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COLERIDGE'S
THEORY OF POETRY

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THEORY OF POETRY

By

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To

JANAKI

One Word

The critical theories of Coleridge have had a varied history. Some found illuminating passages here and there, while others saw only a mist. A few zealots discovered plagiarism from Germans, and still others could find no consistent theory. The present century found him to be a seminal mind; and each critic from Mr. I. A. Richards to Mr. Epsom saw a peg to his pet doctrines in the lines of Coleridge.

Mr. Richards set the ball in motion by reading behaviourist psychology into Coleridge. Mr. D. G. James in seeking to correct the patent error moved to Immanuel Kant. Mr. Rene Wellek kantianised the whole show. Mr. G. P. Baker made much of the unconscious and of the depth psychology. Mr. Appleyard stops even before Coleridge started, and Mr. Walsh saw a different emphasis. Mr. Eliot, following Arnold and others, refused to see a valid distinction between fancy and imagination. Only Mr. R. H. Fogle did some justice to one important aspect of the theory, that of the organic form. Shawcross gave a good edition, but a laboured argument as his introduction. Mr. Read draws our attention to the valid problem of organic form. But Mr. Watson could not place Coleridge in the naive formula of descriptive criticism.

In this welter of confusion we lose sight of what Coleridge himself thought and said on the problems of literary creation and composition. When a critic discovers that he has to do this, he comes to correct his earlier statements as Mr. T. M. Raysor did in his introduction to the **Every Man's Library** edition of **Shakespeare Criticism.** It was long, long ago that George Saintsubry made the great observation that the history of European literary criticism leaves us only with

three great names—Aristotle, Longinus, and Coleridge. One may justifiably add Plato to this small group. These great critics have to be allowed to say what they said; and we have a right to expect that no one tries to mislead us here.

The present work takes up the German problem in the second part. There it is argued that some of the characteristic theories of Coleridge found a place in his poems written before he came into contact with Germans. The first part seeks to present the basic problems examined by Coleridge or referred to by him. This analysis reveals that Coleridge was one of the first who attempted to harmonise the Platonic approach with the Aristotelian one.

A study like this cannot ignore the larger philosophical problems implicit in an aesthetic theory like that of Coleridge. It cannot be overemphasised that Coleridge was applying to literature certain philosophical conclusions which he came to accept. Any aesthetic theory can exist only within the framework of a philosophical theory.

The author's obligations are too many to express. He has been benefited by the writings of the various critics on Coleridge. Some of the chapters were published in different journals and he is obliged to the editors for permitting him to include them here. The author's feelings can be only inadequately expressed to Mr. Sham Lal Gupta of Messrs. S. Chand & Co. (Pvt.) Ltd., New Delhi.

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PART I

THEORY OF POETRY

AESTHETIC APPROACH

Literature, philosophy, science, politics and other activities interested Coleridge because of their direct or indirect connection with religion. "To the cause of Religion I solemnly devote all my best faculties– and if I wish to acquire knowledge as a philosopher and as a poet, I pray for grace that I may continue to feel what I now feel, that my greatest reason for wishing the one and the other, is that I may be enabled by my knowledge to defend Religion ably, and by my reputation to draw attention to the defence of it."[1] Religion has been the great passion of Coleridge's life and thought. Religion implies the idea of a God and the idea of creation. Any creative process seemed to offer a convenient approach to understand and resolve the great theological problem. With this bias he talked of the nature and value of poetry to Wordsworth who, with his eighteenth century prepossessions, understood poetry in his own way. Coleridge's note of 30th August, 1803 states: "My words and actions imaged on his (Wordsworth's) mind, distorted and snaky as the Boatsman's Oar reflected in the Lake."[2] This is inevitable since they differed in their respective starting-points and frames of reference.

Coleridge told Byron that his purpose was "to reduce criticism to a system by the deduction of causes from principles involved in our faculties."[3] He was "to establish the

1. Letter to John Prior Estlin, 6th January, 1798.
2. *Notebooks*, ed., Coburn, I, 1473.
3. Letter of 17th October, 1815.

principles of writing rather than to furnish rules how to pass judgment on what has been written by others."[4] It is to be an enquiry into the creative process; and this is to be conducted with reference to the historical event called the actual poem that is before us. To understand it adequately one should know the nature of the poetic process. But the critical studies he was acquainted with never gave him any fixed standards of approach to this central problem. The real problem can be understood by a consideration of and a reflection upon the poetic act. Instead there were reviews where "the writers determine without reference to fixed principles" and "they teach people rather to judge than to consider, to decide than to reflect."[5] Such passages misled even Raysor to argue that Coleridge's ideas "are inductive generalizations based upon personal experience" and that these are not "a deduction of art from a metaphysical system."[6] Coleridge never accepted the absolute opposition of deduction to induction. He was interested in studying the human mind's reaction to a work of art.

His teacher at Christ's Hospital taught him that poetry "had a logic of its own as severe as that of science; and more difficult, because more subtle, more complex, and dependent on more, and more fugitive, causes."[7] Passages like these clearly show that Coleridge's criticism is not independent of his general philosophical theory, that it is not impressionistic. That we have here the "adventures of the soul among masterpieces"[8] is as faulty a statement as that of Mackail's which holds that Coleridge is a good critic despite his philosophy.[9] On the contrary, the aesthetic of Coleridge is based on the idea of unity and on his concept of Reality: "The great prero-

4. B.L. 18th chapter.
5. *Shakespeare Criticism,* II, 57-58.
6. *Ibid.,* xlvii-xlviii.
7. B.L. I 4.
8. Allen and Clark: *Literary Criticism, Pope to Croce,* 221.
9. *Coleridge's Literary Criticism,* viii-xviii.

gative of genius.... is now to swell itself to the dignity of a God, and now to subdue and keep dormant some part of that lofty nature, and to descend even to the lowest character—to become every thing, in fact."[10] Such heights may not be within the grasp of many artists, and accordingly we have a scale of values determining the various literary genres. This scale is determined by the awareness and by the embodiment of Reality on the part of the artist and on that of the reader as well. It is in a way a return to the exposition and analysis of the total impression.

"When no criticism is pretended to, and the mind in its simplicity gives itself up to a Poem as to a work of nature, Poetry gives most pleasure when only generally and not perfectly understood."[11] The reader's experience takes him to a specific state which he cannot adequately explain or express. This is because, as Coleridge argues, the poet does not create but he becomes. The poem grows, has an inner life. Thus he speaks of the "great and mighty being" of Shakespeare "changing himself into the Nurse or the blundering Constable"; and then compares that being to Proteus.[12] This is an approach which is biological, psychological and metaphysical at the same time, even though the major emphasis is on the psychological side. We understand a poem by understanding the nature of mind that produced it. But this is not the whole truth. He could argue: "Take away from sounds, etc., the sense of outness—what a horrid disease every moment would become/the driving over a pavement, etc.—apply this to sympathy—and disclosure of feeling."[13] The external and the internal have to be studied together. The psychology of Coleridge is inseparable from his metaphysics. The two together are said to take us to an understanding of the nature of sympathy and feeling. It is Coleridge's habit of studying

10. Lecture 7 of 1811-12.
11. *Notebooks*, I, 383.
12. Lecture 3.
13. *Notebooks*, 1, 1307.

one and the same thing from different points of view, that makes his aesthetic a not too easy affair. Sound, for instance, has a physical aspect that can be cognised. But we are told that the 'sense of outness' is as necessary as the sense of meaning, and an empirical investigation is futile without a prior 'idea'. Observation, he observes, is 'as eyes' to meditation; and meditation predetermines the 'field of vision."[14] Observation, meditation and vision are essential for a successful embodiment of the imaginative activity; and the sense of form is equally necessary for a satisfying imaginative experience. These are beyond the powers of understanding and reason.

The source of all error in the eighteenth century outlook was "the growing alienation and self-sufficiency of the understanding." This understanding is the faculty employed by "the science of phenomena" and it can be employed only "as a tool or organ."[15] But this does not lead Coleridge to oppose science to poetry, but to synthesise the two. The highest poetry is the most inclusive one involving "the whole soul of man." It includes the imaginative, the emotional, and the rational activities. He speaks of "the subordination of the faculties to each other, according to their relative worth and dignity."[16] He claimed universality for his system and at the same time believed it to be traditional. "My system", he says, "is the only attempt I know ever made to reduce all knowledges into harmony. It opposes no other system, but shows what was true in each; and how that which was true in the particular, in each of them became error, because it was only half the truth. I have endeavoured to unite the insulated fragments of truth, and therewith to frame a perfect mirror. I show to each system that I fully understand and rightly appreciate what that system means; but then I lift up that system to a higher point of view, from which I enable it to see

14. B.L. II, 64.
15. *Aids to Reflection*, 268-69; *Lay Sermon*, 68, 71-72.
16. B.L. II. 10-12.

its former position, where it was, indeed, but under another light and with different relations;—so that the fragment of truth is not only acknowledged, but explained."[17] It is a system based on the concept of unity which gives him enough scope to preserve particularity and individuality. It is a flexible system advocating synthesis and yet recognising the nature and value of analysis. It is a metaphysic which develops into an aesthetic. It is an aesthetic advocating a sympathetic, imaginative approach to works of arts. If is not interested in the enumeration of defects, but in the search for a value.

"Never to lose an opportunity of reasoning against the head-dimming, heart-damping Principle of judging a work by its Defects, not its Beauties. Every work must have the former—we know it a priori—but every work has not the latter/ and he, therefore, who discovers them, tells you something that you could not with certainty or even with probability have anticipated."[18] There is a certain unique quality in every work and this may be called its individuality. It is governed by its own laws, and yet it is amenable to classification. The critic's first task is to fix the genre to which the given work belongs. Having determined the kind, he must then distinguish it from others falling within the same kind. Thus the swan and the dove are both beautiful, but it is **absurd** to compare "their separate claims to beauty from any abstract rule common to both, without reference to the life and being of the animals themselves...",[19] not less absurd is it "to pass judgment on the works of a poet on the mere ground that they have been called by the same class-name with the works of other poets of other times and circumstances." His quotation from Young's Essay **On Lyric Poetry** is here significant: "Poetry, like schoolboys, by too frequent and severe correc-

17. *Table Talk,* 12th September, 1831.
18. *Notebooks,* I, 1551.
19. *Shakespeare Criticism,* I, 196.

tions, may be cowed into Dullness!"[20] This is possible because such an attitude ignores the passion attendant upon the words. Poetry "does always imply passion" which has "its characteristic modes of expression"; and "the very act of poetic composition itself is, and is allowed to imply and to produce, an unusual state of excitement, which of course justifies and demands a correspondent difference of language."[21] Feeling and a sense of order make the assimilative imagination active in offering an organized form of expression. Such a form presupposes a specific quality of feeling which alone makes the work unique. A work can be and is unique and it can also belong to a specific kind or genre.

The apprehension of value must then be foundational to the aesthetic approach. And we find him stating: "The science of criticism dates its restoration from the time when it was seen that an examination and appreciation of the end was necessarily antecedent to the formation of the rules, supplying at once the principle of the rules themselves, and of their application to the given subject."[22] The sense of value determines the rules and principles that we may establish. These rules cannot be framed in total independence of the aesthetic values. When "the critic announces and endeavours to establish the principles, which he holds for the foundation of poetry in general", the investigation is "fair and philosophical."[23] These values must be capable of being philosophically established and defended. That is, an aesthetic without a metaphysic is an impossibility. He observes: "Individuals may attain to exquisite discrimination, but a true critic cannot be such without placing himself on some central point, some general rule founded in reason, or the faculties common to all." His metapyhysical principles are the main critical principles making his insights into the nature of poetry valuable. "I

20. *Notebooks,* I, 35.
21. B.L. II, 55-56.
22. Snyder: *Coleridge on Logic and Learning,* 110.
23. B.L. II, 85.

laboured", he says, "at a solid foundation, on which permanently to ground my opinions, in the component faculties of the human mind itself, and their comparative dignity and importance. According to the faculty or source, from which the pleasure given by any poem or passage was derived, I estimated the merit of such poem or passage."[24] Not only should the critic have a metaphysic and an aesthetic, but the poetic spirit. "In the Essay on Criticism to examine whether or not a great Critic must needs be himself a great poet or painter."[25] The great critic must be a great poet too if he were to tell us the truth about poetry, for this truth depends upon a critical awareness of the creative process. The critic must receive the impact of the poetic experience and also analyse it and examine it sympathetically.

This two-fiold character is revealed also in the literary experience of the student of literature. Thus we read: "Taste is the intermediate faculty which connects the active with the passive powers of our nature, the intellect with the senses; and its appointed function is to elevate the images of the latter, while it realizes the ideas of the former."[26] The poet's taste is to be regulated by the principles of grammar, logic and psychology and these must be "rendered instinctive by habit." Then there will be "the representative and reward of our past conscious reasonings, insights and conclusions" and this "acquires the name of Taste." This taste comes to the poet "by the power of imagination proceeding upon the all in each of human nature." It is an inclusive experience, and in a way it can be said to be the apprehension of the concrete universal. Coleridge takes this to the logical next step and states: "In good truth, my Taste and Stomach are very catholic."[27] Taste comes intuitively and tells him, "what intermixture of conscious volition is natural" to the different

24. B.L. I, 14.
25. *Notebooks,* I, 892.
26. B.L. II, 227.
27. Letter to Mrs. Coleridge, 10th March, 1799.

states of emotion; and it also tells him "in what instances such figures and colours of speech degenerate into mere creatures of arbitrary purpose."[28]

In his lectures of 1811-12 he defined taste as "an attainment after a poet has been disciplined by experience, and has added to genius that talent by which he knows what part of his genius he can make acceptable and intelligible to the portion of mankind for which he writes." Thus a literary genre is determined by the human nature which is its ground, by the time, place and circumstances of the composition, by the mental activities involved, by its relation to reality, by the effect it evokes, and by the intention of the author. All this implies Coleridge's basic principle of reconciliation of opposites. Then taste turns out to be another name for the imaginative activity, and the critical and the creative activities are not opposed to one another. They are capable of existing together.

"Great injury that has resulted from the supposed incompatibility of one talent with another/Judgment with Imagination, and Taste—Good sense with strong feeling, etc."[29] Instead there is an interaction of forces, though the greater emphasis is on the mind; for, the mind fashions its own experience. The outer life of nature is a contribution of the observer's soul. "Every thing has a life of its own" and "we are all one life."[30] The mind is a source of light, sound and colour. Such a mind is active in the greatest poetic composition. The mind is a living plant. Looking at a plant, he writes: "I feel an awe, as if there were before my eyes the same power as that of the reason—the same power in a lower dignity, and, therefore, a symbol established in the truth of things." It is an archetypal plant of the creative process as "it commences its

28. B.L. II, 63-65.

29. *Notebooks,* I, 1255.

30. See letter to Wordsworth, 30th May, 1815, and to Sotheby 10th September, 1802.

outward life and enters into open communion with all elements, at once assimilating them to itself and to each other. At the same time it strikes its roots and unfolds its leaves, absorbs and respires, steams forth its cooling vapour and finer fragrance, and breathes a repairing spirit, at once the food and tone of the atmosphere, into the atmosphere that feeds it. Lo!—at the touch of light how it returns an air akin to light, and yet, with the same pulse effectuates its own secret growth, still contracting to fix what expanding it had refined."[31] The human mind is a unity. It is dynamic and evergrowing. It imparts something of its character to the works it produces. As a result every good work of art reveals not only the creative process but the other aspects of mental activity. In this light has it been emphasised that the poet brings the whole soul of man into activity. This vitalistic conception of the creative mind makes Coleridge emphasise the elaborate preparation made by Milton. Distinguishing an Epic Poem from a Romance in metre, he writes: "Observe the march of Milton --his severe application, his laborious polish, his deep metaphysical researches, his prayers to God before he began his great poem, all that could lift and swell his intellect, became his daily food."[32] If this holds good of the poet, it is equally well true of the critic.

The critic's approach thus involves the concept of the aesthetic value and of the unity of the creative consciousness. This unity leads us to the unity of the work of art, and the aesthetic approach accordingly must be grounded in these principles. "Till the reviewers support their decisions by reference to fixed canons of criticism, previously established and deduced from the nature of man; reflecting minds will pronounce it arrogance in them thus to announce themselves to men of letters, as the guides of their taste and judgment."[33] Coleridge does admit that taste is innate and universal. It is "the inter-

31. *Lay Sermon*, 75-77.
32. Letter to Joseph Cottle, early April 1797.
33. B.L. I, 44.

mediate faculty which connects the active with the passive powers of our nature, the intellect with the senses; and its appointed function is to elevate the images of the latter while it realises the ideas of the former."[34] This passage has to be read along with another which speaks of imagination as "that reconciling and mediatory power, which incorporating the reason in images of the sense, and organizing (as it were) the flux of the senses by the permanence and self-circling energies of reason, gives birth to a system of symbols."[35] Taste and imagination are defined in identical terms. Taste too mediates between the active and the passive. It is metaphorically derived from the mixed sense that blends perception with the sense of the object;[36] and it involves the reference of the object to our own being.[37] Just as imagination reconciles the discordant features, taste too reveals what is proper, what is required, for the fuller or adequate realization of the beautiful.

Some of the qualities prized in poetry by Coleridge appear in a significant notebook entry: "...peculiar, not far-fetched —natural, but not obvious; delicate, not affected; dignified, not swelling; fiery, but not mad; rich in Imagery, but not loaded with it—in short, a union of harmony, and good sense; of perspicuity, and conciseness. Thought is the body of such an Ode, Enthusiasm the Soul, and Imagination the Drapery."[38] The poetic product must be unique and yet natural, delicate and dignified. We have the balance of opposites again. Harmony and good sense, thought and enthusiasm, are needed. In other words, the poem must have a vitality all its own; it must breathe. To achieve this the poet must charge his composition with emotion. The poem is a whole, an organic whole, wherein "each part is fitted to afford

34. B.L. II, 227.
35. *Statesman's Manual,* Works I, 436.
36. B.L. II, 247.
37. B.L. II, 248.
38. *Notebooks,* I, 36.

as much pleasure, as is compatible with the largest sum in the whole."[39] That which realises this whole is in the objective world the work of art, and in the realm of the subjective it is taste. And taste thus turns out to be an organized organic whole. "All parts of an organized whole must be assimilated to the more important and essential parts."[40] The total unity is organic and it can only be inadequately analysed. But the unity is intuited. It was "in the intuition and exposition of" Hamlet that he "first made his turn for philosophical criticism. . . noticed."[41] This intuition is common both for the poet and for the reader or critic because both need imagination. Intuition is an important phase of the imaginative activity. This identity of the poet with the ideal critic constitutes the basic aesthetic approach of Coleridge, and it led him to observe that while you go through Shakespeare, you are made to feel that you are a poet. It is in a similar strain that he remarked that "Wordsworth is a poet, and I feel myself a better Poet, in knowing how to honour him."[42] The critic is, in a specific manner, a better poet, for the spectator is "to judge in the same spirit in which the artist produced, or ought to have produced."[43]

A given work of art embodies beauty and it tends to evoke certain sensations and emotions. Defining fine arts, Coleridge takes up emotion and pleasure as the subjective counterparts of the objective beauty: "The common essence of all consists in the excitement of emotion for the immediate purpose of pleasure through the medium of beauty."[44] The response of the reader is aesthetic only because it conforms to a universal law.[45] In this sense taste is absolute and one taste

39. *Shakespeare Criticism,* II, 67.
40. B.L. II, 56.
41. *Shakespeare Criticism,* I, 18.
42. *Collected Letters,* II, 1034.
43. B.L. II, 222.
44. B.L. II, 221.
45. B.L. II, 223.

can differ from the other only in degree. At the lowest level one is satisfied with the superficial features only. "But surely always to look at the superficies of Objects for the purpose of taking Delight in their Beauty, and sympathy with their real or imagined life, is as deleterious to the Health and manhood of Intellect, as always to be peering and unravelling Contrivances may be to the simplicity of the affections, the grandeur and unity of the Imagination. . . ."[46] The grandeur and unity of imagination implies the full acceptance and realization of beauty, the fulfilment of the intellectual activity, and the depth of the affections. The intuition of the universal in the given particular is basic to real, genuine taste. Hence in the Aristotelian fashion, he wants poetry to be "essentially **ideal.**"[47] By this he means "an involution of the universal in the individual." That which reconciles such opposites is imagination. This reconciliation is "that just proportion, that union and interpenetration of the universal and the particular" which "must ever pervade all works of decided genius and true science."[48]

The best experience of taste leaves the reader or the critic in the sole company of the work of art; and the truest appreciation or experience of the work makes him feel that he is alone, that he is at least not in the company of other human beings. Emphasising this solitariness Coleridge records in a note: "Without Drawing I feel myself but half invested with Language—Music too is wanting to me.—But yet though one should unite Poetry, Draftsmanship and Music—the greater and perhaps nobler certainly all the subtler parts of one's nature, must be solitary—Man exists herein to himself and to God alone/—yea, in how much only to God—how much lies **below** his own Consciousness."[49] The individual verily feels that he is face to face with his creator, the supreme

46. *Notebooks*, I, 1616.
47. B.L. II, 34.
48. B.L. II, 12.
49. *Notebooks*, I, 1554.

Genius, of whom we seem to know next to nothing in our normal waking moments of life. This supreme Genius is hidden in us.

And the definition of taste involves the definition of the fine arts. "The chief and discriminative purpose" of the fine arts "is to gratify the taste,—that is, not merely to connect, but to combine and unite, a sense of immediate pleasure in ourselves with the perception of external arrangement."[50] The reconciliation of subject and object is implicitly recognised in the nature of taste. It is taste that enables us to have an experience of the beautiful. Like imagination, it too is an intermediate activity connecting "the active with the passive powers of our nature, the intellect with the senses; and its appointed function is to elevate the images of the latter, while it realizes the ideas of the former."[51] Imagination reconciles the idea with the image.[52] It is the homogeneity of a poet's work that can reveal this feature; and this leads Coleridge to equate the greatness of the poet with the greatness of the man; and in the aesthetic experience one feels his oneness with the poet.

With all this Coleridge does not seem to give up the traditional approach to the understanding and criticism of the fine arts. The classicist has his separate instruments of literary interpretation and judgment. Coleridge's organicist criticism has to employ the tools called analysis, discrimination and judgment. If this were denied, then the theory would be of a purely speculative interest divorced from practice. And in his study of Shakespeare and Wordsworth, he does not give up his basic theory. This theory compels the assumption of the ideal poet or the idea of the poet. This idea is not an abstraction but derived from the study of an actual poet. The critic's subjective preferences are reconciled with the ob-

50. B.L. II, 248.
51. B.L. II, 227.
52. B.L. II, 12.

jective poems of the poet concerned. The ideal poetry thus arrived at has a universality. The ideal criticism reconciles the intuitive apprehension of the poems with the critical principles. It might so happen that one poet may always remain an ideal one, while another is ideal at times and actual at other times. Thus Coleridge takes Shakespeare as the ideal poet. Wordsworth has moments when he exhibits not the ideal but the actual. Where the ideal and the actual are identical, the duty of the critic is to expound, to interpret. In the other case, the critic offers not only an exposition, but a critical analysis. The literary critic has to undertake a philosophic investigation in which he "announces and endeavours to establish the principles, which he holds for the foundation of poetry in general, with specification of these in their application to the different classes of poetry." The principles must have a universal application, and so the critic has to single out the significant passages. "Then if his principles be rational, his deductions legitimate, and his conclusions justly applied, the reader, and possibly the poet himself, may adopt his judgment in the light of judgment and in the independence of free agency." The critical principles thus turn out to be the principles of interpretation, appreciation, and composition of poetry. Consequently "the ultimate end of criticism is much more to establish the principles of writing, than to furnish rules how to pass judgment on what has been written by others; if indeed it were possible that the two could be separated."[53] The principle being vital must be capable of governing the creative process.[54] At the same time this process is to be regulated by logic and discrimination, as Coleridge's critique of the "Immortality Ode" reveals. His old schoolmaster taught him that "Poetry, even that of the loftiest and, seemingly, that of the wildest odes, had a logic of its own, as severe as that of science; and more difficult, because

53. B.L. II, 63.
54. B.L. II, 85.

more subtle, more complex, and dependent on more, and more fugitive causes. In the truly great poets, he would say, there is a reason assignable, not only for every word, but for the position of every word."[55] This is not the normal logic of the senses, but a logic of the organic unity.

55. B.L. I, 4.

2. FANCY AND THE TWO FORMS OF IMAGINATION

The eighteenth century considered imagination to be a form of visualisation. Basing his argument on Kant's distinction between the conceivable and picturable, Coleridge rejected the value of this 'despotism of the eye.' He disparaged the 'delusive notion that what is not imageable is likewise not conceivable."[1] This does not, however, mean that in Coleridge's theory imagination exists independent of the senses or that it involves no visual factor. On the contrary, he observed : "If the check of the senses and the reason were withdrawn, the first (=fancy) would become delirium, and the last (=imagination) mania."[2] Both these faculties need the activity of the senses and of reason. He is more explicit in his **Table Talk** for May 1, 1833, where he observed that "genius of the highest kind implies an unusual intensity of the modifying power, which detached from the discriminative power, might conjure a platted straw into a royal diadem." At the same time, he stated: "the activity of thought and vivacity of the accumulative memory are no less essential constituents of great wits." What the eighteenth century understood by imagination, is now designated fancy; and then these two terms are desynonymised.

In a letter to Southey of December, 1794 Coleridge advocated the corporeality of thought. By 1800 we hear of his 'serious occupation' in investing the laws by which our

1. B.L. I, 89, 74; *Logic and Learning,* 126.
2. *Table Talk,* 1834. 6. 23.

feelings are related to each other and to words. Thought was no longer taken to be the product of the activity of the senses. The emphasis falls on the mind. On March 16, 1801 we find him telling Poole that he is on the way "to evolve all the five senses, that is, to deduce them from one sense, and to state their growth and the causes of their difference." This one sense, we may, for convenience, designate, mind. All our senses and all our faculties are deducible from the mind. Then fancy and imagination have a common source, a common origin.

How are they to be distinguished from one another? In a letter to Sharp dated January 15, 1804, he speaks of the "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 that we can **believe,** but all that we can **conceive** of creation." Imagination is an activity similar to that of the creative process; it modifies or transforms the material on which it operates. Fancy on the other is its opposite. It cannot modify the material since it can only combine or group together mechanically. In this light it is observed that the ancient music "consists of melody arising from a succession only of pleasing sounds," while "the modern embraces harmony also, the result of combination and the effect of a whole."[3] Fancy depends upon the succession of events in time and it combines these events associately in such a way that the event retains its original character. Imagination on the other is a principle introducing harmony, into the manifold, and by virtue of this it transforms the given into a whole.

A distinction has long been known to exist among the more important and frequent mental activities. Tetens in his **Philosophische Versuche Uber die menschliche Nature** (1777) distinguishes 'bildende Dichtkraft' which is artistic or poetic from 'Phantasie.'[4] Kant has reproductive, productive,

3. *Lectures and Notes,* 50.
4. Pp. 103, 112.

and aesthetic varieties of imagination. Schelling[5] has 'Phantasie' and 'Einbildungskraft.' Schlegel considered Einbildungskraft to be a mere form of memory, and treated Phantasie as higher. Jean Paul Richter took the former to be a 'potentiated brightly-coloured memory', and held that Phantasie is the power of 'making all parts into a whole.'[6] The prevailing confusion regarding the precise meaning of these and other allied terms led Coleridge "to investigate the seminal principle and then from the kind to deduce the degree."[7] As a result of these investigations he came to interpret phantasie not as the higher, but as the lower, power.

In this endeavour he was, no doubt, helped, at least to some extent, by Kant's **Critique of Judgment.** Kant's reproductive imagination has some similarity to fancy. His productive imagination is nearer to the primary. Since these are said to be forms of imagination it is possible that fancy and imagination may co-exist in one and the same activity. Speaking of Wordsworth's account, he observes: "I am disposed to conjecture, that he has mistaken the co-presence of fancy and imagination for the operation of the latter singly. A man may work with two different tools at the same moment; each has its share in the work, but the work effected by each is very different."[8] When these two powers co-exist in the same activity, it is easy to distinguish them. But he states that in order to achieve 'the highest excellencies' in language, passion and character, the poet needs 'good sense, talent, sensibility, and imagination'; and to the perfection of the work he needs the two lesser faculties of 'fancy and a quick sense of beauty.' These lesser ones are 'necessary for the ornaments and foliage of the column and the roof.'[9] Yet it is certain that "Imagination must have fancy. In short the higher in-

5. *Werke,* I, 357; V, 386.
6. *Aesthetik,* 1817.
7. B.L. I, 64.
8. B.L. I, 194.
9. *Lectures and Notes,* 33.

tellectual powers can only act through a corresponding energy of the lower."[10] Fancy regulates the mental activity, but imagination is constitutive of this activity.[11] Fancy then appears to be the power regulating the figures and other external ornaments, the form as it were of the creative art. It is a power associating the figures, images and diction with the central thought or feeling.

This fancy was for a long time treated as if it were the same as imagination. The first clear statement of this view was given by Hobbes who influenced many writers. In his **Leviathan** Hobbes remarked: "After the object is removed, or the eye shut, we still retain an image of the thing seen..... And this it is, the Latins call **imagination,** from the image made in seeing.... But the Greeks call it **fancy,** which signifies **appearance."** Here we have only the subjective forms which are erroneously 'presented as the true and proper moulds of objective truth'; and in such an act there is no method,[11] for these "fancies are motions within us, reliques of those made in the sense" regulated by mere succession.[12] The revolt against Hobbes began at a very early date.

In 1795 Coleridge borrowed from the Bristol Library Bishop Burnet's **History of my own Times.** In this work Burnet gave in detail the struggle launched by the Cambridge Platonists against the teaching of Hobbes. One of these is Cudworth whose **True Intellectual System** Coleridge borrowed from the same library in May, 1795 and in November, 1796. According to Cudworth, the mind has a creative function even in the knowledge-situation, for it has the power of forming concepts. The creative activity is said to be necessary for an apprehension of the ideas. And this Platonism came to Coleridge as a great relief at a time when Hartley was failing to satisfy him. This gave a new direction to his interpretation of the terms,

10. T.T. August 20, 1833.
11. Cf. essays on Method in *Friend.*
12. *Leviathan,* I, 3.

While imagination is an activity, a growing activity, in fancy the mind merely assembles the past objects. These are the 'fixities and definites' which are grouped together through associative links. "The Fancy is indeed no other than a mode of Memory emancipated from the order of time and space; while it is blended with, and modified by that empirical phenomenon of the will, which we express by the word chance. But equally with the ordinary memory the Fancy must receive all its materials ready made from the law of association."[13] The materials of fancy are supplied by the law of association. Such materials do not arise in the order in which they took place in actual life. Each item recalled thus is fixed, it retains its original character. An unconscious operation of the will selects only a few events or facts from the original experience. Then results a sort of random grouping of incidents or objects. The grouping is more or less determined by the feeling present at the outset. "Association depends in a much greater degree on the recurrence of resembling states of feeling than on trains of ideas.... Ideas never recall ideas any more than the leaves in a forest create each other's motion. The breeze it is that runs through them—it is the soul, the state of feeling."[14] It is thus that fancy consists of an association of feelings with one another. Each feeling branches off into another; and corresponding to this there will be a recollection of the images that have evoked these feelings. No attempt is made to harmonise these feelings. It is by virtue of these feelings that fancy too can enter the poetic composition.

In the **Sophist** Plato speaks of "two kinds of image-making: the art of making likenesses, and fantastic or the art of making appearances." The latter presents a "resemblance of the beautiful", it 'is not really like.' Aristotle too speaks of

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13. B.L. I, 202.
14. To Southey, August 7, 1803.

the 'sensitive' imagination and of the 'calculative' or 'deliberative' imagination.[15] The latter fashions 'a unity out of several images.' He even went to the extent of stating that "the soul never thinks without an image."[16] Following this tradition Horace distinguishes between 'creation' and 'invention.' But the main problem underlying all this is to find out that principle which enables the human mind to apprehend the true character of things. The spatial and temporal characteristics do define only the external appearances, not their real nature. In a letter to Poole, dated March 16, 1801, Coleridge wrote: "I have not only completely extricated the notions of time and space, but have overthrown the doctrine of association, as taught by Hartley." Associationism is the governing principle of fancy. And fancy accordingly will be the principle that retains at least a new set of temporal and spatial characteristics of the objects apprehended or understood. It refers to the impressions and sensations which are held to give rise to all possible knowledge, by Locke and his followers. But not satisfied with this speculation Coleridge goes on to say that "I shall be able to evolve all the five senses, that is, to deduce them from one sense, and to state their growth and the causes of their difference, and in this evolvement to solve the process of life and consciousness."[17] Instead of making the contents of the mind agree with the sense-impressions of the external, he would try with Kant to make the world of things and objects agree with the mind.

In his **Meditations** Descartes associated the 'act of imagination' with intuition, and held that the former needs a 'particular effort of mind'[18] and that we have here an apprehension by 'power and inward vision' of the mind. This intuition is Coleridge's 'forma formans which contains in itself the law of its own conception.' Coleridge held that 'no

15. *De Anima,* 433b.-434a.
16. *Ibid.,* 431a.
17. Cf. his letter to Wordsworth, May 30, 1815.
18. *Meditations,* 6.

thought of any **thing** comprises the whole of that thing', and thought viewed as the Platonic Idea is 'more **real** than what we call **things.**' These Ideas 'are more intensely **actual.**"[19] And they do not find a place in fancy.

Fancy and imagination are 'two distinct and widely different faculties.' They are not two words with the same meaning. Nor is one the lower and the other the higher degree of the same power.[20] Fancy does not concern itself with the essence, with the inner character of any entity or feeling. It is too much dependent on the given, just like the understanding. Imagination on the other is concerned with the ideas. "That faculty of the Soul which apprehends and retains the mere notices of Experience,...with the anticipation of meeting the same under the same circumstances, in other words, all the mere phenomena of our nature, we may call the understanding. But all such notices, as are characterised by **Universality and Necessity**....and which are evidently not the effect of any experience, but the condition of all Experience—that indeed without which Experience itself would be inconceivable, we may call Reason....Reason is, therefore, most eminently the revelation of an immortal soul, and its best synonym—it is the forma formans, which contains itself the law of its own conceptions. Nay, it is highly probable that the contemplation of essential Form...first gave to the mind the ideas."* Reason, as distinct from understanding, intuits truths or ideas; and this power of intuiting is a necessary element of the imaginative process for the simple reason that this process is directly concerned with ideas. Consequently the imaginative activity involves the activity of that aspect of human life which is regarded as spiritual.

On the other hand, the mechanistic philosophy based on associationism "mistakes clear images for distinct conceptions",

19. Letter to Clarkson, October 13, 1806.

20. B.L. I, 60-61. For a faulty view see Richards: *Coleridge on Imagination.*

* Letter to Clarkson, Oct. 13, 1806.

and it "demands conceptions where intuitions alone are possible or adequate to the majesty of the Truth."[21] The contemplation that this act of thinking gives rise to is directed to "external causality in which the train of thought may be considered as the result of outward impressions, of accidental combinations, of fancy, or the associations of the memory." It is a different act of thinking that contemplates "internal causality" in which the train of thought is the result of the operation of "the energy of the will on the mind itself." Consequently we can regard thought "as passive or active and the same faculties may in a popular sense be expressed as perception or observation, fancy or imagination, memory or recollection."[22] These terms are to be taken as relative to one another. Fancy is not totally passive; but compared with the imagination, it is passive. It is a passivity with which we are familiar in dreams, in day-dreaming. In these states our responses to the external world are not quite normal. Judgment and understanding enable us to 'affirm or deny the existence of a reality' corresponding to our thoughts and images. But our "images and thoughts possess a power in, and of, themselves." This power is similar to that felt by the mind in dreams. We neither believe nor disbelieve the actuality of the dreams while we are dreaming, because in this state the power of comparing exercised by the will is suspended. And the strong feelings that at times are connected with these forms and thoughts are "bodily sensations which are causes or occasions of the images, not the effects of them."[23] Fancy thus has its origin in certain bodily sensations and feelings. In dreaming we have a mental activity which is only "an exertion of the fancy in the combination and recombination of familiar objects so as to produce novel and wonderful imagery."[24] This novelty arises from the combination, not from the mutual in-

21. To Wordsworth, May 30, 1815.
22. *Lectures and Notes,* 301.
23. To Stuart, May 13, 1816.
24. *Lectures and Notes,* 294.

teraction. What it combines is that which has ceased to grow, which has no inherent dynamism of its own. It operates only with "fixities and definites." The law of understanding and fancy, he argues, impels the individual "to abstract the changes and outward relations of matter"; and these he arranges under the causal form by "misinterpreting a constant precedence into positive causation." As a result of this misinterpretation the 'indivisible life of nature' is broken into a number of 'idols of the sense.' Then held by these 'lifeless images' created by his own abstracting intellect, he is **sensualized.**[25] Fancy thus abstracts the events and objects from the context to which they normally belong. These abstracted entities, which are in reality the products of the feelings recollected, are arranged in such a way that they seem to have a causal relation to one another. The feelings succeeding one another are thus misinterpreted because a mere temporal succession is no causal relation. Thus instead of a single unified feeling we get a variety of feelings originating from various bodily sensations. The feelings in fancy sensualise the experience and the aggregate of feelings evokes a series of fixed or lifeless images.

Yet these feelings in fancy are regulated by the principles of similarity, difference and contiguity. In 1804 Coleridge stated: "One of the most noticeable and fruitful facts in psychology is the modification of the same feeling by difference of form. The heaven lifts up my soul, the sight of the ocean seems to widen it. We feel the same force at work, but the difference....**that** we feel in Fancy. For what are our feelings of this kind but a motion imagined, with the feelings that would accompany that motion, less distinguished, more blended, more rapid, more confused, and, thereby, coadunated?"[26] The difference between two forms of the same feeling is felt in an activity of the fancy. The feeling of this difference or the awareness of this difference originates in act of the imagi-

25. Essay on Method in *Friend.*
26. *Anima Poetae,* 101.

nation. That is, feeling can operate on what is given by imagination.

To the Greeks 'all natural objects were **dead,** mere hollow statues.' They **included** in each a God or a **Goddess.** "At best, it is but fancy, or the aggregating faculty of the mind, not imagination or the **modifying** and coadunating Faculty."[27] The dissociation of these two faculties is responsible for the absence of the distinction between the various objects in the Greek outlook. The feeling of a distinction is only the imagining of a motion and everything else is unified with reference of this imagining. But "when the pleasure is produced not only by surprise, but also by an image which remains with us and gratifies for its own sake, then I call it fancy."[28] Fancy then seeks to present everything as independent of the rest. When it combines it cannot establish any relations between the feelings or between the images. The principles that govern its combining activity are those derived from the activity of the imagination. Even to associate we need imagination. It is thus observed that by giving "the charm of novelty to things of every day", imgination "awakens the mind's attention to the lethargy of custom, and directs it to the lovcliness and the wonders of the world before us."[29] Though imagination is not confined to the spatio-temporal world, it can yet present the world as beautiful and strange. Imagination can transform the given into the beautiful by virtue of the feelings on which fancy also plays, and by virtue of the intuitions with which it works. In other words, fancy and imagination appear to be the faculties that are together necessary for the successful creative composition. Each in isolation tends to emphasise some one factor only. Yet imagination is the higher faculty because it transforms the materials and modifies the given manifold into a unity or whole.

This imagination is "an inexhaustible treasure, but for

27. To Sotheby, September 10, 1802.
28. *Lectures and Notes,* 415.
29. B.L. II, 6.

which, in consequence of the film of familiarity and selfish solicitude, we have eyes, yet see not, ears that hear not, and hearts that neither feel nor understand."[30] It is an inexhaustible source of everything including the fancy. Fancy and understanding are always preoccupied with the familiar world of objects, sensations, feelings, and images. They are related to the individual personality and, thereby, to the exclusively selfish activities. Consequently they interfere with the free activity of the developed aesthetic senses and of the heart. The range of fancy is strictly limited to the appearances which alone are useful and familiar to us. As against this, Imagination does not refer to any utility, but to value; and it is not satisfied with the forms of things. One could say that the difference between the forms of two feelings is apprehended by fancy, while the qualitative difference depending on the intensity or depth is felt by the imagination. The number of feelings or images is always limited by memory in fancy. But the other creates its own, thereby transcending memory.

In an essay on **The Necessity of Ideas to Scientific Method,** Coleridge distinguished the two activities. He observes that it is not the nature of genius "to assist in storing the passive mind with the various sorts of knowledge most in request, as if the human soul were a mere repository or banqueting-room." On the other hand, genius seeks "to place it in such relations of circumstance as should gradually excite the germinal power that craves no knowledge but what it can take up into itself, what it can appropriate, and reproduce in fruits of its own."[31] New relations are effected by imagination between the various ideas and images; and these relations are such as can modify the very nature of these materials. While fancy can operate only with the fixed relations of similarity, difference and conguity, imagination works with internal relations. The latter thus coadunates, realises specific unities, transforms even the given beyond recognition. And since the external relations

30. *Ibid.*

31. Essays on Method in *Friend.*

present in the case of fancy are all derived ultimately from the internal relations, one can say that fancy too is a product of imagination, a form of motion imagined. That is, succession characterises fancy while simultaneity is basic to imagination.

Crabb Robinson noted in his **Diary** for November 15, 1810: "Coleridge made an elaborate distinction between fancy and imagination. The excess of fancy is delirium, of imagination mania. Fancy is the arbitrary bringing together of things that lie remote, and forming them into a unity. The materials lie ready for the fancy, which acts by a sort of juxtaposition. On the other hand, the imagination under excitement generates and produces a form of its own." Fancy then appears to be the mechanism of the reproduction of sense-impressions, and to that extent it is passive and is associated with mechanical memory.[32] Thus we are told that Shakespeare "possessed fancy, considered as the faculty of bringing together images dissimilar in the main by some one point or more of likeness"; and imagination, on the other, is "the power by which one image or feeling is made to modify many others, and by a sort of fusion to force many into one."[33] In imagination only one feeling is foundational and it is present as the guiding purposive principle throughout the activity. Everything else is assimilated into this one feeling. This one feeling is more or less an all-inclusive whole.

Imagination creates a world that makes possible the most vital experience of reality. It is a world to which the deepest springs of human consciousness respond. When the creative act is relaxed the mind becomes indifferent to reality; and in this indifference fancy is at work. This fancy is "the faculty of bringing together images dissimilar in the main by some one point or more of likeness distinguished."[34] These are like the floating images which retain their character

32. B.L. I, 73.
33. *Lectures and Notes,* 39.
34. *Shakespeare Criticism,* I, 212.

even when they are brought together. They are "fixities and definites."[35] They "have no connexion natural or moral, but are yoked together by the poet by means of some accidental coincidence."[36] They are put together by choice. This choice is "an empirical phenomenon of the will"; it is not the will that constitutes the real being of the mind, for the objects chosen are not shaped or modified by the mind, but only chosen out of those supplied. That is, fancy involves the mental activity of selection, while imagination is a transmuting activity that recognises the validity of no time-series and no spatial locations. The ideas and images appearing in the latter are together present at one and the same moment which seems to remain free from the control of time and space.

The distinction between fancy and imagination depends, therefore, on the criterion of value. Fancy is a term signifying what is other than imagination. It involves images or impressions while imaginations refer to intuitions. These intuitions are evoked objectively by the truth of things, and subjectively they conform to the nature of human reason. As such they are universal and necessary. Consequently there is in Coleridge's theory a close kinship between imagination and the ideas of reason.

Fancy is a mechanistic or associationistic principle, which does not grasp the conceptions of the understanding. Its operations have no universality. The little universality that may be present here is only contingent, not necessary. It is a faculty giving rise to compound images. It arranges the past experiences in a new way by associating one with the other. In all this, the mind is **passive,** it is "a lazy **looker-on** on an external world. . . . Any system built on the passiveness of the mind must be false, as a system."[37] Even in nature there is, he argues, a principle of law, analogous to imagination, operating and

35. B.L. I, 202.
36. T.T. June 23, 1834.
37. To Poole, March 23, 1801.

endeavouring to **break forth;** and as it **breaks forth,** the phenomena become spiritual and one with our consciousness. It is the same principle that "exists in man as intelligence and self-consciousness."[38] This imagination too is active and passive. It is 'joined to a superior voluntary control over it.'[39] The volitional energy is absent in "the streamy nature of the associative faculty."[40]

These two faculties can and do exist together in a variety of ways. But in each case one can determine which one is the basic faculty on which the other is founded. Thus Spenser is said to have 'fancy under conditions of imagination. He has an imaginative fancy, but he has not imagination."[41] Fancy here is a principle governing mere rhetorical figures or metaphysical wit. 'Milton had a highly imaginative, Cowley a very fanciful mind."[42] Fancy here appears to imply a loose connection of the poet's heart and intellect with 'the great appearances of Nature...in the shape of formal similes."[43] The thought and feeling present in the expressions of fancy is 'incompatible with the steady fervour of a mind possessed and filled with the grandeur of its subject."[44]

The distinction between the primary and the secondary forms of imagination involves a differentiation of the unconscious from the conscious activity. The truly artistic imagination, Coleridge avers, is an echo of the primary, and yet it differs from it because this one 'co-exists with the conscious will."[45] Still it is "identical with the primary in the **kind** of its agency, differing only in **degree,** and in the **mode** of its operation."[46]

38. B.L. I, 176.
39. B.L. I, 86.
40. A.P. 64.
41. *Misc. Crit.,* 38.
42. B.L. I, 62.
43. To Southey, July 29, 1802; to Sotheby, September 10, 1802.
44. B.L. II, 68.
45. *Ibid.,* I, 202.
46. *Ibid.*

There have been critics who sought to trace this distinction to the Germans with whom Coleridge was greatly acquainted. When Schelling observes: "Es ist das Dichtungsvermogen, was in der **ersten Potenz** die ursprungliche Anschauung ist, und ungekehrt, es ist nur die in der **hochsten Potenz** sie wie werholende produktive Anschauung, was wir Dichtungsvermogen nennen. Es ist ein und dasselbe, was in beiden tatig ist, das Einzige wodurch wir fahing sind, auch das Widersprechende zu denken und zusammenzu—fassen die Einbildungskraft'"[47]—he seems to have suggested the idea of the primary imagination also. In an earlier passage,[48] Schelling distinguishes conscious imagination from unconscious perception. Coleridge appears to accept the source of imagination as the unconscious. As he remarked, "there is in genius itself an unconscious activity; nay, that is **the** genius in the man of genius."[49] But this doctrine appears to go back to Mesmer whose teachings present the theory of a dynamic unconscious. All these views, however, are not taken over by Coleridge in their setting or with their precise significance. He sought to evolve an altogether new theory, a theory not found in any of the critics who are said to have influenced his doctrine. The term Einbildungskraft appears in J. G. E. Maass's work, **Versuch uber die Einbildungskraft** (1797), which Coleridge borrowed and annotated. Schelling's **Lectures on the method of academic Studies** (1803) also has it. But in the hands of Coleridge it is not a simple shaping into one. It is too complex an activity and to express it precisely he had to invent a new term, esemplastic.

Coleridge held the primary imagination 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

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47. *Werke,* III, 626.
48. *Ibid.,* 271.
49. *Misc. Crit.,* 210.

the infinite I AM."[50] Sarah Coleridge stated[51] that in his copy of the book her father 'stroked out' the sentence. Possibly he felt like giving a new name to this faculty, or he intended to reword it. He never repudiated this doctrine at any time. He once observed: "That which we find in ourselves is **gradu mutato** the substance and the life of all our knowledge. Without this latent presence of the 'I AM' all modes of existence in the external world would flit before us as coloured shadows."[52] The 'I AM', he argues, is the same as spirit, self, self-consciousness.[53] Even in 1806 he stated in a letter to Clarkson that "reflexion seems the first approach to, and shadow of, the divine permanency; the first effect of divine working in us to find the Past and Future with the Present, and thereby to let in upon us some faint glimmering of that State in which Past, Present and Future are coadunated in the adorable I AM."

The secondary imagination functions within a limited field. The Universals that are beyond this power come under the operation of the primary imagination. Even though the secondary imagination has to 'idealise and unify', it cannot unify at least the universals. Hence its field is restricted to those objects which "as objects are essentially fixed and dead." It is the ever active, creative power directed to the physical phenomena.

The two forms are essentially forms of perception and apprehension. With Kant he held that imagination is essential to all perception of objects. He used the term perception in this context to mean the direct awareness of reason. The concepts of understanding are impossible if this understanding is not aided by imagination; nor can imagination apprehend the true character of the particulars of sense in the absence

50. B.L. I, 202.
51. B.L. (1847), I, 297.
52. First. *Lay Sermon,* Appendix B.
53. B.L. I, 183.

of any aid from the conceptual activity of the understanding. As such even in the most elementary acts of perception, there is imagination. This is the pimary imagination present in the perceptions of daily life. That form of the creative power which gives an individuality to the rational insight of the universal is the primary imagination. Since it offers an individuality it is a "repetition of the eternal act of creation." In this repetition the concrete individual comes to embody a value. It is creative in the sense that it makes possible an external world of objects to the self. Here we exercise our power unconsciously. Without it no perception is possible. Hence it is said that "the primary imagination (is) the living power and prime agent of all human perception." All other 'mental activities are the developments or products of the primary or foundational activity.

The primary imagination is "a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM. The secondary imagination 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." The primary imagination is the basic condition which seeks to explain why we have a world of experience. Through a "confluence of our recollections we establish a centre, as it were, a sort of nucleus in the reservoir of the soul."[54] The idea of the **nexus effectivus** originates in the mind as a law which alone can reduce the manifold of sense into unity.[55] This nexus is the **I AM**, the self or self-consciousness. It embodies an eternal act of creation. Consequently he speaks of the dependence of perception 'on the memory and imagination.'[56] Memory is one of the factors accounting for the self-identity of the agent of all experience.

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54. *Biographia Epistolaris,* 2, 182.
55. On Method in *Friend.*
56. *Friend,* I, 248.

The imagination present in the perceptions of the creative artist is secondary. The utilitarian world presented by the primary is raised here to one of value. The world is created anew as an object of contemplation. The same imaginative activity is here intensified and it is directed by the will. It is voluntary and is therefore free. This secondary imagination is the basic condition which seeks to explain how the world of experience is to be grasped in a fuller unity so that we can have the most vital experience of reality. It grasps the whole in which it functions purposively. The teleology immanent in the universe, he says, is "analogous to the causality of the human will."[57] It is a conscious purpose, an awareness of the end to be realised, that directs the secondary imagination.

The will is also operative in the primary imagination which reveals the objects of perception and renders them conceptually to and by the mind. But the objects of the secondary are concrete. This secondary imagination breaks up the original perception into its sense-data and constructs a new concrete picture. "It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events, it struggles to idealise and to unify. It is essentially **vital,** even as all objects (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead."[58] Both the primary and the secondary are constructive, but it is only the latter that is also destructive. The struggle to unify characterising the secondary imagination is the absorption of experiences into a coherent whole. The poet feels the need to create a coherent system of reality; and he embodies the experience in a wider and all-inclusive imaginative pattern. This is a felt need for a single imaginative apprehension of the whole significance of life. In realising this it has to destroy the atomic isolation in which the objects are perceived. This creative activity then brings forth a

57. On Method in *Friend.*

58. B.L. I, 202.

'charm of novelty.' Such a picture is not created by the primary imagination 'in consequence of the film of familiarity and selfish solicitude.' The familiar in normal life ceases to be useful the moment it loses its apparent character. The selfish solicitude is always intent on maintaining the distinction between persons and things since it is a separating or dividing force. This is contrary to social ends and to the sociability of the species. The central doctrine of Coleridge's theory is that poetry "is purely human; for all its materials are from the mind, and all its products are for the mind."[59] It is the nature of the fine arts "to express intellectual purposes, thoughts, conceptions, and sentiments which have their origin in the human mind."[60] This function is realised by the imaginative activity.

Imagination is **essentially vital** in the sense that it 'informs and animates other existences.' The objects are objects only for the imagination, because it is the primary imagination that creates for us the world of objects. Then if the objects are said to be 'fixed and dead', Coleridge might be referring to the **things** prior to their becoming the objects, to the things-in-themselves that may be supposed to exist independent of the precipient. He may also be meaning that the objects of the primary imagination compared with those of the secondary are 'fixed and dead.' In normal life we look at the objects as means, as so many utilities, as counters. But when the conscious imagination is focussed on them they appear as ends in themselves; and they are **vitalised** because they are integrated to that consciousness in which the artist participates. Imagination is the process whereby the objects are charged with consciousness. At the level of the primary imagination we are not aware of this because of the ulterior ends governing our experience; and the world at this level may appear vital, but we do not here apprehend the living principle in-

59. *Lectures and Notes,* 311.
60. *Ibid.,* 313.

herent in the world of objects. This living principle for its own sake is apprehended at the level of the secondary imagination. This vitality may be a case of self-projection at the earlier level, but at this level it is vitality that is felt to be real. Consequently the objects appear more complex and more significant.

The objects at the level of the primary belong to the epistemological situation; and at that of the secondary they are apprehended as having an ontological status. This status is intuited; and in intuiting we create for ourselves that existence or that value which they embody. The creative act in one of its essential forms is present in such a situation if only because the intuited value renders the object vital to us. In itself the object is fixed and definite. But in relation to the percipient it reveals a life that is dynamic, a life which is its specific characteristic. It is an element in the creative process of the universe.

When Coleridge spoke of the imaginative act as the 'dim analogue of the creation', he had in his mind Berkeley's remark: "Certainly we ourselves create in some wise whenever we imagine."[61] More or less in the same manner, Coleridge said in his famous **Ode:**

"We receive but what we give,
And in our life alone does Nature live."

According to Berkeley the action of the will is necessary for giving rise to the ideas of the imagination. The spirit 'producing or otherwise operating about' ideas is called will.[62] 'The ideas formed by the imagination' have 'an entire dependence on the will.'[63] Coleridge spoke of choice being present in the primary imagination, and of will in the other. As an activity, imagination too must arise from the volition. The volitional can have a conscious or unconscious purpose.

61. *Commonplace Book,* 101.
62. *Principles,* 27.
63. *Third Dialogue.*

The former is the character of the secondary which in intuiting the nature of the world, intuits its real character, its essential truth.

In his letter of 23rd March, 1801 to Poole he speaks of truth being a species of revelation. Then he proceeds to examine the nature of the mind. He is convinced that the mind is not passive. "If the mind be not **passive,** if it be indeed made in God's Image, and that, too, in the sublimest sense, the **Image of the Creator,** there is ground for suspicion that any system built on the passiveness of the mind must be false, as a system." It is the dynamism of the mind that is basic to any system of thought seeking to interpret the nature of the world in which we live, struggle and realise. Here he feels the need for a new theory of perception because he is convinced that the mind is not a passive receptacle. Sensation is not the whole of perceptual awareness. The mind is active because it brings together the varied data of sense. This activity is called the primary imagination which gives a form or shape to the varied impressions. Even then the shape given is purely intellectual or ideational; and it may or may not agree with that of the given manifold. It is here that the secondary imagination operates by revealing the agreement of the external with the internal, by revealing the organic unity of the world with the consciousness of the individual, and by revealing the oneness of the creativity of Nature with that of the human mind.

Imagination secondary thus seeks to reveal the animating principle operating in the Universe, a principle which alone can explain Reality. In a letter to Godwin (1800), he speaks of his "endeavour to destory the old antithesis of words and things, elevating, as it were, words into things and living things too." The primary imagination destroys the old antithesis, the old dualism of words and things. It elevates the word into the thing. But the secondary imagination completes this process by elevating it into a living thing. In this process it works as passion.

In a letter of December 1811 he observes: "It will not be by dates that posterity will judge of the originality of a poem; but by the original spirit itself. This is to be found neither in a tale however interesting, which is but the canvas; no, nor yet in the Fancy or the imagery—which are but forms and colours—it is a subtle spirit, all in each part, reconciling and unifying all. Passion and imagination are its most appropriate names; but even these say little—for it must be not merely passion but poetic passion, poetic imagination." Now the nature of passion is to make the individual forget himself, forget the proper distinctions governing the familiar world of selfish solicitude. Poetic passion is a more refined one. It reconciles and unifies all. It is all-inclusive.

