The Charles Lamb Bulletin

Spring 2012

New Series No. 155

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

PUBLISHED BY
THE CHARLES LAMB SOCIETY

Editorial: I thought it might be interesting to begin this issue by remembering that it marks the two-hundredth anniversary of Lamb becoming a landed proprietor. In 1809 Lamb's godfather, Francis Field, died and left to his wife a thatched cottage with about three-quarters of an acre of land near Puckeridge in Lamb's beloved Hertfordshire. In the summer of 1812 she conveyed it to Lamb who, as he recalls in his essay 'My First Play', made the momentous journey to survey his new estate:

> When I journeyed down to take possession, and planted foot on my own ground, the stately habits of the donor descended upon me, and I strode (shall I confess the vanity?) with larger paces over my allotment of three quarters of an acre, with its commodious mansion in the midst, with the feeling of an English freeholder that all betwixt the sky and centre was my own.

E.V. Lucas suggests that it was probably Lamb who named the cottage Button Snap, perhaps after his cousin Eliza Button. In 1815, however, Lamb sold it to a Thomas Greg for £50 (Reginald Hine speculates that Lamb did so in order to lend money to a friend, probably Godwin or Hazlitt). In 1901 Lamb's connection with the place was commemorated by a plaque that reads, 'From the 21st August 1812 to the / 25th February 1815 / This Cottage and Garden of / 'Button Snap' / Was the property of Charles Lamb the Essayist. / Essays of Elia 'My First Play''.

Perhaps we should mark the occasion with a visit in the summer?

The Charles Lamb Bulletin

The Journal of the Charles Lamb Society

New Series, No. 155, Spring 2012

CONTENTS

Charles Lamb and Virginia Woolf
(A short paper at the AGM, May 2011)

J. R. Watson

I first became aware of the interest that Virginia Woolf showed in the writings of Charles Lamb when reading *A Room of One's Own*, the expanded version of two lectures given at Cambridge in 1928, one to the Arts Society at Newnham, the other to the Odtaa Society (One Damn Thing After Another Society) at Girton. You will recall that Woolf was asked to lecture on 'Women and Fiction', and that instead of trotting through Jane Austen, the Brontës, and George Eliot she turned the papers into a book that asked serious and probing questions about the place of women in the world of literature, education, politics, and history. The inferior status of women in the University of Cambridge, the poverty of the women's colleges compared with the men's colleges, the unquestioning prejudice of a male-dominated society, are beautifully captured in the opening section of the book: the wonderful food at lunch time, in a men's college; the awful food at dinner in the women's college, ending with prunes and custard, the prunes 'stringy as a miser's heart and exuding a fluid such as might run in misers' veins who have denied themselves wine and warmth for eighty years and yet not given to the poor'.[1] Before lunch there is the abrupt confrontation with gender exclusion, as Woolf is told off for walking on the grass in the quadrangle, and refused admission to the Library of Trinity College. Between the grass and the library, the process of arriving at the door, where she is met by 'a deprecating, silvery, kindly gentleman' who tells her that ladies are admitted only if accompanied by a Fellow of the College, or furnished with a letter of introduction, circumnavigates several parts of her imaginative world, and is characteristically roundabout in its method. As she puts it in is a parenthesis, 'I give you my thoughts as they came to me':

> As chance would have it, some stray memory of some old essay about revisiting Oxbridge in the long vacation brought Charles Lamb to mind – Saint Charles, said Thackeray, putting a letter of Lamb's to his forehead. Indeed, among all the dead (I give you my thoughts as they came to me), Lamb is one of the most congenial; one to whom one would have liked to say, Tell me then how you wrote your essays? For his essays are superior even to Max Beerbohm's, I thought, with all their perfection, because of that wild flash of imagination, that lightning crack of genius in the middle of them which leaves them flawed and imperfect, but starred with poetry. Lamb then came to Oxbridge perhaps a hundred years ago. Certainly he wrote an essay – the name escapes me – about the manuscript of one of Milton's poems which he saw there. It was *Lycidas* perhaps, and Lamb wrote how it shocked him to think it possible that any word in *Lycidas* could have been different from what it is (6-7).

[1] Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (London, 2004), 20.

The walk across the quadrangle to the library continues with its literary accompaniment: from Lamb, to Edward FitzGerald, who recounted the story of Thackeray and the letter to Charles Eliot Norton,[2] through Max Beerbohm to Milton himself, and then to Thackeray's *Henry Esmond*, until she finds herself at the door of the library, where she meets 'a guardian angel barring the way with a flutter of black gown instead of white wings'. Throughout, Woolf carefully preserves the illusion of casual recollection: it would have been easy for her to have looked it up, and to have been more precise about the reference to Lamb, but she preferred to give us her thoughts as they came to her. It is an apparently artless but perfectly calculated method – perfectly calculated for her purpose, which was to describe the mind in its literary meanderings.

The essay she was thinking about was, of course, 'Oxford in the Vacation', with its footnote about the manuscript versions of Milton's poems – 'How it staggered me to see the fine things in their ore! interlined, corrected! as if their words were mortal, alterable, displaceable at pleasure! as if they might have been otherwise, and just as good!' That essay is the one in which Lamb described himself as 'defrauded in his young years of the sweet food of academic institution', and the reason why Woolf thought of Lamb at the moment when she is told to keep off the grass may well be that she remembered that he, like herself, was an outsider. An 'outsider' is one way in which Virginia Woolf described the condition of women in *Three Guineas*. Cambridge becomes an example of the world that each was denied, Lamb through poverty and circumstances, Woolf through illness.

Her admiration for the writings of Lamb went back a long way. In May 1908 she wrote to Clive Bell 'I have been reading Lamb and Landor – and set beside them a page of my own prose. Lord! what vapid stuff! If you could have seen my misery as I was at this exercise you might have believed in my modesty.' Later in the same letter she wrote: 'I had no notion what an exquisite writer Lamb is; and thus I have a juster opinion of Miss V.S [Virginia Stephen]: and God knows how I shall have the courage to dip my pen tomorrow.'[3]

What it was in Lamb's prose style that particularly attracted Virginia Woolf's admiration has to be gathered from hints and asides. An essay on Vernon Lee's *The Sentimental Traveller. Notes on Places* (1908), for example, draws attention to the use of dots: 'The dots are a characteristic device, and part of an artistic system that prevails throughout. If only, in travelling, you will open your mind to receive all impressions and force your imagination to track down the

[2] [William Aldis Wright], *Letters of Edward FitzGerald* (London, 1894), II. 198.
[3] Nigel Nicolson, ed., *The Flight of the Mind. The Letters of Virginia Woolf. Volume I: 1888-1912* (London, 1975), 330.

most fugitive of suggestions, something charming and valuable, because original, will be recorded. This is perhaps the course that any sensitive mind adopts naturally, though it does not always go on to trace it out upon paper. But what art is needed to give such perishable matter an enduring form! – the art of Charles Lamb or of Henry James.'[4] Woolf's point is that Vernon Lee, whose writing she disliked, does not have the art to make something valuable out of her fleeting impressions. But the idea of opening the mind to track down the most fugitive of suggestions is one that can easily be recognised as a feature of her own style, and indicated in her writing. Everyone remembers the essay on 'Modern Fiction':

> Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad impressions – trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms; and as they fall, as they shape themselves into the life of Monday or Tuesday, the accent falls differently from of old [...] Life is not a series of gig-lamps symmetrically arranged: life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end. Is it not the task of the novelist to convey this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit, whatever aberration or complexity it may display, with as little mixture of the alien and external as possible?

In Lamb's essays there is a similar movement of the mind around a subject, rejoicing in the pleasure of an unforeseen connection. Indeed, part of the charm of the essay as a form is its ability to hold together, in a short and defined space, disparate elements under one particular heading. One of the most remarkable examples is the essay of 1822, 'In Praise of Chimney-Sweepers', which begins with the boys themselves, 'these young Africans of our own growth', but then goes on to describe a kind of tea made from sassafras wood, sold by a Mr Read on the south side of Fleet Street. It then goes on to describe the early workers drinking it – 'the early gardener, who transports his smoking cabbages by break of day from Hammersmith to Covent-garden's famed piazzas' – and then describes Lamb himself slipping in the mud and being laughed at. The next paragraph begins 'I am by theory obdurate to the seductiveness of what are called a fine set of teeth', and the following one proceeds to Arundel Castle, where the little chimney sweep fell asleep in the great bed. And at the end there is a description of James White and his annual feast for the chimney-sweeper boys.

This is a particularly striking example of Lamb's inconsequential art as an essayist, but similar instances can be found everywhere. This is partly because so many of his essays refer to his memories, which are rich and varied. They

[4] Andrew McNeillie, ed., *The Essays of Virginia Woolf. Volume I, 1904-1912* (London, 1986), 158.

concern people and places, and people *in* places, particularly streets of London. The essays incorporate winding systems of connected thoughts and recollections, so that at times they seem like demonstrations of Hartley's theory of association, which was admired and well known in Lamb's day. The idea that human beings learn about the world through impressions that are placed on the mind by the eye, and that simple impressions gradually build up into complex ones, was a popular one: Coleridge called his first child Hartley in homage to the philosopher, although he later rejected his theory in *Biographia Literaria*. Lamb's essays sometimes read like a confirmation of Hartley's ideas on the working of the mind, although at certain points the reader has the impression that something has occurred to Lamb during the process of writing, and that he knows that a digression will serve his purpose; more frequently, however, the essay slips from one topic to another, even as Woolf's mind travelled from Lamb to Thackeray, with a digression to Max Beerbohm, to Milton, to *Henry Esmond*, to the door of Trinity College Library.

If Lamb's essays are evidence of a kind of writing that Virginia Woolf admired because of its ability to convey the 'myriad impressions' of an ordinary mind on an ordinary day, they also demonstrated, in her view, a superiority to those of Max Beerbohm because of 'that wild flash of imagination, that lightning crack of genius in the middle of them which leaves them flawed and imperfect, but starred with poetry.' The 'poetry' of Lamb's essays is an elusive concept, but one that we can easily recognise. Indeed, Woolf said at one point that 'We dip in Lamb's *Letters* – some prose writers are to be read as poets'.[5] If we look again at 'In Praise of Chimney-sweepers' there are phrases and perceptions that might be thought of as somehow 'poetical'. The gardener with his 'smoking cabbages' is one; so is the image of the black-faced sweeps as 'young Africans'. That paragraph goes on to produce an image worthy of Metaphysical Poetry when Lamb describes them as 'almost clergy imps': 'I reverence these young Africans of our own growth – these almost clergy imps, who sport their cloth without assumption; and from their little pulpits (the tops of chimneys), in the nipping air of a December morning, preach a lesson of patience to mankind. 'The comparison is for the first part comic: the sweeper boy climbs up the chimney as a parson climbs to his pulpit, both in special clothes (their cloth), the one white, the other black. But then it turns serious: on a cold December morning, the sweeper boys preach 'a lesson of patience to mankind'. They do not just preach patience: they preach something of more portent, 'a lesson of patience to mankind'. And as they do so, the sentence suddenly calls on our pity for children in such a position, both figuratively and literally.

There are many examples of such twists and turns in this essay. One is the description of the little boy asleep in the bed at Arundel Castle 'encircled with curtains of delicatest crimson, with starry coronets inwoven – folded between a pair of sheets whiter and softer than the lap where Venus lulled Ascanius – was discovered by chance, after all methods of search had failed, at noon-day, fast

[5] Andrew McNeillie, ed., *The Essays of Virginia Woolf. Volume IV, 1925-1928* (London, 1994), 324.

asleep, a lost chimney-sweeper.' The contrast is obvious, and beautifully handled, both in the detail of the bed and the unwashed child (the late duke, we are told, was a connoisseur of beds) and the introduction of Venus and Ascanius. The lost and tired-out chimney-sweeper is contrasted with the beloved son of Aeneas; by a nice postponement he is revealed only at the very end of the sentence.

Lamb's essay ends with a tribute to James White, the founder of the feast for chimney-sweeper boys, at which they ate sausages and he treated them for a day with respect, providing them not only with food but with intimations of grandeur in the toasts:

> All these, and fifty other fancies, which were rather felt than comprehended by his guests, would he utter, standing upon tables, and prefacing every sentiment with a 'Gentlemen, give me leave to propose so and so,' which was a prodigious comfort to these young orphans; every now and then stuffing into his mouth (for it did not do to be squeamish on these occasions) indiscriminate pieces of those reeking sausages, which pleased them mightily, and was the savouriest part, you may believe, of the entertainment.
>
> Golden lads and lasses must,
> As chimney-sweepers, come to dust –
>
> James White is extinct, and with him these suppers have long ceased. He carried away with him half the fun of the world when he died – of my world at least. His old clients look for him among the pens; and, missing him, reproach the altered feast of St Bartholomew, and the glory of Smithfield departed for ever.

Again the contrasts are obvious, between the benevolence of James White and the way in which it was carried out in the remoter cattle pens of Smithfield market, between the mind that conceived the feast and the mouth that was stuffed indiscriminately with pieces of sausage, between those who gave and those who received – the introduction of the phrase 'these young orphans' is a poignant reminder that these boys have no-one to toast them, no-one to love them. And then, suddenly, comes the quotation from *Cymbeline*. Lamb slightly misquotes that most poignant of lyrics, as though, like Virginia Woolf, he was giving us his thoughts as they came to him. Here it breaks in suddenly on the feast: it is expanded on in what follows, as we learn that James White is extinct – not just dead, but extinct, a representative of a species that can never be recovered. It tells of the passing of time, and the inevitable passage from life to death.

The hyperbole that follows is unexpected, yet absolutely right, because it is first asserted to make it a grand tribute, so grand that it seems incongruous when applied to the provider of a sausage supper – 'he carried away with him half the fun of the world when he died' – and then qualified to make it reasonable. But the reasonableness comes after we have registered the grandeur

of the salute. It competes with the grandeur of Johnson's lament that Garrick's death had eclipsed the gaiety of nations. And then we are brought back to reality – 'of my world at least' – and the poor chimney-sweeper boys who now have no feast on Saint Bartholomew's day. Such a feast was the glory of Smithfield. Lamb knew his Bible – 'Ichabod' (I Samuel, 4: 21): 'the glory is departed.' The prose of this passage, interspersed with the lines from *Cymbeline*, referring not to the chimney sweepers, though they would have brought it to mind, is a most beautiful and touching series of modulations, as it moves from the past to the present, from the good deeds of yesterday to the empty Smithfield pens of today. I think of it as one of the moments that Virginia Woolf described as 'a wild flash of imagination', a paragraph of prose that is 'starred with poetry'.

I have suggested that the stylistic features of Lamb's work that Virginia Woolf admired were his ability to capture the myriad impressions of a mind on its wanderings, and the 'lightning crack of genius' that makes poetry out of prose. It is much easier, of course, to point out the affections and interests that they share. I have already pointed to one: that they were both outsiders in Cambridge. There are many others, and I shall mention them only briefly, noting at this point one striking difference, that of class, which makes Woolf more sophisticated, one might say more worldly-wise, than Lamb. But consider some other things that they both loved: books, above all. In a review of the letters of Sir Walter Raleigh, Professor of English at Glasgow and then Oxford, Woolf notes of some writers, Keats, the Goncourts, Tennyson, and Lamb that 'waking or sleeping, these men never stopped thinking about literature. It is kneaded into the stuff of their brains. Their fingers are dyed in it. Whatever they touch is stained with it.'[6] The daughter of Sir Leslie Stephen had no need to draw attention to her own knowledge of literature: it came with her childhood, and remained with her all her life.

London was another shared passion. Lamb's love of London was so frequently expressed in his letters, such as the one to Manning (29 November 1800): 'Streets, streets, streets, markets, theatres, churches, Covent Gardens, Shops sparkling with pretty faces of industrious milliners'; it goes on, and Lamb wrote variations on it in other letters. In Virginia Woolf it is found in many places, in *Mrs Dalloway* and *Orlando* and in the shorter piece, 'Street Haunting: a London Adventure'. Her distress at the bombing of London in 1940, and of the houses and shops that she had known and loved, is recorded.[7]

A third shared interest is in food. Woolf comments in *A Room of One's Own* that novelists mention the conversation at meals but hardly ever talk about the food itself: 'It is part of the novelist's convention not to mention soup and salmon and ducklings, as if soup and salmon and ducklings were of no importance whatsoever'. Lamb, though not a novelist, is clearly an exception. As a writer he frequently mentions food, from the description of brawn in the letter

[6] Andrew McNeillie, ed., *The Essays of Virginia Woolf. Volume IV, 1925-1928* (London, 1994), 343.
[7] Hermione Lee, *Virginia Woolf* (London, 1996), chapter 39.

to Manning of February 1805, to the 'gags' at Christ's Hospital and the 'Dissertation upon Roast Pig'. Lamb is fascinated by the manners that attend eating, such as the saying of grace or the dignity that covers poverty in 'Captain Jackson'; but he also has a strong interest in the food itself.

The list of common interests might be continued. Both had no children, but were very interested in them; both were painfully conversant with the problems of mental illness; both lived through major wars but had little interest in them. Both had an interest in pictorial art (as I was happily reminded by a member at the Society AGM). Both were more concerned with the elements of daily existence, such as letters. Both were interested in Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, on whom Woolf wrote an essay and who was the 'dear favourite' of Lamb.

These are no more than suggestions for future study. Each of the points in the last part of this essay could have been expanded and illustrated with appropriate quotations. But I suggest that a conjunction of these two writers has something to tell us of value about the art of each of them. I end with Woolf's remarks on the essay form itself, in a 1918 review of a book by Robert Lynd. She was reflecting on the relationship between public and private: 'Whether a first-rate essay has ever been written which is not the ripe fruit of egoism may be doubted. The essays of Elia are so many confidences which impart to us the most private secrets of Lamb's heart. There is room in them for all sorts of facts about his whims and habits, but there is very little concern for the public good.' The treatment of 'The Praise of Chimney-Sweepers' above suggests that Woolf missed the powerful plea for social reform that is latent in that essay and elsewhere in Lamb's work. But she then goes on to say that the essay form demands not just an outpouring of anecdote or fond recollection, but what Woolf calls 'the impersonality of the highest art': 'In 2,000 words you cannot do much to reform society or inculcate morality, but you can tell us about your imperfect sympathies, your poor relations, or 'Mackery End in Hertfordshire'. When we consider that this gift of intimacy is the most difficult of all to make, and that to convey anything so personal needs the impersonality of the highest art, we need not wonder that it is not often offered us between the politics and the reviews.'[8] I think, though I am not sure, that what she is suggesting here is that between the world of political action and the world of literature, the essay struggles to find a place; but that when it does, in Montaigne or Thackeray or Lamb, all of whom are mentioned in the review, the result is to be celebrated all the more proudly; as we – and she – did when writing about Charles Lamb.

University of Durham

[8] Andrew McNeillie, ed., *The Essays of Virginia Woolf. Volume II, 1912-1918* (London, 1994), 213-214.

George Dyer and Dissenting Culture, 1777-1796

Timothy Whelan

~ I ~

George Dyer (1755-1841) is primarily known today by what *others* said about him, especially his friends Charles Lamb, William Hazlitt, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and Henry Crabb Robinson. Generally, they poked fun at Dyer's eccentricities and his poetry, criticisms that were often well deserved. Dyer's absentmindedness was legendary, such as the time he walked into the New River directly in front of Lamb's house; fortunately, Dyer was rescued, an event Lamb later joked 'would have made me famous' if Dyer had drowned.[1] Or the time Lamb tried to goad Dyer into saying something negative about another human being, such as an infamous murderer, to which Dyer responded, 'Why, I should think, Mr. Lamb, he must have been a rather eccentric character!'[2] Or Dyer's fear that Coleridge had died and been buried, only to learn from Lamb that Coleridge was indeed 'bury'd, but ... not dead', just recruiting himself at Bury St. Edmunds.[3] As a result of such anecdotes, what one writer calls 'the unconscious comedy of [Dyer's] outer life',[4] Dyer became known as an peculiar but gentle scribe, a 'booksellers' drudge', as Crabb Robinson put it,[5] a pedantic scholar and unimaginative poet whose writings are largely forgotten today but whose personal eccentricities will live forever. Whether the anecdotes came from Lamb (who could 'scarcely conceive a more amusing novel' than a biography of Dyer) or Hazlitt (who said that Dyer 'draws the picture of mankind from the guileless simplicity of his own heart') or Thomas Noon Talfourd (who depicted a 'placid' Dyer 'rejoicing, through the difficulties of a life illustrated only by scholarship', living 'out the most blameless of lives, which began in a struggle to end in a learned dream') – whatever the source, Dyer's image was fixed.[6]

[1] Taken from Lamb's essay 'Amicus Redivivus', in E. V. Lucas, ed., *Elia and the Last Essays of Elia, by Charles Lamb* (New York, 1913), 425. The event occurred in 1823. The majority of the anecdotes about Dyer can be found in E. V. Lucas, *The Life of Charles Lamb*, 3rd ed., 2 vols (New York, 1907), I, 195-230.
[2] T. N. Talfourd, ed., *Final Memorials of Charles Lamb* (London, 1850), 263.
[3] E. V. Lucas, *The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb*, 7 vols (London, 1913), V, 410. More anecdotes of Dyer appeared in Charles and Mary Cowden Clarke, *Recollections of Writers* (London, 1878), 12-13.
[4] M. Ray Adams, 'George Dyer and English Radicalism', *Modern Language Review* 35 (1940), 447.
[5] Edith Morley, *Henry Crabb Robinson on Books and their Writers*, 2 vols (New York, 1967), I, 4.
[6] E. V. Lucas, *Life of Charles Lamb*, I, 208; *Collected Works of William Hazlitt*, ed. Waller and Glover (London, 1902-06), VII, 43-44; Talfourd, *Final Memorials*, 263. This 'image' of Dyer is not reflected in his 1795 portrait by J. Cristall in *Collectonia Biographica* (reprinted in Lucas's *Life of Charles Lamb*, I, opp. 208). In this portrait, Dyer is well groomed, his hair and attire remarkably similar to that of Samuel Taylor Coleridge in his portrait by Peter Vandyke of the same year.

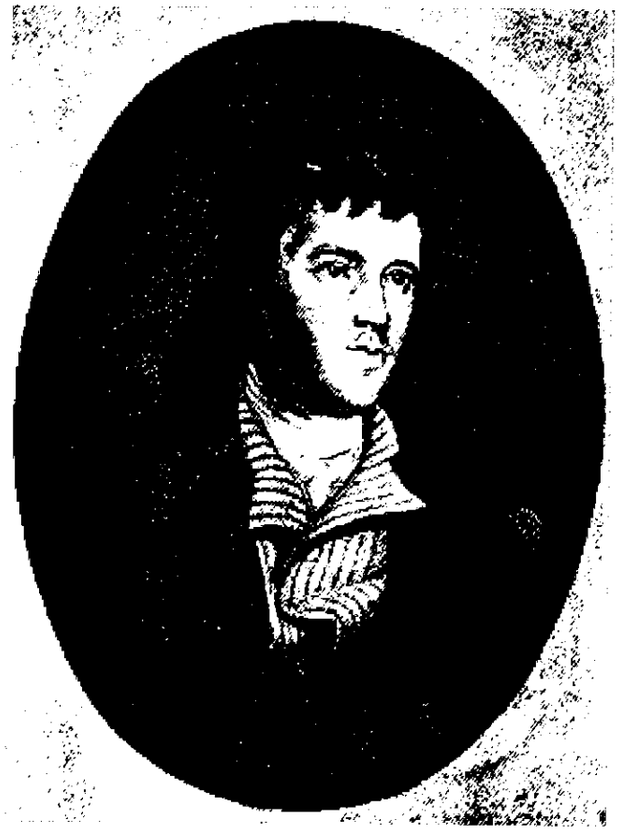

Figure 1: George Dyer (1755-1841)

Unfortunately, this paternalistic depiction of the scholarly Dyer nestled in his quarters at Clifford's Inn or a chair at the Chapter Coffee House in Paternoster Row or a desk at the British Museum has come largely at the expense of his early career as a teacher, preacher, poet and social and political commentator among the dissenters in Cambridge, Oxford, Northampton, and London. E. V. Lucas boasted in 1905 that had Lamb not immortalized his dear friend in his *Elia* essays, 'Dyer's name would now be unknown'.[7] Given the previous century's perception of Dyer, Lucas had good grounds for making such a statement, despite its inadequacies. The truth is, Dyer's early career is sufficiently important that, had he *never* been the friend of Lamb, Coleridge, Southey, Hazlitt, and Robinson, or the subject of so many memorable anecdotes by them, he would still deserve recognition for his contributions to political and religious reform between 1780 and 1800. As Nicholas Roe made clear in his ground-breaking article on Dyer in the *Charles Lamb Bulletin* in 1985, [8] Dyer was anything but 'placid' (to use Noon's word) when he defended Gilbert Wakefield in 1799, the latter suffering in prison under a conviction of libel. 'But some who admit', Dyer argues,

> that thought is free, are backward to allow that man should be free to publish his thoughts. But who are the men that propagate this

[7] Lucas, *Life of Charles Lamb*, I, 195. Lamb's two essays about Dyer are 'Oxford in the Vacation' and 'Amicus Redivivus', in Lucas, *Elia and the Last Essays of Elia*, 8-13, 237-42.

[8] Nicholas Roe, 'Radical George Dyer in the 1790s', *Charles Lamb Bulletin*, 49 (1985), 17-26; *Wordsworth and Coleridge: The Radical Years* (Oxford, 1988), 87-94; see also Roe's chapter on Dyer in *The Politics of Nature: William Wordsworth and Some Contemporaries* (New York, 2002), 19-42.

> doctrine? Not such as possessed the greatest scope of genius; not such as have tried the strength of the human understanding; not such as have taken the lead in arts and sciences. They are selfish and narrow divines; artful politicians; corrupt lawyers.[9]

In language that would have earned him a sharp rebuke from government officials that year (the same year Benjamin Flower of Cambridge spent six months in Newgate Prison for libeling the Bishop of Llandaff in the *Cambridge Intelligencer*), Dyer prays that the time will come

> when tyrants, that have oppressed nations, shall no longer be reckoned illustrious – when judges, who have decreed unrighteous judgments, shall be allowed to have been cunning, but not wise; when magistrates, who have inflicted iniquitous penalties, shall be no longer saluted the benevolent; when politicians, who have ruined nations, shall no longer be accounted more than human; nor priests, who have deceived the world, be reckoned divine.[10]

Numerous writers have attempted to record the chronology of Dyer's life between 1778 and 1792, all unsuccessfully. The earliest biography of Dyer appeared in 1798, the writer noting that Dyer left Cambridge in 1778 for Dedham to tutor in Thomas Grimwood's school, returning to Cambridge after one year to work with Robinson, 'the Apostle of the Baptists' in his church in St. Andrew's Street, during which time Dyer 'appeared frequently in the pulpits of others of the dissenting clergy, both at Cambridge, Oxford, etc.'.[11] Dyer's obituary in the *Gentleman's Magazine* repeats the same details, but also adds that upon his return to Cambridge Dyer served as private tutor in the home of Robinson 'with the view of profiting by his doctrine and learned conversation'. This account also notes that Dyer 'officiated at Oxford as a dissenting preacher', after which he returned to Cambridge and Swavesey, where he 'steadily and successfully prosecuted his studies'.[12] Leslie Stephen's entry on Dyer in the *DNB* mentions his year with Grimwood at Dedham and Robinson in Cambridge (where, Stephen contends, Dyer became an Arian and a committed dissenter) but says nothing about Dyer's time at Oxford, placing him instead at Swavesey and then, in the early 1790s, as an 'usher in a school at Northampton with the father of Charles Cowden Clarke'. Stephen was correct about the location (the

[9] George Dyer, *An Address to the People of Great Britain, on the Doctrine of Libels, and the Office of Juror* (London, 1799), 114.

[10] *Ibid.*, 115. Dyer visited Flower during his stay at Newgate; see Timothy Whelan, *Politics, Religion, and Romance: The Letters of Benjamin Flower and Eliza Gould Flower, 1794-1808* (Aberystwyth, 2008), 113.

[11] 'George Dyer', *Public Characters for 1798* (London, 1798), 457, 458.

[12] *Gentleman's Magazine* 170 (1841, part 1), 545, 546. According to the writer, Dyer at his death had composed a memoir, from which much of the information from his early life that appeared in the obituary was taken, but whether more details were provided by Dyer is unknown, for the manuscript is no longer extant.

school was the dissenting academy operated by the Baptist minister John Collett Ryland and his assistant, John Clarke) but not the date.

Aside from Roe, writers on Dyer during the twentieth century have added little to these accounts. An article in the *Emmanuel College Magazine* in 1905 mentions Dyer's time at Northampton, asserting that Dyer's reason for leaving was his failure to secure an engagement to Miss Stott, Ryland's stepdaughter, who chose Clarke instead.[13] The Unitarian historian Robert Spears appears to have been unaware of Dyer's time at Northampton, placing him at Oxford from 1782 to 1786.[14] J. A. Venn's entry on Dyer in *Alumni Cantabrigienses* follows Stephen's chronology, including placing Dyer at Northampton after Robinson's death in 1790, the same mistake repeated in E. V. Lucas's *Life of Charles Lamb*.[15] In 1940 M. Ray Adams noted Dyer's time at Oxford, then rather bizarrely described Dyer as John Clarke's assistant in a school at Southampton in 1791.[16] A more accurate account of Dyer's early career among dissenters also appeared in 1940, compiled by the Baptist historian Ernest Payne, primarily as a correction to Lucas's account of Dyer's life. Payne contended that when Dyer came to London in 1792 he associated with the Unitarians, but 'clearly for some years, in the early part of his life, [Dyer was] well acquainted with a number of Baptists'.[17] Building upon the work of Payne and Roe as well as some previously unknown letters, this essay will chart, for the first time, an accurate chronology of Dyer's early (and highly formative) career prior to 1800, providing new insights into Dyer's work among the Particular Baptists at Cambridge, Oxford, and Northampton, his initial writings in defense of religious and political dissent, his adoption of Unitarianism, his aborted attempt as a Unitarian minister in Bristol, and his final testaments to his time as a dissenting teacher and preacher in *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Robert Robinson* (1796) and his 1820 letter to his friend William King.

~ II ~

Upon completing his B.A. from Emmanuel College, Cambridge, in 1778, Dyer spent the next year tutoring the children of Robert Robinson and experiencing firsthand the liberal politics and open religious enquiry that had become a hallmark of Robinson and his congregation in St. Andrew's Street, Cambridge, just across from the gates of Emmanuel College. At that time Dyer began to think seriously about leaving the Church of England, and he was not alone, for Robinson was already attracting a number of Cambridge men, such as John

[13] J. B. P., 'George Dyer', *Emmanuel College Magazine* 15 (1905), 201; see also Clarke and Clarke, *Recollections*, 12-13.
[14] Robert Spears, 'George Dyer', in *Memorable Unitarians: Being a Series of Brief Biographical Sketches* (London, 1906), 175.
[15] J. A. Venn, 'Dyer, George', in *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, Part 2: From 1752-1900, 6 vols (Cambridge, 1922–1954), II, 366; Lucas, *Life*, I, 202-03.
[16] Adams, 'George Dyer', 452.
[17] Ernest Payne, 'The Baptist Connections of George Dyer: A Postscript to E. V. Lucas's Life of Charles Lamb', *Baptist Quarterly* 10 (1940-41), 260.

