

ABSTRACT

TITLE: THE LIFE WITHIN: "THE PRELUDE" AND ORGANIC FORM.

NAME: Robert Young.

COLLEGE: Exeter College, Oxford.

DEGREE: D. Phil.

TERM OF SUBMISSION: Trinity, 1980.

[i.e. 1981] "7

Analysis of organic form begins not with plants but with the problem of Cartesian dualism. Inadvertently, its effect was to remove God from the natural world, thus opening the way to atheism. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, this was refuted by stress on God's active role in nature. The presence and operation of his intellect was equated with life as the primary force in the natural world. Later natural philosophy developed a theory of power which was also equated with life and mind.

The subject of Wordsworth's two-part Prelude is the relation of the mind to this life or permeating spirit, and the epistemological uncertainties which it entails. While proposing a view in which the individual is integrated into the totality, the poem also raises the problem of how the individual can also be contra-distinguished from it.

Blumenbach, under whom Coleridge studied in 1798-99, proposed a different theory of life in which it was defined as a nisus formativus, or inner self-generating power, which creates the form of the living body. Coleridge developed this into a theory of life as individuation, which resolved the opposition of the infinite and the individual. Study of Kant also showed how the nisus formativus could be allied to a theory of method based on a priori cognitive structures.

The expansion of The Prelude in 1804 is related to Wordsworth's identification of the self, as the inner principle of life, with the a priori guiding Idea of his poem. Imagination, the "co-adunating Faculty," links the two together. Wordsworth's related theory of poetry views mind and language as integrated in the same way as mind and body, life and matter, and God's mind and nature. Together, these provide the basis for an understanding of the structure of the poem, and, in particular, its "fall."

The Life Within : The Prelude and Organic Form

Robert Young

Exeter College
Oxford

1980 [i.e. 1981] HT

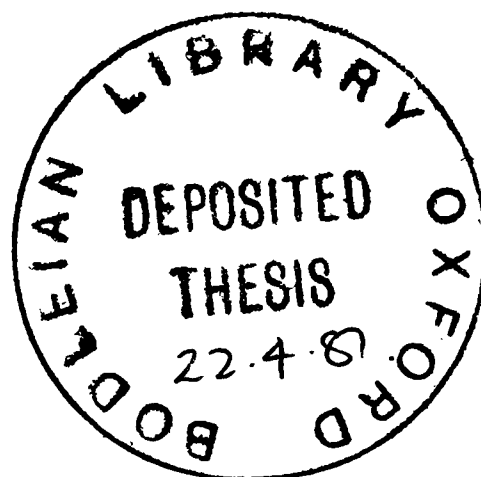


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface		
Introduction:	<u>"The Prelude" and Organic Form.</u>	1
CHAPTER ONE:	<u>"Now in thy inner life, and now abroad": Criticism and the Structure of "The Prelude."</u>	
	i. Before 1850.	8
	ii. Publication: 1850.	20
	iii. After 1850.	31
CHAPTER TWO:	<u>"To apprehend the absolute": The Problem of Organic Form.</u>	
	i. The Poem as Plant.	49
	ii. "And what if all of animated nature be but organic harps?"	58
	iii. Comprehensive Systems.	64
CHAPTER THREE:	<u>Life and Mind in Nature.</u>	
	i. Life, Spirit, and Matter.	75
	ii. The Absolute and Relative Spirit.	80
	iii. Mechanism and Cudworth.	85
	iv. A Deity Alternately Operose and Indolent.	97
	v. The Windy Brow Revisions.	101
	vi. The Marble Index of Newton's Mind.	105
CHAPTER FOUR:	<u>Power.</u>	
	i. The Circulating Spirit.	118
	ii. Problems of Epistemology.	121
	iii. "Him Nature's essence, mind, and energy!"	137
CHAPTER FIVE:	<u>The Two-part "Prelude" of 1799.</u>	
	i. Introduction.	152
	ii. A Poem of Transition.	156
	iii. The Problem of Identity.	161
	iv. An Unresolved Structure.	172
CHAPTER SIX:	<u>The Formative Power.</u>	
	i. "O! the one Life within us and abroad."	189
	ii. Theories of Life.	192
	iii. Blumenbach.	202
	iv. Theories of Method.	215

CHAPTER SEVEN:	<u>The Hidden Life at its Source.</u>	
i.	Pure Self-Beholdings.	234
ii.	The "Ode" as the Myth of "The Prelude."	238
iii.	"The initiative thought, the intellectual seed, must itself have its birth-place within."	250
CHAPTER EIGHT:	<u>The Vital Spirit of a Perfect Form.</u>	
i.	The Electric Thread.	264
ii.	Mind and its Sensuous Language.	266
iii.	The Arab of the Desert.	278
CHAPTER NINE:	<u>The Fall.</u>	
i.	A Parable of Reading.	299
ii.	Darkness Visible.	303
iii.	The Fall.	317
Conclusion		330
Appendix:	<u>Coleridge and Davy's Researches, Chemical and Philosophical.</u>	342
Bibliography.		

Preface.

It was Wordsworth himself who first criticized the structure of The Prelude. In May 1805, he wrote to Sir George Beaumont:

If when the work shall be finished it appears to the judicious to have redundancies they shall be lopped off, if possible. But this is very difficult to do when a man has written with thought The fault lies too deep, and is in the first conception.

Since then, many readers have shared Wordsworth's unease about the structure of the poem. In this thesis, however, I have attempted a more positive analysis. The natural starting point for this was Coleridge. Contrary to Wordsworth's fears, he understood the poem immediately as

An Orphic song indeed,
A song divine of high and passionate thoughts
To their own music chaunted!

An analysis from this perspective stresses the poem's philosophical nature, and suggests that the poem's structure is remarkably consistent and coherent.

I would like to thank the Trustees of Dove Cottage for permission to examine and to cite from copies of the Wordsworth manuscripts in their possession. In particular, I wish to thank my supervisor, Jonathan Wordsworth, who has always been extremely generous with his considerable knowledge of Wordsworth, has always been ready to answer queries, and to extend help of all kinds. He has also kindly given me the opportunity of reading his forthcoming book on Wordsworth in manuscript. I am also grateful to C.J. Crawford, who first helped me to learn about the history and philosophy

of science, and who has continued to take an interest in the material of the thesis. N.W.O. Royle has read the drafts and made many valuable suggestions which have aided me greatly. I have also been lucky to have had the opportunity to discuss Wordsworth's poetry with Isobel Armstrong, Maud Ellmann, and Richard Rand.

Although the thesis is primarily historical and critical in scope, it makes use of the Prelude manuscripts. Its understanding of the poem is based on the recent manuscript work by Jonathan Wordsworth on the five-book Prelude, and, in collaboration with Stephen Gill, on the two-part Prelude of 1799. Their edition of the poem, the Norton Prelude, unfortunately appeared too late for me to be able to use it as my primary text, but it has been of very considerable help. I have referred to the parts of 1799 in lower-case numerals, and the books of 1805 in upper-case. Where there is any danger of confusion, however, I have preceded the reference by 1799 or 1805. References in the footnotes are to short-titles only in most cases; full-titles are given in the bibliography. Conventions for citation and presentation follow the MLA Handbook (New York: MLA, 1977). For occasional items not dealt with in MLA, I have referred to Hart's Rules for Compositors and Readers (38th ed., London: Oxford University Press, 1978).

PRINCIPAL SHORT FORMS OF CITATIONS

- 1799 : The two-part Prelude of 1799. Text: Cornell Wordsworth, vol. II, ed. S. Parrish (reading text).
- 1804 : The five-book Prelude of March 1804.
- 1805 : The thirteen-book Prelude of 1805. Text: Oxford Prelude.
- 1850 : The fourteen-book Prelude of 1850 (1839). Text: Oxford Prelude.
- Bicentenary Studies : Bicentenary Wordsworth Studies, ed. Jonathan Wordsworth (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970).
- BL : Biographia Literaria, ed. George Watson (London: Dent, 1956, rev. 1965).
- BNYPL : Bulletin of the New York Public Library.
- Bristol Borrowings : George Whalley, "The Bristol Library Borrowings of Southey and Coleridge, 1793-8," The Library, 5th ser. 4. (1949), 114-32.
- Carey and Fowler : The Poems of John Milton, eds. John Carey and Alastair Fowler (London: Longmans, 1968).
- CC : Collected Coleridge
I. Lectures 1795 on Politics and Religion, eds. Lewis Patton and Peter Mann (1971).
II. The Watchman, ed. Lewis Patton (1970).
III. Essays on His Own Times, ed. David Erdman (3 vols., 1978).
IV. The Friend, ed. Barbara Rooke (2 vols., 1969).
VI. Lay Sermons, ed. R.J. White (1972).
X. On the Constitution of the Church and State, ed. John Colmer (1976).
- CL : Comparative Literature.
- CN : Coleridge Notebooks, ed Kathleen Coburn.
1 - 1842 : 1794 - 1804, Volume I.
1843 - 3232 : 1804 - 1808, Volume II.
3232 - 4504 : 1808 - 1819, Volume III.

- Crabb Robinson, Correspondence : Henry Crabb Robinson, The Correspondence of Henry Crabb Robinson with the Wordsworth Circle, ed. E.J. Morley, 2 vols. (Oxford Clarendon Press, 1927).
- Crabb Robinson, Diary : Diary, Reminiscences, and Correspondence of Henry Crabb Robinson, ed. Thomas Sadler, 3 vols. (London, 1869).
- CPW : The Complete Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ed. E.H. Coleridge, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912).
- CW : Cornell Wordsworth
- I. The Salisbury Plain Poems, ed. Stephen Gill (1975).
 - II. The Prelude, 1798-1799, ed. Stephen Parrish (1977).
 - III. Home at Grasmere, ed. Beth Darlington (1977).
 - IV. The Ruined Cottage and The Pedlar, ed. James Butler (1979).
- ECS : Eighteenth Century Studies.
- EC : Essays in Criticism.
- ELH : English Literary History.
- ELN : English Language Notes.
- E&S : Essays and Studies.
- EY : The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, ed. E. de Selincourt, 2d ed. The Early Years, 1787-1805, rev. Chester L. Shaver (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967).
- Griggs : Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ed. E.L. Griggs, 6 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956-71).
- Grosart : The Prose Works of William Wordsworth, ed. A.B. Grosart, 3 vols. (London, 1876).
- Howe : The Complete Works of William Hazlitt, ed. P.P. Howe, 21 vols. (London: Dent, 1930-34).
- JEGP : Journal of English and Germanic Philology.

- Journals : Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth, ed. Ernest de Selincourt, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1941).
- Lyrical Ballads : Lyrical Ballads, the Text of the 1798 edition with the additional 1800 Poems and the Prefaces, eds. R.L. Brett and A.R. Jones. (London: Methuen, 1963, rev. 1965).
- Masson : The Collected Writings of Thomas De Quincey, ed. David Masson, 14 vols., (Edinburgh, 1889-90).
- Mirror and Lamp : M.H. Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953).
- MLN : Modern Language Notes.
- MLQ : Modern Language Quarterly.
- Moorman : Mary Moorman, William Wordsworth: A Biography, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957, 1965).
- MP : Modern Philology.
- Music of Humanity : Jonathan Wordsworth, The Music of Humanity: A Critical Study of Wordsworth's "The Ruined Cottage" (London: Nelson, 1969).
- MY : The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, ed. E. de Selincourt, 2d ed., The Middle Years, I, 1806-1811 rev. Mary Moorman (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969); II, 1812-1820 rev. Mary Moorman and Alan G. Hill (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970).
- Natural Super-naturalism : M.H. Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature (New York: Norton, 1971).
- Norton Prelude : The Prelude 1799, 1805, 1850, eds. Jonathan Wordsworth, M.H. Abrams, and Stephen Gill (New York: Norton, 1979).
- N&Q : Notes and Queries.
- OED : Oxford English Dictionary.

- Oxford Prelude : The Prelude, or Growth of a Poet's Mind, ed. E. de Selincourt, 2d ed. rev. Helen Darbishire (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959).
- Phil. L. : The Philosophical Lectures of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ed. Kathleen Coburn (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1949).
- PL : Paradise Lost. Text: Carey and Fowler.
- PMLA : Publications of the Modern Language Society of America.
- Poems in Two Volumes : Poems in Two Volumes, 1807, ed. Helen Darbishire, 2nd ed. (Oxford Clarendon Press, 1952).
- Prose Works : Prose Works of William Wordsworth, eds. W.J.B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974).
- PW : The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth, eds. E. de Selincourt and Helen Darbishire, 5 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940-49). Vol. II, 2d ed., 1952; Vol. III, 2d ed. 1954.
- Reed I : Mark L. Reed, Wordsworth: The Chronology of the Early Years 1770-1799 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967).
- Reed II : Mark L. Reed, Wordsworth: The Chronology of the Middle Years 1800-1815 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975).
- RES : Review of English Studies.
- Shakespearian Criticism : Samuel Taylor Coleridge: Shakespearian Criticism, ed. Thomas Middleton Raysor, 2 vols. (London: Constable, 1930).
- Shawcross : Biographia Literaria, by S.T. Coleridge, ed. with his Aesthetical Essays, J. Shawcross, 2 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1907).
- SIR : Studies in Romanticism.

- Table Talk : Specimens of the Table Talk of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ed. H.N. Coleridge, 2 vols. (London, 1835).
- TLS : Times Literary Supplement.
- UTQ : University of Toronto Quarterly.
- WC : The Wordsworth Circle.

INTRODUCTION:

"The Prelude" and Organic Form.

In "To William Wordsworth" Coleridge claims that The Prelude has organic form. As the person who formally introduced the concept into English literary criticism, Coleridge's opinion ought to be trusted. But the structure of The Prelude remains one of the poem's most elusive aspects. The critical problem still rests upon whether it is best read as a series of "epiphanies," in effect as a collection of fragments, or whether Coleridge's assertion can be borne out at all by the poem. If it has organic form it must also, by implication, have a far more integrated structure.

The problem begins with organicism itself. In order to know whether The Prelude has it, we have to know what it is. The most famous definition that Coleridge gave is virtually a translation of Schlegel, but the plagiarism does not disqualify its usefulness:

No work of true genius dare want its appropriate form; neither indeed is there any danger of this. As it must not, so neither can it, be lawless! For it is even this that constitutes it genius--the power of acting creatively under laws of its own origination. . . . The form is mechanic when on any given material we impress a pre-determined form, not necessarily arising out of the properties of the material, as when to a mass of wet clay we give whatever shape we wish it to retain when hardened. The organic form, on the other hand, is innate; it shapes as it develops itself from within, and the fullness of its development is one and the same with the perfection of its outward form. Such is the life, such the form. Nature, the prime genial artist, inexhaustible in diverse powers, is equally inexhaustible in forms. Each exterior is the physiognomy of the being within, its true image reflected and thrown out from

the concave mirror. And even such is the appropriate excellence of her chosen poet, of our own Shakespeare, himself a nature humanized, a genial understanding directing self-consciously a power and an implicit wisdom deeper than consciousness. 1

It is a very persuasive definition. But it does not function as a key which opens up the mysteries of the structure of The Prelude. The general terms of the organicism which Coleridge describes are clear: the form is an expression of an interior genius, the understanding mysteriously directs a power and a wisdom "deeper than consciousness," inward rather than outward, and organic rather than mechanical. Coleridge's earliest definition in the Shakespeare Lectures again defines organicism in terms of an opposition to mechanicism, and summarizes it as "a law which all the parts obey, conforming themselves to the outward symbols and manifestations of the essential principle."² As the definitions accrue, it is possible to make out a basic typology.³ Organic form is the result of a power which intrinsically shapes a form from within. Any structure that cannot be described in these terms cannot be said to have organic form. This will serve as a working definition of basic principles. There is no point, however, in pursuing Coleridge's definitions further insofar as they themselves contain two related problems.

The first concerns the problem of plagiarism. The first of the definitions that has been cited is really Schlegel's,

-
1. Shakespearian Criticism, I, 223-24.
 2. Shakespearian Criticism, II, 170.
 3. The problems with attempting a definition of organic form by synthesizing Coleridge's disparate statements about it, a procedure followed by M.H. Abrams, are discussed in Chapter 2.

and the second occurs in the lecture immediately following Coleridge's first acquaintance with Schlegel's Vorlesungen in December 1811. The critical debate devolves onto the question of whether Coleridge simply stole an idea, and the exact expression of it, as Fruman claims, or whether, as McFarland suggests, the idea itself was already "in the air," and Coleridge simply stole a felicitous expression of it.¹ This in itself mirrors a larger debate over the question of sources. It is, in fact, possible to trace ideas about organic form back to Aristotle and Plato. As Coleridge puts it in his Letter on Plagiarism:

There are two kinds of heads in the world of literature. The one I would call, SPRINGS: the other, TANKS. The latter class, habituated to receiving only, full or low, according to the state of its feeders, attach[es] no distinct notion to living production as contra-distinguished from mechanical formation. If they find a fine passage in Thomson, they refer it to Milton; if in Milton, to Euripides or Homer; and if in Homer, they take for granted its pre-existence in the lost works of Linus or Musaeus. It would seem as if it were a part of their creed, that all thoughts are traditional, and that not only the alphabet was revealed to Adam, but all that was ever written in it that was worth writing. 2

Yet it is also the case that organicism gained a general currency as the dominant mode in aesthetics in a precise historical period, at the turn of the eighteenth century.

What is clear is that a definite shift occurred in Wordsworth's poetry. If The Prelude has organic form, Descriptive Sketches (1793) very probably does not. In

1. Norman Fruman, Coleridge: The Damaged Archangel (New York: Braziller, 1971), pp. 141-64; Thomas McFarland, Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), pp. 256-61.

2. Shakespearian Criticism, II, 232.

Wordsworth's case, this kind of change can usually be confidently traced to a particular intellectual source--namely Coleridge himself. But it is here that the problem occurs. The Prelude was, in its different forms, completed in 1799 and 1805. All Coleridge's statements about organic form were made after 1811.¹ The question of the plagiarisms, therefore, becomes very germane. Abrams assumes that organic thinking came to Coleridge from Germany, but at the same time points out:

Coleridge had familiarized himself with such important antecedents of German organology as Plotinus, Giordano Bruno, and Leibniz, as well as Boehme and other writers in the occult tradition. . . . In the light of the community of background . . . we can understand Coleridge's feeling that in the German thinkers he found what he had already thought and was just on the point of saying himself. 2

If The Prelude can be shown to have organic form then it would seem to substantiate this claim. The "community of background," however, which Abrams cites, has never been shown to lead to a convincing formulation of organicist aesthetics.

Any investigation of The Prelude in terms of organicism, therefore, has to answer the question not only of whether the poem has organic form, but if it does, how it does. It was certainly written without the help of Schlegel. It is a fair assumption, on the other hand, that intellectually it is influenced by Coleridge's thinking up to his departure for

1. This will be qualified, but it remains true of his most explicit statements, such as those, for instance, collected by Abrams, Mirror and Lamp, pp. 167-77.

2. Mirror and Lamp, p. 218.

Malta in April 1804.¹ For this reason, the following analysis will be concerned partly with an attempt to understand the nature and context of Coleridge's thinking on organicism as well as Wordsworth's. As the critic who made the greatest claims for organicism in The Prelude, his ideas on the subject will prove essential to an understanding of the poem's structure.

But Coleridge's ideas on organicism cannot themselves be understood if they are considered in isolation. The main reason why it remains so difficult to understand the structure of The Prelude is because we read with twentieth

1. Although obviously guided by Coleridge's later formulations, which I have at times made use of for purposes of exposition or illustration, I have attempted to avoid using material dating from after April 1804 as a primary source for understanding organic form in The Prelude. For this reason also, I have not included here a detailed discussion of critical works on Coleridge's organic theory, since these, for obvious reasons, tend to concentrate on later material. I have attempted to show how organicism developed before it was necessarily even formulated as such. This is the task involved in any understanding of The Prelude's organic form. I have, however, been considerably helped by critical discussions of later Coleridgean theory, particularly those of Owen Barfield, What Coleridge Thought (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1971); James Benziger, "Organic Unity: Leibniz to Coleridge," PMLA, 66 (1951), 24-48; R.H. Fogle, The Idea of Coleridge's Criticism (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962); J.R. de J. Jackson, Method and Imagination in Coleridge (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969); Gordon McKenzie, Organic Unity in Coleridge (Berkeley: University of California Publications in English, vol. VII, 1939); Craig W. Miller, "Coleridge's Concept of Nature," JHI, 25 (1964), 77-96; Joseph Needham, "S.T. Coleridge as a Philosophical Biologist," Science Progress, 20 (1926), 692-702; G.N.G. Orsini, "Coleridge and Schlegel Reconsidered," CL, 16 (1964), 99-118, and Coleridge and German Idealism, (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969); G.S. Rousseau, ed., Organic Form: The Life of an Idea (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972); and Daniel Stempel, "Coleridge and Organic Form: The English Tradition," SIR, 6 (1967), 89-97.

century taxonomies which tend to blind us to different historical structures of thought. Organicism is a good example of this. As will be shown, it has tended to be considered in isolation, in terms of plants, without any attempt to relate it to an overall philosophical context. But neither Coleridge, nor Wordsworth, thought in this way. They did not divide areas of knowledge into separate compartments. Coleridge's whole life, in fact, was spent in trying to synthesize knowledge. A related problem can be found in the question of sources. Much criticism of both Wordsworth and Coleridge has tended to produce a somewhat baffling series of claims and counter-claims for this or that particular source. But those sources themselves must exist in relation to each other as well as to the primary text. In any study of sources this must be considered also.

In fact, it is necessary to go back to first principles. For instance, one of the most frequently cited definitions of organicism is that it is opposed to mechanicism. But it is not at all easy to discover precisely what that mechanicism was. By implication the organicism / mechanicism dichotomy implies an opposition between poetry and science. Yet organicism must in its own way be a scientific concept. This paradox is an indication of a more complex relation which requires an analysis of relevant areas of eighteenth century science and metaphysics, as well as a consideration of the ways in which poetry could have been related to them.

The following study, therefore, seeks to define three areas. Firstly, it attempts to establish a context in which

poetry and aesthetics can be seen in relation to scientific and metaphysical thought, and to show, in particular, how poetry was affected by the interrelation of science and metaphysics in this period. Secondly, it attempts to show how, in the particular historical context of the last decade of the eighteenth century, it was possible for a version of organic form to develop, and at the same time it attempts to define its nature. Thirdly, it argues that The Prelude does indeed have a very precise structure, and that that structure, although formulated in terms of organicism, is primarily a philosophical one. It is, however, indebted to a particular "scientific" idea. That idea is of the nature of life, of the idea, as Coleridge put it, of "the Life within." There is, in short, an intrinsic relationship between the development of the biological theory of life and the fact that The Prelude is a life also--an autobiography.

CHAPTER ONE: "Now in thy inner life, and now abroad":
Criticism and the Structure of "The Prelude."

i. Criticism Before Publication.

In the famous account of the teachings of the Revd. James Boyer at the opening of the Biographia Literaria, Coleridge writes:

I learnt from 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 more subtle, more complex, and dependent on more and more fugitive causes.¹

It has never been clear, however, that The Prelude has "a logic of its own as severe as that of science." Although the content of the poem has always been discussed in terms of growth and organicism, its structure has been considered little better than that of the Biographia itself.² Few critics have conceded that the poem develops according to

1. BL, p.3

2. Recent estimates have continued Whalley's challenge to Coleridge's description of the Biographia as "so immethodical a miscellany" (BL, pp. 52-53), and to Pater's remark that "of all books that have been influential in modern times," Coleridge's prose writings, including the Biographia, "are furthest from artistic form--bundles of notes" (Appreciations (London, 1889), pp. 71-72). In addition to Whalley's "The Integrity of 'Biographia Literaria,'" E&S, NS 6 (1953), 87-101, see, in particular, Jerome C. Christensen, "Coleridge's Marginal Method in the Biographia Literaria," PMLA, 92 (1977), 928-40, and "The Genius in the Biographia Literaria," SIR, 17 (1978) 215-31.

its own inner logic. In the nineteenth century, it became almost a critical cliché to complain about the poem's lack of structure. Even F.H. Doyle, one of the poem's most sympathetic critics, felt special pleading was necessary:

it was left more or less unfinished and unrevised by its author as if the manuscript had not been looked over when once copied.

If Wordsworth had chosen to give it to the world himself, I daresay it would have been partially remodelled and rearranged, possibly shortened. It is too long....¹

Doyle's remark seems somewhat ironic today, given what is now known of the complexity of the poem's process of composition.² But his reaction clearly indicates the discrepancy that has often been felt to exist between the poem's subject--"the growth of a poet's mind"--and its form. This division between form and content suggests the very reverse of organicism, for organicism is usually defined precisely in terms of its dissolving any such oppositions.³ Against this, one might remark the fact

1. F.H. Doyle, "The Prelude," in Lectures on Poetry, 2nd ser., (London, 1877), p.48.
2. Cf. Norton Prelude, p. ix: "No literary masterpiece has a more complicated textual history than The Prelude." For detailed accounts of the textual history of the poem, see Oxford Prelude, pp. xix-xxxii, xliii-liv; Norton Prelude, pp. ix-xii, 507-26; CW II, 3-36; Reed II, 628-55; Jonathan Wordsworth and Stephen Gill, "The Two-Part Prelude of 1798-9," JEGP, 72 (1973), 503-25; and Jonathan Wordsworth, "The Five-Book Prelude of Early Spring 1804," JEGP, 76 (1977), 1-25.
3. As, for instance, in the definition given by Stephen F. Fogle, "Organism", Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, 1974 ed., p.594.

that after the completion of the thirteen-book poem in 1805 the structure of the poem was hardly changed at all, although its language underwent what became almost a compulsive process of revision.¹ As M.H. Abrams remarks:

It is surprising that *The Prelude* should often be said--even by admirers who express very insightful things about its component parts--to be formless and aggregative in the whole, to exhibit repetition without real progression, and to end in a perfunctory conclusion in which nothing is concluded. Wordsworth was one of the great masters of complex poetic structure.²

In his defence, Abrams cites the example of "Tintern Abbey". But comparison with other, longer, poems can be less helpful. Hazlitt, for instance, pronounces:

He cannot form a whole. He has not the constructive faculty. He can give only the fine tones of thought, drawn from his mind by accident or nature, like the sounds drawn from the Aeolian Harp by the wandering gale. - He is totally deficient in all machinery of poetry. His Excursion, taken as a whole...is a proof of this.³

-
1. There are few substantial differences in structure between 1805 and 1850. 1850 omits the Matron's Tale and Vaudracour and Julia (1805, VIII. 222-311, IX. 555-934) and a number of shorter passages; it includes, notably, a longer description of the "crisis," (1850, XI. 306-33), and moves the description of the man and child in London from 1805, VIII. 837-59 to 1850, VII. 602-18. Other additions, such as the address to the Genius of Burke (1850, VII. 512-43) are ascribable to a change of political views.
 2. M.H. Abrams, "The Prelude as a Portrait of the Artist," Bicentenary Studies, p.187.
 3. Hazlitt, Lectures on the English Poets (1818), Howe, V, 156.

And this, unfortunately, from a critic who, it has recently been suggested, may well have seen The Prelude.¹

Among the poem's best critics may be counted those who saw it earliest--Coleridge and De Quincey. Both of them clearly understood the nature and the scope of the poem, and anticipated many of the positions adopted by later critics. De Quincey's account could be said to initiate both the biographical approach, and the more fragmentary approach of illuminating individual component parts.² For the most part, he makes use of his knowledge of the poem as source material for his remarkable biographical essay on Wordsworth. He uses the poem to illustrate the growth of the poet's mind, implying an organic development in the poem's narrative:

Wordsworth's attachment to nature in her grandest forms....grew out of solitude and the character of his own mind; but the mode of its growth was indirect and unconscious, and in the midst of other more boyish or more worldly pursuits....³

Even from this short extract, it can be seen that while the emphasis is biographical, De Quincey clearly understands the way in which mental growth occurs through unconscious processes, separate from the everyday activities of the child. Although he communicates very effectively The

1. John Beer, Coleridge's Poetic Intelligence (London: Macmillan, 1977), p.288.
2. "Lake Reminiscences, from 1807 to 1830, by the English Opium-Eater: William Wordsworth," Tait's Edinburgh Magazine, 6 (January, February, April, 1839), 1-12, 90-103, 246-54.
3. De Quincey, "William Wordsworth," p.95.

Prelude's theory of mind, he does not consider the poem's form. His reactions surface only implicitly in his own autobiographical writings--in his theory of "involutiones," for instance, or in his description of the brain as a palimpsest, in Suspiria de Profundis.¹ The latter ends with what, in effect, could be a clear description of The Prelude's structure:

The fleeting accidents of a man's life, and its external shows, may indeed be irrelative and incongruous; but the organising principles which fuse into harmony, and gather about fixed predetermined centres, whatever heterogeneous elements life may have accumulated from without, will not permit the grandeur of human unity greatly to be violated, or its ultimate repose to be troubled in the retrospect from dying moments, or from other great convulsions. 2

The inner organizing principle of a man's life can be seen in retrospect to have fused all outer events into a harmony, and a unity, which has not been violated even by a "great convulsion"-- such as the failure of the French Revolution. In contrast, De Quincey criticizes The Excursion on the

-
1. Wordsworth's effect upon De Quincey, and his relation to De Quincey's "involutiones" and palimpsest, are discussed by Christopher Salvesen in The Landscape of Memory (London: Arnold, 1965), pp. 170-72. Cf. Jonathan Wordsworth, "Fructifying Spots of Time," TLS, No. 3,946, (11 November 1977), p.1330.
 2. Blackwoods, 57 (1845), 742, cited by Salvesen, Landscape of Memory, p.171; Salvesen, however, specifically opposes it to organic form: "Wordsworth, in his last 'retrospect', must surely have recognized a unity in that poetry which was written deeply out of memory, which gave more value to his life than the rather arbitrary unity which he claimed for the Gothic-cathedral bulk of all his collected work."

grounds that it lacks an "esemplastic" controlling principle:

In the very scheme and movement of "The Excursion" there are two defects which interfere greatly with its power to act upon the mind with any vital [my emphasis] effect of unity.... One of these defects is the undulatory character of the course pursued by the poem....as the narrative is not of a nature to be moulded by any determinate principle of controlling passion [my emphasis], but bends easily to the caprices of chance and the moment, unavoidably it stamps, by reaction, a desultory or even incoherent character upon the train of the philosophic discussions.... This has the effect of crumbling the poem into separate segments, and causes the whole (when looked at as a whole) to appear a rope of sand. 1

This critique of The Excursion might seem to implicate The Prelude also. If a poem has an undulating character--which sounds ominously like The Prelude's central image of a river--bending "easily to the caprices of the moment," then the poem's form crumbles into nothing, and shows the whole to be but "a rope of sand." In the light of De Quincey's contrasting descriptions, the critical question becomes whether The Prelude has a determinate organizing principle, such as the inner life of the poet, which fuses it into a unity, or whether it collapses into fragments, into "spots of time."

Coleridge, to whom the poem is addressed, and for whom the poem was a gift, makes the first--and almost the

1. De Quincey, "On Wordsworth's Poetry," Masson, XI, 313.

last--claim for its organic structure and coherence.¹ "To William Wordsworth" indicates that his earliest reaction on hearing the complete poem was a sense of his own betrayal of former hopes and trust, with an accompanying sense of renewal which both recalls and repeats the magic of "The Ancient Mariner":

In silence list'ning, like a devout Child,
My soul lay passive; by thy various strain
Driven as in surges now, beneath the stars,
With momentary Stars of my own Birth,
Fair constellated Foam still darting off
Into the darkness! now a tranquil Sea
Outspread and bright, yet swelling to the Moon!²

Coleridge also understands how the poem is structured by the external event of the French Revolution, with early optimism followed by disillusion, and the compensatory movement of Hope brought home to "the Watch-tower of Man's

-
1. "To William Wordsworth" reciprocated the poem which was at that time known as the poem to Coleridge (e.g., Journals, I, 96: "Wm wrote part of the poem to Coleridge" (26 December 1801), or Dorothy Wordsworth to Lady Beaumont, 25 December 1805: "I have transcribed two thirds of the Poem addressed to Coleridge," (EY, p.664)). At the end of Book XIII, Wordsworth describes his poem as a gift to Coleridge (XIII. 411-12), and Coleridge reciprocates in the first line of his reply, "To William Wordsworth": "O FRIEND! O Teacher! God's great Gift to me!" (CPW II, 1081).
 2. 11. 101-07, CPW II, 1083-84; cf. Coleridge's letter to Poole, 14 October 1803: "I rejoice therefore with a deep & true Joy, that he has at length yielded to my urgent & repeated--almost unremitting--requests & remonstrances-- & will go on with the Recluse exclusively.--A Great Work, in which he will sail; on an open Ocean, & a steady wind; unfretted by short tacks, reefing, & hawling & disentangling the ropes--great work necessarily comprehending his attention & Feelings within the circle of great objects & elevated Conceptions--this is his natural Element--the having been out of it has been his Disease--to return into it the specific Remedy, both Remedy and Health" (Griggs, II, 1013).

absolute Self."¹ His revisions of the poem for publication in Sibylline Leaves (1817) cut out much of the immediate reaction of personal failure, and develop a more detailed analysis of The Prelude itself.

In particular, the published version of "To William Wordsworth" emphasizes the distinction made in the poem between inner and outer processes:

Of the foundations and the building up
Of a Human Spirit thou hast dared to tell
What may be told, to the understanding mind
Revealable; and what within the mind
By vital breathings secret as the soul
Of vernal growth, oft quickens in the heart
Thoughts all too deep for words!--/ 2

In this description, Coleridge makes two separate claims for the poem, comparable to the division implied by his sub-title which speaks of "the growth and history" of Wordsworth's mind.³ Firstly, Coleridge implies, the poem presents a "history", a fairly straightforward narrative like that evoked by De Quincey, "Of the foundations and the building up / Of a Human Spirit." This part of The Prelude is described in the metaphor of building--a metaphor which is particularly prominent in the early books.⁴

1. 1.33, CPW II, 1082

2. 11.5-11, CPW I, 404. Subsequent references will be to the Sibylline Leaves version.

3. The MS.W sub-title reads: "Lines Composed, for the greater part on the Night, on which he finished the recitation of his Poem (in thirteen Books) concerning the growth and history of his own Mind, Jan. 7, 1807, Cole-orton, near Ashby de la Zouch," CPW I, 403.

4. For a discussion of the significance of this, see Alan Grob, The Philosophic Mind (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1973), pp. 48-49.

Secondly, Coleridge describes a more secret, interior process occurring within the poem which, in the words of the "Intimations Ode," is "deep almost as life."¹ This second process is described in terms of organic growth, and more specifically of organic life. Paradoxically, whereas the first is defined as consisting in what may be told, "to the understanding mind / Revealable", the second is defined as being, literally, untellable, "Thoughts all too deep for words!"² The second process, in fact, has the same status as life itself: present but never, apparently, material, "secret as the soul / Of vernal growth." In the mind, it occurs by "vital breathings," an enigmatic almost tautological phrase, in which "breathings" implies (literally) inspiration (OED 1d), and aspiration (OED 5), as in Wordsworth's own phrase in The Prelude, "this I feel, and make / Breathings for incommunicable powers."³ In Coleridge's description, the "vital breathings" themselves serve to "quicken" thoughts in the heart which are inaccessible to the mind, to verbalization. The division which Coleridge describes is clearly comparable to Wordsworth's description of "a mighty Mind... / That is exalted by an under-presence, / The sense of God, or whatsoe'er is dim / Or vast in its own

1. "Intimations Ode," l. 131, Poems in Two Volumes, p.328, PW IV, 283.

2. Cf. III, 182-85: "This is, in truth, heroic argument, / And genuine prowess; which I wish'd to touch / With hand however weak; but in the main / It lies far hidden from the reach of words."

3. III. 187-88.

being", and perhaps even to Coleridge's own distinction between Reason and Understanding, or the primary and secondary imagination.¹ What is significant for present purposes is the relation of these familiar concepts to the metaphors of power and organic life.

If the first process, then, is revealable to the "understanding," the second describes "Reason" itself. In The Prelude, Reason, or imagination, is precisely not told, but presented in the allegorical vision from Snowdon:

The Power which these
Acknowledge when thus moved, which Nature thus
Thrusts forth upon the senses, is the express
Resemblance, in the fullness of its strength
Made visible, a genuine Counterpart
And Brother of the glorious faculty
Which higher minds bear with them as their own. 2

In the discussion which follows, Wordsworth links this power of imagination to the secret process of life:

No secondary hand can intervene
To fashion this ability: 'tis thine,
The prime and vital principle is thine
In the recesses of thy nature, far
From any reach of outward fellowship,
Else 'tis not thine at all. 3

Imagination as a faculty of mind coalesces with the notion of life to produce the identification of imagination as the "moving soul" of the "long labour" of writing The Prelude.⁴

1. XIII. 69, 71-73; BL, p.167.

2. XIII. 84-90 (my emphasis).

3. XIII. 192-97

4. XIII. 171-72. Cf. Coleridge's description of the imagination as "essentially vital" (BL, p.167).

It is precisely this link between the mysterious process of life, "the soul of vernal growth," and the imagination, the "inner Power" within the mind, which produces "organic form" in the poem.

"To William Wordsworth" emphasizes not only the organicism of The Prelude's method, but also a sympathy with its imaginative unity. "I sate," says Coleridge:

my being blended in one thought
(Thought was it? or aspiration? or resolve?)
Absorbed, yet hanging still upon the sound--1

The moment of arrest, suggested by his "hanging still" upon the sound, goes to the very heart of Wordsworth's imaginative processes.² Coleridge's unreserved praise indicates that, unlike The Excursion which he was to find disappointing, The Prelude fulfils the hopes and claims that he had always made for Wordsworth. As he wrote to Sharp in 1804:

I dare affirm that he will hereafter be admitted as the first & greatest philosophical Poet--the only man who has effected a compleat and constant synthesis of Thought & Feeling and combined them with Poetic Forms, with the music of pleasurable passion and with Imagination or the modifying Power.... 3

"To William Wordsworth" suggests that he considered these claims to be fully borne out by The Prelude. As Pater put it:

-
1. "To William Wordsworth," ll. 109-11, CPW I, 408.
 2. e.g., to the Winander Boy, "while he hung / Listening" (V. 406-07), the 1815 Preface, where Wordsworth picks out the word "Hangs" in PL II. 637 (Prose Works, III, 31).
 3. Griggs, II, 1034.

The entire poem ... "composed on the night after Wordsworth's recitation of a poem on the growth of an individual mind," is, in its high-pitched strain of meditation, and in the combined justice and elevation of its philosophical expression--

"high and passionate thoughts
To their own music chaunted;"

wholly sympathetic with The Prelude which it celebrates.... 1

That sympathy involves the recognition of a relation between the secret spirit of life and the inner power of the mind.

1. Walter Pater, Appreciations, p.90.

ii. Publication: 1850.

Coleridge's name was not to appear on The Prelude's title-page in 1850.¹ Only Ainsworth's declared that "To William Wordsworth" had "lastingly enshrined" the Orphic qualities of Wordsworth's "best and most appropriate legacy."² But the reception of The Prelude was not quite as bleak as Herbert Lindenberger suggests in his influential account of the nineteenth-century's response to the poem.³ Although it is true to say that it fell into comparative neglect for the first fifty years after publication, it could not be deduced from the reviews that this would happen.⁴

It has become almost habitual to suggest that the poem

-
1. Thus the only part of the poem's title which Wordsworth had "fixed upon" was disregarded.
 2. Ainsworth's Magazine, 18 (1850), 558.
 3. Herbert Lindenberger, "The Reception of The Prelude," BNYPL, 64 (1960), 196-208. Lindenberger's account is limited by the fact that he discusses only eleven of the twenty reviews that appeared.
 4. Interest in The Prelude was revived by Emile Legouis' La Jeunesse de William Wordsworth (Paris, 1896), A.C. Bradley's essay on Wordsworth in his Oxford Lectures on Poetry (London: Macmillan, 1909) (first given in lecture form in 1903), and by de Selincourt's publication of the 1805 Prelude (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926).

was published in 1850 "with remarkably little stir."¹ It is pointed out that the Edinburgh, Blackwoods, and the Quarterly, failed to review it at all. But then the Edinburgh had rarely taken much sympathetic interest in Wordsworth's poetry.² If three journals ignored it, at least twenty journals reviewed it--which in normal circumstances would indicate a considerable amount of interest in a poem. Its main disadvantage was in being overshadowed by the publication of In Memoriam in the same year. But the instant success of Tennyson's poem was quite extraordinary, and distorts comparisons.

Many of the reviews were enthusiastic and gave the poem the highest praise. The Critic, for instance, having explained The Prelude's function as a preface to the unwritten Recluse, exclaims:

But what a preface! It consists of no less than fourteen books! In itself, and of itself, a grand work: it needs nothing to perfect it. It is a whole by itself. It is much more of an independent poem than The Excursion, for it has a definite purpose--a distinct plan--a beginning, a middle, and an end; which cannot be said of the

1. William Wordsworth: A Critical Anthology, ed. Graham McMaster (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), p.171. Much the same sentiment is to be found in another anthology of Prelude criticism, Wordsworth: "The Prelude", ed. W.J. Harvey and Richard Gravil (London: Macmillan, 1972). In the Introduction, the editors comment that the first reviewers "did not, any more than did the great Victorians, consider it as a poem, in any way remarkable as poetry" (p.14). Parrish comments that the reviews were "polite but not enthusiastic" (CW II, vii).

2. Notably, of course, in Jeffrey's famous review of The Excursion in the Edinburgh, 24 (1814), 1-30.

other.... As a whole, The Prelude may be esteemed his greatest work, abounding in passages as fine or finer than anything of his that the world has hitherto enjoyed. 1

Similar estimations are to be found in many of the reviews.² But a further implication is not simply that the poem was neglected upon appearance, but unappreciated. Lindenberger comments:

Obviously Wordsworth's Victorian critics remained unaware of those aspects of The Prelude which we today recognize as unique. Nowhere do we find a discussion of the significance of Wordsworth's

-
1. The Critic: The London Literary Journal, NS 9 (15 August 1850), 402.
 2. The Gentleman's Magazine, remarking that it is "seldom that we have the privilege of noticing so masterly a work as this poem," continues: "we rejoice to welcome it, while we regret that the greeting and applause with which it has been universally hailed, can no longer soothe and strengthen the soul of the great regenerator of English poetry--William Wordsworth" (NS 34 (1850), 468); Fraser's speaks of the "unsurpassable grandeur" of much of the poetry, and of "its sustained interest and great, we had almost said unequalled, beauty" (42 (1850), 129); the British Quarterly considers the poem to have "a place among the most remarkable poems in our language" (12 (1850), 579); the Dublin University Magazine concludes its notice with the remark that "it will elevate even the fame of Wordsworth. Greater praise than this we cannot bestow" (36 (1850), 337); the Prospective Review ends with the declaration that the poem "has far transcended our expectations, and greatly raised the poetical rank of Wordsworth in our estimation. It reveals...a continuous power and richness of expression... which we hardly expected from Wordsworth" (7 (1851), 130); and the Examiner comments that "it evinces a power and soar of imagination unsurpassed in any of his writings" (No.2217 (27 July 1850), p.478). The most elaborate praise is that of the North American Review, which comments that "the author of the Excursion, and of the Ode on the Intimations of Immortality, has added to the mighty edifice of song a turret of exquisite beauty, which rises nearer to the skies than any other of its pinnacles or towers" (73 (1851), 476).

treatment of time and memory... of his concept of the imagination, of the uniqueness of the visionary experiences of the early books. Only one critic of 1850 attempted in any way to describe Wordsworth's method of recapturing the past....¹

But this is perhaps too positivistic an approach. There is no particular reason why the reviewers should be expected to anticipate what are, in fact, the main concerns of Lindenberger's own book.² They do, on the other hand, discuss aspects of the poem which have only recently begun to receive serious critical attention. Many of the reviews, for instance, pick out the Dream of the Arab as the most sublime passage in the poem, "surpassed," as the Gentleman's Magazine puts it, "by none of his later creations," adding, that it "has few rivals in the entire cycle of verse, Christian or heathen."³

Many of the reviewers understand the poem as "a psychological autobiography."⁴ This characterisation is of interest given Coleridge's virtual introduction of the

-
1. "The Reception of The Prelude," p.204.
 2. Herbert Lindenberger, On Wordsworth's "Prelude", (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963).
 3. Gentleman's Magazine, p.464. The Eclectic calls the dream "the noblest of all his blank verse-passages," and compares it to "Kubla Khan," (4th ser., 28 (1850), 558-59), the Prospective Review calls it "the grandest thing in the poem" (p.119); the Athenaeum, while giving it great prominence, is more bemused by what it calls "a strange visionary speculation" (No. 1188 (1850), p.806).
 4. The Literary Gazette, No. 1750 (1850), p.513; The Prospective Review, p.108; The North American Review, p.485.

word "psychological" into the English language. In his Treatise on Method (1818), Coleridge comments that Shakespeare pursued both the psychological and poetical method at once, and adds in a note:

We beg pardon for the use of this insolens verbum; but it is one of which our language stands in great need. We have no single term to express the Philosophy of the Human Mind: and what is worse, the Principles of that Philosophy are commonly called Meta-physical, a word of very different meaning. 1

Many of the reviewers sense that The Prelude is about "the Philosophy of the Human Mind," and this turns out to be one of the main reasons for criticizing it. Graham's, for instance, suggests that the poem contains "a more constant use of analysis and reflection, and a greater substitution of the metaphysical for the poetic process, than poetry is willing to admit."² Thus disapproval of the poem is based on the fact that it has achieved what Coleridge had always prophesied for The Recluse:

the first & finest philosophical Poem, if only it be (as it undoubtedly will be) a Faithful Transcript of his own most august & innocent Life, of his own habitual Feelings & Modes of seeing and hearing. 3

In 1879, Arnold was to draw a distinction between Wordsworth's poetry and his philosophy, and to suggest that the philosophy

-
1. S.T. Coleridge's Treatise on Method as published in The Encyclopaedia Metropolitana, ed. Alice D. Snyder (London: Constable, 1934), p.32. OED records the first use in this sense in 1812.
 2. Graham's Magazine, 37 (1850), 323.
 3. 15 January 1804, Griggs, II, 1034.

was an illusion.¹ The Prelude's neglect in this period may be at least partly because it was recognised as a philosophical poem.

Arnold's position is in fact anticipated by some of the 1850 reviewers. If the Graham's review, for instance, is generally disapproving of what it sees as the poem's lack of inspiration and ecstasy, it suggests that as psychology, the poem has the highest value:

We believe that few metaphysicians ever scanned their consciousness with more intensity of vision, than Wordsworth was wont to direct upon his; and in the present poem he has subtly noted, and firmly expressed, many new psychological laws and processes. The whole subject of the development of the mind's creative faculties, and the vital laws of mental growth and production, has been but little touched by professional metaphysicians; and we believe "The Prelude" conveys more real available knowledge of the facts and laws of man's internal constitution, than can be found in Hume or Kant. 2

Thus while accepting an organic theory of mental growth, the reviewer finds it too philosophical a subject for poetry. This is generally the position taken by the less enthusiastic reviews. The Westminster, for instance, remarks that Wordsworth presents "truth often as a clear-headed, earnest-hearted metaphysician would, rather than as a poet."³ Similarly, the Spectator regrets the

1. Matthew Arnold, Preface to Poems of Wordsworth (London, 1879), p.xix.

2. Graham's Magazine, p.323.

3. The Westminster and Foreign Quarterly Review, 54 (1850), 272. The review as a whole is unfavourable, although the dour sentiments of the reviewer come across more strongly. "The gems of the volume," he remarks, "will be the passages descriptive of obedience to duty"; he concludes with three extracts from the poem which "embody Wordsworth's faith in the triumph of right" (pp. 272, 277).

"metaphysico-critical disquisitions."¹

But the most interesting reviews take these seriously, and describe a poem in which the whole is organized by an inner principle of mind, comparable to De Quincey's and Coleridge's descriptions. The Examiner, for instance, instead of wishing for a more conventional style of autobiography, as some reviewers do, enthusiastically characterizes the poem as guided throughout by the philosophical mind:

A soaring, speculative imagination, and an impetuous, resistless self-will, were his distinguishing characteristics. From first to last he concentrated himself within himself; brooding over his own fancies and imaginations to the comparative disregard of the incidents and impressions which suggested them.... We behold the result. He lives alone in a world of mountains, streams, and atmospheric phenomena, dealing with moral abstractions, and rarely encountered by even shadowy spectres of beings outwardly resembling himself. There is measureless grandeur and power in his moral speculations. There is intense reality in his pictures of external nature. But though his human characters are presented with great skill of metaphysical analysis, they have rarely life or animation. He is always the prominent, often the exclusive, object of his own song. 2

The Eclectic describes the poem as giving "the inner current of life itself."³ The reviewer links this to the function of memory in the organization of the poem, and stresses that the poem's object is not to recount a narrative, but to

-
1. The Spectator, 23 (1850), 738. Cf. Macaulay's complaints about The Prelude's "old crazy mystical metaphysics" (Life and Letters, ed. G.O. Trevelyan (London, 1876), II, 279).
 2. The Examiner, p.478.
 3. The Eclectic Review, p.551.

trace the growth of a poet's mind.¹ Accordingly, the poem itself is structured exclusively in terms of this mind, and "the world is but the footpath to his imagination":

This is a metaphysical more than a biographical purpose. He leads us accordingly, not so much from incident to incident, as from thought to thought, along the salient points of his mental history. Skiddaw, Cambridge, Paris, London, the Alps, are but milestones marking his progress onwards, from the measured turbulence of his youth, to the calm 'philosophic mind' brought him by the 'years' of his manhood. No object, however august, is here described solely for its intrinsic charms, or made awkwardly to outstand from the main current of the story. Were Ossa an excrescence, he would treat it as if it were a wart--were a wart a point of interest, he would dilate on it as if it were an Ossa. His strong personal feeling bends in all that is needful to his purpose, and rejects all that is extraneous. 2

The passage is worth quoting at length because it shows very clearly an understanding of the poem's peculiar nature, that its true subject is "the life within," and that this is the secret principle which determines its organization. Everything, says the reviewer, is transformed by the poet's mind: "The gauzy veil of imagination was between him and the universe, and swayed gracefully to the outline of all things."³

The other review comparable in quality to the Eclectic is an article of forty one pages in the Christian Remembrancer, which shows many signs of a very careful reading of the poem.⁴ This review also stresses the extent of the internalised

1. The Eclectic Review, p.555.

2. The Eclectic Review, pp. 555-56.

3. The Eclectic Review, p.559.

4. The Christian Remembrancer, NS 20 (1850), 332-73.

nature of the poem, and its preoccupation with mental power:

It is a great work by the only hand capable of its fitting execution--the history of a poet's mind,--and as such a symbol of our own times of restless search into the secret things of nature, and the hidden mysterious sources of power.... What few events are given, drop out incidently to give point to some development of powers or change of feeling. 1

The reviewer draws attention to a connection between the inner life of the poet and the inner processes and secret life of nature:

there was a mysterious union between those noble forms of nature and his inmost soul, which held him to them with something of a mother's embrace. They were the very sources of his power.... 2

This insight is developed further into a way of reading the whole poem through an account of the function of memory in a "restless search" through the "dim obscurities of the past" for the secret of his own power and identity.³ This is

1. The Christian Remembrancer, pp. 334, 336.

2. The Christian Remembrancer, p.337. Nature's maternal embrace suggests the thesis of Richard J. Onorato's The Character of the Poet: Wordsworth in "The Prelude," (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), already anticipated by Erasmus Darwin in Zoonomia; or, The Laws of Organic Life (London, 1794-96), I, 145-46: "All these various kinds of pleasure at length become associated with the form of the mother's breast.... And hence at our maturer years, when any object of vision is presented to us, which by its waving or spiral lines bears any similitude to the form of the female bosom, whether it be found in a landscape with soft gradations of rising and descending surface, or in the forms of some antique vases, or in other works of the pencil or the chissel, we feel a general glow of delight, which seems to influence all our senses.... And thus we find, according to the ingenious idea of Hogarth, that the waving lines of beauty were originally taken from the temple of Venus."

3. The Christian Remembrancer, p.338.

linked to a clear statement of the nature of Wordsworth's metaphysical intuitions, and their uncertain relation to adult consciousness:

He did not slight observation, but it was in self-study that he looked for power to unravel the mysteries and perplexities of our being. The past was with him the golden period, the source of light and inspiration. He strove to establish a chain between the present moment of thought and the remotest sensation that memory or fancy would take him back to; and so vivid and unearthly did that light shine upon him, that to him it could not be derived from the common day of this world, but was rather the reflection of past glory and intelligence revealed in flashes and glimpses by uncertain memory. ¹

The being that asserts itself through these memories becomes the structuring principle of the poem. The reviewer shows quite clearly how the later books, which involve Wordsworth's encounter with an unsympathetic external world, are related to the power of the inner self that has already been located in the poem. The structure of the London episodes, for instance, in Books VII and VIII, is analysed in terms of the overall development of the poet's mind:

in his first sight of London his vision was too bewildered and his heart too much oppressed to form these [internal] pictures. For a time the external scene must prevail over the inner faculty; every thing assumed an equal prominence and refused the fancy's attempts at organization and arrangement. By degrees, however, the superior power overcame these impediments, asserted its supremacy.... ²

-
1. The Christian Remembrancer, p.351.
 2. The Christian Remembrancer, p.353.

The reviewer here shows how the inner faculty of mind organizes and dominates the malleable forms of the external world, and gives, in effect, a description of the structure of The Prelude in miniature.

Thus although The Prelude's reviewers do not give an explicit analysis of the poem in terms of organic form, they are in many ways in agreement with Coleridge and De Quincey that the poem is essentially a philosophical poem, structured according to an inner principle of mind. The poem is seen as a self-analysis concerned with power and identity, in which faculties of mind are linked to the corresponding inner processes of nature. As subject of the poem, Wordsworth is also his own object, fusing the heterogenous elements of outer life into an inner harmony. In short, reviewers were in closer agreement with the opinions of the man to whom the poem is addressed, and who can in many ways be seen to be closely involved with its philosophical principles, than the majority of critics who have discussed the poem since. The separation that Lindenberger detects between the analyses of the 1850 reviewers, and "those aspects of The Prelude which we today recognize as unique," is not necessarily a matter for self-congratulation.

iii. After 1850.

If The Prelude did not die when it was brought to the surface, it was more or less sent back to the depths to sleep undisturbed. It cannot have been helped by the change of mood signalled by Arnold's 1853 Preface.¹ This change of mood can be related to the ever increasing dominance of empiricism during the course of the nineteenth century - the very philosophy to which both Wordsworth and Coleridge were opposed. Clough's comments of 1869 make the difference quite clear:

What is meant when people complain of him as mawkish, is a different matter. It is, I believe, that instead of looking directly at an object, and considering it as a thing in itself, and allowing it to operate upon him as a fact in itself, he takes the sentiment produced by it in his own mind, as the thing, as the important and really real fact. The real things cease to be real; the world no longer exists; all that exists is the feeling, somehow generated in the poet's sensibility. 2

Clough here describes exactly Wordsworth's transmutation of the exterior world by an inner power of the mind. Whereas reviewers of 1850 saw this as Wordsworth's strength, for Clough it is his weakness. His assumption that there is no philosophical problem involved, that we can know things in themselves, and know "the really real fact," as an assumption of common sense, is also implicit in Arnold's

1. Matthew Arnold, Poems. A New Edition (London, 1853).

2. A.H. Clough, "Lecture on the Poetry of Wordsworth," Poems and Prose Remains (London, 1869), I, 319.

desire to look at the object in itself. In an intellectual atmosphere of this kind, when poets were being encouraged to write of noble actions, it is not surprising that such an inward, self-reflective poem as The Prelude found little favour.

The philosophical differences implied in Clough's remark are in many ways already contained within Wordsworth's poetry. As R.H. Hutton put it in 1871:

The commonplace modern criticism on Wordsworth is that he is too transcendental. On the other hand the criticism with which he was first assailed, which Coleridge indignantly repelled... was that he was ridiculously simple, that he made an unintelligible fuss about common feelings and common things. 1

It is generally agreed among critics that Wordsworth's poetry involves a shift from the "simple" to the transcendental. Thus Grob, for instance, argues that The Prelude itself, in its expansion from 1799 to 1805, traces a movement away from a sensationalist or empiricist position towards an idealist or transcendental one.² In broad terms the description is undoubtedly correct, but Grob's attempt to make the two polarities in Wordsworth's work

-
1. R.H. Hutton, "Wordsworth and His Genius," Essays, Theological and Literary (London, 1871), II, 101.
 2. Grob himself, however, is heavily committed to the former. He writes of the poetry of 1802, for instance, that "as we observe this desperate rear-guard action carried on by Wordsworth in the service of naturalism, we also find significant anticipations of the beliefs to which he would finally submit" (p.232).

absolutes, divided only by an interval of time, overrides the complexities of a poetry which can rarely be reduced to a simple statement of one position or the other. The shift also has to be considered in relation to a permanent state of flux and reflux characteristic of Wordsworth's thought and sensibility. For Pater, the movement within the terms of this dualism comes to represent Wordsworth's special power:

the network of man and nature was seen to be pervaded by a common, universal life: a new, bold thought lifted him above the furrow, above the green turf of the Westmoreland churchyard, to a world altogether different in its vagueness and vastness, and the narrow glen was full of the brooding power of one universal spirit. ¹

Pater's appreciation of Wordsworth focusses on this fluidity, which he presents neither as explicable by chronological change, nor as a bathetic alternation from the lowly to the sublime, but as a restlessness which constitutes the essence of the poetry itself.

Wordsworth's speculative boldness, "the sudden passage from lowly thoughts and places to the majestic forms of philosophical imagination," is a difficult quality to pin down, or even to come to terms with.² Criticism, in fact, has been inclined to endorse the polarities rather than the flux between them. As Paul Sheats and others have pointed out, Wordsworth criticism has divided according to

1. Pater, Appreciations, p.55.

2. Pater, Appreciations, p.56.

the antitheses within the poetry itself.¹ The empiricist strain has tended to be associated with British criticism, the idealist with American.² The first follows a line which stems from Arnold, the second from Bradley. This division within Wordsworth criticism has been particularly significant for The Prelude, the text par excellence for criticism orientated towards the idealist Wordsworth. British critics have tended to prefer the recently published two-part Prelude, which, as Grob argues, is predominately empiricist in tone.³

Thus Arnold dismisses the philosophical element in Wordsworth in favour of the poetry alone, in particular for those poems which give a sense of "the extraordinary power with which Wordsworth feels the joy offered to us in nature ... and renders it so as to make us share it."⁴ Arnold's Wordsworth appears at a time, when, as he puts it, Coleridge's influence has waned, "and Wordsworth can no longer draw succour from this ally."⁵ The Prelude becomes associated with Wordsworth's narrowness, his moral defects, which Leslie Stephen describes as "that curious diffidence (he assures us that it was 'diffidence') which induced him

-
1. Paul D. Sheats, The Making of Wordsworth's Poetry, 1785-1798 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), pp. 205-06.
 2. Perhaps the strong German influence on American universities has been a significant factor here.
 3. Grob, The Philosophic Mind, pp. 46-73.
 4. Arnold, Preface to Poems of Wordsworth, p. xxi.
 5. Arnold, Preface to Poems of Wordsworth, p. vi.

to write many thousand lines of blank verse entirely about himself."¹

In the years since then, of course, criticism of The Prelude has become much more sympathetic, but it remains significant that criticism in England has concentrated on the naturalist Wordsworth, the poet of community and relationship, and of human emotions.² Studies in this tradition have shown an aspect of Wordsworth not particularly prominent in The Prelude. There has, to date, been no full length study of the poem by an English critic. But a representative discussion of the poem from this position is to be found in John Jones' influential work, The Egotistical Sublime.³ Jones study is important insofar as it represents the most serious attack in a work of modern criticism upon the structure of 1805, and at the same time the first championing of the "rival" claims of 1799. Jones denies 1805 epic, or indeed any other, conception, characterizing it as an "inert pile" of "distinct incidents," strung along on a serviceable "autobiographical thread."⁴ Any claims that the poem might have organic form are dismissed out of hand:

-
1. Leslie Stephen. "Wordsworth's Ethics," Hours in a Library 3rd ser., (London, 1879), pp. 228-29.
 2. The latest critical work in this tradition, as its title indicates, is John Beer's Wordsworth and the Human Heart (London: Macmillan, 1978).
 3. John Jones, The Egotistical Sublime (London: Chatto and Windus, 1954).
 4. Jones, Egotistical Sublime, p. 125.

The Prelude was not conceived as a poem of epic growth and movement.... Attentive reading ... reveals how an alien consecutiveness, both in chronology and logic, has been imposed upon it-- 1

1799 remains "in the high tradition of solitude and relationship," expounding the ministry of nature and "the mind's reciprocal action in human sympathy and appetite."² Jones's touchstone is the Discharged Soldier, whom he compares to the shepherd encountered in the mist in 1805 Book VIII. He finds that the description has become "rosily transcendental; the verse assumes the hazy, the golden, the remote, which is the conventional dress of otherness." The final optimism of 1805 is "a determined end towards which the poem must be manipulated, like the plot of a bad play."³ The alliance between man and nature found in the Pedlar has been lost; Wordsworth, Jones suggests, "reacts to this ... by reducing the compass of The Prelude," and places greater emphasis on surface narrative. He speaks of the "limiting of imaginative scope" in the treatment of London and the French Revolution, all of which "have nothing but the sequence of events between themselves and complete destitution."⁴ This decline is linked inseparably to the movement towards transcendentalism; for Jones, "the passages from the 1798-9 Prelude stand out in brilliant contrast to

1. Jones, Egotistical Sublime, p.125.

2. Jones, Egotistical Sublime, p.125.

3. Jones, Egotistical Sublime, pp. 127, 129.

4. Jones, Egotistical Sublime, pp. 131, 132.

their drab surroundings in the later books."¹ This validation of the Pedlar and the poetry of 1798 against the full-length Prelude has remained influential in English criticism of Wordsworth.²

Although a much more sympathetic critic of The Prelude, Herbert Lindenberger also follows Arnold in his dismissal of any philosophic import in Wordsworth's poetry.³ The result of this is to show, as Robert Langbaum puts it, "through an analysis of Wordsworth's language how he gives us poetry through a pretext of giving us thought."⁴ Lindenberger's discussion of what he calls the "rhetoric of inter-action" remains the outstanding analysis of the fluidity of the movement between subject and object in Wordsworth's syntax. His views of the poem's structure however, are curiously reductive and tend to deny any overall movement. The predominating structure is simply one of repetition: "there is no real progression in The Prelude, but

1. Jones, Egotistical Sublime, p.126. It is not clear whether Jones knew that the 1798-99 Prelude existed as a separate poem.

2. Jones's view is supported, for instance, by Jonathan Wordsworth in The Music of Humanity, where imagination is dismissed on the grounds of its transcendentalism: "As a replacement for the One Life the Imagination fails.... it is invested with some not very credible transcendental significance, but cannot sustain the grandiose claims which Wordsworth is bound to make for it--bound, because only a general philosophical system could justify the epic pretensions of his autobiography" (p. 214).

3. Lindenberger, On Wordsworth's "Prelude".

4. Robert Langbaum, "Magnifying Wordsworth," ELH, 33 (1966), 272.

only restatements of the poet's efforts to transcend the confines of the temporal order."¹ The poem, as a result, is divided up into "visionary" and "non-visionary" books; any sense we have, as readers, of progression is an illusion.² Committed to a static, non-evolutionary view of the poem, it is scarcely surprising that Lindenberger concludes by wondering that the poem did not disintegrate into a series of "inspired fragments." His suggestion that it did not because Wordsworth was able to draw on "inspiration and the conscious will" is not altogether convincing.³

A more serious attempt to describe the structure of The Prelude is that of M.H. Abrams, whose position might be described as Arnold's, with some of the philosophy reinstated.⁴ Abrams dismisses any consideration of chronological or biographical structure in the poem, and attempts to analyse

1. Lindenberger, On Wordsworth's "Prelude", p.188. Lindenberger sees the imagination in linguistic but not structural terms (p.91). He suggests that there are three separate principles of organization in the poem: the chronology of the autobiography, "the threefold pattern of early vision, loss, and restoration," and repetition (pp. 190-91).
2. "As each spot of time takes the form of a struggle toward definition, so the poem as a whole reveals a struggle to be unified and complete; and as the rhetoric with which the poet struggles to define the inexpressible often gives the reader the illusion that his definitions are complete, so these repeated definitions throughout the poem convince the reader that he has completed a larger experience" (p.191).
3. Lindenberger, On Wordsworth's "Prelude", p. 112.
4. M.H. Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism. Abrams implicitly aligns himself with critics such as Arnold, Stephen, and Morley on p. 134.

it in terms of the teleological structure of organic form which he had described in The Mirror and the Lamp:

The poem has suffered because we know so much about the process of composition between 1798 and 1805.... A work is to be judged, however, as a finished and free-standing product; and in The Prelude as it emerged after six years of working and reworking, the major alterations and dislocations of the events of Wordsworth's life are imposed deliberately, in order that the design inherent in that life, which has become apparent only to his mature awareness, may stand revealed as a principle which was invisibly operative from the beginning. A supervising idea, in other words, controls Wordsworth's account and shapes it into a structure....¹

The supervising idea, however, turns out to be an event--the French Revolution.² It quickly becomes clear that although Abrams is trying to analyse the poem in terms of organic form, the effect of his analysis is to neglect the poem as an inner history of mind. What Abrams describes, in fact, is The Recluse proper.³ Thus, rather than seeing The Prelude in

1. Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism, p.76. His description of organic form in The Mirror and the Lamp is discussed in Chapter 2.
2. "The spaciousness of his chosen form allows Wordsworth to introduce some of the clutter and contingency of ordinary experience. In accordance with his controlling idea, however, he selects for extended treatment only those of his actions and experiences which are significant for his evolution toward an inherent end, and organizes his life around an event which he regards as the spiritual crisis not of himself only, but of his generation: that shattering of the fierce loyalties and inordinate hopes for mankind which the liberal English--and European--intellectuals had invested in the French Revolution (Natural Supernaturalism, p.77).
3. Descriptions of the plan of The Recluse are given in the Oxford Prelude pp. xxxiii-xl ("The Prelude" and "The Recluse"), and PW V, 363-72 ("The Recluse and the genesis of The Excursion"). A much fuller account is given by John Finch in his "Wordsworth, Coleridge, and 'The Recluse,' 1798-1814," Diss. Cornell University, 1964. For a discussion of The Recluse from the perspective of Home at Grasmere, see Jonathan Wordsworth, "On Man, on Nature, and on Human Life," RES, N3 31, No.121 (1980), 17-29.

the context of its own growth or development during the years 1798-1805, Abrams takes the Prospectus to The Recluse as his "indispensible guide"; it is, he says, the "one explicit and detailed exposition" of Wordsworth's grand structural scheme.¹ But neither of these two forms of explanation are produced from The Prelude itself.

Abrams rightly declares that Wordsworth's confidence in the ability of the reader to see the "system" of The Recluse for himself is probably misplaced.² But in his own description of The Prelude's "coherent understructure of ideas and ... sustained evolution of images," he goes back not only to the Prospectus, but also to The Pedlar, which he calls the first sketch of the controlling idea of The Prelude.³ Even in the best section of his book, "Wordsworth's Prelude and the Crisis Autobiography," it becomes clear that, in interpreting the Prelude according to the Pedlar and the Prospectus, didactic and expository schemes have been invoked to describe a very different poem. If a poem has organic form, that form is likely to come from within rather than from without. In Abrams' account, what we miss is any sense of Wordsworth's own "precarious mental journey."⁴ The reason for this, perhaps, is that Abrams' analysis is put forward in opposition to the

1. Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism, p.20.

2. Preface to The Excursion (1814), PW V, p.2.

3. Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism, p.281.

4. Geoffrey H. Hartman, Wordsworth's Poetry 1787-1814 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), p.65.

influential accounts of David Ferry and Geoffrey Hartman which emphasize, almost exclusively, the contradictory, "apocalyptic" inner imagination of the poet. As Lindenberger points out in a review of 1972:

In contrast to Hartman and Ferry, Mr. Abrams' Wordsworth is able to balance his affirmations neatly against his despair and able to convince us sufficiently by his conscious pronouncements that we need not feel tempted to look under the surface for evidences of doubt. 1

Abrams is engaging with nothing less than the whole Bradleian strain of Wordsworth criticism. Like Arnold, he is concerned to present Wordsworth as a moral teacher, translating for his and our age "the values embodied in Milton's religious epic." He concludes dourly:

If such affirmations strike a contemporary ear as deluded or outworn, that may be the index of their relevance to an age of profounder dereliction and dismay than Shelley and Wordsworth knew. 2

Abrams, therefore, in attacking the Bradleian position, is as a consequence prevented from doing real justice to The Prelude, for he cannot allow it to be a poem about, and dominated by, the inner consciousness. He cannot allow a Wordsworth who, as R.H. Hutton puts it, "dives into himself between his respirations, that he may exclude for a little while the tyranny of the senses"³

-
1. Herbert Lindenberger, [Review of Natural Supernaturalism], ELN, 10 (1972), 153-54.
 2. Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism, p. 462.
 3. R.H. Hutton, Essays, Theological and Literary, II, 127.

