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Editorial

AT A TIME when women Romantics are being rediscovered it must be a matter for dismay that Mary Lamb remains even less widely studied than her brother; this issue of the *Bulletin* attempts to redress the balance. Mary Balle's lecture to the Society earlier this year was distinguished for having been conceived by someone experienced in dealing with mental illness. It stimulated much discussion when delivered to the Society and will, I hope, provoke further research into the subject; we still know too little about Mary Lamb's condition and the circumstances of her treatment. Meaghan Hanrahan Dobson's essay is also, implicitly, concerned with psychological matters, but it addresses them through *Mrs Leicester's School* - an intriguing work, recently made available once more by Woodstock Books (to be reviewed in the next *Bulletin*). The Wordsworths were always admirers of Mary Lamb, and it seemed appropriate, alongside two works on her, to include Raymond Powell's discussion of the biblical texts that underlie *Tintern Abbey*. This valuable contribution to the study of theological influences in Romantic poetry will, we hope, stimulate further work in this important area.

The Secretary of the Society asks me to mention, once more, the Charles Lamb birthday luncheon, which takes place on 17 February at the Royal College of General Practitioners, 14 Prince's Gate, Kensington, London SW7. Our guest of honour on that occasion will be Professor J. R. Watson of the University of Durham. He will be known to members through many articles and published volumes - among them, Macmillan's excellent *Handbook to Romanticism*, to which my predecessors Bill Ruddick and Mary Wedd contributed, and which is now flourishing in paperback.

Mary Lamb: Her Mental Health Issues

By MARY BLANCHARD BALLE

A lecture delivered to the Charles Lamb Society, 14 January 1995

IN 1988 I FINISHED my graduate studies at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School and came to London to do a year's postgraduate training in family therapy. That year we lived in Islington, just off St Peter Street, as once did Mary and Charles Lamb. Often, on my way to and from the underground, I walked past their Colebrooke Row house. I knew little about them beyond the fact that they had collaborated on *Tales from Shakespeare*. My graduate degree is in rehabilitation counselling, and my speciality within the field is catastrophic illness and accident and diseases from which one will not recover. Imagine my surprise when, upon learning something of Mary Lamb's life, I realized that she would be, if she had lived today, a perfect candidate for rehabilitation therapy with a high likelihood of recovery. Not only was Mary a rehabilitation counsellor's dream client, but her family followed the behaviour generally expected for family members of patients suffering from catastrophic illness. As a rule, families either cohere around the afflicted family member, as Charles Lamb did, or flee all responsibility, as did the junior John Lamb.

What I would like to do today is to give you some idea of Mary Lamb's personality. Then I will review the events leading up to the tragedy of 22 September 1796, as well as the tragedy itself. I hope to give you a clear idea of what Mary's behaviour would have been during these periodic bipolar attacks, and how she was probably treated in the asylum to which she was committed.

Most of us are aware that, by all accounts, Mary Lamb's early childhood was not happy. She was an unattractive, timid, unselfconfident child, forced by circumstances to live a solitary existence. It is my contention that she was not reared in London by her parents but probably spent her formative years, from age four until ten, in Hertfordshire with her grandmother. I believe that a number of Mary's unfortunate childhood experiences are mirrored in her contribitions to *Mrs Leicester's School*. As a child she felt abandoned, unsupported, ignored, and angry with her situation. Her relationship with her mother was strained at the best of times. Charles recounted to Coleridge: 'Poor Mary, my mother indeed never understood her right. She loved her . . . but in opinion, in feeling, & sentiment, & disposition, bore so distant a resemblance to her daughter, that she never understood her right. Never could believe how much she loved her - but met her careeses, her protestations of filial affection, too frequently with coldness & repulse'.[1] Mary's basic personality (that is, the particular constellation of attributes that defines one's individuality) was probably set by the time she reached adolescence. By then, her characteristic style of thinking and behaving, under normal circumstances, was well-established and did not appreciably change over the course of her life. From contemporary accounts we can glean some idea of both her appearance and her personality. Cowden Clarke recalled;

> Miss Lamb bore a strong resemblance to her brother, being in stature under middle height, possessing well-cut features, and a countenance of singular sweetness, with intelligence. Her brown eyes were soft, yet penetrating, her nose and mouth very

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[1] *The Letters of Charles and Mary Anne Lamb* ed. Edwin W. Marrs Jr. (3 vols., Ithaca, NY, 1975-8) (hereafter Marrs), i. 52.

> shapely; while the general expression was mildness itself. She had a speaking-voice, gentle and persuasive; and her smile was her brother's own - winning in the extreme. There was a certain catch, or emotional breathingness in her utterance, which gave an inexpressible charm to her reading of poetry, and which lent a captivating earnestness to her mode of speech when addressing those she liked. The slight check, with its yearning, eager effect in her voice had something softenedly akin to her brother Charles's impediment of articulation: in him it scarcely amounted to a stammer: in her it merely imparted additional stress to the fine sensed suggestions she made to those whom she counselled or consoled. She had a mind at once noble-toned and practical, making her ever a chosen source of confidence among her friends, who turned to her for consolation, confirmation and advice in matters of nicest moment, always secure of deriving from her both aid and advice. Her manner was easy, almost homely, so quiet, unaffected, and perfectly understanding was it. Beneath the sparing talk and retired carriage, few casual observers would have suspected the ample information and large intelligence that lay comprised there. She was oftener a listener than a speaker. In the modest-havioured woman simply sitting there, taking small share in the general conversation, few who did not know her would have imagined the accomplished classical scholar, the excellent understanding, the altogether rarely-gifted being, morally and mentally, that Mary Lamb was. Her apparel was always of the plainest kind: a black stuff or silk gown, made and worn in the simplest fashion. She took snuff liberally - a habit that had evidently grown out of her propensity to sympathize with and share all her brother's tastes; and it certainly had the effect of enhancing her likeness to him. She had a small, white, and delicately formed hand; and as it hovered above the tortoise-shell box containing the powder so strongly approved by them both, in search of the stimulating pinch, the act seemed yet another link of association between brother and sister, when hanging together over their favourite books and studies.[2]

Thomas Noon Talfourd remembered Mary:

> In all its essential sweetness, her character was like her brother's; while by a temper more placid, a spirit of enjoyment more serene, she was enabled to guide, to counsel, to cheer him, and to protect him on the verge of the mysterious calamity, from the depths of which she rose so often unruffled to his side. To a friend in any difficulty she was the most comfortable of advisers, the wisest of consolers. Hazlitt used to say, that he never met with a woman who could reason, and had met with only one thoroughly reasonable - the sole exception being Mary Lamb. She did not wish, however, to be made an exception, to a general disparagement of her sex; for in all her thoughts and feelings she was most womanly - keeping, under even undue subordination, to her notion of a woman's province, intellect of rare excellence, which flashed out when the restraints of gentle habit and humble manner were withdrawn by the terrible force of disease. Though her conversation in sanity was never marked by smartness or repartee, seldom rising beyond that of a sensible quiet gentlewoman appreciating and enjoying the talents of her friends, it was otherwise in her madness.[3]

An American visitor, Mary Balmanno, who met Mary Lamb at a party given by the Hoods recalled:

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[2] W. D. Howe, *Charles Lamb and His Friends* (Indianapolis, 1944), pp. 48-9.

[3] *Final Memorials of Charles Lamb* (New York, 1859) (hereafter Talfourd), pp. 321-2.

> Miss Lamb although many years older than her brother, by no means looked so. . . . Dressed with Quaker-like simplicity in dove-coloured silk, with a transparent kerchief of snow-white muslin folded across her bosom, she at once prepossessed the beholder in her favour, by an aspect of serenity and peace. Her manners were very quiet and gentle, and her voice low. She smiled frequently, but seldom laughed, partaking of the courtesies and hospitalities of her merry host and hostess with all the cheerfulness and grace of a most mild and kindly nature.[4]

From these descriptions and other records, a detailed picture of Mary emerges. She was short with dark brown hair which she wore long but kept pinned up and confined beneath a lace cap. She wore her years well and in middle age tended to be plump. Her facial features greatly resembled those of her brother and were of the type that look better on a man than a woman. Her jaw was square, the nose prominent, the forehead broad, the brows dark like her hair. Her eyes were probably hazel and took on the colour of her clothing or surroundings, which would account for the differences in reported eye-colour. Since her clothing was old-fashioned, the dresses always long-sleeved and high-necked, Mary seemed to have dressed for comfort rather than style. She strove to blend in as part of the background, to never stand out, to be anonymous. And in her personal appearance she certainly succeeded.

In personality as in dress, Mary sought to be inconspicuous. She was neither dominating nor authoritative. Her concern for her friends and her ability to identify with their problems and sorrows was mirrored in her empathy and sympathy for them. These loving attributes were the hallmark of Mary's relationship with others. Possessed of a strongly internalized prohibition against self-assertion, Mary appeared calm, quiet, retiring and self-effacing. From a close reading of her correspondence, one can deduce that, as Aaron succinctly puts it, Mary's mind was 'under such severe self-restraint that it could allow itself very little freedom, particularly when it came to expressing the merest hint of criticism or what she interpreted as criticism'.[5] Further, Mary felt a great need to constrain her impulses, her actions and her reactions, lest they in some way led to unacceptable behaviour. This in turn led to a generalized repression of self. Though widely condemned in today's modern western society this type of repression was viewed by many in the Lamb's time as 'fit and proper' behaviour for genteel ladies. Gifted with a bright, quick mind, Mary went to some lengths to conceal her vast intellectual abilities. Because of her need not to be the centre of attention, she exhibited her considerable mental prowess only among those she knew well and trusted.

Some note should be taken of Mary's obvious awareness of, and, perhaps, at times, even preoccupation with, social status. Because both her mother and her maternal grandmother had placed such great value and emphasis on social class, Mary was acutely cognisant of her own social position. As employees of Samuel Salt, the elder Lambs would have been characterized in the British class system of the time as upper-class servants, though their situation was unique, and in many ways they had risen above that classification. There is little doubt that at least Elizabeth Lamb harboured some pretensions to higher social standing which she passed on to her daughter, if not her son. The persona which Mary presented to the world and her social behaviour with friends and acquaintances was to some extent dictated by her aspirations to gentility, her desire to be perceived as infinitely respectable, and her determination always to appear sane and rational. In her doctoral dissertation, *Mary Lamb: Sister, Seamstress, Murderer, Writer*, L. J. Friedman writes that 'Mary and Charles did not leave their parents' class through money, but artistic achievements worked for them instead, giving them an elevated and special status that merely an improved income could never provide. Mary never fully realized this, even though her happiest days were those Wednesday evenings entertaining others who had achieved their status through their talents'.[6]

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[4] Edmund Blunden, *Charles Lamb: His Life Recorded by His Contemporaries* (London, 1934), p. 156.

[5] Jane Aaron, *A Double Singleness: Gender and the Writings of Charles and Mary Lamb* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 109-10.

Now let us turn our attention to the year 1796. If you will recall, Samuel Salt had died on 27 July 1792, and, four days later, Mary Burton Field, Mary's maternal grandmother, had died. By 13 November 1792 Salt's property had been sold, and the Lambs were forced to move.[7] Eventually they moved to 7 Little Queen Street. One can only speculate as to who found this humble abode for them or if this was the first place to which they moved after leaving the Temple. Certainly, Little Queen Street, which ran south from High Holborn and in modern times has been merged into Kingsway, was not in the 'better' part of London. The surrounding area was home to a formidable criminal colony, comprised of the worst of the lawless elements. In nearby Clara Market there existed one of the most wildly decadent and depraved red-light districts anywhere in Europe.[8] Little Queen Street was not a quiet and genteel neighbourhood.

The move from the Temple was particularly hard on Mary. Because her parents had lost their protector, and the focus of their daily lives, they began to deteriorate dramatically. Some time before, John Lamb had suffered a stroke which affected his left hand, making it impossible to him to continue his duties in the Inner Temple dining-hall. Besides his physical infirmities, John was also fast sinking into senility. Although Elizabeth Lamb's mental health remained good, she had developed what I believe was arthritis, which caused her excruciating pain and rendered her unable to move without assistance. Fearful for the future, her movements restricted, in constant pain and extremely conscious of her reduced circumstances, Elizabeth probably became petulant and tended to vent her frustration on the only person always available, Mary. The full care and most of the financial support for these two helpless parents fell almost entirely on her.

To provide an income, Mary, who had been trained as a seamstress, continued plying her mantua-maker trade from home. In order to obtain some badly-needed help with the sewing, she took on a young apprentice, probably a girl from the poorhouse of the local parish, whose parents were only too happy to see their daughter go into a situation where she would have a roof over her head, food to eat, and, hopefully, survive, with the means of earning a living. But acquiring an apprentice also meant further crowding in the close quarters inhabited by the Lambs. Aunt Hetty, John Lamb's sister, also lived with the family but provided no appreciable help to the household other than a small monetary contribution. During this period, Charles does not seem to have shouldered any discernible share of the work or responsibility at home. He was in love, busy with settling into the routine of the East India House, seeing his friends after a hard day's work, and may therefore have been slow to appreciate the extent of the burden placed squarely on Mary's shoulders.

In December 1794 Mary became ill with what I believe to be her first manic episode, probably accompanied by some form of physical breakdown. The stress, anxiety, and constant tension of the family's situation finally got to her. She probably became extremely agitated, but it was of short duration and not accompanied by lunatic-like ravings because there was never any suggestion that she was out of control, or that she should be committed to a madhouse. Her illness caused some ripple of concern within the family but was soon forgotten, and life resumed as if it had never happened. By Christmas 1795 Charles Lamb was experiencing his own mental health crisis. The press of work at the East India House was extreme; he had lost the presence, and thus the support, of his friend Coleridge, and his great romantic love was fast receeding from his life. He became violent and delusional. Charles suffered what was almost certainly an attack of mania, for which he was committed to the madhouse at Hoxton.

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[6] *Mary Lamb: Sister, Seamstress, Murderer, Writer* (2 vols., Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1976), ii. 480.

[7] *A Calendar of the Inner Temple Record* ed. R. A. Roberts, Vol. 25 (London, 1751).

[8] William Connor Sydney, *England and the English in the Eighteenth Century* (2 vols., New York, 1892), ii. 27.

The emotional burden carried by Mary throughout Charles' illness must have been horrendous. She had, no doubt, watched his slow deterioration and now her beloved brother had become a virtual stranger. The decision to commit Charles was almost certainly made by his mother, perhaps after consultation with the younger John Lamb, but since Mary was the only able-bodied adult in the household, she could not help but be involved in the actual commitment process. For Mary, the realization that her brother had succumbed to lunacy and needed to be confined to an asylum would have been terrifying. Charles spent six weeks in the asylum, was released, and returned to the East India House, apparently none the worse for his confinement. And again the household settled into its usual routine. But the pressure was building.

In May the younger John Lamb sustained a serious leg injury when he was struck by a large stone. Although he had not lived with the family for some years, he had maintained some contact, so that when he became injured he could call upon them for help. The care and responsibility again fell to Mary, further draining her energy and straining the family's slender resources. John's leg, which had been crushed, was slow to heal. At one point there was some fear that he might lose it. Through the summer Mary ran between the two households nursing her brother, caring for her parents, and trying to keep up the sewing for her clients.

By September Mary must have been exhausted both mentally and physically. Early in the week of 19 September, she began to exhibit some of the symptoms usually associated with the onset of one of her emotional attacks. But the family, who had witnessed these attacks in the past, was not unduly anxious. They had seen her in this condition before. She was harmless and in due course would recover. By the evening of Wednesday, 21 September, the situation had become a bit more difficult and it was decided that the next morning on his way to work, Charles would call at the home of Dr David Pitcairn to seek his counsel. Unfortunately, when Charles arrived the doctor was out, and Charles was not sufficiently alarmed to leave word for him to call at the Lamb home. He continued on his way to work and Mary struggled through the day, becoming progressively more agitated.

This episode reached its conclusion in the afternoon between 4 and 4.30. Mary, who had been coping as best she could all day, began to prepare the evening meal. She or her apprentice was setting the cutlery on the table when she became violently upset by something the apprentice had or had not done. In a fury, Mary began hurling the cutlery at the child. Then seizing a case-knife, which had been lying on the table, she began chasing the child about the room. John Lamb Sr. must have been in the immediate vicinity of the apprentice because he was hit in the forehead by a piece of flying cutlery. When the incident started, Elizabeth Lamb, unable to move without assistance, was seated in a chair nearby. As Mary raced around the room in a blind fury, Elizabeth screamed at her to stop. Suddenly and without warning, Mary abandoned the chase and with a loud shriek turned on her mother.

The case-knife was still in her hand, and in one swift and furious motion Mary drove it directly into her mother's heart. It was all over as quickly as it had begun. Mary stood swaying over the dead body, the knife in her hand - as the landlord, alerted by the cries of the apprentice, rushed up the stairs. Moments later, Charles arrived upon the scene, and while the bleeding John Lamb cried softly in the background, Charles removed the knife from his sister's hand.

It was a fortuitous twist of fate that placed Charles in the room just moments after the murder. He was Mary's most trusted friend and was able to calm her, as he quietly eased the knife from her grasp and persuaded her to be led away from the scene. Charles' immediate appreciation of the seriousness of the situation, enabled him to move swiftly to protect Mary, who was in a state of acute mania, physically violent, raving and out of control. For her own safety, she needed to be placed immediately in a restricted environment. Because of his own recent confinement, Charles probably knew what facilities were available and which would be willing to take Mary given her present condition and circumstances. It seems likely that within minutes of the murder, Charles, acting with decisive insight, made the decision to take Mary to the madhouse in Islington. He seemed instinctively to know that her best chance for recovery depended on her being placed in a small asylum where she could receive humane, individual attention. Therefore he did not choose to commit her to the large facility where he had been confined. Because of her proclivity toward violence, Charles may have found it necessary to subdue her, perhaps pinning her arms with a man's waistcoat. No doubt, as Charles sought to contain her, the landlord, hovering in the background, sent for a hackney-cab in which to take her to Islington. It was a tricky situation, which Charles handled with care and understanding. Beside Mary's own comfort and protection, Charles' rapid response must have been propelled by the fear that the authorities might quickly become involved, and the decision of what was to be done with Mary taken out of his hands. If that had happened, Mary could well have ended her days in Bedlam. But that was not to be: Fisher House, Islington, was her destination.[9]

Within a few days Mary had recovered her senses and, within a few months, she was released from the asylum under Charles' legal guardianship. Many times during her life, Mary returned to the safe haven of various madhouses when the insanity of her disease descended upon her.

