The Charles Lamb Bulletin

Summer 2022
New Series No. 175

'Let us cultivate the Elian spirit of friendliness and humour'

PUBLISHED BY
THE CHARLES LAMB SOCIETY

An Elian Bicentenary

Charles Lamb first published 'The Praise of Chimney-Sweepers' in the *London Magazine*, in May 1822.

From 'The Praise of Chimney-Sweepers'

I am by nature extremely susceptible of street affronts; the jeers and taunts of the populace; the low-bred triumph they display over the casual trip, or splashed stocking, of a gentleman. Yet can I endure the jocularity of a young sweep with something more than forgiveness. In the last winter but one, pacing along Cheap-side with my accustomed precipitation when I walk westward, a treacherous slide brought me upon my back in an instant. I scrambled up with pain and shame enough -- yet outwardly trying to face it down, as if nothing had happened -- when the roguish grin of one of these young wits encountered me. There he stood, pointing me out with his dusky finger to the mob, and to a poor woman (I suppose his mother) in particular, till the tears for the exquisiteness of the fun (so he thought it) worked themselves out at the corners of his poor red eyes, red from many a previous weeping, and soot-inflamed, yet twinkling through all with such a joy, snatched out of desolation, that Hogarth – but Hogarth has got him already (how could he miss him?) in the March to Finchley, grinning at the pye-man – there he stood, as he stands in the picture, irremovable, as if the jest was to last for ever – with such a maximum of glee, and minimum of mischief, in his mirth – for the grin of a genuine sweep hath absolutely no malice in it –that I could have been content, if the honour of a gentleman might endure it, to have remained his butt and his mockery till midnight.

Front cover images of Mary and Charles Lamb are taken from the MacDonald edition of the *Works of Charles and Mary Lamb* (London: Dent, 1903-1908).

The Charles Lamb Bulletin

The Journal of the Charles Lamb Society

New Series, No. 175, Summer 2022

Editor: John Gardner

Reviews Editor: John Gilroy

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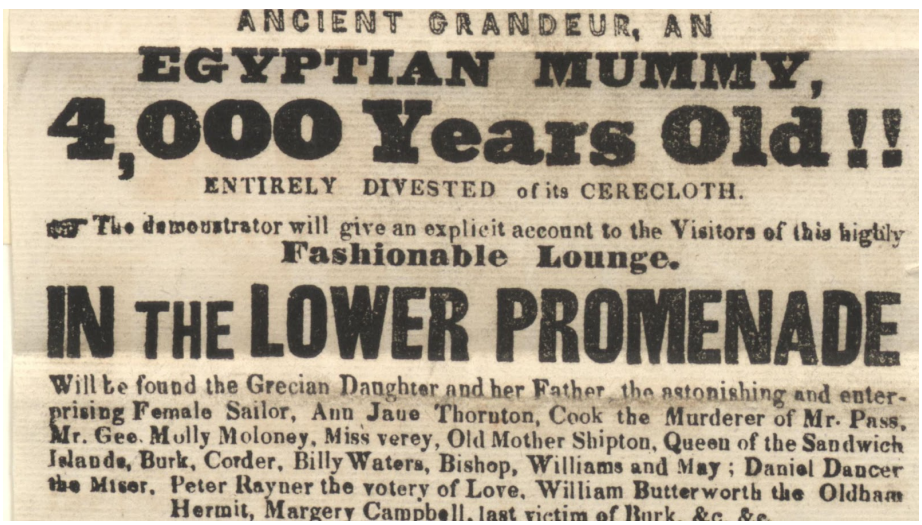
FELICITY JAMES and JOHN STRACHAN

Elian greetings!
The Charles Lamb Society has continued online in the first half of 2022 with all of the advantages and disadvantages that implies. On the one hand our virtual meetings have been accessible to Elians outside the UK who can attend meetings they would not normally be able to attend, while on the other there is nothing to match the actual experience of face-to-face contact with our friends and colleagues, and we have all missed this hugely. We will review matters for the next academic year nearer the time, but we are currently planning to recommence room meetings in the autumn, pandemic willing, though we might well continue with the occasional zoom meeting also.

Its virtuality notwithstanding, the second half of this year's Society programme was just as splendid as the first. In late January we had the first event of 2022, Mary Shannon's lecture on 'Billy Waters and Nineteenth-Century Popular Culture'. Mary, of Roehampton University, is writing a book on the life and cultural resonance of Walters (c.1776-1823), the renowned African-American busker who, with his sailor's uniform and feathered hat became known as the 'King of the Beggars' in nineteenth-century London.


ANCIENT GRANDEUR, AN

EGYPTIAN MUMMY,

4,000 Years Old!!

ENTIRELY DIVESTED of its CERECLOTH.

☞ The demonstrator will give an explicit account to the Visitors of this highly Fashionable Lounge.

IN THE LOWER PROMENADE

Will be found the Grecian Daughter and her Father, the astonishing and enterprising Female Sailor, Ann Jane Thornton, Cook the Murderer of Mr. Pass, Mr. Gee. Molly Moloney, Miss verey, Old Mother Shipton, Queen of the Sandwich Islands, Burk, Corder, Billy Waters, Bishop, Williams and May; Daniel Dancer the Miser, Peter Rayner the votery of Love, William Butterworth the Oldham Hermit, Margery Campbell, last victim of Burk, &c. &c.

Detail from a handbill for the Grand Promenade and Exhibition Rooms, Holborn, featuring a waxwork of Billy Waters (1835)

On 12 February, we marked as usual the birthday of Charles Lamb, although this year, as last, the luncheon was a virtual one. The birthday lunch is, as all Elians know, a long-held tradition. The official Society lunch has been running since the 1930s, but Elian birthday celebrations have been held in one form or another since 1875, and the centenary of Lamb's birth. In a birthday lecture from 1912, Edmund Gosse remembers Algernon Swinburne organising the first Lamb dinner: 'I think it was the only time in his whole life,' writes Gosse, 'that Swinburne ever "organised" anything; he was not gifted in a practical direction.' The guests were five, including Swinburne and Gosse himself, who enjoyed a 'coarse, succulent dinner in the mid- Victorian style, very much I dare say in Charles Lamb's own taste' in a hotel in Soho:

> The extreme dignity of Swinburne was the feature of the dinner which remains chiefly in my memory; he sank so low in his huge arm-chair, and sat so bolt upright in it, his white face, with its great aureole of red hair, beaming over the table like the rising sun. (52)

Unhappily, the dinner ended with a misunderstanding concerning the prodigious bill, which Swinburne had failed to consider in advance - but the tradition was set that Lamb's birthday should be marked by conviviality and scholarship, and a lecture by a distinguished speaker. Gosse's recollections formed part of the 1912 birthday lecture: in 2022, our lecture was given by our President, Professor Duncan Wu. He spoke on 'New Information on Lamb's Friendship with William Hone', drawing on one of the gems in the book collection of the Wordsworth scholar Paul Betz (who has himself given our birthday lecture in the past). Duncan's brilliant talk is included in this number of the *Charles Lamb Bulletin*, and we are very glad to see it in print.

On 10 March, we heard 'Blot Out "Gentle-Hearted": Charles Lamb, S T Coleridge, & the Ridiculous', a lecture by Andrew McInnes, Reader in Romanticisms at Edge Hill University, Andy, who is a specialist in Romantic-period women's writing, is working on a project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, 'The Romantic Ridiculous'. We began the talk with Lamb's remonstrance to Coleridge ringing in our ears: 'For God's sake (I never was more serious), don't make me ridiculous any more by terming me gentle-hearted in print, or do it in better verses'. But Andy's paper flipped this plea on its head, exploring both Coleridge and Lamb's more positive relationship with the ridiculous. The ridiculous, he argued, offers a new perspective on friendship, based on failure and misunderstanding, and leading to collective laughter.

Dr Matthew Sangster (University of Glasgow) spoke to us on 23 April 2022, when we celebrated his groundbreaking new book, *Living as an*

Author in the Romantic Period (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021) with the lecture: '"Throw yourself rather, my dear sir, from the Tarpeian Rock": Writing as a Career in the Romantic Period'. Who better to help us consider the question of 'living as an author' than Charles Lamb, who at once complained bitterly of being chained to the dead wood of his India House desk - but also advised Bernard Barton never to 'turn slave to the booksellers': 'Keep to your bank, and your bank will keep you'. Matt gave us new insights into Lamb's perspective, against the wider culture of authorship in the Romantic period.

Our 2021-2 programme concludes with two June events: our AGM on Saturday 4 June, preceded by a talk on the children's literature of Charles and Mary Lamb, by Felicity James, and 'Charles and Mary Lamb: *Elia* and Beyond', a day conference at the Centre for Eighteenth Century Studies, King's Manor, University of York, Saturday 18th June 2022. We hope to publish some of the papers from this in the *Bulletin* in due course.

In January, we learnt with shock and sadness of the sudden death of the previous editor of the *Charles Lamb Bulletin*, Dr Pete Newbon of Northumbria University, who, despite his comparative youth, was a long term member of the Society, and someone who contributed greatly to Elian studies in his membership of the Society, editorship of the *Bulletin*, and in an important monograph, T*he Boy-Man, Masculinity and Immaturity in the Long Nineteenth Century* (2018). We will remember Pete (1983-2022) in a future number of the *Bulletin*.

Like all societies, this one thrives on its membership. New members are always welcome. Do spread the word about the Charles Lamb Society.

Felicity James and John Strachan, Chairs

Lamb Programme, 2022

There will be a mixture of in-person meetings and lectures on Zoom in 2022. We will issue tickets, free for members, through Eventbrite: please check the events page at www.charleslambsociety.com for details in the summer.

Saturday 4 June: AGM. This will be preceded by a talk on the children's literature of Charles and Mary Lamb, by Felicity James.

Saturday 18 June: 'Charles and Mary Lamb: *Elia* and Beyond', a day conference at the Centre for Eighteenth Century Studies, King's Manor, University of York.

Editor's Note

In the last issue I highlighted the problem of accessing scholarly editions during lockdown. That experience gave many a reminder of the challenges faced by independent scholars who might find it difficult to access a library stacked with the right editions at the best of times. Samantha Matthews, an editor on the new edition of the works of Charles and Mary Lamb, points out that the still-standard E. V. Lucas edition can be found free online. Project Gutenberg has the six volume 1912 Methuen edition free to read at www.guttenberg.org/ebooks/author/293. Furthermore, the Hathi Trust Digital Library has six scanned volumes at catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/011682821. While on the matter of websites, recent talks given to the society online have been recorded and are on the Lamb Society's You Tube Channel. There are currently eight talks available at https://tinyurl.com/Lamb-Society-YouTube.

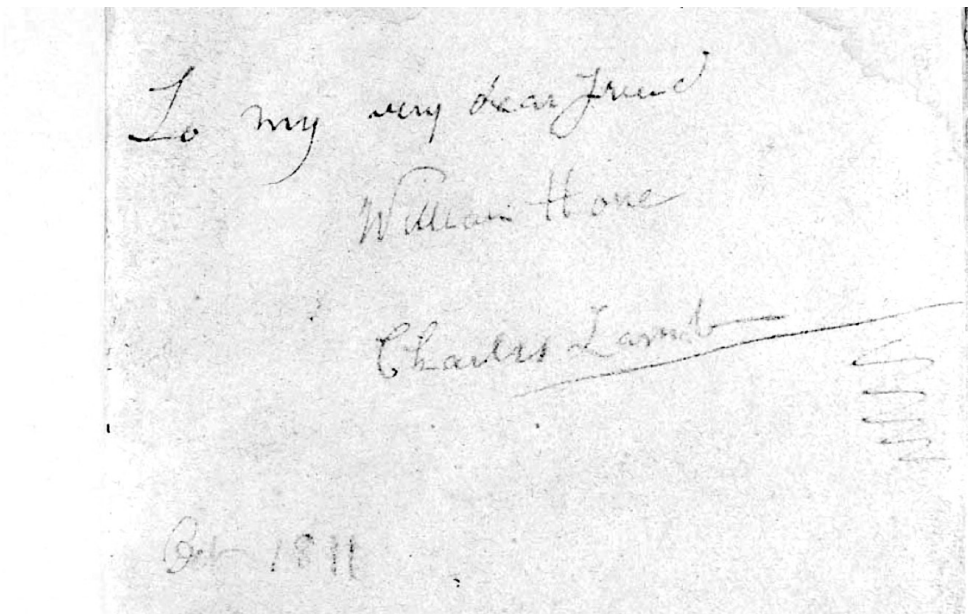
Eventually this present edition of the Bulletin will be uploaded to the Lamb Society website. I hope you enjoy the essays and notes in this volume.

John Gardner

ARTICLES

New Information on Lamb's Friendship with William Hone

DUNCAN WU



A few years ago the Wordsworth scholar Paul Betz chose to donate his vast collection of books, papers, visual materials, and general bric-a-brac relating to the Romantics to the Lauinger Library at Georgetown University in Washington, DC. It was an act of generosity that makes available a largely unknown body of research materials to students of the period, though the collection will remain inaccessible until cataloguing is complete. I am grateful to Professor Betz for permission to discuss one of the items in his collection.

It is a copy of Coleridge's *Poems*, the so-called 'Second Edition' of 1797, the front endpaper of which bears an inscription by Charles Lamb, 'To my very dear friend William Hone', dated, 'Oct[ober] 1811'. This was a gift for a valued friend: a mere 500 copies of this book were produced[1] and by 1811 was not easy to come by. This inscription is helpful for dating the friendship to a time much earlier than previously thought, and well before either Hone or Lamb were well-known. It changes our reading of subsequent events.

In the absence of hard facts, scholars have truffled for clues to their first meeting. E.V. Lucas once wrote that 'Lamb and Hone first met probably in 1823',[2] but changed his mind and dated Lamb's first letter to Hone to 'January or February 1819', though without explanation.[3] Hone appears *nowhere* in Edwin Marrs' unfinished edition of Lamb's letters, which breaks off at 1817.

The newly-appeared inscription doesn't reveal when Lamb and Hone first met, though it must have been before October 1811.[4] How they met is as obscure as when, but it's possible they were introduced by Walter Wilson, with whom Lamb worked at the East India House from 1798 to 1803. Wilson and Hone were in the book trade, and must have known each other. Wilson's earliest letter to Hone dates from 9 July 1813, when he gave advice 'as a friend';[5] his next letter to Hone, 23 August 1813,[6] concludes 'Dear Hone / Yours very truly'. In his *Life of Defoe* Wilson thanked both Lamb and Hone,[7] a reminder that all had been members of nonconformist congregations, like Defoe.[8]

In 1811 Hone had no profile other than as a bookseller: that would soon change. He was already part of the reformist cell gathered round

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[1] William St Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 594.

[2] *The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb* ed. E.V. Lucas (6 vols., London: Methuen, 1903), i 506.

[3] *The Letters of Charles and Mary Lamb* ed. E.V. Lucas (3 vols., London: Methuen, 1935), ii 240. This is, according to Lucas, 'The first letter to William Hone'. That explains why Claude Prance says they 'were acquainted from at least 1819' (*A Companion to Charles Lamb* (London: Mansell Publishing, 1983), 153.

[4] Proximity in time makes me wonder whether Hone attended Coleridge's lectures on Shakespeare which began the following month, on 18 November; Lamb attended the entire course.

[5] BL Add. MS 40120, ff.16-17. Quoted from Hone Archive.

[6] BL Add. MS 40120, ff.18-19. Quoted from Hone Archive.

[7] Walter Wilson, *Memoirs of the Life and Times of Daniel De Foe* (3 vols., London: Hurst Chance, 1830), xxi-xxii.

[8] It is possible also that George Dyer introduced them both. Robert Aspland might have done so, assuming he was known to Lamb—something I have tried, without avail, to prove.

Francis Place, which included Jeremy Bentham, James Mill, and John Cam Hobhouse, and many of his publications supported their stance. He was also the instigator of a damning report on London's asylums for the insane, drafted in March 1814. Having been both carer and patient, Lamb knew how frail a sugarcoating the word 'madhouse' was for the reality. If they discussed it, as they surely did, he would have given Hone encouragement.

By the time Hone was prosecuted for seditious and blasphemous libels in 1817, he had become a deeply-embedded thorn in the government's side—a tradesman from the muddy fields of Ripley in Surrey, who threatened to trample all over their unjust laws with his hobnailed boots. He had to be stopped.

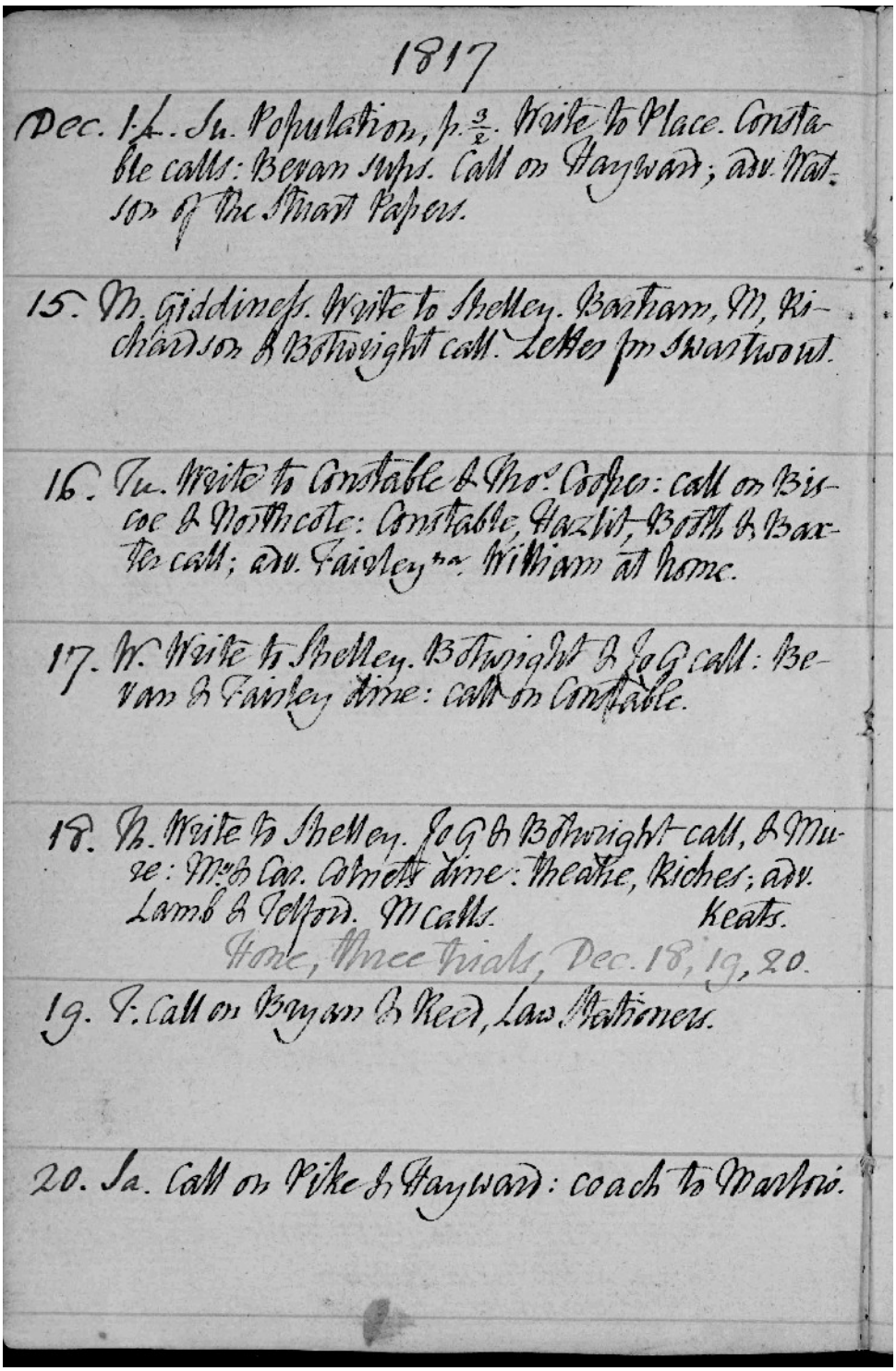
Books on the trials make no mention of Lamb, but if he was Hone's friend, he would have been close by. When imprisoned for debt in 1826, Hone received, from both Charles and Mary, 'sympathy and kindness when glooms outmastered me',[9] and four years later Lamb was the 'moving spirit'[10] in a scheme that would make Hone proprietor of a coffee-house in Gracechurch Street. There can have been no difference in 1817: either in public or behind the scenes, Lamb and his sister were there.

Under his diary entry for 18 December 1817, William Godwin wrote, 'Hone, Three trials, Dec. 18, 19, 20', in red ink.[11] A welcome interlude from the self-engrossment of the diary, red-ink outbursts gave rhetorical amplitude to public affairs discussed in coffee-houses, and when Godwin bumped into Lamb at Drury Lane, the subject of the trials must have arisen. A veteran of the treason trials of 1794, Godwin understood what was at stake, and possessed the reptilian intelligence required to decode the government's preposterously embroidered arguments.

[9] This was in the dedication to the *Every-Day Book*; see E.V. Lucas, *The Life of Charles Lamb* (2 vols., London: Methuen, 1905), ii 152.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Godwin, diary for 1817, fol.3v. This annotation was made shortly after the end of the trials, probably by the end of the year.



1817

Dec. 14. Su. Population, p. 3/2. Write to Place. Constable calls: Bevan supps. Call on Hayward; adv. Watson of the Stuart Papers.

15. M. Giddiness. Write to Shelley. Bantham, M, Richardson & Bothwright call. Letter fm Swanwood.

16. Tu. Write to Constable & Thos. Cooper: call on Biscoe & Northcote: Constable, Hazlitt, Booth & Baxter call; adv. Fairley's. William at home.

17. W. Write to Shelley. Bthwright & Jo G call: Bevan & Fairley dine: call on Constable.

18. Th. Write to Shelley. Jo G & Bthwright call, & Muse: Mrs & Car. Comets dine: Theatre, Richer; adv. Lamb & Jeffrey. M calls. Keats.

Hone, Three Trials, Dec. 18, 19, 20.

19. F. Call on Bryan & Reed, Law Stationers.

20. Sa. Call on Pike & Hayward: coach to Watford.

Keats was also at Drury Lane; when he wrote to his brothers the day after the trials finished, he remarked, 'Wooler & Hone have done us an essential service'.[12] Had he spoken to Lamb and Godwin at the theatre, they would have agreed that, for the stand he was taking, Hone was a popular hero. But Godwin would have wondered whether he had the qualities to make it through the ordeal of three trials on three consecutive days. Because, unlike Godwin, Hone was no intellectual; he was the inheritor of the hog-butcher pragmatism of the tradesmen among whom he was raised—a businessman whose tenacity and sense of justice outgunned the dogma-bound agents of His Majesty's Government.

Godwin left town on 20 December to visit Marlow, where his daughter and son-in-law, Mary and Percy Shelley, were residing. *Frankenstein* (dedicated to Godwin) would be published on 1 January 1818, and Percy's *The Revolt of Islam* was in press. Shelley knew Hone as the bookseller who retailed copies of his *Proposal for Putting Reform to the Vote* (1817)[13] and would have been eager to hear news of the trials, but Godwin knew only of the first two acquittals. The Shelleys didn't learn of the third until he had returned to London the following Monday.[14]

The Lambs celebrated Hone's third acquittal with Godwin's wife, Mary Jane,[15] who told her husband about it when he returned. Eager to make Hone's acquaintance, Godwin called at his house in the Old Bailey on Christmas Eve but found him not at home[16]; Hone visited Godwin in Skinner Street on 26 December.[17]

In the 1790s Hone, like other young men, had believed in Godwin's chiliastic fantasy, that aseptic assault-course for the intellect framing reason as the means by which government would be supplanted by 'anarchy'. It was a philosophy guaranteed to attract disciples high on playpen radicalism but Hone had never been one of those. Having witnessed from afar the unsavoury reality of Godwin's 'paroxysms of ungoverned temper',[18] he renounced all interest in him.

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[12] *The Letters of John Keats, 1814-1821* ed. Hyder E. Rollins (2 vols., Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), I 191.

[13] Letter by P.B. Shelley to William Hone, 20 April 1817; *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley* ed. Frederick L. Jones (2 vols., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), I 538.

[14] Mary recorded in her diary, 'Mr Francis calls with news of Hones third acquital' (*The Journals of Mary Shelley, 1814-1844* ed. Paula R. Feldman and Diana Scott-Kilvert (2 vols., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), I 188).

[15] Godwin's diary for 20 December 1817, fol.4r.

[16] Godwin's diary for 24 December 1817, fol.4r.

[17] Godwin's diary for 26 December 1817, fol.4r.

[18] Frederick William Hackwood, *William Hone: His Life and Times* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1912), 55.

He would have been intrigued to meet the great man. Their initial talk is likely to have gravitated to mutual friends such as Lamb and his sister; perhaps Hone showed Godwin the inscription in his copy of Coleridge's 1797 *Poems*. They would meet many times in the next few years, but theirs would not be a close friendship. Still, it had its uses, and in February 1818 Godwin wrote him a letter of introduction to the British Library.[19]

On 29 December 1817, a public meeting was held at the City of London tavern to establish a hardship fund for Hone and his family. Lamb didn't fail his friends—it was a moral compulsion carried in his bloodstream—and I have no doubt he was involved, though I have no hard evidence to prove it. But then, the moral imperative for Lamb was always to help quietly, out of sight, without posturing or the desire for praise.

Hone published minutes of the meeting as well as a list of donors including a number from Lamb's circle, among them, George Dyer[20] and Leigh and John Hunt who donated 'not what they would, but what they could'.[21] It also included 'Percy B. Shelly, Marlow', who contributed five guineas[22]—a token of jubilation at Hone's third victory.