Bradley's Wordsworth is a deliberate counter to Arnold's poet of natural joy. He emphasizes what he calls "a certain hostility to 'sense,'" a poetry which is paradoxically "the expression through sense of something beyond sense." Bradley asserts for the first time the centrality of The Prelude to Wordsworth's poetry. Those parts of the poem which he emphasizes almost exclusively verge on the transcendental: they are the moments of "visionary dreariness," the "spots of time" and other comparable episodes. The passages which he isolates for comment could all be described in his famous phrase: "Everything here is natural, but everything is apocalyptic."¹ There has, perhaps, been no single essay more influential for criticism of The Prelude. But its effect has been to encourage a fragmentary reading of the poem, focussing attention on the "spots of time," so that the poem is read according to a logic which brings them together at the expense of any overall structure.² Bradley himself did not consider the poem to have a sustained structure, precisely because, as he put it, it is "so entirely

1. A.C. Bradley, "Wordsworth," Oxford Lectures on Poetry, pp. 131, 132, 134.

2. The most extreme form of the compression of The Prelude into its "spots of time" is Jonathan Bishop's "Wordsworth and the 'Spots of Time,'" ELH, 26 (1959), 45-65. The phrase "spots of time" was used by Wordsworth to describe the Gibbet Mast episode and the Waiting for the Horses in 1805 XI. I follow Bishop's suggestion that the phrase can be usefully be applied to all comparable visionary moments in The Prelude.

'interior'."¹

His modern successor is undoubtedly Geoffrey Hartman, who denies that Wordsworth is a systematic thinker, and suggests that his thinking is rather "of the existential or phenomenological kind, which starts with objects not as they are but as they appear to a mind fruitfully perplexed by their differing modes of appearance, and which does not try to reduce these to a single standard."² Hartman attempts, as he says, to produce a new interpretation of Wordsworth's "consciousness of consciousness," together with an interpretation of the structure of The Prelude "as it centers on this."³ The Prelude, however, is rarely about consciousness of consciousness directly; it is more concerned with a discovery of consciousness through its organization of the phenomenal world. An interpretation of the structure of The Prelude "as it centers" on the "consciousness of consciousness" will in fact have to trace a different structure to the explicit structure of the poem. This is in fact what happens; the basic phenomenological

-
1. Bradley, "The Long Poem in Wordsworth's Age," Oxford Lectures on Poetry, p.202. What the essay on Wordsworth took away from Arnold, this essay, somewhat oddly, gives back. Bradley considers the "inward tendency" of The Prelude wholly inappropriate in a long poem. It cannot be said to be "great as a whole" (p.181), it does not "produce the...impression of a massive, building, organising 'architectonic' power of imagination" (p. 202)--a description which itself reproduces Wordsworth's organicist and Gothic metaphors for poetic form. Hutton, who in many ways anticipates Bradley, also considers that there is "no structural power in Wordsworth's mind" (Essays, Theological and Literary, II, 125).
 2. Hartman, Wordsworth's Poetry, pp. 389-90.
 3. Hartman, Wordsworth's Poetry, p. 391.

position which Hartman himself assumes has as an inevitable effect the elision of any analysis of the poem's formal structure, and the rewriting of the poem according to the progression of an increasing self-consciousness.¹

Phenomenological criticism is not, as some reviewers of Hartman's book have assumed, a quasi-psychoanalytical form of criticism.² It does not try to get at a subject behind a work, but constructs one in and through it. Thus the structures of consciousness of which Hartman writes are based simply on the evidence of the poems. But while Hartman does avoid the psychobiographical approach of critics such as Bateson and Onorato, it is perhaps too self-effacing to claim, as he does, that he tries "to describe 'things' strictly as they appeared to the

1. Thomas Weiskel, on the other hand, argues that "the phenomenologists are firmly grounded in the peculiar character of Romantic discourse. Wordsworth himself read his own poems in this way, as Albert Wlecke has shown" (The Romantic Sublime (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), p.56. Wlecke cites a letter from Wordsworth to Lady Beaumont of 21 May 1807 as an indication that Wordsworth regarded his poems "as essentially a description of a progression of conscious states" (Albert O. Wlecke, Wordsworth and the Sublime (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), p.15, citing MY I, 148-49.) A useful exposition and critique of phenomenological criticism is given in J. Hillis Miller's "The Literary Criticism of Georges Poulet," MLN, 78 (1963), 471-88, and, more critically, "Geneva or Paris? The Recent Work of Georges Poulet," UTQ, 39 (1970), 212-28.
2. See, for instance, Onorato, The Character of the Poet, pp. 412-17, or Jonathan Wordsworth, "The Climbing of Snowdon," Bicentenary Studies, p. 469.

poet."¹ For the phenomenological position, like any critical position, has its own philosophical assumptions.² In particular, it gives priority to the consciousness of the poet, and tends, in critical readings, to produce and valorize the totality of a moment of pure self-consciousness. This, in effect, is Hartman's definition of imagination: "Imagination is consciousness of self at its highest pitch."³ His thesis is that Wordsworth's poetry consists of a drama in which Wordsworth refuses the imagination. "An unresolved opposition," says Hartman, "between Imagination and Nature prevents him from becoming a visionary poet."⁴ Hartman shows how Wordsworth is led by Nature to "the borders of vision," but always remains a "limitour," "licensed to haunt only the borders of the country from which imagination comes and to which it seeks to return."⁵ For The Prelude, the effect of this is quite simply that whereas Wordsworth claims that imagination can be naturalised, "Wordsworth's

-
1. F.W. Bateson, Wordsworth: A Re-interpretation (London: Longmans, 1954, 2nd. ed. 1956); Onorato, The Character of the Poet; Hartman, On Wordsworth's Poetry, p. xii. Jeffrey Mehlman's review of Onorato, WC 4 (1973), 206-08, gives a useful critique of Onorato's psychobiographical method, suggesting that the search for a secret truth that can be revealed as latent beneath the poetry (the lost mother in Onorato's thesis) is a serious misinterpretation of Freudian theory.
 2. Herbert Lindenberger, "On Commentary, Romanticism, and Critical Method: Reflections on Three Recent Books," MLQ, 27 (1966), 216-20, gives a clear account of the assumptions implicit in Hartman's critical position.
 3. Hartman, Wordsworth's Poetry, p.18.
 4. Hartman, Wordsworth's Poetry, p. 39.
 5. Hartman, "Retrospect 1971," Wordsworth's Poetry, (rpt. 1971), p.xv. The "Retrospect" is partly concerned with replying to criticisms of his book. This itself is reviewed by Kenneth Johnson in WC 3 (1972), 149-59, who discusses Hartman's debate with Jonathan Wordsworth in detail pp. 153-56.

own imagination refuses to accept this argument. It rejects the history imposed on it."¹ For Hartman, therefore, there are two structures in The Prelude. The overt structure which ends with the Climbing of Snowdon, and a compositional structure, which ends with the recognition of imagination's autonomy in Book VI, and beyond which the poem does not go.²

Hartman's dialectical reading of Wordsworth's poetry, as the "synthesis of a mind in conflict with itself," is an extremely powerful one and has been enormously influential.³

1. Hartman, Wordsworth's Poetry, p.211.
2. 1805, VI. 525ff, discussed by Hartman in Wordsworth's Poetry pp. 39-67.
3. I have not considered separately here the works of Bloom, Brisman, Ferry or McConnell. Although they contain valuable criticism of The Prelude, they do not necessitate separate consideration here insofar as, in their different ways, they all assume a version of the position set out most clearly in Hartman's Wordsworth's Poetry, and view the structure of The Prelude according to a compositional increase of self-consciousness. Harold Bloom's discussion of The Prelude in The Visionary Company is perhaps the closest to Hartman's position, although he places greater emphasis on the poem as "an autobiographical myth-making" (London: Faber and Faber, 1962; rev.ed. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971), p.143. For a very different reading by Bloom, see his essay "The Internalization of Quest Romance," in The Ringers in the Tower: Studies in Romantic Tradition (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1971), pp. 13-35. Leslie Brisman, in Milton's Poetry of Choice and Its Romantic Heirs (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973), develops the moment of arrest, or self-consciousness, in Wordsworth's poetry into the gap that allows the production of the "revisionary ratio." David Ferry, in The Limits of Mortality (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1959), sees Wordsworth as "ambiguously celebrating a view of nature which accepts its order, its comings and goings, the tranquillity of the non-human natural scene, and at the same time [celebrating] a view of nature which rejects the temporal in favour of the eternal and sees man's search as culminating in seas and mists, not in order, but in oblivion" (p.160). Frank D. McConnell, in The Confessional Imagination: A Reading of Wordsworth's "Prelude" (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), again works within the terms of Hartman's reading, but stresses the mediating function of speech over the "daemonic" element in The Prelude.

One overriding problem which his interpretation raises is the question of what the autonomous imagination actually is. Does imagination exist, almost as an object, as Hartman seems to imply, as a presence and a power which, though imageless, could produce its own form of poetry? An interesting perspective on this question has recently been put forward by Harold Bloom:

I myself have come to think that the principal peculiarity of the imagination is that it does not exist, or to state my thought another way, that people talking about the arts do better when they begin to talk as though the imagination did not exist. Let us reduce to the rocky level, and say, as Hobbes did, that "decaying sense" most certainly does exist. 1

If "decaying sense" takes us closer to Bradley, it is also something which cannot exist in any autonomy. A better way to understand the imagination's role in The Prelude--as opposed to Wordsworth's consciousness alone-- is to refuse it any status as an autonomous presence or power, and to interrogate the structures and functions which pivot on it at various levels.

No critic, then, has yet given a clear account of the way in which The Prelude bears out Coleridge's claim for its organic form. This has been partly because neither of the two main strains of Wordsworth criticism have emphasized the philosophical nature of the poem. Critics such as Beatty, Rader, Beach, Havens, Stallknecht and Potts have explored at length the philosophical and literary

1. Harold Bloom, Figures of Capable Imagination (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), p.114.

context of Wordsworth's poetry. But, although extremely useful, their work has tended to discuss individual sources and influences on the poetry without a great deal of critical discussion and analysis at the same time.¹ Two notable exceptions to this are the works of Piper and Prickett who use philosophical material to develop an interpretation of the poetry. Neither discusses The Prelude's structure in relation to the problem of organic form.² Prickett, however, in an interesting discussion of "To William Wordsworth," comments: "Coleridge seems to have grasped the structure of The Prelude perfectly - and apparently at first hearing. As a critical analysis of The Prelude it has never been improved on."³

-
1. Arthur Beatty, William Wordsworth: His Doctrine and Art in Their Historical Relations (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1922); Melvin Rader, Presiding Ideas in Wordsworth's Poetry (Seattle: University of Washington Publications in Language and Literature, 8:3, 1931; 2nd ed. Wordsworth: A Philosophical Approach (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967)); Joseph Warren Beach, The Concept of Nature in Nineteenth-Century English Poetry (New York: Macmillan, 1936); R.D. Havens, The Mind of a Poet, 2 vols. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1941); Newton P. Stallknecht, Strange Seas of Thought (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1945); A.F. Potts, Wordsworth's Prelude: A Study of Its Literary Form (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1953).
 2. H.W. Piper, The Active Universe (London: Athlone, 1962); Stephen Prickett, Coleridge and Wordsworth: The Poetry of Growth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970).
 3. Prickett, Coleridge and Wordsworth, p.148.

CHAPTER TWO: "To apprehend the absolute":
The Problem of Organic Form.

i. The Poem as Plant.

The best guide to understanding the organic form of The Prelude remains Coleridge's "To William Wordsworth." But Coleridge's poetic analysis cannot be assimilated in any straightforward way to his prose statements about organic form. In "To William Wordsworth," emphasis is placed almost exclusively on the relation of life--"what within the mind / By vital breathings secret as the soul / Of vernal growth, oft quickens in the heart"-- and power--"currents self-determined, as might seem, / Or by some inner Power; of moments awful, / Now in thy inner life, and now abroad, / When power streamed from thee . . .". The concepts of life and power have not been investigated in any historical detail in criticism of the period. This is perhaps the more surprising given the widespread formulation of Wordsworth and Coleridge's pantheism as the philosophy of the "one Life."

In The Mirror and the Lamp, M.H. Abrams gives a definition of organic form which has found widespread acceptance.¹ It is compiled by means of a comparison of different statements which Coleridge made on the subject at different periods, and summarized by W.K. Wimsatt as consisting of the following five principles:

1. Abrams, Mirror and Lamp, pp. 167-77, 218-25.

1. that of the WHOLE, the priority of the whole; without the whole the parts are nothing;
2. that of GROWTH, the manifestation of growth in 'the evolution and extension of the plant';
3. that of ASSIMILATION; the plant converts diverse materials into its own substance;
4. that of INTERNALITY; the plant is the spontaneous source of its own energy; it is not shaped from without;
5. that of INTERDEPENDENCE, between parts and parts, and parts and whole; pull off a leaf and it dies. ¹

Although an admirably clear definition, Abrams' formulation raises a number of problems. The first is indicated by the remark with which Wimsatt concludes his summary: the five "have a close affinity for, or near identity with, a sixth, the favorite Coleridgean concept of the tension and reconciliation of manifold opposites which it is the peculiar power of artistic genius to accomplish."² The problem this raises is that organic form as a concept is not fixed; thus Abrams' compilation from Coleridge will be governed by those aspects of organic form which Abrams considers most important. Secondly, in spite of the clarity of this description, it is not at all clear how it can be used as a means of analysing poetic structure. It seems to make sense as a description, but it provides no methodology for analysing the particular way in which a poem is structured.³ Both these problems

-
1. William W. Wimsatt, "Organic Form: Some Questions about a Metaphor," Organic Form, ed. Rousseau, p.67.
 2. Wimsatt, "Organic Form," pp. 67-68.
 3. This difficulty is raised by Appleyard: "The model is clear enough, but its application to the making of poems leaves unanswered questions. Just how does the poem's form develop itself 'from within'? There is a determinism about the plant's growth from seed to flower to fruit that seems impossible to reconcile with the 'modifying' work of imagination." ("Coleridge and Criticism: I. Critical Theory," Writers and Their Background: S.T. Coleridge, ed. R.L. Brett (London: Bell, 1971), p.132).

are probably effects of the third, which is the stress placed on the metaphor of the plant. In this, Abrams differs from "To William Wordsworth" which stresses not the plant, but life and power. Abrams assumes, it seems, that "organic" must have to do, above all, with plants. Thus, when discussing possible anticipations in England of the theory of organic form, he confines himself largely to the citation of essays--such as Gerard's and Young's--in which a vegetable metaphor is used to describe poetic genius. This assumption is further illustrated by the following observation:

To place passages from Coleridge's biology and his criticism side by side is to reveal at once how many basic concepts have migrated from one province into the other. 1

The narrowness of this approach to organic form is nicely brought out by Wimsatt, who shows that analyses of organicism in a poem in terms of a metaphor of the plant would have to be conducted in terms of three issues:

whether the poem presents biological imagery . . .
whether the process of its growth in the mind
represents the growth of a tree . . . whether the
poem itself, the hypostatized verbal and mental
act, looks in any way like an animal or a
vegetable. 2

He ends, unsurprisingly, with a plea for a looser conception

1. Abrams, Mirror and Lamp, p.170. Abrams cites Alexander Gerard, An Essay on Genius (London, 1774), p.167, and Edward Young, Conjectures on Original Composition (London, 1759), p.199. Cf. Stallknecht, Strange Seas of Thought, p.127, on the relation of Gerard and Young to Boehme. Owen Barfield, What Coleridge Thought, discusses the problem of metaphoricity as it appears in The Mirror and the Lamp, and argues that this is a fundamental misapprehension of Coleridge's thinking. (p.59).

2. Wimsatt, Organic Form, p.69.

of organicism. The alternative description that he gives bears a close resemblance to the critical theory of New Criticism, and reminds us that the concept of organicism itself is subject to growth and change.¹ Thus organicism in any particular period must be studied within its specific historical context.

Abrams' suggestion that we should place passages from Coleridge's biology and his criticism side by side makes two assumptions that assimilate organicism in the nineteenth century to more modern concepts. Firstly, it cannot be assumed that organic theory is a simple transfer of an idea from one discipline to another, particularly where Coleridge is concerned. Any understanding of Coleridge must begin with the fact that for him all knowledge was interrelated. Pater saw this clearly. His essay on Coleridge begins by tracing a historical difference between his own times and Coleridge's:

Modern thought is distinguished from ancient by its cultivation of the "relative" spirit in place of the "absolute." Ancient philosophy sought to arrest every object in an eternal outline, to fix thought in a necessary formula, and the varieties of life in a classification by "kinds," or genera. To the modern spirit nothing is, or can be rightly known, except relatively and under conditions. 2

-
1. For the use of the metaphor of organicism in New Criticism, see Cleanth Brooks, "The Poem as Organism: Modern Critical Procedure," English Institute Annual, 1940 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941), pp. 20-41, and Murray Krieger, The New Apologists for Poetry (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956), pp. 21-22, 74-76, 135-38, 142-46.
 2. Pater, Appreciations, p.65.

It is the difference between a modern empiricism which divides knowledge into separate disciplines, and the older, comprehensive philosophies which attempted to understand all knowledge in terms of an overall system, and certain fixed principles. As Pater put it: "the literary life of Coleridge was a disinterested struggle against the relative spirit. With a strong native bent towards the tracking of all questions, critical or practical, to first principles, he is ever restlessly scheming to 'apprehend the absolute,' to affirm it effectively, to get it acknowledged."¹ For Coleridge, as his plan for the Encyclopaedia Metropolitana indicates, all forms of knowledge were interdependent, leading to the Word, or Law - God himself.² Rather than separate knowledge into unrelated disciplines, his constant desire was to synthesize, to coerce all knowledge into one, so that "all human Knowledge will be Science and Metaphysics the only Science."³ It is unlikely, therefore, that any idea in Coleridge will be simply transferred from one area to another in an arbitrary way. If an idea is transferred, as a metaphor, then it will be to describe, as a metaphor, an analogous idea. This means that the biological metaphor will only describe something that already exists in other than biological terms. The second positivistic assumption

1. Pater, Appreciations, pp. 67-68.

2. S.T. Coleridge's Treatise on Method, ed. Snyder, gives a diagram of the proposed table of contents of the Encyclopaedia, which shows this synthesis very clearly (facing p. 71).

3. Griggs, III, 38.

that Abrams makes is of the status of "biology" itself. His remark assumes that disciplines as constituted in the second half of the twentieth century were the same in 1800. But, according to the OED, the word "biology" did not exist in English before 1819.¹

This is more than simply a terminological problem. For the study of plants, as it was constituted in the period, is of little help. Philip Ritterbush has attempted to trace a history of the organic idea through an analysis of eighteenth century botany.² However botanists were not interested in organicist theory at this period. The most eminent and influential of them was the Swede Carl Linnaeus (1707-78).³ Linnaeus' special interest was the classification of plants; he claimed to have personally examined and classified all known species of plants.⁴ Linnaeus attempted two methods

-
1. The first recorded usage is by Lawrence, whom Coleridge opposed in the Lawrence-Abernethy debate; Lawrence proposed that life was a property of organized matter, Abernethy defended a principle of life apart from mere organization. A good account of the issues at stake is given in Owsei Temkin, "Basic Science, Medicine, and the Romantic Era," Bulletin of the History of Medicine, 37 (1963), 97-129. OED gives the first usage of "biology" in both French and German as 1802.
 2. Philip Ritterbush, "Aesthetics and Objectivity in the Study of Form in the Life Sciences," Organic Form, pp. 26-59.
 3. A more detailed discussion of Linnaeus is given in Ritterbush's Overtures to Biology: The Speculations of Eighteenth-Century Naturalists (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), pp. 109-22.
 4. In March 1801 the Wordsworth's acquired William Withering's Botany, the full title of which is The Arrangement of British Plants according to the latest Improvements of the Linnaean System (4 vols. London, 1796), (Moorman, I, 513-14).

of classification: the first, a "natural" method based on the Aristotelian concept of the "chain of being"; and the second, after the failure of the first, an "artificial" method which took the flower as the essential part, and the sexual characteristics of the flower--such as the number of stamens--as the basis for taxonomy.¹ His disciple in England, Erasmus Darwin, wrote his scientific epic, The Loves of the Plants (1789), as a popularization of the Linnaean system, where it becomes a story of how "Beaux and Beauties croud the gaudy groves, / And woo and win their vegetable Loves."² Ritterbush's account of the "evolution"

1. In Darwin's description: "Linneus has divided the vegetable world into 24 Classes; these classes into about 120 Orders; these Orders contain about 2000 Families, or Genera; and these Families about 20,000 Species; besides the innumerable Varieties, which the accidents of climate, or cultivation have added to these Species.

The Classes are distinguished from each other in this ingenious system, by the number, situation, adhesion, or reciprocal proportion of the males in each flower. The Orders, in many of these Classes, are distinguished by the number, or other circumstances of the females. The Families, or Genera, are characterized by the analogy of all the parts of the flower or fructification" (Preface to The Loves of the Plants, The Botanic Garden, II, London, 1789). For Darwin's relation to Linnaeus see Clive Bush, "Erasmus Darwin, Robert John Thornton, and Linnaeus' Sexual System," ECS, 7 (1974), 295-320. For the "chain of being" in eighteenth century natural philosophy, see Arthur O. Lovejoy, The Great Chain of Being (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1936), pp. 227-41.

2. The Loves of the Plants, I. 9-10. Ritterbush, Overtures to Biology, comments that Darwin "followed typical eighteenth-century habits of mind, notwithstanding his recognition of evolution as the principal process of organic development. An analysis of his meaning will contradict any attempt to ascribe a new 'biological' sensibility to him" (p. 159). For his analysis, see pp. 159-75. Another famous disciple of Linnaeus was Rousseau, who described botany as the study for which he felt he had been born, and commented: "I know no study so well associated to my natural tastes as that of plants: the life I lead these ten years in the country, is scarcely any other than that of a continual herbalist" (The Confessions (London, 1783), II, 43, 7).

of concepts of organic form is forced, after Darwin, to follow Abrams and move to Germany--to Goethe and subsequent philosophers.

Thus a further puzzle materializes when the state of eighteenth century botany is examined. Coleridge always described himself as waging a war against the "mechanical" philosophy of contemporary science. Yet whereas his theory of organicism would imply that he took his alternative from another science, that science, biology, did not exist, while botany was based on the very worst (for Coleridge) aggregative principles. As he put it later in The Friend:

Yet after all that was effected by Linnaeus himself, not to mention the labours of Caesalpinus, Ray, Gesner, Tournefort, and the other heroes who preceded the general adoption of the sexual system, as the basis of artificial arrangement--after all the successive toils and enterprizes of HEDWIG, JUSSIEU, MIRBEL, SMITH, KNIGHT, ELLIS, &c. &c.--what is BOTANY at this present hour? Little more than an enormous nomenclature; a huge catalogue, bien arrangé, yearly and monthly augmented, in various editions, each with its own scheme of technical memory and its own conveniences of reference!
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. 1

Even though this was written in 1818, it is nevertheless significant that Coleridge, in attacking contemporary botany, opposes it to organicism and an inward principle of life. Similarly, Wordsworth, in "A Poet's Epitaph" (1799), opposes the Philosopher--"a fingering slave, / One that would peep

1. The Friend, CC IV, I, 468-69. Cf. Appendix C to The Statesman's Manual (1816), CC VI, 77-78.

and botanize / Upon his mother's grave"--to the poet, with his "impulses of deeper birth."¹ Thus, in spite of its usefulness as a metaphor, the formulation of organicism in terms of the plant is unhelpful on almost every count. It changes the emphasis of Coleridge's description of The Prelude it does not lead to any obvious means or working method of understanding the structure of the poem. The science from which organicism is supposed to have migrated did not exist; and the science which did exist which studied plants was based, in the period in question, on all the principles to which organicism is generally understood to be opposed.

1. "A Poet's Epitaph," ll. 18-20, 47, Lyrical Ballads, pp. 212-13, PW IV, 66-67. Wordsworth's habitual presentation of the city, in terms of Cabinet specimens arbitrarily clustered together, is obviously of a piece with the distrust of the botanist's collecting and classifying zeal (e.g. 1805, III. 651-68). But as Ritterbush points out, such a mentality had long since been attacked by, among others, Swift, Pope, and Goldsmith (Overtures to Biology, pp. 62-63).

ii. "And what if all of animated nature be but organic harps?"

The emphasis on "organic" as almost exclusively concerning plants is not an eighteenth or early nineteenth century one. A major problem in any discussion of organic form derives from the fact that the meaning of organicism itself has varied. Orsini is more correct when he speaks of organic concepts.¹ When the concept changes, so the meaning of "organic" changes too. As Rudolf Eucken has pointed out, the words "mechanic" and "organic" originally meant the same thing.² "Mechanical" is used by Aristotle for inventiveness.³ In English, "machine" could mean a structure of any kind, and could be "applied to the human and animal frame as a combination of several parts," (OED 4c), the illustration for which comes, somewhat disconcertingly, from Wordsworth:

And now I see with eye serene
The very pulse of the machine;
A Being breathing thoughtful breath;
A Traveller betwixt life and death; 4

-
1. Orsini, "The Organic Concepts in Aesthetics."
 2. Rudolf Eucken, Main Currents of Modern Thought (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1912), p.165, cited by Orsini, "The Ancient Roots of a Modern Idea," Organic Form, p.9.
 3. i.e. in the construction of machines (ἡ μηχανική, τῶν μηχανικῶν, Aristotle, 847a 18-19). Cf. Eucken, Main Currents, p.165.
 4. "She Was a Phantom of Delight," ll. 21-24, Poems in Two Volumes, p.23, PW II, 214. De Selincourt notes that Knight compares Hamlet, II. ii. 124, "Thine evermore, most dear lady, whilst this machine is to him," while Dowden points to an interesting parallel in Bartram's Travels (1791): "At the return of the morning, by the powerful influence of light, the pulse of nature becomes more active, and the universal vibration of life insensibly and irresistably moves the wondrous machine" (PW II, 506). Eucken comments, "to speak of organic machines was not at that time [the eighteenth century] regarded as at all unusual" (Main Currents, p.168).

"Organic," on the other hand, originally meant "instrumental," coming from the Greek *ὄργανον*.¹ Dr. Johnson illustrates this by quotation from the description of the devil in Paradise Lost, "with serpent tongue./ Organick," where organic means "serving as an instrument"--because the serpent lacks the ordinary means of speech.² Organic also meant "instrumental" in general, and thus "mechanical" (OED 2b, as Latin *organum*). Secondly, organic meant "pertaining to the organs of the body, consisting of various parts co-operating with each other."³ This is the sense in which the word is predominately

-
1. *ὄργανον* meant instrument of thought, a system of or treatise on logic. As such it was the title of Aristotle's logical writings, while Novum Organum (1620) was the title of Bacon's treatise which expounded a system of method, by which knowledge was to be universalized (for Coleridge's comments on the Novum Organum, see CC VI, 172n). Given Bacon's emphasis on method, it is not surprising that Coleridge also adopts the title; see his letter to Godwin of 4th June, 1803, where he describes the contents of a book to be entitled "Organum verè Organum, or an Instrument of practical Reasoning in the business of real Life," by which, he says in a subsequent letter (10 June), "the Reader is to acquire not only Knowledge, but likewise Power" (Griggs, II, 947, 952). The Organum verè Organum is again a part of the projected magnum opus in 1803 (CN 1646), and reappears as the second Treatise of the (now entitled) Logosophia in September 1815 (Griggs, IV, 589).
 2. PL, IX. 529-30; Johnson, A Dictionary of the English Language (London, 1755).
 3. Bailey, A New Universal Etymological English Dictionary, 1764 ed. Thus the predominant meaning of "organic" remained close to "organ" in the sense of an organ of the body, but also retained the meaning of "instrumental"--both as "instrument" and "serving as a means" (cf. the entries under "Organ" and "Organical" in Benjamin Martin's Lingua Britannica Reformata (London, 1749)); "organic" and "organical" were used interchangeably, as in Johnson and Martin. Coleridge plays on all these interrelated meanings in the various drafts of "The Eolian Harp" (for transcriptions of the drafts, see J.D. Gutteridge, "The Sources, Development and Influence of Coleridge's Conversation Poems 1793-8," Diss. Oxford University, 1975, pp. 283-304).

used at the end of the eighteenth century. The Lyrical Ballads Preface speaks of "organic sensibility." Coleridge speaks of the difference between his and Mrs. Coleridge's "organical constitution," implying a difference of sensibility-- which in turn was considered as having a physical basis.¹ As Barclay pointed out in 1822, the meaning of the word became confused in this period.² It became conflated with the sense of "organized," meaning, first of all, an organized structure, as in Priestley's claim that perception is the result of the "organical structure of the brain," or Beddoes' remark in his review of Saumarez' Dissertation on the Universe in General (1795): "The whole phenomena of society are carried on by two ideas that have nothing in common with

1. Prose Works, I, 126; Griggs, II, 832.

2. John Barclay, An Inquiry into the Opinions, Ancient and Modern, Concerning Life and Organization (Edinburgh, 1822): "The word organization now happening to occur, we have next to inquire, what is the idea which he [Lawrence] means to convey by the term? Of this term he gives two definitions: the one is that it denotes the possessions of organs, or instruments for accomplishing certain purposes; the other is, that it means that peculiar composition which distinguishes living bodies. If we understand either of the two, Mr. Lawrence means by organization an organized structure. But, in accuracy of language, organization is not a structure, nor is a structure organization. Organization is a general expression for the process or processes by which an organized structure is formed . . ." (p.340). Barclay's own conclusion on the subject is a good example of the differences from twentieth-century definitions: "The truth is, organization, in the strict philosophical sense of the word, conveys an idea which is utterly inseparable from that of life being actually present, while the words organism and organized structure do not necessarily convey any such idea . . ." (p.341). Barclay is here using "organism" in OED sense 1; the first citation for sense 3, "An organized body, consisting of mutually connected and dependent parts constituted to share a common life," is dated 1842. Cf. Phil. L., pp. 353-55.

organic matter."¹ On the other hand, because organization itself came to be seen as a characteristic of life, and among some thinkers as the cause of life, "organization" began to carry this implication generally. Given the meaning of "organic" already as "bodily," it was clearly not difficult for it to include the notion of life also.² The biological sense of "organic," meaning living as opposed to non-living matter, is generally regarded as having been formalized by Kant.³ Nevertheless, people tended to use the phrase "organic life" at the turn of the century, to make their meaning clear.⁴

1. Joseph Priestley, Hartley's Theory of the Human Mind (London, 1775), p.xx; Beddoes, Monthly Review 18 (1795), 335. Beddoes' comment is probably an echo of Kant, Critique of Judgement: "Thus in the case of a complete transformation, recently undertaken, of a great people into a state, the word organization has frequently, and with much propriety, been used for the constitution of the legal authorities and even of the entire body politic" (2 vols., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1928, reprinted in one volume, 1952), Part II, p.23. Beddoes translated an extract from The Critique of Judgement in The Monthly Magazine the following year (1 (1796), 265-67).
2. Thus Wordsworth's phrase "organic frame" (MS. 18a, D.C. MS. 16) strongly implies the notion of life, in opposition to death, "This organic frame, / So joyful in its motions soon becomes / Dull to the joy of its own motions dead" (75V), while still retaining the sense of "bodily"; cf. "Tintern Abbey," ll. 44-47, where the life / death opposition is only metaphorical, and the phrase used is "corporeal frame": "Until, the breath of this corporeal frame, / . . . / Almost suspended, we are laid asleep / In Body, and become a living soul..." (Lyrical Ballads, p.114, PW II, 260).
3. The Critique of Judgement (1790), develops the "mechanical" / "organical" opposition. Kant, however, although formalizing the description of the organism, took his notions of life from Blumenbach (see Chapter 6).
4. e.g. Dr. Robert Kinglake (of Bristol, friend of Beddoes and Davy), "On the Nature and Properties of Vital Power," The Medical and Physical Journal, 2 (1799), 130; Erasmus Darwin, Zoonomia; or, The Laws of Organic Life.

The real problem in this period, of which the uncertainties of the meaning of "organic" are but a symptom, was the much debated question of what it was that constituted life.¹

An attempt to understand "organicism," then, comes up against the problem not of plants, but of life itself. This context can be illuminated by two further historical details. Firstly, the first person to make the organic versus mechanical distinction in the way Kant and Coleridge were to use it was Stahl (1660-1734), the German chemist and physician, whose theories of animism were an early reaction against the mechanicism of Descartes' physiology.² Medicine, he argued, was not the study of the body as a system of hydraulics, but the science of life.³ Secondly, the first person who in fact used the word "biology" in English was Thomas Beddoes, the Bristol physician, friend of Coleridge and Wordsworth. In 1799 he wrote of "physiology . . .--or more strictly biology-- by which I mean the doctrine of the living system in all its states . . .".⁴ Both Stahl and Beddoes were physicians. The

-
1. Wordsworth's use of "organic" is interesting during this period. 1799, i. 395-97 seems to mean "bodily": "drinking in / A pure organic pleasure from the lines / Of curling mist", but the use at 1799, ii. 440-41 implies the opposition living / non-living, as in "There is a law severe" (1798): "To unorganic natures I transferred / My own enjoyments" (Not in OED). The phrase "organic power" (Peter Bell MS.2, D.C. MS. 33, 49^v) is discussed in Chapter 8.
 2. Georg Ernst Stahl, Theoria medica vera (Halle, 1708), pp. 14-19.
 3. A good account of Stahl is given by Thomas S. Hall, Ideas of Life and Matter (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), I, 351-66.
 4. Thomas Beddoes, Contributions to Physical and Medical Knowledge, Principally from the West of England, collected by Thomas Beddoes (Bristol, 1799), [Introduction] p.3.

science which was involved with the question of life, and therefore of organicism, in this period was physiology, and it is there that contemporary ideas about organicism must be sought.¹ The problem can in fact be reformulated in terms of the relationship of life to matter. This was the way in which it was approached and discussed in the period; to reformulate it in this way shows that it was a problem intimately related to Coleridge's whole philosophical endeavour from at least 1795, the date of the first drafts of "The Eolian Harp." To understand organicism properly, it is necessary to place it within the context of that philosophical endeavour. Only by analysing its part within the whole can there be any understanding of the relation of organicism to life and to the power of the mind, and of the function of organic form in The Prelude.

-
1. The areas of physiology, and the later biology, overlap. Biology means the science of physical life, and involves morphology, physiology, and the origin and distribution of animals and plants. Physiology is the science of the function and phenomena of living things, both animal and vegetable. The first has come to be more associated with vegetable and animal life, the second more specifically with the human body, and hence medical science. Beddoes' use of the word here, twenty years before its first recorded usage in OED, would only seem to emphasize that biology, as a science, did not exist in this period. If Abrams had spoken of the relation between Coleridge's physiology and his criticism it would, historically, have been more accurate. But of course Coleridge's physiology was inseparable from his metaphysics, so a simple comparison of the two disciplines, without any discussion of the philosophical presuppositions behind them both, would be only marginally more helpful.

iii. Comprehensive Systems.

Speaking of Coleridge after his death, Wordsworth

called him the most wonderful man he had ever known--wonderful for the originality of his mind, and the power he possessed of throwing out in profusion grand central truths from which might be evolved the most comprehensive systems ¹

The desire for a comprehensive system was constant throughout Coleridge's life. His comment at the beginning of A Moral and Political Lecture (1795) shows an aspect of him that was never to change:

The Times are trying: and in order to be prepared against their difficulties, we should have acquired a prompt facility of adverting in all our doubts to some grand and comprehensive Truth. 2

The desire to formulate a comprehensive system was characteristic of the time. Wordsworth's own--the projected and unfinished Recluse--was more or less devised by Coleridge in 1798 at Alfoxden and falls into the same pattern. The extent to which the philosopher's system was to embrace all modes of knowledge, and was to provide a "key" or "grand central truth" for understanding is difficult for us now to conceptualise. Coleridge's description of a plan of

-
1. "On the Death of Coleridge," Grosart, III, 469.
 2. CC I, 5-6. Cf. The Friend (1818): "The grand problem, the solution of which forms, according to Plato, the final object and distinctive character of philosophy, is this: for all that exists conditionally . . . to find a ground that is unconditional and absolute, and thereby to reduce the aggregate of human knowledge to a system" (CC IV, I, 461).

work for an epic poem, or his detailed schemes for The Recluse, give an idea of the way in which metaphysics, natural philosophy and moral philosophy were combined without any sense of the separation of disciplines that occurred in the nineteenth century. The Recluse was projected in terms of Wordsworth assuming "the station of a man in mental repose, one whose principles were made up, and so prepared to deliver upon authority a system of philosophy."¹

The Recluse was thought out at a time when, as D.M. Knight has observed, "the term 'scientist' had not been coined, when the natural philosopher was expected to develop and present a world-view, and when most science seemed important as providing data for a cosmology rather than a basis for technology."² The authority for the development of the comprehensive system was Aristotle himself; it had been revived in particular by Descartes. Newton located the laws of gravity without depending on any explanation of its causes in the Principia, but he could not resist the hypothesis of an explanation in the Opticks.³ In the twenty-first Query (1706), he advanced the theory that the cause of gravity, repulsion, the refraction of light, chemical action, and the transmission of nerve impulses, might be ether, a highly rarefied, universal gas. This suggestion that all

1. Table Talk, 21 July 1832, II, 70 (my emphasis).

2. D.M. Knight, "The Physical Sciences and the Romantic Movement," History of Science, 9 (1970), 55.

3. Sir Isaac Newton, Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica (London, 1687), Opticks (London, 1704).

physical forces were interrelated lies behind much of the speculation of philosophers in the eighteenth century, which was orientated towards the ideal of a metaphysical harmony. "Ambitions for comprehensiveness," Ritterbush comments disapprovingly, "survived to influence a generation of speculators who did not forswear ambitions for total explanation."¹ What is most striking about the systems that were proposed is that they all tended to reduce to a single principle, a grand comprehensive truth. Hartley, for instance, introducing his Observations on Man (1749) with an exposition of Newton's ether theory, which he adopted, wrote:

Thus we admit the key of a cypher to be a true one, when it explains the cypher completely. . . and this without any direct evidence at all. 2

Individual empirical observation is useless unless its purpose is to test an already established hypothesis. In 1818 in The Friend, Coleridge was to point out, characteristically, that theories of magnetism

led to no idea, to no law, and consequently to no Method: though a variety of phaenomena, as startling as they are mysterious, have forced on us a presentiment of its intimate connection with all the great agencies of nature; of a revelation, in ciphers, the key to which is still wanting. 3

Hartley's own great merit was to have united the different

1. Ritterbush, Overtures to Biology, p.6.

2. David Hartley, Observations on Man, his Frame, his Duty, and his Expectations (London, 1791), I, 15-16.

3. The Friend, CC IV, I, 479-80.

mental faculties and show that there is an underlying unity, that, as Priestley put it, "this single principle of association is the great law of the human mind...."¹

This desire for a single principle, as the key to a revelation of an underlying unity within the natural and metaphysical world, illustrates the contrast between the ideas of the period and the later attitude of limited explanation, of the relative spirit, as Pater calls it. Coleridge's interest in science is of a piece with his desire for "something one & indivisible."² The great difference to our present way of thinking was that science was most frequently seen as a way of corroborating an already established theological position.³ In January 1798, when refusing the ministry, Coleridge wrote:

To the cause of Religion I solemnly devote all my best faculties--and if I wish to acquire knowledge as a philosopher and fame 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 & 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.--I regard every experiment that Priestly made in Chemistry, as giving wings to his more sublime theological works. 4

-
1. Joseph Priestley, Letters to a Philosophical Unbeliever (London, 1780), p. 209.
 2. Griggs, I, 349.
 3. For the extent to which scientific theories were in fact formed according to theological beliefs, see Chapter 3.
 4. Griggs, I, 372. Cf. McEvoy and McGuire on Priestley: "A systematic account of the interrelated components in Priestley's thought must begin with his view of theism.... Both biblical and cosmological Christianity afforded a rationale for Priestley's interpretation of nature, man, and society.... Whether in reference to his complete philosophy of nature or to particular doctrines like materialism, Priestley held that his thought was compatible with a rational view of scripture" (J.G. McEvoy and J.E. McGuire, "God and Nature: Priestley's Way of Rational Dissent," Historical Studies in the Physical Sciences, 6 (1975), 329).

The other person whom Coleridge compared himself to at this time was Hartley.¹ Hartley's philosophy was a similar attempt to develop the systems of Newton and Locke into a psychology that would provide a scientific proof of his religious beliefs. In the well-known note to the lines in Religious Musings—"Till by exclusive consciousness of GOD / All self-annihilated it shall make / GOD it's Identity: God all in all! / We and our Father ONE!"—Coleridge commented:

See this demonstrated by Hartley, vol. 1, p.114, and vol. 2, p.329. See it likewise proved, and freed from the charge of Mysticism, by Pistorius in his Notes and Additions to part second of Hartley on Man, Addition the 18th, the 653rd page of the third volume of Hartley, Octavo Edition. 2

Coleridge's whole life can be seen as an attempt to formulate a satisfactory system which demonstrated his religious beliefs. Near the end of his life, he still felt able to remark:

You may not understand my system, or any given part of it,--or by a determined act of wilfulness, you may, even though perceiving a ray of light,

-
1. "Did Dr HARTLEY employ himself for the promotion of the best interests of mankind? Most certainly. If instead of being a physician he had been a hired Teacher, that he would not have taught Christianity better, I can certainly say--& I suspect, from the vulgar prejudices of mankind that his name might have been less efficacious" (Griggs, I, 371).
 2. Religious Musings (1796), ll. 52-55, CPW I, 110. Cf. Richard Haven: "Coleridge did not find in Hartley a rationalism in opposition to the intuitions of his 'deeper self'; he found rather what appeared to be a means of providing scientific confirmations for those intuitions" ("Coleridge, Hartley, and the Mystics," JHI, 20 (1959), 481). Coleridge's note was added to Poems (Bristol, 1797), p. 122.

reject it in anger and disgust:--but this I will say,--that if you once master it, or any part of it, you cannot hesitate to acknowledge it as the truth. 1

Initially Coleridge looked to science as a way of refuting materialist philosophical positions, but it quickly developed a more important role, and played a part in the formation of, as well as the confirmation of, his "system." It was not simply a side interest, as is perhaps suggested by Wordsworth's description in "Stanzas Written in My Pocket-Copy of Thomson's 'Castle of Indolence,'" but was of primary importance.² While reading Boehme, he wrote in the margin of his copy: "Humphry Davy in his laboratory is probably doing more for the Science of Mind, than all the Metaphysicians have done from Aristotle to Hartley, inclusive."³ Coleridge expected science both to prove and to reduce to his religious beliefs. This is illustrated in a letter he wrote to Wordsworth in 1807, again on the subject of Davy:

1. Table Talk, 28 June 1834, II, 334-35. After Coleridge's death J.H. Green, and after him J. Simon, spent another twenty-nine years compiling Coleridge's notes into a system: Spiritual Philosophy; founded on the teaching of the late Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 2 vols, (London, 1865). Coleridge always referred to philosophical positions as "systems"; e.g. Godwin's (Griggs, I, 267), Descartes', Locke's, even Christ's (Griggs, II, 699-700).
2. "Glasses he had, that little things display, / The beetle panoplied in gems and gold, / A mailed angel on a battle-day; / The mysteries that cups of flowers enfold, / And all the gorgeous sights which fairies do behold" (ll. 59-63, PW II, 27).
3. Marginal note to The Works of Jacob Behmen the Teutonic Theosopher (London, 1764-81), I, 40. Cited by Trevor H. Levere, "Coleridge, Chemistry, and the Philosophy of Nature," SIR, 16 (1977), 357.

Davy supposes that there is only one power in the world of the senses; which in particles acts as chemical attractions, in specific masses as electricity, & on matter in general, as planetary Gravitation. Jupiter est, quodcumque vides; when this has been proved, it will then only remain to resolve this into some Law of vital Intellect--and all human Knowledge will be Science and Metaphysics the only Science. 1

"Jupiter is, whatever you see": God is behind everything. Scientific information is directed by this and, at the same time, confirms it as well.

Coleridge's desire for a comprehensive system was to develop into the massive, unwritten, and probably unwritable Logosophia.² But there is another perspective from which it can be seen--the nature of the system itself. For Coleridge, it was spiritual intuition which would point out to men the ultimate end of the various sciences, upon which they could then set to work in order to produce empirical verification. The desire to synthesize all knowledge into a system, based on a grand truth, a single unifying principle, is also the essence of Naturphilosophie. This is made clear in the Biographia in Chapter 12, which is heavily based on Schelling:

The highest perfection of natural philosophy would consist in the perfect spiritualization of all the laws of nature into laws of intuition and intellect The theory of natural philosophy would then be completed when all nature was demonstrated to be identical in essence with that which in its highest known power exists in man as intelligence and self-consciousness 3

-
1. Griggs, III, 38.
 2. A useful discussion of the Logosophia is given in McFarland's Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition, pp. 191-95.
 3. BL, p.146. As Fruman points out, the passage is an expansion of Schelling, from his System des transcendentalen Idealismus (1800) (Coleridge, The Damaged Archangel, pp. 103-04).

Thus the principle of the mind itself becomes the centre of the entire system; everything is resolved into a "Law of vital Intellect." Coleridge's late formulation is recognised as being deeply indebted to Naturphilosophie, but it is easy to see how the comprehensiveness of its system was deeply appealing.

Coleridge's 1815 description of his magnum opus bears a distinct resemblance to his 1815 description of The Recluse.¹ There can be little doubt that, while the philosophical substance of the scheme had changed in Coleridge's mind, its form was always based on the desire for fixed principles, for a system. The Recluse, as first thought out in 1798 in the wake of Coleridge's own Religious Musings (1794-96), or Godwin's Political Justice (1793), was much more of a millennial scheme sustained by the belief in the perfectibility of man, the progress of humanity, and probably based on sensationalist premises about the effects of nature and the

1. Coleridge gave a detailed description of The Recluse to Wordsworth on 30 May 1815, and a detailed description of the Logosophia to John May on 27 September (Griggs, IV, 574-75, 589-90). The plan of The Recluse may have remained the same, but the philosophical position must have changed; the original scheme could not have included the anti-sensationalist "informing the senses from the mind, and not compounding a mind out of the senses" (Table Talk, 21 July 1832, II, 71). The Prospectus to The Recluse (1800), on the other hand, suggests that the basic scheme of the "substitution of Life, and Intelligence . . . for the philosophy of mechanism" was present from at least 1800 (Griggs, IV, 575). It is likely, in fact, that this was the basis of The Recluse from the very first. Cf. Chapter 3.

environment.¹ The original context of The Recluse was much closer to the attempt by the deputies of the Paris Convention to institute a "science of man," and thus fulfil Rousseau's declaration in the Preface to the Discourse on the Origin of Inequality (1754) that "of all the human sciences, the most useful and the least understood appears to me to be the knowledge of man."² The Recluse's subject was to be "Man, which is philosophy," its aim to usurp Paradise Lost for its own times:

The darkest pit
Of the profoundest hell, night, chaos, death
Nor aught of blinder vacancy scoop'd out
By help of dreams, can breed such fear and awe
As fall upon me often when I look
Into my soul, into the soul of man
My haunt, and the main region of my song. 3

Like the magnum opus, it was to include everything. It was nothing less than a total system which would take into account what are now known as the physical sciences, the human sciences, philosophy, and

1. A context clearly suggested by Holcroft's remark on the republication of Paine's Rights of Man in 1791: "Hey for the New Jerusalem! The Millenium!" (cited in C. Kegan Paul, William Godwin: His Friends and Contemporaries (London, 1876), I, 69). The atmosphere by 1798 was, of course, very different, but the idea of The Recluse goes back to Miltonic millennial poems such as Religious Musings. This is suggested, most strikingly, by MS. R of Home at Grasmere, which is written on an interleaved copy of Coleridge's poem (CW III, 142-253). Cf. Piper, Active Universe, pp. 47-59.
2. Rousseau, Discours sur l'origine et les fondemens de l'inégalité parmi les hommes (London [Paris], 1782), p.38. ^{3. Nat Inst Science + Arts, 1796}
3. Pierpont Morgan Library: MS. fragment bound into MS. MA 1916; Cited by Levere, "Coleridge, Chemistry," p.350. Prospectus, MS.1, D.C. MS.45, 1^r, ll. 23-24, 1^v, ll. 25-29, CW III, 256-59.

metaphysics. Something of this can be gathered from Wordsworth's confident remark to James Tobin in March 1798:

I have written 1300 lines of a poem in which I contrive to convey most of the knowledge of which I am possessed. My object is to give pictures of Nature, Man, and Society. Indeed I know not anything which will not come within the scope of my plan. 1

The inclusiveness of the scheme is indicated by Coleridge's description of his projected epic in April 1797. He wrote to Cottle:

I should not think of devoting less than 20 years to an Epic Poem. Ten to collect materials, & warm my mind with universal Science—I would be a tolerable mathematician, I would thoroughly know mechanics, hydrostatics, optics, & Astronomy — Botany, Metallurgy, fossilism, chemistry, geology, Anatomy, Medicine--then the mind of man--then the minds of men--in all Travels, Voyages, & Histories. So I would spend ten years--the next five in the composition of the poem-- & the last five in the correction of it— 2

It is no wonder that Wordsworth showed himself so desperate to obtain Coleridge's notes for The Recluse, which would have had to have comprised little less than Coleridge's own magnum opus.³ Wordsworth never renounced the plan while Coleridge was alive. But after his death in 1834, he removed the words "being a portion of The Recluse" from the title page of The Excursion.⁴ It was an ignominious end for the

1. EY, p. 212.

2. Griggs, VI, 1009.

3. Wordsworth's entreaties became more intense as his fears grew for Coleridge's health in March 1804 (EY, pp. 452, 464).

4. Edition of 1836. George Ticknor asked Wordsworth about The Recluse two years later, in May 1838: "On my asking him why he does not finish it he turned to me very decidedly, and said, 'Why did not Gray finish the long poem he began on a similar subject? Because he found he had undertaken something beyond his powers to accomplish. And that is my case' (Life, Letters and Journals (Boston, 1876), II, 167.).

grand claims of the Prospectus. On the other hand, though Wordsworth, like Coleridge, never gave a formal exposition of his system, he still believed, as Coleridge did, that he had one. In the Preface to The Excursion he wrote:

It is not the Author's intention formally to announce a system: it was more animating to him to proceed in a different course; and if he shall succeed in conveying to the mind clear thoughts, lively images, and strong feelings, the Reader will have no difficulty in extracting the system for himself. 1

This is then followed by the "Prospectus of the design and scope of the whole poem." The centre of that poem is quickly stated: "th'individual mind that keeeps its own / Inviolat retirement, and consists / With being limitless, the one great Life."² Once again, the philosophical principles that emerge are those of inner mental power, and life. It is not clear, however, how these can be the key to an entire philosophical poem.

1. PW V, 2.

2. Prospectus, MS.1, D.C. MS. 45, 1^r, ll. 8-10, CW III, 256-57.

CHAPTER THREE: Life and Mind in Nature.

i. Life, Spirit, and Matter.

"Physiology, in the present use of the term, is distinguished from physics by having Life for its subject. Life ... may be defined--'tendency to individualise.'"¹ It is tempting to make a straightforward link between a late statement of Coleridge's such as this, and the Prospectus' "individual mind that keeps its own / Inviolable retirement, and consists / With being limitless, the one great Life."² But it should not be assumed that they can be easily assimilated to one another, any more than it can be assumed that the 1800 statement from the Prospectus is identical to Coleridge's 1815 description of The Recluse:

in short, the necessity of a general revolution in the modes of developing & disciplining the human mind by the substitution of Life, and Intelligence ... for the philosophy of mechanism which in every thing that is most worthy of the human Intellect strikes Death 3

It cannot be assumed because the notion of life itself changed over these years, and this change had distinctly differing effects. On the other hand, the terms of the opposition, the stress on life itself, however conceived,

1. "Monologues by the late Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Esq. No.I. Life," Fraser's Magazine, 12 (1835), 494.

2. Prospectus to The Recluse, MS.1, D.C. MS. 45, 1^r, 11, 8-10, CW III 256-57

3. Griggs, IV, 575.

are clearly constant. So, for instance, Hazlitt records that in 1798 Coleridge did not rate Godwin very highly, and in a footnote adds:

He complained in particular of the presumption of attempting to establish the future immortality of man "without" (as he said) "knowing what Death was or what Life was"--and the tone in which he pronounced these two words seemed to convey a complete image of both. 1

Two questions have to be answered. Firstly, in what ways did the conception of life change for Coleridge and Wordsworth during this period, and what were the effects of this?² Secondly, why was life so important to them?

The role of life in the development of Coleridge's philosophy has not received a great deal of critical attention, perhaps because it seems to involve his interest in "science" as opposed to "metaphysics," although he himself saw no such division.³ In Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition, for instance, Thomas McFarland gives an illuminating analysis of the possible modes of systematic philosophy.

-
1. Hazlitt, "My First Acquaintance with Poets," Howe, XVII, 112.
 2. A proper account of Coleridge's theories of life would obviously have to be taken up to 1816, the date of his Hints Towards the Formation of a More Comprehensive Theory of Life. From the perspective of attempting to understand organic form in The Prelude, however, the developments after Coleridge's departure for Malta, in April 1804, are not of significance, except insofar as they may illuminate earlier thinking. Coleridge's later theory of life is discussed by Barfield, What Coleridge Thought, Chapter 4 (pp. 41-58), and Fogle, The Idea of Coleridge's Criticism, Chapter 2 (pp. 18-33).
 3. In the eighteenth century, what we now call science was known as "natural philosophy," a term which is helpful in suggesting the interrelation of different kinds of knowledge.

He argues that any philosophy "must account for the status and interrelations of three entities, the ego or subject, the external or object, and the questions arising from the defining limitations of both subject and object, or the question of God."¹ Only two basic positions, he suggests, can be established to satisfy these requirements, those deriving from the self or not-self. The answer to the questions arising from the defining limitations will derive from the position that is initially taken. "Depending on whichever of our initial assumptions we treat as primary, the self or the object, the corollary which is God will assume the properties of a self or of an object."² Furthermore, the reality of the initial position that is not chosen will be "inevitably compromised as a result of the emphasis upon the point that is chosen."³ Thus, for instance, in Descartes, the prime example of the ontological presuppositions of all "self" philosophy, the certainty of self-existence inevitably negates the whole of externality. On the other hand, if the point of departure is taken from the empirical view of the primacy of sense impression or the not-self, as in Spinoza, Locke, or Hartley, then "the self will diminish to a mere category of thing, the ego will become an object...."⁴ Pantheism falls into this second

-
1. McFarland, Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition, p.55.
 2. McFarland, Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition, p.55.
 3. McFarland, Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition, p.55.
 4. McFarland, Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition, p.56.

category. McFarland portrays Coleridge's whole philosophical life in terms of a struggle against the attractions of pantheism. As Coleridge puts it in the Biographia: "For a very long time indeed I could not reconcile personality with infinity; and my head was with Spinoza, though my whole heart remained with Paul and John."¹

While this has proved one of the most helpful analyses of Coleridge's philosophical development, there is no place for a concept of life within such a scheme.² On the other hand, if we reformulate it into the more conventional dualism of mind and body, then Coleridge's struggle against the attractions of pantheism becomes less of an emotional disability than a straightforward attempt at a solution of a philosophical problem. That problem was the legacy of Descartes. As Coleridge describes it in both the Biographia and the Philosophical Lectures: "To the best of my knowledge Des Cartes was the first philosopher who introduced the absolute and essential heterogeneity of the soul as intelligence and the body as matter."³ The problem with this separation became almost immediately apparent. The absolute division which Descartes proposed had the unforeseen effect of leading to atheism. In Descartes' system, the bodies of both men and animals were mere machines; in

1. BL, p. 112.

2. McFarland, p. 61, cites Coleridge's remark, "Did philosophy commence with an it is, instead of an I am, Spinoza would be altogether true" (Crabb Robinson, Diary, I, 400); McFarland calls the two modes the "it is" and the "I am."

3. BL, p.74. The same statement is made in Phil. L., p.348.

man, however, the animal spirits of the body came into contact with the mind or soul in the pineal gland. But this made it very easy for the existence of spirit to be denied altogether, so that man became, with La Mettrie, L'Homme machine.¹

Coleridge's entire philosophical endeavour can be seen as a struggle against atheism, against materialism. To succeed, he had to dissolve the division between matter and spirit which Descartes had instituted. An early reaction was to adopt a monism, such as Priestley's, Berkeley's, or Spinoza's. But such solutions in themselves ran the risk of atheism. In returning to a dualism, Coleridge brought matter and spirit together through "the combining power of Life."² Organic form was the product of this reconciliation: "Such is the life, such the form."³

-
1. Julien Offray de La Mettrie, L'Homme machine (Leyden, 1748). L'Homme machine was published the year before Hartley's Observations on Man (1749); in spite of the fact that La Mettrie was an atheist and Hartley a devout Christian, their books had much in common. Both were based on a purely sensationalist philosophy, and both argued that man was the product of the influence of the natural world upon the mind.
 2. Coleridge, Hints Towards The Formation of a Comprehensive Theory of Life, ed. Seth B. Watson (London, 1848), p.28.
 3. Shakespearian Criticism, 1, 224.

ii. The Absolute and Relative Spirit.

Assessment of Coleridge's interest in science--and thus the science of life-- is confused for two reasons. Firstly, because it is only relatively recently, with the expansion of the history of science as a discipline, that estimates of scientific history have moved away from positivistic or "Whiggish" assessments based on canonization of those who got it "right," such as Lavoisier, or Charles Darwin, and relegation to oblivion for those who got it "wrong," such as Priestley and Lamarck.¹ Pater, of course, had appreciated the difference between the absolute and relative spirit, but it is still possible to find assessments of Coleridge's scientific interests based on an uncompromising empiricism. McFarland, for instance, in his "Excursus" on "Coleridge and Scientific Thought," while noting the amount of energy committed to scientific interests, writes:

But it seems to me that Coleridge's scientific speculation--illegitimate in method and specious in conclusion--should be granted only a symbolical, not a substantive, role in any assessment of his thought. . . . To be truly co-ordinate with his opinions on literature, the scientific opinions would have to represent hours in a laboratory and discipline in a method, and such a grounding they did not have. 2

-
1. The classic attack on an historical method which analyses history only from the perspective of the present day is Herbert Butterfield's The Whig Interpretation of History (London: Bell, 1931).
 2. McFarland, Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition, pp. 323-24. Coleridge's later scientific interests, heavily influenced by Naturphilosophie, have had the effect of discouraging investigation at all. One corrective, however, is Kathleen Coburn's "Coleridge: A Bridge between Science and Poetry," in Coleridge's Variety, ed. John Beer (London, Macmillan, 1974), pp. 81-100; cf. also Levere, "Coleridge, Chemistry, and the Philosophy of Nature."

Coleridge himself is partly to blame insofar as his statements are easily taken as being against science itself. To some extent Coleridge himself projects the view that he, like other Romantic poets, was rebelling against a scientific world view, that he was substituting a human creativity for "the philosophy of mechanism which in every thing that is most worthy of the human Intellect strikes Death"¹ Quotations from such poems as Wordsworth's "The Tables Turned" give a similar impression.² The result is that the fight against mechanism becomes a fight against science, a personal battle in which the poet rehumanizes a cold inanimate world. The representative of this world is, through Coleridge, taken to be Newton. Thus, as recently as 1974, M.H. Abrams, in an essay arguing for a more sympathetic reading of Coleridge's scientific interests, wrote of Coleridge's "chief opponent, Sir Isaac Newton":

Coleridge's objection was to Newton as a speculative thinker whose immense prestige as a physicist had given impetus to a metaphysical world-view, the 'Corpuscular and mechanic Philosophy', that had reigned for the preceding century. For despite his reluctance to frame hypotheses, Newton had put forward, in the 'Queries' he added to his Opticks, the stark image of a machine-universe whose ultimate elements are indivisible particles of matter capable of being set in motion. 3

1. Griggs, IV, 575.

2. "Sweet is the lore which nature brings; / Our meddling intellect / Misshapes the beauteous forms of things; / --We murder to dissect" (ll. 25-28, Lyrical Ballads, p.106, PW IV, 57. Most statements of this kind, however, are directed against the analytic method, not against science as such.

3. M.H. Abrams, "Coleridge and the Romantic Vision of the World," Coleridge's Variety, p.117. Cf. Danby, The Simple Wordsworth (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960): "The universe of Newton was a complete, settled thing" (p. 12).

In accepting this account, Coleridge's own contribution becomes a reassertion of a subjectivism in the face of cold objective reality. This view is corroborated by the Keatsian fiction that Newton destroyed the rainbow, and substituted a "world hard, cold, colourless, silent, and dead...."¹ The poet becomes engaged in a kind of personal battle:

Against this 'philosophy of death', which posits only the 'relations of unproductive particles to each other', Coleridge posed his own philosophy of life

By this procedure Coleridge re-endows a dead and meaningless universe with the inherent energies and generative powers of life 2

Almost identical sentiments have been used to describe Wordsworth's special poetic mission.³ The Prelude itself

1. E.A. Burtt, The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Physical Science (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1925), p.237. Burtt's account, together with that of Whitehead, Science and the Modern World (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1926), still remain the standard reference for the description of the "dead" universe of the eighteenth century for literary criticism. This is in spite of Rader's comment that the Newton of the Opticks is very different from that of the Principia (Wordsworth, pp. 44-45), a distinction also made by Sheats, The Making of Wordsworth's Poetry pp. 4-5. Prickett, Coleridge and Wordsworth, also draws attention to the difference, and shows that Wordsworth's attitude to Newton was predominately one of admiration (pp. 9-10); Prickett stresses the effect on Wordsworth of the ideas of vision in the Opticks. On the relation of Newton's theories of vision to eighteenth century poetry generally, see Marjorie Nicolson, Newton Demands the Muse (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946).
2. Abrams, "Coleridge and the Romantic View of the World," pp. 119, 125.
3. e.g. Basil Willey, The Seventeenth Century Background, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1934), pp. 298-99: "His [Wordsworth's] more positive beliefs, those by which he appears in reaction against the scientific tradition, were built up by him out of his own poetic experiences, and it is this which makes him representative of the modern situation--the situation in which beliefs are made out of poetry rather than poetry out of beliefs. To animise the 'real' world, the 'universe of death' that the 'mechanical' system of philosophy had produced, but to do so without either using an exploded mythology or fabricating a new one, this was the special task and mission of Wordsworth." A different view is argued by James Averill, "Wordsworth and 'Natural Science': The Poetry of 1798," JEGP, 77 (1978), 232-46, but he still sees science in modern terms as a separate discipline, speaking for instance of the "quasi-scientific," and a "scientific tinge," in the poetry (p.238).

becomes a story of Wordsworth's power against the tendency to "substitute a universe of death, / The falsest of all worlds, in place of that / Which is divine and true."¹ The opposition between the dead, mechanical universe of Newton and the living, organic universe of the Romantic poets seems quite straightforward. It is left to the poet to assert the possibilities of life:

Life and will are active principles by which we move bodies & thence arise other laws of motion not yet known to us. And since all matter duly formed by generation & nutrition is attended with signes of life, & all things are framed with perfect art and wisdom, & Nature does nothing in vain; if there be an universal life, & all space be the sensorium of a immaterial living, thinking, being ... the laws of motion arising from life may well be of universal extent. 2

But this poet, arguing against the dead, cold Newtonian universe, is none other than Newton himself.

The question is not quite so simple as Coleridge's statements seem to suggest. What then did he mean? Coleridge

1. XIII. 141-43.

2. Draft related to Query 23 of the 1706 Opticks, U. L. C. Add 3790, fol. 252^v. Cited by J.E. McGuire, "Force, Active Principles, and Newton's Invisible Realm," Ambix 15 (1968), p.205. In print Newton was always more cautious than in his private speculations. His "nut-shell" theory, which will be discussed later in this chapter, although known to his own circle for some time, only emerged in print in 1706 as a result of the dispute with Leibniz. As Arnold Thackray observes, Newton characteristically preferred to see many of his theories develop through the writings of his disciples rather than publish them himself "The Immediate Impact of Newton's Ideas," Atoms and Powers, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), p.56.) This habit considerably complicates any assessment of the relation between Newton's private and published work, but also illuminates any account of the genesis of eighteenth century ideas in natural philosophy.

asked this question of Wordsworth; in this case Wordsworth can answer for Coleridge:

As for . . . all science which put this end out of view, all science which was a bare collection of facts for their own sake, or to be applied merely to the material uses of life, he thought it degraded instead of raising the species. All science which waged war with and wished to extinguish Imagination in the mind of man, and to leave it nothing of any kind but the naked knowledge of facts, was, he thought, much worse than useless; and what is disseminated in the present day under the title of "useful knowledge," being disconnected, as he thought it, with God and everything but itself, was of a dangerous and debasing tendency. 1

Coleridge's attack, like Wordsworth's here, is not on science per se, but on scientists "Untenanting Creation of its God."² His attack is on mechanicians, materialists, all those who neglect the primacy of God in the universe. The distinction is made nicely in a post-script to a letter to Thelwall of 1796:

We have an hundred lovely scenes about Bristol, which would make you exclaim--O admirable Nature! & me, O Gracious God!— 3

In Coleridge's view, a French materialism or atheism, such as Thelwall's, is easily identified with the rather different philosophy of mechanism insofar as their theological positions can be seen to be similar. To attack them, he used contemporary scientific ideas such as Priestley's. With equal freedom, he also adapted arguments from seventeenth century theologians such as Cudworth.

1. From a conversation reported by W.R. Hamilton, in R.P. Graves, The Life of William Rowan Hamilton (Dublin, 1882), I, 313; cited in James A.W. Heffernan, Wordsworth's Theory of Poetry (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969), p.156.

2. Southey, Joan of Arc (London, 1796), Book II. 37, p.41, CPW I, 132.

3. Griggs, I, 222.

iii. Mechanicism and Cudworth.

Mechanicism, as a philosophy, belongs to the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. Coleridge's claim that his reading in Platonists ancient and modern enabled him to anticipate the formulations of the German Idealists has been largely discounted. But there is a sense in which it is true in spirit if not to the letter of individual plagiarisms.¹ In many ways, Coleridge's invective against mechanicism took its terms and stance from a battle that had been fought in the previous century. Analysis of the terms of this battle, and its intellectual consequences, is helpful for understanding the philosophical and scientific basis of organicism at the turn of the eighteenth century.

Coleridge, in his arguments against mechanicism, and in his own claims to priority, was fond of invoking an affinity with Renaissance Hermeticists and Neoplatonists, men who, as he put it, "continued to invoke the oracle of their own spirits, not only concerning their own forms and modes of being, but likewise concerning the laws of external nature."² There is a certain justification in this claim. It has been recognised in recent years that the scientific revolution

1. The fairest assessment of Coleridge's claim to date is that of Orsini, Coleridge and German Idealism, Chapter 1, pp. 3-56. Specific source-hunting will always tend to discount such a claim (especially if hostile, as in Fruman's The Damaged Archangel). However, if one takes Coleridge to mean structures, such as the projection of mind into nature, then, as I argue in this chapter, his claim remains valid.

2. Phil. L., p.340, Theory of Life, pp. 28-29.

of the seventeenth century involved far more than a simple revolt against Aristotelianism in favour of the modern scientific world view. Frances Yates has suggested that in the radical transformation of natural philosophy which took place in this period, two phases can be distinguished: that of the Hermetic philosophy which saw the universe as animated and organic, and that of the mechanical philosophy which regarded the universe as composed of matter operating according to forces and laws external to it.¹ In the Hermetic tradition, the tradition of the alchemists, nature was seen as active and dynamic. This view extended not only to what we now regard as living things, but to the entire physical world: metals grew in the earth, and life, in the form of spirit, was intrinsic to all matter.² It

-
1. Frances Yates, "The Hermetic Tradition in Renaissance Science," in C.S. Singleton, ed., Art, Science, and History in the Renaissance (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1967), pp. 255-74. Hermeticism is named after the supposed author of the Corpus Hermeticum, the Egyptian magus Hermes Trismegistus. The best account of Hermeticism in the Renaissance is Frances Yates, Girodano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964). As Descartes can be taken to be the figurehead for mechanicism, so Paracelsus represents the most influential practitioner of the Hermetic alchemical tradition. Rattansi, for instance, considers that it was in its Paracelsian form that the natural magic tradition "came to be considered a serious rival to scholastic Aristotelian natural philosophy well into the seventeenth century," (P.M. Rattansi, "The Social Interpretation of Science in the Seventeenth Century," in Peter Mathias, ed., Science and Society 1600-1900 (Cambridge Cambridge University Press, 1972), p.10).
 2. "The non-precious metals are in some sense aborted remnants of a natural process which, carried to its conclusion, yields gold as its mature product. In undertaking to complete and accelerate the process of nature, the alchemist was in effect seeking to grow gold," Richard S. Westfall, "Newton and the Hermetic Tradition," in A.G. Debuss, ed., "Science, Medicine and Society in the Renaissance" (London: Heinemann, 1972), II, 184.

was, in short, a form of pantheism, as the following statement of Paracelsus makes clear:

There is nothing corporeal which does not possess a soul hidden in it. There exists nothing in which is not a hidden principle of life. Not only the things that move, such as men and animals, the worms of the earth, and the birds of the air and the fishes in the water, but all corporeal and essential things have life. 1

In a view which can be seen as a clear analogue of the method of Naturphilosophie, the Hermeticists projected a mind into nature, so that psychic qualities were attributed to matter in the form of sympathies and antipathies. Magnetism, for instance, was explained in this way. Robert Fludd wrote:

We find, I say, in the Load-stone, all the passions, as well sympathetically as antipathetically, which do affect his mother earth . . . and in conclusion, it argueth not only a sense in motion, but a kind of reason in its action, namely its refusing that which is contrary unto it, or embracing and desiring that which is agreeing and conformable unto its harmony. 2

The Hermeticists made no distinction between the physical and the spiritual. The world was made of a single "prime matter", which possessed at once a material and spiritual nature.³ Paracelsus, as Walter Pagel points out,

advocated what has been called a "vitalistic monism." His ideas of God, the world, nature and man are based on the unity of spirit and nature the

1. The Life . . . of Paracelsus and the Substance of his Teachings, extracted and translated by Franz Hartmann (London, 1887), p.44.

