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).

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The Charles Lamb Bulletin

Spring 2016

New Series No. 163

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

Charles Lamb's Birthday Toast, 2016
FELICITY JAMES

Pattern and Romantic Creativity
JANE MOORE

Napoleon, Charles Lamb, and the Poets
PAMELA WOOF

James Elia in 'My Relations' and 'Dream Children; A Reverie'
MARGARETA EURENIUS RYDBECK

Appropriate(d) nursery reading; or, (implied) child readers, Charles Lamb, and the Godwins' Juvenile Library
JESSICA LIM

William Godwin's *St Dunstan* and Fanny Burney's *Edwy and Elgiva*
HILARY NEWMAN

PUBLISHED BY
THE CHARLES LAMB SOCIETY

Editorial: It has been a very great privilege to have served as editor of the Bulletin for the past six years. During this time I've been extremely fortunate that my work has put me in touch with Elians throughout the world, from North America to Japan, the Far East and India. In fact, the only part of the world I don't think I've made contact with as the editor of the Bulletin is South America – perhaps we need to address this and look to cultivate an enthusiasm for the Lambs there! I am enormously grateful to everyone who has been in touch over the years and contributed in various ways to the Bulletin, which, I hope, has preserved the Elian spirit of friendliness and humour whilst being heart and soul of scholarship on the Lambs. I am indebted to a huge array of people, not least to the outstanding contributors to the Bulletin, the editorial board for their work peer-reviewing submissions, and Peter Shrubb for his eagle-eyed copy editing. Special thanks must go to Felicity James, Nick Powell and Duncan Wu for their incredibly generous help and support which has been invaluable. I am grateful, too, to Rick Tomlinson, from whom I took over the editorship, and I'm delighted that the new editor, Peter Newbon, is a highly respected Lamb scholar whose work has appeared regularly in the Bulletin in recent years. Thank you again for all of your support and I hope to see many of you at the Lamb events in the future.

This issue includes the birthday toast and essays on Mary and Charles Lamb, Godwin, and Burney. Although there are no reviews this time, we can look forward in the next issue to reviews of recent books by Chris Murray and Richard Berkeley.

The Charles Lamb Bulletin

The Journal of the Charles Lamb Society

New Series, No. 163, Spring 2016

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Charles Lamb's Birthday Toast 2016

Felicity James

I want to begin with a mention of someone who would dearly like to be with us – our President Duncan Wu, who would usually be giving this birthday toast. The pressures of work in the US mean that he is absent for the first time in very many years and he sends his warm regards to everyone. I would also like to take this occasion formally to thank our editor of the Charles Lamb Bulletin, Steve Burley, as he hands over the position. The new editor will be Peter Newbon from the University of Northumbria, who spoke at the Study Day in Highgate last autumn. We are so grateful for Steve's work over the last few years, which have seen the development of a wonderful website, making back issues of the Bulletin freely available and publicising the Society's events. Meanwhile, the Bulletin is a really substantial academic journal and Steve's tireless work in developing its profile and putting each issue so thoughtfully together has been greatly appreciated.

And now to a rather bleak birthday scene two hundred years ago. 1816, the year Lamb turned 41, was a crucial year for Romanticism: it was also an inhospitable one. This was the year 'without a summer', a year of fogs, of storms, of frost and cold. Crops failed; skies were dark. The whole world, it seems, suffered through climactic upheaval, now attributed to the massive eruption of Mount Tambora in the Dutch East Indies in 1815, which had thrown great plumes of volcanic ash into the stratosphere, causing a drop in global temperatures. The oft-referenced literary products of that rainy summer include Byron's apocalyptic poem, 'Darkness', with its image of the death of the sun, swiftly followed by war, bloodshed and disaster, and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, conjured up through gloomy story-telling evenings.

This year also saw the very different worlds of Byron and Lamb intersect, briefly, as Byron encouraged Coleridge to publish *Kubla Khan, Christabel and The Pains of Sleep* with Murray. This prompts one of Lamb's most evocative descriptions, in a letter to Wordsworth of April 1816, of Coleridge reciting 'Kubla Khan' 'so enchantingly that it irradiates & brings heaven & Elysian bowers into my parlour while he sings or says it, but there is an observation Never tell thy dreams, and I am almost afraid that Kubla Khan is an owl that wont bear day light'. Then comes the wonderful depiction of Coleridge, 'his face when he repeats his verses hath its ancient glory, an Arch angel a little damaged. –' It's clear that, for Lamb, the great event of 1816 was Coleridge's move to Highgate: 'the neighborhood of such a man is as exciting as the presence of 50 ordinary Persons. Tis enough to be within the whiff & wind of **his** genius, for us not to possess our souls in quiet' [Marrs, III: 215]. Predictably, by the September of that year Coleridge was becoming evasive and failing to visit, causing Lamb to complain to Wordsworth, 'The rogue gives you Love Powders, and then a strong horse drench to bring 'em off your stomach that they may'nt hurt you' [Marrs, III: 225]. Yet in Lamb's letters of 1816, alongside his complaints about the pressures of work – 'Do'nt drag me so hard by the **hair of my head Genius of British India!**' runs a typical exclamation [Marrs, III: 220]– there is a renewed energy and liveliness, which I think must have been engendered through that contact with Coleridge and the reminder of their London closeness way back in the 1790s. Perhaps hearing 'Kubla Khan' and 'Christabel' once more, and seeing them finally in print, for all Lamb's reservations, sparked a desire to go back to his own reading and writing of that period.

Christ's Hospital Grecians, Talula Docherty and Luna Callis, at the Lamb Luncheon, 13 February 2016

Certainly we find him sending such work as his collaborative volume with James White of 1796, *Falstaff's Letters*, to Leigh Hunt in May 1816, probably accompanied by his 1790s play, *John Woodvil*. In the summer of 1816 he revisited some old haunts of the period including Bristol, 'seed-plot of suicidal Chatterton' [Marrs, III: 224], who of course had been a shared favourite with Coleridge as far back as Christ's Hospital. Charles and Mary then settled for a few weeks 'rustication' in Dalston. While Byron and the Shelleys were sojourning in Geneva, the Lambs were enjoying walks to 'Hackney, Clapton, Totnam, and such like romantic country' [Marrs, III: 224]. Mary commented on what a good holiday they had had, 'What a rainy summer!' she writes to Sara Hutchinson, 'and yet [..] I can hardly help thinking it has been a fine summer, we calculated we walked three hundred & fifty miles while we were in our country lodging' [Marrs, III: 234].

I don't think it is going too far to say that this year, listening to 'Christabel', revisiting rural haunts and friendships of the 1790s, might have been the inspiration for Lamb's *Works* of 1818, which revisit and reprint much of the work of that decade, and which are dedicated to S. T. Coleridge. 1816 might have been a dark year, but it's clear that for Lamb it was 'irradiated' by the presence of his old friend; in his birthday week two hundred years ago he could look forward to a rainy, but fruitful, year ahead. So 241 years on, let us toast the Immortal Memory of Charles Lamb.

University of Leicester

Pattern and Romantic Creativity

Jane Moore

Their colours and their forms were then to me
An appetite, a feeling and a love.
(William Wordsworth, 'Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey' [1798])[1]

The contemporary patchwork quilt offers the artist a unique means of expression which communicates a direct emotional response relating to an appreciation of scale, colour, texture and pattern.
(Christine Nelson, 'Quilt Art' [1987])[2]

In her 1815 essay 'On Needle-work'[3] Mary Lamb sought to persuade leisured women to surrender their attachment to the needle, because, she soberly maintained, 'Needlework and intellectual improvement are naturally in a state of warfare'.[4] My essay takes the occasion of the bicentenary of the publication of Lamb's jeremiad on needlework to reassess the status of needlecraft in writing of the Romantic period.[5] It offers an analysis of the creative interchange between poetry (historically designated in high Romanticism as the work of the male mind) and needlecraft, such as quilting (characteristically seen as women's work and as the labour of the hand rather than the mind).

Wordsworth's vivid expression of his creative response to the amatory power of nature's colours and forms in 'Tintern Abbey', that great final poem in the first volume of *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), cited above, in the first epigraph, is paralleled in the

[1] 'Lines written a few miles above Tintern Abbey, On revisiting the banks of the Wye during a tour, July 13, 1798' (*Lyrical Ballads*, 1798), ll. 80-81, *The Poems of William Wordsworth. Collected Reading Texts from The Cornell Wordsworth*, ed. Jared Curtis, 3 vols, (Penrith: Humanities-Ebooks), I, 374.

[2] Christine Nelson, 'Quilt Art', Cooper Gallery, Barnsley, 25 April-20 May, *CRAFTS*, 87 (July-August, 1987), 47.

[3] 'On Needle-work', written under the pseudonym 'Sempronia', was published in the form of a letter to the editor of the *British Lady's Magazine and Monthly Miscellany* (1 April 1815), reprinted in *The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb*, ed. E. V. Lucas, 7 vols (London, 1903-05), vol. 1, 'Miscellaneous Prose (1798-1834), 204-10, 205.

Adriana Craicun suggests that the pseudonym 'Sempronia' refers to the classical figure of that name, who was 'known for criminal activity and radical politics', and that this choice of name reveals on Lamb's part 'a degree of defiance and assertiveness'. Craicun, *Fatal Women of Romanticism* (Cambridge, 2003), 32. On Lamb's choice of pseudonym, see also Jane Aaron, who notes: 'Mary Lamb probably took her pseudonym from the name of a fictional character in Mary Hays's *Letters and Essays, Moral and Miscellaneous*. Aaron, *A Double Singleness* (Oxford, 1991), 51 2n.

[4] Mary Lamb, 'On Needle-work', *The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb*, op. cit., 205.

[5] An earlier paper was presented at the Charles Lamb Society Day Conference, 'Mary Lamb, "On Needle-work": A Bicentenary Celebration', held at the Swedenborg Hall, Bloomsbury, London, in November 2014. As a practitioner of needlework with an academic interest in quilting (I am a member of the British Quilt Study Group (http://bqsg.quiltersguild.org.uk) and the Quilters' Guild of the British Isles (www.quiltersguild.org.uk), and as a scholar of Romanticism, I was pleased to participate in the Mary Lamb day conference and I am grateful to its organizer, Felicity James.

second, taken from Christine Nelson's 1987 commentary on a contemporary exhibition of quilt art, which represents quilting as an expressive art form that 'communicates a direct emotional response relating to an appreciation of scale, colour, texture and pattern'. Written nearly two centuries after Wordsworth's, Nelson's work can be seen as demonstrating the continuing influence of the Romantic ideology on a modern aesthetic that prioritizes affect and individual imaginative response as key to the creative process. In this initial framing of an analogy between poetry and quilting my argument is not, however, that these cultural forms are interchangeable or of equal value. Plainly making a quilt is one thing and making a poem another, and whether or not we favour the literary art of poetry over craftwork such as quilting is often as much a consequence of education or cultural influence as it is a matter of individual aesthetic response. Despite this proviso, there clearly are important if hitherto neglected conceptual and artisanic parallels between the domestic craftwork commonly associated with women and the poetic work of the creative imagination. The contention here is that an attention to those parallels necessitates a more finely developed idea of Romantic creativity. It is in part because Romanticism as a movement has been so sharply gendered that my project acquires significance. Tracing the affinities between craft/women's work and the 'serious' business of high Romantic art involves recalibrating the significance of both needlework and needlecraft in the wider culture of literary Romanticism, an approach which enables a sharper insight into women Romantics' creative imagination as well as a reinterpretation of the importance of craft to Romantic poetry more generally. Situating needlecraft within, rather than separate from, the realm of the traditionally male-dominated arena of Romantic poetry complicates, and potentially disrupts, the binary structures underpinning the ideology of separate spheres. This paper, then, seeks to open up a new cultural and artistic field of enquiry capable of offering an alternative to the dominant narrative in scholarship of the Romantic period of the needle as a tool of female oppression.

In every creative art (from poetry to music to quilting to gardening) there is pattern. Which is to say structures of expression (whether rhythmic sound patterning or visual shape and colour-coding) are part of any aesthetic production and historical period. Both an adherence to and an experimenting with the structural patterning of metre and form in poetry have analogies in the formal patterns followed in needlecraft, most especially in quilting, yet little attention has been given to the relationship between the two art forms in the Romantic period. With the partial exception of work by Rozskia Parker,[6] Carol Shiner Wilson[7] and Pamela Woof,[8] scholars of Romantic literature have not focused on the interplay between needlecraft and creative acts of poetry (which is in contrast to the burgeoning interest shown by Victorian scholars in the interlinked histories of

[6] Rozsika Parker, *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine*, (1984, reprinted London and New York, 2013).

[7] Carol Shiner Wilson, 'Lost Needles, Tangled Threads, Stitchery, Domesticity, and the Artistic Enterprise in Barbauld, Edgeworth, Taylor, and Lamb', in Carol Shiner Wilson and Joel Haefner eds., *Re-Visioning Romanticism: British Women Writers, 1776-1837* (Philadelphia, 1994), 167-90.

[8] Pamela Woof, 'Dorothy Wordsworth and Mary Lamb, Writers'. The essay was published under the same title in two parts in separate issues of the *Charles Lamb Bulletin*. The first part was published in *CLB*, n.s. 66 (April 1989), 41-53. Part two appeared in *CLB*, n.s. 67 (July 1989), 82-93.

women's relationship with their books and their needles).[9] Parker's book is exceptional in its study of the construction of positive forms of femininity through needlecraft and in its exciting thesis that the 'processes of creativity – the finding of form for thought – have a transformative impact on the sense of self'.[10] 'The embroiderer holds in her hands a coherent object which exists both outside the world and inside her head', writes Parker.[11] But this argument remains more suggestive than specific in Parker's account. For concrete historical reasons connected with forms of social, intellectual and economic oppression endured by women as a consequence of their association with the needle, Parker's thesis can appear more meaningful as gestural or conceptual hypothesis than as social history. Indeed, it is often the case that the evidence of the needle as an ideological tool of socially approved models of femininity weighs heavier than the alternative hypothesis that stitching as a creative process can have transformative effect on the female sewer. The task remains of demonstrating Parker's radical suggestion that sewing is constitutive in a positive sense, rather than merely destructive, of women's psychological growth.

Section one of this essay, 'Needlework, women and (creative) death: the case of Mary Lamb', attends to the important caveat that while both poetry and needlecraft are gendered expressions of aesthetic creativity, women writers themselves in the Romantic period did not necessarily promote the latter as such. Mary Lamb argues that needlework is oppressive to all classes of women: for the class of working women, in which she counted herself, it is a poorly paid mode of employment and for the domestic housewife needlework is the 'essential drawback' to family 'comfort' for 'which no remuneration in money is received or expected'.[12] Leisured ladies are not exempt from Lamb's criticism of the needle. Absorbed by the delights of 'the arrangement of her material' or 'fixing upon her happiest pattern' – 'how pleasing an anxiety!' – comments Lamb sarcastically, such a woman has squandered her talents: 'it were pity her energy should not have been directed to some wiser end'.[13] Arguments similar to Lamb's, which are also considered here, are found in the radical writing of Mary Wollstonecraft and in the conservative chapbooks of Hannah More. Quite simply, the needle does not have a good press in the educational treatises of these Romantic women writers. So the question arises of what it is about the use of the needle by women in the Romantic period that can be

[9] Talia Schaffer's *Novel Craft: Victorian Domestic Handicraft & Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, published by Oxford University Press in 2011, turns to the now largely forgotten Victorian obsession with imitative domestic handicrafts such as making wax coral, fashioning hair jewelry or rolling and cutting tiny scraps of paper into candle-lighters so as to resemble feathers, to explore the continuities between female literary authorship and questions of self-representation around women's increasingly marginalized role in the newly mechanized economy. *Crafting the Woman Professional in the Long Nineteenth Century: Art and Industry in Britain*, edited by Kyriaki Hadjiafxendi and Patricia Zakreski (Farnham, Surrey, 2013) attends to female self-fashioning in textile and text, while Holly Furneaux, in *Military Men of Feeling: Emotion, Touch and Masculinity in the Crimean War* (Oxford, 2016), rewrites representations of nineteenth-century military masculinity in the Crimean War, which includes attending to the patchwork quilts fashioned from army uniforms by convalescent soldiers.

[10] Rozsika Parker, *The Subversive Stitch*, op. cit., xx.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Mary Lamb, 'On Needle-work', 205.

[13] Ibid.

creative and transformative.

Section two, 'Female artisanship and Romantic women's writing', gives an answer to the question by considering the positive reception of the needle by women of the Wordsworth circle as a life-affirming and imaginatively engaged activity, one that unites the labour of the hand with artistic self-expression. There is an important distinction, on which Mary Lamb draws, between *needlework*, by which is meant paid work as well as unpaid domestic sewing, and the activities of the leisured lady, who indulges in *needlecraft*, where the term craft indicates a pleasurable use of the needle. But what is striking in the case of Dorothy Wordsworth, considered here, is that the division between 'work' and 'craft' can be seen to break down. In Dorothy's Alfoxden and Grasmere journals the acts of writing and reading are incorporated into the domestic activities of her daily life, which often included sewing. Stringing together the small details of her life with William at Town End, Dorothy's 'Grasmere' journal entries suggest an equivalence of value uniting walking and reading with sewing or baking or gardening. Here is Dorothy's description of a wet Wednesday in June 1800, Grasmere: 'A very rainy day. I made a shoe. Wm and John went to fish in Langdale. In the evening I went above the house, and gathered flowers which I planted, fox-gloves, etc.' [14] The most apparently mundane of her domestic sewing chores – making a felt shoe – is part of a daily aesthetic at Grasmere based on *making* and *creating* that I argue in Dorothy's journal dissolves the traditional boundary between art and the everyday.

Section three, 'Crafting Romantic poetry: pattern and form', examines the inscription of quilting pattern, specifically the star pattern, as metaphor in Wordsworthian poetry and in the poet's design, of 1806, for his friend and patron Lord Beaumont's winter garden. It also turns, briefly, to the example of Jane Austen, herself a skilled needlewoman and quilter, to start to plot an analogy between the symmetry of design in her quilting and the rhythm of chapter and volume design structuring her fiction. This is not the place to review in detail the relationship between Austen's quilting and her fiction or the links between Wordsworth's views on gardening design and his poetical compositions. Rather, my aim is to highlight the creative capacity of quilting and gardening, via the examples of Austen and Wordsworth. To link the activity of sewing or gardening to the process of poetic creativity is to open up a constructive interchange between the labour of the hand and that of the imagination; it is also, in turn, to challenge the assumption of high Romantic argument that there is an implicit distinction between the things that are thought and the things that are made. First, however, is a consideration of one who says no such thing: namely, Mary Lamb, albeit one whose particular form of nay-saying, perhaps paradoxically, opens up a way of articulating a much more positive reading of the work of the hand.

~ Needlework, women and (creative) death: the case of Mary Lamb ~

Mary Lamb's position to her subject in the essay 'On Needle-work' is not an enthusiastic one. There is an implicit opposition between needlework that creates something - in the most prosaic sense of stitching things together, giving or resurrecting life - and Lamb's and other Romantic-period women's indictment of

[14] *Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth*, ed. Mary Moorman (Oxford, 1981), 30.

needlecraft as marking, emblematically, a kind of female death. On a symbolic level, the needle represents the death of the female creative spirit before it is born in being denied a purpose beyond the merely decorative function of the feminine needle. Metaphorically, in Lamb's essay 'On Needle-work', the needle spells the universal death of female fulfillment. Literally, in Lamb's own life, the needle led to actual death in the murderous impulses it prompted in Lamb towards her mother on whom she inflicted fatal wounds with a carving knife in 1796.

'In early life I passed eleven years in the exercise of my needle for a livelihood', writes Mary Lamb in the opening sentence of 'On Needle-work'.[15] Lamb was only sixteen years old in 1781 when she began her period of domestic servitude as apprentice to a mantua-maker, a maker of the short cloaks commonly worn by the women of the day.[16] Mantua-makers did not command middle-class status but the role was respectable and it offered one of the few avenues of paid work open to women with little education.[17] Often considered training for the post of lady's maid, it was a form of work that demanded long hours during which an apprentice was vulnerable to harsh treatment, if not outright violence, by her sewing mistress.[18] By the autumn of 1789 Lamb had completed her apprenticeship and was in full-time employment as a mantua-maker; by 1793 as an unmarried woman in her mid-twenties she was also obliged to take on the task of housekeeper and carer to her ailing parents. Her relationship with her arthritic, bed-ridden, irascible and, it seems, unloving mother affected Mary badly, confining her to the family home and damaging her emotional equilibrium. 'My mother is grown so entirely helpless (not having any use of her limbs) that Mary is necessarily confined from ever sleeping out, she being her bed fellow', writes Charles Lamb to Coleridge in the summer of 1796.[19]

In the following early autumn, on 22 September 1796, Mary Lamb stabbed her paralyzed mother to death with a brutal kind of needle, the point of a carving knife, an event registered in history's chronicle as a family tragedy. Insanity ran in the Lamb family;[20] Mary was particularly susceptible, and it appears that her acute bout of madness in 1796 was brought on by a combination of overwork and stress. Lamb was 'worn down to a state of extreme nervous misery by attention to needlework by day, and to her mother by night, until the insanity which had been manifested more

[15] Mary Lamb, 'On Needle-work', op. cit., 204.

[16] For information on mantua-makers and the type of work Lamb would have undertaken, see Mary B. Balle, *Mary Lamb: An Extraordinary Life of Murder, Madness and Literary Talent* (New York, 2009), 34.

[17] It is worth noting that mantua work seemed to Dorothy Wordsworth a suitable occupation for her own maid, Sally Green, who had proved an inadequate nursemaid to William's infant daughter, Catherine. Dorothy noted that her maid, Sally 'happily has a genius for one thing, namely sewing, and as there is money enough for her we intend to have her apprenticed to a mantua-maker, and this must be done as soon as possible', *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: Volume II. The Middle Years: Part 1: 1806-1811*. Second Edition. Revised by Mary Moorman. Ed. Ernest de Selincourt (Oxford, 1969), 397.

[18] Witness, most notoriously in the present context, Lamb's uncontrolled rage at her young female apprentice, in the attack of September 1796, whom she chased round the dinner table with a knife before turning assassin on own her mother, Elizabeth Lamb.

[19] The letter is dated 29 June/1 July 1796. *The Letters of Charles and Mary Lamb*, ed. Edwin W. Marrs, 2 vols (Ithaca and London, 1975), vol. 1, 34.

[20] Charles Lamb suffered a bout of insanity in the period December 1795 to January 1796, when he voluntarily committed himself to an asylum. See Edwin W. Marrs's introductory essay to his edition of *The Letters of Charles and Mary Lamb*, op. cit., vol. 1, xxxvii.

than once broke out into frenzy', recorded *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*.[21] A contemporary account of the coroner's inquest was given in the *Morning Chronicle* on 26 September 1796:

> On Friday afternoon the Coroner and a respectable Jury sat on the body of a Lady in the neighbourhood of Holborn, who died in consequence of a wound from her daughter the preceding day. It appeared by the evidence adduced, that while the family were preparing for dinner, the young lady seized a case knife laying on the table, and in a menacing manner pursued a little girl, her apprentice, round the room; on the eager calls of her helpless infirm mother to forbear, she renounced her first object, and with loud shrieks approached her parent.
>
> The child by her cries quickly brought up the landlord of the house, but too late—the dreadful scene presented to him the mother lifeless, pierced to the heart, on a chair, her daughter yet wildly standing over her with the fatal knife, and the venerable old man, her father, weeping by her side, himself bleeding at the forehead from the effects of a severe blow he received from one of the forks she had been madly hurling about the room.
>
> [...] It seems the young Lady had been once before, in her earlier years, deranged, from the harassing fatigues of too much business.—As her carriage towards her mother was ever affectionate in the extreme, it is believed that to the increased attentiveness, which her parents' infirmities called for by day and night, is to be attributed the present insanity of this ill-fated young woman.[22]

Here the needle is both the cause of Mary's derangement (implicitly invoked in the phrase 'too much business') and the weapon of her mother's destruction. In a parodic restaging of the domestic scene of the pupil-daughter seated at her teacher-mother's side, Mary's mother is pinned helplessly to her chair by her knife-wielding daughter who stands wildly above her.

It is well known that Lamb escaped incarceration and execution for her crime as the inquest returned a verdict of 'lunacy', enabling her to remain under her brother Charles's care until his death in 1834. It is also a matter of record that Lamb suffered subsequent periodic bouts of madness that confined her for short periods in private asylums, but that she finally found domestic comfort, if not total relief from her condition, by turning author, notably, of educational stories for children in collaboration with her brother Charles. Paradoxically, the woman who murdered her own mother became by virtue of her writing for children a sort of proxy mother, or guardian, of the moral health of the nation's offspring.

There is a connection between needlework, female madness and death in Mary Lamb's life and work, whether literal, as in the case of Lamb's own madness and the murder of her mother, or metaphorical, as in the observation of her essay 'On Needle-work' that girls and women of the bourgeois class waste their time, and

[21] 'Charles Lamb', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, vol. 66 (August 1849), 137.

[22] *Morning Chronicle*, Monday 26 September, 1796; cited in *The Letters of Charles and Mary Lamb*, op. cit., vol. 1, 45, 1n.

in this sense waste their lives, at the needle. In Lamb's words, women have been wont:

> to beguile and lose their time—knitting, knotting, netting, carpet working, and the like ingenious pursuits—those so often-praised but tedious works, which are so long in the operation, that purchasing the labour has seldom been thought good economy, yet, by a certain fascination, they have been found to chain down the great to a self-imposed slavery, from which they considerately, or haughtily, excuse the needy.[23]

The 'slavery' metaphor of a woman willingly embracing the shackles of her sewing hoop makes it difficult to see the middle-class feminine pursuit of the needle, at best, as anything other than a guilty pleasure. At the essay's conclusion, in an envisaged assuaging of that implied guilt, Lamb urges financially comfortable women to 'give the money so saved [from their needle-work] to poor needle-women belonging to those branches of employment from which she has borrowed these shares of pleasurable labour'.[24] Her solemn warning is against the social dangers attached to luxury, the luxury of self-indulgence, and feminine pleasure. Lamb treats equally harshly another stereotypical feminine pleasure, a fondness for dressing up. Her volume *Poetry for Children* (1809), co-authored with Charles Lamb, includes 'Time Spent in Dress', a poem that delivers in its fourth, infelicitous, stanza the reprimand that there is no greater waste of time in a girl's life than the time spent in dressing:

> There's not a more productive source
> Of waste of time to the young mind
> Than dress; as it regards our hours
> My view of it is now confin'd.[25]

Lamb can be seen here to be taking the baton from Mary Wollstonecraft, who had written at length on the dangers posed to women's intellectual and moral development by the unequal system of education in society that urged girls to value their appearance above the improvement of their minds. For Lamb, as for Wollstonecraft, the feminine needle whose sole purpose is female adornment and ornamentation is metaphorically a tool of women's intellectual self-destruction. Even writing about needlework, and its exploitative role in many women's lives, caused Lamb a temporary loss of stability. Upon finishing 'On Needle-work' she went into an asylum for a week, exhausted, according to diarist Henry Crabb Robinson, by the difficult labour of writing.[26]

Mary Lamb's view of needlework as damaging to the development of a woman's rational faculties is shared by radical women writers of the period, notably

[23] Mary Lamb, 'On Needle-work', op. cit., 210.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Charles and Mary Lamb, *The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb*, op. cit., vol. 3, 'Books for Children', 475.
[26] Henry Crabb Robinson recorded in his diary for 11 December 1814 that Lamb 'was not unwell, but she had undergone great fatigue from writing an article about needlework for the new *Ladies' British Magazine*'; cited in Woof, 'Dorothy Wordsworth and Mary Lamb, Writers', *Charles Lamb Bulletin* (July 1989), op. cit., 87.

Mary Wollstonecraft. For Wollstonecraft, the death of a woman's intellect, the demise of her self-autonomy (dulled into inactivity by being deprived of the educational stimulation afforded to boys and men), even the loss of her sexual reputation, are the pernicious consequences of women spending too much time with their needles rather than their books. Wollstonecraft writes in her *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) that 'needle-work':

> contracts their [girls'] faculties more than any other that could have been chosen for them, by confining their thoughts to their persons. Men order their clothes to be made, and have done with the subject; women make their own clothes, necessary or ornamental, and are continually talking about them; and their thoughts follow their hands. It is not indeed the making of necessaries that weakens the mind; but the frippery of dress.[27]

'Frippery' is a sexually loaded word in Wollstonecraft's libidinized moral economy. Women who allow their 'thoughts [to] follow their hands', a metaphor which approaches the masturbatory, are at the mercy of vanity and sensuality, their minds weakened by an overriding preoccupation with dress and ornamentation.

