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Magnifique, mais ce n'est pas Daguerre
Some Notes on the Life of Tom Wedgwood

By FRANCIS À COURT

IN MARCH OF THE YEAR 1850, a teenage girl had just paid a visit to Rydal Mount and, as she was waiting for her carriage,

> a chair drew up at the front door, bearing the shrunken figure of the invalid Dorothy Wordsworth, returned from her day's excursion. Upon hearing [her] name, the old woman seized her by the arm and inquired eagerly: 'From whom are you sprung?'
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> Startled and repelled by the old woman's touch, [she] replied haughtily: 'My father is Hensleigh Wedgwood'.
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> Dorothy Wordsworth's eyes were wild, full of fire and light, but her mind was vague and wandering. 'Hensleigh Wedgwood?' she murmured, 'I know of no Hensleigh Wedgwood. Do you know Thomas Wedgwood?' She then lapsed into a eulogy of Tom Wedgwood as if his death had occurred yesterday instead of nearly half a century before.[1]

The young lady's name was in fact Julia Wedgwood, and she was the granddaughter of Tom Wedgwood's elder brother Josiah. She was later to have a romantic attachment to Robert Browning: there is no doubt that these Wedgwoods got around.

Wordsworth's first encounter with Tom Wedgwood had been when Tom visited Alfoxden in September 1797, with a view to recruiting Wordsworth to a system of education which Tom had recently been evolving. The visit lasted 5 days, and the time passed, Tom records, 'like lightening'.[2] If only we could have eavesdropped! Or—better still—if only Lamb or Hazlitt had been there to take notes!

We do know that[3] Tom's ideas were deeply influenced by Hartley's theories on the association of ideas, and this in itself would at that time have been attractive to both Wordsworth and Coleridge. But Tom wanted to concentrate the infant pupil's attention on a selected few impressions. And he planned to eliminate anything else which might compete with these. Consequently the nursery should be as bare and drab as practicable, save for one or two vivid objects, which would seize the child's attention. Moreover 'The gradual explication of Nature', he says in a letter, 'would be attended with great difficulty; the child must never go out of doors or leave his own apartment'. At all costs the pupil must be protected from getting any uncensored impressions from the natural world.

It must have immediately occurred to Wordsworth that anything in the way of stealing boats at night or the mimic hooting of owls or being haunted by cataracts like a passion would be

[1] Julia Wedgwood, *The Personal Life of Josiah Wedgwood the Potter* (London: Farrer, 1906), and Barbara and Hensleigh Wedgwood, *The Wedgwood Circle* (London: Cassel, 1980). The quotation is from *Circle*.

[2] *Thomas Wedgwood: The Value of a Maimed Life*, sel. by Margaret Olivia Temple (London: C.W. David, 1912) p 60.

[3] Letter from Tom Wedgwood to Godwin July 31, 1797. Quoted in David Erdman, 'Coleridge, Wordsworth and the Wedgwood Fund', *Bulletin of the New York Public Library* 60 (1956) p 431.

rigorously dealt with and, indeed, as Stephen Gill has pointed out in his biography,[4] William and Dorothy were at that time bringing up little Basil Montagu with 'no other companions, than the flowers, the grass, the cattle and the sheep that scamper away from him when he makes a vain unexpecting chase after them'.[5]

Tom had told Godwin that Wordsworth had 'only to be convinced that this is the most promising mode of benefiting society, to engage him to come forward with alacrity'.[6] From what we now know, this must surely rank as one of the most ludicrous misjudgements in the history of our literature, and yet at the time it was not unreasonable for him to expect this, given the little that Tom then knew about Wordsworth and Coleridge, and the way radical followers of Godwin were then thinking.

* * *

Tom Wedgwood is a most interesting, if elusive character, and I would like to discuss some aspects of his life which are not very often considered.

To many people his chief significance must be that he came forward with an annuity for Coleridge at a very critical time. And so he did, of course. So you might call this Coleridgean perspective: to see Tom, as it were, as Coleridge's version of Raisley Calvert and the various people who, as De Quincey pointed out, were always ready to go to another world as soon as their income was needed by Wordsworth in this one.

But there has always been a Wedgwoodian perspective, taken by the large and loyal clan of often very gifted members of the family in the 19th and 20th centuries. To Wedgwoodians Tom's chief interest lies in his exceptional gifts as a scientist, and they tend to speculate upon what he *might* have achieved, had he not been ill, rather than with his *actual* connection with Coleridge (whom they have sometimes rather deprecated as a doubtful investment, in any case). Apart from its own achievements, the family can point to a very close connection with the Darwin family, providing 50% of the genes for Charles Darwin himself. And if you can measure out genes in this way (which I doubt if you can) then they also provided 25% of Ralph Vaughan Williams. So the Wedgwoods do not feel that the Coleridge friendship is necessary to their own artistic or intellectual status.

The only full biography of Tom was produced by R.B. Litchfield (who himself married one of Charles Darwin's daughters) just under a hundred years ago.[7] In the more recent past a number of scholars have taken a much closer look at certain aspects of Tom's ideas, particularly in metaphysics and education, and these include David Erdman, Francis Doherty, and in particular Neil Vickers, whose article 'Coleridge and Tom Wedgwood' appeared in the *Coleridge Bulletin* as recently as 1999,[8] so readers will probably be familiar with that study, and perhaps with his very compelling contribution on a related subject in Nick Roe's recent book.[9]

[4] Stephen Gill: *William Wordsworth, a Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989) p 130 et seq.
[5] Letter to Mrs. Rawson. *Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth. The Early Years 1787-1805*. 2nd ed., (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1967) p 222.
[6] Erdman 431.
[7] R. B. Litchfield, *Tom Wedgwood, The First Photographer* (London, Duckworth, 1903).
[8] Erdman 431; Francis Doherty, 'Tom Wedgwood, Coleridge, and Metaphysics', *Neophilologus* 71.2 1987. pp 305-315; Neil Vickers, 'Coleridge and Tom Wedgwood', *Coleridge Bulletin*, ns no. 14 1999.
[9] Vickers, 'Coleridge's Abstruse Researches', *Samuel Taylor Coleridge and the Sciences of Life*. ed. Nicholas Roe (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001).

And I think that there has been so much interesting material produced since Litchfield that it points to the need for a new and up to date biography. I have not attempted that, but I have collected some notes on aspects of Tom's life which may help us to understand this very unusual man.

My first viewpoint might be called 'Escape from the Overwhelming Father'. Next: 'Dr Beddoes and the Battle with Illness'. And finally: 'Tom as reflected by his relationship with Godwin and Coleridge'.

Old Josiah's Story

It begins with a pothole. Pottery was not much more than a cottage industry in 1730, when Josiah Wedgwood was born; people just scooped out what they needed on a hand-to-wheel basis, and this is the origin of the expression. Josiah's father died when Josiah was 9 years old, after only two years of schooling. Josiah was the youngest of fourteen children, so he had no future in the family business, even if it survived, but he set about improving his scientific knowledge as well as learning the trade before, at the age of 28, going into business on his own. By the time he died, in 1795, he had built up at 'Etruria' which has been described as 'the most powerful and advanced industrial organisation in England',[10] having survived a childhood smallpox, which crippled him, and an accident when he was 38, which involved his having to have his leg sawn off fortified by no anaesthetic other than opium. He had opened up the Potteries by participating in the digging of a new canal, and he was trading with any part of the world which was accessible in times of frequent wars and blockades.

The childhood illness had led to his being treated by the young Doctor Erasmus Darwin, thereby starting an alliance of their families which was to last for over a century. Josiah seems to have been able to talk on terms of equality with many of the philosophers of his age, such as Darwin and Priestley. He was in close touch with the other industrial giants of the time, such as Mathew Boulton. He employed the services of George Stubbs, Reynolds, Flaxman, and Angelica Kauffmann. He had a personality which seems to have enabled him to get the willing co-operation of anyone whose particular talents or imagination might be necessary to his enterprise, no matter what their previous inclinations may have been. His patrons included the Dukes of Bedford and Marlborough, and his personal friendship with the British ambassador to St. Petersburg led to the order by the Empress Catherine of an enormous dinner service depicting the stately homes of England. His letter-heads bore the title 'Potter to Her Majesty'.

He died worth half a million pounds.

So I wonder what it must have felt like to be the child of a man like this?

Josiah had three sons and, of course, he soon set about preparing them for the only thing which mattered in the world, the continuance and development of the family business. The eldest son, John, was the first to crumple under the strain. We hear of him bravely confronting a dangerous bread-riot in his father's absence, at the age of 17.[11] But it was not long before old Josiah seems to have become convinced that John lacked the killer instinct, and proposed a series of alternative careers for him. Eventually he was set up as a part-time director in a bank, which in due course failed, taking John's fortune with it into ruin. John suffered something of a breakdown, and ended his days in humiliation, being looked after by his family and their friend,

[10] Wedgwoods *Circle* 42.

[11] Litchfield, Cap 1. Biographical details are from Litchfield unless otherwise recorded.

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[12] Wedgwoods *Circle* 12

Dr Robert Darwin (Erasmus' son, Charles' father). John was a charming and intelligent man, with a number of interests, notably horticulture, but he became a prime example of the perils of a normal man being born to an outstanding father.

So the pressure of expectation came onto the second son, young Josiah, and the third son, Thomas. Both became partners in the firm, but it is clear that neither of them wished to devote his life to driving it on with their father's obsessive force. Young Josiah became involved in general management, while Tom specialised in scientific experimentation. But there is no record that Tom's investigations were much directed towards improvement of production methods, as old Josiah's had mostly been, though among the six scientific papers that he submitted to learned societies were two to the Royal Society in 1791 on the incandescence of heated objects. More importantly, there were his famous experiments in photography.

