

The Concept of Authorship in the Work of Sara Coleridge

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Abstract

This thesis aims to establish Sara Coleridge's place in literary history. Her authorial achievements have been obscured by two factors. First, she has been the subject of predominantly biographical, rather than literary attention. While this thesis does draw on specific biographical contexts, its approach is literary and critical throughout. Second, Coleridge's mature writings are theological, and consist of polemical contributions to religious debate in the two decades following the Reform Act of 1832. In order to analyse the qualities of Coleridge's mature authorship, this study undertakes the necessary historical and theological contextualization.

Coleridge's politico-religious setting requires innovatory authorial methods: she is, above all, a dialogic writer. The thesis examines her evolving dialogue with her 'literary fathers', and addresses the relationship between her editing of *STC* and her original writing. Bakhtinian theory informs the approach of this thesis to Coleridge's textual analysis of *STC* and his sources. Gadamer's hermeneutic concept of the 'fusion' of historical 'horizons' informs the study's analysis of her appropriation of *STC*'s thought, which she reworks in addressing post-Reform fractures. Prevailing polemical styles exacerbate such fractures, Coleridge maintains. This study finds that Coleridge is committed to individual religious liberty, and an inclusive theology underpinned by Kantian epistemology. This is the basis for her sustained critique of the Oxford Movement's authoritarian tendencies. In her theological writings, therefore, she develops dialogic styles and forms by which to convey her liberal religious philosophy. Along with published sources, this thesis refers to the unpublished writings of 1850 and 1851 that reveal the full extent of Coleridge's literary innovation.

This study is constructed chronologically; it aims to elucidate Coleridge's development through the stages of her writing life, and to uncover the connections between the various strands of her work. It shows that dialogic elements are present from an early stage of Coleridge's literary career, and that her writings in different genres all contribute to her ultimate vocation of dialogic religious authorship.

Abbreviations

- ARCC* *Aids to Reflection*, ed. by John Beer, *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 16 vols (London: Routledge; Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, (1969-2002), IX (1993)
- BLCC* *Biographia Literaria*, ed. by James Engell and W. Jackson Bate, 2 vols, *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 16 vols (London: Routledge; Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1969-2002), VII (1983)
- Biographia*
1847 *Biographia Literaria, or Biographical Sketches of My Literary Life and Opinions by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, second edition prepared in part by the late Henry Nelson Coleridge, completed and published by his widow*, 2 vols (London: Pickering, 1847)
- Criticism* *The Regions of Sara Coleridge's Thought: Selected Literary Criticism*, ed. by Peter Swaab (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012)
- Essays* *Essays on His Own Times: Forming a Second Series of the Friend* by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ed. by his Daughter, 3 vols (London: Pickering, 1850)
- Extracts* 'Extracts from a New Treatise on Regeneration', by Sara Coleridge, in Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection*, ed. by Henry Nelson Coleridge, sixth edn, 2 vols (London: Pickering, 1848), II
- HCPW* *The Complete Poetical Works of Hartley Coleridge*, ed. by Ramsey Colles (London: Routledge, 1908)
- HC Letters* *Letters of Hartley Coleridge*, ed. by G. E. Griggs and E. L. Griggs (London: Oxford University Press, 1937, repr. 1941)
- HRC* Sara Coleridge Collection, MS 0866, Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin

- M & L* *Memoir and Letters of Sara Coleridge*, ed. by Edith Coleridge, 2nd edn, 2 vols (London: King, 1873)
- Mudge Bradford Keyes Mudge, *Sara Coleridge: A Victorian Daughter. Her Life and Essays* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989)
- OR 1843* ‘On Rationalism’, by Sara Coleridge, in Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection*, ed. by Henry Nelson Coleridge, 5th edn, 2 vols (London: Pickering, 1843), II
- OR 1848* ‘On Rationalism’, by Sara Coleridge, in Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection*, ed. by Henry Nelson Coleridge, 6th edn, 2 vols (London: Pickering, 1848), II
- Poems* *Sara Coleridge: Collected Poems*, ed. by Peter Swaab (Manchester: Carcanet, 2007)
- PWCC* S. T. Coleridge, *Poetical Works*, 3 vols, ed. by J. C. C. Mays, *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 16 vols (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1969-2002), XVI (2001)

Introduction

Sara Coleridge: A Career of Authorship

A Literary Study

Sara Coleridge is a neglected figure in literary history. She was born in December 1802, and died prematurely of cancer in May 1852, aged forty-nine. She had two surviving elder brothers: Hartley, born in 1796, and Derwent, born in 1800. Her father, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, was absent for much of her childhood and adolescence, during which her parents lived together for ‘less than two years’.¹ For over a decade, between April 1812 and January 1823, Coleridge did not see her father. She grew up in the household of her uncle, Robert Southey, at Greta Hall, Keswick, in which she was born. She and her mother lived there as Southey’s dependents until Coleridge’s marriage to her cousin, Henry Nelson Coleridge, in 1829. Southey developed a close friendship with the Wordsworths, with whom Coleridge and her mother already had intimate connections. Southey and Wordsworth were Coleridge’s paternal influences in moral and intellectual terms, as she explains in the final year of her life:

I knew dear Mr. Wordsworth perhaps as well as I have ever known any one in the world – more intimately than I knew my father, and as intimately as I knew my Uncle Southey [...] [M]y mind and turn of thought were gradually moulded by [Wordsworth’s] conversation, and the influences under which I was brought by his means in matters of intellect, while in those which concerned the heart and the moral being I was still more deeply indebted to the character and daily conduct of my admirable Uncle Southey.²

Relative to the common experience of middle-class women in the early nineteenth-century, Coleridge received a remarkably advanced education. The home schooling for the children of Greta Hall was systematic and followed a regular timetable. Coleridge’s aunts, mother and Southey were the teachers. As Kenneth Curry remarks, ‘[t]he scholarship of Sara Coleridge [...] is evidence of the thoroughness of [Southey’s] instruction’.³ Southey told Unitarian minister John Estlin that she ‘has received an education here at home which would astonish you’.⁴ Coleridge benefited also from the use of Southey’s extraordinary library, which comprised ‘the impressive total of 14,000 books’.⁵ De Quincey reports that ‘Southey’s library [...] was placed at the service of all

¹ Mudge, p. 19.

² *Criticism*, p. 96.

³ Kenneth Curry, *Southey* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), p. 42.

⁴ Mudge, p. 22.

⁵ Curry, p. 45.

the ladies'.⁶ Coleridge benefited conspicuously from Southey's scholarship and generosity. As this study will show, he was a significant influence upon Coleridge's literary career. Like him, she would become a writer of politico-religious polemic, and would revisit topics on which he had written, such as Methodism. Southey's household offered an academically and socially stimulating environment for the young Coleridge. As Poet Laureate from 1813, Southey was a public figure who received eminent visitors. According to Molly Lefebure, a 'non-stop flow of bishops, politicians, academicians, poets, judges, dons, merchant bankers and Harley Street consultants [...] visited Greta Hall during [the] summer seasons'.⁷ This stirring formative setting, combined with her remarkable home education, helped to form the basis for Coleridge's equally remarkable literary career.

The goal of this study is to discover Sara Coleridge's distinctive literary qualities, and the originality of her concept of authorship. My study foregrounds Coleridge's work rather than her life, and adduces biographical information only when it throws light on her literary activities. I analyze Coleridge's writings across the range of genres in which she worked, from children's literature to theological polemic. I aim to describe Coleridge's procedures as STC's editor in terms of her hitherto unrecognized literary theory.⁸ Similarly, the relationship of Coleridge's editorial to her original work has not been sufficiently analysed. It has been suggested that Coleridge would have achieved a greater reputation in English literature but for her paternal legacy.⁹ I will reconsider how she responds as a writer to this inheritance. The story of Sara Coleridge's life has been uncovered in a number of biographical studies. Yet, her writings, and the development of her authorship, remain obscure. The predominantly biographical focus upon Coleridge continues in the present decade, notably in Jeffery W. Barbeau's *Sara Coleridge: Her Life and Thought* (2014), Katie Waldegrave's *The Poets' Daughters: Dora Wordsworth and Sara Coleridge* (2013), and Molly Lefebure's *The Private Lives of The Ancient Mariner: Coleridge and his Children* (2013).¹⁰ Barbeau followed his book with a biographical article in 2015, 'Sara Coleridge on Love and Romance', which focuses on Coleridge's relationships with Henry Nelson Coleridge and Aubrey de Vere.¹¹ Waldegrave reflects a tendency to combine a study of Coleridge with that of

⁶ Thomas De Quincey, 'Lake Reminiscences From 1807 to 1830' by the English Opium Eater, V: 'Southey, Wordsworth and Coleridge', *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, 6 (1839), 523-517 (p. 514).

⁷ Molly Lefebure, *The Bondage of Love: A Life of Mrs. Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (London: Gollancz, 1986), p. 220.

⁸ I refer to Samuel Taylor Coleridge as STC in this thesis.

⁹ Kathleen Jones, *A Passionate Sisterhood* (London: Virago Press, 1998), p. 329.

¹⁰ Jeffery W. Barbeau, *Sara Coleridge: Her Life and Thought* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014). Katie Waldegrave, *The Poets' Daughters: Dora Wordsworth and Sara Coleridge* (London: Hutchinson, 2013). Molly Lefebure, *Private Lives of the Ancient Mariner: Coleridge and his Children* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2013).

¹¹ Jeffery W. Barbeau, 'Sara Coleridge on Love and Romance', *Wordsworth Circle*, 46 (2015), 36-44

another figure, or figures. Eleanor A. Towle's *A Poet's Children* (1912) places Coleridge's life story alongside Hartley's, and Kathleen Jones narrates Coleridge's life in a context of the wider female community of the Lake Poets' circle.¹² Such approaches highlight Coleridge's relationship with her literary fathers in personal rather than literary terms. The neglect of Coleridge as an author stems from the predominantly biographical bias of studies devoted to her. The emphasis has been on Coleridge as STC's daughter, rather than Coleridge the writer. Her life story has been foregrounded as an exemplar of female filial subjection, and to lend new insight into STC and the Lake Poets' circle. This thesis redresses the balance: I show, through critical analysis, how Coleridge practises and develops her craft of writing, and her conception of it.

Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Studies

Religious and political instability energized Coleridge's authorship. Amid continuing cultural change through the decades after her death, however, Coleridge's writings were all but lost from view. Coleridge's daughter sought to redeem her from obscurity. In 1873, Edith Coleridge published in two volumes the *Memoir and Letters of Sara Coleridge*, which, according to E. L. Griggs, 'was apparently widely read, since four editions appeared within a year'.¹³ Edith Coleridge emphasizes religious subjects in her selection of correspondence. The *Memoir and Letters* appears to have been successful in temporarily boosting interest in Coleridge's life and work. A reviewer of the volumes in January 1874, though, perpetuates the myth of Coleridge's literary subservience: he describes her as Henry's 'zealous helpmate', and STC as her metaphysical 'Pope'. Nonetheless, he concedes that, as editor of STC, she 'proved [...] an efficient substitute' after Henry's death.¹⁴ Towle's biographical study reflects the religious emphasis of the *Memoir and Letters*: for example, in her idealized image of the piety of the Greta Hall household: 'religion' she observes, 'maintained its rightful supremacy' in the domestic ethos, and 'moved like the Spirit of God [...] on the face of the waters beside which the little Coleridges played'.¹⁵

Henry Reed, an American scholar who had corresponded with Coleridge near the end of her life, published a biographical tribute to her in July 1852, two months after her death. Reed's account established a gendered interpretation of Coleridge's authorship. He constructs Coleridge's 'career of womanly authorship' in terms of a feminine ideal. He refers to the 'maidenly modesty' of her early translations, which were

¹² Eleanor A. Towle, *A Poet's Children: Hartley and Sara Coleridge* (London: Methuen, 1912).

¹³ *Memoir and Letters of Sara Coleridge edited by her Daughter*, 2 vols (London: King, 1873). Earl Leslie Griggs, *Coleridge Fille: A Biography of Sara Coleridge* (London: Oxford University Press, 1940), p. 189.

¹⁴ 'Memoir and Letters of Sara Coleridge', *Edinburgh Review*, 283 (1874), 44-68 (p. 56, p. 61, p. 56). Published anonymously.

¹⁵ Towle, p. 40.

published anonymously and sanctioned by her uncle. Reed describes her volume of children's poetry, 'a mother's work', as an expression of 'matronly modesty'. Written for her children, the poems would have remained in the domestic realm, had it not been for Coleridge's husband's insistence on their publication. Her 'editorial labours' were 'a fit filial and conjugal work', Reed contends, and her 'high intellectual powers were held in harmony with [...] feminine delicacy and gentleness'.¹⁶ Reed approves of Coleridge as editorial mediator of STC, because the role implies pious subjection to father and husband.

E. L. Griggs follows Reed in foregrounding Coleridge's gender. His biographical study of 1940 emphasizes Coleridge's 'humility' and 'filial devotion'. Griggs's work remains a valuable quarry of information on Coleridge's life: for example, regarding her circle of eminent acquaintances in widowhood. He also includes significant extracts from Coleridge's unpublished manuscripts. Nonetheless, Griggs's study is circumscribed by his belittling preconceptions of female authorship. He remarks that, in Coleridge's literary criticism, 'a feminine bias often interferes with her judgment'. He cites her alleged failure to 'appreciate the increasing use of the novel for sociological purposes', and her conception of fiction 'as a representation of life'.¹⁷ Coleridge favours 'the novel of every day life' as the genre 'in which women [...] have such perfect success', and regards Jane Austen as the 'princess of novelists'.¹⁸ Griggs reveals his own masculine 'bias' in referring Coleridge's literary judgments to the criteria of a patriarchal canon: '[i]f she failed to recognize Browning, Tennyson, and Landor as we do to-day (sic), at least she did not set up Letitia Landon, Hannah More, and Mrs. Hemans as leading figures'.¹⁹ Griggs's disparaging attitudes to women's authorship limit his attention to Coleridge's religious writings. He notices that Coleridge's theology in 'On Rationalism' differs from STC's, but fails to develop this significant observation. Griggs does not treat chronologically the last nine years of Coleridge's life, which are her most productive. Therefore, the structure of Griggs's study occludes her development into authorial maturity. Virginia Woolf's eloquent and sympathetic essay on Coleridge is a review of Griggs's biography.²⁰ Unsurprisingly, then, she views Coleridge's story as another case of female subservience to patriarchal

¹⁶ Henry Reed, 'The Daughter of Coleridge', in L. N. Broughton, *Sara Coleridge and Henry Reed* (New York: Ithaca, 1937), pp. 1-16 (p. 3, p. 9, p. 12, p. 2).

¹⁷ Griggs, *Coleridge Fille*, p. 166, p. 215.

¹⁸ *Criticism*, p. 187. Wordsworth Trust, WLMS A/Coleridge, Sara/78, <http://collections.wordsworth.org.uk/wtweb/home.asp?person=&place=&object=&event=&activiyu=&state=&concept=&words=&phrases=&author=Coleridge%3C=Sara=%281021852%29&recipient=&date1=&date2=&submitButton=&Submit+search=search&page=Letters=search=home> [accessed 15 May 2015].

¹⁹ Griggs, *Coleridge Fille*, p. 215.

²⁰ 'Sara Coleridge', in *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Andrew McNeillie and Stuart N. Clarke, 6 vols (London: The Hogarth Press, 1986-2011), VI: *1933-1941, and additional essays 1906-1924*, ed. by Stuart N. Clarke (2011), pp. 249-255.

literary authority.

Bradford K. Mudge's *Sara Coleridge: A Victorian Daughter* (1989) appeared almost half a century after Griggs's *Coleridge Fille*. Like Griggs's biography, Mudge's is an indispensable resource. The 'Appendix' contains six previously unpublished essays by Coleridge, and her autobiographical fragment. Mudge's biography reverses Griggs's bias and presents a feminist reading of Coleridge's life. He recognizes that her editorship of STC's works is a strategy to enable her to participate in the literary marketplace. The Coleridge he constructs, however, conditioned to believe in 'the impropriety of female authorship', remains subservient to patriarchy. For Mudge, 'On Rationalism' was a matter for Coleridge of '[d]iscovering her father within herself', while in her editorial contributions to STC's work she 'renounc[ed] authorship and embrac[ed] patriarchal authority'. Mudge's valuable and readable book is limited by an absence of engagement with Coleridge's theological work. For example, Mudge ignores Coleridge's commitment to her religious dialogues when he asserts that she 'abandoned' her autobiography in autumn 1851 'in order to devote herself exclusively to a new edition of her father's poems'. This assumption supports Mudge's polemical intentions: '[s]uch a decision was perfectly in keeping with Sara's attitudes about female authorship and with her devotion to the reputation of her father'.²¹ Although Coleridge collaborated with Derwent in preparing the 1852 edition of STC's *Poems*, and wrote most of the notes and the brief 'Preface', the project that occupied her from September to November 1851 was an original and innovative religious work, the *Dialogues on Personality*. The 'Preface' to STC's *Poems*, just over seven pages long, was written in March 1852, which suggests that Coleridge gave priority in her final illness to the completion of original work.

Kathleen Jones's biographical study of the women of the Wordsworth – Southey – STC circle, published in 1997, follows the same feminist viewpoint as Mudge. Jones portrays a Coleridge who has internalized society's patriarchal assumptions and colludes in her own literary repression. Coleridge edits her father's writings, and dedicates herself to maternal duties, according to Jones, to the willing detriment of her potential for original work. Jones adopts the assumptions of Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar in their pioneering study: she assumes that Coleridge, thwarted by patriarchy, practises 'that graceful [...] self-abnegation which, for a nineteenth-century woman, was necessity's highest virtue'. Jones and Mudge are influenced by Gilbert and Gubar's view of female literary activity: '[a]uthored by a male God and by a godlike male, killed into a "perfect" image of herself, the woman writer's self-contemplation may be said to have begun with a searching glance into the mirror of the male-inscribed literary text'. In

²¹ Mudge, p. 157, p. 99, p. 157, p. 10.

these feminist terms, for the daughter of the poet whose ‘god-like’ aspirations created ‘Kubla Khan’, the ‘anxiety of authorship’ would be the more ‘sickening’.²² To summarize, nineteenth-century commentaries on Coleridge, and Griggs’s account of 1940, are limited by their tacit patriarchal assumptions. Late twentieth-century feminist interpretations provide a necessary corrective, though the deliberate focus of their polemical agenda narrows their perspectives on Coleridge the writer. They substitute ideology for textual analysis. This is an approach against which Lucy Newlyn cautions in relation to Romantic women authors: ‘we should be wary of allowing theoretical constructions to interfere with an awareness of the practices of individual writers’.²³ Coleridge’s revisionary authorship employs dialogic ‘practices’, which require close textual analysis; neither Mudge nor Jones offers this.

Twenty-First Century Editions and Studies

Feminist approaches to Coleridge continue in the twenty-first century. Joanne Wilkes in 2010, for example, adopts the same theoretical perspective as Mudge and Jones. According to Wilkes, Coleridge sacrificed her own literary ambitions in a ‘quest to promote her father’s genius’. Wilkes reads Coleridge’s subtle tactic of publishing ‘On Rationalism’ as ‘Appendix C’ of *Aids to Reflection* (1843 and 1848) as an act of ‘subordinat[ion] [...] in the service of her father’s output’.²⁴ However, to borrow Mary Poovey’s terms, Coleridge exploits ‘strategies of indirection and accommodation’ in her publication of ‘On Rationalism’ that enable her ‘to make [her] presence felt’.²⁵ The success of her tactics is reflected in the Bishop of London’s high praise for the essay.²⁶ Wilkes repeats Mudge’s assumption that Coleridge ‘abandoned’ her ‘autobiography [...] for the sake of yet more editing of her father’s work’, and ignores the original religious work which Coleridge produced in the autumn of 1851.²⁷

Other twenty-first century scholars advance feminist readings of a more analytical nature. Donelle Ruwe’s chapter, ‘Opium Addictions and Meta-Physicians: Sara Coleridge’s Editing of *Biographia Literaria*’ (2004), is a case in point. Ruwe argues that Coleridge’s account of STC’s medical condition, in which she emphasizes ‘the bodily nature of the mind’, undermines the dominance of a male-orientated

²² Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, 2nd edn (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 575, p. 15, p. 64.

²³ Lucy Newlyn, *Reading, Writing and Romanticism: The Anxiety of Reception* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 233.

²⁴ Joanne Wilkes, *Women Reviewing Women in Nineteenth-Century Britain: The Critical Reception of Jane Austen, Charlotte Bronte and George Eliot* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), p. 139.

²⁵ Mary Poovey, *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer: Ideology and Style in the Works of Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley, and Jane Austen* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. xi.

²⁶ See Chapter 2, below, p. 60.

²⁷ Wilkes, p. 39.

creativity based in a disembodied transcendental imagination. Ruwe refers to Isobel Armstrong's suggestion that, in the nineteenth century, 'illness and physical weakness experienced by [...] women writers gave them access to sensory knowledge that could be maneuvered into a position of intellectual authority'.²⁸ Ruwe argues that Coleridge's account of STC's nervous disorder challenges his concept of the relation of body and mind. She revises earlier readings, therefore, in which Coleridge's authorial individuality is subordinated to that of STC. In a chapter also published in 2004, Alison Hickey emphasizes the element of collaboration in Coleridge's work. In this respect, she follows the lead of Jack Stillinger's seminal study, *Multiple Authorship and the Myth of Solitary Genius* (1991). Stillinger refers to Coleridge's 'creative editing' of *Biographia 1847*, which, he contends, constitutes a practice of 'collaborative authorship'.²⁹ Hickey similarly holds that Coleridge, as editor, becomes 'a co-producer' of STC's 'work'. She maintains that Coleridge's 'threefold paternity' makes her particularly receptive to the concept of 'multiple authorship'.³⁰ Dennis Low makes a case for Coleridge as an author in her own right. In his chapter on her earlier work in *The Literary Protégées of the Lake Poets* (2006), Low traces the development of her writings from the translation of Dobrizhoffer to her novel, *Phantasmion*. Low contends that Southey is an enabling influence for Coleridge in supporting her early translation projects. He also suggests that the essential conception of *Phantasmion* relates to STC's literary theories. This concurrence with STC, he indicates, demonstrates Coleridge's 'actively creative correspondence with her father's ideas and values'.³¹ Because Low focuses on women writers of the 1820s and 1830s, his account of Coleridge's authorship ends at 1837. This is the year in which she begins to form the agenda for her mature literary projects.

Twenty-first century interest in Coleridge has grown steadily since the publication of Peter Swaab's pioneering edition of her *Collected Poems* (2007).³² One hundred and twenty of the 185 poems it contains were published for the first time. In 2012, Swaab published a selection of Coleridge's literary criticism.³³ The texts included were either published for the first time or recovered from out-of-print nineteenth-century editions. Swaab's 'Introduction' to this volume presents the most balanced survey of

²⁸ Donelle Ruwe, 'Opium Addictions and Meta-Physicians: Sara Coleridge's Editing of *Biographia Literaria*', in *Nervous Reactions: Victorian Recollections of Romanticism*, ed. by Joel Faflak and Julia M. Wright (New York: State University of New York Press, 2004), pp. 229-251 (p. 243).

²⁹ Jack Stillinger, *Multiple Authorship and the Myth of Solitary Genius* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 205, p. 230 n.

³⁰ Alison Hickey, 'The Body of My Father's Writings: Sara Coleridge's Genial Labour', in *Literary Couplings and the Construction of Authorship*, ed. by Marjorie Stone and Judith Thompson (Winnipeg: University of Winnipeg Press, 2006), pp. 124-147, (p. 132, p. 129).

³¹ Dennis Low, *The Literary Protégées of the Lake Poets* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 141.

³² Sara Coleridge, *Collected Poems*, ed. by Peter Swaab (Manchester: Fyfield Books, Caracenet Press, 2007).

³³ *The Regions of Sara Coleridge's Thought: Selected Literary Criticism*, ed. by Peter Swaab (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

Coleridge's intellectual and authorial characteristics that has been produced to date. He emphasizes the range of Coleridge's intellectual interests, and her linguistic vitality. He excludes Coleridge's theological writings, except where they have literary implications – such as her comments on Newman's prose style. Swaab's editions are major sources for my thesis. He has written authoritatively on Coleridge as a critic of Wordsworth. My study draws on Swaab's article, 'The Poet and Poetical Artist: Sara Coleridge as a Critic of Wordsworth' (2012), particularly his emphasis upon the religious inflection of Coleridge's response to Wordsworth, as shown, for example, in her discussion of 'A Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle'.³⁴

Alan Vardy, in 2010, produced a study of the Coleridge family's attempts to restore STC's reputation in the two decades following his death.³⁵ Coleridge's contributions feature significantly in Vardy's study, in which he argues that the family sought to re-market STC as a High Tory, High Anglican reactionary. Vardy implicates Coleridge in this scheme of alleged cultural falsification. He argues that *Table Talk* is a product of Henry's ideology, and is actually 'Henry's [b]ook', rather than a balanced and accurate representation of STC's thought. Henry's brother, John Taylor Coleridge, and brother-in-law Derwent, are also implicated in this supposed cabal. Vardy regards Coleridge's treatment of STC's plagiarisms as an element of the wider family conspiracy. He attacks Coleridge for what he regards as culpable distortion in her presentation of STC's political thought. In certain respects, Vardy asserts, her political judgment 'comes close to obscenity'. He attributes Coleridge's alleged failure of political principle to her marriage to 'an ultra-Tory who kept her isolated in Regent's Park'.³⁶ Vardy's verdict contradicts the evidence of Coleridge's letters: the letters reveal that she was not influenced by Henry's politics, and that he encouraged and supported her in publishing her work, including 'On Rationalism'. Furthermore, Vardy's opinion reflects his adoption of Slavoj Žižek as his model of political analysis. Žižek's Marxist ideology, adapted to what he terms 'postmodern *post-politics*', cannot be directly applied to an historical setting in which twenty-first century concepts of political Left and Right did not exist.³⁷ As James Vigus notes, Vardy's book displays considerable 'inconsistency' in its political and biographical interpretations.³⁸

³⁴ Peter Swaab, "'The Poet and the Poetical Artist": Sara Coleridge as a Critic of Wordsworth', in *Grasmere 2012, Selected Papers From The Wordsworth Summer Conference*, compiled by Richard Gravil (Penrith: Humanities-EBooks, LLP, 2012), pp. 130-146.

³⁵ Alan D. Vardy, *Constructing Coleridge: The Posthumous Life of the Author* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

³⁶ Vardy, pp. 46-63, p. 141.

³⁷ Slavoj Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology* (London: Verso, 2008), p. 236. Žižek's emphasis.

³⁸ James Vigus, 'James Vigus reads *Constructing Coleridge: The Posthumous Life of the Author*', *Coleridge Bulletin*, n.s., 38 (2011), 134-136 (p. 135).

Two biographical studies were published in 2013: Katie Waldegrave's joint study of Sara Coleridge and Dora Wordsworth, and Molly Lefebure's *Private Lives of the Ancient Mariner*. Waldegrave's study emphasizes the sustaining family circle in which Coleridge grew up, despite her father's absence. It also provides insight into Coleridge's illnesses and medical condition. These aspects of Waldegrave's book provide valuable contextual material. Although Waldegrave acknowledges Coleridge's theological writings, like Mudge and Jones she does not engage with them. Lefebure's book is a revisionary study that ranges widely across STC's activities and family relationships, including significant reinterpretations of his work for *The Morning Post* and his government service in Malta. Lefebure also includes new insight into Coleridge's relationship with her father, and the ways in which his neglect, continuing into adulthood, caused her severe psychological damage.

In the most recent book-length study of Sara Coleridge, published in 2014, Jeffrey W. Barbeau sets out to tell the story of Coleridge's life, and to explain her intellectual ideas.³⁹ Barbeau is a professional theologian and discusses Coleridge's ideas in religious contexts to which I also refer: importantly, he recognizes the influence of the Oxford Movement in the development of Coleridge's thought. He comments on her responses to such key events as Newman's *Tract 90* (1841) and the Gorham crisis. However, he does not relate the religious context with any precision to the broader political situation, with which it is inextricably entwined. Hitherto, Barbeau and myself in this thesis are the only commentators to discuss at length the major part played by the Oxford Movement in Coleridge's work.

However, my thesis and Barbeau's book differ in methodology. Barbeau is interested in the content of Coleridge's thought; I am interested in the processes of her intellectual and literary production. Barbeau and I are working in different disciplines. He is a biographer and an historian of religious ideas; my rationale is literary. Barbeau's recent article, in which Coleridge remains the devoted wife and filial disciple of earlier studies, reflects the same methodological limitations as his book.⁴⁰ Barbeau's substitution of 'extratextual [...] reality' for textual analysis, to borrow M. M. Bakhtin's terms, is particularly reductive for a writer like Coleridge whose creativity flourishes in dialogue with other writers.⁴¹ I attempt to enlarge perspectives on Coleridge by focusing on her writing, and on her critical conceptualization of the processes of writing. Joanne E. Taylor's article of October 2015 is closer to my approach in considering Coleridge from a literary viewpoint. Taylor reads *Phantasmion* alongside a hitherto ignored sketch

³⁹ Barbeau, *Life*.

⁴⁰ Barbeau, 'Love and Romance'.

⁴¹ M. M. Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, trans. by Vern W. McGhee, ed. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), p. 162.

map by Coleridge of the novel's setting. Taylor argues convincingly that *Phantasmion's* landscapes are subtle 'refraction[s]' of the Lake District of Coleridge's childhood and literary fathers: they are 'a world that exists on the other side of the looking glass', in which she finds her own poetic space independent of 'those of her precursors'. In focusing on Coleridge's quest for 'autonomy', this innovative article paves the way for my placing *Phantasmion* in the wider context of Coleridge's whole authorial development. I differ, however, by positioning the novel in the realm of public debate. Taylor concludes her article by calling for a reassessment of Coleridge's 'marginal [...] space' in literary history.⁴² My thesis answers that call with a radical reevaluation of Coleridge's whole literary development.

Theorizing Coleridge

My theoretical approach is distinct from that of Barbeau and all previous commentators. Barbeau assumes, in writing a thinker's life, a traditional pre-Barthesian concept of personal authorship and the literary text, as do earlier commentators on Coleridge. My approach draws upon post-structuralist re-conceptualizations of the relationships of texts, contexts and authors. Indeed, Coleridge's own theory and practice anticipate post-structuralism in certain respects. For Coleridge, a text is a composite product 'made of multiple writings', to borrow Barthes's phrase.⁴³ While a study such as Hickey's refers to the collaborative nature of Coleridge's literary activity, I analyze the dialogic nature of her texts. Two complementary theoretical models permeate my reading of Coleridge: M. M. Bakhtin's concepts of hybrid construction and dialogism; and Hans-Georg Gadamer's hermeneutic theory. I am indebted, also, to Michael Macovski's discussion of Bakhtinian methodology, in which he 'conceives of literary discourse as a composite of voices – interactive personae that not only are contained within the literary text but extend beyond it, to other works, authors and interpretations'. This conception applies to Coleridge's analyses of STC's texts, and to her development of dialogic forms of theological writing. Macovski explains Bakhtin's distinction between Platonic and Socratic methodology. This distinction informs my critical approach to Coleridge's use of Socratic dialogue in her late works on baptismal regeneration, in which form and meaning are inseparable:

In contrast to the "already found, ready made" truisms established by Platonic dialectic, Bakhtin stresses the ongoing construction of knowledge, an

⁴² Joanne E. Taylor, '(Re-)Mapping the "native vale": Sara Coleridge's *Phantasmion*', *Romanticism*, 21 (2015), 265-279 (p. 276, p. 272, p. 277).

⁴³ Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', in *Image Music Text*, ed. by Stephen Heath (London: Fontana Press, 1977), pp. 142-148 (p. 148).

epistemological openness that he traces to the “Socratic method of dialogically revealing the truth”. Such a method holds that knowledge belongs not to an “exclusive possessor”, but “is born *between people* collectively searching for truth, in the process of their dialogic interaction”.⁴⁴

Coleridge’s analysis of the *Biographia* text reveals STC’s ‘searching for truth’ by dialogic means. STC describes ‘truth’ as a ‘Divine Ventriloquist’, rather than the property of an ‘exclusive possessor’.⁴⁵ Bakhtinian theory enables me to redefine the relationship between Coleridge’s editorial work and her independent writing: her ethic of religious discourse in the ‘Dialogues on Regeneration’ is based on a collective and dialogic methodology.

Hermeneutic activity is at the heart of Coleridge’s literary career. As translator, poet, editor and religious polemicist, her writing is rooted in the interpretation of others’ texts. Therefore, Hans-Georg Gadamer’s *Truth and Method* enables me to develop my understanding of the dialogic nature of Coleridge’s works. For Gadamer, ‘the hermeneutic phenomenon [...] implies the primacy of dialogue and the structure of question and answer’.⁴⁶ Bakhtin and Gadamer’s ideas inform my understanding of Coleridge’s redefinition of religious discourse as a collaborative enterprise. Reactions to political and religious reform between 1828 and 1833 precipitated a crisis that was essentially hermeneutic, and continued for the two remaining decades of Coleridge’s life. The interpretation of Scripture and Christian tradition was the site of polemical contest. Coleridge develops her dialogic approach, therefore, in response to hermeneutic division. She engages in dialogue with STC’s Christian Philosophy, and ‘brings [it] down into the present hour’.⁴⁷ To apply terms Gadamer uses in relation to Hegel, Coleridge’s treatment of STC’s ideas ‘consists not in the restoration of the past but in *thoughtful mediation with contemporary life*’.⁴⁸ Gadamer explains that such ‘mediation’ involves a ‘fusion’ of the interpreter’s present ‘horizon’ with that of the ‘past’:

[T]he horizon of the present is continually in the process of being formed because we are continually having to test all our prejudices. An important part of this testing occurs in encountering the past and in understanding the tradition from which we come. Hence the horizon of the present cannot be formed without the past. There is no more an isolated horizon of the present in itself than there are historical horizons which have to be acquired. *Rather,*

⁴⁴ Michael Macovski, *Dialogue and Literature: Apostrophe, Auditors and the Collapse of Romantic Discourse* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 3, p. 27. Bakhtin’s emphasis, quoted by Macovski.

⁴⁵ *BLCC*, I, p. 164.

⁴⁶ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2nd edn (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), p. 378.

⁴⁷ *Essays*, I, p. lxxxiv.

⁴⁸ Robert Piercey, *The Crisis in Continental Philosophy: History, Truth and the Hegelian Legacy* (London: Continuum, 2009), pp. 21-22. Gadamer’s emphasis quoted by Piercey.

*understanding is always the fusion of these horizons supposedly existing by themselves.*⁴⁹

In the ‘fusion’ of her own present with STC’s historical ‘horizon’, Coleridge rewrites and revitalizes his ‘past’ ideas for a new context. This is true, particularly, of her *Regeneration Dialogues*.

Coleridge’s authorial context in the decades following the 1832 Reform Act was significantly different from that in which STC had worked. As F. J. A. Hort observed in 1856: ‘[t]he prodigious changes which have taken place in the last forty years render much of *Aids to Reflection* very perplexing to those who have forgotten the time when it was written’.⁵⁰ In STC’s critique of eighteenth-century mechanistic empiricism, and its deadening influence on the established church of the early nineteenth-century, he ‘rethink[s] [...] the Platonic Christian tradition, principally through his wrestling with Kant and contemporary German Idealism’. Douglas Hedley goes on to locate STC within ‘an Idealistic tradition in British thought whose provenance lies in the Florentine Renaissance and passes through later antiquity to Plato’.⁵¹ STC’s Neo-Platonism is a significant factor in his struggle against Lockean modes of thought. However, in Coleridge’s appropriation and development of STC’s philosophy, she tends to occlude its Neo-Platonism, while exploiting overtly its Kantian elements. In her ‘Introduction’ to *Biographia 1847*, she foregrounds STC’s application of Kantian metaphysics to Christianity, but neglects to relate this to the Neo-Platonic strands of his thought. Coleridge’s consistent Kantian bias is strategic. She exploits the *Critique of Pure Reason* in order to establish a conceptual basis for her critical analysis of Tractarianism; she uses STC and the influences upon him as a resource for her own polemics.

Coleridge contends that Tractarianism lacks an underpinning conceptual rationale; that it has no clear epistemological foundation. While she embraces Tractarianism’s ‘exalted’ devotional ethos, as expressed, for example, in ‘the sermons of John Henry Newman’, she regrets that its conceptual basis is flawed: Newman’s devout ‘views’ are ‘supported by unfair reasonings’, she contends, which severely detract from their potential for positive influence upon the practice of the Christian life.⁵² Coleridge, meanwhile, presents a clear and consistent epistemology based on Kant’s critical analysis of the mind’s range and structure. She expounds this epistemology with a remarkable combination of technical precision and poetic eloquence in her essay ‘On

⁴⁹ Gadamer, p. 317. Gadamer’s emphasis.

⁵⁰ F. J. A. Hort, ‘Coleridge’, *Cambridge Essays, Contributed by Members of the University, 1856* (London: Parker, 1856), pp. 292-351 (p. 356).

⁵¹ Douglas Hedley, *Coleridge, Philosophy and Religion: Aids to Reflection and The Mirror of the Spirit* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000; repr. 2008), pp. 298-299, p. 299.

⁵² *M & L*, I, p. 177.

Rationalism’, discussed below in Chapter 2.⁵³ Kant’s transcendental philosophy investigates ‘our manner of knowing objects’, and Coleridge appropriates the terms of this enquiry in her account of how the mind apprehends ‘the great objects of faith’. For Kant, the practice of metaphysics requires a prior analysis of the powers of the mind in order to avoid dogmatism based on unexamined assumptions. Coleridge adapts this rigorous principle to religious experience: before we can apprehend ‘spiritual truth’, we must undertake ‘a cleansing of the medium through which [it] is beheld’. In *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant sets out to present ‘a treatise on the method’ of ‘metaphysics [...], not a system of the science itself.’ Coleridge’s critical analysis of religious ideas, insistent on rigour and cohesion of ‘method’, suspicious of ‘system’ and dogma, reflects the influence of Kant’s project.⁵⁴

In defining Coleridge’s distinctive qualities as a writer, I have followed the lead of Nicola Healey in her pioneering study of Hartley Coleridge.⁵⁵ Healey releases Hartley’s poems from misleading biographical stereotypes by analyzing their textual characteristics. Similarly, I attempt to free Coleridge from the biographical image promoted by Mudge and Jones of the ‘dutiful’ and repressed ‘Victorian daughter’ who sacrifices herself for her father’s ‘reputation’.⁵⁶ My method is based on literary analysis and informed by historical contextualization. I argue that Coleridge develops as a writer, and I show the connections between the different strands of her work. That Coleridge’s body of work lacks homogeneity obscures these connections: for example, between translation and her revisionary account of STC. Coleridge resists classification as a poet, a novelist, or an essayist, and the key to the unity of her work resides in her religious writings. That Coleridge’s mature writings are located in theological polemics is a principal reason why she has been neglected as an author. The themes of Coleridge’s theological writings soon lost their topicality in the second half of the nineteenth century. This is true, also, of her theological opponent Robert Wilberforce, who had ‘the misfortune to produce his great doctrinal synthesis’, on Incarnation, Baptism and the Eucharist, ‘in the three years which lie either side of 1850’. Doctrinal controversies would soon become insignificant in the wake of two decisively influential publications: Darwin’s *The Origin of Species* in 1859, and *Essays and Reviews* in 1860, which subjected the Bible to modern scholarly criticism. Wilberforce’s ‘writings, therefore,

⁵³ See pp. 64-65, below.

⁵⁴ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. by Marcus Weigelt (London: Penguin, 2007), p. 52. *Biographia 1847*, I, p. lxxii. HRC. Kant, p. 21.

⁵⁵ Nicola Healey, *Dorothy Wordsworth and Hartley Coleridge: The Poetics of Relationship* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

⁵⁶ Mudge, p. 177.

became out of date before they had had a chance to make the impact they deserved'.⁵⁷ Coleridge's theological writings would similarly lose all but academic interest. In the 1840s, though, the issues with which she engaged, such as the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, were matters of urgent public debate. Their reverberations registered in the sphere of party politics. This is why I place Coleridge in her historical context. Her writings, including those in her major editions of *STC*, engage with live politico-religious issues of the two decades following the Reform Act of 1832. The same is true of the writings of John Henry Newman between 1833 and 1845. An analysis of the work of Coleridge, as of the Anglican Newman, requires detailed reference to specific political and religious circumstances.

Coleridge and Gender: Preliminary Perspectives

I discuss the strategies Coleridge employs to exploit and subvert the gender conventions of her times. Barbeau not only condemns these conventions, but also Coleridge's alleged uncritical acceptance of them. He brands Coleridge's own position on women's authorship as 'frankly, outrageous'.⁵⁸ This intemperate expression recalls Vardy's political condemnation of Coleridge. Barbeau, like Vardy, imposes anachronistic expectations upon an author working in the first half of the nineteenth century. Barbeau's view is based in late 1970s feminism, exemplified by Gilbert and Gubar. He does not consider the recuperative strategies of women writers, analyzed more recently by scholars such as Anne Mellor and Lucy Newlyn. He therefore cannot help but fail to recognize that Coleridge is a subtle and determined strategist. Mary Jacobus criticizes Gilbert and Gubar because, she claims, Victorian women writers wished for 'the freedom of being read as more than exceptionally articulate victims of a patriarchally engendered plot'.⁵⁹ This applies to Coleridge, who engages on equal terms, in a masculine academic register, with the leading scholars and theologians of her day. For example, in 1835, Julius Hare, eminent German specialist and theologian, had initially answered De Quincey's exposure of *STC*'s plagiarisms from Schelling. Following Ferrier's more rigorous discussion of the topic in 1840, Hare implies that he regards Coleridge as a fellow scholar who is better qualified to respond. He tells her that it is 'indispensable for you to take some notice of the various charges of plagiarism made against [*STC*], especially by Ferrier and De Quincey'.⁶⁰ This is a remarkable tribute, considering that Hare, with Carlyle, was one of the leading Germanists of the day. It is

⁵⁷ David Newsome, *The Parting of Friends: A Study of the Wilberforces and Henry Manning* (London: Murray, 1966), p. 373.

⁵⁸ Barbeau, *Life*, p. 53.

⁵⁹ Annette R. Federico, 'Introduction', *Gilbert and Gubar's The Madwoman in the Attic After Thirty Years*, ed. by Annette R. Federico (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2009), pp. 1-26 (p. 9).

⁶⁰ Griggs, *Coleridge Fille*, p. 148.

not surprising, therefore, that Coleridge expects to participate on equal terms in the masculine scholarly arena. In 1845, at the time she was editing *Biographia*, she admits to having ‘take[n] a dudgeon being thought feminine, either in my small writings or aught else’.⁶¹ The scholarly and forthright style of ‘On Rationalism’ demands ‘the freedom’ for Coleridge ‘of being read’ on the same terms as her clerical interlocutors.

Diane D’Amico argues that ‘feminist scholarship’ has ‘not yet allowed [Christina] Rossetti to be a woman poet of faith’.⁶² Similarly, I would maintain that the approach adopted by Mudge, Jones and Wilkes belittles Coleridge as an author, and occludes the religious dimension of her authorship. It obscures the dynamic link between Coleridge’s editorial reading of *STC* and her independent writing. Lucy Newlyn comments that Romantic women writers ‘frequently collapsed the division between writing- and reading-subjects as a mode of self-empowerment’. This applies to the way in which Coleridge’s editorial mediation of *STC*’s work empowers her as an autonomous author. Newlyn cites Mary Robinson’s poem, ‘To the Poet Coleridge’, as an example in which the female reader seeks ‘to be included on equal terms’ in the male author’s ‘act of creation’: she extends ‘a paradise he has created’. Robinson’s ‘slippage from an imitative to a supplementary model of reading–writing’ anticipates Coleridge’s appropriation of *STC*’s voice in her ‘Introduction’ to *Essays*, for example.⁶³

Diane D’Amico’s account of the historical reception of Rossetti as a religious writer influences my view of the way Coleridge has been received. D’Amico notes Victorian ‘high praise’ for the ‘feminine’ qualities of Rossetti’s poetry; what a male critic in 1904 termed ‘the purely feminine spirit of her inspiration’, which he associates with passivity and ‘acquiescence’. This is reminiscent of Reed’s construction of Coleridge’s ‘filial’ and ‘conjugal’ authorship as a feminine ideal. D’Amico notes that modernist criticism of Rossetti ‘diminished her worth [...] by focusing on the feminine as inadequate’. This parallels Griggs’s prejudice against Coleridge’s ‘feminine’ literary criticism. In reaction against modernism’s limited version of Rossetti, D’Amico explains, feminist scholarship presents ‘a strong-minded woman asserting the feminine self and subverting the patriarchal ideologies of her time’. Coleridge scholarship has emphasized her subjection to convention, rather than her subversion of it. For both Rossetti and Coleridge, though, an emphasis on gender has taken priority. According to D’Amico,

in this most recent phase of Rossetti scholarship, the focus is still on Rossetti’s

⁶¹ *Criticism*, p. 161.

⁶² Diane D’Amico, *Christina Rossetti: Faith, Gender and Time* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999), p. 9.

⁶³ Newlyn, p. 232, p. 255.

life as a woman, as it was for the Victorians and the moderns, only now womanhood is seen in different terms. For example, instead of renouncing marriage for the sake of her faith, Rossetti is seen to have been “resisting” marriage for the sake of her poetry.⁶⁴

For Coleridge, too, the ‘focus’ remains on her ‘life as a woman’, though as a victim rather than resister of patriarchy. As a result, the originality of her religious writings has not been examined. In the Tractarian era, Coleridge’s posture of reticence and self-effacement is strongly inflected by religious values as well as by social constructions of femininity.

For practical as well as religious reasons, Coleridge upholds in her authorship the ethic of a ‘modesty of service’, to borrow John Ruskin’s phrase.⁶⁵ A project of publication unsanctioned by male management or family support would be undignified, ‘ungentlewomanly’, as she puts it. It would compromise the writer’s standing as ‘a Lady’.⁶⁶ This is a crucial point for Coleridge in 1845, not only as editor of STC, but particularly as a single mother and widow. As defender of the family name, responsible for the commercial viability of the literary legacy, Coleridge herself must project an image of unimpeachable propriety. As Elaine Showalter observes: ‘Victorian women were not accustomed to *choosing* a vocation: womanhood was a vocation in itself’.⁶⁷ Reed’s account of Coleridge shows how successful she was in appearing to combine the vocations of ‘womanhood’ and authorship. She expresses the kinds of attitude Barbeau deplores when, in 1845, she comments on the behaviour of ‘our old Keswick rector’s daughter, Miss Lynn’. Eliza Lynn, aged twenty-three and single, was lodging in London in order to research ‘at the B. Museum – in behalf of an historical novel she has in hand’. Coleridge expresses strong disapproval of a ‘female’ ‘ambition of publishing’. If a woman is to write and publish, the endeavour must arise from a family context, Coleridge contends, and must be conducted under the management of a male relative: ‘[t]ill a Lady can publish under the superintendence and protection of a father, brother or husband, and carry on her literary pursuits, in the bosom of her *own* family, she had far better keep her productions to her own desk or content herself with dwelling on the thoughts of others’.⁶⁸ Ironically, when she wrote this, Coleridge was her own literary manager, working on her pioneering edition of *Biographia Literaria*. The contradiction

⁶⁴ D’Amico, p. 5, p. 7, pp. 7-8.

⁶⁵ Poovey, p. 35.

⁶⁶ *Criticism*, p. 161.

⁶⁷ Elaine Showalter, ‘A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists’, in *The Theory of Criticism From Plato to the Present: A Reader*, ed. by Raman Selden (Harlow: Longman, 1988) pp. 537-541 (p. 539). Showalter’s emphasis.

⁶⁸ *Criticism*, p. 161. Coleridge’s emphasis.

between Coleridge's stated view and her practice has a notable precedent. Poovey cites Lady Mary Wortley Montagu whose 'comment that a woman should "conceal whatever Learning she attains" is sharply undercut by her mastery of Latin, German, Turkish, Spanish, and Greek and by her own publications'.⁶⁹ Coleridge's editing of *Biographia*, however, was a project begun in proper collaboration with her husband. When Coleridge asks her brother-in-law, John Taylor Coleridge, to comment on her 'Introduction' to the edition prior to its submission for publication, she satisfies convention by seeking the sanction of a male relative. Equally, she is testing her theological arguments. John is a principled supporter of Tractarianism, a friend of John Keble's, whose criticism Coleridge trusts: his theological judgment, she says, 'is the best I can have'.⁷⁰ Again, family circumstances enable Coleridge to reconcile literary professionalism with feminine propriety.

When Coleridge meets the multi-talented author 'Miss E. Rigby' in 1849, 'perhaps the most brilliant woman of the day', she comments that the 'top of [Miss Rigby's] perfections' are her '*well-bred, courteous, unassuming manners*', and her 'thoroughly feminine' qualities.⁷¹ Equally, in her review of Tennyson's *The Princess*, Coleridge promotes the received view that men and women occupy separate and complementary spheres. The 'moral' of Tennyson's poem is an ages-old 'truth', she contends: 'that woman, in soul as in body, is no duplicate of man, but the complement of his being; that her sphere of action is not commensurate or parallel with his, but lies within it, sending its soft influence throughout his wider range, so that the two have an undivided interest in the whole'.⁷² Nonetheless, as Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall observe: '[p]ublic was not really public and private was not really private despite the potent imagery of "separate spheres"'.⁷³ Coleridge's editorship of her father's works, begun in collaboration with her husband, enables her to collapse the unstable distinction between 'private' and 'public'. She performs in the public sphere as an ostensible expression of private piety. Coleridge balances the conventions of what Mary Poovey terms 'the Proper Lady' with professional authorship.

Coleridge's Anxious Brothers

Gilbert and Gubar argue that in the nineteenth-century the 'female anxiety of authorship' was more 'profoundly debilitating' than 'the "male" tradition of strong, father-son

⁶⁹ Poovey, p. 40.

⁷⁰ *Criticism*, p. 36 n.

⁷¹ Wordsworth Trust, WLMS A/ Coleridge, Sara/ 78. Coleridge's emphases.

⁷² *Criticism*, p. 107.

⁷³ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1750-1850* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 33.

combat'.⁷⁴ This prescription does not apply to STC's children. Coleridge engages in revisionary 'combat' with STC, while Hartley and Derwent feel diminished and disabled by the literary presence of their father. Coleridge, by contrast, was empowered by the mentorship and encouragement of her Uncle Southey at the beginning of her literary career. Although, as Jane Spencer suggests, 'the literary daughter' was debarred from 'inherit[ing] the father's estate', Coleridge exploits the educational opportunities of her upbringing to become STC's literary and intellectual heir.⁷⁵ STC's fragmentary work required expert reconstruction and mediation. Mediation is the bridge between critical and creative authorship for Coleridge. Her 'self-creation' involves 'what Adrienne Rich has called "[r]evision —the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction"'.⁷⁶ Rich's definition of 'revision', cited by Gilbert and Gubar, applies exactly to Coleridge's critical and creative engagement with STC's 'old text[s]'. It applies to her innovative *Dialogues on Regeneration*, which develop from her revisionary textual encounter with STC.

By contrast, the cultural presence of STC is a source of anxiety for her brothers. Derwent, a clergyman and schoolmaster, the sibling whose primary interests were not literary, produced one full-length book, *The Scriptural Character of the English Church* (1839). In his 'Preface', Derwent expresses tense disquietude. He seeks to free himself, as a religious author, from the disabling presence of STC. He wishes to assert his distinctive textual identity and to differentiate his work from that of his father. At the same time, he is careful to express pious respect for, and essential concurrence with, STC's ideas. He is more concerned, though, with 'the apparent and the actual' than his father, and insists more fully, he says, 'on the necessity [...] of a ceremonial worship', and 'the sacramental nature of all outward religion'. This contrast of principle, Derwent asserts, arises from the difference between his own and his father's 'mental pursuits', and from the 'legitimate influence of [his own] sacred profession'. Derwent distances himself from STC by emphasizing that his theological interests are distinct from those of his father. It is for this reason, he explains, that he is not qualified to edit STC's literary remains. Derwent fears, nonetheless, that readers will inevitably judge his work in the light of STC's: 'I am admonished that this comparison cannot but be made by every reader of my father's works, who may be inclined to cast an eye over that of his younger son'. Implicit here is Derwent's frustration that his status as STC's 'son' will be the primary reason why he might gain readers, rather than his own merits. Derwent insists, however, that he has 'worked out' his own ideas 'independently'. His book is not 'an

⁷⁴ Gilbert and Gubar, p. 51.

⁷⁵ Jane Spencer, *Literary Relations: Kinship and The Literary Canon 1660-1830* (London: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 189.

⁷⁶ Gilbert and Gubar, p. 49.

exponent of [STC's] views'.⁷⁷ As a parish clergyman, working with practical problems of the church and Christian doctrine every day, defending Anglicanism against the influence of Baptists and Plymouth Brethren in his parish, Derwent is confident in the integrity and coherence of his religious position. Yet, he worries that readings of his work will be inflected by reference to his father's metaphysics. Derwent would subsequently abjure any aspirations to authorship to focus on his professional career as cleric and educator.

For Hartley, too, the legacy of STC was associated with debilitating anxiety. STC and Wordsworth's poetic idealizations of Hartley the child as 'Faery Voyager' and 'limber elf', for example, were inhibiting for Hartley the writer.⁷⁸ As Nicola Healey contends, 'he was fighting a battle against a textualized version of [...] his self'.⁷⁹ That Hartley was his 'father's favourite', according to Andrew Keanie, placed disabling pressures upon him.⁸⁰ Coleridge, by contrast, received gentle encouragement from Southey. STC projected onto Hartley a legacy of unsustainable intellectual and literary ambition. Hartley refers to 'the awful weight | And duty of my place and destiny'.⁸¹ Like Derwent, he could not escape the literary trap of his family name. He recognized that he would be read as STC's son, '[a] living spectre of my Father dead'.⁸² Hartley's response was to work in different literary modes to those of his father, and to develop a 'commitment to miniaturism', to borrow Andrew Keanie's apt term.⁸³ Above all, Hartley rejected STC's metaphysics. He found STC's religious philosophy 'too large' for his 'comprehension' and 'too high' for his 'apprehension'.⁸⁴ STC's 'great Idea was too high a strain | For [his] infirmity'.⁸⁵ In an alternative draft of the poem, Hartley describes the 'celestial fire' of STC's intellect as 'what [he] dreaded most'.⁸⁶ Just as Derwent is inhibited by the prospect of theological comparison with STC, Hartley finds STC's 'Vast' metaphysical vistas incapacitating.⁸⁷ At the same time, his idealization of STC produces disabling guilt. As this thesis will show, Coleridge, by contrast, thrives as an author within the family setting. Far from idealizing STC, she is sharply aware of his

⁷⁷ The Rev. Derwent Coleridge, *The Scriptural Character of the English Church* (London: Parker, 1839), p. xxvii, p. xxiv, p. xxv, p. xxiv.

⁷⁸ William Wordsworth, 'Poems in Two Volumes', and *Other Poems, 1800-1807*, ed. by Jared Curtis, *The Cornell Wordsworth* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), pp. 100-101, l. 5. *PWCC*, I, Part 1, p. 503, l. 656.

⁷⁹ Healey, p. 66.

⁸⁰ Andrew Keanie, *Hartley Coleridge: A Reassessment* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 34.

⁸¹ *HCPW*, p. 232, ll. 23-24.

⁸² Hartley Coleridge, *New Poems*, ed. by Earl Leslie Griggs (London: Oxford University Press, 1942), p. 69, l. 2.

⁸³ Keanie, p. x.

⁸⁴ *HC Letters*, p. 210.

⁸⁵ *HCPW*, p. 111, ll. 11-12.

⁸⁶ *HC Letters*, p. 199, ll. 4, 9.

⁸⁷ *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. by Earl Leslie Griggs, 6 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956-1971), I (1956), p. 354. STC's emphasis.

literary and personal disabilities, which she exposes in *Biographia 1847*. In sympathy with the substance of STC's intellect, she seizes the authorial opportunities for originality that his fragmentary oeuvre affords.

The Development of Dialogic Authorship

My study traces Coleridge's whole literary development. In the first chapter, I discuss her early work as a translator, in which Uncle Southey was her mentor and literary agent, and based writings of his own upon her translations. I show that, from the outset, Coleridge experiences literary productivity as a communal, familial and dialogic activity. My subsequent analyses of three poems emphasize that Coleridge's authorship is rooted in the family community: the poems directly address family members and engage in revisionary textual dialogue with her literary fathers. Two of the poems I examine appeared in Coleridge's volume *Pretty Lessons in Verse for Good Children* (1834), and were written initially for her own children. Henry, as Southey had done earlier, acted as her sympathetic editorial reader and literary agent in bringing the volume to publication. Such was the case also with *Phantasmion* (1837), a fairy-tale novel intended initially for the domestic sphere, written for her children. *Phantasmion* reflects Coleridge's ongoing dialogue with her literary fathers in asserting the educative potency of the imagination against the prevailing culture of Benthamite Utilitarianism. Coleridge expresses her gratitude for Henry's encouragement of her novel and his editorial input, and she enlists his moral and practical support for her projected work on the theology of the Oxford Movement.

At the time Coleridge was writing *Phantasmion*, she was also engaged in editorial collaboration with Henry on editions of STC's works and selections from his posthumous literary remains. Henry is named on the title pages as sole editor, though I argue that Coleridge's contributions to editions of STC's work between 1834 and 1843, the year of Henry's death, are far more extensive than is initially apparent. Coleridge's editorial research gives her the necessary resources for undertaking her essay 'On Rationalism', which is the focus of my second chapter. This religious work is remarkable for its innovative subversion of early Victorian gender conventions: Coleridge infiltrates the male domain of academic theology and engages the leading theologians of the day in polemical colloquy on equal terms, in the ostensible cause of pious obedience as daughter and widow. 'On Rationalism' reveals Coleridge to be working towards a dialogic style in her polemical writing, in which she attempts to present the views she opposes fairly, and to criticise the doctrine, not the writer himself, for whom she maintains a tone of respect. I analyse Coleridge's critique of specific aspects of Tractarian theory, in which two dominant themes emerge: her view that

Tractarianism is elitist and authoritarian, resistant to dialogue; and that its doctrines impose arbitrary limitations on the boundlessness of God's grace. A boldly original work, 'On Rationalism' is in dialogue with STC's *Aids to Reflection*, and adapts STC's Christian philosophy to serve her own polemical ends. When the integrity of STC's philosophy is called into question by charges of plagiarism, Coleridge undertakes to edit *Biographia Literaria* and examine the evidence. This project is vital for the viability of her long-term scheme to reconstruct STC's whole oeuvre, and also for the reception of her own writings, in which she appropriates and develops his philosophical ideas.

Coleridge's engagement with STC's plagiarisms is the subject of Chapter 3. Again, the family context – her roles as STC's daughter and widow of his late editor – sanctions her authoritative incursion into the male territory of academic philosophy. Coleridge's editorship of *Biographia* is a pivotal project for her: it brings into play her formative experience as a translator, and requires her to analyse the textual structure of STC's work, which will influence her subsequent practice as an author of dialogic religious prose. I discuss Coleridge's exposure of the profound contradictions in STC's authorial theory and practice in relation to contemporary debates over literary property. Coleridge analyses STC's literary transgressions in textual, philosophical and psychological terms. Her academic methods reveal the evidence of STC's plagiarisms, and she exposes what she believes to be their underlying cognitive and affective causes. Her strategy of openness seeks to pave the way for a just evaluation of STC's strengths, having closed down controversy and speculation by candid exposure of his weaknesses. Also, in exposing STC's literary incapacities, Coleridge opens an authorial space for herself.

My fourth chapter follows the development of Coleridge's religious authorship in her 'Introduction' to *Biographia 1847*, and her 'Extracts from a New Treatise on Regeneration' (1848). Coleridge argues that STC's major achievement was his application of Kant's critical philosophy to the vindication of Christian faith. She again confirms that her priority in encountering STC's ideas is to apply them to problems of her own day. She engages at length with Newman on the contested doctrine of justification, and concludes that the distinctions between Catholic and Protestant versions of the doctrine are merely verbal. This anticipates her argument in 'Extracts', that sectarian polemicists have a professional investment in creating and perpetuating controversy. Therefore, she contends, they magnify minute distinctions between doctrines that are in fact fundamentally similar. Their unscrupulous provocation of religious division is reflected in ostentatious literary styles, which reflect authorial arrogance. Coleridge proposes, by contrast, a code of conduct for fair and cordial engagement in religious discourse. She adopts John Keble's aesthetic criteria of reserve

and plainness in her theory and practice of polemical prose. In her 'Extracts', Coleridge engages in a poetic dialogue with Keble, in which her tone and language are affectionate and reverent, exemplifying the ethos of friendly respect she advocates in polemical discourse. Her dialogue with Keble also reflects her view that the development of religious doctrine is necessarily a communal and collaborative activity.

In Chapter 5, I discuss the ways in which Coleridge refines her dialogic methods of writing: firstly, in the 'Introduction' to *Essays on His Own Times* (1850), in which she employs a polyphonic textual structure, reminiscent of STC's practice of assembling a new literary product from diverse textual components. Coleridge exploits this technique to make an authoritative case against England in its dereliction of moral duty towards Ireland. Secondly, I discuss Coleridge's use of Socratic dialogue in her unpublished *Dialogues on Regeneration*, a substantial and strikingly innovative body of work produced in the last two years of her life. In these works, Coleridge creates a community of speakers, who span a wide spectrum of religious and sectarian viewpoints. Coleridge exploits the Socratic form to demonstrate a collaborative methodology in which characters collectively progress towards a clearer conception of religious truth. The *Dialogues* abound in genial humour and friendly interchange, suggesting that Christian fellowship and heartfelt devotion transcend doctrinal and sectarian division. Ultimately, the *Dialogues* reflect Coleridge's vocational conception that the end of theological discourse must be practical: to support and guide the Christian way of life. My Conclusion focuses on two complementary poetic responses by Coleridge to STC, which elucidate the public and private dimensions of her literary vocation.

Chapter One

Collaboration and Dialogue: Sara Coleridge's Authorship, 1822–1837

Southey's Student and Collaborator: Sara Coleridge as Translator.

Coleridge's first published literary works were translations. *An Account of the Abipones, an Equestrian People of Paraguay, from the Latin of Martin Dobrizhoffer* was published in 1822 when Coleridge was aged nineteen.¹ Her second publication, which appeared in 1825, was a translation from early sixteenth-century French: *The Right Joyous and Pleasant History of the Feats, Gests, and Prowesses of the Chevalier Bayard, the Good Knight without Fear and without Reproach*.² John Murray published both translations, while the translator herself remained anonymous. Translation affords insight into the processes underlying textual production. This formative experience influences Coleridge's future career, therefore, both as STC's editor and as a writer of dialogic religious prose. Translation also enables her to engage in sustained literary activity compatible with the gender conventions of her era. According to Lesa Scholl, translation was seen in Coleridge's day as 'inferior and derivative', and therefore a socially acceptable pursuit for women.³

Previous commentators on Coleridge accept the assumption that translation is a subordinate literary activity. Kathleen Jones suggests that the family endorsed Coleridge's translation work for this reason: '[w]omen were domestic beings', Jones contends, 'unsuited to public life, who might turn a pretty verse or write romances, or even translate the work of great men like Dobrizhoffer, so long as it did not interfere with the real [domestic] business of their lives'.⁴ Jones's ironic 'great men' suggests that a female translator is the servant of an inevitably male original author. This overlooks the empowering processes of translation. Gadamer regards translation as an hermeneutic activity: 'a re-creation of the text', an 'interpretation, and not simply reproduction'. It employs a dialogic procedure, according to Gadamer: 'translating is like an especially laborious process of understanding', he observes,

in which one views the distance between one's own opinion and its contrary as ultimately unbridgeable. And, as in conversation, when there are such unbridgeable differences, a compromise can sometimes be achieved in the to and fro of dialogue, so in the to and fro of weighing and balancing possibilities, the translator will seek the best solution — a solution that can never be more

¹ *An Account of the Abipones, an Equestrian People of Paraguay, from the Latin of Martin Dobrizhoffer*, 3 vols (London: Murray, 1822).

² *The Right Joyous and Pleasant History of the Feats, Gests, Prowesses of the Chevalier Bayard, the Good Knight without Fear and without Reproach*, by the Loyal Servant, 2 vols (London: Murray, 1825).

³ Lesa Scholl, *Translation, Authorship and The Professional Woman: Charlotte Bronte, Harriet Martineau, and George Eliot* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), p. 4.

⁴ Jones, p. 4.

than a compromise.⁵

The translator, participating in a creative activity of negotiation, possesses a significant measure of autonomy. Susan Bassnett describes translation, therefore, as ‘an act of creative rewriting’. Throughout Coleridge’s career, ‘creative rewriting’ is her essential literary mode, in which she develops her authorial identity. It also defines the compositional processes she finds in STC’s texts. Because a translation ‘is a physical manifestation of one person’s reading and rewriting of someone else’s text’, Bassnett argues, the experience of translation ‘offer[s] unique insights into processes of textual manipulation’.⁶ Coleridge herself will exploit such ‘insights’ as STC’s mediator and as original author. The misconception of translation as a subordinate activity worked ‘inadvertently’ to the benefit of ‘women writers’ in the nineteenth century, Scholl argues.⁷ This applies to Coleridge, whose experience as translator inducted her into dialogic processes of creativity.

A.W. Schlegel, in the generation before Coleridge, anticipated the post-modern conception of the translator as ‘a creative artist’.⁸ Coleridge would later research the elder Schlegel’s work in relation to STC’s plagiarisms and literary criticism. In 1803, Schlegel argued that translation is an act of original creativity: ‘it is easy to demonstrate that objective poetic translation is true writing, a new creation. Or if it is maintained that you should not translate at all’, Schlegel continues, ‘you would have to reply that the human mind hardly does anything else, that the sum total of its activity consists of precisely that’.⁹ Schlegel’s idea that translation is essential in all cognitive processing anticipates Coleridge’s analysis of STC. According to Coleridge, STC appropriates, translates and synthesizes literary material with a fluidity that dissolves cognitive boundaries, and invalidates the concept of authorial ownership. She will find that STC, in the process of translating Schelling and Maass, engages in a textual dialogue with his sources that results in a ‘new’ hybrid ‘creation’. Coleridge’s early translation projects prepare her for a radical understanding of authorship, in which, to borrow the words of Michael Macovski, ‘literary meaning is rendered not [...] by a single author, but is communally constructed and exchanged’.¹⁰ Coleridge’s mature theory and practice will reflect this principle.

Bella Brodzki describes translation as a process of redefinition and rediscovery.

⁵ Gadamer, p. 404.

⁶ Susan Bassnett, *Translation Studies*, 4th edn (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), p. 7, p. 13.

⁷ Scholl, p. 4.

⁸ Bassnett, p. 5.

⁹ A. W. Schlegel, ‘Extract from *History of Romantic Literature*’, in *Translation / History / Culture: A Sourcebook*, ed. by André Lefevere (London: Routledge, 1992), p.17 (p. 17).

¹⁰ Macovski, p. 4.

This sheds light upon Coleridge's mediation of STC, and her understanding of this task: 'in an act of identification that is not imitation', Brodzki argues, 'translation hearkens back to the original or source text'. It 'elicits what might otherwise remain recessed or unarticulated, enabling the source text to live beyond itself, to exceed its limitations'.¹¹ This applies to Coleridge's analysis of STC's textual and intellectual appropriations from German philosophers. STC's texts, according to Coleridge, adapt the ideas of Schelling and Kant to Christian doctrine. Their writings, therefore, 'live beyond [themselves]' in STC's work, and 'exceed' what Coleridge regards as 'their limitations'. Brodzki's formulation applies also to Coleridge's appropriation of STC's material in her writings. She takes STC's ideas and terminology from their original context and 'bring[s] [them] down into the present hour'.¹² In Coleridge's refashioning, STC's work is able 'to live beyond itself' in early Victorian Britain, and to 'exceed [the] limitations' of its own times.¹³ Processes essential to the practice of translation are central to Coleridge's whole literary career.

Coleridge's experience as translator inducts her into authorship as a collaborative activity. In his discussion of John and Harriet Mill as 'joint authors' of John Stuart Mill's *Autobiography*, Jack Stillinger observes that '[i]n many cases multiple authorship begins [...] at home'.¹⁴ Collaboration was important within the STC, Wordsworth and Southey circle in the 1790s; within the family context, it is a defining factor of Coleridge's career. She took on the task of translating *An Account of the Abipones* under the mentorship of her Uncle Southey. Initially, she collaborated on the translation with Derwent. In 1818, Derwent needed to raise funds for his university education, and was working as a private tutor, coaching two boys for entry to Eton. Southey suggested that he earn extra income by translating Martin Dobrizhoffer's *Historia De Abiponibus*, which 'might possibly bring some profit'.¹⁵ Dobrizhoffer was an Austrian Jesuit priest who had worked as a missionary in Paraguay before the expulsion of his Order. Dobrizhoffer's Latin account of his experiences in Paraguay was published in 1674.

Southey was aware of the proliferation of translation as a professional occupation, but regarded it as badly paid and highly competitive, as he observed in 1818: 'new books are sent out from France and Germany by the sheet as they pass through the

¹¹ Bella Brodzki, *Can These Bones Live? Translation, Survival and Cultural Memory* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2007), p. 2.

