Coleridge's Conception of the Will:
A Philosophic and Aesthetic Inquiry

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts at the
University of Ottawa

Jennifer MacDonald

12 July 1994

ISBN 0-612-15645-1

Canada

UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA
UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA

For Robert

Preface

The following document is written in gender exclusive terms. This is done in the interest of grammatical clarity. The terms *man*, *mankind*, and all other masculine pronouns whose antecedents are *man* or *mankind* are used in the universal sense and refer to all members of the human race, regardless of gender.

Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to thank: my advisor John Spencer Hill for his helpful direction, comments, advice, and unfailing good humour; my parents, Martin and Penny MacDonald, for their advice and support; John A. and Margie MacIsaac for their support and continued interest; all my friends, both in and outside the university, for their sympathetic ears; and finally my husband, Rob, who, more than anyone else, puts up with me.

List of Abbreviations

AR	*Aids to Reflection.* Ed. H.N. Coleridge. London: Kennikat Press, 1971.
BL	*Biographia Literaria.* Edd. J.Engell & W. Jackson Bate. 2 vols. Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1983.
CL	*Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge.* Ed. Earl Leslie Griggs. 6 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956-71.
CN	*The Collected Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge.* Ed. Kathleen Coburn. 5 vols. (in progress). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1957-
PA	"On Poesy or Art," in *Coleridge. Biographia Literaria: With his Aesthetical Essays.* Ed. John Shawcross. 2 vols. Oxford: Oxford U.P., 1958.
PL	*The Philosophical Lectures of Samuel Taylor Coleridge.* Ed. Kathleen Coburn. London: Pilot Press, 1949.
PW	*Coleridge's Poetical Works.* Ed. E. H. Coleridge. 2 vols. London: Oxford U.P., 1969
SM	*The Statesman's Manual.* Ed. R. J. White. Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1969.
TF	*The Friend.* Ed. Barbara Rooke. Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1969.

Coleridge's Conception of the Will:
A Philosophic and Aesthetic Inquiry
Jennifer Mac Donald, July 12, 1994

This thesis shows that Coleridge's philosophical work is more than merely a compilation of other thinkers' ideas and more than merely a collection of fragmented or incoherent thoughts. Coleridge's work-from the poetry of his early years to the theological treatises of his final days gives evidence of the progress of an intelligent, vigorous mind striving toward a unified system of thought that incorporates the diverse aspects of human art, though and faith.

This thesis explores one instance of how Coleridge's thought on human endevors forms a coherent body by tracing the role he assigns to the will throughout his work. I have chosen the will as the vehicle through which to explore Coleridge's work, not only because it is central in his particular thought, but also because, in Coleridge's view , it is an essential power of the human mind that operates in all thought.

As he himself said:

"Unless...we have some distinct notion of the will and some acquaintance with the prevalent errors respecting the same...our reflections on the particular truths and evidence of a spiritual state will remain obscure, perplexed and unsafe."

Table of Contents

Introduction

Although few people would dare question the importance of Samuel Taylor Coleridge as a poet, his impact as a philosophical thinker has customarily been underrated. Philosophical scholars have either dismissed his philosophy as a fragmented, largely incoherent body of work (Benn 257) or praised it merely for introducing German idealism to England (Windleband 655). Even among literary scholars, Coleridge is generally praised as a synthesizer of German aesthetics rather than as an original thinker in his own right (*BL* I lxxiii).

However, as this thesis attempts to show, Coleridge's work is more than merely a compilation of other thinkers' ideas and more than merely a collection of fragmented or incoherent thoughts. Coleridge's work—from the poetry of his early years to the theological treatises of his final days—gives evidence of the progress of an intelligent, vigorous mind striving toward a unified system of thought that incorporates the diverse aspects of human art, thought, and faith. As John Muirhead has pointed out in the Preface of his book, *Coleridge as Philosopher*:

> his ideas are far more important than has hitherto been realized by either the educated public or by professed students of the subject ... [and] they formed in his mind a far more coherent body of philosophical thought than he has anywhere been credited with. (Muirhead 15)

This thesis will explore one instance of how Coleridge's thought on epistemology, aesthetics, religion, and art forms a "coherent body," by tracing the role he assigns to the will throughout his work. I have chosen the will as the vehicle through which to explore Coleridge's work, not

only because it is central in his particular thought, but also because, in Coleridge's view, it is an essential power of the human mind that operates in *all* thought. As he himself has said: "Unless ... we have some distinct notion of the will and some acquaintance with the prevalent errors respecting the same ... our reflections on the particular truths and evidence of a spiritual state will remain obscure, perplexed and unsafe" (*AR* 89).

What, then, in brief, *is* the will?

According to Coleridge's description in *Biographia Literaria*, it is the *self-conscious spirit* that determines the identity of each particular individual;[1] it is also a philosophical first principle—an *a priori fact* of human experience—not something deduced *ex hypothesi* from philosophical thought (*BL* I 280). The co-implication of self-consciousness and will in Coleridge's philosophy indicates the centrality of this concept in his epistemology—and, as will be seen, also in his aesthetics, theology and poetry. This thesis seeks to establish what Coleridge's conception of the will actually is, what role it plays in his epistemology and theology, what role it plays in his aesthetics, and, finally, how his theory of the will manifests itself, in creative practice, in his poetry. To this end, the first chapter, entitled "Coleridge's Theological Philosophy of the Will," sets out to explore how Coleridge defines self-consciousness, reason, and will as central constituents of the self, given to man by God. Coleridge saw the will as the point at which the self-in-potential interacts with concrete experience to become an actualized self-conscious being, a being that utilizes elements of both *a priori* and *a posteriori* knowledge. The prime forces behind this synthesis are will and consciousness.

The opening chapter goes on to explore how the various epistemological powers—such as the senses, the understanding, and the reason—work together to generate man's perception of both external reality and himself. And finally, the chapter examines the moral powers of man—the conscience and the will—and determines how these powers work together to establish and maintain man's relationship with God.

Chapter Two, entitled "Coleridge's Aesthetic of the Will," explores the aesthetic powers of Fancy and Imagination and the impact the will has on them. It also seeks to distinguish between

[1] *Cf.* "the free-will, our only absolute *self*" (*BL* I 114).

primary and secondary Imagination, and to explore how the will is the distinguishing element between the two. As Chapter One has established that reason and will are the prime powers engaged in generating self-consciousness, so Chapter Two will establish that Imagination and will are the prime powers engaged in generating artistic creativity.

Finally, Chapter Two will explore the role that artistic creation plays in generating self-consciousness. Imagination—the faculty, at one level, responsible for artistic creation—is also seen as the "prime agent of *all* human perception" (*BL* II 304). When the primary Imagination works in conjunction with the will, the secondary Imagination is formed. This power allows human beings to perform acts of artistic creation in which the perceptions of the individual and the creative aspects of the artist's imagination combine to create objects that "imitate" external reality. This external self-expression is an extension and mirror of the self-reflective act that allows individuals to develop self-consciousness. Thus, acts of artistic expression are the result of a secondary level of consciousness—namely, "artistic consciousness."

The final chapter of the thesis, entitled "Coleridge's Poems: Theory in Practice" seeks to show how the theories explored in Chapters One and Two manifest themselves in Coleridge's poetic works. While Coleridge wrote most of his poetry before he began to formulate his philosophic and aesthetic theories, evidence of what became important ideas in his theories can be found in some of his poems. Chapter three will focus on three of the better known poems: "This Lime Tree Bower: My Prison," "Dejection: An Ode," and "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." "This Lime Tree Bower" illustrates how the act of artistic creation serves as an extension of the process by which self-consciousness is generated. "Dejection" illustrates how the will is central to the process of artistic creation, and "The Ancient Mariner"—the most complex and interesting of the three—illustrates how an improper exercise of the will can prevent an individual from achieving full selfhood and attaining his divinely-given potential for self-realization.

Modern critics of Coleridge have approached his work in various ways. Some have attempted to interpret it by drawing upon his psychological or biographical profiles.[2] Others have

[2] K. Dugas, "Struggling with the Contingent: Self-Conscious Imagination in Coleridge's Notebooks."

hunted for similarities between his work and that of earlier literary theorists.[3] Still others have tried to find evidence in Coleridge's work to support (in some cases, to prop up) or to deny traditional notions about Coleridge, such as his pantheism.[4] However, the most popular treatment of Coleridge's prose work in recent years has been, as Jonathan Wordsworth has so aptly put it, to play "the game of Pick-your-own-German-Philosopher ... [and then to ride them] like hobby horses through the pages of the *Biographia*" (Wordsworth 82). Indeed, scholars in recent years have picked out references to, quotations from, and instances of the influence on Coleridge of Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Jacobi, and a host of other German sources with the thoroughness and efficiency of vultures cleaning a carcass. One need only consult the notes to *The Collected Works* edition of the *Biographia* for conclusive proof of how seriously, as an end in itself, some scholars have taken the documenting of Coleridge's influences.[5] It is quite evident, of course, from the exhaustive research of these scholars—and, it may be added, from Coleridge's own notebooks and letters—that the poet *was* strongly influenced by Kant and his colleagues. However, what should be equally important to a scholar approaching Coleridge's work is what Coleridge himself said—since it may not always be quite the same thing. Thus, in the following exploration of Coleridge's poetry and prose, German sources are mentioned only as and when appropriate, *e.g.*, to help define a term or to elaborate a central idea. The main focus of this thesis is on what Coleridge himself has said.

Because Coleridge's writings themselves are the main focus of this examination, citations from secondary sources are generally relegated to the footnotes. Occasionally, secondary sources are cited in the text, if they are useful in elaborating an idea under immediate discussion. Critics who differ with, or seek to refute, Coleridge's doctrines are discussed in the footnotes.

Some scholars have chosen to treat the development of Coleridge's theories in a chronological

---

[3] Jean Pierre Mileur, "Deconstruction as Imagination and Method."

[4] Thomas McFarland, *Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition*; Lawrence Poston, "Poetry as Pure Act: A Coleridgean Ideal in Early Victorian England"; Owen Barfield, *What Coleridge Thought.*

[5] For further proof see: David Ferris, "Coleridge's Ventriloquy: The Abduction from the *Biographia*"; G.N.G. Orsini, *Coleridge and German Idealism*; J.Benzinger, "Organic Unity: Leibniz to Coleridge."

fashion, dealing with them at particular points in his career. This approach is useful since Coleridge continued to modify his theories throughout his life. This paper, however, presents his thought as a finished whole and is based upon a number of works written at different points in his life. The main sources are *Biographia Literaria* (1815), *The Philosophical Lectures* (1819), and *Aids to Reflection* (1825). Coleridge, as an organicist and through his unconscious adherence to what Nicholas of Cusa called the doctrine of *learned ignorance*, held that learning is a continuous process—a progressive closing up to truth about the world, about the self, about God. His theories were the result of years of development and revision. Thus, in order to do justice both to his final vision as well as the process of his education (*ex + ducere*) of the self, this paper presents his theories as a composite of statements made throughout his life. In this way, a more complete and truly representative view of his thought is presented.

The guiding principle of this thesis is that Coleridge is a thinker of distinction as well as a poet of considerable skill, and that the work of the thinker can often be useful in illuminating the sometimes murky processes of the poet. This assertion is not the prelude to an attempt to unravel the tapestry of Coleridge's poetic works. The intent in the following pages is to follow Coleridge himself in his later philosophic, aesthetic, and theological preoccupations by attempting to understand, in some small way, what it means to 'write poetry.'

Chapter One:

Coleridge's Theological Philosophy of the Will

> Errors have ever been partial truths mistaken for the whole Truth, truths divorced from their correspondent and supporting opposites, and converted into contrary falsehoods by being reciprocally unbalanced and disintegrated. (*CN* 4326 f20v)

Since Coleridge is an organicist, it is necessary, in order to appreciate the role that will plays in his system, to see it in the context of his epistemology at large. Only by establishing such a context, and by clearly defining terms, can an examination of his theory of the will have any meaning. It is my intention, therefore, in this present chapter to give a brief explanation of Coleridge's philosophical system, starting with his first principles, then moving to his theories of perception and the generation of knowledge. After outlining the main epistemological faculties of his system, I shall then describe the impact that the will has on the entire structure and, finally, conclude the chapter by exploring the impact that moral conduct, which is determined by the will, has on this structure.

At the starting point of any philosophical system are certain first principles that are axiomatic and must be considered as given in order for the argument to proceed. Coleridge's philosophic system begins with the first principles that God exists, that He is, by definition, our creator, and that He is both omniscient and omnipotent (*PL* 364). Since God's existence is a first principle, the onus does not lie with Coleridge to prove His existence; it must be taken as a given. However, Coleridge does say that proof of the existence of the Almighty—if one were to attempt such proof—is not obtainable through any line of reasoning or system of moral values; rather, it is to be discovered in the very *existence* of the faculties of reason and conscience themselves (*CN* 4326 f20v). The existence of God, like other axioms, is a fact that, according to Coleridge, must be taken on faith. Proof of His existence lies outside the domain of reason.

> The question concerning our faith in the existence of a God, not only as the ground of the universe by his essence, but as its maker and judge by his wisdom and holy will, appear to stand thus. The sciential *reason*, whose objects are purely theoretical, remains neutral, as long as its name and semblance are not usurped by the opponents of the doctrine. But it *then* becomes an effective ally by exposing the false shew [*sic*] of demonstration, or by evincing the equal demonstrability of the contrary from premises equally logical. The *understanding* mean time suggests, the analogy of *experience* facilitates, the belief. Nature excites and recalls it, as by perpetual revelation. Our feelings almost necessitate it; and the law of conscience peremptorily commands it. The arguments, that at all apply to it are in its favour; and there is nothing against it, but its own sublimity.[1] (*BL* I 203)

Once the existence of God is established, then, for Christian thinkers, certain things must follow. Since God is a creator, his creation must have existence. Thus, the reality that man perceives as external to himself must be accepted as having existence (*BL I* 259). Furthermore, it must also follow that man is a part of God's creation: that we exist and are conscious is not an illusion. God is the creator of the universe, and the ground of all existence is found in Him—"*Sum quia in Deo sum*" (*BL* I 274).[2]

While man is part of God's creation, the relationship that he has with creation and with God is a unique one. In Genesis 1:26 God declares that He will make man in His own image. The nature of man as *imago Dei* means that he is endowed with certain qualities that the rest of creation does not have, qualities that man, though to a lesser degree, shares with God. The most important of these qualities are self-consciousness, reason, conscience, and will (*i.e.*, free-will). These qualities determine not only the way that man interacts with God and His creation, but also determine what kind of freedoms and responsibilities he has within this relationship.

---

[1] It should be noted that this quotation refers to an early period in the development of Coleridge's philosophy (1797-98). As he developed his theories further, the religious influence on his thinking became more profound.

[2] Benzinger notes that some may see in Coleridge's assertion that God is the ground of existence evidence to support the theory that Coleridge was a pantheist. However, as he rightly goes on to point out, "pantheism tends to eliminate the distinction between God and the universe, between intention and execution" (30). The nature of God as an Absolute Will necessitates the need for an act, since a will is only a will if it is exercised. It is the all-important ACT of creation that separates creation from creator. While God is the ground of existence, He is by no means identical with it.

While various forms of animal and plant life can be said to have a kind of consciousness, only man can reflect upon, and gain knowledge of, himself. Thus, while all of existence is grounded in the existence of God, man's *knowledge* of his own existence is grounded in himself. "If a man be asked how he knows that he is? He can only answer *sum quia sum*" (*BL* I 274). It is this capacity for reflection that shapes the way man perceives both reality and himself as an individual within that reality.

Because man is a self-conscious as well as conscious being, he perceives reality in a diadic fashion. Perception is divided into what is recognized by the individual as self and not-self—or (in Kantian terms) subject and object. Knowledge is produced in man's mind when a unity is recognized between the two categories.

> All knowledge rests on the coincidence of an object with a subject.... For we can know that only which is true: and the truth is universally placed in the coincidence of the thought with the thing, of the representation with the object represented.... During the act of knowledge itself, the objective and subjective are so instantly united, that we cannot determine to which of the two the priority belongs. There is no first, and no second; both are coinstantaneous and one (*BL* I 252 255).

The stress placed in this quotation on the unity of subject and object in the act of knowledge reveals that, at the heart of the subject/object distinction in the Coleridgean system, lies a paradox. While it is true that humans perceive the distinction between subject and object, these distinctions, while describing the reality experienced by the individual, possess reality in the mind of the individual alone.[3]

---

[3] The paradoxical nature of the distinction of subject and object is discussed by Archie J. Bahm in his philosophic text, *Polarity, Dialectic and Organicity*. While the terms used by Bahm differ, the system of relations between subject and object are essentially the same. In the following quotation, *existence* refers to objects encountered as external to the self and *experience* refers to the self and the knowledge of the outside world that it possesses.

> ...the categories of existence and experience, although different, interdepend. Since experience exists, every category of experience exists; so all of the categories of existence apply to each category of experience. Since existence can be dealt with only as experienced, every category of experience applies to each category of existence as experienced. It may seem to some that, with such universality of mutual application, no

Katherine Wheeler rightly points out that an oversimplification of Coleridge's epistemology has lead many critics to miss important distinctions Coleridge makes in his theories. These oversimplifications have lead many to believe that Coleridge's epistemology is a mere reiteration of the Kantian system (Wheeler 21). The main error lies in interpreting the human mind in the Coleridgean system in the same way as it was portrayed in the Kantian system, *i.e.*, as an entity separate from the reality which it perceives. By separating the mind from the world of objects, the act of producing knowledge ceases to be an open and continuing process. Rather, it becomes a static system, in which a piece of knowledge is an end product that has no effect upon the mind perceiving or conceiving it other than by the act of possessing it as a 'unit' of knowledge (Wheeler 33). Wheeler states Coleridge's position thus:

> Experience is not a private world of a perceiver outside the course of natural existence. Experience is, rather, modes of interaction of natural objects, amongst which the perceiver happens to be one (Wheeler 30).

It is vitally important, then, to see the Coleridgean system as an organic system—one in which there are, not so much static agents, as dynamic forces or *powers* (to use Coleridge's word) which are continually acting upon, changing, modifying, and influencing each other.[4]

Thus, knowledge is arrived at through the processes of analysis and synthesis, in which reality as experienced by an individual is both recognized as separate from that individual and recognized as belonging to categories of experience possessed by, and thus part of, that individual.

---

distinction between experience and existence is needed, but for organicism, such a distinction is basic, and in a sense constitutes a major basic polarity which remains omnipresent in existence as experienced and should, like ... every other categorial polarity, be kept in mind implicitly at all times in philosophical thinking (Bahm 273-274).

[4] It is important to note the importance of the will on this process of recognition and the reconciliation of opposites, as Engell and Jackson Bates observe in their Introduction to Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*:

> The dialectic of matter and spirit, the 'polar logic' of nature and mind, objective and subjective, gave this system great flexibility. We can think of this dialectic, with its initial stress on an act of intelligence that creates matter or nature, as the dynamic in the concept of dynamic philosophy." It requires a "force" or creative act to transform and to reconcile the two halves of the whole (*BL* I lxxvi).

