

COLERIDGE'S PHANTOM AND FACT: TWO NATURES, TRINITARIAN
RESOLUTION, AND THE FORMATION OF THE PENTAD TO 1825

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SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF PH. D.
TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF LITERATURE AND THEOLOGY
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

DECEMBER
1994

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Abstract

This thesis discusses how Coleridge develops his trinitarianism, 'God' 'man', and 'nature', in response to modern philosophies since Descartes, especially to Kant's phenomenology, and how he finally forms the 'Pentad' in 1825. It will have seven chapters. The first chapter discusses his two unexecuted plans, 'the hymns to the elements' (1796) and 'Soother of Absence' (1802–10). It investigates how he comes to think that the hymn, or, the praise of the divine presence in nature, is the original and ideal form of poetry, and how he falls behind his ideal and replaces the first plan with the second. The purpose of the chapter is to show how his experience as a poet prepares the ground of his later philosophy and theology. The second chapter interprets 'The Ancient Mariner' (1798) as a poem about the departure from created nature to uncreated ocean, as an autobiographical poem about Coleridge's own yearning for 'something *one & indivisible*' which leads him to recognize that nature has turned 'ideot', that he has fallen from divine nature. The third chapter shows how in 'Dejection Ode' (1802) he contrasts his 'dejection' with 'Joy' and acknowledges his failure as a poet of nature. It also discusses his attempted recovery from 'Reality's dark dream' by the 'Phantom' creativity of the active human mind illustrated in 'Apologia pro Vita sua' (1800). The fourth chapter concentrates on his days in Malta 1804–5. The first half shows how he experiences difficulty in distinguishing the product of 'the Phantom creativity' from 'Reality's dark dream', and how he shifts the problem to an ethical ground, and finds Kant's ethics insufficient for his problem. The second half shows how he begins to form his 'trinitarianism' under such circumstances and to use the term 'symbol' in relating God and man. The first half of the fifth chapter deals with his ontological speculation on 'space' and shows that it leads him to adopt Leibnizian 'Hypopœēsis', contrasted with Newtonian 'Hypothesis', as an advanced form of 'the Phantom creativity' of the human mind. The second half interprets his 'Confessio Fidei' (1810) as his attempt

to accept and to rewrite Kant's ethics in theological terms in order to deal with 'an original corruption in our nature'. The sixth chapter argues that his theory of imagination in *Biographia Literaria* (1817) is his response to Kant's phenomenology which draws on his own long-standing speculation on the passivity and activity of the human mind, and that he leads his argument towards 'art' and hints at the 'artistic' recovery of human nature. The final chapter deals with the metaphysical and theological recapitulations of his theory of imagination in the *Logic* (1823–9), and in *Aids to Reflection* (1825), and shows, as a conclusion, that by forming the Pentad he anchors the whole of his philosophical and theological argument on the mediatory function of 'the spirit, or, 'Mesothesis' of the Pentad.

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Acknowledgement

It was in the summer 1990 that I received the idea of this thesis. Placed at the centre of a vast, uncircumscribed landscape, I suddenly became convinced that divine creation and human perception cannot but meet at this point. Coleridge's Pentad then appeared to me to be an attempt of putting this experience into a diagram.

I was given an opportunity for research in St Chad's College, Durham, from 1989 to 1991, and in the Department of English Literature and the Faculty of Divinity, Glasgow, from 1991 to 1994. The present thesis is the result of five-year research at the Centre for the Study of Literature and Theology. Dr. David Jasper, the director of the Centre, provided an ideal environment for study, inspired enthusiasm, and never failed to give advice and encouragement. Mr Andrew Hass read the draft and made many helpful suggestions about my English. I met many friends. I remember with gratitude that what was given me these years is disproportionately greater than what I offer now. Lastly I thank my parents for their kind, quiet support.

Abbreviations for Primary Sources

- AR* *Aids to Reflection*, ed. John Beer, in *Collected Coleridge*, vol. 9 (London and Princeton, 1993)
- BL* *Biographia Literaria*, ed. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate, 2 vols, in *Collected Coleridge*, vol. 7 (London and Princeton, 1983)
- C & S* *On the Constitution of the Church and State*, ed. John Colmer, in *Collected Coleridge*, vol. 10 (London and Princeton, 1976)
- CIS* *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit*, ed. Henry Nelson Coleridge (London, 1840)
- CL* *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Earl Leslie Griggs, 6 vols (Oxford and New York, 1956–71)
- CM* *Marginalia*, ed. George Whalley and H.J. Jackson, 3 vols to date, in *Collected Coleridge*, vol. 12 (London and Princeton, 1980–92)
- CN* *The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Kathleen Coburn and Merton Christensen, 4 vols to date (London and New York, 1957–90)

- C 17th C* *Coleridge on the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Roberta Florence Brinkley (Durham, NC, 1955)
- Friend* *The Friend*, ed. Barbara E. Rooke, 2 vols, in *Collected Coleridge*, vol. 4 (London and Princeton, 1969)
- IS* *Inquiring Spirit: A New Presentation of Coleridge from his Published and Unpublished Prose Writings*, ed. Kathleen Coburn, rev. edn (Toronto, 1979)
- Lects 1795* *Lectures 1795: On Politics and Religion*, ed. Lewis Patton and Peter Mann, in *Collected Coleridge*, vol. 1 (London and Princeton, 1971)
- L Lects* *Lectures 1808–19: On Literature*, ed. Reginald A Foakes, 2 vols, in *Collected Coleridge*, vol. 5 (London and Princeton, 1984)
- Logic* *Logic*, ed. J.R. de J. Jackson, in *Collected Coleridge*, vol. 13 (London and Princeton, 1980)
- LR* *The Literary Remains of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Henry Nelson Coleridge, 4 vols (London, 1836–9)
- LS* *Lay Sermons*, ed. R.J. White, in *Collected Coleridge*, vol. 6 (London and Princeton, 1972)

- MC* *Miscellaneous Criticism*, ed. T. M. Raysor (London, 1936)
- Phil Lects* *The Philosophical Lectures of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Kathleen Coburn (London, 1949)
- Poems* *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: Poems*, ed. John Beer (London, 1974)
- PW* *The Complete Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. E.H. Coleridge, 2 vols (Oxford, 1912)
- Sh C* *Shakespearean Criticism*, ed. T. M. Raysor, 2 vols, 2nd edn (London, 1960)
- SM* *The Statesman's Manual*, in *Lay Sermons*, ed. R.J. White, in *Collected Coleridge*, vol. 6 (London and Princeton, 1972)
- TL* 'The Theory of Life', in *Miscellanies, Æsthetic and Literary: to Which Is Added The Theory of Life*, ed. T. Ashe (London, 1885)
- TT* *Table Talk*, ed. Carl Woodring, 2 vols, in *Collected Coleridge*, vol. 14 (London and Princeton, 1990)

Introduction

A reader of Coleridge soon discovers that a small fragmentary piece may carry the whole weight of his philosophy and theology. In his major works, Coleridge both confesses and inquires, and produces a large mosaic of the accounts of his personal life organized by his philosophical and theological endeavour to make sense of them. And he is even so in a small fragment. He often reveals the essence of his thinking in a drafted poem of just one stanza, a Notebook entry of a few lines or a brief aphorism in a letter. 'Phantom or Fact: A Dialogue in Verse', probably of 1830,¹ is such a typically Coleridgean small piece. The 'AUTHOR' presents his brief autobiographical account in the first stanza, and the 'FRIEND' asks about 'This riddling tale' in the second stanza. Then the 'AUTHOR' concludes the poem:

Call it a moment's work (and such it seems)
This tale's a fragment from the life of dreams;
But say, that years matur'd the silent strife,
And 'tis a record from the dream of life.

'Phantom *or* Fact' is a philosophical and, in Coleridge's case, a theological question. But first of all it is a personal question which imposes on him the choice between his miserable 'life' and his bright 'dream'. He cannot make this choice since it is either to confine himself in the lightless 'life' or to deceive himself in the bright but untrue 'dream'. All his philosophy and theology is an effort to avoid such a choice and proceed from 'Phantom *or* Fact' to 'Phantom *and* Fact'. However, 'phantom and fact' is not a stable distinction. In fact it only indicates that one is 'the phantom' of the other. It even suggests that the two are interchangeable. Therefore, being forced to

¹ *Poems*, p. 354.

choose 'Phantom *or* Fact' inevitably results in turning round their interchangeability. One can break this circularity only by admitting 'Phantom *and* Fact'. In the end Coleridge suggests that 'phantom' and 'fact' are reconcilable, for once he fully acknowledges '*or*', he finds '*and*' also implied within '*or*' from the beginning.

The present thesis traces how Coleridge deals with 'Phantom and Fact', also referred to as 'reality and unreality' or 'the problem of two natures' in the thesis, and how he develops his Trinitarian resolution, 'God' 'man' and 'nature'. As he readily admits, he develops this particularly Coleridgean 'Trinity' largely from his poetical and philosophical speculations.² Certainly, this 'Trinity' is not directly derived from the orthodox Christian Trinity, 'Father', 'Son', and 'Holy Ghost'. But it is nonetheless a theological Trinity.

[The Philosophical Trinity]

WHERE'ER I find the Good, the True, the Fair,

I ask no names—God's spirit dwelleth there!

The unconfounded, undivided Three,

Each for itself, and all in each, to see

In man and Nature, is Philosophy.³

As he states here, he does not pay much attention to the philosophical Trinity as such. What is the most important to him is 'God', 'man', and 'nature' which is a theological, if not theologically orthodox, Trinity. It is also important that he says here God's 'spirit'. He maintains this 'Philosophy' to the end and argues that man is an image of God placed in nature, or in his words, 'Man himself is a syllepsis, a compendium of

² See *BL*, I, pp. 179–80, 204–5.

³ *Poems*, p, 324.

Nature—the Microcosm'.⁴ However, he is a 'modern' theologian who develops his theological argument in response to modern philosophies since Descartes, most notably to Kant's phenomenology. Coleridge studies them, goes along with them and finally detects in their arguments the tendency to replace the divine 'Macrocosm' with the human 'Microcosm' and posit man as the subject of his own 'cosmos'. To them he makes a twofold, 'theological' objection. He argues that man 'cannot' replace 'Macrocosm' with 'Microcosm', and that if he attempts it, he makes himself the subject of his own 'chaos', not 'cosmos'. He argues that the human subject simply replaces the correspondent symmetry between 'Macrocosm' and 'Microcosm' with asymmetry between 'divine cosmos' and 'human chaos'. The human subject becomes caught in the problem of two natures. The modern philosophies thus lead Coleridge to a starting point of his theology. He admits that he himself is such a subject and confesses that there is not correspondence, not even 'coincidence' between divine nature and his own human nature. He uses the word 'coincidence' in both epistemological and ethical contexts,⁵ and he admits that in both cases he is deprived of it. Here is another Coleridgean fragment, possibly from 1796:

inward desolations—
 an horror of great darkness
 great things that on the ocean
 counterfeit infinity—⁶

At this point he begins a theological pursuit for a possible reconciliation between the original infinity and the 'counterfeit' infinity. It has to be 'theological', since he

⁴ *TL*, p. 423.

⁵ Coleridge writes in 'Confessio Fidei' (1810), 'all holy Will is coincident with the Will of God'. *CN*, III, 4005. In the twelfth chapter of *Biographia Literaria* (1817), he defines 'the truth' as 'the coincidence of the thought with the thing'. *BL*, I, p. 254.

⁶ *CN*, I, 273.

believes that the problem lies between the original 'subject' and its 'counterfeit', between God and man. In *Aids to Reflection* (1825) he forms the Pentad and suggests that man may be reconciled with God, that nature may be restored somewhere in the middle of 'Phantom *and* Fact'.

If the dating of the above poem is correct, Coleridge is already aware of his 'inward desolation' in 1796. His early poetic practice suggests that it is the case. The first chapter of the thesis deals with a plan, of 1796, to write 'hymns' and shows how he interprets the plan's failure as the mark of the Fall. It also deals with another plan, 'Soother of Absence' and investigates his extensive and desperate attempt to recover exercised under this title. The second and third chapters discuss his two best-known poems and shows that 'inward desolation' is the central theme of these poems. 'The Ancient Mariner' is a good example to see what he believes is the immediate result of that fall, the problem of evil. His reference to original sin at the time of the composition, as well as the poem itself, clearly reveals his particular, inherently theological attitude towards the discovery of his own 'inward desolations'. 'Dejection Ode' is also a clear statement of his 'inward desolations'. Drawing on the sharp distinction between himself and those who enjoy the inward joy, he most powerfully depicts his solipsistic despair which he calls in the poem 'Reality's dark dream'.

Coleridge thus encounters the 'modern' problem as a poet. And when he does, he ceases to regard himself as a poet. It is therefore necessary to investigate his personal circumstance up to 1810 in the context of his poetic failure, and then follow how he develops his philosophy and theology on the basis of this experience. 1810 seems to mark the turning point when his thinking begins to take a form close to systematic argument. It is the time when he, in respect to his public address, shifts his emphasis from poetry to literary criticism. This shift enables him to integrate his reading of Kant and others into discussion and develop along with this discussion his inherent and personal theology which he expects to explain why he

fails as a poet and how he should seek for the recovery. The fourth chapter deals with the period preparatory for this development. The fifth and sixth chapters discuss in detail his sustained attempt to integrate his reading of Kant into his own personal theological argument. Finally, this attempt culminates when he forms the Pentad and publishes it in *Aids to Reflection* (1825). The thesis thus attempts to show how he develops his particular theology in the context of poetical and philosophical discussion and how he exercises his implicit theological argument while dealing with supposedly non-theological matters such as poetry and philosophy. That is, it attempts to argue that his theology originates in his experience as a poet and a metaphysician, and that his repeated reconsideration of this experience finally leads him to the formation of the Pentad. As the conclusion, the seventh chapter shows how he expresses his personal theology in forming the Pentad. He spends his last ten years relating this final form of the Coleridgean 'Trinity' to the orthodox Christian Trinity. But the full investigation into this development in the still unpublished Notebooks lies outside the scope of the thesis, since the Pentad in 1825 is his last public statement concerning the Coleridgean Trinity, and he himself thinks that it is the final form of his poetical, philosophical, and implicitly theological argument.

Coleridge is an 'illustrative' rather than 'conceptual' thinker. His writing suggests that he illustrates his thought first and conceptualizes it afterwards, that he thinks and develops his argument by illustration rather than by systematic conceptualization.⁷ He is particularly illustrative in the early years. And he does not lose all the illustrative quality even when he acknowledges his failure as a poet. In reading Coleridge, therefore, it is crucial to let illustrations speak and respond to

⁷ Kant, on the contrary, takes for granted the priority of concept over illustration. He believes that this is the matter of style, but his philosophy as a whole seems to be determined by his propensity to subordinate illustration to concept, intuition to conceptualization. See Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (1781), A XVII–XVIII.

them rather than reduce them. For me to read Coleridge is to read how he experiences the world and how he illustrates his experience. I believe that man 'knows' the world by basic distinctive experiences such as 'above' and 'below', 'light' and 'darkness', 'without' and 'within', 'passivity' and 'activity', or 'Fact' and 'Phantom'; that his primary experience is to discover that there is a point of distinction which divides 'above' from 'below' and so on. I believe that complex philosophies and elaborate theologies are originally derived from these basic experiences, eloquently demonstrating the possibility of their infinite variations and combinations. Coleridge tends to think that the first distinction is between God and man, and, consequently, that those other distinctions are derivative of this first distinction. Therefore, whenever he speaks about the distinctions he is implicitly theological; and he is particularly so when he argues that the point of distinction is also the point of reconciliation. The thesis is an attempt to 'decipher' his vast and notoriously complex writing by these basic distinctions and detect when and how he adopts theological language in an essentially poetical and philosophical argument.

I employ many, sometimes lengthy quotations from Coleridge in an attempt to avoid arbitrarily conceptualizing his illustrations and to see if they in themselves lead to a coherent argument. The use of secondary sources is limited to a minimum for the same reason. Quoting from Coleridge I pay little attention to whether the work is verse or prose, public or private, published or unpublished. For I think Coleridge is essentially the same thinker in each work irrespective of genre, scale or circumstance.

In transcribing Coleridge's texts, all the spellings, punctuations and errors are kept as the editors reproduce them. Translations of Coleridge's foreign texts, if not noted otherwise, are the ones provided by the editors of the works. Other translations are either specified in footnotes or, in a few occasions where published translations are either unavailable or unsuitable for the discussion, my own.

Chapter 1 'Hymn of Joy' and 'Soother of Absence'

I. Coleridge shares with his contemporaries the romantic belief that the child is a poet of nature. What is also true of him is that the belief is always accompanied with his pessimistic acknowledgment that he himself is no longer a child or a poet. He certainly yearns after that romantic ideal, but he always admits that he can no longer embody that ideal. For example, he writes to Southey on 28 September 1802 of his children playing in the fields and says it is 'as pretty a sight as a Father's eyes could well see':

Hartley & little Derwent running in the Green, where the Gusts blow most madly—both with their Hair floating & tossing, a miniature of the agitated Trees below which they were playing/inebriate both with the pleasure—Hartley whirling round for joy—Derwent eddying half willingly, half by the force of the Gust—driven backward, struggling forward, & shouting his little hymn of Joy.¹

He characteristically idealizes children as natural hymn-singers and sees in them the unity of what is contradictory in man. A child naturally unites activity and passivity, or, a move forward and backward. And it is from such a union that the 'little hymn of Joy' flows. However, 'a Father's eyes' see not only the joy of his children but also his own misery. September 1802 is the time when Coleridge publicly acknowledges that the hymn of joy no longer flows from him. A week following this letter 'Dejection Ode' appears in the *Morning Post*, in which he draws a sharp contrast between children's hymn of joy and his own moaning of deprivation, between what he once was and what he now is. However, he is not an ironist. He certainly accepts that his lingering hope to be a hymn-singer in nature and his

¹ CL, II, p. 872.

acknowledged failure create an ironical situation. Yet he is free from irony in the sense that he takes the problem seriously and sincerely seeks for the solution.²

Coleridge expresses a similar view about idealized child two years before. He writes Godwin on 22 September 1800:

I look at my doted-on Hartley—he moves, he lives, he finds impulses from within & from without—he is the darling of the Sun and of the Breeze! Nature seems to bless him as a thing of her own! He looks at the clouds, the mountains the living Beings of the Earth, & vaults & jubilates!³

This is the letter in which he expresses his doubt about the baptism of his son Hartley. He confesses his bitter contempt to human 'follies' and argues that a blessed child of nature does not need any artificial measure to receive blessings. In spite of or probably because of his 'moody philosophy' he earnestly idealizes his child. He says of his son that in nature 'he moves, he lives' and mediates 'impulses from within and from without'. This passage clearly resonates with Acts 17: 28, 'For in him we live, and move, and have our being'. And the resonance in return reveals a characteristically Coleridgean modification of this biblical passage.⁴ His son is in nature, and therefore, Coleridge implies, in God. Moreover, in the place of 'we have our being', he says his son 'finds impulses from within and from without', that is, he participates in nature actively as well as passively. By such participation he remains Nature's blessed son, 'a thing of her own'.⁵

² For example, in spite of its pessimistic overtone, Coleridge manages to put an optimistic ending to 'Dejection Ode'. See Chapter 3.

³ *CL*, I, p 625.

⁴ For other occasions in which Coleridge quotes this biblical passage, see below.

⁵ It should be noted here that Coleridge's speculation on passivity and activity of man originates in his observation of 'a child of nature'. When he finds that passivity and activity form a paradox in himself, he recognizes that he is no longer 'a child of nature'. This personal crisis is the basis of his philosophy and theology. The search

The scene of this 'hymn of Joy' seems to be so vivid that it causes some retrospection in Coleridge. In 1798 he made a long list entitled 'Infancy & Infants' in the Notebook.⁶ In September 1802 he adds the 'hymn of Joy' to the list with only slight modifications. The fourteenth entry of the list now reads:

14. The wisdom & graciousness of God in the infancy of the human species—its beauty, long continuance &c &c. <Children in the wind—hair floating, tossing, a miniature of the agitated Trees, below which they play'd—the elder whirling for joy, the one in petticoats, a fat Baby, eddying half willingly, half by the force of the Gust—driven backward, struggling forward—both drunk with the pleasure, both shouting their hymn of Joy.>

Characteristic of a romantic poet, his retrospection reaches much farther than his childhood. As in the above entry, it takes him back to his own infancy and subsequently to the 'the infancy of the human species'. Here retrospection is combined with idealization, and 'poet' becomes the idea not only of what he once was but also of what man in the beginning was. George Dekker argues that Robert Lowth's *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews* (1753) has a decisive influence on romantic retrospection of this sort.⁷ Dekker shows how Lowth idealizes the Psalms, the Hebrew ode, as the oldest kind of poetry and quotes from him, 'the origin of the ode may be traced into that of poetry itself, and appears to be coeval with the commencement of religion, or more properly the creation of man'.⁸ The first hymn,

for the mediation of passivity and activity thus becomes the starting point of his speculation.

⁶ *CN*, I, 330.

⁷ George Dekker, *Coleridge and the Literature of Sensibility* (London, 1978) pp. 219–20.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 219. Dekker quotes from Robert Lowth, *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews* (1753) vol. II, p. 192.

that is, Adam's hymn, is described by Lowth as 'an effusion of praise to his Great Creator, accompanied with a suitable energy and exultation of voice'.⁹

'Hymn' understood by Lowth is Adam's 'spontaneous overflow' of praise. Coleridge borrows Lowth's book from the Bristol Library in September 1796.¹⁰ In the same year, though probably earlier, he plans to write 'Hymns to the Sun, the Moon, and the Elements—six hymns ... In the last Hymn a sublime enumeration of all the charms or Tremendities of Nature'.¹¹ He is obviously high-spirited, and his exulted voice in announcing the plan is not unlike that of Lowth. According to Charles Lamb's correspondence with Coleridge between 1796–7, Coleridge works on the plan for sometime.¹² However, although Lamb encourages its progress and Coleridge makes some preparatory notes in the Notebook, the plan remains largely unexecuted. Since then, the plan receives specific attention three times, each at a different stage of his life. In a letter to Southey on 29 July 1802 when preparing a volume on Christ's divinity which too is abandoned, he says, 'This is no mere Dream, like my Hymns to the Elements/for I have written more than half the work'.¹³ But these hymns are daring ones. On 25 September 1816, he lists the plan as the first of the three projected works. He says, 'Seven Hymns with a large preface or prose commentary to each—1. to the Sun. 2. Moon. 3. Earth. 4. Air. 5. Water. 6. Fire. 7.

⁹ Ibid. Dekker quotes from Lowth, *ibid.*, p. 190. It seems to be the case in Lowth that when he draws on the Ninety-sixth and Ninety-eighth Psalms and argues that the praise of the creation is the original form of poetry, the Psalms' destructive elements and their apocalyptic ending are forgotten and buried in the exultation of romantic optimism. Coleridge, however, is alien to this sort of optimism even in his earliest days. It attracts him, but in his case the very attraction forces him to remain aware of the dark side of the creation.

¹⁰ George Whalley, 'The Bristol Library Borrowings of Southey and Coleridge, 1793–8', *The Library*, IV (1949) 114–31, p. 123.

¹¹ *CN*, I, 174: 16. Quoted in full and discussed in relation to 'The Ancient Mariner' in Chapter 2, I.

¹² Charles and Mary Lamb, *The Letters of Charles Lamb to which are added those of his sister Mary Lamb*, ed. E. V. Lucas, 3 vols (London, 1935) I, p. 27, 52, 94. See also John Livingston Lowes, *The Road to Xanadu: A Study in the Ways of the Imagination* (London, 1927) pp. 74–92.

¹³ *CL*, II, p. 829.

God.'¹⁴ As late as on 30 March 1820, he mentions the still unwritten hymns 'entitled Spirit, Sun, Earth, Air, Water, Fire, and Man', remembering 'the proud times when I planned'.¹⁵ It should be noticed that in these recollections he gradually adds 'God', 'Spirit' and 'Man' to the plan. While the reason of this addition can only be guessed at, the addition itself is highly significant. It is so if he is consciously expanding the plan or even if he is remembering it merely incorrectly after twenty-five years. For Coleridge's own lifelong problem concerning 'God', 'Spirit' and 'Man' emerges as early as 'the proud time' when he plans them, and this problem may be the reason why he cannot execute the plan.

The truth is that Coleridge does not have the lived experience of 'the proud time' even in his youth which would enable him to execute the plan. In 1796 he publishes thirty-three 'Effusions' with other compositions, but the overall tone is so far from exulting that they have little to do with the romantic view of poetry. In 1797 he reworks the plan and writes 'The Ancient Mariner', but the poem is essentially of man and not of the elements. But while his poetic exercise remains distanced from the idea of Adam's hymn, the idea itself grasps him firmly. That is, he begins to present himself as a hymn-singer. As a result, he writes, apart from the abandoned plan, 'Hymn to the Earth [IMITATED FROM STORBERG'S 'HYMN AN DIE ERDE']' (1799), 'Hymn Before Sun-Rise, in the Vale of Chamouni' (1802), and 'A Hymn' (1814). Yet, as will be seen below, none of them are genuine hymn. It is obvious that poetics of this kind are alien to his own creativity, and that when he applies it to himself the result is certainly less than successful.

At this point Coleridge makes a peculiar decision, of which the level of impact he receives from the romantic poetics seems to be the only possible explanation. What he does when he realizes that he cannot sing Adam's hymn is to retain the misapplied poetics and abandon his own poetic creativity. He begins to formulate his poetics on

¹⁴ *CL*, IV, p. 687.

¹⁵ *CL*, V, p. 28.

the line of the romantic view of Adam's hymn from which he as a poet is essentially alien, and at the same time he begins to praise more than anything else a poet who can fulfil his poetics, Wordsworth, as the closest example. Coleridge writes on 19 December 1800:

Wordsworth & I have never resided together—he lives at Grasmere, a place worthy of him, & of which he is worthy—and neither to Man nor Place can higher praise be given ... As to our literary occupations they are still more distant than our residences—He is a great, a true Poet—I am only a kind of a Metaphysician.¹⁶

Coleridge simply repeats his acknowledgment that his 'poetry' is astray. It is always 'a true Poet', such as his children or Wordsworth, who reminds him that he is not a poet. In a letter to Godwin on 25 March 1801, he presents himself as a dying poet and leaves the account of his own life, 'Wordsworth descended on him, like the *Γνωθι σεαυτόν* from Heaven; by shewing to him what true Poetry was, he made him know, that he himself was no Poet.' Coleridge's description of a dead poet in the letter clearly articulates what he believes a poet should be:

The poet is dead in me—my imagination (or rather the Somewhat that had been imaginative) lies, like a Cold Snuff on the circular Rim of a Brass Candle-stick, without even a stink of Tallow to remind you that it was once cloathed & mitred with Flame. That is past by!—I was once a Volume of Gold Leaf, rising & riding on every breath of Fancy—but I have beaten myself back into weight & density, & now I sink in quicksilver, yea, remain squat and square on the earth amid the

¹⁶ *CL*, I, p. 658. Coleridge's ambivalent attitude towards metaphysics, along with his oscillating attitude towards himself as a poet of nature, will be discussed in the next Chapter.

hurricane, that makes Oaks and Straws join in one Dance, fifty yards high in the Element.¹⁷

The dead poet is alienated from the presence of God in nature. He is fundamentally deprived of receiving any inspiration from nature at all. As a result, his creativity becomes like an extinct candle. With this recognition, however, he begins to seek for recovery from 'death' and formulate his poetics in this direction. His poetic exercise thus begins to assume the slight suggestion that it is a remedial exercise.

II. Coleridge's letter to William Sotheby on 10 September 1802¹⁸ is a crucial document to see the development of his new poetics and its result. Here he presents his poetics as directly opposed to his early poetic exercises such as 'Effusions' (1796). In the letter the discussion begins with criticizing Bowles, from whom the epigraph of 'Effusions' was taken and to whom the first 'Effusion' was dedicated. The epigraph was:

Content, as random Fancies might inspire,
If his weak harp at times or lonely lyre
He struck with desultory hand, and drew
Some soften'd tones to Nature not untrue.

Bowles¹⁹

Coleridge now criticizes Bowles' 'faintness of Impression'. Obviously, he is no longer 'content' with Bowles' 'Fancies', with 'Some soften'd tones to Nature not untrue'. He argues in the letter, 'Nature has her proper interest; & he will know

¹⁷ *CL*, II, p. 714.

¹⁸ *CL*, II, p. 864.

¹⁹ *Poems*, p. 35.

what it is, who believes & feels, that every Thing has a Life of it's own, & that we are all *one Life*.' What he has in mind is the idea of the romantic poetry which he ascribes to his children, Wordsworth or Adam. He restates his view in the letter in more explicit terms: 'In the Hebrew Poets each Thing has a Life of it's own, & yet they are all one Life. In God they move & live, & *have* their Being'.²⁰ With this romanticized poetics he lays criticism on almost everything around him. Bowles' works, he says, 'are "Sermoni propiora" which I once translated—"Proper for a Sermon"', but not for a hymn. In Greek religious poems 'All natural Objects were *dead*—mere hollow Statues—In the Hebrew Poetry you find nothing of this poor Stuff—as poor in genuine Imagination, as it is mean in Intellect'. To Deism he says 'In God they [natural Objects] move & live, & *have* their Being—not *had*, as the cold System of Newtonian Theology represents/*but have*.' The key concept of this poetics is the unity between the poet and nature. It argues that there should be no discrepancy between the poet's being in nature and his act. As 'hymn of Joy' comes out from a child's 'eddyng half willingly, half by the force of the Gust', a hymn requires unity between the poet's being in nature and his creative act. Coleridge argues in one breath 'that everything has a Life of its own' and 'that we are all *one Life*'. 'Everything' certainly includes the poet. He has to have a life of his own and also remain within '*one Life*'. For that purpose, 'A Poet's *Heart* and *Intellect* should be *combined, intimately* combined & unified, with the great appearances in Nature' as in Wordsworth, and 'not merely held in solution & loose mixture with them, in the shape of formal Similes' as in Bowles and Coleridge himself. The latter have 'Fancy, or aggregating Faculty of the mind' but lack '*Imagination*, or the *modifying*,

²⁰ This passage is from Acts 17: 28. It should be noted that Coleridge applies this passage, originally said of man, to the whole nature. See above. He often quotes this with characteristic modifications. See Chapter 5, l, Chapter 7, l.

and *co-adunating* Faculty'. They have 'the *sensibility* of a poet' but want '*native Passion*'.²¹

Coleridge's next step is to apply this poetics to himself. He exemplifies his confidence in it by quoting from his 'To Matilda Betham from a Stranger' (1802):

Poetic Feelings, like the flexuous Boughs
 Of mighty Oaks, yield homage to the Gale,
 Toss in the strong winds, drive before the Gust,
 Themselves one giddy storm of fluttering Leaves;
 Yet all the while, self-limited, remain
 Equally near the fix'd and parent Trunk

²¹ Later, Coleridge develops the statement 'every Thing has a Life of it's own, & that we are all *one Life*' into 'the principle of individuation' in *Theory of Life*. He writes, 'I define life as *the principle of individuation*, or the power which unites a given *all* into a *whole* that is presupposed by all its parts.' *TL*, p. 385. He also calls it 'the principle of unity in *multeity*', that is, the principle which brings resolution to the problem of one and many. It also solves the problem of passivity and activity, or, of 'ab extra' and 'ab intra'. In the eleventh Philosophical Lecture he explain the principle by ascribing it to Giordano Bruno and adopting what appears to be the Leibnizian argument of 'Monad'. He says, 'there is throughout all nature an aptitude implanted that all things may be <related> to each and to all, for everything that exists in some time strives to be always, everything that perceives anywhere strives to perceive everywhere, and to become that universally whatever it has as an individual; in short each part of nature contains in itself a germ of the omnipresence, inasmuch as it still strives to be the whole, and what it cannot possess at any one moment it attempts to possess by a perpetual succession of development.' *Phil Lects*, p. 326. For his adoption of Leibnizian argument, see below and Chapter 7, III. The principle of individuation involves 'the polar logic', which becomes the basis of the formation of the Pentad. He writes, '*polarity*, or the essential dualism of Nature, arising out of its productive unity, and still tending to reaffirm it, either as equilibrium, indifference, or identity ... Life, then, we consider as the copula, or the unity of thesis and antithesis, position and counterposition,—Life itself being the positive of both; as, on the other hand, the two counterpoints are the necessary conditions of the *manifestations* of Life.' *TL*, p. 393. For the relation of the polar logic to the Pentad, see Chapter 7, I note. This 'manifestation' is, however, the divine self-manifestation. And Coleridge's inherent anxiety that the human self-manifestation may not be included in it, or more precisely, his anxiety that he himself may not be included in it, denies him all the assurance which the above argument seems to offer. He carefully avoids this problem in *Theory of Life*. For a further discussion about the problem, see Chapter 7. For how his attempt at defining 'Life' forces the inception of the human subject 'I', see Chapter 3, III.

Of Truth & Nature, in the howling Blast
 As in the Calm that stills the Aspen Grove.²²

The first half describes how the poet receives 'Poetic Feelings' from nature. It is basically the same expression as the 'hymn of Joy' or 'The Eolian Harp' in which 'the gust' represents the divine presence in nature. The latter half reaffirms that poetry is essentially a hymn. The quotation is virtually the versification of his new poetics which he extensively discusses in the letter. But the latter half is strangely out of place. For, according to his own argument, there is no need of such reaffirmation. Childrens' 'hymn of joy' does not require any argumentation that it is a hymn. Moreover, immediacy between reception and response in the act of singing precludes the possibility of reaffirmation in the first place. Therefore the fact that he sees the need of reaffirmation indicates, probably contrary to his own intention, his awareness that his response to the 'Poetic Feelings' might not be as direct and immediate as his children's. That is, he betrays his inherent anxiety concerning his own status in nature.

Coleridge wrote a year and half before that 'my imagination' was in fact 'rather the Somewhat that had been imaginative',²³ and about the same time acknowledged that he was 'only a kind of a Metaphysician' while Wordsworth is 'a true Poet'.²⁴ Here he opposes metaphysics to poetry. But what he attempts to do in the letter to Sotheby is to incorporate metaphysics into poetry. In fact, three months before this letter, he already wrote to Sotheby, 'a great Poet must be, implicitè if not explicitè, a profound Metaphysician.'²⁵ In his poetic argument, he says that a poet should exercise both passive reception and active participation, both 'Fancy, or aggregating

²² *CL*, II, p. 864.

²³ *CL*, II, p. 714

²⁴ *CL*, I, p. 658. Quoted above.

²⁵ *CL*, II, p. 810.

Faculty' and '*Imagination, or the modifying, and co-adunating Faculty*'. The crucial point in this argument is that he implicitly admits the possible separation of the two. He argues, therefore, they should be reunited. The fact is that this argument is no longer poetical but metaphysical, that it no longer presupposes the immediate union between reception and response but aims at their reunion. He thus shifts the point of argument from the immediate response of children to the mediated response of man, 'thinking'. '*Imagination, or the modifying, and co-adunating Faculty*' is mental, active faculty which is different from passive, sensible 'Fancy'. Accordingly, he criticizes Bowles for the lack of thinking. He says, Bowles 'has no native Passion, because he is not a Thinker'. He continues: 'Bowles ... has probably weakened his Intellect by the haunting Fear of becoming extravagant.' Coleridge is willing to be 'extravagant', and it is not by 'Fancy' but by 'Intellect'.

Coleridge suggests that the successful metaphysician is in fact a poet. He would still argue that Wordsworth, for example, is 'a profound Metaphysician', but no longer maintain the immediacy between reception and response as a prerequisite of the poet. He now argues that poetry comes out of the successful mediation, and not the immediate union, of reception and response. It is inevitably mediatory or 'secondary'. At first he seems to enjoy this new, metaphysical 'extravagancy'. However, behind such 'extravagancy' is his bitter recognition that he can no longer offer immediate response. The once-admitted gap between reception and response gradually reveals itself when he exercises this 'metaphysical' poetics in 'Hymn Before Sun-Rise'.

That this [devotional feeling] is deep in our Nature, I felt when I was on Sca' fell—. I involuntarily poured forth a Hymn in the manner of the *Psalms*, tho' afterwards I thought the Ideas &c disproportionate to our humble mountains—& accidentally lighting on a short Note in some swiss Poems, concerning the Vale of

Chamouny, & it's Mountain, I transferred myself thither, in the Spirit, & adapted my former feelings to these grander external objects.²⁶

He admits here that he has to 'transfer' the scenery of 'Sca' fell' to that of Chamonix 'in the Spirit'. But what he actually does is to transfer himself to the other poet. He may be unaware of this difference, but the real gap is not between 'Sca' fell' and Chamonix but between 'a kind of Metaphysician' and a poet who sings hymns. Coleridge's difficulty in this 'transference' is that his '*native Passion*' has to be transferred to the other poet, or more precisely, '*native Passion*' has to be transferred to him from the other poet, in order for him to sing hymns. And even when he successfully receives the transferred '*native Passion*', there still remains the fact that he, the metaphysician, is solely dependent on the other, true poet.

Thus, in spite of his argument to the contrary, there remains the gap between the poet and the metaphysician. Coleridge would jump over the gap if his 'metaphysical extravagancy' were such as to allow him to claim that he himself is Adam. It does not, but it allows him to admit that his poetic creativity cannot but be in the form of 'transference', that is, the form of plagiarism. He writes in the Notebook towards the end of the year, 'A thief in the Candle, consuming in a blazing the Tallow belonging to a the wick out of sight—/Plagiary from past authors &c—'.²⁷ When his 'poet' died, he described himself as 'a Cold Snuff on the circular Rim of a Brass Candle-stick, without even a stink of Tallow to remind you that it was once cloathed & mitred with Flame'. Now the candle is lit, but it burns 'transferred' tallow. Because of this transference, the composition of 'Hymn Before Sun-Rise' is generally regarded as the first conspicuous occasion of his plagiarism. The charge was first raised by De Quincey in 1834, and recently discussed in detail by

²⁶ *CL*, II, p. 864–5.

²⁷ *CN*, I, 1316. Norman Fruman suggests that this notebook entry is Coleridge's confession of the plagiarism he commits in composing 'Hymn Before Sun-Rise'. See Fruman, *Coleridge, the Damaged Archangel* (London, 1972) pp. 26–30.

Fruman.²⁸ But their moral charge misses Coleridge's own definition of plagiarism which he imposes on himself when he struggles with his own poetics. That is, if all the derivation from 'the wick' is 'plagiarism', the only possible distinction between an original poet and plagiarists is that between 'a true Poet' and metaphysicians, that is, Adam and the rest. The difficulty he faces in his own composition is that even when he admits that it is 'plagiarism', his poetics still urges him to re-produce Adam's hymn. The measure he tries in 'Hymn Before Sun-Rise' is to present himself as a fictive, 'transferred', hymn-singer.

Coleridge borrows without public acknowledgement the poem's setting at Chamonix from Friederica Brun, a Swiss poet of the *Sturm und Drang* period. As Fruman shows, Coleridge's first half of the introductory note is a close translation from Brun's. But Coleridge would defend himself by arguing that he adapted 'his' poetic feeling at 'Sca' Fell' to Brun's at Chamonix, and transferred 'himself' to Brun the hymn-singer, and that since each poetic feeling is derived from and addressed to one source, it is of secondary importance to define when, where or by whom one particular poetic feeling is received and articulated.²⁹ Relying on the notion of the omnipresent and transferable 'Poetic Feelings', he would allow himself to say even in the borrowed setting, 'the whole vale, its every light, its every sound, must needs impress every mind not utterly callous with the thought—Who *would* be, who *could* be an Atheist in this valley of wonders!³⁰

Even though they share the supposedly same setting, 'Chamouny beym Sonnenaufgange'³¹ and 'Hymn Before Sun-Rise, in the Vale of Chamouni'³² are

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Referring to Schelling's 'small pamphlet against Fichte' [*Darlegung des wahren Verhältnisses der Naturphilosophie mit der verbesserten Fichte'schen Lehre* (Tübingen, 1806)], Coleridge says, 'I regard truth as a divine ventriloquist: I care not from whose mouths the sounds are supposed to proceed, if only the words are audible and intelligible.' *BL*, I, p. 164.

³⁰ *PW*, I, p. 377.

³¹ *PW*, II, p. 1131.

³² *Poems*, pp. 289–91.

different poems. They are different in the sense that the latter has a hint of Coleridgean metaphysics. Coleridge is different from Brun in that he expresses his wish to sing hymn and at the same time acknowledges that he cannot. At first, however, Coleridge follows Brun's model and introduces the figure of hymn singer in the poem. Brun writes:

'Aus tiefem Schatten des schweigenden Tannenhains
 Erblick' ich bebend dich, Scheitel der Ewigkeit,
 Blendenden Gipfel, von dessen Höhe
 Ahndend mein Geist ins Unendliche schwebet!
 [Above the deep shadows of the silent forest
 With awe I glimpse at you, the summit of the eternity,
 From the height of the dazzling peak
 My spirit already floats on to the Infinite.]

It is obvious that Coleridge takes the idea from Brun's and makes a similar self-introduction as a hymn-singer. He writes:

O dread and silent Mount! I gaze upon thee,
 Till thou, still present to the bodily sense,
 Didst vanish from my thought: entranced in prayer
 I worshipped the Invisible alone.

But one soon hears Coleridge's own voice. This is Coleridge's third stanza:

Awake, my soul! not only passive praise
 Thou owest! not alone these swelling tears,
 Mute thanks and secret ecstasy! Awake,

Voice of sweet song! Awake my heart, awake!
 Green vales and icy cliffs, all join my Hymn.

The voice which narrates this stanza is Coleridge's own in the sense that it does not have a counterpart in Brun's poem. But more importantly, it is so because it echoes within himself. It is the voice which still remains in darkness and wishes to reach 'the Infinite', which is different from the voice in the first stanza which is already reaching 'the Infinite'. Thus the hymn is sung in a peculiar duality of voice, on the one hand already reaching the sun and on the other still waiting in darkness. This latter voice is the same as that which appears in the latter half of the quotation from 'To Matilda Betham from a Stranger' in the letter. It is the voice of the metaphysician which has essentially no place in hymn. It is the voice which is more suitable for petition than for praise, for mediated thinking than immediate response.

Coleridge is reluctant to speak in this voice. His early attempts show not so much his ambition as his hesitation to present himself as a hymn singer. Both 'Hymn to the Earth' (1799) and 'Hymn Before Sun-Rise, in the Vale of Chamouni' (1802) are dependent on the German originals. In them, he presents himself as a fictive figure. He is merely a 'transferred', therefore negative, figure. It is more than a decade later when he writes another hymn, 'A Hymn' (1814). Yet it shows the direct continuity of thought from the early attempts, in the sense that it begins at the point where the early hymns ended. In 'A Hymn', he ventures to present himself as a positive figure. The poem begins with his own direct address, 'MY Maker!'. Inevitably, it reveals the reason why he hesitated to do so in the early attempts. 'A Hymn' deals with the Fall in a positive, explicit manner:

Great God! thy works how wondrous fair!
 Yet sinful man didst thou declare
 The whole Earth's voice and mind!

Lord, ev'n as Thou all-present art,
 O may we still with heedful heart
 Thy presence know and find!
 Then come what will, of weal or woe,
 Joy's bosom-spring shall steady flow;
 For though 'tis Heaven THYSELF to see,
 Where but thy *Shadow* falls, Grief cannot be!—³³

Here he discloses his implicit anxiety which he had even in the early attempts. Here he expressly deals with the problem that the divine presence in nature and his own presence in it are contradictory. In the early hymns, he could maintain the divine presence if at the cost of his own. But when he presents himself as a positive figure, he can no longer maintain that 'he' receives the divine presence in nature. 'A Hymn' is in fact addressed not to the presence but to the 'shadow' of the presence. His petitionary voice which was but faint in the early attempts is here unmistakably loud and clear. The tone is entirely changed. It is that of consolation, which is not unlike that of 'Effusions' which have no trace of exultation.

Five years later, Coleridge takes up again the same theme. In a letter to an unknown correspondent in November 1819, he deals with the same problem once again by drawing on 'Hymn Before Sun-Rise'.³⁴ There is an obvious difference in argument between 1802 and 1819. In 1802 the argument was focused almost exclusively on the reception of 'Poetic Feelings', but here the point of attention is largely shifted from reception to response. However, he begins the letter as if he repeats his early poetics. Stressing devotional 'feelings', he writes:

³³ *PW*, I, p. 423.

³⁴ *CL*, IV, p. 974–5.

In a Copy of Verses entitled, 'a Hymn before Sunrise in the Vale of Chamouny', I described myself under the influence of strong devotional feelings gazing on the Mountain till as if it had been a Shape emanating from and sensibly representing her own essence, my Soul had become diffused thro' 'the mighty Vision'; and there

As in her natural Form, swell'd vast to Heaven.

The verse line is taken from the second stanza of 'Hymn Before Sun-Rise'. But in this second stanza he already made a strong suggestion that his composition carries the trace of metaphysical argument. Addressing to nature, he wrote these lines:

Thou, the meanwhile, wast blending with my Thought,
 Yea, with my Life and Life's own secret joy:
 Till the dilating Soul, enrapt, transfused,
 Into the mighty vision passing—there
 As in her natural form, swelled vast to Heaven!

The fact is that it is 'my thought', 'my Life' which have no place in hymn. Moreover, he acknowledges the secrecy of 'joy' which clearly makes the loss of his 'hymn of Joy'. Therefore 'my thought' and 'my Life' have to be blended with the original 'Life', naturally or even artificially in order to recover 'joy'.³⁵ But the 'blending'

³⁵ 'Joy' is one of Coleridge's key terms. In 'Dejection Ode' he writes:

Joy, Lady! is the spirit and the power,
 Which wedding Nature to us gives in dower *Poems*, p. 281.

Yet he admits that he has lost this natural gift. He thus faces himself to the task to rediscover 'Joy'. His adoption of Fichte's idealistic argument is coupled with his expectation to find 'Joy' within himself. He puts together Wordsworth's lines

—and the deep power of Joy
 We see into the *Life* of Things—

procedure itself is also outside the scope of the hymn in which the original unity has to be undoubtedly presupposed. He remembers in the letter that Wordsworth, who apparently disliked tension of this kind, criticized the passage just after its composition. Coleridge says, 'Mr. Wordsworth, I remember, censured the passage as strained and unnatural, and condemned the Hymn in toto ... as a specimen of the Mock Sublime.' He now responds to that criticism, 'It may be so for others; but it is impossible that I should myself find it unnatural, being conscious that it was the image and utterance of Thoughts and Emotions in which there was no Mockery.' In short, Wordsworth found metaphysics to be a mere mockery, but Coleridge had to take it as the only possibility left to him. Coleridge readily admits that his poetry is different 'from Milton's and Thornton's and from the Psalms'. What is surprising here is that Coleridge implicitly claims the immediacy of 'his' poetic response in contrast with the mediacy of theirs. He says that he addresses 'himself to *individual* Objects actually present to his Senses, while his great Predecessors apostrophize *classes* of Things, presented by the Memory and generalized by the understanding'. He cannot say this unless he drops the notion of immediate reception in the previous sense, unless he implicitly argues that no one has been given the original unity of reception and response. Here he is virtually arguing that the unity recovered through metaphysical transference is the only possible unity. As he admits, 'in this

with Fichte's 'wall' in one notebook entry. See *CN*, I, 921. Quoted and discussed in Chapter 4, I. But it turns out to be unsuccessful. He fails to find 'Joy' within himself. He writes in November 1804, 'I have forgotten what the *Joy* is'. *CN*, II, 2279. Quoted and discussed below. In the passage he later inserts into 'The Eolian Harp' he suggests that the recovery of 'Joy' may resolve the problem of 'within' and 'without':

O! the one Life within us and abroad,
Which meets all motion and becomes its soul,
A light in sound, a sound-like power in light,
Rhythm in all thought, and joyance every-where— *Poems*, p. 52.

Thus his speculation on 'the one Life within us and abroad' immediately leads him to say 'joyance every-where'.

there may be too much of what our learned Med'ciners call the *Idiosyncratic* for true Poetry.'

Coleridge continues the letter and ascribes his 'idiosyncrasy' to the inherent peculiarity of his perception. He says, '*individual* Objects actually present to his Senses' are in fact not given but gained by him through conscious abstraction and unrealisation. He writes, 'from my very childhood I have been accustomed to *abstract* and as it were unrealise whatever of more than common interest my eyes dwelt on; and then by a sort of transfusion and transmission of my consciousness to identify myself with the Object'. With this recognition the whole perspective finally overturns. Unity is recovered when his 'self' is finally united with 'the Object'. But it is by 'abstraction' and 'unrealisation' of nature. His 'self transfusion and transmission' in fact result in the total loss of nature around him. It is by this overturn that his 'self', which he finds displaced from nature, becomes the centre of the whole perspective. But it is an overturned perspective.³⁶ And it is in this overturned perspective that his self receives a new and more positive assertion. He continues the letter:

I have often thought, within the last five or six years, that if ever I should feel once again the genial warmth and stir of the poetic impulse, and refer to my own experiences, I should venture on a yet stranger & wilder Allegory than of yore—that I would *allegorize* myself, as a Rock with it's summit just raised above the surface of some Bay or Strait in the Arctic Sea,

³⁶ This 'overturn' is described in 'The Ancient Mariner' as a departure from divine nature, and in 'Dejection Ode' as a theft from divine nature. See Chapter 2, I and Chapter 3, III. Thus the problem of two natures, ridden by the sense of guilt, becomes the main topic of his later thinking.

While yet the stern and solitary Night
 Brook'd no alternate Sway—

all around me fixed and firm, methought as my own Substance.³⁷

His 'self' finally arrives at the definite point. And from this point he measures the surrounding sea and makes it his 'own' 'Substance'. But this positive argument is vulnerable to his religious instinct equally inherent in him. In other words, the argument is positive only when it is restricted within the overturned perspective and kept away from any doubt concerning the overturning itself. However, he continues the letter and reveals that he is still in a religious darkness. 'A Rock' is described as 'a pride and a place of Healing to lie, as in an Apostle's Shadow, within the Eclipse and deep substance-seeming Gloom'. 'My own Substance' thus turns out to be in reality 'the deep substance-seeming Gloom'. He fixes himself on the firm point, but he is still surrounded by chaos and not by restored nature. What consoles him at the top of 'a Rock' in the Arctic Sea is not restored nature around but the northern lights above in darkness:

lofty Masses, that might have seemed to 'hold the Moon and Stars in fee' and often in such wild play with meteoric lights, or with the quiet Shine from above which they made rebound in sparkles or disband in off-shoots and splinters and iridescent Needle-shafts of keenest Glitter.³⁸

Some unearthly lights are the only consolation in such an isolation. And he is not all desolate. He continues:

37 *Ibid.*

38 *Ibid.*

I grieved not to serve them—yea, lovingly and with gladsomeness I abased myself in their presence: for they are my Brothers, I said, and the Mastery is their's by right of elder birth and by right of the mightier strivings of the hidden Fire that uplifted them above me.

After this passage the letter is broken off. And no more substantial argument about hymns has come to light. In that sense the hymn addressed to 'the hidden Fire' in darkness has to be taken as the last form of his attempt to write hymns. In regard to its internal development it is indeed the final form. His first written hymn was 'Hymn to the Earth' (1799) and then 'Hymn Before Sun-Rise' (1802). Since then Coleridge's night has become darker and darker as if he were in regression from day to darkness, in exact parallel with his unfulfilled metaphysical pursuit for 'the Infinite'. But once he accepts that he is thrown out in darkness, the pursuit itself proves to be the source of creativity of a quite different kind, which his later literary career well demonstrates.³⁹

III. In 1795 Coleridge twice uses the expression 'a Convex Mirror in the surrounding Landscape' to illustrate what he believes to be the ideal state of man. First it appears in a letter on 10 March, and then in the sixth lecture on Revealed Religion delivered in June. While he does not repeat this expression until later, he keeps the idea at the heart of his thinking. It plays a central role in setting up his

³⁹ At the end of *Biographia Literaria* Coleridge writes: 'Religion passes out of the ken of Reason only where the eye of Reason has reached its own Horizon; and that Faith is then but its continuation: even as the Day softens away into the sweet Twilight, and Twilight, hushed and breathless, steals into the Darkness. It is Night, sacred Night! the upraised Eye views only the starry Heaven which manifests itself alone: and the outward Beholding is fixed on the sparks twinkling in the awful depth, though Suns of the other Worlds, only to preserve the Soul steady and collected in its pure Act of inward Adoration to the great I AM, and to the filial WORD that re-affirmeth it from Eternity to Eternity, whose choral Echo is the Universe.' *BL*, II, pp. 247–8. That is, he believes that 'Religion' is the way from 'inward desolations' to 'inward Adoration'. For his theological speculation on 'the great I AM', see Chapter 7, I.

idea of man's unity with nature as the symmetrical correspondence between man and nature. All the important philosophical and theological problems with which he lives the rest of his life are in fact already expected in this brief expression. The questions concerning the formal correspondence between the divine presence in nature and its reflection, the ontological status of the reflection, and the problem of distorted reflection are all here in their potential forms.

It may be surprising that the idea was first presented without any relation to poetics. In 1795 it is not a poetical but political ideal which aims at social reformation. He says in the sixth lecture on revealed religion in June:

Citie's Drunkenness, Prostitution, Rapine, Beggary and Diseases—Can we walk the Streets of a City without observing them in all their most loathsome forms? Add to these Irreligion. The smoakes that rise from our crowded Towns hide from us the face of Heaven. In the country, the Love and Power of the great Invisible are everywhere perspicuous, and by degrees we become partakers of that which we are accustomed to contemplate. The Beautiful and the Good are miniatur'd on the Heart of the Contemplator as the surrounding Landscape on a Convex Mirror.⁴⁰

In contrast with the grim reality of the city, he presents the idea of man's unity with nature as a political and social ideal. He protests against the urban society and its necessary evils and presents this idea as a remedy of them. Obviously he has in mind 'Pantisocracy', his utopian movement with Southey and others to emigrate to America which is ardently upheld till September 1795. Yet one should not overlook the autobiographical aspect in his description of the city. In 'Frost at Midnight'⁴¹ he tells the story of how he was deprived of this ideal in his youth as a schoolboy. And

⁴⁰ *Lects 1795*, p. 224.

⁴¹ *Poems*, pp. 137–9.

during his flight from Cambridge in December 1793 and his short career as a soldier, he had the actual experience of what he describes as the 'citie's evils'. The experience is such that he forces himself to face the problem of religious sin probably for the first time.⁴² And it is only two months after being discharged from the dragoons that he meets Southey, and the enthusiasm for Pantisocracy begins. In this sense the utopian country-life is to him from the beginning a personal remedy as well as the ideal of social reformation. And this internal, personal pursuit is to prove as difficult as the external, political one.

The description of man as 'a Convex Mirror of the landscape' resembles Leibniz's description of the monad as 'a perpetual living mirror of the universe' [un miroir vivant perpétuel de l'univers].⁴³ Although there is no evidence of Coleridge's direct reading of Leibniz at this time, Coleridge is certainly familiar with this Leibnizian idea. Leibniz writes:

tout Monade étant un miroir de l'univers à sa mode, et l'univers étant réglé dans un ordre parfait, il faut qu'il y ait aussi un ordre dans le représentant, c'est-à-dire dans les perceptions de l'ame et par conséquent dans le corps, suivant lequel l'univers y est représenté.

[since every monad is a mirror of the universe in its own way, and the universe is regulated in perfect order, there must also be an order in the being which represents it, that is to say, in the perceptions of the soul and therefore also in the body, according to which the universe is represented in it.]⁴⁴

⁴² See Coleridge's correspondence with his brother George during this period. *CL*, I, p. 67, 70, 74, 78. See also Richard Holmes, *Coleridge: Early Visions* (London, 1989) pp. 39–58.

⁴³ Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *La Monadologie* (1714) in *Opera Philosophica: quae exstant latina gallica germanica Omnia*, ed. J. E. Erdmann (Aalen, 1959) p. 709, and Leroy E. Loemker, trans., 'The Monadology', in *Leibniz: Philosophical Papers and Letters* (Chicago, 1956) p. 1053.

⁴⁴ Leibniz, *ibid.*, p. 710, and Loemker, *ibid.*, p. 1055.

In Leibniz, as in Coleridge, the reflective symmetry includes an ethical dimension. Leibniz continues, 'we must also point out here another harmony between the physical kingdom of nature and the moral kingdom of grace' [nous devons remarquer ici encore une autre harmonie entre le règne physique de la nature et le règne moral de la grace].⁴⁵ But there is one decisive difference between Leibniz and Coleridge. In presenting the idea, Leibniz is neutral and descriptive. Coleridge, on the other hand, pushes the idea as a protest against social and personal evils. In Leibniz the symmetrical correspondence between nature and man is undisturbed. His calm, descriptive tone may even imply that it is inviolable. On the contrary, Coleridge's urgent voice reveals that in him it is already threatened seriously or even destroyed. When he presents the idea, his primary concern is the pursuit of it, or rather, the recovery of its loss. Urgency in his pursuit is evident in a more anxious tone of voice in the other occasion where he repeats the same argument:

It is melancholy to think, that the best of us are liable to be shaped & coloured by surrounding Objects—and a demonstrative proof, that Man was made to live in Great Cities! Almost all the physical Evil in the World depends on the existence of moral Evil—and the long-continued contemplation of the latter does not tend to meliorate the human heart.—The pleasures, which we receive from rural beauties, are of little Consequence compared with the Moral Effect of these pleasures—beholding constantly the Best possible we at last become ourselves the best possible. In the country, all around us smile Good and Beauty—and the Images of this divine *καλοκάγαθόν* are miniaturized on the mind of the beholder, as a Landscape on a Convex Mirror.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Leibniz, *ibid.*, p. 712, and Loemker, *ibid.*, p. 1059.

⁴⁶ *CL*, I, pp. 154–5.

The contrast between 'melancholy' in the city and 'pleasure' in the country is clear. Man is still 'a mirror', a passive creature which cannot but accept whatever surrounds him. Therefore, even when he implicitly identifies urbanization with the Fall of man, all he can do is to cry for an urgent relief. He continues the letter:

Thompson in that most lovely Poem, the Castle of Indolence, says—

[']I care not, Fortune! what you me deny—
 You cannot rob me of free Nature's Grace!
 You cannot shut the Windows of the Sky,
 Through which the Morning shews her dewy face—
 You cannot bar my constant feet to rove
 Through Wood and Vale by living Stream at Eve'—/

Alas! alas! she *can* deny us all this—and can force us fettered and handcuffed by our Dependencies & Wants to *wish* and *wish* away the bitter Little of Life in the felon-crowded Dungeon of a great City!—

Thus he admits that he can no longer take 'Nature's Grace' for granted, that he has to seek after it socially as well as personally. 'Pantisocracy' in this sense is the measure for the recovery of 'Nature's Grace' which, he believes, he had once and lost.

During the days of Pantisocracy Coleridge writes to Southey on 18 September 1794:

Sublime of Hope I seek the cottag'd Dell,
 Where Virtue calm with careless step may stray⁴⁷

⁴⁷ CL, I, p. 104.