¹² *Essays*, I, p. lxxxiv.

¹³ Brodzki, p. 2.

¹⁴ Stillinger, p. 8.

¹⁵ *Minnow Among Tritons: Mrs. S. T. Coleridge's Letters to Thomas Poole 1799-1834*, ed. by Stephen Potter (Bloomsbury: Nonesuch Press, 1934), p. 89. Mrs. S. T. Coleridge's emphasis.

press, lest the translation should be forestalled'.¹⁶ Coleridge undertook to assist Derwent, and they embarked on the task late in 1818, Derwent working on Volume 1, Coleridge on Volume 3. When his place at university was secured soon afterwards by the generosity of STC's friend, John Hookham Frere, Derwent withdrew from the project. As Mrs. Coleridge explains, 'it was thought too much for his health to pursue the translation' alongside tutorial duties, 'and by Mr. Wordsworth's advice it was withdrawn'.¹⁷ Southey examined Coleridge's work-in-progress after Derwent's withdrawal and gave his approval for her to continue.

Coleridge greatly enjoyed the potentially profitable task of translation. Her mother reported approvingly that Coleridge 'liked the employment "of all things"'.¹⁸ Sara Fricker Coleridge encouraged her daughter's literary work, just as she had superintended — with Southey — her advanced education. As Molly Lefebure comments, 'it took an exceptional woman, in the first decades of the nineteenth century, to encourage her daughter to acquire [and exercise] learning as Mrs C encouraged [Coleridge]'.¹⁹ Coleridge's mother reports that Southey had advised her, kindly, to manage her expectations sensibly: 'she must not be disappointed if nothing was gained' by her efforts, 'and she must *not work too hard*'.²⁰ Mudge and Jones interpret Southey's attitude to Coleridge as belittling. They refer to Southey's discouraging advice to Charlotte Brontë — '[I]terature cannot be the business of a woman's life and ought not to be'. Yet, they ignore Southey's statement, earlier in the same letter, that he warns 'every young man' who aspires to be an author against 'the perilous [...] course' of following a literary profession.²¹ Southey is wholly supportive of Coleridge's translation work. Derwent was thought equally susceptible to stress: to continue the translation would impair his health, it was feared. Coleridge's mother held a Wollstonecraftian view of her abilities. Southey, entrusting the whole project to Coleridge, clearly shares this attitude. As Virginia Woolf observes of Southey, 'that admirable, erudite and indefatigable man' oversaw Coleridge's education and facilitated her intellectual and literary activities.²²

In the event, Coleridge's health flourished as a result of her work. When *An Account of the Abipones* was close to publication, her mother reported that Coleridge was 'at present in better health than [she had] ever known her [...] so fond [was] she of

¹⁶ *The Life and Correspondence of Robert Southey*, ed. by Cuthbert Southey, 6 vols (London: Longman, Brown, Green & Longmans, 1850), IV, p. 312.

¹⁷ Potter, p. 89.

¹⁸ Potter, p. 89.

¹⁹ Molly Lefebure, *The Bondage of Love: A Life of Mrs Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (London: Gollancz, 1986), p. 234.

²⁰ Potter, pp. 89-90. Mrs S. T. Coleridge's emphasis.

²¹ *Correspondence of Southey*, VI, p. 329, p. 328.

²² Woolf, *Essays*, VI, p. 250.

literary employments'.²³ It was fortunate that Coleridge enjoyed an activity from which she could earn money. She refers to having been 'more than amply [...] remunerated' for her translation.²⁴ Griggs regards Coleridge's translation work as serious employment, in which her ability to 'earn a small income' was a significant consideration, enabling her to achieve a sense of independence.²⁵ Coleridge was paid £125 for the translation, a tolerable sum in 1822, considering that 'Letitia Landon, one of the most famous and prolific authors of the later romantic period, lived on £120 a year'.²⁶ A sizable amount of Coleridge's earnings went to Derwent for his university expenses, and the rest funded the visit she and her mother made to London in 1822. The financial rewards of *An Account of the Abipones* encouraged Coleridge to take on further translation work. She was aware that 'a governess's situation', recommended by Uncle Edward Coleridge, was a likely alternative to literary employment.²⁷

Coleridge's next project was a translation of the sixteenth-century French work, the *History [...] of the Chevalier Bayard*. Although a chivalric tale, 'all about battles and sieges', as she puts it, its hero appeals to early nineteenth-century Christian values.²⁸ Along with military valour, Bayard's distinguishing virtue was Christian charity: 'it was not known till his death of what numbers of families he had been the support'. Similarly, while in command of Grenoble during a plague epidemic, Bayard had provided 'medical aid' for 'the poor' at his own 'expense; his beneficence would not lose sight of [the recipients of aid] till it was ascertained that they had regained health and strength sufficient to supply their necessities'.²⁹ As in Coleridge's first translation, her central protagonist is a Christian man of action.

Two further aspects of Coleridge's translation work have been neglected: first, the importance of Southey's literary influence upon Coleridge; second, the reciprocal nature of the literary relationship between apprentice and master. Southey acted as Coleridge's editor, and mentored her in matters of structure, technique and style, as well as guiding her through the practicalities of publishing. Griggs affirms that Coleridge 'had drawn deeply from the mind and spirit' of Southey.³⁰ At this stage of her career, Southey was Coleridge's principal influence. As Lefebure comments, 'Southey had been far more of a true father to [her] than had her own'. When she met STC in London in 1822, Lamb heard her punctuating STC's monologues from time to time with, 'Uncle

²³ Potter, p. 90.

²⁴ *Criticism*, p. 1.

²⁵ Griggs, *Coleridge Fille*, p. 57.

²⁶ Griggs, *Coleridge Fille*, p. 55. William St. Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004; repr. 2007), p. 195.

²⁷ Waldegrave, p. 84.

²⁸ Griggs, *Coleridge Fille*, p. 56.

²⁹ *Chevalier Bayard*, I, p. viii, p. ix.

³⁰ Griggs, *Coleridge Fille*, p. 57.

Southey doesn't think so'.³¹ After publication of *An Account of the Abipones*, Coleridge wrote to Southey, thanking him for having 'entrust[ed]' the translation to her, and for having 'give[n] up [his] valuable time' to assist her in the work and for having 'manage[d]' it for her.³² Southey reviewed Coleridge's translation anonymously in the *Quarterly*. He referred to a point of narrative structure which he and Coleridge had no doubt discussed: 'The translator has, not injudiciously, curtailed the work by omitting controversial parts in defence of [the Jesuits]'.³³ Coleridge explains the rationale of these cuts in her 'Preface'. She has omitted 'many' of the 'controversial parts' regarding the Jesuits, she explains, because they would be of no interest to contemporary British readers.³⁴ In his review, Southey mentions a distinctive strength of Coleridge's language, in which he may have guided her: '[t]he sentences have been frequently curtailed without any curtailment of their sense', writes Southey, 'a judicious mode of abridgement by which nothing is lost'.³⁵ Southey's comment indicates his belief in Coleridge's mastery of her literary craft, which he himself has nurtured.

Her prose is characterized by a terse precision:

Sixty leagues of the journey still remained, through an unknown country, full of woods, lakes and marshes. [...] They were obliged to creep for a long time through trackless woods, and at every step to struggle with briars, which generally proved a bloody contest. To assuage the burning thirst occasioned by extreme heat and bodily fatigue, they could meet with nothing but stinking water out of pools and ditches, which offended their nostrils to such a degree that the poor creatures almost thought thirst preferable.³⁶

The sound effects of Coleridge's syntax and simple diction ('at every step to struggle with briars') emphasize the men's physical effort. Her vivid yet restrained descriptive style, with its judicious economy in terms of adjective use ('bloody contest', 'burning thirst', 'stinking water') anticipates *Phantasmion*, and her incisive vitality in polemical writing. Southey's early mentorship was of lasting importance for Coleridge as a writer of prose. Under his guidance she learned also the committed resilience literary work requires. Her subsequent writing life shows that she accepted the tough conditions of authorship, and emulated Southey's scholarly stamina. In 1848, she describes the 'labour' of tracing references in her editorial work as 'most [...] ungrateful [and] very time-consuming'.³⁷ Yet, she perseveres. Southey's mentorship prepares her, also, for

³¹ Lefebure, *Mrs Coleridge*, p. 234, p. 235.

³² *Criticism*, p. 1.

³³ 'An Account of the Abipones', *Quarterly Review*, 26 (1822), 277-323 (p. 279).

³⁴ *Abipones*, I, p. viii.

³⁵ 'Abipones', *Quarterly Review* 26, p. 279.

³⁶ *Abipones*, III, pp. 104-105.

³⁷ *Criticism*, p. 40.

literary disappointments. He described his *History of Brazil* as ‘the most laborious historical work which has ever been composed in our language’.³⁸ Its three volumes, though, were of ‘little interest’ to the British reading public: as Kenneth Curry observes, ‘the sale of the history [...] netted [Southey] less than one article in the *Quarterly*’.³⁹ While Coleridge learned lasting practical and moral lessons of authorship from Southey, he too found the experience of mentorship creatively enabling.

There was a significant element of reciprocity in the literary relationship of Coleridge and her Uncle Southey. Coleridge’s translations brought her into close contact with Southey’s literary projects. He had encountered Dobrizhoffer’s book while writing his *History of Brazil*. In November 1817 he had ‘in hand’ *A Tale of Paraguay*, a poem based on Dobrizhoffer’s narrative written in Spenserian stanzas. At the time Coleridge was working on her translation of Dobrizhoffer, Southey had put aside his poem, having lost confidence in his abilities as a poet. According to W. A. Speck, Southey ‘had struggled to produce it in a demanding Spenserian stanza’. Early in 1824, though, Southey resumed work on the poem with renewed commitment: ‘I have written some forty stanzas in the “Tale of Paraguay”’, he reported in May. Speck suggests that Coleridge’s translation of *An Account of the Abipones* gave Southey some impetus for resuming his poem. Southey’s review of the translation is likely to have been a catalyst in re-igniting his poetic creativity. His mentoring of Coleridge was therefore of reciprocal benefit, and helped him to reinvigorate the poetic career he had considered ‘almost at an end’. When he resumed writing *A Tale of Paraguay*, Southey found that he had ‘brought [himself] more into the run of verse than [he had] been for many years’.⁴⁰ His reference to Coleridge’s translation in the poem pays generous tribute to her achievement, and implies the close relationship between his own work and hers:

In Latin he composed his history;
A garrulous, but a lively tale, and fraught
With matter of delight and food for thought.
And, if he could in Merlin’s glass have seen
By whom his tomes to speak our tongue were taught,
The old man would have felt as pleased, I ween,
As when he won the ear of that great Empress Queen.⁴¹

³⁸ W. A. Speck, *Robert Southey: Entire Man of Letters* (London: Yale University Press, 2006), p. 173.

³⁹ Curry, p. 126.

⁴⁰ Speck, p. 173, p. 195, p. 194, p. 189, pp. 194-195.

⁴¹ *The Poems of Robert Southey*, ed. by Maurice H. Fitzgerald (London: Oxford University Press, 1909), p. 681, ll. 65-71.

Southey refers to the honour paid to Dobrizhoffer by the Empress Maria Theresa when she invited him to describe his adventures to her. It is an equal honour, Southey implies, for Dobrizhoffer to have been translated by Sara Coleridge.

There is a further element which warrants consideration in the literary relationship of Coleridge and Southey, arising from her translations. Kenneth Curry draws attention to Southey's success in the genre of short biography. Southey's brief biographies for the *Quarterly* would be occasioned by 'a new biography or a recently edited journal or memoir'. In Curry's view, '[t]he best' of Southey's 'small-scale biographies may well be that of the Chevalier Bayard' in his review of the 'memoir [...] Sara Coleridge had just translated'.⁴² Coleridge's translation of *Chevalier Bayard* confirms Southey's confidence in her. She writes, in April 1823, that 'my Uncle, before he went to Town, put into my hands the memoirs of the *Chevalier Bayard*, to translate from old French'.⁴³ Given Southey's predilection for the genre of short biography in the *Quarterly* (his *Life of Nelson* had grown from such a piece), he is likely to have had his biographical review of *Chevalier Bayard* in mind when he gave Coleridge the book to translate. Coleridge's translation would provide Southey with the occasion, as Curry puts it, 'to indulge his love of chivalry and the Middle Ages'.⁴⁴

Yet, the depiction of the heroic Bayard was more than an opportunity for Southey to revel in a rousing chivalric tale, as his tribute to Coleridge at the beginning of his essay shows: '[t]he translator of this "right joyous and pleasant history" has [...] performed a useful task in thus bringing forward a work which has never before appeared in our language'. Southey explains that the translation is 'useful' because it will help to promote English understanding and esteem of the French: it 'may assist in producing well-founded feelings of respect and good will towards a nation against which we have had but too much cause to cherish the most hostile disposition'.⁴⁵ Southey reflects Goethe's view of the translator as 'a mediator in [the] general spiritual commerce' of humanity. For Goethe, the translator's 'calling' is 'to advance' human 'interchange'.⁴⁶ Coleridge's translation of *Chevalier Bayard* fulfills this role. 'It is desirable,' says Southey,

that nations should be conversant with foreign models [of honour and virtue], and particularly with those which may be found among their hereditary and natural rivals. In proportion as this knowledge is cultivated they will be disposed to judge more generously, more kindly, and more equitably of each other.⁴⁷

⁴² Curry, p. 100, p. 101.

⁴³ *Criticism*, p. 2.

⁴⁴ Curry, p. 101.

⁴⁵ 'Memoirs of Bayard', *Quarterly Review*, 32 (1825), 355-397 (p. 356).

⁴⁶ J. W. von Goethe, 'Extracts from *Writings on Literature*', in Lefevere, pp. 24-25 (p. 25).

⁴⁷ 'Bayard', *Quarterly Review*, 32, p. 397.

Southey concludes his review of *An Account of the Abipones* by commenting upon the morality of international politics. He observes that the ‘miseries’ endured by ‘South America’ over the last decade might have been avoided if ‘the colonists’ had exercised ‘patience’ in awaiting the outcome of affairs in ‘the mother-country’.⁴⁸ As Lesa Scholl observes, ‘[t]ranslation had wider implications for the growing global community of the nineteenth century’.⁴⁹ Southey views Coleridge’s translations in a ‘global’ perspective. As well as being politically ‘useful’, as Southey puts it, the translations are morally instructive. The central character of each is a Christian hero. Coleridge’s insistence on the ‘practical usefulness’ of STC’s works reflects Southey’s moral conception of her early translations.⁵⁰

Poems for the Family: Dialogue and Revision

In the context of Southey’s broader interests, and alongside his review essays, Coleridge’s translations are components of a larger, collaborative whole. Southey was instigator and editorial advisor; he was also the mediator, interpreter and authoritative commentator. Coleridge, as translator, performed the core creative role. This dialogic literary model influenced Coleridge’s future career. The family setting of Coleridge’s authorship, and its dialogic nature, are reflected in her poem of 1828, ‘Epistle from Sara to her sister Mary whom she has never yet seen, her “Yarrow Unvisited”’. It is addressed to Derwent’s wife, Mary. Coleridge’s title refers to one of her favourite Wordsworth poems, written in 1803, in which he decides not to visit Yarrow on his tour of Scotland, in order to preserve the integrity of his imagined vision, drawn from poetry and ballad:

Be Yarrow stream unseen, unknown!
It must, or we shall rue it:
We have a vision of our own;
Ah! Why should we undo it?

Wordsworth concludes that he will keep ‘treasured dreams’ intact, which will be more sustaining than a real visit: ‘For when we’re there, although ’tis fair, |’Twill be another Yarrow’.⁵¹

Coleridge’s poem revises the Wordsworthian concept of the power of ‘vision’. She dreams of Mary, but the ‘vision’, yielded in a ‘dream’, confuses what the conscious mind is able to picture:

⁴⁸ ‘Abipones’, *Quarterly Review*, 26, p. 323.

⁴⁹ Scholl, p. 188.

⁵⁰ *Biographia 1847*, I, p. clvi.

⁵¹ Wordsworth, ‘*Poems, in Two Volumes*’, p. 200, ll. 49-54, 54-55, 51.

But Sleep, delighted to distress,
Each dream of thee with sadness taints,
And, ere the vision vanishes,
Mars all that waking Fancy paints.

Coleridge, distrusting creations of the subconscious mind, reverses Wordsworth's confidence in imaginative 'vision'. The best 'waking Fancy' can provide is a 'future scene' coloured by 'Hope'. Coleridge's conclusion, that 'visions', however 'glowing', are unsatisfactory, revises Wordsworth's theme:

Mary! these visions of my own,
All sweet and soothing as they be,
O! may I change, ere weary grown,
For truth and blest reality.

'[R]eality' is 'blest', in contrast with creations of the delusive 'Morpheus'. The image of 'enthrall[ment] | Neath Morpheus's [...] sway' reflects Coleridge's reaction against the 'wild fantastic' elements of the Romantic literary character, associated with STC.⁵²

Coleridge's revision of Wordsworth's conclusion contrasts with her appropriation of his verse form. While Wordsworth varies his rhymes, Coleridge's stanzas consistently adopt the rhyme scheme of the octave of a Shakespearian sonnet. This reflects Coleridge's tendency throughout her poetry to use regular rhyme and verse forms. She requires 'rhymes and stanzas [as] a mechanical support', she says, 'a sort of *frame-work* of poetry [to rest] upon'. The regular sound pattern of the 'Epistle' is neither predictable nor obtrusive; it anticipates the precept she states in 1851, that poetic language should 'not challeng[e] attention by itself'.⁵³ She maintains that a poet's techniques should be inconspicuous. Coleridge's tenet parallels a critical principle that John Keble applies to religious verse in his essay, 'Sacred Poetry'.⁵⁴ This was published in the issue of the *Quarterly Review* preceding that in which Southey's 'Memoirs of Bayard' appeared, so it is very likely that Coleridge read Keble's essay in 1825.

The religious poet, Keble contends, must avoid 'laborious refinement': there must be no ostentatious verbal 'originality', nor 'what is technically called effect'.⁵⁵

⁵² *Poems*, p. 57, ll. 118, 117-120, 145, 146, 149-152, 113-114.

⁵³ *Criticism*, p. 21, p. 202. Coleridge's emphasis.

⁵⁴ 'Sacred Poetry', *Quarterly Review*, 32 (1825), 211-232.

⁵⁵ John Keble, 'Sacred Poetry', in *Occasional Papers and Reviews* (London: Parker, 1877), pp. 81-107 (p. 88).

Coleridge's style in the 'Epistle' reflects this principle: the regular versification complements her poetic diction in a formal description of the seasons, for example. The contrast between 'Sweet Spring' and a traditional Christmas scene is emphasized by the lighter stresses of the first line, and the stronger emphases on 'frost', 'snow', and 'fires' in line 4:

Attended by the frolic Wind
Sweet Spring each field and grove attires,
Yet holly-berries still remind
Of frost and snow and Christmas fires.
The foliage of the chestnut droops
Like Naiad's drenched and clinging robe;
Aurelians bloom in yellow groups,
And half unfold the tiny globe.⁵⁶

Each quatrain of the octave frames a separate picture of the Keswick countryside in transition from late winter to early spring. It is a stylized description, in which the richly delicate imagery and Keatsian mythological reference idealize the view.

The 'Epistle's' dialogic elements are characteristic of Coleridge. She finds her creative space in response to a textual source, the product of one of her literary fathers. This is reminiscent of STC's mode of composition, in which the text of another writer becomes the basis for the development of a new work. In her 'Epistle', Coleridge is introducing herself, and recent family history, to her new sister-in-law. Her reference to Wordsworth in the form, structure and theme of the poem indicates the personal significance of the Rydal poet to the Coleridge children. Coleridge's revision of Wordsworth's conclusion suggests the filial licence she enjoys in engaging the poet in friendly dialogue. When she describes for Mary her childhood with Derwent, and happy memories of playing in different seasons by the River Greta, Coleridge draws on a Wordsworthian mode. Her description of Keswick in spring blends into a recollected vision of Derwent as her childhood playmate:

How many Springs have bloomed and faded
Since one whose name thou lov'st to hear,
On Greta's bank with trees o'ershaded
Joined in my sports, a pleased compeer!⁵⁷

⁵⁶ *Poems*, p. 53, ll. 9-16.

⁵⁷ *Poems*, p. 54, ll. 33-36.

In the ninth stanza, Coleridge changes her scene from ‘fancy-free’ childhood to adult ‘sorrow’. She brings family troubles into focus in a stanza describing Hartley. She omits him from her recollections of childhood, introducing to Mary only ‘the wreck of time mis-spent’, the derelict figure of the failed adult.⁵⁸

I thought of one so fondly deemed
The child of Genius and of Worth,
By thoughtless follies unredeemed
Low laid upon the soiling earth.⁵⁹

The opening words repeat those of Wordsworth in his stanza on Chatterton in ‘Resolution and Independence’: ‘I thought of Chatterton, the marvellous Boy, | The sleepless Soul that perished in his pride’.⁶⁰ Coleridge’s allusion associates Hartley with the Romantic archetype of doomed poetic genius. She relates Hartley’s adult ‘follies’ to STC’s ‘fond’ visions of him in childhood, and implies that Hartley, ‘child of Genius’, is the victim of his paternal inheritance. Her dialogue with Wordsworth, Hartley’s other literary father with STC and Southey, takes on a critical aspect in this stanza. She implicates him in having colluded, ‘fondly’ and mistakenly, in the construction of a damaging mythology around Hartley. Her line, ‘Low laid upon the soiling earth’, refers to Wordsworth’s idealized depiction of Hartley in ‘To H. C., Six Years Old’, in which he is

a Dew-drop, which the morn brings forth,
Not doomed to jostle with unkindly shocks;
Or to be trailed along the soiling earth.⁶¹

Earlier in the poem, Wordsworth expresses ‘fears’ for Hartley’s future vulnerability. He puts these aside, confident that ‘Nature’ will shield the ‘Faery Voyager’ from painful reality. He envisions ‘either a sudden early death or an eternal childhood for Hartley’, as Nicola Healey aptly puts it.⁶² Wordsworth’s faith that ‘Nature’ will not ‘doom’ Hartley ‘to be trailed along the soiling earth’ is shown by Coleridge to be disastrously false. She confides in Mary that she assigns to Hartley’s literary fathers responsibility for his troubles.

⁵⁸ *Poems*, p. 54, l. 44. p. 55, ll. 70, 78.

⁵⁹ *Poems*, p. 55, ll. 73-76.

⁶⁰ Wordsworth, *Poems, in Two Volumes*, p. 125, ll. 43-44.

⁶¹ Wordsworth, *Poems, in Two Volumes*, pp. 100-101, ll. 27-29. I am indebted to Nicola Healey, who pointed out to me Coleridge’s allusion to Wordsworth’s ‘To HC, Six Years Old’.

⁶² Healey, p. 119.

Coleridge's description of Hartley as 'unredeemed' suggests that his soul is in danger, although he is guilty of 'follies' not vices: the foolish behaviour that caused him to lose his Oriel Fellowship has spiritual consequences disproportionate to the misdeeds themselves. Psychologically, Hartley's motivation and self-esteem continue to atrophy as a result of his dismissal: 'Hope grows sick, and will not hear |The promise e'er so truly meant'.⁶³ Coleridge implies that Hartley is suffering from an earlier stage of the condition described by STC in 'Work Without Hope': 'Work without Hope draws nectar in a sieve, | And Hope without an Object cannot live'.⁶⁴

Coleridge also confides in Mary concerning her own sorrows: the ill health of her fiancé, Henry, and their protracted engagement. She uses imagery of flowing water, which will become a frequent presence in her work: 'Not smoother ran my true-love's stream | Than mountain brook by rocks impeded'.⁶⁵ On learning of the engagement, Henry's father, Colonel James Coleridge, forbade the union. To these cares were added Coleridge's fears for Derwent. At Cambridge, he had looked for a time as if he would go the same way as Hartley and succumb to a 'wayward fate'.⁶⁶ Mary herself figures as an 'angel form', whose appearance in Derwent's life saves him and secures his future; a future in which, Coleridge hopes, she and Mary will meet in 'blest reality'.⁶⁷ Coleridge introduces Mary to the troubled psychological legacy of STC's children; and, by such intimate communication, confirms her affectionate acceptance into the family.

Coleridge's poetic activity in the early to mid-1830s arises directly from her family setting, following her marriage in 1829, and the birth of her children, Herbert in October 1830, and Edith in July 1832. Her poems are addressed to the children. This domestic context implies the presence of Henry as reader and adviser. Ultimately, he acts as her literary agent in their publication. Coleridge's children's poems reflect her educational principles: '[p]ut works of simple natural history and geography into [a child's] head, instead of sentimental trash,' she prescribes:

[g]ive him classical Fairy Tales instead of modern poverty-stricken fiction — shew him the great outlines of the globe instead of Chinese puzzles and spillikins. Store his mind with facts rather than prematurely endeavour to prepossess it with opinions or sophisticate it with sentiment based on slippery ground.⁶⁸

'[S]lippery ground', borrowed from the assassination scene in *Julius Caesar*, places

⁶³ *Poems*, p. 55, ll. 79-80.

⁶⁴ *PWCC*, I, Part 2, p. 1033, ll. 13-14.

⁶⁵ *Poems*, p. 56, ll. 89-90.

⁶⁶ *Poems*, p. 56, l. 96.

⁶⁷ *Poems*, p. 56, l. 183, p. 57, l. 152.

⁶⁸ Griggs, *Coleridge Fille*, p. 83.

specious ‘sentiment’ in a sinister frame.⁶⁹ Evangelical educational literature exploits ‘sentiment’, which, Coleridge holds, stunts imaginative growth and moral development. Her poems in *Pretty Lessons in Verse for Good Children* (1834) contain basic lessons on subjects such as Latin, Biology, Geography, and spelling rules. The moral and didactic agenda implied in ‘Lessons’ and ‘Good Children’ would arouse religious expectations in parents. Yet, only two of the poems (‘Childish Tears’ and ‘Providence’) are specifically religious in character.⁷⁰ Coleridge had reservations about writing religious verse. It was too difficult, she believed, for religious poetry to meet the high demands of its subject with fitting language. A flawed style in a religious poem would result either in irreverence or cliché. Coleridge holds, therefore, that ‘the bible itself’ should be the sole resource ‘[f]or teaching the Christian religion to very young persons [...] with a mother’s comments and explanation’.⁷¹

Coleridge’s reaction against contemporary ‘sentiment’ in *Pretty Lessons* results in some dark, pre-Darwinian poems on the animal kingdom. ‘Foolish Interference’ concerns a lynx for whom ‘blood’ is ‘an elixir’. The final stanza presents a grim comedy in which the lynx ‘sup[s]’ the ‘blood’ of a monkey who dared to comment on his eating habits.⁷² ‘The Nightingale’ refers to a bird’s grief ‘when boys have robbed her nest’.⁷³ ‘The Usurping Bird’ gives examples of nature’s cruelty, in which every creature preys upon the weaker, and is preyed upon by the stronger. For example, a female wheatear dies of starvation after a harrier kills her mate:

Her relics were gnawed by the carrion crow,
And flies in the cave did the maggots bestow;
The eggs which the pair had so anxiously cherished
Were sucked by the magpies – or otherwise perished.⁷⁴

The jaunty rhythm presents death and decay with macabre lightness of tone. As in ‘The Nightingale’, Coleridge associates motherhood with death and loss.

Some of Coleridge’s poems addressed to her children are disturbing in psychological terms. They are shadowed by the presence of adult suffering, which reflects Coleridge’s ‘nervous illness’ that ‘continued unabated for more than two years,

⁶⁹ *Julius Caesar*, in *William Shakespeare: Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), III. 1. 205, (pp. 1801-1858), p. 1832.

⁷⁰ *Poems*, pp. 77-78.

⁷¹ *Criticism*, p. 143.

⁷² *Poems*, p. 67, ll. 6, 23.

⁷³ *Poems*, p. 67, l. 13.

⁷⁴ *Poems*, p. 72, ll. 29-32.

from September 1832 to January 1835'.⁷⁵ In 'The Blessing of Health', Coleridge the invalid addresses Herbert from her sick bed. She exhorts him to enjoy his health to the full before 'age' and incapacity inevitably descend. She shows him what it would be like for him to be ill and bedridden, '[w]ith limbs full of pain and a dull heavy head'.⁷⁶ Imprisoned in a sick room, he would lose the joys of the seasons and nature. In the first four stanzas, Herbert's illness is considered as a theoretical scenario; the poet addresses him indirectly using the third person. In the final stanza, there is a grammatical turn as she releases him from her bedside – adding a final unsentimental reminder of future infirmity:

Then Herbert, my child, to the meadows repair,
Make hay while it shines, and enjoy the fresh air,
Til age sets his seal on your brow.⁷⁷

'The Blessing of Health' subverts the Romantic visions of Coleridge's literary fathers. For Wordsworth, though the 'radiance' and 'splendour' of childhood are lost, he 'find[s] | Strength in what remains behind'.⁷⁸ In Coleridge's poem, neither spiritual nor physical 'strength' can be salvaged from 'sickness', 'grief' and 'age', as the negatives of stanza three suggest:

'In this dull apartment', he'd sadly exclaim,
'Spring, summer and autumn, to me are the same;
In vain do the violets blow;
I never can climb to the heather-bell's bed,
Nor watch the rooks building high over my head,
Nor glide where the water-flow'rs grow'.⁷⁹

Whereas for Wordsworth 'the meanest flower that blows' is a sustaining motif, for Coleridge the flowers 'blow' '[i]n vain'. Nor do memories of natural beauty bring 'tranquil restoration'.⁸⁰

Equally, Coleridge's poem contradicts the pantheism of 'Frost at Midnight', in which Hartley is to be educated by the 'Great Universal Teacher'. Passive contact with God in Nature, 'Himself in all, and all things in himself', will 'mould' his 'spirit'.

⁷⁵ Mudge, p. 58.

⁷⁶ *Poems*, p. 74, l. 2.

⁷⁷ *Poems*, p. 75, ll. 28-30.

⁷⁸ Wordsworth, '*Poems, in Two Volumes*', p. 277, ll. 178, 181, 182-183.

⁷⁹ *Poems*, p. 74, ll. 13-18.

⁸⁰ Wordsworth, '*Poems, in Two Volumes*', p. 277, l. 205. *Poems*, p. 74, l. 15.

'Therefore', STC tells Hartley, 'all seasons shall be sweet to thee'.⁸¹ Coleridge tersely rejects STC's pantheistic optimism: '[t]o those that have health every season is sweet'.⁸² Her line echoes STC's language, emphatically denying his vision. She replaces his pantheism with Christian realism, in which '[h]ealth' is a transient '[b]lessing', and 'sickness and grief' are to be patiently endured.⁸³ Coleridge's final stanza contains a revisionary reference:

And they that have never known sickness or grief
Admire the deep red or the light yellow leaf,
Which soon will be whirled from the bough.⁸⁴

This alludes to *Christabel*:

The One red Leaf, the last of its Clan,
That dances as often as dance it can,
Hanging so light, and hanging so high,
On the topmost Twig that looks up at the Sky.⁸⁵

The image expresses the joyful precision of STC and Dorothy Wordsworth's observations of nature, recorded in her *Alfoxden Journal*: '[o]ne only leaf upon the top of a tree – the sole remaining leaf – danced round and round like a rag blown in the wind'.⁸⁶

For Coleridge, delight in such observations depends on the transient '[b]lessing of [h]ealth': 'sickness and grief' destroy any meanings with which health and youth might have invested them.⁸⁷ Around the same time as Coleridge rejects the pantheism of 'Frost at Midnight' in 'The Blessing of Health', Hartley does the same in his 'Dedicatory Sonnet' to *Poems 1833*. In the octave of his sonnet, Hartley recalls STC's 'ardent' supplication that his infant self should learn the arcane 'lore, which none but Nature's pupils know'. The sestet shows that the granting of STC's prayer did not have the desired result. Hartley gleaned only 'shapes and phantasies' from 'Nature': no 'eternal language' taught mystic knowledge.⁸⁸ In a note on his poem, Hartley rejects

⁸¹ *PWCC*, I, Part 1, p. 456, ll. 63, 62, 63-64, 65.

⁸² *Poems*, p. 74, l. 19.

⁸³ *Poems*, p. 75, l. 25.

⁸⁴ *Poems*, p. 75, ll. 25-27.

⁸⁵ *PWCC*, I, Part 1, pp. 484-485, ll. 49-52.

⁸⁶ *Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth*, ed. by E. de Selincourt, 2 vols (London: Macmillan, 1941), I, pp. 11-12.

⁸⁷ *Poems*, p. 74, p. 75, l. 25.

⁸⁸ *HCPW*, p. 2, ll. 8, 11. *PWCC*, I, Part 1, p. 456, l. 60.

STC and Wordsworth's concept of authorship, in which poets are 'Prophets of Nature', whose sacred mission is to 'speak | A lasting inspiration'.⁸⁹ '[P]oets', Hartley states firmly, enforcing his point by italicizing the negative, 'are *not* prophets'.⁹⁰ To misconceive the poet's role in this way, Hartley knows – only too well – can have unhappy consequences. The sestet of Hartley's sonnet, referring to 'the passions of [his] sadder years', implies STC's failure to envision the future.⁹¹

Coleridge employs a multiple time frame in 'The Blessing of Health', in which an encounter is staged between three generations of Coleridges. There is the present of Herbert's healthy, vigorous childhood and Coleridge's bedridden sickness; the distant past of Herbert's grandfather's generation, whose metaphysical conceits are encoded and revised in the poem's language; and the distant future when Herbert will lose his active delight in nature through age and illness. Herbert's young adulthood is also implied, when he will be able to re-encounter the poem as an exhortation to reject the 'phantasies' of the late 1790s, and embrace the Protestant realism of Victorian England.

In 'Poppies', which also employs a multiple time frame, Coleridge rejects STC's Romantic construction of dejection. She confronts her father's themes and experience, and presents radical revisions. Outgoing maternal affection replaces introspective male solitude; active hope replaces passive despair; rational dosage of medication replaces uncontrolled opium (ab)use. Coleridge's language and form recall the aesthetic ideals of her Romantic fathers. Bringing its addressee, Herbert, into the territory of STC's 'The Pains of Sleep', and the inherited 'misfortune' of 'uneasy health', 'Poppies' revises perspectives on 'sorrows of the night'. For Coleridge, 'slumber soft', induced by opium as medication, effects a release into peace from the restlessness of illness.⁹² For STC, meanwhile, an indiscriminate use of the drug renders sleep '[d]istemper's worst calamity', and reduces him to desolate pleading: '[t]o be beloved is all I need' is his helpless cry in 'The Pains of Sleep'.⁹³ The poem represents for Coleridge STC's pathological neediness and behavioural instability. She had experienced in early childhood STC's hurtful unpredictability. In her autobiographical fragment, she describes her 'perplexity and bitterness' at age six on being snubbed by her father in favour of 'the little Wordsworths'. The reason for the snub was Coleridge's having shown spontaneous affection for her mother. In retrospect, she recalls how STC had used her in the emotional struggles of his broken marriage:

⁸⁹ William Wordsworth, *The Fourteen-Book Prelude*, ed. by W. J. B. Owen, *The Cornell Wordsworth* (Cornell University Press, 1985), XIV, p. 271, ll. 446–447.

⁹⁰ Hartley Coleridge, *Poems* (Leeds: F. E. Bingley, 1833; repr. Oxford: Woodstock Books, 1990), p. 145 n. Hartley Coleridge's emphasis.

⁹¹ *HCPW*, p. 2, l. 12.

⁹² 'The Autobiography of Sara Coleridge', in Mudge, pp. 249–266 (p. 249). *Poems*, p. 71, ll. 16, 20.

⁹³ *PWCC*, I, Part 2, pp. 754–755, ll. 36, 51.

some of my recollections [of childhood] are tinged with pain. I think my dear Father was anxious that I should learn to love him and the Wordsworths and their children, and not cling so exclusively to my mother and all around me at home.⁹⁴

'The Pains of Sleep' is associated with STC's dejected solitude, marital breakdown, and the sufferings of his children. Coleridge's laudanum poem, by contrast, presents an image of loving domesticity and watchful parenting. She nurtures her son's 'beaming' and 'bright' childhood, and observes in close, affectionate detail his developing awareness of the world around him. Knowing that he is too young to understand the significance of the poppies, Coleridge is confident that he will learn, in due time, of their therapeutic effects for his mother. Her maternal care will then be reciprocated by loving filial solicitude:

O then my sweet, my happy boy
Will thank the Poppy-flower,
Which brings the sleep to dear Mama,
At midnight's darksome hour.⁹⁵

Poppies anticipates Coleridge's tendency in later poems, as in her letters, to salvage from dejection and suffering an idiom of survival, spiritual resilience, and 'an ethic of care'.⁹⁶ Although 'Poppies' is concerned with adult 'sorrows' and anticipates Herbert's induction into adult experience, the poem is decisively redemptive. Coleridge's functional economy of language replaces the self-dramatizing gothic hyperboles and tensely paced couplets of 'The Pains of Sleep'.

The Wordsworthian form of 'Poppies' determines its measured reflective tone, and underpins its outlook: 'Mr. Wordsworth opens to us a world of suffering', Coleridge observes in 1835, 'but for every sorrow he presents an antidote'.⁹⁷ In 'Poppies', while laudanum is medicinal, the real and lasting 'antidote' to suffering will be the healing restorative of family love; the simple grandeur, in Mary Wollstonecraft's terms, of dignified domestic happiness. Significantly, Coleridge's mother had been denied such happiness, partly through STC's opium consumption. Anne Mellor's description of 'the cornerstones of Wollstonecraft's feminism' is strikingly applicable to Coleridge's outlook in 'Poppies': '[t]he rational woman, rational love, egalitarian marriage, the

⁹⁴ 'Autobiography', Mudge, p. 261.

⁹⁵ *Poems*, p. 71, ll. 21-24.

⁹⁶ Anne K. Mellor, *Romanticism and Gender* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 3.

⁹⁷ *Criticism*, p. 84.

preservation of the domestic affections, responsibility for the mental, moral and physical well-being and growth of all the members of the family'.⁹⁸ Such values are implied in 'Poppies', which anticipate the ethic underlying Coleridge's interlinking literary and family commitments in her final decade. 'Poppies' suggests other key elements of Coleridge's authorial development. First, her creativity flourishes in dialogue with her father's texts and themes. Second, such encounters prepare Coleridge for her critical reinterpretation of STC in *Biographia 1847*. Despite the poem's sensitive subject, which displeased Derwent, 'Poppies' appeared in all five editions of *Pretty Lessons* published between 1834 and 1853. This suggests that its initial insertion had not been an oversight, as Coleridge alleged. She may have included it for its expression of Wollstonecraftian values, and the way it distinguishes her from STC.

'Airy Dreams are Sacred Duty': 'Phantasmion' versus Benthamite Culture

Coleridge's fairy-tale novel, *Phantasmion* (1837), had its origins in the family circle.⁹⁹ It developed from a story that Coleridge invented for Herbert as an educational 'entertainment'.¹⁰⁰ Echoing Percy Shelley, that poets are 'teachers' concerned with 'the beautiful and the true', Coleridge explains that the rationale of *Phantasmion* is to 'cultivat[e] the imagination by exhibiting the general and abstract beauty of things'. Although she observes that to 'publish a fairy-tale is the very way to be *not read*', she is committed to the cultural values the genre represents. By writing her fairy-tale, Coleridge upholds the Romantic equation of 'beauty' with 'truth' against the Benthamite Utilitarianism of the post-Reform Act landscape.¹⁰¹ In socio-economic terms, Benthamite policy, according to 'Tory paternalist' Richard Oastler, would 'break up society and make England a wilderness'.¹⁰² In the cultural 'wilderness' of utilitarianism, there was no place for the exercise of imagination. In 1840, Henry describes *Phantasmion* as 'one of a race that has particularly suffered under the assaults of political economy and useful knowledge'.¹⁰³ John Stuart Mill critiques the social and educational incapacity of the Benthamite mindset. He describes Jeremy Bentham in terms that suggest Coleridge's reasons for writing an anti-Benthamite fairy-tale:

Knowing so little of human feelings, he knew still less of the influences by

⁹⁸ Mellor, p. 38.

⁹⁹ Sara Coleridge, *Phantasmion* (London: Pickering, 1837; repr. Oxford: Woodstock Books, 1994).

¹⁰⁰ Poems, p. 9.

¹⁰¹ Percy Shelley, 'A Defence of Poetry', in *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*, ed. by Donald H. Reiman and Neil Fraistat, 2nd edn (London: Norton, 2002), pp. 510-535 (p. 512). *Criticism*, p. xi, p. 8, p. 10. Coleridge's emphasis.

¹⁰² Eric J. Evans, *The Forging of the Modern State: Early Industrial Britain, 1783-1870* (London: Longman, 1983; repr. 1994), p. 225.

¹⁰³ 'Modern English Poetesses', *Quarterly Review*, 66 (1840), 374-418 (p. 411).

which those feelings are formed: all the more subtle workings both of the mind upon itself, and of external things upon the mind, escaped him; and no one, probably, who, in a highly instructed age, ever attempted to give a rule to all human conduct, set out with a more limited conception either of the agencies by which human conduct *is*, or of those by which it *should* be influenced.¹⁰⁴

In *Phantasmion*, Coleridge seeks to revive ‘the agencies by which human conduct [...] *should* be influenced’. She maintains that ‘wherever the poetical beauty of things is vividly displayed truth is exhibited’. In her educational psychology, this revelation ‘stimulate[s]’ ‘the imagination of the youthful reader [...] to find such truths for itself’; ‘truths’ outside the perceptual field of a Benthamite mind.¹⁰⁵

In 1845, Coleridge inscribed “‘L’Envoy” to ‘*Phantasmion*’ in a copy of the novel she presented to Aubrey de Vere. The poem expresses the rationale of the novel:

Go, little book, and sing of love and beauty,
To tempt the wordling into fairy land:
Tell him that airy dreams are sacred duty,
Bring better wealth than aught his toils command
Toils fraught with mickle harm.¹⁰⁶

The ‘remarkable endowments’ of the Benthamite ‘empirical’ mind, combined with what Mill characterizes as its ‘remarkable deficiencies’, produce psychological and social ‘harm’.¹⁰⁷ The poem’s third line echoes Hartley’s sonnet of 1839, ‘To William Wordsworth’, in which he praises Wordsworth for having ‘proved that purest joy is duty’.¹⁰⁸ The exercise of imagination (‘airy dreams’) becomes a religious imperative (‘sacred duty’) for Coleridge, in order to promote a society of spiritual ‘wealth’. John Henry Newman expresses similar concern about the utilitarian culture of early Victorian Britain. In a series of letters to *The Times* in 1841, he critiqued Sir Robert Peel’s adoption of Whiggish utilitarian policies: ‘[l]et Benthamism reign, if men have no aspirations,’ challenges Newman; ‘but do not tell them to be romantic, [...] do not attempt by philosophy what once was done by religion’. Newman asserts the educative role of the imagination in the attainment of religious faith: scientific ‘deductions’, he asserts, ‘have no power of persuasion. The heart is commonly reached [...] through the

¹⁰⁴ John Stuart Mill, ‘Bentham’, in *Mill on Bentham and Coleridge, with an Introduction by F. R. Leavis* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1950), p. 63. Mill’s emphases.

¹⁰⁵ *Criticism*, p. 10.

¹⁰⁶ *Criticism*, p. 18.

¹⁰⁷ Mill, ‘Bentham’, p. 63, p. 62, p. 63.

¹⁰⁸ *HCPW*, p. 118, l. 7.

imagination'.¹⁰⁹ Coleridge's novel seeks to put this principle into practice. For both Newman and Coleridge, cultivation of the imagination is central to the moral condition of early Victorian Britain.

Derwent criticizes *Phantasmion* from the viewpoint of a professional Church of England preceptor. He regards the novel as deficient because it lacks a moral. Although his orthodoxy has a traditional High Church bias, his educational theory is inflected by evangelicalism. He believes that a work aimed at young people should state its lessons overtly. Coleridge counters by asserting that '[t]ales of daily life, where the ostensible moral is strongly marked', lack the philosophic depth of 'Fairy Tales', which enable the reader to 'perceive the truths and realities both of the human mind and of nature.' Coleridge's vocabulary reflects the Wordsworthian inflection of her literary theory. She argues that the didactic tales favoured by Derwent, with their literalistic focus on the 'petty and particular [...] have a tendency to contract and sophisticate the mind: as the eye is injured by long studying minute objects'.¹¹⁰ Similarly, Mill critiques the narrowness of Bentham's perceptual range, and Percy Shelley holds that '[t]he story of particular facts [...] obscures and distorts that which should be beautiful'.¹¹¹ Coleridge argues that a work of imagination 'according to the merit of its execution, feeds and expands the mind'.¹¹² Coleridge's justification of *Phantasmion* reflects STC's observation that, as 'a work of such pure imagination', the *Ancient Mariner* was impaired by its having 'too much moral, and that too openly obtruded on the reader'.¹¹³ Coleridge adapts STC's tenet to educational literature.

Although Coleridge would have encountered STC's view in collaborating with Henry in the production of *Table Talk*, *Phantasmion* reflects Romantic principles as a whole, rather than any individual paternal influence. To support her belief in the value of the fairy-tale genre, she cites 'Sir W. Scott and Charles Lamb, my father, my uncle Southey, and Mr. Wordsworth'.¹¹⁴ She could have added Percy Shelley, an equally significant influence on the concept of her novel. Shelley opens his 'visionary rhyme', 'The Witch of Atlas' (1824), in terms that defy an empirically rational, anti-imaginative culture:

Before those cruel Twins, whom at one birth
Incestuous Change bore to her father Time,

¹⁰⁹ Ian Ker, *John Henry Newman* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998; repr. 2010), p. 210, p. 211.

¹¹⁰ *Criticism*, p. 10.

¹¹¹ *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*, p. 515.

¹¹² *Criticism*, pp. 9-10.

¹¹³ S. T. Coleridge, *Table Talk*, ed. by Carl Woodring, 2 vols, *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 16 vols (London: Routledge; Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1969-2002), XIV. 1 (1991), p. 273 n, pp. 271-273.

¹¹⁴ *Criticism*, p. 8.

Error and Truth, had hunted from the earth
All those bright natures which adorned its prime,
And left us nothing to believe in, worth
The pains of putting into learned rhyme,
A lady-witch there lived on Atlas' mountain
Within a cavern, by a secret fountain.¹¹⁵

Coleridge, similarly, celebrates the 'bright natures' of 'fairy land'.¹¹⁶ Like Shelley, she seeks to restore the imaginative faculty in a world which had 'sacrificed' human well-being to 'improvements in Mechanism', to borrow Byron's memorable phrase.¹¹⁷ Just as Derwent deplores the lack of an overt moral in *Phantasmion*, Mary Shelley 'object[ed]' to Percy's poem for its 'discarding human interest and passion, to revel in the fantastic ideas [of the] imagination'.¹¹⁸ For Coleridge, 'human interest' resides in a work's imaginative appeal rather than any correspondence with material reality.

Hartley responds to the novel in Christian terms. In his poem, 'Written in a Copy of Sara Coleridge's "Phantasmion"', he contrasts his recollections of Coleridge as enchanted child with her troubled motherhood. The form of Hartley's poem, iambic octameter, with rhyming couplets until the final quatrain, creates a light and tripping movement, evoking a whimsical, playful mood, in the lines that treat Coleridge's childhood. When the focus shifts to adult 'suffering', Hartley deftly reduces the tempo by use of enjambment, and the polysyllabic 'suffering', 'subdued' and 'mortified'. The movement of the verse marks the change from childhood joy to adult care:

She that once was like a Fairy—
Just as light, and just as airy,
Whose every word was like a spell,
Sounded on a pearly shell—
Or harp—which wandering bard and blind
Has left to prattle with the wind—
When a suffering Matron, tried—
By grief—subdued and mortified
In pious woe—her God adoring
And thankful most, when most imploring—

¹¹⁵ Shelley, *Poetical Works*, ed. by Thomas Hutchinson, 2nd edn, rev. by G. M. Matthews (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 371, l. 8, p. 372, ll. 49-56.

¹¹⁶ *Criticism*, p. 18.

¹¹⁷ Lord Byron, 'Frame Work Bill Speech' (1812), in *Lord Byron, The Complete Miscellaneous Prose*, ed. by Andrew Nicholson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), pp. 22-27 (p. 23).

¹¹⁸ Shelley, *Poetical Works*, p. 371, p. 388.

[...]

the Matron mild–

Composed this tale.

Hartley regards Coleridge's composition of the novel, during a period of trial and 'mortifi[cation]', as an act of religious devotion. Her fairy tale, produced in 'pious woe', is an offering of worship and gratitude – 'her God adoring' – and submission to God's will. Hartley pictures the reader as a suffering adult, for whom the novel will have therapeutic effects. He conceives of Coleridge's novel as a devotional offering of Christian service by which other 'heart[s]' may be 'disburthen[ed]' of 'a weary bond of pain'. He conceives of his poetry performing a similar healing function: 'that hearts too sharply bled | Should throb with less of pain, and heave more free | By my endeavour'.¹¹⁹ Hartley's view of *Phantasmion* as a Christian work accords with Coleridge's idea of its educative character. His emphasis on the novel's curative power alludes to a therapeutic principle in the narrative. A character's compassion for another is restorative for the one who exercises compassion: '[t]he chieftain was still telling his tale with passionate gestures to Leucoia, who leaned upon her stag, and felt her own griefs assuaged by the tears that flowed for Ulander'.¹²⁰ Healing for Leucoia begins when she feels sympathy for another's distress.

Devotional in theme, Hartley's poem on *Phantasmion* is Wordsworthian in its affirmation of memory as agent of 'restoration' and creativity.¹²¹ His celebration of Coleridge's novel echoes its imagery:

Recalling images and sounds
That model'd once the frolic bounds
And glancing movements of the child
To soothe and lull the Matron mild–
Composed this tale–this waking dream
This murmur of a distant stream–
This shadow of a purple mist
Of self-diffusing Amethyst.¹²²

Coleridge's Wordsworthian faith in the restorative potential of memory has revived since she wrote 'The Blessing of Health'. In language that evokes 'Kubla Khan' (1797 /

¹¹⁹ Hartley Coleridge, *New Poems*, p. 114, ll. 1-10, 14-15, 19-20. p. 69, ll. 7-9.

¹²⁰ *Phantasmion*, p. 306.

¹²¹ Wordsworth, 'Lyrical Ballads', p. 117, l. 31.

¹²² Hartley Coleridge, *New Poems*, p. 114, ll. 11-18.

98), she explains that ‘for the account of Fairy-land Nature [...] my native vale, seen through a sunny mist of dreamery, [...] suppl[ied] all the materials I should want, and all the inspiration’.¹²³ Similarly, as Mary Shelley observes, the ‘materials’ of the Italian landscape that Percy ‘so much loved’ were processed in his ‘senses’ and ‘fancy’ to ‘form’ ‘The Witch of Atlas’.¹²⁴ Coleridge envisions the Lakeland scenery of her youth ‘clad with “the light that never was on sea or land”’. As Joanne E. Taylor observes, ‘the various regions’ of Coleridge’s ‘[f]airyland [...] reflect different parts of [her] beloved Lake District’, and recall STC’s ‘geographical descriptions’.¹²⁵ Coleridge transforms as well as recollects Lake District scenery: her settings are interwoven with descriptions of character and emotion. For example, the dying Albinian realizes that his daughter, Iarine, will never accede to his wishes to marry Karadan: ‘Iarine saw that his countenance was disturbed, though no new words had been spoken, as a lake appears ruffled on the surface while not a breath of air is stirring abroad, and the valesmen imagine a wind under the waters.’ Equally, features of landscape are personified:

The well-attired valley seemed to smile on the lake which smiled radiantly in return, as a conscious beauty, beaming on her lover, causes his face to brighten with pleasure and hope. The little brook, too, which murmured so fretfully in the darksome pass, now gushed with a wider stream, arrayed in sparkling white, and bounded to the lake, raising a gladsome cry as if of thankfulness at having escaped from those torturing rocks and dreary prison.¹²⁶

The personification of the valley as an elegantly dressed ‘conscious beauty, beaming on her lover’, the lake, creates a mood of excited anticipation, enhanced by the sibilance of ‘seemed’, ‘smile’, ‘smiled’ and ‘conscious’. The trope functions emotionally rather than visually, particularly in the adjectives ‘well-attired’ and ‘conscious’, which carry hints of artful seduction. In the second sentence the onomatopoeic ‘murmured’, ‘gushed’ and ‘cry’ contribute to the atmosphere of joy and release. The contrast between gloom and elation is evoked by an economic use of adjectives: ‘darksome pass’, ‘gladsome cry’, ‘gloomy prison’, and the personification of ‘torturing rocks’. In a tale in which characters lack psychological depth, in conformity with its genre, such personifications of landscape heighten the novel’s emotional tone.

Coleridge pictures the settings of *Phantasmion* with vivid immediacy. This is suggested by her dedication in a copy presented to a friend: ‘To Miss Hinckes from Mrs H. N. Coleridge in memory of a visit to her poetically beautiful residence which recalls

¹²³ *PWCCI*, Part 1, p. 509. ‘The date of Kubla Khan is disputed’, according to the editor of *Poetical Works* in the *Collected Coleridge* series, J. C. C. Mays. ‘The three most likely possibilities are Sept-Nov 1797, May 1798, and Oct 1799, but conclusive evidence is lacking’. *Criticism*, p. 7.

¹²⁴ Shelley, *Poetical Works*, p. 389.

¹²⁵ Taylor, p. 268, p. 272.

¹²⁶ *Phantasmion*, p. 319, p. 57.

the vision of Magnart's Garden in the Vale of Polyanthida p. 57, to the mind of the writer of this Fairy Tale more than any portion of the real world she ever beheld'.¹²⁷ The passage in *Phantasmion* with which Coleridge identifies her friend's garden evokes the 'twice five miles of fertile ground', and 'gardens bright' of 'Kubla Khan':

Turning round a broad rock, they beheld the vale of Polyanthida, vested in sunny green, luxuriant with orange groves, meadows of golden bloom and sloping gardens, whence the rainbow might have borrowed all its colours. From the high ground where the travellers stood, they looked down upon a bright blue lake, partly girt by hills of soft wavy outline, clad in freshest verdure, to which an amethystine tinge was imparted by blossoms of the fragrant thyme. The skirts of these grassy hills were bathed by the water, while on the opposite side was a thick wood, stretching beyond the rocky shores, which looked as if they had been carved by a graver's chisel, and formed bays and promontories overhung, here and there, with knots of drooping trees.¹²⁸

The 'sunny green' vale recalls Kubla Khan's 'sunny spots of greenery': the luxuriance of 'Polyanthida' parallels the fertility of STC's visionary landscape.¹²⁹ The passage is characteristic of the novel's style in its use of personification and simple vocabulary, heightened by sparingly deployed poetic diction, such as 'vested', 'girt', 'verdure'. The sequence of descriptive phrases in the first sentence, separated by commas, gives the effect of 'the travellers' scanning the bright and richly coloured panorama. In the second sentence, their gaze moves from the lake – its bold vividness expressed by monosyllables and alliteration – to the surrounding hills, their 'soft wavy outline' enhanced by assonance. The sentence's tempo slows on the polysyllabic 'amethystine', the sound of its final syllable picked up by 'tinge', to linger on the radiant 'blossoms of the fragrant thyme'. This closing phrase echoes the 't' sound picked up by 'tinge', and evokes the 'incense-bearing tree[s]' and scented landscape of 'Kubla Khan'. The 'fragrance' of Coleridge's landscape is natural and light, contrasting with the strong, intoxicating associations of STC's 'incense'. In his poetic tribute, Hartley alludes to the 'amethystine tinge' of 'blossom' in his image of 'a purple mist | Of self-diffusing Amethyst'.¹³⁰ The passage – characteristically – uses adjectives with precise economy, which contributes to the stylized presentation of the panorama. Only in two phrases, 'bright blue lake' and 'soft wavy outline', is more than one adjective applied to a single noun. The positioning of 'here and there' as the penultimate, rather than the final phrase of the last sentence, conveys how the 'knots' of 'trees' are scattered haphazardly, rather than densely, on the 'promontories'. The structural qualities of Coleridge's prose – her

¹²⁷ This dedication was transcribed by kind permission of Blackwell's Rare Books department, Blackwell's, Oxford.

¹²⁸ *PWCC*, I, Part 1, p. 513, ll. 6, 8. *Phantasmion*, p. 57.

¹²⁹ *PWCC*, I, Part 1, p. 513, l. 11.

¹³⁰ Hartley Coleridge, *New Poems*, p. 114, ll. 17-18.

sound-patterns and syntax – are precisely and deliberately crafted. STC’s ‘prose was that of a poet’, Coleridge contends, and the same is true of her own style in *Phantasmion*.¹³¹

The novel’s narrative structure exploits moments of tension. Coleridge concludes chapters in ways that provoke expectation. Chapter 3 of Part 4, for example, heightens anticipation of the final battle: ‘[t]hen the two chiefs issued forth into the daylight, and beheld the united armies ranged upon the plain, their burnished armour shining coldly in the light of the newly-risen sun’. The dramatic final clause freezes the action in suspense, as Chapter 4 switches to a different strand of the story. The battle itself is withheld until Chapter 5. The novel’s narrative tensions continue to its conclusion, reflected in the ambiguity of the final sentence:

Phantasmion looked around in momentary dread, lest Iarine should have proved a spirit and vanished like the rest; but there she stood, her face beaming bright as ever in full sunshine, the earnest that all he remembered and all he hoped for was not to fade like a dream.¹³²

In the final clause, ‘not’ is balanced against the resonance of the closing words, ‘to fade like a dream’, in which emphases rest on ‘fade’ and ‘dream’. The novel’s final note, therefore, is subdued, and counters the image of Iarine’s sunlit face, which, had the sentence ended at ‘full sunshine’, would have produced a traditionally uplifting and morally certain resolution for the fairy-tale. An intimation that ‘all’ might ‘fade’ lingers.

Coleridge’s literary development is further reflected in the thirty-five poems that accompany the prose of *Phantasmion*. Whereas many of her poems up to 1834 had been personal in context and theme, the *Phantasmion* poems are in dialogue with the prose narrative, and explore its situations of love, desire and jealousy. The following ‘song’, for example, addresses ‘the blight of infidelity in love’:

The winds were whispering, the waters glistening,
A bay-tree shaded a sun-lit stream;
Blasts came blighting, the bay-tree smiting,
When leaf and flower, like a morning dream,
Vanished full suddenly.

The winds yet whisper, the waters glisten,
And softly below the bay-tree glide;

¹³¹ *Essays*, I, p. lxxxvii.

¹³² *Phantasmion*, p. 355, p. 387.

Vain is their cherishing, for, slowly perishing,
It doth but cumber the riverside,
Leafless in summer-time.¹³³

The chilling impact of desertion is expressed through visual imagery and the bleak anti-climactic shock of the short unrhymed line, with which each stanza concludes. This short lyric exemplifies the quality George Saintsbury praises in *Phantasmion*: ‘most of the songs are in undertones’, he remarks: ‘[t]hey have, however, an air of suppressed power’.¹³⁴ Although Coleridge would ultimately envisage publishing some of the poems separately, she took care to craft the style of each poem for its dramatic and psychological contexts. In his essay ‘Modern English Poetesses’, Henry observes that ‘the verses scattered throughout the volume have [...] a dramatic propriety’, and he apologizes for ‘tearing out some of the [poetic] gems from their settings’.¹³⁵

Coleridge completed the first draft of *Phantasmion* on 31 January 1836, and revised it through the year. She did much of the correcting and rewriting in October and November, during what Mudge describes as ‘the worst period of nervous hysteria she would ever endure’.¹³⁶ Coleridge, like STC, finds that creativity, illness and opium use are inextricably interwoven. Nervous dejection provides her with a space in which to work, and itself furnishes material for literary exploitation, as it did for STC.

Phantasmion depicts sensory and volitional derangements produced by ‘the use of stimulants and narcotics’, a topic she had considered in her essay ‘Nervousness’, written in 1834, unpublished until 1989.¹³⁷ Zelneth, assisting the witch Malderyl, who detains Phantasmion against his will, causes him to drink a potion that, destroying his rational capacities, will make him love her instead of Iarine. The toxic but seductive atmosphere of Malderyl’s cavern has already weakened Phantasmion’s resistance: ‘the luscious vapours were stealing over his senses; he was gazing unconsciously upon Zelneth [...]. He retired to a recess [...], and tried to think again his former thoughts and purposes; but insensibly they floated away’. In this loss of rational volition, he succumbs and drinks the liquor Zelneth offers him. Phantasmion’s intoxication is a solipsistic condition, in which his rational interaction with the outside world is blocked: ‘he felt intoxicated with pleasure which sprang from no cause and tended to no object’.¹³⁸ In *Biographia 1847*, Coleridge describes STC’s creative mind as paralyzed, unable to connect with objective

¹³³ *Phantasmion*, p. 177, ll. 1-10.

¹³⁴ *Poems*, p. 10.

¹³⁵ ‘Modern English Poetesses’, *Quarterly Review*, 66, p. 412.

¹³⁶ Mudge, p. 89.

¹³⁷ ‘Nervousness’, Mudge, p. 210.

¹³⁸ *Phantasmion*, pp. 245-246, p. 246.

reality: his thought is locked in ‘self-made channels’.¹³⁹ There is also a parallel between Coleridge’s analysis of STC and her presentation of Penselimer, a character in *Phantasmion* who suffers a prolonged period of mental incapacity. When Penselimer finally emerges from his depression, he describes it in terms that anticipate Coleridge’s account of STC: ‘self’ broke out of ‘its natural limits, [and] sicklied the whole face of outward things, as vapours veil with one same lurid hue earth, sky and water’.

Penselimer was trapped, unable to receive ‘nourishment from without’: his mind could only ‘multiply itself by a thousand vain reflections’.¹⁴⁰ Similarly, in *Biographia 1847*, Coleridge describes STC as imprisoned by ‘the tyranny of ailments, which, by a spell of wretchedness, fix the thoughts upon themselves, perpetually drawing them inwards, as into a stifling gulf’.¹⁴¹ Penselimer and the intoxicated Phantasmion suffer from states that Coleridge associates with STC: they anticipate her description of him in *Biographia 1847*.

From Fairy-Tale to Theological Polemic

Coleridge formed her commitment to theological writing while she was revising *Phantasmion*, or shortly after its completion. Mudge notes that she was ‘preparing a new edition of *Aids to Reflection*’ in autumn 1836.¹⁴² This work, and the ongoing project of editing STC’s *Literary Remains* (1836-1839), would pave the way for her essay ‘On Rationalism’ (1843). In October 1837, Coleridge announces to Henry her plans to engage with Tractarian theology: ‘[m]y love, if I were a man I should like above all things to review Newman’. This may be read as an appeal for Henry’s support, given her project’s social awkwardness. Coleridge begins her letter by thanking Henry for his ‘kindness’ in supporting her production of *Phantasmion*. She reminds him of how important his encouragement has been ‘from beginning to end’. In an earlier letter to a friend, Coleridge praised Henry’s editorial collaboration: ‘[o]ne advantage the story has had – that of Henry’s criticism – whatever faults could be done away with, were so – through his remarks’. In her October letter, Coleridge reminds Henry that she shares some of STC’s ‘literary difficulties’, such as the tendency ‘to pursue’ an idea ‘in every direction’.¹⁴³ Therefore, she would again require Henry’s patient and sympathetic editorial input. His support was forthcoming, which enabled Coleridge to participate in the male genre of theological polemic while maintaining the appearance of social decorum. In fact, all of her published work between 1822 and 1843 is produced in a

¹³⁹ *Biographia 1847*, I, p. xix.

¹⁴⁰ *Phantasmion*, pp. 298-299.

¹⁴¹ *Biographia 1847*, II, p. 410.

¹⁴² Mudge, p. 89.

¹⁴³ *Criticism*, p. 11, p. 7, p. 11.

collaborative familial setting, and is ostensibly managed by the validating agency of a close male relative. Her critique of Newman will be framed in the context of wifely and filial duty.

Newman's *Tract 73, On The Introduction of Rationalistic Principles into Revealed Religion*, appeared in February 1836. In it, he critiques the approach to religion associated with STC's philosophy. In 1847, Coleridge describes this as 'the religion of the heart and conscience', in which the 'voice' of God 'speaks in the heart and reasonable mind', and in scripture, and 'refers us to internal evidence as the only satisfying and adequate evidence of religion'.¹⁴⁴ Newman attacks doctrine that 'direct[s] its attention to the *heart itself*, not to anything external to us, whether creed, actions, or ritual': it prioritizes man over God, he argues, and 'tends to Socinianism'. Although Newman does not target STC directly in the *Tract*, he has STC's religious philosophy in mind at the time of his writing it. In a letter of January 1836, between finishing the text of *Tract 73* and writing its 'Appendix' on Schleiermacher, Newman criticizes STC in terms that recall his *Tract*. STC, according to Newman, 'look[s] at the Church, Sacraments, doctrines, etc. rather as symbols of philosophy than as truths, as the mere accidental signs of principles'. Against such an approach, Newman advances the 'faith' of the 'ancient Saints' in 'truths beyond' the reach of 'the mind'.¹⁴⁵ Newman's attitude to STC is divided; in an article in *The British Critic* in 1839 he expresses conflicting views in the same sentence. On the one hand, STC had 'instilled a higher philosophy into inquiring minds'; on the other, his 'conclusions [...] were often heathen rather than Christian'.¹⁴⁶ Coleridge must defend STC's Christian philosophy from such charges, because she adapts his methodology in her original polemical writings. In staging a critical encounter between STC and Newman, Coleridge becomes a religious author in her own right.

¹⁴⁴ *Biographia 1847*, I, p. cxxxix.

¹⁴⁵ John Henry Newman, *Tracts for the Times*, ed. by James Tolhurst (Leominster: Gracewing, 2013), p. 240. *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, ed. by Charles Dessain and others, 32 vols (London: Nelson, 1961-2008) V: *Liberalism in Oxford: January 1835-December 1836*, ed. by T. Gornall (1981), p. 225. Newman, *Tracts*, p. 184. Newman's emphasis.

¹⁴⁶ Ker, pp. 173-174.

Chapter Two

'On Rationalism': 'The Authoritative Word' and 'Liberty of Conscience'

From STC's 'Literary Remains' to Coleridge's 'On Rationalism'

John Stuart Mill described 'Jeremy Bentham and Samuel Taylor Coleridge' as 'the two great seminal minds of England in their age'.¹ In *Phantasmion*, Coleridge sought to express the educative potential of Romantic imagination against the dominant assumptions of Benthamite Utilitarianism. As noted in the previous chapter, this stance aligns her with Newman. 'On Rationalism', though, is an assured and forthright critique of Newman's theology. The essay's publication history has caused it to be all-but-lost from view. It was published twice in Coleridge's lifetime: as 'Appendix C' to the fifth and sixth editions of STC's *Aids to Reflection*, in 1843 and 1848 respectively.

Coleridge's essay occupies almost the whole of the second volume of both editions. The 1843 version is 220 pages in length, while that in the sixth edition has been expanded to 235 pages. In the sixth edition it is followed by seventy-three pages of a new work, Coleridge's 'Extracts from a New Treatise on Regeneration' (discussed in Chapter 4). The 1848 edition of *Aids to Reflection* contains more than three hundred pages of Coleridge's original writing, all of it in Volume 2. Coleridge explains that William Pickering, the publisher, decided to divide 'the new [1843] edition of the *Aids* into two volumes', in order to accommodate writings by commentators on STC: James Marsh's 'Preliminary Essay', which had introduced the first American edition of 1829, and J. H. Green's essay, 'On Instinct', as well as 'On Rationalism'. STC's work would occupy the first volume, 'and the productions of his disciples [...] the second'. Edward Moxon, the publisher with whom Coleridge and Henry were in negotiation over future STC editions, thought that 'On Rationalism' might 'operate' favourably on the sale of the whole work, 'as the subject is one that excites interest at present'.² Derwent, who managed the family's literary property after Coleridge's death, did not include her essay in the seventh edition of *Aids to Reflection* in 1854. 'On Rationalism' has never been republished.

The presence of 'On Rationalism', with the addition of 'Extracts from a New Treatise on Regeneration' in 1848, changes the character of the fifth and sixth editions of *Aids to Reflection*. STC hoped that *Aids to Reflection* in 1825 would be read by 'the studious Young at the close of their education', and 'especially' those about to take up a life of Christian 'Ministry'.³ The target readership of the fifth and sixth editions, as a

¹ Mill, 'Bentham', p. 40.

² *Criticism*, p. 12, p. 13.

³ *ARCC*, p. 6. STC's emphasis.

result of Coleridge's polemical contributions, is that 'best part of the community' whom Newman addresses.⁴ These editions are composite, multi-voiced productions, in which Coleridge juxtaposes her own texts with STC's. Addressing 'subjects which are even now engaging public attention', 'On Rationalism' becomes the mediator by which STC's earlier text is to be understood in the 1840s by its new Victorian audience.⁵ In the terms of Gadamer's hermeneutics, Coleridge 'mediate[s] between [STC's] texts and contemporary life'.⁶

In this chapter, I will discuss the origins of 'On Rationalism' in Coleridge's collaborative editorial work. Her essay can only be properly understood in relation to the tensions arising from constitutional, political and ecclesiastical reform. I will place Coleridge's essay in its historical context, therefore, and will show that her theological themes were matters of immediate public concern in the 1840s. The doctrine of baptismal regeneration, in particular, was the focal point of politico-religious controversy between 1835 and 1850. I will examine Coleridge's critical application of Kantian epistemology to Tractarianism, and will suggest that this is her distinctive contribution to contemporary religious thought. I will consider the contradictions Coleridge exposes in Tractarian dogma, such as the problem of post-baptismal sin. She identifies tendencies of monologic authoritarianism in the Oxford theology, her critique of which, I suggest, is a major element of the essay. She draws attention, by contrast, to Methodism's practical inclusiveness. Finally, the chapter will refer to the creative tensions that underlie 'On Rationalism'.

