

‘THE BALANCE OR RECONCILIATION OF
OPPOSITE OR DISCORDANT QUALITIES’:
POLITICAL TENSIONS AND RELIGIOUS
TRANSITIONS IN THE WORKS OF
SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

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DECLARATION

I certify that this work has not been accepted in substance for any degree, and is not concurrently being submitted for any degree other than that of PhD being studied at the University of Greenwich. I also declare that this work is the result of my own investigations except where otherwise identified by references and that I have not plagiarised another's work.

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ABSTRACT

My thesis considers the profound effect of the all-pervading late Eighteenth-Century revolutionary climate on the evolving religious and political views of the young Coleridge, and their expression through his published works from 1794-1800. I consider how Coleridge's continuing use of religious imagery evolved, following his transition from the established tradition of Dissenting religion, towards a more personal form of Dissent, grounded in Pantheism.

Chapter One considers how Coleridge's sonnets, lectures and periodical (*The Watchman*) of 1794-5 articulated his developing radical political and Dissenting religious views. Fundamental to Coleridge's views was a notion of the Establishment Anglican Church as a hollow Christian sham, needing a spiritually renewed form of religion to bring it back to God.

Chapter Two compares *Religious Musings* and *Fears in Solitude*, examining how Coleridge's political and religious views matured in the intervening four years. I also focus on iconic and archetypal figures featured in *The Wanderings of Cain*, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, and *Christabel*. A key figure is the Wanderer, who appeared in different guises in Coleridge's works of this period. I also examine the protean nature of Geraldine, from *Christabel*, as a rare female manifestation of the Wanderer, as well as the iconic and archetypal guises of serpent, Lamia, Lilith, and succubus.

Chapter Three considers Coleridge's exploration of the relationship between power, politics, and religion, in his translation of Schiller's *Wallenstein* trilogy, through a comparison of Wallenstein and the archetypal figures of Satan and Faust. I consider how Coleridge has used the vehicle of translation as a creative space, allowing him to articulate and develop his changing religious and political opinions. The notion of translation as creation has not previously been considered.

Chapter Four examines Coleridge's influence on second-generation Romantic Period writers, specifically Mary Shelley. I discuss the evidence for Coleridge's influence on her novels and short stories, also drawing attention to her religious and political expression in microcosm, compared with Coleridge's macrocosmic political views.

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INTRODUCTION

...there are but two subjects worthy the human intellect – politics and religion, our state here, and our state hereafter... (Patton and Mann: 1971: 314)

Coleridge's formative years coincided with a period of great international social unrest. The period 1772-1797 was punctuated by independent uprisings across the world, all of which shared the common factor of the attempted, but not always successful, seizure of power from the authorities by the oppressed. This all-pervading climate of revolution, and social and political unrest, had a profound effect on the young Coleridge and influenced many of his early works, thoughts and ideas. Even as an adolescent, Coleridge was very aware of, and greatly interested in, the religious, social and political climate in which he lived. The influence of the Enlightenment meant that many of these religious ideas in particular were being questioned. Fundamental to Coleridge's position is a notion of the Establishment Church of England as a hollow Christian sham, needing a centralised form of religion to bring it back to God.

The story of Coleridge's early life is well known, along with its highly religious overtones. The youngest son of an Anglican vicar, Coleridge was born in the vicarage of St Mary's parish church, Ottery St Mary, in 1772. Following the death of his father in 1781, Coleridge was sent away to the Christian charity school, Christ's Hospital, from which he progressed to study at Cambridge University. At this time, Cambridge University was still an orthodox Christian institution, but elements of Dissent were beginning to creep in, notably in the person of William Frend, Coleridge's tutor.

The main aim of my thesis is to consider how Coleridge's religious and political views influenced, and were incorporated into, his early works. Through examining the expression of Coleridge's varying religious and political beliefs and ideas in his works, I consider whether Coleridge eventually synthesised or reconciled them, given that they were influenced by the secularist tendencies of Enlightenment rationalism. Coleridge's radical poetic rhetoric was founded in the rhetoric of religious Dissent; for Coleridge the two were inseparable. This is a reminder of the significant part religion played in the development of English radicalism in the 1790's. The thesis is divided into the following areas:

Chapter One, 'A Revolutionary Setting', focuses on the political and social history of the late Eighteenth century, concentrating on Coleridge's early life, and his response to the world around him. I focus on the impact which the American Declaration of Independence, the French Revolution, and the onset of the Industrial Revolution had on the works and opinions of the young Coleridge. Religion is introduced as an inescapable fact of Coleridge's life. Through his works, he interprets both the Old and New Testaments in ways that substantiate his own political theories of the time, falling back on earlier historical or biblical events to corroborate those of the present day.

I consider how Coleridge's changing religious beliefs remained central to his works of this period of transition from the politically radical sonneteer of 1794, whose language is largely, if not wholly, derived from a late Eighteenth century vocabulary of sentimental and sensationalist popular poetry, to the accomplished and more cautious composer of poems such as *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and 'Fears in Solitude', both published in 1798, where Coleridge's more mature poetic voice is seen developing alongside his changing views. In doing so, I consider Coleridge's continuing use of religious imagery coupled with his transition from the established tradition of Dissenting religion into a more personal idiosyncratic form of Dissent grounded in Pantheism derived from his reading of German philosophy.

To illustrate Coleridge's quest to find his own voice, both as a poet and in terms of articulating his changing theories on politics and religion, I consider a range of Coleridge's early works. All quotations from Coleridge's works are taken from the Bollingen *Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, unless otherwise stated in the text. The primary sources on which I focus in this chapter are the 'Sonnet on Pantisocracy'; 'On the Prospect of Establishing a Pantisocracy in America' (still of uncertain authorship); the *Sonnets on Eminent Characters*; the lectures on politics and religion and other lectures delivered in 1795; and finally *The Watchman* (also 1795). These works cover the period of Coleridge's radical youth, and demonstrate him beginning to organise and articulate his changing views. These early works also provided Coleridge with the platform, or pulpit, from which to disseminate his opinions on politics and religion to wide and varied audiences.

Chapter Two, 'Icons and Archetypes', focuses on iconic and archetypal figures who feature in Coleridge's early works, including *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, *Christabel* and 'The Wanderings of Cain'; and those corresponding characters by later writers, which may have been influenced by Coleridge's early works. This chapter also references 'The Nightingale: A Conversation Poem', and 'The Old Man of the Alps'. The works of Coleridge which I consider in this chapter span the years 1794-1798. This was a period of rapid change for Coleridge, which saw him give up many of his radical political ambitions, and achieve a fleeting degree of stability in his personal life as he became a husband and father.

The first section of Chapter Two considers archetypal and iconic representations of characters in *Religious Musings* (written 1794-6) and 'Fears in Solitude' (1798), and explores how Coleridge's political and religious beliefs and ideas are articulated within these works. *Religious Musings* was an important work for Coleridge, as he believed the writing of an epic poem, such as Milton's *Paradise Lost*, was necessary to become a great poet.

A key figure in this chapter is Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew, who appears in various guises in the above works. I examine how the protagonist in each poem appears to bear traits similar to those of Ahasuerus. In many of his appearances in Coleridge's poetry, Ahasuerus has been adapted from the anodyne figure of Christian myth who was punished for making an inappropriate comment in Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765), and transformed into an overtly sinister presence.

The second section of Chapter Two is an in-depth consideration of the figure of Geraldine from *Christabel* (begun in 1798 and published in 1816). I examine her protean nature, considering her in various guises including the proposition that she is a rare female manifestation of Ahasuerus, a lamia or serpent, a succubus and a personification of Lilith. To support these interpretations, I compare Geraldine to similar characters in *The Fairy of the Lake* (John Thelwall, 1801), *Lamia* (John Keats, 1819) and *The Succuba* (Honoré de Balzac, 1836). I also consider how far the perception of such iconic and archetypal figures is considered to be a dynamic concept, rather than a fixed interpretation.

The third Chapter, 'Coleridge and Schiller: Politics, Religion, and the Romantic (anti-) Hero in the *Wallenstein* Trilogy', considers aspects of Coleridge's translation of Schiller's *Wallenstein* Trilogy. The first section examines how Coleridge's translation is rooted in his reading of other important texts, including *The Inferno* from Dante's *The Divine Comedy* (1314), *Faust* (Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, 1797-1806), and *Paradise Lost* (John Milton, 1667). Coleridge's reading of these texts gives the reader clues as to how he understood the relationship between politics, religion, and power. I examine how these views are articulated through Coleridge's translation of the *Wallenstein* trilogy, by comparing the character of Wallenstein with Faust and Satan, the protagonists of the above texts. I consider motifs of delusion and escape into Eden. The first part of Chapter Three concludes with an exploration of Coleridge's construction of Wallenstein the man as a characterisation of the 'Romantic (anti-) Hero'.

The second part of Chapter Three focuses specifically on Coleridge's translation of Schiller's *Wallenstein* trilogy, to ascertain the extent to which Coleridge used or abused the vehicle of translation to incorporate his own current religious, political, and philosophical ideas into both the trilogy and the historical characters of Albrecht von Wallenstein, and Octavio and Max Piccolomini. Schiller also did this, translating the real Seventeenth Century Albrecht von Wallenstein into more of a Napoleonic figure for his play, which was then 'translated' further by Coleridge. The concept of translation as a creative process is a new area of study, with potential for further future development.

Chapter Four, 'Coleridge's Influence on Mary Shelley's Literary Life' considers Coleridge's influence on the works of the second generation of Romantic writers, represented here mainly by Mary Shelley. To a lesser extent I also consider Coleridge's influence on Percy Shelley and Byron. The influence on Mary Shelley is considered in more depth, as I consider her later works still to be disproportionately under-studied compared with those of Shelley and Byron.

The second-generation Romantics inherited feelings of disillusion, disjunction and disunion from the first generation, following the failure of the French Revolution and the resulting social unrest in Britain which stemmed from rising levels of unemployment and inflation. This was compounded by their sense of disappointment in the first-

generation Romantics, as these writers gradually became less politically radical. I examine how these feelings are articulated through a selection of Mary Shelley's novels and short stories, including *Frankenstein* (1818), *Mathilda* (1819), *The Last Man* (1826), and *The Mortal Immortal* (1833). I also briefly consider works by Shelley (*The Revolt of Islam*, 1817) and Byron (*Darkness*, 1816).

I explore how Mary Shelley, like Coleridge before her, engages with current political issues, but through the microcosm of the family unit, rather than through the macrocosm of nationwide or worldwide politics. This final chapter examines how, through the influence of Coleridge's works, Mary Shelley comes to find her own voice through her own literary works, escaping from the politics of her father, William Godwin, and her husband, Percy Shelley.

CHAPTER ONE: A REVOLUTIONARY SETTING

...it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness...it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair... (Dickens: 1999: 3)

This chapter examines the response of the young Coleridge to the volatile world around him. I consider Coleridge's personal and financial circumstances at this time, as well as discussing his political and religious beliefs and motivations, in terms of property, philosophy and politics. I examine how, for Coleridge, exploration and articulation of each of these important areas was inextricably linked to his religious views. This chapter considers Coleridge's continuing use of religious imagery in his early works including the *Sonnets on Eminent Characters* (1794-5) and *The Watchman* (1795), and his increasingly more mature and individual poetry, coupled with his transition from the established tradition of Dissenting religion into Pantheism. This chapter also considers issues raised by Coleridge in his 1795 lectures on the subjects of politics and religion, and other lectures from 1795, in reference to the above-mentioned works of this period.

The major political crises occurring during the final quarter of the Eighteenth Century included the American War of Independence (1775-1783), the first shocks of the Industrial Revolution in Britain, the outbreak of the French revolution (1789), and the subsequent war between Britain and France (1793-1815).

I begin by considering the American War of Independence and its impact on the young Coleridge. In his youth, Coleridge had planned to emigrate to the United States of America, to pursue his dream of Pantisocracy, an egalitarian commune to be founded by himself and Robert Southey, and which was to be based on Christian values, shared property, and the pursuit of intellectual enlightenment. The values of Coleridge's proposed Pantisocracy were also those espoused in the *Declaration of Independence*: equality and liberty, the qualities which had initially led Coleridge to consider the United States as the perfect location for his Pantisocratic commune.

Revolutionary America

By 1772, the year of Coleridge's birth, America had been colonised for 165 years, developing from a series of small coastal settlements into a powerful and increasingly populated nation. Between 1690 and 1775 the American population had increased from a quarter of a million to more than two and a half million (Olson: 1990: 6). The population explosion in America was a consequence of an increased birth rate combined with the continued immigration of people from Europe.

As the settlements became more powerful, they also became increasingly dissatisfied with British taxation and governance, and started to look towards unity, as a first step towards total independence from Britain. The Albany Congress (June 1754) was the first milestone. From this point it took just 22 years for America to formally declare its independence from Britain, after a prolonged international war, and extreme dissatisfaction with the taxes levied by the British on the Americans, which came to a climax with the Boston 'Tea Party' of 16 December 1773. In retribution for the Boston 'Tea Party', Parliament passed the Coercive (or Intolerable) Acts, to punish Massachusetts. In addition to increased taxation, these were enough to make the American provinces question whether they were bound by the jurisdiction of Parliament, as the colonists were not represented in Parliament; the Constitutional Congress was formed, and it agreed upon a strategy of resistance against the British. Neither side was prepared to give way. In the conflict that followed, the British fought the colonists with mercenary troops. Then in January 1776, Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* was published anonymously. It was a pamphlet which attacked both the person of the Monarch, and the notion of hereditary succession, as well as setting out a provisional structure for the self-government of the not-yet-acknowledged United States of America. Just six months later, independence was declared:

The Declaration of Independence – adopted July 4, 1776 – not only announced the birth of a new nation, it also set forth a philosophy of human freedom thenceforth to be a dynamic force in the entire western world. (Olson: 1990: 38)

The *Declaration* itself was couched in language which suggested that America's right to independence from Britain was God-given; for example, the very first paragraph of the *Declaration* asserts the right of the American people to dissolve ties with Britain, and to celebrate 'the separate and equal station to which the laws of Nature and of Nature's

God entitle them...' (GM: XLVI: 1776: 361), thereby exercising independence as their God-given right. This would be very difficult for the British Government to refute.

However, a few lines later, it is proclaimed that:

We hold these truths to be self evident:-- That all men are created equal;
...endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights... among these are...
liberty... (ibid)

Whilst most would agree with this statement, it does seem ironic that it is the foundation of the argument for independence, when viewed in the context of America's history of slavery. Many of the signatories to the *Declaration* were themselves, at this time, slave-owners, such as Thomas Jefferson, the author of the *Declaration*, and Benjamin Franklin, who provided substantial input to the *Declaration*, and who subsequently turned abolitionist. The general opinion was that slaves were not considered to be free 'men' in the sense of the *Declaration*, and therefore were not (and could not be) equal. This issue was raised by a contributor to the September 1776 edition of *The Gentleman's Magazine*, identified only as 'An Englishman', who airs his *Thoughts on the late Declaration of the American Congress*:

In what are they created equal? Is it in size, strength, understanding, figure, moral or civil accomplishments, or in situation of life? Every plough-man knows they are not created equal in any of these... They therefore have introduced their self-evident truths, either through ignorance, or by design, with a self-evident falsehood: since I will defy any American rebel, or any of their patriotic retainers here in England, to point out to me any two men, throughout the whole World, of whom it may with truth be said that they are created equal. (ibid: 403-4)

'An Englishman' finally comes to the point with:

The next assigned cause and ground of their rebellion is, that every man hath an unalienable right to liberty; and here the words, as it happens, are not nonsense, but then they are not true: slaves there are in America, and where there are slaves, there liberty is alienated. (ibid: 404)

This conflation of religious and political rhetoric combined with the issue of slavery provided an important context for the development of Coleridge's ideas and his manner of expressing them. Coleridge's views on slavery are discussed later in this chapter, when I consider his *Lecture On the Slave Trade*, which was delivered in 1795.

There are many instances in the *Declaration* where George III is described using rhetoric such as 'absolute Despotism', 'absolute Tyranny', finally culminating with:

A Prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people. (ibid: 36-3)

Such language had the potential to be viewed as blasphemous in late Eighteenth Century England. Although a constitutional Monarchy at this point, George III was said to be trying to reintroduce the notion that he was endowed with the Divine Right of Kings, thereby deriving his right to rule England directly from God:

[George III] saw himself as God's good man sent to redeem his country from the grasp of the vicious and the clever... (White: 1968:49)

It was also partly as a result of the inclusion of such ideas within the *Declaration* that (inaccurate) rumours circulated that the *Declaration* had in fact been written by Thomas Paine, rather than Thomas Jefferson. Much of the language and ideas used within the *Declaration* are very similar to those used in *Common Sense* (Paine: 1776).

To some English at this time the American colonies represented ideals of freedom and equality which were missing in contemporary England, and which would only begin to be addressed once the Industrial Revolution gained momentum (the impact on Coleridge of the onset of the Industrial Revolution is discussed more fully later in the section entitled 'Sonnets on Pantisocracy'). Bristol, in particular, where Coleridge was living in 1795, was very pro-American at this time, because of its economic links with the New World via the slave trade, and trading of other commodities, such as coffee, sugar and mahogany between the two nations. Whilst Coleridge was also pro-American at this time, he was against the slave trade. In an impassioned letter of 1794 to his brother George, Coleridge states:

Slavery is an Abomination to every feeling of the Head and the Heart – Did Jesus teach the *Abolition* of it? No! He taught those principles, of which the necessary *effect* was – to abolish all Slavery. (Griggs: 1956i: 126: 69)

Coleridge and Pantisocracy

In 1794, eighteen years after the American Declaration of Independence, it was precisely the same ideals of liberty, equality, religious and political freedom, and plenty of land so tempting to the early settlers, which also tempted the Pantisocrats (Robert Southey, Coleridge, Robert Lovell and the Fricker sisters) to consider emigrating to America. As Coleridge stated in a letter of 1794:

A small but liberalized party have formed a scheme of emigration on the principles of an abolition of individual property... (ibid: 96: 54)

Pantisocracy has been well-discussed and evaluated, especially towards the end of the twentieth century by, for example, Richard Holmes, Seamus Perry, Marilyn Butler, William Christie, Nicholas Roe, and David Fairer. I discuss it here, as it was the motivation for much, if not all, of Coleridge's works of this period. Given the prevailing social and political conditions in Britain and France during their youth (discussed later in this chapter), it is hardly surprising that as young men, Coleridge and Southey dreamed of living in a utopia built on a classless society where any form of slavery, even domestic, was unheard of; where freedom of worship and religious expression was encouraged; and where children could be raised without bearing the weight of the historical and traditional precedents of the old world. Like the thousands who emigrated before them, both Southey and Coleridge agreed that this dream could be realised by moving to the New World – America. Coleridge and Southey wanted the Pantisocrats to be completely self-sufficient, living off their own home-grown produce, and educating their children at home. They selected a place on the banks of the Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania as the perfect place to settle.

It is interesting to note that Coleridge's and Southey's notions of Pantisocratic equality meant that all Pantisocratic men would be equal. In a letter of 18 September 1794 to Robert Southey, Coleridge delightedly exclaims: 'SHAD GOES WITH US. HE IS MY BROTHER!' (ibid: 103: 59). Shad was the man-servant of Southey's rich aunt, Elizabeth Tyler. Their initial fraternal intention was for Shad to join the party on an equal footing with the others, the differences of social status between them forgotten or overlooked.

On the other hand, Coleridge and Southey expected the women to take on the majority of the domestic chores, including chopping wood, cooking, cleaning, and helping on the farm. These chores would presumably be done whilst they were pregnant, as Coleridge and Southey also expected that the women would give birth to, raise and educate the next generation of Pantisocrats, which task alone Coleridge and Southey seem to have envisioned as a more or less full-time job! With the women doing the lions' share of the physical work in the new settlement, the men expected to be able to work for

approximately two to three hours per day, leaving the rest of the day free for writing, and discussing philosophy and literature.

Coleridge sought to legitimise Pantisocracy through his poetical and prose works of this time, by making scriptural justifications for Pantisocracy as a practical plan for living, drawing inspiration directly from the King James Bible, such as quoting Acts 2: 44-45 in the 6th *Lecture On Revealed Religion, its' Corruptions and Political Views* (sic):

And all that believed were together, and had all things in common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all *men*, as every man had need.

To fund both the project, and his impending marriage to Sara Fricker, Coleridge needed to raise a considerable amount of money quickly. However, the accumulation of money and the observance of deadlines were never two of Coleridge's major talents.

Nevertheless he explored several avenues, the first of which was to get the verse drama *The Fall of Robespierre* published. Coleridge and Southey wrote *The Fall of Robespierre* very quickly after reports of Robespierre's death reached England, two weeks after the event. Publication was achieved in October 1794, when the radical Unitarian publisher, Benjamin Flower, published an edition of 500 copies, which not only brought Coleridge some much-needed money and public recognition, it also broadcast the Pantisocratic message. Additionally, publication by Flower ensured that Coleridge's radical politics, as expressed in *The Fall of Robespierre*, were inextricably associated with the rhetoric of Dissent, and its literary style. It also helped to make Coleridge known to the authorities.

Coleridge carefully ensured that he received more recognition than Southey for this joint work, by omitting Southey's name from the title-page. He sent this particularly unconvincing explanation in a letter to Southey:

...I shall put my Name – because it will sell at least an hundred Copies at Cambridge –. It would appear ridiculous to put two names to *such* a Work...
(Griggs: 1956i: 106: 60)

It is interesting to note that four years later, Wordsworth would do exactly the same thing to Coleridge, by omitting his name from the title-page of the *Lyrical Ballads* (1798). In her recent biography of Wordsworth, Juliet Barker refers to the incident as follows:

But where did this leave Coleridge? ... At first [he] was unperturbed by the exclusion of his name. It was only later, when, frustrated by his own failures... he came to see this as a sinister denial of his abilities and of his own contribution to *Lyrical Ballads*. (Barker: 2001: 193)

When this realisation finally dawned on Coleridge, several years later, perhaps he finally understood how Southey must have felt, back in 1794.

The reaction of both Coleridge's and Southey's families to the news of their proposed emigration and communal living was predictable and not favourable. As Richard Holmes states:

In Bristol, Southey had been ejected from Aunt Tyler's house because of the scheme, and threatened with disinheritance... Coleridge himself was once more in deep family difficulties. His brothers had now discovered the emigration plan... and threatened to cut off his finances. They proposed that he should leave Cambridge and study law at the Temple. (Holmes: 1999i: 78-9)

The financial pressure on Coleridge and Southey, from all directions, was now immense. These were exactly the conditions that Coleridge needed to enable him to excel. This was a prolific period for Coleridge, both in terms of the amount and quality of composition and publication. His name began to become more widely known and discussed. As well as having *The Fall of Robespierre* published, Coleridge was successfully getting his poetry published, including his *Sonnets on Eminent Characters* which were published weekly in the *Morning Chronicle* newspaper in December 1794 and January 1795. Two sonnets on the subject of Pantisocracy also appeared around this time, which are very likely to have been written by Coleridge, although this has not been conclusively proven. Before presenting an analysis of the two sonnets in the next section, 'Sonnets on Pantisocracy', I first provide a brief overview of the demise of the Pantisocratic project.

The Demise of Pantisocracy

Despite all Southey and Coleridge's efforts, a lack of funds caused the scheme to fall through before it could be even partially realised:

In theory, the Pantisocratic expedition was still scheduled for March or April 1795, but none of the £2000 capital had been raised ... (ibid: 83)

Coleridge and Southey were forced to find other means of raising money quickly. In January 1795 they moved into a house in Bristol, where they both began work on a series of lectures.

Living and working in close proximity to each other for eight months took its toll on Southey and Coleridge's friendship. Coleridge's chaotic lifestyle was very much at odds with Southey's methodical approach. For example, Coleridge would generally begin to write a lecture at midnight on the night before it was to be delivered:

Much of this material, in true undergraduate fashion, was in fact cannibalised more or less directly from commentaries borrowed (usually the day before) from the Bristol Library. (ibid:96)

To add to this, they were affected by other outside issues. Whilst living together in Bristol, Coleridge, Southey and George Burnett had to borrow money for rent and food. Despite these problems, Coleridge managed to write a well-received series of lectures mainly on politics and religion, but also covering other subjects, although understandably, one of the additional chief concerns of the 1795 Lectures was that of property. These lectures are discussed towards the end of this chapter, in the section entitled 'Coleridge's 1795 Lectures on Politics and Religion'.

Whilst living in Bristol in 1795, Coleridge had retained his idealistic hope that he and his Pantisocratic companions would eventually emigrate to the banks of the Susquehanna, despite painful reality drawing him gradually and inescapably towards literary and marital servitude in Britain. Southey on the other hand gradually started to listen to the objections of his family and friends. His Pantisocratic notions began to ebb away, and to be replaced by other, more conservative ideas, which initially still centred round communal living. Southey began to think that a Pantisocratic trial run on a farm in Wales would be sensible, firstly to make sure the Pantisocrats had the necessary skills between them to ensure they did not starve, and secondly to make sure they were able to endure living entirely in each others' company, with very little contact with the outside world. With the advent of a small annuity from his wealthy friend, Charles Winn, Southey also began to reconsider the egalitarian implications of the original Pantisocratic plan. Whilst Coleridge continued to think that all property should be held in common (because he had no material or financial resources of his own, and therefore

nothing to lose), now that Southey had an income, he was (understandably) reluctant to share the proceeds with, and support, the eleven other proposed Pantisocrats. The breach between the two friends grew wider, until their friendship became insupportable. In a scathing epic letter of Friday 13th November 1795, Coleridge terminated both his friendship with Southey, and the projected Pantisocracy, in no uncertain terms. One of the points made by Coleridge in this letter refers to the Welsh Pantisocratic trial scheme, mentioned above:

Your Letter to Lovell... in answer to some objections of mine to the Welsh Scheme, was the first Thing that alarmed me... However, I came over to your opinion, of the utility and in course the duty of rehearsing our Scheme in Wales – and so rejected the Offer of being established in the Earl of Buchan’s Family. (Griggs: 1956i: 164: 93)

Here Coleridge quite clearly blames Southey for introducing the suggestion that the Pantisocratic scheme might fail, which is implied in Southey’s suggestion that a trial run closer to home might prove to be necessary. Coleridge also blames Southey because he (Coleridge) turned down a potentially steady, well-paid job as tutor to the children of the Earl of Buchan. Coleridge saw it as his duty to turn down the offer in favour of the Pantisocratic scheme, in the same way that his marriage to Sara Fricker (initially a vital part of the scheme) was also Coleridge doing his duty. What further irritated Coleridge was that Southey did not appear to suffer personally from the collapse of Pantisocracy, but rather, seemed to do quite well out of it. Southey bowed out of the scheme to go and work for his uncle Herbert Hill, a chaplain, in Lisbon, whilst Coleridge retreated to the moral high ground:

But I hear, that you have again changed your Ground. You do not now mean to study the Law – but to maintain yourself by your writings and on your promis’d Annuity, which... would be more than 100£ a year. Could you not have done the same with *us*? I neither have or could deign to have an hundred a year – Yet by my own exertions I will struggle hard to maintain myself, and my Wife, and my Wife’s Mother, and my associate [George Burnett]... O Selfish, money-loving Man! what Principle have you not given up? (ibid: 171: 93)

This written attack on Southey is scathing in the extreme, but it accuses Southey of many of the things of which Coleridge himself was guilty, for example, continually changing his mind.

For Coleridge, the final nail in the Pantisocratic coffin was that, on the eve of his departure for Portugal, Southey secretly married his Pantisocratic bride, Edith Fricker, not out of a sense of duty or obligation, but because they were passionately in love. At this point it must have been very easy for Coleridge to feel that he had not only lost any chance of making something of his life, but also that he had been outdone by Southey. His letter of 13 November continues to vent his frustrations:

You have left a large Void in my Heart – I know no man big enough to fill it. Others I may love equally & esteem equally: and some perhaps I may admire as much. But never do I expect to meet another man, who will make me unite attachment for his person with reverence for his heart and admiration of his Genius! I did not only venerate you for your own Virtues, I prized you as the Sheet Anchor of mine! (ibid)

Sonnets on Pantisocracy

One poem of this period certainly authored by Coleridge, expressing his Pantisocratic desires, was published in the *Morning Chronicle* on December 9th, 1794, within the same period as the series of *Sonnets on Eminent Characters*. Entitled ‘To a Young Ass, Its Mother Being Tethered Near It’, the poem expressed the fraternal notions of Pantisocracy, but it was unfortunate that, of all possible creatures, the chosen addressee was an ass. This was seized upon by critics in later years when they chose to attack both Coleridge’s works and his ideas. One later critic who took advantage of this was Byron in his anonymously published poem ‘English Bards and Scotch Reviewers’ (1809):

...none in ...numbers can surpass
The bard who soars to elegise an ass.
So well the subject suits his noble mind,
He brays the laureat of the long-ear’d kind. (Byron: 1994: 114: 261-4)

Of the two sonnets of unproven authorship describing Pantisocracy, one was sent in a letter from Coleridge to Robert Southey in September 1794. If this sonnet was written by Coleridge, it represents one of his first published works on Pantisocracy. William Keach’s note on the sonnet states:

The first 8 lines were included in the version of ‘A Monody on the Death of Chatterton’ printed in Lancelot Sharpe’s edition of Chatterton’s *Poems* (1794). Southey himself attributed the poem to STC’s friend S. Favell in a letter of 19 October 1794, and the poem was attributed to Favell when it was first published in full in the *Life and Correspondence of the late Robert Southey*, ed. Cuthbert Southey, 6 vols (London: 1849-50). In 1852 it was printed with a note apologizing for the apparent plagiarism. But E. H. Coleridge argues that the

sonnet is entirely STC's and notes that it was included in MS E' (Keach: 1997: 448)

J. C. C. Mays notes that the poem was very likely to have been a collaborative effort between Favell and Coleridge, but that the extent of Favell's contribution is not known. Mays also surmises that its 'explicit praise of Pantisocracy' (Mays: 2001i: 131: 78) may have explained why Coleridge did not publish it. Favell was a friend of Coleridge's around this time, and was also involved in the Pantisocratic plans.

I believe that there is sufficient evidence to support this sonnet having been mostly written by Coleridge. Before examining the sonnet in detail, it is important to note that it was written before the *Sonnets on Eminent Characters* (1 December 1794 – 31 January 1795), in September 1794. Both the language and style of the 'Sonnet on Pantisocracy' are similar to that of the *Sonnets on Eminent Characters*. The style is slightly awkward and unsettled, and generally indicative of juvenilia, emulating the sonnets of poets such as William Lisle Bowles and Charlotte Smith, who were great influences on Coleridge at this time in his life.

The first four lines of the sonnet state that the poet will no longer concentrate on the pleasures of the past, or the sorrows of the present; he will now only look to the future, which he assumes will be rosy. The author's optimism is expressed through religious rhetoric:

No more the visionary Soul shall dwell
On Joys, that were! no more endure to weigh
The Shame and Anguish of the evil Day,
Wisely forgetful! (Mays: 2001i: 131: 78: 1-4)

The spirit of optimism expressed here is probably consistent with Coleridge's feelings at this time. As stated earlier, Coleridge's main problem at this time was a chronic shortage of money. All other areas of his life seemed to be very good. He was comparatively reasonably healthy, newly engaged to Sara Fricker and still managing to convince himself that he was in love with her, and was serious about the Pantisocratic expedition, still believing at this point that it could be achieved. This was perhaps one of the happiest, most positive periods of Coleridge's life. He appeared to be moving decisively forwards, with a clear plan for his future life and career, which had finally allowed him

to move on from his University career and the 15th Light Dragoons debacle, and to put these episodes behind him. After failing to engage fully with his studies whilst at Cambridge, and in despair at his increasingly dissolute and irresponsible lifestyle, Coleridge ran away from Cambridge halfway through his final year, and joined the mounted regiment of the 15th Light Dragoons. After proving himself to be ‘a very indocile Equestrian’ (Griggs: 1965i: 66: 35), and managing to be discharged on the grounds of insanity, Coleridge was eventually persuaded back to Cambridge, although he ultimately left without taking his degree.

It would be easy for Coleridge, as an idealistic young writer, to compose the above lines, thinking that his hardships were now behind him, and that he was moving on to bigger and better things at this point in his life. At this time in 1794, Coleridge’s point of view might well be that if he could combine this optimism for a brighter future with his leaving a troubled England, one of the sources of Coleridge’s personal troubles, then the proposed Pantisocratic emigration to America would become a rosy new dawn for him, where he could truly put his troubles (4000 miles) behind him. Negative critics might say that this amounted to Coleridge running away both from his troubles and from his responsibilities.

The sonnet continues with the poet expressing his desire to cross the sea where, full of hope and virtue, he will establish his own community, and live by his own rules:

...O’er the Ocean Swell
Sublime of Hope I seek the cottag’d Dell,
Where Virtue calm with careless step may stray,
And dancing to the moonlight Roundelay
The wizard Passions weave an holy spell. (Mays: 2001i: 131: 78:
4-8)

The language used in this part of the sonnet is spell-like, perhaps reminiscent of the Weird Sisters in Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*:

The weird sisters, hand in hand,
Posters of the sea and land,
Thus do go about, about:
Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine,
And thrice again, to make up nine,
Peace! The charm’s wound up. (Craig: 1993: 1:3: 847)

More importantly, there is persuasive evidence for this sonnet having been written by Coleridge, as the phrase ‘O’er the Ocean swell’ also appears in his ‘Sonnet: To Priestley’ (Mays: 2001i: 158: 91: 2), which I discuss later in the section entitled ‘Sonnets on Eminent Characters’. Additionally, lines seven and eight of the Pantisocratic sonnet are very similar to those contained in the last section of *Kubla Khan*, written three years later:

Weave a circle round him thrice...
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drank the milk of Paradise. (ibid: 514: 178: 51-4)

As the sonnet on Pantisocracy progresses, the Christian rhetoric acquires increasingly pagan overtones, as the poet weaves his idealistic spell of Pantisocratic perfection.

The sonnet continues:

Eyes, that have ak’d with sorrow! Ye shall weep
Tears of doubt-mingled Joy –as they, who start
From precipices of distemper’d Sleep
On which the fierce-eyed Fiends their revel keep,
And see the rising Sun, and feel it dart
New rays of Pleasance trembling to the Heart. (ibid: 131: 78: 9-14)

Here the poet states that those who once cried for sorrow in England will now cry for joy in America, although it is qualified by emphasising that the joy will not be unbridled, but mixed with doubt. The poet compares this to having a nightmare which is observed by ‘Fiends’, and then waking up to see the rising sun, which in Coleridge’s language is emblematic of God.

Coleridge also used the image of the rising sun in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1798) as an emblem of God, although it was to reveal a threatening vengeful God – ‘Ne dim ne red, like God’s own head,/ The glorious Sun uprist...’ (Mays: 2001i: 380: 161: 97-8) - whereas the Pantisocratic sun promises peace and redemption.

The experience of disturbed sleep and terrifying nightmares is a common theme in Coleridge’s poetry, and appears in other poems of his written around the same time, such as *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and later poems such as ‘The Pains of Sleep’

(written in 1803, published in 1816). Night horrors are also raised in the ‘Sonnet: To Mrs Siddons’, the eighth in the series of *Sonnets on Eminent Characters* written over the winter of 1794-5. This sonnet was subsequently credited to Charles Lamb, and published in Coleridge’s *Poems* of 1796 under the title ‘Effusion VII’, along with three other ‘Effusions’ by Lamb. The ‘Sonnet: To Mrs Siddons’ has many features pertaining to Lamb, rather than to Coleridge, for example, the fact that the sonnet is addressed to Mrs Siddons, the foremost actress of her day, points towards Lamb’s early (and life-long) love of the theatre.

In his adult life, Lamb always found it very easy to recall how he had felt as a child. Both Lamb and Coleridge experienced night horrors as children, although in Lamb’s case, they started before he was sent to school at Christ’s Hospital, whilst he was a very young child still living with his family in the Temple. He relates his memories of this experience through his alter-ego, Elia, in the essay ‘Witches and Other Night Fears’, published in the *Essays of Elia* (1823):

I was dreadfully alive to nervous terrors. The night-time solitude, and the dark, were my hell. The sufferings I endured in this nature would justify the expression. I never laid my head on my pillow, I suppose, from the fourth to the seventh or eighth year of my life - so far as memory serves in things so long ago - without an assurance, which realised its own prophecy, of seeing some frightful spectre. (Rhys: 1906: 78-9)

If we accept that Coleridge did indeed write the majority of the ‘Sonnet on Pantisocracy’, it is possible that the rising Sun is emblematic of America. Coleridge’s proposed emigration would have been, for him, a new start. By crossing the Atlantic he would leave behind the ‘fiends that plague [him] thus...’ (Mays: 2001i: 378: 161: 80), for example his brothers and friends, his Cambridge tutors, people he owed money to, people he had let down. It is possible that at this point, Coleridge thought that his disappearance would please these people. This shows that Coleridge didn’t understand that many of the people he felt were persecuting him were actually concerned for his welfare, and were trying to help him. However, it is unlikely that Southey was numbered as one of these ‘Fiends’ (although he had certainly come into conflict repeatedly with Coleridge) as the poem was discovered in a letter from Coleridge to Southey, at a time when he was still planning to emigrate on the Pantisocratic expedition with Coleridge.

The second Pantisocratic sonnet which appeared in print at a slightly later date was entitled ‘On the Prospect of Establishing a Pantisocracy in America’. It is also of uncertain authorship. The sonnet was published anonymously in the *Co-operative Magazine and Monthly Herald* (6 March 1826), and attributed to Coleridge by E. H. Coleridge in 1907. There is no known manuscript copy. However, in terms of the language used, it is comparable to other poems of Coleridge’s written around 1794, such as the *Religious Musings*, ‘Epitaph on an Infant’, ‘Monody on the Death of Chatterton’ (written in 1790, revised in 1794), and ‘Monody on a Tea-Kettle’ (also written in 1790 – a parody of ‘Monody on the Death of Chatterton’). The wording and style is comparatively clumsy and awkward, and not yet quite established as Coleridge’s own. In 1794, Coleridge’s style is comparable with classical and Augustan styles, both of which were weighty influences on his work as a young man. Although J. C. C. Mays does not include it in his *Poetical Works*, below I have given an analysis of the sonnet ‘On the Prospect of Establishing a Pantisocracy in America’, as I believe there is a strong case for attributing this sonnet to Coleridge.

The Gentleman’s Magazine published modern poetry of the day, and even a cursory glance at the editions from 1794 and 1795 reveals imagery, subject matter and phraseology not too different to that used by Coleridge in these two years. For instance, in the February 1795 edition, there is a sonnet ‘To The Rev WM Bowles’, by JH. The poet Bowles was also the subject of one of Coleridge’s *Sonnets on Eminent Characters*. Other subjects from these two issues include the war with France, and the Wandering Jew, both favourite subjects of Coleridge’s.¹

¹ ODE ON THE APPROACH OF THE NEW YEAR Part III.

Distracted ‘*France!*’ deluded state
Once happy, powerful and great;
For whom the high creative Hand
All ‘*stations*’ in its wisdom plann’d;
Recording Memr’y heaves a mournful sigh,
Survey’s thee with a retrospective eye,
With pity, mix’d with scorn, beholds thy fall;
‘Tis all thou canst expect- ‘insidious Gaul!’
Born of light fantastic brain,
Of idle sophistry still vain;
What can that dreadful guilt atone
Which ras’d the ‘*altar*’ and the ‘*throne?*’
Which o’erwhelm’d *all* with murd’rous rage,
And stain’d with blood th’historic page!
‘When *Horror* rides upon the white-mouth’d wave,
Can any *port* the found’ring *vessel* save?’

J. CRANE, M.D. *Wells Dec. 31, 1795* (GM: LXV:1795: ii)

The sonnet 'On the Prospect of Establishing a Pantisocracy in America' begins:

Whilst pale Anxiety, corrosive Care,
The tear of Woe, the gloom of sad Despair,
And deepen'd Anguish generous bosoms rend –
Whilst patriot souls their country's fate lament... (Keach: 1997:
58)

This refers to how the patriots, the supporters of England, are anxiously awaiting the threatened French invasion of England, and are also worried about what the final outcome might be. The threat of invasion is exacerbated by other problems within England, such as a failed harvest and resulting famine conditions. The onset of the Industrial Revolution contributed to this problem by the massive influx into the towns and cities of people looking for work. This stretched already limited food and resources to breaking point.

In addition to the problems then current in English society, there was a huge loss of life in the navy, with the result that men were being press-ganged into the services at an alarming rate. This was often little more than kidnap. Men were often plied with alcohol, incited to sign up for the navy, and then carted off immediately, often being many miles out to sea once they were fully sober enough to realise what they had done:

Pressing was legal, but gangs were supposed to observe restrictions... Force was nevertheless central to operations, and generated notorious conflicts in the seaports. Crimping, whereby individuals were lured into service, depended as much on subterfuge as on violence. Many crimps were brothel-keepers and publicans... They often also functioned as loan sharks, entrapping their victims with debts, drink, or prostitution, combined if necessary with cudgelling. (McCalman: 1999: 659)

SONNET. TO -----

The weary trav'ler on some lonely waste,
As the hoarse winds with midnight dangers teem,
Marking, far off, diminutively gleam
Some cottage light, cherly redoubling haste,
Bids Fancy sketch the pallet of repose,
So wears my course, whilst, battling, o'er my breast,
Misfortune's ruthful object, sore depress'd,
Life's tempest breaks with complicated woes!
Lorn wand'rer of the world! to whom thy smile,
Peerless Elmina! claiming thralldom's sigh,
Like the enchantment pow'rful of thine eye!
The shrine where Hope hath laid the lover's spoil!
Still, in the dreariest hour, doth seem a ray
That comfort speaks with amatory sway! *Conduit Street.* J.H. (ibid: 152)

All these factors led to a very unstable society. Given Coleridge's feelings regarding the Government and the general state of the country in 1794, it would have been very easy for him to have pictured England following the lead set by France, and descending either into revolution or anarchy. This was also compounded by the accompanying sense of helplessness occasioned by waiting.

The second section of the sonnet draws attention to the power-hungry 'Despots', who are mobilising armies in an attempt to enslave the mind of man. These leaders want to control and contain man's capability of free-thought and free-will, although the use of the word 'vainly' implies they will never succeed:

Whilst mad with rage demoniac, foul intent,
Embattled legions Despots vainly send
To arrest the immortal mind's expanding ray
Of everlasting Truth... (Keach: 1997: 58)

The language used here is very similar to that of *Religious Musings*. The poet does not state who the 'Despots' are. If this sonnet was written by Coleridge, he would certainly have been referring to William Pitt the Younger, as well as Napoleon. 'Embattled' could also have more than one meaning here. The poet could mean that the armies were armed and ready for war, or the meaning could be that they were weary and soulless, compelled to follow the despotic whims and orders of their unnamed leaders. The religious rhetoric in this section is very Miltonic, reminiscent of the scene in *Book I of Paradise Lost* where Lucifer begins to outline his revenge on God, and his subsequent punishment:

...with ambitious aim
Against the throne and monarchy of God,
Raised impious war in Heaven and battle proud,
With vain attempt. Him th' Almighty Power
Hurled headlong flaming from the ethereal sky,
With hideous ruin and combustion, down
To bottomless perdition... (Milton: 1994: 114-5: 41-7)

The use of words such as 'immortal' and 'expanding' in the sonnet suggests that the mind of man is infinitely larger than any controls or restrictions which could ever be placed upon it. The word 'everlasting' is also applied to the work of the human mind, rather than to the Despots, indicating that their triumph, if achieved at all, will be short-lived, transient, and presumably forgotten by the generations that follow, whereas the 'Everlasting Truth' will live forever. Here, Miltonic and Biblical imagery of damnation

are conflated, to show that this will be the fate of England if the current tyranny is allowed to continue. This is a further case for the sonnet having been written by Coleridge, as at this point, he believed that he could avoid being dragged into the nation's 'perdition' if he emigrated with his Pantisocratic companions.

In the final section of the sonnet, the poet states his intention to explore other countries, which are happier even than Britain was before the current threat. He is exploring them in his mind, and will soon cross the Atlantic with like-minded people, to live in peace and harmony in America, away from the dangers currently threatening English security:

... other climes
Where dawns, with hope serene, a brighter day
Than e'er saw Albion in her happiest times,
With mental eye exulting now explore,
And soon with kindred minds shall haste to enjoy
(Free from the ills which here our peace destroy)
Content and Bliss on Transatlantic shore. (Keach: 1997: 58: 8-14)

Although it has not been definitively proven that Coleridge was the author of this sonnet, the above quotation is an expression of Coleridge's Pantisocratic ideal/idyll on the banks of the Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania in 1794. This sonnet was likely to have been written by Coleridge, because of the very many similarities between the words and ideas used here, and in other works by Coleridge such as 'This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison' (1800, written 1797), in which Coleridge, confined to the house with a scalded foot, imagines the sights that Charles Lamb will see whilst walking in the Quantocks without him. Textual similarities of the same time include words and ideas contained within the *Sonnets on Eminent Characters* (1794-5).

Sonnets on Eminent Characters

The *Sonnets on Eminent Characters* (1794-5) were pivotal at this time in enabling Coleridge to define and organise his political and religious beliefs, in preparation for further refinement through his 1795 Lecture series, as well as being a much-needed source of revenue for him. The *Sonnets on Eminent Characters* were among the most politically daring of Coleridge's early works, as they focussed on some of the most prominent political and Dissenting figures of the day. The political figures included Erskine, Burke, General Kosciusko and Pitt the Younger; the Dissenters included

Priestley. Below, I have examined a selection of the *Sonnets on Eminent Characters* in the order in which they appeared in the *Morning Chronicle*, drawing attention to the main motivations behind Coleridge's writings, and how these are articulated through the religious rhetoric within these sonnets.

At this time, there was the very real possibility and significant worry that England would be invaded by the French. Revolutionary fervour was already rife in England, as demonstrated in 1794 by the Treason Trials of the radicals Thelwall, Horne Tooke, Muir, Hardy and Paine:

... [the government] drafted 800 warrants for the arrest of suspected revolutionaries. With the suspension of Habeas Corpus at the end of May, the prisoners were detained in the Tower of London before Hardy was eventually brought before the Old Bailey on 25 October 1794. The trial lasted eight days, ...the jury ...returned a verdict of not guilty. Tooke was the next to be tried, followed by Thelwall. Both were exonerated, forcing crown lawyers to... release all remaining prisoners and drop the charges against them. (McCalman: 1999: 738)

The first sonnet to appear was addressed to Erskine, who had defended Paine and other radicals in the 1794 Treason Trials. Like Coleridge, Erskine was a great orator, and also like Coleridge, he had the ability to synthesise large amounts of complex information, and present it coherently. These are qualities which Coleridge celebrates in his sonnet:

For dreadless thou didst stand
(Thy censer glowing with the hallow'd flame)
An hireless Priest before th' insulted shrine,
And at her altar pourd'st the stream divine
Of unmatched eloquence. (Mays: 2001i: 156: 89: 4-8)

Here Coleridge sanctifies the law, using religious rhetoric to compare Erskine in full flow to a priest in the pulpit, preaching to his flock. Coleridge's use of religious rhetoric to describe Erskine also highlights Coleridge's esteem of, and respect for, him at this time.

Erskine was remembered for his eloquence during the Treason Trials, and his supreme skill in addressing a jury, but his later career was less spectacular. In 1794 however, there was no reason to believe that Erskine's career as a great legal and parliamentary orator would not continue its meteoric rise, which started before the Treason Trials:

...Therefore thy name
Her sons shall venerate, and cheer thy breast
With blessings heaven-ward breath'd. And, when the doom
Of Nature bids thee die, beyond the tomb
Thy light shall shine: as sunk beneath the West
Tho' the great Summer Sun eludes our gaze,
Still burns wide Heaven with his distended blaze. (ibid: 8-14)

Coleridge's depth of feeling for Erskine and his oratorical abilities at this early point in his career is additionally hinted at by endowing him with God-like status, through identifying Erskine with the sun, and specifically situating him in heaven. As discussed previously, for Coleridge, the sun was usually an emblem of God.

In this sonnet, Coleridge personifies 'British Freedom', noting that she is about to leave England with all its troubles, and settle in a 'happier land'. He states that a blast of rhetoric from Erskine may be all it takes to persuade her not to leave:

When British Freedom for an happier land
Spread her broad wings, that flutter'd with affright,
ERSKINE! thy voice she heard, and paus'd her flight
Sublime of hope! (ibid: 1-4)

The 'happier land' is not identified by name. Coleridge may be exploring his perception here that France, currently in the throes of revolution, is happier and more content than the United Kingdom. The French Revolution allowed centuries of tradition to be overturned, and France appeared to be on the verge of a new beginning, whilst England was still ensnared by the stifling weight of its historical precedents.

The second sonnet in the series was addressed to Burke, another great parliamentary orator, and was concerned with similar issues, including the political repression of English sympathisers with the French Revolution, who at this point expected the Revolution to succeed, and expected that Britain would either be dragged into revolution, or into war with France. Many of the repressive actions of the Government at this time, including the suspension of Habeas Corpus, the Treason Trials and the Two Acts, had a direct effect on Coleridge's activities in 1794-5. This is considered more fully later in this section when the sonnet addressed to Pitt is discussed.

Coleridge uses Burke as a symbol of the repression enacted by the government of Pitt the Younger, as it was Burke who had rallied the New Whigs in support of Pitt's government, which then declared war on France in 1793 in protest at its revolutionary government. Prior to this Burke had written his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), which had prompted Paine to respond with *The Rights of Man* (1791). As Nicholas Roe states:

Burke's *Reflections* forced the issue of France, making the Revolution and its political repercussions elsewhere in Europe the major subject of political debate. (Roe: 1998: 23)

This work was confirmation that Burke had changed sides. He had been an enthusiastic supporter of the earlier American Revolution, which in his view was the American colonists' legitimate assertion of their rights, but these sentiments did not extend to the French Revolution, which he saw as a rebellion against authority, rather than sharing the sympathisers' view that the Revolution represented a step towards democracy. Coleridge captures this defection in his 'Sonnet: To Burke', via the voice of 'Freedom':

Great Son of Genius! sweet to me thy name,
Ere in an evil hour with alter'd voice
Thou badst Oppression's hireling crew rejoice
Blasting with wizard spell my laurel'd fame. (Mays: 2001i: 157:
90: 5-8)

'Wizard spell' here refers to the power of Burke's spell-binding oratorical abilities. Additionally, Coleridge's use of the words 'wizard spell' here is similar to 'wizard Passions weave an holy spell' used in the 'Sonnet on Pantisocracy' discussed above (ibid: 131: 78: 8). Both imply pagan, rather than traditional Christian, thought. These references to Paganism help to dramatize the Christian ideas contained within the sonnet.

