Samuel Taylor Coleridge:

THE POETRY OF PHILOSOPHY

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Samuel Taylor Coleridge

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Abstract

This thesis attempts to show a continuum between the poetry and philosophy of Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

Chapter 1 deals with Coleridge's characteristic method, an initial perception of the abstract, and a subsequent effort to make concrete that abstract. It demonstrates how this method links Coleridge's poetry and philosophy.

Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 divide Coleridge's thought into five major constructs: dichotomy, synthesis, correspondence, progression, and translucence. Although primarily philosophical, all five constructs are in evidence in the poetry. Dichotomy and synthesis Coleridge first develops in poetic terms. Correspondence, progression, and translucence he formulates through an interpenetration of philosophical ideas and poetic images. Furthermore, Coleridge expresses the constructs symbolically rather than didactically in both poetry and philosophy.

Thus, this thesis concludes that the continuum between Coleridge's poetry and philosophy takes the form of "a poetry of philosophy."

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Résumée

Cette thèse essaie de démontrer la continuité entre la poésie et la philosophie de Coleridge.

Le premier chapître traite de la méthode charactéristique de Coleridge, c'est à dire, une perception initiale de l'abstrait, et un effort subséquent de concrétiser cet abstrait. Il démontre comment cette méthode fait le lien entre la poésie de Coleridge et sa philosophie.

Les chapîtres 2, 3, 4, 5 et 6 partagent la pensée de Coleridge en cinq catégories majeures - dichotomie, synthèse, correspondence, progression et translucidité. Quoique principalement philosophiques, toutes les catégories se retrouvent dans la poésie. Coleridge developpe, premièrement, en termes poétiques la dichotomie et la synthèse. Ensuite, il formule à travers une interprétation d'idées philosophiques et d'images poétiques la correspondence, la progression et la translucidité. En outre, Coleridge exprime les catégories de façon symbolique plutôt que didactique soit qu'en poésie qu'en philosophie.

Ainsi, cette thèse arrive à la conclusion que la continuité entre la poésie et la philosophie prend la forme d'une poésie de la philosophie.

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INTRODUCTION

> Art is the only true and eternal organ and document of philosophy, which always and continually proclaims anew what philosophy cannot outwardly represent, namely, the unconscious in activity and producing and its original identity with the conscious. Just for that reason art is for the philosopher the highest thing, because it reveals to him, as it were, the Holy of Holies, where in eternal and original union burns in one flame what in nature and history is sundered, and what in life and action, just as in thought, must eternally flee itself. . . .
>
> If, however, it is art alone that can succeed in making objective, with universal validity, that which the philosopher can represent only subjectively, then it is to be expected, as a corollary, that just as, in the childhood of knowledge, philosophy (and also all those sciences that are brought to fulfilment through philosophy) was born from and nourished by poetry, so, after its maturity, it will flow back as so many individual streams into the universal ocean of poetry.
>
> (Schelling, Werke, iii, p. 627)

This passage from the conclusion of Schelling's System des transcendentalen Idealismus touches on the central concern of my thesis. It is quoted by Thomas McFarland in his discussion "of Coleridge's instinctive, unequivocal, and lasting commitment to the conception of the poet-philosopher."[1] The delineation here of the meeting point and mutual interrelation of poetry and philosophy makes two points that bear on my thesis. First, Schelling contends that art makes objective the concerns of philosophy. In other words, art is the

one path from the ideal to the experiential, or from the abstract to the concrete. Secondly, Schelling sees poetry as the inspiration of philosophy, the matrix from which philosophy draws its material, and to which it ultimately returns.

The following examples should serve to indicate Coleridge's general assent in Schelling's view. In harmony with the corollary of philosophy as "born from and nourished by poetry," Coleridge reflects in one of his later poems upon just such a relation:

> And last, a matron now, of sober mien,
> Yet radiant still and with no earthly sheen,
> Whom as a faery child my childhood woo'd
> Even in my dawn of thought - Philosophy;
> Though then unconscious of herself, pardie,
> She bore no other name than Poesy.[2]
> "The Garden of Boccaccio"

Coleridge accepts the claim that "art is the only true and eternal organ and document of philosophy;" he affirms his conviction that "a true System of Philosophy (= the Science of Life) is <u>best</u> taught in Poetry as well as most safely."[3]

It is, however, the specific role of each of the partners in this marriage of poetry and philosophy that constitutes the focus of my study. In the dictum that "it is art alone that can succeed in making objective, with universal validity, that which the philosopher can represent only subjectively," I see the key to a unity

underscoring the canon of Coleridge's work.

In a lifelong quest for the "final truth," Coleridge distinguished "the acquirement, or communication of truth" as "the proper and immediate object of science."[4] (Philosophy he considered as one of the sciences.) Here, though, lies the problem, since for Coleridge the didactic and discursive procedures of philosophy failed to provide a satisfactory expression for that truth.

A brief period of Hartlean empiricism aside, Coleridge was fundamentally an idealist. For him philosophy's final concern lay beyond the boundaries of human experience, in the realm of noumena, in the world of the Platonic Idea. Of course, such concerns are notoriously elusive of delineation or description by empirical means.

Hence the need for poetry. The poetic image to be effective must be objective and concrete, and yet (still following Schelling) it admits an identity with philosophy. Thus, art alone can articulate the "final truth."

This is the principle that I distinguish behind all of Coleridge's writings. From the vantage point of his philosophy, he spoke with the tongue of his art; instead of starting with the "given" of experience, the concrete, and discovering a metaphysical relevance, the abstract (the procedure of the majority of both poets and philos-

ophers), he perceived the abstract and cast around for the means to make it concrete. There is thus a vital unity to all his work. Poetry, philosophy, politics, theology and aesthetics become a continuum, engendered by a common perception, sharing a common expression.

My study will examine the thesis of such a continuum. It will weigh equally philosophy and poetry, considering in each mode both Coleridge's thought and how he expresses his thought. To this end, I have distinguished five major constructs into which Coleridge's philosophical procedure can be divided, and I propose to investigate in turn whether he formulates these constructs didactically, according to philosophical convention, or symbolically, as in poetic utterance. Meanwhile, approaching the problem from the opposite direction, I will also discuss whether Coleridge's poetry plays any part in his quest for a philosophic "final truth."

Finally, I hope to demonstrate that Coleridge in fact is writing not a philosophy of poetry (or indeed of any other matter upon which he brings his philosophy to bear), but a poetry of philosophy.

FOOTNOTES

1. Thomas McFarland, Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition (Oxford, 1969), p. 116.

2. The Complete Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ed. E.H. Coleridge, 2 Vols. (Oxford, 1912), I, p. 479.

3. The Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ed. E.L. Griggs, 6 Vols. (Oxford, 1956-71), IV, p. 684.

4. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Shakespearean Criticism, ed. T.M. Raysor, 2 Vols. (London and New York, 1960), I, p. 147.

Chapter 1: FROM THE ABSTRACT TO THE CONCRETE

Coleridge's "method" in all his writings involves an initial perception of the abstract, and a subsequent attempt to make concrete that abstract. This method commanded immediate attention. Of all the Coleridgean critics, his contemporaries offer perhaps the best description of his characteristic method.

In a general estimate of Coleridge's work up to 1821, Leigh Hunt, in the Examiner, gives a biographical explanation for his method. Hunt sees in Coleridge's movement from the abstract to the concrete a passage from philosophy to poetry. This strikes him as a unique approach:

> Mr. Coleridge began with metaphysics when at school; and what the boy begins with, the man will end with, come what will between. He does not turn metaphysical upon the strength of his poetry, like Spenser and Tasso; but poet upon the strength of his metaphysics. Thus in the greater part of his minor poems he only touches upon the popular creeds, or wilful creations of their own, which would occupy other poets, and then falls musing upon the nature of things, and analysing his feelings. In his voyage to Germany, he sees a solitary wildfowl upon 'the objectless desert of waters', and says how interesting it was. It was probably from a train of reflection on the value of this link between land and the ship, that he produced his beautiful wild poem of the 'Ancient Mariner', which he precedes with a critico-philosophical extract from Burnet's Archaeologia. We do not object to this as belonging to his genius. We only instance it, as shewing the nature of it.[1]

John Bowring, reviewing the second edition of Coleridge's Poetical Works in the Westminster Review of 1830, seems to agree on all counts. Like Hunt, he describes Coleridge's method as a poeticizing of metaphysics; like Hunt, too, he points out both the singularity of this method and its excellence:

> Mr. Coleridge's addictedness to metaphysical theories, which are said to succeed one another in his mind like travellers at an inn, each making itself quite at home there during its temporary abode, has no more spoiled his poetry than has his political partizanship. . . . This is indeed the most extraordinary quality, the most absolute peculiarity of his poetry. It combines to an unparalled extent the investigation or exposition of the workings of the human mind with the expression or excitation of whatever affects the heart or delights the imagination. It propounds abstract truth in "thoughts that breathe, and words that burn". . . . It is as if he announced a philosophical fact in hieroglyphics; but they are perfectly distinct and intelligible hieroglyphics; and their forms are lovely to the eye. [2]

These two reviews attest to the consensus of opinion among Coleridge's contempories that his philosophy inspired and engendered his poetry. This consensus of opinion had a corollary. In words attributed to his nephew, Henry Nelson Coleridge, Quarterly Review, 1834:

> No student of Coleridge's philosophy can fully understand it without a perusal of the illumining, and if we may so say, popularizing commentary of his poetry. It is the Greek put into the vulgar tongue. And we must say, it is somewhat strange to hear any one condemn those philosophical opinions as altogether unintelligible, which are inextricably interwoven in every page of a volume of poetry which he professes to admire. [3]

Henry Nelson Coleridge puts forward the Schellingian notion of art as the best organ of philosophy, and applies this notion to Coleridge. Correlative to the view that Coleridge's philosophy inspired his poetry is this opinion that Coleridge's poetry in turn provides a "commentary" on his philosophy. As noted by J.H. Heraud in Frazer's Magazine, 1834, with reference to Coleridge's Aids to Reflection:

> Neither philosophy nor poetry is reflective, but originative - neither is exclusively conversant with the external world, both only employ the verbal images of sensible phenomena as the media of communication - media demanded by the necessities of language, which is a material instrument. Of all philosophers, the metaphysician has the most occasion for the assistance of imagination. Discoursing of objects purely spiritual, and inaccessible to the organs of sense, and transcending natural experience, such as the ideas of God, of the soul, of free-will, of a future state, and of the moral law, how are these objects or ideas to be embodied but by the assistance of the imagination to "turn them to shape", and the fancy to aggregate and associate the reflex perceptions to which they are to be assimilated, in order that they may be apprehended by the average understanding of mankind. 4

Philosophy must draw on the poetic imagination in order to express its more abstract metaphysical ideas.

So if Coleridge's poetry owes its origin to his metaphysics, that metaphysics in turn relies on poetry to accomplish its expression. Heraud goes on to detail Coleridge's success on both counts:

> As a poet, he has transferred to the supernatural and romantic world the interests and affections of humanity, and ascribed reality and truth to unseen and mysterious agency. As a philosopher, he has referred to the things which do not appear for the solution of the things that are seen, . . . he has traced the real in the ideal. 5

The statements from Heraud, Hunt, Bowring, and H.N. Coleridge indicate that Coleridge's contemporaries recognized in his writings a characteristic method. This method they describe as a poeticizing on the strength of metaphysics combined with a philosophizing on the strength of poetry. In other words, Coleridge's contemporaries clearly delineate his method of moving from the abstract to the concrete in both philosophy and poetry.

To substantiate these critical observations and opinions, Coleridge's own writings provide abundant evidence of his characteristic method. The Notebooks contain an invaluable record of his initial perceptions and conceptions, and here it seems most logical to begin. Coleridge's earliest notes disclose his attempts to extend an abstract into the more concrete realm of objects and images.

A general perusal of the Notebooks yields an impression of the author as imagist. Regardless of whether a note pertains to thought or fact, there are few entries

which are not accompanied by an image or analogy. Such entries can be divided into two types. In the first, Coleridge adds to a didactic statement a symbolic or pictorial formulation that he perceives as the expression in concrete terms of the idea behind the statement. To cite a few examples:

> What (Burke's book) repugnant feelings did it excite? I shuddered while I praised it - a web wrought with admirable beauty from a black bag of Poison! 6
> (1795-6)

> I discovered unprovoked malice in his hard heart like a huge Toad in the centre of a marble rock - 7

> Man knows God only by revelation from God - as we see the Sun by his own Light. - 8
> (1796)

> Abruptness [. . . . . .]
> An abrupt beginning followed by an even and majestic greatness compared to the Launching of a Ship, which after sails on in a steady breeze. - 9
> (1797)

In the second type of the entries that include images, Coleridge reverses the procedure. Instead of starting with an abstract idea and casting around for a concrete image to depict this idea, he begins with the image and then draws from it its abstract or metaphysical relevance:

> The flames of two Candles joined give a much stronger Light than both of them separate - evid. by a person holding the two Candles near his Face,

first separate, & then joined in one
Picture of Hymen 10
(1795)

Leaves of Trees upturned by the stirring wind in twilight - an image for paleness from affright. 11
(March, 1800)

The current in the river like another river Genius amongst his fellow-men - 12
(March, 1802)

The Palm still faithful to forsaken Deserts, an emblem of Hope. 13
(September, 1802)

This last entry demonstrates with especial clarity Coleridge's method. As noted by Kathleen Coburn, editor of the Notebooks, the image is to be found in George Sandys' A Relation of a journey begun An: Dom: 1610. Foure Bookes. Containing a description of the Turkish Empire, of Aegypt, of the Holy Land, of the Remote parts of Italy, and Islands adioining.[14] At the time reading and extracting from the work,[15] Coleridge obviously noticed the sentence: "A barren and desolate country bearing neither grasse nor trees, saue only here and there a few Palmes which wil not forsake those forsaken places."[16] The image of the Palm is Sandys', its extension into "an emblem of Hope," Coleridge's own.

The two types of entries in the Notebooks (on the one hand, Coleridge's amplifications of a thought in an image, on the other, his interpretations of an image

as relevant to a thought) correspond to the consensus of his contemporaries that he poeticizes on the strength of his philosophy and philosophizes on the strength of his poetry. Whether the movement is from abstract to concrete (thought to image), or from concrete to abstract (image to thought), the end is the same. In all these entries, through the addition of the objective in the form of an image, Coleridge attempts to lend concreteness to the subjective and speculative.

The poetry contains the earliest examples of this process at work. By the age of sixteen, Coleridge had already demonstrated his method of concretizing the abstract in the "Sonnet: To the Autumnal Moon."[17]

The first stanza presents an image that the poet seems to have laboured to make vivid and true to life:

> Mild Splendour of the various-vested Night!
> Mother of wildly-working visions! hail!
> I watch thy gliding, while with watery light
> Thy weak eye glimmers through a fleecy veil;
> And when thou lovest thy pale orb to shroud
> Behind the gather'd blackness lost on high;
> And when thou dartest from the wind-rent cloud
> Thy placid lightning o'er the awaken'd sky.

The second extends that image in an interpretation:

> Ah such is Hope! as changeful and as fair!
> Now dimly peering on the wistful sight;
> Now hid behind the dragon-winged Despair:
> But soon emerging in her radiant might
> She o'er the sorrow-clouded breast of Care
> Sails, like a meteor kindling in its flight.

The inter-penetration of thought and image is

dynamic. Coleridge is not content to accomplish a simple identification of the moon with Hope. He uses the identity. Hope can be depicted by the moon. The moon is changeful, fair, sometimes hidden, sometimes revealed. Hence, so is Hope. In other words, Coleridge interprets the abstract idea of Hope in terms of his observance of its concrete and experiential manifestation in the moon.

The pattern recurs in another early poem, "A Wish: Written in Jesus Wood, Feb. 10, 1792."[18] Coleridge begins with the same careful, detailed construction of image:

> Lo! through the dusky silence of the groves,
> Thro' vales irriguous, and thro' green retreats,
> With languid murmur creeps the placid stream
> And works its secret way.
>
> Awhile meand'ring round its native fields
> It rolls the playful wave and winds its flight:
> Then downward flowing with awaken'd speed
> Embosoms in the Deep!

Then, as in the previous poem, he presents the abstract correspondence:

> Thus thro' its silent tenor may my Life
> Smooth its meek stream by sordid wealth unclogg'd,
> Alike unconscious of forensic storms,
> And Glory's blood stain'd palm!
>
> And when dark Age shall close Life's little day,
> Satiate of sport, and weary of its toils,
> E'en thus may slumbrous Death my decent limbs
> Compose with icy hand!

Again, Coleridge demonstrates a dynamic process,

the active transposition of tenor and vehicle. The stream is a concrete manifestation of the abstract of the poet's life. The stream has the quality of impassivity with susceptibility, to the forces of man and nature respectively. And this impassivity with susceptibility Coleridge applies, by way of deduction, to his own life. Again, he points to a method of understanding and interpreting the abstract by means of its material approximations.

I selected these poems for two reasons. Their dates show that Coleridge's concern to concretize the abstract harks back to his early youth. Their relative simplicity makes them clear examples of the process involved in objectifying and interpreting through the medium of an image. In fact, the workings of this process are in evidence throughout Coleridge's poetry.

There is scarcely a major poem in which Coleridge does not reveal, in one form or another, the dynamic of his interpreted image. "The Eolian Harp," for instance contains an image that extends into a philosophic discourse compounded of Plotinus, Hartley, Boehme and Priestley.[19] "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison" develops an image from which the poet can deduce a universal harmony: "No sound is dissonant which tells of Life."[20]

The nightmare world of "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" provides a complex commentary on both the experiential world and its cosmic framework.[21]

All the images cited as demonstrating Coleridge's method of working from the abstract to the concrete in his poetry recur and are re-interpreted in the context of his philosophy.

The moon assumes a seminal role in Coleridge's speculations on the literal fact of divine light, its manifestation in experiential terms, its effects on the human mind. A notebook entry indicates one such meeting point between the moon and the divine:

> Quiet stream, with all its eddies, & the moonlight playing on them, quiet as if they were Ideas in the divine mind anterior to the Creation - 22 (March, 1802)

Next, Coleridge gives a further interpretation to the image of the stream in Biographia Literaria:

> I sought for a subject, that should give equal room and freedom for description, incident, and impassioned reflections on men, nature, and society, yet supply in itself a natural connection to the parts, and unity to the whole. Such a subject I conceived myself to have found in a stream. 23

The Eolian Harp also re-appears in Biographia Literaria, although with almost the reverse sense and significance:

In Hartley's scheme, the soul is present only to

> be pinched or stroked, while the very squeals or purring are produced by an agency wholly independent and alien. . . . Accordingly, this 'caput mortuum' of the Hartleian process has been rejected by his followers, and the consciousness considered as a result, as a tune, the common product of the breeze and the harp: though this again is the mere remotion of one absurdity to make way for another. 24

The harmonious and instructive Nature observed from the "Lime-Tree Bower" constitutes an integral aspect of Coleridge's thinking. Chief among his many philosophical formulations of this concept of Nature is Nature as the language of God, which I will later discuss in detail.

Last but not least, the 1817 edition of "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" in Sibylline Leaves contains its own philosophical re-interpretation in the form of an epigraph taken from Thomas Burnet's Archaeologiae Philosophicae.[25] Coleridge's choice of the epigraph indicates that he perceived his poem's relevance to Burnet's view. Burnet speaks of the Invisible as a framework for the experiential world, and, through a correct contemplation, its moral regulator. I quote from the translation given by Kathleen Coburn in her edition of the Notebooks:

> I can easily believe, that there are more Invisible than Visible Beings in the Universe; but who will declare to us the Family of all these, and acquaint us with the Agreements, Differences, and peculiar Talents which are to be found among them?

> It is true, human Wit has always desired a Knowledge of these Things, though it has never yet attained it. I will own that it is very profitable, sometimes to contemplate in the Mind, as in a Draught, the Image of the greater and better World; lest the Soul being accustomed to the Trifles of this present Life, should contract itself too much, and altogether rest in mean Cogitations; but, in the mean Time, we must take Care to keep to the Truth, and observe Moderation, that we may distinguish certain Things, and Day from Night. 26

The idea of correct contemplation as a balance of the attention between "the Image of the greater and better World" and "the Truth" of visible Life is particularly interesting. About the same time that he published "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" with this epigraph, Coleridge was affirming his adherence to a system of philosophy midway between idealism and empiricism, and containing both.[27]

The foregoing analysis of Coleridge's poetry demonstrates his poeticizing of the philosophic. These last examples attest to a two-way continuum. Coleridge in turn is philosophizing on the poetic, using a previously established poetic image as inspiration and matter for further speculation. Coleridge's philosophy may provide the inspiration for his poetry, but, in terms of imagery, his poetry exerts an equal influence on his philosophy. The role such imagery plays in Coleridge's philosophy is yet another facet of his characteristic method.

On July 6, 1794, Coleridge wrote to Robert Southey:

> - The Cockatrice is a foul Dragon with a crown on it's head. The Eastern Nations believe it to be hatched by a Viper on a Cock's Egg. Southey. - Dost thou not see Wisdom in her Coan Vest of Allegory? The Cockatrice is emblematic of Monarchy - a monster generated by Ingratitude on Absurdity. When Serpents sting, the only Remedy is - to kill the Serpent, and besmear the Wound with the Fat. Would you desire better Sympathy? [28]

In 1795, this Biblical image re-appears in a politically oriented "Lecture on Revealed Religion," also as emblem of the ills attending a monarchy.[29] (Coleridge prudently omitted the remedy.) "The Plot Discovered", a revised version of the "Lecture on the Two Bills," which Coleridge gave on November 26, 1795,[30] shows the image adapted to Pitt, through the intermediary of Isaiah 59. 4-8:

> The present Bills were conceived and laid in the dunghill of despotism among the other yet unhatched eggs of the old Serpent. In due time and in fit opportunity they crawled into the light. Genius of Britain! crush them! [31]

As the preceding examples reveal, Coleridge uses his images in much the same manner in both modes of his writing. In his philosophy as well as in his poetry, he first conceives a concrete image for an abstract idea, then employs this image to elaborate and interpret that idea. In the case of the Cockatrice, Coleridge fits the initial image to more than one idea.

Another instance of the constant image with a changing significance is the "Allegoric Vision" that in-

troduces the first of Coleridge's six "Lectures on Revealed Religion."[32] The Vision involves the personification of Superstition, Religion and Atheism. Superstition and Atheism, through their allegorical representations, are shown to meet. Religion strikes a right balance between them. The version of 1795 has the Church of England as Superstition, with the Unitarianism which Coleridge then propounded in the role of true Religion. In a subsequent version published in the Courier, 31 August, 1811,[33] Coleridge's religious affiliation has obviously changed. He now makes Superstition the Church of Rome, while the Church of England steps into the mediating position. The basic imagery of the Allegory, however, remains the same, and Coleridge employs its machinery yet again in his introduction to "A Lay Sermon" in 1817.[34]

In both his philosophy and poetry, Coleridge discovered in the image a source of truth that could not be exhausted by any single formulation. The question arises, why with such a perception was he a philosopher at all? Why did he not simply remain a poet? Perhaps Coleridge himself can supply the answer:

> Metaphisics is a word, that you, my dear Sir! are no great Friend to/ but yet you will agree, that a great Poet must be, implicitè 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 - 35

It was to school himself in this "Tact" that Coleridge turned to philosophy. Hence his affirmation that "I cannot write without a body of thought."[36] He believed that the first step in illustrating Nature by Art involved the subjugation of the forms of nature "to our Intellect & voluntary memory,"[37] and from this belief he arrived at his characteristic method of moving from the abstract to the concrete. Poetic images may be the symbols, the hieroglyphics of metaphysical truth, but they require the intermediary of philosophical interpretation to bring out their meaning. As Coleridge himself exclaims:

> To place these images, totalized, and fitted to the limits of the human mind, as to elicit from, and to superinduce upon, the forms themselves the moral reflexions to which they approximate, to make the external internal, the internal external, to make nature thought, and thought nature, - this is the mystery of genius in the Fine Arts. Dare I add that the genius must act on the feeling, that body is but a striving to become mind, - that it is mind in its essence. 38

FOOTNOTES

1. James R. de J. Jackson ed., Coleridge: The Critical Heritage (London, 1969), pp. 474-5.

2. Ibid., p. 547.

3. Ibid., pp. 633-4.

4. Ibid., pp. 586-7.

5. Ibid., p. 587.

6. The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ed. Kathleen Coburn, 3 Vols., 3 pts. (New York, 1957), 1, pt. 1 # 24.

7. Ibid., # 148.

8. Ibid., # 209.

9. Ibid., # 225; the brackets are Coburn's, the dots indicate illegible words.

10. Ibid., # 13.

11. Ibid., # 714.

12. Ibid., # 1143.

13. Ibid., # 1245 1.

14. Ibid., 1, pt. 2, # 1245 1.

15. Ibid., # 1245.

16. Ibid., # 1245 1.

17. Poetical Works, 1, p. 5.

18. Ibid., p.33.

19. G.N.G. Orsini, Coleridge and German Idealism, (Illinois, 1969), p. 38.

20. Poetical Works, 1, p. 181.

21. Ibid., pp. 186-209.

22. Notebooks, 1, pt. 1, # 1154.

23. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, ed. J. Shawcross, 2 Vols. (Oxford, 1907), 1, p. 129.

24. Ibid., p. 81.

25. Notebooks, 1, pt. 2, # 1000 H.

26. Ibid.

27. See Biographia Literaria, Vol. 1, p. 92 for one example of Coleridge's adherence to a philosophical middle-of-the road.

28. Letters, I, p. 84.

29. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Lectures 1795: On Politics and Religion, eds. Lewis Patton and Peter Mann. (London and New Jersey, 1972), p. 134.

30. Ibid., p. 278.

31. Ibid., p. 288 and p. 288 n.

32. Ibid., p. 89 ff.

33. Ibid., p. 89 n.

34. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Lay Sermons, ed. R.J. White (London and New Jersey, 1972), p. 131 ff.

35. Letters, 2, p. 810.

36. Ibid., 1, p. 137.

37. Notebooks, 1, pt. 1, # 1489.

38. Biographia Literaria, 2, p. 258.

Chapter 2: DICHOTOMY

> With respect to Mr. Coleridge's powers of description, we have still further to remark, that we do not know any author who possesses a finer talent for relieving his pictures by judicious contrast. [1]
>
> "Review in Edinburgh Magazine, 1817"

The poetry contains a precursor to the first of the major constructs of Coleridge's thought. The logical procedure of dichotomy, the division of the ground into contraries for the purpose of analysis, that characterizes his early metaphysics and continues into his late philosophy, initially appears as an imaging through contrast. Coleridge shows a tendency to focus through antithesis. That is, he accents the central concern of a poem, whether image, mood, or thought, through juxtaposing another image, mood, or thought that acts as an opposite.

Coleridge's earliest poems, written in his fifteenth year, reveal this pattern. "Easter Holidays" depicts youth in contrast, if not to age, at least to impending maturity; a festive, spring-time, school-boy mirth acquires a brighter colour next to a canvas portraying Mankind's later and predestined Misfortune.[2] "Dura Navis" upholds an ideal of domestic Peace by opposing it to a

stormy course at sea.[3] "Nil Pejus est Caelibe Vitâ" sets up celibacy as the sombre and undesirable antithesis to "Hymeneal bliss."[4]

Contrast is an integral feature of Coleridge's poetry. He repeatedly relieves a poetic image by means of antithesis. In "Reflections on having left a Place of Retirement," he makes a matrimonial "Cot" a clearer emblem of seclusion against a background of all-inclusive Nature; he then accents its tranquil Happiness by juxtaposing a tapestry of human Wretchedness.[5] In "Kubla Khan," he contrasts a "sunless sea" with "sunny spots of greenery," a river "in tumult" with "a lifeless ocean," "a sunny pleasure dome with caves of ice."[6] In "A Christmas Carol," he opposes Peace and War.[7] There are almost as many instances as there are poems.

Thus far, however, Coleridge is in no way remarkable. The use of such tension constitutes a common poetic device. Where Coleridge differs is in his development of this tension. He draws from the formulated opposites a definitive as well as a descriptive quality. Through contrast, he develops a process of definition through antithesis.

The poem, "On an Infant which died before Baptism," clearly exemplifies this process:

"Be, rather than be called, a child of God,"
Death whispered! With assenting nod,
Its head upon its mother's breast,
  The Baby bowed, without demur -
Of the kingdom of the Blest
  Possessor, not Inheritor. 8

Coleridge points to a distinction between terms commonly used as synonymns. "Be, rather than be called"; he draws attention to the absolute reality of existence as opposed to its outward and describable manifestations. In a religious sense, he differentiates the true, inborn spirituality of the infant from the extraneous signs of spirituality imposed on it by the Church. "Possessor, not Inheritor"; he closes the poem with a reiteration of the notion of the actuality as distinct from the act.

Although, logically speaking, one can never know a thing in itself, Coleridge is unusual in that he habitually juxtaposes that which is <u>not</u> the thing to the thing that he is depicting:

I see, not feel, how beautiful they are![9]
"Dejection: An Ode."

Greatness and goodness are not <u>means</u>, but <u>ends</u>![10]
"The Good, Great Man."

Again and again, he contrasts the outward with the inner, the form with the essence.

Coleridge's tendency to depict and define by means of antithesis appears even more clearly when he only half accomplishes such definition, as in the conclusion to Part

II of "Christabel":

A little child, a limber elf,
Singing, dancing to itself,
A fairy thing with red, round cheeks,
That always finds, and never seeks,
Makes such a vision to the sight
As fills a father's eyes with light;
And pleasures flow in so thick and fast
Upon his heart, that he at last
Must needs express his love's excess
With words of unmeant bitterness.
Perhaps 'tis pretty to force together
Thoughts so all unlike each other;
To mutter and mock a broken charm,
To dally with wrong that does no harm.
Perhaps 'tis tender too and pretty
At each wild word to feel within
A sweet recoil of love and pity.
And what, if in a world of sin
(O sorrow and shame should this be true!)
Such giddiness of heart and brain
Comes seldom save from rage and pain,
So talks as it's most used to do. 11

Here, Coleridge explores the antitheses of pleasure and bitterness, love and rage, heart and brain. The dichotomic movement of the piece parallels his attempt to unravel the enigma of a love and pity that share with their opposites, rage and pain, a common mode of expression.

The poem "Time, Real and Imaginary" exemplifies the same characteristics. The actual definition arrived at is obscure, the process of defining through an antithetical formulation is clearly indicated.

On the wide level of a mountain's head
(I knew not where, but 'twas some faery place)
Their pinions, ostrich-like, for sails out-spread,
Two lovely children run an endless race,

A sister and a brother!
This far outstripp'd the other;
Yet ever runs she with reverted face,
And looks and listens for the boy behind:
For he, alas! is blind!
O'er rough and smooth with even step he passed,
And knows not whether he be first or last. 12

Coleridge creates two allegorical images, the brother and the sister, and attempts to point out, through contrasting the way in which each runs a race, his sense of Time Real as opposed to Time Imaginary. A Notebook entry, included in a footnote to the poem, amplifies his idea of the two images as contraries:

> How marked the contrast between troubled manhood and joyously-active youth in the sense of time! To the former, time like the sun in an empty sky is never seen to move, but only to have moved. There, there it was, and now 'tis here, now distant! yet all a blank between. To the latter it is as the full moon in a fine breezy October night, driving on amid clouds of all shapes and hues, and kindling shifting colours, like an ostrich in its speed, and yet seems not to have moved at all. This I feel to be a just image of time real and time as felt, in two different states of being. The title of the poem therefore (for poem it ought to be) should be time real and time felt (in the sense of time) in active youth, or activity with hope and fullness of aim in any period, and in despondent, objectless manhood - time objective and subjective.
>
> Anima Poetae, 1895, pp. 241-2.

A comment that H.N. Coleridge attaches to the entry in Anima Poetae postulates that, although Coleridge wrote his poem about 1811, the antithesis of "'the two lovely children' who 'run an endless race' may have haunted his

schoolboy dreams."[13] The entry thus appears to precede the poem ("for poem it ought to be"), and this fact bears witness to Coleridge's method of reaching, through the medium of his poetry, his final definition by means of antithesis.

Coleridge's characteristic depiction and definition through antithesis may well have its source in his perception of a basic dichotomy between the experiential and the ideal. The operative polarity in most of the antitheses is the distinction of an essence from an outward manifestation. Coleridge reveals a fascination with the essence, which, as an abstract, denies direct accession to the senses. He combines his search for this abstract, through its concrete forms and appearances, with a recognition of its fundamental apartness from these forms. This search he documents thoroughly in the poetry.

The path to the ideal leads through the experiential. Only through the contemplation of life and nature is the poet enabled to go beyond. Such contemplations may include an evening star:

> O meek attendant of Sol's setting blaze,
> I hail, sweet star, thy chaste effulgent glow;
> On thee full oft with fixéd eye I gaze
> Till I, methinks, all spirit seem to grow. 14
> "To the Evening Star"

Or a nightingale:

> Thou warblest sad thy pity-pleading strains.
> O! I have listen'd, till my working soul,

Waked by those strains to thousand phantasies,
Absorb'd hath ceas'd to listen! 15
"To the Nightingale"

Whatever the object, it has an essence that the creative mind can intuit:

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. 16
"Apologia pro Vita sua"

The task of the poet, according to Coleridge, is to point out this essence beneath the appearance, to propound the truth

That outward forms, the loftiest, still receive
Their finer influence from the Life within. 17
"Lines written in the Album at Elbingerode in the Hartz Forest"

One way in which Coleridge differentiates the object from the essence, or the ideal from the experiential, is through the agency of memory. A favourite image, especially in the early poetry, involves the river that reflects a past scene idealized:

Then Memory backward rolls Time's shadowy tide;
The tales of other days before me glide:
With eager thought I seize them as they pass;
For fair, tho' faint, the forms of Memory gleam,
Like Heaven's bright beauteous bow reflected in the stream. 18
"Anna and Harland"

Coleridge sees Memory as the activator of the poetic imagination. The task of "Imagination, Mistress of my

Love" is "to bid the faded shadowy Pleasures move/ On shadowy Memory's wings across the Soul of Love."[19] Memory summons a past that contrasts with the present of the immediate and experiential world. For Coleridge, the past is the antithesis of this experiential present; in other words, the past is an ideal. In "Religious Musings," he touches on the notion of Platonic rebirth; he shows how the soul can reach the ideal sphere through memory, through "dim recollections" of "its nobler nature."[20] Thus, the imposition of the memory of the past on the present in "Anna and Harland" is in fact a dichotomy of ideal and experiential.

Coleridge sows the seeds of the polar logic that he later employs in his philosophy in his poetry. Here, he first formulates his most famous antithetical definitions. His seminal distinction between Imagination and Fancy provides one example of his poetic prefiguration of a philosophical concept. Although he first makes the actual distinction in September, 1802,[21] as early as 1795, he delineates the poetic faculty under two aspects in a sonnet "To Robert Southey":

> Wak'd by the Song doth Hope-born FANCY fling
> Rich showers of dewy fragrance from her wing,
> Till sickly PASSION's drooping Myrtles sear
>
> Blossom anew! But O! more thrill'd, I prize
> Thy sadder strains, that bid in MEMORY's Dream

The faded forms of past Delight arise;
  Then soft, on Love's pale cheek, the tearful gleam

Of Pleasure smiles - as faint yet beauteous lies
The imag'd Rainbow on a willowy stream. 22

Coleridge contrasts "Hope-born FANCY" with the strains of "MEMORY's Dream." The former has a healing, revivifying effect; the latter links with Love, and the Pleasure that, in Coleridge's aesthetics, becomes the end of poetry.[23] "MEMORY's Dream," more prized and more thrilling, evokes a deeper poetic passion. As already observed, memory acts as an agent in distilling an ideal from an experience. "MEMORY's Dream," associated with this concept of the role of memory, becomes even more distinct from "Hope-born FANCY" when juxtaposed to yet another image of the river of remembrance. Coleridge seems both to indicate and to emphasize the dichotomy of Imagination and Fancy.

Nor does this poem constitute an isolated instance. "To the Author of Poems" (Joseph Cottle), reveals another distinction of poetry into two types:

Beneath the Mountain's lofty-frowning brow,
Ere aught of perilous ascent you meet,
A mead of mildest charm delays th' unlabouring feet.