Coleridge was contemplating a work in response to Tractarianism in 1837 and announced in September that she had formulated a basis on which to critique Newman's 'scheme'.⁷ Mudge believes that Coleridge began to write 'On Rationalism' in December 1838; Griggs gives the later date of 1839, though he does not specify the month. Whenever she began to draft the essay's actual text, Coleridge's editorial work was vital preparation for her theological critique of Tractarianism. It enabled her to undertake the necessary and extensive preliminary research. Coleridge evidently played a significant role in preparing the fourth edition of *Aids to Reflection*, published in 1839, although Henry is named as editor on the title pages of the fourth, fifth and sixth editions. It is difficult to know the exact extent of Coleridge's editorial input before Henry's death. Evidence suggests, though, that Coleridge was the intellectual director of the whole editorial enterprise. She writes as the managing partner in the collaborative venture, and

⁴ *OR 1843*, II, p. 400 n. I refer to the version of 'On Rationalism' published in 1843, except where I quote from a passage added to the version published in 1848.

⁵ *Essays*, I, p. lxxxiv.

⁶ Piercey, p. 153.

⁷ Mudge, p. 98.

directs editorial policy from STC's death onwards. Joseph Henry Green, future President of the Royal College of Surgeons, was named in STC's will as literary executor. Green had acted as STC's amanuensis and confidant, but lacked the time and philosophical expertise to contribute to the re-presentation of his work.

In the summer of 1834, Green asked Julius Hare and John Sterling to edit STC's unpublished theological manuscripts. Coleridge countermanded Green's plan, however, and directed that the theological works be published at a later date. This would give her time to prepare the ground, and 'widen the audience for [STC's] works'.⁸ In September 1834, she established the guiding principle that STC's works must be presented in context, as part of a greater whole, not in isolation: 'STC's works must be reissued, [but not] [...] disjointed and unaccompanied', she tells Henry: '[l]et them be set forth [...] with the complete scheme of arguments which convinced his own mind.' Henry looks to Coleridge's 'superior [...] discrimination' in matters of textual criticism; equally, she instructs him on precise interpretations of theological terminology. For example, she criticizes his use of 'that vague High Church cant phrase of abuse *rationalized* [...] It is true my father says "not to seek to make the mysteries of faith what the world calls rational"—but *what the world calls rational* is a definite phrase: *rationalized* is not so'.⁹ A manuscript bears evidence of Coleridge's painstaking hands-on editorial activity: she transcribes 'from a scip [for scrap or slip?] of paper found in [STC's] room' a passage from 'Introductory Aphorisms' XIV – XV of *Aids to Reflection*, with the comment, 'sad pity that paper here broke off'.¹⁰

Coleridge and Henry collaborated in editing STC's *Literary Remains*. This project ran concurrently with the preparation of the fourth edition of *Aids to Reflection*. Volumes 1 and 2 of the *Remains*, published in 1836, are literary in content; Volumes 3 and 4, published in 1838 and 1839 respectively, are religious. The contents of Volumes 3 and 4 include STC's notes on Hooker, Taylor and Waterland, theologians of significance in Coleridge's writings. Volume 4 includes sixty-five pages of STC's 'Notes on Luther': the Reformer will feature prominently in her 'Introduction' to *Biographia 1847*. Coleridge may have taken sole charge of the religious volumes of the *Remains*, and, as suggested below, seems to have written the 'Preface' to Volume 3. Her work in preparing Volumes 3 and 4 of *Literary Remains*, and her editorial input for *Aids to Reflection*, contributed to the conceptual foundation of 'On Rationalism'. For example, *Remains* Volume 4 closes with STC's 'An Essay on Faith', the influence of which is reflected throughout Coleridge's religious writings. STC concludes by arguing

⁸ N. Merrill Distad, *Guessing at Truth: The Life of Charles Julius Hare (1795-1855)* (Shepherdstown: The Patmos Press, 1979), p. 155.

⁹ Mudge, pp. 75-76, p. 76, p. 102. Coleridge's emphases, quoted by Mudge.

¹⁰ *ARCC*, p. 437.

that

[f]aith subsists in the synthesis of the reason and the individual will. By virtue of the latter therefore it must be an energy. [...] And by virtue of [...] reason, faith must be a light, a form of knowing, a beholding of truth.¹¹

Coleridge appropriates STC's image of 'faith' as a 'light' of divine knowledge in her second sentence of 'On Rationalism', in which she defines 'reason [...] as the light by which we read the law written in the heart'.¹² The concept of 'faith' as an 'energy' of the will drives her whole critique of Tractarian doctrine. Such parallels indicate the continuity between Coleridge's work on *Literary Remains* and her composition of 'On Rationalism'.

The 'Preface' to Volume 3 of *Literary Remains* bears notable intellectual and stylistic characteristics of Coleridge's writing. These suggest that Coleridge, rather than Henry, is its author. Having explained that STC took a 'middle path' in his understanding of the Bible's 'transcendent character', the author explodes any misinterpretation of his position:

Did [STC], therefore, mean that the doctrines revealed in the Scriptures were to be judged according to their supposed harmony or discrepancy with the evidence of the senses, or the deductions of the mere understanding from that evidence? Exactly the reverse: he disdained to argue even against Transubstantiation on such a ground.¹³

The abruptly terse retort, 'Exactly the reverse', has the energy of a *viva voce* utterance. Coleridge's rhetorical question implies a dialogic relation with her reader. She exploits a style of oral delivery, particularly when contesting a specific point of interpretation: for example, her discussion of the conversion of the jailor in Philippi, analyzed below.¹⁴ The extract above employs 'understanding' in the same way that Coleridge applies it in 'On Rationalism', where it signifies STC's Kantian concept of 'a Faculty judging according to the Sense'.¹⁵ The 'understanding', in other words, apprehends the data of physical experience. Conceptual and linguistic similarities with other aspects of Coleridge's writings suggest her authorship of this 'Preface'.

In it, Coleridge positions STC's ideas within the contemporary politico-theological landscape. Her ability to map this contested territory underlies her power as a

¹¹ *The Literary Remains of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. by Henry Nelson Coleridge, 4 vols (London: Pickering, 1836-1839), IV (1839), pp. 437-438.

¹² *OR 1843*, II, p. 335.

¹³ *Remains*, III (1838), p. xii.

¹⁴ Acts of the Apostles, 16. 23-34.

¹⁵ *ARCC*, p. 232.

polemicist. She anticipates that STC's ideas will be unpalatable to 'many [...] readers'. With characteristic impersonality and tact, she does not specify the parties from which she expects opposition, though traditional High Church and Tractarian adherents will certainly be among them:

[STC] distinguished so strongly between that internal faith which lies at the base of, and supports, the whole moral and religious being of man, and the belief, as historically true, of several incidents and relations found or supposed to be found in the text of the Scriptures, that he habitually exercised a liberty of criticism with respect to the latter, which will probably seem objectionable to many of his readers in this country.

Coleridge, anticipating her candid procedure in *Biographia 1847*, gives evidence of what certain readers may find 'objectionable'. She attaches a footnote in which she directs the reader to 'Table Talk, p. 178, 2nd edit.', where an example of such 'liberty of criticism' is to be found. Here, STC applies linguistic analysis to the Old Testament, and an editorial note indicates that his religious 'faith' was independent of his belief in the Bible's authenticity.¹⁶ Coleridge correctly anticipates the nature of contemporary opposition to STC: Newman, in 1839, echoes her phrase 'liberty of criticism' in his observation that STC 'indulged a liberty of speculation which no Christian can tolerate'.¹⁷ A reference to Milton, in the context of Kantian metaphysics, provides further evidence that Coleridge is the author. STC, she contends, 'sought to justify the ways of God to man [...] by showing [...] their consequence from, and [...] their consistency with, the ideas or truths of the pure reason which is the same in all men'.¹⁸ Milton is a constant presence in Coleridge's religious writings. Her linking of the 'ways of God' with 'the ideas [...] of the pure reason' anticipates her use of Kantian epistemology in 'On Rationalism', and her discussion of STC's application of it to Christianity in *Biographia 1847*.

'A Glorious Church Betrayed': Coleridge's Political and Religious Context

The Oxford Movement was a political response to political change: '[t]ractarianism represented a revolt of Oxford Toryism at the reforming measures which the [Earl] Grey ministry brought into parliament in the early 1830s', according to Peter B. Nockles. These measures were preceded by constitutional reforms in the late 1820s that severely damaged the relationship of church and state. The first blow against the Church of England came in 1828, when the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts granted

¹⁶ *Remains*, III, pp. x-xi. *Specimens of the Table Talk of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. by Henry Nelson Coleridge, 2nd edn (London: Murray, 1836), p. 78.

¹⁷ Ker, p. 173.

¹⁸ *Remains*, III, p. xiii.

political liberty to Dissenters. Catholic Emancipation followed in 1829, in an attempt to stabilize a dangerously volatile situation in Ireland. A weakening and divided Tory government, incapable of withstanding intense Whig and radical pressures for change, passed these measures. As a result of the constitutional reforms of 1828 and 1829, dissenters and Roman Catholics could sit in Parliament and could therefore exert influence over the Church of England. Historian Eric J. Evans emphasizes how profoundly these measures unsettled the church: ‘the reform question encompassed more than an extension of the franchise. Concessions to Roman Catholics, and even Protestant dissenters, were viewed by many Anglicans as more damaging to the fabric of English society than the granting of a Parliamentary seat to Manchester or Birmingham’.¹⁹

The irreparable divisions in the Tory party caused by these reforms resulted in the collapse of Wellington’s government in 1830, ending decades of Tory rule. Wellington’s government was replaced by Grey’s Whig administration, which was committed to parliamentary reform. High Church and High Tory adherents continued to associate reform with hostility towards the established church. Henry expressed the intensity of Tory fears in his anti-reform pamphlet, *Notes on the Reform Bill*, in which he condemned the 1831 Reform Bill as ‘the first overt act’ of ‘a Revolution’. Henry anticipated a parliament that would wreak revolutionary destruction on the established Church: ‘[t]he Irish Reform Bill will send about thirty Roman Catholic Members to the House of Commons: add to these the English Roman Catholics, the Scotch Presbyterians, the English Dissenters, the Ubiquitarian enemies of any Establishment *whatever*’.²⁰ Coleridge’s comment on her husband’s reactionary pamphlet is a cool report of its sales figures and public reception.²¹ Henry’s attitudes towards Grey’s reformist measures place him on the same political wing as Newman. They are wholly at odds, though, with the political implications of Coleridge’s later theological writings.

Grey’s establishment of an Ecclesiastical Revenues Commission in 1832, the year following Henry’s alarmist pamphlet, would exacerbate Tory and High Church anxieties. Grey was committed to ‘the removal of [...] causes for complaint’ in the financial arrangements of the church. The establishment of a Commission was the first step towards reforming the church’s notorious inequalities. Its uneven deployment of resources meant that ‘[t]he Church of England was overstocked with clergymen in the wrong places’.²² It was therefore unable to respond to social change, and its ministry in the rapidly expanding industrial areas was inadequate. In 1833, Grey’s administration

¹⁹ Peter B. Nockles, *The Oxford Movement in Context: Anglican High Churchmanship, 1760-1857* (Cambridge University Press, 1994; paperback edn, 1997), p. 67. Evans, *1783-1870*, p. 204.

²⁰ *Notes on the Reform Bill* by a Barrister (London: Roake and Varty, 1831), p. 63, p. 61. Henry’s emphasis.

²¹ Mudge, p. 274 n.

²² Evans, *1783-1870*, p. 238.

introduced the Irish Church Temporalities Bill, which Newman branded the ‘Sacrilige Bill’.²³ The Bill proposed to abolish two out of four archbishoprics in Ireland and all eight bishoprics. The Ecclesiastical Commission might allocate some of the money saved ‘to build Catholic or secular schools, or even to pay Roman Catholic priests’.²⁴ Supporters of the established church regarded this as heinous secular interference in religious affairs. For the High Church party, by virtue of the doctrine of Apostolic Succession, only a bishop was entitled to rule on matters of church organization. Although the scheme to divert funds to secular and Catholic causes was dropped, the proposal itself, for High Anglicans, set a threatening precedent. The Tory leader, Peel, presented no more encouraging prospect for them. He was also committed to political reform of the church’s management of its resources.

John Keble responded to the State’s treatment of the church in a sermon entitled ‘National Apostasy Considered’. Keble preached this sermon to the visiting Assize court in Oxford’s University Church on 14 July 1833. Newman assigns to this date the beginning of The Oxford Movement. Keble made his protest in rousing terms: ‘[t]here was once here a glorious Church’, he proclaimed, ‘but it was betrayed into the hands of Libertines for the real or affected love of a little temporary peace and good order’. He denounced the nation for having turned from God and for treating the church as a mere institution of society. Newman published the first two of his *Tracts for the Times* in September 1833. He called upon his fellow clerics to engage in political ‘protest’ both ‘in public and private’. He warns that ‘abstinence’ from political engagement ‘is impossible’ for the clergy in such ‘troubulous times’. Those who remain politically neutral, Newman warns, ‘may perchance find themselves with the enemies of CHRIST, while they think to remove themselves from worldly politics’. He reminds clerics that they are not appointees of the State, and emphasizes the decisive change in the church’s political status since 1828: ‘[n]o one can say that the British Legislature is in our communion, or that its members are necessarily even Christians’.²⁵ Against secularism and heresy, Newman finds inspiration in the early church’s resistance to Roman tyranny: ‘[t]hen as now’, he contends, in *Arians of the Fourth Century* (1833), ‘there was [...] the presence in the Church, of an Heretical Power enthraling it, [...] and interfering with the management of her internal affairs’. He concludes defiantly: ‘our Athanasius and Basil will be given us in their destined season, to break the bonds of the oppressor and let the

²³ C. Brad Faught, *The Oxford Movement: A Thematic History of Tractarians and Their Times* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), p. 82.

²⁴ Owen Chadwick, *The Victorian Church, Part 1, 1829-1859*, 3rd edn (London: SCM Press, 1997), p. 57.

²⁵ Newman, *Tracts*, p. xvi, p. 10, p. 6, pp. 8-9.

captives go free'.²⁶ Newman's friend Hurrell Froude suggested immediate political innovation: disestablishment, the replacement of the 'national Church' with a 'real' church.²⁷

By the time Coleridge was preparing the editions of STC's *Literary Remains* and *Aids to Reflection*, the church's political crisis had assumed an increasingly doctrinal character. In July 1834 Lord Melbourne succeeded Grey as Whig Prime Minister. Melbourne was notoriously indifferent to religion and found Tractarian tenets particularly 'obscure'. He introduced a Bill to admit Dissenters to the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. Although the Bill was not passed, it was further evidence, for the Tractarians, of a Whig agenda to weaken the established church. In 1835, 'the Whigs at Westminster' 'sponsored' a proposal by the Heads of Houses at Oxford to cancel the requirement that undergraduates subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles.²⁸ Dr. Renn Dickson Hampden, Principal of St. Mary Hall, led the faction at Oxford that supported this measure. Melbourne was keen to promote Whig interests at both universities. In 1836, he promoted Hampden to the Regius Professorship of Divinity at Oxford. Tractarians declared Hampden unsuitable on doctrinal grounds. They alleged that his Bampton Lectures (1832) and his pamphlet, 'Observations on Religious Dissent' (1834), were heretical, because he had emphasized 'a religion of the heart' – a phrase Coleridge applies to STC's Christian philosophy – and had placed Unitarians 'on the same footing [...] of love for the Lord Jesus Christ [...] [as] any other Christian[s]'.²⁹ The political attacks on Hampden's appointment were presented in theological terms. Owen Chadwick observes that the 'Tory Press clamoured' that Melbourne was 'invad[ing] the citadel of faith, and intended to deluge the church with a torrent of scepticism and indifference to religious truth'.³⁰

The ultimate target of Tory, traditional High Church and Tractarian opposition to Hampden was Lord Melbourne. According to the predominant Oxford view, 'the Whig Prime Minister was unfit to choose leaders in the Church of England'. The focus of this political crisis was theological. In March 1836, Edward Bouverie Pusey secured in Oxford 'a public declaration that Hampden was guilty of systematic teaching of rationalism'.³¹ This emotive word was associated with German critical methodology;

²⁶ John Henry Newman, *The Arians of the Fourth Century, Their Doctrines, Temper and Conduct, Chiefly as Exhibited in the Councils of the Church between AD 325 and AD 381* (London: Rivington, 1833), p. 422.

²⁷ Piers Brendon, *Hurrell Froude and The Oxford Movement* (London: Elek, 1974), p. 157. Froude's emphasis, quoted by Brendon.

²⁸ Faught, p. 21, p. 20.

²⁹ Frank M. Turner, *John Henry Newman: The Challenge to Evangelical Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), p. 209, p. 210. *Biographia 1847*, 1, p. cxxxix.

³⁰ Chadwick, p. 115.

³¹ Chadwick, p. 120, p. 118.

though in the context of the Hampden case, according to Frank M. Turner, ‘the term *rationalism* denoted a critical approach to clerical and ecclesiastical authority’.³² The Oxford Convocation initially vetoed, but ultimately passed a statute restricting Hampden’s sphere of influence, because his ‘theology failed to possess the confidence of the university’.³³ Therefore, when Coleridge in 1837 begins to plan her anti-Tractarian work on the topic of ‘rationalism’, she is launching herself at the centre of public controversy. The matters on which she writes are far from ‘metaphysical trivialities’, as Griggs contends: they are topics of heated national debate. The political instability of the post-Reform church gives Coleridge significant authorial opportunities. As Nockles explains: ‘once other political props of the establishment had been removed in 1828–33, dogma assumed a greater importance’. The Oxford theologians had ‘rais[ed] [...] the doctrinal temperature of the Church’ in their response to political change, ‘highlighting in an often provocative way theological issues that had lain dormant’.³⁴ The most notable of these was baptismal regeneration, which recalled divisions earlier in the century between Orthodox and Evangelical wings of the church. Regeneration would become the major theme of Coleridge’s theological writings. In preparing the fourth edition of *Aids to Reflection*, and Volumes 3 and 4 of the *Literary Remains*, Coleridge recognizes that, in the new political conditions of post-Reform Britain, STC’s work may take on a wholly new significance. To re-present STC’s work ‘to a new and [...] different Public’ becomes a pressing task. Coleridge is very far from the mere ‘fertilizer, [...] [the] burrowing tunnelling reader, throwing up molehills’ of Virginia Woolf’s conception. To borrow Gadamer’s phrase, Coleridge brings STC ‘into the living present of conversation’.³⁵

‘Little Sara Coleridge’ versus ‘the Great Men’.

Coleridge says that she found STC’s *Aids to Reflection* largely incomprehensible on first reading it in 1825. In the late 1830s, she sees it as a foundation for her intervention in the male genre of theological polemic, while maintaining her social standing as a ‘Lady’. Coleridge manages her position as a writer’s daughter, and his editor’s husband, in order to become a writer herself. She maintains social propriety, yet asserts the ability of ‘the less worthy gender’, as she puts it ironically for her eminent brother-in-law, John, to write on ‘speculative’ subjects.³⁶ Coleridge negotiates tensions between conservative expectations and original authorship. She exploits a pious family context in the interests

³² Turner, p. 236. Turner’s emphasis.

³³ Chadwick, pp. 119–120.

³⁴ Griggs, *Coleridge Fille*, p. 145. Nockles, p. 311.

³⁵ *Essays*, I, p. xi. Woolf *Essays*, VI, p. 253. Gadamer, p. 377.

³⁶ *Criticism*, p. 161, p. 14.

of social respectability and literary autonomy. Henry explains that ‘On Rationalism’ is published as an appendix because it ‘appeared to be so much in harmony with the principles of the *Aids to Reflection*, and to represent, so accurately, the views of Mr. Coleridge on some points’.³⁷ Henry wrote this in the ‘Advertisement’ that prefaces the 1843 edition, and is dated 25 October 1842, exactly three months before his death. He does not mention the bold originality of ‘On Rationalism’. His presentation of the essay as a filially faithful account of STC’s principles preserves Coleridge’s social façade. She adds her own ‘Advertisement’ to the fifth edition of *Aids to Reflection*, dated ‘Regent’s Park, March 27, 1843’, two months and two days after Henry’s death. Here, Coleridge presents her publication of the essay as a dual memorial observance to father and husband. It was the ‘desire of the late Editor’ that she should write the essay ‘to accompany’ her father’s work, she says. She is publishing the essay under her own name ‘in obedience’ to her husband’s ‘express wish and resolve’.³⁸ Coleridge deftly presents her authorship as an act of female piety: not to publish ‘On Rationalism’ would be to flout her late husband’s wishes and to dishonour her father’s memory. The essay that mounts so strong an assault on patriarchal cultural authority is published in the name of obedience to patriarchal authority. Given the combative vehemence of the essay’s concluding pages, it is tempting to read some keen irony into Coleridge’s professions of compliant subservience.

Coleridge’s ‘rebel[lious]’ resistance to Tractarianism may express the agenda of the subordinated woman as well as that of the threatened Protestant.³⁹ The Oxonian authority represented by Newman and his colleagues is an exclusively male tradition. In his discussion of the letters of Newman’s sisters, David Goslee refers to ‘the dramatic discrepancy between the forums available to them’ and to their brother.⁴⁰ Coleridge accepts no such ‘discrepancy’: she is the only woman writer of the 1840s to engage in the scholarly genre of theological polemics. No other woman presents a sustained scholarly and theological critique of Tractarian writings. Religious concerns appear in the work of women novelists of the period: for example, in Charlotte Brontë’s sharp satire of the evangelical clergyman William Carus Wilson through the character of Mr. Brocklehurst in *Jane Eyre* (1847). Charlotte Yonge, a pupil of Keble’s, was a committedly religious novelist who sought to promote Anglo-Catholicism. She intended that her novels, such as *The Heir of Redclyffe* (1853) and *The Daisy Chain* (1856),

³⁷ *OR 1843*, I, p. viii.

³⁸ *OR 1843*, I, p. v.

³⁹ *OR 1843*, II, p. 545.

⁴⁰ David Goslee, ‘Religion as Contextualized Critique in the Letters of Harriett and Jemima Newman’, in *Women’s Theology in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Transfiguring the Faith of their Fathers*, ed. by Julie Melnyk (New York: Garland, 1993), pp. 95-104 (p. 97).

should be ‘a sort of instrument for popularizing Church views’.⁴¹ On the opposite side of the religious spectrum was Catherine Sinclair, ‘a popular Anti-Catholic novelist’.⁴² In the ‘Preface’ to her novel, *Beatrice; or, The Unknown Relatives* (1852), Sinclair states her target readership: ‘the object of this narrative is to portray, for the consideration of young girls now first emerging into society, the enlightened happiness derived from the religion of England’.⁴³ Coleridge, by contrast, operating in the male genre of the polemical essay, engages directly with the leading scholars and theologians of her day, and exploits a patriarchal tradition that stretches back to antiquity and the Church Fathers. It is significant that, in all of Coleridge’s theological writings, and of all the theological authorities she cites throughout her works, she never once refers to a woman writer, past or contemporary.

In ‘On Rationalism’, Coleridge makes no apology, as she sometimes does in her private letters, for engaging in theological or political discussion, ‘after [her] feminine fashion’.⁴⁴ She resents the condescension to which, as female philosopher and theologian, she is liable. Of a projected philosophical work, Coleridge comments: ‘folks will see that the remarks I have ventured [...] [are] only from little Sara Coleridge, and therefore my presumption will do no harm to any of the great men who have disputed on the question’.⁴⁵ The phrase, ‘great men’, is bitterly ironic, considering the consummate assurance with which she critiques Newman and Pusey. She makes no reference to herself in the essay as a female author, and writes in a male third person: ‘we desire that fellow Christians should dwell together as brothers’. Venturing into the masculine domain of theology, Coleridge engages on equal terms. The ‘intoleran[ce]’ she perceives at the heart of Tractarianism includes an elitism that is gendered and social, as well as theological and political.⁴⁶ Writing of *Loss and Gain* (1848), Coleridge finds objectionable a ‘*girl-hatred*’ that she perceives in Newman’s novel.⁴⁷ Misogyny is suggested, for example, when the protagonist, Charles Reding, sees a former acquaintance, now a clergyman, with his ‘very pretty’ bride in a bookshop: ‘[I]ove was in their eyes, joy in their voice, and affluence in their gait and bearing’. Reding hides to avoid a direct encounter, eavesdrops on their domestic conversation, and suffers sensations of nausea. At the close of the episode ‘a severe text of Scripture arose on

⁴¹ Faught, p. 113.

⁴² Carol Engelhardt Herringer, *Victorians and The Virgin Mary: Religion and Gender in England, 1830-85* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), p. 3.

⁴³ Catherine Sinclair, *Beatrice; or, The Unknown Relatives*, 3 vols (London: Bentley, 1852), I, p. iii.

⁴⁴ *M & L*, I, p. 139.

⁴⁵ *Criticism*, p. xv.

⁴⁶ *OR 1843*, II, p. 546.

⁴⁷ *Criticism*, p. 176. Coleridge’s emphasis.

[Reding's] mind'.⁴⁸ Newman satirizes the worldly influence of wives upon married clergy, and emphasizes his commitment to celibacy. Nonetheless, Newman felt comfortable to share his theological ideas with a few trusted, 'benignly receptive' 'female correspondents', from whom he 'sought sympathy, understanding and deference'. According to Turner, these women were unlikely to attempt 'to check the expansion of his thought' in the way that male colleagues such as Keble and Pusey might.⁴⁹ 'On Rationalism', authored by a woman, presented by contrast an assured, rigorous and innovative attack on the whole basis of his religious thought.

Nonetheless, Coleridge had expected Newman to review 'On Rationalism'. In October 1843, she expresses disappointment that 'Mr. Newman's promised review does not appear'. She adds, '[he] has something else to do and to think of'.⁵⁰ Coleridge's comment may reflect some personal hurt. Equally, though, its irony might refer to the crises with which Newman was preoccupied in 1843. Pusey had been denounced for heresy in June and banned from preaching for two years by Oxford University. Newman was considering his personal position in the Church of England, a situation exacerbated by the secession to Rome of one of his young followers. He resigned his ministry in September and preached his last sermon as an Anglican. Given Newman's difficulties at the time, it is not surprising that he was unable to review 'On Rationalism'. Newman felt vulnerable in 1843, reflected by his abandoning a projected 'Saints of the British Isles'. He felt that if he edited this series, he would 'expose himself by giving the bishops a sitting target to "aim at"'. A forthright review of Coleridge's committedly Protestant 'On Rationalism' might also have made him a 'sitting target'.⁵¹ Nonetheless, Newman appears to have read it. In 1846, Coleridge confides to Aubrey de Vere that Newman had spoken in complimentary terms about 'On Rationalism'. 'A lady' has just told her, she reports, that 'Mr. Newman wondered that the said essay was not more read'.⁵² Ultimately, he may have avoided reviewing Coleridge's essay because, lacking 'even [a] modest knowledge of German idealist philosophy', he was not equipped to engage with her underpinning Kantian epistemology. Newman would therefore have been at a significant disadvantage in answering Coleridge's critique. Furthermore, he never did 'direct public battle with an intellectual or theological equal or with a person capable of powerfully expressing convictions at odds with his own', according to Turner.⁵³ Newman's difficulties in answering Coleridge would have been compounded by the fact

⁴⁸ John Henry Newman, *Loss and Gain: The Story of a Convert*, ed. by Trevor Lipscombe (San Francisco: St. Ignatius Press, 2012), p. 289, p. 291.

⁴⁹ Turner, p. 507.

⁵⁰ Wordsworth Trust, WLMS A/ Coleridge, Sara/ 42.

⁵¹ Ker, pp. 281-282.

⁵² *M & L*, II, p. 17.

⁵³ Turner, p. 603, p. 556.

that this formidable opponent was a woman.

Writing to a friend whose husband was ‘honouring’ ‘On Rationalism’ with a ‘slow reading’, Coleridge reports another favourable reception of her essay in high ecclesiastical quarters: ‘[t]he Bishop of London both to my brother and to Judge Erskine expressed an opinion that many of the [essay’s] arguments were “fatal” to Newman’s doctrine’.⁵⁴ Balliol student John Duke Coleridge, Henry’s nephew, told Coleridge that ‘Oxford theologians’ were discussing her essay, including W. G. Ward, a disciple of Newman and Fellow of Balliol.⁵⁵ Hartley recognizes the scholarly and literary achievement of ‘On Rationalism’: it is ‘not ‘a wonder of a woman’s work—where lives that man who could have written it? None in Great Britain since our Father died’, he declares.⁵⁶ That the eminent Charles Blomfield, Bishop of London, considers Coleridge on equal terms with Newman, and judges her to have overcome the great man’s arguments, indicates her significant achievement as a religious author. The eloquent cogency of Coleridge’s writing worked firmly against the enclosed citadel of male academia.

Coleridge strikes at male authority in a more personal way in her essay: she criticizes Derwent’s *Scriptural Character of the English Church*. Coleridge takes the opportunity to put Derwent, with formal academic propriety, in his intellectual place. She resents the way in which he attempts to police her ideas. In November 1820, she tells her friend, Elizabeth Crumpe, that Derwent ‘cautions’ her not to express political opinions: she refers sarcastically to his instruction as a ‘charge’, as though the Cambridge freshman were a bishop issuing orders to his diocese.⁵⁷ More than two decades later, engaged in the editorial tasks that Derwent had avoided, she resents his disapproving interference after Henry’s death: ‘Derwent *will* not agree with me. He will not,’ she complains. She adds that neither Green nor Derwent are ‘pleased that [she] should be the Guardian of [her] Father’s doctrine’.⁵⁸

Nonetheless, she goes through the motions of submitting her ideas for Derwent’s approval, though there is no guarantee that she will accede to his wishes, as with the continued inclusion of ‘Poppies’ in editions of *Pretty Lessons*. In October 1845, however, she lost patience and refused to show Derwent a draft of her ‘Introduction’ to *Biographia 1847*. She asked her High Church brother-in-law, John, to comment on it instead, telling Derwent sarcastically: ‘you may feel confident now that there will not be any thing *disgraceful* in it’. Her emphasis on ‘*disgraceful*’ suggests that Derwent had

⁵⁴ *Criticism*, p. 16.

⁵⁵ Waldegrave, p. 261. Mudge, p. 115.

⁵⁶ *HC Letters*, p. 267.

⁵⁷ Wordsworth Trust, WLMS A/ Coleridge, Sara/ 3.

⁵⁸ Griggs, *Coleridge Fille*, p. 183. Coleridge’s emphasis.

used the word in commenting on an earlier draft she had shown him. At his insistence, she had reluctantly deleted a section on ‘*private judgment*’.⁵⁹ Coleridge shares Hartley’s irritation at Derwent’s ‘freedom of rebuke’ and arrogance, which he attributes to Derwent’s professional ‘habits of command’ and ‘the worship universally paid him’.⁶⁰

In ‘On Rationalism’, Coleridge makes a scholarly pre-emptive strike against the domineering clergyman: she critiques his discussion, in *The Scriptural Character of the English Church*, of the baptism of Jesus. She cites Derwent’s statement that ‘[t]he baptism of Jesus “was an example and pattern of that which he subsequently enjoined upon his followers”’, and that by it we may be “confirmed in the belief that the spirit of adoption, by which we cry, Abba, Father, was henceforth to be bestowed in connexion with the ‘outward laver.’”’ Coleridge then delivers her incisive rebuttal: ‘[b]ut here is an example that does not exemplify’. She refers to Derwent satirically as the ‘reflective writer of those sentences’, and points out their underlying contradiction that ‘the Sinless One’ could ‘require forgiveness of sin, or to be born again of the Spirit.’ Coleridge concludes that Derwent’s discussion of the baptism of Jesus is ‘nugatory’. It merely suggests that ‘being a Son of God has *some kind* of connexion with baptism’ – a point that has never been ‘doubted’. Coleridge lacks professional status, but towers above Derwent intellectually. In a footnote near the end of ‘On Rationalism’, she engages with him again. She refers to his discussion of ‘Infant Baptism’ in *The Scriptural Character of the English Church*. Here, Derwent has ‘apparent[ly]’ adopted ‘Jeremy Taylor’s splendid sophistry on a particular point’. She disagrees with this ‘sophistry [...] as a steadfast maintainer of the doctrines taught in the Aids to Reflection, according to the extent of my understanding’. She satirizes Derwent’s tendency to censor or belittle her ‘understanding’, and concludes the note with ironical poise. She recommends Derwent’s book for its ‘able exposition’ of STC’s ‘opinions’ on the Sacraments, ‘as far as I am a judge’.⁶¹ Again, she taunts Derwent with his disparagement of her ‘judg[ment]’. Furthermore, she does exactly what Derwent hopes in his ‘Preface’ the reader will not do: she reads him as an ‘exponent’ of STC rather than as an independent theologian in his own right.⁶² The adjective ‘able’, therefore, in the context of the whole note, is a term of ironically faint praise.

Derwent’s desire to censor *Biographia 1847* may have been in retaliation for Coleridge’s treatment of him in ‘On Rationalism’, as well as in defence of his conservative religious agenda. Derwent is interested in the church as a national institution, ‘the great organ of public education’, and as a traditional medium of social

⁵⁹ *Criticism*, p. 37. Coleridge’s emphases.

⁶⁰ *HC Letters*, p. 273.

⁶¹ *OR 1843*, II, pp. 505-506, p. 551 n. Coleridge’s emphasis.

⁶² Derwent, *Scriptural Character*, p. xxiv.

cohesion.⁶³ Coleridge, meanwhile, is concerned with the theological principles that impact upon the spiritual life of the church's members. Coleridge's sharp critique of Derwent's views may seem at odds with her concern to uphold the appearance of female propriety. The modest reticence of her literary persona, suggested by her absence from the title page of the fifth and sixth editions of *Aids to Reflection*, is not carried over into the text of her essay. Also, in subjecting her brother's work to incisive criticism, Coleridge ostensibly demonstrates her impartiality.

Kantian Epistemology and Christian Doctrine

The works upon which Coleridge principally focuses in 'On Rationalism' belong to the mid-to-late 1830s. This was the period of Tractarianism's ascendancy, in which its antiquarian basis was established, before the movement's reversal of fortunes in 1841, occasioned by the public relations disaster of *Tract 90*. 'On Rationalism' was published two years after the appearance of this notorious *Tract*, yet Coleridge does not treat it directly in her essay. *Tract 90*, which sets out to show that the church's Articles may be given 'a Catholic interpretation', is concerned with the politics of clerical subscription.⁶⁴ According to Turner, *Tract 90* was seen as encouraging a 'Tractarian ordinand' to intend 'his subscription to embrace a meaning different from what his bishop, as well as the wider church community, thought his words conveyed'. In effect, it encouraged duplicity. Between 1841 and 1843, a significant number of bishops, High Church as well as Evangelical, issued charges strongly critical of the threat *Tract 90* posed to 'the integrity of subscription' and ecclesiastical discipline.⁶⁵ Coleridge, by contrast, seeks in 'On Rationalism' to critique the conceptual basis of Tractarianism. She is concerned with its implications for the devotional experience of the individual Christian.

Coleridge has key Tractarian texts in her sights in 'On Rationalism': Newman's *Tract 73, On the Introduction of Rationalistic Principles Into Religion*, and Pusey's *Tracts 67, 68 and 69* of 1835, collectively entitled *Scriptural Views of Holy Baptism*, published as a single volume in 1836. Pusey's *Tracts* were decisive in 'provoking years of internal disruption' in the Church of England, according to Turner: they shifted the focus of Tractarian attack from 'Dissenters' to 'evangelicals' within the church itself.⁶⁶ Pusey argues in these *Tracts* that, according to Scripture, 'Baptism is the source of our spiritual birth', not 'faith, or love, or prayer', or any other 'grace'.⁶⁷ He maintains that

⁶³ Raymonde Hinton and Godfrey Hainton, *The Unknown Coleridge: The Life and Times of Derwent Coleridge, 1800-1883* (London: Janus, 1996), p. 151.

⁶⁴ Newman, *Tracts*, p. 471.

⁶⁵ Turner, p. 440, p. 392.

⁶⁶ Turner, p. 187.

⁶⁷ E. B. Pusey, *Tracts for the Times, Nos. 67, 68, 69. Scriptural Views of Holy Baptism, with an Appendix* (London: Rivington, 1836), p. 12.

faith leads us to baptism, by which God saves us: regeneration, therefore, is conferred in the ritual of baptism administered by a priest. Newman, in his *Lectures on Justification* (1838), a work with which Coleridge is also deeply engaged, upholds Pusey's position: '[f]aith', states Newman, 'considered as an instrument, is always secondary to the Sacraments'. He then cites St. Paul's pronouncement on faith and baptism in Galatians 3. 26-27: '[y]e are all the children of God *by faith* in Christ Jesus; *for* as many of you as have been *baptized* into Christ have put on Christ'. According to Newman, St. Paul is telling the Galatians that they are 'God's children by faith', because they have 'put on Christ in Baptism'. In doctrinal terms, Newman explains, this means that 'Faith justifies *because* Baptism has justified'. Baptism, for Newman, is the primary 'instrument' of justification.⁶⁸

Another work of significance for Coleridge, in her composition of 'On Rationalism', is Hurrell Froude's 'Essay on Rationalism' (1834), whose title she adopts with combative irony. Froude's essay, first published in 1834, was reprinted posthumously in his controversial *Remains* (1838), prepared for publication by Newman and Keble. Froude introduced the word 'rationalism' into 'Tractarian discourse', Turner observes, 'to disparage both historic Protestant theology and contemporary evangelical practices'.⁶⁹ Froude advances a view fundamentally opposed to that maintained by Coleridge. He conceives of reason mechanistically as 'the faculty by which we are enabled to weigh evidence', and denies that Christians 'have a faculty within them for recognizing and experiencing the supernatural action of the Holy Spirit on the human heart'.⁷⁰ Coleridge rejects this premise, and the Tractarian idea of rationalism, in her opening sentences: she defines 'reason in the primary and proper sense, as the light by which we read the law written in the heart, or rather the law itself, read by its own light, when that is enkindled from above'.⁷¹ Coleridge understands reason to be universal, a light in the minds equally of all individuals, whereby the divine is apprehended. This egalitarian concept, at once devotional and metaphysical, drives her critique of an exclusive and anti-democratic Oxford theology.

In her rejection of Newman's understanding of 'rationalism', Coleridge refocuses STC's distinction between Reason and Understanding, as developed in *Aids to Reflection*. 'Reason', says STC, 'is the Power of universal and necessary Convictions, the Source and Substance of Truths above Sense, and having their evidence in themselves.' He adopts Kant's definition of the Understanding as 'a Faculty judging

⁶⁸ John Henry Newman, *Lectures on Justification* (London & Oxford: Rivington and Parker, 1838), p. 265, p. 266, p. 286. Newman's emphases.

⁶⁹ Turner, p. 85.

⁷⁰ Hurrell Froude, *Remains of the Late Reverend Hurrell Froude, MA, Fellow of Oriol College, Oxford*, 2 vols (London: Rivington, 1839), II, Part 2, p. 18, p. 6.

⁷¹ *OR 1843*, II, p. 335.

according to the Sense'; a faculty that enables us to 'reflect and generalize' the 'notices received from the senses'.⁷² STC had been developing his definitions of these terms since the mid-1800s. In 1806, for example, he described the Understanding as 'that Faculty of the Soul which apprehends and retains the mere notices of Experience'.⁷³ As Monika Class observes, '[h]ere and throughout his future work, [STC] assumed that the Understanding played an inferior role'.⁷⁴ Coleridge follows STC in assigning to the Understanding a function 'inferior' to that of Reason, but continues the ongoing Coleridgean process of refining and developing these essential terms. The polemical context of her re-application of STC's definitions leads Coleridge to re-examine their Kantian basis. She uses them as tools of acute critical analysis for exposing what she regards as Tractarian errors.

Newman states that '[t]o Rationalize is to ask for *reasons* out of place; to ask improperly how we *account* for certain things, to be unwilling to believe them unless they can be accounted for'.⁷⁵ Coleridge argues that rationalism is a mode of thinking that 'involves a forgetfulness of the spiritual and divine, a subserviency to the carnal, finite, and human'. This is not to be confused with the 'necess[ity] [...] to test the truth of doctrine [...] by its correspondency to the rational, moral, and spiritual ideas within us.' Such methodology is not rationalism, Coleridge maintains. Nor is it rationalistic to hold that the 'intellectual faculty [...] must [...] be present and active' in the reception of divine grace.⁷⁶ In her critique of Tractarianism, Coleridge reapplies STC's interpretation of Kant, in which there is a correspondence between Christianity and the configuration of the human mind. Coleridge refers to this in *Biographia 1847* as the 'accordance and identity' of Christian faith with the 'ideas of reason'.⁷⁷ In 'On Rationalism', Coleridge adduces Kantian analysis to expose the imprecise epistemology of Tractarianism, in which 'the use of the understanding in speculation and abstraction' is confused with 'its concrete and practical use'. Consequently, Tractarians fail to recognize that 'the practical use of the understanding, as the organ of reason and the moral mind, [...] [is] universally necessary in *the conversion of the soul to God*'.⁷⁸

Coleridge's originality as a religious polemicist resides in her application of Kantian philosophy to a critique of Tractarianism. Unlike other critics, who oppose the Oxford Movement in sectarian terms, Coleridge presents a succinct account of the epistemological basis of her theology:

⁷² ARCC, p. 216, p. 232, p. 224, p. 232.

⁷³ STC, *Collected Letters*, II (1956), p. 1198.

⁷⁴ Monika Class, *Coleridge and Kantian Ideas in England, 1796-1817: Coleridge's Responses to German Philosophy* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), pp. 180-181.

⁷⁵ Newman, *Tracts*, p. 181. Newman's emphases.

⁷⁶ OR 1843, II, pp. 340-341, p. 342.

⁷⁷ *Biographia 1847*, I, p. lxxv.

⁷⁸ OR 1848, II, p. 69, p. 70. Coleridge's emphasis.

It does not [...] depend upon our *will* whether or no we see a rose when we have turned our eyes consciously toward the flower; yet we do not see a rose, our minds remaining wholly inactive as the crystal mirror when the image of a passing object flashes into it. In every perception the matter is given, [...] excited within us by an outward stimulus; but, in order to its appearing in a definite form, the mind must [...] arrange the affections of sense, apprehend, connect, and reproduce them; and this is to *think* in the widest sense of the term. Now the understanding is the faculty of thinking; [...] it is the whole connecting power of the mind.

In a footnote, Coleridge gives a ‘Free Translation’ and explanation of a passage from Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*, which helps to elucidate her conception of ‘thinking’ as ‘the whole connecting power of the mind’. For Kant, she maintains,

that objects present themselves to us in any definite form, as wholes, having each its own unity, depends upon the understanding and imagination, that is the transcendental imagination [...] which is prior to experience, which orders and shapes it, supplying form to the materials of sensation.

Coleridge contends that the mind’s synthesizing of its sensory impressions applies equally to the objects of ‘spiritual cognition’, which are given form and clarity by its ‘plastic agency’.⁷⁹ The mind, therefore, is so configured as to apprehend spiritual as well as physical reality.

In his critique of ‘private judgment’, Newman makes much of the distinction between ‘Objective and Subjective Truth’ in *Tract 73*, and argues that ‘the Rationalist [...] confines faith to the province of Subjective Truth’.⁸⁰ Coleridge refutes Newman’s position by presenting ‘the mind of man as at once subjective and objective’, and adduces STC’s definition of the mind as ‘a subject which is its own object’. She elucidates her Kantian model of mind in a striking natural analogy, which recalls her opening image of ‘reason’ as ‘light’. Coleridge collapses Newman’s distinction between subjective and objective knowledge and replaces Froude’s mechanical view of reason with her dynamic concept of mind:

The sky and the smooth expanse of skylike ocean, the one overhanging, and, as it were, looking down into the other, —the two, under a strong sun, appearing as one, a double heaven, —may image to us [...] the mind reflecting and reflected, the mind as a power of representation, perception, thought, and the mind as a power of ideas, or spiritual realities, the substance and the life of all our knowledge.⁸¹

⁷⁹ *OR 1843*, II, p. 350, p. 351 n, p. 351. Coleridge’s emphases.

⁸⁰ Newman, *Tracts*, p. 183.

⁸¹ *OR 1843*, II, p. 352.

Coleridge's image of 'the mind as a power of ideas, or spiritual realities' is the conceptual basis of her theology. It underlies her whole critique of Tractarianism, and her defence of the Protestant economy of salvation. It is grounded, ultimately, in Kant's principle that '[t]he synthetic unity of consciousness is [...] an objective condition of all knowledge'.⁸² In Coleridge's conception of individual regeneration, therefore, consciousness works actively in the gradual reception of divine grace: 'the soul of man cannot properly become religious', she asserts, 'without the concurrence of the understanding in every stage of the process'. In Tractarian theory the subject receives grace passively in baptism: as Coleridge puts it, the soul is 'stamped with a character as the dead wax receives the impression of the seal.' It is a process independent of the subject's rational and volitional activity. Coleridge, by contrast, conceives of the Christian life as a dynamic process of devotional struggle towards a regenerate state: 'we are living and growing in the Spirit in becoming the children of God'.⁸³ Coleridge's Kantian epistemology underpins her Christian devotion.

The Tractarian Circumscription of Divine Mercy

Pusey established the Tractarian doctrine of baptism in his *Tracts* of 1835. For Coleridge, this doctrine is not only metaphysically incoherent, but detrimental to individual faith in its limitation of the scope of God's mercy. According to Pusey, regeneration occurs once and for all in baptism: it is a mystic event confined to the sacramental moment. In *Tract 68*, he addresses the 'danger' of 'losing' the 'privileges of Baptism'. He emphasizes the extreme difficulty of 'ris[ing] again after falling from baptismal grace', and bases his argument on the view 'of the ancient Church, that one who [has] fallen grievously after Baptism' can never regain 'the same condition as if he had never so fallen'. In *Tract 69*, Pusey cites St. Cyril to support the position that 'all impairing of baptismal purity' can never 'be wholly repaired': '[t]he bath cannot be received twice or thrice; else a man might say, "though I fail once, I shall succeed a second time": but if thou failest the "once" it cannot be repaired'. Pusey then emphasizes the gravity of post-baptismal sin: 'subjects of which [people] speak lightly', he warns, are 'indeed very fearful'.⁸⁴ In *Tract 82*, written in defence of Pusey's *Tracts*, Newman supports Pusey's stern prescription that 'those who have fallen after baptism' exist in 'a dark place': they have 'no personal assurance, no right to appropriate again what was given them *plenarily* in baptism'.⁸⁵ Coleridge objects that, given 'human nature', it is

⁸² Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. by Marcus Weigelt (London: Penguin, 2007), p. 132.

⁸³ *OR 1843*, II, pp. 342-343, p. 353, p. 551.

⁸⁴ Pusey, *Holy Baptism*, p. 49, p. 58, p. 54, p. 176.

⁸⁵ Newman, *Tracts*, p. 358. Newman's emphasis.

inevitable that a Christian ‘often falls into sin after Baptism’.⁸⁶

She condemns the Tractarian ‘tenet that regeneration [...] and forgiveness of sin, as promised under the Gospel, [come] once for all in Baptism’. It is ‘a desolating belief’, she asserts, ‘which steals away from the Christian the boundless treasures of mercies in Christ. [...] [He] is robbed of the incentives, encouragements and consolations [...] which the Gospel so abundantly supplies to all who really and deeply desire them.’ The trope of theft suggests that the sinning Christian may justly possess the hope of God’s mercy. ‘[B]oundless’ is a key word: Coleridge’s theology expresses her devotional sense that ‘the mercies of God, like Himself, are infinite’.⁸⁷ It is an inclusive creed, in which God’s grace is open to ‘all’ who truly ‘desire’ it. By contrast, Tractarianism limits the scope of God’s mercy. Like Coleridge, Samuel Wilberforce deplored the demotivating implications of Pusey’s baptismal doctrine, and sensed its elitist implications. It held up ‘a glorious standard of holiness’ for those educated in ‘the riches of the Gospel’, he observed, but was liable to shut out ‘ignorant and bowed-down souls’ who needed ‘a more welcoming treatment’. In 1838, Wilberforce, future Bishop of Oxford, preached two Oxford University sermons in opposition to Pusey’s teaching, in which he denounced ‘the preacher’s right to lay undue stress upon the fearfulness of post-baptismal sin’.⁸⁸ Coleridge, though, thought that Pusey and Newman had raised a matter that was better discussed than avoided. Throughout her theological writings, she is committed to the open discussion of religious doctrines, whether congenial or objectionable. By such means, she holds, the conceptual form of Christianity, which underlies faith and morality, may be clarified and understood. She increasingly regards such doctrinal investigation as a dialogic process, as reflected in the Socratic form of her final religious works. Rather than circumvent ‘a doctrine [...] which the human heart very readily rejects’, Coleridge contends, it is the theologian’s responsibility to examine it, so that the grounds for its rejection are held rationally. Her critique of Tractarian negativity enables her to formulate her own positive view. Baptism, she affirms, is ‘an introduction to a perennial fount of living waters, in which our souls are to be washed and purified perpetually, so that at the end of life they *may* be [...] far more stainless and pure, than when those waters were first applied’.⁸⁹ This reflects Coleridge’s devotional concept of a lifelong pilgrimage towards ultimate grace.

Coleridge exposes a disparity between moral intention and practical effect in Tractarian teaching: if ‘the ceremonial act’ of baptism is ‘entirely distinct’ from ‘the actuation of the will’, an individual may deem herself ‘pleasing in God’s sight’, even

⁸⁶ *OR 1843*, II, p. 492.

⁸⁷ *OR 1843*, II, p. 490, p. 492, p. 496.

⁸⁸ Newsome, p. 187, p. 190.

⁸⁹ *OR 1843*, II, p. 497, p. 549. Coleridge’s emphasis.

though ‘purity and holiness [are] almost wanting’. Coleridge defines her own ethic of Christian commitment in evangelical language of military discipline: ‘Christ [...] died to call’ our spiritual capacities ‘into action’, she proclaims. By contrast, she satirizes Newman and Pusey through a trope of epicurean luxury: their ‘doctrine [...] would make our Baptism a down cushion to fall back on and repose upon through life’.⁹⁰

Tractarianism, Coleridge suggests, is self-defeating and undermines moral discipline. Yet, the leaders of the Oxford Movement were associated with severe personal austerity. Newman subjected himself to strict devotional exercises such as fasting; Pusey made his ‘family life into a stronghold of rigid ascetic practices’.⁹¹ By exposing what she regards as a fundamental contradiction between its moral professions and practical effects, Coleridge strikes at the conceptual incohesion of Tractarianism.

The gravity of post-baptismal sin underlies Newman and Pusey’s rigorous asceticism, and drives Pusey’s interest in the concepts of confession and purgatory. Tractarian teaching on post-baptismal sin makes eternal perdition inevitable, unless the redemptive possibilities of purgatory exist. Coleridge recognizes this: ‘the notion of a purgatory intervening betwixt the soul’s departure from this world, and its entrance into final bliss and fullness of glory, is the natural and necessary pendant to [the Tractarian] scheme.’ While Tractarian baptismal doctrine oppresses the devout, the attendant concept of purgatory encourages the materialistic and spiritually uncommitted to persist in self-indulgence. Coleridge presents the notion in reductively satirical terms, and envisages ‘a painless purgatory, which Anglican Anti-protestants can alone venture upon’. The alliterative oxymoron, with its sense of the ludicrous, and the assonant expansion of the ‘Anti-protestant’ tag, which alludes to Newman’s Catholic interpretation of the Articles in *Tract 90*, heighten Coleridge’s satirical tone. The Tractarian version of purgatory would be unscriptural, she contends, and ‘more demoralizing in its tendency’ than medieval superstition.⁹²

Coleridge satirizes the Anglo-Catholic purgatory as an exclusive resort, in which the recently-departed sinner is spared the stress of having to live in holiness straight away: a ‘self-indulgent nominal Christian [...] will [...] feel it a relief and a respite, that he has no chance of passing at once into the company of saints and angels, when he knows himself’ to be entirely unfitted for such company. The lax, self-pampered Christian hopes, in due course, to gain effortless access to heaven. Coleridge implies that he has no wish to exert the spiritual discipline by which he may be reconciled with God: ‘he will rather enjoy the thought of an intermediate sojourn, where he is sure to obtain,

⁹⁰ *OR 1843*, II, p. 472, p. 470, p. 476.

⁹¹ Turner, p. 188.

⁹² *OR 1843*, II, pp. 475-476.

by some means or other, those qualifications for heaven which he took but little pains to *work out* for himself here'. Coleridge's pointed parenthesis, 'by some means or other', has a tinge of humour in its implication that questionable 'means' might be used. Tractarian doctrine produces a psychology of simony, Coleridge implies, and would damage the church's moral influence: 'it must surely take the sting' from the clergy's 'dehortatory preaching', she remarks drily. The spiritual struggle of Christian pilgrimage is degraded to a business of 'obtaining [...] qualifications'. Coleridge pursues the Tractarian tenet that grace is conveyed '*plenarily* in baptism' to what she regards as its necessary conclusion: an 'Anglican Anti-protestant' purgatory that is spiritually vacuous and comically absurd.⁹³

Coleridge refers to further contradictions in Tractarian baptismal doctrine. According to 'Anti-Protestant divines', God's grace was bestowed upon the world in full measure only at the coming of Christ. For Coleridge, this is a misconception that arises principally from unbalanced interpretations of St Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews. The distinction 'intended' in this Epistle is that 'between the Law and the Gospel', which has been mistaken for a 'contrast [...] between the spiritual state of the world before and after the manifestation of our Saviour'. According to this 'Anti-Protestant' misinterpretation, the 'ancient Saints' of the Old Testament, 'lived and died without having their sins forgiven them', which, Coleridge contends, is a 'great [...] outrage to sense and reason'. On the contrary, the Old Testament figures cited in Hebrews Chapter 11 were 'believers in Christ to come, [...] witnesses to divine truth, *of whom the world was not worthy*'. Coleridge incorporates into her sentence the opening phrase of Hebrews 11. 38, in order to emphasize the sanctity of the Old Testament faithful. Although they lived 'before the establishment of the Visible Church', Coleridge believes that, 'on their departure from this world, they entered the Jerusalem that is altogether above'.⁹⁴ Again, Coleridge objects to the 'Anti-Protestant' dogma because it would limit the infinitude of God's mercy.

Infant baptismal regeneration raises further contradictions for Coleridge: its long-standing and intricate confusions are the theological equivalent of 'Arachne's web, the prototype of cobwebs'. Coleridge's Ovidian analogy reflects the imaginative vitality of her style in treating the gravest of subjects. She rejects St Augustine's teaching that all unbaptized people, including all unbaptized infants, are condemned to eternal damnation. Nor can the problems of the mystic doctrine of baptism, she argues, be resolved by the Church's pronouncement that, 'children which are baptized, dying

⁹³ *OR 1843*, II, p. 476. Coleridge's emphasis. Newman, *Tracts*, p. 358. Newman's emphasis. *OR 1843*, II, p. 476.

⁹⁴ *OR 1843*, II, p. 456, p. 457, p. 468. Coleridge's emphasis.

before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved'. Against this, Coleridge asserts her belief in the boundlessness of God's grace:

I must avow my conviction that children dying before they commit, or can commit actual sin, are safe [...] whether baptized or no. [...] It is enough to say that young children dying before they have sinned, are safe in the mercy and infinite loving-kindness of God; that they will not perish without Baptism, missed through no fault of their own.

She applies the same principle to 'the ignorant savage', who has had no opportunity for conversion.⁹⁵ Coleridge's maternal experience of having lost four babies, including one stillborn, may influence her view. Nonetheless, before her daughter Bertha died aged ten days, Coleridge 'sent for the clergyman to baptize the baby'.⁹⁶ This was in July 1840, during the period in which she was occupied with 'On Rationalism'. Coleridge's theological position, though, is that baptism is not necessary in such a case, which, she observes, is supported by scriptural evidence: 'Christ suffered' 'speechless babes' 'to come unto Him, [...] independently of baptism, in right of their own innocence'. Coleridge's view is based on her conviction that God's grace is boundless. She argues that the conceptual problems surrounding infant baptism, and the related 'notion of faith in babes', have never been resolved. Even Luther and Calvin make irrational statements: 'these great teachers', Coleridge observes, 'as soon as they approach the present subject, as if wrought upon by a spell, straightway become children themselves'.⁹⁷ The word 'spell' for Coleridge signifies the suspension of rational volition. Here, she indicates that Luther and Calvin express views on 'faith in babes' that will not bear critical analysis. Ultimately, Coleridge's critique of infant baptismal regeneration rests on two principles: first, that 'the will [is] converted' and 'the heart purified' through 'the subordinate ministrative agency of the understanding'; second, that the salvation of all who die in infancy is secured by God's infinite grace.⁹⁸

Coleridge's Polemical Style

Coleridge's conceptualization of regeneration is governed by her tenet that 'spiritual life can only be initiated by an intellectual process'. She supports the Kantian rationale of her theology by reference to scripture. In all accounts of conversion in the New Testament, she contends, reason is the vital medium of spiritual influence, not the ritual of baptism. Coleridge refers to the account, in *Acts of the Apostles* 16. 23 – 34, of the

⁹⁵ *OR 1843*, II, p. 484 n, p. 482, p. 483.

⁹⁶ Waldegrave, p. 224.

⁹⁷ *OR 1843*, II, p. 484 n, p. 485 n.

⁹⁸ *OR 1848*, II, p. 70.

conversion of ‘the Keeper of the prison’ in Philippi, where the Apostles Paul and Silas were in custody.⁹⁹ STC had cited this episode in *Aids to Reflection*, arguing that the baptism of the jailor ‘and all his [h]ousehold’ did not substantiate the practice of infant baptism in Apostolic times.¹⁰⁰ Newman also refers to the conversion of the jailor in *Lectures on Justification*: ‘[t]he words, “Believe, and thou shalt be saved”, do not ‘negat[e] the use of a divine instrument, such as Baptism, as intervening between faith and its reward’. He adds that ‘[t]he jailor to whom [these words] were spoken was baptized forthwith’.¹⁰¹

Coleridge analyses the process of the jailor’s conversion. She suggests that he had already engaged with the Apostles’ preaching before his impulse for conversion. His ‘terror’ at the earthquake ‘could not have led to a search after spiritual safety, had it not been for its connexion with that evangelical teaching, on account of which Paul and Silas were now in custody’. The jailor’s intellectual reception of the Gospel had already begun. His cognitive apprehension of some elements of the Apostles’ teaching, however vague, had prepared his mind for conversion. Furthermore, when he asked the Apostles what he must do to be saved, he was not baptized at once on the basis of ‘his shapeless emotions and indefinite religious apprehensions’. The Apostles require that the jailor should ‘believe’, and they give him – ‘and unto all that were in his house’ – instruction to promote belief. In effect, Coleridge contends, the Apostles ‘set orthodox doctrine before his mind as a preparation for baptism’. The essential feature of this narrative, then, is the jailor’s active cognitive response to the Apostles’ teaching. Coleridge’s account of this interaction refutes W. E. Gladstone’s Tractarian position in *Church Principles Considered in Their Results* (1840), which she cites in a footnote: “[i]t is rationalistic to maintain that intellectual apprehension is a necessary or invariable precondition of spiritual agency upon the soul.”¹⁰² On the contrary, Coleridge’s interpretation of the jailor’s conversion emphasizes ‘intellectual apprehension’. She shows that his understanding of Christian doctrine was actively engaged before his baptism.

Coleridge’s dismissal of a Tractarian version of the episode is compellingly dramatic:

It is strange indeed that some suppose the jailor to have inquired respecting his temporal safety alone. What! must he not have known that his prisoners professed to teach *the way of salvation*; and could they show him any other than the spiritual way, and does not their answer imply that he inquired after that

⁹⁹ *OR 1843*, II, p. 353, p. 354.

¹⁰⁰ *ARCC*, p. 363.

¹⁰¹ Newman, *Justification* (1838), pp. 273-274. Newman’s emphasis.

¹⁰² *OR 1843*, II, pp. 354-355, p. 355 n. Coleridge’s emphases.

way; and is it not declared that, before the men of God departed, he believed in God with all his house? Believed in God. They were not atheists before, surely? But now they believed, explicitly believed, *in the Lord Jesus*, and that *God had raised him from the dead*, and doubtless also in remission of sins and true righteousness through the empowerment of the Spirit.¹⁰³

Coleridge's prose has the dramatic energy of the speaking voice. It is dialogic in its tone of direct challenge to a silent addressee. Such zestful rhetoric might have been written for animated delivery from a pulpit. The passage opens with its hint of irony in the intensifying adverb 'indeed' – 'strange indeed' – anticipating the ridiculing exclamation with which the sentence ends. The rhetorical 'What!' jolts the reader with its shock of pretended incredulity. The passage proceeds with four rhetorical questions, which succeed one upon another in the same sentence. The last three clauses each start with 'and', intensifying the cumulative syntactic effect, enforcing the sense that the jailor's question was quite plainly spiritual. At the end of the first clause, Coleridge slows the pace of her words by italicizing '*way of salvation*', quoted from Acts 16. 16, to heighten the significance of the phrase. The final clause of the sentence is given dramatic emphasis by the semi-colon that precedes it. The insistent repetition of 'Believed in God', in a single isolated phrase, again slows the pace of the passage to create dramatic tension. Its solemnity is then punctured by terse irony that borders on sarcasm: '[t]hey were not atheists before, surely?' The rhetorical energy of the final sentence, in its syntactical and phonic qualities, maintains the sense that we might be reading the script of a sermon. The sentence begins colloquially with the terse conjunction 'but', which sets a brusquely emphatic tone. The note of authorial assurance is amplified by the repetition of 'believed' in the intensifying parenthetical phrase, 'explicitly believed'. That the jailor and his family now have faith, specifically and exclusively in Christ, is emphasized by a reduction in tempo, signified by the key phrases in italics. '[D]oubtless also' heightens the positive mood of the final clause as it develops to a climactic conclusion in the plosive alliterative consonants of '*empowerment of the Spirit*'. The polysyllabic '*empowerment*', with its stress on the second syllable, clinches the sentence's mood of restrainedly exultant triumph. It is surprising that E. L. Griggs describes 'On Rationalism' as 'dry and unreadable', even while he acknowledges its 'intellectual power'.¹⁰⁴ On the contrary, the essay's prose is rhetorically dynamic and, in its dramatic qualities, anticipates the dialogic modes of Coleridge's later work.

Through her theological writings, Coleridge evolves a code of conduct for religious polemic. This becomes increasingly explicit in her writings from 1848 onwards. She believes that opponents' views should be represented accurately and fairly

¹⁰³ *OR 1843*, II, p. 357. Coleridge's emphases.

¹⁰⁴ Griggs, *Coleridge Fille*, p. 104.

so that the polemical process is one of dialogue rather than confrontational self-promotion. Admittedly, her assault against the Oxford theologians' authoritarianism is rhetorically vehement. Nonetheless, Coleridge avoids the emotive language of personal attack practised by some other opponents of Tractarianism. The leading Evangelical journal, *The Christian Observer*, launched in 1836 an uncompromising philippic against Pusey, occasioned by his *Tracts* on baptism. Pusey is a 'most ignorant Popish fanatic', according to *The Christian Observer*: he promotes 'absurdity' and 'irrational fanaticism'; his writings are 'intellectual drivelling'.¹⁰⁵ Ironically, given the repetitive crudity of such insults, Chadwick characterizes *The Christian Observer* as the more charitable and moderate of the two Evangelical journals. The other, the *Record*, attacks Pusey's 'great ignorance of Scripture' and 'Popish feeling and superstition'.¹⁰⁶ When Coleridge deploys emotive satirical imagery, she does so sparingly in order to maximize its effect. Unlike *The Christian Observer*, her target is a doctrine, not the individual who promotes that doctrine. She attacks the Tractarian principle, derived from 'the Ancient Church', that 'a spiritual change [is] wrought in the human soul without a spiritual act of him that is to be changed'. This tenet 'embodies [the] virus of superstition', she contends, 'which creeps like a cancer over the body of the Christian's faith, and, if uncounteracted, must inevitably reduce it from an animated frame to a lifeless and corrupting mass'.¹⁰⁷ Coleridge's polysyllabic coinage, 'uncounteracted', followed by 'inevitably', slows the sentence to focus attention on the images of degeneration and death in the preceding and following clauses. Her trope of 'superstition' as a 'virus' has greater impact than the *Record's* predictable 'Popish [...] superstition'. She depersonalizes the issue, unlike *The Christian Observer's* branding Pusey himself as a 'fanatic'.¹⁰⁸ Her figurative language has a vigour beyond the reach of the clichéd personal insults and well-worn tags of the sectarian journals. Coleridge's characteristic approach is to critique Tractarianism in precise conceptual terms and to employ a method of academic analysis, as in her discussion of the theology of the ancient church. She presents an alternative model of religious writing to the prevailing mode in which, according to Turner, 'polemicists claimed exclusive truth for their own positions and substituted name-calling for actual recognition of other points of view'.¹⁰⁹

When Coleridge uses a sectarian term, she does so to define a theological position. For example, when she says, 'Taylor was Romish *on one side of his mind*; Hooker had no Romish side, in his view of grace', she is arguing a precise conceptual

¹⁰⁵ 'Professor Pusey and The Oxford Tracts on Baptism', *Christian Observer*, 36 (1836), 788-791 (p. 790).

¹⁰⁶ Turner, p. 190.

¹⁰⁷ *OR 1843*, II, pp. 543-544.

¹⁰⁸ 'Pusey', *Christian Observer*, 36, p. 790.

¹⁰⁹ Turner, p. 242.

distinction.¹¹⁰ Even Edward Bickersteth, a respected Evangelical, who abstains from personal criticism, employs emotive sectarian language: the Oxford theology, he contends, promotes ‘the very principles of popery’ which ‘open’ a ‘door to the land of darkness’.¹¹¹ Coleridge avoids the label ‘Puseyite’ for exponents of the Oxford Movement. The term, which had ‘the quality of offensive slang’, according to Nockles, was widely used by the early 1840s. Coleridge’s avoidance of ‘Puseyite’ (and ‘Puseyism’) reflects her authorial ethic of civil impersonality. Coleridge eschews other current pejorative labels, such as ‘Neomaniacs’, and Bishop Bloomfield’s satirical ‘Newmania’. Nor does she use ‘Tractarian’, ‘first coined’ in 1839, ‘which soon became the most widely employed [term] as a description of followers of the Oxford Movement’. ‘Tractarian’ was the favoured epithet of ‘friends of the Movement’, which is the most likely reason why Coleridge, as independent critic, avoids it.¹¹² In ‘On Rationalism’, Coleridge applies the epithets ‘Anglo-Catholics’ and ‘Anglican Anti-protestants’ to adherents of the Oxford Movement.¹¹³ ‘Anglo-Catholic’, since the seventeenth-century a neutral term ‘for the Church of England as a whole’, was increasingly applied to the Oxford theology.¹¹⁴ Coleridge describes as Anglo-Catholics those who adhere to Newman’s sacramental doctrine. Coleridge coins her variation, ‘Anglican Anti-protestants’, to emphasize contexts that strike at the basis of the Reformation; for example, where she envisages purgatory as a logical outcome of Oxford doctrine.

Coleridge becomes increasingly committed to a dialogic ethic in her religious writing. Her approach is both forthright and respectful. She expresses a ‘keen sense’ of ‘the great services’ Newman ‘has rendered to the cause of truth’, and acknowledges the presence of ‘piety, genius and learning’ in his work. Yet, Newman’s ability and influence make it her duty to ‘bring forward what [she] consider[s] irreconcilable with truth in his teaching’. Coleridge’s commitment to religious ‘truth’ requires her to present Newman’s ideas with impartial precision. There must be no ‘unfairness’, nor ‘a single accusatory word’ which exceeds strict accuracy.¹¹⁵ This ethical imperative is reflected in her evolving dialogic methodology, in which she seeks to represent doctrines with she disagrees in their exponents’ own words. In a lengthy footnote, Coleridge quotes two key paragraphs from ‘Lecture X’ of *Lectures on Justification*, in which Newman argues that ‘Baptism is the primary instrument’ of justification. She ‘give[s] to the doctrine [she] opposes the utmost advantage’, she explains, ‘by citing in illustration of it, the

¹¹⁰ *OR 1848*, II, p. 171. Coleridge’s emphasis.

¹¹¹ E. Bickersteth, *Remarks on the Progress of Popery*, 3rd edn (London: Seeley, 1836), p. 44.

¹¹² Nockles, p. 36.

¹¹³ *OR 1843*, II, p. 504, p. 476.

¹¹⁴ Nockles, p. 42.