Perhaps this is the moment to make an apology for the punning title of this piece. Tom's claim to be the first photographer rests upon a report made some years after the event by Humphry Davy, in which he describes Tom's achievements with the making of pictures from the darkening effect of sunlight projected through a lens onto silver nitrate. Davy concludes, 'nothing but a method of preventing the unshaded parts of delineation from being coloured by exposure to the day is wanting'. So he got his pictures, but they faded into the light of common day. In fact hyposulphate of soda had been made in 1799, and if Wedgwood and Davy had tried using it, they would have solved the problem of how to fix their pictures. Some Wedgwoodians think he would have done so if he had not been ill. So then people would have talked about 'wedgwoodotypes' rather than 'daguerrotypes'. One up to the French, unfortunately.

In any case, by April 1792 Tom concluded that laboratory work was contributing to his illness, and he resolved to give it up. He resigned from the firm in 1793. His illness also provided him with a reason for leaving Etruria Hall altogether, and he made his first visit to Paris in '92.

The *significant* thing is that the moment old Josiah died in 1795 both sons escaped from Etruria, and never lived there again. Etruria Hall was a respectable gentleman's mansion, but it had been built 'over the shop' as it were, where Josiah could keep a direct control on his factory. This was not all to young Josiah's taste, and he lost no time in moving south to where he could set himself up as a country squire, leaving the day to day running of the business to an underling. Within ten years both sons were installed in separate estates at Gunville, in Dorset, where Josiah was to become High Sheriff of the County, and as remote as practicable from the taint of trade. A further example of the way in which the family had come up in the social world was to be provided when Tom Poole, who had become well known to the Wedgwoods through the Coleridge connection, aspired to correspond with the Wedgwoods' sister Kitty, with a view to marriage. Tom wrote to Josiah 'I am surprised at the man's presumption'.[12] It is not likely that Poole would have been thought to be after some of the family money; it was simply that he had retained the rough exterior of a farmer and a tanner, and was not genteel enough for a second-generation Wedgwood.

Tom's Identity, and His Illness

So my contention is that there was a problem of identity for both brothers, and especially for Tom. Who and what was he? On the negative side he was a refugee from his father's pots and kilns, and a fugitive from his own oppressive illness. He had proved himself to be highly

[12] Wedgwoods *Circle* 122.

intelligent, and he was a post-Bastille idealist, who wrote in his notebook, 'How animating is the thought that if by the labour of my life I should add one idea to the stock of those concerning education, my life has been well spent!'[13] Scientific research seemed to be barred to him, but he was interested in research into metaphysics and educational theory, and there was still the possibility of philanthropy through the wise investment of some of his money in people who might benefit mankind.

So his life had two objectives. One was to pursue his interests and take his rightful place in the intellectual world. The other was to hold at bay his debilitating illness, which threatened to destroy not only his potential to achieve anything, but also to deny him the common pleasures of life and of the affection of his family and friends.

There is a nasty character of James Thurber's, who says 'when you've said that Proust was a sick man, you've said everything!' It would be just as outrageous to claim this of Tom Wedgwood. But his illness was something he had to be familiar with and it became part of his personality. It modified the kind of man he grew to become, so it would be a mistake to treat his sickness as some kind of ball and chain, a handicap external to himself.

There is a record of his education having to be modified when he was 8 years old, in view of his delicacy and his migraines. This was when the (inescapable) Erasmus Darwin advises 'a compromise between health of body and mind that shall do least injury to either'. Tom and his brother Josiah went on to spend two active winter sessions at Edinburgh University before they returned to Etruria in 1788. (Josiah writes of the Philological Society that 'we had three visits from Mr. Burns, a natural poet; his brother is a farmer and he was the ploughman, but had a very uncommon poetic turn [. . .]'). Tom picked up a good deal of Classics and Chemistry, but unfortunately he also picked up what was then described as 'dysentery'. There is a case for saying that this is where his troubles really began.

In addition to his headaches he began to have pain in the guts and fits of depression which lasted for weeks. Eventually these depressions were described as 'hardly distinguishable from insanity', except that there were no delusions or loss of faculties. Doctors said the troubles originated as 'a paralysis of the digestive system' or 'hypochondriacal'.[14]

I have had some advice from a medical friend, which I pass on with due diffidence. It seems that the Edinburgh dysentery could indeed have been the cause of Tom's later troubles, just as doctors suggested at the time, since it can lead to malabsorption diseases which become evident in young adults, who then (if untreated) fail to nourish themselves, become thin, wasted and anaemic, and die young. One variety of these diseases is Whipple's Disease. Tom is described a few months before his death as being 'tall, thin, pale sickly—moving feebly, by the aid of a stick'. So there is a case for thinking that Tom's sickness was an accumulation of two conditions, one congenital, and the other contracted at University. But help from the medical profession was at hand.

This is part of an advertisement which appeared in the Bristol Gazette on March 21, 1799:

> NEW MEDICAL INSTITUTION
> This institution [. . .] is intended amongst other purposes for treating diseases hitherto found incurable, upon a new plan.

[13] Temple 90.
[14] Litchfield 23.

> The application of persons in confirmed Consumption is principally wished at present; and though the disease has heretofore been deemed hopeless, it is confidently expected that a considerable portion of such cases will be permanently cured.
>
> Attendance will be given from Eleven till One o'clock by Thomas Beddoes or Humphrey Davy.

Thomas Beddoes was a respected doctor and scientist, and a friend of Darwin and the Wedgwood family. He was a dedicated radical, and had contributed to Coleridge's *Watchman* in 1796.[15] His enthusiastic political opinions had cost him his Readership in Chemistry at Oxford.

He was no less enthusiastic about how the recent discoveries of Priestley and others might benefit Mankind. He had a special interest in artificial gases (facticious airs) and was actually far ahead of his time in thinking that Consumption could be cured by reduced intakes of oxygen. So the gases were meant to block this out. It only remained to hit upon the most suitable facticious air. It seemed that he was on the point of making an enormous boon to mankind, and further possibilities were almost unlimited. '[. . . Y]ou will agree with me in entertaining hopes not only of a beneficial change in the practice of medicine, *but in the constitution of human nature itself*', he wrote to Darwin.[16]

And so he set up the 'Pneumatic Institution' at Bristol in 1798. He got financial help from his wealthier radical friends, including Tom Wedgwood, who gave him £1000, on the reasonable grounds that the money would be well spent even if it only proved that facticious airs were *not* efficacious.[17] (But perhaps he had some hope that Beddoes might stumble on something that would alleviate his own mysterious illness). Suitable machinery was provided by James Watt, and Humphry Davy was brought up at the age of 19 from Penzance, through the influence of the Wedgwoods, to help administer the gases.

There was little sign of progress in dealing with consumption, but there were striking results when Davy began to administer Nitrous Oxide, or laughing gas. This is how Southey describes his experience to his brother Tom:

> Oh Tom! such a gas has Davy discovered, the gaseous oxyde! Oh, Tom! I have had some; it made me laugh and tingle in every toe and finger tip. Davy has actually invented a new pleasure, for which language has no name. Oh, Tom! I am going for more this evening; it makes one strong and so happy! so gloriously happy! and without any debility, but, instead of it, increased strength of mind and body. Oh! excellent air-bag! Tom, I am sure the air in heaven must be this wonder-working gas of delight.[18]

Coleridge of course tried it out. He described the experience much later as 'voluptuous', but the gas was clearly not the milk of paradise. Instead, he commented prosaically, 'The operation

[15] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *CC* 2, *Watchman* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1970). Reviews are on p 100 and p 305. Reprint of pamphlet on p 3344. It is suggested that a number of other items came from Dr Beddoes.
[16] *Letter of Thomas Beddoes MD to Erasmus Darwin*, reprinted and sold by J. Murray, Fleet Street. (Letter dated July 5, 1793).
[17] Litchfield 35.
[18] Eliza Meteyard, *A Group of Englishmen, (1795-1815)* (London: Longman's Green, 1871) 85.

of this gas is to prevent the decarbonising of the blood; and, consequently, if taken excessively, it would produce apoplexy. The blood becomes as black as ink'.[19]

It has recently been suggested[20] that he found the evidence that cognition could be affected by artificial gas inconvenient, because he was trying to move away from Hartleyan materialism with its implication that the mind is mechanical and passively motivated, from outside itself.

This does not seem to have been an objection from Tom Wedgwood's point of view but, on the other hand, he does not report any voluptuous sensations, though he notes its stimulating effect.[21]

Naturally everyone in Bristol wanted to try the new sensation, and many shared Southey's enthusiasm. One lady ran laughing into the street, and had to be caught and subdued by an athletic friend[22]: 'Mrs. Beddoes had frequently seemed to be ascending like a balloon up the hill to Clifton'.[23] It was unlucky that the gas seemed to have no permanent benefit, and it did not occur to Davy until much later that it might be useful as an anaesthetic.[24] And the whole thing provided marvellous ammunition for the *Anti-Jacobin Review*. Beddoes had after all claimed that his airs might make 'a beneficial change to human nature itself', and the *Review* had noted other claims that oxygen might convert cold-blooded animals to warm-blooded ones.

> Frogs [the *Review* suggested] are to be converted into oxen, and oxen no doubt into men [. . .].' perhaps Beddoes and Darwin could convert the whole atmosphere of the earth into nitrous oxide?
>
> This would make us all angels in a trice; not to mention the inexpressible pleasure of being *drunk* all our lives long.[25]

Beddoes' ideas were not limited to facticious airs. He hoped that consumptives might benefit from inhaling the breath of cows, though leading cows into invalids' bedrooms did nothing to improve his popularity with Clifton lodging house keepers.[26]

By 1801 it was clear that the Pneumatic Institution had failed. Tom had no further hope of a medical cure, and he had to fall back on increasingly desperate plans to try to benefit from warmer climates, and to take comfort from drugs, principally opium. (Darwin had given him regular doses some years before, but now he became increasingly dependant on it.)