Despite Burke's defection, at the time Coleridge wrote this sonnet he did not believe that Burke was a corrupt politician: 'Yet never, Burke! thou drank'st Corruption's bowl!' (ibid: 70: 9). He soon changed his view though. Coleridge added the following note to this line in the 1796 edition of his poetical works:

When I composed this line, I had not read the following paragraph in the *Cambridge Intelligencer* (of Saturday, November, 1795.) 'He has thus retir'd from the trade of politics, with pensions to the amount of 3700 l. a year.' (Keach: 1997: 455)

Coleridge implies here that, although he didn't share Burke's views on the French Revolution, he did not believe that Burke was corrupt until he read the above article detailing Burke's pension allocations. However, the following section of the sonnet, written in December 1794, seems to imply that Coleridge held views on Burke's corruption long before November 1795:

Thee stormy Pity and the cherish'd lure
Of Pomp, and proud Precipitance of soul
Wilder'd with meteor fires... (Mays: 2001i: 157: 90: 10-12)

Here, Coleridge suggests that Burke may have changed his views from support of the American Revolution to denunciation of the French Revolution in pursuit of fame and fortune, plus the desire for recognition from Pitt (obliquely referred to in the phrase 'stormy Pity' above). As stated earlier, Pitt's declaration of war on France in 1793 was almost a direct result of Burke's ability to entice the majority of Whigs over to the side of Pitt's government.

Coleridge concludes this sonnet, again in the voice of Freedom, by saying that he believes Burke is fundamentally a good man (whatever he may have implied a couple of lines earlier!):

Ah Spirit pure!
That error's mist had left thy purged eye:
So might I clasp thee with a Mother's joy! (ibid: 12-4)

However, he expresses the wish that Burke will see the error of his ways, and states that 'Freedom' regrets that she will be unable to welcome him back into her arms until he has both seen his error of judgement, and made amends for it. Here, Coleridge implies that Burke will be one of the casualties of the Revolution, in political terms. This of course was not the case, as Burke spent his final years as a strong supporter of the war with France. Coleridge uses very little religious rhetoric in his 'Sonnet: To Burke', and this may be taken as an indication of Coleridge's negative feelings towards him.

The Dissenter Joseph Priestley is the subject of the third sonnet in the series. Coleridge's particular interest in Priestley was his Unitarianism, and the challenge which he presented to many basic Christian orthodoxies through his work, *Institutes of Natural and Revealed Religion* (1772-74), such as Christ's Divinity, and the Virgin birth.

Priestley had also claimed that the 'Christian Church' was originally Unitarian, in his work *An History of Early Opinions concerning Jesus Christ, compiled from Original Writers, proving that the Christian Church was at first Unitarian* (1768).

Again, Coleridge uses religious language and imagery to emphasise his great respect for Priestley and his works:

Calm in his halls of Brightness he shall dwell!
For lo! RELIGION at his strong behest
Starts with mild anger from the Papal spell,
And flings to Earth her tinsel-glittering vest,
Her mitred state and cumbrous pomp unholy... (ibid: 158: 91: 70:
5-9)

As well as making enemies as a result of his views on Christianity and Unitarianism, Priestley also alienated many of his followers by combining science and religion in his works, as many scientists were not interested in the progress of religion and vice-versa. The relationship between Enlightenment science and religion was an ambiguous one, and the concept of evolution was relatively new:

By the 1780s men would argue that natural forces had changed the face of the globe in an endlessly repeated sequence over aeons, reshaping continents, throwing up mountains, carving rivers... without any divine intervention. (Uglow: 2004: 150)

Nicholas Roe thinks it likely that Coleridge was introduced to the ideas of Priestley as an undergraduate by his tutor at Cambridge, William Frend, also a Dissenter: 'Frend would certainly have encouraged Coleridge to read Priestley during 1792 and 1793'. (Roe: 1998: 96)

Coleridge became an Associationist as a result of Priestley's development of the ideas contained within Hartley's *Observations on Man* (1749). At this time, Coleridge was a follower of Priestley. This also affected Coleridge's early poetic style, as is demonstrated in the mannered style of the *Sonnets on Eminent Characters*.

Coleridge begins the 'Sonnet: To Priestley' by drawing attention to the fact that Priestley was forced to flee for his life to America, because of his Dissenting political beliefs,

using the phrase ‘o’er the ocean swell’ also used in the ‘Sonnet to Pantisocracy’ discussed earlier:

Tho’ King-bred rage with lawless uproar rude
Have driven our Priestley o’er the ocean swell... (Keach: 1997:
456)

Priestley’s home and church in Birmingham were torched by the mob, forcing him to escape with his family first to Hackney for three years, and then to Northumberland near Philadelphia. Coleridge subsequently moderated the first line of this sonnet for publication in his later collections of poetry, changing it to read ‘Tho’ rous’d by that dark Vizir RIOT rude...’ (Mays: 2001i: 158: 91: 1). This may have been a later attempt to moderate the politics of the original sonnet, in the same way that Coleridge tried to play down his youthful political beliefs in later life.

Coleridge also employs a trope typical of the religious tradition from which Priestley came, imbued with an Enlightenment appeal to Rationalism, and a possible reference to Priestley’s membership of the Lunar Society, by the words ‘mild radiance’ in the phrase:

Tho’ SUPERSTITION and her wolfish brood
Bay his mild radiance, impotent and fell... (ibid: 3-4)

The Lunar Society was the name given to a group of Dissenting writers, scientists and industrialists based in Birmingham between 1766 and 1791, who met regularly on the nights of a full-moon to discuss their papers and projects.

The ‘Sonnet: To Priestley’ was published in the *Morning Chronicle* on 11 December 1794, the year of Priestley’s emigration, and also sent to Southey in a letter dated 17 December 1794. Coleridge would no doubt have known that, following his emigration, Priestley was helping to establish the First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia. This may also have stimulated Coleridge’s desire to establish his Pantisocratic community in Pennsylvania to be near Priestley. Coleridge hoped Priestley would eventually join the community. The final section of the sonnet refers again to Priestley’s forced emigration to America:

And JUSTICE wakes to bid th’ Oppressor wail
Insulting aye the wrongs of patient Folly;
And from her dark retreat by Wisdom won
Meek NATURE slowly lifts her matron veil

To smile with fondness on her gazing son! (ibid: 10-14)

Coleridge returns to this theme two weeks later, whilst writing the *Religious Musings* on Christmas Eve, 1794:

Lo! PRIESTLEY... Patriot, and Saint, and Sage:
...from his lov'd native land
Statesmen blood-stain'd and Priests idolatrous
By dark lies mad'ning the blind multitude
Drove with vain hate... (ibid: 189: 101: 372-6)

Nicholas Roe suggests that Priestley's emigration was a pivotal event in terms of Coleridge's subsequent development, triggering the articulation and dissemination of his ideas concerning politics and religion in his published works:

For Coleridge...Priestley's exile signified much more than government and national ingratitude. Coming within months of Frennd's banishment from Cambridge, it constituted a major loss of intellectual and spiritual leadership for which Coleridge's own efforts as a lecturer during 1795 would offer some redress in furthering the cause of progress and reform... Priestley's departure... consequently served to focus Coleridge's radical identity, providing a demarcation between the formative period at Jesus College and Coleridge's swift emergence as an active political figure in 1795. (Roe: 1998: 98)

The focus of the fourth sonnet was the Marquis de Lafayette, the first military hero to appear in the series of *Sonnets on Eminent Characters*. Lafayette was a member of the French aristocracy who had served in both the American and French Revolutions: in the American Revolution as a General and Diplomat; in the French Revolution he was commander of the French National Guard, and also served in the Estates General and the subsequent National Constituent Assembly. He was a prominent figure within the Feuillants, who wanted to turn France into a constitutional monarchy. Simon Schama draws attention to this in his book *Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution*:

Lafayette (and others)... were... citizens whose rhetoric was all the more influential because they hailed from the summit of the peerage. For many of them, moreover, this was merely the second stage of a crusade that had begun in America. (Schama: 2004: 251)

Coleridge also draws attention to this fact in the opening line of his sonnet: 'As when far off the warbled strains are heard...' (Mays: 2001i: 159: 92: 1). Although the sonnet is about the French Revolution, 'far off' is likely to refer to America, where the 'warbled strains' of freedom and revolution are to be heard slowly working their way across the

Atlantic towards France. Coleridge was aware of the part Lafayette played in the American Revolution, and given his own interest in emigrating to Pennsylvania, this seems to be the most likely explanation.

This sonnet does not contain any obvious religious rhetoric. In contrast to the other sonnets in the series, the language and imagery is largely political. The sonnet continues:

Within his cage th' imprison'd matin bird
Swells the full chorus with a generous song...
His Fellows' freedom soothes the Captive's cares! (ibid: 3-8)

Here Coleridge compares Lafayette to a lark ('matin bird') in a cage. Lafayette was imprisoned by the Austrian army from 1792-1797, although he had escaped briefly in 1794, just before Coleridge wrote his sonnet in praise of Lafayette. Coleridge comments on his escape in a note published with the sonnet in the *Morning Chronicle*: 'The above beautiful sonnet was written antecedently to the joyful account of the Patriot's escape from the Tyrant's Dungeon' (Keach: 1997: 456).

Coleridge again uses political, rather than religious rhetoric to acknowledge that, in France, Lafayette was an advocate of reform. The final line of the sonnet also indicates that Coleridge believed that Lafayette's reforms could extend as far as the abolition of slavery:

Thou, FAYETTE! who didst wake with startling voice
Life's better sun from that long wintry night,
Thus in thy Country's triumphs shalt rejoice,
And mock with raptures high the dungeon's might:
For lo! the morning struggles into day,
And Slavery's spectres shriek and vanish from the ray! (Mays:
2001i: 159: 92: 9-14)

The above quotation echoes the first line of the sonnet, quoted earlier, implying that Coleridge felt that Lafayette was one of the instigators of revolution in France, following his recent experiences in America, and was to be praised for his efforts as far as 1794. Simon Schama, looking at Lafayette's later fractured career, argues that his early experiences of revolution in America actually prepared him very little for the French Revolution, meaning that Lafayette had to learn very quickly in France:

He was still only thirty-two years old and a complete political novice. Nothing in his American experience had prepared him for the trial by fire in the Paris

districts and *faubourgs* ... Lafayette had to develop [skills...] very rapidly...
(Schama: 2004: 381)

In his efforts to express his admiration for the Frenchman, Coleridge departs from his usage of religious rhetoric to express praise, and instead uses a more traditional political rhetoric, which he may have felt was more appropriate to describe such an outstanding political figure. There is also the possibility that Coleridge did not use religious rhetoric to praise Lafayette, because he was a Frenchman, and a presumed Catholic. Coleridge appears to reserve his religious associations for his British subjects only, as they generally refer to Anglicanism.

The subject of the fifth sonnet was Tadeusz Kosciuszko, the second military hero to appear in Coleridge's series of sonnets. He was a Polish general who had lived in pre-Revolutionary France in the 1770s, and who had then fought as a Colonel in the Continental Army with the colonists in the American Revolution. In recognition of his dedicated service, he was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General in 1783, and also became a naturalised citizen of America in the same year. On his return to Poland, Kosciuszko fought for the cause of Polish independence by planning and executing the mobilisation of the entire Polish army to declare war against Russia in March 1794.

In his book *The Byronic Hero: Types and Prototypes*, Peter Thorslev states:

...the Romantic Age was our last great age of heroes. It was the era of political and military heroes: heroes of revolution from Washington to Kosciuszko, celebrated by most of the Romantic poets... or popular military heroes like ... Nelson; and... above all, Napoleon, who left his shadow across Europe not only in his lifetime, but through the entire 19th Century... (Thorslev: 1962: 16)

Coleridge celebrated many of these heroes through his early works, including Kosciuszko. The 'Sonnet: To Kosciuszko', written December 1794, marks the world's horror at the wounds which he received during the uprising of March that year, intimating that should Kosciuszko die in the cause, Polish independence may prove impossible:

O what a loud and fearful shriek was there,
As tho' a thousand souls one death-groan pour'd!
Great KOSCIUSKO, 'neath an Hireling's sword,
His Country view'd. – Hark! thro' the list'ning air,
Rises...

The dirge of murder'd Hope! while Freedom pale
Bends in *such* anguish o'er her destin'd bier... (Mays: 2001i: 159-
60: 93: 1-9)

For the young Coleridge, Kosciusko was yet another revolutionary figure prepared to try to end the grip of tyranny, or die in the attempt. Important military figures of the day continued to interest Coleridge throughout his life. Fifteen years later, in 1810, biographical studies of the careers of Nelson and Sir Alexander Ball made appearances in the last editions of Coleridge's periodical, *The Friend*, in a study of wartime leadership.

Again in the 'Sonnet: To Kosciusko', political rather than religious rhetoric is used. As with the 'Sonnet: To Fayette', Coleridge may have felt that this was the most appropriate language with which to express his admiration of Kosciusko, an important political figure of the time, and also because Kosciusko was Polish, Coleridge would not have viewed him as being restricted by the Anglican religion. Coleridge's thoughts on religion appear to be only applied to those of his subjects who were British. This may be as a result of the Church of England's deep connections and relevance to British history and tradition, not found elsewhere in the world. Coleridge also refers to the Kosciusko uprising in *A Moral and Political Lecture* delivered in February 1795, a month after Russia and Austria reached an agreement to partition Poland between them.

The subject of the sixth sonnet was the serving Prime Minister, William Pitt the Younger, referred to unflatteringly by Coleridge as:

Yon dark Scowler...
Who...
...kiss'd his country with Iscariot mouth... (ibid: 161: 94: 4-7)

In this sonnet, Coleridge makes good use of religious rhetoric and his Biblical knowledge not to praise Pitt, but rather to ridicule him, and expose him as a traitor to his country. Coleridge additionally makes equally derogatory reference to Pitt throughout the entire course of his 1795 lectures, but particularly in *A Moral and Political Lecture* and *Conciones ad Populum, or, Addresses to the People*, delivered in February 1795.

Coleridge considered that Pitt had betrayed his country in many ways. In his early career, Pitt put forward policies to streamline and reform Parliament. After these were defeated in April 1785 (partly through lack of support from the King), Pitt never again attempted Parliamentary reform. He put forward other policies such as the abolition of slavery, and a scheme to pay off the national debt, all of which were rejected by parliament. Had these policies been adopted, they would have been truly revolutionary; they failed because they encompassed ‘concerns’ of many members of both houses, and Members of Parliament did not wish to curtail their own freedoms.

Despite these early abortive attempts at reform, the final line of the above quotation more or less sums up Coleridge’s views of Pitt both in 1794, and throughout the rest of his career, in specifically Biblical terms. Both in this sonnet and in the *Conciones ad Populum, or, Addresses to the People* (February 1795), Coleridge compares Pitt to Judas Iscariot, the disciple who betrayed Christ to the Romans in the Garden of Gethsemane by kissing him on the cheek, as a pre-arranged signal for him to be seized and arrested (Matt: 26: 46-50). This public ridicule of the serving Prime Minister is evidence of Coleridge taking a huge political risk with his early poetry.

Coleridge shared the view of the Whig opposition leader, Charles James Fox, who blamed Pitt for not doing enough to preserve peace with France, following the war with France in 1793. A further betrayal came in 1794, in the form of the suspension of Habeas Corpus, the right of the prisoner to question and appeal against the legality of his imprisonment. At this time, advocates of parliamentary reform were also arrested and charged with sedition. Hardy, Thelwall and Muir were imprisoned, Paine and others escaped. Additionally, Pitt increased taxation to pay for the war, exacerbating existing social problems caused by the failed harvest of 1794 and the resulting near-famine conditions in Britain:

...Jacques Necker, the Genevan Director-General of Finance determined to finance the American war overwhelmingly by loans rather than taxes. The real difference between the British and French predicaments following that war was that William Pitt could raise revenue from new taxes without threatening a major political crisis, an option that was not open to his French counterparts. (Schama: 2004: 53)

There was therefore no immediate political crisis, but Pitt alienated a large percentage of the population of Britain because of poor social conditions, some of which had been caused by the war with France; this was coupled with a lack of freedom of speech and expression which were enforced by Pitt's government. Additionally, to replace heavy losses in the English navy and a shortfall in recruitment, men were press-ganged into the navy through enlisting-places with sides of mutton and beef hanging above the doors to entice starving people in.

Coleridge continues his harangue of the Prime Minister with the following phrase: '(Ah! foul apostate from his Father's fame!)' (Mays: 2001i: 161: 94: 8). The term 'Apostate' carries religious connotations with it, and refers to William Pitt the Elder's desire for the British Government to recognise the United States Congress, as he saw that eventually American desire for independence from England would be inevitable and unstoppable. Despite the reduction of the British Empire as a result of the war with America, it was increased in other areas, such as the settlement of liberated slaves in Freetown, Sierra Leone, after the abolition of the Slave Trade in 1808:

Freetown would inevitably become the... headquarters of this great emancipation... it needed henceforth to be under the direct protection of the Crown. In 1808 the [Sierra Leone] company was wound up, its flag was run down and the Union Jack run up. (Schama: 2005: 456)

The sonnet continues to vent Coleridge's displeasure with Pitt through the use of biblical language and references to the Bible. This is a technique which Coleridge uses in his 1795 Lectures, and also in *Religious Musings* (1794) when he is trying to emphasise his views; Coleridge's sense of his own political radicalism, particularly in respect to his objections to the Government, is being expressed here in religious terms. It would appear that, at this early point in his career, Coleridge felt that the use of Biblical language invested his works with an authority which he could not otherwise impart. Coleridge is also following (and making much use of) a well-established precedent, rooted in the Dissenting origins of religious and political radicalism. The 'Sonnet: To Pitt' continues: 'Then fix'd her on the cross of deep distress' (Mays: 2001i: 161: 94: 9). Coleridge here states that Pitt had crucified British Freedom through the above betrayals, making an already very bad situation much worse. The British people were starving, and had nothing more to give, yet Pitt increased taxation, and inflated prices, including

bread, to meet the escalating costs of the wars with America and France. Coleridge continues:

And at safe distance marks the thirsty lance
Pierce her big side! (ibid: 10-11)

In other words, Pitt is accused of being chief amongst those who crucified liberty, in the same way that Christ was crucified. Coleridge continues his use of Biblical language, with possible reference to the Passion of Christ described in the Gospel of St John 19:33-34, where a soldier confirms that Jesus is dead, by spearing his side with a lance.

The sonnet concludes with Coleridge's vision of what eventual British freedom will spell out for Pitt in the future:

But ô! if some strange trance
The eye-lids of thy stern-brow'd Sister press,
Seize, MERCY! thou more terrible the brand,
And hurl her thunderbolts with fiercer hand! (Mays: 2001i: 161:
94: 11-14)

Coleridge implies here that Pitt's repressive policies will eventually come back to haunt him when the British people are once again free from the threats of war, poverty and famine, and able to speak and publish freely. This point is also made in the second of the series of two *Conciones ad Populum, or, Addresses to the People* lectures, entitled *On The Present War*, with the phrase: 'horrors... as would arm MERCY with the Thunderbolt' (Patton and Mann: 1971: 71). Perhaps Coleridge was in fact correct, as Pitt died in 1806, aged 47, as a result of increased drinking and related failing health, which was Pitt's way of coping with his intense lifestyle, and the pressures of being a war-time Prime Minister.

Following the Battle of Trafalgar in October 1805, Pitt the Younger was hailed, fleetingly, as the saviour of Europe, until Napoleon triumphed over the Russians and Austrians at the Battle of Austerlitz in December of the same year. As part of the overall picture, Austerlitz was a far more politically crucial battle than Trafalgar. Napoleon's victory was devastating to Pitt's already fragile health, and he died a month later.

The 'Sonnet: To Pitt' is also about slavery. The Biblical and religious imagery used by Coleridge in this sonnet is influenced by his opposition to the Slave Trade, and highlights how outdated he considered it to be. Coleridge thought that slavery had no place in a progressive society. This sonnet highlights Coleridge's views of late Eighteenth-Century society as stagnant, and his desire for change. Coleridge was vocally anti-slavery. His radical opposition to the Slave Trade was heightened by living in Bristol, England's second slave-port, during the height of the trade. This issue is discussed more fully later in the chapter, when I consider Coleridge's 1795 *Lecture On the Slave Trade*, and the subsequent article of the same name in *The Watchman* (1795). As mentioned earlier, Pitt was also anti-slavery, and was a close friend of William Wilberforce. In one of his abortive efforts to pass reform bills through Parliament in his early career, Pitt proposed the abolition of the slave trade in 1781. Ironically the bill failed, due to being outvoted by the large numbers of pro-slavery Members of Parliament and Lords, many of them slave owners, and many of whom professed to be devout upholders of the Christian faith. Slavery was deeply ingrained in Britain at this time, especially in the higher echelons of society, and is mentioned in many of Coleridge's works around this time.

Coleridge's 1795 Lectures on Politics and Religion

Coleridge delivered a series of Lectures in Bristol in 1795, on subjects including politics and religion, with the aim of raising enough money to pay for his projected Pantisocratic expedition. The first lecture in the series, *A Moral and Political Lecture* (February 1795), although clumsy and difficult in terms of language and style due to Coleridge trying to emulate the writing style of Milton and Paine, was a long way ahead of Coleridge's time, and was very radical for 1795. The two main thrusts of the lecture, repeatedly emphasised, were also the ideals of the projected Pantisocracy. Firstly, to suggest that every man's contribution to society, whatever it may be, is useful, is an appeal for Universal Male Suffrage, although 'universal' in this context presumably means all men above a certain station in life. Even for Coleridge, the suggestion of allowing women to vote, and thereby have a say, however small, in the running of the country would have been preposterous. It is also likely that 'universal' in this context applies to men like Coleridge himself (and the men who made up his audience) – well read, politically aware and aspiring middle-class or aspiring gentlemen. In the context of

Pantisocracy, this notion of equality was nominally extended to women as well as men. There would be no servitude of any kind, not even domestic servants, as stated above in the section entitled 'Coleridge and Pantisocracy'.

Coleridge uses religious rhetoric to make his second point, placing the education of the masses into the context of the French Revolution, as a demand for education as a tool to banish ignorance and restore humanity; and a request to preserve (the integrity of) the English Constitution: 'Religion and Reason are but poor substitutes for Church and Constitution' (Patton and Mann: 1971: 9-10). This is also a further reference to the 'Church and King' mob which burned down Priestley's home and church, discussed earlier in the section entitled 'Sonnets on Eminent Characters'. In this lecture, Coleridge suggests that the mob were in fact encouraged by the Anglican Church, implying that the mob's actions were not an attack on religion generally, but on religious Dissent. Coleridge urges a bloodless revolution amongst the lower classes, in terms of educating the masses, and thereby, through education, not allowing themselves to become the mob which they were expected to become by following ignorance blindly. Coleridge urges the working class to break out of the lower orders of society through education, reducing their servitude and dependence on the upper classes. He emphasises the hierarchical structure of society: '... the knowledge of the few cannot counteract the ignorance of the many.' (ibid: 6)

Coleridge stresses that education humanises even men of the lowest class, raising them above the pack mentality; in other words, that knowledge equals freedom. This concept applies particularly to the children born into Pantisocracy, as they would be educated by Coleridge and Southey from the beginning into ideals of social equality, and would have no understanding or experience of a society dominated by class. Coleridge states in this lecture that people must learn from the experience of the French Revolution. He does not blame the mob for their ignorance and aggression, but rather blames the ruling upper classes: 'Our object is to destroy pernicious systems, not their misguided adherents... the evil must leave when the cause is removed' (ibid: 18-9).

The next lectures to be delivered were a series of two lectures entitled *Conciones ad Populum, or, Addresses to the People* (February 1795). They contain many of the same

arguments as *A Moral and Political Lecture*, as well as campaigning for better conditions for the working man, including reducing the length of the working day. Coleridge continues to stress that, without education, the vast influx of workers into the cities as a result of the early stages of the Industrial Revolution could easily become a mob. He concludes that town workers are justified in feeling angry, and that they have been wronged by the society which they have struggled and worked hard to support and uphold, given their appalling working and living conditions.

These were arguments that Coleridge would return to in later life, and therefore represented key beliefs for him, even though his opinions had changed. Evidence of the enduring and important nature of these beliefs for Coleridge can be seen in *Lay Sermons* (1817), where he refers back to *Conciones ad Populum, or, Addresses to the People*, as ‘the first of my Lay Sermons’ (ibid: 25). Only three years later, Coleridge wrote the following note on the front end-paper of the Norton-Perkins *Conciones ad Populum, or, Addresses to the People*, dated July 1820:

Except the two or three passages invoking the doctrines of Philosophical Necessity and Unitarianism I see little or nothing in the outbursts of my youthful Zeal to *retract*, and with the exception of some flame-coloured epithets applied to Persons, as Mr Pitt or others, or rather to Personifications (for such they really were to me) as little to regret... (ibid)

In this note, Coleridge defends the experimental expression of his youthful politics through his early works, but also cautions the reader against taking his experimentation too seriously. This invokes a phrase from Coleridge’s letter to his brother George, written on 6 November 1794, a couple of months before the commencement of the 1795 lecture series:

How often and how unkindly (sic) are the ebullitions of youthful disputatiousness mistaken for the result of fixed Principles!’ (Griggs: 1956i: 125: 69)

Even in the early part of his life, Coleridge was formulating, exploring and refining his ideas and their expression through the medium of his lectures, letters and sermons, whilst also writing to order, writing what his audience wanted to hear, because this series of lectures was written to fund the projected Pantisocratic expedition to Pennsylvania, and would have needed to have been very successful to raise the amount of capital needed.

The language used in *A Moral and Political Lecture* and *Conciones ad Populum, or, Addresses to the People* is generally (as the reader would expect) political in style and tone, although Coleridge roots his politics firmly in his religious convictions. His words are carefully selected to excite a desire for freedom in his readers similar to his own contemporary desire for Pantisocratic freedom. It is also reasonable to assume that the 1795 lectures were delivered in the same extempore and emotionally charged style as Coleridge's sermons of this time, which would have added a further quasi-religious dimension. The limited religious rhetoric, contained at the beginning of *A Moral and Political Lecture*, is largely taken from Milton's *Samson Agonistes* (1761), which in turn is taken from the Book of Judges. The similar metaphors of the mansion of Religion (*Conciones ad Populum, or, Addresses to the People*) and the Pillars of Oppression's Temple, Monarchy and Aristocracy (*A Moral and Political Lecture*) are also taken from *Samson Agonistes*:

...those two massy pillars
 With horrible convulsion to and fro
 He tugged, he shook, till down they came and drew
 The whole roof after them with burst of thunder
 Upon the heads of all who sat beneath,
 Lords, ladies, captains, counselors (sic), or priests,
 Their choice Nobility... (Milton: 1994: 484: 1648-54)

Additionally, all three lectures have echoes of Paine's *Common Sense* and *American Crisis I* (1776), both in terms of content and language construction. For example, the phrase 'The Times are Trying!' (Patton and Mann: 1971: 5) is very similar to 'These are the times that try men's souls' (Philp: 1998: 63), and Coleridge quotes Paine's *Common Sense* (ibid: 5) directly in the second lecture in the *Conciones ad Populum, or, Addresses to the People* series, entitled *On the Present War*: 'Society is in every state a blessing; Government even in its best state but a necessary evil' (Patton and Mann: 1971: 60). Although Coleridge's phraseology was similar to Paine's, his religious tone was very different, as Paine was an Enlightenment atheist.

The first lecture from *Conciones ad Populum, or, Addresses to the People* begins with an allegorical letter from Liberty to Famine, highlighting Coleridge's views of what had gone wrong with the French Revolution, and his fears of similar consequences, should the same happen in Britain. The allegory relates how Liberty entered the mansion of

Religion, to find that it had been taken over by Mystery, ‘the Dry-nurse of that detested Imp, Despotism’ (ibid: 30). Through the allegory, Coleridge urges the rich men and Ministers to act with prudence if they are to preserve and retain liberty in England. Coleridge implies that famine will be the catalyst to eventually restore liberty through revolution, and will incite people to revolt, as it did in France. When used by a Dissenter such as Coleridge, the word ‘Mystery’ meant the enhancement of the Churches’ power through the enslavement of peoples’ minds, robbing them of their capacity for rational free thought. Coleridge emphasises how close this situation comes to ‘Despotism’ by referring to ‘Mystery’ as its ‘Dry Nurse’, a nourishment-lacking, sub-standard substitution for a mother.

Although there is not a great deal of religious rhetoric in either lecture in the *Conciones ad Populum, or, Addresses to the People* series, what is there is more widely spread throughout the 1795 lectures. By drawing attention to religion immediately at the start of the two *Conciones ad Populum, or, Addresses to the People* lectures, Coleridge emphasises just how important it is. He states that Anglican religion in England has become little more than a propaganda tool for Pitt’s government, losing all its sacred connotations. As in *A Moral and Political Lecture*, in the *Introductory Address* to the first lecture of *Conciones ad Populum, or, Addresses to the People*, Coleridge uses rhetoric from the Book of Daniel to argue for wider, more universal suffrage, and for people to believe in the strength of their religious beliefs and convictions, rather than believing the Anglican propaganda being fed to the populace by the Government, as discussed above:

The times are trying; and in order to be prepared against their difficulties, we should have acquired a prompt facility of advertising in all our doubts to some grand and comprehensive Truth. In a deep and strong Soil must that Tree fix its roots ... (Patton and Mann: 1971: 34)

Coleridge does not make it clear to his audience whether this metaphor refers to the tree of liberty, or whether it is a metaphor for religion itself. The tree of liberty was a very common metaphor in Coleridge’s time, also used by his contemporaries including the political caricaturist James Gillray, in his work entitled *The Tree of Liberty, - with, the Devil Tempting John Bull* (1798). It is highly likely that Coleridge is referring to himself and his own lectures when he states:

Men of genius are rarely either prompt or consistent in general conduct: their early habits have been those of contemplative indolence; and the day-dreams, with which they have been accustomed to amuse their solitude, adapt them for splendid speculation, not temperate and practicable counsels. (ibid: 34)

The *Introductory Address* in particular gives stark warnings regarding revolution in England, likening Democrats to religious Infidels: ‘The majority of Democrats appear to me to have attained that position of knowledge in politics, which Infidels possess in religion’ (ibid: 37). Coleridge argues that the working man should look on religion as his only comfort and reward for a hard life’s work:

Religion will cheer his gloom with her promises, and by habituating his mind to anticipate an infinitely great Revolution hereafter, may prepare it even for the sudden reception of a less degree of amelioration in this World. (ibid: 45)

Religion is a support. Once education is added, democracy is enabled to move forwards.

The main body of both lectures in the *Conciones ad Populum, or, Addresses to the People* series become sermons, with phraseology and style comparable to twentieth century Baptist preachers, such as Martin Luther King², for example:

A religion, of which every true Christian is the Priest, his own Heart the Altar, the Universe its Temple, and Errors and Vices its only Sacrifices’ (ibid: 67-8)
and

The age of Priesthood will soon be no more – that of Philosophers and of Christians will succeed, and the torch of Superstition be extinguished forever’ (ibid: 67).

The gospel effect would have been further heightened by the extempore and emotionally charged mode of Coleridge’s delivery.

Above, I have highlighted just how important, developmentally, the years 1794 and 1795 were to Coleridge. His *Sonnets on Eminent Characters* allowed him to experiment

² For example, the following quotation from Martin Luther King’s famous speech entitled ‘I have a dream’:

But there is something that I must say to my people, who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice: In the process of gaining our rightful place, we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred... (Martin Luther King, Jr.: *I Have a Dream*, delivered 28 August 1963, at the Lincoln Memorial, Washington D.C.) (<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkhaveadream.htm>)

with his emerging poetic skills. The 1795 Lectures including *A Moral and Political Lecture* and the *Conciones ad Populum, or, Addresses to the People* series enabled Coleridge to formulate and structure his views and opinions on politics and religion into a sufficiently coherent form to enable them to be publicly presented to others. These two aspects combined to enable Coleridge to redirect his opinions into poetic language, and thereby create his great ‘Conversation Poems’ of 1797 and 1798. Below, I discuss how this transition takes place. The poetry itself is discussed in more detail in Chapter Two.

Coleridge followed up his first three lectures of 1795 with a series of six lectures entitled *Six Lectures on Revealed Religion, its’ Corruptions and Political Views* (sic). The ambitious plan of this series was to give an overview of Christianity from its beginnings right up to the present day (1795):

These lectures are intended for two classes of Men – Christians and Infidels/ (sic) to the former, that they may be able to give a reason for the hope that it is in them – to the latter that they may not determine against Christianity arguments applicable to its’ Corruptions only. (Patton and Mann: 1971: 83)

Whilst this series of lectures covered considerable ground, Coleridge failed in his projected scheme, as his plan for each, outlined in the lecture title, was over-ambitious and often contained too much information to be delivered within the time allotted, and also did not account for Coleridge’s penchant for digression. Despite Coleridge’s published description of the purpose of the *Lectures on Revealed Religion*, the likely actual purposes were to show off his encyclopaedic knowledge, and to advocate Unitarianism as the true form of Christianity. However, Coleridge was successful in one element of his plan. His lectures were deliberately inflammatory and provoked a great deal of controversy, which they needed to do, to ensure that he was lecturing to a packed hall every night, as this would help him to quickly raise the necessary funds.

Coleridge begins *Lecture One* with an ‘Allegoric Vision’, placing the cave of atheism within the grounds of the Temple of Superstition. He shows religious superstition and total disbelief in all religions to be two identical extremes, which was an important facet of Unitarianism, founded equally on reason and religion. Coleridge describes the ‘Allegoric Vision’ in terms of nature, which is a foretaste of his later ideas regarding Pantheism and the ‘One Life’:

... the valley of life ... possessed a great diversity of soils and here was a sunny spot and there a dark one just such a mixture of sunshine and shade...' (ibid: 89).

This is very similar to the words and ideas used two years later in *Kubla Khan* (1797), an ambiguous poem which could also be read as a religious poem, or as an allegory of the Creation:

... blossom'd many an incense-bearing tree;
... here were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery. (Mays: 2001i: 513: 178: 8-11)

The 'Allegoric Vision' continues along similar themes to *Kubla Khan*. The cave of atheism is described in the following terms: ' – the climate of the place was unnaturally cold' (Patton and Mann: 1971: 92). In *Kubla Khan*, Coleridge introduces the same idea: 'A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!' (Mays: 2001i: 514: 178: 36). If these caves also represent atheism, Coleridge gives hope in the first stanza of *Kubla Khan*, by stating: '... ALPH, the sacred river, ran/ Through caverns measureless to man ...' (ibid: 512-3: 3-4). He implies that, although atheism is too large and widespread to be measured, there is always hope, as the 'sacred river', representing faith or Christianity manages to penetrate the vast freezing deserts of atheism. Another quality emphasised in the quotations above is how unnatural the presence of atheism is in the world. Coleridge chooses to allegorise this by using examples from nature, something he would later consider much more seriously.

Here in *Lecture One*, and elsewhere in the other *Lectures On Revealed Religion*, extreme cold is associated with religious disbelief, and a lack of faith or religious feeling. The same association is carried through into *Kubla Khan* (discussed above), and *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.

In *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, the ice imagery occurs even before the subject of belief or non-belief is raised; in a sense it is embedded before the poem begins. This lack of discussion could be interpreted as apparent atheism:

Mist and Snow,
And it grew wond'rous cauld:
And Ice mast-high came floating by
As green as Emerald. (ibid: 376: 161: 51-4)

After three stanzas of description of the ice and snow, the albatross is introduced ‘as if it had been a Christian soul’ (ibid: 65). With the introduction of Christianity in the form of the albatross, another form of nature, the ice of atheism splits, and the ship’s crew is enabled to pass through into religious belief. This is the first mention of the beliefs of the crew (whether religious or superstitious). For some unexplained reason, the ancient mariner needs to destroy this belief, and so kills the albatross. After this, the atmosphere becomes very hot and sultry, which indicates the vengeful Jehovah of the Old Testament, who is represented in the poem by the sun, which remains present in the following stanzas. The hot and red imagery continues until the souls of the ship’s crew depart from their bodies, just before the ancient mariner begins his solitary penance. *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* is discussed more fully in Chapter Two.

Patton and Mann’s note to *Lecture One* states:

Coleridge consistently refers to atheism ... as a kind of disease or malfunction of heart and mind (Patton and Mann: 1971: 94)

As the above argument shows, Coleridge also considers atheism as ‘a kind of disease or malfunction’ in nature, which implies that Coleridge was, even at this time and possibly unknowingly, considering the possibilities of the ‘One Life’. This coincides with his new interest in the ideas of Bishop Berkeley, which replaced Coleridge’s earlier obsessive interest in the ideas of Hartley and Priestley:

Berkeley is relevant to the idea of nature as God’s Language... Coleridge may well have arrived at the idea before he first formally attributed it to Berkeley. (ibid)

Later in *Lecture One*, Coleridge again uses similar expressions to those used in his poetry several years later, for example: ‘I shall now be obliged to introduce abstruser (sic) Reasonings unentertaining indeed but necessary as the foundation of future systems’ (ibid: 95). This is very similar to the following phrase from *Frost at Midnight* (1798) written three years later: ‘...solitude, which suits/ Abstruser musings...’ (Mays: 2001i: 453: 171: 5-6). This is again evidence that Coleridge’s later great poetry stemmed from his poetic and prose experiments of 1794 and 1795, but in a more considered and refined form.

Coleridge then goes on to discuss the arguments that atheists might use to prove that God did not create the Universe. He describes it in such a way as to make this eventuality not only extremely unlikely, but also completely impossible. Several of these arguments are listed below:

... the very idea of a God implies contradictions and... the Phaenomena of Nature are explicable without Deity... Deity is either immaterial or material. If immaterial, how can he act on matter? If he be material and omnipresent how is there room for anything else in the Universe? These men think that they have incontrovertibly proved the impossibility of Divine Existence, when in reality they have demonstrated the limited nature of the human Intellect... (Patton and Mann: 1971: 96)

Coleridge's religious musings on atheism continue:

Late natural Philosophers have uniformly agreed that at some Period or other more or less distant the Earth either from Water or more probably Heat must have been in a state of Fluidity, so as to have rendered the existence of Man impossible. The atheistic Philosophers suppose, that in this uncommon state of Nature the Elements might [concur] unthinkingly to produce... self-conscious, intelligent Man! (ibid: 100-2)

To further ridicule these 'Philosophers', Coleridge then goes on to say:

Suppose him thus formed – Will these Elements give him innate Ideas?... Who was present to teach him that... opening his Mouth & chewing were the means of rendering useful what by accidental[ly] stretching out his hand he had acquired [?] There being no innate Ideas, I am unable to conceive how these Phaenomena are explicable without Deity – (ibid: 102-3)

Towards the end of the lecture, Coleridge attempts to explain the benevolence of God, despite the existence of evil in the world, in a very convoluted manner, which brings to mind Byron's reference to Coleridge in the 'Dedication' to *Don Juan*: 'I wish he would explain his Explanation' (Byron: 1994: 625). Coleridge states that God can be neither 'indifferent' nor 'malignant', and so therefore must either be totally benevolent, or a mixture of benevolence and malevolence. In pure Priestleian terms, Coleridge then goes on to state that the latter option is also invalid because:

...I ...deny the existence of any Evil, inasmuch as the end determines the nature of the means and I have been able to discover nothing of which the end is not good. (Patton and Mann: 1971: 105)

This again emphasises Coleridge's transition from the ideas of Hartley to those of Berkeley. Of the eight topics proposed in the title to the lecture, Coleridge manages to

cover approximately three in the time allotted – an allegoric vision, proof of God’s existence from Universal order, and the origins of evil.

The extended title to *Lecture Two* (‘[Social institutions of the Jews – law of jubilee – no absolute right to the land – Jewish state a democracy – militia – the Jew’s petition for a monarchy – tithes – priests – Mosaic Law adapted to the circumstances of the Jewish people – and to its ultimate end – the slaughter of the Canaanites justified]’) (ibid: 123) indicates that the focus will be on Jewish interests, particularly regarding the Old Testament. However, the lecture actually covers only the ‘Apology for Mosaic Dispensation’. E. H. Coleridge, as he pieces together the lecture series, suggests this is because Coleridge did not finish the first lecture in its entirety:

This is not the *first lecture* for it speaks of the ‘last lecture’ - and it is early in the course, for it speaks of the Course as if it had to run -? Is it Lect[ure]. II – but this does not correspond with the advertised subject. Probably the first lecture did not get itself finished, and this is the advertised ‘*Defence of the Mosaic Dispensation*’. (ibid: 122)

Lecture Two is in fact a recap of much of the material delivered in *Lecture One*. To compensate for this, the remainder of the items which were proposed for inclusion in *Lecture Two* were in their turn also postponed until later lectures. The implication of this is that either Coleridge appeared to have far too much to say on the subject of ‘revealed religion’, or that he was including an unnecessarily wide range of subjects under this heading, as stated above.

Coleridge is particularly interested in the Mosaic Dispensation, as he is able to use it to illustrate the theory around which his Pantisocratic pipedream is based, that of self-sufficiency and common, rather than individual, ownership of land. The Mosaic Dispensation advocated the equal division of land, which would revert to its original owners every fifty years, to prevent greed. Men were forbidden from accumulating possessions or money for the same reason. Much of what Coleridge has to say here on the subject of social equality and the Mosaic Dispensation is paraphrased (ibid: 126) from Moses Lowman’s *A Dissertation on the Civil Government of the Hebrews* (1740), and Paine’s *Common Sense* (1776), although Coleridge characteristically condenses, elaborates and Christianizes the arguments of Paine and Lowman, to make them his own:

Property is Power and equal Property equal Power. A Poor Man is necessarily more or less a Slave. Poverty is the Death of public Freedom' (ibid: 126).

Coleridge peppers his work on ancient Mosaic Law with references to the current political situation in England and France, making the point that even under supposedly harsh Mosaic Law, men were not tortured and treated like animals, such as being press-ganged into the navy. There is also a sub-text implying that the Jews, an ignorant and inferior race according to Coleridge, were capable of humanitarian behaviour, so why wasn't the United Kingdom, a so-called Christian nation?

Coleridge continues to use the Mosaic Dispensation to explain and justify the Pantisocratic scheme throughout *Lecture Two*:

The laws of the Nation had proceeded miraculously from God – none might add to or diminish ought from them. The laws of Moses were fully adequate for the regulation of a People among whom land had been equalised, and each one of whom was to be an agriculturalist... (ibid: 130)

Here, Coleridge continues to try to justify his Pantisocratic endeavours, by indicating that such laws as agrarian harmony and communal living proceeded directly from God, therefore making them very difficult to argue with. Coleridge has previously in this lecture referred to the Jews as an ignorant race – seemingly because he is Christian. He implies he has the intellect to live by the substance of these laws without being subject to following them to the letter. Also, that he has the ability to ignore these laws, should he choose to, thereby giving himself an escape-route, should the Pantisocratic scheme fail.

The above quotation is a further example of Coleridge 'preaching Pantisocracy', and expecting everyone present to agree with his ideas. It is entirely possible at this point in Coleridge's life that many of his peers and members of his audience had more property than he did, and therefore more to lose. Thus, the idea of holding all property in common may not have been as attractive to his audience as it was to Coleridge. An example of this is how Southey's attitude towards the idea of communal property and the employment of slaves on the Pantisocratic farm changed when he came into an annuity, discussed in the above section entitled 'The Demise of Pantisocracy'.

Lecture Three is mainly concerned with prophecies, and the situation of the world at the time of Christ's birth, both topics deferred from the previous lecture. Coleridge suggests that prophecies about lands bordering Jerusalem may have been written after they occurred, hence the accuracy of the 'prophecies'. He states that this lecture will therefore concentrate only on prophecies relating to Christ, as it was well acknowledged by both Jews and Gentiles that these were written, and commentated upon, by the Jews before they happened. Coleridge focuses particularly upon prophecies about the character of Christ made in the Book of Isaiah (53: 4-8) before his birth.

In view of the above, Coleridge suggests that the Jews were an inferior race to the Christians:

The Jewish Commentators, who wrote anterior to the Birth of Jesus, say that general Tradition applied this Prophecy to their future Messiah, but they think it inapplicable as the Messiah was to be a great, and a splendid Monarch, a mistake common among the Jews and to which their rejection of Christ is in great measure to be imputed. (ibid: 154)

Coleridge continues that both Jews and Gentiles were at their most corrupt at the time of the birth of Christ, which could not have been more opportune; the historian Josephus said the 'Jewish and Gentile Kingdoms' should have been consumed by divine fire, 'as Gomorrah was' (ibid: 155). Coleridge's implication here is that the Jews and Gentiles of this time, although corrupt, were actually more civilised than the so-called Establishment Christians of the 1790s in the United Kingdom.

Coleridge goes on to describe how Gentiles (Stoics and Epicureans) were equally as depraved and debauched as the Jews immediately prior to the birth of Christ. Stoics believed in the physical God of Fire, sometimes given or denied intelligence, and not the originator of the Universe but a result of its organisation; an effect rather than a cause. Stoic doctrines were characterised by pride, which Coleridge found distasteful :

Hence too (for Pride and benevolence are utterly incompatible) their whole morality became a System of gloomy and cold blooded Selfishness. To be totally unaffected by external objects, to feel neither Love or Pity, was their first Precept, their middle, and their last. (ibid: 157)

The above quotation suggests that Coleridge felt that these passions were also what drove the average Anglican, especially those representing the Establishment in the 1790s.

Coleridge found the Epicurean doctrines equally distasteful:

...the Epicureans... built all of their moral Doctrines on the principle of gross self-interest. Epicurus taught that pleasure was the final Goal of life, and by his own Life seemed to believe that Temperance and well managed Passions were the only means of true Pleasures. He taught that the World was formed by the blind Play of Atoms – that there was no Providence – and no future State – These Doctrines his Disciples fully embraced but his moral precepts they forgot or perverted. (ibid)

Coleridge's main point in *Lecture Three* is that the very existence of Christ in such a place, at such a time, was in itself a miracle. In order for Christ's works to be taken seriously, Christ needed to be of lowly birth, to prove that God was always in evidence.

As Peter Mann states:

Christ's moral teaching...required the violation of those laws of association which should normally have produced in him the characteristic beliefs, attitudes and prejudices of his race and period. Christ taught principles totally opposed to those of his time, and this required a suspension of the inflexible laws of association possible only through the intervention of the Creator... Hartley... proposed this line of thought in *Observations II*. (ibid: 160)

The suggestion is that Coleridge may have plagiarised this part of the lecture from Hartley, in addition to most of the text of the previous lecture being taken straight from Lowman. The *Lectures on Revealed Religion, its' Corruptions and Political Views* (sic) may well be amongst the earliest examples of Coleridge's plagiarisms, which does raise the question of whether the ideas and beliefs espoused in the Lectures are original to Coleridge, or those of his sources, ones that he could conveniently and quickly lift whilst writing his lectures the day or night before delivery. Also, there is the question of whether Coleridge, rather than outlining his own beliefs and opinions, was just writing what he thought his audience wanted to hear or debate. As stated earlier, Coleridge's audience would have been well-educated, aspiring middle-class young men just like himself. Additionally, in *Lecture Three*, whilst criticising the religious practices and beliefs of others, Coleridge also appears to feel the need to defend his own religious vacillations in the context of his upbringing and education within the Anglican church:

Men who have received their education among Religionists and formed their *habits* within the circle of religious Influence, will probably remain virtuous even after they have thrown off that Piety, by which their Virtue was generated. (ibid: 157)

Towards the end of *Lecture Three*, Coleridge makes a comment seemingly about the ways in which people should let God into their lives, but the sub-text to the comment seems to be a warning about the threat of imminent invasion by the French:

But if we love not our friends and Parents whom we have seen – how can we love our universal Friend and Almighty Parent whom we have not seen... the love of our Friends, parents and neighbours lead[s] us to the love of our country to the love of all Mankind. (ibid: 162-3)

Coleridge here suggests that to protect the United Kingdom against French invasion, the British needed to work together as one unified whole, to repel the threat posed by France. This unity could be achieved through religion and love, beginning within the microcosms of the family and the Church, and expanding throughout Britain, before spreading worldwide. Only unity could provide the necessary strength, so therefore anyone who did not profess faith in God was a potential weakness and a potential threat to overall security.

Lecture Four addresses hardly any of the subject areas advertised in its title in depth, concentrating on the early spread of Christianity, despite the persecution of its followers, and the veracity of the New Testament as evidenced through the spread of the Gospels. Much of the information contained within the lecture is lifted directly from other sources such as Michaelis, Gibbon, Paley and Volney (ibid: 169). As with the previous lecture, the number of ideas acquired from others in the course of Coleridge's reading makes it very difficult to ascertain whether the beliefs and ideas outlined in this lecture are actually original to Coleridge, or those of his sources.

E. H. Coleridge suggests that only a portion of *Lecture Five* has survived, as only one subject from the extended title is addressed, that of the corruptions of Christianity. Coleridge begins *Lecture Five* with ideas taken from Priestley's *Early Opinions* (1768), stating that the Gnostics were probably the first to corrupt Christianity. The Gnostics claimed that the spirit of Jesus entered his body after his birth, and left it before the crucifixion, thereby explaining Jesus' words on the Cross: 'My God, my God why hast

thou forsaken me?’ (Matt: 27:46). They also believed that the physical body of Jesus was not real, explaining why Mary was found to be still a virgin after having given birth. Additionally, the Gnostics did not believe in the Resurrection. Their belief was that the body of Jesus was removed from the tomb after death, and the figure of Christ which appeared to the Disciples was merely a spirit taking the form of Christ. Coleridge states:

Whosoever shall disbelieve that the Creator of the Universe became a creature, that the omnipresent God abode nine months in the Womb of a Woman, and the impassable Eternal suffered agonies and died on the Cross, whosoever shall disbelieve that The Father is one perfect God, the Son one perfect God, and the Holy Ghost one perfect God, yet that the three perfect Gods are but one Perfect God, and that this aggregated God is no greater than either of its three component parts, whoever shall disbelieve this which is the Catholic Faith, beyond all Doubt, he shall perish everlastingly... (Patton and Mann: 1971: 211-2)

By way of explanation, Coleridge had stated earlier in *Lecture 5*:

I have been thus particular in my account of the gnostic Sect, because their doctrine in its consequences produced all the Mysteries, Impostures and Persecutions, that have disgraced the Christian Community... (ibid: 199)

However, E. H. Coleridge states in his note to the text that it was in truth not Coleridge, but Priestley, who had been ‘thus particular’:

That the Gnostics were the first corrupters of Christianity, affirming the divinity of Christ and other heresies, has an important place in Priestley’s account of them in *Early Opinions*. Both here and in his other works he tended to rest his case for the Unitarianism of the early Christians on his belief that the Gnostics were not merely the first but the *only* heretics of early times. (ibid)

Although Coleridge was certainly a Unitarian, and follower of Priestley at the time the *Lectures on Revealed Religion, its’ Corruptions and Political Views* (sic) were written, it is again difficult to say how much of Priestley’s thought Coleridge had at this time appropriated as his own. Much of the remainder of this lecture is a declaration of orthodox Unitarian beliefs, in terms of redemption, atonement and sacrifice. Coleridge vents his disgust both with Trinitarianism and the established Church towards the end of the lecture:

He who sees any real difference between the Church of Rome and the Church of England possesses optics which I do not possess – the mark of antichrist is on both of them. Have not both an intimate alliance with the powers of this World, which Jesus positively forbids? Are they not both decked with gold and precious stones?... Do they not both SELL the Gospel – Nay, nay, they neither sell, nor is it the Gospel – they forcibly exchange Blasphemy for the first fruits, and snatching

the scanty Bread from the poor Man's Mouth they cram their lying Legends down his Throat! (ibid: 210-1)

The final lecture in the series is deliberately more controversial than the others, and begins to touch on the subject of the slave trade. It appears that Coleridge deliberately intended that this final lecture should have the dual purpose of wrapping up the *Lectures On Revealed Religion, its' Corruptions and Political Views* (sic), and introducing the topic of the slave trade and his own opinions of it. E. H. Coleridge suggests that Coleridge may have already decided at this point to go ahead with the *Lecture On the Slave Trade* (to be discussed in the following section entitled 'The Watchman'), which was delivered on 16 June 1795, between four to seven days after the conclusion of the *Lectures On Revealed Religion, its' Corruptions and Political Views* (sic), and suggests that Coleridge wanted to drum up some sensationalism prior to this lecture. He was also running his views on religion directly into his politics.