At its moment of intensity the imagination secondary is poetic passion. The poetic passion impregnates the data of experience and contemplation 'with an interest not their own.'[64] The aesthetic pleasure thus arises not from the thing **presented** prior to the creative act, but from what is **represented** by the artist.[65] Prior to the act the data are not unified, not significant enough. In unifying them, imagination breathes into the whole something of its own character.

Imagination has a tendency to use words by elevating them into things. In other words, it seeks to employ words metaphorically. Metaphors are apprehended primarily as images. These images exist at the two levels of imagination in two different ways. At the lower level, the image does not absorb our attention into itself; it claims no independent or significant character. It functions almost like a counter. "Imagery, affecting incident, just thoughts, interesting personal or domestic feelings", and expression of these in the form of a poem "may all by incessant effort be acquired as a trade." But there is a power which is inborn. It is "the sense of musical delight" which "is a gift of imagination." This gift

64. *Lectures and Notes,* 312.
65. *Ibid.*

"together with the power of reducing multitude into unity of effect, and modifying a series of thoughts by some one predominant thought or feeling, may be cultivated and improved, but can never be learned. It is in these that poeta nascitur non fit."[66] The image resulting from poetic passion is a product of the secondary imagination. As emerging from this source, it carries with it the character of passion and moves in the same rhythm. Yet it is something not common to all human beings. The primary imagination is present in all, but the secondary is only in a few; and these few are the creative artists who are born with the gift. Consequently what distinguishes an artist from any other human being is the presence in him of the secondary imagination.

If the images themselves are not **modified** by the imaginative activity, "poetry becomes flattened into mere didactics of practice, or evaporated into a hazy, unthoughtful day-dreaming."[67] This modifying process secures the 'definiteness and articulation of imagery', and also the 'framework of objectivity.' And the two forms in which the images exist are present in two different activities. In the activity of fancy the images are unrelated, and they have no necessary origination from the poetic imagination. They are merely the images existing at the level of the primary imagination. The images modified into a unity are those charged with poetic passion; and these images offer the clues to an apprehension of the poetic intuitions. In other words, they offer the clues to an understanding of the existence or being of the world, an understanding with which we are not familiar in normal life because of the selfish solicitude which does not allow us to tear off the film of familiarity.

That which distinguishes the normal individual from the genius is the latter's "intuition of absolute existence." This intuition makes him realise within himself "a something

66. B.L. II, 14.
67. *Lectures and Notes,* 11.

ineffably greater than his own individual nature." How does he have this idea? Our sources of knowledge are the senses and the understanding. The senses "supply only surfaces, undulations, phantoms." The instruments of sensation "furnish only the chaos, the shapeless elements of sense." The "moulds and mechanism of the understanding" result "in individualization, in outlines and differencings by quantity and relation."[68] Imagination, on the other hand, is concerned with existence; and in the language of the categories it is preoccupied with quality. As a principle of shapeliness it resolves the chaos; and as the secondary imagination it intuits the impersonal, the universal. Such a creative principle, Coleridge says, is not only analogous to the creativity of nature, but basic to the entire human life as such. It is the stuff of our lives and dreams. It intuits the Platonic Ideas.

The primary imagination is thus essentially utilitarian, concerning itself with appearances. The secondary is actively concerned with reality, expressing no utilities, but values. The former preserves the dualism of normal life, while the latter seeks to transcend the dualistic, or the pluralistic universe. It is this secondary imagination that contains "the seeds of all moral and scientific improvement." This "imagination is the distinguishing characteristic of man as a progressive being",[69] for the simple reason that it "combines many circumstances into one moment of consciousness", and "tends to produce that ultimate end of all human thought and human feeling, unity."[70] It is the greatest faculty of the human mind.

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68. On Method in *Friend.*
69. *Lectures and Notes,* 300.
70. *Ibid.,* 39.

3. NATURE OF IMAGINATION

In every rational being there is present "potentially, if not actually, a somewhat, call what you will, the pure reason, the spirit, **lumen siccum, nous,** intellectual intuition, or the like." It is an examination of these various terms that takes us to that activity which is said to be involved in all artistic creation.

Understanding is 'discursive', analytical, and it turns to the external world. But reason, Coleridge argues, is "the immediate and inward beholding of the spiritual as sense is of the material." The categories and rules supplied by understanding enable us to apprehend the objects conceptually as they are in themselves and as they are related to one another. This is the classifying and generalizing activity of the understanding which is preoccupied with "the quantities" qualities, and relations of particulars in time and space. The understanding, therefore, is the science of phenomena, and of their subsumption under distinct kinds and sorts. Its functions supply the rules and constitute the possibility of experience....The reason, on the other hand, is the science of the Universal."[1] The only object of the understanding is "the material world in relation to our worldly interests."[2] It may have clarity, but it has no depth; for, "it entangles itself in contradictions, in the very effort of comprehending the idea of substance."[3] Its materials are all found in the external universe. It operates on the given in sensations or impressions. It may be viewed as "the power which adopts means to pro-

1. *Lay Sermon,* 399.
2. *Ibid.,* 342.
3. *Ibid.,* 343.

ximate ends according to varying circumstances." "In reason there are no means nor ends, reason itself being one with the ultimate end, of which it is the manifestation"; and it has "no concern with things, but with permanent Relations."[4] The ideas of reason cannot then be conveyed in any adequate manner save through the forms of symbols.[5] However much we may try to relate reason to the external world, "from the understanding to the reason, there is no continuous ascent possible." And yet we are not aware of any gulf separating the two in actual experience.

But purely from a theoretical point of view, we do find that these two function in two divergent ways. In spite of the universals revealed by reason, the gross particularity of an object is not lost in any perceptual activity, while this particularity is lost in the activity of conceptual intelligence. Imagination enables us to apprehend the particulars in the light of the basic concepts of the understanding. That is, reason appears to be nearer to ordinary experience, and the normal understanding seems to aid imagination. This imagination, as it is shown earlier, is necessary even to make any perceptual experience possible. It thus turns out that the activity of imagination is more or less the point on which converge the other activities like those of reason and understanding.

Let us first consider the relation of imagination to reason. Imagination offers an insight into truth. It renders this insight into symbols that are capable of affecting the human feelings and emotions. The symbol is 'con-substantial' with the original insight or conception. In shaping "the flux of the senses by the permanent and self-circling energies of the reason", imagination "gives birth to a system of symbols, harmonious in themselves and consubstantial with the truths of which they are the conductors. These are the wheels which

4. To Tulk, Feburary 12, 1821.
5. B.L. I, 100.

Ezekiel beheld, when the hand of the Lord was upon him. Whithersoever the Spirit was to go, the wheels went, and thither was their Spirit to go: For the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels also."[6] The symbol is derived from the original objective conception and it is also its conductor. Then the poetic imagination is the activity that expresses thought symbolically. Any symbol is an inadequate and imperfect translation of the idea; and yet it is suggestive of the idea underlying its emergence. Imagination is thus an activity that translates an idea into the form of a symbol charged with the powers of suggestion. At the same time the symbol has its basis also in the flux of the senses. This might mean that the symbol represents the synthesis of the sensations and the ideas of reason. But in reality it is only the meeting ground of these. The symbol is like the wheel. It communicates truth to the feelings. It presents the specific **particular** revealed to the senses, the **general** understood by the understanding, and the **universal** cognised or intuited by reason. It is characterised "by the translucence of the eternal through and in the temporal."[7] A set of such symbols forming the expression proper is the work of imagination. Such symbols are charged by imagination with the original character of the ideas.

There is a law operating in the objects. The essence of the objects is called the idea. But whereas a law cannot be the essence of a particular object, idea can be. This idea is presented through symbols. Coleridge opposes symbol to allegory, in the way in which he opposes imagination to fancy, or the organic to the mechanical form. The symbol is more real, more true. 'The germinal causes in nature' are repeated in and through the symbols. The symbol is not a copy, but a 'form breathing life.' "It always partakes of the reality which it renders intelligible; and while it enunicates the whole,

6. *Statesman's Manual,* 229.
7. *Ibid.,* 230.

abides itself as a living part in that unity, of which it is the representative.[8] It mediates 'between the literal and the metaphorical.'

The idea and the symbol are not opposed to one another. Symbol is "characterised by a translucence of the special in the individual, or of the general in the special, or of the Universal in the general."[9] It thus claims the reality of the symbolised. It is 'a sign included in the idea, which, it represents', and so 'a part of the whole of which it is representative."[10] It is a point of union realising the universal and the particular as one. In this Union, the formative idea attains reality and therefore reveals or embodies a value. That is, the symbol views the particular in its proper context and renders it more determinate. In this process the particular embodies the universal. On the other hand, allegory is the "translation of abstract notion into a picture language, which is itself nothing but an abstraction from objects of the senses."[11] Allegory is related to fancy while symbol is related to imagination. This is because allegory is disjoined from the idea, while a symbol 'presumes no disjunction of faculties."[12] The principle of unification is exhibited by the symbol. And when Coleridge emphasises the value of 'animating' imagery, he takes it as the symbol of the poet's thought. In other words, the symbol can be a word, a figure, or even an image. It has a wide range of forms under which it can appear. However, it is imagery that is a true symbol of the original conception, for it presents in a sensuous form that which is non-sensuous. It is imagery that points out clearly man's identity with nature. This unification appears as the symbol. Thus on the side of expres-

8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Aids to Reflection*, 173; *Misc. Crit.*, 99.
11. *Statesman's Manual*, 230.
12. *Lectures and Notes*, 248.

sion the first manifestation of the imaginative activity consists of symbols. These symbols may be viewed as universalised particulars or particularised universals.

The universal appearing or emerging as the particular, becomes significant of reality. Then it acquires a form and embodies a value. Reality then is a mediating principle between concreteness and value. When the concrete reveals an ideal, then the value embodied becomes real. That is, the ideal and the real become one in and through value. "Plato so often calls ideas living laws, in which the mind has its whole true being and permanence; or Bacon, vice versa, names the laws of nature ideas."[13] There is inherent in human nature a mysterious predisposition to "identify our being with that of the world without us" and yet to "place ourselves in contradistinction to that world." It is out of this predisposition that we tend to identify the productive power or **vis naturans** with the intelligence.[14] It is in mediating between man and nature that the creative art appears. Imagination is, at its full power, 'essentially vital',[15] because it reconciles man and nature by humanising the latter, by "infusing the thoughts and passions of man into everything which is the object of his contemplation."[16] It combines and unifies colour, form, motion and sound. This is the basic doctrine that developed into his theory of imagination.

An inherent relation exists between nature and the human soul. This is the ground or basis for the imaginative activity; and this relationship is apprehended in a vision which is both emotional and intellectual. As he observed: "the poet's heart and intellect should be intimately combined and unified with the great appearances of Nature, and not held in solu-

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13. On Method in *Friend.*
14. *Friend,* 511-512.
15. B.L. I, 202.
16. *Lectures and Notes,* 311.

tion and loose mixture with them, in the shape of formal similes."[17] This appears as an inner urge towards identity in Coleridge. **In A Hymn Before Sunrise** he describes himself "under the influence of a strong devotional feelings gazing on the Mountain till as if it had been a shape emanating from and sensibly representing her own essence my soul had become diffused through 'the mighty vision' and there 'as in her natural from, swelled vast to Heaven'."[18]

Just like this identity between the human soul and nature the natural symbol and the interpreting mind have the same spiritual being. As he told Allston in 1815, "The great artist does that which nature would do, if only the disturbing forces were abstracted." The "mind feels as if it ached to behold and know something **great,** something **one** and **indivisible.** And it is only in the faith that rocks or waterfalls, mountains or caverns, give me the sense of sublimity or majesty! But in this faith **all things** counterfeit infinity."[19] The interpreting mind and the symbol partake of the character of imagination from which they are derived; and each **counterfeits infinity** by carrying within it the immense powers of suggestion. The infinity which they counterfeit is the imagination which also reveals the oneness of the human soul with nature.

Nature for Coleridge is the creative aspect of nature. The Cambridge Platonists taught him that there is an organic principle animating nature, a principle which Cudworth called 'plastic nature.' As this principle struggles, new forms of life are evolved. In its highest power Nature is no other than self-conscious will or intelligence.[20] This essence is the **natura naturans** "which presupposes a bond between nature in the higher sense and the soul of man."[21] The creative activity of

17. To Southey, July 29, 1802; to Sotheby, September 10, 1802.
18. Letter of 1820.
19. To Thelwall, October 14, 1797.
20. B.L. I, 187.
21. *Lectures and Notes,* 314.

nature is teleological. It evolves in time and space specific forms of existence for specific ends. Each form is symbolic of the creative endeavour that has made its emergence possible. The "productive power which is in nature, as nature, is essentially one with the intellignece which is in the human mind above nature."[22] Since mind and nature are not different from one another, when art is said to imitate nature, it can only mean that art is a kind of self-revelation. In this sense he could observe that "Shakespeare worked in the spirit of nature, by evolving the germ within by the imaginative power according to an idea."[23] Nature too, he said, "works from within by evolution and assimilation according to a law."[24]

The imitation of Nature, he argues, is the imitation of the beautiful in Nature. The beautiful is "the unity of the manifold, the coalescence of the diverse,....the union of the shapely with the vital."[25] The creative artist in expressing his experience can then be said to imitate Nature. In representing the spirit of nature, the poet works through ideas and symbols, and his art becomes a mediator 'between a thought and a thing.' He presents "the union and reconciliation of that which is nature with that which is exclusively human."[26]

In attempting the mediation, art presents the ideas of reason in and through the imaginative activity. An idea "never passes into an abstraction and therefore never becomes the equivalent of an image."[27] It is not a concept; it cannot be seen. It can at the most be contemplated. Then it becomes an existent. But since it is beyond form, it is rendered concrete or visible by symbols.[28] The idea thus becomes an act rendering the universal concrete. Hence he treats ideas

22. *Friend,* 328.
23. *Misc. Crit.,* 43.
24. *Ibid.,* 42.
25. *Lectures and Notes,* 314.
26. *Ibid.,* 312.
27. *Marginalia.*
28. *On Logic and Learning,* 136.

as 'real', 'living', 'seminal' principles. As a formative principle the idea is immanent in the concrete. But "an idea in the highest sense of the word cannot be conveyed but by a symbol."[29] Hence when an artist is said to imitate nature, it is an imitation in which likeness and unlikeness, or sameness and difference, coexist. "And in all genuine creations of art there must be a union of these disparates.[30] A mere likeness will be a lifeless deception. It is the union of the similar with the dissimilar that gives reality and life to the imitation. And it embodies a value in transmuting the dissimilar into an identity with the idea.

The work of art is both an imitation and a creation. It is an imitation in the sense that the spectator or reader recognises similarity in the dissimilar, or in the sense that he fuses his own knowledge with the external objects. The world it presents is a symbol in a sense. The nature that art reveals is one where the opposites are reconciled to evolve the significant. The composition of a poem is among the imitative arts because imitation is "the interfusion of the same throughout the radically different, or of the different throughout a base radically the same."[31] Here the term imitation comes to mean both idealization and unification, the twin processes of imagination.

The unification of the materials exhibits the universal and the idealisation invests it with a value. Because of this imitation of the general or universal nature Coleridge could say that "the essence of poetry is universality."[32] And in a letter he observes: "whatever is not representative, generic, may be indeed most poetically expressed, but it is not poetry." This is not an abstraction for he is talking of the "involution of the universal in the individual." In poetry the universal truth

29. B.L. I, 100.
30. *Lectures and Notes,* 313.
31. B.L. II, 56.
32. *Shakespeare Criticism,* II, 9.

is clothed in the individual form. The "class-characteristics which constitute the instructiveness of a character are so modified and particularised in each person,... that life itself does not excite more distinctly that sense of individuality which belongs to real existence."[33] Art become more real than life; the semblance is more valuabe than the actual. The artist imitates "that which is active through form and figure, and discourses to us by symbols." The suggestive power of the symbol takes us to the reality it visions. The ultimate or real universals of nature are, therefore, said to be revealed in poetry. These are apprehended by a faculty of the mind more valuable than the discursive intellect. This faculty is imagination.

But the universals are essentially conceptual. Yet the same conceptual understanding tells us that these are immanent in the world of the particulars around us. The universals are the formative principles guiding the process of nature. The particulars are the media; they are like "the lungs in relation to the atmosphere, the eye to light, crystal to fluid, figure to space."[34] The universal, on the other hand, has no character; and to make the apprehension of the universal possible, art presents it as "the substance capable of endless modification."[35] In other words, Coleridge rejects the Aristotelian and Kantian view that universals are merely regulative. He holds with Plato that they are constitutive, that they have independent existence, that they can and do become real.[36] The universal is a process.

Reality is apprehended at that moment in the process wherein the universal and the particular reveal each other. It is the moment when value and concreteness, when the ideal and the real, become one. The human mind can apprehend such a reality and through that power or capacity it is capable

33. B.L. II, 33
34. *Statesman's Manual,* App. B.
35. B.L. II, 262; *Misc. Crit.,* 44.
36. *Statesman's Manual,* 302.

of harmonising or coalescing the data revealed by the different human faculties. This is **imagination** which is a power duplicating the creativity of nature. As such it is "a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation"; and it is also "the living power and prime agent of all human perception."[37] Consequently the ideas that are creative are "more real, more substantial than the things."[38] And as artistic imagination, it intuits the character of the universe and embodies it in a definite or determinate form.

The world has its counterpart in the form of the human senses and understanding; and the universal processes have their counterpart in human reason. The dynamic creativity of nature is in the direction synthesising the universal and the particular. Because of this process reality comes to mediate between concreteness and value. Now imagination attempts to synthesise the impression and conceptions derived from the concrete external world with the insights offered by reason; and in this process imagination mediates between the various faculties and activities of the mind and body. It is after all "the great law of nature, that all opposites tend to attract and temper each other."[39] This principle resolves opposition into harmony by virtue of the fact that the opposites have originated from itself prior to the interaction of ideas and sensations. Hence it is said that imagination is the "reconciling and mediating power, which incorporating the reason in images of the sense, and organising the flux of the senses by the permanent and self-circulating energies of the reason, gives birth to a system of symbols, harmonious in themselves and consubstantial with the truths of which they are the conductors."[40]

Here we come across another specific feature of im-

37. B.L. I, 202.
38. On Method.
39. *Lectures and Notes,* 53.
40. *Statesman's Manual,* 228-29.

agination. Reason cannot be other than imagination, because the latter alone makes possible the being of every other mental faculty. It is said, "the completing power which unites clearness with depth, the plentitude of the sense with the comprehensibility of the understanding, is the imagination, impregnated with which the understanding itself becomes intuitive and a living power."[41] Kant considered imagination to be merely a unifying principle between reason and understanding. But the Platonic Coleridge takes it as a constitutive principle. In unifying it constitutes the character of the unity. It is the essence, and at the same time it evolves itself as having a form. This is not the same theory as that of Schelling who considered imagination to be the same as the creativity of nature. Coleridge takes it to be a dim analogue of the creative process, "a principle within, not originating in anything without"[42]; and out of this principle even nature is evolved. The forms of nature owe their being and their origin to this activity. Hence, "Form is factitious thinking, and thinking is the process; imagination the laboratory in which the thought elaborates essence into existence."[43] Even thinking, like the ordinary perception, is grounded in imagination; and when imagination functions as the immanent driving force, thinking evolves and enables the essence to appear as existence. This essence is the imagination which is present in all existence and which therefore not merely unifies the manifold but gives a determinate shape to them. It is the esemplastic power, the shaping power.

The insights and impressions derived from two divergent activities of the mind are brought together by the imaginative process which transmutes them. In this process the universal conceptions of reason become ideas. Hence he speaks of the idea as being 'an educt of the imagination actuated by the

41. *Ibid.*, 266.
42. *Lectures and Notes*, 48.
43. *Anima Poetae*, 186.

pure reason' and to this 'there neither is nor can be an adequate correspondent in the world of the senses."[44] Even the ideas are educed from the imagination. And when these ideas have no corresponding objects, we have to consider imagination as a super-sensuous power which yet inspirits the world of sense. Then the potential idea acquires a concreteness under the impact of the sense impression, and these impressions get into a proper mould as the idea works on them. The two processes are brought together to form one process by the imagination which thus appears to be "the laboratory in which thought elaborates essence into existence."[45] The rendering of this process in an appropriate medium is called art. It is this process that he sought to designate by the expression 'the shaping spirit of imagination.'

But Coleridge's critical and creative mind is not satisfied by discovering the fundamental principle. He sought to give it a specific name because the word imagination does not actually denote this specific function. So he coined the word **esemplastic.** He felt that the German language, unlike the English, can coin such a word more easily. "How excellently the German Einbildungskraft expresses the prime and loftiest faculty, the power of co-adunation, the faculty that forms the many into one—in-eins-bildung! Eisenoplasy, or esenoplastic power is contradistinguished from fantasy, or the mirrorment, either catoptric or metoptric—repeating simply, or by transposition and, again, involuntary as in dreams, or by an act of the will."[46] Passive reception of images, combining the images of sense-impressions by an act of the will or by an involuntary choice as in dreams are all the forms that are other than those of the imaginative activity. This is an activity out of which we derive images, sense-impressions and the like. Such a conception came from Berkeley who speaks of the mind

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44. *Statesman's Manual,* 302.
45. *Anima Poetae,* 158.
46. *Ibid.,* 199.

as "resembling the divine One by participation and imparting to other things what itself participates from above."[47]

This esemplastic power is not merely a shaping power. It is a power which is "the true inward creatrix, instantly out of the chaos of elements of shattered fragments of memory, puts together some from to fit it."[48] This is the principle "of **polarity**, or the manifestation of one power by opposite forces." To give a shape it ought to synthesize. That is, imagination is dialectical because it is both transcendental and immanent. It is both constitutive and regulative of the mental process. It is a power setting at nought all the contradictions by revealing the true character of identity. It is embodied as a striving towards the reconciliation of the universal with the particular, essence with existence, natura naturans with natura naturata. The imaginative process is the mediating principle in these pairs. In mediating it achieves a new unity, an organic form, in which we have not merely the coalescence of the subject and the object but their identity. From the standpoint of this identity the opposing pairs reveal themselves in a new light; they seem to manifest new forms of existence. As such it is said that "the man of genius places things in a new light....The poet not only displays what, though often seen in its unfolded mass, had never been opened out, but he likewise adds something, namely, light and relations."[49] Good poems may be composed if one has a poetic taste, dexterity in composition, and power of ingenious imitation. But this is not genius which is 'the power of doing something new.'[50] Genius implies 'great sensibility', and men of genius also have 'great confidence in their powers.'[51] They bring these powers to bear on the facts or materials in such a man-

47. *Siris,* 356.
48. *Anima Poetae,* 206.
49. *Ibid.,* 233.
50. T.T. April, 18, 1830.
51. To Sotheby, September 10, 1802.

ner that the data appear to be new and unfamiliar to us.

Imagination synthesizes the data of sense into the world of objects, and the poem, as the product of the imaginative activity, has to express an imaginative idea or object. This is possible when one can "become all things and yet remain the same." For the true imagination is "to make the changeful god be felt in the river, the lion and the flame."[52] To be highly and truly imaginative the artist must become impersonal, lose himself in his experience and be one with every thing or person he contemplates. "It is easy to cloathe imaginary beings with our own thoughts and feelings; but to send ourselves out of ourselves, to **think** ourselves into the thoughts and feelings of beings in circumstances wholly and strangely different from our own—hoc labour, hoc opus—and who has achieved it? Perhaps only Shakespeare."[53] In other words, unlike emotion, the imaginative act is not personal. As impersonal it becomes the source of both persons and things. Hence it is that this activity is said to operate with the universals, with ideas. It has a power whereby it impresses the natural or lifeless objects with the stamp of humanity and of human feelings.[54] It at times makes the reader oblivious of everything external by making him 'see everything flashed upon his inward eye.'

This impersonality of the imaginative process, though Coleridge could not adequately foresee its implications, is vital to art, religion, morality, and all other forms of human endeavour. Psychologically it appears as sympathy; and in an estoeric view it appears as inspiration. From a religio-philosophic standpoint it points to the distinction between the Absolute and God, by treating the latter as an appearance of the former. In other words, it seeks to show the untenability of any dualism or pluralism. Coleridge was slightly aware of

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52. *Lectures and Notes*, 41-42.
53. To Sotheby, July 13, 1802.
54. *Lectures and Notes*, 40.

this when he observed: "In its tranquil and purely pleasurable operation, imagination acts chiefly by creating out of many things...detailed in unimpassioned succession, a oneness, even as nature, the greatest of poets, acts upon us."[55]

In realising this oneness, imagination does away with succession. It reduces all succession into simultanetiy, because it is a power that makes even time and space possible. But such a power cannot be adequately expressed in any medium: and this makes him state that the various forms under which it appears are only shadows of imagination. Yet these shadows have an inherent power to take us beyond themselves. They exhibit what is called the self-transcendence of all finite forms, for the simple reason that the power inspiriting them drives them on forward. Quoting the lines:

> Look! how a bright star shooteth from the sky!
> So glides he in the night from Venus' eye!

Coleridge adds: "How many images and feelings are here brought together without effort and without discord the beauty of Adonis, the rapidity of his flight, the yearning yet hopelessness of the enamoured gazer, while a shadowy ideal character is thrown over the whole!"[56] As we follow the image it appears to be naturally related to a number of other relevant details. It belongs to a relational context where alone it acquires a significance. It is a vital element in an organic unity. Such a character is denied to an image springing from fancy. This is what he means when he speaks of "the power by which one image or feeling is made to modify many others and by a sort of fusion to force many into one."

Even the shadowy ideal character derived from imagination is capable of raising the reader to a higher plane. In such a mood one "feels Shakespeare to be a poet, in as much as for a time he has made you one—an active creative being." Our awareness of Adonis is enlarged, and our apprehension is

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55. *Ibid.*
56. *Shakespeare Criticism*, I, 213.

more complex and yet more clear. That which did not earlier exist is made to exist now in our imagination. This being is achieved by a fusion of varied relevant elements. Here is a gift of spreading the atmosphere, "the depth and height of the ideal world" around the forms and situations of normal life, "of which custom had bedimmed all the lustre."[57] Imagination then is creative in the sense that it only makes us aware of the reality that we tend to ignore or not to know because of our preoccupation with a purely utilitarian world of matter. It reveals the Reality that is hidden by the appearances of the mechanistic physical universe. It offers a revelation; and it is this revelation that imagination creates for us.

When this power is said to unify, this unifying activity applies to the external world and also to the world of consciousness. A failure to unify our experiences of the external world is also a failure to unify our own mental life. That is, in becoming self-conscious we are aware of the unity of the self. The disordered and obscure self-perceptions are dissolved; and with this dissolution the secondary imagination also becomes constructive. It is constructive because it gives itself an objectivity and presents Reality as objective.

As it unifies and idealises, it becomes objective. In this objectivity it emphasises no simgle aspect or activity to the exclusion of the rest. It transcends passions and the like integrating them to a unity. Consequently the creative act of imagination cannot be one where we have mere emotions and feelings, or simple ideas; but it is a unified whole. The emotional and conative reactions of the individual thus become aesthetically distanced in this objectivity. The unique character of the work of art will then depend not on the strength and vividness of the emotions, but on the unity or wholeness created by the imagination.

This unity enabled Coleridge to speak of the logic of poetry. By this logic he meant that every part or element

57. B.L. I, 59.

of a good poem has its own specific station and the function attached to that particular context only. "In my opinion, every phrase, every metaphor, every personification, should have its justifying clause in some **passion** either of the poet's mind or of the characters described by the poet."[58] The predominant passion set in motion by the imagination is the principle that shapes the varied materials into a coherent unity. This passion determines the place and function of each part or detail that enters into the composition. Then alone can the work have the ideal unity which is also called the organic unity. The concept of unity has a reference primarily to the form, discussed by Coleridge under the concept of organic form. Bowyer taught him that there is a logic of poetry, more precisely a logic of expression in poetry. In great poetry 'there is a reason assignable' for every word and for the position of every word.[59] From this follows a corollary: "Whatever lines can be translated into other words of the same language, without diminution of their significance, either in sense, or association, or in any worthy feeling, are so far vicious in their diction."[60] This untranslatability into the same or different language secures the necessity and value of form in fine arts. Form can be dispensed with only when we are prepared to give up the imaginative activity; and then the work ceases to be a work of art.

The unity arising from the imaginative activity appears as organic form. At the same time this unity also refers to what is loosely called the content of the work of art; for the "ultimate end of human thought and human feeling is unity."[61] In a work of art "language, passion, and character must act and react on each other."[62] Out of this arises a form

58. To Sotheby, July 13, 1802.
59. B.L. I, 4.
60. *Ibid.*, I, 14.
61. *Ibid.*, I, 187.
62. *Shakespeare Criticism*, I, 205.

that presents the resolution or reconciliation of all opposites. As he observed in a letter, "All opposites tend to unity; unity can manifest or reveal itself only by opposite poles."[63] The law of polarity speaks of 'the manifestation of one power by opposite forces.'[64] Esemplastic which he constructed from Greek words e'is 'en plattein meaning 'to shape into one,'[65] is the word conveying this reconciliation. In other words the unity that imagination achieves is not the mere unity of the multiple, but that of the opposites. That which brings about this unity is also the primal source of the two poles on which it operates.

The other aspect of unity is the realisation of simultaneity. In a letter he remarks: "the common end of all narrative, nay, of all poems, is to convert a series into a whole: to make those events, which in real or imagined history move in a straight line, assume to our understanding a circular motion." This provides what is called the 'unity of interest.'[66] Succession involves the temporal series. Imagination transcends these distinctions of time by transforming the past and the future into the present. The sense of the presentness is what we mean by the immediacy of experience. This immediacy secures the unity of interest in which each part or aspect is a means and also an end in itself. "What is organization but the connection of parts in and for a whole, so that each part is at once end and means?"[67] This Unity rejects the distinction between means and end; then the idea of succession gives place to that of simultaneity. In thus going against and beyond time imagination presents a new creation. Accordingly the criterion of unity takes us to that of the whole.

Unification implies the existence of the parts. The parts are unified in the light of the spirit of the whole. While unity is a relational concept, the idea of the whole refers to value.

63. To Williams, December 12, 1817.
64. *Friend,* on Method.
65. B.L. I, 107.
66. *Shakespeare Criticism,* I, 50.
67. *Lectures and Notes,* 46.

The unity of a work of art depends on its being a whole. The character of the work of art is determined by the evolution of the organic form which makes it a whole; and structurally we look at the whole from the standpoint of unity. Passion is the determining principle underlying the whole, while imagination evolves the unity. That is, imagination is the "modifying faculty which compresses several units into one whole"[68] because of the passion on which it operates continually.

The work of art as an organic unity is subordinated to the work as an organic whole. Within the framework of the whole we have passion and imagination. But passion is only a certain heightened state of imagination. It is more determinate. We can then say that the whole presents the reconciliation of opposites. It is a kind of organism. But it is the 'toil of thinking which is necessary in order to plan a whole.'[69] It is a thinking where there is "a continuous undercurrent of feeling."[70]

From this standpoint it is clear that images by themselves do not reveal the poetic genius. "They become proofs of original genius only as far as they are modified by a predominant passion,"[71] directly or by imagination. Imagery becomes powerful and effective only when it coexists with "depth and energy of thought."[72] The creative power and the intellectual energy are brought together in the form of imagery which seeks to realise the unity, or to contribute to the whole. Apart from such an inherent relation, nothing can be admitted to the work of art.

The structure of the work of art is explained in terms of organism, continuity, unity and whole. Out of those conceptions Coleridge seeks to derive dialectically the various forms of the beautiful. Thus he observes: "When the whole

68. T.T. January 1, 1834.
69. To Thelwall, December 31, 1796.
70. B.L. I, 15.
71. *Ibid.*, II, 16.
72. *Ibid.*, II, 19.

and the parts are seen at once, as mutually producing and explaining each other as unity in multeity, there results **shapeliness,** forma formosa. Where the perfection of form is combined with pleasurableness in the sensations excited by the matters or substances so formed, there results the **beautiful**... when there is a deficiency of unity in the line forming the whole, and of number in the plurality of the parts, there arises the **formal**. When the parts are numerous and impressive, and are predominate, so as to prevent or greatly lessen the attention to the whole, there results the **grand.** Where the impression of the whole, that is, the sense of unity, predominates so as to abstract the mind from the parts, there results the **majestic.** Where the parts by their harmony produce an effect of a whole, but where there is no seen form of a whole producing or explaining the parts of it, where the parts only are seen and distinguished, but the whole is felt, there arises the **picturesque.** Where neither whole nor parts but unity as boundless or endless allness, there arises the **sublime.**"[73] In all these forms we have the same shaping spirit functioning with varying degrees of intensity and perfection. These varying degrees are reflected in the degree of wholeness realised in the several cases. It is the sublime that rejects the character of wholeness; and yet to be aesthetic, to be the product of imagination, it does retain the character of unity.

Though he was deeply attached to the principle of identity, Coleridge, like his contemporary Hegel, was greatly haunted by the problem of relation. And in trying to explain the activity of the shaping spirit, he made relation basic to his concepts of unity and whole. As a relational continuum the work of art will be something like the concrete universal exhibiting the relation of coherence. But Coleridge was equally well faced with the problem of the primacy of will in relation to the possibility of intuitive knowledge; and he makes the conscious will a power co-existing with the activity of the

73. Allsop, I, 197-199.

secondary imagination. This co-existence reveals the insights and intuitions of the artist; and these intuitions transcend the entire net-work of relations. But when he speaks of the "union and interpenetration of universal and particular"[74] in Shakespeare's characters, and when he refers to Shakespeare's dramatic presentation of "the **homo generalis**...as a substance capable of endless modifications,"[75] he is actually outlining the theory of the concrete universal independent of Hegel. The belief in such a universal was so deep that he observes that to be wholly conscious of one's distinctness is "to be betrayed into the wretchedness of division."[76]

Coleridge's theory of imagination thus contains two divergent lines: one is the relational view, and the other the non-relational. The latter was nearer his heart. On 6.7.1799 he told Greenough that he "was afraid of too much truth, that poisoner of imagination." As he came to present a clear analysis of the imaginative activity, he could not get rid of the shackles imposed on him by his metaphysical studies. But by 1817 he appears to have decided in favour of one of these only. Thus he observes that the two cardinal points of poetry are "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."[77] These two can be combined in the poetry of nature. Here he makes sympathy and novelty basic to all poetic activity. By sympathy he means that **identity** of the human soul with the external universe which arises from imagination; for, imagination humanises nature. The interest of novelty springs from the same imagination which transforms succession into simultaneity by transcending the temporal and spatial relations. For such a theory the basic principle is that

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74. *Friend,* III, 116.
75. *Misc. Crit.,* 43-44.
76. *Anima Poetae,* 184.
77. **B.L. II, 5.**

of identity, not unity, not even the reconciliation of opposites. And yet Coleridge freely uses the relational concepts along with that of identity even in his later work.

Imagination strives to an apprehension of unity within and beyond the discrete and discursive objects of sense and understanding. In going beyond it apprehends a reality which it feebly tries to represent through symbols and myths. In this endeavour to find appropriate symbols for the transcendental reality, it is aided by reason; and in trying to reveal the oneness of life it activates the other factors like feeling, sensibility, and understanding. "The reason, as the integral spirit of the regenerated man, reason substantiated and vital...this reason without being either the sense, the understanding, or the imagination, contains all three within itself, even as the mind contains its thoughts and is present in and through them all."[78] Here is a reason working as direct awareness, as an intuition. Such a conception makes reason almost identical with imagination; and then we can have a logic, even a metaphysic, of poetry.

Reason considered as intuition is one with the unifying and reconciling activity of imagination. Then this reason is a creative power. He observes: "Supreme Reason, whose knowledge is creative, and antecedent to the things known, is distinguished from the understanding, or creaturely mind of the individual the acts of which are posterior to the things, it records and arranges."[79] Such a reason is capable of knowing even the thing-in-itself; and this is a going against Kant.

Reason and imagination appear to be one and the same because in the activity of the artistic creation we have reason appearing in unison with feeling. "Deep thinking is attainable only by a man of deep feeling, and all truth is a species

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78. *Lay Sermon,* 343.
79. *Statesman's Manual,* 22-23.

of revelation."[80] Hence it is that great poetry is that which brings "into the fullest play our imagination and our reason", which "creates the greatest excitement and produces the completest harmony."[81] Here Coleridge is not employing the term reason equivocally; for with his Platonism he takes reason to imply the a **priori** Ideas that are universal and necessary, Ideas that are constitutive of every phenomenon. Such a reason as distinguished from the understanding, and as related to deep feeling, focusses our attention on the very nature of imagination. This imagination is the very process in which reason and feeling are the basic constituents. Hence when it is said that "It is not poetry, if it makes no appeal to our passions or imagination.[82] Coleridge is emphasising the integral unity of a lofty conception or idea and a strong and impetuous passion. It is this unity straining to become one, that humanises the external universe; and in this light imagination is said to **idealise** and **unify.**

The primary effect of imagination is therefore revealed as unity. Fine Art seeks to reveal 'a harmonised chaos.' Harmony is possible only when it can subdue the chaos. The poetic genius apprehends the counteraction of the forces whose powers are indestructible. The product emerging from this counteraction "must be a **tertium aliquid** or finite generation"; and this "can be no other than an interpenetration of the counteracting forces, partaking of both."[83] The finite or sensuous embodiment is generated by this activity. Without this activity we will have only discontinuous moments. This "principle is common to all the fine arts", and it is the "ever-varying balance, or balancing of images, notions, or feelings, conceived as in opposition to each other;—in short, the perception of identity and contrariety."[84] This perception

80. To Poole, March 23, 1801.
81. *Lectures and Notes,* 48.
82. *Ibid.*
83. B.L. I, 198.
84. *Lectures and Notes,* 32-33.

takes us to the heart of the universe. In other words, Imagination offers a creative insight into truth and it is also capable of transforming that insight into beauty. As he observed, it is the 'mediator between truth and feeling.'

Feeling is an intangible something. In itself it is a blank emptiness. At the lowest level it is stimulated by, or appears as, sensation. It colours emotions as well. At the level of concentration or contemplation it appears as passion. Basically it is a form of consciousness; and it gathers substance from outside, from ideas. Whether it is a character or substance, an image or an idea, it acquires prominence only when it is charged with feeling. This feeling as enlivened by the imaginative activity offers intuitions of great value. No genuine insight is possible in the absence of such a feeling. But simple feelings are only "evaporated embryos in their progress to birth" and then "no moral being ever becomes healthy"[85] with such.

Mere imagination is only a shaping power. But the whole or the unity created can be significant only when it embodies a value. Though imagination is in itself valuable, it acquires a human value when it succeeds in evoking the feelings. Sometimes it is the feeling that awakens the imagination. In either case the feeling is charged with an idea, with an insight into truth. Hence it is said, "Our notions resemble the index and hand of the dial; our feelings are the hidden springs which impel the machine with this difference, that notions and feelings react on each other reciprocally."[86] Thought and feeling interact because they are inseparable. This interaction being the work of imagination, it is said that fine art develops it and sustains it. In this framework of art feeling develops content and thought becomes dynamic.

Feeling depends on what it "receives from without." It

85. *Anima Poetae,* 143.
86. *Shakespeare Criticism,* II, 12.

strives to become sympathy through the activity of imagination. It is like the body 'striving to become mind.' Starting as purely personal, it tends to transform itself into an impersonal one. As Coleridge noted on 28th January, 1802, "strength of feeling connected with vividness of idea."[87] When the idea gets clarified, it takes possession of the feeling; and such a feeling actuated by the imaginated activity is released from its inwardness. In this situation it seeks a medium of expression. The medium and the expression are considerably modified by the nature of feeling. At the same time, because of the straining, the feeling too gets modified as the form varies. That is, developing its free activity in close relation to thinking, it seeks an outlet which modifies it considerably. But this modification introduced by the form of expression is already charged with that state of mind known as sympathy; and because of the sympathy, feeling embodies or acquires a value. It is this value we emphasise when we speak of the poem as an organism. Feeling invests the words with a life of their own; and in realising this, feeling becomes one with imagination.

It was in this light that Coleridge observed that his task was to raise the things into living words, and that imagination is essentially vital. The objects apprehended by imagination are no longer dead fixities and definites; and the images arising from the predominant passions are animated. On March 10, 1798 he told his brother George that he devotes himself "in poetry to elevate the imagination and set the affections in right tune by the beauty of the inanimate impregnated, as with a living soul, by the presence of life." That aspect of imagination which breathes this living soul into the form and content of any good work of art is no other than feeling. The complement of imagination is "the threefold form of sympathy with the interesting in morals, the impressive in form, and the harmonious in sound."[88]

87. *Notebooks,* I, 1099.
88. *Shakespeare Criticism,* I, 230.

In such a situation the creative artist is not merely one who has only a more than usual organic sensibility. He is not a mere emotionalist. The fundamental nature of the poet is best apprehended by the nature of good or great poetry. Accordingly we are told that by combining "a more than ordinary sympathy with the objects, or a more than common sensibility, with a more than ordinary activity of the imagination", poetry fulfills its aim, viz., "a more vivid reflection of the truths of nature and of the human heart; united with a constant activity modifying and correcting these truths."[89] In this activity it resolves the distinctions and differences brought by time and space.

Imagination is independent of time and space like reason. It can then transform the potential or the possible into the actual or real, essence into existence.[90] He speaks of the "true imaginative absence of all particular space or time."[91] When the 'bodily frame' is **touched** by imagination, it 'gives the hour which is past as faithfully as a repeating watch',[92] and it fosters 'the contemplation of futurity',[93] even though it is only 'an arbitrary controller' over time and space.[94] Such an imaginative activity is like the Absolute of the Idealists. It is present everywhere as the governing principle of all **appearances.** It is present in all the mental faculties. It brings reason into harmony with sense and understanding. It also works on the fundamental emotions and gives rise to an intense consciousness. The appearances of such a power are therefore said to be revealed in and through symbols. He observes: "The completing power which unites clearness with depth, the plenitude of the sense with the comprehensibility of the understanding, is the imagination, impre-

89. *Ibid.,* I, 164.
90. B.L. I, 167.
91. *Misc. Crit.,* 36.
92. To Poole, April 6, 1799.
93. *Lectures and Notes,* 300.
94. *Ibid.,* 27.

gnated with which the understanding itself becomes intuitive, and a living power."[95]

This is a theory bordering on mysticism. It is designed to explain the relation of the one to the many. It has its application not only in the case of the problems implied by the fine arts. Yet as far as poetry is concerned, it is "a multiform power which acting with its permeating, modifying, unifying might on the thoughts and images specificates the poet"; and it is the power giving rise to 'moral intuition' as well.[96] Accordingly, this power lays its emphasis on the medium or form of a work of art. Apart from the medium, it cannot express itself. And in each medium we have a specific form in which imagination seeks to find a proper finite embodiment. This doctrinal development has to be worked out by us. After distinguishing imagination from fancy, and after separating the artistic imagination from the primary, Coleridge stated that anything else concerning "the powers and privileges of the imagination" "will be found in the critical essays on the uses of the supernatural in poetry, and the principles that regulate its introduction." This essay will be "prefixed to the poem of **The Ancient Mariner.**"[97] But this essay was not written unfortunately. Yet this statement points out that for Coleridge the imaginative power is truly supernatural; and elsewhere he defined the supernatural as the spiritual. Then Coleridge would accept the view that Imagination is the one spiritual power. It is **the Reality.**[98]

This spirit or reality is present everywhere. The creative artists are more deeply self-conscious and are therefore in tune with it. Accordingly it may be said that the poet has this specific power which he shares only with other creators. This is the power of unifying the manifold, of being

95. *Lay Sermon,* 343.

96. Marginal note in Tennemann's *Geschichte der Philosophie.*

97. B.L. I, 202.

98. Rene Wellek ignores this and other facts to make the theory look fantastic.

everything. It is called imagination. "To become all things and yet remain the same, to make the changeful God be felt in the river, the lion and the flame—this is true Imagination."[99] It admits of no personality. As all-pervasive, it strives towards an identity with the entire universe. Out of the realisation of this identity does the creative artist have an insight into the ultimate goal or end to which this power is constantly careering.

The imaginative act duplicates the natural process. It combines the insights of reason with the sense-impressions and understanding. This is presented as agreeing "with that which is exclusively human." In attempting this reconciliation, imagination enables feeling to acquire a specific form. Art then assimilates man to nature through this formative aspect. In this sense "to know is to resemble." The artist has to "imitate that which is within the thing, that which is active through form and figure"; and this is the spirit or essence of nature. It is this imitation that makes the work "truly natural in the object and truly human in the effect."[100] This humanising of the universe is essential to the activity of imagination; and one of the highest and most significant embodiments of this humanising process is found in the fine arts.

Ideas "are of themselves adverse to lofty emotion, and they require the influence of a **light** and **warmth**, not their own, to make them crystallize into a semblance of growth."[101] While Kant held that the ideas of reason should be apprehended impersonally without any feeling, Coleridge argues that they are apprehended with warmth. Hence he observed: "Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm. For what is enthusiasm but the oblivion and swallowing-up of self in an object dearer than self, or in an idea more vivid?...In the genuine enthusiasm of morals, religion, and patriotism, this

99. *Lectures and Notes,* 41-42.
100. B.L. II, 259.
101. *First Lay Sermon,* 318.

enlargement and elevation of the soul above its mere self attest the presence, and accompany the intuition of ultimate principles alone. These alone can interest the undegraded human spirit deeply and enduringly, because these alone belong to its essence, and will remain with it permanently."[102] The impersonal activity does not therefore eliminate the human content. On the other hand the richest human content is found only in the products of imagination.

In the **Biographia,** Coleridge observed that his activity was directed "to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imgination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith."[103] The products of imagination are only **shadows.** They are **appearances,** since the imaginative activity can only be inadequately and imperfectly expressed through symbols. Yet these symbols are charged by the feeling of the artist to such an extent that they acquire life or vitality; and as such they are suggestive of the original experience. In other words, the symbols are charged with a human interest because they are indicative of the highest moments of the human experience. Such moments carry with them a certain truth, a certain conviction, arising from feeling. As unrelated to feeling even the images are of no avail. Images by themselves do not reveal the poetic character or genius. "They become proof of original genius only as far as they are modified by a predominant passion; or by associated thoughts or images awakened by that passion; or when they have the effect of reducing multitude to unity, or succession to an instant, or lastly, when a human and intellectual life is transferred to them from the poet's spirit."[104] The true character of the act of imagination is discernible in the strong passion, or in the thought inherent

102. *Ibid.*
103. B.L. II, 6.
104. *Ibid.,* II, 16

in that passion. It is also found in the assimilation of the many in the one. It appears when we transcend the temporal and spatial distinctions and live in the eternal present. Finally, imagination is at work in any and every humanising activity. It is such an imagination that is revealed as the undercurrent, as the immanent principle in the symbols that make up the work of art. Because of this, there is a "willing suspension of disbelief" in the moment we go through such works. Questions relating to the truth or falsity, to the reality or unreality, of the fact presented, do not arise in the imaginative experience. These predicates are not applicable to imagination, since imagination transcends all dualism.

There can be an intellectual disbelief when the reader disagrees with the ideas expressed by the poet, or when the poet himself does not believe in what he says. The latter convicts the poet of insincerity, and the former fails in creating a truly universal human interest. The disbelief based on insincerity cannot be suspended because any suspension of disbelief can be voluntary only when the reader is convinced that the poet has really felt what is expressed. The opposition between the ideas of the poet and those of the reader can be resolved by imagination, but only for a brief duration.

There is also an emotional disbelief arising either from the insincerity of the poet, or from the disparity between the normal emotion and that presented in the work of art. The former again cannot be suspended. The latter is suspended because the emotion or feeling presented in art is an impersonal one in the sense that it is sufficiently universalised or humanised. In other words, we have in the artistic creation the aesthetic emotion which carries a conviction of its own. Here too the emotional disbelief can be suspended for a brief period. But the aesthetic emotion is such that it impresses us as more valuable and more real.

The poetic faith can be realised only when there is neither an intellectual disbelief nor an emotional disbelief. In other words, it is the peculiar nature of imagination to harmonise

the intellect and the emotion. Deep thinking and deep feeling are therefore said to function together. In this unity we experience the essential nature of the soul. And in such an experience we do not raise the question of its truth or reality. It is an experience more true and more real than any other finite experience.

4. POETIC METHOD AND FORM

Coleridge was not so much interested in the emotional aspect of poetry, as in the voluntary aspects of poetic creation. A conscious direction of the will is present in all great literature. Such a will introduces a method or system as the animating principle. This method may be another name for imagination which calls time "into life and moral being," which is conducive to the "homogeneity of character," and which spreads "the tone, the atmosphere, of the ideal world around situations, of which, for the common view, custom had bedimmed all lustre."[1] It communicates to the fleeting moments 'the imperishableness of a spiritual nature."[1]

By method he means 'unity with progression.' It is "that which unites, and makes many things one in the mind of man." He observes that poetry "owes its whole charm, and all its beauty, and all its power, to the philosophical principles of the Method."[2] It is a principle of unity which realises greater and greater coherence as it progresses with the materials like feelings, emotions, thoughts, ideas and words.

Method becomes natural "to the mind which has become accustomed to contemplate not things only, or for their own sake alone, but likewise and chiefly the relations of things, either their relations to each other, or to the observer or to the state and apprehension of the hearers. To enumerate and analyse these relations, with the conditions under which alone they are discoverable is to teach the science of method."[3] Method

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1. *Friend,* II, 4.
2. *Treatise on Method,* 36.
3. *Friend,* 491-92.

then implies a union of many facts or factors directed by and to a common end. It is the principle seeking to realise the unity of the things, and their unity with the conscious self. In this endeavour the progression is towards an identity, towards the elevation of things to that of living words. As a consequence it integrates the external with the internal. In this process the principle of Method implies a proper balance "between our passive impressions and the mind's own reactions on the same." That is, it takes consciousness to the intenser moment of self-consciousness, a moment when one strikes us as inspired. It is "the unpremeditated and evidently habitual arrangement of (the poet's) words, grounded on the habit of foreseeing, in each integral part, or in every sentence, the whole that (the poet) intends to communicate."[4] Thus the operation of the method is that activity of self-consciousness which has a definite vision of the end to be realised. This vision is at the very starting post. And then it agrees with the immanent teleology of the universe which is what Coleridge meant by the creativity of nature.

The expression assumed by method depends upon the nature and progression of the emotions. The emotion strives to express itself in a specific form. The "exuberance of mind ...interferes with the forms of method; but sterility of mind ...wanting the spring and impulse to mental action, is wholly destructive of the method."[5] It is the habit of method that can give connections and sequence. The fusion of passion, as in the case of Mrs. Quickly, replaces these. The want of method submits the understanding to mere events and images which are neither classified nor appropriated properly. The only connections such persons are aware of, are those of time and place. All logical and psychological relations are overlooked. Then too the form may be maintained or preserved

4. *Friend,* 489-90.
5. *Ibid.,* 494.

but it will be a form embodying confusion; confusion and formality are therefore declared to be the opposite poles of the same null-point. "The terms system, method, science, are mere improprieties of courtesy, when applied to a mass enlarging by endless appositions, but without a nerve that oscillates, or a pulse that throbs, in sign of growth or inward sympathy."[6] The normal being calls only his memory into action and he tries to reproduce the objects and events in the order in which they first occurred to him. He makes no attempt at relating them to one another round any specific centre. This is what he calls "a staple, or starting-post, in the narrator himself." Once there is a starting-post, then "things the most remote and diverse in time, place, and outward circumstance, are brought into mental contiguity and succession, the more striking as the less expected."[7] It is the educated and systematising mind that gives a character and individuality to its moments. This specific character comes from the germinal power. It is the absence of method that characterises fancy or associationism.

'The absence of the leading thought,' of the initiative, results in mental confusion. True method involves 'a progressive transition" which always presupposes a prior conception of the end. Consequently the expression of such a mind is characterised by compression and rapidity, by the omission of the superfluous, and by the attention to what is necessary. The tendency to omission secures unity. But the absence of the principle of progression results in 'a mere dead arrangement.'[8] The improgressive arrangement falls in the same category as the 'mere mode or set fashion of doing a thing.'[9] What is needed for a true method is an awareness of purpose

6. *Friend,* III, 132.
7. *Ibid.,* 495.
8. *Ibid.,* 497.
9. *Ibid.,* 499.

prior to the embodiment in a form. The precognition refers to the apprehension of the whole; and "the whole is of necessity prior to its parts."[10] The intuition of the entire work of art is necessary before it is actually executed.

Speaking of Shakespeare he observes: "In all his various characters, we still feel ourselves communicating with the same nature, which is everywhere present as the vegetable sap in the branches, sprays, leaves, buds, blossoms, and fruits, their shapes, tastes, and odours." It is here that we find "that just proportion, that union and interpenetration, of the universal and particular, which must ever pervade all works of decided genius and true science. For method implies a progressive transition, and it is the meaning of the word in the original language."[11] Continuous transition is necessary to the method; and neither continuity nor transition would be possible if there is no pre-conception or precogitation. In is the 'progressive transition without breach of continuity', 'principle of unity with progression.'[12]

Neither a generalisation, nor a theory, nor a hypothesis can be the ground of the method. One can at best say that method implies or involves some sort of a relation. The relation of law is the Kantian relation of the category. This is based on identity. A second relation is the causal one. These two are welded into a unity by the principle of method. Having its roots in experience and in knowledge, it is enlivened by the insights of the artist. This enlivening is the work of imagination. When imagination is at work organising the data, the passage will be characterised by compression and rapidity, with no superfluity and no omission of any relevant detail. There will be a nucleus acting like the starting-post. This can be the guiding thought or the predominance of some mighty passion. In other words, method reveals itself as thought

10. *Friend,* 511.
11. *Ibid.,* 497.
12. *Ibid.,* 500.

or as imagination. In the former case it is **connective** and in the latter it is co-adunative."[13] This word **co-adunative** is related to the term **constitutive** which denotes the specific relation of the idea to fact. The idea is constitutive, not regulative, of the particulars. Imagination too does not regulate the poetic act, but it is constitutive of the creative act. As constitutive it transcends the dualism of means and end. Hence in the contemplation of a whole "we assume an intention, as the initiative, of which the end is the correlative."[14] It constitutes the basic governing principle in the sense that it embodies the spirit of the whole. It is that which gives a specific character to the whole; and the whole than resembles a living organism.

Method in transforming the materials into an organic unity gives a form expressive of good sense. "The sum total of all intellectual excellence is good sense and method. When these have passed into the instinctive readiness of habit, when the wheel revolves so rapidly that we cannot see it revolves at all, then we call the combination Genius. But in all modes alike, and in all professions, the two sole component parts even of Genius are Good Sense and Method."[15] It is good sense that enables the genius to distinguish the various parts of a whole in terms of means; and they derive their position and characteristics "from the antecedent method, or self-organising purpose."[16] Good sense and method thus form the two inseparable aspects of the same principle operating in every creative act. Good sense is revealed more in the formal elements known to the classicists as proportion, symmetry and balance. From this point of view it can be said that in Gray's Sonnet the line "And reddening Phoebus lifts his golden fire" is a bad line "because it conveys incongruous images, because it confounds the cause and the effect, the real **thing** with the

13. *Ibid.*, 496.
14. *Ibid.*, 512.
15. To Lady Beaumont, 1814.
16. *Friend,* 513.

personified representative of the thing; in short, because it differs from the language of Good Sense."[17] Good sense reveals the reconciliation of opposite and discordant qualities, and 'it blends the idea with the image.' The image gets charged with the intellectual life from the poet's own spirit. The intellect and the passion are thereby fused into a unity in such a way that the resulting product is neither mostly intellectual nor plainly emotional. Good sense is a mediator here tempering both in the interest of securing that sanity and tranquillity of mind which characterises the genius.

Coleridge once presented this position in a paradoxical way. "Good sense is the body of the poetic genius, fancy its drapery, motion its life, and imagination the soul that is everywhere, and in each, and forms all into a graceful and intelligent whole."[18] This might appear to be a meaningless formulation in the eighteenth century fashion. But it embodies the principle Coleridge was endeavouring to express in a concise manner. Good sense here is the equivalent of the form while imagination is an immanent principle. "All true and living knowledge" must "proceed from within; it may be trained, supported, fed, excited, but can never be infused, or impressed."[19] Such an imagination presents the mental antecedent presupposed in the operation of method. This antecedent may be an image or idea received through the senses; it originates from without. The 'inspiring passion or desire' alone is 'the immediate and proper offspring of the mind.'[20] This inspiring passion developing itself into a specific medium gives rise to a form. The principle of the method thus implies the principle of form.