2. Cited by Allen G. Debus, "Robert Fludd and the Use of Gilbert's De Magnete in the Weapon-Salve Controversy," Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences, 19 (1964), 406.

3. Walter Pagel, "The Prime Matter of Paracelsus," Ambix, 9 (1961), 117-35. Much of Boehme's philosophy was derived from Paracelsus; Coleridge owned a copy of his Opera Omnia (3 vols. Geneva, 1658); see CN 1674 and 1674n.

all-pervading spirit . . . is not regarded as alien to matter, but as a substance of finest corporality. It is divine, uncreated and forms that "Prime Matter" ("Iliaster") which precedes and unites all forms of matter. 1

Thus the Hermetic philosophy presented a world which was alive and permeated by all kinds of occult forces, sympathies and antipathies. The world was seen to be unified by a network of infinitely complex interrelationships and harmonies. Nature was fundamentally mysterious and unknowable by rational process.

The mechanical philosophy, on the other hand, associated above all with Descartes, and in England with Hobbes and Boyle, introduced a fundamental dichotomy into nature, in which all of reality is divided into the "thinking substance" of the spiritual realm, and the "extended substance" of the physical realm. The only characteristics which the physical realm possessed were extension and motion, and with these Descartes thought it possible, through his rational method based on the logic of geometry, to deduce the workings of the universe. As Coleridge describes it in the Biographia:

DES CARTES, speaking as a naturalist and in imitation of Archimedes, said, Give me matter and motion and I will construct you the universe. We must of course understand him to have meant, I will render the construction of the universe intelligible. 2

Here indeed, we have the dead mechanical universe in which nature is inert and passive, and has no intrinsic source of

-
1. Walter Pagel, Paracelsus: An Introduction to Philosophical Medicine in the Era of the Renaissance (Basel, Karger, 1958), p.208.
 2. BL, p. 162.

activity. While in the Hermetic philosophy all natural objects have some degree of sense and feeling, in the mechanical world view nature is merely blind, lifeless particles of matter which act on each other by impact alone.

Two examples will suffice to suggest the nature of mechanicism. Descartes insisted that a causal mechanism could explain all known phenomena. Thus magnetism, far from being explained in terms of sympathies and antipathies, was explained by the motion of screw-shaped particles through similarly shaped pores of iron. Magnetic attraction occurs, he said, when the motion of such particles through a magnet and iron drives the air from between the two bodies and causes them to move together. The two magnetic poles were accounted for by the simple claim that there are left-threaded screws and right-threaded screws.¹ This ontological transformation had profound implications for man's relationship with nature. An example of the change is Robert Boyle's A Free Inquiry into the Vulgarly Received Notion of Nature (1685), where he writes, in his distinctively tortuous prose:

the veneration, wherewith men are imbued for what they call nature, has been a discouraging impediment to the empire of man over the inferior

1. Descartes, Principia philosophiae (Amsterdam, 1644), Part IV, Props. CXXXIII-CLXXXVII. Cf. Anthony le Grand, An Entire Body of Philosophy, according to the Principles of the famous Renate Des Cartes (London, 1694), who explains magnetism by the existence of "striate particles," "which we may perceive as so many little Pillars, with three hollow'd Channels, winding like a Screw" (p. 199). Le Grand's lavish work is one of the best expositions of the mechanical philosophy from a favourable point of view.

creatures of God: for many have not only looked upon it, as an impossible thing to compass, but as something of impious to attempt, the removing of those boundaries, which nature seems to have put and settled among her productions 1

As a corrective, he begins by analysing the word nature itself, discovers that it can be used in eight possible senses, and proposes a redefinition. Instead, for instance, of taking nature as "an aggregate of powers belonging to a body, especially a living one," he suggests:

we may employ the constitution, temperament, or the mechanism, or the complex of the essential properties or qualities; and sometimes the condition, the structure, or the texture of that body: and if we speak of the greater portions of the world, we may make use of one or other of these terms, Fabric of the world, system of the universe, cosmical mechanism, or the like. 2

So nature becomes the cosmical mechanism. By the end of the seventeenth century, the mechanical philosophy had become the reigning orthodoxy. "As a Fiction of Science," Coleridge wrote, "it would be difficult to overvalue this invention." But, he added,

1. A Free Inquiry into the Vulgarly Received Notion of Nature: Made in An Essay addressed to a Friend, in The Works of the Honourable Robert Boyle, ed. Thomas Birch (London, 1772), V, 165. Cf. J.E. McGuire, "Boyle's Conception of Nature," JHI, 33 (1972), 523-42.
2. Boyle, A Free Inquiry, p.169. In place of the vulgar description of nature, Boyle provides the following: "Nature is the aggregate of bodies, that make up the world, framed as it is, considered as a principle, by virtue whereof they act and suffer, according to the laws of motion prescribed by the Author of things. Which description may be thus paraphrased; that nature, in general, is the result of the universal matter, or corporeal substance of the universe, considered as it is contrived in the present structure and constitution of the world, whereby all the bodies, that compose it, are enabled to act upon, and fitted to suffer from one another, according to the settled laws of motion" (p.177).

Des Cartes propounded it as truth of fact: and instead of a World created and filled with productive forces by the Almighty Fiat, left a lifeless Machine whirled about by the dust of its own Grinding. 1

In England in the seventeenth century, however, the bête noir of mechanicism, associated with materialism and atheism, was Hobbes.² One of his prime adversaries was Cudworth. The opening chapters of The True Intellectual System of the Universe (1678), the only chapters from which Coleridge took detailed notes, take the form of a long attack on the mechanical philosophy, which, as Cudworth says, "as it is a thing of the most dangerous consequences of all, so it seems to be most spreading and infectious in these latter times."³ In Cudworth we find not only the terms and concepts of the so-called "Romantic reaction against science" but, more specifically, the basis of Coleridge's own formulations. Furthermore, it is Cudworth who, in seeking to refute materialism and atheism, focusses specifically on the question of physiology and life. Thus, he writes:

Now this atheistical system of the world, that makes all things to be materially and mechanically necessary, without a God, is built on a peculiar physiological hypothesis . . . which is called by

-
1. Aids to Reflection, (London, 1825), p. 393.
 2. Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan (London, 1651). For Hobbes' attack on Hermeticism, see Chapter XLVI, "Of Darkness from Vain Philosophy and Fabulous Traditions," pp. 367-80.
 3. Ralph Cudworth, The True Intellectual System of the Universe, 2nd edition (London, 1743), I, 7. This is the edition which Coleridge read 15 May-1 June 1795, and 9 November-13 December 1796 (Bristol Borrowings, nos. 55, 90). Coleridge took detailed notes from the early parts of the book: see Orsini, Coleridge and German Idealism, p.25, and CN 200-04, 208.

some atomical or corpuscular, by others mechanical The atomical physiology supposes, that body is nothing but . . . extended bulk And consequently it supposes, that there is no need of any thing else besides the simple elements of magnitude, figure, site and motion (which are all clearly intelligible as different modes of extended substance) to solve the corporeal phaenomena by 1

This system produces the classic picture of the mechanical universe of "infinite atoms of different sizes and figures, devoid of all life and sense, moving fortuitously from eternity in infinite space" ² The question, as Cudworth sees it, devolves quite simply into the life / matter problem. To reassert life is to reassert spirit, and therefore to confound atheism:

We conclude therefore, that if these two Atheistick hypotheses, which are found to be the most considerable, be once confuted, the reality of al [sic] Atheism will be ipso facto confuted; there being indeed nothing more requisite to a thorough confutation of Atheism, than the proving of these two things; first, that life and understanding are not essential to matter as such; and secondly, that they can never possibly rise out of any mixture or modification of dead and stupid matter whatsoever. The reason of which assertion is, because all Atheists . . . are mere Corporealists, of which there can be but these two sorts; either such as make life to be essential to matter, and therefore to be ingenerable and incorruptible; or else such as suppose life and every thing besides . . . the bare substance of matter, or extended bulk, to be merely accidental, generable or corruptible, as rising out of some mixture or modification of it. And as the proving [i.e. testing] of those two things will overthrow all Atheism, so it will likewise lay a clear foundation, for the demonstrating of a Deity distinct from the corporeal world. 3

-
1. Cudworth, Intellectual System, I, 7.
 2. Cudworth, Intellectual System, I, 98.
 3. Cudworth, Intellectual System, I, 145.

Cudworth's object, then, is to demonstrate "that life, cogitation and understanding do not essentially belong to matter, and all substance as such, but are the peculiar attributes and characteristics of substance incorporeal."¹ If he can prove the existence of life in nature as a form of spirit, then, Cudworth believes, atheism will be refuted. The thesis he advances is the existence of a "plastick nature." This has long been recognized as a source of Coleridge's thinking, but it sometimes tends to be discussed as a phrase in isolation, as if it were an arbitrary assimilation that Coleridge happened to find useful.² But Cudworth's plastic nature is advanced as the solution to a philosophical and theological problem:

Wherefore since neither all things are produced fortuitously, or by the unguided mechanism of matter, nor God himself may reasonably be thought to do all things immediately and miraculously; it may well be concluded, that there is a plastick nature under him, which, as an inferior and subordinate instrument, doth drudgingly execute that part of his providence, which consists in the regular and orderly motion of matter 3

Cudworth's plastic nature is nothing less than a life-force, "a plastic immaterial Nature--all-pervading":

Now if there be a plastick nature, that governs the motion of matter every where, according to laws, there can be no reason given, why the same might not also extend farther to the regular disposal of that matter, in the formation of plants, and animals, and other things, in order to that apt and coherent frame and harmony of the whole universe. 4

1. Cudworth, Intellectual System, I, 146.

2. e.g. Rader, Wordsworth, p. 74-76.

3. Cudworth, Intellectual System, I, 150.

4. Griggs, I, 294; Cudworth, Intellectual System, I, 151.

Cudworth's life-force, however, is very different from the biological sense of life, since it exercises its power within everything in the universe, not just in what we now call the organic part of it. The plastic nature, says Cudworth, "is a life," and therefore "it must needs be incorporeal."¹ In fact in order to establish it as spirit, it is identified with mind. In explaining it as such, Cudworth almost unwittingly gives an account of a sort of organic form. Cudworth argues that God's mind is "the principal and directive cause" ² In doing so, he argues by analogy from the mind of man; he explains plastic nature by comparing it to art. Plastic nature, Cudworth says, can be conceived by imagining the ideas in the mind of an architect suffused into the very stones that are to be employed:

there acting upon them in such a manner as to make them come together of themselves, and range themselves into the form of a complete edifice ³

Thus, while human art acts upon matter, shaping and forming it ab extra, plastic nature "is art itself, acting immediately on the matter as an inward principle."⁴ Plastic nature, in its invisible, inward, and shaping power, is a version of organic form:

Nature is art as it were incorporated and embodied in matter, which doth not act upon it from without mechanically, but from within vitally and magically

-
1. Cudworth, Intellectual System, I, 180.
 2. Cudworth, Intellectual System, I, 151.
 3. Cudworth, Intellectual System, I, 155.
 4. Cudworth, Intellectual System, I, 155.

. . . . as God is inward to every thing, so nature acts immediately upon the matter, as an inward and living soul, or law in it. 1

Another illustration which Cudworth gives as an example of the inward working of plastic nature is that of the harp:

or if the musical art were conceived to be immediately in the instruments and strings, animating them as a living soul, and making them to move exactly, according to the laws of harmony, without any external impulse: these, and such like instances . . . would be fit iconisms or representations of the plastick nature, that being art itself acting immediately upon the matter as an inward principle in it. 2

This passage has been cited as a source for the image of the harp in "The Eolian Harp."³ Certainly, Coleridge was taken by the idea of an instrument played from within, for in December 1796, two days after he had returned the Intellectual System to the Bristol Library for the second time, he wrote to Thelwall, defending a sonnet of his own:

Next as to 'mystical'--Now that the thinking part of Man, i.e. the Soul, existed previously to it's appearance in it's present body, may be very wild philosophy; but it is very intelligible poetry,

1. Cudworth, Intellectual System, I, 156.

2. Cudworth, Intellectual System, I, 155.

3. "And what if all of animated nature / Be but organic Harps diversly fram'd, / That tremble into thought, as o'er them sweeps / Plastic and vast, one intellectual Breeze, / At once the Soul of each, and God of all?" (ll. 36-40, "Effusion XXXV," Poems on Various Subjects (Bristol, 1796), pp. 98-99. The strongest claims are made by C.G. Martin, "Coleridge and Cudworth: A Source for "The Eolian Harp,"" N&Q, 211 (1966), 173-76. The significance of "The Eolian Harp" in this context, and Coleridge's letter to Thelwall of 31 December 1796 where he cites it in relation to theories of life, is discussed in Chapter 6.

inasmuch as Soul is an orthodox word in all our poets; they meaning by 'Soul' a being inhabiting our body, & playing upon it, like a Musician inclosed in an Organ whose keys were placed inwards.-- 1

Cudworth's formulation of a kind of organic form in nature in terms of a primacy of mind, shaping and creating matter from within and equated with life itself, was to play an ever increasing role in Coleridge's thinking. It would not become fully developed, however, until after 1799 when he studied with Blumenbach and learnt about the theory of life which Kant was also to develop for his theory of organic form.

-
1. Griggs, I, 278. Coleridge adds: "Now this opinion I do not hold--not that I am a Materialist; but because I am a Berkeleian--"; yet in a letter written only two weeks later, he is again thinking on this topic (Griggs, I, 294-95).

iv. A Deity Alternately Operose and Indolent.

In a notebook entry of November / December 1796, related to his reading of Cudworth, Coleridge wrote: "In the Essay on Berkley to speak of Sir Isaac Newton & other material theists--Aristotle--Metaphys. Lib. I. Chapter IV. 267, of Tom IV.¹ The passage from Aristotle is copied into the notebook a few entries later:

Anaxagoras useth mind and intellect, that is, God, as a machine in the Cosmopoeia; and when he is at a loss to give an account of things by material necessity, then, and never but then, does he draw in mind or God to help him out; but otherwise he will rather assign any thing else for a cause than mind. 2

The passage comes from the same section of the Intellectual System in which Cudworth proposes his theory of plastic nature. Cudworth is discussing the Ancients, and how both Aristotle and Plato "acknowledged mind to be a cause."³ Anaxagoras, Cudworth says here, was regarded "as a kind of spurious and imperfect Theist, and one who had given great advantage to atheism."⁴ The discussion, as Coburn points out, is in the context of Cudworth's discussion of "corporeal Theists," of whom he says: "Thus we see, that the hylozoick Corporealist is really an Atheist, though carrying more the semblance and disguise of a Theist, than other Atheists,

1. CN 203.

2. CN 208, 208n, Cudworth's translation, which follows the Greek in the Intellectual System, I, 153.

3. Cudworth, Intellectual System, I, 154.

4. Cudworth, Intellectual System, I, 153.

in that he attributes a kind of life to matter."¹ Coleridge, in making the connection with Newton, is thinking back to his own note in Southey's Joan of Arc. There he attacks Newton's theory of aether, which he admits he knows chiefly through Hartley, while the objections that he cites are those of Andrew Baxter.² He adds:

It has been asserted that Sir Isaac Newton's philosophy leads in its consequences to Atheism: perhaps not without reason. For if matter by any powers or property given to it, can produce the order of the visible world, and even generate thought; why may it not have possessed such properties by inherent right? and where is the necessity of a God? matter is, according to the mechanic philosophy capable of acting most wisely and most beneficently without Wisdom or Benevolence; and what more does the Atheist assert? if matter possess those properties, why might it not have possessed them from all eternity? Sir Isaac Newton's Deity seems to be alternately operose and indolent; to have delegated so much power as to make it inconceivable what he can have reserved. 3

-
1. Cudworth, Intellectual System, I, 106-07, cited by Coburn, CN 203n, who comments, "Cudworth evidently (along with Andrew Baxter) helped to release Coleridge from associationism and necessitarianism." Coleridge had expressed dissatisfaction with Priestley in March 1796 (Griggs, I, 192-93).
 2. Southey, Joan of Arc, pp. 41-42. Coleridge acknowledges his source in Baxter, which Piper identifies as An Enquiry into the Immateriality of the Soul, (London, 1745), I, 34-50. Baxter attacks Newton's theory of aether in order to retain the action of gravity as proof of God as an immanent and immediate cause. He declares: "the force of gravity (the same is to be understood of elasticity, fuga, attraction) is a force impressed ab extra, and no conatus, or tendency belonging to matter, or inherent in it" (I, 26). Coleridge read Baxter in the summer of 1795 (see CN 188n); through him he certainly misunderstood the nature of aether, taking it as a purely material entity.
 3. Southey, Joan of Arc, p.42.

According to Coleridge, Newton has delegated God's power to the activity of aether, which is a material substance. The result is a theism which profoundly restricts the power of God. Any system in which God's mind or spirit is not present in nature as an active cause, in which activity is intrinsic to matter, is open to the charge of actual or potential atheism.

Thus there is a common assumption in this period that life is a form of power in matter; the crucial distinction is the role of God in this activity. Sir Humphry Davy, showing obvious signs of Coleridge's influence, puts it very clearly:

The doctrine of the materialists was always, even in my youth, a cold, heavy, dull and insupportable doctrine to me, and necessarily tending to atheism. When I had heard with disgust, in the dissecting rooms, the plan of the physiologist, of the gradual accretion of matter and its becoming endowed with irritability, ripening into sensibility and acquiring such organs as were necessary, by its own inherent forces, and at last rising into intellectual existence, a walk into the green fields or woods by the banks of rivers brought back my feelings from nature to God; I saw in all the powers of matter the instruments of the deity; the sunbeams, the breath of the zephyr awakening animation in forms prepared by divine intelligence to receive it; the insensate seed, the slumbering egg, which were to be vivified, appeared like the new born animal, works of a divine mind 1

The important factor, then, is not so much whether the universe is seen as dead or alive, but the ontology of its power. Coleridge charges Newton with a system in which

1. Sir Humphry Davy, Salmonia (1828), in Collected Works, ed. John Davy (London, 1839-40), IX, 345-46.

activity is inherent to matter, and which, as a consequence, leads to atheism. Piper, in The Active Universe, contrasts Wordsworth's descriptions of active matter in 1794 with a dead Newtonian world.¹ In both cases, this is a misrepresentation. Newton was to formulate and influence the terms of the eighteenth century vitalism which Coleridge is defending. Wordsworth, on the other hand, provides, in the Windy Brow revisions of 1794, a good example of the hylozoic position which Coleridge attacks in Newton.

1. Piper, Active Universe, pp. 72-73.

v. The Windy Brow Revisions.

A number of critics have suggested that the revisions of An Evening Walk (1787-89) made at Windy Brow in April 1794 contain, as G.W. Meyer put it, "as much of Wordsworth's mature philosophy of nature as could be intelligibly compressed within the narrow limit of eight lines."¹ The lines in question are the following:

A heart that vibrates evermore, awake
To feeling for all forms that Life can take,
That wider still its sympathy extends
And sees not any line where being ends;
Sees sense, through Nature's rudest forms betrayed,
Tremble obscure in fountain, rock, and shade,
And while a secret power these forms endears,
Their social accent never vainly hears. 2

Piper is undoubtedly right in ascribing the appearance of these and related lines to the influence of the Girondists and Unitarians whom Wordsworth is likely to have met in Paris in 1792-93.³ Their similarity to later statements by Wordsworth, such as "There is an active principle alive / In all things," leads Piper to comment:

The belief that inanimate objects were in a literal sense alive came nearest to establishing itself as scientific orthodoxy during the years of Wordsworth's most active poetic life. 4

1. G.W. Meyer, Wordsworth's Formative Years (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Publications in Language and Literature, XX, 1943), p.167. Meyer's statement is cited by Jonathan Wordsworth, Music of Humanity, p.185, who also includes similar statements by de Selincourt (The Early Wordsworth (London: Oxford University Press, 1936), p.21), and by Piper (Active Universe, p.73n).
2. PW I, 10, app. crit.
3. Piper, Active Universe, pp. 72-73.
4. MS. 18a, D.C. MS. 16, 73^V, 11. 1-2; Piper, Active Universe, p. 115.

But the literality of the word "alive" is the very thing in question. Piper substantiates his statement by commenting: "In 1802 Cabanis could write: 'Today we are sufficiently informed about fundamentals to regard as chimerical that distinction which Buffon tried to establish between living and dead matter or between organic and inorganic particles.'"¹ There is a fundamental difference, however, between the idea that "inanimate objects were in a literal sense alive" and the idea that there is no intrinsic difference between the matter that constitutes organic and inorganic objects.² Cabanis is not saying simply that inanimate objects are alive, but, if one examines his writings in context, that life is the specific effect of a certain organization of matter. All he is saying here is that there is no difference in the matter itself.³ This confusion in Piper's argument has led Jonathan Wordsworth to observe that

1. Piper, Active Universe, p.115.

2. Thus Buffon actually distinguishes between "matière, vive et brute." For an account of Buffon's theories, see Hall, Ideas of Life and Matter, II, 5-17.

3. Cf. Cabanis, Coup d'oeil sur les révolutions et sur la réforme de la médecine (Paris, 1804), trans. Sketch of the Revolutions of Medical Science and Views relating to its Reform, trans. A. Henderson (London, 1806). pp. 230-32, where Cabanis divides the phenomena of the universe into four gradations based on their degree of organization; only the third and fourth, the vegetable and the animal, are regarded as possessing life. The chain of being, however, from lower to higher, involves a unity in Nature: "Thus, from inanimate to animated matter, from the inert clod in the bowels of the earth, to the being who feels, who becomes susceptible of moral affections and of thought, every thing is linked and connected together . . ." (p. 233). This sympathy is exactly what Wordsworth describes in the Windy Brow revisions. Piper, very oddly, regards this as the one characteristic of Wordsworth's revisions that is not attributable to French

The Windy Brow lines are unquestionably important, but their resemblance to Wordsworth's later positions can easily be over-stressed, as can the continuity of Wordsworth's thought. Both Meyer's "essential spirit pervading all reality and making it dynamic" and Piper's more ambiguous "life in Nature", gloss over the basic distinction between a quasi-scientific belief in animated matter on the one hand, and on the other, a belief in a universe permeated by the One Life.¹

The implied difference here is between "a quasi-scientific

....influence: "But the lines differ from the philosophers' speculations in two ways. They describe an emotional experience in which the forms are endeared to the beholder, and these forms speak with a social accent--that is, they have some significance for his life among men. Such significance is characteristic of mystical experiences" (p. 73). This extraordinary appeal to mysticism for explanation of the "social accents" is surprising in view of the fact that the social ramifications of such a theory of matter can be located very straightforwardly in the theories of natural law held by the French materialists. The concept of a hierarchy of laws of affinity, ascending from universal attraction and sensitivity in matter to the social relationships in man, was common to Buffon, Maupertius, and d'Holbach. Moral sympathy was regarded as beginning as an unconscious, instinctive form of physical sensitivity; thus d'Holbach drew a parallel between the general law of chemical affinity (like seeks like) and the sympathies in the family and in society (see L.G. Crocker, Nature and Culture (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1963), pp. 48-49; L.J. Jordanova, "Nature, Natural Law and the Idéologue Programme for Social Reform," unpublished paper read to the Dept. of History and Philosophy of Science, University of Cambridge, 7.10.1976; Lovejoy, The Great Chain of Being; M. Staum, Cabanis and the Science of Man, Diss. Johns Hopkins, 1971 (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1975), pp. 22-65; Charles Vereker, Eighteenth-Century Optimism (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1967), pp. 162-210). In a comparable way, Volney argued from a physiological basis for the equality of man: "Whatever be the active power, the moving cause that directs the universe, this power having given to all men the same organs, the same sensations, and the same wants, has thereby sufficiently declared that it has also given them the same rights to the use of its benefits; and that in the order of nature all men are equal" (The Ruins, translated from the French, 3rd. ed. (London, 1796), p.136). The same view was to be expressed by Godwin, Political Justice (London, 1793), I, 104-105.

1. Jonathan Wordsworth, Music of Humanity, p. 186.

belief in animated matter," and religious belief. A more exact distinction would be between a materialist description and a pantheistic one. Both make use of natural philosophy; the difference is in the question of belief itself. When Coleridge met Wordsworth in the autumn of 1795, he described him as "a Republican & at least a Semi-atheist."¹ The key concept of the activity in nature in French materialist, or idéologue, thought was in fact sympathy, not life. When Wordsworth writes of a world which, instead of being "in disconnection dead & spiritless," is pervaded by spirit or life, he shows himself to have changed sides, from the position which Coleridge attacked, to that which he espoused.²

1. Griggs, I, 216.

2. Ruined Cottage MS.B, D.C. MS. 17, 49^r, l. 11, CW IV, 266-67.

vi. The Marble Index of Newton's Mind.

And from my pillow, looking forth by light
 Of moon or favouring stars, I could behold
 The antechapel where the statue stood
 Of Newton with his prism and silent face,
 The marble index of a mind for ever
 Voyaging through strange seas of Thought, alone.¹

What is interesting about Wordsworth's lines on Newton is that they are conceived almost exclusively in terms of mind. The prism is there, from the Opticks, but the important lines are about mental power. Newton is both identified with Wordsworth, who looks out from his bed to the night sky, and identified with God, with the universe his vast sensorium. In Wordsworth's metaphor, Newton is voyaging through "strange seas," but he is also the creator of the seas through which he is voyaging, just as Wordsworth himself is when driving through the seas at the end of "To William Wordsworth." Here, Newton's mind, the lone godlike point of perception, shapes and makes the forms of infinity and eternity; an image, as Wordsworth puts it,

Of permanent and universal sway
 And paramount endowment in the mind,
 An image not unworthy of the one
 Surpassing Life, which out of space and time,
 Nor touch'd by welterings of passion, is
 And hath the name of God. 2

Coleridge's characterization of his relation to Newton has generally been accepted without question. With Wordsworth, critical opinion has been much more diverse. In 1927, S.G. Dunn pointed out the affinities between the

1. 1850, III. 58-63.

2. 1805, VI. 152-57.

Wordsworthian sentiments of "A motion and a spirit that impels / All thinking things, all objects of all thought / And rolls through all things" and the Newtonian concept of aether.¹ Since then, critical accounts have ranged from a view which accepts Coleridge's portrayal of Newton as the villain of mechanical philosophy, and which therefore sees him as Wordsworth's very opposite, to a view which attempts to prove that Wordsworth's particular poetic mission was to expound Newton's philosophy.²

The fact that Wordsworth can be associated with Newton at all illustrates that it is not possible to equate Newton

-
1. S.G. Dunn, "Newton and Wordsworth," TLS, No. 1334, 25 August 1927, p.576; cf. also his "A Note on Wordsworth's Metaphysical System," E&S, 18 (1933), 74-109. W.K. Wimsatt, in "The Structure of Romantic Nature Imagery," also notes that "Tintern Abbey" suggests "a poetic counterpart of the several theories of spirit as subtle matter current in the eighteenth century, Newton's 'electric and elastic' active principle, Hartley's 'infinitesimal elementary body'" (The Verbal Icon (London: Methuen, 1970), p. 111).
 2. Piper, Active Universe, Chapter 1: "The Two Universes," pp. 3-28; Geoffrey Durrant, Wordsworth and the Great System (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970). Durrant sets out to show that "Wordsworth was less hostile to physical science than criticism has usually supposed, and that on the contrary his poetic vision is deeply influenced by his scientific interests and his mathematical habit of mind." However, Durrant's separation of physics from all other aspects of natural philosophy and metaphysics produces an inevitable distortion. His next aim is much more dubious: "Secondly, it sets out to demonstrate by examination of individual poems the systems of images, forming a coherent poetic grammar, with which Wordsworth undertakes the great task of following in the footsteps of the man of science, and of making the 'great system' of Newton intelligible to the imaginations of men" (p.vii). This would be an achievement indeed, given the heterogeneity of Newton's thought.

with a pure mechanicism.¹ Newton, in fact, was involved in the same theological issues over the question of matter and spirit as Coleridge. He had strong links with the Cambridge Platonists, particularly with Cudworth and Henry More.² As David Kubrin has shown, Newton's philosophical formulations were carefully conceived to avoid the danger of two positions. The first was one in which God would be so removed from his creation that the Christian idea of providence, and God's intimate involvement in the world, would disappear into Deism. The second would be one in which God was so much involved with the world as to be a part of it. This was associated with Spinozism, and generally regarded as atheistical. Cudworth's theory of

-
1. As Coleridge did. A clear account of Coleridge's estimate of Newton in the context of the development of European philosophy, is given in the Theory of Life (repeated in the Philosophical Lectures). Newton's discoveries, says Coleridge, "gave almost a religious sanction to the corpuscular system and mechanical theory. It became synonymous with philosophy itself. It was the sole portal at which truth was permitted to enter. . . . In short, from the time of Kepler to that of Newton, and from Newton to Hartley, not only all things in external nature, but the subtlest mysteries of life and organization, and even of the intellect and moral being, were conjured within the magic circle of mathematical formulae" (pp. 30-31, Phil. L., p.342). Prickett, Coleridge and Wordsworth, pp. 9-10, shows that Wordsworth's own attitude towards Newton was fundamentally one of admiration. He cites Haydon's account of Wordsworth's reluctance to drink to Keats' toast of "Confusion to the memory of Newton" (Benjamin Robert Haydon: Correspondence and Table-Talk (London, 1876), II, 54-55).
 2. For Newton and the Cambridge Platonists, see B.J.T. Dobbs, The Foundations of Newton's Alchemy or "The Hunting of the Greene Lyon," (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975); Karin Figala, "Newton as Alchemist," History of Science, 15 (1977), 102-37; McGuire, "Force, Active Principles, and Newton's Invisible Realm,"; J.E. McGuire and P.M. Rattansi, "Newton and the 'Pipes of Pan,'" Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London, 21 (1966), 108-43; G.A.J. Rogers, "Locke, Newton and the Cambridge Platonists on Innate Ideas," JHI, 40 (1979), 191-205; Westfall, "Newton and the Hermetic Tradition."

a plastic nature as an intermediate substance between God and the world resolved this dilemma very neatly; in a modified form it was adopted by Newton.¹ In the post-Principia period, Newton gradually evolved a theory in which gravity was seen as an immaterial power, working within a universe of interparticulate forces, where the total amount of matter in existence could be contained within a nut-shell.² As Thackray has observed, such a scheme "was of obvious appeal for the way it combatted the materialistic atheism so easily associated with the 'corpuscular philosophy' by both followers and opponents of Descartes, Hobbes, and Spinoza."³

Recent work by historians of science has shown that Newton's work, particularly that of the post-Principia period, together with that of Locke, formed the basis for the

-
1. David Kubrin, "Newton and the Cyclical Cosmos: Providence and the Mechanical Philosophy," JHI 28 (1967) 325-46. Cf. also J.E. Saveson, "Differing Reactions to Descartes Among the Cambridge Platonists," JHI, 21 (1960), 560-67; and Danton B. Sailor, "Cudworth and Descartes," JHI, 23 (1962), 133-40.
 2. Arnold Thackray, "Matter in a Nut-Shell," Ambix, 15 (1968), 28-53. Newton's theory is described by Coleridge in 1796: "World-makers/maker!-- As if according to Sir Isaac Newton's progression of pores--they had coarct the world to a Ball and were playing with it--" (CN 93). Coburn cites Russel's Essay on the Nature and Existence of a Material World (London, 1781), pp. 57-58, as Coleridge's source for the idea (Bristol Borrowings, nos. 70, 79).
 3. Thackray, Atoms and Powers, p. 245.

eighteenth century disavowal of mechanicism.¹ Heimann and McGuire, for example, point to the underlying conception, from Newton to Hutton, of "the essence of matter as being constituted by attractive and repulsive 'powers'."² Although it is true to say that the passivity of matter was fundamental to Newton's philosophy, that matter was conceived as being extremely porous, being made up of infinitesimally small particles to which were added immaterial forces as the agent of change. Newton's theory of interparticulate forces is brought out in the influential additions to the 1717 Opticks, in which the theory of aether was developed.³ This aether

1. See, for instance, P.M. Heimann and J.E. McGuire, "Newtonian Forces and Lockean Powers: Concepts of Matter in Eighteenth-Century Thought," Historical Studies in the Physical Sciences, 3 (1971), 233-306; P.M. Heimann, "Nature is a Perpetual Worker: Newton's Aether and Eighteenth-Century Natural Philosophy," Ambix, 20 (1973), 1-25; T.H. Levere, Affinity and Matter: Elements of Chemical Philosophy 1800-1865 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971); Ernan McMullin, Newton on Matter and Activity (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1978); Robert E. Schofield: Mechanism and Materialism: British Natural Philosophy in an Age of Reason (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970).
2. Heimann and McGuire, "Newtonian Forces," p.235.
3. i.e. from the 18th Query; "And is not this medium exceedingly more rare and subtile than the air, and exceedingly more elastick and active? And doth it not readily pervade all bodies? And is it not (by its elastick force) expanded through all the heavens?" (Opticks, 4th ed. (London, 1730), p.324; Opera, ed. S. Horsley (London, 1779-85), IV, 223 (this is the edition Coleridge read; see CN 83, 83n)). As Heimann comments, aether "was posited as an explanation of gravity . . . in response to Leibniz's charge that he had employed gravity as an occult quality" ("Nature is a Perpetual Worker," p.3). The theory of vibrations through the nerves, which Hartley used, comes in the 24th Query; the longest, and most influential, in which the theory of aether as a micro-structure of attractive and repulsive powers is developed, is the last, the 31st.

was dynamic rather than mechanical: phenomena of movement were not explained by any contact action, but rather by repulsive powers operating between micro-particles. The increasingly important role that forces came to have in Newton's philosophy was to produce significant consequences. The emphasis on the primacy of force, closely related to the theory of the paucity of matter in the solid universe, was to allow Priestley to reject the theory that solid particles constituted the essence of matter, thus providing the basis for his philosophical monism and entire system of materialism, necessity, cosmic optimism, and psychological perfectionism.¹ In 1777 he wrote in the Disquisitions:

The principles of the Newtonian philosophy were no sooner known, than it was seen how few, in comparison, of the phenomena of nature, were owing to solid matter, and how much to powers. . . . It has been asserted . . . that . . . all the solid matter in the solar system might be contained within a nut-shell. . . . Now when solidity had apparently so very little to do in the system, it is really a wonder that it did not occur to philosophers sooner, that perhaps there might be nothing for it to do at all, and that there might be no such a thing in nature. 2

Priestley's sensationalism, derived from Locke, allowed him to argue that sensory experience only provided evidence of resisting powers, and thus to take Newton's theories to an extreme. Essentially, Priestley's philosophy was a development of Newton, not a radical break from him. In effect, Priestley rejected the dualistic Neoplatonic framework of

1. See McEvoy and McGuire, "Priestley's Way of Rational Dissent," pp. 380-94.

2. Joseph Priestley, Disquisitions Relating to Matter and Spirit, 2nd ed. (Birmingham, 1782), I, 22.

Newton's thought, in which forces were seen ontologically as being closer to the immaterial, even though their effects were manifested in the material.

Newton was, in fact, concerned with the need to maintain the primacy of the spiritual in nature. Fundamental to his concept of force was his notion of "active principles," which were the general mode of causation of divine agency in the natural world.¹ Unlike the mechanical philosophers, Newton did not think that all phenomena could be reduced to the simple basis of mere matter in motion. "Active principles" were his answer to the ontological problem of the causation of force. They were conceived by Newton in a very similar way to Cudworth's plastic nature. Although he regarded God as the direct cause, the active principles were conceptualised as working through natural forces such as generation, fermentation and gravity. Active principles, he wrote,

are the cause of gravity . . . and the cause of fermentation, by which the heart and blood of animals are kept in perpetual motion and heat; the inward parts of the earth are constantly warmed, and in some places grow very hot; bodies burn and shine; mountains take fire; the caverns of the earth are blown up; and the sun continues violently hot and lucid, and warms all things by his light. For we meet with very little motion in the world, besides what is owing to these active principles. And if it were not for these principles, the bodies of the earth, planets, comets, sun, and all things in them, would grow cold and freeze, and become inactive masses; and all putrefaction, generation, vegetation and life would cease, and the plants and comets would not remain in their orbs. 2

1. The best account of Newton's "active principles" is McGuire's "Force, Active Principles, and Newton's Invisible Realm," especially pp. 204-08.

2. Newton, Opera, IV, 257-58.

Thus the mechanical description of causation, as in Descartes or Hobbes, did not constitute causation for Newton at all. Newton held that God worked actively within the world, and that it was through him that a universal life was present. The aether itself was viewed as a type of active principle, while the active principles were described in terms of mind working upon matter. Nature, said Newton, "can be the effect of nothing else than the wisdom and skill of a powerful ever-living Agent; who, being in all places, is more able by his will to move the bodies within his boundless uniform sensorium, and thereby to form and reform the parts of the universe, than we are by our will to move the parts of our own bodies."¹ Thus active principles, as in Cudworth, express the "intending" causality of God which always acts to bring about his ends "with perfect art and wisdom": the mind of God works within and upon creation.²

"Active principles" were in fact used throughout the eighteenth century from Newton to Priestley as a generic term for unknown forces, whether extrinsic or intrinsic to

1. Newton, Opera, IV, 262.

2. McGuire, "Force, Active Principles and Newton's Invisible Realm," remarks that statements by Newton such as "We cannot say that all nature is not alive," "affirm the ontological priority of spirituality in Newton's philosophy" and "provide a further link with the Cambridge Platonists, especially with Cudworth. . . . Newton . . . like Cudworth uses 'life' to cover the volitions and intentions of God and man, as well as the various causal agencies which move matter and replenish activity in nature. Thus the term refers to all manifestations of the non-material from forces to the higher attributes of the spiritual" (p.204).

matter, or conceived as spiritual or material. For Wordsworth to write in the Spring of 1798:

There is an active principle alive
In all things, in all nature, in the flowers
And in the trees in every pebbly stone
That paves the brooks, and stationary rocks
The moving waters and the invisible air 1

shows simply that he was writing within the framework of Newtonian (and thus also Neoplatonic) scientific thinking that remained predominant throughout the eighteenth century. The dominance of this common underlying view of matter throughout the period explains the conflicting claims for specific sources of the idea: J.W. Beach, for instance, relates it solely to the influence of Cudworth, Newton P. Stallknecht favours Newton and Shaftesbury, while Piper plays down these claims in favour of the philosophes.² In seeing these diverse sources in relation to a common philosophical tradition, Wordsworth's own relation to them becomes much clearer. A similar instance is to be found in "Tintern Abbey," with its

sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man,
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. 3

1. MS. 18a, D.C. MS. 16, 73^V, ll. 1-5.

2. Beach, The Concept of Nature, p.105; Stallknecht, Strange Seas of Thought, pp. 131-34; Piper, Active Universe, pp. 78-79, and p.63 for his dismissal of counter-claims.

3. ll. 96-103, Lyrical Ballads, p.116, PW II, 262.

As Stephen Prickett has pointed out, an equally bewildering variety of sources or influences have been cited for this passage. Prickett himself points to a strange fusion of Platonic and naturalistic sentiments in "Tintern Abbey," so that God is both immanent in nature and transcendent to it.¹ However this fusion is exactly that which can be found in Newton. The complications are perhaps most clearly suggested by Berkeley, a direct influence on Coleridge, but himself also influenced by Newton and Cudworth. In Siris, for instance, when discussing the aether of Opticks, Berkeley comments that "Motion, and even power in an equivocal sense, may be found in this pure aetherial spirit" ² This is used to develop his own theory of fire, which is subsequently fused with plastic nature:

-
1. Stephen Prickett, Romanticism and Religion (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p.85. Chard, Dissenting Republican (The Hague: Mouton, 1972), draws attention to "the way in which the Dissenting empirical tradition came to be colored by the revival of Platonism" (p.151). The extent to which it was a "revival" may be questioned; Chard, however, notes an interesting analogue to "Tintern Abbey" in Fawcett's Sermons (London, 1795), I, 32-33: "It is not so proper to say, that the Creator has communicated a principle of life to the animated world, as that he is himself the great principle of universal vitality. . . . He is the great spring and impulse that actuates all things. He is himself the attracting power that holds the particles of all bodies together, and combines all bodies into the beautiful systems we see them compose. He is himself the living soul that inhabits, and animates every living thing; that propels every drop through every vein; that produces every pulsation of every artery; every motion of every limb, every action of every organ, throughout the whole animal kingdom. Every operating principle, through the ample compass of things, is God, that moment willing, God, that moment acting. He is the life of the world: at once the maker, the inspector, and the mover, of all things". For Wordsworth and Fawcett, see G.M. Harper, Wordsworth (London: Murray, 1916, 3rd ed. 1929) pp. 188-94.
 2. Berkeley, Siris (1744), in Works (London, 1784), II, Sec. 221, p.562. (Bristol Borrowings, no. 75).

There is, according to those [Platonic] philosophers, a life infused throughout all things . . . an intellectual and artificial fire, an inward principle, animal spirit, or natural life producing and forming within as art doth without, regulating, moderating, and reconciling the various motions, qualities and parts of this mundane system. 1

It is easy to see how Coleridge and Wordsworth were affected by Berkeley's melodious prose, and by his persuasive plea:

"If nature be supposed the life of the world, animated by one soul, compacted into one frame, and directed or governed in all parts by one mind; this system cannot be accused of atheism. . . . "2

Berkeley, in fact, rejected Newton's hypothesis that aether was a cause of gravity, and adapted it to the universal active aether of fire developed by Boerhaave (which in turn was developed from Newton's aether).³ In doing so, Berkeley marks the beginnings of a shift towards a view of nature in which powers were considered as intrinsic to matter rather than as the direct result of divine agency. The conception of nature as a self-regulating system, in which powers were immanent in the fabric of nature, was advanced by the publication of papers by Newton in the mid-

1. Berkeley, Works, II, Sec. 277, p.589.

2. Berkeley, Works, II, Sec. 279, p.590.

3. Heimann, "'Nature is a Perpetual Worker,'" pp. 13-14. Berkeley's relation to Newton is noted by Prickett, Coleridge and Wordsworth, p.12. For Berkeley's influence on Coleridge, see J.A. Appleyard, Coleridge's Philosophy of Literature (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965), and Orsini, Coleridge and German Idealism, pp. 29-33. For his influence on Wordsworth, see Rader, Wordsworth, pp. 46-47, and E.D. Leyburn, "Berkeleyian Elements in Wordsworth's Thought," JEGP, 47 (1948), 14-28.

eighteenth century which emphasized a theory of aether as a substratum of attractive and repulsive forces in matter. Philosophers such as Priestley or Hutton were to develop this into a theory in which such forces themselves constituted the essence of matter.¹ This view was in fact closer to Wordsworth's Windy Brow revisions than the dualistic position of "Tintern Abbey," in which the crucial philosophical idea is of a divine causality manifesting itself directly through active powers in nature, and identified, as in Berkeley, with "the life of things." Although he retained this position, Wordsworth's poetry can also be seen to be profoundly affected by the concept of power in nature and the mind.

This brief and necessarily restricted account has attempted to place the views of Coleridge and Wordsworth within the context of natural philosophy from the Renaissance to the mid-eighteenth century. What is clear is that in asserting the relation of natural philosophy to theology they took their place within a long tradition. The idea that the Hermetic philosophy of the Renaissance was replaced by the mechanical philosophy, which reigned supreme throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, cannot be sustained. In the seventeenth century, as Richard Westfall has suggested, "the two schools of natural philosophy assumed a far more subtle relationship than the idea of blunt antagonism admits."² In the English reaction against,

1. Or Coleridge: "Thus gravitation combines and includes the powers of attraction and repulsion, which are the constituents of matter . . ." (CC VI, 81).

2. Westfall, "Newton and the Hermetic Tradition," II, 185.

and infiltration of, mechanical philosophy, one characteristic is noticeable throughout. This is the assertion of divine providence and the ontology of force as God. The means of asserting it consistently takes the form of the argument that God's mind is the ultimate shaping and creating force. As Cudworth shows very clearly, this description of God's mind in the universe is based on the analogy of man's mind. In Cudworth it is explicitly argued from the analogy of the relation of the artist to his artefact. The attempt to preserve the spiritual in nature takes the form of asserting mind in it, ostensibly God's, but in fact the only image of that mind that is known--man's. The consequences of this analogy are to be explicitly discussed by Wordsworth at the beginning of Book V of The Prelude. For the moment, however, what is important to emphasize is that the poetry of the late eighteenth/early nineteenth century is intimately a part of this overall intellectual pattern. While pantheism finds a mind in nature, idealism in a sense simply reverses this, and asserts the truth of what was originally only an analogy. In either case, the point at which mind is incorporated into nature is through a (non-biological) conception of life. Berkeley puts it most clearly:

Some Platonics indeed, regard life as the act of nature, in like manner as intellection is of the mind or intellect. As the first intellect acts by understanding, so nature according to them acts or generates by living. ¹

1. Berkeley, Works, II, Sec. 278, pp. 589-90.

CHAPTER FOUR: Power.

i. The Circulating Spirit.

The fragment of 1798 that was eventually to find its way into Book IX of The Excursion, "There is an active principle," is not about nature as such.¹ It begins with nature, but like the "something far more deeply interfused" of "Tintern Abbey," ends up in "the mind of man":

There is an active principle alive
In all things, in all natures, in the flowers
And in the trees in every pebbly stone
That paves the brooks, the stationary rocks
The moving waters and the invisible air
All beings have their properties which spread
Beyond themselves, a power by which they make
Some other being conscious of their life
Spirit that knows no insulated spot
No chasm, no solitude, from link to link
It circulates, the soul of all the worlds.
This is the freedom of the universe
Unfolded still the more, more visible
The more we know & yet is revered least
And least respected in the human mind
Its most apparent home. 2

This movement from nature to the mind is characteristic. So is the equation of the active principle and power in nature with a power in the mind. The claim for power is derived from nature, but the emphasis is on mental power:

Oh never was this intellectual power
This vital spirit in its essence free
As is the light of heaven, this mind that streams
With emanations like the blessed sun
Oh never was this [] existence formed
For wishes that debilitate and die
Of their own weakness 3

-
1. MS. 18a, D.C. MS. 16, 73^V--74^V, Excursion, IX. 1-26, 128-52.
 2. MS. 18a, D.C. MS. 16, 73^V, ll. 1-16.
 3. MS. 18a, D.C. MS. 16, 74^V, ll. 58-64.

Mental power, however, is imaged through nature, and thus the circulation is complete. The contrast between man's intellectual power and "the close prison-house of human laws" that follows is also the subject of the "Intimations Ode" and in many ways of The Prelude itself. The passage strikingly illustrates the way in which the life of nature is identified with that of the mind--identified in the phrase, "this intellectual power / This vital spirit." There the mind, power, life, and spirit, are brought together in one equation and one affirmation. Whereas in natural philosophy, activity and spirit in nature has been deduced, by analogy, from activity in the mind, for Wordsworth activity in the mind is deduced from activity in nature.

"There is an active principle" was written before the formal theory of the imagination was developed. Imagination at that time was not the god-like faculty which it was to become, not yet a word of higher import. It is defined, briefly and unobtrusively, in the note to "The Thorn" (1800): "imagination, by which word I mean the faculty which produces impressive effects out of simple elements. . . ." ¹ But if imagination is relatively unimportant at this stage, it is noticeable that extraordinary emphasis is placed on the concept of power. The image of intellectual power, as a "mind that streams / With emanations like the blessed sun," is noticeably similar to Coleridge's description in "To William Wordsworth":

1. Lyrical Ballads, p.288, PW II, 512.

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-- 1

In epistemological terms, Coleridge has some justification when he suggests that the light Wordsworth receives is in fact from his own power. For insofar as the concept of power can be traced to a philosophical source, that source is in Locke's Essay Concerning Human Understanding (1690), where it is indeed a power of the mind. But the history of the concept of power in the eighteenth century shows it to have precisely that ability to circulate, to transfer from subject to object, and from object to subject, which has already been noted as a characteristic of the relation of nature to the mind.

1. "To William Wordsworth," ll. 16-19, CPW I, 404-05.

ii. Problems of Epistemology.

In asserting that the universe was active and full of spirit, Wordsworth and Coleridge were not fighting in isolation against a "scientific" view of a purely mechanical world. This calls into question the view that in affirming an activity of the mind, they were reacting against an intellectual context which regarded mental processes as purely passive. The dead universe and the passive mind are of a piece, just as, for instance, the mental power of the Infant Babe in Book II of The Prelude is inseparable from his situation as "inmate of this active universe."¹

This mental corollary to the mechanical universe is described by John Spencer Hill:

The prevailing concept of 'mind' in eighteenth-century England was that advanced by empirical philosophers like Hobbes, Locke, Hume, and Hartley. In their systems the mind is represented as a tabula rasa or as a sheet of 'white paper void of all characters, without any ideas' on which external impressions conveyed through the five senses are printed. . . . The mind, then, functions merely as the passive recorder of sense impressions, especially those originating in sight. These mental 'images' or replicas of original sense impressions are stored in the memory, and in the acts of thinking or reflection they are recalled and combined with other stored-up images by the faculty of association. 2

Here, perhaps, is the real object of the attack on mechanism. Certainly, philosophers such as Hartley, Priestley, or Godwin

1. 1805, II. 266.

2. Introduction to Coleridge on Imagination, ed. John Spencer Hill (London: Macmillan, 1978), p.1.

describe the mind in terms of mechanism.¹ An interesting comment on this view, however, comes from Priestley himself. In his Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Palmer, there is a section entitled "Of the Prejudice arising from the terms MACHINE and NECESSITY":

You mislead and deceive yourself, I am persuaded, not a little, by the frequent use of the opprobrious term machine, saying, in the first place that, because a man wills necessarily, that is, definitely in definite circumstances, he wills mechanically; and then having made man into a machine, you, unknown to yourself, connect with it every thing opprobrious and degrading belonging to a common clock, or a fulling-mill.

But you might easily correct this by only considering what you yourself allow to be necessary relating to the mind of man, viz. perception and judgment. Is there not something inconceivably more excellent in these powers than in those of common machines, or mills, and even something that bears no resemblance to any thing belonging to them, though they all agree in this one circumstance, that their respective affections are necessary? Now suffer your mind to be sufficiently impressed with the wonderful nature and excellence of the powers of perception and judgment, and you cannot think the will at all degraded by being put on a level with them 2

-
1. Even Hartley, however, speaks of the "generation" of ideas (Observations on Man, I, 56), which immediately complicates the issue; similarly, although he denies Locke's ideas of reflection, reflection is replaced by an (unconscious) power of association. Hartley himself is a good example of the mutual influence of Newton and Locke, in this case on the model of the mind. As Karl Figlio points out, the Observations on Man was one of the earliest examples of the blending of the impression model of sensation with the idea of the nervous system as a continuous mass of medullary matter. "For Hartley, the general laws of sensation, motion and ideas could be built on two doctrines: the vibration of ethereal particles from Newton, and from Locke, the influence of association on 'our opinions and affections'" ("Theories of Perception and the Physiology of Mind in the Late Eighteenth Century," History of Science, 13 (1975), 196). Figlio comments that the use of the vibratory model declined towards the end of the century; this is borne out by Priestley's revision of Hartley in 1775.
 2. Joseph Priestley, A Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Palmer, in Defence of the Illustrations of Philosophical Necessity (Bath, 1779), pp. 83-84.

Against the accusation of mechanism, Priestley asserted mental power. In doing so, he was completely within the Lockean tradition. For although he rejected innate ideas, and allowed sensation only, it is not true to say that the mind as described by Locke was purely passive. As Ernest Tuveson has pointed out, the solution to the rejection of innate ideas and the assertion of the primacy of experience was, "to give to the mind, not the ideas, but the power to make ideas."¹

Locke did indeed state that the mind was passive with regard to the impression of sensations. But that was only the first stage:

That the Mind, in respect of its simple Ideas, is wholly passive, and receives them all from the Existence and Operations of Things, such as Sensation or Reflection offers them, without being able to make any one Idea, Experience shews us. But if we attentively consider those Ideas I call mixed Modes, we are now speaking of, we shall find their Original quite different. The Mind often exercises an active Power in the making these several Combinations. For, it being once furnished with simple Ideas, it can put them together in several Compositions, and so make variety of complex Ideas, without examining whether they exist so together in Nature. 2

-
1. Ernest Tuveson, "Locke and the 'Dissolution of the Ego,'" MP, 52 (1955), 161.
 2. John Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, ed. Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), II. xxii. 2, p. 288. Coleridge picks this passage out in his first letter to Wedgwood (Griggs, II, 684). For an account of the innovating aspect of Locke's argument that knowledge could be established in the context of sensory experience, see Gerd Buchdahl, Metaphysics and the Philosophy of Science (Oxford: Blackwell, 1969), pp. 6-8, and pp. 181-274, *passim*. The fullest discussion of Locke's views on active powers in the mind and in matter, and the effect of the influence of the Cambridge Neoplatonists on these views, is R.M. Mattern, "Locke on Active Power and the Obscure Idea of Active Power from Bodies," Studies in the History and Philosophy of Science, 11 (1980), 39-77.

Locke's stress on the activity of the mind in reflection, on ideas as the objects of consciousness, is comparable to the mental activity ascribed by Wordsworth to the Pedlar:

He had received
A precious gift for as he grew in years
With these impressions would he still compare
All his ideal stores, his shapes, & forms
And being still unsatisfied with aught
Of dimmer character, he thence attained
An active power to fasten images
Upon his brain, & on their pictured lines
Intensely brooded, even till they acquired
The liveliness of dreams. 1

The exact form of the Pedlar's fastening images, his Miltonic brooding, is of course particular to Wordsworth's description. It is important, however, not to over-emphasize the strangeness of the "active power" of the Pedlar's mental reflection. The fact that Wordsworth uses the very words of Locke must be a coincidence; but it shows that he was writing within a more flexible framework of theories of the mind than is implied by a blanket assertion of passivity.

Locke's formulations were to affect both theories of mind and theories of matter. This was because, epistemologically, a theory of perception was bound to affect ideas of matter. The problem can be approached via Clough's remark that instead of looking directly at an object and seeing it as it really is, Wordsworth takes the sentiment produced by it in his mind as the important and "really real fact."²

1. Ruined Cottage MS.B, D.C. MS. 17, 6^r, ll. 16-18, 7^r, ll. 1-7, CW IV, 150-53. Cf. Robert McRae, "'Idea' as a Philosophical Term in the Seventeenth Century," JHI, 26 (1965), 175-90.

2. Clough, Poems and Prose Remains, I, 319.

This raises the epistemological problem. Central to seventeenth century discussions of matter and perception was the distinction between primary and secondary qualities. Thus Descartes, among others, sought to differentiate between those qualities which actually inhered in an object, and those which were merely produced through the agency of human sensation, such as colour or taste. These secondary qualities only arose through the interaction of the object and the perceiving mind, and were not considered by Descartes to be "really real." It was this separation between primary and secondary qualities which produced the aspect of the mechanical universe so evocatively, if also somewhat unfairly, described by Burt:

The gloriously romantic universe of Dante and Milton, that set no bounds to the imagination of man as it played over space and time, had now been swept away. . . . The world that people had thought themselves living in--a world rich with colour and sound, redolent with fragrance, filled with gladness, love and beauty . . . was crowded now into minute corners in the brains of scattered organic beings. The really important world outside was a world hard, cold, colourless, silent, and dead 1

Fortunately, it would seem, for everybody, many eighteenth century thinkers rejected the distinction of primary and secondary qualities altogether, and conceptualised matter entirely in terms of mind-dependent qualities. Heimann and McGuire have argued convincingly that this shift depends upon Locke's discussions in the Essay Concerning Human Understanding.² Locke developed Boyle's idea that, besides

1. Burt, Metaphysical Foundations, pp. 236-37.

2. Heimann and McGuire, "Newtonian Forces and Lockean Powers," pp. 248-51.

having primary characteristics, material objects have the power to produce changes in sensations, or ideas:

Power thus considered is twofold, viz. as able to make, or able to receive any change: The one may be called Active, and the other Passive Power. Whether Matter be not wholly destitute of active Power, as its Author GOD is truly above all passive Power; and whether the intermediate state of created Spirits be not that alone, which is capable of both active and passive Power, may be worth consideration. I shall not now enter into that Enquiry, my present Business being not to search into the original of Power but how we come by the Idea of it. 1

Thus although Locke denies activity to matter, since it is God who is the causative force, he does "confess Power includes in it some kind of relation"2 Objects do not inherently possess power, but they do suggest, through sensation, the idea of power. Strictly speaking, Locke suggests that we only get the idea of active power from a consideration of "GOD and spirits" and from the mind's reflection on its own operations.3 But Locke's analysis was construed by eighteenth century philosophers as supporting a substantive concept of power in matter, and the theory that the essence of matter was its resisting power was to be advanced many times during the course of the century. Heimann and McGuire show that, while the Newtonian forces and Lockean powers were developed during the eighteenth

1. Locke, Essay, II. xxi. 2, p.234.

2. Locke, Essay, II. xxi. 3, p.234. He adds: "And sensible Qualities, as Colours and Smells, etc. what are they but the Powers of different Bodies, in relation to our Perception, etc."

3. Locke, Essay, II. xxi. 2-4, pp. 234-36.

century into a number of different theories, a common assumption was the notion that matter, and therefore nature, was made up of powers.¹

Thus Locke's theory of perception came to be transferred to the objects of perception, with a resulting correspondence between mind and nature. This can be illustrated from the Lyrical Ballads Preface (1800), where Wordsworth writes:

reflecting upon the magnitude of the general evil,
I should be oppressed with no dishonorable
melancholy, had I not a deep impression of certain
inherent and indestructible qualities of the
human mind, and likewise of certain powers in the
great and permanent objects that act upon it which
are equally inherent and indestructible; and did
I not further add to this impression a belief that
the time is approaching when the evil will be
systematically opposed by men of greater powers
and with far more distinguished success. 2

Thus, in the space of a single sentence, Wordsworth invokes "indestructible qualities of the human mind", compares them to the equally indestructible powers of nature, and announces the impending arrival of "men of greater powers" who will oppose contemporary taste.

1. Heimann and McGuire, "Newtonian Forces and Lockean Powers," pp. 268-304; in addition to Priestley and Hutton, the following works are also discussed: Robert Young, Essay on the Powers and Mechanism of Nature (1788), William Nicolson, Introduction to Natural Philosophy (1782), Gowin Knight, Attempt to Demonstrate, that all the Phaenomena in Nature may be Explained by Two Simple Active Principles, Attraction and Repulsion (1748), as well as many other philosophers of the period who conceived of matter in terms of attractive and repulsive powers. The belief that matter was constituted in this way was also fundamental to the dynamic philosophy of Kant, who argues for it in his Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science [1786], trans. E.B. Bax (London, 1883).

2. Prose Works, I, 130.

While one consequence of Locke's formulation was to lead to a theory of matter as power, a different effect can be seen in the philosophy of Berkeley, who develops the distinction between primary and secondary qualities in the opposite way. Rather than turn to Locke for substantiation of a concept of matter that allows only mind-relational qualities, Berkeley's idealist position takes the emphasis on secondary qualities as produced by sensation to an extreme. In the Principles of Human Knowledge (1710), he asks:

what are . . . objects but the things we perceive by sense, and what do we perceive besides our own ideas or sensations; and is it not plainly repugnant that any one of these or any combination of them should exist unperceived? 1

Denying that any primary quality or substance can be conceived without sensible qualities such as "colours, sounds, tastes, and so forth," Berkeley moves exclusively into the realm of secondary qualities.² Sensible qualities cannot exist without the mind. Yet Berkeley admits at the same time that they must have an existence exterior to any individual mind. It must thus necessarily follow that

there is an Omnipresent Eternal Mind, which knows and comprehends all things, and exhibits them to out view 3

Berkeley's proof of the existence of God, and the relation of the individual mind to God's mind, a fitting or wedding as intimate as ever evoked by Wordsworth himself, is thus

1. Berkeley, Works, I, Sec.4, p.25.

2. Berkeley, Works, I, Sec.9, p.27.

3. Berkeley, Three Dialogues (1713), Works, I, 179.

dependent on a shift to secondary or mind-relational qualities of matter. God is the direct cause of our sensations, which he produces in us through the agency or "language"--to use the favourite term of both Wordsworth and Coleridge--of nature. Berkeley rejects Locke's ideas of reflection, and denies Locke's contention that the idea of power can be derived from the activity of the mind, since the ontology of all perception must be God.¹ This, according to Coleridge, was the reason for his ultimate rejection of Berkeley, because, as he says in the Biographia, Berkeley's system of perception means that we are "merely passive to an external power"²

Berkeley's special attraction, as Rader suggests, may well have been that he combined "a sensationist theory of knowledge with an immanent theism"³ This is true of the only direct influence of Berkeley on Coleridge and Wordsworth that can be traced with any certainty—the idea of the "divine visual language" which, as has been pointed out, is derived from Berkeley's Alciphron (1732), a work which belongs to the later, Neoplatonic Berkeley of Siris.⁴

1. Berkeley, Works, I, Secs. 24-5. pp. 34-5.

2. BL, p.54. McFarland, Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition, pp. 300-03, suggests that Coleridge renounced Berkeley because his system was a form of pantheism. Berkeley's system, in denying matter, and thus the dualism of matter and spirit, was commonly regarded as atheistical. It was attacked by Baxter, Enquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul, II 2/3/5-320; for a discussion of Baxter's critique, see Harry M. Bracken, The Early Reception of Berkeley's Immaterialism 1710-1733, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1959, rev. ed. 1965), pp. 59-81.

3. Rader, Wordsworth, p.47.

4. Rader, Wordsworth, p.46, Appleyard, Coleridge's Philosophy of Literature, pp. 49-50.

Coleridge and Wordsworth's poetry of 1796-98 is much closer to the Neoplatonism of Siris, which is compatible with Cudworth, than to the early immaterialism of the Principles. Orsini, at the end of his analysis of the relation between Coleridge and Berkeley, comments:

All this goes to show that there is not much in the claim of some purely literary students of Coleridge that he got from Berkeley what he was later to receive from Kant, as if the two philosophies were identical. ¹

This, of course, is from a purely philosophical student of Coleridge; the literary student, who also considers the poetry, may argue for some analogies. For Berkeley is clearly important insofar as he raised the problem of epistemology, basing his system on a primacy of mind. Thus once again, nature is seen literally as mind, while consciousness in man comes to be of supreme importance in the perception of nature. But mind for Berkeley, whether of God or man, was not an organizing one.²

One philosopher whom Coleridge read during this period and who genuinely did emphasize the organizing power of the mind in perception was James Hutton. Hutton was no doubt

-
1. Orsini, Coleridge and German Idealism, p.33. Coleridge's enthusiasm for Berkeley (e.g., CN 174) was tempered by 1804 (CN 1842), probably after reading Kant's critique of Berkeley in the Critique of Pure Reason (trans. Norman Kemp Smith, London: Macmillan, 1929), B. 274-79.
 2. Strictly speaking, of course, nature does not exist for Berkeley, insofar as it is God. In Berkeley's system the agency of cause and change of ideas is "an incorporeal active substance or spirit" (Works, I, Sec.25, p.36) It is this which will be developed into his "fire" in Siris; in either case, it is clearly a version of a Newtonian aether.

influenced at Edinburgh by the Scottish Common-Sense school.¹

But he went much further than them, as Coleridge notes on the title-page of the Investigation of the Principles of Knowledge (1794):

There is great metaphysical Talent displayed in it; and the Writer had made an important step beyond Locke, Berkeley and Hartley--and was clearly on the precincts of the Critical Philosophy with which and the precious Treatises of Kant he appears to have had no acquaintance. 2

-
1. Coleridge had read Hutton's Principles by 22 June 1796 (Griggs, I, 222); Coburn comments that "Hutton may have been a factor in Coleridge's movement away from Hartley, and from Priestley and Berkeley, towards Kant I believe his usefulness to Coleridge has been insufficiently recognized" (CN 243n). The Common-Sense school, led by Thomas Reid, was a reaction against Hume's scepticism (including his denial that we can have any idea of power). The existence of this school, of which Coleridge clearly disapproved (see, e.g., Griggs, II, 947; The Friend, CC IV, I, 423), demonstrates very clearly that Coleridge was not interested in a philosophical system in which mind was considered active, by itself. If he had simply been breaking away from a theory of a passive mind towards one of an active mind, where better to find it than in Reid, who begins his Essays on the Active Powers of Man (Edinburgh, 1788) by asserting: "It is evidently the intention of our Maker, that man should be an active and not merely a speculative being. For this purpose, certain active powers have been given him . . ." (Active Powers of Man, p.1)? Reid's philosophy is a sort of language philosophy; his assertion that the mind is active is based ultimately on the existence of active and passive verb forms. To Hume's objection, against Locke, that we have no idea of power, Reid simply answers, "What convinces myself that I have an idea of power is, that I am conscious that I know what I mean by the word . . ." (Active Powers of Man, p.21). For Reid, the idea of power arises from the operations of the mind (Active Powers of Man, pp. 5-12); this was developed by James Gregory to a position where the application of the concept of power to nature was only a metaphor in cases of cause and effect; power is "an attribute of mind, and of mind alone" ("On Power," ed. Philip P. Wiener, JHI, 24 (1963), 249, and Philosophical and Literary Essays (Edinburgh, 1792), I, x-cclxvi).
 2. Coleridge, Inquiring Spirit, ed. Kathleen Coburn (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1951), no. 165, p.199.

Hutton is best known for his Theory of the Earth (1795), but it was his Principles of Knowledge that Coleridge read in 1796. A consideration of Hutton's work has to start with his concept of teleology, and it is through this that he most resembles Kant. Hutton begins with the conventional argument from design, that the order of nature reflects the wisdom of the creator. In seeing the "proper adaptation of powers to an intention" in nature, Hutton argues that a person,

having generalised actions and effects . . . arrives at causes or the order of events, and at the knowledge of end in the generalisation of effect. Now, having from the generalisation of effects formed the abstract general idea of end, he may consciously particularise, in conceiving an end in the order of things which have not as yet come to pass; and, in reflecting upon the various causes of things, he particularises that cause which shall then appear as proper to the end proposed. . . .

In this state of intellect, a mind acts no more in the order or system of nature, but has formed to itself an order of thought 1

"Order," Hutton argues, is therefore "not a thing," but "properly the action of mind, distinguishing its knowledge" ² From this, he produces a theory of knowledge based on "the conduct of a superintending mind, by which things are directed in the system of intellect as in that of matter: In the one, it is a series of thoughts; in the other it is a succession of plants, of animals, of worlds." ³ Space and time have no existence in reality, but only as ideas in the

1. James Hutton, An Investigation of the Principles of Knowledge (Edinburgh, 1794), II, 89.

2. Hutton, Investigation, II, 106.

3. Hutton, Investigation, II, 154.

mind of man. "All the knowledge," Hutton declares, "that we have of external things, consists in the operations of the mind itself conceiving them."¹

Hutton's remarkable analysis develops a theory of activity and passivity in mental operations. His theory of cognition is not based on a priori principles as in Kant, but on a reciprocity between mind and nature. The mind is passive in sensation, but active in judgement and perception. In his analysis "Of the Relation that is found between Power and Matter," he argues that there are two reciprocal species of power:

Therefore, instead of considering matter as a thing inert, and only passive in its nature, in reasoning concerning existences, we find it necessary to conceive power of action to exist in external things. It is in consequence of this power that external things influence our mind, which is then passive; in like manner as those material things are passive in relation to the action of our mind, exerting power, and thus affecting them. 2

This reciprocity between matter and mind is the foundation both of Hutton's system, and of his theory of the growth of the mind, in which man, as he puts it, "exists not only passively as a sensitive being, but also actively or actually in the operation of his thought."³ It is not quite Wordsworth's description of himself as a "sensitive, and a creative soul," but the similarity is a striking one.⁴ Hutton's

-
1. Hutton, Investigation, II, 165.
 2. Hutton, Investigation, II, 404.
 3. Hutton, Investigation, III, 712.
 4. 1805, XI. 257.

analysis of the principles of knowledge through a correspondence between mind and nature, through a perception and half-creation, cannot claim to have had a direct effect on Wordsworth. His work, however, illustrates the foregrounding of questions of epistemology in theories of mind and matter at the end of the century. The reciprocity which he develops is also to be found, in a much less clear-cut way, in the thought of a philosopher who had a much more obvious influence on both Coleridge and Wordsworth, Joseph Priestley.

