"My Father's Fragmentary Work": Sara Coleridge's Restoration of *Biographia Literaria.*

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SARA COLERIDGE'S 1847 EDITION of *Biographia Literaria,* to which I will refer as *Biographia 1847*, was a project of recovery, reconciliation and self-definition. The edition consists of a 180 page introduction, lengthy appendices to both volumes, and copious notes and annotations, particularly on Coleridge's German sources. Sara's whole purpose, in producing *Biographia 1847*, was to rehabilitate Coleridge's moral and intellectual image, and to bring his work—and the Coleridge name—into clear focus for the Victorian world.

In her 'Advertisement' at the beginning of Volume 1, Sara refers to her late husband and editorial collaborator, Henry Nelson Coleridge, who had died aged 44 on 26th January 1843: "His work has fallen to me to complete, and the task has been interesting, though full of affecting remembrances, and brought on by the deepest sorrow".[1] Following Henry's death, Sara found her editorial work therapeutic: it "brought one part of my mind into activity", she confessed, "when the other part, if active, could only have been alive to anguish".[2] Mary Shelley, after the death of Percy, undertook a similar process of personal recuperation and literary restoration: "I shall write his life, and thus occupy myself in the only manner from which I can derive consolation", she wrote in November 1822. "All is better than inaction".[3] Just as Sara, dedicating herself to the reconstruction of STC's work, Mary Shelley would devote much of her future to managing Percy's works and reputation. Her literary collaboration with Percy continued, therefore, even after his death; similarly, Sara's editorial processes were, in effect, collaborative, as Virginia Woolf eloquently recognized: "She found her father in those blurred pages", Woolf wrote, "as she had not found him in the flesh; and she found that he was herself. She did not copy him, she insisted; she was him".[4] In Woolf's reading, author and editor merge in Sara's appendices, footnotes and introductions. However, while Sara describes herself as "a follower […] of the principles of STC […] because they seem the very truth",[5] she is no passively obedient disciple.

Her editorial engagement with Coleridge's ideas was creative, requiring her, she says, to "think […] through them over again myself".[6] Sara's absorption in Coleridge's thought leads her, she explains, to "bring" it "down to the present

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1 Sara Coleridge, 'Advertisement', S.T. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria; or, Biographical Sketches of my Literary life and opinions. Prepared for publication in part by the late Henry Nelson Coleridge; completed and published by his widow*. 2 Vols, edited by Sara Coleridge. (London: Pickering, 1847) Vol 1, p. ii.

2 Letter to Hon Mr Justice Coleridge, July 1843, *Memoir & Letters of Sara Coleridge*, ed. Edith Coleridge, First Edition (London: Henry King, 1873). 2 Vols. Vol 1, p. 282.

3 Stephen Hebron & Elizabeth C. Denlinger, *Shelley's Ghost: Reshaping the Image of a Literary Family* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2010), p. 114.

4 Virginia Woolf, *Sara Coleridge*, in *Death of the Moth and other essays* (London: Penguin, 1961, first pub. 1942) p. 101.

5 *Memoir & Letters* (1873), p. 281.

6 *Memoir & Letters* (1873), p. 282.

hour", applying it to "subjects which are even now engaging public attention".[7] In *Biographia 1847*, Sara applies Coleridge's "philosophical Christianity"[8] to the religious controversies of the 1840s; a project she had begun in her essay *On Rationalism*.[9] The fragmentary nature of Coleridge's materials, a formidable obstacle to his posthumous reception, as John Stuart Mill had observed, invited such a process of creative reinterpretation.[10] Sara had recognized this as early as September 1834: "STC's works must be reissued, but not […] disjointed and unaccompanied", she told Henry. "Let them be set forth […] with the complete scheme of arguments which convinced his own mind".[11] Coleridge's editor, Sara understood, must interpret his scattered, incomplete materials as a cohesive whole. Such creative editorial mediation, Sara believed, would show how all Coleridge's writings "had a determinate object and referred to a regular system of thought".[12] Despite her virtual anonymity on the title page of *Biographia 1847*, where she appears merely as STC's late editor's "widow", her literary practice is boldly confident.

When the assaults on Coleridge's reputation began, immediately following his death, the Coleridge family, and Wordsworth, had initially looked to Hartley to defend STC. De Quincey's allegations of plagiarism from German sources required the preparation of a new edition of *Biographia*, and Hartley was expected to write the introduction. He never did so, declaring himself intellectually unfitted to the task, unable to do justice to "the Metaphysical portion" of *Biographia.* He found Coleridge's "greatness" of mind "too large" and "too high" for his "apprehension".[13] He lacked, he said, STC's "power" to find "in the acts of the pure reason a permanence—truth—beauty—and supersensuous life".[14] Furthermore, Hartley seems to have harboured a nagging unease about the extent to which Coleridge might have relied on books, rather than memory or his own notes, while dictating *Biographia:* "I do not think he had the works of Schelling by him", he comments tentatively, adding that the uncertainty "perplexes and pains" him "deeply".[15] Of course, Hartley had been staying at Calne with his father during his summer vacation of 1815. He had borrowed some of STC's books; and Wordsworth and Southey worried that Coleridge would unbalance Hartley's mind with arcane metaphysics. Holmes even speculates that Hartley may have had "some influence on the writing of *Biographia*".[16] Hartley knew, too, that problems of textual instability in *Biographia* were associated with STC's drug addiction and neuroses, particularly the

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7 Sara Coleridge, *Essays on His Own Times, by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, edited by his Daughter* (London: Pickering, 1850), p. lxxxiv.

8 *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. cxxxvii.

9 Sara Coleridge, *On Rationalism*, published in 1843 as "Appendix C" of the Fifth edition of *Aids to Reflection*.

10 *Coleridge*, in *Mill on Bentham and Coleridge, with an Introduction by FR Leavis* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1950), p. 133.

11 Sara Coleridge, Letter to Henry Nelson Coleridge, cited in Bradford Keyes Mudge, *Sara Coleridge, A Victorian Daughter* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), Mudge pp. 76 – 77.

12 SC, Letter to HNC, Mudge, pp. 76 – 77.

13 *Letters of Hartley Coleridge*, ed. G. E. Griggs & E. L. Griggs (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 194.

14 *Letters of Hartley Coleridge*, p. 210.

15 *Letters of Hartley Coleridge*, p. 242.

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

morbid anxieties he suffered in working to a deadline. Discussion of textual characteristics would encompass matters of personality, to which, says Hartley, "it is painful to allude".[17] This, of course, was precisely the challenge that Sara took on.