Not there the cloud-climb'd rock, sublime and vast,
That like some giant king, o'er-glooms the hill;
Not there the Pine-grove to the midnight blast
Makes solemn music! But th' unceasing rill
To the soft Wren or Lark's descending trill
Murmurs sweet undersong 'mid jasmin bowers.
In this same pleasant meadow, at your will
I ween, you wander'd - there collecting flowers

Of sober tint, and herbs of med'cinable powers!

There for the monarch-murder'd Soldier's tomb
You wove th' unfinish'd wreath of saddest hues;
And to that holier chaplet added bloom
Besprinkling it with Jordan's cleansing dews.
But lo your Henderson awakes the Muse -
His Spirit beckon'd from the mountain's height:
You left the plain and soar'd mid richer views!
So Nature mourn'd when sunk the First Day's light,
With stars, unseen before, spangling her robe of night!

Still soar, my Friend, those richer views among,
Strong, rapid, fervent, flashing Fancy's beam!
Virtue and Truth shall love your gentler song;
But Poesy demands th' impassion'd theme:
Waked by Heaven's silent dews at Eve's mild gleam
What balmy sweets Pomona breathes around!
But if the vext air rush a stormy stream
Or Autumn's shrill gust moan in plaintive sound,
With fruits and flowers she loads the tempest-honor'd ground.[24]

Here, Coleridge makes a "sweet undersong" the polar opposite of "th' impassion'd theme" demanded by Poesy as an ideal. He expresses the dichotomy in terms of antithetical imagery. He contrasts a "pleasant meadow" to "the mountain height," "a mead of mildest charm" and other "balmy sweets" to the fruits and flowers of "the vext air" and "a stormy stream," and the delay of "th' unlabouring feet" to images of a difficult and dangerous ascent. As in the previous poem, the "fanciful" element, the "sweet undersong," possesses restorative, healing qualities: "herbs of med'cinable powers." The "imaginative element," "th' empassioned theme," however, assumes a creative aspect that stands in opposition to this restorative power:

But if the vext air rush a stormy stream

Or Autumn's shrill gust moan in plaintive sound,
With fruits and flowers she loads the tempest-honor'd ground.

Throughout the poetry, previous to Coleridge's 1802 distinction between Imagination and Fancy, there is a sense of two imaginations or two fancies. Coleridge uses the words interchangeably. Now, he will speak of Fancy as a light-hearted, almost frivolous quality, associated with Hope, relief from distress, and youthful joy. Such is the sense of the Pixies as "Fancy's children" in "Songs of the Pixies;"[25] such is the idea in "Monody on a Tea-Kettle" that "Fairy Hope can soothe distress and toil;/ On empty Trivets she bids fancied Kettles boil!"[26] In other words, Fancy in this light becomes a kind of poetic escapism, the "Fancy" that Coleridge opposes to the "Imagination" in his subsequent dichotomy.

Then, however, Coleridge will use the term with quite another implication:

. . . For Fancy is the power
That first unsensualises the dark mind,
Giving it new delights; and bids it swell
With wild activity; and peopling air,
By obscure fears of Beings invisible,
Emancipates it from the grosser thrall
Of the present impulse, teaching Self-control,
Till Superstition with unconscious hand
Seat Reason on her throne. [27]
"The Destiny of Nations"

Here is a Fancy allied with Reason, its agent and guide. This is the "shaping spirit" of poetic genius that Coleridge will later call the "Imagination" as distinct from the

"Fancy." It is to this quality that Coleridge refers in asserting, "To me hath Heaven with bounteous hand assign'd/ Energic Reason and a shaping mind."[28] It is this faculty whose loss he laments in "Dejection: An Ode," the faculty that constitutes his "genial spirits,"[29] his "shaping spirit of Imagination."[30] This is the true and active power of the poet in which he appears analogous to God, the Creator:

> Like that Great Spirit, who with plastic sweep
> Mov'd on the darkness of the formless Deep! 31

Coleridge's well known distinction between Reason and Understanding is likewise prefigured in the poetry. Although he does not delineate the difference between Reason and Understanding, "Vernuft" and "Verstand," until October 13, 1806,[32] as early as 1794, Coleridge seems to be already dividing human intelligence into polar opposites in the poem "To a Friend." This polar opposition takes the form of an antithesis of head and heart:

> Thus far my scanty brain hath built the rhyme
> Elaborate and swelling: yet the heart
> Not owns it. 33

Coleridge repeats the opposition of the head, as the actual thought, and the heart, as that which attests to the truth of the thought, in "The Eolian Harp":

> Meek Daughter in the family of Christ!
> Well hast thou said and holily disprais'd
> These shapings of the unregenerate mind;
> Bubbles that glitter as they rise and break

> On vain Philosophy's aye babbling spring.
> For never guiltless may I speak of him,
> The Incomprehensible! save when with awe
> I praise him, and with Faith that inly feels.[34]

Here, he introduces the element of "the Incomprehensible" that "these shapings of the unregenerate mind" or "vain Philosophy's aye-babbling spring" cannot apprehend alone. He indicates the need for an additional faculty, the "Faith that inly feels." That this working of the heart comprises a factor in intelligence, in opposition to and above human understanding by itself, he emphasizes in a footnote to the 1797 and 1803 versions of the poem:

> L'athée n'est point à mes yeux un faux esprit; je puis vivre avec lui aussi bien et mieux qu'avec le dévot, car il raisonne davantage, mais il lui manque un sens, et mon ame ne se fond point entièrement avec la sienne: il est froid au spectacle le plus ravissant, et il cherche un syllogisme lorsque je rends une [un 1797, 1803] action de grace. 35
> "Appel a l'impartiale postérité," par la Citoyenne Roland.

The idea that a complete knowledge demands a union of the diverse faculties of heart and head recurs in the poem "Addressed to a Young Man of Fortune":

> . . . Then, while thy heart
> Groans, and thine eye a fiercer sorrow dims,
> Know (and the truth shall kindle thy young mind)
> What Nature makes thee mourn, she bids thee heal![36]

"This Lime-Tree Bower my Prison" repeats the concept of such a union:

> . . . Henceforth I shall know
> That Nature ne'er deserts the wise and pure;

No plot so narrow, be but Nature there,
No waste so vacant, but may well employ
Each faculty of sense, and keep the heart
Awake to Love and Beauty! 37

As in "The Eolian Harp," Coleridge appears to equate one faculty, the "faculty of sense," with the experiential, that which can be "understood" directly. Meanwhile, the other faculty, that of "the heart," is exercised in the contemplation of the Platonic ideals of "Love and Beauty."

Coleridge seems to confirm the dichotomy of head and heart as a precursor to his antithesis of Reason and Understanding in a poem "To William Wordsworth":

Friend of the wise! and Teacher of the Good!
Into my heart have I received that Lay
More than historic, that prophetic Lay
Wherein (high theme by thee first sung aright)
Of the foundations and the building up
Of a Human Spirit thou hast dared to tell
What may be told, to the understanding mind
Revealable; and what within the mind
By vital breathings secret as the soul
Of vernal growth, oft quickens in the heart
Thoughts all too deep for words! -

Theme hard as high!
Of smiles spontaneous, and mysterious fears
(The first-born they of Reason and twin-birth). 38

These stanzas, composed in 1807, postdate Coleridge's formulation of the Reason-Understanding distinction. He mentions both Understanding and Reason. The one, he associates with the head: "What may be told, to the understanding mind/ Revealable." The other, he links with the concept of a knowledge in the heart. The "vital breathings" quicken

in the heart "thoughts all too deep for words," that is, thoughts beyond the expressions and apprehensions of sense. It is these thoughts that Coleridge identifies with the "theme hard as high," the theme of the god-given faculty of Reason.

Finally, Coleridge's before-mentioned delineation of the path to the ideal through the experiential prefigures his dichotomy of natura naturans, the essence of nature, and natura naturata, her phenomenal manifestations. The essence concealed in the outward forms, yet distinct from these forms, becomes a kind of spirit of nature, acting as a vehicle for the various aspects of the ideal in Coleridge's poetry. In "To a Young Lady," it appears as poetic truth:

> No purple bloom the Child of Nature brings
> From Flattery's night-shade: as he feels he sings."[39]

In "Religious Musings," it identifies with God:

> Him Nature's essence, mind and energy![40]

It is the spirit of "Love and Beauty" in "The Dungeon,"[41] as well as in "This Lime-Tree Bower my Prison." It is the true ideal of "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner":

> He prayeth best, who loveth best
> All things both great and small;
> For the dear God who loveth us,
> He made and loveth all. [42]

- - - - - -

In his philosophy, Coleridge enlarges upon the dichotomies of the poetry. He makes extensive and obvious use of the logic of antithesis. As J.A. Appleyard points out, "Coleridge's mind seems to have worked, in youth, by dividing subjects into opposing parts and rejecting the unsatisfactory half."[43]

It is this logic that appears to be at work in Coleridge's shift from empiricism to idealism. In 1794, in a letter to Robert Southey, he affirms his allegiance to the philosophical doctrine of Necessity and the school of Hartley and the Associationists:

> I am a compleat Necessitarian - and understand the subject as well almost as Hartley himself - but I go farther than Hartley and believe the corporeality of thought - namely, that it is motion - . [44]

But after his return from Germany, by September 22, 1800, he has abandoned Hartley: "All the nonsense of vibrations &c you would of course dismiss."[45] He formally refutes Associationism and Necessity in a letter to Thomas Poole, March 16, 1801:

> The interval since my last Letter has been filled up by me in the most intense Study. If I do not greatly delude myself, 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, [46]

and becomes, with respect to philosophy, an idealist, his

affiliations a mixture of Platonism, Neoplatonism and German Idealism. "The most intense study" to which he refers probably consists of a study of the German idealists, specifically Kant. Coleridge goes on to assert, "I have not formed opinions without an attentive Perusal of the works of my Predecessors from Aristotle to Kant."[47] The preceding year, he brought back from Germany "30 pounds of books (chiefly metaphysics,)"[48] among which he most likely included works of Kant.

Coleridge later formulates his shift from empiricism to idealism, and this formulation he expresses as a dichotomy:

> There neither are, have been, or ever will be but two essentially different schools of Philosophy: the Platonic, and the Aristotelean. To the latter, but with a somewhat nearer approach to the Platonic, Emanuel Kant belonged; to the former Bacon and Leibnitz & in his riper and better years Berkeley - And to this I profess myself an adherent. 49

The Associationist school he links with the Aristotelean:

> I have found nothing, either in the doctrines of association and the various modes in which they have been applied to the different pursuits and actions of men, or in the schemes of generalization, which had not been anticipated by Aristotle, and in most instances without the errors and the absurdities that in many cases have (later) accompanied them. 50

And, in a reiteration of philosophy as a dichotomy of the Platonic and the Aristotelean, he designates all idealists as "the spiritual children of Plato":

> Divide Mankind into two very disproportionate parts, the Few who have cultivated the faculty of thinking speculatively, i.e. by reduction to Principles; and the Many who either from original defect or deficience, or from want of cultivation, do not in this sense, think at all; and you may then, according to my belief, subdivide the former class, the illustrious Minority into two species, scarcely less disproportionate in the comparative number of Individuals contained in each, viz. the born Conceptionists, the spiritual children of Aristotle, and the born Ideists, or Ideatae, the spiritual children of Plato. 51

In another antithesis, Coleridge repeats yet again his dichotomy of Platonic and Aristotelean. He divides philosophy into the "active" as opposed to the "passive" method of analysis."[52] In his Philosophical Lectures, he associates "passive" analysis with materialism.[53] He then contrasts such materialism to an "active" philosophy of mind,[54] that is none other than Kant's dynamic system.[55] *

Coleridge maintains that philosophical analysis becomes "active" as opposed to "passive" when it takes into consideration the factor of will. Schemes of materialism discount the will.[56] Schemes such as the Kantian uphold

* In his dichotomic division of philosophy (see page 34), Coleridge places Kant on the border between the Platonic and the Aristotelean. Kant belongs "to the latter, but with a somewhat nearer approach to the Platonic." For Coleridge, Kant is Aristotelean when he deals with the empirical understanding, but Platonic in those aspects of his philosophy that led to the dynamic systems of post-Kantians such as Schelling. Here, Kant's "active" philosophy of mind exemplifies one such "Platonic" aspect.

it.[57] On this voluntaristic basis, Coleridge affirms his affiliation to the "active" rather than the "passive" in philosophy in Biographia Literaria:

> But the will itself by confining and intensifying the attention may arbitrarily give vividness or distinctness to any object whatsoever; and from hence we may deduce the uselessness, if not the absurdity, of certain recent schemes which promise an artificial Memory, but which in reality can only produce a confusion and debasement of the fancy. 58

The "certain recent schemes" that Coleridge mentions refer to materialism in the form of Hartlean Association. Thus, he intimates that in his dichotomy of Platonic and Aristotelean, any "passive" philosophy occupies the Aristotelean pole. Later in Biographia Literaria, he expresses his belief that the "active" system of Dynamic philosophy is one with the Platonic scheme:

> In the third treatise of my Logosophia, announced at the end of this volume, I shall give (deo volente) the demonstrations and constructions of the Dynamic Philosophy scientifically arranged. It is, according to my conviction, no other than the system of Pythagoras and Plato revived and purified from impure mixtures. 59

This opposition of "active" to "passive," Dynamics to Materialism, repeats the notion that "there neither are, have been, or ever will be but two essentially different schools of Philosophy: the Platonic, and the Aristotelean."

Throughout his construct of Dichotomy, Coleridge demonstrates his support of the "active" Platonic and Dynamic

school. He affirms with regard to the Platonic system, "To this I profess myself an adherent (see page 34), and he offers an example of his adherence to what he considers the Dynamic developments of Platonism by using the arguments of Schelling as a basis for his distinction between the Fancy and the Imagination in Biographia Literaria.[60]

Coleridge extends his dichotomy of the Platonic and the Aristotelean into an antithesis of Trinitarian Christianity and Unitarianism:

> That not one of the Peculiarities of Christianity, no one point in which being clearly different from other Religions or Philosophies, it would have at least the possibility of being superior to all, is retained by the modern Unitarians. This remark is occasioned by my reflections on the Fact, that Christianity exclusively has asserted the positive Being of Evil or Sin - "of Sin the exceeding Sinfulness" - & thence exclusively the Freedom of the Creature as that, the clear Intuition of which is both result & accompaniment of Redemption. - The nearest Philosophy to Xstty is the Platonic, & it is observable that this is the mere Antipode of the Harleiano-Lockian held by the Unitarians. 61

He repeats the process of "dividing subjects into opposing parts and rejecting the unsatisfactory half," by identifying Trinitarian "Christianity" with the Platonic pole, and Unitarianism with the Aristotelean Antipode. This Antipode, "the Hartleio-Lockian," stands for all the tenets of empiricism, materialism and associationism that Coleridge rejected. In fact, his shift from Hartlean empiricism to Platonic and German Idealism was also a shift from Unitar-

ianism to a Trinitarian (specifically an Anglican) Christianity.[62]

Again, as in his Platonic-Aristotelean dichotomy, Coleridge indicates an opposition between the active and the passive. Trinitarian Christianity emphasizes "the positive being of Evil" and "thence exclusively the Freedom of the Creature." In other words, in contrast to the Unitarian scheme, which, according to Coleridge, is one of Determinism,* his brand of Anglicanism propounds the existence of free will. The adherent sins because he wills to sin, and not because sin is the necessary consequence of his nature. He has a "clear Intuition" of both evil and good, combined with the freedom and responsibility of choosing between them.

I will bypass the question of Coleridge's orthodoxy, either with regard to his initial Unitarian beliefs or his subsequent Trinitarian and Anglican tenets. It is characteristic of Coleridge that he fits all his beliefs, religious

* The link of Unitarianism and Determinism that Coleridge indicates in this dichotomy is one of his many identities of Unitarianism with "Hartleio-Lockian" schemes. Hartley, the propounder of the necessitarian scheme of Association, was also "one of the patron saints of English Unitarianism."[63] During his Unitarian period, Coleridge called Hartley, "that great master of Christian philosophy,"[64] thereby demonstrating his view of the identity of Necessity and Unitarianism before, as well as after, his religious and philosophical shifts.

or otherwise, into a system peculiarly his own. In this instance, he makes of the Unitarian-Anglican conflict a dichotomy along the lines of his central opposition of the Platonic to the Aristotelean. Clearly, he sees Unitarianism as a theological equivalent of the passive and deterministic philosophy that he rejects in Hartley, Locke and Aristotle. So, in terms of Coleridgean dichotomy, Anglicanism emerges as the antithesis, the Platonic antipode. If Unitarianism represents the passive and the determined, then Anglicanism must comprise the active and the voluntaristic.

Coleridge circumvents the denial of Original Sin implicit in such a view by a series of elaborate arguments in Aids to Reflection. He describes Original Sin as a flaw in human will:

> 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 as diseased in his Will. 65

He maintains that man possesses "a captive and enslaved Will," "the restoration of the Will to perfect Freedom being the end and consummation of the redemptive process."[66] He preserves, however, the voluntaristic element, the notion of a free and active will that accords with the Platonic pole of his dichotomy:

> For this is the essential attribute of a Will, and contained in the very idea, that whatever determines the Will acquires this power from a previous determination of the Will itself. The Will is ultimately self-determined, or it is no longer a Will under the law of perfect freedom, but a nature under the mechanism of cause and effect. 67

And he attempts to rise above the somewhat contradictory nature of these various affirmations by protesting that, in the final analysis, the relation of this free will to Original Sin and the redemptive process is, and has ever been, "an acknowledged MYSTERY, and one which by the nature of the subject must ever remain such - a problem, of which any other solution, than the statement of the Fact itself, was demonstrably impossible."[68]

The concept of the will as the operative factor in the antithesis of "active" to "passive" philosophies or theosophies has another formulation. Coleridge re-phrases the Platonic-Aristotelean dichotomy as a dichotomy of the organic as opposed to the mechanic.

In Aids to Reflection, he demonstrates that any religion that denies the active nature of the will makes a mechanism of the universe:

> The doctrine of modern Calvinism as laid down by Jonathan Edwards and the late Dr. Williams, which represents a Will absolutely passive, clay in the hands of a potter, destroys all Will, takes away its essence and definition, as effectively as in saying: This circle is square - I should deny the figure to be a circle at all. It was in strict

> consistency therefore, that these writers 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 less than the material or physical. 69

Later in the same work, he speaks of "the utter emptiness and unmeaningness of the vaunted Mechanico-corpuscular Philosphy."[70] "This," he affirms in his Theory of Life, speaking of the same "corpuscularian philosophy," "is the philosophy of Death, and only of a dead nature can it hold good."[71]

Coleridge sees the antithesis of this mechanism as a vital scheme:

> The leading differences between mechanic and vital philosophy may all be drawn from one point: namely, that the former demanding for every mode and act of existence real or possible visibility, knows only of distance and nearness, composition (or rather juxtaposition) and decomposition, in short the relations of unproductive particles to each other; so that in every instance the result is the exact sum of the component quantities, as in arithmetical addition. This is the philosophy of death, and only of a dead nature can it hold good. In life, much more in spirit, and in a living and spiritual philosophy, the two component counter powers actually interpenetrate each other, and generate a higher third, including both the former. 72

Such a scheme manifests life, and more than life, an infusion of spirit and the spiritual. Hence, the vital philosophy, in contrast to the mechanic, reveals the activating factor of will. As Coleridge affirms in Aids to Reflection:

> If there be aught Spiritual in Man, the Will must

be such.
If there be a Will, there must be a Spirituality in Man. 73

In the dichotomy of mechanic and organic, Coleridge equates his vital philosophy with the principle of organization:

> Mechanism leads to [no] organization and there seems no contradiction in the supposition that mechanism, in the strict sense of the word, is nothing but the negative or organization: for the absence of mechanism will not presuppose organization, but organization ceasing, mechanism commences. 74

In his aesthetics, he develops the antithesis into a theory of art, in which the organic opposed to the mechanic comprises the true source of genial creativity:

> The form is mechanic, when on any given material we impress a pre-determined form, not necessarily arising out of the properties of the material; as when to a mass of wet clay we give whatever shape we wish it to retain when hardened. The organic form, on the other hand, is innate; it shapes as it develops itself from within, and the fulness of its development is one and the same with the perfection of its outward form. Such as the life is, such the form. 75

This same dichotomy he reiterates in a variety of formulations. For instance, he represents genius as growth in contrast to arrangement,[76] and as vitality opposed to aggregation.[77]

Returning to the philosophy proper, Coleridge identifies the mechanic pole with modern materialism,[78] the doc-

trine of Necessity (see above, page 41), and Hartlean, Aristotelean Association and empiricism.[79] The vital philosophy he associates with Dynamics.[80]

Coleridge arrives at this association of the vital philosophy with Dynamics through another development of his organic-mechanic antithesis:

> The word Nature has been used in two senses, viz. actively and passively; energetic (= forma formans), and material (= forma formata). In the first (the sense in which the word is used in the text) it signifies the inward principle of whatever is requisite for the reality of a thing, as existent; while the essence, or essential property, signifies the inner principle of all that appertains to the possibility of a thing. Hence, in accurate language, we say the essence of a mathematical circle or other geometrical figure, not the nature; because in the conception of forms purely geometrical there is no expression or implication of their real existence. In the second, or material sense, of the word Nature, we mean by it the sum total of all things, as far as they are objects of our senses, and consequently of possible experience - the aggregate of phaenomena, whether existing for our outward senses, or for our inner sense. The doctrine concerning material nature would therefore (the word Physiology being both ambiguous in itself, and otherwise appropriated) be more properly entitled Phaenomenology. . . . The doctrine concerning energetic nature is comprised in the science of DYNAMICS. 81

Here, he expresses the dichotomy of the organic and the mechanic as an opposition of "forma formans" to "forma formata." (More commonly, Coleridge uses the terms "natura naturans" and "natura naturata.") The first, or "energetic" sense of the word Nature (the "natura naturans") signifies both "the inward principle of whatever is requisite

for the reality of a thing, as existent," and "the essence, or essential property," "the inner principle of all that appertains to the possibility of a thing." The second sense, "material" nature (or "natura naturata") means "the sum total of all things, as far as they are objects of our senses, and consequently of possible experience - the aggregate of phaenomena."

Essentially, Coleridge is re-working the same perception of the essence as opposed to the outward manifestation, the ideal as opposed to the experiential, that generated the dichotomies of his poetry. He repeats this antithesis of essence to outward form in other formulations of the dichotomy of natura naturans and natura naturata:

> If the artist copies the mere nature, the natura naturata, what idle rivalry! If he proceeds only from a given form, which is supposed to answer to the notion of beauty, what an emptiness, what an unreality there always is in his productions, as in Cipriani's pictures! Believe me, you must master the essence, the natura naturans, which presupposes a bond between nature in the higher sense and the soul of man. 82

In the concept of "desynonymisation" as a first step in philosophical analysis, Coleridge makes a slightly different use of the logic of dichotomy. He perceives that error and evil result from the confounding of opposites under the guise of synonyms. This perception leads him to a search for such erroneous synonyms, combined with an attempt to

restore the actual antithesis behind the apparent similitude.

Throughout his life and work, Coleridge demands "desynonymisation." He first makes this demand in 1795, in an address "On the Present War":

> In private life well-informed Men are generally found the most quiet and friendly Neighbours; but in the dictionary of aristocratic Prejudice, Illumination and Sedition are classed as synonimes, and Ignorance prescribed as the only infallible Preventive for Contention. 84

In 1817, in Biographia Literaria, Coleridge continues to affirm that:

> In all societies there exists an instinct of growth, a certain collective, unconscious good sense working to desynonymize those words originally of the same meaning. 85

Thirty years after the first instance, in Aids to Reflection, he is still maintaining, "that it is a short, downhill passage from errors in words to errors in things."[86]

This process of "desynonymisation" Coleridge designates in another dichotomy as the antithesis of kind and degree:

> In a philosophic disquisition, besides the necessity of confining many words of ordinary use to one definite sense, the writer has to make his choice between two difficulties, whenever his purpose requires him to wean his reader's attention from the degrees of things, which alone form the dictionary of common life, to the kind, independent of degree: as when, for instance, a chemist discourses on the heat in ice, or on latent or fixed light. In this case, he must either use old words with new meanings, the plan adopted by Dr. Darwin in his Zoonomia; or he must borrow

> from the schools, or himself coin a nomenclature appropriated to his subject, after the example of the French chemists, and indeed of all eminent natural philosophers and historians in all countries. There seems to me little ground for hesitation as to which of the two shall be preferred: it being clear, that the former is a twofold exertion of mind in one and the same act. The reader is obliged, not only to recollect the new definition, but - which is incomparably more difficult and perplexing - to unlearn and keep out of view the old and habitual meaning: an evil, for which the semblance of eschewing pedantry is a very poor and inadequate compensation. 87

The author of any "philosophic disquisition" needs to "wean his reader's attention from the degrees of things, which alone form the dictionary of common life, to the kind independent of degree." To effect this weaning of the reader's attention, he must first demonstrate the dichotomy between "degree" and "kind." This demonstration requires the process of "desynonymisation." Here, the author has two choices. Either he can "use old words with new meanings" in order to indicate the distinction in a single word that, philosophically speaking, comprehends two senses. Or, as Coleridge prefers, he can "borrow from the schools, or himself coin a nomenclature exclusively appropriated to his subject."

Coleridge goes on to give examples of his own "desynonymisations" formulated on this basis:

> I have, therefore, in two or three instances ventured on a disused or scholastic term, where without

> it I could not have avoided confusion or ambiguity. Thus, to express in one word what belongs to the senses or the recipient and more passive faculty of the soul, I have re-introduced the word sensuous, used among many of our elder writers, by Milton, in his exquisite definition of poetry as "simple, sensuous, passionate": because the term sensual is seldom used at present, except in a bad sense, and sensitive would convey a different meaning. Thus too I have restored the words, intuition and intuitive, to their original sense - "an intuition," says Hooker, "that is, a direct and immediate beholding or presentation of an object to the mind through the senses or the imagination". - Thus geometrical truths are all intuitive, or accompanied by an intuition. Nay, in order to express "the many", as simply contra-distinguished from "the one", I have hazarded the smile of the reader, by introducing to his acquaintance from the forgotten terminology of the old schoolmen, the phrase, multëity, because I felt that I could not substitute multitude, without more or less connecting it with the notion of "a great many". 88

Such "desynonymisation," involving the abstraction of "the idea of kind from that of degrees," Coleridge designates as "the first and indispensable step in philosophy."[89]

Coleridge acts upon his own advice. He arrives at all his major dichotomies as a result of "desynonymisation." Discussing "the pernicious Doctrine of Necessity" in a letter to Thomas Poole, he affirms himself convinced,

> Of the sophistry of the arguments, & wherein the Sophism consists - viz. that all hitherto, both the Necessitarians & their Antagonists, confounded two essentially different Things under one name - & in consequence of this Mistake the Victory has been always hollow in favor of the Necessitarians.[90]

Coleridge identifies the "two essentially different Things" confounded "under one name" and hence in need of

"desynonymisation," in his analysis of "Hartley's scheme" in Biographia Literaria:

> These, it appears to me, may be all reduced to one sophism as their common genus; the mistaking the conditions of a thing for its causes and essence; and the process, by which we arrive at the knowledge of a faculty, for the faculty itself. 91

Here, he indicates that "desynonyimisation" involves the distinction of the "causes and essence" of a thing from its "conditions." As in all the philosophic dichotomies examined thus far, Coleridge is reworking his poetic perception of the essence as opposed to the outward manifestation, the ideal as opposed to the experiential.

According to his own account, Coleridge also arrives at his antithesis of Imagination and Fancy through his process of "desynonymisation":

> This excellence, which in all Mr. Wordsworth's writings is more or less predominant, and which constitutes the character of his mind, I no sooner felt, than I sought to understand. Repeated meditations led me first to suspect, (and a more intimate analysis of the human faculties, their appropriate marks, functions, and effects matured my conjecture into full conviction,) that fancy and imagination were two distinct and widely different faculties, instead of being, according to the general belief, either two names with one meaning, or, at furthest, the lower and higher degree of one and the same power. 92

His examination of Wordsworth's poetry leads him to perceive that "two distinct and widely different faculties" are confounded whenever the terms fancy and imagination are used as synonyms. He proclaims a distinction: fancy and

imagination must be "desynonymized." They are not, as per "general belief," "either two names with one meaning, or, at furthest, the lower and higher degree of one and the same power." Again, Coleridge maintains that "desynonymisation" involves an abstraction from "the degrees of things." Again, he implies that his dichotomy of kind and degree is an integral factor in the process.

The first instance of Coleridge's distinction between the Imagination and the Fancy (in a letter to William Sotheby of September 10, 1802) clearly reveals that his procedure of "desynonymisation" is the foundation of his logic of dichotomy:

> It must occur to every reader that the Greeks in their religious poems address always the Numina Loci, the Genii, the Dryads, the Naiads, &c &c - All natural Objects were dead - mere hollow Statues - but there was a Godkin or Goddessling included in each - In the Hebrew Poetry you will find nothing of this poor Stuff - as poor in genuine Imagination, as it is mean in Intellect - / At best, it is but Fancy, or the aggregating Faculty of the mind - not Imagination, or the modifying, and co-adunating Faculty. This the Hebrew Poets appear to me to have possessed beyond all others - & next to them the English. 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 - not had, as the cold System of Newtonian Theology represents / but have. 93

Coleridge places the two faculties to be "desynonymized in a polar opposition to one another, and it is through this opposition that each term acquires a meaning distinct

from the other. Thus, Imagination contrasts with Fancy as "the modifying, and co-adunating Faculty" opposes " the aggregating Faculty of the mind." Coleridge further argues the dichotomy against a background of antithesis. He sets up a polarity of Greek and Hebrew poetry, contrasting a scheme of "dead" objects with one in which "each Thing has a Life of it's own, & yet they are all one Life," and "the cold System of Newtonian Theology" with the living System of God. By placing Fancy at the "Greek" pole and Imagination at the "Hebrew" pole, Coleridge emphasizes and enlarges on the distinction.

As will be obvious from the preceding formulation, Coleridge is reiterating his seminal antithesis of essence to object. In the dichotomy of Imagination and Fancy, as in that of natura naturans and natura naturata, the living and essentially vital opposes the stasis of object and aggregation. Coleridge's expression of this vitality, his concept of the "one Life," recurs in the poetry when, in 1828,[94] he adds to "The Eolian Harp" a discussion of the essence of nature as a vehicle for the ideal:

> 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.[95]

Coleridge amplifies the opposition of life to death, active to passive, vitality to stasis in subsequent formu-

lations of the dichotomy of Imagination and Fancy. The antithesis could be a re-working of the dichotomies of Platonic and Aristotelean, organic and mechanic, in view of the terms that he uses.

Fancy he identifies with Hartlean and Aristotelean Association:

> In association then consists the whole mechanism of the reproduction of impressions, in the Aristotelean Psychology. It is the universal law of the passive fancy and mechanical memory. 96

In the antithesis of organic to mechanic, like the philosophies of empiricism, Fancy belongs to the "mechanic" pole.

Imagination, on the other hand, "is essentially vital, even as all objects (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead."[97] In the same discussion (his renowned distinction between Fancy and Imagination in Biographia Literaria), Coleridge enlarges on this vital quality of Imagination:

> The primary IMAGINATION I hold to be the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the Infinite I AM. 98

He here associates Imagination with the apothesis of vitality, Divine Creation, and thus unquestionably places it at the "organic" pole.

Coleridge also formulates a distinction between the primary and secondary Imagination in this section of Biographia

Literaria. The difference between the primary and secondary Imagination, however, is one of degree, not kind.[99] Hence, it is not a dichotomy in the true Coleridgean sense, where dichotomy comprises the opposition of kind to degree.

In the antithesis of Reason to Understanding, so integral to his philosophy, Coleridge repeats, step by step, the process of his other dichotomies. First, he demonstrates that the distinction is the result of "desynonymisation":

> The difference of the Reason from the Understanding, and the imperfection and limited sphere of the latter, have been asserted by many both before and since Lord Bacon; but still the habit of using Reason and Understanding as synonyms, acted as a disturbing force. Some it led into mysticism, others it set on explaining away a clear difference in kind into a mere superiority in degree: and it partially eclipsed the truth for all. 100

In the case of Reason and Understanding, the confounding of "two essentially different Things under one name" has proven an especially virulent cause of error and evil:

> I have no hesitation in undertaking to prove, that every Heresy which has disquieted the Christian Church, from Tritheism to Socinianism, has originated in and supported itself by, arguments rendered plausible only by the confusion of these faculties, and thus demanding for the objects of one, a sort of evidence appropriated to those of another faculty. 101

Upon this distinction of erroneous synonyms, Coleridge formulates a dichotomy after what now should be recognizable as the standard or model for all his dichotomies. From the first instance, in a letter to Thomas Clarkson of October

13, 1806, he expresses the antithesis of Reason and Understanding in terms of the general pattern:

> What is the difference between the Reason and the Understanding? - I would reply, that that Faculty of the Soul which apprehends and retains the mere notices of Experience, as for instance that such an object has a triangular figure, that it is of such or such a magnitude, and of such and such a color, and consistency, with the anticipation of meeting the same under the same circumstances, . . . we may call the Understanding. But all such notices, as are characterized by UNIVERSALITY and NECESSITY, as that every Triangle must in all places and at all times have it's two sides greater than it's third - and which are evidently not the effect of any Experience, but the condition of all Experience, & that indeed without which Experience itself would be inconceivable, we may call Reason. . . . Reason is therefore most eminently the Revelation of an immortal soul, and it's best Synonime - it is the forma formans, which contains in itself the law of it's own conceptions. Nay, it is highly probable that the contemplation of essential Form as remaining the same thro' all varieties of color and magnitude and development, as in the acorn even as in the Oak, first gave to the Mind the ideas, by which it explained to itself those notices of it's Immortality revealed to it by it's conscience.[102]

As in the preceding dichotomies, Coleridge opposes the essence to the outward form. Understanding applies to "the mere notices of Experience," its objects, and the manifestations of these objects, "as for instance that such an object has a triangular figure, that it is of such or such a magnitude, and of such and such a color, and consistency." Its province is that of outward form. Reason, on the other hand, deals with such notices as "are evidently not the effect of any Experience, but the condition of all Experience."

Its province is the essence; in fact, it is the faculty adapted to "the contemplation of essential Form."

With this last statement, Coleridge indicates once and for all that the antithesis of essence to outward manifestation is clearly an antithesis of ideal to experiential. Reason's"contemplation of essential Form" first gives "to the Mind the ideas, by which it explained to itself those notices of it's Immortality revealed to it by it's conscience." Such "ideas," understood by Coleridge in a Platonic sense, evince, and for all human intents and purposes, comprise, the realm of the ideal.

In keeping with Coleridge's pattern, the opposition of Reason to Understanding is also an opposition of natura naturans to natura naturata. Reason as "the forma formans,"which contains in itself the law of it's own conceptions," implies for Understanding a role of "forma formata," or the experiential manifestation of this law.

Elsewhere, and again in terms of the pattern, Coleridge expresses the dichotomy of Reason and Understanding as one of organic opposed to mechanic. Understanding, predictably, he places at the mechanic pole, as exemplified when, in another antithesis, he contrasts the idea of Being with its actuality:

The idea itself, which like a mighty billow at once

> overwhelms and bears aloft - what is it? Whence did it come? In vain would we derive it from the organs of sense: for these supply only surfaces, undulations, phantoms! In vain from the instruments of sensation: for these furnish only the chaos, the shapeless elements of sense! And least of all may we hope to find its origin, or sufficient cause, in the moulds and mechanism of the UNDERSTANDING, the whole purport and functions of which consists in individualization, in outlines and differencings by quantity, quality and relation. It were wiser to seek substance in shadow, than absolute fulness in mere negation. 103

Harking back to the dichotomy of Imagination and Fancy, Coleridge further equates Understanding with mechanism by associating it with the mechanical operations of the fancy in man's psychology, " in that law of his understanding and fancy, by which he is impelled to abstract the outward relations of matter and to arrange these phenomena in time and space, under the form of causes and effects."[104]

Reason, on the other hand, Coleridge identifies with the organic, vital pole. Through the dynamic action of the will, it becomes "the spirit of the regenerated man":

> And herein consists the mystery of Redemption, that this has been rendered possible for us. And so it is written: the first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam a quickening Spirit. (1 Cor. xv. 45.) 105

As already demonstrated, this identity of life, will and spirit comprises Coleridge's ideal of the truly "organic."