In the process of analysis, the mind is made aware of the distinction between itself as a subject and the outside world as a series of objects. However, in the process of synthesis, this distinction disappears as the mind is made aware of the identity of the self with that of the rest of creation. In this way, there is both an alienation of the self from the outside world that occurs when the self recognizes the difference between the self and external objects and, at the same time, an identification of the self with the outside world that occurs when the self finds common ground between external objects and previous personal experience.[5] Since both of these processes are going on in the mind at the same time and continually affecting each other, the distinction between the self and the external world is continually fluctuating between identification with and separation from the outside world.[6]

The most important instance of how knowledge is produced in man is how man generates his knowledge about himself. Self-knowledge is the power that enables man to be aware of his consciousness. (Man's sense of self is a small reflection of the Absolute self, that is, of God.) Self-knowledge is produced when man makes himself the primary focus of his observation.

---

[5] While the terms "synthesis" and "analysis" bear a superficial similarity to the vocabulary of the Hegelain dialectic, the process outlined here is by no means identical. According to Stanley Rosen, in his work *G.W.F. Hegel: An Introduction to the Science of Wisdom*, Hegel defined consciousness as "the identity of identity and non-identity" (25). The process in Hegel results in the subsuming of the subject and object in the synthesized product. In Coleridge, not only do subject and object maintain their integrity, but the identity between them cannot be complete if self-consciousness is to be attained (*cf. BL* I 279).

[6] Brian Wilkie attempts to describe the polarity of subject and object in perception as a series of overlapping meanings based upon the existential properties of knower and known rather than a union or interdependence of the knower and known on an essential level (Wilkie 20). His description of the relationship between subject and object, however, undermines both Coleridge's epistemology and aesthetics by rendering all relationships allegorical. (It also strips his thought of its theological import: for a more in-depth discussion of the theological aspect of Coleridge's organicism, see the section on symbols in Chapter 2 below.) Coleridge's epistemological theory of the generation of knowledge is based upon the same principle as his aesthetic theory of symbolic representation. The relationship between subject and object or symbol and symbolized is one in which the two forces both define each other through mutual opposition as well as through mutual participation. The relationship is one of *inter*dependence.

J. Robert Barth provides a helpful illustration of this relationship of polarities when he observes that the relationship outlined by Coleridge is not how 1+1=2, but rather how 1 is manifested in 2 (Barth II 26).

Wilkie's difficulty with Coleridge's kind of organicism is that it resists classification in traditional hierarchical paradigms (Wilkie 5). However, it is this resistance that M.H. Abrams sees as the one of the structure's greatest strengths: "The result [of this system] is an organic structure that avoids the schisms and divisions of other philosophic systems" (Abrams I 211).

> This principle, and so characterized, manifests itself in the Sum or I am; which I shall hereafter indiscriminately express by the words spirit, self, and self-consciousness. In this, and this alone, object and subject, being and knowing, are identical, each involving and supposing the other. In other words, it is a subject which becomes a subject by the act of constructing itself objectively to itself; but which is never an object except for itself and only insofar as by the very same act it becomes a subject. It may be described therefore as a perpetual self-duplication of one and the same power into object and subject which presuppose each other and can exist only as antitheses (*BL* I 272).

In other words, man's sense of self is the product of a self-generating process that is maintained by constant self-reflection. Knowledge of the self is the most important kind of knowledge to man as it is basic to his conception of reality. All outside knowledge is determined to an extent by the knowledge we have of ourselves. Self-knowledge is the fixed point from which man starts, as well as the only point from which he can infer the existence of a higher Being (*BL* I 275).

Since objects of knowledge (or Nature) are finite, and since the subject or self exists in antithesis to objects, the self cannot be finite. However, in order fully to become a self, the subject must objectify itself to itself, for it is only through the identity of both self-as-subject and self-as-object that knowledge of the self as a self can be produced. Thus the self can be neither finite or infinite exclusively, but must be a combination of both (*BL I* 280). In this way, the human self is a hybrid between the purely spiritual existence of the infinite and the purely physical existence of finite creation. The spiritual and the physical are fused in human nature. Thus, the sharp demarcation between body and soul espoused by thinkers such as Augustine or Descartes is not the relationship outlined here. In Coleridge's thought, the two states are fused; they are held in polarity, and yet they are one.

When applied to the production of self-knowledge, the error of separating the mind from the reality in which it participates has profound effects. The separation of the mind from the reality it perceives leads the mind to see outside objects as dead and fixed. This is what Coleridge saw as a mistake made by his German counterparts.

> But/observe! That in my system the object is not, as in the Fichtean Idealism, the dead, the substanceless, the mere Idol, but the absolutely free productivity in the always perfected product (Coleridge, unpublished notebook entry, British Library M.S. 36, 2, as quoted in Wheeler 35).

Thus, seeing objects as dead and fixed is a degeneration of the vision of human thought processes. The implications of seeing objects as dead has a profoundly negative effect upon the production of the sense of self that was previously outlined. If the only way the human mind can generate self-consciousness is by rendering itself as an object to itself, and if objects are seen by the mind as static or dead, then the sense of self-consciousness produced by this process would be one that saw the self as fixed, and substanceless. For this reason, objects in Coleridge's system must be seen as integrated parts of experience, and the term objective must be viewed as relative.

The fact that man is created in the image of God is what endows him with the infinite aspect of his nature. The finite aspect of man is what seals him into individuation. Thus consciousness, as man experiences it, is a double edged sword. On the one hand, individuation allows him to gain more knowledge of himself and nature than any other part of creation; but, on the other hand, it also cuts him off from the unity of nature. The dual effect of individuation is captured by Milton in "Paradise Lost" when he describes the effect of the eating of the apple on Adam and Eve:

> Up they rose
> As from unrest, and each the other viewing,
> Soon found their eyes opened, and their minds
> How darkened. Innocence, that as a veil
> Had shadowed them from knowing ill, was gone;
> Just confidence, and native righteousness,
> And honour from about them, naked left... (9.1050-57)

Here is illustrated both the awareness of otherness between people that is the effect of individuation—an effect viewed as positive by many Western thinkers and typified by characters

like Goethe's Faust—and the sense of aloneness and "nakedness" that accompanies the individuated or self-conscious state.

According to Coleridge and most other Christian thinkers, the end of self-knowledge is the loss of individual identity in unification of the individual with God. This necessarily requires that the individual surrender the self that it has fought so hard to discover. "I **know myself**, in order to end with the absolute **I am**. We proceed from the self, in order to lose and find all self in God" (*BL* I 283). The dangerous effects of concentrating too hard upon the sense of self *qua* self has already been touched upon. Concentrating too hard upon the self as an object can, if one sees reality as separate and fixed, lead an individual to see the self as empty. If one sees reality as integral to the self, too much concentration upon the self can lead to an inflated sense of importance in which reality becomes an extension of the self.[7] The key to healthy self-knowledge is a balance between attention to the self and the giving of the self to God: losing oneself to gain oneself. It is, however, not the end of knowledge but rather the process by which it is produced that is the focus of our discussion here.

Man produces knowledge from the information that he gathers through his various faculties. Just as the nature of human consciousness necessarily shapes the way man perceives reality, so too does the nature of his faculties necessarily shape the way he interprets reality. When dealing

---

[7] This is not unlike the solipsistic vision presented in some of Wordsworth's poetry. Note how in Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey" and "The Prelude" nature is used as a medium for expressing the author's own view of the world rather than being described by the author for its own sake. The land above Tintern Abbey is not lovingly described because it is beautiful land but rather because it reminds the author of himself:

> —I cannot paint
> What then I was. The sounding cataract
> Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
> The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
> Their colours and their forms, were then to me
> An appetite; a feeling and a love,
> That had no need of remoter charm,
> ("Tintern Abbey," 75-81)

In this passage Wordsworth reveals that external reality acts as a touchstone or a catalyst for his own thoughts, memories, and feelings. For him the cataract, the rocks and woods, are extensions of his own feelings. A similar landscape is created in "The Prelude," where nature serves as a starting point for the author's self-absorbed musings on the nature of his own creativity ("The Prelude" (1850) I 10-25).

with the structure of the human psyche, Coleridge tends to divide the powers of the mind into two main categories, moral/spiritual and rational. Within these main categories there are a number of smaller sub-categories. It is, however, important to keep in mind that all these powers are interdependent (*PL* 345). By the same token, Coleridge makes such divisions only in order to facilitate an understanding of the workings of the mind.

> One must keep in mind that any division within a human being is an arbitrary one that temporarily confounds the underlying unity of the object. Just as when examining a flower we can look at the petals, the stem, the pistils, etc. etc.—the unity of the flower is temporarily suspended (*AR* 106).

So, even though Coleridge does arrange the faculties into a hierarchy, it is important to note that the values attached to the various faculties are to some extent as arbitrary as the divisions themselves.

The "lowest"of the faculties is sense perception.

> The sensitive faculty is the power of being affected and modified by things, so as to receive impressions from them. The quality of these Impressions is determined partly by the nature of the sensitive faculty itself and its organs, and partly by the nature of the things. These impressions are in the first instant immediate sensations: as soon as the attention is directed to them and they are taken up into the consciousness, they become perceptions (*CN* 3605 f117v).

The senses operate by gathering impressions from physical interactions with the body. Coleridge, like many thinkers before him, deemed this level the lowest level of human comprehension (*PL* 141), a level human beings share with other animals (*AR* 233).

The next highest faculty is Understanding, a term that Coleridge endows with his own specific meaning. Understanding provides man with interpretations of the sense perceptions gathered by his senses. Understanding is dependent upon information gathered by the senses in order to function (*AR* 216). Coleridge asserts that, like sense perception, man also shares the

faculty of understanding with animals. However, understanding in animals, without the elevating influence of higher faculties, such as reason, manifests itself as instinct (*AR* 233):

> the Understanding...may be defined [as] the conception of the Sensuous, or the faculty by which we generalize and arrange the phænomena of perception.... In short, the understanding supposes something that is *understood* (*TF* 156).[8]

Linked to generalization is the understanding's capacity for association, an idea that Coleridge borrows from Aristotle. The "laws of association" outline tendencies within the mind that link ideas in certain patterns. These patterns are chronological association, spatial association, causality, likeness, and contrast. By employing these patterns, the understanding produces new generalizations and links old ones together (*BL I* 103).

Understanding, then, is the power which enables man to render his sense perceptions intelligible through the use of generalization and association. It is the conceptualizing power of the human mind. At its highest level, Understanding begins to intersect with the faculty of Reason.

Reason is the power that allows man to reflect inwardly upon what the understanding presents outwardly. Reason deals with abstract notions such as God, the soul, and Truth and other abstract or spiritual objects. While the influence of reason on the understanding is what elevates that power above the level of mere instinct, reason cannot function without the 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.... (*TF* 156)

[8] This particular quotation about the function of the understanding is discussed in greater detail by Kenneth Harris, "Reason and Understanding Reconsidered: Coleridge, Carlyle, and Emerson." See also the useful Appendix on Reason and Understanding in *Coleridge on the Seventeenth Century*, ed. R.F. Brinkley; and extract 41 (from Coleridge's *Marginalia*) in J.S.Hill's *Imagination in Coleridge*.

Reason is what enables man to reflect upon issues that are beyond what is presented on a day-to-day basis. It enables man to question and reflect upon, and to develop abstract notions of the knowledge he arrives at about himself. The power of reason continually grows and changes as it is modified by the experience and knowledge which it both reflects upon and produces. "Reason is in the process of elucidating itself in and through the individual mind, not external to it. Moreover, it gradually evolves ideas of itself that actually change it. Reason grows and alters in the process of knowing itself, for it is one and vital" (Wheeler 35).

There are two distinct aspects of the power of Reason: "speculative" and "practical." Speculative reason contains within it "the grounds of formal principles and the origin of ideas" (*AR* 217). Scientific and intellectual endeavour is the domain of speculative reason. Beyond speculative reason is practical reason. While speculative reason deals with the scientific, with sense- and understanding-oriented ideas, practical reason deals with ideas related to intuition and faith. It is considered, by Coleridge, to be the highest of all human powers.

> The practical reason alone is reason in the full and substantive sense. It is reason in its own sphere of perfect freedom; as the source of ideas, which ideas, in their conversion to the responsible will become ultimate ends: on the other hand, theoretical [=speculative] reason as the ground of the universal absolute in all logical conclusion, is rather the light of reason in the understanding, and known to be such by its contrast with the contingency and particularly which characterize all the proper and indigenous growths of understanding (*AR* 353 note).[9]

The intuitive capacity of practical reason is the part of human consciousness that enables the mind to grasp paradoxical truths.[10] Intuitive perception is a direct beholding, grasped before it

[9] This is an area in which Coleridge re-examined previous conclusions and revised his ideas. At the end of the *Biographia Literaria* (1815), he had indicated that the will and practical reason were the same power (*BL* II 293). However, it is obvious from this from *Aids to Reflection* (1825) that he has redefined his terms.

[10] Manfred Putz points out that when reading Coleridge's prose works, one must be careful not to assume that because Coleridge drew on Kant for much of his thought that all terms used by Coleridge are used in the Kantian sense. On examining the context in which Coleridge uses the term *intuition*, Putz concludes that the Coleridgean meaning of this term is closer to the current *OED* definition than to the Kantian definition. The *OED* defines *intuition* as "the immediate apprehension of an object without the intervention of any reasoning process," whereas

enters the conscious mind and, although it can be considered a ground of consciousness, it is only through the examination of intuition that consciousness is made possible (*CN* 4186 f34).

It may be added that there is a correspondence between the powers of speculative and practical reason distinguished in *Aids to Reflection* and the two different kinds of knowledge—transcendental and transcendent—discussed in Chapter 12 of *Biographia Literaria.* This correspondence further illustrates the difference between these two kinds of reason. In the *Biographia* account, transcendent and transcendental knowledge refer to two different orders of knowledge (*BL* I 237). Knowledge of the *transcendental* order is reflective or intellectual—knowledge grasped as scientific and logical laws. It is cognate with the manipulation performed by the speculative reason on information gathered by the senses and organized by the understanding—and thus knowledge of the transcendental order has corresponding evidence in empirical reality. An example of a piece of transcendental knowledge is the law of gravity. The law of gravity is a scientific law that has been generated by the human mind. In that sense it transcends daily existence. However, it is a physical law that is continually reinforced every time someone sees an object falling. Thus, the universal or unseen law has a physical referent.

Like practical reason, however, *transcendent* knowledge deals with noumena of which man has only an intuitive knowledge. This knowledge has no earthly referent. Man senses this kind of knowledge through the power of practical reason and from it derives a knowledge of God and other first principles. The proof of such principles goes beyond rational analysis and inquiry. The highest piece of transcendent knowledge man possesses is self-consciousness. Beyond this reason has no power. However, from self-consciousness man can *infer* truths that are of the transcendent order of knowing. For example, because man is self-consciousness, he can deduce that his self-consciousness is a modification of a higher consciousness, like that attributed to purely spiritual beings, such as angels, or to an Absolute Being, such as God. Transcendent knowledge is not a modification of being but rather a *modification of knowing*, and consequently

---

Kant had described it as "the immediate apprehension of an object only by the senses under the pure forms of intuition, space, and time" (*ibid*). According to Putz, Coleridge recognized the limitations of the Kantian sense of the word and thus defined it according to the *OED* usage (470). I agree with Putz that the *OED* definition is more in keeping with Coleridge's usage and intention.

can be inferred from what is already known (*BL* I 284). This kind of knowledge is well illustrated by the fact that a person can add one to any known number and create a new number. Like mathematics, transcendent knowledge is a kind of knowing and as such can stretch onward to infinity. (On the metaphysical level, the limit of such knowing would be the existence of God, since God is infinite in being.) To expand this metaphor, *transcendental* knowledge would be all the numbers on a number-line that are known, and *transcendent* knowledge is all the numbers on that same line that are contained in the term infinity. The point that separates the known from the unknown numbers in this case would be self-consciousness, that is, the highest "number" that is known on this line. Man knows intuitively that there are specific numbers in the set called infinity, but cannot know exactly what they are: such is the limit of speculative reason. In the same way man can intuitively know attributes of the Godhead but cannot know all that God encompasses. What is beyond direct knowledge is intuitively grasped by practical reason. Thus, the barrier that separates the world of the seen and the unseen is straddled by man's faculty of reason.

The distinction between practical and speculative reason also highlights the distinction between man as an intellectual being and man as a moral being. The distinction here is not directly voiced by Coleridge; it is, however, evident in the way that he organizes his discussions. While the distinction is useful in an exegesis of Coleridge's thought, Coleridge himself was right in not stressing the distinction in his works, as the two aspects in man are so interdependent that such a division could be misleading. However, within the discussion of man's intellectual capacity, reason and understanding are the primary focus, while in discussions of man's moral capacity the conscience and will are the focus.

The moral aspect of human existence is a difficult one to discuss. The confusion that has arisen about this issue is by no means a modern phenomenon, and is typified by the indeterminability of the terms of the discussion. The word consciousness, so carefully explained earlier, and the word conscience, have over the years been used synonymously to describe both man's awareness of the self and man's sense of morality. However, a good deal of confusion has been caused by the indiscriminate usage of these terms. Coleridge himself is a bit vague as

to what exactly these terms mean. However, if he is unclear as to the meaning of these words, it should not reflect badly upon him as a scholar. As a student of ancient languages, Coleridge would have been well aware of the shifting meanings of the term *conscience*. In this case his knowledge would have served to confuse rather than clarify.

Dominic Manginello in an article in *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature* offers a brief history of the term conscience that may clarify its distinction from consciousness. The term conscience finds its roots in the Greek verb *synoida* (σύνοιδα), which roughly translates "to know in common." Later, Greek added the reflexive to this verb: *synoida emauto*, meaning "to know with myself." This concept later developed into its own noun *syneidesis* (συνείδησις), which meant the same thing. Later Greek thinkers such as Xenophon sometimes added a moral connotation to the term, by using it to refer to the act of remaining true to one's convictions. Generally, however, it referred to knowledge gained by self-reflection. But it was St. Paul's use of the term *syneidesis* in the New Testament that fundamentally altered the meaning of the word.[11] According to Paul, conscience is a moral sense that is given to man by the grace of God (II Cor.1:12). The Latin antecedent of the term conscience [*con* "together" + *scire* "to know"] directly parallels the original Greek term *synoida* but soon acquired the Christian connotation of Pauline usage, so that by the thirteenth century the meaning of conscience as an inner moral sense was firmly established. By Coleridge's time the term had been interpreted by some as the voice of God directing human actions. This view had some support from writers who had a strong influence on Coleridge, such as Milton. However, it also led to a debate: if conscience is the voice of God directing individuals, how can this voice say different things to different individuals, as it sometimes does? This was the context in which the term conscience was viewed in Coleridge's time (*Dictionary of Biblical Tradition* 153-157).

While Coleridge is vague on exactly what the word *conscience* means, he is quite clear on what it does not mean. Conscience and consciousness are not synonymous, nor is one merely the modification of the other. He bases this assertion on the observation that a healthy consciousness—that is, a fully functional and responsible being—must have *as its antecedent* a

[11] See Rom 2:15, 9:1; I Cor 8:12; I Tim 1:19, 4:2 etc.

healthy conscience (*AR* 145). The relationship as elaborated in *Aids to Reflection* is one in which conscience is necessarily distinct from consciousness. However, while these two separate agents may be distinct, they are interdependent—for conscience, as an innate moral sense, necessarily informs the self-conscious intelligence and aids in determining human action. It can be said, then, that while man's identity rests in self-consciousness, all he is responsible for rests in domain of the conscience (*PL* 224). However, no matter how well informed the consciousness, or how vigilant the conscience, an individual could *perform* no action, moral or physical, were it not for the will.

Like the other powers outlined here, the will is an agent given to man by God, in virtue of his status as *imago Dei*. Consequently, this power of determining one's own fate is not found in any other created being (*AR* 273).

