

THE MAJOR ROMANTIC POETS AND THEIR CRITICS
IN BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE: 1817 - 1825

M.A. HASSAN

Thesis presented for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
University of Edinburgh

October 1971



SUMMARY

The criticism of contemporary poetry in Blackwood's Magazine between 1817 and 1825 is so uneven that it has often given rise to contradictory judgements. On the one hand, Blackwood's has often been denounced for its treatment of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Keats, and on the other, it has been awarded the honour of being one of the first periodicals to uphold the names of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Shelley. Although this thesis does not seek to prove the justice of either judgement, it attempts to show that Blackwood's criticism on the five major poets, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, and Keats, is a complex product comprising the various individual attitudes of the Blackwood's critics of contemporary poetry, who inevitably differed in their judgements on those poets. As shown in Chapter I, there are two major reasons for adopting this approach in examining Blackwood's appraisal of the five poets. First, a thorough examination of the Blackwood Papers in the National Library of Scotland has proved that the Blackwood's "editors" did not attempt to impose any consistent or clearly defined critical outlook on their supporters. Secondly, the views expressed by individual critics in the magazine faithfully reflect their private opinion in their correspondence with William Blackwood.

For these reasons, I have attempted to show how and why the Blackwood's critics differed in their appraisal of the five major poets. Part I deals with the critics of Wordsworth and Coleridge. After ascribing the various reviews and critiques to their probable authors, an attempt is made in Chapter II to point out how Wilson's

criticism of both Wordsworth and Coleridge was warped by his personal acquaintance with the two poets, on the one hand, and by the emotional didacticism of his views about poetry on the other. In the same chapter Wilson's criticism of Wordsworth's poetry is contrasted with what Lockhart and R. Jones wrote on the same subject. Chapter III examines William Howison's criticism of Wordsworth within the framework of his philosophical and aesthetic theories. Chapter IV deals with one aspect of Lockhart's criticism of contemporary literature (i.e. its empiricism), as illustrated in his criticism of Coleridge.

Part II of the thesis follows the same pattern as Part I. But because of his contemporary popularity and because of the provocative nature of his later poems, Byron received more attention from Blackwood's than any other contemporary poet, and caused greater differences of opinion among its critics. Chapter V attempts to show how the emotional didacticism of Wilson's conception of poetry accounts for his exaggerated admiration for Byron's non-satirical poems. In contrast, William Maginn was constantly and bitterly hostile towards Byron (Chapter IX). Lockhart and John Herman Merivale were more discriminating than Wilson, and less hostile than Maginn. Both Lockhart and Merivale regarded Don Juan as Byron's greatest poem. But, as Chapters VII and VIII will show, they had different reasons for praising Byron's masterpiece.

Part III of the thesis deals chiefly with Lockhart as a critic of Shelley and Keats. Chapter XI attempts to explain why he passed fairly favourable judgements on four of Shelley's poems, and why he

was adamant in his hostility towards Keats.

Throughout the thesis the views of the Blackwood's critics on the major Romantic poets are examined in the light of their private letters to William Blackwood on the one hand, and of their other writings in Blackwood's and elsewhere, on the other.

Although this thesis concentrates on the individuality, and the independence of the Blackwood's critics of poetry, other facets of periodical criticism are also examined in so far as they are reflected in Blackwood's. William Blackwood's relations with other publishers, and the effect those relations had on the criticism of poetry in his magazine are examined in Chapters I, VI and XII. Similarly, the influence of the Tory politics of Blackwood's on its criticism of poetry is pointed out throughout the thesis, especially in Chapters X and XI.

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	i
ABBREVIATIONS	ii
CHAPTER I Introduction	1
PART ONE: WORDSWORTH AND COLERIDGE	
Introduction	58
CHAPTER II Wilson on Wordsworth and Coleridge	78
CHAPTER III William Howison on Wordsworth	110
CHAPTER IV Lockhart on Coleridge	136
PART TWO: BYRON	
Introduction	155
CHAPTER V Wilson on Byron	157
CHAPTER VI John Murray, William Blackwood, and the Publication of <u>Don Juan</u>	186
CHAPTER VII The First Defence of <u>Don Juan</u> : John Herman Merivale and Byron	207
CHAPTER VIII Lockhart on <u>Don Juan</u>	221
CHAPTER IX William Maginn Versus Byron	259
CHAPTER X Byron in <u>Blackwood's</u> : 1822-1824	284
PART THREE: SHELLEY AND KEATS	
Introduction	299
CHAPTER XI Lockhart on Shelley and Keats	308
CHAPTER XII Shelley, Ollier, and <u>Blackwood's</u>	322

APPENDICES		<u>Page</u>
APPENDIX I	J.F. Ferrier's Memoranda of John Wilson's contributions to <u>Blackwood's</u>	352
APPENDIX II	William Howison's contributions to <u>Blackwood's</u>	354
APPENDIX III	Lockhart's 'Life' of Defoe	359
APPENDIX IV	Further evidence of Lockhart's authorship of <u>John Bull's Letter to Lord Byron</u>	363
APPENDIX V	Lockhart's authorship of "Harry Franklin's" Letter on Cantos III-V of <u>Don Juan</u>	366
APPENDIX VI	William Maginn and Byron's Memoirs and Letters	370
APPENDIX VII	Alaric Alexander Watts and the first Number of "Noctes Ambrosianae"	380
APPENDIX VIII	Some biographical Notes	396
BIBLIOGRAPHY		401

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The extent of my general indebtedness to Alan Lang Strout's various publications on Blackwood's Magazine, is indicated, albeit inadequately, by my footnotes and bibliography. I wish, however, to acknowledge my debt to Strout's articles on the relation between William Wordsworth and John Wilson on which I have drawn heavily for Chapter II in this thesis.

I am grateful to the Trustees of the National Library of Scotland for allowing me to consult and quote the Blackwood Papers, and to all members of the staff of the South Reading Room in that Library for their wonderful helpfulness.

To the University of Alexandria I am grateful for the extremely generous grant, which enabled me to devote many years to an uninterrupted and full-time research.

In expressing my deep gratitude to Professor K.J. Fielding, my supervisor, I wish to thank him for the boundless liberality with which he has given me a great deal of his time during my work on this thesis and before, for his valuable and stimulating comments and suggestions, and for his equally valuable encouragement.

To my wife I owe more than her sympathetic sharing in all the problems of my research. Her patience and perseverance in deciphering a difficult manuscript and in typing the first draft have made the writing of this thesis possible.

ABBREVIATIONS

- Gordon Mrs. Gordon, 'Christopher North': A Memoir of John Wilson, 2 vols., 1862.
- Lang Andrew Lang, The Life and Letters of John Gibson Lockhart, 2 vols., 1897.
- NLS, MSS. 4003-4937 The Blackwood Papers in the National Library of Scotland.
- _____. 3551 William Blackwood's letters to William Maginn in the National Library of Scotland.
- Oliphant Mrs. Oliphant, Annals of a Publishing House: William Blackwood and his Sons, their Magazine and Friends, 2 vols., 1897.
- Strout, Bibliography Alan Lang Strout, A Bibliography of Articles in Blackwood's Magazine, Lubbock, Texas, 1959.
- _____, C&W Alan Lang Strout, "Samuel Taylor Coleridge and John Wilson of Blackwood's Magazine," PMLA, XLVIII (1933), 100-128.
- _____, John Bull's Letter John Bull's Letter to Lord Byron, ed. Alan Lang Strout, Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1947.
- _____, Library Alan Lang Strout, "The Authorship of Articles in Blackwood's Magazine, Numbers xvii-xxiv (August 1818-March 1819)," The Library, 5th S., XI (1956), 187-201.
- _____, WCW Alan Lang Strout, "John Wilson, 'Champion' of Wordsworth," MP, XXXI (1934), 383-394.
- _____, W&W Alan Lang Strout, "William Wordsworth and John Wilson: A Review of their Relations between 1802 and 1817," PMLA, XLIX (1934), 143-183.

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The criticism of contemporary poetry in Blackwood's Magazine has often invited wholesale condemnation, sweeping generalization, or apologetic rationalization. The charges of "critical irresponsibility, political bias and personal slander"¹ have almost become an excuse for avoiding a close examination of what Blackwood's had to say about the five major contemporary poets; Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley and Keats. This modern distaste for the manner in which Blackwood's occasionally treated these poets is understandable. For, at one time or another, Blackwood's sinned against them all, and while it made up for its violent attacks on the first four by equally violent praise, its attacks on Keats has remained its greatest, unforgivable and unforgettable crime.

Yet more than any other periodical in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, Blackwood's responded enthusiastically and appreciatively to contemporary poetry, and its general appraisal of four of the five major poets has withstood the test of time. It has to be admitted at once that its politics and polemics were odious, and its attacks on its victims distasteful even by contemporary standards. Because of these attacks, as Walter Graham observes, "Blackwood's gathered a well-deserved harvest of obloquy at the very

1. J.O. Hayden, The Romantic Reviewers: 1802-1824 (1969), p. 258.

outset of its career,"¹ and it has continued gathering it over the past hundred and fifty years. Yet, it was because of its politics, polemics, and "personality" that Blackwood's was an immediate success at its second beginning (October 1817).² William Blackwood engaged John Wilson and John Gibson Lockhart to produce a different magazine from that with which he had been saddled for six months by his first two editors, Thomas Pringle and James Cleghorn. Wilson and Lockhart hit on the most effective means of challenging the two grave quarterlies, particularly the Edinburgh. They produced a "warmer, sprightlier, and saucier"³ periodical, and whatever literary offences they committed, their magazine was popular. Not only did it overshadow the much older and firmly established monthlies, but it also effectively challenged the Edinburgh and the Quarterly. Its debut was as important a turning point for the monthly magazines as that of the Edinburgh had been for the quarterly reviews. The enthusiastic interest which such a popular and influential magazine took in contemporary poetry was a gain to the cause of contemporary literature which should not be denied, however distasteful some of the other aspects of the magazine seem to us nowadays.

-
1. English Literary Periodicals (New York: 1930), p. 275.
 2. Between April and September 1817 William Blackwood published the Edinburgh Monthly Magazine under the editorship of Thomas Pringle and James Cleghorn. By the sixth number of this magazine Blackwood realized that a change of the editors was necessary if his new magazine was to succeed. He dismissed Pringle and Cleghorn and with the help of Wilson and Lockhart, he produced the first number of Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine in October 1817—See Oliphant, I, 98ff.
 3. Strout, John Bull's Letter, p. 29.

In its early years, Blackwood's gathered as many inveterate enemies as devoted supporters. Some of these enemies, such as Hazlitt and Hunt, were justified in seeing nothing in it but infamous attacks, political and religious bigotry, and social snobbery. But other contemporaries, who were equally opposed to its politics and polemics, were more selective in their condemnations, and, in comparison to the harsh judgement of some modern scholars, their opinion of Blackwood's seems more tolerant. At least John Sterling and John Stuart Mill discriminated between Blackwood's politics and polemics, and its criticism of poetry. In the Athenaeum for 27 August 1828, John Sterling distinguished between Blackwood's criticism of literature which is "original, profound, and eloquent," and its politics, which are "entirely and shamelessly bad."¹ Some seven years later, Mill made a similar distinction in his review of Tennyson's Poems Chiefly Lyrical and Poems:

"Whatever may be in other respects our opinion of Blackwood's Magazine, it is impossible to deny to its principal writers (or writer) a certain susceptibility of sense, a geniality of temperament. Their mode of writing about works of genius is that of a person who derives much enjoyment from them, and is grateful for it. Genuine powers of mind, with whatever opinions connected, seldom fail to meet with response and recognition from these writers."²

Admittedly by the late twenties and early thirties, Blackwood's had become a more sober periodical than what it used to be in its early years. Yet, as early as May 1820, its criticism of poetry was

-
1. "The English Periodical Press," Athenaeum (27 August 1828), I, 695.
 2. London Review (July 1835), rept. in Tennyson: The Critical Heritage, ed. John D. Jump (1967), p. 85.

praised by John Scott, the editor of the London Magazine:

"Its principal recommendation is a spirit of life....Generally speaking, it has done important service to the cause of taste and truth by its poetical criticisms; indeed, before its appearance, there was no periodical work whatever, belonging to any part of the united kingdom, that could be looked to for a decent judgement on poetry. ...It has vindicated with ability, energy, and effect, several neglected and calumniated, but highly deserving poetical reputations."¹

The vehemence with which Scott later attacked Blackwood's (in "The Mohock Magazine") suggests that he probably thought that he had been too hasty in praising it. Yet it is also worth remembering that most of the offences that he accused Blackwood's and Lockhart of had been committed before the passage that has just been quoted appeared in the London Magazine. His acknowledgement of the service which Blackwood's had done to the cause of contemporary poetry was that of a highly critical rival who carefully weighed the strength and weaknesses of the magazine.

It is not the intention of this study either to condemn Blackwood's or palliate its sins. But there must be surely a certain degree of intolerance in the judgement of some modern scholars whose condemnation of Blackwood's is even less discriminating than that of those contemporaries whose judgement lacked the benefit of historical perspective. It would have been understandable had Scott, Sterling, and Mill been as whole-heartedly hostile towards Blackwood's as Hunt or Hazlitt. They were too closely involved in the political life of their age to give an objective judgement

1. Quoted by Josephine Bauer, The London Magazine, in Anglistica, ed. Torsten Dahl et al, Vol. I (Copenhagen: 1953), p. 34.

on a magazine, whose political outlook was utterly opposed to their own, and whose attacks on its political and literary opponents were often too dastardly to deserve any indulgence.

Moreover, they did not have the important advantage that has been given to us in recent years. To its contemporaries Blackwood's spoke with one anonymous voice, and because of the impenetrable array of pseudonyms that appeared in its pages, it was difficult, if not downright impossible, for the majority of its readers to distinguish between the work of one writer and the other. But now that the "ungrateful and practically impossible task" of establishing the authorship of the articles in Blackwood's has very nearly been accomplished, it is only natural that we should expect a higher degree of discrimination in any assessment of its criticism of contemporary poetry. For it is no longer possible to give such a wholesale judgement as that which J.O. Hayden makes when he declares that Blackwood's "was without question the worst of the critical organs"¹ of the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

At the other extreme from Walter Graham and J.O. Hayden stand the students of individual contributors to the magazine who attempt to rehabilitate one or the other of the major supporters of Blackwood's. John Wilson, J.G. Lockhart and William Maginn have been individually the subject of a number of separate studies.² Yet if ignoring all

1. The Romantic Reviewers, p. 258.

2. Lang's Biography is still the best favourable study of Lockhart. See also Lockhart's Literary Criticism, ed. M. Clive Hildyard, and Gilbert Macbeth, John Gibson Lockhart: A Critical Study (Urbana, University of Illinois Press: 1935). Alan Lang Strout's various

the differences between individual contributors leads to unsound generalizations and wholesale judgements, examining the works of individual contributors in isolation gives an exaggerated picture of the role which one major contributor or the other played in establishing the reputation of the magazine, and of his influence on all the other supporters. This is particularly obvious in Gilbert Macbeth's study of Lockhart's contributions to Blackwood's. Macbeth's claim that Lockhart was influenced by the German historical method of criticism may be valid in itself, but when he argues that such a method pervades all the criticism of contemporary literature in Blackwood's irrespective of whether or not it was written by Lockhart, he is much less convincing.¹ Lockhart was definitely a more competent judge of contemporary poetry than Wilson, or even than any other supporter of Blackwood's, but his contributions were only a part, albeit a very important one, of the criticism of contemporary poetry in Blackwood's, and no honour or discredit should be given him because of the work of others. Needless to say, such exclusive concentration on the major supporters in the magazine does

Contd.] articles on Wilson (see bibliography of this thesis) are valuable as exhaustive surveys of the criticism of contemporary poets in Blackwood's, but the ascription of articles should be checked against Strout's Bibliography. Malcolm Elwin, Victorian Wallflowers (1937) has chapters on Wilson and William Maginn, and Miriam Thrall, Rebellious Fraser's (New York: 1934) has important chapters on Maginn.

1. Gilbert Macbeth wrongly attributes several articles in Blackwood's to Lockhart on the ground that the writer employs the historical method of criticism. On the other hand Macbeth's theory does not account for the fact that Lockhart often judged contemporary poetry by classical standards.

not account for the contributions of minor writers. William Howison, John Herman Merivale, and others contributed their share to the criticism of contemporary poetry in Blackwood's, and although their contributions are relatively few, they should also be examined if we are to have a complete picture of the criticism of poetry in the magazine.

Alan Lang Strout's exhaustive surveys of the criticism on individual poets in Blackwood's are almost entirely free from the bias in favour of one or the other of its major contributors.¹ At the same time Strout does not ignore the contributions of minor writers. Unfortunately, however, Strout had published virtually all his work on the treatment of the major poets in the Magazine before he examined the Blackwood Papers. Although his surveys of the Blackwood's criticism of the poetry of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron and Shelley cannot be quantitatively improved upon by a thorough examination of the Blackwood Papers, any reassessment of the criticism of contemporary poetry in the early numbers of the magazine as the work of individual writers is greatly improved by reference to their private letters to William Blackwood.

In order to assess the criticism of poetry in Blackwood's as the work of individual writers, it is essential to settle the authorship of its critiques and reviews. Until we know who wrote a given piece, we hardly have sufficient ground for writing rationally

1. Strout's studies on the criticism of contemporary poetry in Blackwood's are in Strout, WCW; Strout, C&W; "Maga Champion of Shelley," SP, XXIX (1932), 95-119, and John Bull's Letter, 113-150.

about it, let alone for judging it. Once the authorship of articles is established it is also necessary to relate them closely to other writings of the same authors, and to examine them in the light of their private opinion as far as can be ascertained from their correspondence with William Blackwood. Although such a plan may seem too self-defeatingly relativistic, it is, I believe, the only rational way of examining periodical criticism and, throughout this thesis, it will be carried out at least on the contributions of the major critics of poetry in Blackwood's.

Although it is necessary to assess the contributions of individual writers separately, the other complex facets of periodical criticism should not be entirely ignored. How far, for instance, were individual writers affected by the editorial policy of the magazine, if such a policy existed? Was the criticism of contemporary poetry in the magazine influenced by the relation of William Blackwood with other publishers? Did the critics of poetry in Blackwood's pay any attention to the attitude of their readers to the poet criticised, or to their reaction to the criticism of individual poems? If the critics of poetry in Blackwood's are to be treated separately, how far can we rely on their sincerity? In other words, were they seriously engaged in assessing contemporary poetry or (as Peter F. Morgan suggests) were they among those critics whose articles are often less pure criticism than a form of satire thrown up as a defence of the status quo against insurgent elements in art, religion and politics."¹ What exactly is the relation between

1. Peter F. Morgan, "Problems in Examining Periodical Criticism," Victorian Periodicals Newsletter, January 1970, p. 10.

personal judgement and "role-playing of the critics themselves" in this criticism of contemporary poetry? Similarly, are the critical judgements of the magazine to be credited to such "personae" as "Christopher North", "Timothy Tickler", "Lauerwinkel", "Kempferhausen" and "Morgan Odoherty," rather than to the critics behind these "personae"? How far were the views of the individual critics influenced by the Tory politics of the magazine?

Finally the examination of periodical criticism cannot be complete without studying its effect on the poets themselves. Although it can be hardly claimed that the Blackwood's critics had as much influence on any of the five major poets as the contemporary reviewers had on Tennyson for instance, all the five poets examined in this thesis reacted very strongly to Blackwood's. Their reaction ranged from Wordsworth's contemptuous indifference to Blackwood's abuse to Byron's oscillation between exultation in its praise and indignation at its attacks.

All these problems will be dealt with whenever they arise throughout the thesis. In this introduction, however, four aspects of periodical criticism are briefly examined in connection with Blackwood's. These are the editorship of Blackwood's, William Blackwood's relations with other publishers and booksellers, politics and the criticism of poetry, and the question of the "persona". As there will be no occasion later in the thesis for giving an account of the reaction of the Blackwood's readers and supporters to its criticism of contemporary poetry, it is examined in more detail in this introduction.

i. The Editorship of the Magazine.

After analysing the faults of Blackwood's with a commendably high degree of objectivity, Lockhart goes on to say in Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk:

"These faults, however, I am inclined to attribute to nothing so much as to a total carelessness, in regard to the management of the work. The idea seems to have been, that a Magazine is not bound to maintain any one set of opinions, in regard to any one set of objects, throughout the whole of its pages; but that it was quite sufficient to insert in every Number, a certain number of articles, full of the traces of proper feeling and thinking, and to fill up the rest with anything that would amuse any class of Magazine-readers, without the least concern about their agreement or disagreement with the main and presiding spirit of the book. Perhaps, after all, the truth may be, that the whole work was set about without any plan of any kind;"¹

The accuracy of these remarks is corroborated by the whole mass of the early volumes of the Blackwood Papers. Mrs. Margaret Oliphant and Alan Lang Strout, who examined that collection thoroughly, found nothing to contradict Lockhart's statement about the management of the magazine. Perhaps Mrs. Oliphant gives the more accurate picture of the editorship of Blackwood's, though it is doubtful whether either Wilson or Lockhart felt that he was a member of a "Committee":²

"The question whether there was or was not an Editor, or rather a couple of Editors, to the new series...is one that has been very much disputed. I do not think that the reader, after the glimpses into the Blackwood correspondence which I have been able to give, can have much doubt that the Magazine was...in commission, the committee of three

-
1. Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk (1819), II, 224-25.
 2. See also Strout, Bibliography, p.6. I do not think there is enough evidence to justify Strout's conclusion that Wilson and Lockhart alternately edited Blackwood's.

occupying intermittently the supreme chair—one number sometimes in one man's charge, sometimes in another's, now one judgement uppermost and now another, but the veto always in Blackwood's hands, even in the few months when the influence of Murray made itself felt, and bound down a very independent and high-spirited group of men to an unwilling and rare compliance with rule and formula which was quite against their nature."¹

During the brief partnership between John Murray and William Blackwood, Lockhart and Wilson were officially appointed² as joint editors of the magazine. But whether this arrangement ended with Murray's withdrawal from partnership in March 1819, it is impossible to decide. Both Wilson and Lockhart later denied having ever received any payment from the management of the magazine,³ and in a letter of much later date Wilson tells Blackwood that although he [Wilson] was generally believed to be the editor of the magazine, "You are your own Editor & a good one."⁴ Yet there are in the Blackwood Papers drafts of letters addressed to correspondents in Wilson's and Lockhart's handwriting, and some of them signed as from the "editor", and others from the "joint editor" of the magazine. Because virtually all these letters are undated they cannot be used as evidence for deciding the exact date of the end of the joint-editorship of Blackwood's. But it is perhaps significant that in April 1819 Lockhart wrote to Coleridge "in the guise of the editor of the Magazine." As late as December 1819,

1. Oliphant, I, 185.

2. See Lockhart's Letter to David Williams as quoted in Oliphant, I, 191.

3. Lang, I, 134 and Oliphant, I, 192.

4. NLS, MSS. 4937.

and also in the same guise, Wilson wrote drafts of letters addressed to various contributors, but these are all signed "Christopher North."¹

More important than the question of the official editorship is the exact role, which both Wilson and Lockhart played in the "management". Although a great deal can be learnt, from the abundance of letters and notes from Wilson and Lockhart to William Blackwood, about the nature and extent of their role in producing the magazine, it is virtually impossible to determine whether there was any clear-cut division of labour or responsibility. Was this the result of "the constant attempt...to confuse the public as to just who was responsible"² for the editorship? The Blackwood Papers, particularly the letters of Wilson and Lockhart to William Blackwood, do not in the least give that impression.³ William Blackwood found it convenient to invent an imaginary "Editor", who was always responsible for having inserted the objectionable articles.⁴ His public assertions about his "Editor," however, are not so disingenuous as they seem, for the way in which Lockhart and Wilson superintended the magazine gave birth to this half-imaginary Editor. They hardly knew among themselves who was responsible for what. Apparently

-
1. Sometime in 1819 Lockhart addressed a letter to John Anster signed "JEBEM" or the "Joint Editor of Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine," and in December 1819 Wilson wrote as Christopher North to J.H. Merivale, Jonn Galt and Allan Cunningham.
 2. J.O. Hayden, The Romantic Reviewers, p. 62.
 3. It seems inconceivable for instance that Wilson would attempt to confuse any one by referring in several of his letters to William Blackwood to the "Editor" of the magazine.
 4. See Oliphant, I, 150n.

either Wilson or Lockhart undertook to see the magazine through the press, depending on whoever happened to be conveniently available or agreeably inclined. At times they worked closely together. At others, each might disclaim any responsibility for the magazine and assert that the other "has the charge" of this or that number.¹

To have the charge of a number of the magazine apparently meant nothing more than to decide which pieces to publish or reject. Since Blackwood's was published month after month on a hand-to-mouth basis, the problem was often how to find enough pieces to fill up the magazine rather than to pick and choose from an abundance. Lockhart apparently had the charge of the magazine when he wrote the following note to William Blackwood about the number for June 1820:

"What I think is that the Wastle should go at the end of the magazine and I shall send what I wish to be in place of the present bits on Aristophanes &c tomorrow but have not the slips. Whatever the Cork man [Maginn] sends by all means shd appear immediately & I trust you will receive it in the morning. Mr. Anster shd surely be in also. The rest is indiff't."²

Wilson's share in the "management" of the magazine was not any different as the following undated letter shows.

"Everything I tried today failed miserably—the note about Canning is to be in the notices, so let it begin in forms—follow it with the Essay on Song—and let the Skinner article follow that. An Eremus I hope to do tomorrow—& will bring it all with me about three o'clock...I perceive that Canning, Song writing, Skinner, Eremus, [an illegible word], German Play will make about forty pages & Wordsworth,

1. See Strout, Bibliography, p. 6.

2. NLS, MSS. 4005. See Blackwood's for June 1820, VII, 235 and 317 for the pieces referred to.

Anster & Wrangham twenty more—so with two or three amusing articles & anything that comes the magazine will be ready for the printers by Tuesday or Wednesday."¹

There were occasions, however, when Wilson or Lockhart advised against the publication of entire articles, or, more often, suggested the alteration of a word, or the omission of a name in the contributions of other supporters. Thus, in July 1822, Wilson warned William Blackwood against the publication of a hostile article on Southey by E.E. Crowe.² Similarly some time in 1820, Lockhart wrote to Blackwood: "I hope you have not put in all that bad poetry in the Beppo measure this number—very little of it is worth printing."³ More frequently however, Lockhart or Wilson added prefatory or concluding notes to pieces by other contributors indicating whether the views expressed in them agreed or disagreed with those of the "editor" of the magazine.

On the other hand there is no evidence to suggest that either Wilson or Lockhart had the authority to make any substantial changes in the contribution of other supporters,⁴ or impose on them any clearly defined outlook either in politics or in criticism.

Admittedly Blackwood's political views were unashamedly reactionary

1. NLS, MSS. 4729. For the articles mentioned see Blackwood's (April and May 1820) VII, 11, 32, 37 [Skinner is unidentified and there was no article on a German play] 176, 206, 312.
2. NLS, MSS. 4730.
3. NLS, MSS. 4004.
4. This, of course, does not include the extensive collaboration among Wilson, Lockhart and Maginn in such series as "Noctes Ambrosianae" and "Letters of Timothy Tickler." The incorporation of fragments by Maginn into pieces by Wilson or Lockhart was usually done at Maginn's request or with his full approval.

and tempted none but those who sympathized with them to write for its political department. But as far as the criticism of poetry was concerned, contributors were entirely free from editorial control. Allowing for some exaggeration, there was a great deal of truth in what Lockhart said about Blackwood's in "Maxims of Mr. Odoherly" (May 1824):

"The great superiority of Blackwood's Magazine over all other works of our time is, that one can be allowed to speak one's mind there. There never yet was one word of genuine unsophisticated truth in the Edinburgh, the Quarterly, or indeed in any other of the Periodicals—in relation, I mean, to anything that can be called opinion or sentiment. All is conventional mystification, except in Ebony, the jewel alone...I love whisky punch; I say so. I admire Wordsworth and Don Juan; I say so. Southey is a humbug; well, let it be said distinctly. Tom Campbell is in his dotage; why conceal a fact like this?...If I wrote in the Quarterly, I should be bothered partly with, and partly without, being conscious of it, with a hampering, binding, fettering, nullifying sort of notion, that I must make myself, pro tempore, a bit of a Gifford—and so of everything else."¹

It is likely that William Blackwood and his two advisers made a virtue of necessity and that they did not attempt to impose any restrictive editorial policy simply because, in order to meet the demands of a monthly publication, they could not afford to be too discriminating. It is nonetheless true that writers on contemporary literature in Blackwood's enjoyed an enviable degree of freedom. Provided their contributions were original, clever or amusing, they were invariably inserted in the magazine. "The notion of the unity of mind, in a Journal like this," wrote Lockhart in 1825, "is a

1. Blackwood's, XV, 605.

thing quite below our contempt."¹ Many a reader of Blackwood's must have wished a greater degree of consistency had not been quite so below its contempt, but we cannot be certain that such consistency could have been achieved without the loss of the intelligent and sympathetic criticism of the poetry of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, and Shelley, that appeared in its pages between 1817 and 1825.

The freedom from editorial control which the contributors of Blackwood's enjoyed does not account, of course, for the notorious inconsistency in Wilson's treatment of Wordsworth. Yet this is virtually the only case for which it is hardly possible to find a rational explanation. But as we shall see throughout this thesis, Blackwood's was so blatantly inconsistent in its treatment of Coleridge, Byron and Shelley for the simple and really obvious reason that widely different writers were free to express their views on these poets in its pages without being subjected to any effective editorial control. Lockhart and Wilson had the power to reject any contribution and occasionally they did so. Wilson's objection to E.E. Crowe's attack on Southey and Lockhart's to Maginn's attacks on Byron are the only cases that I have come across in the Blackwood Papers in which a piece was barred from the magazine because the views of the writer did not agree with those of one of the two "editors."

The manner in which Hazlitt and Coleridge were treated in

1. Blackwood's, XVII, 132.

Blackwood's in 1818 and 1819 perfectly illustrates how the complete absence of a clear editorial policy often resulted in gross inconsistency. In his Life of Hazlitt, P.P. Howe points out the startling contradiction between the article "Hazlitt and Jeffrey" (June 1818), which is a sympathetic appraisal of Hazlitt's merits as a critic, and a violent attack on the same writer in "Hazlitt Cross-Questioned," and wonders whether to attribute the insertion of the former article to a "freak of editorial inconsequence or revived commercial prudence."¹ The explanation is much simpler than that. The article on "Hazlitt and Jeffrey" was written by William Howison, who was at that time a fairly active supporter of Blackwood's, and everything that he wrote was automatically published. At the same time Wilson and Lockhart continued their intermittent fire against Hazlitt, which had begun in April 1818 and which reached its fiercest in Wilson's "Hazlitt Cross-Questioned." The incompatibility of Howison's article with the clearly hostile attitude of the magazine towards Hazlitt could not have escaped the notice of either Wilson or Lockhart, who had just been appointed as the joint editors of the magazine. It is only when we remember the limits of their editorial authority that such incongruous features of the magazine become comprehensible.

Another case of editorial inconsequence was positively embarrassing for William Blackwood and Lockhart. In the early months of 1819 Blackwood and Lockhart were seriously attempting to

1. P.P. Howe, The Life of William Hazlitt (1922), p. 260.

persuade Coleridge to become a contributor. Yet at the same time when both the publisher and his editor wrote to Coleridge long and respectful letters soliciting his support, a wretched parody of Christabel was published in the magazine. What is more surprising is that apart from running the risk of antagonizing Coleridge, neither Blackwood nor either of his editors knew at that time who the author of the parody was. For contrary to what J.R. de J. Jackson claims, it was not written by a member "of the editorial staff of Blackwood's,"¹ and the anonymous author, D.M. Moir, revealed his identity to William Blackwood and his two editors only in 1821.

Such, however, was the laxity of the editorial control in Blackwood's, that a large number of contradicting or incongruous articles were inserted apparently with the full acquiescence of the two editors, who made no attempt to impose any critical policy on their contributors. Whether this was the best way of running the magazine, is perhaps debatable. Yet the complete absence of any editorial policy shows how impossible it is to make a fair assessment of the criticism of poetry in Blackwood's until we treat it as a complex product of various contributors who inevitably differed in their critical outlook.

1. Coleridge: The Critical Heritage (1970), p. 15.

ii. William Blackwood's Relation with other Publishers and Booksellers.

As we shall see later in this thesis, William Blackwood's relations with other publishers and booksellers had a considerable influence on the magazine. Whether Blackwood was responsible or not for making the magazine reflect the constant mutations of his business relations, or whether Wilson and Lockhart were sympathetically influenced by the often embattled predicament of their principal, it is not easy to decide. But there can be no doubt that the rivalries or the friendly relations between William Blackwood and his brethren were immediately reflected in his magazine. The "Chaldee MSS," for example, had its origin in, and derived its story from, the rivalry between Blackwood and Archibald Constable. Later in this thesis we shall see how William Blackwood's relation with William Davies, John Murray, and Charles Ollier affected the attitude of the magazine towards Coleridge, Byron, Shelley respectively.

iii. The Magazine and its Readers.

The success of a popular magazine such as Blackwood's depended to a considerable degree on how far it took into consideration the taste, the attitudes and the reactions of the reading public at which it was aimed. There might be a grain of truth in the fact that William Blackwood was the first publisher to discover that sensational literary escapades were the surest

means of sustaining the popularity of his magazine.¹ In an undated letter, Wilson urges William Blackwood to publish a violent attack on the Edinburgh, "because it would attract notice & excite anger," and because "there are no attacks in the magazine" of that month.² Yet against such evidence we have the opinion of the majority of William Blackwood's correspondents, who constantly warned him that such attacks did nothing but harm to the sale of the magazine.³ Indeed, a more systematic survey of the effect that the objectionable parts of the magazine had on its sale might well prove that sensational journalism did not always pay, and that it was only when its violent personal attacks were discontinued that its circulation considerably increased.⁴ Now that the Blackwood Papers are easily accessible, a more interesting and fruitful study would be to examine how far the reaction of the readers and supporters of the magazine influenced both the manner and the substance of the magazine over the years. No study of that kind has yet been carried out on any periodical, and the abundance of material in the case of Blackwood's would yield highly significant results. Unfortunately the subject

-
1. Blackwood's has often been accused of seeking to gain attention by fair means or foul. See for instance William S. Ward, "Periodical Literature," in Some British Romantics, ed. James J. Lagan et al. (Ohio State University: 1966), p. 310.
 2. NLS, MSS. 4729.
 3. See for instance J.H. Merivale's letters to William Blackwood, quoted pp.215-17 below.
 4. Apart from the first number of its second beginning which contained the Chaldee Manuscript, Blackwood's started with a circulation of less than 4000. In 1831 its circulation rose to 8000. See Oliphant, II, 102.

and the limits of this thesis make it necessary to confine such an investigation to one small area in a vast subject. There is however a great deal to be learned from studying the reaction of the regular supporters of the magazine even within the limits of this thesis. If William Blackwood's correspondents can be taken as a representative cross-section of the contemporary reading public, their comments on the attitude of the magazine towards the five major poets are valuable not only because their views must have been carefully examined by William Blackwood, but also for what they reveal of the contemporary standing of those poets among the general reading public of the day.

Wilson's attacks on Wordsworth and Coleridge, for example, in the early numbers of Blackwood's were criticised even by a writer whose severity on contemporary poets was notorious. On 2 February 1818, John Wilson Croker wrote to William Blackwood:

"I have to thank you for your last number which I like much better than the former. I was I own distressed at the attacks on Messrs. Wordsworth & Coleridge who are certainly respectable writers to say the least of them & I understand worthy men."¹

Again on 23 April of the same year, Croker wrote to Blackwood,

"I much regretted the tone in which Messrs. Wordsworth & Coleridge were mentioned & I on the whole think you should be careful of personalities because, however legitimate the first step may be, the answer, reply, rejoinder & rebutter seldom fail to lead both parties from the fair road of controversy."²

1. NLS, MSS. 4003.

2. Ibid.

It is surprising to see such sentiments expressed by the harsh critic of Keats and Tennyson. One wonders why Croker did not defend Wordsworth and Coleridge in the Quarterly, which he could easily have done.¹

In 1819 William Davies's letters to William Blackwood consisted almost entirely of comments on the different numbers of the magazine. In letter after letter Davies protested against the "personality" of the magazine, enthusiastically applauded what he approved of in every number, and was generous in his advice to Blackwood on how to run the magazine. His letters to William Blackwood also give perhaps the best contemporary evidence of Coleridge's increasing popularity. Because William Davies was at that time anxious to interest Coleridge in writing for Blackwood's, he was particularly sensitive about the manner in which both he and Wordsworth were treated in the magazine. Although Davies protested against Lockhart's attack on Hunt in the "Cockney School of Poetry No. V," (April 1819) he approved of the praise for Wordsworth in the same article. On 27 April 1819 he wrote to William Blackwood:

"What is said of your Cockney Poetry of the 25th No about Mr. Wordsworth, so perfectly accords with Mr. Coleridge's conversation on Friday last, that I have no fears of his being dissatisfied on that point, but as I discover that Mr. W. is a very great favourite with Mr. C. I am rather inclined to recommend that you occasionally say something kind and conciliatory, about Mr. W. in your future Nos. though merely to show a kind feeling towards Mr. C."²

1. A certain John Smyth (?) also protested in Blackwood's (II, 285-88) against Wilson's review of Coleridge's Biographia Literaria. On the other hand, James Ballantyne praised Wilson's first attack on Wordsworth. NLS, MSS. 4002.

2. NLS, MSS. 4004.

In June 1819 Davies regretted the publication of D.M. Moir's parody of Christabel in Blackwood's, but he also commended the way in which Wordsworth and Coleridge were treated by other contributors. Coleridge, Davies wrote to William Blackwood on 15 June 1819,

"must be influenced, I think, by what he has discovered of the altered manner in which both he and his friend Wordsworth have lately been mentioned in your magazine—and I assure you when he is allowed to perceive the very gratifying mentions that occur in Peter's Letters...you may be able to count him as wholly your own."¹

On 30 June Davies again wrote:

"I cannot help wishing that it was in my power to put Mr. C. in possession of Peter's Letters, as I trust that my countryman's ["Peter Morris"] very flattering mention of Mr. C. himself and his friend Mr. Wordsworth would powerfully overbalance any unfavourable feelings (if such should be unhappily produced) by the third part of Christabel."²

It was probably in response to such repeated hints that Lockhart, who was equally anxious to persuade Coleridge to contribute to the magazine, wrote his highly favourable critique on Coleridge's poetry in the Lake School of poetry series.

There are very few other references to Wordsworth in William Blackwood's correspondents' letters between 1819 and 1825, and it seems that whatever praise he received in the magazine during those years was very much taken for granted by its readers. It was only when Wilson attacked Wordsworth in the "Noctes Ambrosianae" for September 1825 that a few of the magazine's sympathisers protested to William Blackwood. Lockhart found Wilson's personal abuse of

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

Wordsworth so distasteful that he almost doubted whether Wilson was completely sane when he wrote it.¹ D.M. Moir wrote to William Blackwood on 9 October 1819, that the whole passage in the "Noctes" was "a little in the indefensible line."² Even Alaric Alexander Watts, who often rejoiced in the attacks of the magazine on contemporary poets, wrote to William Blackwood on 12 September 1825:

"I am sorry you dealt so uncourteously with W.W. in your last Noctes, as much for his sake as your own. Some parts of the remarks are evidently not meant to be in earnest, but the fact is the public has not as much shrewdness as you give it credit for...After the very laudatory terms in which the Professor [Wilson] has spoken of Wordsworth on former occasions, it does seem strangely inconsistent to revile him now and as there are matters mentioned which he justly conceives have no reference to him in his poetical character, he as well as his private friends feel somewhat aggrieved₃ by the unprovoked severity with which he is spoken of."

In comparison with Wordsworth, Coleridge seems to have been a greater favourite among William Blackwood's correspondents, and, with the exception of Byron, he is more often mentioned in their letters than any other contemporary poet. This is partly due to the fact that on three different occasions Coleridge himself appeared in Blackwood's as a contributor. It was not, however, because of what he wrote for Blackwood's that his genius was generally recognized by William Blackwood's correspondents. In fact, with the exception of William Howison, all the regular supporters and

1. NLS, MSS. 4014.

2. NLS, MSS. 4015.

3. Ibid.

readers of the magazine described his contribution to the magazine as either incomprehensible or simply "too heavy" for a popular periodical such as Blackwood's.¹ Yet nowhere Coleridge is mentioned in the Blackwood Papers except in the tone of highest possible respect and admiration for his genius. We have already seen how William Davies often advised William Blackwood to spare no effort in persuading Coleridge to join the band of his regular contributors. D.M. Moir's letter of 27 October 1821 is perhaps more representative of the opinions of ^{the} regular readers of the magazine. Commenting on the "Selection" from Mr. Coleridge's Correspondence with Friends and Men of Letters" which ~~was~~ published in Blackwood's for October 1821, D.M. Moir wrote to William Blackwood:

"This No of Maga, if not one of her first rate appears at least a good and favourable one. I was a little surprised at seeing Coleridge taking the lead in such an official state; and were it not for his dim and dusty metaphysics he is certainly in every way calculated to be a vast accession to the magazine; but the misfortune is that he is perpetually exposing his weak side, and would not be content to tell you that Leith is a mile from Edinburgh unless he did it in the form of an algebrical problem—The letters which he has here given us are in general speculative and sometimes profound, but in many places mystical and obscure and to the general run of magazine readers will remain...as good as Manuscripts. For the poetry of Coleridge, I, as well as every reader who has the smallest

1. In an undated letter to William Blackwood, Howison writes referring to the "Selections from Coleridge's letters" (October 1821),

"I think Coleridge's letters are interesting and contain a great deal of philosophical truth though expressed in too discursive a manner. But they are excellent articles of their kind, and well worth inserting especially considering the celebrity and interest of his name."

See also Oliphant, I, 218, and Strout, "Knights of the Burning Epistle," Studia Neophilologica, XXVI (1953/54), 81 for comments by Lockhart and Maginn on Coleridge's contributions to Blackwood's.

pretension to taste feel and profess a deep admiration, but I suppose there is little chance of working any of that commodity out of him now."¹

Perhaps more than the attitude of contemporary periodicals, the tone and frequency with which Coleridge's name is mentioned in the Blackwood Papers reflects accurately the general recognition of his importance as a poet and thinker. It is no wonder that on 9 July 1821 John Anster wrote to William Blackwood, "There is no literary man whom I should feel greater anxiety to be acquainted with" than Coleridge.² It is also hardly surprising that from 1819 onwards Coleridge's name was never mentioned in Blackwood's except in terms of the highest praise.

The stormy relation which Byron had with his contemporary reviewers is faithfully reflected in the Blackwood Papers. As we shall see later in this thesis, Byron excited greater attention in the magazine than the other four major poets put together. His name recurs in the Blackwood Papers with equal frequency. For this reason, it is difficult to give an adequate summary of those privately expressed views without relating them closely to the development of Byron's reputation in England in general and to the criticism of his poetry in the magazine in particular. There is, however, little or no reference to his poetry in the Blackwood Papers previous to the publication of the first two cantos of Don Juan in July 1819.³ The reasons for this are self-evident. The

1. NLS, MSS. 4007.

2. NLS, MSS. 4006.

3. The few references in the Blackwood Papers to Byron before 1819 are mostly of indifferent nature.

magazine had been running for only two years and had largely relied on a small circle of supporters in Edinburgh (In the Blackwood Papers, letters dated 1817 and 1818 are considerably fewer than those of later years.) From 1819 onwards, and in particular after the publication of the first two cantos of Don Juan, the Blackwood Papers can be adequately relied upon as a representative sample of contemporary private reaction towards Byron's poetry. In this respect the readers of Blackwood's can be divided into two different categories: the majority approved of a strong condemnation of the "profligate poet." The same readers also protested whenever the magazine adopted a more favourable attitude to Byron. Against those rose the dissenting voices of two or three supporters who defended Don Juan and Cain against the unfavourable criticism in Blackwood's. At a rough calculation it can be claimed that, among Blackwood's readers, for every vote in Byron's favour there were ten against him. More interesting is the reaction of individual readers and supporters to specific poems, and to specific reviews and critiques in the magazine. No sooner were the first two cantos of Don Juan published in London in July 1819 than William Davies wrote to William Blackwood's:

"You have doubtless observed how very unpleasantly both Mr. Coleridge and Mr. Wordsworth are mentioned in Lord Byron's detestable Poem of Don Juan. I have not yet understood how Mr. Murray feels the strong remarks that have been made upon this poem in various quarters—what I fancy he has been most blamed for was [sic] his publishing it with his Printers name and concealing his own; but I fancy he found himself in a very awkward situation between such a Man as Lord Byron and such a Poem."¹

1. NLS, MSS. 4004.

As we shall see in a later chapter, the storm of condemnation which the first two cantos of Don Juan raised, was a godsend to William Blackwood and Lockhart, who had their own reasons for bringing John Murray to task. But Lockhart must have also thought of his readers' expectations when he denounced the first two cantos of Don Juan; readers such as the Archbishop of York, who, Francis Wrangham wrote to William Blackwood on 27 November 1819, was "delighted" with the reviews of Beppo and Don Juan.¹ Only an exceptionally enlightened and selflessly dedicated publisher would have sacrificed such a compliment in order to recognize the literary merits of a work which for obvious reasons were not immediately apparent to him.

When considered in such a context, Lockhart's denunciation of Beppo and Don Juan is hardly surprising. But what is indeed astonishing is that while, with very few exceptions, the general attitude of the Blackwood's readers towards Byron remained extremely unfavourable, Blackwood's intermittently dared to praise Don Juan. As we shall see later in this thesis, first John Herman Merivale and then Lockhart defended Don Juan not only against the almost unanimous condemnation of the contemporary reviewers, but also despite private protest of the Blackwood's readers. Basil Stuart, a London bookseller who for a number of years reported to William Blackwood on the reception of his magazine in the metropolis, protested in September 1821 that Lockhart's review of Cantos III, IV and V (August 1821) was "too lenient towards his Lordship."²

1. NLS, MSS. 4004.

2. NLS, MSS. 4007.

Again in December 1822 Lockhart's somewhat equivocal praise for Don Juan in "Odoherly on Werner" provoked a strong protest from George Croly, who wrote to William Blackwood on 20 December 1822:

"The Letters &c. on Lord Byron are full of pleasantry—but your correspondents have more delicacy about him than suits [him] or them. He is a great poet—or rather was. No one here talks about him but as utterly fallen—& the impression seems, among the higher literary persons, to be that he is now desperate, & has set himself seriously to inundate England with all kinds of corruption. Such things must be denounced not laughed at."¹

It is easy sometimes to forget that William Blackwood was after all a provincial publisher and had to rely, in calculating the mood of the reading public, on the views of his correspondents, particularly of those who professed to be knowledgeable in the literary affairs of the metropolis. George Croly was only one of the numerous supporters of Blackwood's who urged its publisher to condemn Byron's poetry. This pressure on the magazine dramatically increased after January 1822. A later chapter of this thesis is devoted to a more detailed account of how the reaction of the supporters of the magazine to Cain, and to Byron's association with John and Leigh Hunt and his involvement in the Liberal, influenced the criticism of Byron's poetry in Blackwood's. It is sufficient to point out here that the increasing antagonism towards Byron among William Blackwood's correspondents succeeded in strengthening his prejudice against the poet. Thus, in August 1823, Blackwood reassured his London agent Thomas Cadell that the public "will be

1. NLS, MSS. 4008.

completely on the side of the magazine for attacking such a net of infidels and profligates as Hazlitt, Hunt, Byron & Co who are daily outraging not only private character, but everything sacred & civil."¹ On 11 June 1824, Blackwood wrote to William Maginn commenting on Walter Scott's tribute to Byron in the Edinburgh Weekly Journal. "Sir Walter's article on Lord Byron is only equalled by his verses upon M. Alexandre which that idiot Ballantyne had also the folly of printing in his cursed journal."² As we shall see later, it was only through Lockhart's intervention that William Maginn was prevented from abusing the dead poet in Blackwood's.

It is only through examining the confidential correspondence of William Blackwood and his supporters that we realize how much Byron was indebted to Lockhart and, to a lesser extent, to Wilson, for the favourable criticism on his poetry in Blackwood's between 1821 and 1825. For, despite the general hostility towards Byron among the Blackwood's supporters, and despite William Blackwood's own prejudice, Lockhart favourably reviewed cantos III-V of Don Juan in August 1821, and cantos IX-XI in September 1823. Moreover, had he not been extremely dependent on Lockhart's support, Blackwood would not have readily overcome his antipathy towards Byron, or been prepared to risk outraging the feeling of his readers, of whose hostile views on Byron's poetry he had ample evidence, by allowing those reviews to appear in his magazine. In August 1821, Blackwood

-
1. Quoted in Theodore Besterman, "Hazlitt and Maga," TLS, 22 August 1935, p. 525.
 2. NLS, MSS. 3551. William Blackwood probably refers to Walter Scott's verses on Alexander Campbell, published in the Edinburgh Weekly Journal, 19 May 1824.

was prepared to appear as the defender of the "profligate" poet only for the sake of winning back Lockhart's support, after he had withdrawn it for several months following the death of John Scott, the editor of the London Magazine. Two years later, Blackwood sought John Wilson's advice about Lockhart's favourable review of cantos IX-XI of Don Juan. "As I fear," he wrote to Wilson, "it will be apt to startle weak minds."¹ Wilson's reply was reassuring and the review duly appeared in Blackwood's.

Yet, in their sympathetic attitude towards Byron, Lockhart and Wilson were not alone among the supporters of the magazine, even in 1822 and 1823, when the majority was emphatically hostile. Admiration for Byron's poetry and protest against the unfavourable attitude of the magazine came from David Macbeth Moir, David Lyndsay and above all from Thomas Doubleday, the only radical supporter of the magazine. On 4 December 1822, Moir wrote to William Blackwood:

"Werner which I have perused with great delight I have to thank you for. It may be presumptuous in me to hazard an opinion different from Mr. Wilson's but my ideas of it are much higher than his seem to be. It is no doubt there is a profusion of poetical power throughout. It appears to me to be altogether superior to his last large and lumbering volume."²

Moir's preference of Werner to Cain, Sardanapalus and The Two Foscari might not show a sound critical judgement, but in his letter of 6 January 1822 he expressed a better opinion of these dramas than his judgement here implies. Be that as it may, his

1. Gordon, II, 64.

2. NLS, MSS. 4009.

letters are significant because of their opposition to the majority opinion among the Blackwood sympathisers. As we shall see in a later chapter, David Lyndsay did not admire Don Juan and expressed great contempt for the Liberal. This however does not make his praise for Cain any less valuable, especially as the almost simultaneous publication of Byron's poem and Lyndsay's Dramas of the Ancient World was an unfortunate coincidence for the latter work. On 26 December 1821, Lyndsay wrote to William Blackwood:

"Lord Byron's ^{majestic} Drama I have read with feelings of mingled wonder, admiration, and regret,—what a noble performance it is! and how delightfully the Edinburgh Reviewers will cut the little David into mincemeat for his presumptuous seating himself so quietly side by side with this Goliath of Tragedy...but seriously, my dear Sir, the "Mystery" is a superb performance—how terribly has he vented his own doubts of all that is, and shall be... There are times which such thoughts may have ^{risen} pain'd the Bosoms of the most pious of thinking minds—but few I think would venture to publish them."¹

Thomas Doubleday's protest against Maginn's violently hostile review of Cantos VI, VII and VIII (July 1823) is even more critical of the magazine. On 23 August 1823, Doubleday wrote to William Blackwood:

"The last number of Maga was certainly a good one. It is all nonsense, however, to attempt to write down Don Juan. Lord Byron is writing far too much—but depend on it the Don is by far his best Poem and 'please God (as serious people say) be he spared to finish it' will take its place among the most successful Poems in our language. Being a Poetaster myself I can't for the life of me help being plain spoken on this subject. As for the charge of indecorum there is not one book of merit beginning at the Bible and going through the Poets of every age till we get to Byron that has not fully more, the moral Pope not excepted!! If

1. NLS, MSS. 4007.

you do not take care, I shall set up 'the honest Review'
and of course shall have all the Tories as subscribers."¹

After Byron's death in 1824, Doubleday repeatedly urged William Blackwood to do justice to his memory, and for months, he could not forgive Thomas Moore for the burning of Byron's Memoirs. When Robert Southey replied in the Gourier, to Byron's attack on him in Thomas Medwin's Conversations of Lord Byron, Blackwood's reprinted Southey's letter with an introductory note, probably by Lockhart (December 1824), which, while avoiding clearly taking sides, attempted to vindicate Byron's memory against Southey's "specimen of controversial and vituperative writings." Doubleday wrote approvingly to William Blackwood, "You have put Byron & Southey's Controversy in the true point of view."²

If the private letters of William Blackwood's correspondents can be relied on as a representative sample of the English public opinion at large, the contrast between the frequent recurrence of Byron's name in the Blackwood Papers and relatively rare mention of Shelley is indicative of the sharp contrast between the widespread interest in Byron and Shelley's failure to find an audience for his poetry. After examining some thousands of these letters and failing to find even the slightest interest in Shelley among the

1. NLS, MSS. 4010. It is also interesting to know from Doubleday's letters to William Blackwood that Byron's volume containing Sardanapalus, The Two Foscari and Cain was "rejected by the committee of our misnamed 'Philosophical Society' in Newcastle on account of the alleged freedom of the latter Poem." NLS, MSS. 4008.

2. NLS, MSS. 4013.

Blackwood's sympathizers, one is perhaps justified in inferring that only very few of Shelley's contemporaries read his poetry. As we shall soon see, there were a very few exceptions. But the indifference of the majority of the Blackwood's readers is only too noticeable. While the Tory reviewers were vigorously denouncing the subversive political, moral and religious theories which Shelley advanced in his poetry, for two years at least, Blackwood's chose to champion him. One would expect therefore to find at least one letter of protest among the Blackwood Papers. But in fact there is none, nor did any of William Blackwood's correspondents applaud the worsening of the attitude of the magazine towards Shelley late in 1821 and throughout 1822. The pirates of Queen Mab were indicted by the Society for the Prevention of Vice in 1821 and in the same month, April 1821, the reviewer of Byron's Marino Faliero, probably Wilson, praised The Cenci; and yet no supporter of the magazine was outraged, or no protest reached William Blackwood. In view of this extreme indifference it is perhaps legitimate to ask whether in their anxiety to denounce Shelley's theories the contemporary Tory reviewers did not exaggerate the possible influence of his poetry on the reading public.¹ Fear of reform or revolution there definitely was, but Shelley's poetry seems to have been read

1. Commenting on the attacks on Shelley by the Quarterly reviewer, Lockhart wrote in John Bull's Letter: "Poor Mr. Shelley cannot publish a wicked poem which nobody ever read, or was likely to read, but the whole band [of the Quarterly] were up in arms against him."—Strout, John Bull's Letter, p. 83. See also Ian Jack, "Shelley's Search for Readers," The Listener, 6 June 1957, 917-18.

by too few people to represent any serious danger. It is no wonder that Blackwood's could afford to praise Shelley and to bring the Quarterly to task for abusing him.

Thomas Doubleday probably expressed the opinion of those who took the trouble to read Shelley's poetry. Protesting against William Maginn's outrageous article on Shelley's Posthumous Poems, Doubleday wrote to William Blackwood on 15 October 1824:

"B. Cornwall's article on Shelley was in some way absurd enough. But Shelley's memory ought not to be outraged. He was truly a poet. Prometheus is the finest thing of this day. As a visionary he was harmless surely."¹

Even William Maginn, whose Toryism cannot be doubted, had a similar opinion of Shelley's philosophy and offered, in December 1822, to write an "article on Queen Mab which will be a long one." William Blackwood however had the public image of his magazine to think of, and apparently told Maginn that he would not insert it. For on 4 February 1822 Maginn wrote again:

"You mistake the nature of my intended article on Mab—it was to be quite high Churchish arguing however that prosecuting a book is no way of answering it & abusing the whigs as it is natural on all occasions."²

This sane and sensible, albeit humorous, view of the most explicitly revolutionary of Shelley's poems is probably more indicative of the contemporary attitude towards Shelley than all violent condemnation

1. NLS, MSS. 4012. In fact Maginn's article was an attack on Hazlitt's review of Shelley's Posthumous Poem in the Edinburgh for July 1824. In his "Mr. Mullion's Letters to the Leading Poets of the Age" (September 1824), Maginn ascribes Hazlitt's review to Bryan Waller Procter. Surprisingly perhaps, Lockhart approved of this piece.

2. NLS, MSS. 4005.

of the Literary Gazette and the Quarterly Review, or even than all the disapproval of the Society for the Prevention of Vice. Publicly, of course, Blackwood's expressed an unqualified condemnation of Shelley's principles. But unlike its condemnation of Don Juan, it did not arouse the enthusiastic applause of its readers. Nor was there a single protest against Lockhart's praise of Shelley's poetry.

The truth is that Shelley's genius had to wait for another generation to be widely recognized. It might well be that the exaggerated reaction of the Tory periodicals prevented Shelley's poetry from being widely read. But their similar condemnation of Don Juan and Cain only helped to increase the appetite of the reading public for Byron's poetry. In Shelley's case the violent hostility of the Tory periodicals was only matched by the apparently total indifference of the reading public. It would be interesting to know, if at all possible, whether this indifference among the readers and supporters of Blackwood's was shared by those who supported the Quarterly, the Literary Gazette, and Eclectic Review and other Tory periodicals which were violently and consistently hostile towards Shelley's poetry.

There were, however, two supporters of the magazine who interested themselves in Shelley's reputation; Charles Ollier and Alaric Alexander Watts. Ollier's interest in promoting the sale of Shelley's poems will be examined in more detail in a later chapter in this thesis. Yet even Ollier had to give up, and more or less join the enemy while the remainders of the first edition of most of Shelley's poems were still unsold. Alaric Watts was more interested

in Shelley's private life than in his poetry, and his gossip on the subject was systematically ignored by the Blackwoodians. But on 8 March 1823, Watts wrote to Blackwood, approving of Caroline Bowles Southey's parody of Shelley's poetry in "Letter from a Washerwoman" (Blackwood's, February 1823). Other references to Shelley in the Blackwood Papers were mainly references to his collaboration with Byron and Hunt in founding the Liberal. Even among these, there was hardly any mention of Shelley's poetry.

Between 1817 and 1825 there are in the Blackwood Papers even fewer references to Keats than to Shelley. Yet Lockhart's harsh criticism of the 1817 Poems and Endymion (August 1818) did not pass without strong protest from Keats's friends and admirers. Benjamin Bailey attempted to reply in Blackwood's to Lockhart's attack on Keats, but his defence was rejected.¹ In August 1820, John Taylor protested to William Blackwood personally during one of the latter's visits to London.² At the same time a similar protest was made by John Aitkin to John Wilson. On 17 August 1820 Aitkin wrote to Keats:

"I am a Scotsman and proud of my country—and proud, too, of many parts of that magazine, which has always been the vehicle of much unjustifiable abuse, but some that are connected with it, know well, how much, by every means in my power, I have endeavoured to soften its illiberality."³

-
1. See The Keats Circle, ed. Hyder Edward Rollins, second edition (Cambridge Mass.: 1965), I, 41-42.
 2. Ibid., pp.132-137.
 3. Ibid., p. 131.

Aitkin was more successful in his attempt than either Benjamin Bailey or John Taylor. For although Lockhart did not entirely reverse his opinion of Keats, his remarks on Lamia, Isabella and The Eve of St. Agnes in "Extracts from Mr. Wastle's Diary" and the review of Shelley's Prometheus Unbound, both of which appeared in September 1820, were considerably less harsh than his review of Endymion. In explanation he wrote to William Blackwood, "I have nothing to add to the Shell[ey]—what I said about Keats was owing to two long and foolish letters from one Aitkin of Dunbar whom the Prof^r [Wilson] knows—not I."¹ It is difficult to say whether Wilson was again responding to further protest from Aitkin when he wrote to William Blackwood on 30 June 1822, commenting on Maginn's "Metricum Symosium Ambrosianum" (July 1822), "The Irish Article is very good but leave out about Keats."² When it was published, Maginn's Symposium contained no reference to Keats.

In view of the sad history of the treatment of Keats by Blackwood's, one hardly knows whether to regret or to admire the fastidiousness which P.G. Patmore shows in one of his letters to William Blackwood. On 11 December 1820 he wrote to the Edinburgh publisher:

"I write you again, to save you the trouble of answering my last on the subject of inserting an article on Keats's poetry—As I find on looking over two or three of the early Numbers that it would be quite inconsistent to publish in the Mag^e the kind of article I have written."³

-
1. NLS, MSS. 4005.
 2. NLS, MSS. 4009.
 3. NLS, MSS. 4005.

Later in 1821 Shelley published his Adonais, in the preface to which he accused the Quarterly of hastening Keats's death. Few months earlier Lady Morgan had made similar charges against contemporary reviewers in her "Letter to the Reviewers of Italy." These charges infuriated at least one of the supporters of the magazine. In several of his letters to William Blackwood, William Maginn urged Blackwood to reply to those charges in the magazine. In connection with Shelley's Adonais, Maginn wrote on 12 December 1821:

"Get some good hand—Wilson if possible—to review Shell[e]ys what d'ye call it about Master Glysterpipe the dead poet: and acquit yourself of the murder of that Knight of the burning pestle. It literally puts me out of all patience to hear people lamenting that wretched creature as if he could do anything better than bray bawdily and compound nostrums. But to be sure nobody whose ears are under half a yard long joins in the Luctus. So far am I from wishing anything about him unsaid, that I think he is fit subject for a humbug lamentation, in which the Cockneys should mourn over Keats, as the Irishmen did over Donnelly. I am afraid however it would be voted too savage."¹

George Croly was not so inhibited and savagely attacked Keats as well as Shelley in his review of Adonais (December 1821). There was no protest from the readers of Blackwood's against Croly's review, at least there is no evidence of any such protest in the Blackwood Papers.

How far the readers' comments influenced the criticism of poetry in the magazine is not easy to determine, since the appraisal of individual poets or poems ultimately depended on the individual critics and reviewers. But from what we have already

1. Quoted in Strout, "Knights of the Burning Epistle," pp.86-87.

seen of the readers' reactions as revealed in their letters to William Blackwood, it is clear that they were, on the whole, interested in what the magazine had to say on the major contemporary poets. Their applause as well as their protest must have been carefully examined by William Blackwood and his two advisers, Wilson and Lockhart.

iv. Politics and the Criticism of Poetry.

A month before Blackwood's was founded, the renewed agitation for Parliamentary reform, the London riots of December 1816, and a general fear of revolution among the middle and governing classes had caused the Tory administration to suspend Habeas Corpus, to impose severe restrictions on the right of public meetings and to take measures to stamp out the sale of blasphemous and seditious publications. Yet, for two years at least, and despite the revolutionary outbreaks in 1817 and in 1819 the political department in Blackwood's was almost nonexistent. Under Thomas Pringle and James Cleghorn, the Monthly Edinburgh Magazine did not contain a single political article. In October 1817, "in place of a formal prospectus," Lockhart and Wilson prefixed to the first number of the new magazine a long list of titles of articles, which, they claimed, would appear in the following numbers. These titles covered a variety of topics ranging from "Dialogues over a Punch-bowl" to classical and foreign literature, except politics. For nearly two years afterwards, the Tory bias of the new magazine was apparent

only in its reiterated and often crude attacks on the Edinburgh Whigs and the Edinburgh Review, and on Leigh Hunt and the "Cockneys". This gives the impression that Blackwood's became a Tory organ by accident rather than by design, and that having created a sensation in the Edinburgh literary world by their attacks on the Whigs and the Cockneys, Lockhart and Wilson became prisoners of the Tory stance they had adopted.

This is hardly surprising, for neither Lockhart nor Wilson had had any clear Tory sympathies before his connection with Blackwood's. On the contrary, before the founding of Blackwood's Wilson had been on amicable terms with Francis Jeffrey, and in 1818 he contributed an article to the Edinburgh Review.¹ Despite the scarcity of purely political articles in the early numbers of Blackwood's, Wilson once wrote to its publisher: "I am not a party man, but would like your magazine much better were it not so Toryish."² During the battle that raged over the chair of moral philosophy at the University of Edinburgh in 1820 the Edinburgh Whigs accused Wilson of having been a "radical democrat" in his youth.³

In the same way, Andrew Lang observes that before his connection with Blackwood's, Lockhart's letters had hardly "contained one word on politics,"⁴ and that later his attacks on the Edinburgh

1. See Gordon, I, 211-12.

2. NLS, MSS. 4004.

3. Elsie Swann, Christopher North (1934), p. 140.

4. Lang, I, 122.

Whigs (in Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk) were aimed at their intellectual self-complacency rather than their political doctrines. As far as Blackwood's politics were concerned he was anxious to make the new magazine steer clear of the Quarterly outlook as much as that of the Edinburgh. On 21 February 1818 he wrote to his Welsh friend David Williams who apparently was a Whig,

"I confess, if you like to write on politics, I hope you will write something off the line of the 'Edinburgh Review'; for admirable as it is, I think it is now a little stale—still more off the line of the blundering and bigoted pedantry of the 'Quarterly' and its crew. I am sure you loathe Croker and Southey's politics as much as myself."¹

Although there can be no doubt that Blackwood's soon became one of the most reactionary Tory organs of its times,² it is in the light of its opposition to the Quarterly on the one hand and the Edinburgh on the other that the influence of its politics on its criticism of contemporary poetry should be examined. For, had the criticism of poetry been strictly consistent with the extreme political views of such contributors as William Russell, George Croly, John Matthews and David Robinson³ who wrote all the political

1. Oliphant, I, 187.

2. The first purely political articles in Blackwood's are those in "The Warder" series, which was published intermittently between November 1819 and March 1821. Strout, Bibliography does not give the authorship of the early numbers of this series. In a number of undated letters to William Blackwood, Wilson credits to William Russell (1787-1824) at least the first five numbers.

3. George Croly wrote most of the political articles in 1820-1822. John Matthews contributed two letters (March and July 1822) opposing Catholic Emancipation. From January 1824 to 1831 David Robinson wrote practically all the political articles that appeared in Blackwood's.

articles in Blackwood's between 1817 and 1825, the poetry of Byron and Shelley would have never received any praise in its pages. In fact, whenever any of those contributors touched on the poetry of Byron or Shelley they did not qualify their denunciation of Byron's or Shelley's revolutionary ideas by any recognition of the literary merits of their poetry. It was the critical, or rather uncritical, judgements, of such contributors which were entirely warped by their political point of view. As already pointed out, in 1822 George Croly urged William Blackwood to denounce Byron's poetry. It was also Croly who wrote the review of Shelley's Adonais. After the publication of Cain, John Matthews denounced, both in prose and verse, all Byron's works.¹ Similarly, David Robinson was the most reactionary of the writers on politics in Blackwood's, so much so, in fact, that on more than one occasion Wilson described his articles as "insane and repulsive." Whenever Robinson related the sins of the Whigs and the Radicals, as he often did, Byron's poetry was bound to be amongst them. Thus, in one of his tirades against the Whigs, Robinson describes Byron as "the aristocratic despot—the reviler of religion and virtue—the teacher of lewdness and licentiousness—the assassin of the principles of social order."² This was, in fact, Robinson's comment on Byron's death in Greece.

-
1. See John Matthews' article "Lord Byron" (February 1822) and his verse critique (April 1822).
 2. Blackwood's, XVI, 444. See also Blackwood's, XV, 161, 186, and 317 for Robinson's other attacks on Byron.

But Croly, Matthews, and Robinson were diehard reactionaries and their views on literature were the spirit of tolerance itself in comparison with the viciousness of their political writings. Their views on both poetry and politics were extreme and do not give an accurate impression of the influence of politics on the criticism of contemporary poetry in Blackwood's. As has already been pointed out, the Blackwood's group, or at least Lockhart and Wilson, were opposed to the politics of the Quarterly Review as much as to those of the Edinburgh. Luckily for Blackwood's the two great quarterly reviews were equally conservative in their criticism of contemporary poetry; the Edinburgh because of Francis Jeffrey's dogmatic views about poetry and the Quarterly because of the political bias of its reviewers. Opposition to the two reviews in this respect necessarily meant the adoption of a more liberal, less dogmatic, and less politically biased critical policy.

Lockhart gave a definition of this policy in his article "On the Periodical Criticism in England" which he wrote at about the same time as his letter to David Williams on the politics of the Edinburgh and the Quarterly. In the Blackwood's article (March 1818), Lockhart deploras the partisan spirit of the reviewers in general, and of Francis Jeffrey and William Gifford, the heads of the two opposing factions, in particular. He describes Gifford as a "mighty bigot, both in religion and politics" who is "exquisitely formed for the purposes of political oburation, but not at all for those of gentle and universal criticism."¹

1. Blackwood's, II, 672 and 673.

Lockhart expresses greater admiration for Jeffrey than for Gifford, but points out "the fallibility and perverseness of his judgement," of which his criticism of Wordsworth, Byron, Scott, Goethe and Madame de Stael gives sufficient proof.¹ Lockhart also accuses Jeffrey of being inconsistent in both his general theory of poetry, and his judgement on individual poets.

In the same article, Lockhart goes on to give a more positive definition of the principles by which the reviewer should be guided.

"It is a bold thing to compare Shakespeare with a Reviewer; but if ever the world shall possess a perfect Reviewer, be assured that he will bear, in many respects, a striking resemblance to this first of poets. Like him he will be universal—impartial—rational. The serious and the mirthful will be alike his favourites."²

Although the criticism of contemporary poetry in Blackwood's often fell extremely short of this ideal of reviewing (so much so, in fact, that some of the criticism on Wordsworth, and Coleridge, and the series on the "Cockney School of Poetry" embody the exact opposite of that ideal), it is nevertheless true that Lockhart and his other colleagues were less politically biased than the Quarterly reviewers, and less dogmatic than the Edinburgh reviewers.

As William S. Ward has shown, the national crisis in the first part of the nineteenth century "made literary criticism the hand-maiden of politics, religion and morality."³ The renewed radical

1. Ibid., pp. 676 and 677.

2. Ibid., p. 672.

3. William S. Ward, "Some Aspects of the Conservative Attitude toward Poetry in English Criticism," PMLA, LX (1945), 386.

and revolutionary agitation after Waterloo revived the old fear of revolution, and forced the government to take the repressive and counter-revolutionary measures of March 1817, and of November and December 1819. The periodical press reflected this fear of revolution by adopting an uncritical and conservative attitude towards poetry.¹ Patriotism and loyalty were valued for their own sake, and poets were judged by the religious, moral, and instructional value of their poetry rather than by its literary merits. In this, the criticism of poetry in Blackwood's was no exception. Wilson, in particular, tended to stress the instructional character of poetry. His criticism on Wordsworth and Byron show that, in this respect at least, Wilson was very consistent. Similarly, Lockhart excessively praises some of Wordsworth's inferior poems for their patriotic and loyalist sentiments.² It is also true that minor or negligible poets were highly commended in Blackwood's for the religious, moral and instructional value of their poetry.³

Yet there was also the other, and more negative, aspect of the conservative attitude towards poetry in which Blackwood's

1. See Ibid., pp. 387 and 391.

2. See for instance the review of River Duddon, Blackwood's, VII (May 1820), 213.

3. See for instance, the reviews of W.L.Bowles, The Missionary (October 1819), VI, 16); and H.H. Milman's The Fall of Jerusalem (March 1820, VII, 123, 131); George Croly, The Angel of the World (October 1820, VIII, 21); David Lyndsay, Dramas of the Ancient World (December 1821, X, 740).

