

## COLERIDGE AND DANTE, STARLINGS AND POETRY

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On the coach to London on the 27th of November 1799 Coleridge saw and noted:

Starlings in vast flights drove along like smoke, mist, or any thing misty without volition -  
... some moments glimmering & shivering, dim & shadowy, now thickening, deepening,  
blackening!

To Richard Holmes this famous image is of 'protean form or a force-field, lacking fixed structure or outline; 'without volition' ... stimulating in its sense of freedom'. For Holmes it suggests a self-image of Coleridge, but I am inclined to see in it a larger concept, reaching back to Dante.

The image is coincident with Coleridge's love for Sara Hutchinson. It is noted on the coach journey away from his first encountering her, and years later he made a retrospective entry for the 24th of November, just days before his departure, in which he recalled that Sunday as being 'Conundrums & Puns & Stories & Laughter ... Stood up round the Fire, et Sarae manum a tergo longum in tempus prensabam ...' The stories and wandering hands recall Paolo and Francesca, and the starlings directly recollect Dante's even more famous image of the starling-flocking souls of the Second Circle.

But the excitement of the 'protean form' exceeds the menace of the cloud. In this the image seems to me more than anything an image of poetry itself, something beyond the poet but of him, vast, both inchoate and patterned, struggling into and out of form, numinous and enigmatic, nature written down in a notebook. In 1806 Coleridge noted of a Dante canzone that it was 'a poem of wild and interesting images, intended as an enigma, and to me it remains an enigma... Yet it deserves transcription and translation.' In this way poetry and starlings are alike, and Coleridge treats them so.

This paper reaches back into Coleridge's own reading of Dante in order to disclose not simply the antecedence of Coleridge's imagery, but also the influence of Dante upon Coleridge's (and Romanticism's) idea of poetry itself.

## COLERIDGE, GLADSTONE AND THE IRISH CATHOLICS

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In 1800 the Act of Union ended the independence of the Dublin Parliament, replacing it by rule from Westminster. It was Pitt's answer to the Irish Rebellion of 1798. Catholics (three-quarters of the Irish population) were incorporated into a United Kingdom where three-quarters of the population were Protestants. Catholic Emancipation had been expected to follow the Union, but George III's resistance to the measure delayed it for a generation.

An Emancipation Act finally passed into law only a few months before Coleridge published *On the Constitution of the Church and State*. Written before the details of the Emancipation Bill were known, Coleridge's title-page shows that the context of Church and State was the long-running Emancipation debate so suddenly ended by the 1829 Act.

This paper illustrates how the problem posed by incorporating 6 million Irish Catholics within the pale of the Constitution, shaped this most influential of all Coleridge's works, and traces its arguments back to the articles he wrote for the *Courier* in the summer of 1811.

Gladstone would confront Irish resistance to the Union through four terms of prime ministerial office.. Ironically, at the age of 29, he made his own contribution to the church-state controversy—only four years after Coleridge’s death. Gladstone’s defence of the Established Church, *The State in its relations with the Church* (1838), leans heavily on Coleridge’s own work, and quotes it approvingly. Yet, one of Gladstone’s first actions as Prime Minister, 30 years later, would be to disestablish the Irish Church.

## SUFFERING SERVANT: GRIEF AND CONSOLATION IN SARA COLERIDGE’S POEMS

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Sara Coleridge’s private poems explore the relationship between present suffering and divine comfort. I have previously argued that Sara is the consummate theologian of the heart—a thinker devoted to the integral power of the wholly active mind perceiving the relationship between nature and the supernatural. In this paper, I extend my assessment of Sara’s place in nineteenth-century intellectual society by developing her system of theodicy. Sara explores the problem of pain and grief through poems that engage three relational arenas of her life: children, friends, and God. Poems written for her children incorporate Sara’s reflections on individual suffering as a means of instruction about life and the conflict between earthly trouble and heavenly glory. Reflections on friendship provide her with opportunities to cherish aging, reject societal preference for youthfulness, and embrace sorrow towards the attainment of wisdom. Hope in divine reconciliation through the redeeming work of Christ allows Sara to accept earthly trials through a comparison of her own suffering and the work of Christ. Through imaginative poems that envision divine goodness amid the trials of the present age, Sara Coleridge guides readers to rest in a deferred hope on earth for the promise of final redemption in heaven.

## PUBLIC EXPRESSION AND POLITICAL REPRESSION – COLERIDGE ON WILLIAM PITT THE YOUNGER

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The main focus of my paper is Coleridge’s “Sonnet to Pitt”, one of twelve “Sonnets on Eminent Characters” written for weekly serial publication in *The Morning Chronicle* in the winter of 1794/5. This was a time in Coleridge’s life when he was still finding his own voice, both poetically and politically.

Many of Pitt’s policies were aimed at controlling popular radical political activity through mediums such as printed materials (including pamphlets and periodicals) and public meetings, both of which had a direct impact on Coleridge’s activities in the mid to late 1790’s.

My paper will consider Coleridge’s opinions of Pitt the Younger and his policies as expressed initially and primarily through the public forum of his “Sonnet to Pitt”, and then explored further through his political and religious lecture series which was delivered in 1795. I will also consider the potential penalties which Coleridge faced by his choice of public forums through which to air his thoughts and opinions in the face of Pitt’s repressive legislation, including the suspension of habeas corpus.

I will examine Coleridge's transformation from the politically radical sonneteer of 1794, whose language is largely, if not wholly, derived from a late 18th century vocabulary of sentimental and sensationalist popular poetry, to the accomplished and more cautious composer of 'Fears in Solitude' of 1798, where Coleridge's more mature poetic voice is seen developing alongside his changing views. In doing so, I will consider Coleridge's continuing use of religious imagery coupled with his transition from dissenting religion into pantheism.

## DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTIONS OF IDENTITY IN THE ROMANTIC AGE: THE CASE OF SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

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In the Romantic Age, we witness new, discursive practices of identity construction that are eminently dynamic, flexible, and open-ended. However, these discursive constructions of subjective identity are at the same time inevitably prone to paradox and self-contradiction, since the deduction of the self out of the self – its self-grounding – is either contingent or self-cancelling, sometimes even both. The paradoxicality of discursive self-constitution takes radically different forms in Wordsworth, Keats, Byron, Shelley, Charlotte Smith, or Felicia Hemans, since in their texts different strategies are used to either mask and veil or expose and foreground the figures of discursive identity construction. But the case of Samuel Taylor Coleridge is a singular one. Alone amongst the 'big ones', Coleridge derives even the possibility of selfhood from a Divinity, or eternal I AM. He thereby steers clear of the contradictions of his more 'advanced' fellow poets, although he has to admit that, of course, the fact of a Divine Ground cannot be proven logically, but has to be assumed in an act of faith. My lecture will offer a reading of the various versions of "Frost at Midnight" against the backdrop of Coleridge's idea of the individual subject, as delineated in *Biographia Literaria*, his *Logic*, and the *Opus Maximum*. Time permitting, it will also throw new light on the gap or rupture in chapter 13 of the *Biographia Literaria*.

## HAZLITT'S GENDERED CLASSIFICATION OF ENTHUSIASM AND GUSTO AND ITS APPLICATION TO COLERIDGEAN RHETORIC

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During my PhD study of 'The Problematic Rhetoric of Methodist and Romantic Enthusiasm', I have become increasingly interested in the implicit distinction which William Hazlitt makes between his own 'gusto' and religious enthusiasm. It seems to me that it is based on a gendered classification of gusto as a focused, rationally founded, muscular energy and popular enthusiasm as an undisciplined, unfocused 'feminine' emotionalism. I shall suggest how each is applied negatively or positively to Coleridgean rhetoric and reflects Hazlitt's changing estimation of Coleridge's communicative skills and integrity. With reference to explicit commentary and the natural metaphors used to express the concepts, I shall consider how the frequent semantic blurring of Hazlitt's gusto and enthusiasm reveals his own ambivalent estimation of the feminine and masculine qualities and other cultural values they embody.

In view of Hazlitt's dissenting background, I shall examine how his ambivalence to this inherited culture of enthusiasm is demonstrated in his essay 'On the Causes of Methodism' where he identifies the enthusiastic qualities which he believes qualify King David for the title of

the First Methodist. The essay's alternate application of the terms 'gusto' and enthusiasm to David and contemporary Methodists implicitly identifies gusto with charismatic energy and enthusiasm with a self-deceptive self-righteousness - but both equally with assertive self-projection. I shall try to demonstrate, with reference to Coleridge's inaugural sermon at Hazlitt senior's Unitarian chapel in Shropshire, and to one or two of the Lay Sermons, how both varieties of enthusiastic style are critically applied to Coleridge's 'pulpit' style. This analysis will take due account of the voice as an expressive instrument and central vehicle of enthusiastic discourse.