The fund collected upwards of three thousand pounds, but to subscribe to the donor's list was to declare oneself opposed to the government—a dangerous thing. Which may explain why neither Godwin, Hazlitt nor Lamb appear on it,[23] though we know Godwin did contribute, the sum being too small to warrant record.[24] That may also explain the absence of Hazlitt's name. Professor Sir Jonathan Bate says, Lamb's 'characteristic mode of defence is disguise'.[25] In that spirit, Lamb may be among the initials, slogans, or *noms de plumes* on the list—perhaps 'A gentle Shepherd' who gave two pounds.[26] He knew 'The Gentle Shepherd' was a song by Allan Ramsay and would have liked the oblique reference to his name.

Another reason for not wishing to be on the donor's list was the chilly judgement of Tory chums. When Wordsworth saw Lord Darlington's name on it, he passed judgement with that rich and exemplary gravity only puritan passions can release: 'after subscribing for Mr Hone, there is no act

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[19] Godwin to Joseph Planter, 13 February 1818, Adelphi University Library, NY.
[20] *Trial by Jury and Liberty of the Press* (3rd ed., London: William Hone, 1818), 21.
[21] Ibid., 21.
[22] Ibid., p.23. See Jones I, 592.
[23] It is worth noting that Hazlitt's friend, the printer John M'Creery, is on the list. M'Creery would print Hazlitt's *Political Essays* for Hone in 1819.
[24] William St Clair, *The Godwins and the Shelleys* (London: Faber, 1991), 425.
[25] Charles Lamb, *Elia & The Last Essays of Elia* ed. Jonathan Bate (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), xviii.
[26] *Trial by Jury and Liberty of the Press* (3rd ed., London: William Hone, 1818), 22.

of folly or indecency of which he may not be deemed capable.'[27] Years before, Wordsworth had been a Godwinian—but he was always a conservative at heart.[28]

Lamb met Percy Bysshe Shelley only once, possibly in February or March 1818, when Lamb would have approved heartily of Shelley being a donor to Hone's fund. Beyond that, it's not easy to conceive what they had in common, Shelley cherishing the dream that corrupt societies be toppled and utopias created with the aid of poetry—the kind of hermetic conceit that would have made Lamb want to be sick. Yet Shelley was, if nothing else, a believer. In January he published *The Revolt of Islam*, a twelve-canto epic in Spenserians designed to illustrate, among other things, 'the eternity of genius and virtue'.[29] In that mood, he was outcast orphan of the evil empire, vegetarian, stargazer, Godwinian, Spartacist, preaching with uninflected sincerity of revolution. None of which had much credibility for the average, fun-loving Cockney. Shelley's prunefaced conviction in a new social order and abstracted indifference to verifiable human needs, combined with his own mincing snootiness, meant his friendships with Keats and Hazlitt were constrained. His sole encounter with Lamb was a predictable failure: 'Shelly I saw once', Lamb wrote, 'His voice was the most obnoxious squeak I ever was tormented with'.[30]

The Shelleys had adjourned to the continent by the time Hazlitt repeated his *Lectures on the English Poets* at the Crown and Anchor tavern, in a hall measuring 84 by 35 feet, large enough for two thousand people to have debauched uproariously on the fortieth birthday of Charles James Fox. Hazlitt's lectures were a smaller, more sober affair than that, as he had already delivered them at the Surrey Institution, but he attracted a sizeable audience consisting of those unable to attend first time round. When he got to the third of the lectures on 3 April 1818, the audience included Godwin, Hone, and Charles and Mary Lamb.[31] The newly-discovered inscription indicates Hone would have spoken to the Lambs and may even have been their guest. If so, they would certainly have introduced him to Hazlitt,

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[27] *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth III. The Middle Years Part 2 1812-1820* arranged and edited by Ernest de Selincourt, rev. by Mary Moorman and Alan G. Hill (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 413.

[28] Coleridge had no reason to align himself with Hone's politics, but remarked in a letter to *The Morning Chronicle*: 'I exult in Hone's acquittal and Lord Ellenborough's deserved humiliation' (25 January 1818; *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* ed. Earl Leslie Griggs (6 vols., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956-71), iv 814-15.

[29] Percy Bysshe Shelley, *The Revolt of Islam* (London: Ollier, 1818), vii.

[30] Lucas *Lamb Letters* ii 338.

[31] Godwin's diary for 1818, fol.11r.

possibly for the first time[32]—an encounter that ultimately brought forth Hazlitt's *Political Essays*, published by Hone in 1819.

We have De Quincey to thank for the misconception Lamb was a political ignoramus: 'Politics—what cared he for politics?'[33] 'Not a fig', comes the implied response, and the myth of the apolitical Lamb was born, to be parroted by his Victorian editors as if fact. Fitzgerald said Lamb loathed politics 'as a theme for evening talk; he perhaps did not understand the subject scientifically.'[34] E.V. Lucas said Lamb had 'his own world to live in',[35] as if an alcohol-infused idyll in the London suburbs explained the inability to step beyond his own psyche. This remains the orthodox view. As recently as 2000, Michael Alexander wrote that Lamb was 'indifferent to ideas, to politics.'[36] Accordingly, the tumbrils of theoretical discourse have rolled silently over Lamb's grave, deleting him from the corpus of 'serious' writers.

This platitudinous nonsense has been challenged, most notably by Winifred Courtney, but her biography of Lamb extends no further than 1802, and accounts of his later life tend to focus on his relationship with his sister. We have settled too readily for Lamb the gossip, the revenant, randy for antique. De Quincey's myth has become the reality, turbo-charged by an ego of titanic proportions, congratulating itself on absolute and exclusive possession of the truth. The fact is, De Quincey was a conceited peacock, and his inflexibility combined with piety and opportunism to create fantasies not far from paranoid. His inflated ambition encouraged the belief, common among obsessed loners, that everyone was against him except God. When he says, 'Lamb took a pleasure in baffling me', he infers the presence of malice where none existed; in truth, he couldn't understand Lamb's irony—and that, fermented by jealousy, produced in him the iconoclastic impulse to concern himself disproportionately with Lamb's flaws.

So, Lamb's flyleaf inscription to William Hone has a message within it, like a rock in a snowball. It rebuts De Quincey's charge that Lamb cared nothing for politics, bidding us turn instead to the evidence. Winifred Courtney says that 'all his life he wrote nearly always for liberal, Reformist

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[32] That Hazlitt had written a lengthy article on Hone for the *Yellow Dwarf* some time before might suggest this was not their first meeting.

[33] Thomas De Quincey, *Literary Reminiscences* (3 vols., New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1878), iii 84.

[34] *The Life, Letters, and Writings of Charles Lamb* ed. Percy Fitzgerald (6 vols., London: Gibbings, 1895), I 157n.

[35] Lucas, 58.

[36] *A History of English Literature* (3rd ed., Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 245.

publishers and editors',[37] foremost among them William Hone, 'my very dear friend' by 1811, and quite possibly some time before. Which in turn admonishes us to interpret both mens' lives accordingly. While Wordsworth was paying court to the Tory grandees of Westmorland, Lamb acted in support of a man who went head-to-head with the government's agents—and won.

Duncan Wu
Georgetown University

[37] Winifred Courtney, *Young Charles Lamb 1775-1802* (London and Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press, 1982), 202.

In the Theatre of Romantic Eccentricity: John Thelwall's Covent Garden

JUDITH THOMPSON

This paper is a sneak preview of my biography in progress of
Thelwall, titled *Citizen John: A Voice for the Voiceless*. I'll set the scene
excerpts from two of the fictional vignettes that introduce and separat
seven sections, each highlighting a different stage and persona
Thelwall's many-minded, still largely unknown life: Apprer
Adventurer, Citizen, Recluse, Peripatetic, Champion, Veteran. Ther
weave together excerpts from the first two sections. But before you
further, a word on the medium: this is a print transcription of a p
written for performance. Reading in the Romantic period, as we too c
forget, usually meant reading aloud; that is, elocution or dran
recitation, which had been the standard through the eighteenth centu
Working on Thelwall has taught me to write that way, to choose w
carefully, attending to their sounds, and the way the body operate
delivering them effectively. Not that I am anything like as powerf
speaker as Thelwall was. But I have learned that reading is an act as n
as an art, and modulation is meaning. I have marked up the first
sentences in the next paragraph, as in my working script, to show son
their prosody and rhythmus, the length and enunciation of syllables
emphases and cadence, pauses and pacing, gesture and tone. I invite
to roll them around in your own mouth, until they come to life for
(N.B. the first sentence is taken directly from newspaper ads for
Thelwall family silk shop). So, here is the first paragraph of vignette 1
Fabric of Life:

> *Black/ Genoa/ velvets, striped and figured florentines, dove-colo*
> *lustring, scarlet knaps, Norwich crepes, brocades and bombazeens, pr*
> *dimities, princes stuffs, prunellas … The sounds of the words danced i*
> *head, even more brightly than the swish and shimmer of the fa*
> *themselves, as they crisped, or billowed colourful off the bolts, to mee*
> *neat/ snick/ of his father's shears. As a tiny boy he would listen from b*

the counter, where his father sometimes lifted him up as on a stage, to prattle and take a bow for the dignified actor gentlemen and ladies, who ruffled his hair and said that such a fine young man would surely join them one day at the Theatre Royal. A little older, gawky and restless, he would dart past the shelves and showcases of his great-uncles' fashionable shop, into the back warehouse and courtyard, more comfortable with the workmen, carters, tailors and weavers bringing and taking their wares. He listened to their tales and complaints in a drama that spilled into the bustling streets and piazza, and under the portico, past glossy storefronts and squalid stalls, finicky shopmen and burly draymen, pedlars and performers, Punch and Judy brought to life. This was his theatre, with a cast of hundreds, their entrances and exits, comedy and tragedy, voices chivvying and chaffing, exhorting and chastising… the music of a world in motion.

And now a bit of *Barbarossa*, which introduces section 2, 'Adventurer':

You wouldn't credit it to see him in a moment of rest. So slight, with that shock of dark unkempt hair and long nose pouting down over his lisping tongue. But then he never was at rest, possessed of a relentless energy that gathered every eye to him like iron to a magnet. He was everywhere at once it seemed – arranging boxes in the far corner of the shop, daubing backdrops, draping fabrics, telling his friends where to stand and how to speak, a book in one hand, the other thrust out in the studied gestures he had copied from other books. Nought but a cocky upstart, really, but Miss Younge had to smile, in spite of herself, remembering how she felt at his age, plying her needle while dreams of Shakespeare's heroines ran through her mind. Rosalind, Viola, Imogen … girls who wore the breeches and spoke with tongues unconfined by chains of society. They moved with ease from spindle to sword and back again, with a power denied to her, until good fortune led her to Mr. Garrick and the stage on which she had satisfied her ambitions.

And so she indulged young Thelwall's eager vanity, standing to the side and letting him lead the show, even when his directions outpaced his actors' abilities, with no understanding of how it would work on a real stage. Let him learn. Now amid the half-covered bolts and bales, he was practising the scene between young Selim and his faithful friend Othman yet again:

'But where is Barbarossa? I expected this evening to rehearse Zaphira's confrontation with the fell destroyer in Act II.'

'Where do you think, Miss Younge?' answered Phil, rolling his eyes. For John had of course cast his brother Joseph in the role of the arrogant pirate king. The elder Thelwall boy did not take well to the younger's instructions, and usually came late, if he arrived at all, with a smell of brandy and self-important excuses on his breath, rehearsing his power better than he knew his lines. At least he suited the part.

'Well then, Master Thelwall, in a moment let us go over your disguised reunion with Zaphira in Act III. But before this, a few notes for you to consider. Do not forget to grant her a little wisdom and space to take centre stage. She is a queen, a mother and a heroine; she needs no man to rescue her; her noble firmness and resolve alone have kept the usurper and murderer of her beloved lord and king at bay for fully seven years, while Selim her son has been in exile. Her moving eloquence of woe is a weapon keener than swords. The play is a trial of Love, you know. In the mouth of Barbarossa, that word is no more than a lie, but she defeats him in the perilous debate, deflecting and defining it justly. In truth she shows it matters less than her heart in the great climax: 'no tyrant's threat can awe the free-born soul, That greatly dares to die.''

And here she reached out one hand, holding the other at her breast, and even in her daily dress, without the silks and satin train, she was transformed: she became taller, prouder, fair but fiery, as she had been on the greatest stages in the land.

* * *

That vignette took the voice of Elizabeth Younge, a leading actress at the Theatre Royal Covent Garden, who lodged nearby, above the Thelwall family silk shop on King St., where tickets for her benefits were sold between 1773 and 1779. John Thelwall did put on a performance of John Brown's *Barbarossa* in the back of that shop, probably around 1778, when he was fourteen or fifteen (roughly the age the famous Master Betty was when he performed it at Drury Lane 25 years later).[2] But otherwise this vignette, like the first one, is entirely fictional. As you may have guessed, Miss Younge functions here as an alter ego for the biographer, helping this vignette do what they are all supposed to: to imagine and dramatize the life of Thelwall, like the screenplay that everyone (or at least my non-academic friends) tells me I should be writing. I want my biography to walk the line between the documentary and the theatrical, partly because that's what Thelwall himself did and partly because his life has all the ingredients of a Hollywood blockbuster: towering ambition, relentless persecution, heroic integrity, eternal romance, scandalous passion, eccentric originality, cocky wit, and a little farce for comic relief. It's such a good story, and I want to tell it right. For of course most of it has never been told before, and that adds to the drama: the archival mystery and quest; all those boxes of manuscripts that Charles Cestre, Thelwall's last biographer back in 1906, somehow lost, maybe in the German occupation of Paris in

[2] On Master Betty and child actors in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, see Fred Burwick, *Playing to the Crowd: London Popular Theatre 1780-1830.* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011).

World War II; all the letters that Coleridge destroyed; all the papers that have gone missing, whether through political suppression or sheer bad luck; and all the stuff that has suddenly just turned up—most recently his early legendary tale 'Orlando & Almeyda,' always thought to have been lost, turns out to have been at New York University all along.

But while this biographical blank canvas is an exciting opportunity, it is also an obstacle. Since E.P. Thompson tried and failed to find the Cestre manuscripts, scholars have assumed it would be impossible to write a full Thelwall biography. It's not, but it has required a lot of detective work, and still I'm afraid people will think I'm cutting his life out of whole cloth, to use another fabric metaphor. There's also a problem of discontinuity and imbalance, because some parts of the story are almost too well known—obviously the political parts, covering only five years of his three-score and ten, which is all that Cestre was interested in, and all that Thelwall's widow was able to publish in 1838, before she gave up her planned second volume, which was going to deal with Thelwall's literary and professional lives. So the whole middle section of *Citizen John*—seven chapters dealing with his reform activities in the 1790s, his imprisonment and trial, his political and Roman history lectures, his friendship with and visit to Coleridge and Wordsworth, and his 'retirement' in Wales—is relatively well trodden ground (though there is still much to reveal). But fully half of Thelwall's life—his last 35 years (1799-1834), covered in my last 13 chapters—is almost completely unknown, though it was and will be just as dramatic. What I'm giving you today is excerpts from my first 5 chapters, on his first 25 years. This period is covered in Mrs. Thelwall's biography, from which I liberally quote in what follows, but instead of politics, I highlight the performativity that is fundamental to everything that came after.

So, this is a very different project from most of the great biographies of Romantic writers that I try to emulate, which rest upon a solid foundation of pre-existing knowledge. One of these is Eric Wilson's forthcoming *Dream-Child: A Life of Charles Lamb*, previewed in the Charles Lamb Society talk that preceded mine and offered a model for the format of this paper. Listening to it, I noticed many parallels between Thelwall and Lamb, as Romantic eccentrics and devotees of theatre, as well as lovers of London, urban peripatetics, miscellanists and humorists. One particularly interesting similarity is what Wilson calls the 'dispositional doubleness' that came from inhabiting oases of pastoral serenity amid the bustling streets of London (for Lamb this was the Temple neighbourhood where he grew up, for Thelwall the family cottage in semi-rural Lambeth that provided a retreat from the family silk shop in raucous Covent Garden). But Thelwall knew the Temple too, since he went to work there every day in the mid-1780s, when he articled at John Impey's law office in Inner Temple Lane. He was around 20 years old, Charles Lamb 10 years

younger, but it is possible that their paths intersected. Of course, Thelwall was not like one of those eccentric 'old Benchers' that the *Essays of Elia* remember; he would have been just a random passerby. Still, it is one of those serendipitous juxtapositions that keep happening, to tease me out of thought and make this biography so much fun to write (and I hope, to read).

Leaving Lamb behind, let me move on now to excerpts from *Citizen John*, starting with the epigraph to chapter 1, the final stanza of Thelwall's comic 1822 'Autobiography,' which he says has been 'wove double proof, / In the motley woof / Of their up & down friend John Thelwall.'[3]

The motley fabric of John Thelwall's life was first woven in Covent Garden, the creative heart of eighteenth-century London. With its bustling piazza and market, Turkish baths and brothels, theatres and print-shops, artist's and artisan's workshops, coffeehouses, bookstores, aristocrats, beggars, makers, buyers and sellers of everything under the sun, Covent Garden was as eclectic and eccentric as Thelwall himself. A directory of the family neighbours in Chandos St at the time of his birth, 1764, lists four mercers, a hosier, two musical-instrument makers, a jeweller, a portrait painter and a coachmaker. This captures the miscellaneity that fed his polymathic personality, and two passions in particular: performance and politics. Indeed, the site of his christening, St. Paul's Covent Garden, is now known as the 'actor's church' due to its numerous memorials to theatre personalities, starting with the long-lived eighteenth-century luminary Charles Macklin, who revolutionized speech on stage. Under its distinctive portico, 150 years later, George Bernard Shaw would set the opening scene of his comedy on the politics of speech, *Pygmalion*; he chose that site because it had long been a symbol of popular democracy, having served as the hustings for the 'city and liberties of Westminster,' the sole constituency in Britain in which all male householders had a vote.[4] And so the precursor of Shaw's Henry Higgins, the man who would give voice to the voiceless, grew up hearing tongues both eloquent and raucous, raised in debate, song, drama, riot, sensibility, opposition, aspiration and independence. Though he would range far from his tradesman's upbringing into political notoriety as a democrat peripatetic citizen of the world, Thelwall's heart was at home in London, his character shaped by it

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[3] Judith Thompson, ed.. *John Thelwall: Selected Poetry and Poetics* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2015), 272.

[4] Mary Cathcart Borer, *The Story of Covent Garden* (Robert Hale, 1984); Vic Gatrell, *The First Bohemians: Life and Art in London's Golden Age* (Penguin, 2014); 'Bedford Street and Chandos Place Area: Chandos Place.' *Survey of London: Volume 36, Covent Garden*, ed. F H W Sheppard. (London County Council, 1970), 263-265. *British History Online*. <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vol36/pp263-265> [accessed 5 March 2021]

as truly as any of the cockney contemporaries whose energies, interests and networks he shared: the visionary artist William Blake, the radical tailor Francis Place, the eccentric essayist Charles Lamb, the poet-surgeon John Keats, and the gadfly journalist Leigh Hunt. They all knew one another, and like all of them he embodied the theatricality of Covent Garden itself, combining sentimental idealism and plucky pragmatism, earthy egalitarianism and driving ambition into a story of fortune won and lost that spans the age and spirit of Henry Fielding and David Garrick, Edmund Kean and Charles Dickens.

Thelwall was born at a time of relative peace and prosperity after the end of the Seven-Year's War, when his father Joseph migrated from Yorkshire to the metropolis to work in his maternal uncles' silk business, at the *Hen and Chickens* on Henrietta St. The Hinchliffs' high-class silk mercery served 'His Majesty's wardrobe,' and no doubt that of the nearby Theatre Royal, as in my opening vignette. Eccentric theatricality ran in the family, starting with Joseph's father Walter Thelwall, a swashbucklingly humanitarian naval surgeon whom young John idolized, though he died long before John was born. But the daily drama of Thelwall's Covent Garden childhood was supplied by his Hinchliff in-laws, who engaged in what can only be called a flame war, eighteenth-century style, staged in the daily *Gazetteers* and *Advertisers* in 1772. The antagonists were William Hinchliff, pompous proprietor of the *Hen and Chickens*, and the widow of his brother and partner Thomas, who set up a rival business with her dead husband's share of the stock, under the delightfully overdetermined sign of the *Hen and Chickens and Seven Stars*, just around the corner on Bedford St, where she proceeded to undercut her brother-in-law. It was quite the kerfuffle: her advertisements played up her sensibility, and arguments for financial equity, with modestly sharp-tongued puns on mercy, mercery and mercenary; his advertisements replied in a tone of increasingly apoplectic splutter. Sadly, the collateral damage seems to have fallen on the apparent peacemaker, their nephew Joseph Thelwall.

Just two weeks after the widow Hinchliff went offline, so to speak, in late November 1772, Joseph advertised the opening of his own shop, probably with her remaining stock, at the sign of the *Lamb* around the next corner on King St. But he didn't get to enjoy his success, for less than four months later he was dead; we don't know the cause, but he was only 42 and it may be that the stress of domestic discord took its toll. In any case, this was a life-defining trauma for young John, who was only 9 years old, as it eventually plunged the fortunes of the entire Thelwall family into 'embarrassment and ruin.' Essentially the widow Thelwall decided to follow the example of the widow Hinchliff, and went into business herself, taking her eldest son, Joseph Jr., as a partner. This was unwise, for Joseph's 'habits of dissipation […] produced or aggravated an epileptic disease that

ultimately affected his intellects.' Under his financial mismanagement and emotional instability, the shop failed, and was sold at a loss in the early 1780s, leaving the family in danger of debtor's prison.

Deprived of both father and inheritance, young John felt the impact quite literally, as he was beaten by both mother and brother. This in turn exacerbated his own disabilities, a hereditary asthma, speech impediment and heart condition which contributed to the depression that fell upon him after the death of his father and in some measure remained throughout his life. Fortunately, he had inherited his father's cheerful nature and proved remarkably resilient, responding to adversity with the irrepressible energy and iron will that led him to overcome his illness and support the family almost single-handedly, through his pen alone, by his early twenties.[5] Nevertheless he struggled with bouts of despondency and exhaustion all his life. Indeed, the almost manic intensity of his determination to succeed, on his own terms, alternating with periods of breakdown requiring retreat to the country, always followed by rebound, suggests that his 'up and down' character might today be diagnosed as a form of bipolar disorder.

Another lifelong legacy of Joseph Thelwall's death and family discord was John's search for surrogate parents, and a motif of brotherhood betrayed, which shapes and shadows his later political and literary theory and practice. On one hand the wish-fulfilling fraternal ideal of reciprocal exchange and shared understanding was central to his lifelong ethics and activism, and he cultivated intense, intimate friendships in order to realize it. On the other hand, many of these friendships, whether with political confederates or poetic brethren, fell short or ended in suspicion and recrimination, contributing to the themes of apostasy, paranoia and persecution evident throughout his work. Both sides of brotherhood are seen clearly in his best-known poem, the 'Lines Written at Bridgwater' to his best-known brother and betrayer, Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

But the most critical result of sudden death and destitution in the life of John Thelwall was to draw a sharp line between his happy childhood and his turbulent adolescence, a dynamic whose intensity and impact compare in many ways with Charles Dickens' childhood experience in the blacking factory.[6] Thelwall's father had shared his youngest son's creative interests, kindling his 'rage for theatricals' by taking him to see David Garrick in Richard III when he was 7 years old. When his loving

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[5] H.C. Thelwall, *The Life of John Thelwall* (London, 1838), 8-16.

[6] This is just one of many parallels between the two writers. Though 45 years younger than Thelwall, Dickens knew of him both through their mutual friend Thomas Noon Talfourd, who had been mentored by Thelwall and mentored Dickens in turn, and through Thelwall's widow Cecil, who presided at literary soirees at the home of her sister and her husband, Dr. Robert Davey, where Dickens' father resided before his death.

encouragement was replaced by what Thelwall called a 'tyranny' of corporal punishment and emotional manipulation by judgmental relatives and authority figures, he responded with increasingly passionate and principled resistance, caught in a conflict between his affectionate nature and a defiant independence that went beyond adolescent angst.[7] It left him with the lifelong indignation at narrow-minded convention and institutional injustice, and the lifelong passion for self-education and pedagogical reform, that led him to make accessible, inclusive public schooling an integral part of his radical political vision.

His own schooling had begun 'under the *heavy hand*' of a Rev. Mr. Pierce in Lambeth, and then with an even more 'ferocious' schoolmaster named Mr. Dick (not like the one in Dickens' *David Copperfield*, more like sadistic Mr. Murdstone in that novel). Of him Thelwall said that 'almost all that he learnt was to glory in returning from the severest castigations without a tear.' Dick lived at 12 Little Hart St., mere steps from the family home and shop, and one can imagine John at the age of 7 or so, having been newly breeched in both senses of the word (that is, wearing his first trousers and being flogged), gingerly walking home through the piazza while attempting to hide both his tender behind and his tender feelings under a façade of dauntless manhood. His dad would have soothed those blows, but after his death, John's depression, 'attended with a correspondent debility of constitution [was] aggravated by the usual remedy of pedagogues.' Apparently, the schoolmasters interpreted his grief as 'tardiness and … inaptitude,' considering him to be of 'slow and even feeble mind.'[8]

Nevertheless, someone in the family retained enough hope (or desperation) to send John, aged 10, to a boarding-school in Highgate, in what was then the countryside five miles north of Covent Garden, which proved transformative in his development. This is likely to have been Highgate School, founded in 1565, and the only such establishment in the area at that time.[9] Prominently located at the crest of Highgate Hill, it remains a landmark in a village known for its scenic views of the city below, which attracted genteel and even aristocratic residents, such as the Earl of Mansfield, a Lord Chief Justice, legal reformer and parliamentary orator whom Thelwall would revere during the period of his studies in law.[10]

Mansfield, who lived at Kenwood House just west of Highgate, was one of the Governors of the school, and rented pews for his family and

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[7] Thelwall, *Life*, 5, 13.
[8] Thelwall, *Life*, 4-5.
[9] Thomas Hinde, *Highgate School: A History* (James & James, 1993).
[10] Thelwall, *Life,* 30.

servants at its chapel, which was the only church in the village.[11] This meant that during his three years there, Thelwall would have seen and possibly even met Dido Belle, Mansfield's adopted great-niece, a mixed-race Creole beauty who attracted much attention for her cultured yet spirited manners and intelligence. In recent years she has attracted even more, due to the success of the movie *Belle* based on her life, as has Mansfield for his ground-breaking legal judgments that led to the abolition of slavery in England. Of course both of them were far above Thelwall's class socially, but Belle was just three years older than he (the same age as his sister), and if she was as 'pert' and pretty as she was remembered to have been, he would surely have noticed her at Sunday service.[12] Under these circumstances, it is probable that Highgate School contributed to the fervent abolitionism that Thelwall developed in his later teens, and in particular influenced his 1801 feminist-abolitionist novel *The Daughter of Adoption*, whose title character, a cultured and assertive Creole (like Dido Belle crossed with Mary Wollstonecraft), travels from the West Indies to England, where she ends up reforming the slave-owning patriarchy.