Yet Lockhart and Wilson did not always praise such poetry. See for instance Lockhart's review of Milman's Martyr of Antioch (March 1822, XI, 268-269), and Wilson's review of Bernard Barton's Poems (December 1822, XII, 769-70).

differed from other Tory periodicals. It is true that the whole series on the "Cockney School of Poetry" reveals the strong Tory bias of the magazine. (Snobbery, however, was as much behind Lockhart's assault on Leigh Hunt as political differences). The rigidly religious and moral outlook is perfectly illustrated by Lockhart's hostile criticism of Thomas Moore's poetry (October 1818) and Byron's Beppo (June 1818) and the first two cantos of Don Juan (August 1819), and his review of Keats's 1817 Poems and Endymion (August 1818) combines the narrow political outlook of the Quarterly, and the dogmatic approach to poetry of the Edinburgh with the snobbery of the Blackwood's critics. George Croly's review of Adonais (December 1821), the reiterated denunciation of Cain in 1822, the two reviews of the Liberal (January and March 1823), and William Maginn's review of cantos VI-VIII of Don Juan (July 1823), were all political, moral, or religious judgements, and had little or nothing to do with literary criticism. Yet it was also in the year of "Peterloo" that Lockhart defended Shelley against the Quarterly. In spite of Byron's provocative, political, religious, and moral ideas, Wilson consistently praised his non-satirical poems. Lockhart favourably reviewed the later cantos of Don Juan at the time when both the government, and private organisations such as the Constitutional Association and the Society for the Prevention of Vice were actively engaged in prosecuting the Radical Press.

Perhaps the writer of "Candid No II" (March 1823) gave a useful formula for discussing the influence of Blackwood's politics on

its criticism of contemporary poetry, when he described the two different roles that he would assume:

"When I took up the pen, it was no part of my purpose to play the critic, or to take notice of poetical, or literary beauties or blemishes, merely as such. But moral beauties and blemishes in poetical works, are poetical beauties and blemishes of the highest kind; and some literary offences amount to moral misdemeanours at least. Since the offices of Censor and of Critic thus interfere with and slide into each other, I shall not be over scrupulous in my adherence to the office to which I appointed myself, but I still desire the former rather than the latter to be considered as my proper department."¹

The twin roles of critic and censor can be detected everywhere in Blackwood's criticism of poetry, but the censor's voice was not always predominant. Unlike the writer of the "Candid No II", Lockhart and Wilson did not always regard moral and literary "beauties" and "blemishes" as necessarily identical. In the review of cantos IX-XI of Don Juan, Lockhart, as "Morgan Odoherly," appeals to "Christopher North":

"Do not let it be said, that even in one instance you have suffered any prejudices whatever, no matter on what proper feelings they may have been bottomed, to interfere with your candour as a judge of intellectual exertion.—Distinguish as you please: brand with the mark of your indignation whatever offends your feelings, moral, political, or religious—but 'nothing extenuate.'...Stick to your own good old rule—abuse Wickedness, but acknowledge Wit."²

Blackwood's criticism of poetry exhibits all the shades between the extreme position of "The Candid" and Lockhart's more tolerant attitude.

1. Blackwood's, XIII, 263.

2. Blackwood's, XIV, 282.

John Scott, the editor of the London Magazine, perfectly described the difference between the criticism of contemporary poetry in the Edinburgh Review and Blackwood's, when he contrasted the "spirit of life" of the latter with the "gross vision" of the former. In the same way, John Stuart Mill pointed out the sense of enjoyment and gratitude which the Blackwood's critics conveyed when they wrote about poetry. Whatever the faults of the Blackwood's critics may be, they rarely judged poetry according to established theories or rules. The contrast between the Edinburgh reviewer's dogmatic approach to poetry and Blackwood's more empirical criticism becomes clearer when we compare Francis Jeffrey's well-known statement about the fixed standards of poetry, and Lockhart's comment on contemporary periodical criticism. In the review of Robert Southey's Thalaba, Jeffrey declared in 1802:

"Poetry has this much, at least, in common with religion, that its standards were fixed long ago, by certain inspired writers, whose authority it is no longer lawful to call in question; and that many profess to be entirely devoted to it, who have no good works to produce in support of their pretensions."¹

Some twenty years later Lockhart wrote in the review of his translations of Spanish Ballads:

"All men of power and genius should utter themselves to the world, and all in their own way, obeying their own impulses without any other control than that which is imposed by their own intellect, and by their knowledge of the nature of man."²

-
1. Edinburgh Review, I, 63.
 2. Blackwood's, XIII, 346.

Then Lockhart went on to say, probably referring to Jeffrey,

"One or two leading critics sit like overseers in a panopticon, where they can have an eye upon every mind, whom they would wish to see busy at some allotted task, and whom they would fain sally out to punish, whenever they detected them breaking the rules of the prison. Such a system, if it could be made effective, would destroy or depress all genius; but it is really most ineffective, for the great offenders scorn such police, and each does as he lists, in noble defiance of self-elected taskmasters."¹

This opposition to the Edinburgh Review had a liberating influence on Blackwood's approach to poetry. At least, it enabled Lockhart and Wilson to realize that a belief in fixed standards of poetry could have a crippling effect on criticism, and encouraged them to take a more flexible and more liberal attitude towards contemporary poetry. Although, as J.O. Hayden has shown, such an attitude was not uncommon among the early-nineteenth-century reviewers,² the Blackwood's critics had the advantage of writing for a popular and influential magazine, and probably were in a better position to make such an approach popular. Moreover, the vigour, enthusiasm, and wit with which they enlivened that approach, the enjoyment which they derived from reading and writing about poetry, and their occasional and successful attempts at interpreting it to their readers were a positive contribution to periodical criticism. That this contribution was somewhat tarnished by its personal attacks on Keats, Hunt and Hazlitt and others cannot be denied. Yet we would be even less tolerant than the Blackwood's critics

1. Ibid., p. 346.

2. See J.O. Hayden, The Romantic Reviewers, pp. 253-54.

themselves if, as is often the case with modern scholarship, we only abused wickedness, and did not "acknowledge Wit."

v. The Critic and the "Persona".

In one of his frequently recurrent ~~and~~ infertile moods, Wilson exclaimed in a letter to William Blackwood: "I wish to God I had some ass to belabour. But there is none,"¹ and in another he asked Blackwood whether there were new books "to cut up." In March 1823 Wilson introduced his review of Ebenezer Elliott's Love, a Poem in the following manner:

"We have been long looking about for some person or other to immolate to our fury—some victim to break up on the wheel...But it is amazing what difficulty there is in laying hands upon a suitable culprit."²

That Wilson wrote this as "Christopher North" is made abundantly clear by the reference to the well-known "knout" with which North symbolically punished his victim and to the gout which often threw "Christopher North" into his customary fits of bad temper. But was it really "Christopher North" who was in search of a victim, or was it John Wilson? Nowadays there is a tendency among the students of periodical literature of the first quarter of the nineteenth century to treat the pronouncements in Blackwood's and other periodicals on literary and general issues as if they were

1. NLS, MSS. 4729.

2. Blackwood's, XIII, 321.



uttered by the "persona" under whose signature they appeared. Thus Peter F. Morgan advocates the examination of periodical criticism "as stylistic entities," and in terms of the "role" or the "persona" assumed by the anonymous reviewer or critic.¹ Such premise is certainly attractive, and it would help to take the sting out of the harsher aspects of contemporary periodical criticism. It would also give us the opportunity to study periodical criticism without being outraged by its personality or cruelty. Unfortunately, at least as far as Blackwood's is concerned, there is not strong enough evidence to treat its criticism of poetry in that way. On the contrary, as Wilson's confidential letters to Blackwood show, there is hardly any difference between the critic and the "persona" through which he speaks.

The question of the relation between the critic and the "persona" is particularly pertinent in connection with the criticism of contemporary poetry in Blackwood's. In order to make anonymous writing more impenetrable and more entertaining, Lockhart invented a number of pseudonyms, such as "Philip Kempferhausen," "Baron von Lauerwinkel," "Presbyter Anglicanus," "Peter Morris," "William Wastle," "Z.," "Idoloclastes," and many other signatures; other contributors supplied "Christopher North," "Timothy Tickler," and "Morgan Odoherly." Most of these names were used only once or twice, others survived longer and were used by more than one of

1. See Peter F. Morgan, "Problems in Examining Periodical Criticism," Victorian Periodicals Newsletter, January 1970, p. 10.

Blackwood's supporters (Not even "Christopher North" was John Wilson's sole property when it was first invented). Even if the purpose behind these signatures was to create fully developed and independent "dramatis personae" (and that is by no means certain), the constant interchange of pseudonyms among the major writers in Blackwood's made the unity of such fictitious characters virtually impossible. What remained was a number of pseudonyms which were conveniently available to the major supporters of Blackwood's.

Yet, writing some three or four decades afterwards, Mrs. Gordon created the myth of the "persons" when she claimed:

"In the early numbers of the Magazine one meets a perfect host of these mythical personages, and the impression conveyed to the credulous reader must have been that contributions were flowing in from remarkable persons in all quarters of the empire. There was really so much variety and individuality imparted to these imaginary characters that it was very difficult to perceive that the same writer was assuming the guises of William Wastle, Esq., and Dr. Ulrick Sternstare, and Philip Kempferhausen, and the Baron Lauerwinkel."¹

But of course the Blackwood's readers were not so credulous, and although the majority of them probably did not identify the authors of the articles, we have at least the amazingly large number of letters from D.M. Moir to William Blackwood (according to Alan Lang Strout, Moir wrote 560 letters to William Blackwood between 1820 and 1834),² in which he identified the writers of the articles in number after number irrespective of whether they were anonymous or pseudonymous. In fact, Moir was so often successful in guessing

1. Gordon, I, 268n.

2. Strout, Bibliography, p. 16.

the authorship of pieces in Blackwood's that in his Bibliography Alan Lang Strout accepts his attributions whenever better evidence is wanting. Moir's guesses were often accurate for the simple reason that however well disguised the writer was, he betrayed his identity by his views and his style and was easily recognized by a regular and attentive reader of Blackwood's such as Moir.

Moreover, there is little or no difference either in tone or outlook between "Z's" attack on Leigh Hunt and "Presbyter Anglicanus'" on Byron, on the one hand, or "Lauerwinkel's" attacks on Byron and Thomas Moore on the other, for they all came from Lockhart's pen. There are indeed, as Gilbert Macbeth points out, noticeable differences in style, ideas, and outlook, between "Lauerwinkel" and "Ulrich Sternstare".¹ But then Macbeth had no means of knowing that it was William Howison and not Lockhart, who wrote under the latter pseudonym.

Several other examples can be cited to show how the Blackwood's contributors did not adjust either their style or their point of view to suit the various "personae," or rather the pseudonyms, behind which they hid. But it is sufficient to say here that whatever the intrinsic value of the Blackwood's criticism of poetry may be, it is demonstrable that the views expressed through those "personae" are invariably identical with the views which the Blackwood's critics expressed in their confidential letters to William Blackwood. Even the letters of such a contributor as

1. See Gilbert Macbeth, John Gibson Lockhart, pp. 150-51.

William Maginn, who had a strong predilection for role-playing, echo much of his writings in Blackwood's.

For this reason and because, as already pointed out, the Blackwood's management made no attempt to impose any critical policy on the contributors, this thesis examines the criticism on the poetry of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, and Keats as a complex product comprising varying individual attitudes to individual poets or poems. Throughout the thesis the emphasis is placed on individual critics.¹ I have attempted to examine their criticism with the least possible reference to modern taste or modern standards, to see the five major poets as the Blackwood's critics saw them, and to examine their critical judgements in the light of their private correspondence as well as their other writings.

The period between 1817 and 1825 is chosen for many reasons. Firstly those were the years when the major poems of Byron and Shelley, and all Keats's poetry were published, and when the reputation of Wordsworth and Coleridge as major poets had not yet been established. Secondly, during those years Blackwood's contained more criticism of poetry than in any other period of its history. Thirdly, although after 1825 Wilson continued to review minor poets and to give his often unpredictable obiter dicta in "Noctes Ambrosianae," his reviews of Tennyson's Poems Chiefly Lyrical (May 1832), and of Coleridge's Poetical Works (October 1834) are the only two pieces that deserve serious attention. Fourthly, by the

1. For biographical notes on some of the Blackwood's critics see appendix VIII.

end of 1825 Blackwood's had lost most of its early critics of poetry, first among whom was Lockhart, and although new talents, such as De Quincey and Hartley Coleridge, were later recruited, they wrote very little criticism of poetry. A study of the criticism of poetry in Blackwood's in the late twenties and early thirties would almost exclusively be a study of John Wilson. Finally, Alan Lang Strout's excellent Bibliography of Articles in Blackwood's Magazine 1817-1825, from which very nearly all the attributions in this thesis are taken, still contains some gaps which Strout has invited other researchers to fill. The present writer could not resist such an invitation. The extreme difficulty of such a task, and the little success achieved, have enabled him to appreciate fully the size of Strout's achievement.

part one

WORDSWORTH AND COLERIDGE

INTRODUCTION

The criticism of the poetry of Wordsworth and Coleridge in Blackwood's is perhaps one of the most puzzling features of the magazine, even more puzzling than the harsh treatment of Keats by Lockhart. To make it even more enigmatic it has always been assumed that John Wilson, a personal friend of both poets, was behind the startling and quick alternation of abuse and praise of those poets in the pages of the magazine. Faced by such an assumption the student of the magazine either despairs of finding a motive behind Wilson's attacks and panegyrics or alternatively dismisses in toto the criticism of Wordsworth and Coleridge in Blackwood's as irresponsible, worthless or hypocritical, or even insane. Yet it is by no means certain that Wilson wrote for Blackwood's all the criticism of the two poets, and some of the sympathetic and penetrative critiques on their poetry were most likely not his. It is virtually impossible now to attain absolute certainty about the authorship of a given piece in the early numbers of the magazine and those pieces on Wordsworth and Coleridge in particular can be attributed to their authors only on circumstantial evidence. The introduction to this part is therefore devoted to a reconsideration of the available evidence, and to the ascription of various articles on Wordsworth and Coleridge to their probable authors.

Of the criticism of Wordsworth and Coleridge in Blackwood's between 1817 and 1825 only six out of twelve critiques and reviews have been convincingly attributed to Wilson by Alan Lang Strout. These six pieces include the three notorious letters on Wordsworth's Letter to a Friend of Burns (June, October, and November 1817),¹ the review of Coleridge's Biographia Literaria (October 1817),² and "Letters from the Lake No III," on Wordsworth, (March 1819).³ The last and sixth of these pieces, assigned to Wilson by Strout, is the review of Wordsworth's Ecclesiastical Sketches and Memorials of a Tour on the Continent (August 1822).⁴ This list leaves out the three "Essays on the Lake School of Poetry" (July, December 1818 and October 1819) and the reviews of Wordsworth's Peter Bell (May 1819), The Waggoner (June 1819), and River Duddon (May 1820).

In his article "Wilson, Champion of Wordsworth," Alan Lang Strout attributed two of the "Essays on the Lake School of Poetry" to Wilson: "No. I: Wordsworth's 'White Doe of Rylstone,'" (Blackwood's, July 1818), and "No II: On the Habits of Thought, inculcated by Wordsworth," (December 1818).⁵ Earlier, however, Strout had expressed serious doubts about attributing the third of the series, on Coleridge (October 1819), to the same writer and argued that Lockhart was more likely to be responsible for it.⁶ More than

1. Strout, WCW., pp. 384-392.

2. Strout, C&W., p. 103.

3. Strout, Library, p. 103.

4. Strout, Bibliography, p. 99.

5. Strout, WCW., p. 392.

6. Strout, C&W., p. 113 and n.

twenty years afterwards, Strout examined the Blackwood Papers for the purpose of compiling his Bibliography, and during his research he came across a list in William Blackwood's handwriting, which credits William Howison with the authorship of the second essay. Strout published his findings in the Library¹ and seemed satisfied with the conclusiveness of the evidence of William Blackwood's list. Yet three years later he published his Bibliography in which he attributes all of the three essays to John Wilson once more. He explains:

"The attribution to William Howison in my article seems impossible, both the earlier (III, 359) and the present piece [Lake School of Poetry, II] appear in the pencilled memoranda among the letters of J.F. Ferrier containing a list of John Wilson's contributions to B.M., and Ferrier also credits Wilson with both pieces in a letter of 12 June 1856. Moreover the first four and half pages of the present piece (beginning with second paragraph) have been reprinted in Wilson's Essays Critical and Imaginative, I, 392-400."²

Unjustifiably, as we shall soon see, Strout also suppresses his doubts about Wilson's authorship of the third "Essay," on Coleridge, and attributes it to Wilson on the grounds that it appears in Ferrier's memoranda.³

The wisdom of rejecting William Blackwood's evidence in favour of Ferrier's about the authorship of the second "Essay" is questionable to say the least. Ferrier's attempt to collect his father-in-law's fugitive pieces in the early numbers of Blackwood's

1. Strout, Library, pp. 192 and 198.

2. Strout, Bibliography, p. 47.

3. Ibid., p. 59.

was made after Wilson's death and Ferrier had to rely in many cases on internal evidence or sheer guess-work.

Indeed, the way Ferrier went about collecting Wilson's early contributions to Blackwood's can hardly bear any scrutiny.¹ He seemed to have formed for himself an ideal picture of the Professor of Moral Philosophy, and whatever did not agree with that picture he rejected as spurious. Filial devotion as well as this idealized picture of Wilson very often and seriously interfered with his objectivity as an editor. His letters to Major William Blackwood and John Blackwood give only too ample evidence of this fact.² But this is hardly the place to discuss the merits and demerits of Ferrier's selection of Wilson's early contributions to Blackwood's. Suffice it to say that Ferrier's list does not contain more than

-
1. It is not clear from Ferrier's letters, how the memoranda, which contains titles of articles in the magazine from 1818 to 1823, came into existence. The reference in the preface to Essays Critical and Imaginative (The Works of Professor Wilson, ed. Professor Ferrier (1856-57), hereafter cited as Wilson's Works, X, iii.) to copies of Wilson's articles in Ferrier's possession is definitely to articles in the magazine after 1826, as is made clear by Ferrier's letters between April and June 1856. Moreover, the list in Wilson's handwriting in the Blackwood Papers (NLS, MSS.4887), and apparently the one which Mrs. Gordon printed at the end of her biography, begins only at 1826. There is no mention whatever in Ferrier's letters of any list of articles, or of any specific contribution by Wilson to Blackwood's before that date, until, that is, Ferrier's letter of 12 June 1856 in which he suggests amalgamating a number of articles on Wordsworth, including the first two Essays on the "Lake School of Poetry," into one in the Essays Critical and Imaginative.
 2. See in particular Ferrier's letters from January to August 1855, especially 2 January, 5 February, 6 February, 25 May, 27 May and 17 September 1855 (NLS, MSS.4109) and 14 June 1856 (NLS, MSS.4116).

thirty titles from the magazine from April 1818 to August 1823.¹ Of these Wilson's authorship of 11 pieces has been confirmed by other external evidence, 5 pieces (including the reviews of Shelley's Revolt of Islam and Prometheus Unbound) have since been proved by other external evidence not to be Wilson's, 12 pieces, the only evidence of Wilson's authorship of which is Ferrier's own list, one piece has since been found to be only partly written by Wilson, and one piece Ferrier's list leaves undetermined.

Against such doubtful a document, we have, on the other hand, a list made by William Blackwood, apparently on the spot, as some sort of account book, which gives the titles of articles^{and} the names of their authors as well as the exact number of pages of every article.² Moreover, whenever it is available, other external evidence confirms the accuracy of Blackwood's list. It would be unwise therefore to doubt such evidence of Howison's authorship of the second Essay on the "Lake School of Poetry" because more than thirty years after the event Ferrier ascribed it to Wilson in his memoranda. The fact that in his letter of 12 June 1856 he credits Wilson with the piece or that he reprints part of it in his edition of Wilson's Essays Critical and Imaginative does not represent an accumulation of evidence but only a repetition of the initial mistake in the memoranda.

-
1. We do not know whether Ferrier's list is meant to represent the whole or only part of Wilson's early contributions to Blackwood's, but it ought to be mentioned here that the number of pieces which have been conclusively proved to be Wilson's between these two dates is 125.
 2. Unfortunately I have not been able to trace Blackwood's list in the Blackwood Papers, and had to rely entirely on Strout's account of it in Strout, Library, pp. 187-201.

Furthermore, the style and the ideas of the second "Essay" on the "Lake School of Poetry" leave no room for doubt about Howison's authorship. As we shall see in a later chapter of this thesis, Howison's account of Wordsworth's philosophy is so thoroughly impregnated with his own philosophical views that it is hardly possible to understand some parts of the Essay without reference to the wider framework of his philosophical and aesthetic theories.¹

If Ferrier was mistaken in attributing the second "Essay" in the series to Wilson, the evidence of his memoranda can hardly be relied upon in establishing the authorship of the first "Essay" on Wordsworth's White Doe of Rylstone (July 1818), and of the third "Essay" on Coleridge (October 1819). For he must have relied on some internal evidence in attributing the whole series to Wilson. It is vital therefore not to be influenced at all by the evidence of his memoranda or of his edition of Wilson's Essays Critical and Imaginative when we make a fresh examination of the available evidence. It is possible, of course, that Wilson, or any other contributor for that matter, wrote one or both of the Essays. For, if Howison wrote the second, it does not necessarily mean that he also wrote the first and the third of the series. One of the numerous pitfalls for the student of the magazine is to assume

1. It is interesting to notice that, after examining the amalgamation of articles that appear under the title "Wordsworth" in Ferrier's edition of Essays Critical and Imaginative, (Wilson's Works, V, 389-408), George Saintsbury came to the conclusion that Wilson "tries to be systematic, and fails." See George Saintsbury, History of Criticism and Literary Taste in Europe (1904), III, 477.

that a series must always be by the same hand; a pitfall which Ferrier did not sufficiently take into consideration.

If we discard the evidence of Ferrier's memoranda, what evidence is there to prove Wilson's authorship of one or both of the two remaining "Essays on the Lake School Poetry"? There is no immediate external evidence to start with in the case of either pieces. But there is strong circumstantial evidence as well as the internal evidence of style to suggest that Lockhart wrote the Essay on Coleridge. Alan Lang Strout has adequately dealt with the evidence of Lockhart's style and his allusions to German literature in the Essay.¹ What remains is to put together fragments of circumstantial evidence and see whether or not they support his tentative ascription.

In October 1834, soon after the death of William Blackwood, Wilson had to face the task of virtually writing more than one third of the magazine in two days. His daughter tells us, "How he worked that night and next two days may be seen by examining the number of the Magazine for October, of which he wrote with his own hand 56 out of the 142 pages required. His articles were: 'A Glance at the Noctes of Athenaeus;' and a 'Review of Coleridge's Poetical Works.'"² In order to achieve this feat Wilson had to seek help and inspiration wherever he could possibly find them. The back numbers of the magazine were as good a source as any in that crisis. A number of short undated notes to Alexander Blackwood,

1. Strout, C&W, p. 113 and n.

2. Gordon, II, 234.

son of William Blackwood, show that he actually sought such help.

One of these notes is pertinent to our subject. It reads:

"In a number of the magazine soon after Murray had to do with it are extracts from Athenaeus. Look it out for me. In an early number there is an essay on Christabel by Howison. I should like to see it."¹

This note is undated, but apparently it was written in October 1834, when Wilson was writing his two articles "A Glance at the Noctes of Athenaeus" and "Coleridge's Poetical Works" for the magazine (October 1834). For the former of these articles Wilson made use of the "Selections from Athenaeus" (Blackwood's, September 1818 to March 1819,) which had indeed been sent by Murray during his brief partnership with William Blackwood. The reference to Christabel in Wilson's note is more pertinent.

As Alan Lang Strout has shown, Wilson incorporated parts of the third of the "Essays on the Lake School of Poetry," on Coleridge (October 1819) in his review of "Coleridge's Poetical Works" (October 1834). In the latter review Wilson writes about the "Ancient Mariner": "We remember the time when there was an outcry among the common critics, 'What! all for shooting a bird!' We answered them then as now...All the subsequent miseries of the crew, we then said, are represented as having been the consequence of this violation of the charities of sentiment."² That, as well as the passage that follows (including quotations), is taken from

1. NLS. MS. 4730.

2. Blackwood's, XXXVI, 568. See also VI, 6.

the third of the "Essays on the Lake School of Poetry." Similarly Wilson writes in his review of Coleridge (October 1834): "We have a dim remembrance either of having read or written something to this effect--twenty years, or less, or more ago--..." He then copies another passage from the third "Essay on the Lake School of Poetry."¹

Bearing in mind Wilson's note to Alexander Blackwood we may hastily infer from this evidence that William Howison must have written the third of the "Essays on the Lake School of Poetry" on Coleridge (October 1819), and that it is to this Essay that Wilson's note refers. Yet the style of the Essay on Coleridge in the Lake School series rules out Howison's authorship. Moreover, in an article on "The Use of the Preternatural in Works of Fiction" (September 1818), Howison writes on Christabel:

"Mr. Coleridge has perhaps the finest superstitious vein of any person alive. The poem of Christabel is the best model extant of the language fit to be employed for such subjects...Indeed Christabel may be considered as a test by which to try men's feeling of superstition, and who ever does not perceive the beauty of it, may rest assured that the world of spectres is shut against him, and₂ that he will never see 'any thing worse than himself.'" ²

Now, it is possible that Wilson refers to this last article (of September 1818) by Howison in his note to Alexander Blackwood.

In this case it seems inconceivable that he would remember a passing reference to "Christabel" in another writer's article, while, at

-
1. Blackwood's, XXVI, 267, cf. VI, 7. For a more detailed comparison between the two articles on Coleridge, see Strout, C&W., p. 112 n.
 2. Blackwood's, III, 649. In Strout, Bibliography (p. 45), this piece is assigned to Wilson. Yet according to the list in Strout, Library, William Blackwood credits it to Howison (p. 189). William Blackwood's attribution seems to be confirmed by the evidence of Howison's style.

the same time, he would only have a "dim remembrance" of whether or not he had written a major "Essay" on Coleridge of an even later date. Alternatively, after the elapse of some fifteen years Wilson could only vaguely remember that Howison had contributed one or more to the series on "the Lake School of Poetry" and assumed that it was the one on Coleridge. A third possibility is that Wilson asked Alexander Blackwood for one piece in the magazine, Howison's article on "The Use of the Preternatural in Works of Fiction," and received another, the "Essay" on Coleridge in the "Lake School" series. But surely he would then remember a piece of his own composition when he saw it?

Moreover, back in November 1819, Wilson's irritation at Coleridge's letter to the author of Peter's Letter to his Kinsfolk is sufficient evidence by itself to rule out the possibility that he was the author of the third Essay on the Lake School of Poetry.¹ This of course does not prove Lockhart's authorship. Yet Coleridge at least believed that he was indebted to the author of Peter's Letters for the praise of his poetry in the "Essay."² Moreover, as we shall see in the chapter on Lockhart's criticism of Coleridge, a significant sentence was suppressed when Coleridge's "Letter to Peter Morris M.D. on the Sorts and Uses of

1. See Wilson's note to William Blackwood quoted p. 104 below.

2. See Coleridge's letter to the author of Peter's Letters in the Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ed. E.L. Griggs, (1956-59), IV, 970.

Literary Praise" was published in Blackwood's in September 1820. When we compare that sentence with a hint in Lockhart's prefatory note to that letter, the evidence of his authorship of the Essay on Coleridge in the "Lake School of Poetry" series seems to be conclusive.¹

Establishing the authorship of the second and the third of the "Essays on the Lake School of Poetry" is a simple matter in comparison with the extremely complicated and contradictory evidence that can be obtained from the first of the series on Wordsworth's White Doe of Rylstone. For apart from Ferrier's references to this "Essay" in his memoranda and letters to Major William Blackwood, it is not mentioned anywhere else in the Blackwood Papers, and we have to rely entirely on internal evidence in deducing the authorship.

The first of the "Essays on the Lake School of Poetry" appeared in July 1818 under the title "Essays on the Lake School of Poetry No. I, Wordsworth's White Doe of Rylstone." The word "Essay" however is a misnomer, for the piece is utterly lacking in the sort of unity one expects in an essay. It can be easily divided into three separate parts; an introduction on the way Scott, Byron and Wordsworth differ in their genius, lengthy extracts from the White Doe of Rylstone joined together with minimal comment, and finally an analysis of the poem that has little or nothing in common with the account of Wordsworth's genius in the introductory passages, and which is written in a totally different style. The first and

1. See below p. 151.

last part of this "Essay" strongly suggest two different hands.

The structure of the introduction on Scott, Byron and Wordsworth and the attempt to define the different genius of each of these poets recalled to George Saintsbury's mind Hazlitt's similar attempt in the Lectures on English Poets.¹ Saintsbury was right to compare it to Hazlitt. For not only the introductory passages of the first "Essay" on the Lake School, but the whole series appear to have been expressly conceived as a reply to Hazlitt's hostile criticism of the Lake Poets. The reason why Scott and Byron figure so prominently in an article on "the Lake School of Poetry," and not Southey or Coleridge for instance,² was that Hazlitt criticised Scott and Byron as much as he did Wordsworth and Southey, and that his criticism of Byron, Scott and Wordsworth is conveniently consecutive in the Lectures. Whoever wrote this sentence not only had Hazlitt in mind, but also the Lectures in front of him:

1. See George Saintsbury, Essays in English Literature, 1780-1860, [first series] (1890), p. 292.

2. Wilson's defence of Southey against Hazlitt's hostile criticism came some six months later in the "Letters from the Lakes No. I and II" (January 1819). It was however promised in the editorial note that immediately follows the first Essay on the Lake School and which criticises the "author" for not classing "Southey along with his three illustrious contemporaries."

The editor adds:

"We have no doubt that he will yet do ample justice to his incomparable genius, and show to us that he has now omitted that great name, rather from the too exclusive spirit of classification, than from any insensibility (which really in his mind we cannot conceive) to the merits of that truly original Poet." - Blackwood's, III, 381.

Apparently at that time Wilson did not consider Coleridge as one of the "master-spirits" of the age.

"For our own parts, we intend at all times to write of great living Poets in the same spirit of love and reverence with which it is natural to regard the dead and the sanctified."¹

This ~~This~~ not only echoes Hazlitt, but it also perfectly epitomises the way the writer of that introduction deals with Hazlitt's criticism of Scott, Byron and Wordsworth in the Lectures. At the beginning of his lecture on the "living poets" Hazlitt says,

"I would speak of the living poets as I have spoken of the dead (for I think highly of many of them); but I cannot speak of them with the same reverence, because I do not feel it; with the same confidence, because I cannot have the same authority to sanction my opinion."²

Echoes from Hazlitt are all over the piece and Hazlitt's unfavourable criticism is systematically changed into praise. In the paragraph on Wordsworth there are further echoes from his reviews of the Excursion which were reprinted from the Examiner in The Round Table (1817).³

1. Blackwood's, III, 371.

2. Complete Works of William Hazlitt, ed. P.P. Howe (1930-1934), V, 145. Hereafter cited as Complete Works.

3. On Scott, the writer of the "Essay" or rather of the introductory passages, systematically changes Hazlitt's unfavourable criticism into its opposite. Where Hazlitt claims that Scott "has no originality" (Complete Works, V, 154), the "Essay on the Lake School of Poetry" declares him "most unequivocally original" (Blackwood's, III, 369). Compare also Hazlitt's remarks on Scott's treatment of history in his poetry (Complete Works, V, 155) and Blackwood's, III, 370. On Byron cf.:

"Lord Byron shuts himself up too much in the impenetrable gloom of his own thoughts, and buries the natural light of things in 'nook monastic.'...There is nothing more repulsive than this sort of ideal absorption of all the interests of others, of the good and ill of life, in the ruling passion and moody abstraction of a single mind, as if it would make itself the centre of the universe, and there was nothing worth cherishing but its intellectual diseases...'He hath a demon:' and that is the next thing to being full of the God." -- Complete Works, V, 153.

It is not the aim of this introduction to judge the ethics of such modification of Hazlitt's ideas at the same time when one of the most discreditable attacks in the history of the magazine was being planned against him. It is rather to decide who was the author of the piece. In August 1818 Wilson contributed to the magazine his article "Hazlitt cross-questioned" in which two of the questions he addressed to his victim were:

"Did you, or did you not, in the course of your late Lectures on Poetry, &c. infamously vituperate and sneer at the character of Mr. Wordsworth--I mean his personal character; his genius even you dare not deny? Is it, or is it not, true that you owe all your ideas about poetry or criticism to gross misconceptions of the meaning of his conversation[?]"¹

Contd.]

"He cannot sympathise with the ordinary joys or sorrows of humanity, even though intense and overpowering. They must live and work in intellect and by intellect, before they seem worthy of the sympathy of his impenetrable soul... the Poetry of Byron, as we before remarked, is read as a dark, but still a divine revelation." - Blackwood's, III, 370.

On Wordsworth cf.:

"They [the Lake Poets] scorned 'degrees, priority, and place, insistance[sic], course, proportion, season, form, office, and custom in all line of order':--the distinctions of birth, the vicissitudes of fortune, did not enter into their abstracted lofty, and levelling calculation of human nature." - Complete Works, V, 163.

"His poetry is little coloured by the artificial distinctions of society. In his delineations of passion or character, he is not so much guided by the varieties produced by customs, institutions, professions, or modes of life, as by those great elementary laws of our nature which are unchangeable and the same." - Blackwood's, III, 371.

1. Blackwood's, III, 551.

This echoes one of the "Notices to Correspondents" of February 1818, which declares, "If Mr. Hazlitt uttered personalities against the Poets of the Lake School, he reviled those who taught him all that he knows about poetry."¹

Of all the supporters of Blackwood's, only Wilson was quite capable of conceiving the scheme of answering Hazlitt's hostile criticism of the Lake poets by adopting and modifying it. Moreover, the introduction to the first of the "Essays on the Lake School of Poetry" echoes what Wilson wrote about Byron in the review of the fourth canto of Childe Harold in the Edinburgh Review (dated June 1818, but published in September 1818), which he probably wrote at the same time as his share of the first of the "Essays on the Lake School of Poetry." What Wilson said about Wordsworth's religion and his serene vision in the "Essay" is almost identical with what he wrote on the same subject a year later in the review of Crabbe's Tales of the Hall (July 1819).

It is only proper that J.F. Ferrier reprints the introductory passages of the first of the "Essays on the Lake School of Poetry" and leaves out the concluding analysis of the White Doe of Rylstone, for it is doubtful that this is of Wilson's composition. There is a noticeable change of style and ideas between the introduction and the concluding part of the "Essay." The long and sustained comparison between poetry and painting and the distinction between

1. Ibid., II, title-page v. for February 1818. For a more detailed account of Blackwood's attacks on Hazlitt see Alan Lang Strout, "Hunt, Hazlitt, and Maga," ELH, IV (1937), 151-159.

different kinds of poetry suggests Howison or Lockhart rather than Wilson. The allusion to Raphael in the analysis of The White Doe is, however, a positive clue that should not be overlooked.

"Many persons, in some things not only able but enlightened, would look with untouched souls on the pictures of Raphael,--and turn, undelighted, from the countenance and the eyes of beings more lovely than human life,--to the rapturous contemplation of mere earthly beauty."¹

In the following number of the magazine (August 1818) Lockhart, as Baron von Lauerwinkel, described the impression which Raphael's Madonna di Bologna had made on him.

"The image of Raphael's Madonna can never pass from my memory. I desire not to see her often,--those divine lineaments are ever present to my view...Should I live for ages, those grey virgin eyes would still haunt me in visions, those dim wreathed clouds would still seem to expand before my sleeping eye, and give me glimpses of that holy loveliness."²

There can be no doubt that Lockhart wrote the analysis of the White Doe of Rylstone, despite the fact that about two and a half years earlier he had written to his friend Jonathan Christie, "The 'Doe' is certainly wretched, but not quite so bad as the Force of Prayer."³

The reviewers of Peter Bell, The Waggoner and River Duddon have not yet been satisfactorily identified. Unfortunately there is no external evidence for the authorship of the reviews of the last two. Moreover, the review of The Waggoner is too short to afford enough clues to justify even a tentative attribution. There

1. Blackwood's, III, 380.

2. Ibid., III, 565.

3. Lang, I, 102.

is a division of opinion as to the authorship of the review of River Duddon. Gilbert Macbeth attributes it to Lockhart on the grounds that it employs "the historical principle of criticism,"¹ and Alan Lang Strout suggests Wilson's authorship on the grounds that Wilson "reviewed most of Wordsworth's works."² Gilbert Macbeth's guess is probably nearer the truth. The attempt to emphasise Wordsworth's "classicism" and to gloss over the more revolutionary aspect of his poetry is typical of Lockhart. Moreover, the reviewer's praise of Wordsworth's poetry, and particularly of "Ruth," "Michael," "Ode on Intimations of Immortality," and "Sonnets dedicated to Liberty," echoes Lockhart's praise for these poems in Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk.³

Wilson definitely did not write the review of Peter Bell. On 6 May 1819 he sent the corrected slips of four of his contributions for the magazine of that month; "Curran's Letters," "Angling," "The Highlands" and "Mrs. Brunton,"⁴ and told Blackwood in the same letter:

-
1. See Gilbert Macbeth, John Gibson Lockhart, A Critical Study, p.212.
 2. See Strout, Bibliography, p. 68.
 3. Cf. Blackwood's, VII, 208 and 212 and Peter's Letters, II, 143-144.
 4. The full titles of these articles are: "Letters of Curran to the Rev. H. Weston," "The Flyfisher's Guide by G.C. Bainbridge," "On the State of Religion in the Highlands of Scotland," "Emmeline, by Mrs. Brunton," all of which appeared in the magazine in May 1819 and all of which, incidentally, are of Wilson's authorship, as he claims them in another undated letter. (Cf. Strout, Bibliography, p. 51).

"I advise your Editor, on no account to make any of these articles the leading one, because they are all, on various accounts, unfit to be so. The German play is the one."¹

On the cover of Wilson's letter a note in Lockhart's hand gives the provisional arrangement for the first three articles of the magazine; "Peter Bell, Brunton, Highlands." Yet it was not Lockhart either who wrote the review. On 28 April 1819 William Davies, the partner of Cadell and Davies, wrote to William Blackwood:

"Dr. Jones sent to us last night, for Wordsworth's Peter Bell, and the parody--so that I hope he will send some account of them, in good time for Friday's parcel."²

Dr. Jones was a certain R. Jones who apparently corresponded with Blackwood in 1819, but unfortunately no further identification has been possible.³

Although there is hardly any evidence to justify even a tentative attribution of the review of The Waggoner (June 1819), it is possible that Dr. Jones was the reviewer. For on 29 May 1819 William Davies wrote to William Blackwood:

"Dr. Jones looks in upon us, very frequently. We like him exceedingly--he tells us that he has, at length, heard from you, and we are on hopes that he will gradually become a more extensive and acceptable contributor to your mag[azin]e; for he appears to us to have abundant leisure, and, at the same time, the power of sending you many good articles, in more departments than one."⁴

-
1. NLS, MSS. 4004.
 2. NLS, MSS. 4004. The parody, Peter Bell, by John Hamilton Reynolds, was published at the same time as Wordsworth's poem.
 3. See Strout, Bibliography, pp. 53 and 56. I have not been able to trace R. Jones's letters in the Blackwood Papers. Dr. Jones and R. Jones are certainly one and the same person (see William Davies's letter to William Blackwood of 31 March 1819, NLS., MSS., 4004). It is doubtful, however, that Dr. Jones was the political economist, Richard Jones (1790-1855), as Strout suggests.
 4. NLS, MSS. 4004.

Since Dr. Jones favourably reviewed Peter Bell for the previous number of the magazine, it is not unlikely that William Davies asked him to review The Waggoner. In any case, the review of The Waggoner is not in Wilson's style.

To summarize, the authorship of the articles on Wordsworth and Coleridge in Blackwood's Magazine from 1817 to 1825 is as follows:

Observations on Mr. Wordsworth's Letter relative to a new Edition of Burns' Works. (June 1817)	Wilson
Vindication of Mr. Wordsworth's Letter to Mr. Gray on a new edition of Burns' Works. (October 1817)	Wilson
Some Observations on the 'Biographia Literaria' of S.T. Coleridge, Esq. (October 1817)	Wilson
Letter occasioned by N.'s Vindication of Mr. Wordsworth. (November 1817)	Wilson
Essays on the Lake School of Poetry No. I on Wordsworth's <u>White Doe of Rylstone</u> . (July 1818)	Wilson and Lockhart
Essays on the Lake School of Poetry No. II on the Habits of Thought inculcated by Wordsworth. (December 1818)	Howison
Letters from the Lakes III (March 1819) [on Wordsworth's domestic life]	Wilson
Peter Bell, A Tale in Verse, by Wordsworth (May 1819)	Dr. Jones
The Waggoner, A Poem by Mr. Wordsworth (June 1819)	Dr. Jones?
Essays on the Lake School of Poetry No. III, Coleridge (October 1819)	Lockhart
River Duddon (May 1820)	Lockhart

Ecclesiastical Sketches and a Memorial
of a Tour on the Continent (August 1822)

Wilson

Coleridge's translation of Wallenstein
(October 1823)

Lockhart

In this summary three pieces of Wilson are extremely hostile towards Wordsworth and Coleridge, and one does not really have much to do with criticism as it only describes Wordsworth's domestic life. The two favourable reviews of Wordsworth and the introductory passages of the "Essay" on the White Doe of Rylstone are hardly enough to justify Wilson's reputation as a champion of Wordsworth. (He was never claimed to be a champion of Coleridge.) Lockhart's criticism of Coleridge, and, to a lesser extent, of Wordsworth, is considerably more impressive. Even Howison and Dr. Jones wrote better criticism of Wordsworth than Wilson ever did either during the period covered in this thesis or during the years when he ruled supreme over the magazine.

CHAPTER II

WILSON ON WORDSWORTH AND COLERIDGE

Carlyle's judgement on John Wilson is one of these rare insights into the real essence of a contemporary figure which no amount of historical research can later supersede:

"Wilson had much nobleness of heart, and many traits of noble genius, but the central tie-beam seemed always wanting; very long ago I perceived in him the most irreconcilable contradictions: Toryism with sansculottism; Methodism of a sort with total incredulity; a noble, loyal, and religious nature not strong enough to vanquish the perverse element it is born into. Hence a being all split into precipitous chasms and the wildest volcanic tumults,...On these terms nothing can be done. Wilson seemed to me always by far the most gifted of all our literary men, either then or still. And yet intrinsically he has written nothing that can endure. The central gift was wanting."¹

Modern scholarship has only helped to illustrate the truth of this assessment. Enough has been said of Wilson's irreconcilable contradictions and the tie-beamlessness of his talent.² Enough also has been said of his startling alternation of abuse and praise in his writing about Wordsworth,³ and the endless contradictions which he uttered on the subject of Wordsworth's poetry.⁴ Severe

1. Journal of 29 April 1854—quoted in J.A. Froude, Thomas Carlyle: A History of his Life in London (1884), II, 157.

2. See George Saintsbury, Essays in English Literature, 1780-1860, [first series] (1890), 270-303, and also his History of Criticism and Literary Taste in Europe (1904), III, 472-478.

3. See Strout, WCW, pp. 383-394.

4. See Alan Lang Strout, "A Study in Periodical Patchwork, John Wilson's 'Recreations of Christopher North,' 1842," MLR, XXXVIII (1943), 88-105, especially pp. 101-105, on Wordsworth.

judgements have been passed and charitable apologies pleaded, and little remains to be said on the subject.¹

Yet there is no account of Wilson's favourable criticism of Wordsworth. Opinions are equally divided between dismissing it as "so enthusiastic as to be eliminated from serious consideration"² and praising Wilson as "the most important public champion of Wordsworth,"³ between those who consider both Wilson's praise and abuse equally worthless as criticism, and others who claim that his enthusiastic praise of Wordsworth at the time when any praise for the poet was very rare is valuable in itself. This chapter is not primarily concerned with evaluation, unless the tracing of effects to their causes is considered an evaluation. It is rather a study of the peculiar factors which, independently of the magazine Wilson wrote for, distorted his criticism of Wordsworth. Like all that has been written on Wilson, it is no more than a further illustration of the truth of a key sentence in Carlyle's assessment of Wilson: "The central gift was wanting."

1. See Ian Jack, English Literature 1815-1832 (1963), pp. 335-338, and J.O. Hayden, The Romantic Reviewers: 1802-1824 (1969), p.62 for their condemnation of Wilson. The apologists' point of view is adequately represented by Strout, WCW, p. 392., and Malcolm Elwin, Victorian Wallflowers (1937), pp. 37-40.

2. Hayden, p. 100.

3. Strout, WCW, p. 383.

Wilson was one of four contemporaries of Wordsworth, who by virtue of their personal knowledge of the poet were best qualified to interpret his poetry to the reading public, the other three being Coleridge, Hazlitt and De Quincey. As it turned out, Wilson also had the greatest opportunity to do so in the most powerful magazine of its time. Yet what he left behind cannot be compared even with De Quincey's criticism of Wordsworth, let alone Coleridge's or Hazlitt's.¹ Ironically enough too the first piece he wrote for Blackwood's on Wordsworth was an attack beside which all Francis Jeffrey's prejudice against the Lake Poets looked tolerant and enlightened. Such an attack cannot simply be attributed to Wilson's disillusionment about his old literary idol. Hazlitt's disillusionment was much deeper and more far-reaching than Wilson's and yet, next to Coleridge, he wrote the best contemporary account of Wordsworth's genius. Even allowing for Wilson's temperament which vacillated from one extreme to the other for no apparent reason, Wilson's praise for Wordsworth is hardly any different from his attacks from the point of view of serious criticism. Hazlitt, of course, had the greater talent, but, more importantly, he also had the greater perception into Wordsworth's genius. No degree of ideological or personal differences could

1. To compare Wilson to Coleridge is perhaps not fair to the former. Yet there is really nothing in all Wilson's criticism of Wordsworth to match Hazlitt's reviews of the Excursion in the Examiner (Complete Works, IV, 111-125), or De Quincey's essay "On Wordsworth's Poetry," The Collected Writings of Thomas De Quincey, ed. David Masson (1896-97), XI, 294ff.

overshadow that. Despite his greater enthusiasm for Wordsworth's poetry, and despite the intelligent and sympathetic response to the Lyrical Ballads in his early youth, Wilson's knowledge of Wordsworth's genius was very limited. His enthusiasm was that of "wonder rather than legitimate admiration," and it could not, and did not, withstand personal disillusionment with the poet. Hazlitt knew what Wordsworth's genius was worth, even when he bitterly attacked the poet's politics. Wilson did not appreciate Wordsworth's poetry even when he most rhapsodically praised it.

Yet despite his intermittent attacks on Wordsworth there can be no doubt that Wilson's life-long admiration for his poetry was sincere. As a young man of seventeen he wrote a long and enthusiastic letter to the author of the Lyrical Ballads expressing his gratitude for the "species of poetry which will continue to afford pleasure while respect is paid to virtuous feelings, and while sensibility continues to pour forth tears of rapture."¹ In 1807 he became personally acquainted with Wordsworth and for nine or ten years was on intimate terms with him.² In 1811 he collaborated with his English friend Alexander Blair in addressing an appeal to Wordsworth in Coleridge's Friend, exhorting him to come forth and give advice and guidance to the youth of the day.³ In response Wordsworth wrote his well-known "Letter to the Mathetes."

1. Gordon, I, 40.

2. For a detailed account of Wilson's relation with Wordsworth see Strout, W&W, 143-183.

3. Gordon, I, 131, and Strout, W&W, pp. 158-160.

Wilson soon set himself up as a poet in his own right by publishing in 1812 the Isle of Palms and Miscellaneous Poems and was immediately identified by the reviewers as a disciple of the "Lake School."¹

Allan Lang Strout suggests that in 1815 Wilson became estranged from his master and attributes the coolness in their friendship that lasted for the rest of their life to a difference in temperament. "Wilson saw," Strout writes, "for all its philosophic aspiration, something of the pettiness of Wordsworth's seclusion. For all his later championing of the 'Lakers' he disliked their narrowness, and said so in his writings intermittently."² Yet Henry Crabb Robinson gave a different account of the cause of this estrangement.

"Wilson, the minor poet of the Lakes, is estranged from Wordsworth. Vanity among such men produces sad effects. Wordsworth was offended that Wilson should borrow so much without acknowledgement from him and his works, and has therefore given no praise to Wilson. This pains Wilson, who has, besides, peculiarities in his manners, etc., which Wordsworth does not spare."³

Whatever the real cause of his alienation from his old master might have been, Wilson continued to admire his poetry. In his letters to William Blackwood there are occasional references to Wordsworth's "exquisite poetry," and on one occasion at least, he justified the long extracts in one of his reviews by claiming that there could never be "enough quoting of Wordsworth."⁴

1. Strout, W&W, p. 165.

2. Ibid., p. 180.

3. Henry Crabb Robinson on Books and their Writers, ed. Edith J. Morley (1938), I, 160.

4. NLS, MSS. 4730; Wilson's letter is undated, but it refers to the review of Ecclesiastical Sketches and Memorials of a Tour on the Continent in Blackwood's for August 1822. See also Wilson's conversation with Viscount Cranbrook, quoted in Strout, W&W, p.152.

Yet sincere ^{though} as Wilson's admiration for Wordsworth's poetry was, it failed to inspire him to write one single critique that can be described as good criticism. It is true that in sheer number of pages Wilson's praise of Wordsworth outweighs his abuse. Yet his praise is often no more than an outburst of enthusiasm, just as his attacks are fits of resentment. Little or no reasoned argument can be detected in either.

Occasionally, however, Wilson's defence of Wordsworth in Blackwood's rises to the enthusiasm and conviction with which his letter to the poet of 1802 was written. In his "Vindication of Wordsworth's Letter to Mr. Gray on a new Edition of Burns' Works" (October 1817), Wilson writes, albeit defending Wordsworth against his own attack:

"It should, however, be held in mind by Mr. Wordsworth's admirers, among whom are to be found every living Poet of any eminence, that, with all the fearlessness of original genius, he has burst and cast away the bonds which were worn very contentedly by many great writers. Mr. Wordsworth is a man of too much original power not to have very often written ill; and it is incredible that, 'mid all his gigantic efforts to establish a system (even allowing that system to be a right one), he has never violated the principles of taste or reason. He has brought about a revolution in Poetry; and a revolution can no more be brought about in Poetry than in the Constitution, without the destruction or injury of many excellent and time-hallowed establishments."¹

Wilson shows on such occasions an awareness of some aspects of the change which Wordsworth caused in the history of English poetry. Again in the review of Ecclesiastical Sketches and Memorials of a

1. Blackwood's, II, 73.

Tour on the Continent (August 1822) he gives a forcible assessment of Wordsworth's achievement as a pioneer of contemporary poetry:

"For our own part, we believe that Wordsworth's genius has had a greater influence on the spirit of poetry in Britain, than was ever before exercised by any individual mind. He was the first man who impregnated all his descriptions of external nature with sentiment or passion. In this he has been followed—often successfully—by other true Poets. He was the first man that vindicated the native dignity of human nature, by showing that all her elementary feelings were capable of poetry—and in that too he has been followed by other true Poets, although here he stands, and probably ever will stand, unapproached. He was the first man that stripped thought and passion of all vain or foolish disguises, and showed them in their just proportions and unencumbered power. He was the first man who in poetry knew the real province of language, and suffered it not to veil the meanings of the spirit."¹

Rhetorical and unsupported by argument as such pronouncements always are, nonetheless they represent the best in Wilson's writings on Wordsworth.

More often, however, Wilson's defence of Wordsworth, though glowing in its tribute to the poet, is less clearly defined. In the "Vindication of Mr. Wordsworth's Letter to Mr. Gray" (October 1817) he describes Wordsworth as:

1. Blackwood's, XII, 175. Cf. Wilson's letter to Wordsworth of 1802 where he writes:

"The flimsy ornaments of language, used to conceal meanness of thought and want of feeling, may captivate for a short time the ignorant and unwary, but true taste will discover the imposture, and expose the authors of it to merited contempt. The real feelings of human nature, expressed in simple and forcible language, will, on the contrary, please those only who are capable of entertaining them, and in proportion to the attention which we pay to the faithful delineation of such feelings, will be the enjoyment derived from them. That poetry, therefore, which is the language of nature, is certain of immortality."—Gordon, I, pp. 40-41.

"A Poet distinguished for the originality of his genius,—for his profound knowledge of the human heart,—for his spiritual insight into all the grandeur and magnificence of the external world,—for a strain of the most serene, undisturbed, and lofty morality, within whose control no mind can come without being elevated, purified, and enlightened,—for a religion partaking at once of all the solemnity of faith, and all the enthusiasm of poetry,—and, to crown all with a perfect consummation, a Poet who has realized, in a life of sublime solitude, the visions that have blessed the dreams of his inspiration."¹

Such enthusiastic praise is probably sincere enough, and during Wilson's life-time it won for him the reputation of being the champion of Wordsworth.²

iii

Yet mere praise apart, Wilson never wrote any satisfactory criticism of Wordsworth's poetry. His personal acquaintance with the Lake Poet and his attempt to imitate his poetry are not far from the surface in all his writings about Wordsworth. His praise and his abuse are alike distorted by this fact above which he could never rise. The two recurrent themes in all his criticism

1. Blackwood's, II, 73.

2. At least, De Quincey believed that Blackwood's was the first periodical to praise Wordsworth: "This began with Professor Wilson," he wrote in 1835, "and well I remember...that, for eight or ten years, this singularity of opinion, having no countenance from other journals, was treated as a whim, a paradox, a bold extravagance of the Blackwood critics."—Collected Writings of Thomas De Quincey, II, 60. Modern scholarship has of course proved that this statement is not strictly correct. Other writers in other periodicals had praised Wordsworth even before Blackwood's was established. See W.S. Ward, "An Early Champion of Wordsworth: Thomas Noon Talfourd," PMLA, LXVIII (1953), 992-1000, and also his "Wordsworth, the Lake Poets, and Their Contemporary Magazine Critics, 1798-1820," SP, XLII (1945), 87-113. Even in Blackwood's itself, as we have seen, Wilson was not the only one who wrote favourably about Wordsworth's poetry before 1825.

of Wordsworth, the poet's egotism and his religion, are easily traceable back to the years of his discipleship to Wordsworth. Even as late as 1842 these two themes are present in Wilson's criticism. In the following passage from the Recreation of Christopher North, which Wilson apparently wrote in 1842 especially for the purpose of inserting it in that collection of his articles in Blackwood's, he finally succeeded in combining the two themes which had occupied his attention over the previous 25 years, in one final attack on Wordsworth's religion. The extract occurs in "Sacred Poetry" in which Wilson contends that in the story of Margaret, in the first book of the Excursion, Wordsworth's inspiration is "not drawn from the Book of God but from the Book of Nature":

"Throughout the poem he shows that he does reverence it [the Bible], and that his whole being has been purified and elevated by its spirit. But fond as he is of preaching, and excellent in the art or gift, a Christian Preacher he is not—at best a philosophical divine. Familiar by his parentage and nurture with all most hallowed round the poor man's hearth, and guarded by his noble nature from all offence to the sanctities there enshrined; yet the truth must be told, he speaks not, he expounds not the Word as the servant of the Lord, as the follower of Him Crucified.... Passages may perhaps be found in "The Excursion" expressive of that spirit, but they are few and faint, and somewhat professional, falling not from the Pedlar but from the Pastor. If the mind, in forming its conceptions of divine things, is prouder of its own power than humbled in the comparison of its personal inferiority, and in enunciating them in verse, more rejoices in the consciousness of the power of its own genius than in the contemplation of Him from whom cometh every good and perfect gift—it has not attained Piety, and its worship is not an acceptable service. For it is self-worship—worship of the creature's own conceptions, and an overweening

complacency with his own greatness, in being able to form and so to express them as to win or command the praise and adoration of his fellow-mortals."¹

Although this criticism of Wordsworth's Christianity pretends to deal with the Excursion, the attack on Wordsworth's egotism is intensely personal. It was a culmination of many such attacks on the poet in Blackwood's over the previous twenty five years. On the other hand, thirty years before this extract from the Recreations of Christopher North was written, Wilson had attempted to write the sort of poetry which he advocates here, and only succeeded in writing indifferent or bad imitations of Wordsworth with obtrusive religious lessons loosely tacked on to them. His attacks on Wordsworth's egotism in the earlier numbers of Blackwood's are well known and need no further discussion.² The relation between his poetry and his praise of Wordsworth is however a more intriguing subject.

It ought to be mentioned first that on the subject of Wordsworth's religion Wilson changed his opinion drastically in June 1827 in the review of John Aird's Religious Characteristics.³ Before that date he never had any doubts about Wordsworth's Christianity, and he never raised the question even in his most

1. Wilson's Works, X, 63-64.

2. These attacks are in "Observations on Mr. Wordsworth's Letter relative to a new Edition of Burns' work," in June 1817 (Blackwood's, I, 26-66); "Letter occasioned by N's Vindication of Mr. Wordsworth," in November 1817 (Blackwood's, II, 201-204); and in "Noctes Ambrosianae No. XXI," in September 1825 (Blackwood's, XVIII, 380-81).

3. In that review Wilson writes "Wordsworth's religion is that of a wanderer in the woods, rather than a frequenter of places of divine worship where Christians meet." (Blackwood's, XXI, 677).

violent attacks on the poet in the early numbers of Blackwood's. On the contrary, for ten years he never praised Wordsworth without praising his Christianity. We have already seen how in his very first favourable article on Wordsworth in October 1817 he praises him for "a religion partaking at once of all the solemnity of faith, and all the enthusiasm of poetry." From then onwards Wilson repeatedly emphasised Wordsworth's Christianity. In the review of the fourth canto of Childe Harold (May 1818), he advised Byron to be guided by Wordsworth's divine art and divine wisdom. Two months later in the introductory passages to the first "Essay on the Lake School of Poetry" (July 1818), he describes Wordsworth's poetry in its "delineation of passion and character...not unlike the most touching and beautiful passages in the Sacred Page." The philosophy which he ascribes to Wordsworth is indubitably Christian:

"With all the great and essential faculties of the Poet, he possesses the calm and self-commanding powers of the Philosopher. He looks over human life with a steady and serene eye; he listens with a fine ear 'to the still sad music of humanity.' His faith is unshaken in prevalence of virtue over vice, and of happiness over misery; and in the existence of a heavenly law operating on earth, and, in spite of transitory defeats, always visibly triumphant in the grand field of human warfare. Hence he looks over the world of life, and man, with a sublime benignity; and hence, delighting in all the gracious dispensations of God, his great mind can wholly deliver itself up to the love of a flower budding in the field, or of a child asleep in its cradle."¹

1. Blackwood's, III, 371. See also "Letters from the Lake," March 1819 (Blackwood's, IV, 740-741).

In the review of Crabbe's Tales of the Hall, (July 1819) Wilson again emphasises Wordsworth's Christianity.

"Certain it is, that of all the poets of this age, or perhaps any age, Wordsworth holds the most cheering and consolatory faith—and that we all at times rise from his poetry, not only with an abatement of those fears and perplexities which the dark aspect of the world often flings over our hearts, but almost with a scorn of the impotence of grief, and certainly with a confiding trust in the perfect goodness of the Deity."¹

But nowhere does Wilson betray his preoccupation with Wordsworth's religion more than in his review of Ecclesiastical Sketches and Memorials of a Tour on the Continent (August 1822) the former of which Wilson consistently rated higher than any other of Wordsworth's works.

"The sentiments and feelings that embalm all these fine Compositions, are peculiarly important at the present day. It is thus that Christianity, and great Establishments for the preservation of its doctrines pure and unsullied, ought to be thought of in the meditative mind of genius... Here we see the highest intellect bowing down in reverence and adoration before the spirit of Christianity—the most splendid imagination overpowered by its sanctities, whether sleeping silently in the dark depths of bosoms agitated by mortal hope and fear, or embodied, to outward eyes, in beautiful or magnificent rites. Here we see that genius can conceive no image so august, no emotion so affecting, as those that rise up at the feet of the altar. And even the enthusiast of nature, who has followed Wordsworth through his woods and valleys...must have felt, as he finished the perusal of these Ecclesiastical Sketches, that a profounder pathos and sublimer interest lie among the ruined walls of old religious houses, and round the yet undecaying temples of the living God, than can be ever found in the solitude of the great hills; for the shadows that fall there, are all spiritual; the creature is brought nearer to the Creator, and the communion is felt to be more divine."²

1. Blackwood's, V, 470.

2. Blackwood's, XII, 185-186. See also Wilson's similar praise for the Ecclesiastical Sketches in "Wordsworth's New Volume," Blackwood's, XXXVII, 708-711.

This determination to present Wordsworth as an overdidactic and overtly religious poet is typical of Wilson's praise of Wordsworth's poetry in Blackwood's in its early years. This view of Wordsworth intermittently appears in Wilson's later writings in Blackwood's side by side with his more hostile criticism of Wordsworth's Christianity.¹

It is of course a legitimate critical question to ask whether or not Wordsworth's poetry expresses a Christian vision of the world. But with Wilson the question whether or not Wordsworth is a Christian poet seems an obsession rather than a critical question. The comparison with other contemporary critics is again pertinent here. There is hardly any reference to Wordsworth's Christianity in Hazlitt's criticism, and as far as I am aware there is none in Coleridge's either. The only two contemporary reviewers who made an issue of Wordsworth's religion were James Montgomery and Charles Lamb, the former expressing doubt in the Eclectic Review about the soundness of Wordsworth's mysticism in the Excursion from the Christian point of view, and the latter defending it in the Quarterly as "an expanded and generous Quakerism."²

It might be argued that like most Tory periodicals of the first quarter of the nineteenth century, Blackwood's judged

-
1. For an adequate summary of Wilson's views on Wordsworth's Christianity after 1825, see Alan Lang Strout, "A Study in Periodical Patchwork," MLR, XXXVIII (1943), 88-105.
 2. Reprinted in Elsie Smith, An Estimate of William Wordsworth by his Contemporaries, 1793-1822 (1932), p. 170. See also p. 175 for James Montgomery's doubts about the orthodoxy of Wordsworth's religion.

contemporary poetry according to its "religious, moral and instructional value."¹ But such^a principle was evoked in Blackwood's only in the case of poetry, such as that of Byron or Shelley, which had obvious grounds for religious objections, and very nearly always by Lockhart. It is also a curious paradox in Wilson's criticism, as we shall see in a later chapter, that while he dwelled incessantly on Wordsworth's Christianity, he attempted to gloss over whatever was objectionable on religious grounds in Byron's poetry. Moreover Howison, Lockhart and Dr. Jones praised Wordsworth without finding it necessary to stress his Christianity. The emphasis on Wordsworth's religion must be traced to Wilson's own thinking about Wordsworth rather than any monolithic policy of the magazine because there was no such policy as far as the criticism of poetry was concerned.

iv

Wilson's preoccupation with Wordsworth's "cheering and consolatory faith"² might be explained in terms of his tendency to emphasise the didactic purpose of poetry in general. In the review of Coleridge's Biographia Literaria he declares that "the true Poet, like the Preacher of the true religion, will seek to win

-
1. W.S. Ward, "Some Aspects of the Conservative Attitude toward Poetry in English Criticism, 1798-1820," PMLA, LX (1945), 389.
 2. Blackwood's, V, 471.

unto himself and his Faith, a belief whose foundation is in the depths of love, and whose pillars are the noblest passions of humanity."¹ Yet Wilson never adhered to any particular critical principles in his writings, and it is difficult to imagine any principle which is flexible enough to accommodate his attacks on Wordsworth and Coleridge and his praise of Byron in the same article.

It is more likely that the emphasis on Wordsworth's religion in Wilson's criticism was an integral part of Wilson's thinking about Wordsworth. It is no coincidence that such preoccupation with Wordsworth's religion is foreshadowed by the fact that in The Isle of Palms and Miscellaneous Poems, all Wilson's imitations of Wordsworth, conventional religious sentiments are loosely interwoven with a lengthy description of nature. In "Lines written on Reading the Memoirs of Miss Elisabeth Smith" Wilson's reflections on death are alternately interrupted by lengthy descriptive passages and religious preaching. Thus the apotheosis of "Elisabeth Smith" is a straightforward resurrection.

"Oft 'mid the calm of mountain solitude,
Where Nature's loveliness thy spirit wooed;
Where lonely cataracts with sullen roar
To thy hushed heart a fearful rapture bore,
And caverns moaning with the voice of night,
Steeped through the ear thy mind in strange delight
I feel thy influence on my heart descend
Like words of comfort whispered by a friend,
And every cloud in lovelier figures roll,
Shaped by the power of thy presiding soul!...

1. Blackwood's, II, 7.

For reason whispers, and religion proves,
That God by sorrow chasteneth whom he loves;
And suffering virtue smiles at misery's gloom,
Cheered by the light that burns beyond the tomb."¹

In the "Picture of the Blind Man" we read

"Happy old Man! no vain regrets intrude
On the still hour of sightless solitude.
Though deepest shades o'er outward Nature roll,
Her cloudless beauty lives within thy soul."

The poem ends, however, with these lines in which Wilson describes the blind man's absorption in his memories of natural scenery:

"And while thy blissful vision floats around,
Of loveliest form, fair hue, and melting sound,
Thou carest not, though blindness may not roam,
For Heaven's own glory smiles around thy home."²

In another "Wordsworthian" poem "Peace and Innocence" Wilson first describes an evening landscape, and then a child playing with a lamb. The connection between the two parts of the poem is given in these last few lines of the poem, which betray their source in Wordsworth's sonnet, "It is a beautiful evening calm and free."

"I hear thee lisping low thy nightly prayer.
O sweetest voice! what beauty breathes therein!
Ne'er has its music been impaired by sin.
In all its depth my soul shall carry hence
The air serene born of thy innocence.
To me most awful is thy hour of rest,
For little children sleep in Jesus' breast!"³

Nowhere, however, is this dilution of Wordsworth by the overdidactic and overtly religious more obvious than in Wilson's

1. The Poetical Works of Professor Wilson (1865), pp.293-294.

2. Ibid., pp. 331-332.

3. Ibid., p. 334.

poem "Mary" which was clearly written as an imitation of Wordsworth's Lucy poems in the Lyrical Ballads. It is quoted here at some length because it perfectly illustrates how in Wilson's mind the Wordsworthian mode of poetry became inseparable from religious preaching.

Three days before my Mary's death,
 We walked by Grassmere shore;
 "Sweet Lake!" she said with faltering breath,
 'I ne'er shall see thee more!'

Then turning round her languid head,
 She looked me in the face,
 And whispered, 'When thy friend is dead,
 Remember this lone place.'

The air that seemed so thick and dull
 For months unto my eye;
 Ah me! how bright and beautiful
 It floated on the sky!

A trance of light and solemn bliss
 From purest ether came;
 'Mid such a heavenly scene as this,
 Death is an empty name!

The memory of the past returned
 Like music to my heart.—
 It seemed that causelessly I mourned,
 When we were told to part.

'God's mercy,' to myself I said,
 'To both our souls is given—
 To me, sojourning on earth's shade,
 To her—a Saint in Heaven!'"¹

Wilson could not even manage to write a straightforward description of nature without preaching some religious lesson. Thus in "Nature Outraged" he laments the impact of urban civilization

1. Ibid., pp. 344-345.

on nature and adds,

"Thou must watch
 With holy zeal o'er Nature while she sleeps,
 That nought may break her rest; her waking smiles
 Thou must preserve and worship...
 Beautiful thy home upon this beautiful earth,
 And God hath given it to thee: therefore, learn
 The laws by which the Eternal doth sublime
 And sanctify his works."¹

The contemplation of an "Evening Cloud" in the sonnet under that title leads him to the conclusion:

"Emblem, methought, of the departed soul!
 To whose white robe the gleam of bliss is given;
 And by the breath of mercy made to roll
 Right onwards to the golden gates of Heaven,
 Where, to the eye of Faith, it peaceful lies,
 And tells to man his glorious destinies."²

To be fair to Wilson, he composed these imitations of Wordsworth between 1802 and 1812 and they were published in one volume with the Isle of Palms in the latter year. It is not, however, the quality of these imitations that interests us here, but rather the critical judgement that is implicit in them. Wilson wrote these poems when his enthusiasm for Wordsworth's poetry was at its highest and consequently one would assume that he sought to imitate what he admired most in his poetry. It is not possible,

1. Ibid., p. 388.

2. Ibid., p. 407. See also such poems as "To a Sleeping Child," p.223ff; "Hymn to Spring," p.245ff; "Lord Roland's Child," p.258ff; "The Angler's Tent," pp.260-271; "The Hermitage," p.284ff; "My Cottage," p.319ff; "Lines Written on the Banks of Winandermere," p.326ff; "Peace," p. 357; "The Nameless Stream," p.395ff; and "Evening in Furness Abbey," p.441, in all of which the Wordsworthian mode of poetry is invariably combined with Wilson's overdidacticism and obtrusive piety.

of course, to be certain that he actually associated obtrusive piety and overt moralising with the Wordsworthian mode of poetry. Yet the consistent overdidacticism in these imitations betray what was probably a false emphasis in his thinking about Wordsworth. This false emphasis persists in virtually all his later criticism of Wordsworth's poetry, both favourable and hostile, in Blackwood's. One can hardly read Wilson's praise of Wordsworth's "cheering and consolatory faith" without thinking of his own imitation of Wordsworth's poetry. Alternatively in his criticism of Wordsworth's Christianity in later years Wilson seems to judge Wordsworth's religion by the obtrusive piety in his own poetry.

Whichever way the impulse of the moment led Wilson is hardly of any consequence since in both cases the emphasis is the same. What Wilson's criticism did not deal with, and what he failed to grasp both in his poetry and criticism is the imaginative quality of Wordsworth's poetry; the quality which other contemporaries such as Hazlitt and De Quincey, not to mention Coleridge, valued most. It cannot be denied that Wilson reacted enthusiastically to the surface of Wordsworth's poetry, and, as we have already seen, praised it highly in Blackwood's. But his criticism did not probe deeper than the surface.

The emphasis on the didactic and religious value of Wordsworth's poetry which distorted Wilson's criticism is entirely absent from

the writings of other contributors to the magazine on the same subject. As we shall see in the next chapter, Howison's attempt to place Wordsworth in the history of English philosophy and literature represents the best contrast to Wilson's criticism. Lockhart's analysis of the White Doe of Rylstone (July 1818) and his review of River Duddon (May 1820), and Dr. Jones's reviews of Peter Bell (May 1819) and The Waggoner (June 1820) are entirely free from any reference to Wordsworth's Christianity, though these two writers again widely differed in their appraisal of Wordsworth.

Unlike Wilson, Lockhart did not respond enthusiastically to the innovations in Wordsworth's poetry. On the contrary both in Peter's Letters¹ and Blackwood's he vigorously defended the Lake poet against the Edinburgh Review by making light of these innovations, and by emphasising his "classicism". Thus in the review of River Duddon (May 1820), he replied to the charge of "silly simplicity" which had often been levelled against Wordsworth by pointing out that "Dion" was

"a magnificent strain of most classical and energetic poetry, imbued intensely with the spirit of ancient grandeur, and enriched with all the depth and gracefulness of Mr Wordsworth's own most poetical philosophy."²

Lockhart compared Wordsworth's treatment of the story from Plutarch with the treatment of classical themes by Milton and Gray, and declared:

-
1. See Peter's Letters, II, 144.
 2. Blackwood's, VII, 208.

"far from deserving to be held up to derision as a fanciful and conceited innovator, Mr. Wordsworth (judged by the genuine spirit of his writings) is entitled to be classed with the very highest names among his predecessors, as a pure and reverent worshipper of the true majesty of the English Muse."¹

This emphasis on Wordsworth's "classicism" was probably the most tactful reply to the hostile critics of Wordsworth such as Francis Jeffrey who objected to any innovation in poetry. Yet, as a critic Lockhart was definitely on a firmer ground and showed a higher degree of sensitivity, when he adopted a more empirical and less dogmatic approach to contemporary poetry. The vast contrast between his criticism of Coleridge on the one hand, and of Keats on the other, shows how the two different approaches produced completely different kinds of criticism. These two different approaches to poetry can also be distinguished in his criticism of Wordsworth. In the review of River Duddon, his defence of Wordsworth is as unsubstantiated by argument as all Wilson's praise for the Lake poet, and it is hardly less dogmatic than Jeffrey's hostile criticism. Lockhart, however, deserves credit for being one of the earliest critics of Wordsworth to point out the merits of the "Ode on Intimations of Immortality."²

Lockhart's analysis of the White Doe of Rylstone represents his other and more empirical approach to poetry. As has been observed before Lockhart added this analysis of Wordsworth's poem to Wilson's "Essay on the Lake School of Poetry No. 1" (July 1818).