## COLERIDGE AND TRANSLATION: THEORIES AND PRACTICES

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Although Coleridge was variously attracted to the translation theories of Alexander Tytler and Friedrich Schleiermacher, his remarks on his own endeavors as a translator reveal a far wider range of assumptions and strategies of cultural adaptation and appropriation of literary and philosophical texts. One goal of the translator, according to Coleridge, was to enable the reader "to abstract conscious attention from the different sound of the words themselves, in order to forget that is the Translation which you are reading." But he elsewhere held that it was precisely the awareness of cultural difference that ought to be maintained in a translation, so that the reader would be aware of the historical context of the original. Thus biblical texts as well as those of classical Greek and Latin require a greater fidelity to the original vocabulary and syntax than contemporary European works, for which cross-cultural assimilation is more appropriate. In tracking the shifting assumptions in Coleridge's practice as translator, this paper will examine Coleridge's efforts in translating across three discreet spectra: 1) early and late in his own career, 2) philosophical and literary texts, 3) ancient and modern languages.

## A REASSESSMENT OF COLERIDGE'S THEORY OF THE SYMBOL IN THE CONTEXT OF C. S. PEIRCE'S 'SEMEIOTIC'

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In the context of Charles Sanders Peirce's 'semeiotic' and Samuel Taylor Coleridge's theory of the symbol, I will (1) develop and elaborate on Robert Dupree's argument ('Coleridge, Peirce, and Nominalism', *Semiotics* 1995, Peter Lang Publishing [1996]) that Coleridge's theory of the symbol anticipates the more systematic but not more insightful theories of Peirce (1839-1914, American philosopher); (2) offer an 'environmental' view of cognition predicated upon Coleridge's 'outness' of mind and Peircean 'semeiotic'; (3) play with, in the spirit of Peirce's existential graphs and Coleridge's own interest in modeling what we call today 'dynamic systems', a diagrammatic logic which, while confined by the universe of the mere page (or screen), takes on a logical life of its own and thus serves as the type of emergent or intentional being; and (4) offer insight into the constitutive power and phenomenology of the pun (see Coleridge's 'desynonymization'), an idea that permits us to interpret the great web of being of the Naturphilosophen in both ecological and cognitive terms.

A “LONGING EYE TURN’D WESTWARD”: COLERIDGE ATOP THE BROCKEN,  
SPRING 1799

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Coleridge describes his experience on top of the Brocken in the Harz Mountains in lines enclosed in a letter to Sara Fricker. Typical of Coleridge, he also undermines the poetic value of his verses—“not that they possess a grain of merit as poetry”—though he did publish the poem as “Lines Written in the Album at Elbingerode, in the Hartz Forest” in the *Morning Post* not long after his return to England. Following Coleridge’s self-deprecating lead, it is easy to read the poem as a mere expression of homesickness in irregular blank verse. Overcome with longing for home, no doubt heightened by the recent news of the death of his son Berkeley, Coleridge is filled with sentimental longing for “our adored Country,” finding consolation finally in his faith that since “God is every where,” he is presumably to be found also atop a cold mountain in Germany, even one specifically associated with legends of devils and witches.

Coleridge is not alone in such feelings, however, as the cold top of the Brocken as a site of longing for absent love appears also in Goethe’s “*Harzreise im Winter*” (1777) and verses from Heine’s *Harzreise* (1826). Reading this short poem in the context of other “Brocken” poems allows us to see it as more than an overly sentimental postcard home. The intertextual reading helps to reveal the theological and philosophical underpinnings of the sorrow that fills Coleridge’s “longing eye / turn’d westward.”

COLERIDGE, THE RIME, AND THE IMAGE OF GOD: HUMANNESS AS  
COMMUNION WITH CREATOR

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Coleridge presents a view of humanness that rests on humanity’s unique ability to commune with the Creator. In the *Opus Maximum*, Coleridge develops the constitution of this communion and illustrates its implications. Coleridge’s understanding of God as ultimate Will and perfect Reason is vital to his understanding of the human as the Image or symbol of God. Just as a child develops self through contact with its parents, a human being experiences true humanness through communion with God. Part of this communion is a sense of relating to creation as God does, as is seen in the “*Rime of the Ancient Mariner*” when the Mariner comes to see the snakes, God’s creation, as beautiful. This act of loving creation alongside God serves as a means of redemption, which Coleridge presents as a return to natural order and to Reason. The *Opus Maximum* provides a philosophical approach to humanness that further develops Coleridge’s presentation of the human in “*Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.”

“THE POOR TAWNY WANDERERS”:  
THE COLERIDGES, WORDSWORTH, AND THE GYPSIES

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In Chapter XXII of his *Biographia Literaria*, S. T. Coleridge critiques Wordsworth’s somewhat obscure poem ‘Gipsies’. Whilst much of Coleridge’s criticism is directed towards the elaborate “diction and imagery” of the poem, his greater consideration of the Gypsies’ circumstances, and identification of the poet with the Gypsy figure, formed part of the growing interest in representations of the Gypsy from the late-eighteenth century onwards. With Coleridge’s criticism in mind, together with the resurgence of interest in Wordsworth’s ‘Gipsies’, I will examine Wordsworth’s poem in order to determine why, in contrast to STC, Wordsworth, the “champion” of outcast and marginalised figures, was so hostile to the Gypsies. After considering Wordsworth’s uncharacteristic outburst in ‘Gipsies’, I will turn to Hartley Coleridge’s poem ‘On a Picture Representing Gypsies and Asses’. In this poem, aspects of both S.T. Coleridge’s and Wordsworth’s treatment of the Gypsy figure are evident, yet Hartley displays a sensitivity and a sympathy for the subject that is not to be found in the works of the elder two poets. This paper aims to contrast the poetics of the Coleridges’s and Wordsworth in an assessment of differing approaches to the Gypsy figure in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, a topic that is only recently receiving significant critical attention.

COLERIDGE’S FRIEND IN THE OPUS MAXIMUM

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In the “Prolegomena” to the Bollingen Opus Maximum (OM), Thomas McFarland discusses how Coleridge hives off other texts, such as Aids to Reflection, from his “great work.” But one important, retrospective relationship, between OM and *The Friend* (F), also needs to be addressed. Early in the section in OM corresponding to his “Essay on Faith” (1820), Coleridge expands numerous citations from F on faith and conscience into a critique—much more extensive than in F—of William Paley and other “doctors of self-love.” Coleridge evidently thought this intertextuality of F and OM important, since he presented two alternate versions of his expanded critique in OM, on facing recto and verso folios of Victoria College Library MS 29. These links with F and the expanded critiques in this section of OM do not, moreover, appear in its evident source, the “Essay on Faith.” The new material thus demonstrates Coleridge’s bringing one major concern of F into his larger argument in OM, concerning the primacy of the conscience, or the will, for human subjects. *The Friend*’s aphoristic paragraphs accordingly find their fulfillment in a larger, systematic context in OM. That Coleridge himself thinks this is the case is suggested by his adding two distinct handwritten notes, of material from this grander context in OM, to printed copies of F. One of these notes, Coleridge stresses in OM, is the “clue” and “concluding truth” of the whole work. In light of this evidence, we may amend McFarland’s thesis on the textual traffic out of the Opus Maximum in the 1820s. Evidently there was also significant traffic coming in.

## THELWALL THE POET

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Nick Roe's Wordsworth and Coleridge: *The Radical Years* was published exactly twenty years ago. He dedicated the book to a man who makes repeated appearances in its pages, and whose challenging spirit infuses it, a man against whom both Wordsworth and Coleridge needed to be measured – and were: 'To the Memory of John Thelwall, Citizen, Poet, Prophet, 1764-1834'. Nick's book, and his article, 'The Road to Nether Stowey', helped to kickstart a revival of scholarly interest in Thelwall, and the resurgence of critical work on him in recent years has been marked. But somehow, the middle term of those three – 'Poet' – has tended to be overshadowed by other aspects of the Thelwall phenomenon. This twenty-minute paper will focus on the poetry written during his years of political and personal crisis, 1794-1800: particularly the prison sonnets from *Poems written in Close Confinement* (1795) and some of his 'Effusions of Social and Relative Affection' from *Poems Chiefly Written in Retirement* (1801). I want particularly to think about how ideas of confinement and effusiveness might relate eloquently to each other in the way Thelwall shapes thought and gives form to experience. In relation to this, the paper will consider the significance of his visit to Nether Stowey in July 1797. The character of the poetry written under its influence should reflect back not only on his own earlier verse but on that of Coleridge and Wordsworth at this time.