Form is the unique medium of expression. Like method, this form exhibits two possible extremes of its being.

17. B.L. II, 58.

18. B.L. II, 13. Rene Wellek has an unnecessary dig at this passage. See Read: *True Voice of Feeling.*

19. *Friend,* 514.

20. *Ibid.,* 519.

Coleridge distinguishes 'form as proceeding' from 'shape as superinduced.' The latter imprisons or strangles the thing, while the former is its "self-witnessing and self-effected sphere of agency."[21] The 'shape as superinduced' is the mechanical form existing independently as an unalterable pattern. Such a pattern has no necessary relation to what is expressed; and consequently it imposes a control or check from outside. This external control interferes with the free natural movement of the expressed. As against this, there is 'form as proceeding.' This is organic form. It is not a form organically related to the content, but it is a form which develops necessarily out of the content it seems to embody.

The organic form is neither fixed nor definite for all time. It is a constantly growing or developing entity. While "the fullness of nature is without character," it is "the object of art to give the whole ad hominem; hence each step of nature hath its ideal, and hence the possibility of a climax up to the perfect form of a harmonised chaos."[22] It is when the chaos is harmonised there emerges the perfect form. But the harmonising exists under various degrees of perfection, and these can be arranged in an ascending series. The climax of this process is reached with the perfect form which is the ideal pursued by the method. Each case of the organic form is an essay or experiment in the struggle towards perfection. In this process the organic form is active in controlling the varied details. Hence the essential character and value is revealed in what it **subordinates** and **conquers.**[23] Here it is not the addition or accumulation of details that it presents. On the contrary, it fixes the proper context for each part, subordinating it to the spirit or character of the whole. At times a part claims to be very important and then it sounds a jarring note. The character of the organic form appears in

21. *Lectures and Notes,* 319.
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Ibid.*

conquering it, in controlling it. In other words, while imagination is constitutive of the entire creative activity, the organic form is regulative of the actual composition or expression.

Method and the organic form are the two essential aspects of expression in fine art. They relegate this expression to the imaginative activity. Since this activity can be expressed only in and through symbols, organic form presents a highly suggestive expression. It is an expression capable of giving us an intimation of reality. The artist has to imitate "that which is within the thing, that which is active through form and figure, and discourses to us by symbols."[24]

The organic form can then reach a perfection limited by the world of symbols. At the same time the idea that transcends the symbol and gives rise to it is also the originating source of the organic form. That is, the idea has a two-fold manifestation: one is as a symbol and the other as an organic form. The idea that gives the form is above form since it is "its essence, the universal in the individual, or the individuality itself,—the glance and the exponent of the indwelling power."[25] The entire expression thus emanates from the idea which is 'the indwelling power' and which is also known as the creative imagination. This same imagination also creates the content, that which is expressed. Consequently we can hold that the imagination itself evolves as the content and also as the form of the work of art; and the two then become one. Thus "Each thing that lives has its moment of self-exposition, and so has each period of each thing, if we remove the disturbing forces of accident. To do this is the business of ideal art."[26] In its self-exposition imagination evolves itself as organic form; it develops a finite form, a specific character. Such a form is not something external. It is already contained in the original indwelling-power.

24. *Lectures and Notes,* 316.
25. *Ibid.*
26. *Ibid.*

In Coleridge's theory, therefore, we do not have the so-called unity of form and content, but their identity. Form is mechanic, "when on any given material we impress a predetermined form, not necessarily arising out of the properties of the material."[27] It is the outward or circumstantial form. It is at its lowest something like the abstract metrical pattern revealed by the nonsense rhymes. And where such a form is present, we have only an association of the content with the form; and the resulting composition will be the product of fancy only. This association can be transformed into a relation of unity, and this is the initial stage of the organic form, the first expression of the imaginative activity. The perfection of the organic form represents the stage where content and form realise their identity.

The problem of form is closely related to Coleridge's theories concerning the universal, idea and symbol. The true form is not mechanical because it "arises out of the properties of the material." It is the medium that renders possible the organic progression which alone can transform multeity into a unity. The form that proceeds directly and intrinsically from this multeity is the organic form. 'As it develops from within' this organic form shapes its material as well. Then the exterior of the form becomes "the physiognomy of the being within, its true image reflected and thrown out from the concave mirror."[28] This is the self-exposition of the imaginative activity. As identical with the creative process, imagination is truly beyond time and space; and when it appears with a determinate character, its form is organic to what is revealed. In other words, like method, organic form too is an essential aspect of imagination. The poetic imagination does not therefore refer merely to the thought, or to the feeling, or to the emotion; it refers to the

27. *Ibid.*, 46.
28. *Ibid.*, 47.

entire work of art. Imagination "generates and produces a form of its own." This is the form developing from within.

The organic form is intuited by the artist at the same moment that he has the original insight into the essence. This form emerges into being unlike the shape which is actually imposed on the objects. The shape belongs to the world of existence, while form belongs to that of essence. The form is given a relatively stable being while the essence is always dynamic and progressing. In other words, form can never claim finality or perfection. Since form is a symbol or indicator of the essence, it is related to human consciousness. With the help of this form human consciousness tends to introduce harmony into the chaos of existence presented to perception. Then appears the harmonised chaos where the atomic particulars cease to be exclusive existents for, they are unified and idealised. Yet even the organic form is not totally stable. "The organic form is innate; it shapes; as it develops, itself from within, and the fullness of its development is one and the same with the perfection of its outward form. Such as the life is, such is the form."[29] This, however, does not mean that there is a mere correspondence or a simple agreement between the content expressed and the organic form. On the other hand, what Coleridge means is that the same creative work appears as content and also as form when it is viewed from two different points of view. The two are not simply inseparable. They are two aspects of the same whole; they are one and the same.

It is in this light that we find Coleridge stating that "All the fine arts are different species of poetry. The same spirit speaks to the mind through different senses by manifestations of itself, appropriate to each....The common essence of all consists in the excitement of emotion for the immediate purpose of pleasure through the medium of beauty."[30] Poetry

29. *Ibid.*, 46-47.
30. B.L. II, 220-21.

then is "the regulative idea of all the fine arts",[31] while imagination is constitutive. Wherever there is the organic form embodying a content, there we have the spirit of poetry. And since this can be, and is, present in good literary or artistic prose, we cannot treat prose as unpoetic. That is "Poetry is not the proper antithesis to prose, but to science."[32] Poetry is opposed to science for the simple reason that the latter is regulated by the understanding and, therefore, is devoid of organic form.

The literary or artistic prose is not opposed to poetry. The two have more or less the same essential nature. And yet they do differ because of the different forms they separately develop. This is only a difference of degree. "A poem contains the same elements as a prose composition; the difference, therefore, must consist in a different combination of them, in consequence of a different object being proposed."[33] It is the nature of the intended aim or end that will determine the kind of combination; and this takes us to the operation of method. The method, involving the preconception of the end and continuous progression, enables the materials to develop two different degrees to harmony or relative perfection. Prose has one end in view, while poetry has another. The immediate objects or ends of these forms are not identical.

Employing this standpoint Coleridge offers a definition of the poem. "A poem is that species of composition which is opposed to works of science, by proposing for its immediate object pleasure, not truth; and from all other species (having this object in common with it) it is discriminated by proposing to itself such delight from the whole, as is compatible with a distinct gratification from each component part."[34] The works of Plato, Bishop Taylor and Burnet show that "poetry

31. *Ibid.*, II, 223.
32. *Lectures and Notes*, 9.
33. B.L. II, 8.
34. B.L. II, 10.

of the highest kind may exist without metre." But these are not poems because their immediate object is truth.[35] The delight arising from the whole is contributed by the parts and yet it is other than their totality. Organic form appears to be a whole having parts that are vitally related to one another. The parts must 'mutually support and explain each other'[36]; and this they do because there breathes through them the spirit of the whole. The spirit determines the nature of the expressed and that of the organic form.

The poet has 'to regulate his own style' "by the principles of grammar, logic, and psychology. In one word by such a knowledge of the facts, material and spiritual, that most appertain to his art, as, if it have been governed and applied by good-sense, and rendered instinctive by habit, becomes the representative and reward of our past conscious reasonings, insights, and conclusions and acquires the name of Taste."[37] This goodness appears to be discriminated selection or choice or sanity that springs from "the vivacity of the accumulative memory"; and it has a great similarity with the principles of grammar, logic and psychology. These principles are the products of reason and understanding. Reason is concerned wih Ideas which are the "truths, the knowledge or acknowledgment of which require the whole man, the free will, no less than the intellect, and which are not therefore merely speculative, nor yet practical, but both in one."[38] We come by these rules through the activity of imagination which "proceeds upon the all in each of human nature[39] and not through the understanding which belongs to "the rightful sphere of Logic." "Reason is all end," "the understanding all means," and "the rules in all cases means to some end."[40] It is the 'inward ex-

35. B.L. II, 11.
36. B.L. II, 10.
37. B.L. II, 64.
38. *Treatise on Method,* 100.
39. B.L. II, 64.
40. *Treatise on Method,* 110.

perience', the 'clearer intuition' that enables the poet to apprehend the truth or beauty and to express it in the proper form.

In the absence of method and organic form nothing can be of any help to the creative artist. The understanding as providing the rules does not play a significant role in the formation of the poetic nucleus. "Could a rule be given form without, poetry would cease to be poetry, and sink into a mechanical art....The rules of the imagination are themselves the very powers of growth and production. The words to which they are reducible present only the outlines and external appearance of the fruit."[41] As Whistler said, the normal kind of academy picture is only produce, not art; and in the language of Coleridge it is fashioning, not creation. The artistic creation is no fashioning beause it reveals the imaginative activity emerging as method and as organic form.

When words are in their best order, we have prose; and when the best words are in the best order, there is poetry.[42] Elsewhere Coleridge seems to render the word 'best' by 'proper.'[43] Propriety demands an agreement between the sounds and the intended meaning. It implies some form of selection. "The sole difference in style is that poetry demands a severer keeping—it admits nothing that prose may not oftener admit, but it oftener rejects."[44] Referring to one of his poems, he told Thelwall on 14.10.1797: "A little compression would make it a beautiful poem." It is not a selection of the words, but an accurate appropriateness of the words for communication. In this light he says, Prose in an argumentative work "differs from the language of conversation, even as reading ought to differ from talking."[45] They may not differ in

41. B.L. II, 65.
42. T.T. July 12, 1827.
43. T.T. July 13, 1833.
44. *Anima Poetae,* 229.
45. B.L. II, 45.

the sense that both employ words. Poetry employs the same materials. But we do make a distinction between prose and poetry. This difference, however, does not depend on the so-called poetic diction since such a diction can appear in prose as well and since the words belonging to such a diction are very few. Even this small number is only "accidentally appropriated to poetry." We have to seek for the difference elsewhere. In a letter he remarks: "In my opinion, poetry justifies as poetry, independent of any other passion, some new combinations of language and commands the omission of many others allowable in other compositions."[46]

Is there any essential difference between prose and poetry? Essence is 'the principle of individuation.' It is that which reveals the real nature of the object as distinct from its accidenal characteristics. It is what Coleridge, following Plato, called the idea as constitutive. Out of the essence there can arise two divergent series. The forms differ from one another not in their materials, but in the forms developed by the materials. It is possible that Wordsworth denied the importance or value of the difference in these forms. Wordsworth observed "that not only the language of a large portion of every good poem, even of the most elevated character, must necessarily, except with reference to the metre, in no respect differ from that of good prose, but likewise some of the most interesting parts of the best poem will be found to be strictly the language of prose, when prose is well written." Here he was evidently referring to the vocabulary of the two forms. As Coleridge told Thomas Poole on 5.5.1796: "Good writing is produced more effectually by rapidly glancing through language as it already exists, than by an hasty recourse to the mint of invention." The "aloofness from the language of real life", he considered "deadly to poetry."[47] In this sense one can argue that Words-

46. To Sotheby, July 13, 1802.
47. To Tom Wedgwood, October 20, 1802.

worth's contention is not incorrect. But the context in which he made the remarks is one where he was talking about the necessity of metre. The language employed in prose is not other than that of the metrical composition, he argued. But if poetry is concerned with the expression of the spontaneous feelings, the language of poetry will be one charged with feelings. Coleridge on May 19, 1799 informed Poole: "What are deemed fine descriptions, produce their effects almost purely by a charm of words, with which and with whose combinations we associate **feelings** indeed, but no distinct **images.**"

If the language of poetry does not essentially differ from that of metrical composition, can we translate a good poem into good prose without losing any thing? In prose we can have an order of words which can occur in a good poem; and a poem can have lines which will be quite proper in a prose composition. The real problem ignored by Wordsworth is different. There are "modes of expression, a construction and order of sentences, which are in their fit and natural place in a serious prose composition"; and these can be 'disproportionate and heterogeneous' in a metrical composition. Similarly in a serious poem there may be "an arrangement both of words and sentences and a use and selection of figures of speech...which on a subject of equal weight would be vicious and alien in correct and manly prose."[48] In other words, poetry has a specific combination of words and sentences, while prose has another. These two forms of arrangement exclude one another in the sense that form is the characteristic medium of what is expressed. The organic form of poetry is not the same as the form of prose.

When prose is well written, when it exhibits an organic form of its own, prose does participate in the character of poetry. "Poetry is opposed to science, and prose to metre."[49]

48. B.L. II, 49.
49. *Lectures and Notes,* 9.

In spite of the poetic character pervading literary prose, poetry appears to be distinguished from prose by metre. The organic form of prose has rhythm, while poetry exhibits both rhythm and metre. In the absence of the metrical pattern, the form of prose reveals only a loosely organised rhythm. Any such loose texture prevents the fuller development of the form. The development of the form is in the direction of realising a greater degree of perfection whence it is described as organic form.

Does this mean that metre is something superadded to the form in order to render the latter more organic? If it is an adventitious character, it is bound to interfere with the unity, with the spirit of the whole; and then we have to discover the clue to a possible perfection of the organic form outside the addition of the metrical pattern. But metre is an integral element of the form.

There is a 'spontaneous effort' of the mind striving 'to hold in check the workings of passion.' The balance in the mind resulting from this strenuous activity is the source of metre. It is the 'balance of antagonists' that is "organised into metre, by a supervening act of the will and judgment, consciously and for the foreseen purpose of pleasure."[50] The feelings and emotions tend to flow continuously; they succeed one another. And the exuberance of the mind in that situation is detrimental to the development of the form and also to the end. On the other hand any expression or form is only a limit imposed on the content from within. Such an imposition is an act of volition. And Coleridge's theory of the secondary or artistic imagination is an activity regulated and directed by the will. It is the struggle between the passion and will that constitutes the essence of the imaginative activity. Out of this struggle metre emerges as one aspect of form. Metre originates from 'a state of increased excitement,' and it is therefore accom-

50. B.L. II, 50.

panied by 'the natural language of excitement.'[51] The struggle between passion and will fuses the two into one and consequently the metrical form, which is only an aspect of the organic form, is surcharged with the inward struggle; and then it acquires the specific vitality. It "produces a more frequent employment of picturesque and vivifying language."[52] This is what Coleridge meant by elevating things into **living words.** The images, metaphors and figures, and the metrical pattern are all thus indispensable factors that make up the organic form, which in its turn is indistinguishable from what is expressed. In a simpler but a misleading manner, it can be stated that Poetry is concerned with "an excited state of the feelings and faculties. And as every passion has its proper pulse, so will it likewise have its characteristic modes of expression."[53]

The specific arrangement of words and sentences characteristic of poetry is thus one from which metre cannot be excluded. And metre in its turn is not adventitious, not a superadded factor. It grows out of the basic creative activity of the imagination. "Our language gives to expression a certain measure." And our reading of a poem involves the assumption that the poet "is in a continuous state of excitement." Because of this excitement there "arises a language in prose unnatural, but in poetry natural."[54]

Metre is necessary to a poem, though no one but the poet can discover the pattern he should employ for giving expression to his experiences. "Metre therefore having been connected with **poetry** most often and by a peculiar fitness, whatever else is combined with **metre** must, though it be not itself **essentially** poetic, have nevertheless some property in common with poetry, as an intermedium of affinity, a sort

51. *Ibid.*
52. *Ibid.*
53. B.L. II, 56.
54. *Lectures and Notes,* 399.

of morduant between it and the superadded metre."[55] This property is **passion** which may be 'of the poet's mind or of the characters described by the poet.' It implies 'a sort of excitement in the poet's mind.'[56] Metre has an organic relation to the essence of poetry. Then anything related to metre is ultimately related to the spirit of poetry. Here we get the syllabic arrangement and other factors. These are related not directly but through that which operates in the metrical pattern; and this is passion. In other words the pattern is enlivened by passion which functions as the morduant. Passion then is not some elusive thing referring to a feeling or to an idea alone; it refers to the form as well. "The very assumption that we are reading the work of a poet supposes that he is in a continuous state of excitement"; and thereby arises a language in prose unnatural, but in "poetry natural. As every passion has its proper pulse, so will it likewise have its characteristic modes of expression."[57] When this excitement is at the basis of the form, the bodily sensations have much to contribute to the impression evoked by a poem. A form enlivened by this sort of excitement will have not only a metrical pattern but one which is inseparable from rhythm. The form becomes complex and it presents a harmonised chaos. About the form Coleridge told Godwin in 1800: "are not words, etc., parts and germinations of the plant? And what is the law of their growth? In something of this sort I would endeavour to destroy the old antithesis of words and things, elevating, as it were, words into things and living things too."

The fusion of will and passion is expressed as the poem. The poem embodies passion in its content and in its rhythm, and it presents the volitional activity in its metre. The ideas, feelings, emotions and the like are deliberately arranged and combined by an act of the will 'for the purpose of blending delight with emotion.' Consequently "the traces of present

55. B.L. II, 55.

56. To Sotheby, July 13, 1802.

57. *Lectures and Notes,* 399. See *Shakespeare Criticism,* II, 68.

volition should throughout the metrical language be proportionately discernible."[58] These discernible traces form the metrical form which is relatively stable throughout the composition.

Passion and will are united in the metrical composition. It is the "interpenetration of spontaneous impulse and of voluntary purpose" revealing itself in a certain "frequency of forms and figures of speech."[59] Metre is a pattern of signs embodying the movement of the meaning. "The particular pleasure found in anticipating the recurrence of sounds and quantities"[60] is common to many metrical expressions; and this is one feature of the poem. That is, the pleasure of the metre depends on the manner and on the kind of the thoughts, feelings and expressions. Whatever enters metre "must be such as to justify the perpetual and distinct attention to each part, which an exact correspondent recurrence of accent and sound are calculated to excite."[61] The manner or form of expression draws our attention to each aspect, to each part, of the whole. The metrical pattern as an indispensable factor of the organic form, therefore, secures to each component part or aspect its specific character and station. At the same time it also reveals the harmonious fusion of these into a whole.

This fusion, however, is only exhibited by the organic form. It is brought about by the activity of imagination which sets the passion as an undercurrent of the entire work of art. Hence it is said that Poetry harmonises the two opposing forces of metre and rhythm.[62] Rhythm and rhyme create a pattern rousing our minds to expectancy and surprise. Our inerest and attention are so awakened that we are induced into a state of hypnosis, a state of excitement. "Verse

58. B.L. II, 50.
59. *Ibid.*
60. B.L. II, 9.
61. B.L. II, 10.
62. *Misc. Crit.* 337-38.

is the language of passion, and passion dictates energetic expressions."[63]

The necessity of metre can also be established from the standpoint of the effects it produces. We find that the metrical pattern "tends to increase the vivacity and susceptibility both of the general feelings and of the attention. This effect it produces by the continued excitement of surprise, and by the quick reciprocations of curiosity still gratified and still re-excited."[64] The excitement and the reciprocations though individually they are powerless to affect us, in their totality they contribute to the ultimate impression produced by the poem. The pattern provides the framework which is relatively stable. It is the formal expression of unity. The variations from the basic pattern evoke surprise, and yet they tell us that the unity created is not static but dynamic. It is an evergrowing unity. This dynamism evokes and sustains our attention; and consequently metre is 'a stimulant of the attention.'[65] This attention in order to be preserved must have a progression.

The poem should carry us forward. It is not a mere mechanical curiosity concerning the metrical pattern, or a restlessness to know the end that should guide this movement. What is needed as the cause of this carrying forward is "the pleasurable activity of mind excited by the attractions of the journey itself."[66] The journey here is one that compels us to pause, to recede a little and then to swing ahead. As Petronius said, 'the free spirit must be hurried along.' Evidently we have here a reference to rhythm or measure also. Rhythm has a natural magic baffling all analysis. It is the inner life of the metrical pattern. This is the reason why no one can give us the real compelling reason for adopting metre. As Coleridge put it, "I write in metre, because I am about to use

63. Robinson: Diary, November 15, 1810.
64. B.L. II, 51.
65. B.L. II, 53.
66. *Ibid.*, II, 11.

a language differing from that of prose."[67] The metrical movement has a relation to the feelings and emotions and also to the purpose intended. And metre provides the form of poetry and poetry becomes 'imperfect and defective without metre.'[68] because an organised rhythm is the natural medium in and through which the creative activity finds its proper expression.

The rhythm provides the musical medium or form. He refers to "the perfect sweetness of the versification; its adaptation to the subject; and the power displayed in varying the march of the words." The thoughts and the rhythm are to agree with one another in such a way that the sense of melody is preserved.[69] "The delight in richness and sweetness of sound" springs from the 'music in his soul.' This "sense of musical delight, with the power of producing it, is a gift of imagination."[70] In his famous **Ode** he derived the music and joy from the soul, and in his theory metre is said to originate from the same source which is the imagination, the everactive shaping spirit.

The dissociation of metre from imagination is evident in Dr. Johnson's stanza on the hat. It is bad not because it is unpoetic. It is bad because it is wanting in good sense and feeling.[71] It lacks its moorings in that activity of the soul which presents the feelings through imagination. In earlier times metre was chiefly employed as having the power to assist the recollection and thereby to preserve the truths or incidents communicated. But with regard to **The Children in the Wood** one can say that this poem has little to do with its metrical form. It appeals to us because it enables us to place ourselves willingly into the feelings of our childhood.[72] Where the thoughts and feelings can be ab-

67. *Ibid.*, II, 53.
68. *Ibid.*, II, 55.
69. *Ibid.*, II, 14.
70. *Ibid.*
71. *Ibid.*, II, 60.
72. B.L. II, 52.

stracted from the poem without any impairing of our total impression, there the metre is feeble.[73] This is applicable to the metrical compositions like the ballad of **The Children in the Wood** and the stanza on the hat. In other words, in good poetry metre is an indispensable aspect of the organic form which results from method and good sense.

Metre as providing a suitable form to the creative expression, exhibits the working of the principle of unity, of the idea of the artistic whole. It refers to the mental activity which "impels us to seek unity by harmonious adjustment and thus establishes the principle that all the parts of an organised whole must be assimilated to the more **important** and **essential** parts."[74] This assimilation constitutes the unity of the artistic creation. It is a unity that reveals the harmonious fusion of the diverse elements in such a manner that the differents lose their individual characters. It is in this light that a poem is said to present "the interfusion of the same throughout the radically different, or of the different throughout a base radically the same."[75]

73. B.L. II, 54.
74. *Ibid.*, 56.
75. *Ibid.*

5. THEORY OF IMAGINATION

The **Sophist** speaks of "two kinds of image-making: the art of making likenesses, and fantastic or the art of making appearances." The latter is "an appearance since it appears only and is not really like." These activities have little in common with Coleridge's shaping power. What is needed in the arts is neither a likeness nor an appearance, but something that is essentially vital. But the early speculations after the nature of the creative process were based more on the image-making faculties. The empirical school of Locke believed that there is nothing in mind which was not before in the senses; but Leibnitz retorted, "except the mind itself." The mind is active; and Coleridge was well acquainted with Leibnitz.[1]

Aristotle speaks of the sensitive and calculative or deliberative image-making activities. The second one makes "a unity of several images."[2] This kind of imagination "may be false."[3] But "the soul never thinks without an image."[4] This was exploded by the Kantian distinction between the conceivable and the picturable which Coleridge accepted. Horace wants an adherence to fact to govern the products of the imaginative activity. "Let whatever is imagined for the sake of entertainment, have as much verisimilitude as possible."[5] Horace also distinguishes creation from invention.

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1. Cf. B. L. I, 93-94; *Philosophical Lectures,* 383-34.
2. *De Anima,* 427b–429a.
3. *Ibid.,* 428a.
4. *Ibid.,* 431a.
5. Horace, I, 338.

This does not take us deeper into the problem as Coleridge envisaged it.

Aristotle was not unaware of the creative imagination. He observes that "the man of genius places things in a new light....The poet not only displays what, though often seen in its unfolded mass, had never been opened out, but he likewise adds something, namely, light and relations."[6] The imaginative activity reveals a fresh insight and also creates something new. This is a vague anticipation of the future development of the concept.

Descartes associated with intuition the act of imagination which involves "a particular effort of the mind" because it is the mind's apprehension by "power and inward vision."[7] It thus turns out to be a unique kind of intuition, which is only one aspect. That which is intuited in this way coheres with the knowledge of the entity that we have. Such a coherence has been explained differently by different thinkers. Hobbes held that "the cause of the coherence or consequence of one conception to another, is their first coherence or consequence at that time when they are produced by sense."[8] It is rendered more explicitly by Hartley: "Sensations may be said to be associated together, when their impressions are either made precisely at the same instant of time, or in contiguous successive instants."[9] This takes us straight into the associationist approach which comes out more clearly in the **Leviathan:** "after the object is removed, or the eye shut, we still retain an image of the thing seen....And this it is, the Latins call imagination, from the image made in seeing....But the Greeks call it fancy, which signifies appearance." And it is elaborated by Coleridge in a manuscript note in Tenneman's **Geschichte der Philosophie** where he tells us that dreaming

6. *De Anima,* 233.
7. *Meditations,* 6.
8. *Treatise on Human Nature,* Chapter 4.
9. *Observation of Man,* Part 1, Chapter I, prop. 10.

is "the shifting current in the shoreless chaos of the fancy in which the streaming continuum of passive association is broken into zig-zag by sensations from within or from without." This is connected with a mechanistic view of reality and Coleridge sought not to exclude it altogether, but to "place it in a new point of view"[10]; for "Nature excludes nothing."[11] Fancy, understanding and choice are bound up with talent and they give us works like those of Beaumont and Fletcher, Ben Jonson, and Pope. Here we get a mere aggregate with no unity. It is "the streamy nature of association which thinking curbs and rudders."[12] To this is opposed imagination which is bound up with reason and will, giving us the works of genius. The work of a genius gives us "a vitality which grows and evolves itself from within." But "What is the height and ideal of mere association? Delirium."[13] Juxtaposition and succession are present here and the author can reveal only an amassing power.[14] This amassing or spatial power is apparently ever-expanding; and it can become determinate by being subjected to its opposite. "Free unresisted action, the going forth of the soul, life without consciousness, is, properly infinite, that is, unlimited. For whatever resists limits, and whatever is unresisted is unlimited. This, psychologically speaking, is space, while the sense of resistance or limitation is time, and motion is a synthesis of the two."[15] The spatio-temporal unity is motion; and in terms of the creative processes, the spatial and the temporal can be harmonised by an active principle. Nature "works from within by evolution and assimilation according to a law"; and Shakespeare "worked in the spirit of nature, by evolving the germ within by the imaginative power according to an idea—for

10. *Anima Poetae,* 143-45.
11. *Philosophical Lectures,* 313.
12. *Anima Poetae,* 55.
13. *Ibid.,* 56.
14. *Misc. Crit.* 44, 88-89: *Shak. Crit.* II, 170-71.
15. *Anima Poetae,* 57.

as power of seeing is to light, so is an idea in the mind to a law in nature."[16] Perception, idea and the imaginative power are needed for the expression of the creative process.

The imaginative activity is not a series of elements rolled into one. "The common end of all **narrative**, nay, of **all** Poems, is to convert a **series** into a **Whole**: to make those events, which in real or imagined History move on in a **straight** line, assume to our understandings a **circular** motion —the snake with its tail in its mouth. Hence indeed the almost flattering and yet appropriate term—Poesy, i.e., poiesis, **making.**"[17] While association has an infinite progression because of its spatial character, the imaginative act is circular since it realises a form as a unified pattern. Poetry is a making, a creation of an intimate unity.

Coleridge learnt from Berkeley that "certainly we ourselves create in some wise whenever we imagine."[18] The ideas of imagination are said to emerge from an act of the will, and they have "an entire dependence on the will."[19] Berkeley also spoke of the "one presiding mind" which "gives unity to the infinite aggregate of things."[20] Combining Berkeley with Schelling, Coleridge observes that to copy the spirit of nature is to externalise one's own 'living and life-producing ideas'; and poetry then seeks 'to express' those 'which have their origin in the human mind.' As such we have 'a reconcilement of the external with the internal.'[21] The external ceases to appear as external to the mind in the grip of the imaginative act. The external acquires its real character by being reabsorbed and assimilated in the inward process. Accordingly the poet can "transfer from his inward nature a human interest

16. *Misc Crit.* 42-43.
17. *Unpublished Letters,* II, 128.
18. *Commonplace Book,* p. 295.
19. *Principles,* 27.
20. *Siris,* 279.
21. **B.L. II, 255-59.**

and a semblance of truth to the shadows of imagination" he creates.

Hobbes was not aware of this principle. Imagination for him was the same as memory; it is 'decaying sense.'[22] The traces left by the impressions of sense are the 'phantasms' or images. These images are in course of time set free from their old connections and sequences. It is fancy that selects and combines these phantasms; and the desire of a writer "brings in all the phantasms that are means conducing to that end."[23] The storehouse of memory is characterised by a cohesion brought forth by association. In the hands of Hume the mind is like a kaleidoscope, and ideas can be so manipulated there as to give rise to new combinations. This is the "liberty of the imagination to transpose and change its ideas."[24] As such he could observe that "our imagination runs easily from one idea to any other that resembles it."[25] This associating activity in the imagination is "a kind of magical faculty in the soul."[26] Ideas are combined by imagination when it is regulated by the laws of association. This imagination "has unlimited power of mixing, compounding, separating, and dividing these ideas in all the varieties of fiction and vision."[27] Ideas and impressions, emotions and ideas, are capable of being associated with each other. The laws of association are clearly stated for the first time by Hume, who considered association to be the basic operating principle in aesthetic activity. Imagination presents the images of previous perceptions, and these are true or real images; consequently Hume took imagination to be a natural function of the mind and to be a creative principle. It is not a wild, chaotic principle.

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22. *Leviathan,* Part I, Chapter 2.
23. Hobbes: *Elements of Philosophy,* Chapter 25.
24. Hume: *Treatise* (Ed. Green and Gross), I, 318.
25. *Ibid.,* I, 319.
26. *Ibid.,* I, 331.
27. Hume: *Enquiry* (Ed. Selby-Bigge), 23.

This Humean associationist imagination is free because it does interfere with the original order of the previous impressions and because it is not under the absolute control of the intellect. It is also not free because it is regulated by the principle of association.

Akenside, whom Coleridge once liked, follows Hume.[28] So did Hartley and others in the eighteenth century. Since imagination is capable of making associations quickly, it was taken to be inventive. The essence of genius was sought in this quickness and in the range of association. These accounts appeared to Coleridge to be undermining the sense of mystery in all higher experiences.

Coleridge felt that imagination opens the way into the great realm of the spirit. "My mind feels as if it ached to behold and know something great, something one and indivisible."[29] It was a mind that "had been habituated to the vast", and he remarked "I never regarded my senses as in any way the criteria of my belief. I regulated all my creeds by my conceptions, not by my sight, even at that age."[29*] To those who did not possess this pathway to Reality, the universe "is but a mass of little things." Imagination gives rise to a vision of significant forms and values and Coleridge emphasises the awareness of these higher values as the most important feature of the imaginative activity.

The products of the Hebrew mind too nourished this imagination. "In the Hebrew poets each thing has a life of its own" for there is "imagination or the modifying or coadunating faculty." These poets "move and live and have their being, not had, as the cold system of Newtonian theology represents, but have."[30] This imagination involves and implies the eternal pre-

28. *Pleasures of Imagination,* 3.31 & 66.
29. Letter to Poole.
29*. *Ibid.*
30. *Letter to Sotheby,* 10th September, 1802.

sent a state of self-transcendence, a unique form of higher immediacy. Coleridge may have derived his idea of the immediacy of aesthetic plsasure from Addison.[31] Though Addison took imagination to be a compounding power, he did state that "Imagination has in it something like Creation." Yet it is as perceptive response that imagination interested him. And Coleridge's approach does not speak of a mere response but of a vital and transforming power.

Writing to Godwin on May 21, 1800 he observes: "If according to you and Hume, impressions and ideas constitute our being, I shall have a tendency to become a god, so sublime and beautiful will be the series of my visual existence." The mind must be active when it is creative, and this activity must have a unity. The Humean activity is a series of impressions and ideas having no centre of unification, and therefore appearing as a spatial and temporal series. By March 16, 1801 he could tell Thomas Poole: "I have not only completely extricated the notions of time and space, but have overthrown the doctrine of association as taught by Hartley and with it all the irreligious metaphysics of modern infidels—especially the doctrine of necessity." This was the result of an 'intense study' of Kant which gave him the ideality of space and time, the a priori ideas, and the creativity of mind. Kant held that imagination is not regulated by the laws of association. "If, now, imagination must in the judgment of taste be regarded in its freedom, then, to begin with, it is not taken as reproductive, as in the subjection to the laws of association, but produtive and exerting an activity of its own as originator of arbitrary forms of possible intuitions."[32] Instead of depending on fixed and definite forms, it must be capable of creating its own forms. "The imagination (as a productive

31. *Spectator* 411. Cf. J. G. Robertson: *The Genesis of the Romantic theory in England,* p. 241. Carritt: "Effects in England of Kant's Philosophy", *the Monist,* Vol. 35, p. 322-23, *Essays and Studies,* 1937, p. 27.

32. *Critique of Judgment,* Trans. Meredith, p. 3(

faculty of cognition) is a powerful agent for creating, as it were, a second nature out of the material supplied to it by actual nature. It affords us entertainment where experience proves too commonplace; and we even use it to remodel experience....By this means we get a sense of our freedom from the law of association (which attaches to the empirical employment of the imagination), with the result that the material can be borrowed by us from nature in accordance with that law, but be worked up by us into something else—namely, what surpasses nature."[33] The material or the content may be taken from the world of physical experience; but the individual must be free to visualise it or to re-create it with a form that does not belong to it in the actual physical form. The fixed object must, in other words, be liberated from its spatial and temporal limitations.

The reproductive imagination can reproduce the data of experience in a new order. The productive one is not free and it mediates between sense and understanding. The aesthetic imagination is productive and free since it is truly creative. The Platonism of Coleridge was helped by such Kantian studies in formulating his own theory of association. In 1803 he told Southey "that ideas never recall ideas as far as they are ideas, any more than leaves in a forest create each other's motion—the breeze it is that runs through them—it is the soul, the state of feeling." It is the emotional nature of association that is emphasized. Association cannot refer to the series of ideas; and even the so-called unconscious cannot release a series of ideas but a series of impressions, images and sensations. These series are in reality unified by what may be called the felt background. The underlying principle in the Aristotelian law of association is stated in the **Biographia.** "The general law of association, or, more accurately, the common condition under which all exciting causes act" is stated thus: "Ideas by having been to-

33. *Ibid.,* 176.

gether acquire a power of recalling each other; or every partial representation awakes the toal representation of which it had been a part."[34] According to this formulation, ideas are given a power and a vitality to recall other ideas, not to beget new and further ideas. Association is thus taken to explain "the whole mechanism of the reproduction of impressions, in Aristotelian Psychology. It is the universal law of passive fancy and mechanical memory; that which supplies to all other faculties their objects, to all thought the elements of its materials."[35] The reproduction of impressions makes association a factor governing memory, day-dreaming, fancy; and the materials it supplies are those of an earlier experience.

The common condition of all the laws of association is said to be contemporaneity by Aristotle. Hartley took this to be 'the sole law.' Hence instead of taking will, reason, judgment, and understanding to be the determining causes of association, he represented them "as its creatures, and among its mechanical effects."[36] Coleridge sought to demolish the contention that "the will, and with the will, all acts of thought and attention are parts and products of this blind mechanism, instead of being distinct powers, the function of which is to control, determine and modify the phantasmal chaos of association."[37] The chaos can be transformed into an organized whole by will and thought, and consequently the latter cannot be subject to the associative process. At best association can refer to impressions which can be looked upon as being contemporaneous or continuous. Contemporaneity is the common condition of all the laws of association and the true general law is therefore stated thus: "Whatever makes certain parts of a total impression more vivid or distinct than the rest, will determine the mind to recall these in preference

34. B.L. I, 72.

35. B.L. I, 72-73.

36. B.L. I, 76.

37. B.L. I, 81. See Richards: *Coleridge on Imagination,* for an opposite contention.

to others equally linked together by the common condition of contemporaneity, or (what I deem a more appropriate and philosophical term, of continuity."[38] This formulation involves selection determined by emotional interest, vividness of the image and value in the activity of association. Selection implies the construction of a world of experience; and the subject of the experience is then viewed as an organism, as an organic whole. Man is—

Dark fluxion, all unfixable by thought
A phantom dim of past and future wrought.

The mental construction of reality, even in terms of association, presupposes the operation of will. The impressions of images are first recalled. Impressions of sense are then translated, transformed, into symbols. These symbols represent the elementary state of ideas. The creative activity is concerned with ideas round which the emotions and feelings are grouped; and ideas are beyond the pale of association.

Coleridge's Platonism provided an important step in the formulation of his theory. The platonic ideas are "constitutive and one with the power and life and nature."[39] This is harmonised with the Airstotelian idea that "poetry is essentially ideal" avoiding and excluding all accident[40] and that the idea or form develops a form from within the materials of experience. Thus we are told that Shakespeare's gift was "to have the universal, which is potential in each particular, opened out to him."[41] Shakespeare reveals the concrete universal. The poet must "create forms according to the severe laws of the intellect", must trust imagination more than memory.[42] "The power of poetry is, by a single word, perhaps, to instil energy into the mind, which compels the im-

38. B.L. I, 86-87.
39. App. E. of *Statesman's Manual.*
40. B.L. II, 33.
41. *Misc. Crit.* 44.
42. *Table Talk,* 22nd September, 1830.

agination to produce the picture."[43] The Aristotelian theory would take one to over-emphasise the understanding, the conceptual element. But the Platonic Coleridge liked to contemplate understanding distinctly, to look down upon it "from the throne of actual ideas, or living, inborn, essential truths."[44] This 'throne of actual ideas' in the creative act is the realm of imagination. These ideas are visioned as concrete universals by the artist. This transformation has evidently nothing to do with the unconscious or the state below consciousness. If at all we explain it, it proceeds from the superconscious or supra-conscious state which may be viewed as higher immediacy.

It was Wordsworth's poetry that led Coleridge to an inquiry into the nature of imagination and fancy. There he saw "the union of deep feeling with profound thought; the fine balance of truth in observing, with the imaginative faculty in modifying the objects observed; and above all the original gift of spreading the tone, the atmosphere, and with it the depth and height of the ideal world around forms, incidents, and situations, of which, for the common view, custom had bedimmed all the lustre, had dried up the sparkle and the dew drops." But this was only a stimulus that made him express his theory. Long before he met Wordsworth, he arrived at the theory from a study of Plato, Plotinus, the Bible and the Christian Platonists. Even here Coleridge does not interpret imagination in terms of the unconscious, for it involves "the depth and height of the ideal world"; and this ideal world is no other than the actual world seen through the proper perspective, seen in its essence. It is "the prime merit of genius and its most unequivocal mode of manifestation, so to represent familiar objects as to awaken in the minds of others a kindred feeling concerning them."[45] This

43. *Shak. Crit.* II, 174.
44. *Table Talk,* 2nd July, 1830.
45. B.L. I, 56-60.

kindred feeling harmonises the familiar with its essence which does strike one as being true and real. Credibility is a character of this experience which reveals the object as emancipated from its spatial and temporal limitations. Space and time are forms under which the objects of the actual world appear to us. Imagination visualises the objects not under the forms of sensibility but in their real or ideal character. This is an unfamiliar kind of apprehension and yet it is not something unbelievable or unacceptable since such experiences do occur in normal life.

Coleridge speaks of the "true imaginative absence of all particular space or time."[46] The temporal stream is "virtually contained in the present."[47] The sky for Boehme, it may be recalled, is more than the sky; it is the appearance of God, a symbol of his presence. Then space and time can have no place in a universe that reveals itself to the imagination as a symbol-language. Boehme and his commentator Law "contributed to keep alive the heart in the head."[48] They taught Coleridge that "all the products of the mere reflective faculty partook of Death", and that "a sap was yet to be propelled" into them "if they were to afford my soul either food or shelter."[48] It is not a mere idea that can satisfy us, but a living idea; and the idea is alive when we feel it, when we can emotionally apprehend it. In this apprehension we get beyond death. "No one can leap over his shadow, Poets leap over Death."[49] Poets are capable of this because they energise, and energising is the antidote to death and the synonym for the imaginative activity. This process is admirably well described by Coleridge in the significant note: "Nothing affects me much at the moment it happens—it either stupefies me, and I perhaps look at a merrymake and dance the

46. *Misc. Crit.*, 36.
47. *Statesman's Manual*, 36.
48. B.L. I, 98.
49. *Notebooks*, I, 134.

hay of fiies, or listen entirely to the loud Click of the great Clock/or I am simply indifferent, not without some sense of philosophic self-complacency—for a thing at the moment is but a thing of the moment/it must be taken up into the mind, diffuse itself through the whole multitude of shapes and thoughts, not one of which it leaves untinged—between which and it some new thought is not engendered/This is a work of Time/but the Body feels it quicken with me."[50] Then there results the experience of the imaginative absence of time and space. This experience is analogous to the state of inspiration described by earlier thinkers and critics and felt by some of the gifted poets.

Plato and Plotinus, whose works were known well to Coleridge even at an early age, gave him the proper direction in his aesthetic enquiry. The divine frenzy and the creative imagination outlined in the **Ion** was read with the **Enneads** where the artist is said to shape his material impressing it with a character according to an idea. "The essence or character was not in the material, but it was in the conceiving mind, even before it entered into the stone. But it was in the artist not by virtue of his having eyes, but by virtue of his imagination. And this beauty, already comprehended in his imagination, was far greater. For it went not out of him, but abode with him and gave birth to a lesser beauty."[51] The artist may take up any object he likes. But it is he who gives a character to it because he visualises or imagines it. This character develops a form when it is externalised. The beauty that is rendered objectively is but a feeble representation of what he had imaginatively experienced. The artistic products thus turn out to be the shadows of imagination, and the mind of the artist is full of activity.

The Aeolian harp is Coleridge's symbol for the mind of the artist. It speaks of the divine breath of 'life within

50. *Ibid.,* I, 1597.
51. *Enneads,* 5.8.1.

us and abroad,' in the manner of Plotinus. The poet might be passive; but once the divine inspiration is breathed into him, the soul is transformed and the poet is aware of

> A light in sound, a sound-like power in light,
> Rhythm in all thought and joyance everywhere—.
> Over the animated nature there sweeps
> Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,
> At once the Soul of each, and God of all.

This faith is the ground of his theory of imagination. It is the unswerving belief in the unity of the one and the many. Coleridge found it not only in the neoplatonists but in Spinoza whose **natura naturans** implies that God in his creative aspect is revealed in a multiplicity of forms. In a marginal note on Kant we read Coleridge going beyond the Aeolian harp symbol: "The mind does not resemble an Aeolian harp, not even a barrel-organ turned by a stream of water, conceived as many times mechanized as you like, but rather, as far as objects are concerned, a violin or other instrument of few strings yet vast compass, played on by a musician of genius."[52] The mind is a sensitive instrument which is alert to every stimulus coming from the soul; and it can release only a few notes in all their infinite variety. It is the soul that wields imagination and makes the mind adopt itself to the required tune. As Fairchild remarks: "When he thought of creative genius, he thought of Spinoza's **amor intellectualis**, of Plotinus' association of the divine Nous with the mind of man, and Boehme's identification of imagination with a godlike creative will."[53] The soul in its volitional aspect or the soul as reason appears in certain contexts and for a specific end as imagination. Such an imagination cannot have anything in common with the mechanical and blind association or with the unconscious. It is truly creative.

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52. Quoted by Muirhead: *Coleridge as Philosopher,* 91-92.
53. *Religious Trends in English Poetry,* III, 295.

Creation is a central metaphor in the aesthetic of Coleridge. The primary imagination, we hear, is "a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation."[54] Not only are the poet and the creator parallel to each other, but there is a third parallel called the mind in perception. The creative process of God is at the basis of every thing and it is reflected in the primary imagination which renders possible the individual mind's perception of the universe. The creativity is again reflected in the secondary imagination. "The completing power which unites clearness with depth, the plenitude of the sense with the comprehensibility of the understanding, is the imagination, impregnated with which the understanding itself becomes intuitive, and a living power."[55] The mind of the percipient is not passive, for it is, "in the sublimest sense, the Image of the Creator."[56] The world of imagination is, as Muirhead remarked, the world of sense twice-born. The Forms or Ideas subsist eternally in their ideal space, become internal and evolve themselves endlessly into ideas of the world. These ideas of plastic nature are reiterated in and through the 'esemplastic' imagination.

The primary imagination is a form of the highest activity of the human being. It can work even with the universals. The secondary imagination can only 'idealize and unify' its objects; but it cannot unify the universals. The primary imagination apprehends the identity of the universal with the particular in the individual; and thus discovers or realizes a value in all concreteness. The secondary imagination is concerned only with the material offered by the phenomenal world. Hence he speaks of "the limited sphere of mental activity in artist."[57] This, however, should not mean Coleridge's acceptance of the passivity of mind. He writes: "the

54. B.L. I, 202. See also Fogle: *Coleridge's Idea of Criticism.*
55. *Statesman's Manual,* 266.
56. Letter to Poole, 23rd March, 1801.
57. *Notebooks, I,* 77.

mind does not resemble an Aeolian harp...but rather as far as objects are concerned a violin or other instrument of few strings yet vast compass, played on by a musician of Genius."

Imagination gives rise to a unique form of higher immediacy. An entry of March 1796 reads: "Doctrine of necessity rendered not dangerous by the Imagination which contemplates immediate, not remote effects—hence vice always hateful and although equally monotonous as virtue."[58] This immediacy transcends the dualism of good and evil, or right and wrong, of truth and falsehood, of beauty and ugliness. At the same time it synthesises these dualisms, just as it can harmonise the conscious and the unconscious activities. It is an all-inclusive coherent system or whole.

The associative theory works with elementary particles; and Coleridge's idea of fancy shows that fancy operates with 'fixities and definites' which are derived from sense. The sequence in which these particles appear is determined by the law of association and by selection. Hence memory is said to be 'mechanical' and fancy 'passive.' The latter is a 'mirrorment'; it 'repeats simply, or by transposition' and acts 'by a sort of juxtaposition.'[59] But imagination 'recreates'; it is a 'synthetic, permeative, blending, fusing power,'[60] an 'assimilative power', a 'coadunating faculty.' To coadunate is 'to grow together into one.'[61] It is an organic plant with a life all its own. It is a **vital** power which 'generates and produces a form of its own' and its rules are "the very powers of growth and production."[62] The analogy with a plant is complete; and like a plant the highest workings of the mind breathe, assimilate and develop. The mechanical and corpuscular philosophy is rejected in no uncertain terms. The philosophy

58. *Ibid.*, I, 156.
59. B.L. I, 73, 193.
60. B.L. I, 163: II, II, 123, 264.
61. B.L. II, 12-13, 19.
62. B.L. I, 202, II, 65.

of mechanism is replaced by life and intelligence.[63] It is a mental process that evolves itself into the plant called the poem. The materials of sense are surrendered to the mind which "assimilates them to itself and to each other." The initiative idea is the seed from which "successive Ideas germinate." The mind is both a being and a becoming. "Events and images, the lively and spirit stirring machinery of the external world, are like light, and air, and moisture, to the seed of the mind, which would else rot and perish. In all processes of mental evolution the objects of the senses must stimulate the Mind; and the Mind must in turn assimilate and digest the food which it thus receives from without."[64] The soil is sensation and the seeds are the ideas. The plant or a poem is a living whole whose parts are "so far interdependent that each is reciprocally means and end"; and thus we have the 'dependence of the parts on the whole, and the dependence of the whole on its parts.' The living organism is the synthesis. Here we have the 'law of polarity or essential dualism' according to which "every power in nature and in spirit must evolve an opposite as the sole means and condition of its manifestation; and all opposition is a tendency to reunion."[65] The thesis and the antithesis do coalesce; and "the two component counter-powers actually interpenetrate each other, and generate a higher third including both the former." That which is thus manifested is life which is in all and which thereby makes all one.[66] Such a living organism is poetry: "The spirit of poetry, like all other living powers...must embody in order to reveal itself; but a living body is of necessity an organized one,—and what is organization, but the connection of parts to a whole, so that each part is at once end and means!"[67] Imagination then modi-

63. *Collected Letters,* II, 649.
64. *Treatise on Method,* 7.
65. *Friend,* I, 121.
66. *Works,* 6. 101.
67. *Shak. Crit.* I, 223.

fies the things, and it is as such a vital process, a process of growth. It is one and a unity, a whole and an individual.

Imagination is the synthesising power in the world of art. It is the "synthetic and magical power" and it "reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities. It is similar to the organic function of assimilating.

> Flowers and their fruit
> Man's nourishment, by gradual scale sublim'd,
> To vital spirits aspire: to animal:
> To intellectual.[68]

With these significant lines opens the thirteenth chapter of **Biographia Literaria.** Parts of the physical universe are assimilated by the organism so that they are ultimately transformed into the intellectual being. At this last stage the physical object has lost its original character by becoming organic to a more comprehensive, a more intelligible state. Such a transformation is explained in terms of "a true philosophy" which assimilates the partial truths of other systems; all these are to be "united in one perspective central point."[69] The history of thought shows that the chief error has been exclusion, not subordination; and "Nature excludes nothing."[70] Talent and fancy are then included in and transcended by genius and imagination because "the higher intellectual powers can only act through a corresponding energy of the lower."[71] Thus genius and talent, organism and mechanism, symbol and allegory, imitation and copy, are all the contradictory pairs which are synthesised in and through imagination. In each pair the first term expresses a more inclusive concept, though it does also at times express a narrower content. That is, the first term has a larger meaning and also a narrower one. The latter makes the antithesis its equivalent or cognate and

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68. *Paradise Lost,* 5, 482-5.
69. B.L. I, 169-170.
70. *Philosophical Lectures,* 313.
71. *Table Talk.*

the former embodies the reconciliation. The first term in each pair expresses a superior concept which however cannot exist independently of the second term. Thus reason seeks spiritual truth, understanding is after verifiable scientific truth, and imagination is after the beauty of truth.

Writing to William Sharp in 1804, Coleridge speaks of Wordsworth's unity of interest and homogeneity of character. This "most original poet", this "greatest philosophical poet", he continues, "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 the 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 that we can believe but all that we can conceive of creation."[72] The first synthesis involves thought and feeling. This acts as a thesis to the poetic forms and there arises a larger reconciliation or harmony. In this harmony one can notice the activity of imagination which is a creative process. Nothing is external to this process. "The poet's heart and intellect should be combined, intimately combined and unified with the great appearances of nature, and not merely held in solution and loose mixture with them."[73] It is the creative intercourse between the poet and the universe. Such an intercourse implies a kind of synthesis of the active powers of the mind with the passive; and this synthesis, as Tucker felt, gives rise to a new product, to a unique entity, where the constituent element lose their separate properties."[74] This is closer to the irreducible unity of pattern advocated by Gestalt psychology. As Coleridge remarked, the mystics "define beauty as the subjection of matter to spirit so as to be transformed into a symbol, in and through which the spirit re-

72. *Collected Letters,* II, 103-04.
73. Letter to Sotheby, 1802.
74. *The Light of Nature Pursued,* 1852, I, 127-28.

veals itself'"[75]; and "the Beautiful arises from the perceived harmony of an object, whether sight or sound, with the inborn and constitutive rules of the judgment and imagination; and it is always intuitive. As light to the eye, even such is beauty to the mind, which cannot but have complacency in whatever is perceived as preconfigured to its living faculties."[76]

The apprehension of identity or unity with what is taken to be ultimately real is the key to the nature of imagination and to any enquiry concerning it. All pure speculation has its foundation in "the full apprehension of the difference between the contemplation of reason, namely, that intuition of things which arises when we possess ourselves, as one with the whole, which is substantial knowledge, and that which presents itself when, transferring reality to the negations of reality, to the ever varying framework of the uniform life, we think of ourselves as separated beings, and place nature in antithesis to the mind, as object to subject, things to thought, death to life." The latter is abstract knowledge, the science of the mere understanding. The former tells us that "existence is its own predicate, self-affirmation, the one attribute in which all others are contained, not as particulars, but as manifestations. It is an eternal and infinite self-rejoicing, self-loving, with a joy unfathomable, with love all comprehensive. It is absolute and the absolute is neither singly that which affirms, nor that which is affirmed; but the identity and living copula of both."[77] The artistic activity brings the transcendental and the human consciousness together. It is the subject and object and also the very act of affirmation. It is revealed in the process of artistic creation and also as the work of art.

Starting with the product, Coleridge proceeds to give an account of the process. The poet "brings the whole soul of man into activity"; and "he diffuses a tone and spirit of unity that blends, and (as it were) fuses, each to each, by that

75. B.L. II, 239.
76. B.L. II, 243.
77. *Friend,* III, 202.

synthetic and magical power" called imagination which "reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualitites."[78] The criterion of poetic excellence is an inclusiveness which harmonises the discordant qualities; and this criterion is basic to Coleridge's metaphysics. It is the criterion of creation and it renders the manifestation of the many a necessary possibilty. As he put it, "grant me a nature having two contrary forces, the one of which tends to expand infinitely, while the other strives to apprehend or find itself in this infinity, and I will cause the world of intelligences with the whole system of their representations to rise up before you."[79] The two basic entities required are the infinite and the finite, the subject and object of experience. These contrary forces are inherently capable of being harmonised.

Coleridge undertakes to explain this harmony or synthesis in the twelfth chapter of the **Biographia Literaria.** The ten theses presented here are the main tenets of "Dynamic Philosophy", and these are to be applied "to deduction of the Imagination, and with it the principles of production and of genial criticism in the fine Arts." Coleridge's epistemology, ontology and theory of poetic creation are all based on these principles, the chief one being the synthesis of the conflict of opposites into a higher third. Sameness and difference, general and concrete, idea and image, individual and representative, novelty and old, fresh and familiar, unusual emotion and unusual order, nature and art, are all synthesised in and through the imaginative activity.[80] Reason fails to image the ideal; and understanding believes in abstracting from the images, not in idealising them. These two activities are fused in imagination.

These important formulations seem to owe something to Schelling. Nature for Schelling is that which strains to develop itself into consciousness. It is animated, and an organiz-

78. B.L. II, 12.
79. B.L. I, 196.
80. B.L. II, 12.

ing principle is immanent in it. From this principle emerge the opposites and there is a creative synthesis between the subject and the object. The imagination or the aesthetic faculty brings about this synthesis. Nature realises or develops consciousness in imagination. This view was near to Coleridge's possibly because Schelling too passed through the same stages of devotion to Boehme and Kant.

Schelling held that art is "the only true and enduring organon and document of philosophy." The foundational energy or creativity in its unconscious state appears as nature and in its conscious mode as art. Nature or the objective world develops consciousness in the activity of the ego and of the artist.[81] That is, the essences within nature do subsist also as ideas in the mind. Then "the mediatress between, and reconciler of, nature and man" is postulated as art which is "the power of humanising nature, of infusing the thoughts and passions of man into everything which is the object of his contemplation."[82]

The twelfth chapter of **Biographia Literaria** tells us that "all knowledge rests on the coincidence of an object with a subject." Truth presupposes a knower and a known, and many truths have a derivative character. But Coleridge wanted an ultimate truth which must be "self-grounded, unconditional, and known by its own light", and which must be unique. This philosophical basis leads him to state his idea of the creative act. The ultimate truth is a fusion of the objective and the subjective and this fusion is the self or I AM. The self has will and it is neither finite nor infinite. "In the reconciling and recurrence of this contradiction consists the process and mystery of production of life."[83] This leads to religion and offers a thesis grounded on the concept of the individual as a modification of the higher consciousness.