1. Blackwood's, VII, 211.

2. See Blackwood's, VII, 212 and Peter's Letters, II, 143.

Unimpeded by the classical standards with which he often judged poetry, Lockhart gave an intelligent description of how Wordsworth aimed "at awakening the feelings and affection by the medium of imagination."¹ He compared Wordsworth's technique with that of a painter:

"In poetry, as in painting, gentle lineaments, and sober colouring, and chastened composition, often affect and delight the mind of capable judges more than even the most impassioned efforts of the art."²

In his analysis of the White Doe Lockhart emphasised the emotional bond between Lady Emily and the Doe, and described how through this bond Wordsworth succeeded in raising the status of the Doe.

"We willingly attribute something like human reason and human love to that fair creature of the woods,--and feel the deep pathos implied in such communion between a human soul in its sorrow with an inferior nature, that seems elevated by its being made the object of tender affection to a being above itself."³

Surely Wordsworth could not have hoped for a more sensitive interpretation of his poem?⁴

1. Blackwood's, III, 380.

2. Ibid., p. 380.

3. Ibid., p. 380.

4. Cf., for instance, Wordsworth's own account of his intentions in portraying the connection between Lady Emily and the Doe in his letter of 18 January 1816 to Francis Wrangham:

"Throughout, objects...derive their influence not from properties inherent in them, not from what they are actually in themselves, but from such as are bestowed upon them by the minds of those who are conversant with or affected by those objects."

—The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, The Middle Years, ed. Ernest de Selincourt, second edition revised by Mary Moorman and Alan G. Hill (1970), Pt. II, 276.

An equally impressive contrast to Wilson's criticism is undoubtedly Dr. Jones's review of Peter Bell. It is by far the best single review of any of Wordsworth's poems in Blackwood's between 1817 and 1825. It is not distorted by the personal and literary factors that vitiate all Wilson's criticism. It is sensitively receptive to the new ideas about poetry and at the same time independent in its interpretation of these ideas. In comparison with this single review most of Wilson's praise of Wordsworth sounds indeed hollow and unimaginative. It richly deserves more than merely to occupy a part of this chapter on Wilson's criticism.

To start with, in the review of Peter Bell there are no volcanic assertions, no determination to outface the reader in proving that Wordsworth is a good poet, and above all there are no preconceived ideas to distort the reviewer's reading of the poem. Besides giving an adequate summary of the poem in which he emphasises the gradual moral change which Peter Bell's experience causes in his character, Jones explains the principles on which the poem is written:

"No preternatural, nor even any splendid or extraordinary machinery is made use of; and the poem exemplifies a principle which Mr. Wordsworth has often insisted on, namely, that the strength and importance of the emotions which are brought into play, can be made to communicate the highest poetical interest to the circumstances which excite them, although these circumstances may be quite homely and familiar in themselves."¹

1. Blackwood's, V, 131.

In defending Wordsworth Jones shows such a sympathetic understanding of Wordsworth's theory of poetry that it is a pity that Wilson's reputation as the "champion" of Wordsworth has so far prevented Jones' review of Peter Bell from receiving the attention it deserves. Jones anticipates any criticism of Peter Bell on account of the triviality of the subject matter by conceding that there might be some justice in the view that equally good poetry can be written about "incidents less disagreeably homely" than those which Wordsworth chooses for his poems:

"Nevertheless, it is a great chance whether, if Mr. Wordsworth had studied to find more dignified incidents and circumstances, he would not have lost some part of his originality among the hackneyed conceptions of former poets. If he had assumed any of the materials in common use, he must have had to struggle with all that host of factitious associations which attach themselves to ideas that have long been separated from actual modes of life, and employed only in the artificial combinations of literature."¹

Despite Wilson's repeated attacks on the Edinburgh Review for its treatment of Wordsworth, he was never able to write such a cogent reply to Jeffrey's criticism of the language and subject matter of Wordsworth's poetry.

It is, however, in the broader critical argument which Jones develops in the course of his defence of Wordsworth that the value of this review consists. In replying to the contemporary ridicule against the subject matter of Peter Bell, Jones explains that distinction should be made between two kinds of poetry. One kind

1. Ibid., p. 131.

aims at appealing to the imagination and curiosity of the reader "by means of splendid objects and extraordinary imagination." In this kind of poetry there is no comparison of feeling:

"Our pleasure consists in the direct impression made by images upon the imagination, or of incidents drawing us blindly along under the influence of personal sympathy; and therefore, the nature of the images and incidents employed, is here the most important of all considerations."¹

The other species of poetry, to which Wordsworth's Lyrical Ballads and Peter Bell belong, "founds its charm upon the exhibition of the relations which sentiments and emotions bear to each other within the human mind." In this species of poetry,

"that development, collision, or other relation of internal feelings, which the poet chooses for his subject, generally partakes of the nature of a universal truth, and is capable of being represented by means of a thousand different forms; and therefore, the images or situations employed, should be considered only in the light of symbols or vehicles, and not as materials of poetry. That relation of feelings which, in such a case, constitutes the true subject of the poem, would retain the same fundamental interest, although the means by which it was expressed were to be shifted through all the varieties of splendid and familiar, or of coarse and refined. Its eternal and universal nature would only be rendered more apparent, without being either vulgarised or exalted, by the outward aspect of the circumstances, in which it made its temporary abode."²

This is perhaps the earliest conscious definition of symbolism to be found in English literary criticism and anticipates T.S. Eliot's "objective correlative" by more than a hundred years. Its relevance to Wordsworth's poetry in general and to Peter Bell in particular is clear enough. Finally Jones compares Peter Bell

1. Blackwood's, V, 132.

2. Ibid., p. 132.

favourably with the Lyrical Ballads but deplores the "dallying prolixity" and excessive minuteness of some parts of the poem.¹

vi

The contrast between Jones's review of Peter Bell and most of Wilson's criticism of Wordsworth only helps to emphasise how little Wilson actually benefitted from his acquaintance with Wordsworth. The review of Biographia Literaria (October 1817) shows that he learnt even less from Coleridge. Writing about that review in Peter's Letters Lockhart declares, "This is, indeed, the only one of all the various sins of this Magazine for which I am at a loss to discover—not an apology—but a motive."² The motive is not at all different from that behind Wilson's repeated attacks on Wordsworth's egotism.

Two years after the publication of Wilson's review of the Biographia Coleridge was mollified enough to yield to William Blackwood's request for contributions from his pen for the magazine. In November 1819 Coleridge sent the Edinburgh publisher the sonnet "Fancy in Nubibus" and "The Character of Sir Thomas Brown [sic] as a Writer." Coleridge's parcel also included his "Letter to Peter Moss M.D. on the Sorts and Uses of Literary Praise" which Coleridge

1. It is not certain that Dr. Jones wrote the review of The Waggoner (June 1819). But whoever wrote that short and favourable review described The Waggoner as "lightly and playful," and "written in a dancing, merry, irregular measure, sometimes almost Hudibrastic in its cadences and rhymes."—Blackwood's, V, 332.

2. Peter's Letters, II, 218.

probably intended to be published in Blackwood's. More will be said of this letter in a later chapter, but Wilson's response to that letter is significant. He did not disapprove of the unfavourable allusions to Wordsworth in Coleridge's letter,¹ but was, instead, extremely irritated by Coleridge's "egotism" which was Wilson's interpretation of the simple fact that Coleridge had written a letter about himself. In an undated note to Blackwood, Wilson wrote,

"Coleridge's sonnet is an old affair & was published in the Courier & other newspapers. His bit is truly execrable. Catch him writing about anything but himself Wordsworth & Southey."²

Bearing in mind this comment on Coleridge's letter, one can hardly be surprised by the violence of Wilson's personal attack on Coleridge in his review of the Biographia Literaria two years earlier. Wilson considered Coleridge's egotism in writing such a book as the Biographia as an unforgivable sin:

"It is impossible to read any pages of this work without thinking that Mr. Coleridge conceives himself to be a far greater man than the public is likely to admit; and we wish to waken him from what seems to us a most ludicrous delusion. He seems to believe that every tongue is wagging in his praise, that every ear is open to imbibe the oracular breathings of his inspiration...His admiration of nature or of man—we had almost said his religious feelings towards his God—are all narrowed, weakened, and corrupted and poisoned by inveterate and diseased egotism."³

-
1. See Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ed. Earl Leslie Griggs (1956-59), IV, 966-972. The reference to "Atticus" in the letter pointed to Wordsworth.
 2. NLS, MSS. 4729.
 3. Blackwood's, II, 5.

It is hardly possible to account for such an attack by Wilson's attempt to defend Jeffrey or to propitiate Walter Scott as Alan Lang Strout suggests.¹ The very words of Wilson's note to William Blackwood occur in his review of the Biographia Literaria. "Considered merely from a literary point of view," Wilson writes about the Biographia, "the work is most execrable."² And throughout the review he attempts to illustrate Coleridge's "inveterate and diseased egotism" by sneering at everything in his personal and literary life.

Wilson's attacks on Coleridge's domestic life, political integrity and religious belief are too well known to merit any further discussion. Similarly, his irritation at the incomprehensibility of the philosophical and critical system which Coleridge advanced in the Biographia may be attributed to the fact that the Biographia, as J.O. Hayden observes, posed a "major challenge to the reviewers."³ For these reasons it is sufficient to give here Wilson's comments on Coleridge's poetry. Wilson claimed that as a poet Coleridge was inferior not only to Wordsworth, Byron and Scott, but also to Robert Southey and Thomas Campbell. "Except a few wild and fanciful ballads, he has produced nothing worthy remembrance."⁴ On Coleridge's contributions to the Lyrical Ballads Wilson wrote: "He...assisted Mr. Wordsworth in planning his

1. Strout, C&W, p. 103 and n.

2. Blackwood's, II, 5.

3. The Romantic Reviewers, p. 107.

4. Blackwood's, II, 6.

Lyrical Ballads; and contributing several poems to that collection, he shared in the notoriety of the Lake School."¹ (We hardly need to remind ourselves that Wilson himself was a disciple of the same school and that among Coleridge's contributions to the Lyrical Ballads was "The Ancient Mariner.") Then Wilson went on to refer with approval to the hostile reception of "Christabel" by the reviewers:

"But alas! no sooner had the Lady Christabel 'come out', than all the rules of good-breeding and politeness were broken through, and the loud laugh of scorn and ridicule from every quarter assailed the ears of the fantastic Hoyden. But let Mr Coleridge be consoled. Mr Scott and Lord Byron are good-natured enough to admire Christabel, and the Public have not forgotten that his Lordship handed her Ladyship upon the stage."²

Towards the end of his review, Wilson justified his attack on Coleridge by asserting, "We have not been speaking in the cause of Literature only, but, we conceive, in the cause of Morality and Religion."³ It is hardly possible to find in Blackwood's anything to parallel the outrageous hypocrisy of this statement. His attack on Coleridge had no better motive, as his note to William Blackwood shows, than his own dislike of the "egotism" of the

1. Ibid., p. 9.

2. Blackwood's, II, 15. In his protest against Wilson's review, John Smyth (?) wrote in Blackwood's for December 1817, "That Mr. Scott and Lord Byron admired Christabel, and encouraged its publication, you yourself admit. Now it follows, therefore, that you and Mr Scott are at issue on your judgements: he says the work is good—you, that it is good for nothing at all. Which shall we believe? the true poet, or the man who only talks about poetry?"—Blackwood's, II, 287.

3. Blackwood's, II, 18.

Lake Poets, among whom he included Coleridge.¹

vii

Wordsworth and Coleridge reacted, in different ways, to Wilson's attacks. At first neither apparently knew the identity of his assailant, though according to Henry Crabb Robinson, Wordsworth later thought that Wilson was capable of writing the series of abusive and eulogistic articles on A Letter to a Friend of Robert Burns.² In June 1817, however, he suspected William Roscoe of being responsible for the first of these articles (June 1817).³ From a letter that has been recently published for the first time, it is now possible to know more about Wordsworth's reaction to that article. On 22 June 1817 he wrote to James Irving,⁴

"My friends are at perfect Liberty to follow what course they approve under no restriction from me but one...that especial care be taken...not to implicate Gilbert Burns. Cheerfully would I submit to any imputation, from such a Quarter, of vanity, impertinence, or presumption, rather than that he should be involved in the dispute."

-
1. See, for instance, Wilson's long digression on the "miserable arrogance" of "the original members of the Lake School".—Blackwood's, II, 6.
 2. See Blake, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Lamb, etc., being Selections from the Remains of Henry Crabb Robinson, ed. Edith J. Morley (1922), pp. 50-51.
 3. See Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, The Middle Years, ed. Ernest de Selincourt, rev. Mary Moorman and Alan G. Hill (1970), pt. II, p. 393.
 4. It is not known who James Irving was (*Ibid.*, p. 389 n.1), but it is not likely that he was connected with Blackwood's. There are no letters from him in the Blackwood Papers, and Wordsworth's letter seems to suggest that Irving did not approve of Wilson's article.

Wordsworth went on to give his opinion of the new magazine,

"I have lost no time in answering your Letter; and as the best return which I can make for your attention, I venture to observe that your infant publication must unavoidably fall into discredit if it be made the vehicle of the malignant passions by which this anonymous article is disfigured. There are certain indecencies in writing which no merit can atone for. The Philosophy of Plato could not have been endured if it₁ had been accompanied with the manners of Thersites."

Needless to say Wordsworth's advice, which was probably never passed on to William Blackwood, was given in vain. For in October 1817, as we have already seen, Wilson attacked Coleridge, and in the following month he contributed his second hostile article on Wordsworth's A Letter to a Friend of Robert Burns. On 19 February 1819 Wordsworth wrote to Francis Wrangham:

"I know little of Blackwood's Magazine, and wish to know less. I have seen in it articles so infamous that I do not chuse to let it enter my doors. The Publisher sent it to me some time ago, and I begged (civilly you will take for granted) not to be troubled with it any longer...

Perhaps I ought to have mentioned that the articles in B's Magazine that disgusted me so, were personal,—referring to myself and friends and acquaintances, especially Coleridge."²

It seems that this ban on Blackwood's was never lifted,³ which is unfortunate. For according to Sara Hutchinson, Wordsworth mainly objected to Wilson's contributions,⁴ which, as we have already seen,

1. Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, The Middle Years, pt. II, p. 389.

2. Ibid., pp. 522-523 and 524.

3. On 25 July 1819 Sara Hutchinson wrote to Thomas Monkhouse: "By the bye we females have a great curiosity to see the Reviews &c of Wms Poems &c in Blackwood's Magazine; but as Wm will not suffer it to come into the house with his knowledge we must smuggle it."

—The Letters of Sara Hutchinson, ed. Kathleen Coburn (1954), p.157.

4. See The Letters of Sara Hutchinson, pp. 155 and 194.

were by no means typical of the criticism on Wordsworth's poetry in Blackwood's.

Coleridge was indignant about the attack on his domestic life in Wilson's review of the Biographia. He contemplated bringing a libel action against William Blackwood but was dissuaded from doing so by Henry Crabb Robinson.¹ Yet, unlike Wordsworth, Coleridge was not entirely immune against Blackwood's praise. In 1819 he warmly responded to Lockhart's favourable criticism of his poetry.

1. See Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, IV, 884-85, and Henry Crabb Robinson on Books and their Writers, ed. Edith J. Morley (1938), I, 213.

CHAPTER III

WILLIAM HOWISON ON WORDSWORTH

Very little is known about William Howison, too little indeed to be given an entry in the Dictionary of National Biography. His name appears there only in a warning that he ought not to be confused with another William Howison (an Edinburgh line-engraver). From the writings of his contemporaries however, we gather some fleeting impressions of this obscure writer who contributed to Blackwood's some of the most perceptive criticism on contemporary poetry. In Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk, Lockhart writes on Howison:

"It was here, too, that I first became acquainted with another young gentleman, whose writings in the same Magazine had, in a particular manner, interested and delighted me; and which, indeed, could not possibly excite any feelings but those of the purest delight, in the mind of any person capable of understanding them. This is a Mr. William Howison; but the greater by the name of Monsieur de Peudemots, which nom-de-guerre was prefixed by him two or three years ago to an exquisite little separate publication of Tales and Essays, or, as he called them, 'Fragments and Fictions.'... Since his little book was published, however, M. de Peudemots (to judge from the writings, which the inimitable purity of style shews very plainly to be his,) has not a little enlarged his views in regard to men, and manners, and philosophy--and, I doubt not, he will soon shew his enlargement in some very splendid way. By what process of circumstances such a mind as his is, should have been formed and nurtured into its present condition, in the midst of the superficial talkers and debaters of Edinburgh, I am greatly at a loss to imagine. It must, indeed, have been a very noble armour of innate strength, which has enabled him to resist so much of precept and example--and, in spite of all that was passing around him, to train himself, from his earliest years, in so sure a reliance upon the finer examples and higher precepts of the old times of England. It is easy to see much of his inward

strength beaming through the modesty of his physiognomy-- and in his organisation upwards, it is still more easy to detect the marks of a commanding intellect. He has a high pale forehead, the pure intellectual confirmation of which is sufficient to render it perfectly beautiful. So much for one whose name will not long be an obscure one."¹

In 1810 Howison became acquainted with Walter Scott by sending him his lyrical ballad "Polydore" which Scott inserted in the Edinburgh Annual Register for 1810.² About the impression which Howison made on Scott, Lockhart records:

"Scott invited the youth to visit him in the country, was greatly pleased with the modesty of his manners and the originality of his conversation, and wrote to Joanna Baillie, that, 'though not one of the crimps for the muses,' he thought he could hardly be mistaken in believing that in the boyish author of Polydore he had discovered a true genius."³

-
1. J.G. Lockhart, Peter's Letters, III, 138-140. See also the review of Howison's Fragments and Fictions, (Blackwood's, III, 46-47) which was probably written by Lockhart. Howison was fifteen years of age when he first met Walter Scott, in this case he must have been born in 1795. His last known published work, Philosophical Tables, Compiled from Various Authors, Ancient and Modern, is dated 1829, but I have not been able to trace his obituary.
 2. According to Lockhart, Howison wrote "Polydore" when he was fifteen. Scott was probably impressed by the promise of talent rather than by the intrinsic merits of the composition. Yet, in comparison with most of Wilson's poetry, "Polydore" reveals a higher degree of intellectual and artistic maturity.

On Rimside Moor a tempest-cloud
 Its dreary shadows cast
 At midnight, and the desert flat
 Re-echoed to the blast;
 When a poor child of guilt came there
 With frantic step to range,
 For blood was sprinkled on the garb
 He dared not stay to change.

Edinburgh Annual Register, for 1810, II, lxxix.
 3. J.G. Lockhart, Life of Walter Scott (Boston and New York: 1902), II, 302.

Walter Scott wrote to Joanna Baillie about Howison some twelve years later than Lockhart's Life suggests. The first of two letters was in reply to Joanna Baillie's request for Howison's permission to include his ballad in an anthology of poetry which she was compiling for some charitable purpose. On 10 February 1822 Scott wrote to Joanna Baillie:

"I had lost sight of him many a year and when I met him accidentally at Lockhart's some time ago I found for the pale imaginative lad of eighteen a young man who though probably no more than 30 might have been forty by the stoop of his shoulders his spectacles and his wrinkled brow. He has turned metaphysician full fifty fathom deep. Lockhart gave me a treatise of his which seemed very profound indeed but it was not a bag of nuts ready crackd and I never yet found in such a case the kernal worth endangering my teeth on the shells. He wrote also a very pleasing thing calld I think a night in Rome a little Classical fiction. Add to all this the poor fellow is nearly blind. I have always hated to have a train of versifying boys at my heels like a drunken old serjeant at a country fair heading his band of cubbish recruits but I wish I had not let Howison slip through my fingers so completely for I might have been of use to him."¹

On such a writer as Walter Scott who did not greatly relish the company of overserious literary young men, Howison seems to have made a lasting impression. For, some fourteen months later Scott wrote again to Joanna Baillie giving a more vivid picture of Howison.

"As for Mr. Howison such is the worldly name of Polydore. I never saw such a change in my life upon a young man. It may be fourteen years or thereabouts since he introduced himself to me by sending me some excellent verses for a youth of 17 years old. I asked him to Abbotsford and he came--a thin hectic youth with an eye of dark fire a cheek that coloured at the slightest emotion and a mind

1. Letters of Walter Scott, ed. H.J.C. Grierson et al. (1932-37), VII, 59.

fraught with feeling of the tender and beautiful and eager for poetical fame--otherwise of so little acquaintance with the world and the worlds way that a sucking-turkey might have been his tutor. I was rather a bear-like nurse for such a lamb-like charge. We could hardly indeed associate together for I was then eternally restless and he as sedentary...Our acquaintance after this languished and at last fell asleep till one day last year I met him at Lockharts a thin consumptive looking man bent double with study and whose eyes seemd to have been extinguished almost by poring over the midnight lamp though protected by immense green spectacles. I then found my poet had turned meta-physician and that these spectacles were to assist him in gazing into the millstone of moral philosophy...He is a singular instance of talents hitherto lost to the public but if he gets on the right line he may do something remarkable yet."¹

In the early years of Blackwood's, Howison seems to have had a close association with its writers. In March 1818 he was apparently asked by Lockhart to write an "Essay" on criticism and his reply, addressed to the editor of Blackwood's Magazine, shows him anxious to join in the spirit of the new magazine:

"I shall endeavour to prepare a short Essay by the time you mention. Most subjects of criticism are so much glossed upon at present that it is difficult to get out of the ordinary tracks of association connected with them. If I write upon my subject of criticism I shall affect a burlesque sort of plainness and simplicity. The Baron of Lauerwinkel is evidently a person of much penetration and shows a noble independence of thinking."²

Howison did not however write under "Lauerwinkel," which was one of Lockhart's numerous pseudonyms, but contributed a number of pieces under the signature "Ulrich Sternstare."³ It also seems that

1. Ibid., VIII, 54. For a more detached description of Howison, see R.P. Gillies, Memoirs of a Literary Veteran (1851), II, 49-50.

2. NLS, MSS. 4003.

3. See appendix II on Howison's contributions to Blackwood's.

Howison was a more important supporter of Blackwood's than has hitherto been realised. In a letter to William Blackwood dated 1 October 1820, Lockhart inquires: "What has become of Howison?" A year later William Blackwood sought Howison's advice about the publication in the magazine of Coleridge's "Literary Correspondence with Friends and Men of Letters." But having "turned metaphysician" Howison was inevitably out of place in Blackwood's, and "A Key to the Mythology of the Ancient" and "An Essay on the Arrangement of Categories" (March 1822) were reluctantly inserted in the magazine. At any rate, the facetious Maginn wrote to William Blackwood on 31 March 1822:

"You are very much to blame for your treatment of poor Howison. Get him a straight-waist coat at once--blister his head--and purge him without delay. He is decidedly mad: & you ought not to indulge¹ his mania--Coleridge is madman enough for one magazine."

It is no wonder that on 25 July 1822 Howison wrote to William Blackwood:

"I have received the last number of your magazine but I think it proper to state that I do not mean to contribute any farther to that publication. My contributions are in general so short that I find they do not pay at all in proportion to the time or thought which are required for their composition and I suspect that so far from producing the effects I intend they are read or understood by few persons, or they are overlooked among other things more fitted to excite an immediate interest, and in the meantime, the ill will occasioned by the personalities of the magazine is extended to those who have nothing to do with them. Under these circumstances for me to continue and persist in the same course would be a mere waste of time and anxiety

1. NLS, MSS. 4009.

of thought in seeking for materials which do not interest your readers, and the publication will go on just as well without them. I have therefore come to the resolution to discontinue¹ the labour of supplying any farther contributions."

i

This break with Blackwood's was inevitable and judging by his contributions to the magazine it is surprising that Howison's connection with it lasted over four years. For he was one of those very few supporters of the magazine who never relished its polemics and his writings are entirely free from the partisan spirit which is the hallmark of the criticism of most other contributors, especially Wilson, Lockhart and Maginn. Although his style is often enlivened by wit and highly polished humour, he never resorted to the crude personalities or the violent invective for which the magazine was notorious. He was apparently not interested in politics and there is hardly any reference in his articles to the contemporary political scene. His criticism of literature is also free from the violently assertive tone which characterises that of Lockhart and Wilson. It is rather tentative and exploratory, and highly discriminating. Indeed, in many pieces Howison gives the impression of a writer who is primarily interested in the clarification of his own

1. NLS, MSS. 4008.

thought through writing rather than in persuading his reader to accept his point of view. Occasionally, as in his Essay on "The Habits of Thought, inculcated by Wordsworth," this reluctance to make clear-cut judgements leaves us uncertain about his attitude about the subject under discussion.

Yet Howison was the only writer in Blackwood's who attempted to judge contemporary poetry from what appears to be a fairly consistent philosophical point of view. Because he wrote no more than about twenty pieces for Blackwood's on various subjects, it is hardly possible to claim for him a coherent theory of poetry, or even to give a clear definition of his views on contemporary critical issues. Yet more than any other writer on poetry in the magazine, Howison attempted to relate his critical judgement to the wider framework of an aesthetic and moral philosophy. This philosophy might be vague and incoherent to start with, and in his later writings, too abstruse to throw any light on his criticism. But it is essential if we are to make sense of his Essay on "The Habits of Thought inculcated by Wordsworth." Unfortunately there is insufficient material in his contributions to Blackwood's to justify any systematic investigation of his philosophical thinking, and what there is can only help us to discover the direction rather than the substance of his philosophy.

Perhaps the best starting point for such an investigation of Howison's philosophy is his criticism of David Hume's philosophy of association of ideas. In April and May 1818 appeared in Blackwood's two instalments of "Dialogues on Natural and Revealed

Religion," written, as the prefatory editorial note announced, "by an admirer, but certainly not a disciple of David Hume." These "Dialogues" were almost certainly written by Howison. In them the interlocutors of David Hume's Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion meet again after several years have elapsed. Philo, who probably represents Howison's point of view, takes over the task of proving that the belief in the existence of God does not depend on the analogy between the design and order of the universe and that of a machine or a work of art. He contends that the mind's perception of God is immediate and precedes any analogical reasoning. Philo's argument against the evidence of analogy is based, somewhat naively perhaps, on the rejection of the principle of the association of ideas as foundation of human knowledge.

"Indeed I believe every thing which bears the character of reason has its foundation in some original perception of the understanding; and it is never a satisfactory account of any natural process used in the discovery of truth, to say we are carried to it by a mere arbitrary association, by the relations of resemblance or contiguity in place or time, or by the force of custom, in rivetting any particular chain of ideas upon the mind."¹

Instead of relying on custom and association of ideas, Philo claims "the mind is originally prepared to receive" impressions of order and design in nature, and "it cannot continue long in existence without them." This immediate perception of order

1. Blackwood's, III, 175.

and design in nature involved the immediate perception of, and belief in, the existence of God.

The significance of the "Dialogues on Natural and Revealed Religion" lies in what they reveal of Howison's attitude towards David Hume's philosophy of associations of ideas rather than in the argument he uses to refute it. It seems that he believed in the existence of an innate faculty in the human mind which previous to all custom or association of ideas perceives harmony and order in the universe. In his article "Samuel Johnson and David Hume," (August 1818) he again criticises Hume for ignoring this faculty within himself and for merely relying on observation in constructing his philosophy.

"David Hume's temperament was well calculated for a philosopher of the Aristotelian class; that is to say, one who founds his reasonings upon experience, and upon the knowledge gathered by the senses. His whole constitution seems to have been uncommonly sedate and tranquil, and no part of it much alive or awake, but his understanding. Most of the errors of his philosophy, perhaps, arose from his overlooking elements of human nature which were torpid within himself, and which could not be learned by the mere external observer of mankind. He knew more of the virtues in their practical results, than he knew of them as sentiments; and his theory of utility resembles that explanation of musical concords which modern physics have enabled us to draw from the vibrations of the atmosphere, but which is merely an external supplement to the musical faculty within us, which judges of the harmony of sounds by totally different means."¹

This criticism of the empirical and utilitarian nature of David Hume's philosophy is, as we shall soon see, especially pertinent to Howison's criticism of Wordsworth.

1. Blackwood's, III, 511-512.

Yet, even when Howison rebelled against associationist philosophy, his philosophical and critical ideas remained firmly rooted in its later ramifications in the Scottish philosophies of the second half of the eighteenth century. The article "On the Nature of the Imitative Principle" (December 1819) illustrates how despite the close similarity between some of his definitions and the views held by some of the major critics of his age, Howison could not entirely free himself from the trammels of associationism. Howison's article also gives a clue to why he failed where Coleridge succeeded. When Coleridge rebelled against the Hartleian associationism, he renounced all its implications and his conversion to Kantian philosophy was complete. When Howison produced his answer to the associationists, in his Essay on the Sentiments of Attraction, Adaptation and Varieties (1821), he merely imposed Platonic "Ideas" on the fundamentally associationist concepts of the article "On the Nature of the Imitative Principle."

Although Howison's definition of the imitative faculty bears strong resemblance to the concept of imagination in Hazlitt's criticism of Shakespeare,¹ it probably has its source in the philosophy of sympathy which, as Walter Jackson Bate has illustrated, was prevalent among the Scottish philosophers of the

1. Hazlitt's influence on Howison cannot however be entirely ruled out. In June 1818 Howison wrote a sympathetic account of Hazlitt's talent as a critic as demonstrated in his Lectures on English Poets. See "Jeffrey and Hazlitt" (Blackwood's, III, 303-306).

late eighteenth century and which was ultimately derived from David Hume.¹ In Howison's classification of human faculties, "imitation is one of the highest faculties in the human composition":

"The ultimate essence of this faculty, is probably an inclination to assimilate and unite the mind to whatever objects we contemplate, or even to conceptions that we form in the imagination. It has a palpable connection with benevolence, which has a tendency to adapt, conform, and assimilate itself to other beings; and as it were to blend the mind affectionately with their nature...At the same time, I do not suppose that the power of Assimilation, (for so it should be called) has within itself any perceptions concerning good and evil. It probably has an inclination to approximate towards all objects indiscriminately; and being as it were morally neutral, is only repelled from what is vile, by the repugnant movements of the other sentiments. On the other hand, in contemplating the aspects of inanimate nature, the assimilative power finds a free and unrestrained exercise."²

Assimilation is, Howison maintains, "a peculiar act of feeling--a moulding of the mind to an external object," and yet it is incompatible with "personal feeling" and "self-love" which are "not the best guide to any sort of abstract truth."³ This distinction, as we shall soon see, is typical of Howison's distrust of the expression of strong personal emotions in contemporary literature. Howison believes that "great poets and painters have excelled in the species of observation" which results from the complete union

-
1. See Walter Jackson Bate, From Classic to Romantic, Premises of Taste in Eighteenth-Century England (Harvard University Press; 1946), p. 133 ff.
 2. Blackwood's, VI, 309.
 3. Ibid., p. 310.

of mind with external objects.¹ This union is only possible when the assimilative faculty is not distracted by the interference of personal emotions.

In Howison's definitions of human faculties, imagination is also the associative imagination which "furnishes the mind with opportunities of perceiving the relations of objects that lie far separate--and thus enables it to discover new modes of combining."² Similarly, Howison's definition of "form" to which he assigns a separate faculty of the mind is reminiscent of similar definitions which, as Walter Jackson Bate observes, were widely held among the associationist critics:³

"The faculty of form has, probably, no sense of beauty, but only perceives, as a matter of fact, the relation of parts in any physical object; and the feeling of symmetry is experienced when forms are such as to awaken sentiment, by gratifying the faculty of assimilation or discursativeness, by smoothness of prolongation, or by such lines as suggest the idea of motion."⁴

Like the associationist critics, Howison applied this definition of form to literature, painting and music alike. It was also behind the frequent references to painting and music in his literary

1. Cf. also Howison's review of Walter Scott's Kenilworth:

"Thus the same mind, which at first listens to the voice of poetry in the indefinite sound of the elements, and, by sympathy, almost feels what is their internal being, may afterwards turn to consider the intellectual relations of external appearances, and actuated by the spirit of art, may produce compositions having the merit of fine arrangement, beautiful progression, and the display of opposed causes and powers, and though colder in relation to sympathy, more gratifying to intellect and to contemplative taste."
Blackwood's, VIII, 435.

2. Ibid., p. 312.

3. See Walter Jackson Bate, From Classic to Romantic, p. 104.

4. Blackwood's, VI, 313.

criticism. Towards the end of his association with Blackwood's, however, Howison believed that the perfection of intellectual forms could only be realized in music and painting.¹

Yet Howison was not entirely satisfied with the instinctive and emotional foundation of sympathy in most of the associationist philosophers, and throughout his criticism in Blackwood's there is a distinct distrust of strong emotions and personal feelings as means of moral or aesthetic perception. In 1821 he wrote his Essay on the Sentiments of Attraction, Adaptation and Variety in which he advances a moral and aesthetic theory which does not rely on personal feelings as means of perception but rather on what he calls "contemplative emotions" which are in effect a slightly different modification of the benevolent sympathy which he inherited from associationism. Howison's innovation consists in using the concept of sympathy without its emotional and associationist implication. He defines his "contemplative emotions" as those sentiments which form the connections between infinite "ideas" in the mind and finite and individual objects. The Essay is vague and incoherent and is complicated further by Howison's use of highly personal symbolism to denote the different contemplative emotions. But he explained his intentions in this Essay in more recognizable language when he reviewed it in Blackwood's in May 1821:

1. See for instance Howison's "A Letter on the Different Stages of Taste," (Blackwood's, XI, 590).

"The best beginning of philosophy is from a strong feeling of the contrast between moveable and particular being, and the fixed qualities of pure ideas. The mind's own nature being moveable and particular, and destitute of certainty in its natural feelings, it can only find the origin of morality in the internal consciousness of ideas incapable of being altered by the operations of the will, and which, although they are felt within the limits of its own being, are not part of its nature; neither is the feeling of the abstract beautiful to be found in the hazy uncertainty of natural feeling; but in the unchangeable relations of intellectual form."¹

Sometimes Howison gives the impression of having missed the chance of being another Coleridge because of his distrust of emotions in literature. Some of his definitions in the Essay have a Coleridgean ring about them. His definition of allegory for instance is reminiscent of Coleridge's definition of "symbol."

"Allegory conjoins the love of the finite and particular with the love of the infinite, and seeks to multiply ideal resemblances of the particular, or rather seeks to escape altogether from the bounds of the particular in feeling its union with the infinite. This is the perfection of love."²

Yet such definitions are few and far between and his attempt to explain his "ideas" in associationist terms is often vague and incoherent and occasionally utterly incomprehensible.

The Essay on the Sentiments of Attraction, Adaptation and Variety has however some value in pointing out the direction in which Howison's philosophical and critical views developed during his connection with Blackwood's. His attempt in the Essay to replace emotions by "ideas" in his philosophical system is

1. Blackwood's, IX, 393.

2. An Essay on the Sentiments of Attraction, Adaptation and Variety, revised edition (1822), pp. 26-27.

anticipated by his unsympathetic attitude towards the expression of personal feeling in contemporary literature. In "Thoughts on Novel Writing" (January 1819) he describes the roman personnel, such as Werther and Nouvelle Héloïse as a "spurious sort of literature" because the only purpose it can serve is "to afford a temporary excitement, neither very pure in its kind, nor even always agreeable to feel from its want of harmony and consistency."¹ He accuses Byron in the review of John Galt's The Earthquake (January 1821) of appealing "to the most vulgar and ignorant minds" by portraying in his early poetry the movements of pride and passions "for these are always eager to sympathise with ranting force, and a vehement spirit of action, or with fond attachment and hatred."² In "Prospective Letter concerning Poetry" (September 1821) Howison rates Don Juan higher than Byron's earlier poems, but expresses some reservation about the strength of "natural" passions and affections in the first few cantos:

"The successive narrations of amours would require to diminish in warmth, and to increase in philosophical reflections upon the ultimate results of passion, and its various depths; and this, perhaps, is the design of Don Juan, which his lordship promises is to be a moral poem."³

Howison's criticism of contemporary literature gradually emerges as a consistent critique of "Romanticism." His contributions to Blackwood's show an ever diminishing sympathy

-
1. Blackwood's, IV, 395.
 2. Blackwood's, VIII, 458.
 3. Blackwood's, X, 127.

with what was fundamentally the source of vitality in contemporary poetry. His disapproval of the portrayal or expression of strong personal emotions or even the psychological growth of the individual mind culminates in the extreme position which his "Letter on the different Stages of Taste" (May 1822) represents.¹ In this article Howison classifies literature and the arts into four different categories which he relates to clearly defined stages in a progressive development of taste. He assigns all literature that expresses emotions without reference to "the permanent and absolute ideas" to the first two stages, or the two lowest categories. The fourth and highest category comprises the fine arts, in which "the contemplation of abstract relations, such as they are in themselves," takes place "without reference to human affections."² Howison excludes literature from this category:

1. Although there are traces of Howison's lack of sympathy with the emotional bias of contemporary literature in all his earlier contributions to Blackwood's his opposition to the expression of personal feelings in poetry became more extreme only towards the end of his association with the magazine. In "Remarks on Keeping in Remembrance the Capacities of Human Nature" (March 1819) Howison gives "living feeling" a prominent place in poetry. "Warmth and vitality," he maintains, "can only be expected from the sphere of poetry and the arts, whose object it is to attain to an exhibition of the eternal relations of thought and sentiment." The highest pleasure which poetry can give, Howison adds, cannot be realised by a philosophical investigation of human beings as if they were machines. "On the contrary, we must think of nothing but the living feelings that are drawn out, for the time, by the situations in which characters are placed." (Blackwood's, IV, 651-652.) See also Howison "On the Candide of Voltaire" (Ibid., p. 155).

2. Blackwood's, XI, 590.

"This kind of feeling applies to form, style, possible order, relative colour, harmony, extension, and the like. These things cannot be so well expressed by literature, which gives only words to suggest conceptions to the reader, who may conceive imperfectly; but the fine arts exemplify abstract relations, and make them cognizable to the senses."¹

Had Howison written his "Letter on the Different Stages of Taste" four years earlier he would probably have considered Wordsworth's poetry as an example of the third category in his classification, for his definition of this category is closer to his "Essay" on "The Habits of Thought Inculcated by Wordsworth" than most of his other philosophical or critical writings. To the third category, he explains:

"may be referred the mixture of human passions and affections with the sentiment of the beautiful, and with the knowledge of the permanent and abstract idea. From this mixture arises internal taste, and discrimination as to the higher and lower grades of feeling. But still the mixture implies the presence of human affections, which are more or less changed."²

Howison contends that the role of imagination belongs most properly to this category:

"Imagination is not merely a power for conceiving new situations to interest the passions; for, in all the bolder and more sudden flights of imagination, there is a temporary feeling of the reality of general ideas, as existing abstractedly from particular objects. These glimpses are only for a moment, but they are divine."³

1. Ibid., p. 590.

2. Ibid., p. 590.

3. Ibid., p. 590.

Only in Voltaire's works, Howison claims, the qualities of this category are realised. As for Wordsworth, Howison's attitude seems to have changed since he wrote his Essay in the "Lake School of Poetry" series.¹

ii

Towards the end of his article on Samuel Johnson and David Hume, Howison speculates on the kind of poetry which a philosopher such as Hume would have written. "Hume is said to have composed verses in his youth, which would probably be written in imitation of the coldest and most artificial models." In comparison with Hume, Johnson possessed "a stronger imagination and warmer feeling" and "it would have been less difficult for him than for the sceptic to have mounted into the regions of poetry." Yet in their age, Howison adds, "the influence of intellect was completely predominant in this country. No great poet arose, who produced moral impressions fit to be weighed against the speculative calculation to which the times were giving birth."² Taken in conjunction with what we have already seen of Howison's attitude towards

1. At least in "Prospective Letter Concerning Poetry" (September 1821) Howison is more critical of Wordsworth's mode of writing which, he claims, "is sometimes not entirely freed from something like a puritanical grudge, making him wish still to retain 'a stern self-respect,' and to take too much pleasure in his own modes of action."--Blackwood's, X, 126.

2. Blackwood's, III, 513.

associationist philosophy, such observations on the age of Hume and Johnson are necessary to our understanding of his judgement on the philosophical history of England which opens his Essay on the "Habits of Thought inculcated by Wordsworth" (December 1818), and in turn this judgement is the starting point of his assessment of Wordsworth. The polarization in Howison's thinking between the mechanical laws of the intellect as explained by the associationists on the one hand and what he later came to call the "contemplative emotions" on the other, is behind the elliptical and apparently false contrast between "the laws of intellect and association" and the dependence of one feeling upon another.

"As in this country the investigations of metaphysicians have been directed chiefly towards the laws of intellect and association, and as we have nothing which deserves the name of philosophy founded upon an examination of what human nature internally says of itself, or upon enquiries into the dependance[sic] of one feeling upon another; in short, as we have neither any Platonism, nor even any philosophy of the passions, we must turn to the poets, if we wish to hear what our literature says upon these subjects; for, by our speculative men, they have been left in utter silence, darkness, and uncertainty."¹

Throughout the "Essay" Howison treats Wordsworth as "the great poet" that the age of Johnson and Hume failed to give birth to. Unlike Wilson, Howison does not represent Wordsworth as a palpably didactic poet. Yet he is aware of the subtle didacticism of "the moral impressions" which Wordsworth's poetry is calculated to produce:

"Two things may be chiefly observed in Mr. Wordsworth's poetry; namely, first, an attempt to awaken in the minds of his countrymen, certain lumières which they do not

1. Blackwood's, IV, 257.

generally possess, and certain convictions or moral laws existing silently in the universe, and actually modifying events, in opposition to more palpable causes, in a manner similar to what is said to be taught by the philosophy of the Hindoos; and, secondly, a thorough knowledge of all the beauties of the human affections, and of their mutual harmonies and dependancies."¹

For the comparison of Wordsworth's mysticism with the philosophy of the Hindoos, here and throughout the "Essay", Howison was probably indebted to Hazlitt.² Yet his judgement on Wordsworth is indubitably his own. It is inseparable from his moral and aesthetic philosophy. Indeed, his "Essay" often gives the impression that he finds in Wordsworth's poetry the answers to his own intellectual and aesthetic problems. When he claims that Wordsworth "scarcely had any precursors among the poets and philosophers of his country," he clearly estimates Wordsworth's genius in the light of his own views as a philosopher. These views inevitably distort his criticism of Wordsworth's poetry. But, at the same time, Howison's attempt to break away from the philosophical tradition against which he rebelled, gives him an insight into Wordsworth's genius which we rarely find outside the criticism of Wordsworth by the two major contemporary critics, Coleridge and Hazlitt.

Howison's distrust of strong emotions in poetry made him underestimate the importance of feelings in Wordsworth's poetry. He might be justified in contrasting the contemplative spirit of

1. Blackwood's, IV, 257.

2. See the review of The Excursion, Complete Works, IV, 115.

Wordsworth's poetry with "the kind of sublimity with which the English have always been chiefly delighted" and which "consists merely in an exhibition of the strength of the human energies."¹ But when Howison attempts to define Wordsworth's "contemplative Platonism," his definition is too close to his "contemplative emotions" to apply to Wordsworth. As we have already seen, Howison attempted to substitute these contemplative emotions for "natural feelings" as a foundation of his philosophical system. The following description of Wordsworth's "contemplative Platonism" seems sensible enough until, that is, we realize that Howison equates Wordsworth's habits of thought with the disciplining of feeling and the "pleasure of abstract contemplation." Howison claims that Wordsworth's habit of meditation makes him averse to follow the poets that came before him in representing elements of human nature "boiling and foaming with great noise." The strength and sublimity of particular emotions which are characteristic of English poetry do not appeal to him:

"His contemplative Platonism searches for some image of perfection to admire, and perceives that the beauty of no limited being can consist in strength, but in its conformity to the moral harmony of the universe...The small admiration he entertains for the undisciplined energies of human nature leads him to a somewhat contemptuous estimation of active life, even when conduct is submitted to the restraints of morality. He thinks little has been done for the mind, unless those internal movements, also, which are without result in action, have been tuned into beauty and regularity, and a complete balance and subordination established among the feelings by dint of long continued meditation. On this

1. Blackwood's, IV, 257.

subject his ideas cannot fail to recall to remembrance those Indian doctrines, which taught that the first step towards the perception of high moral truth, was the establishment of a certain stillness and equability within the mind."¹

Similarly the long comparison between Wordsworth and Milton is thoroughly impregnated with Howison's philosophical ideas. It is within the wider framework of his philosophical and aesthetic ideas that it is possible to understand what Howison means when he claims that Milton had no idealism. "The most successful parts of Paradise Lost, are those which represent the character of the fallen angel; and yet these sublime and tragical soliloquies are founded chiefly on personal feeling."² Such portrayal of personal feelings in poetry is incompatible with the beauty of immutable ideas.

"The sublimity drawn from terror, collision, tumult, or discord, of any kind, has always the disadvantage of being transient; and, therefore, cannot be considered as equal to those openings into immutable brightness and harmony, which are sometimes to be met with in Wordsworth."³

Howison's aversion for the expression of strong emotions and his dislike of utilitarian philosophies are equally behind the reason which he gives for Wordsworth's contemporary unpopularity. Wordsworth prefers the stillness of contemplation to active life "because he sees a risk that lower and coarser feelings being stirred up may lose subordination and rise to obscure the bright

1. Ibid., p. 258.

2. Ibid., p. 259.

3. Ibid.

ideal image of human nature."¹ Such contemplative philosophy does not appeal to the reading public in England "where life is estimated as it produces external good or mischief." Even among the philosophers this utilitarian spirit prevails:

"Indeed, the moral speculations of England have been very much a separate pastime of the understanding, which began and ended there, without ever drawing a single reflection from the depths of human nature. A remarkable trait in the history of our philosophy is, that Christianity has been as it were transposed by Paley into a more familiar key, and adapted throughout to the theory of utility; so that David Hume himself might almost play an accompaniment to it."²

Because Wordsworth uses his poetry chiefly as a vehicle for his doctrines he is not popular among general readers who are more attracted to poetry that takes hold of their feelings. At the same time the spirit of his doctrines "is unfortunately at variance with the philosophy at present most fashionable in this country" and he is equally rejected by the philosophers.

The full implications of Howison's appraisal of Wordsworth become apparent when his "Essay" is examined in the light of his other philosophical and critical writings. It is true that Howison often projects his own philosophical problems on Wordsworth's poetry. But if we know these problems, we are perhaps in a better position to understand where and why he goes wrong in his criticism of Wordsworth. On the positive side, however, the significance of Howison's praise of Wordsworth's poetry can only

1. Ibid., p. 258.

2. Ibid.

be properly understood when we know that in the following passage for instance he attributes to Wordsworth what he considers to be the highest imaginative faculty of the human mind:

"One beauty cannot fail to strike the reader of his poetry; and that is, the perfect homogeneousness of its spirit. A systematic correspondence pervades the whole, so that the perusal of one piece frequently leads the reader's own mind into a tract of thought, which is afterwards found to be developed by the poet himself, in some other performance. The defects of his poetry originate in the same system of thought which produces its beauties. They are not the result of casual whims, or imperfections of taste. Certain great convictions of sentiment have so completely pervaded his mind, as to produce a degree of consistency in all its emanations, that we vainly look for in works founded upon observation."¹

In the same way if we do not know Howison's poor opinion of the poetry that expresses strong emotions in vivid language we are liable to misunderstand his remarks on the language of Wordsworth's poetry. In fact these remarks can be understood to mean the exact opposite of what Howison actually says.

"The habits of thought, in which he chiefly delights, are not calculated to produce that strength and vividness of diction, which must ever constitute one of the chief attractions of poetry. Imagination seems insufficient of itself to produce diction always nervous and poetical, without the aid of human passion and worldly observation. It is from these that the greatest poignancy of words must spring."²

1. Ibid., p. 259. Cf. Howison's description of the "assimilative faculty" in his article "On the Nature of the Imitative Principle":

"artists who have an uncommon power of producing homogeneousness and harmony, must always possess the assimilative power in a high degree. It is not reflection and analysis which enable them to combine harmoniously, but this faculty operating upon the materials presented by the imagination, and drawing together every thing sweet and homogeneous, by a sort of elective attraction."--Blackwood's, VI, 310.

2. Blackwood's, IV, 259.

More remarkable perhaps is the distinction Howison makes between the association of ideas and the poet's imagination when he describes Wordsworth's attitude towards nature. Of all his criticism of contemporary poetry this comment on an extract from the Excursion represents Howison's closest approximation to Coleridge's criticism. One is tempted to attribute it to their identical renunciation of associationism. Yet the slight tone of scepticism which can be detected in Howison's comment betrays the vast difference between him and his greater contemporary.

"He tunes his mind to nature almost with a feeling of religious obligation; and where others behold only beautiful colours, making their appearance according to optical laws, or feel pleasant physical sensations resulting from a pure atmosphere, or from the odoriferous exhalations of herbage, or enjoy the pleasure of measuring an extended prospect, as an amusement for the eye, this poet (whether justly or not) thinks he traces something more in the spectacle than the mere reflection of his own feelings, painted upon external objects, by means of the association of ideas: or, at least, seems to consider what we then behold as the instantaneous creation of the mind."¹

Yet Howison was not even a minor Coleridge. He had a considerably less original genius, which probably accounts for the sterility of most of his philosophical and critical ideas. His idealism was more dogmatic than original, and because he introduced it as a substitute for emotions it failed to fertilise what he retained of associationism. Yet during his connection with Blackwood's he developed his philosophical and aesthetic system

1. Ibid., p. 260.

and almost fanatically applied it in all his criticism of contemporary literature. It did not produce remarkable results, but occasionally it caught fire and showed some glow of genius. His "Essay" on Wordsworth reveals both the general failure and the occasional success of his system.

CHAPTER IV

LOCKHART ON COLERIDGE

Lockhart's "Essay" on Coleridge in the "Lake School of Poetry" series (October 1819) represents Blackwood's more liberal approach to poetry at its best. For, although Lockhart's praise of Coleridge's poems occasionally becomes rhetorical, and although he criticises the peculiarities of Coleridge's genius according to the established laws of composition, he defends Coleridge against his critics by analysing and interpreting his poems, and by pointing out how in his poetry effect and meaning are closely interdependent. Nowhere else in his criticism of contemporary poetry, not even in his criticism of Byron and Shelley, is Lockhart's argument so free from his favourite "classical" standards or so closely based on the poetry itself. His tribute to Coleridge in Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk¹ which had appeared earlier in the same year seems too rhetorical and too general in comparison with the sensitive and intelligent analysis of the "Ancient Mariner" and "Christabel" in the Blackwood's "Essay".

Predictably enough, Lockhart begins his "Essay" with an attack on Coleridge's critics which, unlike such attacks in Lockhart's periodical criticism, was thoroughly justified. Up to that time Coleridge's genius as a major poet had hardly been recognized by

1. Lockhart's first defence of Coleridge against the contemporary reviewers appeared in Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk (II, 218-221), most of which however is not substantially different from what Lockhart wrote on "Love" in his Blackwood's "Essay."

the contemporary reviewers. Indeed, as J.R. de J. Jackson has recently shown, the treatment of "Christabel" and "Kubla Khan" in 1816, and Sibylline Leaves and the Biographia Literaria in 1817 "is one of the sorriest performances in the history of reviewing."¹ Those works were either ridiculed or savagely abused by periodicals of all shades of political opinion and literary outlook. By 1819 Coleridge's reputation as a poet was at its lowest mark.

After reading Thomas Moore's facetious ridicule of "Christabel" in the Edinburgh, Hazlitt's condescending and dismissive remarks on the same poem in the Examiner, or Wilson's violent abuse in Blackwood's, Lockhart's castigation of the periodical critics for their failure to understand and appreciate Coleridge's poetry can hardly be considered severe enough.

"It is one of the most melancholy things in human nature, to see how often the grandest mysteries of the meditative soul lie at the mercy of surface-skimming ridicule, and self-satisfied rejoicing ignorance...It is a thing not to be denied, that, even under the most favourable of circumstances, the greater part of the readers of English poetry could never have been expected thoroughly and intimately to understand the scope of those [Coleridge's] extraordinary productions, but this ought only to have acted as an additional motive with those who profess to be the guides of public opinion, to make them endeavour, as far as might in them lie, to render the true merits of those productions more visible to the eye of the less penetrating or less reflective."²

To help his readers "thoroughly and intimately" understand Coleridge's poetry is what Lockhart attempts to do in his "Essay." He chooses for his analysis three of Coleridge's poems, the "Ancient

1. Coleridge: the Critical Heritage, ed. J.R. de J. Jackson (1970), p.9.

2. Blackwood's, VI, 4.

"Mariner", "Christabel" and "Love". His remarks on "Love" both in the "Essay" and Peter's Letters do not differ significantly from the high estimate in which that poem was held by Coleridge's contemporaries. Where Lockhart was ahead of his age was in his attempt at interpreting the "Ancient Mariner" and "Christabel" for his readers.

i

In the introduction to Coleridge: the Critical Heritage, Jackson observes, "where the Romantic reviewers differ most sharply from the modern critics is in their complete failure to think of interpreting poems like 'The Ancient Mariner' allegorically."¹ Yet occasionally we catch a glimpse of the modern allegorical approach to Coleridge's poetry in Lockhart's Essay. Naturally enough Lockhart does not attempt to illustrate a detailed and coherent system of allegory running throughout the poem as, for instance, Robert Penn Warren does, but guided by the prose gloss which Coleridge added to his poem when it was republished in Sibylline Leaves,² he tries to give some central symbols in the poem more than their literal or plot significance. Thus, the shooting of the Albatross is taken

1. Coleridge: the Critical Heritage, p. 17.

2. Although Coleridge's gloss was published in 1817, Lockhart was the first writer on Coleridge's poetry to think of making use of it in understanding the poem. He was followed in 1821 by Leigh Hunt in the Examiner, who simply joined together Coleridge's various gloss remarks. The constant reference to Coleridge's gloss has since then become the standard practice for the student of his poetry.

to symbolize a crime against "the spirit of the universe:"

"And the convulsive shudder with which he narrates the treacherous issue, bespeaks to us no pangs more than seem to have followed justly on that inhospitable crime. It seems as if the very spirit of the universe had been stunned by the wanton cruelty of the Mariner—as if earth, sea, and sky, had all become dead and stagnant in the extinction of the moving breath of love and gentleness."¹

This may sound too rhetorical and too general but, in fact, it is not far behind the modern interpretation of the killing of the Albatross as "a violation of a great sanctity at the animal, human, and spiritual levels."² Again Lockhart anticipates modern critics of the "Ancient Mariner" when he points out the complicity of the crew in the mariner's crime:

"All the subsequent miseries of the crew are represented by the poet as having been the consequences of this violation of the charities of sentiment; and these are the same miseries which the critics have spoken of, as being causeless and unmerited!...The crew, who had approved in calmness the sin that had been committed in wantonness and madness, die."³

Lockhart also quotes the Mariner's blessing of the water-snakes and remarks, "pain, sorrow, remorse, there are not enough; the wound must be healed by a heartfelt sacrifice to the same spirit of universal love which had been bruised in its infliction."⁴ "The principle of the poem is contained," Lockhart maintains, in those stanzas in which the Mariner gives expression to the "expiatory

1. Blackwood's, VI, 6.

2. Humphry House, Coleridge (1953), p. 97.

3. Blackwood's, VI, 6.

4. Ibid., p. 6.

feeling in his mind" by blessing the water-snakes.

Lockhart does not attempt to explain the supernatural events of Parts V and VI of the poem which, incidentally, still represent a formidable challenge to modern critics. Yet in explaining the impact of the Mariner's story on the wedding guest he again emphasizes its symbolic significance:

"The actual surface-life of the world is brought close into contact with the life of sentiment—the soul that is as much alive, and enjoys, and suffers as much in dreams and visions of the night as by daylight. One feels with what a heavy eye the Ancient Mariner must look and listen to the pomps and merry-makings—even to the innocent enjoyments—of those whose experience has only been of things tangible. One feels that to him another world—we do not mean a supernatural, but a more exquisitely and deeply natural world—has been revealed, but that the repose of his spirit can only be in the contemplation of things that are not to pass away. The sad and solemn indifference of his mood is communicated to his hearer, and we feel that even after reading what he had heard, it were better to 'turn from the bridegroom's door.'¹

Lockhart's application of the same interpretative approach to "Christabel" is not as successful or as detailed as it is with the "Ancient Mariner". We should, however, bear in mind that Coleridge's fragment must have been extremely difficult to understand, without the help of reminiscences of Coleridge's relatives and friends, which later threw some light on Coleridge's intentions, and which are now indispensable in the appreciation of his poem. Although he had no inkling that Christabel's vicarious suffering for her absent lover was meant to be the central theme of the poem, Lockhart makes a brave attempt at showing that Coleridge embodies

1. Blackwood's, VI, 7.

the meaning of his poem in the contradiction between the appearance and reality ~~and~~ in the character of Geraldine. He explains how Coleridge's imagery creates the appropriate atmosphere for his story ("There is in all the images introduced a certain fearful stillness and ominous meaning, the effect of which can never be forgotten"),¹ and how Coleridge weaves into his poem "with exquisite delicacy... hints of the true character" of Geraldine. Lockhart concludes his analysis of Coleridge's fragment thus:

"After the notion of evil has once been suggested to the reader, the external beauty and great mildness of demeanour ascribed to the Stranger produce only the deeper feeling of terror: and they contrast, in a manner singularly impressive, with the small revelations which every now and then take place of what is concealed beneath them. It is upon this happy contrast that the interest of the whole piece chiefly hinges, and would Mr. Coleridge only take heart, and complete what he has so nobly begun, he would probably make 'Christabel' the finest exemplification to be found in the English, or perhaps in any language since Homer's, of an idea which may be traced in most popular superstitions."²

To the modern student of Coleridge's poetry such interpretations of the "Ancient Mariner" and "Christabel" may seem obvious and commonplace in comparison with the elaborate analysis of modern critics. Yet Lockhart was virtually the first writer who sought to interpret Coleridge's poems for the English reading public. He did so without the benefit of knowing Coleridge personally or listening to his conversations on poetry. Yet, because his "Essay" is published in Blackwood's which did not treat Coleridge favourably in the first

1. Ibid., p. 9.

2. Ibid., pp.10-11.

two years of its publication, Lockhart's praise of Coleridge has been treated with suspicion. Thus, alluding to the fact that during 1819 William Blackwood was trying to enlist Coleridge as a contributor to his magazine, Walter Graham claims that Lockhart's "Essay" is "written in such language as to make one suspect the motives of the writer." Yet the account Graham gives of the "Essay" is hardly accurate to say the least. Having cast some doubt upon the motives of the writer, he goes on to dismiss the criticism of poetry in Blackwood's as "general and indiscriminative," and as "the old criticism of rules rather than that of interpretation and impression."¹

Walter Graham's suspicion of Lockhart's immediate motives may be justified. For in 1819 Lockhart was as anxious to secure Coleridge's support for Blackwood's, as William Blackwood and his London representative William Davies.² Yet it seems a little harsh to infer from this that Lockhart was not sincere in his praise for Coleridge's poems. Had Lockhart's only intention in writing the "Essay" been to conciliate Coleridge, he would not have taken pains to justify his praise by analysing the poems, nor would he have mixed his praise with less favourable remarks on Coleridge's "eccentric" genius.

Walter Graham may also be justified in claiming that Lockhart's

-
1. Walter Graham, "Contemporary Critics of Coleridge the Poet," PMLA, XXXVIII (1923), 283.
 2. See Lockhart's letter, of 8 June 1819, to Coleridge—Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ed. Earl Leslie Griggs, hereafter cited as Collected Letters (1956-59), IV, 943-44n.

criticism is "the old criticism of rules." Lockhart criticises Coleridge for publishing "Christabel" as a fragment and for "being by far too passive in his notions concerning the mode in which a poet ought to deal with his muse."¹ He had no admiration for the Romantic fragment, and believed that a poem should be conceived as a complete whole before it is realized in words. For,

"Language is a material which it requires no little labour to reduce into beautiful forms,—a truth of which the ancients were, above all others, well and continually aware. For although vivid ideas naturally suggest happy expressions, yet the latter are, as it were, only insulated traits or features, which require much management in the joining, and the art of the composer is seen in the symmetry of the whole structure."²

This is indeed the "criticism of rules". Yet Lockhart never developed these remarks beyond stating what he believed to be the best way of composing a poem, a belief which did not in the least influence his criticism of "Christabel."

On the other hand, Lockhart's "Essay" consists almost entirely of impressions and attempts at interpretation. It is true that some of these impressions are rather rhetorical and do not appeal to modern taste, but they often lead to interpretation. This is true of the introductory remarks to his criticism of the "Ancient Mariner:"

"It is the wildest of all the creations of genius, it is not like a thing of the living, listening, moving world, the very music of its words is like the melancholy mysterious breath of something sung to the sleeping ear, its images have the beauty, the grandeur, the incoherence

1. Blackwood's, VI, 8.

2. Ibid., p. 8.

of some mighty vision. The loveliness and the terror glide before us in turns—with, at one moment, the awful shadowy dimness—at another, the yet more awful distinctness of a majestic dream.

Dim and shadowy, and incoherent, however, though it be, how blind, how wilfully, or how foolishly blind must they have been who refused to see any meaning or purpose in the Tale of the Mariner!"¹

Again in commenting on symbolic meaning of the Albatross, Lockhart writes:

"If anyone will submit himself to the magic that is around him, and suffer his senses and his imagination to be blended together, and exalted by the melody of the charmed words, and the splendor of the unnatural apparitions with which the mysterious scene is opened, surely he will experience no revulsion towards the centre and spirit of his lovely dream. There is the very essence of tenderness in the remorseful delight with which the Mariner dwells upon the image of the 'pious bird of omen good.'"²

To liken the effect of the atmosphere in "Christabel" to the impact of a Gothic building on the mind, or the essence of Coleridge's poetry to music is not very different from the sort of impressionistic criticism advocated and practiced by Hazlitt at the time.

Nor is Lockhart's criticism indiscriminative. It has been observed earlier in this chapter that Lockhart was no modern critic who tries to create a coherent system of symbols, in which every image of the poem fits. Hence he criticises the "Ancient Mariner" for its abundance of imagery.

1. Ibid., p. 5.

2. Ibid., p. 6.

"Had the ballad been more interwoven with sources of prolonged emotion extending throughout—and had the relation of the imagery to the purport and essence of the piece been a little more close—it does not seem to us that any thing more could have been desired in a poem such as this."¹

Lockhart also criticises Coleridge for "a too great neglect of the ordinary sympathies" in the "Ancient Mariner," and for ignoring public taste and common opinion in his poetry.

On the other hand, Lockhart's "Essay" contains a great deal of highly flattering praise. ~~That~~ Coleridge, says Lockhart,

"is a poet of a most noble class—a poet most original in his conceptions—most masterly in his execution—above all things a most inimitable master of the language of poetry—it is impossible to deny...In his mixture of all the awful and all the gentle graces of conception—in his sway of wild—solitary—dreamy phantasies—in his music of words—and magic of numbers—we think he stands absolutely alone among all the poets of the most poetical age."²

Not since the age of Elizabeth had there been such a poet as Coleridge "in whose use of words the most delicate sense of beauty concurs with so much exquisite subtlety of metaphysical perception."³ Coleridge has created a few poems "which are, though short, in conception so original, and in execution so exquisite, that they cannot fail to render the name of Coleridge co-extensive with the language in which he has written."⁴ Finally, Lockhart gives an interesting account of how Coleridge and Milton differ in the nature

1. Ibid., p. 7.

2. Ibid., p. 11.

3. Ibid., p. 11.

4. Ibid., p. 4.

and sphere of their imagination.

"Speaking generally, his poetry is not the poetry of high imagination, nor of teeming fancy, nor of overflowing sentiment, least of all, it is the poetry of intense or overmastering passion. If there be such a thing as poetry of the senses strung to imagination, such is his. It lies in the senses, but they are senses breathed upon by imagination, having reference to the imagination though they do not reach to it, having a sympathy, not an union, with the imagination, like the beauty of flowers. In Milton there is between sense and imagination a strict union, their actions are blended into one. In Coleridge what is borrowed from imagination or affection is brought to sense—sense is his sphere."¹

In order to appreciate the value of Lockhart's "Essay" as a turning point in the history of the criticism of Coleridge's poetry, one need only compare it with the puzzled or hostile reception which the "Ancient Mariner" was given, or the ridicule and savage abuse of "Christabel" by the reviewers. Yet Walter Graham summarily dismisses the "Essay", and dates the beginning of the modern criticism of Coleridge's poetry from the publication of John Sterling's article on "Christabel" in the Athenaeum (24 June 1828) and Henry Nelson Coleridge's review of Coleridge's Poetical Works in the Quarterly (1834).² The value of the latter review cannot be denied, but it consists largely in its attempt to explain the theoretical grounds of Coleridge's poetry and its close connection with the poet's philosophical thinking. Henry Nelson Coleridge was also the

1. Ibid., p. 11.

2. See Walter Graham, "Contemporary Critics of Coleridge, the Poet," pp. 283-84, and 288-89, and also his "Henry Nelson Coleridge, Expositor of Romantic Criticism," PQ, IV (1925), 232. In fact, H.N. Coleridge's first critique on his uncle's poetry in the Etonian (1821) derived a great deal from Lockhart's "Essay" in Blackwood's, especially from his remarks on the "Ancient Mariner" and "Love".

first critic of Coleridge to recognize the merits of the Odes. Similarly John Sterling's article on "Christabel" is important as an early specimen of verbal analysis. Yet, despite the fact that both writers clearly benefited from coming into contact with Coleridge's mind, a benefit which Lockhart never had, there is nothing in their criticism of the "Ancient Mariner" and "Christabel" which was not anticipated or even elaborated upon by Lockhart in 1819.

Sterling, for instance, describes "Christabel" as a "tale of witchery" and devotes most of his article in illustrating how Coleridge creates an "atmosphere of mystery and of a supernatural and evil presence."¹ Nine years earlier Lockhart had written of "the fearful stillness and ominous meaning" with which the poem opens, and had illustrated how Coleridge hints at the evil in the figure of Geraldine by describing "the difficulty of passing the threshold—the dread and incapacity of prayer—the moaning of the old mastiff in his [*sic*] sleep—the rekindling of the lying embers as she passes—the influence of the lamp 'fastened to the angel's feet,'"² which are exactly the points that Sterling emphasises. Moreover, Walter Graham claims that Sterling was the first of Coleridge's contemporaries to ask the reader "to approach the poem with a suspension of disbelief which constitutes poetic faith."³ Here again we find

1. Essays and Tales of John Sterling, ed. Julius Charles Hare (1848), I, 107.

2. Blackwood's, VI, 10.

3. Walter Graham, "Contemporary Critics of Coleridge, the Poet," p.284.

Lockhart anticipating Sterling, "He that is determined to try every thing by the standard of what is called common sense, and who has an aversion to admit, even in poetry, of the existence of things more than are dreamt of in philosophy, had better not open this production."¹

Finally, in comparison with Lockhart's interpretation of the "Ancient Mariner," which has already been dealt with in some detail, it is sufficient to quote here most of what H.N. Coleridge had to say about it. "There is nothing else," he maintains, like Coleridge's poem;

"it is a poem by itself; between it and other compositions, in pari materia, there is a chasm which you cannot overpass; the sensitive reader feels himself insulated, and a sea of wonder and mystery flows round him as round the spell-stricken ship itself. It was a sad mistake in the able artist—Mr. Scott, we believe—who in his engravings has made the ancient mariner an old decrepit man. That is not the true image; no! he should have been a growthless, decayless being, impassive to time or season, a silent cloud—the wandering Jew. The curse of the dead men's eyes should not have passed away. But this was, perhaps, too much for any pencil, even if the artist had fully entered into the poet's idea. Indeed, it is no subject for painting. The "Ancient Mariner" displays Mr. Coleridge's peculiar mastery over the wild and preternatural in a brilliant manner."²

This is a sensitive interpretation of the "Ancient Mariner." Yet it added very little to what Lockhart had said about Coleridge's poem fifteen years earlier.

1. Blackwood's, VI, 9.

2. Quarterly Review, LII (1834), reprinted in Coleridge: The Critical Heritage, p. 645.

Perhaps it is not necessary to devote so much space to pointing out the value of Lockhart's "Essay" as a turning point in the history of the criticism of Coleridge's poetry, but this value has not yet been sufficiently recognized. On the other hand it is not enough to give an account of Coleridge's enthusiastic reaction. For, here too, the early sins of Blackwood's against Coleridge have rebounded upon the magazine and its writers, and the warmth of Coleridge's reaction was diffused by the subsequent events, which though irrelevant to our subject had a great deal to do with the suspicion with which Lockhart's "Essay" has been treated. A brief account of the facts will perhaps help to separate Coleridge's reaction to Lockhart's "Essay" from those events which have so far tended to obscure it.

Coleridge was so pleased with Lockhart's praise for his poems both in Peter's Letters and in the "Essay" in the "Lake School Series," that in November 1819 he addressed an effusive letter of gratitude to "the Author of Peter's Letters." In September 1820 this letter was published in Blackwood's under the title "Letter to Peter Morris M.D., on the Sorts and Uses of Literary Praise." Apparently this caused a great deal of embarrassment to Coleridge, because his letter contained unfavourable and thinly disguised allusions to Wordsworth.¹ In December 1820 John Scott, the editor

1. Collected Letters, IV, 966.

of the London Magazine, violently condemned the publication of Coleridge's letter and pointed an accusing finger directly at Lockhart.¹ Although at that time Coleridge denied that his letter to Peter Morris was either private or confidential,² the charge against Lockhart and Blackwood's has persisted.³

Whether or not Lockhart actually published Coleridge's private letter without his authorization it is difficult to determine. But checking the published letter against the original manuscript (in the Blackwood Papers) reveals some interesting facts. Coleridge addressed his letter to "the Author of Peter's Letters," and not to the editor of Blackwood's. Yet, the title under which the letter was published, and which has so far been treated as if it had been added by Lockhart, is in fact Coleridge's.⁴ It is written at the top of the first page of the MSS. in Coleridge's handwriting. More

-
1. In "The Mohock Magazine," London Magazine, reprinted, in part, in Coleridge: the Critical Heritage, 454-60. Scott writes, "The most infamous part, however, of the treatment, which Mr. Coleridge has received at this person's [Lockhart's] hands, clearly is the recent unauthorized publication of his private letter," an action which Scott describes as even more malevolent and treacherous than the forgery of a signature.
 2. See Unpublished Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ed. E.L. Griggs (1932), II, 277.
 3. See John Dykes Campbell, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, A Narrative of the Events of his Life (1894), 241-242n., and Collected Letters, IV, 966. J.D. Campbell also claims that the published version was a "portion" of Coleridge's letter. In fact, apart from the sentence quoted *below*, the published letter "on the Sorts and Uses of Literary Praise" is complete.
 4. Cf. John Dykes Campbell, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, p. 242n., and Collected Letters, IV, 966, where the title is treated as though it were added by Lockhart.

relevant to our subject however, is the fact that when Coleridge's letter was published in Blackwood's, a sentence was omitted, which seems to indicate that Coleridge believed to be indebted to a "personal friend" for the favourable criticism on his poetry in Peter's Letters and in the "Essay" in Blackwood's. The omitted sentence occurs in parenthesis at the beginning of the third paragraph of the published letter.