## 'THAT MARVELLOUS COLERIDGE': THE INFLUENCE OF S. T. COLERIDGE'S POETRY AND POETICS IN MIGUEL DE UNAMUNO

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I intend here to explore some aspects of Miguel de Unamuno's profound engagement with Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poetry and literary theory. The Spanish author wrote in 1907 his first collection of poems, *Poesías*, which aimed at provoking a renewal of Spanish poetry. A non-negligible number of the poems in the collection bear significant resemblances with Coleridge's conversation poems. These similarities are the result of Unamuno's attentive reading of Coleridge's poems, which he frequently praised. Thus, a study of the Spanish author's readings of the 1893 edition of *The Works of S. T. Coleridge*, now held in Unamuno's private library in Salamanca, and the annotations he penned on its pages, will be offered first.

Moreover, the Spanish author also owned, read and annotated Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* and *Essays & Lectures on Shakespeare & some other old poets & Dramatists*. According to the passages highlighted, Unamuno paid special attention to those passages in which Coleridge writes on the nature of poetry and the poetic art, including the well-known concept of the Imagination. Nourished from his reading of Coleridge's works, Unamuno elaborated his own theory of 'contemplative' poetry, which he amply expressed in his short essays. Hence, Miguel de Unamuno, backed upon Coleridge's poetics, inaugurated a new view of poetry that would pervade the works of Juan Ramón Jiménez, Antonio Machado and Luis Cernuda, and would *restitute* the spirit of British Romanticism in Spain.

## ‘SHADOWY NOBODIES’ AND OTHER MINUTIAE

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In this talk I consider similarities between Coleridge’s maturing as a poet and his development as a critic. I argue that he tried all kinds of verse under the influence of other writers without much sense of where he was heading stylistically. He could be said to have stumbled on to what was his most original and crucial achievement, the conversation poem. So it was with his Shakespeare criticism, which has been so influential. He began with a vast ambition to explain the principles of poetry, art and drama, and arrived as it were by accident at his great innovation, namely what he called particular and practical criticism, or concern with minutiae.

## WORDLESS WORDS: CHILDREN, LANGUAGE, AND NATURE’S MINISTRY IN “THE NIGHTINGALE: A CONVERSATION POEM”

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Coleridge’s “The Nightingale” has been somewhat neglected as a poem, perhaps because in many ways it is so similar, but less masterfully executed, than one of the most famous conversation poems, “Frost at Midnight.” However, I’d like to rescue “The Nightingale” from its secondary status by calling attention to its complex philosophical and theological message about language, the ministry of nature, and the idealization of childhood.

Perhaps the most salient similarity between “Frost at Midnight” and “The Nightingale” is that both poems revolve around anecdotes about Coleridge’s children as examples of unsullied communication between the human mind, the natural world, and divine spirit. In “Frost at Midnight” this meditation is prompted by watching his infant asleep in his cot as the frost performs its “silent ministry.” In “The Nightingale,” the poet describes his son holding up his forefinger to “bid us listen” to the nightingale’s song and secondly, hurrying his crying child outside to see the moon, whereupon he ceases crying, and “laughs most silently” while the moonbeams glitter in his eyes. These humble anecdotes carry a profound message about the inadequacy of human language compared to the “ministry” of nature, or the way that nature teaches and conveys divine spirit through natural form.

My paper will explore the way in which “The Nightingale” posits a complex philosophical and theological concept of communication: namely, the idea that the untrammelled purity of a child’s mind can perceive nature in its truest form, as the spiritual language of God.

## ‘A LIVING SPECTRE OF MY FATHER DEAD’: HARTLEY COLERIDGE, SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE, AND LITERARY REPRESENTATION

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This paper analyses the shaping of Hartley Coleridge’s literary identity in relation to his father, Samuel Taylor Coleridge. My focus is the misrepresentation that Hartley has endured due to the public’s inability to disassociate him from STC, and from the child-portrait that STC presents in

such poems as 'Frost at Midnight' and 'Christabel'. Contemporary criticism usually suggests that Hartley was unable to achieve a poetic identity in the shadow of his father, and that he subsequently adopted a permanent child-like persona in order to withdraw from the world and to repay his debt to STC, who celebrated Hartley's childhood as an ideal state. Such an account fails to address the full complexity of Hartley's continued endeavour to realise his own authorial identity. Closer analysis of the four poems which Hartley addresses to STC reveals that Hartley's conflict was more with his public image than directly with his father. The public's obsession with STC after his death was such that Hartley became increasingly viewed as 'A Living Spectre of [his] Father Dead', a perception which thwarted engagement with Hartley's independent literary worth, and fed into the growing myth of Hartley as a failed poet. The dialogue with STC in Hartley's verse provides no evidence of a Bloomian 'anxiety of influence'. My paper stresses the necessity of more serious attention to Hartley's poems in order to recognise this achievement within an enforced marginality, and looks at the distinctive poetic voice that emerges from Hartley's critique of his father's and William Wordsworth's poetics.

## SEQUACITY AND IONIZATION: COLERIDGE'S NATURE METAPHORS

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In this paper, I propose to answer the question of whether Coleridge was more sequacious or ionized. Or the question of whether the plasticity of kinesis understood as companionable dialogue is more important to Coleridge's poetry than the potentiality which constitutes his very best nature metaphors? I have adopted the word sequacious from musicology and it means to follow in a companionable fashion like a musical scale or perhaps a rill boisterously clattering over pebbles. On the other hand, ionized is borrowed from chemistry and means the creation of free radicals, both positive and negative, often after a bolt of lightning has illuminated the night sky. I feel there is a sense in Coleridge's poetry that everything is over before it has properly begun, that the act of working out an idea as poetry is too readily usurped in the instantaneous act of thinking. Coleridge's own mercuriality is therefore detrimental to his desire to become a poet, his yearning to be a philosopher damaged by his love of metaphors. When nature metaphors obtrude in his philosophical jottings then the philosopher has not quite extirpated the poet, and the damaging mercuriality of metaphor leaves the air ionized with possible interpretations that lack the closure beloved of rationality. But what is the calm progress of thought if not a companionable dialogue and how to define great poetry if it is not inevitable as Shakespearean naturalness? Charles Lamb wrote of Shakespeare that he "mingles everything, he runs line into line, embarrasses sentences and metaphors; before one idea has burst its shell, another is hatched out and clamorous for disclosure." The ultimate question here may be to decipher Coleridge's rhapsodical rhetoric as clamorous for disclosure as poetry, and to reveal that his companionable dialogues masquerade as premature soliloquies; mental precincts proleptic of poetry and yet baffled by metaphorically unfulfilled expectations of sublimable opiated excess. In particular, this discussion suits *The Solitary Date Tree*, *Kubla Khan*, *Frost at Midnight*, *The Aeolian Harp*, *Limbo* and numerous, no less valuable for being obscure, fragments in prose and verse.

## BOTTLED MOONSHINE?: SACRED SYMPATHY AND THE MEETING OF EXTREMES IN COLERIDGE'S "THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER"

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Even those readings of the "Rime" that impose a coherent pattern (e.g. Warren, Harding, Haven, Barth, Engell) concede to a "doubtful doubleness" at work, resistant to any comfortable interpretative resolution, in the poem's sustained dichotomy — a universe of desolation operating alongside a universe of consolation. I draw upon Leslie Stephens's statement that Coleridge's central ideas are germinal in the "Rime" and I propose that the ballad contains Coleridge's personal expression of his dilemma concerning the grounds of Christianity and, at the same time, his peculiar solution to that philosophical problem. I first argue that the young Coleridge's conscientious revulsion at the orthodox idea of the atonement and his consequent interest in Unitarianism is traceable in the poem's parody of the redemptive process and in its travesty of the traditional economy of grace. Next, I endorse critical approaches which maintain that the poem's "obtrusive moral" is manifest in the Mariner's blessing of the sea-snakes. I attempt to describe and situate this encounter within the broader context of Coleridge's mature thought, especially in the spiritual "method" of the "Essays on Method" and the "reflection" model of the Aids, and I consider, in relation to this, the Coleridgean terminology of will, intuition, subject-object relations, identity, "outness," and sympathy. I aim to establish that, in the Mariner's manifestation of "sacred sympathy", Coleridge provides a version of the "self-unravelling clue" to feeling and solving "the riddle of the world", a theory that he continued to develop and cherish. In his later philosophy of religion this concept became central to his understanding of the redemption and its effects, and it is equally impressive in his late poems such as "Constancy to an Ideal Object," "Limbo," and "[Reason]." Thus, in the "Rime" Coleridge unconsciously presents, in embryo, the answer to his crisis concerning the redemption, a problem that, in the same work, he consciously sets out to exploit. In this way, I hope to be able to show how the vexing oppositions of Coleridge's celebrated poem are partially reconciled and how, to some degree, the extremes of his thought are met.