Like the existence of God, the existence of free-will in man—and, for Coleridge, the essence of the will is that it *is* free—must be accepted on faith as a first principle. "The self conscious spirit therefore is a will; and freedom must be assumed as a ground of philosophy, and can never be deduced from it" (*BL* 280). Because the will is a first principle, a ground of thought rather than a conclusion of a line of reasoning, it cannot truly be described. Rather, it can only be observed in action. Any description of it will, therefore, necessarily be of what it *does* rather than what it *is* (*AR* 247).

The most straightforward definition of the will that Coleridge presents is that it is a medium of God within the individual—a power that actuates God's will within a person's actions (*AR* 108). However, the will can also be defined as an agent, given to man by God, that endows him with a spiritual nature (*AR* 153). It is this agent that enables man to determine his own fate rather than being the pawn of Nature or even God, but that also requires that he accept responsibility for its own actions (*AR* 106).

The centrality of the concept of the will in Coleridge's thought becomes apparent when he outlines how reason and will work together in order to produce self-consciousness and how reason and consciousness interact in order to create the will. Will and consciousness are terms that co-implicate each other through the medium of reason (*CN* 4265 f22v). In Coleridgean

terms, the combination of reason and consciousness constitutes the intelligent self, and the intelligent self or the "I am" is synonymous with the will (*AR* 157). All three agents are co-implicated and co-dependent upon each other. Coleridge says:

> Yea, in the very nature of a living spirit, it may be more possible that heaven and earth should pass away, than a single act, single thought, should be loosened or lost from that living chain of causes, to whose links, conscious or unconscious, the free-will, our only absolute *self*, is co-extensive and co-present. (*BL* I 144)

Elsewhere he says:

> I maintain that a will conceived separately from intelligence is a non-entity, and a mere phantasm of abstraction; and that a will, the state of which does in no sense originate in its own act, is an absolute contradiction.... (*AR* 158).

To illustrate this relationship, consider what happens if one of the agents is removed. If consciousness is removed—in the case, say, of an individual who is comatose—then the being cannot contemplate its actions and consequently cannot exercise will. If will is removed, an idea that is espoused by deterministic thinkers, the being cannot be held responsible for its actions and thus its moral sense is rendered impotent—a point well illustrated in James Hogg's *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner.*[12] According to Coleridge, consciousness must have as its antecedent a functioning conscience (*AR* 145). Thus, the consciousness that would be present in the will-less being would not be the consciousness that has been outlined here. Further, if reason is removed, as in the case of people who suffer from madness, the individuals

[12] In *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, James Hogg explores the theological implications of the Calvinist, specifically the Covenanter, doctrine of predestination. Through the action of the novel, Hogg points out that a fanatical adherence to the belief that God has predestined some souls to be saved and others to be damned undermines not only the concept of free-will, but also undermines traditional morality, for if a man is damned and nothing he can do can redeem him, the motivation for doing good is removed. By the same token, if a man is saved, then he can do no evil, since committing evil acts would preclude him from entering heaven. It is this line of reasoning that allows the main character of the novel, Robert, who believes he is saved, to justify the murder of his step-brother, his mother, and other "unsaved" members of his family because he is ridding God's creation of sinners.

are either unaware or not in control of their actions. Where the individual is unaware of his actions, consciousness is not fully present. Where the individual is not in control of his actions, the will is not fully present. In either case, the individual is not to be held responsible for his actions—a philosophical judgement that is often illustrated in contemporary courts of law. Moral responsibility is one of the consequences of possessing free will. The absence of the effect indicates the absence of the cause. Thus, the absence of moral responsibility indicates the absence of free will.

These three agents—reason, will, consciousness—make up what human beings experience as self-consciousness. Related to this triad is conscience. Conscience acts as an advisor to the will, providing man with a sense of good and evil (*AR* 145). It is related to reason in so far as it informs reason of what is good and evil (PL 222), and it is related to consciousness, as has already been pointed out, as an antecedent to a properly functioning consciousness (*AR* 145)—and, by extension, it follows that a heightened sense of conscience encourages a heightened sense of consciousness (*AR* 76). Coleridge places moral values within the domain of conscience and will and places these latter two above even the practical reason, for moral sense is given to man directly from God (*PL* 390).

The amount of influence that the conscience has over the will is a subject that Coleridge deliberated on a good deal.[13] In the final speech of his play "Remorse," the character Alvar says: "Just Heaven instructs us with an awful voice,/ That Conscience rules us e'en against our choice" ("Remorse" 73). Whether or not Coleridge actually believed this at that point in his life—the play was first drafted in 1797—or whether he attempted to heighten the sense of classical tragedy by introducing a Christianized form of fate, cannot be determined. However, his later writings strenuously resist any form of determinism that would be the metaphysical conclusion of an irresistible conscience (*AR* 157). While it follows that if man is to be held responsible for his actions as a result of his possessing free will, then he must not be blind to the moral implications

[13] This is also an issue that Kant had a difficult time with. The distinction between will and volition and the influence of the categorical imperative is an effort on Kant's part to determine the relationship between conscience and will.

of those actions. It would not be free will if the moral sense prevented choice. In this sense the conscience can be seen as a moral advisor to, rather than ruler of, the will (*PL* 222).

What has been outlined so far are the general series of relationships between these artificially designated powers. In the functioning person, these powers are in a constant state of flux, moving closer together when a person lives a good life, and farther apart when the individual chooses to follow an evil course of action.

When a person follows a good lifestyle, that is, acts in accordance with God's law and the dictates of the individual conscience, the various powers act in harmony with each other. By following the dictates of one's conscience, the will and conscience are united in purpose, since the will is actually implementing the suggestions presented by the conscience.[14]

Because the will is both a gift of, and a medium for God, to do good is its natural or proper use (*AR* 108). Good action, then, not only strengthens the will but also brings it closer to God. "The finite will gives a beginning only by coincidence with that Absolute Will which is at the same time infinite power" (*AR* 248). The harmony of this relationship between will and conscience reflects the closer relationship that the created being has with the Almighty. This harmony will naturally be passed on to the practical reason which will be in agreement with the line of action undertaken by the will, for reason is a gift given by God to His own image, and therefore must be an attribute of the Deity. It follows, then, that goodness must be reasonable. In this way, reason and will are drawn closer together.

Coleridge defines faith as the interpenetration of reason and will.

[14] According to Muirhead, one of the points with which Coleridge took issue in the writings of Kant was Kant's insistence that the conscience was not a power unto itself but rather "a mode of volitional consciousness." This objection was strengthened by the fact that Kant refused to acknowledge the influence of the conscience upon the rest of man's consciousness (107).

Muirhead's interpretation of the Coleridgean conscience is that it is inexorably linked to the will. "The becoming conscious of the conscience partakes of the nature of an act—'an act, namely, in which and by which we take upon ourselves an allegiance and consequently the obligation of fealty'" (Coleridge's notebooks as cited in Muirhead 108: the specific reference is not provided since Muirhead's research predates the publication of *The Collected Notebooks* and his reference is to the original manuscripts.)

> Faith is the interpenetration of the reason and the will.... It is, at once, the assurance and the commencement of the approaching union between the reason and the intelligible realities, the living and substantial truths, that are even in this life its most proper objects (*AR* 243).

He also observes that faith can be seen as the anticipation of knowledge by the moral will (*PL* 280). This statement highlights the importance of the intuitive powers of humans housed in the faculty of practical reason. The result of this relationship is that the closer reason and will become in purpose, the stronger the faith of the individual becomes.

If reason and will are in harmony, then the consciousness must also be in harmony since these three faculties are inter-related. It is through one's actions that the consciousness reflects upon itself and comes to know itself. If these action are approved by the conscience, then the consciousness is assured of the correctness of its actions and consequently strengthens the resolve or will of the individual (*AR* 122). As well, as an antecedent of a healthy consciousness, a healthy conscience cannot but improve the health of the consciousness.

Thus the proper use of the will is to do good, and in order to continue to maintain the health of the will, the will must be continually used toward good ends. As the will increases in strength it conforms itself more progressively to its original, God. A result of following the good is happiness for the individual since the individual's own will is in harmony with the purpose for which it was created (*AR* 96). Virtue is also a result of this harmony. For virtue can only be cultivated through the continual practice of good living (*PL* 118) and finds its foundation in the will (*PL* 151).

In drawing all of the mental powers closer together, and by drawing the individual closer to God, the pursuit of goodness draws the individual closer to unification with God in two ways. The individual is drawn directly closer to God in that the conscience and the will, as media for the Almighty, are drawn closer to their source. Indirectly, the closer the faculties of the individual are to each other, the greater the unity within the individual and, consequently, the closer the individual actually resembles the Almighty who, in His very nature, contains all Consciousness, all Conscience, all Reason, and all Will in an undivided whole.

An excellent example of a character whose will and conscience are in harmony is the character of Christ in Milton's "Paradise Regained." As the Godhead incarnate, Christ's nature is two-fold. As the Godhead, Christ possesses total unity of being. As a man, Christ is also made in God's image. However, unlike fallen man, the Christ is the perfected image of God in the flesh. As the perfect *Imago Dei*, Christ's will naturally conforms to that of God.

> When I was a child, no childish play
> To me was pleasing; all my mind was set
> Serious to learn and know, thence to do,
> What might be public good; myself I thought
> Born to that end, born to promote all truth,
> All righteous things. Therefore above my years,
> The law of God I read, and found it sweet.
> ("Paradise Regained" I 201-207)

Christ found the study of and adherence to the law of God naturally pleasing. As the perfect man, Christ finds it natural to do what is good since He is made in the image of Him who is all Goodness. His will and his conscience are in perfect harmony. As a result of this harmony, Christ is sure of his identity and his place in the universe. This is made apparent when Christ is first confronted by Satan, who tempts him by inviting him to "test" his powers before his time, by turning stones into bread. Christ is not fooled by Satan's trickery and replies, "Why dost thou then suggest to me distrust,/ Knowing who I am, as I know who thou art?" (1.355-56). Christ, unlike his fallen brothers, knows fully who he is. This certitude in his knowledge of being arises from the harmony of his powers. As Coleridge wrote in a marginalium, "the identity of Reason and Being, and of both with the Eternal Word, [are established in] the Only-begotten Son" (cited in Brinkley 692). As a result, Christ knows who he is, where he belongs in the order of the universe and, unlike Adam and Eve in "Paradise Lost," is not only aware but also *convinced beyond the possibility of sin* of the consequences should this order be disrupted.

If a good course of action draws the elements of an individual's psyche closer together, then an evil course of action would have the opposite effect. Evil acts occur when the individual ignores the dictates of conscience and uses the will to implement acts that are against the

conscience and, by extension, against the will of God. Such acts are performed independently of both conscience and reason, since both operate by doing good. Thus the potential for evil, both in terms of an individual's action, and also metaphysically, lies within the human will. Since God created good and is, ontologically, Sublime Goodness, then evil cannot come from God. Man is the only other creature in creation endowed with the power of creating things and thus the only other possible source of evil. Will is the agent within man that is not under the dominion of God and thus the only one with the power to act against God. Therefore, the will is the source of evil (*AR* 250). The origin of evil explains why man finds it so attractive and easy to understand. An example of this can be seen in the attraction some readers—such as Blake, Shelley, and William Empson—have had for Satan in Milton's "Paradise Lost." Evil is the only thing in the universe created by man alone, the only thing that belongs to him exclusively. Consequently, humans find evil seductive and easy to identify with. However, evil has an ill effect upon the Coleridgean psyche.

When the conscience is ignored, the distance between the will and the conscience becomes greater. Mankind was created by God to do good; so, when man performs evil acts, he is acting against his nature and discord is created. The evil heart, then, turns away from God. However, even in this turning away, God still remains the centre of man's existence (*AR* 148). If God is still the centre, and that centre has been rejected, then it will appear to the evil individual that the centre of existence is empty.

The rejection of the advice of the conscience does two things to that agent. First, it causes the will to be cut off from that source, ignoring the still-functioning conscience and not allowing it to have any effect upon the will (*AR* 155). Second, it replaces the true conscience with a false set of values or twisted priorities that the will then accepts as "good" (*AR* 138). In short, the relationship between the conscience and the will breaks down.

While Socrates argued that all evil is the result of ignorance on the part of individuals, Coleridge maintains that education is not the complete cure for evil. To demonstrate his point he cites the example of the alcoholic who knows that drink is harming him but none the less persists in indulging his desires (*PL* 151). In taking this position, Coleridge is saying that, as a

moral force, reason does not have much impact on rejuvenating the will. It was maintained earlier that to do good is to follow reason. However, in the case of the unrepentant performer of evil acts, reason, like conscience, becomes twisted because it is no longer in harmony with the individual's conscience. Rather, it is following a different set of priorities. Evil acts, to a healthy mind, will appear unreasonable. To the unhealthy mind, it is inconsequential how they appear, since it is the unregenerate will that is fully in control. Reason in the evil mind, then, is either twisted or impotent, and this impotence directly affects both the will and consciousness.

The most profound effect that evil has on the psyche is that the continual pursuit of evil will eventually paralyse and appear to destroy the will.[15] As the individual pursues an evil course of action, the will slowly slips from his control, locking it into a course of action from which it becomes increasingly difficult to extricate itself. "Now our will is to a certain degree in our power, and where it is not it is owning to some prior fault of ours..." (*PL* 364). The path of sin become increasingly difficult to leave because, as the will loses its potency and the power to resist or control circumstances wanes, the choices which the will is free to make become increasingly limited (*AR* 245). Eventually the final effect that evil has is to render the will incapable of any action that is outside of the course of action that the individual has locked himself into:

> If I say to a man involved in the habits of sin, who sees the misery of vice and yet still goes on from bad to worse, 'exert your will.' 'Alas', he would answer, 'that is the dreadful penalty of my crimes. I have lost my will.' (*PL* 224)

This perception of the complete paralysis of the will must, to the Christian thinker, be a delusion suffered by the individual. For what is once given as free by God must always remain such. The free will endowed upon man must always remain free no matter how abused it may be (*AR*

[15] Engell and Bate point out that an ignorance of, or a refusal to, accept man's proper place in creation can lead an individual to "a sense of alienation and paralysis, dejection and personal hopelessness" (*BL* I lxxxi). Refusal to acknowledge one's place in the universe, either by act or thought, is considered a sin and is precisely what led Faust to make a deal with the devil.

155). However, the effect of the continual performing of evil acts is the same as actual paralysis, for, if an individual truly believes that he has no will, then in effect the individual has no will. What has actually happened, of course, is that the individual has so weakened his will that any attempt to exercise it results in so little action that the individual, whose faith has also been eroded by the effects of evil, cannot believe that it still exists.

This false perception as to the true status of the sin, and the ineffectiveness of the other powers, such as faith, to rectify this error, indicates how consciousness is affected by the sinful acts of the will. The erosion of the will necessarily leads to the erosion of the consciousness, by virtue of the relationship between the two. Further, if sinful acts damage the conscience, then consciousness must be affected as well since the two are interrelated. The consciousness of the sinful individual, then, does not function properly as it is not receiving proper information from the conscience, the reason, or the will. Since reason is affected, the act of self reflection, central to consciousness itself, is damaged, directly affecting the quality of the individual's consciousness. Thus the individual can operate under the delusion of having no free will or, indeed, under any other misconception, and not be self-corrected, since the faculties responsible for such correction are not functioning properly. This leaves the individual open to impressions and ideas that would normally offend his sense of reason, such as despair. At this point, the only choice left open to the truly repentant individual is to ask for mercy. This task is not an easy one for the sinful individual because, first, it requires a mustering of what is left of the will, and, secondly, a forcing of what is left of the will to be receptive to grace, from which the sinful will recoil (*AR* 274).

The eroding effect that sin has on the will reveals that, while the will is free, it is only free to do good, since it is the nature of the will to do good. To force the will to act against its nature will weaken and eventually destroy it, robbing it of its capacity to determine its own course. While good acts bring the agents within the psyche closer together, evil acts force them apart, destroying the sense of unity between the agents that is the goal of humans as moral beings.

This process of evil eroding the will in this fashion is not a new concept. The process of moral disintegration initiated by improper acts of the will can be found both in the characters of Shakespeare's Macbeth and Milton's Satan. However, one of the best examples of this process can be seen in Marlowe's "Doctor Faustus." In this play, the pride and ambition of the main character lead him to commit evil acts that slowly but surely limit the options he has to change his course of action. From the moment Faustus signs his pact with the Devil, he commits himself to a course of action that is against his nature and his conscience. As he pursues his ambitions through the play, it become increasing more difficult for him to escape this course of action. In Coleridgean terms, the pursuit of evil is gradually eroding his will. This is evident in the way that Mephistophilis gradually increases his influence over Faustus, convincing him that he is beyond redemption. In Act 5 sc i, the character of Old Man, who like the good and bad angels, is an allegorical figure, in this case representing what is left of Faustus' conscience, says that he can see a vessel full of grace floating above Faustus' head. All Faustus has to do is reach for it. Faustus, however, does not have a strong enough faith to seek grace. His persistence in following an evil course has weakened his power to determine his own fate. Mephistophilis and the events of the drama now control the actions of a man who was once one of the greatest scholars on earth. Faustus' misinterpretation of God's nature (deliberate or otherwise) and his desire to transcend his place in the cosmos, errors that led him to make the pact with the Devil in the first place, keep Faustus from exercising what little is left of his will in the end. In Act 5 sc.ii, Faustus sees Christ's blood streaming from heaven, and yet has been so convinced by false reason, offered by Mephistophilis who continually prompts Faustus to despair, that he cannot reach for it. His weakened will has been paralysed by his lack of faith and misguided reason. Thus the action of this play illustrates how the pursuit of evil leads to the disintegration of the various powers, as revealed by the conflict within Faustus between his conscience and his reason, and the eventual paralysis of the will, as revealed by Faustus' inability to ask for grace at the end of the play.

Coleridge illustrates this same process in his play, "Remorse". In this play the villain, Ordonio, drives his good-hearted brother from their father's estate by making him swear a secret

oath, then hires killers to assassinate him when he is far from home. Alvar, the good brother, however, escapes death and returns to exact revenge on his brother. Alvar's revenge takes the peculiar form of inflicting remorse upon his brother, with the hope of evoking repentance: truly, a Christian form of revenge. The effect of this course of action upon the consciousness of Ordonio traces this effect of evil (*i.e.*, remorse) on the individual. In the years that Alvar was gone, Ordonio languished in the guilt of his own crime, believing that his brother was dead. However, even though he suffered, he did not confess his crime to anyone and remained unrepentant. Ordonio suffers from feelings of despair as a result of both his action and his unrepentant state:

> O this unutterable dying away-here—
> This sickness of heart!
> What if I went and liv'd in a hollow tomb, and fed on weeds?
> Aye! That's the road to heaven! O fool! fool! fool!
> ("Remorse" 23)

Later, these feelings of guilt develop, first, into paranoia, and then into full blown madness, as the consequences of his action continue to eat away at him ("Remorse" 42). Finally, his madness and fear of discovery drive him to murder his accomplice ("Remorse" 53). At last, Ordonio, like Faustus, driven by the hideousness of his own actions, chooses death in sin rather than repentance. Ordonio's begging for death at the end of the play exemplifies the sin of despair:

> I stood in silence like a slave before her
> That I might taste the wormwood and the gall
> And satiate this self-accusing heart
> With bitterer agonies than death can give.
> ("Remorse" 72)

The actions of the characters in this play clearly exemplify the impact of good and evil actions on the individual characters. Teresa, whose heart is pure, instinctively draws away from Ordonio, despite the prompting of her guardian, Valdez. For, although she is ignorant of his actions, she senses his evil, thus revealing the power of practical or intuitive reason. Ordonio,

on the other hand, looses the power over his faculties as he is eaten away by his evil thoughts and unrepentant state. Slowly, his actions paralyze his will and destroy his reason, causing him to commit more crimes, and eventually lead him to death.