Radical and Tory polemicists alike dilated on the dangers of female frippery and vanity. In the latter camp, Hannah More's *Cheap Repository Tracts* of the 1790s issued melodramatic warnings to girls and young women from the lower orders about the moral hazards of aping the dress of the upper classes. The well-known ballad of 'Sinful Sally' is a case in point.[28] It relates the tale of a young country maiden, who, all too conscious of her personal charms, is happy to receive the attentions of the local landowner, Sir William. Her troubles begin with vanity: putting aside her 'cloak of scarlet' (l. 45) and 'simple kersey gown' (l. 12) for London fashion and 'ribbons gay' (l. 50) she becomes 'a mistress to a rake' (l. 56). From there it is but a short step to a life of alcoholism, prostitution and venereal disease, a fate inscribed from the outset in Sal's preoccupation with dress and implied by her scarlet cloak even before her wicked life begins. 'Sal's' 'bold career' (l. 138) pushes her towards the vengeful pain of the pox ('Fierce disease my body seizes,/ Racking pain afflicts my bones', [ll. 141-2]). Her final outcome is moral damnation and death:

> Vain, alas, is all my groaning,
> For I fear the die is cast;
> True, thy blood is all atoning,
> But my day of grace is past (ll. 165-8)

For Hannah More, as for Mary Wollstonecraft, there is a metonymic link between colour and moral corruption. 'Pestiferous purple' is Wollstonecraft's colour-coding in the *Vindication* for the corruption of courtly power and religious hierarchy, 'which renders the progress of civilization a curse, and warps the understanding'.[29] While

[27] Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), Janet Todd and Marilyn Butler eds., *The Works of Mary Wollstonecraft* (London, 1989), vol. 5, 144.
[28] Hannah More, 'The Story of Sinful Sally, Told by Herself' (London, 1796, n. pag.)
[29] Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, op. cit., 87.

'Sinful Sally' is not about matters of needle and thread per se, the symbolic coding of the scarlet cloak as an instrument of Sally's sexual downfall is indicative of a mistrust both of colour and of ornate dress that More shares in this case with Wollstonecraft. Both writers associate the *aesthetic* and *sensuous* appeal of colour and fabric – the very stuff that flows from the needle's point – to illicit female pleasure, which is linked in turn to the sexual appetites of male seducers. In the instance of fashionable dressing, to dwell on colour can be dangerous precisely because it is has the ability to *seduce* a woman's thoughts away from what Wollstonecraft called the rational duties of motherhood towards pleasurable fantasies of self-adornment.

Behind the protests of Wollstonecraft and More lay a contemporary print subculture much taken with feminine apparel; a phalanx of women's magazines deployed vivid descriptions of colour and dress to stir the imaginative aspirations of their readers. Consider, for example, the 'Account of the Ladies Dresses on his Majesty's Birth-Day' published in the *Lady's Magazine* for June 1790: 'There was something finely picturesque in her [the queen's] dress, her petticoat being very beautifully embroidered in imitation of clouds with shades of green foil.'[30] The queen's petticoat of embroidered imitation clouds and shades of green foil is a manufactured pastoral pressed into the service of fashionable dress and is as far away from real nature, so to speak, as it is possible to be. It is precisely this ability of colour to stimulate the imagination, to provoke individualized feelings and moods, to create fantasies, including sexual fantasies even, which explains Wollstonecraft's distrust of the fashionable needle, as opposed to the utilitarian needle of the good mother and her 'making of necessaries'. The business of the mind, rather than the work of the hand, is Wollstonecraft's chief concern. The long shadow cast over Romantic women's writing by such outbursts as Wollstonecraft's against the seduction of colour, of fabric, and fine dress, and by Lamb's vituperative essay has clouded the ability of contemporary critics, whose responses are examined below, to appreciate the importance the needle played in the creative lives of women in the Romantic period.

~ Female artisanship and Romantic women's writing ~

Contemporary accounts of women's sewing in the Romantic period are beset, with few exceptions, by an inability to disassociate the needle from women's historical oppression. 'For all classes, the needle was an instrument of social control that kept girls and women sedentary for hours', writes Carol Shiner Wilson.[31] Shiner Wilson's reminder that sewing could be a mode of oppression for some Romantic women is salutary. Even so, this does not invalidate the possibility of viewing needlework in the Romantic period as a creative process involving the imaginative impulses of individual women as well as their labour. All the women in the Wordsworth circle sewed, among them Mary Lamb, Dorothy Wordsworth, and also Mary Wordsworth and Sarah Coleridge. The second generation of Romantic women, including the poets' daughters Sara Coleridge, Dora Wordsworth, Edith May Southey and the

[30] 'Account of the Ladies Dresses on his Majesty's Birth-Day', *The Lady's Magazine*, vol. 21 (June 1790), 315.
[31] Shiner Wilson, 'Lost Needles, Tangled Threads, Stitchery, Domesticity, and the Artistic Enterprise in Barbauld, Edgeworth, Taylor, and Lamb', op. cit., 168.

poet and author Maria Jane Jewsbury also deployed the needle.

Pamela Woof observes that for the second generation of Romantic women, the poet's sisters, daughters and their friends, 'sewing was a habit'.[32] It was a necessary household duty constituting 'work', but it could also be a source of pleasure and, on occasion, the subject of poetry. During a visit to the Wordsworth family at Rydal Mount in 1827 Dora's friend, the writer Maria Jane Jewsbury (1800-1833), penned a sparkling mock-heroic paean to domestic needlework entitled 'The Lay of Thrift; or, The Progress of a Shift'.[33] An admirer of the poet Wordsworth (to whom she dedicated her collection of poems and prose *Phantasmagoria*, published in two volumes in 1825), Jewsbury wanted to be a writer from a young age and planned later in life to update Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* for a contemporary audience.[34]

'The Lay of Thrift' is a witty salute to the domestic needle, 'Inscribed to Mrs Wordsworth' and dated 'June 1819, Rydal Mount'. The salutation 'Mrs Wordsworth' suggests Mary Wordsworth, who often sewed with Dorothy, (although of the two it is Dorothy who was 'looked upon as the family seamstress').[35] Hence Jewsbury's address:

> Oh Lady of the needle & the shears,
> Thou very peerless one among thy peers,
> I'd rather sit by thee in the green light
> Made by the laurel in the noonday bright,
> Watching thy implements & work maternal,
> Touched into beauty by the influence vernal,
> Than be with a fair idler who rehearses
> In the same sunshine, Mr Moore's best verses (ll. 41-8)[36]

The versifier Mr Moore is of course the astoundingly successful nineteenth-century Irish poet Thomas Moore, who had a reputation as the author of charming seductive poetry. Jewsbury's ironic contrast of the productive use of a woman's time to sew a shift with the profligate wasting of time by the loitering auditor of Moore's 'best verses' mounts a humorous defence of the domestic needle.

William Wordsworth was so taken with a sewing case in the shape of a harp with needles serving for strings, (figure 1),[37] owned by the Poet Laureate Robert Southey's daughter, Edith May Southey, that he wrote a mock dedicatory poem, in ten stanzas, 'On Seeing a Needlecase in the Form of a Harp, the work of E. M. S.' (1827).[38]

[32] Woof, 'Dorothy Wordsworth and Mary Lamb, Writers', *Charles Lamb Bulletin* (July 1989), op. cit., 90.
[33] The poem is held at the Wordsworth Trust Museum, Grasmere. WLMS A/ Jewsbury, Maria Jane/ 49.
[34] Joanne Wilkes, 'Jewsbury , Maria Jane (1800–1833)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004
[http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/14816, accessed 16 Sept 2015].
[35] Pamela Woof, 'Dorothy Wordsworth and Mary Lamb, Writers', *The Charles Lamb Bulletin*, (July 1989), op. cit., 89.
[36] Maria Jane Jewsbury, 'The Lay of Thrift; or, The Progress of a Shift', ll. 41-8. WLMSA/ Jewsbury, Maria Jane/ 49.
[37] Edith May Southey's (uncatalogued) needle case in the shape of a harp is held at the Wordsworth Trust Museum, Grasmere, in a box marked 'Wordsworth's Needle Case'.
[38] The poem is republished in *The Poems of William Wordsworth*, op. cit., vol. 3, 607-8.

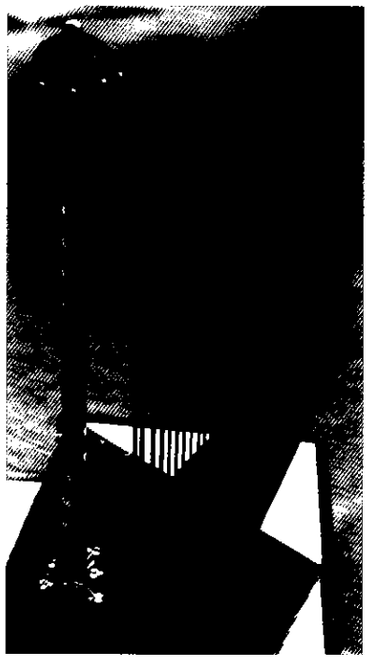

Figure 1: 'Wordsworth's Needle Case', The Wordsworth Trust, gift of Helen Muir in memory of her mother, 2001. Reproduced courtesy of The Wordsworth Trust.

The argument of the poem voiced by an irate 'Bard' (Wordsworth) is that the faux harp is an affront to the 'noble instrument' of the classical Muses and to their mortal representative, the Laureate Southey:

> Frowns are on every Muse's face,
> Reproaches from their lips are sent,
> That mimickry should thus disgrace
> The noble Instrument (ll. 1-4)
>
> [...] And this, too, from the Laureate's Child,
> A living Lord of melody!
> How will her Sire be reconciled
> To the refined indignity? (ll. 13-16)

The 'Bard's' mock tirade is interrupted at stanza five by a female sprite who pleads with 'low voice': 'Bard! Moderate your ire;/ Spirits of all degrees rejoice/ In presence of the Lyre' (ll. 18-20). She whispers to him of an enchanted faery world where love-sick maids embroider to the music of gossamer lutes that have sunbeams for chords, 'made vocal' by the 'brushing wings' of 'Gay Sylphs':

> Some, still more delicate of ear,
> Have lutes (believe my words)
> Whose framework is of gossamer,
> While sunbeams are the chords.
>
> Gay Sylphs this Miniature will court,
> Made vocal by their brushing wings,
> And sullen Gnomes will learn to sport
> Around its polished strings;
>
> Whence strains to love-sick Maiden dear,
> While in her lonely Bower she tries
> To cheat the thought she cannot cheer,
> By fanciful embroideries.
>
> Trust, angry Bard! a knowing Sprite,
> Nor think the Harp her lot deplores;
> Though mid the stars the Lyre shines bright,
> Love stoops as fondly as he soars.' (ll. 25-40)

These lightly mocking tetrameters nonetheless authorize the association of femininity with needlework. Wordsworth here endorses what had become by the

1820s a general recognition of needlework as a cultural signifier of the feminine and of heterosexual love, as demonstrated in the Keatsian romance 'Isabella; or, the Pot of Basil' (1818), with its iconic depiction of Isabella embroidering while day-dreaming of her lover Lorenzo, and which in women's writing of the period demonstrates a softer attitude towards female activity with the needle than that of Lamb or Wollstonecraft.[39]

Sewing was a means of securing bonds of friendship and family attachments between the women of the Wordsworth circle. In the summer of 1832 Dora Wordsworth (1804-1847) wrote to Rotha Quillinan (1822-1876), who became her stepdaughter following Dora's marriage to Edward Quillinan in May 1841, that she had made her a needlecase to remind her of Mary (Wordsworth):

> I have made you a needle-case like Mary's: not that I supposed it would please you for its beauty, because it is as ugly as needs be, - but it would serve to remind you of her and Rydal & therefore I fancied
> *[page break (crossed writing)]*
> it would please you.[40]

When Dora herself was just sixteen years of age, and her parents were on a Continental tour, in Paris, she was desperate that her mother bring back supplies for her workbox, as recorded in a letter from Sara Hutchinson to Mary Wordsworth, dated 11 September 1820: 'You must not fail to provide for Doro's work Box – It is all that she is anxious about – winders, bodkins, skillets, measure &c &c of ivory or mother of pearl – scissars *[sic]* & knife I tell her are far better in Engd.'[41] Then as now France seems to have cornered the market in pretty things: mother-of-pearl rulers and the like. England, on the other hand, is better for plain and also sharp objects: scissors, knives, and needles.

Among the older generation of Romantic women, Dorothy Wordsworth dedicated much of her time to sewing, which was necessary household 'work' but it is work that might also be seen, simultaneously, as an outlet for her creativity. Dorothy was a prolific sewer: at Alfoxden, in the course of March 1797 to April 1798, she made ten shirts for her lawyer brother Richard and then remade with them with significant alternations to the neck and cuffs (due to Richard's having given her faulty measurements).[42] In addition, she made shifts and shoes[43] for herself, waistcoats for Wordsworth,[44] babies' linen jackets edged in lace,[45] and cuffs – or

[39] Roszika Parker points to the insistence by proponents of femininity in the mid nineteenth century that 'it was a woman's duty to embroider for love', *The Subversive Stitch*, op cit., 156.
[40] The letter is held at The Wordsworth Museum. WLL/ Wordsworth, Dora/ I/ 42.
[41] The letter is held at The Wordsworth Museum: WLL/ Hutchinson, Sara/ 1/ 68.
[42] See Dorothy's correspondence with her brother Richard between March 1797 and May 1798. *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: Volume I. The Early Years: 1797-1805*. Second Edition. Revised by Chester L. Shaver. Ed. Ernest de Selincourt (Oxford, 1967).
[43] Dorothy's entry for 2 August 1800, in her 'Grasmere Journal', records: 'after tea worked at my shifts in the orchard' (*Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth*, ed. Mary Moorman, op. cit., 32). See also her journal entry for 25 June 1800: 'I sate with W. in the orchard all morning and made my shoes' (ibid., 30).
[44] Dorothy records a domestic scene at Dove Cottage, in November 1801, of reading and sewing by the fireside: 'We sate by the fire without work for some time then Mary read a poem of Daniell upon Learning. After tea Wm read Spenser now and then a little aloud to us. We were making his waistcoat' (*Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth*, ed. Mary Moorman, op. cit., 62).

'wrists'[46] as she calls them - for Sara Coleridge. She helped her neighbor Aggie Flemming quilt petticoats,[47] and she also made quilted bedcovers and curtains for the Wordsworth household. Making things, no less than writing about them, shaped Dorothy's identity.

It is not insignificant that Romantic poetry, specifically the poetry of William Wordsworth, sets great store by the nobility of labour and the work of the hand. Wordsworth writes in *The Prelude* of the 'mental Power/ And genuine virtue they possess who live/ By bodily toil'.[48] His relocation of poetry from the metropolitan centre to the rural provinces, his telling of the lives of simple folk, rooted in the local community, his use of the popular ballad form and democratizing blank verse, and his recasting of the poetic aesthetic as expressive, with an emphasis on individual experience and, in particular, the individual experience of the poet, has a parallel, I argue, in the artisanal creativity of the poet's sister Dorothy. Dorothy's creativity, like William's, is based in the provinces, on the outskirts of metropolitan life, and is centred on the self. Hers is predominantly a utilitarian and artisanal aesthetic that values the labour of the individual hand; she gives as much attention in her Alfoxden and Grasmere journals to things she makes (from shifts to shoes and cakes to bread) as she does to the conventionally weightier business of reading and writing. Sewing in Dorothy's journals carries positive associations of self-affirmation and productive labour with none of the negative connotations of women's mental impoverishment found in the writings of Mary Lamb or Mary Wollstonecraft. In this respect, Dorothy's knitting a sock, quilting a bed cover or sewing a shirt is part of the spectrum of creativity that includes the expressive individual (stereotypically male) poetic imagination.

The argument requires some qualification even so. Dorothy's domestic needlework activity, recorded in her letters and journals, although clearly of significance to her everyday life is not accorded any aesthetic value by her. Neither does the use of fabric and needle prompt her towards the kind of imaginative flight of fancy that stimulates Charles Lamb in his 'Elian' essay 'Oxford in the Vacation' (1820), an essay which opens with the author contemplating the patterns and fabrics of the textiles traded in by the East India Company for whom he worked as company accountant.[49] 'I confess it is my humour', writes Lamb ('Elia'), 'to while away some good hours of my time in the contemplation of indigos, cottons, raw silks, piece-goods, flowered or otherwise'.[50] While Lamb is released by his imagination from the tedium of his day job of balancing the books, Dorothy's journal writing is anchored to the real world by her down-to-earth eye for the

[45] One such jacket made by Dorothy is held in the Wordsworth Trust Museum. GRMDE.E7: 'Baby's jacket in white made from oblong panels of linen joined by bands of lace. Front opening without fastenings, collar and sleeves edged with lace'.

[46] See Dorothy's entry in her 'Grasmere Journal' for 10 January 1803: 'I lay in bed to have a Drench of sleep till one o'clock. Worked all Day petticoats—Mrs C's wrists. Ran Wm's woollen stockings for he put them on today for the first time' (*Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth*, ed. Mary Moorman, op. cit., 165).

[47] See Woof, 'Dorothy Wordsworth and Mary Lamb, Writers', *Charles Lamb Bulletin* (July 1989), op. cit., 86.

[48] William Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, XIII (1824-1829), ll. 95-7, *The Poems of William Wordsworth*, op. cit., vol. 3, 329.

[49] Charles Lamb, 'Oxford in the Vacation', *The London Magazine* (1820), republished in *The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb*, op. cit., vol. 2, 'Elia and the Last Essays of Elia, 8-13.

[50] Ibid., 8-9.

practical details of everyday things.

It is in its particularity and local detail, rather than in an Elian imaginative flight of fancy, that Dorothy's journal communicates authorial emotion and feeling. Pamela Woof puts the case well in her observation that 'Dorothy's joy, sympathy, anxiety, constantly enrich the particularity of reading, writing, talking, walking, baking, planting, mending. The briefest observation can carry feeling', Woof remarks.[51] Consider, for example, the following entry in the Grasmere journal, dated Monday 23 November, 1801: 'A beautiful frosty morning. Mary was making William's woollen waistcoat. Wm unwell and did not walk. Mary and I sate in our cloaks upon the Bench in the Orchard. After dinner I went to bed unwell—Mary had a head-ach at night. We all went to bed soon.'[52] The beauty of a frosty morning, orchard benches: these are the pared back descriptions of a domestic lifestyle that is defined through acts of making - and being - which shape Dorothy's record of everyday existence – sewing a waistcoat or wearing a warm coat. There is a palpable 'thingness' in the observational style of writing used throughout the journal, which defines Dorothy's artisanal creativity. She sometimes remarks that sewing prevented her from having the time to read[53] and she always had more than enough work for her needle – on one occasion William describes her as being 'absolutely buried in it' [54] - but she is insistent throughout her writing on the central role the needle played in the domestic life of the Wordsworth household. Sewing for Dorothy Wordsworth is precisely not a waste of time (as per the charge of radical women Romantic writers). Rather, it represents an investment in the creative energy of hand labour, from making shoes and shifts to binding books and quilting bed covers.

Binding books in quilted covers and old gowns was a habit of women in the Wordsworth circle. The Wordsworth Trust Museum holds quilted book covers belonging to Dora.[55] Dorothy Wordsworth reputedly bound Wordsworth's poems in her old gowns, [56] while Dora together with her mother Mary made 'Cottonian' bindings, which is the practice of covering books in remnants of dress fabric and such like.[57] Dora Wordsworth, Sara Coleridge and Edith May Southey are said to have bound in cotton fabric 'from 1200 to 1400 volumes', collected in Robert

[51] Woof, 'Dorothy Wordsworth and Mary Lamb, Writers', *The Charles Lamb Bulletin*, (1989), op. cit., 49.

[52] *Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth*, ed. Mary Moorman, op. cit., 60.

[53] Dorothy writes to her brother William, on 23 April 1812: 'sewing has hitherto prevented my reading myself, but Sara often reads aloud', *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: Volume III. The Middle Years: Part 2: 1812-1820*. Second Edition. Revised by Mary Moorman and Allan G. Hill. Ed. Ernest de Selincourt (Oxford, 1970), 5.

[54] Wordsworth sends Coleridge a picture of Dorothy on the eve of her 28th birthday, which was Christmas Eve, 1799, on their arrival at Dove Cottage: 'D. is now sitting by me racked with the tooth-ach. This is a grievous misfortune as she has so much for work for her needle among the bedcurtains &c that she is absolutely buried in it' (*Letters of William Wordsworth. A Selection*, ed. Alan G. Hill (Oxford, 1984), 33.

[55] GRMDC.E77-80-MRRS D/8/4.

[56] Maggs Bros Ltd, *Bookbinding in the British Isles: Sixteenth to the Twentieth Century* (London, 1996), 132.

[57] The British Library 'Database of Bookbindings' includes an example of a 'Cottonian' binding by 'Mrs Wordsworth', belonging to Robert Southey. See the British Library 'Database of Bookbindings' (accessed on 16 September 2015), http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/bookbindings/Results.aspx?SearchType=AlphabeticSearch&ListType=CoverMaterial&Value=117

Southey's 'Cottonian Library'.[58] The Cottonian bindings made by women in the Wordsworth circle gesture towards the ornate book coverings used at William Morris's Kelmscott Press at the height of the later nineteenth-century Arts and Crafts movement. The hand-crafted decorative aesthetic that distinguished the Kelmscott press is evidenced beautifully on the embroidered cover of the anonymous Middle English poem (*c.* 1470), *The floure and the leafe, & the boke of Cupide, God of love, or the cuckow and the nightingale*, published at the Klemscott Press in 1896 (figure 2), which is a poem that Wordsworth also modernized in his translations from Chaucer.[59] The embroidery design of flowers and leaves references the title of the poem in a self-conscious design that refocuses attention from the content of the text to its mode of production, to its very materiality.

Figure 2: The floure and the leafe, & the boke of Cupide, God of love, or the cuckow and the nightingale, published at the Klemscott Press in 1896. Reproduced courtesy of Cardiff University Rare Books and Archives.

The emphasis placed by the Arts and Crafts movement on artisanal craftsmanship and the importance of local tradition – on the practice of *making* things by an individual at a particular moment in time and place – fits well retrospectively with Dorothy's artisanal creativity and also, indeed, with the emphasis on the local and the traditional in the poetic practices of Wordsworth and Coleridge. The first edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*, it might be recalled, was printed in

[58] See C. C. Southey's *Life and Correspondence of the Late Robert Southey* (1850), cited in Howard M. Nixon, *Five Centuries of English Bookbinding* (London, 1978), 194.

[59] F. S. Ellis, ed., *The floure and the leafe, & the boke of Cupide, God of love, or the cuckow and the nightingale* (Hammersmith, 1896). Octavo; Troy type; edition of 300 paper copies and 10 vellum. The first bound copy of this work arrived at Kelmscott hours before William Morris died on 3rd October 1896 and is held in Cardiff University's Special Collections and Archives. Wordsworth's 'The Cuckoo and the Nightingale', composed around 1815-19, is found in *Poems of William Wordsworth*, op. cit., vol. 2, 642-54.

the provinces, in Bristol, well outside the metropolitan mainstream of contemporary eighteenth-century book production. This collection of lyrics, tales, and other poems, composed in a vivid and straightforward idiom, self-consciously looks back to an earlier ballad tradition for its inspiration in terms of poetic pattern and form.

Textile historians have drawn attention to the close association between quilting and the ideals of the Arts and Crafts movement.[60] As with William Morris's woven textiles, embroideries and book covers, quilting designs have a pattern that can be appreciated by people of all classes. 'Textiles could convey a narrative even to the illiterate', writes Morris's biographer Fiona MacCarthy. [61] A quilt made by Dorothy Wordsworth from a gown bequeathed to her by 'Old Molly', the Wordsworth family servant for many years, tells its own story.[62] In spring 1811 Dorothy wrote to Mary Clarkson that she and her sister-in-law Mary were taking advantage of Joanna Hutchinson's 'services in nursing' Mary's toddler Catherine in order: 'to piece up some old gowns and other things which we had no value for into bed quilts, amongst these is old Molly's legacy to me—her best gown, and during the last ten days Mary and I have with our own hands without any help quilted two of them.'[63] The piece of fabric from 'Old Molly's legacy' represents family history of a sort that Molly herself might have recognized more readily in the memories invoked by the fabrics used in Dorothy's quilt than in any written account.

A local woman with little apparent knowledge of the wider world, Molly resembles one of the disenfranchised class of the very old, the very young and the barely literate who populate *Lyrical Ballads*. William Hazlitt recalls 'our laughing [in the summer of 1803] a good deal at W's old Molly, who had never heard of the French Revolution, ten years after it happened. Oh worse than Gothic ignorance!'[64] Coleridge caricatured her as 'Wordsworth's old Molly with her washing Tub'.[65] Mary Lamb, on the other hand, closes a letter to Dorothy of October 1804 with a respectful postscript: 'Compliments to old Molly'. [66] The piece of fabric from 'Old Molly's legacy' stands metonymically for the social and familial history of Dove Cottage and even of the different histories of country folk rooted in the local environment in contrast to the events of the world stage (witness Hazlitt's humorous jibe at Molly's 'Gothic ignorance' of the French Revolution). In the domestic and artisanal context of Grasmere, making things is life affirming; Dorothy's quilting stitches piece together layers of memory that mark different

[60] Susan Marks observes: 'The wholecloth quilting of Durham and South Wales fitted the principles of the Arts and Crafts movement, with its regional traditions, while still maintaining the mark of the individual as each quilter used her patterns in her own peculiar way', 'Changing Perceptions of the Quilt in Twentieth Century Britain: A Personal Polemic', *Quilt Studies. The Journal of the British Quilt Study Group*, 2 (2000), 31-66, 42. A 'wholecloth' quilt, as the name implies, is a quilt made from one piece of material, in a single colour (as opposed to a quilt pieced from several blocks of different coloured patterned and plain fabrics).

[61] Fiona MacCarthy, *Anarchy & Beauty: William Morris and his Legacy 1860-1960* (London, 2014), 75.

[62] Molly is Mary Fisher (1741-1808), the Wordsworth's servant at Dove Cottage who had passed away a couple of years earlier.

[63] *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: Volume II. The Middle Years: Part I: 1806-1811.* Second Edition. Revised by Mary Moorman. Ed. Ernest de Selincourt (Oxford, 1969), 487.

[64] William Hazlitt, 'On the Character of the Country People', *The Examiner*, July 1819; cited in Pamela Woof, ed., *The Grasmere Journals* (Oxford, 1993), 148-9.

[65] *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. E. L. Griggs, 6 vols. (Oxford, 1956-71), vol. 2, 768.

[66] *The Letters of Charles and Mary Lamb*, op. cit., vol. 2, 148.

significant events and persons creating a metaphorical, visual representation of history in which the individual is connected to a wider whole in ways that gesture to subjectivity itself as a textual construct.

The 'memory quilt' is an expression of mourning associated particularly with women during the nineteenth century in which the quilt incorporates fabrics from the deceased's clothing in the manner that Dorothy used pieces from 'Old Molly's gown.[67] Dorothy's quilts, which were intended for use as 'bed quilts', as well as providing physical warmth, might also have given emotional comfort to her and to the Wordsworth family who could still be wrapped metaphorically in Molly's memory so to speak. If a quilt can be conceptualized as an artifact of memory and family history, it is perhaps not surprising that one of the foremost psychoanalytical theorists of the twentieth century, Jacques Lacan, had recourse to the metaphoricity of the quilting needle in explaining how human subject positions come to be stabilized in language. Lacan's notion of the '*point de capiton*,'[68] quilting or anchoring point in English, uses the attachment of buttons as a metaphor to indicate the points along the linguistic chain of signification where the signifier is attached to the signified. A certain number of these points are necessary to the construction of the 'normal' subject—their absence is in fact a symptom of psychosis. Without such quilting points the subject would be incapable of navigating their everyday life. Memory conceived as integral to the formation of individual subject identity serves as a link between the high art of the Romantic poem produced by a creative imagination stimulated by memory and self-reflection and popular material objects and artifacts such as quilts that may also be closely connected to the inner life of memory. As with Romantic poetry, quilts also require an appreciation of the harmonies of pattern and form.

~ Crafting Romantic poetry: pattern and form ~

Of the 'formal patterns' used by Wordsworth to poeticize harmony in the natural world one pattern of imagery shines transcendent, which is that of the star.[69] The metaphysical power of star imagery is seen particularly in the poet's early experimental works, in the avant-gardist 'Lucy' poems of *Lyrical Ballads* (1800) for instance, where the poet's memory of the dead girl Lucy, and the joy she inspires in him, is figured in the image of the 'stars of midnight', which, in harmony with the dancing 'rivulets' on earth below, foster Lucy's eternal ethereal presence:

> The stars of midnight shall be dear
> To her, and she shall lean her ear
> In many a secret place
> Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
> And beauty born of murmuring sound
> Shall pass into her face.[70]

[67] See the entries on 'Mourning Quilts in America' and 'Quilts as Memorials' in the *Encyclopedia of Death and the Human Experience*, 2 vols, eds. Clifton D. Byrant and Dennis L. Peck (California, 2009), vol. 1, 721-3.
[68] Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London, 1977), 303.
[69] 'Formal patterns' is Geoffrey Durrant's phrase, in chapter 3 of his study *Wordsworth and the Great System: A Study of Wordsworth's Poetic Universe* (Cambridge, 1970), 32-43.
[70] William Wordsworth, 'Three years she grew in sun and shower', ll. 25-30, *The Poems of William Wordsworth*, op. cit., vol. 1, 437.