## COLERIDGE, AKENSIDE, AND THE PLEASURES OF MORAL IMAGINATION

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Most analyses of the influence of Akenside on Coleridge focus on Akenside's quasi-Platonism and on his effort to write a systematic and logically rigorous didactic poem. Less often discussed is that Coleridge's interest was in the implications of Akenside's moral view and its relation to poetry. Put simply, the British Moralism tradition has little use for poetry, and Akenside is almost unique in sharing Coleridge's intuition of their intimate connection.

This paper—part of a book-length project on Coleridge's ethics and aesthetics—explores Coleridge's views on moral philosophy as it relates to poetry during the years 1794-1796, and as it is reflected in his borrowings from Akenside. Of special importance here are Coleridge's "Moral and Political Lecture," his sonnet on Bowles and its revision, his various "Effusions," and "Religious Musings." My goal is to show that Akenside's most important role was not as a mediator of Platonism, but as a conduit for the ideas of Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Addison and others. As Coleridge wrestled with those ideas he began his life-long engagement with the rich British Moralism tradition far more fully than he did through his more famous reading of Hartley and Godwin. Indeed, we can see that he was already thinking of reason and the passions as not

just mediated by imagination (as Akenside suggests) but as functions of it, such that poetry does not so much educate the heart or teach principles as create both head and heart through attentively imaginative writing or reading.

## WHAT DOES A FETISH WANT? OR, COLERIDGE, THE OBJECT, AND THE POETICS OF DISPLACEMENT

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As part of an exploration of the signifying work inanimate objects perform in romanticism's discourses of subjectivity, I focus in this paper on the productive dynamic of the fetish within the poetics of creativity that Coleridge conceptualized for his age (and ours), notably in "Kubla Khan," but also in the recurrent image of the eolian harp, which itself complicates the assertions of agency and the claims of consciousness at stake in the relation between subjects and objects. I am interested here in the fetish not so much as perversion but as what we might call a diversionary object, in how objects interrupt the consolidation of identity they also enable, and how the object in its "untranscended materiality" (Pietz) may in fact constitute the very condition of an active, engaged subjectivity. In "Kubla Khan," the object manifests with a simultaneously disruptive and constitutive effect in the figure of the damsel with a dulcimer, an "it" that appears precisely where the poem changes direction—for example, from Xanadu to Abyssinia, from omniscient to first-person narrative, from speech act ("In Xanadu *did* Kubla Khan a stately pleasure dome decree...") to the future conditional or provisional utterance ("Could I revive within me...I *would* build that dome in air"). Coleridge instrumentalizes this object, puts it to use, and yet, like the person on business from Porlock, it may distract him and move him where he may not have intended to go. The instrument as creativity's tool or technique—like metaphor—defines specific possibilities and exerts specific pressures on the subject it is meant simply to express. This paper extends its meditation on the instrumental object in Coleridge's poetics of displacement in a brief reading of Wallace Stevens' "The Man With the Blue Guitar," a poem that may owe more to Coleridge's damsel with a dulcimer or his eolian harp than to Picasso's old guitarist for its representation of "the scene of mind confronting thing" (Mao). If Stevens is "the poetic materialist par excellence" (Tiffany) among modernist heirs of romantic aesthetics, his poem dramatizes such a confrontation, I argue, in the Coleridgean mode of elliptical or evasive encounter.

## COLERIDGE'S POETIC ALLY—SIR WILLIAM ROWAN HAMILTON

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Few of Coleridge's biographers have referred to Sir W. R. Hamilton; thus it appears as though this Irish mathematician is remembered only as a minor figure in Coleridge's final years. Hamilton, a mathematical genius whom Maria Edgeworth called 'a second Newton,' became a professor at Trinity College at the mere age of twenty-one. He was a young admirer of Wordsworth and Coleridge, and his passion for writing verses did not cease until his later years. Hamilton befriended with the Wordsworths, and subsequently visited Coleridge in Highgate in 1832. While Coleridge's Kantian influence on Hamilton has already been recognized, his poetic

influence on him has only been minimally explored. In this paper I would like, first, to examine the relationship between Coleridge and Hamilton especially when they met in Highgate, but also upon their reencounter in Cambridge at the assembly of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. Second, I argue that Hamilton's ideal view of poetry and science, of which he located a proponent in Coleridge, can be considered a form of romantic poetics in which these two elements go hand in hand to pursue a higher purpose. Lastly, I would like to introduce a set of Hamilton's unpublished letters in which he describes his own platonic love for Catherine Disney Barlow, which was one of his romantic trials to keep that poetics alive in himself by balancing his mathematical pursuit with his secret yet passionate narrative of romance.

## REASON AND SADNESS IN SOME LESSER-KNOWN WORKS BY COLERIDGE AND CHARLES LLOYD

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My paper (as yet untitled) will examine in the early Romantic lyric, and in lesser-known works by Coleridge and Charles Lloyd especially, an increasingly commonplace association of reason or rational thinking with sadness. Scholars have generally attributed the poetic melancholy of the 1790s to the perceived failure of the French Revolution and its authorizing fantasies of ameliorative thought. No doubt there are compelling grounds for such associations: to Wordsworth in 1805, for instance, this period was a “melancholy waste of hopes o’erthrown.” Yet these are generally not the terms in which poets wrote in the mid-1790s, during which time the historical causes of melancholy are often only hinted at or provisionally supplied. Melancholy is traditionally defined in this period as a disorder without cause or without apparent cause, and the apparently motiveless character of this complaint informs both how poets attempt to infer a cause for melancholy and associate it with the disappointment of revolutionary hopes. Attending to how poets of these years reckon with this problem of causation in melancholy experience, I will show how Coleridge, Lloyd, and others conceptualize melancholy as a figure for a specifically literary form of thinking, signally characterized by the struggle of reason against itself.

## ELEMENTS OF COLERIDGE'S LATE STYLE

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Coleridge's proposition of the poet in *Biographia Literaria* as one who by the power of imagination achieves ‘the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities’ raises the question as to how the poet is to represent such a marriage. I propose to look at late poems which move away from the dramatic conversational model towards a confessional mode not unlike George Herbert's ‘intimate soliloquy’ (Vendler). Coleridge's late work sees the intensification of what Seamus Perry calls ‘the muddle’ in its concern with faith. The problems of belief and sin form obstacles to the will to reconcile, and inform a late poetry that grapples after opposites not reconciled so much as divided by a sharp fault-line. In such works as ‘Work without Hope’ and the ‘Coeli Enarrant’ notebook lines, I will attend to Coleridge's experimentation with alternative means of reconciliation. The doom of the muddled man finds

its formal equivalent in Coleridge's mature verse in the imposition of stark contrast, and the contemporaneousness of opposites that gesture at that totality whose absence is being dramatized.

## ANNA LETTIA BARBAULD, COLERIDGE, AND EIGHTEEN HUNDRED AND ELEVEN

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The relationship between Anna Letitia Barbauld and Coleridge has largely been analysed in the context of the 1790s, with cursory mention made of her infamous comments about 'The Ancient Mariner'. My paper will trace their later relationship, focussing on Barbauld's controversial poem Eighteen Hundred and Eleven (1812) with a view to broadening our discussion of 'Poems, poets, and Romantic poetics'.

I will explore the poem in detail, and trace its complex revisionary engagements with Coleridge's poems of national engagement of the 1790s. As Barbauld's poem questions Britain's complacency – 'thy grassy turf unbruised by hostile hoof' – it seems both to echo and to challenge Coleridge's uncertainty in poems such as *Fears in Solitude*. Building on recent work by critics such as Daniel White, who has brought out the subtly differing political and religious approaches of Barbauld and Coleridge in the 1790s, my paper will argue that this later poem similarly continues and extends their creative disputes.

## HARTLEY COLERIDGE AND HIS ART OF DOVETAILING MISCELLANEOUS PARTICULARS

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Hartley Coleridge did not make, or challenge, any great theory. Nor could he write a biography with the professionalism of, say, Robert Southey: 'When I compare Southey's biographical style with my own, I confess I am almost driven to plunge myself over head and ears in the slough of despond.'