¹¹⁵ *OR 1843*, II, p. 400 n, p. 388.

language of the author of Lectures on Justification'.¹¹⁶ It is significant that Coleridge depersonalizes the disagreement: she refers to herself as opposing the 'doctrine' not the 'author'. In 'On Rationalism', the citation of others' views takes place predominantly in the footnotes. When Griggs complains that Coleridge's essay 'is filled with numerous footnotes', he misses two key points.¹¹⁷ First, the inclusion of lengthy footnotes is a common feature of theological works of the period. Second, Coleridge's use of footnotes reflects her dialogic ethic. She conceives of theological writing as participation in a debate, a textual dialogue. In 'On Rationalism', footnotes are a means of incorporating multiple voices into the text. In her later works, Coleridge experiments with different forms of dialogic writing, which will be discussed in chapters 4 and 5.

The 1848 Text: Coleridge's Development of her Argument.

Coleridge regards 'bad arrangement' as her literary weakness, as it had been for STC. Professionally experienced in the business of revision and redrafting, as a result of Southey's early mentoring, Coleridge seeks 'to cast [the essay] anew' for the sixth edition of *Aids to Reflection*, and writes in July 1847 of working on 'a better arrangement'. Unfortunately, the restructured version, 'reduc[ed] [...] to more complete symmetry', would have to be deferred 'till a future edition', because publisher Pickering was pressing her to submit the revised second volume. Nor would he re-issue the first volume separately. The 1843 edition of *Aids to Reflection* was selling well within a month of its publication. Pickering no doubt expected the sixth edition to be an equally marketable commodity. Not surprisingly, therefore, '[t]he new edition of the Aids was called for', Coleridge explains, 'as soon as ever [she] had finished the work of editing the Biographia'. Pickering promised that she 'might do all [she] wished for a future edition'.¹¹⁸ Nonetheless, Coleridge's revisions for the 1848 edition were more extensive than she implies, and contribute significantly to the text's clarity and cohesion. She divides the essay into ten separate chapters, and gives each a heading. At the header of each page is a word or phrase indicating its topic. Some footnotes have been cut or abbreviated. At the end of her first chapter, Coleridge adds three paragraphs in which she recapitulates the main direction of her argument. She concludes the chapter with a confident summative challenge: '[s]hew me a single instance in which the will has been converted and the heart purified, apart from the subordinate ministrative agency of the understanding, and I will yield the point for which I contend in this essay'. Just short of three-quarters of the way through 'On Rationalism', Coleridge adds six and a half pages

¹¹⁶ *OR 1843*, II, p. 400 n.

¹¹⁷ Griggs, *Coleridge Fille*, p. 145.

¹¹⁸ *Criticism*, p. 14, p. 19, p. 20, p. 19, p. 20.

to make a sixth chapter of ten pages. She strengthens her argument against the mystic theory of sacraments by contrasting the ‘[l]anguage of Bishop Taylor and of Hooker on Infant Regeneration’. Coleridge critiques Taylor’s position that only passivity and ‘negative qualifications’ are ‘required’ of the individual in the reception of ‘grace’. He overlooks that the ‘non-resistance’ to the Holy Spirit exemplified in infants involves for an adult, who has ‘the opportunity of sinning, [...] an energy [...] of the intensest kind’. Hooker’s Calvinist ‘scheme’ is not without ‘flaw’, but conceives of regeneration as a renewal of the ‘mind and affections’ through ‘a course of *action*’: he opposes the notion of ‘a mystic passive holiness, obtained during a ritual moment’. Coleridge concludes this historical comparison by referring to contemporary Anglo-Catholics who confuse ‘the regeneration of the will with *baptismal regeneration*’.¹¹⁹ There is a further change between the 1843 and 1848 versions: Coleridge rewrites in its entirety a passage that becomes her penultimate chapter.

The 1843 version has a passage of twelve pages, in which Coleridge dismisses the notion that Tractarian views of baptism are validated by ‘any clear Apostolic tradition’. She examines what she considers to be a confusion between the terms ‘regeneration’ and ‘Baptism’ in the Tractarian interpretation of the Bible: ‘[b]aptism is identified with regeneration in the *language* of Scripture: therefore men have forcibly accommodated regeneration to Baptism.’ This is ‘absurd’, Coleridge contends: it would be equivalent to ‘insist[ing] [...] that health is nothing more than what comes with and by medicine, just because ‘medicine may, by a figure be called health.’ The conceptual precision of Coleridge’s language is characteristic. However, in revisiting this section while preparing the 1848 version, she clearly felt that her dismissal of the Apostolic tradition should be developed. She had presented an assumption in the 1843 version: ‘I believe it would be found on careful and impartial inquiry, that the Anti-protestant view of justification [...] was unknown to the primitive Christians, those who lived in and nearest to the Apostolic times’.¹²⁰ Given the importance of the early centuries of Christianity in Newman’s theology, Coleridge recognized that merely to state her belief was inadequate. As Nockles explains: ‘[a]ntiquity became an absolute standard and final court of appeal’ for the Tractarians on all matters of doctrine.¹²¹ Because of the centrality of the issue, Coleridge undertakes that ‘impartial inquiry’ into the Early Church’s teachings on justification, which she mentions hypothetically in 1843.

There is a recurring misconception, Coleridge argues, which ‘runs through the “Anglo-Catholic” expositions of [...] Scriptural views of Baptism’. Tractarian writers

¹¹⁹ *OR 1848*, II, p. 70, p. 167, p. 170, p. 175, p. 173, p. 177. Coleridge’s emphases.

¹²⁰ *OR 1843*, II, p. 509, p. 520, pp. 509-510. Coleridge’s emphasis.

¹²¹ Nockles, p. 114.

confuse ‘spiritual gifts bestowed upon men in order to [establish] the Visible Church with those that pertain to individual salvation’.¹²² Swiss theologian Huldrych Zwingli promoted this view in the sixteenth century. He maintained that baptism ‘represents the public declaration that a child is a member of the household of God’, and is equivalent to the Jewish rite of circumcision.¹²³ STC adopts Zwingli’s position in *Aids to Reflection*: he contends that ‘one of the purposes of Baptism’ in Apostolic times was to make ‘it *publicly manifest* [...] what Individuals were to be regarded [...] as belonging to the visible Community of Christians’.¹²⁴ In a sentence added to the 1848 text, Coleridge reapplies this point in her revision of Tractarianism’s interpretation of Mark 16. 16. According to this verse, she asserts, ‘[t]o be baptized, in those days, meant to become a Christian’. The ‘Anglo-Catholic’ School misconstrues a public ritual intended as a sign of Church membership as an immediate receipt of spiritual grace.¹²⁵

In her critical analysis of the Church Fathers’ teachings on baptism, Coleridge refers to the early eighteenth-century theologian, Daniel Waterland, whose procedure exemplifies what ‘all revivers of ancient teaching’ must undertake: he ‘readjust[s] Patrician doctrine and piece[s] out the mind of one Father with that of another, the mind of the earlier Fathers with the mind of the later ones’. The ‘bare primitive doctrine of baptism’ is not retrievable; what we ‘have instead’, Coleridge maintains, is an inconsistent construct based on ‘later’ developments of ‘the Medieval’ version of antiquarian doctrine.¹²⁶ Her conclusion on the question of the Church Fathers, in the 1848 version of her essay, is based on ten pages of close comparative analysis:

Thus it is with the earliest Christian writers, as far as I have examined. They either identify baptism with the Christian life, after St. Paul, or they are guided by the history in the Acts, to suppose it to be a mere preparation of the soul for the reception of grace by Confirmation; or they are led by a literal interpretation of John 3. 5, and Titus 3. 5, to look upon water applied outwardly to the body as a seal, and the naming of the Holy Trinity as an amulet, which carry with them, as by charm, a specific virtue to keep off evil sprits, and endue the soul with a claim to everlasting life, apart from any sacramental change whatsoever.

With its imagery of primitive superstition – ‘seal’, ‘amulet’, ‘charm’, ‘evil spirits’ – the passage prepares the way for Coleridge’s rejection of antiquarian doctrines. According to her research, the Church Fathers do not write with such apostolic authority as Tractarians maintain. The Fathers ‘talk’ on the doctrine of baptism, ‘like men conjecturing, reasoning, inferring, concluding, or as if they were paraphrasing the

¹²² *OR 1843*, II, p. 497.

¹²³ Alistair E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 3rd edn (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), p. 520.

¹²⁴ *ARCC*, p. 370. STC’s emphases.

¹²⁵ *OR 1848*, II, p. 193. Coleridge’s emphasis.

¹²⁶ *OR 1848*, II, pp. 209-210.

written word; *not* like men reporting Apostolic instructions given *viva voce*, or handing down a definite apostolic tradition'.¹²⁷ Coleridge finds the Church Fathers' discourse to be tentative and unstable. Yet, the Tractarians confer upon it the status of what Bakhtin calls 'authoritative discourse', which 'demands [...] unconditional allegiance'.¹²⁸

Coleridge then explodes in outrage, refusing blind adherence to a flawed and primitive authority: '[w]hy are we bound to their *guesses*? Why must we accept their commentaries on Scripture? Why may we not rather judge, as they did, according to the best of our ability, by the Bible?'¹²⁹ In this stirring tricolon, 'we' carries compelling emphasis. She condemns the Tractarian appeal to the 'authoritative discourse' of the Church Fathers as a tactic to assert priestly power. A Bakhtinian analysis of Coleridge can highlight the radical nature of her critique of the Tractarians' version of the Church Fathers. As Pam Morris observes, Bakhtin cites 'religious, political, moral discourse, [and] the word of a father' as examples of 'the authoritative word'. Bakhtin defines 'authoritative discourse' as 'hieratic', associating it with sacerdotal mastery; he also calls it 'the word of the fathers'.¹³⁰ Although Coleridge is historically specific in her rejection of the Church Fathers, Bakhtin's terminology can shed light on her rejection of male authority enshrined in a religious tradition.

Coleridge's Defence of Liberty

In *Tract 73*, Newman associates the exercise of individual reason with sins of pride and disobedience: a 'desire of judging for oneself is discernible in the original fall of man'.¹³¹ Coleridge defends 'reason and conscience' against Tractarianism's 'exclusive view of authority'. Its appeal to 'external' authority 'mystif[ies] and obscure[s] the foundations whereon all religious faith must ultimately rest', and suppresses liberty of thought.¹³² Like Milton, in his renowned pamphlet of 1660, *The Ready and Easy Way To Establish a Free Commonwealth*, in which he asserts republican and Protestant freedom against the imminent repression of the Restoration, Coleridge seeks to defend 'spiritual [...] liberty' and 'liberty of conscience'.¹³³ She condemns Tractarianism as a 'thought-stifling doctrine': its exponents, she fears, seek to impose their dogma and suppress opposition.¹³⁴ As powerful preachers and writers, privileged by university and

¹²⁷ *OR 1848*, II, p. 219. Coleridge's emphasis.

¹²⁸ *Bakhtin Reader*, p. 78.

¹²⁹ *OR 1848*, II, p. 219. Coleridge's emphasis.

¹³⁰ *Bakhtin Reader*, p. 78 n, p. 78.

¹³¹ Newman *Tracts*, p. 182.

¹³² *OR 1843*, II, p. 545.

¹³³ John Milton, 'The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth', in *The Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, ed. by D. M. Wolfe and others, 8 vols (London: Yale University Press, 1953-1982), VII: 1659-1660, ed. by Robert W. Ayres (1980), pp. 405-463 (p. 456).

¹³⁴ *OR 1843*, II, p. 546.

ecclesiastical status, they have formidable media of influence at their disposal. Eminent evangelical James Stephens shares Coleridge's apprehensions: 'do not allow your Oxford friends to subjugate your understanding to their dreams', he warns Samuel Wilberforce in 1837.¹³⁵

Coleridge attacks Tractarianism for arrogance and intolerance: the Tractarian has 'persuaded himself' that God's 'teaching' is 'much better known to him than to other men'. Having closed his own mind to 'reason and conscience', he thinks it his duty to prevent others from exercising theirs.¹³⁶ A key feature of Bakhtin's theory of the 'authoritative word', Pam Morris remarks, is that it 'disallow[s] any dialogic interaction'.¹³⁷ In his 'Notes Made in 1970 and 1971', Bakhtin defines 'the authoritarian word' as 'inert': it 'retards and freezes thought', and 'withdraws from dialogue'.¹³⁸ To read 'On Rationalism' with Bakhtin's formulation in mind highlights the severity of Coleridge's critique of Tractarianism. The Tractarian, Coleridge contends, remains aloof from opponents, and refuses to engage in dialogue: he 'shrink[s] from *contact* with them or interchange of thought'. Bakhtin's term 'authoritarian' highlights the political inflection of Coleridge's critique: she envisages that a church ruled by Tractarians will 'silence' its opponents. Those who will not submit to 'correct[ion]' will be condemned as 'rebels against God'.¹³⁹ Froude established Tractarianism's oppressive character in an article of 1834, 'On Shunning heretics and evil livers'. Because 'the re-introduction of ritualized ecclesiastical excommunication' was not realistically achievable, Froude 'advocated informal social ostracism of notorious "evil livers and professed heretics"'.¹⁴⁰

In her condemnation of Tractarianism's dictatorial intolerance, Coleridge also has in mind its anti-democratic principle of reserve, promoted in particular by Newman's friend and colleague, Isaac Williams. In *Tract 80, On Reserve in Communicating Religious Knowledge* (1837), Williams argued 'that the ready availability of religious knowledge in the contemporary world should be directly curtailed through the exercise of reserve in Christian teaching'. Williams held that the Evangelicals' emphasis on the Atonement and the infinitude of God's mercy obscured the necessity of Christian obedience and humility. Therefore, as Turner explains, 'clergy should [...] communicate knowledge of Gospel truth only as a person grew in obedience, personal holiness, and accompanying humility'.¹⁴¹ This directly opposes Coleridge's inclusive theology, in which reason, the light through which God is apprehended, is present in all minds. She

¹³⁵ Newsome, p. 187.

¹³⁶ *OR 1843*, II, p. 545.

¹³⁷ *Bakhtin Reader*, p. 78 n.

¹³⁸ Bakhtin, *Speech Genres*, p. 133.

¹³⁹ *OR 1843*, II, p. 545, p. 546, p. 545. Coleridge's emphasis.

¹⁴⁰ Brendon, p. 158.

¹⁴¹ Turner, p. 285, p. 286.

exhorts her readers, therefore, to mobilize against the divisive and elitist Tractarians: ‘[I]et us contend against them the more earnestly the more we value peace and concord’. Conceptually, their system is ‘founded on subtle error and confusion of thought’. Institutionally, it is an anti-democratic political construct, ‘sustained by the powers of this world’, and exploiting human weakness: ‘pride, prejudice, mental indolence, or inexperience, fear of losing caste among the reputed pious and orthodox, or other such allies’.¹⁴²

Coleridge warns her reader not to be deceived by the simple, unembellished elegance with which the Tractarians advance their dogma. She ranks Newman with Carlyle and Dickens as one of ‘the most *striking* writers of the day’. This is why his work poses an immediate threat to religious liberty. Newman the literary artist renders Newman the theologian all the more dangerous: Tractarian ‘false’ doctrines are with ‘tenderness enforced’.¹⁴³ Coleridge’s Orwellian oxymoron suggests a coercive agenda beneath stylistic polish. It carries also an undertone of sexual violence, as does her trope in ‘Extracts’, in which she describes her aim as being ‘to guard a spiritual faith from violation’.¹⁴⁴ Coleridge’s unsettling oxymoron evokes one in *Paradise Lost* associated with Satan’s disordered sexuality. Satan, spying on Eve, is momentarily ‘with rapine sweet bereaved’ of ‘[h]is fierceness’ by her pure beauty. Yet, he is impelled to proceed with his corruption of her by the ‘fierce desire’ of sexual frustration. Eve’s beauty ‘tortures him now more, the more he sees | Of pleasure not for him ordained’.¹⁴⁵ The sexual associations of Coleridge’s oxymoron, ‘with tenderness enforced’, anticipate her view that Newman’s *Loss and Gain* is characterized by misogynistic aggression. The novel also ‘confirm[s]’ her ‘opinion that it is a hard thing for an Ascetic not to have an impure imagination’.¹⁴⁶ She implies that the self-repressive tendencies of Tractarianism, such as Newman’s commitment to monastic celibacy, are prejudicial to psychological health. Her oxymoron hints that Tractarianism’s austere authoritarianism is associated with sexual tension. By this reading, Newman’s strict monasticism, at odds with the Victorian ethic of family life, is related to the coldly arrogant rejection of sociability that Coleridge perceives in Tractarianism: its principles, she asserts, are ‘in their own nature [...] especially intolerant, supercilious and estranging’.¹⁴⁷

In the fervent vigour of her closing pages, Coleridge displays a Miltonic commitment to her Protestant cause. Like Milton in 1660, Coleridge in 1843 defends

¹⁴² *OR 1843*, II, p. 546. Coleridge’s emphasis.

¹⁴³ *Criticism*, p. 155. *OR 1843*, II, p. 546. Coleridge’s emphasis.

¹⁴⁴ ‘Extracts’, p. 256.

¹⁴⁵ John Milton, *Paradise Lost, The Poems of John Milton*, ed. by John Carey and Alistair Fowler (London: Longmans, 1968), pp. 419-1060 (p. 884, p. 642, p. 884). IX. 461-462; IV. 509; IX. 469-470.

¹⁴⁶ *Criticism*, p. 176.

¹⁴⁷ *OR 1843*, II, p. 546.

‘liberty of conscience’ to determine ‘matters of religion’ according to ‘the Scriptures’. Such ‘liberty’, Milton asserts, ‘above all [...] things ought to be to all men dearest and most precious’. Coleridge’s passionate commitment to this principle is the driving force of her essay. In 1802, Wordsworth had invoked the Miltonic spirit to restore ‘freedom’ to ‘England’. Coleridge, Wordsworth’s ‘child in heart’, takes on this challenge forty years later. She defends ‘Christian liberty’ from the ‘deadness and deathliness of authoritarian dogma.’¹⁴⁸

Methodism: ‘An Agency permitted by God in the Restoration of our Church’

Coleridge rejects Tractarianism on three interrelated grounds: its conceptual contradictions; its promotion of mystery and superstition; its elitist and repressive authoritarianism. She rejects doctrines that ‘have nothing but [their] antiquity to recommend [them] to our veneration’.¹⁴⁹ By contrast, she regards Methodism as a source of spiritual vitality, despite some doctrinal limitations. Coleridge uses the apt image of a worn chain with loose links to illustrate her attitude of religious inclusion:

A chain in which two or three links are loosened is not like one in which all are broken, so that the whole is actually falling to pieces. It will probably last out the wearer’s time; it may be repaired at comparatively small expense and trouble; it has not lost all its beauty or all its utility, though, til repaired, it will not bear tight straining.

An error or omission in one aspect of a creed does not invalidate the whole, Coleridge maintains. A scheme of partial truth may yet have a role in the progress of Christian faith. The Methodists, for example, have ‘misunderst[ood] sacraments’, but this tendency ‘has no connexion with rationalism’. On the contrary, Coleridge argues, it is easy to ‘los[e] sight of sacraments, because they are far less distinctly marked in the Bible, as instruments of the Spirit, than the preaching of the word’. She reveals her Protestant sympathies for Methodism, which, if ‘wanting some points of catholic truth’, has, notwithstanding, made a contribution to the spiritual development of the established church. She observes that even Pusey has described “‘Wesleyanism’” as “‘an agency permitted by God in the restoration of our church’”.¹⁵⁰

Coleridge’s sympathy for Methodism reflects the influence of her early mentor, Uncle Southey. His appreciative *Life of Wesley and the rise and progress of Methodism* was published in 1820, during Coleridge’s literary apprenticeship. In concluding his

¹⁴⁸ Milton, *Prose*, VII, p. 456. Wordsworth, ‘*Poems, in Two Volumes*’, p. 165, l. 8. *Biographia 1847*, I, p. i. Milton, *Prose*, VII, p. 456. *OR 1843*, II, p. 544.

¹⁴⁹ *OR 1843*, II, p. 553.

¹⁵⁰ *OR 1843*, II, p. 374, p. 380, p. 381, p. 379, p. 378.

Life, Southey describes John Wesley as ‘a man of great views, great energy, and great virtues’, who ‘awakened a zealous spirit, not only in his own community, but in a Church which needed something to quicken it’; this is ‘acknowledged by the members of that Church itself’. While Southey regrets that Methodism ‘spread superstition as well as piety’, he emphasizes its immense contribution to individual lives and individual salvation: ‘[i]n its immediate effects, the powerful principle of religion which [Wesley] and his preachers diffused, has reclaimed many from a course of sin, has supported many in poverty, sickness, and affliction, and has imparted to many a triumphant joy in death’.¹⁵¹ Coleridge expresses her view of Methodism’s positive influence in a characteristic metaphor of water flowing through a channel: ‘there has been an influx of living waters into the channel of the church, in which before the stream was so low, so languid in its motion, though the freshening tide brought no small portion of impurity along with it’.¹⁵² Coleridge’s concise trope of ‘living water’, a ‘freshening tide’ that also carries some ‘impurity’, expresses a similar balance of admiration and reservation that the *British Critic* identified in its review of Southey’s *Life*: ‘[Southey] is not the advocate, or the accuser, but the historian of Methodism: his admiration of the piety, zeal, and perseverance which adorned the heroes of his tale, does not render him blind to their imperfections’.¹⁵³ Like Southey, Coleridge values the qualities of ‘piety’ and ‘zeal’ that she perceives in Methodism. In particular, she defends its devotional integrity: ‘it is not a spirit of rationalism’, Coleridge contends, ‘but a spirit of faith which leads a man to embrace the fundamentals of Christianity from their accordance with the divine law written in his heart’. Ultimately, Coleridge’s discussion of Methodism is a plea for religious tolerance against the ‘estranging’ tendencies of Tractarianism. Rather than advancing ‘imputations’ of ‘rationalism’ against Methodists, their opponents should engage them in dialogue, in ‘a style exquisitely conscientious and tenderly charitable’.¹⁵⁴

Creative Tensions of Coleridge’s Authorship.

Despite the fundamental religious differences between Coleridge and Newman, there are similarities in the ways in which they conceive of their authorship. In the ‘Advertisement’ prefacing the first edition of *Lectures on Justification*, Newman suggests that his work is not itself definitive, but aims to lay the foundations for a more comprehensive production. He has delivered and published the lectures, he says, ‘in the hope that he might be thereby offering suggestions towards a work, which must be

¹⁵¹ Robert Southey, *The Life of John Wesley and The Rise and Progress of Methodism*, ed. by Maurice H. Fitzgerald, 2 vols (London: Oxford University Press, 1925), II, p. 334.

¹⁵² *OR 1843*, II, pp. 376-377.

¹⁵³ Stuart Andrews, *Robert Southey: History, Politics, Religion* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 96.

¹⁵⁴ *OR 1843*, II, pp. 383-384, p. 546, p. 387.

uppermost in the mind of every true son of the English Church at this day, —the consolidation of a theological system, which [...] may tend to inform, persuade, and absorb into itself religious minds'.¹⁵⁵ The concept of a discrete, lesser work preparatory to a greater one, of which it will eventually form a small component, is distinctly Romantic. Wordsworth's notion of *The Prelude* in relation to the projected *Recluse* is a case in point; or STC's view of *Aids to Reflection* as preparatory to his projected 'Opus Maximum', which would, in the words of John Beer, develop 'on a larger scale questions discussed' in the earlier work, 'along with others deliberately omitted there'. As STC puts it: he will discuss 'the whole scheme of the Christian Faith' in a future 'larger work'.¹⁵⁶ Coleridge envisages 'On Rationalism' to be only her initial and limited assertion of 'scientific divinity' for the Victorian age.¹⁵⁷ As Mill recognizes in 1840, the 'edifice' of STC's work is 'still incomplete'; the available 'fragments', he implies, will require meticulous specialist reconstruction and mediation in order to become more fully 'intelligible'.¹⁵⁸ The 'edifice' Coleridge has in mind, comprising her reconstruction, interpretation, and original development of STC's ideas, would contribute to 'the furtherance' of religious truth in Victorian England; just as Newman, in his projected 'work', would aim to 'consolidat[e] a theological system' for the 'English Church'.¹⁵⁹

From opposing religious viewpoints, Newman and Coleridge aim to contribute to a doctrinal renewal of the church. Both writers display the same paradox. According to Chadwick, 'Newman, high Tory defender of the established church, had a streak of revolution'.¹⁶⁰ Coleridge, similarly, connected by marriage to the High Tory branch of the Coleridge family, herself retaining elements of social conservatism, adopts radical positions. Her covert manipulation of gender conventions is potently subversive; her politico-religious sympathies are distinctly, and independently, liberal. Newman moves, meanwhile, with increasing inevitability from the late 1830s, towards Roman Catholicism; in doing so, he subverts the episcopal authority that he set out to defend. Both Coleridge and Newman, therefore, display characteristics opposed to traditional Toryism. In their combination of radical and reactionary tendencies, they are representative of their times: 'the combination of conservatism and radicalism within the same individuals and movements', according to historian George Herring, was 'very much a characteristic feature of [...] the period'; it was 'at the root of much of [its] social reform'.¹⁶¹ Newman's radical Roman Catholic leanings would ultimately destroy

¹⁵⁵ Newman, *Justification* (1838), p. vi.

¹⁵⁶ *ARCC*, pp. 156-157 n, p. 156.

¹⁵⁷ *OR 1843*, II, p. 481.

¹⁵⁸ Mill, 'Coleridge', p. 133.

¹⁵⁹ *Biographia 1847*, I, p. clvi. Newman, *Justification* (1838), p. vi.

¹⁶⁰ Chadwick, p. 170.

¹⁶¹ George Herring, *What Was The Oxford Movement?* (London: Continuum, 2002), p. 17.

Tractarianism's politico-religious influence. The theology of spiritual regeneration, with its implications for religious liberty, would continue to be Coleridge's main theme.

'On Rationalism', for Coleridge, was the beginning of a major cultural project, driven by her mediation between STC's works and her own politico-religious setting. As Gadamer maintains, 'the course of events [...] brings out new aspects of meaning in historical material. By being re-actualized in understanding, texts are drawn into a genuine course of events in exactly the same way as are events themselves'.¹⁶² Coleridge seeks to 're-actualize' STC's 'texts', and to draw his ideas into the 'course' of politico-religious 'events' in early Victorian Britain. In doing so, she assumes a Miltonic voice in defence of religious liberty. Yet, the author of 'On Rationalism' is a barely visible producer of a composite text, which consists of multiple voices: principally, Kant's, Newman's, and STC's. The multi-voiced nature of Coleridge's essay anticipates her later development of dialogic forms of religious writing. In the independence of widowhood, Coleridge will continue to exploit the tensions of her authorship: between radical and reactionary inclinations; between authorial ambition and religious restraint; between editorial interpretation and dialogic creativity; between female authorship and the male genre of politico-theological polemic. In her next major undertaking, Coleridge will confront the tensions in STC's theory and practice of authorship.

¹⁶² Gadamer, p. 381.

Chapter Three

'Biographia 1847': Plagiarism, Literary Property and Dialogic Authorship.

The Politics of Literary Property

James Ferrier's article, 'The Plagiarisms of S.T. Coleridge', published in March 1840 in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, would determine Sara Coleridge's next literary project. At the time Ferrier's article appeared, though, 'On Rationalism' was still three years from publication. In his opening sentences, Ferrier targets Coleridge and Henry's editorial projects:

Of late years the works of Mr. Coleridge, both in prose and verse, have been continually gaining upon public notice, and now enjoy, we believe, a pretty extensive popularity. Most of them have been reprinted since his death, and several volumes of posthumous miscellanies have been added to their number.

John Stuart Mill thought that STC was far from popular in 1840, and Coleridge's publisher remarked on the slow sales of *Literary Remains*. Ferrier's hyperbole is a pre-emptive strike at the re-publication of *Biographia Literaria*, which, he predicts, will soon be 're-issued [...] by 'some enterprising bookseller'.¹ Ferrier placed the renovation of STC's image under threat. Equally, if STC's work were discredited, the conceptual basis of Coleridge's original writings would be weakened. Editing *Biographia Literaria* would become the defining work of Coleridge's literary career. In it, she subjects STC's creative processes to critical scrutiny. At the same time, she encounters the politics of literary property in tension with these processes.

Changes to copyright law were under discussion at the time of Ferrier's article. Wordsworth was a fervent campaigner for change. As Tilar J. Mazzeo observes, he viewed 'literary borrowing' as an act of 'trespass upon a figurative "manor"'.² Wordsworth believed that the right of ownership to his work was conferred by its originality: by its having introduced 'a new element into the intellectual universe'. Wordsworth's concepts of original 'genius' and authorial ownership reverse the legal and aesthetic positions of the early eighteenth century.³ As Simon Stern contends:

[t]he 1710 Act of Anne prohibited piracy, but did not regulate imitations, condensations, adaptations, anthologies, indexes and similar partial copies. The

¹ James Frederick Ferrier, 'The Plagiarisms of S. T. Coleridge', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 293 (1840), 287-299 (p. 287).

² Tilar J. Mazzeo, *Plagiarism and Literary Property in the Romantic Period* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), p. 11.

³ William Wordsworth, 'Essay Supplementary to the Preface' (1815), *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. by W. J. B. Owen and J. W. Smyser, 3 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), III, pp. 55-107 (p. 82).

profusion of imitative texts testifies to a flourishing public domain that depended on the *absence* of a copyright theory grounded in literary creativity.⁴

In the late eighteenth century, an economic transition occurred, from ‘the limited patronage of an aristocratic society’ to ‘the democratic patronage of the market place’, and the emergence of the professional writer.⁵ The commercial developments in authorship, reinforced by the rise of ‘a Lockean discourse of progressive individualism’, involved an aesthetic and metaphysical shift, in which, according to Stern, there was a ‘drift of aesthetic theories into the legal realm’.⁶ The valuing of tradition and imitation gave way to an aesthetic of originality.

In the 1830s and 1840s, wider economic and political issues governed debates about literary commerce. Wordsworth discovered this when he discussed Thomas Noon Talfourd’s Copyright Bill with Sir Robert Peel in July 1841, the month of a Conservative general election victory. Peel told Wordsworth that he was unable to declare approval for the Bill, for fear of ‘being charged with favouring *monopoly* if he gave it his support’.⁷ Peel had wider policy issues to balance. As incoming Prime Minister, he faced urgent economic and social problems: some industrial areas were suffering ‘severe distress’.⁸ Contrary to the ‘fervent’ Protectionist beliefs of ‘a large number of the Conservative MPs elected in 1841’, the new Conservative Prime Minister ‘was in no doubt that [a] package of Free Trade reforms was necessary for the sake of social stability’.⁹ The choice for the destitute, in some industrial towns, might ‘soon be between starvation and crime’.¹⁰ Less than a year after Wordsworth had lobbied him in the cause of literary protectionism, Peel had implemented what T. A. Jenkins terms the ‘Free Trade budget of 1842’.¹¹ Peel believed that liberal economic policies would alleviate social distress. For him to support monopolistic protection for writers would have been inconsistent. Questions of copyright and authorship were located at decisive junctures of political tension.

Whig MP Thomas Macaulay opposed the protectionist provisions of the 1842

⁴ Simon Stern, ‘Copyright, Originality and the Public Domain in Eighteenth Century England’, in *Originality and Literary Property in the French and English Enlightenment*, ed. by Reginald McGinnis (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), pp. 69-101 (p. 69). Stern’s emphasis.

⁵ Martha Woodmansee, ‘The Genius and the Copyright: Economic and Legal Conditions and the Emergence of the Author’, *Eighteenth Century Studies*, 17 (1984), (425-448) p. 433.

⁶ Catherine Seville, *Literary Copyright Reform in Early Victorian England* (Cambridge University Press, 1999; repr. 2011), p. 212. Stern, p. 70.

⁷ William Wordsworth, *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth*, ed. by Ernest De Selincourt and others, 2nd edn, rev. by Alan G. Hill and others, 8 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976-1988), VII, Part 4 (1982), p. 214. Wordsworth’s emphasis.

⁸ Norman Gash, *Peel* (London: Longman, 1976), p. 212.

⁹ Eric J. Evans, *Sir Robert Peel: Statesmanship, Power and Party* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 46. T. A. Jenkins, *Sir Robert Peel* (London: Macmillan, 1999), p. 108.

¹⁰ Gash, p. 225.

¹¹ Jenkins, p. 109.

Copyright Bill: '[c]opyright is monopoly', he declared in February 1841, 'and produces all the effects which the general voice of mankind attributes to monopoly'. These effects, he adds, are 'to make articles scarce, to make them dear, and to make them bad'. This opposes Wordsworth's position that extension of copyright would promote high quality literature. Macaulay asserts that 'a monopoly of books' would produce the same 'effect' as that 'produced by the East India Company's monopoly of tea, or by Lord Essex's monopoly of sweet wines'. Macaulay applies Benthamite terms to the proposal to extend copyright beyond an author's lifetime:

It is good that authors should be remunerated; and the least exceptionable way of remunerating them is by a monopoly. Yet monopoly is an evil. For the sake of the good we submit to the evil; but the evil ought not to last a day longer than is necessary for the purpose of securing the good.

The term of copyright for an author's descendants, Macaulay contends, must be 'determined in the way [...] most conducive to the general good'.¹² Wordsworth considered publishing a refutation of this speech, to which he referred as 'that trash advanced by Macaulay'.¹³ The proposed extension of copyright impinged also upon Utilitarian principles in educational reform, and movements to extend the diffusion of knowledge for the working class. The British Medical Association presented a Benthamite petition against copyright reform in 1839:

your Petitioners consider every unnecessary restriction on [...] literary productions to be a great national injury, as tending to prevent that diffusion of knowledge and general education so important in promoting habits of industry and morality, and thereby increasing happiness and preventing crime.¹⁴

Equally, evangelical organizations were concerned with the availability of cheap books in the cause of religious instruction. Like the stamp duty on newspapers – a tax on the 'dissemination of information' – extension of copyright was regarded as politically repressive.¹⁵

The changing commercial conditions of authorship, in which the writer was dependent on the mass market rather than a patron, had been slow to gain recognition in law. In 1769, the Lord Chief Justice had supported an author's legal rights of ownership, based on the Lockean principle that 'an author should reap the pecuniary profit of his

¹² T. B. Macaulay, 'A Speech Delivered in The House of Commons on the Fifth of February, 1841', in *Speeches of the Right Honourable T. B. Macaulay, MP Corrected by Himself*, 2 vols (Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1853), I, pp. 273-293 (p. 278, p. 279, pp. 279-280, p. 276).

¹³ Wordsworth, *Letters*, VII, Part 4, p. 178.

¹⁴ Seville, p. 91.

¹⁵ St Clair, p. 310.

own ingenuity and labour'. An appeal brought before the House of Lords in 1774, however, established opposing principles and 'ended the perpetual common law right of literary property.' The 1814 Copyright Act was a tentative response to the changing conditions of authorship. It made the writer's lifespan the criterion in determining the length of copyright term, which it 'set [...] at twenty-eight years, or the author's life if this was longer'.¹⁶ Wordsworth regarded the provisions of the 1814 Act as inadequate for authors who create works of genius. It protected second-rate producers of ephemeral popular matter, he believed, but failed to safeguard those who produce original works; who introduce 'a new element into the intellectual universe'. Such works take time to be accepted into public consciousness. A 'truly original poet', Wordsworth argues, must 'creat[e] that taste by which [he] is to be relished'.¹⁷ Because original work gains recognition slowly, the law deals unjustly with the writer of genius. Wordsworth states his case in *A Plea for Authors*:

Failing impartial measure to dispense
 To every suitor, Equity is lame;
 And social Justice, stript of reverence
 For natural rights, a mockery and a shame;
 Law but a servile dupe of false pretence,
 If, guarding grossest things from common claim
 Now and for ever, She, to works that came
 From mind and spirit, grudge a short-lived fence.¹⁸

Wordsworth's sonnet is one of two he wrote in May 1838 in support of Talfourd's second Copyright Reform Bill.

Talfourd's bill proposed an extension of the terms of the 1814 Copyright Act to the author's life plus sixty years. In 1839, Wordsworth presented a petition to Parliament in support of this bill; he also lobbied former Whig Lord Chancellor, Lord Brougham, as well as Peel. Wordsworth was closely involved in Talfourd's successive bills, which culminated in the moderated compromise of the 1842 Copyright Act. Seville refers to him as Talfourd's 'campaign manager'. As well as maintaining that an author owns his literary 'oeuvre' as a landowner possesses his estate, Wordsworth contended that an author, as a creator of literary commodities, is entitled to enjoy the material rewards of his work like any commercial producer, or purveyor of professional services. In his

¹⁶ Seville, p. 14, p. 15, p. 4.

¹⁷ Wordsworth, *Prose*, III, p. 82, p. 80.

¹⁸ William Wordsworth, *Last Poems, 1821-1850*, ed. by Jared Curtis and others, *The Cornell Wordsworth* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), p. 327, ll. 1-8.

parliamentary petition, Wordsworth refers to ‘the condition of distinguished authors’, in contrast to that of ‘men who rise to eminence in other professions or employments, whereby they not only acquire wealth, but [...] obtain the means of forming family establishments in business, which enable them to provide at once for their descendants’.¹⁹ Concern for the inheritance of his descendants was central to Wordsworth’s desire for copyright reform.

In this chapter, I will discuss the ways in which Coleridge is influenced by Wordsworth and Southey in her attitudes to literary property. I will address the family and literary backgrounds to her editorship of *Biographia Literaria*. I will consider Hartley’s abortive attempt to write an introduction to *Biographia*, and the significance of the factors that inhibit him. The chapter will focus in detail on the first section of Coleridge’s ‘Introduction’ to *Biographia 1847*, thirty-eight pages in length, entitled ‘*Mr. Coleridge’s obligations to Schelling, and the unfair view of the subject presented in Blackwood’s magazine*’.²⁰ The chapter will place Ferrier’s attack on STC, and Coleridge’s reply, in historical context. It will examine the grounds on which Ferrier attacks STC, and the methodology of Coleridge’s response. I will cover in detail her analysis of STC’s textual relationship with his sources, and her account of the psychological factors that resulted in his literary transgressions. The chapter will consider contradictions in Coleridge’s role as STC’s advocate, and will interrogate her analysis of STC’s text in relation to Romantic conceptions of authorship. I will conclude by considering the significance of *Biographia 1847* in the context of Coleridge’s ongoing authorial development.

Coleridge, as executive manager of STC’s literary legacy from January 1843, shares Wordsworth’s position on the legal status of authorship. She contends that, as an author, STC had been treated unjustly. *The Edinburgh Review* had ‘declared’ his ‘works [...] worse than waste paper’: he had suffered emotionally and financially from such absence of critical ‘fair play’.²¹ Coleridge’s re-construction of STC’s ‘oeuvre’ would redress the posthumous balance: through her mediation, his ideas might exert at last their rightful influence on British culture. At the same time, Coleridge’s rebranded STC product would secure an income for her family and a dignified social position. Wordsworth thought that copyright reform would raise authors’ status: ‘the possession of Property tends to make any body of men more respectable, however high may be their claims to respect upon other considerations’.²² Along with financial stability, social respectability was important for Coleridge in helping her to secure her children’s future:

¹⁹ Seville, p. 159, p. 178.

²⁰ *Biographia 1847*, I, pp. v-xlviii.

²¹ *Biographia 1847*, I, p. clxxiii.

²² Seville, p. 168.

literary work became a prime duty of single parenthood. Her desire to exploit the commercial potential of STC's work, and boost the family income and social status, reflects Wordsworth and Southey's influence.

Southey was as committed an advocate of copyright reform as Wordsworth, though he was too ill to take any real part in the campaign in the run-up to the passing of the 1842 Act. In 1813, Southey had complained about a demand made by publishers, under consideration by a parliamentary select committee, to establish the term of copyright at a total of 28 years. In a letter to his friend, Charles Wynn MP, a member of the 1813 Select Committee on Copyright, Southey draws an analogy between the woodland of a landowner's estate and an author's literary productions:

My opinion is that literary property ought to be inheritable, like every other property; and that a law which should allow you the use of the trees upon your estate for eight-and-twenty years, and after that term make them over to the Carpenters' Company, would not be more unjust than that which takes from me and my heirs the property of my literary labours, and gives it to the Company of Booksellers.²³

Coleridge will go on to adopt the assumptions of Southey's letter. In 1843, as manager of the STC legacy, she expresses concern that publishing the Fifth edition of *Aids to Reflection* in two volumes might jeopardize its sales: 'I do not like to think that the *estate* – in which others are interested as well as myself, may lose by the enlarging of the publication'. Coleridge's italicization of '*estate*' reflects her commodification of literary property. She worries that her publisher is overlooking the likely 'detriment to the sale of a book from a heavy price', just as Wordsworth had worried, in 1814, that Longman's price for *The Excursion*, 'very high at two guineas,' would detract from its sales.²⁴ Coleridge conceives of *Aids to Reflection* as the private property of STC's heirs. As manager of the family 'estate', therefore, she must ensure that all who have a stake in that property should receive maximum income from its sales.

Southey may have influenced Coleridge to view a body of literary work as a potentially inheritable 'estate'. In 1819, at the time of his mentoring her in translating Dobrizhoffer, Southey contributed an article on legal aspects of publishing to the *Quarterly Review*. He concluded by referring to the 'descendants of Shakespeare and Milton': '[t]o have placed' them 'in respectability and comfort [...] simple justice was all that was required; only that they should have possessed the perpetual copyright of their ancestors' works, only that they should not have been deprived of their proper

²³ *Selections from the Letters of Robert Southey*, ed. by John Wood Warter, 4 vols (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1856), II, p. 323.

²⁴ *Criticism*, p. 14, p. 15. Coleridge's emphasis. Mary Moorman, *William Wordsworth: A Biography. The Later Years, 1803-1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965; repr. 1968), p. 260.

inheritance'.²⁵ Wordsworth, meanwhile, had been concerned with matters of literary copyright since 1808. Coleridge had grown up in a setting in which the legal rights of authors were a pressing concern: two of her literary fathers were among the most vociferous and influential advocates of copyright reform. Their tenets about the legal status of authorship would underpin Coleridge's project to establish the STC brand as a profitable Victorian commodity.

Thomas De Quincey: the Puzzle of STC's Plagiarisms

In one crucial respect, the concept of literary property held by Southey and Wordsworth would threaten the integrity of the whole Coleridgean 'estate'. When Ferrier charged STC with literary theft in March 1840, his indictment had the potential to destroy STC's reputation irrecoverably. There is a tension, therefore, in Coleridge's roles: on the one hand, as manager of the Coleridgean literary 'estate'; on the other, as STC's advocate in the plagiarism case. De Quincey had exposed STC as a plagiarist six and a half years before Ferrier's charges. The Romantic concept of 'culpable plagiarism', Tilar J. Mazzeo contends, involves 'borrowings that were *simultaneously* unacknowledged, unimproved, unfamiliar, and conscious'. The principle of 'improvement' was important: 'unimproved texts', observes Mazzeo, were regarded as 'monstrous, patchwork, or unassimilated', lacking in stylistic cohesion. By contrast, 'successful improvement' of a source 'justified any borrowing regardless of extent'. An author's 'mastery' of sources was a legitimate criterion of literary achievement.²⁶

Such criteria emerge in De Quincey's discussion of STC's plagiarisms in *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* between September 1834 and January 1835. De Quincey begins by mentioning three examples of plagiarism in STC's poetry. These, he concludes, constitute acceptable uses of source material and are compatible with authorial originality. They 'amount to nothing at all' alongside the 'real and palpable plagiarism' he is about to expose. De Quincey indicates that STC's reference to Schelling, in which he declares 'his willingness to acknowledge himself indebted to so great a man', left him unprepared for what was to follow. Having read STC's preliminary remarks, De Quincey was astonished 'to find that the entire essay, from the first word to the last, is a *verbatim* translation from Schelling'. This is 'barefaced plagiarism', De Quincey contends, because STC makes 'no attempt in a single instance to appropriate [Schelling's] paper by developing the arguments'.²⁷ According to De Quincey, STC achieves neither philosophical nor literary control over his source. *Biographia*, therefore,

²⁵ 'Inquiry into the Copyright Act', *Quarterly Review*, 21 (1819), 196-213 (p. 212).

²⁶ Mazzeo, p. 2, p. 3, p. 5. Mazzeo's emphasis.

²⁷ Thomas De Quincey, 'Samuel Taylor Coleridge', by the English Opium Eater, *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, ns., 1 (1834), 509-520 (p. 511). De Quincey's emphasis.

lacks intellectual and aesthetic cohesion; it fails to meet STC's own definition of genius as 'originality in intellectual construction'. At best, it may display 'talent', in STC's terms, by its 'facility of acquiring, arranging, and applying the stock furnished by others'.²⁸ De Quincey, like Southey and Wordsworth, equates literary with material property, and conceives of '[i]ntellectual wealth' as a commodity.²⁹

Henry sought to address De Quincey's allegations in his 'Preface' to the 1835 edition of *Table Talk*, but lacked the expertise in German language and philosophy to answer the charge of plagiarism from Schelling. German scholar Julius Hare had published an initial reply to De Quincey in the *British Magazine* of January 1835. Hare gave Henry permission to include, in the 'Preface' to *Table Talk*, the section of his article relating to STC's plagiarisms. Hare admits, at the outset, that De Quincey's charges 'are strictly, accurately, true'. He advances three main points of defence, all of which Coleridge will develop. First, the main appropriation from Schelling is so blatant that it cannot possibly have been a deliberate theft. Second, if STC's work were to stimulate the desired interest in German philosophy, he was providing the means by which his appropriations would be detected. Third, STC's plagiarisms are attributable to his 'notoriously irretentive' memory and haphazard notes.³⁰ Coleridge develops Hare's view of STC's faulty memory in psychological depth. She analyzes his whole cognitive profile and compositional processes.

De Quincey's articles were less damaging to STC's intellectual reputation than Ferrier's would be. Coleridge and Henry were upset by De Quincey's harsh personal revelations, as much as by the exposure of the plagiarisms from Schelling. These private topics included a discussion of STC's opium addiction and, more wounding still, a damning account of his family life and marriage. Nonetheless, De Quincey maintained his respect for STC's abilities, and left his intellectual reputation essentially intact: 'I will assert finally', De Quincey declares, 'that, after having read for thirty years in the same track as [STC] – that track in which few of any age will ever follow us [...] and having thus discovered a large variety of trivial thefts, I do, nevertheless, most heartily believe him to have been as entirely original in all his capital pretensions, as any one man that ever has existed'.³¹ There is an apparent contradiction in De Quincey's position. Having revealed that STC had copied from Schelling verbatim, he asserts that he was 'entirely original'. He contends, moreover, that the writer from whom STC had copied would be intellectually incapable of producing even an imitation of his work. De Quincey is not guilty of contradiction, though. His key phrase is 'capital pretensions', in

²⁸ *BLCC*, I, p. 32 n.

²⁹ De Quincey, 'Samuel Taylor Coleridge', p. 511.

³⁰ *Table Talk* (1991), I, p. 23, p. 26.

³¹ De Quincey, 'Samuel Taylor Coleridge', p. 512.

which he suggests that the essence of STC's philosophy, when seen as a whole, will be revealed as fundamentally different from that of Schelling, of greater reach and depth. De Quincey's implication is that the local plagiarisms are 'trivial' in the context of STC's whole 'oeuvre'.

Coleridge develops this point in her response to Ferrier's article. Having admitted the existence of STC's plagiarisms, she contends that there is no source in German philosophy for STC's religious thought. Quoting De Quincey, she argues that, 'in the application of philosophical principles to the explanation, and [...] support of the Catholic faith [...] [STC] had a walk of his own in which "no German that ever breathed" has [...] preceded or outstripped him'. She argues that STC's '*religious* philosophy differed materially' from Schelling's thought. The 'originality of [STC's] authorship' resides in 'his design of applying philosophy to religion'. His 'entire system of thought', had he been able to 'produce' it, would have vindicated his originality.³² De Quincey is aware of the differences between STC's metaphysics and Schelling's, which make the plagiarisms a case for psychological investigation. Coleridge will pursue this line of analysis.

Hartley Coleridge: 'The Chill' of his Father's 'Shadow'

Following the plethora of articles immediately after STC's death, particularly De Quincey's, the Coleridge family had looked to Hartley to defend STC. De Quincey's discussion of STC's plagiarisms necessitated a new edition of *Biographia*, and Hartley was to write the introduction. Coleridge did not become involved at this stage: she declined to participate in what she called 'a warfare of personalities'.³³ The academic locus of Ferrier's attack, though, would enable her to engage on textual and philosophical territory. In the event, Hartley began a tentative introduction to *Biographia Literaria*, but produced only a fragment. The haphazard pages that survive, published by Griggs in 1931, show Hartley's reluctance to confront the questions that De Quincey raises about STC.

Hartley admits that STC failed to respect the boundaries of literary property: 'he had no notion of meum and tuum'. Hartley relates this to STC's tendency, in his recall of conversations, to confuse others' words and ideas with his own. This deficiency, Hartley suggests, stemmed from STC's poor judgment in personal relationships: 'no man so egregiously overrated the understanding of those whom he loved.' He had 'a propensity to overunderstand', to superimpose his own thoughts onto the words of others.³⁴ This

³² *Biographia 1847*, I, p. xxvii, p. xxviii, p. xxvii. Coleridge's emphasis.

³³ Griggs, *Coleridge Fille*, p. 107.

³⁴ Earl Leslie Griggs, 'Hartley Coleridge on his Father', *PMLA*, 46 (1931), 1246-1252, (p. 1249, p. 1250).

kind of confusion, Hartley implies, underlies STC's plagiarisms. Hartley does not take on the specific terms of De Quincey's attack, though, and does not consider the question of STC's textual and philosophical relationship with Schelling. Hartley anticipates some aspects of Coleridge's analysis of STC, however. It is unlikely, though, that she ever saw Hartley's writings on their father. He sent them neither to her, nor to any other member of the family. Hartley was keen, also, to create the impression that he had written more than was the case. Of all tasks that might have been imposed on Hartley, the essay on his father was least likely to succeed: it brought their broken relationship too sharply into focus. To adduce Bloomian terms, in engaging with *Biographia Literaria*, Hartley would 'feel the chill of being darkened by [his father's] shadow'.³⁵

Hartley was in a uniquely sensitive situation in confronting *Biographia*. Having stayed with STC at Calne during his summer vacation of 1815, he was the only family member to have been present during its composition. Dictating to his amanuensis, John Morgan, STC 'talked *Biographia* into life' between 'April and September 1815', as biographer Richard Holmes puts it. Holmes thinks it likely that there was close literary interaction between father and son during that summer of viva voce composition; STC 'might have used' Hartley as 'a sounding board for his philosophical ideas', he suggests.³⁶ An element of collaboration is possible, given STC's propensity for collaborative production in the 1790s. Having been in intimate contact with STC at the time of composition, Hartley seems to harbour a nagging unease about the extent to which STC might have relied on books, rather than his unreferenced notes, while dictating *Biographia*: 'I do not think he had the works of Schelling by him', Hartley says tentatively. 'I do not think' suggests some doubt. Hartley tells Henry that the plagiarism issue 'perplexes and pains [him] deeply'. Having lived with STC through the summer of 1815, Hartley was in a position to know whether Ferrier's allegations were substantially true or false. He says that he refuses to 'believe' that STC 'knowingly' committed plagiarism, but fails to make a plain, unambiguous statement in STC's defence. Hartley also explains to Henry that STC's faculties were distorted by opium at the time he composed *Biographia*: the 'infirmity of [STC's] memory was [...] increased at Calne from a cause to which it is painful to allude'.³⁷ There lingers in Hartley's hesitancy the unsettling possibility that opium temporarily distorted STC's moral judgment.

Hartley's difficulties are compounded by his principled rejection of STC's metaphysics. STC is heuristic, 'habituated to the *Vast*'; Hartley's religious sensibility is attuned to the humble and domestic; to devotional contemplation of Scripture; to the

³⁵ Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 50.

³⁶ Richard Holmes, *Coleridge: Darker Reflections* (London: Harper Collins, 1998), p. 378, p. 386.

³⁷ *HC Letters*, p. 242.

rhythms of parish worship, in which a local community follows in simple faith the liturgical traditions of its forebears.³⁸ He ‘understand[s]’ STC’s ideas, Hartley assures Henry, but is unable to experience them as living realities: he ‘lack[s]’ STC’s ‘power’ to find ‘in the acts of the pure reason, a permanence —truth—beauty—and supersensuous life’.³⁹ This is not an admission of incapacity, but a statement of intellectual and religious independence. Despite his stated reverence for STC, Hartley distrusts in his work the elevation of intellectual ‘power’ over religious experience. Like Newman in *Tract 73*, Hartley rejects the application of analytical methodology to religion.

Hartley’s fragmentary introduction also betrays a disabling depth of personal tension: the sense that he has been sacrificed to his father’s literary creativity. He refers to *Christabel* as his ‘[f]ather’s favourite child—the fondling of his genius’; it was, he adds, ‘the child in which he recognized himself most and finest’.⁴⁰ It is significant that he refers to the poem in which he himself appears as a Romantic symbol of wild innocence, ‘A little Child, a limber Elf [...] a faery Thing’, who is arbitrarily assaulted by his father’s ‘Words of unmeant Bitterness’.⁴¹ Implicit in Hartley’s reference to *Christabel* is the pressure and neglect he bore as the child of an emotionally unstable, mostly absentee father; for whom he was a poetic image, the focal point of a metaphysical ideal, or the subject of intense psychological scrutiny. He knows ‘what it is practically to be without a father’, Hartley observes in 1836: ‘[i]t is not easy to knit together links once broken’.⁴² Hartley is unable to repair the fractured ‘links’ with STC in a posthumous encounter with his work; he finds it impossible to restore the losses of the past. Coleridge attempts the ‘struggl[e]’ of this task.⁴³

Hartley turns his back on *Biographia*; he ‘cannot say aught on the Metaphysical portion’ of the work, and desires his projected ‘essay’ to be ‘prefixed to the Poems’ instead. He does not wish ‘to discuss [STC’s] Philosophy at all’, and proposes to call his essay ‘Coleridge the Poet’. He attempts to pass the task of writing about *Biographia* to Derwent, suggesting that an introduction by his clerical brother would carry more authority: ‘[b]esides’, Hartley pleads, ‘Derwent was much more with STC in his latter years, is a much superior scholar, in every respect fitter for the task’.⁴⁴ Derwent disagrees. In his ‘Preface’ to *The Scriptural Character of the English Church*, Derwent admits to having ‘shrunk from the [...] responsibility’ of writing about STC, because he

³⁸ STC, *Letters*, I, p. 354. STC’s emphasis.

³⁹ *HC Letters*, p. 210.

⁴⁰ Griggs, *PMLA*, p. 1252.

⁴¹ *PWCC*, I, Part 1, p. 503, ll. 656. 658. 665.

⁴² *HC Letters*, p. 203.

⁴³ *Poems*, p. 156, l. 22.

⁴⁴ *HC Letters*, p. 242, p. 210, p. 199.

lacks the ‘knowledge [...] or talents’ necessary ‘for the office of [STC’s] interpreter’.⁴⁵ Only one family member possesses the necessary expertise, as ‘On Rationalism’ will demonstrate.

Hartley expresses a further reservation: *Biographia* contains ‘much respecting W. W. that I wish out’, he tells Henry.⁴⁶ Hartley profoundly admires Wordsworth as poet, and does not wish to risk recalling past tensions between STC and Wordsworth. Coleridge, by contrast, will use her editorial notes in Volume 2 of *Biographia* to renew the Coleridgean appreciation of Wordsworth’s poetry. Her application of critical theory, and incisive practical criticism, will perform the reconciling role between her father and Wordsworth that is a theme of the whole edition, initiated at the outset in her *Dedication* to Wordsworth. She celebrates the collaborative origins of Wordsworth and STC’s work, when they ‘both together sought the Muse, in the lovely Vale of Stowey’, and refers to their shared vocation as ‘Teacher[s] of Wisdom’. The ‘dearest and proudest wish’ Coleridge can ‘form’ for STC’s ‘memory’, she says, is that he ‘may continue to be spoken of in connection with [Wordsworth], while [Wordsworth’s] writings become more and more fully and widely appreciated’. Coleridge’s crowning gesture of mediation is to acknowledge herself as Wordsworth’s ‘Child in heart’.⁴⁷ She enacts the reconciliation that Hartley is unable to envisage.

Another factor connected with Wordsworth underlies Hartley’s reluctance to engage with *Biographia*. Hartley participated in the campaign for copyright reform, and, in May 1839, submitted a petition in support of Talfourd’s Copyright Reform Bill. This was three months after Wordsworth had submitted his own petition. Hartley mentions in his petition that he is himself ‘engaged in the profession of literature’, but only ‘in the more popular and temporary branches’, and not those higher forms that would benefit from an extension of copyright provision. He pleads his case as eldest son of STC on behalf of himself, his siblings and his ‘aged’ mother, who ‘is dependent, in large measure, on the sale of [STC’s] works for those comforts and freedom from anxiety which her increasing years demand’. Hartley contends that the outcome of the Copyright Bill may affect the emergence of the whole corpus of STC’s work. STC ‘has left behind him many valuable manuscripts’, he explains, ‘the publication whereof may depend on the passing of the said bill for the protection of copyright’.⁴⁸ The family project to bring STC’s unpublished writings before the public may cease to be viable, Hartley warns,

⁴⁵ Derwent Coleridge, *Scriptural Character*, p. xxiii.

⁴⁶ *HC Letters*, p. 242.

⁴⁷ *Biographia 1847*, I, p. i.

⁴⁸ Hartley Coleridge, ‘Petition of Hartley Coleridge’, in Sir Thomas Noon Talford, *Three Speeches Delivered in the House of Commons in favour of a measure for an extended copyright: to which are added petitions in favour of the bill, and remarks on the copyright question* (London: Moxon, 1840), pp. 133-136 (p. 135, p. 134).

with the consequent loss to national culture. Talfourd published Hartley's petition with Wordsworth's and Carlyle's, among others. Hartley's high-profile statement for the protection of literary products, and the rights of authors and their descendants, would fit uncomfortably with the role of defender of STC the plagiarist. To uphold the Wordsworthian view of authors' rights of possession, and to defend, or justify, STC's verbatim appropriations from Schelling, would appear to be an impossible contradiction. As editor of *Biographia Literaria*, Coleridge takes on this challenge.

Ferrier's Case Against STC

Ferrier invokes 'truth and justice' in his exposure of STC's 'very large and unacknowledged appropriations' from Schelling. He pursues STC's 'plagiarisms to their true sources', in order to reveal the fraud perpetrated in *Biographia Literaria*. Ferrier suggests that his article will assist 'any future editor' of *Biographia*. This is an ironic thrust against the editors of STC's *Literary Remains*, in the first volume of which Ferrier identifies further unattributed passages copied verbatim from Schelling. Ferrier implies that the family editors are either ignorant of STC's thefts, or are posthumous accomplices in the concealment of stolen literary goods. Ferrier's frame of reference is moral, his terminology judicial. He conceives of literary property in material terms: STC has drawn 'very large sums [...] secretly from the bank of German transcendentalism', without having made any 'repayment'.⁴⁹ Ferrier's language reflects his concept of literary work as a physical possession, over which the author has proprietary rights. Ferrier holds the same view as Southey and Wordsworth, and others who supported Talfourd's Copyright Reform Bill, including *Blackwood's* editor, John Wilson, Ferrier's uncle and father-in-law. Ironically, Coleridge herself regards STC's 'oeuvre' in the same proprietary manner.

Blackwood's owner, William Blackwood, had died in 1839, and Wilson himself had become ill with depression following the death of his wife. Consequently, Ferrier had become, in effect, *Blackwood's* acting editor: he writes in the first person plural as spokesperson of the Tory *Blackwood's*. He undertakes to comment on the plagiarized passages 'with most scrupulous accuracy', because the honourable 'character' of the magazine is at stake.⁵⁰ He speaks, also, on behalf of Edinburgh's academic and literary establishment, who advocated the protection of an author's proprietary rights. Of twenty-one Edinburgh signatories to a petition in 1839 supporting Talfourd's Copyright Reform Bill, ten were senior Professors of Edinburgh University. These included John Wilson, who held the Chair of Moral Philosophy. Ferrier's article, therefore, had a political

⁴⁹ Ferrier, p. 288, p. 287, p. 291.

⁵⁰ Ferrier, p. 293.

dimension in promoting a principle for which the Edinburgh academic establishment had recently expressed public support.

Ferrier's judicial terminology amplifies the impression that STC has broken the law, if not of the land, of social and cultural relations: 'the laws' by which human 'relations and [...] dealings' should be 'regulated'.⁵¹ Robert MacFarlane observes that the word 'plagiarism comes from the Latin *plagarius*, meaning a slave-napper or kidnapper—and although it has never been a legal infraction, plagiarism has always carried this stigma of criminality with it'.⁵² Ferrier exploits this association, which is all the more potent given the political debate over copyright. At the outset, Ferrier refers to the earlier phase of the plagiarism controversy as an incompetently managed court case that must now be reopened. The matter was 'mooted some years ago', Ferrier recalls, 'Mr. De Quincey appearing [...] for the prosecution, and Mr. J. C. Hare [...] for the defence'. Ferrier condemns the incompetence of the advocates: '[o]n both sides the case was very badly conducted; indeed we may say it was altogether bungled'. Neither De Quincey nor Hare grasped the extent to which STC 'unmercifully rifles' Schelling's works: '[n]either party appears to have possessed a competent knowledge of the facts'. Ferrier mocks De Quincey for having referred the reader 'to a work which never existed!' Hare 'talks of [STC] having transferred "half a dozen" pages [...] of Schelling. By [the heavens]!' Ferrier proclaims dramatically, 'they are nearer twenty'.⁵³

Ferrier alleges that STC's 'general acknowledgement' of his 'similarity' with Schelling is fraudulent and 'altogether untenable': the case is one of 'absolute sameness', not 'similarity'. Ferrier is contemptuous of STC's contention that he had found in Schelling's work 'a genial coincidence with much that [he] had toiled out for [him]self'. According to Ferrier, this is calculated deception, so framed as to secure the impression of originality while the plagiarisms remain undetected, and to provide a defence if they are exposed:

[STC] is not able to bring himself to admit that all the profounder philosophical observations contained in his work are entirely the German's, but wishes to have it understood that they are all his own "genial coincidences" with Schelling. Genial coincidences, forsooth! where every one word of the one author tallies with every one word of the other.

Ferrier repeats 'genial coincidence' through the article, in a way that recalls Antony's devastating repetition of the Republican tag 'honourable', in Act 3, Scene 2 of *Julius*

⁵¹ Ferrier, p. 299.

⁵² Robert MacFarlane, *Original Copy: Plagiarism and Originality in Nineteenth-Century Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 44.

⁵³ Ferrier, p. 287, p. 288 n, p. 287, p. 288.

Caesar. STC ‘has not the smallest chance of acquittal’, Ferrier contends, in view of the ‘palpable presence of Schelling in thirty-three of [his] pages’.⁵⁴

Ferrier conjectures, on the basis that STC was ‘a consummate plagiarist’ from Schelling, ‘so in the case of Schlegel, [...] it is more than probable that he has borrowed ready-made from that author everything in which he “genially coincides” with him’. Ferrier refers also to two poetic plagiarisms, one from Schiller and one from Stollberg. He alleges, also, that STC’s aesthetics are ‘plunder[ed]’ from Schelling: ‘many parts’ of *Lecture XIII, on Poetry or Art* are translations from a work by the German. Ferrier then taunts STC’s supporters:

What will Coleridge’s admirers say, upon finding it thus proved that even his notions upon poetry and the fine arts in general are mainly drawn from the profound wells of the German philosopher – that his diamonds, no less than his fuel, are dug up from Schelling’s inexhaustible mines!

Having claimed that the ‘Magazine’ has no ‘desire’ to ‘detract from [STC’s] merits’, Ferrier’s tone is exultant.⁵⁵ Thomas McFarland refers to the ‘open glee’ with which he reveals STC’s ‘thefts’.⁵⁶ Ferrier’s tone of satirical zest, his use of exclamation marks, in one case double exclamation marks, and moments of rhetorical panache, reflect his elation: ‘can anything beat that? – this is surely plagiarism out-plagiarised’, he exults.⁵⁷ This sensationalist style weakens Ferrier’s academic authority, in contrast with Coleridge’s scholarly methodology. She admits to the temptation to ‘give [Ferrier] a trimming’, but disciplines herself to ‘cut’ or ‘soften’ any ‘sharp sentence[s]’.⁵⁸ Norman Fruman praises Coleridge’s ‘sensitivity to the distorting pressures of personal bias, [...] which has not been surpassed by any other editor’, including Engell and Bate.⁵⁹ Ferrier concludes with a triumphant courtroom flourish: ‘[I]et all men know and consider that plagiarism, like murder, sooner or later *will out*’.⁶⁰ This theatrical hyperbole approaches self-parody.

Ferrier’s whole critique of STC reflects a Tory attitude to literary property, and supports the underlying monopolist assumptions of Talfourd’s bill. Coleridge’s account of STC’s methods would place him on the free trade side of the issue. Her own underlying assumption, though, assumes the monopolist position that a writer’s oeuvre is

⁵⁴ Ferrier, p. 289, p. 292, p. 291, p. 296.

⁵⁵ Ferrier, p. 293, p. 297, p. 288. Ferrier’s emphasis.

⁵⁶ Thomas McFarland, *Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 4.

⁵⁷ Ferrier, p. 295.

⁵⁸ *Criticism*, p. 35.

⁵⁹ Norman Fruman, ‘Aids to Reflection on a New Biographia’, *Studies in Romanticism*, 24 (1985), 141-173, (p. 141).

⁶⁰ Ferrier, p. 299. Ferrier’s emphasis.

equivalent to a landowner's estate. She retains a footnote of Henry's, which explains that the copyright of *Lyrical Ballads*, having been initially owned by publisher Joseph Cottle, was passed to Longman and Co. Longman at length gave it back to Cottle, who 'restored [it] to Mr. Wordsworth. Would that he and his might hold it for ever!'⁶¹ Coleridge's inclusion of Henry's political rhetoric attacks the Copyright Act of 1842 in its limited provision for an author's dependents. Coleridge maintains her monopolist stance on literary property in elucidating a text which, in its compositional procedures, wholly subverts the Wordsworthian concept of exclusive and perpetual ownership.

Ferrier's Nationalist Agenda

For Coleridge and Henry, the lack of any ostensible motive for Ferrier's attack was highly disturbing. It had been sadly obvious to Coleridge that De Quincey had 'stoop[ed] to the readiest mode of supplying his pressing necessities'. Despite his personal revelations, their force was weakened for Coleridge by the way in which the 'poor man' had demeaned himself: '[i]t is truly grievous to see a man of such original refinement and of so high an order of intellect, stimulating and gratifying the depraved appetites of the Reading Public'.⁶² On first acquaintance, there could be no such rationalization in the case of the *Blackwood's* article. Hartley, who does not even cite the author's name accurately, expresses the family's puzzlement: '[t]he article was written, I am informed, by James Frazer, a son-in-law of Professor Wilson, whom I formerly knew'. Hartley adds that the author 'is neither Liberal nor Dissenter, nor ever received advice or admonition from [STC]'; he cannot 'conceive [any] motive of personal dislike'.⁶³ An underlying, if 'not overt' aspect of Ferrier's motivation, according to McFarland, was 'Scottish philosophical nationalism'. Vardy disagrees, and states that 'nationalism didn't actually work that way'.⁶⁴

Ferrier's 'nationalism' is more 'overt' than McFarland suggests. In his first two pages, Ferrier presents the issue in terms of national identity. It would 'be highly discreditable to the literature of the country', he observes, 'if any reprint of [*Biographia*] were allowed to go abroad, without embodying some accurate notice [...] of the very large and unacknowledged appropriations it contains of the great German philosopher Schelling'. The 'country' mentioned in this Scottish publication is, ironically, England, shown here to be intellectually dependent on German 'great[ness]'. A national literature that allows 'foreign productions' to be 'palmed off upon it as the indigenous growth of its own soil' will be exposed as narrow-minded and ignorant. Ferrier pours further scorn

⁶¹ *Biographia* 1847, I, p. 2 n.

⁶² Griggs, *Coleridge Fille*, pp. 106-107.

⁶³ *HC Letters*, p. 241.

⁶⁴ McFarland, p. 6. Vardy, p. 73.

upon English literary and philosophical traditions: ‘one of the most distinguished English authors of the nineteenth century, at the mature age of forty-five, succeeded in founding by far the greater part of his metaphysical reputation [...] upon *verbatim* plagiarisms from works written and published by a German youth, when little more than twenty years of age!’⁶⁵ As Engell and Bate point out, the ‘German youth’ was influenced by his compatriot Johann Tetens, who ‘relied’ on a Scottish work, *Essay on Genius* (1774), by Alexander Gerard. Gerard’s *Essay* was ‘widely popular in Germany’, and also influenced Kant.⁶⁶ Indirectly, then, STC’s philosophy might be traced to a Scottish source, via Tetens and Schelling. Ferrier portrays English intellectual identity as parochial and impoverished, and therefore susceptible to dishonesty on the one hand, and prone to gullibility on the other. Ironically, in the light of Ferrier’s nationalist theme, Talfourd, in his 1837 Parliamentary speech on copyright reform, had advocated ‘the expedience and justice of acknowledging the right of foreigners to copyright in this country, and of claiming it for ourselves in return’. He envisaged Great Britain as leading an international concord on copyright, and ‘setting an example’ of respect and protection for literary property to ‘France, Prussia, America and Germany’.⁶⁷ Three years later, STC, a hero of Talfourd’s speech, would be exposed as having disgraced English letters by stealing German writers’ assets.