Randall (professor of music and organist at St. Mary's Church), Robert Tyrwhitt and William Frend (both fellows of Jesus College), most of whom attended the Sunday afternoon meeting. Besides Frend and Tyrwhitt, other Unitarian friends of Robinson included John Jebb (formerly of Peterhouse College, Cambridge) and Capell Lofft, a lawyer from Suffolk. After a year, Dyer 'left the Cambridge Dissenters', he wrote in 1796, and became a tutor at the Dedham Grammar School, Essex, under the direction of Dr. Thomas Grimwood (formerly of Magdalen College, Oxford).[18] During his year at Dedham, Dyer maintained his terms at Emmanuel College and also continued receiving funds from the Clothworker's Company in London, a scholarship that began in 1776 and from which Dyer officially resigned in late August 1780.[19] By early autumn 1780 Dyer had returned to Cambridge, living now with Robinson at his farm at Chesterton, just outside of Cambridge, and preparing, under Robinson's tutelage, to become a Baptist minister. Robinson was sufficiently confident about Dyer's abilities that he applied on Dyer's behalf to the Baptist Fund in London, seeking financial support for Dyer's preparation for the Baptist ministry. Dyer's funding began on Christmas day 1780 and continued for one year,[20] monies that Dyer later felt Robinson had 'used, if not a *pious*, at least a *benevolent* fraud' to attain, for Dyer was never asked to sign any articles of faith or submit to adult baptism by immersion, both omissions acceptable to Robinson but not to the majority of Particular Baptists in 1781.[21]

That same year Robinson, with the assistance of Capel Lofft and Daniel Turner, Baptist minister at Abingdon, drew up a plan for establishing a college for dissenters at Cambridge that would emulate the education provided members of the established church at the other colleges. As Dyer put it, Robinson wanted the sons of dissenters to 'enjoy the literary advantages of an English university, without being subject to its theological shackles'. Robinson's desire was to educate six young men at a time, and he proposed that Dyer serve as the new college's classical tutor. The dissenting college never materialized, probably the result of Robinson's decision that the school not have a doctrinal admission test, a decision that clearly provoked Robinson's orthodox Baptist friends. Dyer was actually relieved, noting that 'the wavering state of my mind

[18] George Dyer, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Robert Robinson* (London, 1796), 178.
[19] Dyer's resignation letter from the Exhibition was dated 28 August 1780, from Dedham. See D. E. Wickham, '"Amicus Redivivus" Repertus: A New Discovery about George Dyer', *Charles Lamb Bulletin*, 38 (1982), 114.
[20] The entry in the Minutes of the Particular Baptist Fund appeared on Tuesday 9 January 1781. Dyer's name was presented by Henry Keene, Baptist deacon at Maze Pond, Southwark. The entry reads: 'Petition ... of George Dyer for assistance in his Study of Divinity; Resolved he be allowed from 25th Dec.r last [1780] to the 25.th Decemb.r next [1781]'. See Minutes of Particular Baptist Fund vol. 5, 1773-92 (unpaginated), Angus Library, Regent's Park College, Oxford.
[21] Dyer, *Memoirs*, 300. There is no record of Dyer's baptism as an adult, primarily because he did not believe that the rite had been established as a sacrament in perpetuity from the early church, though he was not opposed to others being baptized (apparently he baptized believers during his time at Oxford [see below, n. 28]), even arguing that the mode of baptism espoused by the Baptists (bodily immersion in the water) was more scriptural than sprinkling. Dyer, *An Inquiry into the Nature of Subscription to the Thirty-Nine Articles* (London?, 1789?), 341-42, 363-64.

left small room for any confidential repose in my exertions; and my subsequent rejection of baptism, the badge of this intended college, would have raised an insuperable difficulty in the way of my future success'.[22]

Early in 1781, Robinson and Turner toured the Midlands, preaching in various locations and often to small congregations, some meeting only in houses, such as the fledgling group of Baptists at Oxford. Turner was particularly concerned about this new congregation that had just signed a church covenant (a document that espoused open communion and had little to say about baptism) and was now looking for a pastor.[23] Robinson recommended Dyer, and thus, in the middle of his year of support by the Baptist Fund, Dyer left Cambridge for Oxford to commence his pastoral ministry.[24] The congregation was generally pleased with Dyer, and Dyer was fond of them, but his preaching left something to be desired, not because his sermons suggested anything heterodox at this time (though he was clearly ambivalent about the necessity of baptism and was probably leaning toward Arianism), but mostly because the delivery of his sermons was not particularly effective.[25]

His tenure at Oxford lasted one year, ending in June 1782. Daniel Turner worked closely with Dyer that year and heard him preach on many occasions. Writing to a friend at Watford on 14 June 1782, about the time of Dyer's resignation, Turner described Dyer as 'an excell.t man' with 'one foible',

> that is, he is apt to be a little eccentric and to be carried away by sudden starts of fancy sometimes into a behaviour not so manly as I could wish, but it is always with the most benevolent intention, the overflowing of the heart. He would not hurt a worm. In his preaching without notes he is sometimes excellent, especially when he is not overawed. But sometimes he pauses rather too long. He came quite raw to Oxford in the preaching way, not having had time to form his mind, and Robinson is too much of an original to be a pattern for young men who are pleased with his manner and naturally attempt to imitate it; which there is not one in a thousand can do.[26]

[22] Dyer, *Memoirs of Robert Robinson*, 189.

[23] Paul Fiddes, 'Receiving One Another: the History and Theology of the Church Covenant, 1780', in Rosie Chadwick, ed., *A Protestant Catholic Church of Christ* (Oxford, 2003), 92.

[24] James Hinton (1761-1823), Baptist minister at Oxford, 1787-1823, surprisingly does not mention Dyer in his *Historical Sketch of Eighteenth Baptist Churches included in the Oxfordshire Association* (Oxford, 1821).

[25] Fiddes, 95. William Robinson, in his edition of Robert Robinson's writings, rather smugly contended that Dyer's failure at Oxford should have been expected, a glaring 'example of the incompetency of most seceders from the Establishment for the position and duties of dissenting ministers'. See William Robinson, *Select Works of the Rev. Robert Robinson of Cambridge* (London, 1861), v.

[26] Daniel Turner, Abingdon, to Mr. Munn, Watford, 14 June 1782, Daniel Turner: Letters, MSS, and Poems, 1743-82, FPC/c.55, Angus Library, Regent's Park College, Oxford. The letter was first cited by Ernest Payne in 'The Baptist Connections of George Dyer: A Further Note', *Baptist Quarterly*, 13 (1944), 238.

As a preacher, Dyer was a poor imitation of Robinson, not a surprise to those who, like Turner, knew Robinson. Turner's postscript, however, adds new insight into the Abingdon minister's connection with Robinson's heterodoxy. In commenting on a member of the Watford church who had departed ways with the congregation, Turner, generally considered an orthodox Calvinist, writes:

> I can't think what has turn'd the Man's head so far from the Truth except it is the puzzling nonsensical unscriptural Manner the Orthodox people too generally take in maintaining the Doctrines of the Deity of Christ upon the stupid Athanasian plan – The Language of Job is as different from that of the Scriptures as darkness from Light. Let us not attempt to explain what is inexplicable. Who by Search[g] can find out the Almighty? The Bible says it is the Word of God; I therefore believe it: The Bible, the Bible.[27]

Turner's expression that the orthodox too readily maintain their trinitarianism upon 'the stupid Athanasian plan' is truly stunning, implying that Turner, like Dyer, had also imbibed some of Robinson's heterodox tendencies, exhibiting aspects of a 'rational Christianity' that Dyer (and his later Baptist friends Benjamin Flower, William Frend, Anthony Robinson, and Mary Hays) found so attractive in Robinson as well. Thus, if Dyer did exemplify heterodoxy in his sermons at Oxford, such views were apparently acceptable to Robinson, Turner, and many in the small Particular Baptist congregations at Oxford and Watford.

Whether William Frend's claim that Dyer nearly drowned a woman during a baptism at Oxford is true or not,[28] Turner suggested that Dyer seek more training, proposing that he apply for a position as tutor at John Collett Ryland's academy at Northampton. Ryland (1723-92) was also the pastor of the Particular Baptist church in College Lane, Northampton, and his school had an excellent reputation among Calvinist dissenters, both Baptists and Independents. Among his students were several who would become Unitarians and friends of Dyer in the 1790s, including John Towill Rutt (1760-1841), biographer of Joseph Priestley; Benjamin Flower (1755-1829), radical newspaper editor at Cambridge; and two of Flower's classmates from Southwark, John Dunkin and William Hills, both of whom married sisters of Mary Hays (1759-1843), novelist and friend of Dyer, Mary Wollstonecraft, and Anna Lætitia Barbauld.[29] Turner thought that, if given enough 'Time & Encouragement', Dyer

[27] Payne, 'Baptist Connections', 238. Payne did not transcribe the controversial postscript, most likely uncomfortable concerning its implication of Arianism in Turner.

[28] The incident is attributed to Mrs. Augustus De Morgan and recorded by E. V. Lucas in his *Life of Charles Lamb*, I, 228.

[29] For the students at Ryland's academy, see 'The Rev. John Collet Ryland's Scholars', *Northamptonshire Notes and Queries* (1926), 25-28; Timothy Whelan, 'John Ryland at School: Two Societies in Northampton Boarding Schools', *Baptist Quarterly*, 40 (2003), 90-116. In 1808, J. T. Rutt's nephew, George Wedd, married Mary Hays's niece, Mary, further connecting these Unitarian families. John Dunkin and Michael Brown, pastor of the General Baptist congregation in Southwark attended by Hays, also appear in A. F. Wedd, ed., *The Love-Letters of Mary Hays (1779-1780)* (London,

could become a 'good preacher', for 'the Temper of the Man & the good Stuff in him: you will not easily find one to excell'. Turner also thought Dyer would profit by studying divinity under Ryland (an excellent scholar himself) and that he should refrain from preaching for a time. However, if Ryland chose not to employ Dyer, Turner was prepared to recommend him, despite his faults, to the congregation at Watford where his correspondent attended (at that time without a pastor), and 'would do anything in my power', he adds, 'to render [Dyer] happy'.[30]

Ryland responded positively, and by 2 August 1782, six weeks after Turner's letter, Dyer had settled into his new position at the Northampton academy. On that day he wrote to Robinson, providing his former tutor with an intimate glimpse into his brief pastorate at Oxford and new life under Ryland's tutelage. Dyer thanked Robinson (his spiritual 'benefactor') for recommending him to Ryland, and then explained his reasons for leaving Oxford. Some members wanted Dyer to espouse in his sermons at least a moderate Calvinism along with an allegiance to certain Baptist beliefs; others apparently lost patience with his cautious, and probably too rational, spirit of 'enquiry'. He writes to Robinson,

> Did I enjoy, & *c.*[d] I w.[th] freedom approach such a benefactor, I would acquaint *him* with my real motives for leaving Oxford. I would with humility assure him, that it has been my prayer night and day, that God would gently take me by the hand, & lead me as I could bear it, into all truth. I would entreat him to recollect, that enquiry is usually cautious, and dares not speak out, till she herself has rec:[d] an answer: that during this delay ignorance will be growing clamorous, & enthusiasm boisterous: yea that honesty will be suspect of insincerity, and sincere piety will complain of lukewarmness. I would farther entreat him to recollect, that amid *variety* of sentiment, each party only hears for itself, and can no longer receive profit, than it can hear with pleasure. Under these circumstances, y.[e] preacher, if he love all, and wish to do all good, will aim to please all. He will endeavour to forestall their attention. He will be desirous of preoccupying their affections, that he may in future gain over their judgement. Yea he will be in danger, if his principles be not well fixed, of sometimes, perhaps imperceptibly, admitting what may not appear to be true; yea sometimes of advancing, what he hisself [sic] does not cordially believe. For I w.[d] entreat such a benefacter to recollect, that if the situation be such as to prevent y.[e] mind's moving freely, y.[e] confinement must be burst, or the mind will set: that y.[e] mind like y.[e] body, when closely pent

1925), and Marilyn L. Brooks, ed., *The Correspondence (1779-1843) of Mary Hays, British Novelist* (Lewiston, ME, 2004), where the reference to Rutt's nephew appears (pp. 490-91). A collection of letters between Hays and Dyer, 1792-94, can be found in the British Library, RP677.

[30] Turner to Munn, 14 June 1782.

> up, will contract diseases; or like a standing water, it will contract a stench & live upon it's own filth – & then death, hell, & destruction will ensue!

Fortunately, 'death, hell, & destruction' did not ensue during Dyer's tenure at Oxford. Though his pastorate was short-lived, Dyer held the congregation at Oxford in high regard, explaining to Robinson 'that while with y.[e] feelings of an orphan, deprived of it's spiritual parent, I look towards Chesterton; I look towards Oxford with the feelings of a shepherd's-boy; who had been placed by a good shepherd to guard y.[e] sheep & who during his keeping watch had contracted all y.[e] love of a real shepherd'.[31] This would be Dyer's only pastoral charge; he took his duties seriously, and, as Turner's letter makes clear, he was by no means a failure. As to Northampton, Dyer tells Robinson that his time is now 'divided between teaching & learning', exactly what Turner had hoped would happen. Unfortunately, Dyer has 'little leisure for reading', but he is receiving 'calls for preaching on Lord's days, & that I w.[th] pleasure obey those calls'.

Samuel Bagster (1772-1851), a prominent Baptist bookseller and publisher of Bibles who attended Ryland's academy between 1779 and 1783, commented on Dyer in his *Autobiography*. Bagster erroneously places Dyer at the academy in 1779, but otherwise, Bagster's recollections reinforce stereotypes of Dyer that were already widely popularized by 1851, the year of Bagster's death. Bagster writes that the school's classical master, 'the Rev. George Dyer', was

> a man of much reading and considerable erudition, but sadly lacking the talent which invites and fixes the attention of pupils and none made advances under his tuition. His bearing was repulsive to boys, though I consider he was in natural temper mild, and desired to be courteous. He had an infirmity too that as a teacher made against him, he was so short sighted that he held a book when reading only two or three inches from his nose and when the boys of his class stood before him, they grinned and made him a butt for grimace and fun. The pranks the lads played are rife in my memory but I see no profit in here recording them. I was never under his tuition.[32]

If we take Bagster's account at face value, it may be that Dyer was actually a better preacher than teacher.[33] Bagster also recounts the failed love affair of Dyer and Ryland's stepdaughter. Clarke eventually won her affection, much to the

[31] George Dyer, Northampton to Robert Robinson, Chesterton, near Cambridge, 2 August 1782, Dyer Collection, 9.12.1.B, Emmanuel College Library, Cambridge University.

[32] Samuel Bagster, *Samuel Bagster of London 1772-1851: An Autobiography* (London, 1972), 35.

[33] Bagster had little sympathy with the presence of Unitarianism among the Particular Baptists, adding this final note to his discussion of Dyer: 'He subsequently gained a livelihood by his pen. […] Holcroft, Thelwall, Godwin and others, were his associates, and they have floated on the life current into the lake of oblivion' (35).

dismay of the hapless Dyer (who apparently kept his desire for her largely to himself, according to Bagster). Ryland closed his academy in Northampton in November 1785 and moved his school the next year to Enfield, near London, where John Clarke, now his son-in-law, became his chief assistant, becoming headmaster after Ryland's death in 1792.[34] Dyer, disappointed in love and not wishing to remove with the Clarkes to Enfield, returned to Cambridge and his friends at St. Andrew's Street. Bagster suggests that Dyer did not leave voluntarily but was dismissed from Ryland's academy because he had 'left the orthodox faith and adopted Unitarianism'.[35] Though Dyer was indeed an Arian by 1785 (and had been most likely for some time), it is unlikely Ryland would have dismissed him for that reason.[36]

~ III ~

Dyer spent the next six years in and around Cambridge, preaching occasionally in Robinson's pulpit at St. Andrew's Street and in other dissenting congregations (Baptist and Independent) in Cambridgeshire and the surrounding counties. He initially lived in Swavesey, where he kept a school from 1786 to 1788 and devoted himself to composing his first book, *An Inquiry into the Nature of Subscription to the Thirty-Nine Articles* (1789). By late summer 1788 Dyer had returned to Cambridge, supporting himself through private tutoring and occasional Sunday preaching, though, as he wrote in his *Inquiry*, 'I myself have never been licensed either to preach, or teach youth; (nor do I mean ever to be) yet I have continued to do both without interruption, almost ever since I left college'.[37] He was in frequent contact with Robinson for the next three years, appearing often in Robinson's diary.[38] His main purpose for returning to Cambridge, however, was to finish work on the *Inquiry*, hoping its publication would raise some needed funds through private subscriptions. 'I have drop'd my School at present', he wrote to the Rev. Benjamin Loyd Edwards (1765-1831), Independent minister at Northampton, on 22 August 1788, '& devote myself entirely to this business – having free access to one or two of the College

[34] In 1803, John Keats enrolled at Clarke's school at Enfield, where he soon developed a friendship with Charles Cowden Clarke (1787-1877), Clarke's son. For more on Ryland, Dyer and the Clarkes at Northampton and later Enfield, see Nicholas Roe, *John Keats and the Culture of Dissent* (Oxford, 2002), 29-33.

[35] Bagster, *Samuel Bagster*, 35.

[36] In his biography of Robert Robinson, Dyer provided little information on his movements between 1779 and 1785, believing it would be 'improper' to divulge his reasons for leaving Cambridge and the Church of England; he also did not provide any details about his time as a Baptist minister and tutor in Oxford and Northampton. See Dyer, *Memoirs*, 178.

[37] Dyer, *Inquiry*, 13.

[38] During that time Dyer composed an elegy, 'On the Death of a Young Lady', a poem about Robinson's daughter, Julia, who died in 1787; and 'Monody on the death of a Friend', commemorating the death of Robert Robinson in 1790. Both poems appeared in Dyer's *Poems* (London, 1792), 46-47, 22-27. Dyer adds in his Preface that his poem, 'Balaam's Prophecy' (pp. 43-45), had previously appeared 'in a publication of the late Mr. Ryland's consent' (p. viii), suggesting once again that Dyer maintained his relationship with his Particular Baptist friends at Northampton well into the early 1790s.

Libraries – I shall continue at Cambridge at least till my work is finished'.[39] Dyer was seeking Edwards's help in procuring subscriptions from several of his former acquaintances and colleagues at Northampton: a Mr. Hague, who had been the English tutor at Ryland's academy during Dyer's tenure there and was still living in Northampton, possibly operating his own school; John Ryland, Jr. (1753-1825), who succeeded his father as pastor of the Baptist church in College Lane, Northampton; John Horsey (1754-1827), another Independent minister in Northampton; Thomas Toller (1756-1821), Independent minister at Kettering; and several tutors at the dissenting academy at Daventry. 'I only write on this subject to a few friends', Dyer concludes, 'who have either offered to serve me, or of whose friendship in time past I have had proof'.[40] This impressive list of Baptist and Independent ministers reveals that Dyer, after his return to Cambridgeshire in 1785, though moving steadily toward Unitarianism, nevertheless continued to maintain ties with an orthodox community of dissenters in Northamptonshire (only Horsey was considered somewhat heterodox), having most likely preached in their pulpits during his time at Ryland's academy.[41] Consequently, as he was making his final revisions to his first publication in August 1788 – a substantial analysis of the religious, political, and social consequences of subscription and religious tests, written in the shadow of one of the leading expositors of religious liberty in England, Robert Robinson – Dyer had ample reason to expect their support and approval.[42]

After Robinson's death, Dyer continued for a time to affiliate with St. Andrew's Street, though he did not vote on the new pastor, the brilliant and already controversial Robert Hall (1764-1831) of Bristol, who first supplied the pulpit for six weeks in the fall of 1790 and then served as an official candidate from January through June 1791, assuming full pastoral duties that August. Like Dyer and Robinson, Hall was an abolitionist, an ardent political reformer, and, according to many Particular Baptists at that time, slightly heterodox in his theology, being far too appreciative of Priestley and cozy with materialistic philosophy to suit some of the leading ministers among the Particular Baptists. Certain members and attendants of the theologically mixed congregation at St. Andrew's Street welcomed such heterodoxy, considering Hall the kind of liberal thinker and theologian worthy of replacing the revered Robert Robinson. Shortly after his arrival, however, Hall disappointed these individuals (a group of Socinians led by William Frend and Dyer) by preaching a series of sermons on the atonement and divinity of Christ. Though the congregation also

[39] George Dyer, Cambridge, to B. L. Edwards, Northampton, 22 August 1788, in Miscellaneous Autograph Letters: 750 letters of late 18th and early 19th c. Authors, collected by William Upcott, Montagu d. 7, fol. 107, Bodleian Library, Oxford University.

[40] *Ibid*, fol. 108.

[41] For biographies of these Northamptonshire Independent ministers, see Thomas Coleman, *Memorials of the Independent Churches in Northamptonshire* (London, 1853).

[42] Concerning the Baptists, Dyer declares in his *Inquiry* that they have been 'an injured people', even though they have 'ever felt a zealous attachment' to the British Constitution. 'Like the Quakers, the Baptists are Men, Britons, Christians, and Protestants. But what does alma mater say of Baptists: No entrance for Schismatics: and she turns the keys of the college gates on them.' Dyer, *Inquiry*, 20, 21.

contained a large group of Arians, including one of its leading deacons, William Nash (who would later become a close friend of Crabb Robinson), Hall made no attempt to remove them, satisfied that their doctrinal position, though non-trinitarian, was nevertheless more amenable to his moderate Calvinism than that of the Socinians. About twenty Socinians left, forming a new meeting in the house of William Frend.[43] Dyer left at the same time, informing Hall and the church of his reasons for leaving in a letter read by Hall to the congregation in late December 1791. In his letter, Dyer expressed his admiration and respect for Hall, as much a political reformer at that time as Dyer was, and he wished no quarrel with Hall, though Dyer recognized that his adoption of the Socinian doctrine of the humanity of Christ would no longer allow him to participate in the singing of hymns or offering worship to Christ.[44] He also had come to the conclusion that attending public worship was no longer necessary (in fact, he thought it might even be harmful) to one's faith, having been influenced, it would appear, by a controversial publication, *An Enquiry into the Expediency and Propriety of Public or Social Worship* (1791), by his former classmate and friend, the Unitarian Gilbert Wakefield (1756-1801), tutor at Hackney College.[45]

Dyer had thought of leaving Cambridge and the congregation in St. Andrew's Street for more than a year, and Wakefield had likewise played a major role in that decision besides his influencing Dyer against public worship. Late in 1790, Wakefield recommended Dyer serve as assistant to John Prior Estlin (1747-1817), Unitarian minister at Lewin's Mead in Bristol. Estlin had been the congregation's assistant pastor for almost thirty years before the aging

[43] Andrew Fuller, pastor of the Baptist congregation at Kettering, commented on Hall's handling of the Socinians at Cambridge in a letter to John Sutcliff, Baptist minister at Olney, on 13 April 1791:

> [Hall] never spoke so decidedly against Socinianism in Company, nor appear'd so cordially to disapprove it as this time – A certain person said to him in my hearing – "In my opinion Socinianism will spread" – "that may be, said he, but if it does, all true and serious religion will so far be rooted up," or words to that effect. He complains of the ignorance, cant, & bigotry of Socinians—They are he says exceedingly conceited; and as to abilities, they have *one* great man [Frend] amongst them, but the rest are in general but so many *mites* in a great Cheshire cheese—Each one thinks himself entitled in a sort to the whole cheese, and so boasts.
>
> At Cambr. they din him continually with the Subject, together with a cant way of talking of their being "dissenters upon principle." Robert says they do everything *as dissenters* there, nothing as *men* or as *Xns*,—they go to bed, & get up, get their breakfast, dinner, & supper, preserve their reputations, & bestow all their donations *as dissenters*. He supposes if it were not for the honour of the *dissenting Interest* they would not have such a thing as "a vile tub in their meeting called a pulpit," nor yet one man in particular to fill it.

Original Letters: Fawcett, Fuller, Morris, Ryland, Baptist Missionary Society Home Correspondence, Angus Library, Regent's Park College, Oxford.

[44] Dyer writes in the second edition of *Inquiry* (London, 1792), 'I cannot approve paying divine honours to Christ, whom I believe only to be a man, though appointed by God to be the Saviour of the world' (437).

[45] Wakefield's pamphlet was answered by the respected Unitarian writer, Anna Lætitia Barbauld, in *Remarks on Mr. Gilbert Wakefield's Enquiry into the Expediency and Propriety of Public or Social Worship* (1792).

Thomas Wright, the church's senior pastor, asked him to hire a new assistant. Despite Dyer's personality quirks, Wakefield was confident Dyer had the ability to serve once again in a pastoral capacity, only this time among the Unitarians, not the Particular Baptists. 'Dyer, I hope, will go to M.r Estlins', Wakefield wrote to an unknown correspondent on 12 January 1791. 'Like a Blunderer', Wakefield continues, 'he directed his L. [Letter] to the wrong place, so that we have not yet got M.r Estlin's Answer. This said friend of ours is really an eccellent [sic] fellow: I admire him much: I have taken great pains to persuade him to go to Bristol: for, I am sure no Place of the Kind will ever be found half so eligible for him.'[46] In a postscript, Wakefield adds:

> I can make Nothing at all of Dyer. He says that he can't determine till he sees you: then I tell him he ought to see you immediately; & give a decisive answer to M.r Estlin at any Rate because he has another Person, it seems, whom he will take in this Case: for a Letter is come.[47]

It is not improbable that Hall, a friend of Estlin, immediately upon his return to Bristol from Cambridge in December 1790 may also have spoken on Dyer's behalf.[48] Another possibility is that Dyer received assistance from Thomas Mullett (1745-1814), a prosperous London merchant originally from Taunton and Bristol. Mullett was brother-in-law to Caleb Evans, minister at that time to the congregation at Broadmead, where Hall had served as assistant pastor. During the 1790s Mullett became an attendant at the General Baptist (Unitarian) congregation at Worship Street under John Evans, a former student of Hall's at Bristol Academy. Dyer met Mullett, an ardent political reformer, in the late 1780s through Robert Robinson, and after Dyer's removal to London in 1792, he significantly expanded his friendship with Mullett, who later became a close friend of Crabb Robinson.[49]

For whatever reason, no assistant was chosen at this time. After Thomas Wright's death in 1797, Estlin hired John Rowe (1764-1833), assistant minister to the Presbyterian congregation in Shrewsbury, a move that allowed a youthful but not so polished Samuel Taylor Coleridge to candidate as Rowe's replacement in January 1798. Dyer's ineptitude and indecisiveness is clearly

[46] Gilbert Wakefield, Hackney, to unidentified correspondent, 12 January 1791, in Letters by and about Ministers: 1775-1895, NLW 13566C, The National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, Wales.

[47] *Ibid.*

[48] Hall and Estlin had been friends for many years and had worked together in the late 1780s on the committee against the slave trade that they and others had formed in Bristol. Upon his annual visits to Bristol, Hall would often preach at Lewin's Mead. Joseph Cottle was also a close friend of Hall and an acquaintance of Estlin, and he may have played some role in this affair as well.

[49] For more on Mullett, see Timothy Whelan, 'Coleridge and Some Bristol Baptists, 1794-96', in *Wordsworth and Coleridge in the West Country*, ed. Nicholas Roe (Houndmills, 2010), 110-11; 'Memoirs of Mr. Thomas Mullett, by the Rev. John Evans', *Gentleman's Magazine* 85 (1815, Part 1), 83-85; and Jane Mullett Evans, *Family Chronicle of the Descendants of Thomas Evans, of Brecon, from 1678 to 1857* (Bristol, *c.* 1870), 61-63.

evident in Wakefield's postscript, but whether it played a role in Dyer's loss of the position at Bristol is uncertain. It may be that Dyer withdrew his name from consideration, or that Estlin simply decided not to hire anyone at that time.[50] In his letter of dismissal from St. Andrew's Street, Dyer noted that his decision to leave was not the result of 'having no opportunity to preach', a statement justified by the efforts of Wakefield and others in placing Dyer at Lewin's Mead. However, by the date of his letter, the Bristol position was closed and Dyer had made his decision to remove to London, marking a major turning point in his life. His hopes for a career as a dissenting minister had come to an end. He stayed another year in Cambridge, leaving for London in December 1792, eventually taking up residence in Clifford's Inn, where he remained the rest of his life.

~ IV ~

'In 1792, making up his mind as to his true vocation, Dyer turned his steps to London', wrote E. V. Lucas, where 'he began his long career as a hack and the friend of letters and men of letters', such as Charles Lamb.[51] Dyer, however, was far more than a 'hack' writer after 1792, but Lucas is correct about the career change. Despite the move, Dyer continued his interest in dissenting affairs for some time, culminating in his impressive biography of Robert Robinson in 1796. Even before the appearance of the *Memoirs*, Dyer was considered a Baptist writer, with several of his works advertised in John Rippon's *Baptist Annual Register* under 'Publications by Baptists'; three of his poems also appeared in William Winterbotham's *Selection of Poems, Sacred and Moral* (1796).[52] As word circulated among the dissenting community of London in the spring of 1794 that Dyer was contemplating a biography of Robinson, Anthony Robinson (1762-1827), a former student of Hall's at Bristol Academy and a Baptist minister, 1786-

[50] Unfortunately, no record of Dyer's application exists in the Lewin's Mead Church Records. See Christopher James Thomas, *Some Account of the Rise and Progress of the Ancient Society of Protestant Dissenters, Worshipping in Lewin's Mead, Bristol* (Bristol, 1891), 11; Lewin's Mead Church Records, 1706-1963, acc. no. 39461, Bristol Record Office, Bristol, Gloucestershire.

[51] Lucas, *Life of Charles Lamb*, I, 203.

[52] *Baptist Annual Register, for 1794, 1795, 1796-1797* (London, [1798]), II, 340; William Winterbotham, *Selection of Poems, Sacred and Moral*, 2 vols (London, 1796), which included Dyer's 'Address to the Deity' (I, 1-4), 'Ode to Pity' and 'Ode to Science' (II, 102-07, 148-51). Rippon was the Baptist minister at Carter Lane, Southwark; Winterbotham had been the assistant pastor at the Baptist meeting in How's Lane, Plymouth, until his imprisonment in Newgate (he was residing there when he published his *Selection*) for preaching two 'seditious' sermons in 1792. Other Baptist historians who would later claim Dyer as a Baptist include Joseph Ivimey, who in his *History of the English Baptists*, 4 vols (London, 1823), described Dyer as 'A writer of our denomination, distinguished for his sceptical opinions' (III, 176). In the early twentieth century, W. T. Whitley added Dyer to his 'Index to Notable Baptists', published in the *Baptist Quarterly*, 7 (1920-21), 199. Dyer also appears in Edward C. Starr's *A Baptist Bibliography*, 25 vols (Rochester, NY, 1952-76), VI, 208-09. More recently, Len Addicott, in his Introduction to *Church Book: St. Andrew's Street Baptist Church, 1720-1832* (London, 1991), treats Dyer rather harshly, describing him as 'a good-hearted, generous, hyper-sensitive, humourless, tactless, well-meaning absent-minded, short-sighted pedagogue and poet' (xxxiv, n. 41). According to Addicott, 'Dyer appears to have had no personal experience of conversion, failed to understand evangelical Christianity, and one feels the doubts he attributed to Robinson were unconscious reflections of his own uncertainty' (ibid.).

90, wrote to Dyer about the proposed biography.[53] Robinson, at that time living at Kirkland, near Wigton, Cumberland (he settled in London in 1796 and became a prominent sugar refiner and Unitarian writer), acquired Dyer's address from a mutual friend, the Revd Stephen Freeman, a former classmate of Robinson's at Bristol and Baptist minister in Honiton, Devon, prior to his settlement in Ponder's End as a General Baptist (Unitarian) minister and schoolmaster.[54] Dyer and Robinson first met in Cambridge in 1788, both men drawn to Robert Robinson's liberal politics and spirit of open theological inquiry. Anthony Robinson was 'extremely glad' to hear that Dyer was going to write the biography of the Cambridge divine, a man who 'merits a distinct record, by the disinterestedness of his conduct, the greatness of his genius, and the true liberality of his principles & sentiments'. Robinson encouraged Dyer to price the volume cheaply, so that 'the poor to whom the gospel was first preached should be able to obtain a picture of their steady friend'. 'How similar your conduct & opinions in many respects to his', Robinson adds, '& consequently how fit to represent them truly, & give them their proper weight & importance!' a conclusion based upon Dyer's recent publication, *Complaints of the Poor People of England* (1793). Just as Dyer had professed in his Northampton letter to Robert Robinson in 1782, so Anthony Robinson declared to Dyer that Robert Robinson's distinctive greatness resided in the fact that he was 'more the friend of freedom than truth as he taught men to enquire, not to dogmatize'. Like Richard Price, the Unitarian minister and political reformer, Robinson 'was not a propagandist of dogmas, but of freedom of thought – this is one of their peculiar & most characteristic excellencies. Such men are the only friends of *Truth*, as that can be discovered only by enquiry, which their labors were directed to stimulate, *truth* (if any sentiment may be dignified by a general epithet) when received upon the authority of any teacher, without examination & research, is of little importance & of light effect.'[55]

[53] Robinson served as minister to the Particular Baptist congregation at Fairford, Gloucestershire, 1786-88, and preached for a year to the General Baptist congregation in Worship Street, London, in 1790, before returning home to his home in Cumberland. In 1792, while preaching occasionally to a small dissenting congregation there, Robinson published *A Short History of the Persecution of Christianity, by Jews, Heathens, and Christians; to which are added, An Account of the Present State of Religion in the United States of America, and some Observations on Civil Establishments of Religion.* Robinson would be a regular contributor to the *Analytical Review* in the 1790s and later, to the Unitarian periodical, the *Monthly Repository*. He was a close friend of Henry Crabb Robinson for nearly thirty years.

[54] While at Honiton, Freeman became known to Benjamin Flower, who lived at Tiverton, Devon, prior to his arrival in Cambridge (only a few months after Dyer's departure) to begin his tenure as editor and publisher of the *Cambridge Intelligencer*, 1793-1803. Flower, like Dyer, became a follower of Robert Robinson in early 1780s; from 1793 to 1798 he was a member at St. Andrew's Street under Robert Hall, and would later publish several volumes of Robinson's writings. For more on Freeman and Flower, see Whelan, *Politics, Religion, and Romance*, 306-07, 367-69.

[55] Anthony Robinson, Wigton, Cumberland, to George Dyer, No. 45 Carey Street, near Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, 18 March 1794, George Dyer Collection, 9.12.1.C, Emmanuel College Library, Cambridge University.