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81. *System des transcendentalen Idealismus,* 475-76.
82. *Poesy or Art.*
83. B.L. I, 185.

The poetic truth is neither subjective nor objective. It lies neither in him alone not in his object, but in 'the identity of both.' The unity of the experience acquires an expression, a value, in and through the poet's consciousness. In this light "poetry is purely human, for all its materials are from the mind, and all its products are of the mind."[84] The poet and his object act and react upon each other; for poetry "avails itself of the forms of nature to recall, to express, and to modify the thoughts and feelings of the mind."[84*] The poet might recall the sights and sounds of his original emotional experience; but "poetry impregnates them with an interest not their own by means of the passion."[85] The poetic passion is the medium of the artistic embodiment. "The spirit, in all the objects which it views, views itself." One informs the other and is informed by it. This counter-action of forces is controlled and regulated by imagination. The images of nature are "fitted to the limits of the human mind, as to elicit from, and to superinduce upon, the forms themselves the moral reflections to which they approximate, to make the external internal, the internal external, to make nature thought, and thought nature,—This is the mystery of genius in the fine Arts."[86] The objects of sense are acted on and transformed by the poet's feelings and imagination.

The resultant poem is a **tertium aliquid,** "an interpenetration of the counteracting powers, partaking of both." Here are the 'numberless goings-on' by which the poets are "accustomed to watch the flux and reflux of their innermost nature, to venture at times into the twilight realms of consciousness."[87] Sensation, thought and feeling are the 'facts of mind' and they interact. When they venture into 'the twilight realms of consciousness', they seek to realise a supra-conscious exist-

84. *Poesy or Art.*
84.* *Ibid.*
85. B.L. II, 254.
86. B.L. II, 258.
87. B.L. I, 172-73, II, 120.

ence. They exhibit self-transcendence. The poem then is not a thought, not a thing, but a "middle quality',[88] having its own laws. It is not inapt to recall that Akenside believed that "the powers of imagination" occupy a place "between the organs of bodily sense and the faculties of moral perception."[89] Truths belong to the region "quite foreign to the imagination."[90] These powers of imagination "relate to matter and motion."[91] Only at the hands of Coleridge the powers of imagination have also a higher and a more valuable place because imagination is organic and because it is foundational to the universe. This organic theory of imagination came from the Cambridge platonists through Shaftesbury and Akenside; and Collins' **Ode on the Poetical Character** makes poetry divine and impassioned. Referring to this poem Coleridge tells us that the lines beginning with

> The land, as faery legends say,
> Was woven on that creating day,

"inspired and whirled me along with greater agitations of enthusiasm than any the most impassioned scene in Schiller or Shakespeare."[92] Herder, who was known to Coleridge, spoke of the poet as one working in close co-operation with nature. As the sap rises in the tree, so does the creative process proceed.

The sensuous forms of objects are perceived in a normal cognitive act not as sensuous ones merely, but as objects qualified by these qualities. That is, the perceptual act involves an intuition of a real object aided by the sensuous qualities. The mind in such an act constructs or creates the object to itself. Because of this 'intimate coalition' between subject and object this is called the primary imagination which is the instrument of normal perception. It renders the phenomenal world

88. B.L. II, 254.
89. *The Pleasures of Imagination,* V.
90. *Ibid.,* VIII.
91. *Ibid.,* V.
92. *Letters,* 196.

possible. The secondary imagination discovers a value, the noumenon in the same world; and the creative artist exercises the latter. The mind in both the activities is creative and constructive. When both these forms are designated by the same term, there is bound to be some confusion. Coleridge seeks to dispel this when he remarks: "In philosophical language, we must denominate this intermediate faculty in all its degrees and determinations, the Imagination. But in common language, and especially on the subject of poetry we appropriate the name to a superior degree of the faculty, joined to a superior voluntary control over it."[93] The poetic or secondary imagination is the superior or heightened state of the primary; and it needs the cooperation of the conscious will. Imagination is the copula between the active and the passive powers, between the idea and the image, between the subject and the object; and functioning as a copula it makes the external world possible and real.

In any perceptual act we do not perceive the object in its entirety. But we do not have any difficulty in designating it truly. "It is the table itself which the man of common sense believes himself to see, not the phantom of a table, from which he may argumentatively deduce the reality of a table, which he does not see." The true realism "believes and requires neither more nor less, than the object which it beholds or presents to itself, is the real and very object. In this sense ...we are all collectively born idealists, and therefore and only therefore are we at the same time realists."[94] From the perception of a part or of some qualities we idealise and have the knowledge of the object. This is rendered possible by the primary imagination which gives a meaning, a significance, to perception. It is 'the living power.' The secondary imagination is said to be 'essentially vital', while the objects are essentially fixed and dead.' The fixed and dead objects cannot be those of the primary imagina-

93. B.L. I, 86.
94. B.L. I, 179.

tion, for they are those involved in the activity of fancy or of understanding. The world of the understanding is an abstraction based upon that of the primary imagination. Dissociated from will and self-consciousness, the world appears as the 'inanimate cold world'; and then it is the world analysed by the understanding or transformed by the secondary imagination. Will and understanding exercise a gentle control over imagination; and in this context they do not seek to realise the objects of the external world but poetry.

We may here notice the neo-platonic origins of the doctrine. Any perceptual act, says Plotinus, involves selection based on interest; and the mind in such an act is creative.[95] This is Coleridge's primary imagination. It involves the interaction and creative communion between the subject and the object. The object or nature is that in which the spirit is both immanent and transcendent. The communion is actually an interchange because Coleridge held that the productive power in nature is not different from the creative power in man. He observes: "in every act of conscious perception, we at once identify our being with that of the world without us, and yet place ourselves in contradistinction to that world. Least of all can this mysterious predisposition exist without evolving a belief that the productive power, which in nature acts as nature, is essentially one (that is, of one kind) with the intelligence, which is in the human minds above nature."[96] This view was accepted by Coleridge because he saw its confirmation in the writings of the neo-platonists.

Coleridge borrowed Cudworth's **True Intellectual System** in May, 1795 from the Bristol Library. This was written with a neo-platonist outlook. According to Cudworth, even in sensation there is a kind of intellection present, for a sensation reveals the interaction of the active and the passive states. Yet it was Kant that brought forth the final summing-up of

95. *Enneads,* 4.6.2.
96. *Friend.*

the theory. Employing the Kantian concept, Coleridge observes: "of the discursive understading, which forms for itself general notions and terms of classification for the purpose of comparing and arranging phenomena, the characteristic is clearness without depth. It contemplates the unity of things in their limits only, and is consequently a knowledge of superficies without substance. So much so indeed that it entangles itself in contradictions in the very effort of comprehending the idea of substance. The completing power which unites clearness with depth, the plenitude of the sense with the comprehensibility of the understanding is the imagination, impregnated with which the understanding itself becomes intuitive and a living power."[97] The understanding reveals the contradictions inherent in the actual world. It cannot get rid of these contradictions because it fails to penetrate deeper into reality.

Heracleitus and the Neo-Platonists spoke of the synthesis of the opposites. John Scotus Erigena held that God "is the similarity of the similar, the dissimilarity of the dissimilar, the opposition of opposites, and the contrariety of contraries." The God of Nicholas of Cusa presents the reconciliation of opposites. Coleridge speaks of 'the polar logic' of Bruno.[98] In Boehme's thought we find that contrasts are essential for the emergence of life, of any kind of manifestation; and Boehme even declared that "all things are created out of imagination."[99] This doctrine becomes central to Coleridge's thought. "Every power in nature and in spirit must evolve an opposite, as the sole means and condition of its manifestation; and all opposition is a tendency to reunion....The identity of thesis and antithesis is the substance of all being."[100] These are the active and passive powers which at times appear also as im-

97. *Statesman's Manual,* appendix B.
98. B.L. I, 103.
99. *The Signature of all things,* 207.
100. *Friend,* II, 91.

agination and fancy.[101] But imagination in such a context has a wider meaning as well as a narrower one. The wider significance transmutes the passive activity by assimilating it into itself. In this assimilation, the passive ceases to function as passive.

The passive side is revealed in "the streamy nature of association which thinking curbs and rudders",[102] in the ocular spectrum, and in the dreams. In a letter of April 8, 1820, he speaks of how "we establish a centre, as it were, a sort of nucleus in the reservoir of the soul; and towards this needle shoots after needle, cluster points on cluster points, from all parts of contained fluid, and in all directions."[103] He speaks of "the mode in which our thoughts in states of morbid slumber become at times perfectly dramatic" and of the law by which "the form of the vision appears to talk to us in its own thoughts in a voice as audible as the shape is visible; and this too often times in connected trains."[104] Association is active in dreams, and dreams provide a source for the creative process. Coleridge told Hazlitt that "there is a class of poetry built on this foundation (of dream), which is surely no inconsiderable part of our nature, since we are asleep and building up imaginations of this sort half our time."[105] But the dreams that Coleridge has in mind are those which reveal experiences as coherent as those of normal waking life. They do not refer to the unconscious, nor to the incoherent associationism of our normal dreams.

According to Schiller, poetry springs from the unconscious which sends forth its own vague intimations. The poet seeks to blend thought with sensibility, intuition with reflection. The "total idea, obscure but powerful" is "anterior to all technical apparatus"; and without it no poetic composition is possible. Poetry "consists precisely in knowing how to express and com-

101. Cf. B.L. I, 85-86.
102. *Anima Poetae,* 46.
103. *Biographia Epistolaris,* 182.
104. *Friend,* I, 246-47.
105. Hazlitt: *On Dreams.*

municate this unconscious—in other words, in knowing how to embody it in an objective work of art."[106] This unconscious is merely that of which we are not fully or adequately conscious. It may be similar to the unconscious of the psychoanalysts or closer to the supraconscious state referred to by the mystics. In Coleridge, however, the latter appears to figure more prominently.

Imagination is "esentially vital"[107] and it springs from the unconscious. "There is in genius itself an unconscious activity; nay, that is the genius in the man of genius."[108] The 'modes of inmost being' are fugitive and shadowy. To these "the attributes of time and space are inapplicable and alien", and they can be conveyed only "in symbols of time and space."[109] Mental events can be given only a metaphorical expression. This, however, does not mean that Coleridge makes the poet a mechanical agent in an unconscious activity. As he remarked: "Shakespeare, no mere child of nature; no automaton of genius; no passive vehicle of inspiration possessed by the spirit, not possessing it; first studied patiently, meditated deeply, understood minutely, till knowledge became habitual and intuitive...at length gave birth to that stupendous power."[110] The artist draws on the unconscious in the sense that he is not inspired but controlled by his inspiration. This is possible when the artist is not exercising merely his imagination but when the total personality is active. The 'whole soul of man' is brought into activity by the poetic process; for imagination is "first put into action by the will and understanding, and retained under their irremissive, though gentle and unnoticed, control." To these we have to add the statement that Shakespeare's "judgment was at least equal"

106. Letter to Goethe, 27th March, 1801.

107. B.L. I, 202.

108. B.L. II, 257-58. See Baker: *Sacred River,* where the role of the unconscious is maximised.

109. B.L. II, 120.

110. B.L. II, 19.

to his great genius.[111] If the judgment was equal to the genius the unconscious in genius is not the non-rational element. It it possibly more rational than reason, as we understand it. Genius does not draw from below his consciousness for the simple reason that Coleridge's metaphysic speaks of the higher category as including the lower. This contention is not negatived at all even by the notorious account regarding the composition of **Kubla Khan** which speaks of the sleep "of the external senses, during which time he has the most vivid confidence that he could not have composed less than from two to three hundred lines; if that indeed can be called composition in which all the images rose up before him as **things**, with a parallel production of the correspondent expressions, without any sensation or consciousness of effort."[112] The sleep of the external senses does not here refer to reverie or day-dreaming, but to the intense awareness experienced by the soul This awareness is similar to the consciousness of being inspired during the moment of inspiration. The sentiments of Daniel are "drawn from depths which few in any age have courage or inclination to descend."[113] The desecent into the depths is actually an ascent, for the depth refers to the unfathomable, to the profound. The trouble in such passages is due to the peculiar significance with which Coleridge employed certain words. A similar trouble is noticeable in the passage where we are told that "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."[114] It is the genius who blends the conscious with the unconscious. The two are related to each other as the regular form to life and free will. As the unconscious operates as the genius, regular form is the ground of the beautiful. If the conscious is the regular, determinate form, the unconscious is the free and infinite. The

111. B.L. II, 12; *Shak. Crit.* II, 263.
112. *Poems,* 296.
113. B.L. II, 120.
114. B.L. II, 258.

former is controlled while the latter has a spontaneity. To understand this we must go back to the metaphor of the organic unity that Coleridge frequently employs. The growth of the plant from the seed is spontaneous, and this is predetermined. Then there may not be much room for will, understanding and judgment. When we are told that imagination "subordinates art to nature, the manner to the matter", and that the unconscious "is the genius in the man of genius", we might be tempted to derive poetry out of the dreams and the unconscious. But Coleridge does speak of the presence of the conscious will in the activity of secondary imagination. Spontaneous impulse functions in close cooperation with voluntary purpose. Imagination "blends and harmonizes the natural and the artificial." The natural is the spontaneous creative power, while the artificial is the voluntary intellectual energy. In Shakespeare "the creative power and the intellectual energy....were reconciled, and fought each with its shield before the breast of the other."[115] It is the conscious activity which alone can embody the unconscious; otherwise it would be formless. Where the embodiment is beautiful, one could say that the judgment of the artist is equal to his genius. The conscious is thus the intelligible, that which can be understood. But the unconscious is beyond the power of the understanding. If it is below consciousness, it is analysable and explicable; but it is not.

The thesis of Lowes lays greater emphasis on the unconscious operation, on the power of association. Coleridge had "one of the most extra-ordinary memories of which there is record, stored with the spoils of an omnivorous reading, and endowed into the bargain with an almost uncanny power of association."[116] Young's **Conjectures on Original Composition** (1759) tells us that "there is something in poetry beyond

115. B.L. II, 19.

116. *Road to Xanadu,* 43.

[redacted]e-reason; there are mysteries in it not to be explained." This points to the dormant abilities of which the poet may be unaware. But Coleridge was referring to the abilities inherent in us because of the great genius that plays on the sensitive instrument called the mind.

"The marvellous independence and true imaginative absence of all particular space or time in the Faery Queen" is due to the fact that "the poet has placed you in a dream, a charmed sleep."[117] But "dreams have nothing in them absurd or non-sensical"[118] for "even in dreams nothing is fancied without an antecedent quasi cause."[119] This may be a form of "the reproductive imagination, unsophisticated by the will, and undirected by intrusions from the sense."[120] But it is imagination which is "the true inward creatrix", and which "instantly out of the chaos of elements or shattered fragments of memory, puts together some form to fit it."[121] The interaction of the conscious and the unconscious activities gives a form to the chaos of the unconscious. This form emerges because the stream of consciousness has an indivisibility and a continuity, it has "the indivisible undivided duration."[122] At any single moment we have the microcosm of the stream: "What a swarm of thoughts and feelings, endlessly minute fragments, and, as it were, representations of all preceding and embroys of all future thought, be compact in any one moment."[123]

In this context we may note his statement that the poems like the **Immortality Ode** are "intended only for such readers as had been accustomed to watch the flux and reflux of their inmost nature, to venture at times into the **twilight realms of consciousness** and to feel a deep interest in modes of inmost

117. *Misc. Crit.* 36.
118. *Table Talk,* Ist May, 1832.
119. *Table Talk,* Ist June, 1830.
120. Appendix to *Statesman's Manual.*
121. *Anima Poetae,* 206.
122. *Ibid.,* 86-87.
123. *Ibid.,* 208.

being, to which they know that the attributes of time and space are inapplicable and alien, but which yet cannot be conveyed save in symbols of time and space."[124] This is the basic problem of imagination mediating and struggling to recreate. The twilight realms are those that cannot be studied with the help of the categories, because they are the very ground of these categories. The inmost nature thus turns out to be the foundational consciousness which is beyond time and space.

Coleridge discounts the value of piling up of images, for they "become proofs of original genius only as far as they are modified by a predominant passion."[125] He speaks of "the Shakespearean link of association."[126] In such passages the term association is equivalent to 'suggestion.' Coleridge was not unaware of the atmosphere of suggestion in all great poetry. This atmosphere takes us to a world where time and space are absent. Profound sensibility is "one of the components of genius"; and "a more than usual rapidity of association, a more than usual power of passing from thought to thought, and image to image, is a component equally essential; and in the due modification of each by the other Genius consists."[127] It is not a simple assertion of the balance of the active with the passive powers that we have here. Coleridge's 'more than usual' is a significant qualification. The extraordinary rapidity of association is a way of referring to the profound power of intuition which dispenses with the connecting links and steps of the process; and the poetic intuition is an important aspect of the imaginative activity. "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"; and he who combines the two is the man of genius; and for that reason he must partake of both. Hence "there

124. B.L. II, 120. Cf. I, 163-7.
125. B.L. II, 16.
126. *Shak. Crit.* I, 17.
127. B.L. I, 30-1.

is in genius itself an unconscious activity; nay, that is the genius in the man of genius."[128] That the unconscious is something spiritual and infinite is evident from the form in which it is embodied by the conscious. Thus we read that Shakespeare "directs self-consciously a power and an implicit wisdom deeper than consciousness."[129] This 'deeper' is similar to Daniel's depth referred to earlier, and it means more real, more valuable. The "region of unconscious thoughts, oftentimes the more working the more indistinct they are."[130] The indistinct is the indeterminate, the infinite. Thus Pan "represents the intelligence blended with a darker power, deeper, mightier, and more universal than the conscious intellect of man."[131] And Coleridge's endeavour was directed to raise the mind above the tyranny of the senses into the world of Ideas.[132] This elevation is inherent in every organism because of the self-transcendence exhibited by every finite centre of experience. "The Images in Dante are not only taken from obvious nature, and are intelligible to all, but are ever conjoined with the universal feeling received from nature, and therefore affect the general feelings of all men."[133] It is the inherent self-transcendence that gives rise to this experience of universal feelings. Such a self-transcendence is exhibited at the level of prerational immediacy and also at that of the post-ideation experience. The felt back-ground in both the states exhibits similar characteristics, though with divergent values. Because of these two possible levels of immediacy Coleridge could assert that Shakespeare's imagery is "a series and never a broken chain."[134] "In Shakespeare one sentence begets another naturally: The meaning is all inwoven. He goes on kindling like a meteor through

128. B.L. II, 258.
129. *Shak. Crit.* I, 224.
130. B.L. II, 260.
131. B.L. II, 93.
132. B.L. I, 189.
133. *Misc. Crit.* 152.
134. B.L. II, 15.

the dark atmoshpere."[135] The passive, the spontaneous and the voluntary classes of inward experience[136] are harmonised in the great creative artist. Consequently the higher immediacy which a great work of art evokes does not have an infinite progression. It appears like the neo-platonist emanation, and it is circular. Thus "Shakespeare's intellectual action is wholly unlike that of Ben Jonson or Beaumont and Fletcher. The latter see the totality of a sentence or passage, and then project it entire. Shakespeare goes on creating and evolving, B out of A, and C out of B, and so on, just as a serpent moves, which makes a fulcrum out of its own body and seems for ever twisting and untwisting its own strength." The serpent shows the possibility of such an emanation which is organically related to its being. This makes the imaginative activity a coherent unity as against "the phantasmal chaos of association."[137]

The coherence achieved by imagination is symbolic of the unimaginable. As Coleridge remarked in his lecture on **Romeo and Juliet**: "The grandest effects of poetry are when the imagination is called forth, not to produce a distinct form, but a strong working of the mind...; the result being what the poet wishes to impress, namely, the substitution of a sublime feeling of the imaginable for a mere image." The unimaginable is only suggested by the image, or by the words or by both. This unimaginable is Reality which seems to be realised by our consciousness. As a result of this, it is metaphorically remarked: "How much lies below his own consciousness."[138] The supra-consciousness being foundational appears to be hidden or concealed; and the creative imagination seeks to remove the veil a little and present it to us suggestively and symbolically. Hence we are impelled to seek "the

135. *Table Talk*, 7th April, 1833.
136. B.L. I, 66.
137. B.L. I, 81.
138. *Anima Poetae*, 25.

increase of consciousness in such wise that whatever part of the **terra incognita** of our nature the increased consciousness discovers, our will may conquer and bring into subjection to itself under the sovereignty of reason."[139] The **terra incognita** may be the foundational consciousness; but it should be made intelligible and explicable. That which realises this task to some extent is the secondary imagination of the artist who has genius; and "genius of the highest kind implies an unusual intensity of the modifying power."[140] This modifying power belongs to the foundational consciousness. It can never be exhausted, nor can it ever be static. It is constantly revealing itself—"The rules of Imagination are themselves the very powers of growth and production."[141]

139. *Stateman's Manual,* Appendix B.
140. *Table Talk,* Ist May, 1833.
141. B.L. II, 65.

†6. FEELING AND POETRY

The fine arts embody certain feelings and emotions, and the artistic experience is generally taken to be pleasant. But as Coleridge has remarked, "the Apollo Belvedere is not beautiful because it pleases, but it pleases us because it is beautiful."[1] Both beauty and pleasure are objective because they are real, because they conform to universal principles. The pleasure of art is grounded in the awareness of the beautiful which is a value and which is agreeable. A work of art is aesthetically agreeable if it contains in itself the ground of this agreeability, and if it is pleasing for its own sake. Such a work alone is beautiful.[2] The work must not evoke pleasure but must embody that pleasure in itself. That is, the pleasure of art must be intrinsic, not derivatory.

This pleasure appears in a variety of forms, the chief one being sympathy. And it is said, "sympathy the poet alone can excite/any Dabbler in stories may excite pity. —The more I think, the more I am convinced that Admiration is an essential element of poetical Delight."[3] The poem evokes sympathy, and the sympathetic imagination takes the reader to an experience similar to that of the poet. Later when we realise the full value of that experience, our sympathy gradually gives place to, or is assimilated in, our admiration of the poet. Regarding the value of this state of experience, we find Coleridge stating: "If I can do nothing else with

1. B.L. II, 224.
2. B.L. II, 236.
3. *Notebooks,* Ed. Coburn, I, 957.

beauty, I can show it to somebody. Sympathy itself perhaps may have some connection with this impulse to embody feeling in action. The accumulation of these eye-given pleasure-yearnings may impel to enthusiastic action/but if a woman be near, will probably kindle or increase the passion of sexual love."[4] There is no question of the beautiful having any utilitarian function. The experience of beauty is an expansive and illuminating experience. It compels the experiencing subject to share his experience with others. This desire to share is stimulated by the presence of sympathy and it results in a sympathetic interpretation. This is the path of the feeling embodied in the work and experienced by the reader. It is a form of enthusiastic action. Pleasure, on the contrary, has its ground in the physical experiences, not in the mental. As such he remarks: "Pleasure, itself (too often) Delusion, may pitch her Tent on enchanted ground. Happiness can be built on Virtue (only, must of necessity) Truth for its foundation."[5] Truth and virtue are at the basis of a satisfying experience which involves not pleasure but delight and emotion. The blending of the spontaneous impulse with voluntary purpose results in the metrical form. The voluntary act has the design and "the purpose of blending delight with emotion."[6] This fusion offers a disinterested state of exeperience which has an intrinsic value. It is determined by no ultimate motives. It is closer to the satisfaction of the old in the company of the young. "Laughter of parents and Grandames at little children's motions, is Laughter in its original state—a little convulsive motion to get rid of a pleasure rising into pain—this worthy of further thought—Love—Desire."[7] Love and desire, pleasure and pain, are involved here; and the first term of each pair assimilates the second to such an extent that

4. *Ibid.*, I, 1356.
5. *Ibid.*, I, 1375.
6. B.L. II, 50.
7. *Notebooks*, I, 1533.

the total experience purifies and refines the spirit. It is spontaneous and sincere; and the feelings involved in the fine arts have this character.

But does not the experience of a poem or a play give rise to feelings and emotions which we may not normally have? A play like **King Lear** may evoke the experience of ingratitude even when one is unaware of it. "Poetry excites us to artificial feelings—makes us callous to real ones."[8] This is possible when the poet is too subjective, when he is on the verge of becoming sentimental. But what a true poet needs is sympathy. Thus he writes: "The sympathy of the poet with the subjects of his poetry is particularly remarkable in Shakespeare and Chaucer; but what the first effects by a strong act of imagination and mental metamorphosis, the last does without any effort, merely by the inborn kindly joyousness of his nature."[9] Imagination and innate humanity determine the nature of sympathy. And Coleridge remarks: "When a mere stripling, I had formed the opinion that true taste was virtue and that bad writing was bad feeling."[10] True taste is virtue in the sense that it brings forth an expansive, all-inclusive soul. Where this is found, he would say: "How absolutely nothing do we know of Shakespeare."[11] Taste and virtue refer to sound feelings that are not alien to us, but revealed to us in a poetic mood as being implicitly present in us. These are not original feelings for "those only who feel no originality, no consciousness of having received their thoughts and opinions from direct inspiration, are anxious to be thought original. The certainty, the feeling that he is right, is enough for the man of genius."[12] This absolute conviction comes to the genius from his quest for certainty; and he is not very much worried whether his feelings are ori-

8. *Anima Poetae,* 5; *Notebooks,* I, 87.
9. *Table Talk,* 15th March 1834.
10. *Anima Poetae,* 165.
11. *Table Talk,* 15th March 1834.
12. *Anima Poetae,* 160.

ginal or familiar. In most cases, they are not original; for as Coleridge remarks, originality is an eccentricity. "Original? —yes! It is implied in the very idea of a Monster."[13] The poetic process cannot be absolutely original since the poet may draw his impetus or material from the objective world or from his own mind. The latter was affected by Milton: "In the **Paradise Lost**—indeed in every one of his poems—it is Milton himself whom you see; his Satan, his Adam, his Raphael, almost his Eve—are all John Milton; and it is a sense of this intense egotism that gives me the greatest pleasure in reading Milton's works."[14] And yet earlier Coleridge could say that Milton's sympathies or personality did not come in the way of the plan or objective of the poem: "In the description of paradise itself you have Milton's sunny side as a man....The love of Adam and Eve in Paradise is of the highest merit....No one can rise from the perusal of this immortal poem without a deep sense of the grandeur and the purity of Milton's soul, or without feeling how susceptible of domestic enjoyments he really was, notwithstanding the discomforts which actually resulted from an apparently unhappy choice in marriage."[15] It is a curious irony that made Coleridge breathe himself into the last sentence here in 1818 when his own 'unhappy choice in marriage' drove him away from the hearth. It is likely that, like Milton, Coleridge too wanted a wife like Eve.

An intensely deep experience tends to make the feeling too personal. But this personal feeling in that very process undergoes a transformation and appears to be impersonal. And feeling acquires an important place in Coleridge's theory of poetry. The artist "must always be a poor and unsuccessful cultivator of the Arts if he is not impelled first by a mighty, inward power, a feeling...; nor can he make great advances

13. *Notebooks,* I, 557.
14. *Table Talk,* August 1833.
15. *Miscellaneous Criticism,* 163-5.

in his Art, if in the course of his progress, the obscure impulse does not gradually become a bright, and clear, and living Ideal!"[16] The mighty or dominant feeling or passion must become a bright, living idea. The original feeling centres round an object or an image. As his feeling grows and develops, it replaces the original by itself and then becomes one with the idea embodied by the original object or image. The intensity of passion gives rise to an understanding of the symbolic character of its starting point, and the symbol is then replaced by the idea. Throughout the process is determined by feeling which is a personal feeling, and there does not seem to be a way of escaping from this. "When a man is attempting to describe another's character, he may be right or he may be wrong—but in one thing he will always succeed, in describing himself. If he expresses simple approbation, he praises from a consciousness of possession—If he approve with admiration, from a consciousness of deficiency."[17] The personal factor appears to be unavoidable. But if a work were to embody the personal feelings, can it have an objective value? With reference to **The Prelude** he observed: "It is for the biographer, not the poet, to give the accidents of individual life. Whatever is not representative, generic, may be indeed most poetically expressed, but is not poetry."[18] The poem is not to be a piece of autobiograhpy. At the same time the poet cannot go beyond his exclusive experiences and present humanity objectively, since it is remarked: "unbiased mind—an absurdity."[19] The mind is to some extent biased however much one may struggle; and yet one is not to give us snatches of his own life. That is, the personal feeling must be transmuted into the impersonal. The true poet gets the "facts elevated into theory, theory into laws—and laws into living and in-

16. *Treatise on Method,* 63.
17. *Notebooks,* I, 74.
18. B.L. II, 33, 101.
19. *Notebooks,* I, 59.

telligent powers—true idealism necessarily perfecting itself in realism, and realism refining itself into idealism."[20] Facts are apprehended as instances or symbols of a theory. Then the theory is transformed into a law. Facts are thus translated into truths, and these truths are to be embodied as living powers or ideas. This is rendered possible by that state or form of feeling known as intuition.

A kind of sympathetic intuition enables the imagination to identify itself with the object; and through feeling, this imagination apprehends the specific nature of the object. And when feeling is too deep, we have the "substitution of a sublime feeling of the unimaginable for a mere image." The embodiment of a deep feeling carries with it a rare power of suggestion, thereby presenting the ideas not clearly and adequately, but powerfully. "By deep feeling we make our **Ideas dim**—and this is what we mean by our life—ourselves. I think of the wall—it is before me, a distinct Image—here. I necessarily think of the **Idea** and the thinking I as two distinct and opposite things. Now (let me) think of **myself**—of the thinking Being—the Idea becomes dim whatever it be—so dim that I know not what it is—but the feeling is deep and steady—and that I call I—identifying the Percipient and the Perceived."[21] The subject is identified with the object and in such a deep feeling all the distinctions and differences are obliterated. The resulting experience is one of identity or unity; and in seeking to understand it fully the mind becomes active and the feeling becomes identical with its substance. This substance comes from ideas and images.

The power of poetry, he says, is "to instil energy into the mind, which compels the imagination to produce the picture."[22] This picture embodies an idea vividly and clearly; and its vividness is in direct proportion to the nature of the

20. *Collected Letters,* IV, 575.
21. *Notebooks,* I, 921.
22. *Shakespeare Criticism,* II, 174.

feeling. "Strength of feeling connected with vividness of Idea",[23] is a significant note calling us back to the content or substance of feeling. This feeling being personal can be felt intensely only when the individual can withdraw himself into himself. "I must be alone, if either my Imagination or Heart are to be excited or enriched."[24] It is in solitude that the meditating self can feel fully.

On 21st October, 1794, Southey heard that "When a man is unhappy, he writes damned bad poetry." This does not imply that poetry emerges from a subjective state of exultation. It only means that joy as such is an integral aspect of the creative process. This is an objective state. Taking Milton's adjectives 'simple, sensuous, and passionate' as an adequate summary of the nature of poetry, Coleridge observes that "sensuousness insures the framework of objectivity, the definiteness and articulation of imagery."[25] The articulation emerges from the innermost core of the poet's being. And it is observed: "the Voice was in my heart—it is only the echo which you hear from my Mouth."[26] The echo comes from a voice that has realised a unique state of objectivity.

What is the kind of objectivity that a lyric can express? Is it not the expression of a personal emotion? The lyric "in its very essence is poetical."[27] The lyric 'I' is no more the 'I-representative' but the poet as a person. Then alone can he argue that poetry for the early men "was the language of passion and emotion; it is what they themselves spoke and heard in moments of exultation, indignation."[28] Yet he observes that 'deep and quick' sensibility and depth of emotion are necessary components of genius along with impersonality and

23. *Notebooks,* I, 1099.
24. *Ibid.,* I, 1610.
25. *Shakespeare Criticism,* I, 165-66.
26. *Notebooks,* I, 432.
27. *Shakespeare Criticism,* I, 226.
28. *Miscellaneous Criticism,* 227.

'energy of thought.'[29] The depth of emotion refers to its being an essentially human emotion, and the energy of thought secures for it a purely objective existence. Poetry is the product of 'the whole soul of man' in action and a poem "neither can be, or ought to be, all poetry." Passion is the 'soul of Poetry'; and since passion cannot endure for a long time, good poetry is bound to be lyrical; and in such a work of poetic genius, imagination is 'the soul that is everywhere.' It is not the 'striking passages' that give us 'a fair criterion of poetic excellence' but the unity forged by passion and imagination[30]; and unity always secures objectivity to the work of art.

Without the 'framework of objectivity', and without the 'definiteness and articulation of imagery', poetry becomes day-dreaming; and "passion provides that neither thought nor imagery shall be simply objective, but that the **passio vera** of humanity shall warm and animate both."[31] Pure objectivity, is not possible because of passion. Ancient poetry, however, is said to be objective: "It is this inwardness or subjectivity, which principally and most fundamentally distinguishes all the classic from all the modern poetry."[32] Modern poetry is more inward. There is even "a subjectivity of the **persona**, or dramatic character, as in all Shakespeare's great creations"[33]; and yet "Shakespeare is universal, and, in fact, has no manner."[33*] Then certain forms like the elegy, the lyric and the ode are subjective, while the epic is objective.[33*] Shakespeare's characters are bound to express themselves, but Shakespeare himself "is the spinozistic deity—and omnipresent creativeness"; for his "poetry is characterless;

29. B.L. I, 30, II, 14-19.
30. B.L. II, 11-13, 84.
31. *Shakespeare Criticism,* I, 165-66; B.L. I, 109.
32. *Miscellaneous Criticism,* 148.
33. *Table Talk.*
33.* *Ibid.*

that is, it does not reflect the individual Shakespeare."[34] His characters emerged out of his meditation, "and they were at once true to nature, and fragments of the divine mind that drew them."[35] He presents, according to Coleridge, a harmonious fusion of the subjective and the objective. He imitates not 'his own nature, as an individual person', but the **natura naturans** whose one modification was his personal existence.[36] In psychological terms this is explained as being equivalent to the fact that Shakespeare "darts himself forth, and passes into all the forms of human character and passion"; and then he "becomes all things, yet for ever remaining himself."[37]

Describing his yearning for his native land, he observes, "my yearning affects more than my **heart**—I feel it all within me."[38] This is something like the active participation of the whole soul of man in the artistic process. The creative act is a kind of yearning. But the product represents an aspect of this state of being. Possibly here may be found the distinction between poetry and the poem. "Poetry of the highest kind may exist without metre, and even without the contra-distinguishing objects of a poem."[39] Poetry is that state of experience where imagination has not yet succeeded in subjugating the movement of passion. "In all violent states of **passion** the mind **acts and plays** a part, itself the actor and the spectator at once."[40] In the poem proper, the mind is a detached agent and there is the embodiment of the essence of poetry. The poem is the embodied expression of poetry.

In poetry the ideas are under the gentle control of the feelings. Coleridge observes: "Our notions resemble the index and hand of the dial; our feelings are the hidden springs which impel the machine, with this difference, that notions

34. *Table Talk,* 12th May 1830.
35. *Shakespeare Criticism,* II, 117.
36. *Misc. Crit.* 43-44.
37. B.L. II, 20; *Shak. Crit.* I, 218, II, 17, 96. 132-3.
38. Letter to Mrs. Coleridge, 23rd April, 1799.
39. B.L. II, 11.
40. Letter to Thomas Poole, 6th May 1799.

and feelings react on each other reciprocally."[41] The artist turns this interaction to a significant end. The passion that is at the basis of the creative act is so closely connected with metre "that many of the finest passages we read in prose are in themselves, in point of metre, poetry—only they are forms of metre which we have not been familiarised to and are not brought forward to us and other English readers in the shape of metre."[42] In the actual poem or a poetic passage some words may have a jarring effect on the ear since they interfere with the rhythm. This should not lead us to believe that Coleridge defends poetic diction; for he notes "Nose not usable in poetry because no passion—but nostril is—no worthy passion."[43] It is a significant passion that can redeem the words. The emphasis on passion makes poetry the ideal, and the poem the ideal form. That is, the poem is the highest possible manifestation of the ideal. The poem is related to poetry as the symbol to the idea.

In this context we may turn to an interesting note: "Poetry without egotism comparatively uninteresting—Mem. write an Ode to Meat and Drink."[44] But if the Ode is written, we will have a poem, not poetry. The latter may breathe egotism to some extent, but a poem cannot convincingly do that. The objectification of poetry is the poem. Hence poetry and the poet are defined subjectively. The famous definition of the poet[45] emphasises the wholeness of the soul and activity which are revealed in and through a series of relationships. It is the failure to subordinate the "faculties each to each" that is responsible for the absence of genius in the poetry of Dryden and Pope. Thus he notes: "Like Pope and Dryden till 15, well!—if from thence to 25 or thirty—no hope of Genius—but may have Talents and make an excellent Law-

41. *Shak. Crit.*, II, 12.
42. *Ibid.*, II, 79-80.
43. *Notebooks*, I, 644.
44. *Ibid.*, I, 62.
45. B.L. II, 12.

yer."[46] The series of relationship that a genius effects are reducible to a system governed beside others by the principle of the reconciliation of opposites. This principle, however, implies the subordination and assimilation of one entity to the other; and this is intuitively and immediately realised. We should not, however, argue that poetry is illogical, for poetry has a logic of its own. It is an activity that is regulated and controlled by the logical tendency. As a significant note reads: "A child scolding a flower in the words in which he had himself been scolded and whipt, is poetry past passion with pleasure—."[47] The logical frontiers are here not violated but assimilated and transcended. The poetic process involves the struggle "to idealize and to unify." This struggle is charged with a dominant passion which centres round a prominent idea. The two are fused by imagination, and this is contemporaneous with the fusion of passion and will. The two fusions are again unified and idealised giving rise to an immediacy of pleasure; for, "the proper and immediate object of poetry is the communication of immediate pleasure." This immediacy carries with it a spontaneity that seeks to subordinate the volitional activity, even though the volition is necessary for the emergence of form. Poetry differs from science in that it exhibits "those powers of mind, which are spontaneous rather than voluntary, and in which the effort required bears no proportion to the activity enjoyed."

Schiller's review of Burgher's **Gedichte** in the Jenaische Allgemeine Literatur Zeitung, January 1791, employs the expression 'emotion recollected in tranquillity.' Through Coleridge it passed on to the famous statement about the origin of poetry in Wordsworth's **Preface.** Coleridge's emphasis is not so much on tranquillity as on the emotion itself; for poetry has that specific "pleasurable emotion, that peculiar state and degree of excitement, which arises in the poet himself in the

46. *Notebooks,* I, 669.
47. *Ibid.,* I, 786.

act of composition."[48] This excitement of the poet is to be translated into a similar state of the reader or listener of the poem. The recollected emotion has to be concentrated upon till the very awareness of recollection is lost. The absence of such an excitement would make the work sentimental. "Those who have written delightful poems with good sense, and the common feelings of all good and sensible men; but without the passion, or the peculiar feelings, and stronger excitements of the poetic character—**Deserted Village,** but especially Cowley's Cromwell."[49] The poetic character has to overcome the sentimental and be charged with a predominant passion. The poet has "a more than ordinary sympathy with the objects, emotions, or incidents contemplated." He has an uncommon sensibility and an extraordinary activity of the mind. These powers enable him to have "a more vivid reflection of the truths of nature and of the human heart." The passion and the idea are then fused into one. The predominant passion around a significant idea is capable of being expressed in an orderly and harmonious manner. Hence he records in a note "Hotheaded men confuse, your cool-headed Gentry jumble, the man of warm feelings only produces order and true connections."[50] The truths revealed in the creative mood are modified and corrected "by that sort of pleasurable emotion, which exertion of all our faculties gives in a certain degree." This activity of the mind is spontaneous, not voluntary. It is "the state which permits the production of a highly pleasurable whole."[51] The final expression employs words, and even in the imaginative activity there must be a verbal aspect.

"Examine minutely the nature, cause, birth and growth of the verbal Imagination of which Borrow is almost the

48. *Shak. Crit.,* I, 163.
49. *Notebooks,* I, 829.
50. *Ibid.,* I, 868.
51. *Shak. Crit.,* I, 163-64.

Ideal."[52] The unifying principle is emotion at the heart of imagination. This emotion is gently regulated by the will to give rise to proportion, congruity and harmony. Here is the source of verbal imagination. Once it is awakened, it orders the entire composition; for "the business of the writer, like that of the painter whose subject requires unusual splendour and prominence, is to raise the lower and neutral tints."[53] The language of excitement is heightened and intensified by art. The language is selected "by the power of imagination proceeding upon the all in each of human nature", and by meditation that results from the activity of imagination.[54] Mere observation is mechanical if it be not regulated by imagination which is "creation rather than painting" and which flashes at once upon the eye the whole picture.[55] It is the verbal imagination which brings about "a perfect appropriateness of the words to the meaning."[56] This is the criterion of "untranslatableness in words of the same language without injury to the meaning."[57] The poem has in it the full meaning, for the meaning of a word includes "not only its correspondent object, but likewise all the associations of the person who is representing it."[58] These associations are the endless powers of suggestion that significant sounds carry because of the imaginative atmosphere.

Darwin paints and analyses, but he does not know how to keep his own feelings utterly aloof from what he writes. "Darwin's poetry, a succession of Landscapes or paintings— it arrests the attention too often and so prevents the rapidity necessary to pathos. —it makes the great little. —seems to have written his poems as painters who of beautiful objects—

52. *Notebooks,* I, 1275.
53. B.L. II, 98.
54. B.L. II, 64.
55. B.L. II, 102-3.
56. B.L. II, 115.
57. B.L. I, 14-15.
58. B.L. II, 115-16.

take—studies."[59] Mere succession is the product of fancy. Reducing succession to an instant is an act of the imagination. While succession is governed by personal likes and dislikes, genius reveals "a choice of subjects very remote from the private interests and circumstances of the writer himself."[60] Regarding the proposed poem **The Brook** he observes: "I sought for a subject that should give equal room and freedom for description, incident and impassioned reflections on men, nature, and society, yet supply in itself a natural connection to the parts, and unity to the whole."[61] Such a unity might appear on a prima facie view to be abrupt. But "Abruptness....An abrupt beginning followed by an even and majestic greatness compared to the launching of a ship, which after sails on in a steady breeze."[62] The unity or wholeness of a stream is what a good poem would embody. Into this unity there enter diverse elements which reveal a full vitality, for poetry "is the blossom and the fragrancy of all human knowledge, human thoughts, human passions, emotions, language."[63] What is needed is the poetic vision of the whole prior to the actual composition. The poet must have the 'sur-view.'[64] This "enables a man to foresee the whole of what he is to convey appertaining at any one point; and by this means to subordinate and arrange the different parts according to their relative importance, as to convey it at once, and as an organised whole."[65] This organisation involves the patterning of sounds. In a letter he informs us, "in my opinion, poetry justifies as poetry, independent of any other passion, some new combinations of language and **commands** the omission of many others allow-

59. *Notebooks,* I, 132.
60. B.L. II, 14.
61. B.L. I, 129.
62. *Nootbooks,* I, 225.
63. B.L. II, 19.
64. B.L. II, 44.
65. *Friend,* 2-408-9.

able in other compositions." It is an art conscientiously and deliberately undertaken by the poet. He defines the poem with reference to an immediate 'object', 'purpose' or 'end' which is pleasure.[66] It is not a spontaneous overflow, but "the art of communicating whatever we wish to communicate so as both to express and produce excitement, but for the purpose of immediate pleasure."[67] This purpose is achieved by an easy, familiar, conversational style; for, "Good writing is produced more effectually by rapidly glancing through language as it already exists, than by an hasty recourse to the **Mint** of Invention."[68] We may allow a draughtsman to present the visual effects "with incomparably greater satisfaction by half a dozen strokes of the pencil, or the painter with as many touches of his brush."[69] But poetry is a deliberate act of the mind. Epithets are to be eschewed and compression to be practised.[70] Poetry presents the reconciliation of spontaneous impluse and voluntary purpose, even if "the very act of poetic composition itself is, and is allowed to imply and to produce, an unusual state of excitement."[71] The visual effects evoked by a draughtsman or by a painter are not allowable here. "The sole difference in style is that poetry demands a severer keeping—it admits nothing that prose may not oftener admit, but it oftener rejects."[72] Poetry implies a severe discipline. Fine descriptions usually evoke their effects "by a charm of word, with which and with whose combinations we associate feelings, indeed, but no distinct images."[73] This might gradually transform even the nature of reason. He told Southey on 18th September 1794 that Caldwell told him "that the

66. B. L. II, 8-10.
67. *Shak. Crit.* II, 67.
68. Letter to Poole, 5th May 1796.
69. B.L. II, 16-18.
70. Letter to Thelwall, 14th October 1797.
71. B.L. II, 56.
72. *Anima Poetae,* 229.
73. *Collected Letters,* I, 349, 511.

strength of my Imagination had intoxicated my Reason—and that the acuteness of my reason had given a directing influence to my Imagination." Poetry is not the product of a mere spontaneous impulse. It implies the operation of reason, will and understanding. The poet must find out the excitement proper to the creative process and then employ it carefully. "Through the same process and by the same creative agency will the poet distinguish the degree and kind of the excitement produced by the very act of poetic composition."[74] Then he will intuitively know the appropriate style, the kind and degree of the fusion of conscious volition required, and the necessity of figurative language. The story and the event are not so important as imagination and feeling. Referring to Southey he wrote in April, 1797 to Joseph Cottle: "I am fearful that he will begin to rely too much on **story** and **event** in his poems, to the neglect of those **lofty imaginings,** that are peculiar to and definitive of the poet." The words charged by feeling and imagination do not involve a copy which presents discrete parts, for the poet seeks to "paint to the imagination, not to the fancy."[75] It is therefore argued that poetry, like the other fine arts, has "to express intellectual purposes, thoughts, conceptions, sentiments, that have their origin in the human mind."[76]

74. B.L. II, 64.
75. B.L. II, 102-3.
76. *Misc. Crit.* 207.

7. NATURE OF POETRY

The individual in a specific state of experience is known as the poet. The nature of the poet provides the clearest account of the nature of poetry Taking up this line of approach Coleridge observes that the poet is a man of passion and of sensibility. Rejecting the 'state of excitement' expressed crudely and directly, he insists that excitement must stimulate metre and figurative language. Thus he says that 'strong passions command figurative language'; that 'figures of speech are orginially the offspring of passion', and that a strong passion employs 'a language more measured than' that in common speaking.[1] Hence too 'passion is the true parent of every word in existence in every language."[2] This passion links the poet to that state of childhood in which are found simpler and vehement feelings. "The poet is one who carries the simplicity of childhood into the powers of manhood."[3] Passion, sensibility, metre, figurative language, and simplicity are accordingly some characteristics distinguishing a poem from other compositions and works.

Passion or an intense state of feeling is the basic factor on which the others are grounded. This passion works in close cooperation with sensibility. The term sensibility might stand for emotionalism or ability to receive sensations vividly. The sensations are inseparable from the emotional excitement. This excitement is the same as joy, and it is other than emotion. Since passion and emotion are most important along with ideas, Coleridge considers plot to be only a canvas. He

1. *Shakespeare Criticism,* I, 206; B.L. II, 50.
2. *S.C.* II, 15.
3. *S.C.* II, 148.

told Joseph Cottle early in April 1797: "I am fearful that Southey will begin to rely too much on story and event in his poems, to the neglect of those lofty imaginings, that are peculiar to, and definitive of the poet." This, however, does not mean that Coleridge was not aware of the other factors in the poem. In a letter to Wordsworth on 23.1.1798 he analysed a tragedy into "language, character, passion, sentiment and conduct." He is particularly unmindful of the story and of the plot-construction. This might lead to an identification of poetry with the lyric. He remarked, "a poem of any length neither can be, or ought to be, all poetry."[4] But the term poetry, he observes, is applicable to painting and music as well, the various arts being differentiated by the differences in their media.[5] The medium is the distinguishing factor which can also specify the subspecies in any art. He considered it to be "far better to distinguish poetry into different classes" or genres.[6] This classification depends on the nature of the medium. While the medium varies from one art-form to another, that which unifies the different forms and media is passion.

Passion, however, is no chaotic state. Coleridge observes: "By excitement of the associative power passion itself imitates order and the order resulting produces a pleasurable passion (whence metre)." Passion is not only a state of excitement, but it brings about an excitement, involving those factors or faculties that are associated with it. In this consequential excitement there arises an order, a specific combination, a pattern. This pattern is essential to a poem. Without it, the poem will cease to be a poem. The objects touched by poetry acquire an interest "by means of the passions, and yet (poetry) tempers the passions by the calming power which

4. B.L. II, 11; S.C. I, 226.
5. *Lectures,* 30.
6. *Misc. Crit.* 170.

all distinct images exert on the human soul."[7] Just as the volitional act suspends the volitional attitude of belief, the passion or excitement that gives rise to the poem not only excites our emotions but tempers them. In other words, excitement with which poetry is concerned is a strange blend of two divergent trends. It excites and also refines. In this polarity, we find the specific nature of poetry. A quick and deep sensibility is a component part of genius[8] along with imagination and will. As Coleridge told Daniel Stuart on May 16, 1801, "cheerful thoughts come with genial sensations." The poetic activity thus includes the physical and non-physical activities; it is the whole individual that is active, not some mystic essence. As a consequence the poem too embodies the varied aspects that make up the human being.

In this activity the individual has an experience, in which his feelings are so deeply stirred that he does not have a consciousness of his exclusive personality. This state has been described by many, at least since Plato, as an inspired one. Early in April, 1797, Coleridge informed Cottle: "I would write haply not unhearing of that divine and rightly-whispering voice, which speaks to mighty minds of predestinated garlands, starry and unwithering." Late in life in his lectures he remarked: "what Hooker so eloquently claims for law I say of poetry—'Her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world; all things in heaven and earth do her homage.' It is the language of heaven, and in the exquisite delight we derive from poetry we have, as it were, a type, a foretaste, and a prophecy of the joys of heaven."[9] Inspiration is the principle that not only explains the spiritual quality of the poetic content, but it also reveals that the joy or delight communicated by poetry is a spiritual experience. In this experience the body ceases to be physical and it is transformed into the spiritual. The poem resulting from the inspired mood does not, however,

7. M.C. 205-6.
8. B.L. I, 30.
9. *Lectures,* 391-2.

tell us something original; for, inspiration is that moment of experience where we intuit the meaning and value of life, the true nature of reality. This meaning is already present in life, though we are unaware of it because of the 'film of familiarity and selfish solicitude.' Inspiration offers an insight into that which is veiled in normal life. In a notebook entry we read: "To perceive and feel the Beautiful, the Pathetic, and the Sublime in Nature, in Thought, or in Action—this combined with the power of conveying such perceptions and feelings to the minds and hearts of others under the most pleasurable forms of eye and ear—this is poetic genius." The poet does not reveal anything new. It is said: "Those only who feel no originality, no consciousness of having received their thoughts and opinions from direct inspiration, are anxious to be thought original. The certainty, the feeling that he is right, is enough for the man of genius."[10] In true poetry what we have is the authentic voice of experience, a voice that rings with the truth of the intuited, not with the claim of originality. This feature is revealed by the feeling experienced and communicated by the poet. Hence it is that the specific character of the poem "originates in the poetic genius itself."[11] This genius experiences the world not as it appears to the senses and the understanding. That is, 'The man of genius lives most in the ideal world.'[12] The ideal world is more real than the normal world of daily life because it is the basis or foundation of all experience. In apprehending it, the poetic genius reveals an intense imaginative activity. It is such a "poetic genius, which sustains and modifies the emotions, thoughts, and vivid representations of the poem."[13]

It is therefore not feeling that characterises the specific

10. *Anima Poetae,* 160.
11. *Lectures,* 12.
12. B.L. II, 30.
13. *Lectures,* 12.

nature of poetry. To feel, to intuit, the real, one needs imagination. Imagination is not something that comes from outside, nor is it regulated by any principle other than itself. The profoundest activity of the self is called imagination. Genius then is no more than "the action of reason and imagination."[14] But reason is not other than imagination. The ideas of reason are those intuited by the self-developing activity of imagination. And the direction of this power cannot be known before we reach the end. Reason is powerless to know the goal set before itself by imagination. Hence Coleridge informed Thelwall on April 23, 1801: "At least no poet has a right to be certain, that any poem will remain what it is, until he has written the whole." That is, the great poet is not fully conscious of what he is doing even during the composition. "There is in genius itself an unconscious activity; nay, this is the genius in the man of genius."[15] It is unconscious in the sense that one does not know it, though he feels it. In other words, the poetic activity is not self-conscious. In this state the conscious inward self so impresses itself on the so-called unconscious external as to appear in it. Thereby it realises a synthesis, tending towards an identity. As the genius begins to compose the poem, there is a faint return of self-consciousness. This enables him to know at least vaguely the specific character he is going to embody in his work. As he informed Southey on December 17, 1794: "Before you write a poem, you should say to yourself—what do I intend to be the character of this poem, which feature is to be predominant in it? So you make it unique." Some idea of purpose is necessary for any act of composition to begin. This idea may or may not be realised because in the act of poetic composition the genius is no longer self-conscious. He is in the hands of the imaginative power, the shaping spirit. Even the will cannot regulate it.

14. *Table Talk,* May 21, 1830.
15. M.C. 210; *Lectures,* 315.

Hence it is observed: "The rules of imagination are themselves the powers of growth and production. Could a rule be given from without, poetry would cease to be poetry and sink into a mechanical art."

It is because of this imagination that works from within that a poem has the organic form. It is a form developing from within, not imposed from without. The form is one aspect of the manifestation of imagination. And reason and understanding, that make the poet set before himself the specific character or feature he intends expressing, are controlled and regulated by the imaginative activity. This activity is an ever growing one in the sense that it develops itself in order to idealise and unify. It captures the richest moments of life and then tends to express and communicate these. This power is born with the individual. It is not acquired. It is also constantly developing in the sense that it begins its career in human life during childhood and grows with the human being. Thereby it exhibits a certainty. In being identical and yet undergoing a continuous development, imagination grapples with temporal succession which it arrests in an eternal present. This is what is aphoristically stated as reducing succession to an instant, as resolving succession into simultaneity. In this light the poem becomes not merely an expression or revelation of the self but of reality. Imagination may therefore be said to be the activity endeavouring to realise the identity of the self with the universe as a whole.

'The character and privilege of genius' is "to carry the feelings of childhood into the powers of manhood, to combine the child's sense of wonder and novelty with the appearances which everyday for perhaps forty years had rendered familiar." It is therefore "the prime merit of genius and its most unequivocal mode of manifestation", "so to represent the familiar objects as to awaken in the minds of others a kindred feeling concerning them and that freshness of sensation which is the constant accompaniment of mental no less than of bodily, convalescence." Genius produces in poems "the strongest

impressions of novelty, while it rescues the most admitted truths from the impotence caused by the very circumstance of their universal admission.[16] The focussing of imagination on the familiar objects will reveal the novel hidden to normal observations. The perception of novelty, the insight into the true character of the object, evokes the feeling of wonder. This feeling of wonder links genius to the child; and in expressing his experiences, he acquires accordingly a rare simplicity arising from the freshness of sensations and emotions. Then the truths with which we are all familiar strike us as new and powerful. This is an essential feature of poetry.

The poetic quality does not, however, originate in the sensations. It is the poetic experience that results in certain sensations which are inseparable from the emotions. The imagination makes the feeling active by giving it a substance; and this feeling brings about an excitement reflected in the emotions and sensations. As Coleridge observed, "The Beautiful, therefore, not originating in the sensations, must belong to the intellect."[17] But this intellect is that already animated by imagination and feeling. As he said: "When we find objects agreeable, the sensation of pleasure always precedes the judgment, and is its determining cause. We find it agreeable. But when we declare an object beautiful, the contemplation or intuition of its beauty precedes the feeling of complacency, in the order of nature at least: nay, in great depression of spirits may even exist without sensibly producing it."[18] Poetry which aims at giving expression to the Beautiful is based on the contemplation or intuition of the beauty of the object apprehended. This intuition may co-exist with, or give rise to, the feeling of complacency. In the case of the poetic genius, feeling is preceded by intuition; and the specific character or feature which the poet should think of communicating is this intuition.

16. *Friend,* No. 5.
17. B.L. II, 242.
18. B.L. II, 241.

