The Charles Lamb Bulletin

The Journal of the Charles Lamb Society

January 1995 New Series No. 89

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Editorial

Shortly after the last number of the *Bulletin* went to press, Winifred Courtney, who had just written a tribute to Florence Reeves for our October issue, told me that she herself had not long to live. She died in September. Mary Wedd and Nicholas Roe have kindly submitted tributes to this distinguished Elian writer, which appear in this issue. Winifred's passing is a matter of great sadness - not just to her friends, but to all those involved in Elian studies.

This issue of the *Bulletin* begins the 60th anniversary year of the Charles Lamb Society. It is appropriate that it should be accompanied by a Supplement, containing Deborah Hedgecock's handlist to the collection of Eliana established by the Society's founders, and now retained at the Guildhall Library. The task of forming and preserving this collection has always been central to the Society, and the publication of Deborah Hedgecock's handlist makes public for the first time its full extent. Happily, the collection continues to grow; a number of items were donated while the handlist was in preparation. Deborah has executed her labours in exemplary fashion, and the result is an essential research tool for Romantic scholars. It will also, I hope, provide Elians everywhere with a most interesting read.

Lamb and the Politics of Literary Fashion in Southey's Female Wanderers

By C. J. P. SMITH

> A human being, in the lowest state of penury and distress, is a treasure to a reasoner of this cast - He contemplates, he examines, he turns him in every possible light, with a view of extracting from the variety of his wretchedness, new topics of invective against the pride of property. He indeed (if he is a true Jacobin) refrains from *relieving* the object of his compassionate contemplation; as well knowing that every diminution from the general mass of human misery, must proportionately diminish the force of his argument.[1]

DURING A BREAK from polishing his Bristol historical lectures and further thoughts on ways of earning money for Pantisocracy early in 1795, Southey may have been reading the *Critical Review* for 13 April. Inside, he would have taken in (perhaps with some pride), the review of his *Poems* 1795 (which were a joint effort with Robert Lovell) on pages 420-1. The reviewer considered 'Bion' (Southey) the better poet, and gave examples of his work from 'The Retrospect' and 'The Death of Mattathias'. It was this last poem that the reviewer commented on most fully:

> Many bold attempts have been made to free our poetry from the shackles of rhyme, or rather our poets from the trouble of seeking for it, Dr. Sayers has given us some beautiful specimens of this kind in his Sketches of Northern Mythology; but still we are of the opinion, that our language does not possess harmony enough to gratify the ear in any great degree without the assistance of that Gothic ornament, unless it could be made to run more into dactyls, which the structure and genius of it does not easily admit. (p. 421)

Perhaps it is an example of Southey's ear for fashion, here flattered (and challenged) by an early review, and his growing awareness of his own poetic status, if not infamy,[2] that led to the appearance of the dactylics in question. If Southey was out of tune with English politics, he certainly tried to remain in tune with the English public that bought his poetry. An example of the tendency to hedge his bets had already been given in 'The Retrospect', a poem which tentatively lamented war, but included much staple poetic fare in the style of Gray, Goldsmith, and of course the fashionable Samuel Rogers. Southey wrote with a definite literary audience in mind, and if he heard that dactylics were needed, then (it appears) dactylics he would write.

In a letter to Grosvenor Bedford of 12 May 1795,[3] Southey sent a series of poems for his friend's approval, three of which ('Elinor', the first of the 'Botany Bay Eclogues'; 'The Outcast' and 'The Soldier's Wife') fall into the category of poems of humanitarian concern.

[1] *The Anti-Jacobin* (4th ed., 2 vols., 1799) (hereafter *AJ*), i. 70 (27 Nov. 1797).

[2] An account of Southey's central (or 'exemplary') position in the newer poetry of the 1790s may be found in Marilyn Butler's essay, 'The Political Narratives Of Romantic Poetry And Criticism', *Romantic Revolutions* ed. Kenneth Johnston, Gilbert Chaitin, Karen Hanson and Herbert Marks (Bloomington, 1990), pp. 133-57.

[3] *New Letters of Robert Southey* ed. Kenneth Curry (2 vols., New York and London, 1965) (hereafter Curry), i. 95.

Furthermore, the last two were also joint productions by Southey[4] and Coleridge. Southey included 'The Soldier's Wife' and another related poem 'The Widow' in *Poems* (1797), both of which are famous if only because *The Anti-Jacobin* parodied them. As is well-known, 'The Widow' came under fire on 27 November 1797, and 'The Soldier's Wife' on 11 and 18 December.

Southey had been living with Coleridge in Bristol since February 1795, and this 'most fruitful period of their collaboration'[5] was undertaken with the goal of Pantisocracy still in sight, although by June 1795 Southey proposed that a Welsh farm might be substituted for the American Susquehanna. In fact, the idea of leaving England probably became more attractive to the Pantisocrats as their enthusiasm for the joint scheme diminished.

There had been a succession of bad harvests, in an almost unbroken line from 1789, a tendency which would continue (strangely enough) until the Peace of Amiens in 1802. The burdens of war, taxation and the press-gangs became sharpened by autumn 1795, and in addition to this, Pitt introduced his bills of repression to protect the King and limit gatherings of such as the Corresponding Society (responsible for circulating Paine's *Rights of Man*) to no more than 50 people without the permission of a magistrate. The king had heard cries of 'Bread! No War! No Famine!' on his way to Parliament as well as having the glass in his carriage broken.[6] The King's son, the future George IV, added to his father's problems by pursuing the life of a libertine.

On 9 May 1795 Southey exclaimed to his brother Thomas: 'You must have heard that the King has applied to parliament to pay the Prince's debts - 700,000 pounds !!!!!!!! 180,000 are the annual expences of the United States of America' (Curry i. 94). The Prince's marriage of convenience (enabling his debts to be paid) to Princess Caroline of Brunswick must have aroused not only the disgust of the young Pantisocrats (married themselves in 1795), but also of the whole nation.

It is against this background that poems like 'The Soldier's Wife' should be read; after all, the epithets 'wife' and 'widow' focus upon the problem of marriage, which is at the core

[4] 'The Outcast' may be found in E. H. Coleridge's edition of Coleridge's *Poetical Works* (2 vols., Oxford, 1912), i. 71. It was published as 'Effusion XV' by Coleridge in 1796. Here is another version (perhaps earlier) from Southey's correspondence with Grosvenor Bedford (Bodleian MSS. Eug. Lett. c. 22-7, d. 47-57, p. 149), which Curry does not reprint:

> Sonnet. the last 6 lines by Coleridge.
> Poor Wanderer of the Night! thou pale forlorn!
> Remorse that man on his death-bed possess,
> Who in the hour of credulous tenderness
> Betrayed & left thee to the hard worlds scorn.
> The hard world scoffs thy woes! the chaste ones pride
> Mimic of Virtue mocks thy keen distress,
> Thy Loves & they that envied thee, deride,
> And Vice alone will shelter Wretchedness.
> Oh I am sad to think - that there should be
> Cold-bosomed lewd ones, who endure to place
> Foul offerings at the shrine of Misery
> Forming from Famines arms the embrace of Love.
> May he shed healing on thy sore disgrace
> He, the great Comforter who rules above.

[5] Jack Simmons, *Southey* (London, 1945) (hereafter Simmons), p. 51.

[6] *The Cambridge Modern History* planned by Lord Acton, ed. A. W. Ward, G. W. Prothero, S. Leathes (13 vols., Cambridge, 1907), ix. 675.

of ideas about community and its perfectibility. But the poems are also expressive of the fashion of the time, as Robert Mayo comments: 'Bereaved mothers and deserted females were almost a rage in the poetry departments of the 1790s . . .'[7]

Southey had made his debut as a magazine poet in autumn 1794[8] with the first 'Botany Bay Eclogue' placed in *The Morning Chronicle* by Coleridge. The eclogue form was adopted by Southey from Collins (in his *Persian Eclogues*) but Collins' moralising is replaced by Southeyan politics - and Elinor herself (*Poems* [1797], p. 78) is another 'Outcast - unbeloved and unbewail'd'.

The crucial approach to such poems is through feeling for the subject, and Southey tries to force the point by making his poems as grim as possible, and by the use of the exclamatory apostrophe. But his excess of feeling for, rather than feeling with, the subject in hand has led critics such as Geoffrey Grigson to claim that if Southey 'could easily be parodied, one feels, in poem after poem, even poems mainly serious, that he stations himself deliberately on the verge of self-parody, in rhythm and movement and in statement . . .'[9] Grigson's views are persuasive, yet his selection of Southey's poetry sets out to show the comic side of the poet at the expense of his other more serious (and fashionable) talents. Having said this, after writing out 'The Soldier's Wife' for Bedford, Southey states: 'Written with Coleridge. Read this aloud and accent it' (Curry i. 95). Was this poem merely a late schoolboy exercise in scansion? The dactyls trip lightly forward against the sense of the picture of the 'Weary way-wanderer . . . Travelling painfully'.[10]

Yet the choice of subject is interesting if only as a portrayal of contemporary politics and as an indication of contemporary taste. The soldier's wife is little more than a motif, a mother and children travelling in a void. No information is supplied concerning her destination or her home. The poets make her situation utterly hopeless; without her husband she is rendered emotionally and materially without support, and the snow pathetically emphasizes her own adversity. If Southey's metrics are suspect in places, at least the one key dactyl ('wanderer') is sound enough. No conversation is allowed to the suffering woman (she literally becomes 'apostrophe'), she is placed in the kind of desperate environment essential to such works as Wordsworth's *The Ruined Cottage*, but at an even greater distance from help:

> Thy husband will never return from the war again,
> Cold is thy hopeless heart even as Charity -
> Cold are thy famish'd babes - God help thee,
> widow'd One![11]

She has achieved total social insignificance, and has become not only the pathetic obverse of the idyll of home life, but also the symbol of the ill effects of the war against France. The poem is certainly dramatic, and does have an atmosphere of tangible despair, but is undermined by the fact that the metre does not support the sense of the poem.

Lamb reacted to the sheer misery of the imagery and the absurdity of the metre with his own corrective laughter. His own dactylics are also written in the manner of a schoolboy

[7] 'The Contemporaneity of the *Lyrical Ballads*', *PMLA* 69 (1954) 486-522, p. 496.

[8] See Simmons 47 and note 66, p. 233.

[9] *A Choice of Southey's Verse* (London, 1970), p. 15.

[10] *Poems* (1797), p. 145.

[11] *Poems* (1797), p. 146.

exercise, but their infallible honesty should have been taken to heart by both Southey and Coleridge. If only 'The Soldier's Wife' had been written as a wholehearted parody in the first place, and not a poem which in effect inhabited both the camp of reform or protest, and that of fashionable commercial bandwagon-jumping. The poem literally does not know what it is.

Lamb was frequently in touch with Coleridge during May 1796 (the month that Southey returned to England from his Portugal trip), sending him many long letters upon personal and literary topics. He was fighting against worry and exhaustion, and was in desperate need of a holiday, preferably with Coleridge. We might regard him as an eighteenth-century version of what we now call a 'carer', but strung between work and family, worn down, and with little support. The Southey/Coleridge poem would then have struck a very deep personal chord in Lamb's world. Suffering (especially female suffering) was no light matter, and perhaps Lamb even felt something of his own situation in that marooned and isolated figure in the poem. Whatever the case, Lamb's generosity won out. He went on to beat *The Anti-Jacobin* to a parody of these metrics in a letter to Coleridge of July 1 1796:

> What shall I say to your Dactyls? They are what you would call good per se but a parody on some of 'em is just now suggesting itself & you shall have it rough & unlicked. I mark with figures the lines parodied.
>
> 4 Sorely your Dactyls do drag along limp-footed.
> 5 Sad is the measure that hangs a clog round 'em so.
> 6 Meagre, & languid, proclaiming its wretchedness.
> 1 Weary, unsatisfied, not a little sick of em,
> 11 Cold is my tired heart, I have no charity,
> 2 Painfully trav'lling thus over the rugged road.
> 7 O begone, Measure, half Latin, half English, then.
> 12 Dismal, your Dactyls are, God help ye, rhyming Ones.[12]

Lamb parodies only one of Coleridge's lines compared to seven of Southey's, a heavily adverse ratio, even if Coleridge only supplied three out of twelve lines in the poem. It is interesting that he picks out the strained emotion of the poem, and parodies its metrical arrangement, which is, as I have said, out of key with the weary pace one would expect from the woman in the snow. Lamb's honest laughter can be plainly heard in what is a kindly rebuke on Coleridge's involvement in a project which fails to respond seriously to its subject-matter:

> For your Dactyls I am sorry you are so sore about 'em - a very Sir Fretful -. In good troth the Dactyls are good Dactyls, but their measure is naught. Be not yourself 'half anger half agony' if I pronounce your darling lines not to be the best you ever wrote in all your life, - you have written much. (Marrs i. 41)

Lamb's delightful punning around the word 'measure' almost exactly predicts the focus of the *Anti-Jacobin's* attacks upon the irritating display of metre without content, or, rather, irritating metre with the wrong political content. Southey was using classical learning, classical metre, the property of the establishment, against that establishment.

[12] *The Letters of Charles and Mary Anne Lamb* ed. Edwin W. Marrs Jr. (3 vols., Ithaca, NY, 1975-8) (hereafter Marrs), i. 34-5.

Another of Southey's wanderers, 'The Widow', is similarly beleaguered by winter snows and the indifference of society, with 'no home ... no shelter' against the cold.[13] For this poem Southey chose sapphics, appropriately enough (almost) for a female lament, again using a classical metre for radical purposes. We are not told whether the widow of the poem was married to a soldier or not, but as Southey had been preparing *Joan of Arc* (essentially an anti-war poem) for the press early in 1795, there is no doubt that the effects of war were a major theme in his poetry at that time.[14]

A 'chariot' and 'horseman' pass the woman, and she is found dead by 'the Traveller' the next morning. Although stripped of all comfort and hope, her voice is heard pleading for pity:

> Once I had friends, - but they have all forsook me!
> Once I had parents, - they are now in heaven!
> I had a home once - I had once a husband -
> Pity me Strangers![15]

The presentation of this poem is only one step away from the inscription tradition, the voice of the subject calling to the passers-by in an attempt to gain sympathy or give information. But she is no graveyard stone (as in the poetry of Gray) or inscribed tablet; she is a homeless deserted wanderer, a rootless social casualty in the wake of the revolution and war with France:

> As the wits of the *Anti-Jacobin* knew, however, such way-wandering humanitarianism as Southey's and Wordsworth's, if not increasing, was increasingly partisan and ought to be damned. England's war against the Revolution changed an age of sentiment to an age of politics, as one sees in Southey's movement from the elegiac cluster of *Poems*, 1795, around frail Emma, a flower plucked and destroyed by an ungrateful seducer, to the clusters in *Poems*, 1797, around slaves worn with toil, soldier's wives and widows, and deserters transported to Botany Bay, and on to *Poems*, 1799: 'The Sailor who had Served in the Slave Trade'.[16]

[13] *Poems* (1797), pp. 147-8.

[14] Certain passages from *Joan of Arc* (1796) deal with the subject of warfare and widowhood, as here in the description of the capture of Harfleur:

> fertile fields laid waste,
> Dispeopled hamlets, the lorn widows groan,
> And the pale orphans feeble cry for bread. (i 268-70)

After the seige of Rouen certain inhabitants of the town, being considered useless, are sent out to die in the cold:

> Fainter they grew, for the cold wintry wind
> Blew weak; fainter they grew, and at the last
> All was still, save that ever and anon
> Some mother shriek'd o'er her expiring child
> The shriek of frenzying anguish. (ii 689-93)

This passage has similar vocabulary and imagery to the poems discussed above. Southey uses the picture of the frozen mother and child in 'To Horror' with a note explaining that the image was taken from 'the campaign of 1794 and 1795 . . . during the retreat to Deventer' (*Poems* [1797], p. 143). Southey's own mother was a widow, his father having died in early December 1792. He could appreciate the vulnerability of family life at first hand, his own fatherlessness extending from the period when England was at war with France.

[15] *Poems* (1797), p. 148.

[16] Carl Woodring, *Politics In English Romantic Poetry* (Cambridge, Mass., 1970), p. 87.

The Anti-Jacobin thought that Southey's poetry was written for the purpose of 'aggravating discontent in the inferior orders'.[17] It regarded the poems as designed to expose the contempt and tyranny of the rich over the poor, or to subvert 'those orders and gradations of Society, which are the natural result of the original difference of talents and industry among mankind'.[18] But *The Anti-Jacobin* voice (with its Burkean tones) is really another cry of failure, even the sound of 'beating a dead snake'[19] by 1797, as Southey's pro-French stance was long over and he was certainly no jacobin.

The humour of the magazine, though devastating, rests upon contempt for (and fear of) the social reformer and unrelieved poor, a contempt distinct from Lamb's laughter. The individual is blamed for self-degradation, rather than society for beating him or her down. The lower classes are the butt of these parodies and are seen as harmless, to be patronised by the magazine audience, presumably of a higher class. The 'Needy Knife-grinder' (*AJ* i. 71) is a drunken brawling simpleton, the 'little Drummer Boy' (*AJ* i. 169) is a gullible child, and the 'Wearisome Sonneteer' (*AJ* i. 201) is merely moon-mad and ill-educated. Southey tries hard to create a new 'class' of person (the 'underclass'), the liminal figure, dispossessed of home, friends and hope. The widow's grief is perhaps for the recently married soldier, her poverty indicative of society's neglect. Maybe the soldier's wife saw her husband pressed into service, leaving her bereaved, to cope with an England hostile to poverty and suspicious of any voice of complaint.

In this brave attempt Southey was an easy target, as Jonathan Wordsworth notes in the introduction to the recent Woodstock reprint of *Poems* (1797), his 'earnest tones are captured, his sympathy is debased'.[20] But as the epigraph to this chapter insists, Southey's widows operate in an artificial void, sorely trying to our ability to suspend disbelief. As Lamb hinted (noting the 'dismal' nature of the dactylics), Southey fails to excite compassion because he does not allow the reader close enough to his characters. Instead of investigating the psychology of his widows, he presents us with two-dimensional figures, rather like wood-engravings, and leaves the final judgement to the divine.[21] In the case of 'The Soldier's Wife' this is taken up by *The Anti-Jacobin*:

> We think that we see him fumbling in the pocket of his blue pantaloons; - that the splendid Shilling is about to make its appearance, to glitter in the eyes, and glad the heart, of the poor Sufferer. - But no such thing - the Bard very calmly contemplates her situation, which he describes in a pair of very pathetical Stanzas; and . . . concludes by leaving her to Providence. (*AJ* i. 168)

In the attempt to write humanitarian poetry, Southey had produced a series of what are rather half-hearted, even melodramatic, postures. His women are tragic stage heroines, whose 'measure is naught'.[22] Lamb sits in judgement between the politics and metrics of Coleridge

[17] *AJ* i. 70 (27 Nov. 1797).