One can see from the structure of this play that Coleridge's philosophic musings had more than a passing impact upon his literary endeavour. Although most of his great poems were written before Coleridge turned to systematizing his thoughts, his ideas regarding perception and morality were both shaped by, and had a considerable impact on, his poetic works. This influence is best seen in the connections between his epistemology, his theory of imagination and his poetry itself.

Chapter Two:

Coleridge's Aesthetic of the Will

Coleridge's theory of Imagination is undoubtedly the most studied of his theoretical pronouncements. For Coleridge, however, Imagination is not, as the preceding chapter has suggested, merely an aesthetic faculty. In his philosophy of mind, it acts both (a) as a connecting faculty mediating the ideas of the Reason to the conceptualizing power of the Understanding and (b) as a power in its own right. As a connecting faculty, the Imagination takes its place with the other epistemological faculties outlined in Chapter One, in that its function is to help us shape our vision of reality. However, on its own, the Imagination provides a different way of knowing both ourselves and the external world—and this aspect of the Imagination deserves a section to itself, for the Imagination provides an essential bridge between Coleridge's philosophy of knowing and his poetics. This section, then, will outline Coleridge's concept of Imagination and define the differences between the "primary" and "secondary" aspects of this power. It will also explore essential features of the distinction between Fancy and Imagination and outline the relationship between these faculties and the epistemological powers of the mind explored in the preceding chapter. Finally, it will examine how these various powers combine in the act of artistic creation and will look briefly at the purpose of art in light of Coleridge's overall philosophic system.

The place to begin is with the famous definition of Imagination in Chapter Thirteen of *Biographia Literaria*:

> The Imagination then I consider either as primary or secondary. 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. The secondary I consider as an echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the *kind* of its agency, and differing only in *degree*, and in the *mode* of its operation. It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to re-create; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealize and to unify. (*BL* I 304).

This is the most direct passage on the theoretical nature of the Imagination in the *Biographia*; it is also the passage that has generated the most examination and discussion. The passage outlines two aspects of the single power called Imagination. While these two aspects are said to differ "only in degree," the separate functions of each aspect are in fact quite different.

Primary Imagination is a function of the mind that reveals the human consciousness, as *imago Dei*, to be a replication at a lower level of the eternally generative activity God—the infinite I AM. Since Coleridge believes Reason, as an attribute of the Deity, is also an attribute of man's mind (*PL* 394), and since Imagination is "the prime Agent of all human Perception, and a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM," then the Imagination in the primary sense must render information gathered by the other faculties acceptable to the Reason, since it is only through reason that man can understand the world as he experiences it. Thus the primary imagination creates the perception of a modified and finite vision of the reality that is perceived infinitely in the mind of God. Imagination, then, acts as an intermediary among the senses, the understanding and the reason, to compose an intelligible view of reality.

As an intermediary, the Imagination operates in both an active and a passive fashion: it accepts passively the empirical data gathered by the senses (organized by the Understanding), as well as premises formed by the Reason, and sorts them actively into a coherent whole. Coleridge likens this process to the way a water-bug skims across the surface of water:

> Most of my readers will have observed a small water-insect on the surface of rivulets ... and will have noticed how the little animal *wins* 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 *fulcrum* for a 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.) (*BL* I 124)

Alternating between passively receiving and actively organizing empirical data, the Imagination creates in the human mind a finite version of what God sees in the eternal mind.[1] Primary Imagination exists in all humans and allows them not only to sort information into an intelligible order but also to link "the existence of matter with the essence of ideal forms" (*BL* I lxxxi). Thus the primary Imagination not only sorts information, but also "fills out the intervening spaces, and contemplates the cycle ... as a continuous circle giving to all collectively the unity of their common orbit" (*BL* I 267).

The process of the Imagination as presented above is an echo of the process within consciousness that produces knowledge. The mind, in generating knowledge, both receives information passively from the senses and actively manipulates the data received. The knowledge

---

[1] This is the generally accepted interpretation of the function of the primary Imagination among critics of this text: see Barth I 23, Blocker 535, Engell and Bate in *BL* I lxxxi, lxxxiv, and lxxxix, Shawcross as quoted in *Wordsworth* 75, Wheeler II preface, and *Wordsworth* 76.

However, not all critics choose to define the primary Imagination in this fashion. Michael Cooke in *The Romantic Will* says that the primary Imagination not only creates a meaningful whole from various perceptions and pieces of knowledge, but also is the ground of being for the individual. According to Cooke, "if we do not perceive it, individually, it does not come into being for us" (19). This interpretation of the term *primary* and the Imagination's involvement in the repetition of the act of creation in the finite mind, completely ignores the role of God as the ground for being. The result is that Coleridge is read as a twisted version of Berkeley's pronouncement—*esse est percipi* (Copleston 215)—or, as Cooke himself later states, as some kind of precursor to Merleau-Ponty. This interpretation leads the reader away from what Coleridge said: that God is the basis of existence (*BL* I 274). When God is accepted as a first principle, all of creation comes into being, if not on the basis of perception then on the basis of faith. Cooke's interpretation is the result of either too incomplete a reading of Coleridge's text or an imposition of ideas that are incompatible with the message of the text.

that is a result is not exclusively the product of the mind nor of external reality, but is rather "the most original union of both" (*BL* I 280). In this way, the primary Imagination operates both passively and actively in order to produce a *tertium aliquid* or a product of both. The products of both these processes become incorporated into the mind and go on to affect all processes that follow.

The secondary Imagination is a modification of the primary. When the Imagination comes under the influence of the will it is transformed in intensity and in its mode of operation, to form a power that allows an individual to replicate experience in an artistic manner and to initiate acts of artistic creation. While the primary Imagination provides the mind with a coherent vision of reality, the secondary Imagination endows this reality with a hierarchy of significance (*BL* II 5).[2] This hierarchy of significance is referred to as artistic discrimination. Discrimination allows individuals to develop their own personal aesthetic. Thus the secondary Imagination enables individuals to deem certain sights more beautiful, certain tastes more savory or certain sounds more lovely than others. In short, taste is a product of the secondary imagination. While all people have some form of taste—that is to say, all men have preferences—not all people have the ability to control the secondary Imagination enough to create an entire reinterpretation of reality, a hierarchy of significance so complete that it is almost independent of the reality from which it is drawn, that constitutes the artistic aesthetic. This particular ability belongs to artists alone (*BL* I xc). This particular utilization of the secondary Imagination requires a strong will that is naturally directed toward the Imagination, for, while there are many people who are strong willed, not all have artistic tendencies (*BL* I 124 below). The manipulation or imitation of reality required to produce a piece of art can only occur if the individual has a certain mastery over the totalizing view of reality produced by the primary Imagination.

Thus the secondary Imagination co-exists with the conscious will in order to shape the way the primary Imagination produces its intelligible whole. In this way it "diffuses, dissipates in order to recreate" (*BL I* 304). Because the secondary Imagination is powered by the will, its exercise becomes the fullest form of self-expression. This reveals how important artistic creation

[2] See also Shawcross as quoted in *Wordsworth* 75.

is to the development not only of the individual but of all people who derive benefit from the appreciation of art.

The exercise of the secondary Imagination is endowed with moral significance on two levels (*BL* I xc): first, the development of an individual's artistic expression affects the development of the individual as a self. In developing personal interpretations of the reality artists encounter, artists become more aware of both themselves and reality. In Chapter One it was indicated that greater self-knowledge can only be achieved if one is living in accordance with one's own conscience and in accordance with the natural inclination of the will, since to act otherwise would damage the self and the will. Since will is the driving force behind the secondary Imagination, then the exercise of the secondary Imagination constitutes, indirectly, the exercise of the will. Exercising the will through the secondary Imagination, then, leads to the development not only of the artist's self-knowledge but also to the development of his moral being (*BL* II 5); moreover, the products of the secondary Imagination, that is the art itself, becomes a replacement for the lack of a controlled secondary Imagination in other people (*BL* II 54).

Exposure to art provides a reader[3] with an opportunity to exercise both his secondary Imagination and his intellect by providing him with an interpretation of reality that is an alternative to his normal perceptions. This alternative interpretation, first and foremost, provides entertainment by presenting him with familiar scenes recreated in a novel way (*BL* II 5). Pleasure is derived from the fact that the work of art contains, in a coincidence of opposites, elements that are both familiar from experienced reality and yet different from that reality. The reader's secondary Imagination enables him to accommodate the difference between the vision presented in a work of art and the reality with which he is familiar. Coleridge refers to the process by which a reader allows his Imagination, rather than his Reason, to interpret a work of art and participate temporarily in its reality as "the willing suspension of disbelief" (*BL* II 6).[4]

[3] Or, of course, a viewer of paintings, statuary, or architecture—or an audience at a play, or movie, or musical concert.

[4] This "willing suspension of disbelief" exemplifies the power of the will and the way in which it co-exists with the Secondary Imagination. In this process man deliberately, through the exercise of his will, ignores the promptings of Reason, and permits Imagination to replicate the Reason's functions under a different set of guidelines.

On another level, art provides its audience with an opportunity both to re-examine its own interpretations of reality and to exercise critical judgement. This process of re-examination strengthens the self-reflective capacity within the individual and consequently has the potential to develop greater self-knowledge and thereby strengthen self-consciousness. As well, when an audience suspends its sense of disbelief, there is a suspension of self-awareness. Self-awareness is temporarily replaced by identification with the vision of the artist. This identification is, in a finite sense, analogous to the self-surrender that Coleridge regards, at the infinite level, as being essential to the actualization of man's potential for self-consciousness: "we proceed from the self in order to loose and find all self in God" (*BL* I 283). The observation and appreciation of art, then, requires a reader or viewer or audience to use its secondary Imagination, exercise its will, and employ its intellect. All of these functions lead to a greater self-awareness and, by extension, to a greater moral awareness as well. Thus, art serves a social function that has a moral dimension.

In his description of the Imagination, Coleridge is very careful to distinguish this power from Fancy:

> Fancy, on the contrary, has no other counter to play with, but fixities and definites. The fancy is indeed no other than a mode of Memory emancipated from the order of time and space; and blended with, and modified by that empirical phenomenon of the will, which we express by the word CHOICE. But equally with the ordinary memory it must receive all its materials ready made from the law of association. (*BL* I 305)

The Fancy operates on a lower level than the Imagination. Its function is to establish a context for data received from the senses. It does this providing a link between sense perception and the lower functions of the Understanding (Brinkley 694). In doing so, the Fancy operates both at a basic sensual level, as determined by the senses themselves and by the laws of association, as determined by the operation of the Understanding as outlined in Chapter One. Fancy is under the influence of the will, but it is not co-existent with the will to the same extent that Imagination is. Fancy is, however, analogous to Imagination and operates in a similar fashion, in that it links

the various faculties in order to create an intelligible view of reality, albeit on a basic level.

The Senses, Fancy, Understanding, and Memory act as a block, each establishing a context, an image, and (in the case of Memory) a storage place for information. While Imagination modifies and transforms, creating whole descriptions of things, Fancy merely associates certain things with other things. While Imagination deals with essences and ideas, the Fancy deals with existences and particulars (*BL* I ciii).

Imagination and Fancy function both as mediators for and analogies of other powers within the self. The function of Imagination as a mediator has already been described as an attribute of the primary Imagination. Owen Barfield, in his book *What Coleridge Thought*, describes the mediating aspect of Fancy by making a distinction between active and passive Fancy (Barfield 86-88). This distinction parallels Coleridge's own distinction between primary and secondary Imagination. According to Barfield, passive Fancy is very close to the memory. The passive fancy merely takes images from the memory and plays with them, taking them out of the context of time and space. For example, if a man closed his eyes and saw an image of Pegasus, the winged horse, this image would be the product of passive fancy. The fancy merely emancipated the memory of wings on a bird and associated them with the memory of a horse. This kind of association requires no effort on the part of the person seeing the image; the fancy creates the image instinctively. (Modern readers might see this as the result of intrusions into the conscious mind on the part of the sub-conscious, resulting in dreams or perhaps daydreams. However, Coleridge, working years before the birth of modern psychology, would not have thought of it in this way, though his thought seems often to anticipate later theories.) Barfield's "active" Fancy is closer to the Understanding. Like the difference between primary and secondary Imagination, the difference between passive and active Fancy rests on the involvement of the will within the power. Active Fancy is under the influence of the will and consequently has more power over the selection and manipulation of images. For example, if a man saw a horse running and associated the horse's graceful movements with the flight of a bird, this would be the result of active fancy, since the man's mind actively sought out within his memory an image that the Fancy, through the laws of association, deemed similar and, thus, by an act of conscious

choice, brought together. Thus the active Fancy is closer to the Understanding that actively examines and arranges data received from sense and memory (Barfield 88).

While both Fancy and Imagination act as mediators between other faculties, they act, in another sense, as aesthetic analogies of these same faculties. Like the Understanding, Fancy provides sense perception with a context, linking information with other information through the laws of association. Unlike the Understanding, however, the Fancy focuses on the sensual aspect of data rather than the intellectual aspect of it. Thus the Fancy can be seen as an aesthetic parallel to the Understanding, for both are "creative" to the limited extent that they *make* (*i.e.*, fabricate) intelligible wholes out of raw data.

The Imagination, on the other hand, can be seen as an aesthetic parallel to the Reason. Like the Reason, the Imagination is divided into two powers (primary and secondary, active and passive) that perform functions analogous to the two corresponding powers—speculative and practical—within Reason. The primary Imagination organizes information gathered by other powers (sense, understanding, memory) in order to render the perceptions of the lower powers intelligible to the Reason and, at the same time, to transform them in the light of the intuitive insights of the Reason. Speculative Reason takes the information presented to it by the Understanding, in the form of generalizations, and creates abstract notions, such as scientific laws. These laws enable the human mind to render the world intelligible at a higher level than Understanding alone makes possible. While the primary Imagination renders the *sights* of sense perception intelligible, speculative Reason renders intelligible man's *vision* of reality as a meaningful whole. In other words, while primary Imagination presents *phenomena* (*i.e.*, things as they appear to the senses), the speculative Reason presents *noumena* (*i.e.*, the *ideas* of things as they present themselves to the mind) and describes how things work. In both cases, these powers are unifying diverse pieces of information into organic wholes. Both powers, on different levels, organize diverse pieces of information into coherent wholes enabling man to comprehend what he perceives, on the one hand, and to generate ideas from those perceptions on the other.

The secondary Imagination and practical Reason both draw on intuitive and creative powers to describe that which is beyond the experience of the lower faculties. The practical Reason

comes to terms with experiences which are beyond the capacity of the speculative Reason to understand. These experiences include tenets of faith and paradoxes, both of which are based upon principles which elude the structure and method of scientific reasoning. The speculative Reason is useless in dealing with higher truths such as the existence of God. Reason is the property of the Godhead and practical Reason, the highest manifestation of this power within man, provides humanity with a sense of context, of where mankind fits into creation. While this context may not be fully outlined, the sense that there is something perpetually beyond human comprehension, that all knowledge is an approximation of an unknown truth, provides man with some sense of the place he occupies (*CL* IV #688).[5]

Just as practical Reason comes to terms with mysteries and perceives spiritual truths that point to a reality beyond scientific knowing, so too, in an analogous way, does the secondary Imagination point, through fictions (*i.e.*, *made* or collateral realities) that are products of the artist's unifying and creative powers, beyond the perceptions of day-to-day experience. The secondary Imagination takes the experience of the day-to-day world and, through the exercise of the will, transforms it into an imitation of that reality of which it is, quite literally and at a higher level, a *re*-presentation. The imitation, while faithful to the original to an extent, is deliberately changed and transformed, in order to create a meaningful whole, in order to draw out the latent meaning and significance of its inner reality:

> the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature, and the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colours of imagination. The sudden charm, which accidents of light and shade, which moonlight or sun-set diffused over

[5] The acknowledgment of the limitation of man's knowledge, professed as early as the Book of Job, was an idea first developed philosophically by Socrates, said to be the world's wisest man because he knew he knew nothing (Plato, *Apology* 21d). However, this idea is also incorporated into the philosophic system of the fifteenth-century German Neoplatonist, Nicholas of Cusa, in his work *De Docta Ignorantia* (*On Learned Ignorance*), who declares:

> 'Learned Ignorance' means, primarily, an ignorance which someone has come to learn of and, secondarily, an ignorance that renders its possessor wise. The root of such learned ignorance is the recognition that God cannot be known as he is. (Cusa 173).

Coleridge himself recognizes the importance of this principle in the *Biographia Literaria* when he writes, "until you understand a writer's ignorance, presume yourself ignorant of his understanding" (*BL* I 232). When one comes to terms with what one does not know, then what one does know appears in a much clearer context.

> a known and familiar landscape.... (*BL* II 5)

While the world of artistic creation imitates the natural world, it is not bound by the same laws as the natural world. It is bound only by the laws that the artist deems necessary. Thus the world so created resembles the real world and yet possesses the novelty to which Coleridge refers.

While practical Reason provides the mind with the context of external spiritual reality, the secondary Imagination provides the mind with the context of internal spiritual reality. While the practical Reason comes to terms with the world of God's creation, the secondary Imagination comes to terms with the world of our own creation. The latter of these is a finite analogy of the former.

The parallel between Reason and Imagination becomes more apparent when the influence of the will on both is examined. When the Reason comes under the influence of the will, the result is the intelligent self or self-consciousness. When the Imagination comes under the influence of the will, secondary Imagination or artistic consciousness is manifested. The synthesizing power exercised by the primary Imagination, when effected by the power of the will, forms a new kind of consciousness which encounters the external world in a fashion distinct from that of ordinary consciousness. Artistic consciousness allows the individual to take what he experiences as interpreted by the primary Imagination and the Reason and create an imitation of the natural world shaped by the power of his own creativity. This act of creation, performed by the secondary Imagination, is not unlike an act of abstraction performed by the Reason, and, just as the act of abstraction requires an act of will (*AR* 217), so to does the act of imagining require an act of the will. Thus the centrality of the will in both Coleridge's epistemology and poetics is apparent. The importance of the will in the act of artistic creation will be further illustrated in the discussion of Coleridge's poems in the following chapter.

When individuals endowed with the power of secondary Imagination exercise the power of creativity, they create works of art, such as paintings, sculpture, music, poetry, or other artistic forms. When Coleridge formulated his theories he was speaking mainly of the composition of poetry; however, his observations on the creation and purpose of art are equally applicable to

other art forms, as Coleridge himself argues in his essay entitled *On Poesy or Art.*

Art is a product of the secondary Imagination—*i.e.*, the primary Imagination co-existent with the will. The process of creativity, in which the will and the secondary Imagination work together, is apparent when one examines a work of art. In the "Rime of the Ancient Mariner," Coleridge creates a world which is an imitation of the world as experienced by men. Thus the idea of an old man talking to a wedding guest or a sailor going to sea are all presented more or less as a person would experience them first hand. However, the world presented in this poem is also very much influenced by the personality of the poet himself. The strange ghosts that populate the nightmarish visions of the water-starved mariner do not occur in the world as experienced but rather are products of Coleridge's fancy. In the same way, the message or "moral" found in the poem itself is a product of the poet's Imagination. The form of the poem itself is an expression of how the poet sees the world, so that, while the poem presents a vision of the world that is not unlike the world as we experience it, it is a vision that is also very much formed by the personality of the person who wrote it. Thus the perception of the day-to-day world as interpreted by the primary Imagination is both presented and transformed through the influence of the secondary Imagination, and the power within the individual which prompts this transformation is the personality or will of the artist. In this way, secondary Imagination brings together the abstract and spiritual truths of the Reason, the empirical observations of perception (primary Imagination), and the musings of the Fancy into a single unified work of art that is the full expression of the individual. The power that unifies the various elements is the power of the will.

