

13 December 2008

Brano iniziale di una lettera di Wordsworth da Bristol del 1795 indirizzata a un libraio di Londra in cui vengono menzionati Coleridge e Southey

52. W.W. to WILLIAM MATHEWS

Address: Mr W. Mathews | at Mr Mathew's | Bookseller | No 27 Strand | London Postmark: 26 October 1795. Stamp: Crewkhern. MS. Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection, New York Public Lib. LY, 1333.

[20 and] Sat. 24 October [1795] ¹

Racedown Lodge

My dear Mathews,

I have been indebted to you for sometime, not that I feel myself able to say anything which is likely to be particularly interesting; but it was my duty to assure you of the liveliness of my regard and of the strength of my esteem for you. I stayed at Bristol at least five weeks with a family whom I found amiable in all its branches; the weather was delightful, and my time slipped insensibly away. I heard much of Mr Clon and his wife your Lisbon friends. ² They were both spoken highly of. I think I have heard you mention the latter in terms not the most respectful. I had not the pleasure of seeing either the one or the other. Coleridge was at Bristol part of the time I was there. ³ I saw but little of him. I wished indeed to have seen more--his talent appears to me very great. I met with Southey ⁴ also, his manners pleased me exceedingly and I have every reason to think very highly of his powers of mind. He is about publishing an epic poem on the subject of the Maid of Orleans. ⁵

¹ W. W. began this letter on either Tuesday, 20 Oct. or Wednesday, 21 Oct.--'three or four days', he says, before he completed it.

² Unidentified.

³ Samuel Taylor Coleridge (21 Oct. 1772-25 Jul 1834). W. W. as much as implies that Mathews knew S. T. C., perhaps as a result of S. T. C.'s negotiations with the Telegraph in January and February. S. T. C. had gone to Bristol from London in mid-January and early in February had given 'three political lectures'. During W. W.'s visit he was preparing his *Poems on Various Subjects* (pub. 16 Apr. 1796) for the press. He was away 'part of the time' when he went to Clevedon, near Bristol, in mid-September apparently, to lease the cottage where he would live after his marriage at Bristol on 4 Oct. to Sara Fricker (1770-1845).

⁴ Robert Southey (12 Aug. 1774-21 Mar. 1843). In June 1794 he was introduced to S. T. C. at Oxford, where R. S. was a Balliol undergraduate. Joining forces at Bristol the following January, they matured plans for 'pantisocracy', an equalitarian community to be set up first in Wales, then in Pennsylvania. R. S. lost interest in the scheme during the summer. By late August he had decided to study law, but he postponed this venture in order to accompany his uncle, the Revd. Herbert Hill, to Lisbon. On 14 Nov., just before sailing, he secretly married Edith Fricker (1774-1839), S. T. C.'s sister-in-law.

⁵ *Joan of Arc* (pub. 1796), for which S. T. C. supplied 265 lines of Book II.

Descrizione che Wordsworth dà di Coleridge

70. D. W. to MARY HUTCHINSON (?) 2

M(--), i. 98. L(--), i. 109. EL(--), 168.

Racedown, [June, 1797.]

. . . You had a great loss in not seeing Coleridge. 3 He is a wonderful man. His conversation teems with soul, mind, and spirit.

Nota di Wordsworth su *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* di Coleridge

Wordsworth in his Note to the Rime in the 1800 edition of *Lyrical Ballads* registered various objections that amounted to the assertion that the poem was deficient in connections and causes:

The Poem of my Friend has indeed great defects; first, that the principal person has no distinct character, either in his profession of Mariner, or as a human being who having been long under the control of supernatural impressions might be supposed himself to partake of something supernatural: secondly, that he does not act, but is continually acted upon: thirdly, that the events having no necessary connection do not produce each other; and lastly, that the imagery is somewhat too laboriously accumulated.

Il Poema del mio amico ha davvero grandi difetti; per prima cosa, il personaggio principale non ha un suo carattere, né nella professione di Marinaio, né come essere umano (il quale essendo stato per molto tempo sotto il controllo di impressioni soprannaturali potrebbe essere lui stesso considerato come in possesso di poteri soprannaturali); in secondo luogo, egli non agisce, ma continuamente subisce l'azione degli altri; in terzo luogo, non avendo gli eventi tra loro nessuna connessione necessaria non si relazionano l'uno con l'altro; e infine, le immagini si accumulano le une alle altre in modo troppo laborioso. (Bozza di traduzione di L.U.)