When the Pantisocracy scheme is abandoned a year later, his pursuit of the utopian ideal becomes more like that of idyllic retirement. In October 1795 he marries Sara Fricker and stays in a cottage at Clevedon for the next six weeks, and at the end of 1796 he moves from Bristol to Nether Stowey. During this time, he becomes less engaged in social reformation and more in his own recovery as a poet of nature. Now the idea is to place himself in nature as a mirror and to restore his internal disorder in that idyllic surrounding. During this period he writes 'conversation' poems such as 'The Eolian Harp', 'Reflections on Having Left a Place of Retirement', and 'This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison'. All of these have fair descriptions of landscape and show that his attempt of recovery is at first successful.⁴⁸

The same rapturous descriptions of landscape continues when he moves to Keswick in June 1800. At his first introduction to the Lake District in November 1799 he already writes:

how deeply I have been impressed by a world of scenery absolutely new to me ...
 Hawes Water thro' many a varying view kept my eyes dim with tears, and this evening, approaching Derwentwater in diversity of harmonious features, in the majesty of its beauties & in the Beauty of its majesty—O my God! & the Black Crag close under the snowy mountains, whose snows were pinkish with the setting sun & reflections from the sandy rich Clouds that floated over some & rested upon others! It was to me a vision of a fair Country.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Kelvin Everest describes the situation and argues that the poems during Coleridge's retirement reveals his profound social and political concern, that they contain a 'secret ministry'. See Everest, *Coleridge's Secret Ministry: The Context of the Conversation Poems 1795–1798* (Sussex, 1979).

⁴⁹ *CL*, I, pp. 544–5.

During his long walk from 1 to 9 August 1802 he makes a series of minute descriptions of landscape both in the Notebooks and letters.⁵⁰ Among them is the description of Wastdale Water:

When I first came the Lake was a perfect Mirror; & what must have been the Glory of the reflections in it! This huge facing of Rock *said* to be half a mile in perpendicular height, with deep Ravin[e]s the whole *winded* & torrent-worn, except where the pink-striped Screes come in, as smooth as silk/all this reflected, turned into Pillars, dells, and a whole new-world of Images in the water!⁵¹

He finally finds the ideal mirror of nature. 'The Lake' reflects on its clear surface 'a whole new-world of Images'. The region abundant with clear water provides him with many occasions to speculate on the divine presence in reflection. A month after his arrival at Keswick, he already begins to describe the lake as 'a mirror'.⁵² Here is another example:

To Grasmere yesterday, I returned today. O Thirlmere!—let me some how or other celebrate the world in thy mirror.—Conceive all possible varieties of Form, Fields, & Trees, and naked or ferny Crag—ravines, behaired with Birches—Cottages, smoking chimneys, dazzling *wet places* of small rock-precipices—dazzling castle windows in the reflection—all these, within a divine outline in a mirror of 3 miles distinct vision!⁵³

⁵⁰ See *CL*, II, pp. 834–45; *CN*, I, 1207, 1228.

⁵¹ *CL*, II, p. 839. See also *CN*, I, 1213 f10.

⁵² *CN*, I, 798 f34, f37.

⁵³ *CN*, I, 1607. 23 October 1803.

However, there is a subtle but crucial epistemological shift in these descriptions. That is, he begins to receive the beauty of landscape not directly from nature but from its reflection on the water. Meanwhile he seems to forget his personal question whether he himself is one of those faithful mirrors. With rapture he just traces the beauty of these 'perfect', clear and static images.

Let me not, in the intense *vividness of the Remembrance*, forget to note down the bridging Rock, cut off alas! from the great fall by the beaked promontory, on which were 4 Cauldrons, & a small one to boot—one at the *head* of a second Fall, the depth of my Stick, reflected all the scene in a Mirror—Gracious God/⁵⁴

Coleridge does not explain why he is not one of those mirrors. But the reason is not difficult to guess. A description such as 'the whole World seem'd imag'd in its vast circumference' in 'Reflections on Having Left a Place of Retirement' is more suitable to 'a perfect Mirror' of nature than to human perception. Contrasted with the 'perfect', clean and static mirror, 'a convex Mirror' such as a human eye is small and round, and potentially distortive. Moreover, it is three-dimensional, that is, it has its deep, 'inward darkness' within itself. He seems to abandon his own reception altogether when he loses confidence in it at the discovery of the superior, 'perfect' mirror without paying much attention to its consequence. But this shift brings about a peculiar effect in him. In musing on the reflected landscape, he begins to confuse reflection with reality. At first he only notices that 'the Shadow' can exist even when the original is not present. On his first visit to the Lake District in November 1799, he writes:

⁵⁴ CN, I, 1495. Coleridge is on tour in Scotland.

Now as we return the fog begins to clear off from the Lake, still however leaving straggling Detachments on it—, & clings viscously to the Hill/—all the objects on the opposite Coast are hidden, and all those hidden are reflected in the Lake, Trees, & the Castle, <Lyulph's Tower,> & the huge Cliff that dwarfs it!—Divine!—The reflection of the huge pyramidal Crag is still hidden, & the image in the water still brighter//but the Lyulph's Tower gleams like a Ghost, dim & shadowy—& the bright Shadow thereof how beautiful it is cut across by that Tongue of *breezy* water—now the Shadow is suddenly gone—and the Tower itself rises emerging out of the mist, two-thirds wholly hidden, the turrets quite clear—& a moment all is snatched away—Realities & Shadows—⁵⁵

In January 1804, however, he notes two occasions in the Notebook in which he can intentionally confuse reality and shadow. In both cases he mistakes reality for reflection.

Thaw/Half the Lake (the hither, we by the Gate on the ascent 1/4 of a mile or so from Gill's Cottage) bright, the other half breezey-dull/the snowy-zebraed Mountain in the *reflection*, all *bright*/—the Gap between Seat Sandal & Fairfield a beautiful upright blue *Triangle* in the water \wedge with, as I thought six or seven slips of Clouds most beautifully coloured & as beautifully disposed/I looked at the Gap <itself>, & could not perceive any corresponding clouds—noticed it to William, who immediately discovered & made me perceive that they were not clouds, but flakes of Ice on the hither shore close by—instantly the distance altered, & I saw the slips as flakes of Ice close on the surface of the hither shore/yet by volition could again make them clouds—⁵⁶

⁵⁵ CN, I, 553.

⁵⁶ CN, I, 1836. January 1804.

He discovers that he may alternate reality and reflection both unconsciously and consciously. He now has 'volition' which can change reflection to reality and vice versa. At the discovery of this 'volition' within himself, he ceases to be a faithful 'mirror'. It means to him that the distinction between the real landscape and the reflection on the water becomes uncertain. Or more precisely, it means that the distinction between reality and unreality is no longer determined for him, therefore he has to determine it by 'his volition'. It also means that the stability of the undoubted distinction between them is lost to him forever.

Images of Calmness on ~~Grasmere~~ Rydale Lake, Jan. 14/~~new~~ fresh Delves in the Slate Quarry I *mistook* for smoke in the reflection/An islet Stone, at the bottom of the Lake, the reflection so bright as to be heaved up out of the water/the Stone & its reflection looked so compleatly one, that Wordsworth remained for more than 5 minutes trying to explain why that Stone had no Reflection/& at last found it out by me/the shore, & green field, ~~with~~ a Hill bank below that Stone, & with Trees & Rock forming one brilliant picture without was such, that look at the Reflection & you annihilated the water/it is all one piece of bright Land/just half wink your Eyes & look at the Land, it is then *all* under water, or with that glossy Unreality which a Prospect has, when seen thro' Smokes.⁵⁷

When 'annihilating the water', he sees the whole of the landscape and the reflection as 'one piece of bright Land'. Only in contrast with reality, the reflection becomes '*all under water*'. Again it is his 'volition' which decides whether he is seeing the bright reality or the 'glossy Unreality'. His 'volition' cannot deny the real landscape, but it can temporarily eliminate it and assume that the 'glossy Unreality' is reality. In other words, he is no longer certain whether he is receiving the real

⁵⁷ CN, II, 1844. January 1804.

landscape or its counterfeit, that is, his 'volition' has to decide it all independently. It is worth noticing that it is always Wordsworth, when Coleridge exercises such 'volition' to confuse reflection with reality, who corrects him and restores the stable distinction between reality and unreality.

But Wordsworth cannot eliminate Coleridge's already discovered 'depth'. When Coleridge discovers a world of shadow below the bright surface of the water and relates it to 'volition', he falls into his own 'metaphysic depths', as he later calls it.⁵⁸ Its immediate result is that he loses the original landscape. It is interesting to see how Wordsworth, who remains suspicious of Coleridge's engagement in metaphysics, observes this turn. Coleridge transcribes Wordsworth's 'Resolution and Independence' together with 'Dejection Ode' in a letter to Sir George and Lady Beaumont on 13 August 1803.⁵⁹ Wordsworth, probably in response to 'Dejection Ode', sets up a figure of an old leech-gatherer as an example of 'mighty Poets in their misery dead'.

At length, himself unsettling, he the Pond
 Stirr'd with his staff, & fixedly did look
 Upon the muddy water which he conn'd
 As if he had been reading in a book;

As an allusion to Coleridge the metaphysician, this is accurate. Wordsworth here implies that the book of nature becomes unreadable to Coleridge because he stirs the depth of the pond and made its clear surface all muddy, that the clear reflection of nature will disappear when he begins to search something below the surface. The more he stirs, the darker the surface becomes. Nature becomes like obscure books in which Coleridge indulges himself. Interestingly, Wordsworth happens to criticize

⁵⁸ *BL*, I, p. 17.

⁵⁹ *CL*, II, pp. 966–73

Coleridge in the same way as Coleridge complained about materialistic epistemology two years before. Coleridge wrote in the Notebook, 'Materialists unwilling to admit the mysterious of our nature make it all mysterious—nothing mysterious in nerves, eyes, &c: but that nerves think &c!!—Stir up the sediment into the transparent water, & so make all opaque.'⁶⁰ He wrote this criticism when he had a remnant confidence in his early romantic optimism which allowed him to say in 1795, 'The Omnipotent has unfolded to us the Volume of the World, that there we may read the Transcript of himself'.⁶¹ But now Wordsworth tells him that if materialists are distanced from the divine presence in nature, metaphysicians are alienated from it still further. Wordsworth dooms the leech-gatherer's future as follows:

But fewer they became from day to day,
And so his means of life before him died away.

Later, Coleridge accepts Wordsworth's point. He writes in *Biographia Literaria* (1817), 'Well were it for me perhaps, had I never relapsed into the same mental disease; if I had continued to pluck the flower and reap the harvest from the cultivated surface, instead of delving in the unwholesome quicksilver mines of

⁶⁰ *CN*, I, 920. Some fifteen years later, Coleridge repeats the same complaint about materialism. Discussing the reception of 'Leibnitz's doctrine of a pre-established harmony' or 'the hypothesis of Hylozoism' in *Biographia Literaria*, he writes, 'Far more prudent is it to admit the difficulty once for all, and then let it lie at rest. There is a sediment indeed at the bottom of the vessel, but all the water above it is clear and transparent. The Hylozoist only shakes it up, and renders the whole turbid.' *BL*, I, pp. 130–2. But the fact is that not only 'the Hylozoist' but Coleridge himself lack the prudence not to disturb. The difference is that Coleridge refuses to live with the turbid water and pushes the question still further. For his reassessment of Leibnizian system, see Chapter 7, III. He uses the same illustration in the twelfth Philosophical Lecture. See *Phil Lects*, p. 351. Here he relates it to the question concerning the homo- or heterogeneity of body and soul. This seems to indicate that his metaphysical investigation is closely related to the problem of the split between body and soul. For a further discussion about 'body and soul', and his personal experience of the split, see Chapter 4, III.

⁶¹ *Lects 1795*, p. 94. For Coleridge's later revision of this view, see Chapter 4, III.

metaphysic depths.'⁶² But he also gives a firm reason why he steps into 'the unwholesome quicksilver mines'. 'Of the necessary consequences of the Hartleian theory',⁶³ he writes:

Thus the whole universe co-operates to produce the minutest stroke of every letter, save only that I myself, and I alone, have nothing to do with it, but merely the causeless and *effectless* beholding of it when it is done. Yet scarcely can it be called a beholding; for it is neither an act nor an effect; but an impossible creation of a *something-nothing* out of its very contrary! It is the mere quicksilver plating behind a looking glass; and in this alone consists the poor worthless !⁶⁴

He refuses to remain 'a looking glass'. Or rather, he cannot. The reason is simple. Once the third dimension behind 'a looking glass' opens up, it is no longer the divine hand that produces 'the minutest stroke of every letter'. Here he is talking about his own hand which cannot but produce 'every letter'. The shift itself is inevitable in each individual. But in taking this shift, Coleridge, quite unlike Wordsworth, slips into 'metaphysic depths', into his own 'inward darkness'. He falls into the sphere which his 'volition' opens up within himself. He knows that the sphere is unreal and dark. But being deprived of the original reality, he cannot but take it as a sole reality for him. And it is dark. He does not always articulate why this is so. But he certainly knows that his own 'depth' is where he is bound to find his creativity.⁶⁵

⁶² *BL*, I, p. 17.

⁶³ *BL*, I, p. 116.

⁶⁴ *BL*, I, p. 119.

⁶⁵ Kant also uses 'mirror' for a illustration of his argument for the regulative usage of transcendental ideas. Arguing that the usage is limited in 'this', phenomenal, human sphere and calling the usage in 'that', noumenal, divine sphere 'illusion', he writes, 'Hence arises the illusion ... just as objects reflected in a mirror are seen as behind it. Nevertheless ... the illusion involved is indispensably necessary if, besides the objects which lie before our eyes, we are also to see those

IV. Coleridge's long walk from 1 to 9 August marks a decisive turning point in how he receives impressions from nature. He makes a series of detailed descriptions of landscape in the letters and in the Notebooks, as if he wishes to present himself as 'a living mirror' which reflects the ever-changing landscape. But it is also in these depictions where he begins to overstep the bounds of passive reflection. During a climb to Sca' Fell he receives such a vivid impression that he later tries to make it into a hymn, which eventually emerges as 'Hymn Before Sun-Rise, in the Vale of Chamouni' (1802). However, as seen above, in this composition he no longer presents himself as a clear, 'perfect', mirror of nature. It is also during this trip that he makes the first statement of his new projected plan, 'Soother of Absence'. The plan is written down and dated by him in a Notebook entry in which he makes a long, detailed description of landscape reflected on 'a <large> mirror over a rapid'. In doing so, he notices that there are 'many' reflections of 'one' landscape:

which lie at a distance behind our back. [Nun entspringt uns zwar hieraus die Täuschung ... (so wie die Objekte hinter der Spiegelfläche gesehen werden), allein diese Illusion ... ist gleichwohl unentbehrlich notwendig, wenn wir außer den Gegenständen, die uns vor Augen sind, auch diejenigen zugleich sehen wollen, die weit davon uns im Rücken liegen]'. Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (Frankfurt, 1968), and Norman Kemp Smith, trans., *Critique of Pure Reason* (Hampshire, 1929) B 673–4. Thus Kant argues that things behind the mirror are mere illusion, that is, things which are 'really' behind the mirror are utterly unknowable. Coleridge regards this argument as a problem and later argues that the ideas are not only regulative but also constitutive. See Chapter 6, I note. To use Kant's illustration, Coleridge is here experiencing the fall from 'that' side of the mirror to 'this' side. He soon finds himself confined in 'this' sphere. Later in 1825 he calls the mind 'Self-conscious Looking-Glass'. *CN*, IV, 5192 and 5280. He places the problem in an explicit theological context when he points out, in a marginal note to Richard Baxter's *Catholick Theologie* (London, 1675), what he thinks is Baxter's mistake and insists that 'a glass' should be translated as 'a mirror' in 1 Cor 13. 12: 'For now we see through a glass [δι' ἑσόπτρου] darkly; but then face to face'. See *CM*, I, p. 237 and note. He also suggests that God is also such a 'Self-conscious Looking-Glass'. He writes, 'the *personal, living, self-conscious* God'. *CM*, I, p. 242. In 1825 he speculates on the possibility that the two Self-conscious Looking-Glasses cease to be 'self'-conscious. He writes, '21 Feb^y. 1825.—My dear Friend I have often amused my ~~fancy~~ self with the thought of a Self-conscious Looking-glass, and the various metaphorical applications of such a fancy—and this morning, † it struck across ~~my~~ the Eolian Harp of my Brain that there was something pleasing and emblematic (of what I did not distinctly make out) in two <such> Looking-glasses fronting, each seeing the other in itself, and itself in the other.—' *CN*, IV, 5192.

Passed over a common, wild, & dreary, and descending a hill came down upon Ulpha ~~Park~~ Kirk, with a sweet view up the River, with a <large> mirror over a rapid/ ... The view from the Bridge ... is eminently picturesque—A little step (50 or 60 yards) beyond the Bridge, you gain a compleatly different picture— ... compleat in a Mirror & equally delightful as a view/ ... Here it was seated on this Mount, on Saturday, August 7, that I resolved to write under the name of The Soother of Absence, the topographical poem which I had long mummel'd about in my mind⁶⁶

The 'topographical' description of the scenery is again Leibnizian in presenting one substance and infinitely diverse perceptions.

Et comme une même ville regardée de différens côtés paroît toute autre et est comme multipliée perspectivement, il arrive de même, que par la multitude infinie des substances simples, il y a comme autant de différens univers, qui ne sont pourtant que les perspectives d'un seul selon les différens points de vue de chaque Monade.

[Just as the same city viewed from different sides appears to be different and to be, as it were, multiplied in perspectives, so the infinite multitude of simple substances, which seem to be so many different universes, are nevertheless only the perspectives of a single universe according to the different points of view of each monad.]⁶⁷

Coleridge follows what Leibniz presupposes here, namely, the harmonious unity between one presentation and many reflections. But, as seen above, Coleridge admits such harmony only between the presentation and the static and perfectly

⁶⁶ *CN*, I, 1225 f26.

⁶⁷ Leibniz, *ibid.*, p. 709, and Loemker, *ibid.*, p. 1053.

symmetrical reflection of a mirror of nature. He does not, or fails to, include his own reflection which he produces by his 'volition' in this overall symmetrical unity. He notices the problem of 'shadow' when he finds that 'a whole new-world of Images' under the surface of water or 'glossy Unreality' can be equal to real landscape in its clarity and brightness. He notices that his 'volitionary' reflection produces his own world which is separate from the original presentation. Thus he steps into his own world of absence, the world which lies below the surface of water. The original 'one' presentation is still presupposed, but he regards it as absent from his own reflections. His 'topographical poem' is no longer a hymn to the presence but 'The Soother of Absence'. It is, he says, 'the topographical poem which I had long mummel'd about "in my mind"'.⁶⁸

Coleridge first mentions 'Soother of Absence' in August 1802 and keeps planning to write it as late as October–November 1810. But the idea of 'Soother of Absence' seems to extend beyond this time span. When he mentions it first, he indicates its long prehistory in which he 'had long mummel'd about' it in his mind. In fact, the preface to the second edition of his *Poems* (1797) suggests that his poetic exercise even in the period when he believed in 'the romantic poetics' was virtually 'Soother of Absence'. He writes, 'Poetry has been to me its own "exceeding great reward": it has soothed my afflictions: it has multiplied and refined my enjoyment; it had endeared solitude; and it has given me the habit of wishing to discover the Good and the Beautiful in all that meets and surrounds me.'⁶⁸ And when he fails 'to discover the Good and the Beautiful' and 'falls' from his own poetic ideal, he becomes the poet of 'Soother of Absence'. From this point on the plan for the 'Soother of Absence' gradually absorbs all the aspects of his life. When traced chronologically, the plan develops in four stages. After being conceived as 'the topographical poem', it first occasions the internalization of his political ideal into poetics. Then it becomes the

⁶⁸ *PW*, II, pp. 1145–6.

plan to write a love-poem to Sara Hutchinson. Thirdly it becomes autobiographical, and finally it is conceived as a half-comical versification of the Fall. As 'Soother of Absence' absorbs all his life suggests that he keeps losing the sense of the real presence all these years. If he maintains, as he does, that the presence is real and the absence is unreal, he cannot but admit that the whole of his life has become 'unreal'. That is not to suggest that he does not try to reach the presence. But such an attempt results in turning round the distinction between reality and unreality. It seems almost inevitable that when he keeps overturning the distinction, he only increases his inward depth and darkness which he meant to eliminate when he first presented himself as a mirror in nature. And at the last stage of the plan in 1810, he possibly relates it to Kant's phenomenology.

In a letter to Sir George and Lady Beaumont on 1 October 1803, Coleridge mentions his retirement from politics.⁶⁹ In the letter he remembers the Pantisocracy scheme as 'Dreams linked to purposes of Reason'. Its purpose was:

to project this phantom-world into the world of Reality, like a catoptrical mirror ... to make ideas & realities stand side by side, the one as vivid as the other, even as I have often seen in a natural well of translucent water the *reflections* of the lank weeds, that hung down from it's sides, standing uptight, and like Substances, among the substantial water-plants, that were growing on the bottom.

But, as he admits later, he failed to achieve such a symmetry between 'ideas' and 'realities'.⁷⁰ When the scheme was abandoned, he managed to internalize the form of political idealism into that of poetical ideal. But in his case, the internalization did not help him to regain the clear symmetry. In the same month he writes in the

⁶⁹ *CL*, II, pp. 999–1000.

⁷⁰ See *CN*, II, 2557. For his later reference to this observation, see Chapter 7, III.

Notebook, 'Mix up Truth & Imagination, so that the Imag. may spread its own indefiniteness over that which really happened, & Reality its sense of substance & distinctness to Imagination/ For the Soother of Absence—'.⁷¹ Here 'Imagination' is contrasted with 'reality'. Its function is to 'spread its own indefiniteness over that which really happened', which is opposed to 'Reality' and its function to bring 'its sense of substance & distinctness to Imagination'. These two functions are contradictory in the sense that one is an object of the other. His attempt to mix them up is to bring back the unity between the two contradictory functions and to resolve the very contradiction. But this is not 'a hymn' but 'a Soother of Absence', because in this attempt the unity is not presupposed but sought for, and because the search originates in his side, the underworld of 'Imagination' and traces back to 'Reality' above. Moreover, the precedence of 'Reality' over 'Imagination' is destabilized so as to make them possibly interchangeable. It becomes questionable which of the two comes first, and, accordingly it becomes ambiguous when or whether he is a receptive 'mirror' or a responsive 'poet', that is, when or whether he is passive or active. This ambiguity appears again in another similar occasion with an additional distinction between 'within' and 'without'. In April 1804 he writes:

Soother of absence./O that I had the Language of Music/the power of infinitely varying the expression, & individualizing it even as it is/—My heart plays an incessant music/for which I need an outward Interpreter/—words halt over & over again!—and each time—I feel differently, tho' children of one family.⁷²

Here 'Imagination' is taken up independently of 'reality'. He exercises 'the power of infinitely varying the expression, individualizing as it is. It is he, a poet or a

⁷¹ CN, I, 1541.

⁷² CN, II, 2035.

musician of language, who plays the music from within. Therefore, 'I need an outward Interpreter'.

Oscillation between reality and unreality repeats when the plan becomes expressedly that of Coleridge's love-poem to Sara Hutchinson. There is a Notebook entry in which he seems to be paralleling the presence/absence of landscape with that of Sara Hutchinson. He writes in 19 October 1803:

the mountains cloudy—the Lake has been a mirror so very clear, that the water became almost invisible—& now it rolls in white Breakers, like a Sea; & the wind snatches up the water, & drifts it like Snow/—and now the Rain Storm pelts against my Study Window!—Ο Σαρα Σαρα why am I not happy!⁷³

When it is calm, he manages to disregard the water which divides the presence above and the absence below and make his imaginary world equal with the presence. But when the wind reminds him of the existence of the water between reality and unreality, he realizes that it has been all his delusion. In February–March 1804 just at the brink of his voyage to Malta he makes two seemingly contradictory Notebook entries for the love-poem plan.

Poems in the Soother of Absence—

Ode on a Suicide for Love, whose punishment after his Death consisted in the continuance of the same appetiteless heart-gnawing Passion which he could not reveal./The wanderings of this Ghost thro' the world may be finely worked up⁷⁴

This is virtually a confession. When he is deprived of the 'reality', of 'an outward Interpreter', he is a ghost wandering in his own world within even 'after his Death'.

⁷³ CN, I, 1577.

⁷⁴ CN, II, 1913.

But the following entry which he makes about the same time seems to say the opposite.

It is a pleasure to me to perceive the Buddings
Of Virtuous Loves
To know their minutes of Increase, their Stealth,
And silent Growings.—

A pretty idea, that of a good Soul watching the progress of an attachment from the first glance to the Time when the Lover himself becomes conscious of it—A poem for my Soother of Absence—⁷⁵

However, Kathleen Coburn points out that the verse is a quotation and supplies what Coleridge 'does not' quote:

You ne'er knew
That I destroy'd true virtuous Loves; it is
A pleasure to me to perceive their Buddings,
To know their Minutes of Encrease, their Stealth,
And silent Growings.⁷⁶

The bright tone of Coleridge's quotation thus turns out to be that of the 'glossy Unreality'. He seems to have in mind an attempt to revive the once 'destroy'd' love by overriding the boundary from 'Imagination' to 'reality'. The result of such an attempt is seen in a Notebook entry in November 1804 at Malta.

⁷⁵ CN, II, 1937.

⁷⁶ Ibid, note.

Soother of Absence. Days & weeks & months pass on/& now a year/and the Sun, the Sea, the Breeze has its influences on me, and good and sensible men—and I feel a pleasure upon me, & I am to the outward view of all cheerful, & have myself no distinct consciousness of the contrary/for I use my faculties, not indeed as once, but yet freely—but oh Sara! I am never happy, never deeply gladdened—I know not, I have forgotten what the *Joy* is of ~~that~~ which the Heart is full as of a deep & quiet fountain overflowing insensibly, or the gladness of Joy, when the fountain overflows ebullient.—S.T.C.⁷⁷

He may reproduce everything in imagination. But he fails to re-create 'Joy'.⁷⁸ Thus the whole attempt brings him back to where it began. And now he has at hand the still more rigid duality between reality and unreality. He has to carry it in himself, and his person becomes split between the external cheerful appearance and the internal despair. He retreats from the attempt at abolishing the boundary and returns to his inward darkness to find 'Soother of Absence' there. In November–December 1806 he writes, 'In any poem on Sleep the sleep cum amatâ, familiar, confident/O! this felt with enthusiasm & so expressed enumerating all the other excellencies of Sleep/—Soother of Absence.'⁷⁹ But this sweet dream may change to nightmare at any moment.

'Absence' is Coleridge's internal, 'mental' problem. That is to say, it is basically irrelevant whether he enjoys the physical presence of Sara Hutchinson herself. In October 1808, he notes his fear that even Sara Hutchinson's external presence might ultimately fail to save him from his internal disorder, nightmare. He writes:

⁷⁷ CN, II, 2279.

⁷⁸ For Coleridge's attempt to recreate 'Joy', see above.

⁷⁹ CN, II, 2953.

22 Oct. 1808—astonishing Effect of an unbecoming Cap on Sara. It in the strictest sense of the word frightened me, and even continued to do so in a less degree, producing a painful *startle*, whenever she turned her face suddenly round on me, or I mine/even when I force myself to remain looking for a while, the effect is perhaps yet more unpleasant, for then it has the distressing character of one of those Dreams ... It would make the subject of a very affectionate Poem, which might even take an elevated character—gracious Heaven! when I call to mind that heavenly Vision of her Face, which came to me as the guardian Angel of my Innocence and Peace of mind ... What if on my Death-bed her Face, which had hovered before me as my soothing and beckoning Seraph, should all at once flash into that new face, rendered of yet more affrightful expression of by the action of the painful feelings produced by it, thence associated with it, thence returning with it in the same Trance of recollection, and of course modifying it.—This told in the third Person and as *part* of the Life & Feelings of ['Coleridge' in anagram] in the "Soother of Absence".⁸⁰

In October 1797 he expresses his anxiety that the landscape he sees may turn to be 'counterfeit' at any moment.⁸¹ Eleven years later, he confesses his fear that the face of his 'soothing and beckoning Seraph' may turn out to be 'that new face' at any moment. During this decade he lives his life with considerable anxiety about unreality. And now he admits that with all the desperate effort he has just transformed it into the fear of nightmare.⁸² He provides some details in an autobiographical manner under the same title, 'Soother of Absence'.

When the plan became that of writing a love-poem, it was already autobiographical. But it becomes more so when he begins to present himself as a

⁸⁰ *CN*, III, 3404.

⁸¹ See *CL*, I, pp. 349–52. The point is discussed in detail in Chapter 2, I.

⁸² For Coleridge's problem of nightmare, see Chapter 4, II.

wanderer. He writes in April 1804 on board to Malta, 'The Birds that never see land but live & sleep upon the [?waves]. Where do they breed? If on Shore or on some little Rock-island, that would make a beautiful illustration &c in my Soother of Absence.'⁸³ He also remembers the very beginning of his own wandering and takes it into the plan. He writes in December 1804 in Malta, 'In the Soother of Absence—introduce *Domus quadrata hortensis* at Henley on Thames, the beautiful Girl—her after fate—& my Struggle in London, 1804—Jan.'⁸⁴ '*Domus quadrata hortensis* at Henley' is the Pest House of the Henley work house, where he, in February 1794 as a soldier, nursed another soldier who had smallpox. Finally, he plans a self-portrait. He makes the following entry, dated by him 'Christmas Eve, 24 Dec. 1807. Bristol, Mr Morgan's'.

In proportion as a disposition, constitutionally as well as habitually susceptible of social & yet keener loving-kindness, has been by mishap banished from or stripped of, the Objects of these, does it become prone to quarrelsome & angry emotions, & the heart becomes a reservoir of predispositions to the same. Illustrate this by some simile—& introduce it into the Soother of Absence—/85

Here he is not even a wanderer. He shuts himself in his imaginary world and suppresses his frustration all within himself. At this point, religion seems to be the only possible direction to take, simply because there remains nothing else for him.

In May 1808 he makes a Notebook entry which at first seems unlikely to be a part of the plan of 'Soother of Absence'. He writes: 'In the *S. of A.* to describe Sotting

⁸³ *CN*, II, 2054. Coleridge repeats the same self-description with a graver tone in 1810. He writes, 'Soother of Absence—distant 2000 miles—what seas, what wildernesses, &c &c between us!—And yet how incalculably farther might a single Thought separate us—a suspicion, or jealousy, a wound brooded over!—' *CN*, III, 3698.

⁸⁴ *CN*, II, 2366.

⁸⁵ *CN*, II, 3191.

allegorically, losing the way to the temple of Bacchus, come to the Cave of the Gnome, &c &c.⁸⁶ But when he explicates the idea two years later, it proves to be at the focal point of all the above observation. In February 1808 he writes:

Man in the savage state as a water-drinker or rather Man before the Fall possessed of the Heavenly Bacchus as (See Bœhmen's Sophia or celestial Bride) his fall—forsaken by the Διονυσος the savage state—and dreadful consequences of the interspersed vacancies left in his mind by the absence of Dionysus—the Bastard Bacchus comes to his Relief, or rather the Gemini, the one Οινος permitted by the Dionysus—the other a *Gnome*—this pursued, in the mixt effects of the god— ... The former ηδονη μεθυσκιος from Thoughts, and *Action* is least, as far as *communication*—the latter introversive from fear, & feeling in feeling, till the intensity manufactures the *shemata* into Βιλδερ!

A most delightful Poem may be made of it.⁸⁷

In the editorial note, Coburn makes an insightful comment to this entry: 'Coleridge may be combining a theory of the Fall and a theory of the imagination, something that would support some interpretations of *The Ancient Mariner*'. Although her interpretative attempts seem to divert from her insight, her suggestion to relate the entry to the intersecting point of theology and philosophy fits well in the context of 'Soother of Absence'. Here the entry of 1808 seems to be providing a summary of the whole development. 'Man before the Fall possessed of the Heavenly Bacchus'

⁸⁶ CN, II, 2840.

⁸⁷ CN, III, 3263. Coburn notes that the condition of the text is 'almost to illegibility' and that her reading differs from the attempts of others. In her edition the last sentence reads 'The former ηδονη μεθυσκιος from Thoughts, and *Action*, [?at/is] least, [?As/as] far as *communication*—the latter introversive from fear, & feeling in feeling, till the intensity manufactures the *shemata* into Βιλδερ!', and thus remains 'tantalizing where small differences in reading may yield large differences in meaning.' To read '*Action* is least, as far as *communication*' is an attempt to read the entry in relation to 'Soother of Absence'.

represents everything he is to lose: innocence, unity with Sophia, 'inebriation with pleasure' which resembles 'hymn of Joy'.⁸⁸ Then the Fall takes place and the absence follows. It leaves in his mind 'the interspersed vacancies', that is, the internal world of his own which leads to the problem of duality. The duality of 'the Gemini' is very much like that between the world of the presence and the world of the absence; one is 'permitted' while the other is suppressed underneath. 'The mixt effects of god' then is the confusion or collision of the two worlds. In the 'permitted' world man is a passive, receptive mirror. He is in 'ἠδονῆ μεθυσκίος [sweet drunkenness] from Thoughts, and *Action* is least, as far as *communication*'. In his own world man is active but 'introversive from fear, & feeling in feeling, till the intensity manufactures the *shemata* into Βιλλδερ [Bilder (image)]'. Thus by 'losing the way to the temple of Bacchus', he arrives at 'the Cave of the Gnome', that is, his own space of his own activity. It is 'the Cave', the space of darkness and nightmare. But at the same time it is the space of his imagination, his 'Soother of Absence'.

Thus 'Soother of Absence' is a grand project of Coleridge's self-reflection. It extends its time span till 1810. 1810 is the year when he reaches the darkest moment of his self-reflection and writes his 'Confessio Fidei'.⁸⁹ But it is also the time when his self-reflection begins to become slightly brighter. When he mentions the plan for the last time, the tone is not that of desperation but of hope. He writes in June–July 1810:

The words of of Ma Lady Guyon first Confession, that produced her conversion, are words of gold—& to be to inscribed over the Gate of the Temples—Speaking of her discomforts, doubts & c—

"It is, because you seek without what you have within."

⁸⁸ *CL*, II, p. 872. Coleridge says that his children are 'inebriate both with pleasure—Hartley whirling round for joy—Derwent ... shouting his little hymn of Joy.' Quoted in full and discussed above.

⁸⁹ See Chapter 5, III.

A defence of mystical description of feelings of well-executed, i.e. faithfully-drawn from the pleasure all good minds receive from descriptions of material Objects, Landscapes, Trees &c they have never seen/Assuredly, the impressions received by the words are very faint compared with the actual impression—it is but a dim abstract at best—and most often a Sort of *tentative process* now by this analogy, now by that, to recall the reader to some experiences, he must have, tho' he had not attended to them—This for the *Soother of Absence*—either in the poem, or *in the preface*—⁹⁰

With the resolution to find his recovery not 'without' but 'within', he once again takes up poetics. But this time it carries the whole weight of philosophical and theological self-reflections planned under the title, 'Soother of Absence'. It is along this '*tentative process*' of words that his thinking begins to become and unfold in the form of theological argument.

⁹⁰ CN, III, 3946, 3947.

Chapter 2 'The Ancient Mariner' and Departure from Divine Nature

I. The idea of idyllic retirement is an important pretext of 'The Ancient Mariner' (1798).¹ Just as the scene of domestic celebration provides the background of the Mariner's narrative, Coleridge has a brief period of peaceful domestic life in the countryside shortly before getting to work on 'The Ancient Mariner'. As seen in the previous chapter, the purpose of retirement is to bury his restless mind in plain everyday life and dissolve 'inward desolations' into the natural light of the surrounding landscape. It is successful for a while. He writes to Thomas Poole on 12 December 1796:

Lloyd's Father in a letter to me yesterday enquired, how I should live without any companions?—I answered him, not an hour before I received your letter—'I shall have six companions—My Sara, my Babe, my own shaping and disquisitive mind, my Books, my beloved Friend, Thomas Poole, & lastly, Nature, looking at me with a thousand looks of Beauty, and speaking to me in a thousand melodies of Love.'²

But it does not last long. Even in the letter he adds, 'If I were capable of being tired with all these, I should then detect a Vice in my Nature, and would fly to habitual Solitude to eradicate it'. Precisely as he predicts here, his 'disquisitive mind' soon becomes tired of them. In *Biographia Literaria* he relates how his 'disquisitive mind' begins to stray. 'I retired to a cottage in Somersetshire at the foot of Quantock, and devoted my thoughts and studies to the foundations of religion and morals. Here I found myself all afloat ... I began then to ask myself, what proof I had of the outward

¹ Poems, pp. 173–89.

² *CL*, I, pp. 270–1.

existence of any thing?'³ It is what he calls 'a Vice in my Nature' that forces his mind to wander. And once he takes his departure, he loses the external, divine nature all at once.

'The Ancient Mariner' is very autobiographical in this respect. It is the poem of a mind which abstracts itself from nature. The Mariner goes through a continuous loss of all of what naturally constitutes man until he becomes an abstract mind. The voyage deprives him of the land, of the crew, and finally of his own being.

I moved, and could not feel my limbs:
 I was so light—almost
 I thought that I had died in sleep,
 And was a blesséd ghost.

The point is reinforced by the Latin epigraph later attached to the poem, which is taken from Thomas Burnet's, *Archaeologicae Philosophicae sive Doctrina Antiqua De Rerum Originibus* (London, 1692). It first appears in *Sibylline Leaves* (1817), but the transcription from Burnet in the Notebook is made in late 1802.⁴ In translation it reads:

I can readily believe that there are more invisible than visible natures in the universe of things. But who shall explain their family, their orders, relationships, the stations and functions of each? What do they do? Where do they live? Human nature has always sought after knowledge of these things, but has never attained it. Meanwhile, I do not deny the pleasure it is to contemplate

³ *BL*, I, p. 200. Coleridge inserts into this autobiographical account a passage which reflects his later speculation on space. He writes, 'The *idea* of the Supreme Being appeared to me to be as necessarily implied in all particular modes of being as the idea of infinite space in all the geometrical figures by which space is limited.' For his speculation on space and its relation to Kant's phenomenology, see Chapter 5, I.

⁴ *PW*, I, p. 186 and *CN*, I, 1000H.

in thought, as though in a picture, the image of a better and greater world: lest the mind, habituating itself to the trivia of life, should become too narrow, and subside completely into trivial things only. But, at the same time we must distinguish the certain from the uncertain and night from day.⁵

The contrast between 'a better and greater world' and an ordinary domestic world is clear and sharp. Burnet is unambiguous about which of the two worlds is 'the certain'. But when Coleridge quotes the passage and attaches it to 'The Ancient Mariner', Burnet's distinction between 'the certain' and 'the uncertain', 'day' and 'night' overturns. Coleridge makes a characteristic modification in quoting Burnet and adds 'What do they do? Where do they live?' to the original text. He thus introduces the search for 'the certain' which is uncertain to himself. Accordingly, the Mariner's departure is that from ordinary certainty to perilous uncertainty, from the land of natural light to the dark ocean. Because of this Coleridgean twist, the Mariner's voyage simultaneously represents the loss of, and, the search for, 'the certain'.

The twist comes from the fact that the Mariner's departure is from 'divine nature'. In the conversation poems, the description of landscape is always coupled with the praise of God. Coleridge for example writes in 'Reflections on having left a Place of Retirement':

It seem'd like Omnipresence! God, methought,
Had built him there a Temple: the whole World
Seem'd *imag'd* in its vast circumference:⁶

⁵ Quoted from Allan Grant, *A Preface to Coleridge* (London, 1972) p. 124.

⁶ *Poems*, p. 80.

The landscape is 'the whole World' of the divine orderliness. But this divine temple is essentially an enclosed space. Vast though it may be, the landscape is always circumscribed and confined. Describing the landscape in the poem, however, he already sees what lies beyond the circumference.

Oh! what a goodly scene! *Here* the bleak mount,
 The bare bleak mountain speckled thin with sheep;
 Grey clouds, that shadowing spot the sunny fields;
 And river, now with bushy rocks o'er-brow'd,
 Now winding bright and full, with naked banks;
 And seats, and lawns, the Abbey and the wood,
 And cots, and hamlets, and faint city-spire;
 The Channel *there*, the Islands and white sails,
 Dim coasts, and cloud-like hills, and shoreless Ocean—⁷

It is in the 'shoreless Ocean' beyond the divine landscape that the Mariner's journey takes place. The Mariner describes his departure:

Merrily did we drop
 Below the kirk, below the hill,
 Below the light house top.⁸

But his voyage is a transgression of the boundary which distinguishes created nature from uncreated chaos.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Poems*, p. 174.

Coleridge's letter to Thelwall on 14 October 1797,⁹ written a month before he begins to work on 'The Ancient Mariner', is a crucial document in showing that it is his epistemological anxiety that leads him to the departure to the unknown ocean.

I can *at times* feel strongly the beauties, you describe, in themselves, & for themselves—but more frequently *all things* appear little—all the knowledge, that can be acquired, child's play—the universe itself—what but an immense heap of *little* things?—I can contemplate nothing but parts, & parts are all *little*—!—My mind feels as if it ached to behold & know something *great*—something *one & indivisible*—and it is only in the faith of this that rocks and waterfalls, mountains or caverns give me the sense of sublimity or majesty!—But in this faith *all things* counterfeit infinity!—

He begins to suffer from the recession of the divine presence in nature. The landscape, which he once described as 'God's temple' turns to be 'an immense heap of *little* things'. As a result, what he receives from nature becomes 'child's play' in a derogative sense which is quite different from child's 'hymn of Joy'. He does not explain how the presence turns out to be the absence nor why the landscape loses its cohesion. It is even uncertain whether there is an objective difference between the original landscape and 'an immense heap of little things'. Suddenly he realizes that 'parts are all *little*'. Instead of trying to give an objective argument, he offers an internal, subjective account for the incident. 'My mind feels as if it ached to behold & know something *great*—something *one & indivisible*'. Here he endeavours to grasp the peculiar nature of this 'ache' which he also calls 'the faith'. The ache is both the recognition of the loss of 'something *great*—something *one & indivisible*' and the attempt of its recovery. With this 'ache', his mind, once called 'indolent and passive

⁹ CL, I, pp. 349–52.

brain' in 'The Eolian Harp',¹⁰ becomes 'afloat'. But also with this 'ache' it begins to be active in trying to recover the lost presence. The result is necessarily a puzzling one. It is a successful recovery on one hand, for 'it is only in the faith of this that rocks and waterfalls, mountains or caverns give me the sense of sublimity or majesty'. But it is not on the other, for 'in this faith *all things* counterfeit infinity'. Here he does not consider what is behind the expressive difference between the previous description of landscape in 'Reflections on having left a Place of Retirement', 'the whole World seem'd *imag'd* in its vast circumference', and the present one, '*all things* counterfeit infinity'. The difference is nonetheless crucial in regard to the cause of his departure. What divides the latter from the former descriptions of the landscape is the recognition ultimately of a split between God and man. The divine imagination in his landscape is different from the human imagination in a counterfeited landscape. What is puzzling him is the fact that the problem is twofold. The counterfeited infinity is an epistemological problem, but he sees it leading to the deeper theological problem, the implicit enmity between God and man. Therefore, his recovery needs be twofold, that is, it needs be both the recovery of nature and the reconciliation with God. But the attempt is likely to contradict internally. Here is the problem of the immanence and transcendence of God. Because of the nature of the problem, his search for the immanent '*one & indivisible*' is simultaneously the cause of its loss. And he now discovers that he can involve himself in this problem 'actively'. The result is the production of 'counterfeit' nature. While he may regard this development as recovery, this recovery is likely to bring the whole search back to its beginning.¹¹

¹⁰ *Poems*, p. 53.

¹¹ For a further discussion about immanence and transcendence, see Chapter 7, 1. Coleridge may pick up the term 'counterfeit' from Cudworth's *The True Intellectual System of the Universe* (1678) which he borrows from 9 November to 13 December 1796. See George Whalley, 'The Bristol Library Borrowings of Southey and Coleridge, 1793-8', *The Library*, IV (1949) 124. For further discussion about the possible relevance, see W. Schrickx, 'Coleridge and the Cambridge Platonists', *Review of English Literature*, 7 (1966) 81, and David Jasper, *Coleridge as Poet and*

Coleridge continues the letter and abruptly quotes a passage from 'This Lime-Tree Bower my Prison'.

'Struck with the deepest calm of Joy' I stand

Silent, with swimming sense; and gazing round
 On the wide Landscape gaze till all doth seem
 Less gross than bodily, a living Thing
 Which acts upon the mind, & with such Hues
 As cloath th' Almighty Spirit, when he makes
 Spirits perceive his presence!—

According to his own account, he was under the influence of Berkeley's spiritualism when he wrote this poem. When he drafted the poem in a letter to Southey on 17 July 1797, three months before the present letter to Thelwall, he added a note, 'You

Religious Thinker (London, 1985) p. 20. Coleridge also reads *A Collection of Several Philosophical Writings of Dr. Henry More* (1662) which he borrows from Carlisle Cathedral Library from 4 April 1801 to July 1802. See *CN*, I, 938 note. For Coleridge's reference to More, see Chapters 3, II and 5, I. Coleridge may find a hint of distinguishing reason from understanding while reading the Cambridge Platonists, which seem to lead him to say in *Biographia Literaria*, 'I have cautiously discriminated the terms, the REASON, and the UNDERSTANDING, encouraged and confirmed by the authority of our genuine divines, and philosophers, before the revolution.' *BL*, I, p. 173. For Coleridge's distinction between 'reason' and 'understanding', see Chapter 6, II. Unlike the Cambridge Platonists, Coleridge has to struggle with the problem of the human subject 'I' which inevitably arises from the split or even the contradiction between 'reason' and understanding'. Moreover, he experiences the loss of '*one & indivisible*', that is, the loss of 'reason' which he considers as the Fall. In 'Essays on the Principles of Method' he writes, 'that reason in which the essences of all things co-exist in all their distinctions yet as one and indivisible'. *Friend*, I, p. 516. At the same time he calls man 'the high-priest and representative of the Creator'. Therefore the loss of 'reason' or 'something *one & indivisible*' which he confesses in the letter, means the loss of this special status of man in nature. And when he recovers his 'reason' he becomes 'man ... as subsumed in the divine humanity, in whom alone God loved the world'. *Ibid.* For Coleridge's argument about the loss and recovery of reason, see Chapter 6, II.

remember, I am a *Berkeleyan*.—[S.T.C.] Berkeley's spiritualism is seen for example in a following passage from *A Treatise concerning the Principle of Human Knowledge*:

That impious and profane persons should readily fall in with those systems which favour their inclinations, by deriding immaterial substance, and supposing the soul to be divisible and subject to corruption as the body; which exclude all freedom, intelligence, and design from the formation of things, and instead thereof makes a self-existent, stupid, unthinking substance the root and origin of all beings.¹²

In the verse lines, Coleridge suggests along with Berkeley that 'th'Almighty Spirit' and human 'Spirits' are instantly reconcilable when there is no 'matter', or, 'gross bodiliness'.¹³ But Berkeley does not appease Coleridge's 'ache'. Since his philosophy presupposes and takes for granted 'something *great*—something *one & indivisible*', it has nothing to do with Coleridge's 'ache' to reach '*one & indivisible*'. It does not concern Coleridge's epistemological anxiety that 'such Hues as cloath th' Almighty Spirit' may turn out to be 'counterfeit' in a moment. It simply denies the very duality between the original reality and the counterfeit, which is the cause of Coleridge's ache. In the letter, Coleridge acknowledges that 'the ache' takes him over and forces him to abandon his avowal to Berkeley's doctrine. He says, 'It is but seldom that I raise & spiritualize my intellect to this height'.¹⁴

¹² George Berkeley, *A Treatise concerning the Principle of Human Knowledge* (1710) in *Philosophical Works*, ed. M. R. Ayers (London, 1975), pp. 105–6. Berkeley continues: 'That they should hearken to those who deny a providence, or inspection of a superior mind over the affairs of the world, attributing the whole series of events either to blind chance or fatal necessity, arising from the impulse of one body on another. All this is very natural.' This passage has a significant relevance to Coleridge's plan for 'the hymns to the elements', which is an important pretext of 'The Ancient Mariner'. See below.

¹³ For his re-enactment of this spiritualism, see Chapter 5, I.

¹⁴ Coleridge's dissatisfaction with Berkeley is stated in the Notebook entry of January 1804. There he expresses his epistemological anxiety by what seems to be Descartes' 'Wax' in the third meditation. After transcribing in full the seventh

At this point Coleridge recedes into dreaming. If he cannot maintain his 'spiritual height', he would rather sink into dreaming than remain on the ground of 'gross materiality'. He continues the letter:

at other times I adopt the Brahman Creed, & say—It is better to sit than to stand, it is better to lie than to sit, it is better to sleep than to wake—but Death is the best of all!—I should much wish, like the Indian Vishna, to float about along an infinite ocean cradled in the flower of the Lotos, & wake once in a million years for a few minutes—just to know that I was going to sleep a million years more.

He already wrote about the divine sleep in the Notebook in 1796. This time it is sleep not in the ocean but in the paradise. 'In the paradisiacal World Sleep was voluntary & holy—a spiritual before God, in which the mind elevated by contemplation retired into pure intellect suspending all commerce with sensible objects & perceiving the present deity—'.¹⁵ But he is not allowed to remain at rest in this paradisaic dreaming. The entry is followed by another entry from the same period. 'In a distempered dream things & forms in themselves common & harmless inflict a terror of anguish.—'¹⁶ Thus he has to depart even in dreaming. He continues the letter to Thelwall and exemplifies the departure from the land to the ocean with a long quotation from *Osorio* (1797). The quotation ends with these lines:

section of the introduction in *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, he writes, 'I am at a loss how to conceive any thing externally existing, which is not a Thing'. *CN*, I, 1842. Coleridge's basic metaphysical question is 'what proof I had of the outward *existence* of any thing?' The negative answer which Berkeley's system provides is not the solution but the beginning of Coleridge's quest, his 'ache'.

¹⁵ *CN*, I, 191.

¹⁶ *CN*, I, 205. Coleridge writes to Thomas Poole on 18 December 1796 of 'the feelings of those distressful Dreams, where we imagine ourselves falling from precipices'. He explains, 'I seemed falling from the summit of my fondest Desires; whirled from the height, just as I had reached it.' *CL*, I, p. 287.

It were a lot divine in some small skiff
 Along some Ocean's boundless solitude
 To float for ever with a careless course,
 And think myself the only Being alive!

Similarly, the Mariner's voyage strips him of all the ordinary realities and leads him to an absolute isolation. But his voyage does not necessarily recover 'the paradisiacal World' of sleep. In fact, the voyage is far from being 'a lot divine'.

O Wedding-Guest! this soul hath been
 Alone on a wide wide sea:
 So lonely 'twas, that God himself
 Scarce seeméd there to be.¹⁷

It is unlikely, however, that Coleridge intends from the beginning to write a poem of the 'scarce' presence of God. It is the failure of his early poetics and his interpretation of that failure as the Fall that causes the shift in intention and makes the poem addressed not to the abundant presence but to the 'scarce' presence. It is evident that he is optimistic about the result of such address when he begins to prepare materials for the poem. He writes in the Notebook in early 1796:

Hymns to the Sun, the Moon, and the Elements—six hymns.—In one of them to introduce a dissection of Atheism—particularly the Godwinian System of Pride

¹⁷ *Poems*, p. 188. The Mariner's voyage is cheered at first and not moaned. Similarly, Coleridge does not regard 'dream' as a problem until it turns out to be nightmare. He experiences the scarce presence of God not so much as the loss of reality as fearful nightmare. His personal experience of nightmare is always behind his phenomenological argument. See Chapter 4.

Proud of what? An outcast of blind Nature ruled by a fatal Necessity—Slave of an idiot Nature! X †

X Deprœliantiûm e carcere nubium &c

† In the last Hymn a sublime enumeration of all the ~~beauties~~ charms or Tremendities of Nature—then a bold avowal of Berkley's System! ! ! ! !¹⁸

At first, the plan seems to show the same optimistic sentiment as found in the praise of landscape in the conversation poems. It is to end with 'a sublime enumeration of all the ~~beauties~~ charms or Tremendities of Nature'. But under its optimistic overtone, the plan already reveals his deep anxiety. The setting of the poem is shifted from land to ocean, that is, from the theistic landscape of the conversation poems to the atheistic chaos of 'The Ancient Mariner'. Accordingly, the intention of the poem is no longer to praise the divine creation but to 'dissect' Atheism. It is as if he cannot write hymns without dissecting his own atheism, as if the plan for him to write hymns inevitably demands such dissection as a prerequisite procedure. And even if the attempt turns out to be successful, there remains a difficult problem. For it is all uncertain whether the hymns to 'the Elements' are the same as the hymn of Joy in nature, whether the expected hymns thus produced after 'a dissection of Atheism' retain the original poetic spontaneity. At this stage, however, his optimism seems to be covering up his inherent fear. But it is Coleridge himself who draws the distinction between 'the beauties' of nature and 'the Tremendities' of the Elements. The truth is that what he can expect to recover at the end of successful metaphysical or theological battle is at best the 'secondary' spontaneity. In fact, his entire career as a thinker divides the primary spontaneity he here wishes to recover and 'the secondary spontaneity' he actually recover.¹⁹ The fact that the plan itself remains

¹⁸ *CN*, I, 174: 16.

¹⁹ Coleridge's awareness of this 'secondary' spontaneity leads him to the argument about the primary and secondary imaginations in *Biographia Literaria*. By this

unexecuted and reworked into 'The Ancient Mariner' shows that he soon notices this essential difference between the two.²⁰

If Coleridge has personal interest in writing 'The Ancient Mariner', it is about the recovery of spontaneity. But it is 'secondary', metaphysical one. As he later explains, it is the optimism of 'the desire of giving a poetic colouring to abstract and metaphysical truths in which a new world then seemed to open upon me'.²¹ He describes the Mariner's departure: 'The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared, Merrily did we drop'. The 'merriness' of the departure comes from the expectation of 'the new world'. Coleridge seems to defy Locke's sceptical depiction of metaphysicians: 'we let loose our thoughts into the vast ocean of being, as if all that boundless extent were the natural and undoubted possession of our understandings, wherein there was nothing exempt from its decisions or that escaped its comprehension'.²² At the time of planning the hymns to the elements, even at the time of writing 'The Ancient Mariner', he still believes that he can sail through 'the vast ocean of being'. It is only in 1801 that he explicitly acknowledges his failure not only in poetics but also in metaphysics. He writes in the Notebook, 'Mind,

argument he distinguishes himself from Kant who understands 'spontaneity' differently. See Chapter 6.

²⁰ John Livingstone Lowes argues on the contrary that 'The Ancient Mariner' is the direct development of the plan. He writes, 'Sun, Moon, Air, Fire, and Water—no longer hid in a mist of Godwinian and Berkeleyian speculations, but in visible, tangible, trenchantly concrete reality—weave the very fabric of the poem. And they weave it in visual imagery as vivid as when—Fire, Air, and Water blended into one—the sun paints rainbows in the spindrift.' Lowes, *The Road to Xanadu: A Study in the Ways of the Imagination* (London, 1927) p. 76. However, 'the very fabric of the poem' only serves as its background. The point is that these uncontrived autonomous elements have nothing to do with the Mariner. Instead of 'a sublime enumeration of all the beauties charms or Tremendities of Nature', 'The Ancient Mariner' has the Mariner's prayer for its conclusion. And his 'prayer' after the voyage through the atheistic ocean is essentially different from the praise which is possible only within the boundary of the divine creation. Lowes dismisses 'Godwinian and Berkeleyian speculations' as irrelevant, but it is precisely these which bring about this difference. The plan and the outcome show that while the primary purpose of the plan recedes into the background, the secondary, theological purpose of the plan becomes the centre of the composition.

²¹ *BL*, I, p. 8.

²² John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) in *The Works of John Locke*, 10 vols (London, 1823) vol. 1, pp. 5–6.

shipwrecked by storms of doubt, now mastless, rudderless, shattered,—pulling in the dead swell of a dark & windless Sea.²³ He thus gradually becomes aware that his metaphysical engagement does not necessarily lead him to recovery, that is, the Mariner's return journey is not necessarily the expected 'recovery'. While he attempts to overcome the first poetical failure by his metaphysical engagement, it too fails and drives him to a yet more difficult position.

II. Coleridge's plan thus shows a transitional period when his metaphysical interest is gradually taking over his poetical interest. While it shows his lingering hope for hymns, it contains at its centre his metaphysical argumentation. He plans to have 'a sublime enumeration of all the beauties charms or Tremendities of Nature', but it is a preparation for the final conclusion of the whole poem, 'a bold avowal of Berkley's System'. As suggested above, his metaphysical argument resonates to that of Berkeley's in his attack on materialism. His adoption of Berkeley's system, however, has a characteristically Coleridgean effect on himself, which suggests that his real interest is not in metaphysical argumentation as such. While Berkeley categorically denies 'matter' in order to establish a complete argument, Coleridge implicitly admits the distinction between spirit and matter. And by accepting Berkeley's spiritualism, Coleridge sets up a scheme of linear ascent from the latter to the former. It is the scheme of constant denial of matter and of continual ascent towards spirit. In the plan he proposes to put this scheme into practice, which he expects to lead him to 'a bold avowal' of the complete spiritualism.

Coleridge's continual recession from the divine presence in nature, which he regards as the Fall, thus assumes an entirely different aspect. Self-alienation from material nature turns out to be not the Fall but the ascent towards immortality.

²³ *CN*, I, 932.

Accordingly, he begins to see nature as a positive hindrance/the ascent. In August 1796 he makes some Notebook entries titled 'Prayer'.

Brutal Life—in which we pursue mere corporeal pleasures & interests—

Human Life—in which for the sake of our own Happiness & Glory we pursue studies and objects adapted to our intellectual faculties.

Divine Life—when we die to the creatures & to self and become deiform by following the eternal Laws of order from the pure Love of Order & God.²⁴

The linear ascension towards God involves the denial of 'ideot Nature'. In order to practice this scheme of 'Prayer', he has to leave behind the 'Brutal Life' and the 'Human Life', in his words, 'die to the creatures'. It is the process of continual denial both of nature itself and nature in man. He immediately expands the scheme and make it more elaborate:

Prayer—

First Stage—the pressure of immediate calamities without earthy aidance makes us cry out to the Invisible—

Second Stage—the dreariness of visible things to a mind beginning to be contemplative—horrible Solitude.

Third Stage—Repentance & Regret—& self-inquietude.

4th stage—The celestial delectation that follows ardent prayer—

5th stage—self-annihilation—the Soul enters the Holy of Holies.—²⁵

It is very likely that he has this entry in mind when he composes 'The Ancient Mariner'. The Mariner's departure, unfortunate voyage, and isolation are all

²⁴ *CN*, I, 256.

²⁵ *CN*, I, 257.

foreseen in this entry. The '4th stage' describes the scene where the Mariner prays and receives 'the celestial delectation', the rain. But the '5th stage' poses a problem. In the poem he does not achieve self-annihilation nor become immortal. He discovers that his 'self' remains even when he is deprived of everything else. That is, he dies to the creatures but fails to die to his 'self'. And because of this failure his linear ascent remains incomplete. Thus the scheme of prayer too remains unfulfilled in 'The Ancient Mariner'.