The distinction between Reason and Understanding is the most exhaustive of Coleridge's antitheses, and hence,

perhaps the best example of his pattern of dichotomy. In a note to The Statesman's Manual, he adds to the opposing factors. Thus, as well as the antithesis of essence to object, ideal to experiential, natura naturans to natura naturata, organic to mechanic, and idea to existence, the dichotomy of Reason and Understanding comprehends the "immediate" as opposed to the "mediate," "the Necessary and the Universal" as opposed to the particular (the latter is understood), "Ultimate Ends" as opposed to "means to proximate ends," and the "dynamic" as opposed to the "merely formal."[106]

The note, which consists of a geometrical formulation of the difference in kind between the Reason and the Understanding, also divides the two faculties into theoretic and practical. Again, as in the distinction between primary and secondary Imagination, however, this last division points to a difference in degree that has no bearing on Coleridge's real antithesis, the distinction in kind.

The poetry revealed, in a dichotomy of head and heart, the precursor to Coleridge's distinction between Reason and Understanding. In the philosophy as well, the antithesis of head to heart prefigures the opposition of Understanding to Reason.

In his address "On the Present War," in 1795, Coleridge affirms that "Susceptibility of Truth depends on the temper

of our Hearts more than even on the strength of our Understandings."[107] He elaborates this assertion by quoting from Akenside's "Epistle to Curio," lines 265-8 (variant):

> But how can Truth or Virtue guide the Head
> Where Love of Freedom from the Heart is fled?
> Can lesser Wheels repeat their native Stroke
> When the prime function of the Soul is broke?[108]

As in his dichotomy of Reason and Understanding, Coleridge maintains that the human mind possesses two opposing faculties for the apprehension of truth. Here, instead of Reason and Understanding, he describes the antithesis of a faculty of feeling, the "Heart," to a faculty of understanding, the "Head." The poem from Akenside accords with his subsequent concept of the "heart" faculty in the form of Reason as "the Revelation of an immortal soul, and it's best Synonime."

Then, in a letter to George Coleridge of July 1, 1802, Coleridge again expresses a dichotomy of heart and head in the same terms that he will later use for his distinction between Reason and Understanding:

> 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 moral or excellent Example merely - but in a mysterious manner as an effect of his Crucifixion - and this I believe - not because I <u>understand</u> it; but because I <u>feel</u>, that it is not only suitable to, but needful for, my nature and because I find it clearly revealed. 109

Feeling, like Reason, admits the revelation of the ideal that

will always remain a mystery to the experiential faculties of the Understanding.

The dichotomy of heart and head follows the same pattern as that of Reason and Understanding. Coleridge declares in a letter to Thomas 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. The more I understand of Sir Isaac Newton's works, the more boldly I dare utter to my own mind & therefore to you, that I believe the Souls of 500 Isaac Newtons would go to the making up of a Shakspere or a Milton. . . . 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, & 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. 110

In other words, he sets up a polarity of thought joined with feeling and materialism, supposedly thought without feeling. The antithesis, like that of Reason to Understanding, is one of active to passive, creative to mechanical, ideal to experiential. Only one integral element is missing, the dichotomy of essence and object, and this is supplied by another formulation of the antithesis in a letter to Robert Southey:

> Believe me, Southey! a metaphysical Solution, that does not instantly tell for something in the Heart, is grievously to be suspected as apocry[p]hal. I almost think, that Ideas never recall Ideas, as far as they are Ideas - any more than Leaves in a forest create each other's motion - The Breeze it is that runs thro' them / it is the Soul, the state of

Feeling.[111]

In an elaborate metaphor, Coleridge contrasts the outward manifestation of leaves moving in a forest with the cause, or essence, of that movement, the Breeze. As in his dichotomy of Reason and Understanding, he here identifies the essential principle with the idea in its Platonic sense.

In fact, as must be obvious from the similar stamp of the antitheses considered thus far, Coleridge's dichotomies appear to follow a pattern. This pattern originates in the central dichotomy of the poetry, Coleridge's perception of the fundamental antithesis between the ideal and the experiential, which he also expresses as a dichotomy of essence and object, natura naturans and natura naturata, cause and effect. It holds true not only for his major antitheses and the extensions of these antitheses (as Genius and Talent reiterates the distinction between Imagination and Fancy, or Morality and Prudence echoes that of Reason and Understanding.) Coleridge builds all his dichotomies on the polar opposition of the experiential to the ideal.

The double dichotomy of sin and evil, remorse and regret is one instance:

> A sin is an evil which has its ground or origin in the agent, and not in the compulsion of circumstances. Circumstances are compulsory from the absence of a power to resist or control them: and if this absence

> likewise be the effect of Circumstance (that is, if it have been neither directly nor indirectly caused by the agent himself) the evil derives from the circumstances; and therefore (in the Apostle's sense of the word, sin, when he speaks of the exceeding sinfulness of sin) such evil is not sin; and the person who suffers it, or who is the compelled instrument of its inflicion on others, may feel regret, but cannot feel remorse. So likewise of the word origin, original, or originant. The reader cannot too early be warned that it is not applicable, and, without abuse of language, can never be applied, to a mere link in a chain of effects, where each, indeed, stands in the relation of a cause to those that follow, but is at the same time the effect of all that precede. 112

Coleridge formulates the antithesis of ideal and experiential as one of cause and effect. Sin is a causal principle, hence affiliated to Coleridge's ideal, although this may seem somewhat incongrous. Evil is an effect, an outgrowth of circumstance, and thus under the mechanism of Necessity. Remorse as the province of the causal, regret as the province of the caused, repeat the dichotomy.

The antithesis of Symbol and Allegory furnishes another example of the typical Coleridgean dichotomy built on the opposition of experiential and ideal:

> An allegory is but a translation of abstract notions into a picture-language which is itself nothing but an abstraction from the objects of the senses; the principal being more worthless even than its phantom proxy, both alike unsubstantial, and the former shapeless to boot. On the other hand a Symbol . . . is characterized by a translucence of the Special in the Individual or of the General in the Especial or of the Universal in the General. Above all by the translucence of the Eternal through and in the Temporal. It always partakes of the Reality which it

> renders intelligible; and while it enunciates the whole, abides itself as a living part in that Unity, of which it is the representative. The other are but empty echoes which the fancy arbitrarily associates with apparitions of matter, less beautiful but not less shadowy than the sloping orchard or hill-side pasture-field seen in the transparent lake below. 113

Coleridge reiterates the distinction between object and essence. Allegory, "an abstraction from the objects of the senses," producing only "empty echoes which the fancy arbitrarily associates with apparitions of matter," allies to the materialist, Associationist, experiential realm. A symbol, on the other hand, is a vital entity, "a living part in that Unity, of which it is the representative," the principle of essence in the dichotomies of Special and Individual, General and Especial, Universal and General. Like Coleridge's "Reason," it touches on the universal, the eternal, and hence, the infinite. In other words, a symbol is that which is above the experiential, an essence as opposed to an outward manifestation.

The fact that all Coleridge's antitheses extend and elaborate one fundamental principle gives them a symbolic, rather than a didactic value. The more so since this principle both originates and reveals a full development in the course of the poetry. In metaphoric fashion, Coleridge expresses an underlying concept, the opposition of experi-

ential to ideal, in a variety of forms or images, the various dichotomies. And, in the manner of a true symbol, the concept cannot be exhausted by any number of formulations. Coleridge's basic antithetical principle thus provides scope for his particular method. He expresses the abstract, the concept of the antithesis of ideal and experiential, in the various concrete images of his dichotomies. He then draws from these images further abstract or metaphysical relevance in the form of further dichotomies.

FOOTNOTES

1. Coleridge: The Critical Heritage, p. 396.
2. Poetical Works, 1, pp. 1-2.
3. Ibid., pp. 2-4.
4. Ibid., pp. 4-5.
5. Ibid., pp. 106-8
6. Ibid., pp. 297-8.
7. Ibid., p. 338.
8. Ibid., p. 312.
9. Ibid., p. 364.
10. Ibid., p. 381.
11. Ibid., pp. 235-6.
12. Ibid., pp. 419-20.
13. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Anima Poetae, ed. E.H. Coleridge (London, 1895), p. 242.
14. Poetical Works, 1, p. 17.
15. Ibid., p. 93.
16. Ibid., p. 345.
17. Ibid., p. 316.
18. Ibid., p. 16.
19. Ibid., p. 49.
20. Ibid., p. 110.
21. Letters, 11, pp. 865-6.
22. Poetical Works, 1, p. 87.

23. Shakespearean Criticism, 1, p. 147.

24. Poetical Works, 1, pp. 103-4.

25. Ibid., p. 40.

26. Ibid., p. 19.

27. Ibid., p. 134.

28. Ibid., p. 77.

29. Ibid., p. 365.

30. Ibid., p. 366.

31. Ibid., p. 84.

32. Letters, 11, p. 1193 ff.

33. Poetical Works, 1, p. 78.

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36. Ibid., p. 158.

37. Ibid., p. 181.

38. Ibid., pp. 403-4.

39. Ibid., p. 66.

40. Ibid., p. 111.

41. Ibid., p. 185.

42. Ibid., p. 209.

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44. Letters, 1, p. 137.

45. Ibid., p. 626.

46. Ibid., 11, p. 706.

47. Ibid., p. 707.

48. Letters, 1, p. 519.

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51. Ibid., p. 53.

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53. Philosophical Lectures, p. 347.

54. Ibid., p. 366.

55. Ibid., pp. 364-5.

56. Ibid., p. 362.

57. Ibid., pp. 364-5.

58 Biographia Literaria, 1, p. 87.

59. Ibid., pp. 179-80.

60. Ibid., p. 180 ff.

61. Notebooks, III, # 4173.

62. See Letters, II, pages 1189-90 and pages 1192-3 for Coleridge's first accounts of his conversion from Unitarianism to a Trinitarian Christianity.

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64. Letters, I, p. 236.

65. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Aids to Reflection and The Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit (London, 1884), p. 92.

66. Ibid., p. 105.

67. Ibid., p. 190.

68. Ibid., p. 189.

69. Ibid., pp. 104-5.

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83. Lectures 1795, p. 52n.

84 Ibid., p. 52.

85. Biographia Literaria, I, p. 61.

86. Aids to Reflection, p. 167.

87. Biographia Literaria, II, p. 229.

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89. Selected Poetry and Prose, p. 572.

90. Letters, II, p. 1037.

91. Biographia Literaria, I, p. 85.

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93. Letters, II, pp. 865-6.
94. Poetical Works, I, p. 101n.
95. Ibid., p. 101.
96. Biographia Literaria, I, pp. 72-3.
97. Ibid, p. 202.
98. Ibid.
99. Ibid.
100. Aids to Reflection, pp. 167-8.
101. Friend, I, p. 177n.
102. Letters, II, P. 1198.
103. Friend, I, p.514.
104. Ibid. pp. 517-8.
105. Aids to Reflection, p. 143.
106. Lay Sermons, pp. 60-1n.
107. Lectures 1795, p. 52.
108. Ibid. p. 53.
109. Letters, II, p. 807.
110. Ibid., p. 709.
111. Ibid., p. 961.
112. Aids to Reflection, p. 175.
113. Lay Sermons, pp. 30-1.

Chapter 3: SYNTHESIS

Coleridge did not remain satisfied with unresolved polar opposition. He seems to have found the construct of dichotomy, with its tendency to uphold an essence at the expense of the corresponding object, an unnecessarily divisive way of formulating the "ideal." At all events, he soon attempts to reconcile the thesis and antithesis of ideal and experiential through a complete, rather than a partial, dialectic.

Again, the poetry contains a precursor to this second of the major constructs of Coleridge's thought. A "synthetic" movement characterizes his verse. In terms of the dictionary definition, synthesis, or "the putting together of parts or elements so as to form a whole,"[1] emerges as the organizing principle of much of the poetry.

In the earlier poems, Coleridge formulates an idea, the "whole," through a cluster of concepts comprising the various "parts or elements."

> Yet what e'en thus are Fame, Power, Wealth,
> But sounds that variously express,
> What's thine already - Happiness! 2

Thus, "Happiness" brings the diverse elements of "Fame, Power, Wealth" into unity under the principle of Happiness. The poem "To Disappointment" provides another example of such unity in diversity:

Hence! thou fiend of gloomy sway,
That lov'st on withering blast to ride
O'er fond Illusion's air-built pride.
Sullen Spirit! Hence! Away!

Where Avarice lurks in sordid cell,
Or mad Ambition builds the dream,
Or Pleasure plots th' unholy scheme
There with Guilt and Folly dwell! 3

Here, the idea of Disappointment makes a synthesis of the concepts of Illusion, Avarice, Ambition, Pleasure, Guilt and Folly, all of which serve as parts in the central image.

Coleridge tends to repeat his synthetic patterns. When the terms, Fancy or Poetry, appear in his verse, they are commonly joined to the concepts of Joy and Hope:

Farewell parental scenes! a sad farewell!
To you my grateful heart still fondly clings,
Tho' fluttering round on Fancy's burnished wings
Her tales of future Joy Hope loves to tell. 4

Memory is another such catalyst, assimilating Hope and Joy, and, those concepts which often attend Hope and Joy in Coleridge's poetry, Love, Peace, and again, Fancy or Poetry:

So lost by storms along Life's wild'ring Way
Mine Eye reverted views that cloudless Day,
When, -- ! on thy banks I joy'd to rove
While Hope with kisses nurs'd the infant Love!

Sweet -- ! where Pleasure's streamlet glides
Fann'd by soft winds to curl in mimic tides;
Where Mirth and Peace beguile the blameless Day;
And where Friendship's fixt star beams a mellow'd Ray;
Where Love a crown of thornless Roses wears;
Where soften'd Sorrow smiles within her tears;
And Memory, with a Vestal's meek employ,
Unceasing feeds the lambent flame of Joy!

No more the Sky Larks less'ning from my sight
Shall thrill th' attuned Heartstring with delight;
No more shall deck thy pensive Pleasures sweet
With wreaths of sober hue my evening seat!
Yet dear to Fancy's Eye thy varied scene
Of Wood, Hill, Dale and sparkling Brook between:
Yet sweet to Fancy's Ear the warbled song,
That soars on Morning's wing thy fields among!

Scenes of my Hope! the aching Eye ye leave,
Like those rich Hues that paint the clouds of Eve!
Tearful and saddening with the sadden'd Blaze
Mine Eye the gleam pursues with wistful Gaze -
Sees Shades on Shades with deeper tint impend,
Till chill and damp the moonless Night descend![5]
"An Effusion at Evening"

In both these examples the idea of Time furnishes matter for synthesis. Memory opposes a past, which for Coleridge comprises an ideal, to the experiential realm of the present. Coleridge provides an image of the synthesis of this past ideal with the present in the stream whose continuum resembles the continuum of Time. Fancy, or Poetry, also effects the synthesis. As mentioned earlier (page 24), Memory activates the poetic Imagination, initiating a past-present antithesis. Poetry reconciles this antithesis through its ability to unite the elements of Time.

One quality of Coleridge's ideal is timelessness. The essence, as distinct from the object, rises above "whatever is comprehended in Time and Space [and thus] , is included in the Mechanism of Cause and Effect."[6] The ideal, which "has its principle in itself, so far as to originate its actions, cannot be contemplated in any of the forms of Space

and Time."[7] This ideal Coleridge expresses in a poem "To William Wordsworth":

> . . . The truly great
> Have all one age, and from one visible space
> Shed influence! They, both in power and act,
> Are permanent, and Time is not with them. 8

In the poetry, Coleridge achieves the ideal of timelessness through a synthesis of the elements of time. In "Lines written at Shurton Bars," he alleviates his agony of loneliness through superimposing recollections of the past and hopes for the future on the present scene.[9] Past, present, and future thus combine to provide an escape from time. In a footnote to MS II of Osorio, he amplifies his idea of the tragedy-dream of Act IV in a similar synthesis of the elements of time:

> This will be held by many for a mere Tragedy-dream - by many who have never given themselves the trouble to ask themselves from what grounds dreams pleased in Tragedy, and wherefore they have become so common. I believe, however, that in the present case, the whole is here psychologically true and accurate. Prophetical dreams are things of nature, and explicable by that law of the mind in which where dim ideas are connected with vivid feelings, Perception and Imagination insinuate themselves and mix with the forms of Recollection, till the Present appears to exactly correspond with the Past. Whatever is partially like, the Imagination will gradually represent as wholly like - a law of our nature which, when it is perfectly understood, woe to the great city of Babylon - to all the superstitions of men.[10]

Once again, the Imagination plays an active role, engineering a correspondence of the past, "forms of Recollection," with the future, "prophetical dreams," and the present.

Coleridge's search for a principle of unity, a principle to unite the diversity of the experiential world, shapes his poetry:

> 'Tis the sublime of man,
> Our noontide Majesty, to know ourselves
> Parts and proportions of one wondrous whole!
> This fraternises man, this constitutes
> Our charities and bearings. 11
> "Religious Musings"

This principle he discerns in the same poem as God:

> . . . But 'tis God
> Diffused through all, that doth make all one whole.[12]

And this God he in turn identifies with the essential pole of his dichotomy of *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*

> Him Nature's essence, mind, and energy.[13]

Because the principle of unity that Coleridge seeks is a unity of diversity, it acts as a principle of synthesis. Coleridge casts around for the whole capable of assimilating a variety of parts and elements. He finds one such "whole," one such principle of unity, in "Reflections on having left a Place of Retirement":

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

No wish profan'd my overwhelméd heart.
Blest hour! It was a luxury, - to be![14]

For Coleridge, God, with the attributes of omnipresence and omniscience, comprises the most apt representation of unity. The Deity, however, is not the only such principle. As already observed, both Time and Imagination function synthetically. A little poem "To --" adds Love to the list of unifying principles:

I mix in life, and labour to seem free,
With common persons pleas'd and common things,
While every thought and action tends to thee,
And every impulse from thy influence springs.[15]

Thus far, the synthesis in the poetry appears as a unifying of diverse parts or elements. But Coleridge also uses the construct of synthesis in a strict philosophical sense as a dialectical reconciliation of opposites. The synthetic patterns of unity in the poetry set the stage for this dialectic by attesting to Coleridge's desire to see a unity in, or a reconciliation of, diversity. Still within the course of the poetry, however, Coleridge moves to a real synthesis of thesis and antithesis.

One of Coleridge's dialectical formulations involves the balance of the polar opposites. Here, he effects a reconciliation throught the meeting of "extremes." In Osorio, he resolves the hero's conflict between the will to sin and remorse through such a balance:

I thank thee, Heaven! thou hast ordain'd it wisely,

That still extremes bring their own cure.[16]

In "Religious Musings," he reiterates a favourite poetic conception, already discussed in his "Allegoric Vision," of the meeting of Mystery and Atheism:

> . . . For she hath fallen
> On whose black front was written Mystery;
> She that reeled heavily, whose wine was blood;
> She that worked whoredom with the Daemon Power;
> And from the dark embrace all evil things
> Brought forth and nutured: mitred Atheism! 17

More commonly, however, Coleridge resolves "extremes" through a transcending principle that comprehends both opposites in itself. This is a true dialectic, and the poetry abounds in examples.

In "A Mathematical Problem," Coleridge makes his first attempt at such a dialectic. As he explains to his brother to whom he first sent the poem:

> I have often been surprised that Mathematics, the quintessence of Truth, should have found admirers so few and so languid. Frequent consideration and minute scrutiny have at length unravelled the cause; viz. that though Reason is feasted, Imagination is starved; whilst Reason is luxuriating in its proper Paradise, Imagination is wearily travelling on a dreary desert. To assist Reason by the stimulus of Imagination is the design of the following production. . . . I may justly plume myself that I first have drawn the nymph Mathesis from the visionary caves of abstracted idea, and caused her to unite with Harmony. The first-born of this Union I now present to you. 18

Through the medium of poetry, Coleridge hopes to unite Reason with Imagination, Mathematics with Harmony. This synthesis suggests one possible resolution for his dichotomy

of Reason and Understanding in its initial formulation (see page 53.)

In his Reason-Understanding dichotomy, Coleridge also introduces the concept of mathematics, and also identifies Reason with the principle of mathematics. Reason involves "such notices, as are characterized by UNIVERSALITY and NECESSITY, as that every Triangle must in all places and at all times have it's two sides greater than it's third." Coleridge then opposes this mathematical principle of Reason to the images and outward manifestations resulting from the realization of the principle ("the notices of Experience, as for instance that such an object has a triangular figure, that it is of such or such a magnitude, and of such and such a color, and consistency.")

In "A Mathematical Problem," Coleridge is attempting to resolve this antithesis. By means of his new concept of poetry, designed "to assist Reason by the stimulus of Imagination," he tries to link Reason, the "abstracted idea," with those concrete images that Imagination gleans from the experiential world.

"The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" provides another example of Coleridge's use of dialectic in the poetry. The protagonist of the poem acts as a principle of synthesis. The Mariner can mediate between the natural and the supernatural because he himself contains both the contraries.

When he asserts:

> He prayeth best, who loveth best
> All things both great and small;
> For the dear God who loveth us,
> He made and loveth all, 19

the Mariner points the way to a synthesis of objective nature and its essence in God through the unifying power of love.

In "Kubla Khan," the figure of the bard acts as a focus for the synthetic principles of time and art:

> A damsel with a dulcimer
> In a vision once I saw:
> It was an Abyssinian maid,
> And on her dulcimer she played,
> Singing of Mount Abora.
> Could I revive within me
> Her symphony and song,
> To such a deep delight 'twould win me,
> That with music loud and long,
> I would build that dome in air,
> That sunny dome! Those caves of ice! 20

Art rises above the antithesis of past and present, by giving a past ideal, the song of the Abyssinian maid, an experiential formulation in the present "music loud and long." This in turn effects a synthesis of the other contraries of the poem, "That sunny dome! Those caves of ice!"

Finally, in "Dejection: An Ode," the ideal of Joy resolves in itself the opposition of essence and object:

> Joy, virtuous Lady! Joy that ne'er was given,
> Save to the pure, and in their purest hour,
> Life, and Life's effluence, cloud at once and shower. 21

This reconciliation of "Life, and Life's effluence," the "cloud" and its "shower," suggests a reconciliation of the

ideal and the experiential. "Joy", as the synthesis of the ultimate in both ideal and experiential, confirms the suggestion:

> Joy, Lady! is the spirit and the power,
> Which wedding Nature to us gives in dower
> A new Earth and new Heaven. 22

As manifest in these examples, Coleridge's principle of synthesis in the poetry is an elaboration of the ideal rather than the experiential, the essence rather than the object. In contrast to his construct of dichotomy, however, where he denigrates the outward manifestation, Coleridge, in his synthetic ideal, takes into account the objective factor. He uses the experiential as an integral element in the formulation of his dialectic. His poetic syntheses express an ideal which comprehends the union of essence and object, experiential and ideal.

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In the philosophy, Coleridge affirms his dissatisfaction with a partial dialectic:

> The office of philosophical disquisition consists in just <u>distinction</u>; while it is the privilege of the philosopher to preserve himself constantly aware, that distinction is not division. In order to obtain adequate notions of any truth, we must intellectually separate its distinguishable parts; and this is the technical <u>process</u> of philosophy. But having so done, we must then restore them in

> our conceptions to the unity, in which they actually co-exist; and this is the result of philosophy. 23

An unreconciled polar opposition comprises only one portion of the philosophical procedure, "the technical process." By itself, the construct of dichotomy omits the more important part, that synthetic principle of unity that supplies "the result of philosophy."

The philosophy, like the poetry, attests to Coleridge's search for this underlying principle of union. The notebook entries, letters, and lectures of the period 1795 to 1806 (written in conjunction with the poetry under discussion) comment on his poetic quest for unity.

Coleridge's letter to John Thelwall of October 14, 1797, includes one such comment:

> 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 or waterfalls, mountains or caverns give me the sense of sublimity or majesty! - But in this faith all things counterfeit infinity. 24

As observed, the poetry everywhere reflects this perception of the "one & indivisible" beneath the diversity of nature's manifold forms. Coleridge goes on to exemplify the point by citing 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! - 25

Here, Coleridge himself seems to recognize a continuum between his poetry and philosophy. He discerns his philosophic musings expressed in his poetry; he uses his poetry to elucidate and elaborate his philosophy.

In another letter (May 17, 1799), Coleridge reiterates his concept of a unity in diversity with the addition of the notion of Omnipresence:

> Now again is nothing but Pines & Firs, above, below, around us! - How awful is [the] deep Unison of their undividable Murmur - What a <u>one</u> thing it is -[it is a sound] that [im]presses the dim notion of the Omnipresent! 26

Again, Coleridge has already formulated the idea in the poetry.

In both philosophy and poetry, Coleridge arrives at his principle of unity through a synthesis of diversity. He repeatedly points out the "something <u>one & indivisible</u>" that comprehends the "heap of <u>little</u> things." Now, this principle of unity appears as the "<u>one sense</u>" that explains all existence:

> I am about to do more - namely, that I shall be able to evolve all the five senses, that is, to deduce them from <u>one sense</u>, & to state their growth, & the causes of their difference - & in this evolvement to solve the process of Life & Consciousness. 27

Again, "something one & indivisible" emerges in the vital metaphor of a united humanity:

> For I believe there is more than a metaphor in the affirmation, that the whole human Species, from Adam to Bonaparte, from China to Peru, may be considered as one Individual Mind. 28

Coleridge maintains that the human race can achieve this ideal of unity in and through Christ.[29]

In the fall and winter of 1799, Coleridge seems to be centring his principle of unity on the philosophy of Spinoza. He asserts in a letter to Robert Southey of December 24:

> My Spinosism (if Spinosism it be and 'i faith 'tis very like it) disposed me to consider this big City as that part of the Supreme One, which the prophet Moses was allowed to see. 30

He elaborates this idea of a "Oneness" inspired by Spinoza in a notebook entry of the month before:

> If I begin a poem of Spinoza, thus it should begin /
> I would make a pilgimage 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. 31

In 1803, he is still concerned with the poem on Spinoza, and its integral concept of unity:

> 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. - 32

These formulations attest to Coleridge's ouest for a unity capable of assimilating diversity. This he envisages not as "an intense Union," but as a "<u>one</u>" that "<u>can be many</u>.". Such a "<u>one</u>" demands the synthesis of "Feeling & Life" with "Form," in other words, the union of essence with object, ideal with experiential.

As in the poetry, Coleridge finds a principle of this unity in God:

> God is not in all things, for in this case he would be indigent of all; but all things are God, & eternally indigent of God. - And in the original meaning of the word "essence" as predicable of that, concerning which you can say, This is he, or that is he, this or that rather than any other / in this sense of the word Essemce I perfectly coincide with the Platonists & Plotinists, that if we add to the nature of God either Essence, or Intellect, or Beauty we deprive him of being the Good himself, the only <u>One</u>, the purely & absolutely ONE. 33

With a view to the dangers of Spinozism, a philosophy that he frequently criticizes for its pantheism, Coleridge makes a careful distinction between God as the principle of unity in all things and all things in unity as God.

In the projected poem on Spinoza, Coleridge again demonstrates his dynamic of abstract and concrete, philosophy and poetry. Although he never wrote the poem, the abstract idea of "an Absolute Unity" in diversity finds many a concrete expression in the rest of his poetry.

The concept of a unity in diversity becomes an integral element of Coleridge's philosophy. This concept he formulates in its strictest philosophical sense in an essay "On the Principles of Genial Criticism":

> In order to express "the many," as simply contradistinguished from "the one," I have hazarded the smile of the reader, by introducing to his acquaintance, from the forgotten terminology of the old schoolmen, the phrase, multeity, because I felt that I could not substitute multitude, without more or less connecting with it the notion of "a great many." Thus the Philosopher of the later Platonic, or Alexandrine school, named the triangle the first-born of beauty, it being the first and simplest symbol of multeity in unity. 34

His expressions for the idea, however, vary throughout the philosophy from "the universal in the particular," to "the whole in the parts," to "the one that can be many."

As indicated in the passage from the essay, the concept of "unity in multeity" reveals mathematical antecedents. Coleridge distinguishes the oldest formulation of the concept as "that of Pythagoras: THE REDUCTION OF MANY TO ONE."[35] Together, "Pythagoras by his numeral, and Plato by his musical symbols, and both by geometric discipline" free the human mind from "that despotism of the eye."[36] The involvement of mathematics in the construct of synthesis originates in the poetry with Coleridge's expression of the ideal through the dialectic of "A Mathematical Problem." He reiterates this notion of mathematics as associated with both the ideal and the synthetic operations of poetry in

the discussion of yet another "unity in multëity":

> I adopt with full faith the principle of Aristotle, that poetry as poetry is essentially ideal . . . Paradoxical as it may sound, one of the essential properties of Geometry is not less essential to dramatic excellence; and Aristotle has accordingly required of the poet an involution of the universal in the individual. 37

Of course, the concept of "unity in multëity" is first and foremost Coleridge's ideal of excellence in art and poetry:

> A poem is that species of composition, which is opposed to science, by proposing for its immediate object pleasure, not truth; and from all other species (having this object in common with it) it is discriminated by proposing to itself such delight from the whole, as is compatible with a distinct gratification from each component part. 38

In Shakespeare, Coleridge discerns the apotheosis of such excellence:

> It was Shakspeare's prerogative to have the universal, which is potentially in each particular, opened out to him, the homo generalis, not as an abstraction from observation of a variety of men, but as the substance capable of endless modifications, of which his own personal existence was but one. 39

Again, Coleridge expresses this ideal in terms of a "unity in multëity": "the universal, which is potentially in each particular."

Elaborating on "unity in multëity" as a standard in art, Coleridge extends the formulation to related concepts. He defines poetic genius as "unity in multëity":

> It has been before observed that images, however

> beautiful, though faithfully copied from nature, and as accurately represented in words, do not of themselves characterize the poet. They become proofs of original genius only as far as they are modified by a predominant passion; or by associated thoughts or images awakened by that passion; or when they have the effect of reducing multitude to unity, or succession to an instant. 40

He accords to Imagination the power of reducing the many to one:

> 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. 41

The idea of Imagination as "unity in multeity" recurs in Biographia Literaria, where Coleridge uses the term "esemplastic," meaning "to shape into one," which he claims to have construed from the Greek.[42]

Although Coleridge develops "unity in multeity" primarily as an ideal of art, he extends the concept into his other formulations of the ideal. Reason, the "ideal" and "essential" term of the Reason-Understanding dichotomy, acts as an assimilator of multitude into unity:

> In this sense I affirm, that Reason is the knowledge of the laws of the WHOLE considered as ONE. 43

Like Reason, religion emerges as "unity in multeity":

> Religion therefore is the ultimate aim of philosophy, in consequence of which philosophy itself becomes the supplement of the sciences, both as the convergence of all to the common end, namely wisdom; and as supplying the copula, which modified in each in the comprehension of its parts to one whole, is in its principles common to all,

> as integral parts of one system. And this is METHOD, itself a distinct science, the immediate offspring of philosophy, and the link or mordant by which philosophy becomes scientific and the sciences philosophical. 44

Here, Coleridge adds to religion his idea of "method," the organizing principle of science that gives rise to an "arrangement" "grounded on the habit of foreseeing in each integral part . . . the whole."[45] Method provides another example of the synthesis of diversities.

As he moves from dichotomy to synthesis, Coleridge amplifies the "ideal" term of most of his dichotomies into a "unity in multeity." Reason and Imagination exemplify this amplification. The "unities in multeity" of mathematics, religion and method also originate as "essential" terms in Coleridgean dichotomies.

Coleridge describes mathematics as an "essence" rather than a "nature" in his antithesis of natura naturans to natura naturata: "Hence, in accurate language, we say the essence of a mathematical circle or other geometrical figure, not the nature."[46] Religion, or Christianity, he opposes to polytheism or pantheism in terms of the infinite to the finite, the idea to the form:

> The Greeks changed the ideas into finites, and these finites into anthropomorphi, or forms of men. Hence their religion, their poetry, nay their very pictures, became statuesque. With them the form was the end. The reverse of this was the natural effect of Chris-

> tianity; in which finites, even the human form, must, in order to satisfy the mind, be brought into connexion with, and be in fact symbolical of, the infinite. 47

Method he appears to link with the ideal of Reason; like Reason, method has as antitheses the Associationist's memory,[48] and the more mechanical operations of the understanding:

> For the absence of Method, which characterizes the uneducated, is occasioned by an habitual submission of the understanding to mere events and images as such, and independent of any power in the mind to classify or appropriate them. 49

From other dichotomies, Coleridge amplifies other "ideal" terms into "unities in multeity." The concept of will reveals such elaboration:

> For as the Will or Spirit, the Source and Substance of Moral Good, is one and all in every part; so must it be the totality, the whole articulated series of single acts, taken as unity, that can alone, in the severity of science, be recognised as the proper counterpart and adequate representative of a good Will. 50

The idea of a Symbol also emerges as the unity of diversity:

> A Symbol . . . is characterized by a translucence of the Special in the Individual or of the General in the Especial or of the Universal in the General. Above all by the translucence of the Eternal through and in the Temporal. It always partakes of the Reality which it renders intelligible; and while it enunciates the whole, abides itself as a living part in that Unity, of which it is the representative. 51

Finally, Coleridge defines <u>natura naturans</u>, or the principle of life considered "<u>absolutely</u>," as "unity in multeity":

> The most comprehensive formula to which life is reducible, would be that of the internal copula of bodies, or (if we may venture to borrow a phrase from the Platonic school) the power which discloses itself from within as a principle of unity in the many. But that there is a physiogn my in words, which, without reference to their fitness or necessity, make unfavorable as well as favorable impressions, and that every unusual term in an abstruse research incurs the risk of being denominated jargon, I should at the same time have borrowed a scholastic term, and defined life absolutely, as the principle of unity in multeity. [52]

Here, he points to the origin of the concept in the tradition of Platonic Idealism.

The perception of "unity in multeity" is essential to a correct spiritual perspective. Without it, monotheism degenerates into polytheism:

> A confounding of God with Nature, and an incapacity of finding unity in the manifold and infinity in the individual, - these are the origin of polytheism. [53]

The "unity" is the operative element: "The fairest part of the most beautiful body will appear deformed and monstrous, if dissevered from its place in the organic Whole." [54] In contrast to his procedure in the construct of dichotomy, however, Coleridge insists on the inclusion of the "multeity" with this "unity." The ideal must join with the experiential that it synthesizes, for by itself this ideal results in but a partial vision:

> The word, ἰδέα, in its original sense as used by Pindar, Aristophanes, and in the Gospel of St. Matthew, represented the visual abstraction of a distant object, when we see the whole without dis-

tinguishing its parts.[55]

Like the poetry, the philosophy shows a development of the "unity in multeity" concept in relation to time. Coleridge achieves the ideal of timelessness through the same synthesis of the elements of time that he demonstrates in the poetry. In fact, at several points, he uses the same image for that synthesis, the stream whose continuum unites past, present, and future:

> Hence, by a derivative, indeed, but not a divided, influence, and though in a secondary yet in more than a metaphorical sense, the Sacred Book is worthily intitled the WORD OF GOD. Hence too, its contents present to us the stream of time continuous as Life and a symbol of Eternity, inasmuch as the Past and the Future are virtually contained in the Present. [56]

Again, as in the poetry, art or Imagination effects the synthesis. An early definition of poetry reiterates the idea of a union of past and present that characterizes Coleridge's poetic stream:

> A child scolding a flower in the words in which he had himself been scolded & whipt, is poetry / past passion with pleasure - [57]

Poetic genius reduces "succession to an instant,"[58] or, in a more elaborate expression of the process:

> It is not less an essential mark of true genius, that its sensibility is excited by any other cause more powerfully than by its own personal interests; for this plain reason, that the man of genius lives most in the ideal world, in which the present is still constituted by the future or the past. [59]

Finally, Coleridge maintains that "the reason is aloof from time and space; the imagination [has] an arbitrary control over both."[60]

In this last statement, Coleridge demonstrates his extension of the concept of timelessness into other formulations of the ideal. Here, he asserts the exemption from time of Reason. This exemption he also affirms for Original Sin:

> Let the evil be supposed such as to imply the impossibility of an individual's referring to any particular time at which it might be conceived to have commenced, or to any period of his existence at which it was not existing. Let it be supposed, in short, that the subject stands in no relation whatever to time, can neither be called in time nor out of time; but that all relations of time are as alien and heterogeneous in this question, as the relations and attributes of space (north or south, round or square, thick or thin) are to our affections and moral feelings. Let the reader suppose this, and he will have before him the precise import of the Scriptural doctrine of Original Sin. 61

In short, the ideal of timelessness identifies with the faculty of the divine in man:

> For Reflexion seems the first approach to, & shadow of, the divine Permanency; the first effort of divine working in us to bind the Past and Future with the Present, and thereby to let in upon us some faint glimmering of that State in which Past, Present, and Future are co-adunated in the adorable I AM. 62

Coleridge's concept of timelessness has two formulations. Either he indicates an accomplished synthesis

(that exemption from time represented by Reason, original sin, and the divine), or, he reveals a dialectic in action, effecting the synthesis of past, present, and future (as demonstrated by the Imagination.) At the base of the latter, the active dialectic, lies the will:

> From the indemonstrable flows the sap, that circulates through every branch and spray of the demonstration. To this principle we referred the choice of the final object, the control over time - or, to comprize all in one, the METHOD of the will. 63

Although the notion of "unity in multeity" is synthetic,* it is not the true dialectic of Kant and the post-Kantians. As in the poetry, however, Coleridge develops such a dialectic. Further, he follows the poetry in the pattern of this development.