Coleridge accordingly observes that "the most general and distinctive character of a poem originates in the poetic genius itself."[19] It is the poetic genius "which sustains and modifies the emotions, thoughts, and vivid representations of a poem by the energy without effort of the poet's own mind."[20] The poet's individual personality has practically nothing to do with this activity of imagination. As a dim analogue of the creative process, it is present in every one; it is no exclusive property of any one. The Beautiful does not arise as an expression of personality. On the contrary it "arises from the perceived harmony of an object, whether sight or sound, with the inborn or constitutive rules of the judgment and imagination: and it is always intuitive."[21] With regard to the lines addressed "To a Gentleman" he told Wordsworth: "I had never determined to print the lines addressed to you.... Since I lit on the first rude draft and corrected it as well as I could, I wanted no additional reason for its not being published in my lifetime than its **personality** respecting myself....It is for the biographer, not the poet, to give the **accidents** of **individual** life." Hence "the choice of subjects very remote from the private interests and circumstances of the writer himself" is a feature of genius."[22] The personality of the poet is relevant to the biographer, not to the poem.

The impersonality of creative art is an important feature emphasising the universal as the fit theme. Even the intuitions which the poet has and which he seeks to express, are not particulars but universals. And since these universals cannot be expressed adequately in or through any medium, the artist is compelled to employ symbols. The symbols he adopts are, however, charged with suggestion. Hence it is said that it is "not the poem which we have read, but that to which we return, with the greatest pleasure, possesses the

19. *S.C.* I, 106.
20. *S.C.* II, 78.
21. B.L. II, 243.
22. B.L. II, 14.

genuine power, and claims the name of essential poetry."[23] We return to the great poem with undiminished feelings because each reading advances our apprehension of the felt content suggested by it, because the power of suggestion is inexhaustible. In these symbols we discover the reconciliation of sameness with difference which refers to our recognition of imitation and idealization. This recognition gathers greater and greater substance as we renew our acquaintance with the poem.

The impersonality which is at the basis of the poetic composition, implies its emergence from that state of feeling known as sympathy. In sympathy we lose our exclusiveness by tending to share in the experiences of others. In other words, it is a principle unifying man with the external. This unification is the direction in which the imaginative activity proceeds. The poet is then a 'genius' apprehending the whole universe. The universal that is 'potentially in each particular' is revealed to the artist "as the substance capable of endless modifications." The poet's own personal existence is one of these modifications[24]; and yet he does not intuit or express these modifications, but that of which they are the modifications. In this endeavour he embodies in his work that which is of value to the entire mankind irrespective of the age and the country in which he lives. He seeks and intuits the permanent, the real, not the appearances. Hence it is said: "As a living poet must surely write, not for the ages past, but for that in which he lives, and those which are to follow, it is, on the one hand, natural that he should not violate, and, on the other, necessary that he should not depend on, the mere manners and modes of his day."[25] These external detachable features of mankind are of no value in interpreting life, or in embodying the beautiful.

The poetic activity is thus based on the product of the

23. B.L. I, 14.
24. *Lectures,* 241.
25. *Ibid.,* 49.

contemplative imagination. In this contemplation the mental energies are directed to the grasping of truth, to an insight into the nature of reality. But the insight demands a severer experience. The contemplative activity involves an absorption in the impersonal. It interprets reality by creating a fresh one; and in this creation it needs judgment. "Shakespeare shaped his characters out of the nature within", not "out of his own nature as an individual person." "Shakespeare in composing, had no I, but the I representative."[26] The genius in poetry is therefore one who elevates himself into the universal. Because of this elevation he can elevate things not only to the level of words but to that of living words. And the poem consequently becomes a revelation of a significant aspect of the universe in which we live. It presents that moment of reality or life which is charged with a significance extending far beyond the situation in which it is discovered.

In this impersonal experience genius discovers a reconciliation of appearances with reality. He harmonises the familiar with the unfamiliar. Throughout the emphasis is on unity, on the indivisible character of reality. In unfolding this character there is no other medium as powerful as the imaginative activity. Poetic imagination involves the power "to find no contradiction in the union of old and new; to contemplate the 'Ancient of Days' and all his works with feelings as fresh as if all had then sprung forth at the first creative fiat." "The mind that feels the riddle of the world" has this power with which it can attempt "to unravel it."[27]

There is a magnificent passage in the **Biographia** where Coleridge summarises aphoristically the specific nature of the poet, and therefore of poetry. He observes that the poet "described in ideal perfection" is one "who brings the whole soul of man into activity, with the subordination of its faculties to each other according to their relative worth and dignity. He dif-

26. *Ibid.*, 241.
27. *Friend*, No. 5.

fuses a tone and spirit of unity that blends and (as it were) fuses, each into each, by that synthetic and magical power to which we have exclusively appropriated the name of Imagination. This power, first put in action by the will and understanding, retained under their irremissive, though gentle and unnoticed, control, reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities: of sameness, with difference; of the general, with the concrete; the idea, with the image; the individual, with representative; the sense of novelty and freshness, with old and familiar objects; a more than usual state of emotion, with more than usual order; judgment ever awake and steady self-possession, with enthusiasm and feeling profound or vehement; and while it blends and harmonises the natural and the artificial, still subordinates art to nature; the manner to the matter; and our admiration of the poet to our sympathy with the poetry."[28] Here we have an account of the equipment and faculties of the poet, a description of the nature of the work of art, and the effect of the work on the reader. All these aspects are interpreted in the light of the holistic logic based on the principle of unity.

The ideal poet is a genius like Shakespeare in whom are found a variety of factors like sensibilty, passion, fancy, imagination, will, good sense and judgment. He is not only a good man, but 'a profound metaphysician', 'an historian and naturalist in the light as well as the life of philosophy.' He is one constantly seeking to enlarge his self, to become more and more universal. Imagination enables him to realise within himself the comprehensive, all-inclusive character of reality. But this character needs a dynamic soul and the poem resulting therefrom must breathe this dynamism. Because of this perpetual activity, the poem comes to express a genuine experience of wonder at the mystery of the universe. This experience captures the mystery as it unifies the manifold. This unification gives us a powerful apprehension of

28. Cf. *Lectures,* 12; B.L. II, 12.

the Beautiful. Hence it is said that "the safest definition, then, of Beauty, as well as the oldest, is that of Pythagoras: The Reduction of Many to One....The sense of beauty subsists in simultaneous intuition of the relations of parts, each to each, and of all to a whole: exciting an immediate and absolute complacency, without intervenence, therefore, of any interest, sensual or intellectual.'[29] The elements derived from the senses and from the intellect are harmonised by being regulated and controlled by imagination. A good poem then can be neither predominantly sensuous nor too intellectual.

The poetic activity involves 'the whole soul of man.' Here imagination is the nucleus or the indwelling principle around which all other faculties or activities are organised. Out of this arises the unity of the composition. In uniting 'sameness with difference', the poem appears as a growing or evolving form in spite of a pattern. It is an imitation and yet a creation. It unites the 'general with the concrete' when it gives a finite expression to the universal intuited. In this expression we have a reconciliation between the sense-elements and reason or understanding. In other words, the ideas emerging from the intuitions are shown in poetry as coalescing with the images arising from sense impressions. And the experience thus expressed is unique and yet symbolic. In such a poem we have the novelty of the fact intuited and the freshness of the sensation which this intuition brings in its wake. The novelty and the freshness are presented as permeating the old and familiar objects and pattern as well. This evokes the reader's surprise and recognition.

In the poem expressive of such a genius, we do discover an unusual state of emotion, and an unusual ordering of the emotions, sensations and symbols. This ordering or arrangement distinguishes the poem from a prose composition. It is in the evolution of this pattern that the poet's powers of judgment are ever awake; and this judgment comes from

29. B.L. II, 238-9.

the unusual tranquillity and sanity of mind. Yet it is a sanity that carries with it a great enthusiasm, a vitality with tremendous potentialities. This enthusiasm or excitement coexists with a profound or vehement feeling. With all this we are told that imagination not only "blends and harmonises the natural and the artificial", but it "subordinates art to nature, the manner to the matter." Imagination does not assimilate nature to art. The artist cannot capture the essence of nature for the simple reason that he has to depend only on symbols which are inadequate. Moreover, the imaginative activity is not the same as the creativity inherent in the universe, but only a dim analogue of that. It is therefore essential that art should have the power of suggestion. In this suggestion we have the self-transcendence of all the finite forms. The work of art as an embodiment in a determinate medium is characterised by finitude; and yet this finitude is animated by the spiritual activity called imagination. Because of this art constantly aspires to become one with nature. Nature for Coleridge is the spirit of nature; it is Reality. In aspiring to become one with this spirit, the work of art leads us beyond itself. Thus originating in an experience, the artistic composition again takes us to a wider and more significant experience. In this self-transcendence, the manner or the form is subordinated to the matter or content. Here too this subordination is only the self-transcendence of the manner. The form aspires to become one with its matter, just as the complete work exhibits a straining to become one with the spirit.

Such a work of art evokes 'our admiration of the poet' who is able to communicate such an experience. But this admiration slowly gives way to 'sympathy with the poetry.' That is, we tend to become one with the experience which the poem embodies; and through the poem we seek to realise the harmony with the spirit embodied in nature. The poem or the work of art thus comes to mediate between man and nature. In this mediation imagination has a significant role because it humanises nature; it functions like "the soul that

is everywhere, and in each." This soul takes the medium of rhythm which has a motion because of which it is treated as the life of the composition.

The fine arts "certainly belong to the outward world, for they operate by the images of sight and sound and other sensible impressions."[30] This however does not mean that the artist copies or reproduces the external universe. The precise relation between the work of art and the outer world is a specific one. It is said that "the artist must imitate that which is within the thing, for so only can he hope to produce any work truly natural in the object, and truly human in the effect." In other words, he has to imitate the beautiful in nature[31] and embody it in a proper form. Thus the beauty of a painting refers to lines and colours. The lines "belong to the shapely, and in this, to the law, and the reason: and the colours, to the lively, the free, the spontaneous, and the self-justifying."[32] Shape and life are the two moments characterising the real nature of the work of art; and the imaginative act intuits the presence of life or motion in the outward world. As he observed more clearly, "No object of sense is sublime in itself, but only as far as I make a symbol of some Idea.... The circle is a beautiful figure in itself; it becomes sublime, and I contemplate eternity under it."[33] It is the fusion of life, of spirit, that renders the familiar objects of the universe highly significant; and this fusion is facilitated by the contemplative imagination. In such a mood an object might appear as sublime; and this sublime is "neither whole nor parts, but unity as boundless and endless allness"; it is a "total completeness." It is a form of the Infinite. And earlier in 1796 he told Thelwall that all objects counterfeit infinity. This infinity, however, is implicit in the universe and imagination

30. *Treatise on Method,* 1818, p. 69.

31. *Lectures,* 314.

32. *Ibid.,* 354.

33. Fragment printed by T. M. Raysor in *Studies in Philology,* XXII (1925), 532-3.

intuits it. Hence the lines and colours presented by nature "are not arbitrary symbols, but the language of nature, universal and intuitive, by virtue of the law by which man is impelled to explain visible motions by imaginary causative powers analogous to his own acts."[34] It is the law of imagination that reveals the true nature and significance of the lines and colours under which the external world appears in normal life.

Plotinus[35] claimed beauty for simple colours. But Coleridge observes: "Colour is eminently subservient to beauty, because it is susceptible of forms, that is, outline, and yet is a sensation. But a rich mass of scarlet clouds, seen without any attention to the form of the mass or of the parts, may be a delightful but not a beautiful object or colour."[36] In other words the term beauty includes expression and artistic interest.[37] Mere shapeliness unrelated to the intellect denies the freedom of the creative mind. It is the significant shapeliness as enlivened by feeling that art seeks to capture. This significance arising from feeling brings together the human being and the external world.

One species of the agreeable is a necessary component in the beautiful. It is that which "agrees with our nature, that which is congruous with the primary constitution of our senses."[38] Even here "those objects can be admitted which belong to the eye and the ear, because they alone are susceptible of distinction of parts." The universe as perceived by these two developed senses is the only one which art presents as a whole. It may have many parts. But "the very word 'part' imperfectly conveys what we see and feel: For the moment we look at it in division, the charm ceases."[39] The beautiful arrangement in itself and without a purpose can be contemplated exclusively

34. *Ibid.*, 355.
35. *Ennead*, 1.6.1.
36. Allsop, I, 197.
37. *Lectures*, 354.
38. B.L. II, 231.
39. *Ibid.*, II, 245.

as beauty: and this is called order.[40] Thus in expressing the unity of the shapely with life, the work of art transmutes the parts beyond recognition. And where a work of art is analysable into its component parts, it is not a great work.

The work of art has an intrinsic value. The beauty it embodies is not "connected with the ideas of the good, or the fit, or the useful. The sense of beauty is intuitive and beauty itself is all that inspires pleasure without, and aloof from, and even contrarily to, interest."[41] The work of art thus is valuable for its own sake. It is an end unto itself. And yet to be great it must exhibit that self-transcendence which brings man and the universe into an organic oneness. This feature is revealed by the organic form without which there can be no artistic creation. "The form given in every empirical intuition—the stuff, that is, the quality of the stuff, determines the agreeable: but when a thing excites us to receive it in such and such a mould, so that its exact correspondence to that mould is what occupies the mind—this is taste or the sense of beauty."[42]

The beautiful is thus the main preoccupation of the fine arts. This beautiful intuited by the creative imagination is no formal quality of the universe. "Beauty too is spiritual, the shorthand hieroglyphic of Truth—the mediator between Truth and Feeling, the Head and Heart—The sense of Beauty is implicit knowledge—a silent communion of the spirit with the Spirit in Nature, not without consciousness, though with the consciousness not successively unfolded."[43] Our conception and awareness of Reality is sustained by beauty which is apprehended by the whole mind, though "we confine beauty ...to objects of sight and combinations of sounds."[44] This limitation is due to the very framework of the arts. Where

40. *Lectures,* 355.
41. *Lectures,* 314.
42. *Ibid.,* 355.
43. Quoted by Muirhead from the manuscript *Semina Rerum.*
44. *Lectures,* 352.

the eye and the ear are excluded, it is difficult to embody the intuitions of the creative artist. These two senses under the influence of imagination mediate between the internal and the external, between the appearance and reality. "The mystery of genius in the fine arts", he said, is "to make the external internal, the internal external, to make Nature thought, and thought Nature."[45] In this transmutation the artist achieves the identity of man and nature.

This identity, however, is felt by the human soul. And Coleridge told us that it is from the soul there issues forth a mighty voice, the music. And he said in **Semina Rerum,** "To the sensitive mind the beauty of landscape is 'music', and the very rhythm of the soul's movements." The movement or activity of the soul in its imaginative activity has a rhythm, a harmony; and this rhythm is the first medium through which the soul seeks to express itself.

This is the vital process of life which fine art endeavours in various ways to express. A. W. Von Schlegal described romantic spirit as that which "is perpetually striving after new and marvellous births" thereby "approaching more to the secret of the universe."[46] This is generalised by Coleridge to refer to the character of Fine art as such. Art becomes more true and more profound when it presents the living process of life; and Shakespeare is taken to have presented "our **inward** nature, the working of the passions in their most retired recesses."[47] In this vital process, the potential is rendered actual. This is an important aspect of Coleridge's conception of organic unity. He is interested in character rather than in plot because it is the consciousness of the individual that is 'the focus and mirror' of the "loving and life-producing ideas" which carry with them "the certainty that they are essentially one with the germinal causes in nature."[48]

45. *Ibid.,* 315.
46. *Lectures,* II, 98-99.
47. S.C. I, 198.
48. *Lectures,* 315.

The great poem gives expression to the essence of beauty which consists in the union of the shapely with the vital.[49] As Coleridge said elsewhere, "The shapely (i.e. **formosus**) joined with the naturally agreeable, constitutes what, speaking accurately, we mean by the word beautiful."[50] It is the good old principle of the organic unity of form and content. In Coleridge's hands this unity tends to become an identity, even though he talks of reconciliation and balance of opposites. "The balance, the perfect reconciliation, effected between the two conflicting principles of the free life, and of the confining form" is necessary. "The stiffness that would have resulted from the obvious regularity of the latter is entirely **fused** and almost **volatalized,** by the interpenetration and electrical flashes of the former."[51] But such a view does not truly represent the Platonic element which is central to Coleridge's theory. Following the ancients, he speaks of beauty as the one in the many, as harmony. "The beautiful, contemplated in its essentials, i.e., in **kind** and not in **degree,** is that in which the **many,** still seen as many, becomes one."[52] It is 'the unity of the manifold, the coalescence of the diverse',[53] the 'unity in multeity.'[54] It is the development of an identity into the manifold, and the involution of the many into the one. Taking such a stand, Coleridge spiritualises poetry and all the fine arts. He could even speak of 'the beauty of virtue and holiness' like Plotinus. Accordingly the immediate intuition of beauty is like 'light to the eye.' And the mind "cannot but have complacency in whatever is perceived as pre-configured to its living faculties. Hence the Greeks called a beautiful object Kalon quasi Kaloun, i.e., **calling on** the soul, which receives instantly and welcomes it as something connatural."[55]

49. *Ibid.,* 314.
50. B.L. II, 234.
51. *Ibid.,* II, 235.
52. *Ibid.,* II, 236.
53. *Lectures,* 314.
54. *Ibid.,* 318.
55. B.L. II, 243.

8. VALUE OF POETRY

Poetry is "the art of communicating" something "both to express and produce excitement, but for the purpose of immediate pleasure."[1] The excitement giving rise to an immediate pleasure is expressed in the poem, and it is also evoked by it. This end or value is said to be already present in the poem. The value is intrinsic, it is inherent. Coleridge also speaks of "that pleasurable emotion, that peculiar state and degree of excitement that arises in the poet himself in the act of composition." The excitement the poet had during the act of composition, the excitement expressed in the poem, and the excitement evoked by it in the reader are all similar. The excitement is a state of feeling which does not exclude an emotional atmosphere; and this gives rise to an experience of pleasure which is not mediated by reason or understanding or the senses.

The immediate pleasure must be a human pleasure. He informed Thelwall on May 13, 1796: "That poetry pleases which interests." On December 17 of the same year he told him that "poetry ought not always to have its **highest** relish; and, secondly, judging of the cause from its effect, poetry, though treating on lofty and abstract thoughts, ought to be deemed **impassioned** by him who reads it with impassioned feelings." Here Coleridge is trying to qualify or specify the kind of pleasure. He is speaking of a pleasure which is not one of pure feeling or of pure emotion. It is a pleasure in which thinking and feeling appear in an integral union. To experience this state one should approach poetry not with a passive mind

1. *Lectures and Notes,* 398.

but with impassioned feelings. Here poetry differs from other branches of human activity. "The proper and immediate object of science is the acquirement or communication of truth; the proper and immediate object of poetry is the communication of immediate pleasure."[2] In other fields of human endeavour the immediate object is the communication and apprehension of truth. But in poetry it is pleasure. Since this pleasure is not a means to an end, since it is not an end brought forth by extraneous or external means, and since it is both the means and the end in itself, it is immediate.

This immediate pleasure is not a pure undifferentiated one. Poetry "is an art of representing, in words, external nature and human thoughts and affections, both relatively to human affections, by the production of as much immediate pleasure in parts, as is compatible with the largest sum of pleasure in the whole."[3] Human thoughts and affections are harmonised with external nature in poetry in such a way that not only is the external humanised, but throughout the poem there is a human interest. This human interest is communicated through words and other factors. The poem thus is analysable into its component parts. But each part in an organic whole like the poem must be capable of giving rise to an immediate pleasure. And the pleasure communicated by each part must not be at variance with the pleasure arising from the whole. In other words, Coleridge appears to be arguing in favour of a pleasure calculus, in favour of a quantitative standard.

This view is considerably modified later on. The poet brings "the whole soul of man into activity", "the subordination of the faculties of the whole soul of man to each other, according to their relative worth and dignity."[4] He has a peculiar state of excitement in the act of composition, and this may be designated as the pleasurable emotion, which modifies

2. *Ibid.*, 9-10.
3. *Ibid.*, 398.
4. B.L. II, 12.

and corrects the truths of nature and of the human heart. This pleasure too is a unified organic whole, though one can distinguish its components by referring them to the various faculties. What distinguishes a poem from a prose composition is "that sort of pleasurable emotion, which the exertion of all our faculties gives in a certain degree; but which can only be felt in perfection under the full play of those powers of mind, which are spontaneous rather than voluntary and in which the effort required bears no proportion to the activity enjoyed."[5] The pleasurable emotion involves the activity of the whole human being, not any one faculty only. And though the poem arises from that activity of imagination which co-exists with the conscious will, this activity of the will is lost in the immediate pleasure because of the "willing suspension of disbelief."

When he speaks of pleasure as the **immediate object** he means that it is realised without any mediation of the factors external to it. After all Coleridge told us that "few men put more meaning into their words than I." And he was using the word immediate in its significant philosophical sense. The poetic pleasure is an immediacy: it is an experience unmediated by reason or understanding. "In other works the communication of pleasure may be the immediate purpose; and though truth, either moral or intellectual, ought to be the **ultimate** end, yet this will distinguish the character of the author, not the class to which the work belongs."[6] The immediacy he speaks of is that which does not take us to an end different from pleasure. Where pleasure is immediately evoked and yet truth is the ultimate end, pleasure becomes only a means; and with regard to such a work one can say that the author is not a true poet. Poetry is poetry only when it has an end intrinsic to the poem, not when it has an ulterior motive. Even when a poem has an ulterior end, we have only

5. *Lectures and Notes,* 10.
6. B.L. II, 9.

to see whether this ulterior motive has any direct bearing on the poetic value of the composition.

If pleasure is all that characterises the experience of the reader or spectator, does he have the same pleasure in the apprehension of the ugly and the tragic? It is in this context that Coleridge's formula appears striking. The aesthetic experience or situation is no illusion, nor delusion. It is not the same as a normal experience. He describes the mood as one of "willing suspension of disbelief." The pleasure arising from any kind of aesthetic experience depends on a voluntary suspension of disbelief. Belief and disbelief are essentially dependent on volition. An act of volition has to control this tendency of the volition to believe or not to believe. When the individual's intellectual and emotional beliefs and disbeliefs are suppressed or suspended, the kind of pleasure that arises and interests us will have no colouring of the personal prejudices, likes and dislikes. It is a pleasurable emotion that is truly impersonal or universal.

This pleasure must be inherent in the work of art. "Nothing can permanently please, which does not contain in itself the reason why it is so."[7] In other words, the pleasure that is experienced by the reader or the spectator is the pleasure that is embodied in the work of art. If this state of feeling or emotion is present in the ugly or in the tragic, the reader or the spectator too is bound to experience it. We do not and cannot bring an emotion or feeling from outside in order to experience the poem. We willingly suspend our normal categories and principles as we go through the experience communicated by the poem. Hence it is that in the aesthetic experience we do not begin discussing whether this experience or its embodiment is true or false, or whether it is real or unreal. Our concern is with the work to which these predicates do not apply. Speaking of fiction, he observed that it "is not felt to

7. B.L. II, 9.

be fiction when we are most affected. We **know** the thing to be representation, but we often **feel** it to be a reality." In the knowledge situation we are concerned with the normal categories of ordinary life; but in experience these categories are suspended because they have no application. Between the normal life and the poetic experience there lies the wide gulf that separates knowing from feeling. Every other branch of human knowledge or endeavour is directed towards knowing or doing. Poetry is distinguished from everything by feeling which is basic to it. It is the absence of this feeling and therefore of the consequent joy that Coleridge bemoaned in his **Ode;** and in that poem he related feeling and joy to imagination.

The immediate pleasure evoked by poetry depends on taste. Taste involves "an intellectual perception of any object blended with a distinct reference to our own sensibility of pain and pleasure."[8] That is, taste refers the given object to our own being. Without intellectual perception it has no meaning in the consideration of fine arts. The poem aims at an 'intellectual pleasure' and attains this end "by the use of language natural to us in a state of excitement."[9] Just as the poem originates from the union of deep thinking and deep feeling, the experience evoked by the poem too involves the union; and it is to this unity that we give the name taste. Consequently taste functions more or less like imagination. It unifies "the intellect with the senses; and its appointed function is to elevate the **images** of the latter, while it realizes the **ideas** of the former."[10] It combines and unites "a sense of immediate pleasure in ourselves, with the perception of external arrangement.[11] The images are blended with the ideas, and they are apprehended as integral to the total experience.

8. *Lectures and Notes,* 352.
9. *Ibid.,* 10.
10. B.L. II, 227.
11. *Lectures and Notes,* 353.

Taste thus becomes the experience of the total individual and yet it agrees in its broad generality with the experiences of all others. We declare an object beautiful, and feel "an inward right to **expect** that others should coincide with us." We "involuntarily claim that other minds ought to think and feel the same."[12] Each reader or spectator would then be "legislating for all men" only because he is convinced that "each intellect is representative of all."[13] Taste thus carries with it a certain universality.

This universality is basic to the immediate object of poetry, namely, pleasure. It depends on the blending of our intellectual perceptions with our sensibility. In this blending the images arising from sense impressions are harmonised with ideas. In other words, the pleasure expressed in and communicated by a poem is not the so-called pure feeling or pure pleasure, but one charged with a universal content. In order to distinguish this pleasure from that of other moments, this one is qualified by the word immediate. It is a pleasure replete with those intuitions that are at the basis of all human life, intellectual and moral. Coleridge thus observes: "When a mere stripling, I had formed the opinion that true taste was virtue and that bad writing was bad feeling."[14] Elsewhere he refers to "the close and reciprocal connection of just taste with pure morality."[15] The immediate object then is a pleasure which is both intellectual and moral, and yet it is an emotional experience.

This emotional experience or feeling is the same as Joy; or it may be said that it gives rise to joy. While knowledge may bring forth dejection, feeling gives rise to joy. But this joy or delight is not external to feeling. As he said in the **Ode**, it issues forth from the same soul that feels. This delight may be viewed as passion, joy, feeling and the like. From

12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Anima Poetae,* 165.
15. *Lectures and Notes,* 43.

this standpoint poetry exists at two different levels. It is pleasure for the reader, and it is passion in the poet during the actual composition. Even the passion or excitement which the poet has is expressed in the poem; and when the reader is infected with it, he tends to concentrate on the resulting joy, not so much on the excitement that leads him to this state of delight.

This however is a state where the painful is not active. He told Southey on 21.10.1794, "When a man is unhappy he writes damned bad poetry." The pleasurable emotion arises from the apprehension of the whole, "of which each part shall also communicate for itself a distinct and conscious pleasure."[16] The pleasure from the whole should be "consistent with a consciousness of pleasure from the component parts"[17]; and this characteristic distinguishes the poem from other species of composition. This way of stating it appears also in 1811 when he spoke of "pleasure from the whole, consistent with a consciousness of pleasurable excitement from the component parts."[18] Is this a quantitative standard that Coleridge is laying down?

As far as poetry is concerned, "each part shall also communicate for itself a distinct and conscious pleasure"; "the greatest immediate pleasure from each part should be compatible with the largest sum of pleasure on the whole."[19] As he defined it in a clearer manner, "A poem is that species of composition, which is opposed to works of science by proposing for its **immediate** object pleasure, not truth; and from all other species (having **this** object in common with it) it is discriminated by proposing to itself such delight from the **whole,** as is compatible with a distinct gratification from each component part."[20] Each component unit of the whole must give rise to a certain pleasure; and the pleasure arising from these parts

16. *Lectures and Notes,* 10.
17. *Ibid.*
18. Shak. Crit. II, 78.
19. *Ibid.,* I, 164.
20. B.L. II, 12.

should agree with that evoked by the whole. Coleridge applied a similar analysis when he spoke of the intellectual, moral, emotional and sense elements in the total feeling of pleasure. On 6.2.1797 he even told John Thelwall: "Your nerves are exquisite electrometers of taste." The physiological system participates in the immediate pleasure as much as the mind or the soul. In other words, the pleasure felt is felt not by a part of the individual but by the entire organism. In such an experience each part of the organism is involved in its own specific way. Likewise it may be said that each part of the poem has a specific contribution to make to the final immediacy; and all these are harmonised by the whole. Yet the pleasure communicated by the whole is not qualitatively identical with that evoked by any part or parts. And since the pleasure evoked must be inherent in the composition, there can be no part which fails to communicate some specific element of the total experience of pleasure. Coleridge is thus deducing the pleasure as an intrinsic feature of the composition from the organic unity of the poem, from his concept of organic form. In this light he tells us that where pleasure is the immediate object of a poem it refers to "the two master impulses and movements of man—the gratification of the love of variety, and the gratification of the love of uniformity." The former arises from the component parts, while the latter springs from the whole which is an organic form.

This pleasure has no personal element. "Beauty is all that inspires pleasure without and aloof from and even contrary to interest." Probably translating Kant's 'interessenloses Wohlgefallen', he speaks of the 'immediate pleasure.' 'The poet must always aim at pleasure as his specific means."[21] The end is one of 'cultivating and predisposing the heart of the reader', and it may also be one of 'moralising.'[22] As he observes at one place, 'truth itself shall be pleasure.'[23] Just as imagination is

21. *Misc. Crit.* 320-1.
22. B.L. II, 105.
23. *Ibid.*, II, 104.

a striving towards depersonalization, so is the pleasure arising from it. The utilitarian or the selffish interests including the mitigation and softening of the passions have no direct or necessary relation to this experience.

But pleasure, he admits, is equivocal. The term complacency 'expresses the intellectual nature of the enjoyment of the beautiful', but it 'seems to preclude all emotion.' The word delight 'conveys a comparative **degree** of pleasurable emotion, and is therefore unfit for a general definition, the object of which is to abstract the **kind.**"[24] Coleridge is therefore aware of the difficulty in finding out a suitable name for the value embodied and communicated by a poem; and when he employed the term pleasure, it was only for want of a more suitable word. Consequently it is an error of interpretation to foist on him the theory of a pleasure-calculus. By pleasure he does not mean what we normally mean by that word. This becomes clearer when we collate his different statements. In 1811 he observed that one reads Newton or Locke having as his immediate object not pleasure, but "truth which might hereafter enlighten the pursuit of pleasure, or something nobler, for which we have not a name, but distinct altogether from what in the ordinary language of common-sense can be brought under the name of pleasure, but which was expressed in the sacred writings as a peace that passeth all understanding, the delight of which could never be known but by experience, which, consisting of no difference of parts, but being in itself entire, must be altogether unknown, or fully known."[25] Here he is suggesting an experience like that of mystic ecstasy which offers a 'satisfying imaginative experience', and which carries with it the undeniable character of reality. It is in expressing and suggesting such a state and in enabling the reader to have such an experience that we have to seek the value of poetry.

24. *Ibid.*, II, 224.
25. *Shak. Crit.* II, 75.

This state of feeling has something of the character of sympathy. A note book entry of June 1801 reads: "Sympathy the poet alone can excite; any dabbler in stories may excite pity. The more I think the more I am convinced that admiration is an **essential** element of poetical delight."[26] Sympathy is that state of feeling when we escape from our personal feelings and emotions into those of others. It is a state of inducing a sort of unity with the external. In order to understand the nature and value of poetry, therefore, "we must combine a more than ordinary sympathy with the objects, emotions, or incidents contemplated by the poet, consequent on a more than ordinary sensibility, with more than ordinary activity of the mind in respect of the fancy and the imagination."[27] Sympathy, sensations and imagination are all necessary to apprehend the value of the poem.

Coleridge observes that the 'sense of more than musical delight is a gift of the imagination.' That is, the affective-volitional effects are the gifts of imagination. They are incidental to the main imaginative activity which gives rise to a 'more than musical delight.' It is not a simple delight emerging from the form alone, but from the work as a whole. The delight is organically linked to the imaginative activity; and imagination becomes active by stimulating all other mental and physical activities. And in order to apprehend the value of the poem we, therefore, need "a more than usual state of emotion with more than usual order; judgment ever awake and steady self-possession, with enthusiasm and feeling profound or vehement."[28] Emotion and understanding have to function together with enthusiasm; and there emerges a profound or vehement feeling which alone satisfies the whole individual. There may be a moral feeling in this experience. If the moral feeling is present, "there will accrue an excellence even to the

26. *Notebooks,* I, 957.
27. *Shak. Crit.* I, 164.
28. B.L. II, 12.

quality of the pleasures themselves."[29] But this is not the specific immediate pleasure which poetry ought to evoke. The pleasure Coleridge insists upon is a unique harmony of thought and feeling. As he observed in a note on Hartley's **Observation on Man**: "Ideas may become as vivid and distinct, and the feelings accompanying them as vivid, as original impressions. And this may finally make a man independent of his senses. One use of poetry." The immediate pleasure which is the object of poetry thus turns out to be a pure spiritual experience, an experience in which we are emancipated from the conditions and limitations imposed on us by the body.

This state emerges in and out of the resolution of an inner conflict. It arises from the overcoming of the dark night of the soul. Thus he observes: "To the idea of life, victory or strife is necessary, as virtue consists not simply in the absence of vices, but in the overcoming of them. So it is in beauty."[30] Out of the conflict there emerges the richest moment of life, a moment where we experience a value. The value emerges as a result of the reconciliation or balance of the opposites. Coleridge in a letter of 1806 remarked that "the source of our pleasure in the fine art" is to be found "in the antithetical balance-loving nature of man." The revelation of eternal values is the basic function of the secondary imagination. These essentially human values may be designed by a few convenient names. But they are apprehended best not by the understanding, but by the feeling. A notebook entry of early 1799 reads: "Poetry gives most pleasure when only generally and not perfectly understood." This is because "by deep feeling we make our **ideas dim.**"[31] Understanding fails in adequately translating into language the felt content or the felt background. We are conscious of the value communicated and felt; we can only intuit it. Hence it is observed: "The

29. *Lectures and Notes,* 356.
30. *Ibid.,* 319.
31. *Friend,* I, 177.

sense of beauty (not attached to interest, does not act on the will) rests gratified in the mere contemplation or intuition regardless whether it be a fictitious Apollo, or a real Antinous. The mystics meant the same when they define beauty as the subjection of matter to spirit so as to be transformed into a symbol, in and through which the spirit reveals itself; and declare that most beautiful, where the most obstacles to a full manifestation have been most perfectly overcome."[32]

32. *Philosophical Lectures,* 239.

9. THEORY OF ART

Reason is "the immediate and inward beholding of the spiritual as sense is of the material." The ideas of reason and of imagination are "living and life-producing ideas which... are essentially one with the germinal causes in nature."[1] In its higher reaches reason appears to be no longer different from the creative imagination. Reason is "the science of the universal."[2] It "is the power of universal and necessary convictions, the source and substance of truths above sense, having their evidence in themselves. Its presence is always marked by the **necessity** of the position affirmed: this necessity being **conditional,** when a truth of Reason is applied to facts of experience, or to the rules and maxims of the understanding; but absolute when the subject-matter is itself the growth or offspring of the Reason....Contemplated distinctively in reference to formal truth, it is the speculative Reason; but in reference to **actual** truth, as the fountain of Ideas and the **Light** of the Conscience, we name it the **practical** Reason."[3] Reason is the organ of the super-sensuous, for it has "the power of acquainting itself with invisible realities or spiritual objects."[4] This paves the way for the distinction between poetry and religion.

Reason apprehends the truths that cannot be grasped by the senses. It is immediate and it cannot be analysed or examined by the discursive intellect. It originates all thought and from it we derive our ideas of God, spirit and unity.

1. B.L. II, 258-9.
2. *Statesman's Manual,* 259.
3. *Aids to Reflection,* 206-7.
4. B.L. II, 257-9.

"The practical reason alone is Reason in the full and substantive sense."[5] It is embodied in the will, which together with understanding first puts imagination in action.[6] Genius cannot be opposed to rules because of the dominant role played by will. "The spirit of poetry, like all other living powers, must of necessity circumscribe itself by rules" so that it can harmonise power with beauty. It can reveal itself only by being embodied, and "a living body is of necessity an organized one." That which constitutes genius is "the power of acting creatively under laws of its own origination."[7] The creative imagination of the artist reveals the harmony of passion, will, understanding and reason. This harmony being foundational, most of the basic principles are latent. They carry with them the character of our inmost being. "At the annunciation of principles, of ideas, the soul of man awakes, and starts up, as an exile in a far distant land at the unexpected sounds of his native language, when after long years of absence, and almost of oblivion, he is suddenly addressed in his own mother-tongue. He weeps for joy, and embraces the speaker as his brother."[8] This is closer to the gloss on the famous stanza:

> The moving Moon went up the sky,
> And nowhere did abide:
> Softly she was going up,
> And a star or two beside.[9]

The existence of reason can be affirmed only by saying that 'it is.' In this sense it is equivalent to 'I am.' It carries with it an indubitable certainty and necessity. Reason is a "source of actual truth." And since imagination is the "prime agent in all perception", it does not differ from reason. We hear of Shakespeare's "genial understanding directing self

5. Appendix to Aids to Reflection.
6. B.L. II, 19-20.
7. *Shakespeare Criticism,* I, 223-4.
8. First *Lay Sermon,* 318.
9. *The Rime,* lines 263-266.

consciously a power and an implicit wisdom deeper than consciousness."[10] But can we accept the great religious and philosophical truths expressed in poetry without denial or affirmation? Coleridge himself defined a poem as one "proposing for its immediate object pleasure, not truth."[11] If this were so, his critique of the **Immortality Ode** would fall down. But he tells us that the **Ode** was addressed only to those who are accustomed "to feel a deep interest in modes of inmost being, to which they know that the attributes of time and space are inapplicable and alien, but which yet cannot be conveyed save in symbols of time and space."[12] Then there are certain truths expressed in poetry, but these are not to be taken as affirmations. Yet he takes Wordsworth to task for calling a child a philosopher, though one can willingly suspend his disbelief for the moment even on such occasions. This is an instance of an outline, not transformed by the imagination, tyrannising over the mind of the critic. But Coleridge is aware of such a tyranny when he said: "Outline imprisons the mind of the Artist within the first conception."[13] This does not imply the absence of freedom in the creative process. It refers to the conditions under which the reconciliation of opposites takes place. One is the necessity of a copula that can unify, and the second is the possibility of reconciliation implied by the opposing factors. Thus we are told that "the contest between the loyalists and their opponents can never be absolute, for it is the contest between the two great moving principles of social humanity." It is an opposition between conservatism and the need for reform. These "two polar forces" are both "alike necessary to our human well-being." But "perfect symmetry, diminishes the sense of magnitude"[14] because it resolves the opposition. The "opposite powers are always

10. *Shakespeare Criticism*, I, 224.
11. B.L. II, 10-11.
12. B.L. II, 120-1.
13. *Notebooks*, I, 1312.
14. *Ibid.*, I, 1350.

of the same kind, and tend to union, either by equipoise or by a common product."[15] These are not contraries. The copula that reconciles is the imgination, "an intermediary faculty which is at once both active and passive."[16] and which can therefore reconcile the active and passive powers. It can at least reveal the entity: "if I can **do** nothing else with beauty, I can **show** it to somebody."[17] If imagination cannot always create, it can at least show reality. The reconciliation of the opposites is as much necessary to the critic as to the poet; and the duty of both is to reveal the existence and character of beauty in the medium of a work of art.

Poetry expresses the beautiful, and great poetry expresses it not in terms of perfect symmetry but in those of harmony. In this harmony the opposing forces are neither eliminated nor suppressed. The imaginative act seeks to show that the opposition is not relevant since it is not essential or basic to the existence of those forces. It is in this light that Coleridge refers to the harmonious fusion of varied mental faculties.

But when Coleridge talks about the different mental faculties, he is aware of their inseparability. They are distinct, but they cannot be separated. "The office of philosophical disquisition consists in just distinction; while it is the privilege of the philosopher to preserve himself constantly aware, that distinction is not division. In order to obtain adequate notions of any truth, we must intellectually separate its distinguishable parts; and this is the technical process of philosophy. But having done so, we must then restore them in our conceptions to the unity, in which they actually coexist; and this is the result of philosophy."[18] The faculties do not have separable, independent activities since in any mental activity we have the total mind as a single unit. Yet we can analyse the mind, within certain limitations. Thus reason needs

15. *On the Constitution of the Church and State,* 38.
16. B.L. I, 86.
17. *Notebooks,* I, 1356.
18. B.L. II, 8.

the understanding even if the two are logically opposed to each other. Reason is the supreme faculty; but imagination is more important because it reconciles reason with understanding, because it "brings the whole soul of man into activity."[19] The terminology of the faculty psychology should not therefore mislead us in understanding the true import of Coleridge's thought.

Coleridge wants us to assume two infinite and indestructible, yet contradictory, forces. When these are brought together, there emerges a product, a thesis. Then one has "to elevate the thesis from notional to actual, by contemplating intuitively this one power with its two inherent indestructible yet counteracting forces, and the results or generations to which their interpenetration gives existence, in the living principle and in the process of our own self-consciousness."[20] The entities must be opposites, not contraries. Thus sweet and bitter are contraries and therefore irreconcilable. The opposite of sweet is sour, and the two can be reconciled. Copy and imitation are contraries. The primal opposition for Coleridge is between subject and object. All the activities of the human mind are grounded on this opposition. The artist must apprehend and control the **natura naturans** "which presupposes a bond between nature in the highest sense and the soul of man." Images and ideas are thus capable of being fused together. "Man's mind is the very focus of the rays of intellect which are scattered throughout the images of nature." And the mystery of genius is to elicit from these forms moral reflexions, and "to make the external internal, the internal external, to make nature thought, and thought nature."[21] The opposition of sense to thought, of the physical to the spiritual, is reconciled by imagination which has consequently a unique place in human life.

19. B.L. II, 12.
20. B.L. I, 197-8.
21. B.L. II. 257-8.

The artist "must imitate that which is within the thing, that which is active through form and figure, and discourse to us by symbols....The idea which puts the form together cannot itself be the form. It is above form, and is its essence, the universal in the individual, or the individuality itself."[22] True imitation involves the union of likeness and unlikeness, sameness and difference, and when these are said to be reconciled, we are actually implying the strife of the opposites. Hence it is remarked: "To the idea of life victory or strife is necessary; as virtue consists not simply in the absence of vices, but in the overcoming of them. So it is in beauty. The sight of what is subordinated and conquered heightens the strength and the pleasure."[23] The strife of the opposites is overcome by imagination. A similar process appears in the language employed by the artist to express his experiences: "Language and all **symbols** give **outness** to Thoghts/and this the philosophical essence and purpose of Language."[24] The thought which is inward or internal is made external in the form of symbols. These symbols in poetry are words. The strife between the inward thought and the outward symbol is resolved in the emergent organism called the work of art.

Life is the unity of thesis and antithesis and "in the identity of the two counterpowers, life subsists; in their strife it consists: and in their reconciliation it at once dies and is born again into a new form, either falling back into the life of the whole, or starting anew in the process of individuation."[25] The law of polarity is then based on the vital unity, not the mechanical unity, of nature. In the organic unity we have the interpenetration of the counterpowers generating a higher third which includes them.[26] This evolu-

22. B.L. II, 259.
23. B.L. II, 263-4
24. *Notebooks,* I, 1387.
25. Works, I, 391-2. See Fogle: *Coleridge's Idea of Criticism.*
26. Works, I, 399.

tionary process illustrates "the unceasing polarity of life, as the form of its process, and its tendency to progressive individuation as the law of its direction."[27] The reconciliation of opposites is described as balance, equilibrium, harmony, polarity, fusion, interpenetration, coexistence, coordination, consubstantiation and identity. It is coextensive with life and it implies that imagination is at the very foundation of the universe.

Human life involves the activities of the senses, understanding and reason beside many others. The inter-relationship of these gave Coleridge a powerful instrument to unravel the nature of poetry. Understanding at the human level is the sensuous faculty combined with self-consciousness. Reason is the faculty of the supersensuous.[28] In **The Friend** we find reason treated as synonymous with conscience which "commands us to attribute Reality and Existence to those Ideas" which alone render conscience real and consistent. Understanding is "the faculty of thinking and forming judgments on the notices furnished by sense" and talent is grounded in the understanding. Talent can have only "the faculty of appropriating and applying the knowledge of others" while **genius** has "the creative, and self-sufficing power." Thus we have "the shaping skill of mechanical talent, and the creative, productive life-power of inspired genius."[29] The two correspond respectively to the mechanical and organic forms. And we are told that "Form is factitious thinking, and thinking is the process; imagination the laboratory in which the thought elaborates essence into existence."[30] Imagination is the mediating factor between reason and understanding which are active and passive "relatively to each other." Understanding can perceive only the 'inanimate cold world' and it deals with

27. *Works,* 1.401.
28. *Friend,* Nos. 5 and 9; Letter to Tulk, 1821.
29. *Friend,* 2.164; B.L. I, 20; *Shakespeare Criticism,* I, 4-5.
30. *Anima Poetae,* 186.

mechanical structures. Reason is always directly concerned with truth. And so he states: "I was afraid of too much Truth, that Poisoner of Imagination."[31] But a note of October 1803 tells us: "Mix up Truth and Imagination, so that the Imagination may spread its own indefiniteness over that which really happened, and Reality its sense of substance and distinctness to Imagination/for the soother of Absence."[32] Imagination transforms truth into a great value, and truth gives imagination a content and power. The fusion of the two gives a new dimension to reality.

Coleridge speaks of "that illusion, contra-distinguished from delusion, that negative faith, which simply permits the images presented to work by their own force, without either denial or affirmation of their real existence by the judgment."[33] That which is expressed is an intuitive insight of the artist. The intuition of the artist brings him into direct contact with a reality which is emotional. This contact involves a sympathy between the external symbol and the apprehending mind. Even the intuition, he quotes from Hooker to tell us, is "a direct and immediate beholding or presentation of an object to the mind through the senses or the imagination."[34] This intuition unravels the mystery of the given because it is not conditioned. It is beyond time and space. Whatever may be its real content, it comes to us after gathering substance from the world of experience. In this it is not the same as the Kantian imagination which is a free, but formal activity; it can give us nothing about reality. Coleridge's imagination is creative. Even the senses and emotions are not passive. Because of his imagination, "the great artist does that which nature would do, if only the disturbing forces were abstracted."[35] Then that which is revealed by the artist must be

31. Letter to George Greenough, 6th July 1799.
32. *Notebooks*. I, 1541.
33. B.L. II, 107.
34. B.L. II, 230.
35. Letter to Allston, 1815.

capable of being accepted as true or real, and therefore subject to affirmation or denial. What kind of belief does a poem involve? Coleridge's plea for the "willing suspension of disbelief" is usually taken to imply that questions of truth or falsity are irrelevant with regard to poetry. Poetry induces "a sort of temporary half-faith"; it may be a "negative belief" like the one that we have in dreams where we do not raise questions of truth or falsehood. Since "any act of judgment, whether affirmation or denial, is impossible" in connection with dream, "We neither believe it, nor disbelieve."[36] Whether the characters and/or events in poetry are real or supernatural, we enjoy them without affirming or denying their truth, if they are handled well.

This takes us to the importance of content. Judging from his earlier writings, Coleridge made the remark: "I cannot write without a **body** of **thought**—hence my Poetry is crowded and sweats beneath a heavy burthen of Ideas and Imagery! It has seldom Ease."[37] Thought and imagery are taken to charge his poems with an unusual intensity, even though he would not deny the value of these. An image by itself is not poetical. Only when the images "are modified by a predominant passion, or by associated thoughts or images awakened by that passion", they become "proofs of original genius."[38] This original genius has a social value. He told his brother George on 10th March 1798 that he devotes himself not to "the antisocial passion." His task in poetry is "to elevate the imagination and set the affections in right tune by the beauty of the inanimate impregnated, as with a living soul, by the presence of Life." This is possible "when a human and intellectual life is transferred to them from the poet's own spirit."[39] The highest emotion must enliven it; and the absence of pas-

36. *Shakespeare Criticism,* I, 199-203.
37. Letter to Southey, 11th February 1794.
38. B.L. II, 16.
39. B.L. II, 16.

sion behind the figures shows only "the madness prepense of pseudo-poesy or the startling hysteric of weakness over-exerting itself."[40] Instead of passion in such cases we have an intellectual element. "A great vice is metaphysical solution in poetry."[41] Such an intellectual solution is unwanted in poetry, and it has no place in poetry; for the secondary imagination animates and humanises every thing. It transfers a human and intellectual life to the objects. The poet fuses with the objects his life and passion. And the instances given by Coleridge are mostly similes, metaphors and personification. The creative imagination in these instances is seen to act "by impressing the stamp of humanity, of human feeling, over inanimate objects."[42] A sort of empathy seems to take place in the creative process, and this empathy humanises the entire universe of artistic experience. Humanisation contains the germ of all mythology and symbolism.

Imagination sets out to translate passion into myths and symbols. The myths of the ancients were the products of the urge to expression they had. But those myths

> live no longer in the faith of reason!
> But still the heart doth need a language, still
> Doth the old instinct bring back the old names.[43]

The heart controlled the reason and the emotional setting enabled the creative process to discover myths. The Greek way of myth-making is taken by Coleridge to be akin to allegorising. It has little use for the symbolic presentation which alone is carried out by the animating creative imagination. The symbols are animated, they have a life; and "Nature has her proper interest, and he will know what it is who believes and feels that everything has a life of its own, and that we are all one life. A poet's heart and intellect should be combined, intimately combined and unified with the great appearances

40. *Shakespeare Criticism,* II, 103; B.L. II, 65-6.
41. *Notebooks,* I, 673.
42. *Shakespeare Criticism,* I, 212-3; B.L. II, 16-18.
43. *The Piccolomini,* II, iv. 129-131.

of nature, and not merely held in solution and loose mixture with them, in the shape of formal similes."[44] The fusion of the heart and the intellect cannot be denied to the Greeks, though Coleridge's religious bias appears to cloud his judgment in this particular context. Nature was not dead to the Greeks. But since the Greeks are said by Coleridge to have **included** in each statue a God or a Goddess, these are held to be **dead** or hollow. This is the work of the aggregating faculty of the mind and the result is an allegorical presentation. The form and that which it stands for are not bound together organically as is the case when "the modifying and coadunating faculty" operates.[45] The artist must know at the outset what he intends to achieve. "Before you write a poem, you should say to yourself...what do I intend to be the **Character** of this Poem...which feature is to be predominant in it?....So you make it a unique."[46] Ideas are not to be transformed into finite entities. The "translation of abstract notions into a picture—language" can present only "empty echoes which the fancy arbitrarily associates with apparitions of matter."[47] The finished entities, the 'fixities and definites', do not grow. They echo the static, while the poem is a growing organism. "At least no Poet has a right to be certain, that any Book of a Poem will remain what it is, until he has written the whole."[48] The last syllable will tell the poet what the vision at the start was. That is, the poet during the act of composition cannot be conscious of the poem in its entirety because this consciousness functions then as a form of the supra-conscious. The poem then is symbolic or imitative of the orginial experience.

Art is both an imitation and a symbolic representation. The reader or spectator recognises similarity in dissimila-

44. Letter to Sotheby, 10th September 1802.
45. *Ibid.*
46. Letter to Southey, 17th December 1794.
47. *Misc. Crit.*, 148, 191.
48. Letter to John Thelwall, 23rd April, 1801.

rity, and also apprehends the infusion of the poet's knowledge and outlook into the objects.[49] The artist imitates the universal and "the essence of poetry is universality."[50] "Whatever is not representative, generic, may be indeed most poetically expressed, but it is not poetry." In poetry we have "an involution of the universal in the individual."[51] The ideal or the universal expressed as the poem must be a coherent system and also a great symbol. As a form of experience it is an end in itself, and as capable of evoking that experience it is symbolic as well. This twofold character makes the work of art stand on terms of equality with the Berkeleyan Universe. It is a sign and also a symbol; and it is therefore not different from the activity and product of the human mind. This led Coleridge to remark that the "productive power which is in nature, as nature, is essentially one with the intelligence which is in the human mind above nature."[52] Art reveals the spiritual process and also symbolises it. It is a process of self-revelation guided and determined by imagination. "Shakespeare worked in the **spirit of nature,** by evolving **the germ within** by the **imaginative power** according to an idea."[53] Th germ is the idea, something like the Platonic Idea which is translated into concrete terms. The Idea becomes determinate and real when it is apprehended as one with the existent in the universe. As a marginal note tells us, the idea "never passes into an abstraction and therefore never becomes the equivalent of an image." It is other than a concept and different from an image. Hence one can only contemplate it, though it transcends form. It is through a symbol that we can apprehend it.[54] The symbol is a sound

49. B.L. II, 56.
50. *Shakespeare Criticism,* II, 9.
51. B.L. II, 33, 159.
52. *Friend.*
53. *Misc. Crit.,* 43.
54. *Coleridge on Logic and Learning,* 136; *Friend,* 345; B. L. II, 259.

chosen by the poet; and this sound is other than an image. It is a determinate existent with rich powers of suggestion.

Art employs symbols which embody "the germinal causes in Nature" and which therefore do not appear as copies. A copy gives only masks, not "forms breathing life." The close similarity between the natural processes and the poetic is a basic tenet of the Coleridgean aesthetic. The poets of the Renaissance, he notes, are "like fair and stately plants, each with a living principle of its own, taking up into itself and diversely organising the nutrient derived from the peculiar soil in which each grew....In all their hues and qualities they bear witness of their birth-place and the accidents and conditions of their inward growth and outward expansion."[55] Poetry thus appears to be an organism, and each poem has an organic existence. It grows out of the imagination which gives it a vitality. The form it exhibits originates out of it.

The idea of a self-originating or self-evolving form does not appear only in his aesthetic. In **The Theory of Life,** life is said to be "the power which discloses itself from within as a principle of unity in the many"; it is a principle "of unity in multeity", for it is a power that "unites a given all into a whole that is presupposed by all its parts."[56] Beauty is "that in which the many, still seen as many, become one", it is "multeity in unity."[57] The status of the organism is determined by extension and intensity, by inclusiveness and organization.[58] A work of art is "rich in proportion to the variety of parts which it holds in unity."[59] The parts are organically related to each other and to the whole. Yet it reveals itself in and through symbols. These symbols of the artist are not evolutionary.

When a unique form emerges out of the communion of

55. *Shakespeare Criticism,* I, 242-3.
56. *Theory of Life,* 42.
57. B.L. II, 232.
58. *Theory of Life,* 44, 47-50.
59. B.L. II, 255.

imagination with reality, we have value and therefore individuality. This uniqueness embodies the ideal and the value is significant and real. The real and the ideal are therefore not different.[60] Thus a poem expresses the real and it also universalises it. The concrete particularity of the given is transformed into individuality and the character of the universal constitutes its very essence. As against Aristotle and Kant, we find Coleridge following Plato and arguing that the universals are constitutive. When these universals emerge in the particulars, we get a higher order of being called individuality. This implies for Coleridge that the universal is a process.[61] It is not a state but an activity. It is well to remember that the voluntaristic idealism of Coleridge is based upon the basic concept of an act of the will. This is taken by him as a way of escape from Aristotle's objections to Plato, and also from his own opposition to Aristotle's metaphysics.

The Idea is an act manifesting the universal, and it is therefore **living, seminal.** It is a formative principle controlling and being controlled by the universal.[62] When it "elaborates essence into existence", we apprehend a value; and this value emerges when the idea becomes real. Moreover, it is stated that "every principle is actualised by an idea, and every idea is living, productive, partaketh of infinity, and containeth an endless power of semination."[63] Thus the essential idea of ingratitude is elaborated into the play **King Lear;** and the value it embodies is more than the originating idea. It is winnowed by imagination and transmuted into a power of tremendous significance. The idea in its turn strikes us as more real than actual life. It is more real because its power of suggestion partakes of infinity.

The Idea is the essence of the objects, while the symbol

60. B.L. I, 178.
61. *Ibid.,* I, 101.
62. *Ibid.,* II, 187, 259.
63. *Statesman's Manual,* 25.

brings this universal into a relationship with the particular. But for the symbol, the universal will have only a mental existence; it will be an unrealized essence and therefore not a work of art. The mere particular on the other hand will remain an existent without a significant essence. Even if a poet were to take it up and seek to express it without the aid of the symbols, the expression would be too personal. The composition would present snatches of autobiography and this at least is not what we really expect of poetry. About the poem "To a Gentleman" he wrote to Wordsworth stating that "it is for the biographer, not the poet, to give the accidents of individual life."[64] These accidents will remain as particulars; and since they are not universals, they cannot enter poetry proper.