William Godwin

A great deal can be understood about Tom Wedgwood's character by looking at his relationship with his two most important beneficiaries, Godwin and Coleridge. Tom first met Godwin in May 1793, when Tom was 22 years old. Tom had already done some original work in the laboratories at Etruria, and had corresponded with Priestley, so he had some grounds for self-confidence. But Godwin's *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* was just coming out, and this

[19] *Specimens of the Table Talk of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (London: Longman's Green, 1871) 85.
[20] Alan Richardson, *British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind* (Cambridge UP, 2001) 52.
[21] Litchfield 37.
[22] Meteyard 86.
[23] Dorothy A. Stansfield, *Thomas Beddoes MD, Chemist, Physician, Democrat* (Boston: Kluwer, 1984) 164.
[24] Stansfield 170.
[25] *Anti-Jacobin Revue* 1800.
[26] Litchfield 36.

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[27] William St Clair, *Th*
[28] Temple 46.
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[30] Litchfield 29.
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[32] Qtd. In Erdman 429.
[33] St Clair 173.
[34] St Clair 206.

was of course making him one of the most famous and notorious political writers of his time. Wedgwood was considering in what way his inherited wealth might best be put to the service of Humanity, and he overcame his natural diffidence to 'bombard [Godwin] with questions and suggestions'.[27] Godwin's response seems to have been limited to criticising Wedgwood's style rather than the content. He accused Wedgwood of writing 'pleonasms'.

Wedgwood notes: 'Different modes of enunciation. –M[ack]intosh and Godwin close their mouth after each remark, and seem to close the discussion at the same time.'[28] Perhaps Godwin had been a little overbearing.

We may suppose that Tom Wedgwood absorbed a great many of Godwin's ideas, but there is very little record of what he did or did not read. In his notebooks he is often concerned with the effects and importance of association of feelings and ideas, which might suggest Hartley, and his ethics seem to have been founded very much on the need to promote greatest Happiness, which suggests Bentham or Godwin himself. Certainly Tom was familiar with the idea of a pleasure/pain calculus, as is shown when he equates '1 hour's enjoyment for a dog = 1 month for an oyster = three weeks for a toad = 1 week for a bird'.[29] He thought that this consideration justified the killing of animals for sport, because of a human's relative capacity for enjoyment against the animal's limited ability to feel pain.

In 1795 Wedgwood was bold enough to offer Godwin the present of a copying machine, which Godwin declined in view of his 'sentiments on the giving and receiving of presents'[30] Tom replied in rather hurt and formal terms that he had hoped by the gift 'you might connect some agreeable associations with my person, and conceive some interest in my fellowship'.[31] This was of course applying the idea of association to his own end but (as Shelley was to learn later) you couldn't really win with Godwin, whose 'sentiments' insisted on his calling for help whenever he wanted it, without any requirement of gratitude or friendship. When Tom and Josiah called on Godwin in May of 1797 they were discouraged by something 'distant and cold' in his manner. 'It struck me very forcibly, after quitting you on the second visit, that if you really desired pleasure from my conversation, you cou'd not have failed to have invited me to a continuance of our interview'.[32]

In February 1798 Godwin did ask for £50 for a 'friend' (this was for Mary Wollstonecraft), and later another £50 so that they could get married. Both were paid promptly.[33]

By 1800 relations must have improved. Coleridge's *bete noir* Mackintosh had made a savage attack on Godwin. Some of Godwin's friends were avoiding him. Godwin wrote to Wedgwood to ask whether he too had dropped him, now that he was known to be a 'Jacobin Monster'. So he must have assumed a friendship in the first place.[34] Wedgwood had in fact subsidised Mackintosh, and the family remained on good terms with him, whatever his politics, but Tom continued to support Godwin as well.

[27] William St Clair, *The Godwins and the Shelleys* (London: Faber, 1989) 99.
[28] Temple 46.
[29] Temple 75.
[30] Litchfield 29.
[31] Litchfield 30.
[32] Qtd. In Erdman 429.
[33] St Clair 173.
[34] St Clair 206.

In 1804, when Tom was already very ill, with only months to live, Godwin made an apologetic appeal for more funds. Tom paid up and replied: 'I do [. . .] invite you still to consider me as your friend in every honourable sense of the word'. A biographer of Godwin suggests that Tom had been hurt to believe that he might have been thought too concerned with his own troubles to consider those of a friend. But Godwin had been asking for help on the philosophical grounds that he needed it, and this *in spite of* their friendship. So their association remained a little confused to the last.[35]

The Uneasy Friendship with Coleridge

We have seen that Wordsworth was the first person that Tom was inclined to approach with his ideas on education. Tom had told Godwin that Coleridge might be too much interested in poetry and religion to be so open to Tom's ideas. There does not seem to be any evidence that Tom had the slightest interest in poetry, so he was certainly out of luck in his timing, as he approached two of our greatest poets when they had just launched into their joint *annus mirabilis*. It was to become clear that Wordsworth was not to be budged, but Coleridge's involvement with metaphysics seemed to make him, after all, the more promising genius of the two, from Tom Wedgwood's perspective. The joint intervention of Tom and Josiah in January 1798 was clearly directed at saving him from the toils of Religion as well, by making it unnecessary for him to become a Unitarian Minister, for the sake of the bread and cheese, which this appointment would have earned for him.

The story is well known. The Wedgwoods sent Coleridge a draft of £100, which was reluctantly refused, on the grounds that it would not be a large enough substitute for the stipend which would have had to be foregone. In addition there seems to have been an obligation involved for Coleridge to busy himself with some aspect of Tom's plans for an educational or philosophic foundation, which might have hampered him as much as a requirement to preach weekly sermons would have done. It is possible that Coleridge was keeping two or more balls in the air at once when he made his famous trip to Shrewsbury, preaching the sermon which Hazlitt immortalises,[36] and receiving Josiah's letter offering an annuity of £150 each year indefinitely, and without condition.

> My brother and myself are possessed of a considerable superfluity of fortune; squandering and hoarding are equally distant from our inclinations. [. . . W]e are earnestly desirous to convert this superfluity into a fund of beneficence & we have now been accustomed, for some time, to rather regard ourselves as Trustees than Proprietors.

It has been suggested that this first part of the letter was actually written by Tom, even though the whole letter was signed by Josiah only.[37] It is certainly in line with Tom's attitude to his situation in life, and not completely consistent with the way Josiah lived, either then or later. So we can suppose that it was written at least under Tom's influence. (One wonders what 'Old' Josiah would have had to say to it?) At any event it was clearly what Coleridge had hoped for, and it is no wonder that (as Hazlitt put it) he 'seemed to make up his mind to close with this proposal in the act of tying on one of his shoes'.

[35] St Clair 271.
[36] William Hazlitt, 'On My First Acquaintance with Poets', *The Liberal*, April 1823.
[37] Erdman 437.

Wordsworth wrote (6 March 1798, to Tobin) perhaps a little sourly, 'I hope the fruit will be as good as the seed is noble'. If Coleridge really intended to set up as a Minister in Shropshire, where he would have had to spend his time and spirit grappling with his own religious scruples and his parishioner's problems, it is a question whether he would have been in a condition to write either 'Frost at Midnight' or the first part of 'Christabel',[38] so the fruit was certainly good. The other immediate result was that the German expedition became a possibility, with all the results (good or bad) which must have flowed to Coleridge in the development of his metaphysics. Coleridge's immediate comment was that he hoped to repay the Wedgwoods 'through the medium of Mankind'.[39] (Which was, of course, exactly what Tom wanted to hear him say.)

But what did the Wedgwood family think about all this? Daniel Stuart recalls a party at Cote (which was John Wedgwood's house, near Bristol) where Coleridge

> had so riveted, by his discourse, the attention of the gentlemen, particularly Mr Thomas Wedgwood, an infirm bachelor; he had so prevented all general conversation, that several of the party wished him out of the house [. . .] Mackintosh was by far the most dexterous disputer. Coleridge overwhelmed listeners in [. . .] a monologue; but at short cut and thrust fencing, by a master like Mackintosh, he was speedily confused and subdued. He felt himself lowered in the eyes of the Wedgwoods [. . .] and Mackintosh drove him out of the house: an offence which Coleridge never forgave.[40]

The account of Coleridge dominating a conversation is of course familiar enough. Most people seem to have been sufficiently enchanted by what he had to say to not mind being unable to get a word in edgeways but, as the days went by, one can imagine a party of not especially intellectual house guests starting to long for a little mundane chatter ('oh no! not Poetry and Metaphysics *again*!') But this was supposed to have happened only a few weeks before the brothers sent their offer to Coleridge, so obviously he had not been 'lowered in the eyes' of the 'infirm bachelor, Mr Thomas Wedgwood', and it may be that Coleridge was actually talking for effect *at* Tom in particular, since each of them seems to have been measuring up the other with a view to making a deal. Tom could enjoy, much more, metaphysics and education theory than the rest of his family and their friends, and this could explain their restiveness.

Coleridge's relationship with Mackintosh does have one important bearing on his friendship with the Wedgwoods. It has been very much illuminated by a recent paper of John Beer's,[41] so I will only skate over the surface of it here. Coleridge was not the sort of person to take a violent and lasting antipathy towards anyone, and yet there is no doubt he made an exception of this Scots lawyer, 'Dung-fly', 'Stream of Excrement'). Partly, as Seamus Perry has recently shown.[42] Mackintosh's essential *Scottishness* got under Coleridge's skin, but it does seem likely that he also trod on the poet's corns in some very personal way. Also of course Mackintosh was another beneficiary of Wedgwood's, and there is a hint of rivalry, for instance, when Coleridge wrote to

[38] Suggested by Richard Holmes in *Coleridge, Early Visions* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1989) 184.
[39] STC letter to Poole, 27 January 1798.
[40] Qtd. by Erdman 446.
[41] John Beer, 'Coleridge, Mackintosh and the Wedgwoods: A Reassessment, Including Some Unpublished Records', *Romanticism: The Journal of Romantic Culture and Criticism*, 7:1 (2001) 16-40.
[42] *Coleridge Bulletin*, Summer 2001, 74.

Tom 'I most fear [. . .] he will in some way embroider himself upon your Thoughts'[43] when the Scot was entrusted with preparing some of Tom's ideas for publication.