Sir William Hamilton, Ferrier’s mentor, praises his ‘friend, Professor Ferrier’s article’, describing it in his edition of *The Works of Thomas Reid* (1846) as ‘remarkable for the sagacity [with] which [it] tracks [...] the footsteps of the literary reaver’. Hamilton adds further nationalistic criticism of STC for having attacked the reputation of the Scottish empiricist, David Hume: ‘[a]mong his other dreaming errors’, asserts Hamilton, STC ‘charges Hume with plagiarizing from Aquinas (who, by the way, herein only repeats Aristotle) his whole doctrine of Association. But [S. T.] Coleridge charging plagiarism! “Quis tulerit Gracchum de seditione querentum?”’⁶⁸ In attacking Hume, Hamilton implies, STC compounds philosophical errors with hypocrisy. Coleridge, applying academic rigour, doubts that Hume was guilty of the plagiarism STC alleges; she analyses why the likeness between Hume and Aquinas was unduly ‘magnified’ by STC. Nonetheless, she attributes ‘the animosity of the Northern critics’ against STC to

⁶⁵ Ferrier, p. 287, p. 288. Ferrier’s emphasis.

⁶⁶ *BLCC*, I, pp. lxxxv-lxxxvi.

⁶⁷ Thomas Noon Talfourd, *Speech of Sergeant Talfourd on Literary Property, Delivered in the House of Commons, on the 18th May, 1837* (London: Sherwood, 1837), p. 14, p. 15.

⁶⁸ Sir William Hamilton, *The Works of Thomas Reid, now fully collected, with selections from his unpublished letters. Preface, Notes and Dissertation by Sir William Hamilton* (Edinburgh: Maclachlan, Stewart and Co; London: Longman, Brown, Green & Longmans, 1846), p. 890 n. Translation: ‘Who can endure the Gracchi complaining of sedition?’ The brothers Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, in the 130s and 120s BC respectively, instigated a series of revolutionary populist measures as Tribunes of the People. Their actions caused severe civil unrest in Rome. The constitutional precedents set by the Gracchi would contribute, in the following century, to the downfall of the Roman Republic.

wounded national pride: he has ‘ventur[ed] to find fault with some of their Most Profound and Irrefragable Doctors’.⁶⁹ Ferrier’s motive is overtly nationalistic in his pursuit of a careerist agenda. According to Vardy, Ferrier ‘was hard at work integrating German idealist philosophy’, particularly Schelling’s, into Scottish philosophical debates about knowledge and belief.⁷⁰ In the context of Ferrier’s aspirations to make an original contribution to Scottish philosophy, an exposure of STC’s plagiarisms, and the alleged inadequacy of previous commentators, provided him with an ideal career opportunity. Ferrier’s article would promote Scottish, while humiliating English philosophy. It would also reinforce Edinburgh University’s political stance on literary property. It would announce its author as a leading British authority on German philosophy, if not the pre-eminent Germanist. Ferrier was thereby promoting his academic career and establishing his credentials as candidate for an Edinburgh Chair in Philosophy.

On another career front, Ferrier was enhancing his reputation by promoting *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*: his article exploits a theme that had strong appeal for the reading public. Mazzeo notes that there was ‘an intense reemergence of public interest in charges of plagiarism in British print culture from circa 1790 – 1850’.⁷¹ Macfarlane suggests that, in the early to mid-nineteenth century, plagiarism was so popular a topic in magazines as to have become a discrete journalistic specialism: the exposure of ‘allusions, borrowings, and derivations’, and the attendant ‘arraignment of an author’s originality’, was a favourite among readers.⁷² Ferrier was also strengthening his position as acting editor of *Blackwood’s*, indicating his suitability to take over permanent editorship from his father-in-law. Coleridge recognizes that Ferrier’s motives are ultimately careerist. While De Quincey combines his discussion of STC’s plagiarism with personal revelations, Ferrier also feeds ‘the depraved appetites of the Reading Public’.⁷³ Coleridge defines the debased transaction between writer and readership in the titillating sub-genre of ‘plagiarism hunt[ing]’: ‘[f]or one man who will fully and deeply examine any portion of the opinions, religious or philosophical, of a full and deep thinker, there are hundreds capable of comparing the run of sentences and paragraphs and being entertained by a charge of plagiarism’.⁷⁴ The viability of Ferrier’s charges, Coleridge maintains, depends upon the market’s moral and intellectual impoverishment.

Coleridge’s Critical Methodology

Coleridge, Henry and Hartley feared that the ‘light-reading and little-thinking’ British

⁶⁹ *Biographia 1847*, I, pp. 108-109 n, p. clxxvii n.

⁷⁰ Vardy, p. 76.

⁷¹ Mazzeo, p. 14.

⁷² Macfarlane, p. 41.

⁷³ Griggs, *Coleridge Fille*, p. 107.

⁷⁴ Macfarlane, p. 41. *Biographia 1847*, I, pp. xlvihi-xlix.

public was not equipped to make a judgment on Ferrier's charges.⁷⁵ Hartley warned:

Now as there are probably not fifty copies of Schelling in the three kingdoms, nor many more individuals who would or could refer to them to any purpose, the attack may be carried into many, many quarters where it has no chance of fair examination.

Therefore, for '95 out of 100' of Ferrier's readers, his article 'must be fact'.⁷⁶ The public's inability to give Ferrier's case 'fair examination' determined Coleridge's tactics. She makes 'no attempt' to 'deny' STC's 'literary omissions and inaccuracies', or to 'justify' them. She admits that STC 'adopted [an] important [...] portion of the words and thoughts of Schelling', and failed to make the necessary 'distinct and accurate references'.⁷⁷ She seeks therefore to present the full evidence of STC's appropriations. Her method is dialogic: she encourages the reader's 'active response', to use V. N. Voloshinov's phrase.⁷⁸ She provides the evidence and invites the 'reader of the present edition [...] to judge for himself' on the nature of STC's 'obligations to the great German Philosopher'.⁷⁹ For Ferrier's sensationalist rhetoric, Coleridge substitutes textual, philosophical and psychological analysis.

Coleridge's notes are characterized by scholarly exactitude. She explains that Ferrier's article 'directed' her 'to those passages in the works of Schelling and of Maasz, to which references are given in the following pages, [...] and to a few more through the strict investigation which it occasioned'.⁸⁰ In her notes, she identifies the parts of STC's text that he transcribed from the German philosophers. She comments on any additions or modifications he made; and refers to manuscript material that illuminates the relationship of STC's ideas with those of his German sources. She translates the most significant German passages, and gives the exact reference of each source she identifies. Engell and Bate reprint Coleridge's translations, which therefore remain authoritative in the twenty-first century, because Adam Roberts's recent edition of *Biographia* (2014) pays 'much' less attention to STC's textual relationship with his 'German sources'.⁸¹ Coleridge is objective in procedure at what are likely to have been the most emotive of moments. At the beginning of Chapter 10 of *Biographia*, STC claims that he 'constructed' the term '[e]semplastic' himself 'from [...] Greek words'.⁸² Ferrier brands

⁷⁵ *Biographia* 1847, I, p. xlviii.

⁷⁶ *HC Letters*, p. 241, p. 242.

⁷⁷ *Biographia* 1847, I, p. xxxix, p. viii. Coleridge's emphases.

⁷⁸ *Bakhtin Reader*, p. 11.

⁷⁹ *Biographia* 1847, I, p. v.

⁸⁰ *Biographia* 1847, I, p. v.

⁸¹ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, ed. by Adam Roberts (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), p. clxiv.

⁸² *BLCC*, I, p. 168.

this a lie. To STC's claim that he coined 'esemplastic', Ferrier retorts, '[w]e beg your pardon, sir, you did nothing of the sort – you met with it in Schelling's *Darlegung*, p. 61. You found there the word "In-eins-bildung."⁸³ He mentions that the term appears also in Schelling's *Vorlesungen*. Coleridge gives the actual sentence from *Darlegung*, which Ferrier does not, and translates it: 'the bond is the living *formation-into-one* of the one with the many'. She also gives the context of Schelling's use of 'In-Eins-Bildung' in his *Vorlesungen*: 'Schelling [...] talks of the absolute, perfect *In-Eins-Bildung* of the Real and Ideal, toward the end of his *Vorlesungen über die Methods des Academischen Studium* - p. 313'.⁸⁴ Coleridge verifies impartially the textual evidence that enables Ferrier to charge her father with mendacity and theft.

Coleridge, rather than De Quincey or Ferrier, is the most scholarly pioneer in establishing the facts of STC's plagiarisms. In 1942, Joseph Warren Beach observed that '[t]he borrowings from Schelling and others in *Biographia* are a matter of common notoriety since 1847'.⁸⁵ McFarland concurs: '[t]he year 1847, as the publication date of the second edition of the *Biographia*, marks an epoch in the [plagiarism] controversy'.⁸⁶ Fruman makes extensive use of Coleridge's notes and translations in *The Damaged Archangel* (1971), and pays tribute to her thoroughness in laying 'damaging materials clearly before the reader'.⁸⁷ Arthur Thomson, Ferrier's twentieth century biographer, finds Coleridge's approach more rigorous and thorough than Ferrier's: '[w]hen dealing with such an obscure and complicated study', Thomson observes, 'moral indignation is a poor substitute for a precise citation of parallel passages and a wide familiarity with the questions at issue'.⁸⁸ He implies that Coleridge is the greater philosopher.

Coleridge's edition serves not only as the definitive site of forensic investigation; it contributes also to the understanding of STC's philosophical development. The first twenty-four pages of Coleridge's 'Appendix' to Volume 1 consist of notes on Schelling from STC's marginalia. F.J.A. Hort, Cambridge Biblical scholar and theologian, comments in 1856 on the significance of this material: '[t]he marginalia on some of Schelling's treatises, published in the last edition of *Biographia Literaria*, are of great value, personal and intrinsic. They show well the instinctive rebellion of [STC's] mind against the implicit materialism in some of Schelling's early

⁸³ Ferrier, p. 294. F. W. Schelling, *Darlegung des wahren Verhältnisses der Naturphilosophie zu der verbesserten fichte'schen Lehre* (1806). (*An Account of the true Relationship of Natural Philosophy to the improved Fichteian Teaching*).

⁸⁴ *Biographia* 1847, I, p. 173 n. F. W. Schelling, *Vorlesungen über die Methode des akademischen Studiums* (1803). (*On University Studies*).

⁸⁵ Joseph Warren Beach, 'Coleridge's Borrowings from the German', *ELH* 9 (1942), 36-58 (p. 44).

⁸⁶ McFarland, p. 21.

⁸⁷ Norman Fruman, *Coleridge: The Damaged Archangel* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1971). Fruman, *Studies in Romanticism*, 24.1, pp. 141-142.

⁸⁸ Arthur Thomson, *Ferrier of St. Andrews: An Academic Tragedy* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1985), pp. 47-48.

doctrines'. Coleridge's inclusion of the marginalia confirms Hort in his view of STC's Platonism: that he was 'independent' of 'Englishmen and Germans', and was, essentially, a 'disciple' of 'Greek wisdom'. Hort regards 'Plato [...], in conjunction with the New Testament', as the source of STC's concept of 'reason' as 'a divine nature of which we are all partakers, and that equally'.⁸⁹ Such an interpretation of STC's thought remains influential in the twenty-first century. Douglas Hedley comments: '[STC's] Platonism mitigated against an acceptance of some of Schelling's central tenets, particularly the latent materialism of Schelling's philosophy'.⁹⁰ Coleridge's *Biographia 1847*, in elucidating STC's complex relationship with his sources, illuminates his thought in relation to differing philosophical traditions.

Tradition, Dialogue, and the Collective Search for Truth

Coleridge maintains that STC's dialogic practice of composition does not involve theft. Portions of text transposed verbatim into a new work remain discrete entities. They exist intact within a 'new form', or in juxtaposition with 'fresh matter' that 'the borrower [...] engrafts upon it'. The borrowed material forms either 'the substance' or 'the *nucleus*' of the new composite text, but does not 'cease to be [the property] of the original possessor'. *Aids to Reflection* is also hybrid in construction, Coleridge observes: it consists of texts produced by multiple authors, in which STC 'has given his thoughts in the form of comments on passages in the works of other men'.⁹¹ STC refers to himself as 'Editor' of *Aids to Reflection*: he has 'compiled' the work as well as having 'written' the commentaries.⁹² It is deliberately designed as an hybrid work, in which a single product is formed from the dialogic interaction of discrete texts. This mode of composition, Coleridge argues, expresses STC's 'exhaustive intensity' of thought more fully than 'regularity of structure in the architecture of a book'.⁹³

Coleridge describes a radical textual hybridity in *Biographia*. Her analysis has influenced scholars from the 1850s to the twenty-first century. In his 1856 essay, Hort adopts Coleridge's terminology when he refers to STC 'us[ing] the sayings of others as a Nucleus of his own sayings'.⁹⁴ The most recent (albeit brief) consideration of STC's plagiarism, by Roberts in his 2014 edition of *Biographia*, also understands the matter as one of '*form*': STC's plagiarism is not 'an attempt silently to reappropriate another's thoughts so that people believe them [STC's] own'; rather, it is part of a procedure 'to

⁸⁹ F. J. A. Hort, 'Coleridge', *Cambridge Essays, Contributed by Members of the University, 1856* (London: Parker, 1856), pp. 292-351 (p. 325 n, p. 324, p. 325).

⁹⁰ Douglas Hedley, *Coleridge, Philosophy and Religion: Aids to Reflection and the Mirror of the Spirit* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000; repr. 2008), p. 87.

⁹¹ *Biographia 1847*, I, p. xi, p. clxviii n. Coleridge's emphasis.

⁹² *ARCC*, p. 142, p. 156.

⁹³ *Biographia 1847*, I, p. clxviii n.

⁹⁴ Hort, p. 350.

generate something that is more than merely reappropriated'.⁹⁵ Although based on philosophical rather than textual interpretation, Roberts's fundamental position, that STC's plagiarisms reflect idiosyncratic creative processes, is the same as that held – albeit in different terms – by Coleridge. This is true, also, of G.N.G. Orsini's description, in 1969, of STC 'incorporating other men's views with his own views as bricks in a wall'.⁹⁶ McFarland, in the same year, describes Coleridge's 'plagiarism' as 'a mode of composition [...] by mosaic organization'.⁹⁷ Jerome C. Christensen, in 1977, refined McFarland's terminology. He suggested the epithet 'marginal discourse' for STC's writings, because, echoing Coleridge and Hort, they 'consist of marginalia on a central text'.⁹⁸

Engell and Bate, in their editorial research, found that STC's practice 'repeatedly confirmed' McFarland's description.⁹⁹ McFarland's terminology derives from Julia Kristeva's concept of 'intertextuality', in which 'any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations'. Kristeva, though, rejected applications of her theory to 'source-criticism'.¹⁰⁰ Nonetheless, 'mosaic organization' is applicable to the textual structure Coleridge exposes in *Biographia 1847*, where components from different authors are arranged in a new setting. Andrew Keanie, in 'Coleridge and Plagiarism' (2009), refers to STC's generating his ideas orally – significant in the case of the dictated *Biographia*. STC translates 'the energy of his speaking self' into textual form, Keanie contends, by a process of 'inspissation', in which he 'stead[ily] thicken[s] [his own] qualities of vision and method over the original framework' of a source.¹⁰¹ This confirms the definitive nature of Coleridge's original analysis, in which STC composes by 'engraft[ing]' 'fresh matter' onto a '*nucleus*' of source material.¹⁰² Later commentators restate Coleridge's original interpretation in various ways.

In *Biographia 1847*, Coleridge refers to STC's use of Schelling's *Oration on the relationship of the Plastic Arts to Nature* in his lecture *On Poesy and Art*: the nucleus of STC's lecture consists of Schelling's text, from which he 'omits a great deal [...] but adds [...] materially, to what is borrowed'.¹⁰³ In her edition of *Notes and Lectures Upon Shakespeare* (1849), Coleridge concludes that 'the leading thought of the whole' of

⁹⁵ Roberts, p. cxliii. Roberts's emphasis.

⁹⁶ Stillinger, p. 107.

⁹⁷ McFarland, p. 27.

⁹⁸ Jerome C. Christensen, 'Coleridge's Marginal Method in *Biographia Literaria*', *PMLA*, 92 (1977), 928-938 (pp. 928-929, p. 936).

⁹⁹ *BLCC*, I, p. cxvi.

¹⁰⁰ Simon Dentith, *Bakhtinian Thought: An Introductory Reader* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 95, p. 96.

¹⁰¹ Andrew Keanie, 'Coleridge and Plagiarism', in *The Oxford Handbook of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. by Frederick Burwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009; paperback edn, 2012), pp. 435-454 (p. 443, p. 450).

¹⁰² *Biographia 1847*, I, p. xi. Coleridge's emphasis.

¹⁰³ *Biographia 1847*, I, p. xxxvii.

STC's lecture is Schelling's, but that the work 'is STC's also'. She finds that 'the thoughts of Schelling are mixed up with those of the borrower'. As 'borrower', STC has assembled the diverse components to construct a new product. In the *Notes and Lectures*, Coleridge brings 'forward [...] every sentence in Schelling's Oration which has been adopted in [STC's] Lecture', and indicates every 'passage' from which he might have drawn. As in *Biographia 1847*, Coleridge presents the textual evidence: every reader 'will be able to decide for himself [on the nature of STC's borrowings] [...] without going beyond the present volume'.¹⁰⁴ Coleridge argues that the rights of the author whose property forms the 'nucleus' of the new work have not been infringed. The greater the author whose work has been incorporated into the later text, the more secure is his individual ownership of it. Coleridge maintains that Schelling's 'writings, though unknown in this country, when [STC] first brought them forward, were too considerable in his own to be finally merged in those of any other man'.¹⁰⁵ The principal author from whom STC copied, therefore, was too eminent to have suffered any loss. This reflects De Quincey's view that a writer need not record borrowings from major canonical figures, such as Milton or Spencer. Coleridge negates Ferrier's claim, therefore, that 'the rights of [STC's] victims' must be 'vindic[ated]'.¹⁰⁶

V. N. Voloshinov states that '[I]f it begins [...] at the point where utterance crosses utterance'.¹⁰⁷ Coleridge anticipates this theoretical position in her account of *Biographia* as a text produced by multiple authors. To attempt to understand *Biographia* in terms of individual 'property' and ownership is tantamount to a category error:

[STC's] accuser urges against him that he did not elaborate over again what he borrowed and thus make it, in some sense, his own. It is not easy to see how *that which is borrowed* can ever, strictly speaking, become the property of the borrower, so as to cease to be that of the original possessor.¹⁰⁸

The extracts from Schelling copied verbatim into *Biographia* remain Schelling's distinctive product, but are incorporated into a work that includes other texts, which, together, form a new literary entity. Coleridge understands as a practitioner the translator's dialogic negotiation with the original author, and that the process of translation inevitably transforms a text. In *Notes and Lectures*, she maintains that '[t]ranslations' cannot be 'substitutes' for originals, because they tend 'to mislead, and

¹⁰⁴ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Notes and Lectures Upon Shakespeare and some of the Old Poets and Dramatists with other Literary Remains of S. T. Coleridge*. Edited by Mrs. H. N. Coleridge. 2 vols (London: Pickering, 1849), II, p. 363, p. 369, p. 363.

¹⁰⁵ *Biographia 1847*, I, p. xii.

¹⁰⁶ Ferrier, p. 299.

¹⁰⁷ Dentith, p. 31.

¹⁰⁸ *Biographia 1847*, I, p. xi. Coleridge's emphasis.

give a partially false colouring to that which they aim to represent'.¹⁰⁹ In her analysis of STC's translation both of Schelling's words and ideas, she finds that he alters their 'colouring' by incorporating them into a new, discrete text.

According to Coleridge's analysis, *Biographia* does not belong to a single author. Her conception of its complex textual structure can be analyzed through Bakhtinian theory. A Bakhtinian theorization of textual dialogue inflects my whole reading of Coleridge's analysis of *Biographia*. Its 'meaning' is 'communally constructed', and is 'derived from multiple viewpoints'.¹¹⁰ This negates the idea of a writer's work as a private estate defined by distinct boundaries, and resists the myth of inspired individual authorship. Martha Woodmansee observes that the Romantic concept of individual genius 'came to fruition in Wordsworth's "Essay, Supplementary to the Preface of 1815"', in which he presents 'a mystification of an activity which is of necessity rooted in tradition'.¹¹¹ STC's production of a composite text in *Biographia* negates not only the concept of solitary genius but, as Stillingner observes, 'the myth of single authorship itself'.¹¹² Yet, STC appears overtly to support the Wordsworthian view, referring in Volume I, Chapter 2 of *Biographia* to the 'unjust distinction, made by the public itself between *literary*, and all other property'.¹¹³ In Chapter 9 of Volume 1, he upholds a radically contradictory position, which Coleridge foregrounds. STC's theory and practice of authorship, she suggests, are communal and democratic:

[f]airly considered his conduct in this matter does but help to prove the truth of his assertion, that he "regarded Truth as a divine ventriloquist, not caring from whose mouth the sounds are supposed to proceed, if only the words are audible and intelligible".¹¹⁴

In politico-economic terms, Coleridge recognizes, the processes of STC's authorship are radically opposed to 'monopoly'. Philosophically, his communal conception of knowledge anticipates a Bakhtinian model of 'epistemological openness', in which 'truth' is generated by a 'dynamic, collective' process of 'continuing interchange'.¹¹⁵ Coleridge understands STC's relationship with Schelling and Maass in terms of a shared, dialogic quest.

Coleridge includes in *Biographia 1847* a 'marginalium' that exposes further

¹⁰⁹ *Notes and Lectures*, II, p. 369.

¹¹⁰ Macovski, p. 4.

¹¹¹ Martha Woodmansee, 'On the Author Effect: Recovering Creativity', in *The Construction of Authorship: Textual Appropriation in Law and Literature*, ed. by Martha Woodmansee and Pater Jaszi (London: Duke University Press, 1994), pp. 12-38 (p. 16).

¹¹² Stillingner, p. 119.

¹¹³ *BLCC*, I, p. 43. STC's emphasis.

¹¹⁴ *BLCC*, I, p. 164. *Biographia 1847*, I, p. xiv.

¹¹⁵ Macovski, p. 27.

contradictions in STC's attitudes to originality. He alleges that Schelling has borrowed from the Protestant mystic, Jakob Boehme, without adequate acknowledgement: '[h]ow can I explain Schelling's strange silence respecting Jacob Boehme?' STC ponders.¹¹⁶ According to STC's principle of 'truth as a divine ventriloquist', the answer would be 'genial coincidence'.¹¹⁷ STC implies, though, that Schelling should have admitted a significant debt to Boehme: '[t]he identity of [Schelling's] system [with Boehme's work] was exulted in by the Tiecks at Rome in 1805, to *me*; and these were Schelling's intimate friends'. STC alleges not only the identity between Schelling's ideas and those of Boehme, but a correspondence in language: '[t]he coincidence in the expressions, illustrations, and even in the mystical obscurities, is too glaring to be solved by mere independent coincidence in thought and intention'.¹¹⁸ STC's identification of 'glaring' verbal parallels between Schelling and Boehme anticipates, ironically, Ferrier's citing 'absolute sameness of phrase' between STC and Schelling.¹¹⁹ STC absolves Schelling of any moral blame in his appropriations from Boehme, though, on the grounds of Schelling's intellectual stature. This sympathetic stance anticipates De Quincey's equivocal representation of STC's philosophical plagiarisms. STC speculates that '[p]robably prudential motives restrain Schelling for a while' from revealing his debts to Boehme: 'for I will not think that pride or a dishonest lurking desire to appear not only *an* original, but *the* original can have influenced a genius like Schelling'.¹²⁰

In Chapter 9 of the first volume of *Biographia*, STC denies that he is in competition with Schelling. He acknowledges Schelling's precedence as '*founder* of the Philosophy of Nature' and deplores the possibility of his being seen as 'enter[ing] into a rivalry with Schelling'. STC refers to the fact that he and Schelling share the same intellectual predecessors: Kant, Bruno and Boehme. He admits his own 'direct [...] debt' to Boehme. By contrast, he says, developing the ideas of his 'marginalium', Schelling regards the relation of his 'system' to Boehme's as '*mere* coincidence'. Commenting, in the same chapter, on his own relationship with Schelling, STC states that an author's originality is not determined by reference to chronology: '[w]hether a work is the offspring of a man's own spirit, and the product of original thinking, will be discovered [...] by better tests than the mere reference to dates'. Yet, STC denies to Schelling the same privilege of 'genial coincidence' that he claims for himself.¹²¹ In his 'marginalium' on Schelling and Boehme, STC adopts the criterion of chronological priority. Although Coleridge includes the 'marginalium' on Boehme and Schelling without comment, her

¹¹⁶ *Biographia 1847*, I, p. 303.

¹¹⁷ *BLCC*, I, p. 164, p. 160.

¹¹⁸ *Biographia 1847*, I, p. 303. STC's emphasis.

¹¹⁹ Ferrier, p. 289.

¹²⁰ *Biographia 1847*, I, p. 303. STC's emphases.

¹²¹ *BLCC*, I, p. 162, p. 161, p. 164. STC's emphases.

edition as a whole fully exposes STC's contradictions. She shows *Biographia*, a work anxiously concerned with the definition of individual genius, to consist of the texts of multiple authors; and, at different moments, to assert mutually contradictory concepts of authorship. Coleridge acknowledges the conceptually inchoate and inconsistent nature of *Biographia*, and describes it as a 'fragmentary work'.¹²²

Coleridge relates STC's practice to the historical development of philosophical tradition. Her account of the cultural ownership of ideas echoes a distinction made by Talfourd in a parliamentary debate of 1838. Seville refers to Talfourd's differentiation between the content of an intellectual 'discovery, rendering the essence of truth to mankind', and the 'form in which it is enshrined'. The author has right of possession of the text, the 'form', but the idea itself belongs to 'mankind'.¹²³ Coleridge elaborates on how human understanding progresses. She describes the way in which 'the discoveries of science' are dependent on the development of tradition. By 'science' she means philosophy, as when she refers to 'scientific divinity' in 'On Rationalism'.¹²⁴ 'In all scientific product', Coleridge explains, 'two factors are required; energy of thought in the discoverer, and a special state of preparation for the particular advance in the science itself'. Despite her reference to 'the discoverer', Coleridge conceives of 'the human intellect' progressing inevitably and impersonally along 'its pre-appointed course'.¹²⁵ She prioritizes collective development over individual heurism.

Coleridge refers to Schelling's philosophy having its source in the 'Idealism of Kant, which was surely founded on the Idealism of Berkeley'.¹²⁶ She cites a precedent for STC's 'genial coincidence' with Schelling. In the early eighteenth century, Arthur Collier, a contemporary of George Berkeley, 'defend[ed] immaterialism as the only alternative to skepticism'.¹²⁷ Collier reached the same philosophical conclusions as Berkeley, by the same arguments, without having read Berkeley's work:

Berkeleyanism presented itself to the mind of Arthur Collier before he had read a syllable of Berkeley's metaphysical writings and he maintained the non-existence of matter by arguments substantially the same as those employed in [Berkeley's] *Principles of Human Knowledge* and *Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous*.

According to Coleridge's understanding of tradition, such 'genial coincidence' occurs inevitably through the impersonal operation of an historical process. Indeed, she implies

¹²² *M & L*, I, p. 346.

¹²³ Seville, p. 13.

¹²⁴ *Biographia 1847*, I, p. xxx. *OR 1843*, II, p. 481.

¹²⁵ *Biographia 1847*, I, p. xxxi.

¹²⁶ *Biographia 1847*, I, p. xxxi.

¹²⁷ *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, ed. by Robert Audi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 135.

that the force of tradition is so strong that literary borrowing is inescapable and largely unconscious: ‘how commonly do men imagine themselves producing and creating, when they are but metamorphosing!’¹²⁸ In *Notes and Lectures*, Coleridge observes that those who advance ‘positive charges of dishonest plagiarism’ have not ‘properly examined’ the ‘grounds’ on which their accusations rest. They ‘are absolutely ignorant’ of ‘the true nature’ of literary production, which involves an inevitable, dynamic interaction of the individual author with tradition.¹²⁹ The ‘plagiarism hunter[s]’, though, ignore cultural processes, in order to exploit the personal and the sensational.¹³⁰

Literary Property and Nervous Disorder

Coleridge attributes STC’s radical practice, in which he treats authorial products as communal property, to psychological as well as historical and philosophical factors. In 1837, she explains that she recognizes STC’s ‘literary difficulties’ in her own experience: like him, she wishes to ‘pursue’ ideas ‘to the farthest bounds of thought’, while the ‘notion of the indefinite vastness which [she] long[s] to fill’ ‘paralyze[s]’ her productive ‘energies’.¹³¹ She understands the passionate single-mindedness, therefore, which impeded STC’s productive skills, and rendered him culpably inattentive to matters of literary ownership. She maintains that the strengths and weaknesses of his creative constitution were inseparably interwoven. His ‘power of abstracting and referring to universal principles’, Coleridge contends, ‘rendered him unconscious of incorrectness of statement’. Simple facts and material realities ‘laid no hold on [STC’s] mind’, she admits. He was obsessively absorbed in the development of ideas to the exclusion of formal academic considerations: ‘[h]e was ever more intent upon the pursuit and enunciation of truth than alive to the collateral benefits that wait upon it, as it is the exclusive property of this or that individual’. Coleridge contrasts the kind of commercial and legal imagery adopted by Ferrier with the idealistic abstraction – ‘pursuit and enunciation of truth’ – she applies to STC.¹³²

STC was too immersed in ideas themselves to protect even his own intellectual property, Coleridge maintains. He gave away, in letters, marginalia and conversation, much valuable thought and ‘brilliant illustration’, which he might have prudently ‘kept back’ in order to ‘procure for himself a permanent reward’. She presents STC’s absorption in metaphysics as both a virtue and a flaw: ‘[h]e loved to go forward, expanding and ennobling the soul of his teaching’, she explains, but ‘hated the trouble of

¹²⁸ *Biographia 1847*, I, p. xxxii, p. xxxvii.

¹²⁹ *Notes and Lectures*, I, pp. 339-340.

¹³⁰ Macfarlane, p. 41.

¹³¹ *Criticism*, p. 11.

¹³² *Biographia 1847*, I, p. xl, p. xvii.

turning back to look after its body'. Coleridge's terms – 'ennobling the soul' and neglecting the 'body' – reflect STC's metaphysical idealism. For Coleridge, though, STC's absence of proprietorial care for his work is 'an inherent defect' of 'character', as J.H. Green suggests in a letter she quotes. Green describes STC's '*selflessness*' as 'an absence of a sense of self', which disabled him in practical affairs. STC's 'selflessness' had resulted in his family's dependence on Robert Southey. In this sense, STC's 'profuse[ness] of his own [property]' was far from a virtue: 'in regard to all *property*, of what kind soever [, STC] did not enough regard or value it whether for himself or his neighbour'. Coleridge explains that STC's incapacity was such that he would attribute his own ideas to others, as Hartley also observes.¹³³

Coleridge's practical approach to literary property contrasted with that of STC. As editor and author, she paid meticulous attention to accurate referencing, and exercised scrupulous care over commercial affairs. In widowhood, Coleridge became an accomplished businesswoman in managing the family's literary estate. She found unacceptable publisher Pickering's haphazard record keeping, and lack of punctuality in paying annual royalties. In 1851, she successfully completed negotiations with Wordsworth's publisher, Edward Moxon, 'an extremely able businessman', to take over publication of STC's 'oeuvre'.¹³⁴ That this was a viable business proposition for Moxon in 1851 was due entirely to the success of Coleridge's literary and entrepreneurial work over the past eight years. Henry had attempted, in the months before his death, to transfer publication of STC's works to Moxon. He failed, because the prospective publisher did not find the proposition commercially convincing at that time. Coleridge's systematic productivity in the intervening years enabled her to secure the contract with Moxon in 1851. This successful transaction, clinched during her terminal illness, confirms Coleridge's business acumen in making provision for the long-term viability of the family's literary estate.

In philosophical and literary terms, Coleridge attributes STC's relationship with his sources to an historical process: the development of literary and intellectual tradition draws writers into dialogic forms of creativity. In psychological terms, Coleridge exposes idiosyncratic contradictions in STC's authorial theory and practice. She suggests, for example, that STC's extensive use of A. W. Schlegel's 'sentences' and 'illustrations' in his lectures of 1818 indicates mental imbalance: '[h]ad he been fully conscious' of his substantial debts to Schlegel in the lectures, 'common caution would have induced [STC] to acknowledge what he had obtained from a book which was in the

¹³³ *Biographia 1847*, I, p. xvii, p. xix, p. xxxv n, p. xviii. Green's emphasis quoted by Coleridge. Coleridge's emphasis.

¹³⁴ Mudge, p. 172.

hands of so many readers in England'.¹³⁵ Even more inexplicable was STC's having 'published *The Fall of Robespierre* as *An Historic Drama by S. T. Coleridge*, without joining Mr. Southey's name with his in the title page, though my Uncle and all his many friends knew that he wrote the second and third act of it'. Coleridge suggests that the conceptual contradictions of individual authorship, in terms of a writer's relationship with source material, are exacerbated for STC by psychological disorder. She admits that she 'should not have believed [STC's] confusions [...] possible in a man of sound mind'.¹³⁶

Coleridge's Revision of Romantic Concepts of Creativity

Coleridge reveals that *Biographia* was 'composed' at the time of STC's life 'when his health was most deranged, and his mind most subjected to the influence of bodily disorder'.¹³⁷ She describes STC's creativity as being dependent on 'bodily' powers. Her description revises Romantic conceptions of creativity:

The nerveless languor, which, after early youth, became almost the habit of his body and *bodily mind*, which to a great degree paralysed his powers both of rest and action, precluding by a torpid irritability their happy vicissitude, — rendered all exercises difficult to him except of thought and imagination flowing onward freely and in self-made channels; for these brought with them their own warm atmosphere to thaw the chains of frost that bound his spirit. Soon as that spontaneous impulse was suspended, the apathy and sadness induced by his physical condition reabsorbed his mind, as sluggish mists creep over the valley when the breeze ceases to blow; and to counteract it he lacked any other sufficient stimulus.¹³⁸

Inertia, Coleridge contends, became 'the habit of [STC's] body and *bodily mind*' in early adulthood. The term 'habit' here has two implications. In 'Nervousness', Coleridge uses 'habit' in relation to the danger of drug abuse: 'it is the liability to become a habit that is the chief evil of laudanum taking'.¹³⁹ The word's presence in the *Biographia 1847* passage implies a causal link between STC's opium consumption and his 'nerveless languor'.

The second implication of 'habit' refers to the Lockean concept that the nerves retain sense impressions. This theory was adopted in eighteenth-century medical theory, and remained current in the early nineteenth century. The influential physician Thomas Trotter, for example, held that 'impressions' are 'hoarded as it were in the structure of

¹³⁵ *Notes and Lectures*, I, p. 338.

¹³⁶ *Biographia 1847*, I, p. xlii n, pp. xl-xli n.

¹³⁷ *Biographia 1847*, I, p. xxi.

¹³⁸ *Biographia 1847*, I, p. xix. Coleridge's emphasis.

¹³⁹ 'Nervousness', Mudge, p. 211.

[the body's] nerves'.¹⁴⁰ Coleridge adopts this concept in 'Nervousness' – there is a 'force of habit in the nerves' – which she then re-applies in her analysis of STC.¹⁴¹ His sense impressions are retained in his 'nerves', so that 'langour' becomes a permanent condition. In Coleridge's Lockean account, STC's cognitive capacities are subject to the mechanistic determinism he sought in his metaphysics to overcome. The medical history inscribed in the fibres of STC's nerves deprives him of free will: he is incapable 'both of rest and action'. He is trapped in a state of 'torpid irritability', perpetual unproductive agitation. The oxymoron refers to Trotter's description of the nervous symptoms to which writers are subject: '[t]he mind itself, by pursuing one train of thought [...] becomes torpid to external agents'.¹⁴² Coleridge describes this process in STC. His creative faculty becomes solipsistic: his 'thought and imagination' flow 'freely' only 'in self-made channels'. Ferrier alleged that STC had 'stopped short in the process of unfolding a theory of the imagination' because he had exhausted Schelling's resources. Coleridge's account of STC's powers, subject to sudden involuntary paralysis, refutes this damaging view. More was at stake than STC's inability to develop a complete theory of imagination. What occurred, Coleridge suggests, was a total implosion of his creative capacities: 'he broke down in the prosecution of his whole scheme'. It was not the support of appropriate source materials in Schelling that STC lacked: 'his energies for regular composition in any line were deserting him'. Nervous breakdown prevented STC from progressing in his account of imagination. The flaws of *Biographia* – its 'transgressions' and incompleteness – 'belonged not to [STC's] moral being [...] but to the frame of his intellect'.¹⁴³

In the passage cited above, in which Coleridge describes STC's 'nerveless languor', she is in dialogue with his conversation poems of the late 1790s. She locates the later failure of STC's creative powers in the metaphysical vision of poems such as 'The Eolian Harp' (1795) and 'Frost at Midnight' (1798). The structure of these poems depends on a systolic movement of expansion and contraction in the continuous and vital interaction between the poet's inner world and the sensory stimuli of his immediate surroundings. Coleridge refers to 'Frost at Midnight', in which the 'sun-thaw' is an image of universal harmony and beauty. In Coleridge's account of STC's flawed creative powers, the warmth that 'thaw[s] the chains of frost that bound his spirit' is not located in external nature. It derives, solipsistically, from his own 'thought and imagination', and is subject to arbitrary and abrupt 'suspen[sion]'. Coleridge's allusion

¹⁴⁰ Peter Melville Logan, *Nerves and Narratives: A Cultural History of Hysteria in Nineteenth-Century British Prose* (London: University of California Press, 1997), p. 28.

¹⁴¹ 'Nervousness', Mudge, p. 209.

¹⁴² Thomas Trotter, *A View of The Nervous Temperament*, 2nd edn (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1807; repr. Forgotten Books: www.forgottenbooks.org, 2012), p. 39.

¹⁴³ *Biographia 1847*, I, p. xxi, p. xl.

to 'Frost at Midnight' implies the failure of the Romantic imagination, and the breakdown of the domestic structure that forms the poem's social setting. STC casts himself in a maternal role as night-time carer for the '[d]ear [b]abe', Hartley, 'that sleepest cradled by [his] side'. Unlike STC's later solipsistic imagination, his creativity in the poem is energized by acute sensitivity to the external scene: the baby's

'gentle breathings', heard in this deep calm,
Fill up the interspersed vacancies
And momentary pauses of the thought!

The poet's perspectives expand to envision his child's natural education as a wanderer '[b]y lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags | Of ancient mountain', from which he may learn the 'eternal language' of 'God'.¹⁴⁴ However, STC will fail to sustain the parental role he performs in the poem, just as his imagination, drawn in upon itself by disordered 'nerves', will become 'bound' by 'chains of frost'. The juxtaposition of STC's celebrated poem of the 1790s against Coleridge's revisionary analysis in the 1840s suggests the losses and limitations of STC's career. The pantheistic vistas of 'Frost at Midnight', the opium-fuelled visions of 'Kubla Khan', close down and fade. They give way to self-enclosed suffering and a fragmentary inchoate aesthetic.

Coleridge rejects, psychologically and theologically, the Romantic tenet of 'wise passiveness': a state in which the poet's creativity and moral intellect are nurtured by powers of external nature, with no corresponding effort exerted by the poet himself.¹⁴⁵ She describes STC's 'mind' being 'reabsorbed' by 'apathy and sadness', just as 'sluggish mists creep over the valley when the breeze ceases to blow'. Coleridge reverses the situation STC describes in 'The Eolian Harp', in which the poet lies at ease on a sunny hillside 'at noon'. His 'brain' is 'indolent and passive' as it receives arbitrary visitations of creative 'thought'. In the same way, an eolian harp produces music in response to 'random gales'. However, as Coleridge states, 'when the breeze ceases to blow', STC is enclosed in 'sluggish mists'. He is cut off from such inspiration as he experiences in 'The Eolian Harp', in the prospect of the Bristol Channel, where 'sunbeams dance, like diamonds, on the main', enabling him, in a 'tranquil' state, to 'muse upon tranquillity'.¹⁴⁶ Coleridge alludes to the failure of STC's early poetic vision in her discussion of his opium addiction: she represents the disorder of STC's 'nervous system', on which his creativity depends, as 'the jangled strings of some shattered

¹⁴⁴ *PWCC*, I, Part 1, pp. 455-456. ll. 70, 44, 45-47, 55-56, 60.

¹⁴⁵ Wordsworth, 'Lyrical Ballads', p. 108, l. 24.

¹⁴⁶ *PWCC*, I, Part 1, pp. 233-234, ll. 35, 41, 39, 42, 37-38.

lyre'.¹⁴⁷ In her revisionary analysis, STC 'lacked any [...] sufficient stimulus' to reanimate his passive and paralyzed creativity. This confirms his despairing admission in 'Dejection: an Ode' (1802): 'I may not hope from outward forms to win | The passion and the life, whose fountains are within'.¹⁴⁸ If 'poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings', Coleridge shows how easily and how arbitrarily, in STC's case, the 'spontaneous impulse is suspended': his capacities as poet and metaphysician are governed by what she terms 'bodily depression'.¹⁴⁹

Coleridge's location of authorial creativity in physiological processes revises STC's metaphysical theory of Imagination. Donelle Ruwe contends that Coleridge 'privileges a type of imagination more closely akin to her father's category of fancy'.¹⁵⁰ In STC's cognitive hierarchy, 'Fancy' occupies a position below that of 'Imagination', which he divides into 'primary' and 'secondary' functions. The secondary imagination 'differ[s]' from the primary 'only in *degree*, and in the *mode* of its operation'. STC defines the 'primary Imagination' as 'the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM'.¹⁵¹ In a footnote, Coleridge explains that the 'last clause' of the definition, "'and as a repetition", etc.', is

stroked out in a copy of the B. L. containing a few MS. marginal notes of the author, which are printed in this edition. I think it best to preserve the sentence, while I mention the author's judgment upon it, especially as it has been quoted'.¹⁵²

The crossing-out, Coleridge implies, reveals that STC rejected his metaphysical conception of the imagination. She retains the deleted 'clause' in her edition, though, because it has entered literary history.

STC defines 'Fancy' as 'a mode of Memory emancipated from the order of time and space'. It is dependent on sensory experience, and, like 'ordinary memory', takes 'all its materials ready made from the law of association'.¹⁵³ The creative imagination, that Coleridge terms the 'bodily mind', also depends on sensory experience and 'the law of association'. In Coleridge's account of STC's cognitive imbalance, 'imagination' impinges upon, and distorts, the operation of his 'memory'. She finds, in effect, a single cognitive faculty in STC, where two separate functions should exist: 'it seemed as if the

¹⁴⁷ *Biographia 1847*, II, p. 410.

¹⁴⁸ *PWCC*, I, Part 2, p. 699, ll. 45-46.

¹⁴⁹ Wordsworth, *Prose*, I, p. 148. 'Nervousness', Mudge, p. 202.

¹⁵⁰ Ruwe, p. 234.

¹⁵¹ *BLCC*, I, pp. 304-305. STC's emphases.

¹⁵² *Biographia 1847*, I, p. 297 n.

¹⁵³ *BLCC*, I, p. 305.

door betwixt his memory and imagination was always open', Coleridge explains; 'and though the former was a large strong room, its contents were perpetually mingling with those of the adjoining chamber'.¹⁵⁴ STC's nervous disorder produces abnormal cognitive operations, the literary effects of which are plagiarism and fragmentation. It is ironic that Coleridge locates the source of STC's literary disabilities in memory and imagination, the key faculties in the poetics and metaphysics of her literary fathers. Coleridge's construction of STC's defective 'bodily mind', influenced by Locke's conception that delusion originates in the imagination, may appear to contradict the metaphysical concept of Reason in her religious writings.

On the contrary, Coleridge maintains consistently through her career that the sensory and the rational are distinct. In her introduction to 'Nervousness', she states that nervous 'disorders [...] affect the mind but do not radically and directly impair the Reason'.¹⁵⁵ At the beginning of 'On Rationalism', Coleridge defines reason as 'the light by which we read the law written in the heart, or rather the law itself, read by its own light, when that is kindled from above'. Reason is the medium in which we encounter the Divine in Coleridge's theology. She applies the same terms six months before her death, in the *Dialogues on Personality* (1851). Her main protagonist, Markright, an exponent of Coleridgean philosophical principles, defines 'Reason' as the 'downshine of the Divine Light into the soul'. He explains that 'brutes in common with man have not only a sensitive soul and bodily organism, appetites, instincts, senses, but affections and intelligence'. Only man possesses Reason, 'which exalts his will from a mere actuating principle into a capability of acting according to ultimate ends'. Markright refers to Aquinas's definition of 'a person' as 'an individual substance of rational nature', and distinguishes between 'the outward tangible body' and 'the true permanent supersensual body'. Coleridge maintains the classical dualism between body and spirit, but places creative imagination in the physical realm, in which all human attributes reside, save one. The exception is Reason, 'the organ of beholding the Divine Spirit'.¹⁵⁶

STC's Limitations: Coleridge's Opportunities

Coleridge exposes STC's flaws in *Biographia 1847* in the interests of her ultimate authorial agenda. Her defence of STC from the moral charge of plagiarism requires her to produce a comprehensive critique of his psychological weaknesses, and to define the limitations of his literary powers. This would seem to be at odds with Coleridge and Henry's original project to re-present STC as a Christian philosopher. Molly Lefebure,

¹⁵⁴ *Biographia 1847*, I, p. xl n.

¹⁵⁵ 'Nervousness', Mudge, p. 201.

¹⁵⁶ *OR 1843*, II, p. 355. HRC.

in her otherwise insightful biographical study of STC's family relationships, misreads Coleridge as sharing Henry's eulogizing agenda in editing STC. Their collaborative aim, according to Lefebure, was 'reverently' to pass on 'to posterity' a 'sacrosanct [STC], "saint and sage"', from which 'any trace' of STC's 'human' flaws would be 'religiously excluded'.

This is plainly untrue of *Biographia 1847*. After Henry's death, Coleridge's editorial agenda shifts decisively, and is inflected by the evolving conception of her own religious authorship. Lefebure suggests that Henry had envisaged a new edition of *Biographia* as 'the crowning glory' of the editorial project.¹⁵⁷ For Coleridge, *Biographia 1847* marks the point at which Coleridgean controversies are confronted directly, answered candidly, and laid finally to rest. She aims to free the re-interpretation of STC's works from the distractions of biographical speculation and sensationalism. She deals with the issue of plagiarism head-on, and gives fuller and more precise evidence than STC's accusers. She also rejects and revises the views of those who had surrounded STC in idealized mystique. She indicates that she is 'weary' of those who had referred to STC as '*wonderful*', because they had created unrealistic expectations of his literary capabilities.¹⁵⁸

Coleridge contends that contemporaries 'over-rated' STC's literary capacity. As a result, he had been viewed as a failure. STC's constitution, she argues, enabled him to pursue ideas 'in their remotest ramifications', but prevented him from presenting them in sustained and structured productions.¹⁵⁹ In 1837, she attributed the fragmentary nature of STC's work to literary idealism: he 'wrote by snatches' because '[h]e could not bear to complete incompletely, which every body else does'.¹⁶⁰ In *Biographia 1847*, though, she emphasizes his disabilities. Contemporaries who 'were struck by [STC's] marked intellectual gifts' – as suggested by his mesmerizing viva voce performances – 'took no note of his intellectual impediments'. Coleridge adds a forthright and defining statement: the 'want of proportion in the faculties of [STC's] mind [...] would always have prevented him from making many or good books'.¹⁶¹ His capacities for actual literary production were limited. Those such as Hazlitt, who had criticized STC for having 'wasted' boundless philosophical and literary potential, misunderstood his creative character.¹⁶² On the contrary, Coleridge asserts, STC achieved all that his innate limitations would allow: '[h]is powers, compounded and balanced as they were, enabled

¹⁵⁷ Lefebure, *Private Lives*, p. 50, p. 54, p. 48.

¹⁵⁸ *Biographia 1847*, I, p. xvi. Coleridge's emphasis.

¹⁵⁹ *Biographia 1847*, I, p. xviii.

¹⁶⁰ *Criticism*, p. 11.

¹⁶¹ *Biographia 1847*, I, p. xviii.

¹⁶² A. C. Grayling, *The Quarrel of the Age: The Life and Times of William Hazlitt* (London: Phoenix Press, 2000), p. 204.

him to do that which he did, and possibly that alone'.¹⁶³ This is a crucial moment in the development of Coleridge's own authorship and her conception of it.

Coleridge's literary achievement is founded on her father's incapacity. STC's inability to produce 'good books' opens an authorial space for her. His haphazard fragments offer her the opportunity to create the works he was unable to realize, including the projected masterpiece, 'which was to explain his system of thought at large'.¹⁶⁴ STC's inability to construct a systematic 'oeuvre' confers on Coleridge the role of author. The fragments of his major unpublished project, constructed and mediated by her, with her own future independent works, would carry forward the whole Coleridgean project. One such work, 'Extracts from a New Treatise on Regeneration' (1848) appeared shortly after the publication of *Biographia 1847*. The reconstructions and original works Coleridge envisaged would be productions for her own times: they would not be what STC might have written earlier in the century. Her project is polemical not academic: a vocational engagement with contemporary life is the rationale of her authorship. The dynamic relationship between Coleridge the Victorian polemicist and STC the Romantic metaphysician is suggested by Gadamer's concept of an 'historical horizon': a viewpoint through which 'we approach the testimony of the past under [the] influence' of the 'present'. Such a strategy requires us to rise 'to a higher universality,' in which we 'overcome not only our own particularity but also that of the other'. Therefore, Gadamer contends, '[t]o acquire a horizon means that one learns to look beyond what is close at hand—not in order to look away from it but to see it better, within a larger whole and in truer proportion'. Coleridge's 'transpos[ition]' of STC's thought into the Victorian setting enables her 'to see' that setting 'better'.¹⁶⁵ It requires her, also, to develop innovative literary methods in her polemical writings, as the following chapters will show.

¹⁶³ *Biographia 1847*, I, pp. xviii-xix.

¹⁶⁴ *Biographia 1847*, I, p. xxiii.

¹⁶⁵ Gadamer, p. 316.

Chapter Four

The Theory and Practice of Polemical Writing: Religious Authorship from 1847 to 1849

'Biographia 1847': Coleridge's Mediation between STC's Text and 'Contemporary Life'

Sara Coleridge's 'On Rationalism' presents a rigorous critique of Tractarian doctrine. Between 1843 and 1849, she published three more theological writings. The first of these is the second section of her 'Introduction' to *Biographia 1847*, which extends her critical examination of Anglo-Catholic doctrine from the viewpoint of STC's metaphysics. The second work is 'Extracts From a New Treatise on Regeneration' (1848), which appears in the 'Appendix' to the sixth edition of *Aids to Reflection*, after the revised version of 'On Rationalism'. Finally, there is the 'Note on *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit*' (1849), an essay in response to an intemperate attack on STC and some of those influenced by him. These are not her final theological works, however. In 1850 and 1851, she pursues the topic of baptismal regeneration in a substantial series of unpublished dialogues, discussed in Chapter 5. The present chapter will address questions raised by Coleridge's religious writings from 1847 to 1849. First, how does Coleridge's elucidation of STC's doctrines relate to her independent religious writing? Second, how does Coleridge's dialogue with the Tractarians influence her intellectual and authorial development after 1843? Third, how do Coleridge's evolving religious ideas inflect her ethic and practice of authorship?

Coleridge's editing of *Biographia Literaria* was the pivotal factor in her intellectual and literary development through the 1840s. The necessary textual investigations enabled her to develop her metaphysical resources. Her analyses of STC's debts to Schelling and Maass yield insights into the dialogic nature of his writing, and into the different strands and development of his thought. Also, most significantly, Coleridge chooses not to examine STC's religious philosophy in terms of his own times, but in the troubled context of her own. Ferrier, after all, treated STC's philosophical status as a live and contested contemporary issue. In Coleridge's view, STC comes into his own as a religious philosopher in the politico-theological crises of the 1840s. STC's presence in her dialogue with Tractarianism anticipates Gadamer's hermeneutic theory. According to Piercey, 'Gadamer's critique of Romantic hermeneutics [...] argues that the goal of hermeneutics is not to reconstruct the past, but to mediate between traditional texts and contemporary life'.¹ This 'goal' is reflected in Coleridge's discussion of the contested doctrine of justification in the second section of her 'Introduction' to

¹ Piercey, p. 153.

Biographia 1847. The section comprises 114 pages, and is entitled ‘Mr. Coleridge’s Religious Opinions; their formation; misconceptions and misrepresentations on the subject’.²

The Shifting Grounds of Politico-Religious Controversy, 1843 to 1847

During the years in which Coleridge was preparing her edition of *Biographia*, from 1843 to 1847, doctrinal controversy continued to destabilize the Church of England in the wake of Newman’s *Tract 90*, published in February 1841. What Hartley Coleridge calls ‘the pugnacious colloquies of high-Churchmen and liberals’ continued with heated intensity through the 1840s.³ Although it was clear by 1843 that a Tory government could not ‘resuscitate the old alliance of church and state’, the Tractarian agenda in the 1840s had shifted since the mid-1830s, and continued to change in response to rapidly evolving politico-religious circumstances.⁴ Newman became increasingly concerned to secure the position of Anglo-Catholics in the Church of England, and thereby to prevent his followers from converting to Roman Catholicism. With such considerations in mind, he published *Tract 90*. The tract created ‘a dangerous situation’ for Newman. It was said to have ‘opened the door to the teaching of Roman Catholicism’ in Oxford University, and was publically censured by the ‘Vice-Chancellor, Heads of Houses and Proctors’.⁵

In *Tract 90*, Newman maintains that it is possible for Catholics to subscribe to the Articles of the Church of England. In the ‘Introduction’, Newman announces his intention

to show that, while our Prayer Book is acknowledged on all hands to be of Catholic origin, our Articles also, the offspring of an uncatholic age, are, through God’s good providence, to say the least, not uncatholic, and may be subscribed by those who aim at being catholic in heart and doctrine.

Newman then examines a range of Articles to substantiate his contention. With reference to Article 31, for example, on ‘the sacrifice [...] of Masses’, he contends: ‘[n]othing can show more clearly than this passage that the Articles are not written against the creed of the Roman Church, but against actual existing errors in it’. In his ‘Conclusion’, Newman asserts that ‘it is a *duty* which we owe both to the Catholic Church and to our own, to take our reformed confessions in the most catholic sense they will admit’. Ultimately, *Tract 90* exposes the Church of England’s conceptual instability: ‘[w]here exactly did

² *Biographia 1847*, I, p. xlvi. Further references to Volume I of this edition are given after quotations in the text.

³ Hartley Coleridge, *Essays and Marginalia*, ed. by Derwent Coleridge, 2 vols (London: Moxon, 1851), I, p. 350.

⁴ Chadwick, p. 342.

⁵ Ker, p. 222, p. 218, p. 219.

the Church stand?’ was the question raised by Newman in *Tract 90*, according to James Tolhurst. In *Biographia 1847*, Coleridge addresses this question in the context of justification, a topic which Newman discusses with reference to Article 11, which affirms, ‘[t]hat we are justified by Faith only is a most wholesome doctrine’. He also refers to the statement in the ‘Homilies’ that ‘Faith is the sole *means*, the sole *instrument* of justification’. Newman glosses the Article and the precept from the Homilies by quoting *Lectures on Justification*, in which he argues that ‘Faith’ is the ‘inward instrument’ of justification, while ‘Baptism’ is the ‘outward instrument’.⁶ In *Biographia 1847*, Coleridge critiques Newman’s position from the perspective of STC’s Christian philosophy.

Tract 90 had irreversible religious and political consequences: it ‘damage[d] [...] the dogmatic integrity of Protestant High Church Orthodoxy’, according to Nockles, and exacerbated the breach between traditional High Churchmen and Tractarians. *Tract 90* also weakened the political influence of Tractarianism and discredited it in the eyes of the Tory party. In the aftermath of *Tract 90*, ‘a genuinely “Romanising” wing’ of the Oxford Movement emerged ‘in the early 1840s’, which created further divisions, antagonized university and church authorities, and ultimately precipitated Newman’s leaving the Church of England.⁷ W. G. Ward, a forthright exponent of this Roman Catholic tendency, published *The Ideal of a Christian Church* (1844), in which he criticized ‘the emptiness, hollowness, folly, laxity, unreality of English Protestantism’ against the ideal of ‘Roman doctrine’.⁸ Ward’s book was formally condemned by Oxford University, which also cancelled the author’s degrees. Newman states in his autobiography that he ‘was on [his] death-bed, as regards [his] membership with the Anglican Church’ as early as 1841. His awareness of this, he says, came on him, ‘only by degrees’.⁹ This gradual movement would culminate in his reception into the Roman Catholic Church in October 1845. Newman’s conversion is a significant underlying factor for Coleridge in *Biographia 1847*, in which she defines STC’s conceptual relationship with Anglo-Catholicism and Roman Catholicism.

Also in 1845, Tory Prime Minister Sir Robert Peel, for reasons of political expediency, ‘passed an act of Parliament to give money for the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland’, for the renovation of a seminary at Maynooth.¹⁰ This measure increased hostility towards Anglo-Catholics, and renewed tensions in the relationship of church and state. Some High Churchmen regarded the Maynooth grant in the same light as ‘the

⁶ Newman, *Tracts*, pp. 385-386, p. 448, p. 471, p. xl, p. 393, pp. 393-394, p. 394. Newman’s emphases.

⁷ Nockles, p. 142, p. 143.

⁸ W. G. Ward, *The Ideal of a Christian Church* (London: Toovey, 1840), p. 565.

⁹ John Henry Newman, *Apologia Pro Sua Vita*, ed. by Ian Ker (London: Penguin, 1994; repr. 2004), p. 141.

¹⁰ Chadwick, p. 223.

Whig suppression of the Irish bishoprics' in 1833, and condemned it as state support for 'theological error'. Other High Churchmen, such as Gladstone, supported the measure on the grounds of 'social justice' and toleration.¹¹ Meanwhile, tensions arose among the laity in 1845. A movement to revive church ritual, inspired by Tractarianism, culminated in violent protests among the public in Exeter, who were encouraged by sections of the press to regard 'the surplice' as 'the badge of a party which declared war on the Protestant Reformation'.¹² Ward and Frederick Oakely, another of Newman's outspoken disciples, were notoriously 'obsessed' with attacking 'the Reformers'.¹³ Eleanor A. Towle, Coleridge's first biographer, describes the tense religious atmosphere of 1845: 'even those whose hold upon Christian verities and the doctrines of the Church was most tenacious were clinging to an anchor in the midst of the storm'.¹⁴

Divisions between opposing parties in the church were brought into even sharper focus by the political upheavals of 1846. Sir Robert Peel resigned as Prime Minister in June, when Tory unity collapsed following his repeal of the Corn Laws. Coleridge, in a letter of 1850, praises Peel as a principled 'practical statesman', who had acted according to what he judged 'under the circumstances, necessary, let them say what they might, let him lose office or retain it'.¹⁵ What Coleridge admires as Peel's courageous practicality had made him unpopular with those of a High Church and High Tory persuasion, especially Tractarians: 'Newman [...] loathed Peel's politics', Turner observes.¹⁶ Peel had supported Catholic Emancipation in 1829, and, in his first ministry, had promoted the Commission for ecclesiastical reform. He believed that the survival of the established church would depend on its capacity to adapt to political and social change. Pragmatically supportive of the church, Peel opposed the Tractarians for their rigid dogmatism, and sought to appoint opponents of Tractarianism to bishoprics. The Whig leader, Lord John Russell, who followed Peel as Prime Minister in 1846, was committedly anti-clerical and anti-Tractarian. He 'considered baptism', for example, 'to be a mere symbol of dedication'. He pursued the suppression of Tractarianism as a deliberate policy, and encouraged liberal theology. Russell was supported in his liberalizing approach by Prince Albert, whose German background led him to favour the appointment of "'scientists" [...] to high office in the church'.¹⁷ Coleridge, who had advocated 'scientific divinity' in 'On Rationalism', was, in 1846, on the same liberal wing of ecclesiastical controversy as the new Whig Prime Minister and his royal

¹¹ Nockles, p. 92, p. 91.

¹² Chadwick, p. 219.

¹³ Ker, p. 227.

¹⁴ Towle, p. 14.

¹⁵ *M & L*, II, p. 330.

¹⁶ Turner, p. 400.

¹⁷ Chadwick, p. 233, p. 235.

supporter.¹⁸ Coleridge approves equally of the ministries of Peel and Russell, which reflects her liberal and independent approach to politics and religion.

The Principled Independence of Coleridgean Authorship

In *Biographia 1847*, Coleridge emphasizes STC's independence from 'any [...] sect or party', political or religious (p. lxii). She refers to a misconception, expressed by the *Christian Miscellany* in 1842, that he had once been 'engaged in a course of heretical and schismatical teaching'; in other words, that he had been employed as a Unitarian preacher (p. lii). This past allegiance unbalances STC's 'Christian philosophy', the journal maintains, and gives rise to 'inconsistencies' in his view of 'Catholic truths' (p. lii). Coleridge explains that, although he had '[o]nce [...] entertained thoughts' of becoming a Unitarian minister, he had soon 'abandoned the prospect that had been held out to him' (pp. lxvi, lxvii). She argues that, far from having been 'impaired' as a Christian thinker by his early Unitarianism, STC learned 'to perceive the deficiencies and errors of the creed in which he had sought refuge' (p. lxvii). Coleridge's argument supports STC's statement, 'that the difference of my metaphysical notions from those of Unitarians in general contributed to my final re-conversion to the whole truth in Christ'.¹⁹ STC's Unitarian phase, Coleridge contends, was 'a strengthening experiment', which would enable him, ultimately, 'to arrive at a more explicit knowledge of the truth' (p. lxvii). J. Robert Barth, in his influential study, *Coleridge and Christian Doctrine* (1969), gives a similar account of underlying continuity in STC's movement from 'Unitarianism to Trinitarian Christianity'. Barth makes no reference to Coleridge's interpretation, but, stating that STC's Unitarianism 'was a stage through which, for his spiritual growth, he had to pass', he echoes her view.²⁰

Coleridge elaborates on the contribution of Unitarianism to the whole body of STC's Christian thought. It prepared him, she argues, for the application of Kantian critical philosophy to Christian faith: his insight into the 'deep and perfect harmony' of 'the whole scheme of Redemption' with 'the structure of the human mind' (p. lxviii). Coleridge indicates that there was nothing to prevent STC, having abandoned Unitarianism, from adopting 'High Church doctrine' (p. lxix). Equally, she suggests, he might have 'combined German metaphysics with an atheistic Pantheism, instead of bringing them into the service of revealed religion' (p. lxix). STC adduced diverse sources in 'the formation' of his Christian philosophy, the synthesis of which, Coleridge argues, was 'the result and product of his own intellect and will' (p. lxviii). His

¹⁸ *OR 1843*, II, p. 481.

¹⁹ *BLCC*, I, p. 205.

²⁰ J. Robert Barth, S. J., *Coleridge and Christian Doctrine* (Harvard University Press, 1969; repr. New York: Fordham University Press, 2002), p. 11.

philosophy avoids sectarian bias, therefore, and offers a universal perspective. Sectarianism, for Coleridge, resists creative synthesis. She rejects Newman's argument for 'party religion', that 'Christ [...] made a party the vehicle of his doctrine' (p. lxii). She maintains that 'party compact' is a conservative force, which represses the heurism of those 'who are labouring to advance the truth, to reform and expand the stock of divine knowledge' (pp. lxiv, lxv). This is not a restatement of Romantic individual genius. Coleridge envisages that a variety of thinkers, who may express contrasting individual viewpoints, contribute to the advancement of truth. She contends that truth is maintained, and the 'Church at large [...] preserved from error' by theological 'controversy'; or 'discussion', as she prefers to call it.²¹ She values and respects the work of all contributors to religious debate, even those with whom she disagrees. This principle influences her use of literary form in the 'Extracts' and *Dialogues on Regeneration*. Furthermore, in her promotion of Christian truth, the vocational task is foregrounded, not the writer's literary individuality.

For Coleridge, as for Newman, the religious writer works in service of Christianity, and must abjure 'the pretence of authorship'.²² At the opening of *Tract 1*, Newman announces his authorial ethic: he writes as an anonymous 'Presbyter'. To speak 'in [his] own person' would be to 'take too much on [him]self'. Yet, it is a sacred duty to defend the church, 'for the times are very evil'.²³ Coleridge follows Newman's model of self-effacing authorship, and defines STC's literary identity in terms of his religious duty. STC's 'vocation', she asserts, 'was to defend the Holy Faith by developing it, and showing its accordance and identity with ideas of reason' (p. lxv). This concept of individual identity subsumed in the authorial 'vocation' is a Tractarian ideal, reflected also in the 'monotonous' impersonal delivery of Pusey's sermons.²⁴ It inflects Coleridge's account of STC as a Christian writer, and shapes her developing conception of her own authorship.

STC, Newman and Coleridge: Cross Currents of Influence and Tension

Newman is the starting point for Coleridge's autonomous work as a theologian. Her desire to engage with Newman motivates her to undertake 'On Rationalism'. She lays no claim to be an objective academic theologian: she does not approach STC's philosophy as an historian of ideas. To do so would preclude her application of STC's thought to contemporary situations. Gadamer explains the ontological problem of an historical approach:

²¹ *M & L*, I, p. 314.

²² Ker, p. 88.

²³ Newman, *Tracts*, p. 1.

²⁴ *M & L*, I, p. 333.

The text that is understood historically is forced to abandon its claim to be saying something true. We think we understand when we see the past from a historical standpoint — ie., transpose ourselves into the historical situation and try to reconstruct the historical horizon. In fact, however, we have given up the claim to find in the past any truth that is valid and intelligible for ourselves. Acknowledging the otherness of the other in this way, making him the object of objective knowledge, involves the fundamental suspension of his claim to truth.²⁵

Gadamer's critique enables a clear distinction to be drawn between academic definition and creative re-application of historical material. Coleridge uses STC's metaphysics as a means to create 'truth' anew in a new setting. She is a Christian Apologist, working in a public arena of volatile polemic. When her eminent High Church, High Tory brother-in-law, John, teases her with a reference to 'Eichhorn, Schleiermacher or some of your Neologistic friends', Coleridge retorts with a robust statement of her polemical methodology. She describes her procedure as 'an attentive perusal of the writings of Mr. Newman, a comparison of his views [...] with those of S.T.C. – those of both with our old Divines, and the whole with the Bible'.²⁶ Coleridge 'mediate[s]' her 'present' situation with Scripture, 'historical tradition', and the more recent history of STC's metaphysics.²⁷ Her frame of reference is far broader and more rigorous than John's taunt allowed. On a personal level, her foregrounding of Newman is tactically shrewd. John was a friend of Keble, Newman's close associate, and would at length become his biographer. Coleridge's statement of method is combined with a firm assertion of her authorial identity as a female theologian: 'women exercise a considerable influence over the religion of this land, even speculatively', she tells John. She claims the ability, and prerogative, of women to exercise a 'masculine vigour' in religious writing.²⁸ She relishes taking on Newman, both as a source and as an opponent.

Coleridge's discussion of STC's Christian philosophy is inflected by her awareness of some affinities between Newman and STC. STC's influence emerges most clearly in Newman's later work, as Philip Rule shows when he compares *Aids to Reflection* with *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* (1870).²⁹ However, there are earlier instances of what STC himself might have called 'genial coincidence', as Newman recognizes on first reading STC in 1835: 'I [...] am surprised', he declares, 'how much I thought mine, is to be found' in STC's writings. Newman comments

²⁵ Gadamer, p. 314.

²⁶ *Criticism*, p. 13 n, p.13.

²⁷ Gadamer, p. 349.

²⁸ *Criticism*, p. 14.

²⁹ Philip C. Rule, S. J., *Coleridge and Newman: The Centrality of Conscience* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004), pp. 130-160.

privately that STC's work 'seems capable of rendering' the Oxford Movement 'important service'. In the April edition of *The British Critic* in 1839, Newman cites Scott, Wordsworth, Southey and STC as Romantic predecessors who have helped to create a cultural ethos conducive to the reception of Catholic doctrine. Newman celebrates, also, what he sees as 'the old Benthamism shrivelling up, and the richer warmer philosophies succeeding', such as 'Shelleyism, and Coleridgism' at Cambridge, 'edging forward and forward, no one knowing how, to a more Catholic theology'.³⁰

In *Biographia 1847*, though, Coleridge draws a clear distinction between STC's 'teaching' and 'the Oxford theology'. Some Anglo-Catholics, she observes,

aver that, in the beginning of their course they were conducted for a little way by the writings of [STC]; that he first led them out of the dry land of negative Protestantism; but that now, by help of newer guides, they have advanced beyond him.