Priestley's system seems at first to begin at the opposite extreme to Hutton's, not with the mode of individual knowledge but with God himself: "the Divine Being, and his energy, are absolutely necessary to that of every other being. His power is the very life and soul of every thing that exists; and, strictly speaking, without him, we ARE, as well as, can DO nothing."¹ Straightaway, the pantheistic implications of Priestley's system become clear. In the second edition of Matter and Spirit, Priestley denied that his position could be equated with Spinozism. But the terms of his denial, as Heimann has pointed out, simply show that he had misunderstood Spinoza.²

1. Matter and Spirit, I, 42, cited by Piper, Active Universe, p.36. My reading of Priestley has been greatly helped by the very lucid and thorough analysis by McEvoy and McGuire, "God and Nature: Priestley's Way of Rational Dissent."

2. Matter and Spirit, I, 42. Heimann comments: "Incorrectly interpreting Spinoza as denying any conceptual distinction between God and the aggregate totality of all things, Priestley repudiated the suggestion that his own conception of nature, which supposed 'the Deity to be as well as to do everything,' was 'anything like the opinion of Spinoza,' for Priestley claimed that he distinguished (as Spinoza did not) between 'infinite power' and 'inferior beings' and hence between God and nature," ("Voluntarism and Immanence: Conceptions of Nature in Eighteenth-Century Thought," JHI, 39 (1978), 281).

Although God as "ever-acting energy" is ontologically prior in Priestley's system, and everything is directly dependent on his power, the system itself was deduced the other way round. Priestley's theories were developed partly through his critical examination of the Common-Sense philosophers in 1774.¹ Priestley disagreed violently with Reid, and the other Common-Sense philosophers, but he was nevertheless influenced by their analysis of power, and his view of the origin of the concept of power was very similar. In the Introduction to Hartley's Theory of the Human Mind, he wrote:

the idea of power seems at first sight, to be a very simple one; but it is in fact, exceedingly complex. A child pushes at an obstacle, it gives way In like manner he practices a variety of other bodily and mental exercises, in which he finds that it only depends on himself, whether he performs them or not; and at length he calls that general feeling, which is the result of a thousand different impressions, by the name of power From these, and other similar observations, we get the idea of power, universally and abstractedly considered; so that, in fact, the idea of power is acquired by the very same mental process by which we acquire the idea of any other property 2

This was developed by Priestley into a complete philosophical position. Extending the Newtonian theory of the material

....Thought and extension in Spinoza are the two attributes under which the one substance is conceived, but they are merely the attributes that are known, not the totality. God, or substance, consists of infinite attributes (Works, trans. R.H.M. Elwes (New York: Dover Publications, 1955), II, 51); cf. also McFarland, Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition, p.359.

1. Joseph Priestley, An Examination of Dr Reid's "Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense" (London, 1774).
2. Priestley, Hartley's Theory of the Human Mind, pp. xxxvi-xxxvii.

vacuity of nature, he argued that there was no such thing as solidity in nature, only powers:

resistance, on which alone our opinion concerning the solidity or impenetrability of matter is founded, is never occasioned by solid matter, but by something of a very different nature, viz. a power of repulsion 1

From this, in turn, was developed a theory of God, as first cause:

all the powers of nature, or the tendencies of things to their different motions and operations, can only be the effect of the divine energy, perpetually acting upon them an energy without which the power of gravitation would cease, and the whole frame of the earth be dissolved. 2

In short, Priestley's materialism was developed not from God to matter, but from mind, to matter, to God. This epistemological reversal thus brings Priestley's system into the conceptual structure of the philosophical positions that have been described.

1. Matter and Spirit, I, 10.

2. Joseph Priestley, Institutes of Natural and Revealed Religion (3 vols. London 1772-4; 2nd ed. [2 vols.], Birmingham, 1782), I, 35.

iii. "Him, Nature's Essence, Mind, and Energy!"

Thus in the eighteenth century, as Roger Smith puts it, "the material world to which mental and organic systems were being 'reduced' had a complex and by no means unambiguously 'mechanical' structure."¹ Similarly, the relation of poetry to metaphysics and natural philosophy is much more complex if matter is thought to be constituted by forces and powers, and if these ideas themselves are based on mental structures. Overall, the structures that have been described illuminate the nature of natural philosophy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, while putting the epistemological claims of Romantic poetry in a new perspective. This new perspective is one in which the poetry of the period can be seen to be intimately related to its intellectual context and not isolated from it.

Smith argues that, whereas in the Burtt / Whitehead account it is assumed that the physical sciences are both the paradigm and the most basic of the sciences, in fact "mind, or theories of the mind's knowing and acting relations with the physical world, infused speculations in basic natural philosophy."² Thus scientists in fact depended on forms of understanding derived from forms of cognition, such as purposiveness, teleology, and anthropomorphism. Hutton's significance can thus be seen not in terms of his role as

1. Roger Smith, "The Background of Physiological Psychology in Natural Philosophy," History of Science, 11 (1973), 102.

2. Smith, "Physiological Psychology," p. 102.

innovator or precursor of Kant, but as a natural philosopher who, in his Investigation of the Principles of Knowledge, understood these processes and articulated them. Smith argues for the central place of psychological theories in natural philosophy, a place evident enough when the use of such psychological terms as "substance," "cause," "force," "power" is considered.

Newton's concept of "active principles," or forces, and Locke's notion of "powers," utilise theories of mind as a means of dissolving the mind / body dichotomy introduced by Descartes, and, in a different form, continue the traditions of Hermetic and Neoplatonic philosophy generally considered to have been discarded with the new scientific world-view produced by seventeenth century mechanicism. Smith's essay points to two conclusions:

first, relations between mind and its volition, 'force' as a substantial form, and the properties of matter in the structure of seventeenth and eighteenth century natural philosophy; second, common rejection of the Cartesian ontological dualism and tentative dissolution of the mind-body problem by understanding the properties of bodies in terms of mental qualities. ¹

This interpretation of the relation between psychology and philosophy has even more far-reaching consequences for literature. At the end of his essay, Smith points to the possible place of Romanticism in this context:

The complexities of Naturphilosophie related to the assumption that scientific knowledge depends

1. Smith, "Physiological Psychology," p.103.

on categories of thought given meaning in terms of the mind's operations. Romanticism is in a sense the most extreme form of psychologism in science: knowledge of the outer world was based on knowledge of the inner world. 1

The extreme form of this position was, as Smith suggests, that of the Naturphilosophen.² But even in the philosophies that have been described, where this was only implicit in the cognitive structure of the system itself, there is something rather disconcerting about the way in which a system could reverse itself entirely, with apparent ease. Thus, as McFarland shows, Berkeley's system, though it begins by appearing as the very opposite of pantheism, has, by the end of Part I of the Principles, become explicitly pantheistic:

But you will say, hath nature no share in the production of natural things, and must they be all ascribed to the immediate and sole operation of God? I answer, if by nature is meant only the visible series of effects, or sensations imprinted on our minds according to certain fixed and general laws: then it is plain, that nature taken in this sense cannot produce anything at all. But if by nature is meant some being distinct from GOD, as well as from the laws of nature, and things perceived by sense, I must confess that word is to me an empty sound, without any intelligible meaning annexed to it. Nature in this acceptation is a vain chimera introduced by those heathens, who had

-
1. Smith, "Physiological Psychology," p. 104.
 2. Descriptive analyses in English of Naturphilosophie include Joseph L. Esposito, Schelling's Idealism and Philosophy of Nature (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1977); B. Gower, "Speculation in Physics: The History and Practice of Naturphilosophie," Studies in the History and Philosophy of Science, 3 (1973), 301-56; D.M. Knight, "German Science in the Romantic Period," in Maurice Crosland, ed., The Emergence of Science in Western Europe (London: Macmillan, 1975), pp. 161-78; H.A.M. Snelders, "Romanticism and Naturphilosophie and the Inorganic Natural Sciences 1797-1840," SIR, 9 (1970), 193-215; and W.D. Wetzels, "Aspects of Natural Science in German Romanticism," SIR, 10 (1971), 44-59.

not just notions of the omnipresence and
infinite perfection of GOD. 1

Similarly, Priestley's system, although initially appearing pantheistic, shows itself ultimately to be based on a principle of mind. These epistemological uncertainties, in which it is not at all clear what is a process of mind, of nature, or of God's mind, become the very subject, and object, of Wordsworth's poetry, particularly in the period 1798-99. The balance or reciprocity between mind and nature is in fact made up of an oscillation in which it is impossible to know where power or causation is coming from.

This aspect of Wordsworth's poetry first appears very noticeably in the early drafts of The Pedlar, and fragments associated with it in the Alfoxden Notebook, dating from late January / early March 1798:

To gaze
On that green hill and on those scattered trees
And feel a pleasant consciousness of life
In the impression of that loveliness
Untill the sweet sensation called the mind
Into itself by image from without
Unvisited: and all her reflex powers
Wrapp'd in a still dream forgetfulness

I lived without the knowledge that I lived
Then by those beauteous forms brought back again
To lose myself again as if my life
Did ebb & flow with a strange mystery 2

The ebbing and the flowing from within and without, the uncertainties as to where the perceiving mind is, have quite suddenly become the subject of Wordsworth's poetry.

1. McFarland, Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition, p.301; Berkeley, Works, I, Sec. 150, p.101.

2. Alfoxden Notebook, D.C. MS. 14, 21^V, ll. 1-12, CW IV, 124-25.

The Pedlar, withdrawn into "caves forlorn" or "the hollow depths of naked crags," has the same experience:

and even in their fixed lineaments
Or from the power of a peculiar eye
Or by creative feeling overborne
Or by predominance of thought oppressed
Even in their fixed and steady lineaments
He traced an ebbing and a flowing mind
Expression ever-varying. 1

From the first, the descriptions of the Pedlar are preoccupied with this kind of uncertainty. They are particularly interesting because they spell out the oscillation of mind to mind in nature with such specificity:

To him was given an ear which deeply felt
The voice of Nature in the obscure wind
The sounding mountain & the running stream
From deep analogies by thought supplied
Or consciousnesses not to be subdued
To every natural form, rock, fruit, & flower
Even the loose stones that cover the highway
He gave a moral life; he saw them feel
Or linked them to some feeling. In all shapes
He found a secret & mysterious soul
A fragrance & a spirit of strange meaning
Though poor in outward shew he was most rich
He had a world about him--'twas his own
He made it--for it only lived to him
And to the God who looked into his mind 2

Although the history of the Pedlar is told in terms of a power in nature awakening a corresponding power in the mind, this dualistic structure seems to be continually at the point of

-
1. Ruined Cottage MS.B, D.C. MS. 17, 7^r, 11. 15-19, 8^r, 11. 1-2, CW IV, 152-55.
 2. Ruined Cottage MS. B, D.C. MS. 17, 16^r, 11. 77-85, 17^r, 11. 86-89, CW IV, 180-81, 184-85. "From deep analogies by thought supplied / or consciousnesses not to be subdued" is an insertion, retained in MS.D; I have preferred the reading of "consciousnesses," as in MS. D (D.C. MS. 16, 66^v, l. 15, CW IV, 364-65) to Butler's "consciousness is."

dissolution. The spirit that is found in nature, the "secret and mysterious soul," for instance, following on the projection of "He gave a moral life; he saw them feel / Or linked them to some feeling," at first seems to be a predominately mental intuition. Yet as we turn into the next line, we read that he has found a "fragrance" as well, and a spirit of strange meaning that by definition implies otherness. After the assertion that "He had a world about him--'twas his own / He made it--for it only lived to him," we seem to be back in the realm of certainties, until the last line where the whole is reversed, and the "secret & mysterious soul" as object has become a subject, and the Pedlar an object: "And to the God who looked into his mind." The final description of the Pedlar speaks of how his eye "Could find no surface where its power might sleep." This power, restless, simultaneously within and without, is also the circulating power of "There is an active principle":

All beings have their properties which spread
Beyond themselves, a power by which they make
Some other spirit conscious of their life
Spirit that knows no insulated spot
No chasm, no solitude, from link to link
It circulates, the soul of all the worlds. 1

Yet, Wordsworth adds, it is least revered "in the human mind / Its most apparent home."

"Power," as Havens remarks, was a favourite word with Wordsworth. He uses the word over six hundred times in his poetry.² Yet there is something very odd about the way

1. MS. 18a, D. C. MS. 16, 73^V, ll. 6-11.

2. Havens, Mind of a Poet, II, 472.

that he uses it. This has been discussed by Owen:

In ordinary usage the word power demands, or at least implies, a context: we expect it to be followed by an infinitive, or by such a group as of plus verbal noun, or to be qualified by an adjective or its equivalent; or, if such a context is not present, we expect it to be easily inferred. Among the 600-odd occasions on which Wordsworth uses the word or its plural in his verse, all the expected contexts can no doubt be found. But there is also to be found a usage which is seemingly peculiar to Wordsworth, the use of the word without such a context stated or easily inferred--a case which provokes in the reader the questions, "Power for what?" "Power to do what?" and the like. 1

But power in Wordsworth, for the reasons that have been suggested, does not have a subject nor even an object, for it is power which dissolves subject and object divisions and finds no surface on which to sleep. Owen's analysis is the fullest account of power in Wordsworth but it does not include the sort of implications which have been developed here. At the end of his discussion, Owen concludes that he is unable to suggest a general definition of power in Wordsworth's usage. However, he suggests that in the natural scene,

it is, first, the analogue in the scene of various elements of our experience connected with power in the physicist's sense: "any form of energy or force available for application to work" is a definition from the Oxford English Dictionary (sense 13) 2

It should be clear by now that there is a much more specific usage of the word which includes what we now call the

1. W.J.B. Owen, Wordsworth as Critic (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), p. 195-96.

2. Owen, Wordsworth as Critic, p. 213.

physicist's sense, but is based on a psychological and metaphysical one. Owen in fact prefers the only context for the word which he discusses, that of eighteenth century theories of the sublime. He notes, helpfully, the importance which the concept plays in Wordsworth's own essay "The Sublime and the Beautiful."¹ Before going on to discuss this, it should be emphasized that the emergence of a theory of power in the sublime towards the end of the eighteenth century itself has a context, the same context in fact which we have been analysing.² The key role which the word "power" plays

-
1. Owen, Wordsworth as Critic, pp. 195-228. The essay "The Sublime and the Beautiful," an unpublished draft for Wordsworth's A Guide Through the District of the Lakes (1810), probably composed late November 1812, was printed for the first time in 1974 in Prose Works, II, 340-60. Owen's is the only major discussion of a critical principle of Wordsworth's described by De Quincey in his essay on Pope: "There is, first, the literature of knowledge; and, secondly, the literature of power. The function of the first is--to teach; the function of the second is--to move: the first is a rudder; the second, an oar or a sail. The first speaks to the mere discursive understanding; the second speaks ultimately, it may happen, to the higher understanding or reason, but always through affections of pleasure and sympathy" (Masson, XI, 54).
 2. Thus, for instance, Monk describes Priestley's chief contribution in his A Course of Lectures on Oratory and Criticism (London, 1777) as "not so much a body of new ideas, as the fact that he applied definitively the psychology of Hartley to problems of taste. In both his ideas and his associationism he is not unlike Gerard, but in his 'modern' approach to the subject he is a good example of the increasing tendency to take aesthetic problems into the mind of man and to look more carefully at the effect than at the object" (The Sublime: A Study of Critical Theories in Eighteenth-Century England (New York: MLA, 1935), p.119). Clearly the movement towards mind-relational forms of cognition could be traced in terms of the aesthetics of the sublime; Monk in effect does this although in different terms. But consideration of writings in aesthetics in isolation is less helpful. Thus Stallknecht argues for the influence of Alison's Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste (1790), in which "Nature in some of its forms subtly suggests through various means a power or affection of mind . . ."; Stallknecht concedes that there is no reference to Alison in Coleridge or Wordsworth, but adds that this "is of not great significance since the ideas in question appear elsewhere especially in Kant" (Strange Seas of Thought, pp. 250-52).

in The Prelude, in the multitude of functions to which Owen draws our attention, is no more than partially illuminated by placing it within the context of theories of the sublime.

Burke stresses the importance of power in his Enquiry, where he devotes a whole section to it:

Besides those things which directly suggest the idea of danger, and those which produce a similar effect from a mechanical cause, I know of nothing sublime, which is not some modification of power. 1

Burke's description, however, suggests only a fraction of the role that power plays in Wordsworth's poetry. He declares that it "derives all its sublimity from the terror with which it is generally accompanied," and concludes:

we have traced power through its several gradations unto the highest of all, where our imagination is finally lost; and we find terror, quite throughout the progress, its inseparable companion, and growing along with it, as far as we can possibly trace them. 2

In order to isolate the difference of this from the concept of power that is to be found in Wordsworth, it is only necessary to place it alongside Coleridge's description of

-
1. Edmund Burke, A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful (1756, enlarged ed. 1757), Collected Works (London, 1792), I, 127. This was probably the edition of "Burke's Works" which De Quincey owned, and of which he recounts that Wordsworth cut the pages with a dirty butter knife ("William Wordsworth and Robert Southey," Tait's, 6 (1839), 456-57).
 2. Philosophical Enquiry, pp. 128, 134. Priestley denies the role of terror, because for him power is quite simply God (Oratory and Criticism, p. 158-59; Matter and Spirit, I, 41: "every thing is the divine power"). For Wordsworth and Burke see Havens, Kind of a Poet, I, 47-48; Wlecke, Wordsworth and the Sublime, pp. 148-49; W.J.B. Owen, "The Sublime and the Beautiful in The Prelude," WC, 4 (1973), 67-86; Weiskel, Romantic Sublime, pp. 83-106.

God and his power in the world--"Him, Nature's Essence, Mind, and Energy!":

Contemplant Spirits! ye that hover o'er
 With untir'd gaze th'immeasurable fount
 Ebullient with creative Deity!
 And ye of plastic power, that interfus'd
 Roll thro' the grosser and material mass
 In organizing surge! Holies of God!
 (And what if Monads of the infinite mind?)
 I haply journeying my immortal course
 Shall sometime join your mystic choir! 1

It is not that power in Wordsworth excludes the role of terror, but that it also includes a metaphysical belief about the nature of God and the natural world.

Burke's insistence upon the role of terror in the sublime was developed by Kant in the Critique of Judgement (1790). Kant's theory of the "dynamical sublime" concerns the effects of Nature as Macht (Power).² Although Owen discusses Wordsworth's essay almost exclusively in terms of Burke's Enquiry, he himself, in his commentary on the essay in Prose Works, notes a number of parallels with Kant. In fact there is a definite shift in Wordsworth's essay from the concept of the sublime as terror towards the centrality of power as in the Kantian dynamical sublime. Obviously, in view of his own insistent emphasis on power, the Kantian emphasis would be congenial, but it is interesting that Wordsworth, who claimed that he had never read a word of German metaphysics, should show himself directly conversant with the

1. "Religious Musings," ll.60, 429-37, Poems (1796), pp.143, 167, CPW I, 111, 124.

2. Kant, Critique of Judgement, Part I, 109-14.

theories of Kant.¹ No doubt it is no coincidence that Coleridge was lecturing on the very same subject in 1812, and in noticeably similar terms:

He described the sublime as contradistinguished from the beautiful. Beauty consisted in the relation of the parts to the whole. The sublime was an image of which you would neither see the wholeness, nor the parts. Here the lecturer read Milton's description of the form of Satan, floating in the sea, as an instance of the true sublime Mr Coleridge noticed the style of Milton, as a secret which rested with himself. A secret! he exclaimed! If it had been proclaimed by the trumpet of an archangel none but Milton could apply it! It was POWER that was the criterion of poetry. 2

The essay on the Sublime is directly concerned with the power of nature. Wordsworth breaks down the sense of sublimity into three component parts, "a sense of individual form or forms; a sense of duration; and a sense of power."³ Power, to which the essay gives so much prominence, is initially external, but also conjures up a corresponding power in the mind:

-
1. In March 1840, Wordsworth wrote to Crabb Robinson that he had "never read a word of German metaphysics, thank Heaven!" (Correspondence, I, 401, cited by Rader, Wordsworth, p.67).
 2. Retrieved by Richard Haven from The Rifleman, No. 4, 26 January 1812, and quoted in full in "Coleridge on Milton: A Lost Lecture," WC, 3 (1972), 21-22. Cf. Kant, Critique of Judgement: "The beautiful in nature is a question of the form of the object, and this consists in limitation, whereas the sublime is to be found in an object even devoid of form, so far as it immediately involves, or else by its presence provokes, a representation of limitlessness, yet with a super-added thought of its totality" (Part I, p.90).
 3. Prose Works, II, 351.

Power awakens the sublime . . . when it rouses us to a sympathetic energy & calls upon the mind to grasp at something towards which it can make approaches but which it is incapable of attaining-- 1

In Wordsworth's description of the dynamical sublime, its effect is power; it awakens the faculty of desire, and a sympathetic energy is established between the power of nature and the power of the mind. This itself produces "the notion or image of intense unity, with which the Soul is occupied or possessed":

For whatever suspends the comparing power of the mind & possesses it with a feeling or image of intense unity, without a conscious contemplation of parts, has produced that state of mind which is the consummation of the sublime. 2

Coleridge, and Kant, emphasize the limitlessness of the sublime, but stress that it is not the exterior power but the idea "which is planted in us of estimating that might [power] without fear, and of regarding our estate as exalted above it."³ Wordsworth agrees that there is no sublime without a perceiver.⁴ But his emphasis falls not on the exaltation of the mind alone, but on the feeling of "intense unity." "Unity of what with what?" asks Owen, and rightly replies that it is a unity "of the observing mind with the power of the sublime object."⁵ We would, however, alter

1. Prose Works, II, 354.

2. Prose Works, II, 355, 353-54.

3. Kant, Critique of Judgement, Part I, p.114.

4. "To talk of an object as being sublime or beautiful in itself, without references to some subject by whom that sublimity or beauty is perceived, is absurd . . ." (Prose Works, II, 357).

5. Owen, Wordsworth as Critic, p. 206.

this slightly by suggesting that it is the unity of the mind's power with the power in nature-- "Him, Nature's Essence, Mind, and Energy!" This "exertion of a co-operating power in the mind" of the observer is also the structure that describes the reaction of a reader of poetry.¹ The poet, says Wordsworth in the "Essay, Supplementary to the Preface," "has to call forth and to communicate power"² The sublime, in fact, is nothing less than the infinite. De Quincey, many years later, acknowledging Wordsworth as his source for the idea, commented:

What you owe to Milton is not any knowledge . . . what you owe is power,-- that is, exercise and expansion to your own latent capacity of sympathy with the infinite, where every pulse and each separate influx is a step upwards, a step ascending as upon a Jacob's ladder from earth to mysterious altitudes above the earth. 3

Power, sympathy with the infinite, remained a concept of the greatest significance to Wordsworth throughout his creative life; it appears in his poetry with remarkable consistency. It could in fact be said of him, as it is said of Rivers in The Borderers, that "Power is life to him / And breath and being"⁴ If power is being, life and breath is its mode of circulation.

Power gives the two-part Prelude an extraordinary quality. For its mode cannot be subsumed into the "self-

1. "Essay, Supplementary to the Preface," Prose Works, III, 81.
2. Prose Works, III, 82.
3. Masson, XI, 56.
4. ll. 1432-33, PW, I, 184.

centering" Coleridgean "I" of "Frost at Midnight," for instance, where the poem develops and moves round a point of consciousness.¹ Coleridge's method is nicely illustrated in a notebook entry of 1803; he begins with thoughts of the invasion, describes the effects of wind and light over the mountains and the lake, and finally how the rain pelts against his study window. With the "self-centering" mind, the whole of the world literally flows into Coleridge's room:

O Σαρκ Σαρκ why am I not happy! why have I not an unencumbered Heart! these beloved Books still before me, this noble Room, the very centre to which a whole world of beauty converges, the deep reservoir into which all these streams & currents of lovely Forms flow--my own mind 2

With Wordsworth, there is no such movement. It is for this reason that any conventional description of organic form is very hard to pin down in 1799—because, precisely, its mode is not "self-centering" or interior. Take, for instance, one of the most famous anticipations of the theory of organic form--Young's Conjectures on Original Composition. There, discussing the category of the Original, or "natural" author, he declares:

An Imitator shares his crown, if he has one, with the chosen Object of his Imitation; an Original enjoys an undivided applause. An Original may be said to be of a vegetable nature; it rises spontaneously from the vital root of Genius; it grows, it is not made: Imitations are often a sort of Manufacture wrought up by those Mechanics, Art, and Labour, out of preexistent materials not their own. 3

1. Southey, Joan of Arc, II, 49, p.43, CPW I, 133.

2. CN 1577.

3. [Edward Young], Conjectures on Original Composition pp. 11-12.

Wordsworth's poetry is not quite assimilable to this description. Epistemologically, it is far more subtle and complex. In 1799, genius grows, but not solely from within. The distinction between inner and outer breaks down: nature flows into the mind, the mind spreads over nature. What the poem does have is an abstract, disembodied concept of mind or spirit, in many ways reminiscent of Cudworth's plastic nature. In Cudworth's description:

the plastick nature essentially depends upon mind and intellect, and could not possibly be without it . . . Nature depends upon such an intellectual principle; and for this cause that philosopher /Aristotle/ does elsewhere join mind and nature both together. ¹

1799 is structured around an intellectual principle, but this does not give it a clear-cut form, insofar as that intellectual principle both suffuses the poem and is beyond it. The active principle or spirit ebbs and flows in an ever-varying movement from nature to mind, and from mind to nature. It finds no surface where its power can sleep. God, or his spirit, provides an unlocatable, disembodied centre, around which the interaction of nature and the mind is organized: "from link to link / It circulates, the soul of all the worlds." All that is manifest are powers, both subjects and objects, "Upon each other heaped, or parcelled out / In boundless interchange."²

1. Cudworth, Intellectual System, I, 171.

2. "We live by admiration," rejected draft for 1805, VIII, in MS. Y, (October 1804); ll. 96-98, Norton Prelude, p.502, Oxford Prelude, pp. 573-74.

CHAPTER FIVE: The Two-Part "Prelude."

i. Introduction.

It is doubtless an indication of a continuing uneasiness about the structure of the thirteen-book Prelude that the discovery of the two-part Prelude has been accompanied by consistent claims for and emphasis upon the compactness of its form. The status of the two-part version, as a separate poem with the same manuscript authority as 1805, has only been established fairly recently.¹ But critical acclaim goes back to 1954, with Jones's preference for the poetry written in 1798-99, and his criticism of the structure of the longer poem.² This was corroborated by subsequent critics, who also claimed an essential coherence and unity for the earlier poem which 1805, by inference, lacked. In 1959, Helen Darbishire, although not allowing the two parts of MSS. U and V the status of a poem in its own right, asserted that the two books "form one vital and self-contained whole."³ In 1964, J.R. MacGillivray, in making the first claim for 1799 as a separate poem, asserted at the same time that it possesses a much more compact and

1. In 1973, in Jonathan Wordsworth and Stephen Gill's "The Two-Part Prelude of 1798-9." 1799 was first published in the 3rd edition of The Norton Anthology of English Literature, ed. M.H. Abrams et al. (New York: Norton, 1974); a critical text edited by Stephen Parrish was published three years later as CW II; and finally, a text of 1799 has been included with 1805 and 1850 in the Norton Prelude.

2. Jones, Egotistical Sublime, pp. 124-32.

3. Oxford Prelude, p. xlvii.

coherent structure:

In this proto-Prelude of 1798-1800 one observes a much more unified theme and a much stronger sense of formal structure than in the poem completed first in 1805 and published in 1850. The time covered is restricted to childhood and school days only. The single theme is the awakening of the imagination. 1

In 1970 Jonathan Wordsworth published the first critical account of the poem, and this was followed in 1973 by the essay, written in collaboration with Stephen Gill, which gives a detailed account of its textual genesis.² Since MacGillivray, have come even greater claims. Jonathan Wordsworth, for instance, has suggested that 1799 "in fact offers in a simpler and more concentrated form much of what one thinks of as best in the thirteen-Book poem."³

The structure of the poem would seem fairly clearly to be that of the Coleridgean Conversation Poem, as "Tintern Abbey" had been. Comparison is deliberately invoked by quotation from "Frost at Midnight" at both the beginning and end of the poem.⁴ The Conversation Poem has long been felt

-
1. J.R. MacGillivray, "The Three Forms of The Prelude, 1798-1805," in Essays in English Literature from the Renaissance to the Victorian Age, ed. Miller MacLure and F.W. Watt (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964), pp. 229-44.
 2. Jonathan Wordsworth, "The Growth of a Poet's Mind," Cornell Library Journal, No. 11 (1970), pp. 3-24. A revised version is printed in the Norton Prelude, pp. 567-85, entitled "The Two-Part Prelude of 1799." Subsequent references will be to the revised version.
 3. Jonathan Wordsworth, "The Two-Part Prelude of 1799," p.570. An earlier claim in the essay is more cautious, calling 1799 "great poetry in its own right, a poem of much smaller scope but also much more concentrated power than the thirteen-Book version of 1805" (p. 568).
 4. 1799, i. 8, ii. 497, alluding to "Frost at Midnight," ll. 28, 52, CPW I, 241-42.

to have a form of its own.¹ The best description is that of M.H. Abrams, who develops the essays of Harper and Gerard into a paradigm which he suggests was used by almost all English Romantic Poets:

They present a determinate speaker in a particularized, and usually a localized, outdoor setting, whom we overhear as he carries on, in a fluent vernacular which rises easily to a more formal speech, a sustained colloquy, sometimes with himself or with the outer scene, but more frequently with a silent human auditor, present or absent. The speaker begins with a description of the landscape; an aspect or change of aspect in the landscape evokes a varied but integral process of memory, thought, anticipation, and feeling which remains closely interwoven with the outer scene. In the course of this meditation the lyric speaker achieves an insight, faces up to a tragic loss, comes to a moral decision, or resolves an emotional problem. Often the poem rounds upon itself to end where it began, at the outer scene, but with an altered mood and deepened understanding which is the result of the intervening meditation. 2

Abrams goes on to suggest that The Prelude (in its thirteen or fourteen-book version) is also structured like the "Greater Romantic Lyric":

Wordsworth's Prelude can be viewed as an epic expansion of the mode of "Tintern Abbey," both in overall design and local tactics. It begins with the description of a landscape visited in maturity, evokes the entire life of the poet as a protracted meditation on things past, and presents the growth of the poet's mind as an interaction with the natural milieu by which it is fostered, from which

-
1. G.M. Harper, "Coleridge's Conversation Poems," Quarterly Review, 244 (1925), 284-98; A.S. Gerard, "The Systolic Rhythm: The Structure of Coleridge's Conversation Poems," EC 10 (1960), 307-19.
 2. M.H. Abrams, "Structure and Style in the Greater Romantic Lyric," in From Sensibility to Romanticism: Essays Presented to Frederick A. Pottle, ed. F.W. Hilles and H. Bloom (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 528-29.

it is tragically alienated, and to which in the resolution it is restored, with a difference attributable to the intervening experiences; the poem ends at the time of its beginning. 1

In overall terms this is certainly not inaccurate. But it does override the particular qualities of each poem, just as it would override the special qualities of 1799 to suggest that it is either an expansion of "Tintern Abbey," or a shorter, more coherent version of 1805. The problem with Abrams' description is that the production of a paradigm inevitably results in the passing over of real and substantial differences, here between "Tintern Abbey" and The Prelude. Both involve the mind "turning itself inward with a silent Self-questioning," but the results of that questioning are very different.² The same is true of 1799 and 1805.

In a similar way, the claims that have been made for 1799, often in terms of its coherence and concentration, have perhaps resulted in a passing over of the ways in which it shows the tensions of developing thought and changing ideas. Interestingly, it cannot be said to possess identical structural factors to those Coleridge singled out in "To William Wordsworth."

1. Abrams, "Structure and Style in the Greater Romantic Lyric," pp. 529-30.

2. Griggs, II, 832.

ii. A Poem of Transition.

"To William Wordsworth" gives a clear account of the "high theme" of The Prelude:

Of the foundations and the building up
Of a Human Spirit thou hast dared to tell
What may be told, to the understanding mind
Revealable; and what within the mind
By vital breathings secret as the soul
Of vernal growth, oft quickens in the heart
Thoughts all too deep for words!--

Theme hard as high!
Of smiles spontaneous, and mysterious fears
(The first-born they of Reason and twin-birth),
Of tides obedient to external force,
And currents self-determined, as might seem,
Or by some inner Power; 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-- 1

There is no doubt that 1799 tells of "the foundation and the building up / Of a Human Spirit," just as The Pedlar does:

So the foundations of his mind were laid.
In such communion not from terror free
While yet a child and long before his time
He had perceived the presence & the power
Of greatness, and deep feelings had impressed
Great objects on his mind 2

Grob points out that the metaphor of building the mind, with its sensationalist implications, is largely confined to the early books of 1805.³ What is missing in 1799 is the second factor which Coleridge isolates--"what within the mind /

1. "To William Wordsworth," ll. 5-19, CPW I, 404-05.

2. Ruined Cottage MS. B, D.C. MS. 17, 6^r, ll. 8-13, CW IV, 150-51.

3. Grob, The Philosophic Mind, pp. 48-49.

By vital breathings secret as the soul / Of vernal growth,
 oft quickens in the heart" Coleridge's description
 assumes a process close to the biological sense of life,
 but in 1799 life remains what it has been seen to be in
 Cudworth, Newton, Berkeley, or Wordsworth himself, an active
 principle, the spiritual force in nature, the soul of all
 the worlds. It remains "the great social principle of
 life / Coercing all things into sympathy . . ."; it is a
 life which circulates, not yet "the Life within."¹ This
 means that although the poem seems organicist, it does not
 have the organic form which Coleridge claims for the thirteen-
 book Prelude.

It is, in fact, a transition poem. It is certainly a
 quite extraordinary poem, but it is doubtful whether it is
 quite the "vital and self-contained whole," that has been
 implied. Structurally and conceptually, 1799's interest
 lies in the fact that it is written more or less from the
 same premises as The Pedlar and "Tintern Abbey," but
 anticipates the rather different premises of 1805. The
 early poems assume a progressivist theory of growth. 1799's
 stated theme is "the growth of mental power / And love of
 Nature's works."² This could equally well apply to The
Pedlar. On the other hand, the poem's whole raison d'être,
 from the very first of its insistent questions, seems to
 stem from a sense that this has failed, or at least broken

1. ii. 438-39.

2. i. 257-58.

down. In many ways, 1799 seems to be discussing development and growth towards an end point such as that described in the fragment, "Not useless do I deem":

Thus disciplined
 All things shall live in us & we shall live
 In all things that surround us. This I deem
 Our tendency, & thus shall every day
 Enlarge our sphere of pleasure & of pain
 For thus the senses & the intellect
 Shall each to each supply a mutual aid
 Invigorate and sharpen & refine
 Each other with a power that knows no bound
 And forms & feelings acting thus, & thus
 Reacting, they shall each acquire
 A living spirit & a character
 Till then unfelt & each be multiplied
 With a variety that knows no end
 Thus deeply drinking in the soul of things
 We shall be wise perforce & we shall move
 From strict necessity along the path
 Of order & of good. 1

1799 seems to be leading on to a statement of a mature, considered philosophy, such as in The Pedlar. That poem began with an account of the genesis of the Pedlar's mature power. It was written backwards, by way of explanation. But 1799 is rather different. It is also written backwards, from the perspective of the present, but that present has nothing of the certainty or power of the Pedlar's:

He had discoursed
 Like one who in the slow & silent works
 The manifold conclusions of his thought
 Had brooded till Imagination's power
 Condensed them to a passion whence she drew
 Herself, new energies, resistless force 2

1799, on the other hand, is written from the emptiness of

-
1. Ruined Cottage MS. B, D.C. MS. 17, 50^r, ll. 12-15, 51^r, ll. 1-14, CW IV, 268-71.
 2. Ruined Cottage MS. B, D.C. MS. 17, 52^r, ll. 7-12, CW IV, 274-75.

its hanging "this":

Was it for this
That one, the fairest of all rivers, loved
To blend his murmurs with my Nurse's song
. . . .
O Derwent 1

A good deal of speculation has been devoted to the question of what the "this" refers to.² The most likely answer seems to be that it refers to Wordsworth's inability to write The Recluse, as it does in 1805. But there is also a sense in which such interpretations are superfluous, insofar as the hanging "this" refers to a sense of nothingness, of negativity. Instead of the "manifold conclusions" of the Pedlar's thought, 1799 opens with a sense that the present is a vacuum, that the maturity towards which the progressivist scheme had been thought to have been moving, has simply dissolved. If there is a point in 1799 which compares to the Pedlar's philosophical maturity, the "manifold conclusions of his thought" (my emphasis) on which he had "brooded till Imagination's power / Condensed them to a passion whence she drew / Herself, new energies, resistless force," it is the "spots of time":

There are in our existence spots of time
Which with distinct pre-eminence retain
A fructifying virtue, whence, depressed
By trivial occupations and the round
Of ordinary intercourse, our minds
(Especially the imaginative power)
Are nourished, and invisibly repaired.

1. i. 1-3, 6-7.

2. Jonathan Wordsworth, "The Two-Part Prelude of 1799," p.572; Parrish, Introduction to CW II, p.6.

Such moments chiefly seem to have their date
In our first childhood. 1

"Imaginative power" has no longer the inscrutable invincibility that it had for the Pedlar. In a quite different way, memory implants power in the mind.² Power does not grow to maturity with the love of nature, but is retained from the past against the decay of the present.

In this way, there are two distinct and in some sense contradictory structures in 1799. It cannot be said that its single theme is simply "the awakening of the imagination." This is not only because of its contradictory structures, but also, of course, because the imagination as such does not figure in the poem. Imagination appears only as an adjective to describe power: it is power itself that is emphasized, in both nature and the mind, not imagination. But most significantly, the poem can be seen to be made up of a retrospective and a progressive movement. The two do not quite meet.

1. i. 288-96.

2. i. 330.

iii. The Problem of Identity

1799 is, in some ways, like the progressivist Pedlar, passages from which it incorporates.¹ It emphasizes the "love of nature's works," while the first part emphasizes "the growth of mental power." But that power is not portrayed in terms of something that grows from within and shapes the poem itself. It is, to use Wordsworth's own description, "implanted." Similarly, the poem does not unfold spontaneously from its own interior form. We watch, instead, as Wordsworth entitled the fragments which he published in The Friend, the "Growth of Genius from the Influences of Natural Objects," not at all Young's "vegetable" genius.² The growth from within is not possible precisely because that is what the poem is searching for.

A comparison with "Tintern Abbey" can illustrate this. In that poem, there is a sense of loss and change, even regret, but it is also balanced by a sense of progression:

--That time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur: other gifts
Have followed, for such loss, I would believe,
Abundant recompense. 3

The poet is part of a metaphysical, almost Hartleian scheme,

1. Ruined Cottage MS. B, D, C. MS. 17, 14^r, ll. 12-22, 15^r, ll. 1-9, CW IV, 172-73, 176-77, became 1799, ii. 446-64.

2. CC IV, I, 368.

3. "Tintern Abbey," ll. 84-89, Lyrical Ballads, p. 116, PW II, 261.

in which nature is moving him onwards towards a more purely intellectual, higher life. There is regret, a sense of difference, and of loss. But the poet's identity is secure because the whole is part of a continuity, anchored by memory, and by Dorothy's continual presence. Nevertheless, the points of stability are also exterior to the poet: Dorothy herself, the unchanging ruins of the Abbey, the presence of the Wye, an image, like the Derwent in 1799, of origin and an unending source of energy. These are the guarantee of a stasis which remains in the natural world, while the poet himself evolves and progresses. Memory provides the hidden link of identity, but there is no unchanging inner self. Identity is made up of loss and progression, of time. As Coleridge was to put it later in a notebook entry:

Time and Self are in a certain sense one and the same thing: since only by meeting with, so as to be resisted by, Another, does the Soul become a Self. ¹

But the problem in "Tintern Abbey" is that there is no clear sense of self apart from time. The self becomes time, as the image of the river in The Prelude suggests, but this must also imply a continuity which is unbroken. Whereas "Tintern Abbey" begins by affirming a continuity, the rhetorical "Was it for this For this Was it for this. . . ." begins 1799 on a note of elegaic loss. If the

1. Notebook 23, ff. 31^V-32; cited by Kathleen Coburn, The Self Conscious Imagination (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), p.32. This is, of course, the substance of Kant's refutation of Descartes (Critique of Pure Reason, B 275-79).

continuity has been broken, then the self will have dissolved.

"Tintern Abbey" is in fact founded on straightforwardly sensationalist premises about the nature of identity. Whereas Descartes had begun with a notion of the indivisible self as a first premise and self-evident truth, Locke dismissed the idea of identity as an immaterial substance or soul precisely because he claimed that it would mean that there would be no reason why the same soul, or identity, should not exist in different men through the ages. His own conclusion was that identity rested in nothing less than life itself:

This also shews wherein the Identity of the same Man consists; viz. in nothing but a participation of the same continued Life, by constantly fleeting Particles of Matter, in succession vitally united to the same organized Body. 1

If this constitutes personal identity, the self is inseparable from a self-consciousness in sensation and perception:

For since consciousness always accompanies thinking, and 'tis that, that makes every one to be, what he calls self; and thereby distinguishes himself from all other thinking things, in this

-
1. Locke, Essay, II. xxvii. 6, pp. 331-32. Locke adds: "He that shall place the Identity of Man in any thing else, but like that of other Animals in one fitly organized Body taken in any one instant, and from thence continued under one Organization of Life in several successively fleeting Particles of Matter, united to it, will find it hard, to make an Embryo, one of Years, mad, and sober, the same Man, by any Supposition, that will not make it possible for Seth, Ismael, Socrates, Pilate, St. Austin, and Caesar Borgia to be the same Man." On Locke and identity, see Henry E. Allison, "Locke's Theory of Personal Identity: A Re-Examination," JHI, 27 (1966), 41-58.

alone consists personal Identity, i.e. the sameness of a rational Being: And as far as this consciousness can be extended backwards to any past Action or Thought, so far reaches the Identity of that Person; it is the same self now it was then; and 'tis by the same self with this present one that now reflects on it, that that Action was done. 1

Such is the assumption of "Tintern Abbey." But 1799, in extending consciousness back to a past "Action or Thought", finds that there is no such sense of a unitary self:

Ah! is there one who ever has been young
And needs a monitory voice to tame
The pride of virtue and of intellect,
And is there one, the wisest and the best
Of all mankind, who does not sometimes wish
For things which cannot be, who would not give,
If so he might, to duty and to truth
The eagerness of infantine desire?
A tranquillizing spirit presses now
On my corporeal frame, so wide appears
The vacancy between me and those days
Which yet have such self-presence in my heart
That sometimes when I think of them I seem
Two consciousnesses, conscious of myself
And of some other being. 2

In "Tintern Abbey," Wordsworth has felt his former self out of reach; but memory, nature, and the constancy of the Wye itself had all supported his belief in the "progressive powers" of his own mind. In 1799 this has been broken; identity has split into "Two consciousnesses," his own present self-consciousness, and "some other being." The subject of the poem turns out to be a self that has become an object.

As such, it has become unassimilable to the writing poet. The "other being" remains in memory, but is no

1. Locke, Essay, II. xxvii. 9, p.335.

2. ii. 17-31.

longer a simple link in the "same continued Life"; it is separate and out of time:

Those beauteous colours of my early years
Which make the starting-place of being fair
And worthy of the goal to which /s/he tends
Those hours that cannot die those lovely forms
And sweet sensations which throw back our life
And make our infancy a visible scene
On which the sun is shining
Those recollect^{ed} hours that have the charm
Of visionary things--
 islands in the unnavigable depth
Of our departed time-- 1

The poem, as a whole, remains profoundly ambiguous towards the relation between "the starting-place of being" and "the goal to which /s/he tends." Unlike "Tintern Abbey," where there is a sense of an inexorable if gradual movement forwards, 1799 has an almost equal sense of lingering and delay, with the poet "so loth to quit / Those recollected hours that have the charm / Of visionary things."² It is perhaps indicative that they are indeed things, islands, spots of time which live on within the self and yet are felt as separate from the self.

1799 Part I is a self-contained reverie about this time of primordial being. Its stasis is in fact intensified by the presence of the spots of time in their original sequence. For their force and function is precisely to be out of time, to be a continuous presence within the memory. The

1. MS. JJ, D.C. MS. 19, Q^V, ll. 1-11, CW II, 80-81.

2. i. 459-61. Cf. the draft opening to Part II in MS. 18a: "Friend of my heart & Genius we had reach'd / A small green island which I was well pleased / To pass not lightly by for though I felt / Strength unabated yet I seem'd to need / Thy cheering voice or ere I could pursue / My voyage, resting else for ever there" (D. C. MS. 16, 39^V, ll. 1-6, CW II, 144-45).

whole of Part I is an elegy for origins and energy, its elegaic tone taking it in fact much closer to Coleridge's "Recollection" than to "Frost at Midnight."¹ This is also Wordsworth's own description when, at the end of 1805, he recalls the poem's beginnings:

Call back to mind
The mood in which this Poem was begun,
O Friend! the termination of my course
Is nearer now, much nearer; yet even then
In that distraction and intense desire
I said unto the life which I had lived,
Where art thou ? 2

Life, far from being identified with the subject, as in Locke, has become an object, otherness. Divorced from the self, it is nevertheless felt at the same time that it is the real self. This reality is guaranteed by the memory of the interaction between mind and nature, when subject and object divisions were dissolved, and the self was a part of "the one great Life," consisting with "being limitless."³

The sense of the spiritual in nature, and of man as an inseparable part of it, has been shown to have been achieved through the projection of mind into it. In natural philosophy, the accounts of nature that sought to preserve God's role in nature in the face of mechanicism and materialism achieved this through a description of nature based on

1. CPW II, 1023-24. Salvesen (Landscape of Memory, p.194) points to similarities with Schiller's "Die Götter Griechenlands," stanza 12. At CN 494 there is the cryptic note "--Send for Schiller's Götter des Greekenlandes--& remember W's remark" (October 1799).

2. XIII. 370-76.

3. Prospectus MS.1, D. C. MS. 45, 1^r, l. 10, CW III, 256-57.

mind-relational qualities. The projection of mind into nature, of God's mind, was an inevitable accompaniment of reintegrating it with life or spirit. The integration of matter and spirit, of the self and the external world, results in the sort of epistemological uncertainties which are the basis of the descriptions of childhood in 1799

Part I:

Was it for this
That one, the fairest of all rivers, loved
To blend his murmurs with my Nurse's song,
And from his alder shades, and rocky falls,
And from his fords and shallows, sent a voice
That flowed along my dreams? 1

The identification of the poet's mind with the river Derwent thus occurs through the oscillation between the river as an exterior, moulding force, and the river subsumed into the child's mind. The animism of the early part of Part I is very striking, and not simply an aberration. For if Part I does have a structure other than progression through association, it is that it starts by invoking a mind in nature, which moulds and teaches the child, and ends by asserting experiences in which nature has become subsumed into the mind. This corresponds to the two groups of episodes, which are separated by the "home amusements" passage.² The first asserts power in nature, the second power in the mind.

1. i. 1-6.

2. Jonathan Wordsworth points out this division of Part I into two groups of episodes, "The Two-Part Prelude of 1799," p.577.

In the first group, the mind's "knowing and acting relations with the physical world" is marked by an ontological insecurity in which power and mind are disembodied forces that oscillate between the child and nature. The power of the poetry itself is made out of this very indeterminacy, out of the breakdown of subject / object divisions:

Gentle Powers!
 Who give us happiness and call it peace!
 When scudding on from snare to snare I plied
 My anxious visitation, hurrying on,
 Still hurrying hurrying onward, how my heart
 Panted; among the scattered yew-trees, and the crags
 That looked upon me, how my bosom beat
 With expectation. Sometimes strong desire,
 Resistless, overpowered me, and the bird
 Which was the captive of another's toils
 Became my prey; and when the deed was done
 I heard among the solitary hills
 Low breathings coming after me, and sounds
 Of undistinguishable motion, steps
 Almost as silent as the turf they trod. 1

At this stage, the constant movement is towards an overwhelming of the mind by the power of the mind in nature. Although it fluctuates, the active principle in nature no longer circulates evenly from mind to mind, but seems far stronger in its "exterior" form.

Thus the first part is extraordinarily full of anthropomorphisms, of "Gentle Powers," "spirits," "quiet Powers," "Beings of the hills," "Powers of earth," and "Genii of the springs."² There is no point in trying to underplay this animism, which is all-pervasive. Its effect is to allow

1. i. 35-49.

2. i. 35, 69, 73, 130, 186. Cf. Geoffrey H. Hartman, "Romantic Poetry and the Genius Loci," in Beyond Formalism (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), pp. 311-36.

the disembodied power of "There is an active principle" a surface or image in which to rest, and to show the course of its "ministry" on the child's mind. The immanence of "Tintern Abbey" becomes a multiplicity of powers which pervade every moment and every aspect of the landscape in the consciousness of the child, attendant spirits as formidable as those of Prospero, but "spirits of the mind" as in Peter Bell.¹ They build up the human soul, fashion and people the mind, but all depend on the underlying argument of a flowing in of a life-force or spirit:

Oh bounteous power
In childhood, in rememberable days
How often did thy love renew for me
Those naked feelings which when thou wouldst form
A living thing thou sendest like a breeze
Into its infant being. Soul of things,
How often did thy love renew for me
Those hallowed & pure motions of the sense ²

Power is exterior, divine, and, in 1799, personalised. But it is essentially the same as "Tintern Abbey's" "motion and a spirit, that impels / All thinking things, all objects of all thought, / And rolls through all things."³

Nature, in Wordsworth's favoured childhood, has both moulded him and allowed him access to its own inner spirit, thus making "The surface of the universal earth / With meanings of delight, of hope and fear, / Work like a sea."⁴

1. Tempest V. i. 33; Peter Bell MS.3, D. C. MS. 34, ll. 906-20. In 1805 many of the spirits became simply "nature."

2. MS. JJ, D. C. MS. 19, U^r, ll. 12-17, U^v, ll. 1-2, CW II 94-97.

3. "Tintern Abbey," ll. 101-03, Lyrical Ballads, p.116, PW II, 262.

4. i. 196-98.

Its means of operation, as much as the structural connections between the individual experiences described, is through the power of the association of ideas.¹ Its effect is to link the scenes of childhood to the emotions, to expand the mind through the sublimity and grandeur of the landscape:

Ah! not in vain ye Beings of the hills!
And ye that walk the woods and open heaths
By moon or star-light, thus from my first dawn
Of childhood did ye love to intertwine
The passions that build up our human soul,
Not with the mean and vulgar works of man,
But with high objects, with eternal things,
With life and nature, purifying thus
The elements of feeling and of thought,
And sanctifying by such discipline
Both pain and fear, until we recognise
A grandeur in the beatings of the heart. 2

Although written in a different style, the content of these lines would not be out of place in The Pedlar. Like the Pedlar, the child traces "an ebbing and a flowing mind" in nature, and "drinks" its spectacle. But it is at this point that the difference begins to assert itself. Already, of course, 1799's attendant spirits in nature have suggested a more psychological interpretation than the Pedlar's "visitation from the living God."³ But it is at the beginning of the second group of episodes in 1799 that the different direction that the poem is taking becomes clear. The Pedlar had moved forward to what might be described as a pantheistic orthodoxy:

1. Cf. Priestley, Oratory and Criticism, p.35: "a writer can never be blamed if he dispose the materials of his composition by an attention to the strongest and most usual association of ideas in the human mind."

2. i. 130-41.

3. Ruined Cottage, MS. B, D. C. MS. 17, 9^r, l. 12, CW IV, 156-57.

in the mountains did he feel his faith
 There did he see the writing--All things there
 Looked immortality, revolving life
 And greatness still revolving, infinite;
 There littleness was not, the least of things
 Seemed infinite, and there his spirit shaped
 Her prospects nor did he believe--he saw 1

But in 1799 the second group of episodes are quite different. The mind in nature suddenly reverses itself, and becomes a nature in the mind. The Drowned Man, the Gibbet Mast episode, and the Waiting for the Horses, describe experiences utterly alien to those of the Pedlar, and alien also to the progressivist implications of the poem. Instead of moving towards a full recognition of "being limitless and the one great Life," the three spots of time assert simply themselves, their identity, and their permanence in the mind: "forms / That yet exist with independent life / And, like their archetypes, know no decay."² In Hartleian theory, simple ideas combine to become complex ones; each single idea becomes indistinguishable, leaving only a trace in the mind to produce a feeling of pleasure when an associated sensation occurs.³ Wordsworth's description here is the reverse of this. There is no forward looking movement, but stasis and permanence. The poem has begun to go in a different direction. From this point on, it will develop in two different ways.

1. Ruined Cottage, MS. B, D. C. MS. 17, 10^r, ll. 7-13, CW IV, 158-59.

2. i. 285-87.

3. Cf. Priestley, Oratory and Criticism, p.132: "Sometimes it is observable, that, immediately upon feeling a tumultuous sensation of this kind, the idea of some particular affecting circumstance will occur distinctly, it not having perfectly coalesced with the general complex sensation; whereas, by degrees, it intirely vanishes into, and makes a part of it, and in its separate state is quite forgotten"; and also Gerard, Essay on Genius (London, 1774): "Imagination can connect by new relations. It knits them together by other ties than what connected the real things from which they are derived; and often bestows a union upon ideas whose archetypes had no relation" (p. 39).

iv. An Unresolved Structure.

Before introducing the second group of episodes, Wordsworth suggests that the incidents that follow "cannot here / Be regularly classed, yet tend no less / To the same point, the growth of mental power / And love of Nature's works."¹ Both statements are correct, but what he does not say is that he is introducing episodes that depend on an entirely different theory of growth and identity. The second group does not conform to the same idea of the growth of power, not only in associationist terms, but in any other--for they are seen as fountains of energy frozen in the past but still affecting the present. They do not lead on to the "chain of good" of The Pedlar fragments or to the mature life in nature that ends both The Pedlar and 1799. The poem moves in two directions.

The first is that of The Pedlar, and was strengthened in 1805 by the removal of the second group of episodes. It re-establishes the more conventional associationist mode of Part I (ll. 375-442), and develops it in Part II. Part II is much more straightforwardly chronological, moving towards the rapturous song of the one life that flows throughout nature:

From Nature and her overflowing soul
I had received so much that all my thoughts
Were steeped in feeling; I was only then
Contented when with bliss ineffable
I felt the sentiment of being spread

1. i. 255-58

O'er all that moves, and all that seemeth still,
 C'er all that, lost beyond the reach of thought
 And human knowledge, to the human eye
 Invisible, yet liveth to the heart,
 O'er all that leaps, and runs, and shouts and sings
 Or beats the gladsome air, o'er all that glides
 Beneath the wave, yea, in the wave itself
 And mighty depth of waters: wonder not
 If such my transports were, for in all things
 I saw one life and felt that it was joy. 1

As the climax of Part II, the function of this passage seems self-evident. It is the end towards which nature has been leading the poet, towards which the whole poem has been developing. But at the same time, it does not quite fulfil this function, for although it is a fitting end-point for the "love of nature's works," it is not quite such a satisfactory ending for "the growth of mental power." It is interesting that at one stage, 1799 was to have its own climax, not culled from The Pedlar. In MS. RV, the poem continues:

wonder not
 If such my transports were for in all things
 I saw one life and felt that it was joy
 One song they sang and it was audible
 Most audible then when the fleshly ear
 Oerccome by grosser prelude of that strain
 Forgot its functions & slept undisturb'd.

By such communion I was early taught
 That what we see of forms and images
 Which float along our minds and what we feel
 Of active or recognizable thought
 Prospectiveness intelligence or will
 Not only is not worthy to be deemed
 Our being, to be prized as what we are
 But is the very littleness of life
 Such consciousnesses seemed but accidents
 Relapses from the one interior life
 Which is in all things from that unity
 In which all beings live with god, are lost
 In god & nature in one mighty whole
 As undistinguishable as the cloudless east

1. ii. 446-60.

At noon is from the cloudless west, when all
The hemisphere is one cerulean blue. 1

It is an extraordinary passage, and provides a powerful climax to 1799. The interesting question, of course, is why it was left out. An earlier draft in Peter Bell MS.2 includes a version of 1799, ii. 251-54, addressed in MSS. U and V to Coleridge. This Peter Bell version provides an even more extreme statement of pantheism:

Such consciousness I deem but accidents
Relapses from that one interior life
That lives in all things sacred from the touch
Of that false secondary power by which
In weakness we create distinctions, then
Believe that our puny boundaries are things
Which we perceive and not which we have made
--In which all beings live with god themselves
Are god existing in one mighty whole 2

Jonathan Wordsworth suggests very plausibly that in the end it simply went too far:

at the time of Tintern Abbey Wordsworth might well not have shied away from it--though he must have known how badly it frightened Joseph Priestley, and Coleridge, and many another descendant of Spinoza-- 3

So indeed it probably did, although theological objections in themselves were unlikely to have deterred Wordsworth at either stage. More significant perhaps, in the context, is the objection which Coleridge was later to mark into his copy of Taylor's Proclus:

-
1. MS. RV, D. C. MS. 21, 10^r, ll. 17-18, 10^v, ll. 1-18, 11^r, ll. 1-3, CW II, 204-09.
 2. Peter Bell MS. 2, D. C. MS. 33, 50^r, ll. 16-24, CW II, 164-65.
 3. Jonathan Wordsworth, "The Two-Part Prelude of 1799," p.574.

Besides, amid all these fine flights concerning the Soul, the Intellect, and the One, what becomes of poor "I,"--of the Self of each person? Whence comes, whither goes, the personality? 1

With the RV ending, 1799 leads not just to the loss of self, but to its extinction also.

The RV ending is useful insofar as it highlights the distinction between organic unity and organic form.² Like the passage which precedes it, the RV addition certainly depends on a Spinozistic "love towards a thing eternal and infinite," which "feeds the mind wholly with joy."³ In Spinoza, the individual accepts the whole natural order. He does so because he is aware of his place in and unity with the scheme of things, of "the knowledge of the union existing between the mind and the whole of nature."⁴ In the identification of nature and God, there is an underlying unity insofar as God is the indwelling or active cause, and all relations are internal and necessary. "As regards the human mind," Spinoza adds,

I believe that it also is a part of nature; for I maintain that there exists in nature an infinite power of thinking, which, in so far as it is infinite, contains subjectively the whole of nature 5

If the "power of the mind is the actual essence thereof," still "the human mind is part of the infinite intellect

-
1. CN I, ii, Appendix B, p.458, dating from December 1803 or later.
 2. Cf. Orsini, "The Organic Concepts in Aesthetics," p.24.
 3. Spinoza, Works, II, 5.
 4. Spinoza, Works, II, 6.
 5. Spinoza, Works, II, 292.

of God."¹ This organic unity, in which the mind of man is subsumed into the mind of God, is not at all compatible with organic form, which depends on an internal principle, an "I," or a self, in order to shape and create from within. In 1799 this is lacking, particularly at those moments when the mind of the poet seems to be on the edge of dissolving into an infinite beyond:

oh at that time,
While on the perilous ridge I hung alone,
With what strange utterance did the loud dry wind
Blow through my ears! the sky seemed not a sky
Of earth, and with what motion moved the clouds! 2

There is no self onto which these experiences can be anchored. The overwhelming power of the mind of nature, into which the self is continually at the point of evaporating, creates the particular force of the poetry. But the effect is quite clear: "in my thoughts / There was a darkness, call it solitude / Or blank desertion" ³

If the experiences themselves involve the disintegration of the mind into the mind in nature, their memory can provide a different function. For the individual memory, as a spot of time, has the directly opposite effect, namely the preservation of individual identity. This is the second direction in which 1799 moves. The first develops towards the extinction of the self as a part of the infinite intellect of God, the second asserts the self's identity

1. Spinoza, Works, II, 166, 91.

2. i. 62-66.

3. i. 122-24.

and individuality. The three spots of time that make up the second group of episodes are among the most powerful passages of poetry that Wordsworth ever wrote; in the present context, it is not necessary to reassert this, nor even to examine their special qualities.¹ What is significant here is the way in which they leave a "power / Implanted" in the mind:

I might advert
To numerous accidents in flood or field,
Quarry or moor, or 'mid the winter snows,
Distresses and disasters, tragic facts
Of rural history that impressed my mind
With images, to which in following years
Far other feelings were attached, with forms
That yet exist with independent life
And, like their archetypes, know no decay.
There are in our existence spots of time
Which with distinct pre-eminence retain
A fructifying virtue, whence, depressed
By trivial occupations and the round
Of ordinary intercourse, our minds
(Especially the imaginative power)
Are nourished, and invisibly repaired.
Such moments chiefly seem to have their date
In our first childhood. 2

In addition to the Peðlar fragment to which some of these lines have already been compared, the obvious lines which they recall are "Tintern Abbey's" "forms of beauty":

I have owed to them,
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart,
And passing even into my purer mind
With tranquil restoration 3

-
1. For detailed discussion of the spots of time, see Bishop, "Wordsworth and the 'Spots of Time'"; Ferry, Limits of Mortality, pp. 163-65; Lindenberger, "On Wordsworth's Prelude," pp. 147-56; Jonathan Wordsworth, "The Two-Part Prelude of 1799," pp. 568-71, 577-81.
 2. i. 279-96.
 3. "Tintern Abbey," ll. 27-31, Lyrical Ballads, p.114, PW II, 260.

But there are differences as well as similarities. "Tintern Abbey's" "forms" have a moral effect, contributing unconsciously towards acts of sympathy and love, as well as leading the poet on to the more sublime mood "In which the burthen of the mystery, / In which the heavy and the weary weight / Of all this unintelligible world / Is lighten'd" ¹ "Tintern Abbey," with its moral and spiritual guidance in "nature and the language of the sense," with its sublime moments of seeing "into the life of things," implicitly retains a progressivist scheme which is not in contradiction with that of The Pedlar. Nature has a similar moral and spiritual effect upon the Pedlar, so that he is led to a point where he can see "one life" in its forms. All this is present in 1799 also, but its "forms" have a new autonomy, a new interiority, a new sense of existing only in the poet's mind. The phrase "spots of time," with its implication of both time and place, paradoxically takes them out of time and place. They nourish and repair the mind unconsciously, from within; but what is most startling is that they "yet exist with independent life / And, like their archetypes, know no decay." These forms achieve, within the mind, the permanence of the natural scenes from which they were initially derived. This is the key difference from "Tintern Abbey," where everything permanent is in fact exterior, and the poet, as he feels with some discomfort and suggests in elegaic tones, is the subject of change. His mind is growing and progressing, but that in itself becomes a matter for regret.

1. "Tintern Abbey," ll. 39-42, Lyrical Ballads, p. 114, PW II, 260.

The spots of time are in themselves a silent mark of the decline of the sensationalist belief in progress. No less than the political retreat signalled by the decision to move to Goslar, the spots of time signal the end of the implicit assumptions of millennial schemes, whether political or moral.¹ The Pedlar, and, more hesitantly, "Tintern Abbey," had both told of the mind's progress, and The Prelude's story of "the growth of mental power / And love of nature's works," had begun in the same way. The heterogeneous experiences, somewhat tentatively introduced, produce a very different account of Wordsworth's life and of his philosophical understanding of it. Instead of nature's gradual ministration and teaching, we are here presented with experiences from early childhood which retain their power to restore the adult. The child has suddenly become father of the man. The mind possesses forms that "yet exist with independent life / And, like their archetypes, know no decay." This very different account of the mind is reasserted in Part II. Having continued a chronological narrative of his growth, Wordsworth suddenly breaks off, turns back to beginnings in the description of the Infant Babe, and affirms:

--Such verily is the first
Poetic spirit of our human life,
By uniform control of after years
In most abated and suppressed, in some
Through every change of growth or of decay
Preeminent till death. 2

1. Cf. E.P. Thompson, "Disenchantment or Default? A Lay Sermon," Power & Consciousness, ed. Conor Cruise O'Brien and William Dean Vanech (London: University of London Press, 1969), pp. 149-81.

2. ii. 305-10.

The poetic spirit, as well as the spots of time, "with distinct pre-eminence retain / A fructifying virtue" against dissolution and decay.

The portrait of the Babe is extraordinary in any terms. That Wordsworth should suddenly stop his narrative, declare the impossibility of classing "the cabinet" of his sensations, and go back instead to a mythic point of origin, has the effect of suddenly picking up the implications of the spots of time definition and developing them in a direction which opposes the logic of much of the rest of the poem. The Babe is introduced by a discussion of the difference between synthetic and analytic method that has already been cited in its Peter Bell MS.2 form.¹ However, instead of following this with an account of his own loss into "the one interior life," Wordsworth attributes the experience to Coleridge, to whom, he says, "The unity of all has been revealed"² Wordsworth protests the difficulty of tracing "the history and birth of each / As of a single independent thing," and declares:

Hard task to analyse a soul in which
Not only general habits and desires
But each most obvious and particular thought,
Not in a mystical and idle sense
But in the words of reason deeply weighed,
Hath no beginning. 3

1. Cf. Priestley, Oratory and Criticism, pp. 42-43: "In the latter [synthetic] method it is generally more convenient to explain a system of science to others. For, in general, those truths which were the result of our own inquiry, may be made as intelligible to others as those by which we arrived at the knowledge of them; and it is easier to show how one general principle comprehends the particulars comprized under it, than to trace all those particulars to one that comprehends them all."

2. ii. 256.

3. ii. 262-67.

Whether he might have approved of it or not, this account of the soul as ultimately indivisible inevitably goes back to Descartes.¹ In the description that follows, Wordsworth seems to be attempting to project the child as a part of nature, while at the same time asserting the child as its organizing principle. The Infant Babe seems to come very suddenly, out of the blue, unanticipated and unprepared for. A specific source has never been located for it. On the other hand, in spite of the very sudden claim for creativity and divinity in the child, it is unlikely to have come out of nowhere.

It is, in fact, the combination that is remarkable rather than the individual elements. The figure of the child had, of course, been a favourite device for describing the effects of sensation on the developing mental faculties since Locke.² We have already seen how Priestley, for instance, derived the idea of power from an imagined sequence of experiments performed by a child. In the same work, he comments:

When our minds are first exposed to the influence of external objects, all their parts and properties,

1. "In order to begin this examination, then, I here say, in the first place, that there is a great difference between mind and body, inasmuch as body is by nature always divisible, and the mind is entirely indivisible. For, as a matter of fact, when I consider the mind, that is to say, myself inasmuch as I am only a thinking thing, I cannot distinguish myself in any parts, but apprehend myself to be clearly one and entire . . ." (Descartes, Philosophical Works, trans. Haldane and Ross (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911), I, 196).

2. Locke, Essay, II. i. 6, pp. 106-07.

and even accidental variable adjuncts, are presented to our view at the same time; so that the whole makes but one impression upon our organs of sense, and consequently upon the mind. 1

From this initial "confusion" of the senses, the child later learns to distinguish one sensation from another.² Instead of approving of this power of creating distinctions, Wordsworth reverses the emphasis, and produces an image of the child as a fusion of the senses; his synthesizing is a positive quality, while the later work of analysis and differentiation is seen as a falling-off.

What seems to be quite new is the assertion of power. In MS.JJ, the "eternal spirit" or "Soul of things" is praised for being "apparent chiefly as the soul / Of our first sympathies"; this soul flows in as a spiritual breeze:

--Ch bounteous power
In childhood, in rememberable days
How often did thy love renew for me
Those naked feelings which when thou wouldst form
A living thing thou sendest like a breeze
Into its infant being. 3

In 1799, this function is transferred to the mother, but the mother is quickly upstaged by the child:

blest the Babe
Nursed in his Mother's arms, the Babe who sleeps
Upon his Mother's breast, who when his soul
Claims manifest kindred with an earthly soul
Doth gather passion from his Mother's eye!

-
1. Priestley, An Examination of Dr Reid's "Inquiry", p. xxxvii.
 2. Cf. Abraham Tucker [Edward Search], The Light of Nature Pursued (London, 1768-77), I, 223. Wedgwood's scheme for the education of a genius was designed precisely to avoid this initial confusion; see David V. Erdman, "Coleridge, Wordsworth, and the Wedgwood Fund," BNYPL, 60 (1956), 425-43, 487-507.
 3. MS. JJ, D. C. MS. 19, U^r, ll. 12-17, CW II, 94-95.

