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A LITERARY COMPARISON BETWEEN WILLIAM HAZLITT'S THE SPIRIT OF
THE AGE AND RICHARD HORNE'S A NEW SPIRIT OF THE AGE.

BY

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A THESIS

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INTRODUCTION

The old order changeth, yielding place to new
Tennyson, Morte D'Arthur

Change is a universal thing. It is the rise and fall of the tide of existence. It is a natural thing and proof of the rhythm in nature. This element of unrest and continual search for causes in the minds of man is manifested in the words they write, for words are the symbols of thought. These thoughts, translated into the prevailing literature, are the reflection of the change in the universe.

In this study of two books, embodying the spirits of two separate ages, we shall see these truths exemplified. In Hazlitt's, The Spirit of the Age the men are secure in an accepted order and move with the current. Whereas the individuals in Horne's, A New Spirit of the Age peril the danger of a changing mode of literature. Their progress is slow. Their footing is not secure. They must watch the turn of the tide as well as the shore they have left.

While pursuing a course on the Romantic Age I became interested in William Hazlitt, one of its outstanding critics. I had heard of him, slightly, but his eminence had never been recognized in the literature
courses I had studied. He was a shadowy figure--in fact I did not even know his Christian name.

My first perusal of his works was sufficient to charm me and I became one of his literary admirers. Later I was informed that Mr. Horne had followed Hazlitt's footsteps by composing A New Spirit of the Age. I was anxious to see how it would compare with Hazlitt's work, and the following thesis is the result of this curiosity.

The first chapter of this thesis is given to a general view of the content of Hazlitt's work and any published criticism of it. In chapter two I follow a similar plan in giving the content of Horne's work. The next chapter surveys a selection of the poets treated in both works; and the fourth chapter does the same for the prose writers chosen by both critics.

When Horne wrote his book two of the authors discussed in Hazlitt's work were still living. That accounts for a separate chapter being set aside for Leigh Hunt and William Wordsworth. In the final chapter I endeavor to show how the two works compare with one another in general make-up.

This study has opened out to me a good view of the Romantic and the Victorian attitudes. May other students of literature find as much enjoyment in these works as I have.
CHAPTER I

THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE

Of all the nineteenth century writers few are more modern than William Hazlitt. Though dead for over a hundred years, he has left writings that are as pulsing with life as if written but yesterday. His life was marked by that feverish haste which characterizes living in our day. He, too, had to earn his daily bread and that by writing. The demands of literature-for-a-living are often tyrannical and exorbitant. Hazlitt with his powerful store of energy met these demands with a marvelous enthusiasm or "gusto" as he liked to call it. From it came that enormous flow of criticism which covered...the poetry from Chaucer and Spencer to Wordsworth and Byron; the prose, sacred and profane, from Bacon and Jeremy Taylor to Burke and Edward Irving; the drama in its two flourishing periods; the familiar essay from Steele and Addison to Lamb and Leigh Hunt, the novel from Defoe to Sir Walter Scott.1

The joy of action enveloped Hazlitt's whole person. Every fiber of his being tingled with life. He never tired. His later works were just as powerful as his earlier productions. Dying at the age of fifty-

1. Jacob Zeitlin, Hazlitt on English Literature.
three he leaves us to wonder why he did not burn out sooner.

Hazlitt was born of dissenting ancestors on both sides. His mother's family were prominent nonconformists even in Defoe's time, and his father was born of an Irish dissenter. It is quite evident that Hazlitt inherited his "dogged adherence to principle and uncompromising love of truth." At the age of fifteen he tried the ministry but abandoned its pursuit after two years of study. The next eight years he spent in reading, meditating, and walking. Those years were most fruitful for that was the time during which Hazlitt accumulated his great store of information for his later writings. Through the influence of his brother, John, he took up painting but was not successful. However, the years spent in the study of art were not wasted, for it was then his literary career had its birth. His training as an artist sharpened his glance and gave it unfailing sureness in catching essential characteristics. The rules of art gave him "...a standard, an insight and a taste," which later were to make him one of England's greatest critics.


3. Ibid, xi.
From art Hazlitt turned to writing. After being established in his proper domain he poured out of his literary cornucopia his marvelous writings. This supply was exhausted only by death.

Hazlitt wrote fascinatingly on a thousand things in general. The present treatise is concerned with only one of these, namely, his The Spirit of the Age, written in 1825. The Spirit of the Age is a series of masterful criticisms of twenty-four of the leading men of the time. It is a splendid portrait gallery in which Hazlitt places some of his contemporaries in the stocks and others on pedestals of fame. What Chaucer did in poetry through the Canterbury Tales, Hazlitt accomplished in prose through this succession of essays upon men and manners.

In painting his characters Hazlitt dwells on the personality, physical characteristics, powers of mind, style of writing, philosophy, and power of speech of each individual. The persons characterized belong to various fields of activity, namely, philosophy, poetry, politics, history, ministry, oratory, essay, and criticism.

The Spirit of the Age is a culmination of Hazlitt's opinions of his contemporaries. His former views of them have not changed but his expressions have
grown richer and nobler. The book, as a whole, absorbs one's interest but its most significant feature is the fact that it indicates

...what shape the leading figures of the age assumed in the remarkable brain of William Hazlitt.4

The first of these peerless character portraits is of Jeremy Bentham. In clear vision one can see Hazlitt sitting in his study and gazing out of the window. His eye catches the sight of Jeremy Bentham, his landlord, and he cannot refrain from penning that memorable passage:

...his walk almost amounting to a run, his tongue keeping pace with it in shrill cluttering accents, negligent of his person, his dress, and his manner, intent only on his grand theme of Utility—or pausing, perhaps, for want of breath and with lack-lustre eye to point out to the stranger a stone in the wall at the end of his garden...Inscribed to the Prince of Poets, which marks the house where Milton formerly lived....His eye is quick and lively; but it glances not from object to object, but from thought to thought...He regards the people about him no more than the flies of a summer.5

In the writings of William Godwin, Hazlitt discovered the characteristics of his age. He cannot agree with Mr. Godwin's philosophy and he does not hesitate to

Is truth then so variable? Is it one thing at twenty, and another at forty? Is it a burning heat in 1793, and below zero in 1814? Not so, in the name of manhood and of common sense!

If Hazlitt cannot agree with Godwin's philosophy he does not refuse to recognize the literary value of Caleb Williams and St. Leon. He designates those two works as the most excellent and forceful of the Romantic Age.

No one appreciated the genius of Coleridge as Hazlitt; and no one regretted the misuse of it as much as he. His portrait of Coleridge gains in power as Hazlitt proceeds in the work when suddenly he lets his reader drop over a precipice by breaking off suddenly in his description and asking, "What is become of all this mighty heap of hope, of thought, of learning, and humanity?"

His answer leaves us where we had fallen:

It has ended in swallowing doses of oblivion and in writing paragraphs in the Courier.-- Such and so little is the mind of man!

Hazlitt was a lover of truth. He hated dissimulation. He was fearless in uncovering sham and hypocrisy.

6. Ibid., 183.
7. Ibid., 200
as is evident in his character sketch of Rev. Mr. Irving:

...Mr. Irving, with his cast-iron features and sledge-hammer blows, puffing like a grim Vulcan, set to work to forge more classic thunderbolts, and kindle the expiring flames anew with the very sweepings of sceptical and infidel libraries, so as to excite a pleasing horror in the female part of his congregation.

Hazlitt finds nothing of literary value in Mr. Irving's writings. His honest opinion of them is that they are "trashy and hackneyed". They contain no ideas, for "he himself is the only idea with which he has yet enriched the public mind."  

Birrell, in commenting on the next portrait, regrets the extinction of men like Mr. Horne Tooke. He considers it a misfortune for our children of today never to see a "true Erastian in the flesh, or chuckle over his ingrained toughness of moral fibre."  

Hazlitt hated the politics of Scott with all the vehemence of his volcanic spirit, and Scott returned the compliment in a measure befitting his gentle nature. Their natural differences did not prevent Hazlitt's fair treatment of Scott's poetry and prose. It is not Sir

8. Ibid., 205.
9. Ibid., 211.
10. Augustine Birrell, William Hazlitt, 186.
Walter that Hazlitt describes but the author of Waverley.

