The Charles Lamb Bulletin

The Journal of the Charles Lamb Society

July 2000 New Series No. 111

Contents

Editorial

With this number, we will be adding two small, additional sections to the 'Society Notes and News From Members', on an experimental basis. First, 'The Bulletin Board' will serve as a medium for notes and queries on Elian matters or the period, in general. Mr. David Crosher's query on the Lamb citation from the *Independent* is one such item, as is the announcement of September's Kilve Weekend. As I indicate in the Bulletin Board itself, where responses are appropriate, I will publish them in subsequent issues. Reader's responses should, therefore, be forwarded to me.

In addition, I have included significant dates from the Romantic Period, organized to correspond to the quarter in which each *Bulletin* issue is published, that may be of interest to Elians. Again, this effort is also dependent upon members' preferences.

Finally, as you will note on the issue's reverse cover, for those who wish to send publication matter in electronic form, e-mails, transmitted to my address included there, are as acceptable as floppy disks. Of course, print copies are equally welcome.

Joseph Cottle the Baptist

By TIMOTHY WHELAN

Possibly no English writer's life has created greater fascination and borne more scrutiny than that of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. The procession of articles, book-length biographies, critical studies, dissertations and theses devoted to his life and work now number into the thousands. Without fail these works introduce us to the numerous individuals whose lives intertwined with Coleridge's and contributed to his development as a poet, philosopher, and critic. No study of Coleridge's life would be complete without a knowledge of these individuals, and as a result of the labors of numerous scholars, we know volumes about the debt Coleridge owed to so many individuals, as well as his influence upon them, especially in matters of religion, one of Coleridge's chief concerns throughout his life. However, the information disseminated about the religion of one of Coleridge's early benefactors, Joseph Cottle, has been selective at best, at times grossly inaccurate, and on most occasions, nonexistent.

Long before his battles with Coleridge's family and friends over the publishing of his *Early Recollections; Chiefly Relating to the Late Samuel Taylor Coleridge, during his long residence in Bristol* (1837), in which he exposed and condemned Coleridge's opium habit in an obviously unprofessional manner, Cottle had been relegated to the status of a self-promoting, self-righteous, provincial literary dilettante by those in the Wordsworth-Coleridge circle. Even those he helped the most in that brief period in the 1790s and whom he considered his friends—Coleridge, Southey, Wordsworth, and Lamb—would all eventually ridicule him behind his back, sometimes in vicious satire aimed primarily at his literary pretentiousness. Cottle was a prolific poet, but, unfortunately, not a very good one. What may have bothered his friends, even more than his literary inadequacies, however, was Cottle's religious faith and zeal. In this regard his friends appeared to have understood him quite well, even if those in the Wordsworth-Coleridge circle largely disagreed with him. Surprisingly, though, most scholars since then have *not* understood Cottle's religious position, either ignoring it completely (which is the most common occurrence) or misstating it in sweeping generalizations.

A good example of this latter difficulty occurs in Richard Holmes's *Coleridge: Early Visions* (1989). Holmes describes Cottle, upon first meeting Coleridge in August 1795, as a "young Unitarian publisher"[1] already hard at work on Southey's *Joan of Arc.* In an appendix entitled "Coleridge's Circle," Holmes (after an erroneous date of 1835 for Cottle's death) simply lists Cottle as "Bristol publisher, Unitarian."[2] To Holmes, Bristol in the 1790s was a city with a "thriving community of Unitarian businessmen who acted as an intellectual leaven among the rich commercial clan of merchants, ship-owners, lawyers, manufacturers and shopkeepers."[3] Cottle, Holmes implies, was apparently a part of this Unitarian "leaven." Later he describes Coleridge's series of lectures in 1796 as "officially under the patronage of several leading Bristol citizens, of Unitarian or liberal persuasion, who were to become lifelong supporters of Coleridge."[4] Among these Holmes names "Joseph Cottle and his brother" (probably referring to Amos, Cottle's older brother who died in 1799; he also had a younger brother Robert) and their

[1] Holmes 69.
[2] Holmes 366.
[3] Holmes 92.
[4] Holmes 95-96.

"publishing house"[5] (neither brother, however, entered into business with Joseph). To Holmes, the Unitarians "represented the backbone of the Dissenting tradition in England."[6] Consequently, Coleridge's decision in December 1795 to commence publication of the *Watchman* (with Cottle's generous assistance) was "to create a rallying point for the Unitarians and moderate democrats in a radical Christian journal."[7] It was "the Dissenting communities (Unitarian, Methodist, and Quaker),"[8] Holmes claims, which formed the basis of Coleridge's subscription-gathering tour in January 1796.

Holmes pronounces Joseph Cottle an advocate of the liberal Unitarianism adopted by Coleridge when he came to Bristol in 1794. This, however, is simply not true. Cottle was never a Unitarian; he and his brother never ran a Unitarian publishing house, nor were the Unitarians the "backbone" of the Dissenting presence in Bristol. A Unitarian chapel did exist at Lewin's Mead, pastored by John Prior Estlin, who would become Coleridge's friend and mentor. The leading "community" of Dissenters in Bristol, however, was neither the Unitarians, Methodists, or the Quakers, as Holmes suggests, but rather the Baptists, with whom Joseph Cottle had from birth been associated. As Bristol's leading liberal Dissenting printer and bookseller in the 1790s, Cottle indeed served as part of the "intellectual leaven" of Bristol, but he did so as a Baptist, not a Unitarian. Coleridge brought with him to Bristol in late summer 1794 a budding Unitarianism, but it was Bristol's Baptist Dissenting tradition—grounded in Calvinism and the British Constitution, the sanctity of the individual conscience and the separation of church and state, the right to freedom of speech and association and the protection from persecution for exercising that right—that Cottle introduced to Coleridge during his stay in Bristol.

Cottle's Baptist credentials were certainly not hidden from Coleridge, Southey, Wordsworth, Lamb, or Poole as they formed their mutual friendships and working relations between 1794-99. Originally from Gloucestershire, Cottle's mother, Grace, had a close relationship with her cousin Anne Steele, the famous Baptist hymnwriter known as "Theodosia," whose three-volume *Poems on Subjects Chiefly Devotional* (published in Bristol in 1780 by William Pine, and republished in 1796 by Cottle) contained numerous hymns quite popular among the Baptist churches of England. Anne occasionally visited in the 1730s at the home of a Joseph Cottle of Trowbridge (one of Cottle's relatives), and in a letter to Grace Cottle dated 18 May 1761, Anne Steele congratulates the Cottles on their recent move to Bristol and informs Grace that she cannot visit any time soon because of the recent death of her mother, a "mournful Event," the account of which "must have been affecting to you." In 1778 young Joseph was sent to Richard Henderson's Baptist Academy at Hanham, where he met and grew quite fond of the headmaster's son John Henderson, the brilliant but eccentric classics instructor who began teaching Latin and Greek at the age of twelve in a Welsh college. Henderson's brilliance was widely known, counting among his admirers Hannah More and Samuel Johnson. His untimely death in 1788 provoked what may have been Cottle's best poem, the "Monody on the Death of John Henderson," as well as a prose "Sketch of His Character," both of which appeared in his *Poems* (1795). While at Hanham Cottle also met William Gilbert, the eccentric, sometimes "mad" author of "The Hurricane," who was a patient at the Asylum, also operated by Richard Henderson.[9]

[5] Holmes 96.
[6] Holmes 96.
[7] Holmes 106.
[8] Holmes 107.
[9] Cottle, *Reminiscences* 42.

"publishing house"[5] (neither brother, however, entered into business with Joseph). To Holmes, the Unitarians "represented the backbone of the Dissenting tradition in England."[6] Consequently, Coleridge's decision in December 1795 to commence publication of the *Watchman* (with Cottle's generous assistance) was "to create a rallying point for the Unitarians and moderate democrats in a radical Christian journal."[7] It was "the Dissenting communities (Unitarian, Methodist, and Quaker),"[8] Holmes claims, which formed the basis of Coleridge's subscription-gathering tour in January 1796.

Holmes pronounces Joseph Cottle an advocate of the liberal Unitarianism adopted by Coleridge when he came to Bristol in 1794. This, however, is simply not true. Cottle was never a Unitarian; he and his brother never ran a Unitarian publishing house, nor were the Unitarians the "backbone" of the Dissenting presence in Bristol. A Unitarian chapel did exist at Lewin's Mead, pastored by John Prior Estlin, who would become Coleridge's friend and mentor. The leading "community" of Dissenters in Bristol, however, was neither the Unitarians, Methodists, or the Quakers, as Holmes suggests, but rather the Baptists, with whom Joseph Cottle had from birth been associated. As Bristol's leading liberal Dissenting printer and bookseller in the 1790s, Cottle indeed served as part of the "intellectual leaven" of Bristol, but he did so as a Baptist, not a Unitarian. Coleridge brought with him to Bristol in late summer 1794 a budding Unitarianism, but it was Bristol's Baptist Dissenting tradition—grounded in Calvinism and the British Constitution, the sanctity of the individual conscience and the separation of church and state, the right to freedom of speech and association and the protection from persecution for exercising that right—that Cottle introduced to Coleridge during his stay in Bristol.

Cottle's Baptist credentials were certainly not hidden from Coleridge, Southey, Wordsworth, Lamb, or Poole as they formed their mutual friendships and working relations between 1794-99. Originally from Gloucestershire, Cottle's mother, Grace, had a close relationship with her cousin Anne Steele, the famous Baptist hymnwriter known as "Theodosia," whose three-volume *Poems on Subjects Chiefly Devotional* (published in Bristol in 1780 by William Pine, and republished in 1796 by Cottle) contained numerous hymns quite popular among the Baptist churches of England. Anne occasionally visited in the 1730s at the home of a Joseph Cottle of Trowbridge (one of Cottle's relatives), and in a letter to Grace Cottle dated 18 May 1761, Anne Steele congratulates the Cottles on their recent move to Bristol and informs Grace that she cannot visit any time soon because of the recent death of her mother, a "mournful Event," the account of which "must have been affecting to you." In 1778 young Joseph was sent to Richard Henderson's Baptist Academy at Hanham, where he met and grew quite fond of the headmaster's son John Henderson, the brilliant but eccentric classics instructor who began teaching Latin and Greek at the age of twelve in a Welsh college. Henderson's brilliance was widely known, counting among his admirers Hannah More and Samuel Johnson. His untimely death in 1788 provoked what may have been Cottle's best poem, the "Monody on the Death of John Henderson," as well as a prose "Sketch of His Character," both of which appeared in his *Poems* (1795). While at Hanham Cottle also met William Gilbert, the eccentric, sometimes "mad" author of "The Hurricane," who was a patient at the Asylum, also operated by Richard Henderson.[9]

[5] Holmes 96.
[6] Holmes 96.
[7] Holmes 106.
[8] Holmes 107.
[9] Cottle, *Reminiscences* 42.

Another important influence on young Joseph's life as a Baptist and a scholar was the Rev. James Newton, classical tutor at Bristol Baptist College. Newton was a boarder in the Cottle home from the late 1760s (before Cottle's birth) until his death in 1789. Cottle considered him his "most revered and honoured friend," a scholar whose "learning was his least recommendation."[10] "Many an evening," Cottle remarks, "do I recollect to have listened in wonderment to colloquisms and disputations carried on in Latin between Mr. Newton and John Henderson."[11] Newton was Hannah More's private instructor in Latin and the "judicious" editor of many of her works. He was also Assistant Pastor for the last thirty-one years of his life at the Baptist Church meeting at the Pithay, where the Cottles attended under the pastoral care of the Rev. John Tommas.

The Cottles maintained a connection with the church in the Pithay until 1808, leaving shortly after the arrival of the Rev. Thomas Roberts (whose preaching Coleridge greatly admired). During the 1790s the Cottles, however, became frequent attendants at the Baptist Meeting at Broadmead as well. The church in the Pithay had always had close ties with their neighbor church in the Broadmead, even sharing Sunday evening services until 1759, and the ministers and members were frequent attendants at each other's services. The congregations were both Calvinistic Particular Baptists, except Broadmead allowed for paedobaptists to remain as communicant members, thus creating a form of mixed communion within the body of the church. These paedobaptists formed their own Independent Paedobaptist Congregation at Broadmead in 1757, but continued to meet with the larger church for all preaching services, observing, however, their own communion. The pastor at Broadmead was thus pastor of two Baptist congregations within the same church, an odd circumstance for any church at that time. The Baptist meeting at the Pithay was paedobaptist only.

Few records of the Pithay congregation survive, but in the one book that does Joseph Cottle appears in a role usually reserved for a deacon. In 1799 the congregation decided to "suppress" instrumental music, and evidently one prominent member was threatening to leave over the decision. According to the church records, "At a Church meeting held on Tuesday evening, February 5th, 1799, Brethren Cottle and Whittuck was commissioned to wait on Brother Stone, requesting him to fill up his place in the Church. Accordingly they did so, and he seemed offended, and at first seemed to hint that he should not return; but after some conversation with him he said he would consider further about it." We do not know whether Brother Stone remained in the church or not, but apparently other problems may have existed for the Cottles, for a month later, in March 1799, Joseph's three sisters—Anne, Mary, and Sarah—acquired a pew subscription at Broadmead for £2.2. In March 1801 Joseph's mother, Grace, joined the three daughters in their pew subscription. In 1807 the Cottle women began paying £3.3 for the pew seat, maintaining that amount until Mrs. Cottle's death in 1813, at which time the church pew subscription record ends.

On 6 May 1801, Mary and Sarah were baptized by Dr. John Ryland, Jr., at Broadmead, but only Sarah transferred her membership at that time. Anne and Mary signed as "Hearers" on 17 January 1802, in relation to the call of the Rev. Henry Page as Assistant Minister at Broadmead, meaning they were not members but "constant Attendants on divine Worship, at the Baptist Meeting-house, in Broadmead, Bristol, & Subscribers to the Support of the Gospel." On 12 September 1802, Mary became a member of the Independent Paedobaptist Congregation at Broadmead. On 9 April 1807, Anne was baptized and became a member of the larger non-

[10] Cottle, *Reminiscences* 53.
[11] Cottle, *Reminiscences* 53.

paedobaptist congregation at Broadmead. Not until 8 November 1808, did Mrs. Cottle transfer her membership to Broadmead from the church in the Pithay, where she was received on the 11th. During these years Joseph attended Broadmead, but only as a "Hearer" with the Independent Paedobaptist Church at Broadmead to which Mary belongs, signing as such on 16 April 1818, for the call of T. S. Crisp as Assistant Minister, and in 1825 for the call of Robert Hall as Pastor at Broadmead. In 1830, during the ministry of Robert Hall, the small Independent congregation at Broadmead, having never kept its own records, "thought it advisable to choose Deacons, and to establish Rules, and Regulations, such as may improve the Discipline, and give Regularity to the Church." On 1 March 1830, a church record book is begun (the first eight folio pages are in Joseph Cottle's hand) for the thirty-two adult members, which includes Mary Cottle and Joseph, now a full member and deacon in the Independent church and "gentleman" in the community. On 14 November 1831, Joseph and Mary Cottle sign as representatives of the Independent Church in the call of the Rev. Samuel Nicholson to become minister at Broadmead upon the death of Robert Hall. However, on 7 December 1832, Joseph and his sister Mary are dismissed in good standing by the church to join their sister Anne at the Zion Chapel in Bedminster, a new Congregational church founded by John Hare, Anne's wealthy husband.

Several factors were at work in bringing Joseph more fully within the sphere of the Broadmead congregation during the late 1780s and 1790s. One was his selection to the Executive Committee of the Bristol Education Society in 1793, a Society formed in 1770 by the citizens of Bristol and the Baptist congregation at Broadmead solely for the maintaining of a learned ministry through the means of Bristol Baptist College. The annual *Account of the Bristol Education Society* shows Cottle faithfully paying his membership dues, donating to the various building projects of the College, and rarely missing an annual meeting between 1793-1841, demonstrating an attachment to the College unmatched by any Baptist of his generation. Between 1785-95, several important individuals were added to the staff at the College and the church, all of whom Cottle greatly admired, including the extraordinary Robert Hall (classical tutor and assistant pastor from 1785-91), Joseph Hughes (also tutor and assistant pastor from 1791-95), Isaac James (classical tutor from 1795-1821), John Ryland, Jr., the new pastor at Broadmead and President of the College from late 1793 until his death in 1825, and the famous essayist and former student at the college, John Foster. Cottle's friendship with these men and loyalty to their ministries never waned throughout his life.

Cottle first became acquainted with Joseph Hughes (1769-1833) when Hughes was a student at Bristol Baptist College in the mid-1780s. Joseph Leifchild, Hughes's biographer, notes that "at the abode of this amiable man [Cottle] and of his excellent sisters, Mr. Hughes found, to the end of life, whenever he visited Bristol, a welcome and a home."[12] Like Cottle, Hughes was an enthusiastic supporter of the French Revolution and opponent of the ensuing French-English war. In a letter written in late 1793, he notes that "Politics have run high here [in Bristol] as elsewhere. Dissenters have exhibited loyal declarations in different parts. A meeting of a few was called at Bristol. I was present, but we agreed to be silent. I declared that a remonstrance became no better than a declaration, and that though no decisive republican myself I would sign no memorial but what a republican might with full satisfaction subscribe."[13] In another letter from 1793 he writes, "I lament the part England takes in foreign quarrels. I triumph in the French Revolution, though tarnished all along. . . . Babylon is falling, and whatever foreign dignities fall with it, they will only increase the shouts which shall accompany the final

[12] Leifchild 147-48.
[13] Leifchild 125.

overthrow."[14] That year he also became an "Anti-sacharite" in protest against the slave trade.[15] In the summer of 1795, Hughes would leave Bristol for London, where he would pastor the Baptist meeting at Battersea for the rest of his life, as well as be instrumental in the founding of both the Religious Tract Society (1798) and the British and Foreign Bible Society (1803), serving as the first Secretary for both organizations. Cottle maintained contact with Hughes for the remainder of Hughes's life, at times serving as his bookseller (one of the last works sold by Cottle was Hughes's sermon *On Christian Zeal* in 1802) and joining him every August at the annual meetings of the Bristol Education Society.

Cottle revered the ministry of Ryland (1753-1825) as well, both as a preacher and Baptist leader, especially his leadership in the development of the Baptist Missionary Society. In fact, it was on an afternoon buggy ride with Ryland and Hughes in early summer 1794 that Cottle fell from the rig and injured his feet in such a manner that he was forced to walk with a cane and endure a halting step the rest of his life.[16] In Cottle's Bristol Album are several of Ryland's sermons written by Ryland himself on narrow strips of paper in a microscopic hand. Cottle was involved (both with Isaac James and Nathaniel Biggs) in the publication of several works by Ryland, such as *Three Farewell Discourses to the Baptist Church at Northampton* (1793), *The Certain Increase of the Glory and Kingdom of Jesus* (1794), *The Duty of Ministers to be Nursing Fathers to the Church* (1794), *The Earnest Charge and Humble Hope of an Affectionate Pastor* (1794), *The Dependance of the Whole Law and the Prophets on the Two Primary Commandments* (1798), *The Promised Presence of Christ with his People a Source of Consolation under the Most Painful Bereavements* (1798), *The First Lye Refuted; or, the Grand Delusion Exposed* (1800), and *The Partiality and Unscriptural Direction of Socinian Zeal* (1801). Cottle also composed the funeral elegy for his beloved pastor which appears at the end of Robert Hall's funeral sermon upon the death of Ryland in 1825.

John Foster (1770-1843) was a student at Bristol Baptist College from 1791-92; he later pastored briefly at Downend, within walking distance of Broadmead, from 1800-1804, then at Frome until about 1806, when he decided his talents were better suited for the pen and press than the pulpit. While at Frome he published his first book, *Essays, in a Series of Letters* (1805). The volume was an immediate success, going through thirty-five editions in the nineteenth century and earning a reputation for Foster as one of the most popular and prolific essayists of the Romantic era. In fact, it was Foster, in his essay "On the Epithet Romantic" published in the 1805 collection, who first attached the word "romantic" to the new poetic movement of the last decade of the 1790s, noting the ascendency of the "imagination over judgment" as one of its chief characteristics, as well as its form of humanism and what, to him, were some evident fallacies associated with it. Foster would become one of the chief essayists for the *Eclectic Review* and would support himself with his pen the rest of his life, returning to Downend to live out his life near his old friend Cottle. Between 11 September 1824 and 4 February 1825, Foster composed a series of nine letters addressed to Cottle's niece, Sarah Saunders of Plymouth Dock, as she was dying of consumption. These letters were later published, along with a touching tribute to her, in 1825.

All three men remained close throughout their lives. They also knew and maintained an acquaintance with Coleridge and Southey throughout their lives. It was at Cottle's house that Hughes first met Coleridge, probably in August 1794. They would correspond with each other

[14] Leifchild 132.
[15] Leifchild 129.
[16] Cottle, Malvern Hills 2.366.

on numerous occasions and remained interested in each other's activities for the rest of their lives. "There is evidence remaining," Leifchild notes, "that Mr. Coleridge cherished those sentiments of gratitude towards him [Hughes], and formed that high estimation of his talents, which no change of circumstances occurring through the lapse of many years could abate."[17] The most enduring evidence of their friendship is the inscription Coleridge wrote for a copy of *The Friend* he gave to Hughes in 1819: "On testimony of Esteem and Regard, and in the humble hope that the Bread cast on the fluctuating waters of the Author's mind by Mr. Hughes in early manhood and years long gone by, will be here found again, neither innutritious nor unmultiplied." Coleridge attended meetings at Broadmead with Cottle at which Ryland was preaching, and he corresponded with Ryland on at least one occasion. John Foster met Coleridge in Bristol on at least one occasion, and was forced to decline another invitation, both at the home of Joseph Cottle.[18] Foster was a great admirer of Coleridge's genius and wrote to Cottle on numerous occasions, relating any news he had of Coleridge's activities and requesting the same from Cottle. He also wrote a critical review of *The Friend* for the *Eclectic Review* that still deserves to be read.

The Baptist divine who captured the attention of both Cottle and Coleridge more than any other during the 1790s, however, was Robert Hall (1764-1831). Cottle cherished the conversation, writings, and preaching of Robert Hall, even devoting a portion of the *Reminiscences* to him.[19] Hall spent two years at the Dissenting academy at Northampton, then attended Bristol Baptist Academy for three years before heading north for graduate work in Scotland in 1781. Shortly after Robert Hall's return to the University at Aberdeen in November 1783 (he was starting his third year), he received an invitation from the church at Broadmead to become assistant pastor, which he did, taking a six-month break from school before returning to finish in 1784-85. Hall would remain at Bristol, both as assistant pastor and classical tutor, until the fall of 1790, at which time some dissention arose over Hall's beliefs concerning Calvinism and materialism. He resigned in November, took a six-month trial at the Baptist meeting at St. Andrew's Street at Cambridge, and then accepted the pastorate there in July of 1791. He left behind him many friends and admirers, of whom Joseph Cottle was one. He would return to preach in Bristol almost every year after 1793, for his sister married Isaac James, who was, like Cottle, a bookseller in Bristol and who had replaced Hall as classical tutor at the Baptist College. On at least one occasion Cottle brought Coleridge and Hall together so he could see first hand how "the collision of equal minds elicited light and heat; both of them ranking in the first class of conversationalists."[20] In 1826, Robert Hall would return to Bristol in triumph to assume the pastorate of Broadmead after the death of Dr. Ryland, much to the joy of Cottle.