There is also a degree of sad irony linking the two philosophers with Tom Wedgwood. After Tom's death Josiah sent a large quantity of Tom's papers to Mackintosh to be prepared for a biography. He also asked STC to give him a personal contribution. Coleridge eventually told him that he had written an account of Tom based on his friendship and respect, but that it had been lost at sea on his return from Malta. Nothing was forthcoming from Mackintosh either. As we know that Mackintosh also laboured under the opium habit[44] which had the effect of confusing intention in the mind with achievement, it may be that both responses were drowned not in seawater, but in laudanum.

We have one other account of how Coleridge got on with Tom's family and friends. This was supposed to have happened in November 1802, but it must be said that it was recorded from memory 69 years later by Tom's sister-in-law, Fanny Allen. It happened at the Allen's house, Cresselly, in Pembrokeshire.

> Another day at Cresselly, Coleridge, who was fond of reading MS. Poems of Wordsworth's, asked Fanny whether she liked poetry, and when she said she did, came and sat by her on the sofa, and began to read the *Leechgatherer*. When he came to the passage, now I believe omitted, about his skin being so old and dry that the leeches wouldn't stick, it set Fanny a-laughing. That frightened her, and she got into a convulsive fit of laughter that shook Coleridge, who was sitting close to her, looking very angry. He put up his MS., saying he ought to ask her pardon, for perhaps to a person who had not genius [. . .] the poem might seem absurd. F. sat in a dreadful fright, everybody looking amazed, [. . .] and she almost expected her father would turn her out of the room, but uncle Tom came to her rescue. 'Well Coleridge, one must confess that it is not quite a subject for a poem'. Coleridge did not forgive Fanny for some days [. . .] but afterwards he was very good friends with her, and one day in particular gave her all his history, saying, amongst other things, 'and there I had the misfortune to meet with my wife'.[45]

Surely that last line carries conviction, whatever may be believed about Fanny's distant recollection of the 'Leechgatherer'.

The true relationship between Tom Wedgwood and Coleridge was a great deal more complex than the Wedgwood family could be expected to understand. And even now, with the advantage of the letters and notebooks which they both left behind them, it seems in many ways ambiguous.

Both suffered from neuroses resulting from their frequent bouts of illness. They both looked for a warmer climate as a relief for their desperation, and a frequent change of scene was itself some relief to Tom, who made four trips to the Continent and another to Martinique and Barbados, most of which he aborted after a very short time, as the sickness and despair folded round him again. Whenever he felt strong enough, he tried to escape in violent exercise, just as Coleridge did. In January 1803 Coleridge wrote to Tom from Keswick:

[43] STC letter 17 February 1803 to TW.
[44] Alethea Hayter, *Opium and the Romantic Imagination* (London: Faber, 1968) 27-28.
[45] Litchfield 125-6.

> I do not think it possible, that any bodily pains could eat out the love and joy, that is so substantially part of me, towards the hills and rocks, and steep waters! And I have had some Trial.

And he goes on to describe his illness before saying,

> I have strong wishes to be with you, & love your society; & receiving much comfort from you, and believing that I receive likewise much improvement, I find a delight (very great, my dear friend! indeed it is) when I have reason to imagine that I am in return an alleviation of your destinies & a comfort to you.[46]

Drugs were of course another shared source of comfort. In February 1803, Coleridge procured a supply of 'Bhang' or 'Bangee' and wrote to Tom 'we will have a fair Trial of this Bang [. . .]. I will give a fair trial of opium, Hensbane, and Nepenthe'.[47] He was apparently planning to party on opium, cannabis, and what is described as an extremely poisonous alkaloid. Molly Lefebure has concluded that STC's interpretation of 'Nepenthe' suggests that he was hoping for a mood-changing effect, rather than a sedative, and it is clear that he was planning to cheer them both up, rather than expecting any kind of long-term improvement in their health.[48] As for opium—Tom had been taking it in large amounts at least since the failure of the Pneumatic Institution in 1800, and the similarity between some of his symptoms and those of STC could be explained by this.

The uneasy doubt about the truth of their relationship has to come from Coleridge's financial dependency. Few friendships can survive this sort of inequality. Can a friendship survive a gift of money? In the 18th Century it had been a normal thing for a rich man to take a scholar or an artist into his employment, perhaps as a tutor on the grand tour, and this man, even if he had the genius of Mozart, was treated at best as a superior kind of servant. There was talk of Coleridge accompanying Tom on one of his foreign trips. In one letter he professes his willingness to do so. He says that Tom is to have no hesitation in telling Coleridge what to do. Coleridge 'has always lived among equals' and his dependence need not make either of them uneasy.[49] And there is something about the way he describes himself following Tom round the country on a tour of the Wedgwood great houses, 'a Comet tied to a Comet's tail' as he put it,[50] and expected to display his gifts to these fairly ordinary collections of ladies and gentlemen, which can be seen as demeaning to a towering genius. That might explain his passing irritation with the giggling girl at Cresselly.

And yet the mutual affection and respect shines through. There are many passages in Coleridge's letters where he speaks of Tom with real affection, writing to people he had no reason to flatter. To take one example: he writes to Mrs. Coleridge in November 1802,

> T Wedgwood is gone out Cock shooting in high glee and spirits. He is much better than I expected to have found him, and my really coming so immediately, has sent a new life

[46] STC letter to TW, 14 January 1803.
[47] STC letter to TW, 17 February 1803.
[48] Molly Lefebure, *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: A Bondage to Opium* (London: Gollancz, 1974) 367-8.
[49] STC letter to TW, 3 November 1802.
[50] STC letter to Samuel Purkiss, 1 February 1803.

> into him [. . .]. To me he is a delightful and instructive Companion. He possesses the finest, the subtlest mind and taste, I have ever yet met with [. . .].[51]

A remarkable thing is the way Coleridge seemed to delight in arguing with Tom, even though they had less and less in common in the views they held, or even on the way they chose to argue. We have seen a little of the mechanistic approach which Tom made to the education of a genius. He was accustomed to base his beliefs on laboratory observations, and his conclusions were totally materialist. Neil Vickers has recently concluded that Wedgwood can 'retain the credit for setting the course of Coleridge's itinerary even if, as a result of his efforts, the two men moved ever further away from each other philosophically'.[52] Their substantial differences did nothing to upset their friendship and esteem.

* * *

By January 1804 Tom understood that his life was nearly over and, such was his misery, he was ready enough for death. Apart from his sickness, his chief source of unhappiness was the unfulfilled promise of all he had hoped to achieve. His main consolation was the love and support of his family, and there is abundant evidence that his brothers and sisters, in particular, did love him very much. Coleridge suggested opium, grapes, and a hot climate, but Tom was beyond hope of much solace of this kind, though he certainly took plenty of opium, and did play with the idea of another trip to the West Indies. He holed up in a heated, sound-proof room in his house at Gunville, in Dorset, and there he wasted away, dying at last in July 1805, at the age of 34.

A footnote from *The Friend*, 1809:

> He is gone, my friend! my munificent co-patron, not the less the benefactor of my intellect!-He who, beyond all other men known to me, added a fine and ever-wakeful sence of beauty to the most patient accuracy in experimental Philosophy and the profounder researches of metaphysical science; he who united all the play and spring of fancy with the subtlest discrimination and an inexorable judgement; and who controlled an almost painful exquisiteness of taste by a warmth of heart [. . .] which was indeed noble and pre-eminent, for alas! the genial feelings of health contributed no spark to it [. . .].[53]

Coleridge probably believed that Tom was an atheist, and his conclusion is an all the more poignant expression of their friendship, respect, and fundamental disagreement: 'Were it but for the remembrance of him alone and of his lot here below, the disbelief of a future state would sadden the earth around me, and blight the very grass in the field'.

Blandford, Dorset

[51] STC letter to Mrs. STC, 16 November 1802.
[52] Erdman 431.
[53] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *CC* 4, *The Friend* 118.

The Religious Opinions of Samuel Taylor Coleridge

By PETER MULLEN

THERE HAS ALWAYS BEEN a widespread impression of Samuel Taylor Coleridge as a wayward, erratic genius, inspired yet muddled; someone who talked and talked without ever coming to any clear conclusion. He once said to his friend Charles Lamb, 'I believe that you have heard me preach?' And Lamb replied, 'Why, I never heard you do anything else!'[1] Byron, too, poked fun at him in *Don Juan*:

> And Coleridge too has lately taken wing,
> But like a hawk encumbered with his hood –
> Explaining metaphysics to the nation –
> I wish he would explain his Explanation.[2]

Coleridge himself complained about this treatment, saying that he was constantly misunderstood and misinterpreted: 'Whatever therefore appeared with my name was condemned beforehand as predestined metaphysics'.[3] Even T.S. Eliot joins this chorus of criticism: 'Coleridge was one of those unhappy persons of whom one might say that if they had not been poets they might have made something of their lives, might even have had a career . . .'.[4] Not a bad judgement I suppose—from a foreign exchange dealer who took early retirement.

I think these criticisms are unjust. Coleridge is not muddled, but he is difficult. And he is difficult because his thought is not consecutive, which does not mean that his thought is illogical—only that it is many-layered, as he sees so many aspects of a problem at once. He is, as it were, forever interrupting himself to explain the new thought which has just leapt into his head. He seemed to see ideas as if they were in front of him as physical objects in space. He was pre-eminently what I would describe as an embodied, incarnate thinker and extraordinarily penetrating. In this I would compare him in modern times with the philosopher Wittgenstein, who was similarly difficult and allusive but who was also stamped with the same mark of indubitability.