The inflammatory nature of the final lecture in the series was heightened by its venue; it was delivered in the Assembly Coffee House on the quayside at Bristol, England's second slave port in the late Eighteenth Century. Coleridge uses this lecture to reintroduce the subject of Pantisocracy, which he again backs up with biblical authority. He contrasts the unpleasant situation of English workers, currently in the grasp of the harsh conditions prevalent during the onset of the Industrial Revolution, with the utopian Pantisocratic conditions which he envisages in Pennsylvania:

The necessaries of twenty men are raised by one man, who works ten hours a day exclusive of his meals... Now if instead of this one man the whole Twenty were to divide the labour and dismiss all unnecessary Wants it is evident that none of us would work more than two hours a day of necessity, and that all of us might be learned from the advantages of opportunities, and innocent from the absence of Temptation. (ibid: 223)

This passage is a key outline of Coleridge's notions of communal living, which he expected to find a voice in the realisation of his Pantisocracy in America. It also echoes Acts 2:44-5, and has similarities to Godwin's *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and its Influence on Modern Morals and Manners* (1793). It is possible that Coleridge was using this final religious lecture as an attempt to recruit other people to join the Pantisocratic expedition. If so, this raises the question of whether this was purely

philanthropic on Coleridge's part, or whether he was hoping to spread the escalating costs even further.

The Watchman

The final area of Coleridge's early work which I examine in this chapter is *The Watchman*. Lewis Patton examines Coleridge's reasons for writing this periodical, and suggests that *The Watchman* gave Coleridge a public platform from which to preach and disseminate his ideas on many subjects. He reached a much wider range of people than with the 1795 Lectures, as the audience of the lectures was confined to the population of one city (Bristol), but the distribution of *The Watchman* was national:

...Coleridge, a Unitarian, and an advocate of wide political freedom, discovered within himself powers that enabled him to become a public spokesman for... change. (Patton: 1970: xxviii)

Coleridge urged change on many levels, although his main areas of focus were religious, cultural, educational and social change. These four areas are covered in depth in all editions of *The Watchman*. Though much of the material published in *The Watchman* was 'borrowed' by Coleridge from either the London newspapers or from other areas of his own works, there are also some original essays by him on these four themes. Throughout this early period, Coleridge's religious and political beliefs were inextricably intertwined.

The Watchman was written at a period in Coleridge's life when his own beliefs and politics were evolving, especially in terms of the four areas mentioned above, and as such, provided a good vehicle from which Coleridge could discuss and expand his developing ideas. Patton cites Coleridge's Christianity as a strong theme or focus of *The Watchman*:

[*The Watchman*]... was perhaps... an alternative pulpit to the one he rejected when he refused to take orders, and to the Unitarian one ...' (ibid: xxxvi).

Although Coleridge's religious beliefs were changing at this point in his life, as he moved towards Pantheism, his faith in God was never shaken. This is evident in the following extract by Patton, describing Coleridge staying up all night in 1796 with his dying brother-in-law, Robert Lovell:

All one night Coleridge sat up with Mrs Lovell to the accompaniment of the dying man's groans. In the previous weeks, Coleridge had spent much time with his brother-in-law, and having helped convert him to Christianity seemed only an isolated consolation for the nervewracking experience. (ibid: xxxv-i)

Coleridge's 'Prospectus' to the first edition of *The Watchman* states that he intended that its purpose should be to allow him freedom of speech, and to 'supply [and] circulate political information' (ibid: 5). This implies that Coleridge viewed the Government's handling of contemporary world political and religious events (such as the fallout from, and failure of, the French Revolution, and the knock-on effect amongst British working men), as a Government conspiracy, with every effort being made by the Government to keep the truth from the people. This theme is continued in the 'Introductory Essay'. Coleridge implies that the Government was quelling social uprising in England by making it impossible for news to be disseminated amongst the working men, due to factors such as the high price of paper preventing the writing and distribution of newspapers:

... the diffusion of general information has been impeded by accumulated taxes on paper, by stamp duties, and by every mode, direct and indirect, of preventing knowledge from coming within the circle of a poor man's expences (sic). (ibid: 10)

Within this essay in particular (and indeed every issue of *The Watchman*), Coleridge implies his own erudition at managing to produce a regular newspaper, for wide distribution, given the adverse conditions (and of course, his own habit of proposing great schemes, and then leaving them largely unrealised and unwritten). Coleridge does however have the grace to concede defeat in the tenth and final issue, when he has realised that *The Watchman* is no longer viable, with the words:

And it must be attributed to defect of ability, not of inclination or effort, if the words of the Prophet be altogether applicable to me, '*O Watchman! thou hast watched in vain!*' (ibid: 375)

The first edition of *The Watchman* details contemporary parliamentary discussion, taken more or less verbatim from the London newspapers, on the subject of 'Review of the Motions in the Legislature for a Peace with France'. The way in which Coleridge has chosen to repeat this story, which spans several years, highlights the class struggle in France, and the English war with France, being turned into religious conflicts by Members of Parliament for their own political ends. The French are denounced as

ambitious atheists (by Lord Loughborough in 1793), and the reason for war is cited as the ‘preservation of the CHRISTIAN RELIGION’ (ibid: 19) by the Duke of Portland in January 1794. Coleridge highlights how the Members of Parliament seem to be deliberately losing sight of the real reasons for, and causes of, the war, by covering it with a smokescreen threat of loss of British identity, Constitution and religion:

January 27, 1795... Lord Grenville [said]... that it was impossible to treat with men who had changed the worship of God into Idolatry of personified Abstractions (*Freedom &c*) (sic.) and who appeared to have declined even to tolerate the Christian Religion... (ibid: 21)

Coleridge reports the Parliamentary debate in such a way that it appears ridiculous to the reader, but at the same time, this serves to enforce Coleridge’s opinions of the war and the issues surrounding it. He emphasises how the state has hijacked religion, and turned it into a propaganda tool.

In the second edition of *The Watchman*, Coleridge’s original contribution is the ‘Essay on Fasts’, which bears the following unfortunate epigraph from the Book of Isaiah (16:11): ‘Wherefore my Bowels shall sound like an Harp’ (ibid: 51). It was unfortunate not least because after all the trouble that Coleridge had gone to in the preparation of *The Watchman*, including travelling the length of the country to gather subscriptions, this choice of epigraph removed any shred of credibility which it (and by default, Coleridge) may have gained. The ‘Essay on Fasts’, which was actually very informative and knowledgeable, although it provided a very negative analysis and opinion of fasting, was eclipsed by the critical attention gathered by its epigraph. Critics thought that what was actually a serious essay on fasting was Coleridge ridiculing religion.

Patton details Coleridge’s reasons for his abhorrence of the practice of fasting:

... (1) as a Dissenter he viewed it as one of many impurities introduced into Christianity by prelacy... (2) As an eighteenth-century classical student he condemned it as gothic... (3) As a Friend of Freedom he resented the use the Government was making of the Church as a channel of political propaganda... (Patton: 1970: 51)

Coleridge considered that the Christian religion had been polluted as it assimilated aspects of other religions, as well as elements of paganism and heathenism; an area

which Coleridge propounds at length in the 'Essay on Fasts'. He makes remarks against the Christian integrity of contemporary politicians, such as:

The general confession, beginning with 'Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed &c (sic)' is, we believe, omitted, and not without good reason: for as on these annual Fast Days our Legislators are expected to renew civilities with... the Church, it might yield an unholy pleasure to disaffected and seditious persons to hear from their own mouths: 'We have left undone what we ought to have done, and we have done those things we ought not to have done.' (ibid: 54)

In paragraphs such as this one, Coleridge again makes reference to the politicians' practice of adapting Christianity to serve as a propaganda tool, to suit their own ends (an earlier example is the 'Review of the Motions in the Legislature for a peace with France' in the first issue of *The Watchman*, discussed above). The reader is also left to assume that Coleridge includes himself in the 'disaffected and seditious persons' mentioned in the above quotation. In this edition of *The Watchman*, Coleridge additionally provides a social commentary, as part of his explanation as to why he considers fasting to be absurd. He highlights the fact that the number of English poor is increasing, as taxation to pay for the war with France and the American war also continued to escalate, with the result of making a large part of the population destitute. Coleridge's point is that the idea of these people voluntarily fasting is ridiculous, as they are already starving: '... they... already eat neither fish, flesh nor fowl at any time... *they* can afford to eat nothing but bread and cheese on Christmas days...' (ibid: 54).

Coleridge goes on to explain, hopefully tongue-in-cheek, that it is the crimes of the poor which have incurred the judgement of God upon Britain, as the poor represent the larger part of the population, making their collective crimes greater. This use of irony is similar to that of Jonathan Swift and Thomas Paine.

The theme of religion is prevalent in the second issue of *The Watchman*. As well as the above mentioned 'Essay on Fasts', there is also a long extract from the *Religious Musings* entitled 'The Present State of Society', and a short essay entitled 'A Defence of the Church Establishment from its similitude to the Grand and Simple Law of the Planetary System'. This essay compares the structure of the Church to the structure of the universe:

The Bishops are the larger bodies in this system, some at greater, some at lesser distances; but all revolving around their Sun, and rejoicing in the heat and radiance of ministerial favour. (ibid: 67)

The third issue of *The Watchman* contains an essay entitled ‘Historical Sketches of the Manners and Religion of the Ancient Germans, Introductory to a Sketch of the Manners, Religion and Politics of Present Germany’. Although Coleridge wrote the actual essay, it was based on one of the 1795 Lectures delivered by Southey, and therefore likely to have been developed by both Coleridge and Southey together. Many of the ideas which Coleridge and Southey held at this time, such as communal living and the concept of Pantisocracy, are present in this essay, especially in the description of the treatment of women:

[The Ancient Germans] looked upon women as their equals and companions, and whoever wished for the love of a woman first made himself worthy of her esteem. They deemed them favoured by the Gods... (ibid: 90)

This was the kind of idyllic relationship which Coleridge had envisaged for himself and the idealised woman with whom he would spend his life; his soul mate. However, his relationship with Sara Fricker did not live up to this idyllic vision. Coleridge was in love with Mary Evans at the time that he felt obliged to become engaged to Sara Fricker as part of the Pantisocratic scheme. Although their relationship began in conditions which were far from ideal, the newly married couple did initially seem to be very happy and very much in love at the time that this essay was written, although this was not to last.

This short essay also hints at the Pantheism that was very soon to become a large part of Coleridge’s life:

To erect statues to this Deity, or to think of confining him within the inclosure (sic) of walls, was held absurd and impious: ‘it was only within woods and consecrated forests that they could serve him properly’. (ibid: 91)

The final religious-themed work in the third issue of *The Watchman* is a short article entitled ‘Origins of the Maypole’, which was largely taken from the *Monthly Magazine* and the *Morning Chronicle*. This article outlines the transformation of ‘the Pagan festival of Whitsuntide... into the Christian holiday of Pentecost’. (ibid: 103)

The essay 'On the Slave Trade' in the fourth issue of *The Watchman* is a reworking of Coleridge's 1795 Lecture on the same subject. In the second paragraph, Coleridge attempts to explain the reasons and motives for the slave trade in terms of religion:

Man, a vicious and discontented *Animal*, by his vices and his discontent is urged to develop the powers of the Creator, and by new combinations of those powers to imitate his creativeness... (ibid: 132)

Coleridge goes on to say that the very existence of the slave trade was causing many people to doubt God, as it did not seem possible that a benevolent God would allow such pain and suffering, and such evil, to take place on the Earth: '...the Slave-trade... has insinuated in the minds of many, uneasy doubts respecting the existence of a beneficent Deity.' (ibid: 132)

This essay follows the same major points as the 1795 Lecture on the same subject. The *Lecture On the Slave Trade* was a highly inflammatory lecture to deliver in Bristol at this time, as Bristol was the second English slave port. Coleridge was vehemently against this trade and everything it stood for. He went so far as to discontinue his own personal use of by-products of the slave trade, including mahogany, rum, sugar and coffee, and he urged his friends to do likewise. He equated consumption of such produce with cannibalism: 'A part of that Food... is sweetened with the Blood of the Murdered'. (Patton and Mann: 1971: 248)

As well as using the emotive nature of the subject of slavery to heighten the lecture (and presumably its delivery), Coleridge was also extremely well-armed with the facts, for example when he describes the conditions endured by the crews of the slave ships, which were almost as bad as those endured by the slaves themselves during their passage:

From the brutality of their Captain and the unwholesomeness of the Climate through which they pass, it has been calculated that every Slave Vessel from the Port of Bristol loses on an average almost a fourth of the whole Crew... and ... the Survivors are rather shadows in their appearance than men and frequently perish in Hospitals after the completion of the Voyage... (ibid: 238)

One of the many frustrations surrounding the slave trade was the length of time which it took the Government to pass the General Abolition Bill, as stated in the Preface to the lecture:

...Wilberforce [introduced] the subject into Parliament in 1789; almost annually... reintroduced a bill for abolition... until 1807, when the General Abolition Bill was enacted... (ibid: 232)

As well as lecturing on the subject of the slave trade itself, Coleridge used the forum of this public lecture to preach to the crowd about the dangers of the lack of Christianity, resulting in man's inhumanity to man, of which the slave trade was the prime example. This wider scope is evident in such phrases as:

...man can only acquire the right use of God's gifts by experiencing the effects of having perverted them. Perhaps from the beginning of the world the evils arising from the formation of imaginary wants have been in no instance so dreadfully exemplified as in the Slave Trade and the West India Commerce! (ibid: 236)

The first partial sentence of this quotation implies that Coleridge believes that the slave traders can still be saved, if only they repent of their involvement in the slave trade. The truly lost souls are the landowners and slave traders who refuse to open their eyes and see what they are doing. This is highlighted in the lecture by the phrase: 'No Man is wicked without Temptation; no man wretched without a cause' (ibid: 235). Taken at face value, the reader (or listener) would be forgiven for assuming that the wicked man was the slave trader, and the wretched man the slave, although Coleridge does not expand this any further. It is equally possible that the slave traders on-board the slave ships were also the wretched men, as they shared the same filthy conditions, diseases and perils as the slaves on the crossings. Therefore, the wealthy politicians, merchants and land-owners, both in England and the West Indies, are those whom Coleridge describes as wicked, and driven by temptation. However, this sentence could also be interpreted as the politician, merchant and land-owner being both the wicked and the wretched man: wicked, because their greed has drawn them into temptation, yet wretched because, presumably to a Christian (such as Coleridge), someone capable of such wickedness towards another would deservedly burn in Hell. Coleridge's religious rhetoric in this lecture is doctrinally severe, and similar to that found in the Old Testament. Other examples of apocalyptic doctrinal rhetoric in Coleridge's works can be found throughout *Fears in Solitude* (1798).

Coleridge also reintroduces the French Revolution into this lecture:

Enormities at which a Caligula might have turned pale, are authorised by our Legislature, and jocosely defended by our Princes – and yet... we have the impudence to call the French a Nation of *Atheists!* (ibid: 245)

The French Revolution is a continuing theme from Coleridge's earlier *Lectures On Revealed Religion, its' Corruptions and Political Views* (sic). Where previously he has compared the French mob to the rising numbers of English labouring classes entering the cities, here he concentrates on the religious aspects of the French Revolution. He implies that England considers itself to be a more civilised nation than France, as England is a Christian nation, and also exhibits more law and order than France, as evidenced by the lack of uprising amongst the lower classes in England. Coleridge then makes the point that Great Britain, this so-called civilised Christian nation legally allows, and positively encourages (through Parliament) the exploitation and degradation of millions of innocents. Patton and Mann helpfully comment here:

C[oleridge] is pointing to the difference between the movements in the two countries – that in France, humanitarian rather than religious in origin, succeeded in abolishing the slave-trade, whereas that in Britain, religious, not to say evangelical, in spirit, repeatedly failed. (ibid: 245)

This again serves to emphasise Coleridge's point that the atheistic, uneducated mob in France succeeded in doing something which the so-called Christian English Government were only able to achieve after eighteen long years of parliamentary debate. Coleridge again goes on to openly question the Christianity of the Members of Parliament:

...is it possible that they who really believe and fear the Father should fearlessly authorise the oppression of his children!' (ibid: 245)

This quotation implies that men who allow atrocities such as the slave trade to be committed must have no belief in, or fear of, God. Coleridge invokes the Old Testament here, by alluding to the wrath of God as he avenges his 'children'. This theme is continued over the next three pages, when Coleridge invites the Members of Parliament to consider what their eventual fate will be, if directly proportional to the suffering and torment which they have propagated during their lives:

...if the God of Justice inflicts on us that mass only of anguish which we have wantonly heaped upon our Brethren what will Hell be? (ibid: 247)

The remaining issues of *The Watchman* cover many areas of contemporary interest, particularly parliamentary debate. There are no further essays or articles on religious

themes, and, as the publication neared the end of its life, there were fewer and fewer original essays, with much of the material included in *The Watchman* being taken from other sources, such as the London newspapers.

Conclusion

This chapter has considered both the great worldwide political and social upheaval which was occurring in the closing decades of the Eighteenth Century, and Coleridge's response to these revolutionary events through his works. This period coincided with the transition of Coleridge's religious views from his early Unitarian stance, to the beginnings of his later Pantheistic beliefs, which was evident in works such as his sonnet 'On Pantisocracy'. Coleridge's works of this time illustrate how intricately linked religion and politics were in Coleridge's mind.

I have examined how Coleridge learned to articulate his evolving political and religious opinions firstly in sonnet form, particularly in the *Sonnets on Eminent Characters* which were pivotal in enabling Coleridge to organize and articulate his political beliefs in a succinct form. These beliefs were then articulated further through the more sustained medium of his 1795 Lecture series, specifically *A Moral and Political Lecture, Conciones ad Populum, or, Addresses to the People* and the *Six Lectures on Revealed Religion, its' Corruptions and Political Views* (sic), and finally through the periodical format of *The Watchman*. These experiments with both form and content prepared Coleridge for the precise and flowing articulation of his evolving political and religious ideas in the poetry of his 'Great Decade', when his own poetic voice emerged. This included poems such as *Fears in Solitude, The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, Kubla Khan* and *Frost at Midnight*, which are examined in more detail in Chapter Two.

Revolutionary events occurring at this time included the French Revolution, the onset of the Industrial Revolution, and the American War of Independence. The ideals of liberty, equality, and religious and political freedom enshrined within the American Declaration of Independence were also very attractive to Coleridge. They became the main pillars of his proposed Pantisocracy. The acquisition of adequate funding for the Pantisocratic experiment was the catalyst for the explosion in creativity which Coleridge experienced in 1795. In 'preaching Pantisocracy' to the masses, Coleridge was also on the look-out for potential recruits amongst his audience, to accompany the Pantisocrats to

Pennsylvania. Coleridge sought to legitimize Pantisocracy through his works of this time by aligning it with biblical precedents.

Coleridge also took considerable risks through his works of this time, which were designed to be inflammatory, and garner as much public interest as possible. I have used as the main examples of this the *Sonnets on Eminent Characters*, in which Coleridge explicitly identified the subject of each sonnet. In this series of sonnets, he tended to use religious rhetoric to indicate his approval of each public figure. There are a few exceptions to this; as outlined above, the sonnets *To Kosciusko* and *To Fayette* praise their subjects in political terminology, as was appropriate to their political status and foreign citizenship. The lack of religious rhetoric used in these two sonnets may also be a comment on their foreign nationalities. The only example where Coleridge uses religious language not to praise, but to censure his subject, is in his comparison of the serving Prime Minister William Pitt the Younger with Judas Iscariot. This was one of many political risks which Coleridge took with his early works, in an attempt to increase his revenue and the number of his supporters. Habeas Corpus, the right of a prisoner to challenge the legality of their imprisonment, had been suspended by Parliament in May 1794; if Coleridge had been arrested for sedition during his Lecture series of 1795, he could have legally been imprisoned, indefinitely, without trial.

Coleridge's sense of his own political radicalism, in respect of his objections to the Government, is clearly articulated in religious terms through the trajectory of *Religious Musings*, *Sonnets on Eminent Characters*, and the 1795 Lectures, specifically *A Moral and Political Lecture, Conciones ad Populum, or, Addresses to the People*, and the *Six Lectures on Revealed Religion, its' Corruptions and Political Views* (sic), through into the works of the 'Great Decade'. Coleridge found that he had far too much to say during his *Lectures on Revealed Religion, its' Corruptions and Political Views*, with each covering only one or two items, if any, of the advertised prospectus. This exercise led Coleridge into the more succinct, precise poetry of the 'Great Decade'.

The Watchman, which followed, was aimed at a much wider audience than the 1795 Lectures, and included a great deal of information taken from the newspapers, as well as several original essays. Coleridge considered that the Government was deliberately

encouraging the ignorance of the masses by withholding information about the war; *The Watchman* was Coleridge's attempt to redress the balance, and also to incite social change, particularly in the areas of education, religion, culture and society. It was also a good vehicle in which to discuss his ever evolving ideas on politics and religion.

Coleridge also used the 'alternative pulpit' of the 1795 Lectures and *The Watchman* to denounce the slave trade. This was a topic on which Coleridge had very strong opinions, and he couched them in religious language to give his opinions the full weight of biblical authority. His *Lecture On the Slave Trade* was all the more inflammatory for being delivered at the Assembly Coffee House on the docks in Bristol, England's second slave-port at this time.

To conclude, this chapter has examined how the whirl of creative activity into which Coleridge threw himself in 1794 and 1795 was very important in enabling him to formulate and articulate his ideas on politics and religion, in a variety of forms, in the coming 'Great Decade'.

CHAPTER TWO: ICONS AND ARCHETYPES

Day and night my toils redouble,
Never nearer to the goal;
Night and day I feel the trouble
Of the Wanderer in my soul. (Wordsworth: 1994: 166: 25-8)

This chapter focuses on iconic and archetypal figures: those who feature in a selection of Coleridge's early works; those who influenced his early works; and those corresponding characters by later writers which may have been influenced by Coleridge's early figures, many of which stem from revolutionary ideals or cultural archetypes. Biblical references are also implied by the inclusion of figures such as Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew, who appears several times in Coleridge's earlier poetry and prose works. Although Coleridge did not make specific reference to the study of icons and archetypes in his works, in the *Lay Sermons* (1816), and the later *Marginalia* (1818-27) he did discuss the notion of the symbol as '...not allegorical or arbitrary, a Symbol being an essential Part of that, the whole of which it represents' (in Halimi: 2007:106). The iconic and archetypal figures discussed below perform a similar role in Coleridge's works.

Of primary significance here are the religious (both orthodox and Pantheistic) ideas surrounding these characters. I begin by focussing on Coleridge's *Religious Musings* (1794-6) as an example of Coleridge's earlier works, compared to the slightly later 'Fears in Solitude' (1798). *Religious Musings* and 'Fears in Solitude' are similar in that they are both lengthy descriptions of the state of England at the time each poem was written, both purport to be built around a religious framework, and both are attempts by Coleridge to articulate his political and religious views at the time that each poem was written. In the intervening four years between the writing of *Religious Musings* and 'Fears in Solitude', Coleridge had effectively outgrown his radical adolescence. He had also become a husband and a father, and a known and published poet. Through his close friendship and poetic discussions with William Wordsworth during the final part of this four-year period, Coleridge had not only met his poetic match or equal, he had also truly found and developed his own poetic voice. This is evident in works discussed in the second part of this chapter.

The second part of the chapter considers representations of Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew, in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1798), *Christabel* (published 1816, but begun in 1798), and ‘The Wanderings of Cain’ (1797). The original idea for *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* was discussed between Coleridge and Wordsworth, but, apart from a couple of short passages, was composed entirely by Coleridge in 1797-8. He would spend the rest of his life revising it.

The chapter concludes with further exploration of the character of Geraldine in *Christabel*, in which I make a case for identifying Geraldine as a manifestation of a succubus, by comparing her to similar figures in three marginally later texts by other authors: *The Fairy of the Lake* (John Thelwall, 1801), *Lamia* (John Keats, 1819), and *The Succuba* (Honoré de Balzac, 1836).

Religious Musings

Religious Musings was begun in 1794, at a time when Coleridge was struggling with self-definition, in terms of determining and describing his religious beliefs; he was also attempting to follow his vocation and find his own voice as a poet. At the end of the poem Coleridge acknowledges his youth and inexperience in terms of writing poetry: ‘Till then/ I discipline my young novice thought...’ (Mays: 2001i: 190: 101: 410-1).

In Coleridge’s view at this time, to become a great poet like Milton, one had to produce an epic magnum opus, in a similar vein to *Paradise Lost* (1667). *Religious Musings* is an epic construction, and extremely ambitious for a young, inexperienced poet to attempt. It mimics the style of the great seventeenth century poets, primarily Milton, whom Coleridge studied at Christ’s Hospital, and Eighteenth-century derivatives including Young and Akenside; but this mimicry left *Religious Musings* turgid and obscure in places, as Coleridge tried to adapt the style of other poets to fit his own intentions. Additionally, at this point in Coleridge’s career, length seemed to be the most important criterion of a magnum opus, at the expense of quality, clarity or coherence. Coleridge’s choice of religion as a subject was also epic and references *Paradise Lost*, as well as the style of the verse, and the choice of language used.

An example of Coleridge's verse structure in *Religious Musings* being 'influenced by the compressed Latinate style of *Paradise Lost*' (Keach: 1997: 474) is given below:

'Tis the sublime of man,
Our noontide Majesty, to know ourselves
Parts and proportions of one wond'rous whole!
This fraternizes man...
... But 'tis God
Diffus'd thro' all, that doth make all one whole...
(Mays: 2001i: 180: 126-131)

This section is an expression of the Pantheistic God 'diffused' throughout the whole of nature. Coleridge states here that it is man's second-nature to feel that he is also a part of something larger, of this Pantheistic unity, a cog in the machine. This desire for unity is what brings men together, but it is God working through all these parts that unifies them into one whole. This is another of Coleridge's early attempts to define his Pantheistic thoughts, which he was beginning to express around 1796.

Later in the poem, Coleridge again references and subverts *Paradise Lost* by referring to the 'Moloch Priest':

... the Moloch Priest prefers
The prayer of hate, and bellows to the herd
That Deity, ACCOMPLICE Deity
In the fierce jealousy of waken'd wrath,
Will go forth with our armies and our fleets
To scatter the red ruin on their foes!
O blasphemy! to mingle fiendish deeds
With blessedness! (Mays: 2001i: 182-3: 185-92)

This is also a denunciation of 'Priests', as Moloch was the rebel angel who advised 'open war' in *Paradise Lost Book II*:

...Moloch, sceptred king,
Stood up – the strongest and the fiercest Spirit
That fought in Heaven, now fiercer by despair.
His trust was with th' Eternal to be deemed
Equal in strength, and rather than be less
Cared not to be at all; with that care lost
Went all his fear: of God, or Hell, or worse,
He recked not, and these words thereafter spake :-
'My sentence is for open war...' (Milton: 1994: 135: 43-51)

There are also many extended passages giving lengthy descriptions of the history of man and the world, similar to those given in *Paradise Lost* where Milton gives brief descriptions or overviews of historical detail, for instance *Book I*, lines 392-521 (ibid: 123-6).

Religious Musings is very complex, and contains many of Coleridge's key ideas and beliefs, as stated by J. C. C. Mays:

C[oleridge] for a while pinned all his hopes on the poem. It was his first adult venture beyond lyric verse without a collaborator... He poured into it his reading and enthusiasms, making the text and notes a repository of his beliefs and cherished opinions. (Mays: 2001i: 173)

As it took him eighteen months to write, Coleridge was able to mature his ideas over a considerable period of time. This poem is therefore a key example of the flux of ideas and theories which made up Coleridge's religious beliefs between 1794-6, although it is too complex to represent a 'balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities' (Jackson: 2000: 319). The only 'reconciliation' is that all of Coleridge's theories and ideas of that time appear in the same work. This may be as close as he ever came to balancing or reconciling his religious and political ideas. They may have become reconciled, if not balanced, in *Religious Musings*, had the poem been shorter: the fact that the poem is so longwinded and rambling gave Coleridge ample room for repetition and contradiction. Although the beliefs that Coleridge held on Christmas Eve 1794, when the writing of the poem had purportedly begun, had changed considerably by 1796 when the poem was finally published, they were still essentially Unitarian. Even publication did not represent the final version of the poem. Coleridge tried to rush amendments to the printers as *Religious Musings* was being printed, but was too late to get them included. J. C. C. Mays comments:

The date which C[oleridge] gives at the head of the poem is misleading. It was conceived and perhaps begun on Christmas Eve 1794, but it was overtaken by other ventures in the following year and had not reached a finished state even as C[oleridge] began to submit copy for *Poems* (1796). (Mays: 2001i: 171)

Therefore, Mays' version of *Religious Musings* in the Bollingen *Collected Coleridge* is more complete than Coleridge's published version, as it contains all the amendments which Coleridge had wished, but had been unable, to make. I present a detailed analysis

of *Religious Musings* in this chapter, as it contains evidence of all the theories and ideas that Coleridge held between 1794 and 1796.

Religious Musings opens with a seemingly orthodox Christian reference to both its title and sub-title, 'A Desultory Poem, Written on the Christmas Eve of 1794'. However, the vision of angels proclaiming the birth of Christ quickly gives way, within the first fifteen lines, to a Pantheistic vision of 'God in Nature':

...Fair the vernal Mead,
Fair the high Grove, the Sea, the Sun, the Stars;
True Impress each of their creating Sire! (Mays: 2001i: 175: 101:
14-6)

In the above quotation, Coleridge states that the world, rather than man, is created in God's image, although he then goes on to say that however beautiful the images of nature are, they are nowhere near as beautiful as the face of God, referred to in line 19 as 'the sovran Sun' (ibid: 19). This is the first instance of Coleridge equating God with the sun.

Elements of Coleridge's attempt to combine religious and political thoughts at this time are visible in *Religious Musings*. For example, Coleridge adds a footnote to the following section, indicating that it encapsulates the main ideas contained in the 1791 edition of Hartley's *Observations on Man* (1749):

Lovely was the Death
Of Him, whose Life was Love! Holy with power
He on the thought-benighted Sceptic beam'd
Manifest Godhead, melting into day
What floating mists of dark Idolatry
Broke and misshap'd the Omnipresent Sire:
And first by FEAR uncharm'd the droused Soul,
Till of its nobler Nature it 'gan feel
Dim recollections; and thence soar'd to HOPE,
Strong to believe what'er of mystic good
Th' Eternal dooms for his Immortal Sons.
From HOPE and firmer FAITH to perfect LOVE
Attracted and absorb'd: and centr'd there
GOD only to behold, and know, and feel,
Till by exclusive Consciousness of God
All self-annihilated it shall make
GOD its Identity: God all in all!

We and our Father ONE! (ibid: 175-7: 28-45)

This passage is an expression of Coleridge's current Unitarian belief, largely derived, as stated above, from the teachings of David Hartley on Associationism. Associationists believed that, prior to sensation, the human mind was blank. Physical vibrations in the brain encouraged different ideas to become 'associated', with one tendency eventually prevailing over the rest. Both Hartley and Coleridge, his disciple, applied this theory to Unitarianism, meaning that eventually all ideas, or vibrations within the brain, would lead to God. The 'one-ness' of God is emphasised, rather than the Holy trinity, and throughout *Religious Musings*, Coleridge also emphasises man's unity and equality with that unified God. Coleridge's Associationist beliefs also extended into his political views, in terms of reducing the amount of power held by the monarchy and ruling classes, and advocating universal male suffrage to redress the balance. He agreed with the principles of the French Revolution, which was attempting to do just this, by advocating liberty and equality. Coleridge was also a great believer in the power of education to enlighten the masses. In Associationist terms, he believed that all of these elements could be brought together, or associated, to achieve the one goal of emancipation from political oppression, with all men being politically equal, regardless of their social status.

Coleridge's turgid style becomes more flowing and transparent in sections where he discusses his own current religious and philosophical beliefs. This allows him to depart from his epic Miltonic blueprint. It is possible that such sections were revised towards the end of the eighteen month composition process, with Coleridge having had the benefit of that additional period of time to begin to find his own style. Stylistically, the above section is very similar to the 'One Life' section in 'The Eolian Harp' (published in 1796, written in August 1795):

O the one life within us and abroad,
Which meets all motion and becomes its soul,
A light in sound, a sound-like power in light
Rhythm in all thought, and joyance every where... (ibid: 233: 26-9)

Coleridge continues *Religious Musings* with a discussion of the Elect. He implies that they know their status, as the chosen ones, before they get to heaven. They are people

who have professed worship of God, and trampled material things underfoot in the process, using them as steps to help the Elect to ascend to heaven and acquire spirituality:

And blest are they,
Who in this fleshly World, the elect of Heaven,
... gazing, trembling, patiently ascend
Treading beneath their feet all visible things
As steps, that upward to their Father's Throne
Lead gradual – else nor glorified nor lov'd. (ibid: 177: 45-53)

It could be presumed that Coleridge at this point believed himself to be one of the Elect. He was happy and industrious during this period of his life, and was not yet a slave to opium. He also professes himself to be a Unitarian and Hartleian, although elements of Pantheism are starting to creep into his descriptions of, and uses of, nature in this poem. The sun is also made an emblem of God.

From the lectures begun in 1795 (discussed in the previous chapter) Coleridge once again picks up his theme of denouncing corrupt 'priests' and 'ministers' as those who preach for hire:

I deem that the teaching of the Gospel for hire is wrong; because it gives the teacher an improper bias in favour of particular opinions on a subject where it is of the last importance that the mind should be perfectly unbiased. Such is my private opinion; but I mean not to censure all hired teachers, many among whom I know, and venerate as the best and wisest of men – God forbid that I should think of these, when I use the word PRIEST, a name, after which any other term of abhorrence would appear an anti-climax. By a Priest I mean a man who holding the scourge of power in his right hand and a bible (translated by authority) in his left, doth necessarily cause the bible and the scourge to be associated ideas... (Keach: 1997: 476: ff215)

In the extract below, Coleridge blames ministers for heaping wrath upon the world:

...th' immitigable ministers
That shower down vengeance on these latter days.
For kindling with intenser Deity
From the celestial MERCY-SEAT they come,
And at the renovating Wells of LOVE
Have fill'd their Vials with salutary Wrath,
To sickly Nature... medicinal... (Mays: 2001i: 178: 101: 79-85)

Coleridge makes a biblical reference to Revelation 16:1 - 'And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth' – in the following passage:

Thus from th' Elect, regenerate thro' faith,
Pass the dark Passions and what thirsty Cares
Drink up the spirit, and dim regards
Self-centre. Lo they vanish! or acquire
New names, new features – by supernal grace
Enrob'd with Light, and naturaliz'd in Heaven. (Mays: 2001i:
178-9: 101: 88-93)

Coleridge describes here how the evil 'passions', the thoughts and feelings, of the Elect are transformed as they enter heaven, into positive 'passions'. This increases and emphasises the 'chosen-ness' of the Elect. Coleridge here re-emphasises the (Calvinist) belief that the Elect can behave as they choose whilst on Earth, as all of their evil deeds and thoughts will be transformed and forgiven as they enter Heaven. This implies that he believes that as the Elect know during their life-time that they have been 'chosen', they have no need to aspire to great deeds, or spiritual and behavioural perfection. This presumably includes the above-mentioned 'ministers' who pour wrath upon the Earth.

Coleridge's *Religious Musings* then move back towards a description of nature:

As when a Shepherd on a vernal morn
Thro' some thick fog creeps tim'rous...
Darkling he fixes on th' immediate road
His downward eye: all else of fairest kind
Hid or deform'd. (ibid: 179: 94-8)

Again, Coleridge describes this transformation, or 'deformation', in pastoral and natural terms. This could be early evidence of Pantheistic thought, although given the religious context of the poem, it can be assumed that Coleridge's choice of a shepherd as a representative of rural life is not accidental. He emphasises the isolation of the shepherd, protecting and carefully leading his flock safely through the fog and murky, opaque weather. Coleridge notes how, even in these terrible conditions, the shepherd's feet do not stray from the straight and narrow path of righteousness, and his eyes also do not stray, as this would lead to temptation, or to the sight of something too awful to be contemplated. This is similar to the following quotation from *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*:

Like one, that on a lonely road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turn'd round, walks on
And turns no more his head:
Because he knows, a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread. (ibid: 406: 161: 446-451)

However, the difference in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* is that the Mariner chooses not to look behind him out of fear, because he knows he is being pursued by Satan (a 'frightful fiend'). The shepherd in *Religious Musings* is looking forward to salvation in the kingdom of Christ, and therefore has no need or desire to look behind him. He knows he is pursued by Satan, but it holds no fear for him, as his knowledge of imminent salvation is more real, and much stronger than his fear of eternal damnation.

In *Religious Musings*, Coleridge breaks into this pastoral scene with a Pantheistic flash of the sun as an emblem of God, dispelling the dark and gloom, spiritual doubt and confusion, and revealing the way into the light, which enables the shepherd safely to lead his flock from the dark, gloomy fog of doubt into spiritual enlightenment:

...But lo! the bursting Sun!
Touch'd by th' enchantment of that sudden beam
Straight the black vapour melteth...
Dance glad the new-born intermingling rays,
And wide around the landscape streams with glory! (ibid: 179:
101: 98-104)

Even though, at this point in his life Coleridge is still professing Unitarianism, such imagery is a very definite signpost towards his later Pantheism. It is at this point in his career that a definite cross-over between natural description, and religious and Pantheistic expression occurs.

The language in the following quotation is reminiscent of both *Paradise Lost* and the Book of Genesis:

There is one Mind, one omnipresent Mind,
Omnific. His most holy name is LOVE...
He from his small particular orbit flies
With blest outstarting! From HIMSELF he flies,
Stands in the Sun, and with no partial gaze
Views all creation; and he loves it all,
And blesses it, and calls it very good! (ibid: 179: 105-13)

After Coleridge's Pantheistic flight of fancy, he sharply pulls himself up by returning to consider a more orthodox form of God, using the imagery of organised religion. I have already quoted examples of this. This reference to:

Cherubs and rapture-trembling Seraphim
Can press no nearer to th' Almighty's Throne. (ibid: 179: 115-6)

is reminiscent of 'The Eolian Harp' (below), written in August 1795, in the middle of the composition period of *Religious Musings*:

But thy more serious eye a mild reproof
Darts, O beloved woman! nor such thoughts
Dim and unhallowed dost thou not reject,
And biddest me walk humbly with my God...
Well hast thou said and holily dispraised
These shapings of the unregenerate mind... (ibid: 234: 115: 49-55)

Here, as in *Religious Musings*, this expression of orthodox Christian belief follows a passage of Pantheistic (and Pantisocratic) expression, with the attendant respective religious and political connotations:

And what if all of animated nature
Be but organic harps diversely framed,
That tremble into thought, as o'er them sweeps
Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,
At once the Soul of each, and God of All? (ibid: 44-8)

By this time Coleridge was adding the finishing touches to *Religious Musings* in 1796. As a result of the further development and consolidation of his religious and political beliefs, he was able to administer the 'mild reproof' himself. He no longer needed an outside agency or conscience (represented in 'The Eolian Harp' by Sara) to do it for him. This could be taken as a signpost that Coleridge has by 1796 accepted the 'shapings of [his] unregenerate mind'.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the issue of slavery versus freedom was a potent concern for Coleridge throughout his life. In *Religious Musings*, Coleridge returns to a discussion of slavery. The passage begins in a fairly complex manner, with the following quotation:

This the worst superstition, him except
Aught to desire, SUPREME REALITY! (ibid: 180: 101: 132-3)

meaning ‘to desire anything except him’ (Keach: 1997: 475: ff132-3). However, in later revisions and editions of *Religious Musings* (published 1797 and 1803), Coleridge attached the following note to this line:

If to make aught but the Supreme Reality the object of final pursuit, be Superstition; if the attribution of sublime properties to things or persons, which those things or persons neither do or can possess, be Superstition; then Avarice and Ambition are Superstitions: and he, who wishes to estimate the evils of Superstition, should transport himself, not to the temple of the Mexican Deities, but to the plains of Flanders, or the coast of Africa. – Such is the sentiment conveyed in this and the subsequent lines. (Mays: 2001i: 180)

This note (above) by Coleridge serves as an explanation for what follows:

... not that oft
The erring Priest hath stain'd with Brother's blood,
Your grisly idols, not for this may Wrath
Thunder against you from the Holy One!
But o'er some plain that steameth to the Sun,
Peopled with Death; or where more hideous TRADE
Loud-laughing packs his bales of human anguish;
I will raise up a mourning, O ye Fiends! (ibid: 180: 101: 135-142)

The above lines show Coleridge arguing for how conventional religion may be said to allow or condone the slave trade. Coleridge states that ‘priests’ and men have become blinded towards the true meaning and way of Christianity, through the acquisition of worldly goods:

...Toy-bewitch'd,
Made blind by lusts, disherited of soul,
No common centre Man, no common sire
Knoweth!... (ibid: 181: 146-9)

This has allowed them to view the evils of slavery impartially and dispassionately, removed from the acceptance of their common humanity with the slaves. Coleridge calls this into question, and states that *he* has not been blinded by religious idolatry, and worship of false Idols – presumably because his professed religion is Unitarian rather than Anglican/Christian. This statement implies that Coleridge believed that many Christians worshipped false Idols, whilst he (Coleridge) worshipped the one true God. Coleridge cites this ‘cohesion’ and ‘anarchy of spirits’ as the reasons behind slavery:

... curse your spells, that film the eye of Faith,
Hiding the present God; whose presence lost,
The moral world's cohesion, we become

An Anarchy of Spirits! (ibid: 180-1: 143-6)

This is Coleridge's religious manifesto. Religion is the glue that holds society together. Without the framework of God-fearing families, holding together the fabric of a God-fearing society, it begins to unravel (which was ironic, given Coleridge's later personal family breakdown). The 'anarchy of spirits' are looking for some kind of direction. This links in with 'unhelm'd' (line 126), as meaning lacking direction in terms of guidance. These thoughts were held by Coleridge from 1794 to 1796 as part of his Unitarian beliefs, but were equally applicable both to his earlier and later orthodox Christian beliefs. This 'manifesto' could also be equally applied to the Pantheistic period of 1797 – 1800. In the above quotation, 'God' is not identified as Christian, Unitarian, Pantheist or any other denomination.

Coleridge implies in the above quotation that God's presence is never removed, merely obscured, or 'lost' from view. This affirms my thesis that Coleridge's belief in (the presence of) God is never shaken, the issue is rather concerned with the revelation or obscurity of that God. Coleridge never denies 'God' but at different points in his career he argues for the identity of God in very different ways. God is there to be seen, if one is willing, able, or knows how and where to look, and does not allow their vision to be obscured by any distraction or 'Toy'. 'Priests' and 'Ministers' are given as examples of those who have allowed their vision to become obscured. Behind this lies a commitment to democratic, populist assumptions, easily translated into political terms.

Another subject covered by Coleridge's *Religious Musings* is the idea of the Wanderer, which is discussed at length later in the chapter. The following passage is one of several possible early references to the Wanderer in *Religious Musings*:

But that we roam unconscious, or with hearts
Unfeeling of our universal Sire,
And that in his vast family no Cain
Injures uninjur'd (in her best aim'd blow
Victorious MURDER a blind Suicide)... (ibid: 179-180: 117-21)

The Wanderer is a figure, based on Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew, who, at the time of Christ's crucifixion, faced eternal punishment for insulting Christ as he was collapsing under the weight of carrying the cross. Personifications of the Wanderer appear in texts

by many authors during the Romantic era, as well as before and afterwards. Coleridge here implies, with typical haziness, that the Wanderer was unable to appreciate God as being merciful, as he had previously felt God's wrath, albeit administered in an apparently benign fashion. God's punishment had allowed Ahasuerus plenty of time to reflect on, and repent of, his crime. The second part of this quotation implies an eye for an eye; the vengeance of Jehovah. This also appears in the 1798 version of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, where Coleridge uses archaic language in an attempt to make the text seem older than it is, to give it the additional authority of earlier works such as those by John Milton, and the Bible. At this period in his career, Coleridge felt that his own authority was not enough. The presence of Ahasuerus is discussed at length later in the chapter. It is worth noting here that Cain was on Coleridge's mind during this period, leading him to compose 'The Wanderings of Cain' in 1797. 'The Wanderings of Cain' and *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* are also discussed later in the chapter.

Another possible early reference to the Wanderer follows:

... A sordid solitary thing,
 Mid countless brethren with a lonely heart
 Thro' courts and cities the smooth Savage roams
 Feeling himself, his own low Self the whole;
 When he by sacred sympathy might make
 The whole ONE SELF! SELF, that no alien knows!
 Self, far diffus'd as Fancy's wing can travel!
 SELF, spreading still! Oblivious of its own,
 Yet all of all possessing! This is FAITH!
 This the MESSIAH'S destin'd victory! (ibid: 181: 149-58)

This passage describes a social outcast, much the same as the figure described in the following verse from the Book of Isaiah (53:3): 'He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief'. The subject of this verse came to be identified with Jesus by the early Christians. However, in the above quotation from *Religious Musings*, Coleridge describes the outcast as a savage who refuses to accept God/ Christ, and therefore, refusing salvation, he can never become a part of the 'whole' of the unified body of Christ. Coleridge's outcast is 'lost', not 'saved', thereby denying both 'Faith' and 'the Messiah's destined victory'.

The penultimate reference to the Wanderer comes towards the end of *Religious Musings*:

Some Fury fondled in her hate to man,
Bidding her serpent hair in mazy surge
Lick his young face, and at his mouth inbreath
Horrible sympathy!... (ibid: 182: 171-8)

The demon woman described above is a powerful force who uses her sexuality as a tool to enable her to wreak her destructive power. This section is actually about Catherine the Great (personified by Coleridge as Medusa), but its language anticipates Coleridge's and Keats' descriptions of Geraldine (from *Christabel*) or Lamia, both of whom are discussed at length later in the chapter.

'PATRIOT SAGE' (ibid: 184: 234) refers to Benjamin Franklin. Coleridge expresses high hopes for Franklin in *Religious Musings*. He fulfils the role of both progressive scientist and inventor, and of Founding Father of the USA. As Coleridge states in his note to the text, the following scene 'alludes to the French Revolution' (ibid: 187):

...The hour is nigh:
And lo! the Great, the Rich, the Mighty Men,
The Kings and the Chief Captains of the World,
With all that fix'd on high like stars of Heaven
Shot baleful influence, shall be cast to earth,
Vile and down-trodden, as the untimely fruit
Shook from the fig-tree by a sudden storm.
Ev'n now the storm begins: each gentle name,
Faith and meek Piety, with fearful joy
Tremble far-off – for lo! the Giant FRENZY
Uprooting empires with his whirlwind arm
Mocketh high Heaven; burst hideous from the cell
Where the old Hag, unconquerable, huge,
Creation's eyeless drudge, black RUIN, sits
Nursing th' impatient earthquake. (ibid: 186-7: 308-22)

The above passage describes the effect that the French Revolution was thought to have had on the ruling classes of France. In 1796, despite the 'Terror' of 1792, there was still no reason for radical enthusiasts not to believe that the Revolution would have a successful outcome, in terms of the peasants overthrowing the ruling classes. This passage in particular emphasises the fall of Royalty and the ruling classes. Coleridge's use of the plural (such as 'Kings' rather than 'King' in line 310) indicates that at this point it was still possible to believe that the revolution would ultimately spread beyond France, and have a tangible effect across the globe.

Coleridge's Associationist views related to both his political and religious opinions, in that he believed that the leaders, whether they were the Prime Minister and Members of Parliament, or Bishops and other Church Leaders, should not have a disproportionate amount of power over the rest of the population. To Coleridge, the overthrow of dictatorial religious establishments, such as the established Church of England, was every bit as important as Parliamentary and electoral reform.

The following passage refers to the 'downfall of religious establishments', as explained by Coleridge in his note to the text (ibid: 187):

...The abhorred Form
Whose scarlet robe was stiff with earthly pomp,
Who drank iniquity in cups of Gold,
Whose names were many and all blasphemous,
Hath met the horrible judgement! Whence that cry?
The mighty army of foul Spirits shriek'd,
Disherited of earth! For She hath fallen
On whose black front was written MYSTERY;
She that reel'd heavily, whose wine was blood;
She that work'd whoredom with the DAEMON POWER
And from the dark embrace all evil things
Brought forth and nurtur'd: mitred ATHEISM... (ibid: 187: 323-34)

This passage personifies the Church as a woman, possibly a demon woman such as Geraldine from *Christabel*, Lamia, or Zulma (from *The Succuba*), discussed later in the chapter. 'Cups of gold' may be the cup used to take communion, 'wine was blood' refers to the transubstantiation believed by members of the Christian (Catholic) church to take place during the sacrament of communion. 'Mitred atheism' refers to the mitres worn by Bishops and priests, and again to Coleridge's dislike of 'preaching for hire':

By a Priest I mean a man who holding the scourge of power in his right hand and a bible (translated by authority) in his left, doth necessarily cause the bible and the scourge to be associated ideas... (Patton and Mann: 1971: 67-8: ff5)

This is just one example of Coleridge's reiteration of his political and religious views many times within *Religious Musings*. The situations and characters which feature in this poem to illustrate Coleridge's views also arise in his other poems written at the same time as, and immediately after this period. The following description of Paradise in *Religious Musings* is an example of this:

When in some hour of solemn jubilee

The massy gates of Paradise are thrown
Wide open, and forth come in fragments wild
Sweet echoes of unearthly melodies,
And odours snatch'd from beds of Amaranth,
And they, that from the chrystal river of life
Spring up on freshen'd wing, ambrosial gales! (Mays: 2001i: 188:
101: 345-51)

This very similar to Coleridge's later description of Xanadu in *Kubla Khan* (1798):

In Xanadu did KUBLA KHAN
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where ALPH, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man...
And here were gardens bright with sinuous rills
Where blossom'd many an incense-bearing tree... (ibid: 512-3:
178: 1-9)

The following quotation from *Religious Musings* depicts a domestic scene with a parent and child:

O thou poor Widow, who in dreams dost view
Thy Husband's mangled corse, and from short doze
Start'st with a shriek; or in thy half-thatch'd cot
Wak'd by the wintry night-storm, wet and cold,
Covr'st o'er thy screaming baby! (ibid: 186: 101: 296-300)

This horrific nightmarish scene of a poverty-stricken widow trying in vain to keep her home and family together in the face of a harsh winter storm is the antithesis of the unified warm, calm and peaceful domestic wintry scene in 'Frost at Midnight' (1798):

The Frost performs its secret ministry,
Unhelped by any wind...
The inmates of my cottage, all at rest,
Have left me to that solitude, which suits
Abstruser musings: save that at my side
My cradled infant slumbers peacefully.
'Tis calm indeed! So calm that it disturbs
And vexes meditation with its strange
And extreme silentness... (ibid: 453: 171: 1-10)

The outcomes of these two comparable domestic scenes could not be more different. Coleridge's politics are still present in 'Frost at Midnight', although they are considerably dampened down. There is political cache in associations of the city with commerce and competition for example, which Coleridge is eager to escape from.