Byron died while Hazlitt was writing this poet's sketch. Hazlitt then changed his tone to one of kindness as he intended the portraiture to be read by Byron and not to mar his memory. He believed posterity is the best judge of the value of a man's writings:

> The poet's cemetery is the human mind, in which he sows the seeds of never-ending thought—his monument is to be found in his works.11

Southey's hatred of Hazlitt did not prevent the latter's magnanimous description of the former's prose works. As Southey read the portrayal of himself he must have felt coals of fire heaped upon his head. Hazlitt's closing statement of that sketch is as fine a compliment as a close friend might expect: "With some gall in his pen, and coldness in his manner, he has a great deal of kindness in his heart."12

Hazlitt could never quite forgive anyone who changed his politics, and Southey, to his mind, had been guilty of such inconsistency. He admired Southey as a man who held to his principles except in his views on politics.

11. William Hazlitt, op. cit., 244.

12. Ibid., 252.
Quite to be expected is the portrait of Wordsworth as the central figure of Hazlitt's picture gallery. He was recognized by the critic as the best representative of the spirit of the age. This choice of position was probably due to the fact that he knew Wordsworth's poetry so intimately. Nothing escaped the eagle-eye of this character painter—neither excellence nor imperfections.

Sir James Mackintosh was next to feel the scalpel of Hazlitt. If names were substituted in this sketch the world today would have a perfect description of her present-day speakers. The influence of Mackintosh very well parallels that of our modern orators.

Hazlitt was ever on the alert to show the fallacies in any of the writings of his day. He is fearless in pointing out the fault in Malthus' thesis that man cannot exist without food and without propagating his species. Hazlitt admits the verity of the first part, and proves the falsity of the latter by stating that many people live their whole lives without gratifying the sexual passions.13

Biting sarcasm was one of Hazlitt's weapons for warring on his enemies. If he ever had an enemy it was, without the least doubt, William Gifford. Hazlitt, realizing that ironic sarcasm is harder to swallow than open

13. Ibid., 274.
abuse, metes it out profusely while portraying Gifford.

The next sketch is also of an editor and a critic. But how different from the preceding in tone and style! Hazlitt seemed to be looking only for flowers as he wrote this criticism of Francis Jeffrey. The last paragraph contains the highest compliments that one man can pay to another:

He is a person that no one knows without esteeming...He is a person of strict integrity himself, without pretence or affectation; and knows how to respect this quality in others, without prudery or intolerance. He can censure a friend or a stranger, and serve him effectually at the same time.14

Henry Brougham and Sir Francis Burdett are placed in the same frame for contrast. Hazlitt gives Brougham credit for a very scant intelligence whereas he makes Sir Francis an admirable gentleman who claimed only "common sense and common honesty."15

Hazlitt knew human nature tends to be calm when all things are according to its interests, and to explode like a volcano when contradicted. Thus he pictures Lord John Eldon. With the description of that fiery gentleman Hazlitt links William Wilberforce, a vacillating sort of

14. Ibid., 300.
15. Ibid., 306.
man, who was willing to do all the good he could without hurting himself or his fame.16

Of all these sketches, the one of William Cobbett is the most excellent, being replete with the picturesque. This passage typifies the exquisite ring of Hazlitt's artistic gift:

He has no satisfaction but in the chase after truth, runs a question down, worries and kills it, then quits it like vermin, and starts some new game, to lead him a new dance, and give him a fresh breathing through bog and brake, with the rabble yelping at his heels and the leaders perpetually at fault.17

Criticism makes either friends or enemies, as Hazlitt found out after his severe review of Thomas Campbell's poetry. This censure is softened in The Spirit of the Age as though Hazlitt wished to make amends for his former harshness. He does not change his opinions but expresses them in a kindlier manner. For example, in the first essay he dismisses Campbell's Gertrude of Wyoming with a slurring statement that it is simply an historical paraphrase of Wordsworth's poem Ruth.18 However, in The Spirit of the Age he declares certain passages of that

16. Ibid., 307.
17. Ibid., 321.
poem to "exceed all praise." Further,

There are other parts of this poem equally delightful, in which there is light startling as the red-bird’s wing; a perfume like that of the magnolia; a music like the murmuring of pathless woods or of the everlasting ocean.  

George Crabbe is characterized in the same essay with Campbell. The adverse judgments stated by Hazlitt in Crabbe’s sketch are sufficient to kill any aspiring poet. As one reads the description he feels no lifting of the spirit above the ground for the "view of the current of life runs slow, dull, cold, dispirited, half under ground, muddy and clogged with all creeping things."  

Evidently for the sake of contrast Hazlitt places Thomas Moore and Leigh Hunt on the same canvas—his enemy and his friend. The critic presents Moore’s poetry in the most ridiculous light; whereas he finds his satires on a level with those of Pope. Moore’s mere shade fades away under the glaring sun of Hazlitt’s praise for Leigh Hunt. As with most of his intimates Hazlitt is sparing of the space he allots to the description of Hunt. He considers Hunt the best writer of the day after Southey. Fear of partiality caused him to make the sketch short.  

20. Ibid., 331.
21. Ibid., 342.
Coleridge's portrait was among the first in this long line of paintings; Wordsworth's was the central one; while Lamb's put the final touch to the picture gallery. It is surprising that Hazlitt should have so little to say of Lamb, who was his staunchest friend. Hazlitt was attracted to Lamb by the latter's ability to "blurt out the finest wit and sense in the world."22

With the portrayal of Lamb is found a short sketch of Washington Irving, "Geoffrey Crayon." Hazlitt compares Irving with the established English authors and, of course, Irving falls short of his idea of a writer. He does credit him with one worth-while essay, the first one in the Sketch Book.

RECEPTION OF THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE

The criticism brought against the work of Hazlitt only shows how subjective are human judgments. Hazlitt, himself, may be said to be its first judge from his own words:

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

22. Ibid., 348.
not the verdict of posterity to bear me out in bestowing the most unqualified praises on their immediate successors, it is also to be remembered, that neither does it warrant me in condemning them.... Another circumstance that adds to the difficulty of doing justice to all parties is, that I happen to have had a personal acquaintance with some of these jealous votaries of the Muses; and that is not the likeliest way to imbibe a high opinion of the rest...I am afraid, therefore, that I labor under a degree of prejudice against some of the most popular poets of the day, from an early habit of deference to the critical opinions of some of the least popular.23

To Leslie Stephen the portraits in The Spirit of the Age are Hazlitt's best. The pictures contained in that array of personages are piquant and true. Like a suspicious lover Hazlitt ponders over the characteristics of his acquaintances. Even though his suspicions may be unwarranted they give sharpness to his insight. He expresses his feelings about every whim and gesture. But "Hazlitt is no mean assassin of reputations; nor is his enmity as a rule more than the seamy side of friendship."24

To another critic, Hazlitt was a man who "wrote with a pen dipped with gall...seeming indeed as if his sole business in life was to seek for faults."25

"Hazlitt's best book," thus does Birrell desig-

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nate *The Spirit of the Age*. In it Hazlitt has not altered his earlier impressions of contemporary authors nor "swerved an inch from the straight lines of his sinewy convictions" but his humor is milder. Ridiculous as it would be to think of *The Spirit of the Age* as a good-humored book, it is not distorted by passion and prejudice.26

If Hazlitt has been too harsh in dealing with some of his contemporaries there is room for excuse. To point out infallibly the characteristics of living authors, in a time so full of new ideas and changing forms, is a gigantic task. It challenges the powers of the most discerning critics. In *The Spirit of the Age* not one genius has been made a fool nor has a purely nominal poet been put on the pedestal for the worship of later generations.

If Hazlitt were to put his age in the cinema for the world today the outstanding actors would be Wordsworth and Scott, the one as the lifesaver of poetry, the other the maker of the world of romance and humanity. Coleridge would be the greatest genius.

Why did Hazlitt omit sketches of Shelley and Keats in *The Spirit of the Age*? The title suggests the answer.

26 Augustine Birrell, *op. cit.*, 196.
These two authors were not popular at the time of his writing. Since it was Hazlitt's purpose to write about personalities who had attracted the public notice, he neglected some of the finer poets and portrayed such lesser lights as Campbell and Moore and Crabbe. It is to his great credit as a critic that his opinions on these poets are still accepted in the field of literature.

