

his article Lindop points out that Edward Baines's astonishing experience narrated in chapter XVI of his *Companion to the Lakes* (1829) is virtually the same as the one Wordsworth recounts in the boat-stealing episode. Grounding his argument on this fact, Lindop concludes that the spectacle both Wordsworth and Baines describe may have been 'a well-rehearsed part of a local boatman's repertoire' around 1780, something Wordsworth knew before he actually sailed. Thus the real reason for his boat-stealing was to 'experience a locally renowned picturesque spectacle by moon light, and (one must add) free of charge'. It would have been impossible to recognize that the boat-stealing episode originally had such a prosaic aspect, if Baines had not recorded his experience on Ullswater in his tour book to the Lakes.

Wordsworth introduced the 'Minstrel' episode into *The Prelude*, because he wanted to tell that, while he was listening to the flute, the calm water lay on his mind, and the sky 'sank down / Into my heart and held like a dream' (179-80). Thus no reference to what motivated him and his friends to listen to the flute is included in the description of the episode. However, the accounts of the echoes by Gilpin and others indicate that playing wind instruments became an established amusement for tourists in the Lakes by the end of the eighteenth century. Wordsworth must have had chances to hear these performances somewhere. Besides, Wordsworth's minstrel played the flute in the evening. This way of performing resembles the one the sentimental tourists loved. We may say from these facts that when the boys of Hawkshead were listening to the music of their minstrel, they must have been, consciously or not, imitating one of the sight-seeing conventions of the Lakes.

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### AN UNPUBLISHED SOUTHEY LETTER

AN unpublished letter by the poet laureate Robert Southey has been identified among the papers in a large Victorian autograph col-

lection. A transcription of the letter reads as follows:

Dear Sir,

The parcel from Cottle arrived in one of the chests: but that from Mr B[. . . ?] was not there. – nor the octavo edition of Turners History which I expected to find there. –

I have just had an accidental intimation that a chest of books in on the way up from Rome purchased for me by my friend Senhouse. It will probably be directed to your care, & I shall be obliged to you to send it by coach, directed immediately to this place.

May I request you to write 'from Mr Southey' in two copies of my Paraguay [illegible] for Mrs Ekins the other for Arthur Malet Esq & send both to Lady Malets – 100 Gloucester Place

Yours very Truly  
R Southey

The letter is dated 'Keswick, 27<sup>th</sup> September 1825', and addressed to 'Messrs Longman'. It is written on one side of a single sheet of paper measuring approximately 8½" by 6", which has been folded once. There are no traces of a seal or any franking marks. It is gummed into one of twelve large leather-bound volumes as part of an autograph collection amassed by Tyne-side shipowner John C. Brooks (1812-97). The Brooks Collection is owned by the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne, of which Brooks was a Vice-President, and to whom he presented the collection in 1894. It is now kept under restricted access at the Northumberland County Record Office in Newcastle.

The Longman to whom it is addressed is, of course, Thomas Norton Longman the London publisher. Joseph Cottle was a Bristol bookseller with whom Southey had been associated since 1795, and Senhouse was a neighbour in Cumberland. The illegible name could be any one of a number of members of the Southey circle, including Messrs Beaumont, Bedford, Bowles, or Butler. Another possibility is Willem Bilderdijk, a Dutch writer and scientist with whom he had stayed for three weeks during a visit to Holland a month or so earlier. Southey visited him again the following year. The identity of the Mrs Elkins to whom he wished a copy of his poem *A Tale of Paraguay*

sent is not known. The Malets were a well-to-do London family of Southey's acquaintance.

The consignment of books mentioned is almost certainly the same one referred to in a published letter from Southey to Henry Taylor, dated 22 October 1825, in which he states:

My books arrived about a month ago, and I have been in a high state of enjoyment ever since . . . the second edition of Wadding's *Annales Minorum* . . . has been bought for me at Rome by Senhouse.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Charles C. Southey (ed.), *The Life and Correspondence of Robert Southey* (London, 1850), V, 236.