She devotes the first 43 pages of her introduction to the topic of plagiarism; specifically, the charges advanced against Coleridge, first by De Quincey, and then by the Scottish philosopher, J F Ferrier. In her opening sentence, Sara indicates the rigorous professionalism of her approach, explaining that Ferrier's article "directed" her "to those passages in the works of Schelling and Maass, to which references are given in the following pages, - to most of them immediately, and to a few more through the strict investigation which it occasioned";[18] Sara then declares that her editorial procedure will enable "the reader of the present edition […] to judge for himself": she is confident that "the facts of the case" will vindicate STC. Hartley had warned Henry, soon after Ferrier's article appeared, that the general ignorance of German philosophy in Britain would significantly prejudice Coleridge's reputation: "As there are probably not fifty copies of Schelling in the three kingdoms", Hartley wrote, "Nor many more individuals who would or could refer to them to any purpose, the attack may be carried into many, many quarters where it has no chance of fair examination".[19] Sara addressed this problem by enabling "free" scrutiny of the textual and philosophical evidence, which otherwise would have remained inaccessible to British readers, leaving Ferrier's contentions unchallenged. By setting out the evidence in parallel texts, Sara would move the terms of discussion from emotive allegation to scholarly analysis; also, she would illuminate Coleridge's ideas. An essay of 1856, by the Cambridge Biblical scholar and theologian, F J A Hort, reflects the success of Sara's procedure: "The marginalia on some of Schelling's treatises, published in the last edition of *Biographia Literaria*, are of great value, personal and intrinsic", wrote Hort. "They show well the instinctive rebellion of Coleridge's mind against the implicit materialism in some of Schelling's early doctrines".[20] Hort's essay as a whole reflects the influence of *Biographia 1847*. His approval is significant in that, as Graham Neville recently observed, "Hort's work in […] textual criticism and historical theology", required scholarship to be "honest", "untrammeled", and "scientific".[21] As Hort indicates, Sara's strategy reveals fine philosophical distinctions; an opportunity that J F Ferrier, intoxicated by triumphant indignation, notoriously missed.

It was in March 1840, in *Blackwood's Magazine,* that James Frederick Ferrier had launched his "ferocious assault" against Coleridge.[22] At the outset of his

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[17] *Letters of Hartley Coleridge*, p. 242.
[18] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. v.
[19] *Letters of Hartley Coleridge*, p. 241.
[20] FJA Hort, *Coleridge*, *Cambridge Essays Contributed by Members of the University*, 1856 (London: Parker, 1856), p. 325 fn.
[21] Graham Neville, *Coleridge and Liberal Religious Thought: Romanticism*, *Science and Theological Tradition* (London: Tauris, 2010), p. 89.
[22] Thomas McFarland, *Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 5.

confident impeachment, Ferrier invokes "truth and justice"; and he finishes with a dramatic courtroom flourish: "Let all men know and consider that plagiarism, like murder, sooner or later, will out".[23] Ferrier intends his uncompromising exposure to serve as a deterrent: "our purpose will have been answered, should any future author who may covet his neighbour's Pegasus or prose-nag, and conceive that the high authority of Coleridge may […] justify him in making free with them, be deterred by the example we have now put forth in terrorem".[24] Ferrier felt his case to be unanswerable, superceding all previous discussions: "We are aware that this subject is not now broached for the first time. It was mooted some years ago […] Mr. De Quincey appearing for the prosecution, and Mr. J.C. Hare for the defence". The legal terminology is revealing of Ferrier's whole attitude, as is his dismissal of De Quincey and Hare: "On both sides the case was very badly conducted; indeed", he asserts, "it was altogether bungled. Neither party appears to have possessed a competent knowledge of the facts. […] [Hare] talks of Coleridge having transferred 'half a dozen pages' […] of Schelling. By the heavens!" Ferrier exclaims exultantly, "They are nearer twenty!"[25]

More than five years earlier, in November 1834, De Quincey had revealed what he alleged to be "barefaced plagiarism" in Coleridge's "dissertation upon the reciprocal relations of the Esse and the Cogitare" in *Biographia*.[26] However, De Quincey wrote with a sympathetic insight entirely lacking in the quasi-judicial examination conducted by Ferrier. De Quincey left Coleridge's reputation essentially intact: "I will assert […] that, having read for thirty years in the same track as Coleridge […] and having thus discovered a large variety of trivial thefts, I do, nevertheless, most heartily believe him to have been so entirely original in all his capital pretensions, as any […] man that has ever existed".[27] Maintaining his respect for Coleridge's power and originality of intellect, De Quincey presented Coleridge's appropriations as a psychological puzzle: "Had then Coleridge any need to borrow from Schelling? Not at all: - there lay the wonder. He spun daily and at all hours […] from the loom of his own magical brain, theories more georgeous by far […] such as Schelling—no nor any German that ever breathed […] could have emulated in his dreams".[28] Coleridge's appropriations, then, were petty dishonesties, futile and inexplicable. However, De Quincey combined his exposure of plagiarisms with damaging allegations about Coleridge's opium addiction, and a damning presentation of the Coleridges' marriage; including a cruelly scathing account of Sara Fricker Coleridge.

However offensive and hurtful for the Coleridge family, De Quincey's articles did not have the same catastrophic potential as Ferrier's to destroy

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[23] McFarland, p. 6.
[24] Mc Farland, p. 5.
[25] McFarland, p. 19.
[26] Thomas De Quincey, *Recollections of the Lakes & The Lake Poets*, ed. David Wright (Penguin, 1970), p. 39.
[27] De Quincey, *Recollections*, pp. 40 – 41.
[28] De Quincey, *Recollections*, p. 40.

STC's literary and philosophical reputation. Julius Hare, author in 1835 of the initial defence, urged Sara that it would be "indispensable" for her "to answer" Ferrier's "various charges".[29] E L Griggs, in his biography of Sara, described "the weighing of Coleridge's indebtedness to Schelling" as her "most difficult task" in editing *Biographia*.[30] However, Sara's exhaustive critical research—a truly heroic pioneering endeavour—would enable her to succeed in answering Ferrier.[31] Arthur Thomson, Ferrier's twentieth century biographer, admits as much: "it would have been much more convincing", he observes of Ferrier's article, "if the passages involved had been printed in parallel columns and accompanied by an analysis of the works from which they were taken".[32] This was Sara's method: as Thomson implies, Sara is more rigorous in her presentation of textual and philosophical material. Thomson questions Ferrier's scholarly authority, criticizing his attitude to his subject, and an imprecision in his treatment of philosophical texts and ideas. "When dealing with such an obscure and complicated study", writes Thomson, "moral indignation is a poor substitute for a precise citation of parallel passages and a wide familiarity with the questions at issue".[33] Thomson places Ferrier's article in context of his academic career in Scotland: particularly, his promotion of Schelling's ideas in Scottish philosophical controversies about knowledge and belief. An exposure of Coleridge's plagiarisms, therefore, and the alleged inadequacy of commentators such as De Quincey and Hare, provided Ferrier with an obvious opportunity for self-promotion, as the leading British authority on German ideas; as well as asserting the superiority of Scottish philosophy over English. However, "in later years", Ferrier came to accept Sara's position, that "the parallels" between Coleridge and Schelling should be ascribed, not to "wilful plagiariasm", but "forgetfulness";[34] which, though a simplification of Sara's account, confirms the success of her defence. De Quincey, meanwhile, was entirely persuaded by Sara's "justification" of STC, admitting, in 1854, that he regarded "her mode of argument as unassailable".[35]

The achievement of Sara's 1847 edition has been recognized ever since, by Coleridge's admirers and detractors alike; including, for example, Norman Fruman and Thomas McFarland. Fruman, in 1985, reviewing the Bate & Engell edition, acknowledged Sara's rigorous thoroughness in laying "damaging materials clearly before the reader"; adding that her "sensitivity to the distorting pressures of personal bias […] has not been approached by any subsequent editor".[36] In *Coleridge: The Damaged Archangel*, Fruman had made