Coleridge goes on to list some of his greatest influences, and those he has the greatest respect for, personified as the dead who will be restored to life when the Church is restored and cleansed, and Christ returns:

... To MILTON's trump
The high Groves of the renovated Earth
Unbosom their glad echoes: inly hush'd,
Adoring NEWTON his serener eye
Raises to heaven: and he of mortal kind
Wisest, he [Hartley] first who mark'd the ideal tribes
Up the fine fibres thro' the sentient brain...
Lo! PRIESTLEY there, Patriot, and Saint, and Sage... (ibid: 188-9:
101: 364-72)

Coleridge brings the poem full-circle just before the end, by removing any obscurity which remains in the world. The projected success of the French Revolution, and the re-establishment of the Church in its pure form (without its 'Murdering Ministers'), has allowed the omnipotent God to be revealed to men:

The veiling clouds retire,
And lo! the Throne of the redeeming God
Forth flashing unimaginable day
Wraps in one blaze earth, heaven, and deepest hell. (ibid: 190:
399-402)

A further circle which is completed is Coleridge's final thought in the poem, a comparison of God with the sun:

... omnific, omnipresent LOVE,
Whose day-spring rises glorious in my soul
As the great Sun, when he his influence
Sheds on the frost-bound waters... (ibid: 191: 416-9)

Here Coleridge shows the 'Sun' of God warming and illuminating the 'frost-bound' waters of oppression. Political undertones resonate here in the dawning of a fairer and more just world following the Revolution.

At this time, Coleridge also made a substantial contribution to Southey's *Joan of Arc* (1796), which had been written two years earlier, but not published, as not enough subscribers had been found. With Coleridge's additions, Joseph Cottle agreed to publish Southey's *Joan of Arc* in 1796. Coleridge's additions were made at the same time that he was writing *Religious Musings*, and are very similar in style, in subject matter, and in

their discursive nature to *Religious Musings*. Southey subsequently published a second edition of *Joan of Arc* in 1798, without Coleridge's additions, following which Coleridge published a much revised and extended version of his original omitted lines, under the title of *The Destiny of Nations: A Vision* in his 1817 collection *Sybilline Leaves*.

Fears in Solitude

By the time Coleridge came to write 'Fears in Solitude' in April 1798, his radical political views had become tempered. His dislike of Pitt was as strong as it ever had been, as I outlined in the previous chapter, but by 1798 Coleridge had acknowledged that Pitt could not be held solely responsible for the terrible state of England. Coleridge saw that responsibility for the current appalling social conditions in England was the responsibility of all Englishmen, not just the Prime Minister. This was evident in quotations such as:

...Oh! my countrymen!
We have offended... grievously,
And been most tyrannous. From east to west
A groan of accusation pierces Heaven! (Mays: 2001i: 175: 471:
42-5)

Or:

All... must swear, the briber and the bribed,
Merchant and lawyer, senator and priest,
The rich, the poor, the old man and the young;
All... make up one scheme of perjury,
That faith doth reel... (ibid: 472: 76-80)

'Fears in Solitude' also airs Coleridge's concerns that England is becoming a godless nation, and that the seemingly imminent French invasion is God's revenge for this. Coleridge describes how atheism is persuaded to emerge from its lair, and literally fly in the face of God, now that the threat of being banished by a God-fearing nation is no longer present:

...the very name of God
Sounds like a juggler's charm; and, bold with joy,
Forth from his dark and lonely hiding-place,
(Portentous sight!) the owlet, ATHEISM,
Sailing on obscene wings athwart the noon...
hooting at the glorious Sun in Heaven,

Cries out, 'Where is it?' (ibid: 472: 80-87)

So where is it? There is the suggestion of God's presence throughout the poem, although the implication is that God has become more of a Pantheistic presence than a traditional Anglican one. Imagery of nature is also present throughout the poem, with the first and final stanzas given over almost entirely to a natural description of England, including the poet as part of that natural landscape. The first appearance of God is noted in these Pantheistic lines inserted in the middle of a description of the poet:

...from the Sun, and from the breezy Air,
Sweet influences trembled o'er his frame... (ibid: 470: 20-1)

The sun as an emblem of God, and the breeze of religious or poetic inspiration, are common emblems in Coleridge's poetry of this time. Coleridge shows how the breeze has inspired the poet towards Pantheism:

And he...
Made up a meditative joy, and found
Religious meanings in the forms of nature! (ibid: 470: 22-4)

The imagery of the sun continues as Coleridge imagines the changes that would take place if war came to England: 'Carnage and groans beneath this blessed Sun!' (ibid: 471: 41) This is suggestive of the vengeful Jehovah of the Old Testament wreaking his revenge on the godless people of England, through French invasion. Coleridge warns that the English nation has become complacent about the war, as they have not experienced it first hand, but only through received intelligence from the newspapers and other similar media. Thus far, they have been immune to the true horrors of war, but Coleridge warns that this could change:

Thankless too for peace;
(Peace long-preserv'd by fleets, and perilous seas)
Secure from actual warfare, we have lov'd
To swell the war-whoop, passionate for war!
Alas! for ages ignorant of all
It's ghastlier workings...
We, this whole people have been clamorous
For war and bloodshed...
Spectators and not combatants! (ibid: 472: 87-97)

Coleridge comments that England's continued protection from the threat (and reality) of French invasion was due to the skill and bravery of the British Navy. He suggests that,

as a result of this, the population was not truly aware of the scale or the horror of the potential threat facing them. In the final three lines of the above quotation, Coleridge suggests that the English population was glamorising and celebrating their perceived idea of war (observing it like spectators at a football match), without any understanding of the brutality of actual warfare.

To summarise, I have demonstrated that between 1794 and 1800, despite his changing political beliefs and the tempering of his early political radicalism, Coleridge's negative views of William Pitt the Younger did not change. This period also coincided with Coleridge finding, and becoming renowned for, his own poetical voice, which emerged fully in 1798 with the writing of his most well-known poetry, including *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and 'Fears in Solitude'.

The intervening period covers Coleridge's development from the politically radical sonneteer of 1794, whose language is partially, if not wholly derived from a late 18th Century vocabulary of sentimental and sensationalist popular poetry, to the accomplished and more cautious composer of 'Fears in Solitude' of 1798, where his poetic voice is seen maturing alongside his changing religious and political views.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner and 'Fears in Solitude' reveal Coleridge at the height of his poetic powers, continuing to use Christian and Biblical imagery to present an image of the society of which he is now a part. His religious rhetoric, and his connection with the religious and spiritual side of his life is not lost through his development as a poet, but is used in a slightly different way. As the natural world increasingly becomes the subject matter of his poetry, Coleridge gradually takes on more Pantheistic ideas, which suggests he has adopted a broader, more organic and inclusive approach to spirituality and religion. By 1798 Coleridge has less reliance on Biblical authority, although Eucharistic references continue to occur in 'Fears in Solitude'. He has matured enough to be able to demonstrate, through 'Fears in Solitude', that the general population was to blame for the current state of the country, rather than just William Pitt, the 'Iscaiot' figure of 1794. By 1798, the general population had become politically and financially acquisitive, involved in commerce, slavery and overseas travel. At this time, Coleridge is still every bit as fiercely opposed to the war and

resulting social problems in England, but is able to take a broader and more inclusive view that this is a problem for English society as a whole, rather than just for the Prime Minister. He also suggests, through the increasing frequency of overseas travel, whether for pleasure or business, including slavery, that England is also spreading and broadcasting its domestic problems.

The subduing of Coleridge's political 'radicalisation' coincided with the writing of his more well-known 'Conversation Poems', which reveal him as a mature poet.

Coleridge's politics are still evident in the 'Conversation Poems', but they are less radical; the 'Conversation Poems' continue the long-standing debate around Coleridge's articulation of his political and religious views, but from a more balanced viewpoint. It could be said that toning down the expression of Coleridge's political views was a prerequisite to him flourishing as a great poet, although the evidence suggests that Coleridge's politics would eventually have become tempered regardless of how well known he became as a poet. This was mainly because he was outgrowing his radical adolescence, and his politics were becoming tempered by other more immediate interests such as his family, and his friendship with Dorothy and William Wordsworth (and others, such as John Thelwall), with whom he was able to discuss not only politics, but also his creative work, along with his new-found interest in Pantheism and becoming closer to the natural world.

Through his 'Conversation Poems', Coleridge continued to develop and articulate his newer interests, as well as his long-standing interests on many subjects, in addition to politics and religion. Folklore and mythology had always fascinated Coleridge, and one of these myths now began to be articulated in the 'Conversation Poems' via the persona of 'The Wanderer'.

Ahasuerus

Many Romantic writers were fascinated by the myth of Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew. Ahasuerus was the subject of, or an influence in, much romantic and gothic literature produced in the late 1790's. According to popular belief in the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries, Ahasuerus was cursed for taunting Christ on his way to the Crucifixion, and,

as a result, was doomed to wander the Earth for eternity, as described in Percy's *Reliques* (1765):

[He] said, 'Away, Thou King of Jews!
Thou shalt not rest thee here;
Pass on, thy execution-place
Thou seest now draweth near'.

And thereupon he thrust Him hence;
At which our Saviour said,
'I sure will rest, but thou shalt walk,
And have no journey stay'd' (Willmott: 1857: 75)

In the works of Coleridge in particular, the presence of Ahasuerus is implied or felt in several different ways. These include the physical presence of characters who appear to be based on Ahasuerus and characters who are travellers or wanderers (much like Coleridge himself, who spent most of his adult life drifting from one place to another). Geographical wanderings in the works of Coleridge are also present - many of Coleridge's poetical works and note-books were written not only about travelling, but were written whilst travelling. Coleridge was also the author of works which wandered across a range of different ideas and intellectual areas, such as the *Biographia Literaria* (1817).

The Romantic and gothic fascination with Ahasuerus is exhibited on many levels. The notion of a solitary being, excluded from all conventions of society, as well as the passing of time, fashions, and political and world events was attractive to Romantic writers such as Coleridge, Byron, and Percy and Mary Shelley. The Wandering Jew was the likely inspiration for the main protagonist in Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1798), Byron's *Manfred* (1816), Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), and Shelley's *Hellas* (1822). The Wandering Jew was also the subject of a poem by William Wordsworth, entitled 'Song for the Wandering Jew' (1800). One of the main influences for these texts was *St Leon* (1799) by William Godwin, in which the protagonist had been introduced to alchemy, and had discovered the philosopher's stone and the elixir of life. As a result, he was destined to wander the Earth in perpetuity. The only way he could escape to death was by passing his secret onto another. These works indicated that perceptions of the character of Ahasuerus were becoming ambivalent, as notions of

Ahasuerus as a benign character emerged. He became a character 'type' who could be, and was, used in many different ways.

All six writers composed their works against a background of political crisis: Coleridge, Wordsworth and Godwin against the backdrop of the first shock of the Industrial Revolution at home, the American War of Independence (1775-1783), the French Revolution (1789), and the English War against France (1793-1815) abroad; Byron and the Shelleys were all writing after the first phase of the Industrial Revolution, with its rapid industrialisation and large influx of people into towns and manufacturing areas, and during the post-Waterloo political and social fallout of poverty and depression. For all six, the idea of the 'outcast' or non-political, possibly omniscient observer, would have appealed to their various youthful pro-revolutionary notions. The figure of Ahasuerus became ambivalent, and began to take on such characteristics, including that of an oppressed victim, or (anti-)hero, but also, in orthodox terms, of a justly punished offender.

Dissatisfaction with the political establishment was also implied through religious references in the works of other contemporary writers, such as William Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1790), which displays a subversive understanding of good and evil; and the preface to Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* (August 1818 - December 1819), where Prometheus is described as being '...more poetical...than Satan' (Shelley, P.B: 1994: 158), himself an ambiguous figure. The dissatisfaction of the second-generation Romantics with the legacy left to them by the first generation is discussed at length in the final chapter, 'Coleridge's Influence on Mary Shelley's Literary Life'. The second-generation is represented in the final chapter by Mary Shelley, Percy Shelley and Byron.

Writers of the Romantic era were also fascinated by Ahasuerus as the eternal storyteller, with the wide varied knowledge and experience gained by the wanderer on his travels forming the subject matter of his tales, and the wanderer's compulsion to share his experience with others. This quality is brought out in the poem entitled 'The Wandering Jew', collected in Percy's *Reliques*:

... learned men with him confer...

And wonder much to hear him tell
His journeys and his ways. (Willmott: 1857: 77)

The spirit of Ahasuerus was present in many of Coleridge's works written around 1797, the same year in which he reviewed *The Monk* (1794) by Matthew Lewis, the relevance of which will be referred to shortly. Coleridge used the persona of the Wandering Jew as a vehicle with which to explore many other ideas.

The first example of a character resembling Ahasuerus in the works of Coleridge comes in 'The Wanderings of Cain' (1797). As well as bearing similarities to Ahasuerus, Coleridge's Cain also carries overtones of John Milton's Satan, from *Paradise Lost* (1667). Cain is described as the product of the torment that he has undergone as part of the expiation of his crime:

... the mighty limbs of

Cain were wasted as by fire;
... so glared his fierce and sullen eye beneath
... the black abundant locks... a rank and tangled mass...
stained and scorched, as though the grasp of a burning iron hand had
striven to rend them... (Mays: 2001i: 362: 160: II 51-6)

The physical appearance of Cain, enough to frighten his own son, is described in language and terminology similar to that used by John Milton to describe Satan in *Paradise Lost, Book I*:

...his face

Deep scars of thunder had entrenched, and care
Sat on his faded cheek, but under brows
O dauntless courage... cruel his eye... (Milton: 1994: 128: 600-4)

As well as the similarities between the physical appearances of Milton's Satan and Coleridge's Cain, there are also similarities between their relative situations. For overreaching and pride revealed in the over-inflation of their own self-importance, both have been cast out from their homeland by God, the vengeful Jehovah of the Old Testament; and both characters are paying an eternal and unrelenting penance for their crimes. These are characteristics usually ascribed to the figure of Ahasuerus. In Percy's *Reliques*, Ahasuerus' penance is described as follows:

No resting could he find at all, ...
but wand'ring forth he went
From town to town in foreign lands

With grievéd conscience still
Repenting for the heinous guilt
Of his fore-passèd ill. (Willmott: 1857: 75-6)

By alluding to these comparisons between Cain and Ahasuerus, and between Cain and Satan, Coleridge invests Cain with the weighty authority of both folklore and epic poetry through *Paradise Lost*. However, whilst both Cain and Ahasuerus wander the Earth apparently aimlessly, as punishment for their respective crimes, Satan comes to Eden in order to wreak his revenge on God, by disrupting and corrupting his creation. Milton depicts Satan as passionate and proactive, whilst Cain more closely mirrors the characteristics of Ahasuerus, and is two-dimensional and passive by comparison.

These qualities are further emphasised by Coleridge, as he does not relate the beginning and end of the story of Cain and Abel (stating in the preface that his partner – Wordsworth - was to write the first canto, and whoever finished first would write the third canto). Coleridge instead focuses on the part of the story which is not developed in the Bible, the narration of the events that actually befall Cain on his travels. In an attempt to explain the disjointed nature of ‘The Wanderings of Cain’, a prefatory note is given, explaining the story of the poem’s composition, although what is not given is a detailed outline of the intended contents of the unwritten first and last cantos. This implies that Coleridge had no intention of relating the whole story, and was really only interested in the story of Cain’s wanderings in the desert. Because this element of the story is not fully narrated in the Bible, Coleridge was able to give his imagination free rein. This further identifies Cain with Ahasuerus, because although their wanderings are explained in terms of their cause, the desolation of Cain and Ahasuerus’ wanderings is further enhanced by their futility and lack of purpose.

‘The Wanderings of Cain’ gave Coleridge room in which to explore his thoughts regarding the tale of the Wandering Jew, for use in some future work, including the nature of Ahasuerus’ penance and relationships with people whom he met on his travels. The project, however, was doomed to failure. As Coleridge states in the prefatory note to the poem, written in 1828:

... [the] silent mock-piteous admission of failure struggling with the sense of the exceeding ridiculousness of the whole scheme – which broke up in a laugh: and the Ancient Mariner was written instead. (Mays: 2001i: 360: II 1.22-5)

One possible reason for the failure of the ‘scheme’ was that Wordsworth evidently found it difficult to put both Coleridge’s ideas and the existent biblical story into his own words. The exercise was a useful one for Coleridge however, as it enabled him to explore ideas and collect materials for use in the composition of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.

Coleridge’s second attempt to relate the story of Cain, thirty years later, also ended in failure:

... I determined on commencing anew, and composing the whole in stanzas, and made some progress in realizing this intention, when adverse gales drove my bark off the ‘Fortunate Isles’ of the Muses: and then other and more momentous interests prompted a different voyage, to firmer anchorage and a securer port. (ibid: II 1.30-4)

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner was written around the same time that Coleridge was earning money through writing reviews of contemporary Gothic Novels for the *Critical Review*. *The Monk* by Matthew Lewis (reviewed by Coleridge in 1797) also features Ahasuerus. Although Coleridge’s review of *The Monk* is generally scathing, he praises the sub-plot containing the Bleeding Nun and the Wandering Jew:

... the wandering Jew (a mysterious character, which, though copied as to its more prominent features from Schiller’s incomprehensible Armenian, does, nevertheless, display great vigour of fancy). (CR: 19: February 1797: 194)

Coleridge’s reviews of Gothic Novels, in particular the review of *The Monk*, coincide with the emergence of the presence of the wanderer in Coleridge’s works.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner allowed Coleridge greater scope to develop his wanderer into a more fully rounded character, compared with his two-dimensional depiction of Cain, a precursor motif to Ahasuerus. As stated by J. L. Lowes in *The Road to Xanadu*: ‘The Wandering Jew and Cain together took possession of the astral body of an ancient mariner’ (1959: 238). The figure of the ancient mariner is not that of Ahasuerus, although they share many similar characteristics.

The ancient mariner, like Ahasuerus, commits a crime against God, who is present in the folkloric or biblical story as Jesus Christ before the crucifixion, and represented in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* by the albatross, which could be read as a representation of

Christ crucified. Whilst the serious nature of insulting Christ on his way to the Crucifixion is likely to be generally acknowledged, the severity of the mariner's crime depends on how the reader views the albatross. The mariner's crime in comparison is miniscule if the killing of the albatross is taken at face value, but if interpreted as symbolic of the assassination of the 'One life' – the fusion between God and Nature, and the expression of God in Nature - then the mariner's crime is unforgivable. In *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* Coleridge develops a new language in bardic form, relating the mariner's crime and punishment to the transgression of religious authority (similar to that experienced by Ahasuerus), but also to the transgression of the authority of the natural world, as evidenced by the mariner's symbolic shooting of the albatross.

In terms of punishment, Ahasuerus is doomed to wander the Earth indefinitely, without respite, purpose, or the suggestion of mercy. A burning cross, the sign of his crime, marks him so that he is forever associated with his crime, and his reputation goes ahead of him. The mariner is also marked by the sign of his crime, the albatross – 'Instead of the Cross the Albatross/ About my neck was hung' (Mays: 2001i: 382: 161: 141-2). The albatross eventually falls off into the sea once the mariner is able spontaneously to involuntarily bless the water snakes, but the legacy is that he, like Ahasuerus, is fated to wander the Earth telling his story forever.

This is where one of the chief differences between the fates of the ancient mariner and Ahasuerus arises. Ahasuerus is absolutely isolated from society; although he mixes with people on a daily basis, he is not able to spend more than fourteen days in the same place, making it very difficult to form relationships with anyone. Ahasuerus is aware he will not be forgiven; and is doomed to wander the earth, alone, for eternity. The ancient mariner, once he repents of his crime, is able to feel love and have compassion for other living creatures, - 'A spring of love gushes from my heart,/ And I bless'd them unaware!' (ibid: 392: 284-5) – which in turn enables him to pray. This frees him from the Polar Spirit's curse which has hitherto obliged him to remain on board ship, and finally enables him to return to his home country, although he is now (like Ahasuerus) compelled to travel eternally, relating his tale to the people he meets on his journey. In this way, both characters are sentenced to an existence which carries a daily reminder of their crimes, and the consequences thereof, to the extent that they feel constant torment.

Further personifications of Ahasuerus

The presence of Ahasuerus is also implied in other poems written around the same time, such as 'The Old Man of the Alps' (1795-8) and 'The Nightingale: A Conversation Poem' (1798). 'The Old Man of the Alps' was published in the *Morning Post* on 8 March 1798. Although fragmentary evidence of composition exists in both Coleridge and Wordsworth's notebooks of the time, neither poet decisively claimed ownership of it. Wordsworth had written, and would continue to write, additional poems on the theme of the Wanderer; 'Song for the Wandering Jew' had been composed in 1800, and *The Excursion* would be published in 1814. J. C. C. Mays suggests that 'The Old Man of the Alps' may have been originally written by Wordsworth in his youth, and then effectively donated to Coleridge to put towards his obligations for *The Morning Post*, which in turn would grant Coleridge more free time in which to compose works for inclusion in *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) (2001i: 168: 444). In 'The Old Man of the Alps', the spirit of Ahasuerus is invoked when the old man invites the reader to listen to his tale of the loss of his daughter and her intended husband – like the ancient mariner and Geraldine (from *Christabel*), the old man, too, has identified his audience:

Stranger! whose eyes a look of pity shew,
Say, will you listen to a tale of woe? (ibid: 445: 1-2)

In her grief, his daughter also takes on characteristics of the Wanderer:

She wander'd up the crag and down the slope,
But not, as in her happy days of hope...
She roam'd, without a purpose, all alone,
Thro' high grey vales unknowing and unknown. (ibid: 447: 83-8)

This again carries echoes of Ahasuerus, as described in Percy's *Reliques*:

He ne'er was seen to laugh nor smile,
But weep and make great moan;
Lamenting still his miseries,
And days forepast and gone... (Willmott: 1857: 78)

In 'The Nightingale: A Conversation Poem', again the Wanderer is present as the Ahasuerus of folklore: lonely, cursed, and miserable:

...some night-wandering man, whose heart was pierced
With the remembrance of a grievous wrong...
... poor Wretch! filled all things with himself
And made all gentle sounds tell back the tale
Of his own sorrow... (Mays: 2001i: 517: 180: 16-21)

In *Christabel*, Coleridge took the implied presence of Ahasuerus one step further from his characterisation of the ancient mariner. Whilst the characters of the ancient mariner and Geraldine are very similar, and share many characteristics, Geraldine is much more complex. She has a very sinister, yet indefinable, aura surrounding her. The reader is aware, almost immediately, of her malign presence, which becomes stronger throughout the poem. This effect is heightened by the fact that *Christabel* is unfinished, and therefore unresolved.

Geraldine

Coleridge explored another interpretation of the character of the Wandering Jew, in *Christabel*, where the more sinister characteristics of Ahasuerus are revealed in the character of Geraldine. She appears in the woods, in the middle of the night, where she is found and taken home by Christabel. There are several ways in which this could be read. It could be taken at face value, that it was a chance meeting by two unacquainted women, and that Christabel's kind nature had led her to take pity on Geraldine, and offer her shelter. Another possible reading is that Geraldine, as a manifestation of the character of Ahasuerus, had already decided that Christabel was to be the next audience for her story, and had therefore engineered the meeting between the two women. There are echoes of the ancient mariner at this point: 'The moment that his face I see/ I know the man that must hear me...' (ibid: 416: 161: 588-9). There are further echoes of the ancient mariner in Geraldine's speech: 'Nor do I know how long it is/ (For I have lain entranc'd, I wis)' (ibid: 486: 176: 91-2). The ancient mariner is put into a trance after the death of the ship's crew, to enable him to travel at speeds too fast for the human body to bear.

Coleridge also emphasises how Geraldine and the ancient mariner are both able easily to identify and ensnare their audiences. In *Christabel*, it is Coleridge as narrator who exclaims: 'O Geraldine! One Hour was thine -/ Thou'st had thy Will!' (ibid: 492: 176: 305-6). In *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, this is shown by the reaction of the wedding guest:

The wedding guest stood still
And listens like a three year's child;
The Marinere hath his will. (ibid: 372: 161: 14-16)

Coleridge also draws a parallel between Christabel and the wedding guest. When Christabel awakes from her trance, she is visibly upset, as she does not understand what has happened to her:

...the Lady Christabel
Gathers herself from out her Trance;
Her Limbs relax, her Countenance
Grows sad and soft; the smooth thin Lids
Close o'er her Eyes; and Tears she sheds... (ibid: 492-3: 176:
311-5)

Similarly, the wedding guest is also affected by the mariner's story:

He went, like one that hath been stunn'd
And is of sense forlorn:
A sadder and a wiser man
He rose the morrow morn. (ibid: 418: 161: 622-5)

The immortality of the wanderer is suggested in the character of Geraldine, as she is described as having qualities that are 'other-worldly', or not quite human. The phrase 'wandering Mother!' (ibid: 489: 176: 205) even appears in the text, although this is used by Geraldine to describe Christabel's deceased mother, rather than as a self-description. This same quality is present in the ancient mariner, as Coleridge suggests that the mariner may also be immortal, as he is compelled to travel from place to place telling his story. Geraldine first appears to Christabel with a supernatural air about her, almost as a vision:

Her stately Neck and Arms were bare;
Her blue-vein'd feet unsandal'd were;
And wildly glitter'd here and there
The Gems entangled in her Hair. (ibid: 485: 62-5)

Coleridge here describes Geraldine in a heightened, idealised style, similar to that used to describe the poet in the final stanza of *Kubla Khan or, A Vision in a Dream*, written in 1797, the same year as the first part of *Christabel*, if Coleridge's preface is to be believed:

... Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
...he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drank the milk of Paradise. (ibid: 514: 178: 49-54)

One of the most striking supernatural qualities of Geraldine is her apparent rejuvenation at night. At the beginning of Part Two of the poem, it is implied that Geraldine looks considerably different from the woman whom Christabel had watched undress the previous evening:

And Christabel awoke and spied
The Same, who lay down by her Side –
O rather say, the Same whom She
Rais'd up beneath the old Oak Tree! (ibid: 494: 176: 370-3)

Prior to this, before the conclusion to Part One, Coleridge builds up suspense, describing Geraldine undressing, and allowing both Christabel and the narrator, but not the reader, to see Geraldine's body:

Behold! her Bosom and half her Side –
A Sight to dream of, not to tell!
O shield her! shield sweet Christabel! (ibid: 491: 252-4)

This again has overtones of Ahasuerus, and the ancient mariner, both of whom are marked with the signs of their relative crimes. Coleridge does not indicate what Geraldine's crime is, if indeed she is guilty of one, so therefore, it is impossible for the reader to guess what it is that Christabel can see. The reader is left to speculate on the nature of the vision which Christabel is presented with. It is possible that Geraldine's body is incredibly, bewitchingly, beautiful, and the narrator advises Christabel to look away both to protect her innocence and to prevent her from falling under Geraldine's spell. The ambiguous nature of the narrator's comment could also indicate that Geraldine's body is disfigured or marked in some way. It is possible that she is covered in scales; as discussed later in the chapter, Geraldine takes on increasingly serpentine qualities, which, like John Keats' *Lamia* (1819), develops and reworks the figure.

However, between the first and second lines quoted (above), all manuscript versions record the following additional line, later removed by Coleridge: 'Are lean and old and foul of Hue' (ibid: 491: 176: 252ff). This omitted line gives some indication of how Geraldine looks to Christabel, and also gives an explanation for the narrator's plea for Christabel to be shielded from Geraldine's sinister presence.

I see Geraldine as one of very few female characters who appear to be heavily influenced by the character of the Wandering Jew. One explanation for Geraldine's sinister nature is that she is in the act of committing her crime, which distances her from other similar characters, who are derived from Ahasuerus undergoing his penance. Another thing that distinguishes Geraldine from Ahasuerus, is that the crime committed by Ahasuerus appears to have been opportunistic – he simply happened to be there as Christ passed carrying the cross. Geraldine's crime however seems to have been premeditated. Its commission relied on Christabel meeting her in the woods, and escorting and then carrying, her into the castle. As an evil spirit or witch, Geraldine would have been unable to cross the castle's consecrated threshold alone. Coleridge leaves the reader to wonder whether Geraldine will also do penance for her unidentified crime, or whether it will be left to Christabel to suffer the consequences of Geraldine's actions.

Additionally, the reader has only Geraldine's description of her kidnap by five anonymous 'warriors', who then inexplicably abandoned her under the 'old oak tree' where she subsequently appeared to Christabel. No other character in the poem, least of all Christabel, is able to corroborate Geraldine's account of how she came to be under the tree. It is not explicitly stated by Coleridge, but it is possible that Geraldine fabricated the story of how she came to be found under the tree, in order to extort the necessary amount of sympathy from the sensitive Christabel, to ensure that Geraldine got taken back to the castle. If viewed in this way, Geraldine's story may be interpreted as the compulsive story-telling of the Wanderer. It is interesting to note that the oak has associations with both witchcraft and pagan worship in English folklore.

As I touched on above, Coleridge indicates that Geraldine does something to Christabel, after she realises Christabel is still awake and watching her. What is not revealed to the reader, although it is known by Christabel, is the action taken by Geraldine:

Yet Geraldine nor speaks nor stirs;
Ah! what a stricken Look was hers!
Deep from within she seems half-way
To lift some weight, with sick Assay,
And eyes the Maid and seeks delay:
Then suddenly as one defied

Collects herself in scorn and pride... (ibid: 491: 176: 255-261)

1970's critical commentary on this poem highlighted the 'inescapable suggestion of lesbian sexuality' (Keach: 1997: 507); as this particular area of criticism was well-covered forty years ago, it is not my intention to dwell on it at length. Instead, later in the chapter, I focus on the interrupted, but unnamed, action, and consider the possibilities of Geraldine as various types of evil spirit or personification of archetypal malevolent forces, focussing on Lilith, Lamia and the succubus.

Coleridge gives indications throughout the poem that Geraldine may be a malevolent yet undefined supernatural force. The natural order of things within and around Sir Leoline's castle is continually disturbed. The first instance of this is in the very first verse of the poem, where the cock is crowing in its sleep at midnight, and is then awakened by the owls screeching:

Tis the middle of Night by the Castle Clock,
And the Owls have awaken'd the crowing Cock:
 Tu-u-who! Tu-u-who!
And hark, again! the crowing Cock,
How drowsily it crew. (Mays: 2001i: 483: 176: 1-5)

Coleridge uses the owl in a traditional way, as a symbol of atheism, which for him was a serious breach of the natural order of belief in Christ. This may also be a reminder of the political breach taking place at this time, in the form of the French Revolution.

The second instance of disturbance of the natural order is Sir Leoline's ancient dog, which takes great pleasure in howling along with the quarter-hours marked by the castle clock, but which does not usually make any other sound, especially when asleep:

The Mastiff old did not awake,
Yet she an angry moan did make.
And what can ail the Mastiff Bitch?
Never till now she utter'd Yell
Beneath the eye of Christabel. (ibid: 488: 147-51)

The dog, like the cock, apparently aware on some level of Geraldine's presence, moans as Christabel escorts her through the courtyard, towards the castle. Another instance of the natural order being disturbed is as the two women pass through the hall outside Sir Leoline's bed chamber:

The Brands were flat, the Brands were dying
Amid their own white Ashes lying;
But when the Lady pass'd, there came
A Tongue of Light, a Fit of Flame... (ibid: 156-9)

The final, and perhaps most serious disruption of the natural order occasioned by the presence of Geraldine, is the beginnings of a rift between Christabel and Sir Leoline towards the end of Part Two:

His Heart was cleft with Pain and Rage,
His Cheeks they quiver'd, his Eyes were wild,
Dishonour'd thus in his old Age;
Dishonour'd by his only Child... (ibid: 502: 640-3)

This breach is the most serious, and the least easily repaired, as throughout the rest of the poem, Coleridge has repeatedly emphasised the closeness, and mutual love and respect between Christabel and her father. By the end of the poem, Sir Leoline has seemingly chosen Geraldine over his daughter:

He roll'd his Eye with stern Regard...
And turning from his own sweet Maid,
The aged Knight, Sir Leoline,
Led forth the Lady, Geraldine! (ibid: 503: 648-55)

Geraldine and Lilith

Elements of Geraldine's character also bear striking resemblance to the archetypal character of Lilith. The story of Lilith was well-documented in the Eighteenth Century, and there is no reason to suppose that Coleridge was not aware of it. According to Jewish tradition, Lilith was the first wife of Adam, created from the earth as his equal, rather than from his rib as his subordinate. Lilith was expelled from Eden because she refused to submit to Adam's authority. Coleridge may have viewed this lack of submission as a political comment on the uprisings of the French proletariat during the French Revolution. The Zohar, a mystical commentary on the Torah and one of the main holy texts of Kabbalah, states (in Volume 13: Pekudei, Section 21: Breastplate and Efod, verse 207):

For in the beginning, BEFORE EVE, he had another union, WITH LILITH... until Eve came. For the Holy One, blessed be He prepared her for Adam, and they were united face to face. Therefore it is written, 'this one shall be called "woman"' ...But the other one, LILIT, is not so called...
(<https://www2.kabbalah.com/k/index.php/p=zohar/zohar&vol=26&sec=912>)

According to Jewish myth, Lilith was the mother of a brood of demons fathered by Adam, following his seduction by Lilith after their ejection from Eden. According to classical tradition, this race of demons sexually preyed on young men at night, seducing them, and then draining the power and youth from their victims to ensure their own rejuvenation. This is one of many aspects of the Lilith story which Coleridge adapts and uses in the first part of *Christabel*, when Geraldine preys on Christabel the night she is taken into Sir Leoline's castle.

In modern myth, Lilith is transformed and translated from the seductress and first wife of Adam into a serpent, and finally into a succubus. Coleridge adapts and implies these three personifications of Lilith in *Christabel*. In the *Vulgate* (Isaias 34:14), Jerome translated the seductress Lilith as Lamia, forever creating an association between the two in the Christian imagination:

14 et occurrent daemonia onocentauris et pilosus clamabit alter ad alterum
ibi cubavit lamia et invenit sibi requiem

And demons and monsters shall meet, and the hairy ones shall cry out one to another, there hath the lamia lain down, and found rest for herself.

An interesting development occurs when the above verse from Isaias in the *Vulgate* is compared to Isaiah 34:14 from the *King James Bible*, which Coleridge was very familiar with:

14 The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island, and the satyr shall cry to his fellow; the screech owl also shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest.

In the *King James Bible*, Lamia has again been transformed, and translated into a screech owl, Coleridge's favoured symbol for atheism. This is a further warning from Coleridge that Geraldine is a malevolent presence in Sir Leoline's castle. Father Dom Augustin Calmet also comments on this transformation of Lilith into an owl, in his *Dictionary of the Bible* (1732). Under the entry for 'Lamia' he states:

The Hebrew *Word is Lilith*, which signifies, as some say, an Owl, or some other Bird of Night... (Calmet: 1732: II: 24)

and under the entry for Lilith:

We are of the Opinion that this Word signifies a Bird of Night, and of bad Omen, such as the Scritch-Owl... Lilith in *Hebrew* signifies the *Night*. *Isaiah* says that Edom will be reduced to a frightful Solitude, wherein there will be nothing to be seen but wild and ominous Beasts, Demons, Satyrs, Scritch-Owls, & C. (ibid: 77)

The implication is that the Kingdom is under threat from an insidious outside force, as the United Kingdom was under threat at this time from French Invasion. This verse is also a good indicator of Geraldine's protean nature, which is discussed in the following section.

Geraldine as the Serpent

The serpent or snake is an iconic biblical, mythological and literary archetype, and it comes as no surprise that the image of the serpent makes an entrance in *Christabel*. Unlike in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, where the water snakes are observed as an ambiguous force, but worthy of being Pantheistically blessed along with the rest of the natural world, there is no mistaking the malevolence of the image of the serpent when applied to Geraldine. Coleridge challenges the reader's acquired assumption that the archetypal serpent will be unchangingly and inherently evil in these two poems, through his ambiguous and dynamic description of the snakes in each.

It is possible that Coleridge used the presence of the serpent for its shock value, in the hopes of stimulating an audience for *Christabel* when it was finally published. A reason for this is that the snake-like qualities of Geraldine only appear in Part II at the point that she appears to be planning the seduction of Sir Leoline, to follow that of Christabel. Part II of the poem was written in 1800, three years after the completion of Part I.

Additionally, nothing is revealed about Geraldine's origins in Part I. Lord Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine is only mentioned in Part II. Therefore, until Part II was written, there was no mention of a prior association between the families of Geraldine and Christabel. Again in the interests of creating an audience for the poem's eventual publication, and under pressure to develop a plot, it is possible that Coleridge added this aspect in 1800 to make Geraldine's apparent seduction of Christabel all the more shocking and unnatural. Under the given circumstances, the probable seduction of Christabel, and the suggested forthcoming seduction of Sir Leoline, were verging on

incestuous, given that the two men (Sir Leoline and Lord Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine) had previously considered their friendship to be as close as that of brothers. The shape-shifting of Geraldine also lends a doubling of the homo-eroticism of *Christabel*.

The introduction of the image of Geraldine as serpent in Part II makes further connections with the archetypes of Lilith and Lamia, both of whom appear in serpent form. In *Christabel*, the first appearance of the serpent is in Bard Bracy's dream of a white dove (answering to the name of Christabel) being suffocated by a snake, which he dreamt at midnight, the same time that Christabel and Geraldine met under the oak tree:

But yet for her dear Lady's sake
I stoop'd, methought, the Dove to take,
When lo! I saw a bright green Snake
Coil'd around its Wings and Neck... (Mays: 2001i: 500: 176: 547-50)

This image is echoed by that of Lycius and the snake in *Lamia, Part I* (1819), by John Keats:

The God, dove-footed, glided silently
Round bush and tree, soft-brushing, in his speed,
The taller grasses and full-flowering weed,
Until he found a palpitating snake,
Bright, and cirque-couchant in a dusty brake.
She was a gordian shape of dazzling hue,
Vermilion-spotted, golden, green, and blue... (Keats: 1951: 171: 42-8)

which itself has echoes of the water-snakes in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*:

Within the shadow of the ship
I watch'd their rich attire:
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black
They coil'd and swam; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire. (Mays: 2001i: 392: 161: 277-281)

although they are a dynamic force, echoing the Gothic ambiguity which surrounds the character of Geraldine. Coleridge's choice of the water-snakes as the catalyst for the mariner's conversion is interesting. The literary portrayal of snakes is usually as malevolent creatures, but the intent of Coleridge's water-snakes is uncertain and unexplained, and changes focus, although their presence has a positive effect on the mariner.

This uncertainty and dynamism is also displayed in P. B. Shelley's later descriptions of the fighting snake and eagle in *The Revolt of Islam*, Canto I (1817), where it is initially difficult for the reader to decide whether the eagle or the snake is the malevolent force, whether they both are, or whether neither are. (Shelley, PB: 1994: 58-9: I:VIII - XIV) The good or evil nature of both creatures is fluid, toying with the reader's preconceived expectations that the snake will be the malevolent creature.

The second appearance of the snake in Part II of *Christabel* is not a dream, but is observed by Christabel when she sees Geraldine's face taking on serpentine qualities as she begins her seduction of Sir Leoline:

A Snake's small Eye blinks dull and shy;
And the Lady's Eyes they shrunk in her Head,
Each shrunk up to a Serpent's Eye,
And with somewhat of Malice and more of Dread
At Christabel she look'd askance! –
One moment – and the Sight was fled! (ibid: 501: 176: 583-8)

Coleridge adds a twist to this section of the poem, by indicating that at the beginning of the seduction of Sir Leoline, Geraldine had also accomplished whatever she set out to achieve with Christabel the previous evening, by rendering the beautiful Christabel as ugly as her night-time self, through the unconscious reflection of strong negative emotions such as jealousy, disgust and hate:

The Maid, alas! her thoughts are gone
She nothing sees – no sight but one!
The Maid, devoid of Guile and Sin,
I know not how, in fearful wise
So deeply had she drunken in
That Look, those shrunken serpent Eyes,
That all her Features were resign'd
To this sole Image in her Mind:
And passively did imitate
That Look of dull and treacherous Hate. (ibid: 597-606)

Keats makes a similar reference to Lamia showing facial characteristics of both woman and snake at the same time, and revealing these to Lycius:

Her head was serpent, but ah, bitter-sweet!
She had a woman's mouth with all its pearls complete:
And for her eyes: what could such eyes do there
But weep, and weep, that they were born so fair?...

Her throat was serpent, but the words she spake
Came, as through bubbling honey, for Love's sake... (Keats: 1951:
171: 59-65)

Earlier, I referred to the 'sight to dream of, not to tell' revealed by Geraldine whilst undressing for bed. Keats hints at a similar disfigurement in the body of Lamia, perhaps as an acknowledgement of *Christabel*:

So that, in moments few, she was undrest
Of all her sapphires, greens and amethyst,
And rubious-argent: of all these bereft,
Nothing but pain and ugliness were left. (ibid: 174: 161-4)

As Christabel is put into a trance by Geraldine whilst she drains Christabel's youth, Lycius is also put into a trance by Lamia:

The cruel lady, without any show
Of sorrow for her tender favourite's woe,
But rather, if her eyes could brighter be,
With brighter eyes and slow amenity,
Put her new lips to his, and gave afresh
The life she had so tangled in her mesh:
And as he from one trance was wakening
Into another, she began to sing... (ibid: 178: 290-7)

Further connections between Geraldine, Lamia and Lilith are supported by *The Zohar*, in the many references to Lilith as the serpent in the Garden of Eden. The following quotation from Volume 5: Vayishlac, Section 4: 'And Ya'akov was left alone', verses 76-7 is an example:

We have learned that the Spirit of Defilement comes from the corrupt serpent, WHICH IS LILIT. It is a very spirit of uncleanness that is appointed in the world to seduce people to it to him. Thus, the Evil Inclination gains mastery over the world... It is appointed over people and dwells among them. It uses witchcraft and stealth to turn them from the ways of the Holy One... just as it seduced Adam ... So does it seduce men and cause them to be defiled.
(<https://www2.kabbalah.com/k/index.php/p=zohar/zohar&vol=10&sec=356>)

Calmet also supports this view with an extract from the entry under 'Serpent' in his *Dictionary of the Bible*:

And it cannot be doubted, but that under the Name of the *Serpent* we are to understand the Devil, who made use of a real *Serpent* to seduce the first Woman. (1732: II: 665)

The Zohar also goes on to suggest that the birth of Cain was as a result of Eve being seduced and impregnated by Lilith, in the form of the serpent. Volume 13: Pekudei, Section 21: Breastplate and Efod, verse 203 also implies that this serpentine conception was the reason why Cain was capable of such evil towards his brother:

After Adam and his wife sinned, and the serpent had intercourse with Eve and injected filth into her, Eve bore Cain. He had the shape from above and FROM below in the secret of the filth of the Other Side, and from the side below OF THE EXTERNAL FORCES. Therefore, he was the first to bring death into the world, caused by his side, AS HE CAME OF THE FILTH OF THE SERPENT. The nature of the serpent is to lurk so as to kill, and his issue, CAIN, learned his ways. And so it is written, ‘and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and slew him’ (Beresheet 4:8).
(<https://www2.kabbalah.com/k/index.php/p=zohar/zohar&vol=26&sec=912>)

Another characteristic of the snake which is predominant in the characters of Geraldine, Lamia and Lilith is their cunning. With Geraldine, this takes the form of the over-emphasis of her apparent weakness to Christabel when she describes how she came to be abandoned under the Oak tree. Christabel’s erroneous belief in Geraldine’s weakness allows her more power over Christabel; as she is not on her guard, Christabel’s predominant emotion is pity rather than suspicion. It is in Geraldine’s interests for Christabel to think that she is weak, as this enables Geraldine to carry out her planned seduction unhindered. The exhibition of Geraldine’s cunning could be seen as the first indications of both her serpentine nature, and her true identity as a succubus. Calmet states, again under the entry for Serpent in his *Dictionary of the Bible*:

The Craft, the Wisdom, the Subtilty of the *Serpent*, are things insisted on in Scripture, as Qualities that distinguish them from other Animals. (Calmet:1732: II: 665)

Lamia also exhibits similar cunning, as she is able to keep Lycius deluded to her true nature for the entirety of Part I and most of Part II, the time that it takes her to fully ensnare Lycius, and persuade him to marry her. However, Lamia’s undoing is when Lycius’ former tutor, Apollonius, arrives at the wedding unannounced:

‘Fool!’ said the sophist...
... ‘from every ill
Of life have I preserv'd thee to this day,
...shall I see thee made a serpent's prey?’
Then Lamia breath'd death breath; the sophist's eye,

Like a sharp spear, went through her utterly,
... she...
Motion'd him to be silent; vainly so,
He look'd and look'd again ... No!
'A Serpent!' echoed he; no sooner said,
Than with a frightful scream she vanished... (Keats: 1951: 189:
291-306)

Once Lamia's true identity is exposed, she magically disappears, as her illusion ceases to be viable. As Roy P. Basler states:

...the illusion of Lamia's goodness and beauty vanish as her essential nature is exposed by the rationalism of the philosopher Apollonius (Basler: 1970: 36)

Geraldine's cunning appears to be greater than that of Lamia, as Geraldine is able to prolong her illusion, so far as Sir Leoline is concerned, by silencing Christabel and Bard Bracy, who have both seen through her disguise.

Geraldine as the succubus

One of the many forms which the archetype Lilith has assumed is that of the succubus. In the Zohar, Volume 15: Acharei Mot, Section 60: Lilit and Na'amah, Verse 362, we read how Lilith gave birth to Na'amah, a succubus, who then brought her demon children back to Lilith to be raised:

These children, NAMELY DEMONS AND SPIRITS, that she bore to humans are SEEN IN DREAMS to human females who conceive from them and bear spirits. They go to the primordial Lilit and she rears them. She goes out into the world, seeks children, sees human children and attaches herself to them in order to kill them. (<https://www2.kabbalah.com/k/index.php/p=zohar/zohar&vol=32&sec=1178>)

A succubus is a demon who appears to men as a beautiful woman, in order to take advantage of them sexually, and to drain their youth and life-force, like a vampire, until the victim is either completely exhausted, or dead. An incubus is the male equivalent of the succubus. It impregnates women whilst they are sleeping, or puts them into a trance-like state; this was captured by the contemporary artist Henry Fuseli, in his painting entitled *The Nightmare* (1781). Some believe that the gender of the incubus/succubus is not fixed, but can be changed according to the proposed victim. Coleridge is one of a small number of writers to have focussed on the same-sex nature of the sexual encounter between Christabel and Geraldine, and also the seeming bisexual nature of Geraldine.

The idea of Geraldine as a succubus is interesting, as historically, the succubus/ incubus was associated with guilt and shame. For instance, in earlier times it was more socially acceptable for a young girl to state that she had been molested by an incubus than to admit to having become pregnant outside marriage.

On a political level, Coleridge may be equating seduction of the individual with seduction of the state. This was an idea which was also explored by the contemporary political caricaturist James Gillray, in his work entitled 'Sin, Death, and the Devil' (1792). Gillray illustrates a scene from *Paradise Lost*, casting Pitt as the Devil, Thurlow (the Chancellor) as Death, and the Queen as Sin. Gillray's illustration refers to the power-struggle between Thurlow and Pitt, who were competing for royal favour, and it suggests, in a sexualised form, that Pitt was receiving preferential treatment from the Queen, which in turn may have influenced the King's decision. Sin (the Queen) is depicted as a hag with withered breasts, and snaky hair reminiscent of Medusa. Instead of legs, she has two serpent tails. The position of Sin's hands is worthy of note. As Richard Godfrey states:

She protects Pitt... with an outstretched [right] hand, an ambiguous gesture, concealing his private parts but possibly stimulating them as well. (Godfrey: 2001: 137)

Sin's left hand is positioned in another 'ambiguous gesture'. It is unclear whether the outstretched hand is a warning to the Devil (Thurlow) to keep his distance from Sin (the Queen) and Death (Pitt), or whether it is a gesture of welcome, inviting him to approach her. Her facial expression is also ambiguous, and could be read as one of either fear or delight. The suggestion is that Sin (the Queen) could be viewed as a political adultress, depicted in the act of seducing either, or both, Death (Pitt) and the Devil (Thurlow).

On a more personal level, Coleridge carried a great deal of guilt through his adult life, mainly as a result of his failed marriage. Although it is not definitely known whether Coleridge ever had an extra-marital affair, he was certainly plagued by nightmares and dreams featuring women, often of a sexual nature, around the time both parts of *Christabel* were written. They were instigated both by his increasing usage of opium, and his growing infatuation with Sara Hutchinson, who became his muse, Asra.

Below, I have compared *Christabel* with two other texts written around the same time: *The Fairy of the Lake* (1801) by the radical activist and close friend of Coleridge, John Thelwall, which features a character called Incubus, and *The Succuba* (1836) by Honoré de Balzac. There are many marked similarities between Coleridge's Geraldine, Thelwall's Incubus and Rowenna, and Balzac's Zulma, as well as some crucial differences. The physical descriptions of all four characters are dwelt on at some length in each text. The inclusion of Balzac's story here serves to confirm the ubiquity and enduring power of the trope of the 'Lamia' in British and European literature throughout this period.

The Fairy of the Lake is an Arthurian tale, describing Arthur's successful pursuit of his betrothed, Guenever, and the lengths that Rowenna (a sorceress and Queen of Britain – another political comment by Thelwall), passionately and obsessively in love with Arthur, will go to in order to try and prevent this. Given that the author is Thelwall, a broader political reading could be applied here. One of Rowenna's servants or familiars is Incubus, described by Rowenna as 'oafish' (Thelwall: 1801: 13: 1:1). As I mentioned above, it is rare for the succubus/ incubus to pursue a victim of the same sex as themselves. However, in *The Fairy of the Lake*, Incubus does not select his own victim. He is under strict instructions from Rowenna to pursue Arthur under cover of night, and then distract his attendants, leaving Arthur alone and vulnerable, to allow the strong leader to be seduced:

...Him should he find,
Upon the attendant train let him essay
His numbing tricks... (ibid: 14: 1:1)

Additionally, in *The Fairy of the Lake*, Rowenna exhibits some of the characteristics seen in both Geraldine and Zulma. I think this is due to Incubus being a rather two-dimensional figure, and a servant or familiar, to Rowenna, rather than a fully developed character in his own right. Given that John Thelwall is the author of this text, it is unsurprising that a political interpretation can be applied to the unequal relationship between Rowenna and Incubus.