Cottle maintained a correspondence with Hall, though not as extensive as his correspondence with Foster or Hughes. After the publication of *Alfred*, Cottle sent Hall a copy, to which Hall responded, in a letter of April 30, 1801, that he was pleased to find Cottle "a truly Christian Poet who is not ashamed to avow an attachment to the scriptures" and "their sacred mysteries" at a time when so many were belittling them. He critiques the entirety of *Alfred* in the letter, focusing primarily on the historical and religious virtues of the poem, not its poetic qualities. He found his mind "regaled with a succession of pleasing pictures, but what was much more with my heart softened and improved by virtuous and benevolent sentiments." Hall also comments

[17] Leifchild 148.
[18] Cottle, *Reminiscences* 306-08.
[19] Cottle, *Reminiscences* 56-63.
[20] Cottle, *Reminiscences* 97.

on Amos Cottle's untimely death. Though apparently close at one time, Amos (who attended Cambridge during Hall's tenure at St. Andrew's Street and no doubt frequented the services there) and Hall had drifted apart. Hall relates to Joseph that

> though from a concurrence of untoward circumstances my acquaintance with your Brother was interrupted my esteem for him always continued and I imputed his crassness more to the influence of his connexions than to himself. He possessed qualities which must commend the esteem and regret of all who knew him. Mr. [Isaac] James informs me that he died with truly christian sentiments placing his sole reliance on the efficacious merits of the Redeemer. This my dear Sir, this alone is solid rock.

Other views may suffice in time of health, but only "a believing view of Christ crucified" will "support the heart at the season of death," Hall declares. Years later, when Hall was considering leaving Leicester to return to Bristol and Broadmead Baptist, Cottle sent Hall a stirring plea for acceptance. "You have been an alien from us, thro' a mysterious Providence, for 30 years," he argues, "but this is your *rightful home*, & in this Place, I think, your Lamp in the most interesting portion of Life, will long shine to the praise of God & the Lamb." The entire religious community of Bristol, Cottle contends, are desirous that Hall "would make one among them." Among the Broadmead congregation "the most unanimous feeling prevails," especially so for Cottle, who confesses that "the most accession to my own happiness" would prevail if Hall returns to Bristol. Whether Cottle's letter swayed Hall is unknown, but he did accept the call to Broadmead and died there in 1831.

To describe Cottle as a Unitarian is to place him not only as the opponent of these influential Baptist ministers, but more importantly, as the proponent of Socinianism, and that he never was. In a letter to Southey in September 1795, Cottle makes clear his overriding purpose in life, including his efforts to help support his two young poet friends, Southey and Coleridge. "If . . . I feel my heart ardently desire any one gift of the Supreme Being in preference of another," he states, "it is, that he would *make me* the instrument of doing *his* good." Opposing Socinianism was one way Cottle, throughout his life, envisioned himself "doing *his* good." When Coleridge first arrived in Bristol, Cottle observed that "he had evidently adopted, at least to some considerable extent, the sentiments of Socinus," and word was "that he might become a valuable Unitarian minister."[21] Coleridge does make an attempt at preaching in Unitarian churches, even to the point of offering himself as assistant pastor at the "Bridgwater Socinian congregation."[22] Though Cottle assists him in these efforts—it is Cottle who witnessed Coleridge's pulpit debacle when preaching at David Jardine's Unitarian chapel in 1796[23]—he does so as a friend, not a convert, always harboring the hope that his connexion with Coleridge will provide him the opportunity to return him to a Trinitarian position.

Cottle demonstrates considerable graciousness for a Baptist toward his Unitarian friends, publishing Jardine's *Sermons* in 1798 and maintaining close ties with John Prior Estlin at the Lewin's Mead Church, even being appointed "bookseller to the Society." Cottle never wavers, however, about Socinianism. While promoting the Unitarian Coleridge's *Watchman* in 1796, Cottle is also selling the Baptist Andrew Fuller's monumental work *The Calvinistic and Socinian Systems Examined and Compared* (1793). Cottle probably had numerous

[21] Cottle, *Reminiscences* 93.
[22] Cottle, *Reminiscences* 172.
[23] Cottle, *Reminiscences* 93-97.

conversations with Coleridge about the Socinian doctrine, and may have introduced Coleridge to Joseph Hughes, John Ryland, Jr., Robert Hall, and John Foster as part of a plan to bring Coleridge back within the Trinitarian tradition. He may have held little hope of making a Calvinistic Baptist out of Coleridge, but he could help return him to a more orthodox position within the Anglican church. This would account for the evident joy Cottle expresses in the *Reminiscences* when Coleridge, visiting Bristol in 1807 after his return from Malta, informs Cottle that he had

> renounced all his Unitarian sentiments; that he considered Unitarianism as a heresy of the worst description; attempting in vain, to reconcile sin and holiness; the world and heaven; opposing the whole spirit of the Bible; and subversive of all that truly constituted christianity. At this interview he professed his deepest conviction of the truth of Revelation; of the Fall of Man; of the Divinity of Christ, and redemption alone through his blood.[24]

"To hear these sentiments so explicitly avowed," Cottle relates, "gave me unspeakable pleasure, and formed a new, and unexpected, and stronger bond of union."[25]

Cottle then quotes from a letter of Coleridge's sent to him during this same visit in which Coleridge boldly denounces Socinianism, claiming that "Socinianism, misnamed Unitarianism, is not only not Christianity, it is not even religion, it does not religate; does not bind anew."[26] He accepts the view of the Trinity "not as deduced from human reason . . . but as the clear revelation of Scripture."[27] To Coleridge, Socinians are simply not honest in their approach to Scripture:

> I know enough of their shifts and quibbles with their dexterity at explaining away all they dislike, and that is not a little, but though beguiled once by them, I happily for my own peace of mind, escaped from their sophistries, and now hesitate not to affirm, that Socinians would lose all character for honesty, if they were to explain their neighbour's will with the same latitude of interpretation, which they do the Scriptures.[28]

Such a view of scripture is riddled, Coleridge contends, with inconsistencies and "insurmountable obstacles" in that Socinians "admit the *Divine authority of Scripture*, with the *superlative excellence of Christ*, and yet undertake to prove that these Scriptures teach, and that Christ taught his own *pure humanity*."[29] If the Socinians are correct, then "the world and man must be abandoned, with all its consequences, to one universal scepticism!"[30] He closes with the affirmation that the "divine doctrine of the Trinity is to be received, not because it is or can be clear to finite apprehension, but, in reiteration of the argument, because the Scriptures, in their unsophisticated interpretation, expressly state it. The Trinity, therefore, from its important aspects, and biblical prominence, is the grand article of faith, and the foundation of the whole

[24] Cottle, *Reminiscences* 309.
[25] Cottle, *Reminiscences* 309.
[26] Cottle, *Reminiscences* 314-15.
[27] Cottle, *Reminiscences* 315.
[28] Cottle, *Reminiscences* 315-16.
[29] Cottle, *Reminiscences* 316.
[30] Cottle, *Reminiscences* 318.

christian system."[31] Thus, Cottle notes, "on his [Coleridge's] return to Bristol, in the year 1807, a complete reverse had taken place in his theological tenets. Reflection and reading, particularly the bible, had taught him, as he said, the unstable foundation on which Unitarians grounded their faith; and in proportion as orthodox sentiments acquired an ascendancy in his mind, a love of truth compelled him to oppose his former errors, and stimulated him, by an explicit declaration of his religious views, to counteract those former impressions, which his cruder opinions had led him once so strenuously to enforce on all around."[32] In a letter to Joseph Hughes, 15 February 1808, John Foster writes, "Cottle says he [Coleridge] is very greatly improved as to the religious part of the character of his mind, and that really he is even substantially *orthodox*, as well as a believer in Christianity in the general."[33] In another letter Foster writes that he is "exceedingly glad to learn from Mr. C[ottle] that he [Coleridge] is much more firmly established in the principles of religion than at any former period of his life."[34]

By 1807 Coleridge had not only adopted a more orthodox position, but he had also publicly alienated himself from the Unitarians of Bristol by declaring in one of his lectures that Milton in *Paradise Regained* had represented Satan as a "sceptical Socinian."[35] As Cottle notes, this statement was regarded "as a direct and undisguised declaration of war," forming between them "a permanent wall of separation."[36] In a letter to Cottle about the incident Coleridge remarked that no other definition of a "sceptical Socinian" was more fitting, except that "Satan's faith somewhat exceeded that of Socinians."[37] In *Table Talk*, much to Cottle's delight, Coleridge would make the statement that "Unitarianism, is in effect, the worst of one kind of Atheism, joined to one of the worst kinds of Calvinism. It has no covenant with God, and it looks upon prayer as a sort of self-magnetizing; a getting of the body and temper into a certain status, desirable, per se, but having no covenanted reference to the Being to whom the prayer is addressed."[38] For more evidence, Cottle quotes from an 1807 letter by Coleridge to his brother-in-law, George Fricker, in which Coleridge admits that he was "for many years a Socinian," but after much study (and, no doubt, numerous entreaties by Cottle) he "became fully convinced, that Socinianism was not only not the doctrine of the New Testament, but that it scarcely deserved the name of a religion in any sense."[39]

After the appearance of *The Friend* John Foster wrote to his editor at the *Eclectic Review* that "Coleridge is a marvellously original and subtle thinker. Appearances are favorable thus far as to religion, and I hope he is one of the few geniuses that the afore said Satan does not inspire, and will not be allowed to seize."[40] When Coleridge returned to Bristol to lecture in 1814, he was much closer to Cottle and the Baptists at Broadmead and Pithay than he was the parishioners at the Unitarian chapel at Lewin's Mead. He remarks in a letter to Cottle, "I truly honor and love the orthodox dissenters, and appreciate with heart-esteem their works of love,"[41] even attending services at Broadmead with the Cottles.[42] Foster writes in early 1815 that "in

[31] Cottle, *Reminiscences* 325.
[32] Cottle, *Reminiscences* 325-26.
[33] Ryland 1.228.
[34] Ryland 1.229.
[35] Cottle, *Reminiscences* 335.
[36] Cottle, *Reminiscences* 335.
[37] Cottle, *Reminiscences* 336.
[38] Cottle, *Reminiscences* 337.
[39] Cottle, *Reminiscences* 339.
[40] Ryland 1.274.
[41] Cottle, *Reminiscences* 359.
[42] Cottle, *Reminiscences* 360.

point of theologic
is said, highly *ort*
believe they now

Cottle never wa
1842 and he did ir
was still wanted,
for the last descri
metaphysical and
Cottle is glad th
Antinomianism; a
mature views of *S*
To Cottle, Socinia
system "hostile to
Bible, and the whc

Cottle was jus
Coleridge. Writing
become, if not a
that Southey migl
Southey is a gooc
insists, "and that i
should do good be
motive. To Cottle,
the sweetness of n
subject, and he fee
my friend Robert
Hope of the Chris
been deficient in c
the Saints." If Sou

Southey was vi
reminds Southey
conceived opinion
truth of Revelatio
'Testimony,' for h
called Calvinism,
reading of the Nev
& unscriptural" of
acrimony the nam
remains. Southey
the Eternity of He
often taken out of
die because of a br

[43] Ryland 1.292.
[44] Cottle, *Essays* viii.
[45] Cottle, *Essays* viii.
[46] Cottle, *Essays* 10.
[47] Cottle, *Essays* 13.

point of theological opinion, [Coleridge] is become, indeed has now a number of years been, it is said, highly *orthodox*. He wages victorious war with the Socinians, if they are not, which I believe they now generally are, very careful to keep the peace in his company."[43]

Cottle never wavered in his opposition to Socinianism, defending orthodoxy as vigorously in 1842 and he did in 1792. In *Essays in Reference to Socinianism* (1842), Cottle contends "a piece was still wanted, contravening *Socinianism*, in a *temperate* though *unshrinking* spirit, designed for the last description of Inquirers after truth; the *Thoughtful* and *Hesitating*, to whom, the metaphysical and more erudite modes of conducting the argument, would be unsuitable."[44] Cottle is glad that before he dies he can say that he "exposed the pernicious tenets of Antinomianism; and that his days have been spared to express, with equal firmness, these his mature views of *Socinianism*; in opposite extremes, the two chief *Gangrenes* of Christianity."[45] To Cottle, Socinian beliefs are "unscriptural, and *most dangerous to the souls of men*,"[46] a belief system "hostile to all Churches, and all Denominations; and, more especially, to the letter of the Bible, and the whole spirit of Christianity."[47]

Cottle was just as determined to present a Baptist witness before Southey as he was Coleridge. Writing to Southey at Greta Hall on 7 September 1806, Cottle desires that Southey become, if not a Baptist, at least a part of the *invisible* church so dear to Nonconformists: "O that Southey might yet become a disciple of Jesus, and not be condemned with the world." Southey is a good person with "benevolent feelings," "but still you lack one thing," Cottle insists, "and that is the motive, which is the alone standard for estimating human actions." One should do good because of the "commands of Christ" and the Bible, not from a purely rational motive. To Cottle, the Bible is "a treasure" of which he "not part for thrones and scepters. It is the sweetness of my life." Cottle is possibly Southey's only friend who can speak to him of this subject, and he feels obligated to speak. "If the melancholy tidings should have reached me that my friend Robert Southey was no more, in not having previously said to him one word of the Hope of the Christian, I should have felt bitter remorse, and have known assuredly that I had been deficient in one solemn act of faithfulness." He desires for Southey "an inheritance among the Saints." If Southey is bothered by this, Cottle wants him to say so.

Southey was violently opposed to Calvinism, but Cottle, the Calvinistic Particular Baptist, reminds Southey in a letter of 10 May 1807 that Calvinism should be judged not by pre-conceived opinions but by "its conformity with the scriptures. After Reason has established the truth of Revelation, a Christian, I conceive, is bound to recur solely to the 'Law," and to the 'Testimony,' for his guide, and according to that standard, there is, I think, much in what is called Calvinism, which is entitled to our respect & reverence." Cottle argues that an accurate reading of the New Testament supports Calvinism, yet he dislikes some of the "bitter, illiberal & unscriptural" offshoots of Calvinism as much as Southey does. Despite the excesses and the acrimony the name Calvinism creates among the many, there is "much true excellency" that remains. Southey associates Calvinism only with a blind "burning zeal" and the "Doctrine of the Eternity of Hell Torments." Cottle believes the latter to be rational and scriptural, though often taken out of context. In a letter to Southey of 10 May 1814, Cottle, worried that he may die because of a broken blood vessel, once again finds himself "preaching" to his friend:

[43] Ryland 1.292.
[44] Cottle, *Essays* viii.
[45] Cottle, *Essays* viii.
[46] Cottle, *Essays* 10.
[47] Cottle, *Essays* 13.

> I cannot omit, at present (perhaps the last opportunity) to recommend to you a serious concern about your eternal state. A Crucified Saviour is now my only hope, and in which Faith, I experience a joy, more valuable than any, or all earthly objects could afford. Ought not that Book to be esteemed a Treasure, which has subdued in me all fear of Death, and has comforted an innumerable number of all ages, in the prospect of dissolution. Oh! read it more, and earnestly supplicate of the Almighty the healthful spirit of his Grace. I would not enjoy any blessing, here or hereafter, without having those whom I love to participate. Oh! be wise for Eternity, and there we shall meet again in a World of Blessedness, to which we can have no *title*, but must receive it (if received at all) thro the merits & for the sake of Jesus Christ.
>
> Farewell, my dear Southey. You have always been a kind friend to me, & whether I die soon, or have my life protracted a little longer, I shall never cease to desire your present & eternal welfare.

They will continue to correspond over the years and Southey, like Coleridge, becomes steadily more conservative, both in politics and religion. Upon receiving word that Cottle's favorite niece, Miss Sarah Saunders, had died at age eighteen from consumption in February 1825, Southey comforts Cottle with these words: "There is but one source of comfort under such bereavements, & that through God's mercy is a never failing one." Near the end of Southey's life, Cottle writes to Foster, lamenting Southey's senility but graciously acknowledging Southey's integrity: "He might err in his judgment, or particular points, in the estimation of some of his friends, but whatever sentiments he avowed, it is impossible not to believe that they were the genuine dictates of his heart." After viewing Southey's letters to Cottle in June 1843, John Foster commented to Cottle that the letters presented Southey as one who possesses "genuine religion, though not modified to your standard, or mine."

To assume that the final theological positions and spiritual states of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Robert Southey are the result of the efforts of Joseph Cottle would be presumptuous, to say the least, but Cottle's ongoing interest throughout their lives in matters of religion, as evidenced in his letters and other writings, may have played some small part in their eventual movements toward orthodoxy. One thing is certain. Cottle never wavered in his evangelical witness as a Calvinistic Baptist toward his literary friends. Though he may have irritated, even angered, them at times, a fair assessment of his interactions with the two men bears out a consistency of character for which Cottle has rarely been given credit. Though he would not officially acknowledge Coleridge's opium addiction until after his Bristol lecture series in 1814, Cottle may have had intimations of the problem after Coleridge's 1807 visit to Bristol. He writes to Southey that

> If Coleridge should have returned to the North, remember me kindly to him. I do hope and trust that the brightest side of his character is yet to appear & that he would remember the solemn responsibility which is connected with the possession of his talents . . . I know the malady under which he labours & I know the only remedy. It is a Pearl worth seeking for. I hope he may yet find it. It gave me pleasure to hear you say, that you thought, with respect to Coleridge, I had returned Good for Evil. It is so seldom that one has an opportunity of so doing, that wherever the precious occasion does arise, we

> should joyfully embrace it. From my retired habits, I may never again have a similar opportunity (27 May 1808).

Whether or not he "returned Good for Evil" in exposing the extent of Coleridge's opium habit in 1837 was debatable to many, but his motive for so doing was consistent with his faith and practice as a Baptist and as a biographer. To Cottle, Coleridge's opium addiction could come from only one source, and its consequences, if left untreated, were fatal, not just physically, but spiritually as well. In a letter to Southey, 27 March 1817, Cottle writes: "Shall I live to see the day of his [Coleridge's] bursting the Satanic trammels of Opium & becoming a renovated character!" Coleridge never completely freed himself of the "trammels of Opium," but to many he did in his declining years exhibit considerably "a renovated character." To the strict moralist Cottle, however, Coleridge's Highgate years more than likely did *not* exhibit such a renovated character. Though tinged with self-righteous self-pity, Cottle was convinced that, because he failed to help Coleridge with his opium habit in 1814, Coleridge rejected him at that time, "and for the last twenty years of his life, he never even wrote to me, or sent even a remembrance, by common friends who had visited him," he writes to Southey on 9 October 1834. "Never before did I utter a half sentence on this subject, and for this perhaps, tomorrow, I shall feel regret."

Such a character flaw could not be left out of one's memoirs of a friend, Cottle insists, especially one as famous as Coleridge, or the biographer would be guilty of falsifying the record for posterity and, in essence, would be guilty of exhibiting poor character himself. "The great fault of biography," he tells Southey in the same letter, "is, that it is, for the most part too uniformly encomiastic. It wants faithfulness. Writers are not satisfied with an ample portion of praise, but their Hero must belong to other than our mundane system. They must be perfect." To Cottle the Calvinist, all humanity bears the consequences of the Fall; depravity resides within each individual. Such a belief provides the primary motive behind his biographical purpose in the *Early Recollections* (1837) and the *Reminiscences* (1847). As he notes in the Introduction to the latter, "With respect to Mr. Coleridge, it would be easy and pleasant to sail with the stream; to admire his eloquence; to extol his genius; and to forget his failings; but where is the utility, arising out of this homage paid to naked talent?."[48] "Higher objects," he says, "were intended by this narrative than merely to elucidate a character, (however remarkable), in all its vicissitudes and eccentricities. Rising above idle curiosity, or the desire of furnishing aliment for the sentimental;—excitement the object, and the moral tendency disregarded, these pages take a wider range, and are designed for the good of many . . . ."[49] In writing his *Reminiscences*, Cottle feels he must be honest about Coleridge: "Neither to clothe the subject of biography with undeserved applause, nor unmerited censure, but to present an exact portraiture, is the object which ought scrupulously to be aimed at by every impartial writer."[50]

Though Coleridge's family saw little "good' in these revelations, and the majority of Coleridge critics this century have found even less in Cottle's use of Coleridge, his letters reveal a consistency of character and belief for which he has not been given sufficient credit. Though pedantic and petty in many ways, he never compromised in certain matters of faith and practice, regardless of the notoriety of the individual with whom he was engaged. His strict Baptist faith may not have suited the literati of his day, nor his critics in the twentieth century, yet Joseph Cottle believed that in all his interactions with his famous friends—Joseph Hughes, John

[48] Cottle, *Reminiscences* vi.
[49] Cottle, *Reminiscences* vi.
[50] Cottle, *Reminiscences* 348.

> should joyfully embrace it. From my retired habits, I may never again have a similar opportunity (27 May 1808).

Whether or not he "returned Good for Evil" in exposing the extent of Coleridge's opium habit in 1837 was debatable to many, but his motive for so doing was consistent with his faith and practice as a Baptist and as a biographer. To Cottle, Coleridge's opium addiction could come from only one source, and its consequences, if left untreated, were fatal, not just physically, but spiritually as well. In a letter to Southey, 27 March 1817, Cottle writes: "Shall I live to see the day of his [Coleridge's] bursting the Satanic trammels of Opium & becoming a renovated character!" Coleridge never completely freed himself of the "trammels of Opium," but to many he did in his declining years exhibit considerably "a renovated character." To the strict moralist Cottle, however, Coleridge's Highgate years more than likely did *not* exhibit such a renovated character. Though tinged with self-righteous self-pity, Cottle was convinced that, because he failed to help Coleridge with his opium habit in 1814, Coleridge rejected him at that time, "and for the last twenty years of his life, he never even wrote to me, or sent even a remembrance, by common friends who had visited him," he writes to Southey on 9 October 1834. "Never before did I utter a half sentence on this subject, and for this perhaps, tomorrow, I shall feel regret."