Curiously, Belle does the same in the movie, with the assistance of a law-student love-interest, who is a complete cinematic fabrication, as is the scene in which they intervene in the notorious case of the Zong massacre, a pivotal moment in black British history. But that is another of those fascinating juxtapositions—because a radical abolitionist law student is exactly what Thelwall was at the time of the Zong case, in 1783, the year to which he dates the beginning of his abolitionism. It is highly unlikely that the filmmakers knew that, but it is interesting that they felt the need to invent someone like Thelwall in order to give romantic drama to the movie.

Another important feature of Highgate for Thelwall was that he found there a surrogate older brother in the tutor to whom the headmaster left the teaching. His name was Harvey, and even though he stayed for less than three months at the school, he had a huge impact on Thelwall, 'wak[ing] the first spark, and fann[ing] the etherial flame.'[13] Young and high-spirited, he was 'remarkably lax in everything that looked like scholastic discipline' but 'directed attention rather to multiplying the ideas, than cramping the limbs … of his pupils.' His most influential lesson was his attention to the spoken word. Unconventionally turning the schoolroom into a place for amicable conversation, he encouraged the boys

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[11] Highgate School archives.

[12] Reyahn King. 'Belle [married name Davinier], Dido Elizabeth (1761?-1804),' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <https://www-oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-73352 > [accessed 7 December, 2021].

[13] Thompson, *Thelwall: Selected,* 143.

to enquire, and formed them into discussion groups allowed to choose their own books. This later became Thelwall's own *modus operandi*. Just as crucial was Harvey's attention to 'the management of voice and lungs,' anticipating the therapeutic methods that Thelwall would make his own.[14] Essentially Harvey began the training that would lead Thelwall over the next few years to overcome his lisp and asthma, so that by the time he was thirty, he was one of the most powerful orators in Britain, and by fifty, the world's first speech therapist, with a fully-developed theory and practice based on the poetics of the spoken word.

It is likely that Harvey also heightened Thelwall's 'rage for theatricals,' for he remembered spending much of his recreational time at Highgate declaiming, painting scenes, fabricating theatrical decorations and rehearsing plays, and he even 'trained a sort of *corps dramatique*, of which he was the Roscius.' A highlight was when he was 'allowed, at the age of thirteen, to play *Altamont*, to the *Fair Penitent* of a young lady of his own age, at a ladies' boarding school in the neighbourhood.'[15] This is a jaw-dropping revelation, given the scandal caused by young men and women together performing home theatricals in Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*. Even allowing that moral attitudes may have been less stringent in the 1770s than the Regency, it is hard to believe that any school of that time would allow such gender mixing, especially among 13-year-olds, and even more so staging *The Fair Penitent*, a daring Restoration 'she-tragedy' about sexual infidelity and seduction. After all, this is the play that introduced Lothario to the vocabulary of rakes, and that Samuel Richardson based his monumental *Clarissa* on. Its production is slightly more understandable, however, considering that the celebrated author of the play, Nicholas Rowe, was an alumnus of Highgate School.[16]

The Fair Penitent had a formative influence on young Thelwall. Not only did it have a strong and in some ways proto-feminist heroine in Calista,[17] but there was a subplot of equal intensity highlighting fidelity and betrayal between fathers and brothers. At his impressionable age, and in accordance with the popular elocutionary pedagogy of 'emulation' that derived from the theatre and was followed by Harvey (by which the mouth of any speaker must match the mind of the author and/or character they are reading),[18] Thelwall would have internalized the words and virtues of

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[14] Thelwall, *Life*, 6-7.
[15] Thelwall, *Life*, 12-13.
[16] Hinde, *Highgate*, 21.
[17] Henry Herbert Sennett, 'Nicholas Rowe's writing of woman as feminist hero' (2002). *LSU Doctoral Dissertations* 3761. <https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_dissertations/3761> [accessed 7 December, 2021].
[18] Thompson, 'Elocutionary Rhetoric.'

Calista's tender-hearted husband Altamont, and used them to shape his own developing character and moral universe. Such an identification with Rowe's play is evident in Thelwall's first 'ethical romances,' a flurry of poems focussing sympathetically on seduced women, and criticizing the men who fail them, that issued from his pen over the next 10 years.[19]

Not long after playing Altamont, Thelwall was withdrawn from school and put to work, first behind the counter of the family shop and then as apprentice to a tailor. This was no more than might be expected for a boy of his age and social class, to take a man's role in helping family finances, but he bitterly resented being removed from the habits and aspirations that had been stimulated by both his father and Harvey, and thrust into a world of trade where, he complained, the only books that anyone looked at were ledgers, and he was chastised with increasing severity by those who regarded his eccentric and obsessive creativity as mere idleness and obstinacy. This was the beginning of perhaps the lowest period of his up-and-down life, a 'horror' that would drive his stubborn independence, and underlie his kneejerk defensiveness about being patronized or attacked as a 'tradesman' lacking a classical education (as he would be by reviewers, rivals, satirists and even scholars, ever after). These class anxieties are conspicuous in his first published poems in 1787, in a series of autobiographical elegies in which he identifies with the 'mute inglorious Milton' of Gray's 'Elegy in a Country Churchyard,' fearing that he is fated to bloom unseen, forever denied the fame for which he longs, excluded from 'academic groves' and 'deathless classics never taught,' but instead forced to 'ply some low mechanic art.' Indeed, this explains why this first of many autobiographies took an elegiac form.[20]

In his later tongue-in-cheek 'Auto-Biography' Thelwall summed up the 'apprenticeship' phase of his education as follows:

> Now measuring of silk
> And serve & thilk,
> With attitude theatrical:
> And now taking a stitch
> In vest or breach
> With poetic flights erratical.[21]

At least initially, his family seems to have shown some indulgence of his intellectual interests, as long as he pursued them in his leisure time, as an

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[19] The subtitle of Thelwall's 1792 *The Rock of Modrec*, the term ethical romance applies as well to all Thelwall's early poetry.
[20] John Thelwall, *Poems on Various Subjects*. 2 vols (London, 1787), II.104-07.
[21] Thelwall, *Poems*, II, 265.

amusement. He overcompensated by reading in every spare moment, devouring the miscellaneous contents of circulating libraries—plays, poetry, history, moral and natural philosophy, metaphysics, divinity—even while walking through the streets of London at night, carrying a candle in one hand, a book in the other.[22] His ethical romances show how well-read he was, despite (or perhaps because of) his lack of a classical education: he not only quotes from or alludes to (translations of) Ovid, Tasso, Boccaccio, Ariosto, Chaucer, Spenser, Davenant, Drayton, Dryden, Godolphin, Milton, Shakespeare, and all the recent or living poets, but draws on British history from the Romans forward, Anglo-Saxon etymology and continental European romance cycles like the *Amadis de Gaul*. At this time he also pursued his artistic ambitions, copying prints and doing the fine cut-paper compositions that were fashionable, showing a dexterity and delicacy of taste and hand that never left him. While this part of Thelwall's polymathic character is the least known, it remained important, and such fragments of his artwork as survive attest to his skill.

But the activity that brought together all Thelwall's varied skills and interests was theatre. Upon returning from Highgate, he continued to work on plays and somehow convinced his mother to let him convert the family shop, after hours, into a stage where he and his companions performed *Barbarossa* (which he had abridged and altered), to a fair-sized audience. No doubt these efforts were assisted by Elizabeth Younge. She may have been a leading actress, but she too had risen from working-class origins and laboured as a milliner to support herself, while devoting herself to poetry and especially Shakespeare.[23] So she would surely have sympathized with young Thelwall's situation and encouraged his efforts at this time to become a professional actor. Sadly, he was turned down by the theatre manager to whom he applied (George Colman the Elder), on account of both his lisp and his 'want of figure' (he was too short). But as with every other disappointment, Thelwall didn't so much give up as rechannel his 'rage for theatricals' into new forms.[24]

First performed in 1754 and restaged regularly thereafter, *Barbarossa* was synonymous with the great Garrick, who premiered the part of its young hero Selim and wrote its prologue and epilogue (which Thelwall later adapted for one of his own theatrical prologues).[25] A brilliant actor-manager, Garrick revolutionized the art of theatre, importing a noted

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[22] Thelwall, *Life,* 14.

[23] 'Manager's Note-Book: Alexander Pope,' *New Monthly Magazine and Humorist* (London, 1838), 97-98.

[24] Thelwall, *Life*, 13-14.

[25] Thelwall's curious 'Prologue. Written for a Company of Strollers, who were performing in a little Village in South Wales' (Thelwall, *Selected,* 75-76) is based on Garrick's comic Prologue to *Barbarossa*.

French artist to do pioneering stage design, presiding over the creation of Shakespeare as a national icon, and ushering in the cult of the celebrity actor. Hogarth's portrait of him as Richard III was the most widely reproduced theatrical print of the age and fans of all social classes emulated him in the popular spouting clubs that Thelwall too frequented. According to the *European Magazine,* Garrick was 'the very glass, wherein the noblest youth did dress themselves! There were no legs that practiced not his gait, no eyes that practiced not his looks.'[26] Garrick may thus be seen as one of Thelwall's father surrogates, although it is unlikely that they met personally.

In choosing *Barbarossa* to stage at home, Thelwall shaped his identity in Garrick's image, fusing artist, actor, writer and manager. Even more than in *The Fair Penitent*, the germ of his later principles and preoccupations may be found in the romance of Selim, the Ottoman prince whose father is murdered by the tyrant usurper Barbarossa, and who returns from exile to liberate his mother and redeem his people. Here again young Thelwall probably identified the play with his own family situation, especially because it focusses on the intense and ambivalent relationship between a strong-minded widow and the son who both honours and challenges her. Even more strikingly, the themes, motifs, and character types of *Barbarossa* reappear in his later work: spies and informers, exile and return, the power of the name, the shackling and liberation of the tongue, the citizen and the friend, the saviour in disguise. Above all the duplicity of young Selim—at once a metamorphic trickster who tests the truth by performing lies and a sentimental hero who prevails through his heart rather than his sword—captures the two faces of Thelwall throughout his career: the slippery seditious allegorist and the sentimental champion of the people.

Barbarossa is one of many 18th century plays that exploited Britain's imperialist fascination with 'exotic' cultures, both Muslim and Native American, and used them to comment on domestic politics. Some of the most interesting features of these plays were their strong heroines, like Zaphira, whom Bridget Orr calls 'fair captives,' whose stalwart resistance to tyranny was intended to represent British liberty on one hand, and the power of sentiment on the other.[27] Thelwall would have been familiar with these plays, especially because Miss Younge took the lead in two of the

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[26] Gattrell*, Bohemians*, 125-30; Betsy Bolton, 'Theorizing Audience and Spectatorial Agency,' and Heather McPherson, 'Theatrical Celebrity and the Commodification of the Actor' in *Oxford Handbook of the Georgian Theatre 1737-1832,* ed. J. Swindells and D. F. Taylor (Oxford, 2014), 46, 199-26.

[27] Daniel O'Quinn, 'Theatre, Islam and the Question of Monarchy, in Swindells, *Oxford Handbook of the Georgian Theatre,* 642-43; Bridget Orr, *British Enlightenment Theatre* (Cambridge, 2020), 78-80.

most popular, right around the time he was adapting Barbarossa: *Zara*, set in the Ottoman Empire, and *Alzira*, set among the Incas in South America. Both were translated from Voltaire. Thelwall adopted the latter in particular for both of his own ambitious but ill-fated, unstaged dramas of 1787 and 1792, *Inkle and Yarico* and *The Incas*. I do not have time to deal with them here in the detail I do in my biography, but I want to conclude by briefly highlighting features common to both plays that show where his eccentric theatricality would lead.

When I say ill-fated, I refer to the fact that though these plays weren't staged in Thelwall's name they both became huge hits under the name of others, after the scripts he had submitted were withheld by theatre managers who went on to stage remarkably similar plays by different authors. The editors of Thelwall's plays argue that there is not enough evidence to support the charges of plagiarism that Thelwall made at the time; but I'm not sure I agree.[28] Leaving that aside, however, the style of Thelwall's plays is certainly more appealing to a modern audience, not only in their satire and humour but in their versification and voice. The latter is especially notable in Thelwall's opera *The Incas*. Even though no music has survived, and it has never been performed, the melodic modulations of its language are striking, as Thelwall interweaves and multiplies voices that represent different cultural and ideological positions and appear to sing at the same time, to the same tune, and using many of the same phrases and rhymes, but with opposite keywords that play out central dramatic conflicts. His remarkable verbal polyphony or layered counterpoint anticipates the lyrical battle between Javert and Valjean in the musical *Les Miserables*, but multiplied tenfold at the climax, as in Schönberg and Boublil's great anthem 'One More Day.' It begs to be revived.

At our current moment the most exciting, shared feature of Thelwall's early plays is surely their transatlantic perspective, which can only be called proto-post-colonial. He builds on the tradition of colonial contact plays like *Alzira* by exploiting their sensationalism and cultural stereotypes for social commentary and satire, while turning the tables ideologically. So, in *Inkle and Yarico*, the so-called 'savages' teach a moral lesson to the so-called 'civilized' colonizers, as the would-be slave-traders are enslaved themselves. In *The Incas*, the native Americans defeat the Spanish, in a counterfactual reversal of the 1781 rebellion of Tupac Amaru;

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[28] The matter is discussed by Frank Felsenstein and Michael Scrivener in their edition of *Two Plays by John Thelwall* (Fairleigh Dickinson, 2006), 287-30, 79-83. *Incle and Yarico* was submitted to Colman the Elder, whose son (Colman the Younger) had long-lived international success with his play under the same title; *The Incas* was submitted to Thomas Harris, who brought out *Columbus* by Thomas Morton, whose popularity made Morton's name as a playwright.

as Scrivener notes, 'it is as though the Amerindian uprisings in the Andes had succeeded, rather than resulting in the torture and mutilation of the rebel leaders and the slaughter of over 100,000 Native Americans.'[29] In both plays Thelwall places strong defences of liberty, racial and gender equality in the mouths of female, indigenous and lower-class characters. In so doing, he was influenced by the debating societies that were integrally related to his youthful rage for theatricals.

Taking the place of university in his development, these pioneering venues of public education were, like him, unfairly ridiculed in their own time, and overlooked in ours.[30] They offered an important forum for progressive ideas, most notably in debates about abolition and gender rights that intersected in the late 1780s. To illustrate, let me conclude now with a newspaper advertisement for a debate held in 1788 at the Westminster Forum, where Thelwall played a leading role. It announced that 'a NATIVE OF AFRICA, many years a Slave in the West Indies will attend' and speak about his experience. Most likely that was Olaudah Equiano, who addressed several debating societies in advance of the publication of his famous *Interesting Narrative* in the revolutionary year of 1789, and who would soon be a colleague of Thelwall's in the radical London Corresponding Society.[31] After a few sentences outlining his proposed subject, the ad ends by introducing 'A LADY, whose intellectual accomplishments, and wonderful powers of eloquence' have already gained her the highest respect, and who is also expected to speak to the question.[32] She is almost certainly the unnamed female orator to whom Thelwall had paid tribute at the same Westminster Forum only a month earlier, by performing 'A Speech in Rhyme' that singlehandedly enacted an entire debate between four men followed by a woman who wins the contest handily by dismantling their arguments with impeccable logic and

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[29] Felsenstein and Scrivener, *Two Plays*, 85.

[30] Despite the ground-breaking work of Donna Andrew and Mary Thale, there remains surprisingly little analysis of the role of debating societies in the formation of public taste or literary education in the Romantic era; critics still seem uncritically to accept the judgments of satirists upon the folly, vulgarity and ignorance of the popular audiences of these societies, and continue to deny the possibility of the working-class intellect and 'practical fluency' to which Thelwall devoted his career.

[31] Miles Ogburn, *The Freedom of Speech: Talk and Slavery in the Anglo-Caribbean World* (Chicago, 2019), 199-214.

[32] Donna Andrew, ed. 'Entry 1318: February 25, 1788. Westminster Forum,' *London Debating Societies: 1776-1799*. (London Record Society, 1994) in *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/london-record-soc/vol30.> [accessed 16 October 2021].

grace.[33] Here Thelwall's eccentric theatricality meets his feminist, abolitionist, anti-imperialist political activism, as he takes the next steps in a career of giving voice to the voiceless.

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[33] John Thelwall, 'A Speech in Rhyme, Delivered at the Westminster Forum, Spring Gardens' (London, 1788).

‘There goes Tom and Jerry’: On a Spree with Pierce Egan’s *Life in London* (1820-1)

DAVID STEWART

Pierce Egan’s *Life in London; or, The Day and Night Scenes of Jerry Hawthorn, Esq., and His Elegant Friend Corinthian Tom, Accompanied by Bog Logic, the Oxonian, in Their Rambles and Sprees Through the Metropolis* was first serialised in monthly parts from August 1820 and published in book form in 1821.[1] This article draws on research that I am undertaking towards the production of an edition of *Life in London* for Oxford World’s Classics along with John Gardner, Simon Kövesi, and Matthew Sangster.[2] *Life in London* is a rare book, and one that is difficult to read without notes. Its appeal – then and now – lies in Egan’s vast range of references to a rapidly changing city scene. That very range presents challenges to a reader and to an editor. One might easily find oneself bewildered as Egan’s characters skip from Somerset House to Gattie and Pierce’s to Mother O’Shaughnessy’s. I wish to suggest that a certain amount of bewilderment is worth prizing. *Life in London* is itself, I’ll propose, concerned with reading, something prompted by its subject matter, London. Egan’s contemporary, Charles Lamb, enjoyed ‘hovering in the confines of light and darkness… where “both seem either”’.[3] Lamb is remembering writing suggestive jokes for the newspapers, a task and an attitude to broad humour that he shared with Egan. Both learned to appreciate that ability to hover between states in Regency London and its print culture.

It is striking that many of Egan’s best critics – amongst others, Richard Cronin, Gregory Dart, Deborah Epstein Nord, Simon Hull, and John Strachan – have also been critics of Lamb. Lamb and Egan shared more than a city: they shared a fascination with London as a place of culture that was so culturally productive that it proved hard to make sense of. They both, as I will go on to say, hovered between high and low culture.

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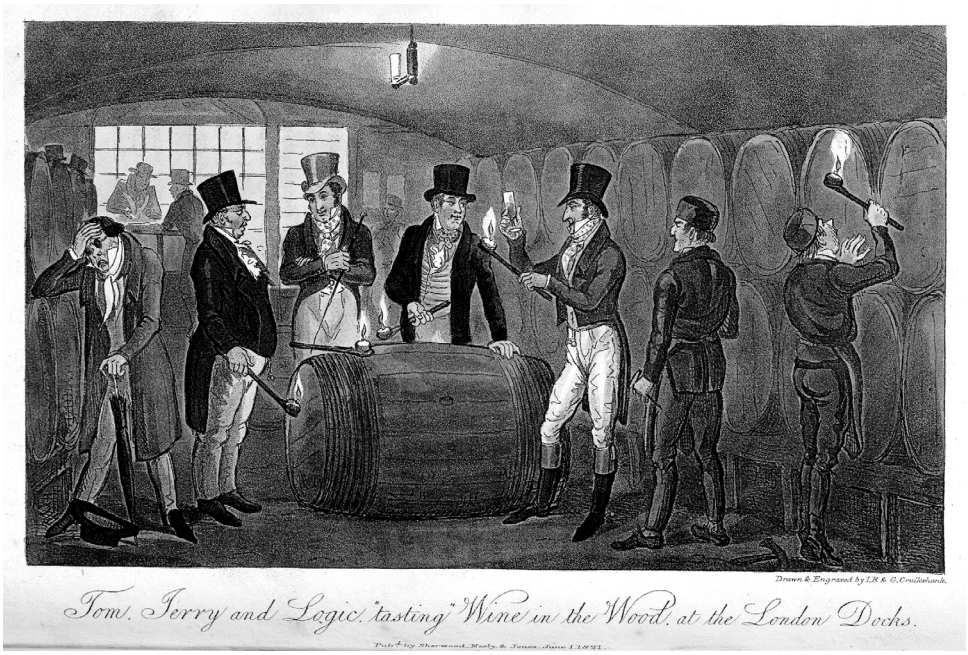
[1] References to *Life in London* are to the 1821 edition published by Sherwood, Neely, and Jones, available via Google Books.

[2] This article is developed from a paper given at a meeting of the Charles Lamb Society. I would like to thank the Chairs for their invitation and the members for their helpful questions and comments. I would also like to acknowledge the help of my co-editors, John Gardner, Simon Kövesi, and Matt Sangster.

[3] Lamb, ‘Newspapers Thirty-Five Years Ago’ (1831); *The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb*, ed. by E. V. Lucas, 7 vols (London, 1905), II: 221.

Here I explore Egan's joyously miscellaneous novel and point to its affinity with Lamb. They both help readers make their way around London, while accepting that part of the pleasure of the city entails getting occasionally lost.



Before introducing Egan's novel fully, I will pause to consider a moment in which Lamb, Egan, and the London streets came together. Thomas Hood tells an anecdote of the *London Magazine* days, the time of John Clare's second visit to London in 1822. Lamb and Clare hit it off and

> In wending homewards … through the Strand, the Peasant and Elia, *Sylvanus et Urban*, linked comfortably together; there arose the frequent cry of "Look at Tom and Jerry – there goes Tom and Jerry!" for truly, Clare in his square-cut green coat, and Lamb in his black, were not a little suggestive of Hawthorn and Logic, in the plates to "Life in London".[4]

[4] Thomas Hood, 'Literary Reminiscences No. IV', *Hood's Own: or, Laughter from Year to Year* (London, 1839), 545-68 (555). Simon Kövesi discusses very insightfully the Clare-Lamb connection and this anecdote in 'John Clare, Charles Lamb and the *London Magazine*: "Sylvanus et Urban"', *Charles Lamb Bulletin* 135 (July 2006), 82-93.

There are reasons to question Hood's reminiscence, not least that Hood's article of 1839 is posed in a self-consciously ironical manner. Lamb are Clare are identified as 'Tom and Jerry', that is, Corinthian Tom and his country cousin Jerry Hawthorn from Egan's novel. Lamb is an unlikely Tom: urban, certainly, but nothing like Tom's tall, upright, casually self-confident figure on the right here. Hood recognises that by making Lamb not Corinthian Tom, but Bob Logic, the bespectacled, shorter, soi-disant Oxonian on the left. Lamb, of course, only visited Oxford in the vacation, but there are some similarities here. Bob is a punster, a learned man, and one who often 'timed his Saturnalia amiss', to use Lamb's phrase: drinking too much alcohol for an increasingly genteel age.[5] But it feels like a slip: would the crowds really have called Lamb Tom? What gives the anecdote an air of plausibility is that, when Clare visited London in 1822, Egan really would have been on the tongues of working-class Londoners. By 1822 there was a *Life in London* mania that embraced the very lowest price points in the print market, including cheap illustrations and a vast number of theatrical productions.

Pierce Egan kick-started that phenomenon, though he was not its sole author. Egan's origins are in Charleville, the market town in the rich farming country in north County Cork, Ireland, where his grandfather was a Church of Ireland minister. Egan's uncle took one branch of the family on to wealth and respectability in Hungary. Egan's father, James, sank down the social scale, moving to Dublin. Pierce was, probably, born in Dublin in late 1774, and the family very shortly after moved to London.[6] Pierce was apprenticed to a printer in Bloomsbury in 1786. It is a trade that he never really left. Egan knew all the branches of the printing trade and all its levels. He edited (that is, embellished, reworked, and reprinted) texts for the cheap book trade. He worked as a compositor and a newspaper editor. Richard Cronin calls Egan 'the most typographically inventive author of the period', a period notable, as Cronin shows, for its typographical flair.[7] Egan's writing is fascinated with the mechanics of work, especially the mechanics of authorship.

Egan was a jobbing writer, a 'gentleman of the press' to use the phrase of the era, a phrase that points to the dubious class position of the print trade. He published extensively, from an account of the scandalous

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[5] 'Confessions of H. F. V. H. Delamore' (1821), Lucas, *Works*, I: 210.

[6] J. C. Reid's *Bucks and Bruisers: Pierce Egan and Regency London* (London, 1971) remains the most accurate source on Egan's life. Reid corrects the *ODNB*'s dating of his birth. On Egan's Irish heritage and interests see John Strachan, 'Pierce Egan, West Briton', *Ireland: Revolution and Evolution,* ed. John Strachan and Alison O'Malley, (Oxford, 2010), 15-35.