How can his harsh treatment of those whom he at other times praised be explained? It must be remembered that Hazlitt's age was one in which blows were freely given and freely taken. If he sometimes treated his very friends harshly it was because he lost patience with their faults; and faults of great men are more glaring since they are on a higher candlestick.

When compared with his fellow critics Hazlitt manifested a wider sympathy with contemporary writers than any of them except Leigh Hunt. But he so far surpassed Hunt in discernment and power that he has earned for himself the title of the "best contemporary judge" of Romantic literature.27

CHAPTER II
A NEW SPIRIT OF THE AGE

Before considering A New Spirit of the Age it might be well to make the acquaintance of the writer who tried to follow in Hazlitt’s footsteps. Richard Henry Horne appears to have been somewhat of a roamer, not only as a traveler but also in his tastes and interests. He was educated at Sandhurst with the intention of entering military life. Failing to receive an appointment he joined the Mexican navy, at that time fighting for independence from Spain. After experiencing many dangerous adventures he came back to England.

He settled down and began a literary career at the age of twenty-five. Having tried various forms of literature, he had most success in poetry. His best works are his epic poem, Orion and his prose work, A New Spirit of the Age.

Shortly after the publication of the latter, the life of adventure started again. The gold of Australia lured him and he spent seventeen years in the gold fields. It was while there that he met a Mr. Hengist of whom he became so fond that he changed his baptismal name from Henry to Hengist.

Returning to England he resumed his writing but
the quality of his earlier work was lost. It has been said of him that the vast amount of his poor writings has obscured the beautiful things he had written in early manhood.

_A New Spirit of the Age_ is a series of essays on the popular personages of the earlier Victorian Age. There are representatives from the fields of theology, philosophy, science, poetry, fiction, history, biography, and criticism. This vast range of interests gives evidence of the spirit of the age as manifested in the literature of the period.

Horne was not the sole author of this work. His main collaborators were Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Bell. In speaking of these contributors, Horne tells us that the work was to be edited and partly written by himself, the principal and most valuable coadjutor being Miss Barrett. This joint project was accomplished mainly by letters interchanged between them.¹

It is difficult to discover accurately the work of any one contributor. Miss Barrett's part was to be strictly secret for she knew the danger of writing such a book and felt that being a woman she could not fight the

¹. Elizabeth Browning, _Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning_, I, 106.
war that would result.2 In his connecting paragraph to the letters which Miss Barrett sent him, Horne mentions "critiques chiefly by Miss Barrett, Robert Bell, and myself," but in the chapter itself no mention is made of Bell.3

From all evidence it seems that the contributors would send in opinions on the several authors and Horne would combine the ideas into a completed essay. The sketches of Walter Savage Landor, Richard Monckton Milnes, Henry Taylor, and P. J. Bailey are mostly Miss Barrett's. Those on Tennyson, Wordsworth, and Leigh Hunt are joint productions, while those on Dickens and Robert Montgomery are entirely Horne's work. In Miss Barrett's letters valuable criticisms are to be found on the various essays sent to her for criticism, and also suggestions for the inclusion of authors purposely omitted by Horne.

The sketch of Dickens, which introduces the reader to A New Spirit of the Age, is the most comprehensive of the twenty-five essays included in the book. No characteristic of Dickens' works is omitted and each is handled minutely by Horne. He does not hesitate to point

2. Elizabeth Browning, op. cit., 134.
3. Ibid., 103.
out any weakness or strength of the author. He considers this necessary to safeguard the public against anything injurious. The critic seems to possess an inexhaustible store of knowledge about Dickens. To his mind Dickens is a true product of the Victorian Age. He was the "genuine emanation from its aggregate and entire spirit."4

Landor is included among the personages of A New Spirit of the Age, not because he belonged to the Victorian Period but for his influence on some of its best teachers and representatives. Landor, purely classical in his poetry disregarded all dramatic principles in his dramas. Most of this sketch is biographical.5

To make a complete picture of the spirit of the Victorian Age required a sketch of one prominent in the field of reform. The essay on Lord Anthony Ashley is, in short, an historical sketch of the Factory and Mining Acts in regard to the employment of women and children. Medicine, too, was making strides at that time and Horne chose Dr. Southwood Smith to represent that phase of the age. He mentions the doctor's contribution to the study of anatomy and of sanitation.6

5. Ibid., 109.
6. Ibid., 55.
“Poison in jest”! This is our introduction to Thomas Ingoldsby. Thus forewarned one is prepared for the worst. Horne inserted the Ingoldsby sketch to warn the public against that author's works, which he feared would have a dangerous influence on the younger generation. Furthermore, he considered his age bad enough without this writer. The voice of the critic is heard saying to Ingoldsby: "Brother!—no more of this!" However, he did find true poetic form and style in Ingoldsby.7

The combined literary labors of William and Mary Howitt were so intimately connected that Horne thought a joint treatment of them advisable. Their writings were mainly in the prose pastoral. Mary Howitt also wrote some admirable books for children. The Howitts proved how much happiness literature might bring to family life.8 That Miss Barrett did not approve of the sketch of Mary Howitt is evident from her remark to Horne,

She appears in the book simply as Mrs. Howitt, William's wife, whereas his reputation has grown from the stem of hers.9

Though the next sketch is entitled "Dr. Pusey" it is rather a survey of the Oxford Movement.

7. Ibid., 98.
8. Ibid., 127.
There are four writers discussed in the article on fiction. Evidently it was written by Robert Bell, for Miss Barrett in commenting on it remarked to Horne, "Tell me who wrote it." G. P. R. James wrote his books so fast that they became merely novels of costume. The critic acknowledges there is a moral in every one of them. Mrs. Catherine Gore and Mrs. Frances Trollope produced the best sellers of their age, according to the reviewer. Captain Frederick Marryat is the last of this fiction group. His sea-stories were fascinating. If his English was crude the truth contained in his stories gave them a permanent charm.

Thomas Noon Talfourd was prominent in various fields; he was a lawyer, a member of Parliament, a poet, and a critic. One sentence suffices to describe him:

It may be said of Mr. Talfourd, as a general estimate of his character, abilities, and aim in life, that his whole career has been equally distinguished by high moral purpose, and by the most unquestionable talents.

Miss Barrett considers Milnes and Hartley Coleridge as two most distinguished writers of their age. She declares that the influence of Coleridge's eminent

11. Ibid., 155.
12. Ibid., 184.
father destroyed his originality. In contrasting the son
and the father she says: "His father talked his best
thoughts, so that somebody had the benefit of them; his
son for the most part keeps his for his own bosom."13

After the discussion on the poets, Horne presents
three individuals who used their wit for the public good,
Sydney Smith, Albany Fonblanque, and Douglas Jerrold.
After citing several examples of their works, the critic
gives a resumé of each writer:

Sydney Smith in hostility is an over­
whelming antagonist; his arguments are
glittering with laughter and well-bal­
anced with good sense....

Fonblanque seems...to stand with an open
Code of Social Laws in one hand, and a
two-edged sword in the other...

As Jerrold's pleasantest works are gener­
ally covert satires, so his open satires
are galling darts, or long bill-hook
spears...14

The next essay was a joint composition by Horne
and Miss Barrett. The subjects of this essay were two
most dissimilar individuals combined for the sake of con­
trast--Wordsworth and Hunt. To these two critics Hunt
was a better poet than Wordsworth. His versification was
sweet and various, running into Chaucer's cadences. Both

13. Ibid., 190.
14. Ibid., 212.
of these authors have written too much; Wordsworth from choice, Leigh Hunt from necessity. Wordsworth elevated with the sense of moral dignity; Hunt refined with a loving spirit and instructed in smiles. Such was their influence on their age.  

Horne believes Tennyson to be a poet of the highest excellence. His genius was most remarkable as a lyric poet since his very speech was a song. The criticism of Tennyson's works is most thorough. But as regards the personality of the poet "we know nothing of him except that he is a poet."  

Most of the treatment of Macaulay is biographical. In speaking of Macaulay's style Horne calls it classical because correct; popular on account of its being readily understood; his prose picturesque by its clearness, solidity, and simplicity.  