Such feelings pass into his torpid life
 Like an awakening breeze, and hence his mind
 Even in the first trial of its powers
 Is prompt and watchful, eager to combine
 In one appearance all the elements
 And parts of the same object, else detached
 And loth to coalesce. 1

The influx of passion from the mother simply serves to quicken the child's own sensibility and to initiate its reciprocal sympathy with the natural world. Instead of nature's impressing its images on the mind, as so often before, the child now tenaciously retains the visual images which his "spreading" mind has apprehended. The whole passage, in fact, shows this tendency to reversal:

In one beloved presence, nay, and more,
 In that most apprehensive habitude
 And those sensations which have been derived
 From this beloved presence, there exists
 A virtue which irradiates and exalts
 All objects through all intercourse of sense. 2

The fluidity of the syntax suggests that not only are objects irradiated and exalted by the virtue or power derived from the presence of the mother, but that this power is subsumed by the child. It is because of his own power that the child so emphatically lives as an "inmate of this active universe." He receives sensations that bond him to nature, but he also irradiates and exalts all objects for his own part too, thus effectively performing the activity of "Tintern Abbey's" "Something" which "impels / All thinking things, all objects of all thought, / And rolls through all things." The implications of this are spelt out quite

-
1. ii. 269-80. The RV reading at ii. 274-75 is "This passion is the awakening breeze of life" (D. C. MS. 21, 6¹, 1. 2, CW II, 188-89).
 2. ii. 285-90. Cf. F.R. Leavis, Revaluation (London: Chatto and Windus, 1936), p. 160, who notes the echo of "Tintern Abbey."

clearly:

For feeling has to him imparted strength,
And powerful in all sentiments of grief,
Of exultation, fear and joy, his mind,
Even as an agent of the one great mind,
Creates, creator and receiver both,
Working but in alliance with the works
Which it beholds. 1

Wordsworth is here not just asserting power, activity, or creativity in the human mind, but has suddenly gone to the most extreme position possible. The child's mind, as agent of God's, repeats God's creativity. As such, it looks forward to Coleridge's definition of the primary imagination as "the living power and prime agent of all human perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM."² Coleridge's definition highlights the ambiguity attached to the word "agent" which can mean both the surrogate or representative, or the person who exerts power, as distinguished from the patient.³ The Infant Babe is thus simultaneously God and his instrument. The closest analogue to this is a fragment from the Christabel Notebook:

There is creation in the eye,
Nor less in all the other senses; powers
They are that colour, model, and combine
The things perceived with such an absolute
Essential energy that we may say
That those most godlike faculties of ours
At one and the same moment are the mind
And the mind's minister. 4

1. ii. 299-305.

2. BL, p. 167. The Infant Babe also looks forward, of course, to 1805, XIII, 93-111.

3. OED, 1, 4.

4. PW V, 343: IV, vi, ll. 1-8 (early October to early December 1800); cf. Hartman, Wordsworth's Poetry, pp. 179-81.

In these remarkable lines, Wordsworth combines the powers of perception of secondary sense qualities with an "essential energy" in the mind that sounds as godlike as, in the next line, it is proclaimed to be. The comparison, as we read it, is of God's "ever-acting ENERGY," as Coleridge puts it, to the creative power of the senses. It is not at all clear whether the senses are merely the instruments of the mind, or are the mind itself. At which point we may ask, "whose mind?" For if the faculties are indeed "godlike", they could, like those of the Infant Babe, also be agents of the "one great mind."

Thus the Infant Babe takes us back to the reciprocity of mind and Mind. The oscillation between the two, or epistemological reversal, which allows the reader no ground from which to judge which is being referred to, is in fact characteristic of both Wordsworth and Coleridge's writings. It is, for instance, noticeable in the well-known letter of March 1801 where Coleridge complains about Newton:

Newton was a mere materialist--Mind in his system is always passive--a lazy Looker-on on an external World. If the mind be not passive, if it be indeed made in God's Image, & that too in the sublimest sense--the Image of the Creator--there is ground for suspicion, that any system based on the passiveness of the mind must be false, as a system. 1

This may be taken as an indication of Coleridge's growing emphasis on the creativity of the individual mind, but it is a complaint about God's mind just as much as man's, and repeats

1. Griggs, II, 709. The "ever-acting ENERGY" is from Joan of Arc, II, 444, p.65 (CPW I, 147), where it describes God's role in nature.

the substance of his Joan of Arc note of 1796.¹ Wordsworth, then, was not doing something altogether startling when he conflated the mind of the child with that of God, for logically, if the mind be made in God's image, and if God is power, then man must be too. The necessity of this was pointed out by Hume with his customary sharpness:

But the principle of innate ideas being allow'd to be false, it follows, that the supposition of a deity can serve us in no stead, in accounting for that idea of agency, which we search for in vain in all the objects, which are presented to our senses, or which we are internally conscious of in our own minds. For if every idea be deriv'd from an impression, the idea of a deity proceeds from the same origin; and if no impression, either of sensation or reflection, implies any force of efficacy, 'tis equally impossible to discover or even imagine any such active principle in the deity. 2

Hume describes why there is an inevitable connection between the idea of power or activity in the Deity, and power or activity in the mind. The idea that the mind is passive is thus, for Priestley or Coleridge in 1796, a logical impossibility, for if the mind is passive, then so is God.

The Biographia definition, then, of imagination as the "repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation" in many ways goes back as far as 1796.³ The assertion of

1. Southey, Joan of Arc, pp. 41-42, CPW II, 1112-13.
2. Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature, ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1888; 2nd ed. rev. P.H. Nidditch, 1978), p. 160.
3. Cf. also Coleridge's Lecture on the Slave Trade (1795): "To develop the powers of the Creator is our proper employment--and to imitate Creativeness by combination our most exalted and self-satisfying Delight" (CC I, 235), and his letter to Thelwall, of December 1796: "I need not tell you, that Godliness is Godlike-ness, and is paraphrased by Peter--'that ye may be partakers of the divine nature'" (Griggs, II, 284).

power and creativity in the mind comparable to God's is not at all the surprising or uncharacteristic element in the description of the Infant Babe. Indeed, as "An inmate of this active universe," the element which is most important is the way in which the individual mind and God's mind are indistinguishable. What is startling in this description is simply the Babe himself. As a piece of self-analysis, and a piece of self-idealization, the portrait of the Infant Babe seems to be set against the course of the rest of Part II, with its movement towards a loss of self in the infinite:

Shall we, too, sink in the dust? shall we, too . . .
in the course of time, be no more? shall that ever-
modified consciousness be lost in the immensity of
being? No, my friend, individuality can never
cease to exist; that ideal self which exists in
dreams and reveries, that ideal self which never
slumbers, is the child of immortality, and those
deep intense feelings, which man sometimes perceives
in the bosom of Nature and Deity, are presentiments
of a more sublime and energetic state of existence. 1

For Wordsworth, the Infant Babe constitutes a particular reversal. Instead of the "growth of mental power," power now simply has to be awakened to manifest itself in full strength. The only available transformation is decline. Instead of growing with the individual, instead of constituting a progressive scheme such as in "Tintern Abbey," where one stage falls away to be succeeded by another, higher and more intellectual, now the child's power becomes something given, that is either suppressed, or "in some / Through every change of growth or of decay / Preeminent till death." From this point, Wordsworth's own autobiographical scheme can

1. Sir Humphry Davy, fragment, c. 1800, Collected Works, I, 66.

become much more straightforward. Instead of attempting to analyse each progressive development of his mind towards the present, he can rather trace the relationship of the poetic spirit to a history of "every change of growth or of decay." It can provide a "never-failing principle" for the poem's own growth. The Infant Babe, as the organizer and centre of perception, provides a self-centering, organizing principle for the structure of the poem itself.

In fact, of course, 1799 continues towards its other end, towards the loss of the self in the one life in nature. As such, the poem leaves us with two unresolved, contradictory structures. The first still moves forward optimistically, the second looks backward to a "vital principle" from the past. Thus, while the poem is formally concluded with an address to Coleridge, it ends without achieving a self-contained conceptual unity. One part of it seems to look back to The Pedlar, another to look forward to the development of the theory of imagination in 1805. This inconclusiveness is tantalisingly echoed by the manuscripts themselves. Two copies were made, as was Wordsworth's practice when he considered a poem to be complete. But its unresolved status is also hinted at by the last words written in MSS. V and RV: "End of the second Part." Elsewhere, at the end of finished drafts, of The Ruined Cottage for instance, are found the words "The End."¹

1. MS. RV, D. C. MS 21, 13^r; MS. V, D. C. MS. 23, 21^v (MS. U has nothing at the end of Part II), CW II, 216-17, 312-13. Ruined Cottage MS. B, D. C. MS. 17, 43^r; Ruined Cottage, MS. D, D. C. MS. 16, 56^r, CW IV, 254-55, 324-25. Cf. Reed II, 635.

CHAPTER SIX: The Formative Power.

i. "O! the one Life within us and abroad."

The oscillation between mind and Mind has, from a different perspective, been brilliantly analysed by Lindenberger.¹ In his account, the linguistic structures are seen as a very successful way for Wordsworth to achieve through language the sense of the interaction of the mind and nature:

Wordsworth's deliberate blurring of tenor and vehicle, his insistence on fusing the literal level of things with their larger symbolic meanings--these are more than rhetorical strategies, for they are, in fact, central to the meaning and intent of his major poetry. 2

As illustration, he cites Coleridge's September 1802 letter to Sotheby which "suggests a program which brings together the realm of rhetoric with that of metaphysics":

Nature has her proper interest; & he will know what it is, who believes & feels, that every Thing has a Life of it's own, & that we are all one Life. A Poet's Heart & Intellect should be combined, intimately combined & unified, with the great appearances in Nature--& not merely held in solution & loose mixture with them, in the shape of formal Similies. 3

Lindenberger comments: "the interaction of man and nature as a demonstration of the 'one life' becomes the central motive of the poet. . . . Wordsworth's major poems . . . had

-
1. Lindenberger, "The Rhetoric of Interaction," On Wordsworth's "Prelude", pp. 41-98.
 2. Lindenberger, On Wordsworth's "Prelude", p.89.
 3. Griggs, II, 864.

by necessity to speak a language which would demonstrate the unity of the poet's inner world and the external world of nature."¹ But this is slightly different from what Coleridge is saying. Coleridge repeats his point a little later in the letter: "In the Hebrew Poets each Thing has a Life of it's own, and yet they are all one Life."² And yet they are all one life--this is Coleridge's point. He is not describing the simple interaction of the mind with nature; he says that each thing has its own life and yet we are all one life. This is rather different from the one life per se. In fact, it describes the two elements that were found to be structuring 1799: the movement towards a totality, and yet against this an assertion of individuality. It is interesting that Coleridge, in saying that Hebrew poetry combines these two elements, gives one of the earliest descriptions of "Imagination, or the modifying, and co-adunating Faculty."³ Imagination, then, joins together the individual and the totality so that they are one, and yet distinct: "each Thing has a Life of it's own, and yet they are all one Life."

It is an exceptionally clear definition of the function of imagination. What is not so clear is how, in practice, it all works. Nor is the difference between the individual life and the one life, or indeed their connection, immediately

1. Lindenberger, On Wordsworth's "Prelude", p. 90.

2. Griggs, II, 866.

3. Griggs, II, 866.

apprehensible. It seems likely, however, that the concept of life must be involved in two senses, so that the word can be employed in contradistinction to itself, as in Coleridge's more famous phrase in "The Eolian Harp".¹

1. "The Eolian Harp" (1817), l. 26, CPW I, 101. It is noticeable that Coleridge always capitalizes "Life" alone, not the phrase "one Life."

ii. Theories of Life.

The "one Life within us and abroad" belongs, of course, to 1817, and was only included in Sibylline Leaves in an erratum slip. But Coleridge's later additions are not altogether foreign to the spirit of the poem; they are a late resolution to a problem which the poem raises. That problem is the recurrent one of the relation of matter to spirit, and of the individual to the totality. The two are inseparable, insofar as the presence of spirit in matter, of God in matter, inevitably calls into question the separate identity of the individual. The lines of Joan of Arc, Book II, from which Coleridge's long note on Newton has already been cited, show this very clearly, and also show Coleridge providing a very Priestleian solution:

But some there are who deem themselves most free,
When they within this gross and visible sphere
Chain down the winged thought, scoffing ascent
Proud in their meanness: and themselves they cheat
With noisy emptiness of learned phrase,
Their subtle fluids, impacts, essences,
Self-working Tools, uncaus'd Effects, and all
Those blind Omniscients, those Almighty Slaves,
Untenanting Creation of its God.

But Properties are God: the naked mass
Acts only by its inactivity.
Here we pause humbly. Others boldlier think
That as one body is the aggregate
Of atoms numberless, each organiz'd;
So by a strange and dim similitude,
Infinite myriads of self-conscious minds
Form one all-conscious Spirit, who directs
With absolute ubiquity of thought
All his component monads, that yet seem
With various province and apt agency
Each to pursue its own self-centering end. 1

1. Joan of Arc, II. 29-49, pp. 40-43, CPW I, 132-33. The note on Newton is to line 34. Cf. "Religious Musings," ll. 429-35, Poems (1796), p.167, CPW I, 124.

This compatibility of the "one all-conscious Spirit" with the "self-centering" individual is the desired end, but Coleridge was unlikely to be satisfied for long with an analogy, "a strange and dim similitude." Nevertheless, Priestley's notion that we are links in a chain, making up an immense whole which we are scarcely able to comprehend, but in which, as Priestley puts it, "we are, at the same time, both instruments and objects," was to remain an attractive solution.¹ Its influence is still apparent in Wordsworth's "At one and the same moment are the mind / And the mind's minister," as well as on the Infant Babe himself--"his mind / Even as an agent of the one great mind". "The Eolian Harp," which Coleridge first drafted later in the same year as the Joan of Arc lines, shows him attacking the same problem:

And what if All of animated Life
 Be but as Instruments diversly fram'd
 That tremble into thought, while thro' them breathes
 One infinite and intellectual Breeze
 And all in diff'rent Heights so aptly hung,
 That Murmurs indistinct and Bursts sublime,
 Shrill Discords and most soothing Melodies,
 Harmonious from Creation's vast concent--
 Thus God would be the universal Soul,
 Mechaniz'd matter as th' organic harps
 And each one's Tunes be that, which each calls I. 2

-
1. Joseph Priestley, The Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity, being an Appendix to the Disquisitions relating to Matter and Spirit (Matter and Spirit, 2nd ed.), II, vii.
 2. "The Eolian Harp" (MS. R), ll. 36-46, CPW II, 1022-23. While Martin, "Coleridge and Cudworth: A Source for 'The Eolian Harp,'" argues for the influence of Cudworth, Piper, "'The Eolian Harp' Again," N&Q, 213 (1968), 23-25, argues for Priestley. Clearly both are important. A very detailed exegesis of the Sibylline Leaves lines is given by M.H. Abrams, "Coleridge's 'A Light in Sound': Science, Metascience, and Poetic Imagination," Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, 116 (1972), 458-76.

Here we see a new solution, now produced via the precise image of the wind-harp. God becomes the "universal Soul," matter becomes the harp (an earlier draft reads "Organiz'd Body [?as] the Instruments"), and the tune which each harp plays, when informed by the breeze or soul, becomes the self. Or in another version of the image, life pervades the body, to produce "that, which each calls I." It is a tortuous, complex, but nevertheless coherent solution to the problem.¹

In a recent lengthy discussion of the poem, and particularly this central section, Kelvin Everest suggests that the philosophical sources of the Conversation Poems--in Boehme, Cudworth and Priestley--"do not help us to read them." In corroboration, he cites the fact that Coleridge quotes part of the central section of "The Eolian Harp" in an exuberant letter to Thelwall in December 1796 in what Everest suggests is an utterly alien context. He concludes:

1. Stallknecht, Strange Seas of Thought, cites Boehme as a possible source of the image of the harp itself (pp. 106-07). He also describes how Boehme, as heir to Renaissance Hermeticism, repeats the idea of "signatures": "For Boehme, all natural substances are 'signatures' or outer manifestations of divine power, for the world at once conceals and reveals God's activity. Such a philosophy would appear even more congenial to Coleridge when he discovered that the inner core of reality which the signatures but darkly manifest is described as 'self-hood' (ichts, or 'something' as opposed to nichts and compared with the pronoun ich)" (p. 105). Coleridge's formulation, though doubtless owing something to Boehme, is, however, closer to Priestley's comparable concept: "I suppose a source of infinite power, and superior intelligence, from which all inferior beings are derived; that every inferior intelligent being has a consciousness distinct from that of the supreme intelligence . . . " (Matter and Spirit, I, 42).

Coleridge's cavalier appropriation of his own lines . . . really makes nonsense of the effort to be precise in the identification of the philosophy of his poetry. 1

But the alien context, making nonsense of philosophical precision, is nothing less than a discussion of the nature of life.

"The Eolian Harp" includes a discussion of life--"And what if All of animated life / Be but as Instruments diversly fram'd / That tremble into thought, while thro' them breathes / One infinite and intellectual Breeze . . ."--so there is no reason why the Thelwall letter should be dismissed as a "cavalier appropriation." The letter is in fact of great interest, for not only does it give very significant evidence of Coleridge's thinking at this time, but also illustrates the great diversity of theories of life in the 1790's. As Coleridge's letter implies, the question of what life was, and particularly the presence or absence of spirit as a constituent factor, produced one of the most significant physiological debates of the last years of the eighteenth century. Something of the complexity and importance of the issues at stake can be gathered from Coleridge's letter:

Well, true or false, Heaven is a less gloomy idea than Annihilation!--Dr Beddoes, & Dr Darwin think that Life is utterly inexplicable, writing as Materialists--You, I understand, have adopted the idea that it is the result of organized matter acted on by external Stimuli.--As likely as any other system; but you assume the thing to be proved--the 'capability of being stimulated into sensation' as a property of organized matter--now 'the Capab.'

1. Kelvin Everest, Coleridge's Secret Ministry (Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1979), p. 211.

&c is my definition of animal Life--Monro believes in a plastic immaterial Nature--all-pervading--
 And what if all of animated Nature
 Be but organic harps diversely fram'd
 That tremble into thought as o'er them sweeps
 Plastic & vast &c--
 (by the bye--that is my favorite of my poems--do you like it?) Hunter that the Blood is the Life--
 which is saying nothing at all--for if the blood
 were Life, it could never be otherwise than Life--
 and to say, it is alive, is saying nothing--&
 Ferriar believes in a Soul, like an orthodox
 Churchman--So much for Physicians & Surgeons--
 Now as to the metaphysicians, Plato says, it is
Harmony--he might as well have said, a fiddle stick's
 end--but I love Plato--his dear gorgeous Nonsense!
 And I, tho' last not least, I do not know what to
 think about it--on the whole, I have rather made up
 my mind that I am a mere apparition--a naked Spirit!
 --And that Life is I myself I! which is a mighty
 clear account of it. Now I have written all this
 not to expose my ignorance (that is an accidental
 effect, not the final cause) but to shew you, that
 I want to see your Essay on Animal Vitality--of
 which Bowles, the Surgeon, spoke in high Terms--Yet
he believes in a body & a soul. 1

Everest comments that if we are to take the "Eolian Harp" quotation as "a serious indication of what Coleridge meant in his lines, then the obvious conclusion must be that the source of the ideas should be sought, not in Cudworth, or Priestley, but in the work of Alexander Monro, which has apparently not been received by Coleridge's commentators as an appealing possibility."² But this attitude to sources will always end in bafflement. Monro does not in fact speak of a "plastic immaterial Nature--all-pervading," but he does speak of something which is easily assimilable to this

1. Griggs, I, 294-95.

2. Everest, Coleridge's Secret Ministry, p.205. Alexander Monro is correctly identified by Piper, Active Universe, p.43, as Alexander Monro secundus (1735-1817); Everest, dismissing his significance, identifies him as Alexander Monro primus (1720-64), (p. 303).

view:

When we throw into the scale the various effects of what has been commonly called the instinct of animals, does it not appear, that the most just, as well as most becoming conclusion we can draw, is, that the Power which created all things, which gave life to animals and motion to the heavenly bodies, continues to act upon, and maintain all, by the unceasing influence of a living principle pervading the universe, the nature of which our faculties are incapable of duly comprehending? 1

The conflation of this with a "plastic immaterial Nature" is in fact made in Coleridge's source, Ferriar's "Observations Concerning the Vital Principle."² Ferriar links Monro's theory directly to Cudworth, which neatly solves the sources problem.³ It seems that Coleridge's letter has to be taken seriously after all.

-
1. Alexander Monro, Observations on the Structure and Function of the Nervous System (Edinburgh, 1783), p. 104.
 2. John Ferriar, "Observations Concerning the Vital Principle," Memoirs of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester, 3 (1790), 216-41. This source is given by Beer, Coleridge's Poetic Intelligence, p. 106.
 3. "Cudworth, from his anxiety to reduce every thing to the Platonic system, attempted to shew a similarity between the Archæus and the Plastic power; he was a true believer in the independent principle Dr. Monro accounts for the commencement of the involuntary motions, and some other phaenomena, on the supposition of a living principle, pervading the universe; similar, I apprehend, to the plastic nature of the Platonists" (Ferriar, "Observations," pp. 220, 222.). Ferriar cites Monro's statement about the living principle, and comments: "But this theory seems liable to the same objection with the notion of a plastic power; that neither of them affords a satisfactory explanation of the phenomena of sense and motion. For the plastic power, or living principle, must be either material or immaterial: if it be material, then it must be allowed that matter, as matter, is susceptible of life But if the plastic power be declared immaterial, its action on matter is as difficult to be conceived, as the action of an immaterial mind on the body, and consequently nothing is gained but a term by the supposition" (p. 226).

One of the few commentators who has done so is John Beer, who suggests that, "unfortunately, in riddling terms," it indicates that Coleridge "was trying to associate the nature of life with the nature of his own central identity, and that he was inclined to locate this in the subconscious."¹ The anachronistic use of the notion of the "subconscious" begs the question, but the link which Beer articulates between life and identity is clearly the subject of Coleridge's letter. Coleridge's account, for all its zestfulness, is a reasonably accurate one. Beddoes and Darwin, who were both influenced by Haller's theory of life as irritability, saw life in terms of irritability and attraction.² As far as Coleridge was concerned, such theories provided no solution at all, insofar as they left themselves unexplained.³ Thelwall, in the paper about which Coleridge has heard, but not yet seen, concludes that life is the product of organization and stimulation:

I consider the preliminary principles of life to be a specific organization and a specific stimulus; the perfect contact of these to be the immediate cause, and life itself to be the state of action produced by this union. 4

-
1. Beer, Coleridge's Poetic Intelligence, p. 106.
 2. For Haller, see Hall, Ideas of Life and Matter, I, 391-408; Beddoes was a disciple of the Brunonian system of medicine, described in section iii; Darwin had conflicting opinions about life. In Zoonomia, it is considered chiefly in terms of irritability, acted on by a "living principle, or spirit of animation, which resides throughout the body, without being cognizable to our senses, except by its effects" (I, 10); cf. Barclay, Inquiry, pp. 143-48, who comments: "he leaves his astonished reader as much benighted, bewildered, and confounded, as he seems to be himself" (p.148).
 3. As Coleridge puts it in the Theory of Life: "To account for Life is one thing; to explain Life another" (p. 35).
 4. John Thelwall, An Essay, Towards a Definition of Animal Vitality (London, 1793), p. 39.

In answer to the question of what the required stimulus actually is, Thelwall suggests that there is nothing "so competent to the task--so subtile, so powerful, so nearly approaching to that idea of an ethereal medium, which some philosophers have supposed necessary to complete the chain of connection between the divine immortal essence, and the dull inertion of created matter, as the electrical fluid."¹ The Analytical reviewer of Thelwall's Essay, perhaps shocked at the criticisms of Hunter, commented: "This essay is evidently the production of a young theorist, who has not been much accustomed to physiological inquiry."² But electricity was in fact quite commonly regarded as the secret of life in this period, and Thelwall's supposition is less naive than might be supposed.³ Ferriar, in his 1790 article, devotes considerable space to a critique of Hunter's "doctrine of the life of the blood."⁴ But in the year following the publication of Thelwall's Essay, Hunter, in his Treatise on the Blood, Inflammation, and Gun-Shot Wounds (1794), hypothesized that a subtle substance, or materia vitae, was diffused throughout the body and possessed the power that he had previously attributed to a vital principle in the blood.⁵

-
1. Thelwall, Essay, p.40. Thelwall's better known work, The Peripatetic; or, Sketches of the Heart, of Nature, and Society (London, 1793), which may have had a part in suggesting the scheme of The Recluse, includes a poem about the vitality of the body (pp. 163-66).
 2. Analytical Review, 19 (1794), 266.
 3. See Ritterbush, Overtures to Biology, Chapter 2, "Electricity: The Soul of the Universe," pp. 15-56.
 4. Ferriar, "Observations," pp. 227-32.
 5. John Hunter, A Treatise on the Blood, Inflammation, and Gun-Shot Wounds (London, 1794), pp. 88-90.

Monro, associated with Cudworth, and thus by Coleridge with the "Eolian Harp," is also criticized by Ferriar, who attacks not only the plastic power, but "the general supposition of an independent living principle" ¹ Ferriar himself, in fact, does not conclude by an affirmation of body and soul, but with the remark that "an investigation of facts seems to lead us back to the brain, as the source of sensibility and irritability." ² But Coleridge may well be thinking of his essay, "An Argument against the Doctrine of Materialism," in the next volume of the Manchester Memoirs. ³ After citing Plato's theory of the soul of the world and of man as harmony from the Timaeus, Coleridge gives what seems to be a frivolous personal opinion. ⁴ But in fact it shows that his own position is still close to Priestley's. His definition of life as "I myself I" is essentially a restatement of the conclusion to the central section of "The Eolian Harp": "Organiz'd Body [as] the Instruments / And each one's Tunes be that, which each calls I." ⁵ Thus Coleridge's later

1. Ferriar, "Observations," pp. 232-40.

2. Ferriar, "Observations," p. 241.

3. Ferriar, "An Argument against the Doctrine of Materialism, addressed to Thomas Cooper, Esq.," Memoirs of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester, 4 (1793), 20-44; cf. also his "Some Remarks on Dr. Tattersall's 'Brief View of the Anatomical Arguments for the Doctrine of Materialism,'" in his Medical Histories and Reflections (Warrington, 1792-98), II, 247-63.

4. Thomas Taylor, The Cratylus, Phaedo, Parmenides and Timaeus of Plato (London, 1793), p. 465. Cf. 1799, i. 67-68.

5. With Coleridge's self-description, "I am a mere apparition--a naked Spirit!" cf. his criticism of Priestley in the Biographia: "He [Priestley] stript matter of all its material properties; substituted spiritual powers; and when we expected to find a body, behold! we had nothing but its ghost! the apparition of a defunct substance!" (p.77).

definition in the Hints Towards a Comprehensive Theory of Life, that life is the "tendency to individuation," had been anticipated as early as 1796.¹

Coleridge's interest in life was probably initiated by his reading of Cudworth; the letter to Thelwall was written only a few days after returning the Intellectual System to the Bristol Library for the second time.² The Thelwall letter shows him trying to adapt Cudworth's emphasis on a purely Platonic conception of life to more modern theories. It also shows how fragile a solution the image of the harp really was. God as the universal, animating soul, now becomes the "plastic immaterial Nature" of Monro (or Cudworth), and the individual tune of the "I" is set up in contradiction to this. In the years that followed, the idea of the all-pervading spirit, whether Cudworth's plastic nature, Berkeley's fire, or Coleridge and Wordsworth's world of harmony and love in which "No sound is dissonant, which tells of Life," would prove the most significant.³ But the problem of reconciling "personality with infinity," as 1799 shows, was not to disappear. It was solved by the assimilation of a new theory of life which Coleridge was to encounter in Germany.

1. Coleridge, Theory of Life, p.49.

2. Bristol Borrowings, no. 90 (9 November--13 December, 1796).

3. "This Lime Tree Bower My Prison," l.50, Griggs, I, 336, CPW I, 181.

iii. Blumenbach.

The problem of reconciling personality with infinity confronted Coleridge very directly in 1799 with the death of his son Berkeley. Coleridge heard the news in April, two weeks before the Wordsworths passed through Göttingen on their way back to England.¹ His immediate reaction to the news was to search for some kind of consolation in speculation about the immortality of infants in the face of their supposed lack of consciousness:

My Baby has not lived in vain--this life has been to him what it is to all of us, education & development! Fling yourself forward into your immortality only a few thousand years, & how small will not the difference between one year old & sixty years appear!--Consciousness--! it is no otherwise necessary to our conceptions of future Continuance than as connecting the present link of our Being with the one immediately preceding it; & that degree of Consciousness, that small portion of memory, it would not only be arrogant, but in the highest degree absurd, to deny even to a much younger Infant. 2

The argument here is with Priestley and Locke, and ultimately with all sensationalist philosophy.³ Coleridge goes on to

-
1. Jonathan Wordsworth suggests that Wordsworth's portrait of the Infant Babe is itself directly attributable to Coleridge's reactions to Berkeley's death (Usurpation and Reality: Wordsworth's Great Six Weeks (Oberlin: Oberlin College, 1974), pp. 12-13).
 2. Griggs, I, 479.
 3. "I confess that the more I think, the more I am discontented with the doctrines of Priestly. He builds the whole and sole hope of future existence on the words and miracles of Jesus--yet doubts or denies the future existence of Infants--only because according to his own System of Materialism he has not discovered how they can be made conscious--But Jesus has declared that all who who are in the grave shall arise--and that those who should arise to perceptible progression must be ever as the Infant which he held in his Arms and blessed!" (Griggs, I, 482).

deny the assertion that "the Essence of Identity lies in recollective Consciousness," and counters it with a remarkable assertion:

but nothing is hopeless.--What if the vital force which I sent from my arm into the stone, as I flung it in the air & Skimm'd it upon the water--what if even that did not perish!--It was life--! it was a particle of Being--! it was Power!--& how could it perish--? Life, Power, Being!-- organization may & probably is, their effect; their cause it cannot be!--I have indulged very curious fancies concerning that force, that swarm of motive Powers which I sent out of my body into that Stone; & which, one by one, left the intractable or already possessed Mass, and-- 1

Once again, Coleridge is speculating on the relation of body to spirit, matter to life, identity to infinity. In the urgency of his grief, Coleridge still argues in terms of the philosophical problem of "The Eolian Harp."² But apart from the urgency, there is a new confidence and precision in the way that he formulates it, comparable even to John Hunter's statement:

Organization and life do not depend in the least on each other . . . organization may arise out of living parts, and produce action; but . . . life can never arise out of, or depend on, organization. 3

1. Griggs, I, 479.

2. He also invokes his thoughts of November 1796, when his son was born while he was at Birmingham. He wrote a sonnet of "very wild philosophy" but "very intelligible poetry," where he imagined that if he found on arriving home that his child had died, he would have struggled to believe in the Platonic doctrine of pre-existence (about which he had been reading in Cudworth); see Griggs, I, 260-61, 278. No doubt this had its effect on Wordsworth.

3. Hunter, Treatise on the Blood, p. 78.

Organization, adds Hunter, "must still have something corresponding to a living principle, namely, some power."¹

The difference between Coleridge's statements about life in 1796 and 1799 are attributable to his studies of physiology and natural history at Göttingen. He had doubtless been recommended to go there by Beddoes, whose knowledge of German developments in medicine and philosophy was extensive.² Göttingen was at that time a centre for studies of the Brunonian system of medicine, of which Beddoes himself was an advocate. A development of Haller's theory of irritability, Brown's system depended on "excitability," and saw all disease as caused by over-or under-excitement. Beddoes prefixed a Life of Brown to a new edition of his Elements of Medicine; Coleridge's notebooks of February--May 1799

-
1. Hunter, Treatise on the Blood, p. 78.
 2. Beddoes' effect on Coleridge was considerable; in May 1796, the year after they met, Coleridge was proposing to study at Jena: "I should there study Chemistry & Anatomy [and] bring over with me all the works of Semler & Michaelis, the German Theologians, & of Kant, the great german Metaphysician" (Griggs, I, 209). The best work on Beddoes in English is still Stock's Memoirs of the Life of Thomas Beddoes (London, 1811); there is also a useful article by Levere, "Dr. Thomas Beddoes and the Establishment of his Pneumatic Institution," Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London, 32 (1977), 41-49. Beddoes regularly reviewed German medical works (e.g. Hufeland's Pathogenie [1795], Monthly Review, 21 (1796), 525-26); his own writings are full of references to developments in German science and philosophy; in his "Miscellaneous Reports and Observations," in the Contributions . . . from the West of England, he cites the Göttingen Review, the Salzburg Medical Journal, and the Gotha Journal among his sources (p.367). For his knowledge of Kant, see section iv. On Beddoes and Coleridge, cf. Levere, "Coleridge, Chemistry, and the Philosophy of Nature," pp. 351-53.

contain a long account of a German review of a translation of it.¹ A second entry also includes a fairly detailed critique of the system, put more pithily in an entry dating from 1801:

Materialists unwilling to admit the mysterious of our nature make it all mysterious--nothing mysterious in nerves, eyes, &c: but that nerves think &c!! 2

A system which Coleridge was to find more sympathetic was that of Blumenbach, whose lectures he attended during the semester of the winter of 1798-99.³ Blumenbach's work is of great importance for the development of organicist theory, and was obviously a major contributory factor in

-
1. CN 388, 389. CN 388n: "Notes and comments on a long review of various works concerning the Brunonian system of medicine--"Anzeige verschiedener Schriften das Brownsche System betreffend"-- which appeared in the Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung (Jena and Leipzig--hence Coleridge's reference to/ the Jena renensent) 11-20 Feb 1799, Nos 48-59." Brown's Elementa medicinae (Edinburgh, 1780), was first translated in 1788; Beddoes' Life was prefixed to the 2nd ed. (1795; CN 389n incorrectly states that this was the 1st ed.). A German translation of Beddoes' Life was published in Copenhagen in 1797 (cf. CN 389).
 2. CN 920. Ironically, perhaps, one of the German practitioners of Brown's system was Schelling. For its effect on his work see John Neubauer, "Dr. John Brown (1735-88) and Early German Romanticism," JHI, 28 (1967), 367-82. For Coleridge and medicine generally, see John Harris, "Coleridge's Readings in Medicine," WC, 3 (1972), 85-95.
 3. "The Professors here are exceedingly kind to all the Englishmen; but to me they pay [the most] flattering attention--Especially, Blumenbach and Eichhorn.--Nothing can be conce[i]ved more delightful than Blumenbach's lectures / & in conversation he is indeed a most i[nteresting] man" (6 May 1799, Griggs, I, 494); "I have attended the lectures on Physiology, Anatomy, & Natural History with regularity, & have endeavoured to understand these subjects" (21 May 1799, Griggs, I, 518).

Coleridge's shift away from a view of life as an undifferentiated energy or spirit surging through the universe, towards a theory in which it is represented as a secret inner force within an organism. Coleridge got to know Blumenbach well, and in later life maintained both his interest in and opinion of him.¹ As a letter to Davy of June 1800 suggests, Blumenbach's importance does not lie in his work in natural history per se, but rather in his theory of epigenesis.² This is set out most lucidly in a work that was translated into English as early as 1792, but is also clearly stated in the work on which the lecture course which Coleridge attended was based, the Institutions of Physiology.³ Like Hunter, Blumenbach evokes a vital principle or power in the organism:

-
1. e.g. Biographia, p. 116, where Coleridge notes of his stay at Göttingen: "Here I regularly attended the lectures on physiology in the morning, and on natural history in the evening, under Blumenbach, a name as dear to every Englishman who has studied at that university as it is venerable to men of science throughout Europe!"; cf. also The Friend, CC IV, I, 156.
 2. Griggs, I, 590.
 3. Über den Bildungstrieb und das Zeugungsgeschäfte (Göttingen, 1781), trans. A. Crichton, An Essay on Generation (London, 1792); Institutiones Physiologicae (Göttingen, 1777), trans. J. Elliotson, The Institutions of Physiology (London, 1815). The lectures on natural history were published as Handbuch der Naturgeschichte (Göttingen, 1779), which Coleridge was proposing to translate in 1800 (Griggs, I, 590). It was translated later by R.T. Gore, A Manual of the Elements of Natural History (London, 1825), as was the work on anatomy, A Short System of Comparative Anatomy, trans. William Lawrence (London, 1807). Coleridge's extensive notes from the Handbuch der Naturgeschichte will be discussed in section iv; it also contains the argument for a nisus formativus, but as that in the Institutiones Physiologicae is more detailed, and as Coleridge attended both courses of lectures, the following exposition is based on the latter work.

1. In the living human body, regarded as a peculiar organization, there are three objects of consideration. The materials of its subsistence, afforded by the fluids:

The structure of the solids, containing the fluids; Lastly, and principally, the vital powers, by which the solids are enabled to receive the influence of the fluids--to propel the fluids--and perform various other motions; and which, as they, in a certain sense, constitute the essence of the living machine in general, so also are of very different orders: some being common to animals and vegetables, some peculiar to animals, and intimately connected with the mental faculties. 1

Thus in a threefold (conceptual) division of the body, vitality is defined solely by its effects, which Blumenbach considers are "ascribable to peculiar powers only."² They are not explained by any chemical or mechanical qualities. Blumenbach does not deny that there are mechanical and chemical powers at work in the body, but names these "dead powers", and affirms that their difference from "vital powers" "is evident on the slightest comparison of an organized economy with any inorganic body, in which these inanimate powers are equally strong."³ Thus Blumenbach defines the organism in terms of life itself:

The vital energy is the very basis of physiology, and has therefore been always noticed, though under different appellations. The titles of impetum faciens, innate heat, archæus, vital spirit, brute life, head of the nervous system, active thinking principle, vital tonic attraction, have been bestowed upon it by different authors. 4

-
1. Institutions of Physiology, pp. 1-2.
 2. Institutions of Physiology, p. 14.
 3. Institutions of Physiology, p. 14.
 4. Institutions of Physiology, p.15. Cf. An Essay on Generation, p.60: "No one can be more fully persuaded of the immense gap which exists between the organised, and unorganised, between the animated, and the inanimate world, than I am; and although I have the greatest respect for the penetration of those who discover a gradual scale of ascent and descent in the works of nature, yet I confess I am at a loss to guess how they make it pass from organic to inorganic bodies."

He goes on, however, to distinguish three "distinct orders of the vital powers" comprising those of organic formation, motion in the parts when formed, and sensation from the motion of the parts.¹ These powers, though distinct, are intimately connected; but conceptually the important theorisation is the special power attributed to organic formation:

The first requisite involved in the name and notion of an organized body, is a determinate form designed for certain ends. That species, therefore, of the vital powers is most general, which produces the genital and nutritive fluids and prepares them for organic nature. This species we have denominated the nisus formativus, since it is the source of all generation, nutrition, and reproduction, in each organized kingdom. 2

This "shaping power," specific to organic formation, producing an organized body, a "determinate form designed for certain ends," is specifically the power that is represented in aesthetic formulations of organicism. Before Blumenbach there was no physiological theory of organic form comparable to that later developed in Romantic aesthetics. Specifically, it was the formulation of life as the formative power of growth and organization which was taken up in organicist theory--not of life as motion, or sensation, irritability or sensibility. Organic theory emphasized this single principle or power at the expense of any other formulation. This has a certain justification, insofar as it must be the

1. Institutions of Physiology, p. 16.

2. Institutions of Physiology, p.16. The "shaping power" or formative power was a phrase and concept used consistently by Coleridge after his visit to Germany; see The Friend, CC IV, I, 493, and Church and State, CC X, 48.

most basic form of life common to all organisms, whether vegetable or animal. As Blumenbach puts it: "the formative power must be most universal; without it indeed organization cannot be conceived to exist."¹

Blumenbach first announced this concept in Über den Bildungstrieb in 1781. In this work, he argued against the "preformation" theory, widely accepted at the time, which held that generation as such did not exist. As Blumenbach described it:

the germ of every animal, and every plant that ever has lived and ever will live, were all created at one and the same time, namely, at the beginning of the world; and that all that is necessary is, that one generation should be developed after the other. 2

The preformation theory had been espoused by Spallanzani, Haller and Bonnet, and is familiar to English readers from Sterne's Tristram Shandy (1759-67).³ The theory was that all germs were preformed, and that the first plant or animal contained within it the germ of every succeeding generation, which would be awakened at the appropriate moment. "By

1. Institutions of Physiology, p. 18.

2. On Generation, p. 5.

3. Spallanzani was translated into English by Beddoes: Dissertations Relative to the Natural History of Animals and Vegetables, translated from the Italian of Abbé Spallanzani by Thomas Beddoes, 2 vols. (London, 1784). The discussion of preformation (or "evolution" as it was sometimes termed) occurs in Chapter 2 of Tristram Shandy (volume 1). It is no coincidence that the damage done to the homunculus occurred as a result of Mrs Shandy's wondering if the clock had been wound up--i.e. a mechanism. Coleridge uses the idea in 1801 to ridicule source-hunters (Griggs, II, 700).

this discovery," comments Blumenbach caustically but in a familiar image, "a key was supposed to be found, which would unlock the whole mystery of generation."¹ Blumenbach, who had originally been an advocate of the preformation theory himself, was persuaded against it by experiments involving that most popular and unfortunate animal in the eighteenth century, the polyp.² He became convinced that a formative power existed in this animal, and thence came to believe "in the existence of a nisus, by which a new being is formed from the unorganized materials of generation."³ Thus, as he elaborates it in the chapter on the "nisus formativus" in the Institutions of Physiology, the matter of organized bodies is alone subject to the influence of the vital powers:

Among the orders of vital powers, one is eminently remarkable and the least disputable of all,—which, while it acts upon that matter hitherto shapeless but mature, imparts to it a form regular and definite, although varying according to the particular nature of the matter. 4

1. On Generation, p. 8.

2. The polyp was the object of much interest in the eighteenth century, and the subject of much speculation, on account of its seeming to have both the qualities of a plant and an animal. It seemed to behave like an animal, but it could be propagated by cuttings like a plant. Many polyps were sliced up in the interests of science. Blumenbach, in the Essay on Generation, recounts how he came to his theory of the nisus formativus by observation of a polyp, when he noticed that it had the power to renew its wounded parts, and thus must have the inherent power of a gradual organization (pp. 17-20). For a detailed account of the fate of the polyp during this period, see Aram Vartanian, "Trembley's Polyp, La Mettrie, and Eighteenth-Century French Materialism," JHI, 11 (1950), 259-86.

3. On Generation, p. 68.

4. Institutions of Physiology, p. 236.

The nisus formativus is "an energy truly vital"; Blumenbach adds that this formulation is made in order to "distinguish it as clearly as possible from powers merely mechanical."¹ Blumenbach thus formulates that definition in terms of organic life which Kant was to define in the same terms and develop into a theory of aesthetics. It is, in fact, Blumenbach's theory of epigenesis to which Kant refers in the third Critique, in his discussion of the application of the teleological judgement, and the concept of the nisus formativus to which he gives due acknowledgement.²

Blumenbach was of very great importance to Coleridge, although there is no point in claiming that he left Germany to return to England with a fully developed theory of organic form. But Blumenbach did change the way in which he thought about life. The "Hartz Forest Lines," though again an addition of 1817, nevertheless record an historical event: "for I had found / That outward forms, the loftiest, still receive / Their finer influence from the Life within"³ Blumenbach's Bildunstrieb, or formative power, provided the essential conceptual basis for a fully developed theory of organicism; this is clear if one compares it to the later definition, albeit from Schlegel, in the Shakespearian Lectures:

-
1. Institutions of Physiology, p. 236.
 2. Kant, Critique of Judgement, Part II, 85-86.
 3. "Lines Written in the Album at Elbingerode, in the Hartz Forest," ll. 16-19, CPW I, 315-16.

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 is the life, such the form. 1

At last, there is a recognizable similarity between physiological theory and the organic aesthetics which were developed from it.

Coleridge's main interest on his return from Germany was his new friendship with Humphry Davy, who was himself proposing a new theory of life in terms of chemical attractions and repulsions.² Davy's discoveries in galvanism and electrochemistry, the substance of his lectures at the Royal Institution in 1802 which Coleridge attended, seemed, as Davy himself believed, "to lead to the door of the temple of the mysterious god of Life."³ Although they never did, Davy's work served to reinforce the idea of life as something hidden and interior, which Coleridge had received from

1. Shakespearian Criticism, I, 224.

2. Davy first proposed an analogy between the powers of attraction and gravitation, repulsion and projection, and the laws of life, in his essay "On Heat, Light, and the Combinations of Light, with a New Theory of Respiration," in Contributions . . . from the West of England, pp. 145-46; cf. also the notebook entry, from 1800/1801, in Fragmentary Remains, ed. John Davy (London, 1858), p. 54, and Kinglake's essay, "On the Nature and Properties of Vitality," where he discusses Davy's new theories, p. 131.

3. Davy to Coleridge, 26 November 1800, Pierpont Morgan Library MS. MA 1857, no. 11, cited by Levere, "Coleridge, Chemistry, and the Philosophy of Nature," p. 356.

Blumenbach.¹ Perhaps most surprising of all, Richard Saumarez, for whom Coleridge makes extravagant claims in the Biographia--"Obligations to Schelling; and among English writers to Saumarez"--published two essays in 1799 on "Generation and the Principle of Life," in which he defined life in a manner than anticipates Coleridge's own later definitions to a remarkable degree.² Saumarez defined it as an abstracted principle through which individual bodies develop their own particular organization and form:

It is to this power, I say, by the energy of which every living system is protected and preserved from decomposition and decay, and by which the different substances it receives are assimilated and changed, that I attach the idea of life.--The Vis Medicatrix Naturae of STAHL, the Vis Vitae of HALLER, the Nisus Formativus of BLUMENBACH, the Living Principle of Mr. HUNTER, the Excitability of Dr. BROWN, and, finally, "Form," by that excellent philosopher Mr. HARRIS:--The Principle of Life, therefore, as a cause, may be contemplated in the abstract, as separate and distinct from the matter into which it is received, and through which its actions are produced; it is by the evolution of the living principle which animated beings possess, from a state of dormant capacity into energy and action, that they are capable of converting to their own

-
1. For Wordsworth's effect upon Davy, see Roger Sharrock, "The Chemist and the Poet: Sir Humphry Davy and the Preface to Lyrical Ballads," Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London, 17 (1962), 57-76; Davy's effect on both Coleridge and Wordsworth has not been investigated in detail, but it seems likely that the idea of the chemical process, uniting and dissolving according to fixed laws, is in the background of definitions of imagination (e.g. Prose Works, III, 31-33); at one point Wordsworth makes it explicit: "The imagination is . . . that chemical faculty by which elements of the most different nature and distant origin are blended together into one harmonious and homogeneous whole" (Gosart, III, 465 (c. 1827)). Davy also provides a possible source for Coleridge's Preface to "Kubla Khan" (see Appendix).
 2. BL, p. 79 (headnote); Coleridge claims that Saumarez should be remembered as the "first instaurator of the dynamic philosophy in England" (p. 88).

nature, the various substances on which they feed, and of making them assume the organization and form of the system to which they are applied. 1

In this formulation lay an obvious and attractive possibility for the reconciliation of personality with infinity. For if life is not longer defined as a living principle, "all-pervading," but as the secret interior power which shapes and creates the individual form of a body or organism, then the living principle can remain the embodiment of spirit, can be allied directly with God, while its effect can be the creation of individual form. A notebook entry from 1805 shows Coleridge developing this significance:

"The inducement of a Form on a pre-existing material"--is this a true definition of Generation? Wherein then would Generation differ from Fabrication, or a child from a Statue or Picture? It is surely the inducement of a Form on a pre-existing materials in consequence of the transmission of a Life, according to the kind of the living Transmitter, this principle of Life so transmitted being both the principle of the ~~form induced~~ and induction of the Form, and of the adduction of the pre-existing materials--. The difference therefore between Fabrication and Generation becomes clearly indicable / the Form of the latter is ab intra, evolved, the other ab extra, impressed--the latter is representative always of something not ~~else~~ itself . . . but the former is representative of its own cause within itself, i.e. its causative self-- 2

Organic form at once dissolves the division between body and spirit. The formation of the body through the power of life produces an image and expression of the self: "It must embody in order to reveal itself Each exterior is the physiognomy of the being within, its true image reflected and thrown out from the concave mirror."³

-
1. Richard Saumarez, "On Generation and the Principle of Life," Medical and Physical Journal, 2 (1799), 325. Cf. Coleridge's disquisition on Hunter, The Friend, CC IV, I, 493-94.
 2. CN 2444.
 3. Shakespearian Criticism, I, 223-24.

iv. Theories of Method.

The 1805 notebook entry shows that Coleridge had developed a concept of organic form. That entry, as Orsini comments, does not constitute a description of a literary form.¹ There is no extant statement by Coleridge describing organic form in literature by this date. But an entry from December 1803 is suggestive:

The reproduction of the Lizard &c, &c, furnishes awful subject for meditation on the Vita Creatrix, on the possible evolvment of the Senses from the principle of Life.--What shall I say to that of Proclus--that LIFE IS KNOWLEDGE ? 2

In this oblique note it is possible to detect an interesting conflation. Coleridge is reading, and taking notes from, Blumenbach's Handbuch der Naturgeschichte, which restates the theories of epigenesis and of the nisus formativus.³ Coleridge is synthesizing this discussion of life from the context of natural history with Platonic theories of life and the soul from Proclus' Elements of Theology.⁴ Reading

1. Orsini, Coleridge and German Idealism, p. 170.

2. CN 1740.

3. e.g. "The Formative Impulse acting in a determinate manner, and with a particular object, upon given materials susceptible of its influence and of organization, preserves the equally determinate form and habit of all the individual species of organized beings . . ." (Manual of the Elements of Natural History, p. 12).

4. Thomas Taylor, The Philosophical and Mathematical Commentaries of Proclus . . . and a Translation from the Greek of Proclus's Theological Elements, 2 vols. (London, 1792). The entries relating to Proclus and Blumenbach are from 1727-53; cf. also CN I, ii, Appendix B, which prints Coleridge's marginalia to volume 1 of Taylor, pp. 455-59. On Proclus and the "Intimations Ode," see J.D. Rea, "Coleridge's Intimations of Immortality from Proclus," MP, 26 (1928), 201-13.

Blumenbach's description of amphibia, which can reproduce without copulating, Coleridge thinks immediately how this implies that the senses are evolved from life. He then conflates it with Proclus to argue that knowledge is evolved from life also. Both presuppose the Vita Creatrix, the inward life, or the inner "I". This conflation, as well as conceptualization, shows the influence of Kant.

The link can be made clearer by comparison with Coleridge's first letter that implicitly indicates a study of Kant, dating from March 1801. In it, he announces that he has overthrown the doctrines of time and space, and of necessity:

This I have done; but I trust, that I am about to do more--namely, that I shall be able to evolve all the five senses, that is, to deduce them from one sense, & to state their growth, & the causes of their difference----& in this evolvment to solve the process of Life & Consciousness. 1

From his reading in Kant, Coleridge considers that he will be able to solve "the process of Life & Consciousness," or reconcile infinity with the individual self. He goes on to attack sensationalist philosophy in general, and claims that he has already traced the history of the causes which effected the (mistaken) reputation of Locke, Hobbes, and Hume "entirely to Wordsworth's satisfaction."² Although we may doubt that this history had indeed been already written as he claims, there can be little doubt that he spoke to Wordsworth on the topic. For in March 1804, when drafting passages about the

1. Griggs, II, 706.

2. Griggs, II, 707.

mind of the poet, Wordsworth wrote:

But also such a one must have been used
 To feed his soul upon infinity
 To deal with whatso'er be dim or vast
 In his own nature blending [?] in a form
 Of unity thro' truth-inspiring thoughts
 By one sensation either be it that
 Of his own mind the power by which he thinks
 Or lastly the great feeling of the world
 God & the immortality of life
 Beneath all being ever more to be 1

Here, in the analogy between the mind of man and nature which follows the vision from Snowdon, Wordsworth too writes of knowledge and sensation evolved from the power of the mind or the life in nature.

Coleridge could not have studied under Blumenbach without also, by proxy, studying under Kant.² It was not necessary for him to bring the two together himself. Kant, like Blumenbach, did not propose a theory of organicism for literary theory. But he did produce a theory which was much more useful for the writing of a poem than the judging of it as a finished artefact. This was his theory of method. It was the theory of method which gave a sophisticated form to the construction of any intellectual endeavour according to

1. MS. W, D. C. MS. 38, 7^V, ll. 1-10.

2. The relations of Kant and Blumenbach are complex, but the basic pattern is clear. Kant read Blumenbach's Institutiones Physiologicae, and used it to develop his own theory of method and organic form. Blumenbach, in turn, read Kant, and made use of Kant's theories. This can be seen if different editions of Blumenbach's works are compared. The exact course of the interaction, and the extent of it at the time Coleridge was at Göttingen, is much more difficult to determine. But given that Coleridge also read Kant, for present purposes all that need be noted is that Coleridge encountered a physiological theory of organic form, as well as a philosophical and aesthetic one, and conflated the two.

a general law or principle. Kant proposed a theory of the construction of a system in organicist terms. It is, in fact, Kant's theory of method which is the basis of Coleridge's theory of organic form, and which provides the key to the understanding of organic form in The Prelude.

Kant's theory of method can best be introduced in its Coleridgean version, in the Essays on Method in the 1818 Friend. Coleridge speaks of the powers of education as "the *nisus formativus* of social man," and, in a lengthy footnote, equates Blumenbach's *nisus formativus* with the life or living principle of Hunter, as Saumarez had done nineteen years before. He continues:

The Hunterian idea of a life or vital principle, "independent of the organization" . . . demonstrates that John Hunter did not, as Stahl and others had done, individualize, or make an hypostasis of the principles of life, as a somewhat manifestable *per se*, and consequently itself a phaenomenon The Hunterian position is a genuine philosophic IDEA 1

This "idea" is Kantian, not Platonic. It is, as Coleridge goes on to say, neither an abstraction, nor a generalisation, nor "an imaginary thing or phaenomenon."² It does not even have to be conscious or articulated:

JOHN HUNTER, who appeared at times almost a stranger to the grand conception, which yet never ceased to work in him as his genius and governing spirit, rose at length in the horizon of physiology and comparative anatomy. In his printed works, the one directing thought seems evermore to flit

1. The Friend, CC IV, I, 493-94.

2. The Friend, CC IV, I, 494.

before him, twice or thrice only to have been seized, and after a momentary detention to have been again let go: as if the words of the charm had been incomplete, and it had appeared at its own will only to mock its calling. At length, in the astonishing preparations for his museum, he constructed it for the scientific apprehension out of the unspoken alphabet of nature. 1

In a manuscript note, instead of the last two sentences, Coleridge writes: "Still did he seem to miss the compleating WORD that should have . . . reflected the Idea . . . and have . . . placed it at the disposal of his own consciousness, ~~for~~ ~~his own distinct~~ and voluntary Contemplation"2 The nisus formativus of Blumenbach is thus equated with the living principle of Hunter, and both are equated with the a priori controlling Idea of Coleridge's theory of method. An unconscious guiding thought directs investigation, until, at best, the idea is reflected in a "compleating WORD," which places that idea at the disposal of consciousness, for its own contemplation. It is in this way that the structure of organic form can also be the structure of conceptual thought. It is also the Kantian method of constructing systems, of making "a system out of a mere aggregate of knowledge," as detailed in the chapter on "The Architectonic of Pure Reason," the penultimate chapter of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason. It is interesting to place Coleridge's description of Hunter, and the comment which follows--"Yet notwithstanding the

1. The Friend, CC IV, 473-74. For an analysis of Hunter, sympathetic to Coleridge's position (which it does not, however, discuss), see Stephen Cross, "John Hunter's Theories of Life, Organization and Disease," Diss. Johns Hopkins, 1977.

2. The Friend, CC IV, I, 474.

imperfection in the annunciation of the idea, how exhilarating have been the results! We dare appeal to ABERNETHY, to EVERARD HOME, to HATCHETT . . ."--beside Kant's description of the same process:

No one attempts to establish a science unless he has an idea upon which to base it. But in the working out of the science the schema, nay even the definition which, at the start, he first gave of the science, is very seldom adequate to his idea. For this idea lies hidden in reason, like a germ in which the parts are still undeveloped and barely recognisable even under microscopic observation. Consequently, since sciences are devised from the point of view of a certain universal interest, we must not explain and determine them according to the description which their founder gives of them, but in conformity with the idea which, out of the natural unity of the parts that we have assembled, we shall find to be grounded in reason itself. For we shall then find that its founder, and often even his latest successors, are groping for an idea which they have never succeeded in making clear to themselves, and that consequently they have not been in a position to determine the proper content, the articulation (systematic unity), and limits of that science. ¹

Kant's description of scientific method clearly anticipates Coleridge's description of Hunter and his work. The idea which Hunter pursued but which eluded him like a will o' the wisp, guiding him but always evading its conscious articulation, Coleridge compares to Blumenbach's nisus formativus. So Kant here laments that it is only after collecting materials on the impulse of "an idea lying hidden in our minds" and producing a mere technical assembly, that the idea behind it all can be discerned clearly. "Systems," he adds,

1. The Friend, CC IV, I, 474; Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, A 834, B 862.

seem to be formed in the manner of lowly organisms, through a generatio aequivoca from the mere confluence of assembled concepts, at first imperfect, and only gradually attaining to completeness, although they one and all have had their schema, as the original germ, in the sheer self-development of reason. ¹

Hunter's thought was always developing purposively, but he barely glimpsed the "compleating WORD" which would articulate the (unconscious or hidden) guiding principle of his system. The identification of the theory of the structure of the organism with the theory of method in both Kant and Coleridge is crucial to an understanding of how organic form works as a method, and particularly, to an understanding of the structural method in The Prelude.

The dispute over priorities regarding the definition of organic form shows how Kant's description is essentially a development or exceptionally well considered statement of a whole movement towards an epistemology based on the cognitive processes of the mind. The theory of organic form in living entities, as developed by both Blumenbach and Kant, was itself based upon assumptions of mind-related descriptions of nature. It is not surprising, therefore, that the structure of the organism--considered almost exclusively in terms of the nisus formativus--is instantly retranslated into a perfect analogy or representation of cognitive method, whether of aesthetic judgement or scientific method. Although it is not possible here to trace a specific genealogy, Kant's theory of matter as constituted by centres of power, and his

1. Critique of Pure Reason, A 835, B 863.

relation to the much wider context of forms of thought that involved cognitive processes within "objective" knowledge, show how easily he could take possession of Coleridge "as with a giant's hand."

This is not the place for a detailed exposition of Kant's system, nor for a general consideration of its influence on Coleridge or his differences from it.¹ Nor is there need to attempt the tracing of individual, specific influences on Wordsworth's poetry.² But insofar as The Prelude's structure is best understood via a consideration of Kant's theory of organic form and Coleridge's theory of method, it will be helpful to summarize the most relevant aspects of Kant's thought. As Coleridge points out in the Biographia, Kant's transcendentalism means a theory of knowledge in which all sense data are considered as regulated by the mode of cognition, or a priori mental structures.³ Kant's "categories" define the ways in which we organize empirical data, and oppose an empiricism that assumes that we can acquire knowledge simply through an unmediated acquisition of sense data. The "transcendent," on the other hand, or the direct intuition or knowledge of God, Kant simply considered unknowable. It was in this that he chiefly differed from the Neoplatonists and later Idealists, and from Coleridge also.

1. For Coleridge's relation to Kant, see McFarland, Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition, D. M. MacKinnon, "Coleridge and Kant," in Coleridge's Variety, pp. 183-203, Orsini, Coleridge and German Idealism. I am particularly indebted to Orsini's analysis.
2. For direct Kantian influences on Wordsworth, see Rader, Wordsworth, pp. 66-71.
3. On the distinction between transcendent and transcendental, see BL, p. 137.

Kant privileged epistemology over all other forms of philosophy. Thus, whereas the British empiricists such as Locke or Tucker analysed the operation of mental faculties, Kant was concerned to investigate the mental structures that allow any form of mental activity. He was interested in those aspects of the mind which cannot be accounted for by experience alone, but which must be produced "spontaneously," or a priori, by the mind itself. Kant's a priori concepts are not innate ideas insofar as they are not conceived as ideas which already constitute the forms of the mind, nor are they conceived as being prior to experience as in their Platonic version. They are those structures that form and shape experience, but which cannot themselves be derived from sense experience. The Critical Philosophy thus consists in the articulation and analysis of the conditions that make experience possible and the conclusions drawn from experience valid.

Kant's major contribution was to specify the forms of knowledge, and to produce a third option for philosophy other than empiricism or rationalism. In the Critique of Pure Reason Kant distinguishes three mental functions. The first is sensibility, or the capacity to receive impressions as understood by the empiricists. The second is the understanding (verstand), or the capacity to conceive concepts and ideas, either a priori ("pure"), that is, the ideas by which we organize and make sense data intelligible (such as the ideas of the cause / effect relation), or a posteriori, which are empirical generalizations made from sense data a posteriori. The third is reason (vernunft), whose objects are "Ideas", or

concepts which transcend sense data and experience, as in traditional metaphysics. Kant believed that pure reason in itself was invalid; Part II of the Critique of Pure Reason shows how, when reason tries to go outside the limits of the understanding in its attempts to demonstrate the existence of God, its arguments are no longer legitimate.¹ As Rader and others have pointed out, in Coleridge the Reason returns to a concept of intellectual intuition, in which the nature and properties of ultimate reality are apprehended.² This "tender-minded version of Kant" is also the form in which it appears, briefly, in The Prelude.³

For Kant, the a priori must be assumed to exist in order for experience to be possible at all; they are accessible through reflection on the forms of mental processes. The a priori are, by definition, the forms of sense data, and are only hypothetically separable from it. Ironically, Kant's philosophy rests upon a separation of form, the a priori, as spontaneous acts of the mind, from content, the a posteriori or data of sensibility that the mind has received. It is in this connection that Kant deals with the phenomena of space and time. As Beddoes put in 1796, "Space and time, which have been the subject of so much metaphysical

-
1. Critique of Pure Reason, A 567-642, B 595-670; cf. Crsini, Coleridge and German Idealism, pp. 130-33. Wordsworth also spoke of three mental functions, feeling, understanding, and imagination (Prose Works, II, 98).
 2. Rader, Wordsworth, p. 69; Crsini, Coleridge and German Idealism, p. 137; Dorothy Emmet, "Coleridge and Philosophy," in S.T. Coleridge, ed. Brett, p. 203.
 3. 1805, XIII. 170.

disquisition, are said, by Mr. Kant, to be forms or shapes of intuition, inherent in the intellect."¹ Coleridge, in his March 1801 letter which has already been discussed, duly announced:

If I do not greatly delude myself, I have not only completely extricated the notions of Time, and Space; but have overthrown the doctrine of Association, as taught by Hartley, and with it all the irreligious metaphysics of modern Infidels--especially, the doctrine of Necessity. 2

Kant considers "space" to be the form taken by the data of the outer sense, which are arranged contiguously, while "time" is the form of data taken by the "inner sense"--which includes emotions, feelings, desire etc. This distinction in turn implies a separation between the mental phenomena themselves as organized according to these categories, and the perceiving self which unifies and arranges them:

The possibility of experience is, then, what gives objective reality to all our a priori modes of knowledge. Experience, however, rests on the synthetic unity of appearances, that is, on a synthesis according to concepts of an object of appearances in general. Apart from such synthesis

-
1. Beddoes, [on Kant], p. 266. Beddoes' article is often cited as evidence for the diffusion of knowledge about Kant in the 1790's. Although concentrating on the Critique of Judgement, which sounds promising, it is slightly odd that the passage which Beddoes chooses to translate is Kant's analysis of laughter and jokes (Part I, 199-202). On the other hand, the translation is quite accurate. Beddoes first discussed Kant in his Observations on the Nature of Demonstrative Evidence (London, 1793), pp. 89-90. For knowledge of Kant in England in this period, see Wellek, Immanuel Kant in England (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1931).
 2. Griggs, II, 706. This letter only gives evidence that Coleridge had read the first two sections of part one of the Critique of Pure Reason, so his knowledge of Kant should perhaps not be overestimated at this stage.

it would not be knowledge, but a rhapsody of perceptions that would not fit into any context according to rules of a completely interconnected (possible) consciousness, and so would not conform to the transcendental and necessary unity of apperception. 1

A primacy is thus placed upon mental organization, and the object of attention becomes the relation of the form of that organization to the knowing process itself. For Kant, the imagination is the synthetic process which forms the manifold of sense data. But the principle upon which all cognition depends is the fulcrum which connects all the categorised sense data and provides a continuous point of perception.² This is the "transcendental unity of apperception," or the act of self-consciousness, the "I think." Ordinary consciousness of self in inner perception is "merely empirical, and always changing."³ But there must also be a condition which precedes all experience, and which validates it:

There can be in us no modes of knowledge, no connection or unity of one mode of knowledge with another, without that unity of consciousness which precedes all data of intuitions, and by relation to which representation of objects is alone possible. This pure original unchangeable consciousness I shall name transcendental apperception. 4

For Coleridge, this was an all important link, for it was this which he was to identify with life itself, and thus enable him "to solve the process of life and consciousness."⁵

-
1. Critique of Pure Reason, A 156, B 195.
 2. Critique of Pure Reason, A 140-42, B 179-81.
 3. Critique of Pure Reason, A 107.
 4. Critique of Pure Reason, A 107.
 5. Griggs, II, 706.

In Kant, of course, it has no such characteristic. It is transcendental because it is the a priori condition of all experience. A unitary consciousness is an absolute necessity: "If we were not conscious that what we think is the same as what we thought a moment before, all reproduction in the series of representations would be useless. For it would in its present state be a new representation which would not in any way belong to the act whereby it was to be gradually generated."¹ Or, as Kant puts it a little later,

The abiding and unchanging 'I' (pure apperception) forms the correlate of all our representations in so far as it is to be at all possible that we should become conscious of them. . . .

A pure imagination, which conditions all a priori knowledge, is . . . one of the fundamental faculties of the human soul. By its means we bring the manifold of intuition on the one side, into connection with the condition of the necessary unity of pure apperception on the other. 2

The relation between the two is such that the abiding and unchanging 'I' can never be known in itself, since the act 'I think' can never be known before the act itself; to put it another way, the determining agent in the mind can never be known prior to the act of determination. It is only from the spontaneity of thought that the determining 'I' can be assumed.³ The difference between the transcendental self and empirical self is of crucial importance. The transcendental self can never itself be the object of knowledge. Its function was well understood by Coleridge, who

1. Critique of Pure Reason, A 103.

2. Critique of Pure Reason, A 123-24.

3. Critique of Pure Reason, B 158.

in 1804 wrote an important note addressed to Wordsworth:

Memo. To write to the Recluse that he may insert something concerning Ego / its metaphysical Sublimity--& intimate Synthesis with the principle of Co-adunation--without it every where all things were a waste--nothing, &c-- 1

Thus the transcendental Ego, in Coleridge's view, is intimately synthesized with the imagination "or the modifying, and co-adunating Faculty."² Without this structure, everything "were a waste"--nature would have no cohesive principle, as Coleridge suggests in "Dejection, A Letter," and Kant in the Critique of Pure Reason:

Thus the order and regularity in the appearances, which we entitle nature, we ourselves introduce. We could never find them in appearances, had we not ourselves, or the nature of our mind, originally set them there. For this unity of nature has to be a necessary one, that is, has to be an a priori certain unity of the connection of appearances; and such synthetic unity could not be established a priori if there were not subjective grounds of such unity contained a priori in the original cognitive powers of our mind 3

The position which Coleridge took from Kant for "Dejection" is well documented.⁴ But the link which he suggests in the Wordsworth note between Ego, imagination and nature shows

-
1. CN II 2057; cited by Orsini, Coleridge and German Idealism, p. 128. Orsini also compares Statesman's Manual, Appendix C: "Without this latent presence of the "I am," all modes of existence in the external world would flit before us as colored shadows, with no greater depth, root, or fixture, than the image of a rock hath in a gliding stream or the rain-bow on a fast sailing rain-storm" (CC VI, 78).
 2. Griggs, II, 866.
 3. Critique of Pure Reason, A 125.
 4. e.g. Basil Willey, Samuel Taylor Coleridge (London: Chatto and Windus, 1972), pp. 86-96.

how, as in "Dejection," he is thinking in terms of Life. The description of nature "without it every where all things were a waste"--could easily have been simply "dead." The implied antithesis is that with this faculty, life would return, with "the vitality & cohesion of our Being."¹ Coleridge's position as set forth in "Dejection" is not, however, altogether characteristic. The ideas of reason for Kant are ultimately unknowable--they are useful merely in a regulative faculty, directing and conditioning the relations of the parts towards an unrealizable whole. In Coleridge, however, reason returns as a faculty to intellectual intuition, and thus is able to apprehend the "nature and properties of ultimate reality."² Thus, whereas the position in "Dejection" would imply that the perceptions of nature are entirely based on the ideas of reason and can have no (knowable) validity in reality, for the later Coleridge they are a means of penetrating nature's inmost life. Ideas for Kant are merely regulative, whereas for Coleridge they are constitutive. The difference is crucial. As he puts it at the end of Appendix C to The Statesman's Manual:

Whether Ideas are regulative only, according to Aristotle and Kant; or likewise CONSTITUTIVE, and one with the power and Life of Nature, according to Plato, and Plotinus . . . is the highest problem of Philosophy 3

If Ideas are constitutive, then they indeed are objects of

1. Griggs, I, 649.

2. Rader, Wordsworth, p. 69.

3. CC VI, 114.

knowledge, and furthermore "one with the power and Life of Nature."