A reasonable picture of Mary's asylum can be gleaned from contemporary accounts of such facilities. The building was almost certainly multi-storied, with its windows covered by thick iron bars. There were sitting-rooms which were often restricted according to sex, where Mary and Charles would have met, but always in the company of others and with attendants present. These rooms were not well-furnished, and may have been dark and damp, but probably clean. What furniture there was was worn and stained. Since all visitation took place in the parlours, few of the bedrooms were likely to have been open for general inspection. The bedrooms were probably cell-like, and all ran off a central corridor. Some of the bedrooms contained more than one bed, but more than likely there were no patients sharing beds. Sanitary provisions were no better nor worse than those usually found in the latter half of the eighteenth century. The house might have contained provisions for slipper- and shower-baths, but there would have been only one pump available within the house, if that. Many metropolitan asylums lacked adequate ground space and thus their facilities for accommodating their clients outdoors was limited, if not altogether unavailable. Since Mary's asylum was located more or less in the country, she may have had access to a garden. But because she was there, at her first attack, only during the winter, no reference to outside activities was made in the correspondence detailing her confinement. An attendant was with Mary 24 hours a day while she was in the agitated phase of her illness. Such attendants were usually drawn from the lower classes and their duties were largely custodial.[10] Although abuses by madhouse attendants were common, Mary does not seem to have endured such maltreatment. In the common areas of the asylum, such as the parlours and the dining-room, Mary was forced by circumstances into contact with her fellow inmates. The classification and separation of patients according to their condition and behaviour was minimal. Most patients who required restraint (this would have included Mary when she was first admitted) were confined in their bedrooms in strait-waistcoats, manacles, handcuffs and/or leglocks. Because no attempt was made to quieten those individuals prone to loud or obscene ravings, the noise of the madhouse could at times be deafening. Patients who proved too unruly were consigned to solitary confinement cells or closets, and good behaviour was rewarded with increased personal freedom within the confines of the house.[11]

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[9] Marrs i. 46.. Fisher House was the only private madhouse at the time in Islington, located opposite Cross Street on what is now Essex Road.

Most psychiatric authorities agree that Mary suffered from the major affective disorder commonly known as manic-depressive.[12] Because the manifestations of this disorder can often be traced from one generation to another in a family, it is generally accepted that there is some type of genetic component involved with this disease, but research has not yet been able to specify the particular gene or gene group responsible.[13] In his 1848 biography of Charles Lamb, Talfourd noted that Charles' maternal grandmother objected to his marriage because of insanity in the Lamb family. This is the first known reference to such a mental illness and there is no further documentation. But because Mary was so obviously stricken with insanity, Lamb scholars have always accepted Talfourd's statement as fact.[14] This would tend to corroborate the presence of some hereditary predisposition to mental illness in both Mary and Charles.

What exactly Mary experienced during her periodic bouts of illness is open to conjecture. Very few descriptions of her during these episodes have come down to contemporary researchers. The few that are available depict her only as she was in her elder years. But because modern medical research has described the behaviour of manic-depressive individuals in detail and has demonstrated that the behaviour is surprisingly consistent from patient to patient, we can to some extent form a realistic picture of Mary during her insane periods.[15]

Assuming that Mary followed a normal course of behaviour during her attack, one can postulate that she suffered certain physical and mental manifestations of the disease. As with most sufferers, just prior to an attack, she usually became agitated and demonstrated a marked increase in physical and mental activity, which was an indication to her and her brother that an attack was imminent. In the manic stage both Mary's speech and movements became rapid and agitated. As the agitation increased, her speech gained in volume and appeared pressured, her movements became abrupt and repetitive, and she began to exhibit threatening gestures and violent behaviour.[16] With the increase in physical activity came an increase in mental activity. Her mood became expansive, her thinking processes speeded up and she felt considerable pressure to express her rapidly changing thoughts. As a consequence her speech became grandiose, tangential and unpredictable.[17] Due in part to her inability to filter trivial stimuli and to maintain her focus, her attention was extraordinarily distractable and her perception impaired.

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[10] William Parry-Jones, *The Trade in Lunacy* (London and Toronto, 1972) (hereafter Parry-Jones), pp. 184-5.

[11] Parry-Jones 98-100.

[12] During the latter half of the twentieth century this illness was renamed Bipolar Disorder by the psychiatric profession and, since then, it has been the focus of intense medical research.

[13] William Carpenter and Joseph Stephens, 'The Diagnosis of Mania', *Mania: An Evolving Concept* ed. R. H. Belmaker and H. M. Van Praag (New York, 1980) (hereafter Carpenter and Stephens), pp. 7-51.

[14] Katharine Anthony, *The Lambs: A Story of Pre-Victorian England* (New York, 1945), p. 64.

[15] Carpenter and Stephens 9.

As the manic attack continued, her mood varied wildly from extreme elation to depression; her consciousness became clouded and her orientation concerning who she was and where she was suffered. She was delusional, often recounting images, and incidents from the past. Perhaps she hallucinated. Talfourd wrote a description of an elderly Mary in just such a manic episode.

> Her ramblings often sparkled with brilliant description and shattered beauty. She would fancy herself in the days of Queen Anne or George the First, and describe the brocaded dames and courtly manners as though she had been bred among them, in the best style of the old comedy. It was all broken and disjointed, so that the hearer could remember little of her discourse; but the fragments were like the jewelled speeches of Congreve, only shaken from their setting. There was sometimes even a vein of crazy logic running through them, associating things essentially most dissimilar, but connecting them by verbal association in strange order.[18]

Mary's delusions, her grandiose, disconnected thinking, her lack of orientation as to time and place, and her uninhibited verbalization, are all symptoms frequently observed in patients suffering from an acute manic illness.[19] She was probably unable to sleep or, if she did sleep, it was only for a few hours. Her appetite was increased but her eating often hasty and irregular due to her distractibility.[20] It was during this phase of her illness that her behaviour would become progressively more combative - due, in part, to her inability to tolerate lack of immediate gratification. Because of her extreme excitability, Mary needed to be protected from as much external stimuli as possible. Stimuli served only to accelerate her disease process.[21] All of these factors, combined with her inability to respond correctly to heat and cold, injury and pain, necessitated her being in some sort of protective environment such as an asylum.[22]

Lamb wrote only once, at length, about Mary in the manic stage of her illness. In a letter written 14 February 1834, he told Maria Fryer:

> When she is not violent her rambling chat is better to me than the sense and sanity of this world. Her heart is obscured, not buried; it breaks out occasionally; and one can discern a strong mind struggling with the billows that have gone over it. . . . Her memory is unnaturally strong; and from ages past, if we may so call the earliest record

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[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Talfourd 322.

[19] Emil Kraepelin, 'Manic-Depressive Insanity', *Manic-Depressive Illness: History of a Syndrome* ed. Edward A. Wolpert (New York, 1977), pp. 33-112.

[20] Kraepelin 38-9.

[21] Kraepelin 55.

[22] Thomas Freeman, 'Observations on Mania', *Manic-Depressive Illness: History of a Syndrome* ed. Edward A. Wolpert (New York, 1977), pp. 257-70, 259.

> of our poor life, she fetches thousands of names and things that never would have dawned upon me again, and thousands from the ten years she lived before me. What took place from early girlhood to her coming of age principally lives again (every important thing and every trifle) in her brain with the vividness of real presence. For twelve hours incessantly she will pour out without intermission all her past life, forgetting nothing, poring out name after name to the Waldens, as a dream; sense and nonsense; truth and error huddled together; a medley between inspiration and possession.[23]

Again in this highly personalized and loving portrait of Mary, Charles describes many of the characteristics attributed to most cases of mania.

From this state of heightened awareness and manic activity, Mary would, after a time, descend into the downside of her illness - depression. In this state, despite her weariness and need for sleep, she might lie for hours in her bed, sleepless, tortured by disturbing thoughts. When she did sleep, she was probably plagued with anxious dreams and woke unrested and weary.[24] Her perception was less disordered than when she had been in the manic phase although she was sluggish and slow to recognize familiar faces and objects. Her ability to read and understand what she was reading was impaired. She might have found that she lacked the ability to recall even the simplest of things. But once the attack had passed, she would find that her memory was not permanently disturbed. Because of her inability to think to logical conclusions, she appeared dull and retarded. When simple questions were put to her, she was unable to answer or appeared not to understand what had been asked. Her competence to generate ideas on her own was nonexistent. In the deepest of her depression, Mary would sink into a stupor. At these times her consciousness was almost completely obliterated, she lacked any understanding of the world around her, and she did not respond to outside stimuli.[25] Gradually, these symptoms would subside and over time Mary would recover.[26]

A brief but insightful account of Mary in her depressive state was given by Charles in a letter dated 25 July 1829. He wrote that she was 'looking better in her health than ever, but sadly rambling, and scarce showing any pleasure in seeing me, or curiosity when I should come again. But the old feelings will come back again and we shall drown old sorrows over a game at Picquet'.[27] Mary herself recounted something of her suffering to Dorothy Wordsworth when she wrote: 'I continued so long so very weak & dejected I began to fear I should never be at all comfortable again. I strive against low spirits all I can, but it is a very hard thing to get the better of'.[28]

In the latter part of the twentieth century, the major affective disorder, bipolar disorder, is generally viewed as an organic dysfunction of brain chemistry. The tendency is to treat it with drugs and some form of psychotherapy to ensure patient adjustment and compliance with the drug therapy. The drugs of choice usually include lithium to control the manic phase of the illness and an anti-depressant to control depression. If necessary an anti-psychotic drug might also be recommended. It is interesting to speculate how Mary and Charles' life would have changed if these drugs had been available in their time. Would it have affected their writing or their personality, and, if so, how? We shall never know.

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[23] *The Letters of Charles and Mary Lamb* ed. E. V. Lucas (3 vols., London, 1935) (hereafter Lucas), ii. 401.

[24] Kraepelin 67.

[25] Kraepelin 38.

[26] Kraepelin 36-45.

[27] Lucas ii. 224.

[28] Marrs ii. 117.

In conclusion, I should like to return again to the concept of Mary Lamb as a rehabilitation candidate. There are a number of factors which predict the outcome of a patients' rehabilitation. Among them are: i) premorbid condition - that is, the patient's basic personality, accomplishment abilities, level of attainment, and level of adjustment prior to the onset of the disease; ii) their locus of control - that is, the patient's beliefs regarding how much control he or she has to affect the outcome of their situation; and iii) degree of family support and involvement. In all of these areas Mary ranked highly. She was a responsible, adult individual, capable of running a difficult household and able to work at a chosen trade. Her locus of control was to a large extent internal, she was cognisant of the fact that to a great degree she was responsible for what she made of her life but she was also able to recognize that there were situations upon which she could have no impact. Her family support centred around her brother Charles, whom she loved dearly but whose character-flaws she recognized and accepted. Thus, as seen from a modern rehabilitation perspective, Mary had a good many of the tools necessary to resume a productive and fulfilling life once her episodic attack had resolved itself. And that is what she did. The miracle of her comebacks is that they recurred for almost 40 years, without therapy or modern medication. Her life and ability to cope with this most devastating of mental diseases are a model for any and all who suffer from such a disability. She managed to prevail again and again, and to rise, like the phoenix, from the depths of an internal living hell - to live, to contribute to, and to enjoy life.

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(Re)considering Mary Lamb: Imagination and Memory in *Mrs Leicester's School*

By MEAGHAN HANRAHAN DOBSON

IN THE RARE CRITICAL ESSAY which examines Mary Lamb's writing, the critic often draws Mary back in under her brother Charles' shadow, coming to a conclusion similar to Pamela Woof's on Mary and on Dorothy Wordsworth: 'Both Mary and Dorothy survived their brothers; they valued each other as friends, the world now properly values them as writers. It is perhaps true to say that these things came about because they were their brothers' sisters'.[1] And criticism of Charles and Mary Lamb's collaborative writing often regards Mary as the entertaining but clearly lesser half of the pair, as when Joseph Riehl comments that *Mrs Leicester's School* (1809), to which Mary contributed seven of ten stories, 'reflects Charles' intellectual activity and the ideas and opinions he shared with Mary'.[2] In one of the few essays to give sustained attention to the stories of both Mary and Charles in *Mrs Leicester's School*, Winifred Courtney finds that Charles' contributions are 'of a piece with Mary's'[3] and that 'sister and brother . . . were, at any rate, two sides of the same coin'.[4] I propose another approach to the work: in examining the *different* contributions Mary and Charles made to *Mrs Leicester's School*, I wish to direct some much-needed and well-deserved attention to Mary as an individual writer in a specific historical and literary context, and to avoid the pitfall of Lamb criticism Jane Aaron illuminates: 'It would appear that too many of the critics who have concerned themselves with the Lambs' relationship have acted on the principle that one member of their union can only be properly acclaimed at the expense of the other'.[5] Accordingly, the differences I examine will be discussed not in terms of tension between the two but as legitimate differences within their mutual struggle against Romantic patriarchy.

Since Mary and her brother experienced many of the same kinds of marginalization - their economic and social status, their 'past membership, of, and close identification with, that group marked by the label "lunatic"', which Aaron calls 'perhaps the most alienated "Other" in [their] society'[6] - the temptation to consider them as, in Courtney's words, 'two sides of the same coin', is great. But that they are, in fact, two different coins becomes clear as one examines their differing experiences and representations of gender. For instance, both Mary and Charles may have had an uneasy relationship to writing and imagination because of their dual experience with madness. As Aaron explains, '[F]or the potentially insane as a group

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[1] Pamela Woof, 'Dorothy Wordsworth and Mary Lamb, Writers', *CLB* NS 67 (1989) 82-93, p. 93.

[2] Joseph Riehl, *Charles Lamb's Children's Literature* ed. James Hogg (Salzburg, 1908), p. 101. There are, of course, exceptions to these approaches. Jane Aaron's '"On Needlework": Protest and Contradiction in Mary Lamb's Essay' (*Romanticism and Feminism*, ed. Anne K. Mellor [Bloomington, Indiana, 1988], pp. 167-84) (hereafter Aaron 'Protest') and Susan Wolfson's 'Explaining to Her Sisters: Mary Lamb's *Tales from Shakespear*' (*Women's Re-Visions of Shakespeare* ed. Marianne Novy [Urbana, Illinois, 1990], pp. 16-40) are notable in their specific attention to Mary Lamb as a woman writer.

[3] Winifred Courtney, '*Mrs Leicester's School* as Children's Literature', *CLB* NS 47-8 (1984) 164-9 (hereafter Courtney), p. 168.

[4] Courtney 166.

[5] Jane Aaron, 'Charles and Mary Lamb: The Critical Heritage', *CLB* NS 59 (1987) 73-85, p. 83.

[6] Jane Aaron, *A Double Singleness: Gender and the Writings of Charles and Mary Lamb* (Oxford, 1991) (hereafter *DS*), p. 147.

. . . writing, along with imaginative activity generally, was discouraged as a dangerous malpractice, jeopardizing mental balance'.[7] Yet treatment of the insane in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries has further implications for women as it 'corresponds interestingly to the ideological methods by which women also as a group were persuaded into accepting, and internalizing, a restricted view of themselves during this period'.[8] The consequence for Mary, Aaron asserts, was that she 'did indeed find the practice of writing on all occasions disturbing, experiencing it as a contradiction of her habitual attempt to retain a self-obscuring modesty. Her letters often testify to inhibiting fears that her pen will "run away" with her'.[9] Thus, although both Mary and Charles were marginalized in various ways, in this particular instance of marginalization, Mary's experience seems to be complicated in ways that Charles' was not. And, I will argue, a similar complexity emerges in her *Mrs Leicester's School* stories.

Aware of the dangers of an approach that resorts to the binaries enforced by patriarchy, I sympathize with Laura Claridge and Elizabeth Langland's 'insistence that the question be nuanced far beyond defining men as the villain and women as the victim'[10] in order to 'consider patriarchy a gender-complicated term - not conflated with the concept "male" alone'.[11] Claridge and Langland voice their dissatisfaction with an approach that lumps all resistance to patriarchy within the category of (potentially) feminist discourse and thus ignores the differing textual effects produced by various kinds of resistance. While Charles certainly fits Claridge and Langland's description of the male writer who 'experiences the patriarchal construction of his masculinity as a constriction',[12] it is Mary who struggles with the relations of women to patriarchal constructions of femininity. To consider their work as essentially the same ignores the divergent directions their stories often take.

It is for this reason that I do not want to sound too apologetic for my attention to Mary Lamb as a *woman* writer. Although Aaron emphasizes the Lambs' 'double singleness' in her work of the same name and argues that their marginalized status led them to similar understandings of themselves as gendered (i.e., feminized) subjects, differences arise in their individual contributions to *Mrs Leicester's School* which speak to unequal perceptions of themselves as writing and speaking subjects and which I attribute to different experiences of gender inscription. Marlon Ross addresses the need to consider women writers on their own terms in his discussion of female poets for whom 'their gender is so crucial a factor in their cultural and literary experience that it alters the effect of shared social conditions and turns these writers into a distinct class, with its own ideological patterning. . . . The recovery of these feminine voices, then, is also a way of *localizing* romanticism, demonstrating its real limits in history by examining its *limited* influence on individuals who lived within its purview'.[13] In an effort to recover one of these feminine voices, a voice which is more than an extension or echo of her brother's voice, much of my essay will focus on Mary's accounts in *Mrs Leicester's School* of young girls trying to assert themselves as imaginative subjects in a social system generally opposed to their subjectivity.