Such a character flaw could not be left out of one's memoirs of a friend, Cottle insists, especially one as famous as Coleridge, or the biographer would be guilty of falsifying the record for posterity and, in essence, would be guilty of exhibiting poor character himself. "The great fault of biography," he tells Southey in the same letter, "is, that it is, for the most part too uniformly encomiastic. It wants faithfulness. Writers are not satisfied with an ample portion of praise, but their Hero must belong to other than our mundane system. They must be perfect." To Cottle the Calvinist, all humanity bears the consequences of the Fall; depravity resides within each individual. Such a belief provides the primary motive behind his biographical purpose in the *Early Recollections* (1837) and the *Reminiscences* (1847). As he notes in the Introduction to the latter, "With respect to Mr. Coleridge, it would be easy and pleasant to sail with the stream; to admire his eloquence; to extol his genius; and to forget his failings; but where is the utility, arising out of this homage paid to naked talent?."[48] "Higher objects," he says, "were intended by this narrative than merely to elucidate a character, (however remarkable), in all its vicissitudes and eccentricities. Rising above idle curiosity, or the desire of furnishing aliment for the sentimental;—excitement the object, and the moral tendency disregarded, these pages take a wider range, and are designed for the good of many . . . ."[49] In writing his *Reminiscences*, Cottle feels he must be honest about Coleridge: "Neither to clothe the subject of biography with undeserved applause, nor unmerited censure, but to present an exact portraiture, is the object which ought scrupulously to be aimed at by every impartial writer."[50]

Though Coleridge's family saw little "good' in these revelations, and the majority of Coleridge critics this century have found even less in Cottle's use of Coleridge, his letters reveal a consistency of character and belief for which he has not been given sufficient credit. Though pedantic and petty in many ways, he never compromised in certain matters of faith and practice, regardless of the notoriety of the individual with whom he was engaged. His strict Baptist faith may not have suited the literati of his day, nor his critics in the twentieth century, yet Joseph Cottle believed that in all his interactions with his famous friends—Joseph Hughes, John

[48] Cottle, *Reminiscences* vi.
[49] Cottle, *Reminiscences* vi.
[50] Cottle, *Reminiscences* 348.

Ryland, Jr., John Foster, Robert Hall, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Robert Southey, and others—whether Baptist or non-Baptist, he never retreated from the vow he made to Southey in 1795, "that [God] would *make me* the instrument of doing *his* good."

Georgia Southern University

The Politics of 'Hart-Leap Well'[1]

By DAVID CHANDLER

This lecture was delivered to the Society at the Wordsworth Winter School at Grasmere, February 2000.

ON 17 DECEMBER 1799 William and Dorothy Wordsworth discovered Hart-Leap Well. They were journeying from Sockburn, County Durham, where they had been staying with the Hutchinsons, to their new home in Grasmere, and were travelling fast, generally halting only for scheduled sightseeing. Hart-Leap Well, not easy to find, and not mentioned in guidebooks, was not part of their itinerary. Yet the place and its associations struck Wordsworth forcefully, and he located it with some precision in the introductory note published with his poem, 'Hart-Leap Well' (1800). This topographical accuracy serves in some measure to authenticate the second part of the note: '*Its name* ['Hart-Leap Well'] *is derived from a remarkable chace, the memory of which is preserved by the monuments spoken of in the second Part of the following Poem, which monuments do now exist as I have there described them.*'[2] Four decades later Wordsworth insisted to Isabella Fenwick that the poem described a real place and preserved a folkloric tradition heard there: 'A peasant whom we met near the spot told us the story so far as concerned the name of the well, and the hart; and pointed out the stones.' On this occasion he added: 'Both the stones and the well are objects that may easily be missed: the tradition by this time may be extinct in the neighbourhood: the man who related it to us was very old.'[3] Wordsworth had reason to fear: his poem seems to uniquely preserve the 'hart' story, and some critics, not altogether surprisingly, have supposed both story and framework (the meeting with the 'peasant', or shepherd) to be purely fictional. In recent decades this supposition has been reinforced by the claim that the poem was not primarily concerned with authentic folklore but, rather, a very *literary* response to Gottfried August Bürger's hunting ballad, 'Der Wilde Jäger' (Walter Scott's English translation had been published in 1796). Bürger's ballad is the story of a 'cursed hunter' who ignores a (supernatural) message warning him not to hunt on the Sabbath, then finds himself in the grave, doomed 'to be the prey of an eternal and hellish hunt until the Last Judgement.'[4]

This Bürger emphasis is needlessly distracting, however. 'Der Wilde Jäger' in no sense explains Wordsworth's poem, and Geoffrey Hartman, who first connected them, was not arguing that one influenced the other, but that they represent different stages of the European literary mind's response to the world of romance. If Wordsworth heard a folkloric story akin to that recorded in 'Hart-Leap Well' he surely needed no other inspiration. Because of the absence of other versions of the 'Hart-Leap' legend it is impossible to say exactly what he heard of course, but a significant reference to the experience in *Home at Grasmere* (not published until 1888), in a more obviously autobiographical context, reinforces the claims Wordsworth otherwise made for the authenticity of his account. It is surely impossible to imagine him evoking such a profound 'spot of time' as a response to a story he had concocted himself from hints in Bürger. As Kenneth Johnston recently remarked, 'He

[1] The version of this paper read at The Wordsworth Winter School had the sad distinction of being the last lecture that Tim Wilson heard. This published version is dedicated to his memory.

[2] All quotations from 'Hart-Leap Well' and 'Tintern Abbey' are taken from the standard text in *Lyrical Ballads, and Other Poems, 1797-1800* ed. James Butler and Karen Green (Ithaca, NY, and London, 1992).

[3] *The Fenwick Notes of William Wordsworth* ed. Jared Curtis (London, 1993), p. 15.

[4] I quote Geoffrey Hartman's summary of Bürger's plot in 'False Themes and Gentle Minds' from his collected volume, *The Unremarkable Wordsworth* (London, 1987), 47-57, p. 54 (hereafter Hartman). The article was originally published in 1968.

[Wordsworth] was a poet with remarkably low powers of invention and remarkably high powers of imagination. He almost could not make up a story on his own...'.[5] And there is the straightforward fact that there *is* a Hart-Leap Well which can still be visited. It is four miles from the centre of Richmond (rather than the five Wordsworth mentions) and is still accessible from the road, although now on land owned by the British Army. Its location has long been known to people living in the area, and in 1987 the Army marked it, not only with an engraved stone, but by planting 'Three aspins at three corners of a square, / And one, not four yards distant' (ll. 103-4) as mentioned in Wordsworth's poem.[6] Moreover, as V. H. H. Green, former Rector of Lincoln College, Oxford, pointed out in a guide he wrote for nearby Hauxwell Church, there had been a local 'Sir Walter [de Barden]', 'a sturdy knight who fought in the Scottish wars', lived at Barden Hall, a few miles from Hart-Leap Well, and died in 1309.[7] Green assumes this was the 'Sir Walter' commemorated in the poem. The poem contains accurate references to other local places: 'Wensley Moor' (l.1), 'the fields of Swale' (l. 75), 'the woods of Ure' (l. 76). Altogether, it is much easier to believe that Wordsworth really had heard such a story as he recounts in 'Hart-Leap Well', and thus been struck into remembering appropriate details of the Well's location, than that, hurrying through Yorkshire, he had nevertheless taken time out of his journey to assemble the materials for a Bürger-inspired hoax.

The question driving the present essay is this: what was it about the story of Sir Walter and the deer that so affected Wordsworth, inspiring him to turn it into a poem, more particularly a poem so strangely designed as 'Hart-Leap Well'? Despite the separate, less 'literary' treatment of the experience in the 'radical[ly] literalis[t]'[8] *Home at Grasmere*, critics have shown a strange reluctance to use the longer poem to help interpret the ballad, apart from glossing the concluding vision of the 'milder day'. But *Home at Grasmere* demonstrates more broadly why Wordsworth was likely to find a very *personal* significance in the story he heard from the 'peasant'. *Home at Grasmere* suggests that Dove Cottage was an end as well as a beginning, a death as well as a birth in Wordsworth's imaginative life. Opening on a rapturous, exultant note, the poem's startling subjectivity quickly involves darker thoughts:

. . . did it cost so much, and did it ask
Such length of discipline, and could it seem
An act of courage, and the thing itself
A conquest?

But I am safe; yes, one at least is safe;
What once was deemed so difficult is now
Smooth, easy, without obstacle; what once

[5] *The Hidden Wordsworth: Poet, Lover, Rebel, Spy* (New York and London, 1998), p. 8.

[6] For information respecting Hart-Leap Well today I am indebted to the researches of my father, Hugh Chandler, and his main sources, Major F. T. C. Williams and Lieutenant Colonel M. C. Deverill. I visited Hart Leap Well with my father earlier this year and a local farmer was, appropriately enough, able to guide us to the spot. Detailed reports on the site were made by two 'Wordsworthians' in the 1880s: see Thomas Hutchinson, 'Local Note on Hart Leap Well', *Transactions of the Wordsworth Society* 5 (1883) 126, and *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth* ed. William Knight (8 vols., London and New York, 1896), ii. 136-7. By that time there was little left of the 'monuments' except the Well and its basin; the building of several walls had substantially altered the surrounding landscape. Today there is only the Well and basin, and the landscape has changed again: the walls have gone, a wood has been planted, much of the surrounding countryside has been fenced off for Army training purposes. It should perhaps be added that 'well' in Yorkshire commonly, as here, signifies a spring.

[7] *Hauxwell Church*, 2nd edition. (privately printed, 1977), pp. 8-9.

[8] Kenneth Johnston's description: *Wordsworth and The Recluse* (New Haven and London, 1984), p. 88 (hereafter Johnston).

Did to my blindness seem a sacrifice,
The same is now a choice of the whole heart.
If e'er the acceptance of such dower was deemed
A condescension or a weak indulgence
To a sick fancy, it is now an act
Of reason that exultingly aspires. (ll. 64-7, 74-82)[9]

Nowhere, subsequently in the poem, does Wordsworth explain exactly why the idea of rural retirement 'was deemed so difficult'. But *The Prelude* and much of his earlier poetry (and other writings) completes the picture. Indeed we can focus on how the word 'reason', prominent in the works of Wordsworth's 'radical' youth, functions in its new context here. It was a fierce, Tom Paineite 'Reason' (with capital 'R') which in 1792-4 had seemed to demand Wordsworth's commitment to the cause of 'Truth', then championed in its public, communal, and urban aspects. It was this 'Reason' which had made rural retirement seem 'a weak indulgence / To a sick fancy' — romantic, but defeatist and selfish. Now, in 1800, 'reason' (initially with small 'r') exonerates a lifestyle previously condemned by 'Reason': 'reason' and 'fancy' carry a virtually reversed significance. Whether this changing view of modes of living reflects an *essential* change in Wordsworth's politics is unclear and the subject of much critical disputation.[10] What is certain, though, is that his understanding of his own political and public role changed decisively.

Home at Grasmere reveals a Wordsworth coy about representing this change in political terms, however. Rather, he represents it, in an allegorical manner, as a changing view of his relationship to 'Nature'. The passage just quoted finally justifies his choice of lifestyle on the grounds of improved understanding of 'Nature':

What I keep have gained,
Shall gain, must gain, if sound be my belief
From past and present rightly understood
That in my day of childhood I was less
The mind of Nature, less, take all in all,
Whatever may be lost, than I am now. (ll. 91-6)

This is roughly the developmental narrative of 'Tintern Abbey', now adapted to new purpose. On the latter poem Stephen Gill has commented:

. . . it is surprising that he [Wordsworth] should present 1793 as the time when Nature was 'all in all' and 1798 as the moment when he felt most at one with the cause of humanity, for in 1793 Wordsworth had been a radical patriot, his heart given to the people and to the French cause, whereas in 1798 he was hymning Nature's power to 'feed this mind of ours, / In a wise passiveness'.[11]

[9] All quotations from MS. B of *Home at Grasmere* are from the standard text in *Home at Grasmere* ed. Beth Darlington (Ithaca, NY, and Hassocks, 1977).

[10] Two standard accounts of Wordsworth's political development in the 1790s are James K. Chandler, *Wordsworth's Second Nature: A Study of the Poetry and Politics* (Chicago and London, 1984) (hereafter Chandler) and Nicholas Roe, *Wordsworth and Coleridge: The Radical Years* (Oxford, 1988). Chandler and Roe produce radically different conclusions.

[11] *William Wordsworth: A Life* (Oxford and New York, 1989), pp. 153-4. James Chandler comments more largely to the same effect (Chandler 8-9).

In *Home at Grasmere* Wordsworth develops this reconstructed political biography in ways which are particularly significant for 'Hart-Leap Well'. As an 'innocent little-one' (l. 910), he says, he 'breathed . . . / Among wild appetites and blind desires, / Motions of savage instinct, my delight / And exaltation' (ll. 912-15). As a youth he loved 'daring feat[s]' (l. 917), 'danger' (l. 923), and tales of courage. He then continues:

Yea, to this day I swell with like desire;
I cannot at this moment read a tale
Of two brave Vessels matched in deadly fight
And fighting to the death, but I am pleased
More than a wise Man ought to be; I wish,
I burn, I struggle, and in soul am there.
But me hath Nature tamed . . .
. . .
That which in stealth by nature was performed
Hath Reason sanctioned. Her deliberate Voice
Hath said, 'Be mild and love all gentle things;
Thy glory and thy happiness be there.
Yet fear (though thou confide in me) no want
Of aspirations which have been — of foes
To wrestle with and victory to complete,
Bounds to be leapt and darkness to explore.
That which enflamed thy infant heart — the love,
The longing, the contempt, the undaunted quest —
These shall survive, though changed their office, these
Shall live; it is not in their power to die.'
Then farewell to the Warrior's deeds, farewell.
All hope, which once and long was mine, to fill
The heroic trumpet with the muse's breath! (ll. 928-34, 941-55)

Wordsworth buttresses the developmental narrative of 'Tintern Abbey' by associating his earlier, agitated, 'savage' response to nature with the world of martial heroism. His difficulties in thinking of rural retirement as anything but 'sick fancy' are glossed as reluctance to abandon the warrior-bard's mind set. This may still seem rather unsatisfactory as an 'explanation' but the shift in terms certainly takes the discussion closer to the buried political narrative. If for that warrior-bard we read the young Wordsworth who wrote *Salisbury Plain* (1793), with its justification of revolutionary warfare, then the politics seem to press close to the surface. In conclusion, then, *Home at Grasmere* connects a violent response to nature with martial heroism and its poetry — and implicitly links both to an abandoned faith in the French Revolution.

Wordsworth's 'heroic' ballad, 'Part First' of 'Hart-Leap Well', thus represents the young poet and the type of poetry which *Home at Grasmere* claimed he was renouncing. Geoffrey Hartman's astute comment, that 'Hart-Leap Well' is 'really a little progress of the imagination . . . from the martial type of the knight, to the pastoral type of the shepherd, and finally to that of the poet',[12] is, given the gloss supplied by Wordsworth's martial renunciations in *Home at Grasmere*, tantamount to saying that the poem is a 'little' biography of Wordsworth himself. As suggested already, destructive or misapplied energy, vented in a natural context, is how Wordsworth consistently

[12] Hartman 57.

represented his immaturity in the years after 'Tintern Abbey',[13] thus representing a changed attitude to the French Revolution: behind Sir Walter stands a young devotee of French 'Liberty'. Sir Walter's pleasures are vividly imagined and sympathised with: as Don Bialostosky notes, the narrator's 'references to "that glorious day," "this glorious act," "a joyful case," and "that darling place" assume his hero's attitudes toward the events of the hunt without explicitly distinguishing them from his own. . . . he sympathises with and in part resembles the Sir Walter he invents.'[14] It is easy enough to connect these hunting pleasures with the 'aching joys' and 'dizzy raptures' (ll. 85-6) experienced by the young Wordsworth in 'Tintern Abbey', bounding around 'like a roe' (l. 68). Nevertheless, Sir Walter is implicitly criticised in 'Hart-Leap Well', read as a whole, while 'Tintern Abbey' presents the young tourist indulgently. This difference may suggest a hardening of Wordsworth's attitude to his early-1790s self.

The implied criticism of Sir Walter is presented in the form of a dialogue, which leaves room for a good deal of ambivalence, however. In this respect attempts to read 'Hart-Leap Well' in the light of Bürger's 'Der Wilde Jäger' (or of Coleridge's 'Ancient Mariner') often tend to distort the basic facts of Wordsworth's poem. There is no suggestion that Sir Walter is anything like the 'cursed hunter' of Bürger's conception, or that he experienced any sort of 'punishment' (whether physical or psychological) for his 'crime'. Similarly, David Perkins's recent attempt to read the poem as a 'polemic against hunting' is notably unconvincing. Indeed Perkins admits that 'Commentaries on this poem ['Hart-Leap Well'] in books and articles leave an animal lover in despair, for they show that if the poem seeks to instill compassion for animals, it was written in vain.'[15] This consensus of readers surely points to the fact that if Wordsworth's principal interest had been the morality of hunting he would have written a different poem. But Wordsworth's interest was in Sir Walter's *legacy*. The question the poem poses is not whether it is wrong to hunt, but how an intelligent 'Nature' responds to the *un*natural behaviour of man. There were deep, personal reasons for this focus. In so far as Sir Walter represents the young, 'savage' Wordsworth the question became, as it would in *Home at Grasmere*, one of inheritance, continuity, and the preservation of high — but transformed — ideals. More pointedly: could the young disciple of French 'Liberty' be *redeemed*?

Wordsworth placed the emphasis on Sir Walter's legacy by essentially structuring his poem as a moralising elegy/epitaph, a popular genre by the end of the eighteenth century, and one thoroughly transformed by Wordsworth in such poems as *The Ruined Cottage*, 'Lines Left Upon a Seat in a Yew-Tree' and 'Hart-Leap Well'. Nevertheless, some of the more conventional elements of 'Hart-Leap Well' are revealed if it is compared with Robert Lovell's 'Elegy. The Decayed Farm-House' of 1794, a largely unremarkable poem which Wordsworth probably knew.[16] Lovell's 'Elegy' is a typical late eighteenth-century response to Gray's seminal graveyard meditation. A poet-tourist, shunning 'proud cities' (l. 5) in order to 'meditate the humbler spot' (l. 13), comes across a ruined farmhouse and wonders at its history. He sees an elderly local shepherd and enquires who had previously dwelt there. The shepherd informs the poet that his former master, Gratio, a good man loved by the whole community, had lived and died there, and guides the poet to Gratio's grave (the poem concludes with an attached 'Epitaph' in the manner of Gray's). As Gratio apparently had a

[13] Other examples include the two-part *Prelude*, 'Nutting', 'To the Daisy' (the opening piece in *Poems, in Two Volumes* of 1807) and 'To a Butterfly' ('Stay near me - do not take thy flight!').

[14] Don H. Bialostosky, *Making Tales: The Poetics of Wordsworth's Narrative Experiments* (Chicago, 1984), p. 90.

[15] 'Wordsworth and the Polemic against Hunting: "Hart-Leap Well"', *Nineteenth Century Literature* 52 (1998), 421-45, p. 427 (hereafter Perkins).

[16] Lovell (*c*..1770-96) was Coleridge's brother-in-law and a member of Coleridge's Bristol circle. His 'Elegy' appeared in the collaborative (with Southey) *Poems* (Bath, 1795) at pp. 35-9. This volume may have supplied the germ of the idea for the collaborative *Lyrical Ballads*.

large family it is not logically clear why his home should have become a ruin, except that this genre of poem demanded one. Lovell's 'Elegy' was published alongside a companion poem of Southey's, entitled 'The Miser's Mansion', which has roughly the same structure, but describes an unsocial, self-absorbed character whose death affects no one. The common theme of the poems is that the only proper measure of a man's value is how his neighbours speak of him when he is dead. In other words, these are poems of communal tradition, centred on a moral legacy enshrined in a ruin, the significance of which is unfolded to a 'stranger' by a local. In 'Hart-Leap Well', for all the formal oddness, the same basic shape can be recognised. Comparing 'Hart-Leap Well' with Lovell's 'Elegy' it can be seen that Wordsworth made two simple but sweeping alterations to the structure. He extracted the story of Sir Walter from its spoken context in the meeting-at-the-ruin, presenting it first, and he added the narrator's (roughly his own) commentary to that of the shepherd. In other respects he followed the model represented by Lovell's 'Elegy' quite closely: as in Lovell, the 'Elegiac' 'Part Second' begins by establishing the thinking muse's preference for 'humbler spots' and subjects, then leaps from the general to the particular of a specific ruin, espied and wondered at by the poet-tourist. Lovell's '"Say, passing shepherd, who has sojourn'd there?"' (l. 20) is hardly more gauche than Wordsworth's 'accosting' of 'one who was in Shepherd's garb attir'd' (ll. 118-9): both highlight the unnaturalness of convention. The same might be said of the easy convenience of the shepherds in both poems seeming to be the supreme living historians of the ruins in question.

This doubling of commentary in 'Hart-Leap Well' may not be any more naturalistic, but it makes for a much more interesting poem, especially given Wordsworth's established sympathetic identification with Sir Walter. One can sense this doubling became necessary when Wordsworth realised that his plot had inevitably doubled the subject of the elegy itself. The 'monuments' encountered at 'Hart-Leap Well' memorialise Sir Walter *and* the hart which died there. By making the shepherd the champion of the hart, Wordsworth made room for the narrator (roughly himself) to enter the elegiac part of the poem in a corrective capacity. The hart is used to focus the human drama, but is finally of secondary importance, as Hartman realised. Within the convention of poems like Lovell's and Southey's, 'Hart-Leap Well' is first and foremost a poem about Sir Walter's 'vice and folly'. The 'monuments' which the poet sees stand as a memorial, enshrined in local folklore, to Sir Walter's false values. In this sense the elegiac sadness of the poem is distilled, as in Southey's 'Miser's Mansion', from a sense of wasted human potential. Sir Walter's 'Pleasure-house' is built for aristocratic dalliance; the point is not made explicitly, but it is clear it brought no good to local people:

'Till the foundations of the mountains fail
My mansion with its arbour shall endure;
—The joy of them who till the fields of Swale,
And them who dwell among the woods of Ure.' (ll. 73-6)

The dash links the obvious vainglory of Sir Walter's boast about the permanence of his buildings with the assumption that local farmers will rejoice in their proximity to such a construction. In fact, as David Perkins has pointed out, the 'Pleasure-house', with the large claims made for it by Sir Walter and the shepherd, is almost certainly Wordsworth's addition to the story he heard from the 'peasant'.[17] Wordsworth exploits it in two related ways, both tending to justify the narrator's having the last word on the significance of the place: first, the shepherd's credulous statements respecting the building ('The finest palace of a hundred realms' (l. 128)) are used to diminish his authority as a commentator; second, the vainglory of Sir Walter's claims justifies a shift in emphasis from the hart

[17] Perkins 437-8.

to mankind's (Wordsworth's) changing attitude to 'Nature' and social responsibility. A version of the poem without the hart would in fact have been very familiar to readers in 1800, and somewhat akin to Southey's 'Miser's Mansion': the shepherd would simply report Sir Walter's boasting, then meditate on human folly and vanity. Given the latent association of Sir Walter and the young Wordsworth, a 'Friend of Liberty', the question whether the 'monuments' mark the scene of a crime, or merely folly, was obviously a pressing one. Shepherd and poet meditate over a site of death in two senses: there was life here before the deer breathed its last, there was life again in the days of Sir Walter's summer parties: now there is a pervading sense of death. But the two men fundamentally disagree as to how and when this deathly sense developed.