The creative process outlined here has caused some critics to ask whether or not the act of artistic creation is a conscious act. Anyone who has attempted to sit down and deliberately write a great poem will find that sheer will and undivided concentration on the task are usually not enough to produce the piece of work intended. The mind, when engaged in the act of artistic creation, acts in both a conscious and an unconscious manner. While the mind actively chooses the form, and revises what is written, the essence of the poem is produced spontaneously by the secondary Imagination: hence the idea of poetic inspiration. "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" (*PA* 258).

Humphry House, like other critics,[6] describes this fusion of conscious and unconscious states in the act of artistic creation by designating within the will different kinds of will. House makes the following distinction between will and volition, the latter being a term which Coleridge uses in various places in his prose work:

> The volition is what is active in the deliberate acts of conscious choice which go to the exercise of the fancy, when in the act of composition selected items from the memory are brought into association.... [T]he will is ... 'strictly synonymous with the individualizing principle, the I of every rational being' and is a governing power of quite a different order. This 'real will' is active only when the whole soul of man is brought into activity. Its material is not presented to the consciousness as a matter of choice, but as being the realization of an idea in a creative act. (House 155)

Volition, then, is an unconscious will that acts without the awareness of the conscious mind. In the act of creation both the volition and the will are involved, illustrating the fusion between the conscious and unconscious states in the creative mind.[7]

Like the reconciliation between self and object upon which rests the production of knowledge within the mind, and the reconciliation of active and passive properties which allows the primary Imagination to render knowledge intelligible, the act of artistic creation rests in the reconciliation or union of conscious and unconscious states that results in an act that contains properties of both states but is dependent on neither exclusively. Consciousness in all its forms is dependent upon this reconciliation of opposites, and the power that unifies them is the will. The act of artistic creation is the level of consciousness in which the self-reflective capacity of the individual

---

[6] See also Owen Barfield's distinction between Choice and Will (*What Coleridge Thought* 88). While Barfield's distinction is similar to House's, it is less complete.

[7] The distinction between volition and will is a common one among philosophers. However, Coleridge probably gleaned this distinction from Kant.

reaches the stage when self-reflection can, through an act of the will, be expressed externally. This outward expression of the internal workings of the artist's mind is what spiritualizes the external world for the artist. The manifestation of this external expression is the creation of a work of art.

The work of art produced by an act of artistic creation is not a copy of external reality but an imitation of it. To copy is to replicate, and copying nature is not an artistic act, for it leaves no room for the artist's creativity to assert itself. Coleridge finds this slavish copying of nature, such as in wax-work figures or marble fruits, disgusting, as it sets up the expectation of reality, an expectation that is confounded when the work turns out to be a copy. Only in imitation is there room for both nature and the individual to exercise creative power:

> in all imitation two elements must co-exist, and not only co-exist but must be perceived as co-existing. These constituent elements are likeness and unlikeness, or sameness and difference, and in all genuine creations of art there must be a union of these disparates. (*PA* 256)

The "union of disparates" means that in any work of art the external landscape is transformed by the vision of the artist but, in that transformation, the essence of nature none the less remains intact. If an artist sticks too close to what he perceives externally, the result is a copy of nature in which nothing of the artist himself is expressed. If the artist wanders too far into his own vision and abandons external reality, then the product is unrecognizable and incomprehensible to anyone other than the artist himself. In order for a work of art to be imitative it must express both the vision of the individual and speak to others outside that vision. In this way, a copy can be seen as a kind of falsehood, a trick, while an imitation, when properly executed, actually captures a truth.

Coleridge says that man is compelled to create art because, through this creation, he infuses the "thoughts and passions of every man into every thing which is the object of his contemplation." Moreover, artistic creation unifies the diverse elements of nature and endows

them with a moral dimension (*PA* 253)[8]. In doing this, man is not seeking to order passive or brute nature (*natura naturata*), but rather to grasp fully the essence of active nature or *natura naturans* (*ibid* 257).[9]

The purpose of art, then, is to reconcile that which is nature with that which is human, for the Imagination is to man what creative force is to nature (*CN* II 3158). As M.H. Abrams observes:

> This [the creative] process seems to be one in which the self searches within the self to find corresponding elements between the self and active nature. Humans are part of nature; consequently, there are levels of correspondence between them. (Abrams I 117)

In creating or in appreciating art, man is not merely reconciling himself with the external world; he is at the same time gaining greater knowledge of and control over himself—that is, fulfilling his role as the *imago Dei*.

In his essay *On Poesy or Art*, Coleridge observes that "nature itself is to a religious observer the art of God" (*PA* 254). In creating art, the artist is, in a finite fashion, emulating the eternal

---

[8] To Coleridge, the act of "endowing" a moral dimension upon nature is not the act of conferring upon nature an element that is not there, but rather making what is there implicitly, explicit. God, as both a Moral Being and as the ground of all existence, cannot be a ground to that which is amoral. Furthermore, if Man is the *imago Dei*, then he too is endowed with morality and, as a self-reflective being, can sense the moral order in creation. He can sense moral order because he possesses a will—and art, which is partially a product of the will, cannot then but have a moral dimension.

What must be stressed here is that the ground of all morality is found in God and not in the powers that enable us to sense it (namely, will and conscience), nor in the nature in which we observe it (*BL* I 203). Thus the moral significance with which a work of art is endowed is not the result of man infusing his thought and passions into everything, but is rather the result of what man senses in the nature of creation itself. This moral dimension is part of capturing the essence of nature in a work of art, rather than a creative embellishment endowed by the author.

[9] Coleridge's distinction between *natura naturata* and *natura naturans* is never fully explained in detail. Engell's and Bate's footnote (*BL* I 240) says that the most complete distinction is made in the source cited above: see *CN* III 4397 f50v, which is the source of the *PA* citation, and see also *PL* 370. All sources merely distinguish between passive nature (*natura naturata*—or the world as it is without human intelligence) and active nature (*natura naturans*—or the world with which "nature in the higher sense" bonds with the soul of man). Engell and Bate note that the distinction and the terms originate with Averroes (*BL* I 240).

act of creation performed by God.[10] So, while the art of man is an imitation of nature, it is also an analogy to the creative power of the Divine.[11] In creating art, man is drawing closer to the Almighty in two ways. In directly emulating God, man is being true to his nature as the image of God, thus drawing closer to his true self and, by extension, closer to his Creator. By reconciling himself with nature, God's creation, man is indirectly drawing closer to the Author of that creation.

Not only is man drawing closer to God through his creation of art, but he is also becoming more aware both of himself as a self and of what that self is and ideally can be. As we saw in the preceding chapter, man produces self-consciousness by constructing himself objectively to himself (*BL* I 272). Through the creation of art he is doing the same thing. The work of art he produces is an extension, an *expression* or outward representation (so to speak), of how he sees himself and nature from his place in creation. The work is also an object that he can contemplate as an object. Thus, through the production of art, man constructs a piece of himself that can be viewed objectively by himself. The result of this contemplation is greater self-knowledge, a higher level of self-consciousness.

By means both of the emulation of the eternal act of creation and the creation of a higher level of self-awareness, art is the medium through which man strives to realize higher truths. These higher truths are expressed through the medium of art in the form of symbols. A symbol is an image, a word, or an object that is viewed by the Imagination to be a window to higher truths. The sign and the higher order it symbolizes are related consubstantially:

---

[10] Hence, in the words of *Biographia*, the secondary (or "poetic") Imagination evidences, no less than primary Imagination, "a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM" (*BL* I 304).

[11] In a letter to Richard Sharp on January 15, 1804, Coleridge, speaking of Wordsworth, describes how the work of a true artist emulates, in a finite way, the work of God:

> [Wordsworth is] the only man who has effected a complete and constant synthesis of Thought and Feeling and combined them with Poetic Forms, with the music of pleasurable passion and with Imagination or the modifying power in that highest sense of the word in which I have ventured to oppose it to Fancy, or the aggregating power—in that sense in which it is a dim Analogue of Creation, not all we can *believe* but all that we can *conceive* of Creation (*CL* II 1034).

> a Symbol ... expresses not merely the juxtaposition of two realities ... but articulates, however dimly the interpenetration of two disparate, and often seemingly very distant realities, such as man and God. It is by such language ... that the chasm between the immanent and the transcendent can be bridged. (Barth I 29)

The symbol in its operation reveals not a single higher truth but rather taps into a whole system of truths, what could be called a higher vision of reality. Thus, the relationship between the symbol and the truth it symbolises is not a one-to-one correspondence. A symbol, Coleridge says,

> is characterized by a 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. (*SM* 30)

There are sacramental overtones in the consubstantial relationship between the symbol and the symbolized (Poston 164). The use of the term *consubstantial*[12] draws on the religious tradition of the sanctifying of the Eucharist in some Christian religions, particularly Lutheranism. The blessing of the host is an excellent example of how a symbol operates. While in one sense the host is a piece of bread, in another it is the body of Christ. The bread, through the intervention of the priest becomes "host" to, or participates in, the higher truth of the presence of God—in a mysterious way actually *becoming* God Himself. In this sense, as Robert Barth observes, "The making or perceiving of a symbol is for Coleridge a kind of act of faith" (Barth 31). The best example of a symbol in the Coleridgean sense is Christ. The absolute and simultaneous conjunction of man and Godhead in the person of Christ illustrates perfectly the union of

[12] The term consubstantial, according to *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, comes from Ecclesiastical Latin *consubstantialis:* "con" meaning "with" and "substantial" as in "substance," the entire word referring therefore to a sharing of substance. In religious terms, it refers to the sharing of substance between the three persons of the Trinity (*COD*). However, in some Protestant religions it is used to describe the sanctification of the Host. In this sense, it is distinguished from the Catholic belief in Transubstantiation in which the bread of the host actually becomes the body of Christ. While in consubstantiation there is a sharing of substance, in transubstantiation there is a transformation from one substance to another.

empirical and transcendent realities as they appear in a symbols.

Through the operation of the symbol, the three previously explored purposes of art are fulfilled. In coming into contact with a higher truth through perceiving a consubstantial relationship, man cannot help but be drawn closer to God. Symbols are the product of an "esemplastic power" that creates unity through the "reconciliation of opposites" and, as such, provides not only a bridge between the immanent and transcendent, but also "fuses the nature of the mind with the reality of nature" (*BL* I lxxxiii). In addition to deepening the relationship of man to the realities above and around him, symbols also enable him to explore the inner nature of himself. Through the mediation of a symbol, Barth declares,

> One comes ... to a deeper knowledge of the Other that is the object of mediation, and because of the 'interpenetration' of subject and object, to new knowledge of the mysteries of one's self. We come to know ourselves in knowing what is not ourselves. (Barth 31)

The transcendent quality of the symbol makes it a difficult concept to grasp completely. However, the matter becomes clearer when symbol is compared to the similar but less complex device of allegory.

Allegory, according to Coleridge, is a device in which a word, image, or object is arbitrarily associated with another word, image, object—or, in some cases, with an abstract concept.[13] In Coleridgean terms, allegory involves the *fanciful* association of two ideas or objects in a one-to-one correspondence:

> Now an allegory is but a translation of abstract notions into a picture language which is itself nothing but an abstraction from objects of the senses... (*SM* 30)

[13] This definition is consistent with the *OED* definition of allegory. According to the second edition of the *OED*, allegory comes to English from the Greek through the Latin *allegoria*, "speaking otherwise than one seems to speak." The English definition is "the description of a subject under the guise of some other aptly suggestive resemblance," or "an instance of such a description; a figurative sentence, discourse, or narrative, in which properties and circumstances attributed to the apparent subject really refer to the subject they are meant to suggest; an extended or continued metaphor."

The relationship between the sign and what it represents in an allegory is one that is made consciously by the mind through the associative faculty of Fancy. Allegory operates along the same principles as a cryptogram or code. In a cryptogram each letter represents another corresponding letter. This relationship, unlike symbolic relationships, operates on a one-to-one correspondence. Similes and metaphors are both literary devices that operate along allegorical lines.[14]

Allegory is an inferior form of poetic language, according to Coleridge. It is "but empty echoes which the fancy arbitrarily associates with apparitions of matter..." (*SM* 30). Once an allegory is established and perceived, the relationship is fixed. A symbol, on the other hand, is much more flexible:

> Symbol allows for growth: growth in the perceiver as well as in the reality perceived, or perhaps better, growth in the cognitive union between them. (Barth I 31)[15]

[14] While metaphor is often defined as a specific instance of an allegory, it can also operate as a symbol. The one-to-one correspondence exhibited in an allegorical relationship is in no way mutually exclusive to the interpenetrative relationship exhibited in a symbolic relationship. This is shown in Coleridge's letter to William Sotheby, dated Sept. 10, 1802. In this letter, Coleridge is writing of a passage in Milton's *Comus* which describes a plant called *haemony*. Coleridge tells how commentators on Milton, by examining the context of the poem, declare the plant to be a metaphor for Christian faith. However, Coleridge discovered that in the Greek, the word *haemony* means literally "blood-wine" and is a reference to the covenant of Christ made at the Last Supper. Thus, the word *haemony*, while it may represent Christian faith at a metaphoric level, participates in the central Truth of the faith, that is, the redemption of mankind through the blood of Christ, on another level (*CL* II #459).

[15] Paul de Man, in his essay "The Rhetoric of Temporality," outlines clearly the distinction that Coleridge makes between symbol and allegory:

> We find in Coleridge ... an unqualified assertion of the superiority of the symbol over allegory. The symbol is the product of the organic growth of form; in the world of the symbol, life and form are identical: 'such as the life is, such is the form.' Its structure is that of synecdoche, for the symbol is always part of the totality that it represents. Consequently, in the symbolic imagination, no disjunction of the constitutive faculties takes place, since the material perception and the symbolic imagination are continuous, as the part is continuous with the whole. In contrast, the allegorical form appears purely mechanical, an abstraction whose original meaning is even more devoid of substance than its 'phantom proxy,' the allegorical representative (176-77).

De Man goes on to criticize Coleridge for placing the symbol above allegory in his aesthetic hierarchy, arguing that the symbol, a form which has its ground in the transcendent, cannot be held higher than allegory, which has its ground in physical experience.

> In truth, the spiritualization of the symbol has been carried so far that the moment of material existence by which it was originally defined has now become altogether unimportant (*ibid.*).

Lawrence Poston observes that the difference between an allegorical and symbolic relationship can be likened to the difference between prelapsarian and postlapsarian (*i.e.*, communal *vs* individuated) consciousness. The unity captured by symbol recreates the unity between man and creation and recalls the reality that was present before the Fall. An allegorical relationship, on the other hand, always keeps the distinction between the man and creation very clear. There is association and similarity between man and creation in an allegorical relationship but there is no symbolic unity (Poston 164). The only spiritual participation that occurs between postlapsarian man and nature occurs through the grace of God—and only when the will of man is properly disposed, as was seen in Chapter One.

The difference between allegory and symbol clearly reiterates the difference between the Imagination and Fancy. Symbols, which are products—or, as Coleridge might prefer to say, *educts*—of the Imagination, communicate complete visions of realities and thus reconcile disparate truths:

> [the Imagination] ... that reconciling and mediatory power, which incorporating the Reason in Images of the Sense, and organising ... 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 *conductors*. (*SM* 29)

Allegory, which is a product of the Fancy, is merely the artistic manifestation of the laws of association by which the Fancy operates. Allegory is the product of a conscious manipulation of forms taken from the senses and the memory.

We see, then, that, while the Imagination operates on a basic level to aid in day-to-day perception, it can, when under the influence of the will, lead man to higher levels of perception

---

De Man's criticism, however, does not take into account that the symbolic form is analogous to the form of man himself. Just as symbol has its ground in the transcendent through the consubstantial relationship with the truth it represents, so too does man have his ground in the transcendent through his relationship with the Divine as the *imago Dei*. As said in Chapter One, God is, for Coleridge, the ground of all existence. It is only natural that the form which best reflects man's relationship with the universe be the highest form for man himself

in which man can interpret the reality he encounters through his own creativity, through the creation of art. The vehicles through which he can express this reinterpretation are allegory and symbol, the former being an expression of man's Fancy and the latter being an expression of his Imagination. By creating art, man is fulfilling his natural role as the *image of God* by drawing closer to nature, the work of God, and by emulating God Himself by creating, in a finite way, analogies of God's infinite creation.

Now that the purposes, powers, and devices of artistic creation have been explained theoretically, the only way to explore them more fully is to see how they work in application. We turn, then, to the products of Coleridge's own acts of artistic creation—the poems themselves.

Chapter Three:

Coleridge's Poetry: Theory in Practice

The final section of this discussion focuses on Coleridge's poetic works. While Coleridge wrote his poetry many years before he developed his epistemology and poetics, evidence of what became important ideas in his prose work can be found in some of his poems. This section will focus on three poems that illustrate artistically certain philosophic ideas that have been examined in the earlier chapters. The first poem in this chapter, "This Lime Tree Bower: My Prison," illustrates how the act of artistic creation is an extension of the process by which self-consciousness is produced. The second poem, "Dejection: An Ode," illustrates how the will must co-exist with the secondary Imagination in order for the artist to initiate acts of artistic creation. Greater attention will be given to "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," as this poem is more complex in structure and illustrates a more complex philosophic view than the others, and also because it is generally accepted as being Coleridge's greatest poetic work.

In Chapter One, self-consciousness—the process through which a mind becomes conscious of itself—was explored. This process was seen to be one in which the mind, or subject, views itself as an object in an effort to gather information about itself (*BL* I 272). Self-consciousness in man's mind is produced through a continual process of self-reflection. Later, in Chapter Two, this process was expanded to include the process of artistic self-reflection. If the mind objectifies itself to itself in order to gain self-consciousness, then art can be seen as a form of self-objectification, in which the self creates an object—a product or, to use Coleridge's word, an *educt* (*SM* 29) of the self—that can be reflected upon. Since creative self-reflection leads the creator to greater self-awareness, art becomes a vehicle of greater self knowledge. A process of this kind can be seen in the structure and content of Coleridge's poem, "This Lime Tree Bower

my Prison."

The opening of the poem reveals the poet laid up with a bad foot,[1] unable to accompany his friends for a walk in the countryside. Yet within five lines of the opening, the poet is following his friends, in his mind's eye, along the path he knows they will take. Using his imagination and his will, the poet suspends the normal functioning of his mind and struggles to visualize, in considerable detail, what his friends are seeing and feeling as they walk:

> Now, my friends emerge
> Beneath the wide wide Heaven—and view again
> The many-steepled tract magnificent
> Of hilly fields and meadows, and the sea,
> With some fair bark, perhaps, whose sails light up
> The slip of smooth clear blue betwixt two Isles
> Of purple shadow! Yes! they wander on
> In gladness all; but thou, methinks most glad,
> My gentle hearted Charles! for thou hast pined
> And hungered after Nature.... (20-29)

In the course of the poem, the poet recreates in his mind the landscape through which he knows his friends are travelling. This recreation is a function of the poet's Fancy, since he is merely drawing upon his memory of the landscape to furnish his visualization. However, to see the land as Charles sees it requires that the poet use his own creative powers to furnish the data his Fancy is incapable of providing. In order to see things as Charles would see them, Coleridge utilizes both his secondary Imagination and his Will to create an imitation of the reality that Charles is experiencing. Coleridge does this so that he can identify with his friend Charles.