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[7] Aaron 'Protest' 180.

[8] Aaron 'Protest' 177.

[9] Aaron 'Protest' 180.

[10] Laura Claridge and Elizabeth Langland, Introduction to *Out of Bounds: Male Writers and Gender(ed) Criticism* ed. Claridge and Langland (Amherst, Mass., 1990), pp. 3-21, (hereafter Claridge and Langland), p. 8.

[11] Claridge and Langland 3.

[12] Claridge and Langland 4.

[13] Marlon Ross, *The Contours of Masculine Desire: Romanticism and the Rise of Women's Poetry* (New York, 1989) (hereafter Ross, *Contours*), p. 6.

Aaron views this work primarily as evidence of how Mary was 'struggling, in covert ways, both to tell the tale of her relations with her mother, and resolve the tensions it created'.[14] Undoubtedly, this struggle exists in *Mrs Leicester's School*, but to it I would add another: that of the creative, intelligent, and self-assertive woman in a society thoroughly opposed to all of those qualities in its constructions of femininity. Margaret Homans contends that women writers and readers of the period we call Romantic were likely to feel an 'exclusion from a traditional identification of the speaking subject as male'.[15] Both Mary's and Charles' stories in *Mrs Leicester's School* dramatize this struggle for imaginative self-assertion, but with varied consequences for their protagonists. Although my method requires that I compare Mary's stories to Charles', in so doing I hope to work within a 'complicated gender grammar . . . with [a vocabulary] that accommodate[s] differences and similarities, contradictions and agreements'.[16]

The two stories which address imagination most overtly are Mary's 'The Young Mahometan' and Charles' 'The Witch Aunt'. In 'The Young Mahometan', the protagonist Margaret Green is a young girl so lonely and isolated in the house of her mother's elderly employer that she compares herself to Robinson Crusoe.[17] Yet her story is clearly about the perils of imagination and self-expression as much as it is about the difficulties encountered by neglected daughters. Reading, for Margaret, is a virtually forbidden activity because of her weak eyes; nevertheless, she says, 'I was very fond of reading; and when I could unobserved steal a few minutes as they were intent on their work, I used to delight to read in the historical part of the Bible' (p. 306). Notably, she is interested in the conventionally masculine realm of history - both in her Bible readings and in her 'reading' of tapestries in the old house. Along with this 'forbidden pleasure' (p. 306), she discovers a most fascinating pastime in the library, which, as a private and nearly secret location of imaginative and literary activity in this text, is locked up. Margaret *knows* that books are forbidden her and that 'it was very wrong to read any book without permission to do so' (p. 308). Left almost entirely to her own devices, however, Margaret reads. In doing so, she attempts to construct both an identity and a community. Testing possibilities for identity, she says after reading *Mahometanism Explained*, 'I concluded that I must be a Mahometan, for I believed every word I read' (p. 309). But this model proves to be inappropriate. Before she fully understands this, she desires to bring others into community with her by telling them about her new beliefs. Here, the actual assertion of her voice becomes problematic: '[I]t wanted more courage than I possessed, to break the matter to my intended converts; I must acknowledge that I had been reading without leave; and the habit of never speaking, or being spoken to, considerably increased the difficulty' (p. 309). Denied subjectivity by those with whom she lives, this female figure imagines an identity for herself and, in the process of trying to speak it, finds that she is isolated from language in such a way as to make this nearly impossible. Indeed, Margaret can speak only to her mother, much later, in a delirium:

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[14] *DS* 125.

[15] Margaret Homans, *Women Writers and Poetic Identity: Dorothy Wordsworth, Emily Bronte, and Emily Dickinson* (Princeton, NJ, 1980), p. 12.

[16] Claridge and Langland 20.

[17] *Mrs Leicester's School* in *The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb* ed. E. V. Lucas (3 vols., London, 1903-5), iii. 273-335, p. 308. References to this text are hereafter incorporated in parentheses.

the expressive female thus not only indulges in forbidden activities but is potentially insane, as the socialization of women and the treatment of mental patients intersect.

Charles, too, in Maria Howe's story, 'The Witch Aunt', tells the tale of another young girl whose imagination 'runs away with her'. Maria, like Margaret, enjoys reading Biblical history, but she eventually finds a more interesting text: *Glanvil on Witches*. After reading the terrifying stories, Maria concludes that her own aunt is a witch. Although at times Maria, too, tries on various identities - as when she imagines herself a martyr - she also projects her imagination on to those around her in ways that separate her from them. Whereas Margaret wants to create a community through her imaginings, Maria wants only to avoid her 'witch aunt' and thus further isolates herself. In an essay which illuminates Charles' attitude towards the children's literature of his day, Riehl suggests that this story 'shows that Lamb pays very close attention to the ways in which he minds of children operate, and it shows his respect for those minds',[18] linking Charles with that other great champion of childhood: Wordsworth. Drawing a connection between 'The Witch Aunt' and Charles' Elian essay on 'Witches and Other Night Fears' (1823), Riehl asserts, 'If Wordsworth believes that we come into this life "trailing clouds of glory", and that the joy of childhood is evidence of pre-existence, Lamb finds evidence for pre-existence in his own early fears and night terrors. And if Wordsworth regrets the loss of the glory and joy of childhood, Lamb is also sorry to have lost his nightmares. "I am almost ashamed to say how prosaic my dreams have grown"'.[19] Reading further in Charles' essay, however, one finds that, although Charles does indeed ascribe to these fears the powers of 'archetypes',[20] he also adds an ironic twist in his discussion of imagination. He admits, 'The poverty of my dreams mortifies me. There is Coleridge, at his will can conjure up icy domes, and pleasure houses for Kubla Khan, and Abyssinian maids, and songs of Abara, and caverns, "Where Alph, the sacred river, runs," to solace his night solitudes - when I cannot muster a fiddle'.[21] He concludes the essay with more self-deprecation:

> The degree of the soul's creativeness in sleep might furnish no whimsical criterion of the quantum of poetical faculty resident in the same soul waking. An old gentleman, a friend of mine, and a humorist, used to carry this notion so far, that when he saw any stripling of his acquaintance ambitious of becoming a poet, his first question would be,- 'Young man, what sort of dreams have you?' I have so much faith in my old friend's theory, that when I feel that idle vein returning upon me, I presently subside into my proper element of prose . . .[22]

In distancing himself from the egotistically imaginative, conventionally masculine realm of Romantic poetry, Charles demonstrates what Claridge calls 'the possibility of the male's legitimate belief in the chance for self-enlargement through inhabiting, at moments, a female space or voice'.[23] Charles thus creates a space for his own work as an essayist through this characteristically self-deprecating opposition, labeling at least some manifestations of the imagination as 'idle' and perhaps even childish.

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[18] Joseph Riehl, 'Charles Lamb's *Mrs Leicester's School* Stories and Elia: The Fearful Imagination', *CLB* 39 (1982) 138-143 (hereafter Riehl 'Elia'), p. 139.

[19] Riehl 'Elia' 140.

[20] Charles Lamb, 'Witches and Other Night Fears', *The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb* ed. E. V. Lucas (3 vols., London, 1903-5), ii. 65-70 (hereafter 'Witches'), p. 68.

[21] 'Witches' 69.

[22] 'Witches' 69-70.

[23] Laura Claridge, *Romantic Potency: The Paradox of Desire* (Ithaca, NY, 1992), p. 16n14.

I make this point to show that, while both Mary and Charles problematize the Romantic imagination in these stories, they do so differently. That Maria Howe's story does not reveal the difficult relationship of women to imagination that Margaret Green's does is especially evident in their resolutions. Both Margaret and Maria are removed from their homes for a time to 'recover'. Significantly, however, although Margaret's fantasies are known to everyone around her and are the cause of her removal (and her shame), Maria's visions remain private - she is taken away simply because she looks ill. When Maria finally does tell her story, it is by her own choice to a group of girls her age who are engaged in telling stories by which they are similarly embarrassed. Furthermore, we hear a good deal about Maria's life after her return home: 'Quite a new turn of ideas was given to me; I became sociable and companionable; my parents soon discovered a change in me, and I have found a similar alteration in them. They have been plainly more fond of me since that change, as from that time I learned to conform myself more to their way of living' (p. 323). Mary alerts us to no such change in Margaret's home life: there is no mention of her reception by her mother or Mrs Beresford, her mother's employer. Thus, while Maria must renounce imaginative activity, her community is eventually enriched as a result; Margaret's remains as bare and lonely as it was before. Charles' character rejects an imagination which on at least some occasions distances her from others; Mary's character, in renouncing her imagination, loses the only identity and community she has so far been able to create for herself.

'The Sailor Uncle', Mary's story of Elizabeth Villiers, also foregrounds reading. Elizabeth's father taught her to read at her mother's grave, 'the epitaph on my mother's tomb being my primer and my spelling-book' (p. 276). Although her father is her teacher, Elizabeth comes to associate language and learning with her mother: 'I had an idea that the words on the tombstone were somehow part of mamma, and that she had taught me' (p. 276). Interpreting death and the graveyard rather unconventionally, she recalls, 'This grave had always been a scene of delight to me. In the house my father would often be weary of my prattle, and send me from him; but here he was all my own. I might say anything, and be as frolicsome as I pleased here; all was cheerfulness and good humour in our visits to mamma, as we called it' (p. 277). When her sailor uncle arrives on the scene, however, the graveside becomes a place of sorrow. The uncle, grieved at the loss of his sister and finding the nostalgia of his niece to be rather morbid, buys Elizabeth some books so that 'there would no longer be a pretence for these visits to the grave' (p. 279). Courtney reads this story as a delightful yet didactic tale teaching children to get on with life and not to mourn for long, but when read beside 'The Father's Wedding Day', also by Mary, the tale takes on a greater significance.

In this story, Elinor Forester's mother, too, has died, and Elinor faces the same issues of how best to remember and imagine her mother. When Elinor's father makes plans to remarry, the housekeeper fears that Elinor has already forgotten her mother. Elinor confidently counters, 'I could not imagine what she meant by my forgetting everything, for I instantly recollected poor mamma used to say I had an excellent memory' (p. 303). Although she comes to accept what she has been told - 'I had apparently forgotten her' (p. 303)- she also has a habit of peeping in through the keyhole of the room, now locked, where her mother died, and singing the songs her mother used to sing, which she remembers very well. Elinor is eventually allowed into this room again when she makes friends with her stepmother:

> Oh, I was so pleased to be taken into mamma's room. I pointed out to her all the things that I remembered to have belonged to mamma, and she encouraged me to tell her all the little incidents which had dwelt on my memory concerning her. She told me that she went to school with mamma when she was a little girl, and that I should come into this room with her every day when papa was gone out, and she would tell me stories of mamma when she was a little girl no bigger than me. . . . After this she used to pass great part of the mornings with me in my mother's room, which was now made the repository of all my playthings, and also my schoolroom. Here my new mamma taught me to read. (pp. 304-5)

The many references in these stories to mothers and reading suggest that Elizabeth and Elinor are doing more than learning lessons about moving beyond the death of a loved one. Elizabeth and Elinor are learning ways of reading death, motherhood, and femininity.

Elizabeth learns to read conventionally. She learns to see the graveyard as a sorrowful rather than a delightful place; she learns to substitute the books provided by her uncle for the epitaph on her mother's tombstone. As a result of this guidance from her uncle, Elizabeth says, 'I could now read very well, and the continual habit of listening to the conversation of my father and my uncle made me a little woman in understanding; so that my father said to him, "James, you have made my child quite a companionable little being"' (p. 280). Mary Lamb remarks on companionship in another text: 'On Needlework' (1815). In this essay, she argues for women's 'intellectual improvement',[24] supporting her claim strategically with a woman's duty to 'fit herself to become a conversational companion'.[25] Although Aaron finds this 'ideological swerve' to be an indication of Mary's acceptance of 'women's subordination to men . . . as inevitable and even just',[26] in Elizabeth Villiers' story this subordination represents a kind of loss. Elizabeth comes to love her uncle, but she becomes a listener rather than a speaker; her father speaks to the uncle about this 'little being' as if Elizabeth were not there. The message is again reinforced: women listen and are spoken about; they do not lift their own voices and assert their own subjectivities. And there is another kind of repression at work here, too. While Elizabeth must quit her mother's grave, Elinor may remain in the room where her mother died; indeed, she virtually comes to inhabit it. These different endings are even more striking when one recalls that, at the end of her story, Elizabeth has, in effect, two fathers - her own father and her uncle - whereas Elinor has, in effect, two mothers - her memory of her own mother and her new stepmother. The patriarchal figures in 'The Sailor Uncle' determine the acceptability of certain kinds of reading, memory, and imagination, especially the reading, remembering, and imagining of maternal figures. In the absence of these patriarchs, as in 'The Father's Wedding Day', memory and imagination are given greater freedom.

Reading these stories through the lens of Mary's matricide, we might see them as two more instances of Mary's attempt to resolve her conflicted position in regard to her own mother. Yet the experiences of Elizabeth and Elinor also demonstrate the difficulties women face under patriarchy of connecting with their memories of their mothers and of keeping them alive in their imaginations. Elizabeth and Elinor's efforts to remember may be seen as attempts to construct identity and history for themselves, in a way similar to Margaret

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[24] Mary Lamb, 'On Needlework', *The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb* ed. E. V. Lucas (3 vols., London, 1903-5), i. 176-180 (hereafter *ON*), p. 176.

[25] *ON* 177.

[26] Aaron 'Protest' 169.

Green's, whose mother, though she is alive, is nevertheless quite distant to her. For Elizabeth and Margaret, instruction in conventional, womanly ways of reading and speaking results, more often than not, in isolation and a forced avoidance of memory and imagination.

Instruction in the conventions of reading also occurs in Charles' story of Susan Yates, 'The First Going to Church'. Susan's imagination is vivid: she hears the bells of the church calling to her, sees gothic decorations grinning, envisions a statue coming alive. By the end of her tale, however, she learns to discount these fancies and to accept her father's interpretations of such ornamentation as 'very improper' (p. 329). Once again, as with the story of Maria Howe, Riehl reads Lamb's concern here as one of childhood imagination which 'comes to grips with the grotesque, turning the outwardly ugly and frightening into a positive and instructive force'.[27] And Aaron reads it as detailing 'the losses entailed by [Susan's] eventual acquisition of more conventional knowledge'.[28] Certainly, in *Mrs Leicester's School* both Mary and Charles are working with possibilities for childhood imagination; their collaboration on children's literature clearly opposes the 'encyclopaedic or didactic tomes' coming into vogue in the early nineteenth century.[29] Once again, however, the relations of Charles' female characters to imagination are less troubled than those of Mary's. Indeed, Susan closes her story by asserting to her listeners,'. . . I never can hear the sweet noise of bells, that I don't think of the angels singing, and what poor but pretty thoughts I had of angels in my uninstructed solitude' (p. 331). Unlike Margaret Green and Elizabeth Villiers, even though Susan has been educated into more conventional ways of reading, she still values her earlier fanciful thoughts: they may be 'poor', but they are also still 'pretty'. By contrast, Elizabeth, who can only '[steal] privately to look at' her mother's grave (p. 281) visits it now with 'awe and reverence' (p. 281), no longer with thoughts of 'pleasant stories' (p. 279), and Margaret Green must renounce entirely 'the fatal book which had so heated my imagination' (p. 310). For Mary's characters, imaginative activity must either be rejected or pursued in solemn secrecy.

Once the girls in *Mrs Leicester's School* move beyond the more private realm of reading into the public realm of narrating their own stories, imaginative self-expression becomes even more problematic. The introduction to the collection foregrounds the purposes for this narration: the new teacher hopes the girls, newly arrived at their school, will become friends and 'amuse themselves with telling stories' (p. 274). But the stories told by the girls are often less amusing than they are painful, and the girls' apologies are profuse. Indeed, the teacher interjects after the second story, 'I shall . . . leave out the apologies with which you severally thought fit to preface your stories of yourselves, though they were very seasonable in their place, and proceeded from a proper diffidence, because I must not swell my work to too large a size' (p. 283). Even so, she includes many of them. When Elizabeth draws to go first, her 'joy' is 'tempered with shame at appearing as the first historian in the company' (pp. 275). The tales told by Ann Withers and Margaret Green reflect the real humiliation of the girls at recalling the events of their young lives, with Ann telling the assembly, 'I am ashamed to confess what a proud child I once was' (p. 289) and Margaret saying, 'I shall be quite ashamed to tell you the strange effect it [*Mahometanism Explained*] had on me' (p. 308). Charles' Maria Howe also chastises herself: 'What I am going to tell, I shall be ashamed of, and repent, I hope, as long as I live' (p. 320). One of Mary's characters, Louisa

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[27] Riehl 'Elia' 140-1.

[28] *DS* 163.

[29] *DS* 162.

Manners, has not yet learned the proper self-restraint; the teacher cuts her story short with the remark, 'You are a little woman now to what you were then' (p. 288). Thus, stories by both Charles and Mary demonstrate the unease with which these feminine voices assert themselves, further supporting the patriarchal coding of the speaking subject as male; a woman - or indeed, any subject distanced from the language of patriarchy - if she speaks at all, should do so with great self-consciousness and self-deprecation. Nevertheless, despite this apparently mutual feeling of disenfranchisement, willing or enforced, from the voice of authority, Charles' stories often end with some degree of enrichment, even as a result of this embarrassment; Mary's stories do not provide the same rewards.