The shepherd, who is implicitly Sir Walter's judge (as well, by extension, Wordsworth's), regards Hart-Leap Well as the scene of a crime, the place where the hart was hunted to its death. His imaginative and elegiac efforts are concerned with humanising and understanding the deer, thereby intensifying a very personal sense of pain:

'Here on the grass perhaps asleep he sank,
Lull'd by this fountain in the summer-tide;
This water was perhaps the first he drank
When he had wander'd from his mother's side.

In April here beneath the scented thorn
He heard the birds their morning carols sing,
And he, perhaps, for aught we know, was born
Not half a furlong from that self-same spring.' (ll. 149-56)

For the shepherd the hart's death was a crime against nature, against humanity even, and the rest follows. The 'Pleasure-house' inevitably fell to ruin because the spot was cursed from the moment the hart died. He does not hint at any particular disapproval of Sir Walter's construction of the 'Pleasure-house', of which he seems rather in awe; rather this vainglorious project simply provides evidence for his theory of the death-curse. The poet politely remarks a 'Small difference' (l. 162) with the shepherd, and although critics have generally emphasised the 'small' rather than the 'difference' 'Hart-Leap Well' cannot be properly understood if it is not recognised that on this issue of what is *marked* by the 'monuments' poet and shepherd differ largely and crucially. The poet is true to the generic tradition represented by Lovell's 'Elegy'. His attention had been captured by a ruin, and his last thoughts are of what the ruin means, what its human lesson is:

'The Pleasure-house is dust: — behind, before,
This is no common waste, no common gloom;
But Nature, in due course of time, once more
Shall here put on her beauty and her bloom.

'She leaves these objects to a slow decay
That what we are, and have been, may be known;
But, at the coming of the milder day,
These monuments shall all be overgrown.

'One lesson, Shepherd, let us two divide,
Taught both by what she shews, and what conceals,
Never to blend our pleasure or our pride

With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels.' (ll. 169-80)

The poet emphasises folly rather than crime, the building and decay of the 'Pleasure-house' rather than the hunting of the hart. He sympathises with the shepherd's notion of a feeling and vengeful nature — 'This beast not unobserv'd by Nature fell' (l. 163) — but emphasises, by contrast, the positive aspects of 'Nature's' (supposed) programme. He assumes 'Nature's' authority to explain 'Nature's' meaning. Sir Walter's construction of the 'Pleasure-house' is turned into a representative error, a mistaken path taken by mankind in an early stage of its spiritual development. Nevertheless, even as an error it has value, for it can act as a foil to mankind's subsequent progress and warn against regressive tendencies. Only with the coming of the millenarian 'milder day' will its usefulness in these respects be exhausted (though one assumes that even 'overgrown' monuments may have an educational potential). Read in the light of Wordsworth's other, more autobiographical, writings of this period, the personal sub-text is that he needed to regard the early 1790s as a time of productive error, with a meaning to be explored: not as an irredeemably 'cursed', unapproachable site of pain. The poem becomes something of a self-elegy (not altogether unlike Gray's) in which the narrator sees in the ruined 'Pleasure-house' — itself a sort of inverted parody of Dove Cottage values — the vanity and ultimate error of his earlier ideals and ambitions. So while 'Hart-Leap Well', like Southey's 'Miser's Mansion', concludes with a 'public' moral along the lines of 'Learn from this man's folly!', this is underwritten by the private realisation: '*I* must learn from my folly'.

As a matter of fact, Wordsworth had used the topos of the 'representative ruin' in a poem of his 'radical' period (1792-5) and comparing this with 'Hart-Leap Well' usefully illustrates how he was re-imagining the basic parameters of his poetic identity. *Salisbury Plain*, written but not published in 1793, is also based around a ruin, Stone-Henge, and similarly includes a dialogue between first-time visitants and locals about the significance of the 'monuments'. Wordsworth had, again in this case, been a recent visitor to those 'monuments' himself, but although he drew on his own experiences in *Salisbury Plain* he did not place himself, a poet-tourist, in the poem, as he would later in 'Hart-Leap Well'. As noted already, *Salisbury Plain* concludes with an appeal to the revolutionary armies — the 'Heroes of Truth' — to destroy all the 'monuments' and champions of 'Superstition'. In the final surviving lines, however, a single exception is made in favour of Stonehenge:

. . . pursue your toils, till not a trace
Be left on earth of Superstition's reign,
Save that eternal pile which frowns on Sarum's plain. (ll. 457-9)[18]

Although the reason for this exception is not spelt out, it is clear that Stonehenge is meant to function in the future pretty much as the 'monuments' in 'Hart-Leap Well' do in the present, 'That what we are, and have been, may be known' — a foil to man's subsequent enlightenment and a warning against regressive tendencies. The crucial difference is that the poet of the earlier poem, assuming the mantle of 'Reason' and speaking in confident, prophetic tones, had imagined Stonehenge preserved as a national or even international monument by decree of some revolutionary council, whereas in 'Hart-Leap Well' decisions about the 'monuments' are represented as 'Nature's'. In 1793 Wordsworth had derived his authority as a poet from a prophetic confidence in the irresistible triumph of 'Reason' and revolution; by 1800 he was deriving it from 'Nature', itself now resonant with prophetic power. 'Nature' guides him towards the 'milder', millenarian future.

The narrator's appropriation of 'Nature's' authority is used to justify his disagreement with the shepherd's sentiments. The shepherd's theory of the curse, translated into the personal plot traced

[18] Quoted from *The Salisbury Plain Poems of William Wordsworth* ed. Stephen Gill (Ithaca, NY, and Hassocks, 1975).

here, amounts to a
revolutionary goal
imaginative stagna
deserts those who
Wordsworth preser
at the same time in
folklore which led
presented in the
enlightened comm
Ballad' here stand
better illustrate the
In one respect this
was full of eloque
literary sensibility.
glossing folk mat
particularly associa
eighteenth century
discussion there is
celebrated *Reliques*
and in fact brand-n
Percy gave pride o
as 'The Hunting o
Spectator, with its
ballad.[20] But Percy
his readers to com
'some few passage
sense Wordsworth
seems complete wi
adds his gloss. The
other words, Wor
incongruously teas
shepherd too is rep
reading would sug
merely adapt the s
himself, *in the poe*
significant this aspe

Home at Grasm
way toward explai
about his relation

[19] In 1815 Wordsworth
would not be proud to
I am happy in this occa
J. B. Owen and Jane W
[20] In 'Chevy-Chase' a
deliberate affront to Lo
hunting ballad Wordsw
[21] *Reliques of Ancient E*

here, amounts to a statement that 'Nature' *will* desert those who betray her: Wordsworth's pursuit of revolutionary goals in defiance of 'Nature's' teaching has led him to personal unhappiness and imaginative stagnation. Against this, the narrator must of course argue that 'Nature' never *wholly* deserts those who betray her, and in fact constantly works to transform, renew and redeem. Wordsworth presents himself as self-consciously drawing on folklore (the story of the Well) and yet at the same time improving it as 'Nature's' spokesman. And it was surely this 'improving' attitude to folklore which led Wordsworth to separate the story proper from the elegiac frame. 'Part First' is presented in the manner of an antiquarian discovery while 'Part Second' is presented as an enlightened commentary on that discovery, recording a folk belief but politely doubting it. 'Lyrical Ballad' here stands for something like ballad plus elegiac gloss (and few of Wordsworth's poems better illustrate the combination of elements which a 'Lyrical Ballad' might be supposed to possess). In one respect this disposed of the conceit endemic in poems like Lovell's — the fancy that England was full of eloquent, moralising rustics whose stories and sentiments could satisfy an educated, literary sensibility. But in substituting the image of the poet playing a necessary role in adapting and glossing folk material Wordsworth was responding to an established cultural tradition and one particularly associated with ballads. The revival of the ballad as a respectable literary genre in the eighteenth century was bound up with a reassessment of the value of folklore. For the present discussion there is no need to trace this important cultural movement beyond Bishop Percy's celebrated *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765), the first scholarly collection of old, not-so-old, and in fact brand-new ballads, and a work which Wordsworth greatly admired throughout his life.[19] Percy gave pride of place to the most famous of ancient English ballads, 'Chevy-Chase' (also known as 'The Hunting of the Cheviot'), praised by Sidney in his *Defence of Poetry* and Addison in *The Spectator*, with its great hunting scene, a richly suggestive English context for Wordsworth's hunting ballad.[20] But Percy also included a 'modern', 'improved' version of 'Chevy Chase', and encouraged his readers to compare the two. He thought the older 'Chevy-Chase' had a superior 'dignity' in 'some few passages', but that the modern version had 'generally' improved the 'sentiments'.[21] In a sense Wordsworth offers 'ancient' and 'modern' versions of 'Hart-Leap Well' — that is, the poem seems complete with the shepherd's very final last words, then seems quite different when the poet adds his gloss. The shepherd may have 'dignity', but the narrator still 'improves' his 'sentiments'. In other words, Wordsworth appears as a sort of creative *editor* of folk material, somewhat incongruously teasing millenarian sentiments out of a local superstition. Not just the ruin, but the shepherd too is represented as 'what we are, and have been' (as Hartman's 'progress of imagination' reading would suggest). However Wordsworth advances somewhat beyond Percy, for he does not merely adapt the shepherd's story to suit it to modern literary sensibilities but expressly presents himself, *in the poem*, as an educator. A side comparison with *Home at Grasmere* will reveal how significant this aspect of 'Hart-Leap Well' is.

Home at Grasmere has a good deal to say, and to speculate, about shepherds, and goes a long way toward explaining the shepherd's role in 'Hart-Leap Well'. It reveals a Wordsworth anxious about his relationship with the shepherds and other working men in Grasmere. As Kenneth

[19] In 1815 Wordsworth famously commented: 'I do not think that there is an able writer in verse of the present day who would not be proud to acknowledge his obligations to the Reliques; I know that it is so with my friends; and, for myself, I am happy in this occasion to make a public avowal of my own.' See *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth* eds. W. J. B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser (3 vols., Oxford, 1974), iii. 78 (hereafter *Prose Works*).

[20] In 'Chevy-Chase' a large number of deer are killed before noon, but the hunt is conducted by Lord Percy as a deliberate affront to Lord Douglas, and by nightfall many of the hunters are dead themselves. In writing his own 'heroic' hunting ballad Wordsworth can hardly have failed to recall and be challenged by 'Chevy-Chase'.

[21] *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* ed. Thomas Percy (3 vols., London, 1765), i. 232.

Johnston's fine reading emphasised, *Home at Grasmere*'s 'Romantic Ode to Joy' 'faltered' when Wordsworth notes the absence of a particular 'pair / Of milk-white Swans' (ll. 322-3):

> The extremes to which he [Wordsworth] goes to explain the swans' absence are the best guarantee of the sincerity of the joy which preceded his discovery of it. . . . His first conjecture is that the swans may have been shot by Grasmere 'dalesmen' [Wordsworth originally wrote 'The Shepherd'], but this leads to an even worse crisis, lack of moral confidence in Grasmere's residents.[22]

Wordsworth's anxious response to this 'crisis' is to shuttle between two poles, alternately chastising himself for idealising the shepherds' lives then chastising himself for being too cynical regarding their moral worth. An attempt at compromise, the assertion that Lakeland 'dalesmen' were at least superior to the peasantry elsewhere, was not particularly satisfactory, and here the poem ran out of momentum in 1800. Yet Wordsworth clearly *needed* to believe in some sort of compromise, and behind this lurked a vocational worry. A perfect valley, even an affected belief in one, would, he realised, 'bear us on / Without desire in full complacency, Contemplating perfection absolute / And entertained as in a placid sleep' (ll. 394-7). Behind this was an 'anxiety of indolence', recently studied in Wordsworth's work as a whole by John Rieder who suggests that Wordsworth's attempts to associate indolence with 'a natural, spontaneous sense of belonging to the world' were always subverted by 'a guilt-ridden awareness of singularity and dereliction of duty'.[23] But at the other extreme, a hopelessly depraved peasantry, lacking any conception of their need for 'improvement', would force the Wordsworths into pastoral fantasising or a painful recognition of their spiritual isolation. Moreover, Wordsworth's redemptive poetic project would be compromised from the start. Soon he would be assuring readers of *Lyrical Ballads* that 'the Poet' 'carr[ies] everywhere with him relationship and love. . . . the Poet binds together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society'.[24] Such a vision obviously supposed a society appreciative of poets, and this is the crux of Wordsworth's vocational anxieties in *Home at Grasmere*. His desired golden mean was country people of refined sensibilities who could and would appreciate the arrival in their midst of a poet bringing 'relationship and love': in specifically Wordsworthian terms, with an educative programme involving mankind's relationship to 'Nature'.

The relationship 'Hart-Leap Well' represents between poet and shepherd is thus an ideal projection of a social role Wordsworth hoped to fill in Grasmere. Unlike the hypothetical shepherd who shot the 'pair / Of milk-white Swans' and led Wordsworth to contemplate his new neighbours with anxiety, this shepherd seems to understand 'Nature' sufficiently for the full Wordsworthian gospel to be proffered him. 'Hart-Leap Well' appropriately refrains from saying whether the shepherd was persuaded by this New Testament of 'Nature', however, and although the poem concludes with evangelical possibilities the question of conversion is left open. 'Hart-Leap Well' benefits from this openness at an artistic level, but it would be naive to maintain that Wordsworth preferred openness to closure on purely artistic grounds. He is simply one of the great poets of ambivalence. Looking back on his immersion in revolutionary theories he was genuinely unsure whether he had committed an irreversible crime against 'Nature' (or, in other words, himself) or been guilty merely of youthful follies. Those two interpretations of his early life were focussed in dramatic juxtaposition in 'Hart-Leap Well' and by presenting them in the form of a dialogue with a shepherd Wordsworth was implicitly making an experiment on his new Grasmere neighbours. If they accepted his new gospel he was a genuine prophet and his faith in a redemptive 'Nature' justified.

[22] Johnston, 90.
[23] *Wordsworth's Counterrevolutionary Turn: Community, Virtue, and Vision in the 1790s* (Newark and London, 1997), p. 85.
[24] *Prose Works* i.

But if they clung to
but he would be co
shrine. Commemor
but not untroubled

Kyoto University

But if they clung to their established conceptions Wordsworth's faith might not only not be justified, but he would be confronted with the realisation that he was for a second time worshipping at a false shrine. Commemorating an event on the road to Grasmere, 'Hart-Leap Well' is a poem of hopeful but not untroubled passage—poised between unsatisfactory past and uncertain future.

Kyoto University

Wordsworth's "The Brothers" and Romantic Humanism of Place

By RICHARD W. CLANCEY

Our passion for the environment is more than a crusade for clean air and natural resources; it is aroused affection for the world we now share so tightly. Because of our anxious caring, Wordsworth's "The Brothers" has special resonance. As a tale for our times, it recounts the story of two young men sharing a brotherly affection that was absolutely bound up in and with their rugged mountain world. It is a kind of parable of two of Wordsworth's most cherished doctrines, love of nature leads to the love of human beings and, especially, the doctrine of our fittingness to the world: that we are "exquisitely" "fitted" "to the external world" and "[t]he external world is fitted" to us in such wise that through the "blended might" of our endeavor to realize this fittingness, a "creation" comes into being, for "by no lower name / [c]an it be called."[1]

Wordsworth's "The Brothers" is the story of how that "creation" came to be, was lost, was sought for through exile and labor only to be lost absolutely in the end. We call it a domestic tragedy, though for some it may seem to deserve a better critical designate. It is tragic, understood in the broad sense, and here lies its special appeal. The term domestic has a particular force in its meaning, as will be seen ahead. The story unfolds as a rural priest misidentifies a returning, long-absent member of the community, Leonard Ewbanks, as a feckless tourist. Even though they talk, the priest recounting the history of Leonard's family and even the details of Leonard's own life, they never really communicate. Leonard, exiled working at sea for twenty years, is too pained in worry and shyness to identify himself. He had gone to sea to earn enough money to recover the family's sheep farm for himself and his beloved brother whom he left behind. Overpowered by the harsh realities of mortgage and unpaid debt, they lost not only their patrimony but the whole life they loved and shared. Leonard finally learns from the garrulous priest that his brother is dead. He sees his grave and departs, returns to sea all the more a lonely exile. Even though he now has the financial means to do so, he cannot purchase any parcel of land nor secure any purchase on the life he lost absolutely with the death of his brother. His tragedy is all the more profound because it is both caused by events and is ultimately willed, because Leonard so deliberately accepts it. [2]

Scholars offer a variety of opinions to explain Leonard's tragic, outcast state. David Simpson argues that Leonard, in leaving his home, was not able to perform "the living rituals which go along with belonging to a dear perpetual place";[3] "there is no . . . place for him there now"[4]; and especially the "landscape," which had been "the emblem of his affection for his brother has now become an icon of pain and loss."[5]

[1] My text for the Prospectus to the *Recluse* is taken from an early manuscript version found in Jonathan Wordsworth, *William Wordsworth: The Borders of Vision* (Oxford, 1982) 111-12, lines 1002-14 (the line numbers of the text will be hereafter given in parentheses).

[2] William Wordsworth, "The Brothers," Lyrical Ballads, *and Other Poems, 1797-1800* ed. James Butler and Karen Green (Ithaca, 1992) 142-59 (the line numbers from this edition will hereafter be given in parentheses).

[3] David Simpson, *Wordsworth and the Figurings of the Real* (London, 1982) 36.

[4] Simpson 38.

[5] Simpson 39.

Fred Randel obs
explaining "the imp
Leonard's exile is fo
fails "to read the lan
Well," "The Brothe
consolation that suffe
to the strophe of 'Ha
constancy," forms "a
all his hopes and resu

James Butler is
publication of the sec
completion of "The
difficulty Wordsworth
and suffering, "hum
Wordsworth to cope v
finish "The Brothers."

Wordsworth came
for no other reason tha
the last poem of an ex

Gordon Thomas m
The words *last, dead,*
cliffs . . . ."[12] Thomas
elegy . . . ."[13] Leona
dead"; "even the place
what *can* he do? Well,
"useful, social, even ha

Each of these expl
compelling interest tha
stronger than elegiac
economic structures to
generosity of a "bold"
honored—are unfortuna
and his self-imposed e
corresponding aspiratio
blood or birth, can truly

[6] Fred V. Randel, "Wordswo
[7] Paul Magnuson, "The Artic
[8] Magnuson 76.
[9] James Butler, "Tourist or
51:1 (1996 June) 7; Butler a
[10] Butler, "Homecomings" 7
[11] Butler, "Homecomings" 1
[12] Gordon K. Thomas," Strar
[13] Thomas 197.
[14] Thomas 207.
[15] Thomas 207.

Fred Randel observes, "The poem . . . is, like Leonard himself, not quite articulate" in explaining "the impossibility of [Leonard's] lasting return".[6] Paul Magnuson argues that Leonard's exile is forced because he cannot share the community's language and symbols;[7] he fails "to read the landscape." Magnuson explains the close association of the poems "Hart-leap Well," "The Brothers," and "Michael." "Hart-leap Well," at its conclusion, "offers the consolation that suffering will find a voice." "The Brothers" serves as "the qualifying antistrophe to the strophe of 'Hart-Leap [sic] Well.'" "Michael," ending on the note of "heroic and stoic constancy," forms "a counter-statement to Leonard's reaction" to his brother's death. He "resigns all his hopes and resumes his homeless and aimless wandering."[8]

James Butler is concerned with the larger compositional context, the years around the publication of the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads.* He reminds us that Wordsworth found the completion of "The Brothers" difficult, and that he went on to write "Hart-leap Well."[9] The difficulty Wordsworth encountered, the "'awkward passage,'" concerned the problem of change and suffering, "human disasters, evil, transience."[10] Doing "Hart-leap Well" enabled Wordsworth to cope with the problem of evil even in "pastoral vales" and further enabled him to finish "The Brothers."

Wordsworth came to see the necessity of "the tragedy inherent in 'The Brothers'"; tragedy if for no other reason than the poem "mourns a lost pastoral world"; it is "literally and figuratively the last poem of an expiring century."[11]

Gordon Thomas makes much the same point. "The Brothers" is "a poem about extinction. . . . The words *last, dead, death, die, died,* repeat over and over like an echo among the rocks and cliffs . . . ."[12] Thomas calls the poem, "not in the traditional sense but in a *strict* sense, a *pastoral elegy* . . . ."[13] Leonard has found that his brother, " like everyone else he has ever loved, is dead"; "even the place he [had] loved has become 'a place in which he could not bear to live.' So what *can* he do? Well, he can endure . . . ."[14] He returns to the sea where he can at least lead a "useful, social, even happy" life.[15]

Each of these explanations has much merit, but I find that the tragedy of Leonard and the compelling interest that "The Brothers" arouses lie much deeper. Somehow the poem's appeal is stronger than elegiac lament at the loss of an idyllic social order, or the failure of modern economic structures to accommodate the independent pastoral community and the unstinting generosity of a "bold" rural population. Such passings, change and pain—though always to be honored—are unfortunately all too common. But there is something special about Leonard's loss and his self-imposed exile at sea. I think it has to do with Wordsworth's own love of place and corresponding aspiration and simultaneous worry that a *chosen* place, not one entitled to him by blood or birth, can truly become his home. Butler would seem to hold this position as he locates

[6] Fred V. Randel, "Wordsworth's Homecoming" *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 17 (1977) 588.
[7] Paul Magnuson, "The Articulation of 'Michael'; or, Could Michael Talk?" *Wordsworth Circle* 13 (1982) 76.
[8] Magnuson 76.
[9] James Butler, "Tourist or Native Son: Wordsworth's Homecomings of 1799-1800," *Nineteen-Century Literature* 51:1 (1996 June) 7; Butler and Green, eds., Lyrical Ballads, *and Other Poems, 1797-1800* (Ithaca, 1992). 378.
[10] Butler, "Homecomings" 76.
[11] Butler, "Homecomings" 10.
[12] Gordon K. Thomas," Strange Alteration Wrought on Every Side: The Brothers", *CLB* NS 92 (1995) 196-97.
[13] Thomas 197.
[14] Thomas 207.
[15] Thomas 207.

our understanding of "The Brothers" with *Home at Grasmere* and the motif of Wordsworth's returning home: "For Wordsworth late in 1799, the outcome of his attempt to rebuild his ancestral home in his native mountains was uncertain."[16] Wordsworth returned not so much explicitly to Grasmere, but to the Lake District. He chose Grasmere as his home and then created an initial fiction for the beginning of *Home at Grasmere* to allow him an affective entitlement whereby he might call Grasmere his home. He claims to have seen the vale as a child and then began to hope that some day it would be his home.[17]

Wordsworth, however, was troubled by the changes he encountered in the Lake District itself and by the shadow of evil he found as part of his elected "Eden." Only when he was able to accept this evil, could he accommodate himself fully to Grasmere and begin to create a body of poetry largely inspired by nature nurturing him in this sacred vale.[18] But "The Brothers" does not easily flow into the eagerness of *Home at Grasmere.* It is something like the counterstatement referred to above by Magnuson when speaking of the relationship of "Michael" to "The Brothers." I am not suggesting that Wordsworth intended "The Brothers" and *Home at Grasmere* as matching texts, but there is an important connection. Butler suggests this as he relates "Hart-leap Well," "The Brothers," and *Home at Grasmere*: "The movement is thus from pastoral . . . to lyrical ballad . . . to autobiography . . . ."[19] Though he warns us against seeing "The Brothers" as "personal allegory,"[20] Butler demonstrates the autobiographical elements strongly suggested in the poem, the way Wordsworth identifies with Leonard and his brother John with James.[21] Butler also reminds us that "The Brothers" was substantially finished "by Christmas eve 1799"[22] and that it was fully completed by April 5, 1800.[23] Beth Darlington dates the beginning of *Home at Grasmere* as "in the early spring of 1800." She also notes that his "beginnings were unpretentious, and hardly philosophical. . . . Their tone is joyful and confident, matching the exuberance of his 'glad preamble' to *The Prelude*."[24] Thus conceptually and chronologically "The Brothers" is related to *Home at Grasmere,* and yet they seem at odds. The tragic character of "The Brothers," however, is precisely its value. I would argue that it provides an appropriate and necessary preamble, a rightful ploy of cautionary rhetoric, a somber andante to be borne in mind as one moves to the optimistic vocational avowals of *Home at Grasmere* and so much of the poetry to follow.