Their view of '*Aids to Reflection* as a half-way house to Anglo-catholic orthodoxy' is 'radically wrong', Coleridge maintains. Others, she adds, who have advanced further in acceptance of Catholic theology, 'consider their Anglo-Catholic doctrine a half-way house to what they consider the true Catholicism – namely that of the Church of Rome' (p. lxxi). The relationship of the Oxford theology with Roman Catholicism remained a contested issue in 1847, two years after the reception into the Roman Church of Newman, and his controversial disciples, W. G. Ward and Frederick Oakley. If Roman Catholicism was the inevitable destination of Newman's Anglo-Catholic journey, Coleridge refutes the notion that STC's religious thought might be a preliminary step on the same route.

She argues that STC's 'religious system, considered as to its intellectual form', is 'different throughout from that of Anglo or Roman Catholic'. Nonetheless, she 'believe[s]' that STC's Christian philosophy 'coincide[s]' with the core '*substance*' of 'Catholic doctrine', as held both by Roman and Anglican churches (p. lxxi). She maintains that STC's 'Christian divinity agreed more with "Catholicism" than with the doctrines of any sect'. Although the 'objects of faith' of STC's Christian philosophy are those of Anglo and Roman Catholicism, his '*rationale*' – methodology – is fundamentally different.³¹ For STC, the 'objects of faith' are apprehended in the 'reason and spiritual sense'; Anglo-Catholics and Roman Catholics receive the 'objects of faith' through the authority of dogma (p. lxxii). Coleridge admits that she held one bias in embarking on her study of STC's religious philosophy. This was 'the natural wish [...]

³⁰ Rule, p. 35, p. 36.

³¹ Coleridge's emphases.

to find [his] opinions as near as may be to established orthodoxy'. Ultimately, though, she has no alternative but to admit that STC's 'system of belief', in its intellectual form, 'differs materially from "Catholic" doctrine as commonly understood' (p. lxxiii). She finds that the distance between STC's thought and "'Catholic" doctrine' increased during his later years, and she attributes this increasing division to the Kantian basis of his epistemology.

Nonetheless, there is a similarity between STC's attitudes to Anglican and Roman orthodoxy and those that Newman came to hold by the early 1840s. STC, contends Coleridge, 'came to consider the notions of the Church entertained by ordinary Protestants inadequate and unspiritual' (pp. lxxix-lxxx). Equally, he rejected key 'Romish doctrines' (p. lxxx). Newman, likewise, found himself isolated in a middle ground between Protestant and Catholic orthodoxies. According to James Tolhurst, the Newman of *Tract 90* 'did not *want* [the English Church] to be papistical. But he also did not want it to be protestant'.³² Coleridge attributes the Church's lack of doctrinal cohesion to the imprecision of its professional discourse, while Newman regards 'half the religious controversies' as 'verbal ones'.³³ For Coleridge, STC's application of Kantian philosophy to religion addresses the conceptual deficiencies of Anglicanism: 'modern mental philosophy [...] shew[s] what spiritual things are *not*', Coleridge insists, 'and thus [...] remove[s] the obstructions which prevent men from seeing [...] what they are' (p. lxxxv).³⁴ She refers to materialistic 'obstructions' to spiritual understanding produced by the Church 'Fathers', who 'change[d] soul into body, and condense[d] spirit into matter': Tertullian, for example, describes the soul as 'a lucid aerial image of the outward man', which 'accords exactly' with the 'common conception of a ghost' (p. lxxxvii).

Baptism and the Eucharist: 'It is our Will to which [Christ] is Present'

Coleridge argues that Tractarian baptismal doctrine is vitiated by primitive materialism. She re-engages with Pusey's *Scriptural Views of Holy Baptism*. She argues that Pusey is influenced by early Christian writers who 'conceiv[e] spiritual subjects' in a 'sensuous way' (p. lxxxvii). The problem of relying on the early writers is that vacuous 'dogma' is confused with 'religious verity' (p. lxxxix). As Coleridge puts it: 'the Antiquarian doctrine' of baptism 'contradicts the laws of human understanding, and either affirms what cannot be true [...] or converts the doctrine into an ineffectual vapour' (pp. lxxx-lxxxii). STC, by contrast, viewed baptism in two ways, Coleridge explains. First,

³² Newman, *Tracts*, p. xl. Tolhurst's emphasis.

³³ Rule, p. 150.

³⁴ Coleridge's emphasis.

institutionally, it is ‘a formal and public reception into a state of spiritual opportunities’ (p. lxxx). This is close to the Evangelical position: ‘most Evangelicals regarded baptism as little more than an initiation into the visible church’, Nockles observes.³⁵ Spiritually, STC held baptism to be ‘an external grant [...] which comes into effect gradually, as the will yields to the pressure of the Spirit from without, but which may be made of none effect by the will’s resistance’ (p. lxxxii). Coleridge appropriates and re-develops this formulation in her writings on regeneration.

Coleridge tested her views on regeneration and baptism in an intensive exchange of letters with liberal theologian and future Christian Socialist, F. D. Maurice. Maurice found ‘On Rationalism’ compelling and provocative. He wrote five letters to Coleridge between May 1843 and March 1844 in response to her essay. Baptism is a major theme of the correspondence. Maurice’s dialogue with Coleridge was of decisive significance for him, as Frank M. McClain suggests:

Maurice’s correspondence with Sara Coleridge is fresh and valuable. To accept the integrity of the mystery [of baptism], all the while open to the widest possibilities of its meaning, may be the distinctively Anglican contribution which Maurice has made to Christian thought.³⁶

Maurice differs from Coleridge on a fundamental point. He asserts that baptism ‘takes [him] out of [his] little circle of individual thought & feelings, that it connects [him] with the universe’.³⁷ This is reminiscent of Newman’s concept of justification, that it ‘buries self in the absorbing vision of a present, an indwelling God’.³⁸ Similarly, Maurice tells Coleridge that baptism ‘save[s]’ him from his ‘individuality’.³⁹ Maurice is a Coleridgean: he acknowledges his debt to STC in *The Kingdom of Christ* (1842), which he dedicates to Derwent. Coleridge, however, disagrees fundamentally with Maurice’s concept of baptism as liberation from self. She says that ‘one great object’ of ‘On Rationalism’ was ‘to shew that *it is our personality* which is the ground of our union with Christ in the Spirit – that it is our will to which He is present’. The active, continuing response of the individual will to Divine influence forms the core of Coleridge’s theology: ‘[w]e work out our own salvation’, she tells Maurice.⁴⁰

Coleridge emphasizes the engagement of the individual will with Divine influence in her account of the Eucharist. STC’s writings on the Eucharist are scattered

³⁵ Nockles, p. 229.

³⁶ Frank McClain, ‘Maurice and Sara Coleridge: Baptism and Human Nature’, *Anglican Theological Review*, 54 (October 1972), 318-330, (pp. 320-321).

³⁷ McClain, p. 325.

³⁸ Turner, p. 273.

³⁹ McClain, p. 325.

⁴⁰ *Criticism*, p. 15. Coleridge’s emphasis.

and unsystematic: Coleridge's task is that of creative reconstruction. She describes STC's Christian philosophy as drawing together Lutheran consubstantiation with Catholic transubstantiation, 'so as not to involve a contradiction in terms' (p. xci). She adds that 'neither doctrine is necessary' in relation to the spiritual 'gift and effect' of the Eucharist (p. xci). Her account of STC's view accords with 'Anglican teaching', which, in the words of E. C. S. Gibson, 'rejects all [...] theories' on the presence of the Lord's Body and Blood in the Eucharist, 'whether that of Transubstantiation, or [...] Consubstantiation'.⁴¹ Coleridge describes 'the Supper of the Lord' as a 'spiritual doctrine', which STC understands as 'an assimilation of the spirit of a man to the divine humanity' (p. xci). In *Biographia 1847*, as in 'On Rationalism', Coleridge presents the Tractarian interpretation of the sacraments, as sanctioned by the Church Fathers, as contrary to reason, lacking in moral substance, and repressive: it circumscribes and restricts the operation of God's mercy. Coleridge, by contrast, is committed to an inclusive and liberating theology. As she puts it in her discussion of baptism, '[o]ur capability of being spiritualized by divine grace is unlimited' (p. lxxx). She approaches the contested ground of justification from this viewpoint.

Newman, Luther and Justification

Coleridge devotes thirty pages to a discussion of justification. This amounts to almost a quarter of the whole sub-section on 'Mr. Coleridge's Religious Opinions'. She revisits *Lectures on Justification*, and engages in a critical re-application of STC's ideas and methods. In her discussion of justification, Coleridge 'bring[s] [STC] down into the present hour', as she puts it in *Essays*, and applies his principles, in her own terms, to 'subjects which are even now engaging public attention'.⁴² Her discussion of justification anticipates Gadamer's hermeneutic principle in which past texts are brought into 'thoughtful mediation with contemporary life', and in which '[t]he past and the present mutually shape each other'.⁴³ A question remains: why does Coleridge choose to critique a work published nine years before *Biographia 1847*, if she aims to bring STC 'down into the present hour'?⁴⁴

Newman's *Lectures on Justification*, from its publication in 1838, was continuously influential. It was a work of authority and conspicuous achievement, 'Newman's most powerful, eloquent, and moving theological work', according to Turner: '[i]ts arguments [...] deeply informed all later Tractarian theological polemics

⁴¹ Barth, p. 178.

⁴² *Essays*, I, p. lxxxiv.

⁴³ Piercey, p. 146. Gadamer's emphasis quoted by Piercey.

⁴⁴ *Essays*, I, p. lxxxiv.

against evangelical religion and historical Protestantism'.⁴⁵ The *Lectures*' themes remained unresolved in the Church of England through the 1840s. Tensions between Evangelical and High Church doctrines, such as had exercised Newman in the *Lectures*, would come to a head when the Gorham crisis erupted in December 1847. Coleridge states that *Lectures on Justification* 'is generally considered by the High Anglican party as an utter demolition of Luther's teaching' (p. c). To re-engage with the *Lectures* offers Coleridge a significant authorial opportunity. According to Nockles, Newman attempts in the *Lectures* 'to construct a *via media* that would embody a synthesis of various scattered strands of older High Anglican teaching'.⁴⁶

At the beginning of 'Lecture XII', Newman presents a core component of his argument: 'I now proceed to show that though we are justified, as St Paul says, by faith, and as our Articles and Homilies say, by faith only, nevertheless we are justified, as St James says, by works'. Newman contends that St Paul conceives of justifying faith as being expressed in action. He observes that St Paul and St James support their positions by reference to the same Old Testament examples, most notably that of Abraham: 'St Paul [...] says, "By *faith* Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac"; and St James, "Was not Abraham our father justified by *works*, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?"' Such a parallel, Newman argues, 'show[s] that faith is practically identical with the works of faith, and that *when* it justifies, it is as existing in works'. He maintains, also, that his viewpoint is supported by 'the notion, which obtained in the early Church, that St James was alluding to St Paul's words, and fixing their sense by an inspired comment'. Newman cites a passage from Luther in which, he alleges, the Reformer 'will be found to corroborate by his testimony' the Catholic view of justification.⁴⁷ Newman contends that the weight of evidence forces Luther into a position in which he unwillingly validates the Catholic doctrine. Coleridge, by contrast, seeks to resolve divisions in a re-establishment of Lutheran principles. She reverses Newman's conclusion and argues that, far from demolishing Luther's 'teaching' on justification, the *Lectures on Justification* amount to a 'tacit establishment of it, or at least of its most important position':

on this cardinal point, this hinge of the question, whether faith justifies alone, as uniting us with Christ, or as informed by love and works, and as itself a work and a part of Christian holiness,—[Newman] decides with Luther, *not* with the Tridentines or High Anglicans. For he expressly states that faith does in one sense, (the sense of uniting us with Christ, which is the same as Luther's sense,) justify alone; that it is the "only inward instrument of justification"; that as such

⁴⁵ Turner, p. 245.

⁴⁶ Nockles, p. 264.

⁴⁷ Newman, *Justification* (1838), p. 314, p. 340, p. 341, p. 344. Newman's emphases.

inward instrument, it is [...] distinct from love and other graces, and not a mere name for them all (p. c).⁴⁸

Newman had argued that Luther ultimately reinforces the Catholic position. Coleridge concludes that, in attempting to critique Luther's doctrine of justification by faith, Newman has in fact confirmed it.

The tone of Coleridge's discussion is measured and irenic: she refers to 'Mr. Newman's splendid work on justification' (c). She pays tribute to W. G. Ward, and records her strong 'interest' in his *Ideal of a Christian Church*, while regretting his book's treatment of Luther and of justification (p. cvii n, p. cvii). At only one point does her assured critique of Newman's argument assume a satirical tone. She employs a trope of love and marriage to express the celibate Newman's instinctive and irresistible attraction to Luther's teaching:

Mr. Newman has beautifully described Luther's conception of justifying faith in his first Lecture. It was then perhaps that he fell in love with it, though he did not tell love at the time, but acted the lover in Lecture X taking it for better for worse. I hope he will never divorce it!

Coleridge's mildly satirical humour supports her argument that apparently divergent views of justification bear 'no real difference at all'. Ultimately, she maintains that there is no disagreement 'about the proper *cause* of salvation, but only concerning the internal *condition* on our part' (pp. xcvi, xcvi).⁴⁹ She argues that '[t]he Tridentine and the Anglican statements of Justification are tantamount to each other,—may be resolved into each other' (p. xcix). For both Luther and Newman, she contends, faith is the instrument of justification, and faith makes us one with Christ. Newman seeks to separate himself from Luther by arguing that baptism is faith's 'antecedent external instrument', and 'that Baptism gives to faith all its justifying power'. Again, though, Coleridge maintains that there is no real difference, because Luther 'held the doctrine of regeneration in baptism as well as [Newman]' (p. ci).

She moderates the apparent disagreement by placing Lutheran teaching in historical context. Luther opposed 'justification by charity', because it led to the corrupt expedient of 'money gifts': he 'thought to preclude this abuse and establish Scripture at the same time by declaring faith alone the means of salvation, and good works the necessary offspring of faith in the heart' (pp. cii, ciii). In doing so, he 'batter[ed] down for as many as possible that labyrinth of priestly salvation, in the mazy windings of which the timid and tender-conscienced wander weary and distressed' (cxxvi). Luther

⁴⁸ Coleridge's emphasis.

⁴⁹ Coleridge's emphases.

liberates the Christian to ‘cast [her] eye [safely] forward, in peace and gladness, hoping and striving through grace to live better from day to day’, instead of being ‘paralyzed’ by dwelling on ‘past transgressions’ (p. cix). Characteristically, Coleridge prioritizes individual devotion and the Christian life in her analysis of doctrine.

According to Coleridge, any division on the ‘subject’ of justification is ultimately ‘a mere dispute about words’ (p. xcvi). Twenty-first century theologian, Alistair E. McGrath, concurs. He maintains that the Council of Trent had misinterpreted Luther’s teaching on justification and, in ‘conced[ing] that the Christian life was begun through faith’, came very close to Luther’s position. This Catholic versus Protestant controversy, according to McGrath, was ‘a classic case of a theological misunderstanding, resting upon the disputed meaning of a major theological term’.⁵⁰ Coleridge’s insistence that the disagreement is essentially semantic anticipates, also, Newman’s retrospective view. In the ‘Advertisement’ to the ‘Third Edition’ of *Lectures on the Doctrine of Justification* (1874), he summarizes the lectures’ overarching theme: ‘[t]heir drift is to show that there is little difference but what is verbal in the various views on justification, found whether among Catholic or Protestant divines’.⁵¹ In 1838, Newman had located the verbal difficulties in a Protestant ‘extravagance of interpretation’ which seeks ‘to cripple an Apostle [St James] into Lutheranism’.⁵² Coleridge contends that the common ground between Newman and Luther negates the ‘High Anglican’ view that ‘Luther’s teaching’ has been demolished (p. c).

Coleridge draws her discussion of justification to a close by summarizing the seven points of agreement she identifies between Luther and Newman. The one difference between them arises from the ‘contradiction’ in Newman’s ‘scheme’ that, ‘after confessing faith to be the *sole* inward instrument of justification he should call graces and works instruments also’ (p. cxix).⁵³ Ultimately, Coleridge turns to ‘Apostolic teaching’ and contends that St. Paul and St. James would have endorsed the views both of Luther and Newman: ‘I believe these inspired teachers’, Coleridge affirms, ‘would have assented to the statement of either party, and when they heard each confess Christ crucified and salvation by His merits, would have inquired no further’ (p. cxxii). Therefore, she dismisses the disputed definitions that surround justification as mere ‘bubbles’ in relation to the major issues of religion (p. cxxiii). At a time when Christianity is threatened by scientific materialism and continental scriptural criticism, ‘[i]t is grievous to hear Christians accuse each other of irreligion and impiety on such grounds as their different views’ of justification (p. cxxii). Her dismissal of Tractarian

⁵⁰ McGrath, p. 462.

⁵¹ John Henry Newman, *Lectures on the Doctrine of Justification*, 3rd edn (London: Rivington, 1874), p. v.

⁵² Newman, *Justification* (1838), p. 339.

⁵³ Coleridge’s emphasis.

polemics as trivial and sectarian is a shrewd tactic. She sets the stage for the contrasting universality of STC's Christian philosophy: in his study of Kant, she contends, STC found that the structure of human cognition is attuned to the presence of the Divine.

Kant and Christianity

Coleridge presents STC as the heuristic discoverer of Kant's religious significance. Kant was 'a reformer of *philosophy*', whose work, as mediated by STC, is as liberating for Christianity as that of Luther.⁵⁴ She refers to the prejudice against all German philosophy in England, and to the disapproval STC incurred by 'his partial advocacy of Spinoza'. She wishes at the outset of her discussion, therefore, to set STC's 'esteem' of Kant in its 'true light, lest it be mistaken for what it is not', namely atheism (p. cxxviii). On the contrary, Coleridge argues, Kant's philosophical achievements undermine atheism. It was Kant 'who [...] overthrew the grand atheistic argument of Hume', and 'stated the fundamental error in the Pantheistic system of Spinoza'. Religious orthodoxy 'abused it as impious; [Kant] alone proved it to be irrational' (p. cxxx).

Kant's appeal for STC was his refutation of the mechanistic and atheistic implications of Locke and Hume. The empiricism 'adopted by both philosophers', Kant proclaims, 'cannot be reconciled with the scientific *a priori* knowledge that we actually have, namely, the knowledge in pure mathematics and general natural science, and is therefore refuted by this fact'.⁵⁵ As James Vigus observes, Kant asserted 'the active nature of mind' and 'decisively countered the empiricist teaching which [STC] summed up as "consciousness considered as a result" of mere mechanical processes'.⁵⁶ Kant's great service to Christianity, Coleridge contends, is that he 'saw what Hume saw not, that there is a power in the human mind sufficient to support and substantiate religion' (p. cxxxviii). It is an advantage that Kant was not personally religious and was 'independent of religious shackles', she maintains (p. cxxxvi). He sets out with no preconceived dogmatic agenda; his 'investigation' is purely analytical, as he states in his 'Introduction' to *Critique of Pure Reason*: he presents a 'critique [...] not a doctrine; his aim is not [...] to expand our knowledge, but [...] to correct it'.⁵⁷ This critical methodology, Coleridge contends, enables Kant to produce, 'independently and abstractly', the '*a priori* map of the human mind', and to describe its structure and limits (p. cxxxvi). Kant provides the basis for establishing 'the harmony of the outward revelation with our internal conformation' (p. cxxxvii). His conclusions, therefore, open the way for STC to establish, by scientific – philosophical – method, 'the religion of the

⁵⁴ Coleridge's emphasis.

⁵⁵ Kant, p. 119.

⁵⁶ James Vigus, *Platonic Coleridge* (London: Legenda, 2009), p. 41.

⁵⁷ Kant, p. 53.

heart and conscience' and 'the law written in the heart' (p. cxxxix).

In *Biographia 1847*, Coleridge develops 'On Rationalism's' epistemological critique of Tractarianism. Her account of Kant directly opposes Newman's view of the mind. Newman defines 'Liberalism' as 'the exercise of thought upon matters, in which, from the constitution of the human mind, thought cannot be brought to any successful issue, and therefore is out of place'. He adds that 'revealed doctrines [...] are in their nature beyond and independent' of the mind. It is wrong, Newman continues, to attempt 'to determine on intrinsic grounds the truth and value of propositions which rest for their reception simply on the external authority of the Divine Word'.⁵⁸ Because the mind, according to Newman, is unable to 'determine' religious 'truth', Tractarianism's claims are based on 'external authority', derived from antiquity and tradition. Coleridge, by contrast, holds that 'the intellectual form' of religion is clarified by application of Kantian methodology (p. cxxxvi). She invokes STC's view that to base faith on 'external evidence' is 'a most venturous and blind proceeding', and that scripture 'refers us to internal evidence as the only satisfying and adequate evidence of religion' (p. cxxxix). She explains the separate roles of Kant and STC in establishing a philosophical framework for Christianity. Kant's method is 'analytic'; STC's 'synthetic' (p. cxxxviii). According to Kant, 'the first and most important task of philosophy [is] to deprive metaphysics once and for all of its pernicious influence, by blocking off the source of its errors'.⁵⁹ Coleridge contends that Kant 'shatter[s]' misconceptions as 'a necessary preliminary to the construction of what is sound'. This 'preliminary' work must then be 'enlivened and spiritualized' by 'the English mind' (p. cxxxix). STC applied 'imaginative power' to Kant's analytical conclusions, and sought to establish a 'pure' form of 'religion' by synthesizing 'the many into one', and assessing 'the parts with reference to the whole' (p. cxxxix, p. cxxxii).

Coleridge's account of the application of Kantian philosophy to Christianity reflects her religious liberalism. She takes respectful issue with Arthur Hallam, who brands 'the spirit of critical philosophy' as 'much more dangerous than the spirit of mechanical philosophy' (p. cxxxii). Coleridge rejects 'the mechanical philosophy' as being incompatible with Christianity. She then uses her characteristic image of the confluence of streams of flowing water, which blend to form a single current. Kantian metaphysics, Coleridge asserts, 'is capable of flowing along with [Christianity] in one channel and even blending with it in one stream, as I contend that it does in the Christian philosophy of [STC]'. She elaborates on this dynamic synthesis by drawing an analogy with Wordsworth's poetry. Kantian critical philosophy, she asserts, 'is like the highest

⁵⁸ Newman, *Apologia*, p. 254.

⁵⁹ Kant, p. 26.

poetry—like the poetry of Mr. Wordsworth, not religion itself, much less dogmatic divinity, but cognate with it and harmoniously co-operative’ (p. cxxxiii). In a footnote, she explains that she is not referring to Wordsworth’s *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, or the parts of the *Excursion* that are ‘expressly Christian and Catholic’. She alludes to his ‘poetry in general, including much of an earlier date than’ those she has mentioned, ‘in which formal religion is not apparent, but in which the spirit of Christianity is “the spirit of the whole”’ (p. cxxxiii n.). Coleridge’s association of the earlier Wordsworth with ‘the spirit of Christianity’ aligns her with Keble. In 1839 Oxford University conferred an honorary degree upon Wordsworth, and Keble gave the formal Oration. In his speech, Keble paid tribute to the poet’s having revealed the ‘secret and harmonious intimacy which exists between honourable Poverty, and the severer Muses, sublime Philosophy, yea, even our most holy Religion’. For Coleridge, Wordsworth’s poetry embodies ‘the truths expressed or understood in the Gospel illustrated by the Imagination’.⁶⁰

Coleridge adds that Kantian philosophy is ‘harmoniously co-operative’ with ‘religion’, though, like Wordsworth’s poetry, not in a dogmatic sense (p. cxxxiii). In her discussion of Kant, Coleridge places the German alongside two of her literary fathers. This implies that, by association, she confers upon Kant the status of an intellectual father. His epistemology underpins her whole theology, and defines the unique position she occupies in the religious culture of the mid-1840s. She does not simply repeat STC’s Kantian formulations: she restates and reapplies them in her own terms and language. Her image of the sky and sea to represent the Kantian model of mind (discussed above, in chapter 2) shows this.⁶¹ As STC’s Victorian mediator, Coleridge stands above and beyond STC as a re-interpreter of Kant. She analyzes STC’s relationship with German thought in her edition of *Biographia Literaria*, and describes the textual and intellectual processes by which STC appropriates his sources. By these means Coleridge constructs the conceptual base from which she mounts her independent critique of Tractarianism.

Baptismal Regeneration and The Gorham Case

Coleridge’s ‘Extracts from A New Treatise on Regeneration’ was published in 1848, at the end of ‘Appendix C’ of the second volume of the sixth edition of *Aids to Reflection*. This new work addresses the doctrine of baptismal regeneration that became the site of acute ecclesiastical and political tension between 1847 and 1850. The crisis was triggered in August 1847 when the Lord Chancellor offered to the Reverend George Gorham, an evangelical, the incumbency of Bramford Speke, a small rural parish near

⁶⁰ Stephen Gill, *Wordsworth and the Victorians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998; repr. 2001), p. 20. ‘On Mr. Wordsworth’s Poem Entitled “Lines Left on a Yew-tree Seat”’, Mudge, p. 230.

⁶¹ See p. 63, above.

Exeter. The traditional High Church Bishop Phillpotts of Exeter, though, refused to institute Gorham on the grounds that his principles were unsound. Gorham had already incurred the Bishop's displeasure by advertising for 'a curate "free from Tractarian error"' in his Cornish parish.⁶² Bishop Phillpotts refused to institute Gorham in the new parish until he had tested his theology.

The Bishop's examination of Gorham 'was solely concerned with the doctrine of baptismal regeneration'. Although this doctrine is the theme of Coleridge's 'Extracts', she does not mention the Gorham case in it directly. This is because she is concerned with the underlying theological principles; though she discusses the case's politico-religious implications in letters. The Bishop's first session of questioning, in December 1847, lasted thirty-eight hours. The interrogation was resumed nearly three months later for a further fourteen hours. At the conclusion of proceedings, the Bishop confirmed that he found Gorham's doctrines to be unorthodox, and maintained his refusal to institute him as incumbent of Brampford Speke. The case was then subject to lengthy appeals procedures: first in the ecclesiastical court of arches, and ultimately before the judicial committee of the Privy Council. The outcome of this protracted inquiry was potentially disastrous for the Church of England: '[i]f the judicial committee upheld Phillpotts, many evangelicals might be compelled to secede from the Church of England', according to Chadwick. Equally, 'if the judicial committee upheld Gorham, the powerful body of high churchmen might secede from the Church of England or try to insist on its disestablishment'. At length, in March 1850, the Privy Council upheld Gorham's position, and declared that his views did not contravene church doctrine. High Churchmen felt that this outcome threatened the survival of the Church of England. Particularly, they did not regard the Privy Council's judicial committee as a legitimate body for determining religious doctrine. High Church Anglicans deplored the referral of such spiritual matters to an institution of the government: it was further evidence of Prime Minister Lord John Russell's 'erastian desire to keep the church under the heel of the state'.⁶³

Coleridge's view of the outcome of the Gorham case opposes that of High Churchmen, whether traditional or Anglo-Catholic. She opposes Bishop Phillpotts, sides with Gorham – despite regarding him as intellectually confused – and views the Privy Council as an appropriate body to adjudicate on 'what the law of the Church is'. In a letter to High Church clergyman Henry Taylor, she refers to 'the late triumph of toleration and moderation, grand characteristics of the Reformed Religion, in the decision of the Privy Council in the Gorham case'. Coleridge elaborates on her political

⁶² Chadwick, p. 251.

⁶³ Chadwick, p. 252, p. 258, p. 265.

opinion: '[i]nfallible guide we have none, and do not think it possible to have upon earth, but the doctrine of the Church of England has always been settled by the Church interpreting Scripture'. She then makes a distinction between the formulation and interpretation of doctrine: '[t]his judgment does but declare what the law of the Church is, what our formularies mean, and to make such a declaration is quite within the province of the learned body of which the Privy Council is composed'. In terms of the content of its judgment, the Privy Council 'has but declared that to be an open question which has always been so'.⁶⁴ In Coleridge's view, the Privy Council upholds the church's status and tradition. It confirms the church's broad inclusiveness in leaving room for individual judgment.

As for the bitter caricature of Lord John Russell as 'the "Pope of our Church"', Coleridge admits that 'in one sense he is so, and, as I believe, very properly and profitably for our country'. She adds a crucial distinction: 'in another sense, the only one that concerns truly spiritual matters, he is not aught of the kind'. Coleridge divides the Church's political and administrative functions from its spiritual character. This aligns her with an evangelical position that is less interested in church laws and procedures than in individual spirituality. Her views are wholly independent of any party, though. Although she supports Gorham on the grounds of religious liberty, she feels 'disagreement and dispathy with both parties', and is inclined to 'oppose' both. Bishop Phillpotts attempts to extort from Gorham a narrower statement of belief than the relevant Article of the Church prescribes. Gorham, however, 'betrays an ignorance of the history of thought and the nature of language on this particular subject of Baptism and the New Birth'. In Coleridge's view, the Gorham crisis is rooted in a weak understanding of theological history on the one hand; and an imposition of arbitrary authority on the other. She regrets that the Church has no internal procedure for reconciling such differences as the case exposes. She feels that 'a General Council of the Church' should exist for the examination of contentious questions of doctrine. She refers to the precedent of Cardinal Contarini at the Council of Trent, who 'sought so hard to bring about a reconciliation between the Protestants and the rest of the Western Church'. In the absence of such institutional procedures, the task of 'ventilating and sifting' the 'theology of all parties' falls to individuals in collaborative dialogue.⁶⁵

'Extracts from a New Treatise on Regeneration': the 'idea of regeneration itself'

'On Rationalism' established the conceptual basis of Coleridge's theology. In the essay, she rejects Tractarianism's circumscription of God's grace, and its oppressive assertion

⁶⁴ *M & L*, II, p. 248, p. 249, p. 249, p. 248.

⁶⁵ *M & L*, II, p. 249, p. 284, p. 227, p. 127.

of ecclesiastical authority over individual faith. The later essay complements ‘On Rationalism’ and develops the rationale of Coleridge’s religious position. There is a subtle shift in focus, which reflects the religious climate of 1848. In ‘On Rationalism’, Coleridge defines her opponents as ‘Anglican anti-protestants’, in other words, Tractarians, while in the ‘Extracts’ they are ‘High Churchmen’.⁶⁶ From 1847 to 1850, the attack on liberal doctrines came principally from traditional High Church as well as Tractarian quarters: for example, in Phillpott’s campaign against the evangelical Gorham. In the ‘Extracts’, both Tractarian and traditional High Church parties are covered by the term, ‘High Churchmen’. Coleridge is concerned, in the ‘Extracts’, to balance a critique of her opponents’ doctrine against a clear, unambiguous assertion of her own position. This is implied in her statement of intention in Chapter 1. She defines Regeneration as

a change wrought by the Holy Spirit on the intelligent will, gradually effected, with the active but subordinate co-operation of man at every step and throughout every stage of the process: a change which manifests itself in correspondent effects recognizable by man, in holiness of thought, word and deed.

Coleridge then cites New Testament texts that support her position before stating the purpose of the ‘Extracts’: ‘[w]e are persuaded that our view is the truth, because it is that which best harmonizes with reason and the word of God. To the proof of this position, the present essay will be devoted’.⁶⁷

Coleridge defines ‘[t]he will [as] the mind considered as determining its own acts’. High Church theologians, by contrast, conceive of the soul as ‘a dead receptacle’, which ‘can but receive what is poured into it as a [...] goblet receives the wine with which it is filled’. Coleridge takes issue with High Churchmen’s profession that they ‘have no metaphysics at all in their religion’. On the contrary, their unacknowledged epistemology is empiricist and mechanical: ‘a sensuous philosophy’. Against this Coleridge restates her dynamic alternative: ‘[t]he soul, *we* think, is essentially life and action, and the Holy Spirit acts upon it by exciting it to act in return as the strings of a harp vibrate under the harper’s hand, or those of an Aeolian Lute at the impulse of a passing breeze’.⁶⁸ She refocuses in a Christian form STC’s pantheist imagery of 1795:

And what if all of animated nature
Be but organic harps diversely framed,
That tremble into thought, as o’er them sweeps

⁶⁶ *OR 1843*, II, p. 457. ‘Extracts’, p. 251.

⁶⁷ ‘Extracts’, p. 261, p. 262.

⁶⁸ ‘Extracts’, p. 260, p. 261, p. 262, p. 269.

Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,
At once the Soul of each, and God of All?⁶⁹

Coleridge superimposes a Christian meaning over STC's pantheist speculation. This is reminiscent of her interpretation of STC's Unitarian phase as an educative step in his progress towards the 'universal ideas of Christianity' (p. lxxii).

Coleridge may have read STC's own revision of the eolian harp image. In the margin of a copy of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, STC rejects his earlier analogy:

[t]he mind does not resemble an Eolian Harp, nor even a barrel-organ turned by a stream of water, conceive as many tunes mechanized in it as you like – but rather, as far as objects are concerned, a violin, or other instrument of few strings yet vast compass, played on by a musician of Genius'.⁷⁰

STC replaces the 'vast' impersonal 'intellectual breeze' of his poem with a 'musician of Genius'. Both STC and Coleridge, in their revision of the poem's imagery, use 'a favourite metaphor' of the Church Fathers for Biblical 'inspiration': that of a 'musician who plays beautiful music on a stringed instrument'.⁷¹ STC's revised formulation has a Christian resonance, whereas Coleridge appropriates the eolian harp image in overtly Christian terms, to express the intimate process by which 'the Holy Spirit' interacts with the individual 'soul'.

Regeneration and Moral Teaching

In 'On Rationalism', Coleridge rejected Tractarian severity on the subject of post-baptismal sin. In 'Extracts', she refutes the discouraging notion that the state of regeneration is not secure; that a regenerate individual remains always in danger of falling. She argues that 'spiritual life, if the soul has truly received it, cannot be stifled from without; temptation cannot prevail against it; the world cannot overcome it'. The regenerate individual is confident in possessing, through long habits of spiritual discipline, the certain 'means to keep [herself] from backsliding'.⁷² The doctrine of momentary mystic regeneration is damaging in another significant respect, according to Coleridge. It is 'anti-scriptural' and 'unreasonable in itself', because it 'impute[s] spiritual regeneration to men whose outward course is evil, – to whom no one would impute a pure heart or enlightened mind'. This is a position severely detrimental to

⁶⁹ *PWCC*, I, Part 1, p. 234, ll. 44-48.

⁷⁰ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Marginalia*, 5 vols, ed. by George Whalley, *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 16 vols (London: Routledge; Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1969-2002), III. 3 (1980), p. 247.

⁷¹ Barth, p. 54 n.

⁷² 'Extracts', p. 291, p. 278. Coleridge's emphasis.

Christian morality: it sanctions institutional laxity and is prejudicial to individual morality. 'It is injurious to the mind', Coleridge asserts, 'not merely, as being false in itself, but because it generates a regular system of sophistication and logical fraud'. '[L]ogical fraud' may allude to the widespread view that *Tract 90* sanctioned deception. The mystic doctrine of regeneration, Coleridge suggests, distorts the church's moral character, and perverts its discourse. The clergy fill 'sermons [...] with dry artificial defences' of unscriptural theories, in place of ethical guidance and spiritual enlightenment. The church fails in its duty of 'enlivening the hearts and strengthening the understandings' of its congregations, therefore, and betrays its evangelizing mission.⁷³

To elevate 'subsequent teaching' over 'the word of God' in 'Scripture' is to promote 'dangerous' falsehood. Coleridge describes the mystic doctrine of regeneration in terms of fraudulent idolatry:

all the gold and jewels and purple and fine linen are boldly carried out of the sanctuary and borrowed for the nonce to deck out an image of regeneration, which is just so near to the real thing as a 'mockery king of snow' to a living, breathing, governing monarch'.

A fake 'image' displaces spiritual reality. '[B]oldly' signifies deliberate sacrilege; 'for the nonce' suggests an act of political opportunism. The fake 'image' of 'regeneration' produces a materialistic distortion of religion. The substitution of a counterfeit for a real 'governing monarch' also implies that the imposture is motivated by a desire for worldly power. Coleridge develops this implication: the unscriptural mystic doctrine casts 'the glowing robes' of 'Righteousness around the shapeless body of Unconsciousness', which then 'develop[s] into the distorted form of Iniquity'.⁷⁴ The magnificent 'robes' incongruously covering an ugly form recall the political fraud of Macbeth, whose 'titles | Hang loose about him, like a giant's robe | Upon a dwarfish thief'.⁷⁵ Coleridge's personification of 'Unconsciousness' represents the subject's passivity, her lack of moral change, and consequent spiritual vulnerability. Coleridge concludes this section with a poem, consisting of two sonnets, in which she critiques the mystic concept of infant baptism. The first stanza suggests the error of conferring upon a passive 'infant' the grace achieved only by 'arduous' pursuit of Christ's 'blessed steps'. In the second stanza, '[u]nconsciousness' represents the oblivious state of early infancy that, in time, will respond actively to divine 'Pow'r', as 'a frozen lake' thaws in the sun's 'kindly

⁷³ 'Extracts', p. 291, p. 278, p. 307, p. 308, p. 312, p. 309.

⁷⁴ 'Extracts', pp. 312-313, p. 313.

⁷⁵ *Macbeth*, V. 2. 23-25.

ray'.⁷⁶ This Lakeland image is as characteristic of Coleridge's style as her later Miltonic reference, in which she associates baptismal regeneration with the description of Old Testament polytheistic paganism in *Paradise Lost*: 'gay religions full of pomp and gold, | Where devils were adored for deities'.⁷⁷ This allusion emphasizes Coleridge's association of mystic regeneration with idolatry and sacrilege.

The separation of the spiritual from the moral in Baptism, according to Coleridge, encourages a sinning Christian to harbour a 'fatal delusion'. The fraudulent doctrine 'deaden[s]' the sense of 'the incompatibility of moral evil with spiritual felicity', and panders to human weakness. The doctrine is dangerous because it cocoons the soul in 'vain security', so that the individual 'neglect[s] [her] powers and opportunities of religious improvement' because she believes in the 'hope of a change in [her] soul hereafter'. Coleridge here revisits themes of 'On Rationalism', particularly her construction of a convenient Anglo-Catholic purgatory, though her tone is no longer satirical. It is difficult enough to 'forego the pleasures of sin', Coleridge suggests, and to undertake 'the labour of co-operating with God', without the Church making it harder by teaching demotivating dogma. In Coleridge's theology, by contrast, the individual is encouraged to embark on her spiritual journey, and is supported along the way: '[b]aptism secures the Spirit to the soul to be its guide and guardian and educator in holiness'.⁷⁸ Again, Coleridge re-applies the imagery of a Romantic literary father in a Christian context. In 'Tintern Abbey', Wordsworth refers to 'nature and the language of the sense' as 'the guide, the guardian of [his] heart'.⁷⁹ As in her revision of STC's imagery in the 'Eolian Harp', Coleridge replaces Romanticism's impersonal force of nature with the Holy Spirit, a Person of the Holy Trinity, as individual teacher.

Polemical Writing: a Code of Conduct

Coleridge's 'Extracts' develop her dialogic conception of religious discourse. The opening section consists of 'Preliminary Observations', in which she sets out her principles of polemical writing. In her later *Dialogues on Regeneration*, the Coleridgean speaker, Markright, critiques the prevailing approach. The theologian 'affects to discuss points, but merely as an opportunity of putting forth his own [...] notions rather than of subjecting them to any trial whether they be true or no'.⁸⁰ This anticipates Gadamer's comments on 'Plato's account of Socrates', in which

⁷⁶ 'Extracts', pp. 313-314, ll. 7-8, 23, 24, 20.

⁷⁷ 'Extracts', p. 318.

⁷⁸ 'Extracts', p. 311, p. 310, p. 311, p. 310, p. 301 n, p. 311, p. 317.

⁷⁹ Wordsworth, 'Lyrical Ballads', p. 119, ll. 108, 110.

⁸⁰ HRC.

there is the critical distinction between authentic and inauthentic dialogue. To someone who engages in dialogue only to prove himself right and not to gain insight, asking questions will indeed seem easier than answering them. [However,] people who think they know better cannot even ask the right questions. In order to be able to ask, one must want to know, and that means knowing that one does not know.⁸¹

The ‘authentic’ participant, in questioning others, seeks to subject her own views to critical scrutiny. In her ‘Preliminary Observations’, Coleridge addresses the problem of how a polemical writer may present a balanced and principled examination of doctrine. She develops the tenet she first advocated in ‘On Rationalism’. The essential point is to describe opponents’ views impersonally and accurately: ‘[i]n all that follows’, Coleridge contends, ‘I shall endeavour to describe my adversaries’ opinions truly, and to give them as far as possible in their own words’.⁸² She implies that a constructive contribution to religious controversy must necessarily be a multi-voiced text: it must contain the ‘words’ of the author’s theological ‘adversaries’. As Voloshinov observes, ‘[a]ny true understanding is dialogic in nature’, in contrast to an ‘isolated, finished, monologic utterance, [...] standing open not to any sort of active response but to passive understanding’.⁸³ Coleridge invokes the dialogic principle she applied in treating STC’s plagiarisms. She will present the evidence as fully as possible, conveying her adversaries’ views and her own with academic exactitude, so that ‘readers will have all the material for judgment before them; they may look at the doctrine drest and undrest’. Her policy is one of openness: ‘I wish to conceal *nothing*: revelation, exposition is my whole aim’.⁸⁴

A polemical context seems inevitably to drive writers into adversarial conflict, Coleridge acknowledges: ‘[a] defence of any scheme of doctrine cannot be maintained without offence to that which is directly opposed to it’.⁸⁵ In the *Regeneration Dialogues*, Markright elaborates on this difficulty: ‘I’m aware’, he admits, ‘how difficult it is to make doctrinal statements understood without distinctions, how difficult to distinguish without arguing and reflecting, and to argue and reflect without censure and condemnation’. Shortly before, Markright’s companion, Marvell, had rebuked him for lacking an appropriate ‘degree of respect’ in discussing a theological adversary.⁸⁶ Given the inevitability that ‘an internecine war’ is ‘waged between two [...] divided opposites’, such as the Calvinist and Romanist tendencies in the church, Coleridge advocates that a

⁸¹ Gadamer, p. 371.

⁸² ‘Extracts’, p. 249.

⁸³ *Bakhtin Reader*, p. 35. Voloshinov’s emphases.

⁸⁴ ‘Extracts’, p. 250. Coleridge’s emphasis.

⁸⁵ ‘Extracts’, p. 255.

⁸⁶ HRC.

controversial author must ‘pay due attention to what others advance’.⁸⁷ He must be open-mindedly alert to find points he accepts in his adversary’s theories. This anticipates Gadamer’s dialogic principle that ‘[d]ialectic consists not in trying to discover the weakness of what is said, but in bringing out its real strength’.⁸⁸ The polemicist must ‘carefully distinguish [an opponent’s] genuine claim on our regard from any particular of their teaching, from which we have to express dissent’.⁸⁹ He must not be arbitrarily prejudiced against a whole theory by individual aspects with which he disagrees. Dialogue, in these terms, is not ‘the art of arguing’, according to Gadamer, ‘but the art of thinking’.⁹⁰

The Tractarians ‘established rules of religious encounter that threw decency, fairness, and truthfulness to the winds’.⁹¹ Turner’s observation indicates why Coleridge sought to change the culture of religious debate, and why this task was so important. In her ‘Preliminary Observations’ at the beginning of ‘Extracts’, she defines a code of conduct whereby dogmatic ‘warfare’ is waged ‘in perfect fairness, and even in charity and kindness’. Her practice supports her principles: for example, she praises Pusey’s account of regeneration as ‘a beautiful description’, while rejecting his baptismal theory. Ultimately, the issue for Coleridge is literary, in specific respect of language, tone and form. If the polemicist is to treat opponents with cordial respect, he must moderate his style accordingly. He must exclude ‘summary censures’ and ‘disparaging remarks’, and avoid ‘pompous’ language that blocks analytical exchange.⁹²

Although Coleridge is theologically opposed to Anglo-Catholicism, her literary theorisation and practice reflect Keble’s devotional aesthetic of personal restraint: she re-applies to prose his principle that religious poets should avoid ‘originality and what is technically called effect’.⁹³ Polemicists too often aim for ‘*effect*’, Coleridge maintains, borrowing Keble’s term: ‘[t]here is a large crop of mock arguments and shewy fallacies in current use upon the subject of baptismal Regeneration’. The authors of such ‘popular productions’ flaunt their ingenuity ‘in a taking style, brief, terse and pithy’: their works like ‘clear but shallow brooks [...] “run glittering in the sunshine” of anticipatory approbation’. They cultivate a ‘keen edge [...] and animated flow’, which misrepresent doctrine and resist dialogue. Their ‘glittering’ style is a mere showcase for individual talent, unfitted ‘to trace out the fine lines of doctrine, the real mysteries of thought which possess the minds of men’: it distorts and falsifies, creating arbitrary divisions and

⁸⁷ ‘Extracts’, p. 257.

⁸⁸ Gadamer, p. 376.

⁸⁹ ‘Extracts’, p. 257.

⁹⁰ Gadamer, p. 376.

⁹¹ Turner, p. 254.

⁹² ‘Extracts’, p. 255, p. 206 n, p. 257, p. 250.

⁹³ Keble, *Occasional Essays*, p. 88.

artificial polarities, obscuring ‘how narrow is that mid space on which the real differences betwixt themselves and their opponents run’.⁹⁴ Coleridge, by contrast, advocates ‘the plainest form’ of expression as the vehicle for religious ideas. There is a crisp and purposeful terseness to her style in the ‘Extracts’, which reflects her tenet. For example, early in Chapter 3 of ‘Extracts’, Coleridge uses simple syntactical constructions as she guides the reader forward to the next stage of her argument:

I now proceed to argue, that the change is not passively undergone; because the seat or subject of it is the will and the will is essentially active. A will which passively receives impressions, which is changed or in any degree affected, without a co-operant self-determining act of its own, is a contradiction.⁹⁵

The punctuation of the first sentence, with its comma after ‘argue’ and a semi-colon, rather than a comma, before the subordinate clause’s ‘because’, separates very clearly the proposition from the formulation of its rationale. There is no risk of semantic ambiguity in the simple syntax. It might be objected that the technical terminology – ‘seat or subject’, ‘will’, ‘co-operant self-determining act’ – is ‘pompous’ and complex.⁹⁶ In the context of Coleridge’s specialist genre of theological polemic, though, in which she writes as an academic addressing her peers, her language is plain and functional.

Religious Authorship and Collaborative Dialogue

Coleridge’s polemical ethic of presenting opponents’ views fairly leads her to make extensive use of footnotes in ‘On Rationalism’ and in *Biographia 1847*. In ‘Extracts’, Coleridge experiments with other methods of producing a dialogic text. The second section of Chapter 5 concludes with her poem, ‘O change that strain with man’s best hopes at strife’.⁹⁷ The poem engages in dialogue with Keble’s ‘The Eighth Sunday After Trinity’, from his celebrated collection *The Christian Year*, published in 1827. The poem is based on the Old Testament story in which a ‘man of God’, sent by the Lord to destroy the idols of Jeroboam, disobeys Him and is killed by a lion.⁹⁸ Keble’s poem warns of the risk of falling from a regenerate state, as the last three of its twelve stanzas emphasize:

Thy message given, thine home in sight,
To the forbidden feast return?
Yield to the false delight

⁹⁴ ‘Extracts’, p. 251, p. 250, p. 251, p. 258. Coleridge’s emphasis.

⁹⁵ ‘Extracts’, p. 268.

⁹⁶ ‘Extracts’, p. 250.

⁹⁷ ‘Extracts’, pp. 280-281.

⁹⁸ I Kings 13.

Thy better soul could spurn?

Alas, my brother! Round thy tomb
In sorrow kneeling, and in fear,
We read the Pastor's doom
Who speaks and will not hear.

The grey-haired saint may fail at last
The surest guide a wanderer prove;
Death only binds us fast
To the bright shore of love.⁹⁹

In the preceding paragraphs of the 'Extracts', Coleridge has argued that regeneration, once attained, is a condition that cannot be lost. The doctrine of Keble's poem, according to Coleridge, is contrary to reason and detrimental to morality, because it implies that God's justice is arbitrary:

They who say that a man may fall from the regenerate estate, the highest state attainable in this life, inferentially though unintentionally represent God as an author of Absolute Decrees, an arbitrary awarder of destruction or salvation: when, according to their theory, He allows some of the justified time to forfeit their inheritance, and rescues others by a timely deliverance from spiritual chance and change.¹⁰⁰

Coleridge's 'unintentionally' is important: in addressing the theology of Keble's poem, she maintains respect for the integrity of the author.

Keble's final verse ('The grey-haired saint may fail at last') is the epigraph of the whole section in which Coleridge's poem appears. At the beginning of the section, it elicits from her four immediate questions fired at the poet with the vehemence of spontaneous *viva voce* expression: '[w]hat then? Are men always fluctuating in this preparatory state? Do they never enter a haven? Are they never anchored firmly on the rock of salvation?' She repeats Keble's stanza three pages later as the epigraph of her poem. Again, her response is a forceful interjection:

O change that strain with man's best hopes at strife,
A recreant strain that wrongs the steadfast soul!

⁹⁹ John Keble, *The Christian Year: Thoughts in Verse for the Sundays and Holydays Throughout the Year* (London: Oxford University Press and Longmans, Green and Co., 1827; repr. Forgotten Books: www.forgottenbooks.org, 2012) pp. 140-141, ll. 37-48.

¹⁰⁰ 'Extracts', pp. 279-280.

It is as though Coleridge, having heard the whole poem and, respectfully, though with difficulty, restraining herself from breaking in before the end, explodes in distress as soon as Keble's voice ceases. Her phrase 'A recreant strain' alludes to Wordsworth's 'The Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle', as she indicates in a note.¹⁰¹ Wordsworth's poem expresses, for Coleridge, the 'profoundly thoughtful Christian heart' of its author, and represents, therefore, Christian reason to counter the 'unintentionally' irrational implications of Keble's poem.¹⁰² For Coleridge, Wordsworth's poetry expresses 'the power of Faith'.¹⁰³ He is a significant collaborative voice, therefore, in her dialogue with Keble, in which she asserts that an individual's eternal destiny is determined by the way in which she exercises Free Will: '[e]ternal joys or pains, | These wait on man by man's own changeless choice'.¹⁰⁴

Having set out her doctrinal position, Coleridge turns again in her eighth stanza to address Keble directly. She does so in terms that reflect her principles for the productive conduct of religious dialogue. She addresses Keble with reverent courtesy and appeals to devotional qualities of 'joy' and faith:

Then, gentle Harmonist, that strain forbear;
Oh! Cast not out from joy the faithful heart!¹⁰⁵

Coleridge's 'kindly and respectful' tone is maintained through the final stanza, the didacticism of which is softened by the sibilant rhyme of the middle couplet, and a tone of subdued affirmation:

Heav'n even here surrounds the filial breast,
Even here our earthly cares and troubles cease.
And what were *heav'n* without a *settled* peace, –
Has He not promised His beloved rest?

The poem ends with a question which, with quiet insistence, invites Keble, the 'gentle Harmonist', to respond and engage in cordial dialogue. This poetic interchange affirms that, for Coleridge, participation in religious polemic is a collaborative vocation.¹⁰⁶

Coleridge hopes that her work on baptismal regeneration 'may lead some minds of greater power than [her own] to take up the argument and put it in a better form than

¹⁰¹ 'Extracts', p. 277, p. 280, p. 280 n.

¹⁰² *Biographia 1847*, II, p. 153. 'Extracts', p. 280.

¹⁰³ *Criticism*, p. 83.

¹⁰⁴ 'Extracts', p. 280, ll. 21-22.

¹⁰⁵ 'Extracts', p. 281, ll. 29-30.

¹⁰⁶ 'Extracts', p. 257, p. 281, ll. 33-36. Coleridge's emphases.

any in which it has hitherto appeared'.¹⁰⁷ This is not tactical self-effacement, but an expression of her dialogic ethic. This is emphasized by her use of the plural, 'minds', which suggests the initiation of a communal dialogue. As she puts it in *Biographia 1847*, '[t]ruth is advanced by the efforts of various minds': by multiple authors in collaborative dialogue working from diverse viewpoints (p. cxxxvii). Julius Hare, to whom Coleridge dedicates *Essays*, holds a similar view. In his 'Preface' to *The Mission of The Comforter* (1846), Hare proclaims that 'all who are striving for the truth are bringing their contributions [...] for the erection of [the] heavenly temple', and he hopes that his writings may 'forward the carrying on of this work'.¹⁰⁸ A strengthened and revitalized Anglican theology, he implies, will be the product of diverse individual components. Hare, like F. D. Maurice, is a disciple and advocate of STC with whom Coleridge corresponds. Her next 'contribution to the heavenly temple' of liberal theology will concern a High Church attack launched against both Maurice and Hare, and STC himself. This will prompt some shifts in Coleridge's religious and authorial agenda, in response to new pressures.

The 'Subversion of Faith'

A new threat to liberal theology appeared in *The English Review* of December 1848, in an essay emotively entitled, 'On Tendencies toward the Subversion of Faith'. The essay attacks a number of authors, including Hare and Maurice, in a seemingly indiscriminate manner. It brands them as having subverted English Christianity by the importation of German atheism. STC – with Carlyle – is said to be the seminal influence upon the alleged promoters of 'complete Infidelity'.¹⁰⁹ The author of the anonymous article was William Palmer of Worcester College, Oxford, who had been closely associated with Newman and continued to support him until 1844. Described by Chadwick as 'driest of the stern, unbending Tractarians', Palmer became increasingly perturbed by liberal trends in theology, and, in December 1848, 'released a cry of agony'. His 'cry' is the article in which he condemns STC and those allegedly influenced by him, whom he labels 'the Coleridge school'.¹¹⁰

Palmer's article reflects STC's continually precarious religious reputation in the late 1840s. While Coleridge brings STC's principles 'down into the present hour' in the service of Christian doctrine, Palmer demonizes his metaphysics as insidiously destructive of mid-century faith. For Palmer, STC's Christianity is 'merely founded on

¹⁰⁷ 'Extracts', p. 255.

¹⁰⁸ Julius Hare, *The Mission of the Comforter*, 2 vols (London: Parker, 1846), I, p. viii.

¹⁰⁹ 'On Tendencies towards the Subversion of Faith', *English Review*, 10 (1848), 399-444 (p. 416). The author of this anonymous article was William Palmer. See Chadwick, p. 541.

¹¹⁰ Chadwick, p. 541. 'Subversion', p. 424.

philosophical argument', not 'faith'; it has 'no principle of cohesion', and 'may be dissolved by the same intellect' that has 'constructed it'. STC's influence is to be blamed for Hare's alleged promotion of David Friedrich Strauss's notorious *Das Leben Jesu, kritisch bearbeitet* (1835) (*The Life of Jesus, Critically Examined*), published in the year after STC's death. For all his intemperate lack of balance, Palmer correctly recognizes that, if Strauss's ideas take hold, the issue for the church will shift from sectarian controversy over competing theories of doctrine, to the most basic question of all: 'whether Christianity be true or false'.¹¹¹ Palmer's extremist solutions to the problem of Strauss are repression and censorship. Coleridge, meanwhile, recognizes that Strauss's arguments require a radical shift in religious discourse.

The *English Review* essay necessitates yet another defence of STC's reputation. Coleridge, fully occupied in 1849 with preparing *Notes and Lectures on Shakespeare and Essays*, asked J. H. Green, still nominally in charge of STC's philosophical remains, to write the introduction to the second edition of *Confessions of An Inquiring Spirit* (1849). Green, however, missed the point and repeats, ineffectually, earlier defences of STC from charges of plagiarism, this time from Lessing. Coleridge, therefore, had to lay aside her preparation of the new STC volumes in order to address Palmer's article herself. Her essay, thirty-seven pages in length, is entitled, with characteristic understatement, 'Note on *The Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit*'.¹¹² Palmer's article was published anonymously, and Coleridge is unlikely to have identified the author, so uncharacteristic of him was its style. Chadwick describes Palmer's usual manner as that of 'a cold prosaic analyst'.¹¹³ Newman characterizes him as coolly methodical: his 'ground of controversy was cut into squares and then every objection had its answer'.¹¹⁴ Coleridge refers to her anonymous opponent as 'the Anglican Inquisitor?'; an allusion, perhaps, to the (literally) judicial policing of ideas and publications that he advocates. She gets straight to the heart of Palmer's allegation that STC 'undermines [...] faith in the Bible as the Word of God'.¹¹⁵ For anyone who has read *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit*, Coleridge contends, this 'accusation [...] is [...] dead'.¹¹⁶

Palmer appeals to the vicious ignorance of 'the English religious mind'. According to Coleridge, his readers will be 'confirmed' in their 'unreflecting prejudice' and will be 'amused' by its sweeping and extreme judgments. For Coleridge, the 'ignorant zealotry' and intellectual impoverishment of author and audience are mutually

¹¹¹ 'Subversion', p. 442, p. 443.

¹¹² Sara Coleridge, 'Note on the *Confessions of An Inquiring Spirit*', in S. T. Coleridge, *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit*, ed. by H. N. Coleridge (1849); repr. from 3rd edn, 1853, ed. by H. St J. Hart (London: Black, 1956), pp. 81-118 (p. 82).

¹¹³ Chadwick, p. 541.

¹¹⁴ Newman, *Apologia*, p. 74.

¹¹⁵ 'Note', p. 82.

¹¹⁶ 'Note', p. 83.

sustaining. The reviewer encourages the anti-intellectual prejudice of his readers: ‘the national mind of England is strongly adverse’ to the writers in question, he asserts. Coleridge refers to the anonymised William Palmer as the ‘English Reviewer’, punning on the journal’s name to use ‘English’ as a synonym for prejudiced and narrow-minded. She asserts that ‘the English Reviewer appeals in mean-minded triumph’ to the ‘existing majority’ who unthinkingly cleave to ‘vulgar conservative maxims’.¹¹⁷ Coleridge anticipates Newman’s critique of English religious culture in his sermon ‘Christ Upon the Waters’ (1850): ‘[w]here Dickens caricatured the materialism and snobbery of the great Victorian middle class, and where Arnold sneered at cultural superficiality’, observes Ker, ‘Newman satirized its religious and spiritual provincialism and shallowness’. Both Coleridge and Newman critique English narrow-mindedness. The Englishman’s ‘vaunted “private judgment”’, according to Newman, is no more than the ‘passive impression’ he derives from ‘his “intellectual servants”, the periodicals and newspapers’ that are employed to ““tell him what to think and what to say””.¹¹⁸ Coleridge adds imputations of cultural tyranny and mob rule: the reviewer ‘appeal[s] to the violent and unthinking Many against the Few’.¹¹⁹ Although she rejects Newman’s interpretation of ‘History’ in his sermon, she shares his view of the public’s debased relationship with its newspapers and journals. Coleridge might have supplemented her income by regular reviewing, but for the meanly partisan character of the English press: ‘I am shut out from several of the leading periodicals by their past conduct to my father, and there is scarcely a subject on which my notions would suit any journal’, she observes in 1849, a view based on direct experience. The previous year, *Critical Quarterly* editor John Lockhart had made ‘misogynistic’ alterations to her review of Tennyson’s *The Princess*, moderating, for example, her assertion of women’s pre-eminence in the genre of the novel. Determined to maintain his journal’s long-standing opposition to the ‘Cockney’ poets, Lockhart had also cut her moderately favourable references to Keats ‘for reasons of literary politics’.¹²⁰

The Threat Posed by Strauss: Coleridge’s Changing Priorities

The ‘English Reviewer’ condemns the writers he attacks for their alleged promotion of Strauss. STC, in Palmer’s heated interpretation, bears greatest responsibility as instigator of this tendency. In his penultimate paragraph, the reviewer’s distress is clear as he confronts the fear that Strauss’s influence might unsettle the whole edifice of the church. At the end of this paragraph, in which he lists the emerging symptoms of scepticism, he

¹¹⁷ ‘Note’, p. 91, p. 109.

¹¹⁸ Ker, p. 361.

¹¹⁹ ‘Note’, p. 110.

¹²⁰ *Criticism*, p. 198, p. 25, p. 101.

cries: '[w]hat is to be the end of it all?' If German methods of thought take hold, he implies, both the church, and Christianity itself, might struggle to survive. Strauss addresses this point at the conclusion of *The Life of Jesus, Critically Examined*: '[i]n what relation, then, must the pulpit stand to theology, – nay, how is the continuation of a ministry possible when theology has reached this stage?'¹²¹

The 'stage' which Strauss believes theology has 'reached' is exemplified in his view of Jesus: 'historically', Strauss regards Jesus as 'nothing more than a person', whose 'exalted character [...] exerted [such a] powerful influence over the religious sentiment, that it constituted him the ideal of piety; in accordance with the general rule, that an historical fact or person cannot become the basis of a positive religion until it is elevated into the sphere of the ideal'.¹²² Coleridge addresses early in her 'Note' the relation of STC's thought to that of Strauss. As Rosemary Ashton observes, Strauss takes 'the eighteenth century rationalism of writers like Lessing and Eichhorn [...] one logical step further' and employs a 'Kantian investigative technique'.¹²³ Coleridge turns Palmer's assumption about STC's relationship with German philosophy on its head. STC, she asserts, is ideally equipped to refute Strauss's 'hypothesis for solving the problem of Christianity'. She adds that 'he was, by anticipation, a most zealous, I think I may add a very successful opponent!'¹²⁴ Barth concurs with Coleridge: it 'is remarkable', he observes, 'how [STC] has managed, without sacrificing the traditional belief of the Church that all Scripture is inspired by the Holy Spirit, to embrace the findings of the new literary and historical scholarship'.¹²⁵ According to the *Collected Coleridge* editors of 'Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit', STC 'had seen himself as making necessary concessions to historical scholarship in order to preserve the essentials of Christian belief'.¹²⁶ Coleridge contends that '[t]here are many thoughtful men who declare that they were diverted from such notions as those of Strauss [...] by the teaching of [STC]'.¹²⁷

Coleridge elucidates STC's approach. She cites the example of David's 'Psalms', which express the writer's individual feelings and character in his own time and circumstances. Yet, STC would have viewed 'the events of David's life, his

¹²¹ David Friedrich Strauss, *The Life of Jesus, Critically Examined*, Translated from the fourth German Edition, in Three Volumes (London: Chapman, 1846), III, p. 440. The anonymous translator was Mary Ann Evans, later known as George Eliot.

¹²² Strauss, III, p. 426.

¹²³ Rosemary Ashton, *George Eliot: A Life* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1996), p. 51.

¹²⁴ 'Note', p. 87.

¹²⁵ Barth, p. 64.

¹²⁶ S. T. Coleridge, 'Confessions of A Inquiring Spirit', in *Shorter Works and Fragments*, 2 vols, ed. by H. J. Jackson and J. R. de J. Jackson, *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 16 vols (London: Routledge; Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1969-2002), XI. 2 (1995), pp. 1111-1171 (p. 1115).

¹²⁷ 'Note', pp. 87-88.

composition of the Psalms included’, as having been ‘so ordered by Providence that the whole was typical and prophetic of our Lord and Saviour’. This view represents STC’s ‘whole conception of the divine dealings with man’, including ‘the Inspiration of Scripture’. Nonetheless, for all her confidence in refuting Palmer’s prejudiced case, Coleridge indicates that further progress is now required in response to Strauss. STC’s *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit* is ‘a step in the right direction’ on the issue of Biblical inspiration, she contends: the work ‘indicates, as far as it goes, the true principles on which the subject ought to be examined’.¹²⁸ In 1850, Coleridge writes to her Brother-in-Law, Reverend Edward Coleridge, about the threat posed to Christianity by Strauss, which, remarkably, she observes, contemporary polemicists largely ignore: ‘[n]o attempt at answering *Strauss* amid all the thousand pamphlets upon theories of doctrine, the practical result of which is insignificant’. The careerist polemicists, to whom she refers in her ‘Extracts’, continue to promote their personal interests by pursuing sectarian theories. They ignore the real ‘danger’ of ‘Infidelity creep[ing] on in silence’.¹²⁹ The reviewer of Coleridge’s *Memoir and Letters* in 1874 alludes to this development in her priorities: ‘she had become aware of the new phase into which religious controversy was passing, and which made the polemics of Puseyism assume diminished importance in her eyes’.¹³⁰ Coleridge believes that Newman is aware of the threat of Strauss’s critical methodology. He has referred in conversation, she understands, to the importance of addressing ‘the prospects of Christianity itself, instead of the differences between Anglican and Catholic’. Then ‘[w]hy does he not answer the adversary?’ she exclaims in frustration.¹³¹ Coleridge reveals her profound respect for Newman five years after his reception into the Roman Catholic Church. She turns to him as the supreme spokesperson for Christianity, regardless of his denomination. Her priorities as a theological author are changing. She has no difficulty in offering a forthright and convincing rebuttal of the *English Review*’s distorted case against STC. However, she recognizes as urgent its underlying theme of Strauss’s threat to Christianity.

The initial reception of Strauss’s ideas in England was slow. There were two reasons for this. Few English people were able to read German, and blasphemy laws inhibited the publication of translations. However, a legal judgment of 1843 confined the definition of blasphemy to works that mocked Christianity. Thereafter, publishers such as Chapman, who published Mary Ann Evans’s translation of Strauss in 1846, ran negligible risk of prosecution. In the late 1840s, therefore, the need arose for a new approach to theology to answer Strauss. As Chadwick puts it: ‘[s]omeone must restate

¹²⁸ ‘Note’, p. 114, p. 111.

¹²⁹ *M & L*, II, p. 364. Coleridge’s emphasis.

¹³⁰ ‘Memoir and Letters’, *Edinburgh Review* 283 (1874), p. 64.

¹³¹ *M & L*, II, pp. 364-365.

Christian divinity so that readers of [...] Strauss would find ideas to [...] convince, ideas which did not sound obsolete'.¹³² Coleridge changes her agenda in response to this shifting intellectual milieu. Referring to the last years of Coleridge's life, Barbeau asserts that the 'wedge between Protestants and Catholics cut straight through Sara's heart'.¹³³ This is not the case. In October 1851, Coleridge indicates her revised focus in a letter to Aubrey de Vere. She uses terms that echo Newman's reported shift in attitude: 'it is the foundations of religion, those problems and difficulties that belong to every system, or underlie them all, which engage my serious thoughts', she explains. 'I care not so much about the differences between Romish and Anglican'.¹³⁴ In December 1851, writing to Henry Reed, Coleridge again alludes to this change of priority. She explains that she has been 'deeply interested and delighted with Dr. Nitsch's letter to Ida Countess of Hahn Hahn'.¹³⁵ This is one month after she completed her final theological work, the *Dialogues on Personality*.

Karl Immanuel Nitzsch, an eminent German theologian, upholds a committedly Protestant position. He defends the Reformation, and maintains that God is encountered 'only in the inmost sanctuary of the human heart'. At the same time, he expresses an irenic attitude towards Roman Catholicism. He believes that, at mid-century, Protestant and Roman Catholic Churches are equally involved in a common 'fight [...] against the world and the devil'. Nitzsch argues that the Churches can learn from each other, and be mutually sustaining. He looks forward to their uniting as 'the Church of the Future'. He contends that the Christian's 'duty' to work 'steadfastly' towards this goal 'can be fulfilled in the Catholic as well as in the Protestant Church'.¹³⁶ While Coleridge retains fundamental reservations about Roman Catholicism as a 'system', she agrees that the Roman Church may be for the '*individual*' a potent 'means of grace and [...] spirituality'.¹³⁷ Coleridge's positive reception of Nitzsch's book reflects the direction of her thought in the final months of her life. Her concern for 'the foundations of religion' belongs to the same year in which Matthew Arnold senses the withdrawal of '[t]he Sea of Faith' in 'Dover Beach', and envisages a dark, valueless world.¹³⁸ Coleridge is ready to take on the intellectual challenges to Christianity. She is confident enough to develop the approach to scriptural criticism exemplified in *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit*. As

¹³² Chadwick, p. 539.

¹³³ Barbeau, *Life*, p. 148.

¹³⁴ *M & L*, II, p. 462.

¹³⁵ Broughton, p. 57.

¹³⁶ *Babylon and Jerusalem: A Letter Addressed to Ida, Countess of Hahn-Hahn. From the German With a Preface by the Translator* (London: Parker, 1851) p. 73, p. 88, p. 101, pp. 100-101. The translator identifies Nitzsch as the author, though the Bodleian Library Catalogue attributes it to H. J. W. R. Abeken.

¹³⁷ Broughton, p. 58. Coleridge's emphasis.

¹³⁸ *The Poetical Works of Matthew Arnold*, ed. by C. B. Tinker and H. F. Lowry (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), p. 211, l. 21.

she said in her 'Note', STC's 'work is a step in the right direction', and she clearly relishes the prospect of making the next strides forward herself. At the time of her 'Note', Coleridge was fully occupied with her editorial undertakings, and was contemplating her innovative *Dialogues on Regeneration*. She was therefore unable to embark on a new theological work straight away. By the time she would have been ready to begin, she had less than six months to live.

In 1849, Coleridge states confidence in the growing influence of STC's 'Christian Philosophy', which has 'many vigorous youthful champions'. Her theological mastery and authorial assurance are reflected in the literary qualities of her response to the anonymous review. For example, she ridicules the folly and futility of the reviewer's attack on STC, and indicates, in a striking Homeric allusion, how utterly inadequate he is as STC's opponent:

Achilles pursued one whom he took to be a mere man beside the deep-eddy Scamander, and ever and anon he thought to overtake him with his swift feet and overpower him with his potent arm. But after a while the supposed Agenor turned about and confronted him, and began to remonstrate seriously with the pride-blinded hero on the vanity of his endeavours; and behold it was no mere man, weak, mortal, vanquishable; but a god, even the god Apollo, strong, deathless, unconquerable, full of light and full of might. So in the strength of vaunted systems of outward evidence, unqualified submission to authority, passive acquiescence and logic apart from metaphysic insight, many a vain boaster will pursue beside the loud stream of Public Opinion, [STC's] Christian Philosophy.

