Bristowa's Citizens?

Coleridge, Southey and Bristol

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COLERIDGE AND SOUTHEY'S associations with Bristol are commonplaces of Romantic literary history. Southey was a native of the city. Coleridge first visited in 1794 and returned sporadically over the following two decades. Bristol was, moreover, the place where the foundations of both men's literary careers were laid, where they wrote and published the poetry and prose that began to make their reputations. From the mid 1790s on, Southey and Coleridge's connections to Bristol were publicly acknowledged by contemporaries and seen as integral to the city's rapidly improving cultural reputation and to both writers' literary identities. In 1795 Coleridge and Southey featured in the locally published *The Observer … Being a Transient Glance at About Forty Youths of Bristol.* In 1799 *The New Bristol Guide* recorded that 'the names of Chatterton, More, Yearsley, Southey, &c. will be sufficient to rescue Bristol from the charges of native dullness and incapacity of science.'[2] (The *Guide's* emphasis on 'native' explains the omission of Coleridge who had been born in Devon.) Metropolitan writers also acknowledged their regional affiliations. In 1798 David Rivers described Southey as 'Of the City of Bristol'[3] and three years later in 1801 the *Monthly Magazine* elaborated on Bristol's good fortune in being able to 'lay claim to the soaring genius or enraptured muse of a *Southey*, a *Coleridge*, or a *Cottle*'.[4] Yet although it was a formative site—a kind of 'home'—for their literary careers, Coleridge and Southey's responses to Bristol as a *place* are strikingly ambivalent. It is their complex relationship with the city and the significances of this that this essay will explore.

What did Coleridge have to say—or not say—about Bristol itself? Although he told John Prior Estlin in a 1796 comparison between Bristol and London, that 'I love Bristol' (CL I 222), this was a rarely bestowed Coleridgean compliment. More often, he either commented on Bristol negatively, or ignored it completely. In his 1795 lecture 'On the Present War', Coleridge reminded his Bristolian audience of the miserable condition of 'the wretches that sadden every street in this City' (LPR 59).[5] In 1796 he urged a friend to visit as there were 'lovely scenes about [not *in*] Bristol' (CL I 222); in 1797 he condemned Bristol's 'local & temporary politics' (CL I 226); in 1799 he

[1] An earlier version of this was given at Kilve, September 2010. I would like to thank Peter Larkin and Shirley Watters for inviting me, and the audience for their perceptive and extremely helpful comments.

[2] Rev. G. Heath, *The New Bristol Guide* (Bristol: R. Edwards, 1799), p. 143.

[3] D. Rivers, *Literary Memoirs of Living Authors of Great Britain*, 2 vols (London: R. Faulder, 1798), II, 372.

[4] *Monthly Magazine*, 11 (April 1801), 221.

[5] That same local audience answered back. Here is Coleridge writing—very melodramatically—in 1795 about their response to his lectures of 1795: 'Since I have been in Bristol I have endeavoured to disseminate Truth by three political Lectures … But the opposition of the Aristocrats is so furious and determined … Mobs and Mayors, Blockheads and Brickbats, Placards and Press gangs have leagued in horrible Conspiracy against me' (CL I 152).

announced 'I never go to Bristol' (CL I 308), the 'Bristol Library is a hum & will do us little service' (CL I 455); and in 1800 he proclaimed that to the idea of living in Bristol 'my objections are insurmountable' (CL I 562). Coleridge's complex relationship with a place central to his own literary history manifests itself most clearly in his last Bristolian production, the *Biographia Literaria*, printed in the city in 1816-17. The *Biographia* skips over Coleridge's crucial Bristol period of the mid 1790s and its two volumes contain a total of only four explicit references to the city:

> I set off on a tour to the North, from Bristol to Sheffield … [BL I 179; Coleridge embarks on the *Watchman* tour of 1796]
> … I had scarcely entered the minister's drawing-room, and opened a small packet of letters, which he had received from Bristol for me … [BL I 183; an incident on the *Watchman* tour]
> … I should have been inevitably thrown into jail by my Bristol printer, who refused to wait even for a month, for a sum between eighty and ninety pounds, if the money had not been paid for me by … a dear friend [Poole] who attached himself to me from my first arrival at Bristol [BL I 186; problems with the publication of the *Watchman*]
> … Let the management of the Poor Laws in Liverpool, Manchester, or Bristol be compared with the ordinary dispensation of the poor rates in agricultural villages [BL II 45; on political economy and the importance of rustic life]

If Bristol is largely and strikingly absent from the text of the *Biographia*, it is also significant by its *relative* absence in Coleridge's poetry, including that written during the mid-1790s, when he was most closely linked to the city. For Coleridge the 1790s was his most productive period as a poet and he frequently drew upon the region in which he lived. To take North Somerset as an example, there is the interesting geographical specificity—or is it calculated imprecision—of the preface to 'Kubla Khan': the 'lonely farm-house between Porlock and Linton' to which Coleridge had retired in ill health (*Poems* Beer 203). North Somerset topography also featured in projected collaborations, including Coleridge and Wordsworth's plan for 'The Brook': 'a subject [Coleridge claimed] … that should give equal room and freedom for description, incident, and impassioned reflections on men, nature, and society' (BL I 195-6). Whilst a cherished locality was invoked in the concluding lines of 'Fears in Solitude':

> belovéd Stowey! I behold
> Thy church-tower, and, methinks, the four huge elms
> Clustering, which mark the mansion of my friend;
> And close behind them, hidden from my view
> Is my own lowly cottage … (*Poems* Beer 98)

Coleridge's investment in the personal and political resonance of selected West

Country sites was not unique. Southey, for whom the 1790s was even more productive, also wrote numerous poems about many of the places he lived in or visited, including the Hampshire village of Burton, Glastonbury Abbey, and the North Somerset coastal settlement of Porlock.[6]

Given his even closer connections with the city, surprisingly few of Southey's poems engage explicitly with Bristol as a *place*. From the beginning of his career Southey enjoyed an ambiguous relationship with Bristol: he took advantage of local publishing networks but simultaneously attempted to remove himself from any potentially deleterious associations with the city itself. His first major publication, *Poems* (1795), a co-production with his fellow Bristolian Robert Lovell, described Southey as 'Of BALLIOL COLLEGE, OXFORD'.[7] The description was repeated in the title of the sonnet tribute Coleridge published in the *Morning Chronicle* in December 1794 (*Poems* Beer 23). Southey too, then, resists invoking 'belovéd Bristol' or—as Coleridge might have preferred—'belovéd Bristowa'.

Southey's most extended meditation on Bristol was a poem written at a distance on 4 February 1797, after he had left to embark on legal training in London:

> Bristol! I did not on thy well-known towers
> Turn my last look without one natural pang:
> My heart remembered all the peaceful years
> Of childhood, and was sad. Me many cares
> Have changed! I may revisit thee again,
> But never with that eager glow of joy,
> As when from Corston to my mother's arms
> I hastened with unmingled happiness,
> Returning from first absence. Thy old towers
> Again may from the hill-top meet mine eye,
> But I shall see them dimly through the tear.
> There is a stranger in my father's house:
> And where my evil fortunes found a home
> From the hard world, the gate has closed upon me:
> The poor spaniel, that did love me, lies
> Deep in the whelming waters.—Fare thee well
> Oh pleasant place! "I had been well content
> To seek no other earthly home beside!"[8]

His major realised poetic engagement with the city of his birth, Southey here contemplates and writes about Bristol from afar, as if somehow distance made it more palatable. On other occasions Southey did consider making Bristol

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6 See Lynda Pratt, 'Southey's West Country' in *English Romantic Writers and the West Country*, ed. Nicholas Roe (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 201-217.