David Perkins reminds us of how worried and unsure Wordsworth could be even with respect to his most cherished beliefs: "that Nature is benign and even tenderly conscious of Man, or that Man should be regarded with love and awe—were as doubtful as they were necessary to him. Even in the retired vale of Grasmere, it was hard to preserve them."[25] I would add that Wordsworth believed in the power of nature and the power of place, but he also fully understood the danger of losing both. It was not enough to accept evil; he had also to be able to accept

[16] Butler, "Homecomings" 7.
[17] Butler, "Homecomings" 10-11.
[18] Butler, "Homecomings" 11-15.
[19] Butler, "Homecomings" 10.
[20] Butler, "Homecomings" 7.
[21] Butler, "Homecomings" 6-7.
[22] Butler, "Homecomings" 7.
[23] William Wordsworth, *Lyrical Ballads*, ed Butler and Green, 380.
[24] Ed. Beth Darlington, William Wordsworth, *Home at Grasmere* (Ithaca, 1977) 8.
[25] David Perkins, *Wordsworth and the Poetry of Sincerity* (Cambridge, MA, 1964) 156-57.

ultimate failure a
good. The const
Wordsworth's thi
dashed. As he se
Grasmere, he mu
possibility. That t
poet Coleridge so
precise dream of
strong philosophic
poetic conception

"The Brothers
naturalistic idealis
1800 edition of *L*
has the special c
passages in *Home*
complex issue of t
Jonathan Wordswo
beginning of the p
Wordsworth cites
that *Home at Gra*
purposes he sugge
Grasmere"[29] (see a
likely period" for
earliest manuscript

Beauty, who
Surpassing
Of delicate
From earth'
Pitches her
My hourly
Elysian, bles
Of choice se
A history, o
Once wedde
In love, find

Jonathan Words
includes the comme

[26] Darlington, ed., *Home*
[27] M. H. Abrams, *Natura*
[28] Jonathan Wordsworth,
[29] Wordsworth, *Borders*
[30] Wordsworth, *Borders*
[31] Wordsworth, *Borders*

ultimate failure as a possibility even in a natural environment which he held to be ultimately good. The constant reworking of *The Prelude* alerts us to the dialectical patterns in Wordsworth's thinking and creative impulses. He had seen his own most cherished beliefs dashed. As he settled in Grasmere and began to write his autobiography of hope, *Home at Grasmere*, he must have felt that he also needed to probe the nature of failure that rose as a possibility. That theme too deserved serious commitment and much art. This is the philosophical poet Coleridge sought to bring forth fully into poetry. Wordsworth never fulfilled Coleridge's precise dream of doing a philosophical poem, but he did demonstrate that poetry can bespeak strong philosophical contrasts. Leonard in exile is as much a part of the Wordsworth canon of poetic conception as the visionary poet at home in Grasmere or on top of Mt. Snowdon.

"The Brothers" is a powerful Wordsworth text because it is a sobering correlative to the naturalistic idealism of *Home at* Grasmere. Also, unlike other poems of human suffering in the 1800 edition of *Lyrical Ballads,* "There was a Boy," "Poor Susan," and "Ruth," "The Brothers" has the special character of providing a poignant illustration of one of the most important passages in *Home at Grasmere,* the famous Prospectus for *The Recluse.* Without going into the complex issue of the dating of the Prospectus,[26] let us just note here that, like M. H. Abrams,[27] Jonathan Wordsworth emphasizes its importance: "Clearly the Prospectus was intended to be the beginning of the poet's work on the central philosophical section of *The Recluse*."[28] Jonathan Wordsworth cites "late December 1799" as the time of its probable composition, and observes that *Home at Grasmere* was done in March of the following year. Most important for our purposes he suggests, "at first the Prospectus was regarded as an introduction to *Home at Grasmere*"[29] (see also Jonathan Wordsworth's comment on January 1800) "but [sic] far the most likely period" for "the dating of the Prospectus."[30] Jonathan Wordsworth quotes one of the earliest manuscript versions of the Prospectus.[31] We pause over certain lines key to our purpose:

> Beauty, whose living home in the green earth,
> Surpassing far what hath by special craft
> Of delicate poets been culled forth and shaped
> From earth's materials, waits upon my steps,
> Pitches her tents before me as I move,
> My hourly neighbour. Paradise and groves
> Elysian, blessed islands in the deep,
> Of choice seclusion -- wherefore need they be
> A history, or but a dream, when minds
> Once wedded to this outward frame of things
> In love, find these the growth of common day? (ll.30-40)

Jonathan Wordsworth observes that this early text (without the more famous addition which includes the comments on our fittingness to the universe alluded to here above), postulates that

[26] Darlington, ed., *Home at Grasmere,* pp. 19-22.
[27] M. H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism* (New York, 1971), pp. 19-21.
[28] Jonathan Wordsworth, *William Wordsworth: The Borders of Vision* (Oxford, 1982) 387-88.
[29] Wordsworth, *Borders* 388.
[30] Wordsworth, *Borders* 108.
[31] Wordsworth, *Borders* 108-14; 426; 388-90.

[t]he equation of paradise and Grasmere anticipated in the Preamble, experienced now in the joy of day-to-day life at Dove Cottage, has become the basis of Wordsworth's faith in the future of mankind. . . . Paradise is not a place, or a stage in the history of man, but a state of mind, a true perception which the individual will carry with him.[32]

If we consider the tragedy of Leonard's exile in the light of these lines, completed so closely upon the writing of the text of "The Brothers," we have to wonder about a possible major contradiction in Wordsworth's thinking. As we saw, Leonard's exile is self-imposed. Surely his was a mind "wedded to this outward frame of things / [i]n love"; why then did he find it necessary to give up a life in his cherished mountain home, even though he had lost his brother? I have suggested that Wordsworth's creative vision was dialectical. As David Perkins points out, he is capable of uttering seemingly grave contradictions in texts composed very close to one another:

> During the years of his greatest poetry, Wordsworth possessed no integrated system of belief. . . . In the first place, if Wordsworth had no single creed, he expounded a number of doctrines separately. . . . Reading his poetry in the light of . . . biographical information, we naturally pay less attention to the uncertainty and many-sided debate that show themselves in the poetry of 1798-1807. In a grand moment . . . from the *Prelude* Wordsworth asserts that
>
> > Our destiny, our being's heart and home,
> > Is with infinitude, and only there;
>
> but later in the same poem he says that in the world of common experience "We find our happiness, or not at all."[33]

Again, we are not confronted with serious contradiction as we put "The Brothers" side by side with the Prospectus and *Home at Grasmere* and the full body of Wordsworth's poetry of the Great Decade. The bliss is qualified, but it is also more tied up with, more embodied in the natural world and in the natural world as peopled and thus made more endearingly human than the first version of the Prospectus would seem to allow. Were happiness, the earthly bliss of paradise now, all a matter of the mind, Leonard could and conceivably would have remained in his valley home clinging to happiness by the power of love endowed by memory. But clearly it is the pain of losing his brother and the world they shared that forces Leonard away. In this sense "The Brothers" anticipates the fully declared section of the Prospectus on the fittingness of our relationship to the world. These lines, according to Jonathan Wordsworth, were added in 1806.[34] I quote the following from Jonathan Wordsworth's text:

> I, long before the blessed hour arrives,
> Would sing in solitude the spousal verse
> Of this great consummation, would proclaim --

[32] Wordsworth, *Borders* 110.
[33] Perkins 238.
[34] Wordsworth, *Borders* 111.

Speaking of nothing more than what we are --
How exquisitely the individual mind,
(And the progressive powers perhaps no less
Of the whole species) to the external world
Is fitted; and how exquisitely too --
Theme this but little heard of among men --
The external world is fitted to the mind;
And the creation (by no lower name
Can it be called) which they with blended might
Accomplish, this is my great argument.
(*Home at Grasmere,* ll. 1002-14; *Borders* 111-12)

Jonathan Wordsworth disputes the good sense of Wordsworth's "rather crude restatement [here] of positions reached in the final Books of *The Prelude:* the 'ennobling interchange / Of action from within and from without' (xii. 376-7)."[35] Further on, Jonathan Wordsworth observes, "The concept of the external world as a creation that man and Nature 'with blended might accomplish' is duly impressive, fine for those 'higher minds' whose achievements resemble the mist on Snowdon . . . ," but hardly something available to ordinary mortals.[36] I would argue, however, that this is the point asserted again and again by Wordsworth. He heralds the creative potential of ordinary mortals as "my great argument"; it constitutes the great theme of his proposed *Recluse* and a central theme of his entire body of poetry. And here I think we find the special quality that makes "The Brothers" so moving. It is precisely their creative power, their achievement and then the loss of their world "as creation," mutual "creation," realized by the interaction of Leonard and his brother with nature, that enables this poem to touch us so deeply. Our familiarity with the Prospectus, strongly occasioned by M. H. Abrams' *Natural Supernaturalism* (especially 17-70), and our familiarity with Wordsworth's poetry generally, enforces our conviction that Wordsworth's poetry is especially about our endowment to react creatively with nature. "The Brothers" illustrates and confirms this conviction, and yet it shows that this ideal can elude us. Hence our identification, our pain, and the appeal of this poem.

To understand how the notion of "creation" lies at the heart of "The Brothers," we should go to another Wordsworth text, one that explains the poem as it argues its special worth as a text demonstrating the deep feelings and spiritual qualities of very ordinary people. I refer to the letter Wordsworth sent to Charles James Fox, the powerful Whig leader, 14 January 1801. Wordsworth sought to win support for his new edition of *Lyrical Ballads* and sent copies to important figures in the arts and politics. He included a cover letter explaining the special merits of his poetry and especially, in the letter to Fox, the special merits of "The Brothers" and "Michael." Wordsworth praises Fox as a humanitarian whose character displays a "constant predominance of sensibility of heart," a man in public life who cares for individuals. This sensibility has made Fox "dear to Poets." As one hoping that he had "a just claim to the title of a Poet," Wordsworth confides to Fox that his claim would be justified "solely on account of two poems in the second volume, the one entitled 'The Brothers,' and the other 'Michael' . . . ."[37]

[35] Wordsworth, *Borders* 112.
[36] Wordsworth, *Borders*
[37] *Wordsworth's Literary Criticism.* ed. W. J. B. Owen (London, 1974) 100.

Wordsworth next enters into an extended discussion of the calamitous state of the poor in England, and the he returns to his main point:

> In the two Poems, 'The Brothers' and 'Michael' I have attempted to draw a picture of the domestic affections as I know they exist amongst a class of men who are now almost confined to the North of England. They are small independent *proprietors* of land here called statesmen, men of respectable education who daily labour on their own little properties. The domestic affections will always be strong amongst men who live in a country not crowded with population, if these men are placed above poverty.
>
> But if they are proprietors of small estates, which have descended to them from their ancestors, the power which these affections will acquire amongst such men is inconceivable by those who have only had an opportunity of observing hired labourers, farmers, and the manufacturing Poor. Their little tract of land serves as a kind of permanent rallying point for their domestic feelings, as a tablet upon which they are written which makes them objects of memory in a thousand instances when they would otherwise be forgotten. It is a fountain fitted to the nature of social man from which supplies of affection, as pure as his heart was intended for, are daily drawn. This class of men is rapidly disappearing.[38]

For our purposes we should notice that Wordsworth is not only arguing the social and humanistic value of the Cumbrian statesmen, he is also graphically cataloguing how those statesmen are "fitted" to their world and it to them. In this process he gives us an affectively rendered paradigm of his doctrine of creative fittingness. We note especially certain striking metaphors:

> First: "[t]heir little tract of land serves as a kind of permanent rallying point for their domestic feelings";
>
> Second: "[their tract of land is] a tablet upon which they [the domestic feelings] are written"; "[a tablet] which makes them [the domestic feelings] objects of memory in a thousand instances when they would otherwise be forgotten";
>
> Third: "[their tract of land] is a fountain fitted to the nature of social man from which supplies of affection, as pure as his heart was intended for, are daily drawn."

These images, "rallying point," "tablet," "fountain," operate in a causative sequence. Such is the relationship of the tract of land to the statesman farmer that it serves as a focus for his heart.

As Wordsworth notes earlier in this letter, there must be something in the home which interests the "affections," something the statesman can love. These things come about through the ordinary intercourse of domestic life.[39] The statesman is focused and his affections are settled in his land, especially if it has been passed down in the family from one generation to another.

[38] William Wordsworth, *Literary Criticism* 101 (the emphasis is Wordsworth's).
[39] William Wordsworth, *Literary Criticism* 100.

His land is not just
happens, and feelir
by the statesman.
themselves as they
growth, and decay.
endeavors and our
inherited, is hardly

Because of the
image of "tablet"
homely paper stoc
Brothers," one feat
Leonard comments
182-85). But as wi
constitute a powerf

Finally, the lanc
of affection, as pu
"rallying point" an
were, possess the
Wordsworth's ima
joined to "fitted."
of its own. It is inte
thirst of people and
community. It is "
single-minded. It i
recalls the Scripture
for us with a kind o

"The Brothers"
something of the to
features of the dram
priest of Ennerdale
anagnorisis. When
pained abruptness,
Thomas likens to th

The unity of pe
social level. Above
inherited land. This
described in terms
identifies the diseas
the disease as repor
"green fields" whic

[40] Stephen Maxfield Par
[41] Thomas 207.
[42] Wordsworth, *Lyrical*
[43] Wordsworth, *Lyrical*

His land is not just the place but also the garment and living texture of his experience. Once this happens, and feelings are localized and rooted, the tract of land becomes scrolled upon and into by the statesman. Land and environment are living things, not dead texts. They take us into themselves as they allow us to mold them and thus transcribe our experiences in their culture, growth, and decay. They are living agents of moral memory especially because they recall our endeavors and our neglect, our failures and our achievements. The land, again especially if inherited, is hardly silent; it is the iconic record of our extended family.

Because of the land's power of inscription and recall, even when fallow and untended, the image of "tablet" is most appropriate. Tablet bespeaks the Decalogue and simultaneously the homely paper stock in daily family use. As will be seen when we consider the text of "The Brothers," one feature of the poem's environment is the lack of grave markers in the cemetery. Leonard comments on the living memory by which the deceased dalesmen are recalled (lines 182-85). But as will also be seen, the inscriptions of community experience in the land itself constitute a powerful agent in keeping human memory fresh.

Finally, the land constitutes "a fountain fitted to the nature of social man from which supplies of affection, as pure as his heart was intended for, are daily drawn." The first two images "rallying point" and "tablet" suggest the passive state of the way we fit into our world. We, as it were, possess the land and it accommodates itself to us with a certain degree of docility. But Wordsworth's image of "fountain" is striking, especially for us in this context because it is joined to "fitted." Here we have an agent operating on us. It works with a kind of deliberateness of its own. It is intended directly for us because it responds, not just generally as water slakes the thirst of people and beasts, but very specifically: it is "fitted" to our social nature, it is for us as community. It is "pure," presumably unadulterated, free of contaminants; it is thus, as it were, single-minded. It is for the heart; it is spiritual, a kind of "living water." Thus this fountain recalls the Scriptures and our highest calling. We do not work the land; it responds to and cares for us with a kind of conscious ministry of its own.

"The Brothers" offers a dramatic illustration of the way humans fit into their world. It has something of the tone of Greek tragedy in the inevitable way it constructs its narrative around the features of the dramatic form and irony[40] and a conclusion that works with ineluctable force. The priest of Ennerdale misidentifies and even misjudges Leonard, but there is no proper, saving anagnorisis. When Leonard finally discloses who he is at the end of the story, he does so with a pained abruptness, but, as Gordon Thomas observes, he departs with a classical dignity which Thomas likens to that of the Ulysses in Tennyson.[41]

The unity of person with environment in "The Brothers" operates at an individual and a social level. Above, it was noted that Leonard and his brother led a life coadunate with their inherited land. This is reflected almost immediately in the narrative as Leonard's life at sea is described in terms of his suffering the tropical disease of calenture.[42] Wordsworth's own note identifies the disease,[43] but his account of Leonard's state hardly matches the characteristics of the disease as reported by the *OED*: sailors are delirious from the heat and think of the sea as "green fields" which they want to leap into. Brantley sees Leonard indulging in "solipsistic

[40] Stephen Maxfield Parrish *The Art of the* Lyrical Ballads (Cambridge, MA, 1973), pp. 132-35.
[41] Thomas 207.
[42] Wordsworth, *Lyrical Ballads* 381.
[43] Wordsworth, *Lyrical Ballads* 144.

fantasy" and "narcissistic introversion."[44] I view Wordsworth's account quite differently. The text does say that Leonard is by "feverish passion overcome" (l. 56), but it hardly pictures someone lost in a woefully sick and deluded state. Leonard has gone to sea and is now a "fellow-mariner,"

> but he had been rear'd
> Among the mountains, and he in his heart
> Was half a Shepherd on the stormy seas.
> Oft in the piping shrouds had Leonard heard
> The tones of waterfalls, and inland sounds
> Of caves and trees: and when the regular wind
> Between the tropics fill'd the steady sail
> . . . . . .
> . . . . . he, in those hours
> Of tiresome indolence would often hang
> Over the vessel's side, and gaze and gaze,
> And, while the broad green wave and sparkling foam
> Flash'd round him images and hues, that wrought
> In union with the employment of his heart,
> He, thus by feverish passion overcome,
> Even with the organs of his bodily eye,
> Below him, in the bosom of the deep,
> Saw mountains, saw the forms of sheep that graz'd
> On verdant hills, with dwellings among trees,
> And Shepherds clad in the same country grey
> Which he himself had worn. (ll. 40-62)

This is very directive narrative technique. True enough, we have a sailor typically subject to tropical delusion, but the rendering of his mind is done with compelling sympathy and respect. Wordsworth recounts how the "sparkling foam / Flash'd round him images and hues," but these were "wrought / In union with the employment of his heart," and thus we have not just a tormented, homesick voyager, but the imaginings of a man whose heart has been employed and united with what has been "wrought." In effect, Leonard has taken his home with him to sea. By the cherishing power of memory, through the influence of his heart, his home and all its domestic evocations remain his "rallying point" and "tablet." He is possessed by a land and a world, even to its very garb. Narratively, Wordsworth has subverted the effects of illness and delusion to allow us to enter that world feelingly and to grasp how fittingly Leonard and it are one.

We are reminded of "tablet" and memory again in the very first words Leonard speaks. He asks the priest about change, hoping that indeed changes have taken place and thus the grave he sees will then be one he had seen before and forgotten, and not that of his brother (ll.81-133). The priest is marvelously obtuse, insisting that little change has come in the valley. When pressed by Leonard, however, he admits that lightning struck the "tall pike" and caused one of the "two Springs," "those brother fountains," to be clogged and stopped up (ll.136-43). The

[44] Richard E. Brantley, *Wordsworth's "Natural Methodism"* (New Haven, 1975), p. 163.

landscape, as held by Leonard, and Leonard as held by it, comes vividly before us. Despite its overtness, the symbolism of the twin springs is moving.

The priest goes on to recount the history of Leonard's family. We have already noted the pained irony here, but the device is an excellent way to see Leonard's world as cherished by Leonard and with Leonard simultaneously inquiring about it and implicitly pleading with Fate that it all has not been lost. His grandfather's devotion to himself and his brother is recounted. Again the tie to the land emerges as the old man with the two boys at his heels is described by the priest as "tripping down the path" (l.219). The old man's affection for the boys is eloquently affirmed, "Two fathers in one father," a mother also to the boys through "tears" and "hauntings from the infirmity of love" (ll.228, 230). This affection is emphasized because "old Walter," to whom was "left . . . the family heart, and land / With other burthens than the crop it bore," "went into his grave before his time" struggling to save the family holdings (ll.208-14). In each instance of recounted affection, the tie to the land is stressed, the "fittingness" of the affection is underscored by its rightness in terms of its place. Old Walter loved his grandsons and the inheritance they shared. He died early in his sacrificial effort to preserve their world for them.

Leonard asks about his own love for his grandfather; he seems to need the priest's confirmation for the affection he warmly bears in his heart,

> **LEONARD.**
> These Boys -- I hope
> They lov'd this good old Man --
> **PRIEST.**
> They did, and truly,
> But that was what we almost overlook'd ,
> They were such darlings of each other. (ll.237-40)

This leads us into the mutual affection of the boys. "[T]hey had much love to spare, / And it all went into each other's hearts" (ll.243-44). The priest describes Leonard's sturdy frame. He was thus able to bear his brother on his shoulders as he forded the flooded streams in bad weather in order to take his brother to school (ll.248-59). In all their struggles, they seemed not threatened but affirmed by the very texture of the land that sustained them. The priest declares that

> looking round these rocks
> And hills on which we all of us were born,
> That God who made the great book of the world
> Would bless such piety -- (ll.260-63)

But again, as old Walter loved the boys in and through and with the land, so did the boys bear a mutual affection embedded in their environment which in turn is imbued in their lives with their religious faith. It is almost as though theirs was a piety integrally and simultaneously natural, fraternal and deeply spiritual:

> Never did worthier lads break English bread:
> The finest Sunday that the Autumn saw,
> With all its mealy clusters of ripe nuts,

Could never keep these boys away from church,
Or tempt them to an hour of sabbath breach.
Leonard and James! I warrant, every corner
Among these rocks and every hollow place
Where foot could come, to one or both of them
Was known as well as to the flowers that grow there.
Like roe-bucks they went bounding o'er the hills:
They play'd like two young ravens on the crags:
Then they could write, ay and speak too, as well
As many of their betters -- and for Leonard!
The very night before he went away,
In my own house I put into his hand
A Bible, and I'd wager twenty pounds,
That, if he is alive, he has it yet. (ll.264-80)

This eulogy recounts one seamless life, not just shared by the boys, but a life of such singleness of fabric that it deserves the term "Unity entire," to borrow a phrase Wordsworth himself will soon use in *Home at Grasmere* to characterize his and Dorothy's absolutely united life when they finally were themselves at home at Grasmere.