Star imagery appears still earlier in Wordsworth's psychologically charged verse tragedy *The Borderers* (composed 1796-7) in which the failed assassin Mortimer, motivated by jealousy and an apparently rational desire to reset a wrong, is prevented from executing his heinous crime by the sight of a solitary star shining through a crevice above his head: 'I cast my eyes up-wards, and / through a crevice in the roof I beheld a star twinkling over my head, / and by the living God, I could not do it—'[71] No human eye can defy God's superior and omniscient presence, symbolized by the solitary star twinkling overhead. Henceforth a murder is prevented. The star, with its attendant Biblical references, represents the pantheistic sense of harmony that is at the genesis of Wordsworthian Romanticism.

God-like attributes of transcendence and immanence are mirrored again in the power of a solitary star in the famous skating passage from the first book of the *Two-Part Prelude* (1799) where the boy Wordsworth skates on frozen Esthwaite in meditative solitude under the shadowy pattern of a star:

> Not seldom from the uproar I retired
> Into a silent bay, or sportively
> Glanced sideway leaving the tumultuous throng
> To cut across the shadow of a star
> That gleamed upon the ice.[72]

Under Esthwaite's starry light Wordsworth pauses and feels himself to be at the still centre of a pantheistic universe in which God is everywhere present, in all of nature's forms. 'Stopped short' (l. 180), he experiences the 'solitary cliffs' (l. 180) wheel by him: 'even as if the earth had rolled / With visible motion her diurnal round.'[73] The power of the star pattern in Wordsworth's poetry is shared by the long history of star patterns in traditional quilting design.

Geometric shapes, specifically the triangles and half squares that form the diamonds used to make the star pattern in quilting, are among the oldest and most widespread in the history of patchwork in Britain. As well as being used to piece a patchwork design of stars and other geometric shapes, the diamond pattern is a popular, probably the most popular, design, used to stitch (to quilt) together the three layers of fabric that make up a quilt, namely the top fabric or coverlet, the middle filling or wadding, and the backing fabric. Formed by a series of diagonally crossed straight lines, diamonds are an easier pattern to quilt than other designs used for decorative quilt stitching such as fans, cables or wreaths (the last two being used mainly for corners or borders). This important practical consideration apart, the diamond shape possesses symbolic, often magical, and also Biblical connotations that have endured across the centuries. The Harlequin figure of ribald sexuality, for example, familiar in Western culture from the early modern period onwards, is instantly recognizable by a costume pieced from brightly coloured diamond shapes and it is argued that 'the concept that patches turn away evil . . . speaks[s] for the

[71] William Wordsworth, 'The Borderers', Act II, sc. iii, 289-91, *Poems of William Wordsworth*, op. cit., vol. 1, 200.
[72] William Wordsworth, 'The Prelude (1798-1799)', ll. 170-74, *Poems of William Wordsworth*, op. cit., vol. 1, 535.
[73] Ibid, ll. 181-2.

use of patchwork textiles in religious festivals'.[74] 'Especially powerful', writes the early modern historian and quilter, Linda Woodbridge, are what she calls 'special patterns' of squares, formed into triangles and diamonds to make star and checkerboard designs.[75] The eight-point star appears in numerous quilting patterns like the 'Star of David', the 'Sunburst' pattern and the still more popular 'Star of Bethlehem' (figure 3).

Figure 3: 'Star of Bethlehem Quilt', c. 1835, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Reproduced courtesy of the American Museum in Bath, (Bath, UK).

History does not record the patterns chosen by Dorothy for her quilts, but we do have Jane Austen's patchwork coverlet (which is not quilted), made with her sister Cassandra and their mother circa 1811 (possibly about the same time that Dorothy was quilting bed covers for the Wordsworth household).[76] The Austen

[74] On the idea that patches turn away evil, see Schnuppe Von Gwinner, *The History of the Patchwork Quilt: Origins, Traditions and Symbols of a Textile Art*, trans. Edward Force (Westchester, Penn., 1988), 52; cited in Linda Woodbridge, 'Patchwork: Piecing the Early Modern Mind in England's First Century of Print Culture', *English Literary Renaissance*, 23. 1 (1993), 5-45, 27.

[75] Ibid.

[76] Austen writes to Cassandra: 'Have you collected the pieces for the patchwork? We are at a standstill', cited in Averil Colby, *Patchwork* (London, 1958), 112. The coverlet is kept in the Austen House Museum in Chawton, Hampshire. It should be noted that the date of 1811 given for the composition of the patchwork cover is based entirely on the citation from Austen's letter, which could refer to any piece of patchwork. There is no evidence that the patchwork referred to is that which hangs in the Jane Austen House Museum. Indeed, a number of fabrics included in the pattern suggest a later date of composition

patchwork is evidently a planned (rather than random) design, executed with considerable skill and precision (see figure 4 below).[77] At the centerpiece of the patchwork is a diamond square cut from a chintz pattern which is surrounded by evenly spaced smaller diamonds in printed cotton dress fabrics divided at regular intervals by a cream sashing fabric with black dots. A masterpiece of design in its symmetry of form and colour, the coverlet might be seen in the exactitude of its formal design as analogous to the symmetries and rhythms of chapter and volume design that structure Austen's novels.[78] The symmetry of Austen's plots and the precise nature of their division into volumes and chapters at the macro level are matched at the micro level of sentence detail, Austen's textual stitches so to speak, paralleling the careful hand-stitching of her patchwork.

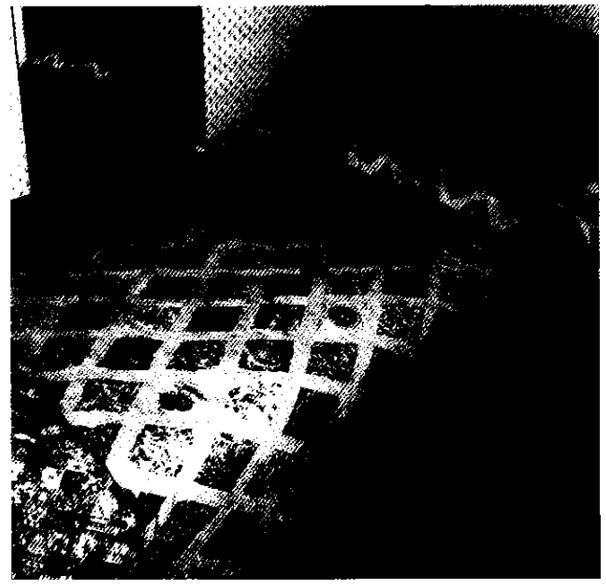

Figure 4: 'Jane Austen's quilt'. Reproduced courtesy of Jane Austen's House Museum.

Patchwork, even in its most sophisticated guise, as with the Austen coverlet, has not historically been accorded an attention equal to that given by scholars of the Romantic period to other forms of non-literary creativity, notably music and painting but also landscape design and gardening. To turn to the latter example of landscape gardening, an activity in which William Wordsworth took an almost professional interest, is to introduce the formal aspects of design that connect non-literary arts with literary creativity. The correlation between the concern with form and metrical patterning in Wordsworth's poetry and his practical plan for the winter garden he designed in collaboration with Dorothy in 1806 for his patron and friend

than 1811. I am grateful to Sue Dell, volunteer curator at the Jane Austen House Museum, for sharing with me her detailed research into Austen's needlecraft and quilting activities.

[77] The coverlet is on display at the Jane Austen House Museum, Chawton, Hampshire. The museum reference no. is CHWJA:JAH153.

[78] On the shape of Austen's novels, see Marilyn Butler, 'Disregarded Designs: Jane Austen's Sense of the Volume', in *Jane Austen in a Social Context*, ed. David Monaghan (London, 1981), 49-65.

Sir George Beaumont,[79] offers a post-hoc justification for a consideration of the ways in which quilting and needlework might been seen similarly as expressions of creativity that interconnect with the formal concerns, the patterns and metaphors of Romantic poetry.

The winter garden Wordsworth designed for George Beaumont and his wife Lady Margaret at their estate at Coleorton, Leicestershire, is remarkable in the context of this discussion of star patterns not least because it included, in later years, a shell grotto with a pebble floor decorated in a Star of David pattern that is attributed to Dorothy Wordsworth.[80] William Wordsworth described his design for the winter garden thus: 'Within and close to the edging of boxwood, I would first plant a row of snowdrops, and behind that a row of crocus; these would succeed each other. Close under the wall I would have a row, or fringe, of white lilies, and in front of this another of daffodils; these also would succeed each other, the daffodils coming first; the middle part of the border, which must be of good width, to be richly tufted, or bedded over with hepatica, jonquils, hyacinths, polyanthus, auriculas, mezereon, and other spring flowers, and shrubs that blossom early.'[81] The whiteness of the winter snowdrop is thrown into relief by the coloured crocus just as, later in the year, the fringe of white lily will intensify the yellow of the spring daffodil. In much the way the colours of a patchwork quilt might seem unplanned but yet follow a pattern, so the colour arrangement of Wordsworth's garden offers pleasing contrasts that form an overall pattern but appear bright, rich and even spontaneous in ways that give the eye the freedom to roam visually and contemplatively. Wordsworth achieves, in other words, a visual imagery which combines order with playfulness. The effect is similar to that found in patchwork quilt design and, indeed, to the use of metrical patterns in poetry. In landscape design, as in quilting and also in poetry, the creative practitioner manipulates the formal template (the garden plan, the quilting pattern or the metrical form).

A final return to *Lyrical Ballads* and to that well-known poem 'We are Seven' allows the possibility of thinking about sewing in poetry, which is to think poetically about sewing as a form of creativity and imaginative freedom. The eight-years-old cottage girl, faced with the fact that two of her seven siblings are dead, insists nonetheless that she has seven brothers and sisters in all. The adult questioner in the poem insists that seven minus two equals five: 'You run about, my little maid, / Your limbs they are alive; / If two are in the church-yard laid, / Then ye are only five.'[82] In response, the maid replies 'Their graves are green, they may be seen' (l. 37): 'My stockings there I often knit, / My 'kerchief there I hem, / And there upon the ground I sit— / I sit and sing to them.' (ll. 41-4) The children's green graves are still resonant with life for the little maid who takes her sewing and sings there. Knitting, hemming, singing: these are imaginative responses to the dead siblings, which contrast with the obtuse literalism of the poetic persona of the interrogator. If the child of that great lyric 'The Rainbow' is in Wordsworth's

[79] See Tony Reavell, 'Poet and Patron: Wordsworth's winter garden design for Lady Beaumont', *Charles Lamb Bulletin*, n.s. 160 (Autumn 2014), 109-24.
[80] Ibid., 117.
[81] Ibid., 93.
[82] William Wordsworth, 'We are Seven' (*Lyrical* Ballads, 1798), ll. 33-6, *The Poems of William Wordsworth*, op. cit., vol. 1, 333.

paradoxical phrase, 'Father of the Man',[83] the little maid of 'We Are Seven' is in some way 'mother of the man', a dispenser of wisdom, however unconventional it might be.

Stitching as a literal activity in 'We Are Seven' triggers the release of the little maid's somewhat uncanny other vision, what Jonathan Wordsworth refers to as a 'border vision', that obscure, almost metaphysical, state of being and not quite being, which in its most developed form opens a window onto the poetic imagination.[84] In a larger metaphorical sense, the imaginative response of the little maid's border vision, which keeps her siblings green in her soul, is also that which preserves her own emotional well-being. In her slippage between the accepted rationality of adulthood (she after all addresses the interrogator's questions – she has a conversation with him) and her expression of a linguistic and arithmetical understanding that defies conventional adult wisdom she finds a place to be, a spot of time, so to speak, in early childhood. Her knitting and sewing are more than just knitting and sewing: they have a powerful spiritual and metaphorical significance, like the nightingale to Keats or, indeed, the rainbow to William Wordsworth.

In the long history of quilting, women have demonstrated their extraordinary powers of creativity, sometimes to keep themselves and their households alive by the making of 'necessaries', and at other times to keep alive the memory of those no longer living or simply (which is not the same as being simplistic) to celebrate life's colours and forms. This much the creative quilter shares with the poet: both work with pattern and the imagination. Each adopts pattern as a template (for instance the traditional design used by a quilter or the poet's choice of a particular metrical form) yet both also individualize their art by playing with and adapting the base pattern. Pattern in this sense connotes an adherence to as well as an individualizing of existing forms. To speak of quilting and poetry in the same sentence is to think seriously about the conjunction of art and craft. This is not to propose a mere interchangeability between the work of the hand and that of the mind; rather, it is to open up the possibility of thinking poetically and imaginatively, as well as historically, about sewing and so-called 'women's work'. To think creatively about quilting or about garden design is to think about quilting and gardening as forms of engaged imaginative creativity. It is not to confuse either activity with poetry and certainly any such rethinking must take account of historical permeations and realities. Yet the bright star of creativity shines powerfully both in textile and text. Reading these two forms together is to put poetry and craft, and male and female creativity into dialogue in ways that can open a theoretical space for sewing conceived as a transformative, meaningful activity and one that has been too long excluded or marginalized from accounts of Romantic creativity.

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[83] William Wordsworth, 'The Rainbow' (*Poems in Two Volumes*, 1807), *The Poems of William Wordsworth*, op. cit., vol. 1, 669.
[84] Jonathan Wordsworth, *William Wordsworth: The Borders of Vision* (Oxford, 1982).

Napoleon, Charles Lamb, and the Poets

Pamela Woof

No-one could fail to have an opinion about Napoleon. English poets all had views, and their views differed. Keats was the youngest of the five best-known Romantic Poets; he was born in 1795 into an England already two years into a war with France. In early 1814, after nearly 20 years, it seemed that the long war was at last ending: Napoleon was broken by Moscow, and his own city Paris was negotiating with the Bourbon monarchy. The Emperor was forced to abdicate, and he was exiled – though on a handsome pension – to the island of Elba in the Mediterranean. Keats was 19, an apprentice surgeon and an apprentice poet. In his sonnet, 'On Peace', he welcomed the peace that would 'bless/The dwellings of this war-surrounded Isle', and bring with it Liberty, Milton's 'sweet mountain nymph'[1]; but he also expressed his fear in the sonnet that European nations might permit power to fall again into the hands of tyrannical monarchs:

> O Peace! and dost thou with thy presence bless
> The dwellings of this war-surrounded Isle;
> Soothing with placid brow our late distress,
> Making the triple kingdom brightly smile?
> Joyful I hail thy presence; and I hail
> The sweet companions that await on thee;
> Complete my joy - let not my first wish fail,
> Let the sweet mountain nymph thy favourite be,
> With England's happiness proclaim Europa's Liberty.
> O Europe! let not sceptred tyrants see
> That thou must shelter in thy former state;
> Keep thy chains burst, and boldly say thou art free;
> Give thy kings law - leave not uncurbed the great ;
> So with the horrors past thou'lt win thy happier fate. ('On Peace')

Napoleon's stay on Elba was short; by March 1815 he was back in Paris, Louis XVIII was slinking out of it, and Waterloo was something like 100 days away. Meanwhile, across in England there had been public celebrations for the anniversary of the 1660 Restoration of Charles II, the flamboyant son of our own executed monarch. Keats could not possibly celebrate; he wrote a verse:

> Infatuate Britons, will you still proclaim
> His memory, your direst, foulest shame,
> Nor patriots revere?
> Ah, while I hear each traitorous lying bell,

[1] Milton associated cheerful happiness with Liberty:
And in thy right hand lead with thee
The mountain-nymph, sweet Liberty ('L'Allegro', 35-6)

> 'Tis gallant Sidney's, Russell's, Vane's sad knell,
> That pains my wounded ear.
> ('Written on 29 May, The Anniversary of the Restoration of Charles the 2nd)

Algernon Sidney, Lord John Russell and Sir Henry Vane had all held and acted upon Republican views in the seventeenth century; they were executed after the Restoration. It is these men who were the patriots for Keats.

Keats did not become militant as a political writer, but he did not forget his early loyalties: '[...] here I am among Colleges, Halls Stalls, plenty of Trees thank God – plenty of Water thank heaven – plenty of Books thank the Muses – plenty of Snuff – thank Sir Walter Raleigh – plenty of Sagars [sic], ditto – plenty of flat Country – thank Tellus's roling pin. I'm on the Sofa - Buonapa[r]te is on the Snuff Box [...]' (Letter from Oxford to Jane Reynolds, 4 September 1817)[2] The Emperor's picture might be on Keats' snuff-box, but Napoleon himself was by then a prisoner on far away St Helena, a remote island in the South Atlantic.

The Allies' victory at Waterloo in June 1815 meant exhaustion for Europe as well as the return of crowned heads. In a letter to his brother George, Keats tried to follow the nuances:

> Notwithstanding the part which the Liberals take in the Cause of Napoleon I cannot but think he has done more harm to the life of Liberty than anyone else could have done: not that the divine right Gentlemen have done or intend to do any good – no they have taken a Lesson of him and will do all the further harm he would have done without any of the good – the worst thing he has done is, that he has taught them how to organise their monstrous armies.

Keats' judgement of Napoleon is mixed. He opens his new poem, *Hyperion*, on a scene of defeat; in Keats' story, as in Europe, there had been a shift in power: a ruling father figure, the Titan Saturn, had been ousted by his son Jove (Jupiter). It is Milton's Lucifer/Satan figure writ new and rebelling against God the Father, but with a difference: Keats, unlike Milton, is openly, and not without knowing it, on the side of the take-over, the rebels. He saw change in power structures as necessary for historical development. At the same time he was moved by defeat, and his poem *Hyperion* begins with stasis, almost paralysis, among the fallen Titans. The feeling is analogous to that of radicals in England, for no new society had arisen with Waterloo, the Congress of Vienna and the downfall of Napoleon. It was as though there had been no French Revolution, as though history like the poem's clouds, like its wind, like Nature, could stand still. There is no 'gentle breeze' here, no 'mild creative breeze' as there is at the start of Wordsworth's long poem *The Prelude*, no breathing inspiration, no breath of life that the Holy Spirit that 'dove-like satst brooding' had offered Milton; there is the opposite – not wind but windlessness and a dead silence that is voiceless:

> Deep in the shady sadness of a vale
> Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,

[2] The Letters of Keats will be found by date in *The Letters of John Keats, 1814-1821*, ed. Hyder E. Rollins, 2 vols. Harvard, 1958.

Far from the fiery noon, and eve's one star,
Sat grey-haired Saturn, quiet as a stone,
Still as the silence round about his lair;
Forest on forest hung about his head
Like cloud on cloud. No stir of air was there,
Not so much life as on a summer's day
Robs not one light seed from the feathered grass,
But where the dead leaf fell, there did it rest.
A stream went voiceless by, still deadened more
By reason of his fallen divinity
Spreading a shade; the Naiad 'mid her reeds
Pressed her cold finger closer to her lips.

Along the margin-sand large foot-marks went,
No further than to where his feet had strayed,
And slept there since. Upon the sodden ground
His old right hand lay nerveless, listless, dead,
Unsceptered; and his realmless eyes were closed...
(*Hyperion I* 1-19)

But the rebel sons, the gods, now the rulers, will not simply replace their fallen fathers – as seemed all too likely in the failed rebellions and conquests of Europe; they will indeed rule, but they will be different. Hyperion, the former radiant Titan divinity of the Sun must make way now for his own son, the even more glorious Apollo who will be not only god of the Sun, but god also of language and communication, of poetry and music; his symbol, the lyre, and 'all the vast / Unwearied ear of the whole universe / [Would] listen in pain and pleasure at the birth / Of [the] new tuneful wonder.' (*Hyperion III* 64-6) Apollo, of course, like all poets, knew how to listen; he heard the voices of nature, 'He listened, and he wept', wrote Keats. He needed to understand the pain: 'I strive to search wherefore I am so sad', he says. Keats strove too. So he broke off his *Hyperion*, and by September 1819 he had largely re-written it as *The Fall of Hyperion*, an exploration of the suffering involved in achieving greater imaginative empathy and thus becoming more worthy for action and leadership as well as for writing and poetry; Keats offers a deepening of Apollo's first ecstatic joy in words and music. This would indeed promote an original style of leadership. In addition, in his poem, there now enters a human, a poet, a man rather like Keats, who takes on the burden of learning, the knowledge of pain; his suffering is inevitably 'deathwards progressing' yet still seeking change and the responsibility of consciousness. Again, the increasingly complicated poem was left unfinished. In 'To Autumn', Keats, by now gravely ill, turned to the sad departing music of nature's own "deathward progressing" yet ultimately life-affirming sounds and harmonies:

Where are the songs of spring? Ay, where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—
While barréd clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue.
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn

Among the river sallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.
('To Autumn', 23-33)

William Wordsworth was twenty-five years older than Keats, but he was only 20 years old when he fell in love with France. In Book Six of *The Prelude* he describes walking through France in 1790, just one year after the Fall of the Bastille, '[...] 'twas a time when Europe was rejoiced, / France standing on the top of golden hours, / And human nature seeming born again.' (*Prelude* VI 352-4) A year later, back in France, Wordsworth's republican and revolutionary ideals grew stronger; he met the charismatic, nobly-born and revolutionary Michel Beaupuy and had many an 'interchange of talk, / On rational liberty and hope in man, / Justice and peace.' (*Prelude* IX 401-3) The execution of the King, the Terror, the carnage of the guillotine, war with England and the rise of Napoleon not just as a leader in France but an aggressor in Europe did much to darken, almost extinguish, Wordsworth's first and famous youthful 'bliss [...] in that dawn to be alive' (*Prelude* X 692). Like the young Keats later in *Hyperion*, he found himself wondering what characteristics were the marks of men of action, of leaders. The moral character of Republican leaders, because elected, should reach the highest standards, and in 1802, influenced by 'the gravity, and republican austerity' of Milton's sonnets, Wordsworth wrote his own sonnet on the subject; he discussed the manifest failure of Napoleon's masculine, martial and ambitious career to fit him for the role of a great leader. Where Keats would later lay stress on the hard-won imaginative empathy for the sufferings of others, Wordsworth began by encouraging a leader's gentler, feminine side:

I grieved for Buonaparte, with a vain
And an unthinking grief! the vital blood
Of that Man's mind what can it be? What food
Fed his first hopes? What knowledge could he gain?
'Tis not in battles that from youth we train
The Governor who must be wise and good,
And temper with the sternness of the brain
Thoughts motherly, and meek as womanhood.
Wisdom doth live with children round her knees:

Bonaparte had not the virtues which Wordsworth and Keats looked for; he had risen in the military and was promoted to First Consul in 1799. Yet Wordsworth's friend Coleridge, as staunch a lover of liberty as Wordsworth, had to concede in his *Morning Post* leading article in March 1800 that the French had,

> seated on the throne of the Republic a man of various talent, of commanding genius, of splendid exploit, from whose policy the peaceful adherents of the old religion anticipate toleration; from whose real opinions and habits the men of letters and philosophy are assured of patronage; in whose professional attachment and

> individual associations the military, and the men of military talent, look confidently for the exertions of a comrade and a brother; and finally, in whose uninterrupted felicity the multitude find an object of superstition and enthusiasm. (*The Morning Post*, 11 March 1800)

'[...] Their country', continued Coleridge of the French, 'is too unregenerate to be capable at present of genuine Republicanism'. Their 'commanding genius' just the year before, in January 1798 had invaded neutral, republican Switzerland. Radicals were disillusioned. Coleridge published 'France: an Ode', in April 1798: in a torrent of rhetoric he calls on Nature's spontaneous life of freedom:

> Ye Clouds! that far above me float and pause,
> Whose pathless march no mortal may control!
> Ye Ocean-Waves! that wheresoe'er ye roll,
> Yield homage only to the eternal laws!
> Ye woods! that listen to the night-birds singing...
> O Ye loud Waves! and O ye Forests high!
> And O ye Clouds that far above me soared!
> Thou rising Sun! thou blue rejoicing Sky!
> Yea, every thing that is and will be free!
> Bear witness for me, wheresoe'er ye be,
> With what deep worship I have still adored
> The spirit of divinest Liberty.

Through the time of the Terror and the falling heads, "Head after head", as Wordsworth described it (*Prelude X 535*), Coleridge had kept his faith that liberty would ultimately come from 'the low huts of them that toil and groan! / And, conquering by her happiness alone, / Shall France compel the nations to be free'. But then had come the invasion of Switzerland, and Coleridge found that he had to beg Freedom to forgive him:

> [...] forgive me, that I cherished
> One thought that ever blessed your cruel foes!
> To scatter rage, and traitorous guilt,
> Where Peace her jealous home had built;
> A patriot race to disinherit
> Of all that made their stormy wilds so dear;
> And with inexpiable spirit
> To taint the bloodless freedom of the mountaineer –
> Oh France [...]

France had sunk. No longer 'Champion of human kind' it prefers 'To mix with Kings in the low lust of sway, / Yell in the hunt, and share the murderous prey; / To insult the shrine of Liberty with spoils / From freemen torn; to tempt and to betray.' France had sunk indeed. Bonaparte invaded Switzerland again: a second time – in 1802. In 1804 he had himself crowned Emperor of the Republic of France, by the Pope in Paris. Clearly, he could no longer in the word's true sense be considered a Republican. Now, Wordsworth, in indignation, in kinship with people who lived amongst mountains, and having in mind Milton's much-loved allusion to

the 'Mountain Nymph sweet Liberty', wrote not an Ode like Coleridge, but a sonnet openly using the word "Tyrant" to refer to Napoleon, and claiming man's right to be as free in society as were the seas and mountains in Nature:

> *Thought of a Briton on the Subjugation of Switzerland*
> Two Voices are there; one is of the Sea,
> One of the Mountains; each a mighty Voice:
> In both from age to age Thou didst rejoice,
> They were thy chosen Music, Liberty!
> There came a Tyrant, and with holy glee
> Thou fought'st against him; but hast vainly striven;
> Thou from thy Alpine holds at length art driven,
> Where not a torrent murmurs heard by thee.
> Of one deep bliss thine ear hath been bereft:
> Then cleave, O cleave to that which still is left!
> For, high-soul'd Maid, what sorrow would it be
> That mountain Floods should thunder as before,
> And Ocean bellow from his rocky shore,
> And neither awful Voice be heard by thee!

It would be sorrow indeed if, in our own sea-girt island the voice of Liberty, the freedom of the Ocean, should suffer from an aggression similar to mountainous Switzerland's. Wordsworth voices here, in 1802, his own real fear of invasion.

But villain as he was, Napoleon constantly exercised people's thinking. In a Notebook of summer 1802 Coleridge jotted down memos to himself:

> 1. N.B. to try to understand Villains
> 2. Greece flattered itself with the hopes of a universal monarchy under Alexander
> - France under Bonaparte
> 3. What are the Likenesses & and what the Differences between France under
> Bonaparte & Rome under Augustus

Three essays were published in September 1802 in the *Morning Post* on the parallel of France under Napoleon with Rome under Augustus; in these articles Coleridge analyses Napoleon's ideas for a single unified European state.

Meanwhile, Wordsworth quietly continued to believe in an ideal of Freedom, but he could no longer feel that people, the populace in the mass, were ready for it. The French Revolution – and he had been there – had shown that society could not be changed by sudden and violent means; these had brought confusion and cruelty; there were no austere and calm Republican ideals; instead, a monarchical and aggressive leader had emerged. The radical aspirations of his youth no longer held Wordsworth and his growing acceptance of English society, on the whole as it was and evolving only slowly, drew on him the contempt of younger poets, notably Shelley and Byron.

***

Shelley was always young – not thirty when he drowned. He was always confident – of solid country gentry and Eton and Oxford (though briefly). He was always

extreme – as intellectual, atheist, lover, democrat; an activist whose passion was 'for reforming the world'; and he always believed that this could be done, and that poetry and imagination could do it. He was always a poet. Born in 1792, a month before the September Massacres and the blood that followed, he never had to face, as was Wordsworth's lot, the devastating disappointment caused by the atrocities and failures of the Revolution. His disappointment was rather in Wordsworth who had been, in *Lyrical Ballads* 1798 and 1800, the poet of the poor, and in his sonnets of the early 1800s, the moral voice of Liberty. Wordsworth's long awaited *Excursion* of 1814 did nothing for Shelley. He felt himself a lonely elegist of lost Liberty. In 1816 he published a sonnet addressed 'To Wordsworth':

> Poet of Nature, thou hast wept to know
> That things depart which never may return;
> Childhood and youth, friendship and love's first glow,
> Have fled like sweet dreams, leaving thee to mourn.
> These common woes I feel. One loss is mine
> Which thou too feel'st, yet I alone deplore.
> Thou wert as a lone star, whose light did shine
> On some frail bark in winter's midnight roar:
> Thou hast like to a rock-built refuge stood
> Above the blind and battling multitude:
> In honoured poverty thy voice did weave
> Songs consecrate to truth and liberty,—
> Deserting these, thou leavest me to grieve,
> Thus having been, that thou should'st cease to be.