When the biography finally appeared in the spring of 1796, what Dyer and his Unitarian friends like Thomas Mullett and Anthony Robinson (and later their mutual friend, Crabb Robinson) valued most in Robert Robinson was brought into stark contrast with those who admired the Cambridge minister's orthodox beginnings. That May, Dyer left a copy of his book at the residence of the famous evangelical vicar at St Mary Woolnoth, John Newton. The book was actually a present from Dyer to Peet Musgrave, Dyer's Cambridge friend, to be forwarded by Newton to Michael Brown, minister to the General Baptist congregation in Blackfields, Southwark, the same church Mary Hays attended for many years.[56] Newton read the book before he passed it on, expressing his appreciation to Dyer in a letter on 6 June 1796. 'I was glad of that opportunity of reading your book', Newton writes. 'My pleasure would have been greater', he adds, 'but for the mournful regret I frequently felt, from the contrast between the beginning & the latter part of your friend's public life'.[57] Newton's reference here to Robinson's departure during the 1780s from Calvinism into some form of Arianism, Sabellianism, or possibly Socinianism became a subject of much debate not only among the Particular Baptists but also evangelical Calvinists in other denominations, including the Church of England. Newton admired Dyer's 'impartiality and candour' but he could not refrain from offering some criticism of Robinson's life, though he wished Dyer to know that his opinions were given in a 'spirit of benevolence'. Newton hoped to end his life 'where Mr. Robinson's began',[58] for both men came out of Methodism, both became known for their evangelical Calvinism and sermons designed for the common hearer, both wrote hymns (Newton's 'Amazing Grace' and Robinson's 'Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing' were among two of the most popular hymns of the century), and both were ardent abolitionists. Newton recalls that he heard Robinson preach on two occasions in 1781 or 1782 (during the time Dyer was at Oxford), and he was concerned then that Robinson might be departing from orthodoxy. Though he thought Robinson 'the best public speaker I had ever heard', Newton could not overlook 'a plausible sceptical turn in his preaching' that tended 'to make Men doubt, than believe', oddly enough the very characteristic that endeared Robinson to Dyer, Flower, Anthony and Crabb Robinson, and so many other rational dissenters.

To the evangelical Newton, however, many parts of the Bible could not be understood apart from '*real* Supernatural assistance', a notion he believes Dyer understood fully, since he was 'so well acquainted with the Scripture'. Calvinism has been falsely caricatured, he argues, mostly by the Unitarians who, in advocating a 'rational Christianity', 'think God almost or altogether like Ourselves'. In so doing, they 'set aside his Holiness, Justice & Truth, & suppose

[56] Michael Brown served as minister at Blackfield's from 1778 to 1820. For more on Brown and his church, see W. T. Whitley, *The Baptists of London 1612-1928* (London, [n.d.]), 131; Walter Wilson, *History and Antiquities*, 4 vols (London,1814), IV, 343-44.
[57] John Newton, Coleman St. Buildings, to George Dyer, Clifford's Inn, 6 June 1796, Dyer Collection, Col. 9.12.1.C, Emmanuel College Library, Cambridge University.
[58] *Ibid.*

that *His* Goodness nearly resembles what we call *our Own*'. This leads them to 'boast' in their own 'righteousness', expect a 'reward' from God rather than 'plead for Mercy', make the 'Atonement [...] unnecessary, & the character of the Saviour a matter of great indifference'. When men like Robinson (and Dyer by default) 'oppose their own Understandings to Divine Revelation, & attempt to grasp *Infinites*, with their feeble span', Newton warns, 'I cannot but fear that their Mental Errors will prove highly dangerous'. Newton chides Dyer for his 'doubts concerning the Authenticity of Matthew's gospel' (he blames Robinson for creating those doubts) and closes with an illustration drawn from the life of the son of their mutual friend (a Mr. Barham), who, after spending time at Cambridge in the mid-1780s, fell under Robinson's influence and soon rejected the orthodox doctrines of the Deity of Christ and the Atonement.

Though Robinson's comments just prior to his death, preached from the pulpit of Joseph Priestley's New Meeting in Birmingham, greatly embarrassed his evangelical friends, Newton did not believe Robinson went as far as Priestley in his heterodoxy, but he did believe Robinson steadily moved in that direction throughout the 1780s.[59] Newton's closing remarks, however, turn from Robinson's heterodoxy to Dyer's, and are highly telling of Newton's sense of Dyer's stature within the dissenting community *c.* 1796:

> Do you ask, why I have troubled you with this sheet? I conceiv'd a respect for you, while reading your book. I have heard of you from Mr. Jowit, Mr. Ryland & others that you once nearly thought with those from whom you now differ. I wished you to know from my heart [and] I hoped you would accept my letter as proof of it. I have no personal interest in writing. That I have written shall remain a secret with myself, I retain no copy of my letters nor do I desire any Answer.[60]

[59] Dyer discussed Robinson's departure from orthodoxy at some length in his *Memoirs*. Priestley thought Robinson's sermons at Birmingham 'unconnected and desultory' and was surprised that Robinson treated the trinity in a manner 'rather of burlesque, than serious reasoning', but was nevertheless convinced that Robinson was a Unitarian at his death. 'To speak freely', Dyer concluded, 'it seems a part less liable to ambiguity, and less subject to contradiction, to consider [Robinson], at the close of life, as a man of literature, than as a divine: as to his precise character in the last respect, it is safer to say what he was not, than what he was. He was not a bigot – he was not an enthusiast – he was not a Calvinist – he was not a trinitarian – and some express doubts, with respect to his confession to Dr. Priestley, "that he was indebted to him for the little he knew of rational defensible Christianity:" we ought, at least, to be on our guard against a conclusion too general and too determinate. That he had read many of that great man's writings, and held several sentiments in common with him, is undoubtedly true; but how far he believed his system, it would be very difficult to determine'; see Dyer, *Memoirs*, 397, 398; 415-16. Benjamin Flower believed Robinson an Arian, but not a Socinian, and took Dyer to task for what he thought were a number of inaccurate claims about Robinson. In Flower's 'Memoir' of Robinson, which appeared as part of his edition of the *Miscellaneous Works of Robert Robinson*, 4 vols (Harlow, 1807), Flower argued that in his final years Robinson 'never embraced Socinianism' (I, cxliii). Addicott seconds Flower in his Introduction, *Church Book: St. Andrew's Street*, xxxiv-xxxv, n. 41.
[60] Newton to Dyer, Emmanuel College Library, Cambridge University.

These comments must have been immensely gratifying to Dyer, for Newton recognised him for having been a colleague of three of the leading figures among the Particular Baptists in the 1780s (Robert Robinson, John Collett Ryland, and Daniel Turner), for having preached in the pulpits of the most prominent Independent ministers in Northamptonshire (including Benjamin Loyd Edwards, Thomas Toller, and John Horsey), and for being a friend and correspondent of numerous Unitarian ministers and laymen, such as Gilbert Wakefield, John Prior Estlin, Anthony Robinson, Thomas Mullett, and the bookseller Joseph Johnson.

Despite these reminders of Dyer's past and the praises from Newton and Robinson for his *Memoirs* of Robert Robinson, Dyer was already turning his attention away from dissenting culture and toward the literary arena that would dominate the remainder of his life. Dyer published one volume of poems in 1792, and when his volume on Robinson appeared was hard at work on a set of odes and a long poem, *The Poet's Fate, a Poetical Dialogue*, both of which appeared in 1797, the latter dedicated by Dyer to the Society for the Establishment of a Literary Fund. By the time of Newton's letter, Dyer had rejected the dissenting ministry, presenting himself now not as the pastor he might once have been but as the poet he sought to become. Just three weeks prior to that letter, Dyer had been instrumental in getting James Martin, on behalf of the Literary Fund, to procure funds (the members settled on £10) to be sent to a financially strapped Samuel Taylor Coleridge, a poet whose future prospects, much as Dyer's had once been, still included the possibility of becoming a dissenting minister.[61]

Dyer's first meeting with Coleridge in late August 1794 in London was the idea of a Cambridge acquaintance of Coleridge's who thought Dyer might be interested in his (and Southey's) scheme of Pantisocracy. Dyer was unsuccessful in his efforts to find a London publisher for *The Fall of Robespierre*, the poetic drama Coleridge jointly authored with Southey, but Dyer's fascination with the notion of Pantisocracy immediately endeared him to Coleridge, and the two became fast friends. As much as he liked his poetry and philosophy, Dyer was immediately drawn to Coleridge because of his Cambridge connections, not the least of which was Robert Hall, Dyer's former pastor at St. Andrew's Street, and Benjamin Flower, who published Coleridge's earliest poems in the *Cambridge Intelligencer* and was himself a member at St. Andrew's Street. When he met Dyer in London, Coleridge had just completed his first trip to Bristol and the West Country, bringing with him an introduction

[61] See A. Scott, Fleet Street, to George Dyer, 16 May 1796, George Dyer Collection, 9.12.1.A, Emmanuel College Library, Cambridge University. James Martin addressed the Committee of the Literary Fund on 18 May on behalf of Coleridge, 'a man of genius and learning' and 'undoubted talents' but who of late had found himself in 'extreme difficulties'. The next day the Committee voted that Coleridge should receive £10, and Scott was commissioned to relay the news to Coleridge, who responded to the Committee on 10 June, thanking them for 'relief so liberally and delicately afforded me'. See Earl Leslie Griggs, ed., *The Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 6 vols (Oxford, 1956-71), I, 220.

to Robert Hall, which he acted upon a few weeks after he met with Dyer.[62] Dyer would have been greatly interested in Coleridge's activities in Bristol, for Dyer had many dissenting friends there, including John Ryland, Jr. (1753-1825), his former colleague at Northampton and now the Baptist minister at Broadmead and President of the Baptist Academy, and John Prior Estlin at Lewin's Mead, both men having played pivotal roles in determining Dyer's fate as a dissenting minister. Not only were these men Dyer's friends but they would also soon form, along with Joseph Cottle, a key part of the dissenting community that Coleridge embraced during his time in the West Country from 1795 to 1798. Just as Robert Robinson had procured monies from the Baptist Fund for Dyer in 1780, so Dyer provided a similar gesture to his young scholar-poet-preacher friend through the Literary Fund. The monies from the Fund in 1796 nudged Coleridge ever-so-slightly toward a literary career, a move greatly strengthened in 1798 when Coleridge became the recipient of a £150 annuity from the wealthy manufacturers Thomas and Josiah Wedgwood. Both events altered the direction of Coleridge's life, just as Dyer's had been, away from the dissenting ministry and toward a life devoted to literature.

Thus, the popular image of George Dyer as a slovenly man who, when not spending enormous amounts of time poring over manuscripts in libraries or exhibiting personality quirks, all of which became the stuff of anecdotal jokes by his friends in letters and essays in popular magazines, deserves serious revaluation. Though his friends largely ignored the nature and quality of Dyer's early career as a dissenting minister and radical political writer, Dyer continued to revere his time among the Baptists. Lamb's playful description of Dyer in 'Oxford in the Vacation', an essay that appeared in the *London Magazine* in October 1820, in which Dyer was described by Lamb as being so 'absent from the body' as, 'not to speak it profanely', perilously close to being 'present with the Lord',[63] differed little from Daniel Turner's observation in 1782 (quoted above) that Dyer was 'apt to be a little eccentric and to be carried away by sudden starts of fancy'. Lamb, however, overstepped the bounds of light-hearted raillery when he criticised the schoolmaster under whom Dyer had worked in his early career, Thomas Grimwood at Dedham and, by association, John Collett Ryland at Northampton. Lamb based his comments upon an account Dyer had related to him, but unfortunately conflated both men into a harsh caricature of the religious schoolmaster. Lamb writes:

[62] Coleridge met Hall for breakfast most likely at Benjamin Flower's residence. Hall thought Coleridge *too* radical, as he wrote to his brother-in-law, Isaac James, in Bristol on 29 September 1794: 'Mr. Harwood has just favoured me with a letter recommending to my acquaintance a Mr. Coleridge of Jesus College, and accordingly I breakfasted with him a few mornings since at a friend's. He is a very ingenious young man, but intoxicated with a political and philosophical enthusiasm, a sophic, a republican, and leveller. Much as I admire his abilities, I cannot say I feel disposed to cultivate his intimacy; it is difficult or rather perhaps impossible to come into contact with such licentious opinions without contracting a taint'. See R. H. W., *The Hall Family* (Bristol, 1910), 60-61.

[63] Charles Lamb, 'Oxford in the Vacation', in *Essays of Elia, First Series*, ed. G. A. Wauchope (Boston, 1904), 21.

> D. commenced life after a course of hard study in the "House of pure Emanuel," as usher to a knavish fanatic schoolmaster at —, at a salary of eight pounds per annum, with board and lodging. Of this poor stipend he never received above half in all the laborious years he served this man. He tells a pleasant anecdote, that when poverty, staring out at his ragged knees, has sometimes compelled him, against the modesty of his nature, to hint at arrears, Dr. — would take no immediate notice, but after supper, when the school was called together to even-song, he would never fail to introduce some instructive homily against riches, and the corruption of the heart occasioned through the desire of them - ending with "Lord, keep thy servants, above all things, from the heinous sin of avarice. Having food and raiment, let us therewithal be content. Give me Agar's wish" - and the like - which, to the little auditory, sounded like a doctrine full of Christian prudence and simplicity, but to poor D. was a receipt in full for that quarter's demand at least.[64]

Even the gentle Dyer was taken aback at Lamb's mocking of someone Dyer still held in high esteem. He corrected (albeit in the gentlest of terms) his friend in a letter to William King shortly after the essay appeared. Grimwood was more than generous, Dyer writes, providing enough funds to Dyer that year that he was able to give £20 to his aging father, besides receiving an extra five guineas from Grimwood upon his removal from Dedham. But it is for Ryland and his Northampton academy that Dyer reserved the greater tribute, a passage worth quoting in its entirety for, despite its obscurity today, it is Dyer's most intimate statement about his early career among the Baptists:

> D. was not properly in the full character of an usher here. All the said places were occupied; he was here a sort of supernumerary; it suited his convenience at the time to be there, and on the part of the Rev. Mr. R. it was an accommodation to the peculiar circumstances of G. D., who, if he did not in all things agree with this gentleman, found the situation very favourable to his own prevailing pursuits. It is true, he continued here much longer than it was at first intended by him, or than was expected by his part employer; but G. D. is not aware that he made any regular agreements on the score of salary, and indeed, for the reasons just alluded to, none such could have been made. It is true that D. might have looked for some remuneration, but the Rev. Mr. Ryland knew on what circumstances, and for what purposes, he came to him from the first; he knew that it had answered those purposes; he knew that he had studied that it should do so; he knew that he had pointed out to him resources, and if G. D. had not availed himself of those

[64] Lamb, 'Oxford in the Vacation', 22. This passage was omitted in Lucas, *Elia and the Last Essays of Elia*, 13.

> resources so much as this good gentleman thought he did, that was certainly his own fault. Further, Mr. Ryland knew that G. D. had very kind and liberal friends. G. D. considers himself to this day as under great obligations to this gentleman, and whatever he may at any time have received from him was to be considered more as a gratuity than a salary. To speak the truth, D. was in this latter situation rather in the character of a student than an usher.
>
> The Rev. Mr. Ryland's terms for tuition were not only low, but his hand was apt to be liberal beyond his means; his peculiar situation as a very popular preacher in a particular line, rendered his academy a sort of open house "to all the vagrant train." As to his ushers, they were commonly persons who had come to him under some peculiar difficulties, on whose gratitude he had even a claim; and if his own circumstances, for the reasons mentioned, did not allow him to give large salaries, it was understood they had enjoyed advantages under him, which were a full compensation for their services, so that some such prayer as "Elia," in his humorous way, alludes to, if even such had come from him, might have had in it something more just and good than Elia is aware of.
>
> The Rev. Dr. Ryland was a gentleman of very extensive reading, eccentric, certainly, if ever man was, both as a reader, an author, and a man; but his understanding possessed some strong features of character; his imagination would sometimes take no common flights; and some of his publications bear evidently these marks of his eccentricities; and with the singular boldness of his remarks, every one who was acquainted with him was well aware and it is not improbable that even G. D. may, in some unguarded moment, have made a slight allusion to them; and this, perhaps, Elia may have worked up in his farcical, poetical narrative. But you perceive, Sir, in reference to Dr. Grimwood, where he says D. "commenced life," not a word can be true. As to Dr. Ryland, D. recollects a circumstance which he will here mention: - A certain spark was once making himself merry with some of his peculiar sayings, when he was interrupted by the Rev. Robert Robinson (whose life I have published,) and who was himself a truly great man; "Sir, let me tell you, if you take away eleven parts out of twelve from Dr. Ryland, there will still be left a greater man than yourself."[65]

After nearly forty years, Dyer was adamant that his life at Northampton under the legendary Baptist minister and schoolmaster, John Collett Ryland, was not a

[65] E.S., 'Recollections of George Dyer, B.A', *The Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction*, 38 (1841), 310-12.

subject to be made light of, even by someone he considered one of his closest friends.[66]

~ V ~

Near the end of his life, as Dyer began composing his memoirs (no longer extant), he reviewed many of his letters and other materials from his early career as a dissenting teacher, preacher, and writer in Cambridge, Oxford, Northampton, and London. On 14 August 1838 Crabb Robinson received a call from 'good Geo: Dyer who was in a worry because I had not returned him Robinsons Plea for the Divinity of Xt A very sensible book and wch I felt quite unable to answer tho' the author ultimately became an Unitarian'.[67] A year later, on 18 August 1839, two years before Dyer's death, Robinson called on Dyer once again, writing later in his diary that Dyer 'shewd me an excell.t letter by Cowper's friend John Newton, worth printing, but he has others and perhaps suff.t to form a Vol: of reminiscences after his death wch I have recommended him to provide for'.[68] Most of Dyer's recollections have been lost, but a number of documents, including his prized letter by Newton, remain extant, enabling us to piece together Dyer's early career among the Baptists and Unitarians. Between 1778 and 1796, Dyer spent nine years as an educator in Cambridge, Dedham, and Northampton, working for an Anglican divine and two of the leading Baptist ministers at that time, Robert Robinson and John Collett Ryland; he spent one year as an assistant to Robinson and another year as a full-time pastor in a Baptist church in Oxford; he composed five substantial works, *An Inquiry into the Nature of Subscription* (1789; rev. ed, 1792), *Poems* (1792), *Complaints of the Poor People of England* (1793), *A Dissertation on the Theory and Practice of Benevolence* (1795), and *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Robert Robinson* (1796), specifically dictated by his dissenting interests and printed for two of the leading dissenting publishers in London, Joseph Johnson and John Robinson; and, for a brief moment, he entertained the possibility of serving as the assistant to one of the leading Unitarian ministers in the West Country of England, John Prior Estlin. Dyer's decision to leave Cambridge for London instead of Bristol, though it brought an end to his ministerial hopes, opened new opportunities that the former classical tutor turned to a profitable end. Between 1778 and 1796, however, though obviously exhibiting some eccentricities in his personality, Dyer was anything but the gentle, absent-minded drudge and part-time buffoon bequeathed to posterity by the anecdotes of his friends. His early career among the Baptists and Unitarians is a fitting starting point in the ongoing reappraisal of Dyer's life and work.

Georgia Southern University

[66] Benjamin Flower also wrote a remarkable tribute to Ryland in a letter to his future wife, Eliza Gould, in 1799. See Whelan, *Politics, Religion, and Romance*, 68-73.
[67] Crabb Robinson Diary, vol. 17 (22 Aug. 1837- 26 Oct. 1839), fol. 112, Dr. Williams's Library, London. Quoted by permission of the Director and the Trustees of the Library.
[68] *Ibid.*, fol. 217.

'Whereto my heart is wedded': Southey's Landscapes

David Chandler

This essay investigates the ways in which Robert Southey responded to landscape, something often regarded as central to the 'Romantic' experience, but a neglected aspect of this important author's intellectual and emotional constitution. It does not claim that Southey's response was particularly influential, typical, or for that matter 'Romantic', nor that it is prominently displayed in his writing, but it does propose that landscape affected him much more profoundly than is usually recognised. Southey himself helped established his stereotype as a bookish, library-bound creature – 'My days among the dead are passed' – though there is plenty of evidence that at all stages of his life, and particularly when he was young, he greatly enjoyed the experience of what has since become known as 'the great outdoors', and could, on occasion, experience feelings in the face of natural beauty as deep as any Werther or Wordsworth. Three landscapes in particular deeply affected him, not just with their undeniable natural beauty, but with the emotional connections he was able to establish with them at key moments in his life: the Avon Valley, Sintra, and the Lake District. These three locations are catalogued in *The Poet's Pilgrimage to Waterloo* of 1816, one of Southey's most commercially successful poems, and this striking review of his life in terms of the landscapes he had occupied establishes the shape and approach of the present essay, divided into three corresponding parts:

> My lot hath lain in scenes sublime and rude,
> Where still devoutly I have served and sought
> The Power divine which dwells in solitude.
> In boyhood was I wont, with rapture fraught,
> Amid those rocks and woods to wander free,
> Where Avon hastens to the Severn sea.
>
> In Cintra also have I dwelt erewhile,
> That earthly Eden, and have seen at eve
> The sea-mists, gathering round its mountain pile,
> Whelm with their billows all below, but leave
> One pinnacle sole seen, whereon it stood
> Like the Ark on Ararat, above the flood.
>
> And now am I a Cumbrian mountaineer;
> Their wintry garment of unsullied snow

The mountains have put on, the heavens are clear,
And yon dark lake spreads silently below;
Who sees them only in their summer hour
Sees but their beauties half, and knows not half their power.[1]

~ 'Where Avon hastens to the Severn sea' ~

Most of Southey's boyhood was spent in close proximity to the River Avon. The first 'landscapes' he recalled were the gardens of his Aunt Elizabeth Tyler's house in Bath, where he lived between the ages of two and six, and his maternal grandmother's house at Bedminster. On 15 July 1811 he wrote to his close friend Landor: 'like you, my earliest and deepest recollections are connected with flowers, and they always carry me back to other days.'[2] Between the ages of six and fourteen Southey was mainly resident in Bristol, though there was a year at the boarding school at Corston, nine miles up the Avon. In these early Bristol years, roughly equivalent to Wordsworth's first few years at Hawkshead, Southey developed a love of the Avon Valley. The feeling was perhaps inherited from his father, whom Southey later characterised as 'passionately fond of the country and of country sports.'[3]

Southey continued to live a good deal with his aunt, who had now moved to Bristol, and he became friendly with her servant, Shadrach Weeks, a boy his own age. In an unfinished, epistolary autobiography that he began writing in the early 1820s he provided what can be read as an extended gloss on the 'wander[ings] free' evoked in *The Poet's Pilgrimage to Waterloo*:

> Perhaps I have never had a keener enjoyment of natural scenery than when roaming about the rocks and woods on the side of the Avon with Shad and our poor spaniel Phillis. Indeed, there are few scenes in the island finer of their kind; and no other where merchant vessels of the largest size may be seen sailing between such rocks and woods—the shores being upon a scale of sufficient magnitude to supply all that the picturesque requires, and not upon so large a one as to make the ships appear comparatively insignificant.[4]

There is, no doubt, an element of convention in this insistence on what 'the picturesque requires', but the sort of balance between expansiveness and enclosure that Southey emphasises here is something he repeatedly looked for in a landscape, and I will suggest later that it reflects emotional needs. The reference to the 'merchant vessels of the largest size' is also striking, combining a

[1] Robert Southey, *The Poetical Works of Robert Southey*, 10 vols (London, 1838), X, 18-19.
[2] Charles Cuthbert Southey, ed., *The Life and Correspondence of Robert Southey*, 6 vols. (London, 1849-50), III, 113.
[3] *Life and Correspondence*, I, 7.
[4] *Life and Correspondence*, I, 131.

sense of nature with a sense of commercial prosperity, something often found in the Flemish-Dutch tradition of landscape representation that had profoundly impacted on British taste.

Both the prose statement and the poetic evocation of 'rocks and woods' in *The Poet's Pilgrimage* were written from the perspective of middle age, so one might suspect that distance was lending a little golden enchantment to the view. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that in later life Southey believed he had come to love nature as a boy wandering by the Avon, and attached great importance to this. The clearest statement is contained in some of the most heartfelt words he ever penned, in the aftermath of the devastating death of his deeply beloved son Herbert in April 1816. Struggling with his grief, Southey planned a long poem, something in the vein of Cowper's *Task*, in which he would search for consolation in religion, philosophy, and nature. It was always a very private project, and he wrote at the time that he did not expect it to be published in his lifetime. In fact he never seems to have got beyond a number of little verse fragments and notes for others, and these were published after his death as 'Fragmentary Thoughts Occasioned by His Son's Death'. They are very beautiful. One fragment reads:

> Beauties of Nature, – the passion of my youth,
> Nursed up and ripen'd to a settled love,
> Whereto my heart is wedded.[5]

It immediately recalls Wordsworth, of course. A note for an unwritten passage refers more specifically to his early Bristol years, though in a favourite 'Romantic' move Southey was going to write not so much about his experiences there as his memory of missing those rural delights when, in 1788, he went up to Westminster School in London:

> Feeling at Westminster, when summer evening sent a sadness to my heart, and I sate pining for green fields, and banks of flowers, and running streams, – or dreaming of Avon and her rocks and woods.[6]

Having feelings, or the memory of feelings, was one thing; finding a poetical language to describe them was another, and Southey struggled with this, just as Wordsworth and Coleridge did. His earliest nature poetry is stiff, awkward, conventional, often with obtrusive moralising, and usually concerned with small details rather than larger wholes. As a young poet it certainly did not occur to him to write about 'The Power divine which dwells in solitude', or his heart 'wedded' to the 'Beauties of Nature', or the Avon Valley as a particular landscape. Even in 'The Retrospect' of 1794, his earliest important poem, which

[5] Robert Southey, *Oliver Newman: A New-England Tale, With Other Poetical Remains* (London, 1845), 94.
[6] Southey, *Oliver Newman*, 94.

describes his time at Corston, and details outdoor play, there is no attempt to work in a larger picture of the Avon valley, or any explicit statement about learning to love nature. It is interesting to compare the poem with some statements Southey made in his letters at this period, when he was an enthusiastic pedestrian. 'What scene can be more calculated to expand the soul than the sight of nature, in all her loveliest works?' he wrote to Charles Collins on Easter Sunday, 1793.[7] But that expansion of the soul had not found its way into the poetry, and to a large extent it never did. At no point in his career can Southey be described as a nature poet, although, as we have seen, he could occasionally touch movingly on what the natural world meant to him.

There can be little doubt that Southey's mature understanding of how important the Avon Valley had been to him was greatly assisted by the work of his fellow 'Lake Poets', Wordsworth and Coleridge – especially the former. I believe he read with great interest and attention their late 1790s poems about childhood and the developing love of nature. In this context it is worth recalling his sometimes unjustly maligned review of the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*, where he introduced a generous 47-line extract from 'Tintern Abbey' with the words: 'In the whole range of English poetry, we scarcely recollect anything superior to a part of the following passage.'[8] (It is worth keeping in mind that far more people encountered 'Tintern Abbey' through Southey's review than through *Lyrical Ballads* itself.) Southey's choice of extract is striking: it does not start from one of Wordsworth's paragraph breaks, or even with the start of a sentence. Instead, it begins: 'So I dare to hope / Though changed, no doubt, from what I was, when first / I came among these hills'. The long extract – about a third of the poem – thus commences at the beginning of the story Wordsworth tells, and essentially includes the entire autobiographical narrative at the heart of 'Tintern Abbey' from the brief glimpse of 'boyish days' to the statement that the mature poet is

> well pleased to recognize
> In nature and the language of the sense,
> The anchor of my purest thought, the nurse,
> The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
> Of all my moral being.

This was intelligent and – I repeat – generous quotation, and it is clear that 'Tintern Abbey', and especially this passage, very much appealed to Southey, and in combination with other poetry by Wordsworth and Coleridge it almost certainly influenced his understanding of his own life. The appeal of their nature poetry, and its ready acceptance by Southey, probably had much to do with the fact that he had felt imaginative stirrings in the same direction, without knowing what to do with them, and perhaps not feeling that he needed to do anything

[7] *Life and Correspondence*, I, 180.
[8] *William Wordsworth: The Critical Heritage. Volume I: 1793-1820*, ed., Robert Woof (London and New York, 2001), 67.

with them. But having read it, he was led in time to make those creedal statements about 'The Power divine which dwells in solitude' and 'the passion of [his] youth'.

~ 'In Cintra also have I dwelt erewhile' ~

In 1793 Southey entered Balliol College, Oxford, where he developed radical views and a taste for hiking, his walks generally taking him in the direction of the West Country. He was only at Oxford until July 1794, abandoning the university on the strength of a plan he had hatched with his new friend Coleridge to emmigrate to America: the famous Pantisocratic scheme. In the end this came to nothing, and after a rather uncertain and turbulent year he made a decision to study law – but first to accept the invitation of his uncle, Herbert Hill, to make an extended visit to Portugal. He departed for Portugal in November 1795, at the age of twenty-one. His visit there included no more than a few weeks at Sintra, where there was an English community and his uncle had a house, but it was a decisive encounter. Sintra subsequently became Southey's touchstone of what was beautiful in nature. Returning there for a longer stay in 1800 he wrote 'The spot I am in is the most beautiful I have ever seen or imagined', and, a few months later, 'I often gaze and gaze till I forget myself and lose all thought, all recollection. You cannot imagine nor is it in my power to describe the beauties of this place.'[9] When Southey first visited the Lake District the following year he wrote to his brother Herbert that, though he had come to enjoy the 'sublimity' of the region, yet 'for beauty – all English – perhaps all existing scenery must yield to Cintra.'[10]

Given these later statements, it is fascinating to look at Southey's earliest and fullest account of Sintra, included in his first substantial prose work: *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Spain and Portugal*, published by Joseph Cottle in 1797. Here he is enthusiastic without, however, conveying the sort of absolute faith in Sintra's supremacy over other landscapes that he would later express:

> Never was a house more completely secluded than my Uncle's: it is so completely surrounded with lemon-trees and laurels as nowhere to be visible at the distance of ten yards – a place
>
> > Where the tired mind
> > Might rest beyond the murmurs of mankind!
>
> A little stream of water runs down the hill before the door, another door opens into a lemon garden, and from the sitting-room we have just such a prospect over lemon trees and laurels to an opposite hill, as, by promising a better, invites us to walk.

[9] *Journals of a Residence in Portugal 1800-1801 and a Visit to France 1838*, ed., Adolfo Cabral (Oxford, 1960), 104, 112.
[10] *New Letters of Robert Southey*, ed. Kenneth Curry, 2 vols (New York and London, 1965), I, 248.

> I know not how to describe to you the strange beauties of Cintra; it is, perhaps, more beautiful than sublime, more grotesque than beautiful, yet I never beheld scenery more calculated to fill the beholder with admiration and delight. The immense rock or mountain is in part covered with scanty herbage, in parts it rises into conical hills, formed of such immense stones, and piled so strangely, that all the machinery of deluges and volcanos [sic] must fail to satisfy the inquiry for their origin. [...] But the abundance of wood forms the most striking feature in this retreat from the Portugueze summer. The houses of the English are seen scattered on the ascent half hid among cork trees, elms, oaks, hazels, walnuts, the tall canes, and the rich green of the lemon gardens.
>
> On one of the mountain eminences stands the Penha Convent, visible from the hills near Lisbon. On another are the ruins of a Moorish Castle [...] From this elevation the eye stretches over a bare and melancholy country to Lisbon on the one side, and on the other to the distant Convent of Mafra, the Atlantic bounding the greater part of the prospect. I never beheld a view that so effectually checked the wish of wandering. Had I been born at Cintra, methinks no inducement could have tempted me to leave its delightful springs and shades, and cross the dreary wilderness that insulates them.[11]

After this Southey has several pages on the history and monuments of Sintra, before concluding with an acknowledgement of the limitations of verbal description: 'I cannot without a tedious minuteness describe the ever-varying prospects that the many eminences of this wild rock present, or the little green lanes over whose bordering lemon gardens the evening wind blows so cool, so rich!'[12]

This description of Sintra says a great deal about Southey and what he wanted from landscape, I believe, and it is illuminating to consider it in relation to a poem he wrote a few months after his return to England: 'Musings on a Landscape of Gaspar Poussin'. Southey never, as far as I am aware, wrote poetry directly descriptive of the Sintra landscape, or his own feelings about it. However, one can sometimes catch memories of Sintra emerging in his descriptions of other landscapes he had never seen: the exotic landscapes of his 'epic' poems, *Thalaba the Destroyer*, *Madoc*, *The Curse of Kehama*, and – with more appropriateness – *Roderick, The Last of the Goths*. But I would argue that the Gaspar Poussin poem is the one in which memories of, and longings for, Sintra express themselves most potently. This leads to an odd quibble respecting dates. Southey published the poem four times between 1801 and 1823 and in each case added the date 1796. But when he included it in his *Collected Poems* of 1837 he

[11] Robert Southey, *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Spain and Portugal* (Bristol, 1797), 509-11.
[12] Southey, *Letters Written During a Short Residence*, 517.

dated it '*Bath*, 1795' – that is to say, placing it before he went to Portugal. Yet the 1796 date was certainly correct. It was towards the end of that year, after his return from Portugal, that Southey wrote to Cottle, his publisher, with the request:

> You have four old engravings of mine in the Barton [...] three from Gaspar Poussin, one from Claude Lorrain. will you be kind enough to send them to me. [...] I am going to write a poem upon one of them, & therefore must have it before me.[13]

Cottle obviously obliged, and Southey, reunited with his prints, immediately set to work on the Gaspar Poussin poem. It went to press straight away, and was included in *Poems*, a volume which appeared just before New Year 1797. The later misdating is suggestive, though. At some level the poem represents a deflection of powerful emotion into a notional realm. That is to say, Southey's desire to live at Sintra was a theoretical possibility but to all intents and purposes a practical impossibility; his desire to live in the picture described in the poem was simply a theoretical impossibility: just a wistful thought. Southey wanted to transfer feelings engendered by the real landscape of Sintra onto a purely imaginative landscape he already knew. And perhaps sensing that, he was later led to pretend subconsciously that the poem had nothing to do with Sintra at all – hence the very late misdating.[14]

As far as I am aware, 'Musings on a Landscape of Gaspar Poussin', a poem considered '*divine*' by Coleridge, is the first poem of its kind in English. Several earlier English poets, notably Dr. Johnson and William Cowper, had written poems in response to painted portraits, but I have been unable to find an earlier poem written in response to a landscape picture.[15] The original painting that inspired the poem was painted by Gaspard Dughet, often known in the past as Gaspar Poussin, about 1667 and at some time thereafter picked up the title *The Cascade*. For most of the eighteenth century it was in Britain, but in 1779 it was bought by Catherine the Great and is now in the Hermitage Museum. John Boydell published an engraving of it by François Vivares in 1785 (see Figure One). Southey presumably had this before him as he wrote what is surely his most fascinating landscape poem:

[13] *The Collected Letters of Robert Southey. Part One: 1791-1797*, ed. Linda Pratt (Romantic Circles), 19 June 2011,
<http://romantic.arhu.umd.edu/editions/southey_letters/Part_One/HTML/letterEEd.26.189.html>
[14] Much the fullest account of the poem to date can be found in Christopher J. P. Smith, *A Quest for Home: Reading Robert Southey* (Liverpool, 1997), 137-60. Smith trusts the 1795 date, reads the poem as a response to the failure of Pantisocracy, and finds in it an attempt 'to re-read the taste of late eighteenth-century society in order to effect an ideological critique of that society' (141). His understanding of the poem and its context is so different from mine that there is virtually no common ground in our interpretations.
[15] For a very full bibliography of European poems written in response to pictures, see Gisbert Kranz, *Das Bildgedicht in Europa* (Paderborn, 1973), 121-200.