But this shared life was not to be. Leonard anticipates this as he asks the priest,

It seems, these Brothers have not liv'd to be
A comfort to each other. -- (ll.281-82)

The story ends rather quickly. Leonard finds out that indeed his brother has died. He is not able to identify himself to the priest, and, as he leaves the cemetery, he looks at his brother's grave and says, unheard by the priest, "My Brother" (l.407).

We have speculated about why Leonard feels he must leave his valley and return in exile to the sea. We all have places we call home, have felt at home in any number of places, but perhaps all of us too, like Leonard, have one or other *home* in the absolute sense as he knew it with his brother. Such a home involves a bonding of persons, place, and shared experience. Mere memory can loose the enfolded tegument of sensory recall, and semblances, as though autonomous, return us to a world and a self we may have long forgotten. We are fitted to our world and it to us, and somehow the exchange humanizes us both. But sometimes going back is all too painful.

And thus paradox feeds into the beauty of "The Brothers." We need Leonard to understand what Wordsworth and Dorothy found in Grasmere:

'Tis (but I cannot name it), 'tis the sense
Of majesty and beauty and repose,
A blended holiness of earth and sky,
Something that makes this individual Spot,
This small Abiding-place of many Men,
A termination and a last retreat,
A Centre, come from wheresoe'er you will,
A Whole without dependence or defect,

Made for itself and happy in itself,
Perfect Contentment, Unity entire.
(*Home at Grasmere,* MS. D. ll.142-51)

John Carroll University

Poems on the Naming of Places

By MARY WEDD

This lecture was delivered to the Society at the Wordsworth Winter School at Grasmere, February 2000.

THE IMPORTANCE OF a sense of place in English Literature has long been acknowledged. It is not easy to love and identify with very large and varied areas and peoples, impossible unless, as Eliot says, we grow out from our own secure center to understand a wider significance.

> Thus, love of a country
> Begins as attachment to our own field of action
> And comes to find that action of little importance
> Though never indifferent. (Little Gidding III. 159-62)

It follows that 'Home is where one starts from' (East Coker V. 90). Wordsworth and Dorothy, together in their own place for the first time, were in the same area as their father's house at Cockermouth. They delighted in remembering their early childhood there before the death of their mother, as we saw when we studied some of the lyrics of 1802. But, though they were in their native area, the village itself was new to them and they had to make it their own. Have you ever seen a cat turn round and round in its basket till eventually it decides, 'Yes, this is home'?

Home for *my* first twelve years, into the 1920s, was a little Cheshire village before the days when villages became commuter dormitories. It had a Church, a school, a pub, a post-office, a blacksmith's forge and a small shop with a marmalade cat sunning itself in the window among the tall jars of peardrops and gob-stoppers. We had no electricity or gas, but oil lamps and coal-fires and our water came from a well. We never had a car and rarely saw one. The nearest public transport was at the Cheshire Lines railway station two miles away. The walk home from it was uphill all the way, hard work for little legs. For rare occasions we would borrow a pony-trap but my father visited his parishioners and the big tuberculosis sanatorium, where he was Chaplain, on his trusty push-bike. Though the population of the parish was small, its boundaries were wide. Of course, we knew who lived in every cottage and farm and we went to barn-dances and other community events in the village school. Every Sunday we walked across two fields to Church. We even had our own names for certain local places, not I'm afraid up to high poetic standards though they had a literary tinge. There was a small thatched house that was always known as the Three Bears' Cottage, though we knew perfectly well that really old Mrs. Antrobus lived there. She would invite us children to tea and give us her own home-made bread. Two of our favourite destinations for walks were 'Happy Valley' and 'Dingley Dell'. A sadder name was 'The t.b. Cottage', because, like the Keats or the Brontes, the family that lived there all suffered or were at risk from the disease. The farmers were going through a hard time and at night one sometimes saw the funeral pyres flaming out for cattle with foot-and-mouth disease. It was a far from idyllic time but a close-knit village community there was. You can understand, then, that one of my most treasured possessions is Pamela Woof's wonderful edition of Dorothy's Grasmere Journal, for with its aid one can reconstruct a similar picture of the village of Grasmere when William and Dorothy lived there, very little different from my childhood home except that they rode the occasional horse – but had no bikes.

> Society is here
> A true Community – a genuine frame
> Of many into one incorporate. (Home at Grasmere 614-16)

That was not to say that everything there was perfect, either. As always, its people were a mixed bunch and so, some years later, Wordsworth was to depict the personalities of the area as the basis for Books VI and VII of *The Excursion*. But Happy Valley and Dingley Dell are part, and not a small part, of that village world. As Karl Kroeber pointed out,

> Because man and nature can so interpenetrate in the vale, its 'true Community' must comprise 'human and brute' and plant and topographic fact as well. (p. 120)[1]

I do not know whether the importance of a sense of place can last in an age of mobility of labour and general globalization. In Wordsworth's day the threat was from the Industrial Revolution, and it is still true, perhaps even more so now, that roads, developers, government housing policies, waste-disposal sites, mobile telephone masts, cable television, etc. etc. make us cry out with him, 'Is then no nook of English ground secure / From rash assault?' (Misc. Sonnets xlv). To quote Karl Kroeber again,

> Against the encroachments of industrial progress he defends not so much picturesque landscape as territorial sanctuaries. (p. 116)

That is exactly the right phrase – 'territorial sanctuaries'. The 'spots of time' of Wordsworth's schooldays were also linked to particular 'spots of place'. Then, though he *was* part of the Hawkshead society, *they* were generally solitary. Now they are associated with community, both of local acquaintances and, very soon, of their own circle of relations and close friends who came to visit them. Above all, Wordsworth now had with him in their first permanent home the sister from whom he had been so long separated.

> Mine eyes did ne'er
> Fix 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. Where'er my footsteps turned,
> Her Voice was like a hidden Bird that sang,
> The thought of her was like a flash of light,
> Or an *unseen* companionship, a breath
> Of fragrance independent of the wind. (Home at Grasmere 85-94)

No wonder, then, that the first of the 'Poems on the Naming of Places', as arranged in *Lyrical Ballads*, is dedicated to her, under her pseudonym of Emma.

It is not, of course, necessary to appreciation of these poems to be familiar with the places Wordsworth is celebrating but, since most of us are, I do not see why we should not enjoy the added pleasure that that local knowledge gives. The poem 'It was an April morning',

[1] Karl Kroeber, *Romantic Landscape Vision: Constable and Wordsworth*. University of Wisconsin Press, 1975.

Wordsworth tells us, 'was suggested on the banks of the brook that runs through Easedale'. Marilyn Gaull and I cheekily call the walk to Easedale Tarn 'Our Walk' because, as Wordsworth says in his Advertisement to these poems, there 'little Incidents must have occurred, or feelings been experienced, which will have given to such places a private and peculiar interest'. He goes on, 'From a wish to give some sort of record to such Incidents, and renew the gratification of such feelings, Names have been given to Places by the Author and some of his Friends, and the following Poems written in consequence'. Wordsworth did not on this occasion go up to Easedale Tarn but merely followed the beck up from the village. In the *Fenwick Note* Wordsworth says that the brook is 'in some parts of its course, as wild and beautiful as brook can be'. This is true. On one occasion when I followed the footpath by Goody Bridge Farm, intending to go over the stepping-stones, I had to turn back. The beck had swollen to a roaring torrent and the stones were well under water. I had no wish to follow the example of young Wilson of Score Crag who was drowned near here in Wordsworth's time.[2] The stepping-stones are on part of a U-shaped bend in the beck, where it leaves the road and then turns sharply to come back to it and somewhere here seems to have been the location of Emma's Dell. Knight quotes Mr. Justice Coleridge in his *Reminiscences* of the poet where 'he tells us of a walk they took up Easedale to this very place'. Wordsworth 'turned aside at a little farmhouse, and took us into a swelling field, to look down at the tumbling stream which bounded it, and which we saw precipitated at a distance, in a broad white sheet from the mountain'. This, of course, was Sourmilk Gill. Grevel Lindop accepts this location for Emma's Dell but also warns us that it is now on private land.[3] Though at first the Wordsworths called Easedale 'the Black quarter', it became one of their favourite haunts and William later said of the beck, 'I have composed thousands of verses by the side of it' (*Fenwick Note*).

Imagine him, then, early in their life at Dove Cottage, celebrating the beauty of this place in a blank-verse meditation.

> It was an April morning: fresh and clear
> The Rivulet, delighting in its strength,
> Ran with a young man's speed; and yet the voice
> Of waters which the winter had supplied
> Was softened down into a vernal tone.
> The spirit of enjoyment and desire,
> And hopes and wishes, from all living things
> Went circling, like a multitude of sounds.
> The budding groves seemed eager to urge on
> The steps of June; as if their various hues
> Were only hindrances that stood between
> Them and their object: but, meanwhile, prevailed
> Such an entire contentment in the air
> That every naked ash, and tardy tree
> Yet leafless, showed as if the countenance
> With which it looked on this delightful day
> Were native to the summer.

[2] William Knight, *The English Lake District As Interpreted in the Poems of William Wordsworth*. Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1891. 61.
[3] Grevel Lindop, *A Literary Guide to the Lake District*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1993. 98-9.

Though it was early in the year, it was as though all the seasons had contributed to this magical moment. Winter had swelled the stream and provided the 'strength' whereby the 'Rivulet' 'Ran with a young man's speed'. Yet the violence of Winter 'Was softened down into a vernal tone'. 'The budding groves' seemed impatient to hurry forward June, 'but, meanwhile, prevailed / Such an entire contentment in the air' that it was as though, 'on this delightful day' it was summer already. Seemingly it is an idyllic scene, yet suddenly

> Up the brook
> I roamed in the confusion of my heart,
> Alive to all things and forgetting all.

'Confusion'? Why? Looking back, one sees that the seasons, though all providing their savour to the present, are not content with their place nor proceeding in order. Eliot, again, expresses the same feeling.

> What is the late November doing
> With the disturbance of the spring
> And creatures of the summer heat. (East Coker 51-3)

A moment in and out of time is punctured briefly by doubt. The confusion among the seasons mirrors the uncertainty in the poet's life. Yes, perhaps he is at last in a permanent home but how is this to be sustained? Raisley Calvert's legacy did not provide a living, especially as Montagu's payments on his loan from it had often proved non-existent and were still unreliable. Wordsworth had been plagued with money worries for a long time and had no reason at this period to foresee the repayment of the Lonsdale debt which took place in 1802. Besides, morally, what work would the poet perform to justify his living in retirement from the problems of the world which he had once thought so important? He is distracted. While he takes in all the beauties of nature in this special spot, he as quickly forgets them. He feels he does not actually possess anything.

Then the sight and noise of the waterfall brings him back to life. 'At length I to a sudden turning came. . . .' Everything he had experienced here up to this 'appeared the voice / Of *common* pleasure'. But now he realizes that he is hearing 'a song . . . / That could not cease to be'. No matter what time might do or what vicissitudes might cause anxiety in the poet's life, there is something stronger and more lasting than 'common pleasure' or 'confusion'. The 'single mountain cottage' too provided a fixed point, a permanency. We may not possess anything. We may not be landowners or have any material security, but 'Our thoughts at least are ours; and this wild nook / My Emma I will dedicate to thee'. The word 'dedicate' suggests that the nook is henceforward a sacred place and, though they cannot buy it with money, they have made it spiritually their own.

> - Soon did the spot become my other home,
> My dwelling, and my out-of-doors abode.
> And, of the Shepherds who have seen me there,
> To whom I sometimes in our idle talk
> Have told this fancy, two or three, perhaps,

Years after we are gone and in our graves,
When they have cause to speak of this wild place,
May call it by the name of EMMA's DELL.

'Our thoughts at least are ours' and his thoughts in his poetry are his justification. At that time he was doubtful whether even two or three shepherds would remember the name. Could he have guessed that, as a result of his residence at the rented cottage at Town End and 'some work / Of glory there forthwith to be begun', we should still to-day be talking of Emma's Dell? (1805 Prelude I 86-7).

So what appears at first to be a simple piece of description celebrating a special rural spot in fact has an equivocal tone and incorporates two turning points like the bends in the stream, the first challenging the idyllic mood with unexpected disturbance and doubt, the second reinvigorated by the sudden creative vitality of the waterfall, restoring the poet to hope and constructive thinking. That the beck is 'wild and beautiful' matches it to Dorothy's character. He was later to compare her in *The Prelude* to

A voice
Of sudden admonition like a brook
That does not cross a lonely road; and now
Seen, heard and felt, and caught at every turn,
Companion never lost through many a league –
Maintained for me a saving intercourse
With my true self . . .
She, in the midst of all, preserved me still
A poet, made me seek beneath that name
My office upon earth and nowhere else. (1805 Prelude X 910-20)

What more appropriate, then, than to call this place 'EMMA'S DELL'?

'To Joanna' is quite different. It is not concentrating on the particular spot on which the poet is situated. In fact, when walking past Butterlip Howe, a friend asked him if a certain rock was the one in this poem and he answered, 'Any place that will suit; that as well as any other'.[4] He was saying, as politely as he could manage, that his friend had missed the whole point. In this poem, Wordsworth was not celebrating one nook but the landscape of a whole region. Nor does he expect any of the details to be taken literally. Joanna was *not* brought up 'amid the smoke of cities'. What that was intended to convey seems to have been that this area was strange to her, so that she was unused to people experiencing 'ravishment' at the beauty of nature, which is why she laughed. This *is* true to life, though not to Joanna. I remember when my daughter and I took her fiancé, who was brought up in India, for a country walk in springtime. He was quite bewildered to see our raptures over the first primroses. He said, 'In India Nature is hostile', which raises all the doubts expressed in Aldous Huxley's essay 'Wordsworth in the Tropics'. This is not the place to go into all that. I am just confirming the risibility of our passion for natural beauty to those who are not attuned to it.

Nor had Joanna visited the Wordsworths at Grasmere when the broom was 'full-flowered', or indeed at all, by this time. Her first visit was in 1803. The object of this fiction is to make plausible the dialogue with the Vicar and to provide the occasion for the laugh echoing through

[4] Knight p. 58

the hills. That Word
this tale does, though
The narrative sta
grew close to the
Coleorton in 1807, t
The Vicar comes out
two of the Wordswor
and this poem is play
when will she return t
years ago (1988), asks
graffiti. For such cour
desecrating rocks with
Cumberland and West
wasting of time, and t
without . . . doubt Ro
precedent.
The Vicar

With gra
Reviving obsolete
I, like a Runic Prie
Of formidable size
Some uncouth nam
Above the Rotha, b

The poet is, of course, h
suggests a mystery, a ma
rock with Joanna's name
Wordsworth indicated tha
and friends and making th
function of these inscriptio
affirming immortality. Thu
The Vicar, however, is
like Joanna, is not a repl
Dorothy's Journal, the Rec
Rowlandson, left much to
'The priest met us – he did
half drunk the day before in
a pot-house, or even peepin
Wordsworth describes seein
the *Fenwick Note* to that po
quotes the following.

[5] Knight p. 64-5

the hills. That Wordsworth chose Joanna, the youngest of the Hutchinson sisters, as heroine of this tale does, though, suggest something of her character, lively, joyous and irreverent.

The narrative starts, then, with the poet discovered seated under 'those lofty firs' which then grew close to the Church. The Wordsworths were horrified to find, on their return from Coleorton in 1807, that these trees had been cut down. Knight tells us it was to widen the road.[5] The Vicar comes out from 'his gloomy house', which was indeed in the future to prove so when two of the Wordsworth children died there. But that was mercifully hidden from the poet in 1800 and this poem is playful. The Vicar, after enquiring after Joanna 'that wild-hearted Maid! / And when will she return to us?' as Jonathan Bate wittily described it in a Winter School lecture some years ago (1988), asks disapprovingly what Wordsworth means by decorating a certain rock with graffiti. For such country-lovers, the Wordsworths and their circle were certainly great ones for desecrating rocks with their initials. In a note at the end of the poem Wordsworth tells that 'In Cumberland and Westmoreland are several Inscriptions, upon the native rock, which, from the wasting of time, and the rudeness of the workmanship, have been mistaken for Runic. They are without . . . doubt Roman'. Perhaps he thought that 'rudeness of . . . workmanship' had a good precedent.

The Vicar

> With grave looks demanded, for what cause,
> Reviving obsolete idolatry,
> I, like a Runic Priest, in characters
> Of formidable size had chiseled out
> Some uncouth name upon the native rock,
> Above the Rotha, by the forest-side.

The poet is, of course, having a smile at his own expense but, all the same, the word 'Runic' suggests a mystery, a magical quality associated with ancient religious myth. In inscribing the rock with Joanna's name in this story here, and later others in real life at the Rock of Names, Wordsworth indicated that he was memorializing and rendering permanent the love of family and friends and making them one with the beauty of the natural world. Jonathan Bate related the function of these inscriptions to that described in the *Essays on Epitaphs*, spiritualizing place and affirming immortality. Thus Wordsworth sees his activity not as desecration but as dedication.

The Vicar, however, is uncomprehending and the poet is not above teasing him. The Vicar, like Joanna, is not a replica of the real-life person. As we know from Pamela's edition of Dorothy's Journal, the Rector of Grasmere 'was absentee and insane' (p. 167) and the Curate, Rowlandson, left much to be desired. Dorothy tells in her Journal (p. 21) of attending a funeral. 'The priest met us – he did not look as a man ought to do on such an occasion – I had seen him half drunk the day before in a pot-house'. One can't help wondering what Dorothy was doing in a pot-house, or even peeping into it. In the 'Epistle to Sir George Beaumont' written in 1811, Wordsworth describes seeing 'The Curate's Dog', disconsolate after his master's death, and in the *Fenwick Note* to that poem gives a long account of Mr. Rowlandson, from which Pamela quotes the following.

[5] Knight p. 64-5

> Two vices used to struggle in him for mastery, avarice and the love of strong drink: but avarice, as is common in like cases, always got the better of its opponent; for, though he was often intoxicated, it was never, I believe, at his own expense.

He does acknowledge, however, that 'this man, on account of his talents and superior education, was looked up to by his parishioners' (DeS Ed./D IV 146 & Poetic Works 434). Possibly there is some small reminiscence in the priest of the poem of the Wordsworths' friend Mr. Simpson, Vicar of Wythburn, but in the main the character seems to have been an invention for the purposes of the poem. In a notebook comment on 'To Joanna', Wordsworth makes it clear that he meant the Vicar to be the rather obtuse butt of his jesting. In the notebook account Wordsworth says,

> The poem supposes that at the Rock something had taken place in my mind either then, or afterwards in thinking upon what then took place which, if related, will cause the Vicar to smile. For something like this you are prepared by the phrase 'Now by those dear immunities' *etc.* I begin to relate the story, meaning in a certain degree to divert or partly play upon the Vicar. (DeS/D II 487)

> - Now, by those dear immunities of heart
> Engendered between malice and true love,
> I was not loth to be so catechized,
> And this was my reply: - "As it befell,
> One summer morning we had walked abroad
> At break of day, Joanna and myself,
> - 'Twas that delightful season when the broom,
> Full-flowered, and visible on every steep,
> Along the copses runs in veins of gold.-
> Our pathway led us on to Rotha's banks;
> And when we came in front of that tall rock
> That eastward looks, I there stopped short – and stood
> Tracing the lofty barrier with my eye
> From base to summit; such delight I found
> To note in shrub and tree, in stone and flower,
> That intermixture of delicious hues,
> Along so vast a surface, all at once,
> In one impression, by connecting force
> Of their own beauty, imaged in the heart.
> - When I had gazed perhaps two minutes' space,
> Joanna, looking in my eyes, beheld
> That ravishment of mine, and laughed aloud.

Both Joanna and the Vicar are amused at 'that ravishment of mine'. These nutty people who go into a trance from looking at an ordinary country scene, what *are* they on about? But at this point, Wordsworth tells,

my mind forg
the rock, and
something sta
caught in the
fire in the lin
terminate the

Here are the lines.

The Rock, like
Took up the La
That ancient W
Was ready witl
And the tall St
A noise of laug
And Fairfield a
Helvellyn far i
Carried the Lac
His speaking-tr
Of Glaramara s
And Kirkstone

Coleridge in *Biog*
it was not rather a c
example of the uniq
style that cannot be i
As undergraduate
Poly-Olbion (the nar
major work written b
different areas of Eng
grabbed by Drayton's
let us kiss and part'.
school, as I was aske
passage to which Co
thirtieth and last Song

Which Copland
Upon her verge
Helvillon from h
From whom as s
From whose stor
Which tow'rds t
That Brodwater
In sailing to the
Whose buildings
Did mightily con

> my mind forgets its purpose, being softened by the images of beauty in the description of the rock, and the delicious morning, and when I come to the 2 lines 'The Rock, like something starting from a sleep / Took up the Lady's voice, and laughed again', I am caught in the trap of my own imagination. I entirely lose sight of my first purpose. I take fire in the lines 'that ancient woman'. I go on in that strain of fancy 'Old Skiddaw' and terminate the description in tumult 'And Kirkstone' *etc.*

Here are the lines.

> The Rock, like something starting from a sleep,
> Took up the Lady's voice, and laughed again;
> That ancient Woman seated on Helm-crag
> Was ready with her cavern; Hammar-scar,
> And the tall Steep of Silver-how, sent forth
> A noise of laughter; southern Loughrigg heard,
> And Fairfield answered with a mountain tone;
> Helvellyn far into a clear blue sky
> Carried the Lady's voice, - old Skiddaw blew
> His speaking-trumpet; back out of the clouds
> Of Glaramara southward came the voice;
> And Kirkstone tossed it from his misty head.

Coleridge in *Biographia Literaria* praises this passage as 'that noble imitation of Drayton (if it was not rather a coincidence)' . . . but instances it not for its indebtedness but rather as an example of the unique quality of Wordsworth's writing, 'a diction peculiarly his own' and 'a style that cannot be imitated' (Chapter XX).

As undergraduates reading English at Oxford in my day, we were recommended to sample *Poly-Olbion* (the name from the Greek, meaning 'Having many blessings'). It was Drayton's major work written between 1613 and 1622, consisting of a series of lengthy 'Songs' celebrating different areas of England. As a conscientious student, I did look into it but I'm afraid I was not grabbed by Drayton's travelogue, much though I loved his sonnet 'Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part'. Incidentally, it was the luckiest thing that I had fallen for this poem at school, as I was asked to give a critical appreciation of it in my entrance exam for Oxford. The passage to which Coleridge refers *is* on an almost identical subject. It comes in Drayton's thirtieth and last Song. Here it is.