For Hartley, the study of, say, Malthus's, or Godwin's, or Burke's painstakingly constructed theses may, indeed, do no harm, for the same reason that it does no good, viz., because it takes no hold; it glides away like globules of crude quicksilver over a smooth surface, or at most is deposited in the show-room of memory: – because no conclusions, applicable to common life, can be drawn from it; because it excites no sense of reality. It is gone through as a task, – by children on compulsion...

Hartley's looseness of research can be set against the fact that he does not aspire to be an 'authority.' Authority is dry and non-digressive. The historians are to Hartley what the scientists were to Blake; their creed is non-deviation from the nature of 'things' which is, arguably, a most external and empty means to a most external and empty end. Hartley calls it 'the hard passionless spirit of enquiry, so essentially necessary to arrive at those grand principles which convert facts into truths.'

So what did Hartley, biographer and essayist (as well as poet), offer the reader?

## MAKING SPACE FOR THE UNSEEN: LIBERTY AND OCCULT AMBITION IN COLERIDGE'S EARLY POETRY.

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This paper explores the connexion between Coleridge's political commitment as a 'Friend of Liberty' and his pursuit of metaphysical knowledge, in the years 1794-1797. It examines Coleridge's 'occult ambition' in the dual sense of both an oblique personal aspiration, and a desire to possess occult knowledge: a mode of apprehension that would comprise the 'unseen' dimensions of reality, including the divine and the supernatural. The paper reads Coleridge's passionate interest in these areas as an imaginative reflex of his political hopes, and uses this analysis to explain his shift of emphasis from active political agitation in 1794-1795, to the propaedeutic cultivation of 'what we are, & what we are capable of becoming', the explicit focus of his work after 1798. I argue that between those years, Coleridge's intensifying concern with consciousness itself – and the medium of language – involved his revolutionary aspirations in a politicised esotericism that would develop, via the experimental poetry of 1797-1798, into the idiosyncratic philosophy of his later career.

Coleridge's close engagement with the culture of dissent fostered a readiness to locate true 'religion' outside established, institutionally sanctioned forms. This paper contends, however, that such readiness also undermined his attachment to the established forms of dissent itself: leading to warnings from Lamb, Barbauld and Estlin, for example, that he was drifting into visionary or even 'pagan' territory. I show how Coleridge's understanding of true 'Religion' as a state of mind, and his psychological approach to 'faith', expresses a counter-dogmatic dynamism that explains why he could 'accept no place in State, Church, or Dissenting Meeting' (CL I 274), and complicates the received view of Coleridge's Unitarian radicalism in these years.

The paper aims to show the formal impact of this metaphysical dynamism in the poetry of 1794-1797.

## POETIC INTEGRITY OF AN UNROMANTIC KIND, WITH A MEASURE OF FACT

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My theme is that Coleridge took poetry seriously to an extent that he rated it one of the most important things in life but, at the same time, his own poetry is difficult to conceive as a whole because he thought other things were also important, some more important. His attitude can be muddling for anyone wanting to read poems as an experience that requires no further justification, but I argue that Coleridge's position in the end commands respect. It explains why he wrote the kind of poetry he did and why he declined to write more of one kind of it, and how connections with issues other than poetry as it were frame the poetry and give it permanency. I discuss this theme in relation to an unnoticed source of *Kubla Khan*: a bit of ballast to prevent the theme from getting lost among cloudy generalisations.

## COLERIDGE AND THE PRINCIPLES OF POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE

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The conditions of knowledge were, for S.T. Coleridge, the conditions on which the practical affairs of this world were required to stand. What sorts of things counted as knowledge, and how the human mind comes to know certain things, determined both the legitimacy of social structures and the nature of political obligation. In this paper, I argue for the centrality of the understanding in Coleridge's mature political thought and his theory of poetry. A faculty often neglected in Romantic studies, which still tends to focus on the dialectic between reason and the imagination, the understanding is, for Coleridge, the operative faculty in judging and applying the principles of political knowledge. I present a reading of *The Friend* (1809-10, 1818), pursuing the implications of Coleridge's reevaluation of the understanding as the faculty of "suited measures to circumstances" and the foundation of all political knowledge. The significance accorded to the understanding has the following related purposes: 1) to demonstrate the necessity of the unequal distribution of property; 2) to secure the autonomy of the moral will in the context of political obligation; and 3) to establish that a philosophy reliant upon the senses is no longer suited to the material conditions of the nation. Finally, I turn to the poetics of the *Biographia* (1817), where Coleridge offers his classic definition of the imagination as a synthetic power. This claim, however, is qualified by the frequently overlooked claim that the imagination is "first put into action by the will and the understanding, and retained under their irremissive, though gentle and unnoticed control" (BL II 16). The generative and regulative power of the understanding in Coleridge's poetics is, I argue, directly related to the political objectives adumbrated above, with both altering our conception of Coleridge as a dialectical thinker in the transcendental tradition.

### THE MIRROR, FRIEND OR FOE? SARA COLERIDGE AND THE ILL EFFECTS OF SOCIETY'S JUDGMENT ON FEMALE APPEARANCE IN FRANCES BURNEY'S *CAMILLA* (1798) AND MARY SHELLEY'S *FRANKENSTEIN* (1818)

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Sara Coleridge claims in her essay "On the Disadvantages Resulting from the Possession of Beauty" (1826) that "[o]f all natural endowments, those of person are perhaps the most generally & the most warmly desired, & great as the influence of Beauty has been at all periods of the world, from the days of Helen even to our own, never, I verily believe, had the Goddess more numerous or more ardent votaries than at the present time. For this is the Age of Taste if not of Reason." In my paper I demonstrate why Coleridge's generation of young women had to hear their mothers proclaim, that "a pretty face was not half as much extolled nor a plain one criticized when they were young as is the case at present." I argue that the differences Coleridge registers can be found in philosophical shifts in the Eighteenth Century and is also thematized in Romantic literature, particularly literature by Romantic women writers.

I apply Coleridge's astute observations to Frances Burney's *Camilla* as well as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Burney succeeds in depicting the ill effects society's focus on female appearance has on beautiful as well as ugly women by contrasting the fate of two secondary characters. Looking at Indiana and Eugenia, both marriageable young women, I compare their merits and the treatment they receive by society. Two decades after *Camilla* was published, Romantic female

writers still struggled with the same issue, society's judgment and focus on female appearance. In Shelley's *Frankenstein*, the subject of appearance and identity takes a new turn, as Shelley applies women's predicament to the male creature, his quest for love and his being rejected by society. I base my reading of those two texts as well as Coleridge's essay on the cultural and literary background female writers grew up with in the Romantic Era, taking into account such texts as Edmund Burke's "A philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful," in which he claims that the object of love and lust is female beauty, Jean-Jacques Rousseau's philosophy, as well as Dr. John Gregory's "A Father's Legacy to his Daughters."

Coleridge states that women's "happiness is dependent on the varying though faithful report of [their] mirror!" I claim that society's focus on their exterior aspects keeps women in a liminal space, where they are – whether they are beautiful or ugly – forever bound in a lost struggle to come to terms with their identity constructed by their fleeting and ephemeral appearance, a mere façade. I argue that female writers and thinkers in the Romantic Era demonstrate that women need to reject the mirror forced upon them by society in order to progress in life.

## COLERIDGE AND ROBERT OWEN

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In his autobiography, Robert Owen claims to have met Coleridge at Manchester in the 1790s, but there are only a few materials available that elucidate the actual circumstances of their encounter and association. If Coleridge met this philanthropic founder of New Lanark by any chance, it was probably during his Watchman tour to the Midland in early 1796. Interestingly, Coleridge had an advance copy of Owen's *New View of Society*, while Owen seems to have received a copy of Coleridge's *Remorse* with an inscription by himself as 'R. Owen, esq., from his sincere admirer'. In his letters, Coleridge also expressed his intention to call on Owen in 1812, on Daniel Stuart's request, and also offered to dine at Stuart's with Owen and his friend Morgan. Coleridge's interest in Owen still continued in early 1818, when he was keeping a close eye on Owen's involvement in Peel's factory bill. Despite all this and his acclaim to Owen's Lanark system, Coleridge did not remain in friendly terms with Owen. Owen's un-Christian system is hardly compatible with Coleridge's socio-religious idea. In this paper, I should like to spell out a curious liaison between them from a socio-religious perspective.

## THE OTHERNESS OF HOME: MARY EVANS AND SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

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When Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Robert Southey began recruiting fellow Pantisocrats for their American emigration in 1794, it was not long before their plans began to unravel. Several ingredients contributed to the dissolving endeavor, but one of the more underrated reasons resides in a letter written to Coleridge by the hand of Mary Evans. This letter implores Coleridge not to depart. Coleridge's brothers wrote similar protests (Holmes 79), but Evans questions his fraternity, his religious beliefs, and his national identity. Ultimately, Mary Evans tries to deny, yet cannot help but suspect, the notion of Coleridge slipping into otherness: "No! you have too

much Sensibility to be an Infidel” (CL I 113 Griggs). Aside from remaining in England, what results is a sonnet.

