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CONTENTS

		Page
Elia: Restoring the *London* Connection	Jonathan Bate	
'The men speak seldomer': Charles Lamb and Quaker Preachers	Edwina Burness	195
Book Reviews		202
Fifty Years Ago (Continued) Selected by	D.E. Wickham	214
Society Notes and News from Members		215

ELIA: RESTORING THE *LONDON* CONNECTION

The fifteenth annual Ernest Crowsley Memorial Lecture, given to the Society by Dr. Jonathan Bate *on 9 January 1988.*

The first Crowsley Memorial Lecture was given by Basil Willey, the second by Hugh Sykes Davies: I am very honoured to be invited to follow in the footsteps of such distinguished members of my own university. I begin by mentioning Cambridge not out of mere piety, but because it gives me the opportunity to exemplify two central principles. Much of the *Elia* essay 'Oxford in the Vacation' was inspired by Lamb's visit to his friend George Dyer in Cambridge. That Lamb's Cambridge became Elia's Oxford demonstrates that the Elia essays are simultaneously autobiographical memoirs and fictional constructs, that Lamb both is and is not Elia. This is my first principle. Second, the essay 'Oxford in the Vacation', when it was first published in *The London Magazine*, included a footnote concerning the manuscript of Milton's 'Lycidas' at Trinity College, Cambridge. This footnote was omitted when the essay was reprinted in the book which Lamb called *Elia. Essays which have appeared under that Signature in the London Magazine.* We may pause to ponder that title, with its strong reminder that the essays originated in *The London Magazine* and its suggestion that 'Elia' is a 'Signature', which is to say a kind of cipher or what a modern literary theorist might call a self-conscious signifier (I will have more to say about this idea). But to dwell on the footnote: it includes the sentence, 'The text never seems determinate'(1) Although Lamb is referring here to the indeterminacy of an author's manuscript before it is fixed by print, I think we may borrow the phrase and say of the Elia essays themselves, 'The text never seems determinate'. The absence of the footnote from 'Oxford in the Vacation' as it appeared in

the book version of *Elia* is testimony to this indeterminacy. In short, every *Elia* essay exists in at least two texts. All modern editions--most recently my own (2) -- reprint the book text. This afternoon I want to begin to recover the magazine text.

'Oxford in the Vacation' had another footnote, also omitted in the book version. It refers to a passage where Elia says of Dyer, archetypal unworldly academic, 'none thinks of offering violence or injustice to him' The footnote reads:

> Violence or injustice certainly none, Mr. Elia. But you will acknowledge, that the charming unsuspectingness of our friend has sometimes laid him open to attacks, which, though savouring (we hope) more of waggery than malice--such is our unfeigned respect for G.D.--might, we think, much better have been omitted. Such was that silly joke of L---, who, at the time the question of the Scotch Novels was first agitated, gravely assured our friend-- who as gravely went about repeating it in all companies--that Lord Castlereagh had acknowledged himself to be the author of Waverly!--*Note--not by Elia.* (1820, ii, 367)

There are no prizes for guessing who 'L---' is here. The 'Elia' essay is thus furnished with a note 'not by Elia' which tells an anecdote about Lamb. I am sure that the note is by Lamb, although his contributions to the *London* did sometimes elicit editorial notes (for example when Elia says that the women speak more than the men at Quaker meetings, a note reads 'Is this confined to *Quaker Meetings*?--ED.') The effect of the note addressing 'Mr Elia' is to split 'Elia' off from 'L---', and to bring another voice-- what we might term the voice of the *London*--into play. I think that the note is omitted from the book text for two reasons: first, because, as it says itself, such waggery at the expense of Dyer might 'much better have been omitted', and second, because the joke only really works in the context of the witty self-consciousness of the *London*. (3)

That self-consciousness is most visible in 'The Lion's Head', the editorial miscellany with which John Scott began each number of the *London* from July 1820 until his tragic death in a duel with a representative of the rival *Blackwood's Magazine* (at which point the Lion's Head was silent for a month before being resurrected and surviving, initially under the auspices of sub-editor Thomas Hood, until the magazine changed format in 1825). 'It has been asked, whether THE LION'S HEAD is *intended* to be *jocular*?', writes Scott in August 1820 (ii, 122). Well, 'yes and no' is the answer to that, as it is to the question whether the Elia essays are intended to be jocular. Lamb caught something of the intimate relationship between editor and contributors in a Latin locution with which he closed a letter to John Scott shortly before the fatal duel: 'Vivat Lond. Mag. cum Editore Scriptoribusque'. (4)

There was considerable interplay between the Lion's Head and the body of the magazine's essays. Thus the Head for December 1820 included an item in which the editor conveyed to one W.K. of Oxford Elia's apologies over a passage concerning G.D. which might have been open to misconstruction. And in November 1821 the Head begins, 'Some of our Correspondents having expressed a wish to put their heads in the Lion's Mouth this month, he hath

courteously consented, and promises not to "*wag his Tail*", till they have done' (iv, 465). The first such correspondent is Elia, who here constructs for *his* correspondents a fiction concerning his own birth, a matter over which he calls for a certain 'latitude of interpretation' (iv, 465)

There is, then, a textual self-consciousness about Elia's *London Magazine* essays which was diminished when they were reproduced in book form. If we go back to the *London* we find that Elia has a playfully multiple identity, both within his own essays and as he exists intertextually, between editorial and text or within the contributions of others, notably Janus Weathercock, to whom I will come in due course. The question of whether Elia is Lamb is nicely compounded by the original ending of 'A Complaint of Decay of Beggars in the Metropolis', where Elia relates an incident concerning his friend L--, and remarks (self-performingly) that 'L. has a way of viewing things in rather a paradoxical light on some occasions' (1822, v, 536). And 'A Chapter on Ears' carried a postscript from which it is worth quoting at some length:

> P.S. A writer, whose real name, it seems, is *Boldero*, but who has been entertaining the town for the last twelve months, with some very pleasant lucubrations, under the assumed signature of *Leigh Hunt*,

(at this point a footnote is keyed: 'Clearly a fictitious appellation; for if we admit the latter of these names to be in a manner English, what is *Leigh*? Christian nomenclature knows no such'.)

> in his Indicator of the 31st January last, has thought fit to insinuate that I *Elia* do not write the little sketches which bear my signature, in this Magazine; but that the true author of them is a Mr L--b . . .
>
> They call this an age of personality: but surely this spirit of anti-personality (if I may so express it) is something worse.
>
> Take away my moral reputation--I may live to discredit that calumny.
>
> Injure my literary fame,--I may write that up again--
>
> But when a gentleman is robbed of his identity, where is he?
>
> Other murderers stab but at our existence, a frail and perishing trifle at the best. But here is an assassin, who aims at our very essence; who not only forbids us *to be* any longer, but *to have been* at all. (1821, iii, 266).

The postscript then continues with a summary of Elia's origins: born forty-six years ago in Cavendish Square, entered in the Parish Register, descended from Genoans who came to England in the reign of Henry VII and flourished as merchants. It is remarkable enough to have an essay that ends with a postscript that includes a footnote, but what is really extraordinary here is that Elia, who is at root Lamb, is accusing Leigh Hunt of accusing Elia that Elia is Lamb, while simultaneously suggesting that Leigh Hunt is not Leigh Hunt but Boldero, a name which, according to another footnote, 'is clearly of transatlantic origin ' (to which we might reply that while boldness is a transatlantic characteristic, 'Boldero'--

like 'Elia'--sounds more Italian). Leigh Hunt is supposedly not Leigh Hunt because Leigh is not an English name. But then neither is Elia. What is more, just as Elia is an anagram of 'a lie', so 'Leigh' might be pronounced 'lie' (that is certainly the pronunciation of the village in Kent which has this name).

It is not, however, merely a matter of play; when Lamb says that our existence is 'a frail and perishing trifle at the best', the mask drops for a moment and one begins to see that the construction of Elia, the 'anti-personality', is Lamb's defence in the face of the instability of his own identity. At this point biography is likely to intrude: we are not so innocent as the readers of *The London Magazine*, for we know that Lamb himself spent a month in a madhouse at Hoxton and, more important, that his whole life was scarred by the day when he came home to find that his sister had stabbed their mother to death. We do not have to be Freudians to be touched by that phrase which slips out in the postscript, 'Other murderers stab but at our existence'.

Leigh Hunt carried on in Lamb's vein in *The Indicator* of 7 March 1821: 'Elia is not an anagram, as some have thought it, but the Judaico-Christian name of the writer before us, whose surname, we find is not Lamb, but Lomb;--Elia Lomb! What a name!'. The intertextual or dialogic being of Elia thus spreads not only through the pages of *The London Magazine* but across into another publication.

All this brings us to the knotty problem of Elia's name. As you know, Lamb derived it from an Italian clerk in the South-Sea-House, a provenance which makes me favour the pronunciation 'Ell-ia'--Lamb did actually write to his publisher, John Taylor, saying 'call him *Ellia' (Letters*, ii,301). It is hard to be sure about the pronunciation of the second syllable. A couplet by William Hone would suggest 'e-liar': 'To such high meed I did not dare aspire/As public honour, from the hand of ALLWORTHY ELIA' (cited, *Letters*, iii, 15). But then the pronunciation Eelia, which I know many of you favour, cannot have come from nowhere. Lucas records a letter from Taylor informing Sir Charles Elton, who wrote a commendatory poem on Elia in the *London*, that 'We think Mr.Lamb pronounces the word Elia' (*Letters*, ii, 302), but we are not to know how e-l-i-a should be pronounced. That the difficulty in pronouncing the name generated correspondence even in Lamb's own time suggests that it is deliberately difficult, elusive, slippery. Eel-like, might one say? Mendacious, certainly: Mary Cowden Clarke recorded in a marginal note to her copy of Procter's memoir that Lamb did once remark upon the anagram 'a lie'. (5) I suspect that one of Lamb's reasons for selecting Elia as a pseudonym was its very instability. There is no correct, definitive pronunciation: E L I A is a tetragram, a kind of four letter code that each individual reader can pronounce and interpret as he or she sees fit. Just as the pronunciation is shadowy and multiple, impossible to pin down, so is the referent: does E L I A denote Lamb, or the Italian clerk, or a fictional character? Like certain other strange four letter codes--Y H W H (the original Hebraic tetragrammaton), or M O A I in Lamb's admired *Twelfth Night*-- E L I A is what modern literary theorists would call a floating signifier.

Lamb's concern for signatures may be seen at work in a letter to the *London's* publishers written in January 1825. De Quincey signed his contributions to the *London*, such as 'Letters to a Young Man whose Education has been Neglected", 'X.Y.Z.' (De Quincey, who liked to have the last word, here claims the last letters). Lamb parodied De Quincey's

disquisition on education by sending to the editor of the *London* a 'Letter to an Old Gentleman whose Education has been Neglected'. In proof it was signed 'S T P T', whatever that may mean, but he then changed his mind and instructed the publisher as follows: 'I particularly beg you to sign the Letter to the Old Gentleman, *Elia* instead of S T P T and *most particularly request it as a favour* that you will blot out the signature of Elia from the Horns Vision, becaus[e] of Ladies &c'.(6) The latter reference here is to 'A Vision of Horns', an essay on cuckoldry which Lamb wished to be signed 'Jack Horner'--'but Taylor and Hessey said, it would be thought an offensive article, unless I put my known signature to it; and wrung from me my slow consent' (*Letters*, ii, 452), a state of affairs which interestingly suggests that the signature 'Elia' was thought to confer a certain licence.