The link which Coleridge makes between the Idea of Reason and Life itself can be clearly followed via the Critique of Judgement, which contains the most explicit thesis of organic form. For Kant, the pleasure of a work of art is an intellectual satisfaction derived from its structure. The judgement of a work of art makes use of a teleological concept in which the work is seen as a system of parts whose structure of mutual relation forms a whole. This principle of intrinsic finality, in "which every part is both ends and means," finds a perfect analogy in a particular product of nature--the organism, an "organized and self-organized being"¹ The principle of finality necessitates that the organism is both cause and effect of itself:

An organized being is . . . not a mere machine. For a machine has solely motive power, whereas an organized being possesses inherent formative power, and such, moreover, as it can impart to material devoid of it--material which it organizes. This, therefore, is a self-propagating formative power, which cannot be explained by the capacity of movement alone, that is to say, by mechanism. 2

Kant is not content to call this an analogue of art, for an artist organizes the artefact from without, whereas nature organizes itself. He adds, "We might perhaps come nearer to the description of this impenetrable property if we were

1. Critique of Judgement, Part II, 22.

2. Critique of Judgement, Part II, 22.

to call it an analogue of life."¹ However, the concept of a thing as intrinsically a physical end is not constitutive. It can be used as a regulative conception only, as a remote analogy. But Kant's use of the structure of an organism as a regulative concept is beguiling, as the opening of the chapter on the "Architectonic of Pure Reason" shows very clearly.

By architectonic Kant means the art of constructing systems, of unifying knowledge and thus raising it above a mere aggregation:

In accordance with reason's legislative prescriptions, our diverse modes of knowledge must not be permitted to be a mere rhapsody, but must form a system. Only so can they further the essential ends of reason. By a system I understand the unity of the manifold modes of knowledge under one idea. This idea is the concept provided by reason--of the form of a whole--in so far as the concept determines a priori not only the scope of its manifold content, but also the positions which the parts occupy relatively to one another. The scientific concept of reason contains, therefore, the end and the form of that whole which is congruent with this requirement. 2

Thus knowledge must be systematized. This involves its unification through a single idea which a priori determines the form of the whole, the organization of its parts, and the end towards which it is designed. This description, which sounds like a version of organic form, indeed turns out to be such:

The unity of the end to which all the parts relate and in the idea of which they all stand in relation

1. Critique of Judgement, Part II, 23.

2. Critique of Pure Reason, A 832, B 860.

to one another, makes it possible for us to determine from our knowledge of the other parts whether any part be missing, and to prevent any arbitrary addition, or in respect of its completeness any indeterminateness that does not conform to the limits which are thus determined a priori. The whole is thus an organised unity (articulatio), and not an aggregate (coacervatio). It may grow from within (per intussusceptionem), but not by external addition (per appositionem). It is thus like an animal body, the growth of which is not by the addition of a new member, but by the rendering of each member, without change of proportion, stronger and more effective for its purposes. 1

The analogy here is to an animal body, not, as always in later definitions of organic form, to a plant. But it does not matter, for the nisus formativus applies equally well to either, and it is the nisus formativus, as the unapprehended but organizing Idea, that is of importance.

In conclusion, it may be said that Coleridge's study of Blumenbach enabled him to think about life in a new way. Instead of the one life or spirit of nature, life was seen as an interior power within living things. It was life, as the nisus formativus, which was attributable to God's power, but in itself formed the particular nature of each organism. This allowed a reconciliation of individuality with infinity, of the one and the many. Blumenbach's theory of organic form was conflated with the Kantian theory of method, in which the whole is organized by a hidden, but predetermining Idea. Coleridge's synthesis of the two is not remarkable in itself, insofar as Blumenbach was Kant's original source and was himself affected by Kantian theories.

1. Critique of Pure Reason, A 833, B 861.

Coleridge, however, produced his own modification. Kant's guiding Idea was equated with the secret inner spirit of life. This hidden life was itself seen as the forming principle of selfhood. In The Prelude, there is a comparable conflation of a theory of method with a theory of organic form which relates the individual self to "God & the immortality of life / Beneath all being." Wordsworth's philosophical structure is by no means a simple replica of Kant's system, but in many ways it depends upon it. Its relation to Coleridge's theory of method is more difficult to determine, since Coleridge's Essays on Method were written after the completion of The Prelude, and are undoubtedly influenced by it. But in the first place it was through Coleridge, via Kant and Blumenbach, that Wordsworth too was able to reconcile personality with infinity, and thus resolve the two structures that had been left in opposition in 1799.

CHAPTER SEVEN: The Hidden Life at its Source.

i. Pure Self-Beholdings.

A notebook entry of February / March 1801 shows Coleridge revising Wordsworth:

--and the deep power of Joy
We see into the Life of Things--
i.e.--By deep feeling we make our Ideas dim--&
this is what we mean by our Life--ourselves. 1

But in the start to 1805 Book III, which Wordsworth made in December of the same year, there is little trace of this revision of the theory of life.² The opening of Book III is written very much in the tones of The Pedlar, further parts of which it incorporates. The new material is hardly distinguishable from the old:

To every natural form, rock, fruit or flower,
Even the loose stones that cover the high-way,
I gave a moral life, I saw them feel,
Or link'd them to some feeling: the great mass
Lay bedded in a quickening soul, and all
That I beheld respired with inward meaning.
Thus much for the one Presence, and the Life
Of the great whole 3

The new work on The Prelude took it no further than the end of The Pedlar, once again to leave Wordsworth's eye with

-
1. CN 921. Cf. Orsini, Coleridge and German Idealism, pp. 178-83, where he gives a striking analogue from Fichte.
 2. The 1801 material was probably 1805, III. 1-167. See Jonathan Wordsworth and Stephen Gill, "The Two-Part Prelude of 1793-99," pp. 523-24. Book III was no doubt seen at this stage simply as an extension to 1799.
 3. III. 124-31. Lines 124-27 are from Ruined Cottage MS. B, D. C. MS. 17, 16^r, ll. 80-83, CW IV, 180-81.

"no surface where its power might sleep...."¹ Life at this stage is still seen in all things. All movement is the effect of an immanent, all-pervading spirit that plays among the forms of nature:

And in our vacant mood,
Not seldom did we stop to watch some tuft
Of dandelion seed or thistle's beard,
Which, seeming lifeless half, and half impell'd
By some internal feeling, skimm'd along
Close to the surface of the lake that lay
Asleep in a dead calm, ran closely on
Along the dead calm lake, now here, now there,
In all its sportive wanderings all the while
Making report of an invisible breeze
That was its wings, its chariot, and its horse,
Its very playmate, and its moving soul. 2

Here the internal feeling which impels the floating seed is identified with and indistinguishable from the breeze which transports it. In the same way, at the beginning of the Glad Preamble, Wordsworth breathes the "gentle breeze / That blows from the green fields and from the clouds" and simultaneously experiences "Trances of thought and mountings of the mind."³ This breeze, blowing equally within and from without, involves the poet in the pervasive spirit or life of nature. But it did not produce any sort of resolution for the problems of 1799.

On 20 December 1803 Coleridge arrived at Grasmere and stayed until 14 January 1804, before departing for Malta in

1. III. 164.

2. "Poems on the Naming of Places: IV," (1800) ll. 16-27, Lyrical Ballads, p.223, PW II, 116.

3. I. 1-2, 20. Cf. M.H. Abrams, "The Correspondent Breeze: A Romantic Metaphor," English Romantic Poets, ed. M.H. Abrams, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 37-54.

Each of these passages describes a structure, as Coleridge puts it, of "Thoughts that obey no mastery of words, / Pure self-beholdings!"¹ This thing which rises before the eye, which is watched as it moves forward of its own accord, is nothing less than an image of the "shaping Spirit of Imagination."² The image of the mind in nature has become self-conscious. The mind in nature is now apprehended as a spectre of the creative self.

1. "To William Wordsworth," l. 5 app. crit. (MS. B), CPW I, 404.

2. "Dejection: A Letter," l. 242, Griggs, II, 796.

ii. The "Ode" as the Myth of "The Prelude".

Imagination can only be a spectre. It can only be apprehended through an image not itself. This much Wordsworth understood during the Christmas visit of 1803:

The idea itself, which like a mighty billow at once overwhelms and bears aloft--what is it? Whence did it come? In vain would we derive it from the organs of sense: for these supply only surfaces, undulations, phantoms! In vain from the instruments of sensation: for these furnish only the chaos, the shapeless elements of sense! 1

The answer, no doubt discussed and developed over the turn of the year, was essentially akin to that which Coleridge gave in the 1818 Friend:

We have asked ... for its birth-place in all that constitutes our relative individuality, in all that each man calls exclusively himself. 2

The significant new idea which appears in the Spring 1804 sections of The Prelude is the identification of the inner power--"what within the mind / May rise enkindled"--with the principle of the self.³ That selfhood both partakes of, and is differentiated from, the totality of the spirit:

The power, which evolved this idea of BEING, BEING in its essence, BEING limitless, comprehending its own limits in its dilation, and condensing itself into its own apparent mounds--how shall we name it? 4

1. The Friend, CC IV, I, 514.

2. The Friend, CC IV, I, 515.

3. "To William Wordsworth," ll. 8-9, CPW II, 1081. This applies equally to the five-and thirteen-book Preludes. The differences in their structures are discussed in section iii below.

4. The Friend, CC IV, I, 514.

"Life, Power, Being!" Imagination was the word and concept which brought them together. It also neatly resolved the contradictory directions of 1799. The mind as the centre, as in the *Infant Babe*, and the mind lost in "the great Whole" were no longer in opposition to each other. For imagination, among its many functions, is essentially the "co-adunating Faculty," or "the connecting energy," which resolves the one and the many.¹

While 1799 recounted the early manifestations of Wordsworth's "inner mind," the later Preludes are concerned to locate and understand the role of that internal self in the whole course of his life.² 1799 does little to relate the evanescent past to the present:

Those recollected hours that have the charm
Of visionary things, and lovely forms
And sweet sensations that throw back our life
And make our infancy a visible scene
On which the sun is shining 3

Its elegaic rapture is an inseparable part of its power, but means also that it is a much less ambitious poem. It only begins to build the intimations of childhood memory into the basis of a philosophical position, hinting at their "fructifying virtue" in the spots of time.⁴

Book III begins the process of coming to self-consciousness, of a separation from the self which is a necessary part of any process of coming to know and to apprehend it. The

1. Griggs, II, 866; The Friend, CC IV, I, 455.

2. VIII. 68.

3. 1799, i. 460-64.

4. 1799, i. 290.

effect of Cambridge, says Wordsworth, was that he "more directly recognised" his "powers and habits."¹ Thus, although dealing with more superficial material of conventional autobiography, Book III is the first moment in 1805 when it is made explicit that the experiences of childhood are to have a function much greater than themselves.² So the details of Cambridge life are interspersed with claims for a true self which resides permanently within. At the same time, Wordsworth makes the first great claims for The Prelude:

Of Genius, Power,
Creation and Divinity itself
I have been speaking, for my theme has been
What pass'd within me. Not of outward things
Done visibly for other minds, words, signs,
Symbols or actions; but of my own heart
Have I been speaking, and my youthful mind. 3

It is no coincidence that Wordsworth makes these ambitious statements at the same time as he describes a conception of the self significantly different from that of 1799. At this point the shift that has been described in terms of theories of life--a shift from a theory of an immanent spirit to a hidden, secret power within the organism or body itself--becomes manifest in The Prelude.

The emphasis of the epic declaration of Book III is not on a power per se, not on power in the abstract, whether in mind or in nature, but on a hidden, invisible power within.

1. III. 105-06.

2. This is, of course, reinforced by the fact that in 1805 the second group of episodes, clustered round the spots of time definition, are taken out of Book I.

3. 1805, III. 171-77.

The theme of the poem, Wordsworth declares, is nothing that is outward or visible, but "Genius, Power, / Divinity itself." This is expressed in the terms of the "Intimations Ode":

O Heavens! how awful is the might of Souls,
And what they do within themselves, while yet
The yoke of earth is new to them, the world
Nothing but a wild field where they were sown. 1

The incipient power of the soul is identified with the image of the seed. The seed contains the invisible power of life, the nisus formativus which cannot be apprehended, but only deduced from its effects. It remains a source within, forming, organizing, and directing the outer life purposively towards an end inherent from the very first. It is this secrecy, this almost mystical aspect, that Wordsworth now stresses and identifies with his "single self":

This is, in truth, heroic argument,
And genuine prowess; which I wish'd to touch
With hand however weak; but in the main
It lies far hidden from the reach of words.
Points have we all of us within our souls,
Where all stand single; this I feel, and make
Breathings for incommunicable powers. 2

This is the element in the poem which Coleridge seized on in his analysis. As he put it:

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!-- 3

The suggestion of an inner depth to the mind--"Caverns there were within my mind" as Wordsworth puts it a little later--is

1. III. 178-81.

2. III. 182-88.

3. "To William Wordsworth," ll. 8-11, CPW I, 404.

a constant element throughout the poem.¹ The function of this inner being, this single point of the soul is quite straightforward. It is, in Coleridge's words,

the one principle of permanence and identity, the rock of strength and refuge, to which the soul may cling amid the fleeting surge-like objects of the senses. Disturbed as by the obscure quickening of an inward birth . . . man sallies forth into nature--in nature, as in the shadows and reflections of a clear river, to discover the originals of the forms presented to him in his own intellect. Over these shadows, as if they were the substantial powers and presiding spirits of the streams, Narcissus-like, he hangs delighted: till finding nowhere a representative of that free agency which yet is a fact of immediate consciousness sanctioned and made fearfully significant by his prophetic conscience, he learns at last that what he seeks he has left behind, and but lengthens the distance as he prolongs the search. 2

At this point, he cites the "Intimations Ode":

Not for these I raise
The song of thanks and praise;
But for those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings;
Blank misgivings of a Creature
Moving about in worlds not realiz'd
High instincts, before which our mortal Nature
Did tremble like a guilty Thing surpriz'd:
But for those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
Are yet a master light of all our seeing.... 3

The major part of the "Ode" was composed in March 1804 at the same time as the composition of the greatest episodes of the thirteen-book Prelude, close to the time of the

1. III. 246.

2. The Friend, CC IV, I, 503-09.

3. "Intimations Ode," ll. 142-55, Poems in Two Volumes, p. 329, PW IV, 283. Cf. Alan Grob, "Wordsworth's 'Immortality Ode' and the Search for Identity," ELH, 32 (1965), 32-61.

decision to expand the five-book poem. Its stress on childhood's "high instincts" as a foundation for subsequent life had been implied in 1799. But like the apostrophe to the imagination in Book VI, written within a matter of weeks of the "Ode," it produces a clear and distinct statement of something which had previously been only implicit in the poetry. For it is in the "Ode" that Wordsworth formalizes his sense of an "inner being," and develops the sense of being "two consciousnesses" into a more specific theory of identity. The "Ode" functions as The Prelude's unstated myth. The major parts of both poems were written virtually simultaneously, and each depends upon the other.

In Book III of The Prelude, it becomes clear that the experiences of childhood are themselves seen as the incarnation in memory of an eternal being, as intimations of a principle within the self. The "high instincts" of the inner being, intuited in the memory of certain childhood experiences, remain almost inapprehensible. Wordsworth has intimations of a self, out of space and time, that is the birth-place and origin of his own identity. But he is scarcely able to know it as an object, precisely because, as with Kant's transcendental Ego, it is itself the ultimate perceiving subject.¹ The only way to discover "all that constitutes

1. It is here that the difference between ideas as regulative as in Kant, and constitutive as in Coleridge and Wordsworth, becomes crucial. In Kant, the transcendental Ego is strictly unknowable, as is the pure Reason. But in Coleridge, as has been noted, the Reason returned to a function of intellectual intuition, which could apprehend ultimates. Thus in The Prelude the 'I think' can be glimpsed as well. There is, in fact, a hint of this in Kant, which is probably behind the image of the imagination

our relative individuality . . . all that each man calls exclusively himself," is through a separation from it, just as the only way of attaining consciousness of the thinking self is through a differentiation of that self from the object world. As it is put in the Biographia: "a subject . . . becomes a subject by the act of constructing itself objectively to itself; but which never is an object except for itself, and only so far as by the very same act it becomes a subject."¹ Coleridge's description (or perhaps one should rather say Schelling's) aptly characterizes the nature of the exploration of The Prelude. As Coleridge puts it elsewhere: "Life is a subject with an inherent tendency to produce an object, wherein and whereby to find itself"² So in his life, Wordsworth is attempting to find himself, but that self must necessarily be an object as well as a subject if it

....described in section i: "Now since I do not have another self-intuition which gives the determining in me (I am conscious only of the spontaneity of it) prior to the act of determination . . . I cannot determine my existence as that of a self-active being; all that I can do is to represent to myself the spontaneity of my thought, that is, of the determination . . . /my emphasis/ (Critique of Pure Reason, B 158). Appleyard notes an interesting analogue from Tucker: "one of the points on which the author reluctantly corrects Locke, is Tucker's insistence on incommunicable substance, rather than the Lockean notion of consciousness, as the source of personal identity. His idea of substance involves not only the element of substare, of serving as the substrate of qualities, but also that of subsistere, of incommunicable existence" (Coleridge's Philosophy of Literature, p. 104).

1. BL, p. 152.

2. MS. Egerton 2801 f. 47, cited by Barfield, What Coleridge Thought, p.67. Cf. Cn Church and State, where life is defined as "a self-finding" (CC X, 180).

is to be found. The poem is a search for a principle of identity, a "true" interior self that will provide a defence against change and the loss implicit in growth. As a principle separate from ordinary consciousness, and indeed anterior to consciousness, this self remains, paradoxically, almost unknowable. It thus comes to be conceived as an essence that exists a priori, but which is deduced from the intimations and "high instincts" of early childhood.¹

The "Ode" thus presents a logical fiction, in which identity, the inner Idea, is correlated with the pre-existence of the soul. The "Ode" describes the arrival of the "internal being," its early instincts of a former self, and its oppression through consciousness of the ordinary world:

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere it's setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy 2

-
1. Cf. CN 2332: "To deduce instincts from obscure recollections of a pre-existing State--I have often thought of it--Ey! have I said, when I have seen certain tempers & actions in Hartley, that is I in my future state / so I think oftentimes that my children are my Soul. / that multitude & division are not (o mystery) necessarily subversive of unity. I am sure, that two very different meanings if not more lurk in the word, one. S.T.C."; and Griggs, IV, 775: "a Life, a Power, an Inside, must have pre-existed, of which Length and Breadth are the process, the fluxions; and of which the Substance, the LIFE appearing, are the result."
 2. "Intimations Ode," ll. 58-68, Poems in Two Volumes, pp. 324-25, PW IV, 281.

If the inner being is hidden, inaccessible, free even from time, then its pre-existence is a necessary fiction. As Coleridge describes it sympathetically in the Biographia:

the ode was intended for such readers only 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 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. 1

In the Fenwick note, Wordsworth likewise defends his poem as a fiction, although he adds that there is nothing to forbid its truth. The inner being, as an abiding and unchanging "I," performs a function comparable to Kant's "transcendental unity of apperception." Its specific form, however, is more closely related to the Platonic doctrine of innate ideas. Locke's opening description, in the Essay on Human Understanding, of the theory of innate ideas which he is concerned to refute, serves as a clear description of this principle which Wordsworth finds in the self:

It is an established opinion amongst some men that there are in the Understanding certain Innate Principles, some primary notions, κοινὰ ἔννοια, characters as it were stamped upon the mind of Man, which the Soul receives in it's very first being, and brings into the World with it. 2

1. BL, p.268. Cf. Statesman's Manual, Appendix C: "Now little as I might be disposed to believe, I should be still less inclined to ridicule, the conjecture that in the recesses of our nature, and undeveloped, there might exist an inner sense, (and therefore appertaining wholly to Time,)--a sense hitherto 'without a name' . . . " (CC VI, 81).
2. Cited by Coleridge, Griggs, II, 680; Locke Essay, I. ii. 1, p.48.

The identification of the soul of childhood, with the inner being and the soul itself, is of crucial importance to The Prelude, for it is this principle of mind, as the true and original self, which is the organizing centre of the whole poem. This mind as centre, which organizes and forms everything else, is nicely suggested by Wordsworth's remark in the Fenwick note: "Archimedes said that he could move the world if he had a point whereon to rest his machine. Who has not felt the same aspiration as regards the world of his own mind?"¹ It is this identification which produces the extraordinary claims for the new-born child:

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
 Thy Soul's immensity;
 Thou best Philosopher, who yet dost keep
 Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,
 That deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
 Haunted for ever by the eternal mind,--
 Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!
 On whom those truths do rest,
 Which we are toiling all our lives to find;
 Thou, over whom thy Immortality
 Broods like the Day, a Master o'er a Slave,
 A Presence which is not to be put by;
 To whom the grave
 Is but a lonely bed without the sense or sight
 Of day or the warm light,
 A place of thought where we in waiting lie;
 Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might
 Of untam'd pleasures, on thy Being's height,
 Why with such earnest pains does thou provoke
 The Years to being the inevitable yoke,
 Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?
 Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly freight,
 And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
 Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life! 2

The last phrase is curious. "Deep almost as life": the soul will be buried so that it is as deep as life itself.

1. Fenwick Note, PW IV, 464

2. "Intimations Ode," ll. 108-31, Poems in Two Volumes, pp. 327-28, PW IV, 282-83.

This strange stanza describes that which, in The Prelude, is buried and is identified with life itself. The echoes of the Glad Preamble--the yoke, the house of bondage, the "long continued frost"--suggest that The Prelude is indeed a poem which begins with the feeling that the immortality of the child has been restored to the adult. But its dissolution, the break-down of hope that occurs so quickly at the beginning of the poem, is the sign of the loss of communication with the internal being. The frost may start to break up, but life is buried too deep to be easily brought to the surface. It is only occasionally that the poet has

glimmering views
 How Life pervades the undecaying mind,
 How the immortal Soul with God-like power
 Informs, creates, and thaws the deepest sleep
 That time can lay upon her 1

The immensity of the child's soul stems from the fact that he still lives within the interior life of the spirit, he can still read "the eternal deep / Haunted for ever by the eternal mind." In September 1800 Coleridge had wondered "if the clusters of ideas, which constitute our identity, do every connect & unite into a greater Whole. . . ." ² This is, in effect, the question behind "Tintern Abbey," and perhaps also the question with which 1799 began. Wordsworth, by the time of Home at Grasmere, asserts that "Possessions have I, wholly, solely mine / Something within which yet is shared by none. . . ." ³ This is the inner being which the

1. IV. 154-58.

2. Griggs, I, 624.

3. Home at Grasmere, MS. B, D. C. MS. 59, 11. 897-98, CW III, 94.

"Ode" produces, and which The Prelude quickly affirms.

The Prelude thus establishes intimations of immortality through the experiences of Book I, and affirms a spirit of which "the mind is both . . . Birth-place and . . . manufacturer" in the projection of the Infant Babe in Book Two.¹ Wordsworth identifies this inner being with the experiences of early childhood, and by structuring the first book as essentially separate from the rest of the poem, in effect creates them as "islands in the unnavigable depth of . . . departed time." Thence-forward, the poem can afford to become more involved with a conventional chronology and ordinary life. This is often seen as an example of the falling-off of the poem after the sublime episodes of the early books; and so, indeed, in a way it is. But the story which Wordsworth has to tell, of his "never-failing principle of joy / And purest passion" is not to be a story in which the inner principle is continuously worn on the sleeve.²

1. Griggs, II, 692.

2. II. 465-66.

- iii. "The initiative thought, the intellectual seed, must itself have its birth-place within."

When Wordsworth began working on The Prelude in January 1804 he was thinking in terms of a poem of five books.¹ The simplicity of this structure is attractive compared to the much more heterogeneous material included in 1805. 1804 was to consist of the first three books as in MS. M, a shortened version of MS. M Books IV and V, and a fifth book which was to begin with the Climbing of Snowdon, continue with the spots of time from 1799, Part 1, and end with a conclusion comparable to 1799's or 1805's.² The theme of the poem remained the growth of mental power and the love of nature's works. It was to have consisted of the child's growth to consciousness of his own mental power, his estrangement from and return to nature; concluding with Snowdon as an example of nature's power--followed by the spots of time as examples of the poet's. This gives the poem a slightly different emphasis from 1805. Nature and the mind are much more evenly balanced, as is evident from the gloss that in one version of MS. W follows the vision from Snowdon:

To this one scene which I from Snowdon's breast
Beheld might more be added to set forth
The manner in which oftentimes nature works
Herself upon the outward face of things
As if with an imaginative power 3

-
1. The following discussion of the five-book Prelude (1804) is indebted to the reconstruction of the poem by Jonathan Wordsworth, in "The Five-Book Prelude of Early Spring 1804."
2. Book IV was largely to have been a more compact version of 1805 Books IV and V, but did not contain the Arab Dream.
3. MS. W, D. C. MS. 38, 48^r, ll. 1-5,

It is, at this stage, a power in nature which proves to be a "Brother of the very faculty / Which higher minds bear with them as their own."¹ 1804 is about powers in mind and nature; it ends on an affirmation of the correspondence of mind and nature, and the locus of their correspondence is power. The dualism of mind and nature dissolves into a disembodied force which exists both within and without "in boundless interchange." The structure of the whole book consists of an altercation between power in nature and power in the mind. But, as the Cambridge experiences have shown, the power of mind is called forth by nature and is dependent on its renewal.

By 1805, however, a significant change has been introduced. Snowdon is no longer simply a sublime manifestation of Nature's power. It has become something else:

A meditation rose in me that night
Upon the lonely Mountain when the scene
Had pass'd away, and it appear'd to me
The perfect image of a mighty Mind,
Of one that feeds upon infinity,
That is exalted by an under-presence,
The sense of God, or whatsoe'er is dim
Or vast in its own being 2

It has become a mind. At first, as one comes to the line "The perfect image of a mighty Mind" it seems that Snowdon is going to be an image of the "one great Mind." The revelation proves not to be of God, but of a colossal mind of man. The mind of Snowdon is nothing less than the poet's own mind, now imaged in nature. Snowdon, in which the poet

1. MS. W, D. C. MS. 38, 43^r, ll. 3-4.

2. XIII. 66-73.

literally sees a mind in nature, could be taken as a representation of the extreme position of the tendency to see nature in terms of mind-relational categories that we have traced from Newton onwards. Nature itself has now become the "index of a mind for ever / Voyaging through strange seas of Thought," the universe its vast sensorium.

The scheme for a five-book Prelude, as Jonathan Wordsworth has shown, very rapidly gave way to a version that must have envisaged at least the outlines of the thirteen-book poem.¹ So rapid was this change, that MS.M, which had begun as a transcript of the completed five-book poem to be sent to Coleridge, was able in a matter of days to be modified so that Books IV and V are almost identical to the form that they were to take in MS.A. This extraordinary shift in the conception of the poem, with its massive expansion of structure, is recorded in the drafts of MS.WW.

MS.WW is a very rough notebook, containing fragmentary drafts, which are often illegible, on twenty-three leaves. The bulk of the material consists of drafts for the five-book Prelude dating from January to March of 1804, but it also includes work towards 1805.² Some of the drafts precede those of MS.W, which shows no signs of having been redrafted after the abandonment of the five-book scheme, but other

1. Jonathan Wordsworth, "The Five-Book Prelude of Early Spring 1804," pp. 24-25.

2. For a detailed description of MS.WW (D. C. MS. 43), see Jonathan Wordsworth, "The Five-Book Prelude of Early Spring 1804," pp. 4-5, and Reed II, 641-42. I follow Reed's ordering, and have been greatly helped by consultation of his WW transcript, from which I cite below.

drafts either date after the change, or contain material that was drafted before the change but was not intended for use. However, the drafts of Book VI.220-30, 347-54, 469-c.482 show that the notebook was in use after Wordsworth had decided to include the journey to France in 1790. The manuscript also contains drafts towards the Arab Dream, the opening of Book XIII, and the "Oft tracing this analogy" lines more fully developed in W.¹ Most significant of all are its drafts towards VI. 494ff., the episode of the Crossing of the Alps, which begin on 16^v. The drafts show that the discovery of the Crossing of the Alps (VI. 524, 18^r) was followed firstly by the image of the Cave of Yordas (corresponding to 1805 VIII. 711-727) which, like Mont Blanc, leaves the poet grieving. The Cave of Yordas comes at the end of a group of seven connected leaves; an eighth, close to the seventh (though the cuts suggest that it was not quite adjacent), contains what are clearly the first drafts of the apostrophe to the imagination.² The drafting is extremely rough, but several phrases that did not find their way into the final version are suggestive:

That stoppd me, [? ?cloud ?& ?]
 And [?happiness] & hopes [?the ?wild ?that ?both]
 Before me the [?true ?pathway ?of ?my ?verse]
 Imagination [?! ?rising ?up]
 Like an unfatherd vapour here [?]
 Crossing [?] I [?]
 I [?paused] was lost awhile as in a Cloud
 A cloud which in my verse [?come ?to ?] 3

1. Cf. Joseph F. Kishel, "The 'Analogy Passage' from Wordsworth's Five-Book Prelude," SIR, 18 (1979), 271-85.

2. VI.525-48. Strictly speaking, the apostrophe is not to the imagination, but to Wordsworth's soul; in 1805 the two are conflated, so I continue to use the description as the lines are generally known in this way. In 1850, Wordsworth makes a distinction when he says "But to my conscious soul I now can say..." (l.596). The drafts corresponding to these lines are on MS.WW 20^{r+v}.

3. MS. WW, D. C. MS. 43, 20^r.

"A cloud which in my verse . . .": the fragmentariness of the drafts is tantalising, but what is most interesting for our purposes is that the apostrophe to imagination, which interrupts the narrative of the poem and brings the reader into the present of the writing is, in its completed version, an apostrophe to the power of the mind, to the mind's ability to hold communion "with the invisible world." In this draft, however, the references are, as far as they can be deciphered, much more to the writing of the poem. The rising up of imagination as a cloud before him shows Wordsworth, as he puts it, the "true pathway of my verse." This reference, which in the MS.A text Wordsworth confines to the phrase "lifting up itself / Before the eye and progress of my Song / Like an unfather'd vapour", suggests that imagination here is as much about the qualities of the "prime and vital principle" of the poem as the poet. This is substantiated by the drafts on 20^V which do not seem to be related to the MS.A version of Book VI, but perhaps relate to the lines describing imagination following the Climbing of Snowdon.¹ One phrase, conjectural though the reading is, again coincides with the sense that the lines are about the writing of the poem, insofar as it speaks of "Return and purpose again." It would be obviously ill-advised to place too much emphasis on these mostly conjectural readings; but it remains the case that such readings as can be conjectured put the emphasis

1. Also present on the very fragmentary verso of 20 are the words "strength," "brother," and "reason," which would seem to connect the drafts to XIII. 87-89.

on a revelation about the writing of the poem, rather than, as in the MS.A version, of the immortal and infinite mental power which constitutes imagination. This different emphasis is also corroborated by the fact that these lines were written at precisely the period when Wordsworth took the decision to expand the poem very considerably. This sudden burst of confidence and new ambition for the poem, of "return and purpose again," suggests that at this moment of revelation while writing, Wordsworth discovered nothing less than the controlling Idea of the poem itself.

After March 1804, Wordsworth very quickly expanded his poem and took much greater risks with his material--insofar as he included the Books on London, the French Revolution, and the despair of the period of his involvement with Godwinism.¹ It is also interesting to note that in MS.A he returned to the earlier books, and where they had, in MS.M, only spoken of the "inner being," he added such remarks as "Imagination slept, / And yet not utterly. . . ."² Thus it seems likely that what occurred in March 1804 was that Wordsworth, in true Kantian fashion, suddenly understood the guiding Idea of his own poem, and realised that it was the same force as he had been describing as his own inner being. The poem begins as a statement of a mental power which can be known in its effects, but not in its essence, which lies "far hidden from the reach of words." The attempt in the

1. As represented in The Prelude; but cf. Stephen C. Gill, "'Adventures on Salisbury Plain' and Wordsworth's Poetry of Protest 1795-97," SIR, 11 (1972), 48-65.

2. III. 260-61.

poem to locate that inner point of stability, to produce the subject as an object, suddenly succeeds when Wordsworth discovers it not in himself as such, but as the central controlling principle that organizes his own poem. It is found, in other words, through the process of writing itself, which is indeed the way which he describes writing in Book V: "Thou also, Man, hast wrought, / For commerce of thy nature with itself, / Things worthy of unconquerable life. . . ." ¹

The break-through of the address to the imagination, preserved in 1805 and 1850 as a revelation occurring at the time of writing, functions as the pivot of the poem. At this point, the organization of the poem, and the organization of the life of which it treats, coincide. The importance of the passage is in its recognition that the poem is systematized according to a controlling principle of the self, that this is the point on which rests "the world of his own mind." That self is a being out of space and time which remains constant throughout the poem and the poet's life, and which at all points exists both as a touchstone and as an organizing centre. The poem is thus a simultaneous organization of Wordsworth's life from this single point of inner being and a self-organizing structure whose own nisus formativus is the hidden principle of "unconquerable life." "Imagination," as Coleridge put it, is "the true inward Creatrix." ² The narrative is the story of the way in which this inner self could become "hidden in its endless home / Among the depths

1. V. 17-19.

2. CN 4046.

of time," and then rise once more to renew its connecting energy with the conscious self.¹ The poem too, in its sinuous and winding course, often seems to lose sight of its own organizing principle:

This faculty hath been the moving soul
Of our long labour: we have traced the stream
From darkness, and the very place of birth
In its blind cavern, whence is faintly heard
The sound of waters; follow'd it to light
And open day, accompanied its course
Among the ways of Nature, afterwards
Lost sight of it, bewilder'd and engulph'd,
Then given it greeting, as it rose once more
With strength 2

The "moving soul" is itself hidden and almost invisible. Only in retrospect or in flashes can the life be seen as "a succession of perceptions accompanied by a sense of nisus & purpose."³ The hidden germ or seed of synthesizing power in the poem is revealed only sparingly, apprehended only in flashes, just as it is for Hunter:

the one directing thought seems evermore to flit
before him, twice or thrice only to have been
seized, and after a momentary detention to have
been again let go 4

In Wordsworth's case, however, the "true self" is allowed the "compleating WORD," not through any direct introspection, but in the sudden recognition of the controlling Idea of the poem. "Imagination" rises up both as a word and as a cloud. The poem is a self-discovery because it works simultaneously on these two levels--it is both an account of an organization

1. V. 197-98.

2. XIII. 171-80.

3. CN 886.

4. The Friend, CC IV, I, 474.

of a life into an inherently purposive structure, and a discovery of that mode of organization which comes from the "pre-designing Consciousness" of the true self, the power of imagination.¹ As the "Vita Creatrix," imagination is simultaneously the inner self, an element of nature, and the presence of "God, or whatsoe'er is dim / Or vast in its own being"

As it breaks into the poem in 1805, imagination is only momentarily described as the "eye and progress" of Wordsworth's song. Much greater emphasis is placed on its power as a faculty of mind, as a revelation of the "other more permanent Self."² This apprehension of the determining power of mind in the act of its spontaneity conflates the idea of Coleridge's thoughts--"Starlings in vast Flights, borne along like smoke, mist--like a body unindued with voluntary Power"--with Milton's invocation at the beginning of Paradise Lost Book III.³ The image of creativity may come from Milton, but the apprehension of the self as an object, as a preceding phantom, has, as Stephen Prickett has pointed out, a further source image in the Broken Spectre which Coleridge saw in

1. Griggs, I, 625.

2. Griggs, IV, 559.

3. Thus with the year
Seasons return, but not to me returns
Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn . . .
But cloud in stead, and ever-during dark
Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men
Cut off, and for the book of knowledge fair
Presented with a universal blank
Of nature's works to me expunged and razed,
And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out.
So much the rather thou celestial Light
Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
Irradiate, there plant eyes, all mist from thence
Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
Of things invisible to mortal sight.

(PL, III. 40-42, 45-55).

1799.¹ Coleridge first wrote of this ideal self or alter ego in his poem "Constancy to an Ideal Object." By the time of Aids to Reflection he had developed it, as Prickett observes, into an image of "the individual's encounter with genius":

The beholder either recognizes it as a projected form of his own Being, that moves before him with a Glory round its head, or recoils from it as from a Spectre. 2

This image of the writer's own secret power of genius, suddenly and momentarily apprehended, is also the image of Wordsworth's own apprehension of imagination and thus of his own inner self:

Imagination! lifting up itself
Before the eye and progress of my Song
Like an unfather'd vapour; here that Power,
In all the might of its endowments, came
Athwart me; I was lost as in a cloud,
Halted, without a struggle to break through.
And now recovering, to my Soul I say
I recognise thy glory 3

The imagination here is recognized in the act of usurping ordinary consciousness. But there is little doubt as to what it actually is. As De Quincey puts it:

the apparition is but a reflex of yourself; and, in uttering your secret feelings to him, you make this phantom the dark symbolic mirror for reflecting to the daylight what else must be hidden for ever. 4

1. See Prickett, Coleridge and Wordsworth, pp. 22-25.

2. Aids to Reflection, p.220 cited by Prickett, Coleridge and Wordsworth, p.25.

3. VI. 525-32.

4. De Quincey, "The Apparition of the Brocken," Suspiria de Profundis, Blackwoods, 57 (1845), 749.

with this apprehension of the "eye" as "I," Wordsworth succeeds to "a sublime consciousness of the soul in her own mighty and almost divine powers."¹

It is the sublime precisely which is at stake. The Crossing of the Alps shows that the true Wordsworthian sublime is nothing less than an inversion of a more conventional Romantic sublime. Mont Blanc or the Alps, where the sublime experience should have occurred, produce nothing but "a soulless image on the eye / Which had usurp'd upon a living thought / That never more could be"² Instead, the sublime moment comes from a revelation from within:

And now recovering, to my Soul I say
 I recognise thy glory; in such strength
 Of usurpation, in such visitings
 Of awful promise, when the light of sense
 Goes out in flashes that have shewn to us
 The invisible world, doth Greatness make abode,
 There harbours, whether we be young or old.
 Our destiny, our nature, and our home
 Is with infinitude, and only there;
 With hope it is, hope that can never die,
 Effort, and expectation, and desire,
 And something evermore about to be. 3

1. Cf. Hartman, "Eye and Ego," Wordsworth's Poetry, pp. 179-81, and, on the Crossing of the Alps, pp. 39-69; Wordsworth, Preface of 1815, Prose Works, III, 33.

2. VI. 454-56.

3. VI. 531-42. The passage ends with a comparison of the rising of imagination to the overflowing Nile: the hidden life at its unlocatable source. It is noticeable that the famous description of the Simplon Pass which follows reproduces the mind / Mind antithesis. As in Snowdon, the mind at first seems to be God's--"Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light / Were all like workings of one mind, the features / Of the same face"--but as the description moves successively further away from any definable external world the mind seems more and more to be the "awful Power" of imagination; by the end, the two are indistinguishable.

The self-spectre of the imagination produces both effects of the sublime from its power:

Power awakens the sublime either when it rouses us to a sympathetic energy & calls upon the mind to grasp at something towards which it can make approaches but which it is incapable of attaining--yet so that it participates force which is acting upon it; or, 2dly, by producing a humiliation or prostration of the mind before some external agency which it presumes not to make an effort to participate, but is absorbed in the contemplation of the might in the external power, &, as far as it has any consciousness of itself, its grandeur subsists in the naked fact of being conscious of external Power at once awful & immeasurable 1

Imagination produces an internalised sublime. This is why it figures in the poem as an entity both so powerful and so inapprehensible. Its sublimity is consonant with the way in which the internal being can also be caught only in flashes:

The days gone by
Come back upon me from the dawn almost
Of life: the hiding-places of my power
Seem open; I approach, and then they close 2

The distance of the inner self as a source of power becomes caught up with a sense that the poet, like the child of the "Ode," cannot but move further and further from the divine point of origin:

I see by glimpses now; when age comes on,
May scarcely see at all 3

But it is worth pointing out that this sense of dimness, of distance, is intrinsic to the whole structure of imagination as the inner being. Firstly, because it can hardly be

1. Prose Works, II, 354. 2. XI. 334-37.

3. XI. 337-39.

apprehended other than in acts of spontaneity of the mind. Secondly, since it represents infinity, reflection upon it, or insight into it, will always be accompanied by a sense of the mind grasping at something "towards which it can make approaches but which it is incapable of attaining" Coleridge gives a vivid account of what would happen if it could be grasped or caught:

Here the lecturer read Milton's description of the form of Satan, floating in the sea, as an instance of the true sublime; and described the image impressed on the mind, in language and figure so fugitive and evanescent, that he became the poet he described--hurrying his thoughts over our minds so as only just to enable us to see what they were, ere they were not. We had glimpses of them, but could not, and would not grasp them. He described the relation of the poet to the reader of taste, and the critic. The thoughts of the former were like fire-flies at night, in a wood; rising and declining--appearing and disappearing, --beautiful only in the inconstancy of the effect. The critic pursued and caught the fly; telescoped and measured its dimensions and proportions--stuck it on the point of a pin, and pronounced it to be nothing but a--black fly! 1

Similarly, a self stuck on the point of a pin would not be able to continue its function as the organizing power of the poem.

It becomes clear that the inner being of the poet, as an "other more permanent Self," provides both a continuous point of identity inaccessible to change and decay, and a point anterior to consciousness which organizes the poem and constitutes its secret spirit of growth. However, it is not necessarily obvious how the poem is structured in detail in this way. The apprehension of imagination in Book VI gives Wordsworth the confidence to continue his life and expand his

1. Cited in Haven, "Coleridge on Milton: A Lost Lecture," p.22.

poem, but the books that follow--on London, the Retrospect, and the long books on the French Revolution--are perhaps those in which it is most difficult to see the poem organized by the force of the poet's inner being. Book VII, as Onorato observes, "is the real new beginning of the extended thirteen-book Prelude, for in it Wordsworth begins to deal imaginatively with his disturbing memories of the recent past, exposing himself again to his own uncertainties."¹ But it remains to be seen in what ways the poem's growth into the later books can still be understood as formed and suffused with the secret inner life which animates the whole.

1. Onorato, The Character of the Poet, p. 135.

CHAPTER EIGHT: The Vital Spirit of a Perfect Form.

i. The Electric Thread.

Pater begins his essay on Wordsworth by discussing the concept of imagination. In his hands, it quickly turns into a form of purging or distillation. Similarly, in the "Postscript" to Appreciations, he describes those who

start with an original, untried matter, still in fusion; who conceive this vividly, and hold by it as the essence of their work; who, by the very vividness and heat of their conception, purge away, sooner or later, all that is not organically appropriate to it, till the whole effect adjusts itself in clear, orderly, proportionate form ¹

For Pater, imagination becomes the degree of intensity in the poet's perception of and concentration upon his subject. Reading Wordsworth too becomes a process of sorting the lower degree of intensity from the higher, of finding the faultless expression of "the imaginative mood":

In him, when the really poetical motive worked at all, it united, with absolute justice, the word and the idea; each, in the imaginative flame, becoming inseparably one with the other, by that fusion of matter and form, which is the characteristic of the highest poetical expression. His words are themselves thought and feeling; not eloquent or musical words merely, but that sort of creative language which carries the reality of what it depicts, directly, to the consciousness. 2

This fusion, which Pater describes as "organic," in some ways seems a characteristic revision of Wordsworth and Coleridge.

1. Pater, Appreciations, p. 270.

2. Pater, Appreciations, p. 57.

Instead of a totality, either in terms of a philosophical system, or of an interrelatedness in the poetry, Pater argues for a separation of high and low, "the electric thread untwined, the golden pieces, great and small, lying apart together."¹ But in many ways Pater is here only re-applying Wordsworth's own theory of organicism to his poetry. For it was Wordsworth himself who insisted that language must be "an incarnation of the thought"² To reduce the phenomena of The Prelude to principles, to trace its own "self-unravelling clue," requires a further elaboration of its organicism, a theory hidden away in its most philosophical book, Book V, whose subject, very suitably, is books.³

1. Pater, Appreciations, p.41.

2. Prose Works, II, 84.

3. The Friend, CC IV, I, 511.

ii. Mind and its Sensuous Language.

In the Peter Bell manuscript are two remarkable passages apparently connected to adjacent Prelude drafts. The first describes a poetry which to the poet had seemed to recall "the whole picture," to speak an "universal language" to all. But whereas to the poet his poetry had seemed to present meanings in their fulness, he now knows them to have been too privately expressed, too cryptically suggested, to be **successfully** communicated:

nor had my voice
 Been silent often times had I burst forth
 In verse which with a strong and random light
 Touching an object in its prominent parts
 Created a memorial which to me
 Was all sufficient and to my own mind
 Recalling the whole picture seemed to speak
 An universal language: Scattering thus
 In passion many a desultory sound
 I deemed that I had adequately cloathed
 Meanings at which I hardly hinted thoughts
 And forms of which I scarcely had produced
 A monument and arbitrary sign 1

Wordsworth was later to describe an epitaph as "not a proud writing shut up for the studious: it is exposed to all"² But this monument, understood only by the poet who wrote it, is hardly a monument at all.

Whereas to the poet it recalled "the whole picture," he had hardly hinted at its meanings. It seems likely that these lines describe the private, rapturous poetry of 1799. Wordsworth's voice has burst forth, strong but random,

1. Peter Bell MS. 2, D. C. MS. 33, 49^V, ll. 1-13, CW II, 162-63.

2. Prose Works, II, 59.

scattering in "passion many a desultory sound." It has created a memorial which to the poet was "all sufficient," but which has not adequately clothed meanings; it has scarcely produced a monument, left only an "arbitrary sign," that is, a sign that has no intrinsic relation to its meaning.

It need scarcely be said, to adapt Wordsworth's own phrase, that a memorial monument supposes an epitaph.¹ And an epitaph, says Wordsworth, should be a biography.² But this biography has been random and scattered; though conducted with passion it has failed to make the interior exterior, it has failed, in short, to make life visible. Now in the ordinary way of things, a person's life will produce his autobiography as any act produces its consequences. But if a secret, interior life produces "the life," that connection may not be so clear-cut, and it may not be communicated at all if composed in the wrong way.³ Language has its own power, which can usurp truth and meaning--as Wordsworth puts it in a memorable passage in the third of the "Essays on Epitaphs":

Doubtless, there are shocks of event and circumstance, public and private, by which for all minds the truths of Nature will be elicited; but sorrow for that Individual or people to whom these special interferences are necessary, to bring them into communion with the inner spirit of things! for such intercourse must be profitless in proportion as it is unfrequent, irregular, and transient. Words are too awful an instrument for good and evil to be trifled with: they hold above all other external powers a dominion over thoughts. If words be not . . . an incarnation of the thought but only a clothing for it, then surely will they prove an ill gift; such a one as those poisoned vestments, read of in the stories of superstitious times, which had power to consume and to

1. Prose Works, II, 49. 2. Prose Works, II, 57.

3. "The passions should be subdued, the emotions controlled; strong, indeed, but nothing ungovernable or wholly involuntary" (Prose Works, II, 60).

alienate from his right mind the victim who put them on. Language, if it do not uphold, and feed, and leave in quiet, like the power of gravitation or the air we breathe, is a counter-spirit, unremittingly and noiselessly at work to derange, to subvert, to lay waste, to vitiate, and to dissolve. ¹

Words, then, themselves possess an awful power when they become estranged from the thought; they become arbitrary and destructive of truth. The tyranny of bad taste, continues Wordsworth, can be so strong that, even upon the impulse of death, "thoughts cannot . . . assume an outward life without a transmutation and a fall."²

In the Peter Bell lines it is the arbitrariness of his language that worries the poet. It is not intrinsically truthful, or does not communicate itself directly. The desire for a language which is the incarnation of the thought is the topic of a letter from Coleridge to Godwin in September 1800, where he writes:

I wish you to write a book on the power of words, and the processes by which human feelings form affinities with them--in short, I wish you to philosophize Horn Tooke's System, and to solve the great Questions--whether there be reason to hold, that an action bearing all the semblance of pre-designing Consciousness may yet be simply organic, & whether a series of such actions are possible--and close on the heels of this question would follow the old 'Is Logic the Essence of Thinking?' in other words--Is thinking impossible without arbitrary signs? &--how far is the word 'arbitrary' a misnomer? Are not words &c parts & germinations of the Plant? And what is the Law

1. Prose Works, II, 84-85. On Wordsworth and language, cf. Frances Ferguson, Wordsworth: Language as Counter-Spirit (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977).

2. Prose Works, II, 85.

of their Growth?--In something of this order I would endeavour to destroy the old antithesis of Words & Things, elevating, as it were, words into Things, & living Things too. All the nonsense of vibrations etc you would of course dismiss. 1

As Richard Haven has pointed out, Coleridge is here upsetting the notion that the "spatio-temporal structure of discursive experience" is the ultimate structure of reality.² In this letter, Coleridge is reversing Hartley's suggestion that thought begins and develops through sense-impressions. Instead, he suggests that there is a determining form outside experience that develops the structures of experience. Instead of the correspondence between the Word and the Thing "out there," the reality out there becomes structured by the "pre-designing Consciousness." Haven connects this with the notebook entry on "Tintern Abbey," and an important note made in November 1801:

Whether or no the too great definiteness of Terms in any language may not consume too much of the vital & idea-creating force in distinct, clear, full made Images & so prevent originality--original thought as distinguished from positive thought-- 3

In the Godwin letter, Coleridge is similarly disputing the

-
1. Griggs, I, 625-26. Cf. Wordsworth on the poet: "whence, and from practice, he has acquired a greater readiness and power in expressing what he thinks and feels, and especially those thoughts and feelings which, by his own choice, or from the structure of his own mind, arise in him" (Prose Works, I, 138, my emphasis).
 2. Haven, Patterns of Consciousness, p. 151.
 3. CN 1016. Cf. also CN 866: "Not only words as far as relates to speaking, but the knowledge of words, as distinct component parts, which we learn by learning to read--what an immense effect it must have on our reasoning faculties?-- Logical in opposition to real."

word / thing antithesis, denying the fact that we merely name things that are already existent in the world. Instead he suggests that we actually create them through the conceptions which we form of them. In this way, words are germinations of a "pre-designing Consciousness." In the same way, in March of the following year, Coleridge was to deduce all the senses from "one sense, & to state their growth, & the causes of their difference---& in this evolvment to solve the process of Life & Consciousness."¹ Connected to feelings and to naked truth, words are no longer arbitrary signs of something else, but become, in Wordsworth's phrase, "things, active and efficient, which are of themselves part of the passion."²

Horne Tooke's system achieved a certain popularity at this time, particularly in radical political and intellectual circles such as those in which Coleridge moved.³ Coleridge's

1. Griggs, II, 706.

2. Note to "The Thorn," Lyrical Ballads, p. 289, PW II, 513.

3. Wordsworth would also have come across the ΕΡΕΑ ΠΤΕΡΟΕΝΤΑ in his reading of Zoonomia in the Spring of 1798 (EY, pp. 199, 214-15, 218). In the Conclusion to the Chapter on "Generation," Darwin discusses the whole of nature in terms of an active / passive, cause / effect relation, and goes on to apply the same principle to a theory of language. At the end, he adds that it is "explained in the ingenious work of Mr. Horne Tooke, who has unfolded by a single flash of light the whole theory of language, which had so long lain buried beneath the learned lumber of the schools" (I, 531). Coleridge wrote to his wife in September 1798 that Johnson was sending him "The Epea Pteroenta" (Griggs, I, 417). This was doubtless the second edition which Johnson published in the same year (the first edition was published in 1786, Part II in 1805). For a discussion of Tooke's system, see also Beddoes, "On the Spirit and Tendency of the Doctrines of the ΕΡΕΑ ΠΤΕΡΟΕΝΤΑ, and on the Merit of the Author as a Discoverer," Observations, pp. 151-72.

desire to "destroy the old antithesis of Words & Things, elevating, as it were, words into Things, & living Things too," is a direct development of Tooke's system. The Preface to Aids to Reflection makes a similar point:

Horne Tooke entitled his celebrated work, ΕΠΕΑ ΠΤΕΡΟΕΝΤΑ, Winged Words: or Language, not the Vehicle of Thought but the Wheels. With my convictions and views, for ΕΠΕΑ, I should substitute λογοι, i.e., Words select and determinate, and for ΠΤΕΡΟΕΝΤΑ ΥΨΟΝΤΕΣ, i.e. living Words.¹

Horne Tooke in fact dispensed with conventional grammar and argued that language should be analysed according to signification, of which there were but two divisions, words for abbreviations and words for communication. The mind does not operate outside language but itself structures language:

The business of the mind, as far as it concerns Language, appears to me to be very simple. It extends no farther than to receive Impressions, that is, to have Sensations or Feelings. What are called its operations, are merely the operations of Language. A consideration of Ideas, or of the Mind, or of Things (relative to the Parts of Speech) will lead us no farther than to Nouns: i.e. the signs of those impressions, or names of ideas. The other Part of Speech, the Verb, must be accounted for from the necessary use of it in communication. It is in fact the communication itself. . . . 2

In this way, the operations of the mind and language are identical, intrinsically linked. Coleridge's modification is to change Tooke's sensationalist or Hartleian assumptions ("All the nonsense of vibrations etc you would of course dismiss") into idealist ones, where words and language may

1. Aids to Reflection, p.vii.

2. J. Horne Tooke, ΕΠΕΑ ΠΤΕΡΟΕΝΤΑ, or, the Diversions of Purley, 2nd ed. (London, 1798), p.51.

be the result of a "pre-designing Consciousness," organized like sensation by a priori intuitions.¹ This organic link between thought and language, lamented as absent in Wordsworth's Peter Bell MS.2 lines, and hypothesized by Coleridge from Horne Tooke, is also behind an image of an organic link between thought and language which Coleridge discusses in a letter to Sharp of January 1804, when he was staying, ill, at Grasmere:

O dear Sir! I am heart-sick and stomach-sick of speaking and writing concerning myself--nay, let me be proud, not my self--but concerning my miserable carcase--the Caterpillar Skin which, I believe, the Butterfly Elect is wriggling off, tho' with no small Labor and Agony.--I was at Grasmere a whole month--so ill, as that till the last week I was unable to read your letters--not that my inner Being was disturbed--on the contrary, it seemed more than usually serene and self-sufficing--but the exceeding Pain, of which I suffered every now and then, and the fearful Distresses of my sleep, had taken away from me the connecting link of voluntary power, which continually combines that Part of ourselves by which we know ourselves to be, with that outward Picture or Hieroglyphic, by which we hold communion with our Like--between the Vital and the Organic--or what Berkley, I suppose, would call--Mind and it's sensuous language. 2

Coleridge's meaning here seems relatively straightforward. He has been ill, his body is decrepit, but he feels his mind as strong as **ever**--hence the distinction between his "self" and his "miserable carcase." His "inner Being" was not disturbed, but it was separated from his body and the world around him. The figure is familiar from The Prelude. The phrase "vital and organic" here simply means the inner

1. Griggs, I, 626, 625.

2. Griggs, II, 1032. Wordsworth uses the phrase "inner being" at III. 523.

Being of self (life, "I myself I") and the outer organs of the body ("organic", extending, with Berkeley, to the whole of the visible world.)¹ There has been a separation of inner and outer, of mind from its picture (the face) or sign, just like the separation between the mind or thought and language which Wordsworth described in the Peter Bell MS. fragment.

When mind and language are intrinsically connected, on the other hand, the result is very different:

Energy, stillness, grandeur, tenderness, those feelings which are the pure emanations of nature, those thoughts which have the infinitude of truth, and those expressions which are not what the garb is to the body but what the body is to the soul, themselves part and power or function in the thought-- 2

In Peter Bell MS.2, after the lines describing the failure to achieve this, Wordsworth invokes a striking description of successful composition. In this case the vital and the organic are intimately related:

1. For a different interpretation, see John Beer, "Coleridge and Wordsworth: The Vital and the Organic," in Reading Coleridge, ed. Walter B. Crawford (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979), pp. 161-64. Beer's interpretation is based on Coleridge's discussion in the Appendix to Church and State (CC X, 179). The somewhat less esoteric interpretation here is corroborated by a notebook entry also dating from January 1804: "under these names I include (no matter how rightly) all those Diseases which proceed from or produce, in one word, which imply an overbalance of the vital Feelings to the Organic Perceptions, of those Parts which assimilate or transform the external into the personal, or combine them thus assimilated (stomach, lungs, Liver, Bowels, & many others, no doubt, the use of which is not yet known) over the Eyes, Ears, Olfactories, Gustatories, & the organ of the Skin" (CN 1822).

2. Prose Works, II, 84.

In that considerate and laborious work
 That slow creation which imparts to speech
 Outline & substance even till it has give[n]
 A function kindred to organic power
 The vital spirit of a perfect form 1

Wordsworth's organicism is thus formulated in terms of the relation of an inner spirit to its expression in an outer form. His wish, as he puts it in the second "Essay on Epitaphs," is

to bring the ingenuous into still closer communion with those primary sensations of the human heart, which are the vital springs of sublime and pathetic composition And, as from these primary sensations such composition speaks, so, unless correspondent ones listen promptly and submissively in the inner cell of the mind to whom it is addressed, the voice cannot be heard: its highest powers are wasted. 2

Wordsworth's criterion is that the writer--and the listener--should produce an intimate and necessary connection between inner sensation and language; a correspondence between the "inner cell of the mind" of both listener and poet. "The Writer," as he puts it, "must introduce the truth with such accompaniment as shall imply that he has mounted to the sources of things--penetrated the dark cavern from which the River that murmurs in every one's ear has flowed from generation to generation."³ Thus Wordsworth is concerned not only to locate the form and function of his own "inner cell of the mind," to specify its continuity throughout his life as the animating and organizing principle, but is also

1. Peter Bell MS. 2, D. C. MS.33, 49^V, ll. 14-18, CW II, 162-63.

2. Prose Works, II, 70.

3. Prose Works, II, 78-79.

concerned--as a poet--that his language should be a part of this inner impulse, and not a mere ornament or clothing.¹

The image of the River as the principle of this inner self or spirit in time, as an "under current . . . of thought and feeling," is diffused throughout the "Essays" as it is throughout The Prelude.²

The Peter Bell lines describe this process in an organicist image where the relationship between the inner being and the exterior form of language, of poetry, is likened to the secret interior power of life that shapes the external form. The lines do not, in fact, describe organic form in terms of the structure of a poem. They liken the relationship of the "vital spirit" or life to the organized body to that between the inner spirit and its expression in language. The most explicit analogue to these lines comes in a fragment that Wordsworth was considering inserting into the second "Essay," now printed as an Appendix in the Prose Works. Wordsworth is concerned to clarify his remarks about "bad taste," which in poetry, as we have seen, can lead to language's dangerous role as a counter-spirit:

The attentive Reader will perceive that nothing in the heart of the Writer had determined either the choice, the order, or the expression of the ideas; that there is no interchange of action from

1. Cf. Coleridge on Pope: "the matter and diction seemed to me characterized not so much by poetic thoughts as by thoughts translated into the language of poetry" (BL, p.9)

2. Prose Works, II, 75.

within or from without--no f[low], no stream.
 In the absence of a constituent vital power,
 the connections are mechanical and arbitrary 1

In the presence of a "constituent vital power", however, the
 "whole is instinct with spirit, and every word has its
 separate life": its truths are re-admitted into the soul
 "like revelations of the moment."²

Wordsworth's organicist theory of language is developed
 by De Quincey, who extends the suggestion that the relation
 of thought and language should not be what clothing is to
 the body, but what the body is to the soul:

the more closely any exercise of mind is connected
 with . . . what is philosophically termed subjective,
 --precisely in that degree . . . does the style or
 the embodying of the thoughts cease to be a mere
 separable ornament, and in fact the more does the
 manner . . . become confluent with the matter. 3

This organicism takes up the most extreme position of a mind-
 relational account of the world. It refuses the status of
 language as a separated sign system for things, which the
 mind merely organizes and perceives. It refuses the conven-
 tional grammatical functions of subject and object, for in
 this language there can be no distinction between the

-
1. Prose Works, II, 98. Cf. Preface to Lyrical Ballads:
 "Accordingly such a language arising out of repeated
 experience and regular feelings is a more permanent and
 far more philosophical language than that which is
 frequently substituted for it by Poets, who think that
 they are conferring honour upon themselves and their art
 in proportion as they separate themselves from the symp-
 athies of men, and indulge in arbitrary and capricious
 habits of expression . . ." (Prose Works, I, 124).
 2. Prose Works, II, 71, 83.
 3. De Quincey, "Style," Masson, X, 229, cited by Owen and
 Smyser, Prose Works, II, 114-15.

perceiving mind and the perceived. This dissolution of subject and object is, of course, a characteristic of Wordsworth's own writing style. De Quincey continues his analysis with an account of Wordsworth's own opinions on the matter:

In saying this, we do but vary the form of what we once heard delivered on this subject by Mr. Wordsworth. His remark was . . . that it is in the highest degree unphilosophic to call language or diction "the dress of thoughts" . . . he would call it "the incarnation of thoughts." . . . Mr. Wordsworth was thinking, doubtless, of poetry like his own: viz. that which is eminently meditative. And the truth is apparent on consideration: for, if language were merely a dress, then you could separate the two; you could lay the thoughts on the left hand, the language on the right. But, generally speaking, you can no more deal thus with poetic thoughts than you can with soul and body. The union is too subtle, the intertexture too ineffable,--each co-existing not merely with the other, but each in and through the other. An image, for instance, a single word, often enters into a thought as a constituent part. In short, the two elements are not united as a body with a separable dress, but as a mysterious incarnation. 1

Wordsworth's explicit interest in organicism, then, concerns the organicism of language, which works in a comparable way to the organicism of method. Whereas what might be termed the Coleridgean analysis of organic form gives an insight into the organization of the poem and into the life **which** that poem organizes, the Wordsworthian analysis focusses on the further level of the relationship of the inner self or "vital spirit" to the language of the poem.

1. De Quincey, Masson, X, 229-30; cf. also, X, 262.

iii. The Arab of the Desert.

The Prelude, as an autobiography, is best seen in terms of a self-memorial or monument which seeks to explore those communications with the "internal being," to show how they have shaped and created the external Being.¹ The relationship of the vital principle to the body or organism, the internal, hidden spirit which shapes and creates the visible form, works synonymously for the life, the poem, and now for its language also. For the poet, this is the result not of rapturous composition, but "that considerate and laborious work," or that "patience . . . admitting no neglect," as a second draft puts it. In this way the inner spirit, instead of being hinted at, gains an exterior substance and assumes the relation of body to soul, "a constituent part and power or function in the thought. . . ." ²

Wordsworth concludes the first Epitaph Essay with the observation that the "mighty benefactors of mankind," do not in any way need a detailed epitaph, because their works, and the memory which they leave behind, survive them. All that the epitaph needs is their "naked names" and a grand comprehensive sentiment, such as "an intuition, communicated in adequate words, of the sublimity of intellectual power." As an illustration of this, he concludes with Milton's poem "On Shakespeare":

1. Prose Works, II, 51.

2. Prose Works, II, 84.

'What needs my Shakspeare for his honoured bones
 The labour of an age in piled stones,
 Or that his hallowed reliques should be hid
 Under a star-ypointing pyramid?
 Dear Son of Memory, great Heir of Fame,
 What need'st thou such weak witness of thy name?
 Thou in our wonder and astonishment
 Hast built thyself a livelong monument,
 And so sepulchred, in such pomp dost lie,
 That kings for such a tomb would wish to die.' 1

Shakespeare, says Milton, has built himself "a livelong monument." Wordsworth has, as he puts it, "Created a memorial which to me / Was all sufficient," but which he subsequently realizes has not succeeded--"thought / And forms of which I scarcely had produced / A monument and arbitrary sign." In order to succeed in building his own "livelong monument," the alternative must be pursued of "considerate and laborious work / That slow creation . . .". This alternative is exactly that described by Milton in the lines which Wordsworth, in the "Essay on Epitaphs," omits:

For whilst to the shame of slow-endeavouring art,
 Thy easy numbers flow, and that each heart
 Hath from the leaves of thy unvalued book,
 Those Delphic lines with deep impression took,
 Then thou our fancy of itself bereaving,
 Dost make us marble with too much conceiving....2

Shakespeare's legendary "easy numbers" shame Milton's "slow-endeavouring art." In Wordsworth's lines we see an interesting example of his habitual identification with Milton. The last lines are best glossed by lines from an epitaph by Browne: "Some kind woman . . . / Reading this, like Niobe /

1. Prose Works, II, 61-62, quoting Milton, "On Shakespeare," ll. 1-8, 15-16.

2. Milton, "On Shakespeare," ll. 9-14, Carey and Fowler, p.123.

shall turn marble, and become / Both her mourner and her tomb."¹ Thus, the effect of the best monument is to turn the reader himself into stone by the strength of his identification.

In The Prelude Book V Wordsworth recounts a dream in which he meets an Arab who is carrying two books, which are simultaneously a stone and a shell, geometry and poetry. The Arab is going to bury them in the face of an impending apocalypse. After the dream is over, Wordsworth remarks that in the face of that apocalypse (or perhaps last judgement) he could do the same thing:

Oftentimes, at least,
Me hath such deep entrancement half-possess'd,
When I have held a volume in my hand
Poor earthly casket of immortal Verse!
Shakespeare, or Milton, Labourers divine! 2

By a curious reversal, Shakespeare's and Milton's memorials--their work--are not monumental enough. Far from turning Wordsworth himself into stone, the monuments of the poets themselves dissolve flake by flake into the frail form of ashes in a casket. The exclamation takes its place in one of the strangest passages of The Prelude, and one which seems to have no obvious place in the topology of the poem. If the poem can be seen to be organized by the principle of a power "hidden in its endless home / Among the depths of

1. William Browne, Poems, ed. G. Goodwin (London, 1894), II, 294, cited by Carey and Fowler, who also compare "Il Penseroso," ll. 41-42: "There held in holy passion still / Forget thyself to marble . . ." (p. 141).

2. V. 161-65.

time," the book on books seems to stretch that principle of organization to its limit. Free of all chronology, only tangentially related to the story of Wordsworth's life, Book V of The Prelude would seem to be the part of the poem that most tests any claim to an organic form, even if few would deny its power.

However, the link with the "Essays on Epitaphs," and the Peter Bell fragments, suggests that the relation may not be at the level of the organization of the life, but rather at that further level of organicism which connects the poem's language to the organizing mind. Book V concerns the poem itself as a monument or epitaph:

Oh! why hath not the mind
Some element to stamp her image on
In nature somewhat nearer to her own?
Why, gifted with such powers to send abroad
Her spirit, must it lodge in shrines so frail? 1

Wordsworth is concerned, as in the "Essays on Epitaphs," with the link between immortality and monuments. The Prelude is his own epitaph, his own monument, and his memorial to "the consciousness of immortality" as his "primal source."² When that consciousness is most imperilled, he feels the greatest need to create an outward sign that will be a lasting memorial. In Book XI, between the episodes of the Gibbet Mast and the Waiting for the Horses which have been taken from Part 2 of 1799, he writes:

1. V. 44-48, echoing Samson's "why was the sight / To such a tender ball as the eye confined?" (ll. 93-94).

2. Prose Works, II, 60.

The days gone by
 Come back upon me from the dawn almost
 Of life: the hiding-places of my power
 Seem open; I approach, and then they close;
 I see by glimpses now; when age comes one,
 May scarcely see at all, and I would give,
 While yet we may, as far as words can give,
 A substance and a life to what I feel:
 I would enshrine the spirit of the past
 For future restoration. 1

Thus, ironically, the figure of organicism is intertwined with that of the shrine. As in the Peter Bell lines, Wordsworth would give a "substance and a life" to an inner spirit or power. But that substance, and that life, is itself a shrine.

Wordsworth's fears in Book V that the shrine of his spirit, "Embodied in the mystery of words," will be overcome by an impending apocalypse seem odd, to say the least. MS.W preserves a link piece which seeks to introduce the sudden change of theme and tie it in to the preceding episode, in Book IV, of the Discharged Soldier.² The new book opens nonetheless with a discussion which is as compelling as it is strange. Strange, ultimately, however, not because of the figure of the apocalypse, but because it calls into question the whole system on which The Prelude has been based, and which it has assumed almost as a matter of course:

1. XI. 334-43.

2. MS.W reads:

Enough of private sorrow longest lived
 Is transient severest doth not lack
 A mitigation in th'assur'd trust
 Of the grave's quiet comfort & blesst home
 Inheritance vouchsafed to man perhaps
 Alone of all that suffer on the earth

MS. W, D.C. MS. 38, 19^V, ll. 1-6 (written for the five-book Prelude).