"I will not suppose it possible, that among our acquaintance, unknown and nameless but not quite un conjectured Friend!—(at least, on the strength of my conjecture I have conveyed my meaning with a more liberal use of metaphors and similes, than good taste would warrant, or than I should have felt inclined to employ, did I not believe myself writing to a "Brother Bard."—)"¹

It is perhaps a sufficient testimony to the value of Lockhart's "Essay" that Coleridge believed that it was written by a "Brother Bard." In the same letter Coleridge described Lockhart's "Essay" as eloquent and "too partial critiques [sic] on my Christabel and Ancient Mariner &c."²

1. NLS, MSS. 4937. Cf. Collected Letters, IV, 968.

Lockhart probably hinted at the reason why the sentence was omitted when he, as "Peter Morris," wrote to "Christopher North": "You will laugh, as I did, at some little mistakes into which our illustrious and excellent friend has fallen; above all, that highly absurd one about your humble servant's personality."—Blackwood's, VII, 628.

Apparently Lockhart found it absurd to be addressed by Coleridge as a "Brother Bard."

2. Collected Letters, IV, 969.

Lockhart replied to Coleridge's highly flattering letters¹ by addressing to him "with the highest respect and admiration" the "Postscript" to the "third" edition of Peter's Letters (dated November 1819). In the same month Coleridge's first contributions appeared in Blackwood's. Despite the unfortunate complications which resulted from the publication of the "Letter to Peter Morris M.D." Coleridge remained on friendly terms with William Blackwood² and contributed three more articles³ in his magazine. About one of these articles, a "Selection from Mr. Coleridge's Literary Correspondence" (October 1821), Lockhart wrote to William Blackwood:

"Coleridge is evidently mad and unintelligible, but I venture to say you will never repent giving him sixteen pages a-month. There will always be thoughts and expressions of the most inimitable beauty—quite enough to interest all men of letters."⁴

-
1. Apart from the "Letter to Peter Morris M.D." Coleridge addressed two more letters to the author of Peter's Letters. See Collected Letters, IV, 971-72 and 973-74. Coleridge's "Letter to Peter Morris M.D." is not dated but Earl Leslie Griggs suggests that it was written in November 1819 (Collected Letters, IV, 966 and n.). If this be the case, Lockhart wrote the Postscript to Peter's Letters as a reply to Coleridge's letters and not, as Alan Lang Strout suggests (C&W, p.110), in anticipation of them. William Davies's letters of 8 and 20 November, and 4 and 8 December 1819 (NLS, MSS. 4004) show that the third edition of Peter's Letters was published towards the end of December 1819.
 2. See Oliphant, I, 413 ff.
 3. Coleridge's contributions to Blackwood's are the sonnet "Fancy in Nubibus" and "Character of Sir Thomas Brown [sic] as a Writer" (November 1819), "Selection from Mr. Coleridge's Literary Correspondence" (October 1821); "The History and Gests of Maxilian" (January 1822), and "What is an English Sonnet?" (June 1832).
 4. Oliphant, I, 218-19.

In Blackwood's itself, Lockhart occasionally made favourable references to Coleridge's poetry between 1819 and 1823.¹ On the whole, however, he never wrote anything else on the same subject that can be compared with the "Essay" in the "Lake School of Poetry" series. He praised Coleridge's translation of Schiller's Wallenstein. But in his review of that work (October 1823) he reserved his highest praise for "Christabel" when he declared:

"Mr. Coleridge's translation from Schiller appeared just when the apathy had attained that depth, which was, although no one dreamed of it, the sure prelude to a burst of revivication. Had it been an English original, it might have done wonders; but we were at our darkest too proud to be kindled by a foreign touch; and the WALLENSTEIN had, like the first publication of Wordsworth's Lyrical Ballads, the fate to delight the few, and to be totally neglected by the many.

Had he published Christabel when it was written, and gone on in that strain, Coleridge might have broken the charm—but there is no use in conjecturing and reflecting."²

-
1. See for instance "Horae Germanicae, No I" (November 1819), Blackwood's, VI, 122. Lockhart also highly praised "Kubla Khan" in "Horae Germanicae, No V" (June 1820), Blackwood's, VII, 235-36 and n.
 2. Blackwood's, XIV, 378-79.

part two

BYRON

BYRON

BYRON

INTRODUCTION

No ~~or~~ contemporary poet received greater attention in Blackwood's than Byron. After 1821 in particular, his name appeared so frequently in the magazine that in March 1822 William Maginn appealed to William Blackwood to insert no more articles about him, and in April of the same year a footnote was added to E.E. Crowe's "Letter from Paddy," "forbidding all contributors to discuss the merits or demerits of Lord Byron, for the space of nine calendar months from the date of this number."¹ Byron's contemporary popularity and the controversial nature of his later poems account for the forbidding mass of critiques, reviews, passing references, parodies and poems on his poetry in Blackwood's. Much of that, however, is negligible. For this reason, and because Alan Lang Strout has already compiled an exhaustive list of the writings on Byron's poetry in Blackwood's,² the following chapters are deliberately selective and deal chiefly with the criticism of Byron's poetry by Wilson, Lockhart, John Herman Merivale and William Maginn. As in part I of this thesis, my aim is to show how those four contributors differed in their appraisals of Byron. The views of minor contributors are also represented (Chapter X), because their hostility towards Byron in 1822 and 1823 probably reflects more accurately the standard contemporary reaction to his poetry in his later years than, for instance, Lockhart's more

1. Blackwood's, XI, 465.

2. Strout, John Bull's Letter, p. 115ff.

favourable criticism.

The authorship of most of the pieces discussed has been settled, and with the exception of "Harry Franklin's"¹ letter on cantos III-IV of Don Juan, the attribution of critiques and reviews in this part are taken from Strout's Bibliography. In the case of three other pieces (the reviews of Marino Faliero [April 1821], Sardanapalos, Cain and The Two Foscari [January 1821], and "Odoherly on Werner" [December 1822]), I have adopted Strout's attribution, though there is no conclusive evidence that Lockhart wrote the last two, and no evidence at all that Wilson reviewed Marino Faliero.

1. For evidence of Lockhart's authorship of that letter see appendix V below.

CHAPTER V
WILSON ON BYRON

During the year that preceded the publication of the first number of the Edinburgh Monthly Magazine [Blackwood's], Byron's popularity in England stood at a low ebb. Partly because of the scandal of his separation from his wife, and partly as a result of the publication in the Champion of 14 April 1816 of the two poems, "Fare thee well!" and "A Sketch", which Byron had written on his domestic misfortunes for private circulation, public opinion had turned against its "fallen idol". Byron's case was aggravated further, as Samuel C. Chew suggests, by "the revival of political attacks occasioned by certain poems that were thought to betray unpatriotic sympathy with Napoleon" as well as by the moral condemnation of Byron's treatment of the theme of incest in *Parisina*, which "made the tale share the odium of the domestic pieces".¹

Political and moral attacks against Byron were renewed towards the end of 1816 and early in 1817 in the reviews of the third canto of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage. Even sympathetic reviewers, such as Francis Jeffrey and Walter Scott, could not refrain from criticising Byron on these grounds. Writing in the Edinburgh Review, on the morally subversive elements in the nature of the Byronic hero,

1. Samuel C. Chew, Byron in England: his Fame and After-fame (1824), p.20 and n.

Jeffrey declares in the review of the third Canto of Childe Harold (December 1815):

"Lord Byron appears to us to be the zealous apostle of a certain fierce and magnificent misanthropy, which has already saddened his poetry with too deep a shade, and not only led to great misapplication of great talents, but contributed to render popular some very false estimates of the constituents of human happiness and merit."¹

The unpatriotic political sentiment expressed by Childe Harold about Napoleon while contemplating "the deadly Waterloo" were more disturbing for Walter Scott, and, in his review of the same canto in the Quarterly (October 1816), he tried to dismiss them as "the sport of whim and singularity, or at best the suggestion of the sudden starts of feeling and emotions [rather] than the expressions of any serious or fixed opinion."²

Against this background of hostile public opinions towards Byron, and of a distinct sense of unease among his most sympathetic reviewers, John Wilson reviewed Manfred for Blackwood's in June 1817. Contrary to what was to be expected from a Tory periodical which was to pride itself upon being vociferous in defending the Constitution, the established religion, and public morality, Wilson's review was surprisingly favourable. J.O. Hayden claims that "most of the monthlies were decidedly hostile" and that the reviewers of Manfred "would have been more severe had not Jeffrey come out in its favour in the Edinburgh Review."³ But Hayden

1. Edinburgh Review, XXVII, 281.

2. Quarterly Review, XVI, 192.

3. The Romantic Reviewers, p. 145. Wilson's review appeared in June 1817, and Jeffrey's in the Edinburgh number dated August but published in September 1817.

ignores the facts that Wilson's review had appeared three months before Jeffrey wrote his for the Edinburgh, and that there is a great deal of evidence to prove that Jeffrey took his cue from Wilson's review of Byron's poem and from his other incidental remarks on Manfred in his article on Marlowe's Dr. Faustus (July 1817).

Wilson's favourable review of Manfred is the more surprising because he had sufficient reasons to condemn Byron's poem on moral, religious and, strangely enough, political grounds. For, firstly, having in mind the condemnation of the theme of incest in Parisina by earlier reviewers, Wilson was aware of the implicit treatment of a similar theme in Manfred. Secondly, Wilson's peculiar reading of Manfred emphasises the hero's renunciation of religion and religious redemption. Thirdly, he was not only aware of the political undertones in the dialogue between the Destinies and Nemesis on the Jungfrau (Act II, iii) but also read into it unpatriotic allusions to Napoleon which were probably never intended by Byron. Yet, Wilson's Tory sensibilities were not outraged by any of these offences, nor did they provoke him to denounce Manfred.

It was not simply because, at this early stage in its history (the June number was the third of the Edinburgh Monthly Magazine), the newly founded magazine had not yet formulated for itself a clearly defined political outlook. Although under the editorship of Thomas Pringle and James Cleghorn Blackwood's did not have the intransigent Tory attitude which it acquired in its later numbers,

it had nevertheless a distinctively Tory point of view. As far as Byron was concerned, at least its attitude was made clear in the very first number (April 1817). The writer of "Periodical Works" gave a brief account of Walter Scott's Quarterly review of the third canto of Childe Harold in which he applauded the restraint, as well as the firmness of Scott's criticism of Byron's political and moral ideas:

"To treat him [Byron] like a spoilt child will not have much efficacy in removing the complaint. If any one should hereafter think it necessary, in order to establish his superiority of talent, to begin with distinguishing himself in the circles of vice and folly, despising the restraints to which ordinary mortals have agreed to submit, he may be led to doubt of the certainty of this mode of proving his claim, when he is assured, that the moral and religious regimen, here prescribed to Lord Byron, has been very faithfully observed, both in the private and public life of several of the most distinguished writers of the present age."¹

This is the first important reference to Byron in the new magazine, and it leaves in no doubt where it stood. What was it then that caused Wilson to review Manfred favourably, when, the policy of the new magazine, as well as what he saw in the poem, could well have provoked him to do otherwise? Unfortunately no correspondence has survived that can help us to answer this question, and we have to seek the answer elsewhere.

Before we turn to the review itself, it is necessary to mention here that a possible answer to our question may be found in the fact that despite the hostility of public opinion in 1818 and early 1817 his poetry continued to be praised by contemporary

1. Blackwood's, I, 84.

reviewers. J.O. Hayden, who has studied a large number of contemporary periodicals, observes that in the reviews of the third canto of Childe Harold and the Prisoner of Chillon the publication of which followed the scandal of the "domestic pieces," "there is no noticeable decline in the critical estimates made by the reviewers."¹ Despite their strictures on the subversive morality and the unpatriotic sentiments in Childe Harold, both Jeffrey and Walter Scott were decidedly generous with their praise for Byron's genius. Did Wilson, therefore, simply follow in the footsteps of the two great reviews, as well as the majority of other periodicals? With a writer who was as emotionally reckless as Wilson, and who enjoyed sheltering behind the anonymous system of reviewing, and attacking friend and foe alike, such a consensus of public opinion could hardly have carried any weight. Certainly Wilson began his review of Manfred by acknowledging the praise which Byron had received, and by declaring that he had no intention of disputing Byron's title to the throne of poetic supremacy "to which he has been elected by the acclamation"² of public opinion. Yet, deference to public opinion was not sufficient in itself to restrain Wilson from attacking Byron's poem, or from denouncing the serious offences which, from a Tory point of view, Byron committed in Manfred.

1. J.O. Hayden, The Romantic Reviewers, p. 145.

2. Blackwood's, I, 289.

Although it is hardly possible to deduce any consistent theory of poetry from Wilson's criticism, the kind of poetry that appealed to him is easy to identify. He probably gave the clue to most of his critical opinions when he declared in the review of Coleridge's Biographia Literaria, "the true poet, like the Preacher of the true religion, will seek to win unto himself and his Faith, a belief whose foundation is in the depths of love, and whose pillars are the noblest passions of humanity."¹ This criterion of "true" poetry combines the two characteristic features not only of Wilson's criticism, but also of his poetry. As we have already seen in Wilson's imitations of Wordsworth, the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling" becomes the expression of false and grotesquely refined sentiment which are rendered even more ludicrous by Wilson's strong predilection for preaching.

Similarly, in his criticism Wilson consistently praised the "turning loose of emotion" in poetry. The turmoil of thought and feeling in Byron's non-satirical poetry, and the rhetorical and emotional gestures, the introspective melancholy, and the constant self-dramatisation of the Byronic hero appealed to him, and he was rather generous in his praise for "so awful a revelation of the passions of the human soul"² in Byron's poetry. Moreover, the Wanderer's flight into nature in the third canto of Childe Harold

1. Blackwood's, II, 7.

2. Blackwood's, I, 289.

was even more congenial to the taste of the disciple of the Lake School. Because of its obviousness, and its occasional sentimentality, Byron's description of nature was more intelligible to Wilson than the subtler interchange between the poet's mind and the external world in Wordsworth's poetry. It is hardly surprising that in his review of Manfred, Wilson preferred the third canto of canto of Childe Harold to the Excursion. In that poem, Byron, Wilson claimed,

"came into competition with Wordsworth upon his own ground, and with his own weapons; and in the first encounter he vanquished and overthrew him. His description of the stormy night among the Alps—of the blending—the mingling—the fusion of his own soul, with the raging elements around him,—is alone worth all the dull metaphysics of the Excursion."¹

Wilson found in Manfred all that he admired in the third canto of Childe Harold. Yet, he complained that although Manfred "unquestionably exhibits many noble delineations of mountain scenery,—many impressive and terrible pictures of passion,—and many wild and awful visions of imaginary horror," it was "difficult to comprehend distinctly the drift of the composition, and almost impossible to give anything like a distinct account of it."² This is interesting for more than one reason. First, Wilson was right to attribute the "sense of imperfection, incompleteness, and confusion [that] accompanies the mind throughout the perusal of the poem" to Byron's failure in his attempt to create a coherent and

1. Blackwood's, I, 289.

2. Ibid., p. 290.

meaningful drama. Secondly, in his attempt to interpret Manfred, Wilson fell back on his own understanding of a poetic drama of a much older poet. At that time, apparently, he was reading Marlowe's Dr. Faustus, for the purpose of writing his article on it, which was to appear in the magazine number for July 1817 (and which, incidentally, was the first of a long series of articles on Renaissance drama an interest in which Blackwood's helped to revive in the second and third decades of the century). Rightly or wrongly, Wilson saw a close similarity between Marlowe's Faustus and Byron's Manfred. Not only did the first and the last scene of Byron's poem remind Wilson of the first and last scene of the older play, but he saw in both works the same themes developed on the same lines and with the help of the same machinery, and ending in the same catastrophe. This discovery was decisive, not just for Wilson's interpretation of Manfred, but also for his whole attitude towards the poet in this review and, I believe, in his later writings on Byron's poetry.

For Wilson, Manfred's guilt lay not so much in the unnamed crime against Astrate, but in his dissatisfaction with man's predicament and his search for greater knowledge. Manfred's suffering was caused by a restless intellect rather than a guilty conscience:

"From early youth he has been a wild misanthrope, and has so perplexed himself with his views of human nature, that he comes at last to have no fixed principles of belief on any subject—to be perpetually haunted by a dread of the soul's

mortality, and bewildered among dark and gloomy ideas concerning the existence of a First Cause."¹

The mysterious crime against Astrate was only an additional burden on Manfred's guilty and agonized mind which drove him, Wilson believed, not to seek relief in oblivion but to discover the secrets "into which his mind cannot penetrate."²

Wilson's insistence on seeing parallels between Marlowe's Faustus and Byron's Manfred is most noticeable in his comments on the interview between Manfred and the Abbot (Act III,1). Wilson failed to see the important difference between Manfred's defiant refusal to derive any consolation from religion or the promise of religious redemption and Faustus's immediate realization, after he concluded his deal with Mephistophiles, that his ambition would cost him his salvation. Both Manfred and Faustus committed great sins, Wilson believed, and both were punished for those sins by eternal damnation. His comment on the Abbot scene is, therefore, crucial to our understanding of his point of view:

"In that scene it seems to us that the moral purpose of the drama appears—the explanation, as it were of all Manfred's misery, wickedness, and delusion. The Abbot offers him that which alone can save the soul from ruin, religion—and the promise of redemption. This salvation Manfred is too far gone in anguish, sin, and insanity, to dare or wish to accept—and the Abbot leaves him in sullen and hopeless resignation to his doom."³

This description is more applicable to Faustus's despair than

1. Blackwood's, I, 290.

2. Ibid., p. 290.

3. Ibid., pp. 294-95.

Manfred's defiant endurance of his suffering and conscious renunciation of any consolation that religion can offer. It is not surprising, therefore, to see Wilson describe the final scene in Byron's drama as "somewhat too much in the style of the Devil and Dr. Faustus."¹

Yet, wrong as Wilson's understanding of Manfred as a latter-day Faustus was, it helped him to overcome the difficulty of praising Byron's poem without appearing to condone whatever may have been considered objectionable on religious, moral, or political grounds. Once "poetic justice" was seen to be done, Wilson found no difficulty in claiming that Manfred was a moral poem, as, indeed, he did twelve months later in the Edinburgh Review in much more detail:

"We speak of Manfred now, because it seems to us to hold a middle place between the Tales of Byron, and Childe Harold, as far as regards the Poet himself. But we likewise do so, that we may have an opportunity of saying a few words on the moral of this poem....

The moral character of Byron's poetry has often been assailed, and we have ourselves admitted that some strong objections might be urged against it. But we think that his mind is now clearing up, like noon-day, after a stormy and disturbed morning;—and when the change which we anticipate has been fully brought about, the moral character of his poetry will be lofty and pure. Over this fine drama, a moral feeling hangs like a sombrous thunder cloud. No other guilt but that so darkly shadowed out could have furnished so dreadful an illustration of the hideous aberrations of human nature, however noble and majestic, when left a prey to its desires, its passions and its imagination. The beauty, at one time so innocently adored, is at last soiled, profaned and violated. Affection, love, guilt, horror, remorse and death come in terrible succession, yet all darkly linked together

1. Ibid., p. 295.

The moral breathes and burns in every word,—in sadness, misery, insanity, desolation and death."¹

Despite this strongly moralistic interpretation of Manfred, and despite the unwarranted attack on Wordsworth, Wilson's review of that poem was the only sensible piece of criticism that he wrote for Blackwood's on Byron's poetry, or even on the poetry of any other contemporary poet.

ii

So close was Wilson's identification of Manfred with Faustus, that he was not content to leave the comparison between them limited to interpreting Byron's poem in terms of the Faustian legend. In the following number of the magazine (July 1817) he started the series of articles on older dramatists, with the first on Dr. Faustus. Here Wilson stated more explicitly what he had in mind when he wrote the Manfred review. He wrote:

"Independently of its own great merits, it [Dr. Faustus] possesses an extraordinary interest at the present time from the general resemblance of its subject to that of Lord Byron's last poem."²

When Francis Jeffrey later criticised Wilson for claiming that Byron had taken much of Manfred from Marlowe's play, he did not realize that Wilson imported as much of his understanding of Manfred into

1. Edinburgh Review, XXX, 95-96; Wilson's review of the fourth canto of Childe Harold.

2. Blackwood's, I, 388.

his reading of Dr. Faustus, as he had done the other way round only a month before. Apart from the very rare flashes of critical inspiration, as in his remarks on the great contrast between Faustus's "high power..." and the insignificant objects on which, for his amusement, he thinks proper to exercise it,"¹ Wilson saw too much of Manfred in the older hero. His comment on Faustus's state of mind after he has concluded his pact with Lucifer is merely reminiscent of his description of Byron's ability to portray the working of the human mind.

"The soul of Faustus is now eternally vowed to Lucifer, and henceforth commence his agonies of remorse and despair, interrupted by sudden starts of exultation and pride, as the visions of eternal bale, or of earthly pleasure... alternately take hold of his imagination. Great knowledge is here displayed of human nature and the workings of the passions."²

Later in the same article, Wilson described the scene of Faustus's exhortation to Mephistophiles to torture the Old Man (V, i, 82-94) as one of "those sublime strokes by which our old dramatists suddenly electrify the soul." What follows sounds more like a description of Byron's attempt in Manfred, rather than of Marlowe's in Dr. Faustus:

"The effect of such passages is deep and lasting; they cling to our feelings and imagination; and the remembrance of one such gleam of light opens out to us

1. Ibid., p. 391.

2. Ibid., p. 390.

the whole character and being of the person described, and raises him up, clearly and distinctly, a real living and human existence."¹

As for specific points of similarity between Faustus and Manfred, Wilson cited one only in his comment on the dialogue between Mephistophiles and Faustus before the signing of the pact (I, ii, 67-84):

"The following lines are striking; and whether Lord Byron had them, or had them not, in his mind during the composition of some passages of Manfred, they will, we think, stand a comparison with any strain of a similar nature in his Lordship's drama."²

Wilson concludes his article on Dr. Faustus by stating clearly where he places both Marlowe's play and Byron's drama:

"Let us conclude with one remark—that while there is at present abroad throughout the world so mad a passion for poetry, and more especially for poetry in which the stronger passions of our nature are delineated, it is somewhat singular, that such excessive admiration is bestowed on one great living Poet [Byron] while (to say nothing of contemporary writers) there are so many glorious works of the mighty dead, unknown or disregarded—works from which that illustrious person has doubtless imbibed inspiration, and which, without detracting from his well-earned fame, we must think, are far superior in variety, depth, and energy of passion, to the best poems which his powerful genius has yet produced."³

Wilson's understanding of Byron's Manfred in terms of Dr. Faustus or Dr. Faustus in terms of Manfred does not, perhaps, show that he was capable of judging the relative merit of either work. "Yet, according to his own perverse fashion," as George Saintsbury observes,

-
1. Ibid., p. 392.
 2. Ibid., p. 389.
 3. Ibid., p. 394.

"he never goes wrong without going right,"¹ and very few people would nowadays dispute his placing Dr. Faustus above Byron's poem.

iii

Yet Wilson did not escape the censure of his contemporaries for associating Manfred with Dr. Faustus, and for expressing his preference for the older play. In the Edinburgh Review for August 1817 (issued September), Francis Jeffrey took him to task for suggesting that the "general conception of this piece [Manfred], and much of what is excellent in the manner of its execution, have been borrowed from The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus of Marlow [sic]." ² This is, in fact, attributing to Wilson what he never said. Nowhere, in either the Manfred review or the article on Dr. Faustus, does he accuse Byron of "borrowing" from Marlowe. In more than one place, in the two pieces, Wilson draws the attention of his readers to certain similarities between the two works, and, as we have seen, only maintains that Byron might have been "inspired" by Dr. Faustus, but he does not accuse Byron of plagiarism. It is obvious from Jeffrey's review, however, that he had a higher opinion of Manfred than Wilson, and that he only criticised Wilson, for suggesting that Byron plundered Marlowe's play for his Manfred, for the sake of defending the superiority of the latter poem. He

1. George Saintsbury, Essays in English Literature 1780-1860, p.295.

2. Edinburgh Review, XXVIII, 430.

even conceded that "there is, no doubt, a certain resemblance, both in some of the topics that are suggested, and in the cast of diction in which they are expressed."¹ Having conceded so much to Wilson, Jeffrey proceeded to deny completely the superiority of Dr. Faustus over Manfred in a somewhat startling manner:

"But these [passages from Dr. Faustus], and many other smooth and fanciful verses in this curious old drama, prove nothing, we think, against the originality of Manfred: for there is nothing to be found there of the pride, the abstraction, and the heartrooted misery in which that originality consists. Faustus is a vulgar sorcerer, tempted to sell his soul to the Devil for the ordinary price of sensual pleasure and earthly power and glory ... The style, too, of Marlow [sic], though elegant and scholarlike, is weak and childish compared with the depth and the force of much of what we have quoted from Lord Byron; and the disgusting buffoonery and low farce of which his piece is principally made up, place it much more in contrast, than in any terms of comparison with, that of his noble successor."²

Although there can be no doubt that Jeffrey was a considerably more consistent, and more rational, critic of contemporary poetry than Wilson, on this occasion, as well as on many others, Wilson was better guided by his more instinctive response to poetry. His judgement on the relative merits on Manfred and Dr. Faustus may have been based on wrong assumptions, but like his favourable criticism of Wordsworth, it has stood the test of time better than Jeffrey's more systematic criticism.

Yet, Wilson did not trust his own initial response to Manfred and was probably intimidated by Jeffrey's enthusiastic defence of

1. Ibid., p. 430.

2. Ibid., p. 431.

the drama into pointing out that he had never accused Byron of plagiarism. In a footnote at the end of the second article in the series on "The Early English Dramatists," on Marlowe's Edward II, he explained that the Edinburgh reviewer was wrong "in supposing that we accused Byron of plagiarism,"¹ and justly pointed out the exact words in which Manfred and Faustus are compared in the earlier pieces. What is inexcusable, however, is that Wilson changed his mind about the relative merits of the two works:

"That 'Faustus' is, as a composition, very inferior to Manfred, we perfectly agree with the Reviewer; for the wavering character of the German magician will not bear comparison for a moment with that of the Princely Wanderer of the Alps: and the mixed, rambling, headlong, and reckless manner of Marlow, in that play, must not be put into competition with the sustained dignity of Byron."²

No wonder George Saintsbury finds it easy to be angry with Wilson, the writer who was capable of forming "the most appreciative judgements" and who "goes and says something which shows that he had entirely forgotten them."³

iv

On this occasion, however, Byron ensured that no student of his poem should ever forget the absurdity of the alleged charge of

1. Blackwood's, II, 30n.

2. Ibid., p. 30n.

3. George Saintsbury, Essays in English Literature, p. 295.

plagiarism in Wilson's review. He repeatedly and indignantly denied the charge in his letters to John Murray and the Byron scholars have never tired of repeating his denials ever since.¹ In fact, Byron never had a chance of examining Wilson's review of Manfred in full and never saw the articles on Marlowe's plays. On 9 July 1817 he wrote to Murray that he had received the review of Manfred which broke off at page 294, leaving out page 295 in which Wilson made his first remarks on the similarity between the last scenes in Manfred and Faustus.² Not knowing that it was Wilson who had suggested the similarity between his poem and the older play, Byron was pleased with the part he read of the review. On 12 October 1817 he wrote to Murray "The review in the magazine you say was written by Wilson? It had all the air of being a poet's, and was a very good one."³ But at the same time he had read Jeffrey's defence in the Edinburgh and in the same letter he told Murray "I never read, and do not know that I ever saw the

1. E.H. Coleridge quotes only Jeffrey's defence of the originality of Manfred and Wilson's reply to it but leaves out the original source of Jeffrey's remarks, Wilson's article on Faustus (The Works of Lord Byron: Poetry, ed. E.H. Coleridge, [1898-1904], hereafter cited by Byron: Poetical Works, IV, 80), so does R.E. Prothero (The Works of Lord Byron: Letters & Journals, ed. R.E. Prothero, [1898-1901], hereafter cited as L. & J., IV, 173n). Samuel Chew asserts, "Wilson threw out the suggestion that Byron was indebted to Marlowe's Faustus" (Byron in England, p.113). From this it is only one step farther for the word "plagiarism" to appear (for example in Andrew Rutherford, Byron: A Critical Study, [1962], p. 76 and Leslie Marchand, Byron's Poetry: A Critical Introduction, [1965], p. 76).

2. L. & J., IV, 146.

3. Ibid., p. 175.

Faustus of Marlow....I deny Marlow and his progeny and beg that you will do the same."¹ Again on 23rd October 1817, he wrote to his publisher, "It is odd that they should say (that is somebody in the magazine whom the Edinburgh controverts) that it [Manfred] was taken from Marlow's Faustus, which I never read nor saw.... the devil may take both Faustuses, German and English—I have taken neither."²

In view of Jeffrey's misinterpretation of Wilson's words, Byron's indignation was probably justified. But the fact remains that Wilson never charged him with plagiarism, and had it not been for Wilson's attempt to interpret one work in the light of his understanding of the other, Manfred would probably not have been favourably received by Blackwood's.

v

Wilson reviewed Manfred in June 1817. The following month saw the publication of the Lament of Tasso. On 2 August William Blackwood sent it to Wilson who was then touring the Highlands. He wrote a review of Byron's new poem, and another of Coleridge's Biographia Literaria, which, he later told Blackwood, "I crammed into my pocket and during my ascent to the top of Cairngorm they must have fallen out, for on returning to Grantown at night they were gone and irretrievably lost":³ This incident delayed the

1. Ibid., pp. 174-175.

2. Ibid., p. 177.

3. Oliphant, I, 263-64.

reviewing of the Lament of Tasso in the Magazine till November 1817. Whether Wilson's second review of the poem was significantly influenced by the extremely favourable reviews that had appeared in the meantime in other periodicals, it is impossible to say.¹ Yet, this short review of a relatively unimportant Byron poem illustrates another distinctive feature of Wilson's writings, both creative and critical, his sentimentality.

Wilson was a great sentimentalist, and nowhere are his lapses into mawkish sentimentality as notorious as in his Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life and The Isle of Palms, the latter of which Henry Crabb Robinson called "a female Wordsworth". In his criticism, sentimentality is less conspicuous but nevertheless characteristic. His friendship with Wordsworth and De Quincey, whose critical doctrines gave a prominent place for emotions in poetry, provided Wilson with the critical vocabulary that appealed to him most. But unchecked by a disciplined intellect and uncontrolled by a clearly defined critical theory, such terms as "feelings," "sympathy," "pathos," and "sensibility" became with Wilson no more than literary counters for expressing his highly emotional reaction to poetry.

In his review of Manfred, Wilson projected his own ideas into Byron's poetry and almost sentimentalized it. Byron, Wilson claims,

1. See Hayden, The Romantic Reviewers (p. 126), for the favourable reception of the Lament by contemporary reviewers.

"often seems unexpectedly to participate in the feelings and emotions of beings with whom it might be thought he could claim no kindred; and thus many passages are to be found in his poetry, of the most irresistible and overpowering pathos, in which the depth of his sympathy with common sorrows and common sufferers, seems as profound as if his nature knew nothing more mournful than sighs and tears."¹

In the review of The Lament of Tasso Wilson celebrates the triumph of feeling in Byron's poetry. He claims that, "to those...who looked deeply into his Poetry, there never was at any time a want of pathos."² The first two cantos of Childe Harold and Manfred have something of this "pathos" while the Prisoner of Chillon shows that Byron had "a heart that can feed on the purest sympathies of our nature, and deliver itself up to the sorrows, the sadness, and the melancholy of humbler souls."³ In The Lament of Tasso, this better side of Byron's genius triumphs over its darker and more speculative tendencies:

"Lord Byron has not delivered himself unto any one wild and fearful vision of the imprisoned Tasso,—he has not dared to allow himself to rush forward with headlong passion into the horrors of his dungeon, and to describe, as he could fearfully have done, the conflict and agony of his uttermost despair,—but shews us the Poet sitting in his Cell, and singing there—a low, melancholy, wailing lament."⁴

Unimpeded by political, moral or religious issues, the outpouring of feeling in the Lament appealed to Wilson's sentimentality and he joined the other reviewers in praising it rather excessively.

-
1. Blackwood's, I, 289.
 2. Blackwood's, II, 142.
 3. Ibid., p. 143.
 4. Ibid., p. 143.

Wilson reviewed Childe Harold, Canto IV, first in May 1818 for Blackwood's and then in June (published September 1818) for the Edinburgh. These two reviews are almost as embarrassing for the student of Wilson's writing and the history of Blackwood's as the series of notorious letters on Wordsworth in which Wilson attacked the poet, praised him and attacked him again over a period of six months. On this occasion, the embarrassment is even greater, since serious doubts have been cast on Wilson's reputation as a man of letters of any importance by the allegation that he took both reviews from two different sources. In 1819 Hazlitt claimed that Wilson made "long Childe Harold articles out of my Round Tables about Rousseau."¹ More recently, Elsie Swann published the correspondence between Wilson and his friend Alexander Blair, which has shown how much Wilson relied on his friend's letters, not only in writing his magazine articles, but also in preparing his lectures as Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of Edinburgh. About the Edinburgh Review article on the fourth canto of Childe Harold, Elsie Swann writes, "Wilson provided the rhetorical trappings of the article, but the solid core of information came undoubtedly from Alexander Blair."² There is, it has to be admitted, some truth in both allegations.

-
1. "Reply to Z," Complete Works, IX, 4. Hazlitt wrote his reply to John Wilson's article "Hazlitt cross-questioned" (Blackwood's for August 1818) in August or September 1818, but it was published for the first time in 1923.
 2. Elsie Swann, Christopher North (1934), p. 72.

Elsie Swann's claim is easy to verify. For apart from the fact that she mentions Blair's letter of 3 November 1817 as the source of Wilson's review of Childe Harold in the Edinburgh, when she clearly means the one in Blackwood's, Wilson's debt to his friend is only too obvious. He incorporated in his review, almost verbatim, most of what Blair had written him about Byron.¹ In fairness to Wilson it ought to be said that in his review there are certain departures from Blair's letter. What Wilson called the cold and unimpassioned judgement in the following passage can be taken as a critical comment on Blair's almost identical remarks. While Blair was aware of the faults and merits of Byron's poetry, Wilson saw in it nothing but excellence. Blair's judgement may be more critically sound but Wilson's praise is at least more consistent with the rest of his criticism on Byron's poetry in Blackwood's.

Blair

In his poetry more than any other man's there is felt a continual presence of himself; there is continual self-representation, or self-reference. Which is both the fault and the excellence of his poetry.²

Wilson

In his poetry, more than any other man's, there is felt a continual presence of himself—there is everlasting self-representation or self-reference; and perhaps that, which to cold and unimpassioned judgement might seem the essential fault of his poetry, constitutes its real excellence, and gives it power.³

But the fundamental difference between Alexander Blair's letter and Wilson's review is that while Blair's criticism is

1. Cf. Elsie Swann, Christopher North, pp. 70-71, and Blackwood's, III, 216-217.

2. Swann, p. 70.

3. Blackwood's, III, 216.

mainly levelled at the egotism of Byron's poetry, Wilson contradicts his earlier defence of the morality in the review of Manfred and expresses his doubts about its dubious moral effect on the readers. He regrets that "the good, the happy and the innocent can draw no instructions" from Byron's poetry:

"Of the danger resulting from such poetry to souls of fine aspirations, but unsteadfast wills,—to souls where passion is the only or chief impulse, and where there is a tendency to hold cheap, and in derision, the dull duties of ordinary life...to such souls...that poetry is most fatal which flings aside the antiquated bonds consecrated by mere every-day associations,—which renders reason itself subservient to the senses (ennobled as they are by the imagination), and admits no other law of life but the tyrannic passions, cherished in the conscious pride of that power, which, in turn, uses those passions as its most abject slaves.

If such may be the effects of Byron's poetry on good natures, it is to be feared that it may exert a lamentable influence over those prone to evil."¹

Byron's poetry is but too full of a pernicious ^{philosophy} "that lends robes of royalty, and a seeming sceptre to passions that are in themselves base, odious, and contemptible, or, haply, such as conduct to ruin, agony, and death."² As a remedy to such dangerous tendencies in his genius, Wilson recommends that Byron should be instructed and guided by Wordsworth and his disciples in seeking moral elevations in nature. Wilson seems to have forgotten that only six months before in the review of Manfred he had claimed that the Wordsworthian stanzas of the third canto of Childe Harold were "alone worth all the dull metaphysics of the Excursion."³ This

1. Blackwood's, III, 217-18.

2. Ibid., p. 218.

3. Blackwood's, I, 289.

obvious inconsistency in Wilson's criticism of Byron's poetry is only an extension of his consistently ambivalent attitude towards Wordsworth which has already been discussed in an earlier chapter of this thesis. But it is also the result of his peculiar interpretation of Manfred which enabled him to argue that there was nothing morally objectionable in Byron's poetry. Such interpretation made Wilson unable to perceive that in Manfred Byron had rejected the Wordsworthian answers to moral and metaphysical problems.

Having given such a long introduction to his review, Wilson had very little to say on the fourth canto of Childe Harold. He described it as the "finest canto of Childe Harold, the finest, beyond all comparison, of Byron's poems."¹ Unaware of the change in Byron's attitude towards nature, Wilson was most impressed by the very few passages of "the poetry of nature" which Byron had learned from Wordsworth. Yet the concluding remarks of the review show that for once Wilson was not far off the point in understanding Byron's intentions:

"It was a thought worthy of the great spirit of Byron...after teaching us, like him [Childe Harold], to sicken over the mutability, and vanity, and emptiness of human greatness, to conduct him and us at last to the borders of 'the great deep.' It is there that we may perceive an image of the awful unchangeable abyss of eternity. No one, but a true poet of man and of nature, would have dared to frame such a termination for such a pilgrimage."²

-
1. Blackwood's, III, 219.
 2. Ibid., pp.217*-18*.

Wilson's debt to Hazlitt is not so obvious as his debt to Alexander Blair, but there can be no doubt that the long comparison between Byron and Rousseau in Wilson's review of the fourth canto of Childe Harold in the Edinburgh was inspired, as Hazlitt claimed, by the Round Table article on Rousseau. More importantly, however, Hazlitt's remarks on Byron, in Lectures on the English Poets, helped Wilson to resolve the contradiction in his attitude towards the morality of Byron's poetry, which is obvious in the Blackwood's reviews of Manfred and the fourth canto Childe Harold. It has already been pointed out in an earlier chapter of this thesis that Wilson adopted and modified Hazlitt's criticism of Scott, Byron and Wordsworth when he wrote the introductory passages of the first Essay on the "Lake School of Poetry" (July 1818). One of Hazlitt's remarks on Byron, "'He hath a demon:' and that is the next thing to being full of the God," inspired Wilson to develop his theory of the dual vision in Byron's poetry, which he first explained briefly in the first "Essay" on the "Lake School of Poetry" in Blackwood's, and in more detail in the review of the fourth canto of Childe Harold in the Edinburgh. In the former of these articles Wilson wrote:

"It is this contrast between his august conceptions of man, and his contemptuous opinion of men, that much of the almost incomprehensible charm, and power, and enchantment of his poetry exists. We feel ourselves alternately sunk and elevated, as if the hand of an invisible being had command over us. At one time we are little lower than the angels; in another, but little higher than the worms. We feel that our elevation and our disgrace are alike the lot of our

nature; and hence the Poetry of Byron, as we before remarked, is read as a dark, but still a divine revelation."¹

In his review of the fourth canto of Childe Harold in the Edinburgh which he probably wrote at about the same time, Wilson saw this dark but "divine revelation" in terms of a progressive development in Byron's poetry towards a nobler and more exalted view of human nature. He traced it in Byron's poetry from the first two cantos of Childe Harold, through the tales and Manfred, to the fourth canto of Childe Harold. In this last poem, Wilson claims:

"It is a nobler creature who is before us. The ill-sustained misanthropy, and disdain of the two first Cantos, more faintly glimmer throughout the third, and may be said to disappear wholly from the fourth, which reflects the high and disturbed visions of earthly glory, as a dark swollen tide images the splendours of the sky² in portentous colouring, and broken magnificence."

We have already seen how Wilson regarded Manfred as the turning point in this progress towards a higher moral vision in Byron's poetry. The fourth canto of Childe Harold represented a step forward in this development. The Pilgrim, who was at last completely identified with the poet, had changed since the appearance of the first two cantos:

"He represented himself, from the beginning, as a ruin; and when he first gazed upon him, we saw indeed in abundance the black traces of recent violence and convulsion. The edifice has not been rebuilt; but its hues have been sobered by the passing wings of time...In so far, the

1. Blackwood's, III, 370.

2. Edinburgh Review, XXX, 94.

Pilgrim has become wiser. He seems to think more of others, and with a greater spirit of humanity."¹

In the earlier cantos of Childe Harold the hero's respect and sympathy "have been given almost exclusively to the intellectual, and refused to the moral greatness of his species. There is certainly less of this in the last Canto."²

Wilson also found the same duality of vision in Byron's attitude to religion. Byron's "scepticism," he claimed, "carries with it its refutation in its grandeur...and the sublime sadness which, to him, is breathed from the mysteries of mortal existence, is always joined with a longing after immortality, and expressed in language that is itself divine."³

vi

Towards the end of his review of the fourth canto of Childe Harold in the Edinburgh, Wilson claimed that among the major contemporary poets only Byron had the power "to construct a great poem" such as Macbeth, King Lear or Hamlet. He equated this power with "intellectual strength," a quality which he often attributed to Byron, and which, incidentally, he often found wanting in Wordsworth and Coleridge. Yet he advised Byron that, in order to

1. Ibid., p. 116.

2. Ibid., p. 117.

3. Ibid., pp. 97-98.

create a great poem, he had first to alter "what may be called his Theory of Imagination respecting Human Life,"¹ by adopting a less misanthropic view of human nature.

In one respect at least Marino Faliero (April 1821) came closer to Wilson's expectations concerning Byron's performance as a dramatist. Apparently Wilson saw in this play that Byron had made the requisite change in his theory of imagination. In his portrayal of Angiolina, the Doge's young wife, the poet has moved towards a more exalted view of human nature, for which Wilson hoped in his Edinburgh review of Childe Harold. For this reason he praised Byron's drama rather excessively:

"Lord Byron's own tragedy is infinitely superior to the 'Cenci,' even in the merits of vigorous conception, and vigorous diction; while it has the happiness to be distinguished both from that and from too many of the productions of his Lordship's own genius, by uniform purity of thought and purpose. Without question, no such tragedy as this of Marino Faliero has appeared in English since the day when Otway also was inspired to his masterpiece by the interests of a Venitian story and a Venitian conspiracy."²

The difference between what Wilson expected from Byron as a dramatist, and what Hazlitt regarded as a fundamental prerequisite of a great dramatist was high-lighted when Hazlitt reviewed the same play in the London Magazine in May 1821, and attributed its failure to Byron's inability to transcend himself. In December of the same year, Wilson stood firm by his belief that a better

1. Ibid., p. 119.

2. Blackwood's, IX, 93.

view of human nature was enough to turn Byron into a great dramatist. In the review of David Lyndsay's Dramas of the Ancient World, Wilson defended Byron's dramatic talents against the attack of the "Cockneys" who declared that "his Lordship had no dramatic genius—that he never forgot himself."¹ It is obvious that Wilson had Hazlitt's review of Marino Faliero ^{in mind} when he wrote that review in which he claimed that Marino Faliero and Manfred were great tragedies despite the failure of the stage production of the former play.²

After December 1821, Wilson intermittently praised Byron, and on one occasion at least, he intervened to defend the morality of Byron's poetry against the attacks of other Blackwood's contributors. But with the publication of the first two canto of Don Juan in July 1819, and of Cain in January 1822, Wilson could not seriously persist, to any significant extent, in his attempt to smooth over Byron's offences against contemporary public opinion. Even as early as June 1818, his consistent and often exaggerated praise for Byron's non-satirical poems caused Lockhart to intervene and reverse the Blackwood's judgement on the Noble Lord.

1. Blackwood's, X, 732.

2. For the stage history of Marino Faliero, see Byron's Poetical Works, IV, 328, and David V. Erdman, "Byron's Stage Fright," ELH, VI (1939), 237-39.

CHAPTER VI

JOHN MURRAY, WILLIAM BLACKWOOD, AND THE PUBLICATION OF DON JUAN

The story of Murray's partnership with William Blackwood in the ownership of the magazine, has been twice told: by Samuel Smiles, and Mrs. Oliphant.¹ Different as their points of view inevitably are, Samuel Smiles and Mrs. Oliphant agree on the basic facts of the history of this partnership. John Murray was attracted by the success of the second beginning of the magazine, and in August 1818, although he disapproved of its violent "personality," he bought a half-share in its ownership. No sooner was the agreement concluded, than Murray's disapproval of the way Blackwood ran his magazine developed into extreme annoyance at the unabated scurrility of its attacks on individuals. During the six months of the partnership, Murray was indefatigable in his attempts to influence the editorial policies of the magazine and to impose on it a more sober and respectable character. At times he pleaded with Blackwood to exert more restraining influence on his writers, at others he strongly remonstrated against excesses of the magazine.² In one letter he promised his partner to exert himself in obtaining contributions from Byron, and in persuading Frere to

1. Samuel Smiles, A Publisher and his Friends: Memoir and Correspondence of John Murray (1891), I, 475-496, and Oliphant, I, 159-496.

2. See Smiles, I, 483, and Oliphant, I, 171.

continue his Whistlecrafts in the magazine, provided Blackwood should show more firmness in restraining the hands of his young supporters.¹ In another, he attempted to influence not only the spirit, but also the contents of Blackwood's. "Laborious Essays," he wrote to William Blackwood, apparently referring to the Lake School of Poetry Series, "are very good as accessories, but the flesh and blood and bones [of a magazine] is information."²

Blackwood's response to Murray's lengthy protests was usually to write short reassuring letters. But either because he was too keen on success to interfere with the work of his two major writers, Wilson and Lockhart, or because he simply did not have enough control over them, he evidently failed to tame the mischievous spirit of his magazine. The violent personal attacks on individuals continued. In the number of the magazine for August 1818, the first to have Murray's name on the title-page, Keats, Hunt and Hazlitt were viciously attacked. Soon afterwards, Hazlitt started legal proceedings in a libel action against the magazine and its publisher which hung over the heads of William Blackwood and his partner for the following four months and which was settled only in December 1818. In October, it was the turn of the supporters of the Edinburgh Review, and Macvey Napier and Professor Playfair were singled out for Maga's violent

1. See Smiles, I, 485-86.

2. Smiles, I, 489.

abuse. In the same month, Thomas Moore was also attacked in the magazine. Murray became alarmed about the effect of his increasingly embarrassing association with Blackwood on his own reputation as a publisher. In November 1818, he promised Moore to give up all concern with the magazine "if it contained any more such personalities."¹

To make matters worse for the London publisher, two anonymous pamphlets were published within a month, in which Murray's connection with Blackwood was strongly condemned. In October 1818, after enumerating the sins of the magazine, the writer of Hypocrisy Unveiled and Calumny Detected urged Professor Playfair to bring legal action against "his flagitious libellers...and not tamely to suffer his professional character, or the interests of his colleagues, to be injured by monthly libels, indited for the base purpose of filling the pockets of Mr. John Murray and Mr. William Blackwood."² In the Letter to Mr. Murray of Albemarle Street, on the Occasion of his having undertaken the Publication in London of Blackwood's Magazine, (November 1818) "Monitor" upbraided Murray for publishing the work of "a horse-whipped bookseller" and "a convicted libeller," and called upon him "in the name of the insulted public to renounce the infamous Magazine."³

-
1. Thomas Moore, Memoirs, Journal, and Correspondence, ed. Lord John Russell (1853), II, 210.
 2. Hypocrisy Unveiled and Calumny Detected (1818), p. 41. This pamphlet is attributed to Macvey Napier in Halkett and Lang, Dictionary of Anonymous and Pseudonymous English Literature (1926-29). But see also Strout, C & W (p. 113n), where this pamphlet is ascribed to James Grahame.
 3. Letter to Mr. Murray (1818), p. 13.

Despite the notoriety of the magazine, and its persistence in its old excesses, Murray did not withdraw from the partnership until February 1819. What brought matters to the final crisis was, surprisingly enough, the review in the magazine of the non-existent "first edition" of Lockhart's Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk (February 1819) about which Murray wrote to William Blackwood on 29 February 1819, "I assure you it is degrading, and I should certainly feel ashamed of publishing it."¹ In the same letter Murray announced what was bound to happen sooner or later:

"I fear you will think me very troublesome in my correspondence about the magazine, but as my character is at stake, you must not be surprised at my anxiety to lose no more of it on this account. I am very far from wishing to trouble you, and if you wish to be quit of me, you have only to pay me off, and I will retire; but such things I cannot publish."²

During William Blackwood's visit to London late in February or early in March, his partnership with John Murray was dissolved.

Both Samuel Smiles and Mrs. Oliphant give January 1819 as the date when this partnership came to an end.³ It is important to correct this here, because Murray's disapproval of the review of Lockhart's Peter's Letters must have appeared to William Blackwood at the time the immediate cause of his decision to withdraw from *the magazine*. How far this affected the attitude of the magazine towards Byron,

1. Smiles, I, 494.

2. Ibid., p. 494.

3. The number for February 1819, which was published late that month had Murray's name originally printed on the title-page, and "T. Cadell and W. Davies, Strand, London" was pasted over it.

will soon become clear. The other aspect of the relationship between Murray and William Blackwood, which is not covered by the historians of their respective houses, is the further deterioration of that relationship after March 1819, and the dissolution of partnership, which reached its lowest point in November that year. The relevance of this further misunderstanding between Blackwood and Murray to the criticism of Byron's poetry in the magazine becomes evident when we remember that the first two cantos of Don Juan were published in July 1819. As a supplement to the history of the Murray-Blackwood partnership and as an introduction to the criticism of Byron's poetry in Blackwood's after 1819, I shall give here a brief account of the relationship between the two publishers in the period which immediately followed Murray's withdrawal from the joint ownership of the magazine. This account is mainly taken from the letters of William Davies to William Blackwood.

William Davies was the other partner of Cadell and Davies to whose firm Blackwood moved his London agency after Murray's withdrawal. Between February and December 1819, Davies wrote lengthy letters to Blackwood, which document in great detail the relationship between Murray and Blackwood in this period. From these letters we learn for instance that at the time when Murray had finally decided to withdraw from the ownership of the magazine, Blackwood was preparing to launch a philosophical journal to be edited by Professors Jamieson and Brewster and to be published jointly by Blackwood, Murray and Cadell and Davies.¹ In February

1. Letters of 9 and 25 February 1819 (NLS, MSS. 4004) from Cadell and Davies to William Blackwood, in William Davies's handwriting.

1819 Murray decided not to join in Blackwood's new plan. On the repeated invitations of Cadell and Davies, William Blackwood visited London late in the same month or early in March, and during this visit he and Murray agreed to end their partnership. Davies's letter of 31 March reports to William Blackwood on the sale of number 25 of the magazine, the first which the new agency handled. At the same time, in July 1819, when Murray published the first two cantos of Don Juan, Blackwood brought out the self-styled "second edition" of Lockhart's Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk.¹ Apparently without any link between the two actions, Blackwood refused to sell Don Juan on account of its immorality and indecency, and Murray, disapproving of the "personalities" of Lockhart's book, declined to subscribe to its sale.² This latter action must have been a severe blow to Blackwood and Lockhart, especially as, according to William Davies's reports, Peter's Letters did not sell well soon after its publication.

In the mean time, differences over the date and the mode of the payment for Murray's share of the magazine continued to be a cause of misunderstanding between the two publishers. Murray also continued to resent Blackwood's refusal to sell Don Juan in

-
1. There was no "first edition" of Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk. In a letter to William Blackwood dated 5 April 1819, Lockhart writes, "I hereby accept your offer of L 500 for the first Edition of Peter's Letters to consist of 2000 copies & to be paid for in the way you mention." (NLS, MSS. 4004) The reviews of that work that appeared in Blackwood's for December 1818, and February 1819 were a mild hoax.
 2. Letters of 20 and 21 July 1819 (NLS, MSS. 4004) from Davies to Blackwood.

his shop in Edinburgh, and when Byron's poem was strongly condemned by Blackwood's in August 1819, and again in November 1819, Murray finally decided to sever the last business link with the Northern publishers. In November he transferred his Edinburgh agency to Oliver & Boyd. Blackwood believed that Murray's action was the immediate result of the publication in the magazine for November of William Maginn's parody "Don Juan Unread."¹ On 14 December 1819, however, William Davies reported to William Blackwood, Murray's own account of his reasons for his action, which include William Blackwood's refusal to handle Don Juan, the offensive attacks on the Quarterly in his magazine, the personal attacks on Henry Brougham, and Blackwood's independent publication of Mrs. Hemans' Poems in which Murray was interested.²

i

This strained relation between the two rival publishers was bound to have an effect on the attitude of Blackwood's towards Byron. Yet four months before their partnership had come into being, it was John Murray who introduced Byron's poetry in their wrangling over the "personalities" of the magazine. Apparently early in

-
1. William Davies's letter to William Blackwood of 4 December 1819—NLS, MSS. 4004.
 2. William Davies's letter to William Blackwood of 14 December 1819 (NLS, MSS. 4004). Murray's complaint against Blackwood as reported by Davies agrees to a great extent with Murray's letter of 22 December 1819 to William Blackwood's brother Thomas. (Oliphant, I, 172-173).

1818 Murray sent William Blackwood an advertisement of the fourth Canto of Childe Harold to insert in the Scottish newspapers and magazines to which William Blackwood added his name. Murray was angered by Blackwood's action and on 24 April 1818 he wrote an indignant letter in which he criticised the Edinburgh publisher for adding his name "to the advertisement of so particular a book as the Fourth Canto of Childe Harold" when he knew "that scarcely any bookseller would take a book from you if he could by any means avoid it." In a rather lordly tone, Murray went on to say:

I appeal to the whole trade if I should not have been justified by your conduct, in putting upon you the affront of suddenly transferring the publication of this work to some other bookseller, and you may believe that I have not been without tempting proposals to do so—but finding from all quarters that you are at variance with the whole trade—I determined not to desert you,...

I have not time to write you so fully as I intended but my conduct on this occasion will I hope testify that I am not disposed to be unfriendly. I would however entreat you to consider well the course which you are pursuing—that man's actions cannot, I think you would allow in any other case, be perfectly right, who has excited the hostility of the whole brethren, nor can I think the fond feeling of success can altogether compensate for the loss of comfort which such a state naturally implies."¹

That Murray was referring to what he came to call later the "universal clamour against the personality" of the magazine is obvious from Blackwood's reply to this letter, which Mrs. Oliphant quotes in her history.² Unfortunately however, Mrs. Oliphant does not include Blackwood's reply to Murray's sharp criticism of his

1. NLS, MSS. 7937.

2. Oliphant, I, 160.

conduct in connection with Childe Harold.

Whatever his reaction might have been, Blackwood did not allow it to influence immediately the criticism of Byron's poetry in his magazine. But in the same number which contained Wilson's favourable review of the fourth canto of Childe Harold appeared a parody under the title "Fragment of a Fifth Canto of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, Dedicated to Mr. H[unt]," followed by "Notes chiefly written by M.H." There is nothing explicitly hostile to Byron in either the parody or the notes. Yet, it is an indication that the extreme reverence with which Byron's poetry had so far been treated in the magazine was now to be overcome by the Blackwood's contributors. In the following month (June 1818) the magazine contained the first serious attack on Byron in the "Letter to the Author of Beppo" by "Presbyter Anglicanus."

Alan Lang Strout has tentatively attributed this letter to Lockhart.¹ Although there is not strong enough evidence to justify Strout's ascription, it is likely that Lockhart was "Presbyter Anglicanus." Such a sudden change of attitude towards the same poet is not, of course, untypical of Wilson's appraisal of contemporary poets, but the style of the letter is closer to Lockhart's style. Secondly the letter, as well as the note that introduces it, is an explicit protest against Wilson's consistently favourable treatment of Byron in previous numbers of Blackwood's. Thirdly the condemnation of Beppo on moral, political, and

1. Strout, Bibliography, p. 42. Lockhart also defended this "Letter to the Author of Beppo" in his Peter's Letters, II, 217.

religious grounds is closer to Lockhart's criticism of Byron's poetry at that time.¹

In the introductory "Note to the Editor," *Presbyter Anglicanus* criticised the magazine for its excessive praise of Byron and for its failure to condemn the effect which his poetry "is likely to produce upon readers of superficial attainments or unsettled principles."² The letter itself repeated the often voiced criticism against some aspects of Byron's poetry which Lockhart believed "has lately received confirmation...from the publication of his *Beppo*."³ Byron had, Lockhart declared, sinned against his country and his birth. With him "heroism is lunacy, philosophy folly, virtue a cheat and religion a bubble":⁴

"In the great struggle between the good and the evil principle, you have taken the wrong side, and you enjoy the worthless popularity of a daring rebel...Men are not upon the whole quite so unprincipled,—nor women quite so foolish,—nor virtue so useless,—nor Religion so absurd,—nor Deception so lasting,—nor Hypocrisy so triumphant,—as your Lordship has been pleased to fancy."⁵

Although Lockhart did not deny that Byron is endowed with great talents, he believed that he could never rise to the status of a truly great poet, the equal of Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton.

-
1. See for instance "Thoughts on Public Feelings" in Blackwood's, for June 1818 (III, 297).
 2. Blackwood's, III, 323.
 3. Ibid., p. 323.
 4. Ibid., p. 326.
 5. Ibid., p. 327.

Those great poets "took our nature as it is but it was for the purpose of improving it," while Byron abused "the gifts of his God by rendering them the engines of corruption among his fellow-men."¹

More original is Lockhart's criticism of Byron's early poetry for its want of sincerity. At first,

"We gave you credit for being sincere in your affliction. We looked upon you as the victim of more than human misery, and sympathized with the extravagance of your public and uncontrollable lamentations...In time, however, we have become less credulous and more inquisitive; the farce was so often renewed, that we became weary of its wonders;... The first thing which made us suspect that we had₂ been played upon, was the vehemence of your outcries."²

Later, in writing about Byron, Lockhart was to criticise him as a poet for his lack of sincerity, and he often dismissed all the poetry Byron wrote before Don Juan as mere humbug. But at this earlier stage of his criticism, he attributed to the misanthropic poet a more sinister motive than innocent pretence. At the end of his letter Lockhart declared that there was as much of Byron in Count Beppo as in Childe Harold. He condemned the pretended sorrow and misanthropy in Byron's poetry and claimed that they were calculated to corrupt his readers:

"Under the pretence of making us partakers in a fictitious or exaggerated grief, you have striven to make us sympathize with all the sickly whims and phantasies of a self-dissatisfied and self-accusing spirit. That you were, as you have yourself told us, a dissipated, a sceptical, and therefore, for there was no other cause, a wretched man, was no reason why you should wish to make your readers devoid of religion, virtue, and happiness."³

1. Ibid., p. 325.

2. Blackwood's, III, 327.

3. Ibid., p. 327.

The "Letter to the Author of Beppo" is the strongest indication yet that Byron should not continue to expect the reverence and admiration that his poetry had received in Blackwood's between April 1817 and June 1818. Yet in comparison with what was to come it is not very severe.

ii

In the meantime, as we have seen, the connection between John Murray and William Blackwood continued to deteriorate. When the first two cantos of Don Juan were published anonymously and without the name of the publisher, William Blackwood had the chance to pay back to Murray some of the latter's criticism both against him personally and against the magazine. On 21 July 1819 he wrote to the London publisher:

"I received this morning by the coach 25 copies of Don Juan, but without any letter to tell me who had sent them. I am sorry to say it is a book which I could not sell on any account whatever. I have therefore laid the copies aside till I receive directions whether I shall send them back, or deliver them anywhere else. Had I not received a copy two days ago from the magazine, I should probably not have had time to have looked at it, but have sold the copies today without thinking about the matter. I hope you will not blame me for what I have done. I need not say how happy on all accounts I should have been if I could have done otherwise. You will see a note at p. 483 with regard to Don Juan."¹

It is almost certain that William Blackwood's "pique" with Murray and "disgust" with Don Juan which, he told William Maginn

1. Smiles, I, 404-5. See also William Blackwood's letter to William Maginn of June 1821 (Oliphant, I, 380-81).

on 19 June 1821, caused him to return the copies of the first two Canto to their publisher, were partly responsible for the virulent condemnation of the poem in his magazine. The note at p. 483 to which he referred in his letter to Murray, announced the impending review, and was as critical of Byron as his publisher.

"We have just received a copy of DON JUAN, (which we are happy to observe has not the respectable name of Lord Byron's Publisher on its Title-page), along with a "Letter" to the author of that most flagitious Poem, by "Presbyter Anglicanus." The "Letter" came to hand too late for insertion in this Number, but it will be the leading article in our next. It is indeed truly pitiable to think that one of the greatest Poets of the age should have written a Poem that no respectable Bookseller could have published without disgracing himself—but a Work so atrocious must not be suffered to pass into oblivion without the infliction of that punishment on its guilty author due¹ to such a wanton outrage on all most dear to human nature."

The promised review appeared in the magazine in August 1819. The claim for its authorship has been equally divided between Wilson and Lockhart. Byron himself believed that it was written by Wilson and said so in his letters and in his famous reply.² E.H. Coleridge accepted Byron's attribution,³ while Pratt considers Wilson to be at least an accomplice of Lockhart.⁴ On the other hand, Thomas Moore claimed that Byron was mistaken in attributing the article to Wilson.⁵ Wilson was also acquitted by E.R. Prothero⁶

1. Blackwood's, V, 483.

2. L&J, IV, 385, 425 and 494-95.

3. Byron; Poetical Work, VI, 213n.

4. Byron's Don Juan, ed. G.T. Steffan and W.W. Pratt (Austin: 1957), hereafter cited as Don Juan, Variorum Edition, IV, 296.

5. Letters and Journals of Lord Byron (1830), I, 292n.

6. L&J, IV, 385n.

and Malcolm Elwin.¹ Gilbert Macbeth was the first to state that "the evidence of style and thought is strongly indicative of Lockhart's pen."² Alan Lang Strout, who agrees with Macbeth, gives further evidence for Lockhart's authorship.³ At the beginning of this chapter I tried to establish what definitely looks like a motive for Lockhart's bitter attack on Don Juan in Murray's severe criticism of Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk (in February 1819) and in his refusal to assist in its sale in July. This seems to support the most recent attempts to assign this review of the first two cantos of Don Juan to Lockhart.

Moreover, the review of the first two cantos of Don Juan has much in common with Lockhart's reviews of other contemporary poems and in particular with his criticism of Byron and Shelley. It follows the same pattern of expressing great admiration for the poem as a literary achievement and strong objection to its contents on religious, political and moral grounds. The difference between this review and the "Letter to the Author of Beppo" for instance is that here Lockhart's praise for the literary qualities of the first two cantos of Don Juan is greater than his praise for Beppo, and his condemnation of its subject matter is more virulent. On the other hand, Wilson rarely mixes incense and mud in this way. He might write a series of startling and self-contradictory articles on Wordsworth or Coleridge, but his censure was neither mitigated

-
1. Victorian Wallflowers (1934), pp. 65-66.
 2. John Gibson Lockhart, p. 98.
 3. Strout, Bibliography, pp. 55-56.

nor his praise qualified in one and the same review. Secondly, the claim that a malignant and corrupting cynicism is behind Byron's deliberate attempt to undermine public morals is Lockhart's, not just because it is here taken from the "Letter to the Author of Beppo," but also because, as we shall see later, Lockhart himself took great pains afterwards to refute it, when he was influenced by Byron's own defence of his poem.

The "review of the first two cantos of Don Juan" is not entirely hostile towards Byron. On the contrary, there is much in the review to indicate that its severe condemnation arises out of sincere admiration for, and recognition of, Byron's great talents. At the beginning of the review, Don Juan is described as a "thorough and intense infusion of genius and profligacy."

"Had the wickedness been less inextricably mingled with the beauty and the grace, and the strength of a most inimitable and incomprehensible muse, our task would have been easy: but SILENCE would be a very poor and a very useless chastisement to be inflicted by us or by any one, on a production, whose corruptions have been so effectually embalmed—which, in spite of all that critics do or refrain from doing, nothing can possibly prevent from taking a big place in the literature of our country, and remaining to all ages a perpetual monument of the exalted intellect, and the depraved heart of one of the most remarkable men to whom that country¹ has had the honour and the disgrace of giving him birth.

Byron, Lockhart declares, "has never written anything more decisively and triumphantly expressive of the greatness of his genius...It is by far the most admirable specimen of the mixture of ease, strength, gayety, seriousness extant in the whole body of English poetry..."²

1. Blackwood's, V, 512.

2. Ibid., p. 512.

However, Lockhart's condemnation of the poem is equally strong. We have already seen how he questions the innocence of Byron's motives in writing the poem. Byron is described as "a cool unconcerned fiend laughing with a detestable glee over the whole of the better and worse elements of which human life is composed, treating well nigh with equal derision the most pure of virtues and the most odious of vices." "The moral strain of the whole poem is pitched in the lowest key."¹

"To lay bare to the eye of man and of woman all the hidden convulsions of a wicked spirit—thoughts too abominable... to have been imagined by any but him that has expressed them—and to do all this without one symptom of pain, contrition, remorse or hesitation, with a calm careless ferociousness of contented and satisfied depravity... was an insult which no wicked man of genius had ever² before dared to put upon his Creator or his species."

Lockhart also condemned the poem for its political cynicism and religious irreverence. Not only love and honour, but also patriotism and religion "are mentioned only to be scoffed at." Byron was "devoid of religion, hope and charity." His impious railing against God equalled only his disloyalty to his sovereign and country.

It is, however, for Byron's satirical portrait of his wife that Lockhart reserved his strongest denunciation. Only "the odious malignity of this man's bosom" he declared, "should have carried him so far as to make him commence his filthy and impious poem with an elaborate satire on the character of his wife."

1. Ibid., p. 513.

2. Ibid., p. 513.

(Lockhart commented on the satirical mode of the poem only in connection with Byron's sarcastic allusions to individuals). Such an offence provoked the most indignant denunciation of a contemporary poem that ever appeared in Blackwood's. Lockhart described it as "brutally, fiendishly, inexplicably mean."

"For impurities there might be some possibility of pardon, were they supposed to spring only from the reckless buoyancy of young blood and fiery passions,—for impiety there might at least be pity, were it visible that the misery of the impious soul were as great as its darkness,—but for offences such as this, which cannot proceed either from the madness of sudden impulse, or bewildered agonies of self-perplexing and self-despairing doubt—but which speak the wilful and determined spite of an unrepenting, unsoftened, smiling, sarcastic, joyous sinner—for such diabolical, such slavish vice, there can be neither pity nor pardon."¹

Lady Byron could only find consolation in that "she shares the shameful satire of her husband, not only with that good, and pure, and high in human nature—its principles and its feelings, but with...the lofty minded and virtuous men whom Lord Byron has debased himself by insulting."²

After so virulent a condemnation, Lockhart still claims that his indignation in regard to the morality of the poem has not blinded him to "its manifold beauties." He praises the superior kind of poetry in the conception "of the love affair between Juan and Haidee, but deploras Byron's cruel barbarity in creating "so much beauty only to mar and ruin it." Lockhart's praise of the shipwreck scene is perhaps the highest that Byron ever received in Blackwood's.

1. Ibid., p. 514.

2. Ibid., p. 512.

"But the best and the worst part of the whole is without doubt the description of the shipwreck. As a piece of terrible painting, it is as much superior as can be to every description of the kind—not even excepting that in the Aeneid—that ever was created. In comparison with the fearful and intense reality of its horrors, every thing that any former poet had thrown together to depict the agonies of that awful scene, appears chill and tame."¹

Yet, here again Lockhart deplures Byron's "depravity" in laughing at such scenes of human misery.

iii

Byron was indignant when he read Lockhart's "Remarks on Don Juan." On 10 December 1819 he wrote to John Murray:

"I perceive Mr. Blackwood Magazine and one or two of others of your missives have been hyperbolic in their praise, and diabolical in their abuse. I like and admire Wilson, and he should not have indulged himself in such outrageous license; it is overdone and defeats itself. What would he say to the grossness without passion, and the misanthropy without feeling, of Gulliver's Travels? When he talks of Lady Byron's business, he talks of what he knows nothing about; and you may tell him that no one can more desire a public investigation of that affair than I do."²

Byron's indignation was presumably too strong to be confined to his confidential letters to his publisher. In the same letter he suggested to Murray to let John Wilson, whom he believed to be guilty of the review, to read his own recently written memoirs "not for his public opinion but his private, for I like the man and care

1. Ibid., p. 518. The phrase "intense reality" is by itself a sufficient evidence of Lockhart's authorship. It was one of his favourite terms of praise. Cf. his Preface to The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe (1820), p. liii.

2. L&J, IV, 384-85.

little about the magazine."¹ Byron was somewhat disingenuous in this avowal of indifference to the criticism of his poem in Blackwood's. As we shall see in a later chapter of this thesis, Byron incorporated his first public reply to Lockhart's criticism of the first two cantos in the fourth canto of his poem, which he was writing when he read Lockhart's review.

One further evidence that Byron was still extremely annoyed by the attack in Blackwood's is that even after incorporating the disguised reply to it in the new cantos, he went back on his decision not to answer his critics,² and soon after he sent the new cantos to John Murray, he proceeded to compose a formal reply to Blackwood's. On 23 March 1820 he wrote to his publisher: "I am foaming an answer (in prose) to the Blackwood article of the last August."³ This reply was completed and sent to Murray towards the end of March 1820, but since the "Reply to Blackwood's Magazine" was not published before 1835, it had no bearing on the criticism of Byron's poetry in Blackwood's during the period covered in this thesis. However, it helps us to understand Byron's reaction to the first review of Don Juan in Blackwood's, and it is only right to point out here that Byron himself thought that Lockhart's review had nothing but praise for his poem as a poem.⁴

1. Ibid., p. 475.

2. L&J, IV, 384.

3. Ibid., p. 422.

4. Ibid., p. 475.

What he strongly objected to was the personal attack on him, and his reply is almost entirely devoted to answering the accusations against his conduct of his personal life, his responsibility for the breakdown of his marriage, his cruel satire on Lady Byron and his self-imposed exile. The only parts of his reply that touch upon literary issues is Byron's defence of his contempt for Wordsworth and Southey and of his exaltation of Pope and Dryden. In other words, having already replied to his critic's attack on the poem, in canto IV, he made no attempt to answer the several charges of indecency, immorality, blasphemy and of having wicked designs on public morals, which Lockhart levelled against him in the review of the first two cantos of Don Juan. It is important therefore, to treat Byron's reply to his critics at the beginning and the end of canto IV as a significant part of Byron's reaction to Lockhart's review in Blackwood's.

Whether or not Byron continued to have an interest in the reception of his poems in the magazine, is difficult to say. In a letter to Thomas Moore dated 8 August 1822, Byron indignantly denies having seen the magazine "(except in Galignani extracts) for these three years past."¹ But R.M. Wardle argues that "Byron's professed ignorance of Blackwood's is not to be taken seriously—he adopted it only to display genteel disdain for its attacks on him."² Wardle also produces rather tenuous evidence

1. L&J, VI, 100.

2. Ralph M. Wardle, "The Motives for Byron's George Russel of A," MLN, LXI (1950) 179-183.

to prove that Byron was always anxious to know what Blackwood's had to say about him, and that in December 1821 Byron wrote the prose fragment "The Life and Writings of George Russell of A." as a satire on the Blackwoodians. If this be the case, the rest of Byron's works as well as his private letters and recorded conversations show that he had exemplary self-control in the face of the extreme provocation from Blackwood's, especially in the last two years of his life.

CHAPTER VII

THE FIRST DEFENCE OF DON JUAN: JOHN HERMAN MERIVALE
AND BYRON.