[7] Richard Cronin, *Paper Pellets: British Literary Culture After Waterloo* (Oxford, 2010), 110.

liaison of the Prince of Wales and Mary Robinson titled *The Mistress of Royalty* (1814), true crime reportage such as *Pierce Egan's Account of the Trial of John Thurtell and Joseph Hunt* (1824), to a novel about the theatre, *Life of an Actor* (published in monthly parts 1824-5). A great number of his publications, including his two newspapers (*Pierce Egan's Life in London and Sporting Guide* (1824-7) and *Pierce Egan's Weekly Courier to the Sporting, Theatrical, Literary and Fashionable World* (1829)), use his name in the title. He was a name, a celebrity of a kind. And yet his was a precarious career. Egan is best known as a boxing journalist, as discussed most fully in David Snowden's excellent *Writing the Prize Fight*.[8] Egan's *Boxiana*, published between 1813 and 1829, made his name. The mixed social world of boxing was Egan's true love. He was a proud member of the Daffy Club, a drinking club (daffy is slang for gin) that celebrated boxing and was located at the Castle Tavern in Holborn, a pub owned by the boxer Tom Belcher.

The slang and intensely masculine homosociality of boxing and drinking was where Egan was happiest. It is typical of Egan that he would seek to celebrate such groups by referring to their public utility: 'The present age is in nothing more distinguished than for the creation of numerous societies, for the carrying on of purposes which one man might be unable to effect'.[9] The Pugilistic Club, he says, can stand alongside charitable societies, the Royal Society, the Geological Society, and Missionary Societies. The mask slips somewhat when he claims the superiority of the Daffy Club to 'any other society in the metropolis' because its members are 'always in spirits'.[10] Egan's writing is always more than social documentary: he is, like Lamb, constantly playful in tone, teasing his readers. He shared his other great love with Lamb, too: the theatre. As I will go on to note, a huge number of the reference points in *Life in London* are theatrical, and the novel achieved its greatest success in theatres. He later wrote a novel set in the green rooms of London, *Life of an Actor* (1824-5), a clear influence on Dickens's depiction of the Crummles family in *Nicholas Nickleby*. It is appropriate that he later made a success as an actor in productions of *Life in London* and *Life in Dublin*.[11] Egan was always acting up.

His greatest splash was *Life in London*. The book was serialised from 31 August 1820, selling at 2/6 with uncoloured plates, or 3 shillings coloured. Half a crown (or 3 shillings) is not cheap, but neither is it hugely

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[8] David Snowden, *Writing the Prizefight: Pierce Egan's Boxiana World* (Oxford, 2013).
[9] Pierce Egan, *Boxiana; or, Sketches of Ancient and Modern Pugilism*, ed. John Ford (London, 1976), 132.
[10] *Boxiana*, 177.
[11] Egan typically played the part of Bob Logic, a role he performed in Liverpool, Brighton, Dublin, London, and elsewhere. Egan's *Life in Dublin* was first performed in 1834.

expensive: it is the same price, interestingly, as an issue of the popular magazines Lamb wrote for, like *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* or the *London Magazine*, which sold at 2/6, or the *New Monthly Magazine*, which sold at 3s. The book consists of a succession of adventures, or sprees, taken by Tom as he shows his cousin Jerry around in the company of Bob Logic. The trio tour around London, though their geographical limit is relatively circumscribed.[12] Those scenes are pointedly – staggeringly – diverse. They take in drinking blue ruin with beggars, a trip to the theatre and a visit to the green room, horse riding on Rotten Row, the Fleet prison, Almack's ballroom, Carlton Palace, the Royal Exchange, and Newgate. A summary is irresistible, but impossible: the sheer variety of the book prompts problems in how we read it.

It is a colourful tale, made more so by the images. Egan worked with Bob and George Cruikshank who provided woodcuts and 36 colour plates. The text was so popular that, according to Egan's Victorian editor John Camden Hotten, 'a small army of women and children' were employed to colour the plates, meaning that the surviving editions are not uniform.[13] The relationship between text and image is unusually important in *Life in London*. It is sometimes said that the plates came first and Egan simply annotated them. This is untrue: the text came first, and the book is properly described as Pierce Egan's *Life in London*. Yet to describe these as *illustrations* is to miss their importance. Often Egan's text is a gloss to the images, pointing out features the reader may have missed. The two work together to create the kaleidoscopic blur that is the novel.

The distinction between text and image is further diminished in a book in which the printed text is itself constantly an image. Egan's use of italics and small caps became famous. Thackeray described the effect memorably: 'How nobly those inverted commas, those italics, those capitals, bring out the writer's wit and relieve the eye! They are as good as jokes, though you mayn't quite perceive the point'.[14] Thackeray is right to say they are 'as good as jokes': the look of the page is just as important as the words on it. His additional comment is even more perceptive. It is hard to know where to look: Egan's page glitters with attractions. The reader risks being dazzled. It is not clear that Egan, even, is always sure what the point is. That, I would suggest, is part of the pleasure the book extends to its readers.

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[12] The geographical range is helpfully visualised in Matthew Sangster's interactive map at the *Romantic London* website. The website also includes reproductions of the *Life in London* colour plates. http://www.romanticlondon.org/life-in-london-map/#13/51.5074/-0.0877

[13] John Camden Hotten, ed. and introduction, *Life in London* (London, 1869), 10.

[14] William Makepeace Thackeray, 'De Juventute', in *The Roundabout Papers* (1863): *Lovel the Widower* (London, 1950), 400.

The idea of a book detailing the thrills and dangers of London life was not original. On the contrary, there were dozens of such books published throughout the eighteenth century, often offering contrasts between the poor and the elite, and frequently dwelling on the seedier side of London, especially its prostitution. The most famous example is Ned Ward's *London Spy* (1698-1700); *The Devil Upon Crutches in England, or Night Scenes in London* (1755) is close to Egan in offering a tour from the theatres, the 'Quality end of the Town' to 'Whores, Pickpockets, and Authors'. It may not have been an original idea, but none became a phenomenon quite like Egan's *Life in London*.[15] The book sold very well, with multiple editions throughout the 1820s carrying on throughout the nineteenth century. J. C. Reid describes a 'Tom and Jerry mania, which extended to snuff-boxes, painted fire-screens, shawls, handkerchiefs, fans, cushions, and dress-stuffs marked with the images of the two heroes and Corinthian styles from tailors, bootmakers and hatters'.[16] In the book Tom and Jerry knock over a Charley, a watchman, in his box, and Egan was blamed for starting a fashion for repeating the trick. Later in life he brazenly wrote to Sir Robert Peel asking for a pension, claiming that by starting the fashion he had hastened the reform of the Charleys leading to the Bobbies, the new police.[17]

Any phenomenon encourages people to cash in, and they certainly did with *Life in London*. It was a readily transportable phenomenon. *Life in London* imitations abounded. Some were simply attempts to replicate the same story, sometimes shifting the location. Some brought the price point down: Jem Catnatch's were 2d and are mainly composed of songs with woodcuts and a brief summary of the story. These are truly popular productions, aimed squarely at a labouring-class audience and using techniques not so different from the broadside ballad tradition. The theatrical productions were the true money-spinner. Almost every theatre in London, legitimate, illegitimate, and even the children's toy theatre, with or without on-stage horses, had a theatrical *Life in London*. The phenomenon spread around Britain and Ireland and further afield. Egan did, eventually, do very well out of the theatre, though the vast majority of these 'Tom and Jerry plays' (as they became known) did not make him a penny. David Worrall is the best guide to this culture, and his *The Politics*

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[15] Rohan McWilliam describes the new fascination with the West End of London in this era, noting that the 'mythology of the West End is that it became a place you went in order to see "life"', with 'life' defined by its 'curious juxtapositions of aristocratic grandeur and low life pleasures': '"A Pantomime and a Masquerade": The West End of London in the Age of Charles Lamb', *Charles Lamb Bulletin* 174 (Winter 2021), 44-58 (47, 48).

[16] Reid, 74.

[17] Quoted in Reid, 185-6.

of Romantic Theatricality tracks the phenomenon in its many manifestations, including across the Atlantic to a company of Black actors on Mercer Street, off Broadway, who found a place for Tom and Jerry in New York City.[18]

The afterlife of Egan in the popular culture of the 20s and 30s has been discussed splendidly by Brian Maidment and Mary Shannon.[19] This extraordinary level of activity and popularity suggests that Thomas Hood's anecdote has some truth in it. Seeing two men walk by, one in a green coat, one in black, might well have brought the cry 'There goes Tom and Jerry'. Egan sits at the centre of this buzz of activity, and his book reflects that in its giddy succession of scenes. Almost every critic of Egan remarks upon the theatricality, or spectacularity, that results from this rush of different scenes. There is a half-hearted attempt to give the story a plot in that Bob ends up in debtors' prison and Jerry is beaten 'to a stand-still' by all the carousing and must return to the country to recuperate. That the novel seems happy to leave Bob in the Fleet Prison is one indication that tying up the threads of the narrative was not Egan's interest. That metaphor – of the text composed of threads that are woven together to create a pattern – does not work. *Life in London* is composed of bits, to use the word the characters use, as in a 'prime comic bit' (209), or seeing a 'bit of Life' (283). When it was printed as a single volume in 1821, Egan changed the order of the episodes slightly from the order they appeared as serialised numbers. It didn't make the least difference.

A serialised episode of *Life in London* cost the same as a copy of one of the monthly magazines that were a publishing phenomenon in the post-Waterloo period. Like those magazines, Egan's book depends on an aesthetic 'principle of miscellaneity'.[20] These publications created a style as diverse as its audience, an audience figured most clearly in a crowd at one of the entertainments attended by Tom and Jerry. Egan makes much of this in *Life in London* and elsewhere. Visiting the Castle Tavern (the famous boxing pub) you might encounter 'the different grades of life – abounding with originals of all sorts – a kind of masquerade'.[21] Visiting Westminster Pitt to see Jacco Maccacco the fighting monkey, Tom and Jerry 'surveyed *flue-fakers*, dustmen, lamp-lighters, stage-coachmen, bakers, farmers,

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[18] David Worrall, *The Politics of Romantic Theatricality, 1787-1832: The Road to the Stage* (Basingstoke, 2007). Reid's account of the spin-offs and his bibliography provides most of the facts: *Bucks and Bruisers*, 73-92.

[19] Brian Maidment, *Dusty Bob: A Cultural History of Dustmen, 1780-1870* (Manchester, 2007); Mary Shannon, 'The Multiple Lives of Billy Waters: Dangerous Theatricality and Networked Illustrations in Nineteenth-Century Popular Culture', *Nineteenth-Century Theatre and Film* 46: 2 (2019), 161-89.

[20] David Stewart, *Romantic Magazines and Metropolitan Literary Culture* (Basingstoke, 2011), 14-51.

[21] *Boxiana*, 171.

barristers, swells, butchers, dog-fanciers, grooms, donkey-boys, weavers, snobs, market-men, watermen, honourables, sprigs of nobility, M.P.s, mail-guards, *swaddies*, &c. all in one rude contact, jostling and pushing against each other' (222). These masquerading crowd scenes ask for us to put them in order at the same time as they make that order seem impossible. Egan called London 'a complete CYCLOPÆDIA' (23), but if the city is like a book it is not one with a comforting structure that allows the reader to find their place. Egan created a style appropriate to a city and a cultural moment that made order at once desirable and hard to achieve. It was a style that shared much with the magazines, as Gary Kelly was the first to notice: 'Egan brings to the novel the racy literariness, the linguistic extravagance and self-consciousness, the effects of immediacy and spontaneity found in much contemporary journalism and magazine writing'.[22] Egan had no interest in reading the city as a continuous whole or putting it into alphabetical order. Egan's ideal London observer is, I have argued, a Cockney of the kind best suited to the magazine market in which Lamb found his place: one in-between social and aesthetic categories, and better able to appreciate the giddy whirl of 'scenes'.[23]

It sounds fun, but it can be troubling. Deborah Epstein Nord's influential account of the novel emphasises a theatricality that keeps the characters aloof from what they observe, negating any understanding of social disturbance.[24] John Gardner's account of Egan's use of the cross-class audience attained by radical satirists like William Hone finds the reasons for Egan's 'de-radicalization' of popular literature in the book's spectacularity.[25] Simon Hull finds the same feature leads to an amoral indifference to poverty.[26] Richard Cronin calls Egan 'a pathologically unfeeling writer', a point that is formal rather than censorious: it is exactly by passing so quickly from scene to scene that the readers, as much as Tom and Jerry, 'are freed to become amused spectators' of what they see,

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[22] Gary Kelly, *English Fiction of the Romantic Period*, 1789-1830 (London, 1989), 207.
[23] Stewart, *Romantic Magazines*, 92-6.
[24] Deborah Epstein Nord, *Walking the Victorian Streets: Women, Representation and The City* (Cornell, 1995), 20.
[25] John Gardner, 'De-radicalizing Popular Literature: from William Hone to Pierce Egan', in *The Regency Revisited*, ed. Tim Fulford and Michael E. Sinatra (New York, 2016), 177-94. See also Roger Sales, 'Pierce Egan and the Representation of London', in *Reviewing Romanticism,* ed. Philip W. Martin and Robin Jarvis. (London, 1992), 154-69: 'He educated and entertained his readers at a time when the government, through the Six Acts and other measures, was trying to contain a mass readership' (163).
[26] Simon P. Hull, *Charles Lamb, Elia and the London Magazine: Metropolitan Muse* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2010).

whether that is the Italian Opera or a man condemned to death at Newgate.[27]

These critics worry at a common problem: how to make something of a text that seems to resist our efforts to do anything other than skip from scene to scene. Egan gives us sentimental moments: the characters are upset to see a Cyprian (a higher class of prostitute) wrongly tried; they witness poverty; they shed a tear over the noble behaviour of an aged duke who is kind to his much younger wife; Bob Logic seems genuinely moved by seeing his one-time drinking pal reduced to being a condemned criminal at Newgate. But such moments last such a short time that it seems absurd to take them seriously as part of a coherent aesthetic or social vision. One might say similarly that Egan has his moments of political anger: a huge footnote about the iniquity of pawnbrokers, or more problematically Tom's supposed exposure of the beggars who claim to be disabled but are in fact healthy and wealthy. One could find a counterexample at every moment: a point of sentiment balanced by a point of callous indifference; wearisome misogyny balanced by a celebration of a woman who resists male oppression; a succession of sly references to the radical cause celebre of 1820-1, the Queen Caroline Affair, balanced by scenes that indicate that the poor lead rich and fulfilling lives, and the status quo seems just fine.

It is hard not to feel angry at the indifference to suffering that structures the text. Simon Kövesi describes Tom and Jerry 'economically secure in their decadent fun, safe in the fat belly of the middle classes'.[28] This is also the feeling Dickens seems to have had when he took the slight sneer the Cruikshanks give to Corinthian Tom in the plates and created Sir Mulberry Hawk in *Nicholas Nickleby*. Going around knocking over watchmen might sound, if we are generous, like the behaviour of the members of P. G. Wodehouse's Drones Club; if we are less generous, like the behaviour of the current Prime Minister, Mr Johnson, when he was a member of the Bullingdon Club. The Bullingdon Club built on historical precedent, but it is the Mohocks they resemble most, the aristocratic thugs of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. That's not Tom and Jerry. Dickens's Sir Mulberry Hawk is different not just because he is a villain but because he has an interior life and a definable social position, someone with a past whose actions have consequences. He is a character of a quite different kind to Corinthian Tom, and Dickens's is an attitude to the novel of a different kind.

Simon Hull thoughtfully uses the word 'tentative' to describe Lamb's engagement with London life and its social inequalities.[29] There is a similar

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[27] Cronin, 189, 191.
[28] Kövesi, 89.
[29] Hull, 122.

tentativeness in Egan, one that results from the feeling that these constant transitions from scene to scene, this endless masquerade, is so obviously a spectacle. Hull distinguishes Lamb and Egan: 'Egan's amoral swells typify city-as-theatre hedonism, whilst Elia assimilates this aesthetic to a notion of social responsibility'.[30] Hull is surely right to claim Lamb's greater subtlety and moral seriousness. He is also at least partially right that Tom and Jerry are amoral swells. But Egan has some of the tentativeness Hull identifies in Lamb. Egan's *Dictionary* of slang defines a swell as 'a gentleman; but any well-dressed person is emphatically termed a *swell*, or a *rank swell*'.[31] A gentleman is, of course, not at all the same thing as 'any well-dressed person'. The first plate in *Life in London* gives us 'Jerry in training for a "Swell"'. The idea seems simple enough: the countryman learning city ways. But one might wonder whether the training is the important thing: these are people trying on a pose. Lamb's Elia becomes a way of testing out identities, a testing out made possible by a metropolitan atmosphere he describes as 'a pantomime and a masquerade'.[32] It is a perception Egan's novel shares, and one that adds piquancy to Hood's claim that the city crowds pointed at the real Charles Lamb and his *London Magazine* colleague John Clare and called them Tom and Jerry.

Gregory Dart describes Egan with most precision in pointing to his 'indeterminacy [and] vagueness' that was 'essential' to his huge popular appeal.[33] It is this that made Egan, as Dart argues, such a helpful guide to a 'Cockney Moment' that came into being in the years after Waterloo, a time in which social as well as cultural identity felt newly unfixed. Dart describes the development of Cockney aesthetic modes characterised by their troubled self-awareness about being in-between, 'the misshapen "foster-child" of Romanticism and Social Realism'.[34] Dart roots that literary culture in a broader set of cultural and economic changes, such as the democratisation of fashions in dress that made it possible for Egan to temporarily confuse a 'gentleman' and a 'well-dressed person'. Sambudha Sen's insightful work emphasises a randomness that inheres in the relation between the city's variety, the 'superficial' characters, and Egan's lack of interest in plot.[35] *Life in London* made a cross-class appeal to readers, and it

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[30] Hull, 179.

[31] Egan, ed., *Grose's Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* (London, 1822).

[32] Letter to William Wordsworth, 30 January 1801; Lucas, *Works*, VI: 210.

[33] Gregory Dart, *Metropolitan Art and Literature 1810-1840: Cockney Adventures* (Cambridge, 2012), 109.

[34] Dart, 25.

[35] Sambudha Sen, 'Hogarth, Egan, Dickens, and the Making of the Urban Aesthetic' *Representations* 103.1 (2008), 84-106. Sen helps us find a way of reading Egan outside of the expectations of the realist novel: '[Tom and Jerry's] behaviour also focuses on their persons the city's propensity to destroy the internal integrity of

did so by virtue of not belonging anywhere. It was a product of what Dart calls 'that uncertain realm between popular and polite literature', a realm that included the literary magazines that sold at the same price point as a serialised number of *Life in London*.[36] Like those magazines, and like Lamb, Egan produced work that mingled liberation and uncertainty in equal measure, a cocktail made possible by being in-between cultural categories, 'half-bound' as Lamb said of magazines.[37]

Learning to 'see Life' in London is, for Egan, also about learning to read life in London. Just as he had done in his boxing journalism, Egan helps the reader become an insider by learning the languages of groups who speak a special dialect. In 1822 Egan published a radically updated version of Francis Grose's *Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* (1785), building also on Hewson's Clarke's 1811 revision *Lexicon Balatronicum*. This was one of Egan's attempts to cash in on the Tom and Jerry phenomenon, but it also builds on something that he recognises as essential to *Life in London*. Editing *Life in London* in 2022 can resemble a work of translation: some of the pages are almost incomprehensible without notes. But Egan was himself concerned with translation. In one of his many long footnotes he states that he wishes to make himself 'perfectly intelligible to all parties. Half of the world is *up* to it; and it is my intention to make the other half *down* to it' (84). And slang is not exclusive to one class: Dingy Sall talks of 'her *prime jackey*, an *out-and-out* concern' while the Duchess 'in her dislikes, tossing her head, observes it was *shocking, quite a bore, beastly stuff*' (85).

The pleasure lies in the way that Egan leaves us half in and half out, glossing some words with footnotes, but leaving gaps for us to fill in. Take this account of Tom's character: 'His *peep* into the *Stews* was merely *en passant*; and the knowing, enticing, Mother DISH-*up's* something "new" was tried on in vain to "have the best" of our Hero only for a single *darkey*!' (90). Egan's *Dictionary* defines a 'darkee' as 'a dark lanthorn used by housebreakers', but it is clear from the use elsewhere that it means simply 'night'. Stews is easy to guess, and *en passant* is simple enough even for anglophone readers without French. We start to piece it together: Tom only rarely visited brothels, and the cunning madam may have palmed off her

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things and habituate the mind instead to the experience of random diversity and juxtaposition, fragmentation, and superimposition. Indeed, Tom and Jerry can sustain their situation as connoisseurs of urban variety only be learning how to rapidly erase from or superimpose upon their personalities such markers of social class or station as may or may not be relevant to a particular social encounter' (95).

[36] Dart, 114.

[37] Discussing different types of binging in 'Detached Thoughts on Books and Reading', printed in the *London Magazine* in July 1822 at the height of the *Life in London* craze, Lamb says that for magazines 'the dishabille, or half-binding… is *our* costume': Lucas, *Works*, II: 173.

latest prostitute on him, but only for a single night. This is Egan at his most risqué; the novel is far more cautious than we might expect (as is his dictionary). The point I wish to emphasise is that experience of piecing it together. As we read *Life in London* the book becomes slowly more and more legible, without ever becoming completely transparent.

Reading the book can feel like stumbling about in the dark as every fourth word – placed in italics by Egan – is slang of some kind. Some are easy enough to get: a *fish-fag* is not in Egan's dictionary, but is a 'foul-mouthed woman' as was notoriously the case of the fishwives of Billingsgate market. *Gills* are cheeks; the *knowledge box* is the head; a *castor* is a beaver skin hat; *ogles* are eyes, and a *suit of mourning* a pair of black eyes. Egan takes his slang from dustmen, thieves, beggars, the Navy, prostitutes, Oxford students, members of the Fancy and, importantly, actors. Some are still used, such as 'pigs' for police or to 'floor' meaning to knock down; some are still used in Regency Romances that borrow indirectly from Egan via Georgette Heyer, such as 'pink of the ton'. There are an enormous number of words for gin, including Deady's Fluid, Max, blue ruin, Old Tom, tape, jackey, stark naked, and flashes of lightning. But one must be careful with some of Egan's translations. His 1822 edition of Grose gives Corinthian, as in Corinthian Tom, as 'the highest order of swells'. Robert Morrison's excellent *Regency Revolution* suggests that we need to be careful: Morrison glosses Corinthian (accurately) as a 'a chic Regency designation that revealingly implies that he is both elegant and lewd'.[38] Egan's *Dictionary* elects to be much more modest than his two forebears. Grose and Clarke have 'Frequenters of brothels. Also, an impudent, brazen-faced fellow'. Looking at the Cruikshanks' illustrations, one wonders if some of the seediness identified in the earlier dictionaries remains in Corinthian Tom. The impudence that might suggest an unwarranted assumption of a higher class status is worth bearing in mind. Tom, after all, is no aristocrat: his father was in trade.

Egan employs a trick that many novelists have subsequently used: Jerry the ingenue is, like the reader, brought into a defined social setting and must be gradually taught the language of that realm. It happens in the 1830s in *Oliver Twist*: Oliver is taught how things work in the London underworld by being taught how to speak its language. Something similar happens in *Clueless*, the 1995 film adaptation of Austen's *Emma*, in which the outsider Tai is instructed in how to behave in a Beverley Hills school; when she asks what words like 'a Monet' and 'a Betty' mean when applied to other girls, the viewer, too, learns the code and feels the warm pleasure of being part of the in-crowd. *Life in London* does this, though it does so in

[38] Robert Morrison, *The Regency Revolution: Jane Austen, Napoleon, Lord Byron and the Making of the Modern World* (London, 2019), 126.

an accelerated way that becomes bewildering rather than reassuring. Rather than learning the language of a single social realm, the characters learn those of a huge range: boxers, coach drivers, thieves, dustmen, artists, aristocrats. Tom, Jerry, and Logic use them all. Gregory Dart points out that Egan casually conflates the words 'slang' and 'cant'.[39] These were two different things: slang was used by a range of classes, while cant was a code used by criminals to avoid detection. Egan is a fundamentally casual writer. But the effect is important. The language one reads in *Life in London* is not the language of a particular group. Although Egan did not invent new words, it is accurate when the *Sheffield Independent* said in 1828 that Egan 'invented a language', because no one group spoke like that.[40] It becomes a generalised slang of Londoners, a kind of theatrical patter adopted by those who are careering around the city. Egan's slang is not a marker of authenticity – a connection with a particular group located socially or geographically – but, quite the contrary, a marker of a willingness to adopt the guises presented by a diverse city, as if London were one linguistic dressing-up box and the streets were a masquerade ball.

The point comes home when the characters are at the Royal Cockpit. Bob Logic is the guide to the slang of the mixed crowd, but at one point Jerry says 'Lethe'. 'I am not up to that phrase; it is *new* I suppose … and you want to *quiz* me' replies Bob (318). It is the word Tom and Jerry had used as code earlier in the novel whenever they risked exposing themselves in the high society setting of Almack's. Bob's moment of doubt is characteristic of the book: all of these words are *new*, and no one uses them with total authenticity. Simply by italicising *new* the word starts to hover dubiously; we wonder if it, too, is a kind of slang. Egan prompted into life two rival, parallel, genres of novel that gained huge popularity in the 1820s and 1830s: the Silver Fork novel and the Newgate novel. Both depend on bringing the reader into a closed-off social world. The Silver Fork novel brings middle-class readers behind the scenes of aristocratic life. It takes its name from teaching readers the importance of knowing which fork to use when eating fish. The Newgate novel does the same with London criminals. This division of high and low is much too neat for Egan. We cannot read *Life in London*'s use of language as the upper classes

[39] Dart, 122. Gary Dyer discusses the importance of cant, flash and slang to a wide range of fiction in this era in 'Reading as a Criminal in Nineteenth-Century Fiction', *Wordsworth Circle* 35.3 (Summer 2004), 141-6.

[40] Quoted by Egan in *Pierce Egan's Finish to the Adventures of Tom, Jerry, and Logic, in their Pursuits Through Life in and out of London* (London, 1830), 6. The *Finish* was first serialised 1827-8.

appropriating the slang of the lower classes as they 'slum it', because these characters, and their language, belong in no one location.