Coleridge is confident both in the conceptual basis of her theological position, and, as foremost of STC's current 'champions', in her own capacity to deal elegantly and convincingly with such deluded polemicists as 'the English Reviewer'.¹³⁹

She follows up her Homeric extended simile with a potent allusion to *Paradise Lost*. She contrasts the 'keen clear' methodology of STC's approach to the 'difficult problem of the Bible' with the inadequacy of conventional unexamined assumptions. She refers to the 'self-contradictoriness of the popular scheme, if scheme *that* can be called, which certain settled form has none'.¹⁴⁰ Here Coleridge appropriates Milton's description of Death when Satan first encounters him with Sin (a 'shape' that 'seemed woman to the waist') at the gates of hell. Death is '[t]he other shape, | If shape it might be called that shape had none'.¹⁴¹ Coleridge's allusion emphasizes the 'deadness and deathliness' of Tractarian dogma, in contrast with her devotional concept of the living

¹³⁹ 'Note', p. 111, pp. 110-111, p. 109.

¹⁴⁰ 'Note', p. 112, p. 111.

¹⁴¹ *Paradise Lost*, II. 649-650. 666-667.

'power of divine light in the soul'.¹⁴² Coleridge's metaphysical and literary assurance in this short but significant work of 1849 is carried over into her major, pioneering works of the last two years of her life: *Essays*, and the intellectually dynamic, multi-voiced *Regeneration Dialogues*. When Coleridge styles herself 'the Esteesian housekeeper' in a letter of 1851, she is maintaining the ironic fiction of social propriety as a cover for authorial independence.¹⁴³ For the same reason, she refers to STC throughout her published writings as 'My Father'.

¹⁴² *OR 1843*, II, p. 544. 'Note', p. 112. Coleridge's emphasis.

¹⁴³ *M & L*, II, p. 452.

Chapter Five

Authorial Vocation and Literary Innovation, 1850 and 1851

'Essays on his Own Times': Critical Problems

Coleridge conceived of a collection of STC's journalism while preparing *Biographia 1847*, in which she discusses his relationship with *The Morning Post*. STC stated in *Biographia* that his journalism had 'added nothing to [his] fortune or [his] reputation'.¹ Equally, he claimed that his contributions had been responsible for a decisive boost in *The Morning Post's* circulation and influence. Daniel Stuart, editor of *The Morning Post* during the period of STC's contributions, and later 'half proprietor' of *The Courier*, took exception to STC's comments.² He rejected STC's claim of having caused *The Morning Post's* circulation to rise between 1799 and 1803.³ Coleridge does not withdraw STC's comments from *Biographia 1847*, but represents Stuart's viewpoint by including letters that Stuart had written to Henry. Characteristically, Coleridge plays a reconciling role between STC and Stuart: '[i]f the anti-gallican policy of *The Morning Post* "increased its circulation", I cannot but think that the influence of [STC's] writings [...] in directing the tone and determining the principles of the paper, must have served it materially. I believe him to have been the anti-gallican *spirit* that governed *The Morning Post*, though he may not have performed as much of the *letter* as he fancied'. Coleridge states also that STC was paid 'far more than the market value of his contributions to the Papers that [Stuart] was concerned in'.⁴ Coleridge cites Stuart's high opinion of STC's statesman-like qualities as a political journalist, despite his tendency to drift off task if left to himself.

Essays on His Own Times (1850) consists of three volumes, largely comprising articles published in *The Morning Post* between 1799 and 1802, and in *The Courier* in 1811. Coleridge's collection is a major contribution to literary history. She cites De Quincey, who lamented in 1834 the loss of STC's writings in the 'vast abyss' of the 'daily press': his vanished pieces are abandoned 'pearls, confounded with the rubbish and "purgamenta" of ages'.⁵ Hazlitt viewed STC's journalism as a dissipation of literary power: '[w]hat is become of all this mighty heap of hope, of thought, of learning and humanity?' he asked with scathing disillusion in 1825: '[i]t has ended in swallowing doses of oblivion and in writing paragraphs in the *Courier*'.⁶ De Quincey, though, argues that STC's newspaper articles are manifestations of his genius: '[n]o more appreciable

¹ *BLCC*, I, p. 215.

² *Biographia 1847*, II, p. 391.

³ *BLCC*, I, p. 214 n.

⁴ *Biographia 1847*, II, p. 403, p. 400. Coleridge's emphases.

⁵ *Essays*, I, p. xv. Further references to Volume 1 of this edition are given after quotations in the text.

⁶ Keanie, *Oxford Handbook*, p. 437 n.

monument could be raised to [STC's] memory', he maintains, 'than a re-publication of his essays in *The Morning Post*, [and] those afterwards published in *The Courier*' (p. xv). Coleridge aims, therefore, to restore STC's political writings to light, and to place them in the context of his whole 'oeuvre'. Her purpose is to furnish 'an important stock of material toward [STC's] biography'; a project she began to contemplate around 1845 (pp. xiii-xiv).

The 'Introduction' provides Coleridge with an opportunity to develop her authorial agenda and to test her innovatory conception of authorship. *Essays* raises questions about Coleridge's presentation of STC, and her authorial relationship with his work. Alan Vardy rejects Coleridge's argument for STC's political consistency. It is, he says, an 'ideological fiction' designed to promote what he wrongly alleges to be Coleridge's Tory agenda, and he calls into question her moral integrity.⁷ Waldegrave follows Vardy in suggesting that the STC of Coleridge's 'Introduction' is a fictional construct, an idealized image of 'the father she had always wanted'.⁸ On what grounds, then, does Coleridge argue for STC's political consistency? How does Coleridge's conception of authorship develop in her reconstruction and reapplication of STC's political thought? Does Coleridge's 'discourse' in her 'Introduction' relinquish 'its claim to individual authorship', as Mudge suggests?⁹ The following five sections of this chapter will address these questions.

'To Live is to Change'

In Section Two of her 'Introduction', Coleridge argues that STC was consistent in his 'career' of political thought: '[t]he spirit of his teaching was ever the same amid all the variations and corrections of the letter' (p. xxii, p. xxv). A fixed moral and religious core governs STC's political judgments, which take different forms in different circumstances. Coleridge's conception is peculiarly suited to the instabilities of the post-Reform Act era, in which the same individual may hold conflicting opinions simultaneously. Tractarian activist Hurrell Froude, a Tory 'reactionary', advocated radical 'anti-establishment' views.¹⁰ Tory Prime Minister Peel pursued Whig policies of ecclesiastical reform and Free Trade. W. G. Ward exercised protestant private judgment in support of Roman Catholicism. Coleridge presents STC in similar terms, as upholding apparently opposing policies simultaneously: for example, as both opponent and advocate of reform:

⁷ Vardy, p. 135.

⁸ Waldegrave, p. 325.

⁹ Mudge, p. 157.

¹⁰ Nockles, p. 82.

In 1811, when he united his forces with those who strove to drag the rushing wheels of the Reform-Chariot, which appeared, from the state of the public mind, to have an inclined plane to travel upon, he carefully recorded his protest in favour of reform, conducted judiciously and on sound principles of policy (p. xxv).

Such an apparent contradiction, for Coleridge, reflects STC's consistent independence and integrity. His 'system of belief' – the structure of his thought, religious and political – is inseparable from 'his personal character and individuality', she contends, because 'the man and the author were in his case especially interfused' (p. xxiii, p. xvi).

Coleridge's conception of STC's diachronic consistency of principle – that the same inner 'spirit' is expressed through a career of external 'variations' – reflects the influence of Newman's *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (1845), in which he argues that an idea 'changes' in response to shifting external factors 'in order to remain the same'. Its cultural vitality, Newman argues, depends on its ability to change: 'to live is to change and to be perfect is to have changed often'.¹¹ For Coleridge, STC's core moral consistency required him to make practical shifts in outlook as events evolved; in response, for example, to Napoleon's emerging despotism and aggression. In 1864, Newman argues that he has been consistent, has held to the same core principle, through a career of changing sectarian allegiance, from Evangelicalism to Roman Catholicism:

From the age of fifteen, dogma has been the fundamental position of my religion: I know no other religion; I cannot enter into the idea of any other sort of religion; religion, as a mere sentiment, is to me a dream and a mockery. As well can there be filial love without the fact of a father, as devotion without the fact of a Supreme Being. What I held in 1816, I held in 1833, and I hold in 1864.¹²

Coleridge anticipates Newman's mode of argument in her presentation of STC's political consistency. His core principles in 1816 and 1817 were the same as they had been in 1796 and 1797, she maintains. In the earlier period, STC had advocated the separation of church and state, while in 1816 and 1817, he had supported 'our Episcopal Church'. Nonetheless, his underlying principles were consistent: in 1796 and 1797, he opposed 'the evil of a rich hierarchy and entered into Milton's mood on Prelacy', while in 1816 and 1817 he continued to oppose 'Mammon' and 'the rich and powerful' (p. xxiv). In both periods he was upholding the principles of the Reformation: this is the significant factor for Coleridge following the Gorham crisis. Her insistence on STC's

¹¹ John Henry Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (London: Toovey, 1845), p. 39.

¹² Newman, *Apologia*, p. 61.

consistent adherence to ‘the doctrines and spirit of the Reformation’ speaks to the England of 1850 (p. xxiv). It also complements her discussion of STC’s admiration for Luther in *Biographia 1847*.

Coleridge argues that STC’s reversal in attitude towards war with France shows equal consistency of principle. What caused him to change ‘from earnest demands for peace to vigorous defence of renewed and continued war’ was ‘the character and conduct of Napoleon’ (pp. xxviii-xxix). She argues that STC, in *The Morning Post*, ‘showed as discerning a patriotism in opposing the earlier war with France as in advocating the later one’ (p. xxxi). She does not know exactly how STC thought through his shift in viewpoint: the underlying intellectual process is ‘a subject upon which [she] can but guess darkly’ (p. xxxi). She contends, though, that STC’s political insight assured him that England would not follow France into Jacobinism. Therefore, he did not regard the first war as a necessary measure to reduce the risk of revolution in England. This exemplifies STC’s ‘gift of political prophecy’, which, according to Coleridge, ‘consists in a clear intuition of the present and the nature of existing things’ (p. xxxii). Her formulation echoes Percy Shelley’s definition of the poet as prophet, who ‘not only beholds intensely the present as it is, and discovers those laws according to which present things might be ordered, but [...] beholds the future in the present’.¹³ For Coleridge, STC’s ‘clear intuition’ of the ‘nature’ and ‘laws’ of ‘present things’ derives from his intellectual independence and consistency.

Coleridge argues that STC perceived the ‘internal stability of the English constitution’ and its essential differences from those of ‘continental kingdoms’ (p. xxxii). She explains his Burkean conception of the English constitution: he saw ‘that our social frame was too firmly compacted by the interdependence of interests and reciprocation of benefits, too closely cemented by gradual reforms and nice adjustments, to be in danger of shock and dislocation’ (p. xxxii). For Coleridge, STC’s perception of English constitutional stability, founded on empirical tradition and organic development, was ultimately a mark of his religious faith. She applies a religious interpretation of political history to her own times: ‘[n]ot to ascribe the peaceful state of England, in this epoch of change, and her exemption from injurious commotions, to [her constitutional stability], is to betray want of Faith in a moral Governor of the World’ (p. xxxiii). Vardy criticizes Coleridge for using ‘providence’ in an attempt to ‘efface [...] history’.¹⁴ However, ‘providence’ is the means by which Coleridge interprets history, as it was for her mentor, Southey. In *Sir Thomas More: or Colloquies on the Progress and Prospects of Society* (1829), Southey, in his persona as ‘Montesinos’, refers to ‘an excellent friend’

¹³ *Shelley’s Poetry and Prose*, p. 513.

¹⁴ Vardy, p. 141.

who ‘delights to trace the moral order of Providence through the Revolutions of the world; and in his historical writings keeps it in view as the pole-star of his course’.¹⁵ Southey uses the dramatic persona to refer to himself. Coleridge reflects Southey’s influence in her interpretation of history according to a Christian – ultimately Miltonic – concept of ‘Providence’. She has learned from Southey to read history in the light of religious principles: ‘in his large knowledge of history’, Coleridge maintains, Southey ‘dwells on the moral of the historic page and its bearings on religion’ (p. xxxviii). The application of Christian criteria to history will underpin Coleridge’s discussion of Ireland.

England’s ‘Misrule’ of Ireland: A Christian Interpretation of History

Coleridge celebrates the protection afforded by divine providence for England through troubled times, but also highlights England’s political ‘sins’ (p. xxxv). This is the starting point for her discussion of England’s relationship with Ireland. Here, Coleridge ‘bring[s]’ STC’s thought ‘down into the present hour’ (p. lxxxiv). Commentators generally regard the discussion of Ireland as all but irrelevant to the presentation of STC’s journalistic writings. However, the section reinterprets and reapplies STC’s principles, and defines the way in which Coleridge brings STC’s philosophy into her own times. She asserts herself in this section as the Coleridgean voice of her age. Her concept of literary and metaphysical creativity involves multiple minds working communally through a process of dialogue. In her discussion of contemporary Ireland, Coleridge adduces four other minds: STC, Wordsworth, Southey, and her friend, Irish poet and landowner, Aubrey de Vere. She develops her ideas in relation to her literary fathers, whose continuing influence is complemented by the closest confidant of her later years. She might have referred, equally, to other influential commentators to support her arguments. Leigh Hunt, for example, following the government’s rejection of a petition for Catholic civil rights in 1808, emphasizes the mutual interdependence of England and Ireland: ‘if ACHILLES in the midst of battle had bared his heel [...] he would hardly have done a more foolish thing than we are at present in our treatment of the Irish’.¹⁶ Hunt’s discussion is framed in political terms. He analyses ‘the three particular classes of men who refuse the petition’.¹⁷ The religious basis of Coleridge’s analysis determines her choice of sources.

Coleridge refers to ‘the sins of England’ (p. xxxv). She understands a nation’s

¹⁵ Robert Southey, *Sir Thomas More: Or, Colloquies on the Progress and Prospects of Society*, 2 vols (London: Murray, 1829), I, p. 26.

¹⁶ Nicholas Roe, *Fiery Heart: The First Life of Leigh Hunt* (London: Pimlico, 2005), pp. 96-97.

¹⁷ Leigh Hunt, ‘On the Rejection of the Catholic Petition’, in *Romanticism: a Sourcebook*, ed. by Simon Bainbridge (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 140-142 (p. 141).

history in terms of its relationship with God. She indicates that her critique of England's treatment of Ireland is based on de Vere's *English Misrule and Irish Misdeeds* (1848), which, she observes, 'partly failed of its purpose, first from saying too much at once [...] but secondly and far more, because it made representations which those to whom they were addressed were pre-resolved not to hear' (p. xxxvi). The English political class remains unrepentant and closed-minded. Coleridge's discussion of the plight of the Irish poor, on the basis of Christianity morality, aims to hit home where de Vere's combative pragmatism failed. Coleridge enumerates the sufferings England has inflicted on Ireland: 'religious persecution with denial of the most effective means of grace'; 'repression of trade and commerce'; denial of the means of education (p. xxxvi). If conditions in Ireland have improved to a certain extent, 'twenty or even fifty years of less unrighteous dealing can[not] atone for centuries of grievous wrong' (p. xxxv). Coleridge's language – 'atone', 'unrighteous' – suggests that ultimately England is answerable to God. The moral processes of history, Coleridge warns, are inescapable: '[b]ygoness cannot be bygoness in such a matter, for the Past, which, as a record of shame, is evil enough in itself, lives in the Present' (p. xxxvii). She invokes the authority of Southey as a 'witness' to the 'cruelty' of England towards Ireland, and the 'atrocious manner' in which the English implemented 'iniquitous laws', which surpassed even Spanish enormities in their 'treatment' of South American 'Indians' (pp. xxxviii-xxxix).

Coleridge also cites STC as a witness against the 'long misgovernment' of Ireland by England. She describes his response to this 'record' of national 'shame' in religious terms: '[m]y Father never ceased to be heartily sorry for these our misdoings, and he ever held the burden of them only to be lightened by confession and amendment' (p. xxxv, p. xxxvii, p. xxxix). Her language is based on the general Confession before Holy Communion in the Book of Common Prayer: '[w]e do earnestly repent, And are heartily sorry for these our misdoings; The remembrance of them is grievous unto us; The burden of them is intolerable'.¹⁸ The process of political reconciliation, of righting political, economic and social injustices inflicted by England on Ireland, must begin in a devotional impulse. Coleridge implies that the political fracture is irreparable unless the malefactor first turns to God to confess and ask forgiveness: penitence and prayer must accompany 'amendment' (p. xxxix). The idea of national repentance was familiar in the mid-nineteenth century, as Chadwick explains: '[g]overnment was in the habit of ordering national days of prayer either of thanksgiving as in victory or of fasting and humiliation as in plague', though after 1830 governments were more reluctant to do so. Nonetheless, there had been a day of 'fasting and humiliation' in March 1832 in

¹⁸ 'The Order of Holy Communion', in *The Book of Common Prayer*.

response to an outbreak of cholera, and cholera again prompted a request for such a day in 1853, which the Home Secretary rejected. Two days of national fasting and prayer were held in the 1850s, however: in 1854 for war in Crimea; and in 1857 for the Indian mutiny.¹⁹ That England should enact national penitence for its misrule of Ireland, as Coleridge implies, was theoretically feasible in 1850. Her liturgical language is designed to express the gravity of this suggestion.

Post-Reform England's Treatment of Ireland

Coleridge critiques England's treatment of Ireland in the age of Reform. She refers to

the munificence of the present age, its Catholic emancipation and present of ten millions, —which might be imaged forth emblematically as a tree of rapid growth and showy bloom, attired in broad white blossoms of persuasive perfume, the odour of that best sanctity, which is one with goodness (p. lvi).

Coleridge's association of England's post-Reform treatment of Ireland with 'sanctity' and 'goodness' is ambiguous. Her language contains subtle equivocations that question the solidity and permanence of recent improvements. '[R]apid growth', 'showy bloom', 'persuasive perfume' carry hints of superficiality, short-term pragmatism, and political spin. Coleridge places the blossoming emblem of post-Reform England in sight of 'the knotted thorns of past oppression, blackening in the back-ground afar into the distance' (p. lvi). She brings the whole scene sharply into moral focus by comparing it to 'that infernal grove beheld by Dante, where self-murderers after the resurrection are to suspend the bodies they have violently cast aside' (p. lvi). Coleridge establishes the rationale for her reference to Dante's grove of suicides by invoking Berkeley's Biblical formulation that Ireland is 'bone of [England's] bone, and flesh of her flesh' (p. xl n). According to Berkeley's conceit, England's 'murderous' treatment of Ireland 'might be called suicidal' (pp. lvi–lvii).

Coleridge updates the landscape of Dante's *Inferno* to incorporate the political catastrophe of Ireland. English oppression 'might be [...] represented in spectral vision as a huge black-thorn bearing the semi-animate mangled body of "poor Ireland"' (p. lvii). The bright emblem of post-reform justice is, after all, no more than a 'showy' deception, because the dangerous myth of 'Celtic original defect' persists (p. lvii). Coleridge quotes de Vere's charge that the English have failed in their 'duty' to provide the Irish with an adequate 'system of education, both intellectual and industrial' (p. lviii). In place of education and agricultural reform, the English 'introduce[d] hard men at arms into the soft bosom of the land' (p. lviii). This language of sexual violence

¹⁹ Chadwick, p. 490, p. 37, pp. 490-491.

recalls Milton's ecological image of incestuous rape: '[m]en', by Mammon's 'suggestion taught', learned to exploit the natural world, 'and, with impious hands | Rifled the bowels of their mother earth | For treasures better hid'.²⁰ Coleridge goes on to present a Miltonic view of seventeenth-century history, in which she condemns the 'Laxity and Corruption' of the 'Restoration' (p. lix). This thwarted the possibility of reformation and prosperity in Ireland, she contends, following 'what Cromwell actually did for [the country], after his campaign' (p. lix). Coleridge aligns herself here with radical republicanism. Her attitudes are reminiscent of those underlying Charles Lamb's historical drama *John Woodvil* (1802), in which republican virtue opposes Restoration courtly excess.

Coleridge recalls that, around 'forty or fifty years ago', some commentators had advocated genocidal policies on the grounds that the Irish were sub-human (xlili). De Vere refers to the English having branded the Irish 'with a character below humanity'.²¹ If no one would dare to advance such a view in the post-Reform era, the tendency to blame Irish poverty on 'their Celtic blood' prevails (p. xlii). For Coleridge, such complacent smugness leads to an ugly hypocrisy characteristic of contemporary England. The belief that the Irish character is innately flawed 'encourage[s] a system of permissive cruelty', which, Coleridge contends, is 'adapted to the delicate selfishness and timid injustice of the present age' (p. lvii). She compares contemporary English hypocrisy to that of 'the brilliant and accomplished Edmund [...] hastening out of sight of the barbarities about to be committed on the body of his miserable and defenceless parent' (p. lvii). Coleridge's personification of her age as 'the brilliant and accomplished Edmund' is a potent critique of a culture in which intellect is a mere instrument for the acquisition of power and wealth; in which, in STC's words, 'those attainments, which give a man the power of doing what he wishes in order to obtain what he desires, are alone to be considered knowledge'. Edmund, opportunistic empiricist, is a supreme practitioner of what STC calls 'the Mechanic Philosophy'.²² Coleridge's appropriation of Edmund to symbolize English political morality is a radical statement. She indicates, though, that her critique does not contradict the positive view of England's political character and constitution that she expressed earlier: '[i]t only implies that as far as we have advanced beyond other lands and ages', she explains, 'so far do we lag behind the standard we ought to attain' (p. lvii). Coleridge recognizes that, in contemporary England, contradictory political tendencies may exist in the same individual. She cites

²⁰ *Paradise Lost*, I. 685-688.

²¹ Aubrey de Vere, *English Misrule and Irish Misdemeanors* (London: Murray, 1848), p. 105.

²² Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *On the Constitution of Church and State*, ed. by John Colmer, *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 16 vols (London: Routledge; Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1969-2002), X (1976), p. 62, p. 64.

people who are personally benevolent, yet support cruel and reactionary social policies: those ‘who would regard with horror any attempt to bring back the villenage of old times’, yet admire ‘Malthusian theories of the Poor Law, which really enslave the poor’ (p. lvii).

The Poor Law: Christian Principles of Political Economy

Coleridge’s reference to the Poor Law leads her to consider Christian principles of social justice. Ireland remains her focal point, but she encompasses the religious and philosophical grounds of socio-economic policy. She supports Hazlitt’s condemnation of ‘Malthusian theories’, which, he contends, teach that ‘by the laws of God and Nature the Rich have a Right to starve the Poor, whenever they, the Poor, cannot maintain themselves’ (pp. lvii, lviii). Coleridge suggests that economic injustice is enshrined in Malthusian ‘laws’ which ‘protect the able and successful, [...] in the accumulation, augmentation and transmission of wealth’, while failing to make provision for ‘those who cannot obtain work or cannot perform it’ (p. lviii). Coleridge’s language has a Biblical resonance: ‘the fortunate are adding field to field and vineyard to vineyard’, while the destitute are barely ‘granted enough’ to survive (p. lviii). She mocks the reactionary attitude that would condemn her argument as ‘the very principle of Socialism, of Communism’ (p. lviii). If Socialism and Communism make the required provision for those who have fallen through society’s net, the victims of ‘the complications of our Social System’, Coleridge contends, they are wholly in line with ‘Christian Polity’ (p. lviii).

Coleridge argues that ‘justice is embodied in the principle of a Poor Law by the reciprocation of rights and duties’ (p. lxxii n.). She cites Wordsworth in support of this tenet, and quotes in a footnote the whole of the ninth paragraph of Wordsworth’s essay that forms the ‘Postscript’ to his volume *Yarrow Revisited and Other Poems* (1835).²³ Here, Wordsworth argues that it is ‘the duty of a Christian Government, standing *in loco parentis* towards all its subjects, to make such effectual provision, that no one shall be in danger of perishing either through the neglect or harshness of its legislation’ (p. lxiii n). Wordsworth is reacting against the Benthamite Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834. The Act aimed to reduce public expenditure on poor relief, and to encourage what the 1834 Poor Law Report called ‘the spirit of industry’. The 1834 Act abolished ‘[a]ll relief whatever to able-bodied persons or to their families, otherwise than in well-regulated workhouses’. The living conditions in the new workhouses were to be worse — ‘less eligible’ — than those of the ‘most wretched independent labourer’, and families would

²³ William Wordsworth, ‘Postscript 1835’, in *Prose*, III, pp. 231-284.

be separated. Workhouse relief would ‘symbolize degradation’.²⁴ Wordsworth, as Keble recognized, had promoted a noble vision of poverty. In *The Old Cumberland Beggar* (1800), a poem that Coleridge loved particularly, Wordsworth had celebrated an ideal of relief based on local tradition and individual charity, wholly at odds with the severely degrading provisions of the 1834 Act. The Tory Wordsworth would advocate relief managed locally by the landed gentry, on principles of Christian charity. In his essay, Wordsworth contends that the nation should implement ‘the political philosophy of the New Testament’.²⁵ This is the defining assumption of Coleridge’s discussion of social justice. She pre-empts the objection that Christianity is no longer a universal creed. Even if agnosticism and atheism are held by some, ‘Christian morality is [...] inscribed upon the heart of every member of the community’ (p. lxiv). Therefore, Coleridge argues, Christian values ‘ought to be expressed in acts of the Legislature’ (p. lxiv). Coleridge adduces both the radical Hazlitt and the Tory Wordsworth to support her critique of the Poor Law.

Coleridge’s Dialogic Experiment

In the penultimate section of her ‘Introduction’, Coleridge explains her dialogic relationship with STC. Ostensibly, Coleridge is asking the reader’s ‘pardon’ for having strayed beyond the confines of introducing STC’s journalism:

In the foregoing sections I have noticed some salient points of my Father’s opinions on politics, — indeed to do this was alone my original intent; but once entered into the stream of such thought I was carried forward almost involuntarily by the current. I went on to imagine what my Father’s view would be of subjects which are even now engaging public attention. It has so deeply interested myself thus to bring him down into the present hour, — to fancy him speaking in detail as he would speak were he now alive; and by long dwelling on all that remains of him, his poems of sentiment and of satire, his prose works, his letters of various sorts, his sayings and the reports and remarks of others about him, I have come to feel so unified with him in mind, that I cannot help anticipating a ready pardon for my bold attempt; nay even a sympathy in it from genial readers, and such, or none at all, I think to have for the present publication (p. lxxxiv).

Filial affection, she pleads, justifies how her writing breaks the bounds of its editorial brief.

The passage also reveals an underlying tension. Coleridge’s authorial autonomy strains against a literary and intellectual dependence on STC. This is reflected in *Biographia 1847*, where Coleridge’s interpretation of STC’s religious philosophy gives

²⁴ Evans, *1783-1870*, p. 221, p. 222, p. 220, p. 222, p. 225.

²⁵ Wordsworth, *Prose*, III, p. 253.

way to her critique of Tractarianism. Similarly, in *Essays*, she says that her sole ‘original intent’ was to comment on ‘[her] Father’s opinions on politics’. She was then carried away by the persuasive impetus of STC’s ideas. She uses her familiar imagery of flowing water to denote creative energy. STC’s ‘thought’ is a strong ‘stream,’ in which she becomes immersed, to be ‘carried forward almost involuntarily by the current’. ‘[I]nvoluntary’ is a term Coleridge associates with STC’s ‘defect[ive]’ cognitive processes. She describes the ‘flowing’ of STC’s ‘thought and imagination’ as being beyond his volitional control.²⁶ Meanwhile, for a time, she is carried forward ‘almost involuntarily’. ‘[A]lmost’ is the vital word. It indicates that Coleridge retains intellectual autonomy, despite the compelling force of STC’s ideas.

Her independence then becomes mastery: she replaces the passive (‘I was carried’) with the active (‘I went on’). No longer immersed in STC’s thought, Coleridge stands apart from it, and subjects it to critical analysis: ‘I went on to imagine what my Father’s view would be of subjects which are even now engaging public attention’. Coleridge takes charge of STC’s ‘thought’ and applies it to the service of her own agenda: ‘[i]t has so deeply interested myself to bring him down into the present hour’. Coleridge’s emphatic ‘myself’ privileges her over STC (‘him’) and indicates her literary dominance. In her transposition of STC’s work to ‘the present hour’, Coleridge locates STC as a contributory voice within her own texts. Her appropriation of STC’s work is a coolly clinical process. It is not a spontaneous, subconscious phenomenon, but a ‘bold’ hermeneutic ‘attempt’ upon which she has engaged deliberately. The process Coleridge describes here applies to her appropriation of STC’s ideas throughout her politico-religious writings, from the ‘Preface’ to Volume 3 of *Literary Remains*, to her final religious work, *Dialogues on Personality*. Coleridge’s methodology of ‘bring[ing]’ STC ‘down into the present hour’ involves, in Gadamer’s terms, a ‘fusion’ of historical ‘horizons’. Gadamer’s description of this hermeneutic process lends insight into Coleridge’s reapplication of STC’s ideas:

understanding is certainly not concerned with “understanding historically” [...]. Rather, one intends to *understand the text itself*. But this means that the interpreter’s own thoughts too have gone into re-awakening the text’s meaning. In this the interpreter’s own horizon is decisive, yet not as a personal standpoint that he maintains or enforces, but more as [...] a possibility that one brings into play and puts at risk, and that helps one truly to make one’s own what the text says. I have described this [...] as a “fusion of horizons”.²⁷

In Coleridge’s present ‘thoughts’, the ‘meaning’ of STC’s texts ‘re-awaken[s]’. She

²⁶ *Biographia 1847*, I, p. xlvi, p. xix.

²⁷ Gadamer, p. 406. Gadamer’s emphasis.

‘fus[es]’ the historical past with her current ‘horizon’. What she seeks to create in this ‘fusion’ is a new understanding of ‘subjects which are even now engaging public attention’. The tension between authorial autonomy and editorial service is resolved, therefore, in the ‘fusion’ of ‘horizons’. Coleridge appropriates STC’s ideas for her own setting, rather than attempting to convey an ‘exact understanding’ of them as they existed in their own context. Coleridge concludes the paragraph by justifying her experimental procedure on the grounds of filial affection. She is a daughter who wishes to ‘fancy’ her departed father ‘speaking’. As a daughter, she has read her father’s writings so attentively that she feels ‘unified with him in mind’. Again, she exploits the family context to construct a position of unimpeachable social propriety. A work of major significance, *Essays*, with its ‘Introduction’, is the composite product of Coleridge and STC. Coleridge is the managing contributor in this partnership.

Her ‘Introduction’ to *Essays* is an experiment in dialogic writing: its text is multi-voiced. In the last three paragraphs of ‘Section V’, the first of her sections on Ireland, Coleridge sets up a textual conversation between Berkeley, STC and de Vere, in which her own role is managerial, guiding the direction and continuity of the textual interactions. The three paragraphs consist of seventeen lines of quotation from de Vere, twenty-four lines of quotation from STC, a quotation in a footnote of two lines from Canticles, viii. 8, a quotation of six lines from Berkeley in another footnote, and thirty-six lines of Coleridge’s writing (including the notes). The first of these three concluding paragraphs follows that in which Coleridge appropriates liturgical language to express STC’s penitential remorse for England’s mistreatment of Ireland. In the next paragraph, three from the end of the section, she explains that STC held it to be a matter of ‘far-sighted prudence and Christian Principle’ to treat ‘Ireland as flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone’ (p. xl). At this point, Coleridge directs the reader to the footnote in which she cites Berkeley as the source of the trope from Genesis 2. 23 to express the intimate relationship of England and Ireland (p. xl). The main text, from the footnote marker to the end of the paragraph, gives a quotation from de Vere which uses a different metaphor to restate the idea of mutual dependence: ‘consider whether your neighbours’ side of the house can be burned without your goods suffering damage’ (p. xl).

The next paragraph consists largely of a quotation from de Vere, which Coleridge introduces by emphasizing Ireland’s helpless vulnerability. She compares his ‘feelings’ to those of ‘a mother defending unfortunate and aggrieved children’ (p. xl). In the quoted passage, de Vere expresses indignation that the English censure the Irish for characteristics of ‘sloth’ and ‘procrastinat[ion]’ that are the effects of English oppression (p. xl). Coleridge concludes the paragraph by addressing the reader directly, who, she assumes, is closely familiar with de Vere’s book, and has a copy ready to hand: ‘[s]ee

again that agitated paragraph, where [de Vere] enumerates the various things for which Ireland has to reproach the Government of England, beginning with “precious and repeated opportunities vouchsafed and rejected”, and ending with “the streams of knowledge choked in their channels and the springs of virtue poisoned at their source” (p. xli). Coleridge conceives her text and de Vere’s as complementary. Hers collaborates with de Vere’s in acting for it as an intermediary or guide. The final paragraph of the section consists of quotations from an article by STC that was published in *The Courier*. This shows, Coleridge explains, that de Vere’s view of Ireland was ‘compendiously anticipated by [STC] [...] in 1811’ (p. xli). The effect of this textual dialogue is to present STC as a ‘political philosopher’ whose views earlier in the century support those of Christian commentators (de Vere, herself) in 1848 and 1850 respectively. Berkeley, however, is the source of the essential concept, just as the writings of Archbishop Leighton underpin the religious discourse of STC’s *Aids to Reflection*. These paragraphs demonstrate Coleridge’s conception of a text as an assembly of separate components. The components bring together individual minds and discrete texts to create a new composite product. Coleridge exploits this method of construction in her unpublished religious dialogues.

Religious Polemic and Literary Form

In the last few years of her life, Coleridge produced a series of texts entitled collectively *Dialogues on Regeneration*. This significant body of work remains unpublished. Coleridge exploits what Gadamer calls ‘the maieutic productivity of Socratic dialogue, the art of using words as a midwife’, as a model for the communal interchange and development of ideas.²⁸ She had experimented with Socratic dialogue in ‘Nervousness’, and her use of the form in religious writing reflects several influences. Walter Savage Landor’s *Imaginary Conversations* had appeared in 1824, but his *Pentameron* (1837), on a theme that encompasses Catholicism and poetry, is a more likely influence. *Pentameron* presents an animated critique of Dante in the form of fictional conversations between Boccaccio and Petrarch. In a footnote to her ‘Critique of Dante and Milton’, Coleridge recommends *Pentameron* to ‘all students of Dante’, along with STC’s and Carlyle’s discussions of the Italian poet.²⁹ Southey offers her a dialogic model in his *Sir Thomas More: or, Colloquies on the Prospects and Progress of Society*. Coleridge refers to *Colloquies* in Chapter 5 of the ‘Extracts’ in connection with her poetic dialogue with Keble. She can ‘speak as freely’ to Keble, the ‘phantom Harmonist’, she says, ‘as my

²⁸ Gadamer, p. 27.

²⁹ ‘Sara Coleridge’s “Critique of Dante and Milton”’, ed. by Peter Swaab, *Wordsworth Circle*, 44 (2013), 20-30 (p. 28, p. 29).

Uncle, Mr. Southey, does with the phantom Sir Thomas More, of his *Colloquies*.³⁰ Southey addresses religious and political themes in a series of dialogues between a persona he adopts ('Montesinos') and the ghost of Sir Thomas More. Although the discourse is often historical, Southey's concerns are those of contemporary England: Catholic Emancipation, the condition of Ireland, the established church, the Reform Movement. The tone of the exchanges between Sir Thomas and Montesinos ranges from the humorously familiar – 'You are a good ghost, said I, to come at cock-crow instead of taking your departure at that sound' – to the stern and prophetic: 'there is no error [...] more dangerous', Sir Thomas warns, 'than the doctrine [...] that the state ought not to concern itself with the religion of its subjects'.³¹ In its combination of high seriousness with genial humour, Southey's *Colloquies* anticipates the dramatic variety of Coleridge's dialogues.

Newman provides models for dialogue as a medium of theological polemic. His *Tract 38* and *Tract 41* of 1834 are dialogues between 'Laicus' and 'Clericus'. Laicus seeks to draw from Clericus an exposition of his theological position. Newman uses the Socratic form to anticipate and answer objections to evolving Tractarian theology, and to connect with a non-professional audience. Coleridge's dialogues, though specialist in content, are also framed to be more accessibly varied in style than continuous essays. Newman again exploited dialogue as a form of religious writing in 'Home Thoughts from Abroad' (1836), and 'The Catholicity of the Anglican Church' (1840), in which he sets out to examine whether the Anglican Church is in a state of schism. The task requires him to 'make a strong statement' of the opposing case, which influences his methodology: 'we shall best begin by setting down the pleadings of one side and the other in the form of dialogue, [...] so as to bring matters to an issue'. Dialogue, Newman claims, enables him to treat both sides 'favourably'.³² This anticipates Coleridge's precept, stated in the *Regeneration Dialogues* by her character Marvell, that it is 'grossly unfair' when a polemicist 'presents the views he means to oppose in the statements of bitter prejudicial adversaries rather than as they are propounded by their intelligent maintainers'.³³ Coleridge, like Newman, uses dialogue as a means of presenting a balanced argument. The Socratic dialogue of Newman's 1840 article is brief, and forms the basis for an extended analysis, in which the author's voice is that of an involved adjudicator who declares his interests: '[n]ow it would seem that in the above discussion each disputant has a strong point; our strong point is the argument from

³⁰ 'Extracts', p. 281 n.

³¹ Southey, *Colloquies*, I, pp. 150-151, p. 284.

³² Newman, *Tracts*, pp. 102-128. John Henry Newman, 'The Catholicity of the English Church', *British Critic*, 27 (1840), 40-88 (p. 42).

³³ HRC.

primitiveness; that of the Romanists is the argument from universality'.³⁴ In the closing pages, a strongly Anglican voice takes over. Newman's essay suggests the possibilities offered by a text of 'multiple voices and perspectives' in negotiating theological divisions.³⁵

'Home Thoughts Abroad' is a dialogue between three friends, which takes place in Rome. The cordial relationship between Cyril and Ambrose anticipates the friendly exchanges between Markright and Marvell, Coleridge's leading protagonists. Ambrose, says Cyril, is an 'entertaining' companion, who, in debate, 'could bear a set down or a laugh easily, from the sweetness and amiableness of his nature'.³⁶ With the exception of the fiercely dogmatic Newbolt, Coleridge's characters are generally amiable, regardless of viewpoint, and 'easily' make or take jokes. Newman exploits dialogue, at a crucial stage of his development, to explore opposing views of the Anglican Church. In literary terms, 'Home Thoughts Abroad' is far less ambitious than Coleridge's dialogues, whose speakers represent a broader theological spectrum. Coleridge exploits dialogue to test the viability of her theology amid diverse competing viewpoints. In a Bakhtinian sense, both Newman and Coleridge offer a model of individuals 'collectively searching for truth, in [a] process of [...] dialogic interaction'.³⁷ Newman's dialogic novel *Loss and Gain* (1848) also influences Coleridge. The novel's most significant passages are conversations in which characters debate religious theory. Despite reservations about its underlying attitudes, Coleridge admires the literary techniques of *Loss and Gain*: its 'style is excellent', she remarks, and 'the dialogue flows well'.³⁸

Coleridge's *Regeneration Dialogues* exploit multi-voiced textual structure within their Socratic form. A passage in 'Dialogue VI' of the 'Introductory Dialogues' exemplifies her techniques. Markright is the main protagonist, and represents a Coleridgean position. He, Marvell and Lyttelthocht have been discussing free will and determinism. Markright has argued that a regenerated individual cannot act in a way contrary to his changed nature: '[h]ow [...] can a divinely changed will, a moral being endowed with a new nature in Christ, will what is contrary to this nature, will to neglect the grace of God?' Before leaving, Lyttelthocht charges Markright with 'Calvinism' and a denial of 'free will'. Markright, with Marvell as empathetic audience, then sets out the rationale for his viewpoint. He hands Marvell his notebook: 'Here are two stanzas and a brief commentary in verse and prose which bear upon the subject of circumstances and free agency'. The 'stanzas' are from *The Christian Year*, the first two of 'S. Luke The

³⁴ Newman, 'Catholicity', p. 47.

³⁵ Dentith, p. 32.

³⁶ John Henry Newman, 'Home Thoughts Abroad', *British Magazine*, 9 (1836), 236-248 & 357-369 (p. 238).

³⁷ Macovski, p. 27.

³⁸ *Criticism*, p. 175.

Evangelist', which consists of twenty stanzas. Keble's poem contrasts the steadfast endurance of St Luke, who continued to follow St Paul in his evangelizing ministry, with the weakness of Demas. St Paul, in his second Epistle to Timothy, explains that Demas left the evangelizing ministry for love of 'this present world'.³⁹ Keble's poem cites Demas's faithlessness as a warning against complacency: a baptized member of the Church may fall.

Marvell reads out the stanzas from Keble, headed 'Remark', followed by two stanzas by Coleridge entitled 'Reply'. The 'Reply' is in quatrains, as are Keble's verses. Keble's are in uniform octameter – while in Coleridge's the second and fourth lines each contain six syllables. The third extract is by Ralph Cudworth, one of the seventeenth-century 'Cambridge Platonists'.⁴⁰ Cudworth's passage is on the concept of free will. The three texts are presented without comment until the end of the third.

Remark

Two clouds before the summer gale
In equal race fleet o'er the sky;
Two flowers, when wintry blasts assail,
Together pine, together die.

But two capricious human hearts –
No sage's rod may track their ways,
No eye pursue their lawless starts
Along their wild self chosen maze.

Reply

Two clouds alike may melt or fly,
Their essence is the same:
Two flowers together bloom or die
Of consubstantial frame.

Man's outward part, like cloud or flower,
Is formed of common clay:
But souls of various thought and power
Take each a several way.

³⁹ HRC.

⁴⁰ Audi, *Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, p. 99.

All “souls or personalities”, as Cudworth speaks, “have in them an individualizing principle whereby one may be exalted to heaven; the other abased unto hell; and this principle, even the Will, by which of course I mean the Man considered as self determinant – originating his own acts – is not subject to circumstances, determined from without”.⁴¹

Markright summarizes how the three texts elucidate his conception of free will in the process of regeneration: ‘man by free acts of submission to the Holy Spirit acquires a holy nature’, he asserts. This is ‘as contrary to sin as it is to the nature of man to grovel in the mire like swine, or dive in the sea like an eel’. The cited texts, according to Markright, negate Robert Wilberforce’s theory that a person can possess a sinful and a regenerate nature at the same time. The individual is ‘self-determinant’, a free agent. As Coleridge comments on a separate sheet of draft notes, ‘a will determined from without, driven along the sky of existence like a breath of wind that meets it, would be no *will* at all, no ground of moral responsibility, because no free agent’.⁴² Both Keble’s and Coleridge’s verses show that, while similar natural phenomena and similar botanical organisms behave in the same way in the same conditions, human beings behave in different, unpredictable ways in the same circumstances, according to the will, which constitutes human individuality. This multi-voiced passage reflects the technique Coleridge identifies in STC’s work of forming his own writings around a nucleus of others’ texts. Coleridge assembles a new composite text from multiple discrete elements. Unlike STC, Coleridge is generally scrupulous in referencing her sources.

Occasionally, Coleridge leaves the reader to make the connection with a source: the effect is to highlight its semantic significance. For example, Markright makes an unreferenced allusion to the ‘Cerberian’ offspring of Sin and Death in *Paradise Lost*, which ‘creep’ back into Sin’s ‘womb’ [‘i]f aught disturbed their noise’.⁴³ This allusion characterizes the ‘Catholicism’ of Anglo-Catholicism as Papist. Its ‘Romanism’, Markright asserts, ‘will creep back into the maternal bosom, whence it came out’. In another passage, Markright’s language interrogates the ontological status of Wilberforce’s theory. ‘Man is one thing’, Markright asserts, ‘no bundle of distinct essences – but one thing with many determinations’.⁴⁴ Markright associates Wilberforce’s ‘divisional’ theory of human nature with David Hume’s sceptical formulation that human beings ‘are nothing but a bundle or collection of different

⁴¹ HRC.

⁴² HRC. Coleridge’s emphasis.

⁴³ *Paradise Lost*, II. 655-657.

⁴⁴ HRC.

perceptions'.⁴⁵ Coleridge's use of a word in this way 'as a sign of someone else's semantic position' anticipates Bakhtin's tenet that 'a dialogic approach is possible toward any signifying part of an utterance, even toward an individual word'.⁴⁶ In *Biographia 1847*, Coleridge had associated Wordsworth's phrase 'inward eye' – 'They flash upon that inward eye | Which is the bliss of solitude' – with Kant's construction of the mind: the 'inward eye' is 'the intellectual medium' through which we view '[r]eligion'.⁴⁷ She does not reference the phrase in *Biographia 1847*, and nor does she in *Dialogues*, when she appropriates it in Markright's definition of 'Reason': 'by Reason I mean the organ of religious apprehension – the inward eye by which we [...] behold God'.⁴⁸ Wordsworthian poetic vision is identified with Coleridgean 'Reason', the 'organ' by which we encounter the Divine. In *Biographia 1847*, Coleridge had reversed STC's negative criticism of 'I wandered lonely'.⁴⁹ The allusion to the poem in *Dialogues* represents STC and Wordsworth as complementary religious and cultural influences, and continues the reconciliation process she had initiated in *Biographia 1847*.

'Dialogues on Regeneration': Theological Themes

Coleridge's 'Dialogues on Regeneration' consist of around eight hundred pages in total. The purpose of the dialogues is to update the anti-Tractarian territory of 'On Rationalism'. Coleridge's theology in 1850 and 1851 is consistent with that of 1843. By 1850, though, the politico-religious ground had shifted. The Gorham crisis brought the divisions of the previous twenty years into sharp focus. In the wake of the Privy Council's judgment of the Gorham case, Coleridge's Tractarian parish priest, William Dodsworth, and Robert Wilberforce's brother, Henry, were among those who seceded to Rome. The Pope's establishment of Roman Catholic dioceses in England in autumn 1850, and Prime Minister Lord John Russell's consequent attack on Anglo-Catholics, exacerbated religious instabilities. The politico-religious disruptions of 1850 are reflected in Coleridge's changing terminology: 'the title Tractarian is ambiguous', comments Markright, 'because the earlier Tracts differ in spirit and principles from the later ones, and have little in common with that section of High Churchmen which I call Anglo-Romanists'. Coleridge used 'Anglo-Catholic' as a term synonymous with the theology of the Oxford Movement in *Biographia 1847*. Because of the distinct Roman Catholic tendencies in the post-Gorham successors to the Tractarians, Markright names them 'Anglo-Romanists', and implies that they belong in the Church of Rome. Marvell

⁴⁵ A. J. Ayer, *Hume* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 52.

⁴⁶ *The Bakhtin Reader*, p. 104.

⁴⁷ Wordsworth, 'Poems, in Two Volumes', p. 208, ll. 15-16. *Biographia 1847*, I, p. lxxv.

⁴⁸ HRC.

⁴⁹ *Biographia 1847*, II, p. 154 n.

articulates the dilemma of a High Churchman in 1850 and 1851, which is reminiscent of that of Charles Reding in *Loss and Gain*: ‘I am no Romanist – of that I am sure – that I am a thorough Reformationist I am not sure’.⁵⁰

As in ‘On Rationalism’, Coleridge’s agenda in the *Dialogues* has a political inflection in her committed defence of religious freedom. Intellectually ‘empty and light as a blown egg shell’, Markright contends, the ‘mystic doctrine of sacraments’ upholds a ‘domineering despotism’ that has potential to ‘become an instrument of grinding oppression’.⁵¹ Coleridge’s language here recalls Kant’s appeal for intellectual ‘freedom’, in defiance of the ‘despotism of the Schools, which cry danger whenever their cobwebs are swept away’.⁵² The ‘mystic doctrine’, Markright contends, exploits superstition as a means of psychological control: he compares the idea of ‘regeneration’ as ‘a momentary change’ to waving an ‘enchanter’s wand’.⁵³ In *Biographia 1847*, Coleridge celebrates Luther’s liberation of individual Christians from the spiritual and emotional ‘labyrinth’ of sacerdotal domination.⁵⁴ The Anglo-Romanists’ baptismal doctrine is based on a system designed to re-establish the clergy’s temporal power. It is, in Markright’s words, ‘constructed for the benefit of priestly mediators between God and Man – it flows forth into the doctrine of penance devised in order to throw power and authority and honour into their hands’. Against the Anglo-Romanist doctrine that sustains the power of the clergy, Markright proposes ‘a cleansing of the medium through which the spiritual truth is beheld’.⁵⁵ This summarizes Coleridge’s whole aim in the *Dialogues*. For Kant ‘the duty of philosophy was to remove the deception which arose from false interpretation, even though many a prized and cherished dream should vanish at the same time’.⁵⁶ Coleridge seeks to ‘cleanse the medium’ of ‘interpretation’ in order to eradicate ‘deception’ in religious teaching. Her Kantian methodology is complemented in her final works by a dialogic form that promotes critical interchange.

It appears that the dialogues would have formed a substantial single work, consisting of an assembly of individual dialogues, each on a particular aspect of regeneration. For example, Coleridge’s final work, *Dialogues on Personality in Man*, was begun in September 1851 and completed in November, just six months before her death. These dialogues form a discrete and tightly structured critique of Robert Wilberforce’s *The Doctrine of Holy Baptism* (1849). Wilberforce, Archdeacon of the East Riding, hailed by William Gladstone as ‘the Athanasius or Augustine of his

⁵⁰ HRC.

⁵¹ HRC.

⁵² Kant, p. 28.

⁵³ HRC.

⁵⁴ *Biographia 1847*, I, p. cxxvi.

⁵⁵ HRC.

⁵⁶ Kant, p. 8.

generation', was, like Newman, a formidable opponent. It is feasible to envisage that *Dialogues on Personality* might have been published separately as an answer to Wilberforce's book; as such, it would have formed a bold and significant intervention. It was the second of three works in which Wilberforce 'drew together the various strands of sacramental teaching', in an attempt 'to form a single corpus' of Anglo-Catholic 'theology'.⁵⁷ Wilberforce's book also had an immediate polemical rationale. It aimed to refute the Calvinist tendencies of *Effects of Infant Baptism* (1849) by Evangelical theologian William Goode, whose learning, according to Chadwick, 'bore comparison with that of any English divine'.⁵⁸ Infant baptism raised the continuing problem of post-baptismal sin in Anglo-Catholic theology. In the first volume of his parochial sermons, published in 1845, the Tractarian Henry Manning included 'On Falling from the Grace of Baptism', in which he echoes Pusey's severity of the previous decade: '[I]et him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. Lot's wife is an example of those who fall from baptismal grace'.⁵⁹ In *Dialogues on Personality*, Coleridge's character Una rejects the harshness of such teaching on post-baptismal sin: 'Heaven forbid that we should look upon all who sin habitually after Baptism as dead branches fit only for burning!'.⁶⁰ The other persistent problem, that potential grace resides in individuals who show no sign of regeneration, also remained unresolved: 'even those whose lives are openly profane and evil', according to Manning, 'are of the nature of saints'.⁶¹ Wilberforce devised what Markright terms a 'divisional theory' of human nature in order to solve the problems raised by Anglo-Catholic baptismal doctrine.

Wilberforce conceives individual human nature as being separate from general human nature. Christ redeems our general human nature in baptism, while our individual nature, in which our distinct personality resides, remains subject to sin. Coleridge selects as an epigraph for the *Dialogues on Personality* a brief quotation from Wilberforce that summarizes the essence of his theory. She puts what she regards as the key words in italics:

There is in each man some simple, single, indivisible principle, which invests him with individuality, whereby he is distinguished from his fellows. [...] [*T*]his principle of Personality is something distinct from that common nature, which is re-constructed in Christ our Lord.

As Hyflyte, who, with Marvell, is an exponent of Wilberforce's theory, explains: 'the gift of Holy Baptism concerns only the general humanity'. Hyflyte believes that

⁵⁷ Newsome, p. 383, p. 374.

⁵⁸ Chadwick, p. 450.

⁵⁹ Newsome, p. 207.

⁶⁰ HRC.

⁶¹ Newsome, p. 209.

Wilberforce has solved the problems surrounding the Tractarian theory of baptismal regeneration: it is ‘as if an influx of light had removed, at once and for ever, the darkness that has so long brooded over the debated doctrine’. Wilberforce’s ‘new theory’, argues Hyflyte,

shows that the principle of personality, that simple, single, indivisible principle, which invests each man with that individuality, whereby he is distinguished from his fellows, [...] is something distinct from that general nature, which we have in common with our race, that common nature which is reconstituted in Christ our Lord. Now it is the general nature which receives the gift of regeneration in baptism. [...] It follows, therefore, as a direct consequence, that a baptized individual may be regenerate as to his [...] mere general humanity, even while he is personally sinful even to a high degree.

Markright finds the theory illogical, because it conceives of an individual possessing two opposing natures simultaneously: a contradiction that undermines faith and morality. The ‘divisional theory’ is subjected through the course of the dialogues to a critique based on ‘reason, which is common to all mankind’; and on ‘free will’, which ‘freely submit[s] to the righteous guidance of Christ’.⁶² Coleridge appropriates these concepts from STC and re-applies them to the politico-religious problems of late 1851.

STC in the ‘Regeneration Dialogues’

Marvell displays the critical open-mindedness that Coleridge advocates in polemical interchange. In the *Dialogues on Personality*, he interrogates Markright’s arguments rigorously, while gradually shifting in his own views. Marvell comes to reject Wilberforce’s ‘divisional theory’ because it contradicts STC’s concepts of reason and the moral will. Beneath the dialogue of Markright with Marvell and Hyflyte is a sub-dialogue between the contemporary Archdeacon and the departed metaphysician. STC is a constant presence throughout the *Regeneration Dialogues*. Coleridge even makes a joke of the repeated allusions to him: ‘S. T. Coleridge again!’ exclaims Marvell at yet another reference to STC in a speech of Markright’s. Marvell contends that the mystic doctrine of baptismal regeneration ‘has been very fully vindicated by J. H. Newman and other Anglo-Catholic writers of the present day’. Markright counters that Anglo-Catholics ignore the history of the topic: ‘[s]ome of your Anglo-Catholic maintainers of potential baptismal regeneration pretend’ that opponents ‘of their view *don’t know what it is*’. Yet, this is not the case, because STC ‘examined’ and refuted their mystic doctrine ‘many years ago’. Markright adds: ‘his pointed exposure of it in the *Literary Remains* has been before the world since 1838, and never has even been noticed. Yet, this

⁶² HRC. Coleridge’s emphasis.

assertion that their doctrine is condemned only because it is misunderstood is coolly repeated from year to year, and writers whose cobweb theories have been pulled to pieces even before they sat down to spin complain that their refinements and profundities have never been appreciated by opponents – that all must succumb under the weight of their reasonings if they dared draw nigh them'.⁶³ Anglo-Catholic polemicists, according to Markright, are sustained by their own and their readers' ignorance, or wilful neglect, of STC.

That STC refutes Anglo-Catholicism by anticipation, according to Markright, recalls Coleridge's contention that STC had answered Strauss before *The Life of Jesus* was published. Markright's comments lend insight into Coleridge as editor and author. As editor of the religious volumes of the *Literary Remains*, she selected extracts from STC's manuscripts that could be applied directly to a critique of Tractarianism. However, the *Literary Remains* received only limited attention, she alleges. Consequently, the potential of STC's ideas to resolve the problems of 1850 and 1851 remains untapped. That STC's writings have been neglected, according to Coleridge, requires her to appropriate his voice and engage his methodology in a new literary form. She 'bring[s]' STC 'down into the present hour' and re-applies his ideas in her dialogic critique of Wilberforce's theory (p. lxxxiv). '[O]bserve', Markright explains to Marvell, 'neither St Paul nor [STC] set forth the notion of two agents or causalities in one being'. STC 'suggests that the Holy Spirit may ineffably *unite* or become *one* with our will. He does not [conceive?] of a Divine Principle and a human power of agency in one man, and acting contrary the one to the other, the latter resisting the suasions of the former'.⁶⁴ As the neglect of *Literary Remains* suggests, for Coleridge merely to collect and reassemble STC's texts is inadequate. She must incorporate STC's principles in new and original writings of her own if his ideas are to have significant impact at mid-century. This is the rationale underlying her *Regeneration Dialogues*.

The Principles of Theological Debate

Marvell ultimately assents to Markright's arguments because they are based in STC's concept of 'reason'. Marvell concludes *Dialogues on Personality* by reading out 'a beautiful description of regeneracy' in STC's 'Notes on Luther'. The passage includes a celebration of 'reason' as 'the light that lighteth every man'.⁶⁵ Marvell's change of viewpoint involves a Christian attitude of humility, and a vocational commitment to seek true doctrine. He follows Coleridge's principle, stated in 'Extracts', that 'all mankind are

⁶³ HRC. Coleridge's emphasis.

⁶⁴ HRC. Coleridge's emphases.

⁶⁵ HRC.

bound to serve and defend' 'Truth'.⁶⁶ He is also an agile critical thinker, in contrast with characters such as Thychnesse and Newbolt, whose unreflecting sectarian affiliations produce intellectual paralysis. As Markright observes, 'long devotion to a peculiar dogmatism [...] habituates the mind to incoherency'.⁶⁷ A disputant who seeks 'understanding', according to Bakhtin, 'must not reject the possibility of abandoning his already prepared viewpoints and positions'.⁶⁸ At the conclusion of the *Dialogues on Personality*, Una praises Marvell's intellectual and moral strength in 'abandoning' his original 'viewpoint': 'he has allowed himself to be instructed by the reasonings of an opponent, and is not afraid to correct his views lest their improvement should be ascribed to powers of thought beyond his own'.⁶⁹ Marvell represents a model of the transformative potential of dialogue. Gadamer describes such a process: '[t]o reach an understanding in a dialogue is not merely a matter of putting oneself forward and successfully asserting one's own point of view, but being transformed into a communion in which we do not remain what we were'.⁷⁰ Marvell exemplifies the abandonment of monologic assertion and its replacement by dialogic 'communion'. His rational openness is a regrettably rare attitude: '[f]or one controversialist who has the thought of mind to own his opinion changed in the course of debate', Una observes, 'there are fifty thousand who can make a shew of maintaining their opinion against all the reasoning in the world'.⁷¹ Theological 'debate' reflects the male arrogance of academic competition, in which the object is self-promotion, and the means monologic. Coleridge presents a model of collaborative dialogue, in which 'meaning is [...] communally constructed and exchanged'.⁷²

Coleridge's 'communal' form of religious discourse reflects an historical process described by Jürgen Habermas. Through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, according to Habermas, a broadening public sphere emerged. It was produced by a culture of dialogue between 'critically debating private persons' of the rising bourgeoisie. Habermas regards Kant as a key influence on this growing dialogic culture. He cites Kant's view of the importance of dialogue in the formation of ideas: '[c]ertainly one may say, "Freedom to speak or write can be taken from us by a superior power, but never the freedom to think!" But how much, and how correctly, would we think if we did not think as it were in common with others, with whom we mutually communicate?' Coleridge's Kantian epistemology is based on a universal concept of reason; combined

⁶⁶ 'Extracts', p. 255.

⁶⁷ HRC.

⁶⁸ Bakhtin, *Speech Genres*, p. 142.

⁶⁹ HRC.

⁷⁰ Gadamer, p. 387.

⁷¹ HRC.

⁷² Macovski, p. 4.

with her politico-theological Lutheranism, it underpins her commitment to intellectual liberty. Similarly, her adoption of dialogic discourse reflects a Kantian commitment to ‘think [...] in common with others’. Habermas identifies the decades that followed the 1832 Reform Act, in which Coleridge was writing, as an era in which ‘public discussion’ flourished. According to Habermas, Peel’s Tamworth Manifesto of 1834, in which ‘for the first time a party published its election platform’, confirmed the importance of ‘[p]ublic opinion [...] formed in the conflict of arguments concerning a substantive issue’.⁷³ The post-Reform public sphere of political and religious argument enabled Coleridge to become an author, and determined the dialogic forms she would adopt and develop in her writing.

In the *Dialogues on Personality*, Coleridge represents Wilberforce’s divisional theory largely through speeches of his supporter Hyflyte, who paraphrases and quotes extensively from Wilberforce’s writings. According to the principles she advocated in her ‘Extracts’, Coleridge presents the views she opposes ‘truly’, using, ‘as far as possible’ the author’s ‘own words’.⁷⁴ As the guiding intelligence managing the dialogue, Coleridge makes her own bias clear. In doing so, she draws the reader into the dialogue. Just as in *Essays*, in which she expects the reader to have de Vere’s book by him, she assumes that her reader will have a copy of *The Doctrine of Holy Baptism* to hand, and challenges his active response. In a footnote her authorial voice intervenes. She directs the reader to consider some specific passages:

If any admirer of the theory under discussion demurs at the description implied in the words put in italics, I would ask him, what he understands by the author’s language in the *Doctrine of Holy Baptism*, at pages 26, 27, 47, 60, 118, 154, 155? What is meant by the following at p. 87?

After the quotation, Coleridge expresses her own view that ‘the theory’ fails to ‘meet the difficulty which it undertakes to remove, namely the personal non-sanctification of so many of the baptized’.⁷⁵ Coleridge here extends her dialogic concept of religious polemic as a collaborative activity. She invites the reader to work through Markright’s interpretations in the main text and use them as a basis for analyzing the passages she cites in the footnote. Coleridge’s literary procedure expresses her ethic of inclusive collaborative discourse.

Coleridge’s innovatory approach reflects her evolving religious and authorial agenda. The threat posed by Strauss’s Biblical criticism requires that theological

⁷³ Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: an Enquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), p. 82, p. 104, p. 131, p. 67.

⁷⁴ ‘Extracts’, p. 249.

⁷⁵ HRC.

discourse be rigorously cogent: ‘religious truth’ must have a ‘clear [...] intellectual form’. High Churchmen, though, rely in polemical argument on their traditional hierarchical status: ‘[s]uch preachers [as Novel Primitive]’, states Markright, ‘deal with argument as game is knocked down [...]. Wretched animals shorn of their strength are driven from the stations of the gallant sportsman, who aims at them luxuriously from beneath the shade of a green silk umbrella’. Markright envisages a future in which traditional religious authority and ecclesiastical privilege will count for nothing. High Church polemicists will be unequipped to defend religion from Straussian critical analysis: ‘[t]urn Primitive or Newbolt adrift into the forest of controversy to take his chance against a drove of wild arguments’ Marvell cuts Markright off with a sharp rebuke for indulging in ‘a wild sort of talk’. Throughout the dialogues, Markright and Marvell demonstrate a rigorously critical methodology. They interrogate imprecise terminology, and unexamined assumptions, in order to expose what is vacuous or contradictory. For example, Markright questions Lyttelthocht’s appropriation of Jeremy Taylor’s metaphor for baptismal grace as a ‘seed sown in the ground of the heart’. Lyttelthocht is unable to explain what this means in plain terms, and can only substitute ‘one metaphorical mode of speech for another’. Markright is committed to establishing ‘clear thought and unity of system’ in his dialogic analysis of doctrine.⁷⁶ For Coleridge, the shifting grounds of religious and cultural discourse at mid-century require literary innovation as much as intellectual subtlety: her dialogues are concerned with language and method.

In Newman’s *Loss and Gain*, some characters are caricatured through their names: for example, a liberal evangelical who regards ‘[r]eligion as a matter of the heart’ is named ‘Mr. Freeborn’; ‘Mr. Gabb’ and ‘Mr. Macanoise’ are verbose dissenting preachers.⁷⁷ In Coleridge’s dialogues all the speakers are given names that indicate their dominant characteristics. The main protagonists are Phosphilus Markright, the critical analyst who upholds the Coleridgean concept of reason as the light in which we encounter the divine; and Mystes Marvell, an Anglo-Catholic, who, as his name indicates, maintains the mystic doctrine of baptismal regeneration. Markright is by no means a model practitioner of polemic: at times he is satirically scathing, and expresses himself intemperately. On one occasion Marvell has to pull him up for arrogance. There is perhaps an element of self-criticism in Coleridge’s portrayal of Markright’s lapses of restraint. Marvell, by contrast, presents the most constructive approach to theological debate. Most of the names in the dialogues are satirically humorous: Brightwit Lyttelthocht, Hyflyte (reminiscent of ‘Mr. Highfly’ in *Loss and Gain*), Dr. Wordsall,

⁷⁶ HRC.

⁷⁷ Newman, *Loss and Gain*, p. 44, p. 337.

Smoothitt Smallthought, Mr. Thychnesse, and the Calvinist minister Mr. Knowell, for example. An Anglo-Catholic preacher is named Novel Primitive, while Oldways is a traditional High Church minister. Coleridge creates a community of characters who bring different shades of language and meaning to ‘the dynamic, collective generation of truth’, to borrow Macovski’s phrase.⁷⁸

None of the characters is a caricature of a contemporary public figure. This contrasts with Newman’s practice in *Loss and Gain*, where Jennings, ‘the Vice-Principal of St. Saviour’s, was plainly meant to be Edward Hawkins’, Provost of Oriel College.⁷⁹ To caricature individuals would be to indulge in personal disparagement of a kind that Coleridge deplors. When she exploits the comic possibilities of characters’ names she is satirizing a tendency or attitude. There is, for example, a comic scene in which the two women, Una and Irenia, draw out Mr. Thychnesse to express himself with increasing absurdity; so much so that Una can barely contain her mirth: ‘[y]ou may smile, Miss Una’, remonstrates Mr. Thychnesse, ‘but I can tell you that this is no exaggeration’. The comedy of the scene, which satirizes Thychnesse’s unreflecting acceptance of the authority of ‘our spiritual superiors’, recalls Molière’s *Tartuffe*, in which the maid Dorine exposes her master Orgon’s ludicrous self-delusions. There are abundant comic moments such as Dr. Wordsall’s reference to his ecclesiastical career as ‘my long warfare in the ministry’; or Hyflyte’s joke, taken in characteristic good humour by Mr. Thychnesse, that Newman’s doctrine would not have much chance of being fairly represented by him ‘if his name was to represent his nature’. There is often a lively dramatic sense, particularly at the beginnings and ends of scenes, maintaining the tone of a stage play, rather than that of a text designed to be analyzed in the study. The animated opening of ‘Dialogue VI’ of the *Dialogues on Personality*, for example, begins in *media res*:

Marvell: Here comes an auxiliary. Our friend, Markright, stoutly denies that we have any such thing as a principle of personality –
Markright: – Distinct from our general humanity: a thing per se: a separate essence. This novel doctrine
Thychnesse: *Novel* doctrine! Why it is as old as Aquinas and older too.
Athanasius is full of it.⁸⁰

The quick pace, colloquial vigour, and humorous military allusion create variety in a work of sustained doctrinal exposition. Such features reflect the stylistic influence of Southey’s *Colloquies*.

⁷⁸ Macovski, p. 27.

⁷⁹ Newsome, p. 313.

⁸⁰ HRC.

The Anglo-Catholic disputants participate in dialogue to lecture rather than listen. Marvell is the exception. Newbolt exemplifies the aggressive and supercilious manner that disrupts theological discourse. When Lytellthocht disagrees with him, Newbolt speaks ‘angrily and with much contempt of look and voice’. He issues arrogant directives, fails to analyze or discuss, and responds to others’ arguments with sectarian insults: ‘[i]t is a mere piece of German Rationalism, a vapour – a vile exhalation from the foul corrupt marsh of German unsoundness and infidelity’. Newbolt’s language is satirically reminiscent of the *British Critic*’s attack on STC. Irenia, as her name indicates, represents the opposite, conciliatory tendency. She refers to all fellow participants, whatever their views, as ‘colleagues’. Her response to Markright’s argument, which Newbolt dismisses with such venom, is devotional: ‘[m]eantime do see how Dr. Pusey explains the Anglo-Catholic doctrine of baptismal regeneration. He is so pious, so truly evangelical, that by a spiritual simplicity he may have found what keener logicians have missed’.⁸¹ Neither Newbolt nor Irenia represents the procedure for productive religious dialogue that Coleridge advocates. Newbolt’s aggressive authoritarianism blocks intellectual interchange, while Irenia’s affective response is not conducive to the conceptual renewal, or defence, of religion. In face of the threat posed to Christianity by Strauss, neither Newbolt nor Irenia would offer a viable strategy. Irenia’s devotional response to Pusey reflects Coleridge’s experience of Pusey’s preaching: ‘[w]hile listening to him, you do not seem to see and hear a preacher, but to have visible before you a most earnest and devout spirit, striving to carry out in this world a high religious theory’.⁸² In *Biographia 1847*, Coleridge cautions that the ‘persuasive’ qualities of Pusey’s ‘discourses’ are intellectually misleading.⁸³

The Gender Politics of Coleridge’s ‘Dialogues’

Coleridge’s inclusion of two women in her dialogues is innovatory. Nonetheless, the gender politics of the dialogues are overtly patriarchal. In the *Regeneration Dialogues* as a whole the roles of Una and Irenia are minor. They appear less frequently and say much less than their brothers, Markright and Marvell, who are the leading protagonists. Throughout, the male characters condescend to the women in belittlingly conventional language. Thychnesse, for example, addresses Irenia, plainly his intellectual superior, as ‘my dear young lady’, as though speaking to a child.⁸⁴ In the ‘Introductory Dialogue’, the usually considerate and restrained Marvell cuts across a poetic observation of Irenia’s with a brusque statement of his agenda. Markright presumes to tell Irenia what

⁸¹ HRC.