'A dissection of Atheism' is the only promise in the plan for hymns which Coleridge fulfils in 'The Ancient Mariner'. The poem is a powerful statement that man once thrown out into 'blind and idiot Nature' necessarily prays. All the human narrative, once attached to the autonomous movements of the elements, becomes meaningless. The Mariner finally clings to the narrative of the Fall, not because it is more likely than the others but because it is internally most powerful. Dissection of Atheism thus allows him to argue that it is the Mariner's prayer that saves him from 'a fatal Necessity' and restores him to immortality, and that atheism or 'the Godwinian System of Pride', on the contrary, remains unaccountable to fatality of man. However, his 'dissection of Atheism' requires a careful examination. David Jasper traces back the usage of the word 'perfectibility' in England to William Godwin's *Political Justice* (1793) and argues that Coleridge must be familiar with the word through his connexion to this rational, democratic circle of the time.²⁶ Jasper summarises the optimistic sentiment attached to the word by quoting from Condorcet's *Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain* to which Coleridge refers in *The Watchman* (1796): 'Let us count on the *perfectibility* with which nature has endowed us.' It is important to remember that this human perfectibility is said to be endowed by 'nature'. However, as Jasper says, 'for Coleridge himself it was a religious subject'. That is, Coleridge does not take the

²⁶ David Jasper, *Coleridge as Poet and Religious Thinker* (London, 1985) pp. 29–32.

word 'perfectibility' as exclusively human as others do. He writes to his brother George on 6 November 1794, during the Pantisocracy scheme:

I see evidently, that the present is *not* the *highest* state of Society, of which we are *capable*—And after a diligent, I *may* say, an intense study of Locke, Hartley and others who have written most wisely on the Nature of Man—I appear to myself to see the point of *possible* perfection at which the World may perhaps be destined to arrive—²⁷

It sounds as if he is propagating the 'human' perfectibility. But he continues to say, 'in deep-felt humility I resign it to that Being ... Who hath said ... ["]The Wolf and the Lamb shall feed together!"]'. It is very likely that he understands the word 'perfectibility' religiously from the beginning, even to the extent that he immediately paraphrases Condorcet's 'perfectibility' and 'nature' as 'immortality' and 'God'. When the Pantisocracy scheme is abandoned, he begins to take a polemic stance to rational humanism. Accordingly, he makes a rigid distinction between perfectibility and immortality. He writes to Josiah Wade on 27 January 1796 and complains about Erasmus Darwin's rational atheism:

all at once he makes up his mind on such important subjects, as whether we be the outcasts of a blind idiot called Nature, or the children of an all-wise and infinitely good God; whether we spend a few miserable years on this earth, and then sink into a clod of the valley, or only endure the anxieties of mortal life in order to fit us for the enjoyment of immortal happiness.²⁸

²⁷ CL, I, 126.

²⁸ CL, I, 177.

It is obvious that there is no ground of discussion between them. As Erasmus Darwin insists that 'there is a certain *self-evidence* in infidelity', so Coleridge deems him by quoting St. Paul, 'Ye have an evil *heart* of unbelief'. As long as atheism remains unaccountable to the fatality of man, Coleridge 'dissects' it and shows its insufficiency. But his polemic against atheism does not prove that his faith in immortality is sufficiently accountable. The Mariner prays, but he remains altogether uncertain whether he is indeed one of 'the children of an all-wise and infinitely good God'. Coleridge's theism is a powerful tool for dissecting atheism and showing its insufficiency, but so is atheism for doing the same to the Mariner's proclamation. This can be illustrated by tracing how Coleridge reads Hume, whom he thinks to be 'the pillar, & confessedly, the *sole* pillar, of modern Atheism' and plans 'a disquisition on Hume's system of Causation—or rather of non-causation'.²⁹ He seems to have this plan for some time. In fact he already made his argument against Hume three years before. In 1795 he began 'Lectures on Revealed Religion' with the 'allegoric vision', probably alluding to Hume:

He [an old dim eyed Man] spoke in diverse Tongues and unfolded many Mysteries, and among other strange Things he talked much about an infinite Series of Causes—which he explained to be—a string of blind men of which the last caught hold of the skirt of the one before him, he of the next, and so on till they were all out of sight; and that they all walked straight without making one false step. We enquired, Who there is at the head to guide them. He answered No one, but that the string of blind men went on for ever without a beginning for though one blind man could not move without stumbling, yet that infinite Blindness supplies the want of sight.³⁰

²⁹ *CL*, I, pp. 385–6. Letter to John Prior Estlin on 13 February 1798.

³⁰ *Lects 1795*, pp. 92–3. Coleridge repeats this expression in *Logic*, p. 86.

'Hume's system of Causation—or rather of non-causation' requires careful handling when brought into theism/atheism argument. For 'Hume's system of Causation' is a system within an anthropocentric sphere, or, it is 'a system of non-causation' only when it is seen from a theocentric point of view. Similarly, Coleridge's own system of causation which he obviously has in mind is valid only in a theocentric sphere, and it becomes a system of non-causation when brought into an anthropocentric sphere. Therefore, his 'allegoric vision' is the description of atheists only because 'an old dim eyed Man' responds, when asked 'Who there is at the head to guide them?', 'No one'. If he answered 'God', he could well be a Coleridgean figure and 'a string of blind men' could well be the chain of theists. The seeming argument is in fact simply pressing an alternative choice between God and man. The truth is that both theist and atheist presume the two to be mutually exclusive, argue which to be chosen, and inevitably remain unaccountable for what they exclude. Coleridge's choice at this point is quite clear. What nature gives him is only 'a few miserable years on this earth'. He refuses to believe in nature nor in the perfectibility nature is said to have endowed him. And he chooses to believe in 'the enjoyment of immortal happiness'.³¹

Coleridge thus comes surprisingly close to Pascal. In spite of apparent remoteness, Coleridge shares a basic congeniality in thought with Pascal.³² Placed

³¹ It is important to see that this is Coleridge's desperate choice. He is a sort of person who finds no meaning of life without this faith. The poem 'Human Life: On the Denial of Immortality' is an eloquent example:

O Man! thou vessel purposeless, unmeant,
 Yet drone-hive strange of phantom purposes!
 Surplus of Nature's dread activity,
 Which, as she gazed on some high-finished vase,
 Retreating slow, with meditative pause,
 She formed with restless hands unconsciously.
 Blank accident! nothing's anomaly! *Poems*, p. 321.

³² 'Coleridge and Pascal' may sound unusual since there have been few attempts to relate them in any respect of their thinking. It is true that he receives little intellectual impact from the French, especially from the contemporary French, as he becomes 'a vehement anti-gallican' because of the chaos and the intellectual

at the beginning and the end of the Age of Reason, neither of them are in support of rationalism as such. At the beginning of the Enlightenment Pascal sees with prophetic insight that there is an essential limit to human rationality, and at the end of that movement Coleridge is forced to recognize its then obvious limit. Both are in agreement that human rationality cannot replace nor exhaust religion. Yet at the same time they are persistent critics of orthodox establishment, by relentlessly attacking its dogmatism and denouncing its superstition publicly as well as privately. In spite of the difference in circumstance and the still wider difference in temperament and talent, they lead the same path from orthodoxy to rationalism, and from there to keener and deeper religiosity. They have in common the rigid, Augustinian understanding of the Fall that man as well as the whole of creation is irretrievably fallen. And it is this conviction that leads the Jansenist of mid-seventeenth century France and the 'Calvinist' of Romantic England to the same religious existentialism.

Philological evidence of Pascal's direct influence on Coleridge is meagre. Coleridge annotates his copy of *Provinciales*, and makes some quotations in his Notebook around July 1805. And there is only one occasion known today where Coleridge quotes from *Pensées*. He writes to Poole from Germany on 6 April 1799, 'La Nature confond les Pyrrhoniens, et la raison confond les Dogmatistes. Nous avons une impuissance à prouver, invincible à tout le Dogmatisme: nous avons une idée de la vérité, invincible à tout le Pyrrhonisme.'³³ Yet even this quotation is not likely

barrenness brought by the Revolution. *BL*, I, p. 187. But Coleridge gives quite a different status to Pascal. He takes caution to spare Pascal even when he condemns French philosophy in general. He writes in the Notebook, 'spite of Paschal, Madame Guyon, and Moliere France is my Babylon, the Mother of Whoredom in Morality, Philosophy, Taste ... How indeed it is possible at once to love Paschal, & Voltaire?' *CN*, II, 2598. He writes to Sir George and Lady Beaumont on 22 September 1803 while reading *Provinciales*, 'Tho' but a wretched French Scholar, I did not go to bed before I had read the Preface & the two first Letters. They are not only excellent; but the excellence is altogether of a new kind to me!' *CL*, II, p. 994.

³³ *CL*, I, pp. 478–9. The quotation is the conflation of the two sentences from the different articles of *Pensées*, Article 434 and 395 in Brunschvicg edition. See

to be from the original. Thomas McFarland argues that the quotation is a conflation of the two passages from the different articles in *Pensées*, and that, as Jacobi uses this conflation in his books, it is very likely that Coleridge quotes it from Jacobi.³⁴ McFarland expresses 'considerable doubt that Coleridge at that time either knew enough French to have read Pascal, or, conversely, was enough aware of Pascal for such an undertaking even had his French sufficed.' McFarland's philological argument is strong. But one such textual finding should not suffice to suggest that there is little between Pascal and Coleridge. For there is an essential, if not philological, congeniality between the rest of Pascal's article from which Coleridge quotes and Coleridge's plan to write hymns which eventually becomes a preparatory note for 'The Ancient Mariner'.

The first half of Jacobi/Coleridge's quotation of *Pensées* comes from one of the articles gathered under the title 'Contrariétés'.

La nature confond les pyrrhoniens et la raison confond les dogmatiques. Que deviendrez-vous donc, ô hommes qui cherchez quelle est votre véritable condition par votre raison naturelle? Vous ne pouvez fuir une de ces sectes, ni subsister dans aucune.

Connaissez donc, superbe, quel paradoxe vous êtes à vous-même. Humiliez-vous, raison impuissante; taisez-vous, nature imbécile: apprenez que l'homme passe infiniment l'homme, et entendez de votre maître votre condition véritable que vous ignorez. Écoutez Dieu.³⁵

[Nature confounds the sceptics, and reason confounds the dogmatists. What then will become of you, man, who seeks your true condition through your natural reason? You cannot escape one of these sects nor survive in either of them.

Blaise Pascal, *Œuvres de Blaise Pascal*, ed. Léon Brunschvicg, 3 vols (Paris, 1921) vol. 2, pp. 302, 346–7.

³⁴ Thomas McFarland, *Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition* (Oxford, 1969) pp. 296–7.

³⁵ Pascal, *ibid*, pp. 346–7.

Know then, proud man, what a paradox you are to yourself. Be humble, impotent reason! Be silent, imbecile nature! Learn that man infinitely transcends man, hear from your master your true condition which you do not know. Listen to God.]

Pascal's primary concern is not with scepticism nor dogmatism. He is a rationalist to the extent of thinking that feeble scepticism and irrational dogmatism are rightly to be superseded with human rationality. But to him 'la raison naturelle', rationality endowed in man by nature, is in itself the most problematic of all. For nature is corrupt, and human rationality can never save man from his natural corruption. Dogmatism and scepticism fail to save him. But for that matter 'la raison naturelle' is equally 'impuissante' and 'imbecile'. At this point his voice becomes prophetic: 'Que deviendrez-vous donc, ô hommes qui cherchez quelle est votre véritable condition par votre raison naturelle?' The parallel between Pascal and Coleridge is unmistakably clear when Coleridge writes of 'a dissection of Atheism—particularly the Godwinian System of Pride'.³⁶ They share the exactly same attitude towards the seemingly triumphant rationalism. Pascal shouts at it, 'Humiliez-vous, raison impuissante!', and Coleridge challenges it, 'Proud of what?'. When they observe that human rationality generates false certainty which is derived from nature, they prophetically argue that religion is the only source of certainty. The expressive similarity between Pascal's 'nature imbécile' and Coleridge's 'ideot Nature' seems to be more than a mere accident.

As to the measure of recovery, what they are pointing at is quite obvious. Pascal begins the article with a statement: 'We have no certainty of the truth of these principles, except for the faith and the revelation' [nous n'avons aucune certitude de la vérité de ces principes, hors la foi et la révélation].³⁷ He makes it clear that he

³⁶ CN, I, 174: 16. Quoted and discussed above.

³⁷ Pascal, *ibid.*, p. 341.

is not propagating any dogmatism. But he does not clarify any further what 'la foi et la révélation' is. To him grace is the last word. Coleridge, on the other hand, is more articulate. He continues:

X Deprœliantiûm e carcere nubium &c

† In the last Hymn a sublime enumeration of all the ~~beauties~~ charms or Tremendities of Nature—then a bold avowal of Berkley's System ! ! ! !

Coleridge still keeps his hope for the recovery of nature. It is as if he expects that when the whole nature is re-created and blessed again, he, as a poet, can sing the praise again. What he is to praise is no longer 'beauties' but newly revealed 'tremendities' of nature. For that sake he has to depart from old and corrupt nature and to discover 'new' nature. Thus Coleridge begins to engage himself with the problem of two natures. It is the problem with which Pascal ends his article.

nous font connaître qu'il y a deux vérités de foi également constantes: l'une, que l'homme dans l'état de la création ou dans celui de la grâce est élevé au-dessus de toute la nature, rendu comme semblable à Dieu, et participant de sa divinité, l'autre qu'en l'état de la corruption et du péché, il est déchu de cet état et rendu semblable aux bêtes. Ces deux propositions sont également fermes et certaines.

[we should know that there are two truths of faith which are equally constant: one is that man in the state of the creation, or in the state of grace, is elevated above the whole of nature, made in the image of God, and participating in the divinity. The other, in the state of corruption and sin he has fallen from the first state and has become like beasts. These two propositions are equally firm and certain.]

Pascal is rather detached and descriptive, and therefore not entirely absorbed in this paradox. Coleridge, on the contrary, is determined and confident at overcoming the paradox. In trying to solve the problem of two natures, Coleridge introduces the 'second' departure. Pascal knows only one departure, and that is the Fall. Coleridge goes farther and seeks for the second departure, and that is meant to be the recovery. But man is allowed only one departure. Therefore Coleridge's first and second departures inevitably overlap and his journey becomes simultaneously Fall and recovery. Pascal asks, 'quel paradoxe vous êtes à vous-même?'

'The Ancient Mariner' is not only the poem of departure but also of return. The Mariner completes his journey when he becomes an immaterial 'blesséd ghost'. But he wakes up again and the return journey begins. The poem's largest irony is that this return journey brings him back not to the original reality but to the original anxiety. The crew is revived and the land is regained, but they are utterly different from what they were. They re-appear as it were on the other side of reality. When he arrives at his homeland, he exclaims 'the lighthouse top', 'the hill', 'the kirk' in the exact reverse order. And in his homeland he experiences the intense ambiguity of his return journey. He certainly ends his voyage in the unknown ocean, but he remains an outcast on the land. He is no longer an expelled atheist, but still deprived of the ordinary reality which he had left behind at his departure. Moreover, in spite of his prayer he does not recover the stable distinction between reality and nightmare. Even the Mariner's own being does not recover its original certainty. The Mariner reassures the Wedding-Guest:

Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-Guest!

This body dropt not down.

But he did drop down into his 'sleep'. And even though he seemingly recovers everything, he finally fails to undo the reality of his surreal experience out in the

ocean. His departure turns round 'phantom and fact' once, and his return journey merely does so once more.

Thus the Mariner fails to get into the '5th stage' of the prayer, which is 'self-annihilation—the Soul enters the Holy of Holies.'³⁸ The linear ascent from materiality to spirituality stops short just before its completion and begins to circulate. The Mariner thus abstracts himself from material nature but fails to resolve himself into spirit, and at the end of his return journey he fails to bury his 'self' in materiality either. His 'self' is thus not quite material nor spiritual; it is an unstable entity which circulates between the two ends. When Coleridge speculates on 'prayer', he also makes the following Notebook entry. 'Prayer Mrs Estlin's Story of the Maniac who walks round & round.'³⁹ In fact, this 'Prayer' describes much better the Mariner's circular voyage and its endless repetition in his narrative than the 'Prayer' of the linear ascent.⁴⁰

Some twenty years later Coleridge takes up the question of linearity and circularity again. In the twelfth chapter of *Biographia Literaria*, he translates Schelling's argument on mathematics with small but significant modifications. As a result, Coleridge's seemingly geometrical observation is the declaration of his commitment to ethics, his mathematical discussion about 'the point in motion' is virtually his ethical argument about the human mind. He writes:

³⁸ *CN*, I, 257. Quoted and discussed above.

³⁹ *CN*, I, 260.

⁴⁰ Coleridge is to write in July–August 1808, 'The *habit* of psychological Analysis makes additionally difficult the act of true Prayer ... it does make Prayer, the sole instrument of regeneration, very very difficult. O those who speak of Prayer, of deep, inward, sincere Prayer, as sweet and easy, if they have the Right to speak thus, O how enviable is their Lot!' Yet he also says that self-reflection 'may be employed as a guard against Self-delusion'. *CN*, III, 3355. Later he mentions the difficulty and rarity of 'true Prayer'. He writes in a marginal note to *Metaphysik der Sitten*, 'It takes for granted that Prayer is not an *act*, but a mere wishing—O! who ever *prayed*, that has not an hundred times felt that scarce an act of Life was so difficult as to determine to *pray*? Effective Resolve to Heart-amendment must have commenced, before true Prayer can be uttered—And why call words of Hypocrites or Formalists Prayers?' *CM*, III, pp. 267–8.

In geometry the primary construction is not demonstrated, but postulated. This first and most simple construction in space is the point in motion, or the line. Whether the point is moved in one and same direction, or whether its direction is continuously changed, remains as yet undetermined. But if the direction of the point have been determined, it is either by a point without it, and then there arises the strait line which incloses no space; or the direction of the point is not determined by a point without it, and then it must flow back again on itself; that is, there arises a cyclical line which does inclose a space. If the straight line be assumed as the positive, the cyclical is then the negation of the straight. It is a line which at no point strikes out into the straight, but changes its direction continuously.⁴¹

If linearity and circularity are contradictory, and if the Mariner is not given 'one and same direction' for his voyage, his journey necessarily falls into circularity. The Mariner is 'the Maniac who walks round & round', who confines himself in 'a space' inclosed by a cyclical line.⁴² In order to break this senseless circularity, Coleridge shifts the dimension of argument and redefines the Mariner's disorientation as freedom. He continues:

But if the primary line be conceived as undetermined, and the strait line as determined throughout, then the cyclical is the third compounded of both. It is at once undetermined and determined; undetermined through any point without, and determined through itself.

⁴¹ *BL*, I, pp. 248–50 and note.

⁴² This 'space' is the 'human' space. For Coleridge's further speculation on space, see Chapter 5, I.

For Coleridge this is no longer a geometrical observation but an ethical argument. He argues that what breaks the maniac's magic circle is determination from within, that the Mariner's voyage is lost not because it does not have a fixed destination but because it lacks self-determination. He concludes the passage with his own word, 'a practical idea'—that is, ethical impetus from within. However, this unconditioned freedom turns out to be the beginning of another, graver problem for Coleridge. In 'The Ancient Mariner', it is the killing of the Albatross, that results from such freedom. Suggestively, the dead bird remains on the horizon at first and later sinks into the depth:

The self-same moment I could pray:

And from my neck so free

The Albatross fell off, and sank

Like lead into the sea.

It is intensely ironical that the attempt of linear ascent thus results in linear descent. If the mariner's departure from nature is the first Fall, this is the second Fall. But Coleridge leaves this problem almost untouched. The Mariner's voyage does not reach this depth, instead, it remains on the surface of the ocean. Coleridge thus gains his freedom by his departure from divine nature. And he finds himself incapable of dealing with its consequence. He addresses this problem in 'Confessio Fidei' (1810), in which he extensively rewrites Kant's ethics in Christian terms.⁴³

III. It is very suggestive that in collaborating on *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), Coleridge takes 'the supernatural' and leaves 'the natural' to Wordsworth. According to the account he gives in *Biographia Literaria*,⁴⁴ they are certainly aware of the basic

⁴³ See Chapter 5, III.

⁴⁴ *BL*, II, pp. 5–7.

difference in their creativities and divide their collaboration accordingly. And they are confident in 'the practicability of combining both'. That is to say, they place the problem of two natures between themselves, and confidently speculate on the possibility of their union and the resolution of the problem. Coleridge describes his role:

it was agreed, that my endeavours should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic; yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith.

Obviously, he does not mean by 'supernatural' merely fanciful. It is 'supernatural' when he brings forth 'a human interest and a semblance of truth' from within. Therefore it necessarily falls outside 'a faithful adherence to the truth of nature'. He here argues that the plausibility of such a poem is not natural but human, and to the extent it represents 'inward' and 'human' nature, it procures the 'willing suspension of disbelief' in the reader. His phrase 'willing suspension of disbelief' allows further interpretation, for he has a personal need to procure it in himself. He experiences his departure from the natural to the supernatural as the Fall and, as a result, sees only 'shadows of imagination' which, when unaccompanied by 'a human interest' or 'a semblance of truth', are nothing but nightmares. Therefore, if he endeavours to restore his own nightmares into some human reality by his poetic exercise, it is an attempt primarily at personal recovery. In this sense, his 'human interest' is an interest in salvation, the 'semblance of truth' then is the fictive reality of salvific story, and the 'willing suspension of disbelief' his own endurance to forbear entire disbelief in his poetic exercise.

Coleridge's supernatural thus originates in his 'inward' nature which is strictly separate from nature. In contrast, Wordsworth, by choosing 'the natural', does not experience such a potentially problematic distinction. Wordsworth's poetic merit, as Coleridge describes in *Biographia Literaria*, is 'to give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us'. But in doing so, Wordsworth does not lose the grounded certainty of 'things of everyday'. In seeking nature's 'loveliness and wonders', he never loses the sight of the ground on which he stands. In this sense Wordsworth's supernatural is continuous with the natural, or rather, his 'feeling analogous to the supernatural' still remains within nature. Coleridge describes his original confidence in 'the practicability of combination' in *Biographia Literaria*. 'The sudden charm, which accidents of light and shade, which moon-light or sun-set diffused over a known and familiar landscape, appeared to represent the practicability of combining both.' But, as he says, 'These are the poetry of nature', that is, strictly Wordsworthian. There are two ways to combine the natural and the supernatural. What Coleridge attempts to do is not ascend from the natural towards the supernatural as Wordsworth does but come back from the supernatural to the natural. And it is as much difficult, even treacherous as the Mariner's return journey. As Wordsworth pulls out of the collaboration in 'The Wanderings of Cain' and 'The Ancient Mariner', Coleridge becomes the one who realizes the depth of the problem of two natures and the real difficulty of his task to reconcile them. Wordsworth's confidence comes from the fact that he does not experience the anxiety of groundless uncertainty of the supernatural world. Wordsworth's elevation from the natural to the supernatural does not presuppose the Fall. But Coleridge's recovery from the supernatural to the natural does, and all he can do to procure recovery is to endure the 'willing suspension of disbelief' first of all within himself and to hope that the supernatural will somehow merge into the natural.

In the days of the collaboration there are frequent exchanges between Coleridge and Wordsworth on the topic of sin and evil. Paul Magnuson compares 'The Ancient Mariner' with Wordsworth's 'Salisbury Plain poems' and argues that the former is the correspondent counterpart of the latter.⁴⁵ The comparison, however, shows the basic difference between them in spite of their similarity of material and story. Most notably, one is located on the plain and the other on the ocean. The point is that in 'The Ancient Mariner' Coleridge depicts the vague, ominous anxiety which he personally experiences. In the later version of the poem, Coleridge writes:

With sloping masts and dipping prow,
As who pursued with yell and blow
Still treads the shadow of his foe,
And forward bends his head,
The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,
And southward aye we fled⁴⁶

This vague anxiety goes through the whole of the poem from the beginning to the end, even after the Mariner's proclamation. The Mariner's only act, the shooting of the albatross, is known to have been suggested by Wordsworth. But Coleridge does not offer any resolution. He only absorbs it in the overall vague anxiety which begins with the Mariner's departure. Understandably, Wordsworth dislikes this vague anxiety and quickly withdraws from the collaboration. Wordsworth's dismissive note attached to 'The Ancient Mariner' in the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads* is an explicit statement of his aversion to it.

⁴⁵ Paul Magnuson, *Coleridge and Wordsworth* (Princeton, 1988), pp. 33–45, 68–86.

⁴⁶ Coleridge writes down these lines in 1806 and inserts them in the 1817 version. See *Poems*, p. 361.

the Author was himself very desirous that it should be suppressed. This wish had arisen from a consciousness of the defects of the Poem, and from a knowledge that many persons had been much displeas'd with it. The Poem of my Friend had 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 controul 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.⁴⁷

It is obvious that Wordsworth reads and criticizes the poem from his 'natural' point of view. All that he lists as 'the defects' of the poem are certainly true. But Coleridge's point is to depict the figure of an outcast who is deprived of his personal character and action, and thrown out into a chaotic, meaningless, 'supernatural' ocean.

When he plans the hymns to the Elements Coleridge seeks for the departure from land to ocean, from the natural to the supernatural. When he finishes the first version of 'The Ancient Mariner' he desperately wishes to return from the supernatural to the natural. Since his departure results in 'the fall' into his own internal depth, he now seeks for a recovery which must be from within himself. In this context, he mentions the 'original sin' in a letter to his brother George on 10 March 1798, exactly when he finishes the first version of 'The Ancient Mariner'. He writes:

⁴⁷ William Wordsworth, *Lyrical Ballads, and Other Poems, 1797-1800*, ed. James Butler and Karen Green (Ithaca and London, 1992) p. 791.

Of GUILT I say nothing; but I believe most stedfastly in original Sin; that from our mothers' wombs our understandings are darkened; and even where our understandings are in the Light, that our organization is depraved, & our volitions imperfect; and we sometimes see the good without *wishing* to attain it, and oftener *wish* it without the energy that wills & performs—⁴⁸

Thus he finds 'original Sin' at the heart of his whole being. In this letter he also describes what he believes to be the recovery. He continues: 'And for this inherent depravity, I believe, that the *Spirit* of the Gospel is the sole cure—but permit me to add, that I look for the *Spirit* of the Gospel 'neither in the mountain, nor at Jerusalem'—'; that is, not in nature nor in society but in himself, in his 'will'. The optimistic overtone of the letter is dependent solely on his confidence in finding the *Spirit* of the Gospel in his own 'will'. Therefore, 'Of GUILT I say nothing'. And once he recovers confidence by referring to 'the *Spirit* of the Gospel', he regains lost nature and his formerly abandoned social idealism.

I love fields & woods & mounta[ins] with almost a visionary fondness—and because I have found benevolence & quietness growing within me as that fondness [has] increased, therefore I should wish to be the means of implanting it in others—& to destroy the bad passions not by combating them, but by keeping them in inaction.

It is as if he is recollecting the Pantisocracy scheme. When he finds 'benevolence & quietness' within himself, he moves on to the amelioration of the whole human being. But this time the grand scheme is the extension of his recovery from within. First of all he has to recover 'benevolence & quietness growing within me'. He promises to

⁴⁸ CL, I, pp. 394–8.

devote himself 'in poetry, to elevate the imagination & set the affections in right tune by the beauty of the inanimate impregnated, as with a living soul, by the presence of Life—in prose, to the seeking with patience & a slow, very slow mind ... What our faculties are & what they are capable of becoming.—'

Coleridge confidently describes his recovery both poetically and politically and presents himself as a poet of nature and a political idealist. But there is also an ill omen in it. Obviously, he thinks he has successfully endured his illness which led him to think of the original sin. He writes, 'God be praised, the matter has been absorbed; and I am now recovering a pace, and enjoy that *newness* of sensation from the fields, the air, & the Sun, which makes convalescence almost repay one for disease.' However, he also writes, 'Laudanum gave me repose, not sleep: but YOU, I believe, know how divine that repose is—what a spot of enchantment, a green spot of fountains, & flowers & trees, in the very heart of a waste of Sand!' It is ominous that he uses almost the same description of landscape for what he thinks is the genuine recovery by 'the *Spirit* of the Gospel' and for the repose by opium. He will soon go through a long and agonizing personal experience for which he constantly chooses the latter in the place of the former. Opium thus intensifies the problem of two natures, and his addiction to it devastates his seeming confidence in his 'will'. Moreover, the sweet dream of artificial paradise effected by opium will soon turn out be a horrifying nightmare.⁴⁹ All of these will force a radical reconsideration of what he here promises 'in poetry' and 'in prose'. That is, 'Of GUILT' he will say much more. And, as is frequently interpreted, his life becomes a grand enactment of 'The Ancient Mariner'.

⁴⁹ For Coleridge's nightmare, see Chapter 4, II.

Chapter 3 'Dejection Ode' and the Theft of His Own 'Nature'

I. Coleridge's writing becomes prominently autobiographical after the composition of 'The Ancient Mariner' (1798). Later in his literary life he writes 'Dejection Ode' (1802), 'Confessio Fidei' (1810), *Biographia Literaria* (1817), *Aids to Reflection* (1825), and *The Confession of Inquiring Spirit* (1840, posthumous), all characteristically autobiographical and confessional. They are the result of his intense and painful self-reflection with one constant theme—recovery. Interestingly, he suggests that his autobiographical writings are derived from the ever growing and never executed plan, 'Soother of Absence'. In the Notebook in November 1803 he describes the plan of autobiography as 'the work which I should be wish to leave behind me, or publish late in Life' and writes: '2nd Vol.—Soother of Absence.—My Life & Thoughts.—Comic Epic.—Hymns, Sun, Moon, Elements, Man & God.'¹ Shortly before that entry he writes, 'Seem to have made up my mind to write my metaphysical works, as *my Life*, & *in my Life*—intermixed with all the other events /or history of the mind & fortunes of S.T. Coleridge.'²

Coleridge's autobiographical, confessional narrative is the result of his self-reflection, that is, the result of the loss of nature. He makes an clear description of his self-reflective mind in 'Frost at Midnight', a composition contemporary with 'The Ancient Mariner'. While his child receives the abundant divine presence in nature, he finds his self-reflective mind expelled from it into darkness. He likens his mind to the restless motion of a film on a grate, 'the sole unquiet thing' at night. It, like his mind, acts only in darkness; its motion is noticeable only when total silence dominates.

¹ *CN*, I, 1646. Here the plan 'the hymns to the Elements' merges into 'Soother of Absence', giving the latter an implicit theological dimension. For 'the hymns to the Elements', see Chapter 1, I and II. For 'Soother of Absence', see Chapter 1, IV.

² *CN*, I, 1515.

Methinks, its motion in this hush of nature
 Gives it dim sympathies with me who live,
 Making it a companionable form,
 Whose puny flaps and freaks the idling Spirit
 By its own moods interprets, every where
 Echo or mirror seeking of itself,
 And makes a toy of Thought.³

The self-reflective mind replaces the reciprocity between reception and response of 'hymn' with its own self-reciprocal, self-reflective act. By relating itself exclusively to its own phantom product, the mind confines itself in its own internal sphere. The self-reflective sphere is thus a negative, phenomenal sphere which lies outside divine nature, yet is, nevertheless, the only 'reality' for those who have fallen into it. It is 'his' world, individual, exclusively internal. He mentions 'the *Γνωθι σεαυτόν* from Heaven' for the first time when he acknowledges his 'poetical death' in a letter to Godwin on 25 March 1801.⁴ Although he does not adopt the explicit theological language for it until much later, self-reflection is implicitly a theological matter for him from the beginning.

In 'Dejection Ode'⁵ Coleridge explores, with considerable anxiety, where his self-reflection takes him. In the end of the poem he declares that self-reflection is a way to the promised recovery rather than to an endless regression from the original presence. He believes in the recovery from within and says, 'Ah! from the soul itself must issue forth A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud Enveloping the Earth—'. Therefore he writes:

³ *Poems*, p. 138.

⁴ *CL*, II, p. 714.

⁵ *Poems*, 280–3.

O pure of heart! thou need'st not ask of me
 What his strong music in the soul may be!
 What, and wherein it doth exist,
 This light, this glory, this fair luminous mist,
 This beautiful and beauty-making power.

He calls this 'power' 'Joy' and writes, 'Joy is the sweet voice, Joy the luminous cloud'. And around the time of the composition, 'luminous cloud' appears several times in descriptions of landscape in the Notebook. One of them is the entry which immediately precedes the draft of 'Apologia pro Vita sua'. The poem is possibly his first articulation of 'beauty-making power' which he believes to lie within poet's mind. The discovery of such power is the result of his nocturnal recollection of the landscape which he observed in daylight. He writes on 26 August 1800:

Wednesday, 26. Morning—six o'clock—Clouds in motion half down Skiddaw, capping & veiling Wanthwaite. No sun, no absolute gleam ... a mere gloom of cloudiness.—

N.B. What is it that makes the silent *bright* of the Morning vale so different from that other silence & bright gleams of late evening? Is it in the mind or ~~is~~ is there any physical cause? ...

8 °clock—White Cloud rolling along on the edge of a green Sun-spot on the Bassenthwaite Extremity of Skiddaw— ...

A day of cloudiness—& the Sun known to have set by the ~~hour~~ clock only.⁶

'N.B.' is an important insertion. Viewing the similar cloud and light in the morning and in the evening, he wonders if he sees the difference between the landscape in the

⁶ CN, I, 789.

morning and that in the evening because of his mind alone, while there is no external, 'physical' difference between them. He here raises the question concerning the extent of the participation of the active mind in viewing the landscape. He repeats a similar observation the next day and speculates the possibility of the act of the human mind which is independent of external nature. This time he goes on to observe the impressions of the landscape recollected in his mind at eleven o'clock and drafts 'Apologia pro Vita sua'.

~~Wednesday~~ Thursday, Aug. 27. A morning of masses of clouds rolling in Sunshine the Grange well lighted up—. It rained a trifle.

Sunset lights slanted Newland Hollands—smoke flame over Wanthwaite & under that mass a *wedge* of light on the cliff—but soon the whole of Wanthwaite drunk with a black-hued *scarlet*—the distances of Borrodale duskily colored long after the set, & the end of the Lake a ↓ was crimsoned during the Sunset ...

Then the evening comes and darkness covers all the visible landscape. Yet he keeps observing the scene which is similar to the landscape of the day. He continues:

11 o'clock at night—that conical Volcano of coal, half an inch high, ~~sending~~ ejaculating its inverted cone of smoke—the smoke in what furious wind, this way, that way—& what a noise!

The poet's eye in his tipsy hour

Hath a magnifying power

Or rather he ~~diverts his eyes~~ / his soul emancipates his eyes

Of the accidents of size /

In unctuous cones of kindling Coal

Or smoke from his Pipe's hole

His eye can see

Phantoms of sublimity.⁷

He describes the coal fire as if it were the landscape. He assimilates the fire and the smoke in a dark room to the sun and the cloud he saw in daylight. Except for 'the accident of size', the two sceneries are similar. 'The Idling Spirit' of 'Frost at Midnight' is said to produce 'a toy of Thought'. Here it produces a miniature landscape. The 'toy' produced within the internalized mind thus begins to assume 'Sublimity' of the external landscape.

Coleridge writes in 'Dejection Ode', 'Joy that ne'er was given, Save to the pure, and in their purest hour'. Personally, however, he has a deep anxiety that he may be deprived of 'Joy'. It is not because his mind produces nothing in the 'genial hour' but because it may produce something other than 'Joy'. In fact, he is to lose his optimism about his own active mind soon. When he writes to Southey on 14 August 1803, a month before the composition of 'Pains of Sleep', he happens to illustrate the 'act' of his mind with an expression similar to that in 'Apologia pro Vita sua'. He writes, 'The simplest Illustration would be the *circle* of Fire made by whirling round a live Coal—only here the mind is passive. Suppose the same effect produced ab intra—& you have a clue to the whole mystery of frightful Dreams, &

⁷ CN, I, 791. The final version of 1822 becomes:

THE poet in his lone yet genial hour
 Gives to his eyes a magnifying power:
 Or rather he emancipates his eyes
 From the black shapeless accidents of size—
 In unctuous cones of kindling coal,
 Or smoke upwreathing from the pipe's trim bole,
 His gifted ken can see
 Phantoms of sublimity. *Poems*, p. 245.

It is important that in the later version he draws closer to his creative theory and names it 'Apologia pro Vita sua'. 'Phantoms of sublimity' is the achievement of poet's perception/creation by 'his gifted ken' in 'his lone yet genial hour'. For the word 'genial', see below.

Hypochondriacal Delusions.'⁸ The point is not that his mind is no longer passive but active. The problem is that his 'active' mind produces 'frightful Dreams, & Hypochondriacal Delusions' and not 'Joy'. He may still believe that he can produce 'Joy' from within himself. Then the question is when or whether his mind stops producing fear and depression ab intra.

Coleridge's letter on 10 March 1799 to his wife from Germany already shows that he may fail in his attempt at 'internal' recovery. He writes:

I have thought & thought of you, and pictured you & the little ones so often & so often, that my Imagination is tired, down, flat and powerless; and I languish after Home for hours together, in vacancy; my *feelings* almost wholly unqualified by *Thoughts*. I have, at times, experienced such an extinction of *Light* in my mind, I have been so forsaken by all the *forms* and *colourings* of Existence, as if the *organs* of Life had been dried up; as if only simple BEING remained, blind and stagnant!—⁹

He recognizes that in exile he loses not only 'all the *forms* and *colourings*' of landscape but also the feminine. The idea and language he uses here resemble those of 'Dejection Ode' to the extent of suggesting that he is rehearsing 'Dejection Ode' three years earlier, dedicating it to his wife. When he endeavours to recover the presence of his wife Sara, he soon discovers that the recovery of the feminine is as difficult and treacherous as that of landscape. He eventually succeeds in recovering the feminine within his mind, but she turns out to be another Sara. It strongly suggests that his problem with the two Saras is not necessarily the problem between Sara Fricker whom he ceases to love and Sara Hutchinson whom he begins to love. It is rather the problem between the real and the unreal woman, or, the woman

⁸ CL, II, p. 974. See Chapter 4: I, II for his further investigation of nightmare.

⁹ CL, I, p. 470.

materialized without and the woman spiritualized within, his mind. This is in fact an ethical version of the problem of two natures.¹⁰

In the letter Coleridge discloses a hint of his metaphysics when he complains about 'an extinction of *Light*'. Without light in 'his' mind he has to live with 'simple BEING ... blind and stagnant'. Here again he expresses his anxiety that nature may turn out to be an amorphous mass.¹¹ He admits that he has fallen into 'a strange state' and explains how it is like to be in it:

After I have recovered from this strange state, & reflected upon it, I have thought of a man who should lose his companion in a desert of sand where his weary Halloos drop down in the air without an Echo.—I am deeply convinced that if I were to remain a few years among objects for whom I had no affection, I should wholly lose the powers of Intellect—Love is the vital air of my Genius¹²

He says he has recovered from 'this strange state'. However, he, the metaphysician is destined to be 'a man who should lose his companion in a desert of sand'. His metaphysical research, as he describes it, is like a 'weary Halloos' to his lost partner. And when he finally gives up waiting for the response from his partner, he instead seeks for the 'Echo' of his own voice and his pursuit becomes 'self-reflective'. He writes in May 1799, 'The voice was in my heart you he it is only the echo which you hear from my Mouth'.¹³ And when he loses 'you' who hears him, his voice becomes entirely confined within himself and resonates only there. He is to

¹⁰ For the parallel of the absence of nature and that of Sara Hutchinson, see the discussion about 'Soothe of Absence' in Chapter 1, IV.

¹¹ Coleridge calls nature 'blind' and 'ideot' in the plan to write the hymns to the Elements. *CN*, I, 174: 16. Quoted and discussed in Chapter 1, I. He calls it also 'an immense heap of *little* things'. *CL*, I, p. 349. Quoted and discussed in Chapter 2, I.

¹² *CL*, I, p. 470–1. For the word 'Genius', see below.

¹³ *CN*, I, 432: 13.

write in December 1802, 'Take away from sounds &c the sense of outness—what a horrid disease every moment would become'.¹⁴

At first, however, Coleridge does not think that metaphysical research is necessarily destined to isolated self-reflection. He can still write to Sotheby on 13 July 1802:

Metaphysics is a word, that you, my dear Sir! are no great Friend to/ but yet you will agree, that a great Poet must be, implicite if not explicitè, a profound Metaphysician. He may not have it in logical coherence, in his Brain & Tongue; but he must have it by *Tact*/for all sounds, & forms of human nature he must have the *ear* of a wild Arab listening in the silent Desart, the eye of a North American Indian tracing the footsteps of an Enemy upon the Leaves that strew the Forest—; the *Touch* of a Blind Man feeling the face of a darling Child—/¹⁵

It may or may not be the case that he regards himself as 'a profound Metaphysician'. The point is that 'a profound Metaphysician' he mentions here is the one with acute perceptive sensitivity rather than strong productive power. 'A Wild Arab' is still listening to the external voice, faint though it may be, and 'a Blind Man' cannot see his child but has no doubt that he is with his child. Metaphysics as well as poetry in this sense are still regarded as the matter of acute reception. But soon Coleridge betrays his personal desperation and indicates where the real origin and goal of his metaphysical research lie. Two months later he writes in the Notebook, 'Mother listening for the sound of a still-born child—blind Arab list'ning in the wilderness'.¹⁶ His metaphysical research thus begins with death, complete loss.

¹⁴ *CN*, I, 1307.

¹⁵ *CL*, II, p. 810.

¹⁶ *CN*, I, 1244.

Because he experiences this loss as the fall into 'metaphysic depths'¹⁷ where he finds no light nor sound, his pursuit of recovery cannot remain merely perceptive. It will soon become productive, or rather, reproductive.

Coleridge's tour to Arabia is a metaphysical pilgrimage. He absorbs it into a plan to write a poem on Spinoza. He writes in November 1799:

If I begin a poem of Spinoza, thus it should begin/

I would make a pilgrimage to the burning sands of Arabia, or &c &c to find the Man who could explain to me there can be *oneness*, there being infinite Perceptions—yet there must be a *oneness*, not an intense Union but an Absolute Unity, for &c.¹⁸

Here he engages himself in the problem of the 'one' presence and infinitely 'many' perceptions. It is a paradox, but it is not a problem until he gets caught by an epistemological anxiety and thinks that 'many' perceptions are alienated from 'one' presence. And it becomes an insoluble problem when he begins to seek for 'one' presence within one of 'many' perceptions. He soon discovers the oneness of his own mind, but for him it is not the end of the problem but the beginning of still further confusion. 'One and many' immediately comes back to him as 'one' mind and infinitely fragmented 'many' minds of which his is one. It is a paradox to know that his mind is a fragmented 'one' and at the same time to find that it contains infinitely 'many' perceptions within its own oneness. He writes in March 1800, 'a cracked Looking-glass—such is man's mind—Spinoza',¹⁹ and acknowledges that the mind's original passivity as a mirror is already fragmented, or, 'cracked'.²⁰

¹⁷ *BL*, I, p. 17.

¹⁸ *CN*, I, 556.

¹⁹ *CN*, I, 705.

²⁰ For Coleridge's later distinction between 'Mind' and 'Minds', see Chapter 7, II. For his definition of mind as 'Self-conscious Looking Glass', see Chapter 1, III note.

Coleridge is to insist on a poetical solution to this ancient question. He writes in April–November 1801, 'Pomponatius de Immort. Animæ.—says of abstract Ideas—universale in particulari speculatur—which is the philosophy of Poetry'.²¹ In *Biographia Literaria* he ascribes this solution to Aristotle. He writes, 'Aristotle has accordingly required of the poet an involution of the universal in the individual'.²² But as seen above, Coleridge's 'one and many' can no longer be settled simply by 'the universal in the particular'. When he discovers the one and fragmented mind, the previous settlement between the universal and the particular gets invalidated from its base. Discovery of the one and fragmented mind causes a new and further complicated question: how does the one 'and' particular mind participate in the original one and universal while it contains now doubly 'particularized' many within itself?²³ He thus needs a new poetics to reconcile 'one and many' on a new level. He writes again in October 1803:

Poem on Spirit—or on Spinoza—I would make a pilgrimage to the Deserts of Arabia to find the man who could make understand how the *one can be many!* Eternal universal mystery! It seems as if it were impossible; yet it *is*—& it is every where!—It is indeed a contradiction *in Terms*: and only in Terms!—It is the co presence of Feeling & Life, limitless by their very essence, with Form, by its very essence limited—determinate—definite.—²⁴

He expresses the wonder and not the problem of 'one and many', that is, he is speaking poetically and not philosophically. It is as if he is recanting 'The Eolian

²¹ *CN*, I, 943.

²² *BL*, II, p. 185.

²³ This is the question with which Coleridge reads Kant. And because of this question he remains unconvinced with Kant's argument. See the following Chapters.

²⁴ *CN*, I, 1561. For Coleridge's later speculation on 'Spirit', see Chapter 7: III, IV.

Harp'²⁵ and praising the harmony between 'one and many'. But by 1803 he must 'personally' know that one and many is not 'a contradiction only in terms'. What he sees in his own mind is a sure sign that the contradiction takes place on a quite different level.

It is in this letter from Germany that he mentions the split between 'feeling and thinking' possibly for the first time. It is to this split that he ascribes the failure of his imagination, 'an extinction of *Light* in my mind'. This is an important observation in view not only of his early poetics he often discusses in letters around the time of composing 'Dejection Ode' but also of its further philosophical development. Later he redefines the split as the split between passivity and activity and places it at the centre of his philosophical and theological argument. In this letter he says, 'my *feelings* [are] almost wholly unqualified by *Thoughts*. I have, at times, experienced such an extinction of *Light* in my mind'. At this stage, however, he is not worried about this failure. He says, 'I have recovered from this strange state'. Even in 'Dejection Ode' he maintains that his imagination is not lost but temporarily suspended. He writes:

But oh! each visitation
Suspends what nature gave me at my birth,
My shaping spirit of Imagination.

It is with this optimism that he begins to formulate his poetics which simultaneously presupposes and aims at the original unity between feeling and thinking. He soon realizes, however, that the argument which presupposes such unity is poetical, but that which aims at it, that is, which acknowledges the split and seeks for its recovery is no longer poetical but metaphysical. And, as will be seen, it is in this

²⁵ *Poems*, pp. 52-3.

pursuit of recovery that he happens to overturn the precedence of feeling over thinking and admits that he has shifted the 'act' of his mind to a quite different level.²⁶

Before the composition of 'The Ancient Mariner' in 1797 he could rely on the unquestioned unity of 'feeling and thinking' in himself. He writes to Thelwall on 17 December 1796:

I feel strongly, and I think strongly; but I seldom feel without thinking, or think without feeling. Hence tho' my poetry has in general a *hue* of tenderness, or Passion over it, yet it seldom exhibits unmixed & simple tenderness or Passion. My philosophical opinions are blended with, or deduced from, my feelings: & this, I think, peculiarizes my style of Writing.²⁷

Here he maintains the precedence of feeling over thinking. He says that his philosophy is 'deduced from' his feeling. Yet it is obvious that the precedence itself is not the matter of question since he takes their unity and reciprocity for granted. He continues, 'I have room enough in *my* brain to admire, aye & almost equally, the *head* and fancy of Akenside, and the *heart* and fancy of Bowles'. It is during his

²⁶ For Coleridge's further philosophical speculation on 'feeling and thinking', see Chapter 4, I. For further discussions about 'the precedence', see Chapters 6 and 7. It is important to remember that these questions originate in his poetical speculation on 'one and many'. In the Notebook entry about 'Poem on Spirit—or on Spinoza', he paraphrases a possible solution of 'one and many' as that of 'the co presence of Feeling & Life, limitless by their very essence, with Form, by its very essence limited—determinate—definite.' *CN*, I, 1561. See above. Later, discussing about poet's 'true genius' in *Biographia Literaria*, he writes, 'his feelings have been habitually associated with thoughts and images, to the number, clearness, and vivacity of which the sensation of *self* is always in an inverse proportion'. *BL*, I, p. 43–4. Here he clearly implies that the split between 'feeling' and 'thinking' intensifies the problem of '*self*'. By this time he is well aware that Kant begins his 'Deduction of the Pure Concept of the Understanding' with the question concerning 'feeling and thinking', or, 'sensibility and representation' and leads his argument towards active self-representation. Coleridge's poetic argument in *Biographia Literaria* can be said to be his response to this Kantian argument. See Chapter 6.

²⁷ *CL*, I, p. 279.

repeated acknowledgment of the loss of poetry and intermittent speculations of its recovery that he shifts the point of argument from poetry to metaphysics. He writes to Poole on 1 February 1801:

I have begun to take Bark, and I hope, that shortly I shall look back on my long & painful Illness only as a Storehouse of wild Dreams for Poems, or intellectual Facts for metaphysical Speculation. Davy in the kindness of his heart calls me the Poet-philosopher—I hope, Philosophy & Poetry will not neutralize each other, & leave me an inert mass.²⁸

Here the split between 'feeling and thinking' is paraphrased as that between 'Poetry' and 'philosophy'. He expresses the same fear as before that because of this split whole nature may become 'an inert mass', or, 'simple BEING ... blind and stagnant' as he said two year before. It should be noticed that even at this stage he seems to be unconcerned about the precedence of poetry over philosophy, or feeling over thinking. However, what he has in mind is not a simple 'co presence' of poetry and philosophy. The two days later, he writes to Davy:

what my heart within me *burns* to do—that is, *concenter* my free mind to the affinities of the Feelings with Words & Ideas under the title of 'Concerning Poetry & the nature of the Pleasures derived from it.'—I have faith, that I do understand this subject/and I am sure, that if I write what I ought to do on it, the Work would supersede all the Books of Metaphysics hitherto written/and all the Books of Morals too.—²⁹

²⁸ *CL*, II, pp. 668–9.

²⁹ *CL*, II, p. 671.

He is no longer a poet who lives with the secret of poetry but a philosopher who intellectually investigates into that secret. This move strongly suggests that for him 'the affinities of the Feelings with Words' has ceased to be self-evident, that it has become the mystery to be investigated. Subsequently, when he presents the figure of ideal poet in 1802, he overturns the precedence of poetry over philosophy and insists that philosophy should play the essential part of poetic creativity. Such philosophy is of course metaphysics. He writes to Sotheby on 13 July 1802 and says, 'a great Poet must be, implicitè if not explicitè, a profound Metaphysician'.³⁰ By this assertion, he virtually replaces poet with metaphysician. This metaphysical overturning does not change the idea of poet/metaphysician who unites feeling and thinking within himself. But it changes the way Coleridge presents the idea. He no longer describes what the poet 'is' but argues what he 'must be'. It is only a matter of time that this descriptive 'must be' becomes imperative 'should be'. Two month later on 10 September 1802 he writes to Sotheby again, 'A Poet's *Heart & Intellect* should be *combined, intimately combined & unified*, with the great appearances in Nature'.³¹ His decisive argument seems to show his confidence in it. But this is the letter in which he explains the circumstance of composing 'Hymn Before Sun-Rise'. As seen in the first chapter, his imperative poetics immediately reveals that he as a poet 'is not' what he 'should be'. Besides, the overturn of the precedence causes another problem. Even when a poet achieves what he should be, he can no longer be

³⁰ *CL*, II, p. 810. Quoted and discussed above. It is not coincidence that with this assertion Coleridge begins to see the difference between him and Wordsworth. In this letter he criticizes Wordsworth for the first time and says, 'we begin to suspect, that there is, somewhere or other, a *radical* Difference [in our] opinions'. *CL*, II, p. 812. With this recognition Coleridge begins to impose his own idea on Wordsworth and 'tell' him what he should be. He writes to Wordsworth on 23 July 1803, '[Wordsworth's] Picture gives them [Sir George and Lady Beaumont] an idea of you as a profound strong-minded Philosopher, not as a Poet—I answered (& I believe, truly—) that so it must needs do, if it were a good Portrait—for that you were a great Poet by inspirations, & in the Moments of revelation, but that you were a thinking feeling Philosopher habitually—that your Poetry was your Philosophy under the action of strong winds of Feeling—a sea rolling high.—' *CL*, II, p. 957.

³¹ *CL*, II, p. 864. Quoted and discussed in Chapter 1, I.

united with nature herself, but only with 'the appearances' of nature. Coleridge is left with a phenomenological problem even when he fulfils the requirement of his own poetics. He experiences the split between appearance and matter, between appearance which may or may not have anything to do with matter and matter which, without appearance, cannot but be 'an inert mass' or 'simple BEING ... blind and stagnant'.

Coleridge thus experiences the problem of mutually excluding feeling and thinking which makes poetry impossible. In 'Dejection Ode' he sees the problem as that of thinking unaccompanied by feeling rather than feeling without thinking. It is the act of his mind which is out of tune. He writes of the landscape:

I see them all so excellently fair,
I see, not feel, how beautiful they are!

In a letter to Godwin on 25 March 1801 he writes, 'I look at the Mountains (that visible God Almighty that looks in at all my windows) I look at the Mountains only for the Curves of their outlines; the Stars, as I behold them, form themselves into Triangles—'.³² Then he continues the letter: 'The Poet is dead in me—my imagination (or rather the Somewhat that had been imaginative) lies, like a Cold Snuff'. Therefore, when he seeks for recovery, he seeks for the 'visible God Almighty' who is no longer 'visible', or if he still is, has ceased to present anything to him. Two days earlier, he writes to Poole, 'My opinion is this—that deep Thinking is attainable only by a man of deep Feeling, and that all Truth is a species of Revelation'.³³ He sounds as if he maintains the precedence of feeling over thinking even here. But this statement proves to be a decisive step towards the inception of an active, 'thinking'

³² *CL*, II, p. 714.

³³ *CL*, II, p. 709.

mind. In fact, it is in this letter that Coleridge hits the highest note for the activated mind. In criticizing Locke and Newton, he says:

Newton was a mere materialist—*Mind* in his system is always passive—a lazy Looker-on on an external World. If the mind be not *passive*, if it be indeed made in God's image, and that too in the sublimest sense—the Image of the *Creator*—there is ground for suspicion, that any system built on the passiveness of the mind must be false, as a system.³⁴

Previously, he called the mind 'a Convex Mirror' which quietly reflects the 'visible God Almighty'. In that, however, the mind was not merely passive since the reflection itself was its immediate response to the presence of the 'visible God'. It was passive only in maintaining the precedence of reception over response. The 'active' mind inevitably overturns this precedence. It produces a response which is no longer response, or more precisely, it responds even after it loses the call to respond to. It is necessarily self-productive, that is, self-reflective. If man is 'the Image of the *Creator*', he ultimately recapitulates the whole creation within himself. But at the same time by doing so he loses nature, the whole creation in which he still supposedly remains.

This is a paradox. Co-ordination between the original passivity of 'a Convex Mirror' and the secondary activity of self-reflective mind thus becomes the focal point of his speculation.

O Lady! we receive but what we give,
And in our life alone does Nature live:

³⁴ Ibid.

Receiving and giving both involve nature. But he insists that internal nature is only nature which is alive, that is, human recapitulation of the creation is only possible nature. The argument involves the reversal of the precedence of receiving over giving. But, as seen above, he does not find his personal problem solved even by this reversal. Personally, he admits that metaphysical research was originally adopted in order to cut off feeling from thinking. He writes to Southey on 29 July 1802, 'As to myself, all my poetic Genius ... is gone—and I have been fool enough to suffer deeply in my mind, regretting the loss—which I attribute to my long & exceedingly severe Metaphysical Investigations—& these partly to Ill-health, and partly to private afflictions which rendered any subject, immediately connected with Feeling, a source of pain & disquiet to me'.³⁵ He then continues and quotes from 'Dejection Ode', italicizing 'think' and 'feel':

For not to *think* of what I needs must *feel*;

But to be still and patient all, I can—

He thus reveals the unfortunate origin of his engagement in metaphysics. On the one hand it is adopted to cut off 'feeling' from 'thinking', and on the other it is expected to unite them again.

II. Coleridge shakes off his early naturalism in the process of activating his mind. Human mind is no longer a part of 'animated nature', one of 'Organic Harp diversely fram'd'. Or if it still is, it should be such a special part that it can recapitulate the whole creation within itself. He begins to denounce 'Hartley's system' which philosophically supported his poetic naturalism by the argument which presupposes no disjunction between divine nature and human nature. He writes to Godwin on 22

³⁵ CL, II, pp. 831–2.

September 1800, 'All the nonsense of vibrations etc you would of course dismiss'.³⁶ He is dissatisfied with it because it limits the function of the human mind into a passive automatic association and precludes its active, free function beyond it. He begins to see it as the system of materialism in which association is predetermined by, in Kantian term, 'natural necessity'.³⁷ In the letter he speculates on the act of the human mind which is independent of nature and asks whether such an act is 'arbitrary'.

I wish you to write a book on the power of words, and the processes by which human feelings form affinities with them—in short, I wish you to *philosophize* Horn Tooke's System, and to solve the great Questions—whether there be reason to hold, that an action bearing all the *semblance* of pre-designing Consciousness may yet be simply organic, & whether a *series* of such actions are possible—and close on the heels of this question would follow the old 'Is Logic the *Essence* of Thinking?' in other words—Is *thinking* impossible without arbitrary signs? &—how far is the word 'arbitrary' a misnomer?³⁸

This 'action' is human action. He argues that human action must be accompanied by human mind which is active and self-determining and not 'organic' or natural, that is, dependent on nature.³⁹ Human mind, he suggests, possesses 'pre-designing

³⁶ *CL*, I, p. 626.

³⁷ For Coleridge's view on 'natural necessity' and its relation to human freedom, see Chapter 5, III.

³⁸ *CL*, I, p. 625.

³⁹ James C. McKusick paraphrases 'organic' as 'materialistic' and discusses this passage in relation to contemporary linguistic theories such as 'Horn Tooke's System'. See McKusick, *Coleridge's Philosophy of Language* (New Haven, 1986) p. 41. In the first chapter, he summarizes the linguistic controversy of the day concerning the arbitrariness or the naturalness of language. Judging from several citations in his book, the basic question seems to be: is language related to nature? If it is, language is somehow derived from nature and also dependent on it. If it is not, language is irrelevant to nature and therefore artificial and arbitrary. McKusick is right in stressing Coleridge's idealistic turn. But he is not quite

Consciousness'. He then draws the example from logical thinking and suggests that thinking itself is not dependent on the signs, that on the contrary these signs are 'the *semblance*' of pre-designing thinking. They are 'arbitrary' only because they are abstract and independent of nature, but they can be 'necessary' as far as the action of the human mind is concerned. He then extends his observation to language in general of which logic is only an example. He continues:

Are not words &c parts & germinations of the Plant? And what is the Law of their Growth?—In something of this order I would endeavor to destroy the old antithesis of *Words & Things*, elevating, as it were, words into Things, & living Things too.⁴⁰

He thus discloses that what he has in mind is 'the old antithesis of *Words & Things*' and its solution. When it is destroyed as he wishes, there will be no disjunction between 'the *Creator*' and 'the Image of *Creator*', between 'the "divine" pre-designing Consciousness' which creates '*Things*' and 'the "human" pre-designing Consciousness' which articulates '*Words*'. If this is achieved, it will certainly lead to the restoration of Adamic language. But it is by this argument that Coleridge loses the point of his criticism of Hartley and gets caught in a circular argument. For it is Coleridge himself who has just brought in 'the old antithesis' against Hartley's

accurate when he paraphrases Coleridge's notion that words are living things as 'words are themselves things—elements, that is, of an organized structure that imposes mental categories on the external world'. *Ibid.*, p. 42. As seen below, by that notion Coleridge is not insisting on one-grounded naturalism nor simple phenomenal idealism. He is in fact speculating on the 'secondary' nature which human language produces for itself independently of nature. He writes in February 1801, 'Words therefore become a sort of Nature to us, & Nature is a sort of Words. Both Words & Ideas derive their whole significancy from their coherence.' *CL*, II, p. 698. He continues his speculation on language's creativity and arrives at the notion of the outness of language. He writes in March–July 1803, 'Language & all *symbols* give *outness* to Thought/& this the philosophical essence & purpose of Language/'. *CN*, I, 1387. For a further discussion on '*outness*', see Chapter 6, I.

⁴⁰ *CL*, I, p. 625–6.

system. Hartley's system has essentially nothing to do with 'the old antithesis' precisely because of 'all the nonsense of vibrations'. Coleridge's dissatisfaction with it is because it merely presupposes the original unity and precludes from consideration the possible recovery from 'the old antithesis'. He insists that any system should acknowledge 'the old antithesis' first and then resolve it, and that Hartley's system does neither, while his system may. But it remains uncertain whether Coleridge's system can be any better than 'all the nonsense'.