7 Robert Lovell and Robert Southey, *Poems* (Bath: R. Crutwell, 1795), titlepage.

8 R. Southey, *Common-Place Book*, ed. John Wood Warter, 4 series (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1849–1850), IV 38-9. [Hereafter cited in text as CB.]

itself the subject for verse, but discovered that his birthplace was somewhere he could more often contemplate writing about, rather than actually succeed in writing about. Indeed, the poems Southey did not write on Bristol subjects are in many ways as revealing as the few he did produce.

Southey realised early on his career that 'England should be the home of an Englishman's poem', but his own birthplace (his 'home') was not re-imagined in his epics or romances (CB IV 17). Bristol and its environs did, though, feature in a number of projected but unwritten Southey poems. These include: an 'inscription by the lime-kiln', to recall the spot in Bristol where in 1795 a poor man had fallen asleep and suffocated; an inscription on a suicide at Sea-Mills; and an eclogue on Southey's grandmother's home in the outlying village of Bedminster (CB IV 192, 199) He also planned a 'fine local poem' on 'our Clifton Rocks', that is the formation known locally as St Vincent's Rocks (CB IV 195). An undated sketch in Southey's *Common-Place Books* suggests what he might have achieved:

> It might begin by saying why I ought to celebrate them. The camp, my cavern, the legend of the building to which there leads no path, Cook's folly and its tale, the suicide at Sea-Mills ... Chatterton. Bristol, too, might have its fame. And Ashton might be mentioned. The hot wells, and those who come to die there. (CB IV 195-6)

This brief note for an unexecuted poem sums up how Southey could have engaged poetically with Bristol. It demonstrates that his response to what we might call his double 'home' (the place that was his literal birthplace and that witnessed his birth as a writer) was potentially made up of the interplay between a series of complex elements. We have here regional landscape; personal experience ('my' cavern, the ancestral Southeyan village of Ashton); local history (the Roman camp at the top of the Avon Gorge[9]); local legend (the tale of a Bristol man called Cook, who terrified of snakes, locked himself up at home, only to be bitten by a viper hidden in a stack of fire-wood[10]); present events (the extraordinary story of a man who in 1797 drowned himself in the Bristol docks and left behind a journal inscribed on the walls of his room[11]); and literature (the ever-present spectre of Thomas Chatterton). His plan shows that for a young, ambitious poet like Southey Bristol had real potential. It was a territory that could be written about and a place that was central to local, and indeed national, history and identity. The only problem was that Southey's 'fine local poem' was never written. The nearest Southey came to a cultural connection with St Vincent's Rocks was in the mid 1840s when Wordsworth suggested that a proposed subscription monument to the

[9] William Barrett, *The History and Antiquities of the City of Bristol* (Bristol: W. Pine, 1789), p. 11. Southey's father had subscribed to Barrett's book (p. xiv).
[10] For Cook's Folly, Heath, *New Bristol Guide*, p. 182.
[11] *Monthly Magazine*, 4 (October 1797), 321-23.

late Poet Laureate be erected there.[12] It was not, and ended up in Bristol Cathedral instead.

Coleridge and Southey's peers were, in contrast, significantly less reticent in proclaiming their own associations with the city. Indeed the local affiliations of writers such as Ann Yearsley were flagged up for contemporary audiences. Yearsley's cultural tag of the 'MILK-WOMAN OF BRISTOL', for example, ensuring readers' familiarity with both her regional and her class origins. Yearsley, like Southey and Coleridge, produced the almost obligatory poem on Chatterton.[13] However, unlike Southey and Coleridge, her poetry also engaged explicitly with living local dignitaries and contemporary events. Her *Poem on the Inhumanity of the Slave Trade* addressed her fellow Bristolians; *Stanzas of Woe* (1790) publicised her dispute with Levi Eames, an ex-mayor of Bristol; whilst other poems addressed local institutions ('To the Bristol Marine Society') and dealt with high-profile local events (including the Bristol Bridge Riots).[14]