These differing consequences become especially clear in stories of more explicit resistance to dominant gender codes, as in Mary's 'The Changeling' and Charles' 'The Sea-Voyage'. In 'The Changeling', Ann Withers provides the clearest example of a female appropriating an authorial voice to herself as she writes and performs in a play which results in the loss of her supposed birthright. Ann's play is occasioned by her discovery that she is not the daughter of Sir Edward and Lady Harriot Lesley, as she once thought, but the daughter of a working woman. Encouraged by her supposed father to arrange an evening's entertainment, she begins to construct a drama but can think of no other subject than that of her 'true' but secret identity, which she writes 'in the best blank verse I was able to compose' (p. 295). On the night of the performance, Ann recalls, 'As author and principal performer, standing before a noble audience, my mind was too much engaged with the arduous task I had undertaken, to glance my eyes towards the music-gallery, or I might have seen two more spectators there than I expected' (pp. 295-6). As the drama unfolds, Ann's real mother, present at the play, confesses to the truth that she had switched her own child with the Lesley's. Notably it is through literary, imaginative activity that Ann loses her identity. She thinks to herself, '[I]t is through the vanity of being supposed to have written a pretty story that I have meanly broken my faith with my friend, and unintentionally proclaimed the disgrace of my mother and myself' (p. 296). Her 'pretty story' becomes instead 'My luckless Play, that sad instance of my duplicity' (p. 298). In her discussion of the story, Aaron asserts that Ann's 'intelligence inadvertently strips away the veil of her true mother's deception and shows the reality of the situation as it is' and that through this inadvertence maternal love and social standing are 'lost through a daughter's impetuous intelligence' (p. 48). These losses complicate the concepts of creativity and intelligence for the woman writer, who stands to lose parents, rank, even her very identity by venturing into the (masculine) domain of self-expression - that of 'author and principal performer'. Ann's venture onto the stage proves even more dangerous because she exposes not only her voice but her very body, attempting to insert herself physically into this public realm.

Charles also presents an individual resisting dominant gender codes in Arabella Hardy's story, 'The Sea-Voyage'. In this case, however, the individual who resists is a man and the results are quite the opposite for those experienced by Ann Withers, Margaret Green, and Elizabeth Villiers. The first mate on Arabella's sea voyage adopts traditionally feminine qualities of nurture and sympathy in order to take care of his young charge; he 'had a gentleness of manners, and a pale feminine cast of face, from ill health and a weakly constitution, which subjected him to some ridicule from the officers, and caused him to be named Betsy' (p. 332). Yet, despite the ridicule, 'he submitted to it the better, saying that those who gave him a woman's name well knew that he had a man's heart, and that in the face of danger he would go as far as any man' (p. 332). The sailor can resist gender expectations with impunity because he has already fulfilled his gendered role beyond all doubt. For him, there is far less shame in resisting conventional,constructions of masculinity than there is for Mary's resistant schoolgirls. Indeed, 'Betsy' seems to have no trepidation whatsoever with regard to his adopted role, suggesting once again the possibilities the role conventionally inscribed as feminine may hold for men resisting patriarchy, whereas the role conventionally inscribed as masculine holds more peril than promise for the woman constructing her identity.

As Aaron has shown in *A Double Singleness*, Charles Lamb questions and often refuses the role constructed for him by patriarchy and experiments with multiple subjectivities, questioning even the categories of masculine and feminine. Aaron credits him with 'a certain detachment . . . gained . . . through the consciousness of oneself as being played upon and playing within, the configuration of roles and settings in which one has been placed'.[30] In the Elia essays, this play 'becomes not simply a means of escape from harsh realities but a subtle organ of attack upon the pompous perpetrators of serious injustice'.[31] Charles, by virtue of his position as a child of servants and as a clerk, is already in a way separated from these patriarchal structures, as Aaron has pointed out, so on some level there is less at stake for him in questioning and subverting categories in which he is not fully inscribed, upon which he does not fully depend for his identity. As I have argued throughout, the situation is different for Mary.

Although her stories critique the ways individuals are limited and burdened by gender inscription, and although her own writing can be construed as an act of resistance in its very representation of these restrictions, she nevertheless recognizes the power these roles can hold. Indeed, women in her stories sometimes do acquiesce to patriarchal authority and are happier for it, at least for a time. For instance, in the process of their education, many of the girls are corrected by patriarchal figures. Elizabeth Villiers has her uncle, whom she loves very much; Ann Withers and Margaret Green are adopted by doctors whose 'instruction' is represented as beneficial. Dr. Wheelding encourages Ann to persevere in her attempt to love her mother - to be a good daughter - and also sees to it that her mother becomes 'quite a respectable woman' (p. 300). Margaret, after a stay with the physician and his wife, learns to turn her attention to properly feminine things they give her as presents: '[R]ibbands, laces, toys, cakes, and sweetmeats . . . . [m]y needle-case, my pincushion, . . . my work-basket and all its contents' (p. 310). By returning to 'proper' activities for a young girl, Margaret reaps the rewards of attention and affection from the physician and his wife, just as by leaving her mother's grave and reading the books presented her by her uncle Elizabeth Villiers gains his favour and friendship. These girls can hardly be blamed for desiring such rewards; indeed, we may see in the willingness of these girls to submit to convention another, perhaps happier, version of Mary's own story as they demonstrate the rewards society offers to women who submit to its expectations. These stories thus often demonstrate the contradictions Aaron finds in 'On Needlework': 'retrograde conclusions in an article that raises so many essentially radical issues'.[32]

Given these poignant tensions, to suggest that Mary Lamb is in all cases as free as her brother to question or refuse gender roles is I think to underestimate the way their 'double singleness' is complicated by gender. Surely Mary's own experience of mental treatment combined with her own gender inscription makes her acutely aware of the dangers involved in women's self-expression. Indeed, many of her stories explore the consequences for women who refuse the docility and self-restraint - the mental patient's straitjacket - expected of them. Even those like Margaret Green and Elizabeth Villiers, who seem happy for a time, eventually lose the patriarchal figures who had guided them: Margaret returns to her silent mother, Elizabeth's beloved uncle leaves. In Charles' stories, however, this deep sense of loneliness and longing does not occur. Although Arabella Hardy loses her guardian, she gains the love and friendship of his mother and sisters; Maria Howe regains the friendship of her family; even Susan Yates still appreciates her earlier fancies. These contrasts illustrate how, in Mary's stories, social circles are often diminished rather than enriched and the telling of a story no longer celebrates a creative, imaginative effort but rather reinforces the shame of a trespass.

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[30] *DS* 166.

[31] *DS* 166.

[32] Aaron 'Protest' 170.

Despite their frequent reinscription of the limits placed on female subjectivity by Romantic conceptions of authority and imagination, Mary's stories nevertheless provide glimpses of a nurturing environment where women's memory, imagination, and storytelling can be valued. Elinor Forester's occupation of her mother's room is perhaps the primary example, but the stories of Emily Barton and Charlotte Wilmot - 'Visit to the Cousins' and 'The Merchant's Daughter' - suggest similar potential for feminine companionship. Although they portray girls ashamed of former prideful behavior, they also represent experiences of being nurtured by other women: Charlotte learns compassion from a girl she once scorned, and Emily learns generosity from a friend and the friend's mother. (Again, though, the possibilities for self-expression and agency are limited: Emily becomes a spectator at a play.) This emphasis on community suggests that the very structure of the text offers some liberating possibilities for these girls: in the company of other girls and women, they construct identities for themselves and develop a record - a memory - of their struggles against the forces that would silence or constrict their expression.

Indeed, in this emphasis on community, Charles and Mary seem quite similar: both ultimately envision speaking subjects in community with others, and this envisioning of community, as Ross's analysis implies, is something wholly outside of the rivalry and self-possession generated by masculine Romantic desire.[33] To argue, however, that this makes them both 'feminine' or 'feminist' in the same way is problematic in light of the significant differences in their stories. The theoretical framework I have attempted to work within thus helps us to see Charles and Mary separately: both discontent with patriarchy, but working against it differently. Charles critiques constructions of masculinity; he explores and sometimes appropriates Romantic notions of imagination to his own purposes. But the need for a space in which women can develop identity and community through imagination and memory does not seem crucial in his stories: Maria Howe, Susan Yates, and Arabella Hardy either find ways to value their solitary imaginings or have communities to care for them, or both. Margaret Green, Ann Withers, and Elizabeth Villiers, by contrast, want companions - especially mothers - in their imaginative activity and end up without them. Considering the stories of Elinor Forester, Charlotte Wilmot, and Emily Barton, one sees Mary's text as deeply involved with the need for and creation of spaces in which women may define their identities, remember their mothers, and try out a creative voice. The communities she envisions are notable for their lack of patriarchal figures, creating a space apart in which women teach each other and imagine and speak their histories together.

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[33] See Ross, *Contours* for a discussion of Romantic rivalry.

Wordsworth's Resurrections:
The Influence of the Bible on *Tintern Abbey*

By RAYMOND POWELL[1]

THE VIEW OF *TINTERN ABBEY* as an intelligible, coherent and consistent expression of what Wordsworth felt and believed has recently been reaffirmed by M. H. Abrams:

> the poem that Wordsworth composed is a sustained lyric meditation, in a natural setting, about what it is to be mortally human, to grow older, and to grow up, through vicissitudes and disappointments, into the broader, sadder knowledge of maturity; about what in this temporal process is inevitably lost, but also what may be gained, and for another person as well as the lyric speaker himself.[2]

There has long been an alternative tradition, however, which finds the poem considerably more problematic than this summary would suggest. William Empson's analysis of a passage from the poem in 1930 is an early example.[3] Since then, the uncertainties, hesitations and discontinuities of argument have been examined, rather more sympathetically, by David Ferry and David Pirie.[4] More recently still, new historicist analysis has sought to identify the consequences of *Tintern Abbey*'s rhetorical strategies of displacement, evasion and occlusion.[5] Thinking of them as two distinct traditions no doubt oversimplifies matters, and one should perhaps regard them as the ends of a spectrum along which commentators on the poem have positioned themselves. So far as the present study is concerned, the examination that follows of the significance of Biblical allusions in *Tintern Abbey* pursues an argument broadly consistent with those accounts which find the poem, in varying degrees, confused, contradictory and unresolved.

The presence of Biblical allusions in *Tintern Abbey* raises problems to do with allusiveness in general. Identifying a Biblical reference invites the question, for instance, whether it should be more properly described as an allusion or an echo. The distinction between the two - an allusion is intended to be recognized, whereas an echo is heard at a distance, and may even go unrecognized by the author - is less than clear-cut and very rapidly breaks down in practice. In his investigation of Wordsworth's borrowings, Edwin Stein retains 'echo' for both forms of allusiveness, but his further division into comparative and assimilative echoes has the effect of partly reinstating the earlier distinction; and he cautiously acknowledges, in any event, that his classification 'is a pragmatic rather than logical dichotomy, because the two classes are not exclusive.'[6] As for the attempt to distinguish allusion and echo in terms of the writer's intentions, it remains the case, as Lucy Newlyn dryly observes, that 'Literary allusion almost always seems intentional to those who perceive it.'[7] For all kinds of theoretical and practical reasons one is generally reluctant to press very far into the area of a writer's supposed intentions, but in the case of a writer such as Wordsworth, and even more of a poem such as *Tintern Abbey*, it is difficult to avoid the matter altogether.

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[1] I should like to express my gratitude to my colleagues Phillipa Hardman and Mary Bryden for drawing my attention to the echoes, respectively, of John 14.19 and Song of Solomon 2.7-8. Editions used in this essay are: *Lyrical Ballads* ed. Michael Mason (London 1992) (hereafter Mason); *The Prelude: 1799, 1805, 1850* ed. Jonathan Wordsworth, M. H. Abrams and Stephen Gill (New York, 1979); *Wordsworth Poems of 1807* ed. Alun R. Jones (Atlantic Highlands, NJ, 1987) (hereafter Jones); *The Poems of John Milton* ed. John Carey and Alastair Fowler (London, 1968).

[2] M. H. Abrams, 'On Political Readings of *Lyrical Ballads*', *Doing Things with Texts: Essays in Criticism and Critical Theory* (New York and London, 1989), p. 379.

[3] William Empson, *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (London, 1930, reprinted 1965), pp. 151-4.

[4] David Ferry, *The Limits of Mortality* (Middleton, Conn., 1959), pp. 107-11; David Pirie, *William Wordsworth: The Poetry of Grandeur and Tenderness* (London and New York, 1982), pp. 269-78.

[5] The most extensive treatment is contained in Marjorie Levinson, *Wordsworth's Great Period Poems* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 14-57. See also Kenneth R. Johnston, 'The Politics of *Tintern Abbey*', *The Wordsworth Circle* 14 (1983) 6-14.

In *Tintern Abbey* the relation of the Biblical allusions (or echoes) to the poet's intention is more than usually complicated, because of widely differing views taken about the degree of Wordsworth's conscious control of his material. A great deal turns, therefore, on whether one broadly regards the poem, as Abrams does, as a coherent and unified structure under Wordsworth's control throughout. In that event, any Biblical allusions are likely to be seen as generally reinforcive of the surface meaning. The contrary view of *Tintern Abbey* - that it is not fully harmonized or integrated - implies a correspondingly different view of the poem's allusiveness. The Biblical echoes will appear, almost inevitably, more complex, puzzling, and not always consistent. In my view the Biblical echoes do indeed operate in this latter way. I argue in what follows that they contribute to Wordsworth's strenuous and perplexed attempt to reconcile the conflicts and discontinuities of his past, present and future selves, and that this aim involved Wordsworth in the creative but ultimately unsuccessful assimilation of the Biblical figures of Adam and Christ.

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We should be clear, first of all, how well Wordsworth is likely to have known the Bible, and how far that knowledge informed his creative processes. As a child, he would very probably have been taught to read by his mother, who is referred to in *The Prelude* as 'the heart / And hinge of all our *learnings* and our loves' (v 257-8, my italics). Given *The Prelude*'s testament to his mother's piety, it seems likely that the prime means of instruction would have been the Bible, possibly supplemented by the Book of Common Prayer. Some of the Old Testament narratives appear to have made a great impression on the young Wordsworth. In the Fenwick note to the *Immortality Ode* he talks about how difficult it was for him as a child to imagine he might die: 'I used to brood over the stories of Enoch and Elijah, and almost to persuade myself that, whatever might become of others, I should be translated, in something of the same way, to heaven'.[8] Before beginning regular schooling at Hawkshead Grammar School in 1779, he attended a dame school at Penrith run by Mrs Anne Birkett, whose method involved a study of the Bible, supplemented by copies of the *Spectator* brought to the school by the Hutchinson children.[9] She made her charges memorize passages from the Bible, as Wordsworth later recalled:

> The old dame did not affect to make theologians or logicians; but she taught to read; and she practised the memory, often, no doubt, by rote; but still the faculty was

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[6] Edwin Stein, *Wordsworth's Art of Allusion* (Pennsylvania and London, 1988) (hereafter Stein), p. 105.

[7] Lucy Newlyn, *Coleridge, Wordsworth, and the Language of Allusion* (Oxford, 1986) (hereafter Newlyn), p. viii.

[8] Jones 179.

[9] Mary Moorman, *William Wordsworth: The Early Years 1770-1803* (Oxford, 1957), p. 15. See also Morris Marples, *Romantics at School* (London, 1967), p. 18.

> improved; something perhaps she explained, and trusted the rest to parent, to masters, and to the pastor of the parish.[10]

When he progressed to Hawkshead Grammar School, he would have found that, 'Reading instruction . . . consisted mainly of spelling, word recognition, and practice reading in the New Testament'.[11] He would also have been required to attend divine service in the parish church on Sundays and Holy Days,[12] and, regardless of any hopes of greater freedom when he went on to Cambridge in 1787, there too attendance at Chapel was compulsory. His exasperation at this discovery found vent in his tart comments in *The Prelude*:

> Was ever known
> The witless shepherd who would drive his flock
> With serious repetition to a pool
> Of which 'tis plain to sight they never taste? (iii 415-18)

Given the further fact that on one occasion he arrived not only late but with his brain 'clouded by the fumes of wine' (iii 306), it is hard to imagine Wordsworth most of the time doing more than let the service drift past him; the readings from the Bible would have been absorbed largely unconciously into his mind and memory. In the first year at St John's all students were obliged to study St Matthew in the Greek, together with the translation of Isaac de Beausobre's *Introduction to the Reading of the Scriptures* (Cambridge, 1779), as part of the preparation for those who were to go on to take holy orders. Here too Wordsworth seems to have been less than assiduous. According to Ben Ross Schneider Jr., 'It is not likely that he gave much consideration to St Matthew and Beausobre. Greek was apparently not his forte to begin with.'[13]

Nonetheless, whatever he may have felt about rote learning and enforced Chapel attendance, by the time he embarked on his career as a poet, he was able to draw on a considerable range of Biblical reference. In *Descriptive Sketches* there are allusions to Psalms, Genesis and Ecclesiastes, and in *The Borderers* to Kings and Revelation. Those in *Descriptive Sketches* lead Duncan Wu to suggest that Wordsworth 'either knew his Bible extremely well, or was consulting a copy as he composed.'[14] So far as *Lyrical Ballads* is concerned, the allusions and echoes take in Genesis, Kings, Psalms, Mark, Colossians and Hebrews. For all that he was referred to by Coleridge only two years before as 'at least a *Semi*-atheist',[15] Wordsworth by this time had clearly a considerable stock of knowledge of the Bible on which to draw. Even so, Stein is for the most part unimpressed by the uses to which this knowledge is put:

> Self-evident appropriateness is common in Wordsworth's borrowings from Scripture. The bulk of the biblical echoes occur in poems full of sententious comment . . . many are allusively inert echoes, highly familiar phrases which function as tags, decorative

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[10] *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth* ed. E. de Selincourt, *The Later Years: 1821-1853* rev. Alan G. Hill (4 vols., Oxford, 1978-88) (hereafter *LY*), i. 686.

[11] Richard S. Thompson, *Classics or Charity? The dilemma of the 18th century grammar school* (Manchester, 1971), p. 21.

[12] T. W. Thompson, *Wordsworth's Hawkshead* (Oxford, 1970) (hereafter Thompson), p. 118.

[13] Ben Ross Schneider Jr., *Wordsworth's Cambridge Education* (Cambridge, 1957), p. 172.

[14] Duncan Wu, *Wordsworth's Reading 1770-1799* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 15. The Biblical references in *Lyrical Ballads*, summarized in the text, are recorded in Mason, *passim*.