Figure One: François Vivares's engraving of Gaspard Dughet's *The Cascade* (c. 1667).

Poussin! most pleasantly thy pictur'd scenes
Beguile the lonely hour; I sit and gaze
With lingering eye, till charmed FANCY makes
The lovely landscape live, and the rapt soul
From the foul haunts of herded humankind
Flies far away with spirit speed, and tastes
The untainted air, that with the lively hue
Of health and happiness illumes the cheek
Of mountain LIBERTY. My willing soul
All eager follows on thy faery flights
FANCY! best friend; whose blessed witcheries
With loveliest prospects cheat the traveller
O'er the long wearying desart of the world.
Nor dost thou FANCY with such magic mock
My heart, as, demon-born, old Merlin knew,
Or Alquif, or Zarzafiel's sister sage,
Whose vengeful anguish for so many a year
Held in the jacinth sepulchre entranced
Lisvart and Perion, pride of chivalry.
Friend of my lonely hours! thou leadest me
To such calm joys as Nature wise and good
Proffers in vain to all her wretched sons;
Her wretched sons who pine with want amid

The abundant earth, and blindly bow them down
Before the Moloch shrines of WEALTH and POWER,
AUTHORS of EVIL. Oh it is most sweet
To medicine with thy wiles the wearied heart,
Sick of reality. The little pile
That tops the summit of that craggy hill
Shall be my dwelling; craggy is the hill
And steep, yet thro' yon hazels upward leads
The easy path, along whose winding way
Now close embowered I hear the unseen stream
Dash down, anon behold its sparkling foam
Gleam thro' the thicket; and ascending on
Now pause me to survey the goodly vale
That opens on my vision. Half way up
Pleasant it were upon some broad smooth rock
To sit and sun me, and look down below
And watch the goatherd down that high-bank'd path
Urging his flock grotesque; and bidding now
His lean rough dog from some near cliff to drive
The straggler; while his barkings loud and quick
Amid their trembling bleat arising oft
Fainter and fainter from the hollow road
Send their far echoes, till the waterfall,
Hoarse bursting from the cavern'd cliff beneath,
Their dying murmurs drown. A little yet
Onward, and I have gain'd the upmost height.
Fair spreads the vale below: I see the stream
Stream radiant on beneath the noontide sky.
A passing cloud darkens the bordering steep,
Where the town-spires behind the castle towers
Rise graceful; brown the mountain in its shade,
Whose circling grandeur, part by mists conceal'd,
Part with white rocks resplendant in the sun,
Should bound mine eyes; aye and my wishes too,
For I would have no hope or fear beyond.
The empty turmoil of the worthless world,
Its vanities and vices would not vex
My quiet heart. The traveller, who beheld
The low tower of the little pile, might deem
It were the house of GOD: nor would he err
So deeming, for that home would be the home
Of PEACE and LOVE, and they would hallow it
To HIM. Oh life of blessedness! to reap
The fruit of honorable toil, and bound
Our wishes with our wants! delightful Thoughts

That sooth the solitude of maniac HOPE,
Ye leave her to reality awak'd,
Like the poor captive, from some fleeting dream
Of friends and liberty and home restor'd,
Startled, and listening as the midnight storm
Beats hard and heavy thro' his dungeon bars.[16]

An obvious way to start relating the poem to the description of Sintra, written slightly earlier, is to consider the significance of the quotation inserted into the latter: 'Where the tired mind / Might rest beyond the murmurs of mankind!' It comes from 'Evening', a sonnet by William Lisle Bowles, a poet mainly remembered for having been a favourite with the young Coleridge, though Southey was almost equally enthusiastic. In the sonnet a beautiful evening landscape brings thoughts 'of those that have no friend'.[17] The poet surmises that such lonely souls may prefer the evening, where they can wander '[u]nseen'. '[T]o their pensive fancy's eye', he continues to speculate, the evening will present 'fairy vales, where the tir'd mind / Might rest, beyond the murmurs of mankind, / Nor hear the hourly moans of misery.' The evening landscape thus offers a sort of enchanted escape from the world of misery, a world that seems to include real destitution as well as affluent melancholics. This was the poem that came into Southey's head as he began his description of Sintra, and similar thoughts can be seen to run through the Gaspar Poussin poem. There 'Fancy' leads the poet to the 'calm joys' of a 'wise and good' Nature, and this is seen as an escape from a rather unappetising society: 'the foul haunts of herded humankind'. The 'fairy' element, lightly but evocatively touched by Bowles, is considerably expanded in Southey's 'blessed witcheries' and references to the romance literature for which he had a life-long enthusiasm. Similarly, Bowles rather unspecific 'moans of misery' is considerably expanded in Southey's more precise attack on the misery produced by an unfair and unjust society worshipping 'the Moloch shrines of WEALTH and POWER.' Thus Southey seems to position both landscapes – the engraved one and the real one of Sintra – in a similar relationship to both an unattractive society and the pleasures of imagination. The landscapes represent imaginative escape, but that escape includes a heightened awareness of what is escaped from. We are not so far from Wordsworth's 'still, sad music of humanity'.

There are other striking similarities between the Sintra description and the Poussin poem. The landscapes are broadly similar, an open plain and deep valley giving way to a thickly wooded hillside that rises to open rock with a towered building on the summit commanding an immense view. The poem essentially represents an imaginative movement from the plain extending to the left to the summit of the hill. Southey's life-changing introduction to the beauties

[16] Text quoted is from *Robert Southey: Poetical Works 1793-1810*, ed. Lynda Pratt *et al*, 5 vols (London, 2004), V, 111-113.
[17] *Sonnets, with Other Poems*, 3rd edn. (London, 1794), 8. This was originally Bowles' 'Sonnet VI'; by this date it was 'Sonnet V'.

of Sintra had taken a similar form, as he approached the hills across the relatively flat countryside, what he calls the 'bare and melancholy country', between Lisbon and Sintra. The poem emphasises the pleasure of a half-way halt, still on the wooded part of the hill, just as Southey had found his uncle's house, like those of other English residents, on the wooded hillside. The stream that features so prominently in picture and poem had its equivalent at Sintra, too. In the description of his uncle's house Southey says '[a] little stream of water runs down the hill before the door', and this stream figured largely in Southey's memories of staying there: 'I shall always love to think of the lonely house, and the stream that runs beside it, whose murmurs were the last sounds I heard at night, and the first that awoke my attention in the morning.'[18] Four years later, when returning to Sintra, he wrote to Coleridge: 'I do not look forward to any circumstance with so much emotion as to hearing again the brook which runs by my uncle's door. I never beheld a spot that invited to so deep tranquility.'[19] As Mark Storey has observed, 'Rather like a Wordsworthian spot of time, this memory – like that of his childhood haunts in Bristol – would remain with him [Southey] all his life.'[20]

'Musings' finally calls for more physical exertion as the speaker seeks to reach the 'utmost height' and a more commanding view; Southey's uncle's house, too, had offered an attractive view, but one that prompted further physical effort to reach a still more advantageous one. The building that dominates the scene at the top of the hill in the picture Southey imagines in the poem as 'the house of GOD', while on one of the 'mountain edifices' of Sintra there was what he calls 'Penha Convent' – in fact a monastery. Southey commented several times on the monastery in his letters from Portugal and clearly found the place fascinating; 'unascendable the height appears on which it stands, yet is the way up easy',[21] he noted, a recognition with a clear counterpart in the poem's 'craggy is the hill / And steep, yet thro' yon hazels upward leads / The easy path'. The later evocation of Sintra in *The Poet's Pilgrimage to Waterloo*, moreover, loads the whole landscape with religious significance, and by recalling Noah imagines an almost empty world in which those on the mountain of Sintra are the sole remnant of humanity. Altogether the resemblances run remarkably deep, and though we unfortunately don't know which other prints Southey owned, apart from the fact that he had two other Gaspar Poussins and one Claude, a strong case can be made that he chose to write his poem on this one because it seemed to encapsulate aspects of the Sintra landscape that he found particularly attractive.

But we can turn this round, too: Southey's finding Sintra remarkably beautiful was doubtless in part at least precisely because it reminded him of his Gaspar Poussins. These pictures had been very important to him in his Oxford days. As he wrote to Cottle, in the letter asking that the prints be sent to him,

[18] Southey, *Letters Written During a Short Residence*, 518.
[19] *Journals of a Residence in Portugal*, ed. Cabral, 70.
[20] Mark Storey, *Robert Southey: A Life* (Oxford, 1997), 85.
[21] *Journals of a Residence in Portugal*, ed. Cabral, 122.

they 'were a constant source of pleasure; I became acquainted with the inhabitants of every house, & knew every inch of ground in the prospect. they have formed for me many a pleasant day dream.' As the reputation of Gaspard Dughet (or Gaspar Poussin) has now declined greatly, to the point where it has been argued that he is the most underrated landscape painter in the Western tradition, the young Southey's preference for this artist may seem a little unusual. In fact it was very much in the mainstream of good taste. From the late 1600s, when the British upper class began to seriously collect paintings, Dughet was, with Claude Lorraine and Salvator Rosa, one of the three most admired and collected landscape painters. His pictures could be found in almost every major British collection, and his influence on the fledgling school of British landscape painting was unparalleled, partly because he was regarded as easier to imitate than Claude or Rosa.[22] When Richard Wilson, the first unequivocally great British landscape painter, was asked 'whom he considered the best landscape painter', he replied: 'Why Sir, Claude for air and Gaspar for composition and sentiment.'[23] Gainsborough, too, was another great admirer. And as late as 1821 Constable would state, remarkably, that Dughet's pictures 'contain the highest feeling of Landscape painting yet seen – such an union of patient study with a poetical mind.'[24] As well as being collected, admired, and imitated, Dughet's paintings also had an enormous influence on British landscape design and the attendant development of theories of the picturesque. They were deeply embedded in British ideas about what constitutes beauty in nature, and it is hardly surprising if, having brooded over his prints in his Oxford rooms, Southey should be predisposed to admire any landscape in the real world that reminded him of Gaspar Poussin. In fact in the *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Spain and Portugal* Gaspar Poussin is the only artist mentioned as a point of reference – not, it is true, with reference to Sintra, but it shows that Southey was inclined to look at the Portuguese landscape in terms of an aesthetic he had learnt from his prints. And in Sintra he found the poetic visions of Gaspar Poussin realised.

There is insufficient space here to explore the questions whether there is something latently 'Romantic' in Dughet's art, and therefore whether Southey's enthusiasm had a particularly Romantic contour. But there is no doubt that Sintra strongly appealed to Romantic taste, as evidenced most significantly in Byron's lofty praise in *Childe Harold* and elsewhere.[25] In this sense there is nothing particularly surprising about Southey finding Sintra so attractive. But part of its appeal to him was, I suggest, of a fairly personal and revealing nature.

[22] For Dughet's influence on British art, see the exhibition catalogue edited and introduced by Anne French, *Gaspard Dughet called Gaspar Poussin 1615-75: A French Landscape Painter in Seventeenth Century Rome and his Influence on British Art* (London, [1980]).

[23] William T. Whitley, *Artists and Their Friends in England 1700-1799*, 2 vols. (London and Boston, 1928), I, 380.

[24] *John Constable's Correspondence*, ed. R. B. Beckett, 6 vols (Ipswich, 1962-68), VI, 66.

[25] For a general account of how Sintra came to be defined as an earthly paradise, and how it greatly appealed to British taste in the late 1700s and later, see Malcolm Jack, *Sintra: A Glorious Eden* (Manchester, 2002).

He liked the fact that it was a sort of self-contained, hilly area surrounded by a wilderness. Recall the way he wrapped up his description: 'Had I been born at Cintra, methinks no inducement could have tempted me to leave its delightful springs and shades, and cross the dreary wilderness that insulates them.' It was a little paradise, and its paradisal qualities were heightened by its diminutive size and the contrast it offered with its surroundings. Somehow the physical landscape enacted the sense that it was a refuge from a cruel world, and Southey, who was a strange combination of confidence and nervousness, ambitiousness and insecurity, seems to have been particularly attracted to such landscapes. One might say that he liked to be on a wall, or surrounded by walls, or at least with his back to a wall. To be in the middle of a plain did not suit his temperament at all. Part of the attraction of his prints was doubtless that they were precisely framed, self-contained, safe. And the Gaspar Poussin poem powerfully expresses a wish for a contained, circumscribed landscape that would shut the world out, even if this is partly disguised as modesty. These longings are important as they go far towards explaining why Southey eventually found that the Lake District suited him very well, and why he made his home there for forty years.

~ 'And now am I a Cumbrian mountaineer' ~

After his return from Portugal to England in May 1796 Southey entered a very unsettled period, studying law and pursuing his literary career. His life was divided between Bristol and the West Country, which he continued to love, and London, which he heartily disliked. In 1800 he was able to go to Portugal again, this time with his wife, for an eighteen-month stay, having persuaded his uncle that he would write a *History of Portugal* – his planned *magnum opus* that was never completed. This allowed him to make a second and last visit to Sintra. The threat of war and an epidemic spreading from Spain forced the Southeys back to England in July 1801. Again they endured a very unsettled period, moving around constantly, including making a visit to the Coleridges at Greta Hall, Keswick, in September 1801. This was Southey's first visit to the Lake District, and in comparison with Portugal, and especially Sintra, he initially found it disappointing. But almost exactly two years later, after various career plans had failed to work out, he returned for a longer stay, and this time he never left.

If Southey was not initially excited by the Lake District, the area soon began to work its magic on him. Though he would later often represent himself as a library bound creature, as noted above, it is clear that in his early years in Keswick especially he was a very active pedestrian and explored his new surroundings with energy and enthusiasm. Herman Prior, a nineteenth-century authority on both Southey and the Lake District, wrote admiringly: 'Southey was all his life a stout walker, and quickly made himself acquainted, not only with the general features of the [Lake] district, but with details of which casual

tourists know nothing.'[26] By 1807 Southey was thoroughly settled in Greta Hall, and writing 'these lakes and mountains give me a deep joy, for which I suspect nothing elsewhere can compensate, and this is a feeling which time strengthens instead of weakening.'[27] But this was in a private letter; as we have seen, Southey was not inclined to rhapsodise about the beauties of nature in lyric poetry, and he lived in Keswick for forty years without being tempted to write any Odes to Derwentwater or Hymns to Skiddaw. His love of the Lake District nevertheless entered his published writings, in an indirect but liberating form. In 1807 Southey published a volume of *Letters from England: by Don Manuel Alvarez Espriella* – an anonymous publication, purporting to be translated from Spanish, in the tradition of works offering a description of the local scene by an imaginary foreigner. Espriella, a convincingly rendered educated Spaniard, travels around England commenting on all he sees. Three and a half enthusiastic letters are devoted to the Lakes, the climax of the tour, and they are full of emotion.

The Lake District offered something similar to Sintra. Again it was a relatively self-contained mountainous area with the sea on one side and flatter, less interesting countryside on the other. There was much less history, and no ruined castles or lonely monasteries atop the fells, something Southey regretted, but in compensation there were the lakes themselves, and all their tributary streams. Writing as Espriella, Southey states:

> The abundance of water in these vales is more delightful than can be imagined. Nothing languishes here for drought. [...] If the sound of a tank or a water-wheel is so agreeable, judge what the voice must be of these living streams, now breaking round rocks which in the process of ages they have worn smooth, now leaping and foaming from crag to crag, now coursing over a bed of pebbles. How little do our Valverdes, and Valparaisos bear comparison with these vales, which are kept always green by streams which never fail![28]

Southey's account of the Lake District in the Espriella letters shows what an original and independent approach he took to the landscape around him. Many of the places he praises most enthusiastically were not the standard tourist sights, and in some cases they had not been praised at all by earlier writers on the region, of whom, by 1807, there had been many. Particularly remarkable is the fact that he reserved his single highest estimate for the view from the little visited and little written about Crummock Water:

[26] Herman Prior, *Southey* (London, 1872), 64-65.
[27] *Selections from the Letters of Robert Southey*, ed. John Wood Warter, 4 vols (London, 1856), I, 414.
[28] *Letters from England*, ed. Jack Simmons (London, 1951), 234.

> We came to an inn at the foot of the Lake, procured a boat and embarked [...] We were well repaid: – for, of all the scenes in the Land of Lakes, that from the middle of Crummock is assuredly the grandest. In colour the mountains almost rival the rainbow varieties of Waswater; they rise immediately from the water, and appear therefore higher and more precipitous than any which we have seen. Honistar crag forms the termination, the steepest rock in the whole country, and of the finest form [...][29]

It is very interesting to find Wordsworth, in the earliest version of his *Guide to the Lakes*, writing 'It must be mentioned [...] that there is scarcely any thing finer than the view from a boat in the centre of Crummock-water.'[30] It is more than probable that he stated this on Southey's authority, and in fact it is not the only detail in which Wordsworth's *Guide* seems to follow the Espriella letters. This highlights the fact that Southey was the first of the so-called Lake Poets to write a lengthy description of the Lake region, and he may in fact have given Wordsworth the initial idea of writing a Guide.[31]

But the Wordsworth connection apart, Southey's high appreciation of the view from Crummock says a good deal about his general preferences in the Lake region. He liked particularly remote places, and he liked places where the landscape seemed to offer a sort of natural refuge: I have suggested that there were psychological reasons for this. Climbing to a hill top, as at Sintra, or in the Gaspar Poussin poem, offered Southey something of what he was seeking, and the Espriella letters include a detailed and fascinating account of climbing Skiddaw. But in the Lakes, unlike Sintra, there was no prospect of actually taking up residence on one of the higher peaks, and a much greater likelihood, as an amused Espriella registers, of encountering gale-force winds and heavy rain. Thus Southey was perforce driven to seek his ideal refuge places in the enclosed valleys, and he was very attentive to the relationships between the size of the valleys and the height and gradient of the fells. In general a strong sense of enclosure, but with enough intervening space to appreciate fully the height of the surrounding fells, security but without claustrophobia, seems to have appealed to him: as in the experience of being on Crummock Water.

Another passage, this time on little Brothers Water, reinforces the point and is again as original as revealing. No one before Southey had praised the lake in print like this, and though Dorothy Wordsworth had written appreciatively of a walk there in 1802 her gentle enjoyment pales before Southey's enthusiasm.[32] Espriella's account begins with the descent from the Kirkstone Pass:

[29] *Letters from England*, ed. Simmons, 249-50.
[30] *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. W. J. B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser, 3 vols (Oxford, 1974), II, 277.
[31] See my article, 'The Influence of Southey's *Letters from England* on Wordsworth's *Guide to the Lakes*', *Notes and Queries* 50 (2003), 288-91.
[32] For Dorothy's account of Brothers Water see *The Grasmere Journals*, ed. Pamela Woof (Oxford, 1991), 86-87.

> The waters which accompanied our descent spread themselves into a little lake in the valley, called Brotherwater; small, but exquisitely beautiful. I have never seen a single spot more beautiful or more rememberable. The mountain behind, – it is one of the highest in the country, – forms a cove, in which a single old mansion stands in a green field among old trees. The most rigid Jeronymites could not wish for a place of more total seclusion. Out of this lake flowed a little river, clear, rapid, and melodious; we crossed it, and our path lay along its banks. How often did I stop and look back, and close my eyes to open them again, as if repetition could better impress the landscape upon remembrance than continuity; the delight I felt was mingled with sorrow by a sense of transitoriness; – it was even painful to behold scenes so beautiful, knowing that I should never behold them more.[33]

Again Southey is responding here to a remote and exceptionally enclosed place, encircled by steep fell sides. The wish that the 'single old mansion' with its 'total seclusion' was his is surely felt, if not directly expressed. Later, in an account of Borrowdale, Southey, as Espriella, writes: 'I have better understood why the saints of old were wont to retire into the wilderness, since I have visited these solitudes.'[34] The thought connects with the wish expressed in the Gaspar Poussin poem, written a decade earlier.

Southey's description of the Lake District in the *Letters from England* is the most passionate 'Romantic' response to landscape he ever penned, and it no doubt says a good deal about him that it was published in the way it was, in a book of which he was determined to keep his authorship a secret. Not for him the public raptures indulged in by many of his contemporaries; but the feeling was there, as this essay has demonstrated, and the feeling lies beneath his work like a refreshing underground spring that, if it only occasionally breaks the surface, nevertheless accounts for many incidental beauties in his writing. Nowadays Southey is widely judged important, yet it is still rare indeed to find someone who actually owns to *liking* his work, and the political focus of most recent Southey criticism has clearly not endeared him to readers. But I suggest, in conclusion, that tracing this frequently hidden spring of deep feeling will make him more rounded, interesting and sympathetic. Perhaps even likeable. Perhaps, indeed, even the sort of writer who can evoke powerful fellow feelings in the reader.

Doshisha University, Kyoto

[33] *Letters from England*, ed. Simmons, 233.
[34] *Letters from England*, ed. Simmons, 245.

William Godwin's Rural Walk

Janet Bottoms

WHEN William Godwin and his second wife, Mary Jane, began their Juvenile Library it was with the hope not only of benefiting financially from the growing market for children's books but also of gently influencing their readers' way of seeing and thinking about the world. This was a period when the importance of children's reading matter, both in forming their ideas and consequently shaping the future of the nation, was becoming widely recognised. It informed Lamb's well known outburst against 'Mrs. B's and Mrs. Trimmer's nonsense'[1] as well as Sarah Trimmer's belief that 'numbers of modern publications for children are evidently calculated to bring about the same change of system in the education of the children of this nation, as has been produced by similar means on the Continent'.[2] It is also behind the enquiries of the government agent who reported to the Privy Council in 1813 that Godwin's publications for children demonstrated 'an intention to have every work published for the Juvenile Library that can be required in the early instruction of children', and by this means to introduce to them 'every principle professed by the infidels and republicans of these days'.[3] It is certainly true that Godwin undertook versions of almost all the principal genres within children's literature, and that these alarmed the conservative minded. The Preface to his *Bible Stories*, published under the name of William Scolfield, was the subject of the longest and most virulent review in Trimmer's *Guardian of Education*, where she drew critical attention to his every reference to imagination and concluded 'that this is the language of *modern philosophy* we need scarcely observe'.[4] Trimmer also criticised the *Fables* as deviating '*systematically*' from the '*Laws of Fable*' [original italics],[5] while *The Pantheon* was attacked by a reviewer in the *Anti-Jacobin* for not impressing on its readers the 'falsehood and absurdity' of heathen mythology. It was this work, along with the Histories, that particularly disturbed the government agent, and Trimmer, also, pointed to the dangers that might lurk in books of apparently harmless instruction: 'ENGLISH HISTORY, as well as Natural History, has been made [...] a dangerous vehicle of corruption'.[6]

Trimmer's reservations about Natural History stemmed from a fear that such books tended toward 'making the *premature acquisition of human science, the great business of early life* to the neglect of Religion' [original italics],[7] but this was,

[1] *The Letters of Charles and Mary Anne Lamb*, ed. Edwin W. Marrs (Ithaca and London, 1976), II, 82-83.
[2] Sarah Trimmer, *The Guardian of Education*, I (1802), 64.
[3] Public Record Office, State Papers Domestic, George III, January to March 1813, No. 217.
[4] *Guardian of Education*, 1 (1802), 247.
[5] *Guardian of Education*, 4 (1805), 282-83.
[6] *Guardian of Education*, 1 (1802), 301.
[7] *Guardian of Education*, 1 (1802), 492.

nevertheless, a flourishing corner of the children's market. In his 'Treatise on Education' the revered Isaac Watts had set out the aims of the genre:

> Shew them the Birds, the Beasts, the Fishes, the Insects, Trees, Fruit, Herbs, and all the several parts and properties of the vegetable and Animal World. Teach them to observe the various occurrences of Nature and Providence, the Sun, Moon and Stars, the Day and Night, Summer and Winter, the Clouds and the Sky, the Hail, Snow, and Ice, Winds, Fire, Water, Earth, Air, Fields, Woods, Mountains, Rivers, &c. Teach them that the GREAT GOD made all these and that his Providence governs them.[8]

The children's market responded with works ranging from Trimmer's own *An easy introduction to the knowledge of nature* (1780), through Barbauld's lyrical *Hymns in Prose* (1781), to Priscilla Wakefield's two volume *Mental Improvement; or, the Beauties and Wonders of Nature and Art in a Series of Instructive Conversations* (1794). Godwin complained of the 'miserable minutenesses of detail' that, in his view, characterised too many such books,[9] but he was in sympathy with many of Watts's sentiments, having himself been taught by Mary Wollstonecraft and Coleridge to feel 'a reverent and soothing contemplation of all that is beautiful, grand, or mysterious in the system of the universe', as well as 'a certain conscious intercourse and correspondence with the principles of these attributes'.[10] Moreover, one of the most popular formats—the 'walk in the fields'—was very well suited to his interests and purposes. In the *Pantheon* he dwelt on how delightful it was 'to take a walk in fields, and look at the skies and the trees and the corn-fields and the waving grass, to observe the mountains and the lakes and the rivers and the seas, to smell the new-mown hay, to inhale the fresh and balmy breeze, and to hear the wild warbling of the birds: but a man does not enjoy these in their most perfect degree of pleasure, till his imagination becomes a little visionary.' This 'visionary' imagination, he wrote, was typical of the Greeks, who 'replenished all nature with invisible beings' so that wherever they travelled 'they felt on all occasions surrounded with the divine nature'. Godwin even added that 'every one must feel how superior this state of mind is to that of the atheist',[11] a comment that might have surprised anyone who discovered under the writer 'the atheist Godwin', but is perfectly in keeping with the man who would ponder in a later essay on 'whether the empire of the imagination can be maintained in proper force without the aid of religion, or of

[8] Isaac Watts, 'Treatise on Education', quoted by Trimmer in the Preface to *An easy introduction to the knowledge of Nature and Reading the Holy Scriptures*, 11th edn. (London, 1780), v-vi. Subsequent page references are to this edition.
[9] C. Kegan Paul, *William Godwin, His Friends and Contemporaries*, 2 vols (London, 1876), II, 119 [Letter to William Cole, 1802].
[10] Kegan Paul, I, 357-8.
[11] Edward Baldwin [William Godwin] *The Pantheon: or Ancient History of the Gods of Greece and Rome* (London, 1806), 6-7, 100-1.

what I call a false religion?' 'We live in a world of wonders' he concluded on that occasion, and though 'the instructed and liberalised man should not delusively see that which is not' it would be 'highly incompatible with his elevation not to see the thing that is'. Nothing tended more to 'enlarge' the mind, or give 'the noblest and kindest tone to the human mind' than contemplating the works of 'that principle that has made us what we are'.[12]

It comes, then, as something of a surprise that there is no 'Natural History' in the Juvenile Library. A work entitled *Rural Walks* is listed in one of its advertisements, but no copy of this is known today, there are no reviews or references to it, and it is at least questionable whether it was ever published. It has been suggested that this might be the same as the anonymous *Rustic Excursions ... By a Father and His Children,* published by Richard Phillips in 1811, but several references to the works of nature as 'proof of the benevolence of the Deity'[13] seem out of keeping with Godwin's style and vocabulary. There is, however, an unfinished manuscript in the Abinger collection, dated 1806, which has a claim to be considered as at least a first attempt by Godwin to write a Natural History.[14] Like comparable works of Trimmer and Barbauld, it follows the programme set out by Isaac Watts. Like theirs, it is a 'walk in the fields' and is addressed to a child, possibly Godwin's then three-and-a-half year old son William, though reference to a deceased older sister Anne shows that it is at least semi-fictional. Like the *Fables* it is simple and direct in style, warm and affectionate in tone, and yet intended to inspire the reader 'to habits of meditation and reflection.'[15] It resonates with everything Godwin had written about the importance of the 'visionary' imagination. It begins confidently, reads easily, and yet it breaks down at the end in a confusion of deletions and half sentences. If this was to be Godwin's Natural History why was it left unfinished?

Sarah Trimmer set out her purpose clearly in the opening sentence of her work: 'I have been thinking, my dear Charlotte, that you and I might take some very profitable Walks together, and [...] improve our Minds: for every object in Nature, when carefully examined, will fill us with Admiration, and afford us both Instruction and Amusement'. The following pages contain repeated injunctions to 'observe', and specific objects are singled out as the basis for further, detailed information, for 'you must learn to know a great deal more about them'.[16] At this stage Trimmer makes no attempt to bring in any religious or metaphysical commentary though she includes a few brief 'morals'. Her emphasis is on how much more there is to be learned: 'Now you see, my Dears, that every Thing when we examine it, is curious and amusing:- None need go

[12] *Political and Philosophical Writings of William Godwin,* ed. Mark Philp (London, 1993), VII, 67 ['Of Religion' (1818)].
[13] [Anon.], *Rustic Excursions to the Villages round London. By a Father and His Children,* (London, 1811), 162.
[14] Bodleian Library, MS Abinger, c 24, fols. 20-31.
[15] Edward Baldwin [William Godwin], *Fables, Ancient and Modern,* (London, 1805) [preface].
[16] Trimmer, *An easy introduction,* 1, 3-4.

sauntering about, complaining that they have nothing to divert them, when they may find Entertainment in every Object in Nature'(40). Anna Letitia Barbauld's first version of the 'walk in the fields' came in her *Lessons for Children From Four to Five Years Old* (1779).[17] This was also a 'familiar conversation', describing to little Charles how they will go 'down the lane, and through the churchyard, and by the corner house, and over the stile, till we have got quite into the fields', though an element of imaginative fantasy creeps in as she envisages going 'on, on, on' to see 'more rivers and more fields and towns'. *Hymns in Prose* (1781), written for slightly older children, takes a similar starting point - 'Come, let us go forth into the fields' - but the intimate, conversational note has gone. Here Barbauld's 'measured prose' and Biblical phraseology are shaped for recitation, even liturgical use, with the express hope of impressing 'devotional feelings' in the child 'by connecting religion with a variety of sensible objects; with all that he sees, all he hears, all that affects his young mind with wonder or delight'.[18] The first Hymn opens with the child's voice declaring that God 'made all things' and that s/he will praise him along with 'the little birds', the 'brooks and rivers'. 'The young animals of every kind are sporting about, they feel themselves happy, they are glad to be alive'. Nature, in these *Hymns,* is warm and protective, for even 'if you fall, little lambs, you will not be hurt; there is spread under you a carpet of soft grass, it is spread on purpose to receive you' (2-3, 9-10). Barbauld explicitly states that the lambs will not be 'offered in sacrifice': her God does not require sacrifice, though Trimmer criticised the passage on the grounds that children might be led to infer 'cruelty in the Almighty' when they came to read of such sacrifices in the Bible.[19] Different though they were in their approach, both *An easy introduction* and Barbauld's *Hymns* found ready markets, going through many editions. Godwin would certainly have been more in sympathy with Barbauld than Trimmer. In a letter to his friend William Cole in 1802 he commended her *Lessons* for the under-fives,[20] and he must also have known that in *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters* Wollstonecraft had recommended *Hymns in Prose* as contributing to 'make the Deity obvious to the senses'.[21] Yet both *An easy introduction* and *Hymns* must be included among those 'numerous works' among which he could not find 'one which he could with complete satisfaction put into the hands of his own' children.[22] By comparing his manuscript 'letter' with both Trimmer's and Barbauld's works we can therefore uncover Godwin's own interpretation of the genre, and judge how 'dangerous' some critics might have found it.

[17] Anna Letitia Barbauld, *Lessons for Children from Four to Five Years Old*, (London, 1801), 21, 27.
[18] Barbauld, *Hymns in Prose for Children*, (London, 1781), iv. Subsequent page references are to this edition.
[19] *Guardian of Education*, 2 (1803), 47.
[20] Kegan Paul, II, 118.
[21] *Anna Letitia Barbauld: Selected Poetry and Prose*, ed. William McCarthy and Elizabeth Kraft, (Peterborough, Ontario, 2002), 236.
[22] William Godwin, Preface to *Bible Stories*, in *Political and Philosophical Writings of William Godwin*, ed. Pamela Clemit (London, 1993), V, 313.

Godwin's 'letter' begins along similar lines, though his 'walk' has already been taken; adult and child have come home; and now they will 'sit down in this pretty arbour, & talk of what we have seen'.