> Which Copland scarce had spoke, but quickly every hill,
> Upon her verge that stands, the neighbouring vallies fill;
> Helvillon from his height, it through the mountains threw,
> From whom as soon again, the sound Dubalrase drew,
> From whose stone-trophied head, it on to Wendross went,
> Which tow'rds the sea again, resounded it to Dent,
> That Brodwater therewith within her banks astound,
> In sailing to the sea, told it to Egremound
> Whose buildings, walks, and streets, with echoes loud and long,
> Did mightily commend old Copland for her song.

Perhaps it is partly Drayton's hexameter couplets, with generally end-stopped lines, which to our ears now sound somewhat stilted compared to Wordsworth's iambic pentameter blank verse, but surely Coleridge was right. If this is an imitation it is a 'noble' one, demonstrating Wordsworth's characteristic voice. Where Drayton's list of names, despite his personification of them, comes over as in the main a mere catalogue, the device of Joanna's laugh has a magical effect. Charles Lamb praised 'the description of the continuous Echoes in the story of Joanna's laugh, where the mountains and all the scenery absolutely seem alive' (Marrs I.265). Trust Lamb to go straight to the essence of the thing. Wordsworth admits of 'To Joanna' in the *Fenwick Note* that 'the effect of her laugh is an extravagance' but, lest we should doubt that there *are* echoes 'in them thar hills', he refers us to the passage in *The Excursion* where he tells of the echoed bleat of a lamb at Pavey Ark. But the realism of the echoes is not important. As Lamb says, they function in the poem as a means of celebrating the landscape as a *living* part of that true community of which Karl Kroeber spoke.

Wordsworth goes on in his notebook:

> When the description is closed, or perhaps partly before I waken from the dream and see that the Vicar thinks I have been extravagating, as I intended he should, I then tell the story as it happened really; and as the recollection of it exists permanently and regularly in my mind, mingling allusions suffused with humour, partly to the trance in which I have been, and partly to the trick I have been playing on the Vicar.

- Now whether (said I to our cordial Friend,
Who in the hey-day of astonishment
Smiled in my face) this were a simple truth
A work accomplished by the brotherhood
Of ancient mountains, or my ear was touched
With dreams and visionary impulses
To me alone imparted, sure I am
That there was a loud uproar in the hills.
And, while we both were listening, to my side
The fair Joanna drew, as if she wished
To shelter from some object of her fear.

So the poem which started as a kind of joke based on a fantasy became, in spite of the poet's intention, something much deeper. The element of fear which makes Joanna creep close to the protection of her companion suggests that Wordsworth did not underestimate the power of the mountains for destruction as well as for inspiration. Although the poet in his joy at finding a home at Grasmere, cries, 'Embrace me, then, ye Hills and close me in', he is not unaware that they are dangerous, a fact that makes the valley seem the more sheltered and secure. In 'To Joanna' he has been betrayed in the midst of his jesting into an imaginative act whereby the majesty of the mountains is somehow incorporated into the seemingly puny sphere of human life, bringing a message of something beyond ourselves which yet interplays with us.

The poem ends by coming back to the beginning and answering the Vicar's enquiry about graffiti, and Wordsworth says, 'The poem then concludes in a strain of deep tenderness'.

- And hence, l
Were wasted, a
Beneath this rc
And silent mor
In memory of a
I chiseled out i
Joanna's name
And I, and all
Have called th

The next poem,
overlook the village
not, as affirmed in th

There is an Em
The last that pa
We can behold
And, when at e
Along the publ
Above us, and
Is visible; and
Its own deep qu
The meteors m
The star of Jov
In the mid heav
As when he shi
The loneliest pl
And She who d
With such com
Can ever be a s
Hath to this lon

Of course you have r
and the communion
represent him! It is b
and it 'often seems to
symbolize the poet
well as elemental for
creative artist who ta
point of ruthlessness
solitude and separati
on and sometimes r
remembers Keats w
wherever he visited i
philosopher'. Even L
visit of Wordsworth

- And hence, long afterwards, when eighteen moons
Were wasted, as I chanced to walk alone
Beneath this rock, at sunrise, on a calm
And silent morning, I sat down, and there,
In memory of affections old and true,
I chiseled out in those rude characters
Joanna's name deep in the living stone: -
And I, and all who dwell by my fireside,
Have called the lovely rock JOANNA'S ROCK.

The next poem, 'There is an Eminence', again deals with one of the rocky peaks that overlook the village, though Wordsworth meticulously says in the *Fenwick Note* that they could not, as affirmed in the poem, 'behold it from our orchard seat'!

There is an Eminence, - of these our hills
The last that parleys with the setting sun;
We can behold it from our orchard seat;
And, when at evening we pursue our walk
Along the public way, this Peak, so high
Above us, and so distant in its height,
Is visible; and often seems to send
Its own deep quiet to restore our hearts.
The meteors make of it a favourite haunt:
The star of Jove, so beautiful and large
In the mid heavens, is never half so fair
As when he shines above it. 'Tis in truth
The loneliest place we have among the clouds.
And She who dwells with me, whom I have loved
With such communion, that no place on earth
Can ever be a solitude to me,
Hath to this lonely Summit given my Name.

Of course you have recognized it, it is Stone Arthur. Despite another touching tribute to Dorothy and the communion between them, what a lonely isolated spot he has made her choose to represent him! It is beautiful, the evening sun stays longest on it, the heavenly bodies favour it and it 'often seems to send / Its own deep quiet to restore our hearts'. These qualities most aptly symbolize the poet whose communing with nature produces work of transcendental peace as well as elemental force. Yet 'Tis in truth / The loneliest place we have among the clouds'. Any creative artist who takes his calling seriously has to be single-minded, even sometimes to the point of ruthlessness, if he is to achieve his full potential. This inevitably leads to a kind of solitude and separation from community, however much loved. This aloofness was commented on and sometimes resented by Wordsworth's contemporaries. It came over as conceit. One remembers Keats writing in 1818 'I am sorry that Wordsworth has left a bad impression wherever he visited in town by his egotism, Vanity, and bigotry. Yet he is a great poet if not a philosopher'. Even Lamb could not resist a dig at his dear friend. In 1808, anticipating an earlier visit of Wordsworth to town, he wrote, 'He says he does not see much difficulty in writing like

Shakespeare, if he had a mind to try it. It is clear then nothing is wanting but the mind' (Mans II p. 274). He may indeed have become seemingly arrogant as time went on but it is as well to remember how this lonely, monumental and apparently humourless man could laugh, as in 'To Joanna', not only at others but at himself.

By contrast with Wordsworth's Stone Arthur, Mary's place is set in Rydal Upper Park, the outstanding feature of which is the spectacular waterfalls which we used to follow up the hill when the Summer Conference was held at Rydal. Does Wordsworth mention the beauty of these fierce torrents in all their violent glory? Not a word. They would not have been at all appropriate to Mary's character. Instead, higher up still, there is a quiet, calm, private place, often neglected by those who come to see the cataract, and it is here that the Wordsworths found a green recess among the trees and a refreshing pool.

> Our walk was far among the ancient trees;
> There was no road, nor any woodman's path;
> But a thick umbrage – checking the wild growth
> Of weed and sapling, along soft green turf
> Beneath the branches – of itself had made
> A track, that brought us to a slip of lawn
> And a small bed of water in the woods.
> All round this pool both flocks and herds might drink
> On its firm margin, even as from a well,
> Or some stone-basin which the herdsman's hand
> Had shaped for their refreshment; nor did sun,
> Or wind from any quarter, ever come,
> But as a blessing to this calm recess,
> This glade of water and this one green field.
> The spot was made by Nature for herself;
> The travelers know it not, and 'twill remain
> Unknown to them; but it is beautiful;
> And if a man should plant his cottage near,
> Should sleep beneath the shelter of its trees,
> And blend its waters with his daily meal,
> He would so love it, that in his death-hour
> Its image would survive among his thoughts:
> And therefore, my sweet Mary, this still Nook,
> With all its beeches we have named from You!

From this retired spot, 'made by Nature for herself', the water of life is dispensed; sun and wind come to it 'as a blessing'; it is unknown to travelers 'but it is beautiful'. A man who settled here 'would so love it' that its image would last till death. The poem was the first of the group to be written, probably at the very end of 1799, as Wordsworth says 'two years before our marriage' and also before Mary Hutchinson had yet visited them at Grasmere, but can one doubt the love that already existed between them? He describes a spot that symbolizes her character and longs to make it his home. Her equable temperament seems to have made her the ideal partner for him and sister for Dorothy, and it is beautifully reflected in this poem. Reading these two poems, on

William's place
character and hers

I often think t
been Mary. Her
Wordsworth's dea
easy to live with,
lonely man, fond
one way of combi
tells how, when th
'Mrs. Wudsworth
Eh dear, that mai
kna he was a ver
reports 'a sort of
people so austere
so gentle and cons
in these two poem

The remaining
'Point Rash Judgr
and Rydal was int
Wood alongside t
of rough stones',
middle road past
'Radical Reform'
of the lake, when
character of the e
beautifully evoked

> A narrow gir
> A rude and n
> Between the
> Of copse and
> Of Grasmere
> And there my
> One calm Se
> Had altogeth
> Sauntered on

Wordsworth, Doro
They made an inv
the erratic course
Played with our tir
though among ther

[6] Hardwicke Drummo
Dillons London, 1968.
[7] Rawnsley pp. 35-6.
[8] Rawnsley pp. 34.

William's place and Mary's place, one is struck by how well he understood both his own character and hers.

I often think that if there was a hero or heroine in the Wordsworth story, it must surely have been Mary. Her care for poor Dorothy in her dotage, continuing for five years after Wordsworth's death, commands our admiration. Wordsworth, the rocky peak, cannot have been easy to live with, either. One of Canon Rawnsley's informants who knew the poet said, 'he was a lonely man, fond o' goin' out wi' his family, and saying nowt to noan of 'em'.[6] Perhaps that was one way of combining community with solitude! Another man who had worked at Rydal Mount tells how, when the dinner-bell and a call at his study door had no effect in getting him to meals, 'Mrs. Wudsworth 'ud say, "Goa and brek a bottle, or let a dish fall just outside door in passage". Eh dear, that maistly wad bring him out, wad that. It was nobbut that as wad, however. For ye kna he was a verra careful man and he couldn't do with brekking t' china.'[7] Canon Rawnsley reports 'a sort of general feeling among the dalesmen that it was rather a strange thing that two people so austere and uncomely in mere line of feature or figure should be so much in love, and so gentle and considerate in their lives.'[8] Their life together was surely beautifully foreshadowed in these two poems.

The remaining poem of this group published in *Lyrical Ballads 1800* was the one we know as 'Point Rash Judgment'. If Thomas Arnold's witty naming of the three roads between Grasmere and Rydal was intended to reconcile Wordsworth to the new road which cut through Bainriggs Wood alongside the lake, it did not succeed. At the time of writing this poem, 'A narrow girdle of rough stones', only 'Old Corruption', the upper corpse road, and 'Bit by bit Reform', the middle road past Dove Cottage and over White Moss Common, existed. The present road 'Radical Reform' destroyed the woodland path from Dove Cottage down to and along the margin of the lake, when it was made in 1831. As Wordsworth sadly says in the *Fenwick Note*, 'The character of the eastern shore of Grasmere Lake is quite changed'. The way it used to be is beautifully evoked in the first few lines.

> A narrow girdle of rough stones and crags,
> A rude and natural causeway, interposed
> Between the water and a winding slope
> Of copse and thicket, leaves the eastern shore
> Of Grasmere safe in its own privacy:
> And there myself and two beloved Friends,
> One calm September morning, ere the mist
> Had altogether yielded to the sun,
> Sauntered on this retired and difficult way.

Wordsworth, Dorothy and Coleridge dawdled along, observing every detail of the natural scene. They made an inventory of all the flotsam that the lake had 'tossed ashore' or stopped to watch the erratic course 'Of dandelion seed or thistle's beard' . . . They were idly pottering, 'we / Played with our time'. They were 'trifling with a privilege', a privilege not shared by everybody, though among themselves 'Alike indulged to all'. They noted 'Fair ferns and flowers, and chiefly

[6] Hardwicke Drummond Rawnsley, *Reminiscences of Wordsworth among the Peasantry of Westmorland.* Reprint by Dillons London, 1968. 32. (First published Transactions of the Wordsworth Society 1882.)
[7] Rawnsley pp. 35-6.
[8] Rawnsley pp. 34.

that tall fern, / So stately, of the Queen Osmunda named'. The name Osmunda Regalis leads the poet into a comparison between this scene and those of 'old romance'. Duncan Wu, at an earlier Winter School (1995), suggested how these particular references, to 'Naiad by the side / Of Grecian brook, or Lady of the Mere', bring with them memories of myths and legends that deal with transformations, moral failures, death and regeneration, guilt overcome by an act that restores fertility. It is harvest-time.

> - So fared we that bright morning: from the fields
> Meanwhile, a noise was heard, the busy mirth
> Of reapers, men and women, boys and girls.
> Delighted much to listen to those sounds,
> And feeding thus our fancies we advanced
> Along the indented shore . . .

Yes, the road has changed things, but if we leave it for Penny Rock, as we have often done on our way to the present foot-bridge, we can still see 'the indented shore' and 'a point of jutting land'. Here the friends were to be challenged in their preconceptions. They were to be pulled up short.

> When suddenly,
> Through a thin veil of glittering haze was seen
> Before us, on a point of jutting land,
> The tall and upright figure of a Man
> Attired in peasant's garb, who stood alone,
> Angling beside the margin of the lake.

The man, they think, is obviously one of 'the undeserving poor'. I can remember well the Thirties, when our family had crossed the Mersey to a parish in an industrial town. Work was just not to be had and once, passing the school when there was snow on the ground, I saw a little girl in the playground with no shoes and wearing a torn, thin summer dress. I was in cast-offs myself – clergymen do not get paid very much – but I was *ashamed* to be warm. Yet those who were still comfortably off would talk self-righteously of 'improvidence' and 'the undeserving poor'. In 'A Carol' Cecil Day Lewis expressed his justifiable indignation at the weekly dole allowance for a child.

> Thy mother is crying,
> Thy dad's on the dole:
> Two shillings a week is
> The price of a soul.

But such a sum would have been greeted with unbelieving delight by many families in Wordsworth's day. As Duncan pointed out, there was no unemployment benefit then. And here was a man passing up the chance of earning good money in the harvest field!

> "Improvident and reckless," we exclaimed,
> "The Man must be, who thus can lose a day

Of the mid harvest, when the labourer's hire
Is ample, and some little might be stored
Wherewith to cheer him in the winter time."

But they were in for a shock. Coleridge recorded in his notebook, in June 1800, 'Poor fellow at a distance idle? in this haytime when wages are so high? Come near – thin, pale, can scarcely speak – or throw out his fishing rod' (Nb. I 761). Wordsworth has transferred his account to September and substituted harvest for hay-making, but the effect is the same.

Thus talking of that Peasant, we approached
Close to the spot where with his rod and line
He stood alone; whereat he turned his head
To greet us – and we saw a Man worn down
By sickness, gaunt and lean, with sunken cheeks
And wasted limbs, his legs so long and lean
That for my single self I looked at them,
Forgetful of the body they sustained. –
Too weak to labour in the harvest field,
The Man was using his best skill to gain
A pittance from the dead unfeeling lake
That knew not of his wants.

Earlier, the lake, though 'dead calm', had been the passive but indulgent watcher of the 'sportive wanderings' of the dandelion and thistle fluff and the breeze 'Its playmate, rather say, its moving soul'. But now it has become 'the dead unfeeling lake / That knew not of his wants'. Nature and human nature are alike in often appearing indifferent to suffering and the needs of the weak.

Perhaps the injunction 'Judge not that ye be not judged' is one of the most difficult and the most necessary to follow. It is to their credit that the three friends acknowledged their error and did not mean to let themselves forget it but would guard against it in future.

I will not say
What thoughts immediately were ours, nor how
The happy idleness of that sweet morn,
With all its lovely images, was changed
To serious musing and to self-reproach.
Nor did we fail to see within ourselves
What need there is to be reserved in speech,
And temper all our thoughts with charity.
- Therefore, unwilling to forget that day,
My Friend, Myself, and She who then received
The same admonishment, have called the place
By a memorial name, uncouth indeed
As e'er by mariner was given to bay
Or foreland, on a new-discovered coast;
And POINT RASH-JUDGMENT is the Name it bears.

The word 'admonishment' was to be used in the same way of the leechgatherer in 'Resolution and Independence'. Our lessons often come to us in unexpected ways. In both cases Wordsworth was deeply impressed by a man 'carrying with him his own fortitude, and the necessities which an unjust state of society has entailed upon him' (Early Years p. 366-7). Each provided a reproach to the poet, in 'Point Rash-Judgment' for his unjustified criticism of the fisherman, while himself idling the day away, in 'Resolution and Independence' for his 'dejection and despair'. It had been his hope that the outcome of the French Revolution would have ensured 'that poverty / At least like this, would in a little time / Be found no more . . .' (1805 Prelude IX 523-5). But he had learnt that Revolution did not work and had only ended in another kind of despotism. So what was he to do? The word 'admonition' is used of Dorothy's voice when she 'preserved me still / A poet, made me seek beneath that name / My office upon earth and nowhere else' (1805 Prelude IX 910-20). This was his task. Maybe he could not reform the world but he could minister to people in his own individual way. He had already spoken up for those suffering from 'an unjust state of society' and he continued to do so. We saw his indignant protests on behalf of the poor, both in industry and in the countryside, when we studied *The Excursion*; and we read his impassioned plea for universal education, made many years before it became law. Similarly he could, and did, give from his small income to those in need. Dorothy records in her Journal several such occasions and, as an old man, Wordsworth when approached by a beggar, felt in his pocket only to find it empty. He had already given away all that was in it to a number of others. Nevertheless, one can detect in certain of the 'Poems on the Naming of Places' an underlying uneasiness about whether the life of 'a poet living in retirement' was justified and how he was to support it. Ought he not perhaps to get 'a proper job'? But would we ever have heard of him if he had?

However, in the main, these are poems of celebration, expressing deep satisfaction in being home at last, in making the surrounding area their own and in being part of a community such as Karl Kroeber describes, which 'must comprise "human and brute" and plant and topographic fact as well'. In rejoicing in the love of people and place, Wordsworth finds himself also, unawares, in touch with something even deeper, as he establishes 'territorial sanctuaries'.

Sevenoaks, Kent

Reviews

MICHAEL GASSENMEIER, PETRA BRIDZUN, JENS MARTIN GURR, AND FRANK ERIK POINTNER, EDS. *British Romantics As Readers: Intertextualities, Maps of Misreading, Reinterpretations.* Festschrift for Horst Meller. Universitätsverlag C. Winter, Heidelberg, 1998.

THIS HANDSOME VOLUME is a well-deserved Festschrift for Horst Meller who, with his mentor at Heidelberg Rudolf Sühnel, did much to put the English Romantic poets on the map in Germany. Apart from Byron, whom Goethe admired, these poets were not well-known there, as Andreas Rossmann tells us in his introductory article. The collection *British and American Classical Poems* edited and annotated by Professors Sühnel and Meller, first published in 1966 and still in print, provided a landmark in appreciation of the English poets in Germany.

The Editors of the Festschrift speak of the affection and esteem in which Horst Meller is held by 'colleagues, friends and disciples both in Germany and abroad', and those who met him at Wordsworth Conferences at Grasmere will warmly endorse this. This book contains a record of an international conference in his honour organized in August 1996 by the Society for English Romanticism (GER) in co-operation with the International Byron Society, 'held at Gerhard-Mercator-Universität Duisburg to celebrate his sixtieth birthday'. Michael Gassenmeier, President of the Society for English Romanticism, provided 'The Praised Friend', a glorious Biography of Horst, wittily disguised as 'The Waste Land' and tricked out with pseudo-learned Latin epigraph illuminated by an equally enjoyable note, in case our Latin or literary knowledge are not up to it. One is particularly charmed by 'The Waste Land' being called 'a hitherto neglected poem'. Surely the book would be worth having for this piece alone.

The Essays, based on Conference Papers, which follow the Conference Reports, cover a wide variety of topics by an impressive array of international scholars. The book's theme, as its title suggests, is what each Romantic writer made of the predecessors who influenced him. The Essays are initiated by the nonagenarian Professor Sühnel's enviably lucid, learned and sensitive article on Keats's sonnet 'On First Looking into Chapman's Homer'. This is followed by Christopher Bode's account of 'Keats as a Reader of Myth: *Endymion*', which Kevin Cope in his Conference Report calls 'a dazzling effort'. In this Bode examines the 'asymmetry between literal and allegorical readings' of *Endymion*. It is a pleasurably honest account which does not attempt to make the 4,000 lines Keats imposed upon himself too 'tidy'.

From this excellent start, we go on to read of 'Romantic Readings of Homer', of Shelley and Aeschylus' *Prometheus*, of Shelley's translation of Plato's *Symposium* and of 'Keats reading Spenser'. Blake is represented by Stephen Prickett's 'Jacob's Dream: A Blakean Interpretation of the Bible'. 'Romantic Readings of Shakespeare's Sonnets' and 'Acts of Misreading? Milton, the "Original Author", and the Romantics', deal with aspects of the understanding of these two great past English poets by writers of the period. In a particularly interesting piece, which makes due acknowledgement to Jonathan Bate and others, Joan Blythe writes on 'An Ecology of Green Texts: Turner, Milton and Romantic Re-use'. She refers to 'Horst Meller's superb study of *Paradise Lost*' and, inspired by it, proceeds to 'explore another intertextual perspective' in relation to 'Milton and Turner as kinds of "Ireniker" in terms of their emphasis on the necessary accord between humankind and nature'. This is beautifully illustrated (in both senses) by reference to the text of *Paradise Lost* and to Turner's pictures, including the use he made of quotation. Though these particular examples are not specified, the reader goes away with a strong impression of the connection between Adam's fatal eating of the apple and such

developments as pollution from atomic power of genetically modified crops. Several of the few references to Wordsworth in the book occur here and one can well see the relevance of this discussion to the Romantic poets. Joan Blythe sets Turner's and Milton's 'concern with "enriching souls, and renewing the face of the earth"' against 'greedy commercial-political societies at war with the natural world'.

There are two essays here on Byron, though a separate collection of Conference Papers 'dedicated to Byron in particular' reflects the importance of the International Byron Society in the organization of the Conference as well as his popularity on the continent. There are two papers devoted to Coleridge, one by Hans Werner Breunig on 'the Influence of German Idealism on S.T. Coleridge' and one by John Beer, which looks back to *The Road to Xanadu*, epoch-making in its day, and reassesses it, while acknowledging its lasting fascination. Papers on Southey's *The Doctor*, on Ann Radcliffe's *Journey . . . With a Return Down the Rhine* (suitably topical since the Conference ended with a two-day Rhine cruise) and on *Rip Van Winkle* complete the special authors list.

Klaus W. Vowe in 'Monster and Machine' bravely tackles the impact of the Industrial Revolution on British writers. He provides an excellent concise historical background and quotes from authors ranging from Gray to Carlyle, including prose passages from William and Dorothy Wordsworth. Conspicuous by their absence are the last two books of *The Excursion*. In this context, it is probably unreasonable to expect them to be widely read but they are surely central to this discussion.