[15] *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* ed. E. L. Griggs (6 vols., Oxford, 1956-71), i. 216.

> reminders, or slight sermonic turns . . . These borrowings do not even seem to function atmospherically, as so many assimilative borrowings do; they act primarily as moral mementos.[16]

He concludes, however, that a few borrowings do have 'atmospheric force',[17] and it is to the presence of such echoes in *Tintern Abbey* that I now turn.

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In the first example, matters are complicated by the fact that we seem to have a choice of sources:

> . . . that serene and blessed mood,
> In which the affections gently lead us on,
> Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
> And even the motion of our human blood
> Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
> In body, and *become a living soul*:
> While with an eye made quiet by the power
> Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
> We see into the life of things. (*Tintern Abbey* 42-50)

The proximate influence would appear to be Milton:

> . . . he formed thee, Adam, thee O man
> Dust of the ground, and in thy nostrils breathed
> The breath of life; in his own image he
> Created thee, in the image of God
> Express, and thou *becamest a living soul*. (*Paradise Lost* vii 524-8)

But behind both passages lies the Biblical account of the creation of Adam: 'And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man *became a living soul*' (Genesis 2.7). It is, of course, unnecessary to try to select one and reject the other of these two sources. The effect here is closer to that of a palimpsest, the different layers of reference being detectable but not fully distinguishable.

What is more remarkable about this passage is the way Wordsworth transforms the significance of this echo from that which it bore in either source. In Genesis, Adam's body is first created out of dust, and it is only after God has 'breathed into his nostrils the breath of life' that he awakes, as it were, to 'become a living soul'. Wordsworth's description, on the other hand, of the process whereby he too becomes 'a living soul' is striking for the way it entails precisely the opposite experience. He is not, like Adam, awakened. On the contrary, he is 'laid *asleep* / In body' (my italics). In some ways this state of bodily sleep seems almost to constitute a metaphoric death: the heart has almost ceased to beat; there is scarcely any 'motion of our human blood'; in place of the breath of God inspiring life, the 'breath of this corporeal frame . . . [is] Almost suspended.' Whereas in Genesis the life of the body and the life of the soul are presented as effectively one, for Wordsworth the deeper life of the soul appears to require, or at least involve, a reduced level of bodily awareness.[18] In *Tintern Abbey* the object is Wordsworth's final awed and joyful sense of being enabled to '*see* into the life of things' (my italics). Spiritual sight is gained through the quiescence of physical sight: the eye is 'made quiet', a phrase whose synaesthesia conveys an oblique impression of its otherwise noisy intrusiveness, and in this respect it perhaps anticipates Wordsworth's well-known phrase, later in *The Prelude*, about the eye being 'The most despotic of our senses' (xi 173).

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[16] Stein 158-9.

[17] Stein 159.

Although it may seem a little fanciful to suggest that being 'laid asleep / In body, and become a living soul' carries metaphoric overtones of death, the phrase impressed itself in precisely this way on Jonathan Wordsworth who wrote, in a suggestive parenthesis, 'death had after all been the central metaphor of *Tintern Abbey*'.[19] Identifying a single controlling metaphor in a poem as complex and multi-layered as *Tintern Abbey* is a difficult matter, and Lucy Newlyn is no doubt on safer ground in observing that 'Loss, on several different levels - sometimes distinct, more often seemingly confused - is the poem's real subject.'[20] There is, though, an obvious enough connection between the two, in that death is the most extreme form of loss, and it would be natural to draw upon the former, consciously or not, as a metaphor for the latter.

In the present case, though, the situation is more complicated. Here the sedation of the vital springs of bodily consciousness is positively welcomed as a necessary stage in the acquisition of a higher level of insight. Elsewhere in the poem, by contrast, the loss of the intense life of the body is experienced as a diminishment of the self, and the pang which it caused is detectable in the very act of denial: 'Not for this / Faint I, nor mourn, nor murmur'. What both responses have in common is a placing of the process of seeming or actual loss in the context of a larger gain. This balance of loss and gain has implications for both Newlyn's and Wordsworth's sense of the central subject, or metaphor, of the poem. If the real subject is not loss (Newlyn) but loss and gain, then equally it is not death (Wordsworth) but death and - for want of a better term - resurrection. Again, distinctions must be made. The concepts of loss and gain have a clear purchase on the poem, since they are employed by the poet himself. Those of death and resurrection have no such purchase; their presence is oblique, hidden, indirect; and in what follows, therefore, I argue that they constitute no more than an intermittent, and not always consistently developed, pattern throughout the poem.

In the passage we have just looked at, Wordsworth seems to have taken over a phrase from the Genesis account of Adam's creation, but transformed its significance. The new context presents something akin to a metaphorical death of the body followed by an access of greater spiritual insight. Implicit in this process is the assumption that the soul and the body are to some degree at odds, at least in the sense that the development of the soul's capacity for spiritual understanding may require a weakening of bodily awareness. Clearly none of this was furnished by the passage in Genesis - or, for that matter, by the corresponding passage in Milton. In order to understand more fully what is taking place here, we must look further into the Bible.

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[18] Coincidentally no doubt, there is some correspondence here between the physical symptoms Wordsworth describes (the slowing of heartrate and breathing) and meditation techniques, whose object is an altered or enlarged consciousness.

[19] Jonathan Wordsworth, *William Wordsworth: The Borders of Vision* (Oxford, 1982), p. 26.

[20] Newlyn 53.

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The Genesis verse occurs again, in the New Testament, where it is quoted in a context which gives it much more of the inflection which it bears when it is quoted in *Tintern Abbey.* In Paul's first Letter to the Corinthians he draws together, in explicit contrast, Adam and Christ. Adam is associated with the corruptible body, and Christ, through his death and resurrection, with the transforming spirit:

> It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body.
>
> And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.
>
> Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.
>
> The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven.
>
> (I Corinthians 15.44-7)

How well would Wordsworth have known these lines? The probability is, very well indeed. They are central to Christian doctrine, and he is unlikely to have escaped contact with them as part of his religious upbringing. Equally, if not more, significant is the fact that they form part of a longer passage presented as part of the burial service in the Book of Common Prayer (I Corinthians 15.20-58). It was customary in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries for children to attend funerals,[21] and at a time in his life when he was most open to impressions and the words would have made greatest impact, he seems likely to have attended at least five: that of his mother when he was eight; the Hawkshead schoolfriend, memorialized as the Boy of Winander, when he was twelve;[22] his father at 13; the husband of Ann Tyson, with whom he boarded while at school, at 14; his much-admired headmaster at 16. As further evidence of the lasting impact of the burial service passage on the poet's imagination, Stein has identified three other occasions when phrases from it are assimilated into Wordsworth's poetry: verse 51 in the 'Prospectus' of *The Excursion*; verse 55 in *The Excursion*, Book 5; and verse 52 in *On the Power of Sound.*[23]

Although '. . . become a living soul' is a direct verbal echo of Genesis, Wordsworth's use seems to draw on some of the associations of the Corinthians passage. On this second occasion Paul employs the Genesis phrase as part of a series of contrasts between Adam and Christ, Adam being associated negatively with the 'natural' body and Christ with the 'quickening spirit'. The opposition here of nature and spirit forms, in turn, part of a larger sequence of death and resurrection, the one being a precondition of the other. Something of a partly similar kind seems to be present in the extract from *Tintern Abbey* quoted earlier; here Wordsworth appears to progress beyond the limits of the body and physical sight as a stage in the achievement of a more profound vision. The parallelism is, of course, far from exact. For a start, Paul gives Adam's symbolic role as bringer of death a considerably more negative emphasis than it bears in *Tintern Abbey*, where the pervasive mood at this point is 'serene and blessed': more negative, too, than it appears in Genesis - something to which I shall return later. Clearly, whatever is going on here, Wordsworth is not making a conscious appropriation of the Corinthians passage. Its diffusive effects (if we can be sure that is what they are) enable us to make only a lesser claim. What I would suggest, with regard to both this passage and the poem as a whole, is that the narratives of the creation of Adam and his subsequent fall, together with the eventual triumph of Christ,[24] seem to have offered Wordsworth's imagination a complex mythic pattern, which he was able to use for the purpose of reflecting, not always consciously or consistently, upon questions of his own growth, change and personal identity.

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[21] There are at present gaps in our knowledge. 'The history of the eighteenth-century funeral has still to be written'; Introduction to *Death, Ritual, and Bereavement* ed. Ralph Houlbrooke (London, 1989), p. 23. In the seventeenth century there was a presumption that children should attend funerals, sometimes even if there were no ties of kinship: 'their importance may be seen in their symbolism as an age group; although death might remove a member, the community still continued to exist through the procreation of children' - Clare Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England* (London, 1984), p. 153. Dr Houlbrooke's opinion, given in a private conversation, is that Wordsworth is likely to have been present at most of the funerals listed.

[22] 'Wordsworth told his cousin Dorothy afterwards Mrs Benson Harrison, that the grave was that of a Hawkshead boy named Tyson, a pupil at the Grammar School who had been a playmate of his' (Thompson 56).

[23] Stein 160, 183.

These symbolic narratives, as I shall now go on to argue, also enabled him to address those larger philosophical questions that lie at the heart of *Tintern Abbey*. What is the relation of the visible to the invisible world, of nature to spirit? Are they aspects of a single comprehensive harmony? To put it more pressingly, can Wordsworth accept as truth those moments of insight - visionary or merely intuitive - which suggest that all life is indeed One? In seeking to give a positive answer to these questions Wordsworth presents us in *Tintern Abbey* with two different experiences of unity. Each is mediated by a metaphoric process of death followed by resurrection. Neither, however, for different reasons, seems to prove satisfactory or enduring. At the end of the poem Wordsworth comes to accept the logic of dualism and division: that is, the separateness of his existence from that which is outside him, and the separateness of 'the mind of man' (as well as its superiority) from the life of the body and senses.

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The higher vision, implicit in the experience of seeing into the life of things, is set forth most powerfully in the celebrated passage beginning, 'And I have felt / A presence that disturbs me with the joy / Of elevated thoughts' (ll. 94-112). Wordsworth here evokes what he elsewhere called the 'one life',[25] that universal principle which lies behind, links together and sustains 'All thinking things, all objects of all thought'. The passage as a whole is undeniably thrilling, not least in its final invocation to 'nature and language of the sense', where, Wordsworth declares, in the majestic sonorities of its conclusion, he is well pleased to recognize

> The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
> The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
> Of all my moral being. (ll. 110-12)

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[24] Medieval accounts of Christ's Harrowing of Hell provide, interestingly, a narrative of Adam's own death and resurrection. According to some versions, Christ after his crucifixion delivered from Hell (or Limbo) a number of virtuous souls, including Adam. Wordsworth is unlikely to have known about this from his own religious upbringing, as it did not form part of Protestant belief or teaching. It is possible, however, that he came across it through his knowledge of Dante, who uses the tradition in *Paradise*, Canto 26. Hazlitt in *The Spirit of the Age* refers to Wordsworth's 'strong predilection for . . . Dante' (*Collected Works of William Hazlitt* ed. A. R. Waller and Arnold Glover [London, 1902], iv. 276).

[25] '. . . in all things / I saw one life, and felt that it was joy'. The passage from which these lines come was written as part of *The Pedlar* a few months before *Tintern Abbey*, and was later incorporated into *The Prelude* ii 415-34.

The firmness and confidence of Wordsworth's utterance at this point invest what precedes it with a gratifyingly extractable quality. In the passage as a whole, we may be tempted to say, Wordsworth evokes his most deeply felt, strongest, and most enduring sense of reality.

And yet for all its immediate rhetorical convincingness, the passage as a whole does not have the same expansiveness, wonder and joy or the achieved poetic unity of the 'one life' passage in *The Pedlar*. Furthermore, closer examination starts to reveal some fissures in the logic of the verse. The relation of the metaphysics of the first part of the passage to the morality of the second is less than seamless, and Wordsworth's use of the connective in '*Therefore* am I still / A lover of the meadows and the woods' (my italics) has been dismissed as an 'extraordinary *non sequitur*'.[26] There is, though, perhaps a more fundamental problem posed by the vision of unity itself. The experience of unity presupposes that dualism has been transcended, and that distinctions between matter and mind, nature and spirit, have ceased to exist, or at least to signify. One cannot be entirely confident, however, that this is the case here. Troublingly, there is the suggestion, at least, that Wordsworth's experience of unity is erected on the foundations of that most traditional and uncompromising of dualisms: body and spirit. The state of spiritual insight in which 'We see into the life of things' seems to have as its prior condition a quietening or sedating of the body. Wordsworth's contrast of the body and spirit, as noted earlier, lacks the absolute, oppositional quality that it has in the Corinthians passage, but to the extent that it is present at all, it constitutes a residual dualism and exerts a subtly destablising effect on Wordsworth's subsequent vision of a comprehensive unifying harmony.

This has two consequences for Wordsworth - one immediate, one longer-term. The immediate sign of destabilisation is the disconcerting effect created at the beginning of the next verse paragraph. After the seemingly confident affirmation of the 'one life' we are suddenly presented with a note of concessive hesitation ('Nor, perchance, / If I were *not* thus taught . . .', my italics), in which Wordsworth seems momentarily to contemplate the illusory nature of everything he has just asserted. The second, longer-term consequence has been summarized by Jonathan Wordsworth: 'The history of his later philosophical poetry is one of declining belief in the One Life, bolstered by greater and greater claims for the Imagination and "the Mind of Man". *Tintern Abbey* is the transitional poem'.[27] Subsequently the relation of mind to nature ceases to be one of unbroken unity and becomes at best a matter of mutual reflection and interdependence. The poem is a stage in the journey to the unambiguous dualism and explicitly-stated order of priorities set out at the end of the 1805 *Prelude*, where Wordsworth makes the ambitious claim about

> how the mind of man becomes
> A thousand times *more* beautiful than the earth
> On which he dwells. (xiii 446-8, my italics)

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[26] Isobel Armstrong, '"Tintern Abbey": From Augustan to Romantic', *Augustan Worlds* ed. J. C. Hilson, M. M. B. Jones and J. R. Watson (London 1978), pp. 261-79, 276.

[27] Jonathan Wordsworth, *The Music of Humanity* (London, 1969), p. 212. See also Nicholas Roe: 'Wordsworth's poetry of "cheerful faith" in "Tintern Abbey" is complicated by, and derives its power from, a lasting awareness of insecurity that issues in the poem's characteristic idiom of assertion and simultaneous reservation. One immediate reason for this was, perhaps, Wordsworth's incipient doubt about the adequacy of the One Life to his own spiritual experience - even as he gave that vision of a living universe its fullest and most beautiful expression'; *Wordsworth and Coleridge: The Radical Years* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 269-70.

If we look again at the Corinthians passage, we notice there is something cavalier, even simply inappropriate, about Paul's incorporation of the verse from Genesis. In his Letter to the Corinthians, Paul writes about the state of imperfect *post*lapsarian mankind and contrasts it with the perfection of Christ. But the verse from Genesis referred to the condition of Adam at the moment of his creation - that is to say, *before*, not after, his Fall. Paul had adapted it to his own purposes. The Genesis verse, in its original context, enshrines a wholly different state, in which nature and spirit are *not* irrevocably opposed, in which indeed they are as one. This conception offers Wordsworth's imagination a correspondingly different metaphor, one which speaks to another aspect of his experience, belonging this time to his past rather than his present. In this second example the Adam-metaphor seems to have been reinforced once again, though to different effect, by the Christ-metaphor of resurrection.

The second manifestation of death and resurrection is inscribed in the change from what Wordsworth was five years ago to what he is now. The forms of nature were then, as he tells us, 'a feeling and a love, / That had no need of a remoter charm, / By thought supplied.' His joy in nature was of such intensity and immediacy as to exclude everything else and to be almost beyond the reach of language: 'I cannot paint / What then I was.' He is a different person now, changed

> from what I was, when first
> I came among these hills; when like a roe
> I bounded o'er the mountains . . . (ll. 67-9)

In these lines there are echoes from the Song of Solomon:

> The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh *leaping upon the mountains*, skipping upon *the hills*.
>
> My beloved is *like a roe* . . . (2, 8-9, my italics)

The Song of Solomon, as well as reinforcing and validating Wordsworth's direct visceral delight in nature ('An appetite'), invests it, by implication, with a more exalted spiritual quality. The poet and nature are sustained in the reciprocity of a perfect love, in which the spiritual is indivisible from the physical. In Wordsworth's summarizing phrase, 'nature then . . . To me was all in all'. The use of 'all in all' at this point has a further significance, carrying as it does another echo from the Corinthians passage used in the burial service: 'And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be *all in all*' (I Corinthians 15.28; my italics).[28] Wordsworth uses the phrase in its Biblical sense of completion and perfection. But whereas, in the Corinthians passage, this state lies in the future, here it is used by Wordsworth to refer to a period in his own past. The state evoked by this phrase and by the echoes of the Song of Solomon earlier are of an innocent joyous blend of the physical and spiritual. To that extent it is arguable that what is created here is analogous, at least to some degree, to the state of the newly-created Adam in the prelapsarian Garden of Eden.

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[28] The use of 'all in all' as an intensifier to signify completeness and perfection goes back to the sixteenth century. It occurs in Shakespeare, perhaps most famously in Hamlet's description of his father: 'He was a man: take him for all in all'. Harold Jenkins in the Arden edition (p. 439) notes that it was collected in Tilley's *Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (1950), and it clearly survived as a popular phrase in Wordsworth's time, as indicated by its later inclusion in Brewer's *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* (1870). One cannot therefore be certain that the route of its transmission into *Tintern Abbey* was via the Bible, though it remains a plausible speculation. The phrase occurs on only one other occasion in the Bible: the church 'is his [Christ's] body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all' (Ephesians I.23). There is also an adapted usage: 'Christ is all, and in all' (Colossians 3.11).