It is not surprising that the argument of this kind assumes the language of theological controversy. Coleridge writes to Poole on 16 March 1801:

I have not only completely extricated the notions of Time, and Space; but have overthrown the doctrine of Association, as taught by Hartley, and with it all the irreligious metaphysics of modern Infidels—especially, the doctrine of Necessity.⁴¹

He abandons 'the irreligious metaphysics' in order to establish a religious metaphysic. He continues:

This I have *done*; but I trust, that I am about to do more—namely, that I shall be able to evolve all the five senses, that is, to deduce them from *one sense*, & to state their growth, & the causes of their difference—& in this evolvment to solve the process of Life & Consciousness.—

The aim of such metaphysics is to solve 'the old antithesis' between '*Things*' and '*Words*', between 'Life' and 'Consciousness' and get to the '*one sense*'. But the truly theological question is not answered. As seen above, this 'oneness' is not the end but

⁴¹ CL, II, p. 706.

the beginning of the problem. For even when he discovers such '*one sense*' and builds up a perfect system based on it, there will remain a question concerning the belonging of such 'oneness'. If it belongs to the human and not to the divine, how can a system built on it be a 'religious' rather than an 'irreligious' metaphysic?

Coleridge soon becomes aware that he has just shifted the problem to a different level. And on that level he fails to get to '*one sense*' because he finds that human passivity and activity, or, feeling and thinking, are irreconcilably two. He writes to Godwin on 4 June, 1803:

I shall, if I live & have sufficient health, set seriously to work—in arranging what I have already written, and in pushing forward my Studies, & my Investigations relative to the omne scibile of human Nature—*what we are, & how we become* what we are; so as to solve the two grand Problems, how, being acted upon, we shall act; how, acting, we shall be acted upon. But between me & this work there may be Death.⁴²

'The two grand Problems' are in fact one theological problem: the Fall by which he ceases to be a poet. Because of the Fall the original unity between reception and response is disturbed; therefore it must be reconsidered and resettled in terms of passivity and activity. Ironically, however, while the distinction between reception and response can be solved in each poetical praxis, the distinction between passivity and activity keeps generating further metaphysical complications. Thus the dichotomy between passivity and activity immediately expands itself and becomes 'the two grand Problems' and so on, generating the endless chain of self-reflection. The last sentence is very suggestive. Coleridge is to live longer than he expects at this time, but the problem he promises to solve turns out to be so big that his

⁴² CL, II, p. 948-9.

unexpectedly long life is to prove still too short. It seems as if even the word 'Death' assumes a theological connotation.

Coleridge repeats basically the same criticism against Locke in letters he writes to Josiah Wedgwood in February 1801. The purpose is to report 'my meditations on the relations of Thought to Things'⁴³ and show that Locke's fame and seeming critical edge over Descartes and others are the result of Locke's lack of criticism of his own inconsistency. Coleridge agrees with Locke that the mind has a passive and active function, and that its function is limited within experience. Coleridge quotes from Locke, 'external Objects furnish the mind with ideas of sensible Qualities, which are all those different Perceptions they produce in us: and the Mind furnishes the Understanding with ideas of it's own operations.'⁴⁴ But he disagrees with Locke's denial of 'innate ideas'. To represent Locke's view, Coleridge again quotes from him, 'It is an established opinion amongst some men, that there are in the Understanding certain Innate Principles, some primary notions, *Κοινὰ ἔννοιαι*, characters as it were stamped upon the mind of Man, which the Soul receives in it's very first being, and brings into the World with it.'⁴⁵ Coleridge sees that by this argument Locke simply misrepresents the word 'innate'. He argues that so called innateness 'was a question of Psychogony not Psychology',⁴⁶ that is, a question concerning mind's original function and not its product. Coleridge insists that no one from Pythagoras and Plato 'asserts, that any Ideas (in the present sense of the word) could be furnished originally or recollectively otherwise than by the mind itself or by this external to the Mind, i.e. by Reflection or Sensation.'⁴⁷ What Plato calls '*Ζωπυρα*, living Sparks, & *Εναυσματα*, Kindle-fuel' should be understood as describing the

⁴³ *CL*, II, p. 678.

⁴⁴ *CL*, II, p. 680.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *CL*, II, p. 681.

⁴⁷ *CL*, II, p. 680. Coleridge then say, 'The nihil in intellectu quod non prius in sensu of the Peripatetics is notorious'. For the further discussion on this maxim, see Chapter 7, III.

mind's original act and not ideas it produces.⁴⁸ Coleridge offers a fine illustration for Locke's failing to see this distinction. He writes:

By the usual Process of language Ideas came to signify not only these original *moulds* of the mind, but likewise all that was cast in these moulds, as in our language the Seal & the Impression it leaves are both called Seals. Latterly, it wholly lost it's original meaning, and became synonymous sometimes with *Images* simply (whether Impressions or Ideas) and sometimes with Images in the memory⁴⁹

Coleridge argues that Locke confuses the mind's original act of impressing with the impressed ideas and fails to see the active priority of the impressing over the impressed. As a result Locke believes that the mind in its original state is a white paper. But Coleridge would argue that if the human mind is originally purely passive, its act itself remains an unresolved problem, and that Locke has no critical sensitivity to see that it is still unexplained. Coleridge says, 'What if instead of innate Ideas a philosopher had asserted the existence of *constituent* Ideas/the metaphor would not be a whit more gross, nor the hypothesis involved more daring or unintelligible, than in the former phrases'.⁵⁰

Coleridge thus complains that while Locke denies innate or '*constituent*' ideas, 'nothing is more common in the Essay than such Sentences as these "I do not say there is no *Soul* in *us* because *we* are *not sensible* of it in our sleep" &—"actions of our

⁴⁸ Coleridge's 'personal' problem, however, is not whether man in general indeed has this 'living Sparks' in his mind, but whether Coleridge himself is able to recover from its loss, 'an extinction of *Light* in my mind'. See above. It is this question that always leads him to the 'personal', theological argument. See below.

⁴⁹ *CL*, II, pp. 682–3. Later, Coleridge repeats the same observation on the Sacrament. See Chapter 5, III.

⁵⁰ *CL*, II, p. 696. Coleridge seems to repeat here Kant's argument against 'constitutive ideas'. It is interesting to see him fifteen years later arguing 'for' them and expressing his theology in this context. See *SM*, p. 113–4, and Chapter 4, III.

mind unnoticed by us["]'.⁵¹ Coleridge paraphrases it and shows how paradoxical it is. He writes, '(according to Locke's own definitions of *mind* & *we*) "actions of *our consciousness, of which our Consciousness is unconscious.*["]'. To Coleridge this paradox is the vindication of the active mind. And it demands a settlement. In a previous letter he extends a typical Coleridgean speculation and ascribes the active, self-reflective human mind to Descartes:

he [Descartes] found himself compelled to turn his view inward upon his own frame and faculties in order to determine what share they had in the making up both of his Ideas and of his Judgements on them. He now saw clearly, that the objects, which he had hitherto supposed to have been intromitted into his mind by his senses, must be the joint production of his Mind, his Senses, and an unknown Tertium Aliquid/all which might possibly be developments of his own Nature, in a way unknown to him.⁵²

Here he does not press the alternative choice between passivity and activity of the mind. He maintains that there is 'an unknown Tertium Aliquid' which mediates the two. That is to say, the mind can be both passive and active. At the very end of these letters, he suddenly asks, 'What is the *etymology* of the Word *Mind*?'⁵³ Yet his real concern is not to establish the etymology of 'mind' but to speculate on the mind's reciprocal function. The conclusion of his private etymology is that the word 'mind' is related to German verb *Mähen* and that 'the word *mähen* is to move forward & backward, yet still progressively—thence applied to the motion of the Scythe in mowing—'.⁵⁴ But if this means that the mind is both passive and active to itself, that

51 *CL*, II, p. 696.

52 *CL*, II, p. 688.

53 *Ibid.*

54 *CL*, II, p. 697.

is, if there is nothing outside the mind for it to be passive and active to, it is hardly a settlement. His anxiety that 'all ... might possible be developments of his own Nature, in a way unknown to him' in fact brings him back to the starting point of the whole speculation. Certainly it is 'an unknown Tertium Aliquid' which may finally settle the paradox. But his speculation on it comes only during the latest stage of his life.⁵⁵

III. Coleridge goes through this fundamental shift during the time between 'The Eolian Harp' (1795) and 'Dejection Ode' (1802). In March and June 1795 he describes the human mind as 'a Convex Mirror' which faithfully reflects the divine presence in nature.⁵⁶ In August he describes it as 'the Eolian Harp'.

Full many a thought uncall'd and undetain'd,
And many idle flitting phantasies,
Traverse my indolent and passive brain
As wild and various, as the random gales
That swell or flutter on this subject Lute!⁵⁷

'Convex Mirror' and 'subject Lute' are an 'indolent and passive brain' which receives the unquestionable presence. He keeps referring to both 'a Convex Mirror' and 'the Eolian Harp' as the metaphors of the original passivity of human mind. The central point is the immediacy between reception and response. The presence is always

⁵⁵ Later, when referring to 'the mind or the power from within' in the thirteenth Philosophical Lecture, Coleridge mentions the two views concerning 'Tertium Aliquid' between the mind and body, or, activity and passivity of the mind. They are reconciled either 'by a miracle according to Descartes, or by some common thing between partaking of the nature both of body and soul, according to one Doctor Henry More.' *Phil Lects*, p. 387. For his later theological speculations on this point, especially in relation to Kant's phenomenology, see Chapters 6 and 7.

⁵⁶ See Chapter 1, III.

⁵⁷ *Poems*, p. 53.

accompanied by the responses from a mirror or a lute, which are so direct and immediate, so enclosed in nature that there is no hint of potential disjunction between reception and response. Passivity of 'Convex Mirror' or 'subject Lute' is in fact not 'indolence' if it is understood as inactive passivity. It involves activity, but only as response which follows reception. 'Full many a thought uncall'd and undetain'd' or 'many idle flitting phantasies' are the immediate responses from 'this subject Lute' which is still a part of the divine nature.⁵⁸

However, Coleridge's first reference to the poem already reveals the potential instability of his status in nature. In a letter to Thelwall on 31 December 1796 he engages himself in a discussion of a possible definition of life. He says to Thelwall, 'You, I understand, have adopted the idea that it is the result of organized matter acted on by external Stimuli', and he insists that their opinions are not irreconcilable since Thelwall's 'organized matter' is Coleridge's '*animal Life*', and Thelwall's 'external Stimuli' Coleridge's 'one Intellectual Breeze'. He continues:

Monro believes in a plastic immaterial Nature—all-pervading—

And what if all of animated Nature

Be but organic harps diversely fram'd

⁵⁸ Therefore, it is not surprising when Coleridge later refers to the same poem in describing his rather idealistical position in the thirteenth Philosophical Lecture and quotes the lines 44–8 of the poem. He says, 'the idealist concedes a real existence to one of the two terms only—to the *natura naturans*, in Berkeley's language, to God, and to the finite minds on which it acts, THE NATURA NATURATA, or the bodily world, being the result, even as the tune between the wind and the Aeolian Harp.' *Phil Lects*, p. 371. Unless he expands this argument theologically, it is a restatement of the argument he made in the 'The Eolian Harp'. The theological questions are: which of the two minds, infinite or finite, plays on the 'Harp'? or if the tune is twofold, that is, both of them play simultaneously, why is the tune discordant? These are the questions he picks up from his early experiences and later deals with in philosophical and theological terms.

That tremble into *thought* as o'er them sweeps

Plastic & vast &c—

(by the bye—that is my favorite of *my* poems—do *you* like it?)

In the letter he examines various definitions of life by Thomas Beddoes, Erasmus Darwin, John Hunter and even Plato. He is unsatisfied with them and says:

And I, tho' last not least, I do not know what to think about it—on the whole, I have rather made up my mind that I am a mere apparition—a naked Spirit!—And that Life is I myself !! which is a mighty clear account of it.

When he says, 'I am a mere *apparition*—a naked Spirit', he seems to imply that he has discovered an immaterial 'I' distinct from a material 'I', and that 'a mighty clear account' is the reciprocal interaction between the two 'I's, 'I myself I'. Satisfying or not, the attempt brings about a question of which he seems to be unaware at this time. The question is whether the interaction between the two 'I's is a part of the whole interaction between immaterial and material nature described in 'The Eolian Harp'. Here are an active, defining 'I' and a passive, defined 'I'. Similarly, there are active, immaterial nature, 'one intellectual Breeze' and passive, material nature, 'organic harps diversely fram'd'. Man as 'this subject Lute' is a part of material nature which is responsive to the divine presence. Then the question is whether the immaterial 'I' is the same as 'one intellectual Breeze'. If the question is answered affirmatively, it means that the immaterial 'I' is not human but divine. But as seen in Chapter 2, I, his epistemological anxiety does not allow him to take this position. By declaring 'I myself I', he virtually accepts that the human mind is separated from

the original divine creation.⁵⁹ Thus by assuming an active role the human mind creates its own internal sphere in which it contains both activity and passivity within itself. In 'Frost at Midnight' the self-reflective mind is said to be 'Echo or mirror seeking of itself'. And he writes on 23 December 1802, 'Himself & his Idea of himself forms a compleat circle, like a one arched Bridge over a smooth clear stream'.⁶⁰ Previously, echoing and mirror-reflection had taken place between the divine presence and the human response. Now the human self-reflective mind assumes both call and response, contains the 'compleat circle' within itself as the ideal form of its internal reciprocity.⁶¹

'Compleat circle', however, is not what Coleridge achieves in his self-reflection. In fact his self-reflection always fails to achieve such clarity and perfection. It

⁵⁹ In November 1825, Coleridge recollects this event and makes a long Notebook entry. He writes, 'the human Subject "I Am" when as known in the act of Self reflection, is expressed in the formula, I affirm myself—*ipse me pono*—the / representing of the Subject, & the *myself* the *Object*, & while the $\Sigma\mu\mu$, or Sum, is the Identity of both/'. *CN*, IV, 5280. For how he relates this 'human I am' with the divine I AM, see Chapter 7, 1. He also makes a postscript which reflects his philosophical endeavour for these years. He writes, 'The term "myself" is used, and of necessity, in two Senses—the first, the artificial & philosophic, that which few are capable of, and which can obtained only by an act of the will and an energy of the productive Imagination—I must abstract from all impressions, and leave only the attribute of impressibility—from all perceptions, and leave only percipiency—& so on till I obtain an idea of myself, as the Subject, Substance, *Natura gemina quæ fit et facit, format et formatur* ... Second, the myself as modified by the circumjacent Objects irremovable, and of closest proximity—organic body, language &c—' The postscript is particularly interesting in view of his response to Kant's argument for the original apperception. See Chapter 6. This is the entry in which he calls the human mind 'a self-conscious self-sentient Looking-glass'. See Chapter 1, III.

⁶⁰ *CN*, I, 1308.

⁶¹ *CL*, I, pp. 294–5. Coleridge keeps working on the possible definition of life till he finally drafts *Theory of Life* around 1820, which remains unpublished in his life time. Here he carefully excludes from the discussion man's 'special' status in the creation. He only says, 'Man himself is a syllepsis, a compendium of Nature—the Microcosm!', and refers to the 'sovereign Master, who made Man in his image, by superadding self-consciousness with self-government, and breathed into him a living soul'. *TL*, p. 423. The fact is that by this time he cannot mention his 'self-consciousness' without also mentioning his personal theology which is out of place in the context of *Theory of Life*. He mentions the possible definition of life also in the twelfth Philosophical Lecture. *Phil Lects*, pp. 355–9. But again he avoids referring to the problem of the human 'I' which such a definition inevitably involves. See below. He concludes the passage in the lecture by saying, 'Whatever life is, in its present state it cannot be brought to account for that which more especially constitutes us Man'.

simply reveals that he is a disordered man. He writes to Davy on 11 January 1801 of the peculiar physical sensation caused by his illness which is a good illustration of how he 'reflects' upon himself: 'I am so weak, that even from sitting up to write this note to you I seem to sink in upon myself in a ruin, like a Column of Sand informed & animated only by a Whirl-blast of the Desert'.⁶² A week later he repeats the same observation, this time using the word 'fall' for 'sink'. He writes to Poole on 19 January 1801, 'But the sense of Lassitude, if I only sate up in bed, was worst of all—I seem'd to fall in upon myself in ruin, like a column of sand, that had been informed & animated only by a whirl blast of the desert—such & so treacherous were my animal spirits to me'.⁶³ Soon 'sinking' becomes not only physical but personal and moral self-description. He writes to Davy on 4 May 1801:

'Sinking, sinking, sinking! I feel, that I am *sinking!*'—My medical attendant says that it is irregular Gout with nephritic Symptoms—. *Gout* in a young man of 29—!—! Swoln Knees, & knotty Fingers, a loathy Stomach, & a dizzy head—trust me, Friend! I am at times an object of moral Disgust to my own Mind.⁶⁴

The days of illness is the time of intense self-reflection. His letter to Thelwall on 23 January 1801 well exemplifies the pain of such an exercise. After a brief account on a series of disease he cries out, 'But I am weary of writing of this I—I—I—I—so bepatched & bescented with Sal Ammoniac & Diaculum, Pain & Infirmity. My own Moans are grown stupid to my own ears.'⁶⁵ Thus he finds that the 'weary Halloos' in Arabian desert soon become the miserable 'Moans' in sickbed.

⁶² *CL*, II, p. 663.

⁶³ *CL*, II, p. 664.

⁶⁴ *CL*, II, p. 726.

⁶⁵ *CL*, II, p. 667.

Coleridge thus shuts himself up in his dreary self-reflection. And it immediately causes the disjunction between the external world outside and the internal world within his mind. He writes in 'Dejection Ode':

A grief without a pang, void, dark, and drear,
 A stifled, drowsy, unimpassioned grief,
 Which finds no natural outlet, no relief,
 In word, or sigh, or tear—

The disjunction between 'within' and 'without' is the immediate result of his 'fall'. Before, the presence was said to be received by a mirror or a lute without any suggestions of such disjunction. He later inserts a passage to 'The Eolian Harp', obviously in search for the recovery from the disjunction between 'within' and 'without':

O! the one Life within us and abroad,
 Which meets all motion and becomes its soul,
 A light in sound, a sound-like power in light,
 Rhythm in all thought, and joyance every where—⁶⁶

Here he endeavours to reconcile between 'within' and 'without' and also to re-unite the audible presence and the visual presence. He attempts the same in 'Dejection Ode'. Once he discovers joy within, the whole presence will be recovered.

⁶⁶ *Poems*, p. 52.

And thence flows all that charms our ear or sight,
 All melodies the echoes of that voice,
 All colours a suffusion from that light.

But as he says in the poem, such joy is what he has lost, 'Joy that ne'er given save to the pure'. He experiences the gradual recession of the presence which results in the complete loss. The visual presence becomes mere 'outward forms' which he sees 'with how blank an eye', and he finds the audible presence violent and unbearable.

Those sounds which oft have raised me, whilst they awed,
 And sent my soul abroad,
 Might now perhaps their wonted impulse give,
 Might startle this dull pain, and make it move and live!

If his soul is no longer sent abroad, he is but an 'Æolian lute, which better far were mute'. Once externalized, the presence is irretrievably lost to him. These 'outward forms' and the wind 'that rav'st without', which are the last remnants of the original presence he receives in the evening, are to disappear into darkness and silence as the evening turns to midnight.

Therefore, it is of no consolation when Coleridge says:

O Lady! we receive but what we give,
 And in our life alone does Nature live:

'Ours is her wedding-garment, ours her shroud', he continues, and describes Wordsworth or Sara Hutchinson as a genuine poet and himself as a miserable metaphysician who is poetically dead. Thus his 'genial spirit failed'. But the seeming continuity between nature and dead nature remains. Even when he admits

the loss, even when his 'genial spirits failed' and he means all the possible implications of the word 'genial' which can be as inclusive as the word 'natural',⁶⁷ he does not become nothing. On the contrary he can be said to lose nothing: illness does not end his life, he gives up poetry but picks up metaphysics, and he is still in love, not with Sara Fricker his fiancée in 'The Eolian Harp' but with Sara Hutchinson his lover in 'Dejection Ode'. And it is precisely because of this seeming continuity that he is trapped in the treacherous duality between nature and dead nature, or, reality and unreality. Treacherous because they look interchangeable, and it is a great temptation for a man like Coleridge to recover the lost reality in the new, seeming reality.

And haply by abstruse research to steal

From my own nature all the natural man—

This was my sole resource, my only plan:

'Abstruse research' is his metaphysical research. As he acknowledges at once, this theft is the attempt at replacing reality with unreality. Once he steals 'the natural man' from nature, he confines himself in his own unreal world. He continues:

Hence, viper thoughts, that coil around my mind,

Reality's dark dream!

He steals 'all the natural man'. And by this theft he becomes for the first time 'I myself I'. In this sense what he calls 'my own nature' from which he steals 'all the natural man' is not yet his own. It is given to him as a gift, which, as he says, is 'not mine own, seemed mine.' But this stolen nature is indeed his own. He now

⁶⁷ For the possible meaning of the word 'genial', see David Jasper, *Coleridge as Poet and Religious Thinker* (London, 1985) pp. 67–8.

appropriates the gift and adapts it to his own need. Once this is done, everything seems to go smoothly. What he calls 'my shaping spirit of Imagination' which has been suspended because of disordered nature, will get freed from it and become 'my' shaping spirit of imagination. And through its free activity, it may eventually bring forth something like the original presence. But he calls it 'Reality's dark dream'. It is because he is still a poet, because he is still responding to the original presence, and in that, he cannot but realize that response to the gift and response to the booty are infinitely different and that the latter can never be response in the real sense, hymn. By his theft the presence has already turned to be the absence, but the absence as it is still insists that the stolen nature is not nature, unreality is not reality.⁶⁸

It is by self-alienation from nature that Coleridge discovers his self-reflective sphere between the two 'I's. Yet it in itself is a mere emptiness. The spiritual 'I' is still 'a mere *apparition*—naked Spirit'. But it can extract its objects from the original presence and pose as the subject. Two problems rise immediately. The problem of these extracted objects is that they are but something 'like' reality. The problem of the extracting subject is that the very extraction is a theft. He rightly tries to solve the two problems at once. The result is life-long, ever-complicating, thinking.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ In a letter to Sara Hutchinson on 4 April 1802 Coleridge is more explicit about 'Reality's dark dream'. He writes of his children:

Those little Angel Children (woe is me!)
 There have been hours, when feeling how they bind
 And pluck out the Wing-feathers of my Mind,
 Turning my Error to Necessity,
 I have half-wished, they never had been born! *CL*, II, p. 797.

⁶⁹ For a further discussion on this 'naked Spirit' and its possible relation to Kant's original apperception, see Chapter 6, II.

IV. Coleridge thinks at night, in darkness or even in sleep. Thinking is the act he adopts when he finds himself in the the absence of all external nature, in that complete isolation. He believes that it is the same even in his son Hartley. He writes to Dorothy Wordsworth on 9 February 1801:

I asked him what he did when he thought of any thing—he answered—I look at it, and then go to sleep. To sleep?—said I—you mean, that you *shut your eyes*. Yes, he replied—I shut my eyes, & put my hands so (covering his eyes) and go to sleep—then I WAKE again, and away I run.—That of shutting his eyes, & covering them was a Recipe I had given him some time ago/but the notion of that state of mind being Sleep is very striking, & he meant more, I suspect, than that People when asleep have their eyes shut—indeed I *know* it from the tone & *leap up* of Voice with which he uttered the word 'WAKE.'⁷⁰

The difference between Coleridge and his son is that Coleridge does not quite 'WAKE' from thinking. In the end of 'Dejection Ode' he vows to keep vigil and promises to abandon his 'abstruse research'. But, as the Ode ends in midnight, his waking is not to daylight but to darkness. Thus the darkness within merges into the darkness without and the difference between vigil and sleep becomes irrelevant. Along with the loss of nature he loses the sense of distinction between day and night, or, reality and dream. As he intensifies his metaphysical research, he replaces these 'natural' distinctions with an artificial one between thinking and unthinking. In fact the vigil he vows in 'Dejection Ode' is to remain thinking day and night, that is, to engage him in 'abstruse research' incessantly. In a letter to Poole on 16 March 1801 in which he promises to 'solve the process of Life & Consciousness', he also writes:

⁷⁰ CL, II, p. 673.

At Wordsworth's advice or rather fervent intreaty I have intermitted the pursuit—the intensity of thought, & the multitude of minute experiments with Light & Figure, have made me so nervous & feverish, that I cannot sleep as long as I ought & have been used to do; & the Sleep, which I have, is made up of Ideas so connected, & so little different from the operations of Reason, that it does not afford me the due Refreshment.⁷¹

The ill effect of the loss of sleep appears immediately. A month and half later, he begins to worry about the serious disorder both of his feeling and thinking. He writes to Godwin on 28 April 1801:

I am not dissembling when I express my exceeding scepticism respecting the sanity of my own Feelings & Tone of Intellect, relatively to a work of Sentiment & Imagination.—I have been compelled, (wakeful thro' the night, & seldom able, for my eyes, to read in the Day) to seek resources in austere reasonings—and have thereby so denaturalized my mind⁷²

He loses the sense of sound sleep because of nightmare. His whole life then becomes as it were a wakeful dream, divided only between thinking, or, rational dream and nightmare. Towards the end of the same year he seriously wonders whether he is awake or asleep during the night. He writes in December 1801:

To *fall* asleep—is not a real *event* in the body well represented by this phrase—is it in *excess*, when on first *dropping* asleep we *fall* down precipices, or *sink* down, all things *sinking* beneath us, or *drop down*, &c—Is there not a Disease from deficiency of this critical sensation/when people imagine, that they have

⁷¹ CL, II, p. 707. See above.

⁷² CL, II, p. 725.

been awake all night/& actually lie dreaming, expecting & wishing for this critical Sensation?⁷³

By the time he writes 'The Pains of Sleep' (1803), he completely loses the distinction between reality and dream. The only significant distinction is that between dream and nightmare. He writes to Welles on 13 September 1803:

My Disorder I believe to be atonic Gout: my Sufferings are often sufficiently great by day; but by patience, effort of mind, and hard walking I can contrive to keep the Fiend at arm's length, as long as I am in possession of Reason & Will. But with Sleep my Horrors commence; & they are such, three nights out of four, as literally to *stun* the intervening Day, so that more often than otherwise I fall asleep, struggling to remain awake. Believe me, Sir! Dreams are no Shadows with me; but the real, substantial miseries of Life.⁷⁴

Yet Coleridge still believes that it is in this inward darkness that he has buried his reality. He writes in November 1803, 'Month after month, year after year, the deepest Feeling of my Heart hid & wrapped up in the depth & darkness—solitary chaos—& solitariness'.⁷⁵ Therefore he is determined to remain a dreamer, a solitary seafarer through his internal chaos. It is during this voyage that 'possession of Reason & Will' in dreaming becomes the crucial matter. He begins to have 'rational' dream in which he recovers vivid internal 'nature'. In December 1803 he writes:

⁷³ *CN*, I, 1078.

⁷⁴ *CL*, II, p. 986.

⁷⁵ *CN*, I, 1670.

When in a state of pleasurable & balmy Quietness I feel my Cheek and Temple on the nicely made up Pillow in Cælibe Toro meo, the fire-gleam on my dear Books, that fill up one whole side from ceiling to floor of my Tall Study—& winds, perhaps are driving the rain, or whistling in frost, at my blessed Window, whence I see Borrodale, the Lake, Newlands—wood, water, mountains, omniform Beauty—O then as I first sink on the pillow, as if Sleep had indeed a material *realm*, as if when I sank on my pillow, I was entering that region & realized Faery Land of Sleep—O then what visions have I had, what dreams—the Bark, the Sea, ~~the~~ all the shapes & sounds & adventures made up of the Stuff of Sleep & Dreams, & yet my Reason at the Rudder/O what visions, <μαστοι> as if my Cheek & Temple were lying on me gale o' mast on—Seele meines Lebens!—& I sink down the waters, thro' Seas & Seas—yet warm, yet a Spirit—/

<oi>
Pillow = mast high⁷⁶

Kathleen Coburn gives the details of the feminine implication of the classic words and puns: Cælibe Toro meo: on my celibate couch. *μαστοι*: breasts. me gale o' mast on: μεγαλομαστον = large breasted. Pillow = mast high: mast-oi = breasts. They all reveal what he believes he has buried in the depth of his inward darkness, what he expects to recover in the end of the journey at the bottom of chaos after chaos. It is the feminine and nature which he hopes to discover in 'Faery Land of Sleep'. Thus, in spite of all epistemological and ethical difficulties, he still retains the hope he expresses at the end of 'Dejection Ode'.

⁷⁶ CN, I, 1718.

Chapter 4 Trinitarianism: 'Symbol' and Human Trinity

I. Coleridge's trip to Malta from April 1804 to August 1806 is very much like that of an exile. It is probably one of the most painful experiences in his life, certainly much more so than the trip to Germany five years earlier. But it is in these painful days in Malta that he 're-discovers' several crucial words such as 'symbol', 'logos' and 'Trinity' which are to become the key terms in his later thinking. It might be useful to trace the circumstance in some detail.

Coleridge's problem with 'I the naked Spirit'¹ was not appeased by the composition of 'Dejection Ode' in 1802, in spite of his effort to work it out into a optimistic conclusion in the end of the poem. Two years later when he is preparing for his voyage, his mind is still occupied with the same problem in a graver tone. He writes to Sir George Beaumont on 6 April 1804, three days before his departure from Portsmouth:

My Spirits are low: and I suffer too often sinkings & misgivings, alienations from the Spirit of Hope, strange withdrawals out of the Life that manifests itself by existence—morbid yearnings condemn'd by me, almost despis'd, and yet perhaps at times almost cherish'd, to concenter my Being into Stoniness, or to be diffused as among the winds, and lose all individual existence.²

He is still perplexed with 'strange withdrawals out of the Life'. This 'Life that manifests itself by existence' is obviously nature, what he calls 'animated nature' in 'The Eolian Harp'. When he 'withdraws' from nature, or in his word, 'Life', and acknowledges his 'individual existence', he finds himself in a personal ontological anxiety. He finds that to be a person is to be separate from nature, that is,

¹ *CL*, I, p. 295. Quoted and discussed in Chapter 3, III.

² *CL*, II, p. 1122.

'individuation' is synonymous with 'denaturalization', the fall from nature, which he would rather avoid.³ In a letter to the Wordsworths five days earlier he states clearly that his reluctance and fear of his personal existence is the cause of the problem. He writes, 'every thing, that forcibly awakes me to Person & Contingency, strikes fear into me, sinkings and misgivings, alienation from the Spirit of Hope, obscure withdrawings out of Life ... a wish to retire into stoniness & to stir not, or to be diffused upon the winds & and have no individual Existence.'⁴ Here again he contemplates the two alternative solutions, either to abandon the process altogether or to complete individuation to its end, in his words, either 'to be diffused as among the winds, and lose all individual existence' or 'to concenter my Being into Stoniness'. These two 'morbid yearnings' are in fact nostalgia and despair. He was once a poet, a child of nature who was 'diffused among the wind' and did not yet have 'individual existence'. And when he finds himself 'individuated' or 'denaturalized', and unable to stop the process, he soon arrives at 'Stoniness', the complete solipsism in despair. These extremes are certainly 'morbid', and he needs remain suspended somewhere between them if he is to live. But these yearnings are tempting, and his attitude towards them is characteristically duplex. They are 'morbid yearnings', he

³ Coleridge develops his theology from the fact that he experiences 'individuation' and 'denaturalization' simultaneously. He uses the word 'individuation' in a marginal note to Kant's *Metaphysik der Sitten* where he writes, 'we must master the principle of Individuation in general, and then the principle of Personality—Action + Passion'. *CM*, III, p. 266. Thus his lifelong quest for the reconciliation of passivity and activity begins with this experience. The note is quoted in full and discussed in Chapter 5, III. 'Individuation' is the key term of *Theory of Life*. See Chapter 1, II note. He thinks that 'the principle of individuation' involves the human mind. He says in the thirteenth philosophical lecture, 'when reflecting ourselves as intelligences and therefore individualizing spirit OR power, that which affirms its own existence and whether mediately or immediately that of other being, we call Mind'. *Phil Lects*, p. 370–1. However, he precludes from the argument of *Theory of Life* his personal experience that his mind, when individualized, is also denaturalized. Yet he acknowledges this privately. He writes to Godwin on 28 April 1801, 'I ... have thereby so denaturalized my mind'. *CL*, II, p. 725. The passage in the letter is quoted in full and discussed in Chapter 3, IV. The word 'Denaturalization' appears in a Notebook entry where he investigates his nightmare. See below.

⁴ *CL*, II, pp. 1115–6.

says, which are 'condemn'd by me, almost despis'd, and yet perhaps at times almost cherish'd'. As he discovers, 'individuation' keeps bringing forth chains of paradoxes. And he can neither complete the process nor altogether undo it. All he can do is to remain in suspense, or rather, in process.

Exactly one month later, still on board, he makes a Notebook entry which is strikingly similar to the above quotation. Strikingly, because here he is describing his nightmare.

these Sleeps, these Horrors, these frightful Dreams of Despair when the sense of individual Existence is full & lively only <for one> to feel oneself powerless, crushed *in* by every power—a stifled boding, on abject miserable Wretch/yet hopeless, yet struggling, removed from all touch of Life, deprived of all notion of Death/strange mixture of Fear and Despair—& that *passio purissima*, that mere Passiveness with Pain (the essence of which is perhaps Passivity—& which our word—mere Suffering—well comprizes—) in which the Devils are the Antithesis of Deity, who is Actus Purissimus, and eternal Life, as they are an ever-living Death.⁵

Similarity between the description of life and that of dream does not suggest that the distinction between reality and unreality is blurred. On the contrary, it means that the distinction between the original reality from which he has fallen and the secondary reality in which he is 'crushed' is ever severe, and that within the latter, within the powerless, dejected passivity which he describes above, his life and his nightmare become ominously close.⁶ Here the distinction between pure activity and pure passivity becomes a polarized contrast. Thus in spite of, or because of, his

⁵ *CN*, II, 2078.

⁶ Coleridge writes to Welles on 13 September 1803, 'Believe me, Sir! Dreams are no Shadows with me; but the real, substantial miseries of Life.' *CL*, II, p. 986. See also *CL*, VI, 767.

attempt 'to solve the two grand Problems, how, being acted upon, we shall act; how, acting, we shall be acted upon',⁷ the problem itself becomes more personal and still more urgent. In fact, he almost achieves one of the two 'yearnings', that is, 'to center my Being into Stoniness'. He is 'crushed *in* by every power', 'removed from all touch of Life', and left in 'ever-living Death'. At the same time, however, he comes to a turning point and begins to seek for the recovery. It should be noted here that he uses the theological language to describe his problem between pure activity and pure passivity.

Coleridge wrote of this dejected passivity to Godwin on 22 January 1802, two months before the verse letter to Sara Hutchinson which was to become 'Dejection Ode'.

Partly from ill-health, & partly from an unhealthy & reverie-like vividness of *Thoughts*, & (pardon the pedantry of the phrase) a diminished Impressibility from *Things*, my ideas, wishes, & feelings are to a diseased degree disconnected from *motion* & *action*. In plain & natural English, I am a dreaming & therefore an indolent man—. I am a Starling self-incaged, & always in the Mould, & my whole Note is, Tomorrow, & tomorrow, & tomorrow.⁸

Once 'passive' feeling and 'active' thinking cease to be united, they are no longer feeling and thinking in the proper sense. Feeling becomes 'a diminished Impressibility from *Things*', and thinking sinks into 'reverie-like vividness of *Thoughts*'. As a result, what was the united feeling and thinking, what he here calls 'my ideas, wishes, & feelings', that is, his whole being, stands still without '*motion* & *action*'. He is 'an indolent man'. And this 'indolence' is totally different from the one he describes in 'The Eolian Harp', in which the very unity between feeling and

⁷ *CL*, II, p. 949. Quoted and discussed in Chapter 3, II.

⁸ *CL*, II, pp. 782–3.

thinking is called 'indolence'. One is the indolence in the undoubted presence of God and the other is that in the utter absence. The poem might have been a piece of a day dream, but certainly not of a nightmare. He continues the letter:

The same causes, that have robbed be to so great a degree of the self-impelling self-directing Principle, have deprived me too of the due powers of Resistances to Impulses from without. If I might so say, I am, as an *acting* man, a creature of mere Impact. 'I will' & 'I will not' are phrases, both of them equally, of rare occurrence in my dictionary.

'The Eolian harp' lacks 'I will & I will not' too. There is no need for it since the reception of 'Impulses from without' is a blessing and not condemnation. That is, the lack of 'I will & I will not' is not a problem at first. But here, unlike 'the Eolian harp', he merely suffers 'Impulses from without' and is unable to return any response. It is in this situation that the lack of 'I will & I will not' becomes a problem. When he loses the faith in the benevolence of reception, he has to rely on his own 'will'. And at this moment, he discovers he has no 'will'. Thus the discussion concerning 'I will & I will not' is a questionable, problematic matter from the beginning. He concludes his self-analysis as follows:

I evade the sentence of my own Conscience by no quibbles of self-adulation; I ask for Mercy indeed on the score of my ill-health; but I confess, that this very ill-health is as much an effect as a cause of this want of steadiness & self-command; and it is for mercy that I ask, not for justice.

As he says 'Misery is a Misery-maker',⁹ the lack of will is both the cause and effect of his deprivation. He has no alternative but to recover 'will' and regain 'steadiness & self-command'. Yet with such will he ceases to receive 'Impulses from without' and begins to resist and counteract it. Thus when he finds 'will', the problem of passivity and activity shifts to a different level. When he recovers his will and begins instead to participate in 'Actus Purissimus', the whole dimension shifts from epistemology to ethics, and even further.

As seen above, Coleridge's first shift in early 1801 from Hartley's passive principle to Fichtean active principle is an obvious failure. When he says 'quibbles of self-adulation' in the letter quoted above, it is likely that he has Fichte's 'I' in mind. When he read Fichte for the first time, however, he was taken into Fichte's argument. He wrote to Dorothy Wordsworth on 9 February 1801:

As I have given you Hartley's Metaphysics I will now give you a literal Translation of page 49 of the celebrated Fichte's *Über den Begriff der Wissenschaftslehre* [1794]—if any of *you*, or if either your Host or Hostess, have any propensity to *Doubts*, it will cure them for ever/for the object of the author is to attain absolute certainty.¹⁰

This 'absolute certainty' is of course derived from 'the absolute I'. He is probably aware that Fichte's 'absolute I' involves the negation of the whole material creation, nature. But he is unaware that he is to experience the painful 'denaturalization' when he practices Fichte's active principle. At this stage he seems to think that the issue is only epistemological. It is in this letter to Dorothy Wordsworth that he reports how impressed he was by his son Hartley when he described 'thinking' as

⁹ *CL*, II, p. 985.

¹⁰ *CL*, II, p. 673.

'shutting eyes and sleeping'.¹¹ In the same month he makes the following Notebook entry:

—and the deep power of Joy
We see into the *Life* of Things—

i.e.— By deep feeling we make our *Ideas dim*—& this is what we mean by our Life—ourselves. I think of the Wall—it is before me, a distinct Image—here. I necessarily think of the *Idea* & the Thinking I as two distinct & opposite Things. Now <let me> think of *myself*—of the thinking Being—the Idea becomes dim whatever it be—so dim that I know not what it is—but the Feeling is deep & steady—and this I call / —~~the~~ identifying the Percipient & the Perceived—. ¹²

The entry is certainly related to his attempt to define 'Life' which resulted in defining it as 'I myself I'.¹³ Here it is as if he thinks that idea passively impressed to the mind must be made dim so that he can grasp himself as 'I', as the identity of the percipient, 'I', and the perceived, 'myself'. That is to say, such identity may presuppose the withdrawal from immediacy of the given object, such as 'the wall'. And if he applies this measure not only to each object but to the whole of nature, 'the Thinking I', the mind activated and elevated to its sublimest status as 'the Image of the *Creator*',¹⁴ may at the same time get completely alienated from the immediacy of the external, material creation.

¹¹ Quoted and discussed in Chapter 3, IV.

¹² *CN*, I, 921. G. N. G. Orsini traces the source of 'the wall' to Fichte. See Orsini, *Coleridge and German Idealism: A Study in the History of Philosophy with Unpublished Materials from Coleridge's Manuscripts* (Carbondale, Ill., 1969) pp. 178–83.

¹³ See Chapter 3, III.

¹⁴ *CL*, II, p. 709. Quoted in full and discussed in Chapter 3 II.

In Malta, Coleridge reworks this simple dichotomy between 'feeling' and 'thinking', or between pure passivism and pure activism, and shifts it into a new phase. He makes a Notebook entry on this subject on 27 December 1804, which shows both his decisive move from passivism and still persistent hesitation towards activism. The entry begins with listing 'the three distinct classes of psychological Facts' and then goes on to examine the three ways to unify them.

Dec. 27. 1804—1. we feel. 2. we perceive or imagine. 3. we think.

These are the three distinct classes of psychological Facts, which all men are conscious of and which all languages express. Hartley, and his followers and the French Philosophers endeavor to resolve the latter two into the first//Leibnitz and Wolff the 1st & 3rd into the second, "der Grundkraft (der einzige) ist der Vorstellungskraft"—and (as far as Thought may be considered as a self-activity of our Being), = the <Will = the *Ich* or *I*/Stahl & Fichte (and as I believe, Plotinus, &c to Proclus) resolve the 1st & 2nd into the third.¹⁵

By 'Hartley and his followers and the French Philosophers' he obviously means various forms of passivism which he now regards as materialism. Opposed to this is activism of Stahl and Fichte. And epistemology is left in the middle between feeling and thinking, or more precisely, at the junction where passive perception and active imagination meet in the second class. But the way he describes this epistemology is clearly inclined towards activism. He writes, "'der Grundkraft (der einzige) ist der Vorstellungskraft"—and (as far as Thought may be considered as a self-activity of our Being), = the <Will = the *Ich* or *I*'. And he admits that his 'Faith is with Fichte'. However, he resists unification in complete activism, not by clinging to Hartleyan

¹⁵ CN, II, 2382.

passivism, but by arguing against unification itself and insisting on keeping the distinctions between the three classes. He says, 'Still however the distinction must remain, alike in all—nor can any one be affirmed hitherto to have succeeded in *explaining* the three into one'. He states towards the end of the first half of the entry, 'never let me lose my reverence for the *three distinctions*, which are human & of our essence'.¹⁶ The latter half of the entry is spent in showing his very subtle but persistent argument against pure activism. He continues:

Shall we add a 4th, *Willing*? No. Because it is yet indefinite in the common ~~nonsense~~ *speculations* of <speculative> mankind whether ‡ the Will be not a combination of all three as wishing evidently is[;] whether wishing & willing are more than degrees of the same operation/And those who hold otherwise make it the Being itself, the absolute I or Self, not a modification of faculty—or if ever they <may have> identified ‡ with the Third,/we still could not *add* it, we could only *substitute* it.—

Here he argues that 'willing', if without the acknowledgement of 'the absolute I' should be called 'wishing'. And if such acknowledgement should be made, he still avoids the loss of distinction in total activism by proposing to substitute 'willing' for 'thinking', which in fact he overtly does with his '*Faith* in Fichte'. He acknowledges 'willing' but at the same time accommodates it in the whole. Thus the whole remains human, in distinction and in 'wishing'. He repeats exactly the same argument in terms of action.

¹⁶ The full quotation is 'My *Faith* is with Fichte, but never let me lose my reverence for the *three distinctions*, which are as human & of our essence, as those of the 5 senses on which indeed a similar process has been tried.' Coleridge attempted to deduce the five senses from 'one sense' when he was abandoning Hartley's associationism. See Chapter 3, II.

But to *act*, is not that a necessary 4th?

Answer. I would, that it were the grand comprising Term in Psiology for all the three; but a fourth it cannot make, inasmuch as "action," taken in the usual sense, implies *willing*, superadding *motion*;—and motion is either the first—i.e. feeling; or the 2nd—i.e. image (or τὸ perceptum definite) or both combined. And abstracted from outward contingency, action is the same as "*willing*"; or at all events (for I perceive a distinction) it cannot be admitted, till "the Will" either as a Thing per se, or <else as> = Ego, Anima, have been admitted.

His fine sense of balance between passive and active involvement prevents him from slipping into pure activism. In spite of his '*Faith in Fichte*' and his own inclination towards ethical activism, he here remains in the middle of the two extremes and retains a Leibnizian epistemological position.¹⁷ But surprise comes in the end. This is how he ends the whole speculation:

Better 5. We 1. *feel*: 2. *perceive*, whether *things* or their representation in the Imagination. 3. *think* or *conceive*: 4. *will*: 5. *move & impress motions*.

Suddenly he not only includes 'will' and 'act' which he has resisted in order to resist the tendency towards unification, but also paraphrases 'act' as '*move & impress motion*' to the omission of attention towards 'outward contingency'. Certainly this is no longer a mere classification of 'psychological Facts'. The key to explain this change lies in his rewriting of the third class. Previously, to think meant to think actively, or almost, to will, but here to think actively is coupled with to conceive passively. This forces the rewriting of the second class to the loss of the junction

¹⁷ For Coleridge's early association with Leibnizian theory, see Chapter 1: III, IV, for his later speculation on the theory, see Chapter 7, III.

between passive perception and active imagination. The whole second class is now changed into passive perception of either '*things* or their representation'. Thus he actually unifies the previous three classes of 'psychological Facts' into passivity and subsequently introduces will and decisive action as the fourth and fifth classes. Obviously he is shifting the whole dimension and seeing the relationship between epistemology and ethics at a different level. The matter in question is 'outward contingency'. The question is whether 'psychological Facts' have anything to do with 'physical Facts'. The system of 'psychological Facts' now expanded into the five classes may still touch 'physical fact', passively at the first class and actively at the fifth. But if he disregards 'outward contingency' at both ends, these five psychological classes constitute one complete and purely psychological, that is, unreal, circle.¹⁸ Fichte would argue that it should be so in order to overcome 'outward contingency'. But as seen above, Coleridge 'fears' contingency. That is, while adopting a similar principle Coleridge tends to 'avoid' rather than 'overcome' contingency. Therefore, his failure to adopt Fichtean principle brings him back to 'outward contingency' with increasing 'fear'.

Coleridge's attempt at omitting contingency is not maintained long. Soon he takes up the question of contingency again in his speculation on 'Luck'. Acknowledgement of luck, he insists, is inevitable as long as 'human affairs' are concerned. He writes, '*Luck* has a real existence in human affairs, from the infinity of co-existences and the co-existence of contingencies in an endless Flux with Necessities & general Laws'.¹⁹ It should be noticed that he relates necessity and contingency by 'co-existence' and not by mutual exclusion, as if he should insist that contingency inherent in 'human affairs' should not be necessarily contradictory with overall necessity of the whole. In the same entry he develops this argument for human contingency in two ways, in perception and in action.

¹⁸ See discussions on 'Miss Theta' below and Chapter 6, I.

¹⁹ CN, II, 2439, f 13-14.

Luck = the coexistence of infinite actions with each other, and the co-existence of those which from the multitude or the subtlety of the causes which produce ~~them~~ or determine them are *called* contingencies, ~~with~~ or of those which Virtue commands us to consider as *really* such, so far as they are the effects of the **Arbitrement** (Arbitrium = ego, et *agens*, not Voluntas = modificatio mei per alterum, et passio—hoc *patior*, istud *ago*; et distinctio manet sacra et immota etsi nulla sit nec esse possit, divisio, etsi etiam patiendo agam, necesse est, et agendo patiar)²⁰—of infinites ~~coe~~ the simple co-existence, and the co-existence of true or fancied contingencies with ~~some one or more~~ any regular and necessary Phænomenon ... produces coincidences,

His sense of balance is preventing him from plunging into passive necessitarianism or exulting in its active counterpart. 'Infinite actions with each other' perceived within the limit of human perception may well appear contingent. Man's act is in no sense decisive in itself and therefore open to contingency. To this point there is no problem. But if one finds between divine necessity and human contingency not 'co-existence' but mutual exclusion, in other words, if he finds himself caught by the problem of evil, then there are problems everywhere. Coleridge writes to the Wordsworths, 'Every thing, that forcibly awakes me to Person & Contingency, strikes fear into me'.²¹ To acknowledge contingency in perception is to admit its deprivation of necessity, and to insist on contingency in action is no longer 'Virtue' of humbleness but vice of irresponsibility. The problem is that he cannot but accept contingency as a 'human' condition while he is theologically vulnerable to it.

²⁰ The editor supplies translation: 'Will (Arbitrement) is myself *acting*, not [the same as] Choice [which] is a modification of myself by something else, and so a submission—in the latter case *I submit*, in the former *I act*; and the distinction remains sacred and steadfast even though there neither is nor can be division, even though of necessity I act by submitting and submit by acting.'

²¹ *CL*, II, p. 1115. Quoted above.

II. There are many evidences that Coleridge's primary concern in epistemology is not of a mere intellectual curiosity. His investigations, especially when related with his problem of nightmare, show his personal and desperate concern in it. If his investigation fails, he loses not only his intellect but also his morality. It is to him a question not only of certainty but of sanity. With this sense of crisis he begins to accuse his own early devotion to Hartley's passive associationism. The Notebook entry on 28 December, 1803 is an example.

I will at least make the attempt to explain to myself the Origin of moral Evil from the *streamy* Nature of Association, which Thinking = Reason, curbs & rudders/how this comes to be so difficult/Do not the bad Passions in Dreams throw light & shew of proof upon this Hypothesis?—Explain those bad Passions: & I shall gain Light, I am sure—²²

The epistemological question here is not the existence or the proper limit of active human reason but its failure. The ethical question is not its proper application but its inherent deprivation. Coleridge's question is why nightmare or 'the *streamy* Nature of Association' takes place in him at all. He detects 'bad Passions' as the cause. But he has to face the question whether he is actively distorting, or passively deprived of, sound perception. He continues the entry in the same evening:

11 °clock/—But take in the blessedness of Innocent Children, the blessedness of sweet Sleep, &c &c &c: are these or are they not contradictions to the evil from *streamy* association?—I hope not: all is to be thought *over* and *into*—but what is the height, & ideal of mere association?—Delirium.—But how far is this state produced by Pain & Denaturalization? And what are these?—In short, as far as I

²² CN, I, 1770.

can see any thing is this Total Mist, Vice is imperfect yet existing Volition, giving diseased Currents of association, because it yields on all sides & yet is—So think of Madness:—O if I live!

Either by active distortion or passive deprivation, 'the blessedness' is lost. As he does not get into a thorough comparison between 'the blessed sweet Sleep' and the fearful '*streamy* association', it is undecided whether delirium is the result of active distortion or of passive deprivation. Yet towards the end of the entry he accepts 'vice' as 'imperfect yet existing Volition'. As far as it is 'volition', it distorts perception actively. But at the same time it is 'imperfect', or rather imperfected and diseased, and to that extent it is a passion.²³

In Malta Coleridge describes this passion as 'a horrid touch of Hatred' which he 'actually' suffers.

dreams interfused with struggle and fear, tho' till the very last not ~~str~~ Victors— and the very last which awoke me, & which was a completed Night-mair, as it gave the *idea* and *sensation* of actual grasp or touch contrary to *my* will, & in apparent consequence of the malignant will of the external Form, actually appearing or (as sometimes happens) believed to exist/in which latter case tho' I have two or three times felt a horrid *touch* of Hatred, a *grasp*, or *weight*, of Hate

²³ With the problem of nightmare, Coleridge begins to argue against the view that the mind is merely passive, which he ascribes here to Hartley. Later he ascribes it to Democritus and says, 'It is sufficient for our purposes to know that the fundamental positions of ancient materialism were first, that motion and sensation are properties of a specific kind of atoms, and that mind is but a species of sensation, and all the processes of perception is but a species of sensation, and all the acts (or more accurately all the phenomena or appearances of life, just as the seeming acts of a dream) are wholly mechanical or produced by necessitating antecedents.' *Phil Lects*, pp. 347–8. As seen above and below, he has the personal need to deny this view and to find a clue to the recovery from his own nightmare.

and Horror abstracted from all (Conscious) form or supposal of Form/an *abstract touch*/an *abstract grasp*—an *abstract weight*—²⁴

He calls his experience 'a completed Night-mair' when its supposed insubstantiality becomes irrelevant. What he describes as 'an *abstract touch*/an *abstract grasp*—an *abstract weight*' is now coming out of its insubstantial state and giving him a concrete, 'actual grasp or touch'. This 'touch' ends any epistemological neutrality and makes irrelevant any question concerning its objective reality or unreality. It becomes the question not of 'external form' but of 'the malignant will' which produces this 'external form'. The completed nightmare is certainly the worst possible horror. But when he detects 'the malignant will' as it is, he also finds the way to get out of it. He finally finds 'his' will resisting the 'touch' of the malignant will to which he has been utterly subjected. Ineffective though it may be, it is a step out of pure passivity.

In investigating the cause of nightmare, Coleridge always keeps in mind 'hymn of Joy' and constantly refers back to 'Innocence', the time when reality and the divine presence in nature were synonymous. Contrasted with original noumenon, phenomenon in itself is a failure caused by 'moral Evil', a degraded amorphous unreality at best, at worst a nightmare.

So akin to Reason is Reality, that what I could *do* with exulting Innocence, I can not always *imagine* with perfect innocence/for Reason and Reality can stop and stand still, ~~by~~ new Influxes from without counteracting the Impulses from within, and *poising* the Thought. But Fancy and Sleep *stream on*; and (instead of outward Forms and Sounds, the Sanctifiers, the Strengtheners!) they connect with them motions of the blood and nerves, and images forced into the mind by the

²⁴ CN, II, 2468.

feelings that arise out of the position & state of the Body and its different members.

All the above-going throw lights on my mind with regard to the origin of Evil.
 <υληη = confusio = passio = finiri—//Reason, Action, Forma efformans. (= means "the same as": // "opposed to").>²⁵

In the days of innocence the divine presence appeared as the unquestioned affinity between 'new Influxes from without' and 'the Impulses from within'. 'So akin to Reason is Reality' that he was completely innocent of their potential breakup. This affinity is prior to the distinction between passivity and activity in the sense that both 'Influx from without' and 'Impulse from within' are simultaneously passive and active at their meeting point. That is to say, if there is no disjunction between within and without, there is no paradox between activity and passivity. But he loses such affinity when he begins to 'denaturalize' himself. He still finds activity and passivity within himself, but no longer in coherent unity. As a result, his internal reflection loses formal cause and streams on; he loses the poising thought between 'Reason' and 'Reality'; and his mind becomes confined within streamy fancy, or, 'images forced into the mind' only by 'the Impulses from within'. His being is almost cut off from nature and deprived of most of the flux and reflux of 'One Life'. Yet it is not completely cut off so as to be dead immediately. A ligated body does not die but decays, and, as his body gradually loses 'Life', his internal vision turns to be a nightmare. This is Coleridge's unbearable passivity. The measure he takes for

²⁵ *CN*, II, 2543. Before the formula in the end, Coleridge makes investigation into dreaming and suggests its relevance with day-dreaming, or, imagination. He writes, 'I have ~~acted~~ done innocently what afterwards in absence I have <likewise>day-dreamed innocently, during the being awake; but ~~after~~ the Reality was followed in Sleep by no suspicious fancies, the ~~latter~~ Day-dream has been. Thank Heaven! however/Sleep has never yet desecrated the images, or supposed *Presences, of those whom I love and revere. *There is often a dim sense of the Presence of a Person in our dreams, whose form does not appear.'

recovery is to separate mind from matter and activate it. As he puts into the formula with which he ends the entry, phenomenon is '*υλη* [matter], *confusio*, *passio*, *finiri*'. And in opposition, mind is 'Reason' and 'Action' as 'Forma efformans'. Mind is not only activated but united with 'Reason' to make itself 'Forma efformans'. It is the formal cause he expects to find within his activated mind under the complete suspension of matter. It is certain that when he expands the three classes of 'psychological Facts' into five, what he has in mind is 'Forma efformans'. Here with the admission of 'Forma efformans' his theory of imagination begins to shape itself into an aesthetical and potentially ethical argument. By this formation, however, nature becomes irretrievably split between matter and mind, or, passivity and activity.

Thus the formula reinforces the split of nature into two, but it should be remembered that it is originally a measure of recovery, pointing at 'imagination with perfect innocence', contrasting itself with streamy fancy.²⁶

III. Coleridge's reading in Kant must have influenced his formulation of 'Forma efformans'. In *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* Kant abstracts the formal function of mind at the beginning of his whole argument:

In der Erscheinung nenne ich das, was der Empfindung korrespondiert, die
M a t e r i e derselben, dasjenige aber, welches macht, daß das Mannigfaltige der

²⁶ Thus the split between passivity and activity, between without and within is the cause of the split of nature. Coleridge later notes in *The Friend*, 'The word Nature has been used in two senses, viz. actively and passively; energetic (= forma formans), and material (= forma formata).' *Friend*, I, p. 467. The point is repeated in the thirteenth Philosophical Lecture with the reference to the distinction between within and without. He says, 'in speaking of the world without us as distinguished from ourselves, the aggregate of phenomena ponderable and imponderable, is called nature in the passive sense,—in the language of the old schools, *natura NATURATA*—WHILE THE SUM OR AGGREGATE OF THE POWERS INFERRED AS THE sufficient causes of THE former ... is nature in the active sense, or *natura naturANS*.' *Phil Lects*, p. 370.

Erscheinung in gewissen Verhältnissen geordnet werden kann, nenne ich die Form der Erscheinung.

[That in the appearance which corresponds to sensation I term its matter; but that which so determines the manifold of appearance that allows of being ordered in certain relations, I term the form of appearance.]²⁷

But Coleridge's 'Forma efformans' is not Kant's categories. As Coleridge later makes clear, he thinks his 'Forma efformans' to be constitutive and different from Kant's categories which are merely regulative.²⁸ In Kant, the suspension of materiality is a single procedure which should be done at the beginning once for all, but in Coleridge the suspension and the recovery of materiality is an endlessly repeating process. Kant continues:

Da das, worinnen sich die Empfindungen allein ordnen, und in gewisse Form gestellet werden können, nicht selbst wiederum Empfindung sein kann, so ist uns zwar die Materie aller Erscheinung nur a posteriori gegeben, die Form derselben

²⁷ Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (Frankfurt, 1968), and Norman Kemp Smith, trans., *Critique of Pure Reason* (Hampshire, 1929) B 34. Coleridge used and annotated the fifth edition (1789) which is on the whole the same as the second edition. See *CM*, III, p. 241. For this reason throughout the thesis the second edition's pagination will be repeated.

²⁸ Later, in Appendix E of *The Statesman's Manual* Coleridge writes, 'Whether Ideas are regulative only, according to Aristotle and Kant; or likewise CONSTITUTIVE, and one with the power and Life of Nature, according to Plato, and Plotinus ... is the highest *problem* of Philosophy, and not part of its nomenclature.' *SM*, p. 114. Here he ascribes his view to Plato and Plotinus. But the biblical quotation he attaches to it is more important than such a dubious ascription. In editor's translation from Coleridge's Greek, he writes, 'In the Word was life; and the life was the light of men.' Thus quoting from John 1. 4, he expects 'AN IDEA' to reconcile human mind with 'Nature'. His view is in fact anticipated in the way he defines 'AN IDEA'. He writes, 'that which is neither a Sensation or a Perception, that which is neither individual (i.e. a sensible Intuition) nor general (i.e. a conception) which neither refers to outward Facts nor yet is abstracted from the FORMS of perception contained in the Understanding; but which is an educt of the Imagination actuated by the pure Reason, to which there neither is or can be an adequate correspondent in the world of the senses—this and this alone is = AN IDEA.' *SM*, pp. 113–4. This mediatory function of 'AN IDEA' is the same as that which he expects of 'Reason'. See Chapter 6, II.

aber muß zu ihnen insgesamt im Gemüte a priori bereit liegen, und daher abgedondert von aller Empfindung können betrachtet werden.