Lamb was rather ashamed of the 'Horns' essay, and did not reprint it in *Last Essays*. I now wish to turn to another essay which he omitted from the book *Elia*, but which went through a number of transmutations that give a strong sense of the indeterminacy or, better, the *plurality* of Elia's texts: 'Confessions of a Drunkard'. Lamb wrote his 'Confessions' long before Elia was invented. They first appeared (unsigned) in 1813 in a magazine called *The Philanthropist; or, Repository for Hints and Suggestions calculated to promote the Comfort and Happiness of Man* in a version which bore the marks of the editorial hand of James Mill (John Stuart Mill's father). (7) They then appeared in a volume edited by Lamb's friend Basil Montagu, *Some Enquiries into the Effects of Fermented Liquors* (1814, reprinted 1818). But in August 1822 they were reprinted over the 'Elia' signature in *The London Magazine*. An old essay was used on this occasion because Lamb was abroad. One reason why the 'Confessions' were chosen was that they had been cited in an article in the *Quarterly Review* that April as evidence of Lamb's drunkenness. He therefore took the opportunity to republish the essay with an additional note explaining that the portrait of the drunkard was 'heightened' and 'exaggerated', and should not be taken as a representation of the true Elia.

As I have suggested in the introduction to my edition, by reprinting his 'Confessions' Lamb was also responding to the vogue for confessional narrative that had been initiated by De Quincey's *Opium-Eater*. Lamb's brief 'Confessions' did something to fill the gap left by De Quincey's failure to produce for the *London* a promised third instalment of his *Confessions*. Lamb's reprinting also served as a gentle reminder to the literary world that De Quincey's stunning pathological self-analysis was not totally original--the alcoholic had pre-dated the opium-addict by some eight years. (8) That Lamb was aware of, and perhaps responding to, the modishness of De Quincey's *Confessions* at this time is apparent from a passing reference in the essay 'On the Acting of Munden', first published in October 1822, where he tells of how, on returning from the theatre, he was unable to sleep because he could not get the image of the actor out of his head:

> No sooner did we fall into slumbers, than the same image, only more perplexing, assailed us in the shape of dreams. Not one Munden, but five hundred, were dancing before us, like the faces which, whether you will or no, come when you have been taking opium--all the strange combinations, which this strangest of all strange mortals ever shot his proper countenance into . . . (1822, vi, 351)

(There was an interesting minor revision when this passage was reprinted in *Elia*: the authorial 'we' was replaced with a--more confessional?--'I'.) Lamb at once leans on and mocks De Quincey. The popularity of the *Opium-Eater* has been such that Lamb expects his readers instantly to recognize the symptoms of an opium vision. But the allusion does not only serve to make vivid the image of his own addiction to Munden's acting. Instead of De Quincey's visions of Piranesi-like staircases over the abyss and monstrous Oriental crocodiles, we have Munden in the farcical role of Cockletop--the substitution acts as a gentle debunking of De Quincey. Lamb's repeated application of the word 'strange' to the familiar actor suggests that he has little time for the Opium-Eater's self-conscious exoticism: he prefers to make strange the familiar, to write about ordinary people, things, events (friends, work, festivals) in such a way as to transfigure them into something extraordinary, unforgettable, even sacred. He is in this sense more truly Wordsworthian than we often recognize.

Where De Quincey is forced into perpetual self-justification, Lamb is able to cast an ironic eye on himself. He has a restraint which De Quincey lacks: 'Shall I lift up the veil of my weakness any further? or is this disclosure sufficient?', he asks towards the end of the 'Drunkard' essay (1822, vi, 121), in sharp contrast to the De Quincey who writes with no veil of modesty and thrives on the disclosure of every last detail of his addiction. Whether defensively or playfully, Lamb always keeps the veil in place and refuses complete disclosure. Only with complete disclosure can a text achieve what theorists of narrative call 'closure', a sense of full completion. In Lamb, 'closure' is always deferred: that is why his *London Magazine* essays are persistently modified by footnotes and postscripts, or revised as they are rewritten for book publication. In this sense, *Elia* answers to Roland Barthes' account of the classic text as something that is marked by openness, by plurality, and of which the 'last closure' is 'suspension'. (9) Or, to use Lamb's own phrase: 'The Essays want no Preface: they are *all Preface*' (*Letters*, ii, 350).

Lamb continues his 'Drunkard' essay, 'I am a poor nameless egotist, who have no vanity to consult by these Confessions' ('Confessions' has a capital C, incidentally, indicating that this is a text in the tradition of Rousseau). The oxymoron 'nameless egotist' is absolutely characteristic of Elia: namelessness annihilates the self that is egotistically displayed. Lamb's self is reconstituted, or rather multipled, in the editorial note that accompanied the 'Confessions' in *The London Magazine*. I have little doubt that he had a hand in this: the note asserts that Elia had been reading among the essays of a contemporary, who had perversely been confounded with himself, who wrote under the pen-name Edax a humourous complaint of his own inordinate appetite; this led Elia to write his paper concerning the imaginary experiences of an excessive drinker. He has given us, says the editor, 'a frightful picture indeed--but no more resembling the man *Elia*, than the fictitious *Edax* may be supposed to identify itself with Mr. L., its author' (1822, vi, 99). The editorial claim, then, is that the Drunkard is written by Elia but does not represent the man Elia, Elia is not Edax, and Edax is written by Mr. L. but does not represent the man 'L'. Lamb did of course write the essay 'Edax on Appetite'; if it does nothing else, the distinction made here between Edax and Elia demonstrates that Elia is a narrative persona who only represents certain

facets of Lamb. (10) Here we may recall Lamb's own analysis of the nature of Elia: he explained to Barron Field (who was in Australia) that the essays constitute 'a tissue of truth and fiction impossible to be extricated, the interlacings shall be so delicate, the partitions perfectly invisible, it shall puzzle you till you return, & I will not explain it' (*Letters*, ii, 282).

Perhaps the best figure for this compositional procedure is the two-faced god, Janus. Horace Smith the parodist saw this, and included the following characterization in an essay contributed to the *London* in reply to Lamb's 'New Year's Eve': 'thou art the very Janus who hast always delighted in antithetical presentments' (1821, iii, 250). Smith is picking up the image of Janus from Charles Cotton's poem 'The New Year', which Lamb had quoted, but what interests me about this is that there was another Janus writing for the *London*. Lamb wrote to Taylor the publisher in 1821 to the effect that 'The *Lond. Mag.* is chiefly pleasant to me, because some of my friends write in it. I hope Hazlitt intends to go on with it, we cannot spare Table Talk' (*Letters*, ii, 306). Hazlitt was unquestionably the best-known name among the *London's* contributors, and his presence in its pages ensured that it earned a reputation for being on the 'liberal' side of most political questions (although the magazine sought to avoid the partisan spirit exemplified by the Tory *Blackwood's*). But when Lamb became dissatisfied with the *London* in 1823, Hazlitt was not the only name he mentioned: 'I cannot but think *the London* drags heavily. I miss Janus. And O how it misses Hazlitt' (*Letters*, ii, 385). Another letter suggests that this 'Janus' was even more central to the *London* than was Hazlitt: 'What is gone of the Opium Eater, where is Barry Cornwall, & above all what is become of Janus Weathercock. . . He is much wanted. He was a genius of the Lond. Mag. The rest of us are single essayists. . . You must recruit. You will get too serious else. Janus was characteristic' (*Letters*, ii, 323).

As you know, 'Janus Weathercock' was the pseudonym of one of the most loyal essayists of the *London*'s early years, T.G. Wainewright (who also occasionally contributed items over different signatures). (11) Wainewright's posthumous fame is largely due to his later life: he married his landlady's daughter and became involved in dodgy life insurance transactions involving her half-sister. He certainly committed forgery, for which he was transported. He probably administered strychnine to his sister-in-law, mother-in-law, and uncle. He was the model for the criminal in Dickens's story *Hunted Down*. His entry in *The Dictionary of National Biography* begins with the somewhat incongruous juxtaposition 'Wainewright, Thomas Griffiths (1794-1847), poisoner and art critic'. Perhaps it was a good thing that Hazlitt didn't succeed in wooing *his* landlady's daughter! But we should not let these lurid developments distract or detract from Wainewright's achievement as a *London* author. Lamb said that 'Janus was characteristic', that he did not merely contribute single essays but was a 'genius', a presiding spirit, of the magazine. Lamb's admiration was, I think, due to the recognition that Janus was the contributor who most resembled Elia, and may even have provided a model for the creation of Elia as a *London* author.

Janus' essays are marked by precisely the playfulness and self-consciousness, the qualities of self-interruption and self-irony, the combination of feeling and drollery, which are the characteristics of Elia. Like Elia, he is played off against the editorial figure, the voice of the *London*.

His presence in the number for June 1820 (that is shortly before Lamb contributed his first piece) is positively Shandian. His article 'Janus's Jumble', a review of the fine arts and the theatre, breaks off unfinished, then some seventy pages later we find 'Janus Weathercock's Dialogue on the Exhibition at Somerset-House', together with the editorial note: '[This is the Dialogue which ought to have been inserted in Mr. Weathercock's Jumble (see page 629). In consequence of offering a handsome reward for its recovery, it has been transmitted to us by the waiter at George's--and we make haste to give it place, on the principle of "better late than never."]' (1820, i, 700). It is possible that the dialogue itself was written by Scott, the editor, rather than Wainewright: Janus not only has two faces but on this occasion he may actually be two different writers.

In the introduction to my edition of *Elia*, I discussed the business whereby *the London Magazine* killed off Elia in January 1823, his two contributions that month being signed 'Elia's Ghost' and 'A Character of the Late Elia By a Friend'. The Lion's Head alluded to Elia's death in February and then announced his revival in March. I want to add here that this business was compounded by the fact that Janus was also killed off that January. Having informed readers of Elia's death, The Lion's Head continues, 'The winter *must* be *very hard*,--as it was expected to be,--for honest Master Janus Weathercock has, in the present Number, "composed his decent head and breathed his last". --But we are acquainted with his tricks--and well know how subject he is to wilful trances and violent wakings' (1823, vii, 4). These last phrases suggest that the option is being left open for a revival of Janus, but as it turned out he was not revived as Elia was: the article which Wainewright wrote that month was Janus' last. It was a valedictory piece called 'Janus Weatherbound; or the Weathercock Steadfast for Lack of Oil', and subtitled--in a very Elian pun-- 'A Grave Epistle'. Throughout this piece, Janus measures himself, and the other contributors from whom he takes leave, against Elia. As Lamb thought that Janus was the genius, the presiding spirit, of the *London*, so Wainewright thought that Elia was. Janus summons up the tragi-comic spirit of Elia:

> what can I say of thee more than all know? that thou hadst the gaiety of a boy, with the knowledge of a man;--as gentle a heart as ever sent tears to the eyes.--Marry! the black bile would sometimes slip over his tongue's tip; then would he spit it out, and look more sweetly for the riddance.--How wittily would he mistake your meaning, and put in a conceit most seasonably out of season!--His talk without affectation was compressed, like his beloved Elizabethans, even unto obscurity;--like grains of fine gold, his sentences would beat out into whole sheets. . . (1823, vii, 51)

Here Wainewright is at once analysing and imitating Elia's inimitable style (I say inimitable because, although Lamb is perhaps the most imitated of English essayists, he is the least effectively imitated--most later imitators catch the whimsy but not the robustness; their sentences are not, as his are, whole sheets of beaten gold). Janus ends his elegy with a fiction about Elia's death:

> His pipe had gone out--he held it to the flame of the candle--but in vain.
>
> It was empty!--his mind had been wandering. He smiled placidly and knocked out the ashes--'even so silently', said he, 'may my fiery

spark steal from its vehicle of ashes and clay!'.

I felt oppressed--many things had contributed lately to break and daunt my once elastic spirits--I rose to go--he shook me by the hand,--neither of us spoke--with that I went my way--*and I saw him no more*!--

How much is lost to this miserable world--which knew him not while it possessed him!--I knew him--I--,--who am left to weep.----Eheu! Elian! Vale!

GOOD NIGHT TO ALL (1823, vii, 52)

The narrative precision, as manifested in the typically Shandian touch of the knocking out of the pipe, is such that we almost forget that this is not Wainewright taking leave of Lamb but the fictional construct Janus taking leave of the fictional construct Elia. But we are brought back to earth by a characteristic intervention: 'Janus was here taken too sick-hearted to proceed. He is now -----. ED.' Janus thus wastes away through grief at the death of Elia; ironically, Elia is not dead, for he returns to the pages of the *London* in two months time, but by then it is too late for Janus. It is almost like a comic version of the end of *Romeo and Juliet*.