It is occasionally pointed out that there is a discrepancy between the emotional tenor of this account of Wordsworth's first visit to the Wye in 1793 and what we know of his circumstances and likely state of mind at the time. He had returned from France the year before, leaving Annette Vallon pregnant with their daughter; he had no immediate prospects of return, since war had been declared against France; the disillusionment of his political hopes, combined with personal guilt and distress, and an inability even to settle on a conventional means of supporting himself, let alone to establish himself as a poet, had led to something like a nervous breakdown. None of this, however, is strictly to the point. The self-examination of which *Tintern Abbey* consists is not concerned with the recording, or even establishment, of literal truth. The poem is an attempt to make sense of his past, to form it into an intellectually and emotionally satisfying pattern. It is an exercise in self-mythologising, similar to that at the end of the 1805 *Prelude* where Wordsworth mythologises the past relations of himself and Coleridge as a prelapsarian idyll.[29] His procedure in both instances differs only in the degree of conscious intent from his deployment in the *Immortality Ode* of the belief in 'a pre-existent state' of the soul[30] not as objective fact but as a way of explaining to himself the process of loss and gain in the growth from childhood to adulthood.

The extent of Wordsworth's self-mythologising in *Tintern Abbey* becomes clearer if we pause over what seems at first an odd, even redundant, parenthesis inserted in his account of the earlier visit. He digresses momentarily to contrast the self that he was five years ago with the more distant one when he was a child:

> (The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
> And their glad animal movements all gone by) (ll. 74-5)

This vignette of the boy Wordsworth as uncomplicatedly extrovert and cheerful in a vaguely thuggish way is puzzling in the context of how Wordsworth explored his childhood experiences elsewhere. The picture it offers will not do even as a comment on *Nutting*. It is even less reconcilable with the complex inwardness of the portrayal of his childhood self in the *Two-Part Prelude*, which he completed within the next twelve months. But, to repeat, the establishment of strict autobiographical truth is not the issue. *Tintern Abbey*'s rewriting of his early years has a different purpose. Wordsworth wants his visit to the Wye five years before to serve as a metaphor for a time of past happiness in which delight in nature was not just more intense but had a distinct spiritual luminosity which he had subsequently lost. To give the spiritual dimension of that state adequate emphasis Wordsworth had to mark it off both from the period that followed (in which he claimed to receive 'Abundant recompense' for its loss) and also from his earlier life. So his boyhood had to become, for the purposes of the poem, a time of nothing more elevated or significant than 'coarser pleasures' and 'glad animal movements'.

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[29] Newlyn 32.

[30] Jones 179. The *Immortality Ode* has many obvious similarities to *Tintern Abbey*. Helen Vendler has noted the presence of the Eden myth here too in what she regards as Wordsworth's 'ambivalence at leaving Eden' ('Lionel Trilling and Wordsworth's Immortality Ode', *The Music of What Happens: Poems, Poets, Critics* [Cambridge, Mass., 1988], p. 95).

If Wordsworth is indeed, at some level, drawing on the image of Adam before the Fall as a way of expressing the distinctive quality of his earlier visit, it is a metaphor whose significance is traced through to its conclusion. His state then is one from which, like Adam, he has since been expelled. He tells us bleakly, 'That time is past'. It is now 'no more'. As Lucy Newlyn points out, 'The insistent repetitions - 'For nature *then* . . . To me was all in all'; 'I cannot paint / What *then* I was'; 'Their colours and their forms were *then* to me / An appetite' - serve to emphasize both the singleness of past time and the absoluteness of its loss.'[31] The self that experienced it is, therefore, also effectively dead. The strategy of the poem at this point is to offer 'for such loss . . . Abundant recompense' in the form of the higher meditative vision of the 'presence that disturbs me with the joy / Of elevated thoughts'. That vision is one which accepts and extends the loss of Wordsworth's earlier responsiveness to nature; his physical self 'dies' in order to make possible a compensating rebirth to a higher state in which he 'see[s] into the life of things'. As discussed already, there is a question as to how adequate or convincing that 'recompense' is. Its adequacy is called even further into question when we realize that there is available to Wordsworth, even as he speaks, a second, much more joyful, abundant and immediate form of recompense which is expressed in terms of an altogether different kind of resurrection:

> For thou art with me, here, upon the banks
> Of this fair river: thou, my dearest friend,
> My dear, dear friend, and in thy voice I catch
> The language of *my former heart*, and read
> *My former pleasures* in the shooting lights
> Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while
> May I behold in thee *what I was once*,
> My dear, dear sister! (ll. 115-122, my italics)

These lines make a powerful impact. Although the principal effect is, of course, of the strength of Wordsworth's love for his sister, the italicized phrases seem to suggest something more. It is as if Wordsworth's younger self, lost or 'dead', is in a sense 'alive' after all, and so 'the absoluteness of its loss' may not in fact be absolute; it has been partly restored to him in the person of Dorothy.

For Wordsworth, Dorothy is an individual recognized and loved for herself, but she is also a figure in whom he can discern, or on whom he can project, 'what I was once'. Even in recording his love for her, an element of fantasy-projection seems to be fleetingly present. The comfort and security which he derives from her presence carries overtones of an altogether different mode of love-dependency, that of mankind on God, most of all in times of distress and uncertainty. The phrase, 'For thou art with me', is recognisably an echo of Psalm 23: 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.'[32] While we are clearly not to make too much of this distant identification of Dorothy with God, it nevertheless serves to reinforce the emotional tenor of the passage as a whole. Its powerful blend of love, joy, relief and religious awe calls to mind nothing so much as the recognition scenes at the end of Shakespeare's late comedies, where a loved one, formerly thought dead, is miraculously restored. One thinks of Pericles' discovery of Marina and, perhaps even more, of Hermione's restoration to Leontes, an occasion on which, like Dorothy, Hermione remains silent. In each case the return of daughter and wife causes the numbed and anguished protagonist to feel that part of his very life, cruelly severed, has been restored to him. In Wordsworth's case the effect of the metaphoric restoration of Dorothy is more muted, not least because of one crucial difference between his situation and the denouements of Shakespeare's late comedies. For Wordsworth, unlike Pericles or Leontes, restoration is not permanent. The processes of time and change are inexorably at work here, just as they are throughout a poem whose gaze is fixed so uncompromisingly on past, present and future. When he asks for 'a little while' in which to 'behold in thee what I was once', the poignancy of the request lies partly in the fact that he knows 'a little while' is all that Dorothy has. The intensity of her 'wild ecstasies' will not last; they will in time transform to the condition of 'a sober pleasure'. She will follow the path that he has had to take. What is maturation and growth considered from one point of view is also diminishment and loss considered from another. In so far as Wordsworth's description of his state five years before contained echoes of uncomplicated Edenic bliss, it follows that, just like him, Dorothy too will in time be cast out of Eden.[33]

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[31] Newlyn 54-5.

[32] Noted in Mason 213.

Tintern Abbey presents us, then, with two Wordsworthian visions of the unity of nature and spirit: one in the past (vicariously, if temporarily, recreated in Dorothy), from which he himself is now forever excluded by the passage of time; and one in the present ('recompense' for the loss of the first), in the adequacy of which, however, he is starting to lose confidence. The former state was distinguished by an innocent, spiritualized joy in the response of body and senses to the life of nature. It was also, significantly, a state 'That had no need of a remoter charm / By *thought* supplied' (my italics). The presence of thought is what distinguishes the later visionary state from its predecessor; the later state encompasses 'All *thinking* things, all objects of all *thought*' (my italics). But this acquisition is not a matter of simple enlargement. For one thing, it is accompanied by, and has to compensate for, a diminution in the poet's earlier, direct, sensuous joy in nature. For another, the growth of his characteristic brooding reflectiveness has the inevitable effect of separating the knower, Wordsworth, from the known. In Blakean terms it is a fall into division. The greater the emphasis on 'the mind of man' - which includes the poet's own mind - the harder it becomes to experience all creation and oneself within it as a comprehensive unity. In Wordsworth's later development 'the mind of man' comes to be upheld as not only separate from but superior to the life of the senses. Because that dualism is already present but not overtly acknowledged in *Tintern Abbey*, it remains as an incipient fracture within the larger philosophical vision of unity which Wordsworth seeks to place at the centre of the poem.

Wordsworth tries to deal with these unresolved contradictions in two ways. The first is a willed and self-conscious attempt to shore up his present visionary faith in the 'one life'. He uses a series of rhetorical devices to qualify and render suspect his experiences of five years before. His joys then are represented as 'aching', his raptures as 'dizzy'. The suggestion of unbalanced excess is reinforced by that of deficiency; the time of 'thoughtless youth' it is implied, lacks the deeper wisdom and insight that comes with age. These, and other examples like them, are not finally convincing. Rather, here as elsewhere, the poem takes on the character of a palimpsest, and despite Wordsworth's attempt to dull the memory and significance of his earlier experiences, they shine through regardless with a still vibrant intensity. The second tactic is to accept the logic of dualism. *Tintern Abbey* comes increasingly to exalt the reflective, the meditative and the spiritual over the instinctual, the physical and (in a derogated sense) the natural. Or in terms of the poem's metaphoric structure, as mediated through the Corinthians passage quoted earlier, it exalts the second Adam, Christ, over the first Adam.

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[33] The nuances of this passage are more complex than I have been able to indicate here. I trace the relationship of these lines to Wordsworth's later poetic development in 'Wordsworth, Dorothy Wordsworth, *Samson Agonistes* and *Tintern Abbey*', *Neophilologus* (forthcoming).

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This second process is observable in the final verse paragraph. Here Wordsworth is doing two things. He seeks to make a final definitive statement about the large philosophical issues with which he had grappled in the previous part of the poem, and he also attempts to redefine his relation with his sister. Both processes take place simultaneously. Both seem to involve him in taking on the persona of Christ. It may be that part of the appeal exercised on his imagination by the figure of Christ is that it represented that condition for which Wordsworth had been striving unsuccessfully throughout the poem: an end to self-division, doubt and uncertainty; a state of serene, calm authority over his own experience, including the transformation of his temporary excessive dependence on Dorothy; a state, in short, of transcendence. The final verse paragraph starts on a note of bewilderment and self-doubt ('Nor, perchance, / If I were not thus taught . . .'), from which he is immediately rescued by the presence of Dorothy. Momentarily at least ('For thou art with me . . .') he is subordinate to her; *she* becomes *his* spiritual guide and source of comfort and reassurance. For Wordsworth, this is a reversal of the natural order of things,[34] and in the lines that follow a more proper balance is restored. His voice acquires first a more confident ring as he takes on what is, in effect, a priest-like role: 'this prayer I make, / Knowing that Nature never did betray / The heart that loved her'.

The balance of dependency and dominance between the two has now shifted, and it shifts still further in the long benediction that makes up the final movement of the poem:

> Therefore let the moon
> Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
> And let the mountain winds be free
> To blow against thee: and, in after years,
> When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
> Into a sober pleasure, when thy mind
> Shall be a *mansion* for all lovely forms,
> Thy memory be as a *dwelling-place*

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[34] Wordsworth's dominance of his sister is explored by John Barrell in 'The uses of Dorothy: "The Language of the Sense" in "Tintern Abbey"', *Poetry, Language and Politics* (Manchester, 1988). In the context of eighteenth-century educational theory, Wordsworth's ability to use abstract language distinguishes him from Dorothy, in whom it is a matter of future potential. A more wide-ranging analysis of Wordsworth's collusion with patriarchy in preserving female subordination is contained in Marlon B. Ross, 'Naturalising Gender: Woman's Place in Wordsworth's Ideological Landscape', *ELH* 53 (1986) 391-410; and briefer comments about Wordsworth and the quest for male self-identity are to be found in the same author's 'Romantic quest and conquest: troping masculine power in the crisis of poetic identity', in *Romanticism and Feminism* ed. Anne K Mellor (Bloomington, Indiana, 1988), pp. 26-51. See also Margaret Homans, *Women Writers and Poetic Identity: Dorothy Wordsworth, Emily Bronte, and Emily Dickinson* (Princeton, NJ, 1980), especially Chapter 1, 'The Masculine Tradition'.

For all sweet sounds and harmonies . . . (ll. 135-143, my italics)[35]

At a distance behind this passage one hears the echo of Christ's words to his disciples:

> Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.
> In my Father's house are many *mansions*: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a *place* for you. (John 14.1-2; my italics)

This passage would have been reasonably well-known to Wordsworth. It is part of a longer passage prescribed as part of the service for the Monday before Easter, and as he daydreamed his way through compulsory Church attendance at school and university, these words would have sunk into that region of his consciousness where his creative powers were forming. The relevance of Christ's words at this point goes beyond a matter of simple verbal echoes. There is a correspondence, I suggest, both in situation and in verbal register, between Jesus offering reassurance to his disciples and Wordsworth here reassuring Dorothy. This becomes more evident in the rest of the sentence just quoted:

. . . oh! then,
If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
Shall be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
And these my exhortations! (ll. 143-7)

Just as Jesus is going to prepare a place for his disciples, Wordsworth has, in a limited metaphoric sense, already gone to prepare a place for Dorothy. He leads where she is to follow. He offers himself as a model of what will be possible for her too later on when her 'wild ecstasies shall be matured / Into a sober pleasure'. A similar view of the lines just quoted has been proposed by Richard J. Onorato: 'He sounds priest-like, but there is also the suggestion of the Poet as Redeemer here . . . As one might imagine Jesus speaking to the Apostles, Wordsworth offers the memory of himself as teacher and model.'[36] This line of thought carries over to what Wordsworth says next: 'If I should be where I no more can hear / Thy voice . . .' With the weight of the preceding lines behind it, this acknowledgement by Wordsworth of his own mortality is momentarily transformed into the hint of Christ's final transcendence, in which he assures his disciples of his love and care for them even after his physical departure. The suggestion of Christ shortly before his Ascension is reinforced by an earlier, more explicit Biblical echo:

Oh! *yet a little while*
May I behold in thee what I was once,
My dear, dear sister . . . (ll. 120-2; my italics)

These heartfelt tones derive part of their force from Christ's last words to his disciples: '*Yet a little while*, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also' (John 14.19; my italics). This verse would have been familiar to Wordsworth, as part of the Whit Sunday service. The echo of it here, combined with the one just noted from the beginning of John 14, indicate how powerfully the image of Christ prior to his Ascension echoed in Wordsworth's imagination.

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[35] Newlyn points out that Wordsworth's blessing of Dorothy recalls the ending of *Frost at Midnight*: 'But Dorothy's future, in contrast to Hartley's, is imagined outside the framework of the "One Life"' (Newlyn 56). What is also significant, for my purposes, is the benign *de haut en bas* tone that Wordsworth took over from Coleridge: as Coleridge to his young son, so Wordsworth to his (adult) sister.

[36] Richard J. Onorato. *The Character of the Poet: Wordsworth in 'The Prelude'* (Princeton, 1971), p. 83.

Although my argument throughout has emphasized the importance to Wordsworth's imagination of the figures of Adam and Christ, the emphasis gradually shifting from the one to the other, *Tintern Abbey* does not in the end attempt a resolution in these terms. It is characteristic of the honesty of Wordsworth's self-scrutiny in *Tintern Abbey* that the covert Christ-references, with all the rhetorical evasiveness that their use implies, do not form the conclusion of the poem. The Christ-references stands at the apex of a verse paragraph whose architecture has a remarkable symmetry of an ascending and descending kind. The ascent has already been described. But Wordsworth does not remain there in the impregnability and security where all doubts are silenced and where he is able confidently to propose Dorothy's future for her. He starts to descend, deploying for a second time the image of himself as priest, or priest-pilgrim ('I, so long / A worshipper of Nature, hither came, / Unwearied in that service'). And at the end he is back where he began, acknowledging his need for, and dependence on, Dorothy. The final sentence combines, in an extraordinarily moving way, a prediction, an injunction, and a plea:

> Nor wilt thou then forget,
> That after many wanderings, many years
> Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
> And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
> More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake. (ll. 156-60)

Tintern Abbey ends its journey of spiritual exploration not with the images of Adam and Christ on which it had drawn earlier; rather, with the acceptance of

> the very world which is the world
> Of all of us, the place in which, in the end,
> We find our happiness, or not at all. (*Prelude* x 725-7)

In 'the world / Of all of us' what matter most are the bonds of human connectedness - most of all for Wordsworth at this time, those between him and Dorothy. The broader recognition implicit at the end of the poem is that 'we have all of us one human heart.'[37] It is a truth that was to become increasingly central to Wordsworth's poetry in the years following *Tintern Abbey*.

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[37] *The Old Cumberland Beggar*, Mason 315. The enduring resonance of this phrase for Wordsworth is indicated by the fact that he quotes it in a letter to Henry Crabb Robinson when he was 65: 'If my writings are to last, it will I myself believe, be mainly owing to this characteristic. They will please for the single cause, "That we have all of us one human heart!"' (*LY* iii. 44).

Charles Lamb and the Bruton Family: A Note

By J. D. ALSOP

ONE OF THE LESSER-KNOWN STUDENTS of English Literature in Victorian London was the publican D. Yeo Bruton. An avid collector of rare eighteenth-century publications during the 1850s and 1860s, he came to be the owner of the Addison *Spectator* manuscript discovered by James Dykes Campbell in 1858 and of a number of significant periodical publications by Steele, lent to George Aitken for the 1889 *Life of Richard Steele*.[1] The last owner of the Trumpet Tavern in Shire Lane, Fleet Street, Bruton compiled a manuscript history of his beloved Kit Kat Club.[2] Genealogy became a feature of his old age, as is seen in the following extract from a letter to William Carew Hazlitt of 30 December 1898.[3] Replying to an earlier communication from Hazlitt, Bruton went on to enquire about the relationship between Charles Lamb and the Brutons. He was aware of the favourable personal references to the Bruton family contained in 'Mackery End', but not, as yet, of the circumstances of Lamb's descent from the Brutons through his maternal grandmother, Mary Field, née Bruton, nor of the extensive intermarriage between the Gladmans and Brutons which produced the 'substantial yeoman' of the essay and the 'glorious woman' - Mrs Bruton of Lamb's correspondence.[4] D. Yeo Bruton believed he was descended from this family, and he certainly possessed close Hertfordshire connections.[5] His enquiry to Hazlitt reads as follows:

> Have you, may I ask, at any time met with any information showing Charles Lamb's connection with the Hertfordshire Bruton's? I imagine they were an old yeoman family who settled in Hertfordshire about 1690. . . . Of course it is only like a bye-path in Lambian history, though as 'Mackery End' is one of his most personal Essays where he avows his connection with the Fields and the Gladman's who were certainly among the oldest and most respectable families in the County, one is almost tempted to think that the essay upon Mackery End might very well be annotated into a small volume. There are still descendants of the Mackery End Bruton's living in the immediate neighbourhood, and if the Fields and Gladman's were also included I should say the whole districts of Wheathampsted, Harpenden and St. Albans is all alive with them.