[29] Julius Hare, Letter to Sara Coleridge, 1840, cited E. L. Griggs, *Coleridge Fille: A Biography of Sara Coleridge* (London: Oxford University Press, 1940), p.148.
[30] *Coleridge Fille,* p. 40.
[31] Jack Stillinger, *Multiple Authorship and The Myth of Solitary Genius* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 111.
[32] Arthur Thomson, *Ferrier of St Andrews: An Academic Tragedy* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1985), p. 47.
[33] Thomson, p. 47.
[34] Thomson, p. 48.
[35] Thomas De Quincey, cited Frederick Burwick, *De Quincey on Coleridge* in *Coleridge's Afterlives*, ed. James Vigus and Jane White (Basignstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 39.
[36] Norman Fruman, 'Aids to Reflection on a New Biographia', *Studies in Romanticism*, 24, pp. 141 – 142.

extensive use of Sara's notes and translations, commenting, for example: "Coleridge's debts are much more easily followed in the edition of Sara Coleridge […] than in Shawcross. She also gives some of STC's marginalia from Maass".[37] In 1969, McFarland had indicated the decisive importance of Sara's contribution: "The year 1847, as the publication date of the second edition of the *Biographia*, marks an epoch in the [plagiarism] controversy, for since that time, though special emphases have changed, no new defences have appeared for Coleridge";[38] Jack Stillinger echoed this favourable verdict in 1991.[39] McFarland, moreover, regarded Sara's rebuttal of Ferrier as largely successful "in its principal aim, the vindication of Coleridge's moral reputation"; though he added that she is "less successful in saving his philosophical reputation".[40] The reason, I would suggest, is that, in promoting Coleridge's reputation as a Christian philosopher, Sara, as theologian, has her own agenda in applying Coleridgean ideas to the religious debates of her own time.

Two significant contributions to the plagiarism discussion have appeared in the past decade: Tilar J. Mazzeo's historicist study, *Plagiarism and Literary Property in the Romantic Period,* in 2007; and Andrew Keanie's brilliantly perceptive essay, 'Coleridge and Plagiarism', in the *Oxford Handbook of Coleridge*, in 2009. Keanie draws attention to Coleridge's exhibiting the whole "spectrum of himself […] viva voce", and seeking to translate "the energy of his speaking self into textual form by a process of "inspissation".[41] For Keanie, as for Sara, plagiarism is a matter of Coleridge's whole creative personality. Mazzeo, however, shows that "authors in early nineteenth century Britain" understood plagiarism "primarily" in "aesthetic", not "moral terms".[42] Sara's perspective would therefore differ from Coleridge's, as constructions of authorship and literary property had changed by the 1840s; as shown by Ferrier's frame of reference. In any case, Sara's roles as proprietor of the whole Coleridgean oeuvre, and representative of the family, made a morally nuanced approach inescapable. Furthermore, as Mazzeo comments, "the morality of plagiarism" has remained "important […] in cultural contexts, post-modern or otherwise".[43] The most recent discussion of Coleridge's plagiarisms appears in Alan Vardy's excellent study, *Constructing Coleridge: The Posthumous Life of the Author*, published in September 2010.[44] While Vardy takes account of Mazzeo's emphasis upon historical factors, his tone is occasionally censorious, arising from reservations about the Coleridge family's ideological agenda in re-

[37] Norman Fruman, *Coleridge, The Damaged Archangel* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1971), p. 463.
[38] McFarland, p. 21.
[39] Stillinger, p. 106.
[40] McFarland, p. 19.
[41] Andrew Keanie, 'Coleridge and Plagiarism', in *The Oxford Handbook of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Frederick Burwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 443 and 445.
[42] Tilar J. Mazzeo, *Plagiarism and Literary Property in the Romantic Period*, (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), pp. 2 & 7.
[43] Mazzeo, p. 7.
[44] Reviewed in this Bulletin by James Vigus

presenting STC. Vardy argues that "the family executors" were intent on constructing "a coherent figure we call Coleridge" in the image of their own high Tory ideology.[45] Vardy therefore sees a Coleridgean conspiracy at work in the defences against plagiarism: "Coleridgeans", he writes, "have denied the charge […], contextualized it […], made it evidence of Coleridge's unique approach to the universality of ideas, or blamed it on poor memory (a strategy first suggested by Hartley to Henry Nelson Coleridge […]), repeated by Hare and then Sara Coleridge, rehearsed by McFarland, left unquestioned by Bate and Engell".[46] Of course, this summary pays indirect tribute to Sara's continuing influence. Vardy might also have added Shawcross; who, producing in 1907 the only new edition of *Biographia* between 1847 and 1983, declined to engage with the issue, accepting Sara's position: "I cannot believe that Coleridge is guilty either of insincerity or self-deception", states Shawcross.[47] Moreover, his 1907 edition is dependent on Sara's 1847 notes and translations; so, to a significant extent, is that of Bate and Engell. As Alan Vardy concedes, Sara's edition is "in many ways still definitive".[48] Yet, Vardy underestimates Sara's insights into Coleridge's creative mind: her discussion of Coleridge's "suffering humanity" and "nervous disposition" is far more than a plea for sympathy in mitigation of an unanswerable charge.[49]

Sara concludes her introduction with a poem, based on a "sentiment" STC "once expressed" to her:

> Passion is blind not Love: her wond'rous might
> Informs with threefold pow'r man's inward sight: -
> To her deep glance the soul at large display'd
> Shews all, its mingled mass of light and shade.[50]

Sara reveals the "shade" as well as the "light" in her presentation of Coleridge. Her sense of the subtle ways in which his opposing qualities 'intermingle', as she puts it, underlies her elucidation of his creativity:[51] Coleridge's "bright endowments" coexist with "stains of frailty". Sara's discussion of Coleridge's authorial creativity could not avoid what might, in other contexts, be damaging revelations. "It will already have been seen", she states, early in her introduction, "that no attempt is made to justify my Father's literary omissions and inaccuracies, or to deny that they proceeded from anything defective in his frame of mind"; she emphasizes, however, that his weaknesses are "involuntary defects".[52] Observing that Coleridge's faults have "not been fairly

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[45] Alan Vardy, *Constructing Coleridge: The Posthumous Life of the Author* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), p. 44.
[46] Vardy, p. 74.
[47] BL 1 Shawcross 243.
[48] Vardy, p. 80.
[49] Vardy, pp. 111 & 112.
[50] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. clxxiv.
[51] *BL 1847* Vol II, p. 772..
[52] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. xlvii.

reported or commented upon",[53] Sara admits that he "adopted" a significant "portion of the words and thoughts" of Schelling, "without himself making distinct and accurate references". She argues that he had "no design of appropriating" Schelling's work; following Hare's earlier defence, Sara points out that Coleridge had "repeated the very words of Schelling", thereby making it easy to identify them. Also, she contends, it would not make sense for Coleridge to have deliberately, and so obviously, appropriated material from Schelling, "at the same time that he was doing all that in him lay to lead Englishmen to the study of that author".[54] Sara attributes Coleridge's glaring unreferenced appropriations to idiosyncratic creative processes, associated with illness, exacerbated by "a mixture of carelessness and confusedness".[55] She explains that Coleridge "wove" passages from Schelling "into his work" from "recollection of the contents of his note-book"; even if he had a notebook to hand, "he mistook some of the translated passages for compositions of his own", because he would not originally "have noted down accurately the particular works and portions of works from which they came".[56]