Balzac's *The Succuba* is a tale of the 13th century ecclesiastical trial of Zulma, a woman in a small French town, who was thought to be a succubus due to her excessive sexual

appetite, and the subsequent deaths of many of her partners or victims. The narrative takes the form of the ecclesiastical court proceedings, and statements from surviving victims and their families. Following the death of the Grand Penitentiary and Ecclesiastical Judge, Jerome Cornille, the tale is continued by Guillame Tournebousche, Chronicler of the Chapter, and describes the eventual execution of the succubus, by burning at the stake.

The changing physicality of Geraldine and Zulma provides a focus in both works. The first description of both focuses on them when they are rejuvenated, young and beautiful. Later in each text, both are briefly also described when they are in need of rejuvenation. When Geraldine is found, she has flawless white skin, and jewels in her hair. Her clothing is described as follows:

Drest in a silken Robe of White;
That shadowy in the moonlight shone...
I guess, 'twas frightful there to see
A Lady so richly clad, as She,
Beautiful exceedingly! (Mays: 2001i: 485: 176: 59-68)

There is no indication as to how Geraldine is able to afford such fine clothes, until her father is revealed to be Sir Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine at the end of Part II, with the inference that, as a nobleman, he should be able to afford expensive clothes and jewels for his daughter. Zulma, however, is much more forthcoming in stating that her numerous lovers have paid for her finery, as their enjoyment of her was heightened by seeing her expensively dressed:

She had been angered by such silly things, but could not refuse to keep a jewel which it so pleased these men to see where they laid it on her. Every man had a different fantasy. There had been none whose whim it was to tear up the costly clothes which she wore to please him, another liked to dress her who spoke with sapphires on her wrists and long back wrappings of silk or black velvet, and would for days on end be ecstatic about the perfect features of her who spoke, who was delighted without end by the things her admirers desired because those things made them all so happy. (Balzac: 1985: 291)

Zulma has two characteristics not shared by the other characters described in this section. Her physicality and immense strength are emphasised, particularly towards the end of *The Succuba*, when the ecclesiastical judge is horrified to notice that the heavy shackles which Zulma has been forced to wear throughout the trial have left absolutely no marks or wounds upon her skin. This supernatural bodily strength is also noted when,

upon trying to escape the punishment of the tribunal by climbing up into the roof of the church, she is shot through the foot by a soldier, and yet continues her climb:

...a soldier got her in the sights of his cross-bow and planted an arrow in her heel. Despite her foot being rent open the poor girl ran on, nimble still, over the church roof, paying no heed to her wounds, but treading on splintered bones, blood streaming behind her... (ibid: 309-10)

Additionally, there are several mentions of Zulma being a ‘Mohammedan’ or ‘Saracen’, and ‘dressed in the outlandish Saracen or Moorish manner...’ (ibid: 269), in accordance with her presumed Islamic faith. To an ecclesiastical court in small-town France, Zulma would have appeared to be extremely exotic, and unpredictable. The question of faith is discussed later in the chapter.

In *The Fairy of the Lake*, Rowenna asks her servants to bring her ‘mystic robes’ (Thelwall: 1801: 7: 1:1), to enable her to successfully navigate ‘the maze of Hela’ (ibid: 8: 1:1) - the ‘Queen of the Infernal regions’ (ibid: 2) - in order to be told her future (‘Extort a boon from Fate’) (ibid: 8: 1:1). In contrast to the expensive clothes of Geraldine and Zulma, Rowenna wove her own robes, and dyed them with babies’ blood. The desired effect was to induce fear rather than to heighten the sexual attractiveness of the wearer:

<i>Row.</i>	Magic Woof, in Cimbrian shade Woven by the gifted maid, While the Raven-voice of Fate Croak'd of slaughters, fears, and hate, <i>Sem cho.</i> Shuddering Horror listning near. <i>Row.</i> ‘Tis the same. Go: bring it here... <i>Sem cho.</i> There 'twas wove—a webb of fear! <i>Row.</i> Its die it drank from infant gore, And tears of mothers blotch it o'er; Groans from its rustling folds resound, And hissing serpents fringe it round. It is a mystic webb of fear. Haste my virgins: bring it here. (ibid: 3-4: 1:1)
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In the above quotation, which is recited almost like a spell, Rowenna plays on the image of the weave (woof) of the fabric, comparing it to the web of a spider, and refers to the robe as if it was a living thing.

Heat is another characteristic of the incubus or succubus. Zulma is described as having:

...an unnatural colour in her skin,...her long hair... possessing heating properties by which Christians were imbued with the fires of hell in the form of sexual desire...' (Balzac: 1985: 269).

This is further corroborated by another witness at the ecclesiastical trial, who claimed that:

...the said foreign woman did give out such great heat herself that when in the evening she walked down her garden wall the next morning her lettuce seed was up and sometimes by the rustle of her petticoats she had made trees gush sap and brought forth new buds.(ibid: 270-1)

This is both a polite Nineteenth Century reference to her raging sexual appetite, and a comment on her actual body temperature.

Incubus, in contrast, is a 'frozen demon' (Thelwall: 1801: 2), and is described by Thelwall in a stage direction as '...a meagre Spectre, with a blue and frosty countenance, sunken eyes, frozen locks and beard, and garments covered with icicles' (ibid: 15: 1:2). This description is removed from the mythical description of an incubus, which was supposedly warm, in order to prolong its predatory sexual encounters with its victims, and to retain the element of surprise. Incubus states that he is only cold because he is currently banished to the frozen realm of Hela, and that once he is released, he will warm up. Incubus is unconcerned about not attracting women in his current frozen state, as he knows this will change once his punishment is complete, and additionally, as stated above, in the mean time he is under orders to pursue Arthur:

O! how gay then I'll flirt and I'll flutter around,
Where the belles of the young 19th Cent'ry are found!
Their charms so obtrusive shall kindle a flame;
Shall melt all the ice that now stiffens my frame;
And...Love's ardour shall glow in each pore... (ibid: 18: 1:3)

Hair was another main characteristic of the description of the mythological succubus. It had to be long and strong, as it was used to ensnare her victims. The hair of each character is given a passing description in each text. As we have already seen Geraldine has 'Gems entangled in her Hair' (Mays: 2001i: 485: 176: 65), and Incubus is described as having 'frozen locks and beard' (Thelwall: 1801: 15: 1:2). Zulma's hair is closest to that of the mythological succubus, as it is long and strong – she has 'all the strength of Samson in her hair' (Balzac: 1985: 281) - and it is used to ensnare her victims:

The hair of the demon, with which my poor body was enveloped, wrapped me in a mist of flame and I felt each single tress like the red-hot bar of a grill. (ibid: 300)

Rowenna's hair is not described, but the hair of her attendants is described as follows: ‘

Rowenna is discovered, arrayed in her Pall and snaky Tiara; Edelthred and others attending; their hair dishevelled, and intermixed with Ivy, Hemlock, Nightshade...’ (Thelwall: 1801: 9: 1:1).

This description again emphasises the fact that Rowenna is a witch or sorceress. Instead of having jewels or flowers in their hair to entice men, her attendants have poisonous plants. In addition to her robe's ‘hissing serpent fringe’ (ibid: 7: 1:1), the word ‘snaky’ is used twice to describe Rowenna, once in the above stage direction, and once by Rowenna herself to describe her clothes: ‘Cimbrian pall and snaky tire, I chaunt the spell to Hertha’ (ibid: 14: 1:1). This gives echoes of the serpentine nature of Geraldine, Lamia and Lilith described above.

The eyes of the succubus are also an important tool as far as ensnaring her victim is concerned. The eyes of each character are described by the three authors in very different terms. Above, I have already described how Geraldine's eyes changed and became snake-like in Part II of *Christabel*. Before that, in keeping with her being young and beautiful throughout much of the poem, Geraldine's eyes are described in terms such as ‘her large bright Eyes’ (Mays: 2001i: 501: 176: 574) or ‘Her fair large Eyes ‘gan glitter bright’ (ibid: 490: 221), which greatly contrasts with their later snake-like appearance. Zulma, on the other hand, although described generally in terms very similar to Geraldine, has eyes more in keeping with those of a demon. Her eyes are described by her various victims as ‘flaming’ (Balzac: 1985: 273), and ‘...more glowing than I can tell, from them sparked forth the fires of Hell’ (ibid: 269). However, there are also certain other victims, who acknowledge that they have been bewitched by Zulma, and state that although they know exactly what she is, they are still attracted to her, and continue to view her as a woman, although confessing that they know they are deluded. The Chorus of Invisible Spirits describe Rowenna's eyes as ‘beauteous’ (Thelwall: 1801: 3: 1:1) at the beginning of *The Fairy of the Lake*, whilst Incubus's eyes are described as merely ‘sunken’ (ibid: 15: 1:1), although with Incubus being most active at

night, his eyes would not necessarily need to be as attractive or hypnotic as those of the succubus.

Throughout *The Succuba*, Balzac emphasises the extraordinary power which Zulma exerts over the men who become her victims. They know that they are deluded, but still they are unable to resist Zulma. This hypnotic power even affects the ecclesiastical judge, Jerome Cornille, and Guillaume Tournebousche the jailer, although they have not, at this point, been sexually molested by the Succubus, they have merely been in her presence in the court-room:

Here ended the first interrogation of the said Sister Claire [Zulma], suspected of being a demon, for we the judge and Guillaume Tournbousche were exceedingly fatigued by the sound of the voice of the said woman in our ears and now found our understanding utterly befogged. (Balzac: 1985: 291)

Below, I have given a further quotation taken from the testimony Jerome Cornille, which is typical of many examples of men trying to explain their attraction to her, when they know ultimately that it will end in their exhaustion or death:

All this time the said succuba stuck to my side and her hateful but winsome touch distilled fresh fire in my members. My guardian angel abandoned me. Then I lived by the frightful luminosity of the eyes of that Moorish woman and craved the warm embrace of that fair body, longing forever to feel the pressure of those red lips which now I believed to be natural, and was without any fear of the bite of her teeth, which drew me to the very bottom of Hell. I found delight in the feel of the unparalleled softness of her hands, without any thought of these being monstrous claws. (ibid: 299)

All these characteristics may be found in Coleridge's portrayal of Geraldine, from *Christabel*.

Sir Leoline exhibits similar characteristics towards the end of *Christabel*, Part II, when Geraldine begins her seduction of him: 'She roll'd her large bright Eyes divine/ Wildly on Sir Leoline' (Mays: 2001i: 501: 176: 595-6). Because Sir Leoline is succumbing to Geraldine's malevolent influence, his perception is skewed, and he reacts with anger towards Christabel as she tries, but fails (as she is still subject to Geraldine's spell), to warn him of the danger that Geraldine presents:

...when the Trance was o'er, the Maid
Paus'd awhile, and inly pray'd,
Then falling at the Baron's Feet,

‘By My Mother’s Soul do I entreat
That Thou this Woman send away!’
She said; and more she could not say,
For what she knew, she could not tell
O’ermaster’d by the mighty Spell (ibid: 502: 613-20).

As she is still unable to articulate her concerns, all Christabel can do is to beg that Geraldine is sent away from the castle, but she is unable to explain why. Their former close relationship and mutual love and respect is the only power over Sir Leoline which Christabel still possesses, as she is even robbed of speech. As I stated above, Sir Leoline does not react with the pity and compassion which Christabel expects from him. Instead, he seemingly chooses Geraldine over Christabel, and rejects her. The main body of the poem ends with Sir Leoline leading Geraldine away, and Coleridge gives the reader no indication of what may happen next. A reasonable assumption is that Sir Leoline will fall victim to the powers of the succubus. It seems that both Christabel and Bard Bracy can see Geraldine for what she really is at this point in the poem, although neither are able to articulate it. Geraldine also knows this as she commences her seduction of Sir Leoline but appears to be unconcerned by their knowledge, presumably because she knows that the others are unable to express it.

Roy P. Basler has a different opinion. He suggests that Christabel is still Geraldine’s intended prey, and that Sir Leoline must be disposed of in order to enable this to happen, as follows:

As Christabel struggles against the influence of Geraldine, revolted but unable to break the spell, Geraldine proceeds to work on her entrapment of Sir Leoline – a necessary step if she is to continue her entrancement of the girl without raising his suspicions. (Basler: 1970: 41)

I think it is unclear whether Coleridge intends that Christabel is still to become Geraldine’s prey, or whether she has admitted defeat, and her attentions have now moved on to Sir Leoline as alternative prey.

The final characteristic of the succubus which I consider is her reaction to religious practices and sacraments. Orthodox Christianity is not mentioned in *The Fairy of the Lake*, so Incubus and Rowenna are not included in this section. In the first chapter of

part two of *The Malleus Maleficarum* by Kramer and Sprenger (1489), five methods of escaping the clutches of the incubus or succubus are given:

...first, by Sacramental Confession; second, by the Sacred Sign of the Cross, or by the recital of the Angelic Salutation; third, by the use of exorcisms; fourth, by moving to another place; and fifth, by means of excommunication prudently employed by holy men. (Summers: 2000: 164)

In *Christabel*, Part I, Geraldine has two encounters with Christianity, both of which she skilfully handles without drawing undue attention to herself, subverting the above theory of Kramer and Sprenger. The first, as I have indicated above, is when Geraldine is unable to enter the castle unaided, as this would mean crossing its consecrated threshold. Immediately following this, she makes excuses when Christabel asks Geraldine to join her in prayer, to give thanks for her apparent recovery immediately on entering the castle:

And Christabel devoutly cried
To the Lady by her side,
'Praise we the Virgin all divine
Who hath rescued thee from thy Distress!'
'Alas, alas!' said Geraldine,
'I cannot speak for Weariness.' (Mays: 2001i: 487: 176: 137-42)

Both these examples show how Geraldine is able to skilfully avoid situations where she may have to make some profession of Christianity. Roy P. Basler has suggested that this incident reveals Geraldine's weakness:

...Geraldine's apparent inability to pray to the Virgin and her strange faintness when she observes the carven angel in the bedchamber suggest the essential weakness of evil and preternatural creatures in the presence of prayer or a symbol of divine power... (1970: 32)

I disagree. I think this actually reveals Geraldine's strength and cunning, rather than her weakness, in the sense that Geraldine is able to use her ingenuity to overcome such obstacles, which should have exposed her true nature, and dispersed her powers.

Zulma, on the other hand, appears to be unaffected by any of the first three methods of disposing of a succubus/ incubus listed above, which she is subjected to. Described as a 'Saracen' and a 'Mohammedan', as well as being thought to be possessed by a demon, Zulma is considered by the tribunal to be beyond the pale of Christianity, so it comes as some surprise to the judge when she professes her faith to be Christian:

Then by us it was put:
'So you are a Christian woman?'
And by her who spoke the response was:
'Yes, Father.'

At this point she was requested by us to make the sign of the cross and take holy water from a stoup placed within reach of her, by Guillame Tournebousche, which she doing, by us witnessed, it was admitted as proved fact that Zulma the Moor, in our country known as Blanch Bruyn, nun of the Convent known as Mt Carmel, there named Sister Clair, but now suspected of being a false appearance of a woman concealing a demon, had in our presence made the act of faith and thereby recognized the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical tribunal. (Balzac: 1985: 287)

She admits that she never goes to church, but prays at home instead. This is more to do with convenience, as she generally entertained her victims on holy days and feast days, as these were the days when they had the time to visit her. Additionally, the judge is surprised to learn that when she was found as an abandoned child in France, Zulma was placed in a convent. The abbess tells the tribunal how Zulma successfully completed her noviciate, but then seemed to become ill to such an extent that the nuns feared she would die:

Finally, she grew thin, lost her very great beauty and shrank to a mere shadow.

When she came to this state we, her Mother, the Abbess, fearing she was about to die, had her placed in the sick-room. But one winter morning the said sister was gone, without leaving any trace of her passage, without opening a door or unfastening a lock, or any window opened, or anything to show how she went, a terrible happening which was held to have taken place with the aid of the devil which was torturing her and tormenting her. (ibid: 279)

This quotation implies that it is not the affirmation of Christianity which would prove fatal to Zulma, but being denied access to men, whom she drains of their energy and life-force to keep herself alive. This is also representative of the State. On his death-bed, the judge makes a public sacramental confession in a final attempt to rid the town of the succubus. This also has no effect, and Zulma is eventually killed by being burnt at the stake.

Conclusion

This chapter has considered Coleridge's demonstration of the evolution of his religious and political beliefs from those of the Dissenting young political Radical, towards the beginnings of his Pantheistic beliefs, which he arrived at via the Associationism of

Hartley and Priestley. His interests at this time also broadened to include gothic excess and mystery, aligning his thoughts with the European gothic tradition.

The first part of this chapter has considered the evolution of Coleridge's changing religious beliefs, through close analysis of *Religious Musings* and *Fears in Solitude*. These two poems particularly detail the development of Coleridge's poetic style, coupled with the transitions in his religious opinions and thoughts of this time. Both purport to be built around a religious framework; both poems are also an attempt by Coleridge to articulate his religious and political beliefs at the time at which each poem was written. They demonstrate the way in which his ideas have developed over the intervening years. Within this period, Coleridge had outgrown his radical adolescence, and had developed his own style and poetic voice. Coleridge had also begun to embrace, and to discuss in his poetry, the Pantheistic notion of God as nature.

The works of this period, 1794-1798, demonstrate one of the biggest shifts in the opinions and style of the young Coleridge, as demonstrated through such works as *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, *Christabel*, *Religious Musings* and *Fears in Solitude*.

Religious Musings demonstrates Coleridge's continued state of personal flux, still imitating the style of the Augustan poets, in an attempt to give his works authority. *Fears in Solitude* and *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* reveal Coleridge the mature poet. At the time that Coleridge composed *Religious Musings* (1794-6), he was lacking confidence in his own abilities, and also the courage to express his changing religious and political views in his own style. Thinking that he did not have enough gravitas of his own, Coleridge leaned heavily on the style of earlier poets such as Milton, Young and Akenside, to endow his works with the authority of theirs, plus the associated authority of the Bible in which their works were steeped.

I have also outlined how *Religious Musings* was one of the earliest expressions of the development of Coleridge's Pantheistic thought. This work captures and articulates Coleridge's transition from religious and political Dissent, into Pantheistic belief coupled with the gradual transition away from radical politics into much more tempered and measured political views. This shift is encapsulated within the person of the

shepherd, which represents the conflation of the traditional Christian symbol of Christ the guide and protector of his flock, with the Pantheistic expression of harmony between the shepherd, his flock, and the natural world.

Coleridge continued to advocate religious and political unity, but the emphasis was beginning to shift from the religious expression of the oneness of Unitarianism to the oneness of Pantheism. *Religious Musings* is demonstrative of the state of flux of Coleridge's ideas surrounding politics and religion in the mid 1790's. The ideas expressed are essentially Unitarian, but beginning to express Unitarianism in Pantheistic language, in terms of Coleridge's gradual shift from the language of religion, to the language of nature: the Christian imagery is conflated with Pantheistic expression. Coleridge's Associationist beliefs at this point in his life enabled him to gradually rationalize his political and religious views, namely that all vibrations generated by the brain ultimately converged, and led to the same conclusion, that of an all-encompassing God. The fact that Coleridge was unable to rationalize his changing thoughts in sufficient time to meet the printer's deadline for inclusion in *Religious Musings* is a further indication of just how much Coleridge's thoughts and ideas on politics and religion were changing at this time. Coleridge expressed his beliefs along Associationist lines, stating that the amount of power held by the few (whether represented by the Ministers of the Anglican Church, or Members of Parliament) should be redistributed more generally and equally, whether politically through Universal Male Suffrage, or via religion, through the all-encompassing nature of Pantheism, which allowed people to directly worship God in nature, rather than through the medium of a Minister. Coleridge's political and religious views at this point in his life mirrored the values of the French Revolution: liberty, equality and fraternity. Through his poetical and prose works of this period, Coleridge urged education of the masses, stating that education would set men free by breeding an inquiring mind, allowing them to liberate themselves from the imposed servitude occasioned by ignorance. This included enabling free speech, in terms of the expression of people's political and religious opinions.

The second half of the chapter focused on the persona of The Wanderer, a common figure in Romantic-period poetry and literature. The Wanderer was an attractive figure to Coleridge, as the character was extremely adaptable. This malleability is evident in

Coleridge's works, as I described above with his explanation of how writing *The Wanderings of Cain* enabled him to collect material and mature his ideas for eventual inclusion in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.

I have also explored the possibility that Coleridge developed a very rare female characterisation of Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew, through the character of Geraldine from *Christabel*. Geraldine is a combination of many diverse archetypal elements; she has many characteristics in common with the Wanderer, but also with the mythical Lamia, Lilith and the succubus, as well as with the iconic biblical, mythological and literary archetype of the serpent. To establish Geraldine as part of the gothic tradition, the final part of this chapter has compared individual characteristics of Geraldine with those of similar figures in works by other authors, including Incubus and Rowenna (from Thelwall's *The Fairy of the Lake*), Zulma (from Balzac's *The Succuba*), and the protagonist of Keats' *Lamia*.

As comparison with these characters has shown, Geraldine carries with her many malevolent overtones, which Coleridge found very difficult to synthesise into one coherent character. *Christabel* represents Coleridge's exploration of the European gothic tradition, and the associated connotations of good versus evil. These extremes are represented by the characters of Christabel and Geraldine in *Christabel*, although evil in the guise of Geraldine appears to triumph at the end of the poem, which is unfinished, and therefore unresolved. The uncertain characterisation of Geraldine is a further example of Coleridge's transition from Christianity to Pantheism. Coleridge's characterisation of Geraldine could be viewed as an expression of malevolence in the Pantheistic forms of nature. She appears, as if by magic, in the middle of the night under an oak tree, which has overtones of both pagan worship and witchcraft, immediately making the reader aware of her poisonous disposition and evil intent. This may be Coleridge questioning and testing his new-found belief in the unity of Pantheistic nature; if this is the case, the fact that Coleridge was unable to finish, and resolve, both the poem and his characterisation of Geraldine, points towards him being unable to completely relinquish his long-held Christian beliefs.

**CHAPTER THREE – COLERIDGE AND SCHILLER: POLITICS,
RELIGION AND THE ROMANTIC (ANTI-) HERO IN THE
WALLENSTEIN TRILOGY**

...in two or three short passages I have been guilty of dilating the original... (Mays: 2001v: 205)

Introduction

In 1800 Coleridge translated *The Piccolomini* and *Wallenstein's Death*, the second and third parts³ of the dramatic *Wallenstein* trilogy by Friedrich Schiller (1799) from the original German into English. The dates are interesting in themselves. As Richard Holmes states in his two-part biography of Coleridge: 'Schiller only completed the *Wallenstein* trilogy in 1799, and Coleridge was working from a manuscript copy' (1999i: 267). This was an early version of the text, which was likely to have been a performance text, intended for the theatre, rather than for publication as a reading text, so many of the textual differences between Schiller's original and Coleridge's translation may actually be Schiller's later revisions, rather than errors of translation by Coleridge. This chapter discusses Coleridge's attempt to express his changing political and religious views through the medium of his translation of *Wallenstein*.

Coleridge's response to Schiller is rooted in the way in which he reads Dante's *Inferno* (1314), Goethe's *Faust* (written 1797-1806), and Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667), all of which are considered as key texts in this chapter. Coleridge's translation of the *Wallenstein* trilogy gives important clues as to how he understands and expresses the relationship between power, politics and religion.

F. J. Lamport, editor and translator of the 1979 Penguin translation of *Wallenstein*, states:

...nobody knew and nobody had ever known what [Wallenstein's] true motives were; even to our own day historians disagree as to whether he is to be accounted

³ Although Coleridge only translated Parts Two and Three of Schiller's original, for brevity, I refer to Coleridge's translation as the 'trilogy'.

amongst the heroes or the villains of the past – whether he genuinely desired peace (and if so, whether he could have achieved it) or merely sought his own aggrandizement. (Schiller: 1979: 13)

This ambiguity is the crux of Schiller's interpretation of this historical period in his dramatic trilogy. The audience is never told what Wallenstein's true intentions really are, as he is portrayed in many different ways, depending on whose eyes he is viewed through. Wallenstein himself, as portrayed by Schiller, also does not indicate to the audience what his true position is. Lampport continues:

...Schiller's Wallenstein is not merely an enigma to the historian, and the object of radically different interpretations by his friends and enemies in the play; he is an enigma to himself. (ibid: 13)

Lesley Sharpe agrees, stating: 'Wallenstein ... seems to have no definable character ... his personality is highly elusive, and this is, of course, Schiller's design' (Sharpe: 1982: 76).

To address Lampport and Sharpe's comments, I use Peter Thorslev's definitions of the characteristics of the Romantic/Tragic hero in *The Byronic Hero: Types and Prototypes*. I discuss the extent to which Coleridge (re)constructs Schiller's leading character, Albrecht von Wallenstein, as a Romantic (anti-)Hero who represents Coleridge's own political and religious preoccupations. Thorslev states:

...the Romantic Age was our last great age of heroes. It was the era of political and military heroes: heroes of revolution from Washington to Kosciusko, celebrated by most of the Romantic poets; or popular military heroes like Wellington ... Nelson ... and ... Napoleon who left his shadow across Europe not only in his lifetime, but through the entire 19th Century... (Thorslev: 1962: 16)

Coleridge celebrated many of these heroes through his early works, such as Kosciusko, a Polish General who had fought with the colonists in the American Revolution and who, on his return to Poland, championed Polish independence, as I outlined in Chapter One. It was therefore not unfitting that Coleridge translated Schiller's *Wallenstein* trilogy, as the main protagonist was yet another larger than life military figure. Thorslev continues:

The hero as he appears in literature bears with him the ethos of the age, the unspoken assumptions, the philosophical presuppositions in the context of which his existence becomes meaningful. His life mirrors not so much the events of the age as its tastes, its values, its aspirations and hopes for the future. (ibid: 19)

I compare Coleridge's fictional Wallenstein with other ambiguous Romantic and Tragic heroes, villains, and anti-heroes of literary works (specifically Faust, and Satan from *Paradise Lost*) in an attempt to define Coleridge's interpretation of Wallenstein's character and type. In comparing the three characters (Satan, Faust and Coleridge's Wallenstein), I examine the ambition to escape into Eden, and delusion as motifs. In this context, delusion means the eventual failure to achieve the Edenic state as part of the Romantic tragedy. This potentially compromises the traditional boundaries between good and evil, creating the ambivalence of the Romantic '(anti-) Hero' which Coleridge's Wallenstein appears to epitomize. This makes it possible to ascertain whether Coleridge's Wallenstein shares any of the characteristics of the Romantic/ Tragic Hero with Satan and Faust.

The final part of Chapter Three focuses on the Wallenstein trilogy. Using the religious themes of power, overreaching and good versus evil considered in the first part of this chapter, I discuss how Coleridge reflects these themes in his characterisation of Wallenstein, and other characters in the trilogy, and how he may have used (or abused) the vehicle of translation to impose his own characterisations onto Schiller's original characters; I also discuss whether Schiller may have done the same to the historical Albrecht Von Wallenstein. I investigate the extent to which the vehicle of translation is used to impose Coleridge's own political opinions and understanding of the current volatile situation in France onto the historical events and characters described in the *Wallenstein* trilogy; and also consider whether Coleridge may have undertaken the translation of *Wallenstein* as an alternative to composing an original work detailing his political opinions at this time. The chapter concludes with a summary of how Coleridge's political and religious views are expressed through, and synthesised with, his translation of Schiller's *Wallenstein* trilogy.

The terms Romantic hero, Tragic hero and Byronic hero are used more or less interchangeably by Thorslev. His thesis is that Byron used earlier examples to construct his Romantic/ Tragic/ Byronic hero as a reflection of himself:

...no poetry in English affords a better opportunity for the study of the Romantic hero than that of Lord Byron; he is the one poet in the Romantic Movement whose hero was his poetry, or whose poetry existed for his hero. Furthermore, the Romantic heroes epitomize many of the most important aspects of

Romanticism, and the Byronic Hero shows elements of every major type of Romantic Hero. (Thorslev: 1962: 4)

I argue that many of Coleridge's poems, or longer verse/ dramatic works also feature as their focal point a hero-figure which could be considered 'Byronic'. This figure is not always heroic in the sense of being a great military genius, or a troubled, introspective anti-hero. Examples of ambiguous hero-types in Coleridge's works include the figure of the ancient mariner (*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*), Kubla Khan (*Kubla Khan*), Geraldine (*Christabel*), Wallenstein (*Wallenstein* trilogy), and himself in *Dejection: An Ode*, amongst others.

The figure which I have selected to illustrate the point is Coleridge's self-portrait of the poet/narrator in *Frost at Midnight*. In *Frost at Midnight* the poet/narrator is quietly introspective, yet ambiguous, comparing his own memories of a dark and dismal childhood with the bright future which he envisages for his own child. There is sadness in the description, as if the poet/narrator does not see himself as part of his child's future. If Coleridge is assumed to be the poet/narrator, his description is prescient. Coleridge's relationship with his eldest son, Hartley, is discussed at greater length later in the chapter.

Thorslev explains that many heroic tales, in one form or another, appeared in the Romantic Age:

As the poets considered themselves alienated, isolated from society because of their greater sensibilities,... their greater closeness to nature or to God, or merely because of their radical ideas in the areas of social, theological, or moral reform, also they alienated and isolated their heroes. Their heroes were solitaires, ...intellectual rebels like Faust; they were moral outcasts or wanderers like Cain or Ahasuerus; or finally they were rebels against society and even against God himself, like... Lucifer. (Thorslev: *ibid*: 18)

Thorslev defines two main categories: Eighteenth-Century Hero Types, and Romantic Hero Types. I focus on three of Thorslev's Romantic Hero Types, namely Faust, Satan and the Noble Outlaw, via the characters of Faust, Satan in *Paradise Lost*, and the poet/narrator of *Frost at Midnight*, as well as Coleridge's characterisation of Wallenstein.

Coleridge had many literary influences, one of which was Dante, a huge influence on Coleridge both as a poet and a Christian author. In his 1818 lecture series on European Literature given at the Philosophical Society in London, Coleridge praised Dante in the following terms:

...Dante was the living link between religion and philosophy; he philosophized the religion and Christianized the philosophy of Italy; and, in this poetic union of religion and philosophy, he became the ground of transition into the mixed Platonism and Aristotelianism of the Schools... (Coleridge: 1836: 154)

Coleridge was an admirer of *The Divine Comedy* (1308-21) in its entirety, and praised the translation made four years earlier by H. F. Cary, which, until Coleridge's lecture series brought it some much needed publicity, had not sold very well. Coleridge particularly praises Dante's description of the Hell Gate in Canto 3 of the *Inferno*:

Consider the wonderful profoundness of the whole third canto of the *Inferno*; and especially of the inscription over Hell gate... which can only be explained by a meditation on the true nature of religion; that is, -- reason *plus* the understanding. I say profoundness rather than sublimity; for Dante does not so much elevate your thoughts as send them down deeper... (ibid: 161)

Another element of the *Divine Comedy* which may have appealed to Coleridge, given the similarities to *Wallenstein the man* and Coleridge's translation of *Wallenstein the character*, is the lack of clarity regarding the identity of Dante within the text; he appears to be multiple individuals. Lino Pertile explains:

The character of Dante, the narrator Dante, and the historical Dante are all intertwined and overlapping, but we cannot assume that they are identical. Nor are they three discrete entities. Dante's identity in the poem is ultimately an irresolvable ambiguity, an interlacing the poet fully exploits. (Pertile: 2007: 67)

In the same way, in his translation Coleridge fully exploits the ambiguities already inherent in the historical figure of *Wallenstein*, which were also previously exploited by Schiller, to ensure that the true motives of *Wallenstein*, both the historical and the dramatic figure, remain never clearly understood. Pertile goes on to state:

Once they are created, the most memorable of Dante's characters cannot be neatly contained within their teleological boundaries, their vitality cannot be repressed. (ibid: 81)

Perhaps the same is also true of the historical *Wallenstein*, and one of the reasons why Schiller, and later Coleridge, selected the epic character for dramatisation and then

translation respectively. It is also interesting to consider whether, with his laborious translation of the *Wallenstein* trilogy, Coleridge contributed to what became the defining characterisation of the Romantic/ Tragic hero, and felt that he himself had approached Hell Gate, and whether he considered that his characterisation of Wallenstein had reached Hell Gate with him:

Through me you pass into the city of woe;
Through me you pass into eternal pain: ...
All hope abandon, ye who enter here. (Dante: 2009: 19: 3: 1-9)

* * *

Faust

There are many similarities between the situations of Faust and Wallenstein, including their eventual fall from grace. Coleridge places great emphasis on the fall of Wallenstein throughout his translation. However, the fate of Faust differs according to the different authors. Marlowe damns Dr Faustus, but Goethe saves him.

This difference in the outcomes of two of the most well-known versions of the Faust legend is interesting. It is possible that Goethe, writing two hundred years after Marlowe, felt that he lived in a more liberated age which meant that he did not have to reflect orthodox Christianity, and was therefore writing under less constraint and fear of persecution than Marlowe. There is current controversy over whether Coleridge may have been the anonymous translator of *Faustus: From the German of Goethe* published by Boosey & Sons (1821). In his introduction to the recently published edition, Frederick Burwick states two plausible reasons for this wish for anonymity:

...[Coleridge] was worried about the play's immorality. This was a reason that he expressed to Byron when he gave up his first effort at translation in 1814. After Coleridge assumed a more prominent role in religious issues with the publication of *The Statesman's Manual* (1816) and *Lay Sermons* (1817), risking an apparent alliance with Goethe's unorthodox religious and moral opinions would have become a greater liability... Not the least of his reasons for maintaining anonymity was his former commitment to Murray which had remained unfulfilled. (Burwick and McKusick: 2007: xxiv)

Murray was the publisher who had initially engaged Coleridge to translate *Faust*, and from whom Coleridge had received an advance fee, which he had promptly spent. Whether or not Coleridge was in fact the translator, he certainly was very familiar with Goethe's version of the Faust legend, and interpreted it in a traditional Christian light.

Eden for Goethe's Faust is being enabled to follow his thirst for knowledge in terms of pursuing his own direction and interests, rather than teaching for hire:

No longer shall I sweat to teach
What always lay beyond my reach;
I'll know what makes the world revolve,
Its inner mysteries resolve,
No more in empty words I'll deal –
Creation's wellsprings I'll reveal! (Goethe: 2007: 14: 380-5)

Throughout the First Part, Faust repeatedly laments the stifling of his great intellectual powers occasioned by the necessity of tutoring his students and his assistant Wagner, 'that plodding bore' (ibid: 19: 521):

In vain it seems to me that I have strained
To grasp the riches of the human mind, for when
I pause to reckon what I might have gained,
I feel no new vitality in my breast,
I am no further in my futile quest –
The infinite is still beyond my ken (ibid: 55: 1810-15)

Faust yearns to pursue the acquisition of his own knowledge, although when this finally begins to bear fruit, it is far from an Edenic experience. He is startled when his spells begin to work, and Mephistopheles is summoned. Mephistopheles' first appearance before Faust in a physical form is as a black dog in a field, a possible reference to Satan's appearance as a serpent in the Garden of Eden:

You see that black dog running through the stubble there?...
It seems to me it's weaving magical lines around us,
To draw us into some infernal snare. (ibid: 36: 1147-59)

As the above quotation illustrates, Faust immediately has misgivings about Mephistopheles, which he chooses to ignore.

Throughout the play, Faust is kept deliberately deluded by Mephistopheles, who at the same time is careful to supply Faust with partial information. At the beginning, Faust is happy to ignore what he believes will be his future inevitable damnation. This is particularly evident in Faust's seduction of Margareta, and his implication in her subsequent crimes, which are committed as a direct result of Faust's influence over her, and that of Mephistopheles over Faust. He is not aware of the detail of all the tricks

which Mephistopheles plays to flatter Margareta to make Faust more attractive to her, such as providing her with jewels, and then speaking to her as if she was a lady, despite being aware of her lowly station in life. Whilst doing this, Mephistopheles simultaneously grooms her friend Martha to be his unwitting accomplice, by fabricating a story of her husband's infidelity and death:

MEPHISTO. Why, I myself, on that condition
 Might be prepared to make a proposition.

MARTHA Ah, you will have your little joke with me!

MEPHISTO. [aside] It's time to go; this tough old bird
 Would take the very Devil at his word.
 [to Gretchen] And you, Miss – all alone and fancy-free?

MARGARETA Sir, what do you mean?

MEPHISTO. [aside] Sweet innocence of youth!
(ibid: 93-4: 3001-7)

The tragedy is that Margareta is instinctively suspicious of Mephistopheles before he brings about her downfall, and repeatedly tries to warn Faust about Mephistopheles' ungodliness; warnings which he chooses to ignore:

...I freeze and shiver when I feel his presence...
It overwhelms me more than I can say.
I even think, whenever he is here,
My very love for you might ebb away
And I could never pray when he is near.
That is what really tears my heart in two ---
But..., you must feel his menace too. (ibid: 112: 3493-4510)

Faust's delusion allows him to hear only what he wants to hear, and it is a long time before Faust learns of the true length of his abandonment of Margareta, her downfall, and her crimes:

I killed my mother in the early hours,
I drowned my child when it was scarcely born.
That child was ours,
Yours and mine. (ibid: 147: 4507-10)

It is difficult to tell whether the realisation of former delusion sets in when this revelation is made to Faust, or whether he is by now so certain of his own damnation that he no longer feels able to influence the fate of anyone else. Mephistopheles tries to whisk Faust away, but not before Faust hears that Margareta has been saved.

Thorslev states that Goethe's *Faust* is very much a product of its age, showing the development of the figure from Marlowe's Tragic Hero Dr Faustus to Goethe's Romantic Hero Faust:

...Faust in Marlowe's drama is a Renaissance hero struggling out from under the repression of medieval orthodoxy; and Faust in Goethe's drama is a Romantic hero emerging from the dead certainties of the eighteenth-century enlightenment. (Thorslev: 1962: 85)

This ambivalence in Faust's character is present in Coleridge's characterisation of Wallenstein as a hero-type.

Satan

Satan is another of Thorslev's hero-types. Thorslev explains that the character of Satan appeared 'first as heroic, if not as a hero' (ibid: 108) in *Paradise Lost*, although it was through Romantic period interpretation of Milton's Satan that he became sublime. More than any of the other characters in this section, Milton's characterisation of Satan in *Paradise Lost* truly understands the lure of a symbolic Eden, here in the form of Heaven, including what it means to be cast out, and how it feels to creep back inside. As Lucifer, Satan was one of God's archangels. In *Book I*, for attempting to overreach himself, and seize power equal to that of God, God cast Lucifer into Hell:

Him th' Almighty Power
Hurled headlong flaming from the ethereal sky,
With hideous ruin and combustion, down
To bottomless perdition... (Milton: 1994: 115: 44-7)

Here Satan could reign supreme over his followers, but not without regrets, as revealed in *Book IV*:

Abashed the Devil stood,
And felt how awful goodness is, and saw
Virtue in her shape how lovely – saw, and pined
His loss... (ibid: 202: 846-9)

Milton voices Satan's thoughts and emotions in great depth and detail throughout *Paradise Lost*, and carefully contrasts his feelings of security when still resident in Heaven, with the revulsion and feelings of revenge which Satan experiences when he is chained to the burning lake in Hell, in *Book I*:

Such place Eternal Justice had prepared
For those rebellious; here their prison ordained
In utter darkness, and their portion set,

As far removed from God and light of Heaven
As from the centre thrice to th' utmost pole.
Oh, how unlike the place from whence they fell! (ibid: 115: 70-5)

This powerful and passionately complex, yet uncertain, characterisation of Milton's Satan as the (anti-) Hero is in sharp contrast to Dante's one-dimensional characterisation of Lucifer in Canto 34 of the *Inferno*, where Lucifer is depicted as a disgustingly piteous creature, operating on auto-pilot, who has no power or influence over anyone, failing (unlike Milton's Satan) to have retained a band of faithful followers. He is under no delusions; Dante's Lucifer knows that this is his lot, and that he has to submit to his punishment because he will never escape it. Dante's Lucifer is enslaved and pathetic, a creature which evokes pity rather than fear:

Upon his head three faces...
At six eyes he wept: the tears
Adown three chins distilled with bloody foam. (Dante: 2009: 19: 3: 1-9)

Milton's Satan returns to Eden with the goal of tempting Eve to eat the forbidden fruit, which he achieves by entering the body of the snake as a disguise. Milton's Satan knows and understands what he has lost, so he is not deluded in this respect. Milton, who never intended Satan to appear as anything other than unambiguously evil, displays Satan's fatal weakness through his arrogant refusal to admit the inevitability of his defeat. He retains a tragically futile determination to believe that he, and his band of rebel angels, will one day be strong enough to overthrow God. This is very like the situation in which Wallenstein finds himself: all the signs are there that he should give up, but still he keeps trying. Wallenstein refuses to acknowledge publicly, and even to himself, that he is beaten.

Thorslev states that Satan is:

...an aggressive and inventive spirit, and he becomes inevitably associated with the inventive, aggressive spirit of man, that proud self-assertion which is the basis of all heresy and *hubris*, but which is also the basis of Romantic... self-reliance. (Thorslev: 1962: 110)

These characteristics are the foundations for Coleridge's characterisation of Wallenstein. Before considering this in detail, I now turn by way of comparison to the persona of the poet/narrator of *Frost at Midnight* adopted by Coleridge.

Whilst not one of Thorslev's hero types, the poet/ narrator profoundly expresses his own perceptions of Eden and, subsequently, delusion. Coleridge the poet/ narrator projects a powerful image of the Edenic future existence which he envisages for his baby, made all the more paradisiacal by its comparison to his own dark and deprived childhood.

Coleridge casts the city as Hell, and the countryside as an Edenic vision of Heaven:

...I was reared
In the great city, pent 'mid cloisters dim...
But *thou*, my babe! shalt wander like a breeze
By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags
Of ancient mountain... (Mays: 2001i: 455-6: 171: 51-6)

Through the projection of his vision for Hartley's future, Coleridge is able (briefly) to escape from the cold, dark routine of life into an Eden created out of his own mind, as described in *Kubla Khan*:

...a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome... (ibid: 514: 178: 35-6)

Although *Frost at Midnight* was written in Somerset, the landscape described is essentially an imaginary construct. This vision of Hartley's future life is also where delusion sets in for Coleridge the poet/narrator. Coleridge's dreams for Hartley's future life contain a projection of Coleridge's own hopes and dreams that were never fulfilled. Whilst this is not an uncommon desire for a parent to have, it was unfair on Hartley, as it set up an ideal which neither Coleridge nor Hartley were able to live up to. Subsequently, both father and son struggled with feelings of failure, inadequacy and unfulfilled potential throughout the rest of their lives, and suffered accordingly:

...brilliant, eccentric Hartley had been expelled from his fellowship at Oriel, for allegedly heavy drinking and bringing the college into disrepute by his erratic behaviour...aged twenty-seven, he was reduced to the position of master in the school at Ambleside where he had once been taught himself... (Barker: 2001: 383)

From a cynical viewpoint, it may have been delusional of Coleridge to expect Hartley, his son, to live up to an ideal which he himself was not able to achieve. It is interesting to consider whether Coleridge was aware of this self-delusion whilst composing *Frost at Midnight*.

Above, I have compared the notions of Eden, and notions of delusion of three characters (Faust, Satan and Coleridge the poet/narrator) who express these ideas very strongly in their respective texts (*Faust*, *Paradise Lost*, *Inferno* and *Frost at Midnight*). Faust and Satan were also selected as they represent two of Thorslev's Romantic hero-types. In the next section, I compare the above characteristics and themes with Coleridge's characterisation of Wallenstein. I also measure Coleridge's Wallenstein against the characteristics of the Noble Outlaw, the one of Thorslev's Romantic hero-types which I feel most strongly resembles Coleridge's characterisation of Wallenstein.

Wallenstein the 'Noble Outlaw'

Schiller wrote the *Wallenstein* trilogy primarily to draw parallels between the Thirty Years' War and the French Revolution, indicating how, instead of driving Europe forward into a new age of Enlightenment as it had appeared to promise, the French Revolution had effectively resulted in Europe regressing to the anarchic state of the early Seventeenth Century. Coleridge picked up on Schiller's highlighted similarities between the two periods, and also between the figures of Wallenstein and more modern military figures, such as Napoleon, in addition to those discussed in Chapter One. This is also similar to Thorslev's description of the genesis of one of his hero-types, the Noble Outlaw:

The French Revolution produced a host of living and historical Noble Outlaws – radicals and democrats who were aristocratic rebels against their hereditary class... Although these actual outlaws furnished some immediate inspiration, in general the Romantic poets turned to literary precedents for their Noble Outlaws – to the close of the Middle Ages, to the robber barons of Germany, or the border outlaws of England and Scotland. They turned to the last fading days of little 'organic' societies, to the days of personal loyalties, personal justice, and personal heroism... (Thorslev: 1962: 66)

Schiller's choice of Wallenstein as his subject has similarities to Thorslev's description above, but taken from continental Europe rather than the English borders.

The historical Albrecht von Wallenstein, the main protagonist in the trilogy, was a General during the Thirty Years' War in Europe (1618-1648). He was supposedly fighting on the side of the Holy Roman Emperor, Ferdinand II, and was eventually made Commander-in-Chief of the Imperial Forces. In 1633, Wallenstein entered into negotiations with the Protestants, supposedly to bring an end to the war which had then

been raging across Europe for fifteen years, and which was to continue for a further fifteen years after the demise of Wallenstein.

R. Ben Jones uses similar language to Thorslev's definition of the Noble Outlaw in his descriptions of Napoleon as a Romantic Hero:

Our present age favours the anti-hero, diminishing the significance of the individual. It was not so in the era of Napoleon. Then, there was an exaggerated consciousness of the capacity of individuals to perform great deeds, and the tremendous achievement of Napoleon makes his career admirably suited to the period of the Romantic Revival. (Jones: 1977: 11)

and:

The Romantic Hero was a superman personifying a great range of human emotions and pursuing a moral purpose in which the ennoblement of life was implicit. He was ...a man with years of solid achievement behind him to add lustre to his genius... In [Napoleon] are combined the history of ideas and the management of politics: by restoring law and order, he re-forged the promethean chains that youthful romantics had sought to break and provided a new goal for the now aimless Revolution – namely the coordination of national energies by an efficient, centralised and secular state. (ibid: 35)

The historical Wallenstein was an 'aristocratic rebel' who, like Napoleon, rose quickly through the ranks, taking advantage of the opportunities which came his way, as well as capitalising on a great deal of good luck, also like Napoleon. Coleridge is very careful to place great emphasis on this aspect of his characterisation of Wallenstein. The audience learns of Wallenstein's past career mainly through conversations between Wallenstein's generals, and from Wallenstein himself, as Coleridge chose not to translate *Wallenstein's Camp*, the first part of the trilogy, in which Schiller introduces the themes to be discussed during the course of the trilogy. Coleridge also highlights Wallenstein's aloof and stubborn nature, which is displayed mainly in Wallenstein's conversations with his wife, and sister Countess Tertsy. Wallenstein will not seek, or listen to, advice, unless it comes from his astrologer, Seni, and even then Wallenstein will only hear what he wants to hear. This flaw eventually results in Wallenstein being taken prisoner by Butler and murdered in the Citadel at Egra, once his own former stronghold, in *Wallenstein's Death*.

This is where Coleridge's characterisation of Wallenstein deviates from the character and career of Napoleon, who up until 1800 (when Coleridge's translation of the

Wallenstein trilogy was published), had gone from strength to strength, having overthrown the Directory and been appointed First Consul in 1799. In the *Wallenstein* trilogy, Wallenstein's decision to take on his two enemies at once, and pit them against each other, proves fatal for him when both sides (the Swedes and the Saxons) reject his advances. Napoleon however, was successful in a similar situation, winning over both of his adversaries, as Jeremy Popkin states:

In the Italian campaign of 1796, Napoleon immediately demonstrated the qualities that were to carry him to glory. With his determined personality, he succeeded in imposing his authority on his troops and on subordinate officers who were often older and more experienced than he was... Outnumbered by the combined Austrian and Piedmontese forces opposing him, Bonaparte succeeded in splitting his foes and overwhelming them separately. In two months, he had knocked the Piedmontese out of the war, chased the Austrians from Milan, and established himself as the most brilliant of the French Republic's generals. (Popkin: 2002: 114)

Like Napoleon, Wallenstein was also initially successful in 'imposing his authority on his troops and on subordinate officers who were often older and more experienced than he was', such as Octavio Piccolomini. However, his authority could not be sustained once his troops became aware of his duplicity, and his fall from grace became inevitable. In 1800, Napoleon's downfall in the form of his abdication, surrender to the British, and subsequent exile to Elba and then St Helena, were still in his future.

Malcolm Crook also comments on the 1796 Italian campaign, with emphasis on the fact that, like Wallenstein, Napoleon deliberately disobeyed orders, in an attempt to protect his own position:

...in Italy, Bonaparte disobeyed (the Directory), for he felt his own position to be in danger from the shifting sands around him – from the revolutionary movements that were taking place. He took these movements under his patronage so that he could have them under his control... He then broke his instructions once more and persuaded the Austrians to conclude preliminaries of peace before they realised the weakness of his position. And the very terms of the agreement that he concluded contravened the whole policy of his government at home. (Crook:1998: 27)

Napoleon was more successful in duping the Austrians than Wallenstein was in attempting to dupe the Swedes.

Next, I consider how Coleridge's portrayal of Wallenstein meets Thorslev's description of the Noble Outlaw:

...the Noble Outlaw personified the Romantic nostalgia for the days of personal heroism, for the age when it was still possible for a leader to dominate his group of followers by sheer physical courage, strength of will, and personal magnetism. (Thorslev: 1962: 68)

Wallenstein is initially portrayed by Coleridge as a leader with immense personal charisma and humanity. In *The Piccolomini* Act I, Scene i, Field Marshall Illo and General Isolani, two of Wallenstein's most loyal and trusted followers, are discussing Wallenstein's benevolent nature, compared with that of the Emperor:

ILLO The Emperor gives us nothing; from the Duke
 Comes all - whate'er we hope, whate'er we have.

ISOLANI My noble brother! did I tell you how
(to Illo) The Duke will satisfy my creditors?
 Will be himself my banker for the future,
 Make me once more a creditable man! –
 And this is now the third time, think of that!
 This kingly-minded man has rescued me
 From absolute ruin, and restor'd my honour. (Mays: 2001v: 217:
 I: i: 68-76)

This is the first speech in the play concerning Wallenstein. Here Illo and Isolani state their loyalty to Wallenstein, and emphasise how good he is to his men. Isolani particularly indicates that Wallenstein's benevolent act of rescuing him from financial ruin was not merely a one-off. Before Wallenstein makes his first entrance, Isolani and Illo build him up as a heroic character, deserving of the men's praise, respect and love, which Wallenstein appears to have in abundance at this early point in the play.