> When we came to the pond we saw the ducks & the geese, with their ducklings & goslings, & you were particularly delighted to see how the ducks amused themselves with putting their heads down in the water, & their feet up in the air, & back again.

Without overt moralising, Godwin takes occasion to comment on the 'moving and wholesome' scene of the farmyard, where all the animals 'live quietly together, each pursuing its own amusements, & scarcely ever interrupting one another'. He does not explain why the ducks put their heads under water, or what they ate, but he directs the child's eye to the way things look and the difference there may be between what is apparent and what is real. A distant view of a hillside covered with sheep causes the child to ask 'what are all those hundred white spots upon the green?'

> & I told you that every one of them was a sheep, & that each white spot as you called it, would be found, if we came near it, to have four legs, & a head, & eyes & nose & teeth, & to be capable of hunger & thirst, that they would sometimes frisk with pleasure, & sometimes languish with pain.

> Descriptions are simple and objective. Godwin does not suggest that the animals praise God, but he does emphasise the life that flows through them. When the dog jumps about and barks he is asking to be allowed to go for a walk with them:

> at first you were frightened, but I made you observe it was a bark not of anger but of joy: he said, thank you, with his mouth, at the same time that he said thank you in every joint of his body: what spirits dogs & young children have! When they jump about and frisk at such a rate, it is that their joy & the lightness of their hearts shows through every limb, & puts the whole creature from head to foot into motion: that is happiness: it often springs from the merest trifle: but do not despise it for it is happiness.

A little later he recalls the happiness of the child himself jumping around in the hay-field and how, when one of the haycocks fell and covered him 'it seemed as if you would never have done laughing & crowing'. Trimmer's walk also includes a hayfield, and on the second day a brief mention of a dog but only as incidental to her instructive narrative. 'Let me look at my Watch; bless me! it is past Eight, we must return Home to Breakfast. Who is that? Oh! it is John coming to call us, and poor Tray with him'(56). Trimmer focuses on objects

rather than activity, and the afternoon walk is replaced by a lesson on the use of the microscope. Where Barbauld stresses the beauty and goodness of nature, and Trimmer its complexity and detail, Godwin's primary emphasis is on the physical body, and the joy of physical freedom.

This focus on Nature does not preclude the human race. In Barbauld's Hymn V mankind is an intrinsic part of the natural world. When night falls the labourers, children 'and every little humming insect' all go alike to their rest, while God draws the curtain of darkness over them 'that his large family may sleep in peace' (32-33). In Hymn VIII she outlines an idyllic rural society – the labourer's cottage, where 'father, mother and children' kneel together to 'praise God every night and every morning with one voice'; and the villagers meet on the green and in 'pleasant walks', to buy and sell and go 'in company' to church when the bell calls them. The picture widens to take in towns, countries, continents and peoples, from the Negro woman 'pining in captivity' to the monarch 'whose armies cover the land' but whom God will assuredly punish if he does ill (54-63). Trimmer also recognises the human race as part of nature though she introduces the subject through a lesson based on a globe, moving from a discourse on the sea, through shells to pearls, and then to jewels, silk, and finally the silkworm and the workers employed to turn the objects of nature into luxuries for the rich. Her emphasis is moral rather than metaphysical.

> Persons who have plentiful Fortunes ought to [...] learn to behave with kindness and condescension to the Industrious, and remember, that the meanest Artificer, if he discharges the Duties of his station, is preferable to themselves, unless they are distinguished as much by their Benevolence and Greatness of Mind, as by their Rank and Riches. (135-36)

Where Trimmer implicitly places herself and her children among the rich, however, while Barbauld hymns the cottagers, Godwin anchors himself and his child in the community. Their homeward walk goes first through the grove that has 'time out of mind been the habitation of rooks', whose incessant cawing 'expresses in no uncertain accents the simple history of their sober tribe, slow, solemn, careful, full of method, & strangers alike to guile & fear'. From there they move on to the church, built 'by no one man for himself' but by the community, for 'the benefit & pleasure of all'. The building speaks of time and of continuity, of the ordinary people who worked, and laughed and cried and 'gave away some things, & kept other things for themselves', and who, when they died, would have been sad to be forgotten and so made plans to be remembered. 'Perhaps my grandfather's grandfather gave some of his money to build this church', for 'few earthly things last longer than a parish church', while 'one race of men succeeds another on the earth as certainly though not quite so fast, as the waters of the river succeed one another, upon the banks of which we had a little before seated ourselves'. Change and continuity running through time is another of Godwin's key themes.

There is a progression of thought in all three works, and each of them in its different way tackles the issue of mortality in nature and man. Trimmer's work is divided into successive days, on the fourth of which rain prevents their 'walking out' so she moves on to a discussion of the difference between animals and Man who, though subject to 'a visible decay of Nature', is distinguished by the 'operations of the Soul' which 'are infinitely above what the most sagacious animal is capable of' (198, 202). Not being tied to virtual walks on one or successive days, Barbauld is able to bring to her Hymns a sense of the child's intellectual growth. By Hymn VI the child, who has hitherto listened happily to the adult's guidance, appears to have grown older, and is now addressed as a 'child of reason' who has to be encouraged to see 'greater things' than the objects of nature. By Hymn X s/he has grown to become a 'child of mortality', who weeps to discovers that the rose seen in all its beauty one day is dying the next, its loveliness 'vanished away'; and even man laid low 'in the pride of his strength'. 'DEATH is in the world; the spoiler is among the works of God' (77-83). Godwin's treatment is nowhere near as lyrical as Barbauld's but more direct and personal than Trimmer's. As adult and child move from church to churchyard he points out that 'under each of the ridges we saw' lies a man or woman or child:

> not such as we see in the houses & the fields, that think, & speak, & work, & play: They are all quiet: Their hearts do not beat: there are no pulses in their veins: they never open their eyes, nor move: they sleep a sound & a lasting sleep: those that have been buried lately are perfectly pale: & those that have been buried long are turned to skeletons.

As if this was not enough the child is then reminded of how they had gone to visit the grave of a sister born a year before himself. If she were alive, she 'would perhaps be half a head taller than you: what a pretty play fellow she would have been, but she grew sick, very very sick indeed, & then she died. Alas, poor Anne!' The tone is brutally matter of fact. Barbauld comforts the child with the promise of a 'happy place' where those who loved God and praised his earth 'will praise him better, and love him more' (vi). Trimmer also promises immortality though she warns that 'it depends on ourselves whether it shall be happy or miserable to all Eternity' (207). Godwin offers no such further outlook, yet the subject is intrinsic to his purpose in writing.

In their pioneering treatments of these subjects for young children Trimmer and Barbauld created an expectation that 'natural histories' would necessarily include the supernatural, though the mood of the times also made this potentially controversial. Authors and readers of different theological persuasions saw danger in others' positions, and even the Edgeworths' attempt to avoid trouble by omitting all religious issues from their *Practical Education* was subject to critical comment. Trimmer's *Easy introduction* was militantly orthodox, designed to move from the detailed description of natural objects to

proof that they must be 'the work of some wise powerful BEING, infinitely our Superior' whose Word, the Bible, 'contains all which is necessary for us to know and practise' (210, 212). Barbauld's *Hymns*, intended 'to impress devotional feelings as early as possible on the infant mind' (iv), is certainly not orthodox, but might be called panentheistic rather than pantheist—God is both 'in' creation but also a 'person', separate from and transcending it. The apparently simple piety of the *Hymns*, however, as well as their value as material for learning and recitation, made them widely acceptable even among those who criticised Barbauld's benevolist theology. Godwin could subscribe to neither position, but he had no wish to dodge the subject. As he had written in his memoir of Mary Wollstonecraft, she believed that the beauties of nature 'would be no better than a vast blank, if the mind of the observer did not supply it with an animating soul'.[23] Such a blank was not what he wanted for his 'dear child', but how was he to awaken the child's 'visionary' imagination without 'delusively' teaching him 'that which is not'? Having led him back to the familiar flower garden and orchard, therefore, Godwin sums up his account of the walk with the conclusion: 'I dare say you wonder, my child, why I have gone over it with so much exactness: I will tell you'. Hitherto the child had understood only as much of the world as his eyes could tell him, but now he was old enough to understand more, and his mentor must 'venture' on explaining to him 'the secret meaning of all you have seen this morning'.

> It is a delightful subject: it is more than delightful: it will make you serious, & at the same time happy, whenever you think of it: it will make you wise, & it will make you good: shall I go on?

It is at this point we see the influence of Coleridge and Wordsworth on Godwin's design. His child is to discover the 'Wisdom and Spirit of the universe' that 'giv'st to forms and images a breath / And everlasting motion'.[24] He is to find the 'auxiliar light' in the mind that will bestow 'new splendour' on the setting sun, the melodious birds, and 'all that leaps, and runs, and shouts, and sings, / Or beats the gladsome air'.[25] It is also at this point, however, that the fluency of Godwin's writing begins to falter. 'Going on' proved to be more difficult than he had perhaps anticipated. As he had himself pointed out in the Preface to his *Bible Stories* several years earlier, 'abstract terms and universal propositions' do not appeal to children,[26] and a 'principle' is neither so attractive nor so easily understood as a 'person' God. He begins confidently enough with some simple statements—'You are alive, & I am alive, & all the people in our house are alive'—before focusing on the concept of life itself, which he defines as growth and the ability to heal. 'When we are sick, there is some quality within

[23] William Godwin, *Memoirs of the Author of A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (London, 1798), 33.
[24] William Wordsworth, *The Prelude* (1805) ed. Ernest de Selincourt, rev. Stephen Gill (Oxford, 1970), Book I, ll. 428-31.
[25] *Prelude* (1805), Book II, ll. 387-89, 425-26.
[26] Philp, ed., *Political and Philosophical Writings*, V, 314.

us that seems always working to make us well again: when we cut our fingers, they speedily heal, & grow together: what is the reason of this?' The question is answered by a series of definitions. The quality that makes for healing is 'what we call life', and it manifests itself in man and animal, in their ability to think and to choose how to act. Further, 'that thing in a man which thinks', he says, 'we call the spirit or soul of a man'. Though it can't be seen, 'there it is', and when the man dies 'we can see nothing go from him, but his soul is gone, & he lives no more'. The same can be said of a horse or a dog, though here Godwin draws an unspoken and perhaps unconscious distinction in referring to the departure of the dog's 'spirit' rather than his soul. Spirit is then defined as breath, though no definition is given of 'soul', and 'breath is in men & animals the sign of life'. Already it is possible to note a certain slippage in Godwin's language, and now the argument begins to get complicated as the child is reminded that growth and health were attributes of all the things seen on their walk. Following on the shower of rain, in fact, 'a tone of health seemed to manifest itself through the air & every surrounding object: to speak poetically, the hills & the vallies rejoice'. It was necessary, then, to make a further distinction between the life of the animal and the life of the grass or tree, for while 'every separate animal has a separate spirit' and can choose what he does, the grass and flowers neither hate nor love nor come when they are called. Yet these, too, says Godwin, have life; and since it is impossible to imagine 'every tree, or flower, or blade of grass, to have a separate spirit: it is more reasonable to imagine our general spirit as pervading inanimate nature, & communicating life & vigour to the whole vegetable world: this we call the Great Spirit, or God'. The whole of this section of the letter is full of crossings out and re-phrasings, signs of the difficulty Godwin clearly experienced in finding a way to express his 'secret meaning', and from this point on it becomes more confused. 'By God then', he says, falling into lecturer mode, 'we mean the great invisible principle, acting every where, which maintains the life of every thing around us: Now is not this principle fitted to excite all our wonder, respect & admiration?' A few lines further on, however, this 'great invisible principle' seems to take on personality and intentionality: 'There is another way of considering God which is also exceedingly beautiful: this is to look upon the whole world as the building of the Great Spirit, the magnificent habitation in which he is delighted to dwell.' After another few lines, commenting that 'all human creatures like sometimes to be alone, & to think: & then they indulge what are called day-dreams', he seems to imply that these ideas are themselves daydreams. If so, however, the beauty of the idea appears to overcome his fear of the 'mischief' done by 'false religion'.[27] One of the 'great differences between man and beast', he says, is that man can go beyond 'mere eye-sight' to become one of those whose 'spirit comprehends more than is painted to his eye', and 'looks through nature up to nature's God'.

[27] Philp, ed., *Political and Philosophical Writings*, VII, 67 ['Of Religion' (1818)].

Perhaps it would have been wise of Godwin to end here. The language and images are still within a child's grasp, and the line from Pope with which he concludes the sentence is open to interpretation at the discretion of the reader.[28] At this point the manuscript was publishable. Now, however, Godwin begins to lose focus. The account of a simple walk, with its relatively simple lessons about life and death and time, covers approximately fourteen pages of manuscript but it is followed by almost as much again of increasingly fragmented material. 'When we have once entered upon so fine & grand a subject, that so much soothes our thoughts, & raises our views, as this of God', he writes, 'we can not easily leave it: I am sure you wish to know more respecting it'. It is Godwin himself, however, who cannot leave it, and from this point the child drops out of the scene. It is Godwin whose sense that the 'whole garden, all the fields as far as we can see, are full of life & health' gives 'new spring & play' to his heart. 'Life is like a ball that bounces from one to another [...] the vigour of every thing around me, is the main reason why I feel so thoroughly alive at this moment. God is the health of the world'. The first thing that follows, then, from this must be that he is also 'good'—'What a magnificent & glorious operation this is, by which all things are maintained in life & health! "Oh, good God, never will I forget thee!"'—but here Godwin appears to be trying unconsciously to smuggle traditional Christian beliefs into his romantic pantheism. Has he forgotten or discounted the sickness of 'poor Anne'? It is doubtful whether a child would let him do so, but Godwin has forgotten his audience. This God or Great Spirit is the 'cause' of all the beauty of the world as well as all motion that is not 'from the choice of men or animals', and he is 'order' too, another of his aspects that is 'full as memorable, & worth our enquiries about, as life'. 'This sameness in the operations of nature shows that the principle is every where & always the same'. Even if not all these things may be apparent to sight they are felt, instinctively, to be true: 'I listen then to the wind, & observe the motion of every leaf, & I say, this is God! I look up at the blue heavens; & the clouds, & there too I perceive the presence of God! I know of nothing that is grander than clouds, those vast bodies of fleecy whiteness, with their giant shapes.' Godwin's pantheism is that of Coleridge and Wordsworth, but his language is that of Milton and the psalms and hymns of his childhood. God 'speaks in the thunder, which purifies & sweetens the air we breathe; he rides in the whirlwind: he guides the tempest, & directs the storm'. To what end he directs it, or Godwin was to direct his argument, is less clear.

In the comparable works of both Barbauld and Trimmer a structure is clearly envisaged from the beginning and informed by a sense of the limits of what a child could be expected to understand. Godwin wanted more. He wanted to make his 'dear child' both 'wise' and 'good' by rejecting 'false religion' and instead 'intertwining' for him 'the passions that build up our human Soul / with high objects, with enduring things, / With life and nature,

[28] Alexander Pope, 'An Essay on Man', Epistle IV, l. 332, in *Pope: Selected Poems*, ed. D. Grant (London, 1965), 145.

purifying thus / The elements of feeling and of thought.'[29] His problem was how to find a language and form in which adequately to convey this to the reader - any reader, let alone a child - and he forgot that for Wordsworth this building up had occurred not through reading but in those childhood 'fits of vulgar joy' or times of 'unconscious intercourse' with the natural world, that were 'doomed to sleep / Until maturer seasons called them forth / To impregnate and elevate the mind.[30] Barbauld was able, to some extent, to mould children's responses and bring them to consciousness through memorable lines that helped them articulate otherwise inchoate emotions and sensations, but her 'God' bears a recognisable relation to the human, 'the shepherd's shepherd', the mother's 'parent' (Hymn III). Godwin knew that children dislike 'abstract and general propositions', and that, as Barbauld put it, 'we require some common nature, or at least the appearance of it, on which to build our intercourse'[31] with whatever God or Spirit we may conceive of, but in his fear of 'false religion' he could not bring himself to write like this. At heart he was a philosopher of the kind who, Barbauld said, 'dwell too much in generals. Accustomed to reduce everything to the operation of general laws, they turn our attention to larger views, attempt to grasp the whole order of the universe, and in the zeal of a systematic spirit seldom leave room for' the particular or personal. They 'trace the great outline of nature, but neglect the colouring which gives warmth and beauty to the piece'.[32] Perhaps Wordsworth had achieved both in *The Prelude*, but even Wordsworth failed to complete the great work that should have followed it, and Godwin was no poet though he had been influenced by poets. Lacking either the discipline of verse or a clearly conceived auditor he allowed his subject to run away from him, and the last part of his 'letter' becomes increasingly fragmentary before finally petering out altogether. In fact Godwin seems here to be experiencing, on a small scale, the same frustration as was being felt by other romantic pantheists at a time when 'the greatest poets and writers of Europe claimed in despair that they could not adequately express themselves'; and 'vast projects remained unwritten or at least unfinished'.[33] Perhaps this is why Godwin's 'letter' remained unfinished, and why he failed to complete his Juvenile Library with a 'Natural History'.

Homerton College, Cambridge

[29] *Prelude* (1805), I, 433-38.
[30] *Prelude* (1805), I, 589, 609, 622-24.
[31] *Anna Letitia Barbauld: Selected Poetry and Prose*, 216, [*Devotional Pieces* (1775)].
[32] *Anna Letitia Barbauld: Selected Poetry and Prose*, 216-17, [*Devotional Pieces* (1775)].
[33] Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *The Emergence of Romanticism* (Oxford, 1992), 82.

Hazlitt, Haydon, and the Elgin Marbles: Aesthetic Values and 'the true spirit of Jacobinism'

Quentin Bailey

IN a June 1816 essay, William Hazlitt 'hoped' that the Elgin Marbles, which a parliamentary select committee had just recommended be purchased by the nation, would serve to

> lift the Fine Arts out of the Limbo of vanity and affectation into which they were conjured in this country about fifty years ago, and in which they have lain sprawling and fluttering, gasping for breath, wasting away, vapid and abortive ever since, – the shadow of a shade.[1]

The piece, ostensibly a review of the *Report from the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Elgin Marbles*, coincided almost exactly with the parliamentary debate that followed the report and touched on a number of the aesthetic and practical issues surrounding the subsequent vote to buy Lord Elgin's collection.[2] In defining the issue, for instance, in terms of the distinction between art as a representation of the '*ideal*' and as an 'imitation [...] from real, living, moving nature,' Hazlitt was not only criticising Sir Joshua Reynolds, about whose ideal theory of art he had written critically in *The Champion* in late 1814 and early 1815, but also identifying one of the key questions put by the Select Committee to the witnesses: whether a 'close imitation of nature' or 'ideal beauty' were to be preferred.[3] As such, the review might certainly be said to identify one of the key elements in that 'neglected watershed between Augustan and Romantic aesthetics' that Norman Bryson identified more broadly in Hazlitt's art criticism, but it also reveals the political context of Hazlitt's appreciation of the Marbles.[4] As his most recent biographer Duncan Wu has pointed out, Hazlitt's support for Elgin's collection was an 'intellectual leap' in the period; it was, however, one informed more by political ideals than by aesthetic considerations.[5] Indeed,

[1] *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, ed. P.P. Howe, 21 vols (London, 1930-35), XVIII, 101.
[2] The parliamentary debate occurred on 7 June 1816; Hazlitt's essay appeared in two parts in the 16 & 30 June editions.
[3] *Report from the Select Committee of the House of Commons in the Earl of Elgin's Collection of Sculptured Marbles, &c.* (London, 1816), 68. The 'fifty years' in which the Arts had, according to Hazlitt, been in 'Limbo' started with the founding of the Royal Academy in 1768 and the commencement, the following January, of Reynolds's annual presidential lectures.
[4] Norman Bryson, 'Hazlitt on Painting,' *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 37.1 (1978), 37-45 (37).
[5] Duncan Wu, *William Hazlitt: The First Modern Man* (Oxford, 2008), 194.

Hazlitt's early writings about the Marbles reveal, perhaps more clearly than any other aspect of his art criticism, the vital role political determinations played in his artistic judgments and suggest that the 'private satisfactions' John Barrell locates in Hazlitt's work invariably contained a Jacobinical component.[6]

Hazlitt was probably encouraged in his appreciation of the Marbles by the painter Benjamin Robert Haydon, whom he met in 1812 and with whom, for a number of years, he had a close but somewhat tense relationship.[7] Haydon was one of the earliest supporters of the Marbles, recollecting years later that he 'enlisted himself at once on their side with a fury, argument, and enthusiasm that bore down all opposition.'[8] As early as September 1808, shortly after he began visiting the makeshift shed on the corner of Park Lane and Piccadilly where the collection was initially housed, he wrote that their arrival was 'the greatest blessing that ever happened to this country' and hoped that close study would lead him 'to do something' before his death that would 'stand in competition and raise the honour of [his] Country.'[9] He was aware, however, that public recognition of the Marbles' excellence would not be easy, noting in July 1808 that if an 'English Nobleman [were] to put his hand to his heart, and say what he really thinks of those exquisite remains, he would say he thinks they are not worth preserving' (*Diary*, I, 6). The eventual public purchase of the collection in 1816 marked, for Haydon, a very personal success and he noted, in his final diary entry for 1816, that '[t]his year the Elgin Marbles were bought, and produced an Aera in public feeling.'[10]

This sense of a new birth was picked up by other writers. Felicia Hemans imagined that a 'flame, / [c]aught from these models [would] illume the west,' and called on her countrymen in *Modern Greece* to achieve excellence in art: 'Yet rise, O Land in all but Art alone, / Bid the sole wreath that is not thine be won!'[11] Hemans's lines would have appealed to Haydon: reflecting on Britain's military successes in 1815 he noted that '[t]o such Glories she wants but the glories of my noble Art to make her the grandest Nation in the World' (*Diary*, I, 456). The combination of national pride and historical fullness evident in Haydon's diaries or in Hemans's poem – which, as Angela Esterhammer notes, identifies England as 'a more fitting environment for these treasures, because

[6] John Barrell, *The Political Theory of Painting from Reynolds to Hazlitt: 'The Body of the Public,'* (New Haven and London, 1986), 340. According to Barrell, Hazlitt's writings on art construct a world in which 'the only legitimate satisfactions that painting can offer are private satisfactions' (340).
[7] Herschel Baker, who finds that Hazlitt's 1816 writings on the Marbles 'strongly echoed Haydon's views,' notes of their relationship: '[t]here was camaraderie, perhaps, but little real rapport' (*William Hazlitt* (Cambridge, MA, 1962), 241).
[8] Benjamin Robert Haydon, *Lectures on Painting and Design* (London, 1846), 219.
[9] *The Diary of Benjamin Robert Haydon*, ed. Willard Bissell Pope, 5 vols (Cambridge, MA, 1960), I, 15.
[10] *Diary*, II, 76. William St. Clair's *Lord Elgin and The Marbles* (London, 1967) provides a detailed account of the private and public measures Elgin pursued to secure the purchase of his collection.
[11] Felicia Hemans, *Selected Poems, Letters, Reception Materials*, ed. Susan J. Wolfson (Princeton, 2000), 61-2, ll. 981-2, 1001-2. The poem, as Wolfson notes, was published by John Murray and advertised in his '*Quarterly Review* as *Modern Greece and the Elgin Marbles: A Poem*' (34). Murray also published Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, with its critical treatment of Elgin, and the *Report from the Select Committee*.

England, not Athens, now stands for republican freedom'[12] – was also apparent in the Select Committee's recommendation that the Marbles be purchased for £35,000:

> In contemplating the importance and splendor to which so small a republic as Athens rose, by the genius and energy of her citizens, exerted in the path of such studies, it is impossible to overlook how transient the memory and fame of extended empires, and of mighty conquerors are, in comparison of those who have rendered inconsiderable states eminent, and immortalized their own names by these pursuits. But if it be true, as we learn from history and experience, that free governments afford a soil most suitable to the production of native talent, to the maturing of the powers of the human mind, and to the growth of every species of excellence, by opening to merit the prospect of reward and distinction, no country can be better adapted than our own to afford an honourable asylum to these monuments of the school of Phidias, and of the administration of Pericles.[13]

The rhetoric of this passage was hardly innocent. In the immediate aftermath of Waterloo, the reference to the 'transient memory and fame of extended empires, and of mighty conquerors' encouraged parliament to confirm its bona fides as a democratic institution by 'afford[ing] a soil' in which 'the powers of the human mind' could flourish. Indeed, by offering an 'honourable asylum' to the Parthenon Marbles, the *Report* suggests, Britain could make clear its difference from France, which had filled the Musée Napoléon with, in Cecil Gould's phrase, 'trophies of conquest.'[14]

The terms of the committee's recommendation represented a victory for Elgin's supporters, who had made Napoleon's determination to obtain Greek antiquities a central feature of their campaign. As part of his testimony, Elgin suggested that he could have made, during his period as a prisoner-of-war in France, 'the most advantageous terms for ceding them [the Marbles] to the French Government.'[15] Much was made, too, of the role played by the British victories over the French in Egypt. According to Elgin, these were almost solely responsible for the *firman* signed by the Camaican Pasha.[16] As the *Report* put it:

[12] Angela Esterhammer, 'Translating the Elgin Marbles: Byron, Hemans, Keats,' *Wordsworth Circle* 40.1 (2009), 29-36, 31.

[13] *Report*, 26-7. Haydon was listed as one of Elgin's witnesses but never called. He felt that his exclusion was due to the influence of the art critic and collector Richard Payne Knight (*The Autobiography of Benjamin Robert Haydon*, The World's Classics Edition (London, undated), 309.

[14] Gould, *Trophy of Conquest: The Musée Napoléon and the Creation of the Louvre* (London, 1965), 13.

[15] *Report*, viii. Hazlitt himself noted in his review that 'Lord Aberdeen approve[d] of bringing them away [from Greece], because otherwise the French might have got them' (XVIII, 103).

[16] The legality and scope of the *firman* is one of the central issues in calls for the restitution of the fragments to Greece. For a summary of these arguments, see – in contrast to St. Clair's sympathetic treatment of Elgin – Christopher Hitchens's *The Elgin Marbles* (London, 1987).

> The success of the British arms in Egypt [...] wrought a wonderful and instantaneous change in the disposition of all ranks and descriptions of people towards our Nation [...] Nothing was refused which was asked; and Lord Elgin, availing himself of this favourable and unexpected alteration, obtained, in the summer of 1801, access to the Acropolis for general purposes, with permission to draw, model, and remove; to which was added, a special licence to excavate in a particular place.[17]

The committee's assertion that Britain was the most 'suitable' modern location for the Parthenon fragments, echoed in Hemans's poem, situated the purchase as a patriotic necessity and an extension of British military triumphs.

Not everyone was as enthusiastic about Elgin's activities. Lord Byron, who witnessed some of the damage done to the Parthenon by Elgin's agents, lambasted the peer in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, insisting – in contrast to the claims made by Elgin, Haydon, and the *Report* – that England's 'free born men should spare what once was free' and asserting that it was Elgin who had taught the Greeks the real 'weight of Despot's chains.'[18] He was even more critical in the 1811 poem, 'The Curse of Minerva,' comparing Elgin to a 'filthy Jackall' and pronouncing a curse on him that combined allusions to the epilepsy of Elgin's son with hints at his first wife's infidelities:

> First on the head of him who did this deed
> My curse shall light, on him and all his seed:
> Without one spark of intellectual fire,
> Be all the sons as senseless as the sire:
> If one with wit the parent brood disgrace,
> Believe him bastard of a brighter race.[19]

The government did not, as the poem suggests, purchase the collection in 1811 when Elgin made his first concerted effort to sell it – he balked at the £30,000 the Paymaster General offered – but Byron was not wrong in asserting that Elgin's only real option was to sell the collection to the state.[20]

Haydon, who felt that Elgin was 'very badly treated, to gratify a malevolent coterie of classical despotic dilettanti devoid of all genuine taste or

[17] *Report*, 3.

[18] *The Complete Poetical Works*, ed. Jerome J. McGann, 7 vols (Oxford, 1980), II, 47-8, ll. 97, 108.

[19] *Complete Works*, I, 324-6, ll. 114, 163-8. Although Byron did not publish 'The Curse of Minerva,' a number of pirated versions were in existence by 1815 (see I, 446-7).

[20] As St. Clair notes, the costs of Elgin's antiquarian pursuits – nearly double what the government paid – were the reason he wanted to sell the collection. These debts eventually 'obliged [him] to live in France to escape his creditors' (270). The condition of the pieces meant, furthermore, that Elgin would have found it difficult to sell them to individuals. Payne Knight, who was no friend of Elgin's but whose views were crucial for many collectors, judged the metopes not to be in 'a state of preservation to be used as furniture' and felt they would have little value in the antiquities market (*Report*, 100).

sound knowledge of Art,' identified Byron as responsible for instigating much of the criticism: '[b]acked by Byron, a hue and cry was raised; [Lord Elgin] was lampooned, abused, ridiculed, epigrammatized, and every motive on earth imputed to him but the motive by which alone he was impelled.'[21] Haydon saw himself as the leader of the campaign to get the nation to purchase the collection and might well have encouraged Leigh Hunt, the editor of *The Examiner*, to run articles on the Marbles in order to counter the hostile claims made by the likes of Byron. He had written a piece himself, 'On the Judgment of Connoisseurs Being Preferred to that of Professional Men,' in March 1816 and claimed to have provided the motivation and facts for John Scott's editorial support of the purchase in *The Champion*. He perhaps suggested to Hunt that Hazlitt contribute a piece on the Marbles, feeling that Hazlitt could be counted on to provide a passionate defence of the Marbles' artistic quality and the integrity of Elgin's motives. Certainly, by the time Hazlitt sat down to write the review, he would have been familiar with Haydon's judgment that the Marbles ranked 'above all other works of art in the world' (*Lectures*, 235).

~ Haydon and Hazlitt in Conversation ~

Although Howe suggests Hazlitt threw 'himself into the campaign on behalf of the acquisition of the Elgin Marbles,' his appreciation was not as instantaneous as Haydon's had been, nor was it ever as intense.[22] This was, in part, because, as he admitted in 'On the Pleasure of Painting,' he knew 'but little of sculpture, and never liked any till [he] saw the Elgin marbles.'[23] When, precisely, this occurred is not clear, but it probably did not predate the beginning of his career as an art critic. In this the Marbles stand in marked contrast to the other examples of artistic excellence in Hazlitt's personal pantheon – the 'pictures of the celebrated Italian Masters – those of the Dutch and Flemish schools – [...] [and] the comic productions of [...] Hogarth' (XVIII, 111) – which he had known and cherished since his youth and which, throughout his life, he used as a yardstick to judge contemporary productions. His friend P.G. Patmore would later identify the incredible persistence in Hazlitt's memory of these works – particularly those he saw in the Louvre in 1802 – and assert that his 'extraordinary critical powers were available to him only by the light of the past.'[24] This, however, is not true of the Marbles, which he probably first saw towards the end of 1814 after he had started writing about art for *The Morning Chronicle*.

[21] *Autobiography*, 319; *Lectures*, 209.
[22] *The Life of William Hazlitt* (London, 1922, reissued 1940), 203. As Stephen A. Larrabee put it some years ago, Hazlitt 'was not immediately overwhelmed by them as young Keats was,' though, according to Larrabee, 'he too regarded them as a sort of new planet swimming into his ken' ('Hazlitt's Criticism and Greek Sculpture,' *Journal of the History of Ideas* 2. 1 (1941), 77-94, 80)
[23] VIII, 16. He attributed this aversion, in *Notes on a Journey through France and Italy*, to the fact that statuary 'accords admirably with the repose of the tomb; and [...] cannot be better employed than in arresting the fleeting dust in imperishable forms, and in embodying a lifeless shadow' (X, 164).
[24] P. G. Patmore, *My Friends and Acquaintance*, 3 vols. (London, 1854), III, 64.

It seems unlikely, for instance, he had seen them – or, at least, given them any real consideration – when, in January 1814, he wrote 'Why the Arts are not Progressive' and gave a list of the 'giant sons of genius' who 'all lived near the beginning of their arts' and 'perfected and all but created them': 'Homer, Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Dante, and Ariosto (Milton alone was of a later age, and not the worse for it), Raphael, Titian, Michael Angelo, Correggio, Cervantes, and Boccaccio.'[25] He developed this idea more fully later the same year in 'Whether the Fine Arts are Promoted by Academies,' where he argued that the greatest achievements in art occurred at an early stage, when '[g]enius can [...] have its full scope' (XVIII, 42), but once again overlooked the Marbles as examples of this theory. Indeed, although he did on this occasion acknowledge some Greek sculptures, suggesting the artists had been supported by 'the religious institutions of the country' (XVIII, 44), he was almost certainly thinking of works like the Apollo Belvedere, the Laocoön, and the Dying Gaul. These 'overwhelmingly famous marbles' (Gould, 59), long considered the standard of perfection in sculpture, had been in the Louvre since 1798, but, as Hazlitt noted in support of his argument that art was not progressive, 'the persons least like the Greek sculptors are the modern French painters, who copy nothing but the antique' (XVIII, 49).