The vicarious participation in the jaunt that his friends—Charles Lamb, William and Dorothy Wordsworth—are taking is the primary concern of the first two verse paragraphs of the poem.

---

[1] The incident is more fully explained in a letter from Coleridge to Robert Sotheby—dated July 17, 1797—which included the original version of this poem:

> Charles Lamb has been with me for a week—he left me Friday morning. The second day after Wordsworth came to me, dear Sara accidently emptied a skillet of boiling milk on my foot, which confined me during the whole time of C. Lamb's stay & still prevents me from walks longer than a furlong" (*CL* I #197).

At the beginning of the final verse paragraph, the author turns his attention back to himself, and finds himself unexpectedly refreshed by his musings: "A delight/ Comes sudden on my heart, and I am glad, as I myself were there!" (43). The exercise of imagining what his friends have been doing is an exercise in objectifying himself to himself. In the course of the poem, as the poet identifies with the responses and emotions of his friend, Lamb becomes the vehicle through which the self as object is reflected to the self as subject, represented in this work by the poet himself. The sympathy with Charles makes the poet aware of feelings of love and compassion within himself. Thus Coleridge's imaginative self-projection results in a higher level of self-awareness at the end of the poem, which is expressed by the poet's heightened awareness of his own surroundings: "Nor in this bower/ This little lime-tree bower, have I not mark'd/ Much that has sooth'd me" (45-6).

While the heightened sense of self-awareness can be attributed to the poet's reflection on himself through the vehicle of Charles, the sense of peace and comfort that he enjoys is the result of a reformed moral attitude prompted by these musings. While in one sense Charles is the vehicle of Coleridge's self-reflection, in another sense Charles is a separate human being with whom Coleridge is in communion. In reflecting upon Charles and *his* joys and sufferings, Coleridge is forgetting himself and his trouble. Self-surrender is the proper attitude for the Christian thinker who "proceeds from the self in order to lose and find all self in God" (*BL* I 283). Coleridge forgets himself in feeling compassion (literally, *an experiencing with*) for Charles and, in this way, he revives himself.

The two levels on which the author, through reflection upon the actions of his friend, gains a greater sense of self illustrate the levels of allegorical and symbolic representation. In using his Fancy to project himself into the character of Charles, to anticipate what his friend sees and feel what he feels, Coleridge is creating a link in which Charles comes to represent Coleridge himself.[2] This allegory is a function of Coleridge's Fancy which allows him to visualize Charles'

[2] The empathetic connection between Coleridge and Lamb was a very real one. Having met in as children at Christ's Hospital school, they both had similar life experiences. Both Coleridge and Charles, at points in their lives, "hungered after nature for many a year/In the great City pent" and suffered "evil and pain/ and strange calamity." Coleridge suffered physical pain and financial stress at various times of his life, while Charles was suffering from

journey. However, Coleridge's sympathy with Charles, which allows him to transcend his sense of self and actually *participate* in Charles' experience, operates on a symbolic level, in which the relationship between Charles and Coleridge is one of participation rather than mere projection. This identification is a function of the poet's Imagination.

On an allegorical level, the vicarious experience of the poet leads him to discover more about himself, as shown by the heightened sense of awareness described in the second verse-paragraph (45-47). On the symbolic level, the communion with the experience of another leads to a sense of peace and comfort (60-65). The lime-tree bower, that had seemed a prison to the unreflecting and self-absorbed poet at the beginning of the poem, becomes a paradise, a place of comfort and peace, to the reflective and selfless poet at the end.

While "This Lime Tree Bower" successfully illustrates, through the utilization of the Fancy and Imagination, how communion with others and personal renewal can be achieved, "Dejection: an Ode" offers the opposite view: that of alienation of the self from itself and, by extension, from nature (and God).

The imagery of alienation in this poem starts in the first stanza. Lines 17-20 express the hope on the part of the poet that contemplation of nature might "startle this dull pain and make it live." The primary symptom of self-alienation—in this case caused by protracted physical and mental suffering—is the same as self-alienation caused by the pursuit of evil goals,[3] as illustrated in Chapter One: the will appears to be paralysed. This self-absorbed attitude of the poet has created a climate in which the healthy exercise of the will has become impossible. His weakened will appears paralyzed to Coleridge. The poet's concern over his "lack" of will pervades the

---

an event the previous summer in which his sister Mary, in a fit of insanity, had killed their invalid mother and wounded their father with a butcher's knife. Charles was charged with legal custody of Mary. (*Cambridge Biographical Dictionary*)

[3] In Chapter One, it was explained how an act directed against the natural inclination of the Will damages the Will and, by extension, mars the quality of consciousness within an individual. The natural inclination of the Will is to achieve unity with the Divine. An act against the will is often the result of an excessively self-absorbed attitude (see references to Marlowe's "Faustus" in Chapter One) which interferes with the natural inclination of the Will. In Coleridge's case, protracted illness and personal trouble—see his letters of January-March, 1802—have interfered with the natural inclinations of his Will.

language of the second and third stanzas of the poem:

> A grief without a pang, void, dark,and drear,
> A stifled, drowsy, unimpassioned grief
> Which finds no natural outlet, no relief
> In word, or sigh, or tear— (21-24)

The poet also describes his state as "wan and heartless" and later says that he gazes on the beauties of nature with a "blank" eye. All of this imagery indicates the inactivity of the will: a state in which the poet has no energy to vent his grief, or even truly to feel it. His grief is a *pangless* and *unimpassioned* grief. Instead of feeling and being able to express his grief—actions that would indicate that the poet has some control over these emotions—he is consumed and rendered inert by his suffering, unable to come to terms with it.

The alienation of the self extends to include an alienation from external reality as well, for the phenomena of nature that he hopes will rouse his spirit fail to touch him: "I see, not feel how beautiful they are!" (38). Since the individual's perception of external reality is dependent not only upon the data organized by the senses but upon the personal interpretation of those perceptions as well, anything that interferes with the self necessarily interferes with the individual's perception of external reality as well. Thus, since the poet is incapable of appreciating the goodness within himself, he is incapable of seeing the beauty in external reality.

The alienation from both self and nature, when examined in the light of Coleridge's later epistemological theory, indicates that the proper mode of perception, in which both the self and nature combine to create positive acts of knowledge (*BL* I 252-255), is suspended. Self-alienation is the result of a problem within the natural process of objectifying the self to the self in order to produce self-knowledge. When this process breaks down, the ability of the self to interact with external reality is reduced and the self becomes increasingly self-absorbed. In "Dejection," the poet realizes that his inability to derive comfort from nature is a result of his own internal problems, and that he cannot derive comfort from nature until he solves his own problems first: "I may not hope from outward forms to win/ The passion and the life, whose fountains are within" (45-46).

The poet, then, cannot perceive nature in the proper fashion because of his own internal grief. While his senses can see nature, he cannot endow nature with aesthetic significance—he cannot *feel* nature—because he lacks the will to generate a sympathy between his dejected self and nature. In this position, Coleridge recognizes the importance of the self in the act of artistic comprehension, and he declares, "Oh Lady! we receive but what we give/ And in our life alone does nature live" (47-48). Coleridge, while attempting to stress the importance of the self in the act of perception, has presented this relationship in such a way that many scholars have been seduced into interpreting this line as meaning that man alone endows nature with significance (Cooke 13). While lines 47-48 do suggest that nature has no significance in and of itself, taken in context with what follows, these lines suggest an interpretation that is more consistent with Coleridge's later thought:

> 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 crowd
> 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! (49-58)

These lines indicate that an integrated self is necessary in order to perceive significance in external reality. In other words, we must see the worth within ourselves before we can see the worth in that which is outside ourselves: "And from the soul itself must there be sent/ a sweet potent voice of its own birth, of all sweet sounds the life and element." The previous insistence that only in our life does nature gain significance is the result of Coleridge's present inability to perceive correctly that which is beyond himself. When Coleridge recalls a healthier state of mind, his perception of the relationship between man and nature changes.

Stanza five is not written from the point of view of the author's present experience. It is a recollection of the past, in which Coleridge is remembering what the mind is like in a healthy

and happy state.[4] The joy Coleridge speaks of is the result of a sympathy between a unified self and nature. When "we *in ourselves* rejoice!" (72; italics added), then the self can properly perceive the beauty that is in nature: "And thence flows all that charms or ear or sight" (73). In this sense, "joy" becomes the "beautiful and beauty making power" (63). Joy is beautiful in that the unity *en*joyed by the healthy self is found when the self most resembles the image in which man was created. Joy is "beauty-making" in that, when the self is unified and functioning correctly, it can properly perceive the beauty that is inherent in all parts of creation. Joy or unity is the "dower" of nature when wedded to the healthy self (68).

This is the second reference to nature and weddings within two stanzas. In the first, man was nature's wedding garment (49), that which endows nature with significance; in the second, man is nature's bridegroom, a partner that is unified with her. These two images are incompatible: in the first, man defines nature; in the second, man joins with nature. The action of being wedded to nature is an act of unification rather than of definition. In this second stanza Coleridge is recalling a healthier state of mind. Hence his image of the relationship between man and nature more accurately reflects the proper relationship between the self and nature. The earlier image, in which man was the definer of nature, was an image created by the poet in his present state of mind—a state in which his will is paralysed, his imagination suspended and his perception of both himself and the external world impaired. Thus the statement, "in our life alone does nature live," reflects the realization of the poet of his inability to see beyond himself and his problems. This line is a symptom of Coleridge's disease rather than a statement of his mature belief.

Stanza five was written from the perspective of the poet's past. Stanza six starts in the past but recalls the reader to the poet's present state of mind. Here the grief suffered by the poet in the present is reiterated and the most devastating symptom of his affliction is given. The poet has lost his shaping spirit of Imagination (86). The disappearance of the Imagination is a result

[4] Peter Larkin points out that with the Imagination suspended in this poem, a greater privilege is given to the Fancy, both in the visual quality of the imagery and the use of information drawn from an indefinite past (Larkin 196).

of the suspension of the author's will. The *Biographia Literaria* defines the secondary or creative Imagination as "co-existing with the conscious will" (*BL* I 304). If the will is paralysed, then the secondary or creative Imagination does not operate either. The suspension of the Imagination recognized by the poet is also a recognition that he is not seeing reality in the way in which he was once able to when it produced 'joy'.

Having recognized that there is a gap in his perception, the poet has then sought to fill the void through "abstruse research" or philosophy, in an effort to discover that which can restore him to his previous—and healthier—state of mind. However, philosophy as an exercise of the Understanding can at best only approximate that which the artistic consciousness spontaneously generates (Barth II 186). Moreover, the analytical aspect of abstruse research only exacerbates the poet's present sense of disintegration.[5]

By stanza seven of the poem, all of the poet's attempts to reestablish the unity required to generate artistic vision have failed. First, he turned to nature, but found that without internal unity, nature appeared as dead to him as he appeared to himself. He then turned to philosophy but philosophy proved to be a poor substitute for art. When the poet turns back to nature in the final stanza, his vision is no better than it was before he turned his attention inward. With all of his problems still clouding his perception, Coleridge sees in the storm all of the elements of his own distress (Barth II 185). However, Coleridge is aware that his perception is of how he feels rather than how things actually are, for he refers to his vision of the storm as "reality's dark dream" (95). What the poet sees in the storm is not reality but rather a dark dream of reality, reality mixed with the concerns of his own tortured mind. Thus the screams of the wind and the destruction that it wreaks are the screams of the poet's unvented grief and the destruction that this grief is wreaking on the poet himself. The landscape that surrounds the poet becomes a

[5] Larkin maintains that Coleridge's Imagination itself was suspended from an excess of abstract theorizing (198). While I agree that philosophizing would not encourage, and cannot replace, artistic inspiration, it would seem Coleridge did not turn to philosophy until after his imagination was suspended. "For not to think of what I needs must feel,/ but to be still and patient, all I can/ and haply by abstruse research to steal/ from my own nature all the natural man" (l.87-90). These lines indicate that philosophy was pursued by Coleridge as an attempt to deal with the suspension of his Imagination. Referring to his later analysis of the secondary Imagination in the *Biographia*, the suspension of the will seems a likelier explanation for Coleridge's loss of creative power.

reflection of the poet's own internal landscape. The wind expresses, incoherently, that which Coleridge would express succinctly, if he had the will to control his artistic vision. However, while the wind is representative of the poet's feelings, these feelings are also personified as "Mad-lutanist, Actor and Poet." In this sense, the wind is a personification of Coleridge's own artistic power which, while it has maintained its intensity, has been emancipated from the confines of the poet's control, and tears across the landscape destroying where Coleridge wishes to create. Again, an image of the poet's power turned against the poet himself is created. The stanza closes with the image of a lost child frantically seeking its mother. Once again, the hopeless image of the self alienated from itself is created. This image is reinforced by the fact that Coleridge refers to his own authorship of the poem as, "Otway's self had framed the tender lay—"(120). The disassociation between Coleridge from Otway and the present Coleridge powerfully reinforces Coleridge's own sense of suffering and alienation.

The final stanza is a benediction for Sara Hutchinson, to whom the poem is addressed. As he had done in "This Lime Tree Bower," Coleridge turns to a consideration of another in order to escape from his own suffering. This would indicate that Coleridge is beginning to emerge from the pain of self-absorption that has been plaguing him since the beginning of the poem. Coleridge devoutly wishes that Sara may never have to experience the pain and suffering that he himself is presently feeling. While the closing images of the poem are soothing and peaceful, and while Coleridge's concentration on the well-being of another indicates the restoration of a healthy exercising of the Will, at no point does Coleridge indicate that his own sufferings have passed. Thus, while there is no happy ending for this poem, there is as much of a sense of hope for Coleridge as there is a wish of peace for Sara.

This poem is important because it illustrates vividly how the creative process works through showing how it does not work. In this respect, "Dejection: An Ode" could be referred to as an anti-poem, for everything that Coleridge strives to achieve in this poem fails to materialize for himself and is only anticipated for Sara. At the end he does not resolve his problems, nor does he restore or come to a better understanding of his poetic powers, nor does he find peace with himself. The best he can do is pray fervently for the peace of others.

While "Dejection: An Ode" was written at a time (1802) when Coleridge's poetic powers were in crisis, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" was composed during the *annus mirabilis* of 1797-1798 when his creative powers were at their height. This poem is the most examined poem within the Coleridge canon, for, in spite of—or perhaps because of—its complex structure and excellent execution, this poem seems to resist any kind of complete explanation.

The New Critical approaches to this poem make very pleasant reading, in the same way that fairy tales make for pleasant reading. According to them, the poem offers us the tale of a simple sailor who sins, suffers, and is restored to his fellow man after feeling true repentance. As part of his penance he is condemned to wander the world telling his story to a select audience. The poem is written in imitation of a medieval ballad form, and seems on the whole rather straightforward.[6] While New Critical versions vary in complexity (for example, Robert Penn Warren's treatment in which the sin of the Mariner and its consequences are seen as symbolic of the fall of man: Penn Warren 719), the structure they follow is more or less the same. These treatments focus on the narration of the Mariner himself, and seek to generate a unified and consistent account of what the poem means based on the information provided by the Mariner and the marginal gloss. What is not addressed adequately by these treatments is the reason for the structure of the poem—the narrative of the Ancient Mariner to the Wedding Guest, the framing plot of the wedding feast itself, and the later addition of the gloss. The New Critical explanation that such devices serve only to emulate medieval style (Huntington Brown as cited in McGann 142) ignores the fact that there are other less elaborate ways that Coleridge could have created a medieval feel for his creation, and does little to explain why Coleridge chose these particular devices to achieve this effect.

Katherine Wheeler observes that the inclusion of both the gloss and the Wedding-Guest framework acts to destabilize the boundary between art and reality (Wheeler II 43). While Wheeler focuses on the effect of the gloss on the text, I will focus on the effect of the poem as

[6] For this kind of interpretation of "The Ancient Mariner," see (for example) Humphry House, *The Clark Lectures*, and C.M. Bowra, *The Romantic Imagination*. For an excellent brief history of critical treatments of "The Ancient Mariner," see Jerome McGann, "The Ancient Mariner: the Meaning of Meanings."

narrative and dialogue. When narrative and dialogue are the focus, the central issue of the poem becomes how meaning is generated through the act of communication. The exploration of this issue is presented through the interaction, or lack thereof, between the Mariner and the Wedding Guest. The fact that the Wedding Guest's impression of the Mariner's tale is not the impression that the Mariner was trying to convey is the result of differences in how each individual perceives and exercises his will.

Through the act of narration, the Mariner is recreating for the Wedding Guest the tale of his voyage and return. Like the story of Beowulf or any other oral tale, the structure and details of the story will change from telling to telling. Thus the fact that the story is related orally contributes to the sense of destabilization of reality. The act of oral narration reinforces the notion that this tale is an account of the events from one perspective only and that this account is subject to change, depending upon the audience. However, as neither the Wedding Guest, the commentator in the gloss, nor the reader is in a position to judge the accuracy of the Mariner's account, the reader must accept, as given, that the tale is what the Mariner truly believes happened to him. This understanding is an easy one to grant when it comes to the physical descriptions in the Mariner's tale—for example, that the Mariner departed on a voyage, saw icebergs, became trapped in the doldrums on a becalmed southern sea. However, when the Mariner attempts to explain or to endow parts of his tale with moral significance, the audience's understanding becomes increasingly dependent on the Mariner's perception of reality.

The most obvious example of information that is an interpretation of events rather than a simple description of them is the Mariner's trite moral at the end of his tale:

> He prayeth best, who loveth best
> All things both great and small:
> For the dear God who loveth us,
> He made and loveth all. (614-617)

Wheeler cites this as the most significant example of how moral significance is imposed by the Mariner on the events of his tale (Wheeler II 61). However, there are many instances where the Mariner offers equally subjective assessments of the events which, he says, he experienced. That

the death of the albatross was the *cause* of the ensuing calamity, for example, is a subjective conclusion that is asserted on the part of the Mariner. Traditionally, critics have identified the Mariner's fellow sailors as representatives of superstitious reasoning, with their vacillating interpretation of events based on a *post hoc ergo propter hoc* line of reasoning;[7] however, the Mariner's own reason, in many cases, is not much more sound. That the figures on the ghost ship were Death and Life-in-Death, or that the Virgin Mary was responsible for sending the Mariner sleep are statements based on no evidence other than the Mariner's private convictions.

That the discrepancy between editorializing and actually describing events is perpetrated subtly by the Mariner is emphasized and thrown into high relief by the Mariner's juxtaposition with the sailors whose superstitious view of the world has already been mentioned. Instead of providing a contrast to the Mariner, the sailors provide the audience with a more extreme—or, at least, a more obvious—example of how the Mariner's personal beliefs shape his version of reality. This comparison is eliminated from the Mariner's tale as the sailors die, but the effect is continued for readers of the text through the inclusion of the gloss, the author of which freely offers subjective explanations of the events presented in the tale in an authoritarian manner.[8]

---

[7] The best example of the sailors' superstitious line of reasoning is how they react to the death of the albatross. After the death of the sea-bird, the sailors curse the Mariner for killing a bird of good omen (91-96). Later, after the fog and mist that had been hindering their progress cleared, the sailors averred that it was a good thing that the Mariner had killed the bird (97-100). However, after the ship became becalmed, the sailors changed their minds again and blamed him for killing an innocent bird and hung the Albatross around his neck as a symbol of his guilt (140-143). In each case the sailors based their judgment of the significance of the killing of the albatross not upon any line of rational discourse, but rather upon the events subsequent to the action itself.