[18] *AJ* i. 69-70.

[19] H. N. Fairchild, *The Romantic Quest* (New York, 1931), p. 49.

[20] Robert Southey, *Poems 1797*, with an introduction by Jonathan Wordsworth (Spelsbury, 1989).

[21] The first edition of *Joan of Arc* has similar Christian machinery: 'God shall hear / The widow's groan' (ii. 723) when Henry V sends the inhabitants of Rouen out of the town to die in the snow.

[22] It is tempting to regard Southey's poetical abuse of women as a display of power, of being in control of life and death. One woman in particular, his aunt Tyler, had flung him out of doors into a rainy night in October 1794 upon hearing about the American scheme. She was exactly the opposite of what Southey expected from a woman, and what Jean Raimond calls a 'femme phallique' (*Robert Southey* [Paris, 1968], p. 560). She had

and Southey, and the politics, parodies, and contempt of *The Anti-Jacobin*. His laughter is the sane point between two opposed and extreme political stances, the real voice of feeling born of experience. I have no evidence that Southey ever read Lamb's humane and honest critique of the dactyls. If he had read and acted upon the advice, he might have saved himself one of the larger knocks that punctuated his career as poet.

Sheffield

also been the strict enforcer of his repressive childhood years, a pseudo-mother against whom some unconscious punitive desires may have been held.

Coleorton's 'Classic Ground': Wordsworth, the Beaumonts, and the Politics of Place

By THOMAS PEARSON

WHILE MOST OF Wordsworth's memorable places have been thoroughly explored by critics and scholars over the years, his association with Coleorton, Leicestershire, a site of great importance to him throughout the first three decades of the nineteenth century, has received relatively little critical attention. Coleorton was the country estate of Wordsworth's friend and sometime patron, Sir George Beaumont. Beaumont, a well-known art connoisseur and collector, as well as a landscape painter of some note, was introduced to the poet in 1803 by Coleridge, while Sir George and Lady Beaumont were on a tour of the Lake District. The Wordsworth / Beaumont friendship proved to be a strong and lasting one.[1] Wordsworth, whose more famous friendship with Coleridge was becoming increasingly troubled in these years, found a welcome source of personal stability in his association with the Beaumonts, and, on occasion, he benefitted from the support of his friends in rather direct ways. For example, when their quarters at Town End, Grasmere grew too small, the Wordsworth family spent the winter and early summer of 1806-7 in a large farm house on the Coleorton grounds. Wordsworth, in turn, dedicated his 1815 edition of collected poems to Beaumont, and, perhaps not surprisingly, given the poet's intense concern for place, he pays warm tribute to the Beaumont estate itself in the dedicatory epistle. He tells Sir George that some of the 'best pieces' in the volume 'were composed under the shade of your own groves, upon the classic ground of Coleorton; where I was animated by the recollection of those illustrious Poets of your name and family.'[2]

This article examines Wordsworth's vision of Coleorton's 'classic ground' in an effort to gain a greater understanding of the poet's politics of place in the early nineteenth century. I'm interested in the political dimension of the Coleorton poetry, because Sir George Beaumont has traditionally been associated with the Tory Wordsworth, the 'lost leader,' as Robert Browning famously put it, who became an unrepentant apologist for the landed élite. In fact, Moorman has suggested that the high Tory politics of men such as Sir George Beaumont and Lord Lowther 'subtly assisted Wordsworth's progress toward political conservatism, and especially toward a faith in the landed gentry as a class.'[3] Although in general I agree with Moorman's thesis, I want to put it to the test by examining the set of four inscription poems that Wordsworth wrote for the Beaumont estate in autumn 1811, paying particular attention to the convergence of certain political, social, and aesthetic ideas in these works. The Coleorton inscriptions, elaborately titled 'In the Grounds of Coleorton', 'In a Garden of the Same', 'Written at the Request of Sir George Beaumont', and 'For a Seat

[1] See Mary Moorman, *William Wordsworth: A Biography, The Early Years, 1770-1803* (Oxford, 1957) (hereafter Moorman), pp. 586-8, and Stephen Gill, *William Wordsworth: A Life* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 218-20. For a discussion of Sir George and Lady Beaumont's devotion to the Lake Poets, especially Wordsworth, see Felicity Owen and David Blayney Brown, *Collector of Genius: A Life of Sir George Beaumont* (New Haven, 1988) (hereafter Owen and Brown), pp. 107-42.

[2] *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth* ed. W. J. B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser (3 vols., Oxford, 1974), iii. 13-18.

[3] Moorman 588.

in the Groves of Coleorton',[4] even as they manifest the poet's increasingly conservative social attitudes and political sensibilities, do not by any means constitute an unambiguous celebration of the landed élite. These poems of 1811 demonstrate that Wordsworth's commitment to the landed interest is qualified and complicated by two characteristically Wordsworthian elements: first, an apocalyptic social vision that haunts the poems, as the Coleorton inscriptions foresee the ruin of the very 'classic ground' that they celebrate and mythologize; and second, an abiding faith in the transcendent powers of poetry, a belief in the capacity of the poet's aesthetic artifact to outlive the gentry's monuments of power and prestige.

The idea for the four Coleorton inscriptions was Beaumont's. As Marc Girouard has demonstrated, the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century was the high point of the estate improvement movement in Great Britain.[5] Just as other members of the gentry were renovating their country houses, so Beaumont was determined to rescue Coleorton from years of neglect by rebuilding the mansion and improving the grounds. In 1810, after he and Wordsworth visited William Shenstone's estate, the Leasowes, and Lord Lyttleton's estate, Hagley, both of which were adorned with various urns, monuments, and inscriptions (Lord Lyttleton's estate, for example, had an urn memorializing Alexander Pope and a temple dedicated to the poet James Thomson), Sir George decided that he wanted similar ornamentation for the Coleorton grounds. Beaumont approached Wordsworth regarding the inscriptions and, in the autumn of 1811, the poet took to the project with great enthusiasm. In 1812, three of the four inscriptions, 'In the Grounds of Coleorton', 'Written at the Request of Sir George Beaumont', and 'For a Seat in the Groves of Coleorton', were actually cut into stone and erected as monuments on the Coleorton ground.[6]

Not surprisingly, Wordsworth uses these poems as a means to honour, indeed flatter, his friend and patron. Beaumont must have been especially pleased by the third inscription, 'Written at the Request of Sir George Beaumont', in which the speaker of the poem is none other than Sir George himself. Standing on his 'patrimonial ground', Beaumont remembers his friend and mentor, Sir Joshua Reynolds (l. 13). My main focus, however, is on the three other inscriptions, which, taken together, constitute a poetic tribute to the Beaumont family, celebrating the achievements, both past and present, of the Sir George and his ancestors. 'For a Seat in the Groves of Coleorton', for instance, addresses a site of great importance in the history of the Beaumont family: 'the ivied Ruins of forlorn GRACE DIEU' (l. 4). Situated in the Charnwood forest, not far from Coleorton, Grace Dieu was the original family seat of the Beaumonts, and, in the late sixteenth century, home to the 'illustrious Poets' that Wordsworth alludes to in the dedication - John and Francis Beaumont. Before coming into the possession of the Beaumont family, Grace Dieu was the home to a priory of Augustinian Cannonnesses.[7] Wordsworth's poem, however, makes only a slight reference to the spot's monastic past; Grace Dieu, the speaker tells his unnamed auditor, was 'erst a religious House, which day and

[4] All quotations from these poems are from *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth* ed. Ernest de Selincourt and Helen Darbishire (5 vols., Oxford, 1940-9) (hereafter *PW*), iv. 195-7.

[5] Marc Girouard, *Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History* (New Haven, 1978), pp. 217-18.

[6] Owen and Brown 134-7, and Russell Noyes, *Wordsworth and the Art of Landscape* (Bloomington, 1968), pp. 123-6.

[7] Owen and Brown 127; for a brief discussion of Grace Dieu's monastic past and its eventual dissolution see David Knowles, *Bare Ruined Choirs: The Dissolution of the English Monasteries* (Cambridge, 1976), p. 188.

night / With hymns resounded, and the chanted rite.' The speaker continues, explaining that 'when these rites had ceased, the Spot gave birth / To honourable Men of various worth' (ll. 5-8). This is a miraculous birth indeed. These rites did not simply cease, as Wordsworth rather benignly puts it; the abbey was shut down in the late 1530s during the dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII. Yet here Wordsworth is less concerned with historical accuracy than with creating an appealing Beaumont mythology centred upon the quasi-sacred spot. Once the site of resounding hymns and the chanted rite, Grace Dieu, in turn, becomes home to the young Francis Beaumont, who in singing his 'youthful tales of shepherds and their flocks' (l. 12), serves as a kind of spiritual heir to the chanting cannonesses.[8]

In the first inscription, 'In the Grounds of Coleorton', Wordsworth again honours the Beaumont family past, while at the same time paying tribute to the artistic ambitions and achievements of his friend, Sir George. The poem's neatly arranged couplets show Wordsworth and Beaumont engaged in the sister arts of poetry and painting:

> One wooed the silent Art with studious pains;
> These groves have heard the Other's pensive strains;
> Devoted thus, their spirits did unite,
> By interchange of knowledge and delight. (ll. 5-8)

The poem then looks to Wordsworth's and Beaumont's spiritual progeny, the poets and painters who will visit the grounds in the future: 'Here may some Painter sit in future days, / Some future poet may meditate his lays' (ll. 13-14). These unnamed artists are vitally connected to the past through the act of memory, and their memorializing activities are nourished by the rich associations of the spot. Inspired by Coleorton's spirit of place, and by the garden's memorial artifacts which honor and embody that spirit, this imagined poet and painter will be 'not mindless of the distant age renowned / When inspiration hovered o'er this ground' (ll. 15-16).

The Beaumont genius, as it unfolds and develops through time, not only vitalizes the spot with artistic inspiration, it also provides a necessary historical continuity and social stability, binding together past, present, and future generations into what Wordsworth in *The Prelude* calls 'the noble Living and the noble Dead.'[9] Of course, we have seen Wordsworth work with such ideas before, just as we have seen him working in the inscription mode before. Indeed, throughout his poetic career Wordsworth was interested in monumental letters engraved in rocks and stones and trees. Yet, if generically and thematically there are continuities with the earlier poetry, then the setting of these poems - an estate garden and grounds - is markedly different, and it suggests a new quality in Wordsworth's conservatism. Wordsworth's politics were always tied to the land, and, more specifically, to his faith in the inherent virtues of privately owned land that was passed down through the generations. As

[8] The editors of Wordsworth's letters note that the priory at Grace Dieu was the first monastery in Great Britain to be refounded after the Reformation (*The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Middle Years, Part I 1806-11* ed. Ernest de Selincourt, revised Mary Moorman and Alan G. Hill [Oxford, 1969] [hereafter *MY* i], p. 519n2). In fact, Wordsworth himself revisted the Abbey in 1841 while it was being rebuilt as a Cistercian monastery, and, in a letter to Isabella Fenwick, described at some length the activities of the resident monks (*The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Later Years, Part IV 1840-1853* ed. Ernest de Selincourt, revised Alan G. Hill [Oxford, 1988], pp. 217-19).

[9] *The Prelude: 1799, 1805, 1850* ed. Jonathan Wordsworth, M. H. Abrams, and Stephen Gill (New York, 1979), 1850 version, xi 39.

Peter Manning has noted, however, the first decade of the nineteenth century marks a shift in Wordsworth's allegiances 'from the small landowners such as the protagonist of 'Michael' to the landed interest.'[10] The landed estate increasingly serves as a bulwark against radical change. Indeed, by 1818, Wordsworth will note with approval the 'stability and weight' of the landed élite, arguing that 'Jacobinism can be frustrated' only by the 'existence of large estates continued from generation to generation in particular families.'[11]

Wordsworth himself recognized the political implications of Coleorton's 'classic ground' and its attendant *genius loci* as his own commentary on the inscriptions explicitly touched on matters of politics and society. In a letter to Lady Beaumont in which he discusses the compositional history of 'For a Seat in the Groves of Coleorton', Wordsworth recommends to her the work of the Elizabethan poet, Samuel Daniel, and notes that Daniel's 'Epistle to Lady Margaret' (1601) is a poem 'strikingly applicable to the revolutions of the present time.'[12] Unfortunately, Wordsworth does not elaborate on this rather provocative phrase, but his reference to 'revolutions' inevitably brings to mind the French Revolution and the radical political and social forces that it unleashed throughout Europe. No doubt, the fear of revolutionary upheaval - what Mary Moorman has called the 'monstrous shadows' of Robespierre and Napoleon - continued to inform Wordsworth's politics in 1811.[13] Yet I want to suggest a slightly different, and more localized source of social dislocation that disturbed Wordsworth in the early nineteenth century as much as Jacobinism did. In their correspondence, both William and Dorothy lament, at times quite passionately, the destruction of the Grasmere landscape by the architectural monstrosities of the professional and industrial *nouveau riche*. For example, in a letter of February 1805, Wordsworth describes one Mr. Crump, 'a wretched creature, wretched in name and Nature . . . goaded on by his still more wretched Wife.' Crump, a Liverpool merchant and attorney, was constructing a house in Grasmere Vale, 'a temple of abomination', according to Wordsworth, which will 'entirely destroy (the Vale's) character of simplicity and seclusion.' Likewise, in a letter of November 1805 to Lady Beaumont, Dorothy criticizes Mr Crump as she points to alarming changes in the landscape. 'Alas poor Grasmere!,' Dorothy exclaims, and she goes on to describe the devastation wrought by new construction in the area - by the activities of what she calls the 'Fancy-builders.'[14] With 'Fancy-builders' such as Crump destroying his beloved Grasmere Vale, Wordsworth finds a safe haven in the protected grounds of the Coleorton estate. In the poet's politics of place, the landed estate comes to serve as something of a substitute for Grasmere - an enclosed, protected space that provides, at least for a time, the social stability and continuity that Grasmere no longer enjoys. Daniel's 'Epistle' is relevant here. The poem, which Wordsworth quotes in the letter to Lady Beaumont, begins:

> He that of such a height hath built his mind
> And rear'd the dwelling of his thoughts so strong
> As neither feare nor hope can shake the frame
> Of his resolved powr's, nor all the winde

[10] *Reading Romantics: Texts and Contexts* (New York, 1990), p. 247.

[11] *Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Middle Years, Part II 1812-1820* ed. Ernest de Selincourt, revised Mary Moorman and Alan G. Hill (Oxford, 1970), p. 413.

[12] *MY* i 519.

[13] Mary Moorman, *William Wordsworth: A Biography, The Later Years, 1803-1850* (Oxford, 1965), p. 292.

[14] *Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Early Years, 1787-1805* ed. Ernest de Selincourt, revised Chester L. Shaver (Oxford, 1967) p. 534; pp. 636-8.

> Of vanitie of malice pierce to wrong
> His setled peace, or to disturbe the fame;
> What a faire seate hath he, from whence he may
> The boundless waftes and wildes of man survay. (ll. 1-8)[15]

In a sense, Coleorton is a physical embodiment of Daniel's metaphorical construct, a 'faire seate' within which the poet can 'build up his mind', resisting and defying the 'waftes and wildes' of change, whether the source of that change is Jacobin radicalism or the increasing power of the industrial and professional classes. Unable to establish an Eden in the Lake District, the poet imaginatively retreats to the artificial confines of the garden and grounds of Coleorton.

Yet the Coleorton inscriptions themselves, as I suggested earlier, do not constitute an unambiguous celebration of the landed gentry.[16] There is another voice in these poems that disturbs the poet's complacent mythologizing of Coleorton. At the same time that he celebrates the Beaumont genius and looks to Coleorton's 'classic ground' as a defense against the 'revolutions of the present time', Wordsworth, in at least two of the inscriptions, reminds his patron of the revolutions of future times. In other words, just as the Pedlar does in 'The Ruined Cottage', Wordsworth points to the transience and mutability of all things, including Coleorton itself. For example, 'In a Garden of the Same' shows Wordsworth adopting an apocalyptic voice that portends the ruin of the monumental artifacts of established power. In the opening of the poem, the speaker looks to a time when 'temples, columns, towers, are laid in dust'. The Beaumont estate will be reduced to dust as well; a time will come when 'yon mansion and the flowery trim / Of this fair garden, and its alleys dim, / And all its stately trees, are passed away' (ll. 2, 5-7). In the fourth inscription, 'For a Seat in the Groves of Coleorton', Wordsworth again strikes an apocalyptic note. After celebrating the literary endeavours of Francis Beaumont, the poem undergoes a sudden and radical shift in tone in the last three lines:

> Communities are lost and Empires die
> And things of holy use unhallowed lie;
> They perish . . . (ll. 17-19)

I do not mean to push this apocalyptic element too far. The Coleorton inscriptions, even as they look forward to the eventual ruin of the landed elite, are hardly a call to arms. Throughout the inscriptions, Wordsworth adopts an agentless view of history and historical development, one in which individual human actors have little, if any, role to play. There is perhaps a hint of social levelling in the second inscription's assertion that 'things obscure and small outlive the great' (l. 4). Yet here any implicit radical potential is dissolved by a characteristic Wordsworthian fatalism. This process is articulated in a noticeably passive voice (towers and temples 'are laid in dust'), and without any strong sense of individual participation (the Beaumont's mansion and garden simply 'pass away'). Similarly, in the fourth inscription, while Wordsworth anticipates the death of unnamed communities and unidentified empires, any such passing is certainly not imminent. Any apocalypse, it seems, is an apocalypse deferred.

[15] Samuel Daniel, 'To Lady Margaret: Countess of Cumberland', *The Complete Works in Verse and Prose of Samuel Daniel* ed. Alexander B. Grosart (New York, 1963), ii. 203-7.

[16] For an unambiguously reactionary Wordsworth, see 'Lowther Castle', an 1823 poem in which his patron's castle stands rocklike against the 'democratic torrent' (*PW* iv. 48).