⁸² *M & L*, I, p. 333.

⁸³ *Biographia 1847*, I, p. lxxviii.

⁸⁴ HRC.

she means and translates her affective devotional language into academic terminology. A romantic relationship between Markright and Irenia is implied and, because Markright is a major protagonist, the impression of a traditional gender hierarchy is reinforced. Yet, Coleridge deploys her women characters in a subtly subversive manner. This is shown by comparison with the female characters in *Loss and Gain*. In Newman's novel, the main protagonist's mother and sisters do not contribute to its substance of religious debate. Their presence serves to heighten the pathos of Reding's emotional dilemma over conversion. By contrast, both Una and Irenia contribute to the dialogues in a significant manner, particularly the *Dialogues on Personality*.

In this final set of dialogues, completed in November 1851, Una seconds Markright in his critique of Wilberforce's theory, expounded by Hyflyte and Marvell. In doing so, she shows herself to be, at the very least, the intellectual equal of her brother and a notable authority on the metaphysical writings of STC. She is also more restrained in her expression and avoids the notes of satire and irritation to which Markright occasionally succumbs. She is particularly sharp and succinct in summarizing key Coleridgean concepts, for example: '[r]eason, which, by its down-shining into the soul, converts it from earthly to heavenly, is the Divine Light, no faculty or personal property of any human mind'. She summarizes the concept of the active will in response to Irenia's poetic image that 'a divine seed implanted in baptism meets the opening faculties and gradually assimilates them to itself, as the moon beams permeate a leaden cloud and convert it into silver'. Una gently corrects the conceptual grounds of Irenia's observation: '[b]ut there is this difference, dear Reny. The cloud passively receives or is absorbed by the moonshine. But the spirit of man with its faculties of thinking, feeling, willing, is essentially active. Our spirit is a will. It cannot, by its own nature, passively absorb divine grace'.⁸⁵ In her formulations of reason and the will, Una summarizes the whole conceptual basis of Markright's arguments, and those of Coleridge herself. The gentle collaborative exchange between the women is a model for the productive conduct of theological debate.

Irenia, like Una, is an accomplished student of divinity. However, like Hartley Coleridge, she values spiritual devotion rather than theological debate. In the *Dialogues on Personality*, Irenia attempts to draw her companions from conceptual dispute to contemplation. After Markright delivers a confident case that man's personal and general natures are not 'separate essence[s]', the company takes time to assimilate his arguments. There is 'a Silence – broken at last by Irenia'. She aims to bring the disputants together in a shared appreciation of the scene outside the window: '[d]o look

⁸⁵ HRC.

Una, at that darling squirrel, up there in the Weymouth Pine! He shakes his shady tail at us, as if in derision of our metaphysics'. Markright replies with affectionate irritation: '[y]es, let us look at the squirrel, and he shall help our metaphysics instead of hindering them as Madam Irenia wants to make him do'. He trumps Irenia's diversionary tactic by using the squirrel as an illustration in his argument: '[c]an you conceive the activity of the creature to be a separate and a distinct creature from his life and general physical nature?'⁸⁶ In their attempts to subvert each other's agenda here, Irenia and Markright are a version of Shakespeare's Beatrice and Benedick. The passage illustrates the lively theatrical sense of Coleridge's dialogues. It also appears to confirm patriarchal stereotypes in presenting an intellectual male protagonist and a sentimental female whose response to religion is affective. As Carol Engelhardt Herringer observes, '[a] key component of the [Victorian] feminine ideal was the belief that women were more spiritual than men'.⁸⁷ Coleridge's portrayal of Irenia seems to support this aspect of the Victorian 'feminine ideal'. However, the gender politics of the *Dialogues on Personality* are more subtle and subversive than immediate impressions suggest.

Irenia's contributions in the *Dialogues on Personality* of late 1851 are more significant and distinct than in those written earlier. This is because Derwent's posthumous editions of Hartley's poems and prose had been published in 1851, and the construction of Irenia in the *Dialogues on Personality* reflects the influence of Hartley's religious poems;⁸⁸ particularly the conversation poems 'Religious Differences' and 'The Word of God', and sonnets such as 'The Bible', 'The Litany', and 'Multum Dilexit', in which Hartley identifies with the penitential devotion of Mary Magdalene.⁸⁹ In 1846, Hartley intended to send Coleridge 'a heap of sonnets and other poems on religious subjects', so that she could annotate any passage that might provoke controversy.⁹⁰ This is characteristic of his irenic attitude. Whether he sent the poems is uncertain, though by the autumn of 1851 Coleridge had read Derwent's edition of Hartley's poetry. The final section, headed 'Scriptural and Religious Subjects', presents a homogenous body of religious poetry committed to personal devotion and the unity of Christian communion. This ethic is reflected in Irenia's role in the *Dialogues on Personality*.

The structure of Hartley's 'Religious Differences', a conversation poem in which he addresses a silent auditor, is dialogic. In Bakhtinian terms, the poem 'enacts [...] a poetics of dialogue', in which a 'mute listener [...] stands as a figure for literary

⁸⁶ HRC.

⁸⁷ Herringer, p. 52.

⁸⁸ Hartley Coleridge, *Poems*, ed. by Derwent Coleridge, 2 vols (London: Moxon, 1851). Hartley Coleridge, *Essays and Marginalia*, ed. by Derwent Coleridge, 2 vols (London: Moxon, 1851).

⁸⁹ *HCPW*, pp. 353-354, pp. 357-358, p. 333, p. 351, p. 359.

⁹⁰ Fran Carlock Stephens, *Hartley Coleridge Letters: A Calendar and Index* (Austin: The University of Texas at Austin, 1978), p. 63.

addressivity'.⁹¹ The conversational tone is relaxed, meditative and egalitarian. Hartley's addressee is of a different religious persuasion, which he dismisses as a matter of linguistic interpretation. Hartley distrusts the claims of dogmatic theology to express religious truth. F. D. Maurice suggested a similar view of the inadequacy of verbal definition in a letter to Coleridge of March 1843: 'verbal forms and propositions answer for the facts of the understanding', but not for the 'higher spiritual realities'. For Maurice, '*Sacraments*' are 'the transcendent language' in which spiritual 'truths' are expressed.⁹² Hartley's poem rejects the discourse of religious sectarianism: he offers instead a Marian image as an aid to devotion, in which professors of 'seeming different creeds' may meet in childlike simplicity of faith:

Sweet dove, sweet image of the faith that rests
All doubts, all questions past,
In babe-like love at last,
With that dear Babe divine, between the Virgin's breasts.

Beyond technicalities of doctrine, Hartley envisages Christians of diverse denominations and sects unified in reverent apprehension of the divine:

Yes, we do differ when we most agree,
For words are not the same to you and me.
And it may be our several spiritual needs
Are best supplied by seeming different creeds.
And differing, we agree in one
Inseparable communion,
If the true life be in our hearts – the faith,
Which
[...]
to believe
Is all of Heaven that earth can e'er receive.⁹³

For Hartley, Christians meet in a unified 'communion' of simple 'faith'. In 1846, Coleridge similarly affirms 'that the life and soul and substance of Christianity may be pretty equally partaken by those who logically differ,' though she remains committed to

⁹¹ Macovski, p. 19.

⁹² Jeremy Morris, *F. D. Maurice and the Crisis of Christian Authority* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 82 n. Maurice's emphasis.

⁹³ *HCPW*, pp. 353-354, ll. 24-27, 28-35, 38-39.

the development of an intellectually cohesive body of doctrine.⁹⁴

Hartley's view, that differences between 'creeds' are irrelevant in contrast with the living reality of devotion, is radically inclusive. Newman satirizes such an attitude in *Loss and Gain* in the character of a young woman who, with some friends, is 'organizing a new religious body', about which she seeks Reding's advice. Her language is used also by Hartley: '[w]e are all scriptural', she tells Reding, 'and therefore are all one; we may differ, but we agree'.⁹⁵ In an unfinished essay published posthumously in 1851, Hartley expresses his vision of a single, liberating, unifying faith: 'all shapes and hues' of sectarian difference 'will vanish', he proclaims, 'in the universal light, and nothing remain but the love, which is perfect light, and life, and immortality, which flows from God, and is God, even God with us, uniting all blessed souls, from the beginning to the end of time, in a beautiful communion, identifying the love of God with the love of all that are God's, that God may be all in all'.⁹⁶ Hartley's rhythmic prose, in which he appropriates St Paul's language, is reminiscent of the devotional lyricism of medieval mystic Richard Rolle.

Coleridge gives voice to Hartley's devotional attitudes in the character of Irenia. When Markright addresses Wilberforce's theory in relation to the doctrine of Original Sin, she pleads: '[s]urely these are mysteries which man's wit cannot fathom'. Attempts to verbalize spiritual mysteries risk blasphemy, in Irenia's view. She objects to Markright's use of horticultural language in relation to the Incarnation: '[o]h!' she warns, 'take care not to lower such sublimities by earthly comparisons'. Irenia distinguishes between 'theories' and 'doctrines'. She has no difficulty in 'receiving' doctrines, but finds 'theories' unsettling and irreligious.⁹⁷ This is an important distinction following the innovations of the Oxford Movement. In their political project to retain ecclesiastical authority amid political change, its leaders attempted to create a new form of Anglicanism: in effect, a new religion. They destabilized Anglican doctrine by advancing novel theories, such as Newman's antiquarianism and Wilberforce's construction of human nature. Hartley fears that 'plain, pious, straightforward, believing church-goers' will be 'disturbed' by the polemical warfare of opposing theorists.⁹⁸ Hartley's division between piety and polemics, spirituality and theory, anticipates that made by Markright in an earlier dialogue, where he defines 'the several theories of 'Regeneration' as 'a question of metaphysical science rather than spiritual religion'. Irenia describes how the theoretical disputes of her companions 'disturb' her spiritual

⁹⁴ *M & L*, II, p. 15.

⁹⁵ Newman, *Loss and Gain*, p. 326, p. 327.

⁹⁶ Hartley Coleridge, *Essays*, I, p. 349. I Corinthians 15. 28.

⁹⁷ HRC.

⁹⁸ Hartley Coleridge, *Essays*, I, p. 350.

devotion:

I cannot follow theories, Phosphilus [...]. When I listen to your debates with my brother and our friends, I seem to be entering a dark tangled forest. I enter in, the more I penetrate the umbrageous region, the dimmer grows the prospect all around. Every trunk splits into boughs, and the boughs break forth into innumerable branches, and the branches are subdivided into endless twigs and leaves and leaflets, and the leaves grow thinner and become mere needles – mere needles that pierce and prick my poor mind and imagination, startling it out of the repose of deep unquestioning faith: and the further I go in this wearisome wood, the less light there is and the more I lose sight of heaven!⁹⁹

In one sense the passage may be read in terms of a conventional gender stereotype: Irenia presents herself as the traditional lost child of fairy-tale. She looks for rescue to Markright ('Phosphilus'), who responds with gallantry, addressing her as 'my fair one'. There are also other associations. Irenia's evocation of 'gloom', Markright says, 'is worthy of a place in Dante's *Purgatorio*'.¹⁰⁰ Irenia's Dantesque description alludes to the Protestant versus Romanist locus of contemporary religious division. Again, Irenia's point of view is not Coleridge's. Coleridge believes that faith should be tested and developed through critical debate: she is committed to 'the [dialogic] process of question and answer, giving and taking', to borrow Gadamer's terms, and to 'forming concepts through working out the common meaning'.¹⁰¹ She conceives of the Christian life as an active spiritual 'struggle', not a passive state of 'repose', as Irenia suggests.¹⁰² Nonetheless, Coleridge presents Irenia's rejection of religious theorizing as a valid, principled position. It is comparable to that of Hartley in his sonnet 'The Bible':

Whate'er of truth the antique sages sought,
And could but guess of his benign decree,
Is given to Faith affectionate and free,
Not wrung by force of self-confounding thought.¹⁰³

For Hartley, as for Irenia, the minute intellectual distinctions over which competing theorists argue are 'self-confounding' and disruptive of Christian communion. Like Irenia, Hartley implies that grace is acquired passively, whereas for Coleridge grace is not simply 'given', but received gradually by ongoing efforts of the will responding to promptings of the Holy Spirit. However, Coleridge acknowledges that rejection of

⁹⁹ HRC.

¹⁰⁰ HRC.

¹⁰¹ Gadamer, p. 376.

¹⁰² Griggs, *Coleridge Fille*, p. 217. HRC.

¹⁰³ *HCPW*, p. 333, ll. 5-8.

theoretical debate is a valid position at mid-century. If religious discourse remains focused on theoretical technicalities, she recognizes, the field will be left open for Straussian analysts. In that case, the whole culture may 'lose sight of heaven'.

Irenia's rejection of intellectual theorizing in favour of 'unquestioning faith' gives way to a moment of romance. The inclusion of romance in the religious dialogue implies a rejection of the ethic of celibacy, upheld by Newman before as well as after his reception as a Roman Catholic. Markright responds to Irenia's plea and rescues her from the 'dark tangled forest' of controversy, and closes the dialogue. Affectionately appropriating language Irenia has used earlier, he suggests that the company 'walk out into the grove and look at the moon silvering those fleecy clouds from among the firs and Weymouth pines with their quaint stems and fairy foliage'. Markright's imagery shrinks Irenia's bewildering tree trunks into daintily ornamental 'quaint stems'; the pine 'needles' that 'prick and pierce' her are transformed into magical 'fairy foliage'.¹⁰⁴ The threatening forest becomes a romantic grotto. Irenia's protest against polemics and Markright's romantic response suggest a conventional construction of gender. Markright soothes Irenia in her intellectual confusion. The episode appears to uphold the patriarchal positions of Derwent and John Taylor Coleridge that women 'ought not to enter upon controversy'.¹⁰⁵ The irony, however, is that the author of the 'Dialogues' is a woman, debarred from university education, from academic or ecclesiastical position. By use of male speakers, she infiltrates the exclusively male domain of theological controversy.

In the *Dialogues on Personality* Coleridge confronts the arguments of an eminent theologian, who, as an Anglo-Catholic Archdeacon, is an archetype of patriarchal authority. Coleridge's subversive irony is that she creates male speakers to refute a theory designed to uphold male power. Una assumes a major role towards the end of the *Dialogues on Personality* and delivers the decisive blow to Hyflyte's argument. Coleridge could have written the leading protagonists as female roles, but chooses to produce texts that are overtly conventional. I suggest that there are three reasons for this. First, Coleridge's agenda is primarily religious. To have foregrounded female protagonists would have distracted from her assertion of inclusive rational theology. Second, a radical public statement on gender would have undermined her religious ethic of restrained and self-effacing authorship. Her apparent upholding of gender conventions in the *Dialogues* enables her to maintain the stance of social propriety that she has adopted throughout her literary career. The frequent references to STC and the *Literary Remains* (edited by Henry Nelson Coleridge according to their title

¹⁰⁴ HRC.

¹⁰⁵ *Criticism*, p. xvi.

pages) imply that the *Dialogues*, like Coleridge's earlier writings, are based in pious and dutiful regard for her departed father and husband. And third, a female author's intervention in the patriarchal academy, under cover of male speakers, is uniquely subversive.

Critical Theory and Authorial Practice.

Coleridge intended to include some poems in her religious dialogues. These illustrate how Coleridge's theory and practice have developed through her career. As late as 1848, when she was contemplating a second volume of children's verse, Coleridge admits to having 'been restrained' from writing religious poetry, 'by a reverential feeling and a fear to vulgarize and trivialize and desecrate'. She adds that religious poetry is 'the easiest of all to write commonplaceishly – the hardest to write worthily in'.¹⁰⁶

Coleridge's sibilant coinage emphasizes her disdain for second-rate religious verse that demeans its subject. In the poems for inclusion in the *Regeneration Dialogues*, however, Coleridge finds an idiom for religious verse that she employs with accomplished assurance. 'The Mystic Doctrine of Baptism', for example, is based on a central conceit that the Tower of Babel represents the delusory, irreverent construct of 'false Theology'. The tower '[d]issolves in air' when struck by God's 'beams'. By contrast, '[t]he golden stair to heaven', an allusion to the ladder of Jacob's dream in Genesis, is to be found '[d]eep in the heart of man'.¹⁰⁷ God has 'cast' this 'structure fair', which provides the means to reach heaven. Here, Coleridge alludes to 'the broad and deep foundation' of faith 'laid by the creator himself', which she describes in *Biographia 1847*.¹⁰⁸ Whether man reaches heaven by the means God has provided depends upon his own efforts. The emphasis at the end of the poem is on spiritual exertion. From lines of eight syllables alternating with four or five syllable lines, the final stanza concludes with a couplet of six syllable lines and a final line of twelve syllables:

Deep in the heart of man was cast
 Its broad foundation
More glorious each day than the last
 It keeps its station: –
This is the gradual stair sublime
 The golden stair to heaven,
 By Truth and Mercy given,

¹⁰⁶ *Criticism*, p. 22.

¹⁰⁷ Genesis, 28. 12.

¹⁰⁸ *Biographia 1847*, I, p. cxxxix.

Knowledge, Faith, Hope and Love, by which to God we climb!¹⁰⁹

The ten successive monosyllables create the sense of effort, of climbing step by step. Coleridge here appropriates a Miltonic technique by using a monosyllabic line to mime energetic exertion. Milton describes Satan struggling to cross Chaos:

O'er bog or steep, through straight, rough, dense, or rare,
With head, hands, wings or feet pursues his way,
And swims or sinks, or wades, or creeps, or flies.¹¹⁰

Coleridge uses a similar rhythmic technique to slow her line to a jerking crawl. She creates the impression of spiritual struggle: the vigorous exercise of 'Faith, Hope and Love'.

Coleridge's poetic practice in the *Regeneration* poems contradicts her critical theory. In 1843 she critiques *The Christian Year* in terms that are exactly applicable to her own religious poems: '[s]et doctrine and poetry are in my mind uncombinable things; just so much as there is of the former in any poem just so far it contradicts its own nature as it seems to me and becomes a failure'. On this topic, as on others, such as the capacity of women to write on Political Economy, she has changed her mind. Coleridge aims, in the poems that accompany her dialogues, to convey theological arguments with conceptual precision. The poems show technical accomplishment and rhetorical vigour, though their poetic range is limited by their polemical context. For Coleridge, modesty of purpose in religious poetry is a virtue. Elizabeth Barrett's 'style' in *The Seraphim*, she maintains, is unsuited 'to the seriousness of a Gospel theme'. Coleridge holds that 'women are not good poets', and that the higher the aspirations of a female poet, the less likely she is to succeed.¹¹¹ Even the greatest of poets may fall short in religious verse: Dante, and even 'our glorious bright-souled "'Puritan"', as she calls Milton, confuse 'the material with the spiritual' in their poetic language.¹¹² 'The Mystic Doctrine of Baptism' tests a style of verse designed to convey a theological doctrine with precise clarity. Its scope is purely conceptual, its purpose polemical. Like the other 'Regeneration' poems, it is accommodated to the limitations within which Coleridge conceives herself as working. She produces accomplished but unambitious verse that, like her poems written for children – including those that accompany her fairy-tale, *Phantasmion* – do not aspire to be great poetry. Coleridge's dogmatic poems lack

¹⁰⁹ *Poems*, p. 194, ll. 25-32.

¹¹⁰ *Paradise Lost*, ll. 948-950.

¹¹¹ *Criticism*, p. 155, p. 147, p. 159.

¹¹² Coleridge, 'Critique of Dante and Milton', p. 23, p. 25.

devotional passion or contemplative spirituality, but answer their polemical purpose as subsidiary components of her *Dialogues*.

Christian 'Life' and the Vocation of Authorship

Coleridge advocates 'practical Christianity'.¹¹³ In *Aids to Reflection*, STC had asserted that 'Christianity is not a Theory, or a Speculation; but a Life. Not a *Philosophy* of Life, but a Life and a living Process'.¹¹⁴ Coleridge suggests that critical discourse is an essential basis of the 'living Process' of Christianity. At the conclusion of a dialogue in which Marvell has made the Anglo-Catholic case for 'momentary passive regeneration', and Markright has critiqued it for incoherence, Coleridge presents a model of 'practical' religious unity. Markright concludes the theoretical debate in order to make a pastoral visit:

I am going to Widow Wornout, for whom you have done so much, Marvell. I think I can give her some comfort about her poor daughter. Country physicians sometimes [...] mismanage both the minds and bodies of their patients: the former especially [...] from fixing their eye too abstractedly on the complaint without due consideration of the patient.¹¹⁵

Whatever their theoretical differences, Markright and Marvell work together in 'one | Inseparable communion' of 'practical' Christian ministry.¹¹⁶ Both are involved in pastoral care of 'Widow Wornout', whose 'poor daughter', we may infer, is suffering from mental illness. In terms that recall 'Nervousness', it appears that Markright is arranging medical care for the daughter of a more effective kind than is available from local 'physicians'.

This passage about pastoral care sheds light upon Coleridge's conception of religious dialogue. Markright and Marvell's mutual commitment to a dialogic community is paralleled by their pastoral collaboration. Coleridge's reference to the theme of pastoral service reflects the social concerns of her friend and correspondent F. D. Maurice. His initiatives in Christian Socialism, with his associates John Malcolm Ludlow and Charles Kingsley, belong to the last four years of Coleridge's life. Maurice and his colleagues sought to achieve a 'renewal of the Church's social mission'. At the heart of their project 'were seemingly minor, practical ventures' conceived on a local scale.¹¹⁷ Maurice's approach to social issues was dialogic and democratic, as shown in his meetings with 'one of the antichristian Chartist leaders, the tailor Walter Cooper'. In

¹¹³ *M & L*, I, p. 315.

¹¹⁴ *ARCC*, p. 202. STC's emphasis.

¹¹⁵ HRC.

¹¹⁶ *HCPW*, p. 354, ll. 32-33.

¹¹⁷ Morris, p. 141.

dialogue with Cooper and his followers, Maurice ‘freely allowed criticism, encouraged the men to talk frankly, guided the discussion without dominating, and tried to give a fair summary at the end. Whereas most clergymen of the day wished to promulgate truth to the workmen’, Chadwick adds, ‘Maurice wished to learn from them’.¹¹⁸ The dialogic, democratic ethos of Maurice’s socio-political methods is paralleled by Coleridge’s ideal of free and open interchange in religious discourse. The dialogic model of communal exchange is important for both Maurice and Coleridge. As Gadamer puts it, participants ‘in a successful conversation [...] come under the influence of the truth of the object and are thus bound to one another in a new community’.¹¹⁹ Maurice collaborates with the workmen in order that both he and they might progress to a new, shared understanding. Similarly, Coleridge’s dialogues show how ‘a new community’ of understanding is formed through processes of open ‘conversation’.

Coleridge, like Hartley, recognizes that the devotional life of Christianity transcends theoretical ‘misunderstandings’ and ‘*dogmatic* differences’.¹²⁰ Nonetheless, she holds that the conceptual definition of doctrine gives Christianity its practical moral direction. Without such definition, spiritual belief is vulnerable to materialistic distortion and authoritarian repression. As Marvell puts it: ‘[t]he intellectual form of religious truth is necessary in order to perceive the moral and spiritual content’.¹²¹ Coleridge’s vocation is to contribute to the development of this ‘intellectual form’. She maintains ‘that the whole logical truth is not the possession of any one party, that it exists in fragments amongst the several parties, and that much of it is yet to be developed’.¹²² This statement, from a letter of 1846, reflects the rationale of Coleridge’s religious dialogues. Each of her personae represents a particular feature or ‘fragment’ of ‘truth’, which Coleridge subjects to analysis by reference to principles she has appropriated from STC. To borrow Bakhtin’s terminology, Coleridge stages ‘the event of an interaction of voices’, in order to renew religious discourse as a dynamic and collective process.¹²³ In the same letter, she describes how she has formed her religious views by dialogic interaction: ‘I [...] have gone between various parties’, she explains: ‘I have [...] not merely *read* on both sides, that is by no means enough, but eat and drunk and slept, and talked confidentially and interchanged, not only courtesies, but heart kindnesses on both or all sides’.¹²⁴ Religious dialogue, for Coleridge, is a sociable, intimate and heartfelt interchange, the opposite of monologic self-promoting confrontation. According to

¹¹⁸ Chadwick, p. 354.

¹¹⁹ Gadamer, p. 387.

¹²⁰ *M & L*, II, pp. 14-15. Coleridge’s emphasis.

¹²¹ HRC.

¹²² *M & L*, II, p. 15.

¹²³ Macovski, p. 6.

¹²⁴ *M & L*, II, p. 15. Coleridge’s emphasis.

Gadamer, '[t]he literary form of the dialogue places language and concept back within the original movement of the conversation. This protects words from all dogmatic abuse'.¹²⁵ Significantly, in her final theological work, Coleridge replaces the polemical essay with the Socratic form, which frames discourse within the flow of egalitarian, communal 'conversation'. In this context, a 'dogmatic', monologic speaker such as Newbolt appears both irrelevant and ridiculous. Coleridge promotes liberal inclusive theology in the form as much as the content of her *Regeneration Dialogues*. In doing so, she aims to fulfil the vocation of 'practical usefulness' she ascribes to STC: to contribute to 'the furtherance of man's well-being here and hereafter'.¹²⁶ For Coleridge at mid-century, this authorial vocation requires democratic, dialogic literary forms.

¹²⁵ Gadamer, p. 377.

¹²⁶ *Biographia 1847*, I, p. clvi.

Conclusion
Public Renewal, Personal Redemption.

STC: a Writer for Post-Reform Britain

I will present the conclusions of my investigation by discussing two poems. Both belong to Coleridge's early phase of mature productivity, in which she was working on her edition of *Biographia Literaria*. The first poem, an experimental hybrid text, appears in that edition. It presents a formal public statement of Coleridgean authorship. In the second poem, unpublished as a complete text for almost a century, Coleridge explores her personal and literary relationship with STC in the context of loss and death.¹ I consider these poems as complementary texts. They lend insight into Coleridge's conception of her public role as STC's literary heir, both as editor and original author, and her private agenda to heal the fractures of the past, and to repair its losses. The poem published in *Biographia 1847*, an adaptation of lines by Horace, has been noticed previously only once before, in an article in *The Coleridge Bulletin* by the present author.² Therefore, it requires extensive contextualization.

The final section of Coleridge's 'Introduction' to *Biographia 1847* presents a brief discussion of STC's involvement in literary polemics. She focuses on STC's hostile engagement with Francis Jeffrey. Jeffrey's attacks in *The Edinburgh Review* against STC, Southey, and particularly against Wordsworth, had drawn STC into combative response. Coleridge's discussion is based on *Biographia* Volume 2, Chapter 8, 'Remarks on the present mode of conducting critical journals'. Coleridge explains that she has cut a paragraph on the subject of Jeffrey from this chapter, and also a footnote from Volume 1, Chapter 3.³ These passages contain personal remarks that, in Coleridge's view, are beneath STC's high principles. They are uncharacteristic of the general moral tenor of his works, she believes. Coleridge regards *The Edinburgh Review's* attacks on the Lake Poets, and STC's barbed reactions, as symptomatic of the debased literary culture of earlier decades. This, in itself, was part of a more general moral malaise in public life, according to her historical interpretation.

Coleridge is uncompromisingly critical of pre-Reform Britain: '[t]hirty years ago many things were done by honourable men which honourable men would not do now, or would gain great dishonour by doing'.⁴ Coleridge's repetitions around 'honour' are pointed, as if, like Antony after Caesar's assassination, she is ironically interrogating

¹ Edith Coleridge published the first stanza only in *M & L*, 1, p. 47.

² R Schofield, "My Father's Fragmentary Work": Sara Coleridge's Restoration of *Biographia Literaria*, *Coleridge Bulletin*, n.s., 38 (2011), 17-36.

³ *Biographia 1847*, II, pp. 117-128. *BLCC*, 1, pp. 50n-52n.

⁴ *Biographia 1847*, I, p. clxx. Further references to Volume 1 of this edition are given after quotations in the text.

the word's meaning. She implies that, in the pre-Reform decades, honour, as an absolute moral value, was absent from public life. Coleridge targets the institutional corruption of the pre-Reform established church: 'money intended for the benefit of the Public, especially for making men living members of the Church and followers of Christ, public functionaries too often thought they might employ according to their own private fancies' (pp. clxx–clxxi). This allegation of malfeasance taints the Tory government of the period as well as the church. The 'functionaries' who 'employ' public money to serve 'their own private fancies' may include clerics, politicians or civil servants. Coleridge leaves the embezzlers' exact identity uncomfortably vague. Her implied approval of Reform in the passage aligns her with Whig attitudes. She adds, with ironic restraint, that '[a] dimness of vision on the subject of duty prevailed among the servants of the public in general' earlier in the century (p. clxxi). Pre-Reform civic life, according to Coleridge, was morally unprincipled.

The world of letters was infected by the institutional corruption of pre-Reform society. Coleridge contends that literary reviewing was conducted in a wholly unethical manner: 'reviewers' were no more aware of their public duty 'than the rest' and 'they thought themselves quite at liberty to make the public taste in literature subservient to their own purposes as members of a party' (p. clxxi). Coleridge places irresponsible reviewing in the same moral category as the corrupt management of public finances. Partisan reviewers did not hesitate 'to choke up with rubbish and weeds the streams of Parnassus, if a political adversary might be annoyed thereby, though all parties alike had an interest in the water' (p. clxxi). This juxtaposition of the classical with the geopolitical suggests the sacrilegious amorality of unscrupulous reviewers, and their corruption of the national culture. Coleridge regrets that STC, in the unprincipled milieu of pre-Reform public life, was undeniably drawn, on occasions, into conducting literary debate in personal terms. She believes that the moral tone of public life has changed for the better; that the abuses she condemns in pre-Reform England 'would not' happen 'now', in 1847 (p. clxx). This is significant for two reasons. First, it confirms the Whig tendencies in Coleridge's political thought. Her position is diametrically opposed to the Ultra-Toryism of Henry's anti-Reform pamphlet of 1831. Second, Coleridge's distinction between pre-Reform and post-Reform culture enables her to suggest that STC's problems of literary reception belong to a former corrupt state of society. In renewed cultural conditions, Coleridge suggests, STC's work and influence will come into their own.

In the final chapter of *Biographia Literaria*, STC discusses how *The Edinburgh Review* subjected him to extreme personal abuse. *Christabel* was reviewed with particular venom, and an anticipatory review of *The Statesman's Manual* was written

‘with a malignity, so avowedly and exclusively personal, as is, I believe, unprecedented even in the present contempt of all humanity that disgraces and endangers the liberty of the press’. STC does not actually mention the author, Hazlitt, by name, although he believed him to have written the *Christabel* review as well. This was particularly treacherous, STC felt, because Hazlitt had warmly praised the poem in his presence. At the beginning of the chapter, STC explains that he has always ‘felt’ undeserved sufferings to be ‘the severest punishment’. He adduces a poem of Catullus, given below in the prose translation cited by Engell and Bate, to express his sense of literary rejection:

Leave off wishing to deserve any thanks from anyone, or thinking that anyone can ever become grateful. All this wins no thanks; to have acted kindly is nothing, rather it is wearisome, wearisome and harmful; so is it now with me, who am vexed and troubled by no one so bitterly as by him who but now held me for his one and only friend.⁵

STC uses Catullus to voice a grief that is at once personal and professional.

In a footnote near the end of the final section of her ‘Introduction’ to *Biographia 1847*, Coleridge discusses *The Edinburgh Review*’s vehement hostility towards STC’s treatment of Hume. She comments that ‘the Northern critics’ have been – and still are – the most aggressive of STC’s detractors (p. clxxvii n). Reverting to language that reflects Southey and Wordsworth’s views of literary property, she refers to ‘the Exteesian domain’ having been battered by ‘Boreal blasts’ and ‘obscured’ by ‘Scotch mists’. She comments that, in the preceding pages, she has ‘necessarily been looking of late more at the bad weather of [STC’s] literary life, —the rough gales and chilling snow-falls, — than at its calm and sunshine’. She ‘trust[s]’, nonetheless, that STC’s literary ‘domain’ will be largely untroubled in future (p. clxxix n). She develops this remark by adapting lines from Horace, in which she promises STC a favourable culture for the reception of his work in post-Reform England. Horace is a congenial poet on whom to base a consolatory message for STC: in his view, Horace’s literary ‘precepts are grounded [...] on the nature both of poetry and of the human mind’.⁶ Furthermore, Coleridge’s choice of Horace as the basis for her poetic statement counters STC’s pessimistic self-alignment with Catullus. It enables her to emphasize the difference between pre-Reform disorder and post-Reform renewal. Catullus, whose voice STC adduces in 1817, is a poet of the late Roman Republic, a culture disintegrating into political anarchy and moral chaos. Horace, by contrast, is a poet of a new political order, of stability and restored values: the voice of a morally regenerated culture. Horace’s renewed State is one in which

⁵ *BLCC*, II, pp. 241-242, p. 234, p. 242 n.

⁶ *BLCC*, II, p. 133.

poetry and literary criticism flourish. Coleridge exploits the historical context of Horace's lines to emphasize STC's future stature.

Coleridge's Horation Manifesto

Coleridge's version of Horace's *Odes* II. 9, lines 1 - 8 is further evidence of her originality and relish for literary experimentation. The 'hybrid construction' of Coleridge's version of Horace, to borrow Bakhtin's terminology, fits well in the 'Introduction' to a text that is defined by its 'hybridization'.⁷ Coleridge places in italics the words with which she replaces those of the original:

Non semper imbres *dulce-poeticos*
Manant in agros; nec mare *lucidum*
Vexant inaequales procellae
Usque; nec *aetheriis* in oris,
Esteese Parens, stat glacies iners
Menses per omnes; aut Aquilonibus
Myrteta Colerigi laborant
Vitibus et viduantur *ulmi*. (p. clxxix n).

These lines, which Coleridge does not translate, may be rendered as follows:

Not always do rains drip into *sweetly-poetic* fields;
Nor do rough storms harass the *shining* sea continuously;
Nor, *my father STC*, does inert ice stand on heavenly shores
Through all months; or with the North winds
Do the *myrtle groves of Coleridge* toil
And are *elms* deprived of *vines*.⁸

⁷ M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin*, ed. by Michael Holquist, trans. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), p. 358.

⁸ I am grateful to Dr Simon Hall of Radley College Classics Department for his translation of Coleridge's version of Horace.

Horace's *Odes* II. 9, ll. 1-8 are as follows:
Non semper imbres nubibus hispidos
manant in agros aut mare Caspium
vexant inaequales procellae
usque, nec Armeniis in oris,
amice Valgi, stat glacies iners
mensis per omnis aut Aquilonibus
querquerta Gargani laborant
et foliis viduantur orni.

Niall Rudd translates Horace's lines as follows:

Not forever does the rain pour down from the clouds onto the bedraggled fields, nor do gusty squalls always whip up the Caspian Sea, my dear Valgius; the ice does not stand motionless on Armenia's coast

Straight after these lines, Coleridge explains: '[t]he twining vines are popularity and usefulness' (p. clxxxix n), which recalls her contention, earlier in the 'Introduction', that, during his lifetime, STC 'had no hope of gainful popularity' (p. xx). The perceived 'obscurity of his prose writings' prevented readers from making 'any' effort of 'co-operation' with him (p. xx). Although STC's consistent aim in his writings was 'practical usefulness', his unpopularity limited the cultural impact of his work (p. clvi). In her explanation, Coleridge adds that 'the elms' are 'literary productions of slow growth and stately character' (p. clxxxix n). Coleridge, as mediator, reviser and re-writer of STC's work, will ensure that its 'slow growth' to full public influence will come to fruition. Appropriated and re-interpreted by Coleridge in a later historical period, STC will enjoy both the 'popularity', and 'usefulness' of influence, which he was denied in times past. Coleridge makes of STC's initials a Latin pun in line five of her verse. 'Esteese' combines two of the commonest forms of the verb 'to be': 'est' and 'esse' (p. clxxxix, n). The pun expresses the theme of Coleridge's verse. More broadly, it states her purpose in recovering and reconstructing STC's work: 'he is to be'. STC will receive, ultimately, the wide recognition and respect denied him in his own day. Coleridge's Latin pun on STC's initials alludes, also, to STC's Greek pun upon them. He frequently signed his articles in *The Morning Post* with the Greek form of his initials, 'Es tee see'. He translates this by-line as 'He hath stood', to signify the consistency, commitment and independence of his principles.⁹ Such qualities will emerge, Coleridge implies, in her representation of STC's work.

Horace's 'amice Valgi' ('my friend Valgius'), for whom Coleridge substitutes 'Esteese parens', is an empowering association for STC, which amplifies the promise for him of future 'popularity and usefulness'. C. Valgius Rufus, a versatile poet, and a writer on grammar, philology and medicine, was a 'distinguished member' of the cultural elite of Augustus's court; he served as consul in 12 BC. Horace mentions Valgius in *Satires* I. 10, as one of 'the inner circle' of distinguished literary critics, in company with Maecenas and Virgil, and Octavius – the future Augustus – himself.¹⁰ Coleridge's superimposition of STC over Valgius's name asserts his future influence. STC will

through every month of the year, nor do the oaks of Garganus always struggle against the northern blasts, nor are the ash trees widowed of their leaves.*

* Horace, *Odes and Epodes*, ed. and trans. by Niall Rudd, *Loeb Classical Library* (London: Harvard, 2004, repr. with corrections, 2012), pp. 112-113.

⁹ Angela Esterhammer, 'Coleridge in the Newspapers, Periodicals, and Annuals', in *The Oxford Handbook of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. by Frederick Burwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009; paperback edn, 2012), pp. 165-184 (p. 170).

¹⁰ R. G. M. Nisbet and Margaret Hubbard, *A Commentary on Horace: Odes Book II* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), p. 135, p. 134.

finally take his place in society as an acknowledged intellectual and literary leader. His influence will extend across the whole culture, like that of Valgius and his illustrious associates. It will no longer be confined merely to those ‘who are *as children to him* in affectionate reverence for his mind’, as Coleridge puts it in her ‘Preface’ to *Essays*.¹¹ In Horace’s *Odes* II. 9, Valgius is mourning the death of his friend, Myestes. Coleridge transforms this original context of grief into one of anticipated celebration. The times of literary loss and rejection for STC, such as he laments in the final chapter of *Biographia*, are almost over, Coleridge suggests. STC, re-presented by her, will become a defining influence upon Victorian culture, and, in due course, on posterity.

Coleridge’s Horatian manifesto recalls the beginnings of her own literary career. Her appropriation and modification of a Latin text suggest the abiding influence upon her of Southey’s early mentorship. This striking experiment in literary hybridization also implies Coleridge’s confidence in her own future authorship. Coleridge has developed her distinct authorial identity from the mid-1830s to the late 1840s. Nonetheless, STC’s oeuvre remains the point of departure for her writings, both editorial and original. The reception of Coleridge’s own work, therefore, depends to a certain extent upon STC’s public stature. She is aware of the market value of her name, as when she suggests that her poems will be saleable, simply because she is STC’s daughter. She and Henry may have had this in mind when they published her children’s verse and *Phantasmion*. Ultimately, Coleridge conceives of herself as editor of the whole Coleridgean ‘oeuvre’, including the *Opus Maximum* material that would remain unpublished until 2002. At the time of her work on *Biographia*, Coleridge expects, in due course, to reconstruct for the Victorian public STC’s ‘entire system of thought’ (p. xxvii). When, in her adaptation of Horace, she refers to the ‘toil’ of ‘the myrtle groves of Coleridge’ against ‘the North winds’, her use of the family name suggests that she is including her own efforts with those of her father. She envisages herself redeveloping, reapplying and reshaping STC’s ideas and fragmentary writings in a process of diachronic composite production. Her original writings will contribute to the whole construct, in the way that ‘On Rationalism’ complements the fifth and sixth editions of *Aids to Reflection*. The outcome will be a major body of work, the achievement, and property, of the Coleridge family. The Latin poem may be read as Coleridge’s confident public statement as director of the family business.

An Aesthetic of ‘Inachievement’: ‘Work Without Hope’

In the private sphere, though, Coleridge’s production of the family ‘oeuvre’ is associated

¹¹ *Essays*, I, p. xiii. Coleridge’s emphasis.

with tension, incompleteness, and grief. STC's fragmentary remains represent a history of loss, personal and literary. Coleridge's poem, 'For my Father on his lines called "Work Without Hope"' is 'dated 1845'.¹² Written two years after Henry's death, it belongs to the period of Coleridge's intensive work on her edition of *Biographia*. The month of the poem's composition is not recorded, so it is not known whether the poem was written before or after the sudden, unexpected death of Coleridge's mother, on 24 September 1845. If Coleridge composed the poem after this date, her mother's death would have contributed to the desolate mood of the opening stanza. Coleridge places her poem in dialogue with STC's sonnet 'Work Without Hope', which was drafted in a notebook entry of 21 February 1825. In the 1852 edition of STC's poems, Coleridge and Derwent give the date of the sonnet's composition as 21 February 1827. This mistake may suggest that Coleridge had not seen the notebook entry from which the sonnet is abstracted. The full text in the notebook is a mixture of prose and verse. The verse consists of an extra fourteen lines, excluding 'abortive drafts and cancellations'.¹³ It has been 'much worked-over': 'taken as a whole', observes Morton D. Paley, 'this poetry records a psychic disaster'.¹⁴ If Coleridge had read the original notebook draft, it would have added to the poignancy of STC's sonnet as a poem of loss. The notebook reveals the sonnet's putative addressee, Anne Gillman. Coleridge would have been reminded of STC's continuing craving for love, of a kind for which he pleads in 'The Pains of Sleep', and which he had sought first from Sara Hutchinson, and later from Mary Morgan and her sister, Charlotte Brent.

'Work Without Hope' is a key text for Coleridge in understanding STC's psychological and creative instabilities, and in positioning her own authorship in relation to his. In 'Nervousness', the Invalid alludes to the sonnet's concluding image of chronic incapacity: '[h]ow often we are called upon, when wretchedly disabled, to derive comfort from this source or from that: "to draw honey in a sieve!" It is not material for comfort but the capacity for comfort that is wanting'.¹⁵ The conceit of 'draw[ing] honey in a sieve' expresses the nervous invalid's involuntary paralysis, and her inability to respond to external stimuli. Coleridge reapplies it in diagnosing STC's nervous illness in *Biographia 1847*. She quotes the final quatrain, placing the concluding couplet in italics, suggesting the significance she attaches to the image of 'draw[ing] nectar in a sieve'. It represents for her the 'apathy and sadness' that paralyze STC's creativity (p. xix). In her poem of 1845, Coleridge engages with the whole sonnet.

¹² *Poems*, p. 225.

¹³ *PWCC*, I, Part 2, p. 1031.

¹⁴ Morton D. Paley, *Coleridge's Later Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996; repr. with corrections, 1999), p. 78.

¹⁵ 'Nervousness', Mudge, p. 203.

Work Without Hope's structure is innovatory. It is a 'reversed' sonnet, 'in which the sestet precedes the octave'.¹⁶ STC's sestet is limited to two rhymes and concludes with a rhyming triplet. The opening quatrain presents a celebration of reawakening life, of a springtime renewal before the end of winter:

All Nature seems at work. Slugs leave their lair—
The Bees are stirring—Birds are on the wing—
And Winter slumbering in the open air,
Wears on his smiling face a dream of Spring!
And I, the while, the sole unbusy thing,
Nor honey make, nor pair, nor build, nor sing.¹⁷

The poet at first records his immediate observations with pleasurable surprise, emphasized by the dashes of the opening lines. 'Winter', personified as a genial dreamer, and the sibilance of the third and fourth lines, augment the celebratory tone. The fifth and sixth lines merge with the quatrain through the rhyming triplet with which the sestet closes. This juxtaposes the revival of life with the poet's inertia, to which he draws attention in line five by the coined compound 'unbusy'. The metrical stresses on 'I', 'sole' and 'thing' emphasize STC's alienation. In terms of purposive activity he places himself below the status of 'slugs'. They at least warrant a name, whereas the poet anonymizes himself as a 'thing', an unclassified entity alienated from the common life of 'Nature'. The four verbs of productivity in the monosyllabic sixth line, each preceded by the emphatically negative 'nor', indicate the sonnet's central contradiction. STC, lyrically sensitive to the scene's natural vitality and beauty, adopts a pose of inert detachment. The final word of line six is the active 'sing', however, which, though it has been negated by 'nor', may leave open just the faintest possibility of the poet's revival.

The octave consists of four pairs of rhyming couplets, each presenting a perspective on the poet's inactivity and failure. This structure expresses a single state of being. In the first couplet of the octave, STC alludes to poetic creativity as an experience of the past. '[A]maranths', as Paley explains, 'hold an important place in [STC's] imaginative world', and recall earlier 'poems in which the flower signified friendship,

¹⁶ *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, ed. by Roland Greene and others, 4th edn (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), p. 1319.

¹⁷ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Poems of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. by Derwent and Sara Coleridge (London: Moxon, 1852), pp. 329-330, ll. 1-6. The text printed in *PWCC*, I, Part 2, pp. 1032-1033 has some variations in punctuation, which moderate the celebratory tone of the opening four lines. The *PWCC* text replaces the dashes in the first two lines with semi-colons, and replaces the exclamation mark at the end of line four with a full stop. All of my quotations from STC's sonnet are taken from the 1852 volume, edited by Coleridge and Derwent.

poetic immortality and the hope of a historical millennium'.¹⁸ The poet is now resigned to the irretrievable loss of such aspirations and ideals:

Yet well I ken the banks where amaranths blow,
Have traced the fount whence streams of nectar flow.
Bloom, O ye amaranths! bloom for whom ye may,
For me ye bloom not! Glide, rich streams, away!
With lips unbrighten'd, wreathless Brow, I stroll:
And would you learn the spells that drowse my soul?¹⁹

In the repeated imperative 'bloom', STC rejects his former territory of poetic achievement. The verb reappears in the present tense, '[f]or me ye bloom not', where the metrical emphasis on 'me' carries a note of self-pity. STC accepts his alienation and casually rejects any marks of distinction in two coined negatives: '[w]ith lips unbrightened, wreathless brow, I stroll'. The verb emphasizes a mood of louche and languid apathy. The poet then addresses the reader in line twelve with ironic self-mockery: '[a]nd would you learn the spells that drowse my soul?' '[S]pells' and 'drowse' allude to what he calls, in a note of 1826, 'the seeming magic effects of opium', by which he has been 'deluded' into paralyzing addiction.²⁰ The grim joke is that the vocabulary of the question suggests its answer: 'opium'.

The rhetorical structure of lines twelve, thirteen and fourteen is that of comedy, in which a leading question is followed by a bathetic answer:

And would you learn the spells that drowse my soul?
Work without hope draws nectar in a sieve,
And hope without an object cannot live.²¹

The poet plays an absurdist role: he is a monstrous clown called 'Work without Hope', who attempts an obviously – laughably – futile task. The repetition of 'without' stresses the negative mood, as do the concluding words' denial of life. The image of 'draw[ing] nectar in a sieve' amplifies the sonnet's allusions to drugs. STC as addict engages in a self-defeating activity. He takes opium in an unending cycle to relieve the symptoms that opium produces. The image also suggests the interrelationship between creative failure and opium consumption. 'Work Without Hope' expresses the same contradiction as

¹⁸ Paley, pp. 74-75.

¹⁹ STC, *Poems* (1852), p. 330, ll. 7-12.

²⁰ *PWCC*, I, Part 2, p. 753.

²¹ STC, *Poems* (1852), p. 330, ll. 13-14.

‘Dejection’. STC writes an eloquent and innovatory sonnet in which he proclaims himself to be a literary failure. He states that he does not ‘sing’ while he is in the very act of ‘sing[ing]’, in the classical sense in which to recite or to compose verse is to ‘sing’. The phonic structure of the octave, with its four pairs of rhyming couplets, expresses stasis and entrapment (as does the whole notebook entry from which the sonnet is extracted). ‘Work Without Hope’ subverts the whole concept of a sonnet, which carries expectations of progression through subtle nuances, shifts and tensions. J.C.C. Mays has suggested that STC, in seeking to define his own distinct poetic territory, practises an anti-Wordsworthian ‘aesthetics of failure and inachievement’.²² ‘Work Without Hope’ might suggest the pursuit of such an agenda. Coleridge, though, is dismissive of STC’s self-presentation in the sonnet.

‘For My Father’: Loss and Restoration

Coleridge’s ‘For my Father on his lines called “Work Without Hope”’ adapts STC’s theme of lost creativity to the ultimate loss of death:

Father, no amaranths e’er shall wreathe my brow, –
 Enough that round thy grave they flourish now: –
 But Love ’mid my young locks his roses braided,
 And what cared I for flow’rs of deeper bloom?
 These too seemed deathless – here they never faded,
 But, drenched and shattered, dropped into the tomb.²³

The opening line, with its initial trochaic foot, followed by four iambs, gives stern force to ‘Father’. Coleridge retorts sharply to the negative conclusion of STC’s sonnet. Her opening word is a firm rebuke, re-calling STC from morbid self-absorption. In the second line, Coleridge rejects STC’s whole premise in ‘Work Without Hope’ that no ‘amaranths [...] bloom’ for him: on the contrary, they ‘flourish’ around his ‘grave’. She contrasts STC’s ‘amaranths’ of high poetic achievement with her own ‘roses’ of ‘Love’, against which the celebratory ‘amaranths’ held no appeal for her. For Coleridge in her youth, the ‘roses’ of ‘Love’ seemed everlasting. To express this, she coins ‘deathless’, which bears the same form as STC’s ‘wreathless’ in ‘Work Without Hope’. The difference between the two coined compounds is that STC’s ‘wreathless’ concerns his self-image, whereas Coleridge’s ‘deathless’ introduces the theme of ultimate loss. The

²² J. C. C. Mays, ‘Coleridge’s “Love”’: “All he could manage, more than he could”, in *Coleridge’s Visionary Languages*, ed. by Tim Fulford and Morton D. Paley (Cambridge: Brewer, 1993), pp. 49-66 (p. 58).

²³ *Poems*, p. 156, ll. 1-6.

roses her lover 'braided' into her hair become the petals she scatters into the grave at his funeral. The last line of the first stanza processes slowly through its triplet of heavily stressed syllables in 'drenched, shattered, dropped', coming to rest with stark finality on 'tomb'; which, with grim irony, rhymes with 'bloom'.

The second stanza begins with the same metrical pattern as the first: a trochaic foot, followed by four iambs. Coleridge emphasizes her own indifference to personal achievement:

Ne'er was it mine t' unlock rich founts of song,
As thine it was, ere Time had done thee wrong.

Here Coleridge avoids the psychological territory of *Biographia 1847*, and presents the dysfunctional STC euphemistically as a victim of 'Time'. In contrast with STC's alienation from his poetic past, Coleridge seeks consolation in memory:

But ah! how blest I wandered nigh the stream,
Whilst Love, fond guardian, hovered o'er me still!
His downy pinions shed the tender gleam
That shone from river wide or scantiest rill.²⁴

The exclamation 'ah!' is a stressed syllable, which introduces the elegiac mood of joyful recollection with which the stanza closes. In a letter of October 1847, Coleridge confesses the danger of indulgence in memory; a temptation to 'forget the present in the past'.²⁵ The stanza expresses how 'Love' brought Coleridge close to the sources of poetic achievement. She alludes here to her literary collaboration with Henry, in which they 'wandered' together 'nigh the stream' of Romantic creativity. The imagery of light ('the tender gleam that shone') associates love with Reason, the medium, in Coleridge's theology, by which we apprehend the Divine.

Coleridge uses her characteristic image of water flowing through a channel in stanza two. The 'scantiest rill' of line twelve alludes to 'Sonnet VI' in 'Part 1' of Wordsworth's 'Miscellaneous Sonnets', 'There is a little unpretending Rill'.²⁶ In this poem, composed in 1802 but not published until 1820, Wordsworth commemorates a particular day when he and Dorothy, on their 'first visit together to this part of the

²⁴ *Poems*, p. 156, ll. 7-8, 9-12.

²⁵ *M & L*, II, p. 142.

²⁶ William Wordsworth, 'There is a little unpretending Rill', in *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. by Ernest De Selincourt and Helen Darbishire, 5 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940-1949), III (1946), p. 4.

country', walked from Kendal to Windermere. As the manuscript draft records, they picnicked – ate 'a Traveller's meal' – by the stream, and 'slaked [their] thirst' from its 'blessed water'. In the published texts, Dorothy figures first as 'faithful Anna', and then as 'faithful Emma' in the 1827 version, though in the first draft Wordsworth refers to her as 'My Love'. The shared memory of that 'happy day' remains a sustaining 'vision' for the poet and his companion.²⁷ Coleridge's allusion to Wordsworth's sonnet at the end of the second stanza suggests that she finds restoration and blessing in her memories of Henry and the life they shared.

From the Wordsworthian consolation of 'private recollection sweet and still', Coleridge returns in her third stanza to confront the material finality of death; what she refers to in the letter of October 1847 as her 'deep irretrievable losses'.²⁸ The opening words introduce a change in focus and emotional tone:

Now, whether Winter 'slumbering, dreams of Spring',
Or, heard far off, his resonant footsteps fling
O'er Autumn's sunburnt cheek a paler hue,
While droops her heavy garland here and there,
Nought can for me those golden gleams renew,
The roses of my shattered wreath repair.²⁹

Coleridge replaces STC's early anticipation of spring with an autumnal intimation of winter and death. The creative stimuli of the seasons hold no interest for her in her state of 'irretrievable' loss. Coleridge's 'shattered wreath' carries poignant associations. The phrase at the end of the third line, 'a paler hue' echoes Henry's 'a graver hue' in his 'Preface' to *Table Talk*, in which he refers to the work's place in STC's 'oeuvre' as a whole: '[t]his sprig, though slight and immature, may yet become its place, in the Poet's wreath of honour, among flowers of graver hue'.³⁰ STC's literary 'wreath of honour' is a bitter contrast to the 'shattered' wedding 'wreath' of Coleridge's loving marriage, of which her phrase echoing Henry is a reminder. There is further irony for Coleridge in recalling Henry's reference to STC's 'wreath of honour'. STC's public image has been tarnished significantly since Henry's 'Preface' to *Table Talk*. STC's 'wreath of honour' in 1845 depends upon Coleridge's success in reconstructing his reputation. If Coleridge's efforts fail, STC may indeed remain 'wreathless'.

The 'shattered wreath', the scattered rose petals dropping into Henry's grave,

²⁷ Wordsworth, 'Poems, in Two Volumes', pp. 530-531, p. 547, pp. 530-531.

²⁸ Wordsworth, 'Poems, in Two Volumes', p. 531 n. *M & L*, II, p. 142.

²⁹ *Poems*, p. 156, ll. 13-18.

³⁰ *Table Talk* (1991), I, p. 7.

and ‘Autumn’s [...] heavy garland’ about to fall, refer to an archetypal emblem of loss and death. Coleridge recalls the moment in *Paradise Lost* that expresses the whole human tragedy of the Fall. In shock at hearing that Eve has eaten the forbidden fruit, Adam

Astonied stood and blank, while horror chill
Ran through his veins, and all his joints relaxed;
From his slack hand the garland wreathed for Eve
Down dropped, and all the faded roses shed’.³¹

Coleridge’s poem alludes to the ‘faded roses’ of Adam’s ‘garland wreathed for Eve’, which, like her own, ‘dropped’ in the face of death. The trochee at the beginning of Coleridge’s fifth line (‘Nought can’) emphasizes the tragic finality expressed by the ‘shattered wreath’. Lines five and six of stanza three would seem to be setting the tone for a despairing conclusion to parallel the negativity (‘cannot live’) with which STC’s sonnet closes.

However, there is a syntactic turn four lines before the end of Coleridge’s final stanza. The pause signified by the comma after ‘repair’ precedes a decisive change in tone from the elegiac to the assertive:

Nought can for me those golden gleams renew,
The roses of my shattered wreath repair,
Yet Hope still lives, and oft, to objects fair
In prospect pointing, bids me still pursue
My humble tasks: – I list – but backward turn
Objects for ever lost still struggling to discern.³²

The monosyllables of the line that begins ‘[y]et Hope’, with strong rhythmic emphases on ‘Hope’ and ‘lives’, create a vigorous mood. Coleridge defiantly rejects STC’s acceptance of defeat, in which he proclaims the death of ‘Hope’. In Coleridge’s closing lines personified ‘Hope’ is an active presence, which urges and encourages the poet, amplified by the plosive alliteration of ‘prospect pointing [...] pursue’. The enjambment after ‘still pursue’ and the medial caesura after four syllables of the following line focus attention on the key phrase: ‘[m]y humble tasks’. The metrical pattern, with ‘[m]y’ unstressed and ‘tasks’ stressed, suggests Coleridge’s devotional conception of her own

³¹ *Paradise Lost*, IX. 890-893.

³² *Poems*, p. 156, ll. 17-22.

authorship, in which the works, the processes and products themselves, are foregrounded, and the producer is all but hidden. The phrase itself indicates Coleridge's revision of the Romantic concept of the poet as celebrity or genius. The caesuras on either side of 'I list' express a moment's hesitation before an immense effort of will, the first of which represents an intake of breath as Coleridge gathers strength to recommence her struggle. The second caesura expresses a sigh as Coleridge turns 'backward' to search in memory for '[o]bjects for ever lost'.

Yet, the grammar and rhythm of the final line assert Coleridge's resilient determination. In 1847, Coleridge describes herself in widowhood as possessing a 'tough state of mind'.³³ This is reflected in her poem's conclusion. The metrical structure of her final line expresses energy and stamina. The line's third stressed syllable is 'lost'. In the next foot, though, the stress falls on the first syllable of the dynamically energetic verb 'struggling'; a word charged with moral and religious significance in Coleridge's vocabulary. To struggle, for Coleridge, is the essence of the Christian life. As she puts it in her unpublished essay 'Asceticism': 'a spiritual education must be one of continued effort and struggling – a contest of our human self must be for ever going on and can only cease to be painful when self is annulled and the contest is over'.³⁴ Similarly, in her 'Extracts from a New Treatise on Regeneration', Coleridge refers to 'a state in which the spirit is struggling with the flesh' as a stage on the individual's journey towards 'the spiritual life'.³⁵ Therefore, in *Biographia 1847*, when she refers to STC 'still struggling through his earthly career', she not only applies to him the two key words of the final line of her poem; she represents him, also, as a Christian pilgrim leading a spiritual life of 'effort' and 'contest' (p. clxxii). Coleridge's devotional ideal of the Christian life as a spiritual 'struggle' through an 'earthly' pilgrimage is rooted in her Kantian epistemology of the active mind and will, which underpins her radical Protestant theology. Through the word 'struggle', she associates intellectual efforts with spiritual exercise. Works that introduce 'new thought', such as STC's metaphysical writings, require a reader's 'cooperation from within', which Coleridge describes as 'a process full of conflict and struggle' (p. xx). To 'struggl[e]', she confides in 1843 to John, is psychologically therapeutic and spiritually invigorating: 'I have struggled and am still struggling, as for life', she explains soon after Henry's death: '[t]he struggle is its own reward, for it calls forth new energies'.³⁶ The 'struggle' is a redemptive process. Her phrase, 'still struggling', therefore, defines Coleridge's tenacious and resolute vitality at the end of her poem. Significantly, she first uses the phrase in her letter of 1843 to John, in

³³ *M & L*, II, p. 128.

³⁴ Barbeau, *Life*, p. 51.

³⁵ 'Extracts', p. 292.

³⁶ Griggs, *Coleridge Fille*, p. 217.

explaining the means by which she endures the loss of Henry. The personal and the authorial for Coleridge are mutually sustaining.

The last four lines of the poem suggest that the effort Coleridge applies to her 'humble tasks', and her psychological and spiritual resilience in enduring loss, are inseparably linked. Coleridge's performance of her 'tasks', and her stamina in 'struggling', will lead in the future to those 'objects fair' in 'prospect' to which 'Hope' is 'pointing'. Coleridge creates a spiritual and literary union between past and future. She hopes that the 'objects fair' of the future, which are dependent on her own present efforts, will recompense the losses of the past. Coleridge's conception of suffering and recuperation in the poem is Wordsworthian. Ten years earlier, Coleridge had defined the spiritual resource she finds in Wordsworth's poetry: 'Mr. Wordsworth opens to us a world of suffering [...] but for every sorrow he presents an antidote – he shows us how man may endure as well as what he is doomed to suffer'.³⁷ Coleridge resorts to the Wordsworthian 'restoration' of memory, as shown in her allusion to the 'little unpretending Rill' sonnet.³⁸ At the same time, her response to loss reflects the Wordsworthian ethic of 'Resolution and Independence' and 'Ode to Duty'.

Coleridge's 'objects fair' and positive 'prospect' refer to the settled future she envisages for her children. Similarly, in 'Time's Acquittal', a poem of 1846, Herbert and Edith are her source of consolation. She laments her loss of youth and beauty, but finds joyful reparation when 'Time' reveals her 'children's faces [...] doubly blooming glad and strong'.³⁹ Coleridge conceives her 'humble' literary 'tasks', therefore, in terms of parental and family duty. She strives, through her recovery and reconstruction of STC's 'oeuvre', to bequeath to her children – and to future descendants – a viable literary estate, in the sense that Wordsworth and Southey conceive of literary property. She will also pass on to them a respected name, and a secure position in English society. From the very beginning of her widowhood, Coleridge associates her literary and editorial work with parental duty: 'I had children to consider and to act for', she explains in 1847, looking back over her years of widowhood; 'the sense how cruel and selfish it would be to shadow their young lives by the sight of a mother's tears, was a motive for exertion'. For Coleridge, the religious, the domestic, the practical and the personal are inextricably interrelated, and coalesce in her literary activity. Coleridge's projects, present and future, editorial and original, are ambitious in scope. Her description of them as 'humble tasks' is revealing, and carries strong religious associations. As historian Heringer contends, 'to categorise humility as feminine is to forget that it [is] also a Christian virtue.

³⁷ *Criticism*, p. 83.

³⁸ Wordsworth, 'Lyrical Ballads', p. 117, l. 31. 'Poems, in Two Volumes', pp. 530-531.

³⁹ *Poems*, pp. 160-161, ll. 31-32.

Furthermore, as Newman articulated the role of humility [...] it was a strength not a weakness'.⁴⁰ Above all, Scripture promotes humility as a core value. In the Old Testament, for example, Proverbs commends 'an humble spirit'. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus extols 'the poor in spirit' and 'the meek'; while St Peter, in his first Epistle, teaches Christians to 'be clothed in humility'. Similarly, St Paul urges the Colossians to 'put on [...] mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, and long-suffering'; while the Epistle of St James proclaims that 'God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble'.⁴¹ Coleridge's phrase defines the vocational ethic of her authorship. The example of Keble's religious humility affords a parallel. His academic achievements promised, at the age of twenty-three, 'a brilliant career leading to the highest offices in the land', according to George Herring. Yet, Keble deliberately 'turn[ed] aside from this path' and in 1823 'retire[d] from Oxford' to serve as a curate in his father's rural parish.⁴² Keble was committed to Christian ideals of selfless service and personal devotion. Coleridge's 'humble tasks' of editorship and authorship may be seen in the same vocational light.

Coleridge's Vocational Concept of Authorship

In her poem in response to 'Work Without Hope', Coleridge conceives of editing and writing as vocational and redemptive activities. In the 'Preliminary Observations' of her 'Extracts', she states her vocational concept of theological writing. It is the 'duty, for those who think themselves able, in any degree, to serve the cause' of religious 'Truth'. She expands on her notion of authorial duty: '[f]or false doctrine is an *offence* against Truth, whom all mankind are bound to serve and defend as far as in them lies'.⁴³ Her mediation of STC's works is, in these terms, a vocational imperative: his Kantian ideas are the base on which her innovative critique of Tractarianism rests. Coleridge emphasizes the destructive potential of fallacious dogma, and the danger it poses to Christian faith and devotion. Her language is emotive and dramatic. Some 'theological theories grievously shatter and distort' the 'great religious verities', she contends, so that 'through the medium of those theories they look as strangely as the sun during an eclipse'.⁴⁴ Coleridge alludes here to Milton's description of Satan's dimmed 'glory':

as when the sun new risen

Looks through the horizontal misty air

⁴⁰ Herring, p. 142.

⁴¹ Proverbs 16. 19; Matthew 5. 3 & 5; I Peter 5. 5; Colossians 3. 12; James 4. 6. All quotations are from the Authorized King James Version.

⁴² Herring, p. 50.

⁴³ 'Extracts', p. 255. Coleridge's emphasis.

⁴⁴ 'Extracts', pp. 256-257.

Shorn of his beams, or from behind the moon
In dim eclipse disastrous twilight sheds
On half the nations, and with fear of change
Perplexes monarchs.⁴⁵

Coleridge's allusion to this simile associates false 'theological theories' with Satanic deception. This is why it is a 'duty', for Coleridge, to engage in theological debate.⁴⁶ There is a further implication: Milton's 'eclipse' portends political upheaval and spreads 'fear of change', a theme strikingly applicable to Coleridge's own times. The 'duty' to which she refers, to argue in 'defence' of 'Truth' is cultural and political as well as religious.⁴⁷ To engage in theological dialogue, and to enlist her editorship of STC in that project, becomes Coleridge's vocation, in service of religion and her family.

Coleridge's output, like STC's, is fragmentary and incomplete. This is because she died prematurely at the age of forty-nine. Derwent did not accomplish for Coleridge what he had performed for Hartley: he never collected nor published her literary remains. He included a mere six posthumous pages, a 'Note on Mr Coleridge's Observations Upon the Gift of Tongues', at the end of his edition of STC's marginalia.⁴⁸ In the 'Preface', he refers only to Henry as STC's editor. Furthermore, Derwent omitted 'On Rationalism' from the seventh edition of *Aids to Reflection*. The conservative clergyman, who had censored a draft of the 'Introduction' to *Biographia 1847*, suppressed his sister's liberal theology after her death. The major works of Coleridge's last years, the *Dialogues on Regeneration*, remain unpublished, all but unread and unstudied. They give insight into Coleridge's ongoing innovative contribution to Victorian Christian discourse. The prevailing monologic forms of theological writing resulted in adversarial stalemate. She adopts dialogic techniques, therefore, that aim to promote communal collaboration and dialectical progression. New threats to religious belief required literary innovation, as well as revitalized metaphysical perspectives. Monologic religious discourse continued to rest upon traditional priestly authority at a time when new methodology was calling the basis of such authority into question. Admittedly, Coleridge's final religious work, *Dialogues on Personality*, is a colloquy with Robert Wilberforce on the familiar ground of baptismal regeneration, for which the eminent Archdeacon had attempted to construct a new conceptual base. Nonetheless, it is reasonable to suppose that, had she lived longer, Coleridge might have applied her

⁴⁵ *Paradise Lost*, I, 594-599.

⁴⁶ 'Extracts', pp. 256-257, p. 255.

⁴⁷ 'Extracts', p. 255.

⁴⁸ Sara Coleridge, 'Note on Mr Coleridge's Observation Upon the Gift of Tongues', in *Notes, Theological, Political and Miscellaneous*, by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ed. by The Rev. Derwent Coleridge (London: Moxon, 1853), pp. 409-415.

dialogic techniques to a systematic critique of Strauss, and to an extended examination of ‘the foundations of religion’, as she puts it in October 1851.⁴⁹ In the 1849 edition of *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit*, she had already prepared the ground for a critique of Strauss on Coleridgean principles. She possessed in abundance the scholarly resources to have engaged with the controversial *Essays and Reviews* (1860), in which the historicity of the Bible was challenged. She had also developed a flexible multi-voiced medium of religious dialectic; an ‘answerable style’, to borrow Milton’s celebrated phrase, for the development of an inclusive yet cohesive Christian philosophy.⁵⁰ Until Coleridge’s religious dialogues are published, our picture of a unique literary figure will remain incomplete. The publication of these works would make a significant contribution to our knowledge and understanding of mid-nineteenth-century culture and authorship.

Coleridge favours ‘a chronological arrangement of Poetry in completed collections’. She follows this principle in the 1852 edition of STC’s *Poems*: the poems have been ‘distributed with relation to time’, she explains, in order to show STC’s development through the successive stages of his poetic career.⁵¹ I have adopted a chronological analysis in my investigation of Coleridge’s authorship for a similar reason. I have shown how Coleridge responds to her literary fathers in writings up to and including the publication of *Phantasmion* in 1837. I have presented, also, the significant ways in which Coleridge’s authorship develops from 1837, when she takes her initial steps towards theological writing, to 1852, the year of her death. I have emphasized the ways in which Coleridge’s authorial development gains impetus in the last nine years of her life, and particularly in her final four years. In doing so, I have discovered the dialogic qualities of Coleridge’s literary theory and authorial practice. I have shown the dynamic and enabling processes of her interaction with her literary fathers, especially STC’s writings, and her use of the family context to subvert the gender conventions of authorship. Above all, I have found that Coleridge’s concept of authorship becomes vocational. It is based on a Kantian commitment to conceptual and methodological clarity, and a Miltonic assertion of individual religious freedom. I contend, therefore, that Sara Coleridge occupies a unique and significant position in early Victorian literary history.

⁴⁹ *M & L*, II, p. 462.

⁵⁰ *Paradise Lost*, IX, 20

⁵¹ STC, *Poems* (1852), p. vii, p. viii.

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