Coleridge's thought begins with a remarkably well-developed capacity for making crucial distinctions. The difference he draws between 'imagination' and 'fancy' is well-known[5]; but here he is on 'opposites and contraries':

> Permit me to draw your attention to the essential difference between *opposite* and *contrary*. Opposite powers are always of the same kind and tend to union. Thus the plus and minus poles of the magnet, positive and negative electricity, are opposites. Sweet and sour are opposites; sweet and bitter are contraries. The feminine character is *opposed* to the masculine; but the effeminate is its *contrary.*[6]

[1] Leigh Hunt's *London Journal*, 17 October 1835, qtd. by Edmund Blunden in *Charles Lamb: His Life Recorded by his Contemporaries* (London: Macmillan, 1934) 246.
[2] Lord Byron, Don Juan, Canto I (fragment) *Oxford Book of English Verse* (London: Oxford UP, 1975).
[3] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria* (London: Dent, 1908) 329.
[4] T.S. Eliot, *Coleridge, 1933*, reprinted in *Selected Prose* (London: Peregrine, 1963) 162.
[5] Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria* 45, 152-53.
[6] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *On the Constitution of the Church and State* (London: Dent, 1972) 16.

The Social Religion of S.T. Coleridge

So let me start with a distinction of my own, even if it is a rather feeble and artificial one: between Coleridge's social religion and his personal religion. He says that the purpose of the Church of England is to make civilisation cultivated:

> Civilisation is itself but a mixed good, if not far more a corrupting influence, the hectic of disease, not the bloom of health, a nation so distinguished to be called a varnished than a polished people; where this civilisation is not grounded in *cultivation*, in the harmonious development of those qualities and faculties that characterise our *humanity*. We must be men in order to be citizens.[7]

The purpose of life, that is its final cause, what Coleridge calls its *idea*, is that men should '. . . be led by the supernatural in themselves'.[8] He defines this idea as follows:

> By an *idea* I mean that conception of a thing which is not abstracted from any particular state, form or mode in which the thing may happen to exist at this or that time; nor yet generalised from any number or succession of such forms or modes; but which is given by the knowledge of *its ultimate aim*.[9]

Although Coleridge speaks of the need for 'cultivation' as part of the ultimate purpose or *idea* of a man, he is no mere proponent of 'sweetness and light', such as Matthew Arnold; and he is fiercely against the utilitarian calculus of Bentham:

> For it is impossible to conceive a *man* without the idea of God, eternity, freedom, will, absolute truth, of the good, the true, the beautiful, the infinite. An *animal* endowed with a memory of appearances and facts might remain. But the *man* will have vanished, and you have instead a creature more subtile than any beast of the field, but likewise cursed above every beast of the field; upon the belly it must go and dust must it eat all the days of this life. But I recall myself from a train of thought little likely to find favour in this age of sense and selfishness.[10]

This cultivation which we should seek, the very *idea* for which we were created, is mediated through

> . . . the true historical feeling, the mortal life of an historical nation, generation linked to generation by faith, freedom, heraldry and ancestral fame.[11]

But instead this has

> . . . given place to the superstitions of wealth and newspaper reputation . . . talents without genius; a swarm of clever, well-informed men; an anarchy of minds, a despotism of maxims; despotism of finance in government and legislation; guess-work of general consequences substituted for moral and political philosophy . . .

[7] Coleridge, *On the Constitution* 33-34.
[8] Coleridge, *On the Constitution* 35.
[9] Coleridge, *On the Constitution* 4.
[10] Coleridge, *On the Constitution* 36-37.
[11] Coleridge, *On the Constitution* 52.

Whereas what is required is,

> A permanent, nationalised learned order, a national clerisy or church as an essential element of a rightly-constituted nation, without which it wants alike for its permanence and progression; and for which neither tract societies not conventicles, nor Lancastrian schools, nor mechanics' institutions, nor lecture bazaars under the absurd name of universities, nor all those collectively can be a substitute. For they are all marked with the same asterisk of spuriousness, show the same distemper-spot on the front, that they are empirical specifics for morbid *symptoms* that help to feed and continue the disease.[12]

Although Coleridge envisioned his national clerisy as comprising other learned men apart from parsons, he yet saw a clear function for the clergy:

> To every parish throughout the kingdom there is transplanted a germ of civilisation; that in the remotest villages there is a nucleus, around which the capabilities of the place may crystallise and brighten; a model sufficiently superior to excite; yet sufficiently near to encourage and facilitate imitation.[13]

Coleridge had read thoroughly the Anglican divines of the 16th and 17th centuries, especially Hooker and Law, and his model of a parson was a man such as George Herbert:

> The clergyman is with his parishioners and among them; he is neither in the cloistered cell, nor in the wilderness, but a neighbour and a family man whose education and rank admit him to the mansion of the rich landholder, while his duties make him a frequent visitor of the farmhouse and the cottage.[14]

Again Coleridge makes a crucial distinction between what he calls *permanence* – the land – and what is *progressive* – the arts and sciences and the mercantile interests. Both permanence and progression are required in a healthy nation. But, as C.H. Sisson points out,

> Coleridge's distinction goes to the root of the matter. Any political unity worth maintaining, or which is in anyway to be maintained at all, must contain a principle of foresight and continuity which goes beyond the next series of trade figures; and it will be the foresight of care rather than calculation.[15]

It is the parson who has a foot in what is permanent and in what is progressive from which he derives his foresight of care: 'Where Bagehot sees the legitimate pursuits of men entitled to their complacency, Coleridge sees, "the drunken stupor of usurious selfishness; but men ought to be weighed, not counted"'.[16]

[12] Coleridge, *On the Constitution* 52-53.
[13] Coleridge, *On the Constitution* 60.
[14] Coleridge, *On the Constitution* 60.
[15] C.H. Sisson, *The End of Walter Bagehot* in *English Perspectives* (London: Carcanet, 1992) 234.
[16] Sisson 224-25.

For Coleridge, the clergyman is the instrument of both permanence and progression. He loosens up, as it were, the permanence and anchors what is progressive in what abides:

> The revenues of the church are in some sort of reversionary property of every family that may have a member educated for the church, or a daughter that may marry a clergyman. Instead of being foreclosed or immoveable, it is in fact the only species of landed property that is essentially moving and circulated.[17]

Coleridge supported the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829, but he would not allow Roman Catholic priests to be members of the clerisy:

> There are only two absolute disqualifications, and these are: allegiance to a foreign power or the acknowledgement of any other visible Head of the Church but our Sovereign Lord the King; and compulsory celibacy in connection with, and in dependence on, a foreign and extra-national Head.[18]

So speaks a true disciple of the Reformation, of which he adds, 'Christianity itself was at stake; the cause was that of Christ in conflict with Antichrist'.[19] Despite these vehement words, Coleridge denies the charge of anti-Catholicism: 'It is not the Catholic Church as such that I attack, but Popery, built as it is on lies, implanted by the most abominable of despotisms, contrary to Christ's law and his inalienable mandate, and jeopardising the peace and security of every Church and State'.[20] That is to say, Coleridge opposes the identification of the Christian Church with any temporal power: 'The Christian Church, I say, is no state, kingdom or realm of this world; nor is it an estate of any such realm, kingdom or state; but it is the appointed opposite to them all *collectively* – the *sustaining, correcting, befriending* Opposite of the world'.[21]

The Christian Church, he says, is 'The great redemptive process which began in the separation of light from Chaos (Hades or the Indistinction) and has its end in the union of life with God'.[22] One might ask how, since he distinguishes the Christian Church from any temporal realm, he can wax so enthusiastic for the Sovereign as the Head of the Church of England. He answers, 'Because there exists, God be thanked, a Catholic and Apostolic Church *in* England: and I thank God also for the constitutional and ancestral Church *of* England'.[23]

The temporal church, of which the Sovereign is Head, may serve the eternal church, of which Christ is the Head; but the two must be distinguished. So, as John Barrell says, 'Coleridge was anxious to support the granting of Catholic Relief, but only if it were accompanied by securities to protect the institutions which are the subject of his book *Church and State* from any attempt by Rome to establish a political base in England'.[24] He vigorously opposed the idea that the Roman Catholic

[17] Coleridge, *On the Constitution* 60-61.
[18] Coleridge, *On the Constitution* 65.
[19] Coleridge, *On the Constitution* 117.
[20] Coleridge, *On the Constitution* 125.
[21] Coleridge, *On the Constitution* 98.
[22] Coleridge, *On the Constitution* 97.
[23] Coleridge, *On the Constitution* 107.
[24] John Barrell, Introduction, *On the Constitution of the Church and State* by Samuel Taylor Coleridge (London: Dent, 1972).

Church should ever be recognised as an Estate of the Realm: 'By this he meant that the Roman Catholic Clergy should not enjoy any part of the national wealth set apart for the National Church'.[25]

Well, it might be said that 19th century England is a faraway country of which we know little; but the profound issues raised in *On the Constitution of the Church and State* reverberate still. C.H. Sisson says,

> This is a remarkable book and certainly one which every literate Englishman should read. The 'blessed accident' [which is how Coleridge saw Christianity or the Church of Christ in relation to the National Church] has ceased to exist in that relationship. It has no intelligibility. What then is the position of the theological rump in our now lay, secularised clerisy? There are three possibilities. They can stay and fight their corner, struggling for an intelligibility which might come again, and will come, if it is the truth they are concerned with. They can sit on pillars in some recess of the national structure, waiting for better times. Or they can let their taste for having an ecclesiastical club carry them into one or other of those international gangs of opinion – that which has its headquarters in Rome or that which has a shadowy international meeting-place in Canterbury. In any case it will be a *political* choice that is being made. For my part, I shall prefer those who stay and fight their corner, content to be merely the Church in a place.[26]

Church and State was published in 1830. Reading it again in 2002, the mind is startled by what might seem to be a final example of extraordinary prescience:

> That erection of a temporal monarch under the pretence of a spiritual authority, which was not possible in Christendom but by the extinction or entrancement of the spirit of Christianity, and which has therefore been only partially attained by the Papacy – this was effected in full by Mahomet, to the establishment of the most extensive and complete despotism that ever warred against civilisation and the interests of humanity.[27]

Personal Religious Response

Bryan Magee says,

> No philosophy that equates reality with actual or possible experience can be right. Because all the ways in which we can apprehend material objects, whether sensorily or mentally, are directly or indirectly experience-dependent, and therefore subject-dependent, such objects cannot exist independently of us and of our experience *in any of the ways in which we apprehend them*.[28]

In other words, the way things appear in the empirical world, and according to science, cannot be the way things really are in themselves. This conviction is, of course, drawn from Kant. Magee adds, 'The notion of objectivity is of incalculable value in science, and yet it is a metaphysical construct of our minds'.[29]

[25] Rosemary Ashton, *The Life of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996) 387.
[26] C.H. Sisson, *Coleridge Revisited* in *The Avoidance of Literature* (London: Carcanet, 1978) 553.
[27] Coleridge, *On the Constitution* 120.
[28] Bryan Magee, *Confessions of a Philosopher* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1997) 462.
[29] Magee 470.