#### A SOURCE FOR SOUTHEY AND COLERIDGE'S 'GREEN LIGHT . . . IN THE WEST'

IN the third, thematically central stanza of 'Dejection: An Ode' (1802) Coleridge describes himself 'gazing' futilely 'On that green light that lingers in the west' (line 44).<sup>1</sup> In describing an Aztec ritual in *Madoc* (1805) Robert Southey evoked 'The last green light that lingers in the west'.<sup>2</sup> It was long assumed that Southey had taken the line from Coleridge, but in 1994 Lynda Pratt demonstrated that the reverse was true.<sup>3</sup> The line first appears in Southey's fifteen-book draft *Madoc* of 1797–9, which Coleridge had read by 22 July 1801.<sup>4</sup> In Pratt's conclusion the borrowing suggests 'that the literary relationship between . . . [Coleridge] and Southey was more reciprocal, and indeed more interesting, than previous studies have assumed'.

A source for Southey's lingering 'green light' may make the borrowing even more interesting. Just before he resumed work on *Madoc* in 1797 Southey was enthusiastically reading Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's *Études*

<sup>1</sup> *Poetical Works*, ed. E. H. Coleridge, 2 vols (Oxford, 1912), I, 365. There are no verbal differences between this line and the corresponding line in the first (never published by Coleridge) version of the poem, now known as the 'Verse Letter to Sarah Hutchinson'.

<sup>2</sup> *Madoc* (London, 1805), 425.

<sup>3</sup> 'A Coleridge Borrowing from Southey', *N&Q*, ccxxxix (1994), 336–8.

<sup>4</sup> E. L. Griggs (ed.), *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 6 vols (Oxford, 1956–71), II, 745.

*de la Nature*,<sup>5</sup> in which occurs the following passage, describing a conversation Saint-Pierre had with Rousseau concerning colours in the evening sky:

J. J. Rousseau observed to me one day, that though the field of those celestial colours be blue, the yellow tints which melt into it, do not produce by that mixture the colour of green, as is the case in our material colours, when these two shades are blended. But I replied, that I had frequently perceived green in the Heavens, not only between the Tropics, but over the Horizon of Paris. That colour, in truth, is hardly ever seen with us, but in some fine Summer evenings.<sup>6</sup>

There can be little doubt that this passage inspired Southey's fascination with green light at sunset. Later, in his *Vision of Judgement* (1821), he wrote again of 'the last pale tint of the twilight; / Green as a stream in the glen . . .' and appended a long explanatory note which mainly consisted of a passage from Saint-Pierre's posthumous *Harmonies de la Nature* (1815) 'concerning this green light of evening'.<sup>7</sup> Here Southey mentioned that he had been led to look for 'green light' at evening after reading Saint-Pierre, and, unlike the latter, had witnessed it 'as often in winter as in summer'. He clearly felt that the description required

<sup>5</sup> Apparently the earliest reference to Southey's enthusiasm for Saint-Pierre is contained in a letter to Grosvenor Charles Bedford of October 1796: 'Have you read St. Pierre? If not, read that most delightful work, and you will love the author as much as I do': *The Life & Correspondence of the late Robert Southey*, ed. Charles Cuthbert Southey, 6 vols (London, 1849–50), I, 294. On 17 November Southey wrote to Bedford again: 'St Pierres [sic] Book is entitled *Études de la Nature* – the observations of a man of real genius and real piety upon the harmonies of nature. I hesitate not to pronounce it one of the most interesting works ever produced: and that heart must be a bad one that is not deeply delighted by the perusal': *New Letters of Robert Southey*, ed. Kenneth Curry, 2 vols (New York, 1965), I, 118. On 21 November Southey was again encouraging Bedford, 'Read St. Pierre, Grosvenor; and if you ever turn Pagan, you will certainly worship him for a demigod . . .': (*Life & Correspondence*, I, 297). In the following January Southey was planning to send a copy of his *Joan of Arc* to Saint-Pierre (*New Letters*, I, 120).

<sup>6</sup> *Studies of Nature*, trans. Henry Hunter, 5 vols (London, 1796), II, 284. Southey's enthusiastic discovery of Saint-Pierre coincides with the appearance of this translation and it is reasonable to assume that he read the *Études* in English, even though he liked to refer to the work by its French title.

<sup>7</sup> *A Vision of Judgement* (London, 1821), 2, 49–56.