In the philosophy also, Coleridge first attempts a balance rather than a real synthesis of opposites. His "Allegoric Vision" of 1795 [64] describes the same "meeting of extremes that he formulates in "Religious Musings." In the "Allegoric Vision," however, Coleridge approaches more to a true dialectic by adding, as mediator between the extremes of Mystery and Atheism, an ideal of right religion in the Unitarian Church.

* "Unity in multeity" is synthetic in terms of the dictionary definition of synthesis (see page 68.) The "unity" is the "whole," the "multeity" the "parts or elements" put together to form this whole.

In December of 1803, Coleridge appears very much concerned with the meeting of extremes:

> I have repeatedly said, that I could have made a Volume, if only I had noted down, as they occurred to my Recollection or Observations, the instances of the Proverb, Extremes Meet / - This Night, Sunday, Dec. 11, 1803, 1/2 past 11, I have determined to devote the last 9 pages of my Pocket [book] to the collection of the same. 65

Subsequently, he affirms that he wrote The Statesman's Manual, "to expose the inconsistency of both these extremes, and by inference to recommend that state of mind, which looks forward to 'the fellowship of the mystery of the faith as a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the KNOWLEDGE of God, the eyes of the UNDERSTANDING being enlightened.'"[66] The "extremes" that he mentions are those of an over-mystification opposed to an over-literalization of the Scriptural word. As in the "Allegoric Vision," he indicates a form of synthesis in faith, which here unites the antitheses of understanding and revelation.

Coleridge clearly relates the concept of "extremes meet" to his philosophical dialectic in a notebook entry of September, 1808:

> Extremes meet. One ~~to be~~ Essay in the Upholder - perhaps, in these first to explain my system of balanced opposites - ~~&~~ thence the Like in the Unlike / - 67

It was probably the idea of "unity in multeity" that prepared Coleridge for his assimilation of this dialectic

from the German Idealists. At all events, his familiarity with Plato and Platonic tradition long preceded his reading of Kant and the post-Kantians. At one point, he expresses the transition from a logic of dichotomy to one of dialectic in a form reminiscent of his "unities in multeity":

> Seek first for the Unity as the only source of Reality, and then for the two opposite yet correspondent forms by which it manifests itself. For it is an axiom of universal application that manifestio non datur nisi per alterum. Instead therefore of affirmation and contradiction, the tools of dichotomic Logic, we have the three terms Identity, Thesis, and Antithesis. 68

Coleridge makes this statement in a marginal note on Kant's Allegemeine Naturgeschichte, and he was also to recognize the principle of trichotomy as "the prominent excellence in Kant's Critique of the Pure Reason."[69] He discerns in the dialectic originated by Kant and developed by Schelling a logical way of effecting the "unity" of "multeity." Nevertheless, the Platonic influence remains. In seeking for the element of synthesis, the "Unity" behind the "two opposite yet correspondent forms," he remarks:

> What is the ground of the coincidence between reason and experience? Or between the laws of matter and the ideas of the pure intellect? The only answer which Plato deemed the question capable of receiving, compels the reason to pass out of itself and 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 preestablisher of the harmony in and between both. 70

In Coleridge's dialectic, as in his concept of "unity

in multeity," the final reconciliation of experiential and ideal involves an elaboration of the element of "unity." "In a supersensual essence," "the ideal of the reason," Coleridge resolves the contradiction between essence and object, inner principle and outward manifestation. Also in the manner of his "unities in multeity," he demonstrates a resolution through inclusion as opposed to exclusion, through the bringing of "multeity" into an accord with its underlying "unity." Experiential and ideal unite in the "supersensual" principle, that although ideal, relates to the experiential as "the cause of the material world" and "the pre-establisher of the harmony in and between both" ideal and experiential. Thus, Coleridge's philosophical dialectic reflects the synthesis of his poetry which reveals an identical pattern of reconciliation.

In his trichotomic dialectic, Coleridge has several different expressions for the "supersensual essence." Most commonly, he speaks of a Synthesis that unites the opposites of experiential and ideal. In the marginal note on Kant, however, he uses the term Identity. At this point in his philosophy, when he is dealing with a basic, unelaborated trichotomy, the word Identity can be taken as roughly equivalent to a Synthesis. Actually, in later expansions of the dialectic, Identity, or Prothesis, describes a kind of

pre-synthesis, a unity that Coleridge believed to exist in the constitutive realm of the ideal. It was this unity that he conceived of as breaking in the process of experiential manifestation, splitting into the polar opposites of Thesis and Antithesis, and having to be resolved again through Synthesis. Another term, Mesothesis, or Indifference, can also be considered at this stage as more or less equivalent to Synthesis. Later, however, it becomes an intermediary instead of an amalgamation, an expression of Thesis and Antithesis held in balance unchanged, a temporary resolution after Prothesis and before Synthesis.

Still, the principle remains the same. The emphasis is on unity, whether Coleridge conceives of such unity as antecedent or subsequent. In this sense, all of Coleridge's dialectics repeat his concept of "unity in multeity," for all his "unities in multeity" also function dialectically.

For instance, Coleridge formulates the dialectical process, like the concept of "unity in multeity," in mathematical terms:

> Kant having briefly illustrated the utility of such an attempt in the questions of space, motion, and infinitely small quantities, as employed by the mathematician, proceeds to the idea of negative quantities and the transfer of them to metaphysical investigation. Opposites, he well observes, are of two kinds, either logical, that is, such as are absolutely incompatible; or real, without being contradictory. The former he denomonates Nihil negativum irrepraesentabile, the connection of

> which produces nonsense. A body in motion is something - Aliquid cogitable; but a body, at one and the same time in motion and not in motion, is nothing, or, at most, air articulated into nonsense. But a motory force of a body in one direction, and an equal force of the same body in an opposite direction is not incompatible, and the result, namely, rest, is real and representable. For the purposes of mathematical calculus it is indifferent which force we term negative, and which positive. . . . It is equally clear that two equal forces acting in opposite directions, both being finite and each distinguished from the other by its direction only, must neutralize or reduce each other to inaction. Now the transcendental philosophy demands; first, that two forces should be conceived which counteract each other by their essential nature; not only in consequence of the accidental direction of each, but as prior to all direction, nay, as the primary forces from which the conditions of all possible directions are derivative and deducible: secondly, that these forces should be assumed to be both alike infinite, both alike indestructible. The problem will then be to discover the result or product of two such forces, as distinguished from the result of those forces which are finite, and derive their difference solely from the circumstance of their direction. 71

In this Kantian demonstration of the mathematics behind transcendental philosophy, Coleridge points to the pattern of a dialectic. The two forces, real as opposed to logical opposites, infinite as opposed to finite, comprise the thesis and antithesis. Their union in "the result or product of two such forces" makes up a synthesis. Coleridge goes on to "elevate the Thesis from notional to actual, by contemplating intuitively this one power with its two inherent indestructible yet counteracting forces, and the results or generations to which their inter-penetration gives

existence, in the living principle and in the process of our own self-consciousness."[72] He discerns a fundamental base for all dialectic in the union, in the principle of self-consciousness, of the "two inherent indestructible yet counteracting forces" (which would be subject and object.) In this form (that is, actual rather than notional, or ideal rather than experiential), he sees the thesis of the dialectic as "the actual application of the positions which had so wonderfully enlarged the discoveries of geometry, mutatis mutandis, to philosophical subjects."[73]

Coleridge's foremost concept of "unity in multeity," his ideal of poetry, is also his most extensive synthesis:

> The poet, described in ideal perfection, brings the whole soul of man into activity, with the subordination of its faculties to each other, according to their relative worth and dignity. He diffuses a tone and spirit of unity, that blends, and (as it were) fuses, each into each, by that synthetic and magical power, to which we have exclusively appropriated the name of imagination. This power, first put in action by the will and understanding, and retained under their irremissive, though gentle and unnoticed controul (laxis effertur habenis) reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities: of sameness, with difference; of the general, with the concrete; the idea, with the image; the individual, with the representative; the sense of novelty and freshness, with old and familiar objects; a more than usual state of emotion, with more than usual order; judgement ever awake and steady self-possession, with enthusiasm and feeling profound or vehement; and while it blends and harmonizes the natural and the artificial, still subordinates art to nature; the manner to the matter; and our admiration of the poet to our sympathy with the poetry. [74]

Poetry, or "what is so nearly the same," the poet,[75] through the agency of a related "unity in multeity," the imagination, is an especially effective mediator between the experiential and the ideal. In all the antitheses, this apotheosis of the poet effects the basic union of essence with object in his reconciliation of the principle of "unity" with the outward manifestations of "multeity." Meanwhile, he unites other essences and objects, "the idea with the image," the head with the heart in the amalgamations of emotion and order, judgement and enthusiasm, and nature (naturans) and art. Coleridge overcomes the active-passive opposition of the dichotomies. Will consorts with understanding to resolve such antithesis, while (in a similar formulation of the poetic synthesis[76]), the concept of "the spontaneous activity of his [the poet's] imagination and fancy," also acting in consort, demonstrates a union of these opposing faculties.

The accord of "sameness, with difference" is an integral element of the poetic synthesis, and perhaps comprises a meeting point between Coleridge's concept of "unity in multeity" and his true dialectic:

> I adduce the high spiritual instinct of the human being impelling us to seek unity by harmonious adjustment, and thus establishing the principle, that all the parts of an organized whole must be assimilated to the more important and essential parts. This and the preceding arguments may be strengthened

> by the reflection, that the composition of a poem is among the <u>imitative</u> arts; and that 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. 77

In Coleridge's association of his first polar balance, "extremes meet" with his dialectic, "my system of balanced opposites" (see below, page 91), the unifying factor likewise appears as a demonstration of "the Like in the Unlike."

The "unity in multeity" of Shakespeare, as an ideal of poetic genius, also acts dialectically:

> In Shakespeare's <u>poems</u> the creative power and the intellectual energy wrestle as in a war embrace. Each in its excess of strength seems to threaten the extinction of the other. At length in the DRAMA they were reconciled. 78

Shakespeare's language, "in his <u>Lear</u>, for instance," provides a mesothesis between the language of man and that of nature.[79]

Coleridge's idea of Imagination becomes his operative agent of synthesis. Herein active and passive unite:

> Most of my readers will have observed a small water-insect on the surface of rivulets, which throws a cinque-spotted shadow fringed with prismatic colours on the sunny bottom of the brook; and will have noticed, how the little animal <u>wing</u> its way up against the stream, by alternate pulses of active and passive motion, now resisting the current, and now yielding to it in order to gather strength and a momentary <u>fulcrum</u> for further propulsion. This is no unapt emblem of the mind's self-experience in the act of thinking. There are evidently two powers at work, which relatively to each other are active and passive; and this is not possible without an 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.) 80

Imagination also effects the synthesis of Reason and Understanding:

> The histories and political economy of the present and preceding century partake in the general contagion of its mechanic philosophy, and are the product of an unenlivened generalizing Understanding. In the Scriptures they are the living educts of the Imagination; 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. 81

Through its medium, Coleridge unites the "Images of the Sense," which appertain to the experiential pole of the Understanding, with the ideal "permanence and self-circling energies of the Reason."

In brief, Imagination acts to elevate the experiential to the ideal:

> Of the discursive understanding, which forms for itself general notions and terms of classification for the purpose of comparing and arranging phaenomena, the Characteristic is Clearness without Depth. It contemplates the unity of things in their limits only, and is consequently a knowledge of superficies without substance. So much so indeed, that it entangles itself in contradictions in the very effort of comprehending the idea of substance. The completing power which unites clearness with depth, the plenitude of the sense with the comprehensibility of the understanding, is the IMAGINATION, impregnated with which the understanding itself becomes intuitive, and a living power. 82

Imagination resolves the contradictions that arise when the

Understanding, the experiential faculty, attempts to contemplate the ideal truths of the Reason by considering "the idea of substance" instead of its outward form. Thus, it makes an ideal faculty of the Understanding. Ordinarily "discursive," when impregnated with Imagination, "the understanding itself becomes intuitive, and a living power." In this sense, Imagination operates in conjunction with Reason, while in turn becoming an element of synthesis as opposed to an agent: "the REASON without being either the SENSE, the UNDERSTANDING or the IMAGINATION contains all three within itself."[83]

Reason, another of Coleridge's "unities in multeity," is another important principle of synthesis in his dialectic:

> 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. 84

In its character of "unity in multeity," Reason engineers "that intuition of things which arises when we possess ourselves as one with the whole," and resolves the antithesis of nature and mind, object and subject, thing and thought, and death and life. The view of these concepts as antithetical, Coleridge goes on to say, "is abstract knowledge,

or the science of the mere understanding."[85]

In keeping with Coleridge's pattern, however, Reason as a synthetic agent requires Understanding:

> The Understanding and Experience may exist without Reason. But Reason cannot exist without Understanding; nor does it or can it manifest itself but in and through the understanding, which in our elder writers is often called <u>discourse</u>. 86

The ideal needs the experiential as an integral element in its dialectical process. A synthesis must have a thesis and antithesis to synthesize. Thus, Reason cannot act as a synthesis unless the Understanding, through its "<u>discourse</u>," provides it with the contraries to resolve.

The "unity in multeity" of right religion likewise functions dialectically. In the fall of 1799, Coleridge proclaimed his dissatisfaction with extremes in religion, criticizing both the creeds that propounded too much intellect and those that gave rise to an excess of enthusiasm:

> Socinianism Moonlight - Methodism &c A Stove!
> O for some Sun that shall unite Light & Warmth 87

He was to find this "sun," the mesothesis of the extremes, in his peculiar brand of Anglicanism:

> The light of religion is not that of the moon, light without heat; but neither is its warmth that of the stove, warmth without light. Religion is the sun whose warmth indeed swells, and stirs, and actuates the life of nature, but who at the same time beholds all the growth of life with a master-eye, makes all objects glorious on which he looks, and by that glory

visible to others. 88

In a further discussion of religion, Coleridge enlarges on its synthetic operations:

> For be assured, never yet did there exist a full faith in the divine WORD, (by whom not Immortality alone, but Light and Immortality were brought into the world) which did not expand the intellect while it purified the heart; which did not multiply the aims and objects of the mind, while it fixed and simplified those of the desires and passions. 89

He shows in this synthesis of head and heart an example of the balance of faith and Understanding that his brand of religion alone is able to accomplish.

Coleridge's expression of the principle behind "unity in multeity," his concept of method, provides another agent of synthesis. Method forms "the link or mordant by which philosophy becomes scientific and the sciences philosophical."[90] In addition, it is fundamentally a polarity:

> Thus exuberance of mind, on the one hand, interferes with the forms of Method; but sterility of mind, on the other, wanting the spring and impulse to mental action, is wholly destructive of Method itself. 91

This polarity strikes a balance between object, in "the forms of Method," and essence, in "the spring and impulse to mental action." Coleridge reiterates the polarity in his notion of the antitheses of "Thought" and "Imagination" (here associated with "Passion"), the connective and the co-adunative, brought into balance in the principle of method.[92]

Through method, Coleridge engineers another accord between the ideal and the experiential. He discerns "that the RELATIONS of objects are the prime materials of Method,"[93] and these relations he divides into two kinds. "The first is that of LAW, which, in its absolute perfection, is conceivable only of the Supreme Being, whose creative IDEA not only appoints to each thing its position, but in that position, and in consequence of that position, gives it its qualities, yea, it gives it its very existence, as that particular thing."[94] Coleridge formulates a relation pertaining to the essential, originating sphere of the ideal. "The second relation is that of THEORY, in which the existing forms and qualities of objects, discovered by observation or experiment, suggest a given arrangement of many under one point of view."[95] Coleridge describes as an antithesis to the first, a relation resulting from experience and the experiential. He then proceeds to a synthesis of the two, and this synthesis he finds in the method of the Fine Arts:

> Between these 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 or less influenced by the knowledge and experience of their previous qualities; but which nevertheless constitute a link connecting the second form of relation with 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), and

a comparative indifference of the materials. 96

For Coleridge, the construct of synthesis applied to artistic method provides one means of expressing his union of abstract and concrete. He perceives the two integral elements of art, image and idea, as a thesis and an antithesis whose dialectical reconciliation strikes a balance in favour of the ideal, but including the experiential.

Coleridge offers yet another example of a "unity in multeity" acting dialectically in his concept of the will. He discerns its synthetic operation in poetry:

> And first from the origin of metre. This I would trace to the balance in the mind effected by that spontaneous effort which strives to hold in check the workings of passion. It might easily be explained likewise in what manner this salutary antagonism is assisted by the very state, which it counteracts; and how this balance of antagonists became organized into metre (in the usual acceptation of that term) by a supervening act of the will and judgement, consciously and for the foreseen purpose of pleasure. 97

In other words, will effects the synthesis of passion, the essence of poetry, with the objective order of that passion in the form of metre.

In a letter to Richard Sharp, Coleridge reiterates the union of essence and object in the idea of will:

> The exceeding Pain, of which I suffered every now and then, and the fearful Distresses of my sleep, had taken away from me the connecting Link of my voluntary power, which continually combines that Part of us by which we know ourselves to be, with that outward Picture or Hieroglyphic, by which we

> hold communion with our Like - between the Vital and the Organic - or what Berkley, I suppose, would call - Mind and it's sensuous Language. 98

Coleridge sees "the connecting Link of my voluntary power" as the synthesis of the originating aspect of Mind and that which it originates, the outward manifestation of "it's sensuous Language." He also expresses the dialectic as a synthesis of subject and object, "that Part of us by which we know ourselves to be, with that outward Picture or Hieroglyphic, by which we hold communion with our Like." This synthesis of subject and object is likewise a union between "the Vital" essence and its object in "the Organic" form.

Finally, "neither can reason or religion exist or coexist as reason and religion, except as far as they are actuated by the WILL."[99] Again, Coleridge indicates a synthesis of experiential and ideal. Religion, in this instance, refers to "the <u>specific</u> and <u>individual</u>" brought into conjunction with "the contemplation of the <u>universal</u>," in other words, Reason.[100]

Coleridge's "unity in multeity" of the symbol likewise has a dialectical application: "The Mystics meant the same, when they define beauty as the subjection of matter to spirit so as to be transformed into a symbol, in and through which the spirit reveals itself."[101] The symbol provides a union of experiential and ideal in its

synthesis of matter and spirit.

In Coleridge's fundamental synthesis of abstract and concrete, his union of poetry and philosophy, the concept of symbol acts as a principle of synthesis. Coleridge equates mythology with symbol: "the mythological form, or, if you will, the symbolical representation,"[102] and asserts that such mythic symbolization was most in evidence "while yet poetry remained the union of the sensuous and the philosophic mind."[103]

Coleridge's notion of the symbol repeats his synthesis of "sameness, with difference," wherein his concept of "unity in multeity" meets his true dialectic: "These analogies are the material, or (to speak chemically) the base, of Symbols and symbolical expressions; the nature of which is always tautegorical, that is, expressing the same subject but with a difference."[104]

Essentially, the Coleridgean symbol offers another expression of the need for a dialectic, a need that Coleridge has already demonstrated in his accord of Reason and Understanding. "An IDEA, in the highest sense of that word, cannot be conveyed but by a symbol; and, except in geometry, all symbols of necessity involve an apparent contradiction."[105] The ideal, when viewed in experiential terms, manifests itself as the dichotomy of essence and object,

experiential and ideal. The symbol repeats the role of the Understanding by providing a similar "discourse" of the ideal, generating the "apparent contradiction" that comprises the only possible expression for this ideal. At the same time, the symbol as synthesis reveals that the contradiction is nothing more than "apparent," for, in itself, it contains the principle of a dialectical reconciliation.

Natura naturans, the principle, or essence, of life, provides one more example of a "unity in multeity" acting as an agent of synthesis. In his "Formation of a More Comprehensive Theory of Life," Coleridge sets up an extensive dialectic with the naturans principle as the synthetic element. Natura naturans, or "the Idea of Life," unites the mechanic and the organic through its inclusion of both the antitheses: "from its utmost latency, in which life is one with the elementary powers of mechanism, that is, with the powers of mechanism considered as qualitative and actually synthetic, to its highest manifestation (in which, as the vis vitae vivida, or life as life, it subordinates and modifies these powers, becoming contradistinguished from mechanism."[106]

In addition, this idea of Life effects a synthesis of "the tendency to individuation" with the opposing "tendency to connect":

> By Life I everywhere mean the true Idea of Life, or that most general form under which Life manifests itself to us, which includes all its other forms. This I have stated to be the tendency to individuation, and the degrees or intensities of Life to consist in the progressive realization of this tendency. The power which is acknowledged to exist, wherever the realization is found, must subsist wherever the tendency is manifested. The power which comes forth and stirs abroad in the bird, must be latent in the egg. I have shown, moreover, that this tendency to individuate can not be conceived without the opposite tendency to connect, even as the centrifugal power supposes the centripetal, or as the two opposite poles constitute each other, and are the constituent acts of one and the same power in the magnet. We might say that the life of the magnet subsists in their union, but that it lives (acts or manifests itself) in their strife. 107

Again, Coleridge indicates an opposition of essence to object. "The tendency to individuation" is "the true Idea of Life," but it "can not be conceived without the opposite tendency to connect." That this balance of "centrifugal" and "centripetal" is in fact an antithesis of ideal and experiential becomes clear from the terms of Coleridge's formulation. He contrasts an "Idea" to "the realization," a power "latent in the egg," to that same power "which comes forth and stirs abroad in the bird." At last, he unites the two poles in his principle of synthesis, a "Life" that resolves the antithesis between essence and object, while preserving the identity of both.

Coleridge sees the initial opposition and subsequent synthesis of the centrifugal and the centripetal forces as

the general law of "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."[108] Through the various expressions of "equilibrium, indifference, or identity," he affirms a unity, while, through "the essential dualism" arising out of this unity, he demonstrates that it is, in fact, a "unity in multeity."

This "unity in multeity" dialectically formulated emerges as a pattern for Coleridge's construct of synthesis:

> 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. These, by the same necessity, unite in a synthesis; which again, by the law of dualism, essential to all actual existence, expands, or produces itself, from the point into the line, in order to converge, as the initiation of the same productive process in some intenser form of reality. Thus, in the identity of the two counter-powers, Life subsists; in their strife it consists; and in their reconciliation it at once dies and is born again into a new form, either falling back into the life of the whole, or starting anew in the process of individuation. 109

Here, he clearly demonstrates the reconciliation of thesis and antithesis using a mathematical model. The synthesis involves Coleridge's basic according of essence and object: "Life" brought into union with "the manifestations of Life." Coleridge also points out the relation between the antecedent unity, "in the identity of the two counter-powers," the

antithetical manifestation of this unity, "in their strife," and the final synthesis, "either falling back into the life of the whole, or starting anew in the process of individuation."

The final "unity in multeity" of Coleridge's concept of time also comprises a kind of final synthesis:

> The sense of Before and After becomes both intelligible and intellectual when, and only when, we contemplate the succession in the relations of Cause and Effect, which, like the two poles of the magnet manifest the being and unity of the one power by relative opposites, and give, as it were, a substratum of permanence, of identity, and therefore of reality, to the shadowy flux of Time. It is Eternity revealing itself in the phenomena of Time: and the perception and acknowledgement of the proportionality and appropriateness of the Present to the Past, prove to the afflicted Soul, that it has not yet been deprived of the sight of God, that it can still recognise the effective presence of a Father.[110]

Coleridge shows how his ideal of the past unites with the experiential sphere of the present. Time as a synthesis is synonymous with the expansion of its ideal quality into Eternity. It remains, however, an ideal that comprehends the experiential, an "Eternity revealing itself in the phenomena of Time." As in the poetry, Coleridge discerns in the Deity a source of the fundamental unity between ideal and experiential. Eternity as the most ideal expression of Time approaches to God.

Perhaps the very form of Coleridge's dialectic, the trichotomy, stems from his perception of a synthetic principle

in God. After his abandonment of Unitarianism, Coleridge declared the only acceptable concept of God to be that of the Trinity,[111] and Trinity itself is a trichotomy:

> The Idea of God involves that of a Tri-unity; and as that Unity or Indivisibility is the interest, and the Archetype, yea, the very substance and element of all other Unity and Union, so is that Distinction the most manifest and indestructible of all distinctions - and Being, Intellect, and Action, which in their absoluteness are the Father, the Word, and the Spirit will and must for ever be and remain the 'genera generalissima' of all knowledge. 112

On occasion, Coleridge expands his three-fold dialectic into a tetrad, pentad, or even a heptad. But trichotomy remains the fundamental pattern of his construct of synthesis:

> The principle of Trichotomy is necessarily involved in the Polar Logic, which again is the same with the Pythagorean Tetractys, that is, the eternal fountain or source of nature; and this being sacred to contemplations of identity, and prior in order of thought to all division, is so far from interfering with Trichotomy as the universal form of division (more correctly of distinctive distribution in logic) that it implies it. Prothesis being by the very term anterior to Thesis can be no part of it. Thus in
>
> Prothesis
>
> Thesis Antithesis
>
> Synthesis
>
> we have the Tetrad indeed in the intellectual and intuitive contemplation, but a Triad in discursive arrangement, and a Tri-unity in result. 113

In this elaboration of the dialectic, Coleridge makes the same distinction between the antecedent and the subsequent

unity that he indicates in the "Theory of Life." As in his discussion of the synthesis of Life, he affirms the underlying principle of trichotomy. Coleridge's dialectical pattern is essentially threefold: an experiential element, an ideal element, and the element of synthesis that comprehends both experiential and ideal. As he states here, trichotomy is "the universal form of division." His expansions of this trichotomy serve but to define more exactly the principle of synthesis in its several manifestations.

In fact, so integral to Coleridge's thought does the model of trichotomy become, that, in many cases where a Thesis + Antithesis = Synthesis equation does not apply as a scheme for the material, he nevertheless preserves an inherent threefold division. His schematization of the Prometheus of Aeschylus provides a case in point.[114] Coleridge represents in Prometheus the Idea, Knowledge, or principle of self-consciousness, in other words, the factor of the ideal. In Jove, he expresses the antithesis, the concept of Law, Productive Energy, or an empirical consciousness, in other words, the experiential factor. Thus, Prometheus opposed to Jove, the Idea minus the Law, demonstrates the essence deprived of its outward manifestation. Jove opposed to Prometheus, the Law minus the Knowledge, represents a subject divorced from its essential principle

of self-consciousness. This very imbalance, however, supposes the existence of a balance elsewhere. Coleridge implies a possible synthesis, the correct polarity of the antitheses. And this he achieves through the reconciliation of Idea and Law, Knowledge and Product, essence and object, in human Reason. Reason, the divine principle given an objective realization in man, unites the ideal and the experiential by comprehending both.

Like his dichotomies, Coleridge's various dialectics follow a pattern. He reconciles the antithesis of the experiential and the ideal through a synthesis that contains the elements of both. From the vantage point of this synthesis, Coleridge resolves the opposition of his dichotomies. Reason unites with Understanding, the active joins the passive, organic and mechanic, natura naturans and natura naturata, no longer stand opposed. Finally, Coleridge's construct of synthesis, applied to his philosophy, supersedes his antithesis of Platonic to Aristotelean:

> I by no means recommend to you an extension of your philosophic researches beyond Kant. In him is contained all that can be learnt - & as to the results, you have a firm faith in God, the responsible Will of Man, and Immortality - & Kant will demonstrate to you, that this Faith is acquiesced in, indeed, nay, confirmed by the Reason & Understanding, but grounded on Postulates authorized & substantiated solely by the Moral Being - These are likewise mine; & whether the Ideas are regulative only, as Aristotle & Kant teach, or constitutive & actual as Pythagoras & Plato, is of

> living Interest to the Philosopher by Profession alone. Both systems are equally true, if only the former abstain from denying universally what is denied individually. 115

Thus, Coleridge reconciles his admiration for Kant and Aristotle with his fundamental adherence to a Platonic Idealism. He sees in Kant the master of the experiential: "In him is contained all that can be learnt." For Kant, and for Aristotle, whom Coleridge here associates with Kant, "Ideas are regulative only." On the other hand, however, lies the realm of the ideal, and for those philosophers who explore this realm, like Pythagoras, Plato, and Coleridge himself, the same "Ideas" are "constitutive and actual." From the vantage point of a synthesis, "both systems are equally true," both the experiential and the ideal comprise fit subjects for investigation. But the element of synthesis, although it unites experiential and ideal, is primarily an elaboration of the ideal, and the philosophy concerned with experiential evidence must "abstain from denying universally what is denied individually."

Repeating a process delineated in the construct of dichotomy, Coleridge first formulates the pattern for his construct of synthesis in the poetry. His poetic search for a unity in diversity develops into his philosophical concept of "unity in multeity." The agents in the poetry

of this unity in diversity, such as God, time, poetry and the poetic Imagination, are likewise agents of "unity in multeity" in the philosophy. As Coleridge moves from a unity in diversity to a true dialectic in the poetry, he creates the intermediate polarity of "extremes meet." The philosophy parallels the procedure.

The poem "A Mathematical Problem" prefigures the basic mathematical structure of Coleridge's dialectic. Art, Imagination, nature, and time are first and foremost agents of synthesis in the poetry, while other dialectical agents, such as method, will and symbol, stem partly from Coleridge's reflections on aesthetics. Last but not least, it is in the poetry that Coleridge first demonstrates his fundamental principle of synthesis: the antithesis between the experiential and the ideal resolved in a synthesis that contains them both.

All of Coleridge's syntheses, like his dichotomies, reflect a single principle that originates in the poetry. In the same metaphoric fashion, Coleridge expresses one concept in an equal variety of forms or images, this time the several syntheses. Thus, the construct of synthesis also has a symbolic rather than a didactic value, and likewise provides scope for Coleridge's particular method. Here, his abstract is the reconciliation of experiential

and ideal, his concrete expression of this abstract, the various syntheses. Coleridge repeats his pattern of concretizing a philosophical abstract (in his synthetic images), then drawing from the images a further metaphysical relevance (in the form of further syntheses.)

FOOTNOTES

1. Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language (New York and Cleveland, 1970), p. 1480.
2. Poetical Works, I, p. 32.
3. Ibid., p. 34.
4. Ibid., p. 29.
5. Ibid., p. 50
6. Aids to Reflection, p. 44.
7. Ibid.
8. Poetical Works, I, p. 406.
9. Ibid., pp. 96-100.
10. Ibid., II, pp. 365-6n.
11. Ibid., I, pp. 113-4.
12. Ibid., p. 114.
13. Ibid., p. 111.
14. Ibid., p. 107.
15. Ibid., p. 292.
16. Ibid., II, p. 596.
17. Ibid., I, p. 121.
18. Ibid., p. 21.
19. Ibid., p.209.
20. Ibid., p. 298.
21. Ibid., p. 365.
22. Ibid., p. 366.

23. Biographia Literaria, II, p. 8.
24. Letters, I, p. 349.
25. Ibid., pp. 349-50.
26. Ibid., p. 502; the brackets are Griggs'.
27. Ibid., II, p. 706.
28. Ibid., p. 701.
29. Ibid., p. 1197.
30. Ibid., I, p. 551.
31. Notebooks, I, pt. 1, # 556.
32. Ibid., # 1561.
33. Ibid., # 1680.
34. Biographia Literaria, II, p. 230
35. Ibid., p. 238.
36. Ibid., I, p. 74.
37. Ibid., II, pp. 33 and 33n.
38. Ibid., p. 10.
39. Literary Remains, I, pp. 105-6.
40. Biographia Literaria, II, p. 16.
41. Notebooks, III, pt. 1, #4176.
42. Biographia Literaria, I, p. 107.
43. Lay Sermons, p. 59.
44. Friend, I, p. 463.
45. Ibid., p. 449.
46. Ibid., p. 467n.
47. Literary Remains, I, p. 155.

48. Friend, I, p. 449.

49. Ibid., p. 451.

50. Aids to Reflection, p. 197.

51. Lay Sermons, p. 30.

52. Selected Poetry and Prose, p. 573.

53. Literary Remains, I, p. 184.

54. Biographia Literaria, I, p. 162.

55. Ibid., p. 69n.

56. Lay Sermons, p. 29.

57. Notebooks, I, pt. 1, # 786.

58. Biographia Literaria, II, p. 16.

59. Ibid., p. 30.

60. Shakespearean Criticism, I, p. 176; the brackets are Raysor's.

61. Aids to Reflection, p. 191.

62. Letters, II, p. 1197.

63. Friend, I, p. 523.

64. Lectures 1795, p. 89 f.

65. Notebooks, I, pt. 1, # 1725; the brackets are Coburn's.

66. Lay Sermons, p. 46.

67. Notebooks, III, pt. 1, # 3400.

68. J.H. Muirhead, Coleridge as Philosopher (London and New York, 1930), p. 86.

69. A. Snyder, Coleridge on Logic and Learning (New Haven, 1929), p. 128 n.

70. Friend, I, p. 463.

71. Biographia Literaria, I, pp. 196-7.
72. Ibid., p. 198.
73. Ibid., p. 196.
74. Ibid., II, p. 12.
75. Ibid., p. 12.
76. Shakespearean Criticism, I, p. 150.
77. Biographia Literaria, II, p. 56.
78. Ibid., p. 19.
79. Shakespearean Criticism, I, p. 185.
80. Biographia Literaria, I, pp. 85-6.
81. Lay Sermons, pp. 28-9.
82. Ibid., p. 69.
83. Ibid.
84. Friend, I, p. 520.
85. Ibid., pp. 520-1.
86. Ibid., p. 156.
87. Notebooks, I, pt. 1, # 467.
88. Lay Sermons, p. 48.
89. Ibid., p. 175.
90. Friend, p. 463.
91. Ibid., p. 454.
92. Ibid., p. 456.
93. Ibid., p. 458.
94. Ibid., pp. 458-9.

95. Friend, I, p. 464.
96. Ibid.
97. Biographia Literaria, II, pp. 49-50.
98. Letters, II, p. 1032.
99. Lay Sermons, p. 65.
100. Ibid., p. 64.
101. Biographia Literaria, II, p. 239.
102. Literary Remains, I, p. 211.
103. Ibid., II, p. 335.
104. Aids to Reflection, p. 136.
105. Biographia Literaria, I, p. 100.
106. Selected Poetry and Prose, p. 573.
107. Ibid., p. 578.
108. Ibid.
109. Ibid., pp. 579-80.
110. Biographia Literaria, II, p. 207.
111. Letters, II, pp.1189-90.
112. Ibid, p. 1196.
113. Literary Remains, IV, pp. 141-2.
114. Ibid., II, p. 323 ff.
115. Letters, V, pp. 14-5.

Chapter 4: CORRESPONDENCE

The construct of synthesis is not Coleridge's only way of resolving the antithesis between the experiential and the ideal. He also brings about their reconciliation by means of another philosophical construct, his pattern of correspondence. Coleridge's construct of correspondence is the Swedenborgian doctrine in Coleridgean terms. Swedenborg speaks

> of the astonishing things which occur, I will not say in the living body only, but throughout nature, and which correspond so entirely to supreme and spiritual things, that one would swear that the physical world was purely symbolical of the spiritual world: insomuch that if we choose to express any natural truth in physical and definite vocal terms, and to convert these terms only into the corresponding spiritual terms, we shall by this means elicit a spiritual truth or theological dogma, in place of the physical truth or precept. 1

In other words, Swedenborg holds that every physical object corresponds to a spiritual principle, or divine truth. Similarly, Coleridge, in his construct of correspondence, strives to indicate how every experiential manifestation has an identity with the ideal, and how every object corresponds to an essence. His correspondence thus comprises the reversal of his dichotomic procedure. Now, instead of demonstrating the polar opposition of essence and object, ideal and experiential, Coleridge attempts to show their

identity.