[That in which alone the sensations can be posited and ordered in a certain form, cannot itself be sensation; and therefore, while the matter of all appearance is given to us *a posteriori* only, its form must lie ready for the sensations *a priori* in the mind, and so must allow of being considered apart from all sensation.]²⁹

By abstracting the mind's active function, Kant seems to be able to suspend his own materiality together with matter in general. But Coleridge is always conscious of his diseased body. As he writes in the formula, '*υλη* [matter], *confusio*, *passio*, *finiri*' is the decisive pretext for the inception of 'Forma efformans'. Therefore once 'Forma efformans' is separated from the confused body it has to be reunited with it in the hope of restoring the lost order. Thus in him both the complete separation of mind from body and the complete unity of them are equally untenable. He has to keep turning this paradox round and round. Later he writes in his marginal note to Kant's *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe*, 'Body: i.e. Matter + Spirit or rather perhaps M = Sp. + Sp. = Matter.'³⁰ His self-reflection, or rather self-oscillation between mind and body is thus impossible to logically admit, but also impossible to ignore.

Coleridge reads Kant's *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* in winter 1800–1. It is the time when he begins to criticize Locke and Hartley. It is likely that he absorbed Kant's phenomenological argument to the extent that he thinks Lockean empiricism unsatisfactory. However, it should be pointed out that Coleridge is unconvinced by Kant's transcendentalism from the beginning. He says of transcendental deduction, 'p. 129 to 169 comprehended the most difficult and obscure passages of this Critique—or rather the *knot* of the whole System. If they are not comprehended, the

²⁹ Kant, *ibid.*, and Smith, *ibid.*

³⁰ *CM*, III, p. 276.

whole Philosophy of Kant, as *Kant's* philosophy, remains unknown'.³¹ It seems as if Coleridge is caught by the Kantian 'knot'. But he clearly sees where Kant's basic argument lies. He writes, 'it is not the system of mere *Receptivity*, like that of Epicurus and Hartley—it is not the System of innate Aptitudes or preformation, nor any from of pre-established Harmony'. It is rather that he finds in Kant the sort of problem he has to take up, and that while absorbing Kant's idea and argument he does not fully agree with Kant's a priori argument. As he acknowledges in *Biographia Literaria*, he is to remain unconvinced with this part of *Kritik* even after repeated perusal.³² And he eventually reworks on Kant's argument and formulates his own version of transcendentalism in the thirteenth chapter of *Biographia Literaria*.³³

At this stage Coleridge thinks he can just untie the Kantian knot 'poetically'. He writes:

The mind does not resemble an Eolian Harp, nor even a barrel-organ turned by a stream of water, conceive as many tunes mechanized in it as you like—but rather, as far as Objects are concerned, a violin, or other instrument of few strings yet vast compass, played on by a musician of Genius. The Breeze that blows across the Eolian Harp, the streams that turned the handle of the Barrel Organ, might be called ein mannigfaltiges, a mere *sylva incondita*, but who would call the muscles and purpose of Linley a confused Manifold?³⁴

He simply argues that when 'an Eolian Harp' is no longer played by 'one intellectual Breeze', it should be played by a human genius, that the divine artist should be

³¹ *CM*, III, p. 242. For further discussions on this 'Kantian knot', see Chapters 6 and 7, II.

³² See *BL*, I, p. 153.

³³ See Chapter 6.

³⁴ *CM*, III, p. 248. The editor's note: 'Thomas Linley the younger (1756–78), one of the finest violinists in Europe in his day.'

replaced with the human counterpart if the latter is aesthetically superior. Describing this shift with the artistic metaphor, he sounds little concerned with its ontological and even theological problems which such shift inevitably involves. When he thinks philosophically, however, he clearly sees that there is an impasse between passivity and activity of human mind at what he calls the Kantian knot. In another marginal note he writes:

was ist Erfahrung? What do you mean by a *fact*, an empiric Reality, which alone can give solidity (inhalt) to our Conceptions?—It seems from many passages, that this indispensable Test is itself previously manufactured by this very conceptive Power—and that the whole not of our own making is the mere sensation of a mere Manifold—in short, mere influx of motion, to use a physical metaphor.³⁵

This sort of autonomy of the human mind is what Coleridge has just argued in artistic terms for human genius. But when he reminds himself the need of 'Test', he realizes that the argument lacks the due attention to the passive side of mind. He continues:

Fichte I understand very well—only I cannot believe his System. But Kant I do not understand—i.e. I have not discovered what he proposes for my Belief.—Is it Dogmatism?—Why then make the opposition between Phænomena and Things in themselves—*τα οντως οντα*? Is it Idealism? What Test then can I find in the <different> modifications of my Being to verify and substantiate each other? What other distinction between Schein and Erscheinung, Illusion and Appearance more than the old one of—in one I dream to myself, and in the other I dream in

³⁵ CM, III, pp. 248–9.

common: The Man in a fever is only *outvoted* by his Attendants—He does not see their Dream, and they do not see his.³⁶

It should be remembered that Coleridge is to resist Fichte's system in order to remain 'human'. He here repeats the same objection to Kant by asking 'What Test then can I find?'. From Coleridge's point of view Kant's system does not provide the occasion of attestation. By 'Test' Coleridge does not mean empirical verification of Kant's categories. It is the test of the reference towards noumenon, the reference back to the original passivity which, Coleridge believes, any phenomenal judgment must convey. Because his system lacks this reference, Kant fails to propose 'Belief'. As a result, according to Coleridge, he as well as everyone else is first made aware of being in a dream and then left to dreaming endlessly.³⁷ But even this might not be the most serious problem. For the real problem of 'the Man in a fever' is not the worry of being 'outvoted by his Attendants' but the fear of being unable to get out of his own nightmare.

Coleridge reads Kant's ethical works in December 1803 and makes several transcriptions from *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* in the Notebooks. His

³⁶ *CM*, III, p. 249. As the editor points out, Coleridge repeats the story of the outvoted man in *Biographia Literaria*. See *BL*, I, p. 262.

³⁷ It would be hardly convincing for Coleridge when Kant assures the autonomous certainty of human understanding and says, 'the only question is whether there is truth in the determination of the object or not. But the difference between truth and dreams is not decided by the nature of the representations that we refer to objects, for they are the same in both, but by the connection of these representations according to the rules that determine the combination of them in the concept of an object, and how far they can or cannot stand together in an experience.' [es fragt sich nur, ob in der Bestimmung des Gegenstandes Wahrheit sei oder nicht. Der Unterschied aber zwischen Wahrheit und Traum wird nicht durch die Beschaffenheit der Vorstellungen, die auf Gegenstände bezogen werden, ausgemacht, denn die sind in beiden einerlei, sondern durch die Verknüpfung derselben nach denen Regeln, welche den Zusammenhang der Vorstellungen in dem Begriffe eines Objects bestimmen, und wiefern sie in einer Erfahrung beisammen stehen können oder nicht.] Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena zu jeder künftigen Metaphysik, die als Wissenschaft wird auftreten können* (1783) in *Sämmtliche Werke*, ed. G. Hartenstein, 8 vols (Leipzig, 1867) vol. IV, p 39 and Peter G. Lucas, trans, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics That Will Be Able to Present Itself as a Science* (Manchester, 1953) p. 47.

reading is critical. It seems that his personal experience in the preceding autumn of going through a series of grave nightmares determines how he reads Kant's ethics. He is quick in picking up Kant's argument, which by proceeding from a priori necessary categories of understanding (Verstand) to the a priori necessary categorical imperative of reason (Vernunft) establishes the absolute autonomy of 'the good will' of man. He disagrees with Kant's ethics for the same reason that he remains unconvinced with Kant's epistemology. It is again a closed system. He writes:

Der Wille, says Kant, ist nicht anderes, als practisches Vernunft [Vernunft]. This I doubt/My will & / seem perfect Synonimes—whatever does not apply to the first, I refuse to the latter/—Any thing strictly of outward Force I refuse to acknowledge, as done *by me*/it is done *with me*. Now I do not feel this perfect synonymousness in Reason & the Wille. I am sure, Kant cannot make it out. Again & again, he is a wretched Psychologist.³⁸

³⁸ CN, I, 1717. Coleridge expresses his dissatisfaction with Kant's 'psychology' in a marginal note dated by him '14 Dec. 1805 Naples'. He writes, 'It is one of Kant's greatest errors that he speaks so slightly of Psychology and the weakest parts of his System are attributable to his want of the habits and facts of Psychology which with all its imperfections and uncertainty is next to necessary in order to prevent Metaphysics from passing into Theosophy and Theurgy—i.e. Dreaming and Conjuring.' CN, IV, 4517 note. The basic difference between Kant and Coleridge is that Coleridge experiences the problem of two natures in the way Kant does not. See above, especially Chapter 2, II, and Chapter 6, I. For Coleridge it is a theological problem. What he sees lacking in Kant is the due attention to this problem. It is inevitable, when he, always aware of the problem and seeking for a theological solution, reads Kant's 'Metaphysics' in which Kant from his point of view ignores the problem in the first place, that he deems him as 'Dreaming and Conjuring'. However, one may argue that it is Coleridge himself who pushes Kant's argument beyond the limit set by Kant and subsequently complains about it. Later he writes in a marginal note to Baxter's *Reliquiae Baxterianae* (London, 1696), 'Before the Revolution, Metaphysics without experimental Psychology ... Since the Revolution, Experimental Psychology without Metaphysics', and argues that both are 'almost equi-distant from true *Philosophy*', implying his intention to reunite them at the middle point. CM, I, p. 281 and 298. When he mentions Kant's lack of 'Psychology' in his ethical argument, he seems to imply that Kant too is metaphysician without 'Psychology'. It is worth remembering that he points out the affinity between Kant and 'our genuine divines, and philosophers, before the revolution'. BL, I, p. 173. Quoted in Chapter 2, I note. Coleridge has no intention to propagate Lockean

Kant does not know the sort of conflict between what is done 'by me' and what is done 'with me' as Coleridge does. Kant argues that man should and can overcome 'what is done with me', but Coleridge dismisses it because it is impossible unless he falls into what he is to call 'concentration of my Being into Stoniness'. Coleridge seems to pay little attention to the fact that Kant presents the 'perfect synonymousness' not as a statement but as a maxim, that is, he does not ignore the problem of 'outward Force' in the way Coleridge seems to imply he does. But this is understandable, for Coleridge's sole hope is for a reconciliation between what is done 'by me' and what is done 'with me', and not for the complete dominance of the former over the latter as Kant argues, or of the latter over the former as a Hartleyan empiricist may insist. Coleridge is soon to call the inclination towards such completion as two 'morbid yearnings'.

It is during his reading of Kant's ethics that Coleridge mentions the Trinity possibly for the first time. He makes another transcription from *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* with a commentary.

Reverence for the LAW of Reason/now this truly is a *feeling*, but says Kant it is a self-created, not a received passive Feeling—it is the *Consciousness of the Subordination of the Will*.—Examine this: for in Psychology Kant is but suspicious Authority.—As an imposed Necessity it is Fear, or an Analogon of Fear; but as a Necessity imposed on us by our own Will it is a species of Inclination/& in this word, as in many others, Man's double Nature appears, as Man and God. I am fully persuaded, that all the Dogmas of the Trinity & Incarnation arose from Jesus asserting them of himself, as man in genere/³⁹

'Experimental Psychology without Metaphysics' here. His objection to both Kant and 'our genuine divines and philosophers' is that without the due attention to the problem of two natures, a system, irrespective of its being divine or human, is bound to become closed. See below. He repeats basically the same argument in 'Confessio Fidei'. See Chapter 5, III.

³⁹ CN, I, 1710. For Coleridge's 'Theanthropism', see Chapter 5, III.

Kant's activism is clear when he says, 'But *even if* 'reverence' is a feeling, it is not a passive one received through influence, but a self-created one effected by means of a concept of reason'⁴⁰ [Allein wenn Achtung gleich ein Gefühl ist, so ist es doch kein durch Einfluss empfangenes, sondern durch einen Vernunftbegriff selbstgewirktes Gefühl].⁴¹ Coleridge would argue that Kant can insist on overriding his passion by his action only because he has no doubt about the onefoldness of his will.⁴² But for Coleridge, 'outward Force' is willingly malignant, actively contrary to his own will. Therefore, he argues, 'LAW' has been imposed from both within and without, that is, it has to cause in him both 'Fear' and 'Inclination'. What he calls 'Man's double Nature' is in fact man's contradictory nature.

Coleridge wrote in early 1801, probably under the influence of Kant, 'To *think* of a thing is different from to *perceive it*, as "to walk" is from "to feel the ground under you"—perhaps, in the same way too—namely, > a succession of perception accompanied by a sense of *nisus* & purpose.' Now he is at pains to place '*nisus* & purpose' of ethics outside the enclosed psychological sphere. He is right in detecting behind Kant's activism the tendency towards closed self-consistency. Kant quotes from Luke 18: 19 with characteristic modification, 'why do you call me (whom you see) good? No one is good (the archetype of the good) but the only God (whom you do not see.)' [was nennt ihr mich, (den ihr sehet,) gut; Niemand ist gut (das Urbild des Guten), als der einige Gott, (den ihr nicht sehet.)]⁴³ Coleridge calls Kant's modification a 'new exposition of the Text'.⁴⁴ By this 'new exposition' Kant virtually

⁴⁰ CN, I, 1710 note.

⁴¹ Kant, *Werke*, IV, p. 249 note.

⁴² According to *Oxford English Dictionary*, 'onefold' is a current word especially in nineteenth century, meaning 'consisting of only one member or constituent; single; simple'. One of the examples which the *Dictionary* provides is: 'The simplicity ... which is opposed to duplicity, and which may be called one-foldness.' *Library Magazine*, May 149 (1887).

⁴³ Kant, *ibid.*, pp. 256–7.

⁴⁴ Coleridge writes, 'God *der Wille*—Christ *Logos*—new exposition of the Text. Why callest thou me good?—' CN, I, 1705 [b].

paraphrases God as the archetype of the good and situates Him in the a priori human reason (Vernunft). However, Coleridge's awareness of 'Man's double nature' prevents him from taking this step. He has in mind the distinction between 'Maxim' and 'Law'. 'Maxim', according to him, involves volition, and therefore is solely human and ultimately unreliable. 'Law', on the contrary, is both divine and human. He writes:

Maxim always implies a voluntary Rule/Laws are not maxims, tho' a good man may by Habit perhaps elevate his Maxim into a Law for himself.—Maxim = the ultimate Principle of action ... /to do unto others as you would be done by, is the Maxim of a good man—but it is not a *Law*, nor was taught as a Law. The Law is, *Be ye perfect*, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect.⁴⁵

In the note to this entry, Kathleen Coburn supplies an interesting marginal note of Coleridge to Tennemann's *Geschichte der Philosophie* II. Coleridge writes, 'neither Socrates nor Christ, who prescribed the same ultimate end to our Aim (*Be ye perfect* even as your heavenly Father is perfect) asserted its absolute realizability in this life'. Thus he reintroduces the possibility of theological attestation as the final purpose of ethics and rewrites Kant's system to make it an open system. And at the same time he admits that such attestation is to keep the system open and not to set up another, theologically closed system.

Coleridge's dissatisfaction with Kant is that Kant refrains himself from speaking theologically. Nevertheless, he keeps long and constant reverence for Kant. It can be seen in a Notebook entry in January 1804 where he seems to describe a Kantian figure. He writes, 'Of a great metaphysician/he looked at (into?) his own Soul with a telescope/what seemed all irregular, he saw & shewed to be beautiful

⁴⁵ CN, I, 1722.

Constellations & he added to the Consciousness hidden worlds within worlds.⁴⁶ He seems to have in mind a passage in the conclusion of *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*.⁴⁷ But that being the case, Coleridge himself is no longer certain about the sure correspondence between the constellations above and moral laws within. He has to rely on the theological language because he has lost the sort of serenity with which Kant can conclude his ethics. He parodies Kant's phrase 'an unbounded magnitude of worlds beyond worlds' [das unabsehlich Grosse mit Welten über Welten] as 'hidden worlds within worlds' and hints at his own introverted investigation. But the truth is that he has already lost his internal constellation, and that 'discovery' is no longer possible even with the largest telescope. It is Coleridge himself who wavers between looking 'at' and looking 'into'. It is as if he implicitly admits that the primary concern is no longer 'how to search' but 'what to search for', that is, 'what to recover'.

From here Coleridge turns back once again to the consideration of the human mind's original passivity. He makes a Notebook entry in January 1804 about 'the dignity of passiveness' which, as Coburn points out, conveys a close parallel to Wordsworth's 'wise passiveness'. He writes, 'The dignity of passiveness to worthy Activity when men shall be as proud within themselves of having remained an hour in a state of deep tranquil Emotion'.⁴⁸ 'Worthy Activity' here is not human but

⁴⁶ CN, I, 1798.

⁴⁷ Kant writes, 'TWO things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the oftener and more steadily they are reflected on: the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me. I do not merely conjecture them and seek them as though obscured in darkness or in the transcendent region beyond my horizon: I see them before me, and I associate them directly with the consciousness of my own existence.' [Zwei Dinge erfüllen das Gemüth mit immer neuer und zunehmender Bewunderung und Ehrfurcht, je öfter und anhaltender sich das Nachdenken damit beschäftigt: der bestirnte Himmel über mir, und das moralische Gesetz in mir. Beide darf ich nicht als in Dunkelheiten verhüllt, oder im Ueberschwenglichen, ausser meinem Gesichtskreise, suchen und bloß vermuthen, ich sehe sie vor mir und verknüpfe sie unmittelbar mit dem Bewusstsein meiner Existenz.] Kant, *Werke*, V, pp. 167–8 and Lewis White Beck, trans., *Critique of Practical Reason: And Other Writings in Moral Philosophy* (Chicago, 1949) p. 258.

⁴⁸ CN, I, 1834.

divine, to which the human mind is passive and receptive. But unlike Wordsworth, he is acutely aware that such passivity can be at odds with the human mind's activity. He continues:

O how few can transmute activity of mind into emotion/yet there are who active as the stirring Tempest & playful as a May blossom in a Breeze of May, can yet for hours together remain with hearts broad awake, & the Understanding asleep in all but its retentiveness and receptivity/yea, & the Latter evinces as great Genius as the Former/

'The latter' is a genius of the Wordsworthian type, or, that which Coleridge advocated in his early poetics. And the former, which he admits to be 'few', is the other type of genius which he has been trying to be himself after Kant's or Fichte's model. It is unlikely that he at this stage forces on himself the alternative choice between the two, since he knows with personal experience that each cut off from the other is doomed to serious defect. He already failed to make himself a Wordsworthian genius. And now he finds himself falling off from the Kantian or Fichtean type of genius, too. Therefore, no matter how meagre its real practicability might be, the only possibility left for him is to reunite the two within himself and recover both at once by that reunion.

In Malta Coleridge reconsiders the relationship between epistemology and ethics. He writes in December 1804:

Think of all this as an absolute Revelation, a real Presence of Deity—& compare it with historical traditionary religion. Two Revelations, the material & moral, & the former not to be seen but by the latter, as St Paul has so well observed— "By ~~philosophy~~ worldly wisdom no man ever arrived at God; but having seen him by the moral Sense then we *understand* the outward World, even as a Book/no

Book of itself teaches a language in the first instance, but having by symp. of Soul learnt it we then understand the Book—i.e. the Deus minor in his work.⁴⁹

Kant's influence may be seen in his separating morality from materiality and arguing for the priority of the former. But by 'moral revelation' Coleridge means not the categorical imperative but the teachings of 'historical traditionary religion', that is, the story of the Fall and salvation. He thinks that 'material revelation' is lost because of the Fall and that 'moral revelation' is needed for the recovery. For him, therefore, 'material revelation' is not what he overcomes but what he loses, and accordingly, the purpose of 'moral revelation' is not the absolute autonomy of human reason but the recovery of 'material revelation' through moral engagement. He says, 'by the moral sense then we *understand* the outward World'. What is remarkable here is the change of his stance towards 'Presence of Deity'. He says, 'no Book of itself teaches a language in the first instance'. If he were to maintain his early poetics, he should have argued that the book of nature was readable precisely because he did not know how to read. He here admits that such presence is lost, that is, that the divine language in nature is no longer readable because he now learns how to read. And there is no alternative but to hope for recovery through this 'moral reading'.⁵⁰ It is very suggestive that he makes a distinction between 'philosophy' and 'worldly wisdom'. Here he seems to imply that the possibility of recovery lies not in 'worldly wisdom' but in 'philosophy', that is, not in 'understanding' but in 'reason'.⁵¹ Finally his statement about 'historical traditionary religion' requires a

⁴⁹ CN, II, 2326.

⁵⁰ Coleridge has come a long way. In 1795 he could say, 'Thus the existence of Deity, and his power and his Intelligence are manifested, and I could weep for the deadened and petrified Heart of that Man who could wander among the fields in a vernal Noon or summer Evening and doubt his Benevolence! The Omnipotent has unfolded to us the Volume of the World, that there we may read the Transcript of himself.' *Lects 1795*, p. 94. See also Chapter 1: I, II.

⁵¹ Coleridge repeats this point in *Biographia Literaria*, again generally quoting from I Corinthians 1: 20–21. Concerning 'mere intellect' which cannot reach 'a holy and intelligent first cause', he reminds the reader of 'St Paul's assertion that by

little clarification. He seems to identify 'moral revelation' with 'historical traditional religion'. But the implicit purpose of 'moral revelation' is the recovery of episteme, which is by definition not confined in 'tradition' nor in 'history'. The statement therefore is his declaration that in order to find the way of recovery he needs engage himself in 'historical traditional religion'.⁵²

IV. Coleridge's decisive move from associationism strictly coincides with his also decisive move from Unitarianism. He sees the inadequacy of the former as it fails to account for the split between noumenon and phenomenon. The inadequacy of the latter is that it does not admit 'Man's double Nature' which 'appears, as Man and God'.⁵³ As the active mind at once recognizes the epistemological problem and attempts to solve it, it also detects the theological problem inherent in Unitarianism and tries to work it out. The inception of 'Forma efformans' thus opens up to him a new dimension not only of epistemology but also of theology.

In January 1805 he re-reads his Notebooks and adds new comments to two previous transcriptions done in his Notebook in December 1797. One transcription is on epistemology and the other on theology.

wisdom (more properly translated by the power of reasoning), no man ever arrived at the knowledge of God'. *BL*, I, pp. 201-2. For the development of this argument in artistic terms, see Chapter 6, III.

⁵² Coleridge is to write in January–April 1817, 'The two Factors of the Christian Faith Religion, the one indispensable to *faith*, and the other no less so to the faith of a CHRISTIAN, are: 1. The Philosophy concerning Christ, < = Τα > περι του Λογου του θεανθρωπου. 2. The History of Jesus Christ. The different ages of Christianity may be conveniently classed and characterized according to the due co-inherence of these, or the undue predominance of the one or the other: while the entire subtraction of either destroys Christianity altogether, even as the subtraction either of Hydrogen or Oxygen would destroy Water.' *CN*, III, 4340. Coleridge's theanthropic Christology which he develops in this ten years thus enables him to write decisively of the possible reunion of 'material' and 'moral' revelations, of epistemology and ethics. For a further discussion about his theanthropism, see Chapter 5, III.

⁵³ *CN*, I, 1710. Quoted and discussed above.

We should judge of absent things by the absent. Objects which are present are apt to produce perceptions too strong to be impartially compared with those recalled only by memory. Sir J. Steuart. / <True! and O how often the very opposite is true likewise—namely, that the objects of memory are often so dear & vivid, that present things are injured by being compared with them, vivid from dearness, &c—>⁵⁴

The latter addition clearly reflects his new epistemology attained in Malta. He here asserts the vividness not of materially present objects but of materially absent objects. It is certainly the active mind which vivifies these absent objects. With the same stroke he adds a comment on Christianity to the following quotation.

Xstianity an imposture, the scriptures a forgery, the worship of God superstition, Hell a fable, Heaven a dream, our Life without providence & our death without Hope—&c.

<I wrote this quotation from Bentley Dec. 1797. with what different thoughts I re-peruse it Jan. 1805.—yet the Feelings the same.>⁵⁵

'The same feelings' are very likely to be his anti-orthodox stance. He wrote in April-May 1797 'Unitarian/travelling from Orthodoxy to Atheism—why,—&c'. And he certainly retains his criticism on the established orthodoxy. Then the different thought must be that this 'Atheism' is no longer atheism. He used to find Unitarianism not far from atheism because of its strong orientation towards humanistic, rationalistic concerns. He had an opportunity in his Unitarian days to explain how close his position was to that of John Thelwall the atheist:

⁵⁴ *CN*, I, 308.

⁵⁵ *CN*, I, 312. This transcription is to reappear in *Statesman's Manual* when he attacks 'such philosophers and truth-trumpeters' as in 'French literature under Lewis XV'. *SM*, p. 83.

You entirely misunderstood me as to religious matters.—You love your wife, children, & friends, you worship nature, and you dare hope, nay, have faith in, the future improvement of the human Race—this is true Religion/your notions about the historical credibility or non-credibility of a sacred Book, your assent to or dissent from the existence of a supramundane Deity, or personal God, are absolutely indifferent to me/mere figures of a magic Lantern.⁵⁶

But in Malta, Coleridge becomes deprived of all of that he listed as 'true Religion'. When he loses the reality of this humanistic religion, his previous faith becomes virtually empty. It is during this theological vacuum when restoration of his active mind takes place in the other side of materiality. Accordingly, what he called 'mere figures of a magic Lantern' in the letter begins to receive a new description. He writes in September 1804, 'God, Soul, Heaven, the Gospel, miracles, &c are themselves a sort of *poetry*.'⁵⁷

Coleridge revives the Trinity essentially as poetry, the product of 'Forma efformans'. He writes in February 1805, 'the inanity of Jehovah, Christ, and the Dove admits the adorable Tri-unity of Being, Intellect, and Spiritual Action, as the Father, Son, and coeternal Precedent'.⁵⁸ His procedure to 'rename' Jehovah, Christ, and the Dove shows a close parallel with that of Kant when he 'renames' God, man and nature as 'Theological Idea', 'Psychological Idea', and 'Cosmological Idea'.⁵⁹ But here he seems to follow John Scotus Erigena whom he read a year before. He 'received

⁵⁶ *CL*, II, p. 667.

⁵⁷ *CN*, II, 2194.

⁵⁸ *CN*, II, 2444. 'Inanity' as Coburn reads is more likely in this context than Basil Willey's objection that it should be 'unity'. See Willey, *Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (London, 1972) p. 107 note.

⁵⁹ Interestingly, in Kant, 'Psychologische Idee' comes first, followed by 'Kosmologische Idee' and 'Theologische Idee'. Kant, *Prolegomena*, in *Werke*, IV, pp. 81–96. Later, Coleridge mentions Kant's procedure of renaming in the thirteenth Philosophical Lecture. See *Phil Lects*, p. 389.

great delight & instruction',⁶⁰ and made an Notebook entry, quoting from *De divisione naturae* (Oxford, 1681) with comments. He wrote:

Creation explained by Jo. Scot. Erig. as only a manifestation of the unity of God in forms—et fit et facit, et creat et creatur. Lib. I. p. 7.—

p. 8. a curious & highly philosophical account of the Trinity, & compleatly Unitarian—God ~~exists~~ is, is wise, & is living. The Essence we call Father, the Wisdom Son, the Life the Holy Spirit.—and he positively affirms that these three exist only as distinguishable *Relations*—habitudines—and he states the whole Doctrine as an invention & condescension of The[o]logy to the Intellect of man, which must *define* & conseq. *personify* in order to understand/& must have some phantom of Understanding in order to keep alive in the heart the substantial Faith.⁶¹

Coleridge detects behind this insight the confessional acknowledgment of incomprehensibility of God itself. He continues:

p. 10 & 11. a curious confession, that we cannot affirm any thing of God, but as a *pia fraus* to make our intellect instrumental to Faith by a rule of false—*nudam omnique propria significatione relictam, divinam essentiam talibus vocabulis vestit*—*scil[icet] bonitate, sapientiâ, essentiâ &c &c*—and adds that Theology is affirmative in superficie, & for the purpose of exciting pious affection; in

⁶⁰ *CL*, II, p. 954. In this letter Coleridge indicates the direction of thinking which leads him to his later theology. He writes, 'I have received great delight & instruction from Scotus Erigena. He is clearly the modern founder of the School of Pantheism—indeed he expressly defines the divine Nature, as *quae fit et facit, et creat et creatur*—& repeatedly declares Creation to be *manifestation*—the Epiphany of Philosophers.' In Coleridge's later theological speculation, the notion that creation is the divine manifestation becomes crucial. See Chapter 6 and 7.

⁶¹ *CN*, I, 1382.

pronunciatione formam affirmativæ obtinet, in intellectu verò virtutem abnegativæ/—⁶²

It is the recognition of negativity which reveals the fictitiousness of theology. But he no longer sees its fictitiousness as 'fraud'. On the contrary it is the necessity of theology. In Malta he looks back the process of his 'conversion' as if he had followed Erigena's argument step by step:

it burst upon me at once as an awful Truth what 7 or 8 years ago I thought of proving with a *hollow Faith* and for an *ambiguous purpose*, my mind then wavering in its necessary passage from Unitarianism (which as I have often said is the Religion of a man, whose ~~Understanding~~ Reason would make him an Atheist but whose Heart and Common sense will not permit him to be so) thro' Spinosism into Plato and S^t John/No Christ, No God!—This I now feel with all its needful evidence, of the Understanding: would to God, my spirit were made conform thereto—that No Trinity, no God.—⁶³

His 'God', his 'Trinity' are still 'a sort of *poetry*' with 'mere figures of a magic Lantern', but this theology is now what he desperately needs to develop.

Coleridge's major concern in his doctrine of Trinity is human participation in it. That is why 'Jehovah, Christ, and the Dove' have to be rewritten as 'Being, Intellect, and Spiritual Action'. In a long entry made in the same month on Trinity, he repeats

⁶² CN, I, 1382 and note. The editor supplies translation. 'pia fraus': a pious fraud. 'nudam omnique propria significatione relictam, divinam essentiam talibus vocabulis *vestit*—scil[icet] bonitate, sapientiâ, essentiâ': it clothes divine essence with such designations although it is naked and untouched by every proper signification—called goodness, wisdom, essence. '[ita ut] in pronunciacione formam affirmativæ obtinet, in intellectu verò virtutem abnegativæ': it obtains the form of affirmation in the enunciation, but it actually retains in the mind the force of negation.

⁶³ CN, II, 2448.

the same procedure to de-figure and philosophize the three persona. The entry begins with the statement: 'The Platonic Fathers, instead of the Πατηρ, Υιος and Αγιον Πνευμα, used Του Θεου, και του Λογου αυτου, και της Σοφιας αυτου.—Θεος, Λογος, Σοφια, Ανθρωπος'.⁶⁴ Coleridge agrees with them because 'this seems as precise and true as human words can be applied to so recondite a subject.' But when he states his trinity, 'Being, Reason and holy action', his human concern is no longer on the level of naming.

1. Being, the eternal evermore I am = Deity, or eternal Life, or as we well say the Supreme Being (which word Supreme is most often most grossly apprehended, as synonymous to the Sublimest or Sovran, whereas it is equivalent to *the Absolutest*)—2. Reason, Proportion, communicable Intelligibility intelligent and communicant, the WORD—which last expression strikes me as the profoundest and most comprehensive Energy of the human Mind, if indeed it be not in some distinct sense ενεργημα θεοπαραδοτον. 3. But holy action, a Spirit of holy Action, to which all holy actions being reducible as to their Sine qua non, is verily the Holy Spirit proceeding † at once from Life and Reason, and effecting all good gifts, what more appropriate Term is conceivable than Wisdom: which in its best & only proper sense, involves action, application, habits and tendencies of realization

'The WORD' is not only divine but also human, and it 'strikes me as the profoundest and most comprehensive Energy of the human Mind'. 'Wisdom' is said to 'involve action, application, habits and tendencies of realization' of man. Thus in the second and third persona the divinity and humanity are at once distinguished and related.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ CN, II, 2445.

⁶⁵ Coleridge continues the entry and emphasizes the human involvement in the Trinity, 'why the Son should both create and redeem ... is of no very difficult solution, seeing that no <true> energies can be attributed to an *Ον αλογον*; the

Coleridge goes on and makes the same related duplexity between God and man at the first person. By this procedure he establishes symmetry between the divine Trinity and its human counterpart. The human trinity is called 'Miss Theta'.

All little Miss Thetas, the Θ being a Circle, with the Kentron [*Kentrum*], or central Point, creating the circumference & both together the infinite Radii/— the Central point is primary Consciousness = living Action; the circumference = secondary Consciousness <or Consc: in the common sense of the word> and the passing to and fro from the one to the other Thought, Things, necessary Possibilities, contingent Realities/= Father, Son, Holy Ghost/the $\text{Το Ον, Ο Λογος, η Σοφια}$ /—The \bullet is I which is the articulated Breath drawn inward, the O is the same sent outward, the Θ or Theta expresses the synthesis and coinstantaneous reciprocation of the two Acts, the Dualism of *Thought* by *Distinctions*, the Unity of *Thing* by *Indivisibility*/and then the Radii, Ακτῖνες = Res in Theta (or perhaps Delta) = $\text{Αγω (acta) εν θητα (or Tau)}$ ⁶⁶

This description of the human trinity is identical with that of the divine Trinity. It is known to be human only because it can be plural, 'All little Miss Thetas'. But Coleridge seems to maintain the distinction between the original Trinity and the human trinities on the ontological/theological level. He writes, 'the Radii = Res in Theta (or perhaps Delta)', that is, 'Miss Theta' is a full circle as the form of 'theta' and yet an half of the full circle as the form of delta. 'Miss Theta' is a full in itself, but yet a human, phenomenal circle, therefore only a half of the whole.⁶⁷

moment we conceive the divine energy, that moment we co-conceive the Λογος . But tho' this may redeem, i.e. procure for us the *possibility* of salvation, it is only the *Spirit of holy Action*, manifested in the *habits of Faith and good works*, (the wings of the brooding Dove) that *sanctifies* us, the Redeemer still co-operating in the completion of that work of which himself is the Corner Stone—in truth, the Α and Ω , seeing that the redeemed & sanctified become finally themselves Words of the *Word*'.

⁶⁶ CN, II, 2784.

⁶⁷ For further references to Miss Theta, see Chapter 5, II, and Chapter 6, I.

Miss Theta's 'halfness' is certainly beyond the mathematically consistent definition of a circle. But this 'illogical' halfness is the source of her life. Miss Theta is a complete circle, a self-centring and self-radiating whole. But she is not a static whole, as her self-centring is inspiration and her self-radiation respiration. As he puts it in the entry, 'the • is I which is the articulated Breath drawn inward, the O is the same sent outward, the Θ or Theta expresses the synthesis and coinstantaneous reciprocation of the two Acts'. And 'the breath' keeps uniting within and without from both ends reciprocally. Thus Miss Theta is alive as far as she participates in the exchange of inspiration and respiration, that is, as far as she keeps in touch with the source of inspiration and the recipient of respiration which is not within her. Here are two perfect circles, divine and human, the centres of which, however, can neither be separated to make them two separate circles, nor be identified to make them the one whole. Logical repugnancy is not reduced even when it is paraphrased as each circle is simultaneously the whole and the half. But this impossibility well describes the fact of Miss Theta's breath. Her breath takes her beyond logical consistency, or, such consistency becomes complete only when she stops breathing.⁶⁸ That is, by her breath the divinity and the humanity in theology, and noumenon and phenomenon in epistemology, reciprocally refer to each other through 'a Symbol'.

Coleridge begins to see 'Symbol' as a possible and probably an only way through the ontological/theological impasse. He writes:

⁶⁸ Coleridge restates this point in the ethical term in June 1810, probably as a preparation for 'Confessio Fidei' 1810. He writes in the Notebook, 'God's free Love acting on a living, conscious, and *conscienced* Being, i.e. on a *Person*, must of necessity require some accompaniment on the part of the person, its subject (the *materia subjecta* of the operation) But such accompaniment in a moral subject is called, an *indispensable condition*—as Lungs to the *vis vitæ*, or as vital air to the ~~Lungs~~ Respiration, not the proper or efficient cause, but the necessary *condition* of its action.' *CN*, III, 3905. For his further speculation on 'breath', see Chapter 7, III and IV.

Saturday Night, April 14, 1805—In looking at objects of Nature while I am thinking, as at yonder moon dim-glimmering thro' the dewy window-pane, I seem rather to be seeking, as it were *asking*, a symbolical language for something within me that already and forever exists, that observing any thing new. Even when that latter is the case, yet still I have always an obscure feeling as if that new phænomenon were the dim Awakening of a forgotten or hidden Truth of my inner Nature/It is still interesting as a Word, a Symbol! It is ΛΟΓΟΣ, the Creator! <and the Evolver!>⁶⁹

By this formulation, he gains the possibility of both symbolical annunciation from, and symbolical reference to, 'the Creator'. By this he finds the hope for a mediation between God and man. But it should be noticed that he arrives at the idea of 'symbol' through an aesthetic speculation. He writes in November 1804, five months prior to the above theological formulation of symbol, 'Hard to express that sense of the analogy or likeness of a Thing which enables a Symbol to represent it, so that we think of the Thing itself—& yet knowing that the Thing is not present to us.'⁷⁰ And he continues, 'Surely, on this universal fact of words & images depends by more or less mediations the *imitation* instead of *copy* which is illustrated in very nature *shakespearianized*'. From here he develops the famous distinction between imitation and copy and writes in *Biographia Literaria*, 'the composition of a poem is among the *imitative* arts; and imitation, as opposed to copying, consists either in the interfusion of the SAME throughout the radically DIFFERENT, or of the different throughout a base radically the same'.⁷¹ It is crucial to see that his theological, or rather, salvific, symbolism which he develops throughout his life is essentially the same as his aesthetical symbolism. That is to say, he virtually restates his poetic

69 CN, II, 2546.

70 CN, II, 2274.

71 BL, II, p. 72.

aspiration when he calls logos 'a Symbol' and anchors on its mediatory function all the hope of recovery from the problem which turns out to be insoluble either ontologically or theologically. Thus, poetic symbolism is indeed a 'universal fact of words & images'.⁷²

Coleridge hails 'the dim Awakening of a forgotten or hidden Truth of my inner Nature' and calls it 'ΛΟΓΟΣ, the Creator! <and the Evolver!>' But it is only a symbolic creator and not 'the Creator' in its full sense. He is well aware of Miss Theta's fullness and halfness. Human mind may achieve the phenomenal wholeness as a full circle, but even so, there remains the other, noumenal whole, to which his phenomenal whole is only a half. The fate of active human mind is well described in the following Notebook entry from the same period.

Of the Devil with a Memory, the first sinner/in order not to be baffled by the infinite ascent of the heavenly Angels he feigned that all, the Τ'Αγαθον, <i.e. *God himself*,> included, spring from nothing—& now he has a pretty task/to multiply without paper or slate the exact number of all the animalcules, & eggs, & embryos, of each Planet by those some other, and the ~~quotient~~ product by a third, that ~~quotient~~ product by a fourth and he is not to stop till he has gone thro' Half of the Universe, the number of which being infinite, it is considered by the Devils in general as a great Puzzle.—A dream in a Doze.⁷³

The 'pretty task' assigned to the devil is to repeat 'creatio ex nihilo' on his own at the loss of the whole of the divine creation. But he is allowed a hope that, no matter how

⁷² Coleridge is to write in *The Statesman's Manual* (1816) of 'that reconciling and mediatory power, which incorporating the Reason in Images of the Sense, and organizing (as it were) the flux of the Senses by the permanence and self-circling energies of the Reason, gives birth to a system of symbols, harmonious in themselves, and consubstantial with the truths, of which they are the *conductors*.' *SM*, p. 29.

⁷³ *CN*, II, 2455.

far away the goal might be, he may eventually complete the fictive half of the whole creation and rest in his seventh day. The task itself, however, is to him still and ever 'a great Puzzle'.

Chapter 5 'Hypopœēsis' and 'Confessio Fidei'

I. Coleridge responds to the problem of matter and mind both philosophically and theologically.¹ His shift in theology from 'material revelation' to 'moral revelation' is the equivalent of that in philosophy from materialism to idealism. It is under the obvious influence of German Idealism which he reads extensively around 1801 that he began to refer to Locke-Newtonian empiricism as 'materialism'.² He then argued against the view that mind was a merely passive recipient of sensations, a passive mirror only to reflect 'material revelation'. But he soon finds himself disillusioned with the ultimate form of idealism when he realizes that it inevitably leads to solipsism which denies 'material revelation' altogether. Thus he comes back to the original problem of matter and mind and suggests that 'matter' and 'mind', regarded as mutually exclusive, make 'nature' impossible. He writes in a Notebook in May–July 1811:

How got the Atheist his Idea of that God which he denies?—I have always held Des Cartes' Proof the best & tenable. The Materialist is the Idealist of the intelligible World—as the Idealist constrains the realities *ab extra* into illusions *ab intra*, so the Mat. the realities *in us* into reflexes and echoes of things without us.—To the one the Universe is but an echo-chamber of the Soul; to the other the Soul is but an empty echo-chamber or Whispering Labyrinth of the World—. Both alike deduce the "Is" from the "Appears", the Substance from the Shadow, the Sound from the Echo—both mistake analysis for preformation—³

¹ As seen in Chapter 3, III, Coleridge personally experiences the split of matter and mind. The split is first of all his 'personal' problem. Therefore, whenever he deals with the it he is always 'personal', that is, in his case, theological as well as philosophical.

² The point is stated in a letter to Godwin on 25 March 1801. *CL*, II, p. 714. Quoted and discussed in Chapter 3, II.

³ *CN*, III, 4087.

Thus nature becomes split between 'within' and 'without'. Nature is either received 'ab extra' or produced 'ab intra', or, in his words, it is either 'forma formata' or 'forma formans',⁴ but never both at the same time. He argues that both 'materialism' and 'idealism' are a form of reductionism, as they 'deduce' nature either 'ab extra' or 'ab intra'. His argument resembles Kant's criticism on both Locke and Leibniz. Kant complains in *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*:

Anstatt im Verstande und der Sinnlichkeit zwei ganz verschiedene Quellen von Vorstellungen zu suchen, die aber nur in Verknüpfung objektivgültig von Dingen urteilen könnten, hielt sich ein jeder dieser großen Männer nur an eine von beiden, die sich ihrer Meinung nach unmittelbar auf Dinge an sich selbst bezöge,

[Instead of seeking in understanding and sensibility two sources of representations which, while quite different, can supply objectively valid judgments of things only in *conjunction* with each other, each of these great men holds to one only of the two, viewing it as in immediate relation to things in themselves.]⁵

Coleridge's position is that there are the realities within the human mind which cannot be deduced from without and also the realities without the human mind which cannot be deduced from within. It should be noted here that to state his position he uses spatial distinction between 'without' and 'within', or more accurately, 'from without' and 'from within', or, passivity and activity of human mind. It is particularly interesting that he attempts to reintroduce Cartesian 'proof' as a possible mediation between materialism and idealism. Descartes himself thinks that both matter and mind are substance and are created by God. And a metaphysician like

⁴ *Friend*, I, p. 467. See also Chapter 4, II.

⁵ Kant, op. cit., and Smith, op. cit., B 327.

Coleridge has to maintain the similar view and argue that there are both 'material' substance and 'mental' or spiritual substance and that they are somehow related. However, between Descartes and Coleridge lies the metaphysical controversy over the possibility of metaphysics itself. It is rather ironical that reductionism is the inevitable consequence of the attempted Cartesian 'proof'. Both the materialist and the idealist are prompted to reductionism either in materialistic or idealistic terms, either dissolving 'the realities within' into 'the realities without' or including the latter in the former. Coleridge's task is to argue that the two are unrelated in the sense that one is not the derivative of the other. But he cannot but argue at the same time that the two are somehow related. His task therefore is to relate, or rather, mediate, the two different kinds of 'realities'.

Coleridge develops his argument basically in theological terms. Trying to relate 'the realities within' and 'the realities without', he eventually identifies the problem of their relatedness and unrelatedness as a variation of the problem of sameness and difference between God and man. The final form of this argument can be seen in *Theory of Life* where he writes:

It is the duty and the privilege of the theologian to demonstrate, that *space* is the ideal organ by which the soul of man perceives the *omnipresence* of the Supreme Reality, as distinct from the works, which in him move, and live, and have their being; while the equal mystery of *Time* bears the same relation to his *Eternity*⁶

Here 'the realities' within space and time, or, 'the realities' within the human mind are contrasted with those without the human mind. Nature, or, 'the works, which in him move, and live, and have their being'⁷ is neither within nor without but

⁶ *TL*, p. 394. See also *CN*, IV, 4775. Quoted in Chapter 6, I.

⁷ This passage is from Acts 17: 28. It should be noted that Coleridge applies this passage, which is originally applied to man, to the whole nature. His theology begins when he recognizes that by the distinction between matter and mind the human mind

somewhere in the middle. He positively argues that 'the Supreme Reality' and 'space' are related in the same way as 'Eternity' and 'Time' are related. 'Nature', which is placed in the middle of the two, is possible only when the two are somehow related. However, he explains such relation no further and just calls it 'mystery'.

Because of this inherently theological argument, Coleridge is particularly sensitive to the problem of 'subjective space'. His final view concerning the subjective space appears in a passage in the *Logic* where he recapitulates in philosophical terms his inherent theological argument. After a brief summary of the controversy between Leibniz and Newton-Clarke 'respecting the ideality of space', he writes:

The truth is that it [space] is the subjective condition of all objectivity, and whatever reality is attributed to outward experience must *a fortiori* belong to that without which no outward experience is possible. If therefore we use the term "real" in opposition to "fantastic", or if we use "objective" as the contrary of "accidental", in order to distinguish from the result of individual peculiarities, then space is in this sense an undoubted reality, and eminently objective; but if we use the word "real" in opposition to "mental", or "*objective*" in opposition to "*subjective*" in its widest sense, then we must reverse the position.⁸

This is basically a restatement of Kant's argument of space. In fact he had already written in 1800–1801: 'Space—is it merely another word for the perception of a capability of additional magnitude—or does this very perception presuppose the idea of Space?—The latter is Kant's opinion.'⁹ But Coleridge is essentially different from

excludes itself from this divine presence in nature. For other occasions of the same quotation, see Chapter 1, I and 7, I.

⁸ *Logic*, p. 160.

⁹ *CN*, I, 887.

Kant in maintaining the 'duality' of space. While following Kant's argument for the subjective space, Coleridge keeps suggesting that the subjective space as such is a problem. In a marginal note to Kant's *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe*, Coleridge clearly illustrates his point. Kant writes, 'space in general does not belong to the properties or relations of *things in themselves* ... but belongs merely to the subjective form of our sensible intuition of things or relations' [der Raum überhaupt nicht zu den Eigenschaften oder Verhältnissen *der Dinge an sich selbst* ... sondern blos zu der subjectiven Form unserer sinnlichen Anschauung von Dingen oder Verhältnissen]. To this Coleridge responds:

But there must be a cause ab extra, why I see this Hop that, the Beans in the opposite direction. What does that mean? We see nothing in itself, but only by its action on us modified by our own laws of Perception. K. should have shewn *how* our "subjective Form of sensuous Intuition" came to be called into action. To common minds the facts would appear instances in proof of the reality, = objectivity, of Space.¹⁰

In other words, Kant should have shown how the distinction between space 'without' and space 'within' came forward and how they can be related. As seen above, his distinction between 'the Supreme Reality' and 'space' corresponds with the distinction between space 'without' and space 'within', or, between divine 'noumenal' space and human 'phenomenal' space. Unlike Kant's 'things in themselves', Coleridge's 'Supreme Reality' does not necessarily have 'material' meaning. It is rather a space which contains the material nature, or in his words, 'the works, which in him move, and live, and have their being'. However, the duality between 'the divine noumenal space without' and 'the human phenomenal space within' is still

¹⁰ CM, III, p. 270.

a problem, and he eventually adopts the word 'mystery' to explain it. While 'mystery' does not explicate anything, it allows him to restate his basic theology in philosophical terms. In Malta he writes, 'Space <is one of> the Hebrew names for God/& it is the most perfect image of *Soul*'.¹¹

Coleridge is well acquainted with seventeenth-century metaphysical controversy about space first between Descartes' 'material extension' and Henry More's 'spiritual extension' and later between Leibniz's 'relative space' and Newton's 'absolute space'.¹² As to the former he reads *A Collection of Several Philosophical Writings of Dr. Henry More* (1662),¹³ which includes the correspondence between Descartes and More over the question whether the extension is only material or also spiritual. As to the latter he summarizes Leibniz-Newton controversy in the *Logic* and presents his own view.¹⁴ It is very likely that Coleridge picks up the notion of 'divine space', which he maintains all through his argument and eventually works into a theological argument, from his reading of More. It seems that when Coleridge writes 'Space <is one of> the Hebrew names for God' he has in mind More's passage in *Enchiridium metaphysicum* (1671). More writes:

There are not less than twenty titles by which the Divine Numen is wont to be designated, and which perfectly fit this infinite internal place (*locus*) the existence of which in nature we have demonstrated; omitting moreover that the very Divine Numen is called, by the Cabalists, MAKOM, that is, Place (*locus*).

¹¹ CN, II, 2402.

¹² See Alexandre Koyré, *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe* (Baltimore, 1957) pp. 110–154, and 235–276.

¹³ Coleridge borrows More's work from Carlisle Cathedral Library from 4 April 1801 to July 1802. See CN, I, 938 note.

¹⁴ See above.

Indeed it would be astonishing and a kind of prodigy if the thing about which so much can be said proved to be a mere nothing.¹⁵

The last of these twenty titles which More lists up is 'Pure Act'. And Coleridge writes 'Space <is one of> the Hebrew names for God/& it is the most perfect image of *Soul, pure Soul*—being indeed to us nothing but unresisted action.'¹⁶

More's 'spiritual substance', or spiritual extension which he posits against Descartes's material extension, is to play an essential role in the history of philosophy. When it is passed on to Locke and Newton, it is appropriated to defend their agnostic, empirical sentiment. In the Leibniz-Clarke correspondence, Leibniz argues that 'there is *no real Space* out of the material Universe' and deems Newton-Clarke's 'infinite empty space' as 'the revival of the odd imagination of Dr. Henry More'.¹⁷ Both parties are in agreement as to what it is they should argue about. It is the absolute, infinite space, that is, ultimately, the transcendent God. Therefore, says Leibniz, it is impossible. But with the same reason More and Newton deem it necessary. The following remark of Koyré well summarizes the basic difference between them: 'the God of Leibniz is not the Newtonian Overlord who makes the world as he wants it and continues to act upon it as the Biblical God did in the first six days of Creation. He is ... the Biblical God on the Sabbath Day, the God who has finished his work and who finds it good'.¹⁸ That is, while Leibniz is determined to remain within

¹⁵ Quoted from Koyré, *ibid*, p. 148. Max Jammer reports that 'As far as his theory of space is concerned, More himself refers to the cabalistic doctrine as explained by Cornelius Agrippa [von Nettersheim] in his *De occulta philosophia*, where space is specified as one of the attributes of God.' Jammer, *Concepts of Space: The History of Theories of Space in Physics* (Cambridge, Mass., 1954) p. 39.

¹⁶ *CN*, II, 2402. Coleridge had written in December 1803, 'Free unresisted action (the going forth of the Soul) Life without Consciousness, properly infinite, i.e. unlimited—'. *CN*, I, 1771.

¹⁷ Koyré, *ibid*, pp. 260, 303 note 25.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 240.

the created world, Newton sends his speculation beyond the limit of the created world towards the absolute space in which '*the Will of God*' prior to the creation resides.¹⁹

Finally, Kant humanizes this Newtonian absolute space and initiates his phenomenology. Coleridge would at this point argue that Kant leaves unsolved the problem between matter and mind and simply adds another insoluble problem between the divine and human minds. Coleridge begins his theological speculation precisely from this point. Kant writes, for example, in *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, 'Space is not an empirical concept which has been derived from outer experiences. For in order that certain sensations be referred to something outside me (that is, to something in another region of space from that in which I find myself) ... the representation of space must be presupposed.' [Der Raum ist kein empirischer Begriff, der von äußeren Erfahrungen abgezogen worden. Denn damit gewisse Empfindungen auf etwas außer mich bezogen werden (d. i. auf etwas in einem andern Orte des Raumes, als darinnen ich mich befinde) ... dazu muß die Vorstellung des Raumes schon zum Grunde liegen.]²⁰ Coleridge would argue that Kant here implicitly admits the duality of space without properly problematizing it. He would never fail to detect the duality between the space 'in which I find myself' and that 'outside me' and point out that such duality is essentially a theological problem. In doing so he appropriates More's argument. In fact, Coleridge's distinction between the divine space without and the human space within is a restatement of More's distinction between 'space' and 'soul'. More writes in *An Antidote Against Atheism* (1653):

¹⁹ In a letter on 11 January 1826, Coleridge ascribes the Leibnizian understanding of the immanent space to 'our Divines' and writes that for them 'The Deity ... was to the Divinities ... as Space to the Diagrams for the Geometrician. The space exists absolutely in each ... but only in these does it exist at all.' That is, they did not understand 'the Absolute, or Causa sui ... essentially unutterable, deeper than all Idea'. Here he claims that he learned this 'deeper philosophy', 'the only one compatible with a *Moral* religion', from the fourth Gospel. *CL*, VI, p. 537. 'The Absolute' here is 'Prothesis' of the Pentad. See Chapter 7, I.

²⁰ Kant, *ibid*, and Smith, *ibid*, B 38.

Wherefore we being assured of this, that there is a spiritual substance in ourselves in which both these properties do resides, viz., of understanding and of moving corporeal matter, let us both enlarge our minds so as to conceive as well as we can of a spiritual substance that is able to move and actuate all matter whatsoever never so far extended, and after what way and manner soever it pleases and that it has not the knowledge only of this or that particular thing, but a distinct and plenary cognoscence of all things; and we have indeed a very competent apprehension of the nature of the eternal and invisible God, who like the soul of man does not indeed fall under sense, but does everywhere operate so, that his presence is easily to be gathered from what is discovered by our outward senses.²¹

Coleridge's difficulty is that he has to argue that 'his presence is easily to be gathered from what is discovered by our outward senses' after accepting Kant's phenomenological argument. In order for that, he first accepts Kant's distinction between matter and mind, and, as the result, subjective human space. And then he also makes a distinction between matter and divine mind, and, as the result, re-introduces objective divine space. Thus he quietly shifts the point of argument from the distinction between matter and mind to that between divine and human minds. And by this shift he attempts to get beyond the limit which Kant sets for his phenomenology.²² In Malta he attempts to 'enlarge our minds so as to conceive as

²¹ Quoted from Gerald R. Cragg, ed., *The Cambridge Platonists* (New York, 1968) p. 193. Coleridge repeatedly reads and quotes in the Notebooks from More's *An Antidote Against Atheism*.

²² Kant's argument that 'limits' are different from 'boundaries' is based on the distinction between matter and mind. His phenomenology argues that mind is 'limited' in its own space, but the space itself has no 'boundaries'. In the *Prolegomena*, Kant writes, 'Boundaries (in extended beings) always presuppose a space which is found outside a certain determined place and encloses it; limits do not need any such thing but are mere negations which affect a quantity in so far as it does not have absolute completeness. But our reason sees so to speak around it a space for knowledge of things in themselves, although it can never have determined concepts of them and is limited merely to experience [appearances] ... human reason recognises

well as we can of a spiritual substance that is able to move and actuate all matter whatsoever never so far extended'.

Coleridge is strongly affected by the sky of Malta. In one occasion he has an opportunity to enact his speculation on space when observing the Maltese sky. He writes in the Notebook:

I have found occasion to meditate on the nature of the sense of magnitudes; and its absolute dependence on the idea of *Substance*; the consequent difference between *magnitude* and *Spaciousness*; the dependence of the idea of substance on double-touch/& thence to evolve all our feelings & ideas of magnitude, magnitudinal sublimity, &c from a scale of our own bodies—²³

The entry begins with the distinction between what appears to be Kant's 'human' space and More's 'divine' space, or rather, between phenomenal 'magnitude' and noumenal 'spaciousness'. With this distinction in mind he suggests that space is not necessarily phenomenal as Kant argues, that is, it is not necessarily dependent on 'a scale of our own bodies'. He writes:

why do I seek for mountains when in the flattest countries the Clouds present so many so much more romantic & *spacious* forms, & the coal-fire so many so much

limits, but no boundaries; i. e. it recognises that something lies outside it, to which it can never reach [Grenzen (bei ausgedehnten Wesen) setzen immer einen Raum voraus, der ausserhalb einem gewissen bestimmten Platz angetroffen wird und ihn einschliesst; Schranken bedürfen dergleichen nicht, sondern sind blose Verneinungen, die eine Grösse afficiren, sofern sie nicht absolute Vollständigkeit hat. Unsere Vernunft aber sieht gleichsam um sich einen Raum für die Erkenntniss der Dinge an sich selbst, ob sie gleich von ihnen niemals bestimmte Begriffe haben kann und nur auf Erscheinungen eingeschränkt ist ... erkennt die menschliche Vernunft zwar Schranken, aber keine Grenzen, d. i. zwar, dass etwas ausser ihr liege, wohin sie niemals gelangen kann]. Kant, *Prolegomena*, in *Werke*, IV, p. 100, and Lucas, *op. cit.*, p. 119. Coleridge's attempt, in this context, can be described as an attempt to resolve 'the limited space' into 'the unlimited space'. See below.

²³ CN, II, 2402.

more varied & lovely forms?—And whence arises the pleasure from musing on the latter/do I not more or less consciously fancy myself a Lilliputian, to whom these would be mountains—& so by this factitious scale makes them mountains, my pleasure being consequently playful, voluntary poem in *hieroglyphics* or picture-writing—"phantoms of Sublimity" which I continue to know to be *phantoms*?—And form itself, is it not its main agency exerted in individualizing the Thing, making it *this*, & *that*, & thereby facilitating this shadowy measurement of it by the scale of my own body?