In the double sketch of Thomas Hood and Theodore Hook, Horne endeavors to illustrate what he believed to be the popular opinion of these two writers. Hood tempered his wit with genuine pathos, but Hook's wit was generally malicious and his humor biting. When struck

15. Ibid., 238.  
16. Ibid., 259.  
17. Ibid., 265.
by him an individual peculiarity was generally cut so deeply that human nature was exposed.\textsuperscript{18}

Horne includes Harriet Martineau because of her writings on political economy. They were composed in a clear and unaffected style. Mrs. Anna Murphy Jameson was an established favorite with the public. She was an accomplished woman and greatly influenced her age by her refined taste and quick sensibility.\textsuperscript{19}

The drama was best represented by Sheridan Knowles and William Macready. The most simple drama is that which reflects the tone and the temperament of the age. Hence, Knowles personified his age, which was conventional, by his very domestic dramas. Horne designates Macready as the first artist of the stage, for he greatly assisted in arousing the dramatic spirit of England.\textsuperscript{20}

Horne does not hesitate to give due credit to the feminine writers of his day. He notes the most important characteristics of Miss Barrett and Mrs. Caroline Sheridan Norton as being the struggles of woman toward happiness and the efforts of a soul to gain heaven. These common points only tend to accentuate the differences between the

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 279.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 296.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 323.
two writers. Both were excellent artists. Mrs. Norton dealt with domestic subjects; Miss Barrett with sacred ones. Mrs. Norton was all womanhood; Miss Barrett all wings. The former wrote from the dictates of the human heart; the latter like an inspired priestess wrote from a heart devoted to religion.21

As the novel was becoming so popular Horne could not refrain from a sketch of John Banim and the Irish novelists. He is in full sympathy with Banim, and calls him the dramatic historian of his countrymen. Other novelists mentioned are William Carleton, the portrait painter of his fellow patriots; Mrs. S. C. Hall, whose Irish Tales are living and tender; Samuel Lover, with his commentaries on the national character; Charles Lever, who is contracted and conventional.22

In criticizing Robert Browning Horne wished to emphasize that the spirit of passionate and imaginative poetry was not dead. To one who demands proof he suggests a selection of passages from the works of the poet named. The essay is practically an interpretation of the works of Browning and J. W. Marston. There is slight

21. Ibid., 345.
22. Ibid., 351.
mention of their style. 23

Horne presents Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton as a man who lowered his genius to gain popular notice. The novel was his proper sphere but he dabbled in poetry and drama, too.

The article on William Harrison Ainsworth was written by three people. Scarcely had the first two paragraphs been written than their severity of treatment warranted a change of critics. When the second reviewer did no better, a third one took over the job and made the essay consist in quotations from Ainsworth's works. Horne thought this a good way to treat a man highly esteemed for his private life. 24

Horne calls the Frankenstein of Mrs. Mary Godwin Shelley the outstanding imaginative romance of his day. He suggests that difficulty of production was possibly the cause of its kind not being written.

The Robert Montgomery article appears to have been written in defence of Montgomery. It is on account of his attacking the hypocrisy of the clergy in this essay that Horne was accused when A New Spirit of the Age was first published. While interpreting Montgomery's

23. Ibid., 357.
24. Ibid., 405.
...we shall discover in this sublime poem a succession of well-glossed blows and thrusts at all those clerical brethren who are not guided and governed in their duties and efforts by 'the sternness of adamantine orthodoxy.'

In commenting upon Thomas Carlyle, Horne stresses his peculiar style of writing noting how his individuality is "graven" upon his least word. He considers *Sartor Resartus* Carlyle's best work; his political philosophy best explained by his *Past and Present*; his philosophy the "philosophy of dissatisfaction." In conclusion Horne says: "One cannot imagine anything done by human hands which would be likely to give Mr. Carlyle much satisfaction."

The concluding essay in *A New Spirit of the Age* is an excellent treatise on the philosophy of poetry, the place of imagination in this form of writing, the role of reason and the passions in poetry. Miss Barrett uses the poetry of Henry Taylor and P. J. Bailey to illustrate her opinions.

A work like *A New Spirit of the Age* would not be accepted without much adverse criticism. Because Horne

25. Ibid., 421.

26. Ibid., 448.
realized this would be the case he made up his mind before he began his work to please no one but himself, as he remarks in his preface to A New Spirit of the Age.

Miss Barrett in writing on the finished project told Horne there was a want of unity in the various essays and that this would not have occurred if he had written the whole. She reminded him that this book was not the only one to give him a name. To project A New Spirit of the Age inevitably meant martyrdom.27

Talfourd expressed the opinion that A New Spirit of the Age was likely to do a great deal of harm to Horne.28 But according to Walter Jerrold, the best prose work of Horne is found in A New Spirit of the Age.29

27. Elizabeth Browning, op. cit., 226.
28. Ibid., 206.
CHAPTER III

THE TREATMENT OF THE POETS IN HAZLITT AND HORNE

Under the influence of the Romantic spirit all literary forms showed a renewed vigor, but the chief glory of the movement was the change affected in the realm of poetry. It is not surprising, therefore, to note the numerical predominance of poets over the prose writers portrayed in Hazlitt's *The Spirit of the Age*. He characterizes nine poets and but one novelist, Sir Walter Scott. Of this latter he also criticizes his poetry. In this chapter the sketches of the prominent poets will be discussed.

Horne wrote his *A New Spirit of the Age* nearly twenty years after Hazlitt's publication. A new generation of writers had sprung up and other forms of literature were becoming prominent. Poetry was losing ground and the novel was supplanting it. Novelists are prominent in Horne's work while the poets are reduced to two outstanding ones. To illustrate the popular snobbishness toward poetry Horne had his epic *Orion* published for the insignificant price of half a penny. To show further proof of the attitude toward poetry there is the incident of a reviewer of Horne's work. This man wrote to Horne
and asked him what Browning had done, as he had never heard of the poet. This evident disregard for poetry did not deter Horne from including fine articles on Browning and Tennyson in *A New Spirit of the Age*.

**POETS SELECTED BY HAZLITT**

Hazlitt included poets who had already won their laurels. Coleridge was dead poetically. Hence, Hazlitt's portrait of him is like a eulogy for a lost friend. He could never forget his first meeting with Coleridge. The best part of Coleridge's portrait is that produced under the influence of the memory of bygone days. Hazlitt never tires of discussing Coleridge's remarkable mind. His choice of the word "tangential" in estimating the poet's intellect is a happy one. For he considers it capable of treating any subject from "Peter Abelard to Thomas Moore, from the subtlest metaphysics to the politics of the Courier."¹ Hazlitt gives us a fascinating description of Coleridge's genius. The reader is simply carried away by the charm of it. He goes with Coleridge through all the philosophy of the age. This part of the journey brings them to a beautiful rainbow in the cloud caused by Leib-

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nitz’s Pre-Established Harmony. Next they fall "plump, ten thousand fathoms down" and land in the field of religion. They climb the mountain in this land passing all the religions, ancient and modern, until they come to his own Religious Musings. Lowering themselves from that dizzy height they get into the country of literature. They meet Milton, pass through the prose of Jeremy Taylor, weep over Bowles’ Sonnets, examine Cowper’s blank verse and enter Thomson’s Castle of Indolence, make acquaintance with the wits of the revolution and taste Swift’s style, rest with the British essayists and novelists, and chat with all the modern writers and artists. They pass over the sea to get acquainted with German thought, rejoice at the triumph of the French Revolution, and plan to go to America to find peace and freedom.²

One is distressed by the fact that most of this is lost to posterity as it was expounded in Coleridge’s conversation and not in his writings. This store of thought was poured out incessantly and lost like drops of water on the ground. Hazlitt laments this loss and tries to fix the reader’s attention on Coleridge’s powers rather than on his weakness.

² Ibid., 198.
But if Mr. Coleridge's works do not place him in that rank, they injure instead of conveying a just idea of the man, for he himself is certainly in the first class of general intellect. 3

By contrasting Coleridge with Godwin, Hazlitt shows the result of the wise use of a few talents and the frightful abuse of many and valuable talents.

As Hazlitt stands before the canvas for Sir Walter Scott's portrait he regrets that he has to include defects in the poetical side of the painting. He is careful, however, to balance them with the good points. To him the redeeming features of Scott's poetry were his picturesqueness, animated movement, smooth and easy versification. To illustrate these characteristics the critic used the incident of the warriors in the Lady of the Lake, who rose up so suddenly from beneath the ferns at a signal from Rhoderick Dhu.