The other reason that Egan's book needs an editor in the twenty-first century is the sheer range and number of references he makes to people and places, and the number of unattributed quotations. The edition we are producing will gloss these to help the modern reader. But, like the slang, I wonder whether our notes restore us to an original reading experience – give us the reference points that everyone would have had in 1820 – or whether a certain amount of bewilderment was always part of the point of *Life in London*. A fine example is this account of Tom's ability to traverse the moral and financial challenges of London life:

> Upon descending into the *Hells*, if he did not prove himself as troublesome an inmate as the *dramatic* Don Giovanni, or possess the icy qualities of Signor Antonelli, the fire eater and hornpipe dancer upon red-hot iron bars, he nevertheless had found out the *secret*, – which, if it did not altogether prevent him from being *scorched* a little, yet saved him from being *burnt to death!* (91)

He casually mentions Signor Antonelli as if he were well known. I have been unable to locate him, though there were several men and women who ate fire or set themselves on fire. Monsieur Ivan Ivanitz Chabert, 'the only Really Incombustible Man' who appears in the newspapers of this era dancing on red hot iron bars, is the closest to Egan's account of Signor Antonelli. The *Don Giovanni* reference is more complex than might be apparent. Egan may have in mind Mozart's opera, which was performed to huge acclaim at the King's Theatre in 1817, or W. T. Moncrieff's burletta *Giovanni in London* (1817), a vast success that prompted many imitations. Moncrieff's *Giovanni* foreshadows *Life in London* in many ways, including his transportation of the scene to the St Giles slums and a play on the double meaning of Hell and gambling Hells (leading to Don Giovanni being imprisoned for debt, just like Egan's Bob Logic).[41] Moncrieff's next big hit was a burletta of *Life in London*. It was Moncrieff who made the most money out of the *Life in London* phenomenon, more than Egan ever did, to Egan's mild chagrin. But perhaps Moncrieff was calling in a debt of his own, because *Life in London* borrowed so much from *Giovanni in London*. It seems important to me that it is so hard to tell if Egan is referring here to Moncrieff or Mozart, to the burletta at the Olympic or the opera at the King's.

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[41] In the novel Tom and Jerry go to Drury Lane to see *Don Giovanni*, though they don't seem to actually watch it, spending their time in the Green Room with the actors instead.

David Worrall describes an 'essentially popular or plebeian network of intricate intertextuality largely cut off from the heritage of English spoken drama as exemplified by Shakespeare' in the cheap popular theatre of the era.[42] Moncrieff is a central figure in this network. It was a popularity that Egan drew on, and that Moncrieff in his adaptation of *Life in London* drew him into. But this is not the authentic home of Bob, Jerry and Tom. Charles Lamb reviewed Moncrieff's *Don Giovanni in London* at the Olympic Theatre in *The Examiner*.[43] Lamb enjoys the slang of the piece and includes phrases such as '*too hot to hold him*' in italics. Indeed, Lamb's playful use of small and large caps and italics in this review (common in *The Examiner* and other periodicals of the era) is a reminder of the influence of the periodical press on Egan's novel, in so many ways a periodical work itself. Lamb loved the theatre, but in writing about such a popular phenomenon in Leigh Hunt's *Examiner*, he was marking both his admiration of its plebeian energy and his own distance from it. That slight uneasiness is important. Egan is like Lamb in being so able a guide to the social whirl of the late Regency by virtue of not quite being sure to which category (social or cultural) he belongs.

Life in London gives us a rush of names and places. It creates a fascinating picture of the social scene in 1820. Cranbourne Alley is not just a street, but a street with milliners' shops on it, and associated with parvenu pretensions to gentility: dropping the name is a kind of code. Most scholars of this era will know Canning, Brougham, Jeffrey and Hazlitt; fewer will know Jacco Maccacco (the fighting monkey), Maria Theresa Bland (the singer), Andrew Whiston (the disabled Dundonian beggar), and André-Jean-Jacques Deshayes (the ballet dancer, teacher and choreographer). Egan drops these names as if they are all the same, but I suspect he knows that they aren't. Egan is such a helpful guide to what Angela Esterhammer describes as a 'self-conscious age of proliferating information' that is also 'a self-defined age-in-formation', a historical moment that produced huge amounts of culture and huge amounts of anxious reflection on that over-productivity.[44] As I have argued, this was a 'period of doubt' in which social and cultural status was unusually hard to fix.[45] Egan's teasing playfulness is like Elia's irony: it leaves us unsure where to locate the things he describes, and this quality makes his book so characteristic of a culture defined by its self-doubt.

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[42] Worrall, 1.

[43] Published in *The Examiner*, 22 November 1822; subsequently titled 'Mrs Gould (Miss Burrell) in "Don Giovanni in London"': Lucas, *Works*, I: 372-3.

[44] Angela Esterhammer, *Print and Performance in the 1820s: Improvisation, Speculation, Identity* (Cambridge, 2020), 26.

[45] See David Stewart, *The Form of Poetry in the 1820s and 1830s: A Period of Doubt* (Basingstoke, 2018).

Something similar happens with Egan's unattributed quotations. J. C. Reid is right to say that Egan does not know much of the great Romantic poets. It tips the balance too much the other way when Reid says that Egan makes up for this 'in his encyclopaedic knowledge of popular writing and sub-literature, of street-songs, ballads, broadsides, thieves' chronicles'.[46] He knows these texts, but editing *Life in London* leads me to say that the truly popular street literature is not Egan's real home. His home was much closer to that inhabited by Lamb: the print culture that produced the magazines, visual satire, and the theatre. There are numerous references to farces or the comedies of George Colman and R. B. Sheridan that played constantly on the London and provincial stages in the Regency. Many of the popular songs he quotes are best known not so much as broadside ballads but as songs that became part of the repertoire of the comedians like Liston and Munden that Charles Lamb celebrates in 'The Old Actors' and elsewhere. Egan quotes the popular ballad 'The Beggars' Imitations'. I've found cheap broadsides of this song, but I also know that it was the speciality of the actor James Robertson who performed it at theatres in London, Bath and elsewhere; other songs are famous for being performed by Lamb's favourite 'mug-cutter', the comic acting genius Joseph Munden. What initially looks like a marker of Egan's low authenticity may be just that: he quotes a song that is really known to the labouring poor, printed as a penny broadside. But I suspect he, and his audience, know it best from the theatre, a venue that was so important to Egan not for giving access to one social class, but in giving access to them all.

A revealing example is a reference that initially *threw me off the scent*, to borrow the hunting slang beloved of Jerry Hawthorn. At a masquerade ball the trio hear the strains of a 'favourite air' from *Guy Mannering* (206). Scott's novel of 1815 was an enormous popular success. The song does not, though, appear in it. 'O slumber my darling' is from Daniel Terry's 1816 theatrical adaptation of Scott's novel. As Annika Bautz explores in an excellent recent article, this adaptation is an important feature of Regency theatrical history.[47] Far, far more people saw Terry's adaptation than read Scott's novel: it played all over Britain and Ireland (and beyond) for many years. This is the version that Keats knew and referred to on the Scottish tour when he wrote a poem about it; he hadn't read the novel. The play opened at Covent Garden, which – newly expanded to hold 3000 people – was increasingly vying with the illegitimate theatres for the same audiences. Terry's play, Bautz argues, is a delicate balance between the

[46] Reid, 7.

[47] Annika Bautz, 'The "universal favourite": Daniel Terry's *Guy Mannering; or, The Gipsey's Prophecy* (1816)' *Yearbook of English Studies* Vol. 47, *Walter Scott: New Interpretations* (2017), 36-57.

desire to attract a large audience and to remain respectable for the middle classes. The point is made nicely by Egan. The song they hear is a parody. Rather than Terry's 'Oh! slumber, my darling, / Thy Sire is a knight / Thy Mother a lady /So lovely and bright', we have a song about a young criminal: 'O slumber, my kiddy, / Thy dad is a scamp, / Thy mother's a bunter, / Brushed off on the tramp' (206). What seems an impish inversion of cultural categories is not quite that. Parody is always a mirror: to get the joke, we need to be in on both sides of the reference, to know both Walter Scott and the underworld. Both kinds of song would be equally acceptable at the theatres where *Guy Mannering* played. Egan clinches the point by having the song sung at a masquerade ball, a location in which identity is a game. It is sung not by a real thief – or, we suppose not – but by an unknown woman dressed, as Egan coyly says, 'à la Poissarde' (206). J. C. Reid says that *Life in London* 'was to make Egan as well-known an author on the vulgar level as Scott was on the polite one'.[48] In fact, both novelists reached a very similar audience, and both reached the 'vulgar' or plebian culture through the efforts of their adapters for theatre and print culture. The result is that Egan hovers between social, political, and cultural categories.

Egan gives us a constant cascade of reference points, a cascade that does not clearly differentiate between cultural or social categories. It is a variety that makes the novel unusually hard to place, or even to read. Editors read more intensely than others, but it may be that they do not always read so well. Perhaps an editor misses the point of the book on which they lavish attention exactly by that lavished attention; they are mired in a pile of tiny details while a reader sees the narrative arc. My favourite 'bit' of *Life in London* is the dustmen's story overheard in a gin shop on the way home from seeing Jacco Maccacco. There's lots of things I like about it, but one reason it sticks in my head, I suspect, is that it is so full of slang and obscure references that it took me such a long time to annotate. It's another 'bit' that challenges any reading of the novel as coherent: Tom and Jerry fade from view as the dustmen's story takes on an energy that exceeds any underlying principle one might look for. And yet this feeling that *Life in London* is a series of detachable 'bits' rather than a consolidated whole is not unusual: indeed, it *is* the novel. It's a problem that critics and other readers try to solve when placing Egan in a pattern. Many historians use Egan's novel as an example of a vanished world: Ben Wilson in *Decency and Disorder* sees it as the last gasp of Regency licentiousness that became impossible by 1837.[49] Lamb was complaining in the 1820s about 'this damned, canting, unmasculine, [unbawdy] … age!'

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[48] Reid, 50.

[49] Ben Wilson, *Decency and Disorder: The Age of Cant, 1789-1837* (London, 2007).

and often looked back wistfully on an earlier age in which he and his friends 'liked a parting cup at midnight, as all young men did before these effeminate times'.[50] Thackeray and Dickens had the same impression, and theirs was not always a wistful backward glance, as *Nicholas Nickleby*'s Sir Mulberry Hawk and Kate Nickleby, so unlike Corinthian Kate, indicate.[51]

Such views seek to place Egan in a historical moment, which seems right and yet too confident. It seems striking that this reaction to Egan seemed to occur almost immediately: his was *already* a depiction of a culture that no longer existed. Egan's London is palpably real and yet a fantasy. Watching Jacco Maccacco, the fighting monkey, Tom notes the overpowering smell caused by the crowd and the blood. It's a rare author who notices smells, and a mark of Egan's attachment to the living moment. Tom's joke is to ask Jerry 'if he did not like *Perfumery*, as the Pit was as highly *scented* as GATTIE'S' (224). Gattie and Pierce was a fashionable chemist that sold perfume on New Bond Street. It is a startling camp way of being realistic, and indicates that Egan's realism cleaves to the reality of a culture of contradiction, juxtaposition, and masquerade. Editing Egan throws up a huge range of names and words: I still don't know who Signor Antonelli is, but I'd know Caleb Baldwin and George Barrington if I met them in Gattie and Pierce's; I could tell you what a bow-wow shop is, even if I lost my barnacles while being a bit bosky over burnt wine in the back slums. The edition, we hope, will help readers find their way around Egan's London. But even with our notes on top of those Egan himself provides, a certain amount of bewilderment will remain. I think that's appropriate. Egan was a success at the end of the Regency not because he gave readers reality in the way we think of it later in the nineteenth century, the reality found in a novel by Zola. It was, rather, the reality of a Regency world that mirrored Egan's novel in being so overproductive that it was impossible to draw it into a coherent pattern.

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[50] Letter to Bryan Waller Procter, 29 January 1829: Lucas, *Works*, VII: 799; 'Newspapers Thirty-Five Years Ago' (1831); Lucas, *Works*, II: 222.

[51] Thackeray could be wistful, as in his comment on Tom, Jerry and Logic that 'there is an enjoyment of life in these young bucks of 1823 which contrasts strangely with our feelings of 1860' ('De Juventute', 399). But he was not always so forgiving. His account of a gentleman of the 1860s dandling his grandchildren reminds us more censoriously that in his youth this gentleman drank to excess, gamed, duelled, and would hold the coat of 'Richmond the black boxer' and 'shout and swear, and hurrah with delight' as Richmond was 'beating Dutch Sam the Jew' ('George the Fourth', 163).

Reimagining Lamb: Charles Dickens Anc 'The Sentimental Man'

VALERIE PURTON

Charles Lamb is reread and reimagined in every generation. Today might look askance at the 1952 Introduction to the *Essays of Elia* in w Malcolm Elwin declares that Lamb is ' the prince of escapists. Makin demands upon the jaded mind, inflicting no rubs on the tender conscie he invites his reader to leisured enjoyment of evening twilight in a w of comfortable illusion.'[1] Susan Oliver's 2011 Lamb, in stark contrast 'roving journalist' who celebrates previous ignored aspects of the 'casting light on them and reconstituting them as the places where s critique begins'. The concerns of the opening Elia essay, she says, uncannily modern'.[2]

Charles Dickens saw Lamb, inevitably, with the eyes of his generation. He read *Essays of Elia* when it first appeared in 1823, at the of eleven. By the 1830s he was recommending to his friends 'the orig kind-hearted veritable Elia'.[3] Dickens's image of Lamb came from pop myths of his goodness and also from talking to his friends, Tho Talfourd and John Forster, both of whom had known Lamb personal his final years. Talfourd in particular wrote two valuable accounts, 'Le of Charles Lamb with a sketch of his life'(1837) and 'Final Memoria Charles Lamb' (1848). In the former, he describes Lamb's 'expression noble and sweet' and uses 'sweetness' twice more in struggling to d his friend's personal charm.[4] In the previous generation, Wordsworth Coleridge had sentimentalised Lamb in his own lifetime. Lamb, obvic an unwilling victim, turned out to be perfectly able to defend himsel responded to Coleridge's three references to 'gentle-hearted Lamb' in ' Lime Tree Bower My Prison', with the famously sharp and distinctly sentimental retort: 'For God's sake (I was never more serious), don't r

[1] Charles Lamb, *Essays of Elia*, ed. Malcolm Elwin (London, 1952), xxix.

me ridiculous any more by terming me gentle-hearted in print, or do it in better verses'.[5]

The first collected edition of Lamb's *Letters* was not published until 1874, four years after Dickens's death, so he is unlikely to have been aware of this letter. To him, and to his generation, Lamb was always the 'frolic and the gentle' of Wordsworth's fond poetic obituary.[6] He was also read as a noble example of self-denial in an age which was deeply moved by what Tennyson, in his 1861 tribute to Prince Albert, praised as 'sublime repression' of oneself[7] .The Notable Names Data Base[8] described Lamb's 'calm self-mastery and loving self-renunciation' which 'will ever give him an imperishable claim to the reverence and affection of all who are capable of appreciating the heroisms of common life'. [9]Thackeray (himself struggling with his wife's mental illness) referred to him as 'Saint Charles'[10]. Samuel Carter Hall, who had known him only slightly, wrote in later life of his 'gentle, sweet yet melancholy countenance'.[11] It was this Victorianised Lamb, I will argue, who initially influenced Dickens. However, beneath Dickens's sentimentalism there is a disquieting irony which he also learnt from Lamb and this is particularly evident in the novels of the 1840s which he wrote shortly after tributes such as Talfourd's were published. In this paper I will look first at the obvious examples of Elian influence in *Master Humphrey's Clock* (1841) and *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1844) before moving on to examine Lamb's less obvious influence on the ending of *The Old Curiosity Shop*.

Master Humphrey's Clock

The elderly man wandering through London and observing the vagaries of human behaviour was a formula the young novelist, seeking a structure for his next novel, found ready-made in the *Essays of Elia*. Much work has been done on Lamb as an early example of the *flâneur,* for

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5 *The Letters of Charles and Mary Lamb*, ed. E.W. Marrs, 3 vols (Ithaca, NY, 1975-8)),II, 217-18.

6 William Wordsworth, 'Extemporary Effusion on the Death of James Hogg,' [1835], in *William Wordsworth: The Poems,* edited by John O. Hayden, 2 vols (London: Penguin, 1977, repr. 1989), II, 800.

7 'How modest, kindly, all-accomplished, wise,/ With what sublime repression of himself','*The Poems of Tennyson*, ed. Christopher Ricks (London, 1969), 1468.

8 Online: http://www.nndb.com/people/943/000095658/ (accessed 31 August, 2011).

9 Notable Names Data Base, https://www.nndb.com.

10 *The Essays of Elia*, ed. Malcolm Elwin (London, 1952), xxvii).

11 Elwin, x-xi.

example by Felicity James [12] and by Susan Oliver. In 'Walking and Imagining the City' the latter observes that ' almost all of Dickens's published work develops Elian modes of roving the streets and writing about that experience.'[13] Dickens does indeed begin *Master Humphrey's Clock* in effortlessly Elian mode:

> Night is generally my time for walking… the glare and hurry of broad noon are not adapted to idle pursuits like mine; a glimpse of passing faces caught by the light of a street lamp or a shop window is often better for my purpose than their full revelation in the daylight[...]Then the crowds for ever passing and repassing on the bridges (on those which are free of toll at least)where many stop on fine evenings looking listlessly down upon the water [...]Covent Garden Market at sunrise too, in the spring or summer, when the fragrance of sweet flowers is in the air, overpowering even the unwholesome steams of last night's debauchery […][14]

London is thus vividly present in the *Master Humphrey* tale, as it was equally vividly in Lamb's imagination. In the well-known letter to Wordsworth Lamb talks of

> the Lighted shops of the Strand and Fleet Street, the innumerable trades, tradesmen and customers, coaches, waggons, play houses, all the bustle and wickedness of Covent Garden, the very women of the Town, the Watchmen, drunken scenes, rattles; life awake, if you awake, at all hours of the night, the impossibility of being dull in Fleet Street […]'[15]

In his final meditation, Master Humphrey turns his thoughts from his own solitude to the bustling city beyond his fireside, and to characters within it who bear more than a passing resemblance to Dickens's image of Charles Lamb himself:

> Amid the struggles of this struggling town what cheerful sacrifices are made; what toil endured with readiness; what patience shown

12 Felicity James, *Charles Lamb, Coleridge and Wordsworth: Reading and Friendship in the 1790s* (Basingstoke, 2008).
13 Susan Oliver, 'Walking and Imagining the City', *Charles Lamb Bulletin*, (Autumn 2011), 123.
14 Charles Dickens, *The Old Curiosity Shop* (London, 2000), 9-10.
15 Marrs, *Letters*, I, 267.

> and fortitude displayed for the mere sake of home and the affections![16]

For Dickens, however, unlike Lamb, the London *flâneur* must give way at some point to the narrator, the essay give way to the novel. In his later 1848 Preface to *The Old Curiosity Shop,* he described the process thus:

> The first chapter of this tale appeared in the fourth number of MASTER HUMPHREY'S CLOCK, when I had already been made uneasy by the desultory character of that work, and when, I believe, my readers had thoroughly participated in the feeling, The commencement of a *story* was of great satisfaction to me, and I had reason to believe that my readers participated in the feeling.[17] [My italics]

The relief with which Dickens, as it were, leaves Lamb to his ramble and strides purposefully away into the novel, is palpable in the transitional paragraph:

> 'But my present purpose is not to expatiate upon my walks. An adventure which I am about to relate [...] arose out of one of those rambles, and thus I have been led to speak of them by way of preface. (11)

That 'adventure' becomes *The Old Curiosity Shop*. Lamb's influence persists, though, and, as I shall show later, resurfaces at the end of Master Humphrey's tale.

Recently Lamb's love of London has been reread in terms of psychogeography: in Merlin Coverley's words: 'the psychogeographer, as he wanders the streets, is exploring the role of the imagination and the power of dreams to transmute the familiar nature of our surroundings into something strange and wonderful'.[18] Dreams fascinated Dickens too. Most important for him is Lamb's sense of the poignant relationship between Dream and Reality. A favourite theme of both is the way in which dreams can compensate for the emptiness of real life and for both, nostalgia, literally the pain of the past, involves a strange sense of ghostliness, bound up with the uncanny nature of dreams. The Essay of Elia which perhaps most powerfully enters Dickens's imagination and never leaves it, is 'Dream Children: A Reverie' (1822). The narrator, Elia, talks to his children,

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[16] *Master Humphrey's Clock*, (London, 1963), 113.
[17] *The Old Curiosity Shop*, (London, 2000), 7.
[18] Merlin Coverley, *Psychogeography*, (Harpenden, 2006) 42-43.

Alice and John, about their family history. As he tells the story, his two children react in childlike ways, 'John smiled'[...]'little Alice spread out her hands'; when the story turns to the death of their uncle, 'the children fell acrying'. It seems to be a simple genre piece. However, when their 'father' begins to tell them of their 'pretty dead mother', and how 'for seven long years[...] I courted the fair Alice Warren:

> suddenly, turning to Alice, the soul of the first Alice looked out at her eyes with such a reality of representation, that I became in doubt which of them stood before me, or whose bright hair it was, and while I stood gazing, both the children gradually grew fainter to my view, receding, and still receding till nothing at last but two mournful features were seen in the uttermost distance, which, without speech, strangely impressed upon me the effects of speech, 'We are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all[...]We are nothing; less than nothing, and dreams. We are only what might have been, and must wait upon the tedious shores of Lethe millions of ages before we have existence, and a name.'[19]

The notion of the interchangeability of Dream and Reality was very much in Dickens's mind in the early 1840s, when he was much preoccupied with thoughts of death and still powerfully affected by the loss of his beloved sister-in-law, Mary Hogarth, in May 1837. He developed the idea of 'Dream Children' in the last number of *Master Humphrey's Clock* in which in a final reverie the lonely old man imagines himself surrounded by a loving family and grandchildren:

> [...]a knot of youthful creatures gather round my fireside, and the room re-echoes to their merry voices. My solitary chair no longer holds its ample place before the fire, but is wheeled into a smaller corner, to leave more room for the broad circle formed about the cheerful hearth. I have sons, and daughters, and grandchildren, and we are assembled on some occasion of rejoicing common to us all. It is a birthday, perhaps, or perhaps it may be Christmas-time; but be it what it may, there is a rare holiday among us; we are full of glee.

Again, as in 'Dream Children', the dream centres on an unattainable beloved, presented in the dream-vision as having *been* attained, and as being the mother of the speaker's children:

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19 *Everybody's Lamb*, A.C. Ward ed.(London, 1933), 479-480.

> In the chimney-corner, opposite myself, sits one who has grown old beside me. She is changed, of course; much changed; and yet I recognise the girl even in that gray hair and wrinkled brow. Glancing from the laughing child who half-hides in her ample skirts, and half peeps out – and from her to the little matron of twelve years old, who sits so womanly and so demure no great distance from me – and from her again, to a fair girl in the full bloom of early womanhood, the centre of the group,[...]I see her image thrice repeated, and feel how long it is before one form and set of features wholly pass away, if ever, from among the living. [...]I have my hand upon [the neck of my grandson] and stoop to kiss him, when my clock strikes, my chair is in its old spot, and I am alone.

Dickens was to return to this Elian theme in 'The Poor Relation's Tale' in the 1852 Christmas Number of *Household Words* and in that same year he wrote, in an uncharacteristically revealing moment, to John Forster, about the recent deaths of three close friends: 'But *this* is all a Dream, maybe, and death will wake us.'[20]

To both Lamb and Dickens, then, nostalgia involved a form of literary 'dreaming', the creation on the page of 'ghosts', in the form of characters who, in Lamb's words, 'are nothing, less than nothing, and dreams. We are only what might have been.' What makes these literary 'ghosts' doubly uncanny is that they occur in a medium where there are *only* ghosts – where *nothing* is 'real'. They are 'Imaginary' both in an everyday and in a Lacanian sense, so that meditating on ghosts makes both Lamb and Dickens question the very nature of their art.

Charles Lamb and Tom Pinch

Dickens's was in the habit of defending his most outrageous inventions by arguing that they were not exaggerated, they were 'TRUE' (most notably in his defence of Nancy in the 1841 Preface to *Oliver Twist*).[21] In the case of one of his most egregiously sentimental characters, Tom Pinch in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, he may very well have had Lamb himself in mind. Pinch begins the novel very much in Lamb's 'frolic and gentle' mode, a kind friend to more egotistical characters such as young Martin himself:

> [...]young Martin laughed again; and said, as soon as he had breath and gravity enough:
> 'I never saw such a fellow as you are, Pinch.'

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[20] See *Letters of Charles Dickens*, VI, 764, cited in Michael Slater, *Charles Dickens*, (Yale, 2009), 353.
[21] Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist,* ed. Steven Connor, (London, 1996), xli.

> 'Didn't you though?' said Tom. 'Well, it's very likely you do find me strange because I have hardly seen anything of the world, and you have seen a good deal, I dare say?'
> 'Pretty well, for my time of life', rejoined Martin, drawing his chair still nearer to the fire , and spreading his feet out on the fender..
> 'Deuce, take it, I must talk openly to somebody. I'll talk openly to you, Pinch.'
> 'Do! said Tom.' I shall take it as being very friendly of you.'[22]

Pinch eventually finds himself in London, where his innocence keeps him free from its dangers while his love of life makes him respond, like Lamb, to the amazing energies of the City. What Dickens shares with Lamb, then, is not simply sentimental nostalgia but a vibrant love of *modern* London. This is the side of both writers which is so often forgotten. Like Lamb, Dickens specialises in a sort of 'urban pastoral' in which the physical features of a much-loved landscape (in their case, streets rather than mountains) yield a kind of joy. In addition, an important theme in *Martin Chuzzlewit,* the power of innocence, is suggested by Pinch's immunity to harm on his arrival in the Capital:

> They made a pretty wide circuit in going back to Islington, as they had time to spare, and Tom was never tired of looking about him. It was as well he had John Westlock for his companion, for most people would have been weary of his perpetual stoppages at shop-windows, and his frequent dashes into the crowded carriage-way at the peril of his life, to get a better view of church steeples, and other public buildings. But John was charmed to see him so much interested, and every time Tom came back with a beaming face from among the wheels of carts and hackney-coaches, wholly unconscious of the personal congratulations addressed to him by the drivers, John seemed to like him better than before. (582)

In Rick Allen's words:

> Following [his] first failed attempt to find his way to Furnivall's Inn, but to no ill-effect, Tom becomes an enthusiastic *flâneur* in Ch 39, window-shopping and viewing the architectural sights, and then in the following chapter, taking 'many and many a pleasant stroll' (585) with his sister in Covent Garden Market and down to the river….the Pinches emerge completely unscathed from [the] corrupt imbroglio [of London]; there is indeed something magical, a fairy-tale quality,

[22] Charles Dickens, *Martin Chuzzlewit,* ed. Patricia Ingham, (London, 2004), 98.