Indeed, if there is a complaint to be made about the book as a whole, it is that there is no article devoted to Wordsworth alone. If, as one might suppose, the British Romantics without Wordsworth are like a kitchen without a stove, then there is a chilly space where he ought to be.

Nevertheless, it is a most interesting collection and it is noteworthy that these articles by international writers are all written in impeccable English that surely puts us native English-speakers to shame. The book ends with the impressive list of Horst Meller's publications, which reinforces our knowledge that this is a worthy Festschrift for an illustrious recipient.

Mary Wedd

KATHLEEN JONES. *A Passionate Sisterhood: Women of the Wordsworth Circle*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000. ISBN 0312227310 $29.95.

KATHLEEN JONES'S NEW "group biography" *A Passionate Sisterhood* focuses, as its subtitle says, on the women of the Wordsworth circle—primarily on Dorothy and Mary Wordsworth, Sarah Coleridge, Edith Southey, and Sarah Hutchinson (Asra), but also on the second generation of daughters: Dora Wordsworth, Sara Coleridge, and Edith May Southey. Both the general subject (the neglected lives of these women) and the approach (to reveal their real hardship and domestic suffering within a fundamentally patriarchal culture) are to be welcomed. The bent of the discussion is revisionist, in that Jones seeks to upset romanticized notions of what it was like to live in these households, or in the immediate orbits of these great poets. And though the biographical contours are well-known, Jones's decision to tell her story (as much as is possible) from the perspective of the women allows her to cast familiar narratives in new lights. The triple alliance between William, Dorothy, and STC, for example, which tends to be ritually celebrated, comes under scrutiny; Dorothy's unquestioning allegiance to her brother is viewed with suspicion, as is her steady denigration of Sarah Coleridge. Sarah Coleridge, in fact, emerges as

developments as pollution from atomic power of genetically modified crops. Several of the few references to Wordsworth in the book occur here and one can well see the relevance of this discussion to the Romantic poets. Joan Blythe sets Turner's and Milton's 'concern with "enriching souls, and renewing the face of the earth"' against 'greedy commercial-political societies at war with the natural world'.

There are two essays here on Byron, though a separate collection of Conference Papers 'dedicated to Byron in particular' reflects the importance of the International Byron Society in the organization of the Conference as well as his popularity on the continent. There are two papers devoted to Coleridge, one by Hans Werner Breunig on 'the Influence of German Idealism on S.T. Coleridge' and one by John Beer, which looks back to *The Road to Xanadu*, epoch-making in its day, and reassesses it, while acknowledging its lasting fascination. Papers on Southey's *The Doctor*, on Ann Radcliffe's *Journey . . . With a Return Down the Rhine* (suitably topical since the Conference ended with a two-day Rhine cruise) and on *Rip Van Winkle* complete the special authors list.

Klaus W. Vowe in 'Monster and Machine' bravely tackles the impact of the Industrial Revolution on British writers. He provides an excellent concise historical background and quotes from authors ranging from Gray to Carlyle, including prose passages from William and Dorothy Wordsworth. Conspicuous by their absence are the last two books of *The Excursion*. In this context, it is probably unreasonable to expect them to be widely read but they are surely central to this discussion.

Indeed, if there is a complaint to be made about the book as a whole, it is that there is no article devoted to Wordsworth alone. If, as one might suppose, the British Romantics without Wordsworth are like a kitchen without a stove, then there is a chilly space where he ought to be.

Nevertheless, it is a most interesting collection and it is noteworthy that these articles by international writers are all written in impeccable English that surely puts us native English-speakers to shame. The book ends with the impressive list of Horst Meller's publications, which reinforces our knowledge that this is a worthy Festschrift for an illustrious recipient.

Mary Wedd

KATHLEEN JONES. *A Passionate Sisterhood: Women of the Wordsworth Circle*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000. ISBN 0312227310 $29.95.

KATHLEEN JONES'S NEW "group biography" *A Passionate Sisterhood* focuses, as its subtitle says, on the women of the Wordsworth circle—primarily on Dorothy and Mary Wordsworth, Sarah Coleridge, Edith Southey, and Sarah Hutchinson (Asra), but also on the second generation of daughters: Dora Wordsworth, Sara Coleridge, and Edith May Southey. Both the general subject (the neglected lives of these women) and the approach (to reveal their real hardship and domestic suffering within a fundamentally patriarchal culture) are to be welcomed. The bent of the discussion is revisionist, in that Jones seeks to upset romanticized notions of what it was like to live in these households, or in the immediate orbits of these great poets. And though the biographical contours are well-known, Jones's decision to tell her story (as much as is possible) from the perspective of the women allows her to cast familiar narratives in new lights. The triple alliance between William, Dorothy, and STC, for example, which tends to be ritually celebrated, comes under scrutiny; Dorothy's unquestioning allegiance to her brother is viewed with suspicion, as is her steady denigration of Sarah Coleridge. Sarah Coleridge, in fact, emerges as

an unlikely heroine: through generous deployment of letters and journals, Jones convincingly presents her as far more intelligent, sophisticated, self-aware, and emotionally well-balanced than we have come to assume. Jones's focus on the domestic also brings with it a focus on the lives of the children, and as we move beyond the *Lyrical Ballads* era, the book actually gathers strength and interest at about the point that many Romantic biographies begin to trail off. Even as the older generation ages, Jones conveys the struggles, ambitions, and irrepressible vitality of the daughters as they enter adulthood and try to make their way in the world.

There are many details here that make for a powerful, if dismal, catalogue of early nineteenth-century life. Throughout, illness and death are lurking presences. Indeed, it is all too easy to forget how many deaths there were in the children of the Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey marriages: four of the Southeys' eight children were dead by age fifteen, while William and Mary Wordsworth outlived three of their five children. It is a terrible litany, though perhaps the sense of compression here—the later chapters tend to scroll rapidly through the years—heightens the sense of doom. Jones's account of the death of Berkeley Coleridge, and its relationship to the chronology of Coleridge's wanderings through Germany, is especially compelling, and perhaps more than any other single episode in the book makes one draw back and consider the difficult calculus between intellectual work and family life that was daily being played out in these strangely interleaved families. The evolution of Sarah Coleridge's status at Greta Hall is also very interesting, but while Southey, here and elsewhere, emerges as a clear, responsible counterpoint to Coleridge, one wishes that Jones had given us more of the Southeys overall.

Even with much to be said on its behalf, though, the book contains a series of problems that range from the mildly annoying to the deeply frustrating. The quality of the writing, especially in the opening chapters, is not distinguished, and will disappoint readers accustomed to the work of stellar Romantic biographers like Stephen Gill, Walter Jackson Bate, Aileen Ward, Rosemary Ashton, Kenneth Johnston, Winifred Courtney, and Richard Holmes. When one reads a paragraph that opens with the sentence, "One of Coleridge's contemporaries at school was Charles Lamb, who became a lifelong friend," one might reasonably expect that the paragraph would say something about Lamb. I am sorry to report that it does not—not a single word. There is a banal, boilerplate character to many of the early passages ("Her death was a tragedy"; "They had a wonderful summer together before the boys went back"; "Her words reveal a deep attraction") that is wholly inadequate to the situations they seek to describe. The book never claims to undertake serious literary criticism, but judging from Jones's brief sketch of "Tintern Abbey," this may be just as well. More generally, an accumulating toll of needless misrepresentations and scholarly errors serves to generate readerly ill-will. Describing William and Dorothy's new life at Dove Cottage in 1800, for example, Jones throws in the detail that, "Hospitality was not lavish. Harriet Martineau complained that she couldn't get enough milk in her tea, was horrified to discover that visitors were asked to pay for their board." The fact that Harriet Martineau was not even born in 1800, never set foot in Dove Cottage while the Wordsworths lived there, and indeed did not even make their acquaintance until she built a house in Ambleside in the middle 1840s, is not allowed to interfere with the narrative. Since there is no footnote or citation here to indicate the date and source of the comment, it is impossible to know whether this is sloppiness or something else. Similarly, Jones concludes a paragraph about Dorothy by writing, "Her Cumberland accent, 'a northern *burr*, like the crust on wine,' was also rather uncouth to a southern ear." The phrase Jones quotes about the accent is a vivid one—from Hazlitt's "My First Acquaintance with Poets"—but since neither Hazlitt nor his essay are named,

and the quote is not footnoted, many readers will have no way of knowing that the quotation actually refers not to Dorothy's accent, but to William's. It is probably true that brother and sister sounded much alike—this is hardly a criminal offense—but surely it cannot be in Dorothy's interest, or in the interest of Jones's larger project, to alter the implied context of the quote while erasing the source.

There are other examples of this sort of thing that could be cited, but Jones's minor solecisms are, in the broader view, less bothersome than the inexplicable number of missing (or partial) footnotes. This is a book that appears to have a full scholarly apparatus, yet for reasons which are never clear, there are repeated failures to cite the poem, essay, or letter in question. Whether the reader is specialist or generalist, this inconsistency in references creates dead ends where there should be clearly marked avenues for further pursuit. Jones's occasional penchant for polemical statements ("So Basil [Montagu] was abandoned, passed on like a parcel to yet another foster home") only increases the need for clearer, richer, more consistent notating of relevant source material and secondary criticism. And there is a great deal of criticism, biographical and otherwise, which could enrich this book without overwhelming its already crowded agenda. Jones offers us a sobering, even arresting perspective—one wishes for the sort of thoroughness that would assure the book a permanent place on the shelf. Scott McEathron

DONALD H. REIMAN AND NEIL FRAISTAT, EDS. *The Complete Poetry of Percy Bysshe Shelley. Volume One*. Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000. Pp. xlviii + 492. ISBN 0-8018-6119-5. £58 hardback.

> I have been in France.
> I have eaten frogs.
> Poor Percy Bishe!!

LAMB'S LACONIC RESPONSE to Shelley's death tends to corroborate the poor opinion he seems to have had of him. Hazlitt said that Shelley had a 'maggot in his brain' characteristic of the philosophic fanatic. Well, Shelley just wasn't their sort of poet, but if he is ever to be appreciated it will be in the twenty-first century. The year 2000 has seen publication of Volume 2 of the Everest/Matthews edition of the poems, and of Volume 1 of the long-awaited Reiman edition. Professor Reiman has been at work on this text for decades, during which time he has sent numerous telegrams to the outside world from the various caves he has resorted to in search of Shelleyana. Devotees will wish to devote particular attention to his *Romantic Texts and Contexts*, reviewed in these pages on publication by Nicola Trott.

With Neil Fraistat as co-editor, Professor Reiman has completed the first volume of his scholarly edition which includes texts of Shelley's works up to 1814. The fact that this isn't Shelley at his strongest is neither here nor there; what's most astonishing about this edition is that it exists at all. Every extant piece of textual evidence has been taken into account, and is presented in a methodical and straightforward manner. No collation of the relevant materials has ever been as comprehensive or as wide-ranging. It is a haven for the Shelleyan: rejected and incomplete drafts are published as supplements to the relevant works, grouped according to their publication histories or the notebooks in which they are to be found.

Volume 1 includes Shelley's first four published works (*Original Poetry by Victor and Cazire* (1810); *The Wandering Jew* (1811), *Posthumous Fragments of Margaret Nicholson*

(1810), and poems from *St Irvyne* (1811)), with a series of poems sent to friends between 1809 and 1814, one of which is hitherto unpublished. It is these uncollected works that would probably have appealed most to Shelley. The first, 'A Cat in distress', is an Elian work if ever there was one:

A Cat in distress
Nothing more or less,
Good folks I must faithfully tell ye,
As I am a sinner
It wants for some dinner
To stuff out its own little belly.

Lamb, who unfortunately could not have known this poem, would have enjoyed the 'low' subject-matter, and the vulgarity of its expression.

The editors argue for the aesthetic significance of this poetry, which is effectively juvenilia, on the grounds that it reveals 'a radical change in [Shelley's] self-image'. They're clearly correct to do so. If a poet's juvenilia has any significance at all, it is as an index of a constantly evolving set of artistic aspirations. That said, most of us will find a good deal of the poetry here pretty tiresome. The imitations of Thomas Moore, Southey, and the Goths overstay their welcome if read as poetry in their own right, but anyone who wants to know how Shelley became the author of 'Mont Blanc' and 'Ode to the West Wind' has to begin here, with this text.

This volume represents a tremendous labour, and it is clear from its scale that the finished work will occupy many more. It is hard to imagine a more comprehensive or detailed treatment of the poems, and one can only hope that the rest of the edition will follow in short order. It is, needless to add, an essential acquisition for all institutional libraries and Shelleyans everywhere.

Duncan Wu

Society Notes and News From Members

NOTES AND NEWS FROM MEMBERS

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Activities

During 1999, the Society published the usual four numbers of *The Charles Lamb Bulletin*, a total of 188 editorial pages. Professor Duncan Wu relinquished the editorship after 6 years in that post and, for the first time, we have an American *Bulletin* editor, Professor Richard S. Tomlinson. The *Bulletin* maintains a high academic standard, and I would like to extend the Society's thanks to all whom assist the editor, particularly those who form the Editorial Board. The year saw an unprecedentedly high number of meetings and events of one sort and another. In January, Luisa Calé of Wolfson College, Oxford, gave an illustrated lecture on *Lamb and Visuality*. The Birthday Celebration Luncheon at the RCGP in February heard from Reggie Watters as our guest of honour. Professor Scott McEathron of Southern Illinois University lectured in March on *Same Old Familiar Faces: Lamb's London Magazine*. April included not only the usual AGM of the ALS, where we were represented by Robin Healey, but also a visit to Kensal Green Cemetery, identified by David Wickham as the resting-place of no less than 33 individuals with Elian connections. The AGM took place on 6th May. During the summer break, there was an Elian occasion at S. Sepulchre's, Newgate Street, to mark the restoration of Lamb's monument there, which the Society had financed. On 12th September, we were delighted to revisit Lamb's Cottage at Edmonton, courtesy of Sandra Knott, for the unveiling of English Heritage's blue plaque to Charles and Mary Lamb. Many Society members heard Mary Wedd lecture on Lamb at the Friends of Coleridge Weekend at Kilve Court, Somerset. Dr. John Strachan of the University of Sunderland lectured in October on *Man is a Gaming Animal: Lamb, Gambling and Thomas Bish's Last Lottery*. Professor Tom Craik of the University of Durham lectured on *Hogsflesh Revisited* in December. All-in-all, a most active and varied 12 months.

Officers and Council

1999 was a year of change. At the AGM, Mary Wedd stood down as Chairman, and I was elected in her place. Madeline Huxstep also stood down after a remarkably long period as General Secretary, and Veronica Finch was elected as Minutes Secretary, with the secretarial now being shared with Cecelia Powell, who continues as Membership Secretary. Two new Council members were elected, Tony Beardwell and Sandra Knott, while Professor Roger Robinson retired from the Council. I would like to take this opportunity of thanking on the Society's behalf all those who assist with the organisation of meetings and help in the running of our affairs.

Ruddick Bursary

In her Report last year, Mary Wedd explained that the Council had decided that an appropriate use of Bill Ruddick's generous legacy to the Society would be to give funds for the University of Manchester, Bill's old University, to provide bursaries in his memory for graduates to enable them to attend academic conferences, which they would otherwise be unable to afford. This arrangement was agreed by the University authorities and came into effect at the start of 1999, with an initial gift of £1,500, to be repeated annually for 2 years and then reviewed. Professor Grevel Lindop of the School of English and Linguistics at Manchester reports that in the first

year £856 has b
not doubt that th

Finances

Broadly speakin
we have benefit
extent. Secondly
that our subscrip
concluded that t
although that is
year 1999 totalle
in 1998), resultir

The Future

I believe the *Bul*
of editor and t
collaboration se
events than the e
and interesting p
that we should s
which we may a
exciting publish
possible new edi
to look forward t

Charles Lamb a
George Sturt's
Farnham in Surr

In chapter 2
"Far far away."
remember the de
sound familiar to

In chapter 21
not be read in th
been an early ed
second edition o
most modern typ
lines.

A bibliograp
Pilgrim, 1949, p
Lamb, Charles
comprises 704 p
no leading!

year £856 has been awarded in total, and there is likely to be a greater take-up in 2000. There is not doubt that the Faculty is delighted with the scheme and most grateful to the Society.

Finances

Broadly speaking, the Society's financial position is strong, due to two principal factors. First, we have benefited from the generosity of past donors and benefactors to a very considerable extent. Secondly, our investments have performed very satisfactorily in recent years. It is true that our subscription income does not suffice to cover all our operations, but the Council have concluded that this is not the moment to come forward with proposal to alter subscription rates, although that is a matter which I and the Council will be keeping under review. Income for the year 1999 totalled £9,840.26 (£8,256.69 in 1998), and expenditure totalled £9,108.84 (£9,909.08 in 1998), resulting in a surplus of £731.42 (1998 deficit: £1,652.39).

The Future

I believe the *Bulletin* can and will continue to give satisfaction, and I am pleased that the change of editor and the shift to a production system which involves transatlantic editor/printer collaboration seems to be working satisfactorily. I suspect that 2000 will see slightly fewer events than the exceptional number in 1999, but I am confident that we shall have a very varied and interesting programme to offer in the 2000-2001 season, and indeed beyond that. I am keen that we should see another Elian booklet published before long. I also want to review ways in which we may achieve more with our collections of Elian books and artefacts. There are some exciting publishing developments in the pipeline: the continuation of the Marrs' *Letters*, a possible new edition of the *Essays* and a new Biography of Lamb. There is a great deal for Elians to look forward to.

Nick Powell

FROM D.E. WICKHAM

Charles Lamb and Farnham

George Sturt's *A Small Boy in the Sixties*, first published in 1927, tells of his childhood in Farnham in Surrey during the 1860s.

In chapter 20 he remembers a school festival at which a boy sang 'that sentimental ballad "Far far away." "Where are now those happy faces," it said, "That I knew so long ago?" I still remember the delicious yearning sob excited by that song.' Does the rhythm, let alone the theme, sound familiar to Elians?

In chapter 21 he recalls the names of his books. 'Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare* . . . could not be read in the type of the duodecimo edition, which is what I had got.' This may well have been an early edition: the first edition of 1807 was a duodecimo in two volumes and so is my second edition of 1810. The print of 1810 strikes me as wonderfully readable, the equivalent to most modern type-faces in terms of size and well leaded, i.e. there is plenty of space between the lines.

A bibliographic digression on Elian readability. . . . William Kent (*London for the Literary Pilgrim*, 1949, page 129) mentions Samuel Morris Rich's first meeting with the works of Charles Lamb, Charles Kent's *oculist's edition* of 700 pages of tiny type. Been there, got that! It comprises 704 pages, actually, the type is half the size of what is in the duodecimo, and there is no leading!

For the Record - Shellyana

Roy Porter is Professor of Medical History at University College London. The 400-plus pages of his *London: A Social History*, 1994, contain many facts and remarkably few errors, but I was rather taken aback by this passage on page 144:

> Light, lofty and theatrically designed, London's shops induced awe. "Oh, the lamps of a night!" exclaimed Shelley, "her rich goldsmiths, print-shops, toy-shops, mercers, hardware men, pastry cooks, St. Paul's Churchyard, the Strand, Exeter Change, Charing Cross, with a man upon a black horse! These are thy gods, O London."

Shelley was the one, of course, who said the opposite, that 'Hell is a city much like London – A populous and smoky city'. This looks to me more like a straight quotation from Charles Lamb's letter to Thomas Manning which Professor Marrs dates 27 (?) February 1801. In other words, a bit of a bish.

In passing, I hope you all read, e.g. in *The Times* of 13 February 1996, about the latterday Mrs Partington, the office cleaner who went into her building at Canary Wharf on the day after it received an indirect hit from the I.R.A. bomb and complained about the mess on the carpets. She and three others cleaned the lavatories and refilled the paper holders, then emptied the rubbish bins. The piles of shattered glass and masonry dust meant, she explained, that 'You couldn't do any Hoovering'. The name of this indomitable lady was Mrs Mary Shelley.

50 Years Ago: *CLS Bulletin* no. 95 (May 1950)

Mr. H---'; A Farce by Charles Lamb. Production by the Dramatic Group, 27th and 28th April [1950; at the Interval Club Theatre, with Basil Francis as Charles Lamb]. . . . its light-hearted, punning humour caught the fancy and tickled the palate of its present audience, a clever and witty play. The members of the Dramatic Group shewed their qualities in no uncertain way and their efforts, with the skilful hand of Miss Annette park as producer in the background, won our applause. One cannot enumerate individual excellencies; the case in essence was a team and the whole production went with a swing, or to put it another way, like a machine that had been oiled with sympathy and understanding for Lamb's whimsical idea . . . . Mention should also be made of the skilful curtain arrangements which compensated for the meagre stage accommodation. Congratulations to the Group on this[,] its fourth major production.

The Bulletin Board (announcements and queries of interest to Elians)

This year's Kilve Court Study Weekend organized by the Friends of Coleridge, to be held from 1st-3rd of September, will focus on the theme of 'Coleridge Abroad'. Speakers will include David Fairer, Michael John Kooy, Graham Davidson and Seamus Perry. Further details from Mrs Shirley Watters, 11 Castle Street, Nether Stowey, Somerset TA5 1LN, UK.

David Crosher writes, 'The "Thought for the Day" in the *Independent*, on April 24, was as follows: "Asparagus inspires gentle thoughts" - Charles Lamb, English essayist.

'I am not familiar with this quote and I wonder if any *Bulletin* reader can identify where it comes from.

'I must get some asparagus.'

If you can identify the source of this passage, please send details to the *Bulletin* editor, Richard S. Tomlinson, at 669 South Monroe St., Decatur, IL 62522-3225, USA (email: rtomlin@richland.cc.il.us).

Duncan Wu notes, interestingly,
From an examination paper in Glasgow
'Malvolio in Much Ado remains an "unbonded" man both in male and female terms. He is left isolated as he says, "I'll be revenged on the whole pack of you." Charles Lamb playing Malvolio was the first to indicate sympathy towards this solitary broken figure at the conclusion.'

Paul Betz advises, citing a recent *TLS* article,
'For $25,000 Lame Duck Books have the presentation copies of Lamb's Elia essays (1823-1833), which he inscribed to Southey with "friendly remembrances"; the first volume was sent to the Poet Laureate by way of Wordsworth'.

Some Noteworthy Dates in the Romantic Period

July-September

July
9 July 1797 - Burke dies
14 July 1789 - Storming of the Bastille
18 July 1817 - Austen dies, Winchester
21 July 1796 - Burns dies
28 July 1814 - Shelley elopes with Mary Godwin

August
4 August 1792 - Shelley born at Field Place, Sussex
18 August 1782 - Blake marries Catherine Boucher
August, 1804 - Dora Wordsworth born
August, 1811- Shelley elopes with Harriet Westbrook
August, 1816 - Austen completes *Persuasion*

September
10 September 1797 - Mary Wollstonecraft dies
September, 1808 - Catherine Wordsworth born