Nevertheless, I find Wordsworth's sense of ruin rather remarkable in a group of poems that are meant to praise the patron and his 'classic ground', and it is this apocalyptic vision that distinguishes Wordsworth's politics of place from that of his neo-classical predecessors. It is hard to imagine Ben Jonson, for example, in the course of describing the virtues of the Sidney estate in 'To Penshurst', at the same time prophesying its eventual destruction. Ideally, the landed estate will endure through time, serving as a monument to the virtuous lives and endeavours of a noble family. Yet apparently Wordsworth had ruminated on ruin, both personal and political, for too long to believe in such forms of endurance. His apocalyptic strain suggests that the classic ground of Coleorton is only a momentary resting-place. For the immediate future, the estate resists radical change and offers a safe haven for the poet, but, like Margaret's humble dwelling in 'The Ruined Cottage', it too will eventually give way to decay and destruction.

What remains? At the end of the fourth inscription, 'For a Seat in the Groves of Coleorton', Wordsworth engages in a moment of poetic bravado, arguing that 'the Intellect can raise / From airy words alone, a Pile that ne'er decays' (ll. 19-20). In his vision of a poetic artifact that 'ne'er decays', Wordsworth suggests that poetry itself has the power to transcend the ravages of time and history. This faith in the transhistorical, transcendent power of the artist and his artifact lies at the heart of what Jerome J. McGann has described as the 'romantic ideology'. Indeed, McGann sees reactionary implications in the notion that art and poetry are somehow immutable and timeless. The 'grand illusion' of every Romantic poet, he argues, 'is the idea that poetry, or even consciousness, can set one free from the ruins of culture and history.' Any such understanding of poetry is, McGann would argue, a form of escapism, an 'act of evasion' which 'occludes' and 'disguises' the poet's 'own involvement in a certain nexus of historical relations.'[17]

McGann's critique of the 'romantic ideology' has achieved a certain prominence in Romantic studies in the last decade. Yet I would like to offer a slightly different reading of the Wordsworthian faith in the power of poetry from that offered by McGann in particular and New Historicism in general. When examined in the context of the Coleorton inscriptions, the Wordsworthian vision of a 'Pile that ne'er decays', rather than constituting the 'grand illusion' of a reactionary ideology, qualifies, and, in the end, supersedes his allegiance to the landed gentry and to the idea of landedness in general. In the fourth inscription, Wordsworth is once again drawn to the idea of building as a symbol of permanence and power. Yet here the 'Pile' that remains and triumphs is not a material artifact, but a symbolic structure, an imagined edifice constructed by the 'building' power of the poet's 'Intellect'. Thus, the dominant figure throughout the inscriptions is not the landlord, but the poet. The poem, and not the patron's estate, is the true artifact of eternity. Indeed, even though Wordsworth yearned for the permanence of the rock and for a suitable place in which he could engage in monumental rock-writing, his striking reference at the end of the fourth inscription to 'airy words' undercuts the very medium in which he has chosen to work at Coleorton. Rather than reminding the reader of the 'stability and weight' of the patron's large estate and its earthbound monuments, Wordsworth suggests that true permanence is found only in the immaterial and 'airy' medium of language itself.

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[17] *The Romantic Ideology: A Critical Investigation* (Chicago, 1983), pp. 91, 68-70.

Two Old Navigators: St Brendan and the Ancient Mariner

By CARLA MARIA GNAPPI[1]

THIS PAPER IS PART of an original project the purpose of which was to discuss the medievalism of *The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere*[2] and to analyse its relationship with some medieval texts bearing thematic affinities. Several works had been taken into consideration (and tentative parallel readings carried out) until the story of St Brendan,[3] a recognized medieval 'best-seller' stood out for the striking features to be discussed in the course of this work. Having set off on my exploration of the medievalism of *The Rime*, however, I became increasingly aware of its complexity; the need, then, to narrow the focus has led me to concentrate on one issue, the central metaphor of the sea journey as quest - around which separate threads of current debate on the poem interweave.

The religious and existential anxieties of this Lyrical Ballad, as the unprecedented association of 'lyrical' and 'ballad' suggests, replace the simpler narrative of the popular ballad of the tradition: through ballad form, gothic lore, specular gloss and all elements which make up the medieval frame, the focus is on Romantic and modern concerns. The following discussion of Coleridge's use of a medieval theme will help illustrate his distance from medieval models. Availing myself of G. P. Landow's study[4] of sea journey imagery as indicator of the religious attitude of the context where it is applied, I wish here to show how, despite the 'orthodox' (in Watson's terms)[5] religious frame, Coleridge conveys a problematic, if not a secular picture.

[1] My interest in Romantic poetry has been invaluably fed by the lectures and seminars that I have attended at Grasmere. My first seminar leader there was Bill Ruddick, whose contained but welcoming manners made me soon feel at home. As he also enjoyed following the route of literary travellers, this small contribution is gratefully dedicated to his memory.

[2] I had originally considered the 1798 edition, but the 1817 revision, with its prose gloss, turned out to be a more interesting choice. I am here using for working purposes the short title *The Rime*, being aware, however, that Coleridge's variations of the title have a bearing on the reception of the whole poem. For a thorough discussion of problems connected with its textual changes, cf. 'The Ancient Mariner: the Meaning of the Meanings' in Jerome J. McGann, *The Beauty of Inflections* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 135-72.

[3] The name of this Irish monk (484-?577), founder of the monastery of Clonfert, has been variously handed down as Brennan, Brandan, Brendan, Brendon. Brendan is the most common present usage. Two separate records of his sea pilgrimages, a short one from *Acta Sanctorum* and a longer one, known as *Navigatio Sancti Brendani*, probably transcribed at the end of the 9th or in the 10th century and merged with legend and folklore, combined in the late Middle Ages. The latter is strongly influenced by Celtic genres such as the Imran, a narration of adventurous sea journeys, and the Echtrai, where the protagonist lands in a fog-covered isle inhabited by the souls of the dead. The Celtic myth of the island inhabited by the souls merged with the Christian concept of the Promised Land.

[4] G. P. Landow, *Images of Crisis. Literary iconology, 1750 to the present* (Boston, 1982).

[5] George Watson's reading of the ballad in his *Coleridge the Poet* (London, 1966), pp. 87-91, remains one of the few where the medieval frame of the poem is dealt with to a certain length. He was one of the first to suggest that, through the complexity of the chronological layers which characterizes the text, Coleridge handles the Mariner's tale and his religious view as something alien to his own times. (However, Watson does not define the terms of the alleged 'medieval orthodoxy' of the Mariner; also, a closer look at his narration and his interaction with the other voices discourages any attempt to consider him a reliable preacher. And just as questionable is his status as an *exemplum* of a 'medieval penitent'.)

Be of good chere, for our Lorde hath sente to us his messenger, to lede us into some good place . . . (*The prose life of St Brendan*)

And horror follows. (*The Ancient Mariner*)

Of the composite medieval frame of *The Rime*, an element which deserves special attention is the very narrative device of the journey as quest. As M. H. Abrams and Thomas McFarland have pointed out, the typically medieval *topos*, pilgrimage or quest, becomes a topical Romantic one.[6] Abrams builds on Blackstone's remark that much of Romantic literature is 'a literature of movement', whose protagonist is a compulsive wanderer: 'Some of these wanderers are guilty driven sinners, on the model of Cain or the Wandering Jew; others are like Ishmael, who is born an alien and exile even in his native land. Especially common, however, is the story form of pilgrimage and quest - the journey in search of an unknown or inexpressible something which gradually leads the wanderer back toward his point of origin.'[7]

The Christian Pilgrim regarded himself as the fulfilment of Old Testament prefigurations, and exhibited a tendency to invest a personal experience with universal religious significance. As Y. Lotman points out: 'In Medieval literature, a person's journey to hell or to heaven is always thought of in geographical terms. . . . In accordance with these ideas, medieval man regarded a geographical journey as a movement in a religious and moral sense'. Also, 'every journey was like a pilgrimage. So, a long journey makes a person more holy, and at the same time the path to holiness implies necessarily leaving the settled life and setting off on a journey: some places were especially charged with symbolic significance; going towards a monastery implied the will to free oneself from sin.'[8]

In the case of sea pilgrimage, the allegorical level is enriched through references to the meaning of water in the Scriptures. The metaphorical use of water imagery is derived from Genesis, Exodus, and the Prophets. Since Noah, water has been seen as the medium of death or the medium of salvation. Such an idea was current in the religious language of Israel:

> 'Save me O God, for the waters are come in, even unto my soul', begins Psalm 69, and it continues, 'Let not the water flood drown me, neither let the deep swallow me up'. Indeed a watery grave was more to be feared than anything and it was through the water that God had led his people from slavery to a new life, free from bondage; it was from drowning that the great fish was appointed by God to rescue Jonah from whose belly or womb (the Greek word means the same) he was cast ashore three days later. The Gospel writers were not slow to pick up these points: in Matthew's Gospel we read: 'For as Jonah was three days and nights in the belly of the whale, so will the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth'. Escape from death by drowning led to a new birth from the watery and dark womb. This is why St John, recording Jesus'

[6] Coleridge's use of the metaphor is mediated through Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Purchas' Pilgrimage*. One of his marginal notes to *Pilgrim's Progress* reads: 'I know of no Book - the Bible excepted as above all comparison - which I according to *my* judgment and experience could so safely recommend as teaching and enforcing the whole saving Truth according to the mind that was in Christ Jesus, as the Pilgrim's Progress. It is, in *my* conviction, incomparably the best SUMMA THEOLOGIÆ *Evangelicæ* ever produced by a Writer not miraculously inspired - S. T. Coleridge. Grove, Highgate 14 June 1830' (*Marginalia* Vol. 1, ed. George Whalley [London and Princeton, 1980], p. 802). The famous statement on Purchas' influence is the 1816 Preface to *Kubla Khan*.

[7] M. H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism* (New York, 1971), p. 193.

[8] Y. Lotman, *Universe of the Mind* tr. A. Shukman (London, 1990), p. 172.

conversation with Nicodemus in Chapter 3, can use the image of natural birth to talk about spiritual awakening in terms which speak to us of baptism: 'Truly, truly I say to you - unless one is born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.'[9]

The vast body of Itinera Ierosolymitana, the pilgrims' reports of their 'perilous journeys' to Jerusalem, reveals the tendency to allegorize the description of the sea crossing, interpreting it in biblical terms. The numerous references to Noah or Jonah[10] provide a recurrent background against which to project a personal experience. The same applies to the emerging hagiography, where episodes from the Saints' lives revive incidents related in the Scriptures. Devotional literature, and hagiography, came to shape even supposedly more secular texts. Many of the books recognized as sources of *The Rime*[11] actually present sea captains as pilgrims, and the whole journey, whatever its purpose, is given a moral significance. Such traditions influenced Coleridge to a point that, despite his famous claim that *The Rime* had no moral, the religious overtones of the ballad are about the only thing on which commentators agree. However, *The Rime* is not a straightforward allegory of sin, repentance, and forgiveness, as may appear. Allegory for Coleridge was uninteresting; also, it presupposes a world view and system of belief that he did not have. Rather, the poem is a typically Romantic exploration of the potentiality of a pseudo-medieval text. This applies even to the use of the marine narrative, as a brief comparison between *The Rime* and a medieval counterpart will illustrate.

But before following the dual route, I should perhaps justify the choice. What struck me on first reading an Italian translation of the *Navigatio Sancti Brendani*[12] was the presence of a set of similarities with *The Rime* in terms of structure, incidents and concerns. For all the similarities, however, the two texts stood sea miles apart, *The Rime* being a sort of darkened image, a deforming mirror of the former - and not only for the obvious reason that the two protagonists are a saint and a sinner respectively. The account of St Brendan's voyage, based on a real 'peregrinatio pro deo', a sea journey at God's mercy, characterized by an unswerving faith in God as a perfect 'helmsman' and 'pilot' (to use the diction of *The Rime*) became in the legend one of the many exemplary searches for a blessed land (here 'paradyse terrestre'); *The Rime*, on the other hand, is an emblematic 'image of crisis', where the 'Divine sponsorship' which characterizes the *topos* of the Christian journey is seriously brought into question. Their analogies and differences are paradigmatic, I would suggest, of two different cultural moments.

In order to carry out a 'contrastive' reading of the two, I then turned to a vernacular, however reduced, version of the *Navigatio*, as it appears in Caxton's *Life of St Brendon*, from

[9] From a sermon delivered by Revd. Margaret Sherwin at St Michael's Church, Highgate (Coleridge's burial place), on 16 August 1992.

[10] As Abrams stresses: 'An unspoken precept of Biblical typology was that images which signify the same things are interchangeable with each other; hence the drastic condensation and displacement of metaphor in Christian devotional literature' (*Natural Supernaturalism* 156). In the legend of St Brendan, a reference to Jonah is evident in the presence of Jasconye, the island fish on whose back the holy crew land. Maud Bodkin quotes the second chapter of the Book of Jonah in 'Archetypes in the Ancient Mariner', quoted *20th Century Literary Criticism* ed. David Lodge (London, 1972), p. 200.

[11] See the controversial as well as influential source-hunting in John Livingston Lowes, *The Road to Xanadu* (Boston, 1927), as well as J. Ivor, *The Source of the Ancient Mariner* (Cardiff, 1890).

[12] *La Navigazione di San Brendano* ed. A. Magnani (Palermo, 1992). An English version is available as 'The Voyage of St. Brendan', *The Age of Bede* ed. J. F. Webb (Harmondsworth, 1983).

his *Golden Legend.*[13] Despite the great variety of manuscripts that testifies to the preexisting popularity of the tale, Caxton's printed version became, to my knowledge, the best known vernacular account. There is no evidence that Coleridge read it, but we know for sure that 'the Romantic literary period, together with other medieval tales, revived the saga of the seafaring abbot.'[14]

A comparison of the two texts is supported by the fact that, in certain respects, they are strikingly akin: both are composite repositories of previous oral and literary traditions, to the point that some remarks about either text are virtually interchangeable;[15] both include Celtic and Christian elements.[16] Also, as many commentators point out, the legendary report of the abbot's journey shows the classical learning of its compiler, who had evidently read Homer and Virgil, also invoked in connection with *The Rime.*[17] Moreover, analogies between the travels of Sinbad the Sailor and Brendan's adventures also occur (uncertainties about dates prevent the claim of derivation of the one from the other) and the tale of Sinbad was one of Coleridge's favourites.

The illustration, from Caxton's *Golden Legende,* shows St Brendan pondering his voyage. It is reproduced here by kind permission of the British Library.

[13] William Caxton, *The Golden Legende* (1483). All quotations are drawn from a modern English edition: *The Golden Legend or Lives of the Saints as Englished by William Caxton* ed. F. S. Ellis (London, 1900), vii. 48-66.

[14] C. Selmer, *Navigatio Sancti Brendani Abbatis* (Notre Dame Ind., 1959), xxxii. It was translated into modern English in 1835; and M. Arnold's poem on St Brendan, as well as William Morris' edition of Caxton's *Golden Legende*, bear witness to the persisting fame of the tale throughout the nineteenth century.

[15] Selmer's introduction to St Brendan's voyage applies to *The Rime* as well: 'In its innermost core it is a work of visionary character blending eschatological motives from Biblical, canonical as well as apocryphal, Greek and Roman mythologies' (Selmer xxiii).

[16] Coleridge's fondness for the Celtic element in European culture emerges in the fragmentary notes for his lectures on the Middle Ages.

[17] As James D. Boulger suggests, 'You may look upon the structure of "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" as an *Aeneid* without the author's voice and epic framework to make the unknown and terrible orderly and rational', with the Mariner resembling 'the stumbing yet pious Aeneas' ('Christian Skepticism in *The Ancient Mariner*', *From Sensibility to Romanticism* ed. Harold Bloom and F. W. Hilles [New York, 1965], p. 451).

Nor are these the only common sources possible. The fantastic geography that characterized medieval Romances and hagiography was based on Greek and Latin sources as well as neo-Platonic ones, with which Coleridge was well acquainted. Despite the centuries of scientific approach to geography which divide Coleridge from his medieval predecessors, he was still much more inclined towards a 'sacred theory of the earth' than toward a lay one, as proven by the epigraph from Burnet, but also by extratextual evidence on Coleridge's siding with the authors mentioned in the gloss. In this respect, his topography is highly symbolic; for instance, like the medieval transcribers of the legend, he associates heaven and hell with different directions in space. As Watson notes, the whereabouts of the Mariner's journey become increasingly more confused, and the same applies to the time in which his story is set; for example, Magellan's route is mentioned as prior to the age of 'minstrelsy'.

What matters is that both texts present the feature of fantastic journeys largely based on a mythical pattern. St Brendan's journey follows the time pattern of the liturgical year, and Coleridge's timing also has a religious significance, being based on the numerology derived from Cabbalistic approaches to the Bible. Both narrations share the common Homeric structure of the circular journey, the sea voyage ending with the *nostos* (return) and include variations of *nekuia* (encounter with the dead) as fundamental functions: no longer descents into the underworld, but corresponding liminal experiences, images of return from death, *figurae* of resurrection. During their voyage, the abbot and the Mariner have foretastes of hell and heaven, although, while the abbot simply sees the Fiends, the Mariner's experience of hell is such a deep and lasting one that the Hermit and the Wedding Guest are both scared by his 'fiendish look.'