However, Coleridge has his own concerns with slipping into otherness, not just in America, but in England, as well. In SONNET: TO MY OWN HEART, Coleridge addresses his most vulnerable organ: ‘Reason’ probes the heart, asking why it fails to keep the fullest sense of ‘Hope’ in mind. As pointed out by Debbie Lee, Coleridge sees the white, western woman as a disease-carrier; and in his SONNET, Coleridge localizes the oppressor in the form of a sublime, maternal (English) being. Furthermore, he exposes his burgeoning, weak nature—a bleeding heart, and an infantilized body, juxtaposed by the confidence of “madman of Genius!” (CL I 103). This is Coleridge at his purest, his truest emotional form, and for that reason I wish to draw attention to this, ostensibly, minor work.

## THE RECEPTION OF COLERIDGE’S POETRY AND POETICS AND THE RENEWAL OF SPANISH POETRY

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Spanish Romanticism was shaped basically upon the models of Victor Hugo, Scott, and Byron. Its heyday, traditionally approximately circumscribed between the years 1834-1845, was late and brief, but its aftermath, as recent criticism is showing, has proved long and productive, reaching far into the twentieth century. This circumstance is explained by a significant move in the models towards which poets and critics directed their views. The early British Romantics figure among the most important sources for a new conception of poetry and a renewal of poetic style that was initiated in its practice in the second half of the nineteenth century by poets such as Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer and Ramón de Campoamor, and continued in the twentieth century by such relevant figures among Spanish writers as Miguel de Unamuno, Luis Cernuda, and Jaime Gil de Biedma among others. All of them after Bécquer look back on their predecessors here named as models for a regeneration of Spanish poetry.

This paper explores the central role played by the reception of Coleridge’s poetry and poetics within this context of a claim for a new poetic expression heard in Spain in a long and continuous line running from Blanco White and Alcalá Galiano in the first half of the nineteenth century; through Bécquer, Campoamor, and Valera in the second half; and Unamuno, Cernuda or Gil de Biedma in the twentieth century.

## COLERIDGE’S APOSTROPHE

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Coleridge's writing life coincided with many important changes in British publishing, one of the more minor but most visible of which was a change in typographical habits. His earliest publications use the long "s", for example, and elide the unvoiced "e" with an apostrophe; but this practice changes, not always predictably, as he continues to publish into the 19C. The wider history of these developments in British book history has yet to be written; but Coleridge offers a good case history for the timebeing; and the comparison with Wordsworth is suggestive. The question is of more than fiddly bibliographical interest too: the matter has possible implications

for our literary understanding of much of his most famous verse. I shall also be adducing the work of several other, later poets, to try and avoid seeming obsessive.

## WHAT ROBERT SOUTHEY DIDN'T WRITE NEXT

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Robert Southey once accused Coleridge of spawning plans – rather than finished writings – like a herring. Yet, Southey too, though famed for his productivity, had herring-like – even Coleridgean – tendencies. Many of his projected works were abandoned, existing only in his head, his letters or the pages of his commonplace books. This paper will focus on those moments when Southey's pen was stayed. It will explore the poems, plays and novels which he thought about writing, even planned, but did not actually go on to produce. It will also consider where looking at what Southey did not write – rather than what he did write - might take us.

## “COLERIDGE'S ‘HYMN IN THE MANNER OF THE PSALMS’: PRAISE, DEJECTION, AND “THE HYMN BEFORE SUN-RISE IN THE VALE OF CHAMOUNI’.”

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Criticism of Coleridge's “Hymn Before Sun-rise in the Vale of Chamouni” has been largely carried out in the context of charges that it is a plagiarized version of Friederike Brun's “Chamounix beyrn Sonnenaufgange.” But recently, Morton Paley and Angela Esterhammer have revealed key differences between the poems. Their studies focus on a major theme that has occupied a central place in Coleridge studies: the distinction between mind and nature, or subject and object, that Coleridge's poetry and prose attempt to navigate and reconcile. What I want to argue is that the gap between the human and nature, and the gap between nature and God, present in the “Hymn” and the “Letter to —————,” seen in their dialogic relation, indicates a key unstated element operating in the drama of the “Hymn.” These poems, published almost simultaneously, show a key development in Coleridge's understanding of the active participation of mind in recognizing the natural world as both revealing and concealing God's presence, and the vital role of the will in this activity. As such, the poems are squarely centered in the tradition of the Psalms, which speak of the experience of both the presence and absence of God. Far from eliding or fearing the gap between the human and nature, and nature and God, the “Hymn” and “Letter” confront those gaps, and point to the source of their overcoming. The Coleridgean sublime is not troubled by the epistemological failures to bridge these gaps, but stands in the midst of that abyss as its very mode of symbolic unity.

## COLERIDGE BEING COLERIDGE

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Where is Coleridge in his poetry? The man and the poetic genius of Samuel Taylor Coleridge has been scrutinized and analyzed through his literary style, religious beliefs and philosophic theories. Searching for Coleridge within his writings requires an unraveling of the imbricated layers of symbolic language, religious faith and psychological awareness of self. His identity has been associated with Romantic attributes of an organic nature; however, if we are to understand the personal Coleridge, an examination of his poetry and the influence of intellectual and scientific theories during the Romantic period will help to reveal more of the man. For Coleridge, pursuing an understanding of the imagination was intertwined with the outward forms of his life in his perception of himself as husband, father, poet and intellectual. Yet, more than just a perusal of his roles, this paper intends to unearth his character, values and beliefs about himself through his attempt to discover his imaginative ideal companion—wife, friend, and lover—in his poetry and his life.

In his poetry as in his life Coleridge addresses the imagination as nature's impressions on the mind intricately wound up in the intimacies of his relationships with both men and women. Of particular interest is the development in several poems of this synthesis of the imagination and his perception of an ideal and real woman. His composition of "An Effusion at Evening" in August 1792 begins his praise of the imagination as his mistress whose sweet sounds later silence the real woman.

## WORDSWORTH'S CRISIS AND THE REPRESENTATION OF GUILT

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Wordsworth's consciousness as depicted in Books Ten of *The Prelude* is marked by the strong presence of guilt. The guilt surrounding the violence in France during Wordsworth's residence there seems a plausible consequence of the events that were unfolding, but Wordsworth himself shared little if any responsibility for the course of these events. Wordsworth's emotional turmoil and self-division, however, suggests the activity of a guilty conscience, even before the war between England and France began and he had any reason to reproach himself for his sympathies with France.

I argue that Wordsworth's representation of guilt in Book Ten is an aspect of his criticism of the French intellectual culture of the time, within which "the passions had the privilege to work / And never hear the sound of their own names." The rationalist attempt to abstract moral judgment from its basis in emotions such as guilt had essentially left guilt unregulated, or had ceded the role of regulating guilt to authoritarian forms of government as represented by the revolutionary tribunals. Wordsworth's failure to "name" or represent his own guilt directly, I argue, is a consequence of his immersion in a culture that had lost touch with the Augustinian tradition of creating individual narratives of guilt. Wordsworth thus internalizes models of guilt that are interpersonal and free-floating, and the guilt he comes to experience has little connection to his individual actions or memories and is very difficult to manage and control.

My paper discusses Wordsworth's portrayal of his own guilt during this period, both as it reflects this interpersonal model and as he searches for new models in his attempt to resolve his crisis. I conclude by discussing Wordsworth's imaginative creation of the spots of time as a

means of circumscribing guilt within an autobiographical narrative that contains and controls it, but that also uses guilt as a source of energy and knowledge.

## FOR A BIRD'S FLIGHT: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE NIGHTINGALE IN COLERIDGE'S, WORDSWORTH'S AND KEATS'S WORKS

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This paper tries to reflect the meaning and the numerous conceptions of the nightingale, focusing on Samuel Taylor Coleridge's, William Wordsworth's and John Keats's poems, since birds constitute a tradition into the romantic movement, particularly in English poetry. So, among other works, Wordsworth presents two versions of "To a Skylark", Coleridge writes "To Cuckoo" and "The Nightingale. A Conversation Poem", whereas Shelley is the author of "To a Skylark".

"The Nightingale. A Conversation Poem" is based on John Milton's "Il Penseroso"; the bird represents an illusion of mystification in Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale", that is, the poet uses some images related to imagination and tries to forget his essence focusing on nature. The poetic ego wants to identify itself with the nightingale. Both Coleridge and Keats must sustain the instant in the bird, which represents a beautiful wish to escape.