It follows that '. . . the self is not a possible object of observation or experience, and therefore not a possible object of empirical knowledge'[30] and, 'Human beings do not consist solely of our bodies; in addition to having bodies, we have, or are, selves, and these selves are not empirical objects in the natural world; also that morals and values do not have their existence solely within the natural world'.[31]

Most philosophers who try to deduce the freedom of the will, deduce or infer this freedom from, say, the fact of the existence of God—or some other benign set of governing circumstances. Kant does the opposite: he says, in effect, that because we *know already* that our wills are free, we can claim direct knowledge of the moral law which is the will of God. In 1798, Coleridge visited Germany and it was there he first read Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* which had been published in 1781. Of Kant, Coleridge wrote,

> The writings of the illustrious seer of Konigsberg, the founder of the critical philosophy, more than any other work at once invigorated and disciplined my understanding. The originality, the depth and the compression of his thoughts; the novelty and subtlety, yet solidity and importance of the distinctions; the adamantine chain of the logic; and I will venture to add – paradox as it will appear to those who have taken their notion of Immanuel Kant from reviewers and Frenchmen – the clearness and evidence of the *Critique of Pure Reason*; of the metaphysical elements of natural philosophy; and of his religion within the bounds of pure reason, took possession of me as with the giant's hand.[32]

Coleridge became a Kantian in his opinions as to religious belief and yet, being Coleridge, he shaped his Kantianism according to his own idiosyncratic mould. He wrote in 1825,

> What we cannot imagine, we cannot in the proper sense conceive. Whatever is representable in the forms of time and space is nature. But whatever is included in time and space is included in the mechanism of cause and effect. And conversely, whatever has its principle in itself, so far as to originate its actions [a clear reference to the will] cannot be contemplated in any of the forms of space and time. It must therefore be considered as spirit or spiritual.[33]

Rosemary Ashton says, 'Coleridge's study of Kant in particular, bears fruit in his characterisation of the previous age, the 18th century, as materialist, mechanist, empirical; while the present age, the 19th century, by contrast, is, or ought to be spiritual'.[34] In *Aids to Reflection*, Coleridge's whole tilt was against that materialist, mechanistic, empirical prejudice – what he called 'the mechanico-corpuscular philosophy'[35]—and against William Paley's *Evidences* (1794) in particular. He railed against associationism, empiricism and mechanism when, as in Paley's writings, those methods were used to justify religion: 'How plausible and popular this is to the great majority! They will accept the doctrine for their make-faith. And why? Because it is feeble. And whatever is feeble is always plausible: for it favours mental indolence'.[36]

[30] Magee 472.
[31] Magee 480.
[32] Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria* 76.
[33] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection*, 8th ed., Derwent Coleridge (London: Edward Mason & Co, 1859) 50.
[34] Ashton 363.
[35] Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection* 339.
[36] Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection* 341.

Against Paley, he wrote, 'Evidences? I am weary of evidences. Only rouse a man and make him *feel* the truth of his religion'.[37] But this was no mere subordination of evidence or argument to feelings – and especially not to aesthetic feelings of the kind which George Santayana refers to as 'emotional shocks'.[38] Rather Coleridge is much closer to Pascal's understanding of feelings and 'heart' where Pascal says, 'The heart has its reasons which reason does not know. We feel it in a thousand things'.[39]

Since we know, through the access which our freewill gives us to the moral law, that we are not the authors of our own being, we also know that our minds are, or can become, copies of the mind of God: 'The primary imagination I hold to be the living power and prime agent of all human perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM'.[40] If one might so put it, the mind is a copy of the mind of the Creator; therefore true doctrine reveals our true nature and our nature's relationship with God. In order to achieve knowledge of God and the awareness of God's presence, we need first imagination and then reflective reason: 'The interest aimed at was to consist in the interesting of the affections by the dramatic truth of such emotions as would naturally accompany such situations *supposing them real*'.[41] In describing the occasion of the *Lyrical Ballads*, Coleridge famously says, 'We transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment which constitutes poetic faith'.[42]

I suggest that this method in poetry is the same method Coleridge takes with him in his attempts at religious understanding.

He urges us to reasoned reflection: 'Dwell at home. It is surprising that the greater part of mankind cannot be prevailed upon at least to visit themselves sometimes'.[43] And, he says, 'An hour of solitude passed in sincere and earnest prayer, or the conflict with and conquest over a single passion or a subtle bosom sin, will teach more of thought, will more effectively awaken the faculty and form the habit of reflection than a year's study in the schools without them'.[44]

What keeps us from this real and wholesome reflection which can do us so much good? He replies: 'The most frequent impediment to men's turning their minds inward upon themselves is that they are afraid of what they shall find there. There is an aching hollowness in the bosom, a dark, cold speck at the heart'.[45] But we should take courage and try regularly, '. . . to form the human mind anew after the divine image.'[46]

Reasonable reflection makes us understand that Christian truth is the satisfaction that we intermittently but desperately crave: 'The sense, the inward feeling in the soul of each believer of its exceeding *desirableness*—the experience that he *needs* something, joined with the strong foretokening that the redemption and the graces propounded to us in Christ are *what* he needs—this I hold to be the true foundation of the spiritual edifice'.[47]

[37] Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection* 329.
[38] G. Santayana, *The Life of Reason* (London: Constable, 1954) 317.
[39] B. Pascal, *Pensées*, para 277, trans W.F. Trotter with an introduction by T.S. Eliot (London: Dent, 1931).
[40] Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria* 159.
[41] Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria* 160.
[42] Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria* 161.
[43] Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection* 2.
[44] Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection* 6.
[45] Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection* 11.
[46] Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection* 12.
[47] Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria* 331-32.

He says, 'Christianity is not a theory or a speculation, but a life – not a philosophy of life, but a life and a living process. Try it'.[48] This he spells out:

> It is the experience derived from a practical conformity to the conditions of the gospel – it is the opening eye; the dawning light; the terrors and the promises of spiritual growth; the blessedness of loving God as God; the nascent sense of sin, hated as sin, and of the incapability of attaining to either without Christ; it is the sorrow that still rises up from beneath, and the consolation that meets it from above'.[49]

All these things are discovered indubitably by reasonable reflection. In short, 'Reason and religion are their own evidence'.[50]

I began by comparing Coleridge with Wittgenstein, and we discover that Wittgenstein held remarkably similar views on the nature of religion:

> Christianity is not a doctrine, not, I mean, a theory about what has happened and will happen to the human soul, but a description of something that actually takes place in human life. For 'consciousness of sin' is a real event and so are despair and salvation through faith. Those who speak of such things (Bunyan, for instance) are simply describing what has happened to them, whatever gloss anyone may want to put on it.[51]

Wittgenstein goes on – it could be Coleridge talking:

> The way to solve the problem you see in life is to live in a way that will make what is problematic disappear. The fact that life is problematic shows that the shape of your life does not fit into life's mould. So you must change the way you live and, once your life does fit into the mould, what is problematic will disappear. Don't we have the feeling that someone who sees no problem in life is blind to something important, even to the most important thing of all? Don't I feel like saying that a man like that is just living aimlessly – blindly, like a mole, and that if only he could see, he would see the problem? Or shouldn't I say rather: a man who lives rightly won't experience the problem as *sorrow*, so for him it will not be a problem, but a joy rather; in other words for him, it will be a bright halo round his life, not a dubious background.[52]

Reflection brings with it the sense of our imperfection and our need to be saved from something. The enemy of salvation is the denial of the truth that there is a need for salvation. And there are plenty of people about to tell us that we have no such need—the Pelagians who deny Original Sin, who tell us we are fine as we are:

> All the evil achieved by Hobbes and the whole school of materialists will appear inconsiderable if it be compared with the mischief effected and occasioned by the sentimental

[48] Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection* 155.
[49] Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria* 332.
[50] Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria* 331.
[51] L. Wittgenstein, *Culture & Value*, trans. Peter Winch (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980) 28.
[52] Wittgenstein 27.

> philosophy of Lawrence Sterne. The vilest appetites and the most remorseless inconstancy acquired the titles of 'the heart . . . the irresistible feelings . . . the too tender sensibility'.[53]

Coleridge nowhere claims that religious faith is easily achieved. In fact, he counsels against easiness in believing: 'Never be afraid to doubt. He never truly believed who was not made first sensible and convinced of unbelief'.[54] He adds the caution, 'Everyone is to give a reason for his faith'.[55] And reason is never an abstract explanation, but the means by which we come to see that the human need and the divine supply are always conjoined: the second is the answer to what the first is the question. There is, I think, among all the misinterpretations of Coleridge, one that surpasses them all. It concerns his famous saying, 'He who begins by loving Christianity more than truth, will proceed to love his own sect or church more than Christianity, and end by loving himself more than all'.[56]

This is often taken to mean that there is some objective standard of truth by which Christianity can be judged true or false, as it were, *academically*. But this thought is far from Coleridge's mind: what he urges the reader to do, by reflection, reason and imaginative meditation, is to persevere until he sees that Christianity and truth are the same thing. And this same thing is not *theoretical*: it is the deepest we can get.