This is a polemical piece: Wordsworth never deserted truth and liberty but as he explained in *The Prelude*, he attended to the world we live in, the 'very world which is the world / Of all of us, the place on which, in the end, / We find our happiness, or not at all.' (*Prelude* X 725-7) Shelley, meanwhile, had something of a leaning towards, in his words, 'beautiful idealisms of moral excellence'.[3] The ground of Shelley's hope for perfecting society was love; love was 'the great secret of morals… a going out of our own nature, and an identification of ourselves with the beautiful which exists in thought, action, or person, not our own.' *(A Defence of Poetry)* After great physical and mental suffering Prometheus in Shelley's idealistic poem *Prometheus Unbound*, reaches the point where he can forgive the tyrant Jove who is torturing him. His forgiveness clears the way for love to regenerate society. There is a grand cleansing of earth's historical and continuing evils: religious hypocrisy, original sin, capitalism, class division, ignorance, desire for property, monarchy, tyranny, the corruption of justice: 'The loathsome mask has fallen', writes Shelley, voicing his great hope:

> man remains
> Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed - but man:
> Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless,
> Exempt from awe, worship, degree - the King
> Over himself; just, gentle, wise - but man;

[3] Preface to *Prometheus Unbound*

> Passionless? No - yet free from guilt or pain
> Which were, for his will made or suffered them,
> Nor yet exempt, though ruling them like slaves,
> From chance and death, and mutability,
> The clogs of that which else might oversoar
> The loftiest star of unascended heaven,
> Pinnacled dim in the intense inane.

But the loathsome mask of course has never fallen away; the 'beautiful idealism' remains pinnacled above the loftiest star always and permanently an idealism. When the state militia used deadly and killing violence against a peaceful crowd gathered in St Peter's Field, Manchester to hear 'Orator' Henry Hunt speaking about working conditions in August 1819, Shelley in Italy responded immediately to the violence with verses of political protest. No 'beautiful idealisms' had emerged from the occasion in Manchester, but Shelley's message was the same as the one he had given Prometheus: do not reply to bloody oppression with violence; use language, let the people's voice be heard with dignity:

> Let a vast Assembly be,
> And with great solemnity
> Declare with measured words that ye
> Are, as God had made ye, free –
>
> Be your strong and simple words
> Keen to wound as sharpened swords,
>
> … Rise like Lions after slumber
> In unvanquishable number –
> Shake your chains to earth like dew
> Which in sleep had fallen on you -
> Ye are many – they are few.
> ('The Mask of Anarchy', 295 – 372)

'They are few', but they are the established Church, King and Government, and the people for too long, says Shelley, have yielded to their oppressors; they have become 'slaves in soul'. The militia's frightened violent attack on a crowd who had met only to exchange views, the killing of 11 innocent people, was the kind of outrage that should, in Shelley's view be met only with non-violence:

> And if then the tyrants dare
> Let them ride among you there,
> Slash, and stab, and maim, and hew, -
> What they like, that let them do.
>
> With folded arms and steady eyes,
> And little fear, and less surprise,
> Look upon them as they slay
> Till their rage has died away.
> ('The Mask of Anarchy', 340-48)

Passive resistance is hard. Leadership in England, as radicals saw it, was tyrannical and unjust. In Europe, liberté, egalité, fraternité had settled into reactionary oppression. Shelley's message of change through the moral force of love is passionate, but it has probably been most effective when the political agitation is couched in the music of his great lyrical gift, when the eternal images of wind and dead leaves, autumn, winter and spring, death, new life and the making of poetry are both the subject and substance of his words: he addresses the west wind:

> Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
> What if my leaves are falling like its own!
> The tumult of thy mighty harmonies
>
> Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
> Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
> My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!
>
> Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
> Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!
> And, by the incantation of this verse,
>
> Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
> Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
> ('Ode to the West Wind', 57-67)

Shelley's imperative urgency for the power of words to change society is impassioned still.

Byron was perhaps the most immediate and perceptive poet to comment both on Waterloo and Napoleon. The battle was on 18 June 1815. Byron was on the battlefield, in April 1816, and he writes at once and in the present tense as though, at the moment of writing he is indeed there; the reader too is present:

> Stop! – for thy tread is on an Empire's dust!
> An Earthquake's spoil is sepulchred below!
> Is the spot mark'd with no colossal bust?
> Nor column trophied for triumphal show?
> None; but the moral's truth tells simpler so,
> As the ground was before, thus let it be; -
> How that red rain hath made the harvest grow!
> And is this all the world has gain'd by thee,
> Thou first and last of fields! King-making Victory?
> (*Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* III. XVII)

"Is Earth more free", asks Byron, as a result of that deadly battle, 'Did nations combat to make *One* submit? / Or league to teach all Kings true sovereignty? / What! Shall reviving *Thraldom* again be / The patch'd-up idol of enlighten'd days?' (XIX) Before the battle Byron had written a little prematurely, in his journal, 'Napoleon! – this week will decide his fate. All seems against him; but I believe and hope he will win – at least, beat back the Invaders.' (18 Feb 1815, L&J III 243)[4] And

[4] For L&J see *Byron's Letters and Journals* ed Leslie A Marchand, 12 vols. John Murray, 1981

again, 'Sent my fine print of Napoleon to be framed. It is framed; and the Emperor becomes his robes as if he had been hatched in them.' (27 Feb 1815, L&J, III 248)

In *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* canto III, Byron looks back from his survey of the battle-field, and tells the story of how the battle began. It is the old story of Love and War, Venus and Mars. Byron spends no time on the military action itself; he offers the drama of its beginning, and then his lament at what he saw as futile heroics and the pointless destruction of life. There is not a word of triumph or of admiration for Wellington.

> There was a sound of revelry by night,
> And Belgium's capital had gather'd then
> Her Beauty and her Chivalry, and bright
> The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men;
> A thousand hearts beat happily; and when
> Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
> Soft eyes look'd love to eyes which spake again,
> And all went merry as a marriage-bell;
> But hush! hark! a deep sound strikes like a rising knell!
>
> Did ye not hear it?—No; 'twas but the wind,
> Or the car rattling o'er the stony street;
> On with the dance! let joy be unconfined;
> No sleep till morn, when Youth and Pleasure meet
> To chase the glowing Hours with flying feet -
> But, hark!—that heavy sound breaks in once more,
> As if the clouds its echo would repeat;
> And nearer, clearer, deadlier than before!
> Arm! Arm! it is—it is—the cannon's opening roar!
>
> Within a window'd niche of that high hall
> Sate Brunswick's fated chieftain; he did hear
> That sound, the first amidst the festival,
> And caught its tone with Death's prophetic ear;
> And when they smiled because he deem'd it near,
> His heart more truly knew that peal too well
> Which stretch'd his father on a bloody bier,
> And roused the vengeance blood alone could quell:
> He rush'd into the field, and, foremost fighting, fell.
>
> Ah! then and there was hurrying to and fro,
> And gathering tears, and tremblings of distress,
> And cheeks all pale, which but an hour ago
> Blush'd at the praise of their own loveliness;
> And there were sudden partings, such as press
> The life from out young hearts, and choking sighs
> Which ne'er might be repeated: who would guess
> If ever more should meet those mutual eyes,
> Since upon night so sweet such awful morn could rise!
>
> And there was mounting in hot haste: the steed,

The mustering squadron, and the clattering car,
Went pouring forward with impetuous speed,
And swiftly forming in the ranks of war;
And the deep thunder peal on peal afar;
And near, the beat of the alarming drum
Roused up the soldier ere the morning star;
While thronged the citizens with terror dumb,
Or whispering, with white lips – 'The foe! They come! they come!'
... And Ardennes waves above them her green leaves,
Dewy with nature's tear-drops, as they pass,
Grieving, if aught inanimate e'er grieves,
Over the unreturniug brave, – alas!
Ere evening to be trodden like the grass
Which now beneath them, but above shall grow
In its next verdure, when this fiery mass
Of living valour, rolling on the foe,
And burning with high hope, shall moulder cold and low.

Last noon beheld them full of lusty life,
Last eve in Beauty's circle proudly gay,
The midnight brought the signal-sound of strife,
The morn the marshalling in arms, – the day
Battle's magnificently-stern array!
The thunder-clouds close o'er it, which when rent
The earth is covered thick with other clay,
Which her own clay shall cover, heap'd and pent,
Rider and horse, – friend, foe, – in one red burial blent!

Byron brilliantly uses the long last line of each stanza to force upon the reader the remorseless further progress towards death. For one night and a day we are caught up in the quick urgencies of dancing, and then begins the trembling. Voluptuous music yields to the relentless roar of cannon, and when it is over, the mud and clay of the dead carelessly mingle with the mud and clay from nature's thunder clouds; both clays indifferently covering alike "Rider and horse, - friend, foe, - in one red burial blent".

On 16 May 1816 Byron wrote to his friend Hobhouse, 'The Plain at Waterloo is a fine one – but not much after Marathon & Troy- [...] Perhaps there is something of prejudice in this – but I detest the cause & the victors - & the victory.' As a boy, Byron's guardian had been the Earl of Carlisle, whose son Frederick Howard was killed at Waterloo, and in *Childe Harold*, "young gallant Howard" stands in for the thousands of pointless deaths, lives destroyed meaninglessly amid nature's perfect indifference:

when I stood beneath the fresh green tree,
Which living waves where thou didst cease to live,
And saw around me the wild field revive
With fruits and fertile promise, and the Spring
Come forth her work of gladness to contrive,
With all her reckless birds upon the wing,

I turned from all she brought to those she could not bring.

I turned to thee, to thousands, of whom each
And one as all a ghastly gap did make
In his own kind and kindred, whom to teach
Forgetfulness were mercy [...] (*Childe Harold* III XXX- XXX1)

Turning to the fallen Napoleon, Byron tries to describe him, neither to condemn, nor praise nor judge; Napoleon's contradictory impulses are perhaps the source of the poet's fascination:

There sunk the greatest, nor the worst of men,
Whose spirit, antithetically mixt
One moment of the mightiest, and again
On little objects with like firmness fixt;
Extreme in all things! hadst thou been betwixt,
Thy throne had still been thine, or never been;
For daring made thy rise as fall: thou seek'st
Even now to re-assume the imperial mien,
And shake again the world, the Thunderer of the scene! (XXXVI)

Conqueror and captive of the earth art thou!
She trembles at thee still, and thy wild name
Was ne'er more bruited in men's minds than now
That thou art nothing, save the jest of Fame,
Who woo'd thee once, thy vassal, and became
The flatterer of thy fierceness, till thou wert
A god unto thyself [...] (XXXVII)

Yet Napoleon, it would appear, behaved well in defeat, 'When Fortune fled her spoil'd and favourite child, / He stood unbowed beneath the ills upon him piled.' (XXXIX) Byron himself had ills enough in 1816; his new-born daughter was lost to him, his wife unreconciled; self-exiled he was never to return to England. He seems to be describing his own volatile psychological make-up as he describes Napoleon:

quiet to quick bosoms is a hell,
There hath been thy bane; there is a fire
And motion of the soul which will not dwell
In its own narrow being, but aspire
Beyond the fitting medium of desire;
And, but once Kindled, quenchless evermore,
Preys upon high adventure, nor can tire
Of aught but rest; a fever at the core,
Fatal to him who bears, to all who ever bore. (XLII)

"Fever at the core" directed Byron to champion independence for Greece and seek for himself "a soldier's grave"; an actual fever fore-stalled this, and Byron after his premature death achieved a fame in Europe that is comparable only to Napoleon's.

Wordsworth at the time of Waterloo was middle-aged, a lover of liberty still, but a detester now of both radicalism and revolution, and a determined enemy of Napoleon and his aggression. In the year of Waterloo, 1815, he produced his collected shorter poems in two volumes. All the familiar poems are there, all the beggars and forlorn women of the *Lyrical Ballads*, all the shepherds, all the country significance and the joy of making a home among the English hills, as well as poems like 'Michael', poems about grief and loss, and the strengths we need to deal with these feelings. The sonnets on liberty, the naming of places and the travel poems all re-appear. The volumes are a pæon to England and Englishness, and this is particularly noticeable because the poems are all freshly arranged: not as in their old volumes but in terms of a man's life: poems about Childhood, and then Youth, are at the start of volume 1, with Old Age and Elegies at the end of volume II. Between, are poems, in Wordsworth's view, springing from areas of the mind: the Affections, the Imagination, with sections on Liberty interspersed, and everywhere the natural world. The impressive collection must have made readers in 1815 look afresh at England and long for the preservation of all that was English. Wordsworth desperately wanted victory at Waterloo; he had come by 1815 to admire Wellington and he hated Napoleon's changes to France and his ambitious aggression.

18 January 1816 was the day appointed for a General Thanksgiving, and Wordsworth published his *Thanksgiving Ode* later that year. In his Advertisement or Preface he gave particular praise to the discipline and skill of the British army, expressed his respect, indeed veneration for martial qualities, and suggested that athletic exercises and manly sports among the peasantry of the country should be encouraged. Wordsworth is unashamedly bombastic as he tells how a future bard might sing of Britain's war-time acts:

> He with enraptured voice will tell
> Of one whose spirit no reverse could quell;
> Of one that mid the failing never failed:
> Who paints how Britain struggled and prevailed [...]
> Shall shew her clothed with strength and skill,
> All martial duties to fulfil;
> Firm as a rock in stationary fight;
> In motion rapid as the lightning's gleam;
> Fierce as a flood-gate bursting in the night
> To rouse the wicked from their giddy dream –
> Woe, woe, to all that face her in the field!
> Appalled she may not be, and cannot yield.

Clearly God, who 'lifteth up and layeth low', has been supporting Britain, for, 'less than power unbounded could not tame / That Soul of Evil – which, from Hell let loose / Had filled the astonished world with such abuse, / As boundless patience only could endure.' The battle, in Wordsworth's poem has been between good and evil, and goodness of course had to win. Napoleon, 'that Soul of Evil', was satanic; Mary Wordsworth called him the 'arch-fiend'. The victory was not owing to martial supremacy alone: it was a moral victory. This had to be the way Wordsworth saw it: he saw Englishness as a divine power for good in the world:

> Land of our fathers! precious unto me
> Since the first joys of thinking infancy;
> When of thy gallant chivalry I read,
> And hugged the volume on my sleepless bed!
> O England! - dearer far than life is dear,
> If I forget thy prowess, never more
> Be thy ungrateful son allowed to hear
> Thy green leaves rustle or thy torrents roar!

Nor will Almighty God of course, 'the God of peace and love [...] martial service disapprove. / He guides the Pestilence - the cloud / Of locusts travels on his breath [...]' He is the 'Tremendous God of Battles', the Old Testament Lord of Hosts entering on England's side the fight of good against evil, and Wordsworth thoroughly offended some of his readers by taking this aspect of the Almighty more literally than was thought decorous or respectful:

> We bow our heads before Thee, and we laud
> And magnify thy name, Almightly God!
> But thy most dreaded instrument,
> In working out a pure intent,
> Is Man – arrayed for mutual slaughter, -
> Yea, Carnage is thy daughter!

This last line produced an outcry and Wordsworth removed for the next edition the alliance of God, carnage and female virtue.

The *Thanksgiving Ode* of 1816 is a bold and thoughtful poem, but it does not catch at the heart: from its opening Address to the Sun, its words are mainly abstract, its sentences rhetorical and there is little of Wordsworth's familiar strength in it, observed factual reality. Some lines from a sonnet Wordsworth wrote after visiting Waterloo himself with Mary and Dorothy four years later in 1820, take us back towards the more familiar Wordsworth who could see a bleak and miserable landscape and make it memorable because of the feelings he experienced there, in that particular place, with whatever unremarkable objects were about. The earth itself of the Field of Waterloo was the significant thing:

> All was joyless, blank and cold;
> But if from wind-swept fields of corn that roll'd
> In dreary billows, from the meagre cot,
> And monuments that soon may disappear
> Meanings we craved which could not here be found;
> If the wide prospect seemed an envious seal
> Of great exploits; we felt as Men *should* feel,
> With such vast hoards of hidden carnage near,
> And horror breathing from the silent ground!

Dorothy had felt much as Wordsworth did about the Field of Waterloo. Her straightforward prose in her Journal gives us the facts and interjects nothing, no commentary between the facts and the feeling. Dorothy's account is direct and touches us immediately; it is all that was needed to convey the cost of that battle:

'we stood upon grass, and cornfields where *heaps* of our countrymen lay buried beneath our feet. There was little to be seen; but much to be felt; - sorrow and sadness, and even something like horror breathed out of the ground as we stood on it.'[5]

~ A note on Charles Lamb and Napoleon ~

Lamb, necessarily almost a constant presence in London, had many friends who hovered about him either in person or by letter; among them, the poets Coleridge, Wordsworth, Southey, and the scholar Thomas Manning. Work in the City, and unremitting attention to his needy and unstable sister, meant that Lamb substituted for personal freedom an excited interest in everything that was close to him or his friends. He explored things, feelings and ideas with an inquisitive infectious gaiety; he asked questions.

The mathematician Thomas Manning, whom Lamb had met during a visit to Cambridge, was out of England a great deal and so it was letters that kept alive their conversation. Manning was in Paris in 1802, learning about French culture and learning Chinese; Lamb wanted to know more about Napoleon's appearance: his interest had been caught by a phrase in Manning's last letter from Paris:

> Some parts want a little explication, for example, "the Godlike face of the First Consul". What God does he most resemble, Mars, Bacchus, or Apollo. . . Our London prints of him represent him gloomy & sulky, like an angry Jupiter. - - I hear, that he is very small, even less than me, who am "less than the least of the Apostles," at least less than they are painted in the Vatican. I envy you your access to this Great Man, much more than your séances & conversationis, which I have a shrewd suspicion must be something dull. ([23 April 1802])[6]

Lamb has been intrigued by Manning's account (6 April 1802) of a visit to the Grand Picture Gallery of the Tuilleries Palace in Paris, to which, as an Englishman pursuing knowledge, he had been granted by Napoleon admittance; stationing himself in the Antichamber, he twice had had 'the satisfaction of seeing the Premier Consul go by, clad in his simple blue uniform. Oh, what a God-like face!'[7] Manning had been given, he proudly continued, through Napoleon's stopping to speak to a lady, 'a full opportunity of contemplating his divine countenance'. In the autumn of that year Lamb described to Manning his and Mary's one and only visit to Wordsworth's mountain country, concluding, 'after all, Fleet Street & the Strand are better places to live in for good & all than among Skiddaw'. (24 September 1802)

And back in London Lamb lived. In October he returned to his fascination with Napoleon. This time his question concerned not appearance but political ideas, and it was directed not to Manning but to his old school friend Coleridge who had

[5] *William, Mary and Dorothy, The Continental Tour of 1820*, ed. Pamela Woof (The Wordsworth Trust 2008), 13

[6] The letters of Lamb will be found by date in *The Letters of Charles and Mary Anne Lamb, 1796 – 1817*, ed, Edwin W. Marrs Jr., 3 vols. (Cornell, 1975-78). For letters post October 1817 see *The Letters of Charles Lamb to which are added those of his sister Mary Lamb*, ed E.V. Lucas, 3 vols. (London, 1935).

[7] For Manning's letters see *The Letters of Thomas Manning to Charles Lamb*, ed. G.A. Anderson (London 1925).

already written essays in the *Morning Post* and made there extended comparisons between the Roman Emperor Augustus and Napoleon. Lamb proposed to Coleridge another possible juxtaposition of historical greatness: '[...] could not you give a Parallel of Bonaparte with Cromwell, particularly as the contrast in their deeds affecting foreign states: Cromwell's interference for the Albigenses, B's against the Swiss. Then Religion would come in; & Milton & you could rant about our Countrymen of that Period. - This is a hasty suggestion, the more hasty because I want my supper. –' (23 October 1802) Religion would certainly come into it if Coleridge had taken up Lamb's reference to Cromwell's violent and ferocious 'interference' on behalf of the Protestants of Ireland, surely denigrating them by his allusion to the Albigenses, those early Christian heretics who were outrageously austere in denying the pleasures of the body, were persecuted and finally exterminated.

Defeat at Waterloo in 1815 brought Napoleon vividly to the fore of Lamb's consciousness: 'After all, [he wrote to Robert Southey] Bonaparte is a fine fellow, as my brother says, and I should not mind standing bareheaded at his table to do him service in his fall. They should have given him Hampton Court or Kensington, with a tether extending forty miles round London. Qu. Would not the people have ejected the Brunswick some day in his favour? Well, we shall see.' (9 August 1815) Lamb had not seen Manning since 1806. His friend had returned from Paris in 1805, although generally English men were detained in France because of the war with England (this had been Wordsworth's fear when he himself returned at the end of 1802). In Paris Manning had come to Napoleon's notice as a mathematician and scholar of Chinese and the Emperor granted him a passport to leave France in order to pursue his studies, which now included medicine. He pursued them in London, deepened his friendship with Lamb, and in May 1806 he sailed on an East India Company ship to China and settled in Canton. After a brief spell as a doctor in Calcutta, he returned to China and the embassy in Peking as secretary and court interpreter. Soon after Waterloo the embassy party were to leave for Europe and Manning went with them. Their ship, the *Alceste*, sailed from Canton and was wrecked in the Java Sea in February 1817; passengers were taken on board the *Batavia*, bound for St Helena. Lamb, working at East India House in London got wind of this and to cover contingences he sent two letters to Manning, one to Canton and the other to St Helena: 'Have you recovered the breathless stone-staring astonishment into which you must have been thrown upon learning at landing that an Emperor of France was living in St Helena. What an event in the solitude of the seas, like finding a fishes bone at the top of the Plinlimmon – but these things are nothing in our western world – novelties cease to affect – come and try what your presence can – God bless you –' (26 December 1815) Manning landed in England on 25 July 1817 and on the way he did see and talk with Napoleon on St Helena. There is no letter extant by Manning describing the June 1817 meeting. Napoleon's personal doctor, Dr Barry O'Meara, published shortly after Napoleon's death in 1821, some of his own observations, necessarily limited, of Napoleon's diminished life on St Helena. Both Napoleon and Manning are courteous, but nothing in their conversation would give Lamb a whit more 'breathless stone-staring astonishment' than the fact that the conversation took place at all and on so remote a prison island

as St Helena, between the man who had dominated Europe for so long and a man who more simply went through life, travelling, learning, enjoying, in his own way, and whose chief fame now is that he was a friend of Charles Lamb.

~ Extracts from the published journal of Dr O'Meara ~

6th [June 1817] – [...] Saw Sir Hudson Lowe [the Governor of St Helena] in town [...] Informed him also that Napoleon had desired me to endeavour to make myself acquainted with a gentleman lately arrived, who, it was reported, had seen the Grand Lama.

[...] Shortly after I met Capt. Balston, of the Hon. Company's [East India] sea-service, who reminded me of our former acquaintance. By him I was informed that a gentleman had arrived from China [...] On seeing the gentleman afterwards, I found that his name was Manning, and that he was the person of whom I was in search. He wore a long black beard, and had travelled through the kingdom of Thibet as far as the frontiers of China. I told him that the emperor had expressed great curiosity about the Grand Lama, and that if he came up to Longwood [the residence of Napoleon] there was every probability that he would see him. Mr Manning related that he had been a prisoner in France and had been released by Napoleon, and furnished with a passport, as soon as the emperor had learned that he was a person travelling for information, which might ultimately benefit society; that as a mark of gratitude for this favour, he has sent some little presents for him, with a request that they might be forwarded and that he would ask a pass for the purpose of endeavouring to see him [...]

7th. – Mr Manning, accompanied by Captain Balston, came up to Count Bertrand's. [...] After they had been about an hour at Count Bertram's, Napoleon came in, accompanied by General Montholon. He accosted Captain Bolston first and observed, "Oh, I have seen you here before". He then asked Mr Manning some questions. Manning related that he had been in France in 1805 (I think), and was one of the persons who had been detained; that he had written a letter to him (Napoleon), stating that he was travelling for the benefit of the world at large, which had procured his release. "What protection had you?" asked Napoleon. "Had you a letter from Sir Joseph Banks to me?" Manning replied that he had no protection whatever, nor letter from Sir Joseph Banks, nor had he any friends to interest themselves in his behalf; that he had merely written a letter to him stating his situation. "Was it your simple letter which obtained your liberty?" asked Napoleon. "It was my simple letter," replied Manning, "that induced you to grant it to me, for which I am very grateful, and beg to thank you." Napoleon asked him where he has lived, &c., and looked at the map of the countries in the atlas of Las Cases, asking a variety of questions about the route he had taken; whether he had seen the Grand Lama; the manners, customs, &c. of the countries he had passed through.

Manning gave a clear and concise reply to every question, said that he had seen the Lama, whom he described to be an intelligent boy of seven years old, and had performed the same ceremonies in his presence as were done by others who were admitted to it. Napoleon said, "how did you escape being

taken up as a spy?" "I hope that there is nothing in my countenance which would indicate my being a spy;" at which Napoleon laughed, and said "How came it to pass, that you being *profane* according to their idea, could gain admission to the presence of the Lama?" Mr Manning answered that he honoured and paid respect to all religions, and there by gained admission. Napoleon desired to know if he had passed for an Englishman, and observed that the shape of his nose would indicate his being a European? The other replied that he had passed for a native of Calcutta, but he believed it was known that he was an Englishman; that there were some races of men there who had a similar formation of nose. Napoleon then observed with a smile, that "*Messieurs les voyageurs* frequently told *contes*, and that the existence of the Grand Lama had been denied by several". Manning answered, "*Je ne suis pas du nombre de ces voyageurs lá*; that truth was not falsehood," at which Napoleon laughed, and asked many other questions. Manning related, that the chief part of the revenues of the Grand Lama arose from presents made to him by the princes and others who believed in him; that temporally, however, he was subject to the Chinese; that he never married, neither did his priests; that the body into which, according to their belief, the spirit passed, was discovered by signs known only to the priests. Napoleon then asked several questions about the Chinese language, the late embassy, if the Russians had ever penetrated in that direction, and whether he intended to publish an account of his travels; after which he asked Balston some questions about his ship, wished them a good morning, and departed.[8]

There are fewer letters when Manning is back in England and could visit Lamb; but the intimacy faded. Manning retired to the country with his Chinese books; he made a two-year visit to Italy, and then, after a stroke, left his country life for Bath in 1838. He died there in 1840. Lamb too, with Mary, lived out of London: first in Enfield, then in Edmonton, where he walked, he told Manning in May 1834, 9 or 10 miles a day always up the road, dear London-wards. Fields, flowers, birds, & green lanes I have no heart for.

Lamb died in the following December, 1834. Napoleon's grave, un-named since his death in 1821, was opened in 1840 and his remains were removed from St Helena. They were placed in the great military museum and church of the Invalides in Paris, a permanent home that Napoleon himself as well as many of his contemporaries would judge adequate and appropriate to his dignity.

The Wordsworth Trust, Grasmere

[8] Barry E. O'Meara, *Napoleon in Exile or A Voice from St Helena*, 2 vols. London 1822; reprinted Peter Eckler, NY. n.d.

James Elia in 'My Relations' and 'Dream-Children; A Reverie'

Margareta Eurenius Rydbeck

Though Lamb never married and had a family of his own, he richly deserves the epithet 'family man'. For thirty-five years he lived 'in a sort of double singleness'[1] with his sister Mary, and they had an adopted daughter.[2] With his brother, John, he had less close contact, but this was mostly due to John Lamb's longing for a life independent of his family. Charles Lamb's affection for his brother, even though it was sometimes put to the test, was great, and he was anxious to defend him against possible criticism on account of his coldness towards Mary.[3]

There are, in the Elian essays, many references to aunts and cousins, but four essays in particular are dedicated to drawing the full pictures of James and Bridget Elia, whom he calls 'cousins par preference'. 'My Relations' (June, 1821) and 'Dream-Children; A Reverie' (January, 1822) portray Elia's cousin James, the name under which John Lamb is disguised, while Bridget Elia is a fictionalized portrait of Mary Lamb in 'Mackery End, Hertfordshire' (July, 1821) and 'Old China' (March, 1823). The first essay about Bridget/Mary is anticipated in the last paragraph of 'My Relations'.