At the end of these compositions it is inevitable to make the necessary references to human passions, while the poetic ego is melancholic. If Coleridge writes his work thanks to the fact that he uses a general point of view, Keats chooses to explain a meditation about mortality-immortality from a particular perspective, to the point that it is usual to indicate the influence of a concrete nightingale. In short and despite their differences, these poems symbolize freedom and carry a message against death.

## SUBLIME POWER OR PICTURESQUE APPEAL: WEST COUNTRY LANDSCAPE IN THREE COLERIDGE POEMS

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In 1795, Coleridge composed three poems that not only reflect West Country landscape but also reveal his ambivalence about the aesthetic categories of the sublime and the picturesque. These poems—"Lines Composed While Climbing the Left Ascent of Brockley Coomb," "To the Author of Poems," and "Reflections on Having Left a Place of Retirement"—overtly privilege the visual and poetic sublime. However, each poem also depicts a quieter realm best associated with the picturesque—a modest, gentler place of enclosure that charms the mind and offers psychic security. While Coleridge claims to value visual and poetic sublimity, these poems reveal a longing for a quieter, picturesque scene.

We see only a hint of this in "Brockley Coomb," where his "oft reverted eye" can't resist the modest, "pre-summit" scenes as he climbs. In his poem to Joseph Cottle, he "climbs" the mythical Poetic mount. He overtly praises the poems where Cottle "soars" to the heights, but he seems attracted to those Cottle poems he places in the "mead of mildest charm," halfway up the mount. These poems anticipate "Reflections," in which he depicts another climb up a "mount Sublime," yet concludes with almost greater regret that he must leave the country's "low Dell."

These three poems appear in his 1796 Poems, about which he told Thelwall, "I build all my poetic pretensions upon 'Religious Musings,'" the volume's "sublime" poem. The three landscape poems, however, suggest that Coleridge's sublime flights are mere "pretensions" that cannot conceal his need for the quiet bower.

*THE SERIES ON THE RECEPTION OF BRITISH AND IRISH AUTHORS IN EUROPE:*  
S. T. COLERIDGE

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The Series on The Reception of British and Irish Authors in Europe (Continuum 2002-) has now published sixteen volumes. The Romantic period group includes Byron, ed Richard Cardwell, 2 vols (2004); Ossian, ed Howard Gaskill (2004); Scott, ed Murray Pittock (2005); Jane Austen, eds Brian Southam and Anthony Mandal(2007); and S.T. Coleridge (2007), eds Elinor Shaffer and Edoardo Zuccato. Shelley will appear in autumn 2008.

The volume on Coleridge contains the first attempt at a comprehensive overview of his reception in Europe, which has been neglected in favour of tracing his own debts to Continental thinkers and writers.

The early reception of his poems, the special place of 'The Ancient Mariner' assured through Gustave Doré's illustrations, the documentation of the German connection down to the present, the complex of political responses, the excellence of Italian translations and the intersection of aesthetic criticism with his own, his reception in eastern Europe including Poland and Russia, are all noteworthy. Insights and information almost entirely new to Coleridgeans are conveyed by the Spanish contribution, and we pursue them here at the Conference with two papers in this Panel which expand and move beyond the initial contributions contained in the volume.

'AMARANTHS' AND POPPIES':  
SARA COLERIDGE, POET'S DAUGHTER AND POET

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The 'flowers' in my title are emblematic of Coleridge's legacy to his daughter; a legacy regarded, notably by Virginia Woolf, as disabling of autonomous creativity. Sara Coleridge's *Collected Poems* show her distinctive quality as poet determined by, yet independent of, the paternal legacy.

Sara diagnosed herself and her father as suffering from the same constitutional disability. The poems of Sara's early maturity, the period of her marriage, treat sickness, depression, the agonies of "midnight's darkest hour", with a rawness and intensity reminiscent of 'The Pains of Sleep' and her father's notebooks. Thwarted desire, disillusion with love, darken the poems and narrative of *Phantasmion* [1837].

The final decade of Coleridge's life was "especially productive" [Paley]; the same was true for Sara, professionally, intellectually, creatively. Sara's poems from 1843 to her death [1852] are energized by a new and empowered voice: gravely passionate; decisive; toughly realistic. This voice of resilience is heard most clearly when Sara engages with two of her father's most significant late poems: 'Work Without Hope'; 'Youth and Age'. Sara takes issue with the passivity

of these, and other late poems, such as 'The Improvisatore'. She refocuses their figurative language to create an active, even defiant response to loss and love's absence.

The artistic success of 'Work Without Hope', based on psychic failure, is paradoxical. Sara's poems in reply to her father break free of this paradox. Unlike Hartley, Sara is able to reject their father's psychology of self-entrapment: she asserts thereby her distinct identity as poet.

## FEARS IN SOLITUDE: PRIVATE PLACES AND PUBLIC FACES

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'Fears in Solitude' is a work which to seems hover somewhat uncomfortably in the margins of Coleridge's major work in spite of its being written out of his central preoccupations at his most poetically productive time in Stowey. Nick Roe talks of its 'discomfiting juxtaposition' of the private and public spheres and of its 'unresolved tensions'. Its reputation has also suffered in the minds of a wider readership from its being at once the most meditative of his political poems and the most political of his Conversation poems. For some, including perhaps for Coleridge himself, the genre is the main problem. However, the work's original publication as the name poem in a quarto pamphlet published by Joseph Johnson, Coleridge's subsequent uneasy relations with it, and its reception at the time and since then, provide a fascinating case study and raise significant issues about what poetry was for then and is now.

This paper will look at some of the biographical and political contexts of 'Fears in Solitude', trace the history of Coleridge's relations with it from his early 'great apparent confidence' to his later hesitancy about it and try once again to put the poem into sharper focus. The spirits of W.H. Auden and Joseph Brodsky may also be invoked to enliven proceedings.

## 'AMBITION AND ABJECTION': COLERIDGE, KEATS AND THE ART OF SELF-ABASEMENT.

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It could be argued that Coleridge and Keats find commonality in that they wrote more about their difficulty or inability to write than any of the other Romantic poets. As poets of the 'body', their poems seem to verbalise what we might paradoxically term a 'compromised creativity'. Much of Keats's formative energy developed out of an acute awareness of his mortality, by the thought that he might 'cease to be' before his 'pen had gleaned his teeming brain', while Coleridge's demiurgical strength, 'the shaping spirit' of his imagination was often engendered by an anxiety that his visionary powers were failing. While numerous scholars have pointed out these personal mythologies of underachievement, anxiety, rejection and alienation, few have explored the poetics and aesthetics of such vision. This paper aims to examine the various ways in which Keats and Coleridge managed to generate poetry out of what is presented as 'creative paralysis': deliberately using their own self-conscious sense of falling dramatically short of their promise as a driving force for art. By pointing to Coleridge's staged abjection (the 'actor, perfect in all tragic sounds') in his earliest poems, I hope to illustrate the beginnings of a personal idiom that would underlie much of his later verse.

## SARA COLERIDGE: POEMS AND THEIR ADDRESSEES

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Most of Sara Coleridge's poems have addressees, usually her husband, children or friends. They were first read or heard by these addressees – Henry Nelson Coleridge when he opened his fiancée's letters, Herbert and Edith Coleridge when their mother read to them, Aubrey De Vere probably again within letters. Often Sara's readership extended no further than her immediate family. Some poems were hidden from all other eyes, even family ones, in private notebooks, perhaps meant to be found after her death. Some were published in the anonymous *Phantasmion*, as the songs of figures in the children's story. A few were published in her lifetime in editorial footnotes and addenda, only visible as *her* poetry to readers with the scholarly stamina to trace them back to the editor's pen. At times she hoped that her poetry would reach a wider readership, but she also had doubts whether it truly deserved one.

In 1833 John Stuart Mill called poetry 'the utterance that is overheard', but there may be no overhearers in poems not written for publication. Similarly, unpublished poems refigure the imponderable distances between addressee and reader involved in the process of publication. The addressee of a poem meant for publication is only in a partial sense the real addressee: there is the public too. But the addressee of a poem not so intended, or half so intended, may be its real addressee, or half its real addressee.