Though admitting Scott to be the most popular poet of the day, he declares his poetry to be wanting in character, that is, to make no lasting impression on the mind. It disappeared from the mind as soon as read like flowing water. The reader might acquire new pictures but he himself was not a changed man. Hazlitt had judged Scott's

3. Ibid., 201.
poetry by the principle that, "...There is a power in true poetry that lifts the mind from the ground of reality to a higher sphere..." and has found it wanting.

Byron, as Hazlitt saw him, was a man seated on a high throne, glaring with disdain on all beneath him. On his brow is a double crown of "Lord" and "Poet". Below crowds of people are coming to pay him homage. At first he accepts this show of popular regard. After awhile he grows tired of it and turns away contemptuously as if to say: "You are all mere nothings. I am sufficient to myself."

He picks up one of his satires, which Hazlitt explains is the satire of a lord whose every whim is pampered but who returns the service with a sneer and cold contempt. Everything must be measured by his lordship's standard of high birth.

Now he has a book of poems. They all bear the impression of the author's own feelings on subjects chosen on the spur of the moment. The Giaour, the Corsair, Childe Harold—all depict the same character, Lord Byron. Manfred is merely himself in "fancy drapery." Whatever he wrote is covered with the gossamer of himself.

4. Ibid., 225.
Hence, the morbidness of his poetry.

His passion is violent and sullen, fierce and gloomy. Still it is powerful, but its power is like that of a bolt of lightning. One watches its course with curiosity but at the same time is frightened by its devastation.

Hazlitt, still keeping Byron's picture before the reader emphasizes the fact that the poet in virility of style and strength of conception surpassed every writer of his day. The coloring of Byron's style is an object of delight and wonder. It is as though one were looking at a beautiful stained-glass window. One sees only the figures in the glass but none of the reality beyond. Hazlitt's complete picture of his lordship's poetry is this:

...He has beauty lurking underneath his strength, tenderness sometimes joined with the frenzy of despair. A flash of golden light sometimes follows from a stroke of his pencil like a falling meteor. The flowers that adorn his poetry bloom over charnel-houses and the grave!

Hazlitt saw fit to delineate a poet laureate for his The Spirit of the Age—Robert Southey. It galled Hazlitt's spirit for Southey to have this honor. He con-

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siders it to be neither natural nor becoming for him. A chaplet of wild flowers would be more fitting for him than the laurel-wreath. His genius was more honored by his pastoral odes and popular inscriptions than by his presentation-poems. His very figure was uncourtly. It was sharp and angular, quaint and eccentric. He was crude, chaotic, self-opinionated, and vain. He walked down the streets of London with his head held high and with an umbrella under his arm, in the finest weather. [Perhaps Winston Churchill tries to imitate Southey.]

Hazlitt judges Southey's very physiognomy to be a result of his belief in the birth of liberty. He saw only good in his fellow men. After he was disillusioned in this idea he took for his principle that if a thing exists, it is. The reason for his so often changing sides was his self-opinionatedness. He was governed by his passions rather than by reason. The temperament of his mind was therefore poetical rather than philosophical.

For Southey to dedicate The Vision of Judgment to the king was very improper according to Hazlitt. A court-poem should be trite and conventional. His longer epics, Kehama, Thalaba, Madoc, and Roderic are mechanical and extravagant, heavy and superficial. Kehama is a loose, sprawling marionette. All of these poetic compositions
were creations of a mind checked by no law and tamed by no fear—a poetic libertine, not fit to be a lawgiver and judge of poetry. His office of poet-laureate gave him no right to make uniform intellectual weights and measures of irregular meters and settled opinions and then enforce them on others by tyranny.

To Hazlitt the best of Southey’s works were his shorter poems in which he seemed conscious of his own faults and expressed a desire to reform the harshness of his manners; for instance in the concluding lines of The Holly-Tree:

That in my age as cheerful I might be
As the green winter of the Holly Tree.6

Hazlitt concedes to Southey the honor of being the best prose writer of any poet of his day. He styles his prose as

plain, clear, pointed, familiar,
perfectly modern in its texture,
but with a grave and sparkling admixture of archaisms in its ornaments and occasional phraseology.7

His translation of the Cid is excellent.

6. Ibid., 165.
Horne introduces the Tennyson sketch by an explanation of the formation of a true poet. He shows the practical application of the exposition to the person of Tennyson. Though Tennyson did not receive popular applause when the poet made his début, the critic believed the time had come for the public to open its eyes to his powerful light.

There is a "sweetness of melody and a richness of harmony" about Tennyson's first poems which capture the auditory sense. Thoughtful grace, depth of feeling, ideal beauty, the power to convey a sense of color, a precision of outline are also important characteristics of the poet's works.

Horne conceives four aspects of Tennyson's poetic productions. First he was a poet of dreamland. His characters did not have flesh and blood. They were mere poetic creatures. He dealt in fantasy. His muse was the Lady of Shalott, whom he transformed into a mermaid. The most outstanding feature of this early sphere of poetic effort was his power to communicate a supernaturalism to simple incidents and objects of reality.

In the second stage of Tennyson's development he was a poet of profound sentiment. There was a great deal
of delicacy, and refinement in the affections. The poet portrayed these traits in the poems, The Miller’s Daughter, Dora, and The Gardener’s Daughter.

Horne regards Tennyson’s third aspect to have been that of a painter of pastorals. In this capacity he was not surpassed. He sketched the landscape as it was in reality, full of freshness and sweetness.

Tennyson’s fourth phase was that of a "delineator" of tragic emotions. Horne selects the following poems to illustrate that point: Dirge, Death of Love, Ballad of Oriana, Supposed Confessions and Mariana. These are full of thoughts and emotions which would lead to tragic results. These others have tragedy in them also; The Lady of Shalott, Eleanor, Sappho, Kenone, New Year’s Eve, The Sisters and Locksley Hall. The longdrawn music of the name Lady Clara Vere de Vere suggests the proud pedigree of the owner and that she would require many a sacrifice to be made for it. Continual "affectionate tenderness and deep pathos" are present in the final stanzas of The Lord of Burleigh and Dora. In Love and Duty there is too much Victorian conventionality.

On subjects of ancient history Tennyson was successful. By his Oenone he infused life into the ancient Greek statues. His Morte D’Arthur brought the Homeric
spirit to a romantic legend. One of the choicest poems in our language is his *Ulysses*. Horne contents himself with saying *St. Simeon Stylites* is a great and original study.8

At the time that Horne wrote his *A New Spirit of the Age*, Browning was just emerging as a new poet. He had written *Paracelsus*, *Sordello*, and had initiated his series of dramatic productions under the title *Bells and Pomegranates*. In spite of the prejudice of the public towards poetry Horne was agreeably surprised to see how well the new poet was received.

*Paracelsus*, one of Browning's earlier works, shows touches of the influence of *Prometheus Unbound* and *Faust*. It is in this early work that Browning best displays the spirit of his age—the search after causes.

Horne warns the reader that if he expects to understand Browning's poetry without any study he had better not attempt it. In *Paracelsus* the difficulties are in the quantity and quality of thought; while in *Sordello*, his next work, there is also difficulty of style.

*Sordello* is the richest puzzle to all lovers of

poetry. It is a modern hieroglyphic. Even critics declare it is beyond their intellectual powers. Browning succeeded in losing himself and his readers in a labyrinth of real and ideal events and biographies. After much searching, Horne decides that the story of the poem can be simmered down to one idea, that Sordello, the hero of the poem, continues the search of Paracelsus. Horne gives two generally accepted reasons for the poem. The first, the poem is to show that mere natural things cannot satisfy man, and lead only to disappointment and grief; and that only in the ideal world is true happiness to be found. Another opinion is that the poem shows the impossibility of gaining the knowledge of existence; that a life amid idealisms is one of uselessness and sorrow, and the true object of man is to discover the best realities. Horne would combine the two ideas and contend that both are useless if followed only for their own sakes. He would have the reader make his own choice.