Another of Wallenstein's men, Colonel Max Piccolomini is a comparatively junior member of Wallenstein's loyal following, in terms of age. He worships Wallenstein, and believes him to be destined for great things, including believing him capable of seizing the throne of the Emperor. He observes that Wallenstein will not bow to authority, even when commanded to do so. He believes Wallenstein is a natural leader of men:

Heaven never meant him for that passive thing
That can be struck and hammer'd out to suit
Another's taste and fancy. He'll not dance
To every tune of every minister.

It goes against his nature – he can't do it.
He is possess'd by a commanding spirit... (ibid: 247: I:iv: 26-31)

Max believes Wallenstein was born to command men, and if he is not able to usurp the position of the Emperor, then Wallenstein should be in command of the army as an alternative to holding the supreme position. This is reminiscent of Satan's speech in *Paradise Lost, Book I*, stating that he would rather 'reign in Hell than serve in Heaven' (Milton: 1994: 120: 263). Max's arrogance in this respect is a very early indication of Wallenstein's hold over him. Although I believe Coleridge emphasised Max's arrogance to highlight his comparative youth and inexperience, it also provides evidence that Max can only see the leader that Wallenstein appears to be, whereas older more experienced soldiers, for example his father, Lieutenant General Octavio Piccolomini, can see through the façade. At this point in the play, Max's devotion to Wallenstein could potentially land him in a great deal of trouble, as the ideas he is verbalising are treasonous, although Max seems unaware of this, again perhaps due to his youth and naivety. The Holy Roman Emperor was not only the supreme commander of the army and the Head of State, he was also regarded as God's representative upon the earth within his Empire.

Max's defence of Wallenstein continues throughout *The Piccolomini*, even daring to defend Wallenstein in front of War Commissioner Von Questenberg, the Imperial Envoy, and his father Octavio. Max can't believe that Wallenstein is dangerous, unreliable and unpredictable, despite being faced with the facts by these two very senior old soldiers who really are in a position to know. Max believes that Wallenstein is trying to end the war, and thinks that Von Questenberg and Octavio are trying to prevent Wallenstein from achieving this:

Ye fret the General's life out, blacken him,
Hold him up as a rebel, and Heaven knows
What else still worse, because he spares the Saxons,
And tries to awaken confidence in th'enemy;
Which yet's the only way to peace... (Mays: 2001v: 259-61: I:iv,
168-172)

Max absolutely believes that Wallenstein is being victimised and hounded out by the Imperial Forces. He doesn't see Wallenstein as a tyrant who wants to continue the war for his own personal reasons rather than end it for the greater good, but as a hero. In the

remainder of this speech, Max implies that it is the Imperial Forces who are the tyrants. This is again something he has no doubt been taught by Wallenstein, in a similar manner to which Satan as the serpent whispered poison into Eve's ear in the Garden of Eden. Max believes Wallenstein is a strong candidate to be the next Emperor, and that this has scared the current Emperor into trying to crush him, in order to carry out his own tyrannous behaviour. Max thinks the Emperor is prolonging the war, to suit his own ends, rather than trying to end it to reduce Wallenstein's power, including dissolving his armies:

Soon will his gloomy empire reach its close.
Blest be the General's zeal: into the laurel
Will he inweave the olive-branch, presenting
Peace to the shouting nations. Then no wish
Will have remain'd for his great heart! Enough
Has he perform'd for glory... (ibid: 369: II:iv: 150-155)

When Max pledges his alliance to Wallenstein, over the Emperor, he knows nothing of his father's secret alliance with Von Questenberg (and the Emperor) against Wallenstein, and thinks Octavio serves Wallenstein as his immediate commander, rather than the Emperor as supreme commander. He thinks, as Wallenstein has led him to believe, that at the end of the war, Wallenstein will be feted as a hero, not reviled as a tyrant. Coleridge's characterisations of Max and Octavio Piccolomini are discussed at greater length later in the chapter, but it is already clear, given the parallels with *Paradise Lost* noted above, that the interplay between religious and political themes was central to Coleridge's engagement with the Schiller text.

Max continues to pledge his allegiance to Wallenstein throughout *The Piccolomini*, even believing that Wallenstein is so fond of him that he will readily agree to Max marrying his only daughter, Thekla. Even at this point, nearly half-way through the play, Max is unable to see Wallenstein for what he really is:

I'll throw me at your father's feet – let *him*
Decide upon my fortunes! – He is true,
He wears no mask – he hates all crooked ways –
He is so good, so noble! (ibid: 373: II:v: 18-21)

This speech shows Max Piccolomini to be as poor a judge of character as his beloved Wallenstein. Max refuses to recognise the Satanic nature of Wallenstein, in the way that

many Romantic Period readers of *Paradise Lost* chose not to recognise the truly Satanic nature of Satan. Max's blind faith in Wallenstein, and his belief that Wallenstein is acting both in his, and the army's, best interests means that Max is unable to see Wallenstein for the manipulative tyrant that he truly is. This is similar to Faust being unaware of the full extent of Mephistopheles' underhand treatment of Margareta; because he is not looking for it, he does not see it. Similarly, many Romantic Readers of *Paradise Lost* were bewitched by Milton's passionate characterisation of Satan, leading them to view him as a victim, rather than as the evil, justly punished, potential usurper of God's power.

Thorslev further identifies the Noble Outlaw as someone who is the undisputed leader of a 'society in miniature', dominating it with his personality:

...the Noble Outlaw usually appears as the leader of a group of comrades of undying loyalty. Within this society in miniature he is a 'natural' leader, owing his position neither to hereditary rank alone nor, of course, to popular election; his authority is unquestioned...in such a society, justice is swift, personal, and real... (Thorslev: 1962: 69)

At the beginning of *The Piccolomini* the reader's attention is drawn to the closeness and insularity of Wallenstein's camp. Throughout the rest of *The Piccolomini* and *Wallenstein's Death*, Coleridge emphasises the fracturing of this once-perfect 'society in miniature', by detailing how Wallenstein's duplicity is quickly and fatally (for Wallenstein) exposed to his former confidantes, including Octavio Piccolomini, Count Tertsy and Colonel Butler, amongst others.

In *The Piccolomini*, Von Questenberg and Octavio Piccolomini quickly realise the level of power exerted by Wallenstein over his troops when they take a walk around Wallenstein's camp. Von Questenberg admits that neither he nor the Emperor had fully appreciated the esteem in which Wallenstein was held by his men, as they only ever saw him when he came to Vienna to visit the Emperor:

O! this is worse, far worse, than we had suffer'd
Ourselves to dream of at Vienna. There
We saw it only with the courtier's eyes,
Eyes dazzled by the splendour of the throne.
We had not seen the War-chief, the Commander,
The man all-powerful in his camp. Here, here,
'Tis quite another thing.

Here is no Emperor more – the Duke is Emperor. (Mays: 2001v: 237: I:iii: 14-21)

Von Questenberg, looking in from the outside, can see that Wallenstein has set himself up as a pseudo-Emperor, or pseudo-Napoleon, in his own personal empire in miniature. Von Questenberg sees this as eminently damaging to the Emperor if Wallenstein is successful in expanding his empire, although he thinks this is highly unlikely. From the capital, Vienna, the Emperor and his envoys had not realised that conditions inside Wallenstein's camp had reached this level of severity. This section of the play shows further exploration of Wallenstein's character by Coleridge. Von Questenberg goes on to imagine the horror that could ensue if Wallenstein's quest for absolute power is not stopped in its tracks:

...this very army
Seduc'd, run wild, lost to all discipline,
Loosen'd, and rent asunder from the state
And from their sov'reign, the blind instrument
Of the most daring of mankind, a weapon
Of fearful power, which at his will *he* wields!
(ibid: 241: I:iii: 54-9)

The above quotation neatly describes what was happening in France during the early years of the French Revolution, as the closeness and camaraderie of the armies began to replace family loyalties amongst the soldiers, as Jeremy Popkin outlines:

The citizen-soldiers of 1792-1793 turned into battle-hardened professionals who lost contact with the civilian population at home. The soldiers... came to have strong personal loyalties to their commanders... the leading generals became ...less patient with interference from the government in Paris. Financially independent because of the money they extracted from the regions their armies conquered, they developed their own policies and became important influences in domestic policies. The various political factions in Paris cultivated generals sympathetic to their views, encouraging the growth of army influence.

No other general profited more from this situation than the young commander of the Army of Italy, Napoleon Bonaparte. (Popkin: 2002: 106)

Malcolm Crook corroborates Popkin's point of view:

As each army became detached from the *patrie*, so it tended to become a praetorian guard, devoted to its general; it was not only Bonaparte who developed a particular *esprit de corps* through his control of patronage, promotion and pillage. The cult of various military personalities brought the formation of states within states. In Italy, commented one officer, we have 'neither law nor government: the generals are our sovereigns'. These generals

became used to operating independently as diplomats and administrators in the occupied territories, like Bonaparte in northern Italy.

The efforts of the Directory to keep the military in check, chiefly by means of civilian *commissaries* who were attached to each army were unsuccessful. There was little that the politicians could do when the regime was so dependent upon the material and monetary assistance that the generals provided. (Crook: 1998: 40)

Behind this aspect of Wallenstein's story as translated by Coleridge, and the history of the French Revolution, lies the portrayal of a political movement gradually losing its sense of obligation to a higher, spiritual set of values. Coleridge addressed this subject directly in his poem 'Fears in Solitude'.

Von Questenberg's prediction that Wallenstein intended to seize absolute power also further ties in Coleridge's characterisation of Wallenstein with the beginning of Napoleon's meteoric rise. Von Questenberg is now fully aware that Wallenstein is acting of his own volition, and no longer carrying out the orders of the Emperor. Von Questenberg is also aware that as an outsider, he will have very little influence in changing the situation. This is where Octavio Piccolomini comes in. As one of Wallenstein's most trusted Lieutenant Generals, and an insider in the camp, Octavio is much better placed than Von Questenberg to keep an eye on Wallenstein's actions, and report back to the Emperor.

Thorslev's third criterion describing the Noble Outlaw states that he has been wronged by those close to him:

The Noble Outlaw is... figured as having been wronged either by personal, intimate friends, or by society in general, and his rebellion is thus always given a plausible motive. (Thorslev: 1962: 69)

Many of Wallenstein's formerly loyal followers desert him over the course of the two plays, although there is certainly also an additional element of perceived wrongs on the part of Wallenstein, which Coleridge will have been aware of.

The primary close friendship which I consider in this section is that between Wallenstein and the Emperor. The Emperor, although often referred to, never actually appears in the text, but Coleridge leads the audience to believe that he and Wallenstein were once

close. The first evidence of Wallenstein feeling he has been wronged by the Emperor comes in Act I, Scene x, when Wallenstein realises the Emperor has named his son, Ferdinand III, as Wallenstein's successor:

They have determin'd finally in Vienna,
Have given me my successor already;...
The Emperor's delicate son! he's now their saviour,
He's the new star that's rising now! Of us
They think themselves already fairly rid,
And as we were deceas'd, the heir already
Is entering on possession... (Mays: 2001v: 289: I:x: 3-10)

This is the point in the play where Wallenstein begins to exhibit signs of insecurity regarding the fidelity of his close friends and colleagues. Wallenstein seems extremely surprised that the Emperor's son has been named as his successor, and begins to wonder if this means that the Emperor is aware of his imminent treachery. Here, Coleridge's translation emphasises Wallenstein's extreme single-mindedness. He doesn't even consider that the Emperor might naturally prefer his son to take charge of the armies, in preference to himself. Therefore he takes the Emperor's decision as a personal slight. Wallenstein also starts to suspect that his formerly loyal generals Counts Altringer and Galas are against him, which later turns out to be the case.

Wallenstein's further disillusionment continues throughout the rest of the act. In Act I, Scene xii, again he shows a slim appreciation for, and disrespect of the Emperor's rank and royal status:

Yes! 'tis my fault, I know it: I myself
Have spoilt the Emperor by indulging him. (ibid: 317: I: xii: 108-9)

In this scene, Wallenstein recounts how exalted he was before his fall from grace:

That was a time!
In the whole Imperial realm no name like mine
Honor'd with festival and celebration ---
And Albrecht WALLENSTEIN, it was the title
Of the third jewel in his crown! (ibid: 116-120)

Other characters, such as Von Questenberg and Octavio Piccolomini, discuss Wallenstein's fall at various other points in the play, but interestingly, they focus on this more than on the height from which he fell. This again shows that Wallenstein may have

been mistaken in his assessment of his importance to the Emperor. He doesn't consider that the Emperor has every right to be suspicious and cautious when having to rely on him, as Wallenstein has publicly failed the Emperor in the past. In terms of Thorslev's definition of the Noble Outlaw, this is evidence that early in the play, Wallenstein believes himself to be secure within a group of loyal followers, and therefore, because he is not looking for it, does not see that his group is crumbling around him. Again, parallels with Milton's Satan as portrayed in the early Books of *Paradise Lost* suggest themselves, and this aspect of the political story will not have been lost on Coleridge.

Wallenstein continues to reflect on his fall from grace:

And what was now my thank, what had I now,
That I, a faithful servant of the Sovereign,
Had loaded on myself the people's curses,
And let the Princes of the empire pay
The expences of this war, that aggrandizes
The Emperor alone – What thanks had I!
What? I was offer'd up to their complaints,
Dismiss'd, degraded! (ibid: 317-9: I:xii: 125-132)

He does not say that he (presumably) went against the Emperor's orders in making the princes pay for the war, rather than levying taxation from the general populace.

Wallenstein also states here that he expected great rewards for merely doing his job.

This quotation, in conjunction with the previous one, more or less implies to Von Questenberg that Wallenstein blames the Emperor for his downfall, and is continuing to take revenge against him. Once Wallenstein has begun in this vein, he cannot stop, even though his words are treasonous, and spoken in the presence of Von Questenberg, the Imperial Envoy, and all Wallenstein's generals. It would have been more beneficial to Wallenstein if this had taken place in soliloquy:

...Since 'twas prov'd so inauspicious to me
To serve the Emperor at the empire's cost,
I have been taught far other trains of thinking
Of th' empire, and the diet of the empire.
From th' Emperor, doubtless, I received this staff,
But now I hold it as the empire's general ---
For the common weal, the universal int'rest,
And no more for that one man's aggrandizement! (ibid: 319: I:xii:
136-143)

Here Wallenstein tells Von Questenberg and the Generals that the Emperor's treatment of him is to blame for his own current ambition and behaviour. He implies that if the Emperor will not reward him for work done, then he will reward himself. Wallenstein's rebellion is entirely plausible and justifiable to himself, but unfortunately, there are very few left at this point within the Imperial Court who share Wallenstein's point of view.

Wallenstein states he is no longer working towards the 'aggrandizement' of the Emperor. This goes against what he should be doing, as the Emperor's subject and commanding officer of his armies. Wallenstein continues to rant, revealing that he made conditions with the Emperor regarding his appointment, something which should have been unthinkable:

I accepted the command but on conditions!
And this the first, that to the diminution
Of my authority no human being,
Not even the Emperor's self, should be entitled
To do aught, or to say aught, with the army. (ibid: 323: I:xii: 177-181)

Coleridge appears to make a comparison here with Napoleon, which represents an adaptation of Schiller's characterisation of Wallenstein. Lamport does not think Schiller's portrayal of Wallenstein was based on Napoleon, and states in his introduction to his modern translation:

It has even been suggested that Schiller had Napoleon Bonaparte in mind. Though Bonaparte's star was rising rapidly at the time of completion of the trilogy... this seems very unlikely; but Schiller's Wallenstein is at least... a study of a man betrayed by his delusions of historical destiny and his belief in his own power... (Schiller: 1979: 12)

In addition to this, it is not unreasonable to suggest that for Coleridge, the relationship between Wallenstein and the Emperor had certain affinities with the relationship between Satan and God in *Paradise Lost*.

Wallenstein reveals that the condition he demanded of the Emperor was that the Emperor should have no authority over the army. Wallenstein thinks that the eight thousand horsemen which the Emperor wants to relieve him of are not to assist the Prince Cardinal, as stated, but to slowly remove parts of the army from Wallenstein's command, and move them back under the command of the Emperor:

May I not be suffer'd
To understand, that folks are tir'd of seeing
The sword's hilt in *my* grasp: and that your court
Snatch eagerly at this pretence, and use
The Spanish title, to drain off my forces,
To lead into the empire a new army
Unsubjected to my controul. To throw me
Plumply aside, --- I am still too powerful for you
To venture that. (Mays: 2001v: 325: I:xiii: 204-212)

Wallenstein pits himself against the Emperor (which he has no authority to do), and states he knows the Emperor wants him removed from office. He asks why the Emperor is not direct with him. Wallenstein himself is not direct with anyone. It is possible that, in his struggle to gain the Emperor's power, Wallenstein is unconsciously emulating him. At this point, in his translation, Coleridge is careful to emphasise that Wallenstein still has absolute belief in his own power and potential, and believes that his power cannot be removed by anyone, including the Emperor. There are significant Napoleonic and Satanic echoes in Coleridge's characterisation of Wallenstein, the latter of which display the importance for Coleridge of religion in his political thinking.

Towards the end of *The Piccolomini*, Wallenstein has his eyes partially opened, and realises that the Emperor is indeed like him, and has used him as a tool to further his own position, much in the same way that Wallenstein has been using both his Generals and enemies as pawns in his battle for self-'aggrandizement':

I never saw it in this light before.
'Tis even so. The Emperor perpetrated
Deeds through my arm, deeds most disorderly.
And even this prince's mantle, which I wear,
I owe to what were services to him,
But most high misdemeanours 'gainst the empire. (ibid: 549:
IV:vii: 212-7)

Here Wallenstein implies that the Emperor himself is also no longer acting in the best interests of the Empire, but merely for his own 'aggrandizement'. This could be a case of Wallenstein deflecting his own guilt and failings, as it is easier to blame the Emperor than to blame himself. Here Wallenstein also acknowledges that the acts which initially raised the Emperor to his exalted level within the Empire were in fact crimes, although he sanctioned their commission by Wallenstein, to avoid dirtying his own hands.

Further evidence of the dissolution of Wallenstein's formerly loyal band of followers comes in the defection of Count Thur. Thur is not even a character in the play, but through reported speech, we learn that Wallenstein had once praised and rewarded Thur for going against the best interests of the Emperor, when Wallenstein should instead have severely punished him, as commander of the Imperial Armies. The Imperial Envoy, Von Questenberg, makes this speech to point out that Wallenstein appears to be working in direct opposition to the Emperor, but also implies that the Emperor is powerless to stop it:

And here, with others,
The righteousness of Heaven to his avenger
Deliver'd that long-practis'd stirrer-up
Of insurrection, that curse-laden torch
And kindler of this war, Matthias Thur.
But he had fallen into magnanimous hands;
Instead of punishment he found reward,
And with rich presents did the Duke dismiss
The arch-foe of his Emperor. (ibid: 313: I:xii: 64-72)

This again is an echo of Napoleon's disregard for, and treatment of the Directory, which Coleridge would have been well aware of. Whilst Von Questenberg knows that Wallenstein rewarded Thur, he does not know that Thur will now no longer have anything to do with Wallenstein. The audience learns of this in a conversation between Wallenstein and Count Tertsy in the previous scene:

... [Count Thur] says you've tir'd him out, and that he'll have
No further dealings with you...
He says, you are never in earnest in your speeches,
That you decoy the Swedes – to make fools of them,
Will league yourself with Saxony against them,
And at last make yourself a riddance of them
With a paltry sum of money. (ibid: 291: I:xi: 24-30)

This seems to indicate that Wallenstein's old friend and colleague, Thur, is now also wary of Wallenstein's opacity in terms of his plans and future aims both for himself and for the army. It is evident, even at this early point in the play, that Wallenstein has no idea of who is actually loyal to him, and who isn't, as his assumptions are very far from the truth. This scene indicates that news of Wallenstein's dishonesty, treachery and prevarication are spreading far and wide, and perhaps the only unsuspecting people are Wallenstein's wife and daughter, and Max Piccolomini.

Wallenstein believes he has been wronged by his own personal friends, but equally, as stated above, he is not honest and straightforward with them. Therefore, it should really come as no surprise to him when they treat him in the same manner – however, he is not prepared when Tertsy begins to question both Wallenstein’s authority and his prevarication:

You will deal, however,
More fairly with the Saxons? They lose patience
While you shift ground and make so many curves
Say, to what purpose all these masks? Your friends
Are plung’d in doubts, baffled, and led astray in you...
But how can it be *known* that you’re in earnest,
If the act follows not upon the word? (ibid: 293: I:xi: 53-64)

Here Tertsy directly accuses Wallenstein of playing mind-games both with his friends and with his enemies. Tertsy is particularly concerned that it is always him and not Wallenstein, who takes the fall-out, as the message always seems to proceed directly from Tertsy and not Wallenstein. Wallenstein loses his temper, and asks Tertsy, if he is so sure of his intentions, how can Tertsy be sure that he is not deliberately playing his followers off against each other, including Tertsy:

And from whence dost *thou* know
That I’m *not* gulling him for th’ Emperor’s service?
Whence knowest thou that I’m not gulling all of you?
Dost thou know *me* so well? When I made thee
Th’ intendant of my secret purposes?
I am not conscious that I ever open’d
My inmost thoughts to thee. Th’ Emperor, it is true,
Hath dealt with me amiss; and if I *would*,
I could repay him with usurious interest
For th’ evil he hath done me. It delights me
To know my *power*; but whether I shall use it,
Of that, I should have thought that thou could’ st speak
No wiselier than thy fellows. (ibid: 295: I:xi: 69-81)

Wallenstein also adds that he has the power to work against the Emperor, should he choose to use it. This is another treasonous comment, and again a reflection of Napoleon’s behaviour towards the Directory.

The entire Tertsy passage, however, should also remind us of the way Milton describes the debate amongst the fallen angels in Pandemonium, and Satan’s devious manipulation of what is made to seem an exercise in free speech beyond the range of an oppressive

God. In Milton's account, the rebel angels remain oblivious to Satan's dishonest tactics. In *The Piccolomini*, however, Tertsy plays the part of an enlightened onlooker, when he comments on how uncertain he is of Wallenstein's policies and intentions:

His policy is such a labyrinth,
That many a time when I have thought myself
Close at his side, he's gone at once, and left me
Ignorant of the ground where I was standing.
He lends the enemy his ear, permits me
To write to them...
Himself comes forward blank and undisguis'd;
Talks with us by the hour about his plans,
And when I think I have him – off at once –
He has slipp'd from me, and appears as if
He had no scheme, but to retain his place. (ibid: 335: II:i: 40-50)

He relates how Wallenstein appears to be disarmingly open in discussing his plans with his men, but in actual fact this just leaves Tertsy even more confused and uncertain than he would be if Wallenstein had told him nothing. Tertsy hints that he thinks Wallenstein is unscrupulous, and will do anything to keep himself in power – presumably this includes sacrificing his generals and men. This shows Tertsy starting to lose faith in Wallenstein, and is further evidence of Wallenstein's close-knit body of supporters starting to crumble.

My final example of Wallenstein's followers gradually losing faith in him comes from Act IV, Scene v; it concerns Wrangel, the representative of the Swedes, who are the Emperor's sworn enemies, but prospective allies for Wallenstein. Wrangel also has doubts regarding Wallenstein's intentions:

But when the common enemy lies vanquish'd,
Who knits together our new friendship then?
We know, Duke Friedland! though perhaps the Swede
Ought not t' have known it, that you carry on
Secret negotiations with the Saxons.
Who is our warranty, that *we* are not
The sacrifices in those articles
Which 'tis thought needful to conceal from us? (ibid: 527: IV: v:
149-156)

Wrangel accuses Wallenstein of already plotting against the Swedes, even before he has formally joined them. Wrangel believes Wallenstein will betray the Swedes to the Saxons to further his own position. This is further proof that Wallenstein is universally

Octavio reveals to Max that Wallenstein thinks they are both on his side, and he is effectively bribing them to stay true to him:

To sell ourselves are we call'd hither, and
Decline we that – to be his hostages. (ibid: 459: III: i: 134-5)

Wallenstein will hold Octavio and Max Piccolomini against their will if they don't willingly sign the fake confession giving Wallenstein their support. Coleridge's characterisations of Max and Octavio Piccolomini are discussed at length later in the chapter.

To summarise, in terms of the motifs of Eden and delusion discussed earlier in the chapter, Wallenstein's own personal entry into Eden would be to usurp the position of the Emperor. He sees this as the logical next step up from his current position of Generalissimo of the Imperial Forces. If this proves to be unattainable, he would like to join the Swedes or the Saxons, despite his former duplicity and dishonesty to both, in order to overthrow the Emperor and usurp his position. Throughout most of *The Piccolomini* and *Wallenstein's Death*, certain of his followers, specifically Max Piccolomini, believe that he is trying to end the war for the greater good, rather than prolong it to further his own position.

Like Milton's Satan and Goethe's Faust discussed earlier in the chapter, Wallenstein is portrayed as being deluded. This aspect of his character drew Coleridge to his interest in Wallenstein, as the character could be manipulated or (quite literally) 'translated' to carry Coleridge's own ideas, rather than those of Schiller. The manifestation of Wallenstein's delusion is that he does not believe it is possible for him to fail. He assumes that if the Swedes won't accept him, then the Saxons will. As he thinks he is in control of the situation, Wallenstein does not consider the possibility of being spurned by both sides, once they find out the truth. From this point of view, Coleridge was able to compare Wallenstein to Milton's Satan, in the sense that he considers himself to be a powerful leader who cannot fail or lose the support of his followers. Lucifer considered himself to be secure in his exalted position until he was ejected from Heaven by God, and he then went on to become the leader of the rebel angels in Hell as Satan; the difference between the two was that Wallenstein was ultimately rejected and outsmarted by both the Swedes and the Saxons, whereas Milton's Satan managed to exert and keep

his power over the rebel angels in the underworld. Coleridge understands that Milton's Satan is controlled and repressed only by God. Wallenstein thinks he is in control, but he is actually controlled by outside forces culminating in the person of the Emperor. Milton's Satan and Dante's Lucifer both know that they are damned, but it is unclear whether Wallenstein fully appreciates his damnation, even when imprisoned in the Citadel at Egra. In Wallenstein's own mind, he has fled to Egra to find sanctuary; he is not aware that Gordon and Butler are holding him prisoner, on the orders of the Emperor.

Coleridge would have appreciated that the following comparison can be drawn between Wallenstein and Milton's Satan: both are great leaders; both consider themselves to be all-powerful; both are controlled and subdued by a higher force. Milton's Satan remains answerable to God, and Wallenstein remains ultimately answerable to the Emperor.

Coleridge's characterisation of Wallenstein also shows similarities to Goethe's characterisation of Faust. As I have mentioned above, Wallenstein is guilty of overreaching, of wanting to see and experience more than his station in life will allow. For Faust, this thirst for knowledge takes the form of wanting to know the secrets of the Universe; for Wallenstein, it takes the form of wanting to join his armies to those of the Swedes or the Saxons, to use their strength to usurp the position of Emperor. Both characters are deluded enough to think that they can achieve their respective goals without great personal sacrifice or effort. Like Faust, Wallenstein is guided by the stars, rather than searching for solutions to his problems through a political morality grounded in sound Christian theology which recognises Satan as an enemy of mankind.

Above, I have shown how Coleridge (re)constructs Wallenstein according to the criteria of the Noble Outlaw, one of Thorslev's hero-types described in *The Byronic Hero: Types and Prototypes*. Thorslev's criteria for the Noble Outlaw are that he must be of noble birth, and must be the undisputed natural leader of a 'society in miniature'. As I have shown, Wallenstein fulfils both of these criteria in his own opinion, as well as in the opinions of both his friends and enemies. Thorslev's Noble Outlaw has been wronged by those closest to him. Wallenstein doesn't fit this criterion exactly, because although we are led to believe that he was wronged by the Emperor in the years prior to

the action of the play, he loses many of his previously loyal followers during its course, due to his own opacity and prevarication, coupled with him not providing information to anyone, even his most loyal supporters. Although Coleridge's (re)construction of Wallenstein fits the majority of the criteria for the Noble Outlaw, there remains the question of whether Wallenstein can be considered truly heroic. Based on the facts presented above, my conclusion is that, despite fulfilling many of the heroic criteria, Wallenstein is actually presented as more of a villain. Coleridge achieves this by highlighting many of Wallenstein's weaker characteristics such as his prevarication, dishonesty, and his duplicitous nature.

***Wallenstein* in Translation**

Finally, I look at the *Wallenstein* trilogy in translation, to ascertain how Coleridge's translation has changed and adapted Schiller's original characterisation of Wallenstein. In the Eighteenth-Century, the concept of translation varied from an exact literal rendering of a text (as today's meaning of the word implies) through to a loose summarisation and extrapolation of the original author's key ideas within a text which was essentially the translator's own construct. Coleridge's own translations (of the *Wallenstein* trilogy, and other works) covered many points on this scale. Coleridge used his translation of the *Wallenstein* trilogy as a safe, non-judgemental space in which to experiment with and articulate his own changing political beliefs, chiefly through his characterisations of Max and Octavio Piccolomini.

Coleridge's decision to use translation as an opportunity for commentary on current events may well have been one of the factors which induced him to accept the task of translating *Wallenstein*, knowing that he would be able to further 'translate' the historical figure of Albrecht von Wallenstein, and others, to accommodate his own political and religious views, in much the same way that Schiller had done before him. Disillusion and weariness with war are brought out very strongly in the *Wallenstein* trilogy, emphasising both Schiller's and Coleridge's disappointment with the eventual failure of the French Revolution, which had initially appeared to promise so much. By 1800 both Coleridge and Schiller, once enthusiastic supporters of the French Revolution, were (in common with many others of their generation) thoroughly disillusioned with its failure:

The joy and enthusiasm with which Europe had greeted the French Revolution within a few years turned to hostility. This was not merely a matter of the emotional recantations of the young (like Coleridge or Wordsworth), but also of a wide range of Europe's intellectual leaders... The Napoleonic era grew out of this rejection of the ideas and practice of revolution. (Jones: 1977: 29)

The 1790's were turbulent years in Europe, due to the French Revolution. Both Schiller and Coleridge enthusiastically supported the revolutionaries in the early years, as the late Eighteenth-Century ideals of enlightenment, advancement, and 'victory over tyranny' seemed to be coming to the fore. However, both men soon became disenchanted and disillusioned with the brutality of the Terror:

The first stages of the French Revolution [Schiller] welcomed... as a victory over tyranny and a confirmation of the eighteenth-century belief in enlightenment and progress; but subsequent events, above all the Terror of 1792, shocked him profoundly, as a relapse into barbarism, a tyranny worse than that it had replaced, a refutation of the meaning of history. (Schiller: 1979: 11)

Coleridge had lived in Germany from late 1798 until July 1799 for the purpose of learning German. Whilst there, he greatly enjoyed himself, travelling around Germany, meeting and conversing with intellectuals and academics, and attending the University at Göttingen. For this period, he was relieved of his domestic responsibilities back in England, and the constant worry and challenge of providing for his increasing family.

On his return to England in 1799, family life once again took over, and Coleridge was forced to earn money in order to provide for his family. He was offered work, writing for the *Morning Post*. This was the point at which Coleridge was commissioned to translate Schiller's *Wallenstein* Trilogy, a task he found difficult and boring. However, whilst the work may have initially bored him, it allowed him the freedom to move back to London and stay with Lamb whilst Sara and Hartley stayed with friends, and finally to admit in a letter to Southey that his marriage was in crisis. Richard Holmes states:

Reverting to bachelor status he worked hard, drank hard, and talked unstopably... In one twenty-four-hour period he drafted his 3,000-word profile of Pitt and completed 50 blank verse lines of his German translation. (Holmes: 1990i: 262)

Interestingly, Schiller had also found the completion of *Wallenstein* tedious, partly due to its great length, and partly because, like Coleridge, he was writing under pressure, albeit of a different kind. Schiller was at this time the resident playwright for the Weimar

Theatre. The first part of the *Wallenstein* trilogy, *Wallenstein's Lager* (*Wallenstein's Camp*) was due to premier on the opening night of the newly restored theatre, on 12 October 1798, so Schiller's deadline was immovable. The second part of the *Wallenstein* trilogy, *Die Piccolomini* (*The Piccolomini*) was to be performed on the Duchess of Weimar's birthday on 30 January 1799, another immovable deadline.

Schiller's *Wallenstein* trilogy articulated many ideas and concepts central to Coleridge's thinking at this time, which Coleridge then adapted through the medium of translation to make his own. He was at best economical with the truth when he stated that his translation of Schiller's work was as faithful to the German original as possible. Much of the text was translated faithfully, but Coleridge also worked in many of his own thoughts, opinions and modified characterisations, such as those of *Wallenstein* and *Max Piccolomini* discussed earlier. The chances of detection were small, as it was unlikely that many English readers would compare his translation to the original German, which was not published in Germany until after the publication of Coleridge's translation in England. In any case, as stated earlier, 'translation' was a process that was understood to cover wide range of approaches, from paraphrase to attempted 'word for word' reproduction. J. C. C. Mays writes that 'F[riedrich] S[chiller]... redisp[os]ed the acts and scenes into their final positions and revised the verse for publication [in Germany] in Jun[e] 1800' (Mays: 2001v: 177). He also notes that '*The Piccolomini* appeared first [in England], in Apr[il] or May [1800], and the two plays bound up together with a shared title-page in early Jun[e]' (ibid: 169).

During the course of his epic translation, Coleridge decided only to translate the second and third parts of the trilogy (*The Piccolomini* and *Wallenstein's Death*). He did not think *Wallenstein's Camp* was worth translating because of 'the incongruity of those lax verses with the present taste of the English Public' (ibid). His opinion was that 'doggerel' was not worth translating. With the benefit of hindsight, it is also possible that Coleridge may have been considering the works that his newly acquired German would allow him to produce in the future, such as his commission from John Murray to translate Goethe's *Faust* in August 1814, which he failed to produce, despite having received and spent the advance from Murray. Coleridge wrote a series of three letters to the publisher John Murray on the subject of *Faust*. The first letter, dated 23 August 1814

(Griggs: 1959: 521-3: 946), starts off optimistically, stating Coleridge's desire to translate *Faust*, if Murray considers that he will do it well; in the second letter, dated 31 August 1814, Coleridge states that the terms offered by Murray are 'humiliatingly low' (ibid: 523: 947), but agrees to accept them; in the third and final letter, dated 10 September 1814, Coleridge apologises for having offended Murray, and clarifies that the terms offered by Murray were 'humiliatingly low' in terms of the amount of work involved in the translation, 'not as less than [Murray] was justified in offering' (ibid: 528: 950). On 6 October 1814, Coleridge subsequently wrote to Daniel Stuart asking for money, and complaining that he had been 'treated... in a strange way' by Murray 'about a translation of Goethe's *Faust*'. He then adds 'it is not worth mentioning except that I employed some weeks unprofitably – when it was of more than usual necessity that I [shou]ld have done otherwise' (ibid: 536: 952). This implies that Coleridge had begun work on the translation of *Faust* for Murray, which he then subsequently abandoned, before 6 October 1814, the date of his letter to Stuart. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Coleridge gave up his translation of *Faust* in September or early October the same year.

Schiller was well aware that the quality of his verse in *Wallenstein's Camp* was below that of the rest of the trilogy. This was deliberate. The 'doggerel' verse is used to vocalise the lives of the common man (and woman), rather than the nobility, for which a higher verse form is used throughout the rest of the trilogy. *Wallenstein's Camp* details the conditions the peasants and the soldiers live in, and shows how the soldiers all praise Wallenstein, and swear their allegiance to him rather than to the Emperor, whom they believe has deliberately withheld their previous year's wages. As early as the second scene, the Sergeant-Major is seen telling the peasants how devoted Wallenstein's armies are to their leader:

The stoutest troops that ever you saw,
Are loyal and devoted to him to the death –
It was he himself who gave us breath,
All the captains himself did enrol;
They are his to the last man, body and soul. (Schiller: 1979: 178:
2: 37-41)

This is evidence of Wallenstein as the ruler of a 'society in miniature' mentioned by Thorslev in his criteria for the Noble Outlaw, mentioned earlier.

Another important purpose of *Wallenstein's Camp* is to prepare the audience for the first entrance of Wallenstein. Although Wallenstein does not appear at all in *Wallenstein's Camp*, most of the conversation between the peasants and the troops is about him, acquainting the audience with many of the issues which will be debated at length in *The Piccolomini* and *Wallenstein's Death*, including Wallenstein's eventual fall from grace. As Lesley Sharpe observes, Schiller builds Wallenstein up before his entrance, so that the audience are expecting:

...a dominant, larger than life figure... when Wallenstein finally arrives his appearance is an anticlimax. (Sharpe:1982: 76)

In this respect, Schiller is employing a characteristic tactic of Romantic Period writing. It is paralleled by Sir Walter Scott in *Waverley* (1814). Scott reminds the reader throughout the first six chapters that Edward Waverley is the hero of the story, and details his family circumstances and the manner of his education, but it is only in chapter seven, when, as an adult, he leaves home to join his regiment in Scotland, that Edward actually becomes the main focus of attention. Despite the elaborate build up, Edward is proved to be poorly educated and disciplined, and not cut out for life in the army:

Our hero was liable to fits of absence, in which his blunders excited some mirth, and called down some reproof. This circumstance impressed him with a painful sense of inferiority in those qualities which appeared most to deserve and obtain regard in his new profession. He asked himself in vain, why his eye could not judge of distance or space so well as those of his companions; why his head was not always successful in disentangling the various partial movements necessary to execute a particular evolution; and why his memory, so alert upon most occasions, did not correctly retain technical phrases, and minute points of etiquette or field discipline...The truth was, that the vague and unsatisfactory course of reading which he had pursued, working upon a temper naturally retired and abstracted, had given him that wavering and unsettled habit of mind, which is most averse to study and riveted attention. (Scott: 1904: 55)

This ultimately disappointing and anti-climactic appearance was one of the main characteristics of a (anti-) hero of Weimar Classicism. Scott had a long interest in German literature, stretching as far back as 1788 when he was a law student. He seemed to find the German language very easy to acquire, and was particularly interested in the works of Schiller and Goethe. During the winter of 1796-7, Scott translated six plays by

German authors,⁴ five of which were set in royal or noble courts, and which dealt with the themes of ‘love versus honour or resistance versus tyranny’ (Adams: 1956: 122), very similar to the setting and themes of the *Wallenstein* trilogy. The consequence in both cases is the questioning of traditional notions of good and evil, where ‘good’ seems to have subverted and been prepared to accommodate ‘evil’. As noted previously in this respect, one of Coleridge’s most direct statements on this process occurs in his poem, ‘Fears in Solitude’.

Due to the absence of *Wallenstein’s Camp* in Coleridge’s translation, the action begins very much *in media res*. The first appearance and expected character of Wallenstein is necessarily given much less of a build-up, and the audience is also completely unacquainted with the main issues which will be debated throughout *The Piccolomini* and *Wallenstein’s Death*. As well as *Wallenstein’s Camp*, Coleridge also did not translate the *Prologue*, in which Schiller states his artistic intentions and introduces the major themes of the play: power, loyalty and betrayal, the historical context, and the eventual Faustian fall of Wallenstein:

The idol of the camp, the scourge of kingdoms,
The prop and terror of his Emperor,
The child and nurseling of adventurous fortune,
Who, borne aloft by favourable times,
Climbed swiftly to the highest peaks of honour,
And striving onwards, never satisfied,
Fell victim to ambition unconfined. (Schiller: 1979: 168)

Schiller states explicitly that he has embellished the facts, to make them more reflective of the French Revolution and Napoleon, in the interests of providing a good story for the audience, rather than maintaining historical accuracy:

... be thankful rather
That she (the muse) should thus transform the sombre hues
Of truth into the realm of art serene,
Create illusion, then in honesty
Reveal the trick she plays, and not pretend
That what she brings us is the stuff of truth.
Life is in earnest, art serene and free. (ibid: 169)

⁴ The six plays which Scott translated in the winter of 1796/7 were *Die Verschwörung des Fiesco* (Schiller, 1783); *Götz von Berlichingen* (Goethe, 1773); *Emilia Galotti* (Lessing, 1772); *Die Mündel* (Iffland, 1785); *Fust von Stromberg* (Maier, 1782); and *Otto von Wittelsbach* (adapted by Steinsberg, 1783, from Joseph Babo’s play of 1782) (Adams: 1956: 122)

The *Wallenstein* trilogy encompasses many different types of translation, each of which further removes the play from its historical factual basis. Schiller's agenda was a discussion of empire, power and oppression in the French Revolution, discussed through the medium of the Thirty Years War. Coleridge took this agenda further. Through his translation from the original German into English, Coleridge adapted Schiller's characterisation of Wallenstein, Butler, and Octavio and Max Piccolomini amongst others, to include his own theories on the exercise of power and leadership both in terms of loyalty and tyranny, monarchy, religion, and the introduction of stock Romantic character-types including the tyrannical anti-hero and the child of nature. The different characters in the *Wallenstein* trilogy allowed Coleridge to express all aspects of his changing political views in a safe space, free from judgemental comments. Coleridge's agenda is discussed more fully later in the chapter.

Coleridge states in the Preface to his translation of *The Piccolomini*: 'In the translation I endeavoured to render my Author *literally* wherever I was not prevented by absolute differences of idiom...' (Mays: 2001v: 205). Considering this statement, it seems odd that Coleridge apparently saw no advantage in contextualising the historical facts of the play, making known the feelings and opinions of the common soldier, or preparing the audience for their first sighting of Wallenstein, unless we assume that what Coleridge meant by this statement was that he 'literally' wanted to reproduce Schiller's intention to reflect contemporary events rather than Seventeenth-Century history. It is possible that Coleridge did not want his audience focussing too much on the Seventeenth-Century events described in the trilogy, as this would take their attention away from the Eighteenth-Century current events which both Coleridge and Schiller were actually commenting on. Schiller 'translates' history into an opinion of Europe in the 1790s; Coleridge translates Schiller to the same end. In both cases, they attempt to do what Lawrence Venuti has argued lies behind most if not all translation:

... foreign texts are often rewritten to conform to styles and themes that currently prevail in domestic literatures, much to the disadvantage of more historicizing translation discourses that recover styles and themes from earlier moments in domestic traditions. (Venuti: 1998: 67)

Venuti infers that the process of translation involves much more than merely translating the text from one language to another. Translation into the appropriate historical context

and idiom is just as important. For example Lamport's 1979 translation of the *Wallenstein* trilogy was necessary for today's modern audience, as Coleridge's 1800 translation now appears linguistically dated, because some of the language which it contains is no longer in common usage. Sometimes, however, a translator might deliberately use archaic, rather than modern, language, for instance to make the translated text seem much older than it actually is (as Coleridge did in the marginal gloss to the 1798 version of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*), or to set it within its historical context. This method has equal value to using modern language to bring the text right up to date. One of the tasks of the translator is to identify the purpose of the translation, and to use language and idiom appropriate to this purpose. Differences in translation may also arise due to different forms of linguistic education over time. Lamport presumably learnt to speak German at school, and so would have been formally educated in German grammar, whereas Coleridge at the time of translating *Wallenstein*, taught himself to speak German by immersing himself in German culture, although he had only been learning German for a few months. Coleridge presumably grounded his acquisition of German in his already great knowledge of English and Classical grammar, which was not without its problems, as pointed out by Joyce Crick: 'C[oleridge]'s German is literary. He is sometimes defeated by idiomatic phrases.' (Mays: 2001v: 934). Bernhard Fabian states:

There are few Eighteenth-Century German translations of prose works which can be said to render the English text so well that they are genuine linguistic equivalents. (Fabian: 1992: 57)

It seems that in this case the reverse is also true. Coleridge was fully aware that an exact translation was very difficult to accomplish for many reasons, and was at pains to explain this in his Preface to his translation of *Wallenstein*:

Translation of poetry into poetry is difficult, because the Translator must give a brilliancy to his language without that warmth of the original conception, from which such brilliancy would follow of its own accord. But the Translator of a living Author is encumbered with additional inconveniences. If he renders his original faithfully, as to the *sense* of each passage, he must necessarily destroy a considerable portion of the *spirit*; if he endeavour to give a work executed according to laws of *compensation*, he subjects himself to imputations of vanity, or misrepresentation. I have thought it my duty to remain bound by the sense of the original, with as few exceptions as the nature of the languages rendered possible. (Mays: 2001v: 621)

With the use of the above phrase ‘bound by the sense of the original’, Coleridge gives himself license to embellish Schiller’s original by reducing or increasing the speeches and importance of certain characters, as well as putting a different slant on their characterisations or actions. Crick states:

...if translation is a process of recasting a text out of one set of linguistic, formal, stylistic, and cultural conditions into another, transparency is possible only when these can be brought to match – which on the whole they do not. Despite C[oleridge]’s aim of a literal rendering, his text approaches strong re-writing, and even, in his footnotes and thoughts in the margin, conscious glossing. (ibid: 939)

Frederick Burwick supports this view:

In translating *Wallenstein*, Coleridge claimed a strict fidelity to the original... Because J. C. C. Mays’s dual-language edition makes the comparison easy, it can be quickly discovered that Coleridge’s claim is more than his actual practice reveals, and rightly so. Indeed, the merit of Coleridge’s translation is that he is not bound by too strict an adherence to the original. (Burwick: 2009: 413)

Coleridge’s use of the word ‘faithful’ to describe his translation of *Wallenstein* may have been a marketing ploy to assure the reader that what they were reading was as close to Schiller’s original work as linguistic translation would allow. Coleridge was also mindful that Schiller was still alive, and very likely to read his translation. His Preface overstates the relationship of a translator to the original author, without wanting to appear derogatory to Schiller:

A Translator stands connected with the original Author by a certain law of subordination, which makes it more decorous to point out excellencies than defects: indeed he is not likely to be a fair judge of either. The pleasure or disgust from his own labour will mingle with the feelings that arise from an afterview of the original. (Mays: 2001v: 620-1)

It is difficult to decide whether this is Coleridge attempting to cover up the disgust and despondency he felt regarding the task of translating *Wallenstein*, or whether it is just an apology for the length of the work. It is interesting that the anonymous 1821 Boosey translation of *Faustus* (recently attributed to Coleridge) went in the opposite direction, condensing over one hundred lines of verse into a single prose line in some cases.

In a gross understatement in his introduction to *The Piccolomini*, Coleridge confesses that he is ‘... conscious, that in two or three short passages I have been guilty of dilating the original’ (ibid: 205). Coleridge’s concept of ‘dilation’ is worth a mention here. He is

known to have translated texts from the original German around this time, and to have passed them off entirely as his own creation, for example, the poem *Hymn Before Sun-rise, In the Vale of Chamouni* (1802), was in fact written by the German poet Friederike Brun. Coleridge made *Hymn Before Sun-rise, In the Vale of Chamouni* entirely his own, transforming it into a much improved poem as a result.

Although Coleridge purports to be the most faithful translator of Schiller, his treatment of the character of Butler is very interesting, particularly given the contention here that Coleridge was pursuing a personal agenda relating to the relationship between religion and politics. It is this preoccupation that comes to have a key role to play in how this character's part in the denouement is interpreted. Through his characterisation of Butler, there is evidence of Coleridge's response to the issue of usurpation of power and responsibility in time of war, and of how established authority should be regarded. Coleridge's translation, however, also reveals a preparedness to edit and change, but in no clearly consistent way. This could suggest that he is still working through the issues in his own mind, or it could be further evidence of Coleridge working under pressure of time, and possibly translating the text as he was reading it for the first time with very little time for reflection on the action that had taken place earlier. As a result, Coleridge himself may not have been clear of the full implications of the character of Butler in the overall context of the play. From the beginning, Butler is inscrutable, and his speeches are full of double meanings. It is clear that he is a respected Colonel, with considerable experience of war, but his motives are not clearly articulated by Coleridge. Butler repeatedly states that he serves both the Emperor and Wallenstein (God and Satan?), but the implication seems to be that he will serve Wallenstein while Wallenstein serves the Emperor. Butler is less forthcoming on whom he would serve if the two were ever separated. The moral dilemma this implied was to haunt Coleridge for most of his life.

For example, in Act II: Scene xi, in conversation with Counts Illo and Tertsy, Butler talks about his own fidelity and honour; he means to the Emperor, but Illo and Tertsy think he is discussing honour and fidelity to Wallenstein:

BUTLER

My fidelity

The Duke may put to any proof – I'm with him!
Tell him so! I'm the Emperor's officer,
As long as 'tis his pleasure to remain

his armies and Counts have mutinied against Wallenstein and sworn allegiance to the Emperor. Kinsky, Tertsky, Illo and Wallenstein have all been sentenced in their absence. Wallenstein (and the reader) are unaware that it is Butler who has been tasked, by the Emperor, with carrying out their sentences.

Coleridge's translation at various points in the trilogy also renders the characterisation of Butler more opaque. For example, a few pages into Act I, Scene ii of *The Piccolomini*, there is a conversation between Illo, Isolani and Von Questenberg, although Butler is also present in the room at the time. In Lamport's translation, Butler interjects with a very short, but very telling comment, which seems to imply where Butler's allegiance really lies:

QUESTENBERG: The sword has made the Emperor a pauper;
 It is the plough must make him strong again

BUTLER: The Emperor were no pauper, were there not
 So many – leeches battenning on the land

ISOLANI: Nor can it yet have come to that. I see

[Planting himself in front of Questenberg and inspecting his clothes]

 There is still gold in plenty yet uncoined. (Schiller: 1979:
 224)

Coleridge omits Butler's two-line speech from his translation:

QUESTENBERG: The sword has made the Emperor poor; the plough
 Must reinvigorate his resources.

ISOLANI: Sure!
 Times are not yet so bad. Methinks I see
 (examining with his eye the dress and ornaments of Questenberg)
 Good store of gold that still remains uncoin'd. (Mays: 2001v:
 225-7: I: ii: 65-8)

The 'leeches' referred to by Butler in Lamport's translation appear to be Wallenstein and his men, such as Illo and Isolani. This indicates that Butler's true allegiance lies with the Emperor, as supreme commander, and not with Wallenstein (as is revealed towards the end of Lamport's translation). This is something that Illo, Isolani and Wallenstein are not yet aware of. In both translations, Isolani states that the Emperor has riches which

Envoy. Illo implies that the Emperor does not care for his men at all (unlike Wallenstein), as the army's pay has been withheld. He also implies that the Imperial Court knows that something is afoot in Wallenstein's camp, but is not yet sure what, or how to stop it.