Once again, Coleridge formulates the elements of this fourth construct of his thought in the course of the poetry. As a first step to revealing the correspondence between ideal and experiential he creates a number of analogies which attest to a real identity of essence and object. As in the construct of dichotomy, Coleridge indicates the essence beneath the outward manifestation, but this time the essence is not the antithesis of the object. In his various correspondences, Coleridge argues that the essence is the equivalent of the outward manifestation in a more ideal, more abstract form.

For instance, in a sonnet "To William Godwin," Coleridge extols that author who

> Bade the bright form of Justice meet my way -
> And told me that her name was HAPPINESS. 2

He repeats this equation of Justice and Happiness in "The Destiny of Nations":

> "Thou mild-eyed Form! wherefore, ah! wherefore fled?
> The Power of Justice like a name all light,
> Shines from thy brow; but all they, who unblamed
> Dwelt in thy dwellings, call thee Happiness. 3

In the identity of Justice and Happiness, Coleridge uses the poetic device of analogy in a special way. He points to Justice as a "Power" within Happiness, that, "like a name all light," shines through Happiness. In other words, Happiness is the outward manifestation of Justice. Here,

Coleridge affirms the correspondence of an object to its essence. If Happiness is the outward manifestation of Justice, Justice, in turn, acts as the inner principle of Happiness.

Coleridge reiterates the correspondence between essence and object in the statement from the poem "With Fielding's 'Amelia'," "On Folly's wings must Imitation fly."[4] In the same manner in which, in the preceding poems, he demonstrates that Happiness is an object whose essence is Justice, he here reveals in Imitation the objective manifestation of the principle of Folly.

Inge Jonsson, discussing the treatise in which Swedenborg first presented his doctrine of correspondence, asserts that "the mathematical associations come very quickly to those who read this little essay with unjaundiced eyes."[5] Likewise, Coleridge's correspondence evinces mathematical antecedents. One meaning of the verb "to correspond" is "to be equal,"[6] and, as will be observed, Coleridge arrives at his correspondence between essence and object through a series of equations. He searches for the "identity" (a favourite Coleridgean term) of ideal and experiential, or, he maintains that the essence <u>is</u> the outward manifestation (as in the sonnet "To William Godwin"). In his notebooks and letters, Coleridge goes so far as to use the mathematical symbol of equality to express some of his

identities between correspondent elements.

In the poetry, Coleridge considers the process of equation. "A Mathematical Problem" puts forward the idea that "some celestial impulse . . . equalises each to each."[7] The notion of a "celestial impulse" is very much a factor in Coleridge's poetic correspondence.

Throughout the poetry, Coleridge shows the correspondence of God, or a principle of His divinity, to various more experiential manifestations of His essence. Again, Coleridge summons the God who is "Nature's essence, mind, and energy!"[8] Behind Christ's human realization of goodness stands "the Great Invisible":

> Yet thou more bright than all the Angel-blaze,
> That harbingered thy birth, Thou Man of Woes!
> Despiséd Galilaean! For the Great
> Invisible (by symbols only seen)
> With a peculiar and surpassing light
> Shines from the visage of the oppressed good man.[9]
> "Religious Musings"

God is the identity of the redeemed Soul:

> God only to behold, and know, and feel,
> Till by exclusive consciousness of God
> All self-annihilated it shall make
> God its Identity: God all in all!
> We and our Father one! [10]
> "Religious Musings"

And likewise the identity of such other human qualities as will, goodness, self-consciousness, and life:

> Eternal Father! King Omnipotent!
> To the Will Absolute, the One, the Good!
> The I AM, the Word, the Life, the Living God![11]
> "The Destiny of Nations"

Of course, Coleridge implies a distinction between man and God. In man, will, goodness, self-consciousness, and life are empirically bounded and determined; in the Creator, their essence, these qualities reach their "Absolute." Still, Coleridge insists on the correspondence between ideal and experiential. Although God is the "Supreme Reality,"[12] Coleridge indicates His identity with the experiential reality that He renders thus "Supreme." "Properties are God."[13]

As in the constructs of dichotomy and synthesis, Coleridge sees another operative factor of correspondence in his concept of Poetry, or the poetic faculty of Imagination. In "An Invocation," he discerns in his "Sweet Muse," the "Voice of my Joy."[14] Poetry becomes the outward manifestation of the principle of Joy. In "The Nightingale," Coleridge argues for an identity of the poet with Nature:

> When he had better far have stretched his limbs
> Beside a brook in mossy forest-dell,
> By sun or moon-light, to the influxes
> Of shapes and sounds and shifting elements
> Surrendering his whole spirit, of his song
> And of his fame forgetful! so his fame
> Should share in Nature's immortality,
> A venerable thing! and so his song
> Should make all Nature lovelier, and itself
> Be loved like Nature! 15

The true poet accepts nature as the essence of his art.

In "The Garden of Boccaccio," Coleridge sees in poetry the manifestation of yet another essence:

> And last, a matron now, of sober mien,
> Yet radiant still and with no earthly sheen,
> Whom as a faery child my childhood woo'd
> Even in my dawn of thought - Philosophy;
> Though then unconscious of herself, pardie,
> She bore no other name than Poesy. 16

This time, poetry realizes, albeit unconsciously, the principle of philosophy.

For Coleridge, poetic creativity achieves a final identity as an analogue of the creativity of God. In a sonnet "To the Rev. W.L. Bowles," he discusses the poetic process:

> Each lonely pang with dreamy joys combin'd
> And stole from vain REGRET her scorpion stings;
> While shadowy PLEASURE, with mysterious wings,
> Brooded the wavy and tumultuous mind. 17

He goes on to equate this process, this combining of regret and pleasure into a stimulus for the mind, with divine creation itself. The poet is

> Like that great Spirit, who with plastic sweep
> Mov'd on the darkness of the formless Deep! 18

In the notion of a relation between memory and poetry, Coleridge demonstrates another correspondence. "Memory, bosom-spring of joy,"[19] acts as the principle of that joy which in turn engenders the outward forms of poetry. By means of his construct of synthesis, Coleridge engineers many such identities of art and recollection.

Memory, the agent of time, has a further correspondent function:

Oft o'er my brain does that strange fancy roll
  Which makes the present (while the flash doth last)
  Seem a mere semblance of some unknown past,
Mixed with such feelings, as perplex the soul
Self-questioned in her sleep; and some have said
  We liv'd ere yet this robe of flesh we wore. 20

In this "Sonnet: Composed on a Journey Homeward; the Author having received Intelligence of the Birth of a Son," the momentary correspondence between past and present argues for the identity of the Platonic ideal of reincarnation with an empirical world. In other words, Coleridge affirms the equivalence of the manifestations of existence, with the principles of that existence in an antecedent and subsequent immortality.

This equation of the spirit of matter with the substance of matter is integral to Coleridge's construct of correspondence, and most directly expresses his identity of essence and object. Now Coleridge formulates the concept as an appearance of spirit through substance:

Her eye with tearful meanings fraught,
She gaz'd till all the body mov'd
Interpreting the Spirit's thought -
The Spirit's eager sympathy. 21
"The Snow-Drop"

Again, he affirms that matter needs its corresponding essence: "That outward forms, the loftiest, still receive / Their finer influence from the Life within."[22]

Coleridge develops the idea of an interdependence of matter and spirit that amounts to a correspondence in

"Dejection: An Ode." "I may not hope from outward forms to win / The passion and the life, whose fountains are within."[23] The essence of "outward forms" is "the passion and the life." The essence of "the passion and the life" is the human soul:

> O Lady! we receive but what we give,
> And in our life alone does Nature live:
> Ours is her wedding garment, ours her shroud!
> And would we aught behold, of higher worth,
> Than that inanimate cold world allowed
> To the poor loveless ever-anxious crowd,
> Ah! from the soul itself must issue forth
> A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud
> Enveloping the Earth -
> And from the soul itself must there be sent
> A sweet and potent voice, of its own birth,
> Of all sweet sounds the life and element. [24]

The essence of the human soul is "Joy."[25]

What is in one light an antithesis of ideal and experiential becomes a correspondence. Through the identity of Joy, the soul, and the essence of nature, the "outward forms again unite with "the passion and the life, whose fountains are within." Thus, Coleridge restores the objective to its rightful place in his hierarchy of correspondence. Joy is the essence of the soul, the soul is the essence of nature, and objective nature is the correlative of all. In its concrete manifestations, nature realizes the ideal; in the ideal, it finds its own animating principles.

The fundamental source of Coleridgean correspondence lies in his method of interpreting his images. In examples

already discussed (see pages 7 to 9), Coleridge makes such identifications as the moon with hope, a stream with the continuum of life. He then proceeds to demonstrate that these identities go beyond a simple process of poetic analogy. The moon is not merely the image of hope, it is hope itself, to the extent that the poet can deduce the qualities of hope from his observations on the moon. Similarly, the stream so corresponds to the life it represents that it acts as a prophecy of the course of that life.

Throughout the poetry, Coleridge shows a fascination for the mirror image. He gives this fascination its fullest expression in "Frost At Midnight" where he identifies the film on the fire with the human spirit:

> This populous village! Sea, and hill, and wood,
> With all the numberless goings-on of life,
> Inaudible as dreams! The thin blue flame
> Lies on my low-burnt fire, and quivers not;
> Only that film, which fluttered on the grate,
> Still flutters there, the sole unquiet thing.
> 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. 26

This description of the search of the soul for its reflection in nature hints at what lies behind Coleridge's interpreted imagery. He seeks a realization of the fancy of "Frost At Midnight," an assurance that nature does not merely furnish concrete images for philosophical abstracts

(such as hope, the idea of life, or the human spirit), but offers a literal correspondence. In short, Coleridge looks to a nature that equates essence and object by providing the outward form of the inward essence.

Such a nature, Coleridge finds through the Berkeleian concept of nature as the language of God. Throughout the poetry, he cultivates the ability to see "religious meanings in the forms of Nature!"[27] The relationship between nature, as a language, and the meaning of that language, in God, reiterates the identity of object and essence on which Coleridge patterns his correspondence

As in the previous constructs, the will is an integral factor of Coleridge's correspondence:

> For what is Freedom, but the unfettered use
> Of all the powers which God for use had given?
> But chiefly this, him First, him Last to view
> Through meaner powers and secondary things
> Effulgent, as through clouds that veil his blaze.
> For all that meets the bodily sense I deem
> Symbolical, one mighty alphabet
> For infant minds. [28]
>
> "Religious Musings"

It is will, in the sense of a God-given "Freedom," that enables man to see in nature the symbol, alphabet, or language of God. Thus, the will makes possible the identity between object and essence, experiential and ideal.

Nature, although primarily the object whose essence is God, also provides the outward manifestation of other ideals. One such is Liberty:

Yes, while I stood and gazed, my temples bare,
And shot my being through earth, sea, and air,
Possessing all things with intensest love,
O Liberty! my spirit felt thee there. 29
"France: An Ode"

Another is the "Truth" of which life is "a vision shadowy."[30] Of course, all the various degrees of the ideal in Coleridge's construct of correspondence act as synonyms for a God, Who, as well as being "the Will Absolute, the One, the Good: / The I AM, the Word, the Life," is "in will, in deed, Impulse of All to All,"[31] and "Infinite Love."[32]

The correspondence of object to essence in Coleridge's concept of nature as the symbol or language of God comprises, in fact, an analogy of being. In his poetry, Coleridge creates his own "Great Chain of Being" linking the experiential and the ideal. Through this "Chain of Being," nature and man, matter and spirit, correspond, animated by the same divine principles. Thus, the identity between human abstracts and the forms of nature in Coleridge's interpreted images emerges as real, not metaphorical. It is to this reality that Coleridge refers in one of his later poems "To Nature":

It may indeed be phantasy, when I
Essay to draw from all created things
Deep, heartfelt, inward joy that closely clings;
And trace in leaves and flowers that round me lie
Lessons of love and earnest piety.
So let it be; and if the wide world rings
In mock of this belief, it brings
Nor fear, nor grief, nor vain perplexity.
So will I build my altar in the fields,
And the blue sky my fretted dome shall be,
And the sweet fragrance that the wild flower yields

Shall be the incense I will yield to Thee,
Thee only God! and thou shalt not despise
Even me, the priest of this poor sacrifice.[33]

Because the experiential and the ideal admit such a real identity, Coleridge is able to intimate a knowledge of the abstract and ideal through an observance of the concrete and experiential. Chief among his images thus interpreted ranks the correspondence between the ideal and the sun.

The sun provides an interpreted image of Love:

Unkindly cold and tempest shrill
In Life's morn oft the traveller chill,
But soon his path the sun of Love shall warm;
And each glad scene look brighter for the storm.[34]
"Anthem: For the Children of Christ's Hospital"

It acts as a depiction of the process of Liberty:

Thou, FAYETTE! who didst wake with startling voice
Life's better Sun from that long wintry night,
Thus in thy Country's triumphs shalt rejoice
And mock with raptures high the Dungeon's might:

For lo! the Morning struggles into Day,
And Slavery's spectres shriek and vanish from the ray![35]
"La Fayette"

Its effect is a figure for poetic generation:

I discipline my young and novice thought
In ministries of heart-stirring song,
And aye on Meditation's heaven-ward wing
Soaring aloft I breathe the empyreal air
Of Love, omnific, omnipresent Love,
Whose day-spring rises glorious in my soul
As the great Sun, when he his influence
Sheds on the frost-bound waters - The glad stream
Flows to the ray and warbles as it flows. [36]
"Religious Musings"

Finally, as all that pertains to Coleridge's ideal, the sun becomes an experiential manifestation of God:

> There is one Mind, one omnipresent Mind,
> Omnific. His most holy name is Love.
> Truth of subliming import! with the which
> Who feeds and saturates his constant soul,
> He from his small particular orbit flies
> With blest outstarting! From himself he flies,
> Stands in the sun, and with no partial gaze
> Views all creation; and he loves it all,
> And blesses it, and calls it very good!
> This is indeed to dwell with the Most High![37]
> "Religious Musings"

The idea that Coleridge interprets from an observance of all creation sharing equally in the sun relates to his concept of a true analogy of being. As in "The Nightingale," he propounds an identity with nature as an ideal. In that same poem, however, he warns that there is a mode of analogy in antithesis to any "Great Chain of Being":

> In Nature there is nothing melancholy.
> But some night-wandering man whose heart was pierced
> With the remembrance of a grievous wrong,
> Or slow distemper, or neglected love,
> (And so, poor wretch! filled all things with himself,
> And made all gentle sounds tell back the tale
> Of his own sorrow.) 38

The subjective principle, taken to this extreme, severs man from the chain of being. The I AM must exist in correspondence with the IT IS. As observed, Coleridge affirms the need of matter for its corresponding essence. Here, he asserts that the process works both ways. The essence too requires a correspondent; the principle of self-consciousness must achieve a union with the objective manifestations of existence.

Allied to Coleridge's concept of the analogy of being is his notion of the pre-determined fitness of the object to its essence. In "The Blossoming of the Solitary Date-Tree," he remarks, "The finer the sense for the beautiful and the lovely, and the fairer and lovelier the object presented to the sense; the more exquisite the individual's capacity of joy, and the more ample his means and opportunities of enjoyment."[39] Such a correspondence of the object to the essence for which it was intended comprises a true intimation of the ideal in the experiential. Coleridge warns, however, that when object and essence are thus fitted, the failure of the object to unite with its corresponding essence can be tragic. This, he sees as his own case: "Why was I made for Love and Love denied to me?"[40]

In the poetry, Coleridge expresses his construct of correspondence in two forms. Most commonly, he uses the direct equation of essence and object already discussed, but from time to time he employs the more elaborate algebraic formula of "a is to b as c is to d." This formula he demonstrates most clearly in "The Blossoming of the Solitary Date-Tree":

> The presence of a ONE,
> The best belov'd, who loveth me the best,
> is for the heart, what the supporting air from within is for the hollow globe with its suspended car. Deprive it of this, and all without, that would have

buoyed it aloft even to the seat of the gods, becomes
a burthen and crushes it into flatness. 41

Coleridge's extended correspondence allows even more scope for his method of interpreting an image. Here, he formulates two correspondences, two relations of essence and object, which, from the point of view of that relation, are in turn correspondent. The point of union between the balloon as object and its essence in the air that fills it is equal to the point of union between the heart and its correspondent in mutual love. Because the former correspondence is more experiential and concrete, it provides an image that Coleridge can interpret of the latter, more abstract correspondence. Again, he reiterates his concept of the fitness of the object for its essence in both sets of correspondence.

Coleridge makes the same formulation in "The Destiny of Nations":

. . . Others boldlier think
That as one body seems the aggregate
Of atoms numberless, each organized
So by a strange and dim similitude
Infinite myriads of self-conscious minds
Are one all-conscious Spirit. 42

The relation of essence to object implicit in the image of the one body imposing its unity on the aggregate of atoms furnishes an image for the more abstract concept of a correspondence between all human minds and the single principle of God. The point of union, the product of both equations

is "unity in multeity." In this case, the fitness of object for essence becomes axiomatic. For Coleridge, "multeity" always supposes a corresponding "unity."

Coleridge's extended correspondences confirm his concept of the analogy of being. Through his corresponding pairs, one more experiential, another more ideal, he sets up an analogy of proportion.[43] Here, the correspondence takes the form of a relation. The more experiential identity between object and essence corresponds to the other, more ideal identity by means of the equivalent relation of object to essence in both pairs. In other words, Coleridge represents the passage from finite to infinite as a continuum in which all the elements, obeying the same laws, relate through those laws. Throughout his instances of the analogy of being, Coleridge implies such an analogy of proportion.

Whether the correspondence is direct or extended, the construct in the poetry follows a pattern. Coleridge demonstrates the identity of object and essence, the mutual need and fitness of one for the other. He creates a "Great Chain of Being" in which the concrete forms of nature can directly depict human or divine ideals because both are animated by the same principles. Thus, the metaphoric becomes the real. The experiential is no mere image for the ideal; it corresponds to that ideal. The experiential

is the ideal itself in a more known, more concrete form.

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The philosophy continues the process of depicting the ideal through a more known, more concrete, and more experiential concept or image. Coleridge reveals a scheme for this process in his equation of idea and law. In his Philosophical Lectures, arguing after Pythagoras for an identity of idea and law, he asserts "that what in men the ideas were, as we should say, those in the world were the laws; that the ideas partook according to the power of the man, of a constitutive character, in the same manner as the laws did in external nature."[44] In other words, Coleridge repeats the correspondence between essence and object formulated in the poetry, implying the same realization of the inner principle in the outward manifestation. A law actualizes an idea, as does an object its essence: "an idea, with the adequate power of realizing itself being a law, and a law considered abstractly from, or in the absence of, the power of manifesting itself in its appropriate product being an idea."[45]

Coleridge re-phrases the correspondence between idea and law in an identity of ideas with principles: "every principle is actualized by an idea: and every idea is living,

productive, partaketh of infinity."[46] Again, he repeats the realization of the essence by its object.

Coleridge uses his scheme of correspondence as a vehicle for exploring the realm of the ideal. He pushes the identity of ideal and experiential ever closer to the wholly ideal. Thus, he depicts the passage from abstract to concrete in increasingly less concrete terms.

As a law, or a principle, acts to objectify an idea, so this idea becomes the object of an essence in the even more ideal concept of Reason: "the equivalent Ideas of the Platonists, ARE not so properly acts of the Reason, in their sense I mean, as they are THE Reason itself in act."[47] Reason, in turn, realizes an even higher ideal: "Reason is therefore most eminently the Revelation of an immortal soul, and it's best Synonime."[48] Finally, the soul, as Coleridge affirms together with Leighton, actualizes the supreme ideal of God:

> The Highest, the Increated Spirit, is the proper good, the Father of Spirits, that pure and full good which raises the soul above itself; whereas all other things draw it down below itself. So, then, it is never well with the soul but when it is near unto God, yea, in its union with Him, married to Him. [49]

All in all, Coleridge indicates a process of augmenting idealization reminiscent of "Dejection: An Ode," and its passage from "outward forms" to "the passion and the life" to the human soul to Joy.

The philosophy, like the poetry, intimates the identity of the mathematical and the "celestial." In an early notebook entry, Coleridge asserts:

> That the evidences of all things ought to be proportioned to their intended uses/ - That the evidence of Faith is in exact proportion to its uses - were it greater, it would destroy its uses - and therefore that the evidences of Faith are all equal to those of Mathematics & Astronomy - i.e. morally equal. - 50

Mathematics, or the related discipline of Geometry, demonstrates one of the most immediate correspondences between the ideal and the experiential, providing "uniform and perfect subjects, which are to be found in the Ideas of pure Geometry and (I trust) in the Realities of Heaven, but never, never, in creatures of flesh and blood."[51] Small wonder that Coleridge builds his construct of correspondence, as he built his dichotomy and synthesis, on a mathematical base.

The preceding statement notwithstanding, Coleridge, as in the poetry, finds divine correspondences throughout the experiential world. God is "the eternal I Am,"[52] the apotheosis of self-consciousness and the subjective principle. The "I Am," in turn, is the principle that gives reality to all existence: "Without this latent presence of the 'I am,' all modes of existence in the external world would flit before us as colored shadows, with no greater depth, root or fixture, than the image of a rock hath in a gliding stream

or the rain-bow on a fast-sailing rain-storm."[53]

To complete the correspondence between God and the experiential, Coleridge also identifies the Deity with the absolute objective principle:

> We have asked then for its [the idea of being's] birth-place in all that constitutes our relative individuality, in all that each man calls exclusively himself. . . . It is absolutely one, and that it IS, and affirms itself TO BE, is its only predicate. . . . The truths, which it manifests are such as it alone can manifest, and in all truths it manifests itself. By what name then canst thou call a truth so manifested? Is it not REVELATION? Ask thyself whether thou canst attach to that latter word any consistent meaning not included in the idea of the former. And the manifesting power, the source and the correlative of the idea thus manifested - is it not GOD? [54]

Through an equation of the idea of being with a Revelation which, in turn, is synonymous with God, Coleridge demonstrates that the Divine unites with all the manifestations of existence.

Thus, all human ideals equate with the divine. As in the poetry, God is the absolute of such qualities as love,[55] will,[56] and goodness.[57] In fact, the sum of man's reflections on the ideal, in other words, his "Ideas," are none other than "the Thoughts of God,"[58] in a more known, more experiential form.

Chief among these "Ideas" is Reason, and Reason, above all, corresponds to God: "Thus, God, the Soul, eternal Truth, &c. are the objects of Reason; but they are themselves reason."[59]

The "Thoughts of God" are also "Things."[60] With God, thinking equates with creation;[61] "'to conceive' is = with creation in the divine nature, synonimous with 'to beget.'"[62] Perhaps it is this identity of conception with creation in God that makes the Imagination "a dim Analogue of Creation"[63] for Coleridge. At all events, he repeats in the philosophy his poetic formulation of poetry, or the poetic faculty, as the experiential correspondent of divine creation.

Coleridge parallels philosophically all those poetic correspondences of object and essence that involve poetry, or the Imagination. Poetry as the outward manifestation of the principle of joy reappears in his affirmation that "the proper and immediate object of poetry is the communication of immediate pleasure."[64] Poetry not only realizes joy, but is defined in terms of that realization.

Then, as in "The Nightingale," Coleridge argues for an identity of the poet, or artist, with nature:

> The artist must first eloign himself from nature in order to return to her with full effect. Why this? Because if he were to begin 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 severe laws of the intellect, in order to generate in himself that co-ordination of freedom and law, that involution of obedience in the prescript, and of the prescript in the impulse to obey, which assimilates him to nature, and enables him to understand her. He merely absents himself for a season from her, that his own spirit, which has the same ground with nature, may learn her unspoken language in its main radicals,

> before he approaches to her endless compositions of them. 65

Here, too, the correct correspondence of artist to nature is one in which the artist surrenders himself to a nature whose principles are those of his own existence. Like the "Nightingale" poet, he thereby allows nature to become the essence behind the outward manifestation of his art.

Finally, the equation of philosophy and poetry in "The Garden of Boccaccio" has counterparts throughout the philosophy. Once again, Coleridge formulates a correspondence between essence and object:

> No man was ever yet a great poet, without being at the same time a profound philosopher. For poetry is the blossom and the fragrancy of all human knowledge, human thoughts, human passions, emotions, language. 66

Poetry provides an outward manifestation, "the blossom and the fragrancy" for those "essential" observations on "human knowledge, human thoughts, human passions, emotions, language" that constitute philosophy.

Another parallel of the poetry involves the identity of art and memory, which, through his construct of synthesis, Coleridge repeats in the philosophy. Memory, and the ideal of the past to which it refers, has also the further correspondent function demonstrated in the "Sonnet: Composed on a Journey Homeward; the Author having received Intelligence of the Birth of a Son." In the form of "Reflection,"

it "seems the first approach to, & shadow of, the divine Permanency."[67]

In a letter of December, 1796, Coleridge comments on the "Sonnet," and its equation of past and present:

> Now that the thinking part of Man, i.e. the Soul, existed previously to it's appearance in it's present body, may be very wild philosophy; but it is very intelligible poetry. inasmuch as Soul is an orthodox word in all our poets; they meaning by "Soul" a being inhabiting our body, & playing upon it, like a Musician inclosed in an Organ whose keys were placed inwards. - Now this opinion I do not hold - not that I am a Materialist; but because I am a Berkleian.[68]

Here, Coleridge appears to repudiate philosophically what he affirmed poetically. He denies that the correspondence between the memory "of some unknown past" and the present provides any real evidence of Platonic reincarnation. In the same letter, however, he adds:

> Yet as you who are not a Christian wished you were, that we might meet in Heaven, so I, who do not believe in this descending, & incarcerated Soul, yet said, if my Baby had died before I had seen him, I should have <u>struggled</u> to believe it. 69

On the death of Berkeley Coleridge in 1799, he attests, in another letter, to this struggle to believe:

> Consciousness - : it is no otherwise necessary to our conceptions of future Continuance than as connecting the <u>present link</u> of our Being with the one <u>immediately</u> preceding it; & that degree of Consciousness, <u>that</u> small portion of <u>memory</u>, it would not only be arrogant, but in the highest degree absurd, to deny even to a much younger Infant. 70

Coleridge asserts that the identity of a remembered past

with the present implies, if not reincarnation, at least an immortality in "our conceptions of future Continuance."

In October, 1806, Coleridge confirms and amplifies this view of an immortality implied in the correspondence between past and present:

> Now as the very idea of consciousness implies a recollection of the last Links, and the growth of it an extension of that retrospect, Immortality - or a recollection after the Sleep and Change (probably and by strict analogy the growth) of Death . . . - the very idea of such a consciousness, permit me to repeat, implies a recollection after the Sleep of Death of all material circumstances that were at least immediately previous to it. 71

Although he might skirt the religious unorthodoxy of reincarnation, he arrives at a species of philosophic adherence to his poetic belief. Even in this instance of an initial disagreement, Coleridge demonstrates the fundamental continuum of his poetry and philosophy by subsequently engineering their accord.

Coleridge also makes the equation of past and present an equation of will and life: "For the Will, like the Life, in every act and product pre-supposes to itself, a Past always present, a Present that evermore resolves itself into a Past."[72] This identity of will and life leads in turn to the equation of the spirit of matter with the substance of matter that Coleridge expresses by the correspondence of past and present in the poetry. In Aids to Reflection, he equates the will with the spiritual. [73]

Furthermore, he shows that the finite will in conjunction with the infinite will of God "constitutes a true Beginning" of being.[74] In other words, the spirit originates the substance of life.

As in the poetry, the equation of spirit and substance in the philosophy demonstrates most directly Coleridge's idea of a correspondence between essence and object. The spirit, originator of being, is to the substance of the body as an essence to an object. Again, following the poetry, Coleridge insists on the identity and interdependence of spirit and matter, soul and body:

> For since impenetrability is intelligible only as a mode of resistance; its admission places the essence of matter in an act or power, which it possesses in common with spirit; and body and spirit are therefore no longer absolutely heterogeneous, but may without any absurdity be supposed to be different modes, or degrees in perfection, of a common substratum. To this possibility, however, it was not the fashion to advert. The soul was a thinking substance; and body a space-filling substance. Yet the apparent action of each on the other pressed heavy on the philosopher on the one hand; and no less heavily on the other hand pressed the evident truth, that the law of causation holds only between homogeneous things, i.e. things having some common property; and cannot extend from one world into another, its opposite. 75

That the object needs its essence, that body requires a vital, animating principle in the form of spirit, Coleridge affirms repeatedly. As in the poetry, however, he also shows, through his construct of correspondence, the need of the spirit for its substance:

> I cannot conceive a better definition of Body than "spirit appearing," or of a flesh-and-blood man that a rational spirit apparent. But a spirit per se appearing is tantamount to a spirit appearing without its appearances. 76

The body, identical with the spirit, but in a lower, more known form, provides the means of manifesting this element of the ideal in experiential terms.

Coleridge's equation of spirit and matter, touches on his concept of the symbol. As opposed to allegory, the symbol "is an outward Sign co-essential with that which it signifies, or a living Part of that, the whole of which it represents."[77] This "whole," as already observed, is the ideal in the form of the Platonic "Idea,"[78] which "partaketh of infinity."[79] In other words, as the body provides the means of manifesting the spirit, so the symbol realizes, in its own more known, more experiential, and more concrete terms, the ideal to which, literally as well as figuratively, it corresponds.

As in the poetry, Coleridge's construct of correspondence stems from his concept of the analogy of being. He forges his "Great Chain of Being," linking the ideal and the experiential, from a flux of symbols that correspond to the ideas they symbolize. One such symbol is Reason: "an organ identical with its appropriate objects," which comprise "the Universal, the Eternal, and the Necessary," "God, the Soul, eternal Truth."[80] Another is the will which "acts outwardly by confluence with the laws of

nature."[81] Yet a third is Genius, whose own spirit also "has the same ground with nature."[82] When Coleridge speaks of symbol or analogy, he everywhere implies an analogy of being: "The language is analogous, wherever a thing, power, or principle in a higher dignity is expressed by the same thing, power, or principle in a lower but more known form."[83]

Again parallelling the poetry, Coleridge arrives at his concept of the analogy of being through his method of interpreting his images. The philosophy, like the poetry, seeks the mirror image that attests to the analogy of being.

For Coleridge, genius, the epitome of the human intellect, acts as the mirror of nature. By learning nature's unspoken rules, which correspond to the laws of his own spirit, the "genial" artist acquires "living and life-producing ideas, which shall contain their own evidence, the certainty that they are essentially one with the germinal causes in nature, - his consciousness being the focus and mirror of both."[84]

Coleridge offers two major examples of such genius, again using a mirror image which he proceeds to interpret. In Wordsworth he discerns:

> 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 the 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. 85

The image of the field reflected in the lake acts as a symbol for the truth of Wordsworth's poetry. Since this truth, however, stems from the poet's identity with nature, the symbol literally corresponds to that which it represents.

In Shakespeare, Coleridge finds the second prime instance of the operations of genius:

> Nature, the prime genial artist, inexhaustible in diverse powers, is equally inexhaustible in forms. Each exterior is the physiognomy of the being within, its true image reflected and thrown out from the concave mirror. And even such is the appropriate excellence of her chosen poet, of our own Shakespeare. 86

Coleridge once more uses an interpreted image to affirm the correspondence between symbol and symbolized. Essence and object identify in terms of the concave mirror. The forms of nature mirror her essence, the art of Shakespeare mirrors his.

As genius acts as a mirror for nature, so nature, in turn, acts as a mirror for God:

> 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 miniatured on the Heart of the Contemplator as the surrounding Landscape on a Convex Mirror. 87

Here, too, Coleridge demonstrates the identity of the symbol with that which it represents. In the landsc[illegible], "the Beautiful and the Good," there perspicuous, correspond to "the Love and Power of the great Invisible." This "Beautiful

and Good," through the medium of "a Convex Mirror" is then "miniatured on the Heart of the Contemplator."

Again, as in the poetry, Coleridge affirms that the images of nature literally correspond to those abstract ideals that they image. Again, he finds a nature that equates essence and object by providing the outward form for the inward essence. Such a nature is philosophically, as well as poetically, the language of God:

> To the philanthropic Physiognomist a Face is beautiful because its Features are the symbols and visible signs of the inward Benevolence or Wisdom - to the pious man all Nature is thus beautiful because its every Feature is the Symbol and all its Parts the written Language of infinite Goodness and all powerful Intelligence. 88

Coleridge extracts the idea of nature as the language of God from his concept of the symbol. As he asserts above, the symbol is the part of which the whole is a language. The isolated symbols, the various correspondences between nature and an aspect of the ideal, taken together comprise nature the language of God. In the manner of any Coleridgean symbol, the symbolic language of nature equates with the ideal that it formulates: "the language of nature is a subordinate Logos, that was in the beginning, and was with the thing it represented, and it was the thing it represented."[89] It is the ideal in a more experiential, more known form.

In accord with its fundamentally symbolic character,

nature, for Coleridge, assumes alternate guises. Thus, instead of a language, nature becomes on occasion the book of God:

> The Omnipotent has unfolded to us the Volume of the World, that there we may read the Transcript of himself. In Earth or Air the meadow's purple stores, the Moons mild radiance, or the Virgins form Blooming with rosy smiles, we see pourtrayed the bright Impressions of the eternal Mind. 90

Or again, Coleridge speaks of a nature which acts as the art of God:

> As soon as the human mind is intelligibly addressed by an outward image exclusively of articulate speech, so soon does art commence. But please to observe that I have laid particular stress on the words "human mind," - meaning to exclude thereby all results common to man and all other sentient creatures, and consequently confining myself to the effect produced by the congruity of the animal impression with the reflective powers of the mind; so that not the thing presented, but that which is re-presented by the thing shall be the source of the pleasure. In this sense nature itself is to a religious observer the art of God. 91

The language of nature, in its identity with the ideal which it images, has an immediacy that cannot be found in human language but emerges in human art.

In the equation of nature, the language of God, with art, Coleridge touches on the operative principle of his analogy of being. In another identity, that of chemistry and poetry, he outlines this principle:

> This is, in truth, the first charm of chemistry, and the secret of the almost universal interest excited by its discoveries. The serious complacency which is afforded by the sense of truth, utility, permanence,

> and progression, blends with and ennobles the exhilarating surprise and the pleasurable sting of curiosity; which accompany the propounding and the solving of an Enigma. It is the sense of a principle of connection given by the mind, and sanctioned by the correspondency of nature. Hence the strong hold which in all ages chemistry has had on the imagination. If in SHAKSPEARE we find nature idealized into poetry, through the creative power of a profound yet observant meditation, so through the meditative observation of a DAVY, a WOOLLASTON, or a HATCHETT;
>
> By some connatural force,
> Powerful at greatest distance to unite
> With secret amity things of like kind,
>
> we find poetry, as it were, substantiated and realized in nature. 92

"The sense of a principle of connection given by the mind, and sanctioned by the correspondency of nature," lies behind Coleridge's notions of art, scientific truth, and nature as the language of God. In this correspondence between essence and object, the elements of the ideal and the experiential (the mind and nature respectively) are, as Coleridge reveals after Milton, "things of like kind." Such correspondence both indicates and involves an analogy of being.

Paralleling the poetry, Coleridge uses his concept of nature as the language of God to substantiate his "Great Chain of Being." As in the poetry, he identifies nature with various aspects of the ideal. He adds to the ideals of God, art, and scientific truth mentioned above a reiteration of the poetic statement, "Life is a vision shadowy of Truth." In the philosophy, Coleridge repeats the equation of Truth and life in his notion of the correspondence of

truth and being:

> The term, Philosophy, defines itself as an affectionate seeking after the truth; but Truth is the correlative of Being. This again is no way conceivable, but by assuming as a postulate, that both are ab initio, identical and co-inherent; that intelligence and being are reciprocally each other's substrate. 93

Coleridge provides another demonstration of the principle behind his analogy of being. The equation of truth, or intelligence, and being exemplifies "the sense of a principle of connection given by the mind, and sanctioned by the correspondency of nature."

Another correspondence in which life, or nature, is the equivalent and outward manifestation of an ideal again echoes the poetry:

> I am aware of few subjects more calculated to awake a deep [and] at once practical and speculative interest in a philosophic mind than the analogies between organic (I might say, organific) Life and Will. The Facts both of Physiology and Pathology lead to one and the same conclusion - viz. that in some way or other the Will is the obscure Radical of the Vital Power. 94

The will is an essence whose object is life. Thus, Coleridge, in both the poetry and the philosophy, involves the will in his concept of nature as a language expressing the ideals of God.