It is not achieved overnight. Coleridge urges us to go easy on ourselves, not to expect too much too soon. He says, 'Translate the theological terms into their moral equivalents, saying, "This may not be all that is meant, but this *is* meant, and it is that portion of the meaning which belongs to me in this present state of my progress". For example, render the words, "sanctification of the Spirit" by "purity in life and action from a pure principle"'.[57]

Nevertheless, 'Conscience is the ground and antecedent of consciousness'.[58] And it is reasonable reflection which awakes our conscience and stimulates us into spiritual awareness. We must not expect ourselves to be better than we are. As we are commanded to have mercy on our neighbour, so we should deal mercifully with ourself: 'Art thou under the tyranny of sin – a slave to vicious habits – at enmity with God, and a skulking fugitive from thine own conscience? The best and most Christian-like pity thou canst show is to take pity on thine own soul. The best and most acceptable service thou canst render is to do justice and show mercy to thyself'.[59]

For love is indivisible.

All these deepest things can be apprehended by reason. As Claude Welch says of Coleridge's high understanding of reason and faith, 'Faith must be a reasoning faith, but reason must be understood more deeply than either by rationalism or the religion of the heart. There *are* mysteries in Christianity, but these are reason in its highest form of self-affirmation'.[60]

Welch underlines this truth in a brief description of what religion means to Coleridge: 'His own sense of the quality and character of personal religion is one in which prayer and the struggle of sin

[53] Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection* 27.
[54] Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection* 75.
[55] Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection* 108.
[56] Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection* 317.
[57] Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection* 55.
[58] Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection* 91.
[59] Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection* 38.
[60] Claude Welch, *Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, Vol lI, *Nineteenth Century Religious Thought in the West*, ed. Ninian Smart et al. (Cambridge UP, 1985) 3.

and redemption were at the centre. For Coleridge, in contrast to Hegel, "Let us pray" represented a higher form of activity than, "Let us think about God"'.[61]

Finally Coleridge the poet is at one with the theologian as revealed in a magnificent passage such as the following:

> If you have had too good reason to know that your heart is deceitful and your strength weakness: if you are disposed to exclaim with St Paul – the law indeed is holy, just, good, spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin: for that which I do, I allow not, and what I would, I do not. In this case there is a Voice that says, 'Come unto ME, and I will give you rest'.[62]

Or this:

> Linger not in the justice court, listening to thy indictment. Loiter not in waiting to hear the sentence. No, anticipate the verdict. Appeal to Caesar. Haste to the King for a pardon. Struggle thitherward, though in fetters; and cry aloud and collect the whole remaining strength of thy will in thy outcry, 'Lord, I believe. Help thou mine unbelief!' Disclaim all right of property in thy fetters. Say that they belong to the old man, and that thou dost but carry them to the grave to be buried with their owner! Fix thy thought on what Christ did, what Christ *is* – as if thou wouldst fill the hollowness of thy soul with Christ. If he emptied himself of glory to become sin for thy salvation, must not thou be emptied of thy sinful self to become righteousness in and through his agony and the effective merits of his Cross?[63]

Or this from the conclusion of *Biographia Literaria:*

> I have earnestly endeavoured to kindle young minds, and to guard them against the temptations of scorners, by showing that the scheme of Christianity as taught in the liturgy and homilies of our church, though not discoverable by human reason, is yet in accordance with it: that link follows link by necessary consequence; that religion passes out of the ken of reason only where the eye of reason has reached its own horizon; and that faith is then but its continuation: even as the day softens away into the sweet twilight, and twilight, hushed and breathless, steals into the darkness. It is night, sacred night!' [this is beginning to sound like Bruckner!] 'The upraised eye views only the starry heaven which manifests itself alone: and the outward beholding is fixed on the sparks twinkling in the awful depth, though suns of other worlds, only to preserve the soul steady and collected in its pure act of inward adoration to the great I AM, and to the filial WORD that re-affirmeth it from eternity to eternity, whose choral echo is the universe. [64]

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, as Charles Lamb affectionately recalled him, 'An archangel, a little damaged'.[65]

[61] Welch 5.
[62] Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection* 153.
[63] Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection* 255-256.
[64] Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria* 334.
[65] Charles Lamb, *Letter to Wordsworth, 1816*, qtd. in *Companion to Charles Lamb* by Claude A. Prance (London: Mansell, 1983).

Yasuhiko Ozawa: A Japanese Elian

By DUNCAN WU

I NEVER MET YASUHIKO OZAWA, but sometimes feel as if I had. I was fortunate to enjoy a brief and lively correspondence with him after taking over editorship of this *Bulletin* in 1994, shortly after the death of the much-missed Bill Ruddick. Towards the end of that year, Professor Ozawa wrote to me out of the blue from Shizuoka University in Japan, requesting one of the rarer back numbers of the *Bulletin*. As it was out of print, I photocopied my own and sent it to him.

I expected to hear no more, but not long afterwards received a letter of thanks which in true Elian spirit went on to outline Professor Ozawa's lifelong love of Lamb's writing, and to describe the work he was undertaking. In the finest traditions of modern scholarship, he was compiling a thorough critical bibliography which he planned to publish in a collection of his Elian essays, forthcoming from a publishing house in Tokyo.

The resulting volume, *Charles Lamb: A Study from the Viewpoint of the History of his Criticism*, published in 1997 by Shinozaki-Shorin in Tokyo, is a monument to a lifelong passion for Lamb's work, and it is still too little known. To the best of my knowledge, no one else has compiled such a detailed and thorough account of critical analysis on Elia. The bibliography with which it concludes runs right up to 1995, making it the most up-to-date compilation of its kind presently available.

The bulk of the volume, it should be said at once, is in Japanese, but much of the bibliography is in English. I have found it an invaluable companion in my own work, and cannot recommend it too highly. At my request, Professor Shizuoka lodged a copy in the Charles Lamb Society collection at the Guildhall Library in London, along with copies of two articles he published in Japanese journals containing additional instalments of his bibliography. They are safely retained at the Guildhall Library for anyone who needs to consult them.

It was not until a chance encounter with Professor Ichiro Koguchi, now of Osaka University, at the Wordsworth Summer Conference in 1999, that I heard of Professor Ozawa's sad death earlier that year. The work he has left behind stands as a moving tribute to his love of Lamb, and it occurred to me that Professor Koguchi might wish to write something about his former colleague for those of us who would like to know more of his Elian labours. We are grateful to him for doing so in the following article.

Professor Yasuhiko Ozawa: Life and Achievement

(Based on the documents supplied by Professor Megumi Uchida of Shizuoka University)

By ICHIRO KOGUCHI

Life: Professor Yasuhiko Ozawa was born in Utsunomiya, Japan, in 1934. During his young days he mostly lived in Shizuoka, a coastal town with beautiful greenery, to which he became dearly attached as his true home. He read English as an undergraduate at Nagoya University, where he also

Professor Yasuhiko Ozawa: Life and Achievement

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Life: Professor Yasuhiko Ozawa was born in Utsunomiya, Japan in 1934. During his young days he mostly lived in Shizuoka, a coastal town with beautiful greenery, to which he became dearly attached as his true home. He read English as undergraduate at Nagoya University, where he also conducted his postgraduate research on Charles Lamb and received his master's degree for his thesis The Material and Spiritual World in Essays of Elia in 1960.

After working for Shinshu University and Aichi Prefectural University, in 1967 he returned to his hometown to teach English literature at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Shizuoka University. Except for a year-long leave from 1969 to 1970 at Cambridge and Harvard, he spent the rest of his academic life there until his retirement in 1997. Following the promotion to Professor of English in 1976, he assumed various senior positions at the university. In the 1980s he served the office of university councilor for six years; he was then elected faculty dean for 1989-1991. He was also the Director of Shizuoka University Library from 1993 to 1995. He was deservedly awarded the title of professor emeritus in 1997 from Shizuoka University for his exceptional contribution in teaching, research and administration.

Outside university Professor Ozawa was also an important figure. He was a long-standing member of the English Literary Society of Japan, Japan Association for English Romanticism, Central Japan English Society, Society of English Literature and Linguistics, Nagoya University and the Charles Lamb Society in London. His presence in the central Japan area was especially prominent as known from the fact that he managed the Central Japan English Society as a board member and was on the editorial board of Central Japan English Studies, both for an extended period of time. The professor was active in international exchanges in Shizuoka as a leading member of the Japan-Britain Society. That he edited part of *Official History of Shizuoka Prefecture* shows the remarkable range of his academic expertise as well as his love of Shizuoka, his home.

Professor Yasuhiko Ozawa was sadly deceased in 1999.

Academic achievement: Professor Ozawa's academic interest was centred on Charles Lamb and literary criticism. He published twenty critical articles, five substantial bibliographies related to Charles Lamb studies and numerous short pieces on English and Japanese literature; some of them are collected in his book, Charles Lamb: A Study from the Viewpoint of the History of His Criticism, the most substantial study on Lamb ever published in Japan.

From the start of his academic career, the professor tried a variety of approaches to define the essence of Lamb's literary achievement. While meticulously well-informed and rigourous, his reading is perceptive and characterized by deep sympathy with Charles Lamb the writer. In '"I love a Fool": Lamb's Long-Cherished Hope' and other articles the professor explicates Lamb's outlook on human life through close reading of his texts. 'The Making of "Dream-Children; A Reverie"' examines the chronological process of writing this Elia essay in great detail to reconstruct Lamb's internal experience during the composition. 'The Uses of "Confess" in the Elia Essays' reveals Lamb's effort to establish

his own style of literary essay through semantic analysis of the usage of this key word. The professor also writes on Lamb's reception of Sir Thomas Browne in comparison with Coleridge's attitude towards this Renaissance essayist.