Other contemporaries' engagement with Bristol was equally thorough-going and controversial. In March 1794 the Bristol-based Romaine Joseph Thorn published *Bristolia, A Poem* dedicated to 'THE NUMEROUS AND RESPECTABLE INHABITANTS OF THIS GREAT COMMERCIAL CITY'.[15] Bristol was, Thorn avowed, quite the equal of the great metropolises of the ancient world, Athens, Rome and Troy. He praised its 'Large, splendid buildings', 'delightful walks', shops stuffed with 'works of art', 'plenteous markets' and busy port.[16] He lauded Bristol's inhabitants for their commercial nous, philanthropy and loyalty to church and king particularly during the current period of national crisis and war with France, and tolerant multiculturalism, failing to dwell upon the fact that prosperity and ethnic diversity were the products of the slave trade. Edmund Burke, an MP for Bristol, had famously leapt to the defence of Marie-Antoinette, and Thorn continued the chivalric tradition by defending the women of Bristol against their detractors. He compared the 'blooming nymphs' of College Green to Diana,Venus and Helen of Troy, and recorded in a footnote that although:

> I have frequently heard the observation made, that the generality of the *Bristol Ladies* were *formerly* noted for *homeliness of person*, and an *ungraceful appearance* … I may venture to assert, that, at present, *the contrary is absolutely the case*.[17]

Thorn's poem 'in praise of Bristol' was the work of a loyalist in local and

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[12] Wordsworth to John Peace, 8 April 1844, cited in Basil Cottle, *Joseph Cottle and the Romantics. The Life of a Bristol Publisher* (Bristol: Redcliffe Press Ltd, 2008), p. 320.

[13] 'Elegy, on Mr. Chatterton', *Poems on Various Subjects* (London: Printed for the author, and sold by G.G. J. and J.Robinson, [1787]), pp. 145-49.

[14] 'To the Bristol Marine Society', *Poems on Various Subjects* (London, [1787]), pp. 15-22; 'Bristol Elegy', *The Rural Lyre* (London: G. G. and J. Robinson, 1796), pp. 100-109.

[15] Thorn had been born in Bridgwater, Heath, *The New Bristol Guide*, p. 153.

[16] Romaine Joseph Thorn, *Bristolia, A Poem* (Bristol and London: Owen Rees and J. N. Longman, [1794]), pp. 8-9.

[17] Thorn, *Bristolia*, p. 10.

national politics, and he quickly followed it with *Howe Triumphant*, a celebration of the naval victory over the French on 'The Glorious First of June' 1794.[18] His vision of a city populated by exemplary patriots who 'pant, 'gainst Gallia's sons … to mix in war' did not go unchallenged.[19] Within months another local poet, Robert Lovell, published an excoriating reply, one that painted a radically different picture of the city. The son of a Bristol Quaker and pin manufacturer, Lovell was an important member of the Southey-Coleridge circle, and responsible for introducing his friends to the ambitious Bristol bookseller, poet and publisher Joseph Cottle. However, a combination of his early death in 1796 and the disappearance of nearly all of his papers and correspondence means that Lovell's voice has been occluded and his importance overlooked. He was, in fact, an ambitious and radical local writer, one who achieved prominence, even notoriety, before his now better-known contemporaries.

Lovell's *Bristol, A Satire* is a direct response to Thorn, a response mediated, moreover, through a radically different (as well as politically radical) sense of Bristol's cultural inheritance, one born out of Richard Savage's *London and Bristol Compar'd* (1744). Savage (confined in Bristol Newgate and therefore not perhaps the most objective commentator) had decried Bristol as 'Thou Blank of Sciences! Thou Dearth of Arts!', attacked its inhabitants for their hypocrisy and barbarity and proclaimed the city a new Gomorrah.[20] Lovell built on this tradition of anti-Bristolian satire to decry 'the ILLIBERAL AND ILLITERATE' merchant-classes. Lovell's city is not the bustling, handsome new Rome of Thorn's *Bristolia*, instead it is a place of mock-heroic hellishness:

> Low in a drear and gloomy vale immured,
> By mud cemented, and by smoke obscured,
> A city stands, and Bristol is its name,
> By trade and dullness consecrate to fame;
> That o'er her sons in form of Plutus reigns,
> And binds their grovelling hearts in golden chains;
> This to their brain a leaden mask imparts,
> And makes their heads as callous as their hearts …?[21]

Lovell lambasts the greed, corruption, bad governance and philistinism of a city where 'Trade, mighty trade here holds resistless sway' (*Bristol*, p. 10), a place whose prosperity was built upon the slave trade: 'Slaves, torn and mangled, cultivate the sweet,/ That trade may thrive, and luxury may eat. (*Bristol*, p. 14) In a note he records that 'Next to London and Liverpool, Bristol employed most ships in the slave trade' (*Bristol*, p. 14). Whereas Thorn uses annotation to praise, Lovell deploys it to authenticate his condemnation,

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[18] Romaine Joseph Thorn, *Howe Triumphant!* (Bristol: S. Bonner, [1794]), p. 16.
[19] Thorn, *Bristolia*, p. 15.
[20] Richard Savage, *London and Bristol Compar'd* (London: M. Cooper, 1744), p. 8.
[21] [Robert Lovell], *Bristol: A Satire* (London: printed for the author, 1794), p. 10.

to document the fact that the city's much-vaunted prosperity is founded on blood sugar. A feature of Bristolian life that Thorn had completed ignored. Moreover, whereas some of his contemporaries celebrated Bristol as the 'dwelling place of 'Inspiration', Lovell's city is deeply antithetical to culture.[22] He echoes Pope to conjure up a city of provincial dunces:

> BRISTOL in thee has dullness fixed her throne
> (Congenial seat) and marks thy Sons her own …
> No blaze of wit thy palace shall illume,
> No ray of science pierce the sacred gloom …
>
> (*Bristol*, pp. 5-6, 8)

Bristol's 'achievements' in the arts are, for Lovell, represented by its ridiculous 'own bard' Thorn and by its inability to foster and promote Chatterton, 'luckless' because of his Bristolian birthplace (*Bristol*, pp. 2, 8).

The presence of these other texts—some by writers now familiar to us only from the margins and footnotes of Romantic literary history—further highlight that as an actual subject for poetry Bristol was relatively disregarded by the two writers of the period with whom its name is now most closely connected: Coleridge and Southey. So what was going on? What was there about Bristol that Coleridge and Southey felt the need to leave behind them or avoid writing about? The city had, after all, been the scene of the intense early days of their relationship. They had walked through its streets; they had participated in its literary and political culture; they had given lectures on politics, religion, the slave trade and history; they had borrowed books from its library; they had gossiped in Joseph Cottle's shop; they had written their names in the book of destiny at the same table of their Bristolian lodgings; they had published with local publishers and printers; they had drunk in its bars and coffee shops, including the Rummer Tavern; and in 1795 they had married two local girls, Sarah and Edith Fricker, in 'Chatterton's Church', St Mary Redcliffe.

For the radical Coleridge and Southey of the 1790s there was undoubtedly an issue with what Bristol represented: the wealth, commerce, and links to the slave trade lauded by Thorn and deplored by Lovell. Moreover, their concern over too close an identification could also have been connected to their awareness of Bristol's reputation for philistinism, a reputation highlighted by Lovell and recalled, and to an extent defended, in the *New Bristol Guide*:

> … it has been too much the custom to attribute dullness and insipidity to the inhabitants of [Bristol] … It cannot, reasonably, be expected that literature should flourish so much in a merely maritime and trading City, as in the Metropolis, or the Universities.[23]

[22] Christopher Sherive, 'On Leaving Bristol Wells', in R. Southey (ed.), *The Annual Anthology*, 2 vols (Bristol and London: T. N. Longman and O. Rees, 1799-1800), II, 243-5.
[23] Heath, *New Bristol Guide*, p. 143.