Sara presents the causes of such clerical negligence as essential components of Coleridge's genius. She explains that his "power of abstracting" enabled him to retain "the spirit of works" he had studied, while "the letter escaped him".[57] F J A Hort develops this point, characterizing Coleridge's creative procedure as "using the sayings of others as a Nucleus for his own sayings".[58] What De Quincey and Ferrier had identified, therefore, in Coleridge's use of Schelling, was not an isolated instance. It reflected an ingrained trend, as Sara admits.[59] However, what Ferrier had alleged to be plain dishonesty, she presents as an idiosyncrasy of selfless genius. Mere legalistic questions of "exclusive property" rights, and "collateral benefits", would not encroach on the philosopher's dedicated "pursuit […] of truth": Coleridge was even known to have attributed his own ideas to someone else. The instances of alleged literary larceny were, in fact, symptoms of Coleridge's disregard of "all property, of what kind so ever, whether for himself or his neighbour".[60] In a footnote, Sara cites a letter in which J H Green attributes Coleridge's appropriations to "selflessness", which he defines as "absence of the sense of self". Green also observes that Coleridge's "system differs essentially from Schelling"; and that Coleridge's principles had been consistent through his whole career. Therefore, in Green's view, Coleridge's essential ideas "were only modified, and indirectly shaped […] by the German school".[61] Extending this point, Sara argues that the relationship of Coleridge's ideas with Schelling's "proves the truth of his

[53] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. xxxix.
[54] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. xii.
[55] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. xlii.
[56] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. viii.
[57] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. xl.
[58] Hort, *Coleridge,* p. 350.
[59] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. xlii.
[60] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. fxxxv fn.
[61] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. xxxiv fn.

assertion, that he 'regarded Truth as a Divine Ventriloquist'"; and that "the main and fundamental ideas of Schelling's system were born and matured in his mind before he read the works of Schelling".[62] At the very least, Sara felt there was "no reasonable doubt that [Coleridge] was in the same line of thought with [Schelling]—was in search of what Schelling had discovered—before he met with his writings".[63] A notebook entry Coleridge made in 1804 may support this.[64] Sara's—and Green's—position on the issue anticipates aspects of Mazzeo's recent interpretation. "Coleridge understood it thus", comments Mazzeo: "the similarities were not the result of wilful imitation, but neither were they unknown to him. They were the result of the unconscious, inevitable, logical coincidence of two intelligences inhabiting the same subjective experience".[65] However, the critical assumptions of the 1840s would not admit such "coincidence", having, in Sara's view, become intellectually, aesthetically and morally debased: "For one man who will fully examine […] the opinions, religious or philosophical, of a full and deep thinker, there are hundreds capable of comparing the run of sentences and being entertained by a charge of plagiarism".[66] The problem, then, in Sara's view, was not one of authorial or textual integrity, but the reader's moral weakness and intellectual limitation.

Sara has compelling evidence that Coleridge and Schelling genially coincided "in the same line of thought": she cites a report that Schelling himself had vindicated Coleridge, and quotes from a letter by Arthur Stanley, Dr Arnold's biographer. Stanley, who had recently met Schelling in Berlin, reports Schelling to have said of Coleridge: "I have read what he has written with great pleasure, and I took occasion in my lectures to vindicate him from the charge […] of plagiarizing from me: and I said that it was I rather who owed much to him".[67] Nonetheless, Sara admits Coleridge's inveterate habits of inaccuracy, and shows them to have arisen from a unique constitution, in which the mental faculties were abnormally, yet creatively, interconnected. "The door between [Coleridge's] memory and imagination was always open", Sara explains; and their contents were in a perpetual state of dynamic flux and interchange. This cognitive fluidity caused Coleridge "to overlook the barrier between imagination and fact"; yet, paradoxically, it powered the distinctive impulse of his genius, which, Sara explains, "was ever impelling him to trace things down to their deepest source", and "to follow them out in their remotest ramifications".[68] However, this mighty intellectual potential—the dazzling brilliance that had promised contemporaries, such as Hazlitt, so much more than it ultimately delivered—was inextricably associated with a paralyzing

[62] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. xiv.
[63] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. xxix.
[64] CN ii 2375.
[65] Mazzeo, p. 40.
[66] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. xlix.
[67] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. xxxviii – xxxix.
[68] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. xvii.

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John Beer has characterized "Coleridge's mind" as one "distinguished particularly by its processes".[69] Defining these processes, Sara identifies a crucial imbalance that was at once the energizing impulse and pathological limitation of his creative capacity.[70] Coleridge's "mind", Sara says, lacked "agility", and was unable to "turn the understanding from its wonted mode of movement" to "new tasks necessary for the completeness and efficiency of what has been produced in another kind".[71] He was constitutionally disabled from taking "the trouble of turning back" to attend to the managerial tasks of "arranging and methodizing his thought".[72] The sickness of what Sara defines as Coleridge's "bodily mind" determines his creativity: on the one hand, Sara explains, there was his "power of abstracting and referring to universal principles"; yet, on the other, this very power "rendered him unconscious of incorrectness of statement".[73] As Donelle Ruwe has pointed out, a source for Sara's construction of Coleridge's "bodily mind" is likely to have been Thomas Trotter's 1807 medical treatise, *A View of the Nervous Temperament*. Trotter defines "nervous disorders" as "an inaptitude to muscular action […] an irksomeness, or dislike to attend to business and the common affairs of life; a selfish desire of engrossing the sympathy […] of others to […] their own sufferings; with fickleness & insteadiness of temper ".[74] What Sara adds to such a concept of nervous disorder, in STC's case, is the awareness of power and disability co-existing in mutual dependence. Sara develops her account of Coleridge's neurotic dispostion by contrasting his "incautious and dreamy" brilliance with the accurate scholarship of the supremely "clear-headed" Sir James Mackintosh; and elucidates the paradox of the Coleridgean constitution in a striking analogy: "Just so many a nervous man can walk twenty miles when he cannot walk straight into a room, or lift a cup to his lips without shaking it".[75] This characterization of Coleridgean neurosis anticipates a formulation in Marcel Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*, in which a character, referring to a great poet confined in a home for neurasthenics, explains the correlation of acute nervous suffering with creative achievement: "Everything we think of as great art has come to us from neurotics", declares Proust's speaker: "we enjoy fine music, beautiful pictures, a thousand exquisite things, but we do not know what they cost those who wrought them in insomnia, tears, spasmodic laughter, urticaria, asthma, epilepsy, a terror of death that is worse than any of these".[76] On 21st February 1825, Coleridge made a notebook entry that records

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[69] J. J. B. Beer, cited Stillinger, p. 111.
[70] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. xviii.
[71] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. xix.
[72] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. xix.
[73] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. xl.
[74] Donelle Ruwe, *Opium Addictions and Meta-Physicians: Sara Coleridge's Editing of Biographia Literaria*, in *Nervous Reactions: Victorian Recollections of Romanticism*, ed. Joel Falfack and Julia M. Wright (New York: State University of New York Press, 2004), p. 257.
[75] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. xlii fn.
[76] Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*, Volume 2, *The Guermantes Way and Cities of the Plain*, translated by C.K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1954), p. 315.

what Morton D Paley has described as a "psychic disaster";[77] yet, from these anguished notes, *Work Without Hope*, one of Coleridge's finest later poems, emerged.