The evidence shows that Coleridge has tampered with the character of Butler. In doing so, he has shown ambivalence, caution, and distaste for the radical Butler, who regardless of his eventual overt support for the Emperor, can still appear to be politically radical. Towards the end of Act I, Scene ii, Coleridge further silences Butler by omitting a 48-line monologue (briefly interrupted once by Von Questenberg) which Lamport includes (Schiller: 1979: 226-8). It states Butler's apparent support for both the Emperor and Wallenstein, and describes the numerical strength of the Imperial armies based around Germany. In this monologue, Butler assures Illo and Isolani that all Wallenstein's Generals are loyal (which of course is not the case, as Butler himself is one of Wallenstein's Generals). He states that the men in the army do not share any common nationality, religion or patriotic pride (therefore implying no loyalty), in fact half of them are deserters from the enemy's armies. Butler also comments that it was almost inconceivable that Wallenstein managed to present the Emperor with a ready-made army, implying that if it was so easy the first time, that Wallenstein could do the same thing again for a different ruler. Butler seemingly states that the Emperor is in charge, but notes that it was Wallenstein who gave him the means to wield power, by the provision of an army. This omitted exchange also provides background information about the early history of the Thirty Years' war, showing how the current situation had arisen; contextual information which Coleridge's audience is again denied. The omission of this passage by Coleridge again suggests that he was either not interested in contextualising the action of the play, or that he found the character of Butler an unnecessary confusion to the clear issues of morality and loyalty, in that the loyal patriot should not be viewed as devious or duplicitous.

Coleridge's stage directions in the remainder of this scene are also different to Lamport's, and appear to further silence Butler. In Lamport's translation, immediately before the monologue described above, Butler is on the sidelines with Octavio Piccolomini, observing the conversation taking place on centre stage between Illo,

Isolani and Von Questenberg. This implies that Butler and Octavio Piccolomini are in each-others' confidence about their loyalty to the Emperor. Butler comes to centre stage and interrupts the conversation with his monologue as soon as the Emperor's intentions are called into question. In Coleridge's translation, all characters, including Butler, are standing in centre-stage, all equally involved with the conversation, all as prominent as each other: therefore there is no need for Butler to interrupt with his monologue. In much of Coleridge's translation, Butler is a passive brooding presence, rather than an active participant in the action as he is in Lamport's translation, which follows more precisely Schiller's original. Intentionally or not, Coleridge's portrayal of Butler begins to suggest a character exhibiting ambivalent and divided loyalties, a situation comparable to that experienced by Coleridge, Wordsworth, and many of their contemporaries who had initially welcomed the radical politics of the 1790s, but who had subsequently been forced into a state of indeterminacy and apostasy by what they perceived as the moral poverty of the motives for revolution by the very leaders of that revolution.

Coleridge also adapts Schiller's characterisation of Max, to bring him more in line with the ideal of the Romantic child of nature articulated in *Lyrical Ballads* (1798). Coleridge's characterisation of Max can be viewed as an echo of his own youthful, radical, pro-revolutionary, idealistic self. Max believes that the revolution which Wallenstein is trying to set in motion will end the war and change the world. He speaks fondly of an idealised utopia, that of peace following the Thirty Years War, in much the same way that the young Coleridge spoke of his vision of Pantisocracy following the French and American revolutions, as I discussed more fully in the first chapter. Max's vision is based on glimpses of lands which were not at war, which he saw whilst escorting Wallenstein's wife and daughter to his camp:

The city gates fly open of themselves,
They need no longer the petard to tear them.
The ramparts are all fill'd...
With peaceful men and women, that send onwards
Kisses and welcoming upon the air...
From all the towers ring out the merry peal,
The joyous vespers of a bloody day. (Mays: 2001v: 259: I: iv:
147-154)

In Lamport's translation of *The Piccolomini* Act I: Scene iv, in an exchange between Max Piccolomini and Von Questenberg which Coleridge does not translate, Max Piccolomini defends Wallenstein, saying that no other man can serve the army in the way he does, and that he deserves to become Emperor. Von Questenberg then sarcastically retorts that Wallenstein is indeed serving the army, and begins to comment on Wallenstein's duplicity and treachery, which Max Piccolomini knows nothing about:

Who would deny he knows the hearts of men,
Knows how to use them! But in ruling them
He quite forgets that he should serve as well,
As if he had been born to the ruler's state. (Schiller: 1979: 234)

This suggests that Von Questenberg thinks Wallenstein, like Faustus, is overreaching himself, and as such, is destined to fall. Max Piccolomini does not understand why Von Questenberg says this, and thinks his aim was merely to complain about Wallenstein. Max states his opinion that Wallenstein deserves to be the ruler, and will be if he has his sights set upon it, as, in Max's opinion, Wallenstein is capable of achieving anything he sets his mind to. Schiller may have inserted this reference to Faustus as a reference to that work by his great friend, Goethe, but also as a subtle reference to Napoleon, who was also destined to overreach himself, and ultimately to fall. It appears that Coleridge wished to save Wallenstein from this degree of attack; to have Max Piccolomini shown as less gullible. The idea of Max as a naive idealist may well have appealed to him as a reflection of his own failings when it came to political judgements.

Coleridge omitted Von Questenberg almost telling Max Piccolomini the truth about Wallenstein, but doing it in such a way as to inflame Max further, as Max refuses to see Wallenstein for what he really is. On this occasion, Coleridge's intention may have been to silence Von Questenberg, in order to retain Max's innocence regarding Wallenstein's impending treachery. Throughout, Coleridge emphasises Max's naivety and impulsive nature, reminiscent of his own youthful notions. It is interesting, bearing in mind that the trilogy was written by Schiller, and not Coleridge, that Max dies during the course of *Wallenstein's Death*, effectively drawing a permanent line under Coleridge's youthful revolutionary idealism. Coleridge may also have wanted to retain a sense of Wallenstein as enigma, by attempting to clarify the complexities of Schiller.

Coleridge also adapts the characterisations of Wallenstein and Max by placing more emphasis than Schiller on the loving relationship which they share, like that of father and son. This is evident in speeches such as that in *The Death of Wallenstein Act II Scene vi* (Mays: 2001v: 733: II:vi: 81-114) where Wallenstein reminds Max that when he was young, Wallenstein treated him as his own child, protecting him from the freezing German winters, wrapping him inside his own robes to keep warm. He also tells Max that the other soldiers were rewarded with ‘dignities and honours’ (ibid: 98), but Max was rewarded with Wallenstein’s love: ‘Thee have I *lov’d*: my heart, my self, I gave To thee!’ (ibid: 99-100). J. C. C. Mays notes that this passage, and the one following, both have ‘the lyrical charge of C[oleridge]’s own treatment of the feelings... of father for child.’ (ibid: 734: ffS122-34/ C103b–114a)

Octavio Piccolomini, in both translations, goes on to call his son Max a child of the war which has then been raging for fifteen years, and explains to him that war is not the only way to live. Max tells his father he wants the Emperor to make peace, not realising that this is what the Emperor is already trying to do, and that it is in fact Wallenstein who is prolonging the war. Max Piccolomini accuses Von Questenberg, and by extension, the Emperor, of prolonging the war:

You it is, you, stand in the way of peace!
It is the warrior who must force it on you.
You make the Prince’s life a burden, make
His every step a trouble, paint him black... (Schiller: 1979: 238)

Coleridge’s translation here is again noticeably longer, or more ‘dilated’ than Lamport’s, and uses a much more ancient language construction:

‘Tis ye that hinder peace, *ye!* – and the warrior,
It is the warrior that must force it from you.
Ye fret the General’s life out, blacken him,
Hold him up as a rebel, and Heaven knows
What else still worse ... (Mays: 2001v: 259-261: I: iv: 166-170)

The final characterisation of Coleridge’s that I discuss is that of Octavio Piccolomini. If Max can be seen as a representation of Coleridge’s young, radical, pro-revolutionary self, Octavio can be viewed as a representation of the slightly older, more cautious, pro-monarchy Coleridge. Joyce Crick states:

Max's idealistic flights and their counterpart, Octavio's conservative realism, represented by F[riedrich] S[chiller] each in their own tragically conflicting integrity, both touch a nerve in C[oleridge]. Max becomes the repository of C[oleridge]'s romanticism... But equally, C[oleridge] seems to be anticipating his own later political views, trying them out 'without prejudice', as the lawyers say, in the dignified language he gives to Octavio's conservatism. (ibid: 944)

The beliefs which Coleridge was starting to espouse around 1800 following the failure of the French Revolution were more conservative, and more accepting of the status quo, and more realistically analytical of his place within it. These are all qualities evident in Coleridge's characterisation of Octavio Piccolomini. Therefore, throughout *The Piccolomini*, the clashes between father and son can be viewed as representative of the flux of Coleridge's beliefs at this point in his life, as his youthful revolutionary politics started to be replaced by more conservative politics, in support of state and monarchy. As stated earlier, the *Wallenstein* trilogy was the perfect place for Coleridge to safely work on the articulation of his changing politics, without the fear of critical ridicule or censure before his ideas were completely formed. The effect of this safe space was increased by the character of Wallenstein being the focus of attention. Coleridge was able to adapt the characterisations of the two lesser, but still very important, Piccolomini characters to become vehicles for his own political views, past and future. Indeed, it has become clear from this discussion of Coleridge's translation of Schiller, that throughout the *Wallenstein* trilogy he was exploring the relationship between politics and religion at a very personal level.

CHAPTER FOUR: COLERIDGE'S INFLUENCE ON MARY SHELLEY'S LITERARY LIFE

'Why do I write my melancholy story?' (Shelley: 1873: 209)

Introduction

My thesis as a whole has considered the expression of Coleridge's changing political and religious opinions through a selection of his early published works. This final chapter concentrates on the influence which his works and opinions had on the works of second generation Romantics. I focus mainly on the novels of Mary Shelley, as an example of the work of this second generation, as they represent an area of later Romanticism which remains disproportionately under-studied. Esther Schor states:

For most students, Mary Shelley is either represented by a single work [*Frankenstein*] or read in relation to Percy Bysshe Shelley, Byron, and the so-called Satanic school of British Romanticism... however... Mary Shelley [can be read] on her own account as a figure who survived all manner of upheaval, personal, political, and professional, to produce an oeuvre of bracing intelligence and wide cultural sweep. (Schor: 2003: 2)

The main texts which I consider in this chapter are Mary Shelley's early works *Frankenstein* (1818), *Mathilda* (1819), *Valperga* (1823), *The Last Man* (1826), and the later short story *The Mortal Immortal* (1833).

Many of Mary Shelley's novels depict dissatisfaction with the political Establishment in the last decades of the Eighteenth Century, and the opening decades of the Nineteenth Century. Her religious and political beliefs remain central to her works. It is possible that this dissatisfaction was part of her inheritance as a second-generation Romantic. For the first generation of Romantic Poets, including Coleridge and Wordsworth, age had progressively tempered their youthful pro-revolutionary political views. Mary Shelley shared with Byron and Shelley a sense of disjunction, disunion and disillusion which came with the failure of the French Revolution and the following social and political fall-out, as well as the increasing conservatism of the previous generation. As Betty T. Bennett states:

The conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars... brought unemployment, inflation, and socio-political upheaval, the very antithesis of the dreams of the early 1790s. (Bennett: 1998: 5)

Many of Mary Shelley's novels reveal the fragmentation and disintegration of the family, both as a comment on her personal domestic situation, and of family as a microcosm of society as a whole. Her writings also contain many gothic elements, with reference to religious themes and issues. Like the other Romantics, this is a displacement activity for commentary on the political issues of the day. Betty T. Bennett notes:

Mary Shelley's contemporary reviewers, however, considered politics a male topic and thus failed to evaluate her novels with this key in mind. (ibid: 3)

In Mary Shelley's case, this displacement took on an increased importance, as it was unseemly for women to become involved in politics in the early Nineteenth-Century. She had also acquired more than enough notoriety, due to her elopement with Shelley and her half-sister Jane (later known as Claire) Clairmont.

This chapter explores the disillusion of Mary Shelley as revealed in her (published) works. I consider how the works of Mary Shelley, as representative of the second generation of Romantics, were influenced by the unresolved disillusion and disappointment of the first generation, represented by Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth. Like Coleridge, Mary Shelley spent much of her literary career searching for her own voice in relation to a creative agenda dominated by a need to reconcile politics and religion, and attempting to emerge from the oppressive shadow, first of her literary parents Mary Wollstonecraft and William Godwin, and later, from that of her husband Shelley, and Byron. This is discussed later in the chapter.

Mary Shelley's career can be divided into two distinct halves, in a similar way to Coleridge's. The first phase of Coleridge's literary life is known as his 'Great Decade', the period from 1797-1807 when Coleridge wrote his greatest poetry, including amongst others, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, *Christabel*, and *Kubla Khan*. This was the time of Coleridge's politically radical youth, and the focus of Chapters One and Two of my thesis. In the latter phase of his career, Coleridge focussed more on his prose works, and this coincided with his later more conservative political stance. During Coleridge's 'Great Decade' he struggled perpetually against poverty, desperate to feed his increasing family. In a letter to the Reverend John Edwards of March 20, 1796, Coleridge states:

My wife, my wife's Mother and little Brother, and George Burnet – five mouths opening & shutting as I pull the string! (Griggs: 1956i: 192: 112).

He eventually, grudgingly, resorted to writing copy for newspapers including the *Morning Post* and the *Courier*; as Coleridge states in various letters of the time, such as the letter to Tom Poole of 4 July 1796: ‘those two Giants, yclept Bread & Cheese, bend me into compliance...’ (ibid: 227, 135)

Unlike Coleridge, the second half of Mary Shelley’s career was the time of her greatest financial need, when she resorted to writing for hire. The progress of her literary life was delineated by the death of Shelley. As Tilottama Rajan has noted:

Her career is generally seen as falling into two phases, divided by the death of Percy and coinciding with a shift from Romanticism to the pre-Victorian 1830’s. (Shelley: 1998: 11)

In her early life with Shelley, Mary Shelley’s writings demonstrated her quest for literary independence, and the development of her gradual intellectual escape from the political and literary influences of her family and close friends, to the point where she began to make her own name as a writer. Following Shelley’s death in 1822, a period of transition ensued. Mary Shelley’s writings took on a more pressing urgency and purpose, that of providing financially for herself and her surviving young son, Percy Florence. The years surrounding the production of *Valperga* (1823) and *The Last Man* (1826) were emotionally intense ones. *Valperga* was begun in 1820, and completed the following year. Mary Shelley miscarried in June 1822, followed immediately by the death of her husband a month later. *Valperga* was published in February 1823; Mary Shelley returned to England with Percy Florence that May. *The Last Man* was begun in 1824, and published in 1826. In Mary Shelley’s fictional Introduction to *The Last Man*, she outlines the real reasons for the composition of the novel:

My labours have cheered long hours of solitude, and taken me out of a world, which has averted its once benignant face from me, to one glowing with imagination and power. Will my readers ask how I could find solace from the narration of misery and woeful change? This is one of the mysteries of our nature, which holds full sway over me, and from whose influence I cannot escape. I confess, that I have not been unmoved by the development of the tale; and that I have been depressed, nay, agonized, at some parts of the recital, which I have faithfully transcribed from my materials. Yet such is human nature, that the excitement of mind was dear to me, and that the imagination, painter of tempest and earthquake, or, worse, the stormy and ruin-fraught passions of man, softened my real sorrows and endless regrets, by clothing these fictitious ones in that ideality, which takes the mortal sting from pain. (Shelley: 2008: 7)

Mary Shelley clearly states here that, for her, the purpose of writing fiction is escapism from the misery of her every-day existence.

If the legacy of Romanticism could be said to have driven Mary Shelley to her adolescent excesses, then publication of *The Last Man* marks its final flush, the point at which the necessity of making a living out of composition began to seriously compete with her fictional writing. Mary Shelley's circumstances had not only changed following the death of Shelley, her views had, of necessity, also become more conventional. Her continued attempts to provide for herself and her son through her literary endeavours included writing short stories for publications such as *The Keepsake* (1828-1857), and biographical essays entitled *Lives of the Most Eminent Literary and Scientific Men of Italy, Spain and Portugal* (three volumes, 1835–37) and *Lives of the Most Eminent Literary and Scientific Men of France* (two volumes, 1838–39) for inclusion in Dionysius Lardner's *Cabinet Cyclopaedia* (1829-46), amongst others.

As a result of the need to prioritise her writings in order to earn money from them, Mary Shelley wrote only two further novels in this second phase of her life. Her last novel, *Falkner* (1837), was published sixteen years before her death at the age of fifty-six. As early as 1824 Mary Shelley herself was very much aware of this division of her literary life. As she stated in her journal entry of January 18 for that year:

I was worth something then in the catalogue of beings. I could have written something, been something. Now I am exiled... writing has become a task; my studies irksome; my life dreary... (Marshall: 1889: 104-5)

Another similarity between Mary Shelley and Coleridge is that both strove for years to consciously write a *magnum opus*. Mary Shelley believed hers was *Valperga* (1826), and Coleridge believed he had never written his. For both writers, this goal was actually reached, unconsciously, in their youths, with the writing of *Frankenstein* (1818) and *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1798) respectively.

Formative Years: Influence and Reciprocal Grief

As with Coleridge in previous chapters, this chapter focuses mainly on the formative first half of Mary Shelley's life and literary career. Up until her return to England in 1823, Mary Shelley's works were mainly fiction (novels and short stories) with the

exception of works such as *History of a Six Weeks' Tour* (1817), and her dramatic poems *Proserpine* (1820) and *Midas* (1820). During her time overseas, she also wrote many letters and began a journal jointly with her husband, although very quickly this became Mary Shelley's task alone.

Despite being the daughter of two formerly prominent and vocal advocates for the reform of girls education, Mary Shelley was not taught according to the educational theories of her parents, with William Godwin offering the rather lame excuse that he had very little time to both devise and implement the educational system, as he was busy providing for his quickly expanding family. His son and stepson were sent away for formal schooling, as were his daughter and step-daughters when the family could afford it. Mary Shelley was sent away to school only once, after which, Betty T. Bennett surmises, Godwin decided that his exceptional daughter could be taught no more under the educational system of the time:

Perhaps Mary Shelley's experience at Miss Petman's [school] convinced Godwin that his gifted daughter had already surpassed the limited education girls' schools offered, because she received no further formal schooling. (Bennett: 1998: 16)

The children's limited formal education was supplemented by visits to the theatre and lectures in London, as well as visits to their home by eminent literary people, including Robert Southey, Charles and Mary Lamb, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. The children were not encouraged to leave the room when these visits took place, as William Godwin regarded it as an indispensable part of their education. The influence of such eminent guests on Mary Shelley's future literary output is discussed later in the chapter.

Coleridge's works went on to become a great influence on the writings of the adult Mary Shelley. Coleridge's avuncular nature also enabled him to become an emotional crutch for Mary Shelley on her return to England following the untimely death of her husband, as Coleridge reminded her of Shelley. For Mary Shelley, Coleridge's great genius, and intellectual and physical presence was comparable to that of Shelley, and proof that his spirit lived on. Richard Holmes notes:

When Mary returned to London after [Shelley's] death in 1822, she was anxious to meet Coleridge personally, regarding him in some strange way as the spiritual

link with her drowned husband. It was the disasters and aberrations of Coleridge's life which authenticated him and linked him to the Shelleys. (Holmes: 1999ii: 455-6)

She explicitly states this in her journal, following a meeting with Coleridge in January 1824:

I know some clever men, in whose conversation I delight, but this is rare, like angels' visits... Seeing Coleridge last night reminded me forcibly of past times; his beautiful descriptions reminded me of Shelley's conversations. Such was the intercourse I once daily enjoyed, added to... a wild picturesque mode of living that suited my active spirit... (Marshall: 1889: 105)

It seemed that the recognition of the similarities between the two poets, and the need to reach out emotionally, was reciprocal. Several years later, Coleridge expressed his regret at never meeting Shelley:

'Poor Shelley,' he confided to John Frere in 1830, 'it is a pity... that I never met him. I could have done him some good... I should have laughed at his Atheism. I could have sympathised with him, and shown him that I did so, and he would have felt that I did so. I could have shown him that I had been in the same state myself, and I could have guided him through it. I have often regretted in my heart that I never did meet with Shelley.' In this interview, not published until 1917, Coleridge added an acute general comment on Shelley's predicament as he had seen it unfolding. 'Shelley was a man of great power as a poet,' he told Frere, 'and could he only have had some notion of order, could you only have given him some plane whereon to stand, and look down upon his mind, he would have succeeded.' (Holmes: 1976: 94)

Many of Coleridge's supporters and critics over the years had felt exactly the same way about Coleridge.

This need for emotional contact was as great for Coleridge as it was for Mary Shelley. Her presence provided him with a lasting link to the rapidly expiring youthful second-generation Romantics, many of whom Coleridge was destined to outlive. In addition to his regret at having never met Shelley, Coleridge was also devastated by the untimely death of Byron, whom he had known, and who had been instrumental in bringing *Christabel* to publication, finally, in 1816. As he saw Byron's funeral cortege ascending Highgate Hill, Coleridge was moved to deliver a spontaneous eulogy:

...Byron's literary merits would seem continually to rise, while his personal errors, if not denied, or altogether forgotten, would be little noticed, & would be treated with ever softening gentleness. (Griggs: 1971: 207: ff)

Contemporary World Events

Compared with the revolutionary years of Coleridge's youth, the world was a very different place during Mary Shelley's formative years. The French Revolutionary wars had given way to the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815), and for a time it looked as if Napoleon would successfully conquer Europe. Following Napoleon's exile to Elba in 1814, the Congress of Vienna began to address the political and geographical issues arising from the French Revolutionary Wars, the Napoleonic Wars, and the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire.

Closer to home, the Acts of Union (1801) had united the Kingdom of Great Britain and the Kingdom of Ireland to create the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. 1801 was also the year of the first British census, which showed that 1.5m people (17.5% of the population) lived in cities of 20,000 people or more, indicating that the first phase of the mass industrialisation occasioned by the Industrial Revolution was well under way in Britain:

At the beginning of the 1770s about a quarter of the population of England and Wales and less than a fifth of the population of Scotland lived in urban communities. By 1801 the proportions had risen to over a third and more than a fifth; forty years later, to almost a half and around a third. In the 1750s London and Edinburgh were the only towns in Britain with more than 50,000 inhabitants. By 1801 the number of such places had risen to eight and by 1841 to twenty-six. (McCalman: 1999: 655)

In November 1811, Luddite uprisings began in Northern England. These were defended by Byron on 27 February 1812 in his first address as a member of the House of Lords, when he spoke in defence of Luddite violence against industrialism in his home county of Nottinghamshire:

Byron opposed the Tory Framework Bill, commonly known as the 'Frame-breaking Bill', then being given its second reading in the House... The Bill sought to make the Luddite destruction of these frames, an increasing local problem, a capital offence.

In arguing the case for a more humane approach towards the rioters Byron was taking up a cause very close to home. (MacCarthy: 2002: 155)

Additionally, on 25 March 1807 the Slave Trade Act became law, abolishing the slave trade in the British Empire. In February 1811, Prince George, the Prince of Wales,

became Prince Regent as a result of the perceived insanity of George III, beginning the period known as the Regency:

Constitutionally, the Regency represents the period from 1811 until 1820, when George III's lapse into permanent insanity forced parliament to sanction the rule of his oldest son George, Prince of Wales, as Regent. Though technically the Regency ended in 1820 when, on George III's death, his son was crowned King George IV, it has come to be associated more generally with the early decades of the nineteenth century when the personal scandals, fashionable lifestyles, and artistic tastes of George IV and his brothers were in the ascendant. (ibid: 671)

Further afield, the Louisiana Purchase was completed and ratified in 1803, doubling the size of the United States of America. America declared war on Britain in June 1812, for a variety of reasons, including trade restrictions which had been imposed on America due to the on-going British war with France, and the pressing of American merchant sailors into the Royal Navy. The War of 1812 was formally concluded by the Treaty of Ghent, signed on 24 December 1814 (Dunan: 1987: 290), but practically concluded in January 1815, with the triumph of General Jackson (later the 7th President of the United States) over the British at the Battle of New Orleans:

The war was brought to a close by the Treaty of Ghent which provided for the cessation of hostilities, the restoration of conquests, and a commission to settle boundary disputes. The dramatic victory Andrew Jackson won at New Orleans over a strong British force came after the peace treaty had been signed but before this was known in America. (Olson: 1990: 60)

This period of political upheaval coincided with a period of considerable volcanic and seismic activity, almost as if the natural world was mimicking the events of the political world. There was a worldwide series of earthquakes; some were relatively minor, but others were unprecedented, such as the Caracas earthquake on 25 March 1812, an estimated 7.7 on the Richter scale, which left an estimated 15 000 – 20 000 people dead. In addition, several major volcanic eruptions in the preceding years culminated with the catastrophic eruption of Mount Tambora in Indonesia, from 5-12 April 1815, creating the 'year without a summer' in 1816:

Aerosols [sulphide gas compounds] from the Tambora eruption blocked out sunlight and reduced global temperatures by 3 degrees C[entigrade]. Ten thousand were killed immediately from the pyroclastic flows [fast-moving current of hot gas and rock] and the eventual toll due to starvation and disease may have been as high as 117 000... The eruption of Tambora volcano in 1815 is one of the largest explosive events in the World in the last 10,000 years... The eruption... commenced on 5th April 1815... The main twenty-four hour-long

paroxysm occurred on 10 April 1815... The sky remained dark for 1-2 days up to 600km from the volcano... (<http://www.volcanolive.com/tambora.html>)

Mary Shelley was later to feature an earthquake as an Act of God, causing the untimely death of Lord Raymond, the anti-hero in *The Last Man* (1826). Also in the framing Introduction dated 1818, although actually written later, she notes that ‘...the whole of this land had been... convulsed by earthquake and volcano...’ (Shelley: 2008: 5). Additionally, in *Frankenstein* (1818), Victor Frankenstein’s violent narration of the final instalment of his tale to Robert Walton, the ship’s captain, is described in the following terms:

Sometimes he commanded his countenance and tones and related the most horrible incidents with a tranquil voice, suppressing every mark of agitation; then, like a volcano bursting forth, his face would suddenly change to an expression of the wildest rage as he shrieked out imprecations on his persecutor. (Shelley: 1994: 202).

Byron also drew on the strange weather in *Darkness* (1816), a gothic exploration of apocalypse, written at the Villa Diodati in the company of Percy and Mary Shelley, Mary’s half-sister Claire Clairmont, and Dr John Polidori:

Morn came and went – and came, and brought no day...
Happy were those who dwelt within the eye
Of the volcanos, and their mountain-torch...
... others... look’d up
With mad disquietude on the dull sky,
The pall of a past world... (Byron: 1994: 93: 6-30)

The unusual weather conditions of 1816 also make an appearance in Shelley’s *The Revolt of Islam* (1817), in the form of pathetic fallacy:

...one blast of muttering thunder
Burst in far peals along the waveless deep,
When, gathering fast, around, above, and under,
Long trains of tremulous mist began to creep,
Until their complicating lines did steep
The orient sun in shadow: - not a sound
Was heard; one horrible repose did keep
The forests and the floods, and all around
Darkness more dread than night was poured upon the ground. (Shelley, PB: 1994: 57: I: II)

Shelley equates the darkness and drop in temperature with the political and societal darkness occasioned by the failure of the French Revolution to illuminate and ignite the

people of the world, as it had promised. Mary Shelley also based some of her later works, such as *Valperga* (1823) and *The Last Man* (1826) on the political and social fallout of the failure of the French Revolution. This is discussed in more depth later in the chapter. Additionally, throughout the above-mentioned texts, both Percy and Mary Shelley use and echo many phrases from Coleridge's various poems including *The Rime of The Ancient Mariner*, *Christabel* and *Kubla Khan*. Mary and Percy Shelley and Byron were great admirers of the works of Coleridge, amongst other writers. It could be said that the three worshipped false idols, in the sense that for all of them, study and engagement with the previous Romantic generation addressed a need, the equivalent of which for Coleridge was the belief in an all-encompassing religious spirit.

The weather conditions of the summer of 1816 conspired to keep Byron and the Shelleys housebound in the Villa Diodati, Byron's rented house. As Mary Shelley commented in the 1831 Introduction to *Frankenstein*: '...it proved a wet, ungenial summer, and incessant rain often confined us for days to the house' (Shelley: 1994: 6). The stormy night of 18 July 1816 provided the setting for the ghost story-writing competition, during which the seeds were sown for the composition of *Frankenstein* (1818); the catalyst was provided by Byron's recital of Coleridge's *Christabel* (1816), which he had been instrumental in finally bringing to publication in May of that year. The effect on Shelley was electric, as Dr Polidori described in his Journal entry for 18 June 1816:

L[ord] B[yron] repeated some verses of Coleridge's *Christabel*, of the witch's breast; when silence ensued, and Shelley, suddenly shrieking and putting his hands to his head, ran out of the room with a candle... He was looking at Mrs. S[helley], and suddenly thought of a woman he had heard of who had eyes instead of nipples, which, taking hold of his mind, horrified him. (Rossetti: 1911: 128)

Mary Shelley's later work, *On Ghosts* (1824), corroborated the above story that Shelley, like Coleridge, saw 'phantoms' and experienced 'night horrors':

I have heard that when C[oleridge] was asked if he believed in ghosts, - he replied that he had seen too many to put any trust in their reality; and the person of the most lively imagination that I ever knew [Percy Shelley] echoed this reply. But these were not real ghosts (pardon, unbelievers, my mode of speech) that they saw; they were shadows, phantoms unreal; that while they appalled the senses, yet carried no other feeling to the mind of others than delusion, and were viewed as we might view an optical deception which we see to be true with our eyes, and know to be false with our understandings. I speak of other shapes... whose cold unearthly touch makes the hair stand stark upon the head; the true

old-fashioned, foretelling, flitting, gliding ghost, - who has seen such a one?
(Breen: 1996: 222-3)

Coleridge's Influence on the Second Generation Romantics

From their youth, and in the months and years leading up to this night at the Villa Diodati, both Percy and Mary Shelley had been greatly influenced by Coleridge's works, gently steering them down the path that their adult works would take. For Mary Shelley, an appreciation of Coleridge's works had formed part of her unconventional education. As mentioned above, Coleridge was just one of the eminent literati who frequently graced the Godwins' home when she was a child:

...literary giants, Godwin himself, Sheridan, Thomas Moore, Lamb, Southey, all passing through the living-room; Samuel Taylor Coleridge would sit there reading from *The Ancient Mariner*, a poem destined to live with Mary for the rest of her life... (Williams: 2000: 21)

Her father, William Godwin, and Coleridge were correspondents. In his letters, Coleridge indicated that he thought Mary was a positive influence on Godwin, and invited Godwin and his children (Mary Shelley was then aged 14) to attend his 1811-12 Lectures on Shakespeare, stating that the children might 'receive amusement' (Griggs: 1959: 346: 840). What is unclear is whether Coleridge believed Godwin to be right when he wrote to Coleridge about Mary's precocious intellectual abilities.

The story of Shelley, Mary Shelley, and her step-sister Claire Clairmont running away together to the continent in 1814 is extremely well-known, so it is not my intention to repeat it here. What is perhaps less certain is Mary Shelley's understanding of how they would live in Europe. She shared Shelley's view that marriage was not a necessity, but it is unclear whether she realised that Shelley expected her to share him with her step-sister, a relationship as distasteful as incest, something also practiced by Byron. The love-triangle must also have been complicated by the fact that despite being step-sisters, the two women did not get along with each other terribly well, and both resented sharing Shelley. It is interesting to consider whether Mary Shelley viewed her elopement to the Continent with Shelley as a positive move (in the same way that Coleridge had expected Pantisocracy to be), or the lesser of two evils. Her disillusion regarding her relationship with Shelley had possibly set in before she left England, but elopement may have

seemed preferable to remaining at home in constant conflict with her step-mother, and increasingly with her father.

Shelley's inspiration to create a radical commune was born from the failed Pantisocracy of Coleridge and Robert Southey, which I discussed in Chapter One. Coleridge's projected Pantisocracy was founded on the basis of Christian marriage, where the children were to be raised within that marriage according to the values of their parents; Shelley's commune was to be founded on free love. Everything was to be held in common, including property, money, sexual partners and children. This was theoretically possible, as was Coleridge and Southey's Pantisocracy. It became more difficult to achieve in practice when children and emotions became involved; indeed, Coleridge and Southey's proposed Pantisocracy never got this far. Mary Shelley discovered this to her cost on both of these counts.

As well as the deaths of two of the Shelleys' children, William and Clara, whilst the family was travelling across Italy in 1818 and 1819, another major tragedy of the Shelley/Byron/Clairmont commune was that of the short life of baby Elena Adelaide, which caused intense emotional upheaval for Mary Shelley. Between the deaths of Clara and William Shelley, Elena Adelaide mysteriously appeared in the commune; everyone else seemed to know who her parents were, but this information was kept from Mary Shelley. John Williams states:

Between them, Shelley, his servant Paolo Foggi, Elise and Claire, knew the answer to the origin of Elena, but it was treated as a mystery, and Mary was left to guess at what had gone on. (Williams: 2000: 66)

The final insult, and an additional cause of her emotional estrangement from her husband, occurred when Shelley registered the birth of the child, naming Mary Shelley as her mother without Mary's knowledge or consent. Richard Holmes explains:

The documents in the state archive... state that Elena's mother was Mary Godwin Shelley. This was patently a falsification on Shelley's part, for otherwise the child would never have been left in Naples, and there would be no mystery and no blackmail. Moreover, there is no mention of Elena in any of Mary's letters or journal at this or any other time, and one cannot be certain that she knew about the baby's existence until... June 1820... Elena... was by then dead. (Holmes: 1976: 466-7)

The true origins of Elena Adelaide were not discussed with Mary Shelley, at least not until the child was dead, if at all. This may have been the final straw for the remnants of any honest, trusting relationship which existed between Mary and Shelley. Coleridge would have attributed the failure of the commune to the Shelleys' lack of religious belief, and their failure to instil these values into their children.

The following year, however, Mary Shelley's religious views seem to have undergone a revolutionary change, as she records in her journal that she has begun attending church: 'Sunday, December 9 [1821]. – Go to church at Dr Nott's.' (Marshall: 1889: 319), and 'Sunday, March 3 [1822]. – A note to, and a visit from, Dr Nott. Go to church.' (ibid: 327). This was such an unusual occurrence, that Mrs Julian Marshall felt the need to remark on it in her commentary upon Mary Shelley's Journals:

Mary's experiments in the way of church-going, so new a thing in her experience, and so little in accordance with Shelley's habits of thought and action, excited some surprise and comment. Hogg... who heard of it from Mrs Gisborne, now in England, was especially shocked. In a letter to Mary, Mrs Gisborne remarked, 'Your friend Hogg is *molto scandalizzato* to hear of your weekly visits...' (ibid: 327-8)

Mary Shelley's sudden interest in church-going may also have been an additional pointer towards the fraught state of her relationship with Shelley, and an indication of their emotional distancing from each other. Church-going was in direct conflict with Shelley's atheism, whatever Mary Shelley's reasons for attending church.

Despite the often difficult and stressful living conditions created by life both in the commune and constantly on the move, paradoxically, Mary Shelley was provided with everything she needed to be able to embark upon her expected literary career. For the first time in her life, she had an excellent tutor in the form of Shelley, who tutored her in everything from his atheistic and political beliefs, to the art of composition itself, including the correct use of grammar:

My husband... was from the first very anxious that I should prove myself worthy of my parentage and enrol myself on the page of fame. He was forever inciting me to obtain literary reputation, which even on my own part I cared for then... (Shelley: 1994i: 6)

She learned a great deal more from her employment copying out the works of both Shelley and Byron, and also from hearing their discussions of the major issues of the day, which included politics, and scientific advances:

Many and long were the conversations between Lord Byron and Shelley, to which I was a devout but nearly silent listener. During one of these, various philosophical doctrines were discussed, and among others the nature of the principle of life, and whether there was any probability of its ever being discovered. They talked of the experiments of Dr Darwin... who preserved a piece of vermicelli in a glass case till by some extraordinary means it began to move with voluntary motion. (ibid: 8)

A major difference between Coleridge and Mary Shelley at these respective turning points in their lives was the way in which their works discussed the idea of living in a commune. As discussed in the first chapter, Coleridge's works of this time, both poetry and prose, generally focussed on the current revolutionary political situation. The *Wallenstein* trilogy is an exception to this, as the action was set during the Thirty Years War, but actually described the political events of the French Revolution. Some of Mary Shelley's works describe the frenzied political status quo and social upheaval following the French Revolution, but removed to a different geographical location, such as *Frankenstein* (1818) for example, which is largely set in Geneva and Ingolstadt; *Valperga* (1823), a later work, projects these events on to the fifteenth-Century Italian conflict between the Guelphs and the Ghibellines; and *The Last Man* (1826) describes an imagined dystopian, post-revolutionary future. This is discussed more fully later in the chapter.

Coleridge specifically identified his subjects in his early works, such as in the *Sonnets on Eminent Characters* (1794-5); Mary Shelley was not so specific. The majority of her works were recognised as *Roman à clefs*, where the reader was left to uncover the true identity of many of her characters, who were based on real people known to Mary Shelley. To give just a few examples, Mary Shelley herself appears variously in her own works in the guise of Elizabeth Lavenza (*Frankenstein*, 1818), Mathilda (*Mathilda*, 1819), Lionel Verney (*The Last Man*, 1826); Shelley appears as Adrian (*The Last Man*), Woodville (*Mathilda*) and Victor Frankenstein (*Frankenstein*); and Byron appears as Lord Raymond (*The Last Man*). Unlike Coleridge, who in his early works aimed to examine the world political situation as it actually stood, Mary Shelley in her works

preferred to reflect the macrocosm within the microcosm of the family or commune. As Betty T. Bennett states:

[Mary Shelley] believed that the socio-political iniquities of the larger society were mirrored within the family and the individual. She delineates this thesis by invariably coalescing the private and the public. (Bennett: 1998: 3)

Percy Shelley's belief in how society should evolve was based on rational, Godwinian principles, and inspired by the genesis of the French Revolution and its commitment to equality, democracy, free speech and freedom of the individual. He educated Mary Shelley into these beliefs, along with those which had been held by her father, William Godwin, in his youth. Godwin came from the philosophical tradition of Radicalism, as opposed to Tom Paine, who represented the physical tradition. Godwin's great work, *Political Justice* (1793) was a philosophical abstraction, more subversive than Paine's *The Rights of Man* (1791).

Shelley's commune was to be pacifist, intended to provide an alternative to the established political regime, rather than to topple it; it was to be, as John Williams states:

[a] circle that professed a radically enlightened rejection of eighteenth-century political and social systems and institutions... an alternative society. (Williams: 2000: 45)

Shelley illustrates this concept in *The Revolt of Islam* (1817), written in the commune whilst in self-imposed exile in Italy in 1816-1817. In the preface, he states that the poem will consider:

...the awakening of an immense nation from their slavery and degradation to a true sense of moral dignity and freedom; the bloodless dethronement of their oppressors, and the unveiling of religious frauds by which they had been deluded into submission... (Shelley, PB: 1994: 49-50)

Coleridge's plan for Pantisocracy, as discussed in the first chapter, had been to establish it in the New World, to enable the children of Pantisocracy to be brought up free from the social and political constraints of the Old World. Percy and Mary Shelley, however, chose to retreat further into the Old World, into the heart of continental Europe, visiting France first in 1814 after running away together with Claire Clairmont. One interesting difference here between the intentions of Mary and Percy Shelley, and Coleridge and Southey, is that Pantisocracy was given up, more or less, as soon as Coleridge and

Southey's respective families found out about the proposal. For the Shelleys and Claire Clairmont, exactly the opposite was true. The fact that Claire's mother and Mary's step-mother, Mary-Jane Godwin, was prepared to pursue her errant daughters all the way to Calais to persuade them to change their minds only spurred Mary, Claire and Shelley on to further disobedience.

Mary Shelley and Manifestations of Ahasuerus

In Chapter Two, I considered the icons and archetypes which populated Coleridge's early works. One of the most frequently appearing was the persona of Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew, who also appeared in Shelley's *Hellas* (1821) as a sage. The figure of the Wanderer is also a stock character in the works of the second-generation Romantics, notably Mary and Percy Shelley, and Byron. The notion of the peripatetic story-telling social outcast was something which all three could readily identify with.

As stated previously, one of Coleridge's greatest personifications of the Wanderer was the ancient mariner. Both Mary and Percy Shelley were fascinated by *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, and the poem remained with both of them throughout their lives, perhaps as much so as with Coleridge himself. With regard to Shelley's adolescent obsession with the Wanderer, Richard Holmes notes:

...in his last term at Eton... he had also developed the eccentricity of muttering bits of... Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* under his breath... (Holmes: 1976: 30)

and

The months before Oxford saw a burst of literary publications (including) ... a verse melodrama *The Wandering Jew*... [which] did not appear in book form until the Shelley Society solemnly brought it forth in 1887. (ibid: 31)

Mary Shelley's fascination with this nebulous archetypal figure also appears throughout her literary works, as in Coleridge's works before; it is particularly well-documented in her first novel, *Frankenstein* (1818), and many years later in her short story, *The Mortal Immortal: A Tale* (1833), written originally for inclusion in *The Keepsake* for 1834.

Both texts refer to Coleridge's works directly and indirectly. For instance, in *The Mortal Immortal*, Winzy describes himself in the following terms:

A sailor without rudder or compass, tossed on a stormy sea - a traveller

lost on a wide-spread heath, without landmark or star to guide him - such have I been: more lost, more hopeless than either. A nearing ship, a gleam from some far cot, may save them; but I have no beacon except the hope of death. (Bennett and Robinson: 1990: 324)

What Bennett and Robinson do not indicate is that this one short quotation clearly demonstrates the influence of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, *Dejection: An Ode*, and even a 1796 letter from Coleridge to John Thelwall⁵. The above quotation is only one of many instances, too many to list, of Mary Shelley referencing Coleridge's works.

Frankenstein also references *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* several times, both directly and indirectly. As Louis James states:

The book is a palimpsest of subtexts, including the Bible, and works by Aeschylus, Milton, Coleridge and Shakespeare. Frankenstein approaches his quest to create life through reading Paracelsus, Cornelius Agrippa and Albertus Magnus. The Monster too, creates a selfconscious identity by its precocious browsing through Volney's *Ruins of Empire*, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Plutarch's *Lives*, Goethe's *Sorrows of Werther*... (Bann: 1994: 79)

Coleridge once described himself as a 'library-cormorant' (Griggs: 1956i: 260: 156). This was evidently a characteristic shared by Victor Frankenstein and the Creature, and also by their creator, Mary Shelley.

⁵ The 1798 version of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* contains the following verse:

...Storm and Wind,
A Wind and Tempest strong!
For days and weeks it play'd us freaks –
Like Chaff we drove along. (Mays: 2001i: 374: 161: 41.1-44.1)

Dejection: An Ode describes the terror of a young girl lost on a heath:

... a little child
Upon a lonesome wild,
Not far from home, but she hath lost her way:
And now moans low in bitter grief and fear,
And now screams loud, and hopes to make her mother hear. (Mays: 2001ii: 701-2: 121-5)

Coleridge's letter to John Thelwall of Tuesday 17 December, 1796, contains the phrase '...yet the Light shall stream to a far distance from the taper in my cottage window.' (Letters, 1895, 194). This letter also discusses Coleridge's ill-health, the proposed Pantisocracy, and invites Thelwall to join in with 'a little sparring about poetry' (Griggs: 1956i: 277: 164)

In *The Mortal Immortal*, the very first action that Winzy, the main character, undertakes in the story is to assure the reader that he is not the Wandering Jew, as he begins to relate his tale:

The Wandering Jew? - certainly not. More than eighteen centuries have passed over his head. In comparison with him I am a very young Immortal.

Am I, then, immortal? This is a question which I have asked myself, by day and night, for now three hundred and three years, and yet cannot answer it...

I will tell my story, and my reader shall judge for me. I will tell my story, and so contrive to pass some few hours of a long eternity, become so wearisome to me. (Bennett and Robinson: 1990: 314)

Despite his denials, as Winzy relates the story of his life thus far, he describes many of his characteristics and circumstances, which are also shared with the characters of Ahasuerus, and the ancient mariner. A note to the text helpfully points out how even Winzy's very name points to his true nature: 'winzy - derived from the Scottish term "winze", meaning curse: an appropriate name for the protagonist, who is cursed with eternal life.' (Jump: 1998: 83). Winzy is based on Godwin's wandering alchemist, the titular hero of *St Leon* (1799), who was also cursed with eternal life through alchemy.

In *Frankenstein*, Robert Walton, the ship's captain, is the first character to identify himself with the figure of Coleridge's ancient mariner:

... the Ancient Mariner... I have often attributed my attachment to, my passionate enthusiasm for, the dangerous mysteries of ocean to that production of the most imaginative of modern poets. (Shelley: 1994: 19-20)

However, Robert Walton, in some respects, is far from being an ancient mariner figure, and in fact more closely resembles that of the Wedding Guest, who 'cannot chuse but hear' (Mays: 2001i: 372: 161: 18). Right from the start of the novel, despite his apparent overwhelming Faustian thirst for knowledge displayed in his first three letters, Walton is portrayed as a very gentle, kind interpretation of Ahasuerus, giving food, shelter, medical aid and a sympathetic, if involuntary (accidental?), ear to Victor Frankenstein and subsequently to his Creature. Circumstantially, as Captain of the only ship for miles around, Walton has been selected as the audience for the tales of both: 'Thus has a week passed away, while I have listened to the strangest tale that ever imagination formed.' (Shelley: 1994: 203). Mary Shelley had already encountered a characterisation of the Wandering Jew in her father's novel, *St Leon* (1799).

Traits of the ancient mariner creep in when Walton makes his acquaintance with Victor Frankenstein, and begins to relay his strange tale to his sister, Margaret, through his letters:

So strange an accident has happened... that I cannot forbear recording it, although it is very probable that you will see me before these papers come into your possession. (ibid: 23)

They are exclusively addressed to her, and so presumably are not intended for the eyes of anyone else – ‘The Marinere hath his will’ (Mays: 2001i: 372: 161:16). Walton is not only compelled to hear what Victor has to say, but also to record it for posterity:

I have resolved every night, when I am not imperatively occupied by my duties, to record, as nearly as possible in his own words, what has related during the day. If I should be engaged, I will at least make notes. (Shelley: 1994: 29)

Along with Walton and the Creature, Victor shares the compulsion of Ahasuerus (and also the ancient mariner) to relate his story. As mentioned above, Victor selects his rescuer Walton as the auditor of his tale. Unlike the ancient mariner, Victor carefully explains to Walton his reasons for choosing him:

I do not know that the relation of my disasters will be useful to you; yet, when I reflect that you are pursuing the same course, exposing yourself to the same dangers which have rendered me what I am, I imagine that you may deduce an apt moral from my tale... nothing can alter my destiny; listen to my history, and you will perceive how irrevocably it is determined. (ibid: 28-9)

This is a stark warning from Victor to Walton, not to seek an excess of power or knowledge, by informing him of the consequences of this action. This warning comes directly from the ‘Modern Prometheus’ of the novel’s sub-title, urging Walton metaphorically not to steal the fire of the Gods. The protagonist in *Mathilda* (1819) also identifies herself as having a strange compulsion to tell her story, like the ancient mariner:

Perhaps a history such as mine had better die with me, but a feeling that I cannot define leads me on and I am too weak both in body and mind to resist the slightest impulse. (Bennett and Robinson: 1990: 175)

Frankenstein’s Creature is depicted as an innocent creature corrupted by society. He is similar to Ahasuerus in the sense that he is cursed and ostracised, both by his creator and by society at large. The Creature is born innocent, but turns to crime following his rejection by Victor Frankenstein. Bereft of paternal love, he learns to hate society as

much as he is hated by his creator. Like Ahasuerus, and also like Geraldine and Lamia discussed in earlier chapters, the Creature is marked, as he is hideously ugly, due to Victor concentrating more on the task itself than on the appearance of the finished living creature:

No mortal could support the horror of that countenance. A mummy again endued with animation could not be so hideous as that wretch. (Shelley: 1994: 56)

The Creature is much larger than a normal man, and therefore easily identifiable, as Ahasuerus is easily identifiable by the burning cross on his forehead. The Creature is different, in that his ugliness is not the mark of his own crime, but that of his Creator. It is also possible that the physical body of the Creature reflects his own incoherent rage and other negative emotions.

In *The Mortal Immortal*, Winzy also is eager to preserve his story for posterity:

...a miserable vanity has caused me to pen these pages. I would not die, and leave no name behind... if I survive, my name shall be recorded as one of the most famous among the sons of men; and, my task achieved. (Bennett and Robinson: 1990: 325-6)

The first event which Winzy relates is his crime. Instead of insulting Christ, or stealing fire from the Gods, or shooting the albatross, Winzy's crime is to expressly disobey the orders of his employer, the alchemist Cornelius Agrippa. Winzy is instructed to wake him up when Agrippa's potion begins to change colour, and not to consume it. Winzy describes the compulsion which overcame him:

...the vessel seemed one globe of living radiance, lovely to the eye, and most inviting to the taste. The first thought, instinctively inspired by the grosser sense, was, I will – I must drink. (ibid: 317)

The consumption of Agrippa's elixir of life gives Winzy eternal life, as it also did to St Leon. Like the Wandering Jew, Ahasuerus and the ancient mariner, Winzy eventually becomes a figure of suspicion because his wife, Bertha, ages, but he does not: 'I was regarded with horror and detestation.' (ibid: 322) Because of this, they are forced to remain constantly on the move:

It was a cruel thing to transport poor Bertha from her native village, and the friends of her youth, to a new country, new language, new customs. The strange secret of my destiny rendered this removal immaterial to me... (ibid: 323)

Winzy feels some guilt at the constant uprooting of his wife, but none for himself.

Frankenstein (1818) contains three wanderers; Robert Walton, Victor Frankenstein, and the Creature, all of whom take turns to narrate the action in the story as it unfolds, and all of whom could be considered to share characteristics with Ahasuerus. Robert Walton, the ship's Captain, identifies himself as a traveller and explorer in letters to his sister, Margaret W. Saville, otherwise 'MWS', another self-incarnation of Mary Shelley. However, Walton's journey is not profitless or aimless. His goal is to discover the fabled North-West Passage, a route to the North Pacific through Russia and the seas surrounding the North Pole.

The purpose of the Creature's wanderings, as soon as he learns the story of his own creation, is to seek out Victor, to ask more questions relating to his creation, secondly to request a bride, and thirdly to reduce Victor's life to the same miserable state as his own if he doesn't get satisfaction. In this sense, he is the opposite of Ahasuerus, as whilst Ahasuerus travels, he tells his story to the people he meets *en route*, the Creature has to travel at night, alone, and unable to seek advice or directions from anyone.

My travels were long and the sufferings I endured intense... I travelled only at night, fearful of encountering the visage of a human being. (Shelley: 1994: 134)

Victor Frankenstein is the audience to whom the Creature seeks to relate his tale. Victor is the one who 'cannot chuse but hear' (Mays: 2001i: 372: 161: 18), and who knows that he must grant audience to his Creature, as part of the penance for his own crime, that of having usurped God by creating a living being.