> about the inviolability of Tom's physical security, let alone of his virtue, throughout his London stay. ..'[What is significant is] 'Tom's enjoyment of urban bustle and his appreciation of "change and freedom [within] the monotonous routine of city lives"'(585).[23]

This excited and positive response to the dangerous urban environment is one of the many paradoxical features of Tom Pinch – and it may well have been suggested to Dickens by his sentimentalised Victorian image of Lamb, as the innocent *flâneur* in the dangerous city. Again, however, the biographical evidence reveals a more caustic Lamb than the figure of Dickens's imagination. In the famous letter to Wordsworth, the tone glides, in typically Elian fashion, between the ironic and the sentimental:

> I don't much care if I never see another mountain in my life. - I have passed all my days in London, where I have formed as many and intense local attachments as any of you **Mountaineers** can have done with dead nature. The lighted shops of the Strand and Fleet Street, the innumerable trades, tradesmen and customers, coaches, waggons, play houses, all the bustle and wickedness round about Covent Garden, the very women of the Town, the Watchmen, drunken scenes, rattles, life awake, if you are awake, at all hours of the night, the impossibility of being dull in Fleet Street, the crowds, the very dirt & mud,[...] I often shed tears in the motley Strand from fullness of joy at so much Life.[24]

This swoop from wit to sentiment, from cynicism to sentimental tears, Lamb can achieve in a single paragraph. Dickens in his novels can only achieve such swoops as he moves between characters, from Pecksniff to Pinch, for example. In both writers too, as this example shows, lists are used to suggest Life, verbal plenitude to suggest emotional plenitude. The sheer *intensity* of the rhetoric surrounding Tom Pinch also suggests an extra-literary prompting: the myth surrounding Charles Lamb, as retold in the mid-Victorian generation, anticipates Pinch's self-sacrifice. After the terrible family tragedy of his mother's death at the hands of his sister, Lamb made a home in London for Mary and they lived out their lives, according to Victorian re-reading, in the innocent domesticity Dickens strives to capture in his descriptions of Tom and Ruth Pinch. Lamb kept himself and his sister, in a manner particularly appealing to the subsequent mid-Victorian generation, by working long hours as a clerk in the accounting

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[23] Rick Allen, unpublished paper, (2020).
[24] *The Letters of Charles and Mary Lamb,* ed. E.W. Marrs, 3 vols, (Ithaca, NY 1975-8), I, 267.

department of the East India House in London, while writing exquisite essays centred on the wise old 'Elia' – a figure combining Pinchean innocence with the aged Master Humphrey's wisdom. Tom Pinch, like Lamb, loves old books and has a genius for friendship. Talfourd recorded in his 1837 memoir (and might very possibly have reported directly in conversations with Dickens) that, during the weekly gatherings of friends in his home Lamb would shuffle about, dressed invariably in black, a frail figure but with a fine face and, as everyone noted, a smile of great sweetness.[25] Pinch too shuffles about among his visitors (though in a 'snuff-coloured suit'(28)), and is an equally benevolent and moral presence, though the victim (again, possibly, like Lamb?) of a degree of condescension from his more worldly-wise friends.

Pinch sets up a home in the City for his beloved sister, Ruth – an obvious link to Charles and Mary – but one of the moments when he moves out of his 'frolic and gentle' mode comes when he detects a slight to Ruth and moves in to rescue her from a bullying employer. Here Pinch sternly condemns the behaviour of the powerful in tones which are not in the least sentimental:

> 'I speak without passion, but with extreme indignation and contempt for such a course of treatment, and for all who practise it' said Tom[...]you have no right to employ her[...].If you imagine that the payment of an annual sum of money gives it to you, you immensely exaggerate its power and value[...]
> Before he had well begun to cool his sister joined him. She was crying and Tom could not bear that any one about the household see her doing that.
> "They will think you are sorry to go," said Tom. "You are not sorry to go?"
> "No, Tom, no. I have been anxious to go for a very long time."
> "Very well then! Don't cry!" said Tom. (542)

There is nothing sentimental in this exchange. Rather, all Dickens's own pride, as a self-made man whose grandparents had themselves been servants in a big house, bristles in the lines. Pinch is quite capable of seeing the inequalities of the world clearly and unsentimentally and so, indeed, is Lamb, as when, for example, as Elia, he describes a pauper's funeral in 'On Burial Societies'. The final paragraphs of *Martin Chuzzlewit* are, however, a virtuoso performance in the sentimentalist mode. Tom Pinch plays out the story of the novel in his music – building to a crescendo much as Lamb does in *Dream Children:*

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[25] Thomas Talfourd, *Letters of Charles Lamb with* a *sketch of his life,* 1837, passim.

> What sounds are these that fall so grandly on the ear? What darkening room is this?
> And that mild figure seated at the organ, who is he? Ah Tom, dear Tom, old friend!

One key moment is the nostalgic 'would have been' of the scene with Mary and Martin's child – exactly in the mode of Master Humphrey and, before him, of Lamb's 'Dream Children'. It is from that essay too that Dickens inherits the archaic 'Thou' and 'Wert' which so alienate twenty-first century readers:

> So, with a smile on thy face, thou passest gently to another measure; to a quicker and more joyful one; and little feet are used to dance about thee at the sound; and bright young eyes to glance up into thine. And there is one slight creature, Tom – *her* child; not Ruth's – whom thine eyes follow in the romp and dance: who, wondering sometimes to see thee look so thoughtful, runs to climb up on thy knee, and put her cheek to thine[...]
> Thou glidest now, into a graver air; an air devoted to old friends and bygone times; and in thy lingering touch upon the keys, and the rich swelling of the mellow harmony, they rise before thee. anticipate thy wants, and never ceased to honour ….thy sister little Ruth, as light of foot and heart as in old days, sits down beside thee. From the Present, and the Past, with which she is so tenderly entwined in all thy thoughts, thy strain soars onward to the Future. As it resounds within thee and without, thy kindling face looks on her with a Love and Trust, that knows it cannot die. The noble music, rolling round her in a cloud of melody, shuts out the grosser prospect of an earthly parting, and uplifts her, Tom, to Heaven! (781-2)

Charles Lamb is never as confident as is Charles Dickens about the possibility of a final elevation into Heaven; however, his prose too is 'devoted to old friends and bygone times' as in his apostrophising of 'Antiquity' in the first Essay of Elia:

> Antiquity! Thou wondrous charm, where art thou? That, being nothing, art everything! [...]The mighty future is as nothing, being everything! The past is everything, being nothing![...]Above all thy rarities, old Oxenford, what do most arride and solace me, are thy repositories of mouldering learning, thy shelves […]'[26]

[26] Elwin, ed. 16.

Beyond Sentimentalism: the deconstructive reading

Both Lamb and Dickens have been, and are still often, read as pure sentimentalists, despite ample evidence, especially in the case of Lamb, to the contrary. In the very first of the *Essays of Elia* he has already established that playful tone which deconstructs pure nostalgia and anticipates postmodern self-reflexivity: 'Whom else shall we summon from the dusty dead?[...] Reader, what if I have been playing with thee all this while? - peradventure the very names, which I have summoned up before thee, are fantastic – insubstantial – like Henry Pimpernel, and old John Naps of Greece '[27] Irony is an essential element of Lamb's power. When he writes, in 'New Year's Eve', of his passionate desire for life, it is *irony,* before any of the beauties of life, that he suggests should be made immortal:

> 'Sun, and sky, and breeze, and solitary walks, and summer holidays, and the greenness of fields, and the delicious juices of meats and fishes, and society, and the cheerful glass, and candle-light, and fireside conversations, and innocent vanities, and jests, and *irony itself* – do these things go out with life?[28]

Lamb's uses irony to express his deepest feelings, as when, in the same Essay, he vituperates on Death:

> Whatsoever thwarts, or puts me out of my way, brings death into my mind. All partial evils, like humours, run into that capital plague-sore. I have heard some profess an indifference to life. Such hail the end of their existence as a port of refuge; and speak of the grave as of some soft arms, in which they may slumber as on a pillow. ..but out upon thee, I say, thou foul, ugly phantom! I detest, abhor, execrate and (with Friar John) give thee to six-score thousand devils, as in no instance to be excused or tolerated, but shunned as a universal viper; to be branded, proscribed and spoken evil of![29]

This seems far removed from Dickens's characteristic rhetoric for dealing with deep emotion, as evinced in the apotheosis of Tom Pinch already quoted. The death of Little Nell in *The Old Curiosity Shop,* too, is surely at the farthest remove from irony, an exercise in pure sentimentalism:

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[27] Elwin, ed. 12.
[28] Elwin, ed. 50.
[29] Elwin, ed., 50-51.

> For she was dead. There upon her little bed she lay at rest. The solemn stillness was no marvel now.
> She was dead. No sleep so beautiful and calm, so free from trace of pain, so fair to look upon. She seemed a creature fresh from the hand of God, and waiting for the breath of life, not one who had lived and suffered death. [...] Dear, gentle, patient, noble Nell, was dead. (538-9)

In fact, an ironic note *has* been sounded earlier in the novel, with Nell's first visit to the graveyard which is to be her final resting place. There she meets an old woman tending the grave of her long-dead husband:

> [The old woman, says the narrator] spoke of the dead man as if he had been her son or grandson, with a kind of pity for his youth, growing out of her own old age, and an exalting of his strength and manly beauty as compared with her own weakness and decay; and yet she spoke about him as her husband too, and thinking of herself in connexion with him, as she used to be and not as she was now, talked[...]as if he were but dead yesterday, and she, separated from her former self, were thinking of the happiness of that comely girl who seemed to have died with him.[30]

The ghostly voices of 'Dream Children' can be heard again here and Lamb is a particularly strong presence in the closing pages of *The Old Curiosity Shop* where the narrator speculates on the afterlife of Nell's childhood admirer, Kit Nubbles. Does he marry after Nell's death? Of course he does – and he and Barbara produce a big and happy family, not 'Dream Children' at all:

> Did Kit live a single man all his days, or did he marry? Of course he married, and who should be his wife but Barbara. ..When Kit had children six and seven years old, there was a Barbara among them, and a pretty Barbara she was. Nor was there wanting an exact facsimile and copy of little Jacob [...]Of course there was an Abel[...]and there was a Dick[...]The little group would often gather round him of a night and beg them to tell again the story of good Miss Nell who died[...].[31]

The novel ends, not with the Death of Little Nell, but with the continuing response to that death of the survivors. The final meditation in the book is

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[30] *The Old Curiosity Shop*, ed. Page, (London, 2000), 138.
[31] *The Old Curiosity Shop*, 573-4.

about the permanence or transience of goodness – and the conclusion is bleak and unillusioned and as self-reflexive as any postmodernist might desire: the sentimental narrator as it were engineers his own destruction, as he insists on the bitter truth that even the saintly Nell will be forgotten – that she was, despite the intensity of the rhetoric surrounding her, simply a story, a text – a cluster of words on a page:

> [Kit] sometimes took them to the street where she had lived; but new improvements had altered it so much, it was not like the same. The old house had been long ago pulled down[...]. At first he would draw with his stick a square upon the ground to show them where it used to stand. But he soon became uncertain of the spot, and could only say it was thereabouts, he thought, and that these alterations were confusing. (574-5)

Not just the building, the Old Curiosity Shop, but the novel, *The Old Curiosity Shop* itself, like all texts it is implied, is here figured as having been 'drawn with a stick', 'a square upon the ground'.

No-one is more aware of sentimentalism's power than Dickens and in the death of Little Nell he draws supremely on that power. In the end, however, the text itself undermines such essentialist rhetoric: goodness and evil, Nell and Quilp, *both* prove chimeras, vanishing once the act of reading is over, and leaving not a wrack behind. Kit and Barbara's happy family are, in this sense, 'Dream Children' after all. The last sentence of the novel is a far cry from the apparent moral triumphalism of Nell's deathbed. It is closer, I think, to the ending of *The Tempest*, a reminder that life itself is an 'insubstantial pageant'. That last sentence is rarely quoted. It takes us far beyond the deathbed of Little Nell: 'Such are the changes which a few years bring about, and so do things pass away, like a tale that is told!'

Dickens's own 'sentimentality', then, is often undercut by an irony inherited from Lamb that subtly deconstructs all that has gone before– but, as is the case with Lamb, it is an irony that is often missed by readers determined to stay within the sentimental cocoon both writers weave so convincingly. The ending of *The Old Curiosity Shop* is not the deification of Little Nell but the tragic recognition that every human life ultimately ends in oblivion.

Conclusion

Every author of worth is reappropriated by each generation of readers – but the process has been particularly drastic in the cases of Lamb and of Dickens, which perhaps suggests something about their complexity. They both 'contain multitudes'. G.K. Chesterton's convivial Dickens is unrecognisable in the 'darker Dickens' discovered by Edmund Wilson in

'The Two Scrooges' and neither would be given houseroom by the deconstructive Dickens of Hillis Miller in the early part of this century. A.C. Ward encapsulates a similar process in the reception of Charles Lamb:

> When the Edwardians rediscovered Elia they twittered of his wistfulness and whimsicality, his gentleness and devotion, his charm and conviviality, qualities cherished in the nineteen hundreds….after 1914 we found [this formula] revoltingly incomplete, and by the time the war was ended we wanted our Lamb[...]with a difference. So, investigating afresh for ourselves, we welcomed the discovery of a hard core of common sense in Lamb, and a streak of contempt for namby-pamby which refreshingly tempered his more genial qualities.' (*Everybody's Lamb,* 1933, xi).

What seems certain is that, though 'the original kind-hearted, generous Elia' of Dickens's imagination is a powerful presence in his novels of the 1840s, both Lamb and Dickens are braver - and bleaker - writers than their Victorian readers wanted to believe.

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Milton at *Home at Grasmere*

CLAY DANIEL

> What Being, therefore, since the birth of Man
> Had ever more abundant cause to speak
> Thanks, and if music and the power of song
> Make him more thankful, then to call on these
> To aid him and with these resound his joy?
> The boon is absolute; surpassing grace
> To me hath been vouchsafed; among the bowers
> Of blissful Eden this was neither given
> Nor could be given---possession of the good
> Which had been sighed for, ancient thought fulfilled,
> And dear Imaginations realized
> Up to their highest measure, yea, and more.
> (*Home at Grasmere* 117-28)[1]

These lines, 'densely echoic of Milton's description of the original Eden,'[2] provide one of the more puzzling of Wordsworth's responses to the poet. 'The bowers / Of blissful Eden' point directly at Adam and Eve's 'blissful bower' (*PL* 4.690). And 'ancient' would seem less to characterize the thoughts of a boy than those of Adam, whose longing in Eden is his (and mankind's) first, an ancient thought from the most ancient and youthful of men, God's 'youngest son' (*PL* 3.151).[3] He had sighed for a mate, informing God that until that time his bower would remain unfulfilled. His 'thought fulfilled,/And dear Imaginations realized' are the consequence. The embodiment of his 'collateral love, and dearest amity' (*PL* 8.426) steps from his imagination into his bower as a dream come true:

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[1] In MS D he's made 'more thankful' by the more overtly Miltonic 'favours of the heavenly Muse' (100). Citations to the poem will refer, unless otherwise stated, to MS B in *Home at Grasmere,* ed. Beth Darlington (Ithaca, NY, 1977).

[2] M. H. Abrams, *'The Prelude* as a Portrait of the Artist,' in *Bicentenary Wordsworth Studies in Memory of John Alban Finch*, ed. Jonathan Wordsworth and Beth Darlington (Ithaca, NY, 1970), 180- 237 (225).

[3] Citations of Milton will refer to *John Milton: Complete Shorter Poems*, ed. John Carey, 2nd ed. (London, 1997) and *Paradise Lost*, ed. Alistair Fowler, 2nd edition (London, 1998).

> Grace was in all her steps, heaven in her eye,
> In every gesture dignity and love.
> I overjoyed could not forbear aloud.
> This turn hath made amends; thou hast fulfilled
> Thy words.
> (*PL* 8.488-92)

'Surpassing grace' and 'highest measure' indeed. Thankful Adam, after gratefully extolling his Creator, then celebrates his spouse in verses of astonishing tenderness (*PL* 8.511-20).

After creating these links, Wordsworth delivers his bombshell. What he has described as happening in the paradise of Grasmere was impossible in Eden, apparently even in Milton's Eden's, where it's happening is powerfully rendered in the lines to which Wordsworth had powerfully alluded. What are we to make of this? Some initial light might be shed by searching for Wordsworth's correlative to Eve. And, indeed, the lines immediately preceding the passage introduce 'Emma', Eve to his Adam.[4] His thankfulness to God for this gift echoes an Adam who awoke to see his vision or 'forever to deplore/Her loss, and other pleasures all abjure' (*PL* 8: 479-80):

> Aye, think on that, my Heart, and cease to stir;
> Pause upon that, and let the breathing frame
> No longer breathe, but all be satisfied.
> Oh, if such silence be not thanks to God
> For what hath been bestowed, then where, where then
> Shall gratitude find rest? Mine eyes did ne'er
> Rest on a lovely object, nor my mind
> Take pleasure in the midst of [happy] thoughts,
> But either She whom now I have, who now
> Divides with me this loved abode, was there
> Or not far off.
> (*Home at Grasmere* 99-109)

[4] M. H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* (NY, 1971), 289; Kenneth Johnston, *The Hidden Wordsworth: Poet, Lover, Rebel, Spy* (NY, 1998), 94. Also see *The Prelude* (1805) 6.218, 13.211-12 (in which he alludes to his tribute to her in *Home at Grasmere)*, where Dorothy's relationship to the poet mirrors Eve's to Adam's (*PL* 8.450, 5.19).

Wordsworth then extols 'Emma' with 'great love poetry' that is 'of astonishing tenderness.'[5]

Few have credited arguments for incest between the pair. Fewer have denied the strong erotic energy in the duo's relations. Does Wordsworth, sensing the sexual implications, attempt to preempt these insights by negating his yearning's obvious parallel with Adam's, obscuring Emma's status as a nuptial Eve? Possibly, but this negation, far from intrusive and singular, supports the poem's program for a reclamation of society based upon his own immediate non-spousal household. Wordsworth's construction of himself and his sister as a fresh Adam and Eve is a, if not the, basis for his 'one Household under God for high and low,/One family and one mansion' (822-23). Anne Wallace calls this phrase 'the controlling metaphor' of a poem whose 'pervading principle' is 'the structuring of Grasmere Vale to resemble a great household.'[6] With Wordsworth the poet as its guiding light, it 'opens out laterally' to collaborate with segments of the community that the poet intends to renovate. Wallace, stating the consensus, explains that this 'corporate household' is one that 'apparently would be at its best if it accommodated both siblings and mates.' But Wordsworth, evoking *Paradise Lost*, excludes sexuality from healthy gender relations, as he rejects a spousal household within the doors of Dove Cottage.[7] After examining this pattern, I will speculate on its significance.

Denying Adam's yearnings in Eden, Wordsworth immediately begins to develop his exclusion of sexuality from his paradise by directing 'a love song [...] to the Vale of Grasmere itself':[8]

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[5] Jonathan Wordsworth, *William Wordsworth: the Borders of Vision* (Oxford, 1982), 118-19; Darlington, 'Preface', *Home at Grasmere* 9.

[6] 'Home at Grasmere Again: Revisiting the Family in Dove Cottage,' in *Literary Couplings: Writing Couples, Collaborators, and the Construction of Authorship*, ed. Marjorie Stone and Judith Thompson (Madison, WI, 2006), 100-23 (107, 122n). Also see her 'Family and Friendship,' in *William Wordsworth in Context*, ed. Andrew Bennett (Cambridge, 2015), 224-31.

[7] Bruce Clarke has written of 'the pervasive evasion or at least elision of explicit sexuality' in the poem (and generally) as integral to Wordsworth's 'blending of Nature and Reason---which we can conceive of today only under the rubric of sublimation' ('Wordsworth's Departed Swans: Sublimation and Sublimity in 'Home at Grasmere'", *Studies in Romanticism*, 19 (1980), 355-374 (370, 358). According to Kurt Heinzelman, the poem expresses 'the radical Wordsworthian mythos' before it 'became enmeshed in what historically may be called a "cult of domesticity'" (to which Milton was a primary contributor) ('The Cult of Domesticity: Dorothy And William Wordsworth at Grasmere,' in *Romanticism and Feminism*, ed. Anne Mellor (Indianapolis, IN, 1988), 52-76 (53).

[8] Darlington, 'Preface' 9.

> Embrace me then, ye Hills, and close me in;
> Now in the clear and open day I feel
> Your guardianship; I take it to my heart;
> 'Tis like the solemn shelter of the night.
> But I would call thee beautiful, for mild
> And soft and gay and beautiful thou art,
> Dear Valley, having in thy face a smile
> Though peaceful, full of gladness.
> (*Home at Grasmere* 129-136)

These lines rewrite the lament of a shamed and naked Adam when he awakens after his first experience of guilty intercourse:

> [...] Oh might I here
> In solitude live savage, in some glade
> Obscured, where highest woods impenetrable
> To star or sunlight, spread their umbrage broad
> And brown as evening: cover me ye pines,
> Ye cedars, with innumerable boughs
> Hide me, where I may never see them more.
> (*PL* 9. 1084-90)

Fallen sexual Adam seeks extinction in the darkened Nature of the paradise he has lost, beseeching Nature to smother him in twilight, never again to see either star or sun. Falling, fraternal and filial Wordsworth (re)gains a paradise,[9] flanked by Dorothy, an 'orphan' of a 'Home extinct' (78 MS D), now of home regained. 'Guardianship' reinforces this identity as it looks forward to the arrival of another orphan, John Wordsworth, who like Coleridge is 'a Brother of our hearts', and Mary Hutchinson, one of the 'Sisters of our hearts' (869-70). The result is a reconstituted, non-spousal family in the embrace (often an erotic evocation in *Paradise Lost*) of a nurturing, lightening maternal Nature whose 'visible presence' surrounds Wordsworth, creating rather than hiding 'clear and open day.' Sheltering darkness links with this revealing light in an Eden that is

> A blended holiness of earth and sky,
> Something that makes this individual Spot ['punctual spot' (*PL* 8.23)]
> [...]
> A termination, and a last retreat
> [...]
> A Whole without dependence or defect,

[9] J. Wordsworth, *Borders* 114-32.

Made for itself and happy in itself,
Perfect Contentment, Unity entire.
(*Home at Grasmere* 163-70)

'Termination---the 'last retreat': Man's first disobedience brought death into the world, and that's where it belongs, even, especially, in Wordsworth's paradise. Immediately after his initial celebration of Emma, he welcomes the prospect of a joyous death,[10] as a 'thought of dying' does indeed enlighten his 'one bright pleasing thought (10-14): 'Aye, think on that, my Heart, and cease to stir' (99).[11] Wordsworth continues to reconfigure death in paradise by relating the disappearance of two swans who, 'side by side' (346), sought to live 'in peace and solitude,/Choosing this Valley, they who had the choice / Of the whole world' (327-29). The swans, linked with death but not explicitly dying, evoke the condemned-to-death Adam and Eve, 'hand in hand' with 'the world [...] all before them, where to choose/Their place of rest' before eventually dying (*PL* 12.646-48). While the swans remained, their relations are characterized in terms that closely resemble those which characterize Wordsworth and his sister. They are 'companions, brethren, consecrated friends' (347). These were, and are, terms that often distinguish chaste intimacy from sexual relationship, often within a religious context. Yet these swans are undoubtedly a sexual pair, as swans usually mate for life. Since 'the two pairs cannot co-exist in one and the same home,' gone are 'not only the swans but the sexual possibilities for which they and their conspicuous home stand. They'---like Milton's Adam and Eve---'have vacated the premises in favor of the Wordsworths.'[12] 'One death, and that were mercy given to both' (357) and to the celibate Wordsworths who remain in a paradise where death happily functions, eliminating a sexuality that would complicate Wordsworth's 'one household.'

Wordsworth's intimations that his neighbors were responsible for the birds' disappearance is countered with a confident statement of their charitable 'overflowing love' (375), a statement that culminates with a rewriting of the epic's epithalamium. Milton's sexual ideal, emphatically neither open-ended nor communal ('sole propriety'), removes non-marital and invasive sex, arch-enemy of his domestic economy if not his social order, to Nature. And he limits fraternal and sororal relations to a

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[10] Clarke, 366.

[11] Darker readings of death in the poem are by Raimonda Modiano, 'Blood Sacrifice, Gift Economy, and the Edenic World: Wordsworth's "Home at Grasmere,'" *Studies in Romanticism* 32 (1993), 481-521; and Kurt Fosso, *Buried Communities: Wordsworth and the Bonds of Mourning* (NY, 2003).