Poetry reveals the universals. The discrete particulars of nature are the organs of the universal, "as the lungs in relation to the atmosphere, the eye to light, crystal to fluid, figure to space."[65] Art shows the universal as that which is "capable of endless modifications"[66] working in and through the particulars. It demands a variety that can present organic unity. Shakespeare, we are told, follows "the great law of nature that opposites tend to attract and temper each other", and he achieves an organic whole "by the balance, counteraction, inter-modifications, and final harmony of differents."[67] The result is the concrete universal which is a coherent, organic unity. Such a unity may be a whole, but it strikes one as an individuality. The form and the content of a work of art acquire an integral character.

Coleridge goes beyond this concept of unity. The universal and the particular, the ideal and the real, value and concreteness have to be realized as identical if reality is to be apprehended. That which enables us to have this reali-

64. Cf. B.L. II. 33.
65. *Statesman's Manual,* App. B.
66. B.L. II, 262; *Misc. Crit.,* 44.
67. *Shakespeare Criticism,* I, 224; II, 262-3.

zation is imagination. A similar process is operating in the external world also. Hence it is said that imagination is "a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation." The counterpart of the external world is constituted by the senses and the understanding which are animated, controlled and regulated by the human mind. The universal processes of nature have their counterpart in human reason and in its exalted state this reason is not different from the creative imagination which, Coleridge remarks, is "the living power and prime agent of all human perception."[68] It not only creates, but constructs. It constructs or reconstructs reality and expresses a value.

There is a creativity of nature revealed through a certain energy which fuses the universal and the particular. A similar creative energy is the imaginative act which harmonises the impressions, images and ideas derived from the external world with the insights and intuitions of reason. Both these energies are directed to render reality concrete and significant. Imagination, therefore, is "that reconciling and mediatory power, which incorporating the reason in images of the sense, and organising (as it were) the flux of the senses by the permanent and self-circulating energies of the reason, gives birth to a system of symbols, harmonious in themselves, and consubstantial with the truths of which they are the conductors."[69] Here is a point of departure from Kant who held that imagination unifies only reason and understanding, and not sense-experience. This passage also reveals the departure from Shelling according to whom imagination is identical with creative processes of nature. Coleridge could speak of it only as "a **dim analogue** of creation—not all that we can believe, but all that we can conceive of creation."[70]

The understanding is **discursive,** mediated, and matter-

68. B.L. I, 202.
69. *Statesman's Manual,* 228.
70. Letter to Sharp, 15th January 1804.

moulded. It is analytical and reflective, and operates upon sense experience. It is preoccupied with "the quantities, qualities, and relations of particulars in time and space. The understanding, therefore, is the science of phenomena, and of their subsumption under distinct kinds and sorts. Its functions supply the rules and constitute the possibility of experience."[71] All that is valid in the theory of association is assimilated to memory, fancy and understanding, and the remaining offices of the mind are appropriated to reason and imagination.[72] Reason works with the physical universe employing different categories. The understanding "has no appropriate object but the material world in relation to our worldly interests."[73] It brings the world and man together in order to facilitate the realization of specific ends. But when it seeks to go beyond its limits, it fails. "It entangles itself in contradictions, in the very effort of comprehending the idea of substance."[74] These contradictions are inherent in the very tools it employs and in its own nature. And Coleridge preserved the autonomy of science, poetry, and religion by assigning to them respectively the dominance of understanding, imagination and reason. "The judgments of the understanding are binding only in relation to the objects of the senses, which we reflect under the forms of the understanding.[75] But imagination involves unities.

We see unity everywhere. The component parts of this unity do not explain it but "they necessarily presuppose it as the cause and condition of their existing as those parts; or even of their existing at all." The root, stem, leaves, petals and the like cohere in one plant because of "an antecedent Power or Principle in the Seed."[76] The inorganic whole is a

71. *Statesman's Manual,* 342.
72. B.L. I, 73.
73. *Statesman's Manual,* 342.
74. *Ibid.,* 343.
75. *Aids to Reflection,* 208.
76. *Ibid.,* 40-41.

mere collection of its parts, and in organic unity "the whole is everything, and the parts are nothing."[77] "Depend on it, whatever is grand, whatever is truly organic and living, the whole is prior to the parts."[78] The work of art is logically and existentially anterior to its components. The artist reveals "growth as in a plant." Explaining it, he observes: "all is growth, evolution, genesis—each line, each word almost, begets the following."[79] A poem is not merely an organism, but it is a growing organism, a process. This explains Coleridge's great preoccupation with the psychological process that brings forth the poem.

The plant has an inner source of energy and so it 'effectuates its own secret growth' thereby assuming a form proper to it.[80] The unity here develops from within; it evolves itself. The emergent form is not the impressing of "a predetermined form" on a given material. It is the organic form which "is innate; it shapes as it develops itself from within, and the fullness of its development is one and the same with the perfection of its outward form."[81] It is "form as proceeding",[82] not "shape as superinduced." It has an inherent teleology, "Not only the characteristic shape is evolved from the invisible central power, but the material mass itself is acquired by assimilation. The germinal power of the plant transmutes the fixed air and the elementary base of water into grass or leaves."[83] But if there is organic self-generation, how does consciousness participate in the creative process? There must be an unconscious component; and yet we are told that Shakespeare "never wrote anything without design."[84] Still we read: "what the

77. *Table Talk,* 18th December 1831.

78. *Philosophical Lectures,* 196.

79. *Shakespeare Criticism,* I, 233; *Misc. Crit.,* 89.

80. *Statesman's Manual,* 77. See Fogle: *Coleridge's Idea of Criticism.*

81. *Shakespeare Criticism,* I, 223-4.

82. B.L. II, 262.

83. *Aids to Reflection,* 267.

plant is by an act not its own and unconsciously, that must thou make thyself to become."[85] Read together the various passages make the unconscious mean that of which we are not normally conscious because it is the higher and yet foundational consciousness.

The creative process creates not the mere content but the embodied content. This organic form "is innate; it shapes as it develops itself from within, and the fulness of its development is one and the same with the perfection of its outward form. Such is the life, such the form."[86] The component parts develop their determinate form simultaneously from the seed. The developed organism is potentially present in the seed. The form of the developed entity represents the limits of the manifestation of the creative process; and form is thus inseparable from content, and the part is not separable from the whole. The entire process of manifestation is complex. The final expression is then inexhaustible. It cannot be fully analysed.

The poem is comparable to a plant. In such a comparison we are only pointing to a certain likeness, not to an identity. As Coleridge remarked, "no simile runs on all four legs."[87] It is in the very nature of a simile to imply the reality of a difference.

The distinction between shape and form is that which exists "betwixt the shaping skill of mechanical talent, and the creative, productive life-power of inspired genius." In the mechanical activity "each part is separately conceived and then by a succeeding act put together."[88] But harmony is manifested in each case of organic unity since the parts are internally related to one another. It is what may be called organization which reveals a specific unique value. It is at times designated method which is "a principle of unity with

85. *Statesman's Manual,* 76.
86. *Shakespeare Criticism,* I, 224.
87. *On the Constitution of the Church,* 79; *Cf.* B.L. II, 112-3.
88. *Shakespeare Criticism,* I, 4-5.

progression." But that which unites is "an act of the mind itself, a manifestation of intellect."[89]

Organic unity is a concept that explains both the process and expression of imagination. It is at least the conceptual equivalent of life and it is also symbolic of life. "No object of sense is sublime in itself, but only as far as I make it a symbol of some Idea....The circle is a beautiful figure in itself; it becomes sublime, when I contemplate eternity under it."[90] The organic unity is felt as a value only when it is contemplated as a symbol. This character gives it a power of suggestion and it is implicit in the uniting and progressive power of the mind. Suggestion invests it with a sublimity.

Coleridge's account of the sublime is helpful here. The sublime is "neither whole nor parts, but unity as boundless and endless allness"; it is a "total completeness."[91] It is infinity. It is something that cannot be comprehended by the pure understanding, and Aristotle is of no help in any attempt at classification. Understanding is only "the faculty judging by the senses"; and Aristotle "was a conceptualist, and never could raise himself into that higher state which was natural to Plato, and has been so to others, in which the understanding is distinctly contemplated, and, as it were, looked down upon from the throne of actual ideas, or living, inborn, essential truths."[92] The Idea is like a seed germinating successive ideas. The artist should have a proper choice of the initiating idea so that he may follow it carefully. That is, "a constant wakefulness of the mind" is an absolute necessity. This brings forth a harmony "between our passive impressions and the mind's reaction on them."[93] Then alone can the work of art evoke the pleasure proper to it. It is an immediacy of pleasure and yet it does not exclude the intellectual content.

89. *Treatise on Method,* 2.

90. Fragment printed by Raysor in *Studies in Philology,* 1925, 532-3.

91. B.L. II, 309.

92. *Table Talk,* 2nd July 1830.

93. *Treatise on Method,* 7.

The immediate object of a poem is pleasure, not truth.[94] The various fine arts, we should note, are different species of poetry.[95] The essence of all these arts is found "in the excitement of emotion for the immediate purpose of pleasure through the medium of beauty."[96] Coleridge's theory of poetry is not different from his theory of beauty. The fine arts reconcile the image with the idea. They "belong to the outward world, for they all operate by the images of sight and sound, and other sensible impressions; and without a delicate tact for these, no man ever was, or could be, either a musician or a poet; nor could he attain to excellence in any one of these Arts."[97] Painting, we are told,

> like a second and more lovely nature,
> Turns the blank canvas to a magic mirror;
> That makes the absent present, and to shadows
> Gives light, depth, substance, bloom, yea, thought
> and motion.[98]

The artist is impelled by a mighty, inward power, by a profound feeling which transforms the original obscure impulse into a bright, clear and living idea. This idea works out the unity of the composition. "The unity will be more intense in proportion as it constitutes each particular thing a whole of itself; and yet more, again, in proportion to the number and interdependence of the parts, which it unites as a whole. But a whole composed, **ab intra,** of different parts, so far interdependent that each is reciprocally means and end, is an individual, and the individuality is most intense where the greatest dependence of the parts on the whole is combined with the greatest dependence of the whole on its parts."[98*] The highest development of the parts is the greatest whole-

94. B.L. II. 10.
95. *Ibid.*, 220.
96. *Ibid.*, II, 221.
97. *Treatise on Method,* 62.
98. Works, I, 388.
98* *Ibid.*

ness, the intensest unity. Individuality is an emergent of the purposive evolutionary process.

We have earlier noticed that the work is an organisation, that it is a unity, and that it has a life of its own. Life is logically or ontologically prior to organization with which it is inseparably bound. This life is conceived of as growth, continuity. It also comes from above and its source is the infinite I am,[99] the great self-consciousness. It is a process and yet it is individual. It has "a circular motion, the snake with its tail in its mouth."[100] It is purposive, evolving to a higher state: But beauty is non-purposive; its end does not lie outside of itself. It tends to appear purposive like life in seeking to subjugate the obstacles; and the expression of beauty is the highest state of life where subject and object, spirit and matter, are reconciled.

Beauty "is, in the abstract, the unity of the manifold, the coalescence of the diverse; in the concrete, it is the union of the shapely with the vital. In the dead organic it depends on regularity of form, the first and lowest species of which is the triangle with all its modifications, as in crystals, architecture, etc.; in the living organic it is not merely regularity of form, which would produce a sense of formality; neither is it subservient to anything beside itself."[101] There is no absolute standard in which beauty may be said to be grounded; and the artist fails to realise it by coyping **natura naturata.** One has to master that which realises in itself the organic unity of nature and the human soul. Such a principle is the **natura naturans.** "Man's mind is the very focus of all the rays of intellect which are scattered throughout the images of nature. Now so to place these images, totalized, and fitted to the limits of the human mind, as to elicit from, and to superinduce upon, the forms themselves the moral reflections to

99. B.L. I, 202.
100. *Unpublished Letters,* II, 128.
101. B.L. II, 257.

which they approximate, to make the external internal, the internal external, to make nature thought, and thought nature,—this is the mystery of genius in the fine Arts. Dare I add that the genius must act on the feeling that body is but a striving to become mind,—that it is mind in its essence!"[102] The spiral dialectic subsumes the lower category in the higher. The body is an aspect of the mind and in the aesthetic contemplation or experience it becomes the mind. One loses the awareness of the body. This is not a state of the unconscious, but a higher state of consciousness. In such a state associationism fails to operate.

The beautiful "is that in which the many, still seen as many, becomes one...so far is the Beautiful from depending wholly on association, that it is frequently produced by the mere removal of association."[103] It reveals the balance, which is one aspect of the process, between the universal and the particular. This statement is one with Coleridge's definition of life; for life is said to be "the principle of unity in multeity, as far as the former, the unity to wit, is produced **ab intra.**" Life is "the principle of individuation, or the power which unites a given all into a whole that is presupposed by all its parts." It is harmony and wherever harmony is apprehended there is the presence of life. The poem thus is like a living organism. "Beauty is harmony and subsists only in composition; the first species of the agreeable can alone be a component part of the beautiful...; even of this species, those objects only can be admitted which belong to the eye and ear because they alone are susceptible of distinction of parts."[104] But real beauty emerges out of "the perceived harmony of an object with the inborn and constitutive rules of the judgment and imagination: and it is always intuitive."[105] This is a rejection of the Aristotelian idea of the regulative

102. *Ibid.*, 257-8.
103. *Ibid.*, 232.
104. *Ibid.*, 233.
105. *Ibid.*, 243.

character of the universal. To explain the felt experience of a real value in a work of art, Coleridge accepts the Platonic theory of the constitutive character. Thus he says: "The shapely joined with the naturally agreeable, constitutes what, speaking accurately, we mean by the word beautiful."[106] Here is the beautiful apprehended through sense. But the higher state of the beautiful involves the presence of life and free will. It is "the balance, the perfect reconciliation, effected between those two conflicting principles of the Free Life, and of the confining form! How entirely is the stiffness that would have resulted from the obvious regularity of the latter, fused and almost volatilized by the interpenetration and electrical flashes of the former."[107] This is beauty emerging as a result of the balance and reconciliation of free life and confining form. The electrical flashes of the former and the stiffness of the latter are resolved by imagination. Consequently the principle of organic unity is not other than that of the reconciliation of opposites, though the former is more elastic in admitting those that need not be mutually contradictory entities.[108]

Poesy, as the generic name of all the fine arts, contains the end in the means.[109] The materials with which it works are harmonised with the idea, and hence it is said that beauty presents a reconciliation of subject and object. "The sense of beauty subsists in simultaneous intuition of the relation of parts, each to each, and of all to a whole: exciting an immediate and absolute complacency, without intervenence, therefore, of any interest, sensual or intellectual."[110] This is identified with the mystic's definition of beauty "as the subjection of matter to spirit." The resultant beauty is "a symbol in and through which the spirit reveals itself." This is possible only

106. B.L. II, 234.
107. B.L. II, 235.
108. B.L. II, 239.
109. *Treatise on Method,* 85.
110. B.L. II, 239.

when the "harmonious chaos" is subdued and harmonised, when we have "the coalescence of the diverse."[111] Beauty then is not simply functional, for it has little to do with "the fitness of the means to the end."[112] Beauty is absolutely real, and does not "depend on a law of proportion."[113] It exists by itself and therefore has Individuality, Life. "Life can be defined only by individuation/that which manifests its individuality is life to us,—that, which existing, as a whole, contains in itself the principle of the specific form, by which it manifests itself as a whole."[114] Such a unique life symbolised as the work of art can only be misleadingly described in the terminology of parts and whole. "The very word 'part' imperfectly conveys what we see and feel; for the moment we look at it in division, the charm ceases."[115] The parts of an organic whole called the poem are significant. But these parts are not predetermined, since they depend on the poem. Aristotle, 'the lord of the understanding', speaks of the prior existence of the parts. But for Coleridge it is the idea of the whole that has a prior existence at least in the imaginative activity. Thus we are told that "Shakespeare studied mankind in the **Idea** of the human race; and he followed out that Idea into all its varieties by a **Method** which never failed to guide his steps aright."[116] The Idea is prior to expression, and the translation of the idea under the guidance of method gives rise to a form of unique significance.

Great art reveals a unique form, not shape. Coleridge therefore remarks: "Remember that there is a difference between form as proceeding, and shape as superinduced;—the latter is either the death or the imprisonment of the thing;

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111. B.L. II, 256.
112. *Ibid.*, 244.
113. *Ibid.*, 245.
114. "Some Unpublished Marginalia", *T.L.S.* June 14, 1957, p. 369.
115. B.L. II, 245.
116. *Treatise on Method*, 27.

the former is its self-witnessing and self-affected sphere of agency. Art would or should be the abridgment of nature. Now the fulness of nature is without character, as water is purest when without taste, smell, or colour; but this is the highest, the apex only,—it is not the whole. The object of art is to give the whole **ad hominem**; hence each step of nature hath its ideal, and hence the possibility of a climax up to the perfect form of a harmonized chaos."[117] Form and shape are contraries, not opposites; and hence they cannot be reconciled. Shape is the negation of beauty. But if form and shape differ only in degree, not in kind, then shape would be an element or aspect of form. Life and free will are capable of transmuting shape into the vital form. The artist is concerned not with the fulness of nature, but with the essence of nature, the latter emerging from the fusion of the soul with objective nature. As such, art is "of a middle quality between a thought and a thing." Here we have "the union and reconciliation of that which is nature with that which is exclusively human. It is the figured language of thought, and is distinguished from nature by the unity of all the parts in one thought or idea. Hence nature itself would give us the impression of a work of art, if we could see the thought which is present at once in the whole and every part."[118] The 'fulness of nature' is the creative act of the deity while beauty is only one of its aspects. The work of art is not an 'object of mere desire' and as such it cannot be 'valued only as the means to the end.'[119] It has no transitive reference outside of itself.

But can a long poem exhibit this kind of unity? In order to be a unity the entire poem must uniformly be pervaded by a never flagging imaginative activity. This is not easily possible since such an activity also presupposes the continuance of a predominant passion; and this is an impossibility. Cole-

117. B.L. II, 263.
118. *Ibid.*, 254-5.
119. *Ibid.*, 224.

ridge remarks: "A poem of any length neither can be or ought to be all poetry."[120] Then the unity appears to be broken. It is to ward off such an eventuality that Coleridge emphasises the part played by method which is a principle of unity with progression. Accordingly he observes: "If an harmonious whole is to be produced, the remaining parts must be preserved in keeping with the poetry; and this can be no otherwise effected than by such a studied selection and artificial arrangement, as will partake of one, though not a peculiar property of poetry. And this again can be no other than the property of exciting a more continuous and equal attention than the language of prose aims at, whether colloquial or written."[121] Method is a logical activity and when it works in close cooperation with imagination, we will have an artist whose judgment would be equal to his genius. Then the work of art can reveal a unique unity. Unity demands and implies variety. The creative process involves the harmony of spontaneous impulse with voluntary purpose. The idea of organic unity clearly stands for the spontaneous growth of the plant; and this growth has an inevitability. Then it would be difficult to speak of the activities of will, understanding and judgment. There is no room for art, for the technique of the artist. It is to overcome this trouble that Coleridge spoke of the presence of conscious will in the activity of secondary imagination. Imagination "subordinates art to nature; the manner to the matter." Still "it blends and harmonizes the natural and the artificial." The supraconscious too needs the conscious for its embodiment. In the work of the great genius we find the artist's "judgment equal to his genius." The organic metaphor cannot then be taken to emphasise the unconscious and inevitable growth, but the complexity of the creative process.

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120. B.L. II, 11.
121. *Ibid.*

10. WORDSWORTH'S PREFACE

The publication of the **Lyrical Ballads** in 1798 was the joint venture of Wordsworth and Coleridge. It was to the second edition of 1800 that Wordsworth prefixed a **Preface**. On September 30, 1800 Coleridge informed Daniel Stuart that "the **Preface** contains our joint opinion on Poetry." If this were true, we could have missed many valuable chapters of the **Biographia.** It is quite probable that Coleridge did not see the **Preface** in its full form prior to its publication. He and Wordsworth had many a discussion on the nature of poetry; and Coleridge may have felt that this **Preface** would contain the views shared by both. It was this hope that was shattered considerably as can be seen from later references to this text by Coleridge in his letters.

In his letter to Sotheby dated July 13, 1802, talking about metre, Coleridge observed: "We have had lately some little controversy on the subject, and we begin to suspect that there is somewhere or other a **radical difference** in our opinions." It is a radical difference separating the traditions of the eighteenth century from the new outlook of the nineteenth century. It separates poetry composed deliberately with a purpose, from poetry which is mainly individualistic. Wordsworth was too much a child of the eighteenth century to give up this diction, style or empiricism even when he was faced with the neo-Platonic visions and intuitions.

But the **Preface** does contain some common ground. Only on July 29, 1802 he told Southey: "Although Wordsworth's **Preface** is half a child of my own brain, and arose out of conversations so frequent that, with few exceptions, we could scarcely either of us, perhaps, positively say which first started

any particular thought (I am speaking of the **Preface** as it stood in the second volume), yet I am far from going all lengths with Wordsworth." This common ground is not hard to discover. The two did not differ much on the question of the nature and function of poetry. On this problem Wordsworth is enthusiastically eloquent and voices the romantic principle unequivocally. The passage "on the dignity and nature of the office and character of a Poet", Coleridge admits, "is very grand"; "but it is, in parts (and this is the fault, **me judice**, of all the latter half of that Preface), obscure beyond any necessity." The obscurity evidently refers to Wordsworth's views on metre and diction.

Wordsworth himself came to realise that his views on diction had "so little application to the greater parts, perhaps, of the collection, as subsequently enlarged and diversified, that they could not with any propriety stand as an Introduction to it."[1] So the Preface became an Appendix, "to be read or not at the reader's choice."[2] But the fact that he retained it even as an appendix implies that he did not give up the general outline sketched in the Preface. He was only seeking to modify some of the statements made in the original text which came to be looked upon as some kind of a manifesto even by those who accepted only Wordsworth's ideas regarding the nature of poetry. But Coleridge remarked: "With many parts of this preface in the sense attributed to them and which the words undoubtedly seem to authorise, I never concurred; but on the contrary objected to them as erroneous in principle, and as contradictory (in appearance at least) both to other parts of the same preface, and to the author's own practice in the greater part of the poems themselves."[3] The self-contradictions in the statement of the theory need an examination.

Before we proceed further we have to remember two

1. Wordsworth's "Preface" to his *Poems* published in 1815.
2. *Biographia*, II, 8.
3. *Ibid.*, II, 7-8.

facts. The first is that the volume of the **Lyrical Ballads** was published as an **experiment.** The volume was intended to "ascertain, how far, by fitting to metrical arrangement a selection of the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation, that sort of pleasure and that quantity of pleasure may be imparted, which a Poet may rationally endeavour to impart." The poems are experiments consciously controlled by a definite end. The end is to impart a certain **quantity of pleasure.** This is dangerously nearer to the pleasure calculus of Bentham and it has its origins in the empiricist tradition of England culminating in Hartley's associationist psychology. What Hartley did in psychology that Wordsworth sought to do in poetry. But Hartley's defence of natural and revealed religion had its hold only on Coleridge, and not on Wordsworth. This is the second factor to be remembered. The means employed to achieve the Hartleyan end refers to the medium in its two aspects. One is metre which Wordsworth takes to be an arrangement of words. The other is the "selection of the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation." Both these aspects are governed by the end which is to impart a certain quantity of pleasure.

The content of the medium is explained in the **Preface.** He claims that his choice of rustic life provides immediate pleasure. But this pleasure may be due to the "naturalness of the things presented", and not to the rustic life as such. It is also possible that the pleasure arises from the fusion of "the apparent naturalnesss of the representation" with "the author's own knowledge and talent."[4] It may also spring from the fact that the reader is conscious of his superiority to the characters presented. The term pleasure here appears to be dubious. One cannot lay down a general rule merely from one's own experience. Since he derived a certain pleasure from his observation and meditation of rustic life, he cannot hold that others too will have that pleasure from a perusal of the poems depicting that life as such.

4. *Ibid.*, II, 30.

But Wordsworth argued that he chose rustic life because of the importance he attached to the primary feelings and affections. The rustics being unsophisticated and simple, the essential passions grow naturally in them. They are uninhibited and the passions are not controlled. Consequently when they communicate their feelings, their language is powerfully charged with vigour, life and sincerity. Since these primary feelings exist in their simplicity in these people, they can be observed well, and contemplated accurately. They are easily comprehended. They are durable. They are expressed effectively by the rustics because they are in hourly communion "with the best objects from which the best part of language is originally derived." The simple and unsophisticated rustics "convey their feelings and motions in simple and unelaborated expressions."

"Humble and rustic life" was chosen because, he argues, "in that condition, the essential passions of the heart find a better soil" in which they are capable of being freely developed. In "The Brothers", "Michael", "Ruth" and others Wordsworth introduces characters who do not seem to belong to the low or rustic life. There is nothing in the poems to show that they come from such a life. The feelings they have and the language they are made to speak have no necessary connection with 'their occupations and abode.' 'The thoughts, feelings, languages, and manners' of these characters are traceable to causes which can bring forth the same results or effects even in the towns. One cause is the sense of independence they have. They are independent to the extent they do not work for the profit of others, and yet they have to struggle in order to preserve the frugal simplicity of their domestic life. The other cause is to be sought in the religious education or training they received in the Church. The particular mode of life the rustics have is by itself capable of moulding their sensibility. As a result the characters presented appeal to us, not because they are rustics and better than others, but because they are, what Aristotle called, idealised beings. "They are persons of

a known and abiding class, and their manners and sentiments the natural product of circumstances common to the class."[5] In "Harry Gill" and "The Idiot Boy", "the feelings are those of human nature in general", though Wordsworth did not take pains to focus the attention of the reader on these feelings. And when he chose "to imitate truly a dull and garrulous discourser", it is impossible to do so "without repeating the effects of dullness and garrulity"[6] even when the poet is prepared "to throw over them a certain colouring of imagination."

In taking up the humble and rustic low, his primary object was to 'trace in them the primary laws of **our** nature.' These are the laws common to all human beings, and they are not the exclusive property of the rustics. Here he is concerned with "the manner in which we **associate** ideas in a state of excitement." This is a valuable statement providing a clue to the basic presuppositions of these experiments. Wordsworth establishes a connection between the language of the common people and their humble life. "The poet thinks and feels in the spirit of human passions. How then can his language differ in any material degree from that of all other men who feel vividly and see clearly?" There is an associative link between ideas and feelings and between feelings and words. Then the ideas and expressions can be associated with each other. "The essential passions of the heart" governing the rustics enable them to "speak a plainer and more emphatic language." They are, in a word, **sincere.** This criterion of sincerity is a double edged weapon which a critic can handle to cry down or to raise high any expression he dislikes or admires.

Essential passions and plainer and more emphatic words are associated with one another. Then we are told that the elementary feelings coexist in a state of greater simplicity. These are the atomic existents of Hartley, the independent reals unrelated to one another. As such one can contem-

5. *Ibid.*, II, 34.
6. *Ibid.*, II, 36.

plate them more accurately. If each feeling is contemplated in itself, one may find a certain difficulty in integrating them to the unity of the individual or in relating them to "the beautiful and permanent forms of nature." To find the nature of the difficulty inherent here, we may turn to what he says regarding the language.

Wordsworth observed: "The language, too, of these men has been adopted (purified indeed from what appear to be its real defects, from all lasting and rational causes of dislike or disgust) because such men hourly communicate with the best objects from which the best part of language is originally derived." When the rustic's language is 'purified from all provincialism and grossness', when grammar is introduced into it, it does not differ from the language of any other. Only others may have more ideas to express, and the rustic only a few vague or obscure ones. The rustic's mental faculties are not well developed, nor are they trained properly; and hence he aims at expressing a few isolated ideas concerning his limited range of experience, or tradition, or belief. The educated man on the other hand seeks to express those connections of things which give rise to the enunciation of the general laws.[7] Consequently, the "simple and unelaborated expressions" of the rustic will not give us a unified whole, though they are free from the "arbitrary and capricious habits of expression."

The rustic would individualise only those things and actions that have a direct bearing on his daily life. These he can express accurately and precisely. For the rest he has a confused general vocabulary which assuredly is not the best part of language. "The best part of human language, properly so called, is derived from reflection on the acts of mind itself. It is formed by a voluntary appropriation of fixed symbols to internal acts, to processes and results of imagination, the greater part of which have no place in the consciousness of uneducated man."* It is possible that our experiences

7. *Biographia*, II, 38-39.
* *Ibid.*, II, 39-40.

in the external universe lead us to think and to reflect. But it is out of these reflections and intuitions that the human mind arrives at certain truths. In analysing these truths we tend to be more exact and therefore more abstract. Such an abstraction Wordsworth condemns as being the product of the 'meddling intellect.' If this intellect does not operate, it is not only impossible to be precise and accurate but difficult to express with clarity// Language as spoken in daily life is essentially 'matter-moulded'; and it is not in itself or by itself capable of expressing the nature of any excitement. Even the rustics convey their emotional experiences partly by gestures because of the difficulty in finding suitable words in their language.

The movements of the educated from and to the countryside, the discourses of the religious, and the talks and conversations of the social reformers and politicians do continuously increase the number of ideas and expressions the rustics have. As the number of the educated increases and as communications between different parts of the country develop, there will be a regular flow of ideas and consequently of words. A significant part of the rustic's vocabulary is derived from this source and not from the so-called communion with nature. And the 'more permanent' part of his language is not 'more philosophical', but more utilitarian. Wordsworth was unfortunately led to exaggerate the value of this utilitarian language because of his antipathy to the poetic diction of the eighteenth century as embodied in Pope's **Iliad**. Instead of arguing for the adoption of a simpler and homlier language, he builds up a fantastic theory of the 'philosophical' nature of the language of common life.

If, however, the peculiarities of the language spoken by the rustics have to be omitted, what kind of expression do we get? The same process may as well be applied to the language of different literary artists. Such a purification applied to the language of Sir Thomas Browne can then agree with the purified language of the Cumberland Beggar. It would be the

substitution of "a language of folly and vanity...for that of good sense and natural feeling" because this resulting language may be either devoid of any value worth mentioning or be the same as the standard language. And a standard language is largely governed by custom and tradition and also by utilitarian considerations.

Wordsworth spoke of his choice of language at different times in different ways. In 1798 he called it "the language of conversation in the middle and lower classes of life." In 1800 this became "a selection of the **real** language of man in a state of vivid sensation"; and yet he stated in the same preface: "I propose to myself to imitate, and, as far as possible, to adopt the **very** language of men." These two formulations were retained in 1802 and also in 1805. But in 1802 and 1805 he spoke of 'bringing my language **near** to the language of men.' In 1802 he said that the mechanical poetic diction 'differs materially from the **real** language of men **in any situation.**' In 1805 he used four expressions: 'a selection of language **really used** by men', 'a selection of the language **really spoken** by men', 'the **real** language of nature', and 'selecting from the **real** language of men.'

The word **real** is equivocal. The language of a man varies with 'the extent of his knowledge, the activity of his faculties, and the depth or quickness of his faculties.'* These conditioning factors contribute to the peculiar features of that man's language. Another part of his language is coloured by the customs and traditions of the class to which he belongs. Then he has also 'words and phrases of universal use.' All these factors make his language **real,** and it differs from that of others. What Wordsworth had in mind was the **ordinary** language, the **lingua communis.** But this ordinary language is nowhere to be found, because it is a language common to all when the peculiarities of each individual's language are omitted. And when these peculiarities are dropped, it is not the **real** language of any one. As Dante has

* *Biographia,* II, 41.

said, this **lingua communis** exists everywhere in parts, and nowhere as a whole.[8]

Wordsworth's expression can be valid to a certain extent if he used **simple** or **natural** instead of **real.** This appears to be his intention from his declared hostility to the language he employed in his earlier sketches and poems. Even then it will result in the creation of another type of poetic diction; and as such it solves no difficulty.

By 'selection' he means the elimination of the painful and repulsive elements. This elimination is necessary because he felt that poetry should always 'produce excitement in co-existence with an over-balance of pleasure.' But words by themselves are not capable of evoking any pleasurable emotion. They must first become members of an organic whole. Even the qualifying words 'in a state of excitement' do not help us much. The expression of an emotional excitement depends on the mental equipment of the speaker. Passion does not create words; it only gives an increased activity and vitality to the ideas and words that are already present. The language of excitement is no more natural than that of an intellectual debate. The increased activity and vitality of the ideas would make the language highly figurative; and then it would not be the real language of the people. Wordsworth's process of selection should then refer to those words which involve the interaction of ideas, feelings and sensations; and this may be the real language of developed minds in a state of excitement. If the poet has to 'compose accurately in the spirit of such a selection', there will be a serious limitation imposed on the content and form of poetry by the emotion or feeling. The selected language has to conform to the nature of the emotion. Such a selection cannot be the work of imagination because all selection is the work of the human understanding and will.

To make a selection one should possess the language already and in selecting he uses his own powers of judgment and reflection, not those of the class to which the language

8. *Ibid.,* II, 41-42.

belongs. The mere adoption of the words used by a class of persons is not the same as adopting their language. In order to adopt that language one has to "follow the order in which the words of such men are wont to succeed each other."[9] This order differs from class to class and from individual to individual. The order is dependent on the degree of awareness of what Coleridge elsewhere called method. The rustic lacks the method or "prospectiveness of mind which enables a man to foresee the whole of what he is to convey, appertaining to any one point"; he fails "to subordinate and arrange the different parts according to their relative importance, as to convey it at once, and as an organized whole."[10] And when the poet takes up the language of the common people, he makes a selection by introducing his method, his sense of order; and to this extent it is a language made his own. It is no longer the language of common people. Even Wordsworth observes that the poet contemplates man "with a certain quantity of immediate konwledge, with certain convictions, intuitions, and deductions, which from habit acquire the quality of intuitions."

Wordsworth's theory of diction for poetry, says Coleridge, is "applicable only to certain classes of poetry." It is applicable to those cases in the sense in which no one can object to it or deny it. Even then as a rule it is useless.[11] By poetic diction Wordsworth meant a fixed vocabulary which excludes what it deemed to be low or trivial. He rejects the specific features like personification, periphrasis, latinisms, inversions, frequent antitheses and the like.[12] At times he would prefer to reject any expression that is not direct, any statement bordering on what is called the pathetic fallacy. He was critical of the line 'She bowed to taste the

9. *Biographia,* II, 43-44.
10. *Ibid.,* II, 44.
11. *Ibid.,* II, 30.
12. N. C. Smith (Ed.): *Wordsworth's Literary Criticism,* pp. 20, 45-46.

wave' only because no one bows actually in drinking Bath waters, and no one calls the bath waters drunk from a goblet a **wave.**[13] This is reminiscent of Johnson's examination of "Lycidas". And in the neo-classical manner he observed: "I have at all times endeavoured to look steadily at my subject: consequently, there is I hope in these Poems little falsehood of descriptions."

'To bring his language near to the language of men' he took pains to avoid 'what is usually called poetic diction.' He looked down upon 'the gaudy affectations of a style which passed current with too many for poetic diction.' His disgust for a time 'narrowed his view.' And when he felt a 'preference for the language of nature for good sense', he gave expression to his thoughts in an exaggerated manner. Thus arose "his predilection for a style the most remote possible from the false and shadowy splendour of the earlier period; and he became **partial** to it."[14] And yet if he felt that there was an undercurrent of genuine feeling he could accept quaintness, conceits, exaggerations and verbal wit. Thus he praised Donne's Sonnet on "Death" as "weighty in thought, and vigorous in the expression."[15] And he was prepared to admit personification 'prompted by passion', though in itself it is 'a mechanical device of style.'

All the while Wordsworth was groping after a simple language, a language employed in daily life by the common people. This is a language easily understood by all. He sought to establish the **lingua communis** "as the only commendable style." But his own style is "the most **individualised** and characteristic"[16]; and the style of the poets whom he admired and followed was again a highly artificial one. As long as the theory dogged him, he could not resolve the conflicting tendencies of his understanding and intellect. And where he

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 126-7.
14. *Biographia Literaria*, II, 69-70.
15. Smith (Ed.): *Wordsworth's Literary Criticism*, pp. 246-7.
16. *Biographia Literaria*, II, 77.

liked a passage, he was ready with a facile explanation bringing even a passage replete with the artificial devices in line with his theory of language. And when he talked of the language of the common people he over-simplified it.

Even in real life words are used in diverse ways. There are 'words used as arbitrary marks of thought' and those conveying pictures. These pictures may be borrowed from one object to make another specific; or they may be employed to represent the mental state of the speaker allegorically; or they may be "the exponents of his particular turn and unusual extent of faculty."[17] This last variety appears in the works of literary art because the activity of the writer is directed "to raise the lower and neutral tints." The metrical pattern is a powerful aid in achieving this task. Though Wordsworth was aware of this use of words and spoke of the 'colouring of the imagination', he could not distinguish the normal usage from the emotive usage.

In good poetry the language of the common people gets purified and charged with the life of feelings and emotions. But the selection, he argued, can "separate the composition from the vulgarity and meanness of ordinary life"; and then he "composes accurately in the spirit of such selection."[18] This is a round-about way of arguing for the neo-classical ideal of "the general language of humanity', and of the "common principles which govern first-rate writers in all nations and tongues."[19] Just as in his early style he was too much under the spell of Darwin and others, so he was in his theory influenced by Hartley and by the neo-classicists. The purification of language through grammar, syntax and decency is not enough. Poetry demands and illustrates a continuous transformation of the normal language of the people. Wordsworth was aware of this. Yet he observed that language in a

17. *Ibid.*, II, 93.
18. Smith (Ed.): *Wordsworth's Literary Criticism*, pp. 11, 13, 14, 21, 24 and 30.
19. *Ibid.*, 90, 117.

"state of vivid sensation", "if selected truly and judiciously, must necessarily be dignified and variegated, and alive with metaphors and figures."[20] The 'dignified and variegated' language belongs to the rhetorical tradition influenced by the principles of Quintilian and by the teaching of Longinus. The latter spoke of 'noble phraseology' and of 'dignified and spirited composition' in enumerating the characteristic sources of the sublime. And Wordsworth remarks that the earliest poets "wrote naturally, and as men feeling powerfully as they did, their language was daring, and figurative." This cannot be the normal language of normal life. It can be the language employed by persons in certain extraordinary situations.

At the back of all this is Wordsworth's belief that the poet's language is inferior to that of men in passion. "The language of the poets falls short of that which is uttered by men in real life, under the actual pressure of those passions," because the words of those men are "emanations of reality and truth." The earliest poets employed a language of these extraordinary occasions; and though it is not the language of normal life, it was actually spoken by the people.[21] But it is an irony that Milton was his ideal, and so was Spenser. These are the most learned poets employing an artificial language; and in a letter he states: "to this day I could repeat, with a little previous rummaging of my memory, several thousand lines of Pope."[22] An ingrained habit takes a long time to disappear, and Wordsworth overcame it probably by 1798.

Wordsworth's reference to the earlier poets is a little misleading. He quotes the authorities he likes, and quotes them for an occasion in which they do not quite fit. We do not know anything about the language spoken by Homer in actual life. If we come to the historical times, we find Wordsworth contradicting himself. Though he admired Burns and Percy,[23]

20. *Ibid.*, 11, 22.
21. *Ibid.*, 24, 43.
22. Letters, Ed. by Knight, III, 122.
23. Smith (Ed.): *Wordsworth's Literary Criticism,* 193, 202.

and though he wrote in that ballad tradition, he spoke of Ossian as the "phantom begotten by the snug embrace of an impudent Highlander upon a cloud of tradition."[24] Yet he accepted as good the tradition of learned Latin poetry. Judging from his literary taste, one comes to the conclusion that the language of the common people was Wordsworth's way of pleading for a language he liked most. Then the selection of the real language of men comes to mean the language of Milton and Spenser, possibly also the language of Shakespeare. This is inconsistent with his view that the poet "must express himself as other men express themselves", if this expression refers only to language. And if this were to be an expression expressive of a state of excitement, the emphasis will fall not on language, but on the passions. But the problem of language acted on Wordsworth as an obsession like the head of King Charles in the philosophical history planned by Dick in **David Copperfield.**

He argued that poetry is "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings", and that the poet should adopt the language of passion to capture vividly that state of excitement. This language is said to be natural or sincere. And yet he observed: "My first expression I often find detestable; and it is frequently true of second words as of second thoughts that they are best."[25] Elsewhere he remarks that "composition of verse is infinitely more of an art than men are prepared to believe; and absolute success in it depends upon innumerable minutiae."[26] The poet should not be viewed as 'pouring easy his unpremeditated verse."[27] And yet he says that the numbers "came spontaneously"[28] and "in such a torrent that he was unable to remember" the passage,[29] and that he poured out a poem truly from the heart."[30]

24. *Ibid.,* 190.
25. Letter to Gillies, Dec. 22, 1814.
26. Letter to Haywood, 1828; Letter of Nov. 22, 1831.
27. Milton.
28. Prelude, I, 51-2.
29. Letter to Beaumont, May 1, 1805.
30. Letter to Dora and Fenwick, April 7, 1840.

This inconsistency is preserved even when he came to speak about nature and place of metre in poetry. Even in a good poem of the most elevated character, he argues, there is a language which does not differ from that of good prose, save in metre. Some of the finest passages even in the best poems exhibit the language of prose. By way of example he refers to Milton and quotes a sonnet of Gray to show that there is only a difference of degree, not of kind, between the language of prose and that of metrical composition. But Wordsworth forgot that this is a difference in the degree of significance communicated by the writer. In other words, the difference is to be found in the use to which a poet puts his language. Ignoring this point, Wordsworth states that "there neither is nor can be, any **essential** difference between the language of prose and that of metrical composition." The body or form of these two has 'the same substance', apparently because language is the common medium. Their 'affections are kindred, and almost identical.' They do not **essentially** differ. But in certain minor details there is a difference. In other words, Wordsworth is not so much seeking to abolish the distinction between prose and metrical composition. On the other hand, he seems to be establishing the nature and value of the distinction in a precise manner.

Once again Wordsworth approaches the problem of metre from the standpoint of associationism. Metre is associated with poetry, and poetry is associated with certain qualities of language, thought and emotion. Then metre too may be associated with these very qualities. He writes: "It is supposed, that by the act of writing in verse an Author makes a formal engagement that he will gratify certain known habits of association; that he not only thus appraises the Reader that certain classes of ideas and expression will be found in his book, but that others will be carefully excluded." Metre thus appears to be a factor in a chain of association. A certain kind of diction too is associated with metre, and Wordsworth is rejecting the "gaudiness and inane phraseology" of others.

This makes Wordsworth believe that metre is associated with diction and that association is a necessary causal relation. Accordingly when he rejects that diction, he is emboldened to declare his rejection of metre too. But he declares that while poetic diction is "subject to the infinite caprices" of the writer and therefore arbitrary, "metre is regular and uniform." That is, metre is now dissociated from the association with diction; and language can then stand in isolation as an independent real. When we have the 'selection of the language really spoken by men' in poetry, this selection 'will of itself form a distinction' between prose and poetry; and it will distinguish the latter 'from the vlugarity and meanness of ordinary life.' Prose is distinguished from poetry by virtue of this selection; and yet Wordsworth makes out that the antithesis of prose is not poetry but metre.

Instead of the diction of the earlier poets, it is the selection of the real language with which metre will now be associated. "If metre be superadded thereto, I believe that a dissimilitude will be produced altogether sufficient for the gratification of a rational mind." This does not mean that metre directly contributes to this gratification; for, it can only "heighten and improve the pleasure which coexists with it." Metre is **superadded** to that which is already **interesting** because it is supposed to have a **charm** of its own. It is **adventitious.**

The entire argument is based on a confusion between metre and rhythm. In good prose and in good poetry we have rhythm. Since the appeal of poetry is largely dependent on rhythm, which does not have a fixed pattern ab extra, Wordsworth took metre to be an appendage. But he forgot that metre provides the basic framework of rhythm in poetry.

The **Preface** curiously enough provides a strong defence for the use of metre in spite of the explicit statements to the contrary. Metre is said to enhance the pleasure given by a poem. He speaks of it as a "superadded charm" and he is aware of the fact that it "paves the way for other artificial

distinctions of a style."[31] His objection is evidently based on these artificial distinctions based on, and derived from, metre. In order to reject the associated consequences, he exaggerates a little. Yet he is aware of the contribution of metre to the total impression evoked by a poem. "The end of poetry is to produce excitement." This "excitement is an unusual and irregular state of the mind" which may overstep its bounds when it is not properly controlled or regulated. Metre being regular and uniform, if it is employed to communicate this excitement, it exhibits its power of "tempering and restraining the passion." This process is carried out by a judicious combination of feeling which is the substance of poetry with feeling "not strictly and necessarily connected with the passion." Metre, as Dryden said earlier, restrains the movement of the exuberant fancy and overflowing emotions. It also helps the introduction of a tone of dissimilarity. It tends to "divest language, in a certain degree, of its reality, and thus to throw a sort of half-consciousness of unsubstantial existence over the whole composition."[32] Some form of a dream-state is induced on us by the recurring pattern through which feeling is unfolded to us. Thereby "the more pathetic situations and sentiments" become capable of being endured in metre. The pathetic is relieved of its intensity to a certain extent. The metrical form renders the familiar feeling unfamiliar. And then the tragic atmosphere of an incident is rendered in such a way that it does not depress us. We have an "indistinct perception perpetually renewed of language closely resembling that of real life, and yet, in the circumstance of metre, differing from it widely."[33] This "perception of similitude in dissimilitude" is one of the sources of pleasure produced by a poem. And this is necessary not only to endure the pathetic, but to understand the feelings and emotions that are founda-

31. Smith (Ed.): *Wordsworth's Literary Criticism,* 21, 31.
32. *Ibid.,* 33, 35.
33. *Ibid.,* 34-35.

tional to all human life. In other words, metre offers an opportunity to understand the primary feelings and the ideas associated with these feelings. Then metre has a necessary internal relation to the material, to the characteristic feature, of all poetry. It cannot be an adventitious thing.

And yet the doctrinaire approach lands Wordsworth into an inconsistency when he takes up an illustration. Dr. Johnson's stanza on the hat is intended to show there can be no poetic quality in a metrical form which employs the language resembling that of life and nature. Wordsworth answers this argument by drawing our attention to a stanza from the ballad of the "Children in the Wood." Here too we have more or less similar words; and the order of the words is that of ordinary conversation. Yet the first is not poetry, while the second is. This evidently means that the metrical form has little or nothing to do with the nature of poetry. We reject Johnson's stanza because the **matter** it expresses is **contemptible.** It gives no pleasure because it does not express any sane state of feeling. It has nothing to do with those primary feelings that are at the very basis of human life. In other words, the essential character of poetry depends on the primary and permanent feelings of human life. But does the stanza of the ballad of the "Children in the Wood" affect us as poetry? Here we do not react in the way we do towards a poem. We react to it from the standpoint of feelings taking into consideration the helplessness of the babes in the wood. We react more or less like children, unconsciously or consciously passing through our own childhood with its hopes and fears. Wordsworth's error then appears to consist in equating a feeling with a poem. The feeling can at best be contributory to the atmosphere of the poem, to the general tone of the poem; it cannot be the same as the poem.

This difficulty arises because Wordsworth has ignored the part played by imagination in the poetic composition. He uses the term imagination with no definite idea about its mean-

ing. He has also inherited the term fancy popularised by the eighteenth century.

Imagination and fancy, we are told, are not forms of memory. They are "processes of creation or the composition." Imagination refers to creation, while fancy may be said to refer to composition. But the examples he gives are only metaphorical transfers. According to him, it is an act of imagination to see the samphire gatherer in **Lear** 'hanging' on the cliff, because the speaker visualises only the precarious position. That this is a form of synechdoche is apparent when Wordsworth gives as another example his own description of the Cuckoo as the 'wandering voice.' Borrowing an expression from Lamb, he describes this imaginative activity as a "drawing all things to one."[34] It is "consolidating numbers into unity", "dissolving and separating unity into number."[35] In other words, imagination is not only a unifying power, but also an analysing one. Elsewhere he attributed this analytic activity to the "meddling intellect" which he is here confusing with imagination.

In the note added to "The Thorn" in 1800, we are told that "imagination is the faculty which produces impressive effects out of simple elements", and that fancy is "the power by which pleasure and surprise are excited by sudden varieties of situation and accumulated imagery." The words **simple elements** and **accumulated imagery** tell us that Wordsworth's distinction is largely coloured by the associationist psychology and that the difference is one of quantity only. This is clear when we look at another statement he made on Coleridge's remarks that imagination is the "shaping and modifying power', while fancy is 'the aggregative and associative power."[36] This, says Wordsworth, 'is too general', because both these powers aggregate and associate', 'evoke and combine.' Both are

34. *Ibid.*, 157.
35. *Ibid.*, 162.
36. *Omniana,* 1812.

equally creative. But as Coleridge pointed out, Wordsworth had "mistaken the co-presence of fancy with imagination for the operation of the latter singly."[37] That these are two different activities is clear from the fact that Wordsworth does not give an equal status to these two. He talks of fancy as if it were a lower power. It is viewed as a kind of trick. In fancy we have the "curious subtility and successful elaboration with which she can detect the lurking affinities." Imagination is the "plastic, the pliant, and the indefinite."[38]

Imagination in Wordsworth's theory is the eighteenth century associationism governing the combination of images. At times he employs the term like a neo-Platonist to mean intellectual vision. The former is prominent in the **Preface** of 1815, and this attitude never left him completely. When he says that the poet has "a greater promptness to think and feel without immediate external excitement", he speaks of day-dreaming which is a form of associationism or fancy. Fancy, he said, is a power that "forms casual and fleeting combinations in which objects are united, not in a permanent relation",[39] while imagination exhibits the mere fact "in connection with infinity."[40]

But there is in him the other strain as well. Imagination involves the cooperation or interaction of the human mind and the external world. It is

> "an ennobling interchange
> Of action from within and without."[41]

This is probably what he meant by "throwing a certain colouring of the imagination over the incidents and situations of common life."[42] Likewise he states that the poet has "to treat things not as they are but as they appear, not as they exist

37. *Biographia Literaria*, I, 194.
38. Smith (Ed.): *Wordsworth's Literary Criticism*, 164.
39. Robinson's *Diary*, June 3, 1815.
40. *Ibid.*, Sept. 10, 1816.
41. *Prelude*, 13, 375-6.
42. Smith (Ed.), 13.

in themselves but as they seem to exist to the senses, and to the passions."[43] It is a form of visualising, creating through visual images. Such a process would have contributed to his general theory of the substance of poetry, if only he examined the relation of imagination to feeling as such.

The 'interchange of action from within and without' is reminiscent not only of Coleridge's theory, but of his expression. Following Coleridge, Wordsworth states that the activity of nature is similar to that of imagination. Nature 'moulds, endures, abstracts, combines,' just like its 'genuine counterpart' in the 'higher minds' who "create a like existence", who have a "communion with the invisible world."[44] Their imagination is

> "absolute strength
> And clearest insight, amplitude of mind,
> And reason in her most exalted mood."[45]

Here imagination becomes the supreme foundational principle of the entire human life. It is the supra-rational or transcendental reason, not the 'meddling intellect.' Imagination here is an intellectual intuition which is associated with the love of man and of God. It is the principle that realizes the organic unity of man with the world. From this standpoint he observed that it is "the faculty by which the poet conceives and produces—that is, images—individual forms in which are embodied universal ideas or abstractions."[46] This is, of course, unusual to Wordsworth because this idea is actually derived from Coleridge's **Lay Sermons** and essays in **The Friend.** It is an idea that fits very little into Wordsworth's **Prefaces,** though it can be amply illustrated from his poems. At one place he even states that imagination 'turns upon infinity.' It 'incites and supports the eternal."[47]

43. *Ibid.*, 169.
44. *Ibid.*, 79, 88-89, 94-95, 105, 121-2.
45. *Prelude*, 13, 168-170.
46. Robinson's *Diary*, Sept. 11, 1816.
47. Smith (Ed.), 165.

Coleridge's influence is perceptible in those parts of the **Preface** where Wordsworth speaks of the nature of the poet and of the characteristics of good poetry. It is not easy to distinguish the views of these two on this question for the simple reason that Wordsworth does not develop his arguments systematically. They are sporadic; and he goes at a tangent to other problems.

Before we go through his views on the nature of poetry, we have to note his observations regarding the value of poetry. On this question again Wordsworth is a typical product of the eighteenth century, a century which emphasises the moral value of poetry along with pleasure or delight. The insistence on the moral function links him with the neo-classicists in a peculiar manner.

"The poet thinks and feels in the spirit of human passions", and hence his language cannot "differ in any material degree from that of all other men who feel vividly and see clearly." Literature then is a social product and its function too must be a social one. It cannot serve any exclusively individual ends. It has a social value. Thus he writes: "A great poet ought to rectify men's feelings, to give them new compositions of feeling, to render their feelings more sane, pure, and permanent, in short, more consonant to nature, that is to eternal nature, and the great moving spirit of things."[48] And his work is intended to 'humble and humanise' the readers "in order that they may be purified and exalted."[49] This relationship between feelings and ideas is taken from Hartley's associationist psychology. Hartley argued that our affections or passions are only aggregates of simple ideas bounded together associatively. The ideas that survive the sensations are the simple ideas. These simple ideas, says Wordsworth, are present in the incidents and situations of common life. Starting with these simple ideas, the poet should exhibit the affections pre-

48. *Ibid.*, 7.
49. *Ibid.*, 196.

sent throughout human life. The poem should embody feelings "such as men may sympathise with, and such as there is reason to believe they would be better and more moral beings if they did sympathise with."[50] It is thus a stimulant to right feelings and right understanding. The two go together. As he observed, "sympathy arises only when there is the possibility of having pleasure; and where he has no pleasure he has no knowledge." Pleasure, knowledge and sympathy form a unique group of ends sustained by a common end. It is the duty of the poet to "bind together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society."[51] The poet not only experiences his unity with the Universe, but he has to foster the sense of unity among all the human beings. This he can achieve by meditating long and deeply on the nature and value of the feelings. Thus he "widens the sphere of human sensibility, for the delight, honour, and benefit of human nature."[52] It is a moral sense of the cohesive life that the poet has to embody in his compositions. Accordingly he would be tracing in the incidents of common life "the primary laws of our nature: chiefly as far as regards the manner in which he associates ideas in a state of excitement." The basic principles of associationism thus form the groundwork; and the superstructure will have a reference to the moral interpretation of life based on the primary feelings regulative or constitutive of human life.

This function of poetry is again related by Wordsworth to his poetry of the eye and the ear. Accordingly, poetry aims at the cultivation of the "joy of that pure principle of love."[53] Satire which saps the 'vital power of social ties'[54] cannot be poetry. Wordsworth offers his poems to remedy "the rapid decay of the domestic affections among the lower orders

50. *Ibid.*, 10.
51. *Ibid.*, 28.
52. *Ibid.*, 198, 202.
53. *Excursion*, 4, 1213.
54. *Prelude*, 7, 547.

of society."[55] It is not any instruction or any pleasure that poetry should offer. The poet should teach the great lesson of how to live in society and he should at the same time offer a rational gratification of the human mind. This is a gratification based on the knowledge of truth. Thus in a letter we find Wordsworth observing that "Every great poet is a teacher: I wish either to be considered as a teacher, or as nothing."[56] Poetry has its value

> In framing models to improve the scheme
> Of man's existence, and recast the world."[57]

It is an essay in social reconstruction on the basis of certain primary laws governing human nature.

The relationship between feelings and truth is inexplicable if we do not recognise the Hartleyan basis of Wordsworth's theory. Feeling involves sympathy, and sympathy takes us to a knowledge of human nature. Then he could observe that "we have no sympathy but what is propagated by pleasure."[58] Feeling, sympathy, understanding and pleasure are all brought together to clarify the end characterising the poetic activity. All these are analysed and examined from a purely social standpoint. The poet expresses the **passions, thoughts,** and **feelings** of men. These, says Wordsworth, are connected "with our moral sentiments and animal sensations, and with the causes which excite these."

To this moral interpretation he joins the theory of pleasure, and here he argues from the nature of metre. Metre with its association of pleasure is present in the general impression evoked by the poem. "The music of harmonious metrical language", the perception of a similarity with the feelings and passions of human life, the perception of this similitude along with a dissimilitude presented by language and metre—all these, he argues, "make up a complex feeling of delight." But

55. Letter to Fox.
56. To Beaumont, Jan. or Feb. 1803.
57. *Excursion,* 3, 336-7.
58. Smith (Ed.), 26.

it is a complex feeling in which metre is a necessary component; and this metre he endeavoured to dismiss as something adventitious.