This symbiosis between contributors occurs over a considerable period of time, not merely within single numbers of the *London*. Thus in July 1821 Janus wrote of a picture exhibited at the Royal Academy: '*Poor Relations*, by Stephanoff, evinces very great and deep observation of nature . . . . I have not time to point out all the variety of intelligence which is combined in this little picture; but I think that our *Elia* would manage it beautifully--let me suggest it to him' (1821, iv, 75). Nearly two years later Lamb got around to writing his essay for the magazine called 'Poor Relations'. This kind of interplay was not confined to Lamb and Wainewright. B.W.Procter ('Barry Cornwall') contributed an essay 'On May Day', the climax of which was an account of how chimney sweeps were the only people who still celebrated May Day (1820, i. 492): this was the inspiration for Elia's essay 'The Praise of Chimney-Sweepers', which appeared in the *London* precisely two years later, with the sub-title 'A May-Day Effusion'. Again, Horace Smith replied to Lamb's melancholy essay 'New Year's Eve' with 'Death--Posthumous Memorials--Children' (March 1821), a eulogy of parenthood that attempted to undo Elia's sense of the transience of all things. Though a passable imitation of Elia's style, Smith's essay is mawkish: he refers to 'the hour of reconciliation, when with the sparkling eyes, my children shall leap to my bosom', and effuses 'God bless ye, my darlings; come to my arms at once!--' (1821,iii, 253). I suspect that Lamb had rather ambivalent feelings about this: it may have inspired him on the one hand to compose 'Dream-Children', the reverie of the parenthood he was denied, and on the other to reprint over Elia's signature an essay he had originally written for Leigh Hunt's *Reflector*, 'A Bachelor's Complaint of the Behaviour of Married People', that wonderful debunking of parents who are besotted with their children.

One begins to question whether the *London Magazine* essays can justifiably be ascribed to individual authors. They are often dialogic or multi-vocal productions. In a sense, this is true of any magazine article where the

editor or sub-editor, or the ambience of the journal, imposes a strong flavour. But it seems to be especially true of the *London*, and to be not merely a contingent circumstance, but actually a formative influence on the kind of essay which appeared there. The *London* remade Lamb as an author, gave him the voice of Elia, and liberated him into his most characteristic essayistic productions. We must also recognize that what I have called the 'dialogic' tendency extends outward from the magazine and into the wider discourse of periodical publication during the period. When John Scott started the *London* he was deliberately making an intervention. As his contributors replied to each other, and his editorials replied to contributors, so his magazine as a whole replied to other magazines, in particular the fierce reactionary organs, *Blackwood's* and the *Quarterly*. Literary dialogue became violent action when *Blackwood's* attacked the *London's* 'Cockney' authors and the *London's* creator and editor died from a wound received in the resulting duel. Rather than dwell on this affair, which still makes one both sad and angry, I want to consider the interplay between the *London* and William Gifford's *Quarterly Review*.

You will remember that in liberal circles it was commonly thought that Keats was killed by hostile reviews, above all those of Gifford in the *Quarterly*. This was an exaggeration, but it suggests how high the stakes were in the periodical press at this time. One of the great political dialogues of the age was played out when Gifford wrote an article in the *Quarterly* attacking Hazlitt's book *Characters of Shakespear's Plays* as a seditious appropriation of the National Poet. Hazlitt replied with his magnificent *A Letter to William Gifford, Esq.*, published in 1819 (Keats admired it so much that he copied pages and pages of it into a journal-letter to his brother and sister-in-law). (12) Hazlitt begins the *Letter* with a superb excoriation of Gifford and the *Quarterly:*

> You are a little person, but a considerable cat's-paw; and so far worthy of notice. Your clandestine connexion with persons high in office constantly influences your opinions, and alone gives importance to them. You are the *Government Critic*, a character nicely differing from that of a government spy--the invisible link, that connects literature with the police. It is your business to keep a strict eye over all writers who differ in opinion with his Majesty's Ministers, and to measure their talents and attainments by the standard of their servility and meanness. For this office you are well qualified. Besides being the Editor of the Quarterly Review, you are also paymaster of the band of Gentlemen Pensioners . . . The distinction between truth and falsehood you make no account of: you mind only the distinction between Whig and Tory. (13)

Hazlitt's branding of Gifford as 'the head of the literary police' (*Works*, ix, 33) lies, I would suggest, behind J.H. Reynolds' bantering article in the *London Magazine* of February 1823, 'The Literary Police Office, Bow-Street'. Here, Reynolds--another regular *London* contributor and an important member of the Keats/Hazlitt circle--wittily charges the leading writers of the day with a variety of offences: Byron has committed literary assault, Coleridge idles and sleeps away the day in Highgate, Wordsworth has stolen a pony from one Mrs. Foy of Westmorland, and Mr. Lamb has murdered Elia with an eye to taking over his column in the *London*. The article has the characteristic doubleness of the *London*: at one and the same time, it

offers a light-spirited reworking of Hazlitt's memorable concept and a serious reminder of Gifford's attempt to make the realm of letters into a police state.

The ultimate 'Gentleman Pensioner' was a man whom Hazlitt despised as much as he did Gifford (perhaps more because he was also a turncoat); the Poet Laureate, Robert Southey. It was with Southey that Lamb became directly involved in the aggressive confrontation between the *London* and the *Quarterly*. In Gifford's magazine in January 1823 (early 1823 was an extraordinarily fertile period) Southey made a passing remark in an anti-radical article entitled 'Theo-philanthropism in France and the Spread of Infidelity' to the effect that the essays of Elia showed a want of religious feeling. Lamb replied in the pages of the *London* later that year in an article called 'Letter of Elia to Robert Southey, Esquire'. It has not, I think, been recognized by modern scholars that the title is a clear allusion to Hazlitt's celebrated *Letter to William Gifford, Esq.* When Lamb brands Southey 'Court Poet' (1823, viii, 401) he is reworking Hazlitt's image of Gifford as Government Critic. It was Gifford and his magazine that were Lamb's real object of attack, as he himself made clear in subsequent private correspondence to Southey in which the quarrel was patched up. When Lamb collected his later Elian pieces in *Last Essays*, he omitted the personal part of the 'Letter to Southey', and printed only the second half of the essay, which concerned the introduction of an admission charge to Westminster Abbey. By 1833, the matter was closed, but at the time it provoked considerable controversy. *The Times*, which disliked Southey despite its own Establishment stance, took Lamb's side:

> The number just published of the *London Magazine* contains a curious letter from Elia (Charles Lamb) to Mr. Southey. It treats the laureat with that contempt which his always uncandid and frequently malignant spirit deserves. When it is considered that Mr. Lamb has been the fast friend of Southey, and is besides of a particularly kind and peaceable nature, it is evident that nothing but gross provocation could have roused him to this public declaration of his disgust. (2 October 1823)

Predictably, Christopher North (John Wilson) in *Blackwood's* attacked Lamb, on the grounds that Southey should be allowed to state his opinion:

> Are you, or are you not, a friend to the liberty of the press? of human thought? feeling? opinion? Is it, Charles, enormous wickedness of Southey thus to characterize your Essays? If so, what do you think of the invasion of Spain, the murder of the Franks family, Pygmalion's amour with the tailor's daughter [a jibe at Hazlitt's *Liber Amoris*, also published in 1823] . . . the French Revolution, the Reduction of the Five Per Cents Navy, Godwin's Political Justice, the Tread-Mill, the Crusades, Gas fighting booty, D'Israeli's Quarrels of Authors, Byron's conduct to the Hunts, and the doctrine of the universal depravity of the human race? (14)

The list is an enumeration of controversial issues of the day. North has a point, in that the liberty of the press depends on argument, on controversy. Reading in the *London* and rival publications, one gets a sense above all of vitality, of strong but fruitful disagreement, of creative revisionism as one article or opinion generates another. Southey's

attack may have stung Lamb, but at least it stung him into action by giving him a pre-text for the composition of a new text. In this way the very life-blood of Elia runs in the veins of the periodical press of the early 1820s.

What happens when Elia is removed from this context? As far as Lamb was concerned, he died a slow death. At the beginning of 1825, the *London* changed in format (no more Lion's Head); that August, Lamb wrote to his friend Barton, 'Taylor has dropt the London. It was indeed a dead weight. It has got in the Slough of Despond. I shuffle off my part of the pack, and stand like Xtian with light and merry shoulders' (*Letters*, iii, 19). Elia did subsequently appear in the pages of various other magazines, but these later essays are not particularly memorable (the one exception is 'Sanity of True Genius', though this is more the product of critic Lamb than Elia Lamb).

The really important question for us is that of the form in which we should be reading Elia today. This seems to me to be an intractable problem. If we are going to read him in book form, then it would seem best to read him in the book form in which Lamb produced him. That is why my edition, like others, reproduces the text of *Elia* (1823) and *Last Essays of Elia* (1833). This is the form in which Lamb exerted enormous influence on English readers for a hundred years down to his dislodgment from favour (in certain quarters) in the 1930s. But we must recognize that this is not Elia as he was originally conceived and as he originally lived. Should we, then, produce an edition of the essays in the form in which they first appeared in the *London*, as modern editions of De Quincey's *Opium-Eater* tend (correctly, in my view) to reproduce the original text of 1821-2, not De Quincey's revised and extended version of 1856? (There is less of a problem with the *Confessions* because the book version of 1822 is almost identical to the *London Magazine* version of 1821--De Quincey did not omit footnotes and postscripts in the way that Lamb did when he collected *Elia*.) But if we are to reproduce the experience of reading Elia in his original form, then what are we to do about the surrounding texts--The Lion's Head, Janus Weathercock's and De Quincey's contributions, the commendatory poems on Elia by John Clare and others--which form an important part of his life in the *London*? Certainly one thing we need is a facsimile reprint of, or at least a good selection from, the *London Magazine* of 1820-24. Such a text would give us extraordinary riches, in that it would put Elia back where he belongs, beside Hazlitt's *Table Talk*, De Quincey's *Confessions*, many of Clare's early poems, Carlyle's first publications, and works by important second-rank figures such as Procter, Reynolds, Wainewright, Henry Cary, and Hartley Coleridge. But even this would be insufficient because, as I have suggested, there are other significant con-texts, ranging from Hazlitt's *Letter to Gifford*, to Leigh Hunt's *Indicator*, to the attacks in the *Quarterly* and *Blackwood's*. To be fair to E.V. Lucas, his definitive edition of Lamb includes much of the contextual material in the notes. But an Elian footnote or a Lion's Head allusion embedded in a thicket of editorial material will be overlooked by most readers, and even if it is noticed it will look very different from its original appearance in the cramped but sparkling double columns of the *London*.

When *Elia* was published in book form, Lamb sent a copy to Wordsworth, with a covering letter that began: 'I beg your acceptance of ELIA, detached from

any of its old companions which might have been less agreeable to you' (*Letters*, ii, 360--presumably Lamb is thinking of such *London Magazine* companions as Hazlitt, who was not at all agreeable to Wordsworth at this time). Like Wordsworth we all now read Elia in detachment. I hope that this lecture has done something to restore him to his 'old companions'.

NOTES

1. *The London Magazine*, ii (1820), 367. Subsequent quotations from the *London* are given in parenthesis in my text in the form date, volume number page.

2. *Elia and the Last Essays of Elia*, ed. Jonathan Bate, The World's Classics (Oxford, 1987).

3. The best accounts of the *London* are Josephine Bauer, *The London Magazine 1820-29*, Anglistica vol. i.(Copenhagen, 1953), and 'The *London Magazine*: 1821-5', chapter 5 of Tim Chilcott, *A Publisher and his Circle: the life and work of John Taylor, Keats's publisher* (London and Boston, 1972). Signatures are decoded and authors identified in Frank P. Riga and Claude A. Prance's invaluable *Index to the London Magazine* (New York, 1978).