An awareness of—and agreement with—Bristol's negative associations can be seen in Coleridge's portrayal of 'Bristowa's citizen' in 'Reflections on Having Left A Place of Retirement':

> Once I saw
> (Hallowing his Sabbath-day by quietness)
> A wealthy son of Commerce saunter by,
> Bristowa's citizen: methought, it calm'd
> His thirst of idle gold, and made him muse
> With wiser feelings: for he paus'd, and look'd
> With a pleas'd sadness, and gaz'd all around,
> Then eyed our Cottage, and gaz'd around again,
> And sigh'd, and said, it was a Blessed Place,
> And we *were* bless'd. (*Poems*, Beer 96)

Coleridge's use of the archaic form 'Bristowa' is very unusual: a search of Eighteenth-Century Collections Online gave one other hit, and that too was Coleridge.[24] Much more common was another Latinate form 'Bristolia', as used by Thorn. 'Reflections' in addition combines the archaic 'Bristowa' with the loaded contemporaneity of 'citizen', a term radically inflected by the French Revolution and Coleridge's own politics . What exactly does it mean to be 'Bristowa's citizen'? In 'Reflections' itself Coleridge constructs the citizen—and by implication the place he comes from and which he represents—as other, a counterpoint to the rural bliss enjoyed by Coleridge and Sara. His wealth, moreover, is potentially derived from a tainted Bristolian 'Commerce', the slave trade or its associated businesses.

Yet let's step back slightly. How far removed from Bristolian 'Commerce'—in the widest sense of the term—were Coleridge and indeed Southey? Could they too be described as 'Bristowa's citizens', the label they were keen to avoid? Coleridge and Southey were in fact well acquainted with and participated in Bristol 'Commerce'. For both, Bristol was inextricably linked to the *business* and trade or profession of writing and the crucial first decade of their careers was founded on Bristol as a centre of literary production and distribution. The title pages of Coleridge's earliest publications bear this out. The topical drama *The Fall of Robespierre* (co-written with Southey) was published by Benjamin Flower in Cambridge (to which Coleridge had returned from Bristol in autumn 1794). Coleridge's relocation to Bristol in early 1795 signalled a change in his allegiances and provided evidence of the swiftness with which he tapped into local publishing networks. *The Plot Discovered* was published in Bristol in 1795, as was *A Moral and Political Lecture* in the same year. *Poems on Various Subjects* (1796) was printed in London for a

[24] In his 'On Observing a Blossom on the First of February, 1796', Coleridge described Chatterton as 'Bristowa's bard', S. T. Coleridge, *Poems, Second Edition. To Which Are Now Added Poems by Charles Lamb and Charles Lloyd* (Bristol and London: Cottle and Messrs Robinson, 1797), p. 108. The archaism whilst reminiscent of Chatterton was not borrowed from him. Chatterton used a different archaic form 'Bristowe', as in the title of his 'Bristowe Tragedie'.

congerie of publishers, including the Bristol-based Joseph Cottle; the *Ode on the Departing Year* was printed in Bristol by Nathaniel Biggs in 1796; and Biggs also printed the 1797 edition of Coleridge's *Poems* (including works by Lamb and Lloyd). Most famously—or should it be infamously—in 1798 the newly established firm of Biggs and Cottle printed the first edition of *Lyrical Ballads*. So, if *Lyrical Ballads* was an epoch-making production, Bristol was central to the production of both the book and the epoch.

Bristol book production was equally essential to Southey. His first solo collection of *Poems* appeared under the imprint of Joseph Cottle in Bristol, 1797, and quickly went into a second edition. Cottle also commissioned and published Southey's *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Spain and Portugal* in 1797 and the first two editions of *Joan of* Arc in 1796 and 1798. The first—1796—edition of *Joan* was, indeed, intended as a testament to the capacity and production values of Bristolian publishing. Cottle ordered new type and fine paper, in order to produce the 'handsomest book that *Bristol* [my italics] had ever yet sent forth'.[25] He also struck off special, larger copies of *Poems* and *Letters* for Southey to distribute to friends. Even later in the 1790s, when Cottle's business failed (partly because of his generosity to his authors) and Southey moved to the London firm of Longman and Rees, these local book-production connections were not severed. Rees had himself been a bookseller in Bristol and continued to make use of regional printers. It was the provincial firm of Biggs and Cottle which printed Southey's third collection of *Poems* in 1799, and subsequent new editions of this and the 1797 collection in 1800 and 1801, the second edition of *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Spain and* Portugal (1799), both volumes of the *Annual Anthology* (1799 and 1800), the Islamic romance *Thalaba the Destroyer* (1801), and in 1803 his edition of Chatterton and translation of *Amadis of Gaul.*