Hitherto,
 In progress through this Verse, my mind hath look'd
 Upon the speaking face of earth and heaven
 As her prime Teacher, intercourse with man
 Establish'd by the sovereign Intellect,
 Who through that bodily Image hath diffus'd
 A soul divine which we participate,
 A deathless spirit. 1

The lines are clearly pantheistic, but it is not Wordsworth's pantheism that is here being called into question; indeed, as with Coleridge, it is too equivocal a position ever to be called into question. Like the additional paragraph at the end of the Essays on Method in The Friend, an extra word, or line, can always charm away the threat of too pantheistic a position.² What seems to be being questioned is that universal language of nature; as Coleridge puts it to Hartley:

that eternal language, which thy God
 Utters, who from eternity doth teach
 Himself in all, and all things in himself. 3

The Prelude assumes throughout the straightforward idea that nature is the language of God. It is, in effect, a metaphor for God, the vehicle of which God is the tenor. Throughout the poem, the assumption is made that this is simply true; whereas other things can be misread--London, the French Revolution--or whereas nature can be forgotten for the moment, her language is always there to be seen and always true. The relationship between nature as language and God as the spirit and meaning is exactly the sort of organic connection which

1. V. 10-17.

2. The Friend, CC IV, I, 522-23n, 1850, V. 17: "As might appear to the eye of fleeting time"

3. "Frost at Midnight," ll. 60-62, CPW I, 242.

Wordsworth describes himself seeking in the Peter Bell lines. To place those alongside the passage just cited from the beginning of Book V makes it clear that Wordsworth's interest is less in its pantheism per se, than with a parallel between pantheism and organicism in language. For here, the "speaking face" of earth and heaven is Wordsworth's prime teacher, as it will be a little later for the Winander boy.¹ This "intercourse with man" has been established by God, or more pantheistically and less personally, "the soveriegn intellect." The relationship of God to nature is of spirit to body: "through that bodily Image hath diffus'd / A soul divine which we participate, / A deathless spirit." That relationship, of body to soul, is exactly the relationship which Wordsworth seeks for that of the human spirit to language--as he puts it in the first "Essay on Epitaphs," "those feelings which are the pure emanations of nature, those thoughts which have the infinitude of truth, and those expressions which are not what the garb is to the body but what the body is to the soul, themselves a constituent part and power or function in the thought."² The example of organicism, par excellence, for Wordsworth is the relationship of God to the world; diffused throughout it, forming it and creating it, yet hidden inside as a secret, inner meaning which has to be read. Wordsworth is thinking back here to

1. V.389-422; the unconscious reading of nature's language is contrasted to the bookish reading of the Infant Prodigy, who "can read / The inside of the earth, and spell the stars" (V. 332-33).

2. Prose Works, II, 84.

the account of the creation of the world in the Timaeus.
 God's creation of the earth provides the perfect organic
 analogue:

For from among the seven species of local motion
 he selected one, which principally subsists about
 intellect and intelligence, and assigned it to the
 world as properly allied to its surrounding body .
 . . . But placing soul in the middle of the world,
 he extended it through the whole: and besides this,
 he externally invested the body of the universe
 with soul; and causing circle to revolve in a
 circle, established the world one singular, solitary
 nature, able through virtue to converse with itself,
 indigent of nothing external, and sufficiently
 known and friendly to itself. And on all these
 accounts he rendered the universe a blessed god. 1

Plato's world is perhaps the most perfect solitary of them
 all. In Book V of The Prelude, although Wordsworth begins
 with an announcement which reads as if the relation of the
 spirit to the world is going to be questioned, it turns out
 that the real problem is the analogy of this--man's relation
 to poetry. In Book XIII, Wordsworth writes of his hope
 that he might have been especially privileged, and that a
 work of his,

Proceeding from the depth of untaught things,
 Enduring and creative, might become
 A power like one of Nature's. 2

But Book V is to explore an irreconcilable gap within this
 analogue.

The paradox is quite simple. The immortal soul can
 only be expressed, turned into "immortal verse," by making

1. Taylor, The Cratylus, Phaedo, Parmenides and Timaeus of Plato, p. 462.

2. XII. 310-12.

it mortal, which is to say making it assume its perishable body, the frail form of books. The infinite is made individual, but individuation can only occur in mortal form. Thus while Nature is the language, or body of God, secretly infused by his immortal spirit, books seem in their own way to be made up through "A function kindred to organic power / The vital spirit of a perfect form." But it is this relationship which produces the paradox: the immortal embodied in the mortal. Thus, in the opening of Book V, it is this relationship which is placed under suspicion. The relation of man to writing, language, or books, under the threat of mortality returns to the function of garment to body:

Thou also, Man, hast wrought,
For commerce of thy nature with itself, .
Things worthy of unconquerable life;
And yet we feel, we cannot chuse but feel
That these must perish. Tremblings of the heart
It gives, to think that the immortal being
No more shall need such garments 1

Man will have to leave his books behind, as the Drowned Man of Esthwaite will leave his garments at the side of the lake. The tremblings of the heart are felt because that which seems most to express individuation, immortality, is itself perishable and has to be left behind. If poetry is written from a belief in immortality, and if it itself seems to take on that immortality and become "immortal verse," then the relationship breaks down at the point where it remains an "earthly casket."² The inner life, or spirit, is immortal;

1. V. 17-23.

2. Prose Works, II, 50-52; V.164.

that which gives it substance and outline, both the words themselves and the physical object of the book, are frail and perishable. If, Wordsworth goes on to say, some apocalypse should raze the earth, "Yet would the vital spirit of her frame / Subsist victoriously. . . ." ¹ But the relationship of the vital spirit of man's mind to his work would break down; books would be destroyed. Even if they represent the relationship of the body to the soul rather than the garment, they are still mortal, and in that sense necessarily subject to destruction. "Time / And Seasons serve" the poet, but his books are finally subject to time. ²

Wordsworth engagingly relates that, on speaking of these thoughts to a friend, "He answer'd with a smile that, in plain truth / 'Twas going far to seek disquietude"; but the friend quickly confesses that he had himself at times succumbed "to kindred hauntings." ³ The Arab Dream is an expression of these. The dream's source in Descartes is well documented. ⁴ If Wordsworth heard it from Coleridge, as is generally supposed, then he would have also heard of Coleridge's fantasies about Arabian deserts, the first of which occurs in a letter to Wordsworth of December 1798. Coleridge is writing about his reaction to the Winander Boy lines (then written in the first person):

1. V. 33-34, reading of MS.W.

2. V. 553-54.

3. V. 51-52, 55.

4. Jane Worthington Smyser, "Wordsworth's Dream of Poetry and Science: The Prelude V," PMLA 71 (1956), 269-75.

That

Uncertain heaven received
 Into the bosom of the steady lake,
 I should have recognised any where; and had I met
 these lines running wild in the deserts of Arabia,
 I should have instantly screamed out 'Wordsworth!' 1

Can we doubt that what Coleridge recognises in the Winander Boy lines is that "sense of the infinite," the way in which, as De Quincey puts it in his famous description of these lines, "space and its infinities are attributed to the human heart, and to its capacities of re-echoing the sublimities of nature. . . ." ² For Coleridge, its sublimity was in its integrating the sense of the infinite with the individual perception of the boy. In a notebook entry, dating from November 1799, he writes:

If I begin a poem of Spinoza, thus it should begin/
 I would make a pilgrimage to the burning sands of
 Arabia, or &c &c to find the Man who could explain
 to me there can be oneness, there being infinite
 Perceptions--yet there must be a oneness, not an
 intense Union but an Absolute Unity, for &c 3

It is Coleridge's habitual problem--the reconciling of the individual with the infinite; here he is still seeking a satisfactory formulation of it, as he had been in the "Eolian Harp," with God's breeze blowing over men who are instruments, "and each one's tunes ... that which each calls I." As we have seen, that description began to be revised in 1796, so that life became the point of reconciliation, the "I myself I." Here, in November 1799, the problem resurges under the

1. Griggs, I, 452-53.

2. De Quincey, "William Wordsworth," p.94.

3. CN 556.

influence and attraction of Spinoza, and Coleridge's mind instinctively slips back to the image of the desert sands and the man who has seemed to achieve this reconciliation-- "Wordsworth!" In October 1803, when copying the earlier entry into a new notebook, Coleridge expands it into a new theory of the reconciliation of the individual with the infinite:

Poem on Spirit--or on Spinoza--I would make a pilgrimage to the Deserts of Arabia to find the man who could make understand how the one can be many! Eternal universal mystery! It seems as if it were impossible; yet it is--& it is every where!--It is indeed a contradiction in Terms: and only in Terms!--It is the co presence of Feeling & Life, limitless by their very essence, with Form, by its very essence limited--determinate--definite.-- 1

His meditation, thus, takes exactly the same form as Wordsworth's at the opening of Prelude Book V. In Coleridge's description, as we have seen, the organism becomes the perfect example of the reconciliation of the infinite--life and feeling--with the definite, the individual; and that relationship is the co-presence of life with form. In their different way, Coleridge's musings are indeed "kindred hauntings" to those of Wordsworth; each is concerned with an habitual problem, but those problems are intimately related. For Wordsworth the irony is that expression of the inner life, or immortal spirit of man, is only possible by making it mortal, by embodying it; for Coleridge this, in a much more positive way, is the answer to the problem of the reconciliation of unity with multitude, or of how there "can be oneness, there

1. CN 1561.

being infinite Perceptions".¹

The dream itself, however, is more anxious. In De Quincey's description it is

a dream, which reaches the very ne plus ultra of sublimity in my opinion, expressly framed to illustrate the eternity and the independence of all social modes or fashions of existence, conceded to these two hemispheres, as it were, that compose the total world of human power--mathematics on the one hand, poetry on the other. 2

The dream aptly illustrates the reconciliation which Coleridge describes--"It seems as if it were impossible; yet it is-- & it is every where!--It is indeed a contradiction in Terms: and only in Terms!"--for the elements of the dream are made up of contradictions in terms, which nevertheless are. The books of poetry and geometry, for instance, are, at the same time, a stone and a shell:

My Friend continued, 'strange as it may seem,
I wonder'd not, although I plainly saw
The one to be a Stone, th'other a Shell,

1. Coleridge's image of the desert Arab who would explain and resolve his metaphysical problems surfaces again many years later: "Accept this very rude sketch of the very rudiments of 'Heracclitus redivivus'--One little presumption of their truth is, that as Wordsworth, Southey, and indeed all my intelligent Friends well know & attest, I had formed it during the study of Plato, and the Scholars of Ammonius, and in later times of Scotus (Joan. Erigena), Giordano Bruno, Behmen, and the much calumniated Spinoza (whose System is to mine just what a Skeleton is to a Body, fearful because it is only the Skeleton) long before Schelling had published his first and imperfect view--. If I had met a friend & a Brother in the Desert of Arabia, I could scarcely have been more delighted than I was in finding a fellow-laborer and in the only Country in which a man dare exercise his reason without being thought to have lost his Wits, & be out of his Senses" (Griggs, IV, 775). But, alas, the very image that Coleridge uses attests otherwise.

2. De Quincey, "William Wordsworth," p. 97.

Nor doubted once but that they both were Books,
Having a perfect faith in all that pass'd. 1

similarly, the Arab of the Desert also becomes Don Quixote, "yet not the Knight, / But was an Arab of the Desert, too; / of these was neither, and was both at once."² In poetry, such a reconciliation of opposites can be achieved; its curious quality is comparable to that of the Northern Lights: "Here, nowhere, there, and everywhere at once."³ But the dream itself is much more ambivalent, even if it allows no contradiction, no negatives. The Stone and the Shell in effect embody the total system which neither Coleridge, nor Wordsworth in The Recluse, was able to achieve.⁴ They are even a little more durable than books. But the basic contradiction seems to remain. In the face of the forthcoming deluge, which the dreamer hears announced in the Ode he hears from the shell, the Arab is set upon a divine mission to bury the books, "that is, in effect, to secure the two great interests of poetry and mathematics from sharing in the watery ruin."⁵ But the dream does not tell us whether he succeeds; the Arab's countenance grows more and more disturbed, and the

1. V. 110-14.

2. V. 124-26.

3. V. 557.

4. Cf. Descartes' analysis of his third dream: "He judged that the Dictionary stood merely for the sciences gathered together, and that the collection of poems entitled Corpus Poetarum marked more particularly and expressly the union of philosophy with wisdom." (translated from Baillet's Vie de Descartes (1691) in Norman Kemp Smith, New Studies in the Philosophy of Descartes, (London: Macmillan, 1952), p.36.

5. De Quincey, "William Wordsworth," p.98.

story is left unreconciled:

"It is," said he, "the waters of the deep
 Gathering upon us," quickening then his pace
 He left me: I call'd after him aloud;
 He heeded not; but with his twofold charge
 Beneath his arm, before me full in view
 I saw him riding o'er the Desert Sands,
 With the fleet waters of the drowning world
 In chase of him, whereat I waked in terror ¹

The man, in short, has not explained how "there can be oneness, there being infinite perceptions"; the dream leaves the individual and the infinite unreconciled, with the strong implication that the individual is going to be overwhelmed and lost.² The Arab Dream shows Wordsworth's organic analogue pushed to its point of weakness. The fear of the dream dissolves, followed by the description of the Winander Boy, whose heart and intellect are "combined, intimately combined & unified, with the great appearances in Nature." But even this unity is followed by dissolution with the child's death.

The alliance between poetry and life becomes also the relation of poetry with death. This is dealt with more fully in the first of the "Essays upon Epitaphs," where all human life is seen in terms of the perspective of death and the

1. V. 130-37.

2. Cf. "Essays upon Epitaphs, I" on the sea: "Never did a child stand by the side of a running stream, pondering within himself what power was the feeder of the perpetual current, from what never-wearied sources the body of water was supplied, but he must have been inevitably propelled to follow this question by another: 'Towards what abyss is it in progress? what receptacle can contain the mighty influx?' And the spirit of the answer must have been, though the word might be sea or ocean, accompanied perhaps with an image gathered from a map, or from the real object in nature--these might have been the letter, but the spirit of the answer must have been as inevitably,--a receptacle without bounds or dimensions;--nothing less than infinity" (Prose Works, II, 51).

concomitant belief in immortality. Impressions of death, says Wordsworth, are

counteracted by those communications with our internal Being, which are anterior to all these experiences, and with which revelation coincides 1

The result of this is a linking of the power of poetry with the immortality of the spirit--"it follows, as a final inference, that without the belief in immortality . . . neither monuments nor epitaphs . . . could have existed in the world."²

Literature, and poetry, affirms Wordsworth, "will live till man shall be no more."³ Poetry is specifically connected with the promptings of immortality in childhood, most cogently expressed in the "Intimations Ode," but appearing throughout Book V, much of which was written at the same period:

Dumb yearnings, hidden appetites are ours,
And they must have their food: our childhood sits,
Our simple childhood sits upon a throne
That hath more power than all the elements. 4

The spirit finds its "mansion" in poetry and words, which are thus revered most.⁵ Wordsworth's desire is that poetry should become, like nature, the embodiment of the eternal spirit. So, in Book XII, he writes:

forgive me, Friend,
If I, the meanest of this Band, had hope
That unto me had also been vouchsafed
An influx, that in some sort I possess'd

1. Prose Works, II, 51.

2. Prose Works, II, 52.

3. V. 529.

4. V. 530-33.

5. "Visionary Power / Attends upon the motions of the winds / Embodied in the mystery of words. / There darkness makes abode, and all the host / Of shadowy things do work their changes there, / As in a mansion like their proper home . . ." (V. 619-24).

A privilege, and that a work of mine,
 Proceeding from the depth of untaught things,
 Enduring and creative, might become
 A power like one of Nature's. 1

In Book V Wordsworth admits that there is a point where this possibility breaks down. The relation of God to nature is far more permanent than that of man to his books:

Tremblings of the heart
 It gives, to think that the immortal being
 No more shall need such garments; and yet Man,
 As long as he shall be the Child of Earth,
 Might almost 'weep to have' what he may lose,
 Nor be himself extinguish'd; but survive
 Abject, depress'd, forlorn, disconsolate. 2

The allusion, suitably, is to Shakespeare's sonnet on time and decay.³ In Book V, it is admitted that poetry, ultimately, is subject to time and decay also. Yet this is clearly the very reverse of Wordsworth's desire, and it is the poets themselves, he says, who can "make our wish our power."⁴ So poetry transcends time, as he later writes to Coleridge:

Time who makes war on temples till they fall
 Towers till they waste away, tho' Nature love
 Their mouldering ruins, cannot treat with words
 Like an omnipotent--Tho' Babylon
 Be dust, and Agrigentum wrapt in weeds
 Homer survives for everlasting praise
 Plato for converse on the soil which now
 Thy footsteps tread, the soil which once he trod. 5

1. XII. 305-12.

2. V. 21-27.

3. Sonnet 64: "When I have seen by Time's fell hand defac'd."

4. V. 552.

5. Draft from MS. A, Oxford Prelude, p. 609. Cf. The Friend: "He organizes the hours, and gives them a soul: and that, the very essence of which is to fleet away, and evermore to have been, he takes up into his own permanence, and communicates to it the imperishableness of a spiritual nature" (CC IV, I, 450).

At the heart of the debate about the organic metaphor of mind to verse is the implication that their relation is really the other way round--so that verse is not perishable and mortal at all, but itself the site and locus of immortality.

CHAPTER NINE: The Fall.

i. A Parable of Reading.

A Great Work, in which he will sail; on an open Ocean, & a steady wind; unfretted by short tacks, reefing, & hawling & disentangling the ropes-- great work necessarily comprehending his attention & Feelings within the circle of great objects & elevated Conceptions--this is his natural Element--the having been out of it has been his Disease--to return into it is the specific Remedy, both Remedy & Health. 1

Some sort of a fall was thus envisaged for The Recluse at least as early as 1803. When it came in The Prelude instead, its function, and indeed even its occurrence, was not so obvious. At times it seems that the fall is a late addition, almost as if Wordsworth is trying to restructure his poem according to the much greater Miltonic element of 1805.²

Two passages from Wordsworth and Coleridge that have already been cited are helpful. The first is Coleridge's "Memo to the Recluse":

Ego / its metaphysical Sublimity--& intimate synthesis with the principle of Co-adunation--without it every where all things were a waste--nothing, &c--³

1. Griggs, II, 1013.

2. On Wordsworth and Milton, see Neil Hertz, "Wordsworth and the Tears of Adam," SIR, 7 (1967), 15-33; Lindenberger, "1798-99 or 1804-5? --A Note on Wordsworth and Milton," On Wordsworth's "Prelude," pp. 300-04; Potts, Wordsworth's "Prelude," pp. 305-37. On Wordsworth and epic see Karl Kroeber, Romantic Narrative Art (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1960), pp. 76-112; and Brian Wilkie Romantic Poets and Epic Tradition (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1965), pp. 59-111.

3. CN 2057.

The Prelude is also about a "melancholy waste of hopes o'erthrown," its moments of threat portrayed in terms of desert wastes.¹ Whereas Coleridge here emphasizes the Ego, or the "I think," Wordsworth, as we have seen, emphasizes the way in which words must be "an incarnation of the thought." The "tyranny of bad taste," in which all connections between thoughts and words are "arbitrary and mechanical," manifests itself even in epitaphs. Even upon the impulse of death, the tyranny of bad taste dictates thoughts that cannot "assume an outward life without a transmutation and a fall."² The fall in The Prelude is imaged in terms of the loss of the connecting link "between the Vital and the Organic."³

Wordsworth's desire, on the other hand, is to remain in "communion with the inner spirit of things."⁴ In terms of poetic language, this is when the "whole is instinct with spirit, and every word has its separate life. . . ."⁵ It is the same with experiences in nature:

Why is it we feel
So little for each other but for this
That we with nature have no sympathy
Or with such things as have no power to hold
Articulate language

. . . . In all forms of things
There is a mind 6

-
1. II. 449.
 2. Prose Works, II, 85.
 3. Griggs, II, 1032.
 4. Prose Works, II, 84.
 5. Prose Works, II, 71.
 6. Alfoxden Notebook, D. C. MS. 14, 20^v, ll. 13-17, 21^r, ll. 1-2, CW IV, 120-23.

For Wordsworth, there is an intrinsic link between perceiving the spirit in nature and authentic language.¹ The relation of God's mind to nature inevitably produces a corresponding relation of man's mind to nature. The link between the two is language. As Coleridge had put it in 1796:

For all that meets the bodily sense I deem
Symbolical, one mighty alphabet
For infant minds 2

Thus when Wordsworth recounts those parts of his life when the link from his external self to his own or nature's inner being is under threat, or even lost, it is natural for him to describe it in terms of language. Nature's beneficent effect is also described in this way:

The mountain's outline and its steady form
Gives a pure grandeur, and its presence shapes
The measure and the prospect of the soul
To majesty; such virtue have the forms
Perennial of the ancient hills; nor less
The changeful language of their countenances
Gives movement to the thoughts, and multitude,
With order and relation. 3

It is Coleridge, however, who makes it explicit how this can

1. Cf. Preface to Lyrical Ballads, where rustic life is chosen because "in that situation the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature. The language too of those men is adopted . . . because such men hourly communicate with the best objects from which the best part of language is originally derived; and because . . . they convey their feelings and notions in simple and unelaborated expressions. Accordingly such a language arising out of repeated experience and regular feelings is a more permanent and a far more philosophical language than that which is frequently substituted for it by Poets . . ." (Prose Works, I, 124).
2. Southey, Joan of Arc, II, 19-21, p.40, CPW I, 132; cf. "Frost at Midnight": "so shalt thou see and hear / The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible / Of that eternal language, which thy God / Utters, who from eternity doth teach / Himself in all, and all things in himself" (ll. 58-62, CPW I, 242), and CW 2546.
3. VII. 722-29, first drafted in the Alfoxden Notebook, D.C. MS. 14, 20^v, ll. 5-12, CW IV, 120-21.

go wrong.

In the Essays on Method Coleridge is fond of contrasting the perceptions of the educated and uneducated man, by which he means the man with and without Method:

the uneducated and unreflecting talker overlooks all mental relations, both logical and psychological; and consequently precludes all Method, that is not purely accidental. Hence the nearer the things and incidents in time and place, the more distant, disjointed, and impertinent to each other, and to any common purpose, will they appear in his narration: and this from the want of a staple, or starting-post, in the narrator himself; from the absence of the leading Thought 1

Thus Coleridge describes the differences in composition. He also gives a parable of reading which works in a similar way:

Imagine the unlettered African, or rude yet musing Indian, poring over an illumined manuscript of the inspired volume, with a vague yet deep impression that his fates and fortunes are in some unknown manner connected with its contents. Every tint, every group of characters has its several dream. Say that after long and dissatisfying toils, he begins to sort, first the paragraphs that appear to resemble each other, then the lines, the words--nay, that he has at length discovered that the whole is formed by the recurrence and interchanges of a limited number of cyphers, letters, marks, and points, which, however, in the very height and utmost perfection of his attainment, he makes twentifold more numerous than they are, by classing every different form of the same character, intentional or accidental, as a separate element. And the whole is without soul or substance, a talisman of superstition, a mockery of science: or employed perhaps at last to feather the arrows of death, or to shine and flutter amid the plumes of savage vanity. The poor Indian too truly represents the state of learned and systematic ignorance--arrangement guided by the light of no leading idea, mere orderliness without METHOD! 2

In the example which Coleridge gives here, the metaphor is

-
1. The Friend, CC IV, I, 454-55.
 2. The Friend, CC IV, I, 512-13.

one of reading--God's book lies before the "savage" but he is unable to decipher it. He arranges it according to labels and classifications, finds it meaningless and fit only for pluming the arrows of death. The book is before him--but its signs are arbitrary.

But see! the friendly missionary arrives. He explains to him the nature of written words, translates them for him into his native sounds, and thence into the thoughts of his heart--how many of these thoughts then first evolved into consciousness, which yet the awakening disciple receives, and not as aliens! Henceforward, the book is unsealed for him; the depth is opened out; he communes with the spirit of the volume as a living oracle. The words become transparent, and he sees them as though he saw them not. 1

Coleridge's parable thus closes on an illustration of the true science of Method. The missionary teaches the savage to read, the savage sees that the words are signs for spiritual truths, that they embody God's spirit. Able to read them, he communes directly with the spirit in them, and no longer sees the words as disconnected objects in themselves. He finds that the "spirit of the volume" corresponds to intimations which he had already experienced, though not articulated.

The Prelude is organized into different ways of reading. The first rests upon the straightforward assumption that Nature is the language of God, that, as it is put in "The Brothers," "God . . . made the great book of the world. . . ."2 Thus in Book III, Wordsworth writes:

the great mass
Lay bedded in a quickening soul, and all
That I beheld respired with inward meaning. 3

1. The Friend, CC IV, I, 513.

2. "The Brothers," l. 270, Lyrical Ballads, p.144, PW II, 8.

3. III. 127-29.

Wordsworth is able to "read" nature in terms of its "one interior life," as an expression of God's spirit:

my mind hath look'd
Upon the speaking face of earth and heaven
As her prime Teacher, intercourse with man
Establish'd by the sovereign Intellect,
Who through that bodily Image hath diffus'd
A soul divine which we participate,
A deathless spirit. 1

The special quality of the child in the "Intimations Ode" is also his ability to read--"thou Eye among the blind, / That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep, / Haunted for ever by the eternal mind. . . ." ² Instead of separating phenomena, classifying them and labelling them, the child is able to read them in terms of their function and relationship, is able to see them as the metaphor of God, as the embodiment of his spirit. So too, Wordsworth, as a child, instinctively reads nature in this way. He understands that nature is the expression of God's spirit. When he sees it, it coheres and communicates itself to him as intrinsically meaningful. In this system the signs of nature, the "language of God," are inherently true.

But, as the Peter Bell MS. 2 passage shows, it is also possible for signs to be "arbitrary," not linked in any coherent or natural way to an inner meaning. This is the kind of language of which the Pedlar speaks:

1. V. 11-17.

2. "Intimations Ode," ll. 111-13, Poems in Two Volumes, p.327, PW IV, 282.

For was it meant
 That we should pore & dwindle as we pore
 For ever dimly pore on things minute
 On solitary objects, still beheld
 In disconnection dead & spiritless 1

The connecting link has been lost. This is the language which Wordsworth encounters in cities, a language that no longer seems to embody a mind. As Coleridge put it in a letter to Southey in 1799:

My Spinosism (if Spinosism it be and i' faith 'tis very like it) disposed me to consider this big City as that part of the Supreme One, which the prophet Moses was allowed to see.---I should be more disposed to pull off my shoes, beholding him in a Bush, than while I am forcing my reason to believe that even in Theatres he is, yea, even in the Opera House.--/-- 2

It is a threat. When Wordsworth succumbs to its charms he too loses the connecting link between the Vital and the Organic.

-
1. Ruined Cottage, MS. B, D.C. MS. 17, 49^r, 11. 7-11, CW IV, 266-67.
 2. Griggs, I, 551.

ii. Darkness Visible.

The controlling principle which organizes The Prelude is named imagination, and is identified with the "under soul" or true self of the poet, the discovery of which is the subject of the poem's narrative.¹ On another level, just as imagination organizes, "shapes and creates," a life and a poem purposively, and just as life organizes matter in an organism, so imagination is also seen as a power which structures the perception of the real and organizes it into meaning.² Nature is read metaphorically, in terms of an inner meaning, as the language of God or sign of his presence. It is in this way that we can understand most clearly the fall that occurs in the poem. Wordsworth seems to get close to it three times, on each occasion when estranged from nature and thus his own inner being. The very opening of the poem begins with a "fall on grass."³ From the time that Wordsworth goes to Cambridge, he admits that "there was an inner falling-off," but also adds "happy is the man, / . . . who falls / No lower than I fell."⁴ Such a fall as there is, is presented in terms of a division in the self. It is Book III which stresses again and again the beginnings of a worldly superficiality:

The memory languidly revolv'd, the heart
Repos'd in noontide rest; the inner pulse
Of contemplation almost fail'd to beat.
Rotted as by a charm, my life became

1. III. 540.

2. Prose Works, III, 33.

3. Cf. Hartman, Wordsworth's Poetry, pp. 35-38.

4. IV. 270; III. 504-06.

A floating island, an amphibious thing,
Unsound, of spongy texture, yet withal,
Not wanting a fair face of water-weeds
And pleasant flowers. 1

The image perfectly evokes Wordsworth's severance from the communication with the permanent and eternal inner self; the "inner pulse" has become dormant, and the other self become a rootless, spongey island of weeds and flowers. The book is full of remarks like this; of Wordsworth seeing himself as travelling "with the shoal / Of more unthinking Natures; easy Minds / And pillowy . . . / . . . when foresight sleeps, / And wisdom, and the pledges interchanged / With our own inner being are forgot."² The suggestion is that there was a "falling-off", but that the "under soul" was only "lock'd up" in a calm.³ There is no serious threat, but enough of an alienation from his true being for him to experience a restoration on his return to the Lakes. The Poet's Restoration sets up a rhythm of separation and return, a return which always brings greater self-consciousness and knowledge of the inner self.⁴ Thus, when restoration knocks "at the door / Of unacknowledg'd weariness," Wordsworth receives a new understanding of his own powers and strength:

How Life pervades the undecaying mind,
How the immortal Soul with God-like power
Informs, creates, and thaws the deepest sleep
That time can lay upon her 5

1. III. 336-43.

2. III. 518-23.

3. III. 540.

4. Cf. Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism, p. 92.

5. IV. 155-58.

The image, as in the Glad Preamble and "Frost at Midnight," is of an inner spirit that has become frozen and lost, but which will always melt into life again with nature's warmth.

A more serious threat comes a little later, when the inner being, which in Book III was locked up in a calm, or simply forgotten, is itself under threat. The MS.W version of Book IV, which begins at l.270 and implies a much shorter introduction, describes the problem most directly:

Auspicious was this outset & the days
That follow'd march'd in flattering sympathy
With such a fair presage; but 'twas not long
Ere fallings off and indirect desires
Told of an inner weakness. 1

The "swarm of heady thoughts" is beginning to affect the inner spirit, the correspondence between it and that of nature is beginning to be lost, and with it the anchor of reason and truth. Wordsworth's image is striking, but it is not altogether clear what is happening:

But, sure it is that now
Contagious air did oft environ me
Unknown among these haunts in former days.
The very garments that I wore appear'd
To prey upon my strength, and stopp'd the course
And quiet stream of self-forgetfulness. 2

The image of the stream is clear enough--its flowing has simply been arrested; and Wordsworth has lost as a result that benefit which comes from reading Fairy Tales rather than Sandford and Merton: "The Child, whose love is here, at least, doth reap / One precious gain, that he forgets

1. MS. W, D. C. MS. 38, 1^v, ll. 1-5.

2. IV. 289-94.

himself."¹ The connection between the loss of "self-forgetfulness" and a falling-off is made by Coleridge when he equates the feeling that he receives from looking at nature to that he feels when gazing at the satisfied infant asleep at the mother's breast:

The same tender and genial pleasure takes possession of me, and this pleasure is checked and drawn inward by the like aching melancholy, by the same whispered remonstrance, and made restless by a similar impulse of aspiration. It seems as if the soul said to herself: from this state hast thou fallen! Such shouldst thou still become, thy Self all permeable to a holier power! thy Self at once hidden and glorified by its own transparency, as the accidental and dividuous in this quiet and harmonious object is subjected to the life and light of nature which shines in it, even as the transmitted power, love and wisdom, of God over all fills, and shines through, nature! But what the plant is, by an act not its own and unconsciously -- that must thou make thyself to become! 2

For Wordsworth the loss is never so great that he has to make himself become it once again; he rather has to be restored to his former state. In Book IV of The Prelude this separation which Coleridge describes is always threatening to occur. It is a separation between the inner being and outer self, and

1. Thomas Day, The History of Sandford and Merton, 3 vols. (London, 1783-89); V: 368-69. Cf. Coleridge (October 1797): "For from my early reading of Faery Tales, & Genii &c &c-- my mind had been habituated to the Vast--& I never regarded my senses in any way as the criteria of my belief. I regulated all my creeds by my conceptions not by my sight--even at that age. Should children be permitted to read Romances, & Relations of Giants & Magicians, & Genii?---I know all that has been said against it; but I have formed my faith in the affirmative.--I know no other way of giving the mind a love of 'the Great', & 'the Whole'" (Griggs, I, 354). Coleridge's desire for "invisible things" is discussed further in the Conclusion.

2. Statesman's Manual, Appendix C, CC VI, 71.

thus also between the self and the inner being of nature. With the sense of that inner being disappearing altogether out of view, "bewilder'd and engulf'd," comes the threat of the dissolution of the cohesion and unity of the world, which had been fused together by the correspondence between the inner spirit of the self and that in nature. Wordsworth's striking description of how the "very garments" that he wore began to prey upon his strength anticipates the "Essay on Epitaphs" which also describes a dissolution of the correspondence between inner and outer, although here the garments are explicitly metaphorical, and the correspondence that between the mind and language:

If words be not . . . an incarnation of the thought but only a clothing for it, then surely will they prove an ill gift; such a one as those poisoned vestments, read of in the stories of superstitious times, which had power to consume and to alienate from his right mind the victim who put them on. 1

In The Prelude, Wordsworth is describing an alienation from "Th'authentic sight of reason ... / ... that religious dignity of mind, / that is the very faculty of truth"; but even here, although this alienation is clearly present, it is not absolute, for it is followed by the description of the Poet's Dedication, where "authentic sight" is restored. The structure is such that the re-communication of his inner being with that of nature occurs as a bonding of which he himself is scarcely conscious:

--Ah! need I say, dear Friend, that to the brim
My heart was full; I made no vows, but vows
Were then made for me; bond unknown to me

1. Prose Works, II, 84-85.

Was given, that I should be, else sinning greatly,
 A dedicated Spirit. On I walk'd
 In blessedness, which even yet remains. 1

The Poet's Dedication, so called because of the heavily Miltonic verse which precedes these lines and which seems to be a rising of Milton's spirit almost as much as nature's, has the effect of short-cutting the story of the poem. Insofar as The Prelude is made up of a constant tension between reassertions of the spirit, and moments of threat, we are told, ab extra, that the spirit will survive. Wordsworth is more interested in pin-pointing both how and why alienation occurred, and to chart its relation to the finding of his true self. At this point, the structure is one of simple alternation, between transient moments and a store, as he puts it,

Of primitive hours, when, by these hindrances
 Unthwarted, I experienc'd in myself
 Conformity as just as that of old
 To the end and written spirit of God's works,
 Whether held forth in Nature or in Man. 2

Thus in the mountains Wordsworth, like the Pedlar, sees the writing of God, the volume of nature "which displays / The mystery, the life which cannot die."³

At most Book IV anticipates the structure of the fall. It specifies the separation between inner and outer selves which if unchecked could lead to decay, the threat that thoughts not based upon the inner impulses of nature cannot

1. IV. 340-45.

2. IV. 355-59.

3. Ruined Cottage, MS. B, D. C. MS. 17, 10^r, 11. 5-6, CW IV, 158-59.

"assume an outward life without a transmutation and a fall."¹ Within the structure of the five-book Prelude this was to go no further. But a large amount of the material which was added after the decision to expand in March 1804 deals with much more serious threats to the inner being--London, the French Revolution, Godwinism--and it is at this stage that the fall becomes a much more explicit structural device. It is not, however, a new structure imposed on a poem whose material had in no way anticipated it. In different ways, Books III to V all explore the nature of the sense of distance from the inner self which is set up in the very first book of the poem. The later books describe a much more serious alienation from the self, but one that is consonant with the underlying structure of the earlier books.

This is particularly clear in Book VII, which hinges explicitly on the question of reading. Whereas Wordsworth has been used to seeing and feeling the coherence and oneness of nature, London represents less of a danger to his inner being than a confusing experience where he can no longer read "the written promise." John Jones has remarked that "there is a false and restricting finality in the later Prelude's attitude to the opposition of countryside and city, as the types of natural and artificial," but it is he who also sees that the city involves the loss of what he calls "significant relation."² Thus, of Luke's gradual dissolution in the city in "Michael," he remarks: "This is typical of Wordsworth's use of the city as a pasteboard symbol of vice and artifice,

1. Prose Works, II, 85.

2. Jones, Egotistical Sublime, pp. 132, 84.

the home of the unintelligible, the wholly random element in things. . . ." ¹ The city for Wordsworth is the place of metonymy, the random and unintelligible series of signs that have no intrinsic truth-value or relation to what they are signs of. In the city, it is easy to lose sight of true meaning and see things only in terms of arbitrary, contiguous relationships, with no ulterior presence behind them at all. In Book VII, Wordsworth is faced with a London that is literally unreadable. The pandemonium of Bartholomew Fair, at the end of the book, becomes an image of London itself:

Oh, blank confusion! and a type not false
Of what the mighty City is itself
To all except a Straggler here and there,
To the whole Swarm of its inhabitants;
An undistinguishable world to men,
The slaves unrespited of low pursuits,
Living amid the same perpetual flow
Of trivial objects, melted and reduced
To one identity, by differences
That have no law, no meaning, and no end;
Oppression under which even highest minds
Must labour, whence the strongest are not free;
But though the picture weary out the eye,
By nature an unmanageable sight,
It is not wholly so to him who looks
In steadiness, who hath among least things
An under-sense of greatest; sees the parts
As parts, but with a feeling of the whole. 2

So Wordsworth claims at the end of Book VII; but it is not until he returns to London once again in Book VIII and shows how this can be done that his assertion seems at all credible. In Book VII, it is the "blank confusion" which is much more

1. Jones, Egotistical Sublime, p.100. Jones is discussing "Michael"; his comments remain appropriate for The Prelude, especially in view of the fact that VII. 701-05 were originally written for "Michael" in 1800 (quoted Oxford Prelude, p. 566).

2. VII. 695-712.

predominant:

the quick dance,
Of colours, lights and forms, the Babel din
The endless stream of men, and moving things,
From hour to hour the illimitable walk
Still among Streets with clouds and sky above ¹

Human subjects and inanimate objects slide into an unstructured flux which threatens to subvert The Prelude's own central image of its own coherence--that of the river. In London, the river becomes the image of the endless flow of amorphous signs that do not cohere into any greater meaning beyond themselves.

London is formulated as a book, whose language is artificial and theatrical, and whose signs Wordsworth is unable to read. Against this show, the natural forms of the Lake District are retained in his mind as contradistinctively real.² London is less of a fall than a test. Whereas previously Wordsworth had merely to be open to "nature's influxes," London, like the sea of the Arab Dream, threatens to pour over him and overwhelm him. The correspondence between the signs of nature and the underlying metaphysical presence has broken down, so that it presents only "mimic sights that ape / The absolute presence of reality"³ The irreconcilable divorce of reality and appearance in

1. VII. 156-60.

2. Cf. IV. 58-59: "The face of every neighbour whom I met / Was as a volume to me"; VI. 473-76: "With such a book / Before our eyes, we could not chuse but read / A frequent lesson of sound tenderness, / The universal reason of mankind"

3. VII. 248-49.

London is imaged by the division between sign or word and thing, which fascinates the poet almost as much as it appals him. One example of the divorce between language and reality is particularly clear:

The Champion Jack the Giant-killer, Lo!
 He dons his Coat of Darkness; on the Stage
 Walks, and atchieves his wonders, from the eye
 Of living mortal safe as is the moon
 'Hid in her vacant interlunar cave'
 Delusion bold! and faith must needs be coy;
 How is it wrought? His garb is black, the word
 INVISIBLE flames forth upon his Chest: 1

Jack the Giant-killer's "darkness visible" produces a "willing suspension of disbelief" to the extent that there is a complete contradiction between the word and the object which it represents. In general, Wordsworth claims, in the ordinary run of extravagant enterprise in London--"Lies to the ear, and lies to every sense"--he did not make "a secret boast / Of reading them with quick and curious eye"2

In all this throng and procession of sights, meaningless and formless, occasional moments impinge upon his consciousness to present themselves as images of truth. Thus, for instance, in opposition to Jack the Giant-killer, he is struck by the sight of the Blind London Beggar:

lost
 Amid the moving pageant, 'twas my chance
 Abruptly to be smitten with the view
 Of a blind Beggar, who, with upright face,
 Stood propp'd against a Wall, upon his Chest
 Wearing a written paper, to explain
 The story of the Man, and who he was.
 My mind did at this spectacle turn round
 As with the might of waters, and it seem'd
 To me that in this Label was a type,

1. VII. 302-09

2. VII. 574, 579-80.

London is imaged by the division between sign or word and thing, which fascinates the poet almost as much as it appals him. One example of the divorce between language and reality is particularly clear:

The Champion Jack the Giant-killer, Lo!
 He dons his Coat of Darkness; on the Stage
 Walks, and achieves his wonders, from the eye
 Of living mortal safe as is the moon
 'Mid in her vacant interlunar cave'
 Delusion bold! and faith must needs be coy;
 How is it wrought? His garb is black, the word
 INVISIBLE flames forth upon his Chest: 1

Jack the Giant-killer's "darkness visible" produces a "willing suspension of disbelief" to the extent that there is a complete contradiction between the word and the object which it represents. In general, Wordsworth claims, in the ordinary run of extravagant enterprise in London--"Lies to the ear, and lies to every sense"--he did not make "a secret boast / Of reading them with quick and curious eye"2

In all this throng and procession of sights, meaningless and formless, occasional moments impinge upon his consciousness to present themselves as images of truth. Thus, for instance, in opposition to Jack the Giant-killer, he is struck by the sight of the Blind London Beggar:

lost
 Amid the moving pageant, 'twas my chance
 Abruptly to be smitten with the view
 Of a blind Beggar, who, with upright face,
 Stood propp'd against a Wall, upon his Chest
 Wearing a written paper, to explain
 The story of the Man, and who he was.
 My mind did at this spectacle turn round
 As with the might of waters, and it seem'd
 To me that in this Label was a type,

1. VII. 302-09

2. VII. 574, 579-80.

Or emblem, of the utmost that we know,
 Both of ourselves and of the universe;
 And, on the shape of the unmoving man,
 His fixed face and sightless eyes, I look'd
 As if admonish'd from another world. 1

As opposed to the rest of London, the Blind London Beggar has a sign attached to him which explains who he is, and how he had come to be what he is. In a ghostly way, this mirrors The Prelude itself, which has, literally, turned Wordsworth's life into writing, and a book, but it is at least a book in which the words correspond to truths, and are not left in "disconnection, dead & spiritless," from reality. "Words follow words, sense seems to follow sense"--London is an endless succession of signs which bear no necessary correspondence to that which they announce: "Shop after shop, with Symbols, blazon'd Names, / And all the Tradesman's honours overhead; / Here, fronts of houses, like a title-page / With letters huge inscribed from top to toe. . . ."2 The whole town is arranged as a written bait for the "simple reader":

Here files of ballads dangle from dead walls,
 Advertisement of giant-size, from high
 Press forward in all colours on the sight;
 These, bold in conscious merit; lower down
 That, fronted with a most imposing word,
 Is, peradventure, one in masquerade. 3

But Wordsworth, though he finds it overwhelming, is never in any real danger of falling.

In fact, far from showing a fall, London serves to assert

1. VII. 608-22.

2. VII. 539, 174-78.

3. VII. 209-14. The description of the guiling of the "simple reader" is at VII. 213 app. crit. (MS. X).

the strength of Wordsworth's internal Being. Against the continual juxtaposition of the contiguous and arbitrary, he opposes the more stable power of his mind:

This did I feel in that vast receptacle.
The Spirit of Nature was upon me here;
The Soul of Beauty and enduring life
Was present as a habit, and diffused,
Through meagre lines and colours, and the press
Of self-destroying, transitory things
Composure and ennobling Harmony. 1

Because he is external and an alien, London can be seen from a distance, through the power of a mind "which with the outside of our human life / Not satisfied, must read the inner mind..."² He can return again to London after the retrospect in the Lake District, with a new control and power. The dissolution of form and meaning becomes a greater challenge to the poet "to puzzle out / Some inner meanings, which might harbour there":

a sense
Of what had been here done, and suffer'd here
Through ages, and was doing, suffering, still
Weigh'd with me, could support the test of thought,
Was like the enduring majesty and power
Of independent nature; and not seldom
Even individual remembrances,
By working on the Shapes before my eyes,
Became like vital functions of the soul;
And out of what had been, what was, the place
Was throng'd with impregnations 3

In retrospect, in memory, the imagination is able to fuse even the city into meaning. If it was too much for sight at the time, in recollection in tranquillity imagination finds an element which pleases her, tries her strength; she reforms

1. VII. 734-40.

2. VII. 67-68.

3. VIII. 684-85, 781-91.

and reshapes it, impregnates it with knowledge, and makes it live.¹ This power of imagination to tame confusion, in the poet's own mind, to reorder it into meaning, if only in memory, is evoked in the great cave image, the first part of which was originally drafted in the context of the disappointment at the crossing of the Alps.² Here, however, it is used to contrast the confusion and power which Wordsworth felt on entering into London--"Great God! / That aught external to the living mind / Should have such mighty sway!"--and that which he now remembers, as "a thing divine."³ Thus the traveller who enters the cave first sees

Substance and shadow, light and darkness, all
 Commingled, making up a Canopy
 Of Shapes and Forms and Tendencies to Shape
 That shift and vanish, change and interchange
 Like Spectres, ferment quiet and sublime. . . . 4

But this movement that he perceives in the cave fades, and dies away, until "every motion gone, / The scene before him lies in perfect view, / Exposed and lifeless, as a written book."⁵ This curious image, anticipating the state of the poem itself, is presumably picking up (in its context in Book VIII) an earlier criticism:

ye who are fed
 By the dead letter, not the spirit of things,
 Whose truth is not a motion or a shape
 Instinct with vital functions, but a Block
 Or waxen Image which yourselves have made,
 And ye adore. 6

1. VIII. 797-802.

2. MS. WW, D. C. MS. 43, 18^r-19^v.

3. VIII. 700-02, 710.

4. VIII. 719-23.

5. VIII. 725-27.

6. VIII. 431-36.

In other words, the shifting shapes of the caves are those that have been created in the city, which, as in Book VII, have no meaning or function related to the spirit of things. Against the deadness of the external world, the mind reasserts itself, like the memory after London, and quickens the images, and the "senseless mass" unites into a "Spectacle to which there is no end."¹

1. VIII. 731, 741.

iii. The Fall.

Until late November 1804 the simile of the cave was to have opened Book VII.¹ In that position, its function would have been to stress the imaginative triumph of Wordsworth that was about to occur--his ordeal in the city but his ability to coerce it together, "embodying everywhere some pressure / Or image, recognis'd or new, some type / Or picture of the world. . . ."² By describing London twice, he makes the role of his own power clearer. Retrospectively, we see that the whole portrait of London has not in the least been presented as sheer randomness. Its "arbitrary" conjunctions and forms are at all times shaped by the perceiving mind of the poet:

I had forms distinct
To steady me; these thoughts did oft revolve
About some centre palpable, which at once
Incited them to motion, and control'd,
And whatsoever shape the fit might take,
And whencesoever it might come, I still
At all times had a real solid world
Of images about me 3

When he first enters London, Wordsworth is overcome with its "mighty sway," but the book ends up as a tribute to his own mental power, which reasserts its dominance over the outward face of things. Although London presents itself as disunified in Book VII, by the end of Book VIII its aspect has changed. It has been reorganized into "a sublime idea" which sets forth "more than elsewhere / Is possible, the unity of man";

1. Norton Prelude, p. 519. 2. VIII. 735-37.

3. VIII. 598-605. Cf. IX. 23-25: "in the midst of things, it seem'd, / Looking as from a distance on the world / That mov'd about me"

the "One spirit . . . / Predominant," however, appears more Wordsworth's than anyone else's.¹ The book ends with the scene of the man in the London square eyeing his child "with unutterable love"--an apt emblem of Wordsworth regarding his own inner self.

The opposition between nature and London makes nature seem even purer by contrast:

such as shew'd itself
To the eyes of Adam, yet in Paradise,
Though fallen from bliss, when in the East he saw
Darkness ere day's mid course, and morning light
More orient in the western cloud, that drew
'O'er the blue firmament a radiant white,
Descending slow with something heavenly fraught.' 2

But the image of the fall which this introduces is ominous, and foreshadows the real crisis and the real trial. The experience of the French Revolution marks the break-down of his system. The organic analogue is assumed to be working in a yet further dimension: the French Revolution at first seems to represent another development of it. The crisis occurs when it goes wrong. The possibility of this has been present from the dark prophecy of the Arab Dream, but it is only now that organicism suffers a fall, and the poet, instead of expanding his assumptions further, has to return to childhood and personal memory in order to establish a continuity with the past and thus his own and nature's inner self.

The structure of the books on the French Revolution is complex, and includes a double movement similar to

1. 1850, VIII. 673; 1805, VIII. 826-27, 828-29.

2. VIII. 817-23.

that of the return to London. We are twice treated to an account of the French Revolution just as we are twice given an account of London. The structure, however, is reversed. Whereas in London we encounter its "mighty sway", and then follow the processes which bring it into shape, the French Revolution seems at first to have its own intrinsic form, and we have to watch this breaking up. Unlike London, which presents itself as a threat from the very first, the French Revolution is the most serious crisis precisely because Wordsworth initially identifies it with his own inner self. His sympathies with the Revolution are made quite clear. After some initial claims about the affinities of the Lake District and Cambridge to egalitarianism, equality and republicanism are quite simply identified with the power of nature itself:

Add unto this, subservience from the first
To God and Nature's single sovereignty,
Familiar presences of awful Power
And fellowship with venerable books
To sanction the proud workings of the soul,
And mountain liberty. 1

Thus the sympathies with the ideals of the Revolution are seen to be intimately involved with the very influences which Wordsworth has been charting so patiently throughout the poem. These influences, which he identifies with his inner self, he now finds can be assumed in a more exterior, political form:

It could not be
But that one tutor'd thus, who had been form'd
To thought and moral feeling in the way
This story hath described, should look with awe

1. IX. 236-41.

Upon the faculties of Man, receive
 Gladly the highest promises, and hail
 As best the government of equal rights
 And individual worth. 1

The ideals of the Revolution seem to be made of the same substance as the whole of Wordsworth's life; when he rejoices at the outbreak of the Revolution, it is because, as he puts it, "unto me the events / Seem'd nothing out of nature's certain course, / A gift that rather was come late than soon."² Thus the Revolution is identified with the progressive tendency of nature, and also, implicitly, with the river of Wordsworth's mind. He has found, on a different level, a river which is in all respects analogous to his own; it seems so natural, that he wonders how it has only appeared just now. That identification between Wordsworth and the Revolution is to be progressively strengthened, and become more and more explicit. Its assertion here, for instance, is quickly followed by the record of thoughts on watching the soldiers leave to fight the foreign invasion:

Yet still a Stranger and belov'd as such,
 Even by these passing spectacles my heart
 Was oftentimes uplifted, and they seem'd
 Like arguments from Heaven, that 'twas a cause
 Good, and which no one could stand up against
 Who was not lost, abandon'd, selfish, proud,
 Mean, miserable, wilfully deprav'd,
 Hater perverse of equity and truth. 3

The echo here of the Infant Babe--"No outcast he, abandon'd and depress'd"--of man without books--"Abject, depress'd,

1. IX. 241-43.

2. IX. 251-53 (my emphasis).

3. IX. 285-92.

forlorn, disconsolate"--marks the positive identification of the Revolutionary spirit with the spirit of nature and man.¹ Similarly, the "Familiar presences of awful Power," among which Wordsworth has lived since childhood, are here recognized in the stormy "revolutionary Power" which he encounters in Paris.² Nature's power is now embodied in political power.³ It is one thing, says Wordsworth, to discuss liberty in the Lake District, but quite another when that discussion and belief is about to be embodied in action:

If Nature then be standing on the brink
Of some great trial, and we hear the voice
Of One devoted, one whom circumstance
Hath call'd upon to embody his deep sense
In action, give it outwardly a shape,
And that of benediction to the world. . . .⁴

When Wordsworth first came to France events seemed "loose and disjointed," and there was no vital spirit to give them a "form and body." Through his friendship with Beaupuy, however, he comes to identify the Revolution with the benign inner processes of nature and man's spirit. Beaupuy himself seems to be about to translate this into political action, to

1. II. 261 (RV reading); V. 27; cf. also VI. 253-56.
2. IX. 238, 48. Cf. IX. 180, and James Boulton, Arbitrary Power: An Eighteenth-Century Obsession, Inaugural Lecture, University of Nottingham, 1966.
3. The spots of time now become historical and political:
"We summon'd up the honorable deeds / Of ancient Story,
thought of each bright spot / That could be found in all
recorded time / Of truth preserv'd and error pass'd away, /
Of single Spirits that catch the flame from Heaven . . ."
(IX. 371-75).
4. IX. 404-09. The following lines echo the apostrophe to
imagination of Book VI (540-41): "Then doubt is not, and
truth is more than truth, / A hope it is and a desire
. . . ." (410-11).

embody truth in the public sphere, and "give it outwardly a shape."¹ Nature's course, from the earliest apprehended murmurs of the Derwent, seems to be advancing, and the vital spirit shaping itself into greater and greater forms. But Beaupuy, like the Winander Boy or the child in the London theatre, is destined to die--similarly, before corruption:

yet most bless'd
In this, that he the fate of later times
Lived not to see, nor what we now behold
Who have as ardent hearts as he had then. 2

The book concludes with further examples of the perversity of the ancien régime--the hunger-bitten girl, and Vaudracour and Julia, a story of oppression, presumably for Wordsworth and Coleridge linked to the other important relationship which he formed in France. The child of this natural love follows the path of Beaupuy, and so many children in The Prelude, to his grave. By the end of the book, the promises of the Revolution, Beaupuy, and the child, are dead. Wordsworth **re-**turns to the Paris of the September massacres, and finds that he can no longer "read" the events of the Revolution. They no longer respire with inevitable and natural meaning:

The Square of the Carousel, few weeks back
Heap'd up with dead and dying, upon these
And other sights looking as doth a man
Upon a volume whose contents he knows

1. Wordsworth says that when he first arrived in Paris he had no means of understanding the overall complexion of events. He had never been able to see a "regular Chronicle" which would tell him, as he puts it,
Whence the main Organs of the Public Power
Had sprung, their transmigrations when and how
Accomplish'd, giving thus unto events
A form and body, all things were to me
Loose and disjointed, and the affections left
Without a vital interest. (IX. 102-07)

2. IX. 433-36.

Are memorable, but from him lock'd up,
 Being written in a tongue he cannot read ¹

Wordsworth later describes the experiences of this time as a "labyrinth." Most readers would agree that this aspect at least is communicated very successfully. Something much more serious happens than the events of the Revolution just becoming unreadable. That, after all, as London has shown, can easily be dealt with. The crisis is much more profound:

Not in my single self alone I found,
 But in the minds of all ingenious Youth,
 Change and subversion from this hour. No shock
 Given to my moral nature had I known
 Down to that very moment; neither lapse
 Nor turn of sentiment that might be nam'd
 A revolution, save at this one time,
 All else was progress on the self-same path
 On which with a diversity of pace
 I had been travelling; this a stride at once
 Into another region. 2

The shock is that the organic analogue, which had been marching forward and expanding in scope throughout the poem as throughout Wordsworth's life, undefeated, suddenly comes to an abrupt halt. France seems to be nature embodied at the level of the state and of politics, nature seems to be impeded by nothing, until this "revolution"--the declaration of war and its ensuing effect on France: "beset with Foes on every side / The goaded Land wax'd mad. . . ." ³ Organicism breaks down. The body betrays its inner spirit. It is this which poses the real threat. This begins to show itself when Wordsworth describes the Terror in what seems, at first, to be a devastatingly inappropriate image:

1. X. 47-52.

2. X. 232-42.

3. X. 312-13.

Head after head, and never heads enough
 For those that bade them fall: they found their joy,
 They made it, ever thirsty as a Child,
 If light desires of innocent little Ones
 May with such heinous appetites be match'd,
 Having a toy, a wind-mill, though the air
 Do of itself blow fresh, and make the vane
 Spin in his eyesight, he is not content
 But with the plaything at arm's length he sets
 His front against the blast, and runs amain,
 To make it whirl the faster. 1

The description of the executions, "they found their joy, / They made it," contains an equally incongruous echo of The Pedlar: "He had a world about him--'twas his own / He made it." But both images are less incongruous than they might seem. Within the structure of the imagery of the poem, the French Revolution has been identified with nature, with Wordsworth's own inner self, and with the innocence of a child, "human nature seeming born again." So, when it begins to go wrong, the Revolution becomes the grotesque figure of a child far more perverted than the Infant Prodigy.

Childhood, as Burton Pike has observed, is frequently used as a metaphor for timelessness.² In The Prelude, the experiences of childhood are introduced in terms of the rapture of memory, but quickly become a special sort of memory "islands in the unnavigable depths / Of our departed time."

-
1. X. 336-46. Wordsworth's description is not, however, as grotesque as Hardy's bitter parody of the child of the "Intimations Ode" in the figure of Little Father Time in Jude the Obscure: "He was Age masquerading as Juvenility, and doing it so badly that his real self showed through crevices. A ground swell from ancient years of night seemed now and then to lift the child in this his morning-life, when his face took a back view over some great Atlantic of Time, and appeared not to care about what it saw. . . . He then seemed to be doubly awake, like an enslaved and dwarfed Divinity . . ." (London: Macmillan, 1912) p. 332.
 2. Burton Pike, "Time in Autobiography," CL, 28 (1976), 334.

In The Prelude, childhood, with its "high instincts," is identified with the poet's own inner self, with undying life, and immortality. Children themselves appear throughout the later parts of the poem as emblems of the poet's own inner being, particularly at moments when that inner being is most under threat. The child in the London theatre, for instance, in Book VII, appears, like the child of the "Cde," as a "sort of Alien scatter'd from the clouds":

The Mother, too,
Was present! but of her I know no more
Than hath been said, and scarcely at this time
Do I remember her. But I behold
The lovely Boy as I beheld him then,
Among the wretched and the falsely gay,
Like one of those who walk'd with hair unsinged
Amid the fiery furnace. He hath since
Appear'd to me oft-times as if embalm'd
By Nature; through some special privilege,
Stopp'd at the growth he had; destined to live,
To be, to have been, come and go, a Child
And nothing more ¹

In describing this child in an earlier draft, Wordsworth calls him "A miracle. An infant Hercules" ² This was dropped for MS.A, but the image recurs in Book X to describe the strength of the innocent child France, when beset by the allied armies in 1793:

Meanwhile, the Invaders fared as they deserv'd;
The Herculean Commonwealth had put forth her arms
And throttled with an infant Godhead's might
The snakes about her cradle. . . . ³

-
1. VII. 377, 391-403. Wordsworth here implicitly tries to answer the problem of Coleridge's "Spinosism." Coleridge had to force his reason to believe that God is "even in Theatres" (Griggs, I, 551).
 2. VII. 378, app. crit. (MS. X).
 3. X. 362-65.

The link between Wordsworth and the Revolution becomes clear. It is not simply a question of his encountering the Revolution, but of identifying with it to the extent that he sees it as a repetition in public terms of his own inner life. The link between the god-child of France, Wordsworth's own childhood, the Infant Babe, and the images of children throughout The Prelude, creates a clear structural pattern. The child is the centre of Wordsworth and of his own poem. Throughout, it is an image of his true self. The covert shifting of the Winander Boy into the third person is typical of the way in which children, "instinct / With Godhead," function in the poem. With the Revolution, as Coleridge puts it, "Hope sprang forth like a full-born Deity!"¹ Wordsworth identifies with Liberty and France to the extent of seeing it as his own self-image, "full of Instinct & Deity."² When the Revolution goes wrong he feels, as he says, "a sense / Of treachery and desertion in the place / The holiest that I knew of, my own soul."³ The embodiment of himself and nature in action, realized in the political sphere, has gone horribly wrong. Its fall, its failure, necessarily implies a fall and a failure of all in which he had believed--nothing less than the inner spirit of himself and nature.

In 1792, greeting the Revolution, Wordsworth had been "a child of nature, as at first, / Diffusing only those affections wider / That from the cradle had grown up"⁴

1. VIII. 638-39; "To William Wordsworth," l. 37, CPW I, 405.

2. CN 1934.

3. X. 379-81.

4. X. 753-55.

But with the fall of the Revolution comes the expulsion from Eden and from the self:

This threw me first out of the pale of love;
Sour'd and corrupted upwards to the source
My sentiments 1

The image that is used indicates the extent of the estrangement: the river itself, Wordsworth's own inner mind and principle, the hidden life at its source, is poisoned and polluted. Small wonder that he takes a knife to the symbol of his own very inner being, and performs an autopsy on a live body:

I took the knife in hand
And stopping not at parts less sensitive,
Endeavoured with my best of skill to probe
The living body of society
Even to the heart; I push'd without remorse
My speculations forward; yea, set foot
On Nature's holiest places. 2

He attacks the vital spirit of an imperfect form.

In this reading, the structural function of the spots of time, as they appear in Book XI, becomes clearer. For Wordsworth had never dreamt "That transmigration could be undergone / A fall of being suffer'd" ³ Insofar as he identifies the Revolution with himself, its fall is his also:

The immediate proof of principles no more
Could be entrusted, while the events themselves
• • •
Could through my understanding's natural growth
No longer justify themselves through faith
Of inward consciousness 4

1. X. 761-63.

2. X. 873-79.

3. X. 600-01.

4. X. 782-83, 786-88.

The crisis is not Godwinism but the fall that has led him into Godwinism; the estrangement from his own inner being and the disavowal of the principles learned in childhood. It seems like a fall within himself. But Dorothy, Coleridge, and through them his own early memories, lead him back to his true self and revive the feelings of his earlier life. The fall is shown to be not in himself, or in his principles, but in the corruption of the Revolution, a corruption primarily produced by the allied attack upon it. The spots of time fulfil a key function in the renewal of his communications with his "internal Being, which are anterior to all these experiences, and with which revelation coincides" ¹

The Prelude ends with the assertion of poetic power, a power in which nature literally conforms itself to the mind. A reading which emphasizes the experience of the French Revolution, however, might suggest that the poem is about taking a mind-relational account of the world too far. The organic connection between mind and body, between the interior spirit and the outward form, can function as a principle for the individual but perhaps no further. The French Revolution is the moment when Wordsworth's power fails, when he does not succeed in shaping and creating events. At first, as he confesses, he assumed that he could:

Why should I not confess that earth was then
To me what an inheritance new-fallen
Seems, when the first time visited, to one
Who thither comes to find in it his home?
He walks about and looks upon the place
With cordial transport, moulds it, and remoulds,
And is half-pleased with things that are amiss,
'Twill be such joy to see them disappear. ²

1. Prose Works, II. 51.

2. X. 729-36.

But such power eludes him. Instead, he is threatened with a complete loss of his own being. Thus the "crisis" is not simply a single event. It is a betrayal which threatens every value, every belief, his own identity, and the truth of the inner spirit of nature on which that identity rests. The fall at first seems to be complete. But the return to nature's course shows that the fall was not in Wordsworth, nor even in the inner spirit of nature which the French Revolution embodies, but in the circumstances and development of the Revolution itself. His own experiences show him that, in his own case, nature eventually thwarts such tyranny. The subject matter of The Recluse was to have shown how it thwarts such tyranny in a more general sense.¹ That The Recluse was never written perhaps shows that Wordsworth was reluctant to reassert the organic analogue at the political level. The Excursion contains his warning:

Oh! no, the innocent Sufferer often sees
Too clearly; feels too vividly; and longs
To realize the vision, with intense
And over-constant yearning;--there--there lies
The excess, by which the balance is destroyed. 2

-
1. XI. 176-85. This had been planned as early as 1799: "I wish," Coleridge wrote to Wordsworth, "you would write a poem, in blank verse, addressed to those, who, in consequence of the complete failure of the French Revolution, have thrown up all hopes of the amelioration of mankind, and are sinking into an almost epicurean selfishness, disguising the same under the soft titles of domestic attachment and contempt for visionary philosophes. It would do great good, and might form a part of 'The Recluse' . . ." (Griggs, I, 527). But Wordsworth was himself not altogether proof against this "Self-involution." Four years later, Coleridge was to write: "I saw him more & more benighted in hypochondriacal Fancies, living wholly among Devotees--having every the minutest Thing, almost his very Eating & Drinking, done for him by his Sister, or Wife,--& I trembled, lest a Film should rise, and thicken on his moral Eye" (Griggs, II, 1013).
 2. Excursion, IV. 174-78, PW V, 114.

CONCLUSION.

In retrospect it might be said that Wordsworth's theory of organicism is remarkably simple. Some of The Prelude's formal qualities, such as its rounding off at the moment at which it began, have received considered critical attention. But the basic theory on which this rests, and of which this is but a small aspect, has been remarkably neglected. This is perhaps because the structure of The Prelude is almost as invisible as life itself.

It has been shown that the poem's preoccupation with the "power of mind" takes its place at the end of a long metaphysical tradition.¹ Its particular structure, which deals with the means of embodiment of that power of mind, is indebted to a much more precise historical event. This was Coleridge's stay at Göttingen in 1798-99, his study under Blumenbach, and his later, related, reading of Kant. The Prelude certainly substantiates Coleridge's claim that he had developed a theory of organic form before Schlegel's definition. Coleridge's fundamental beliefs remained remarkably consistent. But he was also prone to take up the expression and idea of the moment that seemed closest to — or better than — his own thinking.²

In many ways, the theory of organicism, as developed in

1. XII. 99.

2. It is interesting that in the Letter on Plagiarism, Coleridge defends his similarities to Schlegel by reference to their common source in Kant (Shakespearian Criticism, II, 237-38).

The Prelude, goes back to an idea that Coleridge had developed very early on: the contrast between the visible and the invisible. Its earliest statement comes in the note to Joan of Arc, a note which, in its way, can be seen to contain the germ of so much of Coleridge's philosophy:

We seem placed here to acquire a knowledge of effects. Whenever we would pierce into the Adyta of Causation, we bewilder ourselves; and all, that laborious Conjecture can do, is to fill up the gaps of imagination. We are restless, because invisible things are not the objects of vision--and philosophical systems, for the most part, are received not for their Truth, but in proportion as they attribute to Causes a susceptibility of being seen, whenever our visual organs shall have become sufficiently powerful. 1

"Life" answered the desire for the invisible. It filled the gap of imagination without demanding the expulsion of the natural world, resolving the one and the many, the infinite with the individual form: "the co presence of Feeling & Life, limitless by their very essence, with Form, by its very essence, with Form, by its very essence limited--determinate--definite. --"2 Coleridge linked life to the invisible remarkably early, and maintained that link consistently. In the Statesman's Manual, for instance, he writes:

The leading differences between mechanic and vital philosophy may all be drawn from one point: namely,

1. Southey, Joan of Arc, p.42, CPW II, 1113. Cf. the Theory of Life, where he discusses attempts to discover a chemistry of life: "How, otherwise, could men of strong minds and sound judgements have attempted to penetrate by the clue of chemical experiment the secret recesses, the sacred adyta of organic life, without being aware that chemistry must needs be at its extreme limits, when it has approached the threshold of a higher power?" (p. 32).

2. CN 1561.

that the former demanding for every mode and act of existence real or possible visibility, knows only of distance and nearness, composition (or rather juxtaposition) and decomposition, in short the relations of unproductive particles to each other; so that in every instance the result is the exact sum of the component quantities, as in arithmetical addition. This is the philosophy of death, and only of a dead nature can it hold good. 1

Again, the later style of his objection to materialists--"what these men call reality is object unsouled of subject"--uses the same mode of argument as the 1797 letter to Thelwall.² Placing himself in the perspective of Thelwall's materialist system, he writes:

the universe itself--what but an immense heap of little things?---I can contemplate nothing but parts, & parts are all little--!--My mind feels as if it ached to behold & know something great--something one & indivisible-- and it is only in the faith of this that rocks or waterfalls, mountains or caverns give me the sense of sublimity or majesty! 3

"'From his childhood he hungered for eternity.' There, after all, is the incontestable claim of Coleridge."⁴ In the same letter, Coleridge goes on to illustrate this hunger, by quotation from "This Lime Tree Bower My Prison":

'Struck with the deepest calm of Joy' I stand
Silent, with swimming sense; and gazing round
On the wide Landscape gaze till all doth seem
Less gross than bodily, a living Thing

1. Statesman's Manual, Appendix C, CC VI, 89.

2. From a note written in Coleridge's copy of Southey's Life of Wesley (1820); cited by Barfield, What Coleridge Thought, p. 207.

3. Griggs, I, 349. Cf. Coleridge to Poole, March 1801: "Be not afraid, that I shall join the party of the Little-ists--" (Griggs, II, 708).

4. Pater, Appreciations, p. 105.

Which acts upon the mind, & with such Hues
As cloath th'Almighty Spirit, when he makes
Spirits perceive his presence!-- 1

In this description nature has become the body of God's spirit, "a living Thing / Which acts upon the mind," the direct revelation of the divine visual language of God. This notion of God's invisible presence in the body of the world was also of importance in Wordsworth's own version of organic form. No doubt there was a special poignancy for them both in the figure of Jack the Giant-killer, with "the word / INVISIBLE" flaming forth on his chest.²

The embodiment of God's spirit in the natural world was to be developed into a theory of the embodiment of man's spirit, or the power of his mind, in poetry. This correspondence is at the heart of Wordsworth's and Coleridge's concepts of organic form. Without some knowledge of their ideas of how God's mind and power was manifest in the universe--a topic which covers what we would now call science, but which they saw as a part of metaphysics--it is impossible to understand the way in which they felt that their own minds could be embodied in poetry. Imagination, said Wordsworth, was given "to incite and to support the eternal."³ This straightforwardly spiritual element in the concept of imagination has to be likewise acknowledged if their concept of organic form

1. Griggs, I, 349-50, citing "This Lime Tree Bower My Prison" (1797) in a version which conflates the Annual Anthology (1800) text with that of the text of the letter sent to Southey (Griggs, I, 335).