'My Relations', which was published in the *London Magazine* in June 1821, opens with a quotation from Browne's *Christian Morals*. The passage, quoted almost verbatim, is brought to bear on Elia himself, who, like the man in Browne, has to face oblivion in a near future; a too pessimistic view, disproved by posterity.

The next paragraph contains a sketch of an aunt who is characterized by her reading and devotional habits. Having mentioned 'male aunts' (uncles) and brothers and sisters, or rather the non-existence of such relatives, Lamb goes on to James Elia, the 'inexplicable cousin'. – A sentence that smacks of allusion (Burton, Browne?) has baffled my attempts at establishing a source: 'Nature hath her unities, which not every critic can penetrate' (p. 71, 1. 23).

Elia disclaims the ability to draw James Elia's portrait; he lacks 'the pen of Yorick', 'those fine Shandian lights and shades, which make up his story' (p.71, 11. 25-27). There could be several reasons for alluding to Laurence Sterne. Lamb admired him: Yorick is mentioned with approval in 'A Complaint of the Decay of Beggars in the Metropolis'; and Lamb seems to have identified himself with Yorick, as is shown by a passage in the 'obituary' note 'by a friend of the late Elia' in the preface to the *Last Essay of Elia*.[4] In his comment on this essay, Lucas cites the description of Yorick in *Tristram Shandy* (Vol. I, Ch. XI) but gives the honour of having drawn his 'attention to this parallel' to Percy Fitzgerald.[5]

[1] Lucas, *Works*, II, 75.
[2] Emma Isola, who later married Lamb's publisher Edward Moxon.
[3] See letters to Coleridge, *Letters*.
[4] Lucas, *Works*, II, 152.
[5] Lucas, *Works*, II, 399-400.

Another reason for wishing for Yorick's pen could lie in the nature of the project in hand: a true-to-life portrait of his own brother. In spite of certain similarities Charles Lamb lacked Yorick's ruthlessness and his inclination to 'translate into plain English, without any periphrasis; - and too often without much distinction of either person, time, or place.'[6] It is known from different sources that John Lamb was not always an amiable man,[7] but Charles loved his brother and tried to extenuate his weakness of character.[8] Probably he knew that he ought to have been more severe in describing the 'contradictory principles' of James Elia's character. Thus the alleged superiority of 'the pen of Yorick' could be a euphemistic way of saying: 'Though not exactly flattering, my portrait of my 'cousin' is less austere than it should have been.' The whole picture has a tongue-in-cheek quality as if brotherly love and clear-eyed sarcasm could be reconciled only by the amiable humour, where criticism is couched in allusions. Elia writes with the same 'fine Shandian light and shades' that he professes himself to be looking for: every trait in James Elia's character is balanced by its opposite.

'He is courageous as Charles of Sweden, upon instinct; chary of his person, upon principle, as a travelling Quaker.' (p. 72, 11. 9-10) Charles of Sweden, Charles XII, would have been known to Lamb through Johnson's poem 'The Vanity of Human Wishes' (1749) with the much quoted lines: 'He left the Name, at which the World grew pale, / To point a Moral, or adorn a Tale.' (i.e. 220-1)

Lamb's interest in, and sympathy with, the creed of the Quakers was roused by his friend Charles Lloyd in 1797; he even 'thought of turning Quaker',[9] but when he went to a Quakers' meeting, 'the agitations and workings of a fanatic [...] cured [him] of Quakerism'.[10] But he kept, all his life, a favourable attitude towards Quakers, and dressed like one, according to Hood. The experience of the 1797 meeting is the subject of 'A Quaker's Meeting', an essay written twenty-four years later, where Lamb uses much the same words as in the letter to Coleridge when he first mentioned the incident. Thus one may assume that there is no irony implied in the comparison with 'a travelling Quaker'.

"He [...] has a spirit that would stand upright in the presence of the Cham of Tartary." (p.72, 11. 13-15). *Cham* or *Khan* was a title applied to the ruler of the Tartars, but it also the name by which Smollett refers to Johnson, when, in a letter, he calls him 'that great Cham of literature'.[11] It is tempting to assume a chain of associations from Charles of Sweden via Dr Johnson, the Cham of literature, to the Cham of Tartary, the missing link never mentioned.

"[...] at the foot of John Murray's street [...]" (p. 72, 1. 25.) The fact that Albemarle Street is referred to as John Murray's street shows the importance attributed to that publishing house by men of letters. To Lamb the name of John Murray hardly carried pleasant associations. John Murray (the second) started the *Quarterly Review*, which was for a long time openly hostile to Lamb. In 1811 it called

[6] Lucas, *Works*, II, 399-400.
[7] Lucas, *Life*, 588 and *Letters* I:45-46, 60.
[8] See, for example, letter to Coleridge, Lucas, ed., *Letters* I, 44-45.
[9] Lucas, ed., *Letters*, I, 95, I, 101.
[10] Lucas, ed., *Letters*, I, 101.
[11] *The Oxford Companion to Literature*, 156.

his comment in the *Dramatic Specimens* 'the blasphemies of a maniac';[12] and when Lamb, for once, in 1814 appeared in the *Quarterly* as a critic with a review of *The Excursion*, Gifford, the editor, altered his text without notifying him.[13] Two years later Gifford persuaded Murray not to publish a collected edition of Lamb's essays and poems. Lamb told Wordsworth about the refusal: 'Gifford, (whom God curse) has persuaded squinting Murray (whom may God not bless) not to accede to an offer Field made me to print 2 vols. of Essays, to include the one on Hogrth. and 1 or 2 more [...]'.[14] The next year Lamb attacked Gifford with a sonnet printed in the *Examiner*, a rather mean poem alluding to Gifford's former occupation as a shoemaker's apprentice.[15] Recalling all these reasons for shunning the very name of Murray, one may wonder why Lamb chose this way of referring to the street where his 'cousin' waited for the departure of the coach.

'He wonders at your fidgetiness, - "where could we be better than we are, *thus sitting, thus consulting*?"' [...]. (p.72, 11. 28-29) The words within quotation marks are, we may assume, James Elia's; the words in italics, as Lucas points out, are from *Paradise Lost*, II:164. Belial, 'in act more graceful and humane', partaking in a council, dissuades another battle for the recovery of heaven:

> 'Wherefore cease we then?'
> Say they who counsel war; 'We are decreed,
> Reserved, and destined to eternal woe;
> Whatever doing, what can we suffer more,[16]
> What can we suffer worse?' Is this then worse,
> Thus sitting, thus consulting, thus in arms?
> What when we fled amain, pursued and strook
> With Heav'n's afflicting thunder, and besought
> The deep to shelter us? This hell then seemed
> A refuge from these wounds. (11. 159-168)
>
> Thus Belial with words clothed in reasons's garb,
> Counseled ignoble ease and peaceful sloth,
> Not peace; and after him thus Mammon spake. (11. 226-228)

Whether John Lamb on some occasion really did utter Belial's words 'thus sitting, thus consulting' as his own or not is immaterial. The important thing is that Charles Lamb found the words congenial to him. One wonders if the same is true about line 227, which says that Belial 'counselled ignoble ease and peaceful sloth'. If this were the case, one would be entitled to call it a striking example of the euphemistic use and the mock-heroic effect of allusion.

'[...] when peradventure the next moment his lungs shall crow like Chanticleer'. (p. 72, 1.45 – p. 73, 1.1) The name Chanticleer points to the peerlessly crowing cock in 'The Nun Priest's Tale', but the whole phrase is one of the 'felicitous recollections of the Elizabethans', as Lucas calls them, and one of those which he did

[12] Lucas, *Life*, 391.
[13] Lucas, *Life*, 425.
[14] Lucas, *Letters*, II:197.
[15] Lucas, *Life*, 499. This courtesy was repaid in 1822, when the *Quarterly* argued that 'Confessions of a Drunkard' was autobiographical, which it may well have been, though Lamb denied it.
[16] Cf. where could we be better than we are, above.

not comment on. *Cf.* Jaques speaking to the Duke in the forest of Arden. (*As You Like It*, II. vii.)

> Duke. What, you look merrily!
> Jaques. A fool, A fool! I met a fool i' the forest,
> A motley fool. A miserable world. (11. 11-13)
>
> What I did hear
> The Motley fool thus moral on the time,
> My lungs began to crow like chanticleer
> That fools should be so deep contemplative;
> And I did laugh sans intermission
> An hour by his dial. (11. 28-33)

At first glance, the allusion seems to be merely decorative. Even so, it is not chosen randomly, for Jaques' character resembles James Elia's in being composed of opposites; in his case, of melancholy and humour. 'On these occasions he mostly stoppeth me, to read a short lecture on the advantage a person like me possesses above himself, in having his time occupied with business which he *must* do – assureth me that he often feels it hang heavy on his hand – wishes he had fewer holidays – and goes off – Westward Ho! – chanting a tune, to Pall Mall – perfectly convinced that he has convinced me – while I proceed in my opposite direction tuneless.' (p.73, 1. 17-24). The only words signalling some allusion here are 'Westward Ho!' instead of a plain *west-ward* to denote James Elia's direction to some sale in the West End, in pursuit of some landscape by Hobbema. I do not think that this is just a pun, considering that there is, among the *Specimens of Dramatic Poets*, one very short fragment from Dekker's & Webster's play *Westward Hoe!*, with Lamb's subtitle *Pleasure, the general pursuit*:

> Sweet Pleasure!
> Delicious Pleasure! earth's supremest good,
> The spring of blood, though it dry up our blood.
> Rob me of that [...]
> A horse, and this (the gooddliest shape) all one.[17]

And the fact that James Elia "goes off chanting a tune" is also in accordance with the Dekker-Webster fragment, which in Lamb's collection contains the following lines:

> *Music*
> Let Music Charm with her excellent voice an awful silence
> Through all this building, that her sphery soul
> May (on the wings of air) in thousand forms
> Invisibly fly, yet be enjoye'd.[18]
>
> *Cf. Twelfth Night*, III, I, 131-132:
> Olivia: There lies your way, due west.
> Viola: Then westward-ho! Grace and good disposition attend your ladyship!

[17] Lucas, *Works*, IV, 59. According to Lamb, this and the other fragment belong to Act IV, Scene 1.
[18] Lucas, *Works*, IV, 60.

It would, however, be a mistake to try to establish the provenance too closely and to make too much of it. As well as one recalls the line from *Twelfth Night* and the title of Dekker's & Webster's play, one should remember that the expression originally was used by sailors to call attention and give the ship's direction. Besides, NED gives the information about *westward* that it used to have a specific meaning, now obsolete, 'in allusive use': 'To Tyburn'. And, as an instance of this meaning, it gives a line from *Westward Hoe*! belonging to the same scene as Lamb's specimens: 'Sfoot you speak as if you had no harts, and look as if you were going westward indeede: to see how plaine dealing women can pull downe men [...].'[19] It is difficult to pinpoint the effect of this allusion. It is not just decorative, for it also helps to underline James Elia's sanguine attitude; he is as free as an adventurer on the High Seas. 'It is pleasant to see this Professor of Indifference doing the honours of his new purchase, when he has fairly housed it.' (p. 73, 1. 25) NED gives one definition of the word 'Professor' as 'A public teacher or instructor of the highest rank in a specific faculty or branch of learning'.[20] James Elia's specific branch of learning was *indifference*, either meaning 'absence of feeling for or against', 'want of interest in', or 'indetermination of will' (NED 5:2). Whichever of these definitions one chooses, James Elia belies them both, as he is both interested in some things (pictures, for instance) and determined to have them. Lamb's choice of words is obviously ironic; his brother was in fact anything but indifferent himself, though he describes it as indifference to other people. The professorial attitude is heralded by the words 'read a short lecture' in 1. 18. 'The last is always his best hit – his Cynthia of the minute'. (p. 73, 11. 34-35)

The quotation, from Pope's second[21] "Moral Essay", makes up one half of the last of four lines describing how everything is being prepared: canvas, pallet, and colours, to 'catch ere she change' the likeness of the fair lady: 'Come then, the colours and the ground prepare! / Dip in the Rainbow, trick her off in Air, / Catch ere she change, the Cynthia of this minute.'[22] The Pope line, quoted almost but not quite verbatim, serves to stress how fast James Elia's taste in works of art changed; and it is an apt comparison, as it alludes to another work of art (Cynthia's portrait) within another work of art (Pope's poem).

The amusing description of how an alleged Raphael (a print or an etching; an oil painting would be out of James Elia's reach) passes through a series of 'successive lowering ascriptions of filiation' on its way from 'the front drawing-room' [...] 'to the oblivious lumber-room' shows that Lamb himself was interested

[19] The text here follows Bower's edition of 1955. Act IV, Scene 2, page 372 in Vol II. Bower divides the text into scenes in such a way that Lamb's specimens are assigned to scene 2.

[20] NED gives a reference to Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621): 'Our Regius Professor of Physic, well informed us in a lecture not long ago'. (For the context, see Everyman's edition, 37). – Of course, *professor* could also be taken to mean a person who publicly declares his faith in, or allegiance to, something or somebody. Lamb was a true Elizabethan wit, delighting in two meanings under one word.

[21] Not the third, as Lucas has it; the lady addressed in the 'Epistle' was Mrs Marta Blount.

[22] *Epistles to Several Persons*, ed. Bateson, 48-49, 11, 17-20. See also note 20, 49, where it is mentioned that Pope 'associated fairies, and daintiness in general, with the short I'. Lamb's choice of words here seems to indicate the same predilection; in the sentence beginning with the last (11. 34-35), there are no less than eight short i-sounds.

in art and knew his stuff.[23] From here Lamb goes on to meditate on Fortune's inconstancy towards 'great personages' represented by Richard II's wife.

> [...] that woful Queen of Richard the Second – set forth in pomp,
> She came adorned hither like sweet May;
> Sent back like Hollowmass or shortest day.[24]
>
> *Cf King Richard the Second*, V.i. 76-80.
> Part us, Northumberland; I towards the north,
> Where shivering cold and sickness pines the clime;
> My wife to France, from whence set forth in pomp,
> She came adorned hither like sweet May,
> Sent back like Hallowmas or short'st of day.

The connection between the Madonna, who *came in* a Raphael and *went out* a Maratti, and Richard's Queen may seem rather loose, but if one assumes that Elia here (as so often in the essay) is drawing on real life, one is entitled to believe that Lamb's mind really had operated along these lines in a similar situation in his brother's rooms.

The next rather long paragraph contains several words in italics and two phrases placed within inverted commas. The reason for printing the words in italics here and elsewhere is not quite clear. Sometimes the context suggests that Elia is referring to more or less verbatim expressions of some individual, as the one on p. 73, 11. 4-5, about the Eton boys, and p. 74, 1. 11, *knowing me to be a great walker*, which seems to be *I know you are a great walker* in reported speech. Other instances of italics seem to indicate added stress and no more. The phrases within inverted commas in 11. 25-26 and 29 are allusions; on the other hand, Lamb uses the same typographical device to indicate John Elia's own words on p. 72. The main part of the paragraph is about James Elia's sympathy with animals (and human underdogs) and its consequences. In 1810, when a 'Bill for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals' was debated in Parliament, John Lamb wrote a pamphlet addressed to the MP who had opposed the Bill and helped cause it to be thrown out by the Commons, though it had passed the Lords, arguing that it was too petty a matter for legislation. John Lamb was very anxious that his pamphlet be reviewed and asked his brother to use his influence among his critic acquaintances. When writing on this errand to Crabb Robinson Lamb refers to the formidable passage about the eel mentioned in the essay. In one extremely long sentence John Lamb had described the horrors that befall an eel which is skinned alive, skewed up on a skewer and broiled to death 'in the extremest agony'.[25]

Obviously, Charles Lamb found it consistent with his affection for his brother to smile at John's wish to have the pamphlet reviewed – 'our boasted Humanity partakes of Vanity'[26] – and at the verbose specification of the ill-treatment of eels. How else are the concluding words in the Robinson letter to be interpreted: 'But

[23] The three Carracci, an uncle and two brothers, were the founder of the so called eclectic school; Giordano copied great works of Raphael, and Maretti 'formed his style by studying the paintings of the Caracci and of Raphael', all according to Encyclopaedia Britannica.

[24] Again, a small irregularity (*shortest* instead of *short'st of*) shows that Lamb was quoting from memory.

[25] For the complete eel-sentence, see Lucas, *Works*, II, 356-357.

[26] In the letter to Crabb Robinson, mentioned above. See Lucas, ed., *Letters*, II, 93.

here's the Book – and don't shew it Mrs Cillier, for I remember she makes excellent Eel soup, and the leading points of the Book are directed against that very process.' In the essay there is also a very direct reference to the 'eel-passage' in the pamphlet: 'The contemplation of a lobster boiled[27] or eels skinned *alive* will wring him so, that "all for pity he could die". It will take the savour from his palate and the rest from his pillow, for days and nights.'[28]

Cf. Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, Book I, Canto III, Stanza 1.
Nought is there under heav'ns wide hollownesse,
That moues more deare compassion of mind
Then beautie brought t'vnworthy wretchednesse
Through snares of fortunes freakes unkind:
I whether lately through her brightnesse blind,
Or through alleageance and fast fealtie,
Which I do owe unto all woman kind,
Feel my heart perst with so great agonie,
When such I see, that all for pittie I could die.

There is a world of good-humoured irony in the allusion to the knight's compassion for 'beautie brought t'vnworthy wretchednesse', with which James Elia's sympathy for eels and lobsters is compared. What greater discrepancy could there be than between a damsel in distress and an eel on a skewer? Lamb exploits to the full the mock-heroic absurdity inherent in the contrast between high and low, and the effect is not diminished by the possibility that John Lamb, on some occasion, might have expressed himself in these exaggerated words: 'I could die for pity'.

And as if this were not enough, Elia goes on to compare James' efforts to those of Thomas Clarkson, champion of the abolition of the slave trade and slavery,[29] a friend not only of Wilberforce's but also of Wordsworth's and Lamb's@ 'With the intense feeling of Thomas Clarkson, he wanted only the steadiness of pursuit, and unity of power, of that "true yoke-fellow with Time," to have affected as much for the *Animal*, as *he* hath done for the Negro Creation.' (p. 74, 11. 27-31)

Cf. CLARKSON! it was an obstinate hill to climb:
[...] But thou who starting in thy fervent prime,
Didst first lead forth that enterprise sublime,
Hast heard the constant Voice its charge repeat,
Which, out of thy young heart's oracular seat,
First roused thee. – O true yoke-fellow of Time,
Duty's intrepid liegeman, see, the palm
Is won, and by all Nations shall be worn!

[27] The pamphlet says: "[...] that eels were not the only sufferers; that lobsters and other shell fish were put into cold water and boiled to death by slow degrees in many parts of the coast." Swedish readers would remember Salig Dumbom's lamentation over the cruel death of crayfish, which "die alive".

[28] The sentence is remarkable for its balance: two parallel links, kept together by alliteration and assonance, and rounded off by a phrase made up of components that echo the two parallel links.

[29] That John Lamb was concerned about human wrongs, too, is apparent from his poem "The Beggar-Man" (see Lucas, III:395-396) and from some letters on the Corn-Laws, signed J.L., and submitted to the *Examiner* in 1818 (see Lucas, *Life*, 592-595).

[...] Repose at length, firm friend of human kind.[30]

The superiority of Clarkson's character is emphasized by an allusion to Wordsworth's sonnet of 1807; and the lesson to be drawn from the comparison of James Elia to Clarkson is that the former did not possess enough 'steadiness of pursuit, and unity of purpose'; neither could he, as Clarkson with Wilberforce, cooperate with other philanthropists. But this last circumstance Lamb interprets *in bonam partem* 'because the fervor of his humanity toiled beyond the formal apprehension, and creeping processes, of his associates.' This is a fresh example of Lamb's goodwill towards his brother, another effort to represent less satisfactory traits in his character in a better light.

Having thus surveyed the pros and cons in a personality 'made up of contradictory principles', Elia concludes with a protestation that he neither smiled at, nor upbraided his 'unique cousin'. It is as if he felt himself bound to make amends for all the criticism he has levelled at James Elia, however well disguised in allusions, and painted with 'Shandian lights and shades.' 'My Relations' is an admirable example of Lamb's workmanship in its mixture of fictitious and realistic details. Almost everything that Elia says about his cousin could truthfully have been said about Charles Lamb's brother; different sources corroborate this. But the essay is also an equally admirable proof of those traits in Lamb's character which made his friends love him and earned for him the epithet 'the frolic and the gentle'.[31] There was no mawkishness in him, nor was he blind to human frailty – his brother's or other people's: but he found a way of treating it with humour, and in his writing of it, the allusion was a handy tool.

The last lines of this essay, as I mentioned earlier, herald the essay about 'cousin Bridget', and its title is foreshadowed in the concluding quotation, which makes up the last line in a poem of his own, written in 1795, and printed in the *Monthly Magazine* for May 1797. 'Through the green plains of pleasant Hertfordshire.' (p.75, 1. 10)

Cf. [...] Proud City! and thy sons I leave behind,
A sordid, selfish, money-getting kind;
Brute things, who shut their ears when Freedom calls.
I pass not thee so lightly, well-known spire,
That minded me of many a pleasure gone.
Of merrier days, of love and Islington;
Kindling afresh the flames of past desire.
And I shall muse on thee, slow journeying on

[30] To Thomas Clarkson, on the final passing of the Bill for the abolition of the slave trade. March 1807, *11.* 1, 4-10, 14. Wordsworth argued (line 5) that Clarkson initiated the anti-slavery movement in England. When Wilberforce's sons denied it, he added a note to that effect to line 5 of the sonnet. See *Wordsworth's Political Works*, edd. Selincourt and Darbishire (1946) p. 457.

[31] *The Frolic and the Gentle* is the title of A.C. Ward's centenary study (1934), but the words appeared first in the *Extensive Effusion upon the Death of James Hogg*, by Wordsworth: "The rapt one, of the godlike forehead,/ The heaven-eyed creature sleeps in earth: / And Lamb, the frolic and the gentle, /Has vanished from his lonely hearth. (Quoted from *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*) – In his book, Ward calls James Elia "the most subtle portrait drawn by Lamb", and points at his ability to describe John's weaknesses without "merely glossing over" them (pp. 205-206).

To the green plains of pleasant Hertfordshire.[32]

Writing to Coleridge in May, 1796, Lamb sent him the text of the sonnet (in a somewhat different version) and pointed out to him 'that the last line is a copy of Bowle's, 'to the green hamlet in the peaceful plain''.[33] But commentators sometimes know better than the author; and Lucas shows (giving the credit for having seen it first to W.J. Craig) that there is a closer resemblance to a line in another poem, by William Vallens, which must have been known to Lamb: 'The fruitful fields of pleasant Hertfordshire.'[34]

One wishes it had been possible to confront Lamb with this theory, sustained by Lucas's authority, of how his mind worked! This instance makes me, at least, careful of being too sure about "intentions" and the like.

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John Lamb's death, on 26 October 1821 called forth, I am tempted to say, the second essay on James Elia, an essay written in a completely different mood, and with an altogether different technique. 'Dream-Children; A Reverie' was published in the *London Magazine* in January 1822, which implies that Lamb must have written it almost immediately after his loss, perhaps as a kind of atonement for the reckless (for Lamb) judgments he had exposed John Lamb to whose identity with James Elia is revealed in the last line but one. I do not think it is too far-fetched to argue that the idolization of John Lamb in 'Dream-Children', without being insincere, emanates from such feelings of remorse that almost everybody is bound to experience at a near relative's or friend's death. John's death coming so close upon the publication of 'My Relations' might have added to Charles' compunction.

The essay has been much praised, but also criticized. Lucas considers it as 'in some ways [...] his most perfect prose work'.[35] Ward calls it 'a piece of perfected art',[36] and it is believed to be one of the causes for the boundless love that the Victorians bestowed on Lamb.[37] Horst Weber analyses it and comments on it in a chapter on Lamb's narrative technique.[38] On the other hand Denys Thompson refers to it to show how horrid Lamb was at his worst.[39]

The crucial question to me is whether 'Dream-Children' belongs in a discussion of Lamb's allusion technique. In the whole essay there is only one certain allusion and one expression which is doubtful. And yet I think it is right to discuss it here. To me it seems to be another proof of how Lamb adapted his mode of speaking to his imagined audience. Of course, this essay was intended for adult reader's eyes, but the tone is congenial to the dream-children's ears. It is a story, told

[32] The sonnet is the poem of a true Romantic, shunning the "proud city" in favour of his childhood's Hertfordshire. It is, as Lucas says in his comment (V:287), "perhaps the only occasion on which Lamb, even in play, wrote anything against his beloved city."
[33] *Letters*, I:5.
[34] Lucas, II:357-358.
[35] Lucas, II:377.
[36] *The Frolic and the Gentle*, p.197.
[37] Weber, *Studien zur Form des Essays bei Charles Lamb* (1964), p. 71. Weber here refers to Mario Praz, who sees "Dream-Children" as a precursor to *David Copperfield*. I think there are equally strong parallels to *The Old Curiosity Shop*.
[38] *Op. cit.*, pp. 71-77.
[39] "Our Debt to Lamb" in *Determinations*, ed. F.R. Leavis (1934).

for children, 'about their elders, when they were children', and it is told in words so simple that children would understand it. Lamb's artistry is shown in the seeming artlessness of this essay.

The essay is the manifestation of a romanticist's idealization of childhood but also a bachelor's longing for children of his own. Reality and dreams have merged into an insoluble unity. Who is the 'I' speaking? It ought to be Elia, for he speaks of Bridget, the Elia cousin.[40] But 'I' must also be Lamb himself, remembering his maternal grandmother Field, who, logically, in the essay is called the children's great-grandmother. John becomes their uncle, and the childhood memories that Charles relates to 'his' children are his own. But the children are not his children; their dear mother, who is dead, is not the Alice W - n, alias Ann Simmons, of his youth; nor is he their father. The intricate texture of illusion is torn to pieces by the children denying Alice as their mother, Elia/Lamb as their father, and, finally, even their own existence. When they do so, the speech becomes for the first time direct instead of reported, and the few lines that they utter - 'without speech' - are as elusive as the children themselves at that point.

After an introduction of about fifteen lines, the essay is divided into three roughly equal parts, dedicated to grandmother Field, the house in which she was the housekeeper, and John Lamb. Another fifteen lines conclude the essay. Most of the sentences are conspicuously long, but their structure is very simple. Short sentences describing the children's behaviour and their reactions to Lamb's story are interspersed among the long periods. The information given is concrete and visual, nay even dramatic. Lamb gives prominence to such things that would appeal to children: their great-grandmother's elevated position and her fine reputation, the house haunted by 'an apparition of two infants', and the garden full of every kind of delicious fruit. Talking about "their" uncle, Lamb emphasizes that he was 'handsome and spirited' and that he was both unafraid as a horseman and kind enough to provide his own back for Charles' service when the younger brother suffered from a lame foot. Reading between the lines, one notices traces of irritation and discord between the brothers; but also an ambition on Charles' part to take the blame upon himself. It is easy to overlook an instance which might carry an unfavourable implication as when, on page 102, lines 36-38, Lamb says that John had run away without permission, but how delicately he expresses it: 'And yet he loved the old great house and gardens too, but had too much spirit to be always pent up within their boundaries.'

As was mentioned above, 'Dream-Children' has been subjected to close analysis before. Another kind of treatment is given in Ward's study, where it is referred to as an early example of the stream-of-consciousness experiment.[41] But as far as I have noticed, the almost complete absence of allusions has escaped the commentators. There is one allusion, maybe two, at the very end of the essay, but otherwise the text flows without interruptions, and the words seem to be through

[40] We know from Lamb's letters from October-November, 1821 that Mary Lamb was ill again and way from home at the time of her brother's death. Lamb did not even have the comfort of his sister's company; his talking about "the faithful Bridget unchanged by my side" was wishful thinking, and no more.
[41] Op.cit. pp. 194-198.

and through Lamb's. It is, of course, impossible to decide whether this 'artlessness' (*cf* above, p.10) is due to artistic instinct or the result of a conscious effort.

The only passage that has a definitely allusive character is the one that contains the dream-children's parting words: 'We are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all. The children of Alice called Bartum father. We are nothing; less than nothing, and dreams. […]' (p. 103, 11. 29-31.) The children's words have a weird ring, befitting the situation. But there is also a lingering note of both Pindar and *Hamlet*. In one of the *Pythian Odes* Pindar says that man is but 'the dream of a shadow' (skias onar Anthropos); *cf.* also:

> Guildenstern: The very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream.
> Hamlet: A dream itself is but a shadow.
> Rosencrantz: Truly, and I hold ambition of so airy and light a quality that it is but a shadow's shadow. (*Hamlet*, II.ii. 264-268)

'[…] We are only what might have been, and must wait upon the tedious shores of Lethe millions of ages before we have existence, and a name […].' (p. 103, 11. 31-33) As Lucas remarks, following Canon Ainger, this alludes to a passage in the *Aeneid*, VI, 11. 748-751. I quote the translation from Lucas' commentary: 'All these when they have travelled round the circle of a thousand years, God summons in mighty throngs to the river of Lethe, that so, forgetful of the past, they may go back to visit the vault of the sky, and begin without reluctance to return to the body.' (Lonsdale and Lee's translation)

One may speculate about the reasons for placing the only allusion(s) in this essay in the mouths of the young children. The ordinary discussion about intention seems out of place here. But the fact that the children use allusive speech should not appear stranger than the whole situation. I find it only natural that thoughts of this kind occupied Lamb at the time.