[8] The reader should not assume the point of view presented in the gloss is that of the author. It is worth noting, for example, that the epigram for "The Ancient Mariner" is taken from Thomas Burnet's *Archaelogiae Philosophicae* and that the gloss is written in the same style as the epigraph. Thomas Burnet was an English divine born in 1635. His first book, *Tellurus Theoria Sacra* (or *Sacred Theory of the Earth*), published in 1681, presented the bizarre argument that the Earth was created like an egg, the crust or shell of which cracked during biblical times. The force of the liquid interior of the planet rushing to the surface caused Noah's flood. Burnet's theories were condemned by the scientific community at the time, but received mixed reviews from society at large. It was his second book, *Archaelogiae Philosophicae* (1692)—the book from which the epigraph is taken—that tried the patience of even the larger community. In this book, Burnet claims that the book of Genesis is allegorical. This proclamation resulted in Burnet being removed from his position in the court of King William and branded an eccentric by society (Encyclopedia Britannica). Burnet, then, was known as an eccentric whose scientific theories are based not so much upon scientific method as upon vivid imagination. Coleridge's inclusion of this epigraph and the subsequent gloss in the same voice are meant, therefore, I would argue, to be ironic—for the point of view which both put forward is, historical speaking, the voice one who, by Coleridge's time, had long been known as a scientific crackpot.

One of the more important conclusions that can be drawn in the light of the Mariner's editorializing is that, if art is (as Coleridge argues) an extension of the self-objectification process, and if the Mariner is deluded about what happened to him and is caught passing off private assumptions as universal truths in his story, then the reader can reasonably conclude that the Mariner's knowledge of himself is equally deluded.

The crux of the interaction between the Wedding Guest and the Mariner lies in the tension generated as a result of the discrepancies between what the Mariner accepts as plausible fact and what the Wedding Guest accepts as plausible fact. The Mariner's insistence upon the reality of certain events, which are beyond what the Wedding Guest considers plausible, also tests the credulity of the reader—who is, perhaps, already sceptical of the Mariner's sanity early in the poem, since the Wedding Guest does not initially take him very seriously, calling him a "grey bearded loon" (11) and, in the 1798 draft of the poem, even threatening violence to the strange old man ("my staff shall make thee skip") before the Mariner ever begins his story.

Once the Mariner begins his account, the Wedding Guest is enthraled by the tale. The Wedding Guest's emotional involvement in the tale, as illustrated by his breathless interruptions at various points in the poem, is more of a tribute to the power of the Mariner's story-telling than to actual belief on the part of the Wedding Guest. (Coleridge, of all people, recognized the vital role played by a willing suspension of disbelief in the audience's response to any work of imagination.) But, once the tale is finished, the Wedding Guest goes forth "like one that hath been stunned" (622). It is when the Wedding Guest's capacity for intellectual reflection returns at the close of the Mariner's tale—*i.e.*, once the fiction ends and he is no longer required to suspend his disbelief—that he realizes that he has been listening to and, in a sense, believing a tale which his reason cannot accept exactly as narrated. The emotional involvement of the Wedding Guest during the Mariner's tale is essential in order to generate the impact of this revelation. If the tale itself had meant nothing to the Wedding Guest, then he could merely have dismissed it as the ravings of a madman. But the "madman" is standing beside him—a man with whom, in fact, the Wedding Guest has developed some sort of emotional bond during the course of the narration. The Mariner and his tale, then, cannot so easily be dismissed.

The weakness of the Mariner's "moral" at the end of the narration calls attention to the fact that much of the Mariner's tale is an interpretation of events rather than an objective description of them. The liberal use of superstition, the mixed theology (involving pagan spirits and ghosts, as well as angels and the Queen of Heaven), and the unscientific nature of the descriptions of natural phenomena such as icebergs and water snakes, all present to the rational audience—of which the Wedding Guest is the normative example—indications that the tale told is not a completely accurate description of the events encountered by the Mariner. However, the Wedding Guest is not in a position to assert that such events did *not* happen, for he, after all, was not present. The strange presence of the Mariner himself, the emotional bond between him and the Wedding Guest, the elements of the tale that are plausible to the Wedding Guest, and the presence of outside witnesses (the Hermit, the Pilot and his boy) to the strange sinking of the ship: all these indicate that, even if the Mariner's tale was not true in its entirety, *some* of it was—and that is enough to destabilize the Wedding Guest's sense of what is real.

A dynamic, then, is created through the act of narration, in which the Ancient Mariner—and, with him, the narrator of the gloss—seek to generate their own sense of meaning and significance through their presentation of the tale. At the same time, the Wedding Guest and the reader of the poem, through an act of rational comprehension and accommodation, dissolve these meanings and generate their own—a version that is more in keeping with their own particular sense of reality. The dynamic of the act of narration is representative of the general dynamic that is generated when any two individuals communicate. However, in this case, the dynamic is brought into the foreground and illustrated by the framework-plot of the Wedding Guest and especially by the gloss, which draws attention to its own relativity through its archaic language and its confident exposition of "scientific" theories—both of which reveal its "authority" to be mired in an outdated cultural and historical perspective. The cultural and historical relativity of the gloss destabilizes the credibility of its version of events as effectively as the changing nature of oral communication destabilizes the Mariner's account (Wheeler II 60).

What the Wedding Guest realizes, having heard the Mariner out, is that *his own* version of reality (a vision based upon both what he as an individual has actually experienced and any

abstract theories he may have developed as a result of his experience) may not, in the end, be any more reliable as a description of reality than the Mariner's version. He has accepted it without question until now because he has never had occasion—until the Mariner burst into his life—to question it. It is this questioning of his own preconceptions that causes the Wedding Guest to walk away from his encounter with the Mariner as one who is stunned and to rise the next morn a wiser and a sadder man. It is not a pleasant thing to have one's personal view of reality called into question, or to recognize that culturally respected sources of authority do not possess absolute wisdom, for such recognitions seriously undermine an individual's self-consciousness by calling into question how effectively that individual perceives reality.

Every person who seeks to generate a unified vision of truth in this poem fails in some way. The folk-wisdom of the sailors does not give them any great insight into life or provide any real reason for their deaths. As far as they understand the situation, they die because the Mariner killed a bird. (Not, it may be thought, a particularly satisfactory justification for one's death on any reckoning.) Likewise, the "visionary" wisdom of the Mariner, the one who has travelled shaman-like into the regions of the supernatural, justifies his fantastic experience and his tremendous suffering on the basis that he deserved his fate because he killed a bird. The penance he serves is a rather severe one for the death of a single sea-bird. The Sunday-school lesson that he draws from his experience, too, is anti-climactic. He has, apparently, experienced all that he has, only so that he could learn the meaning of a rather trite cliché: that we should all love one another. For the reader, the reliability of scientific wisdom is also called into question. The scientific theories presented in the gloss would have seemed as ridiculous to the readers of Coleridge's day as they do to the modern reader. For example, the gloss's confident assertion that invisible spirits are regular inhabitants of the planet, being "neither departed souls nor angels" (130), and the bibliographic list of learned authorities who wrote on such subjects are enough to try the credulity of even the most open-minded reader.

The various meanings of the events that occurred, as interpreted by the sailors, the Mariner, and the gloss, are subjective, but such subjective interpretation is necessary to the human understanding of reality. The Mariner's peculiar effort to organize and describe his experience

reflects the function of the primary Imagination, which takes diverse elements of an individual's experience and produces from them a coherent whole. But the act of comprehension undertaken by the Wedding Guest, as he dissects the Mariner's tale and forms his own unified conclusion, performs the function of the secondary Imagination. What the Wedding Guest sees in the Mariner's tale is not what the Mariner sees. The difference between what they see is the difference between what the ordinary person experiences in day-to-day life and what an artist perceives. The Mariner understands what happened to him in a limited, allegorical way—and his allegorical understanding, under the heat of overwhelming events, is pushed to fanciful extremes in his attempt to come to terms with the significance of those events. His thinking is not unlike that of the sailors who could not understanding that the killing of the sea-bird had any significance beyond what subsequently happened to them. Both the Mariner and the sailors are mired in a vision of reality in which the greatest force is that of cause and effect. The Mariner kills the bird and bad things happen to him. The moral he learns from this is to be nice to animals. The sailors see the Mariner kill the bird and they die of drought on the becalmed ship. The moral they learn is that killing sea-birds is bad luck. Neither the sailors nor the Mariner glean more abstract or complex messages from their experiences. They do not see that the events that occur after the killing of the sea-bird *may not be related* to the killing at all. Nor do they think that there may be a higher meaning in their experience—such as, that the universe is a truly mysterious place. The *post hoc* connections made by the sailors and the Mariner in the story are like the allegorical connections later passed on by the Mariner to the Wedding Guest, in that both kinds of connections are the products of *ad hoc* relations. The sailors see only cause and effect: the sea-bird is killed; the ship becomes becalmed; therefore, the killing of the sea-bird caused the becalming of the ship. The Mariner kills the sea-bird—and then, as a direct consequence, the Mariner suffers. The Mariner is released from his suffering when he spontaneously loves the water-snakes; therefore the key to survival is obviously to love animals, not to kill them—for such creatures are the allegorical representations of God's (and the Polar Spirit's) holy creation.

The Wedding Guest, unlike the Mariner and the other sailors, sees beyond the surface of events, and beyond the merely *allegorical and superstitious* significance assigned to those events

by the Mariner and his moral, and grasps the truly *symbolic and metaphysical* significance of his encounter with the Mariner—namely, his perception, brought about by hearing the Mariner's fantastic tale, that all human accounts of reality are relativized by speakers in time and space.

While the Mariner's moral is inadequate as a complete description of his experience, it does provide an insight into a higher truth. The Mariner's insistence on dedication to God is a beginning, on the part of the Mariner, toward a full understanding of the greater import of his experience.

> O sweeter than the marriage-feast,
> 'Tis sweeter far to me,
> To walk together to the kirk
> With a goodly company!—
>
> To walk together to the kirk,
> And all together pray,
> While each to his great father bends,
> Old men, and babes and loving friends
> And youths and maidens gay! (601-609)

The Mariner's attempt to generate a unified, consistent vision of reality is not wrong; it is a natural process by which he comes to understand the world in which he lives. The problem with both the Mariner's and the glossator's accounts is their confident assertion that what they are communicating is The Truth about those events. This is evident in the Mariner's moral at the end of the poem. He is sure he has gleaned from his experience exactly what he was expected to. This mistaken assumption is, like the Mariner's problems during the voyage, the result of an improper dispensation of his will.

The Mariner sins during the poem, suffers for his sin, and returns to tell the tale without having learned much from his experience because, through the entire tale, he uses his will to seek greater power and authority for himself—rather than using it to understand himself and the world better. This quest for greater power can be seen in the way the Mariner acts before he starts his narrative, in his actions during the narrative, and in the way he relates the story itself.

The Mariner's first act is to force the Wedding Guest to miss the reception because *he* has

something to tell the Wedding Guest—"the man that *must* hear me" (589; italics added). To the Mariner, his story is more important than anything the Wedding Guest may want to do. Thus, "the Mariner hath his will" (16). As the only survivor of his experience on the wide wide sea, the Mariner has achieved the coveted rank of Authority.[9] The Wedding Guest cannot refuse to hear the Mariner or question the content of his tale because the Mariner has had this experience and no one else still living is in a position to challenge him. But the Mariner does not exercise his will to seek out the truth, to attempt a better understanding of what happened to him all those years ago, for he does not ask the Wedding Guest for his opinion about his tale nor does he allow the Wedding Guest the dignity of reflecting upon the moral of the tale for himself—for, to do either of these things would be to diminish his own power. The Mariner uses his tale for his own self-aggrandizement. From the beginning of the poem to the end, he controls the action of the poem with an almost peevish insistence.

It was the Mariner's hunger for control that led him, in the first place, to commit the central act of the poem: the killing of the Albatross. The Albatross is the center of attention when it enters the story. After the Mariner kills it, he becomes the center of attention for the rest of the tale. The Mariner cannot control the Albatross as he can control the Wedding Guest, so he exercises over the bird the only form of control he can: he kills it. The killing of the bird is an act of pure evil. The motivation behind the act is not rational, for reason, according to Coleridge, is an attribute of God and thus cannot be evil. It is the Mariner's will that enables him to perform the act, and thus responsibility cannot lie with anyone except the Mariner. The Mariner's narcissistic insistence upon being the center of attention is evident not only in his killing of the sea-bird but also in the way he tells his tale.

The Mariner's editorializing, already briefly discussed, is an important way in which the Mariner exercises control over both the Wedding Guest and the interpretation of events in the poem. The killing of the albatross was an evil act—a sin—and the Mariner knows it. He

[9] The telling of the tale for the purpose of self-aggrandizement is also evident in the tone in which the glossator presents his version of the "facts." Like the Mariner, the glossator occupies a position of authority—and his "authoritative" analysis is a clever echo of the folly of the Mariner himself.

chooses to interpret subsequent events as punishment for this sin. But there is no proof (outside the Mariner's account and that of the gloss) that the killing of the bird and the subsequent suffering of the Mariner are related at all. The Mariner, however, interprets them as related. This makes the suffering that Mariner endures appear more potent, for his suffering is not merely the suffering of any sailor lost on any voyage, but that of a great sinner struggling under the burden of divine retribution. The calamity of the Mariner is considerably more striking if it is an act of God rather than mere happenstance. That the Mariner himself firmly believes—because he has convinced himself—that this is so is seen in the way he rattles off his moral, perhaps for the hundredth time, and lectures the Wedding Guest about going to church.

The Mariner does not understand the truth of his tale that the Wedding Guest has been led to understand, for the simple reason that the Mariner has stopped looking for the truth: as far as he is concerned, he has already found it. It is for this reason that the Mariner lacks the true "artistic perception" of the Wedding Guest. He has put self-imposed—indeed, self-centered—limits on his will, and his will is incapable of "co-existing" with his imagination to create a true artistic perception of his experience: he is incapable of seeing himself and his experience objectively. This also limits the depth at which the Mariner is capable of understanding the significance of the events which happened to him. The Mariner has twisted will and imagination to serve himself rather than to serve God—and, in fact, the final impression the reader receives from the Mariner's tale is not how great and mysterious are the ways of God, but rather how sad and burdensome have been the sufferings of the Mariner.

The point from which the Wedding Guest derives comfort is precisely the one point that the Mariner and the glossator miss. This is the point that a true Christian thinker, such as Nicholas of Cusa, would recognize. We are all in the same state of ignorance about the nature of the one God who alone possesses the unified Truth—a truth every soul can hope to attain only after the end of life.[10] It is not in the interest of the Mariner or the glossator to recognize this truth, for,

[10] This point is well presented in the Book of Job, when Job declares:

> Where shall wisdom be found?
> And where is the place of understanding?

in recognizing it, their own positions of authority would be diminished. However, the Wedding Guest who listens carefully to the story and who identifies with the Mariner, as seen from his emotional involvement with the story, does recognize the truth that the others miss.

This offers an explanation of why the Wedding Guest is on his way to a wedding feast as opposed to a party, a funeral, or any other social function. The wedding ceremony is a particularly suitable backdrop for the conversation that the poem presents. First, a wedding is the celebration of unity. Secondly, the religious wedding traditionally is comprised of two parts, the joining of a couple before God, and the joining of the couple before man. The Wedding Guest is proceeding from the wedding service to the reception when he is intercepted by the Mariner. Thus, the Wedding Guest is moving from a religious celebration of unity to a secular celebration of unity. At the beginning of the poem, the Guest is happy and confident, as is revealed by his irreverent treatment of the old man. (This treatment also implies that the young man has not learned a great deal from the religious ceremony which he has just attended, if, on leaving the church, he is immediately rude to an old man.) The Wedding Guest's impatience to enter the hall also implies that he is looking forward to the reception, the celebration of secular unity, more than he did to the religious ceremony.

At the beginning of the poem the Wedding Guest placed his confidence in the unity that man achieves through his own social institutions and, by extension, through his own reasoning or laws. It is this aspect of unity that the wedding feast celebrates. However, after hearing the tale of the Mariner, once his own confidence in the unity apprehended by man is shaken, the prospect of going to the wedding feast seems inappropriate. This is presented in the juxtaposition of the Mariner's conclusions with the exit of guests from the wedding hall. The happiness and celebration of the guests and the singing of the Bride and her maids is contrasted to the Mariner's

---

Man does not know the way to it and
it is not found in the land of the living....
God understands the way to it
and he knows its place. For
he looks to the ends of the earth
and sees everything under the heavens.
(Job 28: 12-13, 23-24)

remarks on his suffering and isolation. In this way, the emptiness of human confidence that celebrates man's endeavour to understand the reasons behind creation is revealed. The emphasis of the wedding celebration should be on the religious ceremony from which the Wedding Guest has departed rather than on the reception, for the celebration of sacred unity is the greater of the two truths in the celebration. That is why going to church is sweeter to the Mariner than the wedding feast. Even though the Mariner has missed the point that the Wedding Guest perceived, he has, though for more simplistic reasons, realized the power of God over man.

While the Wedding Guest is sadder because his confidence in human understanding has been shaken, he is also wiser, for, like Socrates who was considered wise, he now knows that he knows nothing, and, like Nicholas of Cusa, he has the opportunity to see that the first step toward wisdom is the recognition of the unfathomability both of God and His creation.[11] The realization of one's limitations and the recognition of one's place in the universe may be devastating, as it is to the Wedding Guest at the end of the poem—"He went like one that hath been stunned,/ And is of sense forlorn" (622-23)—but it is devastating only to human pride. In reality, the knowledge of man's place in the universe is the beginning of true wisdom and should result in the strengthening of faith—for, "men that know nothing in science have no doubts. He never truly believed, who was not made first sensible and convinced of unbelief" (*AR* 306).