Drawing on his 'Apologia pro Vita sua', he here tries to show that perception of space is independent of 'the scale of my own body'. In the draft of 'Apologia pro Vita sua' he writes:

his soul emancipates his eyes
Of the accidents of size / ²⁴

'Factitious' scale in the fifth line of the passage quoted above is likely to be a slip for 'fictitious' scale. Since it is 'fictitious', it is free from 'the accident of size'. Then he discloses his intention of this observation. Once he frees his soul from 'the scale of my own body', he finds the possibility of dissolving his soul into divine space, that is, in More's words, 'enlarging our minds so as to conceive as well as we can of a spiritual substance'. He continues:

Yon long not unvaried ridge of Hills that runs out of sight each way, it is *spacious*, & the pleasure derivable from it is from its *running*, its *motion*, its assimilation to action/& here the scale is taken from my *Life*, & *Soul*—not from

²⁴ CN, I, 791. Quoted in full and discussed in Chapter 3, I.

my body. Space <is one of> the Hebrew names for God/& it is the most perfect image of *Soul, pure Soul*—being indeed to us nothing but unresisted action.— ... and thus from the positive *grasp* to the mountain, from the mountain to the Cloud, from the Cloud to the blue depth of Sky, ~~that~~ which, as on the top of Etna in a serene atmosphere, seems to go behind the Sun, all is *gradation*, that precludes division indeed, but not distinction/

In viewing the landscape, he shifts his vision from 'the positive *grasp* to the mountain, from the mountain to the Cloud, from the Cloud to the blue depth of Sky'. It is a vision which aspires to larger and larger expansion until it vanishes into the depth of the sky, that which in its expansion restores the fragmented many into one tableau of gradation. But when he directly looks up the sky, he finds nothing which separates the eye from the sky. At that moment he experiences the immediate union of the sky and the eye, of the depth of 'space' and that of 'soul'. He writes in another Notebook entry:

O that Sky, that soft blue mighty Arch, resting on the mountains of solid Sea-like plain/what a awful adorable omneity in unity. I know no other perfect union of the sublime with the beautiful, that is, so that they should both be felt at the same moment tho' by different faculties yet each faculty predisposed by itself to receive the specific modification from the other. To the eye it is an inverted Goblet, the inside of a ~~gold~~ sapphire Bason; = perfect beauty <in shape and color>; to the mind <it is> immensity, but even the eye <feels as if it were to> look *thro'* with dim sense of the non-differresistence/it is not exactly the feeling ~~from~~ a given to the organ by solid & limited things/the eye itself feels that the limitation is in its own power not in the Object.²⁵

²⁵ CN, II, 2346.

In 'Apologia pro Vita sua' he writes of 'the poet's eye' which 'hath a magnifying power', which emancipates itself from 'the accidents of size.'²⁶ And here it is 'emancipated' even from the objects of vision and immediately dissolved into the depth of the sky. It is as if the space within are diffused to the space without and their distinction resolved. He soon gives this experience a rapturous expression.

Friday–Saturday 12–1 °clock/What a sky, the not yet orbed moon, the spotted oval, blue at one edge from the deep utter Blue of the Sky ... such *profound* Blue, *deep* as a deep river, and deep in color, & those two <depths> so entirely *one* ... Unconsciously I stretched forth my arms as to embrace the Sky, and in a trance I had worshipped God in the Moon/the Spirit not the Form ... O not only the Moon, but the depth of Sky!—the Moon was the *Idea*; but deep Sky is of all visual impressions the nearest akin to a Feeling/it is more a Feeling than a Sight/or rather it is the melting away and entire union of Feeling & Sight/²⁷

He almost embraces the sky. In the end, however, he fails to do so. Or rather, at the moment he embraces the sky, the whole vision turns inside out and brings him back to the point where he had begun the whole speculation, the rigid distinction between within and without. This is how he ends the entry: 'And did I not groan at my unworthiness, & be miserable at my state of Health, its effects, and effect-trebling Causes? O yes!—Me miserable! O yes!—Have Mercy on me, O something *out* of me! For there is no *power*, (and if that *can* be, less *strength*) in aught *within* me! Mercy! Mercy!' Suddenly he is drawn back to confinement within his diseased body, and again his soul is confined within his body. The depth of soul may be dissolved into the depth of the sky only when there is nothing material between them. That is, matter prevents the immediate union of space and soul. But matter may also mediate

²⁶ CN, I, 791.

²⁷ CN, II, 2453.

the space without and the soul within. In pursuit of such possibility, he gradually develops his later theological speculation. And in that the recovery of nature usually means the reconciliation between the divine space without and the human soul within on the horizon of nature.²⁸

II. Coleridge's spatial distinction between 'within' and 'without' the human mind causes two major questions. One is the question concerning the distinction between passivity and activity of human mind, or, the distinction between action 'ab extra' and action 'ab intra'. In this sense what he calls 'materialism' and 'idealism' are based on respectively action 'ab extra' and action 'ab intra'. The other question is whether 'substance' is given 'ab extra' or gained 'ab intra', that is, whether it is given to passive mind or produced by active mind. In the above observation he mentions 'the dependence of the idea of substance on double-touch'. 'Double-touch' in this context represents the fictive creativity of the active human mind, as he includes it among the topics he promises in the twelfth chapter of *Biographia Literaria*.²⁹ His investigation into 'double-touch' provides him with a clue to

²⁸ See the following chapters.

²⁹ *BL*, I, p. 293. Coleridge's speculation on 'double-touch' begins in January 1804. He makes a Notebook entry and writes, 'My Skin deadened, the effect of violent Diarrhoea/My Speculations thence on double Touch—the generation of the Sense of Reality & Life out of us, from the Impersonation effected by a certain phantasm of double Touch, &c &c &c, and thence my Hope of making out a radical distinction between this Volition & Free Will or Arbitrement, & the detection of the Sophistry of the Necessitarians/as having arisen from confounding the two.' *CN*, I, 1827. Here he draws the distinction between 'Volition' and 'Free Will', that is, between passive, unwilling automatism which produces 'phantasm' and active, willing 'generation of the Sense of Reality & Life'. He takes up 'double Touch' again in January 1811 while investigating his nightmare. In this observation he adopts idea and language similar to those he uses for imagination in *Biographia Literaria*. It suggests that he sees 'dreaming' and 'imagination' as basically the same phenomenon distinguished only by the difference between 'Volition' and 'Free Will'. He writes in a Notebook, 'Night-mair is, I think, always—even when it occurs in the midst of Sleep, and not as it more commonly does after a waking Interval, a state not of Sleep but of Stupor of the outward organs of Sense ... while the volitions of Reason i.e. comparing & c, are awake, tho' disturbed. This stupor seems occasioned by some painful sensation ... which withdrawing the attention to itself from its sense of other realities present makes us asleep to them indeed but otherwise awake ... transmits ~~single~~ double Touch as ~~double~~ single Touch: to which the Imagination therefore, the true inward Creatrix,

pursue the possibility of a metaphysic 'ab intra', or, a creative fiction of the active human mind. In July–September 1809 he discusses such possibility in a long Notebook entry. There he names 'metaphysic ab intra' as 'Hypopœ̄sis'.

Hypothesis: the placing of one known fact under others as their *ground* or foundation. Not the fact itself but only its position in a ~~given~~ certain relation is imagined. Where both the position and the fact are imagined, it is Hypopœ̄sis not Hypothesis, subfiction not supposition ... Gravitation therefore is a just philosophical Hypothesis; but the Leibnitzian Monad = punctum physicum, is a fiction—& when applied to the causal explication of phænomena a suffiction—hypopoiesy.³⁰

Here are implicit criticisms both on Newtonian cosmology and Leibnizian monadology. Coleridge detects in the former the unacknowledged participation of 'the imaginative power of man [imaginatrici humanâ]'³¹ which suggests that the Newtonian system is only a hypothesis in spite of Newton's claim to the contrary. To the latter he denies any metaphysical certainty which it claims. He calls it 'hypopoiesy' which begins with fiction and deduces the rest from that fiction.³² The

instantly out of the chaos of the elements <or shattered fragments> of Memory puts together some form to fit it—which derives an over-powering sense of Reality from the circumstance, that the power of Reason being in good measure awake, most generally presents to us all the accompanying images *exactly* as we very nearly as they existed the moment before, when we fell out of anxious wakefulness into this *Reverie*—' *CN*, III, 4046. One may say that 'single Touch' and 'double Touch' respectively correspond to 'the primary imagination' and 'the secondary imagination'. Coleridge suggests that 'single Touch' changes to 'double Touch' when 'single Touch' is suspended by 'stupor' and replaced with 'double Touch' supported by 'the true inward Creatrix'. But this change involves the fall from 'realities' into '*Reverie*'. And whether this '*Reverie*' provides a full recovery from 'the chaos of elements' remains uncertain. For the possible relation of his speculation on 'double-touch' to the secondary imagination, see Chapter 6, I note.

³⁰ *CN*, III, 3587.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² For Coleridge's further references to 'hypopoiesy', see Chapter 7, III note.

former begins with 'fact' and ends in 'fiction'; but the latter postulates 'fiction' in the beginning and by the fictive deduction it only multiplies its own fictitiousness. He continues the entry and examines the extent of the applicability of this fictive human creativity.

Query therefore/whether the assumption of a Deity as the cause of the Universe by those who *deduce* the idea of God from the Universe, and deny that it is a fact of itself, *res posita, sive, datum per se*, ever deserves the name of an *Hypothesis*. For what is the *res posita* ~~that~~ *quæ hic supponitur*—? *mens humana*: as in the former case the fall of heavy bodies—. Well, extend the latter in *universum*, but only *add* nothing—& what becomes of creation?

Leibniz may or may not 'deny' God as 'a fact of itself'. But what Coleridge understands as Leibnizian deduction certainly generates the impression that 'the idea of God' is somehow dependent on that deduction. Coleridge is at pains to deny the certainty of the metaphysical claim of the Leibnizian system which originates in 'the human mind' and refers back to God. But he is in no sense dismissive of the system itself. On the contrary, he believes that once the system is successfully purged of the undue claim, once it is properly regarded as nothing but 'suffiction', it deserves a further examination. He believes that he can 'extend' the human fiction 'in *universum*'. Certainly it would '*add* nothing'. And he asks the question concerning the belonging of the whole creation. He wonders whether it lies 'within' or 'without' the human mind; he asks, 'what becomes of creation?' Then he continues:

—I here take in the fact that these same deducers deny the spontaneity of the Will. For let it be granted, that in the higher Volition, (*facultas volitionis superior—das obere Begehrungs-vermögen*) not only the form but even likewise the Stuff or Matter is produced (= *hervorgebracht*) we doubtless get farther on toward a

first hypothesis—For that the thing produced is spiritual in the one, and material in the other, even supposing that we were under the necessity of affirming the absolute heterogeneity of Matter & Mind, & that it were not possible (as it is in reality not only possible but more easy) to conceive the World as an aggregate of Representations, or modifications of Mind—

To his own question he provides a Fichtean answer that everything originates from the human mind. He says, 'we assuredly are justified in magnifying this power, & universalizing it'.³³ Kathleen Coburn points out that 'das obere Begehrungsvermögen' comes from the second edition of Fichte's *Versuch einer Kritik aller Offenbarung* (Königsberg, 1793), which he reads and annotates repeatedly.³⁴ But he also expresses his reluctance to accept this argument and refers to 'the necessity of affirming the absolute heterogeneity of Matter & Mind'. What he does is to call the human mind 'a first hypothesis' and implies that all the Fichtean principle is 'suffiction'. Thus even after agreeing with Fichte's argument and admitting the ethical dimension concerning 'the spontaneity of the Will', he still believes that there is something beyond the human mind, that the human mind is originally passive to that 'something'. That is, he still believes that fictive creation of the human mind is 're'-creation.³⁵

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid., note.

35 Coleridge writes the following marginal note in the first two pages of his copy of *Versuch einer Kritik aller Offenbarung* presumably at the beginning of his reading. He writes of 'inward & indescribable experiences' that 'they all alike are sensations, which, whether desired or undesired, make the Mind passive—for tho' we in common usage we appropriate suffering to that, which we suffer unwillingly (or considered in itself) yet ‡ in fact we suffer pleasure even as we suffer pain.—They are within us as if yet they were without—& stand as the supporting stratum of the Perceptions, which there too are properly within us or rather on the surface, yet represent themselves as without'. And he concludes the note as follows, 'Perception = sensations so minute as to excite the *activity* of the mind by its re-action on the momentary passion—' *CM*, II, p. 639.

Thus Coleridge carefully distinguishes his version of Leibnizian 'Hypopœ̄sis' both from Newtonian 'hypothetic' cosmology and from Fichtean idealism. He certainly sees that such distinction is a necessary procedure when he 'extends it in universum'. Then he continues the entry and gradually discloses what he has in mind.

But it will be my business to set forth an orderly proof, that Atheism is the necessary Consequence or Corollary of the Hartleian Theory of the Will conjoined with his Theory of Thought & Action in genere—Words as distinguished from mere pulses of Air in the auditory nerve must correspond to Thoughts, and Thoughts is but the verb-substantive Participle Preterite of *Thing* ... If therefore we have no will, what is the meaning of the word? It is a word without a Thought—or else a Thought without a Thing, which is a blank contradiction/*reata absque re—materiata sine materia. Verba viventia—imo, literæ viventes—natural music—natural dancing—gestures or natura παντομιμικα.* Refer to Lord Bacon's *impressio communis—unum vestigiolum in sensus varios—/*

It turns out that he has been trying 'to destroy the old antithesis of *Words & Things*'.³⁶ That is, he has been arguing that there is no possibility of '*Words*' in the Newtonian system, and that there is no possibility of '*Things*' in the Fichtean idealism. This etymological speculation is in fact his doctrine of '*Words*' which, he believes, brings back the reconciliation between thing and thought, between passivity and activity, between the present and the past, or, the presence and the

³⁶ *CL*, I, p. 625. See Chapter 3, II. That 'Thoughts is but the verb-substantive Participle Preterite of *Thing*' is the point which Coleridge later repeats in the *Logic*. Consideration of its theological implication eventually leads him to the formation of the Pentad. See Chapter 7, III.

absence, all at once.³⁷ But in attempting to re-introduce the Leibnizian system, he avoids making it exclusively divine or human. He admits into the system 'the spontaneity of the Will'. That is, implicitly, he admits the essential twofoldness of 'the Will' between God and man.³⁸ Therefore, the reconciliation he pursues here is ultimately a theological one. From a human point of view, it is the reconciliation between 'I am *thinged*' and 'I thing or think', or, between body and mind. Coleridge's self-denaturalization, his painful alienation from all the wonders in nature thus turns out to have been the search for the creative will within himself which produces, and cannot but produce 'pantomimic nature'. That is to say, when he finds what he seeks for, when he completes his 'denaturalization', the whole recovery of very nature begins anew in the form of 'Hypopœēsis'. He continues:

By what steps am I to ascend?—1. To abstract whatever is common to all, that is, to discover some definition which will apply to all and each—Idea generica, universalis. This will be the giant difficulty.

2. primary Association. 3. Accidental association. 4. Analogy, 5. Analogical Wit. N.B. In what stage commences the agency of the vis imitativa? In the first? or as a connecting Link between the first & second?. A stringed Instrument—the wind sweeps at once over all the strings, and all parts of each at once—2: One or one part of it, is struck—& yet propagates the vibration thro' all.

³⁷ The passage quoted above has a detailed Latin etymology concerning 'thinging' and 'thinking' which is the expansion of the one he adopted in describing Miss Theta. He writes, 'So in Latin/*Res*, a *thing*—*reor*, I *think*—and observe the passive termination of the verb, which is a verb middle or deponent, i.e. an active-passive—an action upon a passion. *Res* = thing: *res in præsenti* = thinking, i.e. *thinging*, or thing out of me = a thing in me—it is a thing-thing—*reata*, *res preterita*, a thought—a thing representative of what was but is not present—Thought is the participle past of Thing—a thing acts on me but not on me as purely passive, which is the case in all *affection*, *affectus*, but *res agit in co-agentem*—in the first, I am *thinged*, in the latter I thing or think—*Rem reor*—*reatam rursus reor*.' For the description of Miss Theta, see *CN*, II, 2784. See also Chapter 4, IV and Chapter 6, I.

³⁸ Coleridge works on this problem in 'Confessio Fidei' 1810. See below.

3. The facilitation of the latter from the precedence of the former—N.B. The spontaneity of man, what share has it? how does it act, if at all?

Active human mind causes the change in the direction of action. He illustrates this change by drawing on 'a stringed Instrument', probably an Eolian harp, which is no longer played 'ab extra' but also 'ab intra'. When the human mind ceases to be played 'ab extra', it begins to play on itself 'ab intra' and produce either 'Hypothesis' or 'Hypopœēsis'. Both 'Hypo'thesis and 'Hypo'pœēsis are secondary and 'fallen' in that sense. The only difference is that while 'Hypothesis' cannot but remain fallen, 'Hypopœēsis' gives an opportunity to ascend again. In spite of its 'giant difficulty', the first step of ascent has already been taken, at least theoretically, in Malta with the inception of the active human mind as 'Forma efformans'. Now it becomes the first creative will and aims at its goal, 'Analogical Wit', that is, wisdom in fiction. Here its act ranges from producing 'mere pulses of Air' to achieving 'Analogical Wit', from making vocal sound to making sense, in short, all that is to speak. With this interpretation of 'Word', what he saw in a dream in Malta, the assignment given to Devil to imitate 'creatio ex nihilo', here becomes clearly salvific. But he is still a quester. He asks the question which brings the whole of the above speculation back to the starting point, 'the giant difficulty'. He asks, 'the spontaneity of man, what share has it? how does it act, if at all?'

III. Coleridge's 'Confessio Fidei' (1810) is the first substantial statement of his Trinitarian theology.³⁹ It is a compilation of two arguments, one theological and the other philosophical. The theological argument proposes that his Trinitarian theology

³⁹ CN, III, 4005. Coleridge's dejection is probably at the deepest in 1810. See Jasper, *op. cit.*, pp. 93–4. It is the time when his hope for personal recovery gets finally shattered in the real sense. Separation from Sara Hutchinson in March and quarrel with Wordsworth in October mean to him the end of his lingering hope. In this sense 'Confessio Fidei' is an expression of his hope which he can only express in a theological language.

is different from Unitarian theology which he ceases to regard as theology. The philosophical argument proposes that Kantian ethics is essentially insufficient for a man like Coleridge who believes that his personal problems may be dealt with only in theological terms. At the heart of these arguments is the problem of two natures, in his word, the problem of 'Man's double Nature ... as Man and God'.⁴⁰ In the theological context, it is the problem of 'the original corruption of our nature'.⁴¹ He argues in 'Confessio Fidei' that Unitarianism does not deal with the problem in the first place, and that Kantian ethics fall short of settling the problem.

It is around 1800 that Coleridge begins to reconsider his early devotion to Unitarianism. It is the time when he begins to struggle with the problem of 'two natures'. When he recognises the problem, he immediately attempts to settle it by referring to 'the nature & being of Christ' and gradually departs from Unitarianism. He mentions his 'Confessio Fidei' for the first time in a letter to John Prior Estlin, a Unitarian minister, on 26 July 1802. There he declares, 'you will see my *Confessio Fidei*, which as far as regards the Doctrine of Trinity is *negative* Unitarianism—a non liquet concerning the nature & being of Christ—but a condemnation of the Trinitarians as being wise beyond what is written.⁴² It is quite accurate to describe his position as '*negative* Unitarianism' when his personal problems demand a radical reconsideration of his early belief in Unitarianism. It should be noted here also that he shows no intention of accepting 'conventional' Trinitarianism. As he makes clear later, his Trinitarian theology is the result of the reconsideration of his own Unitarianism.⁴³ The difference between Coleridge's Trinitarianism and Unitarianism is closely related to the different understanding of the Fall. For the

⁴⁰ *CN*, I, 1710. Quoted in full and discussed in Chapter 4, III.

⁴¹ *CL*, II, p. 821–2. Quoted in full and discussed below.

⁴² *CL*, II, p. 821.

⁴³ On 23 June 1834 he is recorded to say, 'I owe, under God, my return to the faith to my having gone much further than the Unitarians, and so came round to the other extreme.' *TT*, I, pp. 488–9.

problem of two natures, understood by Coleridge, is the problem of corrupt human nature caused by the Fall. In the letter he continues:

On the subjects of the original corruption of our Nature, the doctrines of Redemption, Regeneration, Grace, & Justification by Faith my convictions are altogether different from those of Drs. Priestley, Lindsey, & Disney—neither do I conceive Christianity to be tenable on the Priestleyan Hypothesis ... My dear Friend—believe no idle Reports concerning me/*if* I differ from you, & *wherein* I differ from you, it will be that I believe *on the whole more* than you, not less—

From his point of view 'Drs. Priestley, Lindsey, & Disney' are Unitarians who fail to deal with the problem of 'the original corruption of our nature'. The problem, he would argue, is at the centre of Christian theology. In 'Confessio Fidei', calling the Unitarian a 'Psilanthropist', he declares, 'if the ~~Trinitarian~~ Theanthropist is a Christian, the Psilanthropist cannot be so'. According to him, the latter is not Christian because he avoids the problem of two natures in the first place and ignores all the subsequent theological attempts to settle the overwhelming problem of 'theanthropy'. It is of interest that Coleridge paraphrases 'Trinitarian' as 'Theanthropist'. It clearly indicates that his 'Trinitarianism' is theanthropism, and that it is the result of the theological modification of his early Unitarianism.⁴⁴

Coleridge repeats the same argument in a letter to his brother George, an Anglican priest. He writes to him on 1 July 1802 and says, 'I ... have convinced myself, that the Socinian & Arian Hypotheses are utterly untenable; but what to put in their place? I find [nothing so] distinctly revealed, that I should dare to impose my opinion as an article of Faith on others—on the contrary, I hold it probable that the Nature of the Being of Christ is left in obscurity'.⁴⁵ What he has in mind is

⁴⁴ See *CN*, I, 1710. Quoted in Chapter 4, III.

⁴⁵ *CL*, II, p. 807.

Original Sin, or, 'an original corruption in our nature'. Thus, he speculates that discussion on 'the Nature of the Being of Christ' may have something to do with the recovery from that corruption. He continues:

My Faith is simply this—that there is an original corruption in our nature, from which & from the consequences of which, we may be redeemed by Christ—not as the Socinians say, by his pure morals or excellent Example merely—but in a mysterious manner as an effect of his Crucifixion—and this I believe—not because I *understand* it; but because I *feel*, that it is not only suitable to, but needful for, my nature.

Here he expresses his hope of recovery 'in a mysterious manner' which is essentially different from recovery by 'pure morals'. When he makes a distinction between his Trinitarian theology and Kantian ethics, he repeats basically the same argument. In 'Confessio Fidei' he writes of Original Sin, 'This fearful Mystery I pretend not to understand—I cannot even conceive the possibility of it—but I know, that it is so!' Thus Coleridge's Trinitarianism involves a 'mysterious' fall and an equally 'mysterious' recovery. And this is the point at which he draws the distinction between his theology and Kantian ethics.

In order to make this point clear, Coleridge argues in 'Confessio Fidei' that 'Natural Religion' is different from 'Revealed Religion': in his words, that Adam's religion is different from Coleridge's religion. In this argument, he first rewrites Kantian ethics into Adam's religion, and then draws the distinction between it and his own, 'Revealed Religion'. He writes at the end of the first half of 'Confessio Fidei':

Here ends the first Table of my Creed, which would have been my Creed, had I been born with Adam; and which therefore constitutes what may in this sense be

called Natural Religion, i.e. the Religion of all finite rational Beings. The second Tables contains the Creed of Revealed Religion, my Belief as a Christian.

'Natural Religion' in 'Confessio Fidei' is arguably a recapitulation of Kantian ethics, for it begins with the assertion of human freedom. But Coleridge rewrites two crucial points of Kant's argument in order to make it Adam's religion. First, he rewrites Kant's phenomenological argument as follows:

The wonderful Works of God in the sensible World are a perpetual Discourse, reminding me of his Existence, and Shadowing out to me his perfections. But as all Language presupposes in the intelligent Hearer or Reader those primary notions, which it symbolizes, as well as the power of making those combinations of these primary notions, which it represents & excites us to combine—

Kant's phenomenology begins when such 'a perpetual Discourse' ceases. He repeatedly argues that 'those primary notions' which are inherent in 'the intelligent Hearer and Reader' do not presuppose such 'a perpetual Discourse'. That is, man is 'free' from it. In fact, Kant repeatedly argues for the a priori status of 'those primary notions' over such 'a perpetual Discourse'. But Coleridge, while postulating human freedom in the beginning, remains indecisive about human 'priority'. He here suppresses Kant's argument that human 'priority', or independence, is necessary for human freedom. Obviously, if he follows Kant's argument for human freedom and accepts human 'priority' over 'a perpetual Discourse', he cannot write of Adam's religion. Secondly, while Kant argues for the ethical autonomy of man, Coleridge maintains that the human will should be balanced with the divine will. He writes in 'Confessio Fidei', 'all holy Will is coincident with the Will of God, and therefore secure in its ultimate Consequences by his Omnipotence'. It is the same indecisiveness which holds him from taking human freedom as the first principle.

Here by saying 'coincidence' he retains the possibility of arguing that human freedom is secondary to divine freedom.⁴⁶

It is his reluctance towards human autonomy that allows him to write of Adam's religion. He has to hold divine creation prior to human perception, divine providence prior to human ethics, in order to do so. There is another example of such an attempt from *The Friend* (1809). Quoting the passage from 'Frost at Midnight' which is dedicated to his 'babe', he writes:

With this Faith all Nature

_____all the mighty World

Of Eye and Ear_____

presents itself to us, now as the Aggregate *Materials* of Duty, and now as a Vision of the Most High revealing to us the mode, and time, and particular instance of applying the realizing that universal Rule, pre-established in the Heart of our Reason: as

That lovely shapes and sounds intelligible

Of that Eternal Language, which our God

⁴⁶ In *The Friend* (1809) Coleridge makes the same attempt to situate Kant's argument in the theological framework. He writes, 'God created Man in his own Image: to be the Image of his own Eternity and Infinity created he Man. He gave us Reason and with Reason Ideas of its own formation and undervived from material Nature, self-consciousness, Principles, and above all , the Law of Conscience, which in the power of an holy and omnipotent Being *commands* us to attribute Reality—among the numerous Ideas mathematical or philosophical, which the Reason by the necessity of its own excellence, creates for itself—to those, (and to those only) without which the Conscience would be baseless and contradictory; namely, to the Ideas of Soul, the Free Will, Immortality, and God.' *Friend*, II, pp. 78–9.

Utters: Who from Eternity doth teach
Himself in all, and all things in Himself!⁴⁷

Here is a hint of Leibnizian pre-established harmony which integrates human perception within divine creation, human freedom within divine providence. But there comes the moment when man ceases to be a 'babe', or, Adam. It is the moment, according to Coleridge, when the human nature becomes separate from the divine nature, that is, when man moves from 'Natural Religion' to 'Revealed Religion'.

It is interesting to see how Coleridge's acceptance of Kantian phenomenology and freedom eventually leads him to his Trinitarianism. It is distinctly different from Kantian ethics. But they are closely related to the extent that Coleridge's theology is a rewriting of Kant's ethics. In September–October 1810, a month before he writes 'Confessio Fidei', he expresses his phenomenological anxiety and suggests a theological resolution to it. He writes in a Notebook:

all Perception—i.e., intuition is sensuous—ergo, passive—ergo, not in God—ergo, Space & Time not in God—But except under the forms Space and Time we can predicate nothing, can bring no one even of the most abstract intellections to consciousness—What follows?—That concerning God we can neither talk sense or nonsense—except as far we talk piously or impiously—that is—that which relatively to human nature in genere, & not in accidental associations, elevates & creates Love & Awe towards him/⁴⁸

As seen above, when he follows Kant and accepts the phenomenological argument, he 'frees' himself from the divine 'perpetual Discourse'. The difference between Kant and Coleridge is that in Coleridge what follows after accepting this freedom is not

⁴⁷ *Friend*, II, pp. 79–81.

⁴⁸ *CN*, III, 3973.

triumphant human autonomy nor self-reliance but piety. That is, Coleridge still sees human freedom not so much as liberation but as loss of the divine 'perpetual Discourse'. Putting this point aside, Coleridge accepts Kant's phenomenological argument and acknowledges agnosticism. About the same time he illustrates two distinct ways to respond to agnosticism. He writes:

The more I read & reflect on the arguments of the truly philosophical Theists & Atheists, the more I feel convinced that the ultimate difference is a moral rather than intellectual one ... an acknowledged Insufficiency of the Known to account for itself, and therefore a something Unknown—but to which the Theist dedicates his noblest feelings of Love, & Awe, & by a moral syllogism connects & unites it with his Conscience & Actions—while the Atheist leaves it a blank in the Heart, because it is a Blank in his Understanding.⁴⁹

He here makes an arguably 'Kantian' ethical argument and draws a 'moral' distinction between those who aim at 'Conscience & Actions' and those who do not. But it is Coleridge who places the argument in an overtly theological context. Moreover, he quietly suggests that 'Love & Awe' may be prior to 'Conscience & Actions'.

Coleridge fully accepts Kant's argument for freedom. He writes in January–February 1810, 'Freedom (i.e. Arbitrium, Free Will)—the *verbal* Definition of—The faculty of absolutely *beginning* any state—einen Zustand (Seyn oder Bestehen) absolut anzufangen—the *real* definition; the faculty of Causality thro' or by Thought alone—or Thought actually causative.'⁵⁰ Kathleen Coburn suggests that 'Coleridge translates what appears to be his own German'. If that is the case, the entry vindicates Kant's strong influence on Coleridge in regard to the understanding of

⁴⁹ *CN*, III, 4030.

⁵⁰ *CN*, III, 3676 and note.

freedom. Certainly the passage has a strong resonance with Kant's argument that 'freedom' is outside 'natural necessity'. Kant writes in the *Prolegomena*:

Ist aber Naturnothwendigkeit blos auf Erscheinungen bezogen, und Freiheit blos auf Dinge an sich selbst, so entspringt kein Widerspruch,

muss ... Naturnothwendigkeit die Bedingung sein, nach welcher die wirkenden Ursachen bestimmt werden. Soll dagegen Freiheit eine Eigenschaft gewisser Ursachen der Erscheinungen sein, so muss sie, respective auf die letzteren als Begebenheiten, ein Vermögen sein, sie von selbst (*sponte*) anzufangen,

[But if natural necessity is referred only to appearances, and freedom merely to things in themselves, no contradiction arises.

... natural necessity must be the condition according to which effective causes are determined. But, if freedom is to be a property of certain causes of appearances, it must be, with respect to the latter as events, a faculty of beginning them *of itself (sponte)*.]⁵¹

Soon Coleridge rephrases Kant's distinction between 'natural necessity' and 'freedom' as that between 'ontosophical' and 'anthropological' philosophies. In February–April 1810 he writes, 'Only two *Systems* of Philosophy—(sibi consistentia) possible 1. Spinoza 2 Kant, i.e. the absolute & the relative, the *κατ' οντως οντα*, and the *κατ' ανθρωπον*. or 1 ontosophical, 2 the anthropological.'⁵² And he, following Kant, makes it clear that in order to initiate ethical argument he has to insist on the latter's priority over the former, that is, in Kantian terms, the practical reason over the speculative reason. In May 1810 he refers to 'the proof of the dependence of the speculative on the practical Reason' and argues that 'all reasoning commences

⁵¹ Kant, *Werke*, IV, p. 91, and Lucas, op. cit., pp. 108–9.

⁵² *CN*, III, 3756.

with a *Postulate* i.e. an *act*.⁵³ But what he has in mind is not ethics as such but religion. 'Ontosophical' and 'anthropological' philosophies are in Coleridgean terms 'moral' and 'material' revelations. He repeats the same argument for the priority of the practical over the speculative reasons in the long Notebook entry titled 'Religion', which is one of his important preparations for 'Confessio Fidei'. He writes, 'Religion has no *speculative* dogmas—but all practical—all appealing to the will, & therefore all imperative', therefore 'my outward senses—the subjugation of which to *Faith*, i.e. the passive to the actional & self-created Belief—is the Great Object of Religion'.⁵⁴ It should be noticed here that Coleridge's 'Great Object' is 'self-created Belief' and not self-created maxim. Thus while following Kantian argument, he leaves himself the possibility of rewriting Kantian ethics in theological terms.⁵⁵

Up to this point Coleridge follows Kant's distinction between 'natural necessity' and 'freedom'. Even when he shifts the argument into the religious dimension, he maintains essentially the same distinction. But when he exercises this ethical/religious argument for himself, he finds the need for a radically different distinction. As the result, in 'Confessio Fidei' he sets up a theological distinction between 'Natural Religion' and 'Revealed Religion'. The crucial point is that while the former presupposes 'coincidence' between Kantian 'natural necessity' and 'freedom', the latter never assumes such 'coincidence'. Already by this distinction

⁵³ CN, III, 3802.

⁵⁴ CN, III, 3581.

⁵⁵ There is little doubt that he fully absorbs Kant's ethical argument. For an example, he writes in a Notebook in March 1808, 'O what an awful Being is Conscience! and how infra-bestial the Locks, Priestleys, Humes, Condilliacs and the dehumanizing race of fashionable Metaphysicians. *Metapothecaries*, said one *sportively*, but I *seriously*, should say *Cataphysicians* (i.e. *Contranaturalists*) when I spoke of them as *Agents*; but when I regard them merely in *themselves* & *passive*, I should call them *Hypophysicians*, i.e. *below Nature*. *Zwoophytes?*—Nay, there is no contradiction in any thing but degraded man.' CN, III, 3281. Kant uses the word 'hypophysisch' in *Grundlegung der Metaphysik der Sitten* to criticize one of the 'popular philosophies' which he would not regard as properly a 'metaphysic'. Kant, *Werke*, IV, p. 258.

Coleridge implicitly argues that human freedom which lies outside natural necessity is in itself a problem. And he fully articulates his point in 'Confessio Fidei': 'I am of myself capable of moral evil, but not of myself capable of moral good'. For Coleridge the loss of the divine 'perpetual Discourse' in nature which precedes all the phenomenological and ethical arguments is essentially a theological matter. That is, he sees the event as the Fall from nature. By that Fall human nature becomes separate from divine nature and caught in the insoluble problem of two natures. And his 'incapability' of moral good and subsequent need of salvation are the necessary consequences of that Fall. He writes in June 1810:

the importance of any *act* in restoring the mind from its wanderings, the servitude of mere association, by strengthening & re-enlivening the *Will* ... an Æolian Harp was moaning in my window—what if this had been an appointed part of religious furniture, like the crucifix—and ~~an end~~ a means, to which a promise of grace had been affixed—⁵⁶

Coleridge's 'Natural Religion' includes the freedom of man. It is not by necessity but by 'coincidence' that the human will is reconciled with the divine will. And his 'Revealed Religion' describes the situation in which such 'coincidence' is theologically impossible. He makes clear his view on the problem of 'Evil' in *The Friend* on 1 June 1809, 'there is Evil distinct from Error and from Pain, an Evil in human nature which is not wholly grounded in the limitation of our understandings.'⁵⁷ And this is his personal problem. He writes in 'Confessio Fidei', 'I am of myself capable of moral evil, but not of myself capable of moral good, and ... Guilt is justly imputable to be me prior to any given act, or assignable moment of time, in my Consciousness.' He calls this a 'fearful Mystery' and gives up further

⁵⁶ *CN*, III, 3909.

⁵⁷ *Friend*, II, p. 9.

explanation. But he clearly understands that because of this 'fearful Mystery' it becomes theologically impossible for God and man to 'coincide'. In June 1810 he writes;

Conditions of human Virtue/—That there is a Being, whose will comprizes in itself Goodness, Wisdom, & Power in the plenitude of Perfection—That Man is not that Being—that Man possesses a free Will separable from perfect Reason, & yet by the very act of separation ceasing to be free, and retaining one sole relict of freedom, *Guilt!* the Guilt of Suicide!—God manifests himself to Man, as a Legislator, by the Law of Universal Reason, the *obedience* to which is not only perfect Freedom, but the only possible Freedom: the Law appealing to the Free Will, i.e. Reason with the consciousness of Will is Conscience—/Where there is no Law, there must be Tyranny—⁵⁸

In 'Natural Religion' God is a speaker of 'a perpetual Discourse' in nature. But outside it he is 'a legislator' of the law. Coleridge here adopts philosophical and ethical terms such as 'Freedom', 'Will', or 'Reason', but he clearly shows that his acknowledged inability to observe this divine legislation is beyond ethical argument.

The problem of two natures is not a problem in 'Natural Religion'. But outside 'Natural Religion' it is an insoluble problem. As seen above, Coleridge implicitly argues that Kant's ethical argument is useless since it works only within 'Natural Religion'. At this point he adopts the doctrine of the incarnation to deal with the problem. He thus sets up his Trinitarian, or, theanthropic theology. In 'Confessio Fidei' he writes, 'I receive with full and grateful Faith the assurance of Revelation, that the Word which is from all eternity with God and is God, assumed our human nature in order to redeem me and all mankind from this our connate Corruption.' In

⁵⁸ CN, III, 3866.

July–September 1809, relying on this notion of the incarnation, he summarizes his own development from 'ontosophical' philosophy to 'anthropological' philosophy, and finally hints at his theanthropic resolution. He writes:

An idea has just occurred to me—it seems important. Is not *Sin*, or Guilt, the first thing that makes the idea of a God necessary, instead of *το θελον*—therefore is not the incarnation a beautiful consequence & revelation of the *το θελον* first revealing itself as *ὁ Θεος*? ... To see the Gospel in a new light again—& again read Spinoza—to think vices mere necessitated movements, relative only as stench or roughness, we *know* to be false—but take it in the Kantian idea, as the Anti-type of the moral Law—suppose it like Cohesion—as that simply causing coherence, so this essentially demanding *morality*—& what becomes of Sinners? I feel the Clouds—yet sure there is something here.—⁵⁹

By asking 'what becomes of Sinners?', he makes clear his view that there is no salvation in Kant's ethics. 'Something' he seeks here is obviously a salvation, or, as he writes in 'Confessio Fidei', 'an effort of my mind to conceive the utmost of the infinite greatness of that [Divine] Love'.

Kant's ethical argument implies that speculative, passive reason is dependent on practical, active reason. Kant's ethics are based on a particularly active principle. Coleridge's theology, in contrast, seeks the mediation of passivity and activity. Probably around July–September 1809 he writes in a margin of Kant's *Metaphysik der Sitten*:

There are two mighty mysteries to begins with it—Action and Passion (or passive action)—and Love is a Synthesis of these, in which each is the other—and as it is

⁵⁹ CN, III, 3510.

only a Synthesis, or one of the Syntheses, of Action and Passion, other discoveries must be made in order to know the principle that individuates this particular Synthesis—for instance, we must master the principle of Individuation in general, and then the principle of Personality—Action + Passion = Εγω + Ουκ εγω. Εγω = Εγω: Ουκ εγω = ουκ εγω—yet Ουκ εγω = Εγω, and Εγω = ουκ εγω by an act which is yet a passion = Love: *Mysterium finale*.⁶⁰

Each individual suffers from the paradox of passivity and activity. 'I' is simultaneously passive and active towards 'Not I', the other. Therefore, he argues, it has to seek for mediation, which he here calls 'Love', or, 'Mysterium finale'. In *Die Metaphysik der Sitten* Kant dismisses 'love' as a passive principle and therefore having nothing to do with ethics. He says, 'Love is a matter of *feeling*, not of will, and I cannot love because I *will* to, still less because I *ought* to (i.e. I cannot be necessitated to love). So a *duty to love* is logically impossible.' [L i e b e ist eine Sache der E m p f i n d u n g, nicht des Wollens, und ich kann nicht lieben weil ich w i l l , noch weniger aber, weil ich s o l l , (zur Liebe genöthigt werden;) mithin ist eine P f l i c h t z u l i e b e n ein Unding.]⁶¹ To this passage Coleridge responds and writes the following marginal note:

If I say, I doubt this independence of Love on the Will, and doubt even Love's being in its essence merely eine Sache der Empfindung, a mere matter of *feeling*, i.e. a somewhat *found* in us which is not of and from us/Emp.-(= in sich)-Findung, I mean only that my Thoughts are not distinct much less adequate on the subject—and I am not able to convey any grounds of my Belief of the Contrary. But the Contrary I *do* believe. What Kant affirms of Man in the state of Adam, and ineffable act of the will choosing evil & which is underneath or within the

⁶⁰ *CM*, III, p. 266.

⁶¹ Kant, *Werke*, VII, p. 205, and *CM*, III, p. 264.

consciousness tho' incarnate in the *conscience*, inasmuch as it must be conceived as taking place in the Homo Νουμενον, not Homo φαينوμενον—something like this I conceive of *Love*—in that highest sense of the Word.⁶²

It is clear that Coleridge has to insist that 'love' is both passive and active, for he expects '*Love*—in that highest sense of the Word' to be the principle which solves the insoluble problem caused by the Fall.

Coleridge places 'love' not only at the centre of his ethical argument but also of his epistemological speculation. That is, he expects 'love' to save him not only from freedom but also from phenomena. In February–May 1807 he attempts to solve the problem of phenomena and the following problem of self-consciousness by referring to 'love'.

All our Thoughts all that we abstract from our consciousness & so form the Phænomenon Self is a Shadow, its whole Substance is the dim yet powerful sense that it is but a Shadow, & ought to belong to a Substance/but this Substance can have no marks, no discriminating Characters, no hic est, ille non est/it is simply Substance—& this deepliest felt during particular phænomena with a consciousness that the phænomenon is in us but *it* not in the phænomenon, for which alone we yet value the phænomenon, constitutes the craving of True Love. Love a sense of Substance/Being seeking to be self-conscious, 1. of itself in a Symbol. 2. of the Symbol as not being itself. 3. of the Symbol as being nothing but in relation to itself—& necessitating a return to the first state, Scientia absoluta.⁶³

⁶² *CM*, III, pp. 264–5

⁶³ *CN*, II, 3026.

'Love' thus occasions the symbolic mediation between noumenon and phenomenon. Theologically speaking, 'love' occasions the symbolic reconciliation between God and man. And the symbolic reconciliation between God and man has been at the heart of his argument about the sacrament. In April–June 1810 he plans an 'Ode on the Eucharist' and writes:

Great allegorical Reality—
Substance & Symbol!—⁶⁴

For Coleridge, however, the symbolic mediation is an unstable, critical mediation. That is, in the sacrament he does not tolerate 'the thing signifying ... idolatrized into the thing signified'.⁶⁵ He had already made the same point in Malta and wrote: 'all expressions belong to the world of Sense—to phænomena/all are contingent, local, here this, there another/but when ennobled into symbols of Noumena, it is a common & venial error to forget the vileness in the worth, to confound not to analyse—the contingent symbol with the divine Necessity = *Νουμενον*'.⁶⁶ It is his critical mind which resists 'the idolatry' of symbol, that is, it is he who resists the identity of divine and human natures. Thus the solution he offers here for the problem of two natures is a theological one, that is, it does not actually 'solve' the insoluble problem but only allows him to express his hope of possible solution. He repeats the same argument in 'Confessio Fidei' and says, 'his miraculous Birth, his agony, his Crucifixion, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension, were all both Symbols of our Redemption (*φαινομενα των Νουμενων*) and necessary parts of the awful process.'

⁶⁴ CN, III, 3765.

⁶⁵ CN, III, 4044. Coleridge writes, 'were the Symbolical Doctrine then held, nothing is more natural than that in the lapse of years the thing signifying should be idolatrized into the thing signified—secundum analogiam Historiæ per orbem terrarum/<N.B. A Mistake this, from my confounding the Love-feast with the preceding Eucharist/>'

⁶⁶ CN, II, 2664.

Chapter 6. Transcendentalism in *Biographia Literaria*

I. Coleridge's attempt to rewrite Kant gradually takes a more systematic form from around 1810. At the time when he 'rewrites' Kant's ethics in 'Confessio Fidei', he also begins to reconsider the basic arguments which constitute Kant's epistemology. The point of the argument is the theological recognition of man's fall from nature. The division between 'Natural Religion' and 'Revealed Religion' in 'Confessio Fidei' is a radical revision of Kant's distinction between natural and moral religion, for in spite of Kant's argument to the contrary Coleridge includes in 'Natural Religion' man who successfully fulfils the Kantian ethical demand, in his word, 'Adam'. Outside 'Natural Religion' lies 'Revealed Religion', which is, no doubt, Coleridge's religion. There is no discussion in 'Confessio Fidei' as to how 'Revealed Religion' stands to the lost 'Natural Religion', nor any suggestion that the final purpose of 'Revealed Religion' should be the recovery of 'Natural Religion'. But Coleridge simply shifts back from ethics to epistemology, and within epistemological argument he attempts to recover the notion of divine nature. It is this attempt that leads him to his definitions of 'the primary imagination', 'the secondary imagination' and 'fancy' in *Biographia Literaria*.¹

Coleridge never disregards Kant's phenomenological argument. On the contrary he carefully examines it and detects precisely what problem it poses for him. Around 1810 he begins to make extensive notebook entries about this problem. He writes in August–September 1809:

What is the common principle of the Philosophical Systems of Des Cartes, (Locke?) Berkley, Hume, and Kant? That Our Senses in no way acquaint us with Things, as they are in and of themselves: that the properties, which we attribute

¹ *BL*, I, pp. 304–5.

to Things without us, yea, that this very *Outness*, are not strictly properties of the things themselves, but either constituents or modifications of our own minds ... we know only the Impressions made on us by unknown *Ουκ ἐφ' ἡμῶν*, or <by> unknown workings *ἐφ' ἡμῶν*; these Impressions which we call Things, are truly only Ideas, or Representations, which change with the changes of the representative Faculties in the subject:²

He accepts that there is a distinction between 'Things as they are in and of themselves' and their appearances, and that 'all our knowledge is confined to Appearances, our philosophy a philosophy of Phænomena'. Thus things only 'appear' to be out there solely by 'the representative Faculties in the subject'. He then summarizes Kant's argument in one 'position' and two 'deductions':

Position. A sentient Being has only its own sensations as the <immediate> objects of its Knowledge/Sentiens non nisi sensationes suas noscit.

Deduction 1. All else we must *conclude*: or all else must be deduced by reasoning, it is not given by perception.

Deduction 2. But Reason at farthest justifies us only in affirming the existence of a Cause out of ourselves adequate to the effect in ourselves.

The important point of this argument is that he maintains a duality between 'unknown [workings] *Ουκ ἐφ' ἡμῶν* [not under our control]', and 'unknown workings *ἐφ' ἡμῶν* [under our control]'. That is, he maintains the duality between 'the impressions' which human mind receives from 'unknown working not under our control' and those which it produces by 'unknown workings under our control'. He again raises the question of passivity and activity of the human mind. It should be

² CN, III, 3605.

noted here that he resists reducing this duality into either passive or active unity. He resists both passive unity, or, materialism which absorbs the human mind in external nature, and active unity, or, idealism which places external nature within the human mind. Shortly before this entry he criticizes idealism and writes, 'if Malbranche and Berkley reject the primary properties & make all phænomena subjective, they make compensation M. by placing the Object in God, B. by realizing the representation in itself, and God creates that in, and of, the mind immediately without any material Go-between.'³ In the previous entry he makes a specific objection to Berkeley whose denial of matter leads to the dismissal of divine nature which Coleridge holds to lie outside the human mind. He writes, 'Berkley's Idealism may be thus illustrated: Our perceptions are impressions on our own minds standing to the external cause in the relation of the picture on the Canvass to the Painter, rather than in that of the Image in the Mirror to the Object reflected.'⁴ But Coleridge also disagrees with the materialist argument which reduces the human mind into a mirror merely reflecting external material nature.⁵ The basic question which Coleridge does not yet articulate clearly is whether the human mind is prior or posterior to the material creation. The question is unanswerable since he believes that there is mind prior to the creation, but he also believes that such mind is not human but divine. Thus the problem arises from the act of the human mind which he believes to be posterior to the creation though it behaves as if it is prior to it. What is unique in Coleridge is that he is resistant to the alternative choice

³ CN, III, 3592. This entry is titled 'On Certainty'.

⁴ CN, III, 3605.

⁵ Coleridge provides a fine illustration of the materialists in 'Essays on the Principles of Method' by quoting from his 'Limbo' (1811). They are 'the partizans of a crass and sensual materialism, the advocates of the Nihil nisi ab extra'.

They, like moles,
 Nature's mute monks, live mandrakes of the ground,
 Shrink from the light, then listen for a sound;
 See but to dread, and dread they know not why,
 The natural alien of their negative eye!

S. T. C. *Friend*, I, p. 494.

between idealism and materialism, between the denial of the external material world and the denial of the internal and active human mind. His ultimate purpose, which is not yet fully articulated at this stage, is to seek for the mediation of the two. So far, he states his position as follows, 'we see in all men, more or less, a desire of knowing that what they appear to themselves to know, has a correspondence in Reality.'⁶

Coleridge argues that in recognizing what he sees as mere appearance, man cannot but 'desire' for its correspondent reality. According to him, the pursuit of 'Reality' is man's instinct which generates this 'desire'. He concludes this entry as follows: 'One Hint more—and I conclude this note. It is not the desire of attaching *Outness*, an *externality* to our representations which is at the bottom of this Instinct; on the contrary this very attachment of *Outness* originates in the Instinct'.⁷ He argues that man cannot stop attaching 'Outness' to his phenomenal representation. The pursuit of 'Reality' presupposes the recognition of the absence of 'Reality'. And if the sense of 'Outness' is the result of such pursuit, 'Outness' is no longer factual but fictional. Although he retains the sense of 'Outness', he has to admit that it is not given 'ab extra' but gained 'ab intra'. Therefore, Coleridge argues, he cannot but desire for, or yearn after, the factual 'Outness' which he has to postulate beyond the fictional 'Outness'. Coleridge even calls this postulation 'those original and innate

⁶ CN, III, 3592.

⁷ Ibid. Coleridge gives a full description of this 'Instinct' in 'Essays on the Principles of Method', with the suggestion that this 'Instinct' is both the cause of the separation and the attempt of reunion between subject and object, or, mind and nature. He writes, 'In a self-conscious and thence reflecting being, no instinct can exist, without engendering the belief of an object corresponding to it, either present or future, real or capable of being realized: much less the instinct, in which humanity itself is grounded: that by which, in every act of conscious perception, we at once identify our being with that of the world without us, and yet place ourselves in contra-distinction to that world. Least of all can this mysterious pre-disposition exist without evolving a belief that the productive power, which is in nature as nature, is essentially one (i.e. of one kind) with the intelligence, which is in the human mind above nature: however disfigured this belief may become'. *Friend*, I, pp. 497–8. For the similar view expressed by Kant about the 'oneness' of the mind and nature, see Chapter 7, I.

prejudices which nature herself has planted in all men, and which to all but the philosopher are the first principles of knowledge and the final test of truth', and deems, 'Now these essential prejudices are all reducible to the one fundamental presumption, THAT THERE EXIST THINGS WITHOUT US.'⁸ But even so, according to him, a priori knowledge is still possible. While unconscious and uncritical attachment of 'Outness' may be mere prejudices, there can be the conscious and critical prejudice which 'the philosopher' exercises. He writes also in *Biographia Literaria*:

This phrase, *a priori*, is in common most grossly misunderstood, and an absurdity burthened on it, which it does not deserve! By knowledge *a priori*, we do not mean, that we can know any thing previously to experience, which would be a contradiction in terms; but that having once known it by occasion of experience (i.e. something acting upon us from without) we then know, that it must have pre-existed, or the experience itself would have been impossible.⁹

Coleridge thus keeps coming back to the question concerning the 'fullness' and the 'halfness' of human mind. The argument above is virtually a restatement of 'Miss Theta'. It is she who 'desires' for correspondent reality beyond her own perception. Coleridge distinguishes himself from other philosophers by his fine sensitivity to the problem of the phenomenon and by his resistance towards reductionism, alternatively materialistic or idealistic. 'Symbol' is again the key term for him to maintain his position. In May 1808 he writes:

All minds must think by some *symbols*—the strongest minds possess the most vivid Symbols in the Imagination—yet this ingenerates a *want*, *πoθov*, *disiderium*, for vividness of Symbol: which something that is *without*, that has

⁸ *BL*, I, pp. 258–9.

⁹ *BL*, I, p. 293, Coleridge's note.

the property of *Outness* (a word which Berkley preferred to "Externality") can alone fully gratify/even that indeed not fully—for the utmost is only an approximation to that absolute *Union*, which the soul sensible of its imperfection in itself, of its *Halfness*, yearns after ... I say, every generous mind not already filled by some one of these passions feels its *Halfness*—it cannot *think* without a symbol—neither can it *live* without something that is to be at once its Symbol, & its *Other half*—¹⁰

There is a crucial difference between Kant and Coleridge in dealing with this 'yearning after union'.¹¹ Kant ultimately denies this yearning in epistemology and gratifies it in ethics. That is, epistemologically the human mind cannot hope to be full, and ethically it is already full without yearning. In Coleridge's case, he 'yearns' in both epistemology and ethics. That is, he retains the hope, which will remain 'hope' forever, of 'union' in both epistemology and ethics. In 'Confessio Fidei' Coleridge rewrites 'fullness' which Kant takes for granted in ethical man as 'fullness' which he yearns after. When Coleridge begins to rewrite Kant's epistemology, his purpose is to retain the very same yearning which Kant ultimately excludes from his epistemology.

Kant defines nature as the whole of what is perceived and thought by man. That is, there is no 'nature' without man, or, nature is thoroughly human. According to Kant, 'nature' is that which is extracted by human perception from what Coleridge calls 'real' nature. Kant renames this 'real' nature as 'things in themselves' and virtually excludes it from his epistemological argument. This radical re-definition

¹⁰ CN, III, 3325.

¹¹ In another place he explains this 'yearning' as follows: 'a striving in the Creature to make itself God by an imitation of that eternal Act, in which the (το) Θελειν comprehends all in himself, and by that contraction generating in himself the φως νοερον dilates by this procession of the Spirit, and thro' the περιχωρησις fills up as it were all the interspaces as ~~it~~ were (infanda vel saltem ineffabilia fari annitor) of the intellectual forms constitutes the heavenly Plenitude.' CN, III, 4359.

of nature, as it must appear to one like Coleridge who never abandons the notion of divine nature, is the starting point of Kant's whole phenomenology. In the *Prolegomena* Kant provides a whole section to clarify this procedure. The thirteenth section is titled 'How is nature itself possible?' [Wie ist Natur selbst möglich?] Two sets of questions and answers exhaust his argument. In a simplified form, one is 'how is nature in the *material* sense ... possible?' [wie ist Natur in mater ieller Bedeutung ... möglich?] The answer is 'by means of the constitution of our sensibility' [vermittelst der Beschaffenheit unserer Sinnlichkeit]. The other is 'how is nature in the *formal* sense ... possible?' [wie ist Natur in formeller Bedeutung ... möglich?] The answer is 'by means of the constitution of our understanding' [vermittelst der Beschaffenheit unseres Verstandes]. Both materially and ideally, he argues, nature is exclusively human, or, there is no nature without man. He has to do so in order for him to assert the possibility of a priori certainty of human knowledge. He asserts 'the proposition' [den Satz]

dass die oberste Gesetzgebung der Natur in uns selbst d. i. in unserem Verstande liegen müsse und dass wir die allgemeinen Gesetze derselben nicht von der Natur vermittelst der Erfahrung, sondern umgekehrt, die Natur ihrer allgemeinen Gesetzmässigkeit nach bloß aus den in unserer Sinnlichkeit und dem Verstande liegenden Bedingungen der Möglichkeit der Erfahrung suchen müssen;

[that the highest legislation of nature must lie in ourselves, i.e. in our understanding, and that we must not seek the universal laws of nature from nature by means of experience, but conversely, we must seek nature, as to its universal conformity to law, merely from the conditions of the possibility of experience which lie in our sensibility and in the understanding.]¹²

¹² Kant, *Werke*, IV, pp. 66–7, and Lucas, op. cit., pp. 79–81.

Only by this procedure can he overturn the precedence of sensibility over understanding and procure the absolute autonomy of categories and the categorical imperative. In the *Prolegomena* he calls 'the system of categories' as 'Leitfaden' [clue]

der, weil er immer durch dieselben festen, im menschlichen Verstande *a priori* bestimmten Punkte geführt werden muss, jederzeit einen geschlossenen Kreis bildet, der keinen Zweifel übrig lässt, dass der Gegenstand eines reinen Verstandes- oder Vernunftbegriffs, sofern er philosophisch und nach Grundsätzen *a priori* erwogen werden soll, auf solche Weise vollständig erkannt werden könne.

[which, because it must always be taken through the same fixed points determined *a priori* in the human understanding, always forms a closed circle, leaving no room for doubt that the object of a pure concept of the understanding or of reason, in so far as it is to be considered philosophically and according to principles *a priori*, can be completely known in such a way.]¹³

This is a 'complete' argument. This 'circle' is as it were Kant's Miss Theta, which is complete as it has no ontological 'yearning'. It does not suffer from any logical inconsistency, quite unlike Coleridge's Miss Theta who suffers from the logical inconsistency in retaining the ontological yearning in the form of symbolism. Coleridge may say Kant's Miss Theta does not breathe. Kant's argument for the independence and autonomy of human mind is supported by his belief that, though the unknown remains unknown, the meeting point on which the human mind meets the unknown can be defined and described in human terms. For Coleridge this meeting is

¹³ Kant, *ibid.*, p. 73 and Lucas, *ibid.*, p. 88.

a mystery.¹⁴ But Kant believes that by defining how the human mind reacts to the unknown he can solve the mystery if not of the unknown itself but certainly the mystery of the way it meets with the human mind. He writes:

Denn nun fragt sich, wie verhält sich unsere Vernunft bei dieser Verknüpfung dessen, was wir kennen, mit dem, was wir nicht kennen und auch niemals kennen werden? Hier ist eine wirkliche Verknüpfung des Bekannten mit einem völlig Unbekannten, (was es auch jederzeit bleiben wird,) und wenn dabei das Unbekannte auch nicht im mindesten bekannter werden sollte,—wie denn das in der That auch nicht zu hoffen ist,—so muss doch der Begriff von dieser Verknüpfung bestimmt und zur Deutlichkeit gebracht werden können.

[For the question now arises, how does our reason behave in this connecting of what we know with that which we do not know and shall never know? There is here a real connection of the known with a completely unknown (which will always remain so), and even if the unknown is not to become the least bit better known—which cannot in fact be hoped for—the concept of this connection must be capable of being determined and brought to clarity.]¹⁵

Coleridge sees this 'connexion' as a mystery. But Kant thus attempts to solve it, or, to define the point of the connection from the human side. For this purpose he provides an extensive discussion on the original apperception [ursprüngliche Apperzeption] in *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. It explains why nature is solely

¹⁴ In 1820 in the notebook, Coleridge gives an impressive description of this infallible but undefinable meeting point. He writes, 'The most perfect human Mind is to God or divine Truth as a Globe on a Table—the G. touches th T. but at one point at a time, ~~but~~ while the T. at each point supporteth the whole globe.' The editor notes that the the passage is taken from Luther's *Colloquia Mensalia* (1652). See CN, IV, 4665 and note. It is Coleridge, however, who uses it in this epistemological context.

¹⁵ Kant, *ibid.*, p. 102 and Lucas, *ibid.*, p. 121.

human, or, phenomenal, and why the human mind cannot transgress beyond this human, phenomenal nature.

Coleridge, as he believes that the human mind is originally passive, remains unconvinced with Kant's argument for the original 'active' apperception. Kant would deny that by postulating the original apperception at the beginning he either ties or unties what Coleridge calls the 'Kantian knot' between passivity and activity of the human mind. But Coleridge is suspicious that Kant ties the knot by postulating the original apperception as the first principle and excluding things in themselves which are by definition prior to the original apperception. Coleridge checks this point when he writes in the marginal note to *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, 'p. 129 to 169 comprehended the most difficult and obscure passages of this Critique',¹⁶ where he finds the chapter on 'Transcendental Deduction of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding' which includes the sections concerning the original apperception. In *Biographia Literaria* he repeats the same point when he says of *Kritik*, 'the few passages ... remained obscure to me, after due efforts of thought, (as the chapter on *original apperception*)'.¹⁷ He suggests that he is dissatisfied with Kant's procedure. He detects that these 'obscure' passages 'were hints and insinuations referring to ideas, which KANT either did not think it prudent to avow, or which he considered as consistently *left behind* in a pure analysis, not of human nature in toto, but of the speculative intellect alone.'¹⁸ If the former were the case, Coleridge would exert enough courage to say precisely what these 'ideas' are; if the latter were the case, he would rewrite Kant's argument and reintroduce it in its proper form. In fact, Coleridge's theory of imagination is his response to what he calls 'the most difficult and obscure passages' of *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. Where Kant speaks in a descriptive language and merely say 'ideas', Coleridge would speak a sort of language

¹⁶ *CM*, III, p. 242.