The portrait of James Elia is now completed. Do we like this man? Thanks to Charles Lamb's ability in distributing light and shadow, an art taught by Yorick but also partly developed through an intelligent use of allusion, we get a rounded and fair picture of the man. If the reader does not like James Elia, his cousin is not to blame.

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Essays by Margareta Rydbeck printed in the Bulletin

- 'Christ's Hospital a Second Time Revisited (Part 1)', 119 (July 2002), 84-101
- 'Christ's Hospital a Second Time Revisited', 120 (October 2002), 106-123
- 'Oxford in the Vacation', 160 (Autumn 2014), 70-84
- 'The Two Races of Men', 161 (Spring 2015), 32-65
- 'Mackery End, in Hertfordshire', 162 (Autumn 2015), 135-141
- 'James Elia in 'My Relations' and 'Dream Children; a Reverie', 163 (Spring 2016), 44-54

We look forward to the publication of three further essays in subsequent issues: 'A Complaint of the Decay of Beggars in the Metropolis', 'A Dissertation upon Roast Pig', and "Old China', or 'On the Importance of English Poverty".

Appropriate(d) nursery reading; or, (implied) child readers, Charles Lamb and the Godwins' Juvenile Library

Jessica W. H. Lim

One does not have to look hard to find the British Romantics' anxiety concerning early nineteenth-century children's books — or scholarly debates about Romanticism and children's literature. Often brandished about in this fray is Charles Lamb's letter to Coleridge railing against 'that cursed Barbauld crew'.[1] Lamb is a curious figure in Romantic criticism —a prolific essayist and children's writer not often known for his children's works, he is frequently treated as the fullest expression of the Romantic critical mind or 'the perpetrator of its worst excesses.'[2] Lamb certainly belongs to the British Romantic huddle: a close correspondent with Coleridge and Wordsworth, he is immortalised as 'gentle-hearted Charles' in Coleridge's "Lime-Tree Bower". Moreover, Lamb's representations of the child seem seminally Romantic. His cry, 'The soul of a child … how apprehensive! how imaginative! how religious!',[3] and his comment that 'beautiful interest… made the child a man, while all the time he suspected himself to be no bigger than a child',[4] correspond with Wordsworth's declaration that the 'Child is the Father of the Man.' Yet the assumption that Lamb subscribed to a Romantic ideology of the spiritually pure child becomes problematic when examining his works for children, published by the Godwins' Juvenile Library.

The Juvenile Library was established in 1805 by the Romantic radical republican, William Godwin, and his second wife, Mary-Jane. The Godwins commissioned pieces by authors like the Lamb siblings, educators such as William Mylius, and worked with illustrators including William Mulready. The Library was not particularly profitable, but Pamela Clemit's claim that it was 'one of the most successful small outlets for educational books and children's literature' in the Romantic period remains a dominant critical view.[5] This question of 'success' is fraught: if the Library was not financially profitable, how does one measure 'success'? Past critics have cited Godwin's statement that the child's sympathetic imagination is 'the ground-plot upon which the edifice of a sound morality must be

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1 Letter to Coleridge 23 October 1802, in *The Complete Works of Charles and Mary Lamb*, Vol. VI (*Letters* 1796–1820), ed. by E. V. Lucas, (London, 1904), 253.
2 Joseph E. Riehl, *That Dangerous Figure: Charles Lamb and the Critics*, (Columbia, 1998), 4.
3 Charles Lamb, review of *The Excursion*, cited by George L. Barnett, ""That Cursed Barbauld Crew' or Charles Lamb and Children's Literature", *The Charles Lamb Bulletin*, 25 (1979), 11.
4 See note 1.
5 Pamela Clemit, "Philosophical anarchism in the schoolroom: William Godwin's Juvenile Library, 1805–25", Biblion: *Bulletin of the New York Public Library* 9 (1/2), 44; also Margaret Fearn, "William Godwin and the 'Wilds of Literature', *British Journal of Educational Studies* 29.3 (1981), 247–257.

erected' as particularly innovative.[6] In this reading, didacticism and delight are considered as dichotomous, even contradictory aims, and success is measured by the extent to which the Library's books promoted imaginative, rather than educational material. In this narrative of the development of children's literature, the fact that Lamb's *The King and Queen of Hearts* is entertaining and not educative speaks in its favour as a 'successful' Juvenile Library text. However, by the same token, one need only open Mrs Caroline Barnard's *The Rays of the Rainbow* or Eliza Fenwick's *Grammar Lessons* to conclude with Geoffrey Summerfield that the Library was based on an ostensibly 'unresolvable' philosophical commitment to unite child enlightenment with imaginative stimulation.[7] But this once dominant interpretation of children's literary history as a progression from dry to imaginative texts is increasingly under question, and Donelle Ruwe has scornfully termed it an 'outdated Manichaen approach.'[8] Rather, it is more helpful to assess the Juvenile Library's philosophical and ideological commitments using a more nuanced understanding of William Godwin's philosophy. This essay builds on Susan Manly's analysis of Godwin's concept of the imagination as radical and anarchic, able to sift through multiple viewpoints to decide upon a personal moral value system.[9] In this light, the Godwins' Juvenile Library may be credited as a pioneering enterprise. The two Charles Lamb works examined in this article, *The King and Queen of Hearts: With the Rogueries of the Knave Who Stole the Queen's Pies*, and *The Adventures of Ulysses*, are adaptations of texts not initially written for child readers. They retain (even in their adapted forms) questionable and ambiguous elements that suggest Lamb's shared commitment with Godwin in presenting the child reader with the chance to exercise his or her imagination in forming individual moral judgements.

The original rhyme *The King and Queen of Hearts* appears to have crossed over from the adult sphere of satire into the world of children's nursery rhymes. The rhyme's earliest dated appearance was in 1782 in *The European Review*, where it was used as a political satire; five years later Canning used it as the basis of a satire on poetic criticism.[10] Peter and Iona Opie posit that it was already a nursery rhyme by the time Charles Lamb produced his elaboration, [11] but this is an unsubstantiated claim. Lamb's elaboration is dated from 1805. His adaptation is unusual: he takes the first line of the traditional rhyme and produces a series of related sextets. Unusual, but not a masterpiece: *The King and Queen of Hearts: With the Rogueries of the Knave Who Stole the Queen's Pies* is as unwieldy as its title suggests. Nevertheless the title is thematically indicative: by highlighting the knave's thievery, Lamb signals that his work will thematise challenges to the 'right' of authority figures.

[6] William Scofield [William Godwin], Preface to *Bible Stories*, (London, 1806), 1. Also Fearn, "Godwin and the 'Wilds of Literature'; Barnett, "'That Cursed Barbauld Crew'".
[7] Geoffrey Summerfield, *Fantasy and Reason: Children's Literature in the Eighteenth Century*, (London, 1984), 246.
[8] Donelle Ruwe, *British Children's Poetry in the Romantic Era: Verse, Riddle, and Rhyme*, (Basingstoke, 2014), 4.
[9] Susan Manly, "William Godwin's 'School of Morality'", *The Wordsworth Circle*, 43.3 (2012), 135–142.
[10] Peter and Iona Opie, *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes* (Oxford, 1951, 2nd edition, 1997), 427.
[11] Ibid.

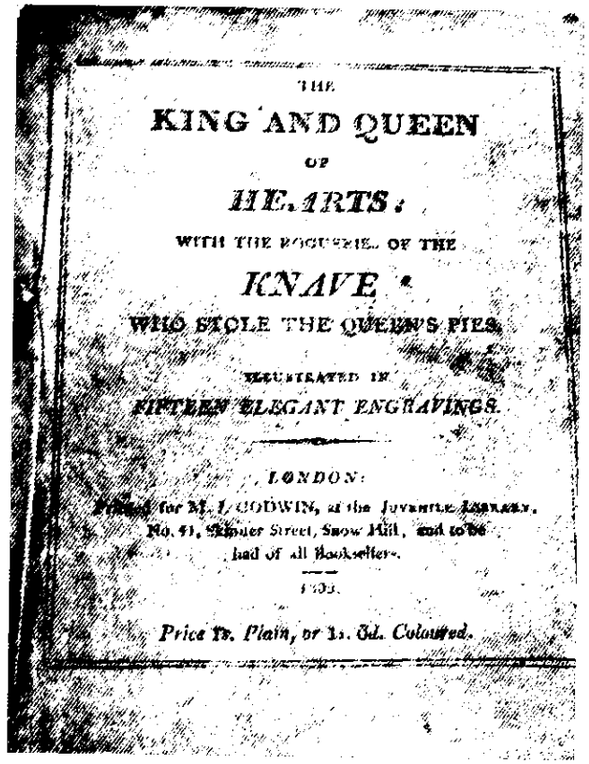
THE
KING AND QUEEN
OF
HEARTS:
WITH THE ROGUERIES OF THE
KNAVE
WHO STOLE THE QUEEN'S PIES.
ILLUSTRATED IN
FIFTEEN ELEGANT ENGRAVINGS.
LONDON:
Printed for M. J. GODWIN, at the Juvenile Library,
No. 41, Skinner Street, Snow Hill, and to be
had of all Booksellers.
1805.
Price 1s. Plain, or 1s. 6d. Coloured.

Figure 4: *The King and Queen of Hearts* (1800). Images reproduced by kind permission from The Board of Trinity College Dublin.

The text is packaged to recall chapbooks (see Fig. 1.). Chapbooks were small, unbound books that consisted of folded sheets of paper stitched together. Due to their production methods, chapbooks were cheap, often sold at a penny or less. They enjoyed a wide distribution, particularly in rural areas, as they were not sold by booksellers in city centres, but by itinerant merchants known as chapmen.[12] Chapbook culture in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries became increasingly seen as morally and culturally questionable. As Margaret Spufford notes, chapbooks were so cheap they were often omitted from inventories, and many diarists confessed to reading chapbooks as a sin.[13] Mary V. Jackson similarly notes the association of chapbooks with scandalous material,[14] while St Clair describes the picture of life in chapbooks as "harsh and violent" where luck, rather than the increasingly prominent middle-class values of hard work and moral uprightness, shapes protagonists' (and antagonists') fates.[15] Thus, Godwin's omission of references to Charles Lamb and the already-respectable artist William Mulready on the title page evokes the chapbook culture of anonymity and amorality. The book's construction from folded, coarsely stitched pages strengthens the evocation of the chapbook aesthetic and culture.

The poem opens, apparently affirming the authority of the Queen of Hearts:

> High on a throne of State is seen
> She whom all Hearts own for their Queen
> Three pages are in waiting by;

[12] M. O. Grenby, "Chapbooks, Children, and Children's Literature," *The Transactions of the Bibliographical Society*, 8.3 (September 2007), 277–78.
[13] See seventeenth-century Puritan diarists John Bunyan and Richard Baxter: Margaret Spufford, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories: Popular Fiction and its Readership in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1981), 46–48
[14] Mary V. Jackson, *Engines of Instruction, Mischief, and Magic: Children's Literature in England rom Its Beginnings to 1839* (Lincoln, 1989), 66.
[15] William St Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge, 2004), 343.

He with the umbrella is her Spy,
To spy out rogueries in the dark,
And smell a rat, as you shall mark.

The scansion of Lamb's stanzas is irregular, mirroring Coleridge's fondness for counting in syllables rather than feet'. This unstable scansion mirrors Lamb's complication of notions of authority. Although the stanza opens with the preposition 'High', demonstration of the Queen's authority, the syntax of the line recalls Milton's Satan.[16] This intertextuality implicates the Queen with Satan's darkness and malice (Satan not yet recuperated as a Byronic hero), suggesting that her authority, like that of Satan's, is falsely gained and built on unstable premises. Moreover, the sibilance of 'State' and 'seen' emphasises the arbitrariness of her power. The Queen's authority is implicitly positioned as (mis)perception: her might comes from the fact that she is 'seen' atop the throne. Lamb also puns on 'own'. In the context of the sextet, it speaks not of definite possession, but refers to the fact that the Queen's subjects profess her authority, highlighting again the arbitrary nature of her power. The word also foreshadows the poem's climactic conflict: the knight's act of stealing the Queen's pies, or tension over the concept of private property. Mulready's illustrations parallel Lamb's interrogation of the justice of unequal power structures: his richly clad Queen is juxtaposed with her stunted, slave-like pages. As Mulready's image occupies the majority of the page, the page layout highlights the centrality of Mulready's images to the text.

The images in *The King and Queen of Hearts, with the Rogueries of the Knave Who Stole the Queen's Pies* are ethnically and politically problematic, particularly considering the contextual slavery debates and the then-recent Mansfield ruling. Mulready's images constantly verge on the edge of the offensive and transgressive. The Queen's spy, Mungo, is identified in Lamb's text as possessing an umbrella: he is illustrated as a child-like slave, clad in nothing but a primitive loin-cloth stamped with the Queen's heart. Indeed, the text in general revels in the problematic. Lamb indulges in violence. When Mungo reports the Pambo's thievery (the eponymous

[16] Milton, *Paradise Lost*, II:1.

Knave), the King punishes Pambo such that the narrator exclaims, 'You'll beat poor Pambo into dust!' and Mulready energetically depicts the King gleefully beating the Knave.

Most significantly, Lamb adds a coda. The King and Queen eat and drink themselves into a stupor, and Pambo the Knave takes revenge upon Mungo the spy for reporting his thievery: 'Now Pambo, is the time for you / Beat little Tell-Tale black and blue!' This is no straightforward adaptation. Readers might want to sympathise with Mungo for discharging his duty to his Queen, but the narrator brands him 'little Tell-Tale'. William Godwin might write that the imagination ought to be the ground-plot for moral development, but Lamb's imaginative elaboration between the lines of the rhyme leads to amoral violence.

If Lamb adhered to an image of a spiritually pure child, the violence and crude poetry in *The King and Queen of Hearts* must lead us to conclude with George Barnett that Lamb's children's works are not 'consistent with his theory.'[17] Yet Barnett's criticism was that Lamb's children's works are *too* didactic.[18] Is *The King and Queen of Hearts* an outlier in Lamb's *oeuvre*; a piece of 'hack work'? In that case, Barnett's claim that 'Expediency required concession' must be our final stamp.[19]

Yet Lamb was fond enough to mention this work to Wordsworth's son, Johnny,[20] and Godwin thought enough of it to republish it. Moreover, in its anarchic subversions, it *does* reflect some of Lamb's philosophies concerning children's literature. Michael Kooy's analysis of Lamb's moral paradigms suggests that Lamb was an iconoclast who understood moral didacticism in terms of power dynamics.[21] Lamb's elaboration of *The King and Queen of Hearts* and his coda emphasise the arbitrary nature of authority. By transforming the monarchs into violent, gluttonous buffoons, the poem focuses on the shifting dynamic between Pambo and Mungo and encourages children to think *between* the lines of a poem, and *about* the justice and efficacy of authority structures. Indeed, Lamb was reasonably consistent when injecting his philosophical iconoclasm into children's texts.

[17] Barnett, "Lamb and Children's Literature", 15.
[18] Ibid, 10.
[19] Ibid, 15
[20] Lamb, letter to William Wordsworth 1 February 1806, *The Letters of Charles and Mary Lamb*, ed. by E. V. Lucas (London, 1903), I, 420.
[21] Michael John Kooy, "Lamb's the Moralist", *Charles Lamb Bulletin*, 127 (2004), 57–69.

Of Lamb's children's texts, *The King and Queen of Hearts With the Rogueries of the Knave Who Stole the Queen's Pies* is one of the least famous. Three years later, Godwin commissioned Lamb to write the text that later became one of the most significant of Lamb's children's stories.[22] Lamb's adaptation of *The Odyssey*, *The Adventures of Ulysses* (1808), is a chronological, linear narrative focusing solely on Ulysses' journey back to Ithaca. It simplifies the narrative focus and progression of time in *The Odyssey*, but problematises notions of textual authority and nineteenth-century morality.

Lamb highlights the intertextuality of his adaptation to destabilise the concept of an authoritative source text. He describes his work as a 'supplement' to Fenelon's *Télémaque*, and makes reference George Chapman as the translator through whom he accessed and adapted Homer's epic.[23] Thus, for the more experienced reader, or for adults mediating the text to child readers, Lamb's preface provokes the question: who holds ultimate authority in determining a narrative when several writers have shaped the narrative for different cultures at different times? This question is mirrored by the events of the narrative, too, for Ulysses is alternately granted protection and curses depending on the whims of the gods, goddesses, demi-gods and demi-goddesses he encounters. Furthermore, Lamb's insistence that his work was 'designed as a supplement' to Fenelon's text has multiple implications. Initially published in 1699 and reissued in 1717, *Télémaque* was a didactic text designed for Louis XIV's grandson. Inspired by *The Odyssey*, *Télémaque* omitted Odysseus' journeys, instead elaborating upon Telemachus' education by Minerva in the seven years. Upon publication it was recognised as a political critique of the current French king, and an attempt to shape the civilising mission of future French kings. Over the course of the eighteenth century royal tutors provided their charges with the text.[24] It was hugely popular internationally and was a bestseller in England in the eighteenth century.[25] Lamb's appeal to Fenelon's text thus operates on several levels. On a functional level, it justifies Lamb's narrative decision to excise a parallel narrative from *The Odyssey* and to focus solely on the journeys of one character, allowing *The Adventures of Ulysses* to be a linear narrative of Ulysses' journeys. Moreover, by invoking Fenelon's text, with its history of engaging with concepts of leadership and authority, Lamb signals his interest, and his text's interest, in questions of power and leadership. This is further politicised by the fact that the book was commonly used in English Dissenting communities.[26] Lamb was, potentially, suggesting a subtle affinity with Dissenting principles, a politically

[22] Lamb's adaptation was edited for use in schools in the United States of America (edited by David Henry Montgomery in 1886), Ireland (edited by John Cooke, 1892), and England (J. C. Dent, for Westminster School, in 1939); and James Joyce credited *The Adventures of Ulysses, edited by John Cooke* (1892) as a sources of inspiration for *Ulysses*: see Alistair McCleery and Ian Gunn, "Apparatus", *The Adventures of Ulysses, edited by John Cooke* (Edinburgh: Split Pea Press, 1992), 159.

[23] Charles Lamb, "Introduction", *The Adventures of Ulysses, edited by John Cooke* (1892), xix–xx. Quotations from this version will be cited in-text as *Adventures*.

[24] See David Avrom Bell, *The First Total War: Napoleon's Europe and the Birth of Warfare As We Know It* (New York, 2007), 171–175.

[25] See Ruth B. Bottigheimer, "Fairy Tales, Telemachus, and Young Misses Magazine: Moderns, Ancients, Gender, and Eighteenth-Century Children's Book Publishing", *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, 28.3 (2003), 171–175.

[26] Don Locke, *A Fantasy of Reason: The Life and Thought of William Godwin* (London, 1980), 169.

suggestive allusion to the political inequality experienced by Dissenting communities in early nineteenth-century England. Additionally, Lamb's reference to *Télémaque* suggests an appeal to the cultural and didactic authority of Lamb's own adaptation: an attempt to market *The Adventures of Ulysses* as a similarly culturally revolutionary pedagogical text.

In *The Adventures of Ulysses*, Lamb accommodates *The Odyssey* for younger readers — to a degree. In his highly abridged version of Ulysses' journey home, Lamb uses his preface to announce that he will eschew the 'prolixity which marks the speeches and the descriptions in Homer' which he hopes will attract young readers, and insists that his work is not 'a comparison with any of the direct translations' (Preface, *Adventures*, 1.). Reading Lamb's abridgement, though, we see his joy in challenging child readers with lengthy sentences: so much so that a later editor, John Cooke, replaced many of Lamb's colons with full stops to give 'more ease to the text' (*Adventures*, iii.).

Lamb's decision to alter the form of *The Odyssey* and present a linear narrative is perhaps his greatest accommodation for child readers. Working with a prose narrative instead of a poem, Lamb removes the invocation to the Muse and positions his adaptation as an authoritative history, presenting Ulysses as the embodiment of patriotic fervour:

> This history tells of the wanderings of Ulysses and his followers [...] He was king of a barren spot, and a poor country [...] yet wherever he came, he could never see a soil which appeared in his eyes half so sweet or desirable as his country earth. This made him refuse the offers of the goddess Calypso [...] this gave him strength to break from the enchantments of Circe" (*Adventures*, I:1).

Although referring to Ulysses' journeys as 'wanderings', Lamb stabilises Ulysses from the 'wondrous' traveller of Chapman's poem who internalises and comes to 'know' men and different cultures. In Lamb's text, Ulysses is fundamentally driven by his love for Ithaca, and it is this patriotic passion that provides him with the moral strength to resist supernatural temptation from goddesses and enchantresses. The moral gloss is also significant. As Matthew Grenby notes, the nineteenth-century chapbook industry was still thriving amongst poorer readers and child readers, and 'respectable children's literature' was designed so guardians of affluent children might perceive their moral and pedagogical superiority.[27] Lamb's moral gloss in the opening sentence of his work suggests an attempt to appeal to morally concerned guardians browsing bookstores for appropriate reading material for their young charges.

However, after the opening paragraph, Lamb's text repeatedly transgresses expectations that a child's text be morally clear and 'safe'. Lamb insisted that his adaptation should not compromise all the terror or poetry of Homer's narrative. He famously denied Godwin's request to tone down the violent imagery of Polyphemus eating Ulysses' crew, or Ulysses blinding Polyphemus, writing, 'If you want a book which is not occasionally to shock, you should not have thought of a

[27] M. O. Grenby, "Chapbooks, Children, and Children's Literature".

tale which was so full of anthropophagi and wonders>'[28] Lamb's comment sheds light on the relationship between authors and publishers, and the different pressures exerted upon each. Godwin was most likely responding to the pressures of middle-class reading expectations, which had been shaped by the rigorous reviews and essays in Sarah Trimmer's periodical *The Guardian of Education;* Lamb (and, perhaps, the twenty-first century reader) was responding to the censorious pressure of a seemingly over-zealous editor.[29]

Lamb pointedly limits the extent to which he accommodates his text for children, morally and linguistically. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, educational theorists and child writers were expressing concern that children's books used language in a sophisticated manner beyond the syntactic and linguistic ability of the children for whom they were aimed.[30] Lamb is almost defiant in his indulgence in complex and lengthy sentences that undoubtedly challenged child readers. When Ulysses and his men pass the Sirens, Lamb writes:

> He would have broke his bonds to rush after them; and threatened, wept, sued, entreated, commanded, crying out with tears and passionate imprecations, conjuring his men by all the ties of perils past which they had endured in common, by fellowship and love, and the authority which he retained among them, to let him loose; but at no rate would they obey him. And still the Sirens sang. Ulysses made signs, motions, gestures, promising mountains of gold if they would set him free; but their oars only moved faster. And still the Sirens sang. (III, 50–51)

The energy of the accumulated verbs in the paratactic sentences contrast jarringly with the short, alliterative clause 'And still the Sirens sang', enacting Ulysses' passion upon hearing the Sirens, and his inability to break free from the mast. Such passages suggest that Lamb's disclaimer that he 'subordinated the manner to the passion' (*Ulysses,* Preface) was disingenuous, or authorial dissembling.

Perhaps most significantly, Lamb transgressed nineteenth-century expectations to communicate clear moral values. He was vague in describing moral virtue. He praises Ulysses as 'a brave man struggling with adversity' who 'by a wise use of events, and with an inimitable presence of mind [...] forced out a way for himself' (Preface, *Ulysses*). 'Forcing' a way for oneself was not promoted in moralistic children's works at the time, and 'bravery', while a virtue, is morally ambiguous. Indeed, the subject matter with which Lamb was commissioned to work is morally dubious. If a situation required Ulysses to indulge in an extramarital

[28] Charles Lamb, letter to Godwin 11 March 1808, *Letters* ed. E. V. Lucas, 386 – 87.

[29] Evidence of publishers responding to the pressure of Sarah Trimmer's reviews include F. Houlston and Son's publication lists from 1809–10, which list multiple fairy-tales but notably omit *Cinderella,* the fairy-tale Trimmer singled out for criticism in *The Guardian of Education*: Margaret Nancy Cutt, *Mrs Sherwood and her books for Children* (London, 1974), 29.

[30] For instance, Sarah Trimmer marketed *The Little Spelling Book for young Children* as a preparatory text to Anna Laetitia Barbauld's *Lessons for Children,* concurring with the Edgeworths that Barbauld's book was above the reading capabilities of such young children: *The Little Spelling Book for young Children,* 2nd ed. (London: J. Johnson, 1786); also Maria Edgeworth and Richard Lovell Edgeworth, *Practical Education,* 2nd edition, 3 vols (New York, 1996), 81.

affair, Lamb saw no reason to euphemise the fact. After confronting Circe with her lies, Circe exclaims, 'This haughty bosom bends to thee. O Ithacan, a goddess woos thee to her bed' (*Adventures* II:19). Incidentally, this line was removed in later publications of Lamb's adaptation,[31] revealing the editorial tendency to euphemise and 'sanitise' child-specific adaptations for ostensibly moral purposes, regardless of the moral dubiousness of the original tale.

And what could be more morally dubious than the story of *The Odyssey,* nestled within the Greco-Roman mythological body of adulterous and incestuous gods and figures? Charles Lamb highlights the amorality of the Greco-Roman *mythos* when Ulysses descends to the Underworld and encounters notorious mythological women:

> Then saw he Tyro, who when she lived was the paramour of Neptune, and by him had Pelias and Neleus. Antiope, who bore two like sons to Jove [...] with her fair daughter, afterwards her daughter-in-law, Megara. There also Ulysses saw Jocasta, the unfortunate mother and wife of Œdipus; who ignorant of kin wedded with her son, and when she had discovered the unnatural alliance, for shame and grief hanged herself. ("Apparatus", *Adventures,* 158)

Lamb repeatedly references the infidelities of the Greco-Roman gods, suggesting the importance of questioning the virtue of established figures. Moreover, in his use of free indirect discourse, the narrator implicitly invites the child reader to sympathise with Jocasta, subtly inserting the adjectives 'unfortunate' and 'ignorant' to explain her accidental incest. It is fairly instructive to note that later editors of Lamb's work altered the content of this scene: David Henry Montgomery entirely omits references to any women in his schoolbook edition of *The Adventures of Ulysses,*[32] while John Cooke emphasises the virtuous characters in Greco-Roman mythology, describing Leda as 'the wife of Tyndarus, the mother of the beautiful Helen, and of the two brave brothers, Castor and Pollux' (*Adventures,* II:24). Although Cooke cannot un-write Zeus' rape of Leda, he emphasises Leda's normative role as Tyndarus' wife and as the mother of the 'beautiful' Helen (whose infamous infidelity remains glaringly unmentioned), and the 'brave brothers' Castor and Pollux, whose selfless love is described in great detail.

As an inhabitant of this morally dubious world, Ulysses is a remarkably morally dubious protagonist. As the ultimate adapter, he is a skilled liar, and the narrator even praises Ulysses' ability to lie. When Ulysses reaches Ithaca, the narrator declares: 'So prudently he carried his joy, that dissembling his true name and quality, he pretended to the shepherd that he was only some foreigner [...] the young shepherd, laughing [...] said to him: '[...] think you that you are unknown?' (VII:86). The narrator stresses that Ulysses' dishonesty is *prudence:* a virtue. Moreover, Minerva reacts fondly to Ulysses' attempt to deceive her, and provides him with a divinely empowered disguise as an old beggar, suggesting the arbitrariness of moral categories of good or bad.

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At times the narrator intrudes with a moral lesson, usually praising Ulysses' faithfulness to Penelope. The ending, however, avoids middle-class values of self-restraint and self-effacement:

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The language is emotively charged and retributive. Lamb subversively uses Biblical allusions: 'the land had rest' is the clause that brackets Israel's conquests in Canaan in the books Judges and Joshua. Lamb also mimics the King James Version's dependence on paratactic sentences beginning with the conjugation 'and'. He thus posits a link between the ultimate Christian text and violence, and implies that Scriptural values are present in non-Christian legends: even in the ultimate dissembler.