Of all the contemporary critics who attempted to defend Byron during the violent outcry that followed the publication of the first two cantos of Don Juan, John Herman Merivale, the friend of Byron's youth, has hitherto received so little attention that to devote a short chapter to one of his articles in Blackwood's is certainly justified. Leigh Hunt's brave, albeit ineffective defence in the Examiner has been amply rewarded by the gratitude of modern admirers of Byron's masterpiece. Similarly John Scott's somewhat equivocal judgement on the morality of Don Juan, and Lockhart's more spirited criticism of the poem have been duly resurrected and sufficiently recognized by modern scholars. Even Francis Jeffrey's belated, and extremely reserved praise for Byron's achievement has not been neglected. Yet Merivale's criticism of the first two cantos of Don Juan has largely been overlooked, though it contained a greater critical insight into Byron's intentions and performance than Leigh Hunt's dogmatic defence in the Examiner, and anticipated much of Scott's, Lockhart's and Jeffrey's criticism of the poem. Merivale, for instance, was the first of Byron's contemporaries to defend the legitimacy of Byron's satire in Don Juan, as well as the first to introduce into the public controversy over the morality of the first two cantos, the argument

from precedent, which Byron often repeated in his private letters to his publisher and friends.¹ Merivale's criticism of the first two cantos of Don Juan occupies the larger part of a published letter to Christopher North which he wrote for Blackwood's Magazine in December 1819, entitled "Remarks on some of our late Numbers; by a Liberal Whig" and signed Metrodorus.² As Merivale's early friendship with Byron on the one hand, and his connection with Blackwood's on the other, account for a great deal in his defence of Don Juan, a rapid review of both these connections will provide the necessary introduction to this short chapter.

-
1. J.O. Hayden claims that the anonymous reviewer of cantos III-V of Don Juan in the Monthly Magazine for September 1821, was the first to give the "long overdue" definition of the genre of Byron's poem (The Romantic Reviewers, 1802-1824 [1969], p. 155). Yet in this, Merivale anticipated the Monthly reviewer by nearly two years.

The argument from precedent was publicly advanced by Byron for the first time in August 1821 (Don Juan IV, xcvi) and was later used by Jeffrey (Edinburgh Review [February 1822], XXXI, 448) and by Lockhart (Blackwood's [September 1823], XIV, 283). In December 1819 Merivale used the same argument to defend Don Juan.

2. For Merivale's pseudonyms, "Liberal Whig" and "Metrodorus" see Strout, Bibliography, p. 52. Further evidence of Merivale's authorship of these series of letters (not cited by Strout) may be found in the letters of Merivale to William Blackwood. After contributing a second letter from the "Liberal Whig" (Blackwood's, February 1820), Merivale wrote to William Blackwood, on 19 March 1820, "I fear you will be heartily tired of the moderate whig, for whom, however, I pledge myself that he shall not trouble you with his reflections any longer than you express yourself disposed to receive them."—NLS, MSS. 4005.

An account of Merivale's friendship with Byron between 1805 and 1816 is inevitably very sketchy, since it has to be compiled from the occasional references to Merivale in Byron's Letters and Journals, Merivale's own account in his Leaves from the Diary of a Literary Amateur, and such memoirs as those of Francis Hodgson, by his son J.T. Hodgson, and of Thomas, the first Lord Denman, by Sir Joseph Arnould. When Thomas Moore was editing Byron's letters and journals, he asked Merivale for the material in his possession and received from him "two packets" of letters and memoirs,¹ but with the exception of one letter from Byron to Merivale, Moore unfortunately did not include any of the contents of Merivale's packets. As a result there is hardly any reference to Merivale in Leslie A. Marchand's biography of Byron, or in Peter Quennell's Byron, the Years of Fame, the years apparently, during which Merivale and Byron saw much of each other.

What little we know about the personal relationship between Merivale and Byron can be summed up in very few words. They first met at Harrow in 1805 where Byron was still a school boy and Merivale was a frequent visitor to the house of the headmaster Dr. Joseph Drury, whose only daughter, Louisa Heath, he married in the same year.² At Harrow, Merivale was also a member of the

1. See Letters of Thomas Moore, ed., Wilfred S. Dowden, 1964, II, 641.

2. Leaves from the Diary of a Literary Amateur, ed. E.H.A. Koch (1911), p. 17.

"social club or circle" to which belonged a number of Byron's later friends, such as Henry Drury (who was then Byron's tutor) Robert Bland and particularly Francis Hodgson.¹ Through these friendships they evidently became better acquainted in later years, especially after Byron's return to London from his tour of Greece and Asia Minor in 1811, when Byron and Hodgson became close associates. Yet Byron's Letters and Journals record only one visit by Merivale to the poet on 19 March 1814,² and in the Leaves from the Diary of a Literary Amateur Merivale recalls no more than four meetings with Byron.³ In October 1811 Merivale was apparently one of the friends with whom Byron spent a few days at Harry Drury's house, and in February 1815 Merivale was present at one of the meetings between the poet and Sir Walter Scott,⁴ at John Murray's drawing room in Albemarle Street. What is certain, however, is that although Byron was occasionally very critical of Hodgson and some of his friends, he liked and admired

1. J.T. Hodgson, Memoir of the Rev. Francis Hodgson (1878), I, 227.

2. L&J, II, 392-3.

3. Leaves from the Diary, pp. 19-20.

4. Merivale does not give the dates of these two meetings with Byron, but since Thomas Denman, whom Merivale remembers to have been present, met Byron only once, Merivale probably refers to the same meeting. (Sir Thomas Arnould, Memoir of Thomas First Lord Denman [1873], I, 82-83). Merivale is not mentioned in Walter Scott's account of his meetings with Byron in February 1815, but since Byron and Scott met at Murray's almost every day for nearly two months (Lockhart, Life of Scott [Boston and New York; 1902], III, p. 29) it is possible that Merivale saw them together.

Merivale.¹

However, the literary side of Merivale's connection with Byron is better documented. Merivale's interest in poetry first attracted Byron's attention in 1806, when in collaboration chiefly with Robert Bland he published Translations chiefly from the Greek Anthology. Byron was impressed by the performance and remembered three years later to address few lines in English Bards and Scotch Reviewers to Bland and Merivale. Ironically enough, at the same time as the Greek Anthology was published, Merivale was engaged in introducing to the English readers the works of another poet, whose influence (through John Hookem Frere's Whistlecraft) was to prove the greatest turning point in the development of Byron's poetry; for, in the summer of 1805, Merivale tells us in the preface to the second volume of his collected poems "it was his fortune to fall in with the works of Luigi Pulci";² and between May 1806 and July 1807 Merivale published in the Monthly Magazine a series of nine articles, in which he gave an account of the life of Pulci and his age, and a prose summary of Morgante Maggiore interspersed with the translations of numerous stanzas.

1. On 29 June 1811, Byron wrote to Hodgson from Greece: "I regretted very much having omitted to carry the Anthology with me." In English Bards and Scotch Reviewers, Byron addressed Merivale and Bland as "associate bards":

Whose mingling taste combined to cull the wreath
Where Attic flowers Aonian odours breathe,
And all their renovated fragrance flung
To grace the beauties of your native tongue.

2. John Herman Merivale, Poems, Original and Translated (1844), II, 1.

In this first attempt, Merivale was opening new horizons for the English readers, and his chief concern was to present Pulci in what seemed to him in the most favourable light, and vindicate him from the reputation of being merely a burlesque poet. In his first article in the Monthly Magazine he declares that "Luigi Pulci deserves a higher rank in the poetical scale than late authors have been inclined to give him,"¹ indeed, he has a right, Merivale believes, to be classed with such poets as Ariosto, and Boiardo, who wrote in the tradition of poetry which started with Morgante. For this reason Merivale deliberately selected from Pulci's poem the more serious stanzas for his translation, and left out "the common jests which had fixed on the romance the reputation of the burlesque."² The result, as R.D. Waller observes,^{is that} "the most characteristic parts of the poem are not represented at all."³

Apparently Byron did not know about Merivale's first attempt at translating Pulci. But in 1814 Merivale published Orlando in Roncesvalles, a poem in ottava rima, in which he developed the last canto of Pulci's Morgante into a five canto poem of his own. Here again Merivale was anxious to avoid what he called "the defects" of Pulci's style of poetry; the incongruous, half-serious, irreverent, and free and colloquial style, which Byron was to make

1. The Monthly Magazine, XXI (1806), 305.

2. Ibid., p. 512 n.

3. R.D. Waller, The Monks and the Giants (1926), p. 27.

his own in Beppo and Don Juan. Merivale strove "to preserve an epic and heroic atmosphere, an elevated and earnest tone."¹ Byron read Merivale's Orlando and professed to admire it. In January 1814, he wrote to the author: "You have written a very noble Poem, and nothing but the detestable taste of the day can harm you."² Yet, Orlando in Roncesvalles did not leave any lasting impression on Byron.

Although Merivale in 1806 and in 1814 did not appreciate Pulci's jesting, his poetry apparently became more acceptable to him after the publication of Frere's Whistlecraft in 1817 and 1818. In the summer of 1819 he started the translation of Ricciardetto of Fortiguerra,³ and in May 1820 he published the first two cantos under the title Richardetto. Merivale's translation was more successful with the ottava rima and the light-hearted style of poetry, than it had been in his earlier attempts with Pulci.

Although Byron was probably not influenced at all by any of Merivale's attempts at the translation and imitation of this style of poetry, he recognized in him a fellow-admirer of Pulci. When in 1820 Byron made his own attempt at translating the Morgante,

1. Ibid., p. 27.

2. L&J, III, 5.

3. Merivale must have finished his translation just before the first two cantos of Don Juan were published and his "Dedication to the Public" is dated July 1819. In February 1820 he sent to William Blackwood either specimens of Richardetto or another poem in the Italian heroi-comic style of poetry (Merivale's letter of 2 February 1820, NLS, MSS. 4005) which William Blackwood evidently declined to publish.

Merivale was one of the few friends whom Byron advised Murray to consult about its publication.¹ In the advertisement to his translation, which was publicized in The Liberal in 1823, he describes the Orlando in Roncesvalles as an excellent poem.² Finally, Byron paid Merivale a last compliment when in the "Reply to the Article in Blackwood's" he included his name among the contemporary disciples of Pope.³

Merivale's intimate knowledge of the tradition of this kind of poetry, which found its ultimate consummation in Don Juan, made him one of the few of Byron's contemporaries qualified to judge the first two cantos of Byron's poem in 1819. Moreover, Lockhart's attack on these cantos induced him to come forward in defence of an old friend.

ii

Merivale's connection with Blackwood's Magazine had begun in the summer of 1818. In a letter to his Welsh friend, the Rev. David Williams, Lockhart wrote probably in August 1818, "Mr. Merivale, the author of 'Orlando at Rouncevalles'...has agreed to write a great deal and I think his knowledge of old French and Italian books may render him a most valuable hand."⁴ What attracted

1. L&J, IV, 417.

2. Byron: Poetical Works, IV, 383.

3. L&J, IV, 495.

4. Oliphant, I, 191. Merivale met William Blackwood in London in the summer of 1818, and on Blackwood's request undertook to write for the magazine—Merivale's letters to William Blackwood, of 31 October 1818, and of 19 January 1819, NLS, MSS. 4003 and 4004.

Merivale to the new magazine, was that unlike the Quarterly, the Monthly and the Critical Reviews, for which he had written earlier, Blackwood's gave greater opportunities for more original writings. Yet the amount of Merivale's contributions to the magazine between August 1818 and December 1819, cannot be described as a "great deal." The reason for this, and equally for Merivale's intervention on behalf of Byron, was his strong objection to the extreme "personality" of the magazine. In the Blackwood Papers there are several letters from Merivale to William Blackwood, in which the former repeatedly criticised what he called the "delinquencies" of the magazine. Of these letters I quote here only the ones which strongly express Merivale's objections.

On 31 October 1818, Merivale wrote to William Blackwood:

"Some of your contributors, particularly in the reviewing department, have seemed to use the critical tomahawk with a little too much of the unsparing fierceness which generally characterises the first feeling of being possessed of so dangerous & powerful a weapon, and in most instances subsides by degrees into a more settled tone of moderation & justice— & I hope this will be the case with the writers to whom I allude. I am also at issue with you as to some—I believe I may say most—of your politics, but as that is a subject on which I have never had any inclination to wield the pen, we shall not be the worse friends for a difference of opinion respecting it."¹

Needless to say that Merivale's hopes for more moderation in the magazine were not realized. For Blackwood's continued to indulge

1. NLS, MSS. 4003. Merivale did however wield his pen on the subject of politics and wrote for the magazine two series of "Letters from a Liberal Whig," of which the first was mainly on Don Juan, criticising the exaggeration of the extreme Tory political views of the magazine. The first series of these letters appeared between December 1819 and April 1820, and the second, between January 1835 and June 1836.

into its fierce "personalities," which eventually led to the dissolution of the short-lived partnership between William Blackwood and John Murray in March 1819. On 22 June 1819, Merivale wrote to William Blackwood:

"I had also intended to take the liberty of addressing to you some observations, to which I have thought that too many articles in your late magazine give sufficient occasion, on the subject which we entered upon when I saw you in London & which gave rise to the separation between yourself and Murray. But all I can now say on the subject is merely to suggest to you that, whatever may be the state of parties & things at Edinburgh, or the taste of your readers there, I am satisfied, from what I see & hear in the Southern Regions that both the sale & character of your Work have been most materially impeded by the unwarrantable licence assumed by some of your most frequent Contributors—& this as much among those who are generally attached to Government Interests as their opponents. In this respect I cannot help thinking that your two or three last numbers have been more peccant than most preceding ones.

I trust you will forgive the freedom of these remarks which I am unable at present...to pursue further or qualify with any more favourable judgement on other parts of your miscellany, but I think you may still essentially serve the Interests₁ of the work by a timely adoption of a different system."

Again on 13 August 1819, Merivale addressed to William Blackwood a strongly worded letter on the same subject:

"I expressed myself rather strongly with respect to what I thought the delinquencies of your magazine in the last letter I wrote you—but you will remember that you invited me to do so whenever I should see occasion. The parts I thought particularly offensive were the reiterated & (as I thought) vulgar attacks on Playfair in various articles & still more the trash which you doled out to us so unmercifully from the New Whig Guide, which really seemed to me to contain only two or three tolerably witty hits—all the rest being below

1. NLS, MSS. 4004.

contempt. The article on Leyden was surely very ill-natured and illiberal as well as showing (in my opinion at least) the writer's utter want of good taste & feeling, & discrimination. In thus expressing myself, I make use of the Freedom you desired of me—and indeed it is only on the occasional employment of such Freedom that any good can arise from the suggestions of others; so that I am sure you will excuse it in consideration of the motive. I fear you are now degenerating into too much of a mere Review & wish that my other employments would give me sufficient leisure to furnish you with more materials of a miscellaneous nature."

After such criticism of the magazine, it is not surprising that, when Lockhart made a personal attack on Byron in the first review of the first two cantos of Don Juan, Merivale turned these private letters to Blackwood into a more formal series of letters which were addressed to Christopher North and written to be published in the magazine. The first of them appeared in December 1819, and was mainly devoted to Merivale's remarks on Lockhart's review of the first two cantos of Don Juan.

-
1. NLS, MSS. 4004. The articles which Merivale refers to in his letter are "Letter to the Reverend Professor Laugner [Playfair], occasioned by his Writings in the Königsberg [Edinburgh] Review" by Lockhart (Blackwood's, III, 689ff.); "The Poetical Remains of the late Dr. John Leyden" by Wilson (Blackwood's, V, 3ff); "The New Whig Guide" by Wilson (Blackwood's, V, 89ff) and "A Few Remarks on the New Whig Guide" by Wilson (Blackwood's, V, 197ff.).

In reply to Merivale's repeated criticism of the magazine, John Wilson, signing himself "Christopher North," wrote to him in December 1819:

"Allow me to thank you very sincerely for your various communications & also for the Opinions which you have, from time to time, given of our miscellany.

I am not ignorant of your talents & acquirements, and I am disposed to attend with respect & deference to your sentiments on any subjects.

An Editor of a periodical work, however, must conduct it on those principles that seem best to his own judgement—, and though he ought to avail himself at every hint & suggestion from men of talent, he ought not to yield up his own convictions and must not hope to please equally men of all Parties."—NLS, MSS.4004.

Merivale's feeling of loyalty to an old friend, his intimate knowledge of the tradition of poetry in which Don Juan was written, and above all the personal attack on Byron in Blackwood's, induced him to intervene and try to bring some sanity into the general hysterical reactions to the first two cantos. He chose Blackwood's for expressing his dissent from the almost unanimous condemnation of Byron's poem by reviewers and pamphleteers, and he began his letter to Christopher North by criticising Blackwood's itself for partaking in this exaggerated hostility towards Byron's new poem;

"I do not much admire your criticisms on Lord Byron's new poem. I have lately read his formidable Don Juan; and, while I agree as to its transcendent merit, both as a work of imagination, and a general satire on men and manners, I cannot subscribe to the overstrained and somewhat hypocritical tone of abhorrence which it is the fashion to adopt with respect to it, on the alleged scores of morality and religion."¹

Merivale attributes the universal condemnation of Don Juan to the "unpopularity of Byron's moral character and conduct," "the absurd mystery which enveloped the publication of Don Juan," to the rumours about suppressed libellous attacks on individuals in Byron's original manuscript, and, above all, to "the spirit of universal exaggeration" which Merivale describes as "the grand master vice."²

However, Merivale, who had been brought up under a strict Presbyterian discipline, concedes that the poem "contains very

1. Blackwood's, VI, 287.

2. Ibid., p. 287.

high-wrought descriptions of the voluptuous kind, which may render it a dangerous book in the hands of young and inflammable persons." But, and here Merivale becomes the first to advance the argument from precedent in defence of Don Juan:

"this is a charge to which it is obnoxious only in common with a great many other seductive works of fancy and genius, about which no such mighty stir has been made, and to which no such violent exception was ever taken, even though they might be accidentally found on the shelves of a young lady's library."¹

Even the criticism at the expense of the Scriptural phrases and religious doubts in Don Juan are less objectionable than some parts of Childe Harold.

Merivale also deploras Byron's satire on individuals, especially "when it is levelled at one injured individual in particular."

"But where his satire is general, it is often as well directed as it is keen and irresistible. Witness his strictures on education, (canto i. st. 40, &c.; canto ii. st. 1, &c.)—on crim. con. actions, (i. 64)—on passion and hypocrisy, (i. 73)—his fine lecture on "Lead us not into temptation," (i. 80)—on self-deception, (i. 83, 106, &c.)—on the vanity of human wishes, (i. 218)."³

1. Ibid., p. 288.

2. Ibid., p. 289. When Merivale published his Richardetto, he took pains to address a "Dedication to the Public" to save himself the imputation of writing a satire on individuals, because,

"there's a float a vague and idle rumour
(which painfully I have sometime contradicted)
That you won't understand any harmless humour
And see no joke when no wound is inflicted
And that is the cause (they say) you never laugh'd
Sufficiently with good friend Whistlecraft."

—Poems Original and Translated (1844), II, 137.

3. Blackwood's, VI, 289.

Merivale's intimate knowledge of the Italian Romantic tradition and the characteristic use of deflationary incongruities in its style of poetry enabled him to appreciate fully Byron's achievement.

"The levity with which the poet turns the terrors and sublimities of his own genius into ridicule, so far from converting into matter of serious charge against him, I consider with admiration, as affording the highest evidence of its astonishing and overwhelming superiority, and of his magnificent consciousness of his own power, which makes him love to sport with the passions he has himself excited in the breasts of his readers. To speak of it as evincing a complete depravation of mind and intellect, argues nothing, I think, but malice,¹ stupidity, or degree of prejudice bordering on both."

Finally Merivale defends Byron against the fierce personal attack which Lockhart made on him in the August number of the magazine. In reply to Lockhart's description of Byron "as a cool, unconcerned fiend," Merivale asserts:

"for my own part, I hold Lord Byron to be neither god nor devil, nor a being partly one and partly the other, but a mere man, with very uncommon talents, and at least an equal proportion of faults;"²

Whether or not Merivale's defence of Don Juan had any influence on the criticism of the later instalments in Blackwood's is not easy to decide. But the first indication of a change of attitude in the magazine towards Don Juan appeared in a footnote at the end of Merivale's "Remarks from a Liberal Whig," in which the editor (probably John Wilson) claimed that he had selected Merivale's letter out of thirty others, "on account of its sense, liveliness and spirit," and that he could "scarcely believe it possible that METRODORUS can be a Whig."³

1. Blackwood's, VI, 288-289.

2. Ibid., p. 289.

3. Ibid., p. 287 n.

CHAPTER VIII

LOCKHART ON DON JUAN

It would have been surprising had Lockhart continued to hold the same hostile views of Don Juan as those which he expressed in his review of the first two cantos. Temperamentally he was of a completely different cast from Byron. Nothing can be more unlike Byron's predilection for outspoken self dramatisation than Lockhart's extreme diffidence and "withdrawn hidalgo airs."¹ Yet, the satirical turn of mind was even more predominant in Lockhart than in Byron. Walter Scott considered his powers of personal satire as "an odious [and most dangerous] accomplishment."² In the self portrait in Peter's Letters, Lockhart wrote apologetically about his own satirical talent, when he described it as "a turn for pleasantry" that

"rather inclines to exercise itself in a light and good-humoured play of fancy, upon the incongruities and absurd relations which are so continually presenting themselves in the external aspect of the world, than to gratify a sardonic bitterness in exulting over them."³

The change in Lockhart's attitude to Byron's satirical epic was almost inevitable, and when Lockhart wrote again on Don Juan early

-
1. Francis R. Hart, Lockhart as Romantic Biographer (1971) p. 251. See also Lang, I, 273-274.
 2. See Letters of Sir Walter Scott, ed. H.J.C. Grierson, et al. (1932-7), VI, 227, letter of July 1820 to John B.S. Morritt.
 3. Peter's Letters, III, 137.

in 1821, his favourable criticism was probably more sincere, and less consciously self-righteous, than his denunciation of the first two cantos.

Moreover, between 1819 and 1822 Lockhart published a number of works, the writing of which helped him to gain a better insight into Byron's method, and aims, in Don Juan. Although Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk and Don Juan are hardly comparable in many respects, the intention behind Lockhart's prose-picture of Scottish society in the first quarter of the nineteenth century is not vastly different from that behind the verse narrative of the adventures of Byron's hero. Each work sets out to criticise the society that it portrays. Byron attacks the "cant," and hypocrisy, of English society from a radical point of view, and in the name of sincerity, while, as Francis R. Hart suggests, the Tory "Peter Morris" is "the embodiment of...a criticism of a Scotland untrue to its own national culture."¹ Similar uproar attended the publication of both works, though, owing to Byron's considerably greater fame, the outcry against Don Juan was more vehement, and more widespread. But as we have already seen, even the publisher of Don Juan found Peter's Letters objectionable on account of its "personality."

More relevant to his criticism of the later instalments of Don Juan is Lockhart's biographical sketch of Defoe, which was

1. Lockhart as Romantic Biographer, p. 61. Mrs. Oliphant goes as far as calling Peter's Letters a "criticism of life" (Oliphant, I, 220). See also Lang, (I, 219) for the comparison between Lockhart and Carlyle as critics of Scottish culture.

published in 1820.¹ This was Lockhart's first exercise in the art of biography, and in it he displayed the same sympathetic understanding towards his subject that later characterised his lives of Burns, and Scott. In this biographical sketch, Lockhart represented Defoe as a man of genius who was constantly misunderstood by his contemporaries. Defoe's satire, and his irony, Lockhart maintained, were "too exquisite to be understood by judge and jury," and because of them he was pilloried once, and imprisoned twice. Lockhart did not, naturally enough, mention Byron in his sketch of Defoe, nor did he see any parallel between Defoe's misfortunes, which he attributed to the "blindness and want of perception" of his contemporaries, and the contemporary hostility towards Byron. Yet, Lockhart's account of how a writer is liable to misinterpretation by his readers because of his mode of writing anticipates much of his later defence of Don Juan. It is also interesting to notice how Lockhart praised the same qualities in Defoe's novels that only a few months earlier he vehemently denounced in Don Juan.

"Every thought that passed through the mind of the hero is set down, and we feel that there would be a want of candour in refusing to see what it was; we are gained over to his side, even if he be a villain, by the honesty with which he lets us into the secrets of his inmost heart. The nature that is so communicative cannot be entirely depraved; the charm of frankness and confidence overcomes and subdues us. The reader is made the father confessor of him that addresses him, and it would be a breach of duty to turn a deaf ear to any thing he has to say."²

-
1. See Appendix III for the proof of Lockhart's authorship of his first and hitherto unknown biographical composition.
 2. Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe (1820), pp. liv-lv.

The "candour" with which Defoe portrays his heroes and heroines enhances the sense of "intense reality" which he throws around his fiction. Lockhart's definition of the realism of Defoe's novels is also pertinent in his later criticism of Don Juan. Defoe, Lockhart maintains, "paints not only the minute items of life and action exactly as they are, but its whole scope and tenour also is [sic] viewed and represented by him, and by him alone, exactly as it is [sic]." ¹ While other novelists are only "painters...of the ideal of excitement":

"Defoe on the other hand always shews himself to be perfectly aware, that the prosaic part of existence is far greater than the poetic; that mountains are ever succeeded and separated by valleys; that the most romantic avenue often conducts into a dull and level wide-ness of plain...His lovers are not always married; nor do his duellists always escape. The same laws by which men and things are governed in the world, govern them in his representations of the world; an unforeseen storm sinks the fairest vessel into the sea, with all her equipment; absence cools the most ardent lovers; time consoles the most despairing mourners; the sonneteer burns his sonnets, and learns to laugh at himself; and the widow's heart is made to sing aloud for joy." ² His women are never angels, nor his misers sentimental." ²

Lockhart's admiration for the realism of Defoe's novels is not only reminiscent of his favourable criticism of the "intense reality" of the first instalment of Don Juan, particularly of the shipwreck scene in Canto II, but also anticipates his later praise for Byron for drawing his materials from nature. ³

1. Ibid., p. lviii.

2. Ibid., pp. lviii-lix.

3. See for instance Strout, John Bull's Letter, p. 93.

Within less than three years of his first denunciation of Don Juan, Lockhart found himself accused by contemporary reviewers of committing, in Adam Blair, the same offences for which he himself had denounced Don Juan. Jeffrey found Lockhart's story of the Scottish minister who succumbed to the temptation of his passion, "neither very pleasing nor very moral," and "revolting in its details."¹ Nor were old enemies such as Jeffrey, and the reviewers in Constable's Edinburgh Magazine and the London Magazine alone in attacking Adam Blair. It also offended some of the Blackwood's supporters. Thus, on 5 March 1822, George Croly wrote to William Blackwood:

"Adam Blair seems a very clever performance...But it has probably suggested itself to you that the conduct of the story involves unnecessary & repulsive offence. Whether a Scottish parson is allowed to be capable of so worldly a sentiment as love—I cannot say—but if he should be, it seems probable that his commission of a gross crime is a gratuitous heightening of the wildness & despair & impatient and incurable misery in which an ardent spirit may be plunged by too headlong a submission to the even nobler impulses of human feelings—of which love be the noblest. The author has fine faculties for moral writings...but Adam Blair ought not to have committed the vulgar offence of vulgar licentiousness. He might have loved, struggled & withered away till he perished before man's eyes, like the waning moon, but like it to the last pure, bright and sublime."²

Ironically enough, Lockhart used the same argument in defending his novel as that which Byron often used in replying^{to} the censure of

1. Edinburgh Review, XXXIX, 185 and 186. Stronger condemnation of Adam Blair appeared in Constable's Edinburgh Magazine [N.S. of Scot's Magazine] for March 1822, X, 376-81, and the London Magazine for May 1822, V, 485-89.

2. NLS, MSS. 4008.

his reviewers. On 20 March 1822 he wrote to his friend Christie:

"'Adam Blair,' which I am glad you liked, and which I wish had been more worthy your liking, has created a good deal of rumpus, and some of the low cattle here are saying, and printing, that it is fit for the same shelf with 'Faublas'...If it be immoral I did not write it with an immoral intention, or in a culpable spirit, but quite the reverse. The story is a true, and I think, a tragic and moral one."¹

That Lockhart found it necessary to dissociate his novel from "Faublas" is highly ironical, for he himself had, on more than one occasion, compared Don Juan with the same book.²

It is difficult to determine how far the writing of those works helped Lockhart to adopt a more sympathetic attitude towards Don Juan. Yet between July 1819 and April 1821 he radically modified his views about the first two cantos, and during the following four years he consistently praised the later instalments of Byron's masterpiece. What is more remarkable is that between 1821 and 1825, Lockhart was the only contemporary reviewer to pay any attention to Byron's repeated and bitter protest against his reviewers' criticism. It is highly unlikely that Lockhart was acquainted with Byron's repeated defence of his poem in his private letters to his publisher and his friends. But the poet also replied to the censure of his critics in the poem itself. Lockhart

1. Lang, I, 302. The reviewer of Adam Blair in Constable's Edinburgh Magazine (X, 380) declared that it was "destined to stand on the same shelf with Faublas and the Memoires de la Duc de Lauzen." "Faublas" is Les Amours du Chevalier de Faublas (1789-90) by Louvet de Couvray, a licentious novel about the amorous adventures of the hero. The Memoires, which were published in 1821, are those of Armand Louis, Duc de Lauzen, and give an account of his military and amorous adventures to the year 1783.

2. See Strout, John Bull's Letter, p. 71.

not only listened to these replies, but he actually endorsed them in his reviews of the later instalments of Don Juan and used them to defend Byron in Blackwood's.

1

Lockhart's first defence of Don Juan appeared in the form of an anonymous pamphlet entitled A Letter to the Rt. Hon. Lord Byron by John Bull. Yet, as Alan Lang Strout suggests, it is "a sort of expanded magazine article."¹ In one of his letters to William Blackwood, Lockhart certainly compared it with the sort of articles that he wrote for Blackwood's.² For this reason, and because of his reviews of the later instalments of Don Juan Lockhart developed the views which he had first expressed in John Bull's Letter, the pamphlet will be treated in this chapter as if it were one of Lockhart's contributions to Blackwood's.

John Bull's Letter represents a dramatic change in Lockhart's criticism of Don Juan, not only because of its recognition of the literary merit of Byron's masterpiece, but also on account of the evidence that it affords of Lockhart's susceptibility to Byron's argument and outlook, and the apparent ease with which he was able to enter into the spirit of Don Juan. His advice to Byron shows

1. Ibid., p. 5.

2. See Appendix IV.

how far he had changed his opinion about the poem since he reviewed the first two cantos in August 1819.

"Stick to Don Juan: it is the only sincere thing you have ever written; and it will live many years after all your humbug Harolds have ceased to be, in your own words,

'A school-girl's tale—the wonder of an hour.'

Perhaps you will stare at this last piece of my advice: but, nevertheless, upon my honour, it is as sincere as possible. I consider Don Juan as out of all sight the best of your works; it is by far the most spirited, the most straightforward, the most interesting, and the most poetical."¹

Throughout the pamphlet Lockhart repeatedly praises Don Juan for its sincerity and its truth to nature. Its style, which, he tells Byron, "is entirely and intimately your own—the sweet, fiery, rapid, easy—beautifully easy, anti-humbug style of Don Juan,"² places it far above the rest of Byron's work including Childe Harold, Manfred, and Marino Faliero.³ Lockhart also praises the versatility and skill with which Byron handles the ottava rima. While John Herman Merivale's defence of Don Juan is based on his knowledge of the tradition of its style of poetry, Lockhart praises Byron's departure from this tradition. He defends Byron against the charge that he borrowed the style of Don Juan from the Italian burlesque poets of Frere's Whistlecrafts. The merriment of the Italian poets, Lockhart tells Byron, "is nothing, because they have nothing but their merriment; yours is every thing, because it is

1. Strout, John Bull's Letter, p. 82.

2. Ibid., p. 92.

3. Ibid., pp. 82, 92 and 102.

delightfully intermingled with and contrasted by all manner of serious things."¹ Although the measure of Don Juan and Whistlecrafts is the same, Lockhart goes on to say, "the spirit of the two poets is as different as can be."

"Mr. Frere writes elegantly, playfully, very like a gentleman, and a scholar, and a respectable man, and his poems never sold, nor ever will sell. Your Don Juan again, is written strongly, lasciviously, fiercely, laughingly—every body sees in a moment, that nobody could have written it but a man of the first order both in genius and in dissipation;—a real master of all his tools—a profligate, pernicious, irresistible, charming Devil—and, accordingly, the Don sells, and will sell to the end of time."²

Despite the "personality" in this distinction, Lockhart was the first contemporary critic to point out the difference between Frere's use of the ottava rima in Whistlecrafts and its further development in Beppo and Don Juan. This is hardly surprising since Lockhart also experimented with the ottava rima in "The Mad Banker of Amsterdam" (a poem in five cantos published intermittently in Blackwood's between August 1818 and January 1820), and despite the fact that John Wilson and John Wilson Croker excessively praised his skill in handling the stanza,³ Lockhart had no illusions

1. Strout, John Bull's Letter, p. 90.

2. Ibid., p. 91.

3. On 20 June 1818, John Wilson Croker wrote to William Blackwood commenting on Lockhart's ottava rima "Notices" in Blackwood's for that month; "Beppo & Whistlecraft will stand amazed at seeing such a rival, who is, I think, equal to either." (NLS, MSS. 4003). Some five years later, Wilson wrote to Blackwood, "I wish Mr. L[ockhart] could do the next canto of Don Juan, and make it an infernal attack on the Cockneys. He writes the stanzas as well as Lord Byron, and in some respects better." (NLS, MSS. 4011).

Also cf. The Mad Banker of Amsterdam (V, ix, 1-4):

"To speak the truth, I neither wish nor pray
For fame poetic. Once upon a time
Perchance so high might young ambition stray;

My reason's mended now, if not my rhyme."—Blackwood's,
IV, 564.

about the inferiority of his verse. Commenting on his own hostile review of the first two cantos of Don Juan, he says in John Bull's Letter that it was written by "a set of obsequious moralists" who would have been happy to club their brains to write one stanza" of Byron's poem.¹

Lockhart's disapproval of his own review of the first two cantos of Don Juan shows how far he had modified his attitude since August 1819. Indeed, his comment on the outcry against those two cantos echoes Byron's repeated defence of his poem in his letters to his publisher and friends in England.² In John Bull's Letter, Lockhart attributes the widespread condemnation of Don Juan to the hypocrisy on the part of those who enjoyed reading the poem in private, and condemned it in public. He especially criticised the Quarterly reviewers for not having the courage to avow their admiration for Don Juan and William Blackwood and his supporters for denouncing it.³

1. Strout, John Bull's Letter, p. 86.

2. For an exhaustive account of Byron's long-drawn campaign against the objections to Don Juan by John Murray and his "Utican Senate" see Don Juan: Variorum Edition, I, 16 ff.

3. See Strout, John Bull's Letter, pp. 84-86. Blackwood's retaliated by reviewing Lockhart's pamphlet in July 1821. Beside sneering at Lockhart's defence of Don Juan, the reviewer boasted about the castigation of the first two cantos in the magazine. Lockhart was definitely not responsible for this attack on Don Juan, and it is even doubtful that, as Alan Lang Strout suggests, the review was deliberately written "to mystify the public, [or] to set up a smoke screen protecting Lockhart by accusing the Whig Bentham of writing the pamphlet." (p. 56). According to J.F. Ferrier, John Wilson wrote the review (see Strout, Bibliography, p. 81). I believe, however, that William Maginn was the reviewer. It echoes his letter of 24 May 1821 to William Blackwood (quoted by Strout, Bibliography, p. 8) too closely to be written by anyone else.

More intriguing than the dramatic change in Lockhart's attitude to Don Juan, is his advice to Byron about how to continue his poem. Perhaps, Lockhart was thinking of Defoe, whose works he had described only twelve months earlier as "intensely English" and as the embodiment of the spirit of England in the days of King William and Queen Anne,¹ when he told Byron:

"There is nobody but yourself who has any chance of conveying to posterity a true idea of the spirit of England in the days of his Majesty George IV...You know the society of England...and, I promise you, that knowledge is a much more precious thing, whatever you at present may think or say, than any notion you or any other Englishman ever can acquire either of Italians, or Spaniards, or Greeks. Do you really suppose...that you know any thing at all about either Venice or Ravenna worthy of being compared either as to extent or as to accuracy with what you know of London?...

Wherever you find them in short, compare reality with vision, sincerity with insincerity, honesty with humbug,—and there you will see what I mean when I advise you to continue the Don—on, through all his cantos, (observe I don't mean to continue it as wickedly as it began, but as sincerely)—to bring the Don forthwith into England."²

What is intriguing about this advice to Byron is that only two months before John Bull's Letter was published, Byron had written privately to John Murray about his plans for Don Juan,

"The 5th[canto] is so far from being the last of D.J., that it is hardly the beginning. I meant to take him the tour of Europe, with a proper mixture of siege,

[Contd.] It is also obvious from that letter, in which, ignorant of the identity of the real author of John Bull's Letter, he suggested attributing the pamphlet to "Jeremy Bentham, or Alderman Wood," that Maginn genuinely disliked Lockhart's pamphlet. On the other hand, Lockhart's letter of 2 May [1821] to William Blackwood, quoted in appendix III below, shows that Wilson was not favourably impressed by John Bull's Letter.

1. Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe (1820), p. lx.
2. Strout, John Bull's Letter, pp. 95-96 and 98.

battle and adventure, and to make him finish as Anarcharsis Cloots in the French Revolution. To how many cantos this may extend, I know not, nor whether (even if I live) I shall complete it; but this was my notion: I meant to have made him a Cavalier Servente in Italy, and a cause for a divorce in England, and a Sentimental "Werther-faced man" in Germany so as to show the different ridicules of the society in each of those countries."¹

There is no reason to suppose that Lockhart had any knowledge of Byron's private letters to his publisher or that his advice about bringing Don Juan to England was any more than a curious coincidence. Yet such a coincidence shows how susceptible Lockhart was to Byron's point of view, and how easy it was for him to adopt Byron's reply to his critics in his later reviews of Don Juan. For, in John Bull's Letter he was not only able to read Byron's mind as regards his intentions for his hero but he also described accurately the satirical purposes behind these intentions.

In fact, there is so much in John Bull's Letter that could have easily been written by Byron's himself, that some sixty years later Swinburne claimed that the pamphlet was "so adroitly extravagant in its adulation that an 'ill-minded man,' after study of Byron's correspondence and diary, might be tempted to assign it to the hand which penned them."² It is hardly surprising therefore that on 29 June 1821, Byron wrote to John Murray, "I have just read John Bull's Letter: it is diabolically well written, and full of fun and ferocity. I must forgive the dog, whoever he is."³ It is

1. L & J, V, 242.

2. Quoted in Samuel C. Chew, Byron in England, p. 39n.

3. L & J, V, 315-16.

also likely that Lockhart's pamphlet encouraged him to carry out his plans of sending his hero to England, which he did in 1822 when he wrote canto X (published in August 1823). Whether or not John Bull's Letter had any influence on the development in Byron's poem, is not easily to determine. Yet there are echoes from the pamphlet in Byron's letters. Lockhart, for instance, claimed that Byron did not borrow the ottava rima from Frere's Whistlecraft. "The measure to be sure is the same, but then the measure is as old as the hills."¹ In a letter to Thomas Moore (2 October 1821), Byron wrote that Pulci's style "which the fools in England think was invented by Whistlecraft...is as old as the hills in Italy."² More importantly, in John Bull's Letter Lockhart maintained, "nothing worth much has ever been done either in literature, or in any of the sister arts, except by taking things as they are, or representing them as they are."³ In canto XII of Don Juan, Byron declared: "I mean to show things really as they are, /Not as they ought to be."⁴ Since this was Byron's unavowed intention from the beginning of Don Juan, it would probably be an exaggeration to attribute the greater degree of realism of the later cantos to the influence of Lockhart's pamphlet on Byron. Yet Lockhart's encouragement must have given him an additional impetus to develop

1. Strout, John Bull's Letter, p. 91.

2. L&J, V, 385.

3. Strout, John Bull's Letter, II, p. 96.

4. Byron, Poetical Works, VI, 466.

his poem in the way he did.

But before he read John Bull's Letter, Byron had answered Lockhart's attack on the first two cantos. As has been suggested in an earlier chapter, Byron replied to Lockhart's review partly in his well-known "Some Observations upon an Article in Blackwood's Magazine," and partly in the fourth canto of Don Juan. Since the "Observations" were never published during Byron's life time, it was the other part of Byron's reply that influenced Lockhart's reviews of the later cantos of Don Juan.

ii

Apparently Byron had not seen the review of the first two cantos of Don Juan, when he wrote the greatest part of the third and fourth cantos which were originally meant to form one canto. On 4 December 1819, he wrote to Murray, "the third canto of Don Juan is completed—about two hundred stanzas and very decent, I believe."¹ In his letter to Murray of 10 December, he repeated that he had finished the third canto. The same letter contains Byron's first indignant reaction to the review of the first two cantos in Blackwood's.² Then, on 21 February 1820, he wrote to Murray that he had sent the third and fourth canto of Don Juan and that "the whole is about 225 stanzas more or less and a lyric of

1. L&J, V, 383.

2. Ibid., pp. 384-385.

46 lines."¹ It appears, therefore, that between 30 November 1819 and 17 January 1820,² and most likely after 10 December, Byron added some 25 stanzas to the original text of the fourth canto. It is likely that these additional stanzas largely consist of the introductory stanzas (i-vi) of canto IV and the digression at the end of the same canto (stanzas xcvi-cxii). This conclusion agrees, on the whole, with G.T. Steffan's description of the manuscripts of the first draft and the fair copy of that canto,³ except on the date of Byron's completion of the main 98 matrix stanzas of canto IV. From the terminal date of the first draft, G.T. Steffan infers that stanzas xcvi-cxvii and cxviii-cxii were written before 30 November 1819.⁴ Yet the account which he gives of the manuscript casts some doubt on such an inference.⁵ On the other hand, there is stronger internal evidence to support the conclusion that the digression at the end of canto IV

1. L&J, IV, 406.

2. These are the terminal dates of the first draft and the fair copy as given by G.T. Steffan in Don Juan: Variorum Edition, I, 373 and 378.

3. G.T. Steffan's description of the manuscripts proves that stanzas i-vii, xli and cii, which are not in the first draft, were a late addendum. So were stanzas ciii-cvi, which were written in the first draft on separate leaves. Stanzas cxix-ci were written crosswise in the first draft and were probably another late addition (Ibid., pp. 376-377). Three more stanzas, lv-lvi and lxx, which Steffan considers as late additions, are not mentioned above because they are not immediately relevant to our subject.

4. Ibid., pp. 302 and 377.

5. Apparently Byron had first written "Nov^r", crossed it off and wrote "Dec^r", and then cancelled that (Ibid., p. 373).

(including xcvi-xcvi and cvii-cxli) was written after 10 December 1819. Byron's reply to the attacks of his reviewers in xcvi-xcix was certainly the immediate result of his reading of his reviews shortly before 10 December 1819. The speculation on immortal fame (xcix-cvi) gives the impression that it was inspired by Lockhart's declaration in the review of the first two cantos, that Don Juan "will remain to all ages a perpetual monument of the exalted intellect and the depraved heart"¹ of the poet. E.H. Coleridge and Willis W. Pratt agree that stanza cvii is a reply to Lockhart's criticism of Byron's unashamed exhibition of "all the hidden convulsions of a wicked spirit."² Finally, in his address to Bluestockings (cviii-cxii) Byron again hits out at his reviewers,³ and his retort to Wordsworth's contempt for immediate popularity is a reply to Lockhart's defence of "the lofty minded and virtuous men whom Lord Byron has debased himself by insulting."⁴ However, the stanzas that are most relevant to our purpose are ii, iii, iv, v, xcvi, xcvi, xcix, cvi, cvii.

-
1. Cf. in particular Don Juan, IV, xcix, Byron: Poetical Works, VI.
 2. Byron: Poetical Works, VI, 213n., and Don Juan: Variorum Edition, IV, 118. See also P.G. Trueblood, The Flowering of Byron's Genius (Stanford University Press: 1945), p. 90.
 3. Byron: Poetical Works, VI, 214.
"What! must I go to the oblivious cooks,
Those Cornish plunderers of Parnassian wrecks."—IV, cviii, 5-6.
 4. Perhaps the clinching evidence of Blackwood's being Byron's main target in these digressional stanzas is that in "Some Observations upon an Article in Blackwood's Magazine" which he wrote in March 1820, he again attacked Wordsworth for his contempt for contemporary fame.—L&J, IV, 487.

But time, which brings all beings to their level,
 And sharp Adversity, will teach at last
 Man,—and, as we would hope,—perhaps the devil,
 That neither of their intellects are vast:
 While youth's hot wishes in our red veins revel,
 We know not this—the blood flows on too fast:
 But as the torrent widens towards the ocean,
 We ponder deeply on each past emotion.

As boy, I thought myself a clever fellow,
 And wish'd that others held the same opinion;
 They took it up when my days grew more mellow,
 And other minds acknowledged my dominion:
 Now my sere fancy 'falls into the yellow
 Leaf,' and Imagination droops her pinion,
 And the sad truth which hovers o'er my desk
 Turns what was once romantic to burlesque.

And if I laugh at any mortal thing,
 'Tis that I may not weep; and if I weep,
 'Tis that our nature cannot always bring
 Itself to apathy, for we must steep
 Our hearts first in the depths of Lethe's spring,
 Ere what we least wish to behold will sleep:
 Thetis baptized her mortal son in Styx;
 A mortal mother would on Lethe fix.¹

Some have accused me of a strange design
 Against the creed and morals of the land,
 And trace it in this poem every line;
 I don't pretend that I quite understand
 My own meaning when I would be very fine;
 But the fact is that I have nothing plann'd,
 Unless it were to be a moment merry,
 A novel word in my vocabulary.²

Here I might enter on a chaste description,
 Having withstood temptation in my youth,
 But hear that several people take exception
 At the first two books having too much truth;

-
1. Byron: Poetical Works, VI, 183-84. These first three stanzas are probably Byron's reply to Lockhart's assertion that Byron is no longer a human being, but "a cool, unconcerned fiend laughing with detestable glee over the whole of the better and worse elements of which human nature is composed."—Blackwood's, V, 513.
 2. Byron: Poetical Works, VI, 184. Cf. Lockhart's fear of the effect of the poem on "the public mind" (Blackwood's, V, 513).

Therefore I'll make Don Juan leave the ship soon,
 Because the publisher declares, in sooth,
 Through needles' eyes it easier for the camel¹ is
 To pass, than those two cantos into families.¹

'Tis all the same to me; I'm fond of yielding,
 And therefore leave them to the purer page
 Of Smollett, Prior, Ariosto, Fielding,
 Who say strange things for so correct an age;
 I once had great alacrity in wielding
 My pen, and liked poetic war to wage,
 And recollect the time when all this cant
 Would have provoked remarks which now it shan't.

As boys love rows, my boyhood liked a squabble;
 But at this hour I wish to part in peace,
 Leaving such to the literary rabble,
 Whether my verse's fame be doome'd to cease
 While the right hand which wrote it still is able,
 Or of some centuries to take a lease;
 The grass upon my grave will grow as long,
 And sigh to midnight winds, but not to song.²

Yet there will still be bards: though fame is smoke,
 Its fumes are frankincense to human thought;
 And the unquiet feelings, which first woke
 Song in the world, will seek what then they sought:
 As on the beach the waves at last are broke,
 Thus to their extreme verge the passions brought
 Dash into poetry, which is but passion,
 Or at least was so ere it grew a fashion.

If in the course of such a life as was
 At once adventurous and contemplative,
 Men who partake all passions as they pass,
 Acquire the deep and bitter power to give
 Their images again as in a glass,
 And in such colours that they seem to live;
 You may do right forbidding them to show³em,
 But spoil (I think) a very pretty poem.

-
1. Byron: Poetical Works, VI, 210. Cf. Lockhart's praise of the "intense reality" of the shipwreck scene, and his disapproval of the depravity of Byron's satire on scenes of human misery (Blackwood's, V, 518).
 2. Byron: Poetical Works, VI, 210-11. Cf. Lockhart's prediction about Don Juan remaining to all ages "a perpetual monument of the exalted talent and the depraved heart of the poet." (Blackwood's, V, 512).
 3. Byron: Poetical Works, VI, 213. Probably, when Byron wrote these two stanzas, he had in mind Lockhart's accusation that in his earlier poems he was mocking his readers, when he aroused in them "very high thought..and very pure and lofty feelings" (Blackwood's, V, 514).

As we shall soon see, these stanzas not only point back to Lockhart's review of the first two cantos of Don Juan but virtually outline the main points of his later defence of the poem, particularly in "Harry Franklin's" letter on the "Continuation of Don Juan" (August 1821), and in "Odoherly on Don Juan" (September 1823).

iii

Cantos III and IV altogether with canto V were published in London on 8 August 1821. It seems that as soon as he received a copy of the new volume, William Blackwood immediately dispatched it to Lockhart, who had retired to Chiefswood for the summer. In an undated letter which, I believe, was written on 16 August 1821, Lockhart wrote to William Blackwood:

"I think the poem the most careless thing I ever read—even of his, but full of poetry & fire—a very fine poem surely & one which may well enough 'pass into families.' If you have nothing of him now I shall do the Don for next month."¹

Lockhart was, however, able to write a review of the new cantos in time for its inclusion in Part II of the August number of the magazine. It was Harry Franklin's letter to Christopher North on "The Continuation of Don Juan."²

Harry Franklin's letter represents a further development in this curious two-way process of interaction between Byron's poem

1. NLS, MSS. 4005.

2. Blackwood's, X, 107-115. For the date of Lockhart's letter and other evidence of his authorship of Harry Franklin's letter see appendix V.

and Lockhart's reviews. In his letter to William Blackwood, Lockhart quotes Byron's poem on how difficult it was for the first two cantos to pass into families. In the review he declares that the new cantos are "not quite so naughty as their predecessors."

"Indeed his Lordship has been so pretty and well behaved on the present occasion, that I should not be surprised to hear of the work being detected among the thread-cases, flower-pots, and cheap tracts, that litter the drawing-room tables of some of the best regulated families."¹

More importantly, Lockhart appreciated the sincerity of Byron's remonstrance that he had no "design against the creed and morals of the land" and was particularly receptive to the confessional and defensive mood of the introductory stanzas of canto IV, and the digression at the end of the same canto. Byron's repeated reference to the passions and experience of his youth, and his remonstrance that his poetry is like a mirror that reflects the images of those passions and experiences "in such colours that they seem to live" seem to have made a strong impression on Lockhart. In Harry Franklin's letter he tries to exonerate Byron from the charge of having deliberately intended to corrupt public morals. He appeals to Christopher North:

"in your flagellation, be not so peremptory as you sometimes are.—Lord Byron may have his faults,—you may have your own, my good friend, but there is some difference between constitutional errors, and evil intentions, and propensities,—it is harsh to ascribe to wicked motives what may be owing to the temptations of circumstances, or the headlong impulse of passion. Even the worst habits should be charitably considered, for they are often the result of the slow, but

1. Blackwood's, X, 107.

irresistible force of nature, over the artificial manners and discipline of society,—the flowing stream that wastes away its embankments."¹

Thus, Lockhart, as P.G. Trueblood rightly claims, becomes the first reviewer to contradict the assertion made by earlier critics, that in Don Juan Byron had a deliberate intent to undermine public morals.² It is true that Lockhart was encouraged to reach such a favourable conclusion by the relative absence in cantos III, IV, and V of anything to which he could strongly object on political, religious, or personal grounds. Yet, from the close similarity between Byron's own defence of himself in those cantos and Lockhart's favourable judgement both in his letter to William Blackwood, and his Harry Franklin's letter, it is clear that Lockhart's first defence of Byron in Blackwood's was indeed a unique result of the poet's continuous and largely futile attempt to be understood by his contemporaries. While the rest of the reviewing world professed to be too shocked to listen to Byron's remonstrations, and when Leigh Hunt made it his principle to defend him irrespective of the merits and demerits of Byron's case, Lockhart read attentively, accepted Byron's defence of himself and endorsed it in his reviews of Don Juan.

On the other hand, Lockhart's review of cantos III-V is by no means a blind repetition of Byron's reply to his critics. On the contrary, much of what Lockhart says about Don Juan in

1. Ibid., p. 115.

2. See P.G. Trueblood, The Flowering of Byron's Genius, p. 42.

Harry Franklin's letter reiterates the views he had expressed three months earlier in John Bull's Letter to Lord Byron. We have already seen how in this pamphlet Lockhart praises Don Juan as out of all sight the best of Byron's works. In the review of cantos III-V, Lockhart declares:

"Byron's powers are in no degree abated..." The new canto "will certainly help redeem his poetical reputation from the effects of that lumbering of wheel-waggoned blank verse 'The Doge.'" ¹

In this respect this review also recalls the few, but superlative, words of praise in Lockhart's review of the first two cantos, and in particular the admiration which Lockhart reluctantly expressed in the earlier review for what he called "the manyfold beauties" of the poem. From the "beauties" of the new poem Lockhart selects for his praise the description of Haidee and Lambro, and the "Ave Maria" stanzas.² Particularly interesting is Lockhart's praise for Byron's description of the fete, which anticipates the similar praise it received from S.T. Coleridge about three years later:

"The description of the fete is executed with equal felicity and spirit, we think it would be difficult to match the life and gaiety of the picture by anything of the kind in English poetry—perhaps in any other poetry."³

Although, in Harry Franklin's letter, Lockhart absolves Byron from any intent to corrupt public morals, he nonetheless objects

1. Blackwood's, X, 115.

2. It is also interesting to notice that Lockhart quoted the "Isles of Greece" in its entirety. Many years later, Dr. Boyle, Dean of Salisbury, wrote to Andrew Lang that the "Isles of Greece" was one of two poems that Lockhart admired most: See Lang, II, 402.

3. Blackwood's, X, 108. Cf. Coleridge's similar praise for the same scene in Don Juan quoted in Byron: the Critical Heritage, ed. Andrew Rutherford (1970), p. 256.

to some scenes in the new cantos on moral grounds. Yet his disapproval is much milder and more selective than his earlier strident and indiscriminate condemnation of the first two cantos. The love affair between Juan and Haidée, Lockhart maintains, is "pretty enough, not at all objectionable in a moral point of view,"¹ but he criticises Byron for sneering at marriage (Don Juan, III, vi-viii). Moreover, he goes on to say:

"Only infants can be shown naked in company, but his Lordship pulls the very robe de chambre from both men and women... This, as nobody can approve, I must confess, is very bad, and I give you full liberty, Christopher, to drub him well for it in your next."²

This rigidly moral outlook is, however, counterbalanced, on the one hand, by a great deal of praise for the new cantos, and on the other, by a fairly unbiased and legitimate critical judgement on Byron's versification. For Lockhart draws "Christopher North's" attention to "the three hundred and fifty ricketty stanzas, of which he [Byron] ought, as a versemaker, to feel as much ashamed as any carpenter ever did of a slovenly piece of work."³

But what is really worth emphasising is the close similarity between Harry Franklin's letter and Lockhart's privately-expressed comment on the new cantos of Don Juan. There can hardly be a better evidence against the widely held opinion that Blackwood's

1. Blackwood's, X, 107.

2. Ibid., p. 115.

3. Ibid., p. 115.

was deliberately sensational, or that its critics of contemporary poetry expressed the views of the "personae" they adopted rather than their own. For, what Lockhart wrote about the new cantos in his letter to William Blackwood (of 16 August 1821) is no more than a brief summary of the main points of his review of those cantos in the magazine. Moreover, Lockhart consistently expressed his own views whether he wrote on Don Juan as "John Bull," "Harry Franklin," "Timothy Tickler," or "Morgan Odoherly."

iv

It was more than two years later, in September 1823, that Lockhart reviewed another instalment of Byron's poem. In the meantime Blackwood's continued to comment on Byron's poetry with frequent references to Don Juan. Much of the adverse criticism during that period (July 1822 - September 1823) occurs in these incidental remarks, particularly in the letters from Timothy Tickler to Christopher North: "The Quarterly Review No. LIII" (July 1822), "Letters of Timothy Tickler No. VII" (July 1823), and "Letters of Timothy Tickler No. VIII" (August 1823). In these letters the Quarterly and the Edinburgh are violently attacked for their criticism of the Lord Chancellor for his refusal to grant John Murray an injunction against the pirates of Byron's dramatic poem Cain. As we shall see later in another part of this thesis, both Don Juan and Cain came under heavy fire from Blackwood's during these attacks

on the two great reviews, for which Lockhart has been held responsible. On the strength of the evidence of a letter from Lockhart to William Blackwood, M. Clive Hildyard attributes the "Letters of Timothy Tickler No. VIII on the Edinburgh Review and Things in General" (August 1823) to Lockhart, and from this she argues that as the "Letters of Timothy Tickler No. VIII" and "The Quarterly Review No. LIII" deal with the same subject, Lockhart must also be responsible for the authorship of the latter.¹ But Miss Hildyard does not quote all the relevant passages in Lockhart's letter, which says:

"You may depend on having Timothy Tickler on the Edin. Rev. & Liberal soon: therefore if Maginn or Wilson send anything on that subject let me have it... I shd think my art. on the Edin. Rev. &c. will be 10 or 12 pages. Tis half done."²

On August 1823 William Maginn wrote to Blackwood:

"As for the Edinburgh I shall decidedly do my best...I shall take in hand Greece, Literary Property & Napoleon—but above all the Periodicals which I know as well as any man in The Euxine;—better than some few."³

The next letter to William Blackwood on the same subject came from Lockhart:

"It will cost you considerable trouble to see that this Tickler of shreds and patches appears properly. I have numbered the pages in red and marked out wt red markers the bits to be taken from Maginn's MS. I cannot well judge—but the two hands will scarcely be detected."⁴

1. M. Clive Hildyard, Lockhart's Literary Criticism (1931), p. 155.

2. NLS, MSS. 4721.

3. Quoted in Ralph M. Wardle, "'Timothy Tickler's' Irish Blood," RES, XVIII (1942) 487.

4. Ibid., p. 487.

Finally, when the magazine for August 1823 was published, Maginn wrote to William Blackwood on 31 August 1823,

"I have received your three letters in due course and your Magazine...I think it will be liked. L. ought not to have bothered himself incorporating my remarks on the Edin. when he could do so much better, but as the affair stands, it is meo judicio rather effective."¹

From these extracts from Lockhart's and Maginn's letters to William Blackwood, we may conclude that Maginn and Lockhart collaborated in writing "Letters of Timothy Tickler No. VIII," with Maginn taking the major part. Indeed, Maginn's share in the piece is probably greater than what R.M. Wardle is prepared to assign to him,² and includes the parts of the letter on the Lord Chancellor's decision against Cain, Sir William Gell's Greece, The Periodical Press, and Napoleon (Blackwood's XIV, 213-23). From this it follows that Miss Hildyard's attribution of "The Quarterly Review No. LIII" on the sole evidence that it deals with the Lord Chancellor's decision against Cain is not convincing. It becomes even less convincing when we remember that it was Maginn who in July 1823 defended the first attack on the Quarterly on the grounds that its criticism of the Lord Chancellor amounted to a betrayal "of its party for the sake of its publisher."³ And it was Lockhart, on the other hand,

1. NLS, MSS. 4011.

2. Ralph M. Wardle, "'Timothy Tickler's' Irish Blood," RES, XVIII (1942), 487.

3. Blackwood's, XIV, 81, in "Letters of Timothy Tickler No. VII." It is possible that there is no evidence of Maginn's authorship of the article "The Quarterly Review No. LIII" because Maginn was in Edinburgh in July 1822 and apparently he wrote a number of pieces for the magazine during that visit. In that month, Wilson wrote to William Blackwood, "I am glad Mr L[ockhart] and Dr. M[aginn] are doing good things."—NLS, MSS. 4729. See also Oliphant, I, 273.

who wrote in "Noctes Ambrosianae No. I" (March 1822):

"But as to Cain, I entirely differ from the Chancellor. I think, if Cain be prosecuted, it will be a great shame. The humbug of the age will have then achieved its most visible triumph."¹

The other evidence that is often cited to prove that Lockhart was inconsistent in his criticism of Byron, is taken from his reviews of Byron's dramatic poems. Although there is no absolute proof that Lockhart reviewed any of Byron's drama, the reviews of Sardanapalus, Cain, The Two Foscari (January 1822), and of Werner (December 1822) are treated here as if they were written by him. Even if these reviews can definitely be ascribed to Lockhart, they do not in the least contradict any of the views expressed in the other writings which we know to be his. Like Wilson, Lockhart first believed that Byron was the only contemporary poet capable of writing a great play, and in his John Bull's Letter he seriously advised him to turn his mind to drama:

"You might write both tragedies and comedies of the very highest merits, if you choose to. You ought to choose, because you may depend upon it, these are the true forms for a man² that understands human nature on both sides as you do."

Lockhart's expectations in this respect were probably too high, and from Manfred onwards Byron's performance as a dramatist fell

1. Blackwood's, XI, 375. This was Lockhart's comment on the news in Alaric Watt's "Memoranda" that the Constitutional Association contemplated prosecuting John Murray for publishing Cain. See appendix VI.

2. Strout, John Bull's Letter, pp. 102-103.

increasingly short of what he had hoped for. He was rather reserved in his praise of Manfred in John Bull's Letter, but dismissed Marino Faliero as "a failure."¹ The later dramas, Lockhart believed, were even worse. He conceded that there was a great deal of power in Sardanapalus, but as a play he described it as "utter failure," and as a poem it was "not quite worthy of its author. The Two Foscari was "totally inferior to Sardanapalus."

"Cain contains, perhaps, five or six passages of as fine poetry as Lord Byron ever wrote or will write; but, taken altogether, it is a wicked and blasphemous performance destitute of any merit sufficient to overshadow essential defects of the most abominable nature."²

In view of the decidedly hostile attitude towards Byron in 1822 and 1823, and of the highly provocative themes of Sardanapalus, The Two Foscari and Cain, the review of Byron's volume is very restrained. Even its condemnation of the "blasphemy" of Cain is not particularly severe, at least in comparison with the attacks on Cain by other writers in Blackwood's and other periodicals, and, as we have already seen, in March 1822, Lockhart defended Cain against the Lord Chancellor. Apart from the condemnation of the "blasphemy" of Cain, Lockhart's criticism was mainly aimed at the literary qualities of Byron's volume.

Late in 1822, Werner gave the final blow to Lockhart's hopes for Byron as a dramatic poet. In "Odoherly on Werner" (December 1822) he gives an account of his increasing disillusion with the

1. Ibid., pp. 92 and 102.

2. Blackwood's, XI, 91.

deterioration of Byron's performance as a playwright which, if anything, is only too consistent with his attitude throughout.

"When Lord Byron first announced himself as a tragedian in regular form, there is no doubt that public curiosity was strongly, most strongly, excited. "Marino Faliero Doge of Venice" was a sad damper; yet nobody could deny that there was great and novel beauty in the conception of one character, that of the old Doge's young wife; and we all said, this is a first attempt, and Byron may hereafter write a tragedy worthy of Byron. Then came Sardanapalus—on the whole a heavy concern also;... "The Two Foscari" was greatly inferior; in fact, it contained a plot than which nothing could be more exquisitely absurd and unnatural—characters strained almost to the ludicrous—versification as clumsy as the grinding of the tread-mill—and one splendid passage,—just one. "Cain, a Mystery," was worse and worse. Byron dared to measure himself with Milton, and came off as poorly as Belial might have done from a contest with Michael... Nevertheless, it is not to be denied, that even in Cain some occasional flashes of Lord Byron's genius were discernible; there was some deep and thrilling poetry in Cain's contemplation of the stars—enough to recall for a moment the brighter and more sustained splendours of Manfred.

But now at last has come forth a tragedy by the same hand, which is not only worse than any of those we have been naming, but worse, far worse, than we, even after reading and regretting them, could have believed it possible for the noble author to indite."¹

It might be argued, with difficulty, that Lockhart was rather insensitive to certain literary merits in Byron's dramatic poems, or that he was too harsh on what Byron himself considered as experiments in different forms of drama.² But, on the other hand, after his first attack on the first two cantos of Don Juan, Lockhart's

1. Blackwood's, XII, 710-711.

2. The prejudice of twentieth century Byron scholars against contemporary reviewers, however understandable, is occasionally carried to absurd extremes. Samuel C. Chew who criticises Werner for the extent of Byron's borrowing from Miss Lee's Canterbury Tales, describes Tickler's similar criticism as vicious.—The Dramas of Lord Byron (Göttingen: 1915), p. 144.

praise for Don Juan continued. Only on one occasion did he waver in his admiration of Byron's masterpiece. In July 1823, Maginn included in one of his Timothy Tickler's letters an extremely hostile review of cantos VI, VII and VIII, to which William Blackwood requested Lockhart to make any necessary additions. In an undated letter to William Blackwood, Lockhart wrote referring to Maginn's piece:

"I have run over the Doctor and added a few pages as you see which I think will make it do very well for a continuation of Timothy—not a P.S. I really have not read the poem but dipping here and there it seems worthy of all that Maginn says."¹

Certainly Lockhart deserves criticism for claiming that the new cantos of Don Juan are "worthy of all Maginn says" without reading them. But what he actually added, as R.M. Wardle has convincingly proved, was nothing more than the three final paragraphs in Maginn's review, which, while agreeing in the most general terms with the rest of the review, seek to temper its bitter attack on Byron.² After Maginn had declared that "it was impossible to extract twenty [lines] distinguished by any readable quality"³ from the new cantos, Lockhart began his continuation rather loosely, "I do not mean to say that there are not some half-dozen or two of stanzas not quite unworthy of the better days of Lord Byron."⁴ Against Maginn's assertion that the poet was

1. Oliphant, I, 205.

2. See Ralph M. Wardle, "'Timothy Tickler's' Irish Blood," RES XVIII (1942), 487.

3. Blackwood's, XIV, 88.

4. Ibid., p. 92.

wallowing in "a sty of filth," Lockhart defended Byron in the same way as he had already done in Harry Franklin's letter.

"I do not believe Lord Byron to be a bad man—I mean a deliberately, resolvedly wicked man. I know him to be a man of great original power and genius, and, from report, I know him to be a kind friend where his friendship is wanted. I cannot consent to despair of Lord Byron."¹

v

Lockhart, however, did read cantos IX, X and XI, and wrote to William Blackwood, "Don Juan—these cantos are far better than the three last. Shall I say so?"² The review of these cantos, the last to be reviewed in the magazine, appeared under the title "Odoherly on Don Juan, Cantos IX, X, XI," in September 1823, and its defence of Byron and admiration of Don Juan equals, if not surpasses, what Lockhart had written in this respect in John Bull's Letter to Lord Byron and Harry Franklin's letter, and, in a way, does not depart much from his review of the first two cantos. Lockhart had never pretended that Don Juan was a moral poem, but he had also declared that to use moral objections as an excuse to dismiss the poem as worthless was sheer hypocrisy. In "Odoherly on Don Juan," he criticises both Christopher North and Timothy Tickler for their "lapses into the crying sin of the age, humbug!":

"Call things wicked, base, vile, obscene, blasphemous; run your tackle to its last inch upon these scores, but never say that they are stupid when they are not..."

1. Ibid., p. 92.

2. Oliphant, I, 208.

Distinguish as you please: brand with the mark of your indignation whatever offends your feelings, moral, political, or religious—but 'nothing extenuate.' If you mention a book at all, say what it really is. Blame Don Juan; blame Faublas; blame Candide; but blame them for what really is deserving of blame. Stick to your own good old rule—abuse Wickedness, but acknowledge Wit."¹

Once more Lockhart repeats what he has been saying all along.

"I maintain, and have always maintained, that Don Juan is, without exception, the first of Lord Byron works. It is by far the most original in point of conception. It is decidedly original in point of tone...it contains the finest specimens of serious poetry he has ever written; and it contains the finest specimens of ludicrous poetry that our age has witnessed...Don Juan, say the canting world what it will, is destined to hold a permanent rank in the literature of our country."²

It has been suggested earlier in this chapter that Lockhart was probably the only contemporary reviewer of Byron's poetry to be influenced by Byron's replies to his critics. Whether Lockhart was on this occasion more favourably inclined towards the poem, because he saw his idea of bringing Juan to England realized in cantos X and XI, is impossible to say. However, here Lockhart adopts Byron's response "Cant!" to his reviewers' accusation of immorality. Moreover, Byron's contempt for "the literary low empire" of the periodical press is echoed in Lockhart's review which is also highly critical of Blackwood's itself.

The most important point in Lockhart's defence of Don Juan can also be traced back to Byron's reply to his critics. As we have already seen, Byron publicly advanced this argument for the

1. Blackwood's, XIV, 282.

2. Ibid., pp. 282-3.

first time in the fourth canto of Don Juan (xcii) where he mentioned Smollett, Prior, Ariosto and Fielding as examples of established classical writers with whose works the alleged indecency and immorality of Don Juan could be compared. In his review, Lockhart uses the same argument in defence of Don Juan.

"And, after all, say the worse of Don Juan, that can with fairness be said of it, what does the thing amount to? Is it more obscene than Tom Jones?—Is it more blasphemous than Voltaire's novels? In point of fact, it is not within fifty miles of either of them: and as to obscenity, there is more of that in the pious Richardson's pious Pamela, than in all the novels and poems that have been written since."¹

Yet, here, once more, Lockhart impressed upon Byron's argument his own stamp. In John Gibson Lockhart, A Critical Study, Gilbert Macbeth suggests that early in his literary career Lockhart came under the influence of the German Romantic critics, and, in

1. Blackwood's, XIV, 283. It is interesting to see Lockhart substitute Richardson's name for Smollett's. Lockhart admired Smollett and believed that he was a better writer than Richardson. In his review of Walter Scott's edition of "Ballantyne Novelist's Library" (April 1824), he writes: "We should have recommended the placing of Fielding, Smollett, Sterne in a class by themselves; then Richardson. As to Pamela, ...we confess it appears to be...a very singular production to have come from the pen of the saintly Samuel, and to have found favour with the ladies of England within the time of our own grandmothers." (Blackwood's, XV, 408).

Lockhart's inclusion of the name of Voltaire is, I believe, another of those uncanny coincidences, which occur in both Lockhart's criticism of Byron and Byron's private letters without there being any apparent link between them. For, unless the name was suggested to him by Byron's defence of Voltaire against his English detractors in the notes to canto V of Don Juan (which were published in July 1822), Lockhart could not have possibly known that Byron had mentioned in a letter to Hobhouse, Voltaire's works as an example of those eighteenth century classics with which Don Juan could be compared. See Lord Byron's Correspondence, ed. John Murray (1922), II, 90.

particular, Friedrich Schlegel, whose Lectures on the History of Literature, Ancient and Modern, he translated in 1818, and that he inherited from them the historical method of criticism. In his defence of Byron, Lockhart applies this method which "seeks the causes of these phenomena [works of art] in the social, political and religious life and the tradition of the groups out of which a literature has arisen."¹ On a theoretical level such a method was perhaps sufficient to give rise to doubts in Lockhart's mind about the validity of Byron's argument from precedent, since the works of Fielding, Smollett and Voltaire on the one hand, and Don Juan, on the other, were the products of completely different ages. On a more pertinent level, however, Lockhart was perhaps better guided by his own knowledge of the literary tastes of his own age and his own society, which he knew better than the poet who had been living in exile for more than seven years. In an excellent article on the reception of Don Juan in England, Edward Dudley Hume Johnson suggests that by referring to the works of Voltaire, Fielding and Smollett in his defence of Don Juan, "Byron gives evidence of how completely he was out of touch with the temper of his countrymen."² Lockhart was more aware of the

1. Gilbert Macbeth, John Gibson Lockhart, p. 65.

2. E.D.H. Johnson, "Don Juan in England," ELH, XI (1944), 145-46. Johnson quotes William Parry's The Last Days of Lord Byron, on Byron's inability to understand the middle classes, and the change which their moral and spiritual standards had undergone since the beginning of the century (Ibid., p. 152), which shows, Johnson comments, Parry's remarkable understanding of Byron. Yet, Lockhart made a similar point more than two years before Parry's book was published.

great moral and religious change which the country had been undergoing since the turn of the century, which transformed England from the atmosphere of moral and religious latitude of the previous century to more rigid moral and religious standards of the Victorian era. It is no wonder that Lockhart uses the precedents of the works of Voltaire, Fielding and Richardson both to defend Byron and to criticise him at the same time:

"The whole that can with justice be said of Byron, as to these two great charges, [of obscenity and blasphemy] is, that he has practised in this age something of the licence of the age of our grandfathers. In doing so, he has acted egregiously amiss. The things were bad, nobody can doubt that, and we had got rid of them; and it did not become a man of Byron's genius to try to make his age retrograde in anything, least of all in such things as these... People make excuses for Fielding and Voltaire, because they don't know in how far these men have been acted upon by circumstances: but people will not make such excuses for Lord Byron, because they know, we all know, that he was educated among the same sort of people as ourselves, that he must know and feel the same things¹ to be wrong which his neighbours know and feel to be so."