The classical myth of the sea journey and its Platonic interpretation merge with the Christian theme of Pilgrimage: the single experiences become part of the life-long spiritual refinement which facilitates the *nostos*, the return to the One. If this meaning is evident in Brendan's quest for the Isles of the Blessed, the same applies, less directly, to the Mariner's exploration of the South Sea ('We were the first . . .') - the New Lands being a more recent *figura* of the heavenly Promised Land. John Beer has been the first to see in the Mariner's voyage the platonic interpretation of Ulysses' journey, through which 'Ulysses gains the vision of the inward eye and therefore is allowed to return to his country.'[18] The Mariner's return, however, is only a provisional homecoming as, like the Wandering Jew, he is bound to roam for the rest of his life. The forces undermining the circularity of the Mariner's journey have been explored, among others, by A. Serpieri, who states that the Mariner's experience is a 'liminal' one, in as much as it is heterodox and disruptive to the point of being devilish. Of Coleridge's attachment to the Middle Ages, Serpieri stresses its unorthodoxy.[19]

The basic difference between the two tales lies precisely in the contrast between the hell of the Mariner and the Abbot's blessed journey; several elements build up such difference. One of the opening images of the Mariner's tale is that of a ship under the overwhelming power of a 'STORM-BLAST' (l. 41): the propelling power of the wind (again, with its religious connotations) is replaced by a disruptive force. The storm is the agent, while the ship is simply acted upon until, almost unwillingly, it reaches the land of 'floating ice', where it is 'wondrous cold'. Not only does the ice send a 'dismal sheen', but it fills the fearful silence

[18] Quoted Paul Magnuson, *Coleridge's Nightmare Poetry* (Charlottesville, 1974), p. 74.
[19] *Retorica e Immaginario* (Parma, 1986) pp. 320 ff.

with beastly sounds.[20] The importance of these lines is signalled not only by the care fc the sound, but by the violation of the traditional ballad metre, or common metre, which occui only at significant points of the Mariner's narration - indicating that a regular ballad form wa regarded by Coleridge as inadequate.[21]

A parallel with St Brendan's voyage shows how the two adventures pertain to tw opposite worlds. Brendan's ship sails 'in Goddes name' and 'by the purveyaunce of ot Lorde', and the assertions of God's benevolence marks, as a refrain, the different steps in tl narration. The monks simply let themselves go adrift, certain that God can only lead thei 'to some good place'. The tempests cannot affect their journey and even if they experienc sin and separation, it remains an individual experience, which does not compromise tl voyage of the holy crew. The 'wonders' of the journey (the word occurs several tim together with the alternative 'marvayles') are signs of God's care and source of grateful aw as the monks' devotional weeping shows. One of these wonders is the ice column that, f from suggesting the cold and desolation of Coleridge's land of ice, is here regarded as oi of the mysterious beauties of nature that the monks have the privilege to see. Whereas fe and anguish are the prevailing sensations of the Mariner ('Fear at my heart', reads l. 204, ai pain does return, 'at an uncertain hour'), the monks' fear is only momentary, thanks Brendan's leading and reassuring presence - both Brendan and the Mariner can be read *figurae* of Christ, but the Mariner is a mocking one (see ll. 141-2).

Surprisingly similar episodes serve opposite effects. The monks' frightful experienc includes the menace posed by the fiends, who cause the sea to boil. Nevertheless, their sh can safely sail by, whereas the parallel experience for the Mariner's crew is much more lon lasting and source of death and anguish. Compare: 'The water, like a witch's oils, / Bui green, and blue and white' (ll. 129-30) with the following paragraph from the abbo adventures:

> And then there came a south wind and drove the ship northward, whereas they sa an island full dark and full of stench and smoke, and there they heard a great blowi and blasting of bellows, but they might see nothing but heard great thunderii whereof they were sore afeard, and blessed them oft. And soon after . . . there cai a great number of fiends and assailed them wih hooks and burning iron malles, whi ran on the water, following their ship fast, in such wise that it seemed all the sea be on fire. But by the pleasure of our Lord they had no power to hurt ne grieve th ne their ship, whereof the fiends began to roar and cry, and threw their hooks a malles at them. And they then were sore afraid, and prayed to God for comfort a help, for they saw the fiends all about the ship, and them seemed then all the isla andthe sea to be on fire. And with a sorrowful cry all those fiends departed fr them and returned to the place that they came from.

The image of the Mariner's hell, covering Part II, Part III and most of Part IV, sets the mc of the whole work. The emotional and spiritual drought of the Mariner -

[20] Dante's *Inferno* ix has been suggested as the source of this image. This medieval poem has often l considered as a hypotext to *The Rime*, especially since W. Knight's essay in *The Starlit Dome* (Oxford, 19

[21] Coleridge's use of the ballad form, sources and purposes, is discussed in C. W. Stork, 'The Influenc the Popular Ballad on Wordsworth and Coleridge', *PMLA* 29 (1914) 299-326, and T. P. Coffin, 'Coleridge's of the Ballad Stanza in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*', *Modern Language Quarterly* 12 (1951) 437-45. also Max F. Schulz, *The Poetic Voices of Coleridge* (Detroit, 1964), pp. 62-9.

> Water, water, every where,
> And all the boards did shrink;
> Water, water, every where,
> Nor any drop to drink. (ll. 119-22)

- is emphasized, throughout the narration, by related images: 'slimy sea', 'painted ocean', 'thick' sea (also mentioned in the legend of St Brendan and perhaps derived in both cases from Dicuil's 'mare concretum').[22] By contrast, Brendan and his crew never run out of water - always laid for them, even in the form of wells (cf. Isaiah 19). Nature and the elements are experienced by Brendan and his crew in their friendly quality; all creatures, birds, fishes, four-legged (Genesis stands behind this as it stands behind Coleridge's 'living things') have food or messages for the monks - in keeping with functions recurring in popular stories.[23] They are also one more indication of an approach towards nature denied to modern man, which Wordsworth and Coleridge were trying to recover: nature regarded as a divine book for those who can read it.

What first suggested to me a juxtaposition between St Brendan's travels and *The Rime* is the presence in both of a white bird that moves the action:[24] in St Brendan's case it is one of the inhabitants of the Isle of Birds (derived perhaps from Lucian's *Traveller's Tale*) who leaves the rest of the flock to talk to the crew, announcing the outcome of their journey and giving instructions as to how to proceed in compliance with God's design. Brendan's initial prayer to God, to show him the meaning of this encounter, enables him to communicate with the birds: it is Brendan's firmness in his faith and total confidence in his consequent ability to decipher God's messages that allows a safe voyage for the crew. In the Mariner's case, by contrast, the catastrophe is sparked off precisely by the crew's inability to make sense of the presence of the albatross: not only do they swing between the opposite beliefs that the bird is of good and bad omen, but (what is worse) they do not realize that it is sent by some supernatural 'agency'. (The relationship between the Polar Spirit and God is just one of the intriguing features of *The Rime.*) This failure to interpret the bird's meaning is part of a wider cognitive problem of the crew (the 'as if' clause at l. 65 is one of the recurring signals of a dubitative mode). This is a sign of a broken tie with the source of all knowledge and understanding.

The Mariner's experience is precisely that of falling out of a horizontal tie (among all creatures) and a vertical one (between creatures and creator): his is a sin of isolation, bearing with it, to quote *Religious Musings*, the rupture of 'The moral world's cohesion', whereby the Mariner becomes 'A sordid solitary thing, / Mid countless brethren with a lonely heart / Thro' courts and cities the smooth Savage roams' (ll. 159-65). The sea 'savage' will be redeemed - at least this wishful thought is set forth in the gloss - exactly when, blessing the water snakes, he reconciles himself with the community of God's creatures. The act of blessing is a frequent one among the sailing monks, who acknowledge in all 'living things' God's messengers.

[22] The Irish monk Dicuil has left an account, written in 825, of the sea voyages of Irish hermits: *Dicuili Liber de mensura orbis terrae.*

[23] Both tales can be analyzed in the terms set by V. Y. Propp, *The Morphology of the Folktale* (Austin and London, 1968), and A. J. Greimas, as shown by A. Serpieri 323-4.

[24] While the colour of the albatross is only implied in the ballad, in the tale the whiteness of the bird is insisted upon, and enhances the angelic quality of the flock.

To be fully forgiven, the Mariner turns to the Hermit, whose description matches perfectly the ones recurrent in the *Navigatio*. In this respect, both texts are alike in their praise of the monastic ideal.[25] Behind these images, there is a historical fact: Irish monks, between the introduction of Christianity and the High Middle Ages, 'would withdraw into a watery desert of their own: the ocean',[26] so Irish 'peregrini' spread out in the British Isles, while others would preach on the Continent, in both ways answering, like Abraham, God's call, to leave his homeland (Genesis 12:1). But legends like the one of Paul the Hermit, included in our legend (Brendan meets Paul as well as Judas during his voyage) may have been the mediators between history and this character in *The Rime*.

The Hermit rescues the Mariner, whose former ship sinks. This final sinking of the boat with its dead crew can be regarded as an instance of the modern treatment of the sea-journey metaphor, which, according to Landow's study, has prevailed since the turn of the eighteenth century:

> The presence of the modern shipwreck tradition in literature and art over the past two centuries - he states - has meant that an author can move his reader from an imaginative cosmos in which God is present to one in which he is absent. Even when the artist and the writer are believers, his alternative universe hovers beneath the desired one.[27]

In conclusion, *The Rime* presents the Christian paradigm whereby man, however exiled from his heavenly home, 'voyages with some sort of divine sponsorship, if he can only recognize the fact' and finally 'is driven by the needs of his human nature to return to God'. However, 'the Christian voyage topos possesses a clear goal or teleology' lacking in the case of *The Rime* that, filled with 'problematic images of a problematic nature', epitomizes the moment of crisis 'when the primal isolation and helplessness of the human condition are revealed':

> Alone, alone, all, all alone,
> Alone on a wide, wide sea!
> And never a saint took pity on
> My soul in agony. (ll. 232-5)
>
> I looked to Heaven, and tried to pray;
> But or ever a prayer had gusht,
> A wicked whisper came, and made
> My heart as dry as dust. (ll. 244-7)

This is one of the ways in which the text manifests its distance from the Middle Ages - from which, at least on the surface, it seems to borrow.

If, on the other hand, apparently simple texts such as those collected in the *Golden Legend* also hint at complex theological issues of their time that we, as modern readers, may tend to simplify, still, whatever theological controversy stands behind them (concerning Judas, for example), what we perceive is the unswerving faith of the protagonist, his total commitment to God's will and his charismatic power over the other monks. He dispenses

[25] In a marginal note to Joseph Blanco White's *Practical and Internal Evidence against Catholicism* (1825), Coleridge makes one of the few concessions to Catholicism in his praise of the monks, whose cells appear as isles of uncorrupted Christianity.

[26] Selmer xxiii.

[27] Landow 156. The following quotations are also from Landow, *passim*.

consolations as well as 'glosses' on the various incidents, and, through him, negative forces are easily tamed. In sharp contrast with the nightmarish quality of the Mariner's voyage, where even the angels pushing his ship home leave a sinister gleam, stands the serene atmosphere of the 'odysée monacale':

> Tout y est beau, pur, innocent. Jamais regard si bienveillant et si doux n'a été jeté sur le monde; pas une idée cruelle, pas une trace de faiblesse ou de se repentir. C'est le monde vu à travers le cristal d'une conscience sans tache, on dirait une nature humaine comme la voulait Pélage qui n'aurait point péché. Les animaux eux-mêmes participent à cette douceur universelle. Le mal apparaît sous la forme de monstres errant sur la mer, ou de cyclopes relégués dans des îles volcaniques, mais Dieu les détruit les uns par les autres, et ne leur permet pas de nuire aux bons.[28]

On the contrary, the Mariner's world is characterized by ambiguity if not disorder. There is very little in his tale to support Watson's view that the Mariner acts as the spokesman of a Catholic orthodoxy. Even if several elements of his narration refer to Catholic tenets, like the cult of Virgin Mary and the Saints, his discourse as a whole points to, and elicits, doubt if not disbelief. The Mariner's words could hardly be regarded as a prize specimen of Christian discourse. This applies to the 1798 text, and all those which followed - particularly the last, where the gloss amplifies the pre-existing tension between the Mariner's and the other voices.

There is, in fact, the Mariner's attempt to preach to the Wedding-Guest about God's love and mercy within a tale that points toward a Christian universe 'gone mad',[29] where God's wrath, rather than his forgiveness, seems to prevail, especially against the crew. His role as a preacher is unconvincing (he had to mesmerize his listener to start with), notwithstanding the gloss - a declared though problematic attempt to turn the poem into a straightforward allegory and to give it a clear-cut religious meaning. Well-defined Catholic or Protestant theological approaches to the poem are doomed to fail, as neither the Mariner nor the narrator who introduces him, the Wedding-Guest or the glossator, qualify as spokesmen for whatever systematic view. The variety of voices within the poem contribute to multiply the perspective on fundamental issues within it.

The poem certainly conveys some of Coleridge's theological concerns, but leaves most questions unanswered. Any given theological scheme can only be superimposed by isolating suitable passages of a text which, read in its totality, defies any attempt to reduce its undercurrent conflicts. Extratextual evidence of Coleridge's unwillingness to commit himself to one strict creed supports this view. Rather than being an allegory, in any medieval or Coleridgean sense of the word, *The Rime* can be read as 'a parable of the uneasy Christian scepticism that has been with us since Newton and Kant.' For Boulger, this is further proven by unpublished speculations on the problem that 'would provide a better gloss to the poem's meaning than the archly pious and disingenuous one he gave, which has misled commentators

[28] E. Renan, *Essais de Morale et de Critique* (Paris, 1868), pp. 445-6. 'Everything there is beautiful, pure, innocent. Never before such a benevolent and sweet look had encompassed the world. Not one cruel idea or a trace of weakness. There, the world is seen through the crystal of a spotless conscience - one could say, human nature unaffected by sin, as Pelagius conceived it. The animals also join in this universal harmony. Evil appears in the form of sea-wandering monsters, or cyclops isolated in their volcanic islands; but God destroys the ones by means of the others, and does not allow them to hurt the good.'

[29] E. E. Bostetter, 'The Nightmare World of The Ancient Mariner', *Studies in Romanticism* 1 (1962) 241-54.

in various ways.'[30] It is beyond the scope of this paper to account for the variety of interpretations as to the religious stance embedded in the poem, but it is worth recalling Irving Babbitt's remarks:

> There is, again, in Coleridge an element of genuine religious vision. He seems singularly different, however, in the total impression he produces, from the religious teachers of the past. These teachers, whether a saint . . . or a Buddha, are as energetic and purposeful as the head of some great industrial enterprise in our own time, though one scarcely need add, in an entirely different way; whereas one can scarcely find in the whole annals of literature another personality as richly endowed as Coleridge and at the same time so rudderless.[31]

Having discussed how *The Rime* might be considered a variation on the theme of sea-pilgrimage, I will mention, briefly, how the metaphor of the 'homo viator' brings together, for the Romantic poet, religious and aesthetic concerns. It is interesting to note that the terms that Coleridge employs to describe the process of prayer and reconciliation are similar to the ones that he uses to describe the poetical faculties. The highest, or secondary imagination, realizes a union of the will and the intellect in a final reïntegration in the Whole. In this sense, the creative act is a metaphoric homecoming. Coleridge himself stresses the 'circular motion' of all poetic endeavours: 'The common end of all narrative, nay of all, Poems is to convert a series into a whole: to make those events, which in real or imagined History move on in a strait Line, assume to our Understanding a circular motion - the snake with it's Tail in it's mouth.' It is not far-fetched to suggest (and many discussions of the poem point to this conclusion) that the Mariner's painful recovery of his ability to pray, and the glossator's attempt to make some sense out of a 'wary' tale, parallel the composition process itself.

In the final part of the ballad, the self-reflective quality of the text becomes more and more evident: the Mariner needs an audience (the Wedding-Guest is more than a device pointing back to the original orality of the ballad), either willing or mesmerized. He can only find relief from his anguish once his tale is told. The gloss, on the other hand, points towards another important tenet of Coleridge's poetics: the organic growth of a text. In this respect, Coleridge, either consciously or (like the Mariner) 'unaware', through the use of the prose gloss (at face value simply a sign of the 'medievality' of the text) shows the text in its becoming and, moreover, points towards the modern issue of the interaction between text and reader, in a process that continuously expands its meaning, even well beyond the initial provisions. The hell of the Mariner, therefore, is neither a mere tribute to the gothic dictat, nor simply a sign of the Romantic troubled religiosity; it is also a hint to that sense of loneliness, isolation and longing that characterizes the poet's 'thrust to unity', in metaphysical and aesthetic terms.

The sense of longing that saturates Romanticism revives earlier quests for earthy paradises:

> The longing for and quest of such a realm are the very stuff of Romanticism. The Ancient Mariner, the Wandering Jew, Cain - the restless and unsatisfied wanderings of these mythic Romantic figures find counterparts in the actual journeying of figures such as Chateaubriand, Lenan, Nerval. Shelley's Alastor leaves his 'alienated home

[30] Boulger 449-51.

[31] 'Coleridge and Imagination' (1929), in *On Being Creative and Other Essays* (Boston, 1932), quoted *The Ancient Mariner: A Casebook* ed. J. S. Hill (London and Basingstoke, 1961), p. 70.

> / to seek strange truths in undiscovered lands'. The questioning voyages of the fictional Childe Harold parallel the questioning voyages of the actual Lord Byron. . . . The always distant country could be removed in time, as with the Romantic mania for the medieval (what Uhland calls 'ein phantastischer Wahn des Mittelalters') or removed in space, as with the Romantic preoccupation with the oriental.[32]

The Rime, then, while trying imperfectly to reproduce the setting of a medieval tale, projects into it typically Romantic concerns. The obsession with revision is one way of allaying the pain of inhabiting a post-lapsarian universe. But if imitation, quotation and adaptation of medieval material can be inscribed in this 'existential' attempt to recover a lost integrity through the revival of the past, the awareness of our own distance from the Middle Ages is just as strong as that of the Romantics themselves.

The Middle Ages are nostalgically (in the etymological sense of *nostos-algos*, well rendered as home-*sickness*) regarded by Coleridge as a moment in our cultural history characterized by an unsurpassed 'symbolic expression of the infinite', and become thereby the ideal displacement for Romantic metaphysical and aesthetic preoccupations. At the same time, this Romantic recreation of the Middle Ages is constantly deconstructed. Coleridge was thoroughly aware of the fragility of his invention: if the creative mind and its faculties seemed at times to have the upper hand, in the long run nature, and with it time, 'manifested its presence in unsettling ways, challenging his certainties about the exclusive prerogative of the mind, undoing his artistic pretensions and in the end always winning'.[33] This is evident within the text, for example through the hybridation of archaic language with contemporary ones, but also in later commentaries, by Coleridge himself, about his work. One of his letters reads:

> For a while the mind seems to have the better in the contest . . . transforms her Summer Gales into Harps and Harpers, Lovers' Sighs and sighing Lovers, and her Winter Blasts into Pindaric Odes, Christabels & Ancient Mariners set to music by Beethoven . . . But alas! alas! that Nature is a wary wily long-breathed old Witch . . . She is sure to get the better of Lady MIND in the long run, and to take her revenge too - transforms our To Day into a Canvass dead-colored to receive the dull featureless Portrait of Yesterday; not alone turns the mimic Mind, the ci-devant Sculptress with all kaleidoscopic freaks and symmetries! into clay . . .

In this respect, the unifying (if misinterpreting) voice of the gloss is also the one that most consciously, and not without ironical overtones, articulates Coleridge's wishes and nostalgia.