Having pointed out the difficulties in Sordello, Horne next proceeds to show how much beauty can be found in the poem. He selects several passages to illustrate the fact: the description of the poetical mind of the hero, his childhood and the development of his mind; passages portraying the philosophy of the poem, and the pas-
Horne's description of the impressions felt while reading *Sordello* are worth quoting:

In what fine rapture, then, shall we seek to lose our mere critical faculties, and resign ourselves to the swift and wayward current of the verse; now basking in its brilliancy, now merged in its profound shadows, at one time whirled in a vortex, and the next moment cast upon some vast shelving strand, glistening all over with flints, and diamonds, and broken shells, where strange amphibious creatures crawl, and stare, or wink, while the song of *Sordello* passes over our prostrate head, and we have to scramble up and stagger after the immortal choir vainly catching at the torn and cast-off segments of their flickering skirts? We hurry on in fond yet vain pursuit, when suddenly a Guelph or Ghibellin appear before us, each with an enormous urn of antique mould, which they invert above our tingling cranium, and instantly we are half extinguished and quite overwhelmed by a dark shower of notes and memoranda...

Horne considers Browning's greatest powers to be displayed in his dramatic productions published under the title *Bells and Pomegranates*.

Woman was coming into her own during the Victorian Age. Horne, ever mindful of his title, introduces several feminine writers into his work. Among the poetesses he

discusses is Miss Barrett. As she was one of his collaborators it was a rather delicate task for him. A major part of the essay is devoted to her biography. In regard to her achievements, Horne considers her as the most widely read person in the field of literature. Miss Barrett in her letter to Horne expressed her appreciation of his description of her but accused him of exaggeration, for instance, "...there is not a single elegant Latin verse extant from my hand. I never cultivated Latin verses."10

10. Elizabeth Browning, *op. cit.*, 199.
CHAPTER IV

THE TREATMENT OF THE PROSE WRITERS
IN HAZLITT AND HORNE

It is hardly to be expected that Hazlitt would treat of many writers from the standpoint of prose production. His was an age preeminent for lyric verse. Therefore, it is not surprising to find only Scott discussed as a novelist and Lamb as an essayist. Not that there were no other prose writers, but these two are the ones who best developed their talents in that field.

Horne, on the contrary, dealt mainly with novelists and critics. The literary tide had turned for the Victorian Age, and prose was the recognized form of literature. Poetry was pushed into the background. The prominent places were assigned to Dickens and Bulwer-Lytton, the novelists; Macaulay, the historian; and Carlyle, the critic. Landor, the arch-classicist, was included in A New Spirit of the Age but as he was not a representative of his age he will not be included in this chapter.

PROSE WRITERS SELECTED BY HAZLITT

To discuss Scott's novels was the joy of Hazlitt's heart for he was truly in love with them. He says:
...Scott's novels are like the betrothed of our hearts, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, and we are jealous that any one should be as much delighted or as thoroughly acquainted with their beauties as ourselves.¹

Scott is at his best in the field of the novel because he has discarded his poetic defects of "tagging rhymes, sking out of syllables, supplying of epithets". If Scott's poetry is a "lady's waiting maid, dressed out in cast-off finery; his prose is a beautiful, rustic nymph..."² Furthermore, Hazlitt believes that the author's success in writing the novel to be the result of his abandoning "fine writing and worn-out sentimentality."

Sir Walter found that real life makes the best romance, and working by this principle he produced writings as fine as nature itself. The admiration of Hazlitt is expressed best in these words: "His works (taken together) are almost like a new edition of human nature. This is indeed to be an author!"³

According to Hazlitt, another drawing card for Scott's novels is their power to destroy prejudice, for

². Ibid., 227.
³. Ibid., 230.
"he is a writer reconciling all the diversities of human nature to the reader."\(^4\) It is in this sense that he considers the author of \textit{Waverley} as one of the greatest teachers of morality that ever lived.

Thus does Hazlitt give a picture not of Sir Walter Scott, the man, but the author.

How accurately Hazlitt can analyze Lamb and his writings! If Hazlitt ever had a loyal friend it was Charles Lamb. He appreciated Hazlitt's genius as no one else. Hazlitt, too, was capable of giving a just picture of Lamb. He admires the author's ability to "rake among the dust and cobwebs" of the past and dress them to the taste of the modern reader. Hazlitt certainly shows good judgment when he says:

\begin{quote}
Antiquity after a time has the grace of novelty, as old fashions revived are mistaken for new ones; and a certain quaintness and singularity of style is an agreeable relief to the smooth and insipid monotony of modern composition.\(^5\)
\end{quote}

Lamb was shy, and averse to everything coarse, obtrusive, and commonplace. He preferred old times because homelier and more durable. He did not look for praise, but would shrink from any kind of ostentation

\begin{footnotes}
\item[4] \textit{Ibid.}, 231.
\item[5] \textit{Ibid.}, 344.
\end{footnotes}
into retirement.

Hazlitt considers the author's style as pure and clear though it might seem old-fashioned. There is a fine tone of moral perspective in his writings. To Lamb, anything that was remembered was more likely to live than that which may be forgotten tomorrow.

The hospitality of the Lamb home was often enjoyed by Hazlitt. He shows his appreciation for it by mentioning the fact in his description of Lamb. That Lamb was a judge of art awakened a feeling of happiness in Hazlitt for this was also an appeal to his artistic sense.

The critic had made his acquaintance with Elia through some witticism and with but short intermission the friendship was never broken. Lamb was not forward but at the opportune moment he would stammer out some excellent wit.

Hazlitt does not stint his praises in regard to the character of Lamb. He calls him a general favorite with any one who knew him. He was beloved because of his foibles as well as for his virtues.

PROSE WRITERS SELECTED BY HORNE

If Hazlitt knew the value of Scott as a novelist, Horne fully appreciated the genius of Dickens in the same
field. He understood Dickens' methods of gaining the interest of his readers. One of these methods, the use of humor, he treats extensively. Works selected to demonstrate the use of humor particularly are *Martin Chuzzlewit*, *Oliver Twist*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, *Sketches by Boz*, and *Pickwick Papers*.

Horne defends Dickens against the accusation of inability to portray the upper classes of society, by the retort that the upper classes are barren of humor and wit.

Likewise Dickens' works show deeper touches of pathos than any other writer, because

...they grow out of the very ground of our humanity, and being Nature at her best, are in themselves perfect, by universal laws.  

The best examples of this are found in *Oliver Twist*. Dickens displays a mixture of serious and comic characters throughout his works. This is but a portrait of real life. Horne considers Dickens' greatest ability to be his use of both humor and tragedy in a work without confusing the two.

One is reminded of Hazlitt's description of Coleridge's genius as he reads Horne's portrait of Dickens as a writer. He calls him an instinctive writer—one who

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could write without any difficulty. The words simply flowed from his pen. Though he had over-peopled our literature, his characters are well-rounded even if most of them do represent a definite class. To Horne, Dickens' works gave the truest pictures of the middle and lower classes of society. The author's influence on his age was most extensive—"pleasurable, instructive, healthy, reformatory."  

Horne summed up his admiration for Dickens in these words: "Seldom, if ever, has any man been more beloved by contemporary authors, and by the public of his time."  

The essay on Dickens was wholly written by Horne. Miss Barrett did not read any of it until it was fully completed. She remarked that the "admirable critical essay" had only one omission of importance in it, namely, the influence of French literature, especially of Victor Hugo. She declared her admiration for Dickens faded the more she read of Hugo.  

Horne could not agree with Miss Barrett's idea of Dickens' work. He had read the French author, too, but

7. Ibid., 51.  
8. Ibid., 52.  
was not convinced that Dickens had taken his trial-scene of Fagin from that author's *Trois Jours d'un Condamné*. He regards Dickens' work as "strikingly original, full of touches of genius". He claims Dickens' tragic scenes to be his own because they were founded on first-hand information. He acknowledges that Hugo might have influenced Dickens slightly but a more direct influence was that of one of America's earliest novelists, namely, Charles Brockden Brown—a writer of very peculiar genius and originality. 10

Horne introduces Macaulay by a rather lengthy description of his political career. He would place him among the first orators of his age. But a better classification for him would be "the first critical and historical essayist of the time." 11 He had every quality to give him this rank. His style is classical and it appeals to the common reader because it is so easily intelligible.