Unlike the wanderings of Ahasuerus, who is 'not permitted to pass more than fourteen days on the same spot' (Lewis: 1994: 274), the wanderings of Victor Frankenstein also have a purpose. Towards the end of *Frankenstein*, Victor travels to seek the knowledge and materials to build his Creature a bride, in return for which the Creature has promised to leave him, and his family, in peace. In *The Mortal Immortal*, Winzy shares the Creature's desire to spend eternity with one of his own kind:

Thus I have lived on for many a year - alone, and weary of myself - desirous of death, yet never dying - a mortal immortal. Neither ambition nor avarice can enter my mind, and the ardent love that gnaws at my heart never to be returned- never to find an equal on which to expend itself - lives there only to torment me. (Bennett and Robinson: 1990: 325)

On catching sight of the Creature watching him working on the construction of the female creature, Victor Frankenstein comes to his senses, and realises that he must not continue with his second creation:

As I looked on him, his countenance expressed the utmost extent of malice and treachery. I thought with a sensation of madness on my promise of creating another like to him, and trembling with passion, tore to pieces the thing on which I was engaged. The wretch saw me destroy the creature on whose future existence he depended for happiness, and with a howl of devilish despair and revenge, withdrew. (Shelley: 1994: 161)

Victor's destruction of the female Creature was a declaration of war, and as a result, Victor spends the rest of his life fleeing from the wrath of his Creature. Unlike Ahasuerus, and possibly the Creature, Victor is not doomed to eternal suffering, as he dies on board Walton's ship, prematurely aged by his experiences. At the end of *Frankenstein*, the reader is left wondering whether the Creature is in fact dead, or whether, like Ahasuerus, he may be immortal, as Mary Shelley is not specific on this point, stating only: 'He was soon borne away by the waves and lost to darkness and distance.' (ibid: 215)

Many of Mary Shelley's works reveal a keen interest in the emergence of science. Coleridge was also interested in science, but for him, its existence was further proof, if proof were needed, of an ordered Universe created by a benevolent God. Initially for Mary Shelley, as demonstrated in *Frankenstein* through the characterisation of Victor Frankenstein, the all-encompassing nature of scientific discovery could become a substitute for religion. The conceptual pursuit of eternal life was of great interest to both writers. For Coleridge, this took the form of spiritual redemption and resurrection following death. Mary Shelley was more interested in the theoretical possibility of physical eternal life, as evidenced by the references to alchemy in her works.

An important link between *Frankenstein* and *The Mortal Immortal* is the presence of Cornelius Agrippa, the 15th-century alchemist, occultist, and wanderer. In *Frankenstein*, the young Victor Frankenstein acquires a copy of Agrippa's works whilst on holiday with his family. His father dismisses Agrippa's work as 'sad trash', and advises Victor to 'not waste your time upon this.' (Shelley: 1994: 37) This marked the beginning of Victor Frankenstein's fascination with the occult side of science and pseudo-science:

Under the guidance of my new preceptors [Agrippa, Paracelcus, Albertus Magus] I entered with the greatest diligence into the search of the philosopher's stone and the elixir of life. (ibid: 38-9)

In *The Mortal Immortal*, Winzy, the protagonist, is Agrippa's assistant and steals his 'elixir of life', Agrippa's life's work. Crosbie Smith states:

Medieval alchemy... was also... concern[ed] with material and spiritual perfection. Perfection would be achieved by the liberation of material and other earthly substances from a temporal existence in which all objects, living and non-living, were subject to ageing and decay... Immortality or eternal youth would achieve material perfection for human beings... (Bann: 1994: 45-6)

The outcomes of Agrippa's 'pseudo-science' or alchemy in both works could not be more different. Winzy's punishment is eternal life, but coupled with the comparative blessing of eternal youth and beauty; whereas the Creature, not human but made in human form, is cursed with the abominable ugliness representing the legacy of his rushed creation. Victor Frankenstein recalls:

I had gazed on him while unfinished; he was ugly then, but when those muscles and joints were rendered capable of motion, it became a thing such as even Dante could not have conceived. (Shelley: 1994: 56)

Victor's horror at the Creature's appearance may seem surprising, since he had very little potential for beauty, given that in his quest for eternal life, his creator constructed the Creature's body from decaying human remains:

I collected bones from charnel-houses and disturbed, with profane fingers, the tremendous secrets of the human frame. In a solitary chamber... I kept my workshop of filthy creation... The dissecting room and the slaughterhouse furnished many of my materials... (ibid: 52)

These two statements by Victor Frankenstein are in direct contrast to the overwhelming joy and delight normally expressed by a new father upon seeing his child for the first time. What we learn from this is the obsessive nature of Victor Frankenstein's quest; he is so obsessed with seeing if he *can* create life, he doesn't stop to consider whether he *should*. The first time that he gives this moral question serious consideration is outlined in the first of the above quotations. At this point, Victor Frankenstein's morality has been overtaken by events; his Creature is alive, and capable of reason and independent thought. In this instance science has blinded Victor Frankenstein to the truth, rather than revealed it.

Dystopian Futures and Displaced Pasts

Although Mary Shelley was interested in religious issues, her own politics seem to have been more of a driver in her works. Despite (or maybe because of) being brought up to be aware of the radical politics of her father, Godwin, and those of her husband, Mary Shelley did not subscribe to them. In two of her novels, *Valperga* (1823) and *The Last Man* (1826), her politics can be reduced to the domestic sphere, even though both novels are also concerned with national and worldwide political events, past and future. The third edition of *Frankenstein* (1831) was also much altered by Mary Shelley, cutting out many of its more radical elements and ‘domesticating’ its politics, to boost the novel’s appeal to an increasingly conservative pre-Victorian audience.

One of the central themes of both *Valperga* and *The Last Man* is an exploration of the social and political struggles of the French Revolution and its aftermath, also a preoccupation of the first generation of Romantic poets, specifically Coleridge and Wordsworth. *Valperga* is an historical drama which superimposes the events of the French Revolution onto the fifteenth century conflict between the Guelphs and the Ghibellines in Italy, whilst *The Last Man* transfers these events onto a post-apocalyptic dystopian future imagined by Mary Shelley, summarized by the publicity for the 2008 edition as: ‘...a reaction against Romanticism... [and] the failure of the imagination and of art to redeem her doomed characters’ (Shelley: 2008). My main consideration of *The Last Man* takes the form of identifying echoes within Mary Shelley’s novel of Coleridge’s works, particularly in relation to his negotiation of political and religious themes, and an exploration of the presence and identity of the ‘Romantic Hero’ in *The Last Man*.

There are many echoes of Coleridge’s works within *The Last Man*. The most obvious is the descent of Mary Shelley, as narrator, and her friend into the Sibyl’s cave, and their subsequent finding of the sibylline leaves, which she then manages to reassemble to construct the text of *The Last Man*:

At length my friend, who had taken up some of the leaves strewed about, exclaimed, ‘This *is* the Sibyl's cave; these are Sibylline leaves.’ On examination, we found that all the leaves, bark, and other substances, were traced with written characters. What appeared to us more astonishing, was that these writings were expressed in various languages: some... ancient... Stranger still, some were in modern dialects, English and Italian... they seemed to contain prophecies,

detailed relations of events but lately passed; names, now well known, but of modern date; and often exclamations of exultation or woe, of victory or defeat, were traced on their thin scant pages... (Shelley: 2008: 5)

The 'names... well known, but of modern date' and 'victory or defeat' may well refer to the subject-matter of Coleridge's early revolutionary poetry. In the Preface to his 1817 collection, *Sibylline Leaves* (1817), Coleridge states that he has collected all of his existing poetry together, under this title, to emphasise its hitherto disparate and disorganised nature:

THE following collection has been entitled SIBYLLINE LEAVES; in allusion to the fragmentary and widely scattered state in which they have been long suffered to remain. (Coleridge: 1817: i)

The collection is broken down into sections, in an attempt to structure his poetic works; one of these sections is entitled 'Poems Occasioned by Political Events or Feelings Connected With Them'. It contains many of Coleridge's poems which were concerned with the events of the French Revolution⁶. Mary Shelley infers that she is a disciple of Coleridge, by stating in her Introduction to *The Last Man*:

Since that period [finding the Sibylline leaves]... I have been employed in deciphering these sacred remains. Their meaning, wondrous and eloquent, has often repaid my toil, soothing me in sorrow, and exciting my imagination to daring flights, through the immensity of nature and the mind of man. (Shelley: 2008: 6)

The Last Man is a futuristic science fiction novel, set at the end of the Twenty-First Century. England has become a republic, following the abdication of the last king in 2073, exactly three-hundred years after the onset of the French Revolution, and overseas, Greece and Turkey have been at war for over two hundred years. In the second part of the novel, the plague is sweeping the world, and eventually wipes out the human race, all except for the Last Man, the narrator Lionel Verney. The Greek war of Independence, or Greek Revolution, began in 1821, several years before Mary Shelley began writing *The Last Man*. It lasted for nine years. Mary Shelley was a supporter of Greece in its early struggle for independence, and personally knew Prince

⁶ This section includes: 'Ode to the Departing Year' (1796), 'France; An Ode' (1798), 'Fears in Solitude' (1798), 'Recantation – Illustrated in the Story of the Mad Ox' (1798), 'Parliamentary Oscillators' (1798), and 'Fire, Famine and Slaughter: A War Eclogue with an Apologetic Preface' (1798). 'The Destiny of Nations' (1817) is also included, within a different section.

Mavrocordato, one of the prominent leaders of the Revolution. In *The Last Man*, Lord Raymond, like Byron, goes to Greece to fight as a volunteer leader.

Mary Shelley's characterisation of the hero as 'Noble Outlaw' in *The Last Man*

Initially, it is difficult for the reader to decide who the hero of the novel is. Lydia

Ginzburg describes the Romantic Hero in the following terms:

Eternal dissatisfaction and striving for the unattainable were traditional features of the romantic hero. Yet that hero was contradictory too, in the sense that a kind of complacency was also characteristic of him... The romantic hero was a positive hero, but... however positive or even ideal he might appear, he still possessed defects... Indeed the romantic hero could also be depraved... It was not so much the virtues and vices themselves that were important, but their spiritual scale, which was in no way limited by the requirements of commonly accepted morality. (Ginzburg: 1991: 90-1)

The three contenders for the position of hero are Lionel Verney, the narrator, whose simple life as a shepherd (occasionally complicated by the necessity of being a poacher) is transformed by his introduction to literature; Adrian, the rightful King of England who prefers solitude and seclusion in his home at Windsor Castle to the responsibilities of Court; and Lord Raymond, the dashing military hero and lover.

The Last Man is recognised as a *Roman à clef*, a novel in which actual persons and events are described in fictional terms. The main characters, Lord Raymond, Adrian, Lionel Verney, Perdita and Idris, all live together at Windsor, but in distinct family units within the commune, and with no evidence of partners being shared. This appears to be Mary Shelley's re-writing of her own history. Adrian is a representation of Shelley, perfected as Mary Shelley chose to commemorate him after his death; Lord Raymond is a thinly disguised characterisation of Byron; and Mary herself is represented partly by Lionel Verney. *The Last Man* stands as a eulogy to both Shelley and Byron, both of whom were dead by the time the novel was published in 1826.

Mary Shelley initially presents both Lionel Verney and his sister Perdita as examples of the Romantic 'child of nature', unaccompanied children who roam the countryside, delighting in the natural world: 'My first real knowledge of myself was as an unprotected orphan among the valleys and fells of Cumberland' (Shelley: 2008: 13). The

reference to Cumberland additionally links Lionel Verney to Coleridge and Wordsworth.

As he grows up, Verney's solitariness takes on a more sinister character:

...untaught in refined philosophy, and pursued by a restless feeling of degradation from my true station in society, I wandered among the hills of civilized England as [an] uncouth... savage... (ibid: 14)

He becomes a social outcast, a possible Cain or Ahasuerus-type of figure. His sister, Perdita, is also depicted initially as a wanderer, and social outcast:

All the time she could command she spent in solitude. She would ramble to the most unfrequented (sic) places, and scale dangerous heights, that in those unvisited spots she might wrap herself in loneliness... Meanwhile her active fancy wove a thousand combinations; she dreamt... she lost herself delightedly in these self-created wanderings, and returned with unwilling spirit to the dull detail of common life. (Shelley: 2008: 15-6)

Mary Shelley indicates that their poverty-stricken and deprived, friendless, upbringing was the cause of this social ostracism, as it was with Frankenstein's Creature, discussed earlier.

Towards the start of the novel, Lionel Verney experiences a moment of conversion similar to the moment when the albatross falls from the neck of Coleridge's ancient mariner, allowing him to pray. This happens following his first conversation with Adrian, the rightful King. Adrian is very kind, and speaks warmly about Verney's dead father, which is unexpected, as Verney is waiting for Adrian to punish him, after being caught in the act of poaching game on his land. Verney is 'overcome' by Adrian's generosity:

...and then quite overcome, I wept aloud.

As this gust of passion passed from me, I felt more composed... I was as a child lisping its devotions... and my plastic soul was remodelled by a master hand, which I neither desired nor was able to resist. (Shelley: 2008: 29)

Mary Shelley expresses Verney's moment of conversion by employing an echo from Coleridge's *Pains of Sleep* (1816):

O'ercome with sufferings strange and wild,
I wept as I had been a child;
...having thus by tears subdued
My anguish to a milder mood... (Mays: 2001ii: 754: 335: 39-42)

Additionally, Mary Shelley used her in-depth knowledge of Byron to characterise Lord Raymond. Byron was a great cultivator of his own myth, both in his works and in society at large. Mary Shelley was very well acquainted with Byron, having spent a great deal of time with him between his initial meeting with Shelley in the summer of 1816, and Shelley's death in 1822. As stated earlier in the chapter, it was rumoured that the Shelleys, Claire Claremont and Byron practised 'free-love', something later repeatedly denied by Byron: '[his] commerce being limited to the carnal knowledge of the Miss C[lairmont]' (MacCarthy: 2002: 298). Whatever the precise nature of their relationship, Mary Shelley certainly had ample opportunity in which to observe Byron, his mannerisms, his works, and the way in which he related to other people. John Williams states:

Prior to leaving Italy [in July 1823, following the death of Percy Shelley], Mary Shelley spent a good deal of time transcribing Byron's poetry and so will have confronted these ideas at an intimate level. (Williams: 2000: 105-6)

Her characterisation of Lord Raymond eulogises Byron in the way in which he would have recognised himself, as the dashing Romantic hero and lover with an oppressive dark side. Peter Thorslev suggests possible reasons why Byron became the 'Romantic hero-poet':

There are probably a number of reasons, accidental or otherwise, why Byron became the English Romantic hero-poet, but there are two which...are most significant. First, Byron was a cosmopolitan aristocrat, not only by birth, but by temperament; and second, he was probably more open to heterogeneous influences, both intellectual and emotional, than was any other of the major English Romantic poets. (Thorslev: 1962: 190)

Thorslev's main criteria for the Noble Outlaw are that he must be 'of noble birth', and must be the undisputed natural leader of a 'society in miniature'; Coleridge's characterisation of Wallenstein displayed many of the characteristics of the Noble Outlaw, as discussed in the previous chapter. Byron was of noble birth, as was Mary Shelley's character Lord Raymond. Lord Raymond is also shown to be the leader of his 'society in miniature' (ibid: 69) in retirement at Windsor Castle with Adrian and his sister Idris (rightful heirs to the throne of England, should the monarchy ever be restored), and Lionel Verney (the narrator and subsequent Last Man) and his sister (and Lord Raymond's wife) Perdita, and their children. Lord Raymond eventually becomes bored with this comfortable microcosm after several years, and begins to ponder means

by which he would be able to become King, and seize absolute power, if the monarchy was ever restored in the United Kingdom.

The extended family unit is broken up when Lord Raymond decides to go to London and stand for election to the position of Protector, the republican leader of the United Kingdom. Before he begins his campaign, Lord Raymond shows his cunning. He tells Verney that he (Lord Raymond) will engineer the electoral process to enable him to become King if he marries Idris, as he thinks Adrian (the rightful heir to the throne, in the event of the restoration of the Monarchy) is not fit to rule:

‘...her power and my wit will rebuild the throne, and this brow will be clasped by a kingly diadem.--I can do this--I can marry Idris.’---...

[Verney] asked, ‘Does Lady Idris love you?’

‘What a question,’ replied he laughing. ‘She will of course, as I shall her, when we are married.’

‘You begin late,’ said [Verney], ironically, ‘marriage is usually considered the grave, and not the cradle of love. So you are about to love her, but do not already?’

‘Do not catechise me, Lionel; I will do my duty by her, be assured. Love! I must steel my heart against *that*; expel it from its tower of strength, barricade it out: the fountain of love must cease to play, its waters be dried up, and all passionate thoughts attendant on it die--that is to say, the love which would rule me, not that which I rule. Idris is a gentle, pretty, sweet... girl; it is impossible not to have an affection for her, and I have a very sincere one; only do not speak of love... the tyrant and the tyrant-queller; love, until now my conqueror, now my slave; the hungry fire, the untameable beast, the fanged snake---no--no--I will have nothing to do with that love...’ (Shelley: 2008: 55-6)

Lord Raymond states that it would be a marriage of convenience, but that he equally would be prepared to learn to love Idris after they were married. This is an echo of Coleridge’s 1794 letter to Robert Southey, describing his complicated feelings for Mary Evans and his future wife, Sara Fricker, and the emotional difficulties of making a match which he believed would better himself, rather than being for love:

To love her! – I can rise above that selfish Pang. But to marry another... to marry a woman whom I do *not* love – to degrade her whom I call my Wife, by making her the Instrument of low Desire – and on the removal of a desultory Appetite, to be perhaps not displeased with her Absence! – Enough! These Refinements are the wildering Fires, that lead me into Vice.

Mark you, Southey! – *I will do my Duty!* (Griggs: 1956i: 145: 77)

In Lord Raymond's speech to Verney (above) he aligns himself with Byronic heroes, Kings, and leaders of the past in attempt to give his pursuit of the throne some legitimacy:

Were not the mightiest men of the olden times kings? Alexander was a king; Solomon, the wisest of men, was a king; Napoleon was a king; Caesar died in his attempt to become one, and Cromwell, the puritan and king-killer, aspired to regality. The father of Adrian yielded up the already broken sceptre of England; but I will rear the fallen plant, join its dismembered frame, and exalt it above all the flowers of the field. (Shelley: 2008: 56-7)

Lord Raymond further shows his cunning during the subsequent debate on the Protectorship in the House (the now combined House of Commons and House of Lords) by carrying out his promise to Verney, and inserting an amendment which would legally give Lord Raymond the right to seize the crown if the monarchy were ever restored into England. Lord Raymond wins the debate and the Protectorship. Lord Raymond is described in the following terms:

His first wish was aggrandisement; and the means that led towards this end were secondary considerations. Haughty, yet trembling to every demonstration of respect; ambitious, but too proud to shew his ambition; willing to achieve honour, yet a votary of pleasure,--he entered upon life. (ibid: 39)

However, he gives up his military ambitions when he becomes Lord Protector, as he wants to be remembered as a peace-maker rather than a war-monger. This is unlike Coleridge's characterisation of Wallenstein, who wished to prolong the Thirty Years' War in order to achieve his own 'aggrandizement'.

Mary Shelley's characterisation of Lord Raymond subverts one of Thorslev's characteristics of the Noble Outlaw. As I stated in the previous chapter, Thorslev comments:

the Noble Outlaw is... figured as having been wronged either by personal, intimate friends, or by society in general, and his rebellion is thus always given a plausible motive. (Thorslev: 1962: 69)

Lord Raymond is unfailingly treated with the utmost love, respect and devotion by those closest to him; it is he himself who wrongs his friends, most notably his wife Perdita. This is also true of Coleridge's characterisation of Wallenstein, and his family and supporters. Wallenstein believes that he can manipulate both of his sworn enemies, the

Swedes and the Saxons, into allowing him to join them. Once his duplicity becomes apparent, the inner circle of his Camp, comprising Wallenstein's family, his generals and his troops, begin to abandon him. This illustrates that the downfall of both Lord Raymond and Wallenstein is caused by an inability to gauge the loyalty of their followers. Both Mary Shelley and Coleridge identify this inability to sustain close personal relationships as a Faustian fatal flaw in the characters of their heroes, carrying with it significant religious implications for the political conduct under scrutiny.

When Lord Raymond leaves Windsor to move to London permanently following his successful bid for the Protectorship, Perdita accompanies him, and they are inseparable. Eventually he has a chance meeting with Evadne, a former lover of Perdita's brother, Adrian, and falls in love with her. They pursue an adulterous affair behind Perdita's back. Perdita eventually finds out from a peasant woman who brings a note from Lord Raymond excusing his lateness at a ball in his honour, whilst he is actually attending Evadne during a near-fatal illness:

Perdita dreaded a fall from his horse, or some similar accident – till the woman's answers woke other fears. From a feeling of cunning blindly exercised, the officious, if not malignant messenger, did not speak of Evadne's illness; but she garrulously gave an account of Raymond's frequent visits, adding to her narration such circumstances, as, while they convinced Perdita of its truth, exaggerated the unkindness and perfidy of Raymond. Worst of all, his absence now from the festival, his message wholly unaccounted for, except by the disgraceful hints of the woman, appeared the deadliest insult. (Shelley: 2008: 133)

Perdita is distraught not only as a result of the affair, but the knowledge that her husband has been lying to her, and concealing his affair from her for many months. This revelation sparks a change in their relationship, which they agree to end, but continue to live together for the sake of their daughter, Clara. Eventually, Lord Raymond can't bear his own guilt, and Perdita's grief, and so he abandons his family, resigns the Protectorship, and returns to Greece as a common soldier (like Byron), where he quickly rises through the ranks. Eventually, Perdita and Clara join Lord Raymond in Greece, and a reconciliation looks possible, until Evadne is uncovered posing as a soldier. Lord Raymond realises his love for her is greater than that for his wife. On her death-bed, Evadne prophesises the death of Lord Raymond. He takes this prophecy to heart.

In descriptions of the Turkish Greek war, Lord Raymond is described as being an inspiration to his men, and leading them by sheer force of personality when his superior office is killed in battle, leaving him in absolute command. This is one of Thorslev's criteria of the Noble Outlaw:

...the Noble Outlaw personified the Romantic nostalgia for the days of personal heroism, for the age when it was still possible for a leader to dominate his group of followers by sheer physical courage, strength of will, and personal magnetism. (Thorslev: 1962: 68)

Coleridge's characterisation of Wallenstein also meets this criterion of the 'Noble Outlaw', as I discussed in my previous chapter. His men are unfailingly loyal to him, until they realise that he has betrayed them, by attempting to forge alliances separately with both of his enemies. Also like Coleridge's depiction of Wallenstein, Mary Shelley describes Lord Raymond as being: 'one who seemed to govern the whole earth in his grasping imagination, and who only quailed when he attempted to rule himself' (Shelley: 2008: 58).

In the months before their respective downfalls, both men are seen to be natural leaders. Lord Raymond is described very much in the same manner as Wallenstein in Coleridge's translation:

He became an adventurer in the Greek wars. His reckless courage and comprehensive genius brought him into notice. He became the darling hero of this rising people... Lord Raymond... led the Greek armies to victory; their triumphs were all his own. When he appeared, whole towns poured forth their population to meet him; new songs were adapted to their national airs, whose themes were his glory, valour, and munificence. (Shelley: 2008: 39-40)

After several days holed up in the fortified palace, Lord Raymond realises that the enemy armies in the city below have stopped their attacks. When he summons his armies to accompany him whilst he investigates, no-one will follow him. Lord Raymond realises at this point, like Wallenstein before him, that he has lost the trust of both his family and his armies. Anne K. Mellor states:

Mary Shelley explicitly invoked and then attacked Burke's celebration of the organically developing body politic (in which the patriarchal father serves as the head of the body, family and state, producing a constitutional monarchy and a highly regulated class system) by showing that the body politic can become diseased and die. (Mellor: 1993: 69)

Lord Raymond rides into the city alone, and discovers that those inhabitants who were able have fled from the plague, and the city is deserted. There is an earthquake, and Lord Raymond is buried alive under the rubble of the city which he came to liberate from the infidels. Like Coleridge's characterisation of Wallenstein, he does not survive his own treachery.

Conclusion

In this final chapter, I have demonstrated Coleridge's influence on the second generation of Romantic writers, exemplified by Percy Shelley and Byron, with a particular emphasis on the works of Mary Shelley. I chose to consider Mary Shelley's works in more depth than those of Shelley and Byron, as her works remain proportionally less studied than those of the male second-generation Romantics. For a variety of reasons, not least among them being her gender, previous generations of critics have tended not to view Mary Shelley's works from a political stand-point. This situation began to change in the 1970s, and Mary Shelley is now increasingly viewed as a political writer on a level comparable with her husband, Percy Shelley.

As I have demonstrated throughout the chapter, although Mary Shelley was schooled from an early age in the radical politics and atheism of Shelley and Godwin (and the youthful Coleridge), her writings reveal at best an ambivalent attitude towards them. Mary Shelley's politics were much more often reduced to the domestic sphere: and she reflects on the macrocosm of national and international events within the microcosm of the family unit.

The second-generation Romantics were no less subject to political instability than their predecessors, despite the fact that for them, the French Revolution was an historical event. The Revolutionary wars of the 1790s gave way to the Napoleonic Wars of the 1800s, which in turn led to very difficult social conditions, including massive levels of unemployment and inflation. Mass industrialisation occasioned by the onset of the Industrial Revolution led to huge numbers of people flocking to towns and cities, desperate for employment. On the other side of the Atlantic, the United States of America was asserting its independence: the Louisiana Purchase was ratified in 1803, doubling the size of the United States. This was followed by the 1812 War, declared on

Britain by the United States, which lasted for three years, and which Britain ultimately lost.

In his youth, Coleridge had dreamed of being part of the United States' struggle for true independence. His dream of Pantisocracy, so workable in theory, was never put into practice. However, the planning of Pantisocracy gave Coleridge's writing career a much needed kick-start. Writing under pressure both of time, and the need to earn money, Coleridge found that his output, and its quality, increased substantially, as he strove to reconcile political and religious themes through the mediums of poetry and prose. As I have discussed above, Mary and Percy Shelley, and Claire Clairmont, realised a form of Coleridge's Pantisocratic dream when they ran away together to the Continent in 1814, but the outcome was far from idyllic. Coleridge would have put the failures of the Shelley commune down to them not building it on a foundation of Christianity, the basis for the proposed Pantisocracy. Mary Shelley's writing, in common with that of Coleridge, went on to combine religious and political themes as she sought to understand the evolving pattern of her life.

The circumstances of her elopement and communal living provided Mary Shelley with everything she needed to embark upon her literary career, and find her own voice as an author, in terms of proximity to Shelley and Byron, and the intellectual benefit of their conversation and tuition; paradoxically, their itinerant lifestyle was to deprive Mary Shelley of the people she most loved: Shelley and their children William and Clara. Ultimately, the tragedies of this period of Mary Shelley's life determined the course of its second half. Largely denied support from the Shelley family, Mary Shelley was forced more or less to abandon her fictional writing, in order to write for hire in publications such as *The Keepsake*, to enable her to provide for herself and her surviving young son, Percy Florence. As I have outlined both in this chapter and throughout my thesis as a whole, this was in contrast with Coleridge, whose writing 'for hire' in his early life both fed his family, and launched his literary career, by providing him with the space in which to develop and articulate his political and religious ideas.

Different as their careers therefore were, the common ground lies in an attempt to articulate the relationship between religious and political themes that both writers

shared, and that found their source in Dissent, and specifically in the Godwin circle. Both writers were influenced by archetypal cultural forms that took on profound significance during this period, not least among them being Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew, who appears repeatedly in various guises. There are many echoes of Coleridge's works to be found in those of Mary Shelley, most specifically as they relate to an attempt to balance or reconcile tensions between political and religious conviction in public and private life.

CONCLUSION

Over the course of my thesis, I have examined Coleridge's changing political and religious beliefs, as expressed in his early works. I have also considered whether, in his youth, Coleridge eventually managed to synthesise or reconcile these evolving political and religious beliefs. Coleridge's youthful views on politics and religion were influenced by the secularist tendencies of Enlightenment rationalism, and also by the volatile political environment of the world in the Eighteenth Century. As I have shown, the revolutionary events of this period towards the end of the Eighteenth Century had a profound effect on the political and religious views of the young Coleridge.

In Chapter One, 'A Revolutionary Setting', I explored how Coleridge's changing religious and political beliefs were central to his works of this period, including the early sonnets 'Sonnet on Pantisocracy', 'On the Prospect of Establishing a Pantisocracy in America', 'Sonnet: To a Young Ass, its Mother being Tethered Near it' and the Sonnets *On Eminent Characters*; Coleridge's 1795 Lectures including *A Moral and Political Lecture*, the *Conciones ad Populum, or, Addresses to the People* series, the *Six Lectures on Revealed Religion, its Corruptions and Political Views*, and the *Lecture On the Slave Trade*; and finally, *The Watchman*. Through consideration of these texts, in terms of their style and content, I have explored Coleridge's early quest for self-definition, in terms of developing his own poetic identity alongside the gradual evolution of his views on religion and politics. The years 1794-8 were a very productive period for Coleridge, driven by the necessity of obtaining sufficient funds for the proposed Pantisocratic expedition. His increased output not only greatly increased his technical expertise as a poet, but also his confidence, enabling Coleridge to gradually move away from his previous supports of Biblical language and Miltonic authority, to begin to synthesise and articulate his own ideas on politics and religion in his own voice.

Coleridge was very pro-American at this time (although against the slave trade). To him, the American colonies represented ideals of freedom and equality which were missing in contemporary England, and America was therefore the perfect place for the proposed Pantisocratic settlement. Pantisocracy was a very important stage in Coleridge's early career, as it was the catalyst for the majority of his work of this period, driving his

output and his ideas further and harder in an attempt to raise sufficient money to fund his dream. As much of his work of this period was in the form of lectures, it was essential that Coleridge was able to reconcile his opinions into a form sufficient for them to be publicly delivered.

Many of the main concerns of Coleridge's later 'Great Decade' can be seen emerging through his early sonnets. For example, in the 'Sonnet On Pantisocracy', the Christian rhetoric becomes increasingly pagan as the sonnet progresses. Also in this sonnet, Coleridge introduces the concept of the sun as an emblem of God. This would later be used to greater effect in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, although here, it would be to reveal God as the vengeful and threatening Jehovah of the Old Testament, through the imagery of a hot, red sun, rather than the benevolent God of the 'Sonnet: On Pantisocracy', who promised peace and redemption.

As outlined in Chapter One, 'A Revolutionary Setting', the *Sonnets on Eminent Characters* were also pivotal in the synthesis and articulation of Coleridge's political and religious opinions of this time. They were politically daring, and enabled Coleridge to organize and refine his political and religious ideas. The *Sonnets on Eminent Characters* are also a good indication of how inextricably intertwined politics and religion were in Coleridge's thoughts and works of this period. Religious rhetoric was generally used by Coleridge to express his admiration for the subjects of the *Sonnets on Eminent Characters*, with the exception of the 'Sonnet: to Pitt' where religious rhetoric was used to ridicule and censure Pitt the Younger, by comparing him with Judas Iscariot. The use of such rhetoric endowed Coleridge's verse (and perhaps he also thought, his opinions) with the weighty authority of the Bible.

Coleridge also used the sun to confer God-like status on Erskine in his 'Sonnet: to Erskine', by not only identifying him with the sun, but also situating him in heaven. This was in response to Erskine's great oratorical abilities during the Treason Trials of 1794. Priestley also was praised with religious rhetoric in the 'Sonnet: to Priestley'. Coleridge admired his Unitarianism, and also his combination of science and religion, which alienated many of Priestley's followers. This combination was very attractive to Coleridge, as it revealed proof, if proof were needed, of an ordered Universe created by

a benevolent God. The ‘Sonnet to Priestley’ uses a trope typical of the Enlightenment religious tradition from which Priestley came. Coleridge later modified the first line of this sonnet, in the same way that in later years, he tried to moderate the expression of his youthful radical political views. Kosciusko and Lafayette were also praised in the sonnets *On Eminent Characters*, although through the use of political rather than religious language. This became their status as eminent political figures, and also indicated that Coleridge was aware that they were not British subjects, and therefore, reasonably beyond the pale of Anglicanism.

In Chapter One, ‘A Revolutionary Setting’, I examined a selection of Coleridge’s lectures from 1795, including *A Moral and Political Lecture*, the *Conciones ad Populum, or, Addresses to the People* series, the *Six Lectures on Revealed Religion, its Corruptions and Political Views* (sic), and the doctrinally severe *Lecture On the Slave Trade*. The themes of slavery, education of the masses, and a more Universal Male Suffrage ran through this selection of lectures, and also through *The Watchman*, and evidently represented key concerns of Coleridge’s, both in the late Eighteenth-century, and throughout his whole life.

Other important ideas to emerge from Coleridge’s 1795 lectures included religion allegorized in the form of nature. Although Coleridge may not have recognized it as such at the time, these instances were amongst the first examples of his emergent Pantheism, a belief system that was to significantly shape the way in which he combined religious and political themes in his mature poetry. In particular, the *Allegoric Vision* at the beginning of the first lecture in the *Conciones ad Populum, or, Addresses to the People* series reveals an environment which is unnaturally cold, representing a lack of faith or religious belief. These were ideas which Coleridge used to greater effect in his later poetry of the ‘Great Decade’, specifically the ‘caves of ice’ in *Kubla Khan* and the vast sea-bound wastes of ‘ice and snow’ in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. Both of these frozen deserts of non-belief are dispelled by the introduction of forms of nature, represented by the ‘sacred river’ Alph in *Kubla Khan*, and the albatross in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. Throughout Chapter One, I have shown how the relationship between religion and politics in Coleridge’s later great poetry of his ‘Great Decade’

stemmed from his experiments with verse, prose, and lecturing of 1794-5, which enabled him to develop and synthesize his thoughts on politics and religion.

In Chapter Two, 'Icons and Archetypes', I outlined how the years 1794-8 were a period of great development for Coleridge, in terms of significant changes in his personal life (his marriage, and the birth of his first child, Hartley), and in the development of his opinions on politics and religion. His radical political views had become tempered, and his religious opinions began to be articulated through the more Pantheistic language of the poetry of his 'Great Decade'. As I have noted, Coleridge's friendship with William Wordsworth, and their poetic discussions of this period, were crucial to the development of Coleridge's own poetic voice and style.

Coleridge's poetry of this period began to contain many more descriptions of the natural world than his previous works; although these were expressed in religious terms, it was now the religious language of Pantheism which came to the fore, rather than the religious language of Unitarianism. Coleridge's religious and Associationist views are still very much in evidence within the poetry of his 'Great Decade', but they are now descriptive of a Pantheistic God. All ideas generated in the brain now combined to lead to the answer of one all-encompassing God in nature, and God as nature. The Pantheistic emblem of the sun as God continues to be used in Coleridge's poetry of this period, including *Religious Musings* and *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.

I began the chapter with a comparison of *Religious Musings* and *Fears in Solitude*, as each gives a description of England at the time of writing. Both poems purport to be built around a religious framework, and both are attempts by Coleridge to describe and synthesise his political and religious views in the year that each poem was written. *Religious Musings* (1794) is written in very orthodox religious language, as Coleridge at this point was still struggling with self-definition in terms of his views on politics and religion, and lacking the confidence to speak in his own poetic voice, which he felt still needed the support of Biblical authority. In 1794, Coleridge felt that to be a great poet, he needed to write an epic poem, chiefly identifiable by its great length. Coleridge intended *Religious Musings* to be his *magnum opus*; his choice of religion as a subject, plus the poem's Miltonic structure, was also epic. It is hardly surprising that Coleridge

struggled to present his own developing ideas on religion and politics in a coherent form within the poem. Passages written in the language of orthodox Christian belief are intermingled with Pantheistic passages.

As I explained in the above chapter, despite this awkward confusion and mixing of orthodox Christianity and Pantheism, it is however in *Religious Musings* that Coleridge sets out his religious manifesto. In Associationist terms, he states that religious belief and education binds society together through love of each other, leading to love of family, love of country, and ultimately to love of God. Without this religious cohesion, society begins to break down. Coleridge cites the enormous political and social impact of the French Revolution as an example of this societal breakdown, and warns that the same could occur in Britain if the British people continue to allow themselves to be blinded to the sight of the true God by ‘Ministers’, or the worship of false idols. Here, God is not identified as being Unitarian, Pantheistic or any other denomination. Although Coleridge’s views on Christianity and Pantheism changed over the course of his life, his belief in the education of the masses connected with the necessity of belief in God, the foundations of his religious manifesto, did not change.

By 1798 when *Fears in Solitude* was written, Coleridge’s poetic tone is much more confident, and his Pantheistic religious imagery is now his own. It no longer needs to be bolstered by the Bible, or the religious linguistic constructions of his predecessors. Coleridge here expresses his fears that the United Kingdom is becoming a Godless nation. The logical consequence of this failure to commune with God, according to Coleridge’s religious manifesto, is that ties of family and friendship will also begin to breakdown, leading to the breakdown of society (in both political and religious terms), ultimately leaving the United Kingdom vulnerable to invasion.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner was also written at this time, and is another example of Coleridge’s more confident descriptions of religion and the natural world. The poem can be read in many ways, not least as a religious allegory of the crucifixion, as outlined in Chapter Two. A lesser amount of Biblical phraseology is used both in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and *Fears in Solitude*, both poems revealing Coleridge at the height of his poetic powers, than in his earlier poetry. Ideas in both poems continue to be

expressed through the use of religious rhetoric, but it is now expressed in a slightly different way. A greater amount of Pantheistic expressions are used in both *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and *Religious Musings*, suggesting that Coleridge's approach to spirituality and religion is now broader and more inclusive, synthesising elements of both orthodox Christianity and Pantheism.

In addition to Coleridge's preoccupations with the nature of religious or Pantheistic belief in the mid 1790s, his interest in mythology and folklore continued, examples of which are also to be found in his works of this period. In Chapter Two, 'Icons and Archetypes', I gave two examples: the first was the Wandering Jew, a mythological and folkloric persona who particularly fascinated Coleridge; and the second was Geraldine from *Christabel*, one of Coleridge's characters who exhibited synthesised elements of many characters of mythology and folklore.

As I outlined in the above chapter, the Wanderer was a figure of great interest to many Romantic Period writers, including Coleridge. Wordsworth, Byron, Percy and Mary Shelley, and Godwin all composed works featuring the Wanderer around this period, in addition to those by Coleridge. The lure of the ambivalent character-type of the Wanderer was irresistible, and could be adapted to achieve many ends, including those of the possibly omniscient, non-political observer and eternal story-teller. Coleridge's most obvious incarnations of the Wanderer appeared in his characterisations of Cain (from *The Wanderings of Cain*), which led him to the development of the ancient mariner (from *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*). I have argued that Geraldine from *Christabel* may also be a very rare female personification of the Wandering Jew.

The characterisation of Geraldine combines many mythological and folkloric elements, which Coleridge struggled to reconcile, resulting in the poem remaining unfinished and unresolved. In the final part of Chapter Two, 'Icons and Archetypes', to establish Geraldine as part of the European gothic tradition, with the associated connotations of good versus evil, I identified a number of characters in slightly later works by other authors who share characteristics with Coleridge's portrayal of Geraldine. The unnatural, protean, nature of Geraldine was explored through comparison with Keats' *Lamia*, Incubus and Rowenna from Thelwall's *The Fairy of the Lake*, and Zulma, the

protagonist of Balzac's *The Succuba*. I also outlined how Geraldine bears characteristics of the archetypal figures of Lilith, and the biblical, mythological and iconic figure of the serpent. In terms of Coleridge's new found interest in Pantheism, Geraldine, particularly when revealed as a serpent, may also be an expression of malevolence in the Pantheistic form of nature, with the obvious religious associations of the serpent in the Garden of Eden. The unresolved characterisation of Geraldine and the unfinished poem also point towards Coleridge's inability to totally relinquish his life-long Christian beliefs in the face of Pantheism.

In the third chapter, I examined how Coleridge's response to Schiller's *Wallenstein* trilogy was rooted in the way in which he read Dante's *Inferno*, Goethe's *Faust*, and Milton's *Paradise Lost*, all of which were key texts in this chapter. Coleridge's translation of Schiller's *Wallenstein* trilogy also gives important clues as to Coleridge's understanding of the relationship between power, politics, and religion.

I considered the extent to which Coleridge (re)constructed Wallenstein as a Romantic (anti)- Hero, encompassing many of his own political and religious preoccupations of 1799-1800. The hero type with which Coleridge's characterisation of Wallenstein was most closely identified was that of the 'Noble Outlaw'. Coleridge introduced many elements to his characterisation which identified his portrayal of Wallenstein with Napoleon.

Coleridge's interpretation of Wallenstein's character and hero 'type' was determined by comparison with Faust and Satan, and consideration of the motifs of escape into Eden, and delusion, represented by each character's failure to achieve the Edenic state; these factors compromised the traditional boundaries between good and evil, and revealed the ambivalence of the (anti)-Hero, epitomized by Coleridge's characterisation of Wallenstein. This ambivalence was evidently a characteristic which Coleridge found attractive, as the protagonists of *The Rime of The Ancient Mariner*, *Kubla Khan*, *Christabel*, and *Dejection: An Ode* also bore similar traits, as discussed.

Coleridge was greatly influenced both by Dante's works, and by his status as a Christian author. As mentioned, Coleridge may also have admired the lack of clarity regarding the

identity of Dante within the text of *The Inferno*, as this ambivalence was carried over into Coleridge's characterisation of Wallenstein.

Coleridge's Wallenstein also shared many characteristics with Faust, particularly his ambivalent nature. This is unsurprising, as Coleridge was very familiar with the story of Faust, even before his aborted translation of 1814. Throughout his translation of the *Wallenstein* trilogy, Coleridge is careful to emphasise Wallenstein's prevarication and impending fall, consequences of the choices he made whilst seeking 'self-aggrandizement'. As outlined in Chapter Three, one of the reasons given by Coleridge for not completing the 1814 translation of Goethe's *Faust* was because of his disgust at the play's sexual immorality. Evidently, he did not view Wallenstein's all-consuming quest for power as an equally taboo subject.

Coleridge's Wallenstein, Goethe's Faust, and Milton's Satan are similar characters, in that they are all yearning for various forms of 'self-aggrandizement', for which they are prepared to sell their souls. Wallenstein seeks power and influence greater than that of the Emperor, in a similar way to that in which Satan seeks to overthrow God, whilst Faust yearns for greater knowledge of the secrets of the universe. Each of their characters also bears a fatal flaw, which ultimately brings about their downfall. The fatal flaw of Milton's Satan is the sin of pride, for which he is rewarded with ejection from Heaven by a furious God. Both Goethe's Faust and Coleridge's Wallenstein only hear what they want to hear, and as such are never in receipt of the full facts on which to base their judgements: both share the same fatal flaw, in that they allow themselves to be guided by the stars; Faust directly, and Wallenstein through the intermediary of his Astrologer, Seni. The self-salvation of both characters may have been possible, had they instead sought answers to their problems through political morality grounded in Christian theology, enabling them to recognise the temptations of Satan within themselves. The pseudo-science of Astrology did not instigate such introspection, leading both characters ultimately to perdition.

Affinities between the way in which Milton distinguishes between God and Satan, and Coleridge's portrayal of the Emperor and Wallenstein can also be identified. Both Satan and Wallenstein are portrayed as great leaders of their 'societies in miniature'. Satan can

be repressed and controlled only by God, whilst the same is true of the Emperor and Wallenstein. Both Satan and Wallenstein both have absolute faith in their own power, believing it is impossible for them to fail, yet both are brought down by God and the Emperor respectively. As Satan, in the form of the serpent, whispered poison into Eve's ear in the Garden of Eden, Wallenstein poisons the thoughts of the young Max Piccolomini, by telling him that the Imperial forces, and not Wallenstein, are the tyrants. This interplay between good and evil is central to Coleridge's engagement with Schiller's text.

As I have demonstrated, the translation of Schiller's *Wallenstein* trilogy provided Coleridge with a safe, non-judgemental place in which to explore and define his constantly evolving political opinions, creating a work of his own through his translation of Schiller's original. Coleridge's ideas are chiefly articulated through his portrayal of Butler, and Max and Octavio Piccolomini. These characters were ideal for this purpose, because although central to the plot, they were not the main focus of the trilogy, giving Coleridge more of a free hand to adapt them according to his needs. Although purportedly a faithful translation, Coleridge's interpretation of the *Wallenstein* trilogy articulated many issues close to his heart at this time, such as disillusion and weariness with war. The years 1799 and 1800 were a pivotal time in Coleridge's life and opinions, when he was effectively caught between the radical politics of his youth, and his later more conservative views. This was also an issue shared by Schiller. By 1800, both men had become disillusioned with the brutality of the 'Terror', and the failure of the French Revolution. This dichotomy is revealed in Coleridge's characterisation of the ambiguous Butler; Max Piccolomini, the stock Romantic 'child of nature' of the *Lyrical Ballads*; and Octavio Piccolomini, the conservative monarchist. There is the potential for further future research into Coleridge's later translations, to ascertain whether Coleridge's creative translation of the *Wallenstein* trilogy was unique, or whether it was the beginning of a series of similar works.

Coleridge considerably adapted the character of Butler, silencing him in places where Schiller gave him a voice. Although possibly not intentional on Coleridge's part, this has the effect of making Butler appear less politically radical than Schiller's original, and also to exhibit ambiguous and divided loyalties. It is unclear whether Butler's loyalties

lie with Wallenstein alone, or ultimately with the Emperor, and by extension, whether Butler is actually on the side of good or evil.

Max Piccolomini can be seen to represent the politically radical, pro-revolutionary, impetuous young Coleridge, pre-1799, whilst his father Octavio can be viewed as a foreshadowing of Coleridge's later much more conservative political views. By 1800, Coleridge was more accepting of the political status quo than previously. Equally, the conflict between father and son outlined in Coleridge's translation of the *Wallenstein* trilogy can be viewed as representative of the state of flux which Coleridge's political and religious views were in at this time.

The final chapter of my thesis examined the influence of the interplay between the religious and political opinions in Coleridge's works on those of second generation Romantic writers. My main focus was on the works of Mary Shelley, because, the later works particularly, continue to be disproportionately less studied than those of her male contemporaries, Percy Shelley and Byron, also subjects of the final chapter. This is despite a surge of critical interest in the works of Mary Shelley over the last decade. Mary Shelley was appreciative of Coleridge's works throughout her life. She had been introduced to Coleridge's thoughts and works at a very early age, due to her unconventional education, and Coleridge's friendship with Godwin. He was a frequent visitor to Godwin's house during Mary Shelley's childhood, and she had seen and heard him recite *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, which was destined to haunt her throughout her life.

I examined how, like those of Coleridge, Mary Shelley's political and religious opinions remained central to her works. Mary Shelley was writing during the period of social and economic fall-out following the French Revolution, and the subsequent English war with France. These harsh social conditions bred feelings of dissatisfaction amongst Mary Shelley and her contemporaries, which were coupled with their disillusion at the increasing conservatism of Coleridge's generation, which had once been so radical. One key difference between the political styles of Coleridge and Mary Shelley was their scale. As I have shown, in his early poems and lectures, Coleridge's focus was very much on national and international politics. Mary Shelley also commented on such

events, but preferred to do so through the microcosm of the family unit, revealing the tensions within, and ultimately, its fragmentation.

Just as Coleridge's early works enabled him to develop and articulate his thoughts on politics and religion, which gradually led him to find his own poetic voice, Mary Shelley's early writings were expressive of her gradual movement away from the ideology of her literary parents, William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft. They also demonstrated her gradual intellectual escape from the radical politics of her father, and her husband. On Mary Shelley's return to England in 1823 following the death of Shelley, her works became increasingly important, as she struggled to support herself and her surviving young son, Percy Florence. Like Coleridge before her, Mary Shelley was compelled to write for hire to provide for her family. It was at this point that her novel-writing all but ceased, in favour of producing short stories, and biographical and descriptive sketches for works such as Lardner's *Cabinet Cyclopaedia*, and *The Keepsake*.

One of the most important events for the young Mary Shelley was the 'year without a summer' of 1816, specifically the historic stormy night spent at the Villa Diodati with Shelley, Byron and Polidori, when the seeds for the composition of *Frankenstein* were sown. Significantly, the catalyst for this competition was Byron's reading of Coleridge's *Christabel*, which terrified Shelley. In Chapter two, I identified personifications of the Wanderer in the works of Coleridge, and also in the works of other Romantic period writers including Wordsworth, Godwin, Byron, and the Shelleys. *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley's first novel, featured three wanderers: the ship's Captain Robert Walton, Victor Frankenstein, and the Creature, all of whom also bore more than a passing resemblance to Coleridge's ancient mariner.

The persona of the wanderer also made appearances in other later texts by Mary Shelley, such as *The Mortal Immortal*. Mary Shelley was greatly interested in science, with its attendant theological and political significance, and also in the pseudo-science of alchemy, both of which are explored in the above texts. Through her characterisations of the protagonists in both *Frankenstein* and *The Mortal Immortal*, Mary Shelley reveals how science can become dangerously obsessive, leading the scientist to dabble with the

secrets of human existence and everlasting life. Coleridge was also interested in the emergent science, but for him, it was proof of a benevolent God, the creator of an ordered Universe. For Mary Shelley, the possibility of everlasting life as an expression of disobedience to God was represented by the power of science, and the theoretical possibility of alchemy. For Coleridge, the possibilities of everlasting life were entirely in terms of redemption and spiritual resurrection.

Mary Shelley's most overtly political works were *Valperga* and *The Last Man*, both of which were written in response to the events of the French Revolution. The action in each novel has been transferred to alternative geographical and temporal locations: *Valperga* is set in the midst of the conflict between the Guelphs and the Ghibellines in fifteenth-century Italy, whilst *The Last Man* is set in an imagined dystopian future, following the abdication of the last King of England in 2073. Both novels are *Roman a clefs*, in which Mary Shelley gives strong hints as to which members of her family and close friends were intended to be portrayed by each character. In his youth, Coleridge had no such compunctions about publicly identifying the inspiration for each of his works, for example, the *Sonnets on Eminent Characters*, where Coleridge was bold enough to ridicule the serving Prime Minister, William Pitt the Younger.

I have argued that Mary Shelley made a specific reference in *The Last Man* to the influence of Coleridge's works on hers, through the prefatory tale of the finding, and reconstructing, of the sibylline leaves. *Sybilline Leaves* was, of course, Coleridge's poetic collection of 1817, in which he collected all of the poetry of his youth, including his early poems on the French Revolution which I discussed in Chapters One and Two.

In conclusion, I have examined the articulation of Coleridge's early opinions on politics and religion through a selection of his published works of 1794-1800; I have also examined their influence on the works of Mary Shelley as a second-generation Romantic writer. As my thesis has shown, in the early years of his literary career, Coleridge's views on politics and religion were constantly developing and evolving. As is evident in the case of missing the printer's deadline for changes to *Religious Musings*, these ideas were evolving faster than Coleridge could comfortably record them.

My conclusion is that Coleridge constantly attempted, throughout his early career, to reconcile his varying beliefs on politics and religion, but I do not think that he successfully removed all of the inherent tensions. Christianity was far too deeply ingrained in his character for him ever to be able to totally relinquish these beliefs in favour of Pantheism. I also believe that the perpetuation of these inherent tensions contributed significantly to the development of Coleridge's mature poetic style in the late 1790s. Influenced specifically by Coleridge's work, reconciling political aspiration with religious belief then continued to be an enduring feature of the British Romantic Movement (albeit in modified form) as the writings of Mary Shelley in particular have served to illustrate.

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