Sara herself had experienced the vital relationship of nervous suffering with intellectual and artistic growth: "my nervous trials", she wrote to a friend, "have been the source of some of my most valuable acquisitions".[78] However, Sara knew that nervous symptoms were seldom understood: "To the healthful and vigorous", she observes in *Biographia 1847*, the kind of exertion of which Coleridge was incapable, "appears nothing, simply because they *are* healthy and vigorous; but to feel all exertion a labour, all labour a pain and weariness, this is the very symptom of disease and its most grievous consequence".[79] Sara had explored this theme in 1834, in an essay titled *Nervousness*, composed as a dialogue between two voices, the Invalid and the Good Genius: "To be a fully competent judge of the complaint", pleads the Invalid, "as to its trials and requisitions, you should have been in the charmed circle yourself. There is a sort of knowledge which experience only can give".[80] Sara's view again anticipates Proust's presentation of neurosis. In *A la recherche du temps perdu*, a doctor, treating the narrator's grandmother for neurasthenia, confides: "I, Madame, I do not like you fancy myself to be suffering from albuminaria, I do not have your neurotic fear of food or fresh air, but I can never go to sleep without getting out of my bed at least twenty times to see if my door is shut. And yesterday I went to a nursing home […] for the purpose of booking a room for, between ourselves, I spend my holidays there […] when I have aggravated my own troubles […] in the attempt to care for others".[81] In an autobiographical fragment written in the final year of her life, for her daughter, Edith, Sara explains that "nervous sensitiveness", and "morbid imaginativeness", had "set in" with her "very early" in childhood. She recalls that STC was the only member of the Greta Hall household who "understood" the intense "nervous sufferings" that prevented her from sleeping; and would ensure that she had a "lighted candle" in her room.[82] In defining sympathetically the psychopathology that produced the unstable *Biographia* text, Sara is, in a sense, reciprocating this sensitive paternal kindness. As an adult, too, she had suffered the prostration of Coleridgean neurosis, which, as she explains in *Biographia 1847*, paralyses "all powers both of rest and action".[83] Eleven years before its publication, Sara had experienced a major psychological collapse, while in mid-journey from Ottery to London. Henry and the children had to proceed without her, and she remained at Ilchester for six weeks, unable to move from her room in an inn; her convalescence took a further five

[77] Morton D. Paley, *Coleridge's Later Poetry* (Oxford: OUP, 1996), p. 78. The notebook entry to which Paley refers is CN IV 5192.
[78] Sara Coleridge, cited Kathleen Jones, *A Passionate Sisterhood* (London: Virago, 1997), p. 293.
[79] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. xix.
[80] Mudge, p 215.
[81] *Remembrance of Things Past*, translated by Scott Moncrieff and Kilmartin, Penguin Vol 2, p. 316.
[82] Mudge, p 266.
[83] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. xix.

months.[84] It is not surprising, then, that in her autobiographical fragment, Sara refers to herself and her father sharing the same medical condition. She defines the "great misfortune of both [their] lives" as "want of bodily vigour adequate to the ordinary demands of life even under favourable circumstances".[85] The psychiatrist, Kay Redfield Jamison, in her study of manic depression and artistic creativity, supports Sara's self-diagnosis, identifying, in father and daughter, similar symptoms of affective illness and temperamental disorder.[86] Sara's experience of this shared medical history determines her construction of STC in *Biographia 1847*.

Donelle Ruwe argues that, in locating the imagination, and the sources of productive creativity, in the "bodily mind", Sara "proves that her own understandings of the interaction of […] body and mind are superior to her father's".[87] Certainly, Sara is unsparingly clinical in discussing his weaknesses; as she knew she must be, in order properly to explain the textual idiosyncrasies that had been so disastrously misunderstood. Nonetheless, there is a sense in which Sara's analysis is conducted from a viewpoint of superior insight. This is reflected in a key passage of her introduction, in which she describes Coleridge's flawed creativity: "The nerveless languor", she writes, "which, after early youth, became almost the habit of his body and bodily mind, which to a great degree paralyzed his powers both of rest and action, precluding by a torpid irritability their happy vicissitude—rendered all exercises difficult to him except of thought and imagination flowing onward freely and in self-made channels[;] for those brought with them their own warm atmosphere to thaw the chains of frost that bound his spirit. Soon as that spontaneous impulse was suspended, apathy and sadness induced by his physical condition reabsorbed his mind, as sluggish mists creep over the valley when the breeze ceases to blow; and to counteract it he lacked any other sufficient stimulus".[88] The Coleridgean text, then, according to Sara, is produced by a creative process set in motion by "spontaneous impulse"; which, subject to entirely arbitrary suspension, is "reabsorbed", to be disabled by the "apathy" attendant upon "physical" disorder.

This passage, from *Biographia 1847*, has a significant precursor in Sara's novel, *Phantasmion*, published ten years earlier, in which a character, named Penselimer, suffers a period of prolonged mental incapacity. Finally emerging from his torpid state, Penselimer describes the condition in terms that anticipate STC's disorder: in his nervous paralysis, says Penselimer, "self, shrinking from its natural limits […] sicklied the whole face of outward things, as vapours veil with one same lurid hue this earth, sky and water".[89] In this

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[84] Mudge, p. 94.
[85] Mudge, p. 249.
[86] Kay Redfield Jamison,*Touched with Fire: Manic-Depressive Illness and the Artistic Temperament* (New York: Free Press Paperbacks, 1993), p. 222.
[87] Ruwe, p. 230.
[88] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. xix.
[89] Sara Coleridge, *Phantasmion* (Oxford: Woodstock Books, 1994), p. 298.

state, Penselimer explains, the mind could only "multiply itself by a thousand vain reflections".[90] Similarly, in *Biographia 1847*, Sara describes Coleridge as imprisoned by "the tyranny of ailments, which, by a spell of wretchedness, fix the thoughts upon themselves, perpetually drawing them inward, as into a stifling gulf".[91] Sara emphasizes that such dysfunction stems from illness, not moral deficiency: "In these cases," she wrote in her *Nervousness* essay, "just as the body is constantly simulating some organic disease, so the agitated spirits induce the appearance of certain tempers which [arise] from diseases of the mind itself and occasion conduct which looks as if it were principled by envy, discontent, cowardice, or the weakest and blindest self-love".[92] This insight, that an invalid's behaviour may be misconstrued morally, is central to Sara's whole treatment of plagiarism: the "involuntary defects", which caused Coleridge to appropriate the words of Maass and Schelling, were symptoms of "bodily", not moral, disorder. Sara attributes Coleridge's acute emotional dependency—what she calls his "morbid intensity and tenacity of feeling"—to the same source. Coleridge's personal relationships were, she admits, "subject to such change and fluctuation […] as may have subjected his conduct to unfavourable construction".[93]