[12] Clarke, 370.

household's guarded door---constructed by the sexual, spousal act behind that door---which shelters the solitary household, of the one just man and woman, from the evils that can and will beset a fallen predatory, unregenerate, natural society:

> Hail wedded love, mysterious law, true source
> Of human offspring, sole propriety,
> In Paradise of all things common else.
> By thee adulterous lust was driven from men
> Among the bestial herds to range, by thee
> Founded in reason, loyal, just, and pure,
> Relations dear, and all the charities
> Of father, son, and brother first were known.
> (*PL* 4.750-57)

Wordsworth energetically responds. Nature, beyond the front door, never did betray the heart that loved her, rather links it with her other children, in fraternal and sororal unity:[13]

> [...] Then hail!
> Hail to the visible Presence! Hail to thee,
> Delightful Valley, habitation fair!
> And to whatever else of outward form
> Can give us inward help, can purify
> And elevate and harmonize and soothe,
> And steal away and for a while deceive
> And lap in pleasing rest, and bear us on
> Without desire in full complacency,
> Contemplating perfection absolute
> And entertained as in a placid sleep.
>
> But not betrayed by tenderness of mind
> That feared or wholly overlooked the truth
> Did we come hither, with romantic hope
> To find in midst of so much loveliness
> Love, perfect love of so much majesty
> A like majestic frame of mind in those
> Who here abide [...]
> (*Home at Grasmere* 387-404)

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[13] Lucy Newlyn calls 'Home at Grasmere' an 'epithalamion' that 'celebrates the spiritual wedding of brother and sister to each other' (*William & Dorothy Wordsworth: "All in Each Other"* [Oxford, 2013], 109).

Private wives, and those generated by Milton's household model, often have wreaked havoc, domestic and otherwise, as in Eden, and even 'with native honour clad / In naked majesty' (4.289-90). A treacherous 'tenderness of mind' points to Adam's confession of his weakness against the sexual passion aroused by his wife, of 'lowliness majestic' (8.42), who with 'obsequious majesty' allows herself to be led 'to the nuptial bower' (509-10). Adam locates the heart of his supposed 'love, perfect love,' in Eve's 'loveliness, so absolute she seems / And in herself complete' (8.547-8). Adam is rebuked for this statement, which complacently reveals what turns out to be an imperfect love that is no small element in his imminent fall, which generates the fallen conditions from which he will need protection.

Guided by Nature, Wordsworth is not deceived into believing in an Adamic perfect ideal love, neither in a sighed for lover nor, that possibility scorned, in his neighbors. The result is a love that wisely, tolerantly opens his household to the community. Yet, not to argue the perfection of his wiser love, it too has pleasant pitfalls. At its worst, it incites a natural, healthy complacency, which can 'lap in pleasing rest,' starkly contrasting with the blissful rest that Adam seeks in Eve's lap, before and after the fall.

The conclusion of Wordsworth's account of his neighbors continues this rewriting of the epic's epithalamium:

> Here Love his golden shafts employs, here lights
> His constant lamp, and waves his purple wings,
> Reigns here and revels; not in the bought smile
> Of harlots, loveless, joyless, unendeared,
> Casual fruition, nor in court amours
> Mixed dance, or wanton masque, or midnight ball,
> Or serenade, which the starved lover sings
> To his proud fair, best quitted with disdain.
> (*Paradise Lost* 4.763-70)
>
> **********
>
> No, we are not alone; we do not stand,
> My Emma, here misplaced and desolate,
> Loving what no one cares for but ourselves
> [...] We do not tend a lamp
> Whose lustre we alone participate,
> Which is dependent upon us alone,
> Mortal though bright, a dying, dying flame.
> (*Home at Grasmere* 646-58)

Where Milton hymns solitary love as a social defense and refuge, Wordsworth insists aloof and erotic love creates 'Mortal though bright, a dying, dying flame' (a mercy to both partners?). Beyond either sex or marriage, Wordsworth's natural love bonds him with neighbors who would continue to love Grasmere though he and Dorothy, like Adam and Eve, and the swans, 'were not.' These households, as suggested by their enduring presence, are non-spousal. The tragic and somber one is marred by sexual violation, which reduces an extended conjugal household to a single-parent abode.[14] The other two households, happy though perhaps wistful, begin and end as single parent, one headed by a male (aided by boyish daughter) and the other by a woman.

Natural love fuels the common 'human heart' in a paradise where 'solitude is not' but 'these things are' (659, 807-08). 'These things are' where 'sorrow spreads' through common 'anxiousness,' 'selfishness,' and the 'evil' sounded in the preceding account of 'selfishness and envy and revenge . . . / Flattery and double-dealing, strife and wrong' (664, 677, 675, 625, 436-38). This echoes the catalogues of evils witnessed by postlapsarian Adam, who sources it in the daughters of Eve, especially as active sexual agents. Raphael rebukes him, citing 'man's effeminate slackness' (11.634), a quintessential Miltonic vice that is rooted in a male lubricity wisely precluded at Dove Cottage and that Wordsworth would reform in his neighbors' households.

Wordsworth's arguments for the 'blended holiness' of mind and Nature 'blossom into the famous spousal verse of the Prospectus':[15]

> I, long before the blessed hour arrives,
> Would sing in solitude the spousal verse
> Of this great consummation.
> (*Home at Grasmere* 1001-03)

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[14] These passages are usually dated 1806, but their tight, subtle, immediate links with the poem's Miltonic passages indicates an earlier composition. After his marriage, Wordsworth deletes the domestic episodes. All of the passages that echo the epic, examined in this essay, Darlington dates from the Spring of 1800, except one: 'No, we are not alone.' 'No' implies an iteration, a reference to a previous assertion. The most likely antecedent would be his previous allusion to the epic's epithalamium for the solitary paradisal lovers: '[...] then hail, / Hail to the visible Presence' (387-88). These lines were almost certainly composed in Spring 1800, which, in light of the subtle connection, would also seem to be the date for 'No, we are not alone.' Jonathan Wordsworth argues that the entire poem was largely composed in 1800 ('On Man, on Nature, and on Human Life,' *RES* New Series 31.121 [1980], 17-29).

[15] Clarke, 368.

The solitary poet, 'lonely' in MS D l. 810, has not forgotten his sister but is rather emphasizing his own unmarried state as he, like St. John, sings the spousal verse of the 'blessed'/'blissful hour' MS D 809) of 'a renovated world.'[16] The call's marital imagery then, far from reaching out for a spousal household, is based on the intensely anti-sexual Marriage of the Lamb in chapter 14 of the Book of Revelation. St. John celebrates the one household of the Church---all male virgins---as it is married to God while divine retribution is visited upon those who were made to 'drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornications [Babylon's]' (Rev 14.8). This marriage's most eloquent literary expression appears in *Lycidas*, in the vision of a solitary swain who celebrates the celestial joys of a virgin shepherd as the reforming two-handed engine prepares to strike a belly-driven, socially empowered, unmindful clergy.

Wordsworth follows up by inserting a resounding echo of the resounding Lady's rebuke of Comus, pastoral libertine, as she exalts 'the sublime notion, and high mystery / That must be uttered to unfold the sage / And serious doctrine of virginity' (*A Masque* 784-86):

> [...] and by words
> Which speak of nothing more than what we are
> Would I arouse the sensual from their sleep
> Of Death, and win the vacant and the vain
> To noble raptures.
> (*Home at Grasmere* MS D 811-15)
> **********
> Thou art not fit to hear thyself convinced;
> Yet should I try the uncontrolled worth
> Of this pure cause would kindle my rapt spirits
> To such a flame of sacred vehemence
> That dumb things would be moved to sympathize.
> (*A Masque* 791-95)

'The sublime notion,' like the philosophy of *The Recluse*, remains unarticulated. If Wordsworth was indeed married when he revised the lines, he likely consoled himself with the assertion by the 'holiest of Men' (974) who would thrice marry that marriage did not defile virginity.

Home at Grasmere excludes marriage, and sexual relations, from Wordsworth's household regained. What are the implications? However long or brief, a rejection of sexuality was part of Wordsworth's efforts to

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[16] Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism* 338; 55-6. 'Bliss' occurs only two times in MS B: line 85 to describe Wordsworth in Grasmere ('unappropriated bliss') and 124 ('blissful Eden') to characterize Adam and Eve.

regain the 'unity and wholeness' of the boy who first glimpsed the Valley,[17] a state that the poet meditates after his 'embrace' by maternal Nature:

> No where (or is it fancy?) can be found---
> The one sensation that is here; 'tis here,
> Here as it found its way into my heart
> In childhood, here as it abides by day,
> By night, here only [...]
> (*Home at Grasmere* 155-59)

There are also the implications for his social vision. 'Ribaldry and blasphemy' (426)---it is not clear who is looking over Wordsworth's shoulder, the revered author of 'the sage and serious doctrine of virginity' or the reverend theorist of *Essay On Population*. Probably both, as Wordsworth links the vices as the twin devils of his paradise. Wordsworth's 'concept of domesticity was rooted in political and philosophical discourse': 'If Grasmere was to become paradise regained, however, a new (home) economics would be needed to replace the lost Edenic one, which had become reified into the fallen economic law of Malthus.'[18] According to that law, reproduction (Woman's primary labor) cancels any improvement enabled by production (Man's domain): 'The critical question, which none of Malthus's contemporary critics addressed, is why female labor should be so singularly identified as childbearing. One answer is that Malthus's thesis of mankind's rapacious growth was perched, not at the height but deliberately at the foot of that great argument of *Paradise Lost*.' Heinzelman adds, 'Malthusian theory strips labor of even the power to reproduce itself, for such theory takes the sexual division of labor as a given and necessary dichotomy, following Milton and orthodox Christianity.'[19] Wordsworth's pointed exclusion of reproduction, especially in relation to Milton, from his model household in which females, and the feminine, are essential would seem to have radical implications.

On the other hand, Wordsworth in at least one instance does not so much correct as expand Milton's cultural message. Far earlier than Malthus, political moralists had argued sexual excess as the enduring justification for the plights of the lower orders, frequently in rural areas. And Wordsworth 'at the critical moment in the transformation of his own domestic economy, conducted an extended meditation in Miltonic sonnets on the analogy between patriotic and domestic love, between public 'shew'

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[17] Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism* 290.
[18] Heinzelman, 56, 61.
[19] Heinzelman, 59.

and private 'comfort,' and the consequences of the analogy for the growth or decline of the individual personality.'[20] Several of the sonnets, and these among the better ones, comment upon political and cultural issues of Milton's era. In 1800, Wordsworth seems to have looked to, or at least glanced at, the Christian/Puritan sexual ethic as one source for reforming the English people, as he promoted eros into agape and caritas.

Here the public sphere links with Wordsworth's private one. In 1800, he had regained his paradise with his soul-mate sister, while the passionate love whom he should have married was inaccessible in a foreign hostile land. As he later wrote, he composed most, if not all, of the lines discussed in this essay 'when he had no thoughts of marrying'---sourcing this extreme position in his poverty---'and when we [he and Dorothy] had no hope about the Lowther debt.'[21] 'In the earliest surviving MS of the "Prospectus" [...] 387-390, the marriage metaphor is given only ten words (11. 39-40), which grow to twelve lines 1805/1806 (MS B).'[22] When the marriage was set (late 1801), 'there were difficulties which needed much careful handling before Wordsworth felt himself conscientiously free to marry.'[23] When the marriage occurs, his poem on the marriage ('A Farewell') as 'consciously marks their [his and Dorothy's] departure from Grasmere as *Home at Grasmere* had marked their arrival.'[24] In light of the poem's decisive and consistent rejection of Miltonic (by 1802, often respectable British) marriage, Wordsworth's own marriage also might have marked, consciously or unconsciously, his departure from any real hopes of completing his philosophical project.

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[20] Heinzelman, 65.
[21] William Wordsworth to James Losh, March 16 1805, in *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Early Years, 1787-1805*, 2nd ed., ed. Ernest de Selincourt, rev. Chester Shaver (Oxford, 1967), 563.
[22] Anthony John Harding, 'Forgetfulness and the Poetic Self in 'Home at Grasmere', *The Wordsworth Circle*, 22 (1991), 109-118 (117n 7).
[23] Mary Moorman, *William Wordsworth: A Biography*, 2 vols. (London, 1957-1965), 1:518.
[24] Stephen Gill, *William Wordsworth: A Life* (Oxford, 1989), 205.

Book Reviews

Paul Keen on *Living as an Author in the Romantic Period* by Matthew Sangster

MATTHEW SANGSTER, Living as an Author in the Romantic Period (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009). £89.99 hardback. 978 3 030 37046 6

In a recent interview, a novelist was asked what advice she might have for aspiring writers. After a long pause she warned them not to have any illusions about the prospect of a career as an author. The industry had changed, she explained. Increasingly, publishers cared more about the author as celebrity than about the quality of the work itself. Publishers' first question when considering a new manuscript, she offered by way of example, was not about the writing but about how large a potential author's social media presence was: how many followers they had and how often they posted. Anyone tempted to equate the dream of a literary career with the bookish ideal of a room of one's own might do well to reconsider. Readers of Matthew Sangster's *Living as an Author in the Romantic Period* would find her comments uncannily familiar.

Living as an Author shines a valuable light on the same question of what it took to succeed as an author in an era that came to be associated, perhaps more than any other, with the ideal of literary genius. In doing so Sangster exposes the limited relevance, not just of older accounts of Romantic authorship as a visionary company of inspired creators but also, to a large extent, of the more worldly models of literary professionalism that replaced these accounts in more recent critical debates. Hard work, talent, and a passion for the public good mattered but without financial independence, helpful connections, and a knack for networking and self-promotion, these were very rarely enough. Cast in this more realistic light, Southey's infamous 'caution' to a young correspondent eager to embark on a literary career against 'taking so perilous a course' sounds more like sober good sense than unfeeling condescension, though it may have been a bit of both (123). Charlotte Bronte did not, of course, take his advice, but for the vast majority of emerging writers this bleak assessment would not have been inaccurate.

Building on the work of book historians such as James Raven and William St. Clair, Sangster offers a compelling account of both the careers

of successful individuals who were able to mobilize this combination of personal assets and literary potential, and their less fortunate contemporaries who discovered to their chagrin that talent alone was rarely enough. The breakthroughs in print technologies which finally brought book prices within the reach of the general public would soon make authorship a viable career option for a far broader group of aspiring writers (Charlotte Bronte amongst them) but until the 1820s and '30s, authorship remained a perilous course that was largely restricted to those fortunate enough to be both well-connected and financially independent.

If Sangster's work in the Longman and Murray archives enables him to offer a nuanced sense of the economic realities of the early nineteenth-century book trade, from the oligarchy of publishers whose carefully sustained relations left individual writers with little room to manoeuvre to the different types of contracts on offer, his exploration of the nearly seven hundred letters from starving, sick, and bankrupt authors to the Literary Fund founded by David Williams in 1790 provides a stark reminder of the high cost of 'the social and economic consequences of the divergence between idealising (and paranoid) conceptions of the power of writing and the grim realities of many writers' lives' (51). The letters, which Sangster makes excellent use of, form a melancholy but revealing archive of precarious labour marred by disappointment and frustrated hopes. Isaac D'Israeli's dire warning in *Calamities of Authors* (1812) that although 'the title of AUTHOR still retains its seduction among our youth,' it remained true that 'most authors close their lives in apathy or despair, and too many live by means which few of them would not blush to describe' (21) was no exaggeration. Having offered a revealing account of the ways that Southey, Thomas Moore, and Felicia Hemans mobilized their various personal advantages in order to advance their literary careers, Sangster turns to the largely forgotten but far more typical plight of authors such as Robert Heron, Eliza Parsons, and Robert Bloomfield, all of whom successfully applied for aid from the Literary Fund, as examples of 'the wider neglected majority who found authorship and its attendant fashions parlous, destructive, and fickle' (48). Southey may have sniffed at 'the absurd purposes of the Literary Fund, with its despicable ostentation of patronage' (though he gave D'Israeli's *Calamities* a glowing review in the *Quarterly*), but not all aspiring writers enjoyed the benefits of his Westminster and Oxford connections, including the £160 lifetime annuity granted to him by his schoolfriend Charles Wynn (229).

Even in these daunting circumstances, however, the avenues to success were more limited to some groups than others. Thomas Moore was in many ways Southey's charming antithesis, thriving in Whiggish high society after the success of his early poetry, but however great their contrast, the more fundamental differences which distinguished Felicia

Hemans' career path underscores the highly gendered nature of these dynamics. Like Southey and Moore, Hemans was 'an immensely crafty operator, comfortable both in communicating with established elites and in navigating the opportunities presented by emerging societies, formats and publishers,' but the double standard facing women authors meant that she 'produced more and received much less in recompense than her male contemporaries, in terms of direct payments, social recognition, establishment support and meaningful patronage' (155, 158).

Hemans' entire lifetime earnings may have amounted to what Moore received for a single poem (*Lalla Rookh)*, but compared with many of her contemporary authors, she was a huge success. Judging by the hundreds of letters from indigent authors to the Literary Fund requesting support, Robert Heron was more typical of his age. Heron worked as hard as anyone to establish himself as an author, both in terms of his voluminous writings across an extraordinary range of genres and his efforts to cultivate support, but none of this prevented him from being jailed in Newgate for debt, where he died of a fever. D'Israeli's *Calamities of Authors* quoted his letter to the Literary Society at length (the Society sent Heron £20, but it was not enough to clear his debts) as a warning of the sad fate reserved for many individuals determined to live by 'honest literary industry' (194). Robert Bloomfield's early success ensured relatively strong patronage but as the allure of untaught genius grew old, support gradually lessened. Eliza Parsons wrote prodigiously for William Lane's Minerva Press (nine novels between 1791 and 1797 alone) and received a £40 annual income from her position as a seamstress in the Royal Household but having been widowed early with eight children to raise, she was forced to apply to the Literary Society five times over the course of her career, successfully each time though for relatively modest amounts. As all three learned firsthand, avoiding the pitfalls that bedevilled so many authors' careers involved a set of near-impossible Catch-22s. Cultivating the sort of support network enjoyed by authors such as Southey, Coleridge, and Wordsworth required maintaining the semblance of genteel existence (Heron kept a carriage, which was dismissed by some as evidence of his wasteful habits but might also be read as a deliberate investment in the trappings of polite society), but winding up in debt carried the added danger of a tarnished reputation. As Sangster's account of these various very different histories reminds us, negotiating this real-life version of snakes and ladders, with failure lurking around unpredictable corners, was itself an extraordinary challenge requiring often inspired forms of personal creativity that are not reflected in either traditional ideas of Romantic genius or elevated models of literary professionalism.

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Christopher Butcher on *Poetics of the Pillory: English Literature and Seditious Libel, 1660-1820* by Thomas Keymer.

THOMAS KEYMER, *Poetics of the Pillory: English Literature and Seditious Libel, 1660-1820* (Oxford University Press, 2019). £26.49 hardback. 9780198744498

In Charles Lamb's 'Reflections in the Pillory' (1825), a convicted fraudster stands for an hour in the pillory at the Royal Exchange. At each quarter hour he is turned by 90 degrees to face a different section of the crowd. Held in his 'wooden cravat', fitted at the 'exact point between ornament and strangulation', he reflects on the 'magnificent theatre' which the setting constitutes, in which he is at once performer and spectator. Former occupants of his position occur to him: 'Shades of Bastwick and of Prynne hover over thee. Defoe is there, and more greatly daring Shebbeare. From their (little more elevated) stations they look down with recognitions.'

As this shows, Lamb saw the pillory as having a distinctive history, in which the heroes were exponents of unpermitted freedom of expression. Professor Keymer's excellent book, which started life as the Clarendon Lectures in English for 2014-15, throws light on that history as part of a sustained exploration of the role which actual or potential punishment for politically transgressive writing had on English literature in the long eighteenth century. Keymer's central argument is that the cessation of pre-publication licensing, which lapsed temporarily in 1679-85 and permanently in 1695, did not mark the end of political censorship as a major influence on literature. Prospective authorisation was replaced by the threat of retrospective punishment: a distinction encapsulated in a chilling quotation from Idi Amin, 'There is freedom of speech, but I cannot guarantee freedom after speech.' In the long eighteenth century the threat to 'freedom after speech', consisting in particular of the possibility of being punished for seditious libel, remained real for writers, printers and publishers, and shaped what was written, how it was written, and how it was read.

The pillory was the most eye-catching and public punishment for seditious libel, though it was not the only sentence available for that offence. Nor was seditious libel the only offence for which people were pilloried: perjury, fraud, peculation, sodomy, brothel-keeping and blasphemous libel were also 'pilloriable'. This list was not established on

the basis of principle but, as Keymer says, it is not fanciful to see a common thread running through these crimes consisting in the violation or perversion of officially-sanctioned norms of truth and nature. The fearsome reputation of the punishment owed much to the fact that the most famous of all pilloryings, namely that of Prynne, Bastwick and Burton following their convictions by the Star Chamber in 1637, had been accompanied by mutilations: all three had had their ears cropped and Prynne's face had been branded. Though such severities were rare after the Restoration, and the last book-trade mutilation was probably in 1678, the association of the pillory with mutilation persisted. Defoe's ears were not cut off when he was pilloried in 1703, but in popular memory they had been. Pope contributed to this myth by his lines in *The Dunciad Variorum*, 'Ear-less on high, stood un-abash'd Defoe'. As Keymer shows, the loss of ears, with attendant connotations of emasculation, formed a recurrent part of the black humour associated with the pillory. In his 1821 essay 'A Chapter on Ears', Charles Lamb continued the tradition, thanking his stars that he was never in the pillory, and had not incurred the 'hideous disfigurement' of ear loss.

State action, in the form of prosecutions for seditious libels, remained 'alarmingly unpredictable' in this period. Eighteenth-century England was far from being an absolutist, centralised and methodically-censoring state. Furthermore, even when someone was prosecuted and convicted, the severity of their sentence was unpredictable because of the nature of the pillory as a form of punishment. Its harshness or otherwise was in the hands of the crowd that attended. In some cases, particularly likely to involve perjured thief-takers or sodomites, it could be very severe, and even fatal. On the other hand generally, and increasingly, authors and others involved in the print trade tended to receive more lenient treatment, especially if they were seen as exercising a liberty of expression. Defoe had been apprehensive of his punishment, but escaped unscathed. By 1758, John Shebbeare was allowed to stand behind rather than in the pillory while a footman held an umbrella over his head, and he departed to the cheers of the crowd. In 1765 a radical Wilkite printer, John Williams, was garlanded with flowers. For offences of publication, the pillory became increasingly counter-productive, advertising the offensive works and making celebrities out of those convicted. The pillorying of Daniel Eaton, the radical bookseller, for publishing Paine's *The Age of Reason, Part the Third*, in 1812, was a farce, with the mob 'decidedly friendly', and 'his punishment of shame [becoming] his glory' as Crabb Robinson wrote. This inconsistency and indeterminacy of outcome was central to the arguments advanced against the pillory by Burke in a speech of 1780, and in particular by Thomas Talfourd in an article which he published in 1814, and which he came to believe had influenced the passage of the Pillory Abolition Act

of 1816, which removed it as a punishment except for perjury and subornation.

Keymer's main concern, however, is not with the pillory itself but to show how the threat of punishment of which it was the symbol affected the literature of the period. Consistently with the work of Annabel Patterson, Keymer sees that threat as having been a spur to ingenuity and to techniques of indirection and misdirection, of implication, irony and satire. Strikingly, Keymer turns Voltaire on his head. Far from its being the case, as Voltaire had said, that England would have had no poets had Milton, Dryden and Pope not been free, in fact 'had Dryden, and for that matter Milton or Pope, been free, England would have had no poets'. That *bon mot* undoubtedly exaggerates, but Keymer's absorbing close analysis of a series of texts does lend support to his thesis that the survival of punishment 'after speech' fostered an elaborate art of communicating dissident meanings within a framework of permissible or deniable utterance.

Thus, in his first chapter Keymer draws out Dryden's innuendos in a range of works from *Lachrymae musarum* up to the 1692 translation of Juvenal's third satire. In the following chapter Keymer examines the age of Defoe and Pope. While Pope's public stature meant he was not at risk of standing there himself, he was interested in literal and metaphorical pillories, and was concerned about the possibility that retribution of one kind or another might befall him. To minimise such risks, Pope engaged in complex strategies of transmission and circulation of some of his works; and he produced masterpieces of deft and allusive anti-Hanoverianism, for example in *The Dunciad Variorum*. Defoe, by contrast, became the one canonical writer actually to undergo the pillory. Keymer examines *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters,* the work which got him there, and considers whether it was irony or hoax, and how Defoe came to be found guilty. Keymer's third chapter examines the contrasting techniques of Henry Fielding and Samuel Johnson in criticising Walpole. It also charts how some authors and publishers came to see prosecution for seditious libel as being good for business: 'if you should be sentenced to the pillory, your fortune is made', as a fictional publisher tells a fictional author in *Humphry Clinker*.

Keymer's fourth chapter deals with 'romantic-era libel'. It notes the increase in prosecutions for seditious libel in the 1790s and again in 1808-11. Eaton's prosecutions for publishing 'King Chaunticlere; or, The Fate of Tyranny' in *Hog's Wash* in 1793 and Paine's *Age of Reason* in 1811 are described with verve. One notable feature of the first was the defence made by Eaton's counsel, John Gurney, which in effect accused the prosecution of having a seditious mind in reading into the text a meaning which no respectable person would ascribe to it. While not new, the

argument was deployed with great effect: the real libeller was the writer of the indictment, who not merely insisted on reading a story about a cockerel as referring to a king, but actually applied it to the mild and merciful George III himself! The chapter ends with an intriguing account of Southey's 1794 play *Wat Tyler*. Keymer shows just how seditious *Wat Tyler* was, and how intensely embarrassing its unauthorised publication in 1817 was to the by-then royalist Laureate. Southey attempted to have the drama suppressed as a breach of copyright, but Lord Eldon refused an injunction on the basis that seditious libel fell outside copyright protection. His ruling has been derided as counter-productive and productive of a tide of cheap sedition, but Keymer notes that Eldon may have been rather more far-seeing, as the ruling helped ensure that profit could not thereafter be made from writing or publishing seditious works.