Haydon was incensed by such claims, overlooking Hazlitt's self-deprecating irony and taking his comments about the 'retrograde' (XVIII, 49) nature of art as criticism of his own work.[26] He included part of Hazlitt's essay in his diary and commented:

> Futile, vain, imbecile assertion, the product of disappointed irritibility, of morbid vanity, & of conscious weakness, of deep rooted indolence, of that blurred & envious wretchedness the result of disappointed failure, of just aimlessness enough to know what ought to be done of that, & just perseverance enough to attempt and relinquish it.[27]

[25] XVIII, 6. When Hazlitt drew on this passage a few years later for his discussion of Shakespeare and Milton in the *Lectures on the English Poets* he revised it to include the 'Greek sculptors and tragedians' to the list (V, 45).
[26] At one point, for instance, Hazlitt describes how a 'young enthusiast' whose 'genius and energy were to rival the great Masters of antiquity' ends up writing 'newspaper criticisms of the Fine Arts' (XVIII, 42) – a judgment clearly passed on the contrast between his own youthful ambitions and his present occupation. It's possible too that Hazlitt's comments reinforced Haydon's own fear: a diary entry for 17 May 1814 noted 'It is strange that all the Pilgrimages to Rome should never have produced a Michel Angelo or Raphael!' (I, 352).
[27] *Diary*, I, 386-7. As Barrell has pointed out, both Haydon and Hazlitt had slightly contradictory perspectives on the kind of relationship that should be fostered between artists and society, but Haydon's reduction of what Barrell terms '[t]he relations between the political republic and the republic of taste [...] almost entirely to relations of patronage' probably led him, desperate for money as he was by 1814, to the violence of his attack on Hazlitt (309); for Barrell's criticisms of Hazlitt see 319-20.

Even for someone of Haydon's irascible temperament, this was strong stuff, and it is hard not to imagine him dragging Hazlitt down to Burlington House in October 1814 to show him the Marbles and explain that these works, far from hindering him by their too formidable example, were the source and inspiration of his own achievements.[28] Convinced he was 'the most prominent historical student, perfectly qualified to appreciate' the greatness of the Parthenon Marbles (*Autobiography*, 86), Haydon would certainly have wanted his friend to recognise that his work was inspired by the same principles as the Marbles, and he perhaps hoped that Hazlitt would say as much in his journalism.[29]

The effect of this visit is, I think, almost immediately evident in Hazlitt's criticism – though not, perhaps, quite as strikingly as it is in Keats's response to the Marbles after Haydon had escorted *him* to the British Museum in March 1817. 'On Seeing the Elgin Marbles,' as Noah Heringman suggests, 'register[s] a widely shared project of establishing the Parthenon sculptures as *close to nature*,' but Hazlitt's series of articles on 'Sir Joshua Reynolds's Discourses' are surely an earlier manifestation.[30] Indeed, in these essays, published in *The Champion* in December 1814 and January 1815, Hazlitt developed in detail his argument that the finest art was a close imitation of nature and turned, in what appears to be his first direct reference to the Marbles, to the works 'taken from the Acropolis' as examples of the highest achievements of art:

> The figures have all the ease, the simplicity, and variety of nature, and look more like living men turned to stone than any thing else. Even the details of the subordinate parts, the loose folds in the skin, the veins under the belly or on the sides of the horses, more or less swelled as the animal is more or less in action, are given with scrupulous exactness. This is true nature, and true history. (XVIII, 81)

The attention to anatomical details evident here is new in Hazlitt's art criticism and can surely be attributed to Haydon's obsession with the correct interplay of muscle, tendon, and bone which was so central to his appreciation of the Marbles. In September 1808, for example, Haydon reported that he was 'much improved this week in the knowledge of Horses' because 'the Greeks attended to every alteration in the body produced by the slightest movement!' (*Diary*, I, 1); he recorded an even more memorable 1808 visit in his *Autobiography*, noting the attention to detail and variety in the Greek statues:

> [W]hen I turned to the Theseus and saw that every form was altered by action or repose, – when I saw that the two sides of his back varied, one side stretched from the shoulder blade being pulled forward, and the other side compressed from the shoulder blade being pushed close to the spine as he rested on his elbow, with the belly flat because the bowels fell into the pelvis as he sat, – and when, turning to the Ilyssus, I saw the belly protruded, from the figure lying on its side, – and again, when in the figure of the fighting metope I saw the muscle shown under the one arm-pit in that instantaneous action of darting out, and left out in the other arm-pits because not wanted, – when I saw, in fact, the most heroic style of art combined with all the essential detail of actual life the thing was done at once and for ever. (85-6)

This attention to the interplay of action and repose – which Hazlitt rendered as being 'more or less in action' – was, according to Haydon, the 'principle [...] which the great Greeks in their finest time established' (86).

Hazlitt agreed, noting in very similar terms in his essay on Reynolds that, in contrast to the Apollo Belvedere and the Farnese Hercules, '[t]he form of the limbs [in the Theseus], as affected by pressure or action, and the general sway of the body, are better preserved' (XVIII, 81). He developed this idea further in his *Examiner* essay on the Elgin Marbles in language that is strongly reminiscent of Haydon's,

> Let any one, for instance, look at the leg of the Ilissus or River-god, which is bent under him – let him observe the swell and undulation of the calf, the inter-texture of the muscles, the distinction and union of all the parts, and the effect of action every where impressed on the external form [...] and he will own that art and nature are here the same thing. It is the same in the back of the Theseus, in the thighs and knees [...] It is not the same in the cast (which was shown at Lord Elgin's) of the famous Torso by Michael Angelo [...] There every muscle has obviously the greatest prominence and force given to it of which it is capable in itself, not of which it is capable in connexion with others. (XVIII, 145-6)

Though Hazlitt quoted Sir Thomas Lawrence's testimony to the Committee about the 'alternate action and repose' in the figures, his greater debt in writing about the artistic qualities of the Marbles is clearly to Haydon, who judged Michaelangelo to have 'burdened his figures with useless & ostentatious

[28] Haydon returned to London in October after trips to Hastings and Plymouth. He spent much of the early summer in France.

[29] Hazlitt addressed Haydon's relationship to the Marbles in an 1820 *Edinburgh Review* essay on the 'Life of Sir Joshua Reynolds,' noting that 'Mr. Haydon is a devoted admirer of the Elgin marbles; and he has taken advantage of their breadth and size and masses' but urging him also to 'follow them [...] into their details, their involved graces, the texture of the skin, the indication of a vein or muscle, the waving line of beauty, their calm and motionless expression; into all, in which they follow nature' (XVI, 210).

[30] Noah Heringman, 'Stones so wonderous cheap,' *Studies in Romanticism* 37.1 (1998), 43-62, 43 (emphasis in original).

anatomy' (*Diary*, I, 336) and who repeatedly insisted on anatomical correctness in his diary entries in the years between 1808 and 1816.[31]

Haydon, then, probably had every reason to expect Hazlitt to write in support of the Marbles in *The Examiner* in 1816. Not only did Hazlitt share his dislike of Payne Knight and the Society of Dilettanti, but the two had clearly discussed the reasons for the Marbles' excellence at some length. Under the circumstances, he might well have taken Hazlitt's admission in the review that he was 'not without hope' that the works would 'promote the Fine Arts' (XVIII, 101) as a significant concession from the writer who had insisted only a few months earlier that the arts were not progressive.

~ Hazlitt on the Elgin Marbles ~

In contrast to Haydon, however, whose support of Elgin was unquestioning, Hazlitt shared Byron's conviction that the collection had been assembled illegally.[32] Indeed, although the Select Committee took considerable pains establishing the legality of Elgin's activities, Hazlitt dismissed these arguments in a couple of lines:

> Lord Elgin appears not to have had the slightest authority for bringing away these statues, except a *fermaun* or permission from the Turkish Government to bring away pieces of stone from the ruins of the Parthenon, which he paid 21,000 piastres to the governor of Athens for permission to interpret as he pleased. That it was not meant to apply to the statues, and only to fragments of the buildings, is also evident from this, that Lord Elgin had originally, and at the time the *fermaun* was granted, no intention, as he himself says, of bringing away the statues. (XVIII, 103)

Hazlitt did not 'blame Lord Elgin' – indeed his feelings 'r[a]n the contrary way' – but his plain-spoken exposure of the sophistry of Elgin's claim to have had a 'general power to remove' items from the Parthenon and his contention that there was a considerable amount of 'cant and hypocrisy' in the debate (XVIII, 103) are unlikely to have pleased Haydon, who had sought to recast the legal issues in terms of the threat posed to the Parthenon by the alleged indifference of the occupying Turks.[33] Hazlitt was unimpressed with this kind of justification

[31] Haydon might also have been the source for Hazlitt's later assertion that the Apollo was a 'theatrical coxcomb' (X, 222); in a footnote to an April 1816 entry in his diary Haydon noted that Flaxman had, in 1808, insisted that the Apollo 'in comparison with the Theseus was a dancing master' (*Diary*, II, 15).

[32] Hazlitt might well have known 'The Curse of Minerva' in its pirated form – and was certainly aware of the criticisms of Elgin in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. In an echo of his comment that the Apollo Belvedere was a 'theatrical coxcomb,' Hazlitt would later insist that it would 'be hard to persuade ourselves that the author of Childe Harold and Don Juan is not a coxcomb' (XI, 72).

[33] In 1814, for instance, during a visit to France, Haydon defended Elgin's conduct to Vivant Denon, director of the Louvre, on the grounds that the Marbles would have been destroyed had they not been removed and he later insisted that Elgin's 'bold step was the only rational one' (*Lectures*, 208; see also *Diary*, I, 380).

and, in his *Examiner* essay, countered with a story about the destruction wrought by Elgin's agents:

> The Rev. Dr. Philip Hunt, in the service of Lord Elgin, declares, in his evidence before the Committee, that no objection was made nor regret expressed by the inhabitants at the removal of the Marbles. In the notes to *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, we find the following extract of a letter from Dr. Clarke to Lord Byron:– 'When the last of the Metopes was taken from the Parthenon, and in moving it, great part of the superstructure, with one of tryglyphs, was thrown down by the workmen whom Lord Elgin employed, the Disdar, who beheld the mischief done to the building, took his pipe from his mouth, dropped a tear, and in a supplicating tone of voice, said to Lusieri, '*Telos!* I was present." – It appears that Dr. Phillip Hunt was not. (XVIII, 439)

Elgin, in other words, not only had no legal title to the Marbles, but his workmen were also every bit as destructive as the Ottoman authorities. The reference to Byron must further have displeased Haydon, who was no doubt expecting an essay in unqualified support of Elgin and the collection. Instead, Hazlitt produced a piece that briefly praised the artistic quality of the Marbles but then went on to criticise just about every other aspect of their acquisition, evaluation, and eventual purchase.

It would be easy to put this down to his notorious independence – that determination not to have his 'understanding made a dupe of' (VII, 7) – but his complex attitude was also, I think, shaped by the debates that preceded the Marbles' purchase and by their status as spoils of war.[34] Elgin's campaign to situate his acquisitions as a national treasure that had been snatched from under the nose of the avaricious French ambassador and safeguarded, at considerable personal cost, from Napoleon – a position repeated with only minor variation in *Modern Greece*, the Select Committee *Report*, and Haydon's conversation – was potentially off-putting for Hazlitt, suggesting that the purchase of the Marbles might be construed as the final reproof to Napoleon's ambitions. Hazlitt, however, saw an opportunity to reconfigure the terms of the debate and, in his *Examiner* essay, sketched out a perspective from which the Marbles could, in defiance of Elgin and the Select Committee, be understood as an extension of the

[34] This complexity is perhaps another version of the apparent contradiction in Hazlitt's thought (in his review of Reynolds's *Discourses*) that both David Bromwich and, as noted earlier, John Barrell have pointed to. As Bromwich points out, Hazlitt's evocation of the Marbles to counter Reynolds's theories of ideal form produces a view of the imagination as 'subordinate and derisory' that seems to contradict most of his other claims (*Hazlitt: The Mind of a Critic* (New York and Oxford, 1983), 206). Ultimately, as I suggest in this essay, these contradictions develop because Hazlitt's appreciation of the Marbles was primarily political: he did not come to appreciate the Marbles because they fit neatly into his aesthetic ideals but because of his political allegiances.

Napoleonic ideal. In a footnote, for instance, Hazlitt responded to objections 'to what was said in a former article on the comparative propriety of removing these statues,' pointing out that:

> It appears from the Report of the Committee, that the French Government were, in the year 1811, anxious to purchase the collection of Lord Elgin, who was then a prisoner in France. We ask then, supposing this to have been done, what would have become of it? Would not the Theseus and the Neptune have been solemnly sent back, like malefactors, 'to the place from when they came?' – Yes, to be sure. (XVIII, 439)

This was omitted when the essay was revised for inclusion in the February 1822 *London Magazine*, but its presence here reveals the deeply political connotations the Marbles held for Hazlitt in the year after Waterloo. Situating the Marbles as vagrants liable to be deported, according to the Statutes, to 'the place from whence they came,' Hazlitt linked the Parthenon fragments to the masterpieces in the Louvre which, in 1816, had just been returned to their previous owners.

Wellington's decision to permit this repatriation, which even he seems to have recognised contravened the 1814 Treaty of Paris, was based on the assumption that works of art belonged in their original setting and that the French people had no claim on them beyond their former military victories. As he put it in a letter to Castlereagh published in *The Times* 14 October 1815:

> The feeling of the people of France upon this subject must be one of national vanity only. It must be a desire to retain these specimens of the arts, not because Paris is the fittest depository for them, as, upon that subject, artists, connoisseurs, and all who have written upon it, agree that the whole ought to be removed to their ancient seat, but because they were obtained by military concessions, of which they are the trophies.[35]

Hazlitt would have recognised such claims were contrary to the logic of the Select Committee's *Report*, which had insisted that Britain was the modern inheritor of Greek ideals of liberty. He was, furthermore, incensed by Wellington's concluding remark that the removal of the artworks was an excellent opportunity to give 'the people of France a great moral lesson' (135), ironically suggesting in his *Examiner* essay that the real reason the paintings were removed was that they 'were an obstacle in the way, in case the great Duke should have to teach the great nation another *great moral lesson* by the burning of Paris' (XVIII, 102, emphasis added).

Wellington's phrase clearly rankled and Hazlitt evoked it again years later in his *Life of Napoleon Buonaparte*, insisting the opposite was in fact the case:

[35] Quoted in Gould, 134. Gould prints Wellington's letter in an appendix, 131-5.

'The Louvre was [...] 'a great moral lesson'; a school and discipline of humanity!' (XIII, 213). It is, in fact, in this biography, as he attempts to justify Napoleon's acquisitions, that the connections between Hazlitt's radical politics and the Elgin Marbles can be discerned in their clearest formulation. The artworks assembled in the Louvre, Hazlitt argues in the *Life*, were not 'taken from their respective countries, [but] [...] given to the world, and to the mind and heart of man, from whence they sprung' (XIII, 212). The real reason they were ultimately removed and sent back ignominiously 'to the place from whence they came' was that they were 'the true handwriting on the wall, which told the great and mighty of the earth that their empire was passed' (XIII, 212). Wellington's desire to teach the French a 'great moral lesson' was, in other words, a determination to stamp out any future Jacobinical thoughts. For Hazlitt, however, the exchange of intellectual and artistic productions was the hallmark of the Republican ideal, promoting an equality between individuals and fiercely opposing 'that empire of extravagance and frivolity which assumed all superiority to itself' (XIII, 212), and he discovered in the Parthenon fragments a similarly radical spirit.

Wellington's actions were, as Hazlitt pointed out in his *Life*, in perfect opposition to the ideals Napoleon espoused and that he set out in a letter to the mathematician Oriani, from which Hazlitt quoted and then linked to the Marbles:

> Buonaparte has explained his views [about the republic of art] in a letter publicly addressed to Oriani [...] where he assures him that all men of genius, all who had distinguished themselves in the republic of letters, were to be accounted natives of France [...] 'Hitherto,' he says, 'the learned in Italy did not enjoy the consideration to which they were entitled [...] It is no longer thus [...] Thought is free in Italy [...] The people of France have more pride in enrolling among their citizens a skilfull mathematician, a painter of reputation, a distinguished man in any class of letters, than in adding to their territories a large and wealthy city.' – This is the true spirit of Jacobinism; and not the turning the Thuilleries into a potatoe-garden. – Once more, as to the charge of plunder and robbery, all the collections in Europe answer it, for they are composed of works by the same masters. If these works were heir-looms, and sacred to the soil where they grew, they could not be removed. What is subject of barter and sale in time of peace, may be reckoned among the spoils of war. The Cartoons, the Elgin Marbles answer it. (XIII, 213)

Tom Paulin has suggested that, in Hazlitt's *Examiner* essay about the Marbles, '[c]lassical Greece and post-Napoleonic Europe are thrown together in a series of fighting marble figures' that, in their beautiful but fragmentary state, evoke both an ideal of artistic achievement and a sense of political loss, but the effect of

linking the Marbles to the Louvre in this passage is somewhat different and points at a more stubborn loyalty to Jacobinical ideals.[36] In fact, rather than a sense of sympathy between the ruined Marbles and the defeated spirit of Jacobinism, the evocation here highlights the hypocrisy of the British political class who approved the purchase of Elgin's collection but allowed Napoleon's acquisitions to be removed from the Louvre without any recompense.[37] It is not, in short, their distressed state that most appeals to Hazlitt, but their evocation of the 'true spirit of Jacobinism.' Radical politics and art are intertwined here: in Napoleonic France, as in the history of art, the accidents of birth bow down before the achievements of genius.

Indeed, for all his positive comments about the 'perfection' of the Marbles, the first essay in *The Examiner* is really more concerned with the wonder of the Louvre and the hypocrisy in the debates about Elgin's collection than it is about the 'new principle' of art at work in the statues (XVI, 355). As he would later in the *Life of Napoleon*, Hazlitt treats the Louvre in this early essay as being 'of the greatest importance not only to France, but to Europe' because '[i]t was a means to civilise the world' (XVIII, 102) – and, as in the biography of Napoleon, the crucial evidence for British hostility to this ideal is provided by the Elgin Marbles:

> The reason assigned in the Duke of Wellington's letter, that the works of art should be sacred to conquerors, and an heirloom of the soil that gives them birth, is quite apocryphal. Half of the works from Italy had originally been brought there from Greece. If works of art are to be a sort of fixtures in every country, why are the Elgin Marbles brought here, for our artists to strut and fret over this acquisition to our 'glorious country'? If the French were not to retain their collection of perfect works of art, why should we be allowed to make one of still higher pretensions under pretence of carrying off only fragments and rubbish? The Earl of Elgin brought away the Theseus and the Neptune as bits of architecture, as loose pieces of stone; but no sooner do they get into the possession of our glorious country, than they are discovered to be infinitely superior to the *Apollo*, the *Venus*, and the *Laocoon* [...] All this may be true, but it is truth with a suspicious appearance. (XVIII, 102-3)

The Marbles come, in Hazlitt's work, to function as a substitute for the Louvre artworks: they remind the wealthy of the permanence of those artistic ideals that place individual genius above hereditary power. And their continued presence in London serves, for Hazlitt, as a reminder of all the hypocritical assertions

[36] Tom Paulin, *The Day-Star of Liberty: William Hazlitt's Radical Style* (London, 1998), 102.

[37] Hazlitt made the same point about hypocrisy in his *Notes of a Journey through France and Italy*, suggesting that French artists 'may smile to see that we are willing to remove works of art from their original places of abode, though we will not allow others to do so' (X, 168n).

made by members of the British establishment during the war with France that he had first identified in print in *The Morning Chronicle* in 1813 and 1814.

Haydon didn't comment on this essay directly in his *Diary*. He did, however, judge Hazlitt's later essay on 'The Catalogue Raisonné of the British Institution' (November 1816) to be the '*first* symptom' of Hazlitt's ability to 'assist the good cause, instead of sneering at it' (II, 65, emphasis added) – suggesting that the earlier one on the Marbles was, to Haydon's mind, on a par with 'Why the Arts Are Not Progressive.' One could forgive him for feeling that Hazlitt's review was not the ringing endorsement he had hoped it might be. In fact, not only did it destroy Elgin's legal claims and point out the hypocrisy of the justifications by reminding the public of Byron's denunciations, but it also questioned the 'suspicious' truths about the Marbles' excellence and had, at its centre, an extended appreciation of the Louvre. It appreciated the Marbles in language borrowed from Haydon, but reworked the terms of the debate to situate them as symbols of the republican ideal.

There was probably also a personal reason for Hazlitt's attitude. Although he appreciated the quality of the sculpture in terms he learnt from Haydon, he would have objected to the painter's political judgments about Napoleon and Wellington. In his *Diary*, for instance, Haydon commented after the Battle of Waterloo that 'Wellington will truly be considered by Posterity as the Saviour of the World's intellect, for the age would have been brought back to ignorance & barbarism had the Demon succeeded in his despotic system' (I, 457). Hazlitt, for whom the Louvre was 'a means to civilise the world' and who viewed Napoleon in much the same way Haydon viewed Wellington, was hardly likely to view things in quite the same manner. Years later he wrote that Haydon should 'have been the boatswain of a man-of-war: he has no other ideas of glory than those which belong to a naval victory, or to vulgar noise and insolence; not at all as something in which the whole world may participate alike' (XX, 392), but his own essay is a shot across Haydon's bows, accepting the quality of the fragments but redefining the terms of the debate about Napoleon, Wellington, and the Louvre artworks. As he sat down to write about the Marbles almost exactly a year after the Battle of Waterloo, Hazlitt might well have reflected on the competing claims of art and armies to civilize nations, on the differences in treatment of the Greek statues in Paris and those in London, and on Haydon's passionate appreciation of the Marbles and equally vociferous denunciation of Napoleon. In the essay he staked out an alternative position that recognised the artistry of the statues but linked them closely to the political values of his youth by constantly evoking the dispersal of Napoleon's collection and the lost opportunity to create something 'in which the whole world may participate alike.' In such a way, he was able to add the Marbles to that private pantheon of masterpieces he first established in 1802 when he visited Paris during the Peace of Amiens and saw the artworks that guided his criticism throughout his life.

Indeed, when Hazlitt returned to the question of the Elgin Marbles some six year later, revising and developing his *Examiner* essays for the *London*

Magazine, he again drew on the dreams of liberty and genius with which he had long associated Napoleon, the Louvre, and his own youth and with which, after 1816, he came to associate the Marbles. He completed these revisions shortly before setting off to Scotland to obtain the divorce that would, he thought, allow him to marry Sarah Walker. Whilst in Edinburgh, with his moods swinging from despair to hope, he visited an exhibition of Hugh Williams's paintings of Greek scenes and dashed off a review for the *London Magazine*, painting his own picture of the values he identified with Greece and that, by extension, might be said to be maintained by the Marbles:

> What land can rival Greece? What earthly flowers can compare with the colours in the sky? What living beauty can recall the dead? For in that word, GREECE, there breathe three thousand years of fame that has no date to come! Over that land hovers a light, brighter than that of suns, softer than that which vernal skies shed on halcyon seas, the light that rises from the tomb of virtue, genius, liberty! Oh! thou Uranian Venus, thou that never art, but wast and art to be; thou that the eye sees not, but that livest for ever in the heart; thou whom men believe and know to be, for thou dwellest in the desires and longings, and hunger of the mind; thou that art a Goddess, and we thy worshippers, say dost thou not smile for ever on this land of Greece, and shed thy purple light over it, and blend thy choicest blandishments with its magic name? (XVIII, 171)

This passage, with its evocation of a light that hovers over the land of 'virtue, genius, liberty' recalls the description of the French Revolution in *The Round Table* – 'that glad dawn of the day-star of liberty; that spring-time of the world, in which the hopes and expectations of the human race seemed opening in the same gay career with our own; when France called her children to partake her equal blessings beneath her laughing skies' (IV, 119-20) – and points to that stubborn blend of political ideals and artistic dreams that shaped Hazlitt's art criticism throughout his life and that, after 1816, linked the Parthenon fragments to the Musée Napoleon, 'where the triumphs of human genius' were displayed where 'the triumphs of human liberty had been' (XVIII, 102).

San Diego State University

Byron's Arabesque

Anna Camilleri

TO assert that an appreciation of Byron's Orientalism is central to an understanding of his poetic practice is such a commonplace of Byron scholarship as to border on the banal. Critical exploration of the impact of Byron's Oriental reading on his own poetry, however, uncovers radical ways of considering the poet's Eastern Tales in terms of narrative strategy and gender dynamics. The focus of this essay will be to illustrate the significance of Byron's reading of Jonathan Scott's *Arabian Nights* (1811) for the construction of the poet's Oriental heroines. Byron's creative relationship with the *Nights* plays on the definition of 'Arabesque': the Eastern Tales both imitate Arabian stylistics in their Oriental costume (and so are Arab *like*), and also demonstrate Byron's reaction to the fancifully intertwined narrative of Scheherazade with his own strangely mixed, fantastic tales. As I shall go on to consider, Byron's development of his Oriental heroines reflects a markedly similar narrative pattern in the *Nights* themselves, the heroines becoming increasingly active as each set of tales progresses.

Of all the Romantic poets, Byron in particular held an unwaning enthusiasm for the Orient, both factual and fictional.[1] He boasted of knowing the entire of Ottoman History 'from Tangralopix, and afterwards Othman 1st to the peace of Passarowitz, in 1718 - the Battle of Crotzka in 1739 & the treaty between Russia & Turkey in 1790',[2] and of reading 'All travels or histories or books upon the East I could meet with [...] before I was *ten years old*. I think the Arabian Nights first.'[3] Such precocious intellectual posturing – to be expected perhaps from a nineteen-year old Byron, fresh from Trinity College, Cambridge – marked the beginning of an enduring fascination with the Orient. In a letter of 28 August, 1813 he famously advised Thomas Moore to 'stick to the East', believing the region to hold limitless imaginative possibilities.[4] Byron's decision to follow his own advice proved a shrewd poetical policy. And Byron, unlike Southey who experimented with both form *and* content, struck the right balance in offering Western narrative form dressed in Oriental costume. The oft-cited

[1] For further information on Byron's Eastern reading see H. S. C. Wiener, 'Byron and the East: literary sources of the "Turkish Tales"' in Herbert Davies *et al* eds., *Nineteenth-Century Studies* (1940; reissued New York, 1968), 89-129.

[2] 'Reading List' (1807), Andrew Nicholson, ed., *Lord Byron: The Complete Miscellaneous Prose* (Oxford, 1991), 4.

[3] Cited in Isaac D'Israeli, *The Literary Character*, 2 vols (London, 1822), I, 102n.

[4] Leslie A. Marchand, ed., *Byron's Letters and Journals*, 13 vols (London, 1974), III, 101. (Hereafter referred to as *BLJ*.) The honeymoon was close to being over in 1815, when Byron claimed to have 'apparently exhausted' the East's resources (*BLJ* , V, 45), though he returned to an Ottoman setting for *Siege of Corinth* (1816) and Cantos V and VI of *Don Juan*, published 1821 and 1823 respectively.

stanza from his later comic Tale, *Beppo*, self-ironizes the earlier 'easy' success of his tragic Tales:

> Oh that I had the art of easy writing
> What should be easy reading! could I scale
> Parnassus, where the Muses sit inditing
> Those pretty poems never known to fail,
> How quickly would I print (the world delighting)
> A Grecian, Syrian, or *Ass*yrian tale;
> And sell you, mix'd with western sentimentalism,
> Some samples of the finest Orientalism! (*Beppo*, 401-408)[5]

The world did indeed delight in the swift publication of his tales, all six of which appeared in a little under three years of each other.[6] Conforming to his expectation of them, the public consumed Byron's Turkish delights with a seemingly insatiable appetite, *The Corsair* selling 10,000 copies on the first day of its publication. Yet Byron's familiarity with 'samples of the finest Orientalism' has been overstated: he was no Orientalist.[7] Despite sojourns in Albania and Greece,[8] he was not fluent in any of the Syriac languages; as Yohannan has indicated, 'The only genuinely Eastern tongue he ever learned was Armenian.'[9] Consequently, Byron's exposure to Eastern literature was predominantly via a Western filter. Arguably the most characteristic Eastern text that Byron would have had access to was the *Arabian Nights*, translated into English for the first time in 1706.[10] In his comprehensive essay on Byron's Eastern reading Wiener argues that: 'The tales are quite unlike those of Byron, and we are forced to conclude that although the *Arabian Nights* awakened in Byron the desire to read and learn more about the East, they played no greater part in his literary career.'[11] The purpose of this article is to consider more closely the part I believe the poet's reading of the *Arabian Nights* did indeed play in Byron's literary career. It is in the Tales that we have the most overt demonstration of the influence of the *Nights* on Byron as an adult poet. Parallels between all six of Byron's Oriental tales and the *Nights* are discernable. For the purposes of this

[5] Lord Byron, *The Complete Poetical Works*, ed. Jerome J. McGann, 7 vols (Oxford, 1980-93), IV, 145. Hereafter abbreviated to *CPW*.

[6] *The Giaour* was the first to meet the public gaze in March 1813, *Parisina* the last in February 1816.

[7] Whilst the term is now inevitably haunted by its Saidian context, I here use it in the traditional sense, 'An expert in or student of oriental languages, history, culture, etc' (*OED*, 'orientalist' *n.* 3. <http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/00333786> [accessed 2 July 2010]).

[8] His Grand tour took him to Albania and Greece between September 1809 and June 1811; he returned to Greece in August 1823, dying at Missolonghi in April 1824.

[9] John D. Yohannan, 'The Persian Poetry Fad in England, 1770-1825', *Comparative Literature*, 4.2 (1952), 137-160 (32).

[10] Eva Sallis, *Sheherazade Through the Looking Glass: The Metamorphosis of the Thousand and One Nights* (Richmond, 1999), 3.

[11] Wiener, 'Byron and the East', 89-129 (114).

essay, however, discussion will be limited to the first four of Byron's Turkish Tales: *The Giaour* and *Bride of Abydos* of 1813, and *The Corsair* and *Lara* of 1814.

Nearly every study of the influence of the *Nights* begins with a chronology of their English appearances.[12] Nigel Leask has already argued in his influential *British Romantic Writers and the East: Anxieties of Empire* that 'The great stimulus for the new taste in oriental literary commodities was undoubtedly the *Arabian Nights Entertainment*, translated into English from Galland's 'translation' in the period 1704-12.'[13] As Leask indicates, Galland's 'translation' was far from straightforward, however, John Payne's comments of 1879 suggest that despite such a controversial reputation the text retains significant literary value:

> Numerous as are the mistakes and inaccuracies, willful and involuntary, that deface it, there lives in it, if not the letter, emphatically the true spirit of Oriental romance, as seen by European observers through the intervening media of distance and difference; and his charming style, the fine flower of the literary manner of the eighteenth century [...][14]

Or, as Borges evocatively phrases it: 'We, their mere anachronistic readers of the twentieth century, perceive only the cloying flavor of the eighteenth century in them and not the evaporated aroma of the Orient which two hundred years ago was their novelty and their glory.'[15] Certainly, Galland's *Nights* and responses to it tell us more about British Romanticism than the Orient. Southey regarded the 'intervening media of distance and difference' as the essential ingredient in the *Nights* palatability, remarking that the *Arabian Nights* 'abound with genius' but only because 'they have lost their metaphorical rubbish in passing through the filter of a French translation'.[16] In a comparison of the *Nights* with select examples from Byron's Eastern oeuvre such as this, discussion of the developing nature of the *Nights* can be restricted to a consideration of which version would have been available to Byron during the composition of his Oriental costume poetry. Wiener reasonably concludes that though Byron may have read Galland in the original French, or in translation, 'It is most probable that during the preparation of the Turkish Tales he used the edition of Jonathan Scott' owing to

[12] For a list of English translations, see Robert L. Mack's 'Select Chronology of the Oriental Tale and Related Writings in English' in *Oriental Tales* (Oxford, 1992), lvi-lxi.

[13] Nigel Leask, *British Romantic Writers and the East: Anxieties of Empire* (Cambridge, 1992), 19. The first English translation was not actually available until 1706 (Sallis, 3), and the final two volumes of Galland's twelve volume set in French did not appear until 1717, two years after his death; see Duncan B. Macdonald, 'A Bibliographic and Literary Study of the First Appearance of the *Arabian Nights* in Europe', *The Library Quarterly*, 2.4 (1932), 387-420 (387).

[14] John Payne, 'The Thousand and One Nights I', *The New Quarterly Magazine* (January 1879), 150-174 (154).

[15] Jorge Luis Borges, *The Total Library: Non-Fiction 1922-1986*, ed. Eliot Weinberger, trans. Esther Allen et al (London, 2000), 93.

[16] Robert Southey, *The Poetical Works of Robert Southey* (London, 1876), 215n.

the presence of that edition in Byron's library.[17] Though Payne makes no mention of Scott among the 'versions with which I am acquainted, that are worthy of serious notice',[18] Scott's edition was, according to Muhsin Jassim Ali, among the most authoritative editions available at the start of the nineteenth century: Scott published to answer 'the call for an accurate translation that would satisfy the emerging scientific spirit'.[19] Despite manifold similarities with the Galland edition, I refer *exclusively* to Scott's edition of the *Arabian Nights*, and not the *Nights* more generally.