Finally, Coleridge formulates his "Great Chain of Being" as a correspondence between Reason and nature: "And now the remarkable fact forces itself on our attention,

viz. that the material world is found to obey the same laws as had been deduced independently from the reason."[95] Nature, identified with Reason, provides an outward manifestation for its ideal equivalent:

> I feel an awe, as if there were before my eyes the same Power, as that of the REASON - the same Power in a lower dignity, and therefore a symbol established in the truth of things. I feel it alike, whether I contemplate a single tree or flower, or meditate on vegetation throughout the world, as one of the great organs of the life of nature. 96

Nature is Reason "in a lower dignity," and "therefore," its "symbol," or experiential form.

In the poetry, the various aspects of the ideal act as synonyms for God, and this holds true for the ideal of Reason in the philosophy:

> 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 [man] beholds his own present and his own past being in the law, and learns to reverence while he feels the necessity of that one 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. 97

In this instance of the correspondence between the reason of man, the reason of God, and the realities of nature, Coleridge again brings forward his poetic notion of a "celestial impulse" in the mathematical sciences that provides an antecedent for his construct of correspondence. He

further indicates that geometry is one of the "mirrors" that reflect the analogy of being, and thus a central link in the "Great Chain of Being" that leads to God.

As in the poetry, Coleridge's "Great Chain of Being" gives to certain of his images and analogies a real, rather than a metaphoric, quality. His concept of the actual correspondence between the experiential and the ideal lends scope to his interpreted images. Again, following the poetry, the identity of the sun, or the light, with various aspects of the ideal ranks chief among the interpreted images of the philosophy. This identity Coleridge demonstrates to be not a metaphor, but a literal correspondence.

Thus, Coleridge's association of the sun with benevolence appears as more than a mere figure:

> The intensity of private attachments encourages, not prevents, universal Benevolence. The nearer we approach to the Sun, the more intense his heat: yet what corner of the system does he not cheer and vivify.[98]

The sense here is of correspondence rather than comparison. Coleridge, in creating the analogy, arrives at the qualities of benevolence through an observance of the corresponding qualities of the sun.

In like fashion, Coleridge shows the correspondence of light to the Platonic Idea:

> The pure untroubled brightness of an IDEA, that most glorious birth of the God-like within us, which even as the Light, its material symbol, reflects itself

> from a thousand surfaces, and flies homeward to its Parent Mind enriched with a thousand forms, itself above form and still remaining in its own simplicity and identity. 99

Light is the "material symbol" of the Idea, the Idea in more experiential terms.

Finally, Coleridge identifies the sun with Reason: "Reason the Sun - Revelation the comet which feeds it."[100] As in the poetry, he finds the ultimate correspondent for the earthly light in the principle of the divine: "Reason and Religion are their own evidence. The natural Sun is in this respect a symbol of the spiritual."[101] Thus he concludes that "Man knows God only by Revelation from God - as we see the Sun by his own Light."[102]

Coleridge climbs his "Great Chain of Being" into the realm of the ideal. He takes an image from the experiential world, and, confident of its fundamental identity with a corresponding ideal, proceeds to interpret that ideal in terms of the image. He provides a particularly good example of this process in a notebook entry dated 1807-1810.

First, Coleridge repeats a formulation from the poem "Ad Vilmum Axiologum":

"Love is the Spirit of Life, and Music the Life of the Spirit."[103]

He then takes this formulation through a series of equations:

> What is MUSIC? - <u>Poetry</u> in its grand sense?
> Answer.
> Passion and order aton'd! Imperative Power in Obedience!

> What is the first and divinest Strain of Music?
> In the Intellect - "Be able to <u>will</u>, that thy maxims (rules of individual conduct) should be the Law of all intelligent Being."
> In the Heart - or practical Reason - Do unto others, ~~and~~s thou would'st be done by.
> This in its widest extent involves the Text - Love thy Neighbour as thyself and God above all things. - For conceive thy Being to be all-including, i.e. God, thou knowest, that <u>thou</u> wouldest command thyself to be beloved above all things. - 104

In each successive equation, the experiential manifestation of the corresponding ideal moves increasingly nearer to an ultimate ideal. Thus, poetry is the experiential form of the ideal of music, which, in turn, actualizes an ideal of "Imperative Power in Obedience." "The first and divinest Strain of Music" realizes the ideal of will in the intellect (or Understanding.) Then, this strain of music, applied to the more ideal faculty of Reason, provides the Golden Rule. The Golden Rule, in turn, emerges as the experiential form of a final ideal of all-inclusive love, which, poetically and philosophically, is, for Coleridge, the essence of God in the world.

Coleridge also repeats in the philosophy his poetic concept of a mode of analogy antithetical to his "Great Chain of Being." As he warns Wordsworth:

> Surely always to look at the superficies of Objects for the purpose of taking Delight in their Beauty, & sympathy with their real or imagined Life, is as deleterious to the Health & manhood of Intellect, as always to be peering & unravelling Contrivances may be to the simplicity of the affections, the grandeur & unity of the Imagination. 105

The only true analogy of being is the correspondence between essence and object. Here, a "real or imagined Life" is imposed on "the superficies of Objects." In the same manner, the "poor wretch" of "The Nightingale" "filled all things with himself," and thereby became blind to the true analogy of being. In both instances, the essence that corresponds to the outward manifestation is obscured. Philosophically and poetically, Coleridge argues that man, if he hopes to discover ideal correspondences, must refrain from imposing "Contrivances" of his own on the outward manifestations of nature.

Allied to Coleridge's concept of the analogy of being, in the philosophy as well as in the poetry, is his notion of the pre-determined fitness of object to essence. In Biographia Literaria, he remarks, translating from Plotinus:

> For in order to direct the view aright, it behoves that the beholder should have made himself congenerous and similar to the object beheld. Never could the eye have beheld the sun, had not its own essence been soliform," (i.e. pre-configured to light by a similarity of essence with that of light) "neither can a soul not beautiful attain to an intuition of beauty." 106

In The Philosophical Lectures, he repeats this idea of a a pre-determined fitness based on the fundamental correspondence between the various objects and essences that make up his "Great Chain of Being":

> In the language of the old philosophy they would say that the eye could not possibly perceive the light but by having in its own essence something luciferous

> that the ear could not have been the organ of hearing but by having in its essence, and not by mechanism, something conformed to the air. 107

Again parallelling the poetry, Coleridge has the same two forms for his construct of correspondence in the philosophy. In addition to a direct equation, he also employs the more elaborate algebraic formula of "a is to b as c is to d." Such equations as "Reason the Sun - Revelation the comet which feeds it," and the identity implied in Coleridge's analogies of genius and nature (the power of nature is to her forms as the power of genius is to art) indicate this more extensive correspondence. At one point, Coleridge gives in direct algebraic terms the pattern for his second form of correspondence:

> Abstruse Reasoning : the inductions of common sense :: reaping : delving. 108

The pattern, however, remains identical with the pattern of extended correspondence in the poetry. Coleridge sets up two pairs of equations, one more experiential, the other more ideal. Each pair reveals an identity between essence and object, in which the essence shows a pre-determined fitness for its object. This pre-determined fitness becomes the relation linking the two pairs.

The preceding examples attest to this pattern. The attraction between essence and object implied in the forces of sun and comet is equal to the finess of reason for

the apprehension of revelation. The power of nature produces her forms as the power of genius produces art. In both instances, Coleridge indicates the correspondence of the experiential to the ideal that it represents. As already observed, the sun is Reason in a more concrete form, while genius has the same ground as the powers of nature.

Further extended correspondences substantiate the pattern. Coleridge maintains that "as the power of seeing is to the light, so is an idea in mind to a law in nature. They are correlatives which supposes each other."[109] Or again he affirms, "The will to the deed, - the inward principle to the outward act, - is as the kernal to the shell."[110]

These last examples are, in a sense, types of Coleridge's construct of correspondence as a whole. They both demonstrate the identity of a principle of spirit, the invisible, with a manifestation of matter, or the visible. They both reveal "the sense of a principle of connection given by the mind, and sanctioned by the correspondency of nature." They both indicate that equation of spirit and matter underlying all of Coleridge's correspondences, in his philosophy as well as in his poetry. As Coleridge remarks in Aids to Reflection:

> There is something in the human mind which makes it know (as soon as it is sufficiently awakened to reflect on its own thoughts and notices), that in all

> finite Quantity there is an Infinite, in all measure of Time an Eternal; that the latter are the basis, the substance, the true and abiding reality of the former; and that as we truly are, only as far as God is with us, so neither can we truly possess (that is, enjoy) our Being or any other real Good, but by living in the sense of his holy presence. 111

The experiential corresponds to the ideal, and all ideals correspond to God.

Parallelling the poetry, Coleridge uses his extended correspondence to demonstrate the analogy of proportion implicit in his analogy of being. A more known, more concrete identity between an essence and an object equates with another essence and object of a more ideal character. The relation, the pre-determined fitness linking the elements, stems from the laws of nature which correspond to the ideas of the mind which, in turn, identify with the thoughts of God. These laws comprise the ground of the continuum of being that ends in God. Operating throughout this continuum, they link matter and spirit, object and essence, experiential and ideal.

The construct of correspondence reveals with especial clarity the continuum between Coleridge's poetry and philosophy. As in the constructs of dichotomy and synthesis, Coleridge, in his philosophical correspondences, extends and elaborates one fundamental principle. This principle, the identity between object and essence that attests to an

analogy of being, is also the underlying principle of the poetic correspondences.

In the manner of the preceding constructs, the repetition of one principle in several forms gives a similar symbolic as opposed to didactic value to this construct. In his correspondence, Coleridge follows the path mapped out by his dichotomy and synthesis. Once more, in both the philosophy and the poetry, he expresses a construct metaphorically.

Again, the pattern in the philosophy parallels that of the poetry. The same elements in the same order characterize the construct in both modes. Poetically and philosophically, Coleridge explores the realm of the ideal, through a chain of increasingly idealized correspondences. In both the poetry and the philosophy, he seeks the mirror image that demonstrates the analogy of being. In both, he uses his "Great Chain of Being" to represent nature as the language of God. And in both, his analogy of being gives his own analogies a real, rather than a metaphoric value.

Furthermore, Coleridge derives his concept of correspondence from his reflections on the workings of poetry and art. Central to both the poetry and the philosophy is his view of the identity of poetic genius with the ideal. Here, he finds a type for the correspondence between object and essence, in which the object acts as the outward

manifestation for the ideal contained in the essence. Here, he discerns "the sense of a principle of connection given by the mind, and sanctioned by the correspondency of nature."

Also derived from Coleridge's aesthetic observations, and also integral to his correspondence, is his notion of the symbol. The idea that a true analogy contains what it represents is fundamental to Coleridge's analogy of being. His concept of the symbol that literally corresponds to the ideal that it symbolizes provides the climate and scope for his philosophical interpretations of his poetic images.

Unlike the constructs of dichotomy and synthesis, Coleridge's correspondence does not originate as a pattern in the poetry that he then develops in the philosophy. The relation between poetic and philosophic correspondence seems more a matter of interpenetration. From the chronological point of view, there is no clear antecedent for the construct of correspondence in the poetry. Poetic and philosophic correspondences demonstrate a parallel development. Nature as the language of God, the identity of poetry and philosophy, the pre-determined fitness of object and essence, are all ideas that move with the same facility from Coleridge's philosophy to his poetry, from his poetry to his philosophy.

Nevertheless, poetry and philosophy act as a continuum. Whether a poetic image gives rise to a philosophic concept, or vice versa, the construct of correspondence, like dichotomy and synthesis, provides scope for Coleridge's particular method. He interprets the abstract, his view of the identity between essence and object, spirit and matter, in the various concrete forms of his several correspondences. He then draws from such concrete expressions further metaphysical abstracts in the form of further correspondences.

FOOTNOTES

1. Inge Jonsson, Emanuel Swedenborg, trans. Catherine Djurklou (New York, 1971), p. 107; Jonsson quotes from Swedenborg's Regnum animale anatomice, physice et philosophice perlustratum, tom. I. Jonsson gives a good résumé of the doctrine of correspondence on pages 104-118.

2. Poetical Works, I, p. 86.

3. Ibid., p. 144.

4. Ibid., p. 37.

5. Emanuel Swedenborg, p. 105.

6. Webster's New World Dictionary, p. 319

7. Poetical Works, I, p. 23.

8. Ibid., p. 111.

9. Ibid., p. 109.

10. Ibid., pp. 110-11.

11. Ibid., p. 131.

12. Ibid., p. 114.

13. Ibid., p. 133.

14. Ibid., p. 16.

15. Ibid., p. 265.

16. Ibid., p. 479.

17. Ibid., p. 84.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid., p. 72.

20. Ibid., pp. 153-4.

21. Ibid., p. 356.

22. Poetical Works, I, p. 316.

23. Ibid., p. 365.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid., pp. 240-1.

27. Ibid., p. 257.

28. Ibid., p. 132.

29. Ibid., p. 247.

30. Ibid., p. 124.

31. Ibid., p. 147.

32. Ibid., p. 132.

33. Ibid., p. 429.

34. Ibid., p. 6.

35. Ibid., p. 82.

36. Ibid., pp. 124-5.

37. Ibid., p. 113.

38. Ibid., p. 264.

39. Ibid., p. 396.

40. Ibid., p. 397.

41. Ibid., p. 396.

42. Ibid., p. 133.

43. For further information on the analogy of proportion and the doctrine of analogy in general, see E.L Mascall, "The Doctrine of Analogy," Cross Currents, I, 1951.

44. Philosophical Lectures, pp. 107-8.

45. Literary Remains, II, p. 348.

46. Lay Sermons, p. 23.
47. Philosophical Lectures, p. 115.
48. Letters, II, p. 1198.
49. Aids to Reflection, p. 83.
50. Notebooks, I, pt.1, # 6.
51. Friend, I, p. 202.
52. Aids to Reflection, p. 360.
53. Lay Sermons, p. 78.
54. Friend, I, pp. 515-6.
55. Letters, II, p. 1196.
56. Aids to Reflection, p. 224.
57. Ibid., p. 360.
58. Letters, II, p. 1195.
59. Friend, I, p. 156.
60. Letters, II, p. 1195.
61. Notebooks, I, pt.1, # 1072.
62. Ibid., # 1619.
63. Letters, II, p. 1034.
64. Shakespearean Criticism, I, p. 147.
65. Biographia Literaria, II, p. 258.
66. Ibid., p. 19
67. Letters, II, p. 1197.
68. Ibid., I, p. 278.
69. Ibid.
70. Letters, I, p. 479.

71. Letters, II, pp. 1197-8.
72. Aids to Reflection, p. 198.
73. Ibid., p. 166.
74. Ibid., p. 178 n.
75. Biographia Literaria, I, pp. 88-9.
76. Literary Remains, I, p. 195.
77. Aids to Reflection, p. 25 n.
78. Biographia Literaria, I, p. 100.
79. Lay Sermons, p. 23.
80. Friend, I, p. 156.
81. Aids to Reflection, p. 178 n.
82. Biographia Literaria, II, p. 258.
83. Aids to Reflection, p. 136.
84. Biographia Literaria, II, pp. 258-9.
85. Ibid., p. 121.
86. Shakespearean Criticism, I, p. 198.
87. Lectures 1795, p. 224
88. Ibid., p. 158.
89. Shakespearean Criticism, I, p. 185.
90. Lectures 1795, p. 94.
91. Biographia Literaria, II, p. 254.
92. Friend, I, p. 471.
93. Biographia Literaria, I, p. 94.
94. Letters, V, p. 406; the brackets are Griggs'.
95. Friend, I, p. 462.

96. Lay Sermons, p. 72.

97. Philosophical Lectures, pp. 333-4.

98. Lectures 1795, p. 46.

99. Lay Sermons, p. 50.

100. Notebooks, I, pt.1, # 88

101. Lay Sermons, p. 10.

102. Notebooks, I, pt.1, # 209.

103. Ibid., II, pt. 1, # 3231.

104. Ibid.

105. Ibid., I, pt.1, # 1616.

106. Biographia Literaria, I, p. 80.

107. Philosophical Lectures, p. 114.

108. Notebooks, I, pt. 1, # 1700.

109. Literary Remains, I, p. 104.

110. Ibid., p. 338

111. Aids to Reflection, p. 54.

Chapter 5: PROGRESSION

Coleridge amplifies the notion, implicit in his various correspondences, of a passage from the experiential to the ideal. In his fourth construct, he demonstrates that the movement to the ideal, through a series of more and more idealized correspondences, is, in fact, a process. Synonymous with process is the concept of progression. Coleridge probably encountered the term in Priestley's Necessitarian philosophy,[1] but progression remains a favourite notion, a major construct of his thought, long after his abandonment of the doctrine of Necessity.

Once again, Coleridge formulates poetically the elements of this fourth construct. In "The Destiny of Nations," he speaks of progression in terms of an evolving process. The "Monads" of the "one all-conscious Spirit" of God, among their other effects, "evolve the process of eternal good."[2]

In "The Dungeon," Coleridge repeats the notion of process as progression. He exclaims ironically of the dungeon, "This is the process of our love and wisdom," and then proceeds to demonstrate his idea of a true progression. Nature accomplishes the process of bringing the "dissonant" human spirit into harmony with the ideal:

With other ministrations thou, O Nature!
Healest thy wandering and distemper'd child:
Thou pourest on him thy soft influences,
Thy sunny hues, fair forms, and breathing sweets,
Thy melodies of wood, and winds, and waters,
Till he relent, and can no more endure
To be a jarring and a dissonant thing,
Amid this general dance and minstrelsy;
But, bursting into tears, wins back his way,
His angry spirit heal'd and harmoniz'd
By the benignant touch of Love and Beauty. 3

The "Ode to the Departing Year" reiterates the idea of progression as harmony:

> The Ode commences with an address to the Divine Providence that regulates into one vast harmony all the events of time, however calamitous some of them may appear to mortals. 4

Providence and the regulation of the continuum of time indicate a process and a progression from the dissonance of diverse and calamitous events into "one vast harmony." Coleridge touches on the same notion in "Religious Musings." "Philosophers and Bards" shall see the day when the Creator, "with plastic might / Molding Confusion to such perfect forms,"[5] brings to completion all worldly progress.

Coleridge sees an agent of progression in Fancy (here used in an "imaginative" sense), as well as in Providence:

. . . For Fancy is the power
That first unsensualises the dark mind,
Giving it new delights; and bids it swell
With wild activity; and peopling air,
By obscure fears of Beings invisible,
Emancipates it from the grosser thrall
Of the present impulse, teaching Self-control,

Till Superstition with unconscious hand
Seat Reason on her throne. 6
"Religous Musings"

The progress from Fancy to Superstition to Reason demonstrates the notion of an augmenting idealization implicit in all of Coleridge's progressions.

The concept of a process involves a gradation, the sense of proceeding step by step. This is true of Coleridge's progressions. In "Religious Musings," he describes the progress of the "elect of Heaven" who

gazing, trembling, patiently ascend
Treading beneath their feet all visible things
As steps, that upward to their Father's throne
Lead gradual. 7

He repeats this idea of the "gradual steps," the gradation of progression, in his description of the progress of truth in "The Destiny of Nations":

. . . Wild phantasies! yet wise,
On the victorious goodness of high God
Teaching reliance and medicinal hope,
Till from Bethabra northward, heavenly Truth
With gradual steps, winning her difficult way,
Transfer their rude Faith perfected and pure. 8

The gradation of progress involves Coleridge's dichotomy of kind and degree. Coleridge sets up numerous continuums demarked by a range of degree. Within the range of degree he then indicates various points which he designates as "the KIND abstracted from degree."[9] These points attest to his notion of transition in the course

of progress. The several distinctions of kind punctuating the continuum of degree comprise Coleridge's "gradual steps," his concept of the gradation of progression.

In a fragment, entitled "The Three Sorts of Friends," Coleridge develops this idea of gradation, or progress with transition:

> Though friendships differ endless <u>in degree</u>,
> The <u>sorts</u>, methinks, may be reduced to three.
> <u>Acquaintance</u> many, and <u>Conquaintance</u> few;
> But for <u>Inquaintance</u> I know only two -
> The friend I've mourned with, and the maid I woo! 10

Friendship emerges as a continuum of differing degrees. Within the continuum, however, Coleridge indicates three "<u>sorts</u>," or points of transition, in which he abstracts a kind from the degree. He implies in the passage from "<u>Acquaintance</u>" to "<u>Conquaintance</u>" to "<u>Inquaintance</u>" a progress from common acquaintance to true friendship to a state of empathy which approaches an ideal of friendship.

"Love and Friendship Opposite" provides another example of the progression of kind and degree:

> Her attachment may differ from yours in degree,
> Provided they are both of one kind;
> But Friendship, how tender so ever it be,
> Gives no accord to Love, however refined.
> Love, that meets not with Love, its true nature revealing,
> Grows ashamed of itself and demurs:
> If you cannot lift hers up to your state of feeling,
> You must lower down your state to hers. 11

Here, a continuum of the various degrees of attachment reveals two "steps" in the two different kinds of attachment,

Friendship and Love. The passage is from a lower to a higher state, in other words, an ascent as well as a transition. To effect the progression, Friendship must be lifted into Love.

For Coleridge, the notion of a step by step progression commonly entails an ascent. In the example from "Religious Musings," the steps of the elect lead "upward to their Father's throne." In "The Destiny of Nations," those who comprise the antithesis to this elect, "who deem themselves most free / When they within this gross and visible sphere / Chain down the wingéd thought," are thereby"scoffing ascent."[12] The view of progression as a matter of choice, the implication of man's freedom to ascend or to scoff such ascent, touches on Coleridge's ever-present element of will. The will is as much a factor in progression as in his other approaches to the ideal.

In the poetry, Coleridge's most usual image of ascent involves the climbing of a mountain. In "Reflection on having left a Place of Retirement," "the time, when first / From that low Dell, steep up the stony Mount / I clim'b with perilous toil and reach'd the top," results in a vision of God for the poet.[13] Coleridge expresses the notion of an ascent to the ideal which in itself is a form of

progression. As already observed, in "To the Author of Poems" (see pages 26-7), Coleridge implies a transition from "fanciful" poetry to "imaginative" poetry. This transition he formulates as an ascent of the "Poetic mount."[14] Again, he describes a passage from experiential to ideal (Fancy being the experiential faculty, Imagination, the ideal sense), in terms of a mountain progression.

Coleridge has a number of images for his construct of progression in the poetry. To his expressions of progress as a harmony, a gradation, or an ascent, he adds the description of progression as a circle:

> From Avarice thus, from Luxury and War
> Sprang heavenly Science; and from Science Freedom
> O'er waken'd realms Philosophers and Bards
> Spread in concentric circles. 15

In "Religious Musings," Coleridge indicates a progress from Avarice, Luxury and War to Science, and from Science to Freedom. This process he attributes to the agency of "Philosophers and Bards," whose own circular progress sets the pattern for a progressive expansion from one centre.

In a poem "To the Rev. George Coleridge," Coleridge varies this pattern:

> . . . Such, O my earliest Friend!
> Thy lot, and such thy brothers too enjoy.
> At distance did ye climb Life's upland road,
> Yet cheer'd and cheering: now fraternal love
> Hath drawn you to one centre. 16

Here, progress as an ascent ends in a closing rather than a widening circle. Coleridge, however, maintains the notion of concentricity, the "one centre."

He emphasizes such concentricity in a description from "Religious Musings" of progress and its antithesis:

> . . . Toy-bewitched,
> Made blind by lusts, disherited of soul,
> No common centre Man, no common sire
> Knoweth! A sordid solitary thing,
> Mid countless brethren with a lonely heart
> Through courts and cities the smooth savage roams
> Feeling himself, his own low self the whole;
> When he by sacred sympathy might make
> The whole one Self! Self, that no alien knows!
> Self, far diffused as Fancy's wing can travel!
> Self, spreading still! Oblivious of its own,
> Yet all of all possessing! This is Faith!
> This the Messiah's destined victory! 17

Without a "common centre," Man cannot participate in the progressive spread from Fancy to Faith that comprises the process of the Messiah's victory.

Another of Coleridge's images of progression depicts progress as a process of growth. For instance, he figures the progress of "Happiness," in the poem so entitled, under the development of a plant:

> On wide or narrow scale shall Man
> Most happily describe Life's plan?
> Say shall he bloom and wither there,
> Where first his infant buds appear;
> Or upward dart with soaring force,
> And tempt some more ambitious course? 18

He parallels the formulation in "Epitaph on an Infant":

> Ere Sin could blight or Sorrow fade,

Death came with friendly care:
The opening Bud to Heaven convey'd
And bade it blossom <u>there</u>. 19

As in "Happiness," the process of human life emerges as a vegetative growth, a blossoming.

In "To William Wordsworth," the transition from Understanding to Reason is also a vegetative process:

Of the foundations and the building up
Of a Human Spirit thou hast dared to tell
What may be told, to the understanding mind
Revealable; and what within the mind
By vital breathings secret as the soul
Of vernal growth, oft quickens in the heart
Thoughts all too deep for words. 20

Coleridge describes the progress from the head, "the understanding mind," to the heart, or reason, in terms of the vital, secret quickening "of vernal growth."

In yet another formulation of the construct, Coleridge images the progressive continuum as a stream. As already demonstrated in his interpreted image of "A Wish," he finds the progress of a stream a fit representation of the course of life. In "Happiness," he amplifies the notion:

For humble independence pray
The guardian genius of thy way;
Whom (sages say) in days of yore
Meek Competence to Wisdom bore,
So shall thy little vessel glide
With a fair breeze adown the tide,
And Hope, if e'er thou 'ginst to sorrow,
Remind thee of some fair tomorrow
Till Death shall close thy tranquil eye
While Faith proclaims "Thou shalt not die!" 22

Coleridge depicts, in the progress of the vessel down the tide, both the progression of mankind from independence to Competence to Wisdom, and the individual's progression from independence to Hope to Faith.

As noted in preceding constructs, the figure of the stream provides a continuum that unites past, present, and future. Thus, for Coleridge, it acts as a representation of another of his images of progression, the flux of time. In the passage from "Happiness" cited above, the progress of human life from independence to Hope to Faith is also a progress from life to death to immortality. Coleridge indicates a continuum in which the individual's religious development is a process of time. He implies a reward for right progression in the extension of this process beyond human life and into immortality.

The concept of man's progress to immortality furnishes a particularly clear example of the transition from experiential to ideal in all of Coleridge's progressions. In "Fears in Solitude," he discerns that "all lovely and all honourable things" make "this mortal spirit feel / The joy and greatness of its future being."[23] The progressive human spirit moves through the temporal continuum of life to the ideal of future joy and greatness. In "Ode to the Departing Year," Coleridge solidifies this sense of a passage,

through time, from the experiential to the ideal:

> The Past to thee, to thee the Future cries!
> Hark! how wide Nature joins her groans below!
> Rise, God of Nature! rise. 24

He reveals in God the end of the progress of Time.

Coleridge uses as his last image for progression in the poetry the figure of the rising sun, and the process of dawn. "On the Prospect of establishing a Pantisocracy in America" offers one instance of the use of this image:

> Embattled legions Despots vainly send
> To arrest the immortal mind's expanding ray
> Of everlasting Truth; - I other climes
> Where dawns, with hope serene, a brighter day
> Than e'er saw Albion in her happiest times,
> With mental eye exulting now explore. 25

Coleridge describes his "Pantisocratic" dream of human progress in terms of the dawning of a brighter day.

Another example appears in "Verses: Addressed to J. Horne Tooke":

> Yes Tooke! tho' foul Corruption's wolfish throng
> Outmalice Calumny's imposthum'd Tongue,
> Thy Country's noblest and determin'd Choice,
> Soon shalt thou thrill the Senate with thy voice;
> With gradual Dawn bid Error's phantoms flit. 26

Here, the expression "gradual Dawn" instances once more the gradation of Coleridge's processes.

The process of dawn, like the process of time, intimates immortality:

> And still, O Lord, to me impart
> An innocent and grateful heart,
> That after my great sleep I may

Awake to thy eternal day: [27]

Again, Coleridge emphasizes, through a progression, the passage from the experiential to the ideal.

Coleridge's poetic progression, like his other constructs, follows a pattern. All his images of progress (ascension, gradation, growth, the stream, time or the dawn) depict a passage. And in all cases, this passage begins with the more known and more concrete and moves, step by step, towards the ideal.

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Once again, a construct that Coleridge formulates in his poetry reveals a parallel development in his philosophy. Coleridge repeats philosophically the pattern of his poetic progresses. In the philosophy, progression is likewise a passage from the more experiential to the more ideal.

As in the poetry, Coleridge defines progression as an evolving process:

> Christianity regards morality as a process - it finds a man vicious and unsusceptible of noble motives; & gradually leads him, at least, desires to lead him/ to the height of disinterested Virtue - till in relation & proportion to his faculties & powers, he is perfect "even as our Father in Heaven is perfect." [28]

He parallels his poetic formulations of progress as a process both initiated by and ending in God:

> To determine whether these annunciations were accidental guesses, or imparted Rays of the divine Foreknowledge we must again adopt that mode of reasoning by which we proved the existence of an intelligent First Cause, namely the astonishing fitness of one thing to another not in single and solitary instances which might be attributed to the effects of Chance, but in the combination and Procession of all Nature. 29

Progression, the move from the experiential to an ideal whose ultimate is God, is the law of all nature:

> As the Father by and for the Word, and with and thro' the Holy Spirit has given to all possible Existences all susceptible perfection, it is in the highest degree probable that all things, susceptible of Progression, are progressive. 30

Man, equally with the rest of nature, is subject to such law: "for man is destined to be guided by higher principles, by universal views, which can never be fulfilled in this state of existence, - by a spirit of progressiveness which can never be accomplished, for then it would cease to be."[31] Coleridge emphasizes the idea of a passage. Poetically and philosophically, his progressions gravitate towards the ideal, but it is the process of such gravitation that constitutes the pattern of the construct.

In a "Lecture on Revealed Religion," Coleridge repeats his poetic concept of progression as harmony. "In the combination and Procession of all Nature . . . from the evident and vast predominance of Good in the natural World, the wise infer that all apparent Discord is but Harmony

not understood."[32]

Another philosophical formula for the harmony of progress appears in the course of Coleridge's discussions of method. Method, the imposition of unity on multeity, is his operative term for order, his equivalent in the philosophy of the art of "molding Confusion to such perfect forms." For Coleridge, method is synonymous with progression: "For Method implies a progressive transition, and it is the meaning of the word in the original language."[33]

In the philosophy as well as in the poetry, Coleridge discerns, next to the Creator, Imagination as the prime agent of progression: "The imagination is the distinguishing characteristic of man as a progressive being; and I repeat that it ought to be carefully guided and strengthened as the indispensable means and instrument of continued amelioration and refinement."[34] Coleridge gives this concept of the progressive impetus of Imagination its fullest exposition in his "Lecture on the Slave Trade":

> But we are progressive and must not rest content with present Blessings. Our Almighty Parent hath therefore given to us Imagination that stimulates to the attainment of real excellence by the contemplation of splendid Possibilities that still revivifies the dying motive within us, and fixing our eye on the glittering Summits that rise one

> above the other in Alpine endlessness still urges us up the ascent of Being, amusing the ruggedness of the road with the beauty and grandeur of the ever-widening Prospect. Such and so noble are the ends for which this restless faculty was given us. 35

Imagination as an agent of progression is the agent of God.

Like the idea of progression in the poetry, progress in the philosophy involves a gradation. As observed, the process of Christian morality "gradually leads" man towards divine perfection. The process of language also exemplifies such gradation: "all languages perfect themselves by a gradual process of desynonymizing words originally equivalent."[36]

The philosophy develops the poetic notion of gradation as a step by step procedure. In a lecture of literature, Coleridge asserts that "each step of nature hath its ideal, and hence the possibility of a climax up to the perfect form of a harmonized chaos."[37] In Aids to Reflection, he describes a few of these "steps" of nature:

> Every rank of creatures, as it ascends in the scale of creation, leaves death behind it or under it. The metal at its height of being seems a mute prophecy of the coming vegetation, into a mimic semblance of which it crystallizes. The blossom and flower, the acme of vegetable life, divides into correspondent organs with reciprocal functions, and by instinctive motions and approximations seems impatient of that fixure, by which it is differenced in kind from the flower-shaped Psyche, that flutters with free wing above it. And wonderfully in the insect realm doth the Irritability, the proper seat

> of Instinct, while yet the nascent Sensibility is subordinated thereto - most wonderfully, I say, doth the muscular life in the insect, and the musculo-arterial in the bird, imitate and typically rehearse the adaptive Understanding, yea, and the moral affections and charities, of man. 38

The progress from metal to vegetation to insect to bird to man provides a clear example of Coleridgean gradation.

In the philosophy, Coleridge develops a number of formulae that demonstrate his process of gradation. In his Philosophical Lectures, he indicates the graduated passage from theory to hypothesis to law to system: "From a perfect theory arises an hypothesis, that we place under all; from a stedfast hypothesis arises a law; and from a primary independent or absolute law, a system."[39] In a notebook entry of 1803, he speaks of "the beautiful Graduation of attachment, from Sister, wife, Child, Uncle, Cousin, one of our blood, &c. on to mere Neighbour - to Townsman - to our Countrymen."[40] Here, he frames the progress in reverse.

As in the poetry, Coleridge's gradations ally to his dichotomy of kind and degree. In his gradation of nature, the various steps are "differenced in kind." The "Theory of Life" amplifies the operations of kind and degree in the progression of nature.

Coleridge's philosophic progression, like his poetic progress, consists of a continuum of degree punctuated

by the points of transition of "the KIND abstracted from degree." In the analysis of life,

> We study the complex in the simple; and only from the intuition of the lower can we safely proceed to the intellection of the higher degrees. The only danger lies in the leaping from low to high, with the neglect of the intervening gradations. But the same error would introduce discord into the gamut, et ab abusu contra usum non valet consequentia. That these degrees will themselves bring forth secondary kinds sufficiently distinct for all the purposes of science, and even for common sense, will be seen in the course of this inquisition: for this is one proof of the essential vitality of nature, that she does not ascend as links in a suspended chain, but as the steps in a ladder. [41]

Again, as in the poetry, a point of transition in "kind" acts as one of Coleridge's "gradual steps" of progression. Here, he sees those distinct kinds, that the degrees in continuum bring forth, as "the steps in a ladder" that depicts the vital progress of nature.

Still in the "Theory of Life," Coleridge maintains, "So are we the better enabled to form a notion of the kind, the lower the degree and the simpler the form is in which it appears to us."[42] The complete definition of kind, however, corresponds to the highest, not the lowest, degree of that kind in the continuum: "the definition of the kind will, when applied absolutely, or in its fullest sense, be the definition of the highest degree of that kind."[43] Finally, in The Friend, Coleridge concludes that the highest possible kind in any continuum constitutes the end of

all degree:

> We have thus assigned the first place in the science of Method to LAW; and first of the first, to Law, as the absolute kind which comprehending in itself the substance of every possible degree precludes from its conception all degree, not by generalization but by its own plenitude. As such, therefore, and as the sufficient cause of the reality correspondent thereto, we contemplate it as exclusively an attribute of the Supreme Being, inseparable form the idea of God. 44

The absolute of kind, uniting with God, accomplishes all progression, and thus acts as a final step in Coleridgean gradation.

Parallelling the poetry, the step by step progressions in the philosophy also commonly entail an ascent. The description of the graduated steps of nature in Aids to Reflection formulates the progress of life in terms of ascension: "Every rank of creatures, as it ascends the scale of creation, leaves death behind it or under it." The analysis of the "Theory of Life" notes "one proof of the essential vitality of nature, that she does not ascend as links in a suspended chain, but as the steps in a ladder."

In a notebook entry, Coleridge offers an alternative to the ladder of ascent:

> The progress of human intellect from earth to heaven is not a Jacob's ladder, but a geometrical staircase with five or more landing-places. That on which we stand enables us to see clearly and count all below us, while that or those above us are so transparent for our eyes that they appear the canopy

> of heaven. We do not see them, and believe ourselves on the highest. 45

The "five or more landing-places" of the staircase become five essays in The Friend, also entitled "landing-places," and also depicted under the image of the ascending staircase.[46] In both staircase and ladder, however, Coleridge re-formulates a concept of the poetry. He repeats the idea from "Religious Musings" of the progress of the elect: "Treading beneath their feet all visible things / As steps that upward to their Father's throne / Lead gradual." Both staircase and ladder exemplify just such a step by step ascent from the experiential to the ideal.