4. *The Letters of Charles Lamb*, ed. E.V.Lucas (3 vols, London, 1935),ii, 292. Marrs' edition of the letters does not yet extend to the Elia years; subsequent references to Lucas' are incorporated in my text.

5. Cited, E.V. Lucas, *The Life of Charles Lamb* (2 vols, London, 1905, repr. 1921), ii. 545n.

6. *Letters*, ii, 375, misdated by Lucas.

7. See Thomas Hutchinson, 'Lamb and the Utilitarians: The "Confessions of a Drunkard",' *The Athenaeum*, 16 August 1902, p. 225.

8. This sense of Lamb pre-dating De Quincey is worth pursuing: in *Suspiria de Profundis*, the sequel to the *Opium-Eater*, De Quincey exemplifies the 'involute', his version of the Wordsworthian 'spot of time', by recalling a childhood reading of an illustrated Bible-- precisely the memory that so strongly marks the Elia essay 'Witches, and other Night-Fears', which appeared in the same issue of the *London* as the second instalment of the *Opium-Eater*.

9. Barthes, *S/Z*, trans. Richard Miller (New York, 1974), p. 217.

10. To my knowledge, the only serious discussion of Lamb's narrative personae is Gerald Monsman, *Confessions of a Prosaic Dreamer: Charles Lamb's art of autobiography* (Durham, N.C., 1984), but this does not consider Elia with regard to the *London*, nor (despite its title) does it see the connection between 'Confessions of a Drunkard' and De Quincey's *Confessions*.

11. There is a good discussion of Wainewright in Joel Haefner, 'The Two Faces of the *London Magazine*', *Charles Lamb Bulletin*, NS No. 44 (1983), 69-81, the most helpful account hitherto of the character of the *London* as it affects the Elia essays. Jonathan Curling's *Janus Weathercock: The Life of Thomas Griffiths Wainewright 1794-1847* (London 1938) concentrates on Wainewright's unfortunate later career.

12. I discuss this affair in detail in my forthcoming book, *Shakespeare's Afterlife: Politics, Theatre, and Criticism in Gillray, Hazlitt and Others*.

13. *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, ed. P.P. Howe (21 vols, London, 1930-34), ix, 13.

14. *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, vol. xiv, October 1823, p. 505.

'THE MEN... SPEAK SELDOMER': CHARLES LAMB AND QUAKER PREACHERS

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In *A Quaker's Meeting* (1821) Elia made a significant comment on the contribution made by women to Quaker worship, and the visual impact they gave in London:

> Only now and then a trembling, female, generally *ancient*, voice is heard - you cannot guess from what part of the meeting it proceeds - with a low, buzzing, musical sound, laying out a few words which 'she thought might suit the condition of some present', with a quaking diffidence, which leaves no possibility of supposing that any thing of female vanity was mixed up, where the tones were so full of tenderness, and a restraining modesty. - The men, for what I observed, speak seldomer.
>
> ... Every Quakeress is a lily; and when they come up in bands to their Whitsun-conferences, whitening the easterly streets of the metropolis, from all parts of the United Kingdom, they show like troops of the Shining Ones. (1)

To Elia, then, female Quakers were a model of rectitude and gentleness, even when they were taking an active part in the Meeting. More recently, some critics have discerned motives other than purely religious in the involvement of women in the ministry of the Society of Friends. Sheila Rowbotham argues that the Quakers' 'revelation and enthusiasm provided an outlet for the suppressed female spirit. Because the men subscribed to the same faith, they were not able to silence this explosion of prophecy and spirit-possession'. (2) Elizabeth Isichei goes as far as to claim that many women preachers used 'the concept of inspiration to manipulate their masculine environment'. (3)

In order to ascertain which view is closer to the truth, the contemporary Elian or the modern feminist one, it might be instructive to examine the life and work of three Quaker preachers of the time; Lucy Maw (1774-1856), the first cousin by marriage of a friend of Charles Lamb, Bernard Barton, her grandmother, and her aunt. Lucy Maw was connected by birth to two important Quaker banking families. Her father was Samuel Alexander (1749-1824), a joint owner of the Suffolk bank where Barton was employed, (4) and her maternal grandfather was John Gurney (1718-1779), the founder of the Gurney bank at Norwich. John Gurney married his first cousin Lucy Gurney (1722?-1749). Although the marriage of first cousins usually meant expulsion from the Society of Friends, (5) the couple managed to convince

their local Norwich Monthly Meeting that they were spiritually indispensible to each other. (6) Their daughter Elizabeth (1747-1786) was Lucy Maw's mother.

Lucy Maw's father was not initially a conventional member of the Society of Friends. After a strict education, his association with his more worldly business acquaintances led him into what Quakers considered 'some deviations, in dress and manners'. (7) It took his wife's premature death to draw him back to his faith; so much so that he felt a calling to preach in 1789, wrote a number of religious pamphlets, and retired early from his bank in order to devote himself and much of his income to worthy causes. (8) Despite his re-conversion, however, Alexander was said at times to have had to 'pass through close conflict of mind, both on his own account and that of the church'. (9)

Although her father's Christian service and charity had a great influence on Lucy Maw's spiritual development, she also had the example of two female ministers in her family to follow, her paternal grandmother and her aunt. Her grandmother Martha Alexander (1726-1775) was conscious of a special vocation to preach at the age of twenty-four, three years after her marriage to Dykes Alexander (1724?-1786), himself an elder (responsible for the pastoral duties the minister was not expected to fulfil); she proceeded to make visits to Friends' Meetings throughout England for the rest of her life. (10) Martha Alexander's resolve to combine domestic and spiritual obligations and her propensity for travel might seem on the surface to justify the feminist interpretations of the female Quaker's assumption of the role of preacher. If, however, a brief examination is made of the nature of Quaker ministry and the status of women within the Society, a less clearly-defined picture emerges.

Initially the Quaker minister, whether female or male, felt a divine summons to serve fellow Quakers, prior to being recognized through preaching by a community of Friends. (11) This sense of mission without the formalities of ordination owes much to the Quaker belief that all were called by God to bear witness: in the words of Lucy Maw's father 'a people designed by Almighty God, to hold forth the primeval simplicity of the Gospel, devoid of unessential forms and ceremonies, and a ministry free as *that light* from whence all true ministry cometh'. (12) The Quaker ministry was in essence founded on a concept of sexual equality, since God was seen to be calling all men and women to the priesthood. (13) The equality was more apparent than real, though, since women had no legislative power at their own local Monthly Meetings or at the Yearly Meetings of female delegates which took place in London and which Elia calls their 'Whitsun-conferences'. Obviously, preaching did provide the sort of public career which was not open to women in any other sphere at that time. It afforded to women, both married and unmarried, the respect, even reverence, of a community, invested in them the authority to teach, counsel and admonish, and gave them the opportunity to leave home periodically, to visit other groups of Friends, sometimes as far away as America, to renew the faith of believers and convert non-believers. Such comparative freedom, at least in the case of Martha Alexander, did not necessarily lead to increased assertiveness or the manipulation of the 'masculine environment'. Indeed, the evaluation of her ministry given by her local Monthly Meeting would seem to indicate that Lamb's essay is a more accurate portrait of what the Quaker woman-preacher was like:

> a living example of the doctrines she delivered, in conversation and conduct; a shining pattern of humility and patience, piety and charity; faithful and amiable in every relation of life; kind and courteous to her neighbours; sympathizing with the afflicted; and liberal to the needy of all denominations, (15)

Even the Elian notion of the 'Quakeress's' 'restraining modesty' and resemblance to the 'Shining Ones' is echoed in the Meeting's reference to Martha Alexander being 'a shining pattern of humility'.

It could be argued that as her grandmother died when she was only one year old, Lucy Maw would be unlikely to imitate her particular kind of service. Maw's unmarried paternal aunt Mary Alexander (1760-1809), only fourteen years her senior, would have had a more direct influence on her ministry. Mary Alexander, unlike her own mother Martha Alexander (and Lucy Maw herself), kept a journal of her religious experiences, a common practice among Quaker preachers. (16) Mary Alexander's awareness of her calling follows the accepted Quaker pattern in some respects: she had intimations of her future ministry in her late teens and at twenty-three shared in the 'gospel labours' of her fellow members. (17) Like her brother Samuel Alexander, however, she went through a period of indulging in behaviour which, as she later described it, 'required to be slain by the sword of the Lord'(18); also, like him, she admits to having been 'in great doubt and uneasiness' about when to start her chosen career. (19) At twenty-nine she had a visionary confirmation of her vocation: 'a light shined round my bed, and I heard a voice intelligibly say; "Thou art appointed to preach the Gospel".'(20) She was accepted as a minister by her local Monthly Meeting two years later, and thereafter made extensive missionary journeys in England, Scotland and Wales, often accompanied by her brother Samuel, and once by her niece Lucy who felt an 'inclination' to go with her father. (21) Mary Alexander was fully alive to the evangelical potentialities of her being a woman, remarking of a group of non-Quakers she visited in the Isle of Man: 'probably the novelty of a female's appearance in such a manner, might have place with some of them'. (22) Nevertheless, like her mother, she would seem to endorse Elia's view that Quaker women preachers were the model of humility and self-abnegation; for she confesses that she was led to write her journals:

> not with the smallest supposition that anything I may have to commit to paper, can be likely to yield either edification or consolation to those who survive me...but... from a belief... that to look back and consider the merciful dealings of a gracious Creator with one of the least of his spiritual family (if worthy to conclude myself at all of this number)...may tend to my own future satisfaction and instruction.(23)

Although Lucy Maw left no such account of her spiritual life, she shared some of the same experiences. She reportedly spoke of a 'remarkable visitation' at the age of fourteen, after which she had a 'change of heart'. (24) Like both her aunt and her father, she was afflicted by self-doubts, and was conscious of feeling unusually strong temptations to evil in herself and of having had to pass through 'deep conflict of soul'. (25) Her reticence, otherwise, about the nature of her spiritual growth sets her apart from most

Quaker divines, men or women. When she was about twenty-four she first spoke at a Quaker Meeting and was acknowledged as minister by the Meeting of Woodbridge Friends in 1801. (26) She married at the (then) late age of thirty when she had been a minister for three years. Her choice of partner was a comparatively obscure man, Thomas Maw (1772-1849), a Quaker from Kelsale; his parents were shopkeepers who moved to Ipswich to educate their children and to be near a meeting-house, Mr. Maw senior being an elder. A chemist's shop was taken for Thomas Maw by his father, which he left to a younger brother in 1800. Maw acquired a paper-mill near Needham Market, where presumably he met his future wife. (27)

Although a successful small-businessman in his own right, Maw clearly benefited financially and socially from his marriage into the Alexander family. In 1808 he was given charge of his father-in-law's bank at Needham Market and continued there and at his mill until 1830 (28); he obtained this post after it had been vacated by an uncle of his wife, William Alexander (1768-1841), who went to join his wife Ann, another Quaker minister, at her school in York. (29) Thomas Maw, however, appears to have regretted in later life that there had been so few intellectual opportunities open to him (30): perhaps he might have agreed in part with Elia's strictures against the 'primitive banquet' of Quaker pleasures. (31) He had a considerable knowledge of botany and chemistry, and dispensed drugs to relatives and the poor, (32) in keeping with his role as husband of a wealthy, charitable minister. Maw did, however, produce some written work, notably *Scripture Lessons* (1826), a selection of historical facts, 'precepts' and significant passages from the New Testament, intended to complement the religious education in schools and to assist parents unable or too busy to instruct their families. (33) Lucidly expository, if somewhat over-didactic, the book was admirably suited to the system of teaching practised in Quaker schools in the first half of the nineteenth century, where the child was made to learn Biblical texts ' "lightened" into his understanding with the confessions and exhortations' (34) taken from Friends' works of a devotional nature.