The sequence of the tales has never been taken to exist in a fixed order; as Rana Kabbani has commented, 'The collection of stories commonly referred to as the 'Arabian Nights' was never a definitive text in Arabic literature as is generally supposed by a Western reader'.[20] Without assuming an unchanging *Nights* or unchanging Orient, I shall be taking Scott's edition of *Nights* as existing as a whole and argue that the manner in which the individual tales are organised is deliberate, and intensifies the didactic intention of the text.[21] Whilst I would agree with Peter Heath's qualification that the didacticism of the *Nights* 'might not immediately appear self-evident',[22] recent scholarship on the *Nights* has turned away from nineteenth-century criticism, notably that of G. K. Chesterton and E. M. Forster, who argue the primary focus of Scheherazade's narrative is to ignite in the sultan (and reader) the 'wish for an everlasting story',[23] and that she only survives 'because she managed to keep the king wondering what would happen next.'[24] Heath argues that Scheherazade's 'main purpose with this strategy is not procrastination [...] On the contrary, Schahrazād is narrating tales primarily to instruct the King.'[25] Though Scheherazade's suspenseful *modus operandi* does not necessarily sit contrariwise to the assertion of didactic intent, as Heath appears to suggest, that her major task is the reorientation of the Sultan's perspective is beyond doubt. Fedwa Malti-Douglas similarly contends that Scheherazade's arduous task is to educate the sultan 'in the ways of a non-problematic heterosexual relationship.'[26] Makdisi and Nussbaum follow twentieth-century feminist interest in the *Nights*,

[17] Wiener, 'Byron and the East', 89-129 (91n). Wiener points out that Scott's six volume set 'appears as item No. 23 in the 1816 sale catalogue of Byron's books, a copy of which may be found in the British Museum.' I refer to the set housed in the Bodleian, shelf mark 931 f.46 (v.1) to 931 f.51 (v.6).
[18] John Payne, 'The Thousand and One Nights II', *The New Quarterly Magazine* (January 1879), 377-401 (396).
[19] Muhsin Jassim Ali, *Scheherazade in England: A Study of Nineteenth-Century English Criticism of the* Arabian Nights (Washington D. C., 1981), 74.
[20] Rana Kabbani, *Europe's Myths of Orient* (Bloomington, 1986), 23.
[21] Muhsin Mahdi, *The Thousand and One Nights* (Leiden, 1995), 2. See also Peter Heath's argument that the individual tales 'may also be viewed as integral parts of larger, complex literary structures' in his chapter in *The Thousand and One Nights*', *The Arabian Nights Reader*, 170-225 (171).
[22] Heath, *The Arabian Nights Reader*, 170-225 (203).
[23] G. K. Chesterton, 'The Everlasting Nights', *The Spice of Life and Other Essays* (Beaconsfield, 1964), 58-60 (58).
[24] E. M. Forster, 'The Story', *Aspects of the Novel* (Penguin, 2005), 40-53 (41).
[25] Heath, *The Arabian Nights Reader*, 170-225 (204).
[26] Fedwa Malti-Douglas, 'Shahrazād Feminist', *The Arabian Nights Reader*, 347-364 (359).

which suggests that Scheherazade's story primarily gives voice to culturally significant themes rather than narrative stylistics: 'Arab and Persian women figure centrally in the *Nights*, and one might argue that part of its modern legacy is that it gave voice to European women writers and feminist themes on a worldwide scale.'[27] In a consideration of the feminist legacy of the *Nights* in Byron's Oriental poetry, one can begin to observe a productive partnership between the study of feminist themes alongside narrative stylistics.

The presentation of women in Scott's edition of the *Nights*, culminating in the success of the heroine of the frame narrative, is comparable with a sense of female heroic development found in Byron's *Turkish Tales*. Significantly, the presentation of women in the first three volumes of Scott's edition of the *Nights* conforms to the limited notions of womanhood which can be observed in Byron's own early Tales, *The Giaour* and *The Bride of Abydos*, though Byron (mercifully) exhibits his Western sensibilities in his rather more cautious deployment of misogynist violence. Both of Byron's 1813 tales are concerned with forbidden love, and accord with what Borges believes to be one of the favourite themes of the *Nights*: 'death for love'.[28] In the former, the punishment faced by the heroine Leila is drowning in a sack, a punishment the author assures is 'now less common in the East than formerly';[29] in the latter the lovers, who have mistakenly believed themselves to be brother and sister throughout their childhood, attempt to elope, only to be thwarted by Zuleika's father, the Pacha; Selim is killed in battle, and Zuleika dies on hearing the news of his death.

The Giaour and *The Bride of Abydos* appear to conform to the misogynistic setting of the *Nights*, which is infamously established by the focus on female adultery and violent retribution in the frame narrative. The cuckolded Sultan of the *Nights'* opening story executes his faithless wife and resolves to wed a new bride each night, and have her strangled the following morning (I, 19).[30] The stories that form the major body of the *Nights* are told by Scheherazade, the vizier's daughter, who bravely volunteers to marry the sultan herself to prevent him strangling every marriageable maid in the land; she proceeds to deter the sultan from carrying out her own execution by telling him such engaging stories that he postpones her fate for 1001 nights. Byron's first tale presents a heroine whose fate, unlike Scheherazade's, is sealed from the opening Advertisement, though the disjointed fragmentary nature of the narrative of *The Giaour* means that the 'circumstances' surrounding the fate of Leila do not become clear until

[27] Saree Makdisi and Felicity Nussbaum, 'Introduction', *The Arabian Nights in Historical Context*, 19.
[28] Borges, *The Total Library*, 96.
[29] *CPW*, III, 39. Byron comments on Leila's murder (*The Giaour*, 1334) that 'The circumstance to which the above story relates was not very uncommon in Turkey' (*CPW*, III, 422). McGann has speculated upon Byron's own involvement in the controversy, though admits there is 'unfortunately little data to substantiate' such speculation (see *CPW*, III, 415). For Byron's unpublished note on the drowning of Leila see *CPW*, III, 423.
[30] All citations taken from Jonathan Scott, ed., *The Arabian Nights Entertainments*, 6 vols (London, 1811).

over three hundred lines into the text. Even then, her murder is censored by asterisks:

> 'Yet 'tis the longest voyage, I trow,
> That one of' — * * * *
> * * * * * * * *
> Sullen it plunged, and slowly sank,
> The calm wave rippled to the bank;
> I watch'd it as it sank, methought
> Some motion from the current caught
> Bestirr'd it more, — 'twas but the beam
> That chequer'd o'er the living stream —
> (*The Giaour* I, 372-379)

The use of 'trow' at the end of line 372 is haunted by the possibility of 'woe' being the completing word of the interrupted heroic couplet. The absence of gendered pronouns withholds any human identity from the sack and its contents. Objectified in life ('The lovely toy so fiercely sought' (I, 404)), it is perversely apt that Leila is treated so in death. The only adjective the fisherman attributes to the sack is sullenness, which serves only to emphasise the immaterial quality of its contents,[31] and made heavier by Byron's inversion of the expected opening iamb, which suggests a bodily weight.

The brutality of Leila's murder is informed by a cultural specificity: being drowned in a sack as punishment for infidelity is figured as an Eastern custom. Yet she is the only one of the Eastern heroines to die by violent means. The nature of her death is also rather less gory than her Arabian sisters. In 'The History of the Young King of the Black Isles' the adulterous queen is cut in half by her husband (I, 142) and at the start of the Story of Sinbad, where the hero is interred in a tomb with a basket containing 'the corpse of a young lady, whiter than snow, all cut in pieces.' (II, 100) We later discover, in the 'Story of the Three Apples', that she has been murdered by her husband after he mistakenly believes her to have cuckolded him with a black slave (II, 109).

The primary cause of death for Byron's Eastern women is a broken heart, with five out of the seven Eastern heroines suffering this fate, including Zuleika of *The Bride of Abydos*: 'He was thy hope — thy joy — thy love — thine all — / And that last thought on him thou could'st not save / Sufficed to kill —' (*The Bride of Abydos* II, 636-638). As is predominantly the case in the later tales, the heroine's fate is tied to that of her hero's; her grief at being unable to save his life leaves her unable to continue her own. In these lines, Byron adapts an earlier rendition of this sentiment in *The Giaour*, the hero reacting to Leila's death as follows: 'My good, my guilt, my weal, my woe, / My hope on high–my all below.' (*The Giaour*, 1182-1183). Though the remaining tragic tales conclude with broken-

[31] *OED*, 'Sullen' 3a. <http://dictionary.oed.com> [accessed 6 October 2010].

hearted heroines, the prototype of the grieving voice is that of the hero's.[32] Byron's early attention to the masculine experience of grief contrasts with the general emphasis being placed on feminine forms of mourning in the *Nights*,[33] and his demonstrative awareness of this tradition throughout the tales makes his initial focus on the mourning Giaour all the more remarkable.[34] In addition, that none of the heroines in Scott's edition are drowned in sacks,[35] and none die of broken hearts, suggests that whilst Byron's heroines of the tragic tales engage with a fate determined by geography, the nature of their death is more explicitly engaging with a Western tragic tradition.[36]

As the respective titles of the 1813 poems would indicate, the primary focus of the first is the hero, the Byronic Giaour, the second is the heroine, the not-quite-bride of Abydos.[37] The 1814 tales present heroes and heroines that command equal attention. *The Corsair* narrates the adventures of a pirate captain, Conrad, whose feud with the Pacha Seyd ends in Conrad's imprisonment. Separated from Medora, the woman he loves, Conrad encounters the harem slave Gulnare. Though her love for him is unrequited, she murders the Pacha on his behalf thereby freeing them both. On his escape, Conrad learns that Medora, fearing the worst, has died of a broken heart. Gulnare's fate is unclear, though contemporary reviewers speculated that she returned as Kaled, heroine of *Lara*. *Lara's* title character is a characteristic example of the Byronic hero, 'Much to be loved and hated, sought and feared' (I, 290). His only human companion is the enigmatic (and cross-dressed) Kaled, whose feminine gender is only revealed at the end of the poem at the news of Lara's death. It is in the presentation of an alternative *female* hero in *The Corsair* and *Lara* that Byron's tales find what Leask describes as a 'transgressive path' which counteracts the 'official' heroism of the *Tales*'.[38]

[32] The inversion of the two early tales is made rather more complete by the shared fate of the deceased lovers: like Leila, Selim is committed to the sea, and haunts the billows (*Bride*, II, 723-728).
[33] Scott's introductory essay (I, lxxxv) describes the chief mourner: 'She occasionally utters the most dismal shrieks, which are chorused by the wullwulleh of the other women often hired for the occasion'; and 'The Story of Ali Baba and the 40 Robbers Destroyed by a Slave', refers to the 'lamentable cries' of women at funerals (V, 150).
[34] See 'woman's wildest funeral wail' (*The Giaour*, I, 323); 'Can he not hear / The loud Wul-wulleh warn his distant ear?' (*Bride*, II, 626-627).
[35] Though there are examples of men and children being drowned, or nearly drowned, as in 'The Story of the Three Calenders, Sons of Sultans; and the Five Ladies of Bagdad' (I, 320-322) and 'The Story of the Sisters Who Envied Their Younger Sister' (V, 350).
[36] The emphasis I place on genre is contrary to Joseph Lew's statement that 'Byron helped to create an expectation based not on genre but on geography'. See 'The Necessary Orientalist? *The Giaour* and Nineteenth-Century Imperialist Misogyny' in Alan Richardson and Sonia Hofkosh, eds., *Romanticism, Race, and Imperial Culture, 1780–1834* (Bloomington, 1996), 173-202 (175).
[37] In its review of 'Lord Byron's *Bride of Abydos and the Corsair*', the *Antijacobin Review* (March 1814) acerbically comments, 'It was reserved for the ingenuity of Lord Byron to produce a bride without a marriage' (Donald H. Reiman, ed., *The Romantics Reviewed: Contemporary Reviews of British Romantic Writers*, 'Part B: Byron and Regency Society Poets', 5 vols (New York, 1972), I, 42. For Byron's reaction to the alleged blunder of his poem's title see *BLJ*, 3, 233.
[38] Leask, *British Romantic Writers*, 16.

Leask rightly emphasises the importance of the heroines, rather than the heroes of the two 1814 tales, 'for it is the women who suddenly spring to life.'[39] In the 1814 tales the radicalization of the heroine is far more explicit than in any of the other tales. Compare Zuleika's flight with Selim:

> More free her timid bosom beat,
> The maid pursued her silent guide;
> And though her terror urged retreat,
> How could she quit her Selim's side? (*Bride*, II, 95-98)

> With Kaled's steadfastness:
> He turned his eye on Kaled, ever near,
> And still too faithful to betray one fear; (*Lara*, II, 348-349)

> This Lara mark'd, and laid his hand on his:
> It trembled not in such an hour as this; (II, 354-355)

The motivation for such devotion is unchanging: love. Yet the manner in which it manifests itself, and the actions taken by each heroine are striking in their dissimilarity. As far as one can speak convincingly of a sense of development within poems written and published within eight months of each other,[40] it is clear that Byron's initial attempt to try his hand on a female character in Zuleika[41] encouraged him to repeat the endeavour.

Scheherazade is an early example of the kind of heroine we encounter in Byron's later Turkish tales, possessing 'courage, wit, and penetration, infinitely above her sex. She had read much, and had so admirable a memory, that she never forgot any thing she had read. [...] Besides this, she was a perfect beauty, and all her accomplishments were crowned by solid virtue' (I, 20). Notably, other than Scheherazade herself, the first three volumes of Scott's *Arabian Nights* contain few examples of radical femininity. A shift, however, occurs in the third volume. Despite opening with the expression of similar sentiments to those of the Sultan in the frame story in the 'Story of Kummir al Zummaun and the Princess of China' ('I know not whether I could prevail on myself to marry, on account of the trouble incident to a married life, and the many treacheries of women, which I have read of' (III, 105)), the volume swiftly progresses to the 'Story of Noor Ad Deen and the Fair Persian', whose hero adopts an almost Wollstonecraftean rhetoric, stating 'there is but little difference between brutes and those men who keep a slave only to look at, and to gratify a passion that we have in common with them'(III, 284). The buying and selling of female slaves informs much of the narrative of the stories in the third volume; along with the

[39] Leask, *British Romantic Writers*, 45.

[40] *The Bride* and *Lara* were published swiftly after composition, on 2 December 1813 and 6 August 1814 respectively.

[41] Letter 'To Edward Daniel Clarke', 15 December 1813 (*BLJ*, 3, 199): 'I also wished to try my hand on a female character in Zuleika – & have endeavoured as far as ye. grossness of our masculine ideas will allow – to preserve her purity without impairing the ardour of her attachment.'

Fair Persian, there is 'The Story of Prince Beder and the Princess Jehaun-Ara', which contains the following condemnation of slavery by the heroine, Gulnare of the Sea (III, 383): 'The body indeed may be enslaved, and under the subjection of a master, who has the power and authority in his hands; the will and never be conquered, but remains free and unconfined, depending on itself alone.' (III, 382) The sentiments and language are remarkably similar those expressed by Byron's Gulnare: 'I felt—I feel—love dwells with—with the free' (*The Corsair* II, 502) and:

> I never loved—he bought me—somewhat high—
> Since with me came a heart he could not buy. (III, 329-330)

Also comparable is 'The Story of Ali Baba and the 40 Robbers Destroyed by a Slave', where Morgiana, the slave of the title, manages to end the lives of 37 of the robbers; she begins by stabbing the leader of the gang of thieves with a poniard, saving Ali Baba's life a second time, in a manner remarkably akin to that of Byron's Gulnare. In return, Ali Baba grants her freedom and marries her to his son (V, 179).

Crucially, the final tale of Scott's fifth volume, 'The Story of the Sisters Who Envied Their Younger Sister', told immediately prior to the happy conclusion of the frame, is one of female heroism. The latter half of the tale follows the adventures of the daughter of the younger sister of the title, Princess Perie-zadeh, who goes on a quest to rescue her brother. Though she is cautioned of the danger ahead, she asserts confidence in her abilities: 'as in all enterprises and dangers every one may use strategem' (V, 379). The 'Heroic princess' obtains the object of her quest – a talking bird – 'so courageously' that the bird swears 'inviolable fidelity' (V, 381). She leads the way home, her male companions declaring: 'Madam, were we ignorant of the respect due to your sex, yet after what you have / done for us there is no deference we would not willingly pay you, notwithstanding your modesty; we entreat you no longer to deprive us of the happiness of following you'' (V, 386-387). Again, we are reminded of *The Corsair*, where we are told of Conrad's men: 'had they known / A woman's hand secured that deed her own, / She were their queen – less scrupulous are they / Than haughty Conrad how they win their way' (III, 508-511).

The sixth volume of Scott's *Nights*, which collects extra tales selected from the Montagu manuscript copy and translated by Scott, contains two further tales of female resourcefulness and courage. The first, 'The Story of the Lovers of Syria; or, The Heroine' follows the heroine of the title who is separated from her lover after being taken hostage by the master of a ship. Outwitting her captors, she takes control of the ship and its crew and sails for the scene of her kidnapping. En route, the heroine collects 39 ladies and 40 robbers, taking the robbers' booty, and clothing the women as men in the process (VI, 250-251). Before being reunited with her lover, the convincingly cross-dressed heroine arrives in a foreign land, takes up the position of sultan and, subversively, is

married to the vizier's daughter: 'From this time they lived in perfect happiness together, one exercising the authority of sultan to the satisfaction of the subject, and the other acting the part of a satisfied and obedient wife.' (VI, 253-254) This 'artful yet virtuous' (VI, 255) heroine continues to reign as sultan until the arrival of her father, and her lover. She and her wife are married to the lover and live happily ever after. The storyline of 'The Heroine' invites comparison with *Twelfth Night*, and indeed, becomes almost an Arabic pantomime of its Shakespearean relative. Such early examples of cross-dressed heroines appropriating traditionally masculine spheres of action offer clear comparison with Byron's own tales, *Lara* in particular.

The tales collated by Scott in the fifth and sixth volume alert us to the narrative power Scheherazade wields. The subliminal influence created by the progression of the tales should not be overlooked: as the nights pass, Scheherazade becomes more daring in her presentation of women, until they eventually become a gloss on her own position. As with Byron's Turkish Tales, we can observe a marked shift in narrative tone, as well as content as we progress through Scott's *Nights*. Scheherazade's voice becomes more didactic at the close of 'The Wonderful Lamp', the opening story of the fifth volume, and we begin to observe a shift in dynamics between the sultan and the story-teller – he begins to wake her himself: 'His only thought now was to see if he could exhaust her store' (V, 46). Whilst we can observe the treatment of women as resources to be exhausted (reminiscent of Byron's casting of the East in his letter to Moore), such straightforward chauvinism is complicated by the sultan's recognition of Scheherazade's tales as educational: 'Indeed they were all diverting, and for the most part seasoned with a good moral' (V, 46). In the concluding lines of the collection, it is made clear that Scheherazade's efforts have been a success, the Sultan declaring:

> I see, lovely Scheherazade, said he, that you can never be at a loss for these little stories, which have so long diverted me. You have appeased my anger. I freely renounce the law I had imposed on myself. I restore your sex to my favourable opinion, and will have you to be regarded as the deliverer of the many damsels I had resolved to sacrifice to my unjust resentment. (V, 411-412)[42]

Not only has she saved her own life, but by her own actions, and her subtle introduction of the merits of women and the capacity of female characters for bravery and honour (by the final volume female heroics and male cowardice come in equal measure), she convinces the sultan to suspend his 'unhappy prejudice against the fidelity of women', and to cease his pursuit of enacting his vengeful and 'unjust resentment' on less fortunate sultanesses.

Though I have argued that Byron's heroines become more active in the later tales, it is important to emphasise that they are not empowered via didacticism. In stark contrast to Scheherazade's appeased sultan, Gulnare's Pacha receives her rhetorical defence of Conrad with incredulity:

> Release my foe! – at whose remonstrance? – thine! [...]
> I have a counsel for thy gentler ear:
> I do mistrust thee, woman! and each word
> Of thine stamps truth on all Suspicion heard. (III,171; 177-179)

Gulnare's voice is not devoid of power throughout the poem. On offering Conrad's relief, she assures Conrad that:

> A single word of mine removes that chain:
> Without some aid how here could I remain (III, 314-315).

Yet Gulnare's failed attempt at coercing Seyd through verbal means necessitates her recourse to violent ones.

Both the *Nights* and the Tales resist categorization. Partly such resistance is owing to their origins. As Eva Sallis has indicated, the *Nights*: 'evolved, arguably as a response or reaction to a rigid social and spiritual structure, and satisfies a need similar to that which generates carnival and carnivalesque inversions in popular cultures.'[43] She goes on to state that 'The *Nights* does not fit comfortably into the genre of a translation and at the same time does not fit comfortably into the canon of English literature.'[44] We can extend such an analysis to Byron's own Tales, which masquerade as Eastern tales, clothed in Oriental costume, and remain to be taken seriously in their canonicity. The various conditions surrounding the Tales' conception, not least the evident vacillation of Byron's own opinion of what they were and how they should be taken, prevent a sterile reading of them as being serious socio-political critiques. Yet, as Marilyn Butler has argued, 'In either case, not to attend to the variety of motive and of social philosophy in this generation of writers is to impose an untenable uniformity on the English Romantic poetry addressing the East, or, simply, not to hear what is being said.'[45] And it is variety of motive *and* content that both the *Nights* and the Tales teach us. As Chesterton wrote in his critique of the *Nights*, 'The possibilities of life are not to be counted. That is the profoundly practical moral buried in the *Arabian Nights*.'[46] The profoundly practical literary moral of the both Byron's *Tales* and the *Arabian Nights* is just that: the possibilities of text are not to be counted.

Balliol College, Oxford

[42] This ending is remarkably close to Galland's conclusion. In other versions Scheherazade produces three sons (or variation on that number) and begs to be allowed to live for their sake.

[43] Sallis, *Sheherazade Through the Looking Glass*, 1.
[44] Sallis, *Sheherazade Through the Looking Glass*, 7.
[45] Marilyn Butler, 'Orientalism', *The Romantic Period. Penguin History of Literature* (Harmondsworth, 1994), V, 395-447 (447).
[46] G. K. Chesterton, 'The Everlasting Nights', 59.

Glossop and 'the Murderer'

Joseph Riehl

In a letter to John Howard Payne of 23 January 1823 Lamb wrote this puzzling sentence: 'Glossop has got the Murderer' (Lucas, *Letters*, II, 365). After meeting Payne in France, Lamb had been acting as an informal agent for the playwright Payne, then living in France, and was informing him of whether his plays had been accepted for performance, along with other bits of theatre gossip. Here he is either referring to one of Payne's plays, or simply providing a bit of interesting news.

Glossop is very likely Joseph Glossop, the manager/owner of the Royal Coburg Hall, a theatre which he opened in 1818. Edward Ledger's *The Era Almanack* of 1871, provides a detailed history of the theatre. The Coburg was to have opened with *Trial by Battle*, a murderous revenge play by Glossop's theatre manager, William Barrymore.[1] According to Ledger, the theatre, initially designed mainly for melodramas and pantomimes, had what seemed to be a successful run, in spite of the fact that Glossop had claimed to have invested £25,000 in the first three years of operation. But in 1835 the Coburg suddenly failed. Competition among the lesser theatres was intense and, from the beginning, Glossop seems to have engaged in less than ethical practices. In 1821 Glossop and the Coburg were fined £50 for violating their license by employing Junius Brutus Booth who had been contracted by Drury Lane.[2] Moreover, his productions were often adaptations or imitations of the successes of other playhouses. Shortly after the failure of his theatre, Glossop left England for Italy. New owners renamed his theatre The Royal Victoria (later to be known as The Old Vic). Glossop had inherited money from his father, which he had used to build the Coburg. His father also left him the rights to the Milanese theatres, the San Carlo and La Strada, 'at the time the two largest theatres in the world,' (Ledger, 10-11). According to William Ayrton, Glossop took over the

[1] "The Victoria Theatre" in Edward Ledger's *The Era Almanac, 1871*, 7-11. Although the title page specifies 1871 as the date of the volume, the article is designated as being published in 1873.

[2] John Booth, *A Century of Theatrical History 1816 to 1916, The "Old Vic."* Stead, n.d, 13. (Internet / California Digital Archives) and George Rowell, *The Old Vic Theatre: A History* (Cambridge, 1993), 14-19. Glossop was once charged with horsewhipping James Winston, an employee of Drury Lane, and he was forced to pay £150 in damages, see Philip H. Highfill, *et al, A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, and Other Stage Personnel in London, 1660-1800* (Carbondale, IL, 1993) XVI, 187. Rowell writes that Glossop left England in 1822 fleeing a charge of forgery (14), an assertion seemingly disproved by Lamb's letter which indicates that Glossop was still in charge of the theatre in 1823. If he left in 1822, he soon returned. Rowell also asserts that in 1842 Glossop was managing a boarding house in Brussels (18). The sum of £25,000 is mentioned in Thomas Dibdin, *The Reminiscences of Thomas Dibdin* (London, 1827) II, 211-212. There was always a strong, sometimes underhanded, competition between Glossop's Coburg and Dibdin's Surrey Theatre. Dibdin accused Glossop of stealing his ideas and actors. The Surrey's management was accused of similar practices.

management of those theatres in 1833 or 1834, as well as La Canobia.[3] Ayrton wrote, 'He is certainly playing a high card, and how he will finish time must show; certainly the moment of his speculation is not a propitious one, from the scarcity of good composers and singers of excellence.' In 1812 Glossop had married the noted soprano Elizabeth Feron and she seems to have preceded him in Italy.[4] But Glossop's venture in Italy failed and in 1847 Feron, now back in England, was sued for a debt in the amount of £30. The proceedings revealed that Glossop had gone abroad before 1838. Testimony also showed that he was alive as late as 1848 when he wrote a letter to one of the witnesses.[5]

Though it first seemed to me that Lamb was referring to one of Payne's plays stolen by Glossop, 'The Murderer' could well be *The Cry of Blood: or, the Juror Murderer* performed at about the time of Lamb's letter.[6] Could that have been a Payne play, as the context of the letter might suggest? Possibly. Glossop had a long record of pirating Payne's plays. Previously, shortly after the production of Payne's successful *Brutus; or, the Fall of Tarquin* (1818), Glossop produced *The Judgment of Brutus* (1818 or 1819).[7] Both plays deal with the same subject: Brutus' sentence of death upon his sons. In 1821 Glossop was sued for pirating Payne's *Therése or the Orphan of Geneva* from Drury Lane's Robert William Elliston, a case which 'ended in a draw.'[8] Likewise, on 8 May 1823, about four months after Lamb's letter, Payne's very successful opera *Clari, Maid of Milan* was performed at the Theatre Royal.[9] Glossop immediately put a version of *Clari* on the boards at the Coburg.[10] However, in spite of the evidence of Glossop's repeated 'borrowings' from Payne, the author of *The Cry of Blood* was not Payne, but H.M. Milner, Glossop's resident playwright.[11] Glossop had

[3] *The Harmonicon*, 2 (1832), 212-213. Ayrton will be familiar to readers as Lamb's musical friend. La Canobia was another Milanese opera house. Most of the dates of Glossop's movements are not clear, though sources generally differ only by a year or two.

[4] Also Fearon, d. 10 May 1853, obituary notice, *The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Review*, 221 (1853), 678 (Internet). According to the entry for George Augustus Polgreen Bridgewater at AfriClassical.com, she moved to Italy in 1827 and her husband Joseph Glossop seems to have followed around 1834.

[5] Frederick Pollock, et al, eds., *The Revised Court of Cases: Being a Republication of Such Cases in the English Court of Common Law and Equity from the Year 1785 as are Still of Practical Utility* (London, 1848), 76 (643), Sayer vs. Glossop, 6 June, 1848. The case concerned a debt incurred by Mrs. Feron, who asserted that she was not responsible under the principle of coverture, which held that in general a husband was responsible for his wife's debts. She was not able to prove either that she was married or that her husband was alive, see *Law Times*, 11 (1848), 225. The debt was for £30.

[6] Booth, 17-18.

[7] Booth, 12-13.

[8] Booth, 15.

[9] The play introduced 'Home, Sweet Home'. Payne wrote the lyrics; the music was adapted from a 'Sicilian air' by Henry Rowley Bishop, see Byron Edward Underwood, 'The German Prototype of the Melody of "Home! Sweet Home!"', *Jahrbuch für Volksliedforschung*, 22 (1977), 36-48, and *The Musical Times*, 1 December 1886, 708 (Internet).

[10] 'Memoirs of John Howard Payne', *North American Magazine* 2.7, 43, see also Rowell, 12.

[11] Booth, 17. Milner also wrote for the Coburg an adaptation of Mary Shelley's work, which he entitled *Frankenstein, or The Man and the Monster*, and which introduced into the Frankenstein legend, the famous line, 'It Lives!' a line which does not appear in the book (BBC, 'Frankenstein, the Legacy,' 26 October 2007).

chosen Milner to write the Coburg's version of Payne's *Therése.* (In fact, Milner had translated the play from Victor Ducange's French original, just as Payne had done.) If 'the Murderer' was in fact one of Payne's plays, would Payne have submitted a play to Glossop who had already 'pirated' two of his plays, and would soon pirate another? In any case, no other plays by Payne which deal with a murderer are listed in his bibliography, and I have found no record of any of Payne's plays ever being performed at the Coburg, nor can I find a record of any play titled simply 'The Murderer' there.

Another possibility suggests itself. There was an intense rivalry between Glossop's Coburg and the nearby Surrey Theatre. A play titled *The Murderer, or the Devoted Son* had opened at the Surrey Theatre 8 April 1822 'translated and adapted by Mr. J. H. Amherst.' The Surrey had been managed and partly owned by Thomas Dibdin, son of Lamb's friend Charles Dibdin, a fact which may suggest why Lamb was concerned with *The Murderer,* but Thomas left the Surrey a month before to manage the Haymarket. His successor, a Mr. Borroughs, and not Glossop, had staged *The Murderer.*[12] Did Burroughs inherit the script of *The Murderer* from Dibdin? Did Borroughs or Dibdin pirate the play from Glossop? Was Glossop considering his own version of the play almost a year after it had been presented at the Surrey? Indications are that, given the intense competition between the Surrey and the Coburg, either of those conclusions is possible.

University of Louisiana

[12] Dibdin, 174, 233. *The Theatrical Observer and Daily Bills of the Play* 2:195-350: (Jul 1, 1822-Dec 31, 1822) 11, *The Drama: or, Theatrical Pocket Magazine,* 3.3 (August 1822). There are indications of an intense rivalry between the Surrey and the Coburg (See Dibdin, 209). For instance, on November 17, 1823, both theatres presented plays based on the same incident on the same night. Coburg presented *The Gamesters, or the Murderers at a Desolate Cottage* based on the murder of William Weare by John Thurtell which had taken place only weeks before on October 24, (See Allardyce Nicoll, *A History of English Drama 4.* Cambridge, 1955, 466, "Thurtell, John," *DNB,* and Jeffrey Cass and Larry H. Peer, *Romantic Border Crossings, 28*). On the same night, the Surrey presented its version, later published as *The Gamblers : a new melo-drama in two acts of peculiar interest, as performed for the 1st and 2d times, November 17 & 18, 1823 : suppressed by order of the Court of King's Bench.* (The theatre claimed to be using the identical "horse and gig" that were used in the murder. "This is all very improper" wrote the commentator (*Theatrical Observer* 620 November 18, 1823]) *The Gamblers* was actually cancelled by authorities on November 10 (*Theatrical Observer* 618 [November 15, 1823]) and after the two performances the next week, it was definitively suppressed at the insistence of the lawyer for Thurtell *(Theatrical Observer* 620 [November 18, 1823]). The Coburg changed the name of its play to *The Inseparables, or the Spectre of the Desolate Cottage.* (Nicoll, 466). The Coburg play was written by the previously mentioned M. H. Milner, and, revised, it was published in 1824 under the title *The Hertfordshire tragedy, or, The victims of gaming : a serious drama in two acts (founded upon recent melancholy facts) : as first performed at the Royal Coburg Theatre on Monday, Jan. 12, 1824.* Milner's play was apparently restaged to take advantage of the hanging of Thurtell only three days previous.

Wordsworth's 'St Paul's'

Ian M. Emberson

WORDSWORTH'S 'St. Paul's' is an elusive poem. I first came across it in a brief mention in *The Gaskell Journal.* Yet when I picked up *The Complete Poetical Works of William Wordsworth – with an introduction by John Morley* (1888), I failed to find it. Intrigued by this omission I tried the Internet, and came across a message from a distressed young lady student pleading with anyone who could post her a copy! Later that morning I had the good fortune to find a selection on the shelves of Todmorden Library which contained the much sought after work.[1] On reading it I was surprised to discover that this was no product of some Wordsworthian 'off day' (of which there were many), but represented the poet at his very best – in fact it could easily be mistaken for a passage from *The Prelude.* Yet for unknown reasons Wordsworth never published it in his lifetime, and several 'complete' editions miss it out.

Pressed with conflicting thoughts of love and fear
I parted from thee, Friend! And took my way
Through the great City, pacing with an eye
Downcast, ear sleeping, and feet masterless
That were sufficient guide unto themselves,
And step by step went pensively. Now, mark!
Not how my trouble was entirely hushed,
(That might not be) but how by sudden gift,
Gift of Imagination's holy power,
My soul in her uneasiness received
An Anchor of stability. It chanced
That while I thus was pacing I raised up
My heavy eyes and instantly beheld,
Saw at a glance in that familiar spot,
A visionary scene – a length of street
Laid open in its morning quietness,
Deep, hollow, unobstructed, vacant, smooth,
And white with winter's purest white, as fair,
As fresh and spotless as he ever sheds
On field or mountain. Moving Form was none
Save here and there a shadowy Passenger,
Slow, shadowy, silent, dusky, and beyond
And high above this winding length of street,

[1] *William Wordsworth: the Major Works,* ed. Stephen Gill (Oxford, 1984).