The result of such a mistake, Lockhart declares, might be a decline of Byron's contemporary popularity, but it does not mean that his genius has deserted him.

vi

Although Lockhart did not review the last five cantos of Don Juan, he continued to defend Byron whenever the opportunity

1. Blackwood's, XIV, 283.

occurred. After Byron's death, Lockhart intervened, to prevent Maginn from attacking him in Blackwood's. In June 1824 Maginn apparently offered to abuse Byron in the "Noctes," which brought a strong reaction from Lockhart: "It is a horrid idea of yours to run down Byron dead," he wrote to Maginn probably early in June 1823, "It is quite a punch bred notion & you cd not say so impransus. Blackwood, besides, will not have it so."¹ The published Noctes was largely written by Lockhart who made Tickler defend Byron against Odoherly's criticism:

"I think Byron's Childe Harold, Corsair, Lara and Don Juan (in part), will be remembered in the year of grace 1924; and I think the name of Byron will then be ranked as the third name [after Wordsworth and Scott] of one great aera of the imaginative literature of England; and this I think is no trifle."²

Finally, in February 1825, Lockhart wrote for Blackwood's a formal reassessment of Byron as a man, and his achievement as a poet. Although Lockhart's attitude towards the man became considerably more sympathetic and tolerant after Byron's death, his critical assessment of the poems is not in the least inconsistent with the views he had expressed before in Maga and elsewhere. In this review of Byron's works, Childe Harold receives guarded praise, while the early tales Lara and Corsair, and Manfred are more enthusiastically commended. On the dramatic poems, Lockhart repeats the view which he has expressed all along:

-
1. Strout, John Bull's Letter, p. 157.
 2. Blackwood's, XV, 711.

"In spite of many isolated passages, quite equal to any he ever produced, especially in *Cain* and *Sardanapalus*, his more formal dramatic poems, have been weighed in the balance against *Manfred*, and found wanting."¹

It is in *Don Juan*, however, that Lockhart sees Byron's greatest achievement:

"We have little hesitation in saying, that we regard that work as, upon the whole, the most original, remarkable, and powerful of all the works of Lord Byron's genius. The exquisite grace of its language and versification (generally speaking, for it is often very careless as to both of these matters), the keen and searching observation—the perfect knowledge of human nature in very many of its weakest, and in very many of its strongest points—the wit—the humour—the really Shakespearean touches of character scattered over every page—these are excellencies which lie sufficiently on the surface of this extraordinary poem..." Byron "tears the mask from the front of frigid hypocrisy—he lays bare the misery of unsatisfied infidel intellect on the one hand—and the worthless poverty of mere conventional forms of goodness upon the other. In *Don Juan*, he has shown himself to be, as a wit and a satirist, quite equal to *Le Sage*—to *Voltaire* himself...No one can defend the licentiousness of some descriptions in this poem; but the refinement and art of the whole composition are so great, that we really do not entertain any apprehensions of its ever being a favourite book with the sort of readers likely to be essentially injured by those offensive passages,—which, after all, are not very many—not nearly so many, certainly, as those who take their opinions from the reviews must imagine."²

This is indeed nothing more than a recapitulation on Lockhart's criticism of Byron's poetry over the previous six years. I have quoted it at length at the end of this chapter because in conjunction with Lockhart's other articles and reviews, and the many scattered remarks on Byron's poetry in *Blackwood's* from 1818 to 1825, it is

1. *Blackwood's*, XV, 149.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 149.

enough in itself to answer the charge of inconsistency that has often been brought against Lockhart. The value of Lockhart's criticism of Don Juan as such consists in the fact that in the Tory reviewer Byron found an attentive reader who was prepared to examine his argument in defence of his poem, and who tried to give it as much publicity as a successful magazine such as Blackwood's was capable of.

The part played by Blackwood's itself cannot be overestimated. The comparative freedom which the magazine gave to its writers in expressing their opinions on contemporary poets made it possible for Lockhart to defend Don Juan in a Tory periodical when the vast majority of the other reviewers and pamphleteers were too shocked to pay any attention to Byron's argument. When Lockhart became the editor of the more respectable and sedate Quarterly Review, he ceased to enjoy such freedom and could not but adopt the more conventional Tory attitude towards Don Juan. This change is most noticeable in his review of Thomas Moore's Life of Lord Byron (1831) in the Quarterly Review, where Lockhart considers Manfred and Sardanapalus superior to "such flimsy lucubrations as occupy fifteen stanzas out of every twenty in the later cantos of Don Juan."¹

1. Quarterly Review, XLIV, 204.

CHAPTER IX

WILLIAM MAGINN VERSUS BYRON

Turning from the criticism of Byron's poetry by Lockhart and Wilson to William Maginn's contribution on the same subject, we realize how important it is to assess the contributions of every individual writer to the criticism of poetry in Blackwood's separately. Despite their occasional excesses, both Wilson and Lockhart made a serious and often praiseworthy effort to understand, appreciate, and evaluate contemporary poetry, though like most contemporary reviewers, major critics included, they had their blind spots. William Maginn may have shared Wilson's emotional recklessness or Lockhart's biting sarcasm; the political bias of the magazine as well as its penchant for mischief may have been congenial to his temperament. Yet he was different and remained different from his two colleagues throughout his association with Blackwood's. Miriam Thrall describes Maginn as a misfit Bohemian, who knew his age too well to take it seriously.¹ Despite all appearances and his prolific contributions to the magazine, he did not fit in Blackwood's either.

1. See Miriam Thrall, Rebellious Fraser's (New York: 1934), p. 162.

To start with, unlike Wilson and Lockhart, Maginn thought too little of his own talents to appreciate talent in others. Although his prodigious scholarship was greater than either Lockhart's or Wilson's, and his wit keener than theirs, he never thought of writing for periodicals except with the view of amusing himself, as he once wrote to Blackwood.¹ As regards more substantial forms of writing, Maginn wrote to Blackwood on 7 August 1823: "If I can do tales for you I will but without fishing for compliments. I really do not feel myself competent to do anything worth a penny."² Again on 24 December 1824 he replies to Blackwood's objection to a satirical article he intended for the magazine:

"I don't remember any grossness of expression farther than about eating and drinking in the Romance I sent you & surely objecting to that is over squeamish. I intended it as a vehicle for a satire on the learned professions beginning with medicine. As for making a book of it—that is nonsense. I never intend to write books if I can avoid it. Besides it would not put fifty pounds into my pocket, and that is less than I get from writing fifty half hours worth of newspapers stuff."³

As for his contributions to the magazine Maginn had no illusions whatever about their value. Very often he told Blackwood: "I give you carte blanche with respect to alterations" or, "You need

1. NLS, MSS. 4005.

2. NLS, MSS. 4011.

3. NLS, MSS. 4012.

not give yourself the trouble of apologizing to me about altering my articles—treat them always as you please; they are nothing to me."¹ Neither Wilson nor Lockhart had such a poor view of their own talents. Even his other accomplishments which were by no means insignificant, were not rated much higher by him. Just before one of his frequent visits to London, Maginn wrote to William Blackwood on 14 June 1823:

"Apropos, you have the most humbugging strain of Blarney in your letters always, a talent I do not wish you to exercise at my expense: So in introducing me to Cadell say that I am a friend—that I know something of your affairs—that I can explain some vexatious matters and that I am in London on some little business of my own—No more—not a₂ word about talent, taste, genius, gusto or virtue."²

Secondly, even when he was still a schoolmaster in his native town Cork, Maginn had managed to acquire too intimate a knowledge of the "puffing system" which publishers used in promoting the sale of their books, to have any faith in the intrinsic value of any literary work. It was not simply because of the weakened state of literature in the early thirties that made Maginn start his campaign against "puffery" in Fraser's, as Miriam Thrall suggests. Long before that, and during one of the richest periods in the history of English poetry, Maginn seemed to think that all publishers were guilty of deceiving the reading public by extolling their own publication. Indeed, in his

1. NLS, MSS. 4011.

2. NLS, MSS. 4011.

earliest letters to William Blackwood that have survived, we find Maginn already referring to the subject that was to occur only too frequently in his later letters:

"Your greater acquaintance with the self-puffing tribe will, if you like to exert it, improve my preface [of Maginn's poem "Chevy Chase]...

You have not answered me with respect to the newspaper's puffery. Say yes or no & I shall act accordingly."¹

It is virtually impossible to quote within the space of this short chapter all the letters in which Maginn either informs William Blackwood about his indefatigable exertions in "puffing" the magazine or Blackwood's other publications, or tries to persuade the Edinburgh publisher to puff the works of his own friends. Suffice it to say that having himself done so much in that line, or at least offered to do, Maginn strongly believed that all publishers and periodical reviewers were guilty of the same sin towards the reading public.

Thirdly Maginn's taste in literature, which he once described to Blackwood as a "barbarous one" was inseparable from his scholarship and his veneration for Classical and Renaissance literature. Homer, Rabelais and Shakespeare were his idols and he could write learnedly and appreciatively about them. But when it came to contemporary poetry he simply admitted his distaste for it and his inability to criticise or evaluate it. On 5 August 1822 he wrote to William Blackwood, "I always confess that I do not know

1. NLS, MSS. 4005.

good verses from bad,"¹ and in an unpublished letter from "Olinthus Petre" Maginn again says referring to Keats, "I do not pretend to be a judge of poetical feelings but I hope I do not transgress in hinting that a good apothecary is a much more respectable man than a bad poet."² It is hardly surprising then to know that for more than three years Maginn never tried his hand in the reviewing department of the magazine, and when he finally did, his reviews were savage tirades against the poet reviewed rather than serious criticism of his poetry.

It would really be too charitable to Maginn to claim that his attacks on practically every contemporary poet was the result of "his critical integrity"³ or even the poverty of the literary scene in the 1830s, for unfortunately it had its source in a complete moral and critical cynicism. One can hardly ascribe to moral and critical integrity the fact that while he had no scruples about pouring savage abuse on poets and writers such as Byron, Shelley, Keats, Moore, Hazlitt, De Quincey, Lamb and many others, we find Maginn warning Blackwood against criticising such considerably less gifted but powerful figures as William Jerdan and Theodore Hook, as the following extracts from his letters to William Blackwood show:

1. NLS, MSS. 4009.

2. NLS, MSS. 4007. See also Maginn's letter of 24 May 1824 in which he confesses to William Blackwood: "I really am no judge of poetry at all and whenever I criticise, it is by a different standard" - Strout, Bibliography, p. 8.

3. See "William Maginn; the Tragedy of a Writer" TLS, 22 August 1942, p.418.

"You say that you think L's review [of Hook's Sayings and Doings] will not please Theodore's amour propre. H. is callous as to what is said about him, and wishes puffs only to do his books good. But if you really thought it would annoy him, do you not perceive you must bid adieu to having help given any concern of yours in whatever quarters he may have influence. I own I doubt the wisdom of running any chance of offending people with power in their hands. The Whig organs are against you of course—you have alienated the Q. Review & the Lit. Gaz. each of them let me tell you whether you believe it or not powerful engines in their respective lines. Do you think it good sense to run the risk of adding to them the John Bull and its endless ramifications, when a couple of pages of Balaam would obviate all risk."¹

In another undated letter Maginn writes to Blackwood:

"Believe me it would do you more service to tackle the amour propre of Hook at the expense of a page or two of Balaam than to give half a sheet to the edification of such things as the Literary Souvenir. You are gradually losing your hold on the press and I protest I do not know any quarter in which I could expect to have, as a matter of favour, a puff on a volume of yours inserted. This is not wise. I am quite serious."²

About William Jerdan, the editor of the Literary Gazette, whom Lockhart attacked in the "Noctes", Maginn wrote to Blackwood on September 1824:

"Depend on it you are quite wrong in suffering J. to be affronted. There was a swipe at him in this last Noctes which can do no good. By what means he attained it Heaven knows, but in fact he has attained more influence over light literature than any man in London and should rather be conciliated. The Gazette is doubling in circulation & quarrelling with it is bad policy particularly as it answers no purpose on earth."³

It is hardly possible to find excuses for Maginn in the fact that as a man he harboured no grudge against any of those he abused,

1. NLS, MSS. 4015.

2. NLS, MSS. 4723.

3. NLS, MSS. 4012.

or that his attacks were free from malice. Nor will it do to say that his excellent wit and sarcasm compensate for the anarchy in his critical and moral values. Indeed, his resort to parody and burlesque as means of criticism was the obverse side of this fundamental critical incapacity. Yet his irresponsibility and his absolute inattention to the consequences of his attacks can only be ascribed to someone who considered the whole business of reviewing and periodical criticism as a big joke which no writer should take seriously. "Were I criticising," he once wrote in Blackwood's, "I should lay on abuse as thick as butter. Nor would there be a particle of malignity in my whole composition while doing so."¹ Maginn's reasons for preferring abuse to praise in writing about his contemporaries, were first, that "people in general, and the reading public in particular, feel a sort of repugnant horror against the sweetmeat confections of flattery, and like exceedingly to have their palates roused by the piquant sauce of the tomahawk", and secondly, he believed, that "All the abuse of all the scurrilous publications in the country...never will do a man of genius—of real undoubted genius—one pinworth of harm."² On the other hand, Maginn was equally flippant about the attacks on him. When late in 1823 a pamphlet under the title Blackwood's Blackguards was advertised for publication, he wrote to William Blackwood on 30 October 1823:

1. Blackwood's, XII, 57.

2. Ibid., pp. 57-58.

"As for me I give anybody, who thinks such poor deer worth his while, leave to abuse me for having committed all the crimes in the calendar, without being in danger of law. If I could find him out afterwards I might give him a pinch perhaps in turn—if not n'importe."¹

Again in September 1824, when he was attacked in the Examiner, Maginn wrote to William Blackwood:

"I do not know nor care who it was who paragraphed me in the Examiner. John or Robert Hunt, I suppose. But no matter. I would not on any account think there was the slightest notice of such nonsense in any quarter which I could influence. That would be spoony with a vengeance."²

ii

It would be futile, in the case of such a writer as Maginn, to search for the motive behind his antagonism towards Byron in some literary or political convictions. He delighted in what Walter Scott called the "genteel-blackguard, touch and go" journalism, and to him periodical criticism of contemporary poetry was no more than such journalism. Nor would it amount to much to say that Maginn was the most consistent among the writers on poetry in Blackwood's in his hostility towards Byron, since he was consistently hostile towards practically every major or minor poet of his age. On the other hand it would perhaps be understandable if Maginn directed his attacks on Byron's early poems. By qualification as well as by temperament he was not fitted to share

1. NLS, MSS. 4011.

2. NLS, MSS. 4012.

his age's adoration for the early tales and Childe Harold. Yet it was Don Juan that most of his abuse was hurled at. Indeed Maginn's first known contribution to Blackwood's is a parody of Wordsworth's poem "Yarrow Unvisited," under the title "Don Juan Unread" (Blackwood's, November 1819). Predictably enough Maginn uses Don Juan as a stick to beat the Whigs:

"Let whiggish folk, frae Holland House,
 Who have been lying, prating,
 Read Don Giovanni, 'tis their own,
 A child of their creating!
 On jests profane they love to feed,
 And there they are—and many;
 But we, who link not with the crew,
 Regard not Don Giovanni.

"Be Juan then unseen, unknown!
 It must, or we may rue it;
 We may have virtue of our own;
 Ah! why should we undo it?
 The treasured faith of days long past,
 We still shall prize o'er any;
 And we shall grieve to hear the gibes
 Of scoffing Don Giovanni.

When Whigs with freezing rule shall come,
 And piety seem folly;
 When Cam and Isis curb'd by Brougham,
 Shall wander Melancholy;
 When Cobbett, Wooler, Watson, Hunt,
 And all the swinish many,
 Shall rough-shod ride o'er Church and State,
 Then hey! for Don Giovanni."¹

This appears good-humoured enough, but in fact it was the beginning of a campaign against Byron, first in Blackwood's and then in Fraser's which was not often tempered by Maginn's wit and

1. Blackwood's, XI, 194-195.

satirical talents.

However, two years had to pass before Maginn wrote in any length on Byron's poetry. Apart from the occasional parody or passing reference, he abstained, or probably was prevented from attacking Byron in Blackwood's. This was definitely not the result of good will on Maginn's part. Between 1820 and 1822 his letters to William Blackwood contain several and unfavourable references to Byron. Yet even here his passion for good, free for all journalistic warfare was dominant. For a long time Maginn was very anxious to get hold of Byron's "Reply" to the review of the first two cantos of Don Juan in the magazine. He had of course read about the "Reply" in Blackwood's itself. But in 1820 he had some hope of ferretting out a copy. He wrote to William Blackwood on 4 July:

"A friend of mine who writes me now and then a sprightly letter from France wrote me a word the other day that he dined with T. Moore at his house in Paris last month & that Moore received a letter during dinner from Lord Byron dated Ravenna which he read for him. It contained inter alia a tirade against your magazine; and the forthcoming Cantos of Don Juan (or at least a copy of part of them) were seen by my friend full of angry strictures on your critique against him. Wastle in his last extract I perceive alludes to this ill humour of his Lordship.¹ I think a few verses in anticipation as if extracted from the embryo cantos would make a good article; it might be made rather amusing against Lord B & Wastle could do it famously."²

-
1. See "Extracts from Wastle's Diary," Blackwood's, VII, 317.
 2. NLS, MSS. 4005. Byron's letter which Maginn alludes to is most likely the one to Moore of 24 May 1820, in which Byron refers to his "furious prose answer to Blackwood's." The letter did not however contain any part of the new cantos (III and IV) of Don Juan: See L&J, V, 32-33.

Again on 26 December of the same year Maginn wrote to William Blackwood:

"You get I understand a pretty peeling from Ld. Byron; his verses about your magazine have been spouted in some companies in Paris. If you cd get a copy of them, it wd make a good article to publish them with a quiz¹ commentary. I imagine it wd not be hard to come at them."

In the review of Lockhart's John Bull's Letter to Lord Byron (Blackwood's, July 1821) the writer, whom I suspect to be Maginn,² refers again to Byron's "Reply" to Blackwood's:

"Of our castigation of Don Juan, we are proud, and laugh at the vapourings of Lord Byron, who says he will answer us. If he do, we shall annihilate him in the twinkling of a bed-post."³

It ought to be mentioned here, again, that this review of Lockhart's pamphlet appeared after Maginn's first visit to Edinburgh in July 1821. On 3 August Maginn wrote again to William Blackwood about his hopes of obtaining a copy to Byron's reply. He again referred to Mr. Sullivan, Thomas Moore's friend, who, Maginn told Blackwood, "promised me faithfully that he could get that letter of Lord Byron's, of which we were speaking, from Moore with whom he saw it, and certainly transmit it to me. This might be a good thing."⁴ Needless to say, ~~that~~ Maginn's effort failed and the "Reply" to Blackwood's remained unknown until it was published in 1835.

1. NLS, MSS. 4005.

2. See above p.

3. Blackwood's, IX, 426.

4. NLS, MSS. 4007.

In other respects too Maginn was constantly urging Blackwood to take a less favourable attitude towards Byron. When in March 1821 Maginn's first "Letter on Bowle's Strictures on the Life and Writings of Pope" was published, Maginn wrote to Blackwood on 10 April 1821:

"Lord Byron's pamphlet ought to be answered by a Wordsworthian. I am too remote from the scene of action to do it effectually, but could not you stir up the Professor of Moral Philosophy."¹

It also seems that in March 1822 Maginn wrote an article for Blackwood's in which he defended Robert Southey and abused Byron. Shortly afterwards, however, he became irritated at the frequency with which Byron's name appeared in the magazine. On 29 April, he wrote to William Blackwood referring to Eyre Evans Crowe's "Letter from Paddy" (Blackwood's, April 1822):

"Your Dublin correspondent Paddy makes I think a fair comment about the subject of Lord Byron &c becoming a bore [sic]. Let us have no more about him. Therefore destroy the letter about the Vision of Judgement which I wrote you sometime ago."²

But Maginn was as unpredictable as Wilson if not more so. On 7 June 1822, he sends Blackwood "a nonsensical article....a quiz on critiquing," in which "various of your old friends and enemies

1. NLS, MSS. 4007.

2. NLS, MSS. 4009. Mrs. Oliphant (Oliphant, I, 388) confuses two different pieces by Maginn on Southey's Vision of Judgement. The satiric article, or "squib" as Maginn called it, appeared in the magazine in April 1821 (IX, 59-64) under the title "Letter from ***** enclosing a hymn to Christopher North." The other piece, "a puff on the Doctor," which Maginn sent to Blackwood on 22 March 1822, was the one which he asked the publisher to destroy, for the reason he gave in his letter.

make their appearance."¹ This article, "Letter from a 'Gentleman of the Press,'" appeared in July 1822 and contained an attack on Francis Jeffrey whom Maginn accused of telling Byron that "he ought to give up poetry—for that Nature never intended him to be a poet."² On 12 June 1822 Maginn again sent "a few lines in Hexameter" which also appeared in the July number of the magazine, under the title "Metricum Symposium Ambrosianum, Seu Propinatio Poetica Northi." In this piece Maginn "toasts" all contemporary poets among whom Byron comes first:

"His Lordship, who, in the dull play, the Foscari,
Wrote worse than e'er Cockneyland's regent, mild Barry,
And whose fame and whose genius came down to their Zero
In the robberies and wretchedness of Faliero.

He with folly inflated, with vanity reeling,
And mocking at nature, at morals, and feeling,
At the pride of the brave, at the tears of the tender,
And who cares for them all and their ties not a bender.

Who spouts out more venom than an Amphisboena
On the land of his birth; and, like laughing Hyena,
Mocks at the brave country, he scarce should dare dream on—
At whose blood and whose glory he sneered like a demon."³

After such questionable a compliment it is surprising, to say the least, to learn that Maginn wrote the fourth number of the "Noctes" (July 1822) in which the scene is "transferred (by poetic licence) to Pisa," and Odoherly and Byron are the only two

1. NLS, MSS. 4009.

2. Blackwood's, XI, 58. Jeffrey was often quizzed by the Blackwoodians for Henry Brougham's famous review of Hours of Idleness in the Edinburgh.

3. Blackwood's, XI, 79.

interlocutors. Yet Maginn claims the piece in his letter to William Blackwood of 25 June 1823.¹ How far Maginn was solely responsible for the generally favourable attitude to Byron in this number of the "Noctes", and how far he was under the influence of one or both of the other two major contributors is impossible to say. Yet it is certain that Maginn wrote this number of the "Noctes" during his visit to Edinburgh in July 1822,² and a great

-
1. See Oliphant, I, 396, and Alan Lang Strout, "Concerning Noctes Ambrósianae," MLN, LI (1936), 495 and n.
 2. R.M. Wardle, (MP, XLII, 11), misreads and misdates one of Wilson's letters and consequently comes to the conclusion that Maginn had the idea of sending Odoherty to Pisa, as early as May 1822. In his letter to Blackwood, [of 23/24 June 1822], Wilson writes, "I can do nothing with Maginn's notices nor is it necessary for this number. I will do it for the next. I wish he would himself do the Noctes he speaks of—the idea is excellent—for the next number." From internal evidence it is clear that all Maginn's letters to William Blackwood during June 1822 have been preserved, and nowhere does Maginn speak of the Odoherty-at-Pisa "Noctes." On the other hand he asked Blackwood on 7 June: "Write me soon what is the plan of the next Noctes i.e. those of July & what I can do for them—songs &c. to an unlimited amount." On 9 June he sent "a catch" for three voices for the "Noctes" and explained: "It is concerning Johnny Ballantyne. A most interesting conversation might be got up concerning that worthy bibliopole which would amuse the natives." Three days later, on 12 June, Maginn again wrote about a new idea for the "Noctes", in which John Murray would appear as an interlocutor; "he strikes me to be the greatest butt going nowadays. Only that it would be too dangerous, he would be a fine interlocutor in one of your noctes, but if you attempted it you wd. be pelted by all your fraternity with folios." Apart from these there is no other reference in William Maginn's letters to the "Noctes" before he started for Edinburgh on 1 July 1822, nor to "Alaric's notes" which, a year later, Maginn claimed to have used for the published "Noctes." It is obvious, therefore, that Wilson's letter refers to either of Maginn's two ideas for the "Noctes" and most likely to the one about John Murray. See NLS, MSS. 4009 and 4723.

deal of the dialogue between Odoherly and Byron is closer to Lockhart's views on Byron than to anything Maginn wrote on the subject before or after. At least Odoherly's declaration that he "had rather have written a page of Don Juan than a ton of Childe Harold—that was too great a bore entirely,"¹ echoes Lockhart so closely that his influence on Maginn cannot be ruled out.

More relevant to our subject however, is the central part of the "Noctes", in which Odoherly raises objections to Don Juan and Cain and Byron is supposed to answer them. On Don Juan Byron is made to say:

"In Don Juan I meant to give a flowing free satire on things as they are. I meant to call people's attention to the realities of things. I could make nothing of England or France. There every thing is convention—surface—cant. I had recourse to the regions where Nature acts more vividly, more in the open light of day. I meant no harm, upon my honour. I meant but to do what any other man might have done with a more serious face, and had all the Hannah Mores in Europe to answer his Plaudite."²

Byron also defends Don Juan against the charge of immorality by pleading his hero's youth and promises that "The Don may be Lord Chancellor ere he dies." The argument of literary precedents is also put in Byron's mouth and examples are cited from Homer and Virgil, and, surprisingly enough from Milton. Odoherly's objections to Cain as well as Byron's refutation only repeat the

1. Blackwood's, XII, 106.

2. Ibid., p.103.

two sides of the contemporary controversy over the blasphemy of Byron's poem. Milton's Satan as well as Prometheus of Aeschylus are cited by Byron in defence of his delineation of Lucifer.¹

iii

Up till December 1822, Maginn had not yet written a single review of any of Byron's poems, or of the poems of any other poet for that matter. On 9 December 1822 he sent William Blackwood a review of Werner, accompanied by this letter, which expresses for the first time Maginn's opinion that Byron's poetry had been "puffed" by Blackwood's:

"Is the above any use to you? If you have not an article on Werner, or only a puff article, print this. If you have a puff article reduce it to the shape of a letter and print them side by side, or one after the other rather, as two opinions. ²I remember seeing a thing of the kind formerly in Maga."

As we have already seen in the last chapter, a review of Werner (probably by Lockhart) was already in the press and eventually appeared in the magazine under the title "Odoherly on Werner." Accordingly Maginn's review was "reduced" to the shape of a letter from "Timothy Tickler." How much was omitted of the

1. See ibid., p. 104. Byron is reported to have read this number of the "Noctes" and exclaimed: "By Jupiter! The fellow has me down regularly, in black and white." But as the evidence for this does not go back farther than R. Shelton Mackenzie (Noctes Ambrosianae, [1863], I, 198n.) it should be considered doubtful, but also see His Very Self and Voice, (ed.) E.J. Lovell, Jr. (New York; 1954), p.551.

2. NLS, MSS. 4005.

original article we have no means of telling, but as it stands the review is indeed anti-puffery. After abusing Byron for writing Don Juan and Murray for publishing it, as well as dragging in Jeffrey and the Edinburgh Review, Maginn settles down to the task of applying his tomahawk to Werner. And indeed he uses a sledgehammer to crack such a small nut. As we have already seen, Maginn never pretended to be a judge of contemporary poetry and whenever he criticized it, it was by a different standard. In this review of what Byron in his preface described as a close adaptation of Harriet Lee's Canterbury Tales, Maginn speculates on how Shakespeare might have done justice to the source:

"Lord Byron hinted some time since (I forget exactly when, but I believe in some of his absurd prefaces,) that Shakespeare was not an over civilized writer; and yet, I venture to say, that if he turn over the plays of the Bard of Avon, he will nowhere find so clumsy an exhibition of want of art, as in the opening scene of Werner. And perhaps, I may add, that Shakespeare would hardly have missed the fine opportunity of developing in its most trying situation the character of Ulric."¹

Unlike the other reviewer of Werner in the same number of the magazine, Maginn refrains from pointing out the close similarity between Werner and its source, but he finds Byron's poem wanting in another kind of originality.

"Ulric, the favourite, is only the Giaour, Conrad, Lara, Alp, &c. &c. rehashed and served up as a Bohemian. Coelum, non anumum mutant. It is the old mess with a new sauce... The conception of such characters, instead of being the sublime of poetry, is not very far from being the sublime of vulgarity. It is easy to lay on the thick daubing shades of intense villainy; but not quite so easy to soften them off, so as to draw a character in

1. Blackwood's, XII, 783.

which these shades blend consistently with the hues of virtue, or even seeming virtue. The Giaour & Co. are barely unnatural, just as out of the way as Sir Charles Grandison and his compeers, who charmed our grandmothers; and like them, they have become bores of the first magnitude."¹

Having judged the characters in Werner by his Shakespearian standards, Maginn turns to Byron's verse which he describes as "hideous" judged by the Miltonian flow of verse. Byron's verse has no more than "the bare typographic impress of metre," and to prove his point Maginn resorts to the familiar critical device of printing extracts from Werner as prose.

Despite the relative unimportance of Werner among Byron's work and the unfair standards with which Maginn judges it, "Tickler on Werner" is virtually the only serious piece of criticism of poetry in Maginn's contribution to Blackwood's. The flippant abusive vein is not dominant at least in the letter itself and his remarks about Byron's dramatic talents are not entirely unjustified. But as J. Stuart Mill said about Blackwood's in a different context, "It was not to be expected that a writer in Blackwood could accomplish a criticism on a volume of poetry, without cutting capers."² The "capers" in Maginn's letter on Werner come in the postscript. Here Maginn goes back to his tomahawk work: "Heaven and Earth" is condemned before its

1. Ibid., pp.783-784.

2. John Stuart Mill's review of Tennyson's Poems, Chiefly Lyrical, London Magazine, reprinted Tennyson: The Critical Heritage, ed. John D. Jump (1967), p. 85.

publication, the Quarterly abused for not criticising Byron, and the Lord Chancellor applauded for keeping his blasphemous books, such as Cain, "out of the market."

Before Maginn wrote his second and last review of any of Byron's poems for Blackwood's, he tried to publish in the magazine in March 1823 what he himself described as a savage attack on Thomas Moore's Loves of the Angels. Like a great deal of Maginn's intended contributions to the magazine it was vetoed by William Blackwood, and still lies unpublished among the Blackwood Papers. The vulgar and savage invective against Thomas Moore had better be left where it is, but in the course of his tirade against the indecency of Moore's poetry Maginn declares that it is "but a wretched ground of exultation for" Moore "that Lord Byron now and then condescends to write in the licentious style of a wit of the days of Charles II."¹ When Blackwood wrote back to Maginn to apologize for not publishing the article, the latter replied, characteristically enough, "I am sorry you find it necessary to apologize for rejecting an article of mine. Pitch my lucubrations to old Nicholas whenever it so pleases you. But you are getting squeamish I perceive. I completely forgot what I said in the article on 'the 'Loves of the Angels'. Something savage I think."²

Equally savage but not so scurrilous is Maginn's review of

1. NLS, MSS. 4011.

2. NLS, MSS. 4011.

Cantos VI-VIII of Don Juan (Blackwood's, July 1823). By that time of course, as we shall see in the next chapter, all Byron's sins have been finally crowned in eyes of the supporters of Blackwood's by his collaboration with John and Leigh Hunt in the production of the Liberal. Maginn's contempt for the Hunts and their "Cockney" associates knew no limit, and one could quote endlessly from his attacks on them, both in the magazine and in his letters to William Blackwood, but one example is more than enough. The only excuse for reproducing Maginn's letter is that it was written just before the publication of Cantos VI-VIII, in July 1823. It also has some connection with another poem of Byron's. When John Hunt published Byron's Age of Bronze anonymously in March of the same year, John Wilson made the poem an excuse for retaliating to the attacks on Blackwood's and its supporters in the Liberal. Wilson did not pretend to review Byron's poem but savagely denounced John Hunt for hinting that the satire on the Holy Alliance was a production of Byron. When John Hunt read the review and threatened to bring a libel action against the publishers of Blackwood's which subjected Thomas Cadell to yet another bout of harrassment from the victims of the magazine Maginn, who was then about to visit London, wrote to William Blackwood on 14 June 1823:

"If you want to mistify [sic.] Cadell about the tearing of Hunts, I do not care a rap if you do it at my expense. We would most likely not be willing to come forward with such a scamp as any of the tribe of Hunts, but I do not value the vagabonds the tenth part of a cabbage stump and would just as soon get into a row regular with them as

empty a can of punch. They are lily livered valets, made of scrapings of chamber pots, not of the same clay as the rest of us. So if you wish for a bullying match, I shall support the honour of my country in that important department."¹

It is hardly surprising that the mere fact that the Cantos VI-VIII were published by John Hunt was enough reason for Maginn to damn them. When it came on top of Maginn's own antagonism towards Byron, it produced the savage tirade against the new cantos of Don Juan in "Timothy Tickler's letter, No. VII" (July 1822). It is bad enough to see Byron associate with the Cockneys, but that he "should descend to the composition of heartless, heavy, dull, anti-British garbage, to be printed by the Cockney's, and puffed in the Examiner"² only fills Tickler with sorrow. Maginn's attack on those cantos is so blatantly prejudiced and indiscriminating that we should really wonder whether he meant it as a criticism of Byron or just one of his "bullying matches."

"Page after page presents us with a monotonous unmusical drawl, decrying chastity, sneering at matrimony, cursing wives, abusing monarchy, deprecating lawful government, lisping dull double-entendres, hymning Jacobism, in a style and manner so little unrelieved by any indication of poetic power, that I feel a moral conviction that his lordship must have taken the Examiner, the Liberal, the Rimini, the Round Table, as his model, and endeavoured to write himself down to the level of the capacities and the swinish tastes of those with whom he has the misfortune, originally, I believe, from charitable motives, to associate. This is the most charitable hypothesis which I can frame."³

-
1. NLS, MSS. 4011. Mrs. Oliphant, (Oliphant I, 400) bowdlerized Maginn's letter a great deal.
 2. Blackwood's, XIV, 88.
 3. Ibid., p. 88.

The new cantos, Maginn claims, are not even original enough to compensate for their indecency. Byron has borrowed from Les Aventures du Chevallier de Faublas by Louvet more than immoral incidents for his plot:

"It is, however, fair to say, that Byron adopts here and there the filthy incidents, and, almost throughout, the filthy tone, of Faublas, without, in any one passage, (I mean of these three new cantos,) rivalling the sparkle of Louvet's¹ wit—far less the elegance of Louvet's language."

Maginn does not spare Byron's verse either. He resorts again to the device of printing verse as prose extracts and claims that Byron has lived in exile for too long and has fallen too much under the influence of the Cockneys to write good English. Finally Maginn dismisses the new cantos as nothing more than "stupid French books translated, not into stupid English, but into stupid Cockneyeze."²

This review of cantos VI-VIII by Maginn represents the lowest point to which the criticism of Byron's poetry in Blackwood's sank. Although Lockhart saw Maginn's review before its publication, he did not alter any part of it, but as we have already seen, he tried to temper Maginn's attack by adding to it three paragraphs of much milder criticism. This was the first expression of the difference of opinion between Lockhart and Maginn on the subject of Byron's poetry. Two months later this difference became even

1. Ibid., p. 90.

2. Ibid., p. 92.

more pronounced. Lockhart reviewed cantos IX-XI of Don Juan, in which he upbraids Timothy Tickler for describing the previous instalments of Byron's poem as stupid. When Maginn read Lockhart's review, he wrote to William Blackwood on 22 September 1822:

"I am glad L is on Don Juan. He may of course cut up Tickler as he pleases, but beyond question the last cantos are devilish stupid."¹

This gap between the views of those two major contributors of Blackwood's became even wider after the poet's death.

iv

Like most other writers in Blackwood's, Maginn hardly mentions Byron in his contribution to the magazine, or in his private letters to its publisher between September 1823 and May 1824. But soon after the poet's death was announced in England, Maginn was the first among the major contributors of Blackwood's to give his own assessment of Byron's achievement:

"Lord Byron—light lie the stones upon his bones—fed us full of horrors. We had dark-eyed fellows, with bushy eyebrows, white foreheads, gloomy cogitations, deep amorosities, and a decided penchant for cutting throats, and easing honest way-farers of the contents of their purses. These neat gentlemen were served up to us in all possible varieties. Even Don Juan was but a Childe Harold doing vagaries, like John Kemble acting Mirabel. No constitution could long stand doses of this kind; and accordingly the stomach of that worthy old gentlewoman, the public, rejected them at last. It was a pity; for, though there was no variety, the very worst of his lordship's esquisses displayed the hand of no ordinary man. We always except his strategies,

1. NLS, MSS. 4011.

which were sad concerns—lacrimosa poemata, in every sense but one. However, he knocked up poetry more completely than any man of our day."¹

Maginn must have written this "tribute" to Byron late in May.² Early in June he read Sir Walter Scott's essay "The Death of Byron" in the Edinburgh Weekly Journal, (19 May 1824) and wrote to William Blackwood on 7 June:

"What bewitched Sir W.S. to write this awful stuff on Lord B. If he could see how it is seen through here and how thoroughly he is laughed at, he would give up all such open and useless humbug."³

Apparently Maginn also suggested that the magazine should attack the dead poet. For early in June, Lockhart wrote to him:

"It is a horrid idea of yours to run down Byron dead. It is quite a punch bred notion & you cd not say so impransus. Blackwood, besides, will not have it so.

My fancy is to have a noble "Noctes" entirely devoted to him. Do you take up Timothy [Tickler] & make him abuse Byron as heartily as heartily [sic] as he pleases. Be Odoherly his defender & eulogist mordicus This part I wd fain undertake."⁴

Lockhart's idea of such "Noctes" did not appeal to Maginn, for he wrote to William Blackwood:

"I am sorry something more piquant about Lord B. is not determined on. You may be certain nobody here cares a farthing about him, except such devils as newspaper people or Procter or Hunt or some ragamuffian."⁵

-
1. Blackwood's, XV, 675.
 2. See NLS, MSS. 4012 for Maginn's letter of 7 June 1824, in which he informs Blackwood that he sent the article from which the passage is quoted on the previous Monday.
 3. NLS, MSS. 4012.
 4. Quoted by Alan Lang Strout, John Bull's Letter, pp. 157-158.
 5. NLS, MSS. 4012.

On 14 June Maginn wrote again to Blackwood:

"I have nothing for you but a song on Lord B. which I hope will suit L's idea. I think however you are decidedly wrong in praising him; for that is pons asinorum. Every blockhead here is at that work. Campbell I understand is to have some stuff in his next magazine about him."¹

As we have already seen, Lockhart wrote the number of the "Noctes" of June 1824 in which Maginn's share did not exceed the song, *in imitation of* "The Last Rose of Summer," under the title "Lament for Lord Byron"

This was not the only occasion in which Lockhart interfered to prevent Maginn from attacking Byron in the magazine. When Thomas Medwin's Conversations of Lord Byron was published in October 1824, apparently Maginn as well as John Galt offered to review it. On 3 November 1826 Lockhart wrote to William Blackwood:

"I wd. let Galt say as much as he chooses about Byron but not play C.N. ipse on such a theme—no nor the Doctor himself, for he hates Byron too bitterly or at least he writes as if he did."²

1. NLS, MSS. 4012.

2. NLS, MSS. 4012. For Lockhart's suspicion about Maginn's role in the publication of the supposed chapter of Byron's Memoirs and his condemnation of John Bull Magazine see Appendix VI.

CHAPTER X

BYRON IN BLACKWOOD'S 1822-1824

Despite Lockhart's virulent condemnation of Beppo in 1818 and the first two cantos of Don Juan in 1819, Byron was fairly well treated by Blackwood's in the first five years of its existence. The reviews of his poems by Wilson and Lockhart were not so warped by the political bias of the magazine as may have been possible, and the final judgement of those two contributors was more often than not made on literary grounds. William Maginn contributed some burlesque poems and parodies on Byron's poetry, but during those five years he did attempt to write serious criticism of any of his poems. Even as late as December 1821 John Wilson, as we have already seen, made a final attempt to defend Byron as a playwright against Hazlitt's hostile criticism.

Early in 1822, however, there was a sharp reversal in Blackwood's attitude, and its comments on Byron's poetry remained predominantly hostile for the two following years. Byron's own activities, poetical and otherwise, were responsible for this reaction. His sceptical attitude towards some fundamental Christian doctrines was only thinly disguised by the dramatic form of Cain. Moreover, "in his later years," as Andrew Rutherford observes, "Byron put himself beyond the pale for a great number of his readers by his revolutionary or republican sympathies, his contempt for the royal family and established order, and his

association with such disreputable figures as John and Leigh Hunt in the production of the Liberal."¹

Towards the end of 1821 and early in 1822, the change in Blackwood's attitude towards Byron's poetry was foreshadowed by an increasing interest in the news and rumours about him among the Blackwood's supporters. Even before Cain was published in December 1821, Basil Stuart wrote to William Blackwood that Byron's new drama "is a poem which will make some noise from the opinions set forth by the noble author." Stuart went on to say,

"It seems that Lucifer is one of the characters and that in the preface his Lordship mentions that it can only be expected he should make him speak as the Devil."²

Following the publication of Cain, news came thick and fast about Lord Eldon's refusal to grant John Murray an injunction against the pirates of Cain, about an impending prosecution of John Murray by the Constitutional Association for the alleged blasphemies of Byron's drama, about the private circulation of the "Irish Avatar," Byron's satire on the King's visit to Ireland, among his friends in London, and about Byron's intended collaboration with Leigh and John Hunt to produce a radical journal "as a neutralizer of the 'Quarterly Review'...and 'Blackwood's.'" Alaric Alexander Watts was particularly active in relaying to William Blackwood whatever he gathered of the London gossip about Byron,³ but the letters of other supporters such

1. Byron: The Critical Heritage, ed. Andrew Rutherford (1970), p.9.

2. NLS, MSS. 4007.

3. For Alaric Alexander Watts' letters and memoranda see appendix VII below.

as Charles Ollier, John Galt, George Croly, Eyre Evans Crowe, and David Lyndsay also contained a great deal of news about Byron, and all seemed to confirm that he, as George Croly told William Blackwood, was "now desperate and has set himself seriously to inundate England with all kinds of corruption."¹ The letters of William Blackwood's correspondents of early 1822 perfectly show how Byron's provocative challenge to English public opinion during the last two years of his life was producing its predictable effect, and it is hardly surprising that throughout 1822 and 1823 Blackwood's abounded in hostile comments on his poetry.

The extreme abundance and variety of these comments defeat any attempt to discover a clear pattern into which all details may be fitted. On the other hand it is needless to give a detailed survey of the comments by the various Blackwood's contributors on Cain, Byron's association with Hunt, or his contributions to the Liberal. Alan Lang Strout and William H. Marshall have already given excellent and detailed accounts of what Blackwood's had to say on all these topics.² Yet, examining Blackwood's criticism on Byron's poetry during those years along the lines followed in this thesis reveals some interesting features. First, although much of Blackwood's comments give the impression that its contributors were ~~as~~ uniformly and unanimously hostile towards Byron, individual

1. NLS, MSS. 4008.

2. See Strout, John Bull's Letter, p. 122 ff., and William H. Marshall, Byron, Shelley, Hunt, and 'The Liberal' (Philadelphia: 1960), pp. 46-48 et passim.

attitudes are distinguishable. More importantly, while the majority of casual or minor contributors swarmed like birds of prey over the fallen idol, Lockhart and Wilson remained fundamentally favourably inclined towards Byron. Secondly, in the controversy over Lord Eldon's ruling against Cain,¹ Blackwood's took the side of the Establishment. This attitude accorded well with its avowed opposition to the Quarterly and the Edinburgh, which questioned the legal soundness and the beneficial effect of Lord Eldon's decision. Blackwood's contribution to that controversy was extremely chauvinistic and its attacks, one cannot but suspect, were primarily aimed at the two major reviews rather than at Byron's poetry. In order to appear as the defenders of English laws and established institutions and to give point to their attacks on the Quarterly and the Edinburgh, the Blackwood's contributors, especially Maginn, readily stressed all the objectionable aspects of Byron's poetry. Finally, Blackwood's attitude to the Liberal was throughout one of humorous contempt. This was not vastly different from the private opinion of the Blackwood's supporters. The alliance between Byron and Leigh and John Hunt was a much harder dose to swallow than the radical journal itself, and consequently much of the abuse in Blackwood's was aimed at it.

1. For an adequate account of Lord Eldon's refusal of injunctions against the pirates of Cain and other publications, see Paul M. Zall, "Lord Eldon's Censorship," PMLA, LXVIII (1953), 436-443.

The difference between Lockhart's criticism of Don Juan and William Maginn's vilification of cantos VI-VIII of the same poem has already been pointed out. It remains to give a brief account of how Lockhart's criticism of Cain was much milder than comments by other contributors. In an unfavourable review of Byron's poetical development (February 1822) Col. John Matthews declared Cain to be indeed "a literary devil, not only because Lucifer himself is a leading character of the drama, but that it is perhaps of all the effusions of the Satanic school, the best entitled to that distinction."¹ Lucifer and Cain are Byron's favourite characters, and he cannot shelter himself from the "blame in disseminating unreproved blasphemy, by asserting that he cannot make Lucifer 'talk like a clergyman.'" Matthews goes on to say,

"On all occasions throughout this poem his end and aim appears to be to perplex his readers by starting doubts necessarily inexplicable to human understanding, and insinuating opinions derogatory to the veneration we owe to the Divine Being, and filling their minds with discontent at the nature which it has pleased Infinite Wisdom to bestow on mankind."²

On 1 March 1822 Matthews wrote to William Blackwood:

"When an author of his [Byron's] powers shows himself so capable or so willing to do mischief some David ought to step forth with his sling & hurl a pebble at the Giant who bears his faculties with so much arrogance.

This is the only motive for the attack I have ventured to make."³

-
1. Blackwood's, XI, 215. In a footnote, C.N. describes the phrase "Satanic school" as "a miserable piece of monkish conceit."
 2. Ibid., pp.216-17. Apart from Matthews' objections to Byron's poetry on moral and religious grounds, his article is almost unique as a specimen of the early eighteenth century criticism in Blackwood's.
 3. NLS, MSS. 4009.

Matthews however had another pebble to hurl at Byron, and in April 1822 he contributed a verse version of his prose critique in which these lines about Cain occur:

"Thus, Satan exhibits preadamite spectres,
And lays down his maxims there free from objectors.
How we turn with disgust, as we listen'd with pain,
From the vile metaphysics he whispers to Cain!
Fit talk for the fiend and the fratricide felon,—¹
But this is a subject too hateful to dwell on:—"

More extreme was George Croly's condemnation of Don Juan and Cain. In March 1822 Croly approved of Francis Jeffrey's review of Byron's drama, for "it has probably crushed out...the whole brood of 'Cains' which were threatened from Pisa."² Six months later Croly accused Byron of being "resolved to act the part of an English Voltaire" and to help disseminate revolutionary ideas in England.

"As his popularity with the intelligent and honourable diminishes, his reception among the profligate and lawless becomes more sincere, undisguised, and triumphant. His name now figures among the foremost on the lists of the venders of corruption."³

Cain and Don Juan, Croly claimed, "constitute the present intellectual delight of thievery, licentiousness, and sedition."⁴

As pointed out in an earlier chapter of this thesis, such contributors as Matthews and Croly were extreme both in their literary and political views. The mischievous sense of humour with which Blackwood's treated its victims is better represented

1. Blackwood's, XI, 460.

2. Ibid., p. 740.

3. Blackwood's, XIII, 50.

4. Ibid., p. 50.

by Eyre Evans Crowe's attack on Cain. Instead of joining in the hysterical outcry against the blasphemies of Cain, Crowe professed to be surprised at the wrath which Byron's drama had excited; for, "By mine honour," he declares in April 1822,

"there is more genius in Carlisle's [sic] pamphlets, and a drama of Hone's or Cobbett's were worth ten dozen of it."¹

Byron's insinuations against religion are trite and have "occurred to every school-boy that ever read the first part of Genesis."² Cain may be written with "manifestly bad intention" but its stupidity is enough to neutralize it. After pointing out the superiority of Milton's Satan, Crowe goes on to say,

"The Lucifer of Byron is neither a noble-fiend, nor yet a villain-fiend—he does nothing, and he seems nothing—there is no poetry either of character or description about him—he is a poor, sneaking, talking devil—a most wretched metaphysician, without wit enough to save him even from the damnation of criticism—he speaks neither poetry nor common sense—Thomas Aquinas would have flogged him more for his bad logic than his unbelief."³

As for the poetry in Cain, Crowe claims there are no three lines "to gild its bitter pill of casuistry, or to induce young or old to a second dose of its vulgar dialogue."⁴

1. Blackwood's, XI, 463.

2. Ibid., p. 463.

3. Ibid., p. 463.

4. Ibid., p. 463.

Blackwood's hostile criticism of Cain and Don Juan was given a new impetus in July 1822 when the Quarterly Review criticised Lord Eldon's refusal to grant John Murray an injunction against William Benbow, who had privated Cain earlier in the year. Trade rivalry between William Blackwood and John Murray, William Maginn's liking for polemical writings, and the general hostility towards Byron among the Blackwood's supporters because of his alliance with Leigh and John Hunt, all contributed to make Cain and Don Juan a favourite target for Blackwood's attacks. Yet, there is very little in what Blackwood's had to say on the Lord Chancellor's decision that can be treated as literary criticism. Suffice it to say that William Maginn used Cain and Don Juan as ammunitions in his attacks on the Quarterly, and, later, on the Edinburgh Review. Replying to the article in the Quarterly (April 1822) on the Lord Chancellor's refusal to protect the copyright of some publications including Cain, Maginn claimed in July 1822, that when the Lord Chancellor "had declared that he would not suffer Mr. Murray to make money by the publication of books teeming with blasphemy and obscenity...the champion of law and morals [the Quarterly]... roared aloud that the law of England was the BARBAROUS INVENTION OF A BARBAROUS AGE, because it did not allow a wealthy bookseller to swell his purse still wider by the profits of Cain and Don Juan."¹

Inevitably in this assault on John Murray and the Quarterly,

1. Blackwood's, XII, 97.

Byron's literary sins were exaggerated. "Don Juan in the hands of young gentlemen of birth and fortune, capable of 'remembering its poetry and wit,'" Maginn claimed, "is a pernicious book," and "metaphysical young gentlemen of poetic souls might think it very fine to discourse in the vein of Lucifer."¹ Yet, one cannot but suspect that Maginn aimed his attack primarily at John Murray and the Quarterly.

"Mr. Murray must have known that the third and fourth cantos of that poem were unfit for publication, for it is admitted in terms characteristically irreverent, that it was harder to pass them into families, than a camel through the eye of a needle. Yet did he hesitate to publish? Not he...When he published Cain, was he ignorant of the nature of the book? By no means...As it is admitted on all hands that the poem is wicked...it was right that some one should be punished, and punishment has fallen on Mr. Murray, as it ought."²

Lord Eldon's decision against Cain insured that "we shall have no more Don Juans, or no more Cains, published by people who can liberally pay men of talent for prostituting their powers."³

How far can this be taken as a serious objection to Byron's poetry, and how far did Blackwood's take advantage of the controversy to score a point against a rival Tory periodical? As in the case of most polemical pieces in Blackwood's, especially those written by Maginn, it is difficult to decide the exact motive.

The controversy over Lord Eldon's decision would probably have died naturally had not the Edinburgh revived it in May 1823 by

1. Ibid., p. 98.

2. Ibid., p. 99.

3. Ibid., p. 99.

including a closely argued article in which Henry Brougham pointed out the want of sufficient legal precedence for Lord Eldon's decisions. As in the previous year, Blackwood's entered the controversy anew, with much heat but very little reason. In "Letters of Timothy Tickler" Nos VII and VIII, (July and August 1823) Maginn attacked the Quarterly and the Edinburgh alike and, as on all such occasions, he lashed at Cain and Don Juan.

iii

At the same time, Byron's association with Leigh and John and their projected radical journal had been the target of much personal abuse in Blackwood's ever since February 1822. The alliance between Byron and Blackwood's first enemy, Leigh Hunt, was probably a greater affront to its writers than the Liberal itself. The long campaign against Hunt, which Blackwood's had been waging ever since October 1817, appeared as if it had ended in utter failure when the editor of the Examiner and "King of the Cockneys" was invited by a member of the aristocracy to Pisa to edit a new periodical. It was a victory for Hunt, and an honour beyond the aspiration of any of the Blackwood's supporters. It is hardly surprising that much of Blackwood's venom was aimed at the Pisa alliance itself rather than at the Liberal, or Byron.¹ Yet, as William H. Marshall has admirably

1. See for instance Lockhart's review of Leigh Hunt's "The Florentine Lovers," Blackwood's (December 1822), XII, 781, and Wilson's "On the Scotch Character—By a Flunky," Blackwood's (March 1823), VIII, 365-67.

shown, with the exception of the reviews of the first two numbers of the Liberal "contempt was a dominant attitude of the Blackwood's writers when they regarded the Pisan group." In their attacks on the Byron-Hunt alliance they employed the more effective weapons of ridicule and humour and "there was rarely a suggestion of the self-righteousness and distorted fear with which others were to regard the new journal."¹ This attitude, for what it is worth, was genuine rather than assumed. At least the following extracts from Lockhart's and William Maginn's letters to William Blackwood give that impression. About the second number of the Liberal, Lockhart wrote, probably in January 1823 "I think this is even a stupider Liberal than No 1—but have not yet read Heaven and Earth."² In April of the same year, he had an even poorer opinion of the third number:

"The Liberal seems to have not one word of Lord Byron & is all exquisitely bad, both prose and verse, above all what poor wit! & satire! Nobody cares for this thing, nobody even sees it. It has the elements of utter dulness & imbecility & not enough of vice to carry them down."³

On 3 August 1823 William Maginn wrote to Blackwood, "Maga is superb, but let the Liberal go to hell henceforward—it is really being too often notices."⁴

Yet other correspondents expected Blackwood's to attack the Liberal. After two months had elapsed without any comment appearing

-
1. William H. Marshall, Byron, Shelley, Hunt and 'The Liberal', p. 48.
 2. NLS, MSS. 4721.
 3. Ibid.
 4. NLS, MSS. 4011.

in Blackwood's on the first number of the Liberal (October 1822), Alexander Alaric Watts wrote to the publisher on 18 December 1822:

"It has been, I understand, a subject of great disappointment to your London friends that you have not castigated 'the Liberal.' The thing is to be sure very dull as well as wicked but it is countenanced and puffed by the Whigs and such such worthy of attention...I hope you will not let the scoundrels₁ of the 'Liberal' go unscathed after their second number."

When the Liberal was at last reviewed in Blackwood's in January 1823, David Lyndsay told William Blackwood: "For the Candid you deserve public thanks—bravo my dear Sir, if you go on thus one or two more such counterblasts will blow the P.P.P. (Paltry Pisa Periodical, as you justly call it) into tatters."² It was probably because of the expectations of the Blackwood's sympathizers that after having rejected two reviews on the first number of the Liberal from William Maginn and George Croly, William Blackwood inserted a third (under the title "The Candid No I", January 1823), apparently written by a certain John Gillon who had never written for Blackwood's before.

Gillon devotes the major part of his review to discussing Leigh Hunt's Preface, and Byron's "The Vision of Judgement" and "Epigrams on Lord Castlereagh." Predictably enough Byron's verse contributions to the first number of the Liberal were vehemently denounced. Gillon describes "The Vision of Judgement" as "a

1. NLS, MSS. 4009.

2. NLS, MSS. 4010.

travesty on a composition of the same name by Mr. Southey."

"A jest that does not excite a smile, drawled out through nine-and-thirty pages, must be a dull one. I wish this were the worst that could be said of it. The object of its author is less to amuse than to shock."¹

Gillon disclaims any pretence to writing a critical review of Byron's satire and devotes most of his comment to denouncing Byron's unpatriotic abuse of George III (loyalty and patriotism are, he claims, "are affections that cannot subsist asunder"²) and the profane and irreverent mode of Byron's satire. The writer of the "Epigrams on Lord Castlereagh" "must have a depraved taste, a dull head, as well as an unfeeling heart."³ Although Gillon's horror at the "Vision of Judgement" and the "Epigrams" was shared by most of the contemporary reviewers, he seemed determined to denounce Byron's poetry, and was alone among the reviewers in devoting "The Candid No II" (March 1823) on the second number of the Liberal to pointing out an impious tendency in "Heaven and Earth." "That an angel... should renounce Heaven rather than forego a passion for a daughter of Eve," Gillon declares, "seems to militate against an important article in the natural belief of mankind, as well as the particular creed of Christendom."⁴

1. Blackwood's, XIII, 119.

2. Ibid., p. 121.

3. Ibid., p. 122.

4. Ibid., p. 265.

These uniformly hostile attitudes to Cain and the Liberal are dominant in Blackwood's in 1822 and 1823. Byron's own provocation was responsible for them. As Andrew Rutherford observes, "His works presuppose certain habitual assumptions in his readers—assumptions which he may indulge or outrage, but on which he is deliberately playing."¹ In his later years, the publication of Cain, "The Vision of Judgement" and the later cantos of Don Juan were calculated affronts against his audience. The dominantly hostile reaction in Blackwood's was a reflection of the indignation of that audience.

Yet, most of the condemnation of Cain, Don Juan and "The Vision of Judgement" came from either minor contributors or William Maginn, whose antagonism to Byron has already been discussed in detail. John Matthews, George Croly, Eyre Evans Crowe, and John Gillon were more conventional and less daring in their critical judgement than Lockhart or Wilson, who often introduced a more moderate, or even positively favourable tone in Blackwood's hostile criticism of Byron's poetry. Lockhart's restrained review of Cain (January 1822) and his favourable review of cantos IX-XI of Don Juan (September 1823) have been discussed earlier in this thesis. Similarly, although he regarded "The Vision of Judgement" as inferior to Beppo and Don Juan, he defended it as a satire on Southey's

1. Byron: The Critical Heritage, p. 12.

"arrogance and dogmatical airs."¹ John Gillon's condemnation of "Heaven and Earth" was a reply to Wilson's favourable review of that poem in a previous number of the magazine (January 1823), in which Wilson asserted that there was "little or nothing objectionable" in Byron's poem, "either to the theological orthodoxy or general human feelings" and that "it is a proof against the Constitutional Association."² In the following month (March 1823), Wilson defended Byron against Ebenezer Elliott's attacks in "The Giaour, an Historical Poem."³ Finally, as already pointed out, after Byron's death Lockhart was adamantly opposed to abusing him in Blackwood's, and, in spite of William Blackwood's willingness to give Maginn a free hand in this respect, he undertook to write the number of the "Noctes" for June 1824 and the sympathetic assessment of Byron and his works in February 1825.

-
1. Blackwood's, XII, 698. See also Lockhart's defence of Don Juan against the Council of Ten in "Odoherly on Werner," Blackwood's XII, 710.
 2. Blackwood's, XIII, 77.
 3. See Blackwood's, XIII, 322-23, and also Wilson's review of Bernard Barton's Poems in December 1822, Blackwood's, XII, 710.

part three

SHELLEY AND KEATS

INTRODUCTION

Lockhart is almost the sole author of the vastly different chapters on Shelley and Keats in Blackwood's history. In January 1818 he threatened to relieve his attacks on Hunt by diversions on Shelley and Keats, Hunt's "younger and less important auxiliaries."¹ Twelve months later he changed his mind about Shelley, and instead of the promised assault, he favourably reviewed The Revolt of Islam (January 1819). This was followed by favourable reviews of Rosalind and Helen, in June 1819, of Alastor, in November 1819, and of Prometheus Unbound, in September 1820.² In all these reviews Lockhart consistently disapproves of Shelley's political, moral, and religious views, but praises him as a poet. The tolerance which Lockhart shows in his criticism of Shelley's poems represents one of the most remarkable chapters in the history of periodical criticism.

Yet, in August 1818, he had the misfortune to commit one of the periodical critics' most common blunders, and failed to recognize the promise of genius in Keats' early poems and Endymion. But instead of merely criticising Keats' poetry, however harshly, he wove into his review objectionable sneers at the poet himself and at his private life. By doing so, Lockhart wrote one of the most deplorable chapters in the history of Blackwood's and marred his really remarkable record in appreciating and defending

1. Blackwood's II, 415.

2. For the attribution of these reviews to Lockhart see Alan Lang Strout, "Lockhart, Champion of Shelley," TLS, 12 August 1955, p.468. See also Alan Lang Strout, "Maga, Champion of Shelley", MP, XXIX (1932) 102-3.

Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron and Shelley. Yet, while there can be no question that the review of Endymion is one of Lockhart's worst offences as a critic, his treatment of Keats can hardly be described as libellous (as J.R. MacGillivray insists on describing it),¹ nor does it justify calling Lockhart and Wilson "ruffians at heart without a spark of decent feeling,"² or "cut-throat buccaneers."³

But Lockhart has not been without his defenders who have pleaded mitigating circumstances such as the general harshness of the age, the heat of political and literary feuds, the personality of the magazine, the immaturity of Keats' early poems, and Lockhart's ignorance of his fine qualities as a man and his later achievement as a poet. Nothing remains to be said either for or against the manner in which Lockhart treated Keats.⁴

Yet, condemnation is always much easier than enquiry, and justification is a poor substitute for explanation. For there are questions that have yet to be answered. Why, for instance, after threatening to attack both Shelley and Keats as disciples of Hunt, did Lockhart reverse his judgement on Shelley in spite of the poet's

-
1. See J.R. MacGillivray, John Keats, A Bibliography and Reference Guide with an Essay on Keats' Reputation (University of Toronto Press: 1949), pp. xxiv and xxv. MacGillivray's bias against Lockhart is understandable, but to describe Lockhart as "mischievous and truth-perverting" because of his belief that Keats was a disciple of Hunt, is a little unreasonable.
 2. Amy Lowell, John Keats (no date), II, 82.
 3. J.R. MacGillivray, John Keats; A Bibliography, p. xviii.
 4. See Lang, I, 195-200, and Gilbert Macbeth, John Gibson Lockhart, pp. 112-120. Macbeth's gives an able, but too charitable defence of Lockhart.

objectionable political, religious, and moral theories, and why did he persist in his hostility towards Keats in spite of Keats' less radical views on politics, and in spite of attempts by friends and acquaintances to avert the threatened attack?

The answer to the first of these questions is still a mystery on which the Blackwood Papers are completely silent. Was Lockhart at all influenced by Walter Scott's favourable review of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein (Blackwood's, March 1818), which Scott mistakenly attributed to Shelley? Was he influenced by Wilson who first praised Shelley in a review of Mary Shelley's A History of a Six Weeks' Tour (July 1818)?¹ Was Charles Ollier, Shelley's publisher, responsible for preventing the threatened attack on Shelley?² Or is the answer to our question to be sought simply in Lockhart's genuine appreciation of Shelley's poetry of which he knew nothing

-
1. Wilson concludes his review of Mary Shelley's pamphlet with the following comment on Shelley's "Mont Blanc":
 "the volume concludes with a little poem by the husband, which, though rather too ambitious, and at times too close an imitation of Coleridge's sublime hymn on the vale of Chamouni, is often very beautiful. In the following passages ["Mont Blanc" lines 49-84] there is some darkness and confusion, as if the writer were grappling with objects above his strength, but there is grandeur both of thought and expression,—indubitable indications of a truly poetical mind."—Blackwood's, III, 416.
 This first favourable mention of Shelley in Blackwood's has been overlooked by Alan Lang Strout in "Maga, Champion of Shelley," SP, XXIX (1932), 95-119, and by N.I. White, The Unextinguished Hearth (Durham, NC: 1938). Strout, Bibliography does not give the authorship of this review, but the reference to Mrs. Spence (III, 412), whose Letters from the North of the Highlands Wilson reviewed in the same number of Blackwood's, proves that he also reviewed Mary Shelley's pamphlet.
 2. Ollier's relation with William Blackwood is treated in some detail in Chapter XII of this thesis.

when he announced his intention to attack Shelley and Keats?

The claim that Shelley was spared because he was a "gentleman" and that Keats was attacked because he was of a less exalted origin, is hardly a good enough answer.¹ Lockhart severely criticised "gentlemen" with Tory convictions, such as Robert Southey and H.H. Milman, and aristocrats of a higher rank than Shelley, such as Byron. Similarly his praise of Shelley and his attack on Keats can hardly be accounted for by his political bias since in fact his condemnation of Shelley's revolutionary ideas is immeasurably stronger than the incidental and, one suspects, half-hearted attack on Keats' political views.

Moreover, unless Charles Ollier had a much greater influence on Blackwood's than he seems to have had, no personal pressure was exerted on Lockhart to change his attitude toward Shelley. On the other hand, in 1818 two attempts were made to persuade him not to attack Keats. In January 1818 Jonathan Christie probably succeeded in delaying the intended attack, and Lockhart even asked Christie to write "a little review" of Keats "in admonition to leave his ways, &c., and in praise of his natural genius."² How later in the same year Benjamin Bailey made his disastrous attempt to influence Lockhart in Keats' favour is too well known to be related in any more detail.³

1. See for instance N.I. White, Shelley (New York: 1942), II, p.158, and Ian Jack, English Literature 1815-1832, p.19.

2. Lang, I, 199.

3. See Bailey's account of his conversation with Lockhart at Bishop Gleig's, The Keats Circle, I, 34-5 and 245-7.

For these reasons it is evident that Lockhart's different attitudes to Shelley and Keats can hardly be explained on personal, social, or political grounds. But it is more likely that when he threatened to attack both poets as disciples of Hunt, he knew nothing of their poetry. He knew Shelley's name only through Hunt's Examiner; and Cornelius Webb, who unwittingly provided him with the motto for the "Cockney School of Poetry" series, drew his attention to Keats.¹ The publication in February 1818 of Hunt's Foliage, in which he was imprudent enough to include "Sonnet to Mr. Keats," "On Receiving a Crown of Ivy from the Same," and "On the Same," seems to have confirmed Lockhart's impression that Keats was a disciple of Hunt.

Whether or not Lockhart approached Shelley's Revolt of Islam with an equally prejudiced mind is not easy to determine. But the reference to Shelley in that review as a member of the "Cockney School" is perhaps a proof that, as late as January 1819, Lockhart probably intended to attack Shelley as severely as he had attacked Keats five months earlier, and that it was only when he actually read Shelley's poetry that he discovered his mistake in believing him to be a disciple of Hunt.

Although the examination of Lockhart's criticism of the poetry

1. It is not known how Lockhart came by these lines of Cornelius Webb which appeared as a motto for the first article on the "Cockney School of Poetry":

Our talk shall be (a theme we never tire on)
 Of Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, Byron,
 (Our England's Dante)—Wordsworth—HUNT, and KEATS,
 The Muses' son of promise; and of what feats
 He yet may do.

of both Shelley and Keats in the light of his detestation of Leigh Hunt's poetry does not in the least make his review of Keats' Endymion less objectionable or excuse its unpleasant tone of snobbish contempt, it may perhaps account for the vastly different ways in which he treated the two poets.

Lockhart's share of the articles on the Cockney School Series has not yet been finally settled, but he almost certainly wrote the first and the second numbers on Hunt (October and November 1817), and definitely the fourth number on Keats (August 1818). He also may have written the two letters, "From Z. to Mr. Leigh Hunt" (January and May 1818). The third and the fifth numbers of the "Cockney School of Poetry" (July 1818 and April 1819) are most likely by Wilson. The sixth number, on Hunt's Foliage (October 1819), may have equally been written by either Wilson or Lockhart. Of these eight pieces the first two articles on the "Cockney School of Poetry" and the two letters "From Z. to Mr. Leigh Hunt" are the most relevant of Lockhart's criticism of Keats.

In the first letter "From Z. to Mr. Leigh Hunt" (January 1818) Lockhart summarizes the main points of his first attack on Hunt:

"The charges which I have brought against your literary life and conversation are these: 1. The want and the pretence of scholarship; 2. A vulgar style in writing; 3. A want of respect for the Christian religion; 4. A contempt for kingly power, and an indecent mode of attacking the government of your country; 5. Extravagant admiration of yourself, the Round Table, and your own poems; 6. Affectation; 7. A partiality for indecent subjects, and an immoral manner of writing concerning the crime of incest, in your poem of Rimini; 8. I have asserted, that you are a poet vastly inferior to Wordsworth, Byron, and Moore!"¹

1. Blackwood's, II, 415.

The first article on the "Cockney School of Poetry" was extremely objectionable, full of innuendoes on Hunt's private moral character and sneers on his "plebian origin and education." But the two points that have direct bearing on Lockhart's treatment of Shelley and Keats are those about Hunt's "want and pretence of scholarship" and "vulgar style of writing." In the "Cockney School of Poetry No I" Lockhart claimed that in Hunt's The Story of Rimini, "every thing is pretence, affectation, finery, and gaudiness":

"As a vulgar man is perpetually labouring to be genteel—in like manner, the poetry of this man Hunt is always on the stretch to be grand... In his verses he is always desirous of being airy, graceful, easy, courtly, and ITALIAN."¹

Perhaps more than anything else this was what Lockhart had against Hunt and what he had in mind when he coined the phrase "Cockney School of Poetry." In the first letter "from Z. to Leigh Hunt," out of prudence perhaps, he emphasised that he attacked Hunt "as a poet and a founder of a new school of poetry." In the review of The Story of Rimini, which appeared as the second article "On the Cockney School of Poetry" in November 1817, Lockhart heavily emphasised the complacency and levity with which Hunt treats the theme of incest. Yet his objections to The Story of Rimini were not only moral, but also stylistic. He disapproved of such lines as:

Why need I tell of lovely lips and eyes,
A clipsome waist, and bosoms balmy rise,
[I, 121-22; Lockhart's italics]

1. Ibid., pp.39-40.

and

So lightsomely droopt in his lordly back. [Lockhart's italics]

Lockhart also objected to these lines:

Paolo, by degrees, gently embraced,
 With one permitted arm, her lovely waist;
 And both their cheeks, like peaches on a tree,
 Leaned with a touch together thrillingly;...
 And Paolo turned, scarce knowing what did,—
 Only he felt he could no more dissemble,
 And kissed her, mouth to mouth, all in a tremble.
 [III 591-94, 602-4]

The second letter "From Z. to Mr. Leigh Hunt" (May 1818) was scarcely less outrageous than the first article on the "Cockney School of Poetry," but it hardly added anything to what Lockhart had already said about Hunt's politics and religion, and the vulgarity, affectation, and immorality of his "Italian Muse." But as far as Keats was concerned, that letter was ominous. Lockhart had spotted in Leigh Hunt's Foliage the sonnets on receiving a crown of ivy from Keats, and in the course of his attack on Hunt, he sneered at "that amiable but infatuated bardling, Mister Keats."¹

1. Blackwood's, III, 197.

CHAPTER XI

LOCKHART ON SHELLEY AND KEATS

i

As already pointed out, it is not known how much Lockhart knew about Shelley, when he reviewed the Revolt of Islam in January 1819. But he apparently found Shelley's poem free from the "pretence, affectation, finery, and gaudiness" which he detested in Hunt's poetry; and instead of Hunt's familiarity and vulgarisms, the Revolt of Islam was earnest and passionate, though diffuse and badly constructed. Yet Lockhart must have been only vaguely impressed by the power of Shelley's poetry. For although he rightly criticises the Revolt of Islam for the "unskilful manner in which the allegory is brought out,"¹ his praise for Shelley is too general and he carefully avoids any close reading of the poem.