In Aids to Reflection, Coleridge images this progress as an ascent from the prudential to the moral to the divine. The final step, the end of the progression, is also a microcosm of the process involved in proceeding from experiential to ideal:

> Last and highest come the spiritual, comprising all the truths, acts, and duties that have an especial reference to the Timeless, the Permanent, the Eternal: to the sincere love of the True, as truth; of the Good, as good; and of God as both in one. It comprehends the whole ascent from uprightness (morality, virtue, inward rectitude) to godlikeness, with all the acts, exercises, and disciplines of mind, will, and affection, that are requisite or conducive to the great design of our Redemption from the form of the evil one, and of our second creation or birth in the divine image. 47

Following the poetry, Coleridge discerns in the will, joined

to mind and affection, the agent of "the great design of our Redemption," the progress towards "our second creation or birth in the divine image."

Again, as in the poetry, Coleridge frequently uses a mountain climb to depict his process of ascension. Imaginative progress in the "Lecture on the Slave Trade" "stimulates to the attainment of real excellence by the contemplation of splendid Possibilities that still revivifies the dying motive within us, and fixing our eye on the glittering Summits that rise one above the other in Alpine endlessness still urges us up the ascent of Being." In Biographia Literaria, Coleridge repeats this notion of progress as an Alpine ascent. He images the progress from spontaneous consciousness to philosophic consciousness in terms of ascending ranges of hills:

> The first range of hills, that encircles the scanty vale of human life, is the horizon for the majority of its inhabitants. On its ridges the common sun is born and departs. From them the stars rise, and touching them they vanish. By the many, even this range, the natural limit and bulwark of the vale, is but imperfectly known. Its higher ascents are too often hidden by mists and clouds from uncultivated swamps, which few have courage or curiosity to penetrate. To the multitude below these vapors appear, now as the dark haunts of terrific agents, on which none may intrude with impunity; and now all a-glow, with colors not their own, they are gazed at as the splendid palaces of happiness and power. But in all ages there have been a few, who measuring and sounding the rivers of the vale at the feet of their furthest inaccessible falls have learned, that the sources must be far higher and far inward; a few

> who even in the level streams have detected elements, which neither the vale itself or the surrounding mountains contained or could supply. 48

The idea of ascension provides Coleridge with a means of accomplishing the identity of body and spirit so integral to his construct of correspondence:

> The growth, diseases, and restoration of the Soul are not merely analogous to those of the Body, as ideas to their appointed Symbols (i.e. by a factitious analogy, the work of association) but strictly so, as <u>things</u> of one class to <u>things</u> of another, in the linked ascent of creation. 49

"In the linked ascent of creation" soul and body are merely different points of transition, adjoining steps in the ladder of progress from "<u>things</u> of one class to <u>things</u> of another." Coleridge's ascent of creation underlies his concept of the true analogy of being. It is the same vital essence that, in its progress from experiential to ideal, reveals itself in increasingly higher manifestations.

Following the poetry, Coleridge devises a number of images for his construct of progression. In the philosophy also, he adds to expressions of harmony, gradation, and ascent the symbol of the circle of progress. Here, too, he discerns a circular movement in the progress of science. Coleridge remarks on "the true depth of science, and the penetration to the inmost centre, from which all the lines of knowledge diverge to their ever distant circumference" in <u>Biographia Literaria</u>.[50]

As in the poetry, Coleridge dwells on the import of concentricity. He maintains that "Truth and prudence might be imaged as concentric circles," with the former passing beyond the latter.[51] He asserts that the question, "Am I <u>at one</u> with God, and is my will concentric with that holy power, which is at once the constitutive will and the supreme reason of the universe?" marks the completed process of man's Redemption.[52]

From the common centre, progress moves in a widening circle:

> Jesus knew our Nature - and that expands like the circles of a Lake - the Love of our Friends, parents and neighbours lead[s] us to the love of our Country to the love of all Mankind. The intensity of private attachment encourages, not prevents, universal philanthropy. 53

In fact, for Coleridge, the only true philosophy is that which progresses by a gradual and circular expansion:

> Why do we so very very often see men pass from one extreme to another? . . . Alas they sought not the Truth but praise, self-importance, & above all to see something <u>doing</u>. - Disappointed they hate and persecute their former opinion, which no man will do who by meditation had adopted it, & in the course of unfeigned meditation gradually enlarged the circle & so got out of it / 54

Finally, in looking forward, he sees the completed process of his own system as a completed circle:

> It is wonderful to myself to think how infinitely more profound my views now are, yet how much clearer they are withal. The circle is completing; the idea is coming round to, and to be, the common sense.[55]

Another parallel of the poetry involves Coleridge's depiction of progress as a process of growth. With noteworthy correspondence, he repeats the formulations of the poem "Happiness" in a "Lecture on Revealed Religion":

> From the whole circle of Nature we collect Proofs that the Omnipotent operates in a process from the Slip to the full-blown Rose, from the embryo to the full-grown Man how vast & various the Changes! And this is a new proof of Wisdom & Benevolence - We find that independently of the Pleasures to which we change, every act of changing is itself a pleasure - so that the Sum of Happiness is twice as great to a Being who has arrived at a certain point by gradual progressiveness as it would be to him who was placed there in the first step of his Existence.[56]

As in the poem, the progress of man is a growth, and Happiness, a progression that can be depicted in terms of such growth.

Coleridge also follows the poetry by representing, in the manner of his "Epitaph on an Infant," the process of human life as growth:

> To me the death of the aged has a more mournful effect than that of the young. Accustomed to observe a completeness in all the works of Nature, the departure of the Latter seems more of a <u>transition</u> - the heart is dissatisfied, & says, <u>this cannot be all</u>. But of the aged we have seen the bud, the blossom, & the fruit - & the whole circle of existence appears completed. [57]

The same sense of the need to complete a process that Coleridge asserts in the "Epitaph" attends his formulation here. The same image, the bud that must blossom, again acts as the vehicle for this sense.

Finally, Coleridge echoes the passage from "To William Wordsworth" in a similar identity of the progress of human reason with the process of growth:

> Does not the child, feeling its growth, anticipate its manhood and does not it work on with a view to it? Does not the child while it plays on its mother's knees, yea in the touch on the mother's arm, receive in love and in kindness a pledge that that something it understands not it yet possesses, the essential of truth and reality combined with a reversional property, something yet to come? This, in reality, is the pride of human reason because it is the pledge and necessary consequence of its progression. 58

Again, as in the poetry, Coleridge also develops his concept of progression under the image of the stream. In a letter to Robert Southey, he repeats his poetic notion of the stream as a figure for the process of life: "And Heaven forbid, that I should not now have faith, that however foul your Stream may run here, yet it will filtrate & become pure in it's subterraneous Passage to the Ocean of Universal Redemption."[59] For Coleridge, the true progression of human life is synonymous with redemption. This concept he reiterates (quoting Leighton) in Aids to Reflection. God's children, "finding the stream of grace in their hearts, though they see not the fountain from whence it flows, nor the ocean into which it returns, yet they know that it hath its source in their eternal election, and shall empty itself into the ocean of their eternal salvation."[60]

The image of the stream figures in the passage from Biographia Literaria where Coleridge describes the progress from the spontaneous to the philosophic consciousness. As already observed, he depicts this progress as an ascent. The ascent, however, culminates in the affirmation that "in all ages there have been a few, who measuring and sounding the rivers of the vale at the feet of their furthest inaccessible falls have learned, that the sources must be far higher and far inward."[61]

The stream unites with the notion of ascension. Furthermore, it adds an "inward" aspect. Thus, Coleridgean progression also emerges as the journey inward to the source. In Biographia Literaria, this journey involves the exploration of the unconscious, in Coleridge's words, the "consciousness, which lies beneath or (as it were) behind the spontaneous consciousness natural to all reflecting beings."[62]

The idea of the inward journey perhaps lies behind Coleridge's analogy of the stream with genius. In a notebook entry, he remarks, "The current in the river like another river = Genius amongst his fellow-men."[63] Genius, the stream within the stream, effects the inward journey. For Coleridge, the "inwardness" of genius is synonymous with the unconscious:

In every work of art there is a reconcilement of

> the external with the internal; the conscious is so impressed on the unconscious as to appear in it; as compare mere letters inscribed on a tomb with figures themselves constituting the tomb. He who combines the two is the man of genius; and for that reason he must partake of both. Hence there is in genius itself an unconscious activity; nay that is the genius in the man of genius. 64

The man of genius reaches the goal of the inward journey from the spontaneous to the philosophic consciousness that, in Biographia Literaria, Coleridge symbolizes by a stream.

In keeping with the image of the stream as the process of human redemption, Coleridge speaks of the stream of truth. In another notebook entry, he quotes from Milton:

> Truth is compared in scripture to a streaming fountain; if her waters flow not in perpetual progression, they stagnate into a muddy pool of conformity & tradition. 65

The concept later re-appears as Coleridge's own in The Friend:

> The truth-haters of every future generation will call the truth-haters of the preceding ages by their true names: for even these the stream of time carries onward. In fine, Truth considered in itself and in the effects natural to it, may be conceived as a gentle spring or water-source, warm from the genial earth, and breathing up into the snow drift that is piled over and around its outlet. It turns the obstacle into its own force and character, and as it makes its way increases its stream. 66

The stream of truth is also the stream of time. As in the poetry, the continuum that unites past, present,

and future provides another vehicle for Coleridge's construct of progression. In the philosophy, he repeats the notion formulated in the poem "Happiness" of human life as a progress from Life to Death to immortality. He defines the human soul as "that class of Being . . . in which the Individual is capable of being itself contemplated as a Species of itself, namely, by it's conscious continuousness moving on in an unbroken Line."[67] This "conscious continuousness" consists of "a recollection of the last Links" (the consciousness of past life), and a "growth," "an extension of that retrospect," in "Immortality"; "a recollection after the Sleep and Change . . . of Death."[68] Thus the "conscious continuousness" is, in fact, a progression of past, present, and future, life, death, and immortality.

The concept of a progress to immortality provides, in both poetry and philosophy, a clear example of the transition from the experiential to the ideal:

> Men of genius and goodness are generally restless in their minds in the present, and this, because they are by a law of their nature unremittingly regarding themselves in the future, and contemplating the possible of moral and intellectual advance towards perfection. Thus we live by hope and faith; thus we are for the most part able to realize what we will, and thus we accomplish the end of our being.[69]

In this passage from a lecture on literature, Coleridge reiterates the notion from "Fears in Solitude." Here,

men of genius, "regarding themselves in the future," contemplate "the possible of moral and intellectual advance towards perfection." In like manner, in the poem, "this mortal spirit" looks forward to "the joy and greatness of its future being."

Finally, again parallelling the poetry, Coleridge reveals in God the goal towards which time progresses:

> Hence by a derivative, indeed, but not a divided, influence, and though in a secondary yet in more than a metaphorical sense, the Sacred Book is worthily intitled the WORD OF GOD. Hence too, its contents present to us the stream of time continuous as Life and a symbol of Eternity, inasmuch as the Past and the Future are virtually contained in the Present. According therefore to our relative position on its banks the Sacred History becomes prophetic, the Sacred Prophecies historical. 70

Past, present, and future admit a progression to God, in the continuum of individual human life and in the continuum of human life as a whole. Coleridge introduces the concept of the Word of God as a prophecy progressively realized. Relative to the distance that man has advanced along the stream of time, "the Sacred History becomes prophetic, the Sacred Prophecies historical." This concept Coleridge amplifies in a "Lecture on Revealed Religion":

> From the evident and vast predominance of Good in the natural World, the wise infer that all apparent Discord is but Harmony not understood, so if we can prove the fitness of most of the Events to the Annuntiations the subordinate Difficulties we must necessarily refer not to the deficiency of the

> Annunciations, but to our limited Nature as Percipients. And this Argument is more particularly applicable to Prophecies which exist by Procession, and consequently must be obscure in proportion to the distance, and become clear as they approach the Time of their Completion. 71

Here, he clearly correlates the order and articulations of Divine Providence with the notion of progression.

As a last correspondence to the poetry, Coleridge also develops the image of progression as dawn in the philosophy. He parallels the poetic gradations of kind and degree in "The Three Sorts of Friends" and "Love and Friendship Opposite," with a formulation of the progress of love as a dawning:

> I believe that Love . . . is always the abrupt creation of a moment - tho' years of Dawning may have preceded. I said, Dawning; for often as I have watched the Sun-rising, from the thinning, diluting Blue to the Whitening, to the fawn-coloured, the pink, the crimson, the glory, yet still the Sun itself has always started up, out of the Horizon - ! between the brightest Hues of the Dawn and the first Rim of the Sun itself there is a chasm - all before were Diff[er]ences of Degrees, passing and dissolving into each other - but there is a difference of Kind - a chasm of Kind in a continuity of Time. - And as no man, who had never watched for the rise of the Sun, could understand what I mean, so can no man who has not been in Love, understand what Love is. 72

The transition between the process of dawn and that process completed in the risen sun is the same transition in kind required for a passage from other forms of attachment to love. In "Love and Friendship Opposite," Coleridge emphasizes just such a transition.

In one of Coleridge's many "ascents of life," the progress from the Spontaneous to the Voluntary to a Free Will emerges as a process of dawning:

> The Spontaneous rises into the Voluntary, and finally after various steps and a long ascent, the Material and Animal Means and Conditions are prepared for the manifeatations of a Free Will, having its Law within itself and its motive in the Law - and thus bound to originate its own Acts, not only without, but even against, alien Stimulants. That in our present state we have only the Dawning of this inward Sun (the perfect Law of Liberty) will sufficiently limit and qualify the preceding position if only it have been allowed to produce its twofold consequence - the excitement of Hope and the repression of Vanity. 73

The sun rises in "the perfect Law of Liberty," that "Free Will" that in both the poetry and the philosophy comprises an integral factor of Coleridgean progression.

At last, as in the poetry, the process of dawn becomes an intimation of immortality:

> The mighty kingdoms angelical, like the thin clouds at dawn, receiving and hailing the first radiance, and singing and sounding forth their blessedness, increase the rising joy in the heart of God, spread wide and utter forth the joy arisen, and in innumerable finite glories interpret all they can of infinite bliss. 74

Dawn acts as an image for a divine as well as for a human progression. The angels interpret the joy of God "in innumerable finite glories," and Coleridge, as in all his progressions, both poetic and philosophic, indicates yet another passage from the experiential to the ideal.

Coleridge's construct of progression, like his other constructs, demonstrates the continuum between his philosophy and his poetry. Once again, the philosophy parallels the poetry. In both modes, Coleridge develops the construct in terms of the same patterns of imagery. Both philosophy and poetry show progression alternately as harmony, gradation, ascension, a circle, growth, a stream, time, and the dawn.

Furthermore, in the course of this development, a number of close correlations emerge. For instance, formulations from the poem "Happiness," written in 1791, recur in a "Lecture on Revealed Religion" of 1795, and in a discussion of the process of human consciousness in 1806. From the other direction, philosophical notions of the gradation of kind and degree, applied to the continuum of attachment in a letter of 1811, re-appear in the 1830 poem "Love and Friendship Opposite." As in the construct of correspondence, the relation between poetic and philosophic progress seems a matter of interpenetration. Coleridge's ideas move with the same facility from his philosophy to his poetry, from his poetry to his philosophy.

All Coleridge's progressions, in the manner of the preceding constructs, extend and elaborate one fundamental principle. This principle, his view of the process involved

in a passage from the experiential to the ideal, is also the underlying principle of his poetic progresses. Again, as in his preceding constructs, Coleridge repeats the one principle in a number of formulations. Thus, his various progressions, both poetic and philosophic, amount to metaphors.

The construct of progression provides yet another opportunity for Coleridge to exercise his particular method. Again, he gives to an abstract, the passage from experiential to ideal, concrete expression in the various images that he devises for progression. He then draws from these images further metaphysical abstracts in the form of further progressions.

FOOTNOTES

1. Lectures 1795, p. 109n.
2. Poetical Works, I, p. 133.
3. Ibid., p. 185.
4. Ibid., p. 160.
5. Ibid., pp. 117-8.
6. Ibid., p. 134.
7. Ibid., p. 111.
8. Ibid., pp. 135-6.
9. Biographia Literaria, I, p. 108.
10. Poetical Works, II p. 1012.
11. Ibid., I, p. 484.
12. Ibid., p. 132.
13. Ibid., p. 107.
14. Ibid., pp. 103-4.
15. Ibid., p. 117.
16. Ibid., p. 174.
17. Ibid., pp. 114-5.
18. Ibid., p. 304
19. Ibid., p. 68.
20. Ibid., p. 404.
21. Ibid., p. 33.
22. Ibid.

23. Poetical Works, I, p. 262.
24. Ibid., p. 165.
25. Ibid., p. 69.
26. Ibid., p. 151.
27. Ibid., p. 401.
28. Letters, I. pp. 282-3.
29. Lectures 1795, p. 150.
30. Letters, II, p. 1196.
31. Literary Remains, II, p. 179.
32. Lectures 1795, pp. 150-1.
33. Friend, I, p. 457.
34. Literary Remains, I pp. 198-9.
35. Lectures 1795, pp. 235-6.
36. Biographia Literaria, II, p. 255.
37. bid., p. 262.
38. Aids to Reflection, p. 74.
39. Philosophical Lectures, p. 360.
40. Notebooks, I, pt. 1, # 1637.
41. Selected Poetry and Prose, pp. 572-3.
42. Ibid., p. 572.
43. Ibid., p. 574.
44. Friend, I, p. 459.
45. Anima Poetae, p. 157.
46. Friend, I, pp. 148-9.
47. Aids to Reflection, p. 20.

48. Biographia Literaria, I, pp. 164-6.

49. Notebooks, III, pt. 1, # 3847.

50. Biographia Literaria, I, p. 96.

51. Ibid., II, p. 129.

52. Lay Sermons, p. 55.

53. Lectures 1795, p. 163; the brackets are Patton and Mann's.

54. Notebooks, II, pt. 1, # 2121.

55. Specimens of the Table Talk of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ed. H.N. Coleridge (London, 1851), p. 330.

56. Lectures 1795, pp. 108-9.

57. Letters, I, p. 317.

58. Philosophical Lectures, pp. 280-1.

59. Letters, I, p. 168.

60. Aids to Reflection, p. 37.

61. Biographia Literaria, I, p. 166.

62. Ibid., p. 164.

63. Notebooks, I, pt. 1, # 1143.

64. Biographia Literaria, II, p. 258.

65. Notebooks, I, pt. 1, # 119.

66. Friend, I, p. 65.

67. Letters, II, p. 1197.

68. Ibid.

69. Literary Remains, I, p. 199.

70. Lay Sermons, p. 29.

71. Lectures 1795, p. 151.

72. Letters, III, p. 304; the brackets are Griggs'.

73. Aids to Reflection, pp. 58-9.

74. Literary Remains, I, p. 370.

Chapter 6: TRANSLUCENCE

In his construct of progression, Coleridge emphasizes the long and difficult passage from the experiential to the ideal. Perceiving the ideal proves no easier than attaining it. The notion of progress as a dawning, a progressive dissipation of darkness, carries into the fifth construct. In formulating the concept of translucence, Coleridge extends this sense of a shadow gradually dissipated, a darkness gradually illuminated.

Through his construct of correspondence, Coleridge identifies the ideal with a light or the sun. From the experiential view, however, such light is for the most part in obscurity. Thus, the first step towards achieving a translucence of light through darkness comprises the examination of whatever obscures the light, in other words, the translucent medium.

Once again, Coleridge formulates the elements of a construct in his poetry. He takes the first step towards translucence by demonstrating, in poetic terms, the various phenomena that hide the light of the ideal.

The cloud emerges as Coleridge's earliest agent of obscurity. In the "Anthem: For the Children of Christ's Hospital," written in 1789, he delineates the emergence of compassion through sorrow, in terms of the emergence of the sun through the clouds:

She comes: she comes: the meek-eyed Power I see
With liberal hand that loves to bless;
The clouds of Sorrow at her presence flee;
Rejoice: Rejoice: ye Children of Distress:
The beams that play around her head
Thro' Want's dark vale their radiance spread.[1]

A favourite, if not particularly original, image describes "the cloudy throne" that hides the light of God from the experiential world.[2]

Clouds, for Coleridge, are, on occasion, veils, and veils also act to obscure. The clouds around God's throne are "veilingclouds."[3] The light of nature is all but lost in "her dark retreat," behind "her matron veil."[4]

Mists and vapours, too, are agents of obscurity: "What floating mists of dark idolatry / Broke and misshaped the omnipresent Sire."[5] In the manner of clouds or veils, these also darken the light of God, "the vaporous passions that bedim / God's Image, sister of the Seraphim."[6]

Mists and vapours have for Coleridge a distorting as well as a darkening effect. In "Verses: To J. Horne Tooke," he reveals that "the lazy mists of Pedantry" form "Mists in which Superstion's pigmy band / Seem'd Giant Forms, the Genii of the Land:"[7] The magnifying quality of mist allows for misrepresentation, In "Constancy to an Ideal Object," Coleridge describes a similar optical illusion produced by a snow-mist:

The woodman winding westward up the glen
At wintry dawn, where o'er the sheep-track's maze

> The viewless snow-mist weaves a glist'ning haze,
> Sees full before him, gliding without tread,
> An image with a glory round its head;
> The enamoured rustic worships its fair hues,
> Nor knows he makes the shadow, he pursues. 8

Such distortion amounts to an obscuring of reality. The rustic mistakes an illusion for something real, and confuses a shadow with a substance. The notion of the shadow without substance, which can also act to conceal any substance, lies behind Coleridge's various obscurers of the ideal.

The idea of obscurity through optical illusion touches on a fundamental of Coleridge's concept of obscurity in general. The problem of obscurity is a problem of vision, a matter of the limitations of human sight. In the poetry, Coleridge uses the metaphor of blindness.

Such blindness can, as already observed, take the form of an external obstruction of vision provided by cloud, veil, or mist. In "Ode to the Departing Year," Coleridge relates that, while he was gazing "on Heaven's unchanging clime," "the enter'd cloud foreclos'd my sight."[9] In "Religious Musings," he curses the "Fiends of Superstition," whose spells "film the eye of Faith."[10]

The blindness can also result from a limitation inherent in human sight itself. Man cannot help being blind to the "invisible world - unheard, unseen," of "The Picture."[11] Here, Coleridge introduces hearing as a parallel to sight. That which eludes one sense will commonly elude another.

In fact, as Coleridge maintains in the "Hymn Before Sunrise," man must transcend all "the bodily sense" in order to perceive the invisible ideal:

> O dread and silent Mount! I gazed upon thee,
> Till thou, still present to the bodily sense,
> Didst vanish from my thought: entranced in prayer
> I worshipped the Invisible alone. 12

Sometimes, even when it is not a question of the limitation of vision, Coleridge gives the impression of an incompleteness in vision alone. The numb poet in "Dejection" exclaims regarding the beauties of nature, "I see, not feel, how beautiful they are!"[13] Mourning for an element missing in his experience, Coleridge indicates yet another limitation in the power of the human eye.

Most frequently, however, man's blindness results from his refusal to develop the full potential of his vision. It is to this blindness that Coleridge refers when, in "Fears in Solitude," he speaks of the blindness of the atheist:

> Forth from his dark and lonely hiding-place,
> (Portentous sight!) the owlet Atheism,
> Sailing on obscene wings athwart the noon,
> Drops his blue-fringéd lids, and holds them close,
> And hooting at the glorious sun in Heaven,
> Cries out, 'Where is it?' 14

In the same vein, Coleridge dwells on "those blind Omniscients" of "The Destiny of Nations," who are "scoffing ascent" to the ideal by remaining "within this gross and visible sphere."[15] The last formulation may seem

something of a contradiction. According to Coleridge, such empiricists, through confining themselves to the "visible sphere," become blind. In fact, he is repeating the notion from the "Hymn Before Sunrise," emphasizing the need to transcend the bodily sense in order to apprehend the ideal.

For Coleridge, human vision is sometimes a barrier to the ideal and sometimes a metaphor for its apprehension Ideal vision, however, generally results from the modification, even the abandonment, of the organ of sight. This is the vision indicated in the "Hymn Before Sunrise" and "The Destiny of Nations" that results from the transcending of "bodily sense." This is the vision that Coleridge extols in "Hexameters" sent to William and Dorothy Wordsworth:

> . . . my eyes are a burthen,
> Now unwillingly closed, now open and aching with darkness.
> O! what a life is the eye! what a strange and inscrutable essence!
> Him that is utterly blind, nor glimpses the fire that warms him;
> Him that never beheld the swelling breast of his mother;
> Him that smiled in his gladness as a babe that smiles in its slumber;
> Even for him it exists, it moves and stirs in its prison;
> Lives with a separate life, and "Is it a Spirit?" he murmurs. [16]

Blindness, blocking the visual distractions of the experiential world, allows a concentration on the spiritual rather than the sensual quality of sight. Thus, the blind figure of "Human Time" in "Limbo" "gazes still, - his eyeless

face all eye; - / As 'twere an organ full of silent sight,/ His whole face seemeth to rejoice in light:"[17] His "ideal" sight is more sublime, more receptive to the light, than any experiential organ of vision.

Extending his concept of blindness, Coleridge seeks in alternate senses a mode of apprehending the ideal. Although hearing is one of the "bodily senses," it seems less of an experiential distraction for Coleridge. In "Dejection," he looks to "Those sounds which oft have raised me, whilst they awed, / And sent my soul abroad,"[18] to relieve his numbness, and supply the missing element in his experience. In "The Eolian Harp," he identifies such sound with an ideal of light: the "one Life, within us and abroad," consists of "A light in sound, a sound-like power in light, / Rhythm in all thought, and joyance every where."[19]

The real source of the missing element in the vision of the "Dejection" poet, however, lies in yet another sense, that of feeling. A true apprehension, a true grasp of the ideal, depends on the "Faith that inly <u>feels</u>."[20] Intuition, in the sense of an immediate perception that by-passes the senses, is a Coleridgean ideal. He achieves a semblance of this intuition in "A Day-Dream." Closing his eyes, shutting out the distractions of empirical vision, he experiences an ideal apprehension that emerges as a feeling: "I dream thee with mine eyes, and at my heart I feel thee!"[21]

Thus Coleridge arrives at an "inward sight," his symbolical expression in "The Garden of Boccaccio" for a vision that can perceive the non-experiential.[22] Such "inward sight" is sometimes a vision through feeling, as in the "Reason for Love's Blindness":

> I have heard of reasons manifold
> Why Love must needs be blind,
> But this the best of all I hold -
> His eyes are in his mind.
>
> What outward form and feature are
> He guesseth but in part;
> But that within is good and fair
> He seeth with the heart. 23

More often, however, "inward sight" comes from an ability to modify the senses, and see the experiential world as "nature, the language of God."

In "Religious Musings," Coleridge affirms that "the Great Invisible" can only be seen by symbols.[24] Then, in "The Destiny of Nations," he maintains, "For all that meets the bodily sense I deem / Symbolical, one mighty alaphabet."[25] The normal apprehension of the human eye, symbolically interpreted, suffices for the sight of God. Used correctly, experiential vision leads not to blindness in view of the ideal, but to the antithesis. For the initiated, "Life is a vision shadowy of Truth."[26] Or, as Coleridge phrases the concept in "A Hymn":

> From all that meets or eye or ear,
> There falls a genial holy fear
> Which, like the heavy dew of morn,

Refreshes while it bows the heart forlorn![27]

Parallel to the "inward sight" is the inwardness of another "bodily sense," that of hearing. In "A Hymn," all that meets the ear as well as the eye admits a symbolic sense of God. In "Reflections on having left a Place of Retirement," Coleridge formulates a mode of inwardly apprehending the ideal of happiness. The sky-lark's note symbolizes "The inobtrusive song of Happiness,/ Unearthly minstrelsy! then only heard / When the Soul seeks to hear; when all is hush'd, / And the Heart listens!"[28]

The use of "inward sight," a sense for the symbolic, leads to the notion of the vision of the initiate. "Error' mist" leaves the "purgéd eye" of a Burke brought to see the true light.[29] God's love shines "with unrefracted ray . . . on the Prophet's purgéd eye."[30] Both have a vision cleared of any elements of obscurity. The poet, too, has a similar faculty for glimpsing the ideal:

> . . . he emancipates his eyes
> From the black shapeless accidents of size - . . .
> His gifted ken can see
> Phantoms of sublimity. 31

As Coleridge has two modes of vision, an experiential sight that often amounts to a blindness, and an ideal vision, he also formulates two modes of obscurity. The blindness inherent in experiential vision corresponds to that obscurity whose various agents form the shadow without substance that hides the ideal. Then, as a correlative to the second mode,

the vision of the ideal, Coleridge introduces a shadow with substance.

In his concept of "nature, the language of God," in fact, throughout his scheme of correspondence, Coleridge describes the manifestation of the essence through its object. Since human vision has limits, this essence, or ideal, is often but dimly perceptible. Thus, it also appears as a shadow. Coleridge, however, differentiates between the shadow without and the shadow with substance. The former obscures the ideal. The latter, like certain forms of Coleridgean blindness, offers oneof the few possible modes of apprehending this ideal.

In the poem "What is Life " Coleridge implies that the essence of life only becomes visible through the medium of shadow:

> Resembles life what once was deem'd of light,
> Too ample in itself for human sight?
> An absolute self - an element ungrounded -
> All that we see, all colours of all shade
> By encroach of darkness made? 32

He suggests that the light constituting this essence of life might be "too ample in itself for human sight." He indicates that vision itself, especially the perception of the essence of life, which, as light, comprises the ultimate in vision, requires the modulating effect of darkness or shadow. Hence, perhaps, his earlier assertion that life although a vision of truth, emerges as "a vision shadowy"

of such truth.

Coleridge offers a variation on his concept of the correspondence between object and essence. As the object, equivalent to the essence, acts as the outward manifestation of that essence, so the shadow, equivalent to the substance, is also the experiential form of that substance. In the poetry, the contemplation of the ideal leads to an apprehension of the correspondence of shadow to substance, object to essence.

"To a Lady" refers to the "shades of the Past,/ Which Love makes substance."[33] In "Human Life," only the surety of immortality lends substance to "these costly shadows of thy shadowy self."[34] In "The Improvisatore," the light of Reason gives substance to the shadow of Fancy.[35] In a fragment, Coleridge reveals that the body is the shadow of the soul:

> The body,
> Eternal Shadow of the finite Soul,
> The Soul's self-symbol, its image of itself.
> Its own yet not itself. 36

Here, the shadow is also the symbol. In other words, it is a part of the ideal that it represents. Owing to the limitations of human vision, however, the shadow, or the symbol, provides the only portion of this ideal that admits apprehension. Since the rest of the ideal remains invisible, there is a sense of something missing. The

correspondence is not complete, and the body, although the soul's "own," is still "Its own yet not itself."

Through the shadow that is the manifestation of substance, Coleridge arrives at the central image of his construct of translucence. He depicts the ideal as light, the experiential as a shadow of that light, and its only visible form. From this image, he formulates the concept of translucence, clearly expressed in yet another fragment:

> Bright clouds of reverence, sufferably bright,
> That intercept the dazzle, not the Light;
> That veil the finite form, the boundless power reveal,
> Itself an earthly sun of pure intensest white. 37

The human eye is not adapted for a view of unveiled ideal light. The second mode of Coleridgean obscurity, the substantial shadow, intercepts "the dazzle," or that which would be "too ample in itself for human sight," and therefore allows the perception of such light as then becomes visible. This is Coleridge's idea of translucence: an ideal light illumes the shadow that renders it visible and in turn gives a substance, or essence, to that shadow.

All Coleridge's agents of obscurity also act as translucent media to reveal, rather than hide, the light. Chief among the translucent media is the cloud. To the "bright clouds of reverence" of the preceding fragment, Coleridge adds the "Fair cloud which less we see, than by thee see the light," as an image for the beauty of the soul shining

through the veil of the body.[38] The light of "Joy," issuing from the soul in "Dejection," manifests itself in experiential terms as "a fair luminous cloud / Enveloping the Earth."[39] Then, as in "The Destiny of Nations," the view of nature as a symbol for God emerges as a translucent prospect: "Him First, him Last to view/ Through meaner powers and secondary things / Effulgent, as through clouds that veil his blaze."[40] Nature, as a cloud that attests to the light of God behind, is first and foremost of the symbolic shadows that image the substance of the ideal.

The translucent cloud, like the obscuring cloud, is also a veil, as the preceding examples deomonstrate. The veil is another shadow that, by blocking the dazzle, renders the light visible to human eyes. In "This Lime-Tree Bower my Prison," Coleridge refers to "such hues / As veil the Almighty Spirit, when he makes / Spirits perceive his presence."[41] In "The Destiny of Nations," he reveals how "Infinite Love . . . with retracted beams, and self-eclipsè / Veiling, revealest thine eternal Sun."[42]

Finally, Coleridge hints that even "Error's mists" can be translucent:

> The ascending day-star with a bolder eye
> Hath lit each dew-drop on our trimmer lawn!
> Yet not for this, if wise, shall we decry
> The spots and struggles of the timid Dawn;

Lest so we tempt th' approaching Noon to scorn
The mists and painted vapours of our Morn. 43

In these "Lines: Suggested by the Last Words of Berengarius," he affirms that although mists and vapours may distort, they are "painted" by the rising sun, and thus constitute the first evidence of "th' approaching Noon" of the ideal.

For Coleridge, the identity of the body with the soul is the type for both translucence and correspondence. The poem "Phantom" formulates the correspondence of body to spirit in terms of translucence:

All look and likeness caught from earth
All accident of kin and birth,
Had pass'd away. There was no trace
Of aught on that illumined face,
Upraïs'd beneath the rifted stone
But of one spirit all her own; -
She, she herself, and only she,
Shone through her body visibly. 44

Furthermore, the one instance in the poetry where Coleridge gives to the concept of ideal light behind substantial shadow the name of translucence involves a correspondence between body and spirit. In "The Two Founts," he finds in the "benignant face" of a lady "The soul's translucence thro' her crystal shrine!"[45]

Coleridge sees the progressive apprehension of the ideal through the experiential as an augmenting translucence. This progression he describes as the increasing transparency of the translucent medium. The poem "Reason" outlines the process:

> Whene'er the mist, that stands 'twixt God and thee,
> Defecates to a pure transparency,
> That intercepts no light and adds no stain -
> There Reason is, and then begins her reign! 46

Coleridge seeks to develop the perception of the prophet who sees God's love "with unrefracted ray." Or, he yearns towards the ideal of Wordsworth's genius, "When power streamed from thee, and thy soul received / The light reflected, as a light bestowed."[47] Such vision, however, seems largely reserved for those who transcend the experiential at the time when "Death shall pour the undarken'd ray."[48] The full accomplishment of this transcendence awaits the millennium. Then, as Coleridge maintains in "Religious Musings," both obscuring and translucent media will finally disperse:

> . . . The veiling clouds retire,
> And lo! the Throne of the redeeming God
> Forth flashing unimaginable day
> Wraps in one blaze earth, heaven, and deepest hell.[49]

Until then, the modes of perceiving the ideal without its intervening, if translucent, shadow are few and far between. Coleridge, however, does suggest that one mode, open to those who are neither prophets or geniuses, may be the dream. In a notebook entry, he begins a poem in which a dream appears to make the veil of the experiential world translucent to the point of transparency:

> A River, so translucent as not to be seen - and yet murmuring - shadowy world - & these a Dream / Inchanted River - 50

Here, he images the veil, or shadow, of the ideal in the "translucent" river.

The man who can read nature as the language of God, who finds "religious meanings in the forms of Nature," does so when "in a half sleep, he dreams of better worlds."[51] Those who "sleep / The sleep of Death, and dream of blissful worlds,/ Then wake in Heaven, and find the dream all true."[52] As Coleridge observes in another embryonic notebook poem:

> One lifts up one's eyes to Heaven as if to seek
> there what one had lost on Earth / Eyes -
> Whose Half-beholdings thro' unsteady tears
> Gave shape, hue, distance, to the inward Dream / 53

Human sight, when combined with dream, achieves "Half-beholdings" of the ideal.

The perception, however, is still in the form of "Half-beholdings." There is still a veil, albeit translucent to the point of transparency. As Coleridge maintains "On Revisiting the Sea-Shore":

> Dreams (the Soul herself forsaking),
> Tearful raptures, boyish mirth;
> Silent adorations making
> A blessed shadow of this Earth!

The dream may lift the veil so that the earth and not the ideal becomes the shadow. The shadow, nevertheless, remains.