One advantage of ambiguous, indirect writing, as noted by contemporaries, was that it engages the reader: as Blake put it, 'it rouzes the faculties to act'. This book likewise undoubtedly rouses the faculties to act, not by reason of ambiguity but through its penetration and breadth of reference. It is a most valuable contribution to social as well as literary history.

Christopher Butcher
London

Sarah Burton on *Dream-Child: A Life of Charles Lamb* by Eric G. Wilson

ERIC G. WILSON, *Dream-Child: A Life of Charles Lamb* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2022) £25 hardback. 978 0 300 23080 2

We have waited well over a century for a worthy successor to E. V. Lucas's useful but limited biography of Charles Lamb, and the long wait has left us unusually free to construct own our own versions of this elusive author, basing our views on his public and personal writings and the letters and memoirs of his contemporaries, as well as on the multiplicity of articles and academic papers which have focused on particular aspects of his work – not least those appearing in the pages of the *CLB*. We have drawn our own conclusions about the seriousness of his drinking problem, the nature of his feelings about Emma Isola, the extent to which his own thoughts and attitudes resembled those of Elia, and much else besides. Any biographer looking to offer a definitive account of Lamb's life at this late stage will appreciate the difficulty – perhaps impossibility – of the task.

So it is both understandable and appropriate that Eric G. Wilson's life of Lamb is idiosyncratic, discursive and often disarmingly intimate; also that – like Lamb's own work – it may not suit all tastes. Witness his description of his own personal discovery of the peculiar appeal of his subject's work: two sentences into 'A Chapter on Ears', he says, he was hooked, 'not by Lamb's Romantic vision, but by his freaky prose. I soon learned that Lamb the stylist is also Lamb the sage, however outlandish and skeptical. Life is terrible, he teaches, but here's how to love it anyway. I wanted to be near Lamb, for a long time. I committed, seven years ago, to writing his life. I am the better for it.'[1]

Readers will quickly pick up on Wilson's pointed refusal to confine himself to Lamb's own cultural context when drawing comparisons between his writing and the work of others. Lamb's poem 'To Charles Lloyd', he says, 'would remind us of Hopkins's 'Terrible Sonnets,' but it lacks the verbal mania of those vertiginous cries. It is Beckett. Words wind down to meaninglessness but keep on sounding.'[2] Nor does Wilson confine himself to the medium of the written word: he compares reading 'Dream-Children: A Reverie' with 'watching a condensed version of David Lynch's

[1] Wilson, *Dream-Child,* xiv
[2] Wilson, *Dream-Child,* 127

Mulholland Drive.' Lynch's irony, in which 'there is no reality, only varying degrees of liveliness, with art being the most electric,' he says, resembles Lamb's.[3] Some might query the validity of this and similar cinematic allusions ('The vivid language galvanized by striking imagery … brings the scene cinematically to life. Harold Lloyd – more Lamb's type than Chaplin or Keaton – might do this bit [...]'[4]) but they certainly make for lively reading.

Sometimes he takes cinematic parallels further than seems helpful. Having quoted the passage in 'The Praise of Chimney-Sweepers' in which Elia delights in the hilarity of a child sweep who has watched him slip on an icy pavement, land on his back and attempt to retrieve the situation with outward dignity, Wilson adds:

> The scene is cinematic. Elia strolls westward. Medium shot of him walking right to left. Then a point-of-view shot: we see what he sees. Back to medium shot. He goes down hard on the street, hops back up, hoping no one has seen. Cut to a medium shot of the be-sooted boy. Close-up: through the grime, roguish mockery. A long shot, taking in the larger scene. The sweep points Elia out to the mob. The camera pans into the mass, focuses on one woman, maybe the mother who sold the sweep, in the center.[5]

The passage is not so much inappropriate as simply redundant. Wilson's reframing of the incident gives us nothing of importance that is not already present in Lamb's narrative and, perhaps inevitably, omits a crucial element: Elia's inward gratification at the whole episode. Wilson's references to film are usually thought-provoking, however, and they also serve to remind us of the vivid imagistic immediacy of Lamb's writing.

Even so, there are a number of points at which Wilson's idiosyncratic approach shades into unscholarliness, as when he quotes (admittedly in parenthesis) 'Sarah Walker's side of the story' of her affair with Hazlitt as imagined by Anne Haverty in her novel *The Far Side of a Kiss*.[6] Another disconcerting practice is to blur the distinction between his own voice as author of the biography and the voice of the author of an excerpt under discussion. For example, following an extract from one of Coleridge's letters he writes: 'Only Coleridge, a psychologist whose subtlety is matched only by his neediness, could have written this. You and Lloyd, not

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[3] Wilson, *Dream-Child,* 52-3
[4] Wilson, *Dream-Child,* 192
[5] Wilson, *Dream-Child,* 243
[6] See Wilson, *Dream-Child,* 232

in your right minds, have projected onto me superlatives beyond what any man can embody'.[7] This habit takes some getting used to.

Wilson is often at his best when he is doing what is most difficult: attempting to articulate the universal effect of the highly particularised experience Lamb gives the reader. This underlies Wilson's discussion of 'Mrs. Battle's Opinions on Whist', which opens out into a wider observation about Lamb's essays:

> Mrs. Battle's goal-oriented obsession gives Elia the occasion to celebrate the delight of merely passing the time, especially with a beloved companion. And what else are Lamb's essays but his casual attempts to make a small period entertaining, for himself and his reader? His verbal drifts aren't going anywhere in particular. Whim is the guide. But when the final punctuation presses, you realize, oh, I didn't know I wanted to be here, in this mood or this idea, but I don't desire to be anywhere else. And like any brilliant improviser, in jazz, say, or acting, Lamb might have known he was getting there all along; he found the impeccable time to stop. If so, this is Lamb's equivalent to Mrs. Battle's winning the prize: getting out of the game, which is fun if you take it in the right spirit, before it gets ugly.[8]

Equally illuminating is Wilson's observation that in his pre-Elian writings 'Lamb creates different personae through which he expresses possibilities society denies him. He proliferates identities, and even if common concerns unite these selves, each persona is different to the point of eccentricity'. Wilson posits a connection between Lamb's depression and the licence, implicit in the various personae of the essays, to live other lives. Lamb's own life was characterised by irreconcilable needs: he craved both company and solitude; he yearned to retire and then found time hanging heavy on his hands. 'He wishes Mary were dead; he can't live without her. He falls in love with women he knows will not love him back'.[9] With the advent of 'Elia' this 'playing other roles, wearing masks' persists but becomes 'a more unified view of different phenomena'.[10] As Wilson points out, in later life Lamb lamented that the signature 'Elia' had itself become restrictive, forcing everything 'to be all characteristic of one man'.[11]

Wilson's prose is highly engaging – although you may sometimes feel uncomfortable, you are never bored; the literary commentary is often

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[7] Wilson, *Dream-Child,* 122
[8] Wilson, *Dream-Child,* 239
[9] Wilson, *Dream-Child,* 435
[10] Wilson, *Dream-Child,* 321
[11] Wilson, *Dream-Child,* 436

sharply illuminating (analysis of the Elia essays is among the best) and despite some minor infelicities[12] there's a general sense that he knows and loves his subject; the book is clearly the result of thorough and critical reading, underpinned by original thought. Wilson has given us the essential flavour of Lamb, and his candid, personal engagement with the material is refreshing. This is the biography we have been waiting for, though not necessarily the one we were expecting. I am definitely the better for reading it.

Sarah Burton
Presteigne

[12] Some examples: 'Gonville and Caius Colleges'; Sadler's Wells figured as a holiday destination; an error in the first title in the bibliography; and errors in the transcription of the verses on Lamb's gravestone – particularly surprising since a clearly legible photograph of the gravestone appears on the same page.

Crystal Biggin on *Recovering Dorothy: The Hidden Life of Dorothy Wordsworth* by Polly Atkin

POLLY ATKIN, *Recovering Dorothy: The Hidden Life of Dorothy Wordsworth* (Salford: Saraband, 2021). £9.99 paperback. ISBN 978-1913393175.

Polly Atkin's bold and insightful blend of literary biography and personal memoir in *Recovering Dorothy* introduces us to a Dorothy Wordsworth we are unlikely to have met before, whose later life writings are shown to offer an invaluable account of the struggles and challenges of living with a debilitating and undiagnosed chronic illness. This book carefully retraces Dorothy's recurring ill health as told through letters, journals and poetry, with a particular focus on the unpublished *Rydal Journals* (1824-35). Atkin's own experiences of chronic illness are alluded to throughout, and it is clear that they inform – and are inseparable from – her original perspective on Dorothy as biographer and as literary scholar. We can be left in no doubt of her deeply personal connection with her biographical subject, for instance, when she openly describes how she 'wept for Dorothy, and for myself' after 'yet another conference paper that repeated the same old ideas about Dorothy's illness' (12). Atkin's goal is to enlarge our discussions about Dorothy by 'recovering' her later years or 'hidden life', as is alluded to in the book's full title; and the ways in which Dorothy's disability and chronic pain increasingly impacted her life and informed her writings are explored in this recuperative biography.

Chapters 1 and 2 provide helpful summaries of existing perspectives on Dorothy and her illness, drawing on a wide range of primary and secondary sources. Here Atkin surveys contrasts between descriptions and accounts of Dorothy written by her contemporaries and more recently by scholars, and Dorothy's own autobiographical writings about her experiences. She is interested in debunking how Dorothy's episodes of ill health have been overlooked, misunderstood and even misdiagnosed by readers and biographers alike over the years. As Atkin says at the outset, Dorothy's 'worth is not in her youthful vigour, nor is it lost in her illness, nor is she herself lost' (20). Her *Rydal Journals* take centre stage in Chapters 3, 4 and 5, which offer a broadly chronological account of Dorothy's sickness with extracts from letters as well as from her poetry. They are described as follows: 'Dorothy's *Rydal Journals* are full of pain, fatigue and frustration. But they are also full of beauty and joy; moments of sudden

gladness in which she is taken out of her pain' (122). Importantly, we learn that 'nature, memory, and poetry' are the main things that bring Dorothy comfort when she is unwell; and Atkin considers how these comforts 'are tangled up in each other' (Ibid), especially when she is bedbound for longer periods of time.

It is fitting, then, that the titles for these chapters are all direct quotations from Dorothy's poetry: 'Five years of sickness & of pain' (Chapter 3) is the first line of a poem she wrote about a 'fearful night' she thought she was dying days before her sixtieth birthday in December 1831; 'Sickbed Consolations' (Chapter 4) is the title she gave to a collection of poems in her commonplace book in 1832; and 'Lost fragments shall remain' (Chapter 5) is from the penultimate line in her poem 'Floating Island at Hawkshead', which was originally composed in 1828 before her illness with other versions being copied into letters written when she was sick. They are likely to be the most interesting to scholars and students, but they also offer non-specialist readers a wonderfully accessible and engaging introduction to Dorothy's life writings and the expansive Wordsworth circle more broadly. Particularly useful here is Atkin's distinction between Dorothy's letters and poems as revealing 'what she wanted to tell others' because they were 'written to be read and shared', where the *Rydal Journals* were 'not written to be shared in the same way as her earlier journals were' with the result being that they offer 'the least censored (by her own hand, at least)' account of her serious illness from 1829 onwards (188). Chapters 6 and 7 both shy away from speculating about the exact cause of her sickness by instead detailing Dorothy's bodily ailments and physical symptoms as described in letters and journals. Her possible health conditions are documented as ranging from bowel disease, arteriosclerosis, dementia and chronic fatigue with symptoms including swollen ankles, spasms, cognitive impairment as well as the physical effects of opium withdrawal. Atkin's generosity and sensitivity as a reader is shown to be grounded in shared experiences of chronic pain being misunderstood, as is evident when she touches on connections between the autobiographical and the academic and how both inform her new perspective on the incomplete evidential record.

The rich archival research presented in the biographical narrative of *Recovering Dorothy* is underpinned by Atkin's background as a Wordsworth scholar, as well as her own lived experiences of chronic illness. This means that while her book is aimed at a general readership, it nevertheless addresses and speaks to the interests of an academic audience with expertise in the field by disseminating her original research findings more widely. One of the strengths of this study is that Dorothy's *Rydal Journals* are shown to have a complicated textual history affected by different kinds of gaps in the evidential record. There are the various lapses

of time between individual journal entries that appear to coincide with crises in Dorothy's health. There are also the later editorial efforts to erase her efforts to chronicle her ill health from the public record about the Wordsworth family in the 'parts of her journals that had been blacked out, that had been cut out' by Dorothy's great-nephew, Gordon Graham Wordsworth (10).

Atkin's extensive transcriptions from Dorothy's *Rydal Journals* form a key part of what her book is adding to existing scholarship. She offers a brilliantly perceptive reading of Dorothy's misdated last journal entry of November 4 1835, for instance, which is said to end 'with no full stop, as though Dorothy was interrupted mid-sentence' (119). Atkin recreates Dorothy writing this entry imaginatively and without judgement, describing how the final word ''unwell' is drawn out, larger and longer than the others and thicker in ink, as though she has had to refill her quill or was having a problem with it' (Ibid). Material details like this provide readers with some sense of the manuscripts in the archives, as well as modelling the kinds of unanswerable questions that emerge from sympathetic readings of Dorothy's handwritten pages. Chapter 3 ends with Atkin suggesting possible explanations for why this final entry reads as unfinished before concluding that '[w]hatever the reason, her journal ends there, on the word 'unwell', and she does not pick it up again' (Ibid). Poignant and moving in its simplicity, Dorothy's words about her illness are repeatedly shown to be at the heart of Atkin's biography.

Ultimately, *Recovering Dorothy* provides substantial evidence that her *Rydal Journals* deserve to be better known and more widely accessible. The most obvious next step is for a complete transcription to be published of the late journals that are archived at the Wordsworth Trust, in Grasmere. Indeed, Atkin includes a brief nod to editorial work being 'under way to produce an edition of some kind' (53). There are important lessons here about reading Dorothy's journals more holistically in future; and moving beyond the earlier and better-known journal entries that informed her brother's published poetry. This brilliant study therefore demonstrations that there is scope for 'many more conversations' not only about Dorothy, but about the wider Wordsworth circle, and the ways in which disability and chronic illness were understood and engaged with during the Romantic period (238). Perhaps Atkin's biggest triumph is that *Recovering Dorothy* brings Dorothy's vibrancy of character and resilience as a human being into the twenty-first century by drawing on her personal relationship with her biographical subject to show that she is both relevant and relatable to readers today.

Crystal Biggin
University of Leicester

Chloe Chard on *Canals, Castles and Catholics: Dora Wordsworth's Continental Journal of 1828,* edited by Cecilia Powell

Canals, Castles and Catholics: Dora Wordsworth's Continental Journal of 1828, edited by Cecilia Powell (Grasmere: The Wordsworth Trust, 2021), £20.00 hardback, 978-1-905256-52-5

Accounts of European travel, in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, trace out at least two contrasting yet intersecting narratives. On the one hand, a continental tour entails progressing through a series of sights and wonders, and according them an elevated attention – or, perhaps, debating whether they really deserve the acclaim accorded to them. On the other hand, traveller-narrators can embark on a story concerned with the experience of travel itself: engaging with different modes of transport and grappling with the comforts or privations of inns. The latter narrative, almost inevitably, generates various incidents, which can be seen as instructive, annoying, amusing – or, at times, 'affecting'.

Dora Wordsworth, in her journal of her six-and-a-half-week tour in 1828, at the age of 24, with her famous father and his fellow-poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, is aware of the possibilities of both kinds of narrative. The three of them, as her aunt Dorothy Wordsworth put it, 'took it into their heads to cross the Sea by steam to Ostend, thence up the Rhine – and homeward through Holland' (14). Dora happily engages with the sights that present themselves – visiting art collections and churches, seeking out views to sketch, and greeting the pleasures of landscape in a hyperbolic yet carefully calibrated manner, as in a description of scenery from a well-known vantage point:

> The Sun was about to set in great splendour & anxious to see it from the Drachen fels we crossed the River & made the best of our way to the summit – The view was inconceivably splendid The Rhine winding along like a huge silver snake seen as far as Cologne – The distant colouring a lilacy purple which gives place to a rich orange & this to a richer crimson up the river the gloom of a coming storm (112).

For Dora, however, other interests vie with art and landscape, both as concerns of the moment and as material to write about. In Holland, she observes buoyantly: 'Charmed with Canal travelling [–] no fatigue

whatever – indeed it is quite restorative after a mornings sight seeing and Picture gazing which is by much the most exhausting part of my Travels (152).' A ferryman who is driven to 'stamp and rave' by her innocent failure to discern that she is supposed to sit down in his boat provides her with material for a cheerfully humorous anecdote (136). At St Goar, during the Rhine journey, she exuberantly describes the choice of an incongruous site for a picnic:

> When a Child I have more than once been told I was only fit to dine with the Pigs but little did I think that one day I was destined to eat my dinner in a Sty! A Sty! today was my sal-à manger and a very dry & comfortable one it was – Mr C – introduced us to it – & we found it a good shelter from the flying showers (131).

Managing practicalities and managing aesthetic pleasure are, unsurprisingly, not mutually exclusive for Dora: while the party are about to travel on from Bonn to Cologne, she describes a potentially wearisome interlude that becomes an occasion for delight: 'At eleven oclock we parted from our kind Friends – made our way to the River Side & there sate under the delicious shade of a fine old elm in front of a small Inn for two hours waiting for the Diligence – We beguiled the time in the true German style – with a bottle of Wine.' Visual fascination then floats into this happy scene: 'We were fortunate enough to witness a lovely picture – A Boat filled with Nun like Figures some sitting others sleeping – all their attitudes peculiarly happy – a female steering (142).'

When Dora allows the sights to take precedence over the incidents, she often acknowledges the educational dimension of her tour, with her father and 'Mr C – ' assuming a distinctly preceptorial role: in Ghent, she notes: 'To the Academy some good Pictures but my Tutors tell me none quite first rate (89).' On the journey from Aachen to Cologne, she suggests that she has discussed with Coleridge the kinds of language that topographical commentary might demand, and mischievously implies by her down-to-earth enumeration of crops and vegetation that he has urged her to aim for severe simplicity: 'off again and thus Mr C – bids me journalize – Rye barley, wheat, potatoes, clover, clover potatoes wheat barley rye – trees in the distance no trees' (106). At one point, she details the tribulations of travelling with a father who is eager for her to derive every possible advantage from the scenes through which they progress: 'heavy rain which obliged us to shut up the Carriage much to Papa's chagrin – who was cruel enough to <u>dear</u> & to <u>touch</u> me every moment to poke my head through a Hole not much larger than a Needle's eye – to look at some rock or Castle (115-16).'

In the early nineteenth century, the family tour became a recognized genre of travel writing – often of a satirical nature, as exemplified by Thomas Moore's *The Fudge Family in Paris* (1818). Dora's journal is obviously not exactly a narrative of this kind, but she registers a strong awareness of the social interaction between the three travellers. The sad state of health of Mr C – , for example, delicately ascribed to causes more mundane than opium addiction ('far from well the heat kills him'), demands some solicitude from Dora and William: at Spa, 'again bought fruit &c on which we dined – to Mr C's no small comfort as he dislikes the Cookery so much' (105).

Dora Wordsworth's journal is a lively and spirited read, which has been published in a very generously annotated – and illustrated – edition. The book includes two introductory chapters, concerned with Dora's biography and with the tour, a day-to-day 'Commentary' at the end, richly informative about places and people encountered along the way, a few 'Poems by Coleridge and Wordsworth resulting from the Tour' and extracts from writings by two travellers who spent time with the party on their travels: Thomas Colley Grattan and Julian Charles Young. Other travel writings of the period would lend themselves to similarly thoughtful treatment.

Chloe Chard
London

Note from the Friends of All Saints Edmonton

Phillip Hawes of Friends of All Saints Edmonton writes:

We were dismayed to discover over Open House weekend that the grave of Charles and Mary Lamb and indeed all the Garden of Remembrance was so overgrown by ivy that it had become inaccessible.

Committee members Phillip Hawes and Robert Musgrove decided that, in the absence of maintenance by the Enfield Parks Department, voluntary direct action was necessary. And so a small crew of volunteers was assembled and began work on removing the ivy on the following Saturday, 11th September.

Underestimating the tenacity of the ivy, it took the crew working every weekend until the end of September, to clear the undergrowth into some 50 green bags for collection by the Parks Department. The team then decided to undertake the task of removing the giant buddleia engulfing the elevated tomb to the right of the garden entrance and then clear the garden of the overgrowth, which resulted in over 200 bags of cuttings. Robert Musgrove had been on the lookout for undiscovered graves and was delighted to uncover the grave of Joseph Salmon (he of Salmon's Brook fame).

The team discussed possible replenishment planting in the Garden of Remembrance. Daffodils were suggested as Charles and Mary Lamb knew William and Dorothy Wordsworth well. Wordsworth wrote a short epitaph for Charles, which can still be seen in the church. So there seem to be good enough connections to merit some daffodils in the garden and at the end of October we planted about 200 bulbs around the site. So hopefully in the Spring of 2022, a lonely cloud will be cheered up by a 'splash of daffs'!

Lamb Society Essay Prize 2022

Deadline for submissions: 31 December 2022

The Charles Lamb Society welcomes submissions for a new essay prize. The competition is open to all. The winning essay will be published in the *Charles Lamb Bulletin* (with revisions if appropriate) and the author will receive £200 and a one-year subscription to the Charles Lamb Society, including two issues of the journal. They will also receive 5 additional copies of the issue in which their essay is published.

Essays should be 3000-7000 words, and not under consideration for publication elsewhere. Entries must offer an original contribution on either, or both, Mary and Charles Lamb and their circle. All shortlisted submissions will be considered for potential publication in the *CLB,* and the winner will be chosen by the *Bulletin* Editorial Board. Please see the Lamb Society website for the style guide: www.charleslambsociety.com. Entries should be sent to the Editor, John.gardner@aru.ac.uk.

The *Charles Lamb Bulletin* is a highly regarded peer-review journal and a lively forum for discussion of all things Elian. It was founded in 1935 and since then has printed over four hundred issues containing essays, letters, reviews, poems, notes and queries relating to the Lambs and their circle. Its contributors have included an array of distinguished scholars including Jonathan Bate, Edmund Blunden, Gillian Beer, John Beer, Helen Darbishire, Earl Leslie Griggs, Nicholas Roe and Duncan Wu.

The *Bulletin* is now produced twice a year, in the summer and winter. It aims to promote and develop scholarship on the Lambs' circle and the editor welcomes submissions in the form of essays, reviews, and notes and queries from established academics, new entrants to the field, and those who simply admire the Lambs' writings.

Past issues of the *Bulletin* can be found at: www.charleslambsociety.com.

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UK-only payment options:

Student/Early-Career Membership : £5.00 GBP - yearly Individual membership : £24.00 GBP - yearly Double membership (one Bulletin) : £32.00 GBP - yearly Corporate membership : £32.00 GBP - yearly

Access this option here: **https://www.charleslambsociety.com/join.html**

Overseas payment options:

Student/Early-Career Membership : $10.00 USD - yearly Individual membership : $45.00 USD - yearly Corporate membership : $60.00 USD - yearly

Again, you can access this here: **https://www.charleslambsociety.com/join.html**

iii) Send a cheque (payable to 'The Charles Lamb Society') to the following address:

Paul Stephens
Treasurer, Charles Lamb Society
Lincoln College, Oxford
OX1 3DR

Subscriptions are due in January of each year. The following rates apply:

- Student/Early-Career Membership (UK only), £5; (overseas), $10
- Individual membership (UK only), £24
- Double membership (UK only, one Bulletin), £32
- Individual membership (overseas), $45
- Individual membership (overseas), $60
- Corporate membership (UK only), £32; (overseas), $60

If you have any issues accessing these options or if you have any queries then please contact the membership secretary Helen Goodman at h.goodman@bathspa.ac.uk, or the Chairs, Felicity James, fj21@le.ac.uk and John Strachan, j.strachan@bathspa.ac.uk, or the editor, john.gardner@aru.ac.uk.

The Charles Lamb Bulletin

www.charleslambsociety.com/bulletin.html

The Charles Lamb Society *Bulletin* has been published since 1935. Its first editor was the Elian scholar and poet S. M. Rich. The new series began in January 1973 as *The Charles Lamb Bulletin* under the editorship of Basil Savage. The *Bulletin* is a peer-reviewed journal devoted to the study of Charles and Mary Lamb and their circle. It aims to promote Lamb scholarship and welcomes submissions in the form of essays, reviews, and notes and queries from established academics, new entrants to the field, and those who simply admire the Lambs' writings.

Essays submitted to the journal should be in 11-point Book Antiqua typescript and between 4000 and 8000 words in length. Preferably, submissions should be sent to the Editor as an email attachment in MS Word. Submissions should be double-spaced throughout, including quotations, and should follow MHRA style, with a couple of minor alterations. A full style-sheet is available online at the Society's website. For further information contact the Editor, John Gardner, School of Humanities, Anglia Ruskin University, East Road, Cambridge, CB1 1PT (john.gardner@aru.ac.uk).

The Charles Lamb Society

www.charleslambsociety.com

The Charles Lamb Society was founded on 1 February 1935 at a meeting at Essex Hall in The Strand. Its first President was Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch. Today, the Society aims to advance the study of the life, works, and times of Charles and Mary Lamb and their circle; to preserve for the public a collection of Eliana (currently held at Guildhall Library, London); and to stimulate the Elian spirit of friendliness and humour. The Society holds a series of events each year in London, including lectures, study days, and a Charles Lamb Birthday Luncheon. The Society also publishes the biannual peer-review journal, *The Charles Lamb Bulletin*. For further information please contact either the Membership Secretary, Helen Goodman, h.goodman@bathspa.ac.uk, or the Chairs, Felicity James, fj21@le.ac.uk and John Strachan, j.strachan@bathspa.ac.uk.

Postal Address: BM-ELIA, London, WC1N 3XX

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