Horne is not reticent about Macaulay's literary faults. In the first place he considers it a very bad movement on Macaulay's part to relate his defects in his preface to his *Essays*. There was nothing left for the critic to do. Another fault is the historian's confusion

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OE of truth and fiction in history. He might have made history interesting but he failed to give facts as they are. Still another grievance against Macaulay is his attitude toward poetry, his belief that the poet is a lunatic and the madness is caught by the reader of the poetry. Horne thinks this idea very unfortunate, especially before a public already averse to that form of literature.

The critic praises the essays for their moral value, for

They contain many passages of sterling philosophy in the analysis and elucidation of character, in principles and conditions of public and private morality, and in matters of literary taste.12

The ability to write biography was also one of Macaulay's achievements. The biographies mentioned are those of Warren Hastings and Lord Bacon. As Macaulay possessed great powers of judgment it is not surprising that Horne classifies him as a very able critic. Another field in which he showed wonderful ability was that of reviewing; for example, his critique of Southey's Colloquies in Society. In that discussion he points out Southey's errors and wrongheadedness and what the true state of the nation was.

12. Ibid., 270.
The only fault he discovers in Macaulay's Lays of Ancient Rome is his use of Gothic and not classical style. Horne's closing statement is a true description of the poem:

...there is all the hard glitter of steel about the lines;—their music is the neighing of steeds, and the tramp of armed heels; their inspiration was the voice of a trumpet. 13

Horne considers Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton the most prolific writer of his day. Sir Edward tried his skill at writing the novel, poetry, and drama. In the field of poetry he was a failure. Of his dramatic works, The Lady of Lyons was the most popular by reason of the interest of the plot, the clarity of the story, the easy flow of the dialogue, the reality of action, and the scenery. But his greatest success was in novel-writing. Horne ranks him with the greatest novelists on account of the variety and originality, thorough understanding of character, the building of plot, and his style. The critic reviews Sir Edward's masterpieces: [Eugene Aram is distinguished for the development of the great truth that a man fails when he relies on reason alone. Earnest Maltravers shows how genius is trained to the business of life; Zanoni is the most imaginative and the highest in

13. Ibid., 273.
moral purpose of Bulwer's works; in *Paul Clifford* the bad characteristics of the hero are condemned and his high qualities extolled. It shows a manful struggle for the good.

Some faults in Sir Edward's character were his slighting the truth for the sake of popularity, lack of sympathy for mankind until refined and polished. Horne would have him possess more faith in himself and in human nature.

The essay on Carlyle is the most philosophical of the entire work. Hence, one is tempted to conclude that a large part of it is the product of Miss Barrett. With a great deal of philosophizing the critic leads up to the treatment of Carlyle's genius which has opened a "window in his century" and let in the light of the sun. He calls Carlyle's language a "soul-language". Of Carlyle he would say that "the speech is the man". For he is so forceful that his impression is left on whatever he says.

Horne considers Carlyle, not as an originator, but a renewer. As such he reminds his readers of things they knew but had forgotten. Miss Barrett did not approve of Carlyle's indefinite ideas of "truth" and "faith". She complained that he confuses his readers. She instructed the reader that the best way to review Carlyle's
works is to remember that he is not teaching us "everything" but "something". She objected to Carlyle's statement in Past and Present that the English people is a silent people. She contended that the English people have a more abounding literature than any other people except the Greeks. If she knew Carlyle she would tell him, "we are a most singing people...we are none of us silent except the undertaker's mutes." 

Horne believes Carlyle in the right for if Shakespeare and Milton were living in the Victorian Age they would be scorned for a good business reason—they wouldn't sell.

Horne explains the apparent contradiction between some of Carlyle's works by his lack of faith in human nature and his philosophy of "Dissatisfaction."

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No doubt the reader has been puzzled over the omission of William Wordsworth and Leigh Hunt from the chapter on the poets. These two writers have been reserved for the present chapter because they are the only authors treated by both critics. Hazlitt includes Wordsworth because he considers him a "pure emanation of the Spirit of the Age", and Leigh Hunt because, "...there is no man now living who at the same time writes prose and verse so well..."¹

Though Wordsworth, as a poet, was dead when Horne wrote his work he selects him and Leigh Hunt because he regards them as

...highly important connecting links between past and present periods; as outlivers of many storms; the originators of many opinions and tastes; the sufferers of odium; and the long wounded but finally victorious experimenters of popular changes of mind during many years.²

At the time that Hazlitt wrote, Wordsworth had not yet received popular recognition. And Hazlitt was anxious that the public should appreciate him for he is

¹ William Hazlitt, The Spirit of the Age, 343.
² Richard Horne, op. cit., 221.
...the most original poet now living, and the one whose writings could the least be spared; for they have no substitute elsewhere. 3

When Horne wrote his essay on Wordsworth, the poet's genius had been recognized.

After the public had denied Mr. Wordsworth the possession of any of the highest faculties of the mind during twenty years, the same public has seen good of late to reward him with all the highest faculties in excess. 4

One would expect Horne to discuss Wordsworth from an entirely different view-point from that chosen by Hazlitt. However, this is not the case, for upon examination Horne is found to parallel Hazlitt on nearly every characteristic discussed. This similarity of comparison offers an interesting study. In commenting on Wordsworth's Excursion Horne follows Hazlitt almost literally.

There are delightful passages in the Excursion, both of natural description and of inspired reflection. 5

...his chief poem, The excursion, which is only a portion of a larger work called The Recluse, has passages of very glorious exaltation. 6

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Both recognize and acclaim his ability to read.

His manner of reading his own poetry is particularly imposing; and in his favorite passages his eye beams with preternatural lustre, and the meaning labors slowly up from his swelling breast.

He reads poetry very grandly, and with solemnity.3

Wordsworth's silence in company is a topic of discussion by both critics.

In company,...Mr. Wordsworth is often silent, indolent, and reserved. If he became verbose and oracular of late years, he was not so in his better days. He threw out a bold or an indifferent remark without either effort or pretension, and relapsed into musing again.9

Mr. Wordsworth does not converse. He announces formally at times, but he cannot find a current. He is moral, grave, good-natured, and of kindly intercourse.10

His poetic standards and his determination to fulfill his own ideals are appraised.

His standard of poetry is high and severe, almost to exclusiveness.11

He laid down fixed principles in his prefaces, and carried them out with rigid boldness, in his poems. 12

He is criticized for his lack of discrimination.

He has gnawed too much on the bridle; and has often thrown out crusts to the critics, in mere defiance or as a point of honor when he was challenged, which otherwise his own good sense would have withheld. 13

If he had not written too many sonnets, it may be doubted if he has not burned too few; none are bad it is true; but the value of the finest would be enhanced by separation from so much fatiguing good sense. 14

Wordsworth's love for nature is not overlooked by either.

He has dwelt among pastoral scenes, till each object has become connected with a thousand feelings, a link in the chain of thought, a fibre of his own heart. 15

A minute observer of exterior nature, his humanity seems nevertheless to stand between it and him and he confounds those two lives—not that he loses himself in the contemplation of things, but that he absorbs them in himself, and renders them Wordsworthian. They are not what he wishes, until he has brought them home to his own heart. Chaucer and Burns made the most of a daisy but left it still a daisy; Mr. Wordsworth leaves it transformed into his thoughts. 16

15. William Hazlitt, op. cit., 255.
Both critics give Wordsworth credit for his initiating a new movement in the poetic field.

It [his poetry] is one of the innovations of the time. It partakes of, and is carried along with, the revolutionary movement of our age: the political changes of the day were the model on which he formed and conducted his poetical experiments. 17

...Mr. Wordsworth took the initiative in the great poetical movement of his times. 18

Thus it can be seen how very closely Horne mirrors Hazlitt's opinions of Wordsworth. Aside from these points of similarity the two critics disagree on Wordsworth's desire for popularity. Hazlitt claims that the lack of it soured Wordsworth's disposition, and Horne declares that Wordsworth "walked upon the pride of criticism with greater pride." 19 Hazlitt's essay is more personal than Horne's; for the former also describes Wordsworth's physical characteristics; the latter discusses the poet's works only.

Not so close a comparison can be found between Hazlitt's and Horne's treatment of Leigh Hunt. However they do express similar ideas. They mention his unjust imprisonment, and both regard him as an imprudent politician. His unfavorable editorship on the Examiner is

19. Ibid., 223.
recalled by both. The following excerpts show some similarity:

For his *Story of Rimini* they say:

We will venture to oppose his Third Canto of the *Story of Rimini* for classic elegance and natural feeling to any equal number of lines from Mr. Southey's *Epic* or from Mr. Moore's *Lalla Rookh*.