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[1] G. A. Aitken, *The Life of Richard Steele* (2 vols., London, 1889), i. xiv, 97n; J. D. Alsop, 'The Victorians and the Addison Manuscript', *Harvard Library Journal* (forthcoming). Bruton's correspondence with Aitken is in the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin (HRHRC).

[2] A manuscript copy exists in HRHRC, Aitken-Steele MSS, Misc. (Aitken notes for Steele biography, folder 3).

[3] British Library, Add MS 38908, f. 23.

[4] Charles Lamb, *The Essays of Elia and the Last Essays of Elia* ed. R. Lynd and W. Macdonald (2 vols., London, 1929), i. 90; Winifred Courtney, *Young Charles Lamb, 1775-1802* (London and New York, 1982), pp. 350-1; *Letters of Charles Lamb* ed. E. V. Lucas (3 vols., London, 1935), ii. 246.

[5] HRHRC, Aitken-Steele MSS, Misc. (Bruton, 10 and 24 March 1885).

Reviews

Coleridge: The Early Family Letters. Ed. James Engell. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994. Pp. xx + 113. ISBN 0 19 818244 9. £25 hardback.

SOME 45 YEARS AGO that great Coleridgean George Whalley wrote: 'The childhood of Samuel Taylor Coleridge was recorded only by himself'. Every biographer of STC before or since has accepted that judgement. Our sense of Coleridge's early days at Ottery St Mary depends almost entirely on a short sequence of autobiographical letters the young poet addressed to his friend Tom Poole at Nether Stowey. Crafted with all the artistry of the Romantic egotist, these letters convey to us an indelibly memorable sequence of images of the infant poet: reading all those gilt-covered little books from his aunt's 'every-thing shop' at Crediton, and then running down to the churchyard of St Mary at Ottery to 'act over all I had been reading on the docks, the nettles, and the rank-grasses'; quarrelling about some minced cheese with his brother Frank, and, after menacing him with a knife, running away to spend the night by the banks of the Otter, where he lay devoutly reading over his shilling book of morning and evening prayers, and 'thinking at the same time with inward & gloomy satisfaction, how miserable my Mother must be!'; walking home with his elderly clergyman father one night and being told the names of the stars; 'and how Jupiter was a thousand times larger than our world'. . . . All of which occasioned in him, so he tells us, not 'the least mixture of wonder or incredulity for . . . my mind had become habituated to the Vast'.

It is a marvellous account of a 'marvellous boy'. A brilliantly suggestive and self-conscious sketch for 'the Growth of the Poet's Mind', in which bursts of physical activity alternate with bouts of literary brilliance or indolence, convincingly projecting upon us what might now be called a media image of the adult STC. The Poole letters read like drafts for the script of some modern literary TV documentary. It is as such that we ought perhaps both to enjoy them and to question them. For few TV documentaries are content to record merely a single voice. How illuminating it might be, for example, to have Brother Frank's version of what happened in that minced cheese episode, possibly with a quiet Devonian summing-up from their mother as a voice-over! Such revelations at this late date seem unlikely and the Infant Samuel Documentary must remain a monologue. But publication of Professor Engell's new edition of *The Early Family Letters* will be widely welcomed for the momentarily stereophonic effects it helps to add to the story of STC's childhood.

The 40 letters James Engell prints have been available, transcribed in the hand of Bernard Lord Coleridge, as the British Library Additional MS 47556 since the 1950s. Amazingly, they have been little used by scholars and biographers. At one level they provide social documentary evidence of the history of a remarkable family. Two of the brothers, in particular, emerge more clearly: the eldest son John (1754-87), and Sam's sibling rival Frank, or Francis Syndercombe Coleridge (1770-?91/2). John, 18 years older than Sam, left for India as a military cadet two years before the poet was born. He was very consciously and conscientiously the eldest son of the family, sending money home from the time of his father's death and providing help, through money, influence and advice, for the younger Coleridges from then on until his own death. He was even planning a cadetship for young Sam in 1785. (And how irretrievably disastrous the Silas Tomkyn Comberbache episode might have been had it occurred in Bengal rather than Berkshire!) A chance meeting between Captain John and his midshipman brother Frank led to his securing an army place for him as an ensign at the age of thirteen. The moment is vividly rendered in Frank's letter to his sister Anne of 1784, and an extract may help to show these letters at their best. As Professor Engell claims, they often have the force of a short eighteenth-century epistolary novel. Yet it is perhaps worth pointing out that, in this instance, the epistolary novelist was no more than fourteen.

> I was then in the lower deck, and though you won't believe it, I was sitting upon a Gun and thinking of my Brother, that is, whether I should ever see or hear anything of him, when seeing a Lieutenant, who had been sent to inform me of my Brother's being on board, I got off the Gun; but instead of telling me about my Brother, he told me that Capt: Hicks was angry with me, and wanted to see me. Capt: Hicks had always been a Father to me, and loves me as if I had been his own child. I therefore went up shaking like an aspin leaf to the lieutenant's apartments, when a Gentleman took hold of my hand. I did not mind him at first, but looked round for the Captain, but, the Gentleman still holding my hand, I looked in his face, and what was my surprise when I saw him too full to speak, and eyes full of tears; whether crying is catching I know not, but I began a crying too, though I did not know the reason till he caught me in his arms and told me he was my Brother and then I found it was paying nature her tribute, for I believe I never cry'd so much in my life. There is a saying in Robinson Crusoe I remember very well viz. Sudden joy like grief confounds at first. We directly went ashore, having got my discharge, and having took a most affectionate leave of Capt. Hicks I left the ship for good and all.

The trembling aspen leaf image and easy familiarity with *Robinson Crusoe* are, as James Engell points out, indicators of a shared mental heritage with Sam. The passage also expresses vividly the whole vibrance and vitality of the sibling personality with which young Sam competed. Suggestively, the hearty extrovert practical joke played upon the musing midshipman bears a resemblance to Frank's own behaviour during the minced cheese episode, when he fell to the ground and pretended Sam had seriously hurt him. But the passage is resonant of a warm fraternal emotion which STC looked for throughout life. In fact, surely, the manly, resilient self-reliance of the Coleridge brothers supplied a constant yardstick of confident competence against which STC must have continually found himself wanting. Yet there was both a toughness and a sensitivity he himself shared.

That, of course, leads us to the second and larger claim these letters have upon our attention: the new light they often throw upon all-too familiar moments in the autobiographical letters. For example, both in his Stowey letters and his Highgate comments to Gillman, STC was at pains to claim an identity with his father, which might help to distance him from the other brothers. To do so, he characterized the Revd. John Coleridge as an unworldly 'Parson Adams'. His father had, Sam tells us, 'so little of parental ambition in him, that he had destined his children to be Blacksmiths, etc'. Letter 11 in Professor Engell's collection shows a very different side of the Revd. John Coleridge as he writes to an unknown correspondent on young Frank's behalf, with the aim of co-ordinating the support of two Admirals of the Fleet in gaining his son's admission to the navy as a midshipman. Such details justify Richard Holmes's intuition that STC's character-sketch was 'almost certainly untrue of the Reverend John, whose whole career showed a headmaster's natural drive for distinction'. Again, significantly, these letters throw new light on Sam's claim to a kind of clairvoyant kinship when he awoke to his mother's shriek on his father's death-night and cried out immediately: 'Papa is dead'. This edition of the letters makes it clear that some years earlier the Revd. John had suffered several serious illnesses, possibly strokes or heart attacks, and anxiety about his health was widespread in the family.

The story told by these letters is a poignant one. Between the age of eight and 20 STC suffered the loss of six immediate members of his family, including his father, both the brothers in India, doctor brother Luke, with whom he walked the wards of The London Hospital, and Nancy, their only sister, to whom they were all devoted. James Engell sketches persuasively in his introduction some of the repercussions these kinships and losses may have had in STC's later life and writing. The letters themselves will enable us to test his theories against our own reading. This is certainly a book future biographers of STC will need to use. If they ignore it they will be as culpable as James Boyer himself (schoolmaster of a simpler age, before parental power had been invented) in all his stentorian blindness:

> Boy! the School is your father! the School is your mother! Boy! the school is your brother - the school is your sister - the School is your first cousin and your second cousin - and all your relations! Let's have no crying!

Or was that, too, just part of another Infant Samuel Documentary?

Nether Stowey REGGIE WATTERS

MARY ANNE PERKINS, *Coleridge's Philosophy: The Logos as Unifying Principle*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994. ISBN 0 19 824075 9. Pp. xii + 310. £30 hardback.

MARY ANNE PERKINS' CONSIDERATION of Coleridge's 'Logos' as 'the unifying principle which connects his theories of language and imagination, his philosophy of nature, his attempt to establish an epistemology based on the constitutive nature of ideas, and his moral philosophy and anthropology' is, indisputably, an ambitious undertaking. For too long, too many commentators have sought to mute the singular importance of religion, particularly the Logos, both human and Divine, to Coleridge's thought, not the least of which involves his highly influential theory of the creative imagination. Consequently, Perkins's work is most welcome and will, with the Jacksons' *Shorter Works and Fragments* volumes and McFarland's *Opus Maximum* edition, spur vigorous research and review of Coleridge's status as a literary critic, psychologist, philosopher, and theologian.

Perkins' scholarship is fundamentally sound. This is important since there is much contained in her work that was hitherto unpublished, including some 50 citations from the 'Opus Maximum' MS (which she curiously refers to as the 'notes for the "Opus Maximum"') and more than 20 citations from the MS 'On the Divine Ideas'. Notwithstanding the overall strength of her research, there are a surprising number of oversights in presentation, including grammatical errors (even sentence fragments), confusing transitions, and faulty citations. Consider the following:

> He [Coleridge] insisted that, without the Trinity, the distinction between Creator and creature was lost, as indeed were ultimately all distinctions in any other than an illusory sense. In the 'Opus Maximum', he had described the role of the Logos as
> the two forms in which all true being is comprehended [,] the Idem et Alter . . . in this other all others are included . . . in this first substantial & intelligible distinction (= ο Αογος) all other distinctions . . . are included.

Perkins' focus here is Coleridge on the 'interconnectedness' of all life, a focus which can easily be lost since there is no transition between the first and second lines of the initial citation block above. Moreover, in the second citation, the first ellipsis masks a textual omission of 46 lines. While this kind of leap may be acceptable in paraphrase, it is not appropriate for direct quotation. Similarly, Perkins' tendency to use one citation from Coleridge, especially from his notebooks, to illustrate or even attempt to explain another quotation, is often ineffective. As for Perkins' prose, she has continued to perfect both its clarity and vigour since she published a related article on Coleridge and Hegel in the *Heythrop Journal* 32 (1991).

Another problem with Perkins' scholarship is spotty transcription. In reviewing ten citations (from the 'Opus Maximum' and 'Divine Ideas' MSS), five had errors in transcription, some of which were the omission of ellipses at the end of citations. Consequently, Coleridge's point appears complete to the reader, even though he intended it to continue. Likewise, although Perkins's index appears to be structured conventionally, a random sampling of page references reveals more than 20 omissions for the 'Divine Ideas' MS and some 40 citations from the 'Opus Maximum' MS that have not been included. Finally, the 'Opus Maximum' MS reference, VCL S MS 29, is omitted from Perkins' bibliography.

However, despite these shortcomings, there is a great deal to commend Perkins's work. Most importantly, she has certainly achieved her primary aim, 'to give a new perspective on [Coleridge's] thought and show it to be of a more coherent nature that has generally been allowed'. Chapters 3 and 4 are particularly well developed and contain many fresh and trenchant insights into Coleridge the person, as well as the Coleridge who so well understood how the light of Reason (and Faith) can illuminate the intelligible world. As Coleridge points out in *On the Constitution of Church and State*, 'Where no Vision is, the people perisheth'. Perkins notes that, based on new insights provided by the 'Opus Maximum', Coleridge held that

> This Vision was the presence of the divine Word [Logos] to the mind and heart of God's people. Ideas [a medium of the communicative Logos] should be understood in this sense. They must not be identified with concepts, mental pictures, sense impressions, or logical constructs; rather they are both the life of the mind itself and its 'light', the revelation of Reason communicated through interpersonal encounter and exceeding the grasp of intellect alone. Indeed, the perfection of the intellect itself, for Coleridge, depends upon moral and spiritual development in will, faith, conscience, and love.

This is Coleridge correctly interpreted. Indeed, as Perkins says later,

> The *active* subject has become, after Kant, a commonplace of philosophical and scientific speculation, but it was Coleridge's bold - now almost shocking - submission that only in the reality of the Christian Logos as Principle and Person was this concept fully reconcilable with objective reality.

Those critics who have consistently claimed that Coleridge's view of consciousness, including the creative imagination, was grounded in human psychology alone will find, with the discourse that should follow Perkins' study, McFarland's *Opus Maximum* edition, and the Jacksons' *Shorter Works and Fragments*, that their views are incomplete.

Perkins' other valuable insights include Coleridge on the relation between mystery, faith, and reason; STC's idea of humanity; and his understanding of the tension between the individual and the Unity of which he is part, what he had earlier thought of as 'one wondrous whole'. Rather curiously, Perkins does not take up, at least in any detail, the role of the Logos and the creative imagination, first touched upon by Jonathan Wordsworth in the *Wordsworth Circle* 16 (1985). Perkins' work will (supported by the publication of new volumes in the Collected Coleridge) sustain Wordsworth's claim that the primary imagination is indeed superior to the secondary, artistic level of imagination. Ultimately, the Divine Logos will be shown to be the ground of Coleridge's theory of the creative imagination. Although Perkins' detailed views on the relation between the Logos and Coleridge's famous *Biographia Literaria* description of imagination are absent from this volume, they should be very informative to us if subsequently considered elsewhere.

On the whole, Perkins's work demonstrates a sound grasp of the importance of Logos doctrine for Coleridge. Legitimately, its significance cannot be exaggerated in accurately understanding Coleridge's thinking. Hence, though uneven, *Coleridge's Philosophy* is an excellent first monograph that provides a good critical beginning for an entirely new focus in Coleridge studies that should continue for some time to come.

Decatur, Illinois RICHARD S. TOMLINSON

Romanticism: An Anthology. Ed. Duncan Wu. Blackwell Anthologies Series. Oxford: Blackwell, 1994. ISBN 0 631 19196 8 (paperback); ISBN 0 631 19195 X (hardback). £14.99 paperback; £60 hardback.

MANY YEARS AGO a broadcast music performance was being overseen by an inexperienced recording engineer, who had been instructed to control the volume of sound carefully at every point. He did so faithfully, turning it down a little every time he found it becoming louder, and felt he had done a good job. Unfortunately, the piece being transmitted was Ravel's *Bolero*, so that at the end the audience was hearing exactly the same level of sound as at the beginning.

Anthologists must watch out for similar pitfalls: if they print only short pieces throughout, for example, the result of their labour may all too easily be a levelling. In the recent *Oxford Book of Romantic Period Verse*, similarly, the compiler decided that if it were to be truly representative of the period it should include no work published later, so that hardly anything from *The Prelude* and very little Blake appears. Instead, the poems that were most popular in each succeeding year take precedence. The resulting collection provides an interesting conspectus of the state of publishing in the period and shows a laudable humility on the part of the compiler, who has not allowed ideas of his own beyond that initial decision to affect the choice of items. It also means, however, that nearly two centuries of criticism and further scholarship which have been providing various new perspectives from which to view the achievements of the time are implicitly ignored.

Duncan Wu's new anthology, by contrast, displays the intervention of an alert and critical mind throughout. He is very much alive to all the work on texts that has been going on in recent scholarship, and is anxious in addition to make his selection as various and interesting as possible. Because he has been allowed considerable space he need not stick simply to the more obvious figures and because he is not restricted to literature in verse he can fully consider the political dimension of the period. The editing, though unobtrusive, still manages to convey the imprint of a particular personality and his own feelings about Romanticism.

Two editorial decisions in particular give character to the volume. The first is that texts are presented in as early a state as possible, which creates a certain purity of effect: we do not need, for instance, to consider whether a revision was undertaken out of deference to criticisms by reviewers. Although first thoughts are not always the best, also, the presentation of early versions gives a freshness to our experience of them. To read *Frost at Midnight* in its original, longer form allows the poem to end on a note of energy and growth, with the young child stretching out its arms in delight at the beauties of nature, by contrast to the (equally striking) harmonizing control of the later ending, which gives the poem what Coleridge called a 'rondo'.

The editor has not been afraid to present very long texts, so that there is no danger of indigestion on an exclusive diet of small pieces. Instead we can settle down from time to time to an extended reading and get to know what a long-breathed Romantic work is like: with Wordsworth, for example, we are given the opportunity of reading the whole of the *Thirteen-Book Prelude* (1799-1806), with Blake the whole of the *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* and *The Book of Urizen*, and with Byron the first Canto of *Don Juan* (though this, presented as it appeared on first publication, might be taken for the whole poem). Another interesting decision has been to present the whole of the 1798 volume of *Lyrical Ballads*, with the result that the first version of *The Ancient Mariner* appears there under Wordsworth while the 1817 version is given later under Coleridge's own name. More complicatedly, *Kubla Khan* is printed in its 1816 version but presented as a product of 1797, the text of the early preface then being given later under 1816. Readers have to be on their toes at this point to follow what is happening: it might have been better to add the 1797 version, with its more factual account of the composition and minor but interesting variations, at the earlier point.