The review of the Revolt of Islam, however, established the manner in which Shelley was to be treated in Blackwood's in the two following years. Lockhart denounced Shelley's "PERNICIOUS system of opinions concerning man and his moral government,"² which he attributed to Shelley's connection with the "Cockney School," but praised his poetry as poetry. As a revolutionary philosopher Shelley "is weak and worthless," but as a poet he is "strong, nervous, original; well entitled to take his place near to the great creative masters, whose works have shed its truest glory

1. Blackwood's, IV, 476.

2. Ibid., p.475.

around the age wherein we live."¹ For this reason Lockhart concentrates his attention on the relation between Laon and Cythna, in whom, he claims, Shelley has "striven to embody his ideas of the power and loveliness of human affection" and in whose history "he has set forth a series of splendid pictures, illustrating the efficacy of these affections in overcoming the evils of private and of public life." Lockhart eloquently praises Shelley's treatment of the relation between Laon and Cythna:

"it is in the portraying of this intense, overmastering, unfearing, unfading love, that Mr. Shelley has proved himself to be a genuine poet. Around his lovers, moreover, in the midst of all their fervours, he has shed an air of calm gracefulness, a certain majestic monumental stillness, which blends them harmoniously with the scene of their earthly existence, and realizes in them our ideas of Greeks struggling for freedom in the best spirit of their fathers."²

It was probably this impression (and as yet it was no more than an impression with Lockhart) that Shelley was a classical scholar that determined Lockhart's attitude towards the Revolt of Islam. Lockhart fanatically believed that a writer should not venture beyond his immediate environment without acquiring through scholarship an intimate knowledge of the world into which he was about to step. He attacked Hunt and Keats because they presumed to write poetry on classical themes without having any knowledge of Greek or Greek literature. Now he declared Shelley to be "a scholar, a gentleman and a poet" and advised him to dissociate

1. Ibid., p.476.

2. Ibid., p.277.

himself from Hunt and Keats. Although these unmistakable social connotations persist throughout Lockhart's criticism of Shelley, his criticism of the Revolt of Islam was at least consistent with his literary convictions, and his praise of Shelley seems sincere enough:

"His praise is, in our judgement, that of having poured over his narrative a very rare strength and abundance of poetic imagery and feeling—of having steeped every word in the essence of his inspiration. The Revolt of Islam contains no detached passages at all comparable with some which our readers recollect in the works of the great poets our contemporaries; but neither does it contain any such intermixture of prosaic materials as disfigure even the greatest of them. Mr. Shelley has displayed his possession of a mind intensely poetical, and of an exuberance of poetic language, perpetually strong and perpetually varied."¹

ii

In the review of Rosalind and Helen (June 1819), Lockhart is more reserved in his praise and devotes more space to criticising Shelley's philosophy, especially his attitude to religion. "That a poet should be blind, deaf, and insensible to the Divine beauty of Christianity, is wonderful and deplorable, when, at the same time, he is also so alive to the beauty of the external world, and, in many instances, to that of the human soul."² Lockhart also points out William Godwin's influence on Shelley's philosophy, but seems to have entirely misjudged the strength of Shelley's conviction when he claims that he had adopted Godwin's views "from waywardness and

1. Ibid., p.482.

2. Blackwood's, V, 273-74.

caprice, from the love of singularity, and, perhaps, as a vain defence against the reproaches of his own conscience."¹ Lockhart objects to Shelley's sympathetic portrayal of the unmarried lovers, Helen and Lionel, and strongly condemns "his everlasting allusions to the unnatural loves of brothers and sisters."

Despite these objections Lockhart praises Rosalind and Helen. Shelley's modern eclogue, he claims, "breathes throughout strong feeling and strong passion, and strong imagination,"² and, as in the review of the Revolt of Islam, he hopes to see the day when Mr. Shelley, "having shaken himself free from these faults—faults so devoid of any essential or fundamental alliance with his masterly genius—will take his place as he ought to do, not far from the first poets of his time."³

The review of Rosalind and Helen leaves us in no doubt that Lockhart was by now fully aware of all that was objectionable in Shelley's political, moral, and religious views, and his suggestion that Shelley had adopted those views as "a vain defence against the reproaches of his own conscience" indicates that Lockhart was not unaware of the events of Shelley's private life. Yet when John Taylor Coleridge hinted in his review of the Revolt of Islam in the Quarterly (September 1819) that there was some disgrace in Shelley's private life, Lockhart sought out Alastor, which had been published

1. Ibid., p. 274.

2. Ibid., p. 268.

3. Ibid., p. 274.

three years earlier, and used it as an excuse to defend Shelley against the Quarterly's attack. There is something suspicious in all this, for which unfortunately the Blackwood Papers do not give any explanation. Lockhart's defence of Shelley may have been the result of Blackwood's deliberate policy of opposing the Quarterly. Equally, the review of Alastor may have been published in Blackwood's as a favour to Charles Ollier who, at that time, had friendly business relations with William Blackwood.

Whatever the real motive behind this late review of Alastor may have been, it is so excessively favourable that one cannot but doubt the sincerity of Lockhart's praise. Although he criticises Shelley for being "too fond of allegories" and although he admits that without Shelley's preface "the poem would be altogether unintelligible to ordinary readers," Lockhart goes on to say:

"Our readers will not expect, from this somewhat dim enunciation [Shelley's preface], at all times to see the drift of this wild poem; but we think they will feel, notwithstanding, that there is the light of poetry even in the darkness of Mr. Shelley's imagination."¹

Similarly Lockhart finds the "Demon of the World" strange and unintelligible, yet describes it as "exceedingly beautiful."

But, as already pointed out, the purpose behind this late review of Alastor was to defend Shelley against the Quarterly. Lockhart begins his defence of Shelley by describing his treatment in the Quarterly as infamous and stupid:

1. Blackwood's, VI, 140.

"His Reviewer there, whoever he is, does not shew himself a man of such lofty principles as to entitle him to ride the high horse in company with the author of the *Revolt of Islam*. And when one compares the *vis inertiae* of his motionless prose with the 'eagle-winged raptures' of Mr. Shelley's poetry, one does not think indeed of Satan reproving Sin, but one does think, we will say it in plain words and without a figure, of a dunce rating a man of genius."¹

After strongly condemning the Quarterly for making "dark" and "oracular" allusions to Shelley's private life, and for fearing to acknowledge his genius, Lockhart declares:

"It is not in the power of all the critics alive to blind one true lover of poetry to the splendour of Mr. Shelley's genius—and the reader who, from mere curiosity, should turn to the *Revolt of Islam* to see what sort of trash it was that so moved the wrath and the spleen and the scorn of the Reviewer, would soon feel, that to understand the greatness of the poet, and the littleness of his traducer, nothing more was necessary than to recite to his delighted sense any six successive stanzas of that poem, so full of music, imagination, intellect, and passion."²

Finally Lockhart advises Shelley to return to England, "in his strength conquering, and to conquer," for there is "a strong love of genius" among its people, "and they are willing to pardon to its possessor much extravagance and error—nay, even more serious transgressions."³

Lockhart's review of Prometheus Unbound is definitely the best of his four reviews of Shelley's poems, and it is also the

-
1. Ibid., p. 153.
 2. Ibid., p. 154.
 3. Ibid.

most characteristic. As has been pointed out before, Lockhart often judged contemporary poems by comparing them to established classics both ancient and modern. Either in spirit or in the treatment of specific themes, he compared Wordsworth with Homer, Aeschylus, Dante, and Milton; Coleridge with Homer and Milton; Byron with Virgil. Some of these comparisons are manifestly arbitrary and others are even absurd, but they were an important part of Lockhart's critical apparatus. Such poems as Prometheus Unbound and Keats' Endymion invited such comparisons.

Lockhart also believes that "nothing worth much has ever been done either in literature, or in any of the sister arts, except by taking things as they are, or representing them as they are."¹ By this Lockhart means not just the representation of what is real in a human or universal sense, but also in a relative and empirical sense. It is the truth to life as known or experienced by a poet or a novelist. If a writer wishes to represent "the reality" of a different age or a different society, he should first acquire an intimate knowledge of that age or that society. It is perhaps worth remembering that Lockhart's novel Valerius is not only a faithful representation of Roman life and society but, as Andrew Lang observes, reads as if it were written by a Roman. Lockhart had no faith in the reinterpretation of a classical myth or theme, so as to embody the writer's experience or philosophy. The faults of this rigid critical principle are only too obvious. But it was

1. Strout, John Bull's Letter, p. 96.

the principle according to which he judged Shelley's Prometheus Unbound (September 1820) and Keats' Endymion (August 1818).

Lockhart introduces his review of Prometheus Unbound with an account of Prometheus Bound in which, he claims, the Greek poet meant Prometheus to represent "the native strength of human intellect itself—its strength of endurance above all others—its sublime power of patience."¹ Yet Lockhart calls Aeschylus' Prometheus a "suffering divinity" and traces the origin of the myth to something that vaguely resembles what we nowadays call archetypal images in the collective consciousness of human communities.

"No one...who compares the mythological systems of different races and countries, can fail to observe the frequent occurrence of certain great leading Ideas and leading Symbolisations of ideas...Such, among others, are unquestionably the ideas of an Incarnate Divinity suffering on account of mankind—conferring benefits on mankind at the expense of his own suffering—the general idea of vicarious atonement itself—and the idea of the dignity of suffering as an exertion of intellectual might."²

All these ideas Lockhart sees embodied in Prometheus the Titan, as well as the idea of the "deliverer waited for patiently, through the ages of darkness, and, at last, arriving in the person of the child of 10." Lockhart's implications here are obvious. He regards both Aeschylus' Prometheus and the mythological Titan as pre-Christian Christ-figures. He therefore denounces Shelley strongly for his reinterpretation of the myth; for "grossly and miserably perverting its purpose and its meaning":

1. Blackwood's, VII, 679.

2. Ibid., pp.679-80.

"It is quite evident that the Jupiter whose downfall has been predicted by Prometheus, means nothing more than Religion in general, that is, every human system of religious belief; and that, with the fall of this, he considers it perfectly necessary (as indeed we also believe, though with far different feelings) that every system of human government should also give way and perish. The patience of the contemplative spirit in Prometheus is to be followed by the daring of the active Demagorgon, at whose touch all 'old thrones' are at once and for ever to be cast down into the dust...it is quite impossible that there should exist a more pestiferous mixture of blasphemy, sedition, and sensuality, than₁ is visible in the whole structure and strain of this poem."

And yet Lockhart praises the parts of Shelley's poem "in which it is possible to separate the poet from the allegorist—where the modern is content to write in the spirit of the ancient." He praises Prometheus Unbound for the abundance "of beauties of the highest order," for the "many specimens not easily surpassed of the moral sublime eloquence," for its pathos and most magnificent description.² He claims that it is Shelley's best written poem. Finally he pays Shelley the greatest tribute that a critic can ever pay a contemporary poet: "One might almost fancy that we have recovered some of the lost sublimities of Aeschylus."³

In the same review Lockhart also praises "To a Skylark" and "Ode to the West Wind" and places "The Sensitive Plant" on a level with the "very happiest productions of the greatest contemporaries of Mr. Shelley."

The review of Prometheus Unbound was the last of Lockhart's

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid., p.680.

3. Ibid., p.681.

four reviews of Shelley's poems. For it was probably Wilson who briefly and favourably noticed the Cenci in the review of Byron's Marino Faliero (May 1821), and, as we shall see in the next chapter, Charles Ollier wrote the notice of Epipsychidion (February 1822). But Lockhart praised Shelley's translation of Goethe's May-day Night in the "Noctes" for December 1822. Yet praiseworthy as his treatment of Shelley definitely is, it is not without flaws. He cannot be blamed for not preventing Croly's outrageous review of Adonais, for in December 1821 he was not as active in the management of Blackwood's as he used to be before February of that year, or later in 1822. But he positively approved of Maginn's atrocious article on Shelley's Posthumous Poems (September 1824).

iv

Lockhart put Keats' Endymion to the same test to which he later subjected Shelley's Prometheus Unbound, but approaching Keats' poem with an already prejudiced mind, he saw nothing in it except that it was written by a disciple of Leigh Hunt. "Mr. Keats," Lockhart wrote commenting on the use of the heroic couplet in the Endymion, "has adopted the loose nerveless versification and Cockney rhymes of the poet of Rimini"¹ (Lockhart does not fail to notice that Keats rhymes "higher" with "Thalia," and "ear" with "Cytherea").

1. Blackwood's, III, 522.

Much has already been written against and in justification of Lockhart's review, and nothing else remains to be said except that although there is a great deal that is indefensible in Lockhart's assault on Keats, his objection to Endymion is consistent with his critical practice. The same principle operates in a negative way in his criticism of Keats and Hunt, and positively in his criticism of Burns, Scott, Byron, Shelley, or even on the works of so different writers as Defoe and Wordsworth. Lockhart praised all those poets and writers for representing the world, which they intimately knew either through immediate experience or scholarship. There was no affectation, or pretence, or vulgarity in their writings. On the other hand, Lockhart was repelled by what he regarded as fanciful vulgarization of a Greek myth by a young poet who knew no Greek, and whom he associated with Hunt. Keats' Endymion, he claimed,

"is not a Greek shepherd, loved by a Grecian Goddess; he is merely a young Cockney rhymester, dreaming a phantastic dream...no man, whose mind has ever been imbued with the smallest knowledge or feeling of classical poetry or classical history, could have stooped to profane and vulgarise every association in the manner which has been adopted by his 'son of promise.'" ¹

Guided by such a principle, and perhaps already determined to damn Keats, Lockhart finds enough indifferent poetry to illustrate the vulgarization of the myth, and "the calm, settled, imperturbable drivelling idiocy of 'Endymion.'" He quotes such lines as:

Thus spake he, and that moment felt endued
With power to dream deliciously; so wound
Through a dim passage, searching till he found
The smoothest mossy bed and deepest, where

1. Ibid.

He threw himself, and just into the air
 Stretching his indolent arms, he took, O bliss!
 A naked waist: 'Fair Cupid, whence is this?'
 A well-known voice sigh'd, 'Sweetest, here am I!'
 At which soft ravishment, with doting cry
 They trembled to each other—Helicon!
 O fountain'd hill! Old Homer's Helicon!
 That thou wouldst spout a little streamlet o'er
These sorry pages... (II, 707-19, Lockhart's italics)

In the same number of the "Cockney School of Poetry" Lockhart also reviewed Keats' first volume (1817) in the same hostile and contemptuous manner, not omitting to quote two of Keats' early sonnets as a proof of his discipleship to Hunt. He also attacks Keats for abusing Pope and Boileau in "Sleep and Poetry."

However justified Lockhart's criticism may be, and however consistent with his critical principle, his attack on Keats is inexcusably harsh. The supercilious allusion to Keats' medical apprenticeship, to his youth, and want of education; the sneers at his literary aspirations; and, most of all, the concluding paragraph ^{of the review} are altogether indefensible.

Keats had expected an attack on him in Blackwood's ever since his name appeared in large letters next to that of Hunt in the motto of the first article on the "Cockney School Series." When the assault finally came, Keats treated it with the same indifference as Wordsworth had treated Wilson's abuse, and with a greater degree of modesty. On 8 October 1818 he wrote to his publisher, J.A. Hessey, referring to the defence of Endymion in the Morning Chronicle:

"Praise or blame has but a momentary effect on the man whose love of beauty in the abstract makes him a severe critic on his own Works. My own domestic criticism has given me pain without comparison beyond what Blackwood or the Quarterly could possibly inflict."¹

1. The Letters of John Keats, ed. Hyder Edward Rollins (Cambridge Mass.: 1958), I, 373-74.

When he wrote this, Keats did not know that Lockhart's worse offence against him was not the harsh criticism of Endymion as such, but the insulting label which he had stuck on him, "Master John," the apprentice apothecary and the infatuated disciple of Hunt, and which Lockhart and other contributors would use against him again and again.¹

In September 1820 Lockhart knew about Keats' illness, through John Aitkin, who apparently appealed to him to notice Keats' 1820 volume. The great poems which appeared in that volume, such as The Eve of St. Agnes and the great Odes, did not cause any significant change in Lockhart's appraisal of Keats. In the "Extracts from Mr. Wastle's Diary" (September 1820) he said "something kind" about the new volume:

"There is much merit in some of the stanzas of Mr. Keats' last volume, which I have just seen; no doubt he is a fine feeling lad—and I hope he will live to despise Leigh Hunt, and be a poet—"²

Yet what he said about Keats' new volume in the review of Shelley's Prometheus Unbound in the same number of Blackwood's, shows that his views about Keats' genius had not changed much since August 1818.

"In the last volume he [Keats] has published, we find more beauties than in the former, both of language and of thought, but we are sorry to say, we find abundance of the same absurd affectations also, and superficial conceits, which first displeased us in his writings;—and which we are again very

1. For the frequency of abusive references to Keats in Blackwood's see J.R. MacGillivray, John Keats: A Bibliography, pp. xxx, 64 and 89.

2. Blackwood's, VII, 665.

sorry to say, must in our opinion, if persisted in, utterly and entirely prevent Mr. Keats from ever taking his place¹ among the pure and classical poets of his mother tongue."

1. Ibid., p.686.

CHAPTER XII

SHELLEY, OLLIER, AND BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE

Although there are in the Blackwood Papers several letters from Charles Ollier to William Blackwood, it is difficult to decide what the nature of the relation between the two publishers was, or why such a relation should have had any influence on the criticism of Shelley's poetry in Blackwood's. We have already seen how William Davies succeeded in persuading the "editors" of Blackwood's to adopt a more consistent attitude towards Coleridge and how the differences between William Blackwood and John Murray were reflected in Lockhart's review of the first two cantos of Don Juan. William Blackwood, as far as I am aware, had no business relation with Ollier and there is no reference in the latter's letters to any joint publication by them. It is also difficult to determine when exactly the correspondence between Blackwood and Ollier began as the earliest letter, in the Blackwood Papers, from Ollier to the Edinburgh publisher is dated 27 November 1819. For these reasons we cannot be quite certain that it was through Ollier's good offices that Blackwood's changed its attitude towards Shelley between January and July 1818. Yet it may be also significant that in August 1818 John Wilson favourably reviewed Ollier's novel Altham and his Wife in Blackwood's.

Whatever the nature of Ollier's relation with William Blackwood may have been, it was not apparently of great importance to the

Edinburgh publisher; nor did Ollier have any significant influence on him. His letters to William Blackwood between 1819 and 1822 are, however, interesting for the light they throw on Shelley's publisher's role as a middle-man between Blackwood's and Shelley and on his relation with the poet.¹ In these letters we catch a glimpse of Ollier's "poetic insight and his championship of genius against which half the world was up in arms."² But Ollier's correspondence with William Blackwood also reveals the other side of his character, that shows him timid, compromising, deferential to the more reactionary half of the world and, eventually, willing to forsake these men of genius whom he at first championed. Ollier shows himself, in these letters to Blackwood, as the same publisher, whose "terror" of persecution induced him on reading Laon and Cythna in 1817 "to solicit the alterations of many passages which he marked,"³ and to refuse to publish Shelley's poem before those alterations were made.

In slightly more than two years Ollier's strange willingness to compromise led him from one side of the fence to the other. In

-
1. Long extracts from these letters were published by W.M. Parker in TLS, 4 June 1947, p. 288, but, surprisingly enough, very little use has been made of them.
 2. [S.R. Townshend Mayer], "Leigh Hunt and Charles Ollier," St. James's Magazine, NS, (1875), 392. Mayer takes rather too favourable a view of Charles Ollier. But see also Roger Ingpen, "Shelley and his Publishers," London Mercury, January 1920, pp. 291-300, and Sylvia Norman, Flight of the Skylark (1954), pp. 45-46.
 3. Thomas Love Peacock, Memoirs of Percy Bysshe Shelley, ed. H.F.B. Brett-Smith (1909), p. 61.

1819 he tried to exploit his connection with William Blackwood in Shelley's favour. As long as Maga's favourable attitude to Shelley lasted, he actually succeeded in rendering him some service. However in 1821 Shelley showed that he had no intention of responding to Maga's long wooing, or of renouncing his unorthodox political and moral theories in return for its patronage. A drastic change immediately occurred in Blackwood's estimation of his poetry, and Ollier found that he had to choose between the friendship of Blackwood's and that of Shelley. In those hectic early years of Blackwood's, J.G. Lockhart wrote, "In the present state of the world, all Christians are entitled to say that 'they that are not with us are against us'"¹ Ollier's connection with William Blackwood proved that all those who were with Maga must necessarily be against those whom it considered its enemies. When Shelley became one of those enemies towards the end of 1821, Ollier succeeded, inadvertently perhaps, only in supplying Blackwood's with ammunition, which was readily seized upon by its writers and used in their attacks on him.

My aim in this chapter is to trace the development of Ollier's

1. Peter's Letters, II, 136. Lockhart was not alone in expecting such wholehearted allegiance from the supporters of Blackwood's. In a letter to William Blackwood, Alaric Watts wrote on 8 August 1822:

"It is curious to hear the Olliers, who I thought were friends, and even contributors to your Mag. puff the London Magazine. They seem to have hardly any sleep the night preceeding its publication, and when it is really out Good God! how they do rant about the vast power of this article and the pathos of that, the exquisite tact of Safie Reynolds and the never-enough-to-be-exalted bleatings of Charles Lamb. C.O. told me a few days ago, he considered the English Opium Eater the first prose writer of the day." - NLS., MSS., 4009.

connection with William Blackwood and to examine the effect it had on Blackwood's attitude towards Shelley between November 1819 and March 1822.

i

As we have already seen in November 1819 Lockhart sought out Alastor and used it as a pretext to take up arms in Shelley's defence against John Taylor Coleridge's ungenerous and personal attack in his review of the Revolt of Islam in the Quarterly Review of April 1819. Ollier was so delighted with Lockhart's article that he did not wait for his copy of the magazine to arrive from Edinburgh. Instead, he borrowed from Bryan Waller Procter the leaf which contained Lockhart's attack on the Quarterly and enclosed it in a letter to Shelley. On the following day, he received the magazine and wrote to Blackwood:

"Yesterday being the foreign-post day, we were enabled (by the kindness of Mr. Procter) to send to Mr. Shelley at Florence the leaf of your magazine containing that independent and generous¹ defence of the author of 'The Revolt of Islam'."

Shelley's reaction to the attack of the Quarterly² is also communicated to William Blackwood in Ollier's letter, and as a further inducement to the Blackwood's reviewers to maintain their

1. NLS., MSS. 4004. This letter is signed C. and J. Ollier, but it is in Charles Ollier's handwriting. All other letters referred to in this chapter are signed Chas. Ollier.

2. See Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley, ed. F.L. Jones (1964), II, 127 (Hereafter cited as Letters).

favourable view of Shelley's poetry, Ollier wrote quoting the poet's letter to him of 15 October 1819.

"In another place he apprizes us of his new poem:
 'The MS. of Prometheus, a poem in my best style, whatever that may amount to, will arrive with the other things. It is the most perfect of my productions.'"¹

It is evident from Ollier's letter that what Shelley saw of the article on Alastor did not exceed pages 153-154 of Blackwood's Magazine for November 1819 (the one leaf which Ollier enclosed in his letter). It was enough, however, to produce Shelley's puzzled, delighted reaction, which he expresses in his letter to Ollier of 15 December 1819.²

-
- Ollier's quotation from Shelley's letter is not very accurate:
 "The 'Prometheus', a poem in my best style, whatever that may amount to, will arrive with it [The Cenci], but only in MS., which you can print and publish in the season. It is the most perfect of my productions." (Letters, II, 127).
 "Prometheus, a Poem by Percy Bysshe Shelley" is advertised under "Works Preparing for Publication" in Blackwood's of December 1819, (Blackwood's, vi, 344) and when Lockhart reviewed it in September 1820, he described it as Shelley's "best-written" poem. (Ibid., VII, 680).
 - "I am glad, however, to see the Quarterly cut up," Shelley wrote to Ollier, "and that by one of their own people...Do you know I think the article in Blackwood could not have been written by a favourer of government, and a religionist. I don't believe any such one could sincerely like my writings. After all, is it not a friend in disguise, and don't you know who wrote it?" (Letters, II, 163).

Mary Shelley too was pleasantly surprised by the Blackwood's defence of Shelley, which she described to Maria Gisborne as the "antidote" to the "bane" of the Quarterly. Letters of Mary Shelley, ed.

F.L. Jones (University of Oklahoma Press: 1944), I, 90.

Ollier's letter to William Blackwood clears up some confusion about Shelley's reference to the "article in Blackwood." In the two articles referred to on page 30 above, A.L. Strout assumes that Shelley's allusion is to the review of The Revolt of Islam (Blackwood's for January 1819). So do Roger Ingpen, (Both in Shelley's Letters (1909), II, 122 notes, and the Julian Edition (1926), X, 134 notes.), and F.L. Jones in Letters, II, 163 notes. However, N.I. White rightly guessed that Shelley's reference is to the article on Alastor (The Unextinguished Hearth p. 110 and Shelley II, 161).

Lockhart's defence of Shelley delighted and encouraged Ollier. It offered an unexpected opportunity to promote the sale of Shelley's works, which he did not hesitate to exploit. He had so far printed at his own expense two long poems (The Revolt of Islam and Rosalind and Helen in addition to the suppressed Laon and Cythna) which had failed to sell well, despite Leigh Hunt's testimony to the contrary,¹ and Shelley was already writing from Italy about the publication of two more (Prometheus Unbound and The Cenci). It is not surprising then that Ollier saw in Maga's championship of Shelley an effective means of advertising all these works, and that to do this he only had to maintain and strengthen his connection with William Blackwood. Yet, first, a formidable obstacle had to be surmounted. To the Blackwood's reviewers, Shelley and Ollier were friends and supporters of Leigh Hunt, the "King of the Cockneys" and Maga's greatest enemy. Since Hunt played an important part in the development of Blackwood's attitude towards Shelley as well as in the relationship between Shelley and Ollier, it is right to investigate this part in some detail.

1. For Hunt's account of the sale of The Revolt of Islam see his letter of 12 November 1818, to Mary Shelley, reprinted from Shelley and Mary in Letters, II, 64-65 n. After Shelley's death, C. and J. Ollier still had an "unsold stock" of those works which they had printed at their own expense, and which, Ollier told Mary in his letter of 17 November 1823, "were disposed of in the general sale of our property," when their business was liquidated in 1823. (For Ollier's letter to Mary Shelley, see Sylva Norman, Flight of the Skylark, p. 46, reprinted from Mary and Shelley). Of these works of Shelley only The Cenci went into a second edition.

Since October 1817, Hunt had been a target for frequent and most virulent attacks in Blackwood's. In the articles on "The Cockney School of Poetry" and "Letters from Z to Leigh Hunt," Lockhart, Wilson and their collaborators did not scruple to use the worst possible smear campaigns to belittle the man whom they considered not only politically dangerous, but a vulgar social upstart. Since in the eyes of Blackwood's literary fame was the prerogative only of a gentleman, which Hunt had no claim to be, he and his associates had no right to meddle with literature. In this fierce political, social and literary warfare between Blackwood's and the "Cockneys," Keats was mercilessly sacrificed, and Shelley's poems were always in danger of meeting the same fate.

Charles Ollier was also known to the Blackwood's writers to be a cockney and one of Hunt's associates.¹ Their collaboration in producing the Literary Pocket Book from 1818 to 1822 was an open secret. It is no wonder therefore, to see Ollier in his letters to William Blackwood deliberately playing down his connection with Hunt. On 27 November 1819 he wrote to the Edinburgh publisher:

"A copy [of the Literary Pocket Book for 1820] will come with this, soliciting your acceptance. The thing has a very rapid sale here, and we should have begged the honour of your name as its publisher in Edinburgh, only that it is an offspring of Mr. Leigh Hunt, a circumstance of which it would have been uncandid in us not to apprise you. It is, however, our property by purchase, and has contributors this year by our friends Mr. Procter, Mr. C. Lloyd and others."²

1. See for instance Wilson's review of Ollier's novel Altham and his Wife, Blackwood's, III, 542.

2. NLS, MSS. 4004.

Ollier's anxiety to dissociate himself from the "Cockneys" is perhaps tactful, and, in view of the hostility between Blackwood's and Hunt, understandable. It is, however, worth mentioning here that, when he bought the copyright of the Literary Pocket Book, Ollier asked Hunt to retain its editorship. On 12 September 1819, Hunt wrote to Mary Shelley:

"You remember the 200 l. which Ollier was prevailed upon by you to advance before you left London. The first number of the Literary Pocket Book has sold so well, and promised so better, that I have liquidated the debt by selling him the copyright for that sum. I only retain the editorship which, had he not asked me to do, I would have stipulated¹ for, seeing this new channel of opinions opened to me."

The Literary Pocket Book for 1819 and 1820 were reviewed together in Blackwood's Magazine for December 1819 by John Wilson.² Although Wilson's review was not very severe, Hunt could hardly have been pleased with it. Ollier's tact about his connection with Hunt was not met by similar caution from Wilson about the connection between Blackwood's and Ollier. At the beginning of his review Wilson wrote "Mr. Hunt, we understand, does not take our Magazine, but he generally contrives to get a peep at it at our friend Ollier's."³ This is followed by yet more banter about Hunt and the "Cockneys". But what probably caused Hunt's displeasure with Ollier was the fact that Wilson succeeded in identifying the

-
1. Correspondence of Leigh Hunt, ed. Thornton Hunt (1862), I, 146. For the terms of the agreement see "Leigh Hunt and Charles Ollier," St. James's Magazine, NS, XV (1875) 393, and L. André, Leigh Hunt, (Paris: 1936), I, 104 and n.
 2. A.L. Strout attributes this review to John Wilson on stylistic grounds. See Strout, Bibliography, p. 62.
 3. Blackwood's, VI, 235.

writers of every single contribution to the Pocket Book. Since these contributions were printed under "various signatures of Greek Characters and Roman Capitals,"¹ Hunt apparently suspected Ollier of revealing their secret in his correspondence with William Blackwood,² which caused some estrangement between him and Ollier in 1820. Neither in his Autobiography nor his Correspondence, does Hunt mention any such quarrel with Ollier. There are a number of allusions, however, to such misunderstandings in Shelley's letters to Hunt and Ollier in May 1820.³ (The effect of this misunderstanding on the relation between Shelley and the latter will be discussed later in this chapter.) Twenty months later, Ollier gave his own account of the quarrel with Hunt in a letter to William Blackwood. After another Literary Pocket Book had received a less favourable review in Blackwood's in December 1821, Ollier wrote to William Blackwood on 3 January 1822:

-
1. Charles and Mary Clarke, Recollections of Writers (1878), p. 28, Hunt explained the significance of those signatures in a letter to Charles Clarke, (Ibid, p. 201).
 2. Ollier's letters to William Blackwood do not contain any reference to the authorship of the contents of the Literary Pocket Book. But in view of Wilson's failure to identify any of the contributors to the Literary Pocket Book for 1822, apart from two very obvious ones, Hunt's suspicion was not apparently unjustified. It is possible that Ollier pointed out the identity of the contributors in a letter he wrote to William Blackwood about 24 November 1819, which has not been preserved, or on Blackwood's copy of the Literary Pocket Book.
 3. See Shelley's letters to Hunt, of 1 and 26 May, and to Ollier of 14 May 1820, Letters, II, 191, 197, and 201.

"Your first article on the Pocket Book caused what had been breeding for some time, namely, disagreeable feelings between Mr. Hunt and ourselves, to burst from him in an unappeasable flame, and some two or three of his friends whom we distinguish by the name of "holy alliance" leagued themselves together, that their joint indignation might be terrible to us. They even announced a documentary reprimand (although we were quite innocent of your article on the "Pocket Book") to be signed by them severally, but we treated the announcement in such a way that the manifesto never came to hand."¹

One of the main motives behind Blackwood's attacks on Hunt and his friends was to isolate the liberal journalist, and thus render his radical views on politics innocuous. In different ways and at different times, Blackwood's tried to drive a wedge between Hunt, on the one hand, and Keats, Shelley and Byron, on the other. It was only with Byron that its efforts, supported by other Tory periodicals and, more importantly, by Byron's friends in England, achieved some success in 1823.² The same tactics were used by Blackwood's to separate Hunt and Ollier. With the latter's readiness to meet the Tory periodical more than half way, this strategy of sowing seeds of disunity among the opposite party proved to be very effective. As we shall see later, Ollier continued his correspondence with William Blackwood to dissociate himself from Hunt, and to report disapprovingly on his activity. But since

-
1. NLS, MSS. 4007. Ollier's letter is dated 3 January 1821 (a mistake for 1822).
 2. About the Byron-Hunt collaboration, Lockhart wrote addressing Lord Byron, "This is by far the greatest outrage you have ever yet committed against manners, and morals, and intellectuals." (Blackwood's, XII, 781). See also W.H. Marshall, Byron, Shelley, Hunt and the Liberal (1960), p. 39 passim, for Byron's friends' antagonism to the Pisa coalition.

this attitude towards Hunt also affected Shelley, it will be discussed in connection with the part which Ollier played in contributing to the Blackwood's hostile attitude to Shelley towards the end of 1821 and early 1822.

iii

Although Ollier incurred Hunt's anger by disclosing to William Blackwood the authorship of the pieces in the Literary Pocket Book, he gained, through that disclosure and his tact in general, one further compliment for Shelley in Blackwood's, as well as general encouragement for himself. In his review of the Literary Pocket Book for 1819 and 1820, Wilson quotes Shelley's poem "Marianne's Dream" in its entirety, and introduces it by remarks as abusive of Keats as they are laudatory of Shelley's "deep voice of inspiration".

"It would greatly amuse us to meet in company together Johnny Keats and Percy Bysshe Shelly [sic] ... A bird of paradise and a Freezland Fowl¹ would not look more absurdly on the same perch."

Wilson also ends his review with a word of encouragement to

C. and J. Ollier:

"We cannot conclude without remarking that many very interesting little works keep issuing from Messrs. Ollier's shop. Our readers will observe a list of some of the new things in our literary intelligence of this month. We look hopefully to them all."²

1. Blackwood's, VI, 240.

2. Ibid., p. 247.

Under "Works Preparing for Publication" in the same number of Blackwood's (for December 1819), several of Ollier's publications were noticed, among which were Shelley's Prometheus, Ollier's own novel Inesilla, and the Literary Miscellany. About the last work Ollier had written to William Blackwood on 27 November 1819.

"You will perceive at the end of our "Pocket Book" that we have announced an annual Literary Miscellany. It would be something of the manner¹ of those formerly published by Tonson and Lintot. We wexpect to be supplied with articles from Mr. Shelley, Mr. Lamb, Mr. C. Lloyd, Mr. Procter, Mr. T.L. Peacock and other gentlemen whose names we may not state. These last are, for the most part, young writers, but there are among them some minds of originality and power. There² will, of course, be no book reviewing in the affair."

In the Blackwood's, notice the Literary Miscellany is described as a work consisting of "a variety of new Articles in prose and verse, by some of the best living Authors." But, as a warning hint to Ollier and his supporters to steer clear of party politics, the notice continues:

"As this Work will have no reference to Politics or Polemics, it may perhaps afford a channel of communications of literary Gentlemen who are unwilling to have their writings surrounded by the fever and bitterness of party dispute."³

All Ollier's tact and caution in his correspondence with William Blackwood could not, however, secure for him or his publication

-
1. Jacob Tonson and Barnaby Lintot, the early eighteenth century publishers. In 1684 Tonson started his Miscellany under the editorship of Dryden, in opposition to which Lintot published in 1712 Miscellaneous Poems and Translations by Several Hands.
 2. NLS, MSS. 4004.
 3. Blackwood's, VI, 344.

the permanent patronage of the extremely unpredictable Maga. When the Literary Miscellany appeared in 1820, Lockhart declared in a letter to William Blackwood, "Ollier's Miscellany is a Cockney thing & won't do to any great extent."¹ However, Lockhart suggested paying Ollier and his supporters a compliment in return for their appreciation of R.P. Gillies' translation from German literature in Blackwood's. This compliment appeared in a brief and somewhat reserved form in the introductory letter "Horae Scandicae II" in Blackwood's for September 1820.

Although Lockhart's view of the Literary Miscellany shows how slippery was the ground on which Ollier was moving in his connection with William Blackwood, and how futile his attempt to remain in Maga's favour was doomed to be, his letters to William Blackwood show him determined to keep this connection on as friendly terms as possible even at the cost of giving evidence, as it were, against some of his own friends and acquaintances. It is true that he was encouraged by William Blackwood to continue this correspondence. "You see what danger you run into," he wrote to Blackwood at the end of one of his letters, "in being so kind as to express a wish for our letters." Yet occasionally Ollier's deference to the Edinburgh publisher went beyond the mere politeness of business correspondence. When in November 1820 John Scott made his famous attack in Baldwin's London Magazine on the

1. NLS, MSS. 4005.

proprietor and writers of Blackwood's, Ollier wrote to William Blackwood, deploring the war of "personality" in the periodical press in general; and in itself such a disapproval seems commendable until one remembers that John Scott's attack on the "Mohock Magazine" was made in defence of Hunt, Hazlitt, Keats and many others of Ollier's friends and acquaintances who had been constantly and cruelly persecuted in Blackwood's:

"I have not yet received the Magazine, which I am most anxious to see, as I always am at this period of the month, and I can say unaffectedly that my mind is fixed in anticipation more on its general contents as usual, than on the answer it will probably have to Baldwin's attack. I want a relish for these private acrimonies. Political, literary or even religious quarreling is all very well, but the public allusions to private & confidential correspondence, such as Mr. Baldwin had condescended to permit, is vile & debasing and communicates a feeling of humiliation even to the reader - at least it does to me -. It is little and mean, and these qualities send out contagion which is offensive even when it does not infect you."¹

Encouraged by the first review which the Literary Pocket Books of 1819 and 1820 received in Maga, and also perhaps by Wilson's favourable review of Procter's, "Barry Cornwall's" Sicilian Story (March 1820), and Lockhart's review of Shelley's Prometheus Unbound (September 1820), Ollier wrote to William Blackwood in the same letter of 20 November 1820:

"With this two copies of the Pocket Book come soliciting your and Mr. North's acceptance. The sale increases rapidly; and in all opinions, it is the best number we have published, should it give birth to a remark or two, however short or otherwise, in your next magazine, it

1. NLS, MSS. 4005.

would be very serviceable to us, as it is entirely our property. We are unreasonable, however, to indulge a hope of this again."¹

It was not, however, until December 1821 that another of Ollier's Pocket Books, for 1822, was reviewed in Blackwood's. By then the inevitable change in Maga's attitude towards Shelley had occurred. Wilson used the Literary Pocket Book as an excuse to make yet another attack on Leigh Hunt and his "Cockney" associates.² This review on the whole was much harsher on the Pocket Book than the first one. What interests us here, however, is Wilson's inclusion of Shelley's name in his list of minor contemporary poets:

"Put Byron, Wordsworth, Crabbe, Scott and Southey aside, and all other great poets seem to us one flock of sheep. We mean no offence by this pastoral image—but really there is not much to pick and chuse between Coleridge, Montgomery, Hogg, Heber, Bowles, Millman, Shelly, Hunt, Wilson, Procter."³

Shelley had fallen out of Maga's favour since Prometheus Unbound was reviewed in September 1820.

iv

Many factors contributed to the change of attitude towards Shelley in Blackwood's Magazine, first among which was the setback

-
1. NLS, MSS. 4005.
 2. A.L. Strout ascribes this review to John Wilson on stylistic grounds. (Strout Bibliography, p. 89). It is curious, however, to see Wilson so modest as to include himself among the "flock of sheep" of contemporary poets.
 3. Blackwood's, X, 579.

in his reputation in England during 1821. This was mainly caused by the publications, in the spring of that year, of three different pirated editions of Queen Mab, for which one of the publishers, William Clark, was indicted by the Society for the Prevention of Vice. The Tory reviewers and journalists seized this opportunity and attacked Shelley with renewed vehemence and greater malice. The Literary Gazette in particular, which had always been one of the main assailants of Shelley, resorted to its strongest invective against him in its review of one of the pirated editions of Queen Mab, on 18 May 1821.¹ Secondly, up to early in 1821, Blackwood's mixed its high praise of Shelley's poetic genius with a strong condemnation of his unorthodox theories, and constantly warned him that he would not gain general recognition as a great poet, to which he was entitled, unless he "learned 'to fear God, and honour the king'."² Shelley, however, persisted in his course, and instead of completely renouncing Queen Mab, he wrote a letter to the editor of the Examiner, in which he only described it as "crude and immature", both as a literary composition and a philosophical treatise, but he still declared himself as "a devoted

1. The Literary Gazette declared, "against receiving our social impulses from a destroyer of every social virtue; our moral creed, from an incestuous wretch; or our religion from an atheist, who denied God, and reviled the purest institutes of human philosophy and divine ordination, did such a demon exist." White, The Unextinguished Hearth, p. 65 n.

2. Blackwood's, VII, 687. HL, 607.

enemy to all religious, political and domestic oppression."¹

It is likely that Ollier was intimidated by the fierce attacks on Shelley in the Tory periodicals during the summer of 1821. To make matters worse for his publisher, Shelley attacked the Quarterly Review in his preface to Adonais. Although Shelley singled out the Quarterly reviewers and accused them of hastening Keats' death by their "savage criticism of Endymion," the Blackwood's writers felt themselves implicated in Shelley's accusation, since they were the most savage of Keats' critics.² Intimidated by all this, Ollier did not publish Adonais when he received the printed copies from Italy. Needless to say

1. Letters, II, 305. Shelley's letter was printed in the Examiner on 15 July 1821.

2. On 10 October 1821, William Maginn wrote to William Blackwood: "Keats too is flung in your face. I wonder how you escape being charged with the murder of Jack Polidori. With respect to Johnny K. it may be said flatly at once, that whatever his powers might have been, they were swallowed up by affectations and aspiring to be Leigh Hunt the second - the base minion of Cockaigne."

For this and two more of Maginn's letters to the same effect, see Mrs. A.K. Cooke, "William Maginn on John Keats," Notes and Queries, NS, CCI (1956), 119.

Maginn was not referring to Shelley's preface to Adonais, which had not yet been published, but to Lady Morgan's "Letter to the Reviewers of 'Italy'," which was published and circulated with the October number of The New Monthly Magazine. (This "Letter" is prefixed to NMM, II, 1821, Original Papers). Lady Morgan's criticism was directed against "a host of professional writers," who "under the licence conceded to their anonymous and political warfare, pique, envy, or invidiousness, are permitted to scatter their random shots, in personal slander or calumnious misrepresentation" (p. 25). Lady Morgan only mentioned Keats and John Scott as two of the victims of those writers, without explicitly charging Blackwood's with the murder of both, or either.

William Blackwood did not receive a presentation copy of Adonais.¹ This omission could be considered the first serious mistake that Ollier made in his connection with both William Blackwood and Shelley. Had he sent a copy to the Edinburgh publisher, the review of Adonais in Blackwood's might have been less cruel. But this is mere speculation.

Whatever the result might have been, George Croly did not wait to be presented with a copy of Shelley's poem. As a friend of William Jerdan, and an occasional contributor to the Literary Gazette, Croly shared with its reviewers the low opinion of Shelley, which they had always expressed, and more vigorously than ever in May, and again in December 1821.² In December Croly had one further cause for harbouring a grudge against Shelley. In his

-
1. Adonais was printed in Pisa early in July 1821 and shipped to England later in the same month. (Letters, II, 310 and 312). In the meantime John and Maria Gisborne who arrived in England early in September 1821 carried a number of copies for Shelley's friends (Letters, II, 312, 330, 345, and 348 n.) On 11 October 1821, Shelley wrote to Ollier, "How is Adonais liked? I should be glad to see what the reviews may say - having attacked them" (Ibid., p. 357). Shelley made the same request to John Gisborne on 22 October and again to Ollier on 11 November. The parcel that contained the copies of Adonais must have reached London towards the end of October at the latest.
 2. Adonais received an extremely hostile review in the Literary Gazette of 8 December 1821 (see White, The Unextinguished Hearth, pp. 287-89.) On 11 December, Croly wrote to William Blackwood: "Shelley's poem is not to be had but in this newspaper. Seven copies quarto have been sent to his friends. I perfectly believe him to be a heartless & hopeless scoundrel." (see A.L. Strout, "George Croly and Blackwood's Magazine," TLS, 6 October 1950, p. 636.)

preface to Adonais, Shelley mentioned Croly's poem Paris in 1815 as one of the many examples of the indifferent poetry which the cruel critics of Keats praised and patronised.¹ It is not surprising therefore that Croly seized the opportunity which The Literary Chronicle and Weekly Review of 1 December 1821, offered him by quoting Shelley's poem almost in full, and wrote his atrocious review, in which he was not content to lash out at both Shelley and the dead poet, but also included two cruel parodies of Adonais.²

Croly's viciousness in attacking a dead man, let alone a great poet such as Keats, exceeds anything that appeared in Blackwood's against its worst enemies (the only other article that descends to its level in the magazine is perhaps the first in the series on the "Cockney School of Poetry," October 1817. But then Hunt was alive and able to reply effectively to the slanders against him in Blackwood's). Defending the Quarterly against Shelley's

-
1. Although Croly apparently did not see a copy of Adonais, the passage of Shelley's preface in which his poem was mentioned, was quoted by the Literary Chronicle in its review of Adonais. See White, The Unextinguished Hearth, p. 291.
 2. For the authorship of this review, and of the parodies, which are often ascribed to William Maginn, see Strout, "George Croly and Blackwood's Magazine," and also his "Knights of the Burning Epistle" in Studia Neophilologica, XXVI (1953/54), 77-89 and Bibliography, p. 90, and White, The Unextinguished Hearth, p.290.

It is possible that Shelley knew about Croly's article. On April 10th 1822, he wrote to John Gisborne: "I know what to think of Adonais, but what to think of those who confound it with the many bad poems of the day, I know not - " (Letters, II, 406). Croly was the only contemporary reviewer of Adonais that did exactly what Shelley found so painfully puzzling.

accusation, Croly wrote:

"We are not now to defend a publication so well able to defend itself. But the fact is, that the Quarterly finding before it a work at once silly and presumptuous, full of the servile slang that Cockaigne dictates to its servitors, and the vulgar indecorums which that Grub Street Empire rejoiceth to applaud, told the truth of the volume, and recommended a change of manners and of masters to the scribbler. Keats wrote on; but he wrote indecently, probably in the indulgence of his social propensities."¹

Having thus slandered the dead poet, Croly turned to Shelley's poem.

He saw in it the revival of the Della Cruscan style of poetry.

Shelley was capable, Croly claimed, of writing "two sentences of pure nonsense out of every three."

"But any man may have the command of every word in the vocabulary, if he will fling them like pebbles from a sack; and even in the most fortuitous flinging, they will sometimes fall in pleasing though useless forms. The art of the modern Della Cruscan is thus to eject every epithet that he can conglomerate in his piracy through the Lexicon, and throw them out to settle as they will. He follows his own rhymes, and shapes his subject to the close of his measure. He is a glutton of all names of colours, and flowers, and smells, and tastes, and crowds his verse with scarlet, and blue, and yellow, and green; extracts tears from every thing, and makes moss and mud hold regular conversations with him."²

Croly was, perhaps, the most reactionary and bigoted contributor to Blackwood's. Some of his letters, which have already been quoted earlier in this thesis show how he urged Blackwood to condemn Byron and how he found Lockhart's Adam Blair highly objectionable. In the review of Adonais, he vehemently

1. Blackwood's, X, 697.

2. Ibid.

denounced Shelley's atheism which he would attribute to his "unsettled understanding," had it not been for the preface to Adonais. In Shelley's preface, he argued, "there is none of the exuberance of insanity; there is a great deal of folly, a great deal of bitterness, but nothing of the wildness of his poetic fustian."¹

Croly's review of Adonais was by far the strongest expression of the change in Blackwood's attitude towards Shelley. Ollier could perhaps have prevented any further attacks from that quarter by simply abstaining from mentioning Shelley and his works in his correspondence with William Blackwood. It so happened that at about the same time his connection with Shelley was far from being perfect. Since the disagreement over Laon and Cythna in 1817, Shelley had not been always happy with Ollier's conduct of his business in London. On 15 August 1819, Shelley wrote to Hunt: "If reasons which you think good make you wish me to employ another bookseller, or not employ him - say so and do so. Otherwise I have no wish to change even a lazy bookseller."² When Blackwood's succeeded in 1820 in causing some misunderstanding between Ollier and Hunt, Shelley showed more sympathy for the latter. On 1 May 1820, he wrote to Hunt: "As to Ollier - I am

1. Ibid., p. 699.

2. Letters, II, 110.

afraid his demerits are too heavy - they must have been so before you could have perceived them."¹ The delay in the publication of Adonais and failure of Shelley's other poems to sell as well as he had expected, strained their relation almost to a breaking point. In his letters to his friends in England, Shelley more than once called Ollier "a thief". On 26 January 1822, Shelley wrote to John Gisborne:

"I wish now to have done with Ollier as a publisher, & should feel exceedingly grateful to you if you would undertake to extract me from his clutches. I give you hereby, full authority, to settle my accounts with him, & to take from him all the unsold copies of my works;² which I wish to be transferred to another publisher."

On the other hand, Ollier answered hardly any of Shelley's letters to him during that time. It would probably be unjust to suggest that Ollier allied himself with William Blackwood in retaliation to Shelley's anger with him. But the quarrel with Hunt and the low ebb at which his relation with Shelley stood at that time, probably made him less anxious about the fate of Shelley's work than he might have been, and having practically lost all communication with one side, he was inevitably drawn closer to the other.

1. Ibid., p. 191.

2. Ibid., p. 387.

The double number of Blackwood's which contained Croly's article on Adonais, also included Wilson's second and less favourable review of the Literary Pocket Book. On 3 January 1822, Ollier wrote a long letter to William Blackwood, which deserves to be quoted here at some length, as it throws some light on Ollier's character and opinions which must have had some influence on his relation with Shelley. Even after Croly's violent attack on Shelley, and Wilson's on Hunt, Ollier remained as deferential as ever to William Blackwood and his supporters. About Wilson's review of the Pocket Book for 1822, Ollier wrote to William Blackwood:

"Many thanks to you and to the writer of the article on the Literary Pocket Book for the handsome and friendly manner in which that article distinguished us. The kindness is the greater in proportion to the extent of its going beyond our deserts. In other respects you have given the Pocket Book a blow under which it will struggle for some time; and although we cannot arraign the justice of the review, one could have wished that less stress had been laid upon what are called Hunt's offensive principles and deism,¹ because nothing on earth alarms the "many" more than scepticism with regard to the established religion, which they shun as they would pestilence. This has been the case from the beginning of the world; and the histories of all creeds which have had existence, and which are now dead and scorned, have shown that punishment and Contemporary odium universally await such as dare to be public free-thinkers. Nothing can be more striking than the display of

1. In his review, John Wilson wrote about Hunt "The writer has so little sense of propriety, so little feeling, that he more than once lets out that he is a deist; and seems to hug and pat himself upon the back for being so liberal as to speak flatteringly - of what? - of the Christian Religion, and its Divine Author." (Blackwood's, X, 577).

this in the fine novel of 'Valerius'.¹ It is however decidedly against our wish to have anything of the kind in the Pocket Book, and we shall look carefully to it another year."²

If this is a sincere expression of Ollier's views, it is surprising indeed, that he ever agreed to publish any of Shelley's works, nor it would seem, was Shelley's suspicion about Ollier's indifference to the sale of his works, unjustified. Ollier's anxiety to dissociate himself from Hunt's "deism" seems to imply a greater disapproval of Shelley's more unorthodox views on religion and morality, which must have caused him a great deal of worry over the publication of Shelley's works.

Ollier's letter also contained the first news to reach William Blackwood of the intended collaboration of Byron, Shelley and Hunt in Pisa, which later caused so much abuse to be poured on the names of Shelley, Hunt and The Liberal in Blackwood's.

"Mr. Leigh Hunt, we are told, is gone to Pisa. He and his family are to live with Lord Byron in his Lordship's house and they (Ld. Byron and Hunt) are, with the assistance of Mr. Shelley, to write a journal, to be published here as a neutralizer of the Quarterly Review and, I suppose, "Blackwood." This however is mere rumour. No one knows less of Mr. Leigh Hunt than we do; we never see him."³

-
1. John Gibson Lockhart's novel which Ollier describes later in the same letter as "a work of the most exalted talent."
 2. NLS., MSS., 4007.
 3. NLS., MSS., 4007. The Hunts left London on 15 November 1821, but their departure for Italy was delayed till 13 May 1822. Blackwood's was one of the first magazines to announce to the world the intended publication of The Liberal, in February 1822. (see W.M. Marshall, op.cit., p. 45).

So far Ollier had tried to keep his connection with William Blackwood as friendly as possible without actually getting involved in the literary escapades of his magazine. But in his review of the Literary Pocket Book for 1822 Wilson had written that Charles Ollier ought rather "to review in this magazine than be reviewed." In January 1822, Ollier took up this invitation and wrote to William Blackwood:

"The critic of the Literary Pocket Book is more than usually facetious when he says I am fitter to review in a magazine than be reviewed. I should be happy, however, to send you the product of my leisure hours on almost any terms you please, in as much as such employment would be to me incidental. This is the first offer I ever made to a magazine, or indeed to any other work; though I have received several indirect overtures. But I am ambitious."¹

It was not long before Ollier sent his first contribution to Blackwood's. On 12 February, he wrote to William Blackwood: "Will the enclosed do as a mere beginning? The next should be more full of news."² The "enclosed" was an article entitled "Letter from London," dated February 10th, 1822 and signed John Johnes, which Blackwood inserted in the February number of his magazine. It reports among other things on the intended collaboration between Byron, Shelley and Hunt, in much the same terms as Ollier did in his letter to Blackwood of 3 January, except that in his article in Blackwood's he tried to imitate the flippant, though less abusive, style which the other writers of

1. NLS, MSS. 4007.

2. NLS, MSS. 4009.

Maga so often used in their attacks on the "Cockneys".

"You have perhaps heard of the Journal which is to be written by him at Pisa, and sent over here for publication, in order that the balance of critical power may be restored, which has preponderated lately too much on the Tory side. In this great undertaking he has called to himself two allies, namely, Mr. Bysshe Shelly [sic] and Mr. Leigh Hunt, the latter of whom has abandoned his suburban villa, (Nr. 13, Lisson Grove North,) to brave, with his wife and "Little Johnys", a perilous voyage on the un-cockney ocean. The sphere of this poet's experience will now be nobly enlarged. No one must twist [sic]₁ him any more about "poplar rows" and "back gardens."

In the same article, Ollier applies the term "Holy Alliance" to the intended Pisa coalition. The sarcastic application of such a name to two of his friends, who felt strongly about the tyranny of the 'leagued Oppressors', is perhaps an indication of how wide the gulf had grown between Ollier on one side, and Shelley and Hunt on the other.²

More important, as far as Shelley was concerned, was the notice of Epipsychidion, which the "Letter from London" included. Ollier apparently was now prepared to go to any length in order to please the editor, or editors, of Blackwood's. He adopted the

1. Blackwood's, XI, 237.

2. On 12 February 1821 Shelley wrote to Ollier, "We hear every day the news of a battle between the armies of Austria and Naples. The latter have advanced upon Rome; and the first affair will probably take place in the Ecclesiastical States. You may imagine the expectation of all here." (Letters, II, 263). Enclosed in this same letter was Shelley's "Ode to Naples" which he asked Ollier to publish at "The first opportunity." In the first number of "Noctes Ambrosianae" in March 1822, Lockhart borrowed the term "Holy Alliance" to ridicule the Pisa coalition. (Blackwood's, XI, 363).

same critical attitude of its early reviews of Shelley's poems, which praised Shelley as a great poet, but deplored the obscurity of his poetry and the dangerous nature of its moral message.

"This little pamphlet is a threefold curiosity, on account of the impenetrable mysticism of its greater portion, the delicious beauty of the rest, and the object of the whole, which I take to be an endeavour to set aside the divine prohibition, that a man may not marry his own sister."¹

What Ollier did not take into consideration, however, was that Shelley had already sunk several degrees in Maga's estimation. Further, his half hearted attempt not to commit himself in attributing the poem to any of the members of the Pisa circle (Byron, Shelley and Hunt), provoked "C. North" (probably John Wilson) to add a footnote to Ollier's article, making it clear to Maga's readers that he was not taken in by the correspondent's ludicrous attempt at mystification:

"Our readers will probably suspect, that our correspondent's intention is to attribute the poem in question to Lord Byron; But we venture to say, that there is nobody capable of wasting such poetry on such a theme, except only the unfortunate Mr. Shelly [sic] ... Percy Bysshe Shelly [sic] has now published a long series of poems, the only object of which seems to be the promotion of ATHEISM and INCEST; and we can no longer hesitate to avow our belief, that he is as worthy of co-operating with the King of Cockaigne, as he is unworthy of co-operating with Lord Byron. Shelley is a man of genius but he has no sort of sense of judgement. He is merely 'an inspired idiot.' ... Lord Byron we regard as not only a man of lofty genius, but of great shrewdness and knowledge of the world. What can HE seriously hope for from associating his name with such people as these? CAIN is in some parts a reprehensible performance, but what a gulf between it and Queen Mab, or the Cenci, or this Epipsychidion!"²

1. Blackwood's, XI, 237.

2. Ibid., p. 237 n.

More damaging still to Shelley's name was the implication in Ollier's article that the Epipsychidion was withdrawn from circulation partly because of its immoral subject matter and partly as a result of the speculations about the identity of its author.¹

With the notice of Epipsychidion in his "Letter from London," Ollier did all that he could, perhaps unintentionally, to increase the hostility in Blackwood's towards Shelley, which continued till his death, and for long years afterwards. On 11 March 1822, Ollier humbly wrote to William Blackwood trying to repair some of the damage which his article had done:

"Christopher's note to my article was a very good one, though it always gives me pain to see anything against the noble-minded and honourable Mr. Shelley. I do not agree in his opinions by any means, but I reverence his intentions."

1. Whatever the damage done to Shelley's name by such remarks as these may have been at the time, Ollier's article cannot be ignored as a possible clue to the approximate date of the withdrawal of Epipsychidion. After Shelley's death, Ollier wrote to Mary Shelley on 17 November, 1823:

"As it was the wish of Mr. Shelley that the whole of the "Epipsychidion" should be suppressed, I would not, though it was printed at our expense, suffer the remainder to be disposed of. The whole of it is sent to Mr. Hunt." -

Quoted by Sylva Norman, in Flight of the Skylark, p. 46.

This makes it almost certain that Ollier had had definite instructions from Shelley about the Epipsychidion by the time he contributed his article to Blackwood's Magazine, and the reference to the withdrawal of Shelley's poem was not merely "irresponsible literary gossip". Shelley must have decided on the withdrawal of the poem from circulation between 12 January 1822, when he wrote to John Gisborne asking him to obtain a copy of the poem from Ollier, and 10 February, the date of Ollier's article in Blackwood's. This partly accounts for the fact that Shelley did not make any further inquiries about the poem, or mention it at all in his letters, till he wrote to John Gisborne on 18 June, 1822, that he could not look at it. (Letters, II, 434).

His heart and his actions go together, no matter what may be his own sacrifices or sufferings. The greater part of his income during his stay at Marlow was given to the needy in that wretched neighbourhood."¹

Similarly in his second and last article, which he contributed to Blackwood's under the title "London Chit-Chat" (March 1822), Ollier made a somewhat feeble and incidental protest against the unjust treatment of Shelley in the Quarterly Review. However, this was too late, and could not restore Maga's initial favourable attitude towards Shelley. Thenceforward Shelley's name was more often abused than praised in Blackwood's Magazine.

1. NLS, MSS. 4009.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

J.F. Ferrier's Memoranda of John Wilson's contributions to
Blackwood's (NLS, MSS. 4717)

[An asterisk (*) against the title indicates that the article has been conclusively proved to be by Wilson. The authorship of the articles which have been proved to be by other writers is given in square parenthesis.]

		<u>Vol.</u>	<u>P.</u>
Hospital Scenes in Portugal	[Lockhart]	III	87-90
*4th Canto of Childe Harold		"	216-218
The Lake School of Poetry No. 1 (Compares W., S. and B. as poets)		"	367-381
*Charles Lamb		"	599-610
*The Influence of the Love of Fame etc		"	701-704
The Lake School of Poetry No 2	[Howison]	IV	255-266
Shelley's Revolt of Islam	[Lockhart]	"	275-482
*Burns and the Ettrick Shepherd		"	521-529
*Crabbe's Tales of the Hall		V	469-482
The Twelfth Night of August	[Lockhart, Wilson and others]	["	597ff.]
The Tent	[Lockhart, Wilson and others]	["	628ff]
The Lake School of Poetry No. 3		VI	3-12
Bowles' Missionary		"	12-18
Shelley's Alastor		"	146-154
Lloyd's Horae Nugae		"	154-162

	<u>Vol.</u>	<u>P.</u>
*The Radical's Saturday Night	VI	257-262
There is Death in the Pot	"	522-55
Shelley's Prometheus	VII	679-687
		[Lockhart]
*An Hour's Tete à Tete	VIII	80-100
Letter to Lord Byron	IX	421-426
*Hogg's Memoirs	X	43-52
Anastasius ?	"	200-220
Personalities of the Whigs	"	217-222
		[John Galt]
Rumour of Change	"	743-752
*The Lakes of England	XII	84-90
*Wordsworth's Sonnets and Memorials	"	175-191
The Sorrows of the Stot	"	333-345
*Edinburgh Nuisances	XIII	367-368
Letter from a Contributor in the Sulks	XIV	181-184
Hayley's Memoirs	"	303-308
		[Lockhart]

APPENDIX II

William Howison's contributions to Blackwood's

Because Howison has never been the subject of any study, some of his contributions to Blackwood's have been wrongly assigned to other writers. We have already seen how J.F. Ferrier reprinted in his edition of Wilson's Works a part of Howison's Essay on "The Habits of Thought inculcated by Wordsworth." The following list of Howison's articles is not exhaustive, but comprises only the pieces that are known to be written by him. It is largely based on Strout's Bibliography, with some additions by Brian M. Murray, and the present writer. The articles under which no evidence of Howison's authorship is given have been convincingly assigned to him by Strout:

Time's Magic Lantern No. I, Machiavel's Death-bed, March 1818,
II, 689.

Time's Magic Lantern No. II, Galileo in the Inquisition,
April 1818, III, 3.

Time's Magic Lantern No. III, Rembrandt's Workshop, April 1818,
III, 4.

Fragment of an Essay on Taste, April 1818, III, 21.

[Strout's tentative attribution seems to be confirmed by
Howison's style]

Dialogues on National Religion, Dialogue I, April 1818, III, 90.

[Like the writer of these Dialogues Howison was "an admirer of David Hume." His interest in Hume's attitude to Christianity (see Blackwood's, III, 512); the noticeable similarity between the remarks on materialism in Dialogue II

(Blackwood's, III, 172) and in the Essay on the Sentiments of Attraction, Adaptation and Variety (pp. 7-8); and the style of the dialogues, all seem to suggest Howison's authorship]

Time's Magic Lantern No. IV, Bunyanus Obsessus, May 1818, III, 137.

(Strout's tentative attribution is confirmed by one of the notices "The Correspondents" on the back of the title-page of the April No:

"Times Magic Lantern No. IV, Lord Bacon and Shakespeare is in our next. We need use only but a few words to this valued correspondent."

The allusion to Howison's pseudonym M. de Peu-de-Mots is obvious. "Lord Bacon and Shakespeare" appeared in July 1818 as Time's Magic Lantern No. V.]

The Craniologist Review I, Napoleon's Head, May 1818, III, 145.

[Although the German signature Ulrich Sternstare suggests Lockhart's authorship to Gilbert Macbeth,¹ there is no evidence that Lockhart ever used that pseudonym. On the other hand, William Blackwood credited Howison with two pieces under that signature.²]

Dialogues on Natural and Revealed Religion, Dialogue II, May 1818, III, 170.

[See under Dialogue I above.]

Time's Magic Lantern No. V, Lord Bacon and Shakespeare, and No. VI, Dr. Johnson's Nightwalk, June 1818, 270.

[See under No. IV above.]

The Craniologist Review No. II, June 1818, III, 278.

[See under I above. This piece is definitely Howison's. Cf. pp. 301-302 on Voltaire and Howison's article on "The Candide of Voltaire" (Blackwood's, IV, 55).]

Jeffrey and Hazlitt, June 1818, III, 303.

1. John Gibson Lockhart, p. 150.

2. Strout, Library, pp. 192 and 193.

[The points of comparison between Jeffrey and Hazlitt (i.e. power of observation, imagination and wit), the structure of the piece, and its style closely resemble Howison's article on "Samuel Johnson and David Hume" (see below). Cf. also Howison's comment on Johnson's Criticism (Blackwood's III, 512) and the remarks on Lives of the English Poets(III, 303).]

Time's Magic Lantern No. VII, Adam Smith and the Highland Laird, July 1818, III, 419.

Samuel Johnson and David Hume, August 1818, III, 511.

On the Use of the Preternatural in Works of Fiction, September 1818, III, 648.

[Strout, Bibliography, p. 45, assigns this piece to Wilson, but the Library list p. 189 gives it to Howison. Stylistically it is Howison's.]

On the Candide of Voltaire, November 1818, IV, 155.

Comparisons of Sounds and Colours, November 1818, IV, 178.

Essays on the Lake School of Poetry No. II, December 1818, IV, 257.

[See Introduction to Part I of this thesis]

On the National Character of the Scots, December 1818, IV, 328.

Thoughts on Novel Writing, January 1819, IV, 394.

Dr. Sternstare's Letters No. II, January 1819, IV, 430.

The Capacities of Human Nature, March 1819, IV, 649.

Scottish Proverbs of Alan Ramsay, September 1819, V, 669.

Musical Queries, October 1819, VI, 69.

On the Nature of the Imitative Principle and some other Faculties, pointed out by Gall and Spurzheim, by Peter Morris, December 1819, VI, 309.

The title of this piece has led a number of the students of the magazine to assign it to Lockhart.¹ Yet, it is almost

1. See for instance M. Clive Hildyard, Lockhart's Literary Criticism, p. 154. Strout, Bibliography, p. 62.

certainly by Howison. It gives the impression as though it were the first draft of his Essay on the Sentiments of Attraction, Adaptation and Variety. The definition and classification of different faculties in both are almost identical. The "associative principle" in the article (VI, 309) reappears in the Essay as the "sentiment of attraction" (pp. 8-9). Howison uses the phrase "desire for variety" in the Blackwood's article and the Essay to describe what he calls in the former "the discursative principle" (IV, 311) and the "sentiment of variety" in the Essay (p.10). Cf. also the definition of imagination (Blackwood's, VI, 312 and Essay p. 17), of wit (Blackwood's, VI, 312 and Essay p.17).

Moreover, in an undated letter Howison wrote to William Blackwood that he was not able to write a good tale and that he would send instead "a letter or a Disquisition of some sort which will occupy four pages or so." (NLS, MSS. 4719) This article occupies five pages.

Upon the Relation of Music to Drama, January 1820, VI, 430.

Kenilworth (A Romance), January 1821, VIII, 435.

The Earthquake (A Tale), January 1821, VIII, 450.

[Apart from the evidence of Howison's style and ideas in these two reviews, Howison was paid £10 in May 1821, which means that he contributed 16 pages of Blackwood's, Strout tentatively assigns to Howison the review of Galt's Earthquake which is only 8 pages long.]

An Essay on the Sentiments of Attraction, Adaptation and Variety,
July 1821, IX, 393.

[It seems certain that Howison reviewed his own Essay.]

Prospective Letter Concerning Poetry, September 1821, X, 135.

[Attributed to Howison by Brian M. Murray in "The Authorship of some Articles Unidentified or Disputed in Blackwood's Magazine," Studies in Scottish Literature, IV (1966-67), p. 146.]

Mr. Superflint's Visit to the Minister of Glenlonely Trout,
October 1821, X, 286.

A Letter Concerning Hayden's Paintings, December 1821, X, 286.

[Attributed to Howison by Brian M. Murray, p. 146.]

An Essay on Arrangement of Categories, March 1822, XI, 30.

A Key to the Mythology of the Ancient, March 1822, XI, 313.

Nodier Promenade [in part], March 1822, XI, 321.

Letter on Different Stages of Taste, May 1822, XI, 585.

[Strout's tentative attribution seems to be confirmed by Howison's style.]

The Fortunes of Nigel, June 1822, XI, 734.

APPENDIX III

Lockhart's 'Life' of Defoe

Curiously enough, very nearly all the facts concerning Lockhart's biographical sketch of Defoe have been easily available in print for the last thirty years or so. In his history of The Publishing Firm of Cadell & Davies, Theodore Besterman prints the correspondence between the two London publishers and William Blackwood which contains all that we need to know about Lockhart's "Defoe."¹ But as Theodore Besterman says, "Lockhart does not seem ever to have produced his life of Defoe,"² the purpose of this appendix is to identify the edition of Robinson Crusoe for which Lockhart wrote his biographical sketch of Defoe and to give some additional evidence of his authorship.

Soon after Cadell and Davies and William Blackwood had joined forces in 1819, one of their several publishing projects was to bring out a new edition of Defoe's works "with an account of the Author's Life and Writings by Mr. Lockhart."³ The publishers however, disagreed on whether such a "Preface" would introduce Defoe's collected works or only a new edition of Robinson Crusoe.

1. See Theodore Besterman, The Publishing Firm of Cadell & Davies: Select Correspondence and Accounts, 1793-1836, 1938, pp. 56-58.

2. Ibid., p. 56.

3. Ibid., p. 56.

While Cadell and Davies were doubtful about the wisdom of publishing "heavy sets of books" that would not sell, Blackwood, apparently with Lockhart behind him, was all in favour of the collected edition. Eventually a letter from William Davies to William Blackwood seems to have persuaded the Northern publisher of the enormous financial risks which his more ambitious project involved. On 8 November 1819, William Davies wrote to William Blackwood:

"When I wrote to you last, a very few days ago,¹ I gave you some idea of what I was most anxious for you to send me for our new Edition of Robinson Crusoe, which, indeed, I am still impatient to receive—as our operations are quite at a stand [still] for want of it—and I also stated, what Mr. Cadell and I have thought of recommending to your attention, in the way of caution, before you and we too far commit ourselves, respecting the collected Edition of De Foe's works. Such [a] collected Edition, under the Editorial care of Mr Lockhart, would, doubtless, be well worthy our best attention—and, perhaps, it would be my best plan to recommend that you make out an Estimate, not only of the number of volumes, but also of the Expenses, of 1000 Copies of such an Edition, exclusive of the Robinson Crusoe of which last mentioned Work we would, at the same time, be making out a similar Estimate.

Having said thus much, which includes every thing that we at present think of, we will now wait very patiently till we receive the very interesting letter, that I am confidently expecting from you."²

1. William Davies probably refers to his letter to William Blackwood of 30 October 1819 (NLS, MSS. 4004) in which he requests Blackwood "to send us the copy from which you advise our Reading the Proofs of the New Edition." In the same letter William Davies adds,

"Respecting the Preface, I merely wish to say that, so far from wishing to point out the extent of that portion of the Work, I should be much better satisfied to leave it, in all respects, to the decision of the truly respectable Friend from whose Pen you have authorized us to expect it."

—NLS, MSS. 4004.

2. NLS, MSS. 4004. This letter is signed "W. Davies," but it is written in his son's, William E. Davies, handwriting. Because of his declining health, the senior Davies could only dictate his letters. He died in May 1820.