It was on one such work that Thomas and Lucy Maw collaborated, a *Memoir* (1828) of their daughter Louisa (1806-1828). As in similar Quaker efforts, the subject's life and writings are used to illustrate Christian virtues. The brief memoir contains an additional element which distinguishes it from most of the other examples of the genre, poems addressed to the central figure, including three by Bernard Barton and one by Maw himself, of which, surprisingly, the offering of the amateur is superior to that of the professional. (35) Thomas Maw's piece, at once less hackneyed and self-conscious than those of his more famous relation, also includes a tribute to Lucy Maw's attentions to her daughter:

> Of *one* 'twere not invidious to speak,
> Whose unremitted and unwearied care
> T'anticipate thy wants - thy spirits cheer -
> And reconcile thee to thy present lot -
> Gives ample evidence of steadfast love.
> Stock of the good Samaritans! she feels
> The tender sympathy that spares no pains;
> Shares in thy solitude - and condescends
> T'impart the treasures of a well stor'd mind. (36)

It is interesting that, despite Maw's due emphasis in the last line quoted

on his wife's influence on Louisa's intellectual growth, Lucy Maw wrote little for publication, except their joint *Memoir* and a 'little memorial'(37) to her late husband in 1850. In this later work biographical data, quotations from Thomas Maw's letters, and unpublished papers are presented clearly and unaffectedly; the author's occasional pious asides are never allowed to dominate the material, and the religious imagery is used adroitly and with charm, as in the description 'he resembled in due time the tree planted by the rivers of water, which bringeth forth fruit in his season; his leaf, also, did not wither'. (38) The work is also notable for the revealing remarks Lucy Maw makes *en passant* about her ministry and her sense of inferiority.

In the first place she is at pains to present herself as the dutiful wife and mother. She claims, for example, that after her daughter's death she felt more free to make religious journeys; (39) in fact she had already gone to London on two occasions in 1811 and 1817(40) to speak at Yearly Meetings, when both her children Louisa and Samuel (1807-1884), were still quite young. On her visits to Quakers in 'several counties' she admits that she was 'invariably' accompanied by her husband, who, as she says, was 'very cautious not to give me undue encouragement beforehand'. (41) She even goes to the length of confessing that in comparision with him she felt the 'weaker vessel'. (42) This comment might appear strange at first sight since, as a travelling minister, she had a more public role than Thomas Maw, who was an elder. Her low self-esteem may merely reflect prevailing nineteenth century attitudes about women's status in society. Another factor may also have contributed to her sense of unworthiness, guilt about her own comfortable background. In a letter to a fellow Quaker minister Elizabeth Dudley she wrote: 'when I consider the privileges and favours I have enjoyed, I see cause to be not only abased but alarmed that so little progress has been made in the divine life'. (43) She was even conscious that in preaching to others she was in effect preaching to herself, or, as she expresses it in the Biblical image from her memoir of her husband, 'whilst endeavouring to water others, I should myself be watered' (44) - a comment which recalls Mary Alexander's belief that her writings 'may tend to my own future satisfaction and instruction'. After her death two poems, both entitled 'Lucy Maw', pay tribute to the two qualities which she, her aunt and her grandmother shared, and which Elia called in his essay 'tenderness' and 'a restraining modestry'. The first poem, written in 1856 by 'S.P.' (un-identified) speaks of her as 'Anxious to fulfil her mission,/Humbly trusting in her God'.(45) The second, written by the Quaker minister-poet who lived next door to the Wordsworths at Rydal, William Ball (1801-1878) (46), voices similar sentiments:

> Close keeping to her Saviour's side,
> His lowly follower nothing knew
> But Jesus, and Him crucified,
> And sang His praise with death in view. (47)

If Elia seems, at least in the case of the Alexander/Maw family, to give a more accurate picture of Quaker women preachers than recent feminist theorists, he is also thoroughly justified by them in his contention that 'the men...speak seldomer'. In the extended Alexander/Maw family, during Lamb's lifetime, there was only one male minister, Lucy Maw's father Samuel Alexander (her own son only became a preacher in 1877 when he was seventy (48)). There were, however, no less than six female ministers;

Lucy Maw, her grandmother Martha Alexander, her aunt Mary Alexander, her aunt by marriage Ann Alexander and Ann's half sister Sarah Grubb (49), and even her niece Sophia Alexander (1806-1865) (50), all of whom formed a part of the 'troops of the Shining Ones'. (51)

NOTES

1. 'A Quaker's Meeting', *The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb*, ed. T. Hutchinson (London: Oxford University Press), I, 530-1.

2. Sheila Rowbotham, *Hidden from History* (London: Pluto Press, 1973, Repr. 1974), p.9

3. Elizabeth Isichei, *Victorian Quakers* (London; Oxford University Press, 1970), p.108.

4. Barton's connection with the Alexander family is examined in an article by the present writer, 'Charles Lamb, Bernard Barton and the Quakers', *Charles Lamb Bulletin*, N.S. 53 (Jan. 1986), pp. 150-2.

5. Minutes of the Yearly Meeting 1675, *Yearly Meeting 1668 to 1693*, I, 14.

6. *Minutes of Norwich Monthly Meeting, 1701-1775*, ed. A.J. Eddington Norwich n.p., 1935, I, 146.
The son of Lucy Maw, Samuel Maw (1807-1884) was less fortunate. He too married his first cousin Rachel Alexander (1809-1899), daughter of his maternal uncle Samuel (1773-1838). The births of their first two children, Rachel (1843?-1865) and Ellen (1845?-1869) are not recorded in the Quaker Digest of Births. It must be inferred that the Society of Friends had forbidden the marriage and the couple had been married in a church or a registry office, in either case an offence leading to disownment. As the birth of their son Samuel is recorded in 1846 in the Digest, it is probable that they were re-admitted into membership around that time. (Unpublished *Quaker Dictionary of Biography* Friends House, London).

7. *Piety Promoted Vol. IV*, ed. W. and T. Evans (Philadelphia: n.p., 1854), p. 239.

8. Ibid, pp.239-40.

9. Ibid, p. 242.

10. *Some Account of the Life and Religious Experiences of Mary Alexander* [ed William Alexander] (York: C. Peacock for W. Alexander, 1811), pp. 11-13.

11. R.M. Jones, *The Later Periods of Quakerism* (London: Macmillan, 1921), I, 200-1.

12. Samuel Alexander, *An address to the Members of the Two Monthly Meetings* (York: Thomas Wilson for W. Alexander, 1812), p. 6.

13. W.A.C. Stewart, *Quakers and Education* (London: Epworth Press, 1953), pp. 13-14.

14. Elizabeth Isichei, *Victorian Quakers*, p. 108.

15. *Some Account*, pp. 13-14.

16. Cf. *A Memoir of Mary Capper* [ed. Katherine Backhouse] Philadelphia: n.p., 1882; *Memoirs of Elizabeth Dudley*, ed. Charles Taylor(London:

A.W. Bennett, 1861); *Some Account of the Life and Religious Labours of Sarah Grubb* (1792) (Repr. Belfast; William Robinson, 1837). Sarah Grubb (née Tuke) (1756-1790) was the half-sister of Lucy Maw's aunt by marriage, Ann Alexander (q.v. note 29).

17. *Some Account*, pp. 16, 18.

18. Ibid, p. 17.

19. Ibid, p.23.

20. Ibid, p. 24.

21. Ibid, p. 102.

22. Ibid, p. 143.

23. Ibid, pp. 14-15.

24. *Testimonies Concerning Deceased Ministers* (London: Edward Marsh, 1857), p. 29.

25. Ibid, p. 30.

26. Ibid, p. 30.

27. [Lucy Maw] *A Tribute to the Memory of Thomas Maw By His Widow* (London: Charles Gilpin, 1850), pp. 1-3.

28. Ibid, p. 4. Cp. Bernard Barton's less fortunate connection with the Alexander Bank 'Charles Lamb, Bernard Barton and the Quakers', p. 150.

29. *A Tribute*, p. 4. Ann Alexander (née Tuke) (1767-1949), a 'much travelled Minister' (Stewart, *Quakers and Education*, p. 96), was superintendant of a Quaker girls' school in Trinity Lane, York (precursor of 'The Mount') from 1808-1811, a school founded - and run - by her mother Esther Tuke (1727?-1794) in 1785 with the support of other interested Friends (H.W. Sturge and T. Clark, *The Mount School York* (London, Toronto: J.W. Dent, 1931), p. 30.

30. *A Tribute*, p. 2.

31. 'Imperfect Sympathies', *Works*, I, 550.

32. *A Tribute*, pp. 13-14.

33. Thomas Maw, *Scripture Lessons* (York: W. Alexander, 1826), p.v.

34. Stewart, *Quakers and Education*, p. 131.

35. Vid. 'Charles Lamb, Bernard Barton and the Quakers', p. 152 for further reference to Barton's contribution.

36. T. and L. Maw , *A Memoir of Louisa Maw* (York: W. Alexander, 1828), p.11.

37. Lucy Maw, unpublished letter to unnamed correspondent, April 29, 1850 (Friends Library MS JT 344).

38. *A Tribute*, pp. 12-13.

39. Ibid,p. 6.

40. ed. Norman Penney, *Pen Pictures of the London Yearly Meetings 1789-1833* (London: Friends Historical Society, 1930), p. 131; *Memoirs of Elizabeth Dudley*, p. 47.

41. *A Tribute*, p. 6.

42. Ibid, p. 6.

43. Letter to Elizabeth Dudley, November 21, 1827, *Memoirs of Elizabeth Dudley*, p. 148.

44. *A Tribute*, p. 6.

45. S.P., *Lucy Maw* (broadsheet; Rushmere 1856) (Friends Library Box 387/1).

46. E.N. Armitage, *The Quaker Poets* (London: William Andrews, 1896), pp. 17-19.

47. William Ball, 'Lucy Maw', *The Tribute* (London: Richard Barrett for William Ball, 1862), p. 101.

48. *Annual Monitor 1885* (London: n.p., 1884), p. 116.

49. Vid. notes 16 and 29.

50. She was daughter to Samuel Alexander, Lucy Maw's brother (q.v. note 6), and she married her father's first cousin William Alexander (1799-1864), himself son of the minister Ann Alexander (vid. note 29). She first spoke as a minister in 1827 (*Testimonies Concerning Deceased Ministers*, p. 23; *Memorials of William H. and Sophia Alexander* (London: F.B. Kitto, 1867), p. 26.

51. I should like to thank Vivian Salmon for suggesting that I investigate the life and works of Lucy Maw.

BOOK REVIEWS

Charles Lamb, *Elia and The Last Essays of Elia*, edited with an introduction by Jonathan Bate. Oxford University Press ('The World's Classics'), 1987. £4.95 paperback.

Charles Lamb's two collections of his own essays, the *Elia* of 1823 and the *Last Essays of Elia* of ten years later, have been recognised as classics from the start. Their reputation dipped in the 1930s and '40s, affected by Leavisite distrust of personality displays and any suggestion of 'mere' charm, but recent studies of Romanticism show a fresh awareness of the important critical insights which many of the essays embody, and the originality of form which distinguishes virtually every one of them.

Jonathan Bate's well-produced paperback edition of the essays balances the work of the great late-Victorian and Edwardian textual editors of Lamb with the fresh critical insights of the present generation. Textually, the *Elia* essays have been ignored for years, but Jonathan Bate's comments offer a reassuring reason why (beyond changing fashions in nineteenth-century literature) this has been so. There were strong economic pressures pushing the new editor towards re-using the text of one of the old editions. Jonathan Bate made a fresh collation with the originals and found that E.V. Lucas's standard edition, in one of its formats, could be employed with the minimum of silent alteration. Lucas's errors, he has found, averaged only one or two in each essay.