The example of *The Rime* shows how, at its most conscious, the 'Gothick' was much more than a mere ornament or an object of untroubled revival. If earlier gothicists may have used it 'fancifully', here it is used 'imaginatively'. The poem may be read in terms of a struggle between fancy and imagination, a departure from allegory, in favour of symbolism. Paradoxically, the conscious medievalism of *The Rime* is at the heart of its modernity. It becomes not only the privileged vehicle through which Coleridge conveys modern, personal themes, but the very meeting-point of his poetic theory and practice, and, to this purpose, the metaphor of the sea-journey has proved a powerful one. As Modiano points out,

[32] Thomas McFarland, *Romanticism and the Forms of Ruin* (Princeton, 1981), p. 8.
[33] Raimonda Modiano, *Coleridge and the Concept of Nature* (London, 1985), p. 206.

> one might describe Coleridge's journey poetry . . . as a poetry of encounter or confrontation between man and nature; the private and the public world, the imaginative artist and conventionally-minded auditors; the limited though safe life in a familiar, home environment (the cot, the harbour, the castle) and the vastly larger experience, of either joyous or devastating possibilities, gained through contact with the external world. (Modiano 86-7)

In this voyage, Ulysses, the Anglo-Saxon Seafarer, seafaring monks as well as Everyman, Christian the Pilgrim, and the differently-named protagonists of similar quests, merge in the figure of the poet, contributing to a tale still being told.

University of Venice

The Ancient Mariner as depicted by Mervyn Peake. It is reproduced here by kind permission of Random House UK Ltd.

Coleridge's Carrier

By BERTA LAWRENCE

OLDER PEOPLE whose memories of childhood reach back to the 1920s will remember the sight of a country carrier in his cart or wagon, plying between his village and the nearest market-town, delivering to village homes on his route a variety of goods - packets, letters, eggs, butter, vegetables, bottles of medicine from the doctor. He operated in a similar way on the return journey. Coleridge, when living in Bristol or Nether Stowey, made use of such a carrier called Thomas Milton. His letters contain such references as 'the Carrier is at the door', and he calls Milton 'the Stowey carrier' although it is not certain that Milton lived in Nether Stowey.

In the Reference Department of Bristol City Library I came across copies of a Bristol Directory dated respectively 1791 and 1794. These publications supplied information to visitors and travellers, and embedded in it is the following item:

Milton (Thos.)	Carrier to the Bear
	Redcliffe St.
A Cart	in Thursday
	out Friday
for	Withycombe
	Stowey
	Minehead
	Dunster
	Watchet
	Dulverton
	and all places adjacent.

This Thomas Milton was Coleridge's carrier. It is reasonable to assume that such a carrier lived at the terminus of his route - which in Milton's case would be Dulverton, that tiny town on the edge of Exmoor sought by tourists for the sight of its famous clapper-bridge called Tarr Steps which spans the river Barle. Unfortunately I have not found it possible to confirm this. Milton was, and still is, a not uncommon name in the villages of Thomas Milton's itinerary. The places quoted in the Directory lie adjacent to Exmoor and the Quantock Hills. Several are reached by what is now the A39 road running from Bridgwater to Minehead and passing through Nether Stowey village (before the construction of the modern bypass).

In addition to these places Milton served the villages between Bridgwater and Bristol (his terminus) along what is now the A38 road, then a busy turnpike road. This part of his journey totalled nearly forty miles so that he needed to stay a night *en route*. It is probable that he slept at Cross near Axbridge which possessed a well-known coaching-inn. Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journal* records 'Slept at Cross'[1] after she and William walked to Cheddar. Perhaps Milton slept in his waggon.

Bridgwater, then a flourishing river-port and market-town of 3,500 inhabitants, was Milton's intermediate place-of-call, either at the Post Office or at one of the coaching-inns, the Angel, the Swan, the George where Coleridge wrote some of his letters while waiting for the coach to Bristol. (In Milton's time there was no coach to Stowey.) If requested Milton

[1] *The Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth* ed. Mary Moorman (2nd ed., Oxford, 1971), p. 14.

took letters to the Post Office or picked up letters there. Most frequently he delivered packets and letters to the Angel or picked some up. This was the inn Coleridge and his local correspondents often used as similarly they used the Bear in Bristol. All remains of the old Angel Inn have been demolished. The inn stoood near the modern shopping precinct called Angel Place.

On Wednesday morning Thomas Milton would call at Coleridge's cottage in Lime Street where sometimes Coleridge was still scribbling away to finish a letter in haste. 'I have fifty things to write - but the carrier is at the door',[2] he wrote to Estlin one Wednesday in January 1797, as a conclusion to his happy description of his recently acquired cottage. According to Coleridge (and not only Coleridge), Milton was unpunctual, unreliable, surly, disobliging - even dishonest, if it *was* Milton Coleridge referred to in 1803 when, writing a letter to send Tom Wedgwood with a packet of 'Bang' (Indian hemp), he declared that he would not rely on the Stowey carrier for transport and posting because 'the Stowey Carriers of Letters . . . are a brace of as careless & dishonest Rogues, as had ever claims on that article of the Hemp & Timber Trade, called the Gallows'.[3]

After visiting Tom Poole in April 1796 Coleridge wrote to him from Bristol a month later: 'Don't forget to send by Milton my old Clothes & Linen'.[4] By the end of that year, almost overwhelmed by domestic and money problems, he sent Poole a flood of letters imploring him to find him a cottage, however humble. Towards December the letters became frantic because Poole objected to several comfortless dwellings. However, by New Year the Coleridges were settled in Stowey, and in January 1797 Coleridge wrote rapturously to Estlin about his new home while Milton waited at the door. No doubt Milton also carried similar rapturous letters written to Thelwall with a hand 'calloused by gardening', as well as the 'curious' letters to Mr Catcott, the Bristol librarian who had complained about the length of time Coleridge kept library books in Nether Stowey.[5]

Correspondence with Cottle, his publisher in Wine Street, Bristol, contains various references to the disobliging Milton. In early August 1797, when Cottle was ill, Coleridge wrote that he wanted 'a full account of you by Milton'.[6] Earlier that year, on 6 January, he wrote Cottle a letter containing details of revisions for *Poems* (1797), saying that if on Thursday morning 'you will send down your young man to the Bear Inn, Red Cliff Street, to ask for Milton, the Stowey Carrier, you will find a parcel containing the book of my poems interleaved with the alterations'.[7] This parcel was delayed almost a week because Milton had left Stowey one Wednesday two hours before his usual time. There were occasions, however, when the unwilling Milton had to wait because Coleridge was still scribbling his letter. Cottle sent back several suggestions for alterations to the Poems (the Poems included *Low was our Pretty Cot*, *Shurton Bars* and *The Beautiful Spring in a Village*). Coleridge accepted most of these changes but was less willing to alter the word 'scythesman' in the *Allegorical Lines* as he had heard it used locally. 'Milton waits impatiently', he ends his reply to Cottle.[8]

[2] *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* ed. Earl Leslie Griggs (6 vols., Oxford, 1956-71) (hereafter Griggs), i. 301-2.

[3] Griggs ii. 934.

[4] Griggs i. 218.

[5] See Griggs i. 323.

[6] Griggs i. 340.

[7] Griggs i. 300.

[8] Griggs i. 315-16.

One July day, when Coleridge was lame after Sara's careless scalding, he entrusted Milton with his first draft of *This Lime Tree Bower my Prison* intended for Southey. Did any of our modern carriers every carry such a precious manuscript with their eggs and parcels?[9] That summer Milton carried most of the joyous correspondence about the Wordsworths' arrival at Alfoxden. Sara Coleridge also refers to Milton during Coleridge's stay in Germany. To save postage (paid by the recipient) Coleridge would enclose a letter to Sara with one to Poole so that at times Sara wrote pathetically to Poole, 'Is there *no* letter from Samuel?' Via Milton came her request for a loan of ten guineas, and also her sorrowful message: 'Oh! my dear Mr Poole, I have lost my dear dear child!' after the death of her baby Berkeley.[10] Her requests for a reply sometimes end: 'I shall be here, and happy to recieve it . . . by Milton'.[11] One letter reached her late, 'by neglect of the carrier'.[12]

In December 1797 Dorothy Wordsworth entrusted to Basil Montagu, the Wordsworths' guest at Alfoxden, a parcel of five linen shirts which she had painstakingly made for her brother Richard. Carelessly Montagu left it at Coleridge's cottage. In April 1798 Dorothy sent this parcel with five *more* shirts to Bridgwater by Milton. (It took many months to reach its destination.)[13]

At the end of his short stay in Stowey in the summer of 1798, Charles Lamb left his greatcoat behind. He wrote to Coleridge:

> You will oblige me too by sending me my great-coat, which I left behind in the oblivious state the mind is thrown into at parting - is it not ridiculous that I sometimes envy that great-coat lingering so cunningly behind? - at present I have none - so send it me by a Stowey waggon, if there be such a thing, directing for C.L., No. 45, Chapel-Street, Pentonville, near London.[14]

Either Coleridge or Milton was neglectful: winter was near when, on 20 September 1797, Lamb wrote again:

> I wish you would send me my Great coat - the snow & the rain season is at hand & I have but a wretched old coat, once my fathers, to keep 'em off - & that is transitory -
>
> When time drives flocks from field to fold,
> When ways grow foul and blood gets cold -
>
> I shall remember where I left my coat - meek Emblem wilt thou be, old Winter, of a friend's neglect - Cold, cold, cold, -[15]

NB In spite of many attempts, I have not located this inglorious Milton. The respected farming family of Milton has lived for years in the tiny village of Withypool (adjacent to the route of Coleridge's carrier) and became famous for the breeding of Exmoor ponies. The

[9] See Griggs i. 332-6.

[10] *Minnow among Tritons: Mrs. S. T. Coleridge's Letters to Thomas Poole 1799-1834* ed. Stephen Potter (London, 1934) (hereafter Potter), p. 1.

[11] Potter 2.

[12] Potter 4.

[13] See *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Early Years 1787-1805* ed. Ernest de Selincourt, revised Chester L. Shaver (Oxford, 1967), pp. 198, 215, 219.

[14] *The Letters of Charles and Mary Anne Lamb* ed. Edwin W. Marrs, Jr. (3 vols., Ithaca, NY) (hereafter Marrs), i. 117.

[15] Marrs i. 123.

village is a pretty and picturesque place with a stone bridge over the river Barle. The Somerset writer Walter Raymond had a cottage there. (It has a commemorative plaque.) In 1898, a century after Coleridge's Somerset stay, there lived in Withypool a Carrier called John Milton.

Bridgwater, Somerset

Whose Secret Life is it Anyway?

By JANET DALEY

INTRODUCED BY D. E. WICKHAM

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Although written about a later period, it struck me as of particular interest to Elians because of the details of the lives of Charles and Mary Lamb which were omitted in the earliest biographical works and published letters, and which remained suppressed at least until after the death of Mary Lamb. Then, perhaps, certain happenings were regarded as shameful. Now we regard them as reasons for sympathy and as showing Charles Lamb's heroic character.

The argument can be applied in other forms. When does grave-robbing become archaeological investigation? Is it right to excavate treasures from a pharaoh's grave - if 'tomb robbers' have not been there first? Or goldwork from a Viking tomb? Or a chalice from a medieval bishop's skeletal grasp in the crypt of his own cathedral? Or an interesting necklace from a nineteenth-century grave? From another point of view, I remember the shock of going into the new basilica of St Teresa at Lisieux in France, a sort of Marylebone Station blazingly lit *à la* Disney with fairy lights in little coloured glasses, all bought by the faithful who had come to worship the basilica's great relic, an arm of the saint, which must have been surgically removed after her death in 1897 or at her canonisation in 1925.

* * *

To whom do your life and its secrets belong? First to yourself and next to your nearest and dearest? The platitudes slip off the tongue easily enough when we talk about the private lives of ordinary people. But what if the life is not a purely 'private' one? And whose life is definitively private, anyway? Not a politician's obviously; but what about a great writer's? And whatever rules we accept, do they still apply when that life is over? Once we are part of history, does the detritus of our feelings belong to the world?

In Dublin, an archive of James Joyce's private papers has been released for public examination. What should have been a momentous unlocking of insights into the development of one of the most influential figures in modern literature has provoked protest and disappointment. Missing from the 50-year-old collection is all the material relating to Joyce's schizophrenic daughter, whose illness was a critical tragedy in his life. Of even more direct relevance to Joyce's artistic production were his wife Nora's erotic letters - thought to be the basis for Molly Bloom's monologues in *Ulysses* - which are also missing.

These absences present very different moral quandaries. Documents about Joyce's daughter have apparently been deliberately withheld by his descendants, who still have control over his estate. But Nora's letters are thought to have been destroyed by her. A family (in the person of a grandson whose authority has become unchallengeable in an Ireland which venerates Joyce) wishes to conceal a painful episode of mental illness; a wife is determined that her own intimate correspondence shall not be revealed. Are they within their rights? Or is James Joyce (and are all the influences which bore upon his genius) now a part of our collective inheritance: the intellectual property of the English-speaking world in whose literature he is a seminal figure?

Protecting the privacy of the living with ludicrous libel laws slides easily into censorship: the open secrets of public and political life remain a closed book to the electorate. Arguments about whether a politician's personal peccadilloes are relevant to his fitness for office are purely academic in Britain. Guarding the secrets of the dead may not have such obviously dire consequences for democracy, but it does threaten historical truth. Authentic knowledge about the past is problematic enough when we are in possession of all the possible evidence. When crucial material is lost about a major political or cultural figure, whatever hope there might have been of piecing together a picture of how things really were is doomed.

The Joyce case is not unique. Peter Ackroyd, T. S. Eliot's biographer, was forced to write without access to private material which Eliot's widow did not release. Ironically, there is a vogue in current literary theory for declaring that 'context' is irrelevant to the study of literary texts. Some theorists argue that no amount of knowledge about writers' lives adds anything to our understanding of their works. This perverse dogma offers a convenient cover for all those who seek to conceal the unsavoury or the disillusioning. But even without venturing into the arcane territory of literary criticism, we have to make some hard decisions about what kind of knowledge of the past is important enough to justify gross intrusion. The artist and typographer Eric Gill was described in a recent biography as having committed incest. The accounts of his sex life deeply affected other members of his family, and have given rise to great bitterness. It would be hard to justify such revelations as essential to our understanding of him as an artist, but if true, they provide a fascinating picture of a defiantly unconventional life. And what of Virginia Woolf's homosexuality? And the lesbian affair of Vita Sackville-West? Their sexuality was certainly not irrelevant to their work, and their lives are an intriguing facet of English social history.

Documents once thought to be most important often turn out in the end to be the least significant: redundant treaties, makeweight bureaucratic correspondence, publishers' bland testimonials. In the study of tumultuous historical events, it is often the most intimate and idiosyncratic documents that offer real insight: the letters men write to their wives and girlfriends from the front lines in war; the diaries of seventeenth-century diplomats, with all their indiscretions intact; the laundry-lists and menus of Victorian housekeepers, which give such a wealth of domestic detail. The unofficial, confidential document is the one that gives a vivid picture of life as it was actually lived. Individuals speaking to one another off-the-record are the life-blood of history: its telling anecdotes and eyewitness accounts. Which is why private letters are of such matchless importance when one is trying to understand, not just what it was like to be trapped in the mud of Flanders during the First World War, but what possessed James Joyce to create the character of Molly Bloom.

To falsify history by suppressing information is one thing. Certainly there are circumstances where it is understandable - when the unpalatable truth about a parent would become known to young children, for example. Alternatively, in the case of an untimely death, by suicide particularly, there can be prolonged controversy about what the truth is: the acrimony between Sylvia Plath's feminist biographers and her widower, Ted Hughes, is unlikely to be resolved within our lifetimes.

To go even further, to the lengths of *destroying* material so that it is lost forever, is difficult to forgive. But what if this is the documented wish of the deceased himself? Philip Larkin left instructions to the woman with whom he lived that notebooks and diaries of his were to be destroyed on his death, and she loyally followed his instruction. Was she morally bound to do so, or did she owe a greater duty to the understanding of English poetry than to him?

Even more awkward, did he have a right to order such a thing, given that by the time of his death, he was fully aware of his own importance to twentieth-century British poetry? Writers are private people by temperament: it is arguable that they would not be who and what they are if we did not permit them that secretiveness. But their compulsion to create is matched by our compulsion to understand their creativity. In the end (and especially after the end), they belong no longer to themselves but to us.

The 'precocious herb-woman's darling': Some Notes on Saloop

By R. M. HEALEY

> There is a composition, the ground-work of which I have understood to be the sweet wood yclept sassafras. This wood boiled down to a kind of tea, and tempered with an infusion of milk and sugar, hath to some tastes a delicacy beyond the China luxury. (Lamb, 'In Praise of Chimney-Sweepers')

IT MAY COME AS A SURPRISE to some that the famous description of the beverage favoured by London chimney-sweepers in Lamb's time has not already come under the scrutiny of Elia scholars. This seems especially odd when one considers that a good deal of confusion (not all of which is the fault of Lamb) surrounds the identify of the drink in question. Elia is in no doubt that the decoction he describes, which was served not only by Mr Read at his 'Salopian House' in Fleet Street, but by a host of imitative street-vendors, went by the name of saloop. Over 130 years later we find Aytoun Ellis, the historian of coffee-houses, repeating the story. Moreover we learn from Ellis that one of Read's predecessors, around the end of Queen Anne's reign, opened one of the first coffee-houses to serve saloop, and that the beverage had the alternative name 'bocket'.[1] So far, so good.

However, it is when we consult other sources that both pre-date and post-date Elia, that the seeds of confusion are sown. For instance, the antiquary John Thomas Smith made an etching in 1819 of a Smithfield saloop-seller and in the accompanying text remarked on the popularity of saloop, which he claimed 'has superseded almost every other midnight street refreshment, being a beverage easily made, and a long time considered as a sovereign cure for headache arising from drunkeness'.[2] Like Lamb, Smith mentions the late hours kept by the street vendors and includes a puff for Read's Salopian establishment. He then goes on to quote some doggerel extolling the virtues of saloop that could be found printed on a sign in Read's shop. Some mention is made in this unmemorable verse to Mount Pleasant:

> Come all degrees now passing by,
> My charming liquor taste and try;
> To Lockyer come and drink your fill,
> Mount Pleasant has no kind of ill.
> The fumes of wines, punch, drams, or beer,
> It will expel; your spirits cheer;
> From drowsiness your spirits free . . .[3]

According to one historian Mount Pleasant was the name of the saloop-house opened in 1719 by a predecessor of Read, one Lockyer, who died in 1739, having made a small fortune from the popular beverage.[4] Mount Pleasant was also the home of the sassafras tree, a native of North America, whose aromatic bark, when chipped and boiled, yielded the strongly

[1] *The Penny Universities* (1956), pp. 47-8. Ellis confuses sassafras with salep and thus his account of saloop is totally misleading.