William Davies's calculating logic seems to have prevailed and Blackwood dropped his ambitious scheme in favour of a new edition of Robinson Crusoe. For, on 12 January 1820 he wrote to Cadell and Davies:

"I am sorry I cannot yet send you the Biographical Preface for Crusoe. Mr. L. intended to have done it during this Xmas recess, but was obliged to go out of town. He promises it however very shortly, and I hope to be¹ able to say in my next when you may positively expect it."

On 29 February, however, William Davies was still waiting for the "Preface," and on receiving the news of Lockhart's engagement to Sophia Scott, he feared lest the approaching events in Lockhart's private life should cause further delay in the publication of the new edition of Robinson Crusoe. He wrote to William Blackwood:

"As we are now at the last Day of Feby we are particularly anxious about the Preface to Robinson Crusoe and therefore begin our present letter with a fresh hint upon that subject. It certainly gives us pleasure to find that Mr. Lockhart is about to unite himself so closely with your friend Mr Scott's family, but these things are too apt to interfere with literary Engagements, and we, on that account, must beg you to keep his² attention to that business as much alive as you well can."

Immediately on receiving this letter, Blackwood must have dispatched Lockhart's "Preface." For on 7 March 1820 William E. Davies, son of William Davies, wrote to William Blackwood:

"My father this morning received your Parcel containing the Preface to Robinson Crusoe &c, with your letter expressing a wish that he would write a complimentary note to the Author, enclosing a sum by way of Remuneration; and I think

-
1. Theodore Besterman, The Publishing Firm of Cadell & Davies, 1938, p. 58.
 2. NLS, MSS. 4005.

he would have been better satisfied, had you given him your opinion as to what would be considered by the Author a sufficient compliment for it."¹

Although in the same letter William E. Davies promised to send a "Draft" with "the Proofs of the Preface," Lockhart was not paid so promptly. Sometime in June 1820 he wrote to William Blackwood, "I wish you to send me the money due from Cadell & Davies for Robinson Crusoe."²

In 1820 an anonymous edition of Robinson Crusoe with a biographical preface some sixty-five pages long,³ was published by Cadell and Davies, and William Blackwood. It was advertised in Blackwood's Magazine for July 1820, under the "Monthly List of New Publications":

"The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, with a Biographical and Critical Preface, written expressly for this edition; illustrated with twenty-two engravings, by Mr. C. Heath, from a series of designs by T. Stothard, Esq. R.A. 2 vols 8vo."⁴

The "Biographical and Critical Preface, written expressly for this edition" of Robinson Crusoe must be Lockhart's first and hitherto unknown biography.

-
1. NLS, MSS. 4005.
 2. NLS, MSS. 4005.
 3. It is not clear from the Blackwood-Davies correspondence whether Lockhart also compiled "A List of De Foe's Writings, as far as they have been ascertained,"—Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, 1820, I, lxvii-lxxxii.
 4. Blackwood's Magazine, VII, 450. Cf. the title-page of the first volume: The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe. Embellished with Engravings from Designs by Thomas Stothard Esq. R.A. In Two Volumes, Vol. I. London: Printed for T. Cadell and W. Davies, Strand; and W. Blackwood, Edinburgh. 1820. In his letter of 30 October 1819, William Davies tells Blackwood, "The Plates...are now completely finished by Mr. Heath." NLS, MSS. 4004.

APPENDIX IV

Further evidence of Lockhart's authorship of John Bull's Letter to Lord Byron.

In his edition of John Bull's Letter, Alan Lang Strout gives enough evidence to prove beyond any doubt that Lockhart was the author of that open letter to Lord Byron.¹ The following letter from Lockhart to William Blackwood confirms Strout's attribution, if indeed such a confirmation be needed, and also throws new light on Lockhart's pamphlet.

Germiston, May 2d[1821]

My dear Sir

I am much obliged by your attention in writing and sending me the letters I have received at Inverness & Aberdeen. I was so much occupied with attending the court by day, and assisting Lord Hermand to drink his claret at night that I had no time to write a single scrap for anybody all the time I was away - & besides I had nothing to say worth yr. hearing. I spent a pleasant & I hope not altogether useless fortnight - got acquainted with all the Northern² gentry - & saw a vast deal of fine country I had never seen before.² But I had rather too much of it & was very glad when I got home to the doctor's quiet roof-tree.³

I was very glad inter alia to see your seal and superscription & I have run over all yr. enclosures. I wish the pamphlet had been as good of its kind as the magazine, but I entirely disagree w. you as to thinking it mendable. I suggest however to make the Title

-
1. Strout, John Bull's Letter, pp. 49-56.
 2. Lockhart toured the Highlands in April 1821. See Marion Lochhead, John Gibson Lockhart (1954), p. 86.
 3. Dr. John Lockhart, Lockhart's father, in whose house the Lockharts were staying at that time. See Ibid., p. 87 and Letters of Sir Walter Scott, IV, 341.

Letter
to
Lord Strutt¹
from
John Bull

and say on the back of the title page "the following letter is the first of a series to be continued occasionally. The second letter is addressed to Mr. Thomas Campbell - the third to his Majesty the King—& the fourth is also to Lord Strutt."²

As for the rest have the pamphlet pubd. immediately & let it take its chance—it is bad enough but not so bad as Wilson says. He always abuses Hogg and me as you well know. I shall walk into Glasgow today & write you again in a day or two. In the meantime if you have any views I shall be anxious to have them. I am glad to hear Valerius³ gets on on account of all concerned. It depends entirely on its fate whether I shall really make another & more serious attempt in the same line this year. Send me any critiques that may appear on it & believe me always yours faithfully,

JGL.

PS. I saw at Aberdeen a Baillie Brown who asked particularly about you—apparently a very decent worthy man. I shall bring a Maga article w me.⁴

It is evident from this letter that it was written shortly before the publication of John Bull's Letter to Lord Byron, and that the pamphlet was published in May 1821. It is also interesting to see that Lockhart was rather disappointed with his pamphlet, which a century or so later Samuel C. Chew regarded as "by far the most

-
1. The allusion to Lord Byron as Lord Strutt appeared in the quotation from Arbuthnot's History of John Bull, on the title-page of the published pamphlet.
 2. Cf. the announcement on the back of the title-page of the pamphlet (Strout, John Bull's Letter, opposite p. 637).
 3. Lockhart's novel Valerius was published in April 1821.
 4. NLS, MSS. 4004.

interesting of all contemporary bits of Byroniana."¹ It was probably Maginn who reviewed John Bull's Letter in Blackwood's for July 1821. Yet it is also clear from Lockhart's letter to William Blackwood that Wilson was equally hostile in his attitude to the pamphlet, and that he may well have been its reviewer in Blackwood's. Whether it was Maginn or Wilson who wrote that review, Lockhart was not responsible for it and it does not seem probable that there was any attempt on the part of the reviewer to mystify the public or to build up a smoke screen to protect Lockhart.

Another interesting fact comes to light from Lockhart's letter. Apparently he did ^{not} entirely sever his connection with Blackwood's during 1821 and after the duel between John Scott and Lockhart's friend Jonathan Christie, in which Scott was fatally wounded in February of that year. For in his letter to William Blackwood Lockhart promises "a Maga article" for the number for May 1821. This article has not been identified.² But as will be seen in the next appendix, he wrote the review of Cantos III-V of Don Juan in August 1821.

1. Byron in England, p. 39.

2. Strout, Bibliography, p. 79, assigns to Lockhart the review of Henry Schultze, and other Poems, although it is not written in Lockhart's style.

APPENDIX V

Lockhart's authorship of "Harry Franklin's" Letter on
Cantos III-V of Don Juan.

Lockhart's letter to William Blackwood (quoted in Chapter VIII above) is not dated but from internal evidence it is possible to deduce its approximate date. It reads:

"I send the only one of Croker's Squibs that I had seen before I believe tis the best of them out of all sight. I shall write the Dr. [Maginn] one of these days.

My dear Sir,

I received Don Juan by Mr. Henderson's good offices immediately after I had written & sealed the letter he franked to you. This was on Sunday. I sat up wt H. that night late & spent the next morning on Don Juan—but having covered some six or seven pages desisted. For I was obliged to go to Jedburgh the morning after & knew it wd be too late to finish the concern when I came back today. I think the poem the most careless thing I ever read—even of his, but full of poetry & fire—a very fine poem, surely & one which may well enough "pass into families."¹ If you have nothing of him now I shall do the Don for next month.

I am greatly obliged to Maginn and yourself. He says the packet contained 3—it still contains I hope 2 bottles of usquebaugh. Keep one of them for Mrs. Blackwood's Beaufet and send the other by Ballantyne as you say.

Yours truly

JGL.

Chiefswood, Thursday.²

1. Cf. Here I might enter on a chaste description.
Having withstood temptation in my youth,
But hear that several people take exception
At the first two books having too much truth:
Therefore I'll make Don Juan leave the ship soon,
Because the publisher declares, in sooth,
Through needles' eyes it easier for the camel is
To pass, than these two cantos into families.—
Don Juan, IV, xcvi.

2. NLS, MSS. 4005.

The reference to William Maginn in this letter proves that it was written after July 1821. Before his visit to Edinburgh in the summer of that year, Maginn was known to William Blackwood and his group only by the initials R.T.S. with which he signed all his letters to Edinburgh publisher previous to that visit.¹ Secondly on 3 August 1821, Maginn wrote to William Blackwood, from Cork, certainly referring to the bottles of usquebaugh, "I sent a couple of packets to Lockhart through you. I suppose he has received them by this." Thirdly, the letter which Lockhart says that he wrote to Blackwood "on Sunday" (12 August 1821) has also been preserved.

My dear Sir,

I am much obliged by your sending me the slips of Mr. Galts very amusing account of the coronation—which how ever I hope will appear along w. something from the same pen more expressive of the real impression produced on those worth caring about. I hope I shall be able to send you something or other for the same No. but really ever since I came here, I have been both low & stupid & I can promise nothing either to you or to myself. I am happy in having had the opportunity of making acquaintance wt Mr. Henderson who is a very manly fellow & full of good stuff. Pray give my compts. to Mrs Galt. I am very sorry for not being in Edinr, but should have great pleasure in seeing him shd. he return southward via the Tweed.

[Yours J GL. signature cut out]

Chiefswood, Sunday²

John Galt sent his account of the "Coronation Dinner at Edinburgh" to Blackwood on 30 July 1821, and it was inserted in the same

1. See the interesting account given by D.M. Moir of Maginn's visit to Edinburgh in 1821, in Dublin University Magazine, XXIII (1844), 82-83.

2. NLS, MSS. 4007.

number of the magazine which contained the review of the new cantos of Don Juan.¹

Since Cantos III-V of Don Juan were published on 8 August 1821, Lockhart's letter must refer to them. Moreover, the fact that Lockhart says his review of these cantos would be too late for the magazine is sufficient by itself to date Lockhart's letter accurately. For William Blackwood usually insisted that all contributions to his magazine should reach him before the 16th of every month. On this occasion, however, there was a double number of Blackwood's, and it was published exceptionally late that month (on 31 August 1821).²

The evidence of Lockhart's authorship of Harry Franklin's review of Cantos III-V of Don Juan consists mainly of the close similarity between Lockhart's letter to William Blackwood and the review which has already been pointed out in Chapter VII of this thesis. But there is also the great familiarity with which Harry Franklin throughout treats Christopher North and in which William Blackwood did not usually permit his more casual supporters to indulge. Secondly Harry Franklin not only knows Edinburgh well but seems familiar with the name of William Blackwood's porter. Thirdly it seems unlikely that William Blackwood would have allowed Harry Franklin's defence of Byron to appear in his magazine,

-
1. Galt's letter of 30 July 1821 is also in the Blackwood Papers, but an extract from it is given in Strout, Bibliography, p. 83.
 2. See advertisement on the back of the title-page of the number for August 1821, Part II.

had it come from a total stranger or even from a casual supporter. We have already seen how only two years before Blackwood had refused to sell the first two cantos of Don Juan at his shop in Edinburgh, and how Lockhart had strongly condemned it in Blackwood's.

APPENDIX VI

William Maginn and Byron's Memoirs and Letters

Did John Murray ever ask Maginn to edit his collection of Byron's papers? According to the four major biographers of Maginn he did. Thus E.V. Kenealy claims, "From Murray 'the Anax of book-sellers', as Lord Byron called him, he received overtures for the composition of a life of that poet who had just died....the papers and letters of his lordship were accordingly placed in the doctor's hands, and remained in his possession for some time, but no steps were taken in the biography, and it was finally entrusted to Mr. Moore."¹ R. Shelton Mackenzie makes ever more absurd claims:

"At that time, had he been so minded, Maginn (Odoherly) could have put up a popular life of Byron as well as most men in England. Immediately on the account of Byron's death being reviewed in London John Murray proposed that Maginn should bring out Memoirs Journals and Letters of Lord Byron and with this intent, placed in his hands every line that he (Murray) possessed of Byron's handwritings."

Shelton Mackenzie adds that it was only as a result of the burning of the memoirs that "Murray and Maginn agreed it would not answer to bring out the work then."² More recently both Malcolm Elwin and Miriam Thrall repeated Kenealy's assertion that Maginn advised Murray to publish the whole collection entire "prefaced only by the

1. E.V. Kenealy, "William Maginn," Dublin University Magazine, XXIII (1844), 85.

2. Noctes Ambrosianae, ed. R. Shelton Mackenzie (1863) I, 436n. See also V, viii.

necessary introduction and notes."¹ All Maginn's biographers found the evidence for their assertions in Odoherly's claim in "Noctes Ambrosianae No. XV" that he had read the memoirs twice over and in the description which he also gives of them.² The weakness of such evidence has been perfectly illustrated by R.M. Wardle and Alan Lang Strout, who have proved that it was not Maginn at all but Lockhart who wrote that number of the "Noctes".³ Yet the question whether or not Maginn was ever chosen by Murray to be Byron's biographer has yet to be answered.

As regards his knowledge of Byron's memoirs, we have Maginn's own confession that he never read them. He told E.V. Kenealy, "although I have never read the autobiography of which so much has said, so much of it has been repeated to me that I know almost the entire of its contents. It contained scarcely anything more than what we already know. The whole object seemed to be to puff himself and run down everybody else. Moore's disinterestedness in burning the manuscript has been talked of absurdly. There has never been such humbug. Murray lost two thousand pounds by it."⁴ This abuse of Moore may be attributed to Maginn's strong hostility towards his compatriot, but it is more likely that he was simply

1. Malcolm Elwin, Victorian Wallflowers, p. 98. See also Miriam Thrall, Rebellious Fraser's, pp. 180-81.

2. See Blackwood's XV, 709-10 and 712-13.

3. See R.M. Wardle, "The Authorship of Noctes Ambrosianae," MP, XLII (1944), 113-114, and Alan Lang Strout, "The Authorship of the First Twenty Three Numbers of Noctes Ambrosianae," The Library, XII (1957), p. 115.

4. E.V. Kenealy, "William Maginn," p. 86.

ignorant both of the contents of the memoirs and the circumstances of their destruction. We now know that Moore was not at all responsible for the burning of the memoirs, and that he paid back to Murray the two thousand pounds which he had received from him during Byron's life-time.¹

Also in connection with Byron's memoirs Maginn was suspected to be responsible for the publication in John Bull Magazine in July 1824, of what was claimed to be "a chapter" of the destroyed memoirs. This salacious account of Byron's wedding night has often been attributed to Theodore Hook,² but in one of Maginn's letters to William Blackwood we find that Hook himself believed that Maginn was responsible for the supposed extract from Byron's memoirs. On 16 July 1824, Maginn wrote to Blackwood:

"Of John Bull Magazine I know little or nothing. Hook is sure it is mine by the style. The passage of Lord B. which it contained is asserted by Murray and Croker to be authentic."³

Theodore Hook was not alone in suspecting Maginn's connection with John Bull Magazine. On 16 July 1824 Lockhart wrote to William Blackwood:

"I don't care what anybody may say: My opinion is fixed that Maginn is the new Bull Magazine. The Prospectus, the article on De Quincey, the rhyming review contain proofs in every line to my eye & I think it must be the same for yours.

-
1. The story of the burning of the memoirs and the reimbursing of Murray for its loss is given in great detail in D. Langley Moore, The Late Lord Byron (1961), p. 12 ff. and p. 263 ff.
 2. See, for instance, S.C. Chew, Byron in England, p. 379 and D. Langley Moore, The Late Lord Byron, p. 298.
 3. NLS, MSS. 4012.

I am truly sorry if he has had the vice to take any part in the publication of Byron's atrocity. It is enough to kill Lady B. and the allusions to Mr. De Quincey are just in the same unmanly taste. It is a very clever thing and will, if it live at all, live in immense notoriety. I have no doubt 'tis another invention of Croker's (The French song is his?) and that the Dr. is to be for this what Theodore is for the other Medardus. If so you are nearly done w. M...I gave the John Bull Magazine to Sir W.S. who is much hurt with the publication of the fragment. He evidently thinks that Hook is the culprit—of course I said nothing. He is very angry too about De Quincey. Let me have the 2^d No quam primum. I think your wisdom is to be in no hurry about noticing it."¹

Apparently Lockhart then changed his mind about noticing the new John Bull. But in the same month he contributed to Blackwood's an indignant letter, in verse, from "Timothy Tickler" to the editor of John Bull Magazine, in which he clearly pointed an accusing finger at Maginn for publishing "My Wedding Night."

"I perceive you have learning—I trace in your style
The precision and polish of Attica's file—
O shame! that your weapons, so terse and so trim,
Should be poison'd with venom, not pointed with whim.

Byron's CHAPTER proclaims him the Worst of the Bad—
Unless Charity whisper, most wild of the mad.
I confess the alternative vexes me sadly;
And I envy no eyes can contemplate it gladly.

That for tickling the vein of some vile heartless flirt
The Genius of Harold could stoop to such dirt—
That a POET like this could be less than a MAN,
I loathe the conviction:—go hug it who can!

But that you, sir,—a wit, and a scholar like you,
Should not blush to produce what he blush'd not to do—

1. Ibid. For evidence of Maginn's authorship of the attack on De Quincey and for further evidence of his connection with John Bull Magazine, see Kenneth Forward "Libellous Attack on De Quincey," PMLS, LII (1937), 244-61.

Take your compliment, youngster—this doubles (almost)
The sorrow that rose when his Honour was lost."¹

At about the same time Lockhart wrote to John Wilson:

"Maginn, you have heard, I suppose, is universally considered as the sole man of the John Bull Magazine; a most infamous concern, and in general displaying a marvellous lack of everything but the supremest impudence. I foresee sore rubs between Ebony and him."²

Although on his first reading of the supposed chapter Lockhart believed it to be authentic, he gradually came to the conclusion that it was of Maginn's fabrication. In an undated letter, probably written early in September 1824, he told William Blackwood:

"It is clear from the way the Dr. writes that all we suspected about John Bull is true—but I now doubt whether the Chapter was anything more than his clever doing up from what he had heard through Croker & others."³

On 8 October Lockhart again wrote to William Blackwood about Maginn's connection with that notorious publication:

"As for the Bull Mag. does he think you, seriously go on with the task? To say the truth there is so very little talent in the affair that I begin to hope he has not very much to do with. The humbug series is evidently all his and bad, it is. There is some low maginnish tone about them."⁴

-
1. Blackwood's, XVI, 115. Alan Lang Strout (Bibliography, p. 122) tentatively attributes this verse letter to Lockhart. The allusion to John Bull Magazine and John Bull, in the first stanza, as "Medardus" and "Doppelganger", (taken from Hoffman's Devil's Elixir) and to both as "Merdardus" in his letter to Blackwood just quoted confirms Lockhart's authorship.
 2. Gordon, II, 96-97. Mrs. Gordon dates this letter wrongly. From internal evidence it is clear that it was written in August or September 1824 and not 1825.
 3. NLS, MSS. 4721.
 4. NLS, MSS. 4011.

Further evidence of Maginn's connection with John Bull Magazine comes from a completely different source. After a short stay in London, Alaric Alexander Watts wrote to William Blackwood on 12 November 1824:

"I need not tell you who is the Editor of the John Bull Magazine but I may as well put you a little on your guard as not what you communicate to a certain Dr M[agin]n of your acquaintance. He has told Jerdan that Mr Lockhart was the author of the allusions to him in the Noctes some time ago. He has been more communicative on some other points than he ought to have been. The John Bull Magazine is considered in London a very blackguard affair...It was bad taste in Maga₁ to honor it with any notice, at least so people say."

Some of these accusations about his connection with John Bull Magazine must have reached Maginn through William Blackwood. Yet he never bothered to answer them. Instead, on 2 September 1824 he wrote to William Blackwood defending the libellous attack on De Quincey:

"The John Bull Magazine is going on. Why are you fighting with it? It has done one excellent work in unmasking and exposing to general contempt that base little wretch Quincey whom it has hurt pretty feelingly. You know that this ought to have been done in your pages, but on the contrary you have taken a fancy to puff this scabby imposter who has done you more harm than all the scribblers of the magazines here together."²

In view of such evidence Maginn's responsibility as the major contributor to John Bull Magazine becomes a certainty. But to go back to his letter to William Blackwood about the authenticity of

1. NLS, MSS. 4012. Watts' connection with William Jerdan must have given access to a great deal of information about Maginn who, at the time, was often in the company of the editor of the Literary Gazette.

2. NLS, MSS. 4012.

"My Wedding Night," the supposed chapter of Byron's memoirs, Maginn's claim that such authenticity has been testified by John Murray and John Wilson Croker is palpably false. It is barely conceivable that Murray who, at exactly that time, was consistently denying having ever looked into Byron's memoirs,¹ could have told Maginn that the extract published was authentic. Secondly, despite the wide circulation of Byron's manuscript among many of his friends and acquaintances, John Wilson Croker² does not seem to have been among those who had read the memoirs before their destruction. Thirdly, according to R. Shelton Mackenzie, John Murray is reported to have suspected Maginn of the authorship of the supposed chapter in *John Bull Magazine*.³ Bearing in mind that Maginn himself confessed that he had never seen the memoirs, it is most likely that he composed the notorious account of Byron's "Wedding Night."⁴ In this case we do not have to go far in search for the source of his inspiration. In Noctes Ambrosianae No XV (June 1824) Lockhart makes Tickler suggest to Odoherly to patch up Byron's memoirs. "You can easily guess what sort of stuff they

-
1. See Doris Langley Moore, The Later Lord Byron, p. 47.
 2. Doris Langley Moore who combed all evidence about the contents of the memoirs in the writings and the letters of Byron's contemporaries does not mention Croker as one of those who read Byron's manuscript.
 3. Noctes Ambrosianae, (1863) I, 474n.
 4. Doris Langley Moore arrives at the same conclusion about the spurious nature of the John Bull Chapter by detecting obvious mistakes which could not have been made by Byron, and checking it against the testimony of those who read Byron's manuscript. (The Late Lord Byron, pp. 298-299).

were; and at any rate an edition of 10,000 would sell ere the trick could be discovered."¹ It seems that Maginn did not lose time in carrying out Lockhart's idea.

Although Maginn confessed that he had never read the memoirs, he seems to have encouraged, or perhaps originated, the reports that Murray gave him a free access to Byron's letters with the view of deputing to him the task of writing the poet's life. Yet Maginn's letters to William Blackwood during 1824 and 1825 contain no reference to either Murray's collection of Byron's letters or any intention on Murray's part of commissioning him to edit them. On the contrary, at least two of Maginn's letters show how anxious he was to get hold of any of Byron's letters from any source. When Byron's old friend and kinsman R.C. Dallas announced his intention of bringing out an edition of the poet's letters to him to be published by Charles Knight, Maginn wrote to William Blackwood on 5 July 1824:

"Knight is going to publish Lord B's letters to Dallas on 14th. He has promised to let me have the proofs by the 10th so as to give me time to cook up an article for you in which I shall insert some queer correspondence hitherto unknown to mankind. K. stags at some things in B's letters but thank heaven we are not so squeamish."²

Just before the publication of Dallas's book Byron's friends and relatives intervened and succeeded in obtaining an injunction from

1. Blackwood's, XV, 709. See also Lockhart's letter to Maginn of June 1824, quoted in Strout, John Bull's Letter, pp. 157-158.

2. NLS, MSS. 4012.

the Lord Chancellor barring him from publishing any of the poet's letters. On July 16 1824 Maginn wrote to William Blackwood:

"I am afraid the injunction against Knight will be made absolute. More is the pity. There was an abundance of nonsense in the letters. But they did contain the full and minute history of the composition of the English Bards and Scotch Reviewers which would be a fine text for us. I am not without hope of being able to coax one or two out of Knight. I am promised what may be made a fine bonne bouche for you."¹

If late in 1824 or during 1825 Murray ever asked Maginn to examine Byron's letters in preparation for a biography, Maginn was uncharacteristically silent about it in his letters to William Blackwood, despite the fact that in June 1824 Blackwood's announced that "Mr. Moore, it is confidently said, will set about a Biography of Lord Byron, as soon as he has finished that of Sheridan."² It ought to be remembered here that at that time and ever since the burning of Byron's memoirs, Thomas Moore was canvassing, with no little difficulty, the support of Byron's relatives and friends for his right to be Byron's biographer. It is simply extremely unlikely that just at that time Murray would have asked Maginn to contemplate writing the poet's life.³ In any case, Maginn told Blackwood on 20 October 1824 that he had "contracted with Murray to publish a new & splendid edition of Paradise Lost,"⁴ a project

1. NLS, MSS. 4012.

2. Blackwood's, XVI, 117.

3. It is interesting to know from Maginn's letters to William Blackwood that he was introduced to Murray only in March 1824. See his letter of 4 March 1824, NLS, MSS. 4012.

4. NLS, MSS. 4012.

which was no doubt interrupted by Maginn's appointment late in 1825 as the Paris correspondent of Murray's daily newspaper the Representative. Even when Thomas Moore and Murray finally agreed on publishing the Life of Byron, Maginn wrote to William Blackwood on 6 November 1826, "You were misinformed abt Moore's Lord Byron—it is to be published by Murray not Longman."¹ But he writes not a single word about having been invited to write it himself.

1. NLS, MSS. 4017.

APPENDIX VII

Alaric Alexander Watts and the first Number of "Noctes
Ambrosianae."

Despite several and conflicting contemporary or near contemporary accounts of the beginning of the Noctes Ambrosianae, the origin of the first number of this very successful series which appeared in Blackwood's for March 1822, still remains a mystery.¹ It is true that R.M. Wardle and Alan Lang Strout have established that Lockhart wrote the dialogue between "Editor and Odoherthy."² Yet by doing so, Wardle and Strout have solved one mystery, only to create another. Traditionally, the "Noctes" was believed to have originated by William Maginn, and the intimate knowledge of the London literary publishing world that the writer of the first "Noctes"³ displayed seemed consistent with Maginn's skill in ferreting its secrets. Now that there can be no doubt that Lockhart wrote the first number of the "Noctes", how do we account for this abundance of London news in the dialogue between "Odoherthy" and the "Editor"?

-
1. A detailed account of the different stories about the origin of the "Noctes" is given by Alan Lang Strout in "Concerning Noctes Ambrosianae" MLN, LI (1936) 493-504.
 2. See R.M. Wardle's letter to the editor, TLS, 9 October 1937, p. 735, and also his "The Authorship of Noctes Ambrosianae," MP, XLII (1944), 10-11, Alan Lang Strout, "Concerning Noctes Ambrosianae," p. 494, and "The Authorship of the First Twenty Three Numbers of 'Noctes Ambrosianae'," The Library, XII (1957), 108.
 3. See for instance Noctes Ambrosianae, ed. R. Shelten Mackenzie, I, xvi, M. Thrall, Rebellious Fraser's, 239, and Strout, "Concerning Noctes Ambrosianae," p. 495.

According to N.P. Willis, Wilson is alleged to have said that Lockhart produced the first number of the "Noctes" after a convivial gathering of the Blackwood's circle at "Ambrose's,"¹ thus giving the impression that the dialogue between Odoherly and the Editor was the record of a real conversation inspired by "tobacco smoke and Whiskey punch."² Yet Wilson's alleged statement is in direct conflict with the facts which can be ascertained from the Blackwood Papers. For the substance of the first Noctes did not come from the brilliant conversation of a night at Ambrose's, but in the more prosaic and pedestrian form of what Mrs. Oliphant calls "notes of interminable length" which she found "impossible to follow."³ These notes were the reports on the London literary scene which Alaric Alexander Watts sent to William Blackwood in February and March 1822. As we shall soon see, had Watts not supplied the material for the first number out of what he gathered from the gossip circles in London. In fact, Lockhart's dependence on Watts' notes is considerably greater than has hitherto been realized.⁴ An examination of these reports, which Watts called "memoranda" will

-
1. See Alan Lang Strout, "Concerning Noctes Ambrosianae," p. 494.
 2. A similar meeting at Ambrose's is described by Lockhart in John Bull's Letter, p. 86.
 3. Oliphant, I, 499.
 4. See, for instance, Oliphant, I, 499; Strout, "Knights of the Burning Epistle," Studia Neophilologica, XXIII (1953/54), 87. and R.M. Wardle, "The Authorship of Noctes Ambrosianae," p. 17, where Alaric Watts memoranda are referred to as an incidental source of the "Noctes."

show how far that relatively obscure journalist, critic, poet and editor was behind the beginning of that popular series in Blackwood's. More importantly, the alterations which Lockhart made, especially on Watts' views on contemporary poets, give an interesting glimpse into the attitude of the magazine towards some of these poets.

Curiously enough it was one of Lockhart's productions that eventually led to establishing the connection between William Blackwood in Edinburgh and Alaric Watts in London in December 1821. Earlier in 1821 Watts had written for the Literary Gazette (from 24 February to 31 March 1821) a series of articles under the title of "Lord Byron's Plagiarism" in which he claimed to trace back a great deal of Byron's compositions to their source in different English and European authors. In May 1821 Lockhart published his pamphlet A Letter to Lord Byron by John Bull in which he defended Byron against Watts' charges of plagiarism and attributed his attack on the poet to "his base ignorance and his still baser envy."¹ In July 1821 Maginn reviewed John Bull's Letter in Blackwood's and Alaric Watts was again among the many contemporary writers who came under Maginn's lash.² Towards the end of 1821 however, another London supporter of Blackwood's, George Croly, succeeded not only in pacifying Watts but also in recruiting him for Blackwood's.³ On

1. Strout, John Bull's Letter, p. 66.

2. Blackwood's, IX, 422-23.

3. See Oliphant, I, p. 496.

29 January 1822, Watts explained to William Blackwood what he intended to do for his magazine:

"Again, I propose, if you consider it would be of the slightest service, to give you a private letter, consisting chiefly of loose memoranda of whatever is passing in the principal literary circles in London or even in the Trade, opinions of your work & c. Some of your finest strokes of satire have lost their point with us, from being of too local a nature: it will be but fair to give us a bit now and then which we Londoners can fully enter in the spirit of."¹

This letter was followed on 22 February by yet another long letter accompanied by a few memoranda notes and then on 10 March by even longer memoranda which consisted of 20 folio pages. Out of these and other undated letters and parts of memoranda, evidently belonging to the same period, Lockhart wove the first number of "Noctes Ambrosianae" as the comparison that follows will show. What Lockhart actually did was to cast the contents of Watts' letters and memoranda in the dialogue form between the Editor and Odoherly, who significantly enough had just arrived from London. But Lockhart did not blindly interpolate the information supplied by Watts. Especially where Watts' own opinions were concerned, Lockhart made significant alterations. These alterations are interesting since they on the whole involve Watts' views on some major contemporary writers and poets. For this reason the comparison that follows consists only of the passages of the "Noctes" where Lockhart closely follows Alaric Watts' memoranda. Later in this appendix some of

1. Oliphant, I, 502.

Lockhart's alterations will be examined in some detail.

Noctes

Editor: Have you seen Milman's new tragedy?

Odoherly: No; but I saw the proofs of a puff upon it for the next Quarterly. He's a clever fellow, but they cry him too high. The report goes that he is to step into Gifford's shoes one of these days—
Blackwood's XI, 369.

Watts

Milman's Martyr of Antioch is to be puffed in the Quarterly as usual. He is an able man enough; but Murray's attempt to bolster up his literary reputation is too palpable. It is understood that Gifford is ere long to give up the Editorship of the Quarterly to him.—NLS, MSS. 4009.

* * * * *

Noctes

Editor: Then you wrote for the World did you not?

Odoherly: I never heard of such a thing. They have been quizzing you, old boy. Imposters are abroad.

Editor: Then somebody has been sporting false colours about town.

Odoherly: Like enough. Set a thief to catch a thief—
Blackwood's XI, 369.

Watts

There is a wretched creature about town, a Hugh Odoherly who assumes the style and bearing of your Ensign and adjutant Odoherly. This fellow conducted a stupid paper called the World which has been at an end long ago, he is not worth notice.—NLS, MSS. 4009.

* * * * *

Noctes

Odoherly (pretends that after repeated requests for contributions from Colburn of the New Monthly he only sent an epigram)
Colburn Campbell & Co. write rather so so
But atone for't by puff and profession.
Every month gives us scope for the Pleasures of Hope
But all ends in the Pains of Possession.
Blackwood's XI, 370.

Watts

The following epigram on Colburn's Magazine I have some where heard repeated:

Colburn, Campbell & Co. write rather so so
But puff without dread or discretion
And each month give us scope for the Pleasures of Hope
But to end in the Pains of Possession—NLS, MSS. 4009.

* * * * *

Noctes

Editor: How do they [The editors of the New Monthly Magazine] get on? Heavily, Ensign?

Odoherly:D-heavily. They lay out a cool hundred on advertisement every month; but Campbell does very little—and Subs are no great shakes. They have a miserable set of bullaboos about them—broken-winded dominies, from the manufacturing districts, and so forth. Even Hazlitt does the drama better. Blackwood's XI, 370.

Watts

Orme told me a few days ago that Colburns Magazine falls off with them most alarmingly...You will have perceived that Hazlitt has become a retainer of Colburns and is at present dribbling out another volume of balderdash called table talk in the New Monthly. Did you notice that in one of the articles in the N.M. by one of the Roscoes of Liverpool two or three pages were transferred without the least ceremony from the Quarterly Review as proving part of the discussion. This is just a piece of highway literary robbery...Dubris and one Cyrus Redding are the working editors of Colburn. To these persons he pays 200 pounds a year and to Campbell by his own account £800 for the next five years...His advertisements have been several months to the extent of upwards of a hundred pounds. —NLS, MSS. 4009.

* * * * *

Odoherly's stories about the row between Murray and Longman, and Murray's mistake about the Bishop of Winchester, and his news of sale of Kitchener's books are all told in great detail in Alaric Watts memoranda (MSS. 4009, ff.202-203, 250 and 257-58).

Noctes

Odoherly:Have you seen Horace Walpole's Memoirs?

Editor: I have. A most charming book. A most malicious, prying, lying old fox. What a prime contributor he would have made:- but, to be sure, he was a Whig.—
Blackwood's XI, 370-71.

Watts

Walpole excites the strongest indignation against the paltry defunct. It is well for this vain and vituperative babler that he has died out of the way of the critical vengeance which he has so justly provoked...Of what are the volumes composed? In the most part of garbled and falsified reports of the debates in parliament—period upon period of most elaborate calumny against all the eminent men of his day;—and a few, and these are very few, original anecdotes strung into notes principally to illustrate his taste. I hope your reviewer will hit him devil hard!—NLS, MSS. 4009.

* * * * *

Noctes

Odoherly: The Holland-house gentry are chuckling very much over a little tid-bit of blasphemy, sent over by a certain learned Lord from Italy,—'tis called the 'Irish Advent,'—'Tis a base parody on the Advent of our Saviour,—'tis circulated widely among the same Thebans who blarney'd about Hogg's Chaldee.— Blackwood's XI, 371.

Watts

A production of Lord Byron's entitled the "Irish Advent" ["Irish Avatar"] is handed about among the duly initiated Thebans of Holland House. The subject is of course the King's visit to Ireland and ye piece is a blasphemous parody of the "Advent of our Saviour."—NLS, MSS. 4009.

* * * * *

Noctes

Editor: What is that thing called the Gazette of Fashion?

Odoherly: 'Tis a poor imitation of the Literary Gazette. Mr. ———, they say, patronizes it; but this can't be true, for it attacks, very shamefully, the man who did HIM more good than any body else ever will be able to do him, here or hereafter.

Blackwood's XI, 371.

Watts

A Mr West-Macott, brother to the Sculptor a needy and miserable animal has set up a thing called the Gazette of Fashion which Mr. Murray patronizes. To prove how exquisitely worthy of contempt such a catchpenny must be I need only mention that it is filled with vulgar and personal abuse of Sir Walter Scott.—NLS, MSS. 4009.

* * * * *

Noctes

Odoherly: You would notice the puffs about another thing, called "the Royal Progress;"—they say 'tis writ by Mrs. Morgan's ex-chevalier; and I can believe it, for it is equally dull and disloyal.— Blackwood's XI, 371.

Watts

The piece of flippant dullness entitled the "Royal Progress" and published by Colburn in imitation of the mysterious announcement of Don Juan is the handwork of Lady Morgan's gentle knight Sir Charles Morgan. Colburn has taken a great deal of trouble to puff it without effect— NLS. MSS. 4009.

* * * * *

This is followed by Odoherly's report to the Editor on minor periodicals, all of which is taken almost verbatim from Alaric Watts' memoranda (NLS, MSS. 4009, pp. 257-8).

Noctes

Editor: 'Tis the age of owning and disowning. It was a long while or [sic] I believed Hope to be Anastasius.

Odoherly: It will be a long while ere I believe that Anastasius wrote those quartos about mahogany. I believe he might furnish the wood, but, by Jericho, did he carve it at all? Blackwood's, XI, 372.

Watts

Hope may say what he chooses but I know that he is not bona fide the author of "Anastasius." Much of the raw material was however furnished by him. It is well known who weve the final web. His book on Costume (I have it from Rees) was so deficient in the commonest essentials of composition that Longman & Co. were obliged to get a person to rewrite it entirely.—NLS, MSS. 4009.

* * * * *

Noctes

Editor: There was a worthy young man done up only a few months ago by the Cockney poets. He gave £100 to one for a bundle of verses, (I forget the title,) of which just 30 copies were sold. They were all at him like leeches, and he was soon sucked to the bone.—

Blackwood's XI, 373.

Watts

Warren's failure is not much to be wondered at. What little money he had was sucked out of him by Procter, Hazlitt, Reynolds and other Cockneys of less import. He gave that arch Cockney Reynolds 100 guineas for a farrago called "The Garden of Florence" of which he sold in all somewhere about 30 copies. His business is now adjusted and he is about to begin again.

NLS. MSS. 4009.

* * * * *

Noctes

Odoherly: I don't think Sir Andrew [Wylie] near so good as the Annals of the Parish.—Whas say you?

Editor: I agree with you.—The story is d— improbable; the hero a borish fellow, an abominable bore! but there is so much cleverness in the writing...

Odoherly: The Author has a vast deal of humour, but he should stick to what he has seen. The first part of Wylie is far the best.

Editor: The scene with old George is as good as possible.
Blackwood's XI, 360.

Watts

I have only had time to...cause to be extracted in the Chester Chronicle, Macclesfield, Liverpool, and two of our London papers the Capital colloquy with old George. You will smile when I tell you that I am quite sure this dialogue alone will do much for the book...You are of course aware that it is by no means so good [as the Annals of the Parish] It abounds in excellent material but many of the incidents are a step or two beyond probability.—NLS, MSS. 4009.

* * * * *

Noctes

Odoherly: This holy alliance of Pisa will be a queer affair. The Examiner has let down its price from a tenpenny to a sevenpenny. They say the Editor here is to be one of that faction, for they must publish in London of course.

Editor: Of course; but I doubt if they will be able to sell many...
.....

Editor: Who is the Regent at present during his Majesty's absence?
[Hunt]

Odoherly: Of course Prince John. I don't think Hazlitt is in the Council of Regency.—Blackwood's XI, *363-364*

Watts

The periodical at Pisa will certainly be proceeded with: Prince John Hunt now Regent (during the absence of Leigh of the kingdom of Cockaigne) is to edit the matter which will be sent hither and published in this country.

* * * * *

Of the nineteen pages of the first number of the "Noctes" nearly two thirds are taken from Alaric Watts' memoranda, but Lockhart did not always follow Watts' notes as closely as in the passages that have just been quoted. He made significant alterations specially in Watts' opinion of contemporary poets and writers. Watts' plea for a better treatment of "Barry Cornwall" is only briefly answered in the "Noctes" when the Editor accuses Odoherly of having puffed that minor poet in the earlier numbers of the Magazine.¹ On the other hand, Watts abuse of John Clare becomes a brief comparison between Clare and James Hogg in the "Noctes." Lockhart also omits altogether Watts' repeated and violent attacks on the London Magazine and its writers, particularly De Quincey and Lamb. Even Hazlitt is better treated in the "Noctes" than in Alaric Watts' memoranda. One of several hostile allusions to that old enemy of Blackwood's in the memoranda, only one appears in the "Noctes" after having been considerably toned down. In the undated memoranda Watts tells Blackwood, "You will have perceived perhaps that Hazlitt has become a retainer of

1. Blackwood's, XI, 369.

2. Ibid., p. *361.

Colburns, and is at present dribbling out another volume of balderdash called Table Talk in the New Monthly."¹ In the "Noctes" Lockhart makes the Editor express different views about Hazlitt and almost have a swipe at Alaric Watts for abusing him. "Hazlitt's a real fellow in his small way. He has more sense in his little finger, than many who laugh at him have in their heads, but he is bothering too long at tha t table-talk."²

Lockhart's departure from Alaric Watts' memoranda is, however, more noticeable where Byron is involved. As has already been observed earlier in this appendix, Watts old hostility towards Byron was well known in the Blackwood's circle, and because of it he was more than once mercilessly handled by the magazine. It is not surprising therefore to find Lockhart change, or omit a great deal of what Watts says about Byron in his memoranda. The news about the "Irish Avatar" and the Liberal as well as some of Watts violent attacks on the Quarterly are interpolated in the "Noctes" without any alterations. But when Watts reports with exultant anticipation that "A prosecution of Murray [as a publisher of Cain] is certainly contemplated by the Constitutional Association,"³ Lockhart immediately takes Byron's side:

Editor: But as to Cain, I entirely differ from the Chancellor. I think if Cain be prosecuted, it will be a great shame. The humbug of the age will then have achieved its most visible triumph.

1. NLS, MSS. 4009.

2. Blackwood's, XI, 370.

3. NLS, MSS. 4008.

Odoherly: I never saw it, but I thought it had been blasphemous.

Editor: No, sir, I can't see that. The society might have had some pretence had they fallen on Don Juan; but I suppose those well-fed Archdeacons, and so forth, have their own ways of observing certain matters.¹

It is also likely that it was Lockhart who wrote the verse version of Byron's letter to Murray of 8 February 1822 which immediately follows this defence of Cain. In his Memoranda Watts draws Blackwood's attention to its publication in some newspapers on 26 February 1822.

Despite these alterations, Watts was naturally pleased to see his memoranda made use of in the magazine, and on 7 April 1822 he wrote to William Blackwood:

"Noctes Ambrosianae: This idea is a capital one. The article will serve as an escape valve for all sort of amusing information and anecdotes, as for paragraphic notices favourable or otherwise, as may be of new publication."²

Throughout the rest of 1822 Watts continued to send to William Blackwood his long memoranda. But the freedom with which Lockhart treated the first few of Watts' reports set the trend for the writers who tried their hands at the new series after him. Thus by the second number of the "Noctes" (April 1822) Wilson almost entirely ignores Watts memoranda and makes the conversation deal mainly with Scottish affairs and contemporary poetry in general. Only in the last three pages of the second "Noctes" does he make

1. Blackwood's, XI, 375.

2. NLS, MSS. 4009.

use of Watts' London gossip, and even then he treats it with greater freedom than Lockhart has done in the first number. For Watts' abuse of Lamb, De Quincey, Campbell and John Hamilton Reynolds, Wilson substitutes compliments to them all, particularly the first two.¹ Watts' attempt to fan the flames of hostility between Blackwood and John Murray is spurned by Wilson's conciliatory compliments for the London publisher.² When Lockhart wrote the third number (May 1822) of the "Noctes" he hardly used any of Watts' memoranda. But according to William Maginn the fourth number of the "Noctes" (August 1822) was taken from those memoranda.³ I have not been able to find among Watts' correspondence with Blackwood any memoranda that could have been the only source of Maginn's "Noctes." On the other hand a great deal of the London news in that number of the "Noctes" could have equally been taken from Watts' letters and memoranda from February to April 1822, with

-
1. See Blackwood's, XII, 486-87 and Alaric Watts' Memoranda of 7 April 1822.
 2. On 7 April 1822 Watts wrote to William Blackwood, "you could be quite amused could you know the sort of sensation your last Number has given rise to among your readers in the great City, and especially among the Coterie of Albemarle St. you are denounced as a traitor to the interests of literature and the Quarterly Review... [Murray's] rage in speaking of you beggars all description... This is hardly new for he has long used every means of his power to injure you and if he has not succeeded it has not for lack of zeal"—NLS, MSS. 4009, also cf. Blackwood's, XI, 488-89.
 3. See Oliphant, I, 896, and Alan Lang Strout, "Concerning Noctes Ambrosianae," MLN, LI, 495 and n.

some additions by Maginn himself. Odoherly's news about the London periodicals, Henry Taylor's continuation of Johnson's Lives of the English Poets in the London Magazine, and Murray's plans for a new edition of Pope, are all taken from Watts' earlier letters and memoranda. Whatever the case may be, it is difficult to imagine how in view of his old hostility towards Byron, Watts could have inspired that delightful "Noctes" in which Byron answers his critics in the conversation with Odoherly.

Perhaps the most praiseworthy departure from Alaric Watts' notes was the omission in the sixth number of the "Noctes" (which was probably written by Lockhart rather than Maginn),¹ of an extremely insensitive letter that Watts wrote to William Blackwood on 7 September 1822 on Shelley after his death, and which does not have to be quoted here as it has already been published in its entirety by Alan Lang Strout.² Instead of abusing the dead poet as Watts does in his letter, Lockhart makes two favourable references to Shelley. Odoherly attributes Byron's "Epigrams on Castlereagh" in the Liberal to the attack on Shelley in the ministerial paper The Courier, the writer of which North describes as "a poor drivelling hypocrite."³ In the same "Noctes" Shelley's

-
1. Strout, Bibliography, p.103, gives Maginn as the author of the sixth number of the "Noctes". Yet as late as the 14th December 1822, Maginn advised Blackwood to include "a Noctes" in his magazine for that month. Moreover, the praise of Shelley and mild criticism of "The Vision of Judgement" suggest Lockhart.
 2. See Alan Lang Strout, "Knights of the Burning Epistle," pp. 88-92.
 3. Blackwood's, XII, 703.

translation of Goethe's "May-day Night" in the first number of the Liberal is singled out for the unanimous praise of all the interlocutors. North calls it: "'Tis indeed an admirable morceau—full of life, truth and beauty."¹

The last important example of the Blackwood's writers' reluctance not "to meddle with Alaric's views,"² as Lockhart once warned William Blackwood, again concerns Byron. In August 1822 Watts made yet another attempt to prejudice the magazine against him. Just before the publication of the "Vision of Judgement" in the Liberal, Watts wrote to William Blackwood:

"John Hunt as you will see by your list will be the publisher of the Vision of Judgement, in which Southey is bitterly lampooned—Murray already refused it. The Letter to Blackwood's Mag. Ed. is also full of sound and fury as to have excluded the possibility of it in its present form and there are I understand some gross personal attacks on one or two of your Edinbro friends in it."³

In the sixth number of the "Noctes" (December 1822) no reference whatever is made to Byron's "Reply to Blackwood's" and the "Vision of Judgement" gets away with very mild criticism indeed. Tickler declares that "it is vastly inferior to Beppo, to say nothing of the exquisite Don Juan." Yet he defends the satire on Southey, "I think Dr. Southey is the fairest of all subjects, for my part.

1. Ibid., XII, p. 701.

2. NLS, MSS.

3. NLS, MSS. 4009.

The man's arrogance and dogmatical airs are worthy of much severer castigation than they have yet met with."¹

By the end of 1822 not only did the writers of the "Noctes" learn to do without Alaric Watts memoranda but it also happened that in November 1822 Watts left London in order to take over the editorship of the Leeds Intelligencer. He continued to write long letters to William Blackwood from Leeds but the writer of the "Noctes" did not show any interest in the news of Watts warfare with the editors of other provincial newspapers, which filled his letters in 1823-1825.

1. Blackwood's, XII, 698.

APPENDIX VIII

Some Biographical Notes

William Blackwood (1776-1834):

William Blackwood was born in Edinburgh. At the age of fourteen, he was apprenticed to a firm of booksellers, Bell & Bradfute. On finishing his apprenticeship in 1797, Blackwood was engaged by Messrs. Mundell & Co., a publishing firm in Edinburgh, as the agent and manager of their branch in Glasgow, where he remained for a year. After a brief partnership with a booksellers' auctioneer in Edinburgh, Blackwood was employed by an antiquarian London bookseller. In 1804 he returned to Edinburgh and set himself up as a publisher in his own right. His first two important publications were Life of John Knox, by Dr. Thomas M'Crie and a catalogue of old books (1812) which Blackwood himself compiled. In 1810 he started publishing the Edinburgh Encyclopaedia (completed 1830), and in 1816 Blackwood became John Murray's Edinburgh agent and was the joint publisher of Sir Walter Scott's Tales of My Landlord. Besides founding the magazine that carried his name, Blackwood specialised in Scottish literature, and especially Scottish novels, and he published most of the works of John Galt, James Hogg, Susan Ferrier, and John Gibson Lockhart. Blackwood was also an active member of the Edinburgh City Council.

George Croly (1780-1860):

Croly was born in Dublin and was educated at Trinity College. He was ordained in 1804. But in 1810 he migrated to London and devoted himself to literary pursuits, contributing articles to the New Times, the Literary Gazette, and Blackwood's. Besides his sermons, theological pamphlets, and biographical and historical works Croly wrote Paris in 1815, A Poem (1817); The Angel of the World: An Arabian Tale and Sebastian: A Spanish Tale (1820); Catiline: A Tragedy (1822); May Fair, a verse satire in four cantos (1827); Salathiel (1829); The Modern Orlando and Marston: or Soldier and Statesman in 1846. In 1828 Croly published an anthology of verse with critical comment under the title The Beauties of the British Poets, in which he atoned for his outrage against Keats in Blackwood's, by quoting and praising his poetry. Croly's connection with Blackwood's lasted to the end of his life, and between 1820 and 1860 he contributed at least 300 articles.

In 1835, through his connection with Lord Brougham, Croly became the rector of St. Stephen's, Walbrook, and was an eloquent and popular preacher.

Eyre Evans Crowe (1799-1868):

Crowe was educated at Trinity College, Dublin, where he won a prize for an English poem. He left College early, and migrated to London. Then he travelled extensively on the Continent, and contributed to Blackwood's several articles on France and Italy, and French and Italian Literature (1822-1823). Crowe also wrote a number of novels, such as Vittoria Colonna; Today in Ireland (1825); The English in Italy (1825); The English in France (1828); Yesterday in Ireland (1829); The English at Home (1830); and Charles Delmer (1853). In 1856-58 Crowe published a History of France in six volumes. In 1830 he became the Paris correspondent of The Morning Chronicle, and in 1846 joined the staff of The Daily News. He also contributed to the Examiner under Fonblanque and Forster.

William Howison (born c. 1795):

Howison's first publication was the ballad "Polidore" which Sir Walter Scott caused to be published in the Edinburgh Annual Register for 1810. In 1815 Howison published Fragments and Fiction under the pseudonym M. de-Peu-de-Mots, and in 1821 An Essay on Sentiments of Attraction, Adaptation, and Variety. After his break with Blackwood's, Howison apparently contributed to the London Magazine, at least Lockhart identified his style in "The Doomed Man" in the London for September 1823. Howison's other works are A Grammar of Infinite Forms (1823); Contest of the Twelve Nations (1826); and Philosophical Tables Compiled from Various Authors Ancient and Modern (1829).

John Gibson Lockhart (1794-1854):

Lockhart was educated at Glasgow High School and University of Glasgow. In 1808 he was offered the Snell Exhibition and studied at Balliol College Oxford. In 1816 he studied Law in Edinburgh and became an advocate. Lockhart was a gifted linguist and an accomplished classical scholar in 1816. With the help of a loan from William Blackwood, he visited Germany in 1817, where he met Goethe and acquired extensive knowledge of German literature. After his return to Edinburgh, he helped Wilson to launch Blackwood's. In 1818 he translated Lectures on the History of Literature Ancient and Modern. Despite his prolific contributions and the part he played in the management of Blackwood's, Lockhart wrote Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk (1819) and four novels between 1821 and 1824, (Valerius, Adam Blair, Reginald Dalton, and The History of Matthew Wald), edited a translation of Don Quixote by Motteux (1822), and translated Ancient Spanish Ballads (1823).

In 1818 Lockhart met Walter Scott, and, two years later, he married his daughter Sophia. Thus began the relationship which, seventeen years later, and after many misfortunes, produced Lockhart's best-known work, Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott (1837-38).

In 1825 Lockhart left Edinburgh to become the editor of the Quarterly Review, a position which he held until 1853. During those years Lockhart also occasionally contributed to Blackwood's and other periodicals, such as Fraser's and the Representative. In 1828 he published The Life of Robert Burns, and in 1829 The Life of Napoleon Bonaparte. Lockhart's last biographical work, Theodore Hook: A Sketch, appeared in the Quarterly in 1842 and was published in book form in 1853.

In 1843 Lockhart was given the auditorship of the Duchy of Lancaster which he held till a few months before his death. After a brief visit to Italy, Lockhart returned to Abbotsford where he died.

William Maginn (1793-1842):

Maginn was born in Cork. He studied at Trinity College Dublin where he graduated in 1811. Maginn's precociousness as a scholar was legendary and, in 1819, he obtained LL.D. from Trinity College. From 1813 to 1823 he ran his own private school in Cork. In 1819 he began to contribute to the Literary Gazette and Blackwood's. Soon after his marriage towards the end of 1823, he migrated to London to lead the life of a literary adventurer. For some time he assisted Theodore Hook in editing John Bull. In 1826 he was appointed by John Murray as the Parish Correspondent of the short-lived daily newspaper, Representative, and then as its editor. In 1830 he founded Fraser's, and for more than seven years was its most important single supporter and the author of its famous "Gallery of Literary Characters." Maginn is also said to have contributed to such disreputable periodicals as the Age. Apart from White Hall, or the Days of George IV (1827) and John Mansty, the Liverpool Merchant (posthumously published in 1844), most of Maginn's other works were published in periodicals, especially in Blackwood's and Fraser's, and were partly collected and published in book form only after his death. The most notable among these were Homeric Ballads (1850), Shakespeare Papers: Pictures Grave and Gay (1859), and A Gallery of Illustrious Literary Characters (1873).

A Bohemian life of dissipation finally led Maginn to the debtor's prison in 1840, and on being declared insolvent, he was released in an advanced stage of consumption, of which he died shortly afterwards.

John Matthews (1755-1826):

Matthews was educated at Merton College Oxford and obtained M.D. in 1779. He was appointed physician to St. George's Hospital in London in 1784. In 1793 he became Mayor of Hereford, and from 1803 to 1806 he was the M.P. for Herefordshire. Matthews wrote a parody of Pope's Elvira (1780), A Sketch from the Landscape (1794), and translated Fables of La Fontaine in English Verse (1820). John Matthews was the father of Charles Skynner Matthew, Byron's friend.

John Herman Merivale (1779-1844):

John Herman Merivale spent some years at St. John's College but, because of his Presbyterian religion, left without a degree. In 1798 he entered Lincoln's Inn and was called to the bar in 1804. Through the Drury family, whose daughter Louisa Heath he married, he became acquainted with Byron, Francis Hodgson, and Robert Bland. In 1806 he collaborated with Bland in publishing the Translations Chiefly from the Greek Anthology, and in 1808 Merivale published a continuation of James Beattie's The Minstrel. Merivale's other major works were Orlando in Roncesvalles (1814) and a free translation of Ricciadetto of Fortiguerra (1820).

As a lawyer, Merivale practised in chancery and bankruptcy, and between 1817 and 1819 he published Reports of Cases argued in the High Court of Chancery. He sat on the Chancery commission for 1824, and in 1831 was made a commissioner of Bankruptcy, a position which he held until his death in 1844.

Charles Ollier (1788-1859):

Charles Ollier was a descendant of a French Protestant family. In 1816 he set up his publishing firm in partnership with his brother James. The Olliers had a remarkable though not very successful, publishing history. They published Keats' 1817 Poems, all Shelley's major poems except Alastor; Leigh Hunt's Foliage, Hero and Leander, and the second edition of The Story of Rimini; the works of Charles Lamb, and Barry Cornwall's early poems. Between 1819 and 1822 they published the annual Literary Pocket Book, and in 1820 the sole number of Ollier's Miscellany. They wound up their business in 1823. Charles Ollier was also a novelist and wrote Althan and his Wife (1818), Inecilla (1824), Ferrers (1842), and contributed to Ainsworth Magazine "The Fallacy of Ghosts, Demons, Omens, Witchcraft, Life in Death, and Monomania" (reprinted in book form in 1848).

Alaric Alexander Watts (1797-1864):

Watts was born in London and educated at Wye College Grammar School Kent and Power's "Academy" at Ashford. After some years as a private tutor, he became the sub-editor of the New Monthly Magazine and contributed to the Literary Gazette. From 1822 to 1825 Watts edited the Leeds Intelligencer. Besides editing other newspapers, such as the Manchester Courier (1825-26) and the Standard (1827), Watts was also a minor poet. In 1823 he published Poetical Sketches, but he is better known as the editor of annuals, such as The Literary Souvenir (1825-35) and its sequel The Cabinet of British Art (1835-38).

John Wilson "Christopher North" (1785-1854):

Wilson was born in Glasgow to a wealthy Paisley family and was educated at Professor Jardine's College Glasgow and Magdalen College Oxford, where in 1807 he was the first ^{under}graduate to be awarded the newly founded Newdegate prize. After leaving Oxford, Wilson, who was a fanatic nature enthusiast and impressive athlete, bought a cottage on Lake Windermere, in the lake district, for summer residence. Soon afterwards he introduced himself to Wordsworth, with whom he remained on friendly terms till 1815. In 1811 Wilson was married to Jane Penny of the Lake District, and at the same time started studying for the Scottish bar in Edinburgh. In 1812 Wilson published his first volume of verse, The Isle of Palms and other Poems, which established his reputation as a disciple of the Lake Poets. In 1815 Wilson lost his fortune, but continued to divide the year between the Lake District and Edinburgh. In the same year he was called to the Scottish bar. The following year saw the publication of The City of Plague and in 1817 Wilson and Lockhart helped William Blackwood to launch his monthly magazine for the second time. In 1820 Wilson was elected to the Chair of Moral Philosophy at the University of Edinburgh which he held for the rest of his life. Apart from his contributions to Blackwood's, Wilson published three prose works between 1822 and 1825 (Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life, The Trials of Margaret Lindsay, and The Foresters). After Lockhart's appointment to the editorship of the Quarterly, Blackwood's became increasingly dependent on Wilson's support, and with the exception of his essay "The Genius and Character of Burns" (1841), all his later writings were contributions to Blackwood's. His skill in handling and developing the "Noctes Ambrosianae" helped to increase the popularity and circulation of Blackwood's. In 1842 Wilson published a selection from his contributions to Blackwood's under the title of Recreations of Christopher North.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Manuscripts

The Blackwood Papers in the National Library of Scotland.

William Blackwood's Letters to William Maginn in the National Library of Scotland.

Published Sources

Anon. "A Tragedy of a Writer: William Maginn," TLS, 22 August 1942, p.418.

_____. Hypocrisy Unveiled and Calumny Detected, in a Review of Blackwood's Magazine. 1818.

_____. Letter to Mr. Murray of Albemarle Street, on the Occasion of his having undertaken the Publication in London of Blackwood's Magazine. 1818.

Arnould, Sir Joseph. Memoir of Thomas First Lord Denman. 2 Vols. 1873.

The Athenaeum

Bate, Walter Jackson. From Classic to Romantic, Premises of Taste in Eighteenth Century England. Harvard University Press: 1946.

Bauer, Josephine. The London Magazine, 1820-1829, in Anglistica Copenhagen: 1953.

Besterman, Theodore. The Publishing Firm of Cadell & Davies. 1938.

_____. "Hazlitt and Maga," TLS, 22 August 1935, p. 525.

Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine.

Byron, Lord. Byron's Don Juan, ed. T.G. Steffan and W.W. Pratt. 4 Vols. Austin: 1957.

_____. Letters and Journals of Lord Byron, ed. Thomas Moore. 2 Vols. 1830.

_____. Lord Byron's Correspondence, ed. John Murray. 2 Vols. 1922.

_____. The Works of Lord Byron: Letters and Journals, ed. Rowland E. Prothero. 6 Vols. 1898-1901.

- _____. The Works of Lord Byron: Poetry, ed. E.H. Coleridge. 7 Vols. 1898-1904.
- Campbell, John Dykes. Samuel Taylor Coleridge: A Narrative of the Events of his Life. 1894.
- Chew, Samuel C. Byron in England: His Fame and After-Fame. 1924.
- _____. The Dramas of Lord Byron. Göttingen: 1915.
- Clarke, Charles and Mary Cowden. Recollection of Writers. 1878.
- Coleridge, S.T. Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ed. Earl Leslie Griggs. 4 Vols. 1956-59.
- _____. Unpublished Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ed. Earl Leslie Griggs. 2 Vols. 1932.
- Cooke, A.K. "William Maginn on Keats," N&Q, CCI (1956) 118-120.
- De Quincey, Thomas. The Collected Writings of Thomas De Quincey, ed. David Masson. 14 Vols. 1896-97.
- The Edinburgh Review
- Elwin, Malcolm. Victorian Wallflowers, 1934.
- Eerdman, David V. "Byron's Stage Fright," ELH, VI (1939), 219-243.
- Forward, Kenneth, "Libellous Attack on De Quincey," PMLA, LII (1937), 244-60.
- Froude, J.A. Thomas Carlyle: A History of his Life in London. 2 Vols. 1884.
- Gillies, R.P. Memoirs of a Literary Veteran. 3 Vols. 1851.
- Gordon, Mrs. 'Christopher North': A Memoir of John Wilson. 2 Vols. 1862.
- Graham, Walter. "Contemporary Critics of Coleridge," PMLA, XXXVIII (1923) 278-89.
- _____. English Literary Periodicals. New York: 1930.
- _____. "Henry Nelson Coleridge, Expositor of Romantic Criticism," PQ, IV (1925), 231-38.
- Hart, Francis R. Lockhart as Romantic Biographer. 1971.
- Haydon, J.O. The Romantic Reviewers 1802-1824. 1969.

- Hazlitt, William. Complete Works of William Hazlitt, ed. P.P. Howe. 21 Vols. 1930-1934.
- Hodgson, J.T. Memoirs of the Rev. Francis Hodgson. 2 Vols. 1878.
- House, Humphry. Coleridge, The Clark Lectures 1951-52. 1953.
- Howe, P.P. Life of William Hazlitt. 1922.
- Howison, William. An Essay on the Sentiments of Attraction, Adaptation, and Variety. revised edition. 1822.
- Hunt, Leigh. Correspondence of Leigh Hunt, ed. Thornton Hunt. 2 Vols. 1862.
- Hutchinson, Sara. The Letters of Sara Hutchinson from 1800 to 1835, ed. Kathleen Coburn. 1954.
- Ingpen, Roger. "Shelley and his Publishers," London Mercury, January 1920, pp.241-300.
- Jack, Ian. English Literature 1815-1832. 1963.
- _____. "Shelley's Search for Readers," The Listener, 6 June 1957, pp.917-18.
- Jackson, R.J. de J. (ed.) Coleridge: The Critical Heritage. 1970.
- Johnson, E.D.H. "Don Juan in England," ELH, XI (1944), 135-53.
- Jump, John D. (ed.). Tennyson: The Critical Heritage, 1967.
- Keats, John. Letters of John Keats, ed. Hyder Edward Rollins. 2 Vols. Cambridge Mass.: 1958.
- Kenealy, E.V. "William Maginn, LL.D." Dublin University Magazine, XXIII (1844), 72-101.
- Lang, Andrew. The Life and Letters of John Gibson Lockhart. 2 Vols. 1897.
- Lochhead Marion. John Gibson Lockhart, 1954.
- [Lockhart, John Gibson.] John Bull's Letter to Lord Byron, ed. Alan Lang Strout. Norman, University of Oklahoma Press: 1947.
- _____. Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott. 5 Vols. Boston and New York: 1902.
- _____. Lockhart's Literary Criticism, ed. M. Clive Hildyard. 1931.
- [_____.] Preface to Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe. 1820.

- Lovell, E.J. (ed.). His Very Self and Voice: Collected Conversations of Lord Byron. New York: 1945.
- Lowell, Amy. John Keats. 2 Vols. [1925.]
- Macbeth, Gilbert. John Gibson Lockhart: A Critical Study. Urbana, University of Illinois Press: 1935.
- MacGillivray, J.R. John Keats: A Bibliography and Reference Guide, with an Essay on Keats' Reputation. Toronto: 1949.
- Mackenzie, R. Shelton (ed.). Noctes Ambrosianae. 5 Vols. New York: 1863.
- Marchand, Leslie. Byron: A Biography. 3 Vols. 1957.
- _____. Byron: A Critical Introduction. 1965.
- Marshall, William H. Byron, Shelley, Hunt, and 'The Liberal'. Philadelphia: 1960.
- Mayer, S.R. Townshend. "Leigh Hunt and Charles Ollier," St. James' Magazine, NS. XV (1875), 387-413.
- Merivale, John Herman. Leaves from the Diary of a Literary Amateur, ed. E.H.A. Koch, 1911.
- _____. Poems Original and Translated. 2 Vols. 1844.
- The Monthly Magazine
- Moore, Doris Langley. The Late Lord Byron: Posthumous Dramas. 1961.
- Moore, Thomas. Letters of Thomas Moore, ed. Wilfred S. Dowden. 2 Vols. 1964.
- _____. Memoirs, Journal, and Correspondence, ed. Lord John Russell. 8 Vols. 1853.
- Morgan, Peter F. "Problems in Examining Periodical Criticism," Victorian Periodicals Newsletter, January 1970, pp.9-11.
- Murray, Brian M. "The Authorship of some Unidentified or Disputed Articles in Blackwood's Magazine," Studies in Scottish Literature, IV (1966-67), 144-154.
- Norman, Sylva. Flight of the Skylark. 1954.

Oliphant, Mrs. Annals of a Publishing House: William Blackwood and his Sons, their Magazine and Friends. 2 Vols. 1897.

Parker, W.M. "Charles Ollier to William Blackwood," TLS, 4 June 1947, p.288.

Peacock, Thomas Love. Memoir of Percy Bysshe Shelley, ed. H.F.B. Brett Smith, 1909.

The Quarterly Review.

Robinson, Henry Crabb. Blake, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Lamb, etc., being Selections from the Remains of Henry Crabb Robinson, ed. Edith J. Morley. 1922.

_____. Henry Crabb Robinson: on Books and their Writers, ed. Edith J. Morley. 3 Vols. 1938.

Rollins, Hyder Edward (ed.). The Keats Circle. Second Edition. 2 Vols. Cambridge Mass.: 1965.

Rutherford, Andrew. Byron: A Critical Study. 1963.

(ed.)
_____. Byron: The Critical Heritage. 1970.

Saintsbury, George. Essays in English Literature 1780-1836. [First Series]. 1890.

_____. History of Criticism and Literary Taste in Europe. 3 Vols. 1904.

Scott, Sir Walter. The Letters of Sir Walter Scott, ed. H.J.C. Grierson, et al. 12 Vols. 1932-37.

Shelley, Mary W. Letters of Mary W. Shelley, ed. F.L. Jones. 2 Vols. University of Oklahoma Press: 1944.

Shelley, Percy Bysshe. Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley, ed. F.L. Jones. 2 Vols. 1964.

Smiles, Samuel. A Publisher and his Friends: Memoir and Correspondence of John Murray. 2 Vols. 1891.

Smith, Elsie. An Estimate of William Wordsworth by his Contemporaries 1793-1822. 1932.

Sterling, John. Essays and Tales of John Sterling, ed. Julius Charles Hare. 2 Vols. 1848.

- Strout, Alan Lang. A Bibliography of Articles in Blackwood's Magazine 1817-1825. Lubbock, Texas: 1959.
- _____. "A Study in Periodical Patchwork: John Wilson's Recreations of 'Christopher North,' 1842," MLR, XXVIII (1943), 88-105.
- _____. "Concerning 'Noctes Ambrosianae,'" MLN, LI (1936), 493-504.
- _____. "George Croly and Blackwood's Magazine," TLS, 6 October 1950, p. 636.
- _____. "Hunt, Hazlitt, and Maga," ELH, IV (1937), 151-159.
- _____. "John Wilson, 'Champion' of Wordsworth," MP, XXXI (1934), 383-394.
- _____. "Knights of the Burning Epistle," Studia Neophilologica, XXVI (1953/54), 77-98.
- _____. "Lockhart, Champion of Shelley," TLS, 12 August 1955, p.468.
- _____. "Maga, Champion of Shelley," SP, XXIX (1932), 95-119.
- _____. "Samuel Taylor Coleridge and John Wilson of Blackwood's Magazine," PMLA, XLVIII (1933), 100-128.
- _____. "The Authorship of Articles in Blackwood's Magazine, Numbers xvii-xxiv (August 1818 - March 1819)," The Library, 5th series, XI (1956), 187-200.
- _____. "The first Twenty-Three Numbers of 'Noctes Ambrosianae,'" The Library, 5th series, XII (1957), 108-118.
- _____. "William Wordsworth and John Wilson: A Review of their Relations between 1802 and 1817," PMLA, XLIX (1934), 143-183.
- Swann, Elsie. Christopher North: John Wilson. 1934.
- Thrall, Miriam M.H. Rebellious Fraser's. New York: 1934.
- Trueblood, P.G. The Flowering of Byron's Genius: Studies in Byron's Don Juan. Stanford University Press: 1945.
- Waller, R.D. The Monks and the Giants. 1926.
- Ward, William S. "An Early Champion of Wordsworth: Thomas Noon Talfourd," PMLA, LXVIII (1953), 992-1000.

- _____. "Periodical Literature," in Some British Romantics, ed. James V. Logan et al. Ohio State University Press: 1966.
- _____. "Some aspects of the Conservative Attitude toward Poetry in English Criticism, 1798-1820," PMLA, LX (1945), 386-98.
- _____. "Wordsworth, the Lake Poets, and Their Contemporary Magazine Critics, 1798-1820," SP, XLII (1945), 87-113.
- Wardle, Ralph M. "The Authorship of 'Noctes Ambrosianae,'" MP, XLII (1944), 9-17.
- _____. "The Motives for Byron's George Russell of A," MLN, LXI (1950), 1179-1183.
- _____. "'Timothy Tickler's' Irish Blood," RES, LXXII (1942), 486-490.
- White, Newman Iv~~e~~. Shelley, Second Edition. 2 Vols. New York: 1947.
- _____. The Unextinguished Hearth: Shelley and his Contemporary Critics. Durham, North Carolina: 1938.
- Wilson, John. The Works of Professor Wilson, ed. Professor Ferrier. 12 Vols. 1856-57.
- _____. The Poetical Works of Professor Wilson. 1865.
- Wordsworth, William and Dorothy. The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, The Middle Years, ed. Ernest de Selincourt, Second Edition, revised by Mary Moorman and Alan G. Hill. 2 Vols. 1970.
- Zall, Paul M. "Lord Eldon's Censurship," PMLA, LXVIII (1953), 436-443.