Although they benefitted from its publishing and cultural networks and contributed to its burgeoning cultural reputation, Coleridge and Southey tried to avoid being labelled as 'Bristowa's citizens'. By overlooking Bristol—by not writing about it, by distancing themselves from 'Bristowa's citizens'—they deflected their engagement in Bristol's literary 'Commerce', attempting to elevate their own status by removing themselves and their productions from the trade of writing and publishing. Ironically, by so doing, they lost the chance of publicly acknowledging the role they and their writings, all the poems, lectures and plays they wrote whilst based in the city, were playing in what their contemporaries (who were less fastidious about Coleridge's and Southey's Bristolian links) recognised as a local renaissance.

After years of avoiding writing about Bristol or of refusing to be identified as 'citizens' of 'Bristowa', Coleridge and Southey did both physically leave. They ended their days, respectively, in Highgate and Keswick. Yet Bristol ultimately proved to be inescapable. It pulled both Coleridge and Southey back. Long after Southey and Coleridge's final departures from the city, their

[25] R. Southey, *Poetical Works, 1793-1810*, gen. ed. L. Pratt, 5 vols (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2004), I, 201

Bristolian associations continued to be pointed out, most notably in Joseph Cottle's *Early Recollections*, a controversial intervention in mid-nineteenth century attempts to shape the image of the two poets and a forceful reminder of their connections to Bristol and to the publishing trade. Cottle was, moreover, not alone. In 1836 John Crudge celebrated 'many … who do Bristowe adorn', including Southey, Mary Robinson and the painter Thomas Lawrence.[26] Whilst in 1838 James Montgomery, lecturing in Bristol on another famous poetic resident, Thomas Chatterton, cited the city's 'supreme dominion in literature between the years 1796 and 1826', its importance as 'the place … where Southey, Coleridge, and Wordsworth, first tried their prowess and achieved their first triumphs in song.'[27] In 1839 *The Great Western, Cheltenham and Great Western, and Bristol and Exeter Railway Guide* reminded early rail travellers that Bristol 'has at all times held a high standing in the annals of literature … To the present age, it has furnished Southey, Coleridge … and many more.'[28] Local pride in Coleridge and Southey continues to the present day. It can be seen in the Coleridge and Southey manuscript and book collections in the city library; in local street names, including Coleridge Road and Southey Street; in local enterprises such as the Southey Playgroup, appropriate given Southey's popularising of 'The Three Bears'; and on numerous websites, including those of Bristol City Council.

Coleridge and Southey's complex relationship to Bristol tells us much about the roles of provincial identities and provincial citizenship in the forging of British Romanticism. It also has wider-ranging implications. It raises important questions about the reciprocal relationships between writers and places, about the geographical labels ('Lake Poets', 'Bristowa's Citizens') that we all use so easily, but which are also markers of territory, definition, possession and cultural capital.

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[26] John Crudge, *Poems, Partly Descriptive of Bristol and Its Environs* (Bristol: published for the author, 1836), p. 10.

[27] *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of James Montgomery*, eds J. Holland and J. Everett, 7 vols (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1854-6), V, 438.

[28] *The Great Western, Cheltenham and Great Western, and Bristol and Exeter Railway Guide* (London: James Wyld, 1839), pp. 225-6. The same guide described Hannah More as 'a notorious writer' (p. 226).