[2] J. T. Smith, *Cries of London* (1839), pp. 85-7.

[3] Ibid. This verse can also be found in Bryant Lillywhite, *London Coffee Houses* (1963) p. 377.

[4] See Lillywhite 377-8.

stimulative tea familiar to Lamb and Smith. So far then, all the sources seem to agree that the refreshing drink sold under the name of saloop from the early eighteenth century was a decoction of sassafras to which milk and sugar could be added.

A problem arises, however, when we continue to read Smith's account of saloop. The next source he quotes is Charles Bryant's *Dioetetica* (1783), which praises the remarkable properties of the common plant *Orchis mascula*, a flower familiar to most country people. According to Bryant the powdered 'roots' or 'bulbs' of this orchid and its related species are said by some to be the saloop sold in the shops, though 'the shop roots come from Turkey'. Bryant then goes on to suggest that the gathering of orchid bulbs might prove to be a lucrative employment for country people and he concludes by promoting saloop as a 'celebrated restorative among the Turks' which 'stands recommended in consumptions, bilious, cholics, and all disorders proceeding from an acrimony in the juices'.[5] If we look further afield, for instance to the *London Medical Journal* of 1804, we discover more facts about saloop. For example, that the name derives from 'salep', a Turkish word, and that though expensive to import, the powdered bulb can provide an extremely economical foodstuff. Indeed, just one ounce of powder added to the same weight of 'portable soup' (that is, dehydrated flesh) in two quarts of boiling water will 'afford a man sufficient subsistence for a day'. Saloop is even claimed to be an aphrodisiac.[6]

So who is right? What exactly did Mr Read use to make his aromatic tea? Did it ever contain powdered orchid bulb, or, as the evidence suggests, was the main ingredient always chipped sassafras bark? One possible answer might be that Lockyer and his successor began serving saloop made from salep powder dissolved in water and flavoured with sassafras chips. One modern herbal maintains that the sweetly insipid Turkish drink was often spiced up with aromatics, including sassafras.[7] However, the price of salep rose in the 1740s to 1/- an ounce and it is possible that the owner decided to omit this expensive ingredient from the recipe, hoping none of his customers would notice.[8] The deception would be made easier by the fact that sassafras possesses similar properties to salep, the most significant of which is its ability to thicken liquids. In Louisiana, for instance, sassafras leaves are still used to thicken soups.[9]

It would be interesting to know whether the sassafras chips used in the preparation of saloop from the time of Lockyer became a scarce commodity during the American War of Independence. Perhaps in this period some other flavouring was substituted - cinnamon seems the most likely. A recipe of 1742 mentioned by Dorothy Hartley in her excellent *Food in England* (1954) calls for a combination of lemon and cinnamon as a flavouring.[10] Hartley, incidentally, makes no mention of sassafras in her account of 'salop'. Her beverage is very definitely made from powdered orchid bulbs and she recalls drinking it in various forms in Cardiganshire, Scotland and Ireland. She also repeats (though no sources are cited) the familiar assertion that salop was drunk by 'porters, coalmen, and workers of all kinds,

[5] Smith 85-7.

[6] *London Medical Journal* 2 (1804) 440-2.

[7] M. Grieve, *A Modern Herbal* (1985), p. 605.

[8] By the 1770s the price of imported salep had gone down to about 6*s*. a pound, while it was estimated that the home-grown product could be sold at a mere 10*d*. a pound. See *Georgical Essays* ed. Alexander Hunter (1772) and in particular 'On the Orchis Root' by Thomas Percival, vol. 4, pp. 163-181.

[9] Grieve 715.

[10] Dorothy Hartley, *Food in England* (1954), p. 576.

who bought it at the small car-men's rests'.[11] With the mention of 'coalmen', of course, we are back with Elia's chimney-sweepers, who found that saloop could soften 'the fuliginous concretions' which stuck to the roofs of their mouths. It is difficult to imagine the starchy, slightly gelatinous product of salep powder having the effect of dislodging coal dust, and so one must deduce that the favourite drink of the coalman, like that of the chimney-sweeper, was wholly (or almost wholly) composed of sassafras tea! To complicate the matter further Hartley suggests that the word salop was derived from the Dutch word 'slemp', which was a drink made of 'thickened milk with cloves and sugar' which was served hot to skaters.[12]

So, what are we to make of all these contradictory accounts of salep/salop/saloop? Was salop/salep a different drink from saloop? Bryant Lillywhite, in his exhaustive study of London's coffee-houses, argues that they were. 'In *English Inn Signs* (1951)', he writes, 'the author appears to confuse saloop with salop'.[13] Saloop, he maintains, is prepared from sassafras bark, while salop is made from orchid roots. Lillywhite neglects, however, to acknowledge that the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* does not see the distinction as so clear-cut. Salep is defined as a 'nutritive meal, starch, or jelly' made from dried orchid tubers. Saloop, however, is a 'hot drink consisting of an infusion of powdered salep, or (later) of sassafras, with milk and sugar'. The key word in this dictionary definition is 'later'. One possible solution to the puzzle may be that Lockyer, in the early years of the eighteenth century, introduced into his coffee-house a new drink from Turkey which, though it had excellent nutritive properties of its own, needed something to give it flavour and to act as a stimulant, since it was designed to rival the more expensive coffee. Sassafras chips were tried and found to be ideal. The combination of Turkish salep and American sassafras was renamed saloop and made Lockyer a small fortune. His successor continued to serve the drink but unfortunately due to the steep increase in the price of salep powder was forced to drastically reduce, or even eliminate completely, this particular ingredient. Thus 'later' the original salep powder was replaced by the milk and sugar mentioned by Lamb in his essay. It is possible, of course, that Mr Read in his only 'Salopian House', for the sake of tradition (and to keep himself within the law), did indeed add a pinch or two of orchid root to his brew, but it is unlikely. If the cheaper arrowroot, or perhaps sassafras leaves, could do just as well why should he waste his money on the real thing? Or maybe Read was a keen gardener and preferred to see orchids alive and thriving in the English hedgerows and meadows.

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[11] Ibid, p. 576.
[12] Ibid, p. 576.
[13] Lillywhite 377.

'Barrenness of the Imaginative Faculty in the Productions of Modern Art' - the Manuscript Text

By DUNCAN WU

FOREMOST AMONG the Society's holdings at the Guildhall Library is a fragment of Lamb's holograph manuscript of 'Barrenness of the Imaginative Faculty in the Productions of Modern Art', originally published in *The Reflector*, 23 and 30 December 1832, and then in *The Athenaeum*, 12 January and 2 February 1833, under the title 'On the Total Defect of the Quality of Imagination, Observable in the Works of Modern British Artists'. The manuscript was purchased from Maggs by John M. Turnbull for £25, 24 February 1947; Turnbull subsequently gave it to the Society.[1] Other manuscripts and facsimiles of the essay are to be found in the British Library and the Victoria and Albert Museum;[2] the Society's manuscript is not listed in Barbara Rosenbaum's *Index of English Literary Manuscripts* (1990).

The draft is entered on lined, foolscap paper in Lamb's hand. Although fairly rough, the text is very close to that published both in orthography and punctuation; readers wishing to run their own collation with Lucas' text as reprinted by Jonathan Bate will find it in *Elia and the Last Essays of Elia* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 263-4.

The draft contains numerous deletions and corrections, in most of which Lamb formulates or rearranges phrases and sentences. Of these I note only a representative selection, leaving it to the editor of a future critical edition of the *Essays* to provide a fuller account. The punctuation and orthography of the manuscript has not been emended in any way.

I wish to acknowledge the invaluable assistance of Deborah Hedgecock during my work on this manuscript.

* * *

To the lowest subjects, and, to a superficial comprehension,[3] the most barren, the Great Masters gave loftiness & fruitfulness. The large eye of genius saw in the meanness of present objects their capabilities of treatment from their relations to some grand Past, or Future. How has Raphael - we must still linger about the Vatican - treated the humble[4] craft of the ship builder in *his* 'Building of the Ark'? It is one in that scriptural series to which we have referred, and which, judging from some fine rough old graphic studies of them which we possess, seem to be of a higher & more poetic grade than even the Cartoons. The dim of sight are the timid and the shrinking. There is a cowardice in modern art.[5] As the Frenchmen, of whom Coleridge's friend made the prophetic guess at Rome, from the beard

[1] For more on this Elian, see Claude Prance, *Companion to Charles Lamb* (London, 1983), pp. 333-5.

[2] See Barbara Rosenbaum, *Index of English Literary Manuscripts* Volume IV: *1800-1900* Part 2 *Hardy-Lamb* (London, 1990), pp. 704-5.

[3] During work on the manuscript by the paper conservators at the Guildhall Library, a first draft of the opening words of the first sentence was discovered on the verso. It is in Lamb's hand, and reads: 'To subjects, that to a superficial [appreh *del.*]'.

[4] mechanic *deleted to* humble

[5] At this point Lamb has deleted the beginning of a new sentence: 'What painter now would dare to try his hand upon such a subject ...'

and horns of the Moses of Michael Angelo collected no inferences beyond that of a He Goat and a Cornuto, so from this subject, of mere mechanic promise, it would instinctively turn away, as from one incapable of investiture with any grandeur. The dock-yards at Woolwich would object[6] derogatory associations. The depot at Chatham would be the moat and the beam in its intellectual eye. But not to the nautical[7] preparations in the ship yards of [8]Civita Vecchia did Raphael look for instructions when he[9] imagined the Building of the Vessel that was to be conservatory of the wrecks of the species of drowned mankind. In the intensity of the action he keeps ever out of sight the meanness of the operation.[10] There is the Patriarch in calm forethought, and with holy prescience,[11] as guided by Heaven,[12] giving directions.[13] And there are his agents - the solitary but sufficient Three - hewing, sawing,[14] every one with the might and earnestness of a Demiurgus; under some instinctive rather than technical guidance; giant-muscled; every one a Hercules, or liker to those[15] Vulcanian Three, that in the sounding caverns under Mongibello wrought in[16] fire - Brontes, and black Steropes, and Pyracmon. So work the Workmen that should repair a world!

Acton, London

[6] suggest *deleted to* object
[7] naval nautical artisans *deleted to* nautical
[8] his own *deleted*
[9] modelled the architectural *deleted*
[10] craft *deleted to* operation
[11] instinct *deleted to* prescience
[12] as guided by Heaven: *This phrase does not occur in any of the printed versions of the text.*
[13] to his *deleted*
[14] each with his might *deleted*
[15] other Three that in the sounding caverns under Mongibello forged *deleted*
[16] with *deleted to* in

Reviews

JOHN BEER, *Romantic Influences: Contemporary - Victorian - Modern.* Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994. £40 hardback. ISBN 0 333 43915 5. JOHN BEER, *Against Finality.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993. £5.95 paperback (US$9.95). ISBN 0 521 45954 0.

ROMANTIC INFLUENCES, a fine, capacious, packed thing, exemplifies the unusually consensual modern belief that the Romantic poet-theorists anticipate later literary thinking, even ostensibly anti-Romantic modernists'. Like most received wisdoms, the theory proves itself more of a puzzle when you try to work with it; and, even though Beer doesn't tackle them head on, one distinction of the book is the ingenuity and sense with which it encounters the puzzles raised by the subject.

For a start, 'Romantic' is an obscure word, mostly because its range encompasses logically quite incompatible ideas - 'the return to nature' and 'the renaissance of Platonism', say. A second problem raised by the continuing Romanticism theory is the deceptively simple question: *why* does it continue?

One way out of the problem of the word's contradictory spread is to draw prominent opposing positions into some quasi-Hegelian narrative of reconciling synthesis (an interpretation often imposed on Blake, as Beer remarks). But this seems very far from the probing, exploratory, rather famously *non*-progressive intellect pre-emimently at work in Coleridge, even when reconciliation and happy marriage is being most loudly announced; quite rightly Beer is having nothing to do with it. The *failure* of Coleridgean system is the important thing, attributed not to some constitutional indisposition, with the gaps left to be made up by the handy critic, but rather to 'the nature of the elements he was trying to reconcile'.

Coleridge is put centre-stage because even if he didn't find the right answers, 'he was asking the most pertinent questions'; and this emphasis suggests a way round defining 'Romanticism', since it places probings and speculation rather than theories and affirmations at the heart of the 'Romantic' experiment. It seems quite too good to be true, but it is reported that as she lay dying Gertrude Stein suddenly asked, 'What is the answer?', before lapsing back and reflecting with atypical self-scrutiny, 'But what is the question?' Applying that rare insight, we could say that it is not the 'answers' offered by Coleridge which are of primary interest, for these are only ever conditional and often renounced, but the bigger 'question' underlying them.

Beer, picking up an etymological *glissade* from Bloom, seeks out an '*influenza*' rather than a 'theory' defining Romanticism, and the reason for the resemblances between the moderns and the Romantics is, accordingly, that they share a broadly common 'influenza'. If this seems shiningly reasonable, it is quietly subversive of the programme influentially announced by Jerome McGann, who defines the critic's task as tracing historical *difference*. The mysterious continuity of Romantic ideas (which McGann admits) must then be attributed to protracted delusion: the nebulous but apparently *engagé* concept of 'ideology' obligingly steps in, with the appropriate connotations of bad faith and false consciousness. The McGann project thus represents a notable victory for Occam's hair-tonic, since the I-know-not-what we already have ('Romantic') is hitched to a quite new one ('ideology'). In avoiding this, Beer is onto something important, not least a path away from the populous school instinctively working to find poets' minds as murky, and preferably disreputable, as possible: responding to the 'influenza' is clearly incumbent upon any thinking person.

Now it is true that critics have cast Romanticism as a 'predicament' before; but Beer's use of this is particularly strong because it is aware of the danger always inherent in the continuity argument, which is making everything since Coleridge just more of the same thing. Beer makes the Romantics feel not like blind precursors but like uninsistent clairvoyants (as Hartman puts it, nicely).

The 'influenza', faced by the clear-eyed Coleridge and some others in the 1790s, and rediscovered by writers periodically since, is described in tbe *Inaugural* as arising when 'metaphysical authority in the culture gives way to the deferred authority of empirical enquiry'; the task this demands of the intellect is 'the reconciliation of the human, imaginatively and physically, with the new world of scientific investigation'. This too puts Beer at odds with many Romanticists (rightly, I feel) for this state is basically an empiricist *impasse*, a Humean indecision between scepticism and an abiding faith in nature: Coleridge makes no progression into the clear light of Kantianism here.

Beer's unannounced strength as a critic is his belief in the conceptual respectability of metaphor, which he interprets, not as simply 'imagery', but with a serious literalness that reminds one sometimes of Empson. The 'influences' of the title are, primarily, the 'exploratory metaphors' of fluency and fluidity to be found in the Romantic tradition, drawn from both empiricism and, in Coleridge, more esoteric, spiritual literature. It is the possible coincidence of these otherwise separate fluencies which animates Coleridge's speculations; but, as the nineteenth century wears on, 'fluency' loses much of its redemptive promise and becomes, in Newman, Pater and others, its darker Coleridgean sister, 'flux'. The range of the book extends to Forster, Eliot, Lawrence and Woolf, this last the great modern representative of Beer's 'lonely, independent artist seeking a rapport between her inner self and outer world'.

Quite apart from the general case, there are good pages on many matters, including a fine discussion of Pater and Woolf, and an account of 'fluency' metaphors in descriptions of the Wordsworth-Coleridge relationship. He resists summary, partly because he shares the resistance to 'finality' exemplified in the authors he discusses in the Inaugural: Shelley, Woolf again, Hopkins and Pound, as well as Wordsworth. Like those authors, he can give us an exhilarating, bumpy ride, 'between precise weighing and valid imagining'.

His inaugural lecture, *Against Finality* - which is, alas, all the ordinary mortal will be able to afford - treats the subject with an urbane touch, and discourses engagingly on the literary potential of the word 'perhaps', a good Beerism. A good negatively capable word too, maybe: *Romantic Influences*, like *Coleridge's Poetic Intelligence*, has remarkably suggestive things to say in passing about Keats, and although it seems greedy to want yet more after what has been a bumper year, it would be good to look forward to the book on Keats which seems to be bubbling underneath.

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WILLIAM WORDSWORTH, *William Wordsworth: A Selection of his Finest Poems* ed. Stephen Gill and Duncan Wu. Pp. xviii + 252. ISBN 019 282269 1. SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE, *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: A Selection of his Finest Poems* ed. H. J. Jackson. Pp. xviii + 201. Oxford Poetry Library. ISBN 019 282266 7. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1994. £5.99 paperback.

'I THINK THE COLLECTION judiciously made,' was Wordsworth's verdict on the first editorial attempt to compile a selection of his poems, 'Mr. Hine . . . feels the poetry, and that is

enough.' Joseph Hine's *Selections from the Poems of William Wordsworth* appeared in 1831, establishing a market that dozens of subsequent selected editions have competed for. Gill and Wu's Oxford Poetry Library volume is the latest in this numerically rich tradition. No one who has heard either editor speak on the subject of Wordsworth will doubt that they too *feel* his poetry and by Wordsworth's own criterion this ought to be a judicious selection. It is.

The work both editors have done on the early poems has wisely been allowed to have no effect on this selection, which is focused firmly on Wordsworth's 'great decade', 1797-1806. No earlier and only seven later poems are included. Interestingly enough, of the 67 shorter poems selected (of which *The Ruined Cottage* and *The Discharged Soldier* were never published as separate poems by Wordsworth, but can be reasonably treated as such), around half were chosen by Hine in 1831. This gives a pleasing idea of a continuity of appreciation among those who have 'felt' Wordsworth's poetry: if the new Oxford selection seems conservative it will also have the great merit of offending few readers through omission of traditional favourites.

Now, of course, though not in 1831, Wordsworth's total poetic achievement seems firmly centred on *The Prelude*. So while Hine ended his selection of the shorter poems with generous extracts from *The Excursion*, 'this Divine Poem . . . [which] will take rank with the first productions of the British muse' (a note Wordsworth objected to, incidentally), Gill and Wu treat *The Prelude* the same way. Extracts are given from every book of the thirteen-Book 1805 text, Books I, II, V, VII, VIII and X being treated the most generously. This highlights much of Wordsworth's finest poetry, even at the inevitable cost of readerly dislocation. The only viable alternative would have been to include the entire two-part *Prelude* completed in 1799 - the choice made by Nicholas Roe in his 1992 selection of Wordsworth for the Penguin Poetry Library. Bar the *Ruined Cottage* episode, nowadays treated as a separate, masterly, early poem, the *Excursion* is not featured at all in this selection. There are, however, generous extracts from *Home at Grasmere*, written in 1800 and intended to form part of *The Recluse*.