With all this there is a certain anti-intellectualist attitude in Wordsworth which made him oppose poetry to science.[59] He speaks of the 'meddling intellect', 'the false-secondary power by which we multiply distinctions'; and he states that the 'dull eye, dull and inanimate' of science is but 'a prop to our infirmity.'[60] The scientific attitude is held to be incompatible with that of the poetic. Though both these are directed to an understanding of the ideas of truth concerning human life and the world, the scientific attitude gives a knowledge in which the human observer is left out. The poetic approach is directed to personal and yet universal knowledge. And he speaks of a co-operative venture between poetry and science. He visualises a time when the poet will be "carrying sensation into the midst of the objects of the science itself. The remotest discoveries of the Chemist, the Botanist, or Mineralogist will be proper objects of the Poet's art." The scientist studies the countenance, the appearances of things. He does not enter into their being. It is the poet who seeks to get into the life of things and to present them from within. That is, the poetic activity goes beyond that of the scientist. He will be completing the task begun by the scientist. "If the time should ever come when what is now called science, thus familiarised to men, shall be ready to put on, as it were, a form of flesh and blood, the Poet will lend his divine spirit to aid the transfiguration."[61] The poet tends to make the scientific data organic to human life. This is one aspect of the organic sensibility with which the poet is credited, though Wordsworth may not have actually meant this by the expression organic sensibility. But he is aware of such an

59. *Ibid.*, 21.
60. "Tables Turned"; See *Prelude* 2, 214-7. *Excursion*, 4, 1254-5.
61. Smith (Ed.), 28.

activity when he said that the poet "carries sensation into the midst of the objects of the science itself." Even the physical universe comes alive, it acquires a being and a value when the poetic activity is rightly focussed on it. Consequently, as an emotional approach to the knowledge and apprehension of reality, poetry is "the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all science."[62]

This approach is through the feelings and emotions, and it is directed towards the unfolding of the truth lurking in the universe. It offers a knowledge of the universe. The knowledge given by the poet appeals to us more than that offered by the scientist. The knowledge of the latter is not personal; it is divorced from the life of the feelings and emotions whence it fails to bind us to our fellow-beings. It is poetry which is "the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge." It presents the living principles underlying the universe, and it enables us to apprehend these principles in a state of rational pleasure. These very principles emphasise the organic unity of the universe. The poet views neither man nor nature in isolation. He apprehends the organic unity of man and nature because his experiences are directed and regulated by the spirit of love or sympathy. The emotional approach gives him his ideas or knowledge concerning the world; and this approach is not an analysing or separating one. It binds together, it unifies the entire human society. In other words the poetic activity is directed towards a clearer understanding of the primary affections which are the basic, permanent feelings. These feelings are common to all human beings in all times. Since these feelings form the content of poetry, it is said that "Poetry is the first and last of all knowledge—it is as immortal as the heart of man."

The poet apprehends the action and reaction between men and objects. In presenting this in his poems he is able to offer "an infinite complexity of pain and pleasure." This

62. *Ibid.*, 27.

distinguishes the poet from the historian. Unlike the historian and biographer, "the poet writes under one restriction only, namely, the necessity of giving immediate pleasure to a human being possessed of that information...as a man."

The poet is one "endowed with more than lively sensibility." He has a "more than usual organic sensibility." By sensibility he means emotionalism. This emotionalism is related to the senses. Then the poet is one who is capable of receiving the impressions through the senses, thereby experiencing a state of excitement. In this state the senses and the inner emotions are organically related to one another. While Coleridge was a Hartleyan arguing for the "corporeality of thought" and deriving the mind out of the senses, Wordsworth either held this view or learnt about it. But by 1800 Coleridge had already given up Hartley; and with his innate Platonism and study of Berkeley he underwent a thorough change. And at the time the **Preface** was written Coleridge was trying to derive the senses out of the mind. But Wordsworth in his theory retained the old associationist doctrine of deriving the intuitions of the poet from his sensations and impressions. The poet is then one who has a keener awareness of the nature and quality of his sensations.

Along with this sensibility the poet is required to think long and deeply; for, our thoughts are capable of directing or modifying the feelings. Even these thoughts are in reality "the representatives of all our past feelings", thereby looking like the empiricist and associationist ideas which are derived from the impressions. By contemplating the relations of these general ideas to each other, we come to know the basic facts of human life and the connection of these with our feelings. In other words, this contemplation is directed to determine the associative links between ideas and feelings. Out of this association springs the poem which is intended to enlighten the understanding and to strengthen and purify the affections of the reader. Hence it is said that the feeling developed in the poems 'gives importance to the action and siutation.' Each

poem thus presents an action or situation from the standpoint of the psychologist. Yet considered historically, this is a valuable shift from the eighteenth century externality to the subjective.

Then we are told that the poet has "more enthusiasm and tenderness." He can easily enter into an emotional experience by virtue of the sympathy that he has for all forms of existence and experience. Since he can enter into the experiences of others by identifying himself with them, he was "a greater knowledge of human nature and a more comprehensive soul." He can become truly impersonal and transform his own emotions in such a way that they become universal. It is "the spirit of life that is in him" which enables him to have a delight in the feelings and passions of mankind. This spirit of life makes him not only "contemplate similar volitions and passions" but "create them where he does not find them." This is the imaginative activity which plays a very minor role in Wordsworth's theory proper. There is a close interaction between the feelings and imagination. This is evident when Wordsworth observes that the poet has "a disposition to be affected more than other men by absent things as if they were present." Such a disposition was held to be the essence of imagination by the eighteenth century; and Wordsworth explains it in terms of sympathy. It is the same sympathy which enables the poet to "consider man and nature as essentially adapted to each other, and the mind of man as naturally the mirror of the fairest and most interesting properties of nature." Even the immediate pleasure the poet communicates is directly derived from a sincere apprehension of "the beauty of the universe" arising from the fact that he "looks at the world in the spirit of love." In "conjuring up in himself" the passions of others, the poet tends "to bring his feelings near to those of the persons whose feelings he describes." At times he would even "identify his own feelings with theirs", for the simple reason that this act gives him pleasure.

Unlike the historian, or the scientist, or the philosopher

the poet is "a man speaking to men." He has to communicate his experience to others. Any such communication implies that it must have a human value. When Aristotle observed that "poetry is the most philosophic of all writing", he was only stating the object or aim of poetry to be "general, and operative" truth. It is universal truth "carried alive into the heart by passion." Passion or emotion is the central principle in and through which the poet seeks to understand, interpret and express his experiences, observations and meditations of human life. Passion has a tendency to unify, to bring the entire universe into a grand unity. Consequently there is the representation of life in all poetry. It is thus argued that "Poetry is the image of man and nature." This image is charged with the life derived from human feelings, from those primary affections forming the basis of all human life.

"All good poetry is the spontaneous overflow o. powerful feelings." Feeling is something exclusive. To be spontaneous it should be one's own. It is powerful when it s primary or permanent. The "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" would tend to make the poem an expression of the poet's personal feelings, an externalisation of his personal emotions. In order to remedy this defect, Wordsworth observes that the poet should have a developed organic sensibility, and that he must devote his energies to deep thinking for a long time. This thinking will direct the feelings and modify them. Even then poetry tends to be a piece of simple self-revelation. This is a kind of poetry which Wordsworth does admit.

And yet his theory and conviction compel him to consider the impersonal variety as great poetry. Accordingly Wordsworth modifies the definition by observing: "It takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity; the emotion is contemplated till, by a species of reaction, the tranquillity gradually disappears, and an emotion kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation is gra-

dually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind."[63] Thus first there is an experience which the poet as an individual has. This experience is coloured by the accidents of time, place, and person. The second stage is that wherein he recollects the original experience and the emotional excitement he had. This recollèction needs a tranquil situation, not one of personal excitement. It is only tranquillity that can divest the original experience of its accidental characteristics that refer to time, place and person. Then there is the third stage wherein the poet reflects on what he remembers and begins to contemplate it dispassionately. The mood of tranquillity is the contemplative or reflective stage. It is in the contemplative stage that he exercises his powers of selection. But here the selection is directed towards a greater universality. Then arises the fourth stage in which passion overtakes the individual as a result of this contemplative activity. This passion is similar in its essential nature to that he had in the original experience. In order words, the contemplative act universalises what was originally a personal emotion or feeling. It is in this mood that there begins the poetic composition, "and in a mood similar to this it is carried on."

63. *Ibid.*, 34-5.

PART II

GERMAN THOUGHT

11. COLERIDGE AND GERMAN THINKERS

"I can not only honestly assert, but I can satisfactorily prove by reference to writings (Letters, Marginal Notes, and those in books that have never been in my possession since I first left England for Hamburgh, etc.) that all the elements, the **differentials** as the algebraists say, of my present opinions existed for me before I had even seen a book of German Metaphysics later than Wolf and Leibnitz, or could have read it, if I had."[1] Coleridge's acquaintance with the German thinkers began in or after 1798. By that time he had already arrived at certain conclusions regarding the nature of fine arts and the problems connected with epistemology. These conclusions were forced on him by his thinking and by his varied study which included the Cambridge Platonists, the neo-Platonists and the mystics.

There is an example strengthening this contention in his statement: "From the following sentence in his life (that invaluable work published from Baxter's own Manuscript by Matthew Silvester) I cannot doubt, but that the merit of substituting Trichotomy for the then, and alas! the still, prevailing method of Dichotomy, which forms the prominent excellence in Kant's **Critique of the Pure Reason,** belongs to R. Baxter, a century before the publication of Kant's work. Nay, it appears that the claim of our own countryman rests on a stronger as well as older plea. For Baxter grounds the necessity of Trichotomy, as the Principle of Real Logic, as an absolute Idea presupposed in all intelligential Acts: Whereas Kant adopts it merely as a fact of reflection."[2] It was Baxter who

1. To John Taylor Coleridge, April 8, 1825.
2. *Misc. Crit.*

first promulgated the triadic movement of the dialectic; and even if Coleridge never read Kant and the other German philosophers he would have found this out.

By 1802 he came to feel that German metaphysics did not allow him to proceed in his own way; and he was therefore trying to recapture the 'self-impelling, self-directing Principle."[3] German thinkers made him pay for some time greater attention to the nature of human reason. But as early as 1796 he wrote to Flower requesting God to "continue his visitations to my soul, bowing it down, till the pride and Laodicean self-confidence of human Reason be utterly done away." It was the union of thinking and feeling that Coleridge sought to have as the basis of his entire Metaphysic. "My philosophical opinions", he informed Thelwall,[4] "are blended with or deduced from my feelings." The development of his position was temporarily checked by the German philosophers.

Early in life he came under the spell of Spinoza. Even as late as 1812, his admiration for Spinoza did not fade. And he could declare that Spinoza's book "was his gospel, and, in less than a minute, added that his philosophy was after all false. Did philosophy commence in an **It is** instead of an **I am,** Spinoza would be altogether true."[5] He felt that Spinoza's Absolute is the negation of all 'the determinations that go to make the individual'; and he could not reconcile his doctrine of personality as the unity of thinking and feeling, with this Absolute. Even after he studied Kant, he never lost touch with his fundamental theory. On March 23, 1801 he told Poole: "Deep thinking is attainable only by a man of deep feeling, and all truth is a species of revelation." Later on August 7, 1803 he told Southey that "ideas never recall ideas, as far as they are ideas, any more than leaves in a

3. *Letters,* I, 782.
4. Letter, Dec. 17, 1796.
5. Robinson's *Diary,* Nov. 3, 1812.

forest create each other's motion. The breeze it is that runs through them—it is the soul, the state of feeling." This state of feeling, however, is alien to German transcendentalism, though it is commonly found in all the writings of the mystics and the neo-Platonists. It was the importance he attached to feeling that brought him for a time under the influence of the associationist psychology; and the same importance he gave to feeling drove him away from this psychology to the mystics and to Berkeley and Spinoza. The basic principles underlying his thought have very little in common with the main stream of German thought which began with an enquiry into the nature of reason. And yet the eclectic Coleridge did take over the methodology of Kant and his successors. Hence it is that at every significant moment he finds a way of going beyond the positions held by these German thinkers.

Following the distinctions made by Kant in his last **Critique,** and adopting Kant's illustrations, he gave his essays "On the Principles of Genial Criticism"(1814). Even the distinction between genius and talent is Kantian. But as he came to develop his idea of genius, he leaves Kant behind by making the suprarational an essential element in all genius.

The fragment of an essay on "Taste" (1810) is based on Kant's **Critique of Judgment.** Yet towards the end Coleridge raises the question of universality on the basis of an identity of human nature. In this context, the enquiry tends to advance from the Kantian position. Kant has only provided him with a starting point and with a definite method. And Coleridge was not interested in defending or explaining Kant. Thus when Kant's last **Critique** established a relationship between the purposiveness or teleology of nature and the creative activity of the artist, Coleridge proceeds to treat beauty as symbol of morality.

Then again when we come to his specific doctrine of imagination, we do not find Coleridge repeating or echoing Kant. On the other hand, he departs from Kant; and this departure is based on the doctrine that was basic to Coleridge's position

since his early days. The so-called freedom of imagination is only a formal activity in Kant's theory; and accordingly imagination cannot enlighten us about the nature of things. But for Coleridge, imagination is creative of both the sensuous and the conceptual. Hence he rejects the Kantian standpoint 'of the essential passivity of our sensible and emotional nature.' Even before he studied Fichte and Schelling, Coleridge was moving away from the Kantian view. In a letter of December 13, 1817 he told Green of his rejection of Kant's stoic principle regarding the affections. Declaring that Kant belongs to the Aristotelian school 'with a somewhat nearer approach to the Platonic', while he is in the Platonic school, Coleridge goes on to show that he is not a Kantian.[6] This rejection of the Kantian view is basic to his doctrine of imagination where he advocates the view that the universal is not regulative, but constitutive.

On September 18, 1794, Coleridge informed Southey that Caldwell "told me that the strength of my imagination had intoxicated my reason—and that the acuteness of my reason had given a directing influence to my imagination." This was long before he heard of any German thinker. At this time he was already arguing about the interaction between reason and imagination. On 12th December, 1796, in a letter to Thomas Poole, he referred clearly to "my own shaping and disquisitive mind." In the "Lines on a Friend", composed in 1794, he observes:

> To me hath Heaven with bounteous hand assigned
> Energic Reason and a **shaping mind.**

And in his sonnet addressed to Sheridan (29th January, 1795) he writes:

> My soul hath marked thee in her shaping hour.

The 'shaping mind' or the 'shaping hour' is the gift of nature with which the creative artist is born. As he said

6. To Gooden, Jan. 14, 1820.

in 1802, it is

What nature gave me at my birth,
My shaping spirit of Imagination.

We are therefore justified in holding that the theory of the 'shaping spirit of Imagination', at least in its outline, was Coleridge's own doctrine. He did not derive it from any metaphysical school of Germany. And the curious coincidence between the shaping mind and Einbildungs-kraft is only a powerful instance of how Coleridge independently arrived at this conclusion held by others.

Richter in his **Aesthetick** (1817) took Einbildungs-kraft to be a 'potentiated brightly-coloured memory', and Phantasie to be the power of 'making all parts into a whole.' This was also the view of Schlegel and others. But for Coleridge, phantasie is a power inferior to the other one. Even for Kant, the freedom of imagination is only a formal activity whose creations are only arbitrary and contingent. This activity cannot tell us anything about the real nature of things. And for Coleridge imagination is a supreme power which alone can give rise to intuitions that reveal the true character of reality. As against Kant, he denies the essential passivity of our sensible and emotional nature. Though Kant would refuse to accept it, Coleridge argues that human reason can reconcile the temporal and the transcendental. Imagination, said Kant, can only mediate between reason and understanding. But Coleridge considered it capable of synthesising reason and sense and also powerful enough to transform the understanding into an intuitive and living power.[7]

His discussion of the contrast between ancient and modern literature owes much to Schiller's 'Naive and Sentimental Poetry.' But the romantic principle he advocates is not the same as that of Schiller. We can admit that his discussion of associationism owes a great deal to J. G. E. Maass' **Versuch ueber die Einbildungskraft** (1797). He even attributes to

7. *Statesman's Manual,* 228-229, 266.

Hartley some of the findings of Maass.[8] Then again his manuscript notes for the lecture on Wit and Humour contain many quotations from Jean Paul Richter's **Vorschule.** These quotations may have been employed as his points of development in a different direction.

But with Schelling and Schlegel we are on a different ground. The principle he adopts in distinguishing organic form from mechanical regularity came from Schlegel. So are his distinctions between classical and modern, and between statuesque and picturesque. His lecture on Greek drama is no doubt a free rendering of Schlegel. There has been a good deal of controversy, however, about his lectures on poetry and drama.

Coleridge delivered such lectures at least thrice. The lectures on the principles of poetry delivered by him in the winter 1807-1808 are practically the same as those he gave in 1812. Schlegel's **Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature** were delivered in 1808. There can then be no borrowing. The first two volumes of Schlegel appeared in 1809, and the third in December 1810. On 29th January 1811 Coleridge discussed Schlegel's idea of the Greek chorus with H. C. Robinson. On 6th November 1811, he tells Robinson: "I am very anxious to see Schlegel's **Werke** before the lectures commence." The lectures commenced on 12th December 1811. In the second series, therefore, we may be justified in observing Coleridge's indebtedness to his German contemporary. There is, however, one play of Shakespeare which occasioned Schlegel's exposition. Schlegel's essay on **Romeo and Juliet** appeared in 1801 in **Charakeristiken und Kritiken.** Earlier still it appeared in Schiller's **Horen** in 1797. And Coleridge must have been acquainted with this essay long before he delivered his first series. But Coleridge did not admit any such knowledge till 1811.

He met Tieck in Rome in 1806. Tieck's sister spoke on 6th February 1806 of Coleridge's acquaintance with Kant,

8. B.L. I, 72.

Fichte and Schelling, and of his admiration for Schlegel's translation of Shakespeare. She too does not appear to have known about his acquaintance with that essay. In a letter of December 1811 he refers to one, Bernard Krusve who told Coleridge immediately after the latter's lecture on **Romeo and Juliet:** "Were it not almost impossible, I must have believed that you had either heard or read my countryman Schlegel's lecture on this play, given at Vienna: the principles, thought, and the very illustrations are so nearly the same. But the lectures were but just published as I left Germany, scarcely more than a week since, and the only two copies of the work in England I have reason to think, that I myself have brought over. One I retain: the other is at Mr. Boosey's." Coleridge replied that he had not "seen any work of Schlegel's except a volume of translations from Spanish Poetry, which the Baron Von Humboldt had lent me when I was at Rome." Schlegel's lectures were delivered in 1810. Coleridge could not have borrowed from these because a few years earlier he delivered a lecture which has the same substance as the one of 1811.[9] We have no reason to doubt the veracity of this statement.

It is no doubt true that there is a remarkable similarity between Coleridge's lecture on **Romeo and Juliet** and that of Schlegel. Coleridge himself recognised it. After going through the lectures of Schlegel, he discovered a similarity with his own "in all the lectures that related to Shakespeare or to the stage in general, the grounds, train of reasoning." One may doubt whether such a coincidence can take place. But the explanation offered by Coleridge is not unconvincing. He observes that this is a coincidence between 'two writers of similar pursuits, and of nearly equal talent.' Both of these "studied deeply and perseverantly the philosophy of Kant, the distinguishing feature of which is to treat every subject in reference to the operations of the mental faculties, to which it specially appertains—and to commence by the cautious discrimination

9. See *Lectures and Notes,* 78, 135-6.

of what is essential, i.e., explicable by mere consideration of the faculties in themselves, from what is empirical, i.e., the modifying or disturbing forces of time, and place, and circumstances." The coincidence arises from the Kantian methodology common to both.

But the problem is different in the case of Coleridge's indebtedness to Schelling because of his acceptance of a part of his system at various places. In Chapters 12 and 13 of the **Biographia** he has taken over long passages from Schelling in an attempt to provide an epistemological and metaphysical basis for his theories. But the basic doctrine does not go to Schelling at all. He took Cudworth's **True Intellectual System** from Bristol Library in May-June 1795, and also in November-December 1796. Cudworth was a Cambridge Platonist; and prior to this, he borrowed Bishop Burnet's **History of My Own Times** which describes the struggle of the Cambridge Platonists against the influence of Hobbes. Here was a reference to Cudworth who argued that the mind has a creative function in knowledge. This is the genesis of Coleridge's theory which resulted in the synthesis and identity of subject and object. The appeal to the unconscious too does not go back to Schelling; for both Schelling and Coleridge took over Mesmer's theory of the dynamic unconscious. The supposed similarities between Schelling and Coleridge in many cases are traceable to the neo-Platonic influence on both, and where this is not possible, we can explain the similarity as arising from their Kantian methodology.

Yet there are a few essays which are bodily taken over by Coleridge from Schelling. Thus we have the essay "On Poesy or Art" (1818) which is a paraphrase of Schelling's Academy Oration of 1807 on 'the Relation of the Formative Arts to Nature.' Such essays may have been his manuscript notes meant for an unspecified purpose. Nothing can be definitely stated on the basis of such essays alone. Coleridge came to distrust and reject Schelling's system even before he openly rejected Kant.

In a letter of December 13, 1817, to Green, he observes: "As my opinions were formed before I was acquainted with the schools of Fichte and Schelling, so do they remain independent of them, though I con- and pro-fess great obligations to them in the development of my thoughts, and yet seem to feel that I should have been more **useful** had I been left to evolve them myself without knowledge of their coincidence." The few terminological borrowings came to him along with their subjective implications and then they obscured and clouded his aim which was to harmonise the British empirical intuitionism with the Platonic tradition. These German thinkers impeded the growth and development of his own philosophical and aesthetic position.

Schelling provided him with ideas concerning the relations between art and nature, the reconciliation of opposites, and the distinction between allegory and symbol. From Fichte and Schelling he learnt to relate imagination to cognition. All this Coleridge freely admitted. As he stated in the **Biographia,** "In Schelling I first found a genial coincidence with much that I had toiled out for myself, and a powerful assistance in what I had yet to do."[10] By abridging his own endeavours, Schelling and others deprived him of a real interest for some time in pursuing his speculations freely.

Art is 'the only true and enduring organon and document of philosophy'; it is 'the keystone of its entire arch.' At the basis of the universe, Schelling said, is a creative energy. When this energy functions unconsciously, it appears as nature; and when it is conscious, it is revealed as art. The unconscious objectivity becomes conscious in the subject. And so reality appears with a significance in the world of art.[11] Even this doctrine goes back to Cambridge Platonists who held that there is an organic principle animating nature. Cudworth even called it 'plastic nature'; and Coleridge could assimilate Cud-

10. B.L. I, 102.

11. *System of Transcendental Idealism,* pp. 475-6.

worth more easily because the Platonist speaks to the feelings and to reason as well.

Schelling's theory of creative imagination is intended to overcome the opposition of subject and object. This, he said, "enables art to compass the impossible, to resolve an infinite contradiction in a finite product." But Coleridge points out that Schelling reveals "a confusion of the creaturely spirit in the great moment of its renascence with the deific energies in Deity itself."[12] The opposition of subject and object is a mysterious creation of the human mind; for Coleridge could either admit their identity or hold to the reality of only the subject. Schelling's emphasis is dangerously enough on the object. Coleridge's marginal note on Schelling's **Briefe Ueber Dogmatismus Und Criticismus** is revealing in this context: "The more I reflect, the more convinced I am of the gross materialism of the system!" That gross materialism Coleridge rejected when he came to disown Hartley and Newton. This disowning was hastened by his study of the mystics and Platonists and by his own deep thinking. And Coleridge could therefore state with confidence that "All Schelling had said he (=Coleridge) had thought out for himself, or found in Jacob Boehme."[13]

The Neo-Platonists held the world to be a work of Art; and Coleridge took it over from them. Possibly Schelling too got it from the same source, with a difference. Schelling took imagination to be identical with the creative processes of nature. But Coleridge considered it as the 'dim analogue of creation', even before he read Schelling. He was not acquainted with Schelling before he reached Malta in 1804; and he employed this expression in a letter of January 15, 1804 addressed to Sharp. Here he speaks of imagination as the **modifying power**. In his famous letter of September 10, 1802 to Sotheby, he talks of 'the modifying and coadunating faculty.' The central doctrine of imagination as stated by Coleridge owes very little to Schelling.

12. Note on Jacob Boehme's *Aurora,* cited by Muirhead, 56.
13. Robinson's Diary, May 29, 1812.

Unlike the German transcendentalists, Coleridge was interested in comprehending that activity of imagination which humanises nature. In this endeavour he was more deeply interested in the problems of personality and spiritual life. This interest was with him from an early date when he knew practically nothing about Kant and his successors in Germany. Thus in a letter to Thelwall in December 1796 he said that he is 'a mere **apparition,** a naked spirit, and that life is, I myself I.' This self-distinction essential to Coleridge's theory of spiritual life goes back to Boehme; and it also appears scattered in his "Destiny of Nations."[14] Self-distinction is lost in the higher experiences like those of the sublime. He refers to this in his letter to Poole, dated October 16, 1797.

He informed Thelwall on October 14, 1797: "My mind feels as if it ached to behold and know something **great,** something **one** and **indivisible.** And it is only in the faith of that that rocks or waterfalls, mountains or caverns, give me the sense of sublimity or majesty! But in this faith **all things** counterfeit infinity." Seven years later Coleridge must have read Schelling's **Transcendental Idealism** where it is said that 'every single work of art represents infinity.'[15]

14. See lines 27, *ff.*
15. *Werke,* I, 627.

12. SLEEP, DREAM AND VISION

Sleep is the 'God of half-shut eye'[1] who can command many a dream from his dominions to

Wave its various-painted pinions,
Till ere the splendid visions close.[2]

Sleep offers an experience rich with dreams of varied hues: and these dreams are the splendid visions. Coleridge's poems abound in plenty of references to sleep, dream and vision; and from a study of these passages we can understand an important aspect of his theory of poetry.

"Tears of doubt-mingled joy' come to those 'that 'Start from precipices of distemper'd sleep.'[3] Even such a sleep can beget the joy of the creative artist. But it is not a creative joy because it is jarred by doubts and these doubts owe their origin to the distempered character of sleep. When it is not distempered, sleep leads us to a world of shadows that bewitch the individual. There is 'slumber's shadowy vale.'[4] These shadows are not other than the 'shadows of imagination' which people the world of poetry. And yet the shadows are not lifeless, though they have the 'silent poesy of form.'

The calm of peaceful slumber is an anathema since it is
so calm, that it disturbs
And vexes meditation with its strange
And extreme silentness.....

1. *Poems* (O.S.A.), p. 26.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
3. *Ibid.*, 69.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 80.

..... Sea, and hill, and wood,
With all the numberless goings-on of life,
Inaudible as dreams.[5]

The entire external world partakes of the character of a dream. The silence of a happy sleep is strange in itself since a passive sleep is taken to be self-contradictory. Even sleep has its own dynamism in that it is not only the awakener of dreams and visions but it has its specific sounds through which it gets articulated. Dream is that form of sensibility which sleep assumes in comprehending sound and time. He gazes at the soothing things in a dream-like state till they lulled him to sleep; 'and sleep prolonged my dreams.'[6]

Psychoanalysts have been telling us that in the dream-state the unconscious struggles for an escape. The individual has an experience and is aware of something during this state. This kind of awareness can best be described as the subconscious or the subliminal. A state similar to this is found in day-dreaming and in reverie. The fascinating "Fears in Solitude" presents the subliminal self looking at the world. The humble man 'found religious meanings in the forms of Nature' in his meditative joy. And

his senses gradually wrapt
In a half sleep, he dreams of better worlds,
And dreaming hears thee still, O singing lark,
That singest like an angel in the clouds![7]

The meditative state lulls the senses to sleep, and the sights and sounds he experiences look like those occurring in the dreams. During the experience what is cognised is true and real, though the relative characteristics like reality and unreality are not applicable to the cognitions we then have. Yet what is experienced does transcend the limitations of time, space and persona-

5. *Poems*, p. 240.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 241.
7. "Fears in Solitude," II, 25-8.

lity; and the lark can appear as an angel in the clouds. The sleep that begets such dreams and visions is indeed blessed.

The Ancient Mariner came to realise at one stage that sleep is 'a gentle thing', and Mary queen

> sent the gentle sleep from Heaven,
> That slid into my soul.[8]

Sleep comes from heaven to the soul in travail; and though it becalms the senses by sliding into the soul, it does not render the soul passive. The soul is dynamic and is somehow conscious of the numberless goings-on in the universe around. It is in a trance-like state whence the mariner could hear the conversation of the two voices in the air. Nothing of significance can be lifeless or unconscious. We are even told:

> Yet still the sails made on
> A pleasant noise till noon.
> A noise like of a hidden brook
> In the leafy month of June,
> That to the sleeping woods all night
> Singeth a quiet tune.[9]

The sleeping woods do listen to a quiet tune made by a flowing but hidden brook. The association of music with sleep is pregnant with great implications. Music, for Coleridge, is a necessary source of artistic inspiration; and when the sleeping woods are bewitched by music we get something like the 'silent poesy of form' revealed by the garden of Boccaccio. When the mariner sees his native country, in his ecstasy he cries:

> O let me be awake, my God;
> Or let me sleep alway.[10]

He does not know which is real. He could not associate the joy of creation with the waking moments since he committed the crime in the so-called wakeful or conscious state. He would prefer to have a perpetual sleep if this ecstasy were to be found

8. "The Ancient Mariner", II, 295-6.
9. *Ibid.*, II, 367-72.
10. *Ibid.*, II, 470-1.

only while sleeping. Music, ecstasy and sleep are inseparably united; and poetry cannot be sought elsewhere.

A sleep that is ecstatic is as valuable as the moment of inspiration to poet. Christabel too

> hath drunken deep
> Of all the blessedness of sleep![11]

This is a blessedness which Coleridge attributed to joy and imagination, and Shakespeare to mercy. It is usually associated with saints and seers. And one can then say that the 'gentle sleep' has 'wings of healing.'[12]

There is "The Pains of Sleep" which is an outcry of agony. It is a vision of the sufferer who is afraid of sleep:

> Sleep, the wide blessing, seemed to me
> Distemper's worst calamity.[13]

This is in strange contrast to the mariner's invocation to sleep five years earlier. This contrast seems to have become more acute in the lines:

> A low dead thunder mutter'd thro' the night,
> As 'twere a giant angry in his sleep.[14]

Frightened, he wants Nature to 'lull me into sleep and leave me dreaming.' As the notebook records, it is "the dark spirits' worst infirmity."[15] In "The Pains" we read that the next night

> When my own loud scream
> Had waked me from the fiendish dream,
> O'ercome with sufferings strange and wild,
> I wept as I had been a child.[16]

Such dreams arise out of the distempered sleep, not from the blessed one. Yet the reaction is similar to that of a child who is a visionary, with all its innocence, freshness and spirit of wonder. This distemper again appears in another passage:

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11. "The Ancient Mariner", II, 375-6.
12. "Dejection: An Ode", I, 128.
13. *Ibid.*, II, 35-6.
14. *Poems*, p. 502.
15. *Notebooks*, Ed. by K. Coburn, I, 198.
16. "The Pains of Sleep", II, 37-40.

Though obscure pangs made curses of his dreams,
And dreaded sleep, each night repelled in vain,
Each night was scattered by its own loud screams.[17]

The creative process has nothing to do with such sleep and dreams because these are intensely personal and because they beget a state opposed to that of joy.

Sleep interested Coleridge primarily because it is the parent of dreams, and dreams have a good deal to do with the origin and nature of the creative process. In 'the sunny hour of sleep', near his 'dear native brook' for the first time

young Poesy
Star'd wildly-eager in her noon-tide dream.[18]

Day-dreaming might get itself expressed in the form of poetry. But it cannot divest itself of the wildness associated with fancy. We are even told that

All Nature day-dreams in the month of May.[19]

Day-dreaming too can give rise to poetry; and nature is a kind of creative artist, for in nature we are assured of the presence of a divine analogue to the artistic process. This is a variety of dreaming where the individual is asleep without closing the eyes.

With open eyes (ah woe is me;)
Asleep, and dreaming fearfully,
Fearfully dreaming, yet, I wis,
Dreaming that alone, which is—[20]

This is what was elsewhere called 'memory's dream.'[21] It is an open-eyed dream'[22] and Christabel had one such. She dreamt and in dreaming she recollected the sweet vision and also looked to the future. Where the vision appears in all its com-

17. *Poems,* p. 416.
18. *Ibid.,* pp. 54, 521.
19. *Ibid.,* p. 442.
20. "Christabel", II, 292-5.
21. *Poems,* p. 87.
22. *Ibid.,* p. 318.

plexity and intricacy and where its significance seems to extend to unknown regions and frontiers, we have that

perplexity of mind
As dreams too lively leave behind.[23]

It is a perplexity which is lively. The liveliness is due to the vision and the activity of the subconscious in imagination. But the perplexity is the result of shapelessness. Imagination has yet to reduce the liveliness of the vision into a proper form. Till the form emerges,

Though my slumber was gone by,
This dream it would not pass away—
It seems to live upon my eye![24]

The visual activity remains till the organic form evolves itself out of the materials with which imagination works; and the dream might pass away when the organic form takes its proper place.

In "Phantom or fact", he tells us that

This tale's a fragment from the life of dreams;
But say, that years matur'd the silent strife,
And 'tis a record from the dream of life.[25]

There is a life of dreams along with dream of life. Ordinary human beings have dreams in their lives, but the poet has a dream of life. All our values including the aesthetic emanate from the dream of life. There is a fragment illumining this idea:

I know 'tis but a dream, yet feel more anguish
Than if 'twere truth. It has been often so.[26]

Even when he knows that it is only a dream, he feels more anguish because it is more than the truth with which we are acquainted in our ordinary life. It has a higher truth, a greater reality, and he does not want to be exiled from the

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23. "Christabel", II, 385-6.
24. *Ibid.*, II, 557-9.
25. *Poems*, p. 485.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 495.

dream. We are also told that Imagination is the 'lovely sorceress' who must 'aid the Poet's dream.'[27] This aiding is necessary because it is only imagination that can give a shape or form to the dream. Once the dream acquires a form under the influence of the shaping spirit it becomes a work of pure art. And Coleridge at times felt that he was one with his dream. Speaking about the joys evoked by love, he says,

> such joys with sleep did 'bide,
> That I the living Image of my Dream
> Fondly forgot.[28]

When a poet tells us that he was the living image of his dream and that his poem is 'a record from the dream of life', we get Coleridge's equation of the poet with the poem. He admits that he was given to 'dream away' the tame 'pampering coward heart with feelings all too delicate for use.'[29] The dream has no practical utility. On the other hand it has an intrinsic value, it is valuable for its own sake. He would not give up such a value for the sake of some utility. And he therefore observes:

> My heart has need with dreams like these to strive.[30]

He would strive with dreams which alone have a value and which are consequently real.

The dream has an intellectual content which can at times appear perfectly logical. He says that

> the murmuring tide
> Lull'd her, and many a pensive pleasing dream
> Rose in sad shadowy trains at Memory's call.[31]

The witchery of sound induces a sleep-like state in which one has pensive dreams. They are full of thoughts. And yet because memory intervenes, there are only series of shadows. We

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27. *Poems,* pp. 49-51.
28. *Ibid.,* pp. 95-6.
29. *Ibid.,* p. 107.
30. *Ibid.,* p. 348.
31. *Ibid.,* p. 527.

find him saying 'light as a dream.'[32] Besides this we also hear of 'dark as a dream' and 'swift as a dream.'[33]

> But swift as dreams myself I found
> Within the Pilot's boat.[34]

The dreams are fleeting, inscrutable and mysterious, since they are like moments of inspiration. And he has a 'sweet dream where Susquehannah pours his untamed stream.'[35] The pleasantness of dreams needs no comment. When an exclusively personal feeling is evoked, the dream can be sweet and pleasant in a very very narrow sense. Thus we read that Christabel 'had dreams all yesternight of her own betrothed knight.'[36] But then the dreams of love 'prove seldom true.'[37] Such personal emotions bring the dreamer into direct contact with the hard facts of life; and this contact rings the death-knell of dreams. The 'viper thoughts that coil around my mind' are 'Reality's dark dream'[38]; and so he turns to listen to the 'mad Lutanist.' Or he would tell Asra,

> You stood before me like a thought,
> A dream remembered in a dream.[39]

This dream within a dream is more fascinating than the normal dream. But sometimes there start

> Sad recollections of Hope's garish dream,
> That shaped a seraph form, and named it Love.[40]

In the true dream there is no awareness of a recollection. Where one is conscious of remembering, he is having only fancy, not imagination.

But there is also the nightmare-variety of dream. In the epode of the "Ode to the Departing Year", in the epode which

32. *Poems,* p. 336.
33. *Ibid.,* p. 475.
34. "The Ancient Mariner", II, 554-5.
35. *Poems,* p. 131.
36. "Christabel", II, 29-30.
37. *Poems,* p. 426.
38. "Dejection: An Ode," II, 94-5.
39. *Poems,* p. 410.
40. *Ibid.,* p. 152.

Lamb wished to 'commend to annihilation', Coleridge observes:

> And ever, when the dream of night
> Renews the phantom to my sight,
> Cold sweat-drops gather on my limbs;
> My ears throb hot; my eye-balls start;
> My brain with horrid tumult swims;
> Wild is the tempest of my heart;
> And my thick and struggling breath
> Imitates the toil of death![41]

Restless, uneasy and frightened, he shudders at this kind of dream which is a kind of death-in-life and which therefore is the antithesis of the aesthetic. This anti-aesthetic dream is that which has engulfed man who is busy wrecking the hard-won values and ideals of life. We read that the present activities of men look like

> A wild and dream-like trade of blood and guile,
> Too foolish for a tear, too wicked for a smile.[42]

The wild and foolish and wicked dream is to be compared with the dream of life that made the Wedding Guest 'a sadder and wiser man.' And

> all the fierce and drunken passions wove
> A dance more wild than e'ver was maniac's dream.[43]

These maniacal dreams of desolation and destruction are busily engaged in a struggle with the physical and material problems. They are the dreams which can trace their genesis to the first murder or crime committed by man who did not know what it is to love and to dream. "Cain stood like one who struggles in his sleep because of the exceeding terribleness of a dream."[44] And Coleridge asks us to overcome this kind of dream if we are to cherish or create poetry, if we are to struggle to realize the enduring human values embodied in great art and literature.

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41. *Ode to the Departing Year*, II, 105-12.
42. *Poems*, p. 361.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 245.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 290.

In his "Dark Ladie" he speaks of the 'waking dreams'[45]; as he narrates his love to Genevieve,

Like the murmur of a dream
I heard her breathe my name.[46]

And yet Earl Henry could say

I am too full of dreams to meet her now.[47]

The 'waking dream' has been his enviable lot.[48] Since the dream is more real and valuable and since it is complete, independent and autonomous, he cannot give it up. There is "A Day-dream" addressed to Asra. He opens the reverie by admitting that his 'eyes make pictures when they are shut'; and he proceeds to say:

I dream thee with mine eyes, and at my heart I feel thee![49]

A dream where the eyes and the heart are together active reminds us of the saying that the poet's heart and intellect must be combined, intimately combined. But there is 'passion's feverish dream'[50] too; it is the 'unholy Pleasure's frail and feverish dream'[51] is the product of simple passion. Then we have

Alas, vain Phantasies! the fleeting brood
Of woe self-solaced in her dreamy mood.[52]

Thus the heart divorced from the intellect can give us only the feverish excitement of a dream.

The true dream, on the other hand, has a music. Bard Bracy had 'so strange a dream'[53] that he

vowed with music loud
To clear yon wood from thing unblest,

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45. *Ibid.*, p. 552.
46. *Ibid.*, pp. 334, 555.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 567.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 285.
50. *Poems*, p. 588.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 130.
53. "Christabel", I, 527.

Warned by a vision in my rest![54]

The vision can indicate the things to come; and if they are the unblest, the vision demands that they be suppressed or destroyed with the help of music. The harmony in music, the rhythm in thought, and the shaping spirit operating on the dream-material, are all alike. In all these the common controlling principle is that of music. Vision and music are inseparable.

That an organic form is evolved from within is one of Coleridge's tenets. Such a form can emerge from the dreams too. In the "Songs of the Pixes", we read

Weaving gay dreams of sunny-tinctur'd hue,
We glance before his view.[55]

The shaping spirit can operate successfully as the dream because the dream has colour, and colour is the first affirmation of form. The gay dreams have a sunny-tinctured hue; they are bright and variegated. He speaks of the 'day-dreams whose tincts with sportive brightness glow.'[56] These are the dreams of the lover; and yet as far as the immanence of colour is concerned, they do not differ from those dreams that give birth to poetry. Besides colour, the dream has a movement:

On Seraph wing I'd float a Dream by night,
To soothe my love with shadows of delight.[57]

Colour and motion together give us a form that is dynamic, growing and evolving. In this light we can have

the love-lorn Serenade
That wafts soft dreams to slumber's listening ear.[58]

Now the dream is made to acquire a sound too. An entity that has colour, motion and sound is the dream. And in the "Destiny of Nations" we find that

54. *Ibid.*, 528-30.
55. "Songs of the Pixies", 43-4.
56. *Poems*, p. 47.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 53.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 88.

a Dream arose,
Shaped like a black cloud marked with streaks of fire.[59]

The dream has a shape, a form; and the poet seeks to express it in another form through significant sounds. This work is carried out silently, semi-consciously.

The semi-conscious state is closer to that of the trance arising out of an intense concentration or contemplation. When we speak of a vision that transcends human limitations, we are actually referring to a trance. Sometimes it is difficult to say whether a trance is a day-dream or a reverie. At any rate it is a state where one is not aware of his environment. Not only can he be 'entranced in prayer',[60] but he could have a 'brief trance of abstraction.'[61] That is, the trance can be an emotional experience or a purely intellectual one. Great poetry presents a synthesis of these two varieties; and the poetic trance does not appear to be different from a dream or sleep where consciousness is active without having the interference of the will. One such was the Mariner's trance[62] wherein he heard the two voices of justice and mercy. Even Geraldine says that she had 'lain entranced'[63] when the five warriors seized her. This would imply that there are only certain trances which can give birth to poetry. While Geraldine 'seems to slumber still and mild',

Christabel
Gathers herself from out her trance;
Her limbs relax, her countenance
Grows sad and soft.[64]

This is a trance that begets sadness; but the softness that is present is not the wisdom which dawned on the mariner and on the wedding guest. To be artistically creative the trance

59. *Poems,* p. 141.
60. *Ibid.,* p. 572.
61. *Ibid.,* p. 591.
62. "The Ancient Mariner", 429.
63. "Christabel", 92.
64. *Ibid.,* 311-4.

must leave one sadder and wiser. But Christabel smiles and weeps

> Like a youthful hermitess,
> Beauteous in a wilderness,
> Who, praying always, prays in sleep.[65]

This trance disturbs and yet pacifies because it works merely on the emotions; and such an experience has its aching joys and dizzy raptures. There is, however, another which gives rise to a blessed visionary experience. Christabel had 'a vision sweet'[66]; and there was another 'vision' that fell upon her soul.[67] The earlier one was the 'vision blest',[68] which 'put a rapture in her breast.'[69] The second one was 'a dizzy trance.'[70] The poet is inspired by the former to express.

In a vacant mood, one sultry hour, he had an experience which may have come to him in 'a transient sleep' when he 'watched the sickly calm with aimless scope'; or it may be 'a trance' wherein he 'turned his eye inward.'[71] But then

> Some hoary-headed friend, perchance,
> May gaze with stifled breath;
> And oft, in momentary trance,
> Forget the waste of death.[72]

Forgetting the waste of death is to have the dream of life. In such a dream everything is charged with a new light. We hear of the 'row of bleak and visionary pines'[73]; and we find that the moon is the 'mother of wildly-working visions'[74] and

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65. *Ibid.*, 320-2.
66. *Ibid.*, 326.
67. *Ibid.*, 451-2.
68. *Ibid.*, 464.
69. *Ibid.*, 467.
70. *Ibid.*, 589, 607.
71. *Poems*, p. 489.
72. *Ibid.*, p. 176.
73. *Ibid.*, p. 503.
74. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

dreams.[75] He told Mary Morgan and Charlotte Brent,

> You have been to me
> At once a vision and reality.[76]

He would 'dream' of them,

> Only **dream** of you (ah! dream and pine!).[77]

The vision must be felt to be real. And the Pixies say that

> at the visionary hour,
> Along our wildly-bower'd sequester'd walk,
> We listen to the enamour'd rustic's talk.[78]

That makes them happy. But the blessedness of the muse of poetry implies music:

> The music hovers half-perceiv'd,
> And only moulds the slumberer's dreams.[79]

It is music that moulds the dream; and the dream is moulded into the poetic form by the joy which is at the heart of secondary imagination. Thus the eave-drops fall is 'heard only in the trances of the blast'[80]; but the silent Mount of poetry makes

> the dilating soul, enrapt, transfused,
> Into the mighty vision passing—there
> As in her natural form, swelled vast to Heaven![81]

In its higher reaches, the dream stimulated by music and regulated by imagination gives us poetry that constantly aspires to the heavenly state of experience.

The poet is a visionary who feels truth. But Coleridge speaks of the 'vision veiling truth'[82] and goes beyond it when we read:

> Life is a vision shadowy of Truth;

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75. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
76. *Ibid.*, p. 411.
77. *Ibid.*, p. 412.
78. "Songs of the Pixies", 53-5.
79. *Poems*, p. 358.
80. *Ibid.*, p. 242.
81. *Ibid.*, p. 378.
82. *Ibid.*, p. 523.

And vice, and anguish, and the wormy grave,
Shapes of a dream![83]

This idea is based on Berkley's thought, as Coleridge admits in a footnote. Then life refers to what we have in our normal experiences. And the dream partakes of reality. After the shooting of the albatross

Some in dreams assured were
Of the spirit that plagued us so.[84]

The waking moments never gave them any idea of the spirit. It was a dream that made them conscious of it; and what they dreamt was true as the mariner came to realise. The mariner dreamt that the buckets

were filled with dew;
And when I awoke it rained.[85]

This is another instance of the dream revealing the facts of life. The mariner continues:

My lips were wet, my throat was cold.
My garments all were dank;
Sure I had drunken in my dreams,
And still my body drank.[86]

He drank in his dreams. Not only did his soul drink, but his body. His purgation began in the dream and it is futile to disbelieve it. Strange things happen in a dream; but there are stranger events even in our waking moments:

It had been strange, even in a dream,
To have seen those dead men rise.[87]

It is not strangeness that makes a dream unreal or false. It is the influence it wields that makes a dream real and true. It is not for us to question what was a fact of actual experience. When the Mariner beholds his native country, he cries

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83. *Poems,* p. 124.
84. "The Ancient Mariner", 131-2.
85. *Ibid.,* 299-300.
86. *Ibid.,* 301-4.
87. *Ibid.,* 333-4.

in a neo-platonic ecstasy: 'Oh! dream of joy!'[88] Even the 'age'd Hermit' has 'his holy dream.'[89]

But the greatest vision comes to us in "Kubla Khan." The poet starts with a pleasure dome with its earthy environment and human fears and struggles. It is slowly washed away. This dome is transformed in the vision:

A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw[90]

The dome becomes a damsel singing on her dulcimer; and the music which has replaced the earlier dome gives place in its turn to the dome of poetry. The poet dreams 'of blissful worlds' and he would

Then wake in Heaven, and find the dream all true.[91]

Coleridge's poetry abounds in dreams and visions like these. They constitute a great source of the misinterpretation to which his poetry was subjected. And because of the great part played by dreams and visions, critics have ventured to maximise the role of the unconscious in his theory of poetry. The statements of the poet himself convincingly tell us that dreams and visions have little of the unconscious in them.

88. *Poems,* p. 464.
89. *Ibid.,* p. 142.
90. "Kubla Khan", 37-8.
91. *Poems,* p. 350.

13. MUSIC AND LOVELINESS

Coleridge's poetry has many references to music; and a study of these will throw much light on his theory. At the outset we must remember that poesie is 'a sweet tune played on a sweet instrument.'[1] It falls on the ear as

a Nightingale's fine notes
Blend with the murmur of a hidden stream.[2]

Poetry is a form of music and it has its own musical instrument that articulates it. It is similar to the song of the nightingale when it is blended with the sounds of the flowing, hidden stream. The birds of the air and the streams under the earth bring the terrestrial and the subterraneous together; and the music of poetry is the synthesis of these two. In such a case the sense of musical delight can only be an innate tendency being coeval with imagination.

Music has a direct effect on the passions. When he climbs Brockely Coomb in 1795,

sweet songsters near
Warble in shade their wild-wood melody:
Far off the unvarying cuckoo soothes my ear.[3]

Shakespeare was said by Milton to 'warble native wood-notes wild'; and the context in Milton associates this with fancy. 'The wild-wood melody' too has an association with fancy because of the word 'wild.' As the bride paced into the hall, 'before her goes the merry minstrelsy.'[4] The blending of the

1. *Poems*, p. 374.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 375.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 94.
4. "The Ancient Mariner", 35-36.

fine notes of the nightingale with the sounds of the running brook may be soothing to the excited passions. But it can have neither the wildness nor the quality of being merry. It becomes merry because of its association with the wedding; and the associationist background makes this music an acquired, not an inherent, endowment. Coleridge thus seems to refer to two forms of music; and this may be partly responsible for the gross misunderstanding on the part of the critics who made out that the sense of musical delight is a product. There is a music which is a product, and there is another which is productive of others. The former emerges from a poem, but the latter is at the origin of the poem. These two are distinct, though at times they may appear inseparable.

Music has a power to transform our outlook on life. 'Mingling with the choir' he 'seems to view the vision of the Heavenly multitude, who hymned the song of Peace over Bethlehem's fields."[5] The rapture or ecstasy of music is an experience of a vision; and the vision is of a heavenly society of angels that sing. There is something uniquely Coleridgean in the connection of music and vision. It is moreover to be noticed that music is anterior to the vision. The vision makes us aware of music; and music may then inspire the individual to the creation or expression of a poem.

In a poem addressed to Lamb he speaks of the Aonian mount where

> Stands a lone and melancholy tree,
> Whose aged branches to the midnight blast
> Make solemn music.[6]

From other references we know that Coleridge speaks of a poetic mount and of a tree or hill of knowledge. The branches of the tree make solemn music to the blast of the Lutanist. There is the link with the Aeolian Harp. As the woods 'have

5. *Poems*, p. 109.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 159.

made a solemn music of the wind', he wound his moonlight way

Inspired, beyond the guess of folly,
By each rude shape and wild unconquerable sound![7]

The breeze of inspiration, music and moonlight bring about the absorption of the external universe in the individual. It is not a simple organic unity, but a realized identity that is expressed as a result of the music under moonlight. 'Nature's passion-warbled plaint' melts us.[8] Birds, trees, ocean-gale and stiff grass, murmur and give us 'music thin of sudden breeze.'[9] It is an 'enchanting music,' a 'witching melody,' which is

soft, various, and sublime,
Exempt from the wrongs of Time![10]

That was what the 'mighty Mount' of poetry announced. And out of that spring emerges poetry of the highest value. The music and the breeze are, however, not two different entities if only we remember the significance of the Aeolian Harp to Coleridge.

The music that brings the different worlds together is also that which clarifies the visionary experience. Such a music can lead to poetic expression only when it inspires the individual. In 1790, we are told that the lyre sounds and glows 'with fire divine.'[11] The divine fire is the afflatus that overpowers the individual and makes him glow with inspiration. Even the lyre is said to be touched with that divine afflatus. Then its sounds would penetrate the very core of existence. The 'soul-dissolving Harmony' leads 'the oblivious soul astray.' With her 'sacred might', music 'inspires each throat.'[12] Personal identity is lost under the spell of music. And it is not

7. *Ibid.*, p. 244.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 324.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 325.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 352.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 28 (written in 1791).

any spirit or muse that inspires the poet, but music. Such music is anterior to poetry.

Imagination brings about a synthesis of the dominant passion with the will of the individual. Thus

> Passion with a languid eye
> Hangs o'er the fall of Harmony
> And drinks the sacred Balm.[13]

Passion is divested of its restless, uneasy state by virtue of the harmony released by music. It is the fall of harmony which synchronises with the operation of the conscious will. But music in itself is mysterious and startling. We read that

> the matin Bird with startling song
> Salutes the sun his veiling clouds among.[14]

The clouds may veil the sun; they may obscure light; but music is capable of penetrating the veil. The glorious sun who rises 'like God's own head' is saluted by the music that visions the truth. The 'far-off music' is said to be 'voyaging the breeze'; and it may be the 'passion-warbled song.'[15] The breeze is the wind of inspiration that carries music with all its passion throughout the universe. The 'warbled strains soar on morning's wing' among the gales; and the imprisoned bird 'swells the full chorus with a generous song.'[16] In other words, music soars higher into Reality and pervades every nook and corner in the world, breaking the veils and glorying in the effulgence. This is a state of joy. The 'melodies steal' over the ear 'like far-off joyance' or like 'the murmuring of wild bees in the sunny showers of spring.' Such sounds 'cheer the lonely breast'[17] and make it a rich all-inclusive whole.

The "Ode to the Departing Year" (1796) begins with an address to the Divine spirit 'that regulates into one vast har-

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13. *Ibid.*, p. 36 (written in 1792).
14. *Ibid.*, p. 49.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 52.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 82 (written in 1794).
17. *Ibid.*, p. 87 (written in 1795).

mony all the events of time.' It 'sweeps the wild Harp of Time' and releases the 'dark inwoven harmonies' which can be heard only when one has an 'inward stillness', 'a bowed mind' and 'an untroubled ear."[18] Humility, tranquillity and an ear for music are necessary. The first two bring music into relation with the good; and the last makes the individual organic to the world. The divine spirit has reduced all the events of time into the form of music. The essence of time is music. We have not the harp of time but the music of the harp which

hovers half-perceiv'd
And only moulds the slumberer's dreams.[19]

Music thus is anterior to time which it transcends. And Coleridge's metaphysical enquiries were directed largely towards the problem of time. It was in this light that he spoke of reducing succession to an instant. There is even

Some sweet beguiling melody,
So sweet, we know not we are listening to it.[20]

Awareness is an event in time; and time does not exist in the higher reaches of music. When music inspires, it does induce a mood of forgetfulness; and yet it is a mood in which one feels that he has the best moments of existence. And there is also the poet who goes roaming about

Many a morn, on his becharmed sense
So rich a stream of music issued thence,
He deem'd himself, as it flowed warbling on,
Beside the vocal fount of Helicon![21]

The stream of music so bewitched him that he not only had no awareness of his body and senses and became a living soul as it were, but he felt that he was at the fountain of the muses. Here is a stream of music that transforms an individual into

18. *Ibid.*, p. 160.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 538.
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 377-8.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 442.

a poet. The stream in Coleridge has varied associations with poetry and life as well. It is a living, perennial fountain.

Music does not always imply something sweet and pleasant only. It is a poor music that has no touch with the tragic element in human life. We are told that

> even saddest thoughts
> Mix with some sweet sensations, like harsh tunes
> Played deftly on a soft-toned instrument.[22]

The harsh tune played deftly on a delicate instrument loses something of its harshness. It is mellowed to such an extent that we are easily reconciled to its existence because it fits into the scheme of things. The melodies preserve the memories of the wrongs and distress for which mankind weeps; and

> such strains, breathed by my angel-guide,
> Would make me pass the cup of anguish by.[23]

Music enables us to endure the anguish, for sorrow would then appear to be a necessary ingredient in the total experience of man.

But the music which is the ideal condition of all poetic inspiration transcends pain and pleasure. Nature's sweet voices are 'always full of love and joyance'; and with 'his delicious notes', the Nightingale seems to

> disburthen his full soul
> Of all its music![24]

Earlier we had a 'soul-dissolving harmony'; and here we have a soul heavy with music, a soul that would like to be free and light. A soul that would disburthen itself of all its music; and a music that would dissolve the soul does not exclude it. They are one and the same. We are in touch with this entity in that silent meditation where we can have perfect concentration. As he listens to 'the silent poesy of form' in

22. *Ibid.*, p. 149.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 236.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 265.

the "Garden of Boccaccio", he is affected

like a stream
of music soft that not dispels the sleep,
But casts in happier moulds the slumberer's dream.[25]

This music does not dispel sleep; but through the dream it puts us in tune with that foundational consciousness which is the source of all being and becoming. It reveals the vision of the real and the true.

