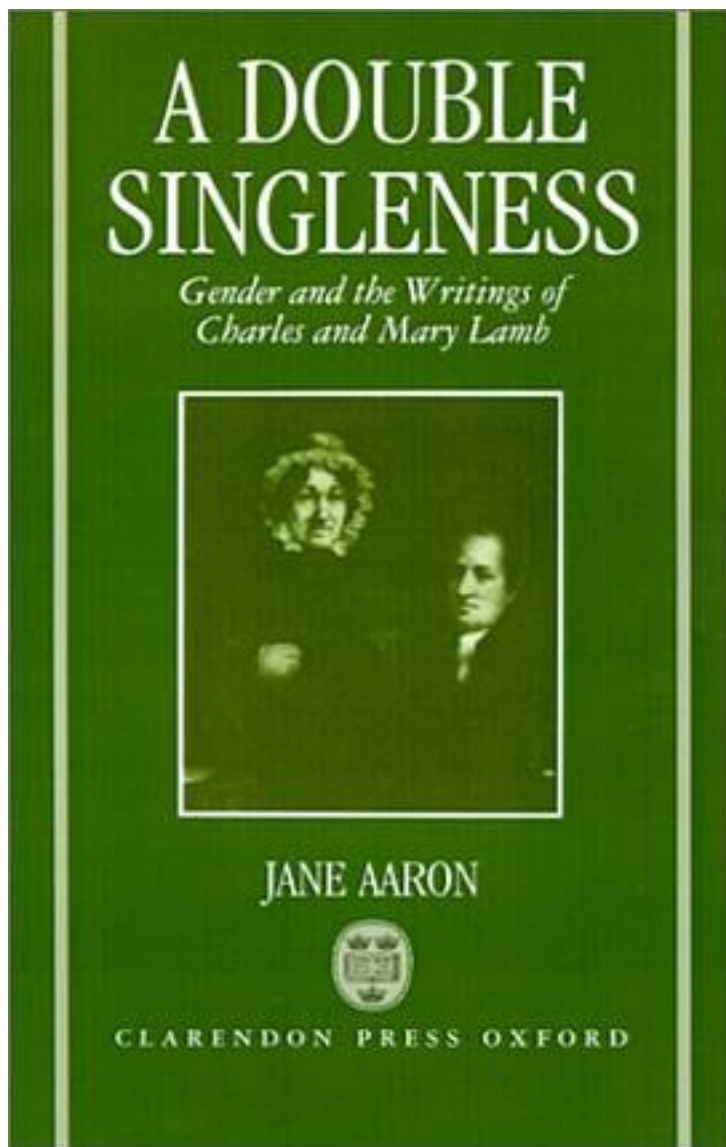


A Double Singleness



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In 1796 when Mary Lamb, in a sudden attack of violent frenzy, killed her mother, her brother Charles pledged himself to be responsible for her care, thus sparing her from threatened incarceration in Bedlam. For the next thirty odd years they lived, and wrote, together. Informed by feminist and psychoanalytic literary theory, this book provides an entirely new perspective on the lives and writings of Charles and Mary Lamb. It argues that the Lambs's ideological inheritance as the children of servants, their work experience as clerk and needlewoman respectively, and the role that madness and matricide played in both their lives, resulted in writings which were at variance with the spirit of their age. In particular, the intensity of their sibling bond is seen, in Charles Lamb's case, as resulting in texts stylistically and thematically opposed to the masculinist stance currently considered characteristic of Romantic writers.

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