The explanatory notes are economical and always to the point. Jonathan Bate declares that he has eschewed biographical and other material tending to connect Lamb's characters in the essays with his own friends or

acquaintances for the reason that no such material was available to Lamb's original readers. His decision, though sometimes tantalising to the present-day reader, is legitimate, and obviously sensible in an edition on this scale. He does, however, give 'details of original magazine publication, together with elucidation of literary and other allusions that would have been more familiar to Lamb's readers than they are to us'. We cannot read Elia as his contemporaries did, but Jonathan Bate tries to make sure that we are not hindered in our response by factual and literary allusions that were more generally familiar in the 1820s than they are today. He has a sharp eye for the original context. How many of us had noticed that 'The South-Sea House' not only inaugurated Lamb's great series of contributions to John Scott's *London Magazine* in August 1820 and immortalised the circumstances of Lamb's first spell of clerical employment, but also marked the centenary of the 'South Sea Bubble', from which the fortunes of Lamb's moribund concern never fully recovered?

In preparing this new edition of *Elia* and the *Last Essays*, Jonathan Bate's intention has clearly been to help the reader respond directly to two collections of miscellaneous essays of an idiosyncratic and highly-personal kind, but also to emphasise the fact (partly by denying us the one-to-one identifications of fictional with real characters which so much writing on Lamb used to indulge in) that though obviously incorporating much that relates to Lamb's own life and friendships, these are collections of original inventions. In his essays Lamb's personality is repeatedly modified and recreated through the shaping power of his imagination, just as (though to a greater degree) Coleridge's is in the ballad of *The Ancient Mariner* or Wordsworth's is in his narrative of *The Pedlar*. Jonathan Bate notes that Lamb could distinguish between essays to be signed with his own initial and others to be distinguished as 'more Eliacal'. Elia could be killed off, with his obituary written, and then brought back to life again. His creator controlled him.

One reason for Lamb's success with his Elian personality must have been the way Elia brought into the foreground and integrated into wholeness, a complete character, various bits of Lamb's own personality - whimsical, quirky, hobby-horsical, bookish, even neurotic - which in his professional life could never form more than a 'holiday' or 'off-duty' manifestation of his private self. Dickens's Wemmick would build a miniature castle as an escape from the restrictions imposed by his life as a clerk. Charles Lamb created Elia and fulfilled himself.

Jonathan Bate wishes us to read the Elia essays for their own intrinsic merit. But he is also aware that the essays were first published one at a time in the midst of new developments in the art of periodical essay writing being inaugurated all the time by Lamb himself, his friends Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt and, presently, by his younger friend Thomas De Quincey. Lamb's *London Magazine* essays generated correspondence (real and pretended) and if (as Jonathan Bate wishes) we could have a reprinting of the whole magazine for the first half of the 1820s we would find a good deal of cross-reference and picking up of one another's ideas going on among the group of friendly fellow contributors. But he is careful to stress the extent to which Lamb was an originator: his Introduction points out that Lamb's 'Confessions of a Drunkard' had inaugurated the modern form of essay as confessional several years before De Quincey began to

publish his *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* in the *London Magazine* in 1822. Lamb's essay (not included in *Elia* by its writer) is given now in an appendix so that we can make our own comparisons.

It would be hard to imagine an edition of *Elia* and the *Last Essays* better calculated to introduce the new reader to the delights of Lamb's great essays without impeding his way with excess scholarship than this one. At the same time, Jonathan Bate has managed to include, economically and unobtrusively, the scholarly facts and apparatus that the serious student will require. The 'Select Bibliography' emphasises the degree to which Lamb studies are still based on the sterling work of the old editors, but the criticism listed is, with one exception, all post war. Scholars have been writing about Charles Lamb with a new respect and perceptiveness of recent years. It should be a source of quiet satisfaction for all of us that among the list of critical studies which Jonathan Bate includes, more than a third have appeared in the pages of *The Charles Lamb Bulletin*.

Bill Ruddick

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Thomas McFarland, *Romantic Cruxes: The English Essayists and the Spirit of the Age*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987. pp. xiii + 128. £15.

Those familiar with the monumental erudition of Thomas McFarland's *Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition* will at once recognise in his present book the same broad landscape of reference and depth of outlook which stamped the former work as a classic of intellectual commitment. In the splendid opening chapter of *Romantic Cruxes* McFarland locates the work of Lamb, Hazlitt and De Quincey, with an admirable economy, within the coils of that 'gigantic and unprecedented crisis' of European culture which is the true context for any thorough approach to Romanticism, in which the whole system of traditional beliefs and values was put under enormous and intolerable pressures by a remorseless progress in every aspect of human thought and endeavour. What were those pressures?

> Socially they were signalized by the French Revolution, with its attendant shattering of age-old securities of class and status and theological assumption. Economically, they were signalized by the Industrial Revolution, which not only turned the cities and means of production into Satan's mills, and uprooted the populace from the traditional permanence of a farming life, but also called into question the very significance of individual craftsmanship. . . . Spiritually, they were signalized by the collapse of religion in the French Enlightenment, a collapse feared even where it was denied.

The alienation which evolved from these massive transitions was exacerbated by a more insidious revision in conceptual awareness, and one which for McFarland is the most significant source of pressure. This was the collapse of the notion of 'substance' and its replacement with that of 'process', giving rise to a psychological condition in which the indivual, cut loose from the reliably static fixities of the old world and thrust into a world of endless change, found himself in a state of permanent insecurity and anxiety.

Thus at the very core of the Romantic spirit McFarland finds alienation and despair, melancholy and madness, as man's sense of self and its value diminishes, and his role amid the eternal flux of process becomes disturbingly obscure. Finding himself, in Carlyle's memorable phrase, 'Unblest on burning deserts', the individual beats an inauthentic retreat into drugs or dreams, or imaginary worlds cunningly substituted for the intolerable complex of reality.

If McFarland seems to sketch an excessively dismal picture of the spirit of the age, its unsettling bleakness is carefully targeted at a blind-spot in traditional Romantic studies. Critics who promote a spirit of optimistic, egocentric Romanticism, and those who deny Romanticism as an essentially unified response to a major critical upheaval in cultural history, can find little nourishment in that air of remoteness or gloom which hangs over and pervades the work of the triad of essayists presented here, preferring to dismiss the effacements and uncertainties encoded within their writings as self-indulgent whimsy, gratuitous escapism, or plain sour grapes. Lamb, Hazlitt and De Quincey must be seen as central, iconic figures in their period, mountains in the Romantic range; 'not dizzying elevations like Wordsworth and Coleridge, perhaps, but definitely mountains, not outlying hills'.

But having adjusted critical perspectives to focus the better on his chosen field, Mc Farland's critical treatment of the individual essayists is, with one brief exception, disappointingly light and unchallenging. The three chapters which follow are introductory and general, rather than incisive and particular, and they take much on trust. Those familiar with De Quincey's autobiographical writings, for example, will find themselves racing with little friction over extremely familiar ground, in a chapter less critical than summarial. In the case of Lamb, enough pioneering zeal has been expended -- by, among others, Fred Randel, Roy Park, and Jonathan Bate (see, for example, the latter's canonical placement of Elia in his introduction to the recent World's Classics collection of Lamb's essays) -- to pronounce him thoroughly redeemed both from the inconsidered and offensively inelegant approach typified by Denys Thompson, and from the devoted but ultimately unflattering efforts of the Centenary school of Elian criticism. McFarland's chapter presents Lamb through an astute and ample selection of letters and anecdotes. But when he reaches the Elian essays-- promisingly tabled as the record of Lamb's psychical odyssey-- he pulls up short, prepared to do no more than 'sketch and suggest, and that only briefly', as he shows the general areas to dig, but does no more himself than to break the topsoil.

The exception is Hazlitt. For those who have puzzled over Hazlitt's apparent about-turns in evaluative judgements, when, in a movement inexplicable as a merely accidental disposition of mind, he leaps from veneration of a writer or artist to outright condemnation, McFarland offers a crisp and ingenious solution through his notion of Hazlitt's 'coarctive imagination'. A brief summary would fail to do justice to this rich and complex concept- but suffice it to say that in such a systematic approach McFarland is both riveting and convincing, and indicates what might have been if this tough-mindedness had been spread more thoroughly throughout the book.

But despite its tendency to be introductory rather than analytical, *Romantic*

Cruxes is the most enjoyable book to appear on Romanticism for some time. McFarland's prose is limpid and precise, and is enhanced by his own considerable flair for figurative language and his awareness of the focussing power of a sharply-tuned image--the sharp, intelligent raps of Hazlitt's appositional clusters are likened to 'the muted clicks of stainless-steel bearings'. One only wishes that, rather than stimulating a critical approach to Lamb, Hazlitt and De Quincey, the book had initiated it and thus-- such is the pleasure of Mc Farland's company--were twice or three times its present size.

Hugo Donnelly

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Molly Lefebure: *The Illustrated Lake Poets: their Lives, their Poetry and the Landscape that Inspired them.* Windward Books 1987 £10.95

The first thing that has to be said is that this book is perfectly beautiful to look at. The illustrations are stunning and excellently chosen to illustrate the text. *The Illustrated Lake Poets* is the ideal present with which to introduce novices to the pleasures of the Lake Poets and their environment. It has the great advantage that old pictures and prints are supplemented by superb modern photographs, including a number by Molly Lefebure's husband John Gerrish, so that one can see how much or how little the landscape has changed. Despite the great interest of seeing what Wordsworth's Lakeland looked like, early views, particularly perhaps prints, on their own may be for the Common Reader a little off-putting, whereas this combination pulls like a magnet.

One has to start by commenting on the illustrations because they are so immediately striking, but the text, as one would expect from this author, is both lively and informative. Molly Lefebure introduces the reader to the Lake District alongside Coleridge, who first saw it on a walking-tour with Wordsworth in November 1799. Then follows an entertaining background chapter leading into an account of the life and work of Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey. A final section deals with their successors, up to the present day. Purists may notice an occasional tendency for 'poetic licence' to blur strict fact. For example, did Wordsworth and Coleridge really discuss the possibility of Greta Hall, 'soon to be built', 'as a future residence for Coleridge', as they walked down the shore of Bassenthwaite as early as November 1799? Again, the statement that 'Wordsworth came down from Cambridge in the summer of 1790 without having sat for his degree' gives the impression that he did not gain a degree at all, whereas what really happened was that he had decided not to read for Honours but he did gain his degree of Bachelor of Arts, which was conferred on him on 27 January 1791. But these are matters of detail. It *was* true that by this decision he debarred himself from a fellowship and the professions that depended on it, which is the point here. Perhaps for a popular audience pedantic accuracy is less important than an absorbing narrative to hold the reader's interest, as this text certainly does.

Throughout the book there are generous selections from the poetry,

skilfully chosen so as not to intimidate the faint-hearted by excessive length yet to give the flavour of each poet's work. The quotations are placed so that they relate to the narrative. Important poems such as 'Tintern Abbey' and the 'Dejection Ode' are printed in full. It is a particular pleasure to be able to read Southey on his cats as well as his cats on him! Also included are some of Hartley Coleridge's touching poems. The selection of modern poets seen as in the Lake Poets' tradition is interesting too. Although this is primarily a book for the Common Reader, it is by no means only that. It provides a salutary reminder, to specialists in the field, of what the poets and poetry on which they expend 'midnight oil' were really concerned with and how closely they combined literature with the living world around them.

Mary Wedd

Wordsworth & Coleridge: Lyrical Ballads 1805 edited by Derek Roper, 3rd edition, Northcote House, 1987, £8.95.

It would be nice to give a warm welcome to the re-appearance of this Macdonald and Evans annotated edition under a new imprint. I found my copy of the 1976 edition, which cost two pounds and was printed on quality paper, very useful. The 'new edition' ought to be just as useful, since it is in fact a photographic reproduction, identical to the 1976 edition except for a new title page and a revised booklist on pages 420-7. The main changes are that the new edition is a centimetre thicker, because is uses inferior paper, and that it costs £8-95.

The notes are full (almost 150 pages), reliable, and informative, and often give a helpful resumé of critical issues associated with the texts. In this last respect, however, the edition is now very slightly dated, both in detail, and in retaining what must surely be a minority opinion that Wordsworth's Preface fits the practice of the 1800 poems better than the 1798 poems. The Preface is surely one of the most radical literary manifestos ever written : it expresses the spirit of the most experimental ballad-poems, and sorts ill with the cosy 'poems on the naming of places' which mark the onset of premature poetic senility.