The tragic power of the *Story of Rimini* has scarcely been exceeded by any English poet, alive or dead.

Hunt's genuine sensibility in portraying pathos is recognized in these passages:

A light, familiar grace, and mild unpretending pathos are the characteristics of his more sportive or serious writings, whether in poetry or prose.

...while his laughter is audible and irresistible, in pathos and depth of tender passionateness, he is no less sufficient.

Hunt's conversational powers far surpass Wordsworth's:

...but in conversation he is all life and animation, combining the vivacity of the schoolboy with the resources of the wit and the taste of the scholar.

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Leigh Hunt converses as well as he writes, often better, ready on every point, with deep sincerity on all serious subjects, and far in advance of his age; with a full and pleasant memory of books, and men, and things; and with a rich sense of humour and a quick wit.25

Hazlitt seems to slight the discussion of Hunt's style but Horne says, "When he says new things, he puts them strikingly; when he says old things, he puts them newly."26

Hazlitt's treatment of Hunt is very incomplete and very unsatisfying. For personal reasons he refrains from a lengthy discussion of him. In his short sketch he maintains that the very charms of the man are a detriment to his style. In one line he seems to put Hunt on a pedestal and in another he derides the very quality which he seems to admire. To him Hunt's effervescence and his natural good feeling necessarily resulted in a light vein of literature.

On the other hand Horne made Hunt's sketch very complete. He loved and admired Hunt very much. He defends the poet's extreme ideas about no evil in man, saying his opinions were so formed because of his superstition for good. He calls this reason "the key" to the many extravagant things Hunt wrote, and says he would

26. Ibid., 229.
rank him as the author of our most "exquisite" essays.

So, on the one hand we have the critical dissertation of a personal friend who curtails his discussion to shun the odium of partiality while on the other we have the mechanical notation of a sincere admirer of the man for the sake of friendship and of the author for the sake of literature.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

It is the aim of this chapter to point out differences and similarities between the works of Hazlitt and Horne. Being primarily a man of letters, Hazlitt claimed literature as his first love. Horne was a man of many affairs—of adventure, war, politics, travel—and last of all a writer. Hazlitt had the sole responsibility of his work, while Horne was assisted by collaborators. This was a distinct advantage for Hazlitt as it enabled him to acquire more unity; it was a drawback to Horne because he had to unify all the opinions suggested by his assistants and unfortunately he did not always succeed.

Hazlitt had a better choice of subjects for his discussion, for he could select individuals who had already won their laurels in the literary world. With the exception of three or four individuals all of Hazlitt’s characters are people of whom any fairly well-read person would have some knowledge. Horne wrote his work when a new age was emerging. His characters, with the exception of William Wordsworth and Leigh Hunt, were only beginning their literary careers. Consequently he was less sure of his ground and has criticized several writers who would scarcely be mentioned by one compiling a
literary history of the past sixty years.

Horne never loses sight of the spirit of the age and keeps it ever present to the mind of the reader. Hazlitt gives place to the individual. Horne, like an indifferent recorder, contents himself with displaying his age as it appeared to him. He never becomes impatient or overenthusiastic. On the contrary, Hazlitt, seems to be forever at odds with the spirit of his age.

In his criticism Horne dwells on the works, the biography, and the influence of an author upon the age. Hazlitt, typically loving or hating, hesitates not in expressing his feelings toward the individual criticized. He believes that as an author he should say what he feels as a man. He does not let his love or hate blind his critical faculty as is manifest in his essays on the author of Waverley and Charles Lamb. He discusses physical characteristics, details of figure, voice, gesture, and facial expression. This strong personal element explains Hazlitt's grasp on the reader's attention. Not so Horne, who goes no deeper into personal make-up than the individual's conversation.

Horne gives bare facts, clothing them with little imagination; whereas Hazlitt dresses his words with so much of his own emotions that they appear at times auto-
In his essays Horne frequently strays from his subject and introduces many characters not connected with the theme of the description and thus spoils the unity of his subject. If Hazlitt at times seems to be on the wrong track, before long he is swinging the reader back in the right direction. Comparison of writers is used so often and so extensively by Horne that the reader actually forgets whose description he is reading. Hazlitt uses comparison, too, but does not confuse the reader. Both critics seem to enjoy philosophizing.

Horne's style of writing may be called scientific because it is objective and emotionless. Hazlitt's is a combination of the literary and conversational or, as he termed it, "familiar style". The latter's aim is to convey his impressions to his reader in a language that can be easily understood. He has the aptitude for making his writing fit his thoughts;—short, sharp, and sure. Horne's style is usually correct, clear, concise. A moral tone, indicative of the Victorian Age, pervades Horne's essays or rather his historical sketches. His choice of passages to illustrate his meaning is very appropriate but he does not have Hazlitt's happy faculty of intermingling quotations in his works.
In describing Hazlitt’s style the following quotation from a recent critic seems most fitting:

Hazlitt’s style is informal, crisp, pointed, picturesque and charged with nervous energy. His language is choice, but belongs to the speech of daily life like Newman’s and Thackeray’s. He hated sham in diction as in all things else and he avoided phrases that lacked the sanction of good usage...He portrays men, scenes, landscapes, vividly, incisively as if his pencil were always sharpened to a point—brilliant, swift moving descriptions to which the vigor of his style, his apt allusions, and his effective figures all minister.¹

Hazlitt flavors his essays with anecdotes; Horne uses only two, one in the essay on Bulwer-Lytton and the other in that on Carlyle. Horne feels that anecdotes and disagreeable personal remarks have no place in a critical work. Hazlitt’s conscience is not so tender for he makes use of irony, sarcasm, and harshness. Horne is prejudiced and has a tendency to exaggerate the good. He can have patience with faults on remembering the good qualities; but not so Hazlitt who has a passion for truth and also a passion for that truth to prevail. In this he is like a nervous, fault-finding mother who wants her child to be perfect. He becomes a public scold. He does not laugh at human foibles and frailties. Such things rouse

his fighting blood and he must needs relieve his feelings in biting sarcasm, satire, invective, bitterness, and scorn. Hazlitt would have saved himself much loneliness if he had not been unmindful of the classic admonition of St. Benedict:

> And even in his corrections, let him [the Abbot] act with prudence, and not go too far lest while he seeketh too eagerly to scrape off the rust, the vessel be broken.\(^2\)

In spite of the fact that his style is to be admired, his harshness is to be regretted. His irritability may have come from his fearless and uncompromising pursuit of truth but he would have made more converts to truth by kindness and charitableness, for as St. Francis de Sales says, "You can catch more flies with a spoonful of honey than with a hundred barrels of vinegar."

As a rule, Hazlitt's sentences are short and snappy. If he does employ long sentences they are not clumsy and unintelligible but flow on without obstructing the meaning.

Mr. Southey, as we formerly remember to have seen him, had a hectic flush upon his cheek, a roving fire in his eye, a falcon glance, a look at once aspiring and dejected—it was the look that had been impressed upon his face by the

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events that marked the outset of his life, it was the dawn of Liberty that still tinged his cheek, a smile betwixt hope and sadness that still played upon his quivering lip.3

Horne does not seem to possess this faculty in so high a degree, as may be seen from the following passage:

Harriet Martineau, in whose powers of keen observation, clear thought, patient study, and untiring energy, guided always by singleness of purpose in the pursuit of truth, we should naturally have found promise of a long career of constantly progressive intellectual labour, has been, in a great measure, withdrawn by disabling illness from the active course which from her youth she had worthily pursued.4

In conclusion the writer feels that Horne has followed rather closely in the footsteps of Hazlitt in regard to the method of treatment, but he misses the "gusto"—the fire and the zeal which permeate Hazlitt's expressions. While Horne leaves the reader a clear idea of his age, Hazlitt leaves the reader regretful of not having lived with the personalities in his portrait gallery. Horne was a true Victorian—conventional, moral, scientific. The essential interest of the Victorian writer was not in himself and his own experiences but in

3. William Hazlitt, The Spirit of the Age, 244.
the social problems of England. On the other hand Hazlitt's subjectivity indicates him to be a true Romantic.