There have always been fewer selections of Coleridge's poems, partly because he wrote far less of classic status, partly because all he did write can fit comfortably in one volume. As Swinburne noted in his early attempt to make a selection of Coleridge (1869), 'his good work is the scantiest in quantity ever done by a man so famous in so long a life; and much of his work is bad' (for 'work' read 'poetry', of course). Swinburne confidently discriminated between the 'jewels of the diamond's price, flowers of the rose's rank' and the simply 'damnable'. Jackson, in her new Oxford Poetry Library selection, makes no such value judgements, and certainly includes much that Swinburne would have called 'damnable'. Even though there is really only two thirds as much poetry as in the companion Wordsworth volume, only the devoted Coleridge aficionado will miss the sense that some of this is padding. It certainly seems most unlikely that anyone will miss a favourite poem, though this would still be true of an even shorter collection. The poems are drawn from the whole course of Coleridge's career, from the 1780s to the 1830s.

Both these Poetry Library volumes present the poems in chronological sequence, a coherent form of presentation that in practise produces very different results. Gill and Wu 'print a text which comes as close as possible to the state of a poem when it was first completed.' If this sounds a little too inflexible it is at least an editorial policy that sits easily with Wordsworth's famous description of poetry as 'the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings', and it is generally hard to fault the text. But one does feel that the 1799 *Prelude* could have been included, in sequence, with rather more overall consistency. Jackson, by

contrast, adopts Coleridge's 1834 text, often very different to what Coleridge originally wrote. In an Appendix he gives early versions of *The Eolian Harp*, *The Ancient Mariner*, and *Dejection*, but only with a lot of leafing back and forth can these be compared with the versions in the main text, and there is no annotation to point out when the changes were made. Of course it is an old critical truism that Coleridge, unlike Wordsworth, was an inspired reviser; nevertheless, Jackson's editing is a discomforting compromise between the sort of old-fashioned policy that aimed simply at the best possible text (i.e. most artistically satisfying) and a modern scholarly one interested in the genesis of texts (and revisions) in a precise historical context.

But does this matter? In many ways it doesn't. The main aim of editions like this is to provide a compact collection for the interested reader, not the specialist who, wanting a more complete edition, is also likely to be sensitive to exactly what text he is reading. Jackson actually seems more aware of this likely readership than Gill and Wu. Her introduction is simple and suggestive, occasionally almost sentimental (he whimsically ends up speculating on a 'metaphor for Coleridge'). It effectively stirs up interest in 'one of the most fascinating minds in European intellectual history', as Jackson describes her subject, and whets the appetite for the poems. Gill and Wu pitch much higher in their introduction, giving vastly more biographical and critical information in the same space, and even adding bibliographical footnotes (which assume the reader has access to no mean reference library). The reader attempting to find his way into Wordsworth for the first time via this introduction will feel swamped. It is also not entirely adjusted to the poems actually being presented: there is over a page on Wordsworth's *Recluse* ambitions, but no mention of the 1807 *Poems, in Two Volumes* from which much of the collection is drawn. The poems are presented in a historical and biographical context, but not as living works of art (as R. S. Thomas effectively did in his still available Faber and Faber collection). Altogether the student rather than the general reader will benefit, while it is the other way round with Jackson's Coleridge volume.

A final point that needs to be made is, of course, that these volumes take their place in a competitive market. Aesthetically they are certainly the most attractive available, but are by no means the best value. The Wordsworth volume is the most vigorously edited edition money can buy, but if this is not of paramount importance it is only fair to note that other editions offer rather more poetry for the same price. For those who put quality before quantity it can be warmly recommended: judged by its own high standards it is impeccable. Unfortunately the same cannot be said for the Coleridge volume, which enters into direct competition with John Beer's well established, more substantial, superior, cheaper Everyman edition. The only real advantages it has over Beer's edition are the dubious ones of compactness and reduced commentary. While some readers may prefer this, it must be said the abiding strength of Beer's edition has been its breadth of appeal to general reader and specialist alike.

Corpus Christi College, Oxford DAVID CHANDLER

EVENSONG AT YORK MINSTER

By Geoffrey Parrish

The April afternoon hath passed its prime
And some there be that hear the Minster's call,
Though in the nave sightseers nearly all
Suspecting that for Evensong 'tis time,
Now leave the Church as four o'clock doth chime.
Choirboys, red-robed, in solemn line now fall,
And Dean and Canon fill their accustomed stall,
As diapason booms in tones sublime.
And so once more the ancient rite begins -
While in the city money changes hands -
Lesson and Psalm, confession of our sins,
The liturgy proceeds, its power still stands.
Thus modern hearts Archbishop Cranmer wins,
As rising Ouse makes river of flat lands.

For permission to reprint this poem from *Morning Twilight*, a privately printed collection of verse by Geoffrey Parrish, the editor wishes to thank Constance Parrish, an Elian resident in Ambleside.

Society News and Notes From Members

Obituary: Winifred Courtney

The sad death of Winifred Courtney, one of the most distinguished Elian biographers of recent times, is the occasion for two tributes: the first by Mary Wedd, the second by Nicholas Roe. The photograph, reproduced here by kind permission of Nicholas Roe, shows Winifred at the Wordsworth Summer Conference 1983, in the gondola on Coniston Water.

Mary Wedd:

Our dear friend Winifred Courtney died on 13 September 1994, after a short illness. She and her husband Denis spent a sunny day with me in Sevenoaks early in July and she seemed just her usual happy self. So it was a great shock when I received a letter dated 27 August telling me that she had 'from three weeks to three months' to live. A seeming minor gastric upset proved to be 'a rapidly developing malignant tumor of the liver'. It is a testament to her

character that she immediately began 'to clear my house for Denis's more tidy habits', throwing things away 'to ease his life later on'. In a P.S. to me she said, 'I wrote the Obit. (memoir) of Florence . . . little knowing my next would be for me!' She then set to to write her own 'for Denis to send - I can spare him that'. She wrote:

> Winifred was a strong lover of life in all its manifestations, and most happy in all her affections . . . and her lovely last home in Greenwood. She loved travel, and was so glad to have done - with Denis - nearly all she had a mind to. She saw the Acropolis (Athens) this past March for the first time, the boys' 'King's Week' (Canterbury) as well, in July, and many dear friends and relatives in the U.K. She loved in particular her five grand-children and two nearby grand-nieces - and writing to old friends far away. She revelled in the English Lake District and the Wordsworth Summer Conferences there. She was, earlier, fascinated, as U.N. observer, with the struggle for African independence - and saw the fondest wishes of her father, Charles Fisk and her lovely mother Cara Fisk.

She does not mention that she was regarded as one of the foremost Lamb scholars of our time, and was called upon to write the entries on him in prestigious publications such as the *Dictionary of Literary Biography* vols. 93 and 107 (ed. John Greenfield). Her researches into Lamb's contributions to *The Albion*, with help and advice kindly given by David Erdman, were published in the *CLB* in January, April, and October 1977 under Basil Savage's editorship. Her book *Young Charles Lamb 1775-1802* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan; New York: New York University Press) was published in 1982. We all longed for a sequel, but it was not to be.

Perhaps her outstanding contribution was to place Lamb against the background of his period and alongside his 'Jacobin' friends. Though he could not risk losing his job, on which not only he but his sister Mary depended, his sympathies in youth were with those with whom he was pilloried in the notorious Gillray cartoon. 'He did not care about day-to-day politics', but he *was* passionately concerned with opposition to cruelty and injustice. Gavin Ewart in *The Observer* called *Young Charles Lamb* 'a scholarly work' and Marilyn Butler in *The Sunday Times* (though she disagreed about Lamb's interest in politics) called Winifred 'a shrewd and knowledgeable biographer'. Lamb's feeling for Ann Simmons is also taken more seriously in this book than in the generally accepted view and we are given, as well, light on Lamb's interest in dissenting religion in his younger days.

Young Charles Lamb was a landmark in Lamb studies and in Winifred Courtney we have not only lost a valued friend but also an Elian scholar of great distinction.

Nicholas Roe:
Chapter eleven of Winifred Courtney's *Young Charles Lamb 1775-1802* begins with a description of Lamb's arrival to visit Coleridge at Nether Stowey, 7 July 1797:

> Lamb arrived alone on the outside of the coach - the cheaper seats without protection from wind, sun, cold, or rain, the usual method of travel for the impecunious. In his scarred and haunted state he was meeting his old friend on new ground, meeting Mrs Coleridge for the first time, and feeling somewhat strange if not quite a stranger.

The moment is brilliantly focussed. The solitary, exposed figure on the outside of the coach suggests Lamb's poverty but also tells of the psychic turbulence he had recently endured: Mary's insanity and their mother's violent death. Somewhat disoriented by the encounter at

Stowey, meeting his 'old friend on new ground', Lamb's uneasiness described here has an uncanny effect in seeming also to be haunted by Coleridge's response to this long wished-for reunion. Lamb feels 'strange is not quite a stranger', an echo of Coleridge's anxiety of expectation in *Frost at Midnight* as he looks up to glimpse the familiar '*stranger*'s face', townsman, aunt, or sister - or, in this case, Charles Lamb.

Winifred Courtney's great skill as a biographer makes her subject a living presence for the reader. To achieve this she drew on an immense range of reading, on personal research, and an acute imaginative involvement with her subject. More than previous biographies, *Young Charles Lamb* brings a mass of contextual information to the life, giving us a richer sense of Lamb's relations with his family, friends, and contemporaries, and with the goings-on of contemporary history. In the chapter 'Political Lamb' we discover the true extent of Lamb's close and attentive interest in radical politics from the 1790s onwards. All this, combined with the following memorable glimpses and vignettes: Lamb himself, 'on his lofty perch at the India House, entering the bolts of cotton, indigo dyes, teas, and spices in large ledgers and hating every minute of it'; George Dyer, 'Though dim of eye, . . . not blind to the charms of women and the hope of love . . . the life of the mind kept him very untidy and not often bathed'; William Godwin, 'not unprepossessing in spite of his short stature, large head, and prominent nose . . . for one so rational [he] placed a high value on friendship'; Mary Wollstonecraft, 'speaking from the eighteenth century with the voice of the twentieth'.

With characteristic self-deprecation Winifred said in her introduction to *Young Charles Lamb* that she did not intend the book to be the 'definitive' biography that would replace E. V. Lucas' work. She added that she hoped her book would 'interest the modern general reader in the man and the writer from some new perspectives related to our own times'. It certainly does this, and much more besides. The biography and her numerous contributions to the *Bulletin* and other journals have made a very substantial contribution to Lamb scholarship, and to Romantic studies more generally. In her published work, and also in the generosity with which she was always willing to share her knowledge with others, Winifred Courtney truly cultivated the 'Elian spirit'. Her death is a great loss to us all.

From the Hon. Secretary

Charles Lamb's Birthday Celebration Luncheon 1995

Members are reminded that this most important of events in the Society's calendar during its diamond anniversary year will take place on Saturday 18 February 1995 at the Royal College of General Practitioners, 14 Princes Gate, South Kensington, London SW7, 12.15 for 1pm. Tickets cost £20 and are available from the Hon. Secretary, Mrs M. Huxstep, 1a Royston Road, Richmond, Surrey TW10 6LT, who may be contacted by phone on 081 940 3837. If you have not yet applied please do not delay, as numbers are limited to 50. We are delighted that this year, Ms Irene Gilchrist, Principal Librarian at the Guildhall Library, London, will be our guest of honour.

Eighteenth-Century Coleridge: Study Weekend at Kilve Court, 9-11 September 1994

Sunshine and showers prevailed at the second Coleridge weekend which has become a home from home for Charles Lamb Society members (13 of us if I correctly identified all of the Elian company). We all enjoyed good company, nourishing food, illuminating lectures and much talk, all under the seemingly effortless management of Shirley and Reggie Watters.

On our first evening, Tom Mayberry shared his unrivalled knowledge of Somerset in the late eighteenth century, but in no time it was 7am on Saturday morning for an (optional) early morning walk to Kilve Beach (graced by a truly Romantic rainbow). During the morning

David Fairer shed new light on Chatterton and Roger Robinson initiated us into his special fascination with James Beattie.

In the afternoon, the less hardy were deterred from a walk in the Quantocks, and we repaired to Nether Stowey to view Coleridge's Cottage, to partake of a luscious tea and to make an all-too-tempting visit to the Watters' bookshop.

Sunday's early morning walk (7am to 8.30am) proved remarkably strenuous to your correspondent but we were rewarded with the sight of deer grazing on the heather-covered uplands, wonderful views of the coastline, and a close sight of Alfoxden Manor.

Other treats included Duncan Wu on John Thelwall, Reggie Watters on Coleridge, Family and the West Country, and the concluding talk by Graham Davidson on Coleridge and Nationhood.

We look forward to the 1995 Coleridge weekend!

Coleridge Cottage, Nether Stowey

An appeal for £20,000 has been launched by the National Trust and the Friends of Coleridge to restore this cottage which was Coleridge's home from December 1796 until 1799 - this work should be completed by the end of December 1996 to mark the bicentenary of Coleridge's arrival in Nether Stowey.

Bearing in mind Charles Lamb's life-long friendship with Coleridge, members may wish to add to the Society's donation to this appeal. Cheques should be made payable to 'The National Trust Coleridge Cottage Appeal' and sent to the Appeal Secretary, Coleridge Cottage, Nether Stowey, Somerset TA5 1NQ.

Greta Hall, Keswick

Coincidentally, another Coleridge home was in the news in October. Greta Hall was Coleridge's home from 1800 to 1803; in the latter year he was joined by Southey and his family who continued to live there until Southey's death in 1843.

The Grade I listed building has been little altered since it was built in 1790. Originally bought by Canon Rawnsley (one of the founders of the National Trust), it was put on the market at £40,000 by the present owners, Keswick School. By the time this *Bulletin* appears, the fate of the house may have been decided - it is to be hoped that the campaign to save this vital part of our literary heritage was successful. We have written to the National Trust urging it to acquire the house.

Lamb's letter to Manning of 24 September 1802 describes his three-week visit:

> I set out with Mary to Keswick, without giving Coleridge any notice, for my time being precious did not admit of it; he received us with all the hospitality in the world, and gave up his time to shew us all the wonders of the country. He dwells upon a small hill by the side of Keswick, in a comfortable house, quite enveloped on all sides by a net of mountains: great floundering bears & monsters they seem'd, all couchant & asleep. . . . Coleridge had got a blazing fire in his study, which is a large antique ill-shaped room, with an old fashioned organ, never play'd upon, big enough for a church, Shelves of scattered folios, an Eolian Harp, & an old sofa, half bed &c. And all looking out upon the last fading view of Skiddaw & his broad-breasted brethren: What a night! (Marrs ii 68-9)

Books for Sale

In place of the theatre visit listed for April in the 1994/5 programme we are holding a book sale on Saturday 8 April 1995 from 11.30am to 3pm at Putney United Reformed Church, Upper Richmond Road, Putney. There will be plenty of time to browse among the wide selection of books on the Romantic period, to enjoy a buffet lunch and meet fellow Elians. Putney URC is on the corner of Upper Richmond Road and Briar Walk. Nearest stations: Putney BR station (frequent trains from Waterloo) or East Putney District Line. Thence, 337 bus along the Upper Richmond Road (request stop). On-street parking available.

Crossword Addicts may share Lamb's Love of a Good Pun

Clue: Fish left on sale, possibly, by doctor or writer
Answer: Charles Lamb (Char=fish; L=left; esla=anagram of 'sale'; MB=doctor)

Clue: Lamb's - Shakespeare?
Answer: Ophelia (Of Elia)

Clue: A former pupil of left-wing tendency joins the writer to create a flower
Answer: Lobelia

From the Editor

The Charles Lamb Bursary to the Wordsworth Summer Conference, 1994

I am grateful to Sylvia Wordsworth for a copy of a press release and photograph issued last August. Alex Black's photograph is reproduced here by permission of the Wordsworth Trust.

LAMB'S PRESENCE FELT IN GRASMERE

It was thanks to the Charles Lamb society that Aveek Sen was able to attend the Wordsworth Summer Conference in Grasmere. Aveek is from India and is currently doing a doctoral degree at Cambridge. He is pictured with Jonathan Wordsworth, the Chairman of the Wordsworth Trust. Aveek joined delegates from nine different countries as leading academics and authors discussed many aspects of Romanticism. The sponsorship given by the Charles Lamb Society allowed Aveek to present a well-received paper on Keats.

Aveek enjoyed the unique two-week conference tremendously and took a leading role in the lighthearted production of Elizabeth Inchbald's *Everyone Has His Fault*.

Wordsworth Winter School, 5-10 February 1995, and Book Collectors Weekend, 24-6 February 1995, at Dove Cottage, Grasmere

The Hon. Secretary points out to me that the lecturers at this year's Wordsworth Winter School are all members of the Society: Jonathan Wordsworth, Mary Wedd, Gordon Thomas, Nicola Trott, Seamus Perry, Molly Lefebure, Richard Clancey, and me. The Book Collectors Weekend, which will interest bibliophile Elians, will be held on 24-6 February, and feature Denis Healey, Grevel Lindop, and Iain Bain, among others. The organizer for both events is Sylvia Wordsworth, Dove Cottage, Grasmere, Cumbria, LA22 9SH. She may be contacted during working hours on 05394 35544, or at home on 05394 35651.

Notes and News From Members

Fanny Kelly's Grave Reidentified

Among the Archives of the Elian, the forerunner of The Charles Lamb Society, is a cryptic letter dated 27 November 1934 from the Superintendent of Brompton Cemetery to the Elian's Hon. Secretary. It states that 47893/B.R. 'is the Grave Number you require. M.E.F. Greville was the last buried in the Grave, which now has no established owner. There is room for one more Burial'. The now much-crumpled letter may have been taken to the cemetery where notes were pencilled on the back. These read, *inter alia*, '1st Lydia Burns 1867 - Gerbini (Greville) - F.M. Kelly, 16 Dec 1882'. Fanny Kelly had a younger sister named Lydia. Mary Ellen Gerbini, afterwards Greville, was Fanny Kelly's adopted or illegitimate daughter. The further note '172743 Greville' is probably her B.R. (Burial Register) number. Neither the number nor the grave's exact location is recorded in Prance's *Companion* or in Holman's *Lamb's 'Barbara S---'* or in Basil Francis' *Fanny Kelly of Drury Lane*.