So, Charles Lamb's stance against didactic moral children's literature is consistent with the anarchic, subversive texts he produced for the Godwins' Juvenile Library. But what of his Romantic-era child reader? Lamb's decision to adapt adult works for children suggests, by implication, that Romantic writers did not believe that the ideal child figure was the ideal reader. In *Tales for Shakespeare*, Charles and Mary Lamb anticipate that child readers will use the stories as a 'stepping stone' to Shakespeare's plays, implying that the developing Romantic ideology of childhood was not synchronous with the ideal Romantic reader.[33]

I here appeal to an alternative, organic theory of Romanticism and childhood that highlights the continuity between childhood and experience. Alan Richardson and Judith Plotz describe 'organic' models of understanding the 'Romantic' child in Blake's poetry.[34] In this view, children possess innocence and insight, and, in their growth, they attain more complex insights such that innocence and experience are 'subsumed into the comprehensive (and dynamic) vision [...] 'organized innocence.''[35] To re-quote Charles Lamb, 'beautiful interest [...] made the child a man'[36]— in other words, children *will* mature, and this is good. Using this paradigm, the adaptation of adult works for child readers is a logical progression that arms children to navigate the literary world of experienced readers.

A final thought.

Velma Bourgeois Richmond suggests that Lamb's child-specific adaptations provided 'a correlative to popular chapbooks.'[37] I will not overstress Lamb's significance in opening adult literature to child audiences. William Godwin, after

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all, commissioned the works. It is better to say that Lamb, alongside Godwin, facilitated children's access to adult literature.

It is the second part of Richmond's claim that is fascinating. Romantics elegised the chapbook: Wordsworth lamented the loss of the '[...] invisible coat / Of Jack the Giant-killer, Robin Hood / And Sabra in the forest with St George.'[38] Yet, as Clair's research suggests, quantification indicates that *more* chapbook titles were being produced during the Romantic period, and larger numbers were sold in towns and rural country areas, than in previous years.[39] What was changing was chapbook culture itself, as traditional titles were replaced by more recently composed texts, and chapbooks came to be associated with the reading material of the lower classes.[40] Grenby suggests that 'respectable children's literature' was designed to provide affluent children with products perceived as morally and pedagogically superior to chapbooks.[41]

Subsequent to St Clair and Grenby's observations, I wish to suggest that William Godwin's adaptations for children were part of a concerted effort to *supplant* the chapbook industry: not merely to act as a 'correlative', as Richmond posits. We have seen the extent to which *The King and Queen of Hearts* mimicked the aesthetic and, importantly, the price of chapbooks. Truncated narratives formed the backbone of chapbooks, and it is difficult to *not* read the narrative condensation of *The Adventures of Ulysses* within the chapbook tradition. In this light, Lamb's lament about the decline of the 'old classics of the nursery' may contain an agenda;[42] a legitimate lament over the popularity of rational, moralistic children's books, but also an attempt to pre-emptively sound a death-knell for the chapbook industry he and Godwin would seek to supplant.

And where stands the child?

Rather, where stands *a* child?

Lamb's children's works imply *a* Romantic child reader: a child possessing the imaginative ability to discern implicit moral lessons who still requires guidance as a reader. This child who progresses from innocence to experience is as embedded within the Romantic tradition as the spiritually pure infant. Charles Lamb's adaptations for children invite us to read anew the complexity ascribed to the apparently simple 'Romantic child'.

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[38] William Wordsworth, *The Prelude: Book 5*, lines 342–344.
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[40] Ibid; also M. O. Grenby, "Chapbooks, Children, and Children's Literature", 277 – 303.
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He with the umbrella is her Spy,
To spy out rogueries in the dark,
And smell a rat, as you shall mark.

The scansion of Lamb's stanzas is irregular, mirroring Coleridge's fondness for counting in syllables rather than feet'. This unstable scansion mirrors Lamb's complication of notions of authority. Although the stanza opens with the preposition 'High', demonstration of the Queen's authority, the syntax of the line recalls Milton's Satan.[16] This intertextuality implicates the Queen with Satan's darkness and malice (Satan not yet recuperated as a Byronic hero), suggesting that her authority, like that of Satan's, is falsely gained and built on unstable premises. Moreover, the sibilance of 'State' and 'seen' emphasises the arbitrariness of her power. The Queen's authority is implicitly positioned as (mis)perception: her might comes from the fact that she is 'seen' atop the throne. Lamb also puns on 'own'. In the context of the sextet, it speaks not of definite possession, but refers to the fact that the Queen's subjects profess her authority, highlighting again the arbitrary nature of her power. The word also foreshadows the poem's climactic conflict: the knight's act of stealing the Queen's pies, or tension over the concept of private property. Mulready's illustrations parallel Lamb's interrogation of the justice of unequal power structures: his richly clad Queen is juxtaposed with her stunted, slave-like pages. As Mulready's image occupies the majority of the page, the page layout highlights the centrality of Mulready's images to the text.

The images in *The King and Queen of Hearts, with the Rogueries of the Knave Who Stole the Queen's Pies* are ethnically and politically problematic, particularly considering the contextual slavery debates and the then-recent Mansfield ruling. Mulready's images constantly verge on the edge of the offensive and transgressive. The Queen's spy, Mungo, is identified in Lamb's text as possessing an umbrella: he is illustrated as a child-like slave, clad in nothing but a primitive loin-cloth stamped with the Queen's heart. Indeed, the text in general revels in the problematic. Lamb indulges in violence. When Mungo reports the Pambo's thievery (the eponymous

[16] Milton, *Paradise Lost*, II:1.


Behold the due reward of ſin,
See what a plight rogue Pambo's in.
The King lays on his blows ſo ſtout,
The Tarts for fear come tumbling out
O King be merciful as juſt,
Knave), the King punishes Pambo such that the narrator exclaims, 'You'll beat poor Pambo into dust!' and Mulready energetically depicts the King gleefully beating the Knave.

Most significantly, Lamb adds a coda. The King and Queen eat and drink themselves into a stupor, and Pambo the Knave takes revenge upon Mungo the spy for reporting his thievery: 'Now Pambo, is the time for you / Beat little Tell-Tale black and blue!' This is no straightforward adaptation. Readers might want to sympathise with Mungo for discharging his duty to his Queen, but the narrator brands him 'little Tell-Tale'. William Godwin might write that the imagination ought to be the ground-plot for moral development, but Lamb's imaginative elaboration between the lines of the rhyme leads to amoral violence.

If Lamb adhered to an image of a spiritually pure child, the violence and crude poetry in *The King and Queen of Hearts* must lead us to conclude with George Barnett that Lamb's children's works are not 'consistent with his theory.'[17] Yet Barnett's criticism was that Lamb's children's works are *too* didactic.[18] Is *The King and Queen of Hearts* an outlier in Lamb's *oeuvre*; a piece of 'hack work'? In that case, Barnett's claim that 'Expediency required concession' must be our final stamp.[19]

Yet Lamb was fond enough to mention this work to Wordsworth's son, Johnny,[20] and Godwin thought enough of it to republish it. Moreover, in its anarchic subversions, it *does* reflect some of Lamb's philosophies concerning children's literature. Michael Kooy's analysis of Lamb's moral paradigms suggests that Lamb was an iconoclast who understood moral didacticism in terms of power dynamics.[21] Lamb's elaboration of *The King and Queen of Hearts* and his coda emphasise the arbitrary nature of authority. By transforming the monarchs into violent, gluttonous buffoons, the poem focuses on the shifting dynamic between Pambo and Mungo and encourages children to think *between* the lines of a poem, and *about* the justice and efficacy of authority structures. Indeed, Lamb was reasonably consistent when injecting his philosophical iconoclasm into children's texts.

[17] Barnett, "Lamb and Children's Literature", 15.
[18] Ibid, 10.
[19] Ibid, 15
[20] Lamb, letter to William Wordsworth 1 February 1806, *The Letters of Charles and Mary Lamb*, ed. by E. V. Lucas (London, 1903), I, 420.
[21] Michael John Kooy, "Lamb's the Moralist", *Charles Lamb Bulletin*, 127 (2004), 57–69.

Of Lamb's children's texts, *The King and Queen of Hearts With the Rogueries of the Knave Who Stole the Queen's Pies* is one of the least famous. Three years later, Godwin commissioned Lamb to write the text that later became one of the most significant of Lamb's children's stories.[22] Lamb's adaptation of *The Odyssey*, *The Adventures of Ulysses* (1808), is a chronological, linear narrative focusing solely on Ulysses' journey back to Ithaca. It simplifies the narrative focus and progression of time in *The Odyssey*, but problematises notions of textual authority and nineteenth-century morality.

Lamb highlights the intertextuality of his adaptation to destabilise the concept of an authoritative source text. He describes his work as a 'supplement' to Fenelon's *Télémaque*, and makes reference George Chapman as the translator through whom he accessed and adapted Homer's epic.[23] Thus, for the more experienced reader, or for adults mediating the text to child readers, Lamb's preface provokes the question: who holds ultimate authority in determining a narrative when several writers have shaped the narrative for different cultures at different times? This question is mirrored by the events of the narrative, too, for Ulysses is alternately granted protection and curses depending on the whims of the gods, goddesses, demi-gods and demi-goddesses he encounters. Furthermore, Lamb's insistence that his work was 'designed as a supplement' to Fenelon's text has multiple implications. Initially published in 1699 and reissued in 1717, *Télémaque* was a didactic text designed for Louis XIV's grandson. Inspired by *The Odyssey*, *Télémaque* omitted Odysseus' journeys, instead elaborating upon Telemachus' education by Minerva in the seven years. Upon publication it was recognised as a political critique of the current French king, and an attempt to shape the civilising mission of future French kings. Over the course of the eighteenth century royal tutors provided their charges with the text.[24] It was hugely popular internationally and was a bestseller in England in the eighteenth century.[25] Lamb's appeal to Fenelon's text thus operates on several levels. On a functional level, it justifies Lamb's narrative decision to excise a parallel narrative from *The Odyssey* and to focus solely on the journeys of one character, allowing *The Adventures of Ulysses* to be a linear narrative of Ulysses' journeys. Moreover, by invoking Fenelon's text, with its history of engaging with concepts of leadership and authority, Lamb signals his interest, and his text's interest, in questions of power and leadership. This is further politicised by the fact that the book was commonly used in English Dissenting communities.[26] Lamb was, potentially, suggesting a subtle affinity with Dissenting principles, a politically

[22] Lamb's adaptation was edited for use in schools in the United States of America (edited by David Henry Montgomery in 1886), Ireland (edited by John Cooke, 1892), and England (J. C. Dent, for Westminster School, in 1939); and James Joyce credited *The Adventures of Ulysses, edited by John Cooke* (1892) as a sources of inspiration for *Ulysses*: see Alistair McCleery and Ian Gunn, "Apparatus", *The Adventures of Ulysses, edited by John Cooke* (Edinburgh: Split Pea Press, 1992), 159.

[23] Charles Lamb, "Introduction", *The Adventures of Ulysses, edited by John Cooke* (1892), xix–xx. Quotations from this version will be cited in-text as *Adventures*.

[24] See David Avrom Bell, *The First Total War: Napoleon's Europe and the Birth of Warfare As We Know It* (New York, 2007), 171–175.

[25] See Ruth B. Bottigheimer, "Fairy Tales, Telemachus, and Young Misses Magazine: Moderns, Ancients, Gender, and Eighteenth-Century Children's Book Publishing", *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, 28.3 (2003), 171–175.

[26] Don Locke, *A Fantasy of Reason: The Life and Thought of William Godwin* (London, 1980), 169.

suggestive allusion to the political inequality experienced by Dissenting communities in early nineteenth-century England. Additionally, Lamb's reference to *Télémaque* suggests an appeal to the cultural and didactic authority of Lamb's own adaptation: an attempt to market *The Adventures of Ulysses* as a similarly culturally revolutionary pedagogical text.

In *The Adventures of Ulysses*, Lamb accommodates *The Odyssey* for younger readers — to a degree. In his highly abridged version of Ulysses' journey home, Lamb uses his preface to announce that he will eschew the 'prolixity which marks the speeches and the descriptions in Homer' which he hopes will attract young readers, and insists that his work is not 'a comparison with any of the direct translations' (Preface, *Adventures*, 1.). Reading Lamb's abridgement, though, we see his joy in challenging child readers with lengthy sentences: so much so that a later editor, John Cooke, replaced many of Lamb's colons with full stops to give 'more ease to the text' (*Adventures*, iii.).

Lamb's decision to alter the form of *The Odyssey* and present a linear narrative is perhaps his greatest accommodation for child readers. Working with a prose narrative instead of a poem, Lamb removes the invocation to the Muse and positions his adaptation as an authoritative history, presenting Ulysses as the embodiment of patriotic fervour:

> This history tells of the wanderings of Ulysses and his followers [...] He was king of a barren spot, and a poor country [...] yet wherever he came, he could never see a soil which appeared in his eyes half so sweet or desirable as his country earth. This made him refuse the offers of the goddess Calypso [...] this gave him strength to break from the enchantments of Circe" (*Adventures*, I:1).

Although referring to Ulysses' journeys as 'wanderings', Lamb stabilises Ulysses from the 'wondrous' traveller of Chapman's poem who internalises and comes to 'know' men and different cultures. In Lamb's text, Ulysses is fundamentally driven by his love for Ithaca, and it is this patriotic passion that provides him with the moral strength to resist supernatural temptation from goddesses and enchantresses. The moral gloss is also significant. As Matthew Grenby notes, the nineteenth-century chapbook industry was still thriving amongst poorer readers and child readers, and 'respectable children's literature' was designed so guardians of affluent children might perceive their moral and pedagogical superiority.[27] Lamb's moral gloss in the opening sentence of his work suggests an attempt to appeal to morally concerned guardians browsing bookstores for appropriate reading material for their young charges.

However, after the opening paragraph, Lamb's text repeatedly transgresses expectations that a child's text be morally clear and 'safe'. Lamb insisted that his adaptation should not compromise all the terror or poetry of Homer's narrative. He famously denied Godwin's request to tone down the violent imagery of Polyphemus eating Ulysses' crew, or Ulysses blinding Polyphemus, writing, 'If you want a book which is not occasionally to shock, you should not have thought of a

[27] M. O. Grenby, "Chapbooks, Children, and Children's Literature".

tale which was so full of anthropophagi and wonders>'[28] Lamb's comment sheds light on the relationship between authors and publishers, and the different pressures exerted upon each. Godwin was most likely responding to the pressures of middle-class reading expectations, which had been shaped by the rigorous reviews and essays in Sarah Trimmer's periodical *The Guardian of Education*; Lamb (and, perhaps, the twenty-first century reader) was responding to the censorious pressure of a seemingly over-zealous editor.[29]

Lamb pointedly limits the extent to which he accommodates his text for children, morally and linguistically. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, educational theorists and child writers were expressing concern that children's books used language in a sophisticated manner beyond the syntactic and linguistic ability of the children for whom they were aimed.[30] Lamb is almost defiant in his indulgence in complex and lengthy sentences that undoubtedly challenged child readers. When Ulysses and his men pass the Sirens, Lamb writes:

> He would have broke his bonds to rush after them; and threatened, wept, sued, entreated, commanded, crying out with tears and passionate imprecations, conjuring his men by all the ties of perils past which they had endured in common, by fellowship and love, and the authority which he retained among them, to let him loose; but at no rate would they obey him. And still the Sirens sang. Ulysses made signs, motions, gestures, promising mountains of gold if they would set him free; but their oars only moved faster. And still the Sirens sang. (III, 50–51)

The energy of the accumulated verbs in the paratactic sentences contrast jarringly with the short, alliterative clause 'And still the Sirens sang', enacting Ulysses' passion upon hearing the Sirens, and his inability to break free from the mast. Such passages suggest that Lamb's disclaimer that he 'subordinated the manner to the passion' (*Ulysses*, Preface) was disingenuous, or authorial dissembling.

Perhaps most significantly, Lamb transgressed nineteenth-century expectations to communicate clear moral values. He was vague in describing moral virtue. He praises Ulysses as 'a brave man struggling with adversity' who 'by a wise use of events, and with an inimitable presence of mind [...] forced out a way for himself' (Preface, *Ulysses*). 'Forcing' a way for oneself was not promoted in moralistic children's works at the time, and 'bravery', while a virtue, is morally ambiguous. Indeed, the subject matter with which Lamb was commissioned to work is morally dubious. If a situation required Ulysses to indulge in an extramarital

[28] Charles Lamb, letter to Godwin 11 March 1808, *Letters* ed. E. V. Lucas, 386 – 87.

[29] Evidence of publishers responding to the pressure of Sarah Trimmer's reviews include F. Houlston and Son's publication lists from 1809–10, which list multiple fairy-tales but notably omit *Cinderella*, the fairy-tale Trimmer singled out for criticism in *The Guardian of Education*: Margaret Nancy Cutt, *Mrs Sherwood and her books for Children* (London, 1974), 29.

[30] For instance, Sarah Trimmer marketed *The Little Spelling Book for young Children* as a preparatory text to Anna Laetitia Barbauld's *Lessons for Children*, concurring with the Edgeworths that Barbauld's book was above the reading capabilities of such young children: *The Little Spelling Book for young Children*, 2nd ed. (London: J. Johnson, 1786); also Maria Edgeworth and Richard Lovell Edgeworth, *Practical Education*, 2nd edition, 3 vols (New York, 1996), 81.

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William Godwin's *St Dunstan* and Fanny Burney's *Edwy and Elgiva*

Hilary Newman

Margaret Anne Doody tells us that 'most eighteenth century tragedies' were 'historical plays'.[1] The near contemporaries, William Godwin (1756-1836) and Fanny Burney (1752-1840), were both writing plays, as well as producing various other literary forms. Godwin wrote four historical tragedies: *St Dunstan* (1790), *Antonio* (1800), (the partly lost) *Abbas, King of Persia* (1801) and *Faulkener* (1807). Burney wrote eight plays: four tragedies and four comedies. Her tragic plays were *Edwy and Elgiva* (1788-95), *Hubert de Vere* (1790-1797), *The Siege of Pevensey* (1790-1791) and the unfinished play *Elberta* (1791-1814). This article will consider the first tragedy written by both these authors: Godwin's *St Dunstan* and Burney's *Edwy and Elgiva*. The two playwrights' attitude towards the stage, their attitudes towards history and their mutual exploitation of a contemporary interest in their Anglo-Saxon ancestors will be examined. Unknown to each other, both Godwin and Burney created their plays around an identical tenth-century conflict.

From childhood Burney and Godwin had shown an interest in theatrical matters. As Sabor points out, Dr Burney 'was himself the author of a translation of Rousseau's operetta *Le Devin du Village* (1752), produced at Drury Lane as *The Cunning Man* in 1766'[2]. Presumably, at the age of fourteen, Fanny would have been able to take an intelligent interest in this production, which had actually been written the year she was born.

Perhaps as a result of his own theatrical involvement, Dr Burney came to know leading actors and actresses as well as theatre managers. David Garrick, the manager of Drury Lane theatre, and George Colman the elder, manager of Covent Garden, were friends of Dr Burney and the friendship was extended to the younger Burneys. The family thus had access to the two patented London theatres, whose performances they frequently attended.

As Evelyn Farr wrote: 'The eighteenth century also saw an increase in the popularity of private theatricals in aristocratic and middle-class circles, possibly as a result of the Licensing Act, which prohibited legal public performances in the country'[3]. From 1770 to 1776 Fanny Burney participated in private theatricals on at least four occasions. The Burney family took pride in their own makeshift theatre.

Godwin also showed an interest in the theatre from childhood, though the location of his family meant that he could not often be a spectator of dramatic performances and then not those in London. He came from a very large family, and perhaps in the competition for parental attention, used to act the part of a dissenting

[1] Margaret Anne Doody *Frances Burney The Life in the Works* (Cambridge, 1988), 180.
[2] *The Complete Plays of Frances Burney Comedies*, ed. by Peter Sabor (London, 1995), xxii.
[3] Evelyn Farr *The World of Fanny Burney* (London, 1993), 72.

preacher (which his father was, and in whose footsteps he briefly followed). In one of his autobiographical fragments, Godwin recalled a visit to a theatre in Norwich when he was nine. He remembered the play being performed was Thomas Otway's *Venice Preserved* (1682) and described in detail his responses to the play's characters and their competence in their roles. Although, or perhaps because, Godwin was at this time 'a total stranger to plays' it made a great impact on him.[4] This experience seemed to have been unique in Godwin's childhood, but, despite this fact, it is of interest to note that before he entered the Hoxton Dissenting Academy in 1773 he had already planned two tragedies. They were never completed, but one of them was a historical tragedy based on Roman history. In 1774 he recorded reading widely among Shakespeare's plays.[5]

For both Burney and Godwin, their childhood experiences of the theatre initiated a lifelong interest in the stage. Burney read a great number of plays as well as attending performances. Their influence can be found in her journals and letters. In her professional life as a writer, her novels often feature theatricals as well as dialogue which would have been equally acceptable on the stage. Similarly, when Godwin moved to London in adulthood, his interest in drama continued. As David O'Shaughnessy observes, 'One of the Romantic period's most frequent theatre-goers, Godwin was also a tireless reader of dramatic works and an author whose own commitment to writing drama was substantial.'[6]

Godwin's *St Dunstan* and Burney's *Edwy and Elgiva* are both written in unrhymed iambic pentameters and are composed of five acts each. The blank verse is in a lofty and elevated style in both plays under consideration; modern audiences/readers can find it off-putting. Both playwrights also adhere to the neo-classical unities of place, time and setting. Mary Shelley, in her incomplete *Life of William Godwin*, devoted considerable space to her father's *St Dunstan*. She wrote: 'we do not wonder that the play was never brought out on the stage, though there are many scenes and situations which render it interesting for the closet.'[7] Similarly, *The European Magazine* reviewer suggested that *Edwy and Elgiva* might still 'afford much pleasure in the closet', though unsuccessful on the stage.[8]

There are historical sources for both Godwin's and Burney's plays. David O'Shaughnessy has identified the main source of *St Dunstan*: Tobias Smollett's *A Complete History of England deduced from the Descent of Julius Caesar to the Treaty of Aix la Chapelle, 1748, Containing the Transactions of One Thousand Eight Hundred and Three Years*. Smollett's work was written in four volumes and published from 1757 to 1758 (O'Shaughnessy, xxi). Godwin adheres fairly closely to his source. Indeed, Godwin thought very highly of Smollett's long-titled history, writing that 'Respect for the great name of Smollett, will not suffer me to pass over in silence his History of

[4] *Autobiography 1756-1772* in *Collected Novels and Memoirs of William Godwin*, ed. Mark Philp (London, 1992), I, 28.
[5] *Autobiographical Fragments and Reflections* (1800) in *Novels and Memoirs of William Godwin*, I, 41-42.
[6] *The Plays of William Godwin*, ed. David O'Shaughnessy (London, 2010), ix. All further references to *St Dunstan* will be taken from this edition and given in the body of the article in parenthesis.
[7] *Mary Shelley's Literary Lives and Other Writings*, ed. Pamela Clemit (London, 2002), IV, 45.
[8] Quoted by Sabor in *Complete Plays of Frances Burney*, I, xv.

England, the most important of his compilations.'[9] O'Shaughnessy also tells us that the characters used by Godwin in *St Dunstan* 'are based on real historical figures although Godwin took license with their relationships and their chronology: Edward is King Edwy (955-9); Edgar is King Edgar (959-75); St Dunstan (d.988); Althelstan "Half-King" (fl.932-8); Harold is possibly Harold I (d.1040) and Eltruda is Aelfgifir (fl.956-66)' (O'Shaughnessy, 257). An additional character, Anselm, is for some reason not included in Godwin's list of 'Dramatis Personae'. Also noteworthy is the fact that there is only one female protagonist, Eltruda, among the nine characters.

Likewise, Burney's *Edwy and Elgiva* has a historical source and uses real events and people. Burney's sources are more various than Godwin's, including Smollett, but also using accounts by Hume, Henry and others. She uses more characters than Godwin; there are fourteen characters separately identified in the 'Persons of the Drama', five more than in *St Dunstan*. Burney also has two female characters rather than Godwin's one. Confusingly, Godwin calls Edward/Edwy's wife Eltruda, rather than Burney's Elgiva, and Eltruda in *Edwy and Elgiva* is Elgiva's maid or personal attendant.

Both Godwin and Burney were keen readers of history from childhood onwards. Godwin wryly comments that when he was a child he read Newberry's *History of England* several times. Then he asked a relative to recommend something more substantial in the area of history. Apparently, Mrs Sothern borrowed a book from Godwin Senior's library. Mrs Sothern advised Godwin not to read the pre-Conquest history. In so doing, she made the book wearisome reading to the boy. However, she insisted that he should read the rest of the book and she held him 'to the task of reading twenty pages from it every Sunday afternoon' (*Autobiography 1756-1772*, 25). As a schoolboy living away from home, he records that he read 'with the greatest transport [...] the early volumes of the English translation of the Ancient History of Rollins' (*Autobiography 1756-1772*, 37).

Finally, as evidence of Godwin's interest in reading history is an account of his views of the purpose of studying the subject. In an article called 'Essay of History and Romance', Godwin's opening words are: 'The study of history may well be ranked among those pursuits which are most worthy to be chosen by a rational being'.[10] He divides history into two main branches: that of society and that of the individual. Later Godwin added, 'the study of individual history [...] is the most fruitful source of activity and motive'.[11] Ultimately, however, history's two branches - that of society and that of the individual - should be combined. It is knowledge of the individual [which] can alone give energy and utility to the records of our social existence'.[12] Arguably, this is what Godwin aimed to achieve in his historical plays.

Though Burney was not a philosopher and gave little attention to the theory of history, Janice Farrar Thaddeus confirms her interest in the subject itself:

[9] *Political and Philosophical Writings of William Godwin*, ed. Pamela Clemit (London, 1993), V, 284.
[10] *Political and Philosophical Writings*, V, 291
[11] *Political and Philosophical Writings*, V, 292.
[12] *Political and Philosophical Writings*, V, 294.

> From the age of 16, she had set herself projects in the reading of history, especially classical narrative. [...] While at court, she continued to read history and embroider on its stratagems. Many other writers simply borrowed their plots from other plays. Burney wrote stories that were either entirely original, or based on historical narrative drawn from her extensive reading[13].

So, what exactly are the events from English history that Godwin and Burney used in *St Dunstan* and *Edwy and Elgiva* respectively? Using the historical characters Edwy or Edward, and Elgiva or Eltruda and the tenth-century monk Dunstan, Godwin and Burney explore the conflict between public duties and personal passions, and between the state and the church.

Although the two plays treat of the same major historical figures, period and themes, their titles suggest a difference in emphasis. *St Dunstan* suggests that Godwin emphasised the state and public duty; while Burney's title is that of the eponymous royal heroine and hero who want to create a domestic life for themselves, regardless of their duties and mainly oppose the church because it challenges their marriage. Barbara Darby has helpfully categorised these two very different approaches to eighteenth-century historical tragedy. The first category described sums up Godwin's *St Dunstan* and its idea of tragedy, which is often seen 'as a masculine and male dominated genre: the leader of a community, usually male, comes into conflict with other men, or must choose between his position of authority and his personal desire, usually for a woman'[14]. But, Darby argues, there is a different, more feminine, version of tragedy, which is highly relevant to Burney's *Edwy and Elgiva*, 'one that is less concerned with the public, the majestic, or the lofty (ideas linked conventionally with the masculine) than it is with the emotional, domestic and personal' (48).

The remainder of this article will explore these alternative views of tragedy by examining the two themes of the dichotomy between the political and the domestic (or the public and private) and the conflict between the church and the state, in the persons and behaviour of the historical protagonists as they are presented by Godwin and Burney's plays. (Incidentally, both Godwin and Burney have developed the character of Dunstan, the Abbot of Glastonbury, rather than that of the historically more dominant Odo, the Archbishop of Canterbury). This exploration of themes will involve a move from the more generalised first part of this article to a closer examination of specific passages in the plays.

First, then, let us look at the conflict between the public and private in Godwin's *St Dunstan*. The play opens with a dialogue between Eltruda and Althelstan, which fills in the personal and political background. Eltruda is much more politically astute than Burney's hero and heroine. Although it is her wedding day and she is to marry the young King Edward, Eltruda is preoccupied with the politics of the situation. Her father, an earlier opponent of the influence of Dunstan on state affairs through the weak king Edred, was exiled for his pains 'and died in

[13] Janice Farrar Thaddeus *Frances Burney A Literary Life* (London, 2000), 104.
[14] Barbara Darby *Frances Burney Dramatist: Gender, Performance and the Late Eighteenth-Century Stage* (Kentucky, 1997), 47.

foreign climes'. Eltruda and her mother were forced to live in poverty, aided by Athelstan, and her mother soon died of grief. Eltruda still fears her 'wily enemy' Dunstan.