Also unchanged is the very brief selection of early critical comments by Francis Jeffrey, Hazlitt, Arnold, David Nicol Smith, Charles Burney, Leslie Stephen, and (for the twentieth century) C.M. Bowra. Compared with the Brett and Jones edition this is a slender haul. The star piece here is undoubtedly the Francis Jeffrey. There is no easier way to help students to realise the significance of what Wordsworth undertook in the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* than to point them to Jeffrey's angry insistence that the love or grief of an 'enlightened and refined' person, such as himself, is not merely better expressed in polite society but is 'in itself a different emotion' from that of 'a clown, a tradesman or a market wench'.

The reading list is updated. A number of older studies have been dropped and a sensible selection of more recent work included. I find it odd that Heather Glen's *Vision and Disenchantment*, which is superb on Blake but grudging on Wordsworth and ignores Coleridge, should appear as 'particularly recommended' in a list which excludes Don Bialostosky's work on the relation

between Wordsworth's narrative experiments and Coleridge's criticisms of them. Incidentally, Roper fails to amend the last item in his 'bibliographies' section. David Erdman's annual bibliography 'The Romantic Movement' is now a self-standing publication. It is many years since it appeared in *Philological Quarterly* or in *English Language Notes* - let alone in *Modern Language Notes* as Roper errantly suggests.

No doubt there is something to be said for using the 1805 edition as a basis for a teaching text of the ballads, though it seems to me that a case could be made for combining its strengths with those of earlier editions. For instance, I happen to prefer the arrangement of poems in 1798, when the volume opened with 'The Ancient Mariner', and Wordsworth's poems seemed to run in a more dialectical current. But of course the 1798 volume (available in a rather spartan Oxford edition) was a relatively slender affair. The two-volume editions of 1800, 1802 and 1805 included the Lucy poems, the poems on the naming of places, Michael and other pastorals. The famous 'Preface' only reached its full length in 1802, and Roper includes not only the Appendix on poetic diction (which did appear in the 1805 edition) but also, as part of the critical apparatus, the splendidly laconic 1798 advertisement.

One textual change is made, in that Roper marries the 1805 text of 'The Ancient Mariner' with the splendid prose gloss which it did not acquire until 1817, by when the text of the poem was also revised. Roper's 'Ancient Mariner' is therefore a unique composition of the editor's. He might have done better, it seems to me, simply to adopt the 1817 text of the poem.

Since he includes one 1798 feature (the Advertisement) and one 1817 feature (the Neo-neo-Platonist gloss on the Mariner) it seems odd that he does not also include, at least in an appendix, the Bastille-influenced poems which appeared in 1798 but were dropped for the more conservative two- volume editions. Wordsworth's 'The Convict' (dropped in 1800) is no great loss, perhaps, but room should be made for Coleridge's 'The Dungeon' which was dropped, more reprehensibly, in 1802.

Creeping Conservatism is detectable, of course in each edition of *Lyrical Ballads*. The exclusion of certain poems on political grounds is one sign of this. The rearrangement of the poems is perhaps another. Whereas in 1798 Wordsworth's first poem was a parody of the 18th century taste for the picturesque, the 1805 edition opens with 'Expostulation and reply', a poem which memorialises Wordsworth's quarrel with Hazlitt.

It is true that, by and large, the Wordsworth poems have not been significantly bowdlerised at this date. Wordsworth still insists that the narrator of 'The Thorn', for instance, is a man of obsessional mensurative faculties, and if people object to the lines 'I've measured it from side to side / 'Tis three feet long and two feet wide', is still prepared to take it on the chin, in the interest of psychological realism. But in one case, a calamitous retreat has been made. Although the old man of 'Old Man Travelling' is still permitted a perspective, his version of events is now reported rather than rendered in direct speech. The effect is to mend a rupture of decorum. The story of human suffering is now secondary to the gentlemanly indulgence of poetic reverie. In 1798 the picturesque sub-title, 'Animal Tranquillity and Decay: A Sketch', served to draw

attention to the way in which the poem diagnosed its own exploitation of the human subject. In 1805 the old man's reposte appears for the last time (Roper does not indicate, incidentally, that in 1798 he spoke directly), and the promotion of sub-title to main title ominously prefigures the subsequent eradication of his perspective altogether. As Wordsworth was writing at about this time, in another context, 'I see by glimpses now; when age comes on/May scarcely see at all'.

All this is - in the popular sense of the term - academic. A student reading Wordsworth is not going to pay £8.95 for an edition of *Lyrical Ballads* when the same money will buy Stephen Gill's much more comprehensive Oxford Authors selected works. If s/he buys the Gill selection, however, s/he will not find 'The Mad Mother', nor be told what the famous *Lyrical Ballads* contained, or even that Wordsworth went on to write a poem called *The Excursion* which his contemporaries thought one of the glories of the age. If such a student turns in despair to a cheaper selection the most likely choice is the allegedly 'new' Penguin selection, which reprints a selection made in the 1940s, and reflects a view of Wordsworth which is shared by no living critic. S/he might of course turn instead to a more specialised approach: Jonathan Wordsworth, for instance, has edited two slenderly elegant selections of the blank verse of 1797-1800. But these are so arranged that one must buy both volumes if one is to read both the tale of Margaret in 'The Ruined Cottage' and the tale of its narrator in 'The Pedlar'. And if one spends one's six pounds on these two volumes, for the sake of the extensive and expert critical commentary, one will not have acquired a single line of Wordsworth that is not in blank verse: nor a hint of Wordsworth's brilliance as mock-balladeer, lyricist, or sonneteer.

If the Cornell series, with its repellent and unreadable texts, so priced (perhaps luckily?) as to be out of the reach even of most colleges, does not succeed in burying Wordsworth, the current competition to share out the more popular market between elderly reprints and new-fangled 'tasters' will surely do so.

Richard Gravil

The College of St. Mark and St. John

David Erdman: *Commerce des Lumières: John Oswald and the British in Paris, 1790-1793*. University of Missouri Press, 1986, 338 pages, cloth. Price in United Kingdom £35.

Apart from the extensively researched writings of John Goldsworth Alger, published at the turn of the last century, little more than desultory attention has been paid to the numerous British whom the Revolution attracted to Paris and to the far from insignificant roles not a few of them played between the year 1790 and the autumn of 1793. David Erdman, in his truly remarkable *Commerce des Lumières* (upon which he has been working over a long period of time) devotes himself to 'the subject of the involvement of British intellectuals in revolutionary thought and action between the end of the American Revolution and the fourth year of the French Revolution', with particular attention to John Oswald, born in

Edinburgh *circa* 1760; 'Poet, soldier satiric and political journalist, author of *Constitution for the Universal Commonwealth*, active member of the Paris Jacobin Club' and 'self-styled "Anglo-Jacobin",' as Erdman tells us in his introduction, going on to claim that to pursue Oswald's career 'is to move into the center of British-French revolutionary organization'; because Oswald, 'active and articulate and highly memorable . . . kept close to the centers of thought and action in London and Paris just before and during the early years of the French Revolution, a thorough investigation of his military and intellectual career should considerably advance *our* comprehension of the ideas and efforts of British and French intellectuals during those exciting years.' This claim Erdman dazzingly makes good.

Following a brief military career in India as a junior officer in the 42nd or Royal Highland Regiment (already famous as the Black Watch) Oswald resigned his commission in protest against the outrageously brutal behaviour of the British at the storming of Bednore in February 1783. He then emulated the indefatigable 'Walking' Stewart, travelling on foot among the 'Turkomans and Curdees'. After which he settled in London and embarked upon a career as political journalist, parliamentary reporter, satiric writer, poet, and revolutionary speaker at the debating societies.

From London Oswald progressed to Paris to become further involved in revolutionary journalism coupled with political action. In May 1790 we find him launching the *Universal Patriot*, a newspaper for two cities (Paris and London). The reception of the *Patriot* in Paris was such that Oswald was enthusiastically made a member of the Jacobin Club; an exceptional mark of favour to a Britisher. London's reaction was equally strong, though in a diffferent direction; the *Patriot* was quickly suppressed. Oswald by now was participating in the newly formed *Cercle Social*, fundamentally a society for furthering serious theoretical political discussion and aiming, among other things, to bridge the gap 'between the people and their representatives' and having as its central creed the basic theme, 'To each according to his needs, from each according to his capability to produce'. Publications issued by the *Cercle* included a series launched by Bonneville and Oswald to supply 'both current political information and a variety of theoretical and practical discussions of the needs and prospects of the revolutionary situation'. (Marx and Engels correctly saw the ideas and functions of the *Cercle* as sources of modern communism). Oswald also became an important contributor to, and guiding influence of, the *Cercle's* monthly, *La Chronique du mois*. But probably his most important contribution to Enlightenment was his translation (entitled *The Spirit of the French Constitution*) of Collot d'Herbois's *Almanach du Père Gérard*, written, as Oswald put it, 'to explain to the people the spirit and principles' of the said revolutionary constitution.

Oswald, says Erdman, was 'a moralist of extremes who was certain of the need of what Wordsworth [in *The Prelude*] called "philosophic war".' The *Chronique du mois* for March 1792 carried a manifesto, in part written by Oswald, urging that the attainment of Enlightenment was inevitably related to the arming of citizens: the burden of the manifesto was, 'Of the Universal March of the Human Spirit toward Social Perfection And of a New Means of Rendering it More Certain and Swift'; this turned out to be a new and democratic method of marching (invented by Oswald and described by him in a manual, *La Tactique du peuple*), an egalitarian 'line of science'

instead of the *marche circulaire* of the *ancien régime*. Designed for the People's Army, the *levée en masse*, it was sensible and simple, abolishing all the traditional complicated wheels and turns. The weapon which Oswald favoured for the battalions of citizens-turned-combatant was the pike; the 'holy pike', traditional weapon symbolic of the people in insurrectionary mood since Roman times. On October 1 Oswald became commandant of the newly embodied First Battalion of Pike-bearers and by November he was drilling volunteers in the *Champ-de-Mars*. The following March he and his battalion were dispatched to the Vendée to fight Royalist insurgents now giving much trouble there. Cynics will note with interest that in this moment of truth the battalion had asked to be armed with firearms, not pikes.

On 26 March 1793 Oswald and his men, quitting Paris for the battlefield, paraded through the hall of the National Convention. The sight of Colonel Oswald with a knapsack on his back, the same as any private soldier, evoked a storm of applause. Six months later he was killed in a skirmish at Thouars; tradition has it that he was slain by his own men. Erdman admits that the legend has plausibility. There had been indiscipline in the battalion and Oswald, a fanatical disciplinarian, had earnestly exhorted his soldiers, 'Insubordination is destroying all hope for that unity from which should flow the force and glory of all battalions of the Republic...' Enough was probably seen as enough from this insufferable Anglais!

Among his contemporaries he was not infrequently referred to as 'the mad Colonel Oswald' and we can see what they meant. Total single-mindedness is all too often perceived as a form of insanity and the single-mindedness of a dedicated revolutionary is as baffling as it is intimidating to less consecrated mortals. Nonetheless, mad or not mad, Oswald was a most extraordinary man; indeed a famous man in his day, which makes it at first sight remarkable that history should have forgotten him so completely. But the French would not want to be reminded that an 'Anglais' played a salient part in shaping and organizing *their* revolution, while, as Erdman points out, in England Oswald's sensational articles and pamphlets were widely known, but 'his actual presence and personality were kept very private'. So this remarkable individual, who under different circumstances might have been a Napoleon or a Lenin, has slipped from memory.