This noiseless and unpeopled avenue,
Pure, silent, solemn, beautiful, was seen
The huge majestic Temple of St Paul
In awful sequestration, through a veil,
Through its own sacred veil of falling snow.
(Gill, *Oxford Authors*, 332-333)

Its basic theme is one much explored by Wordsworth. As elsewhere in his work, it starts by describing a situation of distress and uncertainty. Similarly, it goes on to set out a progression from this condition to some more hopeful state, brought about by an encounter with a person or place – thereby providing the poet with a new vision. *Resolution and Independence* follows this pattern. In stanza four we learn that 'fears, and fancies, thick upon me came'. No real explanation of these fears and fancies is given – in fact they seem to belong to that intangible realm of ill-moods to which humankind is prone. Fortunately, he encounters the old leech gatherer on the lonely moor, and having listened to him for some while, he 'could have laughed myself to scorn, to find / In that decrepit Man so firm a mind.' Elsewhere it is a natural scene which releases the vision – a mountain, valley or river. 'St Paul's' is unusual in that the focal point is a building – and furthermore a building set in the midst of a vast city. Wordsworth is nearly always thought of as a countryman, yet he was quite capable of praising the city in his verse – one has only to think of the magnificent sonnet *Composed upon Westminster Bridge*. Yet on the rare occasions when he praises the city, it is usually in terms of natural landscape.

Thanks to a letter addressed to Sir George Beaumont on 8 April 1808 we know quite a lot about the tangible background to the poem.[2] It describes an incident on 3 April. Wordsworth had just parted from Coleridge (the 'Friend' mentioned in line two), and was about to travel back to the Lake District, where his sister-in-law, Sara Hutchinson, was reported to be dangerously ill.[3] He crosses the city 'with an eye / Downcast, ear sleeping, and feet masterless'. But then, glancing up Fleet Street, he sees the dome of St Paul's. A thin snow is falling. Few people are around: 'Save here and there a shadowy Passenger.' The analogy isn't exactly used, but the reader will instinctively think of the scene as that of a mountain at the head of a valley – so habitual is Wordsworth's way of describing a cityscape in terms of a landscape. And thus the poem works to its subtly beautiful conclusion – wisely saving the best to last, as the poet sees:

The huge majestic Temple of St Paul
In awful sequestration, through a veil,
Through its own sacred veil of falling snow.

Todmorden, West Yorkshire

[2] *William Wordsworth: Poems, Volume 1*, ed. John O. Hayden (Harmondsworth, 1977), 1031.
[3] Juliet Barker *Wordsworth: a Life* (London, 2000), 371-372 and 870.

Reviews

DAVID FAIRER, *Organising Poetry: The Coleridge Circle, 1790-98* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). £56 hardback. 978 0 19 929616 3

David Fairer's fine book begins with a polemical plea for a distinctive intellectual method and critical vocabulary, which at its heart identifies the great political challenge of the 1790s, the 'revolutionary decade', with the challenge of organic life itself: the issue of 'how a living continuity can accommodate interruption, addition, and alteration' (Fairer, 89). For Coleridge and his circle, of course, that issue played out in personal and literary ways inseparably involved with such political dynamics, and one of the joys of Fairer's book is that his theme so eloquently brings together questions of poetry, biography, revolution and constitution.

Organising Poetry is divided into two parts. In Part I, Fairer develops a sense of the 'organic' that flows not from singleness unfolding itself into a unified totality, but from the negotiations of plurality, collectivity and continuity – the organic *habitat* rather than unific form – with a view to accommodating a messier breadth of activity in the metaphor than the better-known Schlegelian version (at least, as that version has tended to be applied). Fairer takes pains to sift his own methodological concerns from those he finds in the dominant tradition, emphasising 'organic integrity' over 'organic unity' (Fairer, 8), experience over teleology, 'discovered values and emerging meanings' over 'framing truth or directing purpose': 'The aim', he writes, 'is not to be unified or complete, but to be more integrated and thus more articulate' (Fairer, 53).

In a way typical of the book's lucid style and intellectual clarity, Fairer observes the nice irony of 'how fixed and definite' the binary opposition of 'mechanism' and 'organicism' now seems – when dogmatically imposed – and 'how very inorganic is the notion of literary history it assumes' (Fairer, 18). The older Coleridge, as Schlegel's furtive translator, unsurprisingly features as the erstwhile source of this binary opposition in England. Fairer, however, reserves his fire for its subsequent critical application and reification, particularly as found in M.H. Abrams's famous summaries of the place of 'organic form' in literary critical history. In practice, of course, Coleridge's career, with its hospitality to ideas, idiosyncrasies, digressiveness, diversity and manifold fascination might well embody Fairer's preferred notion of 'organic character', being itself a kind of gothic labyrinth. While Fairer is concerned in this book with the Coleridge of the 1790s, illuminating continuities with Coleridge's later intellectual life can be traced from the patterns he discerns here. 'O I begin to be sick of all post-Kantian philosophers', the older Coleridge once complained in the margins of one such author; it is tempting to imagine the conversation, could Fairer have caught him in such a mood.

In constructing the genealogy of the 'organic character' he describes, Fairer puts Locke's model of continuing identity at the centre of a discourse in which he has been marginalised by many scholars of Romanticism. If Locke provides something of a theoretical framework for the book, however, Warton, Burke and Sterne are the informing spirits of its critical fabric. It is, in fact, a Wartonian project, in a very positive sense: like Warton's *History of English Poetry*, *Organising Poetry* attempts to comprehend the 'complications, variety, and extent' of the materials it discusses.

There are two broad critical principles in play here: the further corrosion of the old, simplistic dichotomy between the 'eighteenth-century' and the 'Romantic' – and the blurring of the (still) frequently-applied, but unhelpfully stark distinction between the 'radical' and the 'conservative'. In their place, Fairer presents a richer view, of a culture in search of 'a continual newness that possesses at the same time a continuous meaning' (Fairer, 3) – and hence the proposition 'that the eighteenth-century organic is not a reactionary idea, but one in which continuities can direct and further change' (Fairer, 6).

In Part II of the book, comprising nine chapters and a Postscript, Fairer embodies his animating methodology in a stimulating variety of readings, which touch upon both well-known and less frequently studied texts and connections. 'Tintern Abbey' becomes the occasion for a 'case-study of textual interplay' (Fairer, 97), while Southey's sense of his own literary history is found to be reflected in his narratives on the history of English poetry, in a chapter that contains this memorable observation on the lasting reverence of Southey and Coleridge for Bowles: 'To "outgrow" Bowles was a contradiction if your link with him was an organic one bound up with the continuity of your own history. You did not outgrow Bowles, you grew out of him – a very different idea' (Fairer, 132).

Coleridge's 'Monody of the Death of Chatterton' is read as a barometer of flux, both in Chatterton's posthumous reputation and Coleridge's poetic identity in the early 1790s. The structuring of Coleridge's 1796 *Poems* receives particularly illuminating treatment as the index of 'uncertain hope' (Fairer, 161), and Fairer offers a similarly sequential reading of Coleridge's 1796 *Sonnets from Various Authors* as a 'literary artefact' (Fairer, 192) – a composite work that brings diverse voices into dialogue, and makes their textual relations as vital to the volume as the poems themselves. The literary blends more openly with the biographical in the two chapters that follow, which focus on the dynamics of Coleridgean friendship, as negotiated by Lamb, Lloyd, and – in a rather different way – by Thelwall. In a move that mirrors his argument, Fairer returns in the next chapter to Wordsworth, to 'Tintern Abbey', and then on to 'The Ruined Cottage', in order to examine 'the act of revisiting' (Fairer, 264) itself, where the 'silent overgrowings' of the latter poem are found to contain the key to both its imaginative life and enduring value. The book concludes in style by exploring the complexity of Coleridge's homeward glance in 'The Recantation' and 'Fears in Solitude', with a rich discussion sensitive to the delicacy of what was at stake in those poems, as well as the fraught political climate to which

they responded in the spring 1798. In the case of 'Fears in Solitude', Fairer shows that response to be especially precise: Coleridge's public dating of the poem to 20 April 1798 tied it to Sheridan's influential speech on the national emergency, made in the House of Commons that day.

If I might sound one warning, among so much to relish, it concerns an intellectual danger that strictly speaking, lies beyond the scope of Fairer's book, but springs to mind in the context of his survey of the critical heritage on Romanticism. In the light of Fairer's promotion of a British eighteenth-century idiom of 'organic character', some of his readers might be tempted to prise open an all-too-convenient dichotomy between the fruits of British and German thinking and imagining during this period – something which would, I think, be a disservice to the spirit of 'continuities and connectedness' (Fairer, 1) that animates Fairer's argument. After all, the great flowering of German intellectual and artistic life in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century was eagerly aware of its own continuities with British culture – an iteration through difference not entirely at odds with the model of change and accumulation through time and space that Fairer so engagingly expounds.

What Fairer writes of eighteenth-century 'organic history' holds true of his own book: 'a capacity to notice things goes along with a recognition of the often haphazard way meanings and values evolve' (Fairer, 68). His prose is always both scholarly and lively, with a sure feel for the figurative turn that will crystallise the idea at hand – even the central manoeuvre of the whole book: 'In place of the perfect orchid there stands an old armchair' (Fairer, 32). Settle in for the pleasure of a nourishing read.

GREGORY LEADBETTER
Birmingham City University

ARNOLD ANTHONY SCHMIDT, *Byron and the Rhetoric of Italian Nationalism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010). £52.50 hardback. 978 0 230 61600 4

MARTIN GARRETT, ed., *The Palgrave Literary Dictionary of Byron* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010). £65 hardback. 978 0 230 00897 7

Writing in his Ravenna journal in February 1821, nearly five decades before the eventual unification of Italy, Byron speculated on the political fate of Italy: 'It is no great matter, supposing that Italy could be liberated, who or what is sacrificed. It is a great object – the very *poetry* of politics. Only think – a free Italy!!!' (*Letters & Journals*, IV, 230). Arnold Anthony Schmidt's *Byron and the Rhetoric of Italian Nationalism* seeks to shed light on Italy as the area that first inspired Byron's political fervour. Following on from Maria Schoina's recent *Romantic 'Anglo-Italians': Configurations of Identity in Byron, the Shelleys and the Pisan Circle* (2009), the book is primarily concerned with the relationship between Italy and Byron's Romantic identity. Though Schmidt devotes some attention to the significance of Italian culture and history for Byron's own

writing, he is more especially concerned with the impact Byron's poetical and political identity had on nineteenth-century Italian writers, thinkers, and political activists. The book is among the latest additions to Palgrave's *Nineteenth-Century Major Lives and Letters* series, edited by Marilyn Gaull. It is the second full-length study of Byron in the series, following Cheryl A. Wilson's edited collection of essays, *Byron: Heritage and Legacy* (2008), and continues the series' emphasis on the enduring continental significance of the second-generation Romantics, which began with Susanne Schmid's *Shelley's German Afterlives* (2007).

Schmidt's study examines varying forms of Byronic mythology, all of which elucidate Byron's role in making the Italians, who in turn made Italy. The book is comprised of four chapters. The first, and most thoroughly researched, 'Byron and Italy', considers Byron's Italian experiences in light of the Grand Tour, before focussing on Byron's involvement with the *Carbonari*. The next chapter, 'Byron and the *Risorgimento*', considers the impact of Byron's poetical and political discourse on nationalist rhetoric. In his use of *rhetoric*, Schmidt is less concerned with the ways in which Byron's own rhetorical art influenced that of Italian nationalists, and more alert to the ways in which the myth of Byron was incorporated in the rhetorical stratagems of Italian nationalism. The third chapter, 'Crimes and Punishments', provides a study of Byron's two Venetian dramas, *Marino Faliero* and *The Two Foscari*, examining the dramas via concerns regarding parliamentary and democratic reform in nineteenth-century Italy. Schmidt emphasises the significance of the role of torture in each play when read in their Enlightenment context, drawing upon contemporary essays on jurisprudence. The final chapter pays close attention to *Don Juan* and the evolution of narrative voice, before moving on to consider the significance of Byron's sketch of the Russian General, Alexander Suvorov. The book concludes with a coda on 'Byron's Legacy', which gives a brief study of Gabrielle D'Annunzio's and Guido Gozzano's own literary imaging of Byron.

The purpose of the book is to reconsider the more traditional Anglo-American critical stance, which at its most extreme follows Malcolm Kelsall's assertion in *Byron's Politics* that 'The life of Byron is of no political significance.' One is made aware throughout the study of the competing critical perspectives of the Anglo-American and Continental scholars: 'Clearly Byron—and "Byron"—mean something different to different audiences' (Schmidt, 9). Schmidt explains: 'Italians see Byron as more than a mere symbol; they perceive the poet's actions, including the act of writing itself, as concrete manifestations, not as patriotic gestures.' For Italian Romantics, writing is a political act in itself, as Schmidt points out, 'an opinion that Byron himself did not share' (Schmidt, 10). Schmidt draws attention to Byron's own scepticism regarding the effectiveness of revolutionary writing in the appendix to *The Two Foscari*: 'The French Revolution was *not* occasioned by any writings' (Schmidt, 30). Byron emphasises political action being the root: 'Acts—acts on the part of government, and *not* writings against them, have caused the past convulsions,

and are leading to the future.' Yet Schmidt points to contradictory sentiments in Byron's own poetry, citing the third Canto of *Don Juan*:

> But words are things, and a small drop of ink,
> Falling like dew, upon a thought, produces
> That which makes thousands, perhaps millions, think
> (III, 88, 793-795)

lines which are reminiscent of the 'unvanquishable number' summoned at the close of Shelley's *Mask of Anarchy*. Throughout the study, however, one is aware that Schmidt is presenting "Byron" rather than Byron. When Giuseppe Mazzini, the founder of *Giovine Italia* ("Young Italy") and dubbed by Klemens von Metternich "the most dangerous man in Europe", declared that 'The day will come when democracy will remember all that it owes to Byron', we can assume he was ignorant of Byron's views on democracy:

> It is [...] difficult to say which form of Government is the *worst*—all are so bad. —As for democracy it is the worst of the whole—for *what is* (*in fact*) democracy? an Aristocracy of Blackguards. (Byron, *Letters*, 9, 49)

From the opening chapter, Byron is treated as an emblem rather than an actuality. Arguing for the effect of the Grand Tour on Italy's national identity and Continental political theory as a whole, he indicates the central position Byron's poems occupy in the literature of the Grand Tour, drawing upon *Childe Harold* IV to present the poet as 'the grand tourist par excellence'(Schmidt, 22). Surprisingly, at no point is the reader made aware that, owing to the Napoleonic wars, Byron's Grand Tour did not take the usual route through Italy, instead being left to assume that the poet's first exposure to Italian culture was as a young man. Byron's first experience of Italy, however, was not until October 1816. Unlike Bacon, whose essay "Of Travel" Schmidt uses to highlight the Renaissance origins of the Grand Tour, he does not discriminate between the effects of travel according to age. Equally, for much of the study there is no discrimination between the Grand Tourism of the opening Cantos of *Childe Harold*, composed whilst the poet toured Greece, and the composition of *Childe Harold* IV, which began after Byron's later travels in Switzerland and Italy. It is not until the closing pages of the study that Schmidt nuances his approach to Byron's travels by contrasting Byron as grand tourist with Byron as expatriate—a change of situation and sentiment that Schmidt suggests 'most comfortably inhabits works like *Beppo* and *Don Juan*' (Schmidt, 51). Arguably, this is because Schmidt views it of little significance whether Byron's own Grand Tour took him to Italy; it is the Italian image of Byron as Grand Tourist that is of primary importance. Such an approach informs the entire study. The remainder of the first chapter is concerned with Byron's political activism whilst in Italy. Schmidt initially presents a side of Byron unfamiliar to Anglo-American Byronists: Byron

as prominent *Carbonaro* leader, who penned a 'profusion' of manifestos and proclamations. Though Schmidt does acknowledge a lack of evidence pointing towards Byron's involvement in the *Carbonari*, he maintains that such conjecture enhanced the mythic quality of Byron and is revealing of the manner in which rhetoric operated in nationalist discourse: historical accuracy becomes subordinate to 'ideological and polemical truths' (Schmidt, 40).

In contrast to the explicitly Italian settings of *Marino Faliero* and *The Two Foscari*, the final chapter's focus on *Don Juan* may at first appear an odd choice, considering that despite alleged intentions to make Juan a Cavalier Servante there is a circumspect absence of Italy in the poem itself. The entire of *Don Juan*, however, was composed in the country from where it draws its *ottava rima* form. Schmidt suggests a further debt to Italian tradition in the evolution of the narrative identity of the poem, which he believes to be entirely concomitant with Byron's attendance of Italian salons and—most importantly—*conversazioni*. Schmidt reads *Don Juan* as a conversation, and compares Byron's use of digressive interlude to that of Marlow in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*; an unexpected parallel to draw, unless Schmidt is hinting at *Don Juan* as a phase in the evolution of the novel. Even then, a comparison with the digressive nature of *Tristram Shandy*, Sterne's 'comic epic poem in prose' would have perhaps proven more illuminating.

The Palgrave Literary Dictionary of Byron is the second addition to the recently founded series of *Palgrave Literary Dictionaries*. It is encouraging for those currently working on Byron to have the poet represented second on the list of a series that intends to cover 'some of the major authors of literature written in the English Language'. Garrett has produced an impressively wide-ranging dictionary, with entries on people, places, and poems. Entry lengths are determined by the perceived significance of a particular topic, for example, a line or two is given to the lost early poem 'Bosworth Field', compared with over eight pages on *Don Juan*, which governs the most significant entry in the entire book. Entries on people range from a couple of lines on Charles F. Barry, Byron's banker and friend in Genoa, to two pages on Samuel Taylor Coleridge. The other 'Big Six' poets have similarly lengthy entries with, as ever, the exception of Blake, whose entry is less than an hundred words.

The cover of *The Palgrave Literary Dictionary of Byron* hints at alertness of the Anglo-American cultural mythologization of the poet. The front cover displays a reinvention of Warhol's famous pop art rendition of Marilyn Monroe using the image of the poet painted by George Sanders in 1807. Yet unlike Schmidt's study, which hints at the real thing only to focus on the myth, Garrett demonstrates little awareness of the significance of the poet's contemporary celebrity and fame. There is a modest entry on 'Byromania', but entries on 'Celebrity', 'Female fans', and 'Common place books' are rather glaring omissions given the proliferation of recent critical work in these areas. If, being sympathetic, one could excuse Garrett on grounds of unfortunate timing. Though the book was published only last year, his 'Preface and Acknowledgements' is dated 2009, the year Tom Mole, Ghislane McDayter, and

Atara Stein all published monographs on Byron's celebrity and legacy. There has, however, been a significant amount of work in the field of Byron studies on fandom and celebrity for some time. Corin Throsby's 'Flirting with Fame: Byron's Anonymous Female Fans' was published in *The Byron Journal* in 2004, and Tom Mole's study *Byron's Romantic Celebrity* was released by the *Dictionary*'s own publisher, Palgrave, in 2007.

As a preliminary reference tool, it is arguably beyond the remit of a work of this kind to be at the cutting edge of scholarship. The series editors, Brian Caraher and Estelle Sheehan, state that the primary purpose of these dictionaries is 'to provide the reader with immediate access to reliable information'. Garrett's contribution fulfils its remit as a comprehensive encyclopaedia on Byron's life and work. Entries on substantial works, such as *Childe Harold* and *Don Juan*, provide helpful summaries of publication history and critical heritage. There are concise and useful entries on shorter poems too, from the prolific 'She Walks in Beauty' to the less well-known 'Parody on Sir William Jones's translation from Hafiz—"Sweet Maid etc."' Refreshingly, Byron's prose works are not neglected and Garrett provides entries on prose sketches such as 'An Italian Carnival' (1823); the unfinished satirical piece 'Italy, or *not* Corinna' (1820); and the fragment of Byron's unfinished novel 'Donna Josepha', based on the months preceding Byron's separation from Lady Byron in April 1816. Garrett's cross-referencing is sporadic, and when it does appear tends to be biographical in nature, rather than poetical. There is substantial cross-referencing for 'Harrow', 'Italy', and 'Greece', but none for '*ottava rima*', 'Satire', 'Spenserian Stanza', or the 'Sonnet'. The editors are ambitious in their proposed intended audience of 'students, graduate students, teachers, scholars and advanced general readers.' Students at a formative stage of their English studies may well find the book a useful start point. As an academic resource, however, it both suffers from the necessary limitations of its genre and is too focussed on the biographical—an area long saturated—to make considerable impact on the field of Byron studies or literary studies as a whole.

ANNA CAMILLERI
Balliol College, Oxford

PAMELA CLEMIT ed., *The Letters of William Godwin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). £100.00 hardback. 978-0199562619

William Godwin has often been represented by literary scholars as a cold, aloof man of reason, whose chilling influence Wordsworth, Coleridge and Shelley all had to escape in order to become great poets. This version of literary history, underpinned by a straightforward distinction between Enlightenment rationalism and the Romantic imagination, has been challenged by recent Godwin scholarship, and should finally be laid to rest by Pamela Clemit's magnificent edition of Godwin's letters.

The project will eventually run to six volumes and be the first complete edition of Godwin's surviving correspondence. It will contain over 1,200 letters, three-quarters of which have never been published before. The reasons for this neglect are various and complicated. After Godwin's death in 1836, Mary Shelley started work on a 'life and letters' biography, but had abandoned it by 1840. On her death in 1851, Godwin's letters, together with the rest of the family archive, were left to her son, Sir Percy Florence Shelley. His wife Jane, Lady Shelley, infamously destroyed items that did not conform to Victorian ideas of propriety, adding to letters already destroyed by Mary Shelley and Godwin's second wife, Mary Jane Clairmont. The archive passed through later generations of the family and was eventually loaned, and in 2004 sold, to the Bodleian Library. Other letters remained outside the family archive, and more than 260 are now held in the Carl H. Pforzheimer Collection at the New York Public Library. Further letters are scattered across institutional and private collections. As Clemit writes in her introduction, 'what survives is as much a matter of chance as of good custodianship' (Clemit, xxx).

This long history of archival fragmentation ensures that many of Godwin's letters do not survive. What does survive is a mixture of drafts, holograph letters, returned from their recipients, and copies, both scribal and mechanical, many produced by a letter-copying machine given to Godwin by Thomas Wedgwood. All of this poses considerable editorial challenges, which Clemit is more than equal to. Her work helps to restore Godwin's place in a dazzling intellectual world: this volume alone, covering 1778-97, contains letters to figures including Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Thomas Paine, Charles James Fox, Elizabeth Inchbald and Mary Hays. Clemit's biographical notes are exemplary, succinct, informative and clearly presented, and the editorial apparatus laid out after each letter often includes substantial quotations from the other side of the correspondence, allowing readers to follow both sides of the exchange.

The first part of this volume charts Godwin's progress from hack writer to celebrated philosopher and novelist. In 1783, he wrote to his disapproving mother, Ann Godwin, 'you seem to regret my having quitted the character of a dissenting minister. To that I can only say with the utmost frankness whatever inference may be drawn from it, that the character quitted me' (Clemit, 20). He goes on to declare, 'I know of nothing worth living for but usefulness & the service of my fellow creatures. The only object I pursue is to increase as far as lies in my power the quantity of their knowledge & goodness & happiness' (Clemit, 21). He finally found the opportunity to devote himself to this goal in 1791, when the publisher George Robinson agreed a substantial advance for a book on 'Political Principles'. An unpublished letter to Robinson two years later proposes to capitalize on the success of *Political Justice* with a history of the Roman republic ('the choice of years, the favourite prospect of my life'), on the same lucrative terms of 350 guineas a volume (Clemit, 81). Fortunately, Robinson did not accept the offer, and three weeks later Godwin began writing *Caleb Williams*.

Fewer than thirty pre-1790 letters survive, so the emphasis of this volume is on the way Godwin's relationships were played out against the politics of the 1790s, with a distinctive combination of utopian zeal, high-minded disinterestedness, intense intellectual pursuit and sinewy argument, as friendships were tested by the seriousness of the polemical debates and the abandonment of conventional codes of politeness. As Godwin wrote to his old teacher Samuel Newton in 1793, one of many dissenters who refused to follow him as far as *Political Justice*, 'I make no apology for want of ceremony. We are both of us I conceive enemies to that servility under which the species have so long laboured' (Clemit, 89).

Over the next few years, the primary drama of the letters shifts to the government's persecution of radicals and reformers, many of whom belonged to Godwin's circle. His correspondence gives a fresh perspective on this episode, as he visited his friends in prison and wrote in their support, however imprudent it might be. However, even in this turbulent period, he remained determined that debate should take place in a dispassionate style, writing in a congratulatory letter to Lord Chief Justice Eyre, after Eyre had summed up for an acquittal in the trial of Horne Tooke, 'I cannot believe that truth will ever be injured by a sober & benevolent style' (Clemit, 109). A few months earlier, he had admonished his friend John Thelwall, 'I am sorry to see in your letter a spirit of resentment & asperity against your persecutors. I was in hopes that the solitude of a prison might have taught you to reflect on this error & amend it [...] If you had ever fully conceived the beauty of universal benevolence, you could not thus neglect & offend against it' (Clemit, 103). It is left to the reader to decide whether this determination to engage with radical politics on his own philosophical terms is heroic or myopic.

Following the collapse of the Treason Trials at the end of 1794, the remaining letters concentrate on his relationship with Mary Wollstonecraft, a very different test of Godwin's principles, friendships and reputation. Over half of the letters in this volume are from 1796 and 1797, and there are a total of forty-five letters to Mary Wollstonecraft, although some of these are short notes. By the summer of 1796, Godwin is writing, 'your company infinitely delights me [...] I love your imagination, your delicate epicurism, the malicious leer of your eye, in short, every thing that constitutes the bewitching tout ensemble of the celebrated Mary' (Clemit, 171).

An exchange of letters on 31 December 1796, following an argument between them, introduces the final, tragic year of this volume. As Clemit writes, Wollstonecraft's reply 'probably alludes to the possibility that she might be pregnant', stoically telling Godwin, 'I am, however, prepared for any thing. I can abide by the consequence of my own conduct, and do not wish to envolve any one in my difficulties' (Clemit, 190). Following their marriage at the end of March 1797, Godwin tried hard to reconcile his actions with the notorious rejection of marriage in *Political Justice*. He writes to Thomas Wedgwood, 'having done what I thought necessary for the peace & respectability of the individual, I hold myself no otherwise bound than I was before the ceremony

took place', adding for good measure, 'we do not entirely cohabit' (Clemit, 199-200).

Some of the most moving letters in this volume date from a separation of a fortnight in June 1797, when Godwin went with Basil Montagu to visit Wedgwood in Etruria, Staffordshire and wrote a series of journal-letters home, asking Wollstonecraft to 'tell Fanny, I am safely arrived in the land of mugs', and referring to their unborn child as 'William' (Clemit, 214). Wollstonecraft died on 10 September from complications following the birth of Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, and Godwin wrote five letters the same day, until, as he described a few days later, 'I felt myself called upon by every principle of justice & reason to lay down the pen, & write no more. The effects that employment produced in me alarmed me' (Clemit, 243). The final, anguished months of this volume show Godwin irresistibly drawn towards expressing his feelings through writing to his friends, and at the same time terrified of the strength of feeling, even temporary insanity, that letter-writing produced.

Godwin's commitment to complete candour sometimes produced offence and embarrassment, and can easily be mistaken for social awkwardness. However, it should not be taken for coldness. One of the final letters, to Anthony Carlisle, the surgeon who attended Wollstonecraft in her final days, argues that Godwinian frankness should properly be seen as a rejection of the personal reserve that constitutes 'the English character': 'I regard it to be my duty, & I find if fraught with much pleasure, to tell every man what I think of him, more especially when I find cause for approbation [...] I love these overflowings of the heart, & cannot endure to be always treating, or being treated by my friends, as if they were so many books' (Clemit, 247). This sense of warm, unreserved friendship, between men and women united in common philosophical, literary and political endeavour, is revealed through Pamela Clemit's sterling editorial work, and students of the period will look forward with great anticipation to subsequent instalments of this project.

JAMES GRANDE
King's College London

Society News

Wilhelmina Geddes (1887-1955) was an Irish artist who studied in Belfast under Willam Orpen and later worked in a stained glass studio in Dublin and, from 1925, at Fulham. Her works are to be found in many church windows and there is a notable three-light window at St Bartholomew's, Ottawa, Canada. The scholar, Dr Nicola Gordon Bowe of the Irish National College of Art and Design has written to the Society seeking information about a portrait of Charles Lamb in stained glass which Geddes apparently produced in 1934. Her workbook reveals that on 21 July that year she was paid 6 guineas for this panel by a purchaser recorded (without further particulars) as 'Rev Maclise'. It also shows that there was a proposal for a replica to be produced for 'J Collins' of the Elians, but there is no indication whether this happened. The charcoal cartoon and a coloured

Figure 1: Copyright Dr Nicola Gordon Bowe

design for the panel are reproduced here. If any member is able to throw any light (excuse the Elian pun) on this matter, the Chairman would be pleased to pass the information on to Dr Gordon Bowe. For example, where might the stained glass portrait of Lamb be now? Who was 'Rev Maclise' and was he a descendant of Daniel Maclise on whose portrait the design is evidently based? Interestingly, Geddes had exhibited a couple of panels in London some two years earlier, apparently illustrating Lamb ("Old China" and "Nice Old Purchases") and it would be fascinating to locate these also.

The annual Birthday Luncheon this year was again held at the Oxford & Cambridge Club, when the guest of

Figure 2: Copyright Dr Nicola Gordon Bowe

honour was Dr Greg Dart of University College, London, who gave a fascinating talk on the compilation of Lamb's *Works* in two volumes published in 1818. A presentation was made to our outgoing President, Professor J. R. Watson who retires this year after ten years in office. I would like to take this opportunity of recording the Society's heartfelt gratitude to Dick for his unfailing support and the way in which he has combined a deep knowledge and love of Lamb with genuine warmth in presiding over the Society's celebratory luncheons and other meetings in the last decade. We are very pleased that Dick hopes to go on attending our meetings from time to time.

Nick Powell

Fanny Kelly's Dwelling

30 Moscow Road, London W2, was Fanny Kelly's address in later life. I am happy to leave some juicy topographical research for others and have not even tried to check if the buildings have been renumbered.

Prima facie, No. 30 has been long demolished. Moscow Road runs east-west, near Queensway and Bayswater tube stations, and a little north of the north-west corner of Kensington Gardens. The house was presumably on the north side of Moscow Road, opposite Nos. 65-67 on the south side, now a launderette. On the north-west corner of the junction with Ilchester Gardens is London's Greek Orthodox Cathedral, built in 1877. No. 30 was doubtless on the opposite corner, behind the City of Westminster Micro Recycling Plant and where the London Electricity Moscow Road Substation now stands, built of brick apparently in the 1950s.

D.E. Wickham

Charles Lamb in Cambridge

My last exchange of letters with the late Judith Wilson concerned the refurbishment of (at least) the façade of the building where Charles Lamb stayed in Cambridge and her fear that the commemorative tablet had been removed. She was able to visit the site one last time and reassure herself that all was well. When I visited the place on 25 July 2006 and later, it was interesting to see that the dark stone surround of the tablet, which used to make it merge into the wall, had been stained or painted so that it stood out, as if in a bright frame.

The tablet, stating that 'Charles Lamb / lodged here / August 1819', is upstairs on the left-hand side of No. 11 King's Parade, opposite the main gate of King's College. The building is double-fronted. It used to be the Fudge Kitchen (I don't say a word). At least the first floor, perhaps more likely as the Elian rooms, later housed the Upstairs Gallery.

D.E. Wickham

The Charles Lamb Bulletin

Editor
Stephen Burley

Reviews Editor
Felicity James

Copy Editor
Peter Shrubb

The Charles Lamb Society Bulletin was published in quarterly issues from 1935 to 1972. Its first editor was the Elian scholar and poet S. M. Rich. The new series began in January 1973 as *The Charles Lamb Bulletin* under the editorship of Basil Savage.

The *Bulletin* is a peer-reviewed journal devoted to the study of Charles and Mary Lamb and their circle. It aims to promote Lamb scholarship and welcomes submissions in the form of essays, reviews, and notes and queries from established academics, new entrants to the field, and those who simply admire the Lambs' writings.

Essays submitted to the journal should be in typescript, and be between 4000 and 7000 words in length. Preferably, submissions should be sent to the Editor as an email attachment in MS Word. Submissions should be double-spaced throughout, including quotations, and should follow MHRA style, with a couple of minor alterations. A full style-sheet is available on request.

For further information contact the Editor, Stephen Burley, 2 Royal London Buildings, 644 Old Kent Road, Southwark, London, SE15 1RX (stephenburley@hotmail.com); or the Reviews Editor, Felicity James, School of English, University of Leicester, University Road, Leicester, LE1 7RH (fj21@le.ac.uk).

The Charles Lamb Society

The Charles Lamb Society was founded on 1 February 1935 at a meeting at Essex Hall in The Strand. Its first President was Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch. Today, the Society aims to advance the study of the life, works, and times of Charles and Mary Lamb and their circle; to preserve for the public a collection of Eliana (currently held at Guildhall Library, London); and to stimulate the Elian spirit of friendliness and humour.

The Society holds a series of events each year in London, including lectures, study days, and a Charles Lamb Birthday Luncheon. The Society also publishes the biannual peer-review journal, *The Charles Lamb Bulletin.* For further information please contact the Chairman, Nick Powell (nrdpowell@gmail.com).

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

Printed by the Stanhope Press, 14 Montague Avenue, South Croydon, CR2 9NH.

Registered Charity Number 803222: a company limited by guarantee.
ISSN 0308-0951