¹⁷ *BL*, I, p. 153.

¹⁸ *BL*, I, p. 154.

which inevitably transgresses the limit which Kant sets for his own argument. Two reasons seem likely: one is that Coleridge finds lost in him what Kant takes for granted as the proper function of human mind; another is that Coleridge is a poet. Kant would not accept the charge which Coleridge implicitly brings to him that he disregards the 'Kantian knot' by his argument for the original apperception. But because of these differences between them, Coleridge remains dissatisfied with Kant's treatment of the original passivity of human mind and demands a proper recognition of the knot between passivity and activity. And these differences also lead to their different approaches to the problematic human subject, 'I'.

The original apperception in the form of 'I think' is the starting point of Kant's phenomenology. In *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, 'the knot' between passivity and activity of the human mind is placed on 'intuition' [Anschauung] in the form of the question whether it belongs to passive sensibility [Sinnlichkeit] or active 'original apperception'. And as seen above, his intention is to overturn the precedence of its passivity over activity. In order to initiate his phenomenological argument he has to postulate 'I think' at the starting point of the active human mind. Although it is not a simple question whether Kant indeed drops the original passivity of human mind from the consideration, one thing can be said with certainty. That is, his whole argument begins with the separation of 'the synthetic unity in the connection of perceptions' [die synthetische Einheit der Wahrnehmungen] from 'the synthetic unity in the connection of things in themselves' [die synthetische Einheit in der Verknüpfung der Dinge an sich selbst].¹⁹ Two lines of argument

¹⁹ Kant, *ibid.*, p. 58, and Lucas, *ibid.*, p. 70. In Kant, this separation is thorough and complete. He then argues that even the transcendental ideas cannot repair it, that they are 'regulative' only and not 'constitutive'. See Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (Frankfurt, 1968) B 672. See also Chapter 1, III note. Coleridge is to wonder whether they are merely regulative or also constitutive. See *SM*, p. 114. Quoted in Chapter 4, III note. He also uses the word 'consubstantial' for 'constitutive'. See *SM*, p. 29. Quoted in Chapter 4, IV note. Coleridge's problem is, as he writes in 1825–1826: 'The unsatisfyingness, the *felt* insufficiency, of all Finites in themselves, and the necessity which the Understanding feels of seeking their solution elsewhere—i. e. in an X that is not finite—It would therefore *derive* the

follow. One is that he then proceeds to the possibility of a priori knowledge by categories. The implicit argument here is that by sensation man does not receive 'the synthetic unity of things in themselves' or anything which is related to it, but only the chaos of impressions. Kant sees this chaos as the material on which the human mind actively works and of which it produces 'the synthetic unity of *perceptions*'. In short, the unity of his perception is not given by nature outside the human mind but actively produced from within. This is how Kant procures the active autonomy of human mind and guarantees a priori certainty of knowledge by categories. The other line of argument is that such knowledge is only empirical, that is, limited within experience. He repeatedly warns that categories which are not applied to sensible intuition are empty. Behind this warning is his grand purpose of the whole book, that is, to criticize the transgression of reason. For the sake of limiting the application of categories within experience, but only for that sake, Kant does not dismiss 'sensibility' which is the passive and first 'experience' of man.

It is very suggestive that the chapter on 'Transcendental Deduction of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding' begins with the definition of intuition in the passive sense. Kant writes, 'THE manifold of representations can be given in an intuition which is purely sensible, that is, nothing but receptivity' [Das Mannigfaltige der Vorstellungen kann in einer Anschauung gegeben werden, die bloß sinnlich, d. i. nichts als Empfänglichkeit ist].²⁰ But according to him this receptivity in a formal sense is determined from within and not from without. He immediately continues,

Finite from the Infinite, the Condition from the Absolute! But alas! by what intelligible process Diminuendo can the Infinite pass into the Finite.' *CN*, IV, 5294. 'The unsatisfyingness, the *felt* insufficiency' resonate with Miss Theta's 'Halfness' and her yearning after '*Other half*'. See Chapter 4, IV, and Chapter 5, II. In the same entry, he offers his solution: 'there lies a chasm between them, which no Industry can fill up, no Imagination over-bridge.—Here the Ideas intervene, and the Reconcilers'. In 1820–1821 he provides a shorter version, 'the Infinite taken up into the Finite', but says that he prefers, 'SPACE = the form by which the Boundless is subsumed into the Bounded.' *CN*, IV, 4775. For his speculation on space, see Chapter 5, I.

²⁰ Kant, *ibid.*, and Norman Kemp Smith, trans., *Critique of Pure Reason* (Hampshire, 1929) B 129.

'and the form of this intuition can lie *a priori* in our faculty of representation, which being anything more than the mode in which the subject is affected.' [und die Form dieser Anschauung kann *a priori* in unserem Vorstellungsvermögen liegen, ohne doch etwas anderes, als die Art zu sein, wie das Subject affiziert wird.]²¹ His basic argument is already clear. He here argues that although he cannot define 'what' affects man, he can certainly define in human terms 'how' it affects him. He thus replaces 'intuition' in the passive sense with that in the active sense. And he postulates the original apperception as the first and pure intuition of the active 'I think'. Once this is done, his transcendental philosophy unfolds almost automatically. He writes:

Diejenige Vorstellung, die vor allem Denken gegeben sein kann, heißt *Anschauung* ... Diese Vorstellung aber ist ein Actus der *Spontaneität*, d. i. sie kann nicht als zur Sinnlichkeit gehörig angesehen werden. Ich nenne sie die *reine Apperzeption*, um sie von der *empirischen* zu unterscheiden, oder auch die *ursprüngliche Apperzeption*, weil sie dasjenige Selbstbewußtsein ist, was, indem es die Vorstellung *Ich denke* hervorbringt ... von keiner weiter begleitet werden kann. Ich nenne auch die Einheit derselben die *transzendentale Einheit* des Selbstbewußtseins, um die Möglichkeit der Erkenntnis *a priori* aus ihr zu bezeichnen.

[That representation which can be given prior to all thought is entitled intuition ... But this representation is an act of *spontaneity*, that is, it cannot be regarded as belonging to sensibility. I call it *pure apperception*, to distinguish it from empirical apperception, or again, *original apperception*, because it is that self-consciousness which, while generating the representation '*I think*' ... cannot itself be accompanied by any further representation. The unity of this

21 Ibid.

apperception I likewise entitle the *transcendental* unity of self-consciousness, in order to indicate the possibility of a *priori* knowledge arising from it.]²²

By this procedure he believes that he procures the a priori certainty of categories 'which have their source in the understanding alone, independently of sensibility' [[die] unabhängig von Sinnlichkeit bloß im Verstande entspringen],²³ and that he successfully guarantees 'the a priori validity of the categories in respect of all objects of our senses' [Gültigkeit [der Kategorie] a priori in Ansehung aller Gegenstände unserer Sinne].²⁴

Kant then confidently proceeds to the section titled 'The Application of the Categories to Objects of the Senses in General' [Von der Anwendung der Kategorien auf Gegenstände der Sinne überhaupt].²⁵ By this application the human mind produces empirical unity which is different from and, as Coleridge may say, secondary to, the original unity of apperception. Kant calls this empirical unity 'figurative synthesis' and explains, 'the figurative synthesis ... must ... be called the *transcendental synthesis of imagination*. *Imagination* is the faculty of representing in intuition an object that is *not itself present*.' [die figürliche Synthesis ... muß ... die transzendente Synthesis der Einbildungskraft heißen. Einbildungskraft ist das Vermögen, einen Gegenstand auch ohne dessen Gegenwart in der Anschauung vorzustellen].²⁶ At this point again he repeats his discussion on passivity and activity of human mind. He writes:

Da nun alle unsere Anschauung sinnlich ist, so gehört die Einbildungskraft, der subjektiven Bedingung wegen, unter der sie allein den Verstandesbegriffen eine

22 Ibid., B 132.

23 Ibid., B 144.

24 Ibid., B 145.

25 Ibid., B 150.

26 Ibid., B 151.

korrespondierende Anschauung geben kann, zur Sinnlichkeit; so fern aber doch ihre Synthesis eine Ausübung der Spontaneität ist, welche bestimmend, und nicht, wie der Sinn, bloß bestimmbar ist, mithin a priori den Sinn seiner Form nach der Einheit der Apperzeption gemäß bestimmen kann, so ist die Einbildungskraft so fern ein Vermögen, die Sinnlichkeit a priori zu bestimmen, und ihre Synthesis der Anschauungen, den Kategorien gemäß, muß die transzendente Synthesis der Einbildungskraft sein, welches eine Wirkung des Verstandes auf die Sinnlichkeit und die erste Anwendung desselben ... auf Gegenstände der uns möglichen Anschauung ist.

[Now all our intuition is sensible, that imagination, owing to the subjective condition under which alone it can give to the concepts of understanding a corresponding intuition, belongs to *sensibility*. But in as much as its synthesis is an expression of spontaneity, which is determinative and not, like sense, determinable merely, and which is therefore able to determine sense *a priori* in respect of its form in accordance with the unity of apperception, imagination is to that extent a faculty which determines the sensibility *a priori*; and its synthesis of intuitions, conforming as it does to the *categories*, must be the transcendental synthesis of *imagination*. This synthesis is an action of the understanding on the sensibility; and is its first application ... to the objects of our possible intuition.]²⁷

Kant also calls this imagination 'the productive imagination' and distinguishes it from 'the reproductive imagination'. Coleridge picks up this distinction and uses it in distinguishing between 'the secondary imagination' and 'fancy' in *Biographia Literaria*. Kant says, 'In so far as imagination is spontaneity, I sometimes also entitle it the *productive* imagination, to distinguish it from the *reproductive*

²⁷ Ibid., B 151-2.

imagination, whose synthesis is entirely subject to empirical laws, the laws, namely, of association, and which therefore contributes nothing to the explanation of the possibility of *a priori* knowledge.' [So fern die Einbildungskraft nun Spontaneität ist, nenne ich sie auch bisweilen die produktive Einbildungskraft, und unterscheide sie dadurch von der reproduktiven, deren Synthesis lediglich empirischen Gesetzen, nämlich denen der Assoziation, unterworfen ist, und welche daher zur Erklärung der Möglichkeit der Erkenntnis *a priori* nichts beiträgt].²⁸

II. Kant's original apperception, productive imagination, and reproductive imagination respectively correspond with Coleridge's primary imagination, secondary imagination, and fancy. In two points, however, Coleridge differs from Kant. The first point is that Coleridge's 'I think' is not the same as Kant's. Kant argues that 'I think' is 'that highest point, to which we must ascribe all employment of the understanding' [der höchste Punkt, an dem man allen Verstandesgebrauch ... heften muß].²⁹ In this argument, the crucial point is the separation of 'the synthetic unity of *perceptions*' from 'the synthetic unity of *things in themselves*' at the inception of 'I think'. By this procedure Kant believes that he successfully procures the rest of human mind's active autonomy. For Kant the original apperception and the productive imagination are one continual act with no hint of shift or disparity. But Coleridge argues that there is the original stage of the human

²⁸ Ibid., B 152. In *Biographia Literaria* he says, 'The Fancy is indeed no other than a mode of Memory emancipated from the order of time and space ... But equally with the ordinary memory it must receive all its materials ready made from the law of association.' *BL*, I, p. 305. From here he develops his 'ontological' argument. It is crucial to see that this argument primarily concerns the distinction between the secondary imagination and fancy and not between the primary and secondary imaginations. See below. He later writes, 'the Mind must have emancipated itself from the thralldom of the sensuous Imagination, which perpetually craves an antecedent *Matter*—self-subsistent Appearance—in short, an *Apparition*.—The first exercise in Philosophy is *facere non dare materiam*/or *Matter* is a result not a Datum—'. *CN*, IV, 5298. This statement is also the developed form of his speculation on 'double-touch'. See Chapter 5, II.

²⁹ Ibid., B 134 note.

mind where it is passive. In that stage 'the synthetic unity of *things in themselves*' and 'the synthetic unity of *perceptions*' are not separate but related, and man receives something to do with 'the synthetic unity of *things in themselves*' which once received becomes 'the synthetic unity of *perceptions*'. Coleridge maintains that at this stage the human mind is still passive. The primary imagination is 'a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM'.³⁰ The crucial point comes at the emergence of the active, secondary imagination. At this point he loses the original passivity of the human mind and also 'the synthetic unity of *perceptions*' which once was given to this passive mind. The task of the secondary imagination therefore is to re-create 'the synthetic unity' which it forces out of human mind at its own inception. This difference between Kant and Coleridge as to the original state of human mind inevitably leads to another difference between them.

The second point in which Coleridge differs from Kant is the way he distinguishes the secondary imagination from fancy. When Kant says that productive imagination is 'spontaneous', he has in mind a sort of automatic mechanism, such as the function of categories, which are innate in the human mind unvariably. But Coleridge has a personal reason to disbelieve such automatism.³¹ While he may agree that the productive imagination is 'spontaneous', this spontaneity is not that of the automatic mechanism but that of a willed act. He says of the secondary imagination that it is 'co-existing with the conscious will' and 'dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to

³⁰ *BL*, I, p. 304. There is a fine definition of the primary imagination contrasted with the secondary imagination in 'Essays on the Principles of Method' (1818). In the tenth essay Coleridge says, 'whatever could be educed by the mind out of its own essence, by attention to its own acts and laws of action, or as the products of the same; and whatever likewise could be reflected from material masses transformed as it were into mirrors, the excellence of which is to reveal, in the least possible degree, their own original forms and natures'. *Friend*, I, p. 505.

³¹ Coleridge sometimes calls the secondary imagination as 'Forma efformans' as in the following formula: '$\nu\lambda\eta = \text{confusio} = \text{passio} = \text{finiri}$—//Reason, Action, Forma efformans. (= means "the same as": // "opposed to".)>' *CN*, II, 2543. It is important to note that this formula is a comment made later on his investigation into his own nightmares in Malta. See Chapter 4, II.

re-create; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealize and to unify.³² Because of how he defines the primary imagination, his secondary imagination suffers from resistance quite unlike Kant's productive imagination which claims its autonomy. But by the same reason, Coleridge's secondary imagination has the clear teleological orientation from the beginning, of which Kant remains quiet at this stage of the discussion. It is to 're-create' and not merely to create.³³

Coleridge's own argument gradually evolves along with his response to Kant's phenomenology. In the latter part of the notebook entry from August–September 1809 quoted above, he writes:

a Perception blended with the sense of real Presence I use the word, a Presentation—a renewal of this by the memory or in the imagination, with or without an act of the will, Representation.

Thus then: THING = a supposed Reality existing separately from our minds, and the supposed Correspondent to the impressions, of which it is the supposed Cause—. OBJECT—the impression made or left, either that *in* which we

³² *BL*, I, 304.

³³ Coleridge seeks for a 'trichotomous' resolution to the problem of passivity and activity of the human mind. He writes, 'Our inward experiences were thus arranged in three separate classes, the passive sense, or what the school-men call the merely receptive quality of the mind; the voluntary, and the spontaneous, which holds the middle place between both.' *BL*, I, p. 90. The problem of passivity and activity involves 'the absence or presence of WILL'. *BL*, I, p. 89. And Coleridge's basic question is whether or not there can be a middle point in this dichotomy, or, how he should seek after this middle point. In another place he writes, referring to the movement of 'a small water-insect', 'There are evidently two powers at work, which relatively to each other are active and passive; and this is not possible without a intermediate faculty, which is at once both active and passive. (In philosophical language, we must denominate this intermediate faculty in all its degrees and determinations, the IMAGINATION ...)' *BL*, I, pp. 124–5. This 'imagination' includes both the primary and secondary imaginations and intermediates them. For his further discussion on trichotomy and its relation to Richard Baxter and Kant, see Chapter 7, I.

perceive the Thing, or *by* which we recall it to our imagination: in the former sense, I term it a PRESENTATION, in the latter, a REPRESENTATION.—

A SENSATION, = a Feeling referring to some *Thing*, and yet not *organized* into a definite *Object* and ~~this~~ nor separated from the sentient Being.³⁴

Here the primary imagination is called 'Perception blended with the sense of real Presence'. He does make a distinction between 'Sensation' and 'Perception', but this distinction is quite unlike Kant's distinction between sensibility and apperception which, as seen above, is the same as the distinction between passivity and activity of the human mind. In this sense Coleridge's 'Perception' is still passive and close to, if not identical with, 'Sensation'. In other words, 'Perception' is the first act of the human mind which is still enwrapped in its overall passivity and not yet extracted from this original passivity and identified as pure act, as pure apperception. Coleridge's 'Perception' is still very close to 'Sensation' when he says, 'Perception is blended with "the sense" of real Presence'. Thus, he argues, 'Perception' presupposes 'Presentation' of 'a supposed Reality existing separately from our minds', or, through 'Presentation' the human mind receives 'the sense real Presence' of 'a supposed Reality'. And the human mind receives not only 'sense' but also 'Object' or 'the impression made or left ... in which we perceive the Thing'. It is when this 'Presentation' ceases that 'Representation' comes into play. It is a replacement, or, 'renewal' of Presentation. When 'the Thing' is no longer present, it can still be 'recalled to our imagination'. But this 'renewed' Presentation is not a repeated Presentation in the sense that it does not present 'the sense of real Presence' but merely recalls it. Moreover, the human mind is passive and receptive to 'real Presence' in 'Presentation' while in 'Representation' it has to be decisively active and expressive in order to reproduce, or, 'recall' the sense of real Presence.

³⁴ CN, III, 3605

The point may become clearer by asking who presents 'the sense of real Presence' and who re-presents its 'renewal'. 'The Re-presenter' is no doubt the human 'I', but 'The presenter' is the divine, infinite 'I'. Coleridge also points out here that there are two kinds of 'Representation'. One is a 'a renewal ... by the memory ... without act of the will', and the other 'a renewal ... in the imagination with an act of the will'. The former is to be called fancy and the latter the secondary imagination.

In March–April 1811 Coleridge repeats basically the same observation. Here 'Objects' in the above quotation are called 'Definites'. He writes:

Definites conceived as being *in us* but not of us—& these subdivided into Definites at once present in us & to us, & secondly Definites present *in us* but not—to us ... In other words, Definites, be they Sounds or Images, that must be thought of either as being or as capable of being, *out* of us. Nay, ~~this is~~ is not this faulty?—for an Imagination quoad Imagination cannot be thought of as capable of being out of ~~our~~ us? Answer. No. For while we imagine, we never do think thus. We always think of it as an *it*, & intimately mix the Thing & the Symbol.³⁵

Coleridge's position as to the origin of 'Definites' is quite clear. They are not 'of us', that is, they are given, or, defined prior to any act of human mind. And there are two ways in which the human mind relates itself with these 'Definites'. 'Definites' are either presented 'in us & to us' or represented '*in us* but not—to us'. This 'subdivision' corresponds to the division between 'Presentation' and 'Representation'. In 'Presentation', definites are presented 'to us' from without and internally received '*in us*'. But there comes the moment when definites are no longer presented 'to us' but only remains '*in us*'. Therefore, in 'Representation', the human mind attaches 'Outness' to these internal 'Definites'. These 'Definites' can no longer 'be'

³⁵ CN, III, 4058.

out of us but 'be thought to be' out of us. In his words, they are 'capable of being out of us'. Thus 'Presentation' is from without to within, and 'Representation' is from within towards without. 'Presentation' is the work of the primary imagination. 'Representation' is the work of the secondary imagination in the form of active symbolism in which 'we ... intimately mix the Thing [without] & the Symbol [within]'. He summarizes the above discussion as follows:

1. Definites with the sense of their divided Presence. 2. Definites without this sense—or still better—Definites perceived by us as present Realities—and Definites perceived by us as Symbols distinct from the Things, of which they are Symbols— ... Definites conceived as ~~æ~~ present really—Definites ~~conceived~~ as not combined with the sense of real Presence.—This will do.—

α Definites combined with the sense of their real presence;

β. Definites combined with a sense of their Absence.³⁶

At 'Presentation', 'Presence' of 'Definites' are divided between without and within, but also united in one 'Presence'. But at the next moment, 'Definites' lie only within, so that by 'Representation' the human mind attaches 'Outness' to them and transfers them from within towards without by the act of symbolism. Finally, he concludes that 'Definites' given to the human mind at 'Presentation' carries 'the sense of their real presence', while 'Definites' returned from within the human mind by 'Representation' carries 'a sense of their Absence'.

In this context the secondary imagination is an attempt to recover from 'Absence'. From here he begins his argument about the secondary imagination, as he shifts the point of the argument from the distinction between the primary and the secondary imaginations to that between the secondary imagination and fancy. Coleridge's basic

³⁶ Ibid.

argument is that the human mind is no longer passive, that the original passivity cannot be retained but should only be referred to through the willed act of the human mind. Immediately after the above entry, he writes, 'we clearly feel the difference in our own minds & know well when we remember a thing by accident & passively, & when actively—This important distinction of active and passive Remembrance is among the many Omissions of Hartley's System—'.³⁷ Coleridge takes 'Hartley's System' as an example and suggests that it lacks the proper acknowledgement of the secondary stage of the human mind in which it can only 'remember'. As Hartley fails to make a proper distinction between 'Presentation' and 'Representation', so he fails to make, or rather fails to see the need of making, a distinction between the active 'Representation' and the passive 'Representation'. Coleridge argues that the passivity in the passive 'Representation' is nothing like the original passivity but merely a negated activity. 'Hartley's System', according to Coleridge, is the system which by disregarding the inevitable activity of the human mind mistakes mere negation of that activity for the original passivity.³⁸ In February–June 1813 he repeats this argument.

His Imagination, if it must be so called, is at all events of the pettiest kind—it is an Imagunculation [imaguncula: little image].—How excellently the German Einbildungskraft expresses this prime & loftiest Faculty, the power of co-adunation, the faculty that forms the many into one, *in eins Bildung*.

³⁷ *CN*, III, 4059.

³⁸ In *Biographia Literaria* he writes of Hartley's associationism, 'this hypothesis neither involves the explanation, nor precludes the necessity, of a mechanism and co-adequate forces in the percipient, which at the more than magic touch of the impulse from without is to create anew for itself the correspondent object.' *BL*, I, p. 137.

Eisenoplasmy, or esenoplastic Power, \times Fantasy, or the Mirrorment, either catoptric or metoptric—repeating simply, or by transposition—& again, involuntary (as in dreams) or by an act of the will.—³⁹

In one formula he makes the contrasts between 'Einbildungskraft' and 'Fantasy', between 'the power of co-adunation' and the power of 'the Mirrorment', between the passive repetition of what is given and the active re-creation of it, between the 'involuntary' act and the willed act.

In April 1811 Coleridge repeats basically the same argument with a more vehement language and a hint of theology. This is because he clearly states here what he aims at in the exercise of the secondary imagination. He writes:

The image-forming or rather re-forming power, the imagination in its passive sense, which I would rather call Fancy = Phantasy, a *φαινεῖν*, this, the Fetisch & Talisman of all modern Philosophers (the German excepted) may not inaptly be compared to the Gorgon Head, which *looked* death into every thing— ... all form as body, i.e. as shape, & not as forma efformans, is dead—Life may be *inferred*, even as intelligence is from black marks on white paper—but the black marks themselves *are truly "the dead letter"*.⁴⁰

The sole purpose of the secondary imagination is to 'infer Life'. By this alone it is distinguished from fancy. 'Inference of Life' as an attempt of recovery follows the recognition of loss of Life. But without the due recognition of 'death', even this attempt does not come forward. He continues and detects where the mistake occurs:

³⁹ CN, III, 4176.

⁴⁰ CN, III, 4066.

Here then is the error—not in the faculty itself, without which there would be no *fixation*, consequently, no distinct perception or conception, but in the gross idolatry of those who abuse it, & make that the goal & end which should be only a means of arriving at it. Is it any excuse to him who treats a living being as inanimate Body, that he we cannot arrive at the knowledge of the living Being but thro' the Body which is its Symbol & outward & visible sign?—

Certainly not. On the contrary Coleridge believes that the very recognition of the loss of 'Presentation' should lead to the determination to 'infer Life' in his 'Representation'. Passive 'Representation' simply lacks this determination. Finally, this 'inference' is poetical. He concludes the entry as follows: 'From the above deduce the worth & dignity of poetic Imagination, of the fusing power, that fixing unfixes & while it melts & bedims the Image, still leaves in the Soul its living meaning—'. And it is not only poetical but also religious. The argument of the above entry is in fact the extended recapitulation of another entry from November 1809 where he had to write:

Important remark just suggests itself—13 Nov^r. 1809—That it is by a negation and voluntary Act of *no*-thinking that we think of earth, air, water & c as dead— It is necessary for our limited powers of Consciousness that we should be brought to this negative state, & that should pass into Custom—but likewise necessary that at times we should awake & step forward—& this is effected by Poetry & Religion/—.⁴¹

This entry resonates with his early plan to write hymns to the element, which was abandoned and reworked into 'The Ancient Mariner'.⁴² In *Biographia Literaria* there

⁴¹ *CN*, III, 3632.

⁴² See Chapter 2, I.

is little theological argument related to the theory of imagination, except that he mentions his intention to expand the argument and attach it to 'The Ancient Mariner' as the preface.⁴³ While the preface remains unwritten, it is not difficult to see the parallel between the origin and the purpose of the secondary imagination and the departure and the destination of the Mariner's voyage. In both cases man falls from nature and yearns after the recovery which may be granted only partially or symbolically.

Coleridge thus appropriates Kant's phenomenological argument in distinguishing the secondary imagination from fancy. But Coleridge radically disagrees with Kant's two basic arguments. Kant argues that intuition only brings about a confused manifold, and that once it is given, or rather, gained by intuition in the active sense, the human mind freely and without resistance works on it and brings about the formally regulated unity. Coleridge argues that by intuition in the passive sense man is originally provided with cosmos and not chaos. It is on the loss of the original annunciation that his intuition becomes active in the Kantian sense. He also argues that when he works on his own chaos, he gets overwhelming resistance from it. He simply disagrees with Kant's usage of the word 'intuition'. In *Biographia Literaria*, he notes that Kant's intuition as the first active re-presentation has no equivalent in English. He writes, 'I take this occasion to observe, that here and elsewhere Kant uses the terms intuition, and the verb active (*Intueri*, *germanice* Anschauen) for which we have unfortunately no correspondent word, exclusively for that which can be represented in space and time.' Coleridge then insists that the word should be used in his way. He continues, 'But as I see no adequate reason for this exclusive sense of the term, I have reverted to its wider signification authorized by our elder theologians and metaphysicians, according to whom the term comprehends all truths known to us without a medium.'⁴⁴ In short, he suggests that intuition is not the

⁴³ *BL*, I, p. 306.

⁴⁴ *BL*, I, p. 289.

beginning of the secondary imagination but of the primary imagination, and that the shift from the primary to the secondary imaginations, which he takes along with Kant, has not only epistemological or ontological but also theological implications.

In Appendix C of *The Statesman's Manual* Coleridge restates this argument rephrasing 'the primary imagination' and 'the secondary imagination' as 'the Reason' and 'the understanding'. He postulates the self-manifestation of 'the Reason' in the beginning of the argument. He writes, 'the Reason first manifests itself in man by the *tendency* to the comprehension of all as one.' But this first manifestation is unsustainable because once received in man, it forms a paradox, or in his words, 'the original temptation'. It is the paradox in which 'we can neither rest in an infinite that is not at the same time a whole, nor in a whole that is not infinite.' Subsequently he falls and 'either loses the ONE in the striving after the INFINITE ... or the INFINITE in the striving after the ONE.'⁴⁵ Thus 'the Reason [which] is the science of the *universal*, having the ideas of ONENESS and ALLNESS as its two elements or primary factors'⁴⁶ becomes impossible. 'The Reason' recedes from the surface of consciousness, and 'the *discursive* understanding' remains 'which forms for itself general notions and terms of classification for the purpose of comparing and arranging phaenomena'. 'The Characteristic', he continues, 'is the Clearness without Depth'.⁴⁷ Therefore, he argues, man must recover 'the reason' from the depth and reunite it with the understanding on the surface. Quoting John 1. 5, he writes in Appendix D, 'all human understandings are nourished by the one Divine Word, whose power ... (= shineth in darkness, and is not contained therein, or comprehended by the darkness)'.⁴⁸ Thus 'the Reason' must become 'the integral

⁴⁵ *SM*, p. 60.

⁴⁶ *SM*, p. 59–60.

⁴⁷ *SM*, p. 69.

⁴⁸ *SM*, p. 97.

spirit of the regenerated man'.⁴⁹ Only by this recovery 'the Reason' and 'understanding' are

"Differing but in degree, in *kind* the same!"⁵⁰

Coleridge appropriates Kant in this potentially theological context. Kantian phenomenology can be said to begin with the loss of 'the ONE INFINITE', that is, it begins with a confused manifold, and strives after the recovery of 'the ONE' at the cost of 'the INFINITE'. But since Kant neither postulates 'the Reason's self-manifestation' in the beginning nor acknowledges its loss, his discussion has nothing to do with Coleridge's view that the human understanding as such is degenerate. While Kant does argue that the reason leads the understanding to its unity,⁵¹ he has

⁴⁹ *SM*, p. 69.

⁵⁰ *SM*, p. 69 and note. As the editor notes, Coleridge here adopts Milton's distinction of 'Intellectual' and 'Discursive' reasons. See *Paradise Lost*, V, ls 488–90. He quotes the same book ls 485–90 in *Biographia Literaria* and ls 469–88 in the twelfth Philosophical Lecture. See *BL*, I, 173–4, and *Phil Lects*, p. 349. Coleridge says of the secondary imagination in *Biographia Literaria* that it is 'identical with the primary in the *kind* of its agency, and differing only in *degree*, and in the *mode* of its operation.' *BL*, I, p. 304.

⁵¹ In the fifty-sixth section of the *Prolegomena* Kant argues of pure concepts of reason 'that they are principles for establishing thoroughgoing unanimity, completeness and synthetic unity in the use of our understanding, and hence they are valid merely of experience, but of the whole of it. But although an absolute whole of experience is impossible, the idea of a whole of knowledge according to principles in general is what alone can procure for it a special kind of unity, namely that of a system, without which our experience is nothing but patchwork and cannot be used for the highest end ... and here I mean not merely the practical use of reason, but also the highest end of the speculative reason.' [dass sie Grundsätze sind, unseren Verstandesgebrauch zur durchgängigen Einhelligkeit, Vollständigkeit und synthetischen Einheit zu bringen, und sofern blos von der Erfahrung, aber im Ganzen derselben gelten. Obgleich aber ein absolutes Ganze der Erfahrung unmöglich ist, so ist doch die Idee eines Ganzen der Erkenntniss nach Principien überhaupt dasjenige, was ihr allein eine besondere Art der Einheit, nämlich die von einem System, verschaffen kann, ohne die unser Erkenntniss nichts, als Stückwerk ist, und zum höchsten Zwecke ... nicht gebraucht werden kann; ich verstehe aber hier nicht blos den praktischen, sondern auch den höchsten Zweck des speculativen Gebrauchs der Vernunft.] Kant, *Werke*, IV, p. 97 and Lucas, *ibid*, pp. 115–6. See also Chapter 4, III.

no intention to re-introduce 'the INFINITE' in Coleridge's sense of the word or insist that such re-introduction is 'the regeneration' of the human understanding.⁵²

All the disagreements between Kant and Coleridge come from the different ways they postulate the human subject 'I'. Kant's original apperception, as the highest point of his philosophy, has many names. One of them is 'the transcendental unity of self-consciousness' [die tr anszendental e Einheit des Selbstbewußtseins].⁵³ This is an empty 'I' which is thought to be prior to any intuition other than that of itself. It is 'the "I" that intuits itself' [Ich, das sich selbst anschauet].⁵⁴ And it becomes 'the "I" who think I' [Ich, der ich denke] by its act of thinking.⁵⁵ The process is that, first, the empty 'I' extracts human nature by intuition, or, gains its

⁵² Coleridge often discloses his inherent theology in a philosophical argument. In 'Essays on the Principles of Method' (1818) he identifies the Fall with the loss of reason and writes, 'The ground-work, therefore, of all true philosophy is the full apprehension of the difference between the contemplation of reason, namely, that intuition of things which arises when we possess ourselves, as one with the whole, which is substantial knowledge, and that which presents itself when transferring reality to the negations of reality, to the ever-varying framework of the uniform life, we think of ourselves as separated beings, and place nature in antithesis to the mind, as object to subject, thing to thought, death to life. This is abstract knowledge, or the science of the mere understanding.' By 'reason' he has in mind, as it were, Adamic, intuitive, comprehension of the whole creation. He continues, 'By the former [reason], we know that existence is its own predicate, self-affirmation, the one attribute in which all others are contained, not as parts, but as manifestations. It is an eternal and infinite self-rejoicing, self-loving, with a joy unfathomable, with a love all comprehensive.' *Friend*, I, p. 520-1. He repeats his own argument in *Aids to Reflection* (1825). There he distinguishes 'Reason' from 'the *human* Understanding' as follows. 'There is, in this sense, no *human* Reason. There neither is nor can be but one Reason, one and the same: even the Light that lighteth every man's individual Understanding (Discursus), and thus maketh it a reasonable Understanding, DISCOURSE OF REASON—"one only, yet manifold; it goeth through all understanding, and remaining in itself regenerateth all other powers." (Wisdom of Solomon, c. viii.)' *Aids*, p. 218.

⁵³ Kant, *ibid*, and Smith, *ibid*, B 132. Quoted above.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, B 155.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* Smith translates this as 'I' that thinks', following Vaihinger's reading of 'das Ich, der ich denke' as 'das Ich, das denkt'. But since in this section Kant is restating 'cogito, ergo sum' with the phenomenological terms, Kant's original passage with its first person to 'think' and with the suggestion that this 'thinking' is self-manifestation through thinking rather than mere thinking seems to be more appropriate. Smith's commentary explains his general agreement with Vaihinger. See Smith, *A Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'* (London, 1918) pp. xliv and note, 233-4, 268.

content in the form of a confused manifold by its active intuition, and subsequently when it produces formal unity of its content by thinking, it becomes 'the "I" who think I'. Kant calls this process 'a system of the epigenesis of pure reason' [ein System der Epigenesis der reinen Vernunft].⁵⁶ Coleridge also postulates an empty 'I'. But in his case this empty 'I' is filled with the divine presence which reflects on its emptiness. It receives the divine creation as if it were a mirror placed in the middle of the whole creation. In Kant's terms, it does not know the possibility of 'synthetic judgments' [synthetische Urtheile]⁵⁷ nor the painful and perilous pursuit of their a priori certainty. Thus Coleridge's empty 'I' is not active as Kant's. It is not 'the "I" that intuits itself' of Kant but the 'I' that reflects the divine 'I'. The former is inevitably active, but the latter is not. When Coleridge's empty 'I' becomes active, it loses the divine cosmos, one, and gains the human chaos, many. It is precisely at this point that Coleridge appropriates Kant's phenomenological argument which begins with the original apperception. He also accepts that 'the "I" who think I' is the final form of the human epigenesis. But Coleridge's primary concern is not with the epigenesis' a priori certainty but with its relation to the genesis, the original creation.

Thus Coleridge's secondary imagination is inherently paradoxical, or rather, theological. When he writes to Wordsworth on 30 May 1815 and encourages him to write 'a *Philosophical Poem*', he uses probably the most overtly theological language for active, poetic creativity of man. He says, 'I supposed you first to have meditated the faculties of Man ... by removing the sandy Sophisms of Locke, and the Mechanic Dogmatists, and demonstrating that the Senses were living growths and developements of the Mind & Spirit in a much juster as well as higher sense, than the mind can be said to be formed by the Sense—.' But these 'faculties of Man' presuppose his fall from nature. He continues, [I supposed you] 'to have affirmed a

⁵⁶ Ibid., B 167.

⁵⁷ Kant, *Werke*, IV, p. 14 and Lucas, trans, *Prolegomena*, p. 16.

Fall in some sense, as a Fact, the possibility of which cannot be understood from the nature of the Will, but the reality of which is attested by Experience & Conscience.' Then he declares the beginning and the ultimate aim of poetic exercise with a specific biblical reference: the beginning is 'the sore evils, under which the whole Creation groans'; therefore the end is 'a manifest Scheme of Redemption from this Slavery, of Reconciliation from this Enmity with Nature'.⁵⁸ In *Biographia Literaria*, however, he avoids an explicitly theological language in discussing his theory of imagination. The theological dimension is only suggested when the discussion is said to be related to 'The Ancient Mariner'. But even if he adopts a theological language, it would not reduce the paradoxicality of the secondary imagination. It may, however, generate a sense of hope. He says of the secondary imagination that it is 'an echo of the former [the primary imagination] ... identical with the primary in the *kind* of its agency, and differing only in *degree*, and in the *mode* of its operation.'⁵⁹ This is not a statement but an expression of hope for the possible reconciliation of the secondary creation with the original creation.

Towards the end of *Kritik der Urtheilskraft*, Kant confesses that nature as it is, and especially man's status in such nature, appears to him to be a riddle. He cannot but think that nature as a great piece of art is without any purpose. He asks:

wozu sind ... alle jene künstlichen Naturdinge; wozu der Mensch selbst, bei dem wir, als bei dem letzten für uns denkbaren Zwecke der Natur, stehen bleiben müssen; wozu ist diese gesammte Natur da, und was ist der Endzweck so grosser und mannigfaltiger Kunst? Zum Geniessen, oder zum Anschauen, Betrachten und Bewundern ... als dem letzten Endzweck, warum die Welt und der Mensch selbst da ist, geschaffen zu sein, kann die Vernunft nicht befriedigen;

⁵⁸ *CL*, IV, pp. 574–5. The biblical reference is to Rom 8: 22.

⁵⁹ *BL*, I, p. 304.

[wherefore are all those natural things that exhibit art? Wherefore is man himself, whom we must regard as the ultimate purpose of nature thinkable by us? Wherefore is this collective Nature here, and what is the final purpose of such great and manifold art? Reason cannot be contented with enjoyment or with contemplation, observation, and admiration ... as the ultimate final purpose for the creation of the world and of man himself.]⁶⁰

Kant's whole philosophy in this context can be said to be the grand attempt to satisfy this unsatisfied reason in ethical terms. As seen in the previous chapter, the difference between Kant and Coleridge is that Coleridge postulates the moment when nature as it is is not a riddle, the moment when nature is divine and not human. It is the time when man is content just contemplating and admiring the divine presence in nature. For him, 'admiration [Bewundern]' is the beginning and the end of philosophy. He writes in 'Essays on the Principles of Method', 'In *wonder* ... says Aristotle, does philosophy begin: and in *astoundment* ... says Plato, does all true philosophy *finish*.'⁶¹ When Coleridge finds that nature has become a riddle to him too, or in his word, 'ideot',⁶² he picks up Kant's phenomenological argument and works it into the theory of the secondary imagination. But precisely because he

⁶⁰ Kant, *Werke*, V, pp. 491–2, and J. H. Bernard, trans., *Kant's Kritik of Judgment* (London, 1892) p. 417, § 91. Bernard, the translator, retains the German spelling of 'Kritik' in the title.

⁶¹ *Friend*, I, p. 519. Coleridge believes that man experiences the loss of this original state as the split between the speculative reason and the practical reason, and that the recovery from this split leads to the recovery of the original state. Just before the passage quoted above, he writes, 'The head will not be disjoined from the heart, nor will speculative truth be alienated from practical wisdom. And vainly without the union of both shall we expect an opening of the inward eye to the glorious vision of that existence which admits of no question out of itself, acknowledges no predicate but the I AM IN THAT I AM!' *Ibid.* For a further discussion about 'I AM', see Chapter 7, I. His statement that philosophy begins with and ends in 'wonder' reappears in *Aids to Reflection*. See *AR*, p. 236. In February 1824 he makes three variations of this statement. See *CN*, IV, 5131.

⁶² *CN*, I, 174: 16. Quoted and discussed in Chapter 2, I and II.

maintains that his unsatisfied reason is secondary, he retains his yearning towards the original state, the yearning which always brings him back to theology.⁶³

III. Coleridge is far more articulate about the hope of recovery when he discusses it in artistic terms. For example in *Biographia Literaria* he confidently argues that poetry is the sublimation of all human faculties. He writes, 'No man was ever yet a great poet, without being at the same time a profound philosopher. For poetry is the blossom and the fragranciness of all human knowledge, human thoughts, human passions emotions, language.'⁶⁴ This argument is likely taken from the Notebook entry of

⁶³ Coleridge makes an interesting marginal note between September 1816 and the summer 1817 to Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi's comments on Kant. In translation, Jacobi says in 'Allwills Briefsammlung', 'If the highest thing upon which I can reflect, which I can intuit, is my empty and pure, naked and mere I, with its self-sufficiency and freedom: then reflective self-consciousness and rationality is a curse to me—and I curse my existence'. *CM*, III, p. 96. Coleridge would agree with him without reservation. Coleridge is also deeply reluctant to accept the Kantian position. But when Jacobi refuses to accept this 'curse' and dismisses Kant's phenomenological argument which, Coleridge believes, leads to ethics, Coleridge radically disagrees with Jacobi. Jacobi continues, 'Never have I understood how one could find something mysterious and incomprehensible in Kant's categorical imperative and could subsequently use this mystery to turn the conditions of the *reality* of the laws of practical reason into a *convenient substitute* for theoretical reason.' For Coleridge, however, the categorical imperative is not a 'convenient' but a desperate substitute, and, as a substitute, it is irreplaceable. He at once refutes Jacobi and writes, 'And what is Jacobi's Mystery? Is it not the Organ of spiritual Truth? And what is this but the real Ich, that shines thro' the empirical Ich—the coincidence of which with the former is categorically demanded.// That is to say, no one can avoid that 'curse', and the Kantian ethics is the only possible way to deal with it. As seen in Chapter 5, III, Coleridge's theology begins when he recognizes the impracticability of this 'demand' and rewrites it in theological terms. Yet even so he never dismisses Kantian phenomenology and ethics as nonsense. For possibly the latest example of such rewriting, one finds the following passage in 'Essay on Faith': 'FAITH may be defined, as fidelity to our own being—so far as such being is not and cannot become an object of the senses ... I am conscious of something within me peremptorily commanding me to do unto others as I would they should do unto me;—in other words, a categorical (that is, primary and unconditional) imperative;—that the maxim (*regula maxima* or supreme rule) of my actions, both inward and outward'. *LR*, IV, p. 425.

⁶⁴ *BL*, II, pp. 25–6. Coleridge writes on 13 July 1802, 'a great Poet must be ... a profound Metaphysician'. *CL*, II, p. 810. Quoted and discussed in Chapter 3, I. The reason why he reintroduces the same argument while he repeatedly acknowledges his 'metaphysical' failure is that simply he has no other alternatives. His implicitly theological argument in *Biographia Literaria* is expected to be the way to get over this impasse.

May 1810 where he called poetry as 'a mode of composition that calls into action & gratifies the largest number of the human Faculties in Harmony with each other, & in just proportions'. He then said, 'Frame a numeration table of the primary faculties of Man ... the Like and the Different—the spontaneous and the receptive—the Free and the Necessary—And whatever calls into consciousness the greatest number of these in due proportion & perfect harmony with each other, is the noblest Poem'.⁶⁵ Although this confident argument is similar in its content to his theological argument, and although he must be aware that 'the noblest Poem', the sublimation of all human faculties, is 'noblest' only in the human scale, he still hopes rather than despairs. In art he confidently presupposes nature which is nobler than 'the noblest Poem'. Again in *Biographia Literaria* he says of imagination that it is 'that synthetic and magical power' which 'first put in action by the will and understanding ... reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities ... while it blends and harmonizes the natural and the artificial, [it] still subordinates art to nature; the manner to the matter'.⁶⁶ Yet poetry is 'imitation' and not 'copy', that is, active 'Representation' and not passive 'Representation'. He writes, 'Could a rule be given from *without*, poetry would cease to be poetry, and sink into a mechanical art. It would be *μόρφωσις*, not *ποίησις*. The *rules* of the IMAGINATION are themselves the very powers of growth and production.'⁶⁷ This leads into the inevitable paradox of the secondary imagination. But though nature and art, matter and manner, can never be identified, they can still be mediated by the very paradoxical nature of imagination. For poetry is the creation which is neither the same as, nor completely different from, the original creation. That is, one can be simultaneously the same as and different from the other. He writes 'the composition of a poem is among the *imitative* arts; and

65 *CN*, III, 3827.

66 *BL*, II, p. 16–7.

67 *BL*, II, pp. 83–4.

imitation, as opposed to copying, consists either in the interfusion of the SAME throughout the radically DIFFERENT, or of the different throughout a base radically the same'.⁶⁸

Thus the goal of poet is to create a phenomenal nature which is symmetrical with the original, noumenal one. It aims to achieve the sort of symmetry in which the two are simultaneously the same and different as landscape and its reflection on the surface of a lake are. Coleridge certainly has in mind his early observations that the surface of clear water shows the exact reflection of surrounding landscape.⁶⁹ In *Biographia Literaria* he writes of Wordsworth's poetic genius that it produces

the perfect truth of nature in his images and descriptions as taken immediately from nature, and proving a long and genial intimacy with the very spirit which gives physiognomic expression to all the works of nature. Like a green field reflected in a calm and perfectly transparent lake, the image is distinguished from the reality only by its greater softness and lustre.⁷⁰

But Coleridge argues that Wordsworth's poetic creation is not a static, two-dimensional reflection of the surrounding landscape but a three-dimensional re-creation of it. In Coleridge's term, it is not 'Copy' but 'Imitation'. Whether Wordsworth himself follows this argument or not, Coleridge is determined to insist that the three-dimensional re-creation from the depth of human mind can be as bright and faithful as the two-dimensional reflection, that the primary and the secondary imaginations are not necessarily contradictory.

Acknowledgment of the depth is crucial for Coleridge in arguing for the three-dimensional re-creation. It is in November 1799 when he notes his experience that

⁶⁸ *BL*, II, p. 72.

⁶⁹ See Chapter 1, III.

⁷⁰ *BL*, II, p. 148.

he sees a reflection on water even when the real landscape is hidden in mist. He writes, 'all the objects on the opposite Coast are hidden, and all those hidden are reflected in the Lake, Trees, & the Castle, <Lyulph's Tower,> & the huge Cliff that dwarfs it!—Divine!—'.⁷¹ Here he simply expresses surprise and wonder at witnessing the opening of a new world. But this early optimism is soon replaced with a deep ontological anxiety. In fact, the opening of the phenomenal world within himself is the result of his shift, or, fall from the bright surface of the water to 'the metaphysical depth' underneath the surface. He thus loses the original landscape. From this moment on, the re-creation of the landscape from the depth of his own mind becomes his urgent task. In September 1809 he restates the same experience in a clearly theological context. He writes, 'the promises of ancient prophecy would disclose themselves to our Faith, even as when a noble Castle hidden from us by an intervening mist, discovers itself by its reflection in the tranquil Lake, on the opposite shore of which we stand gazing.'⁷² In the mean time he repeatedly criticizes Hartley and others for the lack of this 'Faith'. He persistently argues that perception as the passive, static reflection on the surface is no longer possible, that the landscape he sees on the opposite shore is in fact not the one he receives from without but the one he re-produces from within. He repeatedly argued that the human mind inevitably shifts from the surface to the depth, from receiving the external landscape to re-producing it from within. In *Biographia Literaria* he uses the model of Plotinian contemplation to illustrate this. First, the poet is merely passive, or, contemplative. He does not yet 'create' since contemplation on nature does not automatically teach him how to create. By quoting Plotinus he makes 'nature' say, 'it behoves thee not to disquiet me with interrogatories, but to understand in silence, even as I am silent, and work without words.'⁷³ Then comes

⁷¹ *CN*, I, 553. Quoted in full and discussed in Chapter 1, III.

⁷² *Friend*, II, p. 70. The editor relates this passage to a Notebook entry 1844 which is relevant but only remotely so. See *Friend*, I, p. 103 note.

⁷³ *BL*, I, p. 241. The editor notes that the quotation is from *Ennead* 3. 8. 4.

the moment when the poet receives what he seeks after in nature, in Wordsworth's words, 'the vision and the faculty divine'. With this faculty the poet begins to create. Again quoting Plotinus Coleridge says, 'it suddenly shines upon us; preparing ourselves for the blessed spectacles as the eye waits patiently for the rising sun'. But he never forgets the darkness which precedes the sunrise, that is, his 'inward darkness'. For it is in this internal depth that the new creation takes place.

They and they only can acquire the philosophic imaginations, the sacred power of self-intuition, who within themselves can interpret and understand the symbol, that the wings of air-sylph are forming within the skin of the caterpillar; those only, who feel in their own spirits the same instinct, which impels the chrysalis of the horned fly to leave room in its involucre for antennæ yet to come.⁷⁴

As seen above, Coleridge maintains that the re-creation of phenomenal landscape is not the purpose in itself. The ultimate purpose of such re-creation is the recovery of the symmetry between noumenal and phenomenal natures. In March 1818, he provides a discussion on 'Art' in his notebook, which serves as a summary for the above discussion. He defines poetry as this: 'Poetry ... is purely *human* ... It is the Apotheosis of the former state—viz. Order and Passion'.⁷⁵ Then he examines the shift from the primary to the secondary imaginations: '*N.b.* how by excitement of the Associative Power Passion itself imitates Order, and the *order* resulting produces a pleasurable *Passion* ... and thus elevates the Mind by making its feelings the Objects of its reflection.' He then continues to state the paradoxical nature of poetry:

⁷⁴ *BL*, I, pp. 241–2.

⁷⁵ *CN*, III, 4397.

Poetry is the ~~Per~~ Preparation for Art: inasmuch as it avails itself of the forms of Nature to recall, to express, and to modify the thoughts and feelings of the mind—still however thro' the medium of *articulate Speech*, which is so peculiarly human that in all languages it is the ordinary ~~distinction~~ phrase by which Man and Nature are contra-distinguished.

He argues that the poetic exercise both divides and reunites man and nature. That is to say, he hopes that the Creator and the creator may be reconciled through 'Art'. He states the possibility of mediation between the two artists as follows: 'Nature itself is to a religious Observer the Art of God—and for the same cause Art itself might be defined, as of a middle nature between a Thought and a Thing, or ... the union and reconciliation of that which is Nature with that which is exclusively Human.' Then he describes the human artist's Fall from nature and his hope of recovery, with some confidence:

the Artist must first *eloin* himself from Nature in order to return to her with full effect.—Why this?—Because—if he began by mere painful copying, he would produce Masks only, not forms breathing Life—he must out of his own mind create forms according to the several Laws of the Intellect, in order to produce in himself that co-ordination of Freedom & Law, that involution of the Obedience in the Prescript, and the Prescript in the ~~tendency~~ impulse to obey, which assimilates him to Nature—enables him to understand her—. He absents himself from her only in his own Spirit, which has the same ground with Nature, to learn her unspoken language, in its main radicals, before he approaches to her endless compositions of those radicals—Not to acquire cold notions, lifeless technical Rules, but living and life-producing Ideas, which contain their own evidence/and in that evidence the certainty that they are essentially one with the germinal causes in Nature, his Consciousness being the focus and mirror of

both—for this does he for a time abandon the external *real*, in order to return to it with a full sympathy with its internal & actual.⁷⁶

'The Artist' begins with passive reception. But he soon becomes unable to 'infer Life', or, produce 'form breathing Life'. Therefore, 'he must out of his own mind create forms according to the several Laws of the Intellect', that is, he must engage himself in the secondary imagination. It involves 'Freedom & Law', or, ethical dimension too. For that sake 'he absents himself from her [Nature] only in his own Spirit' and becomes 'I myself I'.⁷⁷ He then learns how to read the book of nature before he learns how to speak it.⁷⁸ Finally he recovers the symmetrical correspondence between nature and man. Yet it is the three dimensional correspondence which reconciles 'external' and 'internal', 'real' and 'actual', that is, 'without' and 'within', or, 'fact' and 'phantom'. Thus the poet distances himself from nature in order to find 'living and life-producing Ideas' within himself. Only then he allows himself to presume that these 'Ideas' should be 'essentially one with the germinal causes in Nature'. It is certainly a matter of faith, but only by this presumption may he provide himself with the sense of orientation in his poetic exercise. Coleridge's descent from nature is a symmetrical imitation of the ascent of the transcendent God. Instead of ascending towards God, he descends and finds himself on the opposite side of nature, doubly distanced from what he means to follow. Thus the problem of the two nature leads him to the problem of the two creators. And he is to spend most of his remaining time in search of the mediation between them.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ *CL*, I, 295. See Chapter 3, III.

⁷⁸ See Chapter 4, III.

⁷⁹ In the eleventh Philosophical Lecture Coleridge repeats the same argument in scientific terms and ascribes it to Descartes. He says, 'Out of these simple acts the mind, still proceeding, raises that wonderful superstructure of geometry and then looking abroad into nature finds that in its own nature it has been fathoming nature, and that nature itself is but the greater mirror in which he beholds his own present and his own past being in the law, and learns to reverence while he feels the

necessity of that great Being whose eternal reason is the ground and absolute condition of the ideas in the mind, and no less the ground and the absolute cause of all the correspondent realities in nature—the reality of nature for ever consisting in the law by which each thing is that which it is.' *Phil Lects*, p. 333–4. For his other references to 'mirror', see Chapter 1, III note. In *Theory of Life* he repeats the same argument in philosophical terms. He writes, 'we cannot force any man into an insight or intuitive possession of the true philosophy, because we cannot give him abstraction, intellectual intuition, or constructive imagination; because we cannot organize for him an eye that can see, an ear that can listen to, or a heart that can feel, the harmonies of Nature, or recognize in her endless forms, the thousand-fold realization of those simple and majestic laws, which yet in their absoluteness can be discovered only in the recesses of his own spirit'. *TL*, p. 399. However, as argued above, he carefully excludes theological implication from these scientific and philosophical argument.

Chapter 7 The 'Pentad' in *Aids to Reflection*

I. Coleridge thus restates the problem of 'two natures' as the problem between the genesis and the epigenesis and anticipates his later theological speculations between God and man. This is a particularly Coleridgean development which is driven by his theological tendency to shift the problem beyond the limit of epistemology, to replace the problem of truth and falsehood with that of good and evil. His epistemological argument is thus essentially theological even when he adopts neutral, untheological terms in the argument. As seen above, at the end of the philosophical chapters of *Biographia Literaria* he declares his intention of re-introducing theological argument. While he falls short of achieving his intention in *Biographia Literaria*, he certainly compensates for it with subsequent writings towards the end of his life.

Human subjectivity is an inevitable consequence of Kantian phenomenology. While suspending any argument about the genesis, Kant extensively argues that the human subject is an active creator of its own object, nature. He needs his phenomenology in order to procure the autonomy of the human subject in its epigenesis. And he needs to establish the human autonomy in order to argue for human freedom. That is to say, he is a transcendentalist in human terms who draws a rigid distinction between 'being' and 'personality' and argues that human freedom can never be buried in nature. The crucial point is that his 'personality' is solely human. By his phenomenological argument, he believes that he solves the question of the human transcendence and immanence. For example, he writes in *Kritik der Urtheilskraft*:

Ob nun zwar eine unübersehbare Kluft zwischen dem Gebiete des Naturbegriffs, als dem Sinnlichen, und dem Gebiete des Freiheitsbegriffs, als dem Uebersinnlichen, befestigt ist, so dass von dem ersteren zum anderen, (also vermittelst des theoretischen Gebrauchs der Vernunft) kein Uebergang möglich

ist, gleich als ob es so viel verschiedene Welten wären, deren erste auf die zweite keinen Einfluss haben kann, so soll doch diese auf jene einen Einfluss haben; nämlich der Freiheitsbegriff soll den durch seine Gesetze aufgegebenen Zweck in der Sinnenwelt wirklich machen, und die Natur muss folglich auch so gedacht werden können, dass die Gesetzmässigkeit ihrer Form wenigstens zur Möglichkeit der in ihr zu bewirkenden Zwecke nach Freiheitsgesetzen zusammenstimme.

[Now even if an immeasurable gulf is fixed between the sensible realm of the concept of nature and the supersensible realm of the concept of freedom, so that no transition is possible from the first to the second (by means of the theoretical use of Reason), just as if they were two different worlds of which the first could have no influence upon the second, yet the second is *meant* to have an influence upon the first. The concept of freedom is meant to actualise in the world of sense the purpose proposed by its laws, and consequently nature must be so thought that the conformity to law of its form, at least harmonises with the possibility of the purposes to be effected in it according to laws of freedom.]¹

Kant is a determined transcendentalist and argues that the human subject is transcendent, or, free, from nature, and that only by its act of self-manifestation does it make itself immanent in its own nature. It is not surprising if Coleridge immediately notices that exactly the same argument has been repeated about the transcendence and immanence of God. Coleridge is also a determined transcendentalist both in divine and in human terms, believing that the subject, be it divine or human, cannot be buried in nature. In 1820 in a Notebook, he, as a transcendentalist in divine terms, attacks 'these good folks' who 'forget, that in making Nature God they make God Nature, and fall into all the chaos of Eastern

¹ Kant, *Werke*, V, p. 182, and J. H. Bernard, op. cit., p. 12.

Pantheism'. Then he continues as a transcendentalist in human terms, 'if they include Man in Nature, they annul all morality'.² It is characteristic of him to argue in one breath both divine and human transcendence. What makes Coleridge theologically different from Kant is that Coleridge believes that human transcendence and divine transcendence are not identical but opposite, that is, divine transcendence is above, and human transcendence below, nature. Simply, human transcendence is a fall from divine nature. Since he has the concept of transcendence which is theologically twofold, he does not allow himself to mention human transcendence 'above' without considering its furthest theological implication. Kant, on the other hand, believes that human transcendence is necessarily above nature. Kant can argue for 'the unity' between what Coleridge would call divine transcendence and human transcendence and say, 'There must, therefore, be a ground of the *unity* of the supersensible, which lies at the basis of nature, with that which the concept of freedom practically contains' [Also muss es doch einen Grund der *Ei n h e i t* des Uebersinnlichen, welches der Natur zum Grunde liegt, mit dem, was der Freiheitsbegriff praktisch enthält, geben].³ Coleridge would never say 'the *unity*'. But he allows himself to expect that there may be a symmetrical correspondence between the two, one from above and the other from below, nature. Precisely because of his theology, he reserves for himself the possibility that the divine and human creations, each from the opposite end, may meet on the level of nature, that the problem of two natures may be solved by the reconciliation of the two creators, God and man. His question is: is there anything in common between the two creations which are undoubtedly heterogeneous, that is, is the human epigenesis related to the original genesis at all?.

² *CN*, IV, 4648.

³ Kant, *ibid.*, and Bernard, *ibid.*, pp. 12–3.