Behind this extended scope of interests was Professor Ozawa's deep awareness of critical methodology and the history of criticism. His early article, 'Two Phases of Lamb Criticism', is an attempt to trace in Arnold Bennet and E. M. Forster two contrasting attitudes of reading Lamb. In '"The New Criticism" of the Elia Essays' he pioneered in introducing to Japan the analytical methodology of modern Lamb criticism. The professor then proceeded to write extensively about literary criticism and the critical reception of Charles Lamb both in Lamb's time and in the modern era. The five-part series published in 1991-96, 'The Contemporary Criticism of Charles Lamb', can be named the pinnacle of his scholarly achievement.

The professor's commitment to criticism led to another of his major academic projects, compilation of critical bibliographies. After publishing his first bibliography of Lamb criticism in 1973, he continued to work on the academic articles and books on Lamb and translations published in Japan since the beginning of the writer's reception in the country in the late nineteenth century. This effort came to fruition in the two comprehensive bibliographies in 1980 and 1984 collecting 224 publications and in the elaborated analytical commentary published in Approaching British Romanticism in 1988. At the same time Professor Ozawa was undertaking a still more comprehensive bibliographical project of collecting criticisms on Lamb in British and American periodicals in the last two centuries. This was published again in the form of two bibliographies in 1994 and 1995, together collecting 656 titles. These bibliographies were commended by the April 1995 issue of The Charles Lamb Bulletin as 'one of the most important scholarly publications in the field of Elian studies this year' and 'a standard reference for years to come'.

While his academic work is marked by scholarly rigour, Professor Ozawa was always a sympathetic reader of Charles Lamb. More than anything, he was keen to share the pleasure of appreciating this author's writings. His painstaking work, especially his comprehensive research on Lamb's critical reception, will smooth the path of appreciating and understanding this Romantic essayist for new generations of readers and scholars.

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Reviews

ROY PORTER. *Madness: A Brief History*. Oxford UP, 2002. Pp. 233, illustrations. ISBN 0-19-280266-6 hardback. £11.99 cloth.

JULIA SWINDELLS. *Glorious Causes: the Grand Theatre of Political Change, 1789 – 1833*. Oxford UP, 2001. Pp. 202, illustrations. ISBN 0-19-818729-7. £40 cloth.

BEFORE I LOOKED INTO THE LATE lamented Roy Porter's valuable survey I had only a sketchiest notion of what may have befallen Mary Lamb had her brother eventually decided to forego a family life to care for her. At the time of her temporary incarceration in the Islington madhouse there were around fifty licensed private asylums in Britain, only a handful of which could be said to have been run as compassionately as the one chosen by Lamb. The most feared, not least by Mary herself, was of course 'Bedlam', but at this time, there were a number of equally monolithic institutions springing up around the edges of London to house the shell-shocked casualties of the war with Napoleon. Madness was very much a 'business' in which the inadequately qualified physician as well as the grossly unqualified amateur could make a great deal of money. Nathaniel Cotton's tiny asylum at St Albans, where William Cowper stayed contentedly for eighteen months, housed no more that half a dozen patients at five guineas a week. Then there was Ticehurst House in Sussex, where residents might live in private houses on the estate, perhaps with a servant. However, the vast public mental hospitals, like Friern Barnet and Colney Hatch, did not come about until after an act of Parliament of 1845 stipulated that public funds be used for the provision of asylums. And yet by 1850 more than half the insane were still in private institutions. Nor, despite the fact that so many establishment were run by physicians was there any mandatory medical provision until the 1820s. Even if he could have afforded the expense, which he could not, Lamb would have thought deeply before abandoning Mary to the care of even the kindliest of madhouse keepers. We know the choice he made in 1799, but under pressure from his brother John, who urged him to consider his own future, the final decision couldn't have been any easy one to make.

The sort of care and consideration expended on the privileged insane was seen as essential to the healing process. Moreover, such an approach enabled one particular proto-psychiatrist, William Battie, to develop a radical new theory of madness. This was the notion that insanity was not something one was born with—like 'original sin'—and thus incurable—but was the result of events in one's life, and therefore treatable. But while in England such enlightenment came with a price tag, across the Channel the Revolution fostered an egalitarian attitude towards mental health care. In Paris the physician Pinel recommended removing the manacles from the lunatics of the Salpetriere and Bicetere asylums. In London Bedlam's Thomas Monro declared to a Commons Commission in 1815 that while to a pauper the use of manacles was bearable, 'a gentleman . . . would not like it'. William Blake was, of course, a pauper by the standards of Monro. One shudders to think how this patron of Turner might have treated the visionary had he mentioned seeing the ghost of a flea. They manage these things better in France, evidently. Thanks to the Revolution and to Pinel and others, public asylums were established in each department seven years before the United Kingdom made similar provisions. And in the United States a number of asylums combining private and charity provisions on the Pinel model were built in the years immediately following the end of hostilities.

The social history of madness in the age of Reason seems to interest Porter much more, perhaps, than the developments in psychiatry that followed the recognition of a 'mad' type in the late 19th century. Consequently, we are given a rather breathless tour through the history of psychiatry (it is, after all, a 'brief' history). During this part of the book what we most notice is the singular absence of British figures in these pioneering years. Note the names—Lombroso, Charcot, Freud, Adler, Jung; it is only until we get to Freud's interpreter, Ernest Jones, in the early twentieth century and later, Donald Winnicott, that major figures emerge. Porter attributes this singular lack of interest in the study of the psyche to a British 'phlegm'—what he calls a suspicion of navel gazing. This depressing tendency, which is as prevalent today as it was then, part has given us British the stiff upper lip we are so proud of, a distrust of 'intellectuals', the conviction that boarding schools taught character and bred 'moral fibre', and the idea that children should be seen and not heard. Worst of all, as we have seen, it has justified the bourgeois hypocrisy which has made us capable of defending the incarceration of an insane relative for the sake of 'appearances'. Perhaps the fact that Lamb eschewed this particular option says a lot for his humanity.

Lamb makes a fleeting appearance in Julia Swindells' study of the 'political character of theatricality and the theatrical character of politics' between 1789 and 1832, as do Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Clare, Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt. But Ms Swindells is less concerned with the theatre that Hunt or Hazlitt reviewed, and more with the work of contemporary playwrights like Thomas Morton, which tackled the iniquities of slavery, W.T. Moncrieff, who openly urged political and theatrical reform, and the proto-feminists Elizabeth Inchbald and Joanna Baillie. Ms Swindells also considers the ways in which political activists like Thomas Hardy of the London Corresponding Society used theatrical language to dramatise their role as victims of persecution. She argues that in an era of radical debate, playwrights interested in social progress saw the stage as a natural 'theatre' in which topical debate could be aired in a way that evaded the government censure that stymied the more openly critical radicals. She also emphasises the role of melodrama, which was brought to England from France by Hazlitt's mentor, Thomas Holcroft, as a vehicle in which issues affecting the common people rather than the middle and upper classes, could be played out before an audience of the same class. Ms Swindells is convincing in the weight she gives to drama hitherto neglected as 'minor'. There can surely be no doubt that the very naturalism of this popular art form had a strongly radical effect on already radicalised theatregoers and helped create a climate in which political change could be achieved.

I feel, however, that the book could have extended its scope to explore the ways in which orators like Eliza Sharples, the Rev Robert Taylor, and others exploited theatricality in the service of radical reform. I was also disappointed, given the quasi-political dimensions that Gary Dyer has revealed, not to find at least a mention of 'Mr H'; moreover, the omission of any reference to Cobbett's anti-Malthusian play 'Surplus Population', is a fault. But all the same this is a valuable study of a neglected area. R.M. Healey

The Annual General Meeting of the Alliance of Literary Societies

By R. M. HEALEY

IT BEING NEARLY FIFTY YEARS since Dylan Thomas downed his very last bourbon in a New York hotel it was decided to hold the ALS AGM in his home town of Swansea—at the well appointed Dylan Thomas Centre.

Despite the scarcity of hotels, the reputation of South Wales as one of the wettest places on Earth, and the distance from London, which had daunted the man sent by the *Independent* to cover the event, attendance was pretty good. Your delegate was particularly pleased to see the Friends of Coleridge represented.

The meeting opened with a most succinct and well balanced summary of Thomas's brief career by Mr James Davies, an authority on the poet. This was followed by the AGM, which somehow managed to be one of the least eventful since the Alliance was established on a permanent footing in 1989. The executive and committee were reappointed en bloc. It was unanimously decided to replace the inert Miss Susan Hill as President with someone more committed to the Alliance. It turned out that both Michael Holroyd and his wife Margaret Drabble had already been approached but had declined the honour. Eventually, the task of choosing a successor was delegated to the committee. It was revealed that finances were sufficient to ensure that no increase in the subscription was necessary; in fact, membership of the Alliance had grown to 106, with the Samuel Pepys Society and the Fanny Burney Society being re-admitted. The Secretary stressed the central importance to the Alliance of the regular bulletins it issued and the frequently updated website. The editor of *The Open Book*, the Alliance's annual journal, was concerned that she had received little or no 'creative' contributions, a concern that was *not* shared by your delegate. The Publicity Officer, who just happened to *be* your delegate, announced that he had sneaked in a short item on literary societies into the Oxford World Classics Magazine, which reaches a quarter of a million people worldwide, and had also managed to interest the editor of Book and Magazine Collector in the possibility of regular features on selected societies. But on broaching the subject of his most ambitious project—a National Parody Contest to be administered by the Alliance with sponsorship by a national newspaper—he did anticipate opposition that never actually materialised. In fact, after completing his presentation he was approached by several delegates with words of support.

After lunch most delegates, undeterred by the rain, which had arrived on cue, boarded coaches for an excursion to Laugharne, where the programme included visits to Thomas's Boathouse, watering holes and grave; later the coach party would view his birthplace in Swansea. The following day, for those who had not by this time surfeited on anecdotes concerning the 'Bard of Cwmdonkin Drive' a coach took sightseers to Rhosili. However, your delegate, who had spent his entire teenage years in Swansea, went nowhere.

The next AGM will be (*Independent* reporter please note) much closer to London—at Berkhamsted School, alma mater of Graham Greene, a cousin of the eminent poet and critic Geoffrey Grigson.