In June 1993 I wrote to the Cemetery Supervisor who responded with delight: there was just time to add Fanny Kelly's name to the guide-booklet which was being printed for the forthcoming cemetery Open Day on 3 July and I was able to notify Elians Mrs Huxstep and Mr Branchini, who has family buried at Brompton. We found Fanny Kelly's gravestone, a shaped upright granite slab. It is in excellent condition, as is the inlaid metal lettering, and little if any attention is needed. The wording on the stone does not seem to have been noted before and is printed here for the record:

FRANCES MARIA KELLY,
BORN 15 OCT. 1790, DIED 6 DEC. 1882,
AGED 92 YEARS

THE WORLD RECOGNIZED THE GREAT ARTIST
THOSE WHO BEST KNEW HER
[L]OVED THE TRUE AND NOBLE WOMAN

'IN THEE O LORD HAVE I PUT MY TRUS[T]
[TH]OU SHALT ANSWER FOR ME, O LORD MY GO[D]'.
ALSO HER BELOVED SISTER
LYDIA ELIZA BERNIS
(WIDOW)
DIED 25 FEB. 1867
AGED 72 YEARS

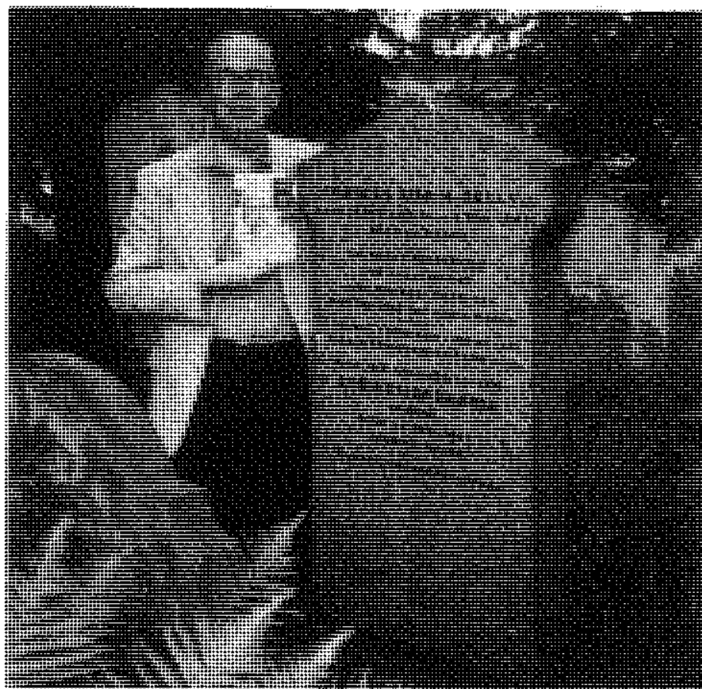
IN DEATH THEY ARE NOT DIVIDED

No third name is recorded, though about one-quarter or one-third of the space at the bottom of the stone is blank. So is the back. On the plinth are the details J. & A. GREW / MASONS / LONDON N W.

How does one find the grave? Brompton Cemetery is still taking in coffins and will reach 205,000 burials 'any day now'. There are 30-40,000 gravestones. The Supervisor boasts that any grave can be located within three inches. It might, however, be worth noting the following directions. Brompton Cemetery, which lies in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, is now administered by The Royal Parks and is open during 'normal hours'. It is most easily reached by a shortish walk from Earls Court tube station. If we assume that it runs north-south, the north entrance is in Old Brompton Road. There is a map there and another at the south entrance in Fulham Road. The technical reference for the Kelly grave is AA 33' 9" x 52' 6". One ought to find Section AA (which is outside the north-east quadrant of the Great Circle), go to the north-east corner of the section, measure (pace out) 33' 9" to the south, then plunge into the undergrowth and pace out 52' 6" to the west. I did it *and it works!!!*

It is easier to come out of the east side of the Great Circle ('at 3 o'clock'). Ignore any footpath round its curve and walk east until you reach an asphalted cross-path running left and right. Turn left (north) and walk eighty paces along the path. You should then see, on your left, just off the path, the Gullick obelisk, a mini Cleopatra's Needle. Some way beyond it, in the undergrowth, you will see an angel. Line these up and 'you cannot miss' the classically pointed top of Fanny Kelly's pinkish-grey granite gravestone. You would do well to walk a few paces further, to a narrow path off to the left, follow this for a couple of yards and find an easier way across the grassed-over gravestones to Fanny Kelly.

D. E. Wickham



This photograph, reproduced by kind permission of Mrs M. Huxstep, shows D. E. Wickham next to Fanny Kelly's grave, the guide-booklet to the Brompton Cemetery open day in hand.

Louisa Martin, Whom I Used to Call 'Monkey'

The following letter, typed in mauve, has turned up in the Archives of The Elian, the forerunner of The Charles Lamb Society. It seemed worthy of transcription since the present reference may well be indexed and the letter adds a few details and pointers to the article in Prance's *Companion* - and omits a remarkable number of details one would be glad to have in the way of addresses and dates. The addressee has not been identified.[1]

The Red House
Epsom.
11 - 2 - 20

Dear Madame,

The Charles Lamb letter to which you refer[2] was given to me by my Mother, Mrs A. T. Squarey, some years ago, and, on her death in 1912, I decided, not owning any other similar ones, to dispose of it. My maternal grandmother was Sarah Martin, and she had two sisters, Louisa, and Hannah the latter of whom I remember well. My grandmother married Mr Hamilton Fulton, a well known Civil Engineer, who after being in London many years, went with his Wife & family to Georgia,[3] where my Mother was born. Later on they all returned to London, and soon afterwards my grandfather died. Neither Louisa or Hannah ever married. Louisa, I never saw, but my Mother spoke often of her with great affection, and was at her school in Carlisle, which was, I believe fairly successful. The house was still there last time I was in Carlisle. My Mother came with me there once when I was on Circuit to see an old servant, and pointed it out to me.

Hannah, as I have said, I remember well; she lived to old age, and was a remarkable, bright, clever woman. She used to tell me stories about Charles and Mary. The former was a frequent visitor at her Mother's house, and they were on the most intimate terms. As to the history of the Martin family, I can say but little. They were Irish, and had property there, including a silver mine, from which great things were expected, but never came to pass, as is so often the case. My mother was, as you will have gathered, a niece of Louisa and Hannah. Had she been alive I have no doubt that she could have given me many more details. I fear I have not told you much, as one is liable to forget things which were told in one's youth, and of which one does not realise the interest.

I too, am a great admirer of Charles Lamb and am very glad that you wrote. I am, dear Madam,

Yours faithfully,
T. F. Squarey

A cutting from *The Times* of Thursday 15 May 1924, attached to one corner of the letter, records that Tucker Fulton Squarey, JP, eldest son of the late Andrew Tucker Squarey of Bebington, Cheshire, died at The Red House, Epsom, on 13 May, in his 72nd year. The funeral would be at Flaybrick Hill Cemetery, Birkenhead, on 16 May, with a memorial service at Epsom on 17 May.

D. E. Wickham

[1] Although Deborah Hedgecock suggests that it may have been Mrs G. A. Anderson; see *A Handlist to the Charles Lamb Society Collection at Guildhall Library* (Supplement to *CLB* NS 89 [1995] 22). Ed.

[2] Reference untraced.

[3] U.S.A.?

For the Record
Theodore Watts-Dunton, the friend of Swinburne, wrote a book entitled *The Old Familiar Faces.* It was published by Herbert Jenkins in 1915 and includes essays on Dante Gabriel Rossetti, William Morris, Christina Rossetti, George Borrow, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Lord De Tabley, etc. Not a lot of people know that. D. E. Wickham

Diminutive Nomenclature
Randal Norris (1751-1827), Librarian and sub-Treasurer of the Inner Temple, was a generation older than Charles Lamb. When he died, Lamb wrote: 'To the last he called me Charley. I have none to call me Charley now.'

This led me to wonder what Mary Lamb called her brother. Surely she must have called him something other than 'you' - and are Charles or 'dear' appropriate as sisterly vocatives on every occasion? It was too early for 'bro'. We continue to use a few relationships as titles - mother, father, uncle, aunt, son - but we might search the works of Jane Austen and Dickens for others which are now redundant. I seem to remember husband and sister being used in conversation, and perhaps also brother. But, if others had called him Charley, why not Mary too? D. E. Wickham

Tell me the old old story
A recent meeting of the Bexley Philatelic Society was dissolving into a welter of obscure enthusiasms when I glanced at a copy of the Kent Federation of Philatelic Societies' Bulletin No. 125 of January 1991.

I think there were eight pages. Half the first page was taken up with a plea from the Editor, saying that he had dropped enough heavy hints about finding someone to assist him and now he would not stand for re-election at the next AGM.

Another page and a half were filled with Quotes from the Archives and I thought that the excerpt from No. 56, April 1967, sounded familiar. So did the annotation '[Ed: without comment!!]'

Just Belong

Are you an active member -
The kind that would be missed,
Or are you just contented
That your name is on the list?

Do you attend the meetings
And mingle with the flock?
Or do you stay at home
And criticize and knock?

Do you ever go and visit
A member who is sick,
Or leave the work to just a few
And talk about the clique?

Come to the meetings often
And help with hand and heart.
Don't just be a member
But take an active part.

Think this over, member,
You know right from wrong -
Are you an active member,
Or do you just belong?

D. E. Wickham

Charles Lamb in Mussolini's Italy
The Rich collection (now incorporated with the Society's collection at the Guildhall Library) contains an article in Italian from *Festa (Roma)* for 28 July 1935 entitled 'Charles Lamb: La casa dei pazzi' ('The House of the Mad People'). It is illustrated with a bad picture of

Charles Lamb and a splendid aerial photograph of the Whitehall area, showing the district from Westminster in the south, all of Whitehall, and Charing Cross up to the Cecil Hotel (where Shell-Mex House now stands), as well as the Horseguards, part of St James' Park, Hungerford Railway Bridge, Waterloo Bridge, and beyond. The caption reads: 'La sede londinese dell'East India Company' - the seat, or perhaps the locality, of the East India Company, and wrong in either case. D. E. Wickham

Macaulay on Lamb

If it is not a letter, is not in Lucas' *Life*, is not in Prance's *Companion*, and is not in Cecil's *Life*, then I incline to believe that it hardly exists in Elian scholarship and so merits a place of record in the *Bulletin*.

Lord Macaulay wrote of Lamb in his essay on Leigh Hunt in the *Edinburgh Review* for January 1841. He said that Lamb's attempted defence of the late seventeenth-century dramatists - in that they should not be tried by the standards of morality prevailing in real life because their world is one of conventions, pure comedy where no cold moral (*sic.*) reigns - is an argument which is, though ingenious, altogether sophistical. *But* 'We admire his genius; we love the kind nature which appears in all his writings; and we cherish his memory as much as if we had known him personally'. D. E. Wickham

Sherwood Anderson: Winesburg, Ohio

Winesburg, Ohio, published in 1919, was the first literary work by the American Sherwood Anderson (1876-1941) to achieve widespread recognition. It seems to be considered a minor masterpiece and fairly obviously based on the towns and people known to Anderson in his boyhood. Each chapter is like a short story, introducing another inhabitant of the small town 'with the freshness and brightness of Cezanne'. Once described, a character may reappear and interact with others in later chapters. Virtually every character is shown being shaped by a major incident in life or by a fault of character, often inherited. The early chapters would not be out of place in a mainstream magazine yet one suddenly realizes that there are allusions which enable one to tick off the subjects being covered in each as those not mentionable in a family *Bulletin*. No wonder the book caused a furore on first publication!

I was pressing ahead with the chapter entitled 'The Teacher' in the impeccable Penguin edition of 1947. This is the one about Kate Swift, the biting, forbidding, cold, stern, unmarried schoolmistress of a certain age (30), whose recognition of a spark of genius in something written by a former male pupil leads to what the Hays Code would require me to describe as 'unhealthiness'. It is all entirely small-town America, *c.* 1900. Then the following paragraph hit me like an ice-cold sponge:

> With hands clasped behind her back the school-teacher walked up and down in the schoolroom and talked very rapidly. It did not seem to matter what subject came into her mind. Once she talked to the children of Charles Lamb and made up strange intimate little stories concerning the life of the dead writer. The stories were told with the air of one who had lived in a house with Charles Lamb and knew all the secrets of his private life. The children were somewhat confused, thinking that Charles Lamb must be someone who had once lived in Winesburg.

Then she tells them about Benvenuto Cellini and afterwards we are back in small-town America again. D. E. Wickham

The Lambs' Dwelling in Covent Garden - An Old Controversy Settled
These details, which deserve wider circulation, are summarised from an article by C. Van Noorden in *The Bookman's Journal and Print Collector* of 6 February 1922. A copy is in the Samuel Morris Rich Collection of cuttings, now owned by the Society and retained at Guildhall Library.

The article reproduces a (late 18th-century?) trade card of Russell House, Nos. 20-1 Russell Street, Covent Garden. The building is one house externally, the entire ground floor occupied by the shop of Thomas Owen, brazier.

The first floor, originally the club room of Wills' Coffee House, had been divided by a brick wall long before the Lambs went there in 1817. By that time, too, there was no communication at second-floor level, nor in the attics.

Thus the upper part was totally divided, into No. 20 with its entrance and staircase in Russell Street, and No. 21 with its entrance and staircase in Bow Street. Hence the confusion, which led Barry Cornwall to write that the Lambs lived in the corner house and Mary Lamb to write from No. 20 in Russell Street.

In fact No. 21 had no back windows but abutted on to the Grapes Public House, the source of noise which troubled Charles Lamb. No. 20 *did* have back windows, from which one could see Covent Garden Theatre and Bow Street Police Court, which was then on the same side of the street as No. 21.

Hence, Van Noorden concludes, the Lambs lived in No. 20, which was strictly next to the corner house.

Note: Basil Savage contributed a useful paper on this subject, 'Charles and Mary Lamb in Russell Street', though without making all the above points, to *CLB* NS 19 (1977) 59-61.

D. E. Wickham

Chesnutt's Marrow
Members who do not like to miss out on any allusion to Lamb may be interested in *The Marrow of Tradition* by Charles W. Chesnutt, which takes its title from *To the Editor of the 'Every-Day Book'*. Chesnutt's novel is based on the violent campaign by Democrats in North Carolina, in 1898, to maintain white supremacy. It is a vivid reminder that the spirit of Thomas Clarkson was (and is) still needed. *The Marrow of Tradition* is available in the Penguin Modern Classics series. David Crosher

Lamb's love of Hollington-church-in-the-wood and any possible connection with Sir Charles Montolieu Lamb
Research into the life of my great, great grandmother, Deborah Lamb took me to Beauport House, now a hotel in Hollington, East Sussex. I had always believed from childhood and a 'family tree' given to me from my grandfather that there was a bust of Charles Lamb in the graveyard of Hollington-church-in-the-wood closely resembling his grandfather. I was surprised that the bust was that of Sir Charles Montolieu Lamb, not of Charles, and wondered if there was a family connection between them as Charles Lamb so loved the little church.

In June 1826 Lamb wrote to his friend John Bates Dibdin:

> . . . go to the little church, which is a very protestant Loretto, and seems dropt by some angel for the use of a hermit, who was at once parishioner and a whole parish. It is not too big. Go in the night, bring it away in your portmanteau, and I will plant it in my garden. It must have been erected in the very infancy of British Christianity, for the two or three first converts; yet hath it all the appertenances of a church of the

> first magnitude, its pulpit, its pews, its baptismal font; a cathedral in a nutshell. Seven people would crowd it like a Caledonian Chapel. The minister that divides the word there, must give lumping pennyworths. It is built to the text of two or three assembled in my name. It reminds me of the grain of mustard seed. If the glebe land is proportionate, it may yield two potatoes. Tythes out of it could be no more split than a hair. Its First fruits must be its Last, for 'twould never produce a couple. It is truly the strait and narrow way, and few there be (of London visitants) that find it. The still, small voice is surely to be found there, if any where. A sounding board is merely there for ceremony. It is secure from earthquakes, not more from sanctity than size, for 'twould feel a mountain thrown upon it no more than a taper-worm would. Go and see, but not without your spectacles.[1]

Sir Charles Montolieu Lamb was the son of Sir James Bland Burges and Anne, daughter of Colonel Montolieu, Baron de Hypolite. Sir James Bland Burges was a Member of Parliament for Helstone and the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. His great friend, John Lamb, was an Army Agent; both opposed the slave-trade. Sir James was made Knight Marshall in 1795 and John Lamb owned properties in Hertfordshire, Suffolk and Leicestershire, as well as a row of houses in Palace Yard, Westminster and a mansion in Golden Square. He left his estate to Sir James Bland Burges in 1821, who changed his name to Lamb by Royal Licence.

Charles Lamb was not related to Sir Charles, but it is very possible that he was to John Lamb; it would make interesting research, as there is so little known of Charles Lamb's family. He would have laughed at my explorations, because my Deborah Lamb, born nearby in Westfield, bore children the exact likeness to Sir Charles Lamb - who wasn't a Lamb.

Christine Evans

New Members

The Society warmly welcomes the following new members, who have enrolled since May 1994:

Dr A. L. Levene
Simon Levene
Mrs Pat Dick
Miss E. M. Quaye
M. Michel Jolibois
David Crosher
Bruce Graver
Geoffrey Bindman
J. R. Watson
P. Couchman
T. W. Craik

50 Years Ago: from *CLS Bulletin* No. 65 (Tenth Year) January 1945

[The Charles Lamb Society Brains Trust which took place on 9 December 1944 included exchanges which may be summarized thus:]

Q. Should Charles Lamb's works be read in schools? (E. Blunden)
A. Yes, after a sympathetic teacher's introduction - and without a subsequent examination!
Q. Would Charles Lamb have been a conscientious objector had he been living today? (Miss Smith)
A. Certainly not. His writings reveal nothing of his views but his intimate friends included Admiral Burney and Wordsworth's naval brother.
Q. Do his letters or his essays or his life best reveal Lamb as a man?
A. 1. **Talk. 2. Letters. 3. Essays. 4. Other prose writings. 5. Poems. 6. Stories.

[1] *The Letters of Charles and Mary Lamb* ed. E. V. Lucas (3 vols., London, 1935), iii. 49-50.

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