Coleridge's ten theses written in a Notebook in September 1815 deal primarily with this question.⁴ The question itself, however, is not fully worked out. What is closest to the expected answer comes at the conclusion of Thesis III where he writes, 'the ~~Ultimate~~ ABSOLUTE GROUND OF KNOWLEDGE MUST *be* A PRINCIPLE, *in which* BEING AND THOUGHT COINCIDE, ~~and~~ EACH INVOLVING AND PRESUPPOSING the other.'⁵ That is to say, there must be 'a Principle' which penetrates both the creation of 'Being' and the creation of 'Thought'; that the material creation and the immaterial creation not only 'coincide' but one necessarily 'involves' and 'presupposes' the other. He even expects a parallelism between 'the Process' of nature and that of 'Human Intelligence'. He writes in Thesis IX, 'there [will] arise a confirmation of the Truth of the Process, should it appear that all the different Steps of the Process, which we had shewn to be the necessary Preconditions of Human Intelligence did actually exist in Nature, & that in giving the hypothetical Progression of our Self to Reason, & Conscience, we had undesignedly given the History of the Material World'.⁶ But at this point he refrains himself from paraphrasing the statement in theological terms. Such an

⁴ CN, III, 4265. The ten theses in *Biographia Literaria*, which is a reworking of these in the Notebook, do the same, though in a much less degree. There the question is somehow muffled by a number of borrowings from Schelling. See *BL*, I, pp. 264–86 and notes. His reading of Schelling suggests that Schelling fails to notice the problem of the two transcendent subjects and, as a result, slips into what Coleridge calls pantheism. While acknowledging his limited reading of Schelling, Coleridge writes for example, 'The inconsistency Schelling has contrived to hide from himself by the artifice of making all knowledge bi-polar, Transcendental Idealism as one Pole and Nature as the other—from the tendency of my mind to confidence in others I was myself *taken in* by it, retrograding from my own prior and better Lights, and adopted it in the metaphysical chapters of my Literary Life—not aware, that this was putting the Candle horizontally and burning it at both ends ... *The divine Unity* is indeed the indispensable CONDITION of this Polarity; but both its *formal* and its immediate, *specific* CAUSE is the contradictory Will of the Apostasy.' *CL*, IV, p. 874. See also *CL*, IV, p. 883. What he sees missing in Schelling is the transcendent God which is prior to the polarity, that is, 'Prothesis' which remains transcendent while it manifests itself by polarity of 'Thesis; and 'Antithesis'. He makes this point clear when he writes, 'Schelling's System and mine stand thus:—In the Latter there are God and Chaos: in the former an Absolute Somewhat, which is *alternately* both, the rapid *leger de main* shifting of which constitutes the delusive appearance of *Poles*—'. *CN*, IV, 4662. For 'Prothesis', 'Thesis' and 'Antithesis', see below.

⁵ *CN*, III, 4265.

⁶ *Ibid.*

attempt would immediately have required a radical reconsideration of the precedence between God and man. At this stage he is not ready to say of them, 'each involving and presupposing the other'.⁷

The principle which penetrates both the 'Material' and 'Intelligent' creations is the principle of self-manifestation. By this principle, 'an absolute principium essendi' and 'an absolute principium cognoscendi'⁸ may achieve symmetry, or 'coincidence' in Coleridge's word. It should be noted here that what he expects is not their identity but their symmetry at their middle point. He continues, 'The result of both the sciences, or their equatorial point, would be the principle of a total and undivided philosophy.' However, he avoids making clear that this 'principle of a total and undivided philosophy' is the result of a radical mediation between the two creators. He avoids saying that this principle '*in which* BEING AND THOUGHT COINCIDE, ~~and~~ EACH INVOLVING AND PRESUPPOSING the other' is the same as the one in which the creator of 'Being' and the creator of 'Thought' coincide, and 'each involving and presupposing the other'. While his argument requires a radical reconsideration about the theological precedence of God over man, he obviously hesitates what to do with it. In fact, instead of following up his argument, he makes an attempt to preserve the stable precedence of God over man. In the 'Scholium' he adds to Thesis IV in a Notebook he makes an extensive argument for the precedence of 'Sum quia in Deo sum' over 'Sum quia sum'.⁹ For the conclusion to the 'Scholium' he quotes from the Bible and says:

⁷ Coleridge's annotation to *The Friend* clarifies this point. He writes, '<that the object & subject are one—> that the Reason *is* Being, the Supreme *Reason*, the Supreme Being—and that the antithesis of Truth and Being is but the result of the *polarizing* property of all finite mind, for which Unity is manifested only by correspondent opposites.—' *Friend*, I, p. 515. Thus 'Truth' and 'Being' are separated yet also reconciled by the polar logic. But the problem of the 'finite mind' remains. And as to whether the polar logic reconciles the 'finite mind' with the infinite mind, that it, whether the polar logic works vertically as well as horizontally, he remains quiet here. For his resolution of this problem and formation of the Pentad, see below.

⁸ *BL*, I, p. 282.

⁹ *CN*, III, 4265.

we have, by anticipation the distinction between the conditional finite I (which as known in distinct consciousness by occasion of Experience, (= *εμπειρ[ι]α*) is called by Kant's Followers, the empirical I) and the absolute I AM—& likewise the dependence or rather the Inherence of the former in the Latter:—in whom "we live and move and have our Being."¹⁰

However, 'reflection', after Kant, is no longer between God and man but between 'homo noumenon' and 'homo phenomenon', that is, self-reflection. After Kant man has to say 'I am that I am' in exclusively human terms. And, as seen above, Coleridge fully accepts this argument. He accepts that human self-manifestation produces its own, exclusively human, sphere, in which there remains no trace of divine self-manifestation. There is nothing in common between the two subjects except for the supposedly shared principle of self-manifestation. This virtually means that man never knows if he lives and moves and has his being 'in God'.

The principle of self-manifestation is 'I am that I am'. While putting aside full-scale discussion as to how this principle can be both divine and human, Coleridge gives some detailed sketches of what he thinks of it. First of all, the first 'I am' is not a mere subject but the primary identity of subject and object. He writes in Thesis IV, 'It is to be sought for therefore neither in Object or Subject, taken separately, and consequently, as there is no other conceivable as a Third, it must be found in that which is neither Subject nor Object, but the identity of Both.—Such a Principle is the SUM or I AM.'¹¹ From this identity comes subject and object as separate entities when subject begins to manifest itself in its object. That is, the principle is the process from primary identity which is prior to the separation of

¹⁰ Biblical quotation is from Acts 17: 28. For other occasions of this quotation, see Chapters 1, I and 5, I.

¹¹ *CN*, III, 4265.

subject and object towards their secondary identity after their separation. And this process is self-manifestation, or, the act of 'will'. He writes in Thesis VI:

as an absolute Principle it can be neither Subject nor Object, per antithesis; but the identity of both, or Subject-Object—. And yet to be known, this Identity must be dissolved—and yet it cannot be dissolved. For its Essence consists in this Identity. This Contradiction can be solved no otherwise, than by an Act, in consequence of which and from the necessity of Self-manifestation the Principle makes itself its own Object, in and thus becomes a Subject.—The Self-affirmative is therefore A WILL: and Freedom ~~therefore~~ is ~~the~~ a primary Intuition, & can never be deduced.—

Here he carefully avoids such a question as to whether this 'Will' or 'Freedom' is divine or human. That is to say, he believes, or at least pretends to believe, that his discussion here is an epistemological one. But Thesis VII clearly shows that he consciously draws a parallel between the genesis and the epigenesis. He writes:

Thus then A Will only can be Self-Conscious, and Self-consciousness is the primary Act of a Will in and in order to Self-manifestation—the original and perpetual Epiphany. All Modes of Knowledge are ~~pro~~ Parts of the Process, by which the Will becoming an Object for itself becomes *the* SUBJECT, and in this creation of the material of Thought & Intelligence is self-revealed as Intelligence.—

One may ask whether 'the original and perpetual Epiphany' is divine. But he is here arguing for the self-manifestation of 'a Will', that is, of 'a man'. Later, he paraphrases subject and object as 'Thesis' and 'Antithesis', and names the primary identity of subject and object 'Prothesis' and the secondary identity or indifference

'Synthesis'. His later thinking is dominated by these terms. Out of these terms he eventually forms the 'Pentad'. And through the formation of the Pentad he gradually picks up the problem he suspends at this moment—the problem arising from the question about the precedence concerning the two self-manifestations.¹²

Coleridge's Pentad has both scientific and humanistic origins. Scientifically, it is derived from the polar logic of electricity and magnetism. He subsequently

¹² Coleridge makes possibly the clearest exposition of what he means by Prothesis in a Notebook entry of April 1819. There he writes, 'Now to manifest itself is to *produce itself*, & to produce is to manifest, as is implied in the very terms. Absolute oneness in the manifestation may be known, indeed, or *inferred*, as Oneness; but cannot *appear* except in and by *the many*, or not-one, as the condition of the Distinct ... Since then the $\Theta\alpha$ Monad or Indistinction can be made manifest only by *the Many* (*the Dyad* we will suppose;) and as each is distinct in relation to that from which it is distinguished; it follows, that all manifestation is by Opposites, each opposed to the other as Thesis and Antithesis, and both (*as both*) opposed to the Prothesis or that which is thus manifested, as ~~the~~ distinct Multeity to absolute Identity. *Both* I say as both: for neither *as* either is opponible to Identity, inasmuch as they *exist*, each severally, in <and by> contradistinguishable relation to each other. Thus then: Unity is manifested by Opposites. But it is equally true, that all true Opposites tend to Unity. For the further Fleeing each from the other is here precluded by the assumption of the Line as finite, i.e. the assumption of a punctum indifferentiae midway between the extreme points, and the distance of each from the mid point is the exponent or measure of the equal *attractive* power of the mid point over each extreme in controlling *their* centrifugal, ~~power of the latter,~~ or the measure of ~~the finite degree of the~~ its own projective power'. *CN*, IV, 4513. It should be noticed here that his understanding of 'transcendence' radically changes by integrating Prothesis into the argument. It is no longer the transcendence of subject from its object but the transcendence of Prothesis from both Thesis (subject) and Antithesis (object). 'Polar logic' obviously provides him with a hint for formulating this argument. In Thesis VIII he writes of electricity and magnetism, 'an <indestructible> Power [is] displaying itself by two opposite and counteracting Forces, + and -, the one tending to objectivize itself, in order to know itself—the other to *remain* itself'. *CN*, III, 4265. In May 1819, drawing on the polar logic, he makes essentially the same explanation. 'These twin Opposites I call the Poles; and the process itself, in which THE ONE reveals its Being in two opposite yet correlative Modes of Existence, I designate the term, Polarity, or Polarizing. The $\Theta\alpha$ Poles themselves are entitled, either plus (+) & minus (-); or positive and negative; or Thesis and Antithesis (in English, Position and Counterposition) and the Antecedent One, which is the sole *reality* of Both, and in both is *presupposed*, I call the Prothesis (in English, the Pre- or Ante-position) or the Identity; or the Radical.' *CN*, IV, 4538. See also Chapter 5, I note. In the eleventh Philosophical Lecture he suggests that the self-manifestation which originates in Prothesis is irreversible. He says, 'the polar principle, (that is that in order to manifest itself every power must appear in two opposites, but these two opposites having a ground of identity were constantly striving to reunite, but not being permitted to pass back to their original state, which would amount to annihilation, they pressed forward and the two formed a third something)'. *Phil Lects*, p. 323. See also his marginal note to Böhme's *Aurora*. *CM*, I, pp. 562–3.

explores its possible applications in chemistry, physics or physiology. Humanistically, he believes it to be the last form of his philosophical and theological speculations. He certainly believes that he can find the Pentad both in nature and in man, that the Pentad is the 'truth' both of nature and of man. Richard Baxter's brief statement of 'the Divine Trinity' seems to exercise a decisive influence in setting this grand scheme. It appears in his *Reliquae Baxterianae* which, with his *Catholick Theologie* Coleridge reads repeatedly and heavily annotates when he forms the Pentad. The passage reads: 'I had been Twenty Six Years convinced that Dichotomizing will not do it; but that the Divine Trinity in Unity, hath exprest it self in the whole Frame of Nature and Morality'.¹³ In this context Coleridge's Pentad is an attempt to find 'the Divine Trinity' both in nature and in man and finally to reconcile them by showing that both nature and man participate in one and same principle. What is probably most important for him personally is that he finds in Baxter's trichotomous argument a clue to settle his lifelong problem, 'reality and unreality'. In a margin of Baxter's *Catholick Theologie*, Coleridge writes, 'Trichotomy ... Instead of the dichotomy Real ÷ Unreal ... Reality can have no opposite, we should say—'.¹⁴ A similar statement appears in his marginal note to Kant's *Vermischte Schriften* (1799). There he points out 'the false conclusion inevitable on the Logic of Dichotomy' which ends up in saying 'it is at once +A and -A'.¹⁵ What he finds difficult in 'the dichotomy' is that it cannot but postulate 'Non-entity—i.e. 0' in the middle of 'Real ÷ Unreal' or '+A and -A'. In the dichotomy the middle point is 'Non-entity—i.e. 0'. In contrast, the middle point in the trichotomy is the point not of

¹³ *CM*, I, p. 347.

¹⁴ *CM*, I, p. 231.

¹⁵ *CM*, III, p. 363. Coleridge also acknowledges Kant's contribution in developing the trichotomous argument. In the marginal note to *Reliquae Baxterianae* he writes, 'the substitution of Trichotomy for the old & still general plan of Dichotomy in the Method and Disposition of Logic, which forms so prominent & substantial an excellence in Kant's Critique of the Pure Reason, of the Judgement, &c belongs originally to Richard Baxter, a century before Kant'. *CM*, I, p. 347. It is likely that when he writes '+A and -A' he has also in mind Kant's 'negative quantities'. For his view on it, see *BL*, I, p. 297–9.

cancellation but repletion and fulfilment. When he polarizes 'Real' into 'Actual' and 'Potential' and speculates the point of their union, that is, when he realizes that the problem of reality and unreality can be settled by the trichotomous argument, he begins to say confidently, 'Reality has no opposite'.¹⁶ And, as will be seen below, his speculation on the middle point plays a crucial role in his formation of the Pentad. In 1820–1821 he makes a long Notebook entry and explores possible development of the trichotomy. Here he calls this middle point 'Indifference' and writes:

It differs from Identity or the co-inherence of the Thesis & Antithesis contemplated as anterior to their manifestation as opposite—& out of which as their pre-existing principle they are both evolved: and from synthesis, which is posterior to both, and ~~arises~~ is formed by adding the one to the other so as to produce a third different from both.¹⁷

Soon he expects this middle point to reconcile the opposites in nature, the opposite in man, and finally nature and man. When he renames 'Indifference' as 'Mesothesis' and suggests that it is the point of fulfilment not only between horizontal Thesis and Antithesis but also between vertical Prothesis and Synthesis, he forms the complete Pentad.

II. The manuscript of the *Logic* (1823–9) is one of Coleridge's major later works. It is an extended restatement of his theory of the secondary imagination, and, inevitably, heavily dependent on Kant. The basis of his argument in the *Logic* is the Kantian original apperception. He explains it as follows:

¹⁶ *CN*, IV, 4784, and *CM*, I, p. 231.

¹⁷ *CN*, IV, 4784.

This primary mental act, which we have called the synthetic unity or the unity of apperception, is presupposed in, and in order to, all consciousness. It is its condition (*Conditio sine qua non*) or that which constitutes the possibility of consciousness *a priori*, or, if we borrow our metaphor from space instead of time, *ab intra*. Both metaphors mean one and the same, viz. an act or product of the mind itself considered as distinct from the impressions from external objects.¹⁸

While Kant invariably says 'a priori', Coleridge more often says 'ab intra'. But as Coleridge says here, they 'mean one and the same', that is, the priority and independence of the human mind as subject over its object, nature. It involves the overturn, to use the temporal metaphor, of the precedence of the genesis over the epigenesis, or, to use the spatial metaphor, the opening of the new internal sphere within the human mind which lies outside the sphere of the genesis. This 'internal sphere' is what Coleridge understands of Kant's phenomenal space. Coleridge sees that it is the sphere within which the human mind claims its autonomy. He argues that an object of the senses which 'exists *out of us* or *without us* would, if examined exclusively on speculative grounds, derive its evidence from a truth formed *within us*, and we may appropriately say with us.'¹⁹

The result of this precedential overturn, or the spatial inside-out is that the human mind becomes active in its own sphere. By postulating in the beginning Kant's original apperception and not his primary imagination, Coleridge virtually precludes the original passivity of the human mind.²⁰ That is, he 'cuts' what he once

¹⁸ *Logic*, p. 76.

¹⁹ *Logic*, pp. 65–6.

²⁰ 'The primary mental act' in the *Logic* is not the same as 'the primary imagination' in *Biographia Literaria* in the sense that the former is not contrasted with something which is prior to itself. Coleridge makes an argument in the *Logic* which seems similar to the one of the primary and secondary imaginations in *Biographia Literaria*. But it is different in presupposing 'nothing' prior to it. He writes in the *Logic*, 'Without the primary act or unity of apperception we could have

called the 'Kantian knot' which is made of passivity and activity of the human mind.²¹ He declares in the *Logic*, 'It is a Gordian knot which it is incomparably more to our interest to cut than untie, even if the latter were as easy as it is in fact impossible.'²² By cutting the knot, he 'emancipates' human mind from its passivity. In another place he writes, 'To emancipate the mind from the despotism of the eye is the first step towards its emancipation from the influences and intrusions of the senses, sensations, and passions generally.'²³ By 'this power of abstraction' the human mind distances, or, 'emancipates' itself from nature. It is a little surprising to see him triumphantly declaring the end of the original passivity of the human mind. In his usual expression, this 'abstraction' is not emancipation but the Fall. But here he is so willing to follow Kant that he seems to be able to suspend his inherent theological argument. Whether emancipation or the Fall, this marks the end of the primary imagination and the beginning of the secondary imagination, that is, the beginning of self-reflection. He writes:

if the passive be wholly separated, what can remain but acts and the immediate results of the same in the subject or agent himself; for this is the very principle from which we commence, that we confine ourselves to the mind, and that the mind is distinguished from other things as a subject that is its own object, an eye, as it were, that is its own mirror, beholding and self-beheld.²⁴

nothing to be conscious of. Without the repetition or representation of this act in the understanding [that] completes the consciousness we should be conscious of nothing. It will appear, however, on a moment's self-examination that a mere repetition of this act, a mere representation of the product of the act, could in no respect differ from the former in kind, at least more than the second echo from the former'. *Logic*, p. 78.

²¹ See Chapters 4, II and 6.

²² *Logic*, p. 235.

²³ *Logic*, p. 243.

²⁴ *Logic*, p. 75–6.

Describing the human mind's 'emancipation' from nature, he here appropriates a particularly Coleridgean illustration. This 'mirror' is the mirror which reflects itself and not the natural landscape which surrounds it.²⁵ In restating Kant's argument about the application of categories, Coleridge says that the human mind is not 'a small concave mirror'.

Let it not ... be thought that by referring the synthetic function to the sense ... I mean the unity ... to be a mere simultaneity of passive impressions without distinguishable interspaces, as for instance a landscape [in] a small concave mirror or the image of a lake on the retina of the eye, which is an act of agents external to the mind, if it be an act at all. No! I speak of a function which, as I have before explained, supposes a power of conferring unity in the mind itself, which power in the very introduction of the work we have learnt to recognise as mental forms or primary moulds.²⁶

In another place, however, he speaks of 'the faith in the existence of the external world' and says that the external world is 'something self-subsistent and present to us as other from ourselves and no less real'.²⁷ And he even illustrates this 'faith' by referring to 'the Eolian Harp'. He writes:

the matter or material *from* which we have *withdrawn* our attention are properly and wholly objective—i.e. that they have a subsistence independent of the mind which contemplates them. They may for aught that the common logic

²⁵ See Chapter 1, III.

²⁶ *Logic*, p. 73.

²⁷ *Logic*, p. 133.

can affirm or deny consist of a wonderful and seemingly indecomposable union of the mind and an external agency, as the tune of the breeze and the Eolian harp.²⁸

His metaphysical speculation of this sort is as old as 'The Eolian Harp' (1795). But once he 'withdraws his attention' from nature, such faith becomes 'only negative'.²⁹ 'The external world' becomes merely 'that which the mind can discover of what is not contained in its own consciousness by a light of its own'. That is to say, 'the external, the immediately sensuous' becomes a uncreated, confused manifold, in other words, chaos. He carefully avoids implying that the active human mind uncreates the divine creation. But the following explanation virtually amounts to saying it. He continues, 'the supposed impressions from external agents are comprised under the common term of "the many", "the manifold", or "multeity", or "the indistinguishable" (to which we may add the phrases adopted by symbolical writers or mystics, viz. "chaos", "the water", etc, etc[.]).'³⁰ These 'symbolic writers' certainly include Coleridge himself, who consciously draws the contrast between the divine genesis and the human epigenesis both from the chaos, or, the confused manifold.

In the *Logic* Prothesis is called 'the higher ground of philosophy, seen from which mind and nature, subject and object, are one (that is, anterior to that evolution of the Prothesis in which mind and nature first appear as the thesis and antithesis)'.³¹ And since 'Logic' is the principle of the human self-manifestation by language, the Prothesis here is called 'the verb substantive ("am", *sum*, εἰμι)'. Relying on his speculation on grammar and paraphrasing mind and nature as act and being, he draws a chart of the transition from Prothesis to Synthesis.

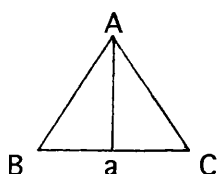
²⁸ *Logic*, p. 142.

²⁹ *Logic*, p. 77.

³⁰ *Logic*, p. 77.

³¹ *Logic*, p. 265.

the verb substantive ("am", *sum*, εἰμι) expresses the identity or coincidence the being and act. It is the act of being. All other words therefore may be considered as tending from this point, or more truly from the mid-point of the line, the *punctum indifferentiae* respecting the *punctum identitatis*, even as the whole line represents the same point as produced or polarized.



In this simple diagram *A* (= the point of identity) is supposed to generate by perpetual irradiation the line *BC*, the pole *B* representing being in its greatest predominance, and the pole *C* action in like manner: while the point *a*, expressing the indifference of being and action, of substantive and verb, is the more especial representative or analogon of the *point A*, as a point. *A*, the point of identity, is verb and substantive in one and as one; *a*, the point of indifference, is *either* verb *or* substantive, or even both at the same time, but *not* in the same *relation*. Such in grammar is the infinitive.³²

The point 'A' is Prothesis and the point 'a' is Synthesis. This diagram, however, is not yet the Pentad. The diagram is still that of the onefold self-manifestation, that is, it is exclusively 'human'.

'Logic' or human self-manifestation is the Coleridgean epigenesis. It is not surprising if he draws a parallel between the divine and human self-manifestations by using exactly the same term to describe them. In fact, the diagram in the *Logic* is the restatement of what he calls 'the Pythagorean *Tetractys*—i.e. the eternal Fountain

³² *Logic*, p. 16–7. For a similar speculation, see *CN*, IV, 4523.

or Source of Nature'.³³ That is, his epigenesis is a recapitulation of the genesis, both interpreted in a particularly Coleridgean way. In 1818 he makes several attempts in the Notebooks to interpret the genesis as the divine self-manifestation from the Prothesis. In one of them he explains the Prothesis as 'Unitrine ... Or the Subject-Object in absolute Identity neither Subject or Object, or both in Combination, but the Prothesis or Unground of both = Τὸ ὑπερούσιον, Ὁ πατήρ.'³⁴ He even re-interprets the verses of Genesis I with these terms. He writes in August 1818:

2nd V. A state of Indistinction, or Fluidity—i.e. intelligible transcendental Fluidity...the parts of which ... are absolutely ~~un~~ indistinguishable and co-inherent, so that neither is there an *Outness* nor an *In-ness*—neither a whole nor Parts, but a Mere Allness—all without an each. This Prothesis in Inwardness and Outwardness, which therefore is neither because the (N.b. *not* Synthesis, but) Prothesis or potential Identity of both ... And the Spirit of God moved on the *faces* of the Waters, there is an actual tho' not a phænomenic Trans or Super—therefore a relation ejusdem generis of all the Surfaces to the common Superincumbent or Super-incubant, and consequently an *intelligible* relation to each other: which in V. 3 becomes real by the resolution of the Prothesis into the Thesis and Antithesis.³⁵

It should be noted here that he is at pains to preclude his own anxiety from this interpretation of Genesis. He makes clear that there is no '*Outness* nor an *In-ness*', no '*phænomenic* Trans or Super' in the original genesis. But his precaution, probably contrary to his intention, suggests that he already has such anxiety in

³³ *CM*, I, p. 348.

³⁴ *CN*, III, 4427.

³⁵ *CN*, III, 4418.

himself. In fact, he confesses his phenomenological anxiety right in the middle of the interpretation. He writes:

For tho' the Thesis as necessarily supposes the Antithesis, as the Anti-thesis the Thesis, and both must begin to be as Thesis and Anti-thesis at in one and the same indivisible instant, yet in the order of *our* Thought or rather mode of representing our Thought, there must be a priority *assumed* even while the contrary is affirmed—/but which shall be assumed, as the Thesis, is determined best by choosing that which is most of the Nature of a Noumenon, the Antithesis being essentially a Phænomenon or the power of Manifestation.³⁶

He makes the point clearer in another notebook entry from the same time. Here he expresses his epistemological anxiety and the problem of self-reflection which follows such anxiety by alluding to 'Ixion's wheel'. He writes in August–September 1818:

behold in these two Theses and Antitheses the History of Nature for ever struggling to reproduce the-~~Pr~~ ineffable Prothesis, and for ever Ixionlike baffled by ~~the~~ its cloud-like Counterfeit, the Synthesis—or producing and therefore self-reduplicating Product—or rather Mock-Product—*Phæno*-product—for our word mock answers rather to *pseudo*—³⁷

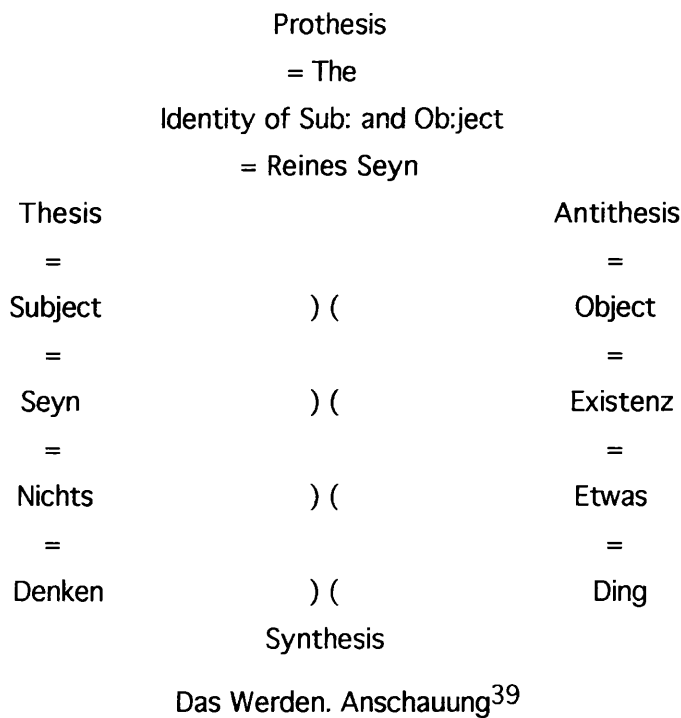
Therefore, when he draws the diagram of 'Unitrine', he quietly integrates the human dimension into it. The diagram depicts the divine self-manifestation from Prothesis towards Synthesis. And after drawing the diagram he adds, 'Hence in all things the Synthesis ~~or an~~ images what in God only absolutely is, the Prothesis manifested—it

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ CN, III, 4432.

is a return to the Prothesis, or re-affirmation. Thus the Monas, the Dyas, the Trias, and the Tetractys are one/'. Although he says 'Synthesis = Father' in the diagram, the sort of reciprocity he describes here between Prothesis and Synthesis is that between God and man. When he says, 'the Synthesis images what in God only absolutely is', he may well replace this 'Synthesis' with the human mind.³⁸

Coleridge's first attempt to formulate a proper Pentad, that is, a Pentad which, unlike Tetrad which tends to be either divine or human, integrates both the divine and human dimensions, appears in his marginal note to Hegel's *Wissenschaft der Logik* (1812, 1813, 1816). Criticizing Hegel for omitting Prothesis in the beginning, Coleridge writes down the following diagram:



³⁸ *CN*, III, 4427. See also Coleridge's marginal note to Böhme's *Aurora*. *CM*, I, pp. 562–3. In his attempt of reinterpreting Genesis, he receives probably the most important influence from Böhme, especially from *Aurora*. Yet while making extensive and minute marginal note to the work, he maintains that his own basic problem is unsolved even here. The problem is 'the Chasm infinitely infinite between Deity and the Creature[s]'. *CM*, I, pp. 573–4. For his own version of reinterpretation not only of the creation but also of salvation, see *CM*, I, pp. 574–5.

³⁹ *CM*, II, p. 991.

Having detailed epistemology and phenomenology in between, here are arranged the divine and human self-manifestations facing each other on the vertical line and thus revealing his intention of introducing a theological argument.

But when the human mind abstracts itself from this correspondence and grants itself the status of Prothesis, it begins to repeat the genesis or produce the epigenesis within itself. The fact that Coleridge closely follows Kant's argument allows us to suspect that Coleridge's term 'Synthesis' comes from Kant's 'synthetic *a priori* judgment'. Kant defines 'synthetic *a priori* judgment' in the *Prolegomena* as that which 'enlarges my knowledge in that it adds something to my concept' [vergrößert also meine Erkenntnis, indem er zu meinem Begriffe etwas hinzuthut].⁴⁰ The question concerning the belonging of this 'added something' is at the centre of Coleridge's whole theological investigation. In fact, by contrasting the Kantian Synthesis with Prothesis, and the Kantian epigenesis with the genesis, Coleridge already brings the question into the theological arena. He suggests that the genesis is inevitably followed by the epigenesis which is outside yet also inside the original genesis, which is prior yet also posterior to the original genesis. His point is that this paradox comes from the duality of Prothesis. In August–September 1818, he writes in a Notebook, 'Now here the O1 is the Prothesis, i.e. id quod semper supponit 'Ο Θεος intra se; quum apud παντας τους κτιστους est id quod supponitur sub nosmet ipsos'.⁴¹ In the *Logic* he repeats the same argument and says:

The principle itself, I say, which is here the absolute "I am", will be found to involve a universal antecedency and consequently to preclude both all precedency and all parity of any other in its very conception, and what is here affirmed

⁴⁰ Kant, *Werke*, IV, p. 14, Lucas, op. cit., pp. 16–7.

⁴¹ CN, III, 4436. 'Id quod ... ': that which God always lays down within himself, whereas among all his creatures it is that which is laid down beneath us ourselves.

metaphysically of the absolute "I am", is logically and scientially affirmable of consciousness generally.⁴²

But this argument requires a theological mediation between 'the absolute "I am"' and the not-absolute "I am"s. In a marginal note to Böhme's *Aurora* he writes of 'the infinite disparateness' between 'Mind' and 'Minds'.

the infinite disparateness of an eternal and creative Mind, whose ideas are anterior to their Objects, from Minds whose Images and Thoughts are posterior to the Things, and produced or conditioned by their Objects! The latter—Effects, Shadows of Shadows, pene Nihilum a non vere Ente! The former super-essential Causes ... *ων εν τω Περισσω*, in whose excess and overflow of Actually all created Things have their Reality.⁴³

Coleridge sees this 'infinite disparateness' between Mind and Minds as the result of the Fall. When the separation between God and man takes places, it results in the problem of the two separate, irreconcilable self-manifestations, that is, the problem of 'these two Theses and Antitheses'. Once this happens, it becomes insoluble. Even when he grants priority to the human 'Mock-Product', or allows the status of Prothesis to the human mind by the theory of the secondary imagination, the inherent paradoxicality does not decrease. On the contrary, it increases and intensifies. In a marginal note to Eschenmayer's *Psychologie* (1817) he discusses 'transformation' of 'the archetypal soul' into 'a copy-soul'. He writes, 'Was the transformation good or evil? If good, then the *Copy-Soul* must be better than the original Prototype Soul: & we have the Schellingian Atheism. If evil, how is the

⁴² *Logic*, p. 86–7.

⁴³ *CM*, I, p. 565. 'Pene Nihilum a non vere Ente': Almost Nothing, from what does not really Exist; *ων εν τω Περισσω*: In the superabundance of which.

adulteration of a perfect free Essence by a blind and heterogeneous Inferior ≠ Conceivable?'⁴⁴ Thus he restates the epistemological problem in theological terms and shifts it onto the more intricate ground.

III. The basic argument of *Aids to Reflection* (1825) is in direct continuity with that of the philosophical chapters in *Biographia Literaria*. That is, *Aids to Reflection* also deals with the problem of freedom, or in Coleridge's case, the problem of evil, arising from the active human mind. The simplest motto in *Aids to Reflection* is 'He only thinks who *reflects*.'⁴⁵ And Coleridge adds a long note to this motto and explains the '*Distinction between Thought and Attention*'. He writes, 'In ATTENTION, we keep the mind *passive*: In THOUGHT, we rouse it into activity. In the former, we submit to an impression—we keep the mind steady in order to *receive* the stamp. In the latter, we seek to *imitate* the artist, while we ourselves make a copy or duplicate of his work.' If 'the artist' here is the divine artist, he has in mind the problem of the two creators. Even if it is the human artist, he cannot avoid the same problem since the artist '*imitates*' the divine artist. And he also deals with his old problem of passivity and activity, or, between passive, receptive 'ATTENTION' and active, productive 'THOUGHT'.

As well as the argument from *Biographia Literaria*, *Aids to Reflection* repeats also Coleridge's epistemological and phenomenological speculations from various stages of his life. The first of such speculations is his acknowledgment that man falls into his own internal darkness. He writes a poem about it in a Notebook, for which Kathleen Coburn suggests the date September–October 1796.

O man, thou half-dead Angel—
a dusky light—a purple *flash*

⁴⁴ *CM*, II, p. 553–4.

⁴⁵ *AR*, p. 14.

crystalline splendor—light blue—
 Green lightings.—
 in that eternal and & delirious misery—
 wrathfires—
 inward desolations—
 an horror of great darkness
 great things that on the ocean
 counterfeit infinity—⁴⁶

In *Aids to Reflection* he describes those who do not see with 'the eye of Reason' as follows:

one that shuts the eye hard, and with violence curls the eyelid, forces a phantastic fire from the crystalline humor, and espies a light that never shines, and sees thousands of little fires that never burn; so is he that blinds the eye of Reason, and pretends to see by an eye of Faith. He makes little images of Notions, and some atoms dance before him, but sees like a man in his sleep.⁴⁷

However, if he holds to a thorough phenomenological argument, every man is 'in his sleep'. To see is to dream, be it bright or dark. The following statement looks back to his experience of nightmare and his desperate investigation into it in the days in Malta. He writes, 'Things take the signature of Thought. The shapes of the recent dream become a *mould* for the objects in the distance; and these again give an outwardness and a sensation of reality to the Shapings of the Dream.'⁴⁸ Therefore,

46 *CN*, I, 273.

47 *AR*, p. 341.

48 *AR*, p. 36.

Aids to Reflection is aid to 'the Delightful Dream', or, 'Dream of Truth'.⁴⁹ The acknowledgment of the Fall and the yearning for the recovery, or ascent, makes the crucial difference between upward 'Delightful Dream' and downward nightmare. Referring to his early day's observation on 'the images of the weeds' on the surface of water,⁵⁰ he writes:

All things strive to ascend, and ascend in their striving. And shall man alone stoop? Shall his pursuits and desires, the *reflections* of his inwards life, be like the reflected Images of a Tree on the edge of a Pool, that grows downward, and seeks a mock heaven in the unstable element beneath it, in neighbourhood with the slim water-weeds and oozy bottom-grass that are yet better than itself and more noble, in as far as Substances that appear as Shadows are preferable to Shadows mistaken for Substance!⁵¹

The phenomenological anxiety behind this statement leads him to the argument for the need of theological attestation. He raises a question in a Notebook exactly when he interprets Genesis as the divine self-manifestation from Prothesis. He writes in August–September 1818, 'Either our spiritual Instincts have their correspondent

⁴⁹ AR, p. 394.

⁵⁰ CN, II, 2557. The notebook entry is from his days in Malta. Coleridge writes, 'O the beautiful Fountain or natural Well at Upper Stowey— ... The images of the weeds which hung down from its sides, appeared as plants growing up, straight and upright, among the water weeds that really grew from the Bottom/& so vivid was the Image, that for some moments & not till after I had disturbed the water, did I perceive that ~~they~~ their roots were not neighbours, & they side-by-side companions. So—even then I said—so are the happy man's *Thoughts and Things*—(in the language of the modern philosophers, Ideas and Impressions.)' In the days of the Pantisocracy scheme, he sought to be such a 'happy man' and 'to make ideas & realities stand side by side'. CL, II, p. 1000. Quoted in full and discussed in Chapter 1, IV. But to the above Notebook entry he later adds, 'Who that thus lives with a continually divided Being can remain healthy! <... Pain is easily subdued compared with continual uncomfortableness—and the sense of stifled Power! ... O it is horrid!—Die, my Soul, die!—Suicide—rather than this, the worst state of Degradation! It is less a suicide! S.T.C.>'

⁵¹ AR, p. 118.

Objects as well as the animal Instinct, or it is ~~the~~ in the ~~Holiest Temple~~ Place of their noblest Temple, the Heart of Man, that Nature tells her first *Lie*. Ideas as anticipations are intellectual Instincts.⁵² And he writes in *Aids to Reflection*, 'All other prophecies of Nature have their exact fulfilment—in every other "ingrafted word" of Promise Nature is found true to her Word, and is it in her noblest Creature, that she tells her first Lie?'⁵³ The fact that he repeats the same question two more times in the Notebook shows how anxious he is for some form of theological attestation.⁵⁴ But this attestation does not bring him any conclusion. In that sense it always remains sustained attestation, and he keeps raising the same question again and again.

In order to occasion attestation, Coleridge has to have some form of metaphysical argument, or rather expectation, that the epigenesis is posterior to the genesis, and that the latter is somehow related to the former. At this point he turns to the theory of Leibnizian pre-established harmony. It is in 1809 that he argues that the theory is not 'Hypothesis' but 'Hypopœ̄sis'.⁵⁵ As a post-Kantian, he sees that the theory is invalidated as a propositional theory. Yet he tries to argue that it is valid as poetry. It should be remembered here that he calls Leibniz 'a visionary'.⁵⁶ Since then, he makes several attempts to re-introduce a poeticised Leibnizian theory to meet his need of metaphysics.

⁵² *CN*, III, 4438.

⁵³ *AR*, p. 353.

⁵⁴ See *CN*, III, 4377, and *CN*, IV, 4692.

⁵⁵ *CN*, III, 3587. Quoted and discussed in Chapter 5, II. In April 1819 Coleridge criticizes 'Atomism' and writes, 'Atoms.—If understood and employed as xyz in Algebra, and for the purpose of scientific Calculus, as in elemental Chemistry, I see no objection to the ~~assumption~~ Fiction not outweighed by its technical utility. But if they are asserted as real and existent, the Suffiction (for it would be too complimentary to call it a Supposition)'. *CN*, IV, 4518. In July 1822 he complains about 'Pseudo-platonists' and writes, 'their Explanations are all not so much suppositions or hypotheses, as *Suffictions* or hypopoieses'. *CN*, IV, 4910. For Coleridge's own Hypopœ̄sis, see below.

⁵⁶ *Phil Lects*, p. 380. Quoted below.

It is rather ironical that Leibniz's own addition, '*præter ipsum intellectum*' [except the mind itself] to the Aristotelian-Lockean principle, '*nihil in intellectu quod non prius in sensu*' [There is nothing in the mind that was not before in the senses]⁵⁷ should mark a crucial step towards Kant's phenomenology and eventually invalidate what Leibniz believes in the form of pre-established harmony. Kant develops to the full extent the slight suggestion of the autonomy of the human mind in Leibniz's addition and initiates his phenomenology by establishing a thorough dualism between being and thinking. Kant summarizes the Leibnizian pre-established harmony in *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* towards the end of the section on the original apperception:

Wollte jemand zwischen den zwei genannten einzigen Wegen noch einen Mittelweg vorschlagen, nämlich, daß sie [die Kategorien] weder selbstgedachte erste Prinzipien a priori unserer Erkenntnis, noch auch aus der Erfahrung geschöpft, sondern subjektive, uns mit unserer Existenz zugleich eingepflanzte Anlagen zum Denken wären, die von unserm Urheber so eingerichtet worden, daß ihr Gebrauch mit den Gesetzen der Natur, an welchen die Erfahrung fortläuft, genau stimmte (eine Art von Präformationssystem der reinen Vernunft)

[A middle course may be proposed between the two above mentioned, namely, that the categories are neither *self-thought* first principles *a priori* of our knowledge nor derived from experience, but subjective dispositions of thought, implanted in us from the first moment of our existence, and so ordered by our Creator that their employment is in complete harmony with the laws of nature in accordance with which experience proceeds—a kind of *preformation-system* of pure reason.]⁵⁸

⁵⁷ *BL*, I, p. 141 and note.

⁵⁸ Kant, *ibid.*, and Smith, *ibid.*, B 167.

Then he dismisses this argument on the ground that it does not procure the a priori certainty of categories. That is, the argument does not lead to the categorical imperative. Coleridge agrees with Kant that the pre-established harmony understood as a propositional theory nullifies ethics. But the reason Coleridge dismisses it is graver than that of Kant. Coleridge's concern is not with freedom itself but with its inevitable result, the problem of evil. To use his terms, the theory is 'necessitarianism' or 'pantheism' which cannot properly deal with the problem of evil. Around 1809 he writes a marginal note to a German translation of Leibniz's *Essais de Théodicée*:

the Falsum Magnum, on w[hi]ch all the Theodices have struck: & with them the first Principle of morality. I mean the subordination of moral to physical Evil: in consequence of which the latter in reality constitutes the true evil of the former—now as the latter is evidently avoidable by omnipotence ... the former becomes unintelligible—.59

He never stops arguing against this view. To hold such a view, he argues in *Biographia Literaria*, is to 'assume in its full extent the position, *nihil in intellectu quod non prius in sensu*, without Leibnitz's qualifying *præter ipsum intellectum*, and in the same sense, in which it was understood by Hartley and Condilliac'.60 That is, to hold to necessitarianism is to deny freedom and drop ethics altogether. In *Aids to Reflection* he criticizes those who hold 'the doctrine ... which represents a Will absolutely passive' and writes:

they supported the Necessitarian Scheme, and made the relation of Cause and Effect the Law of the universe, subjecting to its mechanism the moral World no

59 *CM*, III, p. 505.

60 *BL*, I, p. 141.

less than the material or physical. It follows, that all is Nature ... With such a system not the Wit of Man nor all the Theodices ever framed by human ingenuity before and since the attempt of the celebrated Leibnitz, can reconcile the Sense of Responsibility, nor the fact of the difference *in kind* between REGRET AND REMORSE.⁶¹

In December 1823, he repeats the same criticism of the same people in a Notebook, calling them 'Leibnitzian'.⁶²

Coleridge writes his dismissive comment on Leibniz's theory in *Biographia Literaria* on this line of argument. He writes, 'Leibnitz's doctrine of a pre-established harmony, which he certainly borrowed from Spinoza, who had himself taken the hint from Des Cartes's animal machines, was in its common interpretation too strange to survive the inventor—too repugnant to our common sense'.⁶³ But he adds a provocative comment on 'our common sense', saying that it 'is not indeed entitled to a judicial voice in the courts of scientific philosophy; but whose whispers still exert a strong secret influence.' He repeats the same dismissive comment on 'Leibniz's doctrine' in the twelfth Philosophical Lecture.⁶⁴ But in the thirteenth

⁶¹ AR, p. 159. In *Aids to Reflection*, Coleridge repeatedly points out that 'the Will' is distinct from nature. Nature here is understood as material, mechanical, unspiritual nature, that is, nature of necessitarianism. He writes for example, 'The first step to a rational Faith is the clear understanding of the sense attached to the word, *Spirit*, as that which is not included in *Nature*. The NEXT step is the conviction, that if there be aught spiritual actually existing, the Will must be the Spiritual part of our Humanity.' p., 74 note. Then he goes on to argue that by '*the Will*' man becomes distinct from nature. He writes, 'the Will, as the Supernatural in Man and the Principle of our Personality—of that, I mean, by which we are responsible Agents; *Persons*, and not merely living *Things*.' pp. 77–8. But all these arguments are not for praising man's freedom but for pronouncing his original sin. He writes, 'I profess a deep conviction that Man was and is a *fallen* Creature, not by accidents of bodily constitution, or any other cause, which *human* Wisdom in a course of ages might be supposed capable of removing; but diseased in his *Will*, in that Will which is the true and only strict synonyme of the word, I, or the intelligent Self.' p. 139–40.

⁶² See CN, IV, 5077

⁶³ BL, I, pp. 130–1.

⁶⁴ *Phil Lects*, p. 350.

lecture, he says, 'Leibniz supposed [a *plenum*, a pre-established harmony, but he was a visionary, a fantastic fellow and was treated with bitterness and contempt by Newton's understrappers]'.⁶⁵ That is, he thinks that Leibniz is 'a visionary' whom 'our common sense' is incapable of proper appreciation. As shall be seen below, this means that if the Leibnizian theory concerns not nature as an 'animal machine' but two natures as divine and human self-manifestations, he would keep it. In a marginal note, probably from the time when he is preparing for *Biographia Literaria*, to Maass *Versuch über die Einbildungskraft*, he writes:

In order to render the creative activity of the Imagination at all conceivable, we must necessarily have recourse to the *Harmonia præstabilita* of Spinoza and Leibnitz, in which case the automatism of the Imagination and Judgement would be Perception in the same sense, as a <self-conscious> Watch as would be a Percipient of Time, and inclusively of the apparent motion of the Sun and Stars.⁶⁶

Then he continues and declares, 'I shall still prefer it [Leibnizian theory]: & not doubt, that the Pencil of Rays forms pictures on the Retina † because I cannot comprehend how this Picture can excite a mental Fac-simile.' Contrary to Kant's argument, Coleridge here argues that the secondary imagination presupposes the external forming power, in his words, 'Form' as 'an external active power'.⁶⁷ That is to say, the epigenesis presupposes the genesis. In 'Essays on the Principles of Method' (1818), he asks the question: 'what is the ground of the coincidence between

⁶⁵ *Phil Lects*, p. 380.

⁶⁶ *CM*, III, p. 790. The last sentence shows that this argument is in direct continuity with the one for the 'coincidence' between God and man in 'Confessio Fidei'. There Coleridge writes, 'all holy Will is coincident with the Will of God, and therefore secure in its ultimate Consequences by his Omnipotence—having, if such similitude be not unlawful, a similar relation to the goodness of the Almighty, as a perfect Timepiece would have to the Sun. *CN*, III, 4005. See also Chapter 5, III.

⁶⁷ *CM*, III, p. 790.

reason and experience? Or between the laws of matter and the ideas of the pure intellect?' Then, by introducing the 'personal' dimension, he argues that to ask this question is to 'seek the ground of this agreement in a supersensual essence, which being at once the *ideal* of the reason and the cause of the material world, is the pre-establiher of the harmony in and between both.'⁶⁸ About the same time, he writes in a marginal note to Eschenmayer, 'Precious Logic 'pon 'onor'!—A beautiful View, or Scheme of Leib^s Pre-est. Harmony indeed!'⁶⁹ In April 1819 he contemplates the possibility of 'reconciling Leibnitz with Kant' within the framework of phenomenology.⁷⁰

Coleridge's next move is to add to this epistemological theory the ethical and potentially theological dimension. Also in April 1819, he writes, 'Leibnitz brought forth two imposing Ideas: one, that all the varieties of existing Things consisted in the More or the Less, i.e. in different degrees or quantities of the same X: the other that the *vis representativa* (*Vorstellungskraft*) was this X or one prime fundamental Power (*Grundkraft*).'⁷¹ Then he immediately expresses his dissatisfaction with this. He continues:

The latter is obviously either false, if it exclude the Will, and *vis essendi*: or nugatory and an illogical generalization if it subsume them ... To the former it has been objected, that such an Analysis would require an infinite Mind, Yes!

⁶⁸ *Friend*, I, p. 463. Coleridge continues and presents 'the Method in the FINE ARTS' as lying between the ideal and material worlds. He writes, 'Between the two lies the Method in the FINE ARTS, which belongs indeed to this second or external relation, because the effect and position of the parts is always more less influenced by the knowledge and experience of their previous qualities; but which nevertheless constitute a link connecting the second form of relation which the first. For in all, that truly merits the name of Poetry in its most comprehensive sense, there is a necessary predominance of the Ideas (i.e. of that which originates in the artist himself)'. *Friend*, I, p. 464.

⁶⁹ *CM*, II, p. 556.

⁷⁰ *CN*, IV, 4545.

⁷¹ *CN*, IV, 4515.

(Leibnitz might justly reply) to *compleat* it. But it is proposed as an Idea, for regulation and guidance—as the ultimate Insight, at which we are to aim; the unattainable Ideal, by which we are to measure our approximations.

Here is a hint that although Leibnizian theory does not deal with the problem between 'Mind and Minds', or, 'Will and Wills', Coleridge may be able to make it do so. The crucial problem then is the essential, 'infinite disparateness' between 'Mind and Minds', and between 'Will and Wills'. He raises this point in this entry as follows:

There is, however, another Objection which has not, I believe, been advanced, and less easily to be removed—viz. that Leibnitz's Idea contains a probable Truth turned topsy-turvy—proposing Quantity as the ground of Quality, <(Qualitas *primaria*)> i.e., the Phænomenal and merely Relative for the Real or Actual, Quality being in fact pre-demanded in order to determine the amount of Quantity.

He again complains that Leibnizian system lacks the due recognition of the essential heterogeneity between 'Mind and Minds', between 'Will and Wills'. Yet even so, if there is possible mediation beyond the qualitative difference between the two heterogeneous self-manifestations, he would remain Leibnizian. Finally in *Aids to Reflection*, he discloses what sort of mediation he has in mind. He writes:

the Will is pre-eminently the *spiritual* Constituent in our Being. But will any reflecting man admit, that his own Will is the only and sufficient determinant of all he *is*, and all he does? Is nothing to be attributed to the harmony of the system to which he belongs, and to the pre-established Fitness of the Objects and Agents, known and unknown, that surround him, as acting *on* the will, though, doubtless, *with* it likewise? a process, which the co-instantaneous yet

reciprocal action of the Air and the vital Energy of the Lungs in Breathing may help to render intelligible.⁷²

He expects mediation by inspiration. 'Breath' here is not at all a capricious allusion.⁷³ Drawing on 'breath', he in fact hints at 'co-instantaneity' and 'reciprocity' between God and man and suggests that this is the way to mediate the two.

In *Aids to Reflection* Coleridge makes many biblical references to explain his faith in inspiration.⁷⁴ But he does not forget that his theory of inspiration is for the mediation between the two self-manifestations, that is, between the two Protheses. He explains how the spirit reaches the deepest human Prothesis as follows:

If any reflecting mind be surprised that the aids of the Divine Spirit should be deeper than our Consciousness can reach, it must arise from the not having attended sufficiently to the nature and necessary limits of human Consciousness. For the same impossibility exists as to the first acts and movements of our own will—the farthest back our recollection can follow the traces, never leads us to the first foot-mark—the lowest depth that the light of our Consciousness can

⁷² AR, p. 75.

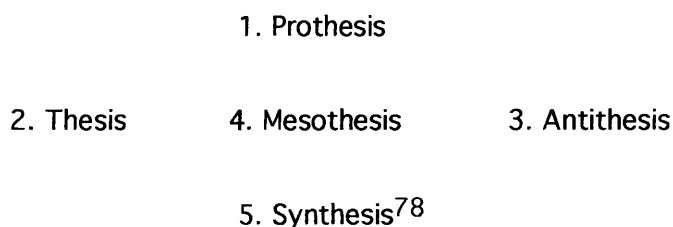
⁷³ See, for example, CN, IV, 4689 where he writes, 'Life *without breathing*—not always a positive torture of deprivation of Breathing, but often a *mere negative*—*not to breathe*—fearfully symbolical of a spiritual Life, but why say I Spiritual only?—of Life without continued successive feeling of dependence on God, of food of Life asked each moment & granted—O recollect in waking thought, that every free Breath is = God has not yet rejected me.'

⁷⁴ For example, Coleridge writes with a characteristically Coleridgean modification, 'we may believe the Apostle's assurance, that not only doth "the Spirit aid our infirmities;" that is, *act on* the Will by a predisposing influence *from without*, as it were, though in a spiritual manner, and without suspending or destroying its freedom ... but that in regenerate souls it may act *in* the will; that uniting and becoming one with our will and spirit, it may "make intercession for us;" nay, in this intimate union taking upon itself the form of our infirmities, may intercede for us "with groanings that cannot be uttered.'" AR, p. 78. The biblical passages are from Rom 8. 26.

visit even with a doubtful Glimmering, is still at an unknown distance from the Ground.⁷⁵

Conscience is thus 'the Ground', or rather, 'the Unground' of consciousness.⁷⁶ And he expects 'the Divine Spirit' to mediate this human Prothesis with the original Prothesis. He argues that only by this mediation, or, 'a quickening inter-communion with the Divine Spirit', one may receive 'the mystery of Redemption, that this has been rendered possible for us.' Then he quotes from 1 Cor 15. 45: 'And so it is written: the first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam a quickening Spirit.'⁷⁷

It is in *Aids to Reflection* that Coleridge draws the first complete Pentad with Mesothesis at the centre.



He explains Prothesis here in the same way as he did in the previous notebook entries. He says that it is

⁷⁵ AR, p. 79.

⁷⁶ Coleridge writes, 'How do you define *the human mind*? the answer must at least contain, if not consist of, the words, "a mind capable of *Conscience*." For Conscience is no synonyme of Consciousness, nor any mere expression of the same a modified by the particular Object. On the contrary, a Consciousness properly human (*i.e. Self-consciousness*), with the sense of moral responsibility, presupposes the Conscience, as its antecedent Condition and Ground.' AR, p. 125.

⁷⁷ AR, p. 217.

⁷⁸ *Aids*, pp. 180–2 note.

a Point not contained in the line but independent, and (in the language of that School [Pythagorean]) transcendent to all production, which it caused but did not partake in. *Facit, non patitur*. This was the Punctum invisibile, et presuppositum: and in this way the Pythagoreans guarded against the error of Pantheism, into which the later schools fell.⁷⁹

Then he makes a curious comment on it. He writes, 'Taken *absolutely*, this finds its application in the Supreme Being alone, the Pythagorean TETRACTYS; the INEFFABLE NAME, to which no Image dare be attached.' Mesothesis is here understood as what was Synthesis in the previous speculations, that is, 'the INDIFFERENCE' between Thesis and Antithesis. He explains the whole diagram, 'the *absolutely* Real as the PROTHESIS; the *subjectively* Real as the THESIS; the *objectively* Real as the ANTITHESIS; and affirm, that Idea is the INDIFFERENCE of the two'. Also curiously, he says little of Synthesis. Yet there is a document which allows us to guess what he has in mind about these points. It is in July 1833 when he is recorded as offering a new interpretation of Mesothesis. He says, 'Imitation is the mesothesis of Likeness and Difference; the Difference is as essential to it as the Likeness; for without the Difference, it would be Copy or Fac-simile. But, to borrow a term from astronomy, it is a librating mesothesis'.⁸⁰ Carl Woodring, the editor of *Table Talk*, supplies the explanation of 'Libration' from John Bonnycastle, *An Introduction to Astronomy* (4th ed. 1803) p. 431. Bonnycastle writes, 'LIBRATION, an apparent irregularity of the moon's motion, which makes her appear to librate about her axis, in such a manner that the parts of her eastern and western limbs become visible and invisible alternately'. Thus Mesothesis mediates not only between positive Thesis and negative Antithesis but also between Prothesis and Synthesis in their sameness and difference and their co-instantaneity and reciprocity. It is not surprising that Mesothesis

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *TT*, I, p. 408.

finally becomes 'The Spirit' in the Christian Pentad.⁸¹ Accordingly, the upper half of Pentad which is the divine Trinity and the lower half which is the human trinity are mediated at the centre of the Pentad. Both divine and human self-manifestations involve their respective trinities. And when he finally places 'The Spirit' in the middle, he achieves the final form of Coleridgean Trinity of God, man, and nature. Relying on this development he says in 'Essay on Faith', in spite of his own caution that 'no Image dare be attached' to Prothesis, that Synthesis is 'the only possible likeness or image of the prothesis, or identity, and therefore the required proper character of man.'⁸²

IV. Thus Coleridge's long metaphysical speculation comes back to its starting point. In 'The Eolian Harp' (1795) he writes:

Whilst thro' my half-clos'd eyelids I behold
 The sunbeams dance, like diamonds, on the main,
 And tranquil muse upon tranquillity;
 Full many a thought uncall'd and undetain'd,
 And many idle flitting phantasies,
 Traverse my indolent and passive brain
 As wild and various, as the random gales
 That swell or flutter on this subject Lute!

⁸¹ See *CM*, III, p. 416. This Christian Pentad is reproduced in the front page of *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit*.

⁸² *LR*, IV, p. 431. Coleridge makes many extensive marginal notes to Edward Irving's *Sermons, Lectures and Occasional Discourses*, 3 vols (London, 1828) and discusses about the Pentad. In one of them he writes, 'The Father *begetteth* the Son, while he proceedeth in and with the Spirit, even as the Spirit proceedeth from and with the Father thro' the Son. ~~For the same reason, it~~ Again—if there can be no mesothesis, still less, if less could be, can there be any proper Synthesis, or Compound of both—only that here a higher form is substituted: and to express this, † instead of omitted I say that the Synthes[is] is *exchanged* for that absolute Form, of which it is a dim and imperfect analogon.' *CM*, III, p. 16.

And what if all of animated nature
 Be but organic Harps diversly fram'd
 That tremble into thought, as o'er them sweeps
 Plastic and vast, one intellectual Breeze,
 As once the Soul of each, and God of all?⁸³

Here he draws a parallel between the genesis without and the epigenesis within. It is the spirit, 'one intellectual Breeze' which blows without and within his mind simultaneously. His expectation of the mediation by the spirit is expressed by the phrase 'what if'. But here the human mind is still 'passive'. When it becomes active, or, productive, it invites the problem of two natures. About a year after the publication of 'Dejection Ode' he writes in a Notebook:

My nature requires another Nature for its support, & reposes only in another from the necessary Indigence of its Being.—Intensely similar, yet not the same; or may I venture to say, the same indeed, but dissimilar, as the same Breath sent with the same force, the same pauses, & with the same melody pre-imaged in the mind, into the Flute and the Clarion shall be the same Soul diversly incarnate.⁸⁴

Again the spirit is expected to mediate, or, penetrate through the two natures which are 'intensely similar, yet not the same'. In October 1819 when he is preparing for *Aids to Reflection*, he writes in a Notebook:

the particular Will could not be awaked and realized into an actual Volition but by an impulse and communication from the universal Will. The latter is the vital air, which the particular Will breathes, but which must have entered & excited

⁸³ *Poems*, p. 52.

⁸⁴ *CN*, I, 1679.

the faculty ~~in order to~~ as the previous and enabling Condition of the first disposition to breathe, as well as of the power of drawing the Breath. It must be "in us both to will and to do." And not only at the beginning but thro' the whole Life do we need this *prevenient Grace*—⁸⁵

Here two natures, or, the divine and human self-manifestations are related by their breath, that is, by their 'co-instantaneity' and 'reciprocity'. Finally, towards the end of his life he restates his earliest metaphysical speculation. He depicts the simultaneity between the genesis and the epigenesis by the expression which can be read as either. He writes: 'And the capacious and capable *Ether* was the work of God the Spirit, as the Spirit singly. It was the Breath of God breathed on the closed Eye-lids of the Darkness, the Brooding and Hush that smoothing the convulsive Death-throe into the smooth Sleep made Death and the Darkness parturient at the voice of the heavenly Lucina.'⁸⁶

⁸⁵ *CN*, IV, 4611.

⁸⁶ *IS*, p. 393.

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