This interpretation of *The Ancient Mariner* suggests that the poem is an anticipation of Coleridge's later theories on the interpretation of meaning in the Scriptures. Anthony Harding comments on the hermeneutical model that Coleridge constructed in his approach to sacred works. Drawing from *Aids to Reflection* and Coleridge's posthumous work, *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit*, Harding asserts that, for Coleridge, the most important relationship between the authors of the inspired word and the reader of their texts is that of communication between the human author and the human reader, rather than between God as the inspirer of revealed text and the reader as the believer of that text. For Coleridge, the distinction is that Scripture *contains*

[11] For example, see the conclusion of Book I of *De Docta Ignorantia*: "we conclude that the precise truth shines incomprehensibly within the darkness of our ignorance. This is the learned ignorance we have been seeking..." (Cusa 85).

the word of God rather than *is* the word of God (Harding 74). The effect that this premise has on scriptural interpretation is that the Scriptures, while being the word of God, were not to be taken literally (Harding 59). Moreover, any human interpretation of Scriptures would necessarily be clouded by both the relativizing effects of time and space and by the fallibility of the human interpreters themselves. Thus, any truth gleaned from the Scriptures must be recognized as a relative truth. As Jerome McGann observes,

> Coleridge's view is that Scriptures are, as it were, a living and processive organism, one that comes into existence in human time and continues to develop in that 'fallible' and limited sphere. This view leads him to affirm that the Bible is indeed the word of God, but that its Word is uttered by God's mortal creatures. (McGann 144)

The revelation of the truth of God, then, does not occur within the actual text of any given piece of Scripture. Rather, the truth contained within is revealed to man through a "continuous historical process of incarnation" (*ibid.*, 145).[12] When the structure of "The Ancient Mariner" is examined in light of this later theory of Coleridge, it become apparent that the point of the poem is not merely the tale of the Mariner's journey, but rather the revelation to the Wedding Guest of the hermeneutical nature of true knowledge.[13] For the wiser and sadder Wedding Guest, truth is no longer something that is grasped, but something that must be striven for in a continuous process, where the final goal is never, in this life, fully achieved. Any conclusions the Wedding Guest may have drawn about the world before his encounter with the Mariner and his tale are now called into question. This interpretation offers an adequate explanation for the strong reaction of the Wedding Guest to the Mariner's tale—a reaction too strong to be accounted

[12] Harding goes further, relating Coleridge's approach to Scripture to the doctrine of *learned ignorance*. While the revealed Text may contain the word of God, man's interpretation of that text is necessarily limited by his own capacity for understanding. Anything learned from the revealed Text, then, is only an approximation of the Word within the text (Harding 77). In this way, the value of the revealed Text is neither limited nor impugned, and the interpretation of that text is put into its proper context.

[13] It is ironic that when one views the poem in this light, the interpretation of the work by the New critics echoes the short-sightedness of the Mariner's trite moral. The tale of sin and redemption generated by the New Critics is every bit as simplistic as the Mariner's admonishment to love all creatures.

for by the tale or the Mariner's trite moral alone. It also offers some explanation for the later addition of the gloss. The gloss draws attention to the subjective nature of the information related both by itself and by the Mariner.

The Wedding Guest's experience is the experience of anyone who is engaged in the process of learning. This process becomes stagnant when the learner, like the Mariner, is convinced that this process is at an end—that he has found THE ANSWER. The learning process, like the process of developing individual self-consciousness described in Chapter One, or the process of the will striving toward greater unity and understanding through the fictive products of the secondary Imagination (Chapter Two), is an organic and unending one, which concludes (still inconclusively) with the earthly demise of the individual. This is, perhaps, a sadder wisdom than some men are prepared or able to accept.

Conclusion

The previous chapters have outlined how the various aspects of Coleridge's thought are linked, through the concept of the will, to form a coherent body of thought. The concept of the will, a theological premise, is a central concept in both Coleridge's view of the development of self-consciousness and in his theory of Imagination. Early evidence of the importance of the will can be found in Coleridge's poetry. Thus the concept of the will forms a link between Coleridge's theological, philosophical and aesthetic theories and is, as well, an *ur*-influence on his artistic works.

Chapter One showed how the will is a philosophic first principle and is God's gift to man. The will is the prime force that motivates man to develop himself through the process of self-conscious discovery and then to surrender that self to the Author of his creation. This chapter also outlined how the will works with the power of reason to develop the self-reflective capacity of consciousness within man. This capacity allows man to perceive both external reality and himself and to reflect upon these. Finally, Chapter One outlined the moral capacity of the will. The will is the central force in man's ethical well being. The proper dispensation of the will allows man to develop his full potential and to fulfil his natural role as *imago Dei* by seeking unification with the Divine. Conversely, improper dispensation of the will not only arrests man's personal development but also damages the powers through which his development proceeds (*e.g.*, his reason and the will itself).

Chapter Two showed how Coleridge's aesthetic theory is an extension of his epistemology. Imagination, which performs an epistemological function when operating in the "primary" sense, functions as the initiator of creative acts when it comes under the influence of the will. This power allows man to reinterpret his perceptions of reality through the medium of his own

creativity. Acts of artistic creation produce works which can be seen as an externalization of the act of self-reflection which allows man to develop self-consciousness. As the will, when combined with reason, enables the mind to develop self-consciousness, so to the will, when combined with Imagination, enables the mind to externalize this self-reflective capacity and thus to expand it.

The final chapter showed how Coleridge's poetry helps to illustrate his philosophic and aesthetic theories. "This Lime Tree Bower: My Prison" provides an excellent example of how the secondary Imagination works to externalize man's capacity for self-reflection. It also shows how, through the exercise of the will, man can transcend his sense of self to identify with another person which, by extension, leads him to a closer identification with God. The second poem, "Dejection: an Ode", illustrated how the will is essential to the creative Imagination, for, when the will is suspended, artistic creation is impossible. While Coleridge still uses his fancy and imagination in this work, he does not control the creative power sufficiently to communicate coherently the cause of his pain or to exorcise it.

"The Ancient Mariner" reveals how the improper dispensation of the will can prevent an individual both from gaining wisdom and from achieving his own potential. The Mariner, instead of exploring external reality and learning from his experience, uses his will to try to control reality. Every major act in the poem initiated by the Mariner can be seen as a effort to gain or maintain control over the situation he find himself in. This is revealed in the way that he accosts the Wedding Guest, kills the Albatross, insists upon his puerile moral as the true meaning of his adventure, and demands that he himself occupy the central position of authority through his editorializing interpretation of the meaning of his tale. As a result, the Mariner is trapped by his own belief that he has the answers and thus learns next to nothing from his experience. The Wedding Guest, on the other hand, has the proper attitude towards learning. Once he forgets about attending the wedding feast, the Wedding Guest becomes an attentive listener. He expresses concern and compassion for the Mariner. Unlike the Mariner, the Wedding Guest learns something more from the Mariner's tale than merely the story it tells: he learns of the relative nature of earthly truth. Not only does this poem reveal the effect of the properly

disposed and improperly disposed will, it also reveals how art can not only be entertaining but also instructive to those who are open to learning experiences.

The will, then, is an essential element that runs through all major areas of Coleridge's thought. It is the prime force behind all of the actions, both cognitive and moral, within the Coleridgean psyche. Examination of the will also reveals that Coleridge's aesthetic theory is an extension of his epistemology. The consistent centrality of the will in these different areas in Coleridge's thought shows how Coleridge's prose work does, in fact, form a unified organic system. Coleridge's poetic work shows that the issues explored in the later prose works were important to Coleridge long before he began to develop his formal philosophy, aesthetics, and theology.

The moral component of Coleridge's concept of the will, and his repeated insistence upon both its freedom and responsibility, brings to the modern reader a view that is alien in the new determinism prevalent in today's popular thought. Today, an individual's actions are far more likely to be seen as determined by environment, genetics, and the plethora of other "devils" that mysteriously run our lives. Ironically, by attempting to escape responsibility for our sometimes not-so-noble actions, we are also surrendering the power to determine our own fate. Personal power is less likely to be found in a self-help guide than it is in taking responsibility for the consequences of our actions. Coleridge, better than many of us, knew that this responsibility is not always easy to bear; but, in order for us to avail ourselves of our birthright—freedom—it is a necessary cross.

Bibliography

Primary Sources: Coleridge

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. *Aids to Reflection.* Ed. H.N. Coleridge. London: Kennikat Press, 1971.

———. *Biographia Literaria or Biographical Sketches of My Literary Life and Opinions.* Edd. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate. 2 vols. Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1983. Vols. 7i & 7ii of *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge.* Gen. Ed. Kathleen Coburn. 14 vols. 1969-90.

———. *The Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge.* Ed. Earl Leslie Griggs. 6 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956-71.

———. *The Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge.* Ed. E.H. Coleridge. 2 vols. London: William Heinemann, 1895.

———. *The Collected Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge.* Ed. Kathleen Coburn. 5 vols (in progress). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1957-.

———. *The Friend.* Ed. Barbara Rooke. Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1969. Vol. 4i of *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge.* Gen. Ed. Kathleen Coburn. 14 vols. 1969-1990.

———. "On Poesy or Art," pp 253-263 in *Biographia Literaria: with His Aesthetical Essays.* Ed. J. Shawcross. 2 vols. Oxford: Oxford U.P. 1958.

———. *The Philosophical Lectures of Samuel Taylor Coleridge.* Ed. Kathleen Coburn. London: The Pilot Press, 1949.

———. *Coleridge's Poetical Works.* Ed. E.H. Coleridge. 2 vols. London: Oxford U.P., 1969.

———. *Remorse, 1813*. Oxford: Woodstock Press, 1989.

———. *The Statesman's Manual*. Ed. R.J. White. Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1969. Vol. 6 of *The Collected Works Of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. Gen. Ed. Kathleen Coburn. 14 vols. 1969-1990.

Primary Sources: Other

Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa Theologica*. Trans. Blackfriars. Vols. 11, 18, 19. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964.

Aristotle. *The Nichomachean Ethics*. Trans. David Ross. Rev. ed. Oxford: Oxford U.P., 1980.

Augustine, Bishop of Hippo. *On the Free Choice of the Will*. Trans. Anna Benjamin & L.H. Hackenstaff. New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1964.

———. *The Trinity*. Trans. Stephen Mc Kenna. Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1963.

Boethius. *The Consolation of Philosophy*. Trans. V.E Watts. Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin Press, 1969.

———. "The Trinity," in *Theological Tractates*, trans. H.F. Steward, E.K. Rand, S.J. Tester. London: William Heinemann, 1923.

Cusanus, Nicholas. *On Learned Ignorance: A Translation and Appraisal of De Docta Ignorantia*. Trans. Jasper Hopkins. 2nd ed. Minneapolis: Arthur J. Banning Press, 1985.

Duns Scotus, John. *Philosophical Writings: A Selection*. Trans. Alan Walter. Edinburgh: Nelson & Sons, 1962.

Epictetus. *The Discourses of Epictetus*. Trans. George Long. New York: H.M. Cladwell (n.d.).

Erasmus, Desiderius. "On the Freedom of the Will," in *Luther and Erasmus: Free Will and Salvation*. Trans. E.G. Rupp & P.S. Watson. London: SCM Press, 1969.

Fichte, Johann G. *The Science of Ethics.* Trans. A.E. Kroeger. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Truber & Co., 1907.

Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan.* Ed. Richard Tuck. Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1991.

Hogg, James. *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner.* Ed. John Wain. Harmondsworth, U.K.,: Penguin Books, 1989.

Kant, Immanuel. *Ethical Philosophy: The Complete Texts of* Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals *and* Metaphysical Principles of Virtue. Trans. James W. Ellington. Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co., 1983.

Leibniz, G.W. *New Essays Concerning Human Understanding.* Trans. Peter Remnant & J. Bennett. Abridged Ed. Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1982.

Locke, John. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding.* Ed. P.H. Nidditch. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975.

Luther, Martin. "On the Bondage of the Will," in *Luther and Erasmus: The Free Will and Salvation.* Trans. Philip Watson and B. Drewery. London: SCM Press, 1969.

Marlowe, Christopher. "The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Dr. Faustus" (1616 text) in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Major Authors* Gen. Ed. M.H. Abrams. 5th ed. New York: W.W. Norton, 1987.

Milton, John. "Paradise Lost," in *The Portable Milton.* Ed. Douglas Bush. New York: Viking Press, 1966.

————. "Paradise Regained," in *The Portable Milton.* Ed. Douglas Bush. New York: Viking Press, 1966.

Ockham, William. *Philosophical Writings: A Selection.* Trans. P. Boehner. Edinburgh: Nelson & Sons, 1957.

Plato. *Five Dialogues.* Trans. G.M.A. Grube. Indianapolis: Hackett Pub., 1981.

Rousseau, Jean Jaques. *The Social Contract and Discourse on th Origin and Foundation of Inequality Among Mankind.* Ed. Lester Crocker. New York: Washington Square Press, 1967.

Spinoza, Benedict. *Ethics* and *On the Improvement of the Understanding.* Ed. James Gutmann. New York: Hafner Pub., 1949.

Voltaire. *Philosophical Dictionary*. Trans. Theodore Bestermann. Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin Books, 1972.

Wordsworth, William. "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey, On Revisiting the Banks of the Wye During a Tour, July 13, 1798," in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Major Authors*. Gen. Ed. M.H. Abrams. 5th ed. New York: W.W. Norton, 1987.

————. "The Prelude, or the Growth of a Poet's Mind: an Autobiographical Poem" (1850 text), in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Major Authors*. Gen. Ed. M.H. Abrams. 5th ed. New York: W.W.Norton, 1987.

Secondary Sources

Abrams, M.H. "Coleridge, Baudelaire and Modernist Poetics," in *The Correspondent Breeze: Essays on English Romanticism*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1984.

————. "Coleridge's *'a Light in Sound'*: Science, Metascience and Poetic Imagination," in *The Correspondent Breeze: Essays on English Romanticism*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1984.

————. "Coleridge and the Romantic Vision of the World," in *The Correspondent Breeze: Essays on English Romanticism*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1984.

Bahn, Archie J. *Polarity, Dialectic and Organicity*. Albuquerque, N.M.: World Books Press, 1976.

Bailey, Cyril. *The Greek Atomists and Epicurus: A Study*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1928.

Barfield, Owen. "Symptoms of Iconoclasm," pp 41-46 in *Romanticism and Consciousness*, ed. Harold Bloom. London: W.W. Norton, 1970.

————. *What Coleridge Thought*. Middleton, Conn.: Wesleyan U.P, 1971.

Barth, J. Robert. "Coleridge's *Dejection*: Imagination, Joy and the Power of Love," in *Coleridge's Imagination: Essays in Memory of Pete Laver*, ed. Gravil, Newlyn and Toe. Cambridge: Cambridge U.P, 1985.

————. "Theological Implications of Coleridge's Theory of Imagination." *Studies in Literary Imagination*, 19.2 (1986): 23-33.

Beer, John. "Coleridge's Religious Thought: The Search for a Medium.," in *The Interpretation of Belief: Coleridge, Schleiermacher and Romanticism*. Ed. David Jasper. New York: St Martin's Press, 1986.

Benn, Alfred William. *The History of English Rationalism in the Nineteenth Century*. New York: Russell & Russell, 1962.

Benzinger, J. "Organic Unity from Leibniz to Coleridge." *PMLA*, 66 pt.i (1951): 24-48.

Blocker, Gene. "Another Look at Aesthetic Imagination" *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 30 (1972): 529-36.

Bourke, Vernon J. *The Essential Augustine*. Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co., 1964.

Bowra, C.M. *The Romantic Imagination*. London: Oxford U.P., 1950.

The Cambridge Biographical Dictionary. Gen. Ed. Magnus Magnusson. Cambridge: Cambridge U.P.,1990.

Chambers, E.K. *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: A Biographical Study*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1938.

Cooke, Michael. *The Romantic Will*. New Haven: Yale U.P., 1976.

Copleston, Frederick. *A History of Philosophy*. Vols iv-vi. Garden City, N.J.: Image Books, 1960.

Dakin, A. *Calvinism*. London: Duckworth Press, 1940.

de Man, Paul. "Intentional Structure of the Romantic Image," pp 65-77 in *Romanticism and Consciousness*, ed. Harold Bloom. London: W.W. Norton, 1970.

————. "The Rhetoric of Temporality," pp 173-210 in *Interpretation: Theory and Practice*, ed. Charles Singleton. Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1969.

Devlin, Christopher. "The Psychology of Duns Scotus." (Aquinas Society of London, Paper #15.) Oxford: Blackfriars Press, 1950.

Dugas, K. "Struggling with the Contingent: Self-Conscious Imagination in Coleridge's Notebooks," pp 53-68 in *Coleridge's Imagination: Essays in Memory of Pete Laver.* Ed. Gravil, Newlyn and Roe. Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1985.

Encyclopaedia Britannica. 11th ed. Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1910.

Ferris, David. "Coleridge's Ventriloquy: The Abduction from the *Biographia.*" *Studies in Literary Romanticism*, 24 (1985): 41-84.

Harding, Anthony John. *Coleridge and the Inspired Word.* Montreal: McGill-Queen's U.P., 1985.

Harris, Kenneth. "Reason and Understanding Reconsidered: Coleridge, Carlyle and Emerson." Essays in Literature,. 31.2 (1986): 263-281.

Hartman, Geoffrey H. "Romanticism and Anti-Self-Consciousness," pp 46-57 in *Romanticism and Consciousness.* Ed. Harold Bloom. London: W.W. Norton, 1970.

Hill, J.S. *Imagination in Coleridge.* London: Macmillan, 1978.

House, Humphry. *Coleridge: The Clark Lectures 1951-52.* London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1969.

Jeffery, David L., ed. *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature.* Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1992.

Korner, S. *Kant.* Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin Books, 1955.

Larkin, Peter. "Imagining, Naming, Shaping: Stanza VI of Dejection: An Ode," pp 193-206 in *Coleridge's Imagination: Essays in Memory of Peter Laver.* Ed. Gravil, Newlyn, and Roe. Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1985.

Maurer, Armand. *Medieval Philosophy.* New York: Random House, 1962.

McFarland, Thomas. *Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition.* Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1969.

———. "Imagination and its Cognates: Supplementary Considerations," pp 14-30 in *Coleridge's Theory of Imagination Today*, ed. Christine Gallant. New York: AMS Press, 1989.

———. "Romantic Imagination, Nature, and the Pastoral Ideal," pp 5-21 in *Coleridge's Imagination: Essays in Memory of Peter Laver.* Ed. Gravil, Newlyn and Roe. Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1985.

McGann, Jerome. "The Ancient Mariner: The Meaning of Meanings," pp 131-72 in *The Beauty on Inflections: Literary Investigations in Historical Method and Theory.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985.

Mileur, Pierre. "Deconstruction as Imagination and Method," in *Coleridge's Theory of Imagination Today.* Ed. Christine Gallant. New York: AMS Press, 1989.

Muirhead, John H. *Coleridge as Philosopher.* London: George Allen & Unwin, 1930.

Orsini, G.N.G. *Coleridge and German Idealism.* Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois UP, 1969.

Penn Warren, Robert. "Sin and Redemption in *The Ancient Mariner*," pp 719-28 in *The English Romantics: Major Poetry and Critical Theory.* Ed. John L. Mahoney. Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath & Co. 1978.

Perkins, Merle. *Jean Jaques Rousseau: On the Individual and Society.* Lexington: U of Kentucky P., 1974.

Poston, Lawrence. "Poetry as Pure Act: A Coleridgean Ideal in Early Victorian England." *Modern Philology*, 84.2 (1986): 162-84.

Putz, Manfred. "Coleridge's Use of 'Intuition' in the Kantian Sense and the *OED*." *Notes & Queries*, 34.4 (1987): 468-70.

Wheeler, Kathleen. "Coleridge's Theory of Imagination: A Hegelian Solution to Kant?" pp 16-40 in *The Interpretation of Belief: Coleridge, Schleiermacher and Romanticism.* Ed. David Jasper. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986.

———. *The Creative Mind in Coleridge's Poetry.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 1981.

Wilde, Oscar. "The Critic as Artist," pp 341-408 in *The Artist as Critic: Critical Writings of Oscar Wilde.* Ed. Richard Ellman. London: W.H.Allen, 1970.

Wilkie, Brian. "The Romantic Ideal of Unity." *Studies in Literary Imagination*, 19.2 (1986): 5-23.

Windelband, W.A. *A History of Philosophy.* New York: Harper, 1958.

Wordsworth, Jonathan. "The Infinite I AM: Coleridge and the Ascent of Being." *Wordsworth Circle*, 16.2 (1985):74-84.