King Edward is also concerned about the political situation. While public events are overshadowing their personal happiness, they are both content to put their duties foremost. Edward asks Eltruda: 'Can you forgive me on my wedding day, /That empire thus divides my time with love?' (Act I, ll307-308). He adds: 'But thus 'tis ever with a mortal, rais'd/ To watch & labour for the general weal' (Act I, ll309-310). Eltruda understandingly responds that she would not be 'so meanly selfish' and in one of the natural image which commonly occur in both Godwin and Burney's plays, adds, 'And heaven avert the impending storm from Britain' (l. 314, l.319). At the conclusion of the first act they are still discussing Dunstan's plotting against them. Unlike Eltruda, Edgar is confident of his ability to deal with the situation, querying, 'Why should I fear? Have I a single purpose/That tends to any aim but England's welfare?' (I, ll.323-4). Edward makes it clear to his brother Edgar that he is devoted to the commonweal above personal desires: 'Think you, /When thus a nation's weal depends upon it, /That Edward is so light & weak of purpose, /As to permit caprice or passion to usurp/ The seat of reason?' (I, ll.441-5).

In Act III, the central one of the play, Edward is still putting his public duties before his private pleasures. Although Edward describes his onerous duties as a king, he believes that Eltruda is 'ample recompense/To solace all my public cares' (III, ll.14-15). Later it is Eltruda who is anxious about Edward's subjects possible belief that they will think him 'careless of his people's welfare (III, l.111)' and 'blindly guided by a youthful passion?' (III, l.112). Edward quickly reassures Eltruda and asserts his public duties:

> 'Tis true I love you with an ardent passion,
> ...But even your love shall never come in rivalship
> With that I bear to England. No indulgence,
> No thought of private ease & happiness
> Shall ever make me leave the path of duty (III, l.122, ll.124-7).

In Act IV, private life intrudes in the form of Edward's troubled brother Edgar. Edward promised to help his brother with his difficulties, but not at this moment when 'public cares' are uppermost in his mind (IV, l. 65). There is no doubt that the postponing of this matter adds to Edward's danger, by not reasserting his affection for and influence over Edgar instead of Dunstan's. It is worthy of comment that Godwin has used a structural technique he often used in his novels: that of setting up parallels and contrasts between characters and situations. The effect of Edgar is to raise the reader/spectator's opinion of Edward, for Edgar is solely motivated by his own selfish concerns, which will lead him to murder his brother and try to marry his widow. This is highlighted when Edward tells Edgar that he fears for Eltruda's safety, but that 'there's no longer room/For all the fond regards of private feeling' (IV, ll. 107-8). Just before leaving Edward is about to leave Edgar, he declares: 'Alas, my brother! At this moment/ My throne is tottering! This is the dread hour, /That must decide the fate of England!' (IV, ll. 332-4) Edgar soon after stabs Edward, who forgives his brother and asks him to 'take pity on my wife' (IV,

l.384), but his final dying words are an expression of his desire to have lived a little longer which would have enabled him to 'have secur'd my country's pledge & hope/Of future happiness' (IV, ll.395-6).

Thus it can be seen that from first to last, Edward in *St Dunstan* puts his country and subjects before his personal happiness. This would have been perfectly in accord with Godwin's views as expressed in his philosophical treatise *Political Justice* (1793), where he argues that even a close relative should not be saved from a fire before an individual who is capable of a bigger contribution to the overall welfare of mankind.

By contrast, it is clear that in Burney's *Edwy and Elgiva*, the playwright preferred to concentrate on the eponymous characters' happiness and not on Edwy's public duties as king[15]. The situation is the same: both young kings' marriages have been forbidden as incestuous and they are both struggling to get them acknowledged against the opposition of Dunstan. Edwy's self-absorption in this situation is reiterated as often in Burney's play as frequently as the opposite is stated in Godwin's. Again, many examples of this could be cited. Although Elgiva receives equal billing in the title, she will not be dealt with in the same detail as Edwy because Barbara Darby has already given an excellent feminist reading of Elgiva's role in the play.

The first four short scenes are devoted to the machinations of Dunstan and his associates. It is plain that the public welfare is in a precarious position, but as Edwy and Elgiva make their first appearance in the play, they appear to be unaware of the extent of their peril. Edwy is vastly hubristic in dismissing the danger Dunstan poses. Aldhelm, Edwy's former tutor and current political advisor and friend, is more concerned about the political situation than his master. This pattern of the responses of these two characters is maintained throughout the play. Aldhelm is to Edwy what Dunstan was to Edgar in Godwin's play. However, Aldhelm is a far worthier character and has no private ambitions.

Edwy's self-centred behaviour continues in the second act. He has just been crowned and has absented himself from the banquet following this state occasion, to visit Elgiva. He is putting his private feelings before his public role and, as we discover in Act II, scene V, his behaviour has caused great offence to the assembled nobility. Edwy is unwittingly playing directly into Dunstan's hands, who hardly soothes ruffled feelings by telling the aristocracy that Edwy was 'by pleasure call'd aside/Revels in love licentious'. In Act III, Edwy acts in a similar manner, which once again provides Dunstan with an opportunity to undermine the king's authority. Sigebert tells Dunstan, the monks and the nobility that Edwy has postponed the meeting of the council to search for the missing Elgiva. Dunstan caustically comments that 'Th'assembled Council may await his pleasure/While his voluptuous Courtezan detains him' (III, iii). When the loyal Aldhelm defends Edwy, Dunstan retorts with hostility: 'And flow such sentiments from Edwy's tutor, /Who should have taught his Prince to know/That Royalty exists but for the State?' Aldhelm humanely argues that a king, as well as other men, should he allowed a 'home, man's dearest right, all trust and comfort'. Dunstan replies so misogynistically that

[15] All references are to Peter Sabor, ed, *The Complete Plays of Frances Burney* (London 1995), II.

Aldhelm makes an apt and cutting rejoinder, demanding: 'If Woman is our scorn, Wedlock, our horror, /Where dwells the virtue of our self denial?' (III, iv).

Three scenes in Act IV are devoted entirely to a display of the private passions of Edwy, whose wife has been seized by Dunstan and some ruffians. Dunstan's cause is plainly in the ascendant, but Edwy is still entirely preoccupied with the whereabouts of Elgiva. The loyal Aldhelm offers a defence of Edwy against Sigebert's criticism that he has too hasty a temper:

> Youth, and early power,
> Sigebert, might make thy Temper hasty too.
> Had years matur'd him ere he reach'd the Throne
> His virtues might have rank'd him first of kings.
> Form'd mildly to command or nobly yield,
> Fair his intent, his very wishes upright
> His soul the genuine seat of native honour;
> But of a sensibility so ardent
> His spirit impetuous owns no curb but feeling:
> Reason it leaves behind, impell'd by impulse;
> Tis fiery, ev'n to fury, if incens'd
> Tis tortured ev'n to madness, if unhappy (IV, v).

Edwy sounds more like a hero of the Romantic period than a tenth-century king! Undoubtedly, however, Burney uses Aldhelm to crank up sympathy for Edwy. Aldhelm also reminds us that Elgiva is very young and reveals her 'inexperience' and 'the innate credulity of youth'. The playwright evidently regarded Aldhelm's role as being of paramount importance, for she wrote that he was 'the most important character, after the Hero and Heroine'[16]. It is a matter of great interest that Aldhelm is a more vital character to the play than Dunstan. Even Aldhelm is driven to despair by Edwy's waywardness. Rather than recalling Dunstan from banishment, Edwy insists on putting his private enmity first, ignoring that the consequence for his country will be a civil war. Aldhelm helplessly exclaims: 'Alas! my King! My Country!' (IV, xx)

Finally, in the closing scenes of the last act, Edwy is reduced to a state of madness as he is finally reunited with the dying Elgiva. Broken syntax with an exclamatory style convey the strong emotions of Edwy, as it has earlier done with Elgiva when she too went mad. Now, however, Elgiva is hardly conscious, but her sanity has returned and she wants to take leave of Edwy. She has been relentlessly used as a political pawn but at last she dies. Sigebert then attempts to persuade Edwy to take an interest in the military situation and to leave Elgiva's corpse. Edwy remains indifferent to the public weal and his survival as king. Doody's comment on the characters of Edwy and Elgiva highlight the difference between Godwin and Burney's plays on the same events and characters: 'Edwy is a man of sensibility for whom the pressures of his time prove too strong. He and Elgiva are sexual, emotional creatures, rebelling in the name of private happiness against the decrees of patriarchal power' (Doody, 180-181).

[16] *The Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney Volume III Great Bookham 1793-1797*, ed., Joyce Hemlow et al, (Oxford, 1973), 100 [letter no. 163 to Mrs Waddington 15 April 1795],

It is a matter which is not clearly elucidated in either *St Dunstan* or in *Edwy and Elgiva* whether either of the contentious marriages has been consummated. If not, it makes Edward and Eltruda's embrace of public duty before all us more admirable, whilst simultaneously it makes Edwy and Elgiva's preoccupation with themselves more understandable.

The other theme, entangled to some extent with the public/private dichotomy, is that of the conflict between church and state. It is amusing to look at how Godwin viewed the monarchy as a child. In September 1761, when Godwin was six, the coronation of George III took place. Godwin recorded that he and one of his brothers concluded 'that there would be another coronation of another king that day twelvemonth. It was also settled, that the power of the king extended to the ordering any man to be put to death within his dominions, and that of consequence it would be fatal for any one to resist his will, or excite his displeasure' (*Autobiography 1756-1772*, 15). So much for the juvenile view of a child who would grow up to become a republican!

Generally, Godwin was nothing if not rational. In a letter written to PB Shelley on 4 March 1812, Godwin explained his view of institutions and their reform:

> One principle that I believe is wanting in you, and all our too fervent and impetuous reformers, is the thought, that almost every institution and form of society is good in its place, and in the period of time to which it belongs. How many beautiful and admirable effects grew out of popery and the monastic institutions, in the period when they in their genuine health and vigour [...] There is a period indeed,, when each institution is obsolete and should be laid aside; but it is of much importance that we should not proceed too rapidly in this, or introduce any change before its due and proper season[17].

It seems likely that in the reign of Edward, Godwin thought that the 'popery and monastic institutions' had reached its 'due and proper season' for change. Dunstan is not presented sympathetically and he is a threat to the state and the monarchy. In Act II when Edward asks Dunstan why he has broken the law and returned unsummoned from banishment, Dunstan replies that as a servant of God he is obeying a higher authority than a king. Edward refuses to agree that his marriage to Eltruda is incestuous as they are too nearly related in blood, and banishes Dunstan again.

Eltruda is a more independent woman than Burney's heroine and several times confronts Dunstan herself. At the end of Act II she demands to know how she has 'offended' (II, l. 336). In answer Dunstan continues to harp on the subject of the incestuous marriage, condemned by Canon-law. Eltruda, again more forcefully than Elgiva, puts up a defence of her action: 'Alas, the contract was pronounced legitimate/By the lord primate & by many of/ Our English bishops. Could I doubt the soundness/ Of their opinions?' (ll. 345-348). At this stage, Eltruda is still consulting male authorities.

[17] *Collected Novels and Memoirs of William Godwin*, I, 71-72.

Dunstan repeatedly presents himself as the chosen instrument of God, for example he claims that 'Heaven has establish'd me a judge of kings' (II, l. 289). His ultimate threat is to excommunicate Edward and Eltruda:

> When I shall loose the fiends of discord,
> Mothers & daughters shall no more confess
> Mutual affection, sons shall draw the sword
> Against their fathers brothers shall brothers slay (II, ll 433-436).
> [Excommunication] at once dissolves
> The mutual oath of sovereign and subject,
> And arms the people in a pious war
> Against their monarch's life (II, ll. 439-444).

Note that it is Dunstan ('I') who is going to do all this. He repeatedly shows an overweening pride in his own position and power.

Is the law of the church and the pope the only reason that Dunstan is opposed to Edward? Athelstan exposes what he believes the Abbot's real motives are: 'Think you we see not that our monarch's crime/ Is his resolute hostility/ To monkish usurpation, not in fair/ Eltruda's love?' (II, ll.317-320). Later Athelstan cannot decide whether Dunstan's behaviour is motivated by 'audacious guilt' or if he is 'self-deceiv'd' in his determination to 'extend the church's power' (III, ll.243-44).

Edward himself is in no doubt what motivates Dunstan against him and his wife. Edward refers to Dunstan's 'crimes' (II, l.237) and calls him a 'criminal' (II, l.158) and an 'arch traitor' (III, l.225). Furthermore, Edward is convinced that Dunstan wishes to revenge himself on the royal family. The Abbot recalls how King Edmund, the father of Edward and Edgar, 'Tarnish'd my youth with stain and dishonour/And drove me from his court as infamous' (II, ll.85-6). As far as he is concerned, like father like son, Edward 'breathing all his father's malice, /Has sought my ruin' (II, ll.85-87). Though Dunstan claims that 'Anger & revenge/Have in my bosom long since yielded place/To Christian charity & meekness' (II, ll. 85-86), actually he later shows the falsity of this. To Dunstan, Edmund is still an object of hatred for he 'stigmatis'd my youthful fame [...] And all his unblest, sinful race must die' (II, ll.542 & 547).

In *St Dunstan* it is the only female character in the play that is able to bring the misogynistic Abbot to repentance. In front of the populace Eltruda exposes Dunstan as the instigator of Edgar's crimes, saying 'Religion how hast thou been prostituted' (V, l.424). For the first time in the play the eponymous character doubts himself (V, ll.431-441). Although he then tries to dismiss Eltruda as an 'officious trifler', she has effectively sown the seed of doubt:

> I fear no mortal power!
> But, oh, my conscience wakes an enemy within!
> Have I not follow'd a deceitful light,
> And sold myself to baseness? I have been
> A murderer! [...]
> But the means I have employed!
> Are they not falsehood, treachery, seduction?
> Can God approve of these? Or if he did
> Not prompt them, from what fatal source have they
> Then sprung? From pride, from mad ambition, which
> When it assum'd an angel's face, has plung'd
> Me to damnation! Oh, most dreadful thought!
> Curst be these symbols of the priestly office,
> That drew me to perdition! - Curst the church,
> And all its specious blandishments! - A tenfold curse
> On my contriving heart that schem'd this ruin! (V, ll. 453-468).

David O'Shaughnessy suggests that 'The incident between Dunstan and Edwy was an historical event which proved amenable to Godwin as a dramatic example of the corruption of the nation by the church'[18] However, as Mary Shelley suggested in her unfinished *Life of William Godwin*, the play presents conflicting views of Dunstan (op cit, 43). Edward and Eltruda see him as a wily scheming criminal priest who wants to subject the power of the king to that of the pope. But there are also the views of Edgar, the monks and the general populace who all idolise him. Dunstan also does actually believe the religious notions he professes. With this ambiguity, St Dunstan is no tragic hero, but neither is he altogether a tragic villain. Perhaps, knowing Godwin's atheistical views, it might be evident that Dunstan was not supposed to be either. Certainly Athelstan's final speech in the play suggests that Dunstan's repentance will only be temporary: 'the lust of power/Is as a flame, unfading and perpetual' (V, ll.522-23).

Fanny Burney's idea of kingship was rather different from that of Godwin. Her tragedies were all actually written at the court of King George III, where she attended the queen. In her diary and letters, Burney accepts the hierarchy at court and is an ardent royalist. She relates to the royal family as a dependent, but also was near enough to see that they were only human, who had problems much like those of their subjects. Indeed it is of undoubted significance that Burney wrote her tragedies at a time of crisis in the royal family.

Edwy and Elgiva opens with the clergy condemning the proposed marriage of the hero and heroine, led by Dunstan. Edwy shows repeated failures in judgement of the threat posed by the church to his authority. He dangerously underestimates Dunstan as he scornfully dismisses him as one who thinks he has achieved sainthood in his lifetime. Edwy argues that the 'hypocrite' Dunstan and the 'fool' Odo will be baffled at the meeting of the Council.

Dunstan and Edwy immediately clash over the proposed marriage because of the bride and groom's near kinship. Unknown to everybody though, they are already married. Edwy is forced to ask himself whether he has been precipitate, when the faithful and statesmanlike Aldhelm says that defying the clergy in the matter of the marriage would cause 'Tumult! - Divorce! - Rebellion!' (I, ix Yet knowing this, when Dunstan abuses Elgiva, Edwy lacks the self control not to blurt out that they are already married!' (I, xi).

Dunstan leads the rebellion against the royal marriage, fearing if he does not do so the pope's authority will be lost. Unlike Godwin's Eltruda, Elgiva does not force the Abbot into long debate with her on the subject. Instead she merely

[18] David O'Shaughnessy *William Godwin and the Theatre* (London, 2010), 63.

expresses her alarm and bewilderment in broken syntax. She and her maid, Eltruda, can put up no opposition to the physical force used against them by Dunstan's henchmen.

Like Godwin's Dunstan, Burney's Abbot distinguishes between himself and the king's secular subjects. Dunstan claims that the king's subjects are 'Bound to obey your Will, to court your favour,/ Live by your Smiles, or perish by your Frowns/As suits your pleasure' (III, iv). Before Edwy can refute this, Dunstan proceed to say that by contrast 'the sacred body of the Priesthood' are 'no vassals for mere Earthly monarchs;/Tis lent to teach, not to be rul'd by kings' (III, v).

As presented by Burney, Dunstan seems to be less stable than Godwin's eponymous character. It is Burney's Dunstan who experiences horrific 'frequent visions' and who has 'been visited by evil spirits' (III, v). Archbishop Odo also refers to Dunstan's visions in *Edwy and Elgiva*. In both plays Dunstan is banished but returns to lead a popular uprising. As in Godwin's play, Burney's Dunstan is called a 'traitor' and accused of embezzlement of state funds. However, much less is made of this in Burney's play than in Godwin's. Edwy again shows his lack of statecraft when he is told that his former supporter, the Earl of Mercia, wishes to resign from his service (IV xiv). Edwy replies arrogantly and ignores Aldhelm's attempted protest. Even Edwy has to acknowledge his rashness in the next scene. Meanwhile popular opinion is firmly behind Dunstan and the cause of the church is clearly in the ascendant over that of the state. Edwy finally appeals to Aldhelm to keep him from 'what now alone remains' - suicide (IV, xix)

In Burney's play both Edwy and Elgiva die. (In Godwin's play queen Eltruda took charge of her own destiny and went into voluntary exile in Ireland after she was widowed). Neither of the eponymous characters of Burney's play display any such initiative or resolution. They are too weak and self-centred to be admirable. (This is rather the impression created of the royal family in Burney's journals and letters, though she herself does not seem to be aware of it).

Burney's Dunstan has also contrived to replace Edwy by his brother Edgar. However, in *Edwy and Elgiva*, Edgar does not actually appear in either the cast list or the play. Neither does Dunstan manipulate Edgar into fratricide. Burney's Dunstan may seem less reprehensible than Godwin's character, but in both their plays he repents. In *Edwy and Elgiva*, Dunstan shrinks from hearing an account of Elgiva's death from the bloody handed ruffians he has employed for this murder (V, i). This prepares for his later remorse. In Act V, scene xvii Dunstan regrets the murder of Edwy: 'I never meant that he should be slain'. In the next scene Dunstan is still preoccupied with Edwy's death, wishing he had met a 'natural Death'. Then he sees Elgiva's corpse, and like his opponents he descends into broken exclamatory sentences which convey his rapid and incoherent emotions. His final feelings of remorse occur in Act V and occupy the whole of scene xx:

> With what fell havoc does the fiend Remorse
> Grasp my disorder'd soul! cling to my vitals,
> Is this my promised Joy? O glaze fallacious! -
> The world may bow before, and Nations honour me
> Misguided Myriads may adore my name; -
> What's all this to him who honours not himself? -

> [He would rather be a slave, tortured or starved]
> So I were innocent of the blood of Elgiv,
> The crying wrongs of Edwy! - Innocent They
> Therefore no sufferers: them I pity not;
> O could I say I do not envy them!
> Their task perform'd, their Earthly labour o'er.
> Their lasting recompense assign'd in Heaven! -
> Where may be mine?

Dunstan goes to hide himself after this speech; he does not appear again in the play. But as in Godwin's play, Burney's Dunstan may make a comeback, for he has only disappeared 'Till I can mask the misery of my Soul!' Nevertheless, the final words are given to trusty Aldhelm who is sure that eventually justice will be meted out to all.

In conclusion, Godwin's *St Dunstan* and Burney's *Edwy and Elgiva* tapped into the late eighteenth-century interest in historical tragedy and the Anglo-Saxons. There are many similarities, though Godwin and Burney never read each other's plays. Godwin's play is concentrated on various ideas about the public and the personal life and the relative power of church and state. His tragedy is truly that of a philosopher, consisting of very long and complex speeches and little action, and, hence not 'dramatic' in the way we might expect of a play. Burney deals with the same themes, but her characters are less conscious of the choices they must make. *St Dunstan* was never performed and *Edwy and Elgiva* had only one disastrous performance. It is hard not to concur with Mary Shelley's judgement on her father's *St Dunstan*: 'his genius was not dramatic' (*Mary Shelley Literary Lives*, IV, 41). Similarly, a modern critic opined of Burney that 'Tragedy was not at all Fanny's style' (Farr, 77). Nevertheless, as Burney and Godwin's contemporary critics remarked of both plays, they are a good read in the closet!

Epsom, Surrey

Society News

Since the last Bulletin members have enjoyed three very different events: a day-long Symposium at Highgate, organised in conjunction with the Friends of Coleridge; an excursion to Enfield to view the cottage in Gentlemen's Row in which Lamb lived for a time; and the annual Birthday Luncheon in February. I should like to encourage more members to attend our meetings and participate in our events. These are always most companionable affairs and I feel sad that they are not better supported.

We are most grateful to Pete Newbon, Heather Stone and Graham Davidson for the papers they delivered at the Highgate Literary and Scientific Institution, and especially to Richard Holmes for his novel and entertaining talk during the afternoon on 'Coleridge in Highgate'. The event was very well attended and we shall look forward to similar joint ventures with the Friends of Coleridge in the future. At Enfield our party enjoyed magnificent hospitality from the owners of Lamb's Cottage (whom we welcome as new members) and were very impressed by this complex and beautiful historic building. The Birthday Luncheon took place, as in the past two years, at TAS restaurant in Great Russell Street. The plan had been for the lecture after lunch to be delivered in the normal way at Swedenborg Hall, but an error over the timing of our booking meant that the Hall proved to be unavailable and so, thanks to the restaurant's management, we stayed on there. Our guest speaker, Richard Gravil, intrigued his audience with a discourse on the use of 'chaunt' by the poets, coping manfully with the improvisation forced upon us by the last-minute change of venue.

As usual, two Grecians from Christ's Hospital attended the Luncheon and recited the Graces. This tradition is just one of the ways in which the Society has endeavoured to maintain links with the school, the annual Lamb essay award being another. For many years a strong cohort of Old Blues attended our meetings, especially the annual luncheon, but old age has taken its toll and this particular link has sadly disappeared. It was, therefore, a pleasant surprise to receive recently a communication from the current Housemaster of Lamb House suggesting that the Society might embark on a programme to enable pupils who live in Lamb House to learn more about Lamb and his work. We are considering organising an illustrated lecture to the House and, possibly, a 'Lamb walk' for CH pupils around the Temple and other Elian spots in central London.

I must whole-heartedly congratulate Steve Burley on the Bulletin, which has maintained such a very high standard of scholarship under his editorship. The Society has been very fortunate that Steve has been able to undertake this large task among his many other responsibilities during the past six years and we thank him very much indeed. In the course of 2016 Steve will be handing over to Pete Newbon.

Finally, can I once again remind members who have not yet paid their subscriptions for 2016 that it is not too late to do so! As I warned in the last issue of the Bulletin, we shall not be able to retain members who are seriously in arrear, so you cannot expect to receive future news of the Society and future Bulletins unless you keep up your membership subscriptions! *Nick Powell*

The Coleridge and Lamb in London Symposium, 31 October 2015

The biennial Coleridge Summer Conference has long been noted for its good luck with the weather – and a bit of that must have rubbed off on this special event, which came together on a glorious autumn day in London. Around sixty delegates gathered in the splendid Victoria Hall at Highgate Literary and Scientific Institution – within hailing distance of Coleridge's two Highgate homes – for a symposium designed specifically to address the London works and lives of Coleridge and his old friend, Charles Lamb. Their companionship was celebrated not just in the subject matter of the symposium, but also in the fact that this was an essentially collaborative occasion, organised by the Friends of Coleridge and the Charles Lamb Society working together.

Our first guest speaker, Peter Newbon, presented a paper on 'Lamb, Coleridge and the Witch of Endor', which revealed Lamb and Coleridge to be at odds with the rise from the 1790s of an approach to reading and education that defined itself as both rationalist and Christian. In defiance of John Locke's view that children should not be exposed to tales of spirits, ghosts or goblins, Lamb not only defended the effects of 'unsupervised reading' (as the rationalists framed it) but also showed that the Bible itself was a 'source of the dark sublime'.

There were times, no doubt, that those who lent books to Coleridge wished that they could have been there to supervise his reading – but as Heather Stone showed in her paper, 'Coleridge and Lamb: Reading Round the Margins', Lamb relished the liberties Coleridge would take with his hitherto uninscribed pages. Taking in particular Daniel's Civil Wars, Heather described the intimate and generous dynamics not only of their mutual exchange through books, but the way in which both Lamb and Coleridge read.

In his paper 'Coleridge and Lamb – Head and Heart', Graham Davidson used a late note by Coleridge on Lamb to explore the differing but complementary inner lives of the two friends. Despite Lamb's refusal to conceive of himself as entirely Christian, Coleridge saw in Charles an essentially and authentically religious nature in the 'adhesion of the inmost will' – which Coleridge could all too readily contrast with his own sense of lack of what would (or should) make him a Christian (despite his more intellectualised identification with the religion). The Lamb of Graham's paper brought out Lamb the meditative, inward thinker, as the correlation of his modesty and humour.

At lunch, delegates were given the freedom to roam Highgate and find food where they wished. At the café to which I found my way, Terry Jones – of Monty Python fame – appeared, but I didn't get the chance to ask him along for the afternoon session.

After lunch, delegates were treated to a wonderful keynote lecture by our special guest, Richard Holmes. In his lucid, inviting and inimitable way, he conjured up not only the Coleridge of Highgate – who would shuffle to the door under the gaslight in Townsend Yard to collect a little unsupervised laudanum – but also the Coleridge that existed in the imagination and ideas of seven other great minds:

Shelley, Blake, Thomas Love Peacock, John Stuart Mill, Michael Faraday, and Henry James, whose story 'The Coxon Fund' was lovingly explored in all its Coleridgean dimensions. It was a superb conclusion to proceedings at Victoria Hall, received with what felt like unending applause.

Edward Preston then led a guided walk around the literary hotspots of Highgate as the Hallowe'en twilight came on. Just off the village square, carved pumpkins began to appear – some lined a staircase to a doorway left ajar. You couldn't help but wonder what Coleridge would have made of it all on his own crepuscular stroll.

Warm thanks are due to all of our speakers, and to our delegates, for making the occasion what it was: to Edward Preston, for leading the walk; to Nick and Cecilia Powell for so kindly and efficiently looking after tea, coffee and biscuits during the day; and to my co-organiser, Felicity James, for all her help behind the scenes, and for chairing our first two papers. The symposium was jointly funded by the Charles Lamb Society and the Friends of Coleridge, which meant that we could hold it at no cost to delegates.

Greg Leadbetter

A short note on the changing reactions to the poetry of Wordsworth and Coleridge

F.T. Palgrave's *The Golden Treasury of the best songs and lyrical poems in the English Language* was first published in 1861. It has enjoyed continued popularity with successive generations of the lovers of English poetry since its first publication. It is interesting to observe that more than forty poems of Wordsworth are included in this classic anthology, including the much celebrated Immortality Ode, Tintern Abbey, Upon Westminster Bridge, Daffodils, Solitary Reaper and Lucy poems, whereas only two minor poems of Coleridge, namely Love and Youth and Age, are included. None of the three celebrated poems, Rime of the Ancient Mariner, Kubla Khan and Christabel, for which he is chiefly remembered, are included. Their position remained unchanged even after the revised edition of the anthology with additional poems was subsequently brought out and went through several impressions. This interesting feature is an indication of the high and low estimation in which Wordsworth and Coleridge respectively were held in the heyday of Victorian period. It may be pointed out that it was only in the early-twentieth century that their name, fame and permanent place in English literature was established with the publication of standard critical editions of their poetry by scholars such as H.W. Garrod and Ernest de Selincourt, and J.L. Lowes, which contained detailed introduction and notes appended at the end of the books. Their position was further strengthened by the publication of their joint collaboration 'Lyrical Ballads' and also the collection of their prose works and letters, which are vital for the understanding of their literary theory and poetic practice enunciated in the prefaces to their joint venture. So Palgrave's *Golden Treasury* may be taken as an interesting milestone and turning point for the rise and fall in their literary reputation and fluctuating position in the history of English literature, and particularly in the history of modern English poetry of the Romantic period.

Tapan Kumar Mukherjee

The Charles Lamb Bulletin

www.charleslambsociety.com/bulletin.html

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 online at the Society's website.

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