Sara's psycho-medical account of STC's literary incapacities counters one of Ferrier's most damaging contentions: that he had "stopped short" in delivering "a theory of the imagination", because he had exhausted the resources he had found in Schelling. With clinical candour, Sara states that, on the contrary, Coleridge "broke down in the prosecution of his whole scheme", disabled by his medical condition.[94] Similarly, Sara argues, "physical languor", combined with an "exhaustive intensity" of intellectual absorption, had determined the literary form of *Aids to Reflection*.[95] Dependence on Schelling is therefore not an issue, intellectually or morally. Coleridge's creative breakdown was, Sara shows, further exacerbated by his intense anxieties of reception. Coleridge's work, and particularly *Biographia*, aimed to "introduce new thought to the public".[96] As Lucy Newlyn comments: "Coleridge's struggle as […] a prose writer was marked by the double bind of needing to create 'the taste by which he is enjoyed'—or rather, of having to induce the faculty by which he was to be understood; and, at the time of *Biographia*, Coleridge was addressing an audience he had not yet invented".[97] Sara recognized this, and her 1847 edition was an attempt to create its 'fit audience'. Sara describes how the "process" of the reception of Coleridge's philosophical work was "full of conflict and struggle", inducing in him a "haunting dread". This intense anxiety "acted as a narcotic", Sara says; by deepening Coleridge's despondency, it increased his

[90] *Phantasmion*, p. 299.
[91] *BL 1847* Vol II, p. 775.
[92] Mudge, p. 203.
[93] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. xlvii.
[94] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. xxi.
[95] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. clxviii, fn.
[96] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. xx.
[97] Lucy Newlyn, *The Anxiety of Reception* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 50-51.

literary "inertness".[98] The reference to "narcotic" is suggestive—particularly in light of Cottle's and De Quincey's revelations about Coleridge's opium use. Moreover, Sara admits that *Biographia* was "composed at that period of [Coleridge's] life when his health was most deranged, and his mind most subjected to the influence of bodily disorder".[99]

In 1837, Joseph Cottle had published a letter, written by Coleridge in June 1814, specifically for posthumous publication, presenting himself as an exemplar of the dangers of taking opium. Henry had vehemently disapproved of Cottle's publishing the letter; in *Biographia 1847*, though, Sara agrees that Coleridge would have wished his sufferings to be known, to serve as a warning.[100] De Quincey's discussion of Coleridge's opium use was more damaging, however. Sara comments: "Of all the censors of Mr. Coleridge, Mr. De Quincey is the one whose remarks are most worthy of attention". However, although he had "inward sympathy" with Coleridge, and was capable of "beholding his mind as it actually existed, in all the intermingling shades of reality", De Quincey, states Sara, "had seen Coleridge's mind too much in the mirror of his own".[101] His account of Coleridge contained, therefore, a fundamental error: De Quincey wrongly thought Coleridge's "constitution" to be "strong and excellent", and that he had taken opium as "a source of luxurious sensations". Coleridge had "endeavoured", according to De Quincey, when "youthful blood no longer sustained the riot of his animal spirits" to "excite them by artificial stimulants".[102] Sara counters this decisively: De Quincey, she asserts, "mistook a constitution that had vigour in it for a vigorous constitution". She continues, with almost shocking candour: Coleridge's "body" was "originally full of life, but it was full of death also from the first; there was in him a slow poison, which gradually leavened the whole lump, and by which his muscular frame was slackened and stupefied".[103] Sara explains, in light of her diagnosis, that Coleridge took opium therapeutically: "that the power of medicine might keep down the agitations of his nervous system, like a strong hand grasping the jangled strings of some shattered lyre".[104] In 1989, George Pollock, a past President of the American Psychiatric Association, concurred: he related Coleridge's "use of opium" to manic depression, describing it as "a self-therapy to keep his affects in some kind of manageable equilibrium".[105] However, although Sara presents Coleridge as having fallen "ignorantly and innocently" into taking opium, she admits that "the unregulated use" of the drug had been "a calamity" for him.[106]

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[98] *BL* 1847 Vol 1, pp. xx – xxi
[99] *BL* 1847 Vol 1, p. xxi.
[100] *BL 1847*, Vol II, p. 771.
[101] *BL 1847*, Vol II, p. 772.
[102] De Quincey, *Recollections*, p.75.
[103] *BL 1847* Vol II, p. 772.
[104] *BL 1847* Vol II, p. 773.
[105] George Pollock, cited Stephen M. Weissman, *His Brother's Keeper: A Psychobiography of ST Coleridge* (Connecticut: International Universities Press, 1989), p. ix.
[106] *BL 1847* Vol II, p. 770.

While Sara is remarkably candid in defining STC's flaws and limitations, showing that his faculties, "compounded and balanced as they were, enabled him to do that which he did, and possibly that alone",[107] she aims to present what he had achieved. A significant point, for example, in Sara's defence of Coleridge, is the scope of his theme, which transcended that of any of his sources. "In the application of philosophical principles to the explanation of Catholic faith", Sara contends, "no German had preceded him".[108] Furthermore, Coleridge's relationship with German thought in *Biographia* would prove to be merely an insignificant contribution to a far greater "whole"; which Sara describes as "the sum of his future labours", such as he had projected, "in the furtherance of truth".[109] The "total result" of Coleridge's "productions", therefore, his "whole work", Sara believes, will place him far above the reach of his ruthless careerist attackers; who, as "vultures[,] hunt for things corrupt in nature".[110] Having placed the problem of plagiarism in context of Coleridge's psychological history, Sara sets out to elucidate his Christian philosophy, in relation particularly to the restive religious culture of early Victorian England; as Sara's correspondent, Aubrey De Vere, wrote, "everyone is talking theology".[111] She aims, particularly, to address "misconceptions and misrepresentations" of Coleridge's religious thought, and to explain the "formation" of his ideas.[112] Sara defines STC's "vocation" as the touchstone by which his whole career is to be understood: this was, she says, "to defend the Holy Faith by developing it, and showing its accordance and identity with ideas of reason".[113] As Eleanor A Towle, Sara's first biographer, remarked in 1912: her "great characteristic was the radiant spirituality of her intellectual and imaginative being".[114] Sara's "spirituality" underlies her commitment to develop, in context of her father's work, "the religion of the heart" and "the law written in the heart".[115]

Sara pursues this theme, showing how Coleridge's ideas had developed with "a steady coherency of thought and action", and a committed self-sacrificing independence.[116] Coleridge would have developed the same philosophy, Sara argues, regardless of formative background: had he "been born in the Church of Rome, or in the bosom of some Protestant sect", he would have "arrived at conclusions substantially the same as those which now appear" in his "writings".[117] Even Coleridge's early Unitarian phase, Sara asserts, reflects his concern with "general principles of religion", rather than adherence to a "sect".