Readers of this journal will be glad to learn that Lamb is well represented, with the full texts of *Imperfect Sympathies* and *Witches, and Other Night-Fears*. He also appears as the author of a few letters (here, as in the case of Keats, this reader would have liked to see more) and, equally memorably, in Haydon's account of the 'Immortal Dinner'. An important achievement of this anthology lies in the range of contemporary documents that it brings together to provide a background for the texts. Thelwall, for instance, normally absent from such collections, is represented by several poems and prose extracts which bring out the coexistence of political passion and poetic aspiration that cohabited side by side not only in that talented man but in the society he was trying to reach. Ann Radcliffe appears, rightly, as author both of elegant fiction and of good travel descriptions. Price, Burke and Paine are all allowed their say.

Such juxtapositions are not just a matter of 'intertextuality', since they point directly to the interpersonal relationships between the writers themselves, helping in the process to question some of the presuppositions of recent criticism. Deconstructionist approaches, for all their virtues, cannot allow for a relationship between reader and text, which is regarded as necessarily falsifying. One of the achievements of a collection such as this is to remind us of the degree to which Romantic literature was shaped by personal relationships between the figures involved. Coleridge, for example, is a constant presence, whether in the lines from Mary Robinson which reveal her as an early reader of *Kubla Khan* (possibly in a text different from any that has survived) or in *The Prelude* (along with *A Complaint* and the *Extempore Effusion*). He is quoted portentously in *Witches, and Other Night-Fears*; Hazlitt inflates his qualities in one superb essay (*My First Acquaintance with Poets*) and deflates them in another (*Mr Coleridge*); he figures as the companion of Keats in an unforgettable walk of 1819 which both would later write about. Romanticism is a movement of friendship and love (along with other feelings such as jealousy, as Martin Aske is about to remind us). But it constantly involves persons before it involves texts; and it is to this central fact that the present collection returns us again and again. It is a good anthology for the 1990s, starting hares in readers' minds, and encouraging them to look for further strands in the culture of the time as well as in their own experience. It will be welcomed not only by those who, like myself, value Romanticism for its strenuousness and prefer to go back continuously to the major intelligences of the time, wrestling with and delighting in their achievements, but by those who want to see it in its fuller connections with the culture and thought of the time, looking across the widest range of what was being written, from the political and social insistences of Burke, Paine and Wollstonecraft to the sentiments of Leigh Hunt and Felicia Hemans. Those who wish to use this anthology for teaching will be particularly pleased by its versatility, which enables it to be used both intensively, for work on complex short pieces, and extensively, for getting a sense of context and assisting sustained study of a few long and major texts. Duncan Wu is to be congratulated on a fine and wide-ranging achievement.

Peterhouse, Cambridge JOHN BEER

JOHN SUTHERLAND, *The Life of Walter Scott*. Blackwell Critical Biographies. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1995. ISBN 1 55786 231 1. Pp. xi + 386.

ONE OF THE AIMS of the Blackwell Critical Biographies series is 'to re-establish the notion that books are written by people who lived in particular times and places'. This is presumably to counter critical trends of the last quarter of a century which have assumed 'the death of the author' or which have asserted that 'noone is single-handedly author of his own text'. Now that the Book of the Film of *Rob Roy* has appeared, it will be interesting to see how this biography of Walter Scott will influence the reception of his work.

Perhaps more than any other writer, we associate Scott with single-handed enterprise. Lockhart's anecdote about the Edinburgh sighting of Scott's hand 'like the writing on Belshazzar's wall' has retained the potency of myth despite rigorous debunking. We think of the Herculean labours to pay off creditors after the 1826 crash of his publishing house, and the repeated vaunt of his journal, 'My own right hand shall do it' (p. 292). Beyond these legendary deeds John Sutherland's biography charts rising (and sometimes surprising) feats of authorship:

> *The Heart of Midlothian* is the first (non-pornographic) novel in the English language to deal with the tricky matters of contraception, infanticide, abortion and the embarrassing propensity of the working classes to breed. (p. 218)
>
> The author of *Ivanhoe* was largely responsible for injecting consciousness of race (and a sizeable dose of racism) into the popular British mind. (p. 229)
>
> Thackeray's vast webs of consanguineous fiction, Trollope's Barsetshire and Palliser sagas, Oliphant's Carlingford Chronicles, together with a multitude of other Victorian sequence novels (not to mention Balzac) can be traced back to the *Monastery - Abbot* combination. (p. 239)
>
> *Kenilworth* was a main source of the cult of Elizabethanism that was to flourish in nineteenth-century Britain and which is still periodically revived by opportunistic politicians and nostalgists. (p. 247)
>
> In 1826 the author of *Waverley* was the most successful man of letters Scotland had ever known. He had single-handedly made the novel the most potent form in literature. (p. 296)

Sutherland gives credit where it is due but he also provides a judicious account of items from the *oeuvre* of Scott which were achieved with rather more than single-handed effort. These include *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* which was a 'team effort' although, Sutherland remarks dryly, 'it is not evident from the title page (where "Walter Scott, Esq., Advocate" has sole billing)' (p. 76). The technical innovation of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* Sutherland describes as 'like switching from black and white to technicolor film' (p. 102), but he also points out that 'its novelty did not emerge from nowhere' (p. 100).

Scott's tardily acknowledged debt to Coleridge's 'Christabel' is one of the better known instances of how Scott preserved the anonymity of other authors before developing his own lucrative brand. A less well-known writer than Coleridge who experienced Scott's collaborative approach to publication was John Nichols whose editorial work on Swift reappeared without acknowledgement in Scott's edition of the *Life and Works of Jonathan Swift*. Sutherland's commentary on the episode is terse: 'Scott's procedures in preparing his edition hovered between the lazy and the downright plagiaristic' (p. 166).

As well as a readiness to efface the creative and scholarly identities of other people, Sutherland suggests that Scott was partly responsible for two literal deaths of authors; Sir Alexander Boswell who fought a duel over the scurrilous Tory *Beacon/Sentinel* journal which was backed financially (and ideologically) by Scott, and the editor John Scott who died after a duel over Scott's and Lockhart's reputations. Sutherland's account of these events alerts us to the way that the cult of anonymity supporting 'scummy' nineteenth-century journalism might be seen as the darker side of *Waverley's* modishly unidentified author.

Sutherland is sceptical about the version of Scott produced by Lockhart and the 'gallant' Edgar Johnson. 'Shrewd' is a term which is used approvingly of David Daiches' and Herbert Grierson's biographical studies, and which could be applied to Sutherland's own critical assessments. His tone is generally good-humoured as when he describes Scott's obsession with the Peninsula Campaign as one of 'Uncle Tobyish proportions' (p. 157), but the tone can slip occasionally into the mordant as when Loch Nor is described as being 'evidently a favourite resort of desperate mothers' (p. 218) (in a feminist reading this would be on a par with Sutherland's listing of 'some insignificant rapes' [p. 2] amongst the activities of one of Scott's forefathers).

The biography allows us to see Scott spurring himself (the cavalry analogy matters) across a wide field of literary attainments from ballad-collecting, through long poems and longer sequence novels, to his journal. Each major publication is considered primarily in relation to Scott's personal, domestic, and financial preoccupations but Sutherland is also attuned to the 'mood of the nation' which Scott caught so skilfully. The mesh of contexts can be sensed in Sutherland's advocacy of late nineteenth-century Black edition reprints as the best way to read Scott:

> The raw power in Scott's fictions lies in their presentation of surfaces, textures of the past that Scott has felt in his hand, heard in the accents of some old peasant or nobleman, apprehended from the view of some crumbled tower. To read Scott thus is to experience a direct transfusion of his antiquarian's enthusiasm. (p. 48)

Sutherland's wry characterisations of each work attempt to distinguish between Scott's swarming literary products. *The Bride of Lammermoor* is classed as 'the darkest of Scott's novels' (p. 220), 'Harold the Dauntless' is introduced as 'the shortest of Scott's long poems' (p. 201). *Guy Mannering* 'is one of the patchiest novels ever to enter the canon of British literature' (p. 182), *Rob Roy* is 'Scott's first novel to deal with the Highlands and their 'feudal' culture from below' (p. 205), *The Heart of Midlothian* offers three firsts, 'a female protagonist, the first to cast a lower-class personage as protagonist' and 'the first of Scott's novels to take Edinburgh . . . as its central location' (p. 211). Most of these points are not new insights and some readers may disagree with Sutherland's allocation of shadows and patches but his judgements impart to the biography a strong sense of authorial control. Throughout, Sutherland is clear about the terms of evaluation which should be applied to Scott's grotesquerie:

> It was *Kenilworth*, as Grierson tells us, that led Goethe to repudiate Scott in 1823 with the lofty declaration, 'I can learn nothing from him. I have time only for the most excellent' (HG 201). The issue is, however, more complex than whether or not we have 'time' for novels like *Kenilworth* . . . it left his tens of thousands of readers eager for more of the same

> post haste. It is an achievement as worthy of studious examination as the inner meaning of *Elective Affinities*. (p. 248)

Scott's audience devoured his works with the same voracious appetite with which Scott sucked material into his writing. It is this formidable energy, astonishing and half-appalling, which still draws readers to Scott's work.

Sutherland's biography provides an immensely impressive marshalling of scholarly material and he conducts us through Scott's life and writing with great verve. Choosing to end with Lockhart's exact, yet baffled record of the weather on the day Scott was buried, Sutherland leaves his subject with an unspoken acknowledgement of the pressure of its absence. It brings to mind the haunting first few lines of Wordsworth's 'On the Departure of Sir Walter Scott from Abbotsford, for Naples', a poem which recreates the enigmatic force of Scott's life and work: 'A trouble . . .' This last hint of the tension between Sutherland and Scott allows them both to stand as 'the complete author'.

University of Dundee JANE STABLER

Society News and Notes from Members

FROM THE EDITOR

John Keats at the British Library

Members living in or near London may be interested to know that the excellent Keats exhibition curated by Robert Woof for the Wordsworth Trust this summer is now at the British Library. Anyone who missed it during the summer is strongly urged to see it while they can. It offers a rare opportunity to see at first hand Keats manuscripts and memorabilia culled from around the world. It closes on 28 January and may be found in the Crawford Room, British Library, Gt Russell Street. To coincide with the exhibition, Christ Fletcher, Curator of Manuscripts at the British Library, will be delivering three lectures on Keats this month: 8, 15, and 22 January, all at 11am in the Grenville Library. The Library is open 10am-5pm Monday to Saturday, 2.30-6pm on Sunday.

The Wordsworth Winter School, 4-9 February 1996

This is a final reminder for this year's Wordsworth Winter School, the theme of which is *Home at Grasmere* and *The Two-Part Prelude*. Lecturers include Mary Wedd, Gordon Thomas, Seamus Perry, Graeme Stones, and the editor of these fine poems, Jonathan Wordsworth. For further details contact Sylvia Wordsworth, Dove Cottage, Grasmere, Cumbria LA22 9SH

SOCIETY NOTES AND NEWS FROM MEMBERS

Kilve Court Study Weekend, 8-10 September 1995

The Friends of Coleridge held their third Study Weekend at Kilve Court, 8-10 September 1995, mixing talks and walks in what has already become a regular pleasure of early autumn. This year's topic was 'exploring *The Ancient Mariner*', and we came to feel a certain kinship with the Wedding Guest, held under the spell of this lurid yet spiritual tale, and asking questions with no certainty that there were answers. David Jesson-Dibley took this as his theme and showed how much the interrogative mode is central to the ballad - questions both naive and complex, statements couched as questions, even questions begged - and it was heartening that in each of the six sessions we managed to avoid the tidy allegorical readings that always leave bits out. But which poem were we discussing? As Seamus Perry remarked, if all the variants are counted there are over a hundred possible versions of the poem, and Coleridge revised it again and again.

On the first evening Reggie Watters refreshingly gave a reading of the 1798 *Ancyent Marinere*, with several Gothick touches later removed, and hearing this brought to mind the ballad's links with the world of Percy's *Reliques*, simultaneously naive and sophisticated, innocent and knowing, demotic and literary. His spellbinding reading, with a hint of West Country burr, struck just the right Coleridgean note. Before that, Tom Mayberry's expert slide lecture had also given the poem its local dimension in Watchet, Porlock, Culbone, and the Valley of the Rocks, another reminder of how the poem never entirely cuts itself off from the familiar - as Mary Wedd remarked in her paper: the poet who wrote *and all the boards did shrink* was even in that moment of horror alert to the annoyances of the everyday world in which doors don't shut properly. Seamus Perry developed this idea in terms of Southey's criticism of the *Rime* as 'a Dutch attempt at German sublimity'. Alongside the Kantian sublime of transcendence is the minute observation evident in Coleridge's Malta notebook - though Cuyp and Ruysdael still seem a world away. He showed that Southey had touched on part of the poem's power that took it beyond the gloomy vagaries of Burger's *Lenore*. Peter Kitson placed the poem in its contemporary political context, usefully linking the mariner's self-loathing to Coleridge's sense of national guilt in *France: An Ode*. Peter Larkin in the final session followed the *Ancient Mariner* into this century through the work of the poet-artist, David Jones (1895-1974), and with the help of Alan Halsey and a fascinating collection of engravings we were reminded of the original meaning of *ars* as getting things to fit together, putting art back into the workshop and *embodying* the mysteries of incarnation and transubstantiation. This gave us a final image of Coleridge's poem as a text that works to reverse transcendence and returns us again and again to the actual, just as the mariner must repeatedly communicate his vision to men involved in more mundane rituals. In different ways all the speakers touched on this idea. Altogether, thanks to the excellent papers and the lengthy stimulating discussion, the weekend cannot fail to have brought a sharper understanding of the poem to everyone involved.

The weekend also featured the first performance of *Brandy is for Heroes*, David Jesson-Dibley's dramatized meeting between Coleridge and Keats in 1820. During their discussion of vision and truth, the Highgate sage (played by the author) seemed to have half his mind on the brandy bottle and grew notably warm and avuncular to the young poet (spoken and coughed by Duncan Wu). This time Coleridge let him have his say. David Fairer

FROM D. E. WICKHAM

Colebrooke Cottage for Sale

In September 1995 Colebrooke Cottage, Duncan Terrace, London N1, the house bearing the old brown LCC plaque saying that Charles (and Mary) Lamb lived there (from 1823 to 1827), was for sale again.

Members may recall that it was once the home of Angus and Muriel Cheyne, members of the Charles Lamb Society, who rescued it from advanced dilapidation. The widowed Mrs Cheyne sold it, at what I heard as a price to cause astonishment, to someone who refurbished it to a high degree. I think it is that owner who is selling it now.

Hugh Grover Associates, 325 Upper Street, London N1 2XQ (tel.: 0171 226 1010) issued a fine brochure for this 'beautifully presented four bedroom Georgian cottage': four bedrooms, three reception rooms, bathroom, shower room, kitchen/breakfast room, and an attractive walled garden, stripped polished wooden floors throughout, and an abundance of wooden panelling and fireplaces.

I must say that the illustrations have a distinct look of *House and Garden*. I doubt that Charles and Mary would feel at home in the rooms ('Charles Elia could not be persuaded to sit down in his dusty brown suit. Bridget Elia had never known such refinement and blushed again, whispering that she felt almost ashamed of her old print gown and homely shoes'), let alone in the tiered garden, its thirty foot length filled with 'an abundance of creepers, plants, shrubs . . . flowers . . . a pond and a fountain'.

The house may, of course, have been sold by the time you read this. Otherwise the advertised price is £425,000 freehold. Please form an orderly queue.

Charles Lamb's Eyes: For the Record

We know that the colour of Charles Lamb's eyes causes difficulties. Talfourd apparently once described them as 'softly brown'. J. Fuller Russell described them as 'very piercing jet-black'. They are generally claimed to have been of two different colours.

The research lavished on the 1985 Anniversary Quiz produced, with the agreement of Talfourd (!) and E. V. Lucas, that one eye was hazel and the other was greyish blue or contained specks of grey, etc. The Rich Collection (viii 15) includes a press-cutting from the *Daily Mirror* of 10 July 1935, an article entitled *How Your Eyes Give You Away* by George Godwin. Part of it discusses *When Eyes Don't Match*:

> There remains one more type - those people who have eyes of different colours, a more common thing than most people realise, because we seldom note the colour of the eyes of others.
>
> Such people are generally emotional, leading towards mysticism. They are kindly, and often whimsical. But they often lack energy or capacity for active endeavour. Charles Lamb is a very good illustration of this type: he had one blue and one brown eye, and like many people thus provided for by nature, was a trifle sensitive about it.

50 Years Ago: from *CLS Bulletin* No.69 (Twelfth Year) January 1946

New Members: Mr R. Hine, 'William Bury', Letchworth.

Charles Lamb Birthday Celebrations, 1946

This year's Celebration will take place on Saturday, 9th February [1946], and will be held in the Queen Mary Hall at the Central Club (YWCA), Gt. Russell Street, WC1, at 2.45 pm for 3 o'clock. Tea will be served during the proceedings. Admission will be by ticket (2*s*. inclusive), to be obtained from Mr E. G. Crowsley. It is hoped that members will make a special effort to attend. Guest of Honour: Mr A. C. W. Edwards, MA (of Christ's Hospital).

CLS Orchestra and Choir

It is proposed [in 1946!] to form an Orchestra and a Choir as further acitivities of the Society. Will those prepared to participate in either of these projects please communicate with Mr E. G. Crowsley.

Temporary Treasurer

At a meeting of the Council, held on 10th December 1946, Mr S. L. G. Huxstep was unanimously nominated to act as temporary Treasurer until an election could be made at the Annual General Meeting [as a consequence of the resignation of Mr E. F. Lewis, Treasurer since February 1938, on the grounds of ill-health].

The Programme for 1946 included a reading by the CLS Dramatic Group and talks by Robert Gittings, E. M. W. Tillyard, and William Kent.