Many of Sara Coleridge's poems (within *Phantasmion* and elsewhere) are about being overheard or unheard. My paper looks at the creative uses to which she puts her unusual situation as a writer, and which she makes of the questionable and shifting status of the literary addressee. There is for instance the twist given to a poem called 'Song' when it is encountered without music in the pages of a book; the difference between addressing somebody on paper and vocally; the gap between how children might hear their mother's verses and what they mean to her (still more so when the verses are addressed to a baby, or – in one case – a 'babe unborn'). Mill drew a famous distinction between poetry – 'feeling confessing itself to itself in moments of solitude' – and eloquence – 'feeling pouring itself out to other minds'. But for Sara her private journal was where she confessed to herself in solitude, and the writing of poetry, with its addressees and its half-implied wider audience, was a means of controlling and shaping her feeling, a therapeutic activity, a religious discipline, and a re-imagining of how she might be heard.

## COLERIDGE AND THE FREE MARKET

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Coleridge's later discussions of politics, society, and economics, especially in the *Table Talk*, often present him as an arch-conservative, opposing reform movements such as Catholic emancipation and the extension of the franchise, and recommending the preservation of traditional patterns of land-ownership and agriculture, in preference to free trade and the development of industry and commerce. These seemingly anti-progressive views, however, are justified by him on the grounds of seeking to preserve a form of national unity protecting the people from the adverse effects of economic competition, whether domestic or international. In order to understand his later political opinions, therefore, we need to recognize their emphasis on resisting the 'denationalization' and commercialization of society so as to facilitate greater

respect for the individual and for humane values or concerns. Coleridge's vision of the traditional social order is clearly idealistic, but the connection of his later political opinions with his views in the 1790s is clarified by his outspoken preference of a universal franchise to the mere extension of voting rights to small traders, and his vehement rejection of the aims and values of political economists such as Malthus.

## HENRY'S BOOK

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This lecture will offer a detailed examination the discussions and disagreements among members of the Coleridge family before and after publication of Henry Helson Coleridge's *Specimens of the Table Talk of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. At stake in that publication was the nature of the posthumous Coleridge the family intended to present to the public. The controversy centred on Hartley whose Whig sympathies placed him in the minority within the family. He worried that 'Henry's Book', as both he and Derwent referred to it in letters, failed to provide an accurate portrait of STC's views. While he agreed that Coleridge was the ultimate source for Henry's material, he objected to the partiality of the views expressed and suspected that Henry's reactionary Toryism skewed the work. The family efforts to maintain peace throughout the dispute are fascinating as they negotiated issues of authorship, censorship, and distortion. Despite their differences, all parties agreed that *Table Talk* was 'Henry's Book', as distinct from a part of Coleridge's *Literary Remains*. The second part of the lecture will take up the complex issue of authorship. How can we establish which ideas are simple transcriptions of Coleridge's words, which are coloured by his audience, etc? The fame of Coleridge the talker ensured a wide audience for the work, and it enjoyed great popular and financial success. That success itself became problematic as *Table Talk*, over the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, came to be regarded as a work of STC—a process that persists in its inclusion in the *Collected Coleridge*.

## COLERIDGE'S TRANSCENDENTAL PHILOSOPHY: KNOWING THROUGH CONSCIENCE AS "A SPIRITUAL SENSATION"

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What distinguishes Coleridge's transcendental philosophy from that of Schelling's *System of Transcendental Idealism* is his idea of "a good conscience" that enabled him to pursue, in Wordsworth's words from *The Prelude*, "the highest bliss that can be known" to those "hold[ing] communion with the invisible world." For Coleridge, "the highest bliss" means to accumulate knowledge through personal experiences about the Peace of God, that is, the overflowing communicativeness of the absolute I AM, in whom he "lives, and moves, and has his being" (BL [CC] i 277). "A good conscience" as "a spiritual sensation" (SM [CC] 67) is crucial to find himself in God's Peace. As explained etymologically in "Essay on Faith," conscience is "to know something in its relation to [him]self, and in the act of knowing [him]self as acted on by that something" (SW [CC] ii 837).

Coleridge as a poet-critic strives to point out the joy of creating our own happiness of intuiting the true self-image in its relation to a dissimilar yet morally greater power. To be linked

both consciously and unconsciously to not-self (the objective) through “wondrous sympathy,” like Shelley in “Defense of Poesy,” is the key to Shakespearean self-transformation.

Like Adam Smith in *The Theory of Moral Sentiment* and in “Of the Imitative Arts,” Coleridge emphasizes the possibility of self-moralization by accepting the transcendental reality of being fostered by the other as “an other self.”

#### SARA COLERIDGE: A POET HIDDEN.

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Sara Coleridge glimmers tantalisingly just beyond the grasp of the biographer. Her form is ever changing; just as one begins to think a portrait can be made, the light shifts, and her colours change. But the unusual circumstances of her life mean that Sara Coleridge remains peculiarly enigmatic. She wrote diaries, letters, books, poems and essays but in a sense each was a mask projecting a Sara who deep down remained - to herself and to us - occluded. Her life was devoted to literature, but literature of a kind which ensured that she would never become fully known as a mature, autonomous talent in her own right. Producing a stream of children’s stories and verses, together with learned translations and editions of her father’s work, she was careful never to transgress her designated role. Somewhere behind all the thousands of words she published is an author, unable or unwilling to write, as herself, for adults. She was a mystery to her husband, Henry Coleridge, who could not understand her illnesses, her ‘nervousness’, or her dependence upon opium. This paper examines a journal review (‘Modern English Poetesses’ in the *Quarterly Review*, September 1840) published anonymously - in fact written by Sara’s husband - in which her fairy-tale ‘Phantasmion’ is praised. I hope to suggest reasons why, despite her husband’s assertions to the contrary, Sara was, for many reasons not free in the broadest sense of the word. Her upbringing, name, politics, addiction, family and gender created a talent which was never, in the last analysis, ever quite able to declare itself.

#### MAN AND MEDIUM: COLERIDGE, HERBERT, AND GLASS

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Coleridge’s opinion of George Herbert’s poetry changes significantly over the course of his life. I trace the influence and adaptation of Herbert’s ideas in Coleridge’s writing through the enduring metaphor of glass—an image predominant in Herbert’s poetry. Coleridge appropriates this metaphor and transforms it in his own poetry, poetics, and philosophical prose writings over the course of his literary career. The implications of the secular and sacred imaginings of both men explore glass and mankind as the object and the medium. Glass and man are both things to see and things to see through—a way of seeing. From Herbert’s “Brittle Crazy Glass” to Coleridge’s assertion that the mind is a “mere quick-silver plating behind a looking glass,” the protean nature of glass in all of its forms and transformations works to describe the ambiguities of mankind and his relationship to his world and God. It is dust; it is solid; it is hard and brittle; it is liquid when hot; it can be transparent or opaque. Through its transformations it is itself. This integrity is an important component to Coleridge in his philosophical system. I assemble materials from Coleridge’s *Marginalia*, *Poems*, *Notebooks*, and *Letters* to clearly establish the link from Herbert’s stained glass window to Coleridge’s looking glass.

THE ABOUNDING HONEYSUCKLE: EDWARD THOMAS, S.T. COLERIDGE,  
AND THE QUANTOCK HILLS

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In March 1913, Edward Thomas set off on a westward pilgrimage to the Quantock Hills, to find spring, a landscape of poetry—the poetry above all of Coleridge. *In Pursuit of Spring* (1914) recalls how he would see ‘Nether Stowey, the native soil of “Kubla Khan,” “Christabel,” and “The Ancient Mariner.”’ Entering the Coleridge Country, Thomas was immediately fascinated by the landscape. His response to it is both imaginative and sensuous. On seeing ‘Honeysuckle [ramping] on the banks of the deep-worn road in ... profusion,’ he imagines that these flowers full in bloom might have provided ‘the honeydew for nourishing [Coleridge’s] genius.’ The honeysuckle is not in bloom then. Just to imagine the flowers, just to smell them imaginatively is enough for him ‘to suggest the poet.’ Then he speculates how Coleridge’s ‘chaste and voluptuous’ imagination had a topographical aspect; it was nourished by the mild climate and the pastoral landscape, while the ‘wildness’ of his imagination was drawn to the ‘dark, bleak ridges’ of the upland hills. In Coleridge’s poetry Thomas sees the sea, the hills, the wood and the coombs of the Quantocks, decked with mosses, flowers and birds. And in the landscape of the Quantocks, he finds an enchanted land enriched by Coleridge’s poetry. It is through his own imaginative response to the landscape that Thomas interprets Coleridge, and it is through his sensuous response to Coleridge’s poetry that Thomas enjoys the landscape. And here, in these Quantock scenes, Thomas finds sustenance for the poetry he is going to write for the rest of his life. My paper will explore how imaginatively and sensuously Thomas responds both to the landscape of the Quantock Hills and to the poetry of Coleridge, and will suggest how this intense response of Thomas’s bears fruit in his own poetry.