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[107] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. xix.
[108] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. xxvii.
[109] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. xxvii.
[110] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. xlix.
[111] Aubrey De Vere, Letter to Sara Coleridge, cited Wilfred Ward, *The Life of John Henry Cardinal Newman* (London: Longmans, 1912), p. 309.
[112] *BL 1847* Vol1, p. xlvii.
[113] *BL 1847* Vol1, p. lxv.
[114] Eleanor A. Towle, *A Poet's Children: Hartley and Sara Coleridge* (London: Methuen, 1912), p. 119.
[115] *BL 1847* Vol1, p. cxxxix.
[116] *Essays on His Own Times*, p. xxii.
[117] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. lxx.

It was a necessary "strengthening experiment enabling his mind […] to arrive at a more explicit knowledge of the truth", and to develop a philosophy "exhibiting the universal ideas of Christianity".[118] The "insight" Coleridge "attained into the whole scheme of Redemption […] its deep and perfect harmony with the structure of the human mind", was, Sara asserts, "the product of his own intellect and will".[119] His "love of unity and dislike of partisanship in all its forms" had cost Coleridge "great effort and much sorrow", as the liberal theologian, F D Maurice, observed in 1842.[120] Sara emphasizes this, referring to his agonies of reception in face of what she calls "the light-reading and little thinking world".[121] Nonetheless, she feels that STC's detachment "from all outward connection with religious bodies" left him "free as air".[122] The religious philosopher of *Biographia 1847* anticipates, perhaps, the figure of "Truth" in Sara's poem on the *Doctrines of Grace*, written around 1850: from the noisy camp of political and doctrinal disputants, "Truth" withdraws to

> a silent dell
> Where Peace and Meditation dwell,
> Where no rude gales contending blow,
> But fires of deep Devotion glow.[123]

Similarly, in Sara's *Biographia* introduction, Coleridge's vocational isolation releases "the power given to individual minds to be what the prophets were of old, by whom the Holy Ghost spake, religious instructors of their generation".[124] Through such spiritual "power", Sara explains, "the promise of Christ to his Church" is fulfilled.[125]

The seminal religious 'instructor' with whom Sara most closely associates STC is Luther: a spiritual "hero", whose "mind" Coleridge regarded as "more akin to St Paul's than that of any other Christian teacher".[126] The association with Luther distances Coleridge from Anglo-Catholic doctrine: Sara vehemently refutes the view of STC's theology as "a stunted Anglo-Catholicism", and condemns as "radically wrong" the interpretation of it as a "half-way house to Anglo-Catholic orthodoxy".[127] The damaging prevalence of this opinion is reflected by John Henry Newman, who, in February 1835, commented that Coleridge, despite "defects of doctrine", seemed "capable of rendering […] important service" to the "cause" of the Oxford Movement.

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[118] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. lxxii.
[119] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. xviii.
[120] FD Maurice, *The Kingdom of Christ, Preface to second edition*, cited CR Saunders, *Coleridge and the Broad Church Movement* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1942), p. 193.
[121] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. lxviii.
[122] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. lxxii
[123] Sara Coleridge, *Collected Poems*, ed. with an introduction by Peter Swaab (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 2007), p 192.
[124] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. lx.
[125] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. lx.
[126] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. xciv.
[127] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. lx.

He further noted that Coleridge was at present "the oracle of young Cambridge men"; hoping fervently that Coleridge's influence would "prepare them (please God) for something higher".[128] Sara, however, argues that Coleridge's philosophy, inflected by an underlying "Platonism", was more purely spiritual than High Anglican doctrine. She criticizes, for example, Pusey's teaching on Baptism, in which "the soul […] passively undergoes" an "introduction of the spirit", as "the dead cage receives the living bird, or the lodgement of the spirit within it [,] irrespectively of its own moral state".[129] By contrast, in the Coleridgean view, the "will of the receiver" is engaged; and, by a gradual process, "yields to the pressure of the Spirit from without".[130] For Sara, this liberates faith from a "senseless dogma" based on "primitive Materialism". In the same way, Coleridge's "spiritual doctrine" of the Eucharist frees religion from "the old sensualism": he understands the sacrament as "an assimilation of the spirit of a man to the divine humanity".[131] This epitomizes, for Sara, the essence of Coleridge's teaching, in which "our capacity for being spiritualized is unlimited".[132] Sara is concerned, in particular, to develop Coleridge's Christian philosophy as a unifying influence for the religious divisions of her time. The error in aligning it with Anglo-Catholicism, for instance, was a failure to recognize its reconciling potential. Sara focuses on Newman's *Lectures on Justification* to demonstrate how Coleridgean philosophy may mediate between low and high church fractures. Sara refers, with genuine admiration, to "Mr Newman's splendid work on justification"; which "the High Anglican party" took to be "an utter demolition of Luther's teaching on the subject".[133] However, confidently adjudicating between Luther and Newman, Sara concludes that Newman's position "is, in fact, a tacit establishment" of Luther's doctrine.[134] Both Newman and Luther, Sara contends, hold that "faith", in unifying us with Christ, "is the only inward instrument of justification"; and that faith "is one certain property […] distinct from love and other graces, not a mere name for them all".[135] Although Newman may have set out to contend with Luther, "on the main point", she says, "he has adopted the Reformer's doctrine".[136] Viewed in the unifying perspective of Coleridge's thought, Newman's and Luther's doctrines are, Sara contends, "different aspects of the same truth". Sara develops Coleridge's thought, therefore, as "a purifying and preserving" influence in an age of religious controversy.[137]

Sara relates Coleridge's sympathy with Luther to his admiration of another

[128] *The Letters & Diaries of John Henry Cardinal Newman*, Vol 5, ed. Thomas Gornall, SJ (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), p. 27.
[129] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. lxxxii.
[130] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. lxxxii.
[131] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. xci.
[132] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. lxxx.
[133] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. c.
[134] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. c.
[135] *BL 1847* Vol l, p. c.
[136] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. c.
[137] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. c.

great German, Immanuel Kant; emphasizing the contribution of each to his Christian philosophy. Sara is concerned "to set" Coleridge's "esteem" for Kant in its "true light, lest it be mistaken for what it is not", namely atheism.[138] Newman, for example, in 1839, had cited Coleridge as having "advocated conclusions which were often heathen rather than Christian".[139] On the contrary, Sara argues, Coleridge's great religious contribution was to show how "the characteristic parts of Kant's teaching […] might be brought to the service of Christianity".[140] Sara follows De Quincey in defining Kant as a "shatterer to pieces", arguing that his destructive process is a "preliminary to the construction of what is sound—a necessary work towards pure religion".[141] Sara points out, moreover, that it was Kant who "overthrew the grand atheistical argument of Hume" and "discovered […] the fundamental error in the Pantheistic system of Spinoza". While others had merely "abused it as impious", Kant "alone", Sara reminds us, had "proved it to be irrational":[142] Kant's independence of "religious shackles", therefore, enabled him to eliminate falsehood. Under the 'enlivening' and 'spiritualizing' influence of Coleridge, the critical philosophy would promote the development of religious truth. To Kantian thought, says Sara, Coleridge supplied "that imaginative power,—so necessary in religious speculation,—which brings the many into one, and judges the parts with reference to the whole".[143] Using a characteristic image, Sara describes the "critical philosophy", as Coleridge developed it, 'flowing' and 'blending' with Christianity "in one stream".[144] Kant's teaching, applied by Coleridge to "Christianity", purifies "faith" and "brings it into coincidence with reason"; enabling Coleridge to establish what, for Sara, is essential in her own life and work, as in her father's: namely, "the religion of the heart and conscience", in which "spiritual ideas" are "seen by the eyes of the spirit within us", to be "embraced by the will, not blindly and passively received".[145] This, for Sara, is a crucial point of religious faith, in which "reason" becomes a living mediator of grace. As Hort put it nine years later, "reason is not a mere faculty of individual men, as it is with Kant", but "a divine nature of which all are partakers and that equally";[146] this is a fair summary of the Coleridgean position Sara had established in *Biographia 1847*.