In the manner of the other constructs, Coleridge's poetic translucence also follows a pattern. This pattern

relates most immediately to the pattern of progression. In his various progressions, Coleridge depicts a never-to-be-accomplished passage from the experiential to the ideal. Likewise the elements of translucence develop the idea of approach rather than attainment. The essential is never truly revealed to mortal eyes. The ideal, even when it is not obscured, is only visible through the translucent veil, the symbolic shadow, of its experiential manifestation.

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Again, the philosophy parallels the poetry as Coleridge repeats philosophically the pattern of his poetic translucence. Translucence in the philosophy also demonstrates the notion of approach rather than attainment, and also reveals the omnipresence of a translucent medium. Coleridge formulates yet another construct in terms of the same elements in both modes of his writing.

In the philosophy, he takes the first step towards translucence by demonstrating the various phenomena that hide the light of the ideal, and these phenomena prove identical with his poetic agents of obscurity. First, the cloud emerges as one of Coleridge's earliest obscuring media. In a letter of 1796, he writes to Thomas Poole:

In no after emotion of vain regret have I apostatized

> from the divine philosophy, which I profess. The black clouds, which hide the Sun from my view, are they not big with fertility? and will they not drop it on me? 55

Here, he indicates in the agent of obscurity a potential translucent medium. The clouds may not reveal the light, but they do mediate between the sun of faith, which they hide, and earthly apprehension.

In a later letter, Coleridge repeats the poetic image of earthly cloud over ideal light. The lectures of James Mackintosh, decrying Wordsworth, "are but the Steam of an Excrement, & truly animalcular must those Souls be, to whom <u>this</u> can form a cloud that hides from them the face of Sun or Star."[56]

Then, as in the poetry, Coleridge intoduces the obscuring veil. Before the spiritual sun has risen for earthly eyes, "his glories are still under veil."[57] Those who have never known the struggles of Love "see God darkly and thro' a Veil."[58]

Finally, vapour, or mist, acts as a prime agent of obscurity. In <u>The Friend</u>, Coleridge repeats the notion of "Error's mist": "How do these rules apply to books, which once published, are as likely to fall in the way of the incompetent as of the judicious, and will be fortunate indeed if they are not many times looked at through the thick mists of ignorance."[59]

In another parallel to the poetry, Coleridge describes the distorting effect of mist. In the third number of The Watchman, he admonishes a correspondent:

> I thank "a Well-wisher and old School-fellow," for his friendly, though severe, admonition; and request him to reflect, whether it be not possible that my prejudices may appear to him gigantic through the mist occasioned by his own. 60

He reiterates this notion of objects "gigantic through the mist" in "Conciones ad Populum":

> The mind is predisposed by its situations: and when the prejudices of a man are strong, the most overpowering Evidence becomes weak. He "meets with darkness in the day-time, and gropes in the noon-day as in night." Some unmeaning Term generally becomes the Watch-word, and acquires almost a mechanical power over his frame. The indistinctness of the Ideas associated with it increases its effect, as "objects look gigantic thro' a mist." 61

Here, the distortion of mist combines with a hint from Job regarding its additional veiling and darkening effects. Following the poetry, Coleridge sees such distortion and darkness as a mistaking of shadow for substance. In a notebook entry, he touches on the idea of the shadow without substance implicit in all his agents of obscurity, both poetic and philosophic:

> Shadow - its being subsists in shap'd and definite non-entity / 62

Again, as in the poetry, the idea of obscurity through optical illusion introduces the aspect of vision. In the philosophy, the problem of obscurity is also a matter of the limitations inherent in human sight. Here, too, Coleridge

uses the metaphor of blindness. His poetic image of the film over the eye recurs in a notebook formulation. "Eyes filmy with drowsy empiricism," "[The best and wisest] men not always & of logical necessity in the constitution of a State, the men who will act best & most wisely."[63]

The philosophy reiterates the poetic concept of a blindness resulting from the insufficiency of human sight. The ideal, whose ultimate is God, remains invisible:

> Religion, in its widest sense, signifies the act and habit of reverencing THE INVISIBLE, as the highest both in ourselves and in nature. To this the senses and their immediate objects are to be made subservient, the one as its organs, the other as its exponents: and as such therefore, having on their own account no true value, because no inherent worth.[64]

As in the "Hymn Before Sunrise," Coleridge urges the transcendence of bodily sense. Man must bring his experiential powers of perception into accord with this invisible, non-sensual ideal.

Coleridge repeats his poetic notion of human vision as somehow incomplete. In The Statesman's Manual, he puts the deficiencies of "mechanic" philosophy down to the limitations inherent in human sight:

> The leading differences between mechanic and vital philosophy may all be drawn from one point: namely, that the former demanding for every mode and act of existence real or possible visibility, knows only of distance and nearness, composition (or rather juxtaposition) and decomposition, in short the relations of unproductive particles to each other; so that in every instance the result is the exact sum of the

> component quantities, as in arithmetical addition. This is the philosophy of death, and only of a dead nature can it hold good. 65

To apprehend the vitality of existence takes more than the eye alone. To confine philosophy to that which has "real or possibile visibility" is to draw a false picture, and describe life in terms of "the philosophy of death."

As in the poetry, man's blindness stems from his refusal to develop the full potential of his sight. The "Allegoric Vision" has the same image of the blind atheist that Coleridge uses in "Fears in Solitude." In the temple of the atheists, "the string of blind men went on for ever without any beginning; for although one blind man could not move without stumbling, yet infinite blindness supplied the want of sight."[66]

Then, in a notebook entry, Coleridge extends the depiction of "those blind Omniscients" of "The Destiny of Nations":

> Men who ~~use~~ direct what they call their Understanding or Common-sense by rules abstracted from sensuous experience, ~~to~~ in moral and super-sensuous truths, remind me of the Zemni . . . "a kind of rat in which the skin (conjunctiva) is not even transparent over the eye but is there covered with hairs as on the rest of the Body. The eye which is scarcely the size of the Poppy Seed, is perfectly useless." (= the understanding.) 67

The empirically-minded, limiting themselves to the visible and sensuous, become blind to the "moral and supersensuous truths." This idea, after the "blind Omniscients," who

in like fashion chain themselves "within this gross and visible sphere," Coleridge repeats in the "Theory of Life." There, "the harmonies of Nature" are also imperceptible to the man "whose imaginative powers have been ossified by the continual reaction and assimilating influences of mere objects on his mind, and who is a prisoner to his own eye and its reflex, the passive fancy!"[68] Coleridge reiterates the notion from the "Hymn Before Sunrise" of the need to transcend the bodily sense in order to perceive the ideal.

So, the philosophy develops, in the same manner as the poetry, the same concept of ideal vision as the modification, or abandonment of empirical sight. In a notebook entry, Coleridge provides what amounts to an outright statement of the implications of blindness in "Hexameters" and Limbo":

> It is all attention / your eyes being shut, other images arise, which you must attend to / it being the habit of a seeing man to attend chiefly to sight - so close your eyes, you attend to the ideal images - & attending to them you abstract your attention. 69

Freed from experiential distractions, the power of sight focuses on the ideal.

As in the poetry, Coleridge seeks alternate senses for apprehending the ideal. Again, hearing emerges as less of an empirical distraction than sight. At all events, as Coleridge remarks in The Friend, "there are sounds more

sublime than any sight can be."[70]

It is feeling, however, that, in both poetry and philosophy, comprises the element of perception without which vision remains incomplete. In The Friend, Coleridge compartmentalizes the senses. The intellect, or sensuous understanding, he assigns "to clear, distinct, and adequate conceptions concerning all things that are the possible objects of clear conception."[71] The apprehension of the ideal, on the other hand, he reserves for

> the deep feelings which belong, as by a natural right to those obscure ideas that are necessary to the moral perfection of the human being, notwithstanding, yea, even in consequence, of their obscurity - to reserve these feelings, I repeat, for objects, which their very sublimity renders indefinite, no less than their indefiniteness renders them sublime: namely to the Ideas of Being, Form, Life, the Reason, the Law of Conscience, Freedom, Immortality, God! To connect with the objects of our senses the obscure notions and consequent vivid feelings, which are due only to immaterial and permanent things, is profanation relatively to the heart, and superstition in the understanding. [72]

It is through "deep feelings," reminiscent of the "Faith that inly feels," and not the bodily sense, that man perceives "the Ideas of Being, Form, Life, the Reason, the Law of Conscience, Freedom, Immortality, God," and all the other myriad facets of the ideal.

In another parallel of the poetry, Coleridge arrives at the idea of an "inward sight" through his notion of a vision through feeling. In The Friend, he anticipates the

end of philosophy:

> 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 no question out of itself, acknowledges no predicate but the I AM IN THAT I AM. 73

With the conjunction of head and heart, that is, upon the union of both modes of sight, experiential vision and the ideal vision associated with feeling, "the inward eye" opens to "the glorious vision" of God.

Also as in the poetry, Coleridge suggests that "inward sight" requires the ability to apprehend symbolically:

> 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, than observing any thing new. Even when that latter is the case, yet still I have always an obsecurecure feeling as if that new phaenomenon were the dim Awaking of a forgotten or hidden Truth of my inner Nature / It is still interesting as a Word, a Symbol! It is ΛΟΓΟΣ, the Creator! 74

In this notebook entry, he gives yet another expression to his favourite concept of nature as the symbol or language of God.

Philosophically and poetically, Coleridge maintains that "the Great Invisible" can only be seen by symbols:

> To the philanthropic Physiognomist a Face is beautiful because its Features are the symbols and visible signs of the inward Benevolence or Wisdom - to the pious man all Nature is thus beautiful because its

> Every Feature is the Symbol and all its parts the written Language of infinite Goodness and all powerful Intelligence. 75

Once more following the poetry, he affirms that experiential vision, when interpreted symbolically, leads not to blindness but to the ultimate sight of the ideal:

> With this faith all nature,
>
> all the mighty world
> Of eye and ear -
>
> presents itself to us, now as the aggregated material of duty, and now as a vision of the Most High revealing to us the mode, and time, and particular instance of applying and realizing that universal rule, pre-established in the heart of our reason! 76

Quoting from "Tintern Abbey," Coleridge makes a statement identical in implication to the passage from "A Hymn." All that meets the ear as well as the eye, "all the mighty world / Of eye and ear," admits the symbolic sense of God. Correlative to the "inward sight" in both the philosophy and the poetry, is the inwardness of hearing.

In a notebook entry, Coleridge reformulates the concept of the inwardness of hearing:

> In the holy eloquent Solitude when the very stars that twinkle seem to be a voice that suits the Dream, a voice of a Dream, a voice soundless and yet for the Ear not the Eye of the Soul, when the winged Soul passes over vale & mountain, sinks into Glens, and then climbs with the Cloud & passes from Cloud to Cloud, and thence from Sun to Sun. 77

This time, the inward hearing without the "inward sight" comprises the organ through which the soul, in her ascension, apprehends the ideal.

In the philosophy as well as in the poetry, the use of "inward sight" and hearing as senses for the symbolic leads to the vision of the initiate. Coleridge, in the "Allegoric Vision," demonstrates how the true believer can aspire to such vision. Religion "gave us an optic glass which assisted without contradicting our natural vision, and enabled us to see far beyond the limits of the Valley of Life."[78]

But the optic glass of religion, although it enhances human sight, does not offer that vision cleared of obscurity that Coleridge seeks in both philosophy and poetry: "our eye even thus assisted permitted us only to behold a light and a glory, but what we could not descry, save only that it was, and that it was most glorious."[79] Unobscured vision appears beyond human ken, reserved for the immortal:

> This is - in the only wise, & verily, in a most sublime sense - to see God face to face / which alas! it seems too true that no man can do and live, i.e. a human life. It would become incompatible with his organization, or rather it would transmute it, & the process of that Transmutation to the senses of other men would be called Death. 80

In other words, such is an angel's vision:

> What? was God, the father received up into Glory? - and "seen by Angels" - Suppose Christ a mere Man, . . . what is the significance, the specific purport, of this Clause? What could the Angels see that mæn could not? - But if it were . . . God incarnate, then indeed Angels might SEE, i.e. have a direct and intuitive knowledge of what men could only infer discursively & know by faith. 81

As in the poetry, however, Coleridge indicates that perhaps poetic genius can approach to the ideal of an unobstructed vision:

> Milton, austere, condensed, imaginative, supporting his truth by direct enunciation of lofty moral sentiment and by distinct visual representations, and in the same spirit overwhelming what he deemed falsehood by moral denunciation and a succession of pictures appalling or repulsive. In his prose, so many metaphors, so many allegorical miniatures. Taylor, eminently discursive, accumulative, and (to use one of his own words) agglomerative; still more rich in images than Milton himself, but images of fancy, and presented to the common and passive eye, rather than to the eye of the imagination. 82

In this antithesis of Milton to Taylor, he opposes "the eye of the imagination" to "the common and passive eye" of fancy. The eye of fancy (for Coleridge, the blind eye of the empiricist) is discursive; the eye of the imagination seems, by implication, to admit something of the intuitive. At all events, imagination allows a kind of immediacy of vision. It offers "distinct visual representations" and "a succession of pictures."

In the philosophy, Coleridge repeats his poetic notion of the two modes of vision, an experiential sight, which he often represents as a blindness, and an ideal vision. As in the poetry, he offers two correlative modes of obscurity. In both philosophy and poetry, the blindness of the experiential corresponds to the shadow without substance that hides the ideal. Then, to complete the correlation, Coleridge develops philosophically the notion of the shadow

with substance.

After his poetic formulas, Coleridge describes the obscurity of the manifestation of essence through object. He quotes from Macbeth: "Out, out brief candle! / Life's but a walking shadow," to emphasize the shadowy aspect of this essence of life. Yet he prefaces his quote with the remark that Macbeth "would fain think every thing shadowy and unsubstantial, as indeed all things are to those who cannot regard them as symbols of goodness."[83] The ideal and the essential may appear as shadows, but they are, nevertheless, shadows with a substance. By means of symbolic apprehension, man can perceive the substance behind the shadow, the essence through the object. As in the poetry, Coleridge differentiates between the shadow without substance and the shadow that is in fact the manifestation of substance.

Consequently, Coleridge implies, still following the poetry, that essence and ideal only become visible through the medium of shadow. Plato, in his formulations of God, "is dark with excess of Brightness."[84] The light of his assertions emerges as blindness.

Coleridge repeats this idea in The Statesman's Manual.[85] He reiterates his concept of the two modes of obscurity. "Obscurity is a word of many meanings," he affirms and proceeds to demonstrate his own two meanings. He cites "the obscurity

of that which hath not true Being" as his shadow without substance, and "a darkness which Socrates would not condemn, and which would probably appear to enlightened Christians the darkness of prophecy" as his shadow with substance. He indicates that this shadow with substance, through "the darkness of prophecy," manifests the ideal. He explains the appearance of ideal light in the guise of darkness by pointing out, after Plato, that "the idea of true being . . . is by no means easy to be seen on account of the splendour of that region. For the intellectual eyes of the Many flit, and are incapable of looking fixedly toward the God-like."

Coleridge offers, philosophically as well as poetically, a variation on his concept of the correspondence between essence and object. In the philosophy too, the shadow acts as the experiential form of the substance in the same way that the object constitutes the outward manifestation of its essence. For Coleridge, in his "Confessio Fidei," "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."[86] God reveals Himself through a "Shadowing out" in nature, His language and symbol. The "Works of God in the sensible World" appear as shadows of which the "perfections" of God comprise the substance. As Coleridge maintains in The Friend, "The Invisible was assumed

as the supporter of the apparent . . . - as their substance."[87]

In another parallel to the poetry, Coleridge makes the substantial shadow equivalent to his idea of the symbol. He repeats this concept in a discussion of "the natural effects of Christianity." Here, "finites, even the human form, must, in order to satisfy the mind, be brought into connexion with, and be in fact symbolical of, the infinite; and must be considered in some enduring, however shadowy and indistinct, point of view, as the vehicle or representative of moral truth."[88]

By way of the substantial shadow that is also a symbol, Coleridge reaches, in both modes of his writing, the centre of his construct. In philosophy and poetry, translucence involves the manifestation of the light of the ideal through the shadow of the experiential. The shadow thus illuminated then emerges as the only visible portion of this ideal light.

In a notebook entry, Coleridge describes that Platonic light, "dark with excess of Brightness," as "the sunny mist, the luminous gloom of Plato."[89] The ideal light of Platonic truth that appears in the form of a darkness is, in fact, the illuminator of mist or gloom. Coleridge reveals in his substantial shadow, translucent but not transparent to ideal light, the sole outward manifestation of that light.

In The Friend, Coleridge considers a mode of apprehending

the characters of the deceased:

> The character of a deceased Friend or beloved Kinsman is not seen, no - nor ought to be seen, other than as a Tree through a tender haze or a luminous mist, that spiritualizes and beautifies it; that takes away indeed, but only to the end that the parts which are not abstracted may appear more dignified and lovely, may impress and affect the more. Shall we say then that this is not truth, not a faithful image; and that accordingly the purposes of commemoration cannot be answered? - It <u>is</u> truth, and of the highest order! for, though doubtless things are not apparent which did exist, yet, the object being looked at through this medium, parts and proportions are brought into distinct view which before had been only imperfectly or unconsciously seen: it is truth hallowed by love - the joint offspring of the worth of the Dead and the affections of the Living! 90

The perception "of a deceased Friend or beloved Kinsman" demonstrates the concept of translucence. Coleridge maintains that such perception constitutes an ideal: "it <u>is</u> truth, and of the highest order! . . . it is truth hallowed by love." This ideal only becomes visible as a light behind a translucent medium of mist or haze. Through translucence, "parts and proportions are brought into distinct view which before had been only imperfectly or unconsciously seen."

Finally, Coleridge finds in a sonnet of Giovanni Battista Marini yet another expression of his notion of translucence:

> What then is the Sonnet rendered without its faults? - This: Eternal Mind, that in Light inaccessible buriest the mysteries of thy Essence & Providence, ~~hiding~~ veiling thy own Self from us by the abyss of thy own Eradiance, out of my blindness thou makest Sight and Glory for me - for how much less I understand, so much the more do I know thee! 91

By means of this précis, Coleridge brings Marini's work into accord with his own. He makes the sonnet repeat the concept from his poetic fragment of "Bright clouds of reverence, sufferably bright,/ That intercept the dazzle, not the Light."

In the poetry, all Coleridge's agents of obscurity also act as translucent media. Likewise, in the philosophy, all the shadows without substance become vehicles of translucence. Coleridge describes youth in terms of a translucent cloud. He points to "the mists of the Dawn of Reason coloured by the rich clouds, that precede the rising Sun."[92]

The obscuring veil, too, admits a translucence. In both Aids to Reflection and the "Lectures on Revealed Religion," Coleridge envisages the attaining of the light behind the "luminous gloom" of Plato as an "unveiling."[93] In the same fashion, mist is as much an agent of translucence as of obscurity; the deceased Friend appears through "a luminous mist," "the sunny mist" is translucent to the light of Plato.

Coleridge elaborates his notion of the translucent mist in The Statesman's Manual: "if the light be received by faith, to such understandings it delegates the privilege to become Sons of God . . . , expanding while it elevates, even as the beams of the sun incorporate with the mist, and make its natural darkness and earthly nature the bearer

and interpreter of their own glory."[94] After the pattern of all his translucences, poetic and philosophic, the ideal corresponds to (here, incorporates with) the experiential through which it is manifested.

For Coleridge, the correspondence between ideal and experiential has a type in the correspondence between body and soul. In turn, the correspondence of body and soul provides a type for his construct of translucence in both poetry and philosophy. In his essay "On the Principles of Genial Criticism," Coleridge repeats the idea from "Phantom" and "The Two Founts" of a spirit that shines through its corresponding body or matter:

> The Mystics meant the same, when they define beauty as the subjection of matter to spirit so as to be transformed into a symbol, in and through which the spirit reveals itself; and declare <u>that</u> the <u>most</u> beautiful, where the most obstacles to a full manifestation have been most perfectly overcome. 95

Still following the poetry, Coleridge formulates his direct expressions of translucence around this notion of "the soul's translucence thro' her crystal shrine." In a further discussion of beauty and art, he maintains that "'<u>forma formans per formam formatam translucens</u>,' is the definition and perfection of ideal art."[96] The identity of <u>forma formans</u> and <u>forma formata</u> reiterates Coleridge's correspondence between essence and object, spirit and matter, and here, he phrases the identity as a translucence.

The forma formans appears through the translucent medium of the forma formata.

The translucence of spirit through body and essence through object gives to the Coleridgean symbol its particular character. The symbol is a part of the ideal that it represents. Furthermore, it constitutes the only objective and visible part of that ideal. In terms of Coleridge's construct of translucence: "a Symbol . . . is characterized by a translucence of the Special in the Individual or of the General in the Especial or of the Universal in the General. Above all by the translucence of the Eternal through and in the Temporal."[97]

In the poetry, Coleridge sees the progressive apprehension of the ideal through the experiential as an augmenting translucence. In the philosophy also, he describes a more proximate view of the ideal as an increase in transparency. Science advances in terms of a dissipation of the obscuring or translucent medium of mist:

> With the knowledge of LAW alone dwell Power and Prophecy, decisive Experiment, and, lastly, a scientific method, that dissipating with its earliest rays the gnomes of hypothesis and the mists of theory may, within a single generation, open out on the philosophic Seer discoveries that had baffled the gigantic, but blind and guideless industry of ages. 98

The symbol becomes more transparent than translucent to the divine light as it joins with the ideal that it represents, the Platonic Idea:

> The pure untroubled brightness of an IDEA, that most glorious birth of the God-like within us, which even as the Light, its material symbol, reflects itself from a thousand surfaces, and flies homeward to its Parent Mind enriched with a thousand forms, itself above form and still remaining in its own simplicity and identity! O for a flash of that same Light, in which the first position of geometric science that ever loosed itself from the generalizations of a groping and insecure experience, did for the first time reveal itself to a human intellect in all its evidence and all its fruitfulness, Transparence without Vacuum, and Plenitude without Opacity! 99

Coleridge seeks, both poetically and philosophically, the Prophet's view of divine light "with unrefracted ray." As in the poetry, he intimates that perhaps poetic genius can capture, if not a totally "unrefracted" light, at least the true reflection of that ray. The immediate depiction that the poet offers when he paints "to the imagination, not to the fancy . . . is <u>creation</u> rather than <u>painting</u>, or if painting, yet such, and with such co-presence of the whole picture flash'd at once upon the eye, as the sun paints in a camera obscura."[100] In other words, the poetic genius effects an instantaneity of vision that approaches angelic intuition.

In accord with the poetry, however, the vision of "unrefracted" light seems largely reserved for those who transcend the experiential, the prophet, the angel, and the human soul after death. As already observed "to see God face to face" is the prerogative of angels and those who have passed "the process of that Transmutation" that "to

the senses of other men would be called Death." Coleridge reiterates his poetic notion that unobscured vision must await a millennium. In his Philosophical Lectures, he describes the end of the progress of science in terms of such a millennium:

> And then too shall we be in that state to which science in all its form is gradually leading us. Then will the other great Bible of God, the Book of Nature, become transparent to us, when we regard the forms of matter as words, as symbols, valuable only as being the expression, an unrolled but yet a glorious fragment, of the wisdom of the Supreme Being. 101

The end of both scientific and human progression emerges as a reading of the translucent symbols of nature, the language of God, as ever more transparent. Full transparency, Coleridge implies, awaits the total "unrolling" of divine wisdom, of which as yet man sees only "a glorious fragment."

As a final parallel to the poetry, Coleridge intimates an exemption to this rule in his idea of the dream. Through dreams, those who are neither prophets or geniuses may still glimpse the ideal without its translucent medium. In a notebook entry, Coleridge depicts the apotheosis of the dream, the sleep of 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 - 102

Sleep, in the realm of the ideal, amounts to an immediate

perception of deity, but, even in the experiential domain, the dream has something of this quality of ideal apprehension. From the world of phenomena, the sphere of outward manifestations, the only immediate mode of perceiving the ideal world of the noumena, the things in themselves, is the dream. On occasion, "we dream the things themselves."[103]

Again, as in the poetry, the dream plays a second role and appears as another shadowing medium. Regarding the correspondence between body and soul, Coleridge affirms, "It is impossible to express these truths truly, or otherwise than vaguely and as it were dreamily."[105] Regarding the remembrance of past life, he maintains, "It must not be a sensuous remembrance of a Death passed over. No! Something like a Dream / that you had not died, but had been taken off, in short, the real events with the obscurity of a Dream."[106] Although both poetically and philosophically, Coleridge implies that a dream may on occasion lift the veil between the ideal and the experiential, more often, even in sleep, the translucent shadow remains.

The construct of translucence, like the preceding constructs, reveals the continuum between Coleridge's poetry and philosophy. Once again, the pattern in the philosophy parallels that of the poetry. In both modes of his writing, Coleridge formulates a vision of the ideal through the

experiential, and in both, he approaches rather than attains this ideal vision. The essential is never truly revealed to mortal eyes. The ideal, even when not obscured, is only visible through the translucent medium of experiential manifestation.

Unlike the other constructs, translucence involves more than the elaboration of one fundamental principle under a number of metaphoric expressions. To arrive at the concept of translucence, Coleridge embarks on a detailed exploration of the limits and possibilities of the senses, especially the sense of sight. Through such exploration, he achieves his final formulation of the relation between the experiential world of these senses and the ideal world that lies beyond their reach.

The exploration passes through several stages. First, Coleridge considers obscured vision as error and blindness, the shadow without substance that hides the light of the ideal. He then progresses to a blindness that in itself constitutes a vision, blocking out empirical distractions and focusing attention on the ideal world. He arrives at the concept of an "inward sight," a non-visual apprehension of the ideal. Finally, he translates this "inward sight" into the metaphors of the substantial shadow and the translucent medium. Both poetry and philosophy attest to Coleridge's progress through these stages. Both reveal

the same elements given the same development.

The substantial shadow and the translucent medium correspond to the Coleridgean symbol. Both indicate a single mode of apprehending the ideal through the experiential, the symbolic. Poetically and philosophically, Coleridge develops his construct of translucence in terms of symbolic expression. He then brings such expression to bear on the concept of the symbol. He ends by describing the symbolic symbolically.

Of all the constructs, translucence best demonstrates Coleridge's method of proceeding from the abstract to the concrete. He fixes the procedure once and for all as a matter of symbolism. The Coleridgean symbol is both the concrete representation of the abstract and the sole conductor to this abstract. Thus, Coleridge speaks of the immediate perceptions of imagination and the intuitive pictures created by the poetic genius.

Philosophically and poetically, Coleridge resigns himself to the translucent veil of the experiential over the ideal. Although he points out a certain transcendence exemplified by the prophet and the dream, he concentrates on an imaginative apprehension that accepts the veil but seeks to make it ever more transparent. For Coleridge the closer the approach to the abstract and ideal, the more transparent becomes the veil. As in his other constructs,

he seeks, in his poetic and philosophic translucence, the closest view of the abstract and its most immediate concrete representation.

FOOTNOTES

1. Poetical Works, I, p. 6
2. Ibid., p. 164.
3. Ibid., p. 124.
4. Ibid., pp. 81-2
5. Ibid., p. 110
6. Ibid., p. 168.
7. Ibid., pp. 150-1.
8. Ibid., p. 456.
9. Ibid., pp. 160-1.
10. Ibid., p. 114.
11. Ibid., p. 370.
12. Ibid., p. 377.
13. Ibid., p. 364.
14. Ibid., p. 259.
15. Ibid., p. 132.
16. Ibid., p. 305.
17. Ibid., p. 430.
18. Ibid., p. 363.
19. Ibid., p. 101.
20. Ibid., p. 102.
21. Ibid., p. 385.
22. Ibid., p. 478.
23. Ibid., p. 418.

24. Poetical Works, I, p. 109.
25. Ibid., p. 132.
26. Ibid., p. 124.
27. Ibid., p. 423.
28. Ibid., p. 107.
29. Ibid., p. 81.
30. Ibid., p. 147.
31. Ibid., p. 345.
32. Ibid., p. 394.
33. Ibid., p. 425.
34. Ibid., p. 426.
35. Ibid., p. 467.
36. Ibid., II, p. 1001.
37. Ibid., p. 998
38. Ibid., p. 999.
39. Ibid., I, p. 365.
40. Ibid., p. 132.
41. Ibid., p. 180.
42. Ibid., p. 132.
43. Ibid., p. 461.
44. Ibid., p. 393.
45. Ibid., p. 455.
46. Ibid., p. 487.
47. Ibid., p. 405.
48. Ibid., p. 12.

49. Poetical Works, I, p. 124.

50. Notebooks, I, pt. 1, # 1124.

51. Poetical Works, I, p. 257.

52. Ibid., p. 350.

53. Notebooks, III, pt. 1, # 3649.

54. Poetical Works, I, p. 359.

55. Letters, I, p. 228

56. Ibid., II, p. 737

57. Lay Sermons, p. 10.

58. Notebooks, II, pt. 1, # 2556.

59. Friend, I, p. 53.

60. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, The Watchman, ed. Lewis Patton (London and Princeton, 1970), p. 125.

61. Lectures 1795, p. 52.

62. Notebooks, II, pt. 1, # 3171

63. Ibid., I, pt. 1, # 1612; the brackets are Coburn's

64. Friend, I, p. 440.

65. Lay Sermons, p. 89.

66. Ibid., p. 137.

67. Notebooks, III, pt. 1, # 4356.

68. Selected Poetry and Prose, p. 583.

69. Notebooks, II, pt. 1, # 2486.

70. Friend, I, p. 367.

71. Ibid., p. 106.

72. Ibid.

73. Ibid., p. 519.

74. Notebooks, II, pt. 1, # 2546.

75. Lectures 1795, p. 158.

76. Friend, I, p. 112.

77. Notebooks, III, pt. 1, # 3700.

78. Lay Sermons, p. 136.

79. Ibid.

80. Notebooks, II, pt. 1, # 2556.

81. Ibid., # 3858.

82. Poetical Works, II, p. 1106.

83. Literery Remains, II, p. 250.

84. Lectures 1795, p. 208.

85. See Lay Sermons, pp. 97-8, for the quotations in this paragraph demonstrating Coleridge's argument.

86. Notebooks, III, pt. 1, # 4005.

87. Friend, I, pp. 440-1.

88. Literary Remains, I, p. 155.

89. Notebooks, I, pt. 1, # 528.

90. Friend, II, p. 343.

91. Notebooks, II, pt. 1, # 2625.

92. Letters, II, p. 1000.

93. Aids to Reflection, p. 21 n and Lectures 1795, p. 209.

94. Lay Sermons, pp. 96-7.

95. Biographia Literaria, II, p. 239.

96. Ibid., p. 187.

97. Lay Sermons, p. 30.

98. Friend, I, p. 470.

99. Lay Sermons, p. 50

100. Biographia Literaria, II, p. 102

101. Philosophical Lectures, p. 367.

102. Notebooks, I, pt. 1, # 191

103. Lay Sermons, p. 80.

104. Letters, II, p. 1195.

105. Notebooks, III, pt. 1, # 3962.

106. Ibid., II, pt.1, # 2584.

CONCLUSION

All of Coleridge's constructs show a continuum between his philosophy and his poetry. In turn, this continuum reveals two distinct modes of formulation. In the first two constructs, dichotomy and synthesis, Coleridge creates a pattern in the course of the poetry which he then repeats philosophically. In the remaining constructs, correspondence, progression, and translucence, the identity between poetry and philosophy emerges as an interpenetration. Coleridge arrives at the elements comprising these constructs through a process of parallel development. An idea in the poetry becomes a philosophical concept, a philosophical concept appears as a poetic image. Subsequently, each of these constructs demonstrates the same elements, similarly expounded, in both the poetry and the philosophy.

The relation between the ideal and the experiential, the essence and the object, is the underlying pattern of all the constructs. Here, again, the continuum becomes evident. Whether Coleridge expresses this relation as a dichotomy, a synthesis, a correspondence, a progression, or a translucence, the problem of reconciling the experiential with the ideal gives equal inspiration to his poetry and to his philosophy.

In the course of every construct, Coleridge establishes

that the ideal, or essential, cannot be apprehended directly and experientially. Instead, he concludes that it requires a sense of the symbolic for its perception. Given such a conclusion, it is not surprising to find that when Coleridge deals with this ideal, whether poetically or philosophically, he expresses himself symbolically and not didactically. In the first four constructs, his repetition of one concept in a variety of formulations gives a metaphoric value to such repetitions wherever they occur, in the poetry or in the philosophy. In the last construct, his exploration of the realm of the ideal in terms of its visibility, or translucence, ends in a description of the symbolic symbolically.

While such symbolic expression, in the philosophy as well as in the poetry, further demonstrates Coleridge's continuum, the thought behind the expression also proves continuous. Coleridge develops his ideas as a result of his particular method. He gives to an abstract a concrete formulation; that is, he formulates a philosophical concept under a poetic image. He then draws from the concrete formulation a further abstract. In other words, he finds in the poetic image food for further metaphysical thought. Coleridge applies this procedure whether he is working in terms of philosophy or poetry.

The special nature of the continuum between Coleridge's philosophy and poetry provides an answer to one major criticism

of his work. The fact that his expression has the same fundamentally symbolic character in both poetry and philosophy throws a new light on the contradictory nature of his work. In this light, Coleridge's contradictions resolve into metaphor. For instance, a statement involving the antithesis between essence and object does not really contradict a statement affirming their correspondence, any more than it is a contradiction to say, in the same breath with Burns, that "my Luve's like a red, red, rose" and "like the melodie / That's sweetly play'd in tune!" Both are examples of metaphoric expression. The concept behind a metaphor, because it cannot be exhausted by any one formulation, admits an infinite number of images, but no one would say that, for that reason, such diverse images are contradictions. As already observed, behind all of Coleridge's constructs lies the one concept, the relation of ideal and experiential, for which each element of each construct acts as a metaphor.

Another aspect of the Coleridgean continuum answers another criticism of his writings, the objection to his plagiarism. Granted, Coleridge borrows liberally and often without acknowledgement from other authors;[1] he nevertheless incorporates such borrowings into a framework that is uniquely his. Coleridge's characteristic method, his working from abstract to concrete and from concrete to abstract, not only makes poetry out of his philosophy and philosophy

out of his poetry; it also makes the works of others his own.

As demonstrated in the course of this analysis, to cite only a few examples, Coleridge uses the dynamic arguments of Schelling, a Spinozian or Platonic view that the many can be one, a formulation from Leighton, an image from Milton, and a sonnet from Marini. Such appropriations, however, only become fuel for the general fire of his method. The Schellingian arguments serve to substantiate the Coleridgean dichotomy of Imagination and Fancy. The Spinozian or Platonic "one in many" confirms Coleridge's "unity in multeity." The formulation from Leighton (of the soul's identity with God) provides another image for Coleridge's correspondence. Milton's stream of truth depicts an idea that accords with the direction of Coleridgean progression. Finally, in the sonnet of Marini, Coleridge sees the confirmation of his own concept and expression of translucence.

Where Coleridge finds in the images and ideas of others substantiation for his own images and ideas, he borrows, but he fits such borrowings into his general system. From the ideas of others, as from his own ideas, he draws poetic images. From the images of others, as from his own images, he draws philosophical ideas.

Through it all, Coleridge continues his quest. He explores the realm of the ideal, and then turns to the only

mode of representing this ideal, the analogies of the experiential world. As he moves from the concrete to the abstract, from the ideal to the experiential, and again from the experiential to the ideal, he documents his passage. This documentation he supplies in the only terms he considers suited to so lofty and divine a subject, the symbol that is a part of the ideal that it represents. By means of this symbol, and the resulting continuum of symbolic expression, Coleridge succeeds in making a poetry of his philosophy.

FOOTNOTES

1. See Thomas McFarland, Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition, the edition of Biographia Literaria edited by J. Shawcross, and G.N.G. Orsini, Coleridge and German Idealism, for further details of Coleridge's plagiarism.

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My development of this notion is, to the best of my knowledge, original. I analyze the continuum in terms of my view of Coleridge's characteristic method. This I see as an initial perception of the abstract, and a subsequent attempt to make concrete that abstract, resulting in what can be termed a "poetry of philosophy." To demonstrate Coleridge's method I delineate five constructs of his thought, dichotomy, synthesis, correspondence, progression, and translucence, and these I discovered through an independent analysis of both his poetry and philosophy. I have taken the name for each construct from the Coleridgean term most appropriate to the concept developed in that construct.

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Griggs have been invaluable for my study of the patterns of Coleridge's thought.

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