Wordsworth was one who never forgot Oswald (for even if they never met, and they might well have done so in Paris, Wordsworth assuredly knew *of* him). Running through Erdman's book is the fascinating theme of *le colonel Oswald, Commandant du Premier Bataillon des Piques*, as Oswald, of the Band of Borderers, entering in Act One, Scene One of Wordsworth's tragedy with (stage direction) a bunch of plants in his hand; the wild rose, the poppy, and the nightshade, of which the last, says Oswald, is his favourite, because, 'While it is strong to destroy, is also strong to heal'. Erdman, we know, has devoted much time in past years to this Colonel Oswald/Oswald the Borderer theme; sadly most of it has been removed from *Commerce des Lumières*, though doubtless rightly so within the context of the book as a study of British participation in the Revolution.

Enlightenment characters from either side of the Channel, lumières brilliant, not so brilliant, a few definitely smoky; politicians, poets, hack-writers, thespians, priests, *sans-culottes*; Théroigne de Mericourt with her 'pretty, very pretty face' and her pistols; Miss Williams and her friend Madame Roland, all intellectual revolutionary fervour; Tom Paine, wholly unable, or perhaps never bothering to learn how, to speak French; Camille Desmoulins

all sparkle, Danton all vehemence; the two mysterious (and apparently simultaneous) Mrs. Oswalds; James Watt; Mayor Pétion; Bishop Grégoire, fiery democrat, whom Wordsworth held up as model to the bishop of Llandaff. The pages teem, voices clamour, drums beat. Much of the material is absolutely new, though the author, modestly, does not emphasize this. The writing is brilliant throughout, consciously or unconsciously using the techniques of Carlyle in his *French Revolution*; the switching of tenses to increase tempo; long reflective passages punctuated by vivid flashes as if of lightning; exclamations; speedy asides; deliberations, followed by the full-tilt charge. It is all so exhilarating; so absorbing; such a whirlwind and tempest, with Oswald, icy cool and masterly, stalking through it with his metaphorical deadly nightshade in one hand, his pike in the other, and his pen at the ready behind his ear, that it is not until a good while afterwards you begin to marvel at Erdman's grasp of his material, his awesome scholarship; to realize that here is a unique and highly important contribution to revolutionary studies.

Molly Lefebure

Peter Jackson: *George Scharf's London: Sketches and Watercolours of a Changing City, 1820-50*, London: John Murray, 1987,pp. 154. 148 illus. £14.95.

I looked in vain for George Scharf in Mr.Prance's otherwise admirable *Companion to Charles Lamb*. Thomas Hosmer Shepherd, author of *Metropolitan Improvements*, gets a mention, as does W.P. Sherlock, who also sketched Lamb's London. But no Scharf, which is a pity, but not entirely surprising. Although his deft and lively depictions of metropolitan life are scattered among half a dozen public collections they have remained (until very recently) largely hidden, and Scharf is better known, if he is known at all, as a prolific illustrator of Victorian scientific books, notably on natural history and palaeontology. Quite why he has been neglected is hard to determine. From the evidence of this book alone he is undeniably a more industrious and observant artist than either Shepherd or Sherlock and a more interesting one than the overrated Thomas Shotter Boys. Happily, thanks to two exhibitions at the Museum of London last year and Mr. Jackson's lavishly illustrated tribute Scharf's genius should now receive the recognition is so justly deserves.

The achievement of Scharf was remarkable. Born in Bavaria in 1788 he was trained in the relatively new process of lithography after a formal schooling in art. In 1816 he arrived in Dover from Paris and headed straight for London, intent on making his fortune as a portrait painter. He was to remain in England until his death. In 1817 he sent portraits to the Royal Academy and painted the heads of the Spa Field rioters, Thistlewood, Watson, Preston and Hooper. The following year he made sketch after sketch of the three-week election hustings at Covent Garden, such was his excitement at this novelty. Thus began his life-long love affair with workaday London. He was seldom to be seen without a sketchbook and by the end of a frenetically productive life he had filled dozens of these with his deft vignettes. Here are the forlorn-looking street advertisers holding aloft

placards announcing the latest election results, or details of Belzoni's Egyptian exhibition, or of various dioramas. He drew men (or children?) dressed up as giant tins of Warren's blacking. Scharf was intrigued by the Fantoccini theatre, a marionette rival to Punch and Judy, which, having arrived in the 1820s, or perhaps earlier, survived at least until Henry Mayhew's time. Then there are the numerous street-vendors, the umbrella print man who lived in fear of the rain ruining his merchandise, the various sellers of hot food, flowers, fruit, vegetables, the menders of chairs, the grinders of knives (and organs), the one-man bands. Scharf returned frequently to the bustling Strand, then probably (as it had been in Dr. Johnson's day), London's liveliest thoroughfare, and which Lamb praised in 1802:

> Often when I have felt a weariness or distaste at home, have I rushed into her crowded Strand and fed my humour till tears have wetted my cheek for inutterable sympathies with the multitudinous moving picture, which she never fails to present at all hours, like the shifting scenes of a skilful Pantomime.

But though Lamb was clearly moved by the same London that excited Scharf there is little of it to be found in his letters, and even less in his essays, and that equally applies to Hazlitt, though not to Leigh Hunt, whose Scharf-like attachment to street life is brilliantly captured in, for instance, 'Of the Sight of Shops' and its sequel. Where in Lamb can we find references to the numerous shows of his London--the dioramas, panoramas, menageries, the Apollonicon, the peep-shows? Scharf sketched whole streets being carved up in the 'twenties for gas-pipe installation, but such a novelty appears not to have moved Lamb who, incidentally never remarks upon the destruction of ancient buildings or, unlike Scharf, seems to notice the rise of the stucco terrace, for all his travels to and fro across the metropolis. Modern London, or at least many aspects of it, simply passed Lamb by, whereas Scharf felt a need to record every detail of the shifting scene.

As a hack illustrator Scharf was abused and exploited by clients like Gideon Mantell, who complained of the 'little hot German's gross inaccuracies' (though Peter Jackson fails to mention this working relationship) and Charles Darwin, who forced him to re-draw a huge lithographic stone. His serious oils would not sell; he was hopeless with money and was even cheated by his own maidservant. With a gift for self-promotion he might have achieved fame as a delineator of the urban scene in the manner of Phiz or Leech. As it was he died in near penury, though his legacy to historians of London is rich indeed.

R.M. Healey

University of London

FIFTY YEARS AGO (Continued)

CLS Bulletin No. 28 (Third Year) With Three Supplements February 1938

(At the January meeting Mr. F.C. Owlett read a paper on the Elizabethan Age.) Mr. S.M. Rich who presided quoted a number of eulogies by eminent writers such as Eden Phillpotts and Professor E.H. Blakeney, which led the audience to expect what, indeed, they heard - a paper of rare literary quality. (Mr. A.F. Bishop took part in the discussion afterwards).

CLS Bulletin No. 29 (Third Year) With Two Supplements March 1938

CHARLES LAMB MEMORIAL SERVICE

After discussion it was agreed to hold an annual Charles Lamb Memorial Service provided suitable arrangements could be made by the Officers and Council.

CLS Bulletin No. 30 (Third Year) With Supplement April 1938

1) No expense has been incurred by the Society in the production of this Supplement.

2) Members will contribute to a general symposium entitled "My Favourite Lamb Letter" ... It is hoped that members will make every effort to be present.

3) Subscriptions for 1938 became due on January 1st, but... a large number have not yet been paid.

(Plus ça change!)

SOCIETY NOTES AND NEWS FROM MEMBERS

LITERARY SOCIETIES

Members of the Charles Lamb Society may be interested to know of other Societies in similar fields.

THE JAMES HOGG SOCIETY

The James Hogg Society is an association of readers and scholars interested in the works of that early nineteenth century Scottish writer. The Society is a non-profit organization based in Stirling, Scotland. It publishes a regular Newsletter, proceedings of a biennial conference, and the Altrive Chapbooks, a series of editions of Hogg's work presently unavailable in other form. The annual subscription is £4, some publications being paid for separately. Enquiries should be made to:

Dr. Douglas Mack, President of The James Hogg Society,
Dept. of English, University of Stirling, Stirling, FK9 4LA,
Scotland,

or

Professor Jill Rubenstein, Dept. of English, Unviersity of
Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio 45221, U.SA.

FRIENDS OF COLERIDGE IN SOMERSET

A prospectus has been issued for an association centred on Coleridge's cottage at Nether Stowey, which is owned by the National Trust. The prospectus states:

> 'It is not intended that Coleridge Cottage become a place for major scholarship or large exhibitions: Dove Cottage in Grasmere already serves this purpose admirably. Rather, we wish to focus on Coleridge's work in Somerset, generating further academic interest in this seminal period of Coleridge's life and helping to make the Cottage a special place which more effectively captures the feeling of Coleridge's presence during those extraordinary Nether Stowey years'.

Those interested in gaining further information should write to Dr. David S. Miall, College of St. Paul and St. Mary, The Park, Cheltenham, Glos. GL50 2RH.

COLERIDGE SUMMER CONFERENCE

A conference, under the auspices of the Friends of Coleridge in Somerset

is to be held in Nether Stowey village hall from Monday, July 25th to Thursday, July 28th. Accommodation will be found nearby. Booking enquiries should be sent to Mrs. Rosemary Cawthray, Coleridge Cottage, 35 Lime Street, Nether Stowey, Bridgwater, Somerset. TA5 1NQ.

COLERIDGE COTTAGE, CLEVEDON

Mrs. Berta Lawrence writes that Coleridge Cottage in Old Church Road, Clevedon, has recently been up for sale. There is a plaque on the outside wall stating that this was Coleridge's honeymoon cottage, but there is controversy locally as to whether this was the right one. As Mrs. Lawrence points out, Clevedon 'is no longer the peaceful village that S.T.C. knew.'

CROWSLEY LECTURE

We were very fortunate to have as our lecturer this year Dr. Jonathan Bate of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, who edited the new World's Classics *Elia* and *Last Essays* reviewed in this *Bulletin*. We are all very much in his debt for this excellent edition, which was badly needed. He gave us a most interesting lecture, which we are happy to be able to print here. It was a great pleasure to have his wife, Hilary, with us too, for the first but we hope not the last time.

DEBORAH LAMB

Mrs. Christine Evans writes to ask whether any member can help her with information about the relationship between Charles Lamb and her great great grandmother Deborah Lamb. She lived at Beauporte, Westfield near Hastings, where there is a 'Folly' in the grounds of Beauporte Park dedicated to her. Her brothers were Alfred and George Lamb and she married George Gutsell. If anyone can throw any light on this relationship, will they please write to the Editor, who will pass the information on.

SUMMER VISITS

SUNDAY, 26th June at 2.30 p.m. to St. Mary's-at-Lambeth (adjacent to Lambeth Palace). This historic church was saved from destruction by the Tradescant Trust and is being transformed into a Museum of Garden History. Among its many attractions are the tombs of the Tradescants (noted seventeenth century plant collectors) and of Admiral Bligh (of 'The Bounty'), and a delightful garden (usually with plants for sale). Of particular interest to Elians is the memorial to Nancy Storace - the original Susanna in 'The Marriage of Figaro' and partner of John Braham, so much admired by Lamb.

If the weather is kind, members may care to bring a picnic lunch to the Millbank Gardens opposite, then cross Lambeth Bridge to meet at the Church

at 2.30 p.m. Tickets are £1, to include tea, from the Secretary, Madeline Huxstep.

SATURDAY, 16th July 'Between Cloister and Cloister'.

Once again we are indebted to Edward G. Preston for offering to share with us his unrivalled knowledge of Elia's London, this time including the site of Christ's Hospital and the Temple. We meet at the Temple Tube Station at 2. 30 p.m.

CELEBRATION LUNCHEON - 23rd April, 1988 at 12.15 for 1 p.m. at the Vitello d'Oro Restaurant, Church House, Great Smith Street, S.W.1.

Guest of Honour: Professor Christopher Salvesen.

Tickets are still available from the General Secretary at £14; please enclose a S.A.E. with your application.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - 7th May, 1988 at 2.45 p.m. at the Mary Ward Centre. The Agenda, Chairman's Report and Annual Accounts for 1987 are enclosed with this Bulletin.

Coleridge Cottage, Clevedon