If Sara had one overriding purpose in *Biographia 1847*, it was to present STC as an authoritative teacher of Christian truth for her own times. From the outset, therefore, she associates her father with Wordsworth: the revered Laureate and STC are, she contends, complementary influences. If

[138] BL 1847 Vol 1, p. cxxxviii.
[139] John Henry Newman, *The State of Religious Parties*, in the *British Critic*, April 1839, cited Ian Kerr, *John Henry Newman* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, paperback edition, 2010), pp. 173 – 174.
[140] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. cxxix.
[141] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. cxxxi.
[142] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. cxxx.
[143] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. cxxxii
[144] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. cxxxiii.
[145] BL 1847 Vol 1, p. cxli.
[146] Hort, *Coleridge*, p. 325.

Wordsworth is the poet of Christian wisdom, Coleridge is its philosopher: "They who best understand the Poet and Philosopher", Sara argues, "best understand the Philosophic Poet his Friend".[147] She dedicates *Biographia 1847* to Wordsworth, signing herself, "your child in heart",[148] thereby invoking the intimate interconnection between the Wordsworth and Coleridge names. Sara recalls the collaborative origins of Wordsworth's poetic achievement: STC's "name", recalls Sara, addressing Wordsworth in her 'Dedication', "was early associated with yours from the time when you lived as neighbours, and both together sought the Muse, in the lovely Vale of Stowey".[149] She hopes that now, in the crowning years of Wordsworth's recognition, his association with her father will properly be acknowledged: "That […] as a Lover and a Teacher of Wisdom, my father may continue to be spoken of in connection with you, while your writings become more and more fully and widely appreciated, is the dearest and proudest wish that I can form for his memory".[150] In her editorial contributions, Sara amplifies STC's role in securing the reputation of Wordsworth's work, as the collaborator who first recognized and nurtured his poetic genius.[151] Wordsworth, says Sara, has expressed "the mind of the age in poetry"; and Coleridge has defined that poetry's critical and philosophical grounds.[152]

Sara's editorial comments often emphasize the Christian qualities of Wordsworth's poems, which she aims to associate with Coleridge's moral and religious philosophy; "the whole aim" of which is "the furtherance of man's well being here and hereafter".[153] In her introduction, Sara defines the relation of Wordsworth's poetry to Christianity: it is "not", she says, "religion itself, much less dogmatic divinity, but cognate with it and harmoniously cooperative".[154] Sara is referring, she says, to "much of" Wordsworth's "earlier" poetry, "in which formal religion is not apparent", but in which "the spirit of Christianity is the spirit of the whole".[155] Sara was by no means alone, at this time, in holding such a view. Keble, for example, paid tribute to Wordsworth's insight into "that secret harmonious intimacy […] between […] the severer Muses, [and] […] most holy Religion".[156] Newman himself, in 1841, had praised Wordsworth's contribution to the "great progress of the religious mind of [the] Church".[157] For Sara's American correspondent, Henry Reed, her literary criticism was distinguished by an insight "at once imaginative and

[147] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. clvi, fn.
[148] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p.i.
[149] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p.i.
[150] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p.i.
[151] For an illuminating discussion of Sara's readings of Wordsworth, in the light of S T C's readings of him, see Heidi Thompson, *The Construction of William Wordsworth in Sara Coleridge's 1847 Edition of 'Biographia Literaria'*, in *Grasmere 2009: Selected Papers from the Wordsworth Summer Conference* (Penrith: Humanities-EBooks, LLP, 2009), pp. 117 – 131.
[152] *BL 1847* Vol II, p. 446 fn.
[153] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. clvi.
[154] *BL 1847* Vol 1 p.cxxxiii.
[155] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. cxxxiii.
[156] John Keble, *A Memoir of John Keble*, Sir John Taylor Coleridge (London: Parker, 1869), p. 249.
[157] Stephen Gill, *Wordsworth and The Victorians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, paperback edition, 2001), p. 63.

analytical";[158] which is most radiantly evoked by her responses to the religious "spirit" of Wordsworth's poetry. Reed cites Sara's discussion of *The Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle*, in *Biographia 1847*, as "one of the choicest pieces of criticism in the language".[159] Recollecting a remark of STC's about the poem's pace and rhythm, Sara discusses its varied movement, culminating in a rapturous commentary on the closing lines: "I know nothing more beautiful or affecting", Sara writes, "than the final transition […] to the slow elegiac stanzas at the end, when from warlike fervour and eagerness, the jubilant menacing strain that has just been described, the Poet passes back into the sublime silence of Nature, gathering amid her deep and quiet bosom a more subdued and solemn tenderness than he had manifested before:—it is as if, from the heights of imaginative intellect, his spirit had retreated into the recesses of a profoundly thoughtful Christian heart".[160] The rhythm of Wordsworth's closing lines creates for Sara a deeply devotional moment.

For Sara, Wordsworth's poetry, as Coleridge's philosophy, addresses "the common heart and universal reason".[161] In joining Coleridge, as Christian philosopher, with the Laureate, whose poetry expressed "the truths" of "the Gospel illustrated by the Imagination",[162] Sara aims to secure due recognition for her flawed, maligned and misinterpreted father. She seeks to bring into wider currency the minority view of those Cambridge followers of Coleridge to whom Newman had alluded. In a footnote near the end of her introduction, Sara pledges to STC that his future recognition is assured, free from unjust misunderstanding. She adapts lines from Horace, subtly exploiting the original context to suggest the extent of her father's promised influence; her Latin verse translates as follows:

> Not always do rains drip into sweetly-poetic fields;
> Nor do unfair storms harass the shining sea continuously;
> Nor, my father Esteese, does inert ice stand on heavenly shores,
> Through all months; or with the North winds
> Do the myrtle groves of Coleridge toil
> And are elms deprived of vines.

She explains that "the twining vines are popularity and usefulness: the elms literary productions of slow growth and stateliness".[163] This dignified tribute implies Sara's confidence in the success of her editorial undertaking. As literary history shows, she had every right to be confident; moreover, *Biographia 1847* confirms Sara as a Coleridgean author in her own right, for her own times.

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[158] Henry Reed, *The Daughter of Coleridge*, L. N. Broughton, *Sara Coleridge and Henry Reed* (New York: Ithaca, 1937), p. 13.
[159] Broughton, p. 13.
[160] *BL 1847*, Vol II, p. 565, fn.
[161] *BL 1847*, Vol 1, p. clxii.
[162] Mudge, p. 230.
[163] *BL 1847* Vol 1, p. clxxxix fn, based on Horace *Odes* 2.ix 1-8.