When the recipient is not able to acquire the necessary concentration because of some distraction, music may not be effective. Yet it can hypnotise. As the Aeolian harp is caressed by the desultory breeze

Like some coy maid half yielding to her lover,
It pours such sweet upbraiding as must needs
Tempt to repeat the wrong!

One is tempted to repeat his ways of life since the spell of music tends to obliterate all distinctions imposed by our relativistic ethic and outlook. But the harp has a more powerful influence. Its strings sweep boldly 'the long sequacious notes', which sink and rise. There is

Such a soft-floating witchery of sound
As twilight elfins make, when they at eve
Voyage on gentle gales from Fairy-Land,
Where Melodies round honey-dripping flowers,
Footless and wild, like birds of Paradise,
Nor pause, nor perch, hovering on untamed wing![26]

The breeze from fairy land, the melodies of the honey-heavy bees, and the magic sounds of the elfins recall the birds of Paradise which are the angels.

The paradisal aspect of music is prominent in Coleridge's poetry. We have already noticed the identity of the soul or spirit with music. We find that 'sweet sounds rose slowly through' the mouths of the inspirited mariners. This presents us with the core of the vision in the "Ancient Mariner":

25. *Ibid.*, p. 478.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 101 (written in 1795).

Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
Then darted to the sun;
Slowly the sounds came back again,
Now mixed, now one by one.[27]

All the little birds filled 'the sea and air with their sweet jargoning.'

And now 'twas like all instruments,
Now like a lonely flute;
And now it is an angel's song,
That makes the heavens be mute.[28]

Sound and light are synthesised because of music which alone can render the heavens mute. This music is a kind of light that envelops an individual when, with the becharmed sense, he comes under its spell. The sails continued to make a pleasant noise which was

like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.[29]

We began the enquiry with the murmur of a hidden brook. Here again we have a hidden brook singing a quiet tune to the sleeping woods; and the sleeping woods have the spell of music on them. The woods experience the music, and the sleep they have is a kind trance in which their soul is awake. A trance can hear only a quiet tune.

Bard Bracy was to ride to Lord Roland's with "music so sweet, more loud than your horses' echoing feet!"[30] Music can be **loud** only when it is like an incantation. Without such music the bard outside the poem could not complete it, and the bard inside does not want to undertake the journey that day:

So strange a dream hath come to me,
That I had vowed with music loud

27. "The Ancient Mariner", 354-7.
28. *Ibid.*, II, 363-6.
29. *Ibid.*, II, 369-72.
30. "Christabel", 499-500.

To clear yon wood from thing unblest,
Warned by a vision in my rest![31]

The vision warned him of the evil; and evil can be exorcised only by music. This is something like that religious catharsis of which Plato has given us a good account. For good and evil alike, music is absolutely necessary. So Bard Bracy vowed on the same day

With music strong and saintly song
To wander through the forest bare,
Lest aught unholy loiter there.[32]

The loud music is strong; it is efficacious like the hymn or incantation. Then the unholy or the unblest can be removed root and branch.

Music purifies and refines the atmosphere. It is also creative. We have only to remember how the earlier poets used to invoke the aid of the Muse for composing their poems. Coleridge has given the best account of this aspect of music in his "Kubla Khan". There we have the lines:

Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 'twould win me.
That with music loud long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice![33]

The song of the Abyssinian Maid seen and heard in the vision is more powerful than the might of the earthly potentates. Kubla might have decreed a pleasure dome to be built by manual labour with physical objects. But there is the real dome called poetry which can be created only with the inspiration provided by music. The unearthly music would so excite him with spiritual delight or ecstasy that he can build in air the sunny dome with its caves of ice. As such it would be 'a

31. *Ibid.*, 527-30.
32. *Ibid.*, 561-3.
33. "Kubla Khan", 42-47.

miracle or rare device.' Music awakens the soul to an activity. The soul, which is of the nature of harmony, is the creative principle. We are therefore told:

> 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![34]

It is the 'strong music in the soul' which is

> This light, this glory, this fair luminous mist,
> This beautiful and beauty-making power.[35]

The strong music which is the soul in action is the Beautiful; and it is also that principle which shapes everything in its own image. It is the shaping spirit which makes, creates beautiful objects because this music is light. It is the halo and yet it is veiled to the ordinary perceptions of the individual. It is a spirit. This spirit is joy; it is 'the sweet voice', 'the luminous cloud.' Out of this

> flows all that charms or ear or sight,
> All melodies the echoes of that voice,
> All colours a suffusion from that light.[36]

Melodies, colours and beautiful forms are all emanations of the spirit which is music. When this music inspires, it begets an experience of joy which is the first indication of the activity of the creative, aesthetic imagination. Wherever we have such music we have a poet and poetry too. The wind is the 'mad Lutanist', the 'mighty poet.' And there is 'music travelling on the twilight breeze'[37] which spreads everywhere.

Music is embodied in the Abyssinian Maid; and for Coleridge there is music where we have a well designed woman. It is not surprising that in the lines to Matilda Betham we get the significant lines:

> The Almighty, having first composed a Man,
> Set him to music, framing Woman for him,

34. "Dejection: An Ode", 56-58.
35. *Ibid.*, 62-3.
36. *Ibid.*, 73-5.
37. *Poems*, p. 510.

And fitted each to each, and made them one!
And 'tis my faith, that there's a natural bond
Between the female mind and measured sounds.[38]

Plato's **Symposium** was after all not unknown to Coleridge, the Platonist.

The poem which Coleridge felt he would complete if he were given good music was "Christabel"; and it is with Christabel that the word **lovely** is associated often. One aspect of the significance of music must have come to Coleridge from this word. It is therefore necessary to investigate into the meaning of the word **lovely.**

There is a poem of 1790 by Coleridge depicting a lady's weeping which opens with the lines—

Lovely gems of radiance meek
Trembling down my Laura's cheek.[39]

Here the word **lovely** qualifies the lifeless gems; and yet the gems are said to have **meek** radiance. This is the earliest association of the word **lovely** with an ethical quality. This is not a mere accident. There are 'lovely native vales'[40] in another early poem. The native vales that foster and develop the personality and character can be and are lovely. The individual is moulded largely by the influences of his environment in his early impressionable years. In 1794 he composed "The Sigh" where we have the lines:

While peace the present hour beguil'd,
And all the lovely Prospect smil'd.[41]

The lovely prospect is the future which is not merely beautiful. It is the future which is to present the realized dreams, ideals and desires of the present. In a sonnet composed in January, 1795, the scenes at distance are said to be 'all-lovely.'[42] The expression **all lovely** is patterned on the words like omnipotent,

38. *Ibid.*, p. 375.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 34.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 86.

omnipresence and omniscience. Such a patterning introduces also a theological aspect to the already ethically charged **lovely.** There is 'a lovely rose'[43] likened to a child. Here we can read into the word the ideas of innocence, of freshness, warmth of feeling and purity. Above all, the word 'lovely' is the unique quality of Christabel:

> It was a lovely sight to see
> The lady Christabel, when she
> Was praying at the old oak tree.[44]

The sight of the lady praying at the oak tree is not itself lovely. What makes the sight lovely is the oak tree with its rarest mistleto, and then this tree speaks of the descent of divinity on it. There is an evocation of the spiritual; and in this set-up the sight is lovely.

There are passages that might appear to conflict with such a view. One such occurs in the "Songs of the Pixies" (1793):

> Tearful cheeks are lovely to the view
> As snow-drop wet with dew.[45]

The snow-drop wet with dew is compared to the tearful cheeks. The cheeks can be lovely because of the attachment of affections implied by the word 'tearful.' The snow-drop however is attached to the dew; and this can be a moral attachment only by a stretch of imagination. The cheeks are the snow-drops and the tears are the dew. It is through this symbolism that loveliness is felt in both. In "The Kiss" (1794) we have another interesting passage:

> On those lovely lips the while
> Dawns the soft relenting smile,
> And tempts with feign'd dissuasion coy
> The gentle violence of Joy.[46]

The lips are lovely when they breathe those affections that have an ethical genesis. But more significant is the association of

43. *Ibid.,* p. 176.
44. "Christabel", 279-81.
45. *Poems,* p. 44.
46. *Ibid.,* p. 64.

shyness and joy with loveliness. In Coleridge's theory and practice alike, joy is the soul, the light, which is one with the creative imagination. Then imagination would make the whole universe lovely. During his Christ's Hospital days he

> saw nought lovely but the sky and stars.[47]

Elsewhere we are told that 'the blue sky bends over all' and that therefore 'saints will aid if men will call.'[48] The sky with 'the moving moon' and the stars cannot but be lovely. In the year 1800 he could say that

> All things lay before mine eyes
> In steady loveliness.[49]

It is not a static loveliness that is referred to here, but a harmonious loveliness. The steadiness is the result of the enduring and therefore effective character of loveliness. But what are we to say about 'flowers of loveliest blue?'[50] The colour blue associated with the sky makes the flowers gleam like stars. These are explicitly said to be the 'living flowers' in the vale of Chamouni. They are transmuted into vital organisms; and then they can be lovely.

In 1794 he speaks of 'the lovely starling.'[51] Later Miss Lavinia Poole becomes 'a lovely convalescent.'[52] In his first Asra poem called "Love", he is the 'bold and lovely knight.'[53] Besides these, we hear of 'the blameless features of a lovely mind'[54] in a poem of September 1794. With the loveliness of mind we proceed to the supersensuous which presents one important aspect of loveliness. That which transcends sense is related to the affections in the concept of the lovely. This feature is well expressed in the lines:

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47. *Ibid.*, p. 242.
48. "Christabel", 330-1.
49. *Poems*, p. 49.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 379.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 61.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 252.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 333.
54. *Ibid.*, p. 66.

Flowers are lovely; Love is flower-like;
Friendship is a sheltering tree.[55]

The tree of friendship with its flower-like love is related to the lovely. Emotions and moral values are brought together. And Coleridge also gives us a tree of knowledge beside the most famous lines of friendship in the second part of "Christabel." There are

The spirits of all lovely flowers,
Inweaving each its wreath and dewy crown.[56]

Loveliness thus slides imperceptibly but inevitably into the spiritual. The experience of the lovely might make one feel pleasure or pain or both. But this pleasure has a 'persistent loveliness' and this pain has 'its lovely mound.'[57] Pleasure and pain cease to be contraries; and they carry meanings from another world. The ethical aspect of the lovely is best expressed in the lines:

O Woman! nurse of hopes and fears,
All lovely in thy spring of years,
Thy soul in blameless mirth possessing,
Most lovely in affliction's tears,
More lovely still than tears suppressing.[58]

Blameless goodness and happiness have made her lovely even in her sorrow. The spiritual aspect is more prominent in the lines:

There is a thicket of dedicated roses,
Oft did a priestess, as lovely as a vision,
Pouring her soul to the son of Cytherea,
Pray him to hover around the slight canoe-boat.[59]

The priestess pours her soul almost like the nightingale; and she is as lovely as a vision. Loveliness here is integrated with

55. *Ibid.*, p. 440.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 454.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 455.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 509.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 307.

dedicated roses, priestess, vision and music. In a poem on "Happiness" (1791) we read:

> If chance some lovely maid thou find
> To read thy visage in thy mind.[60]

It is the lovely maid who can read the vision, because loveliness is an aspect of the vision. In his vision he finds dim fragments of 'lovely forms' which

> Come trembling back, unite, and now once more
> The pool becomes a mirror.[61]

Solitude, contemplation, supersensuousness, and beauty are brought into an organic coherence with loveliness in a poem written in prose and verse. It is entitled "The Blossoming of the Solitary Date-Tree." Here we have the lines: "The finer the sense for the beautiful and the lovely, and the fairer and lovelier the object presented to the sense; the more exquisite the individual's capacity of joy, and the more ample his means and opportunities of enjoyment, the more heavily will he feel the ache of solitariness, the more unsubstantial becomes the feast spread around him."[62] Loveliness brings forth the joy of creation, a joy which is intensely felt in solitude by the creator. The joy of creating the living transcends the distinctions of life and death, of good and evil, of pleasure and pain. Loveliness implies this transcendence, thereby becoming an absolute entity.

The contemplative spirit of the creator finds not only life lovely, but death. The loveliness of death refers implicitly to the ethical and spiritual value or ideal for which the individual surrenders his life. In the "Religious Musings" we read that

> Lovely was the death
> Of Him whose life was Love.[63]

This is a death within time while the lovely transcends space

60. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 372.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 396.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 110.

and time. This transcendence is communicated by the word 'love' which refers to the all-inclusive love. It is a universal, impersonal emotion of love. The 'Lord of unsleeping Love' has formed

> Teachers of God through Evil, by brief wrong
> Making Truth lovely.[64]

The ever-wakeful love can transform truth into loveliness. That truth is made lovely by spiritual love was given by Keats a seemingly paradoxical expression. Coleridge stated this doctrine in an effective and simple manner when he said that 'The Hill of knowledge' is the 'lovely hill sublime.'[65] Knowledge, sublimity and loveliness are interrelated. Thus we find that the seraph-band in the "Ancient Mariner"

> Stood as signals to the land,
> Each one a lovely light.[66]

The spirit that is light is lovely.

One such spirit is Christabel in whom Coleridge studied the dissociation of the intellect from the will. There is 'the lovely lady, Christabel',[67] who 'lay down in her loveliness.'[68] The arms of Geraldine 'have been the lovely lady's prison.'[69] Even Geraldine 'tricks her hair in lovely plight.'[70] But Christabel is 'the lovely maid' and Geraldine 'the lady tall.'[71] It is Sir Leoline who is made to describe Geraldine as the 'lovely daughter' of Lord Roland.[72] But for the poet and his readers Christabel alone is the lovely lady; and the poem where she appears is the most musical of Coleridge's. Loveliness and music go together since Bard Bracy wanted to clear the garden

64. *Ibid.*, p. 116.
65. *Ibid.*, p. 157.
66. "The Ancient Mariner", 494-5, cf. *Poems*, p. 369.
67. "Christabel", 23, 38.
68. *Ibid.*, 238.
69. *Ibid.*, 303-4.
70. *Ibid.*, 365.
71. *Ibid.*, 393.
72. *Ibid.*, 507.

of the unholy with the power of music. In a note on the translation of L'Estrange's **The Travels of Monsieur de Thevonot in the Levant,** Coleridge stated, "Lovely is a darling word of this translator, a word that should never be applied except to objects that exercise a **moral** feeling of attachment. I may say, 'a lovely Woman' or 'a lovely Infant', but not 'a lovely Diamond or Topaz'." Then Coleridge's music is ethical and spiritual.

14. THEORY OF IMAGINATION IN THE POEMS

Coleridge's theory of imagination was formulated in his letters and in his **Biographia Literaria.** Attempts have been made to show that this theory was largely derived from German thinkers and that it was not well thought out. Critics are not wanting who found associationism in it. Coleridge's critical formulation may have arisen after 1802 or after 1813. But we have indisputable evidence to show that he had a theory of imagination from the early days of his poetic career. A poet like Coleridge gives us not only a highly valuable set of poems but poems where he gave vent to his theories and dogmas, aesthetic and religious.

In a poem of 1787 entitled "Dura Navis" we have the first mention of fancy:

Vain are thy Schemes by heated Fancy plann'd.[1]

Fancy in action offers vain schemes. They can be vain only because they are not unified by any single dominant principle. Three years later he tells us that his only wish is to gaze awhile at the Evening Star 'mid Fancy's high career.'[2] Such a gaze would lead to day-dreaming wherein the associative activity of the mind is supreme. Such an act has neither a purpose nor an objective nor any coherence. Fancy takes him in the next year to the fairy region, and he does not want the steeds of fancy to be unhorsed since he will then be brought to the dreary heath.[3] Here fancy is taken to be the means of an escape from the hard facts of life. And if poetry is

1. *Poems,* p. 2.
2. *Ibid.,* p. 17.
3. *Ibid.,* p. 27.

concerned with life, it cannot be the product of fancy. Yet we read:

> Tho' fluttering round on Fancy's burnish'd wings
> Her tales of future Joy Hope loves to tell.[4]

In another poem of the same year we read of fair delights that fly like shadows 'on memory's wing.' Fancy depends on memory which gives us fixed entities that have ceased to grow. They have no vitality. Those fixities are merely shadows or appearances even when they appear burnished like the barge in which Cleopatra sailed to see Antony.

The pixies of 1793 are 'fancy's children,'[5] and by implication they are shadows released by the burnished wings of fancy. They are a multitude:

> Thither, while the murmuring throng
> Of wild-bees hum their drowsy Song,
> By Indolence and Fancy brought,
> A Youthful Bard, 'Unknown to Fame',
> Wooes the Queen of 'Solemn Thought. . .'[6]

Drowsiness and indolence are associated with fancy. Dissatisfied with these, one youthful bard longs for 'solemn thought', the solemnity which belongs to imagination proper. Imagination alone can offer truth and reality. The Tea-Kettle in 1790 prompts him to say,

> But hark! or do I fancy the glad voice.[7]

It is a dream-like state, one of auto-hypnosis, which seeks to obliterate all distinction between reality and unreality. And yet fancy can simulate, for in 1792 we find him saying—

> Propitious fancy hears the votive sigh—
> The absent Maiden flashes on mine Eye![8]

The flashing evoked by fancy refers to the inward vision or insight. But there is the awareness of absence. He wants

4. *Ibid.*, p. 29 (written in 1791).
5. *Ibid.*, p 40.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 49.

'wild fancy' to check its wings, not to explore the clouds or nature. But fancy is the 'lovely sorceress' who must aid the poet's dream and bid the maid arise 'with faery wand.' When these are accomplished, he would call fancy 'dear deceit.'[9] And the 'dear native brook' leads him on to cry earnestly:

> Yet dear to fancy's eye your varied scene
> Of wood, hill, dale, and sparkling brook between!
> Yet sweet to Fancy's ear the Warbled Song,
> That soars on Morning's wing your vales among.[10]

All these may flash on the eye. But the variety that is released by fancy is a product of deception, of something unreal. And even deception can be sweet and pleasant as long as one is not aware of the hard facts.

> Ye Woods! that wave o'er Avon's rocky steep,
> To Fancy's ear sweet is your murmuring deep![11]

The ear of fancy receives pleasant sounds and makes the mind wander over faery regions in order that he may extract all kinds of implications. 'Fancy's eye' finds in 1797 'a potent spell'[12] in the mother's name. The eyes and ears of fancy are powerful instruments which can make one interpret the associated ideas and images as the true meanings and thoughts. This is possible because the poet under the spell of fancy does not know that the imaginative act is absent. In 1790 on the death of Chatterton he writes, 'Cold my Fancy grows, and dead each Hope of Fame.'[13] But when

> Fancy in the air
> Paints him many a vision fair
> His eyes dance rapture and his bosom glows.[14]

Fancy in reality offers a series of visions, not a unified vision.

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9. *Poems,* p. 51.
10. *Ibid.,* p. 54, cf. p. 50.
11. *Ibid.,* p. 129.
12. *Ibid.,* p. 176.
13. *Ibid.,* p. 13.
14. *Ibid.,* p. 14.

Fancy is active in giving a series of pictures. Four years later there was fancy, at his side,

> Deep-sighing, points the fair frail Abra's tomb.[15]

We know from other passages that Coleridge found joy at the heart of imagination. But here he finds a sigh enlivening the activity of fancy. His bleeding, poor heart listens 'to Hope's whisper' and forgets it

> When Jealousy with fevered fancies pale
> Jarr'd thy fine fibres with a maniac's hand.[16]

The fevered fancies are pale; they are lifeless. And yet they can so control the mind as to make one a maniac since fancy is essentially chaotic. In January, 1795, he observes that the melodies of Southey have awakened 'Hope—born fancy' which flings 'rich showers of dewy fragrance from her wing.'[17] Fancy has a beginning; it is born of hope. Such a beginning is denied to imagination which is a gift that nature endows an individual with at the moment of his birth. By contrast, fancy is an acquired power which is of little value to the true poet.

"The Lines Written at Shurton Bars" in September, 1795, gives us another picture:

> But why with sable wand unblessed
> Should Fancy rouse within my breast
> Dim—visag'd shapes of Dread?[18]

Later on this same fancy 'more gaily sings.' She may drop awhile her wings like skylarks.[19] Fancy then alternates from one extreme to another. Jealousy, fear and hope are at the genesis of fancy; and the shapes that emerge out of this are dim. 'In fancy's saddest hour', his soul 'averted shudders at the poison'd bowl.'[20] Depression brought by fancy would make this power exclusively subjective; and poetry of value has very

15. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 72 (written in 1794).
17. *Ibid.*, p. 87.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 97.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 98.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 126.

little to do with personal emotions. The true aesthetic emotion must needs be impersonal, universal. Fancy, on the other, has a background of gloom; and out of this gloom it can make the mind turn crazy. Thus Joan of Arc's

> tumultuous features shot
> Such strange vivacity, as fires the eye
> Of Misery fancy—crazed![21]

And once again there was within her 'The unquiet silence of confused thought and shapeless feelings.'[22] This shapelessness is the result of fancy; and it is very antithesis of the **shaping spirit.** Shapelessness would be the result of an activity that is not directed or regulated by the conscious will. Fancy would thus be an activity dissociated from the will; and the dissociation makes for the wild, chaotic nature of the act. In 1797 we find that the strange man leaves Maria

> Troubled with wilder fancies, than the moon
> Breeds in the love-sick maid, who gazes at it.[23]

The **wilder fancies** are associated with love-sickness, the emotion being too personal and incommunicable. Such an emotion can lead to a pleasant reverie or to a series of violent feelings like anger, fear or jealousy. There is an element of rashness here. By 1809 we find 'Wild-wood fancy and impetuous zeal.'[24] The impetuosity is a feature of the dominant passion which needs a fusion with will.

In the "Religious Musings" (1794-1796) the self is said to be 'far diffused as Fancy's wing can travel.'[25] This very fancy, we read later, falls from 'heights most strange, fluttering her idle wing.'[26] Without a goal or an objective, fancy evokes a series of discrete particulars by ranging within time. In other words, it is an activity that is circumscribed by space and

21. *Ibid.,* p. 139.
22. *Ibid.,* pp. 139-140.
23. *Ibid.,* pp. 182-3.
24. *Ibid.,* p. 413.
25. *Ibid.,* p. 115.
26. *Ibid.,* p. 123.

time which it can never transcend. Consequently the true freedom of the creative process is denied to fancy which flutters its idle wings.

The "Destiny of Nations' (1796) gives a very good account of fancy:

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

These lines were written at least six years before the famous letter to Sotheby, and eighteen years prior to the **Biographia Literaria.** Sensations give rise to images and ideas. But fancy disconnects these images and ideas from the original sensations. Then under the powerful impact of the association of ideas there is a wild activity of the mind. Strange phantoms and fears emerge and as the association advances the contact with the present is snapped. Once self-control begins to appear, its place is slowly usurped by reason. Fancy is thus said to be opposed to reason; and its essence lies in evoking a wild, restless series of pictures and ideas, fears and hopes.

But sometimes fancy too is present when the imagination is active. In such instances fancy functions in a subordinate capacity only. Writing to Lloyd in 1796 he speaks of a

> Hill with secret springs, and nooks untrod,
> And many a fancy—blest and holy sod
> Where Inspiration, his diviner strains
> Low-murmuring, lay.[28]

The **holy sod** by virtue of its holiness is blest by fancy; and

27. *Ibid.,* p. 134.
28. *Ibid.,* p. 157.

then the associative links partake of the character of goodness. Out of such a holy context even fancy can evoke **diviner strains.** But these strains presuppose inspiration, not daydreaming; and then imagination must be taken to be implicitly present governing the entire process in which fancy plays but a minor role. In "France" (February 1798) he tells us that he winds his moonlight way 'pursuing fancies holy.'[29] The moon and holy fancies are brought together; and when the moon is near by anything can happen to Coleridge's muse. As he goes through Ovid and Boccaccio

> the eye of fancy views
> Fauns, nymphs, and winged saints.[30]

Thus fancy makes him traverse the sea, air and heaven with absolute freedom; and the process is charged with visual images of unusual felicity and sweetness. At the time of the writing of the **Biographia,** Coleridge speaks of 'a constitutional activity of fancy and association' and 'the specific joyousness combined with it.'[31] In some passages, he observes, we have words that are 'mere bubbles, slashes and electrical apparitions, from the magic cauldron of a fervid and ebullient fancy, constantly fuelled by an unexampled opulence of language.'[32] We have passages where the poet is carried away more by the magic of sounds. One such passage we have in the "Religious Musings" where he moves to the vision of a desert in the tropics.[33] And in "The Destiny of Nations" there is a paragraph[34] on which Coleridge comments: "these are very fine lines, tho' I say it, that should not: but, hang me, if I know or ever did know the meaning of them, tho' my own Composition."

In March, 1796, there is an 'Advertisement' to "Ad Lyram"

29. *Ibid.,* p. 244.
30. *Ibid.,* p. 481.
31. *Ibid.,* p. 597.
32. *Ibid.,* p. 598.
33. Lines 260ff.
34. Lines 278ff.

in which Coleridge refers to Casimir's 'boldness of conception, opulence of fancy, (and) beauty of versification.' We have noticed how Coleridge made fancy roam freely within the spatio-temporal world. Space and time are its forms of sensibility and hence he could speak of the opulence of fancy and combine it with boldness of conception, thus hitting the main features of the school of poetry headed by Donne. Along with a copy of "Religious Musings", in December, 1794, he writes to Lamb:

> In fancy (well I know)
> From business wandering far and local cares,
> Thou creepest round a dear-lov'd Sister's bed
> With noiseless step, and watchest the faint look,
> Soothing each pang with fond solicitude,
> And tenderest tones medicinal of love.[35]

Here is an unusual kind of fancy which concentrates on a single visual image and communicates it. Such an act lends to the pictorial in art. Possibly the picturesque is a product of the activity of fancy; and the picturesque does not imply any idealization or synthesis.

In March, 1798, we find him speaking of a woman who built a little home of joy and rest 'in fancy oft.' She peopled it with the friends she loved best and 'named the inmates of her fancied cot.'[36] In December, 1794, he speaks of the 'soft strains' of Bowles; and these

> Wak'd in me Fancy, Love, and Sympathy.[37]

Again all these are exclusively personal feelings and fancy is one of them. We are told in 1824 that

> Fancy in her magic might
> Can turn broad noon to starless night.[38]

Here is a reverie transforming itself into a state of auto-

35. *Poems,* p. 78.
36. *Ibid.,* p. 249.
37. *Ibid.,* p. 84.
38. *Ibid.,* p. 446.

hypnosis. In the same strain, 'Fancy makes in the clouds' battlements, crags and towers.[39] It can picture before itself any object.

This fancy functions like mercury in the barometer. When "poor-fancy stagger'd and grew sickly' there comes a restless state, 'twixt yea and nay.'[40] He advised Matilda Betham in 1802 to allow herself to be

> Hurried onward by the wings of fancy
> Swift as the whirlwind, singing in their quills.[41]

It is a spontaneous association of ideas and feelings that she was asked to cultivate at the outset. And this spontaneity would be subjective.

Early in 1789, even when the subject is "The Nose" he wants his Muse to aspire:

> And from my subject snatch a burning brand;
> So like the Nose I sing—my verse shall glow—
> Like Phlegethon my verse in waves of fire shall flow![42]

This can be accomplished by fancy provided there is a burning brand called inspiration regulating it throughout the process. The waves of fire correspond to the waves of association. The sonnet to the Muse of the same year calls her 'lovely.' He proceeds to observe:

> thy sweet employ
> Exalts my soul, refines my breast,
> Gives each pure pleasure keener zest,
> And softens sorrow into pensive joy.[43]

Evidently the Muse does not respond to the call of fancy. This is due to pensive joy, for joy is the essence of imagination. From the Muse he learnt to commune with his heart and to laugh at the gay varying hues that wanton in

39. *Ibid.*, p. 496.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 467.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 376.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

the sun since these hues are 'by folly spun.'[44] Thus was Coleridge brought to speak of the work of fancy as one of folly. Folly and 'gay-varying hues' go together to give us a complete picture of fancy.

Wallowing in the personal, sentimental experiences, one is apt to become a slave to fancy. Chatterton 'to scenes of bliss transmutes his fancied wealth.'[45] He becomes a solipsist pure and simple, for fancy cannot offer an impersonal experience. In 1800 his 'fancy transports' him.[46] But 'the social sense' that spreads far and wide is 'more than fancy.'[47] It is 'the sociable sprite' that crowns the Poet's cup, and not fancy.[48] Imagination is **the** social sense. It looks outwards and is an all-inclusive spirit.

"Dejection: An Ode" presents a very good contrast between fancy and imagination. In the earlier days

> all misfortunes were but as the stuff
> Whence fancy made me dreams of happiness:
> For hope grew round me,.....
> But now afflictions bow me down to earth:
> Nor care I that they rob me of my mirth;
> But oh! each visitation
> Suspends what nature gave me at my birth,
> My shaping spirit of Imagination.[49]

Misfortune, fancy and dream are associated with one another. They emerge into being at some point in time and they are acquired. But the 'shaping spirit of imagination' is a gift of nature and one is born with it. Misfortune by itself cannot suspend the shaping spirit. It can destroy the shaping spirit only when hope is no more. Hope and joy go together.

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44. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 127
46. *Ibid.*, p. 343.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 405 (written in Jan. 1807).
48. *Ibid.*, p. 467.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 366.

And imagination would be active and living as long as hope is alive.

In March, 1798, we find a woman who 'play'd with fancies, of a gayer hue.'[50] 'Gay fancy', as distinguished from joy, appears in 1802.[51] It is interesting to note that fancy can have not only darker emotions but colours. It is not merely a colouring of imagination that can be thrown over objects, but even a colouring of fancy. This aspect in a sarcastic mood appears when he writes in "Fears in Solitude" (April, 1798):

> As if a Government had been a robe,
> On which our vice and wretchedness were tagged
> Like fancy-points and fringes, with the robe
> Pulled off at pleasure.[52]

These fancy-points are like the sensitive points emblematic of human vice and wretchedness. Through these qualities the points acquire their colour. Fancy having a pigment of its own looks like the skin, while imagination has to deal with that which develops from within.

Even in 1799 we find him saying that his

> fancy still wandered by day and by night,
> Amid battle and tumult, 'mid conquest and death.[53]

Confusion is a product of fancy; and this faculty moves in its two extreme points without any steadying or balancing influence. It thereby becomes changeable as the weathercock. Thus in 1800 he begins associating love with fancy, 'when grosser eyes are closed in sleep.'[54] This association, five years later, makes fancy 'bitter-sweet', since only the names of the lovers can meet.[55] Here we get a clear picture of fancy which appears to be no other than the coalescence of the idea and

50. *Ibid.*, p. 248.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 368.
52. *Ibid.*, pp. 261-62.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 317.
54. *Ibid.*, p. 358.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 392.

the image as practised by Donne and his Metaphysicals. It is in his fancy that he presumes to call the bosom of the lady 'poor love's tomb.'[56] Once fancy is set aside and pure imagination alone is brought into play, we have only sensibility.

Fancy and reason are mutually exclusive. He starts 'for the fancied goal' and soon finds that reason intervenes between him and his promised joy.[57] That reason begins usurping the throne of fancy at the advent of self-control, we have already noticed. What he means by reason is not what is commonly attributed to the term, but systematic metaphysical enquiry. By 1802 it is the 'abstruse research' that enables him to steal from his 'own nature all the natural man.'[58] But fancy too does 'interpret Reason's light.'[59] Fancy is then as powerful as reason; and as such it can make one believe that he is truly imaginative when all that he has is only fancy.

There is a sonnet of 1817 entitled "Fancy in Nubibus or the Poet in the Clouds." Just after sunset or by moonlight skies, one should have a heart and ease and make pictures of shifting clouds; and then the eyes are 'easily persuaded.' One can fancy himself to be Homer who was 'possessed with inward light.'[60] A similar contrast is between 'Fancy' and 'Parnassian Youth.'[61] The fancies are in 'the bee-hive' of his brain; and as they were lured forth there was 'a freakish rout' and they

Witched the air with dreams turned insight out.[62]

This freakish rout can bewitch one only when he is not the Parnassian Youth or the true poet. The genuine poet does not bring forth that which is already present in 'the bee-hive'

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56. *Ibid.*, p. 475.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 30 (written in 1791).
58. *Ibid.*, p. 367.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 467.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 435.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 411 (written in 1823).
62. *Ibid.*, p. 442.

of his brain; he creates something new. The other one remains under a self-delusion described in the lines of 1827:

Life's richest treat
He had, or fancied that he had;
Say, 'twas but in his own conceit—
The fancy made him glad![63]

Fancy makes him glad while imagination is synonymous with joy. Joy is not a product, but a beauty-making power. Gladness, on the other, refers to the animal senses.

Coleridge's use of the term 'joy' needs a proper understanding if we are to follow his theory of imagination well. The maid he loves must inspire '**pure** joy and calm delight.'[64] In the same year the 'best beloved' Goddess is 'Delightful Tea'

Who know'st to spread the calm delight
And the pure joy prolong to midmost night![65]

This is a joy associated with inspiration and with 'the warm raptures of poetic fire.'[66] Though this joy is associated with delight, it is used here to imply the state where one forgets the present. This state is capable of being prolonged and it is in a way similar to what Coleridge said in after time about reducing succession to an instant. In 1791 he speaks of flowers

Which joy from Eden stole
While Innocence stood smiling by.[67]

Here is joy linked to paradise. Childlike simplicity, purity and innocence breathe the joy of eternity, of paradise. As against this we have luxury which offers only 'her maniac joys that know no measure', or there is 'her frown with gloomy joy.'[68] But the **unmixed** joys are given only to the 'favourite of Heaven'; and

Heaven shall lend
To share thy simple joys a friend!

63. *Ibid.*, p. 466.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 17 (written in 1790).
65. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 31 (written in 1791).

Ah! doubly blest, if love supply
His influence to complete thy joy.[69]

Love completes joy which is heavenly. As heavenly, it implies the state of rapture and ecstasy.

But joy does manifest itself in a variety of ways, creative joy being only one among others. Affection shall pour the high raptures 'of filial and maternal joy',[70] we are told. These may give rise to artistic activity; but such raptures are of no avail to a poet if they are self-contained. There are 'cares that sweeten Joy.'[71] Here is a joy that becomes creative when there is an element of discord at its core which it seeks to resolve. The present of a flower inspirited by love thrilled him

With deep delight!
Then clapp'd his wings for joy.[72]

This is a joy which is active; and delight by contrast does not appear to be so dynamic.

He speaks 'of joys that glimmer'd in Hope's twilight ray.'[73] The glimmer and the twilight are ominous if only because love and poetry are intimately connected with bright moonlight in the best moments of Coleridge's life. Even in 1792 he saw in the 'bright-blue eyes' of Mary Evans 'chaste Joyance dancing'[74]; and love dips 'his myrtle flower' 'in Joy's red nectar.'[75] Brightness, blue colour of the sky, love, joy and nectar have rich denotations; and one is tempted to recall a number of passages even from the major poems of Coleridge. 'Joy's electric beam illumed' the vernal gleam[76] in 1793. Elsewhere it is a 'generous joy.'[77] There is an electric charge in joy

69. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
70. *Ibid.*, p. 34 (written in 1792).
71. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
72. *Ibid.*, p. 45 (written in 1793).
73. *Ibid.*, p. 48.
74. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
75. *Ibid.*, p. 52.
76. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
77. *Ibid.*, p. 57 (written in 1794).

which is expansive and comprehensive in being generous.

But there can be an exclusive joy which is the very antithesis of the creative process. Thus selfish joy

Tasted her vernal sweets, but tasted to destroy![78]

Here joy would refer to sensuousness which may be needed as the starting point but which cannot remain unmodified or untransformed. But he speaks of 'the charms of vernal grace and Joy's wild gleams' lightening over the face of Chatterton.[79] Coleridge was explicitly referring to the ecstatic joy. But this state may be one of dizzy rapture which must needs be kept under control; and control implies the operation of will. Accordingly we read:

When the mind hath drunk its fill of truth
We'll discipline the heart to pure delight,
Rekindling sober joy's domestic flame.[80]

The true joy of the creative artist is sober, not wild; and the sobriety that accrues to it is the result of the will working in unison with the dominant passion.

But in the context of love it is the 'warm tear of joy.'[81] The warmth of joy makes it a state of experience which harmonises contraries. As he 'listened with a heart forlorn' to the song of Wordsworth, 'life's joy rekindling roused a throng of pains.'[82]

The sweet Muse is the Voice of his Joy. This muse soothes the sigh and goes to him that has 'the candid eye.'[83] Clarity of vision might be the poetic insight or intuition; and it is other than the dimness or glimmering which is associated elsewhere with fancy. As the eyes of Chatterton 'dance rapture and his bosom glows, with generous joy he views the ideal gold.'[84] Along with clarity, there is an expansive experience

78. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
79. *Ibid.*, p. 128.
80. *Ibid.*, p. 157 (written in 1796).
81. *Ibid.*, p. 346 (written in 1800).
82. *Ibid.*, p. 407 (written in 1807).
83. *Ibid.*, p. 16 (written in 1790).
84. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

that makes one enthusiastic. Out of this cheerful enthusiasm there emerges an awareness of one's organic unity with the world. Even in 1790 he says that 'full oft with fixed eye' he gazes at the evening star 'till I, methinks, all spirit seemed to grow.'[85] The more than usual sensibility that accompanies the joy of the creative artist makes him realise not only an identity with his objects, but he becomes a living soul. His spirit is subdued and chastened. There is 'the Muses' calm abode'[86] in 1792, though he speaks of the 'passion-warbled song' which is

> As sweet as when that voice with rapturous falls
> Shall wake the soften'd echoes of Heaven's Halls![87]

The tranquillity of the poet's joy is almost heavenly.

The experience of joy which the creative imagination evokes might be closer to that of a reverie. We have the dear native brook

> Where first young Poesy
> Stared wildly-eager in her noon-tide dreàm![88]

But 'the young-eyed poesy' of Chatterton has given the 'stately song' that enraptured him.[89] The day-dreaming is related to 'the young-eyed poesy', not to the full-grown poetic activity. It is the latter which is free from wild restlessness. Satyrane 'in joy was strong to follow the delightful Muse.'[90] It is 'the radiant light of joy.'[91] And it is the 'deep, heartfelt, inward joy that closely clings.'[92] Here are

> The joys, that came down shower-like,
> Of friendship, Love, and Liberty.[93]

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85. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
86. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
87. *Ibid.*, p. 52.
88. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
89. *Ibid.*, p. 130.
90. *Ibid.*, p. 413 (written in 1809).
91. *Ibid.*, p. 514.
92. *Ibid.*, p. 429 (written in 1820).
93. *Ibid.*, p. 440 (written in 1823).

These joys are like the quality of mercy dropping gently and blessing both the giver and the recipient. This blessedness of experience makes not only joy divine but makes him refer to 'Beauty's saintly shrine.'[94]

Spontaneity, fullness and profundity of joy accompanying the artistic creation is given the fullest and noblest expression in "The Eolian Harp" (1795) which releases

> Such a soft floating witchery of sound
> As twilight elfins make when they at eve
> Voyage on gentle gales from Fairy-Land,
> Where Melodies round honey-dropping flowers,
> Footless and wild, like birds of Paradise,
> Nor pause, nor perch, hovering on untam'd Wing![95]

The bewitching sound of the elfins and the 'gentle gales' constitute the framework where we have melodies emanating from the 'footless and wild' bees. These 'birds of Paradise' release a heavenly music which alone can inspire the poet. If he could revive within him the 'symphony and song' of the Abyssinian maid,

> With music loud and long
> I would build that dome in air,
> That sunny dome! those caves of ice![96]

It is not with any physical material that he can build the sacred dome of poetry. He needs divine music, the music of the spheres, which makes him conscious of the joy underlying all creation. In this light we can understand Poesy being called 'a sweet instrument' and the poem 'a sweet tune.'[97]

Joy and moonlight go together. He wants his child to 'associate joy' with the night.[98] Elsewhere we read that joy rose within the lady like a summer's morn.[99] It has all the

94. *Ibid.*, p. 66 (written in 1791).
95. *Ibid.*, p. 101.
96. *Ibid.*, p. 298.
97. *Ibid.*, p. 374 (written in 1802).
98. *Ibid.*, p. 267 (written in 1798).
99. *Ibid.*, p. 338 (written in 1799).

freshness and beauty. We read

> A new joy,
> Lovely as light, sudden as summer gust,
> And gladsome as the first-born of the spring,
> Beckons me on....[100]

This joy is that of the lover.

Joy implies freedom. We are told that he shook the red lance from the tyrant's wound 'and strode in joy the plains of France.'[101] There is even dancing for joy.[102] We have the 'hyblean murmurs of poetic thought industrious in its joy.'[103] And the joy referred to is that which transcends the relative and relational context. We thus hear that 'Nature fleeing from pain, sheltered herself in joy,' for 'there is joy above the name of pleasure' and this is 'deep self-possession, an intense repose.'[104] This is the joy which is the Absolute Spirit expressed in the lines:

> O! the one life within us and abroad,
> Which meets all motion and becomes its soul,
> A light in sound, a soundlike power in light,
> Rhythm in all thought, and joyance everywhere.[105]

"The Eolian Harp" (1795) does this. 'In a world so filled' it is 'impossible not to love all things.' It is not only the life and soul of all being and becoming, but it is the power that transmutes light into sound and sound into light. It is not a vague joyance but rhythm immanent in all thought. Rhythm implies harmony which is the nature of the soul in Platonic philosophy.

Harmony or rhythm being synonymous with the joy of creation, it is a principle of synthesis. It synthesises in aesthetic experience varied sense experiences. He visualises Lamb

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100. *Ibid.*, p. 369 (written in 1802).
101. *Ibid.*, p. 65 (written in 1794).
102. *Ibid.*, p. 67.
103. *Ibid.*, p. 405 (written in 1807).
104. *Ibid.*, p. 422 (written in 1813).
105. *Ibid.*, p. 101.

'struck with deep joy' and standing

> Silent with swimming sense; yea, gazing round
> On the wide landscape, gaze till all doth seem
> Less gross than bodily; and of such hues
> As veil the Almighty Spirit, when yet he makes
> Spirits perceive his presence.[106]

Deep joy brings forth swimming sense; and this movement gradually becomes disembodied and symbolic of the Absolute Spirit. Such an experience is one of 'a meditative joy' which alone can reveal 'religious meanings in the forms of Nature!'[107] These meanings refer to the language of signs popularised by Berkeley in his metaphysics.

At times joy might partake of the sinister while retaining all the other features of the serene experience. The mariners see the skeleton ship and in the beginning 'they for joy did grin.' This flash of joy was soon followed by horror.[108] But when the ancient Mariner beholds his native country, there is the 'dream of joy;'[109] and 'it was a joy the dead men could not blast.'[110] The feeling of at-homeness is a necessary ingredient in the solemn experience of joy.

Sometimes one may have only a fancy with which he visualises the future; and this can give him only a pleasant or delightful experience that can easily be mistaken for joy. At the onset of the revolution in France,

> With what a joy my lofty gratulation
> Unawed I sang.[111]

But the 'meditative joy' cannot be divorced from awe. So when he sang **unawed,** he had only fancy, not joy of the creative artist. He believed that France would

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106. *Ibid.,* p. 180 (written in 1797).
107. *Ibid.,* p. 257 (written in 1798).
108. "The Ancient Mariner," 164ff.
109. *Ibid.,* 464.
110. *Ibid.,* 506-7.
111. *Poems,* p. 245.

compel the nations to be free
Till love and joy look round, and call the earth
their own.[112]

Here he is more explicit in connecting joy with the purely personal emotion of love. This joy has its basic reference to the body, to the sensory system; and as such it has all the wild restlessness which has no place in the higher experiences. When the moment of the lover's return from the wars draws nearer,

Her whole frame fluttered with uneasy joy.[113]

The uneasiness of the head that wears the temporal power is the result of a mixed or impure joy which excludes the detached state. But if it is a pure joy,

Joy lift her spirit, joy attune her voice.[114]

This is the spiritual joy which realises an organic kinship with the world and which gradually leads to an awareness of identity. The Invisible blends 'with my Life and life's own secret joy'; and the soul is 'enrapt, transfused, into the mighty vision.'[115]

The pure joy of the meditative spirit is no other than imagination. "The monody" (1790) begins with the Muse who prompts 'poetic lays.'[116] The songs of the inspired moment are the valuable expressions of imagination, of joy. These emerge from the genius who 'pours forth her soul-enchanting strain.'[116] These soul-enchanting strains have a halo of divinity around them. We therefore read in an early poem:

And Otway, Master of the Tragic Art,
Whom Pity's self had taught to sing.[116]

Pity or sympathy is an expansive feeling going out to share the experience of others, not fancifully, but imaginatively. This sharing is possible only when great values are at stake.

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112. *Ibid.*, p. 246.
113. *Ibid.*, p 249.
114. *Ibid.*, p. 368 (written in 1802).
115. *Ibid.*, p. 378.
116. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

Virtue and truth may love the gentle song; 'but Poesy demands the impassioned theme.'[117] One is never great, we read,

> But by the inspiration of great passion,
> The whirl-blast comes, the desert-sands rise up
> And shape themselves.[118]

And when 'the blast pauses', even 'their shaping spirit is fled.'[118] Imagination emanating from inspiration is the shaping spirit. Hence he would join the 'mystic choir' of the spirits; but till then

> I discipline my young and novice thought
> In ministries of heart-stirring song.[119]

Once discipline is there, something of value can be realised, provided there is a spirit inspiring him. 'With Baccaccio's spirit warm' he framed a garden 'in the silent poesy of form.'[120] And there is

> The chamber carved so curiously,
> Carved with figures strange and sweet,
> All made out of the carver's brain.[121]

Here we leave behind all the associationist series evoked by fancy. In that place we find imagination creating something new, for the poetic act is said to be a dim analogue of the divine creative process.

The great poet, therefore, would not waste his time rhyming. Instead of 'building up the rhyme', he would like to stretch his limbs

> Beside a brook in mossy forest-dell,
> By sun or moon-light, to the influxes
> Of shapes and sounds and shifting elements
> Surrendering his whole spirit, of his song
> And of his fame forgetful![122]

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117. *Ibid.*, p. 104 (written in 1794).
118. *Ibid.*, p. 423 (written in 1808).
119. *Ibid.*, p. 124.
120. *Ibid.*, p. 478 (written in 1828).
121. "Christabel," 178-180.
122. *Poems*, p. 265 (written in 1798).

He would absorb and assimilate all the pleasant sounds and shapes; and the poet is 'a visionary wight' whose thoughts 'hover round the Muses' home.' Music pours forth 'on his becharmed sense.'[123] In this experience he has not only an intuition of his content as a synthetic unity, he has also an intuition of the organic form or shape and an experience that synthesises these two intuitions. 'In his lone yet genial hour' the poet's eyes have 'a magnifying power.' This might mean that the poet is fond of exaggeration. So he corrects the expression and says that

> rather he emancipates his eyes
> From the black shapeless accidents of size.

Thereby

> His gifted ken can see
> Phantoms of sublimity.[124]

All the forms that he visualises and expresses are 'shadows of imagination', as he said later. Here these are called 'phantoms of sublimity.' The sublime thus becomes synonymous with imagination which is 'a light, a cloud, a fair luminous mist.' Wordsworth's soul received

> The light reflected, as a light bestowed—
> Of fancies fair, and milder hours of youth,
> Hyblean murmurs of poetic thought
> Industrious in its joy, in vales and glens.[125]

There were fancies and also poetic thoughts in Wordsworth's poetry; and joy is the dynamic principle related to the latter. The more valuable part of his poetry is rich with

> what within the mind
> By vital breathings secret as the soul
> Of vernal growth, oft quickens in the heart
> Thoughts all too deep for words![126]

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123. *Ibid.*, p. 442 (written in 1823).
124. *Ibid.*, p. 345 (written in 1800).
125. *Ibid.*, p. 405 (written in 1807).
126. *Ibid.*, p. 404.

Creative imagination cannot fully express itself in any medium. It offers shadows which yet are highly suggestive.

An atmosphere of infinite suggestion hovers round the best poetry because of inspiration. We read that

> In inspiration's eager hour,
> When most the big soul feels the mastering power.[127]

Chatterton roamed over the wilds and the caverns and poured 'on the winds a broken song.' The song is only metaphorically **broken**. It leaves something unsaid; and what is unsaid is communicated through the power of suggestion with which inspiration charges the sounds of the poem. This can be accomplished by no ordinary poet, for poetry implies an arduous labour. He tells Lamb in 1796 that he should renounce the 'low cares and lying vanities' and remain

> Steadfast and rooted in the heavenly Muse,
> And wash'd and sanctified to Poesy.[128]

One has to be canonised to became a poet; and the holy oil that is poured on his head is inspiration which alone releases the dormant secondary imagination. He, therefore, speaks

> Of that divine and nightly-whispering Voice,
> Which from my childhood to maturer years
> Spake to me of predestinated wreaths,
> Bright with no fading colours![129]

In silence and tranquillity, the meditative spirit becomes fit to receive the fountain of inspiration. But inspiration does not come when one wants it, nor does it depart at our bidding. It has its own inscrutable ways. It comes like a flash of lightning. We are even told that

> a very dainty simile
> Flash'd sudden through my brain.[130]

This flashing does not refer merely to an emotion or passion. It does refer to an idea that illumines the entire field of

127. *Ibid.*, p. 130 (written in 1790).
128. *Ibid.*, p. 158.
129. *Ibid.*, p. 174 (written in 1797).
130. *Ibid.*, p. 212 (written in 1798).

experience. Then inspiration and imagination might tend to be confounded with philosophic insight. Poetry and philosophy, said Coleridge, appeared identical in his childhood. It was 'like a gift from heaven', prattling and playing with everything in the universe, for life was 'revealed to innocence alone.'[131] Poetry in its higher reaches may join hands with philosophy.

In a mixed piece Coleridge has informed us that 'the finer the sense for the beautiful and the lovely, and the fairer and lovelier the object presented to the sense; the more exquisite the individual's capacity for joy, and the more ample his means and opportunities of enjoyment, the more heavily will he feel the ache of solitariness....'[132] Solitude and meditation go together, while loveliness is the essential characteristic of the good. The Beautiful which is the Good is realised in that joy which emanates out of the meditative spirit when imagination is active. Solitude and meditation are thus the prerequisites for the descent of inspiration and the activity of imagination. And in giving a set of qualities which a poet must have, Coleridge wrote:

> Imagination; honourable aims;
> Free commune with the choir that cannot die.[133]

Imagination, ethical ideals, and divine music are necessary. The last of these appears in the **Biographia** as a gift of imagination; and here we are told that the ability to commune with divine music is innate. With regard to Wordsworth he speaks

> of moments awful,
> Now in thy inner life, and now abroad,
> When power streamed from thee, and thy soul received
> The light reflected, as a light bestowed.[134]

These moments of inspiration made him the recipient of the light that guided his muse. This light is the antithesis of

131. *Ibid.*, p. 479 (written in 1828).
132. *Ibid.*, p. 396 (written in 1805).
133. *Ibid.*, p. 396.
134. *Ibid.*, pp. 404-5 (written in 1807).

fancy and the mainspring of imagination and reason alike. But we have also the curious lines:

> Imagination, Mistress of my Love!
> Where shall mine eye thy elfin haunt explore?

The bright pinions of imagination are embathed on the rich cloud 'in amber-glowing floods of light.' This imagination is the 'lovely Sorceress' who must 'aid the poet's dream' with faery wand' and give him 'the thrill of joy ecstatic yet serene.'[135] It is 'the lambent flame of joy.'[136] In the final published draft all this is transferred to fancy. Milton, we learn, is 'austere, condensed, imaginative', presents truth 'by direct enunciation of lofty moral sentiment and by distinct visual representations'; but Taylor is 'accumulative and agglomerative', and his are 'images of fancy' which are 'presented to the common passive eye, rather than to the eye of the imagination.'[137] The latter looks to the ideal. The 'mortal spirit' feels 'the joy and greatness of its future being.'[138]

It is imagination that made the mariner realise:

> He prayeth best, who loveth best
> All things both great and small;
> For the dear God who loveth us,
> He made and loveth all.[139]

Here are the eternal values revealed by the secondary imagination. This imagination brings the urge to speak out:

> Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched
> With a woful agony,
> Which forced me to begin my tale;
> And then it left me free.[140]

He cannot keep quiet when he is under the spell of inspira-

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135. *Ibid.*, p. 49 (written in 1792).
136. *Ibid.*, pp. 50, 54.
137. *Ibid.*, p. 604.
138. *Ibid.*, p. 262 (written in 1798).
139. "The Ancient Mariner," 614-7.
140. *Ibid.*, 578-81.

tion. His imagination demands an outlet. But this urge comes we know not whence. Even the precise moment of its onset is uncertain:

> Since then at an uncertain hour,
> That agony returns:
> And till my ghastly tale is told,
> This heart within me burns.[141]

It is this burning sense, this vague undefined aching of the spirit that comes in solitude; and it compels him to move forward:

> I pass like night, from land to land;
> I have strange power of speech.[142]

This strange power is the power of suggestion. It comes from the secondary imagination of the inspired poet; and it equally well influences the listener and the reader:

> He went like one that hath been stunned,
> And is of sense forlorn:
> A sadder and a wiser man,
> He rose the morrow morn.[143]

Sadness and wisdom are the fruits of imagination. It is a sadness that makes one reflective and contemplative.

Enclosing an ode on a mathematical problem, in March, 1791, he informed his brother that in mathematical enquiry 'though Reason is feasted, Imagination is starved; whilst Reason is luxuriating in its proper Paradise, Imagination is wearily travelling on a dreary desert. To assist Reason by the stimulus of Imagination is the design of the following production.... I may justly plume myself that I first have drawn the nymph Mathesis from the visionary caves of abstracted idea, and caused her to unite with Harmony.'[144] At this early period Coleridge was visualising the possibility of synthesising

141. *Ibid.*, 582-5.
142. *Ibid.* 586-7.
143. *Ibid.*, 622-5.

reason with imagination. This is a kind of fusion which should not be confused with the fusion of the poet's heart and intellect which Coleridge advocated a decade after the composition of this ode. Reason he refers to here is a kind of mental discipline which he refers to on his quitting school for Cambridge in 1791:

> I haste to urge the learned toil
> That sternly chides my love-lorn song.[145]

In the "Lines on A Friend" (1794) we have an interesting account of imagination:

> To me hath Heaven with bounteous hand assign'd
> Energic Reason and a shaping mind;
> The daring ken of truth, the Patriot's part,
> And Pity's sigh, that breathes the gentle heart—
> Sloth-jaundiced all![146]

The shaping mind is imagination; and Coleridge was using the expression long before he knew a syllable of German. Four years later he set sail for Germany and in 1802 he spoke of the 'shaping spirit of imagination.' When we look to the poems he wrote when he was ignorant of German, we are compelled to argue that the theory of the esemplastic imagination was Coleridge's own and that he was well aware of it before he came across the German thinkers. In 1795 he wrote:

> It was some spirit, Sheridan! That breath'd
> O'er thy young mind such wildly-various power!
> My soul hath mark'd thee in her shaping hour.[147]

The shaping hour of the soul was only the moment when secondary imagination is active.

Imagination is the shaping, unifying, synthesising spirit. Its essence is joy. It is an innate power with which we are endowed; and it found the grandest enunciation in the lines:

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145. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
146. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
147. *Ibid.*, pp. 87-8.

Joy, Lady! is the spirit and the power,
Which wedding Nature to us gives in dower
A new Earth and new Heaven,
Undreamt of by the sensual and the proud—
Joy is the sweet voice, Joy the lumionus cloud—
We in ourselves rejoice!
And thence flows all that charms or ear or sight,
All melodies the echoes of that voice,
All colours a suffusion from that light.[148]

This is a 'Joy that never was given, save to the pure, and in their purest hour.'[149] And we learn that the product of 'seething imagination' is 'impregnated with the pleasurable exultation which is experienced in all energetic exertion of intellectual power.'[150]

148. *Ibid.*, p. 366.
149. *Ibid.*, p. 365.
150. *Ibid.*, p. 599.

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