2. VII. 308-09.

3. Prose Works, III, 37.

is to be understood. Thus, for instance, the following definition, from the 1815 Preface, rests on the assumption of a "prime and vital principle" existing in the recesses of man's nature, "far / From any reach of outward fellowship":

When the Imagination frames a comparison, if it does not strike on the first presentation, a sense of the truth of the likeness, from the moment that it is perceived, grows--and continues to grow--upon the mind; the resemblance depending less upon outline of form and feature, than upon expression and effect; less upon casual and outstanding, than upon inherent and internal, properties: moreover, the images invariably modify each other.-- 1

Wordsworth's organicism is particularly difficult to define because it is dependent on such internal qualities, such nebulous notions as that of the spirit which only becomes manifest in the form that it creates. The "vital functions of the soul" are impossible to pin down as a separable quality.² The soul is only manifest in the form which it produces. Wordsworth says this nowhere more clearly than in Book VIII of The Prelude, when he describes the process which is also the form of his own poem:

when that first poetic Faculty
Of plain imagination and severe,
No longer a mute Influence of the soul,
An Element of the nature's inner self,
Began to have some promptings to put on
A visible shape 3

Thus the Infant Babe possesses "the first poetic spirit / Of our human life," but that spirit is not at all dependent on poetry. It is quite possible to be a "silent poet":

1. XIII. 194, 195-96; Prose Works, III, 36.

2. VIII. 789.

3. VIII. 511-16.

Theirs is the language of the heavens, the power,
 The thought, the image, and the silent joy;
 Words are but under-agents in their souls;
 When they are grasping with their greatest strength
 They do not breathe among them 1

This means, perhaps, that the concept of imagination itself has to be reconsidered. It is doubtless the poetic spirit, but it is not dependent on actual poetry as such, any more than God is dependent on his own expression in the world.

To see imagination from the perspective of organic form can help solve two critical problems. Firstly, there is problem of the Biographia definition. Coleridge's definition of imagination comes at the end of a long philosophical disquisition which nowhere mentions poetry as such. Critics have been divided as to which of the two categories of imagination could be describing poetry. Bate argues for the primary, Shawcross for the secondary:

The imagination then I consider either as primary, or secondary. The primary imagination I hold to be the living power and prime agent of all human perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM. The secondary I consider as an echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the kind of its agency, and differing only in degree, and in the mode of its operation. It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to re-create; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still, at all events, it struggles to idealize and to unify. It is essentially vital, even as all objects (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead. 2

1. XII. 270-74.

2. BL, p. 167. Walter Jackson Bate, "Coleridge on the Function of Art," in Perspectives of Criticism, ed. Harry Levin, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1950), pp. 145-46; Shawcross, I, 272.

It could be suggested that what Coleridge is describing here is nothing less than what we have been dealing with in our search for an understanding of organic form. The primary imagination is the repetition of God's mind in man's mind. It is precisely the Mind—mind relation that has been analysed from its first appearance in Joan of Arc onwards. But, as our discussion of organic form has shown, this does not mean that Mind (or mind) at this stage is anything more than pure intellect:

Quiet stream, with all its eddies, & the moonlight
playing on them, quiet as if they were Ideas in the
divine mind anterior to the Creation-- 1

The secondary imagination is identical to the primary, and differs from it only "in the mode of its operation." The difference is that it is involved with materials, dissolving, diffusing and unifying them. It "souls" them with subject, without which they are but a heap of little things: "It is essentially vital, even as all objects (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead." In other words, whereas the primary imagination is "an element of the nature's inner sense," the secondary imagination describes its action when it puts on a "visible shape." In Coleridge's definitions, we find a description of spirit, and spirit infused in body. It thus corresponds exactly to organic form. The mind, or spirit, can exist in itself: the mind embodied in materials depends on that initial existence. If the relation of Coleridge's description to the theory of organic form is

intelligible/sensible free & bound unity

accepted, then the consequence for poetry is that it consists of both primary and secondary imagination. The secondary imagination is the embodiment or incarnation of the primary--without which it could not exist--in language. It is hardly likely, after all, that in the "esemplastic" power the two could be separable.

Secondly, such a concept of organic form can answer the question of why, in The Prelude, which was described by Wordsworth himself as being about the "growth of a poet's mind," there is so little in the poem about poetry as such. The poet's mind is indeed seen in terms of mind; Wordsworth rarely discusses the fact that poetry is actually spoken or written, that it consists of language. The same thing can be seen in the Lyrical Ballads Preface, where Wordsworth, having conducted the whole discussion virtually exclusively in terms of processes of mind, announces in the penultimate paragraph that unfortunately he has no space to discuss the "powers of language."¹ In Middlemarch, George Eliot mocks the way in which the actual writing of poetry so often disappears from view in Romantic aesthetics. Dorothea suggests to Will Ladislav that he might become a poet. Will replies:

"That depends. To be a poet is to have a soul so quick to discern, that no shade of quality escapes it, and so quick to feel, that discernment is but a hand playing with finely-ordered variety on the chords of emotion--a soul in which knowledge

1. Prose Works, I, 156. Cf. the Encyclopaedia Metropolitana heading: "Poetry, introduced by Psychology," (Coleridge's Treatise on Method, ed. Snyder, facing p. 71).

passes instantaneously into feeling, and feeling flashes back as a new organ of knowledge. One may have that condition by fits only."

"But you leave out the poems," said Dorothea.
 "I think they are wanted to complete the poet." 1

In Wordsworth's case at least, the poems are left out because they are seen as incarnations of thought. Wordsworth's concern is that language should not be arbitrary, but intrinsically linked to thought and feelings. So, for instance, in the Preface, the language which men speak has a relationship of truth to the objects described. "In the absence of a constituent vital power," says Wordsworth in the Appendix to the "Essays on Epitaphs," "the connections are mechanical and arbitrary," and this is the sentiment of the Preface also.² The more philosophical language of rural people is contrasted to the language of poets who "separate themselves from the sympathies of men, and indulge in arbitrary and capricious habits of expression."³ Figures of speech, he observes, in the 1802 additions, unless "prompted by passion," are "a mechanical device of style."⁴ But if language is the result of passion, then it will be "alive with metaphors and figures."⁵

In retrospect, in fact, it can be seen that the Lyrical Ballads Preface contains much of the "germ" of the theory of organicism. Wordsworth's emphasis on purposiveness, which

-
1. George Eliot, Middlemarch (London: Virtue, 1908), I, 341-42.
 2. Prose Works, II, 98.
 3. Prose Works, I, 124.
 4. Prose Works, I, 131.
 5. Prose Works, I, 137.

may not be consciously formulated in the mind, his emphasis on the cognitive processes of organization and relation, and his stress on the intimate union of feelings and words that occurs in the man of "more than usual organic sensibility," all suggest an early formulation of a theory of language based on the relationship of spirit to its expression. The "blind" and "mechanical" responses of the poet which Wordsworth describes are in themselves a guarantee of the relation of poetry to the spirit within. It only needed the substitution of the theory of the designing inner life, in place of associationism, for the theory of the creation of poetry as "a function kindred to organic power" to be developed.

But language in itself is never an end for Wordsworth. The end for him is the same as that of the river in his poem. The river's destination is the sea, and the sea for Wordsworth is, as he puts it, "nothing less than infinity."¹ Thus imagination, the "moving soul" of The Prelude, generates "The feeling of life endless, the great thought / By which we live, Infinity and God."² Immortality is the founding principle of The Prelude, just as it is of human sympathy and love, and of poetry itself:

it follows, as a final inference, that without the belief in immortality, wherein these several desires originate, neither monuments nor epitaphs, in affectionate or laudatory commemoration of the deceased, could have existed in the world. 3

1. Prose Works, II, 51.

2. XIII. 183-84.

3. Prose Works, II, 52.

The spots of time embody this prime and vital principle of belief. Insofar as all beliefs, including poetry, are founded on intimations of immortality, it is the remembrance of those intimations which brings Wordsworth, in Book XI of The Prelude, back to his true self. Both memories concern the "impression of death," "counteracted," as Wordsworth puts it, "by those communications with our internal Being, which are anterior to all these experiences, and with which revelation coincides. . . ." These revelations of the foundation of all feelings and truth are the spots of time. In the additional lines of the 1805 version of the Gibbet Mast episode this is made poignantly clear:

I led my Horse, and stumbling on, at length
 Came to a bottom, where in former times
 A Murderer had been hung in iron chains.
 The Gibbet-mast was moulder'd down, the bones
 And iron case were gone; but on the turf
 Hard by, soon after that fell deed was wrought
 Some unknown hand had carved the Murderer's name.
 The monumental writing was engraven
 In times long past, and still, from year to year,
 By superstition of the neighbourhood,
 The grass is clear'd away; and to this hour
 The letters are all fresh and visible. 1

In themselves, the lines have a strange power that borders on the uncanny, but they are not inserted merely for effect. The "monumental writing" gives the clue that these letters, like all "sepulchral inscriptions," have, for Wordsworth, "the consciousness of immortality as their primal source." 2

Immortality, in the last analysis, is the subject of The Prelude as it is the "Ode." In both poems it is childhood

1. XI. 288-99.

2. Prose Works, II, 60.

which is seen to have the closest intimations of another existence. The return to childhood memory at the end of The Prelude signals a return to this life of the spirit. The Prelude itself, however, has also a function in this regard. It was never published in Wordsworth's lifetime, ostensibly because he believed that it could only be justified by the writing of The Recluse. But that explanation leaves some unanswered questions. Logically, for instance, when Wordsworth realized that The Recluse would never be written, he should have destroyed The Prelude if its raison d'être was never to materialize. Why should it have been justifiable, with or without The Recluse, only after his death? Why was it that Wordsworth so often, when discussing the poem, referred to the fact that it would never be published during his lifetime? And why, finally, even when it was last revised for posthumous publication in 1839, did he still not give it a name? Why, if not because the poem itself had his name, because it was written as his own monument and epitaph? Embodying the history of his own inner spirit, his identity, the poem was Wordsworth himself. During his lifetime, it remained secret and hidden, itself a "Life within." On his death, it was published almost immediately, an epitaph immortalizing the inner self that had taken literally Milton's advice:

he who would not be frustrate of his hope to write
well hereafter in laudable things, ought him selfe
to bee a true Poem 1

1. Milton, Prose Works, ed. D. Bush et al. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953-74), I, 890.

APPENDIX.Coleridge and Davy's Researches, Chemical and Philosophical.

When Coleridge met Davy on his return from Germany in 1799, Davy was working as Superintendent of the Medical Pneumatic Institute at Bristol. At that time, Davy was conducting experiments in the inhalation of nitrous oxide, which had only then been obtained in a pure form. The laughing gas was "inspired" by many of those in the Bristol circle; Davy's account of the experiments in his Researches, Chemical and Philosophical contains short reports from J.W. Tobin, Southey, Coleridge, the Wedgwoods, Poole and others, describing their experiences.¹ All speak of fits of laughing and of ecstasy. As Dr. Roget puts it: "My ideas succeeded one another with extreme rapidity, thoughts rushed like a torrent through my mind, as if their velocity had been suddenly accelerated by a bursting of a barrier which had before retained them in their natural and equable course."² Others speak of sensations of power, of the feelings of sublime poetry and music, of the sensations of "a half-delirious dream." Most interesting of all, perhaps, is Davy's own long narrative of his many and repeated experiences of inhaling the gas, which reads almost as a covert Confessions. One episode in particular seems to show the influence of the

1. Humphry Davy, Researches, Chemical and Philosophical; Chiefly Concerning Nitrous Oxide, or Dephlogisticated Nitrous Air, and its Respiration (London, 1800).

2. Researches, pp. 510-11.

ending of "Kubla Khan," with its sublime and godlike genius: "And all should cry, Beware! Beware! / His flashing eyes, his floating hair!"¹ But it also seems to anticipate Coleridge's Preface of 1816, especially the profound sleep "at least of the external senses," in which, Coleridge says, "images rose up before him as things, with a parallel production of the correspondent expressions."² Both Davy and Coleridge feel compelled to communicate their sublime vision, but both find that it has soon passed away. After contributing to the volume, Coleridge wrote eagerly to Davy in October 1800: "When you write (& do write soon) tell me how I can get your Essay on the nitrous oxyd--if you desired Johnson to have one sent to Lackington's to be placed in Mr Crosthwaite's Monthly parcel for Keswick, I should receive it."³ Perhaps when composing the Preface sixteen years later, Davy's description, with its own echo of "Kubla Khan," was also present in Coleridge's mind:

I now came out of the box, having been in precisely an hour and quarter.

The moment after, I began to respire 20 quarts of unmingled nitrous oxide. A thrilling extending from the chest to the extremities was almost immediately produced. I felt a sense of tangible extension highly pleasurable in every limb; my visible impressions were dazzling and apparently magnified, I heard distinctly every sound in the room and was perfectly aware of my situation.* By degrees as the pleasurable sensations increased, I lost all connection with

*In all these experiments after the first minute, my cheeks became purple.

1. "Kubla Khan," ll. 49-50, CPW I, 298.

2. "Kubla Khan," Preface, ll. 17-22, CPW I, 296.

3. Griggs, I, 632.

external things; trains of vivid visible images rapidly passed through my mind and were connected with words in such a manner, as to produce perceptions perfectly novel. I existed in a world of newly connected and newly modified ideas. I theorised; I imagined that I made discoveries. When I was awakened from this semi-delirious trance by Dr. Kinglake, who took the bag from my mouth, Indignation and pride were the first feelings produced by the sight of the persons about me. My emotions were enthusiastic and sublime; and for a minute I walked round the room perfectly regardless of what was said to me. As I recovered my former state of mind, I felt an inclination to communicate the discoveries I had made during the experiment. I endeavoured to recall the ideas, they were feeble and indistinct; one collection of terms, however, presented itself: and with the most intense belief and prophetic manner, I exclaimed to Dr. Kinglake, "Nothing exists but thoughts!--the universe is composed of impressions, ideas, pleasures and pains!" 1

1. Researches, pp. 487-89. Coleridge's original description of the circumstances of the composition of "Kubla Khan" is strikingly brief and factual. There is a transcription by John Shelton in "The Autograph Manuscript of 'Kubla Khan' and an Interpretation," Review of English Literature, 7 (1966), 33.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. Unpublished Material.

A. Manuscripts.

Wordsworth, William. Dove Cottage MSS., consulted on xerox, by permission of the Trustees of Dove Cottage.

1. MS. JJ, D. C. MS. 19.
2. Christabel Notebook, D. C. MS. 15.
3. MS. 18a, D. C. MS. 16.
4. Peter Bell MS.2, D. C. MS. 33.
5. MS. RV, D. C. MS. 21.
6. MS. V, D. C. MS. 22.
7. MS. U, D. C. MS. 23.
8. MS. WW, D. C. MS. 43. Transcription by Mark Reed.
9. MS. W, D. C. MS. 38.
10. MS. M, D. C. MS. 44.
11. MS. Y, D. C. MS. 48.
12. MS. X, D. C. MS. 47.
13. MS. Z, D. C. MS. 49.
14. MS. A, D. C. MS. 52.

B. Dissertations, and unpublished papers.

Cross, Stephen. "John Hunter's Theories of Life, Organization and Disease." Diss. Johns Hopkins, 1977.

Finch, John. "Wordsworth, Coleridge, and 'The Recluse,' 1798-1814." Diss. Cornell University, 1964.

Gutteridge, John. "The Sources, Development and Influence of Coleridge's Conversation Poems 1793-8." Diss. Oxford University, 1975.

Hunt, Bishop C. Hunt, Jr. "Wordsworth's Marginalia in Dove Cottage to 1800: A Study of his Relationship to Charlotte Smith and Milton." Diss. Oxford University, 1965.

Jaye, Michael C. The Growth of a Poem: The Early Manuscripts of William Wordsworth's "The Prelude." Diss. New York University, 1969. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1978.

Jordanova, L.J. "Nature, Natural Law and the Idéologue Programme for Social Reform." Unpublished paper read to the Department of History and Philosophy of Science, University of Cambridge, 7.10.1976.

Staum, M. Cabanis and the Science of Man. Diss. Johns Hopkins, 1971. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1975.

II. Primary Sources.

Akenside, Mark. The Pleasures of Imagination. A Poem. In Three Books. London, 1744. Rev. ed. [with fragment of 4th Book] 1772.

Alexander, H.G. ed. The Leibniz-Clarke Correspondence. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1956.

Anderson, Robert. A Complete Edition of the Poets of Great Britain. 13 vols. London, 1792-95.

Arnold, Matthew. Poems. A New Edition. London, 1853.

Bailey, Nathan. A New Universal Etymological English Dictionary. Rev. Joseph Nicol Scott. London, 1764 ed.

Barclay, John. An Inquiry into the Opinions, Ancient and Modern, Concerning Life and Organization. Edinburgh, 1822.

Bartram, William. Travels Through North and South Carolina. 2nd ed. London, 1794.

Baxter, Andrew. An Enquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul; Wherein the Immateriality of the Soul is Evinc'd from the Principles of Reason and Philosophy. 3rd ed. 2 vols. London, 1745.

Beattie, James. The Minstrel. Book I. London, 1771. Book II. London, 1774.

Beddoes, Thomas. Observations on the Nature of Demonstrative Evidence; with an Explanation of Certain Difficulties Occurring in the Elements of Geometry: and Reflections on Language. London, 1793.

----- ed. Contributions to Physical and Medical Knowledge, Principally from the West of England. Bristol, 1799.

----- [Review of Saumarez, Dissertation on the Universe in General] Monthly Review, 18 (1795), 335.

----- [Article on Kant] The Monthly Magazine and British Register, I (1796), 265-67.

----- John Brown's Biographie, nebst einer Prüfung seines Systems von T. Beddoes und einer Erklärung der Brownischen Grundsätze von T. Christie. Aus dem Englischen. Ein Anhang zu Brown's System der Heilkunde. [Trans. P. Scheel] Kopenhagen, 1797.

Berkeley, George. The Works of George Berkeley, D. D. Late Bishop of Cloyne in Ireland. To which is Added an Account of his Life, and Several of his Letters To Thomas Prior, Esq. Dean Gervais, and Mr. Pope, &c. &c. [Ed. J. Stock.] 2 vols. London, 1784.

Blair, Hugh. A Critical Discussion of the Poems of Ossian. London, 1763.

----- Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Letters. 2 vols. London, 1783.

Blumenbach, J.F. Institutiones Physiologicae. Göttingen, 1777. Trans. J. Elliotson, The Institutions of Physiology. London, 1815.

----- An Essay on Generation. Trans. A. Crichton. London, 1792.

----- A Short System of Comparative Anatomy. Trans. William Lawrence. London, 1807.

----- A Manual of the Elements of Natural History. Trans. R.T. Gore. London, 1825.

- Boehme, Jacob. The Works of Jacob Behmen the Teutonic Theosopher. To which is Prefixed the Life of the Author. With figures, illustrating his Principles, left by the Reverend William Law, /Ed. G. Ward and T. Langcake./ 4 vols. London, 1764-81.
- Boyle, Robert. The Works of the Honourable Robert Boyle. To which is prefixed the Life of the Author. A New Edition. /Ed. Thomas Birch./ 6 vols. London, 1772.
- Brown, John. The Elements of Medicine. Translated from the Latin, with Comments and Illustrations, by the Author. A New Edition, revised and corrected. With a Biographical Preface, by Thomas Beddoes, M.D. and a Head of the Author. 2 vols. London, 1795.
- Burke, Edmund. The Works of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke. 3 vols. London, 1792.
- Burnet, Thomas. The Theory of the Earth. 2 vols. London, 1684, 1690.
- Cabanis, P.J.G. Sketch of the Revolutions of Medical Science, and Views relating to its Reform. Trans. A. Henderson. London, 1806.
- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. Poems on Various Subjects. Bristol, 1796.
- Poems by S.T. Coleridge, Second Edition, to which are now added Poems by Charles Lamb and Charles Lloyd. Bristol, 1797.
- Fears in Solitude, Written in 1798, During the alarm of an invasion, to which are added, France, an Ode; and Frost at Midnight. London, 1798.
- Biographia Literaria; or Biographical Sketches of My Literary Life and Opinions. 2 vols. London, 1817.
- Biographia Literaria, by S.T. Coleridge. With his Aesthetical Essays. Ed. J. Shawcross. 2 vols. London: Oxford University Press, 1907.

- Biographia Literaria, or Biographical Sketches of My Literary Life and Opinions. Ed. George Watson. London: Dent, 1956. Rev. 1965.

- Aids to Reflection in The Formation of a Manly Character on the Several Grounds of Prudence, Morality and Religion. London, 1825.

- Specimens of the Table Talk of the late Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Ed. H.N. Coleridge. 2 vols. London, 1835.

- "Monologues by the late Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Esq. No. I. Life." Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country, 12 (1835), 493-96.

- Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit. Ed. H.N. Coleridge. London, 1840.

- Hints Towards a More Comprehensive Theory of Life. Ed. Seth B. Watson. London, 1848.

- Anima Poetae. From the Unpublished Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Ed. E.H. Coleridge. London, 1895.

- The Complete Poetical Works of S.T. Coleridge. Ed. E.H. Coleridge. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912.

- Coleridge's Shakespearian Criticism. Ed. T.M. Raysor. 2 vols. London: Constable, 1930.

- S.T. Coleridge's Treatise on Method as published in The Encyclopaedia Metropolitana. Ed. Alice D. Snyder. London: Constable, 1934.

- Coleridge's Miscellaneous Criticism. Ed. T.M. Raysor. London: Constable: 1936.

- The Philosophical Lectures, Hitherto Unpublished. Ed. Kathleen Coburn. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1949.

- Inquiring Sprit: A New Presentation of Coleridge from his Published and Unpublished Writings. Ed. Kathleen Coburn. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1951.
- Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Ed. Earl Leslie Griggs. 6 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956-71.
- The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Ed. Kathleen Coburn. 3 vols. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957--
- "Coleridge's Vindication of Spinoza: An Unpublished Note." Ed. Lore Metzger. JHI, 21 (1960), 279-93.
- Poems. Ed. John Beer. London: Dent, 1963.
- The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. 1969-
1. Lectures 1795: On Politics and Religion. Ed. Lewis Patton and Peter Mann. 1971.
 2. The Watchman. Ed. Lewis Patton. 1970.
 3. Essays on His Times. 3 vols. Ed. David V. Eriksen. 1978.
 4. The Friend. Ed. Barbara E. Rooke. 2 vols. 1969.
 6. Lay Sermons. Ed. R.J. White. 1972.
 10. On the Constitution of the Church and State. Ed. John Colmer. 1976.

Cooper, Anthony Ashley, Third Earl of Shaftesbury.
Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times.
 3 vols. London, 1711.

Cowper, William. Poems. 2 vols. London, 1782-85.

----- Poetical Works. Ed. H.S. Milford. 4th ed. rev. Norma Russell. London: Oxford University Press, 1934.

Crowe, William. Lewesdon Hill. Oxford, 1788.

Cudworth, Ralph. The True Intellectual System of the Universe: Wherein All the Reason and Philosophy of Atheism is Confuted, and Its Impossibility Demonstrated. With a discourse concerning the true notion of the Lord's supper; and Two Sermons,

on I John II. 3, 4. and I Cor. XV, 57. The Second Edition; in which are now first added References to the Several Quotations in the Intellectual System; and an Account of the Life and Writings of the Author: By Thomas Birch. 2 vols. London, 1743.

Darwin, Erasmus. The Botanic Garden, Part II. Containing The Loves of the Plants, a Poem. With Philosophical Notes. Lichfield, 1789.

----- The Botanic Garden, Part I. Containing The Economy of Vegetation. A Poem. With Philosophical Notes. London, 1791.

----- Zoonomia; or, The Laws of Organic Life. 2 vols. London, 1794-96.

----- A Plan For the Conduct of Female Education, in Boarding Schools. Derby, 1797.

Davy, Sir Humphry. Researches, Chemical and Philosophical; Chiefly Concerning Nitrous Oxide, or Dephlogisticated Air, and its Respiration. London, 1800.

----- The Collected Works of Sir Humphry Davy. Ed. John Davy. 9 vols. London, 1839-40.

----- Fragmentary Remains, Literary and Scientific. With a Sketch of his Life, and Selections from his Correspondence. Ed. John Davy. London, 1858.

Day, Thomas. The History of Sandford and Merton, A Work Intended for Children. 3 vols. 1783-89.

De Quincey, Thomas. "Lake Reminiscences, from 1807 to 1830, by the English Opium-Eater." Tait's Edinburgh Magazine, 6, January -- December 1839, 1-12, 90-103, 246-54, 453-64, 513-17, 569-81, 804-08.

----- "Suspiria de Profundis: Being a Sequel to the Confessions of an English Opium-Eater." Blackwoods Edinburgh Magazine. Part 1: 57 (1845), 269-85, 489-502, 739-51. Part 2: 58 (1845), 43-55.

----- The Collected Writings. Ed. David Masson.
14 vols. Edinburgh, 1889-90.

Descartes, René. The Philosophical Works. Trans.
Elizabeth S. Haldane and G.R.T. Ross. 2 vols.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911.

Dyer, George. Poems. London, 1792.

Edgeworth, Maria. Practical Education; by Maria Edgeworth,
Author of Letters for Literary Ladies, and The
Parent's Assistant; and by Richard Lovell
Edgeworth. 2 vols. London, 1798.

----- Lessons for Children. 6 vols. London 1801-09.

Eliot, George. Middlemarch. A Study of Provincial Life.
3 vols. Illustrated Copyright Edition. London:
Virtue, 1908.

Enfield, William. The History of Philosophy. 2 vols.
London, 1791.

Fawcett, Joseph. Sermons, Delivered at the Sunday-Evening
Lecture, for the Winter Season, at the Old Jewry.
2 vols. London, 1795.

Ferriar, John. "Observations Concerning the Vital Principle."
Memoirs of the Literary and Philosophical Society
of Manchester, 3 (1790), 216-41.

----- Medical Histories and Reflections. 3 vols.
Warrington, 1792-98.

----- "An Argument against the Doctrine of Materialism,
addressed to Thomas Cooper, Esq." Memoirs of the
Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester,
4 (1793), 20-44.

Fink, Z.S., ed. The Early Wordsworthian Milieu: A Notebook
of Christopher Wordsworth with a few entries by
William Wordsworth. Oxford: Clarendon Press,
1958.

Gerard, Alexander. An Essay on Genius. London, 1774.

Godwin, William. Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and Its Influence on Morals and Happiness. 2 vols. London, 1793.

----- Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and its Influence on Morals and Happiness. 2nd ed. 2 vols. London, 1796.

----- Things as They are; or, The Adventures of Caleb Williams. 3 vols. London, 1794.

----- Caleb Williams. Ed. David McCracken. London: Oxford University Press, 1970.

----- The Inquirer. Reflections on Education, Manners, and Literature. In a Series of Essays. London, 1797.

Green, Joseph Henry. Spiritual Philosophy; founded on the teaching of the late Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Ed. J. Simon. 2 vols. London, 1865.

Gregory, James. Philosophical and Literary Essays. 2 vols. Edinburgh, 1792.

----- "On Power." Ed. Philip P. Wiener. JHI, 24 (1963), 241-68.

Hardy, Thomas. Jude the Obscure. Wessex Edition. London: Macmillan, 1912.

Hartley, David. Observations on Man, His Frame, His Duty, and His Expectations. With Notes and Additions to Dr. Hartley's Observations on Man; by Herman Andrew Pistorius. Translated from the German Original [1772]: To which is Prefixed, a Sketch of the Life and Character of Dr. Hartley. 3 vols. London, 1791.

Haydon, Benjamin Robert. Correspondence and Table-Talk. With a Memoir by F.W. Haydon. 2 vols. London, 1876.

Hazlitt, William. The Complete Works of William Hazlitt.
Ed. P.P. Howe. 21 vols. London: Dent, 1930-34.

Hobbes, Thomas. Leviathan, or The Matter, Forme and Power
of a Common-wealth Ecclesiasticall and Civil.
London, 1651.

Hume, David. A Treatise of Human Nature. Ed. L.A. Selby-
Bigge. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1888. 2nd ed.
rev. P.H. Nidditch, 1978.

Hunter, John. A Treatise on the Blood, Inflammation, and
Gun-Shot Wounds. To Which is Prefixed a Short
Account of the Author's Life, by his Brother-in-
Law, Everard Home. London, 1794.

----- Essays and Observations on Natural History, Anatomy,
Physiology, Psychology, and Geology. 2 vols.
London, 1861.

Hurd, Richard. Letters on Chivalry and Romance. London,
1762.

Hutton, James. An Investigation of the Principles of
Knowledge, and of the Progress of Reason, from
Sense to Science and Philosophy. 3 vols.
Edinburgh, 1794.

----- Theory of the Earth, with Proofs and Illustrations.
2 vols. Edinburgh, 1795.

Jeffrey, Francis. [Review of The Excursion.] The
Edinburgh Review, 24 (1814), 1-30.

Johnson, Samuel. A Dictionary of the English Language.
London, 1755.

Kant, Immanuel. Prolegomena, and Metaphysical Foundations
of Natural Science. Trans. E.B. Bax. London,
1883.

----- The Critique of Judgement. Trans. James Creed
Meredith. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1928.
1 vol., 1952.

- Critique of Pure Reason. Trans. Norman Kemp Smith. London: Macmillan, 1929.
- Kinglake, Robert. "On the Nature and Properties of Vital Power." The Medical and Physical Journal, 2 (1799), 127-31.
- Lamb, Charles, and Lamb, Mary. The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb. Ed. E.V. Lucas. 7 vols. London: Methuen, 1903-05.
- The Letters of Charles and Mary Lamb. Ed. E.V. Lucas. 3 vols. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1935.
- Lamb as Critic. Ed. Roy Park. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980.
- le Grand, Anthony. An Entire Body of Philosophy, according to the Principles of the famous Renate Des Cartes, in Three Books. Written Originally in Latin by the Learned Anthony le Grand. Now carefully Translated from the last Corrections, Alterations, and large Additions of the Author, never yet Published. By Richard Blome. London, 1694.
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm. Leibniz: Philosophical Writings. Ed. G.H.R. Parkinson. Trans. Mary Morris and G.H.R. Parkinson. London: Dent, 1973.
- Locke, John. The Educational Writings of John Locke. Ed. James L. Axtell. London: Cambridge University Press, 1968.
- An Essay Concerning Human Understanding. Ed. Peter H. Nidditch. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975.
- Lowth, Robert. Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews. Trans. G. Gregory. 2 vols. London, 1787.
- Mackenzie, Henry. The Man of Feeling. Ed. Brian Vickers. London: Oxford University Press, 1967.
- Martin, Benjamin. Philosophia Britannica: or A New and Comprehensive System of the Newtonian Philosophy, Astronomy and Geography. 2 vols. Reading, 1747.

- Lingua Britannica Reformata: or, A New English Dictionary. London, 1749 ed.
- Merry, Robert. The Pains of Memory. London, 1796.
- Milton, John. Complete Prose Works, Ed. D. Bush et al.
7 vols. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953-74.
- The Poems of John Milton. Eds. John Carey and
Alastair Fowler. London: Longmans, 1968.
- Monro, Alexander. Observations on the Structure and
Function of the Nervous System. Illustrated
with Tables. Edinburgh, 1783.
- More, Henry. Philosophical Writings of Henry More. Ed.
Flora Isabel Mackinnon. New York: Oxford
University Press, 1925.
- Newton, Sir Isaac. Opticks: or, A Treatise of the Reflections,
Refractions, Inflections and Colours of Light.
4th ed., Corrected. London, 1730.
- Opera: quae exstant omnia. Commentariis
Illustrabat, Samuel Horsley. 5 Vols. London,
1779-85.
- Sir Isaac Newton's Mathematical Principles of
Natural Philosophy and His System of the World.
Trans. Andrew Motte (1729). Ed. Florian Cajori.
Berkeley: University of California Press, 1934.
- The Correspondence of Isaac Newton. Ed. H.W.
Turnbull et al. 7 vols. Cambridge: Published
for the Royal Society, 1959-77.
- Isaac Newton's Papers & Letters on Natural
Philosophy and related documents. Eds. I
Bernard Cohen and Robert E. Schofield. Cambridge,
Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978.
- Nitsch, F.A. A General and Introductory View of Professor
Kant's Principles concerning Man, the World and
the Deity, Submitted to the Consideration of the
Learned. London, 1796.

Ossian. The Poems of Ossian. Trans. J. Macpherson. 2 vols. London, 1773.

Paine, Thomas. Rights of Man: Being an Answer to Mr. Burke's Attack on the French Revolution. 2 vols. London, 1791, 1792.

Priestley, Joseph. A Course of Lectures on the Theory of Language, and Universal Grammar. Warrington, 1762.

----- Institutes of Natural and Revealed Religion. To which is Prefixed, an Essay on the best Method of Communicating Religious Knowledge to the Members of Christian Societies. 3 vols. 2nd ed. Birmingham, 1782.

----- Disquisitions Relating to Matter and Spirit. To which is added The History of the Philosophical Doctrine concerning the Origin of the Soul, and of the Nature of Matter; with its Influence on Christianity, especially with respect to the Doctrine of the Pre-existence of Christ. 2nd ed., improved and enlarged. 2 vols. Birmingham, 1782.

----- An Examination of Dr Reid's "Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense," Dr. Beattie's "Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth," and Dr Oswald's "Appeal to Common Sense in Behalf of Religion." 2nd ed. London, 1775.

----- Hartley's Theory of the Human Mind, On the Principle of the Association of Ideas; with Essays Relating to the Subject of it. London, 1775.

----- A Course of Lectures on Oratory and Criticism. London, 1777.

----- A Free Discussion of the Doctrines of Materialism, and Philosophical Necessity, in a Correspondence between Dr. Price, and Dr. Priestley. London, 1778.

----- A Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Palmer, in Defence of the Illustrations of Philosophical Necessity. Bath, 1779.

----- Letters to a Philosophical Unbeliever. London, 1780.

- An Appeal to the Public, on the Subject of the Riots in Birmingham. To which are added, Strictures on a Pamphlet, intituled, 'Thoughts on the late Riot at Birmingham.' Birmingham, 1791.
- The Present State of Europe Compared with Antient Prophecies; A sermon, Preached at the Gravel Pit Meeting in Hackney, Feb. 28, 1794, Being the Day appointed for a General Fast. London, 1794.
- Memoirs of Dr. Joseph Priestley, to the year 1795, Written by Himself: with a continuation, to the Time of his Decease, by his son, Joseph Priestley. London, 1806.
- A Scientific Autobiography of Joseph Priestley (1733-1804). Selected Scientific Correspondence. Ed. Robert E. Schofield. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1966.
- Prichard, James Cowles. A Review of the Doctrine of the Vital Principle as Maintained by some Writers on Physiology. With Observations on the Causes of Physical and Animal Life. London, 1829.
- Reid, Thomas. An Inquiry into the Human Mind, on the Principles of Common Sense. Edinburgh, 1764.
- Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man. Edinburgh, 1785.
- Essays on the Active Powers of Man. Edinburgh 1788.
- Rennell, Thomas. Remarks on Scepticism, Especially as it is Concerned with the Subjects of Organization and Life. Being an Answer to the Views of M. Bichat, Sir T.C. Morgan, and Mr. Lawrence, upon these Points. London, 1819.
- Robinson, Henry Crabb, Diary, Reminiscences, and Correspondence. Ed. Thomas Sadler. 3 vols. London, 1869.
- The Correspondence of Henry Crabb Robinson with the Wordsworth Circle. Ed. Edith J. Morley. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927.

- Henry Crabb Robinson on Books and their Writers.
Ed. Edith J. Morley. 3 vols. London: Dent, 1938.
- Rogers, Samuel. The Pleasures of Memory. London, 1792.
- Rousseau, Jean Jacques. Emilius; or, An Essay on Education.
Translated from the French by Mr. Nugent. 2 vols.
London, 1763.
- Discours sur l'origine et les fondemens de l'inég-
alité parmi les hommes. London /i.e. Paris/, 1782.
- The Confessions of J.J. Rousseau: with the Reveries
of the Solitary Walker. Translated from the French
2 vols. London, 1783.
- "Essay on the Origin of Languages." Jean Jacques
Rousseau, 'Essay on the Origin of Languages,'
Johann Gottfried Herder, 'Essay on the Origin of
Language.' Trans. John H. Moran and Alexander
Gode. New York: Ungar, 1966.
- Russel. An Essay on the Nature and Existence of a Material
World. London, 1781.
- Saumarez, Richard. A Dissertation on the Universe in
General, and on the Procession of the Elements
in particular. London, 1795.
- "On Generation and the Principle of Life." The
Medical and Physical Journal, 2 (1799), 242-47,
321-26.
- Schiller, Friedrich von. Naive and Sentimental Poetry and
On the Sublime, Two Essays. Trans. Julius A. Elias.
New York: Ungar, 1966.
- Schlegel, A.W. A Course of Lectures on Dramatic Art and
Literature. Trans. John Black. 2 vols. London,
1815.
- Schlegel, Friedrich. Dialogue on Poetry and Literary
Aphorisms. Trans. Ernst Behler and Roman Struc.
University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State
University Press, 1968.

Shakespeare, William. Complete Works. Ed. Peter Alexander.
London: Collins, 1951.

----- Shakespeare's Sonnets. Ed. W.G. Ingram, and
Theodore Redpath. London: University of London
Press, 1964.

Smith, Adam. The Theory of Moral Sentiments. 4th ed.
London, 1774.

----- An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth
of Nations. 2 vols. London, 1776.

Southey, Robert, Joan of Arc, An Epic Poem. Bristol, 1796.

----- ed. The Annual Anthology. Volume I.
Bristol, 1799.

----- ed. The Annual Anthology. Volume II.
Bristol, 1800.

----- The Poetical Works, Collected by Himself. 10 vols.
London, 1837.

Spallanzani, Abbé. Dissertations Relative to the Natural
History of Animals and Vegetables. Trans. Thomas
Beddoes. 2 vols. London, 1784.

Spinoza, Benedict de. Works. Trans. R.H.M. Elwes. 2 vols.
New York: Dover Publications, 1955.

Stahl, Georg Ernst. Theoria medica vera. Physiologiam &
Pathologiam, tanquam doctrinae medicae partes vere
contemplativas, e Naturae & Artis veris fundamentis,
Intaminata ratione, & inconcussa Experientia sistens.
Halle, 1708.

Taylor, Thomas. The Mystical Initiations; or, Hymns of
Orpheus. London, 1787.

----- An Essay on the Beautiful. From the Greek of
Plotinus. London, 1792.

- The Philosophical and Mathematical Commentaries of Proclus, on the first book of Euclid's Elements. To which are added a history of the Restoration of Platonic Theology by the latter Platonists: and a Translation from the Greek of Proclus's Theological Elements. 2 vols. London, 1792.
- The Cratylus, Phaedo, Parmenides and Timaeus of Plato. London, 1793.
- Thelwall, John. An Essay, Towards a Definition of Animal Vitality, read at the Theatre, Guy's Hospital, January 26, 1793; in which several of the Opinions of the Celebrated John Hunter are examined and controverted. London, 1793.
- The Peripatetic; or, Sketches of the Heart, of Nature and Society; in a Series of Politico-Sentimental Journals, in verse and prose, of the Eccentric Excursions of Sylvanus Theophrastus; Supposed to be Written by Himself. London, 1793.
- Poems Written in Close Confinement in the Tower and Newgate, under a charge of High Treason. London, 1795.
- Poems Chiefly Written in Retirement. 2nd ed. Hereford, 1801.
- Thomson, James. The Castle of Indolence; An Allegorical Poem. London, 1748.
- Poetical Works. Ed. J. Logie Robertson. London: Oxford University Press, 1908.
- Ticknor, George. Life, Letters, and Journals of George Ticknor. [Ed. G.S. Hallard.] 2 vols. London, 1876.
- Tooke, J. Horne. ETIPA TITEPOENTA, or, The Diversions of Purley. 2nd ed. London, 1798.
- Tucker, Abraham. [Edward Search, pseud.] Nature Pursued. 3 vols. [in 6] The Light of London, 1768-77.

Volney, M. The Ruins: or A Survey of the Revolutions of Empires. Translated from the French. 3rd ed. London, 1796.

Willich, Anthony Florian Madinger. Elements of the Critical Philosophy: Containing a Concise Account of its Origin and Tendency; a View of all the Works Published by its Founder, I. Kant, and a glossary for the explanation of terms and phrases. London, 1798.

Wordsworth, Dorothy. Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth. Ed. Ernest de Selincourt. 2 vols. London: Macmillan, 1941.

----- Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth. The Alfoxden Journal 1798, The Grasmere Journals 1800-1803. Ed. Mary Moorman. London: Oxford University Press, 1971.

Wordsworth, William. An Evening Walk. An Epistle; In Verse. Addressed to a Young Lady, from the Lakes Of the North of England. London, 1793.

----- Descriptive Sketches. In Verse. Taken During a Pedestrian Tour in the Italian, Grison, Swiss, and Savoyard Alps. London, 1793.

[Wordsworth, William and Coleridge, Samuel Taylor.] Lyrical Ballads, with a Few Other Poems. London. 1798.

----- Lyrical Ballads, with Other Poems. 2nd ed. 2 vols. London, 1800.

----- Lyrical Ballads, with Pastoral and other Poems. 3rd ed. 2 vols. London, 1802.

----- Lyrical Ballads, with Pastoral and other Poems. 4th ed. 2 vols. London, 1805.

----- Lyrical Ballads. The Text of the 1798 edition with the additional 1800 Poems and the Prefaces. Ed. R.L. Brett and A.R. Jones. London: Methuen, 1963, rev. 1965.

Wordsworth, William. Poems, in Two Volumes. 2 vols. London, 1807.

----- Poems in Two Volumes, 1807. Ed. Helen Darbishire. 2nd ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952.

- The Excursion, Being a Portion of The Recluse, A Poem. London, 1814.

- Poems by William Wordsworth: Including Lyrical Ballads, and the Miscellaneous Pieces of the Author. With additional Poems, A New Preface, and a Supplementary Essay. 2 vols. London, 1815.

- The White Doe of Rylestone; or The Fate of the Nortons. A Poem. London, 1815.

- The Prelude, or Growth of a Poet's Mind; An Autobiographical Poem. London, 1850.

- The Prelude, or Growth of a Poet's Mind; An Autobiographical Poem. 2nd ed. London, 1851.

- The Prelude, or Growth of a Poet's Mind. Ed. Ernest de Selincourt, 2nd ed. rev. Helen Darbishire. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959.

- The Prelude, or Growth of a Poet's Mind (Text of 1805). Ed. Ernest de Selincourt. Rev. Stephen Gill. London: Oxford University Press, 1970.

- The Prelude: A Parallel Text. Ed. J.C. Maxwell. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971.

- The Prelude: 1799, 1805, 1850. Eds. Jonathan Wordsworth, M.H. Abrams, Stephen Gill. New York: Norton, 1979.

- The Prose Works of William Wordsworth. Ed. A.B. Grosart. 3 vols. London, 1876.

- Poems of Wordsworth. Ed. Matthew Arnold. London, 1879.

- The Complete Poetical Works. With an Introduction by John Morley. London, 1888.

- and Wordsworth, Dorothy. The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, 1821-1850. Ed. Ernest de Selincourt. 3 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939.

----- The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth.
Ed. Ernest de Selincourt. 2nd ed. Oxford:
Clarendon Press.

1. The Early Years 1787-1805. rev. Chester L.
Shaver, 1967.

2. The Middle Years. Part 1: 1806-1811. rev.
Mary Moorman, 1969.

The Middle Years. Part 2: 1812-1820. rev.
Mary Moorman and Alan G. Hill, 1970.

3. The Later Years, Part 1: 1821-1828. rev.
Alan G. Hill, 1978.

The Later Years. Part 2: 1829-1834. rev.
Alan G. Hill. 1979.

Wordsworth, William. The Poetical Works of William
Wordsworth. Eds. Ernest de Selincourt and Helen
Darbishire. 5 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press,
1940-49. Vol. II. 2nd ed. 1952; Vol. III, 2nd
ed. 1954.

----- The Prose Works of William Wordsworth. Eds.
W.J.B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser. 3 vols.
Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974.

----- The Cornell Wordsworth. Hassocks: Harvester, 1975-

1. The Salisbury Plain Poems. Ed. Stephen Gill.
1975.

2. The Prelude, 1798-1799. Ed. Stephen Parrish.
1977.

3. Home at Grasmere. Ed. Beth Darlington. 1977.

4. The Ruined Cottage and The Pedlar. Ed.
James Butler. 1979.

----- The Poems. Ed. John O. Hayden. 2 vols. Harmondsworth:
Penguin Books, 1977.

Young, Edward. The Complaint; or, Night-Thoughts, on Life,
Death, and Immortality. 9 Parts. London, 1742-45.

----- Conjectures on Original Composition. In a Letter
to the Author of Sir Charles Grandison. London,
1759.

Appendix. Reviews of The Prelude.

- i. Ainsworth's Magazine. 18 (1850), 558-59.
- ii. Athenaeum. No. 1188 (1850), pp. 805-07.
- iii. British Quarterly Review. 12 (1850), 549-79
- iv. The Christian Remembrancer. NS 20 (1850), 332-73
- v. The Critic: The London Literary Journal.
NS 9 (1850), 402-04.
- vi. Dublin University Magazine. 36 (1850), 329-37.
- vii. The Eclectic Review. 4th ser., 28 (1850), 550-62.
- viii. The Examiner. No. 2217 (1850), 478-79.
- ix. Fraser's Magazine. 42 (1850), 119-32.
- x. The Gentleman's Magazine. NS 34 (1850), 459-68.
- xi. Graham's Magazine. 37 (1850), 322-23.
- xii. The Knickerbocker, or New York Monthly Magazine.
36 (1850), 373.
- xiii. The Literary Gazette. No. 1750 (1850), 513-15.
- xiv. The North American Review. 73 (1851), 473-95.
- xv. The Prospective Review. 7 (1851), 94-131.
- xvi. Sharpe's London Journal. 12 (1850), 185-92.
- xvii. The Southern Literary Messenger. 16 (1850) 635-37
- xviii. The Spectator. 23 (1850), 738-39.
- xix. Tait's Edinburgh Magazine. NS 17 (1850), 521-27.
- xx. The Westminster and Foreign Quarterly Review.
54 (1850), 271-77.

II. Bibliographies.

- Bauer, N.S. William Wordsworth: A Reference Guide to British Criticism, 1793-1899. Boston: Hall, 1978.
- Elkins, A.C., and Forstner, L.J. The Romantic Movement Bibliography 1936-1970. 7 vols. Ann Arbor: Pierian Press, 1973.
- Haney, John Louis. A Bibliography of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Philadelphia: Privately Printed, 1903.
- Haven, Richard and Josephine, and Adams, Maurianne. Samuel Taylor Coleridge. An Annotated Bibliography of Criticism and Scholarship. Vol.I. 1793-1899. Boston: Hall, 1976.
- Healey, George Harris. The Cornell Wordsworth Collection. A Catalogue of the Books and Manuscripts Presented to the University by Mr Victor Emanuel. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1957.

- Henley, Elton F., and Stam, David H. Wordsworthian Criticism 1945-1964. An Annotated Bibliography. New York: New York Public Library, 1960, rev. ed. 1965.
- Jordan, Frank, ed. The English Romantic Poets. A Review of Research and Criticism. 3rd. ed. New York: MLA, 1972.
- Logan, James Venable. Wordsworthian Criticism. A Guide and a Bibliography. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1947.
- Patton, Cornelius Howard. The Amherst Wordsworth Collection. A Descriptive Bibliography. Published by the Trustees of Amherst College, 1936.
- Stam, David H. Wordsworthian Criticism 1964-1973. An Annotated Bibliography, Including Additions to Wordsworthian Criticism 1945-1964. New York: New York Public Library, 1974.
- Caskey, Jefferson D., and Stapper, Melinda M. Samuel Taylor Coleridge: A Selective Bibliography of Criticism, 1935-1977. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1978.
- Wise, Thomas J. A Bibliography of the Writings in Prose and Verse of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. London: Bibliographical Society, 1913. Rpt. London: Dawsons, 1970.
- A Bibliography of the Writings in Prose and Verse of William Wordsworth. London: privately printed, 1916. Rpt. London: Dawsons, 1971.

III. Secondary Sources.

- Abrams, Meyer Howard. The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition. New York: Oxford University Press, 1953.
- ed. English Romantic Poets: Modern Essays in Criticism. New York: Oxford University Press, 1960. 2nd ed. 1975.

- "The Correspondent Breeze: A Romantic Metaphor." English Romantic Poets. Ed. M.H. Abrams. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1975. pp. 37-54.
- "Structure and Style in the Greater Romantic Lyric." From Sensibility to Romanticism: Essays Presented to Frederick A. Pottle. Ed. F.W. Hilles and H. Bloom. New York: Oxford University Press, 1965. pp. 527-60.
- "The Prelude as a Portrait of the Artist." Bicentenary Studies, ed. Jonathan Wordsworth. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970. pp. 180-237.
- Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature. New York: Norton, 1971.
- ed. Wordsworth: A Collection of Critical Essays. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1972.
- "Coleridge's 'A Light in Sound': Science, Metascience, and Poetic Imagination." Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, 116 (1972), 458-76.
- "Coleridge and the Romantic Vision of the World." Coleridge's Variety: Bicentenary Studies. Ed. John Beer. London: Macmillan, 1974. pp. 101-33.
- Allison, Henry E. "Locke's Theory of Personal Identity: A Re-Examination." JHI, 27 (1966), 41-58.
- Appleyard, J.A. Coleridge's Philosophy of Literature: The Development of a Concept of Poetry, 1791-1819. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965.
- "Coleridge and Criticism: I. Critical Theory." Writers and Their Background: S.T. Coleridge. Ed. R.L. Brett. London: Bell, 1971. pp. 123-46.
- Averill, James H. "Wordsworth and 'Natural Science': The Poetry of 1798." JEGP, 77 (1978), 232-46.
- Aubin, Robert Arnold. Topographical Poetry in XVIII-Century England. New York: MLA, 1936.

Bagehot, Walter. "Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning; or, Pure, Ornate, and Grotesque Art in English Poetry" (1864). English Critical Essays: Nineteenth-Century. Ed. E.D. Jones. London: Oxford University Press, 1916. pp. 430-91.

Barfield, Owen. What Coleridge Thought. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1971.

Bate, W.J. From Classic to Romantic. Premises of Taste in Eighteenth Century England. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1946.

----- Coleridge. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson. 1969.

----- The Burden of the Past and the English Poet. London: Chatto and Windus, 1971.

----- "Coleridge on the Function of Art." Perspectives in Criticism, Ed. Harry Levin. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1950. pp. 125-59.

Bateson, F.W. Wordsworth: A Re-interpretation. London: Longmans, 1954. 2nd ed. 1956.

Bayley, John. The Romantic Survival: A Study in Poetic Evolution. London: Constable, 1957.

Beach, Joseph Warren. The Concept of Nature in Nineteenth-Century English Poetry. New York: Macmillan, 1936.

Beatty, Arthur. William Wordsworth: His Doctrine and Art in Their Historical Relations. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1922.

Beer, John. Coleridge the Visionary. London: Chatto and Windus, 1959.

----- ed. Coleridge's Variety: Bicentenary Studies. London, Macmillan, 1974.

----- Coleridge's Poetic Intelligence. London: Macmillan, 1977.

- Wordsworth and the Human Heart. London: Macmillan, 1978.
- Wordsworth in Time. London: Faber and Faber, 1979.
- Benziger, James. "Organic Unity: Leibniz to Coleridge."
PMLA, 66 (1951), 24-48.
- Bernbaum, Ernest. "Is Wordsworth's Nature-Poetry Antiquated?"
ELH, 7 (1940), 333-40.
- Bishop, Jonathan. "Wordsworth and the 'Spots of Time.'"
ELH, 26 (1959), 45-65.
- Bloom, Harold. The Visionary Company: A Reading of English Romantic Poetry. London: Faber and Faber, 1962.
Rev. ed. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971.
- The Ringers in the Tower: Studies in Romantic Tradition. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1971.
- Figures of Capable Imagination. New York: Seabury Press, 1976.
- Boas, Marie. "The Establishment of the Mechanical Philosophy."
Osiris, 10 (1952), 412-51.
- Bostetter, Edward E. The Romantic Ventriloquists: Wordsworth Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, Byron. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1963.
- Boulton, James T. Arbitrary Power: An Eighteenth-Century Obsession. Inaugural Lecture, University of Nottingham, 1966.
- Bracken, Harry M. The Early Reception of Berkeley's Immaterialism 1710-1733. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1959, rev. ed. 1965.
- Bradley, A.C. Oxford Lectures on Poetry. London: Macmillan, 1909.
- Brantley, Richard E. Wordsworth's "Natural Methodism." New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975.

- Brett, R.L. ed. Writers and Their Background: S.T. Coleridge
London: Bell, 1971.
- Brisman, Leslie. Milton's Poetry of Choice and Its Romantic Heirs. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973.
- Brooks, Cleanth, Jr. "The Poem as Organism: Modern Critical Procedure." English Institute Annual, 1940. New York: Columbia University Press, 1941. pp. 20-41.
- Brown, Theodore M. "From Mechanism to Vitalism in Eighteenth-Century English Physiology." Journal of the History Of Biology, 7 (1974), 179-216.
- "Physiology and the Mechanical Philosophy in Mid-Seventeenth Century England." Bulletin of the History of Medicine, 51 (1977), 25-54.
- Buchdahl, Gerd. Metaphysics and the Philosophy of Science: The Classical Origins, Descartes to Kant. Oxford: Blackwell, 1969.
- Bullough, Geoffrey. Mirror of Minds: Changing Psychological Beliefs in English Poetry. London: University of London, Athlone Press, 1962.
- Burtt, E.A. The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Physical Science: A Historical and Critical Study. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1925.
- Bush, Clive. "Erasmus Darwin, Robert John Thornton, and Linnaeus' Sexual System." ECS, 7 (1974), 295-320.
- Bush, Douglas. Science and English Poetry. A Historical Sketch, 1590-1950. New York: Oxford University Press, 1950.
- Butterfield, Sir Herbert. The Whig Interpretation of History. London: Bell, 1931.
- Byatt, A.S. Wordsworth and Coleridge in their Time. London: Nelson, 1970.
- Cannon, Walter, F. "The Normative Role of Science in Early Victorian Thought." JHI, 25 (1964), 487-502.

- Cardwell, D.S.L. "Early Development of the Concepts of Power, Work, and Energy." British Journal for the History of Science, 3 (1967), 209-24.
- Cassirer, Ernst. The Philosophy of the Enlightenment. Trans. Fritz C.A. Koelln and James P. Pettegrove. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951.
- Cassirer, H.W. A Commentary on Kant's 'Critique of Judgment.' London: Methuen, 1938.
- Chard, Leslie F. Dissenting Republican: Wordsworth's Early Life and Thought in their Political Context. The Hague: Mouton, 1972.
- Christensen, Francis. "Intellectual Love: The Second Theme of The Prelude." PMLA, 80 (1965), 69-75.
- Christensen, Jerome C. Coleridge's Marginal Method in the Biographia Literaria." PMLA, 92 (1977), 928-40.
- "The Genius in the Biographia Literaria." SIR, 17 (1978), 215-31.
- Clarke, Colin C. Romantic Paradox: An Essay on the Poetry of Wordsworth. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962.
- Clough, Arthur Hugh. Poems and Prose Remains, with a Selection from his Letters, and a Memoir. Edited by his wife. 2 vols. London, 1869.
- Coburn, Kathleen, ed. Coleridge: A Collection of Critical Essays. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1967.
- "Coleridge: A Bridge Between Science and Poetry." Coleridge's Variety: Bicentenary Studies. Ed. John Beer. London, Macmillan, 1974. pp. 81-100.
- The Self Conscious Imagination: A Study of the Coleridge Notebooks in Celebration of the Bicentenary of his Birth 21 October 1772. London: Oxford University Press, 1974.

- Collingwood, R.G. The Idea of Nature. New York: Oxford University Press, 1945.
- Cornwell, John. Coleridge. Poet and Revolutionary 1772-1804. London: Allen Lane, 1973.
- Crawford, Walter B. ed. Reading Coleridge: Approaches and Applications. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979.
- Crocker, L.G. Nature and Culture: Ethical Thought in the French Enlightenment. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1963.
- Crofts, J. "Wordsworth and the Seventeenth Century." Warton Lecture on English Poetry. Proceedings of the British Academy, 26 (1940), 179-96.
- Coveney, Peter. The Image of Childhood. The Individual and Society: A Study of the Theme in English Literature. 2nd ed. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1967.
- Curtis, Jared R. Wordsworth's Experiments with Tradition. The Lyric Poems of 1802, with Texts of the Poems Based on Early Manuscripts. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971.
- Curtius, Ernst Robert. European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages. Trans. Willard R. Trask. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952.
- Danby, John F. The Simple Wordsworth. Studies in the Poems 1797-1807. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960.
- Darbishire, Helen. The Poet Wordsworth. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950.
- Davie, Donald. Articulate Energy: An Inquiry into the Syntax of English Poetry. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1955.
- Debus, Allen G. "Robert Fludd and the Use of Gilbert's De Magnete in the Weapon-Salve Controversy." Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences, 19 (1964), 389-417.

Deschamps, Paul. La Formation de la pensée de Coleridge (1772-1804). Paris: Didier, 1964.

de Selincourt, Ernest. The Early Wordsworth. Presidential Address to the English Association. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936.

Dewhurst, Kenneth, and Reeves, Nigel. Friedrich Schiller: Medicine, Psychology, and Literature, with the first English Edition of his Complete Medical and Psychological Writings. Oxford: Sandford, 1978.

Dobbs, B.J.T. The Foundations of Newton's Alchemy, or "The Hunting of the Greene Lyon". Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975.

Douglas, Wallace W. Wordsworth: The Construction of a Personality. Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1968.

Doyle, Francis Hastings. Lectures on Poetry, 2nd Series. London, 1877.

Dunklin, Gilbert T., ed. Wordsworth: Centenary Studies. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951.

Dunn, S.G. "Newton and Wordsworth." TLS, No. 1334, 25 August 1927, p.576.

----- "A Note on Wordsworth's Metaphysical System." E&S, 18 (1933), 74-109.

Durrant, Geoffrey. Wordsworth and the Great System: A Study of Wordsworth's Poetic Universe. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970.

Eliot, T.S. The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism. London: Faber and Faber, 1933.

Ellenberger, Henri. The Discovery of the Unconscious. London: Allen Lane, 1970.

Empson, William. The Structure of Complex Words. London: Chatto and Windus, 1964.

- Erdman, David E. "Coleridge, Wordsworth, and the Wedgwood Fund." BNYPL, 60 (1956), 425-43, 487-507.
- Esposito, Joseph L. Schelling's Idealism and Philosophy of Nature. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1977.
- Eucken, Rudolf. Main Currents of Modern Thought: A Study of the Spiritual and Intellectual Movements of the Present Day. Trans. Meyrick Booth. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1912.
- Everest, Kelvin. Coleridge's Secret Ministry: The Context of the Conversation Poems 1795-1798. Hassocks: The Harvester Press, 1979.
- Ferguson, Frances. Wordsworth: Language as Counter-Spirit. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979.
- Ferry, David. The Limits of Mortality: An Essay on Wordsworth's Major Poems. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1959.
- Figala, Karin. "Newton as Alchemist." History of Science, 15 (1977), 102-37.
- Figlio, Karl M. "Theories of Perception and the Physiology of Mind in the Late Eighteenth Century." History of Science, 13 (1975), 177-212.
- "The Metaphor of Organization: An Historiographical Perspective on the Bio-Medical Sciences of the Early Nineteenth Century." History of Science, 14 (1976), 17-53.
- Foakes, R.A. The Romantic Assertion. A Study in the Language of Nineteenth Century Poetry. London: Methuen, 1958.
- Fogle, Stephen F. "Organism." Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics. 1974 ed.
- Fogle, Richard Harter. The Idea of Coleridge's Criticism. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962.

- Fotheringham, James. Wordsworth's "Prelude" as a Study of Education. London, 1899.
- Foucault, Michel. The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences. Trans. anonymous. London: Tavistock, 1970.
- Fruman, Norman. Coleridge, the Damaged Archangel. New York: Braziller, 1971.
- Garfinkle, N. "Science and Religion in England, 1790-1800: The Critical Response to the Work of Erasmus Darwin." JHI, 16 (1955), 376-88.
- Gerard, A.S. "The Systolic Rhythm: The Structure of Coleridge's Conversation Poems." EC, 10 (1960), 307-19.
- Gill, Stephen C. "Wordsworth's Never Failing Principle of Joy." ELH, 34 (1967), 208-24.
- "'Adventures on Salisbury Plain' and Wordsworth's Poetry of Protest 1795-97." SIR, 11 (1972), 48-65.
- Gornall, R. Guest. "Samuel Taylor Coleridge and the Doctors." Medical History, 17 (1973), 327-42.
- Gower, B. "Speculation in Physics: The History and Practice of Naturphilosophie." Studies in the History and Philosophy of Science, 3 (1973), 301-56.
- Graves, R.P. The Life of William Rowan Hamilton. 2 vols. Dublin, 1882.
- Grob, Alan. "Wordsworth's 'Immortality Ode' and the Search for Identity." ELH, 32 (1965), 32-61.
- The Philosophic Mind: A Study of Wordsworth's Poetry and Thought 1797-1805. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1973.
- Hall, Thomas S. Ideas of Life and Matter: Studies in the History of General Physiology, 600 B.C.--A.D. 1900. 2 vols. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969.

- Harper, George Maclean. William Wordsworth, His Life, Work, and Influence. 2 vols. London: Murray, 1916.
3rd ed. 1 vol. 1929.
- "Coleridge's Conversation Poems." Quarterly Review, 244 (1925), 284-98.
- Harris, John. "Coleridge's Readings in Medicine." WC, 3 (1972), 85-95.
- Hartman, Geoffrey H. The Unmediated Vision: An Interpretation of Wordsworth, Hopkins, Rilke, and Valéry. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954.
- Wordsworth's Poetry, 1787-1814. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964.
- Wordsworth's Poetry, 1787-1814. Rpt. with "Retrospect, 1971." New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971.
- Beyond Formalism: Literary Essays 1958-1970. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970.
- The Fate of Reading and Other Essays. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975.
- Hartmann, Franz. The Life of Philippus Theophrastus, Bombast of Hohenheim, known by the Name of Paracelsus, and the Substance of his Teachings concerning Cosmology, Anthropology, Pneumatology, Magic and Sorcery, Medicine, Alchemy and Astrology, Philosophy and Theosophy. Extracted and Translated from his Rare and Extensive Works and from some unpublished manuscripts. London, 1887.
- Harvey, W.J., and Grivil, Richard. Wordsworth, "The Prelude": A Casebook. London: Macmillan, 1972.
- Haven, Richard. "Coleridge, Hartley, and the Mystics." JHI, 20 (1959), 477-94.
- Patterns of Consciousness: An Essay on Coleridge. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1969.
- "Coleridge on Milton: A Lost Lecture." WC, 3 (1972), 21-22.

- Havens, R.D. The Influence of Milton on English Poetry. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1922.
- The Mind of a Poet: A Study of Wordsworth's Thought with Particular Reference to "The Prelude." 2 vols. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1941.
- Hazard, Paul. European Thought in the Eighteenth Century: From Montesquieu to Lessing. Trans. J. Lewis May. London: Hollis and Carter, 1954.
- Heath, William. Wordsworth and Coleridge. A Study of their Literary Relations in 1801-1802. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970.
- Heffernan, James A.W. Wordsworth's Theory of Poetry: The Transforming Imagination. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969.
- Heimann, P.M. "Nature is a Perpetual Worker: Newton's Aether and Eighteenth Century Natural Philosophy." Ambix, 20 (1973), 1-25.
- "Voluntarism and Immanence: Conceptions of Nature in Eighteenth-Century Thought." JHI, 39 (1979), 271-83.
- and McGuire, J.E. "Newtonian Forces and Lockean Powers: Concepts of Matter in Eighteenth-Century Thought." Historical Studies in the Physical Sciences, 3 (1971), 233-306.
- Herford, C.H. Wordsworth. London: Routledge, 1930.
- Hertz, Neil. "Wordsworth and the Tears of Adam." SIR, 7 (1967), 15-33.
- Hill, J. Spencer, ed. Coleridge on Imagination. London: Macmillan, 1978.
- Hilles, F.W., and Bloom, Harold. From Sensibility to Romanticism: Essays Presented to Frederick A. Pottle. New York: Oxford University Press, 1965.
- Hirsch, E.D. Jr. Wordsworth and Schelling: A Typological Study of Romanticism. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960.

- Hobsbaum, E.J. The Age of Revolution. Europe 1789-1848.
London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1962.
- House, Humphry. Coleridge. The Clark Lectures 1951-52.
London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1953.
- Hutton, Richard Holt. Essays, Theological and Literary.
2 vols. London, 1871.
- Jackson, J.R. de J. Method and Imagination in Coleridge's Criticism. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969.
- Jacob, M.C. The Newtonians and the English Revolution 1689-1720. Hassocks: Harvester, 1976.
- James, D.G. "Wordsworth and Tennyson." Warton Lecture on English Poetry. Proceedings of the British Academy, 36 (1950), 113-29.
- Johnston, Kenneth. Review of Hartman, Wordsworth's Poetry, 1971. WC, 3 (1972), 149-59.
- Jones, John. The Egotistical Sublime: A History of Wordsworth's Imagination. London: Chatto and Windus, 1954.
- Jordanova, L.J. "Earth Science and Environmental Medicine: The Synthesis of the Late Enlightenment." Images of the Earth: Essays in the History of the Environmental Sciences. Eds. L.J. Jordanova and Roy Porter. Chalfont St. Giles: British Society for the History of Science, 1979. pp. 119-46.
- Kermode, Frank. Romantic Image. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957.
- King, Alec. Wordsworth and the Artist's Vision: An Essay in Interpretation. London: University of London, Athlone Press, 1966.
- Kishel, Joseph F. "The 'Analogy Passage' from Wordsworth's Five-Book Prelude." SIR, 18 (1979), 271-85.
- Knight, D.M. "The Physical Sciences and the Romantic Movement." History of Science, 9 (1970), 54-75.

- "Chemistry, Physiology, and Materialism in the Romantic Period." DUJ, 64 (1972), 139-45.
- "German Science in the Romantic Period." The Emergence of Science in Western Europe. Ed. Maurice Crosland. London: Macmillan, 1975. pp. 161-78.
- Knight, G.W. The Starlit Dome: Studies in the Poetry of Vision. London: Oxford University Press, 1941.
- Körner, S. Kant. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1955.
- Koyré, Alexandre. From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1957.
- Krieger, Murray. The New Apologists for Poetry. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956.
- Kroeber, Karl. Romantic Narrative Art. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1960.
- Kubrin, David. "Newton and the Cyclical Cosmos: Providence and the Mechanical Philosophy." JHI, 28 (1967), 325-46.
- Kuhn, Thomas S. The Structure of Scientific Revolutions. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962. 2nd ed. 1970.
- Land, Stephen K. "The Silent Poet: An Aspect of Wordsworth's Semantic Theory." UTQ, 42 (1973), 157-69.
- Langbaum, Robert. "Magnifying Wordsworth." ELH, 33 (1966), 271-78.
- The Modern Spirit: Essays on the Continuity of Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Literature. New York: Oxford University Press, 1970.
- Leavis, F.R. Revaluation: Tradition and Development in English Poetry. London: Chatto and Windus, 1936.

- Lefebvre, Georges. The French Revolution from its Origins to 1793. Trans. Elizabeth Moss Evanson. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962.
- The French Revolution from 1793 to 1799. Trans. John Hall Stewart and James Friguglietti. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964.
- Legouis, Emile. The Early Life of William Wordsworth. 1770-1798. Trans. J.W. Matthews. 3rd ed. London: Dent, 1932.
- Levere, T.H. Affinity and Matter: Elements of Chemical Philosophy 1800-1865. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971.
- "Dr. Thomas Beddoes and the Establishment of his Pneumatic Institution." Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London, 32 (1977), 41-49.
- "Coleridge, Chemistry, and the Philosophy of Nature." SIR, 16 (1977), 349-79.
- Leyburn, E.D. "Berkeleian Elements in Wordsworth's Thought." JEGP, 47 (1948), 14-28.
- Lindenberger, Herbert. On Wordsworth's "Prelude." Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963.
- "The Reception of The Prelude." BNYPL, 64 (1960), 196-208.
- "On Commentary, Romanticism, and Critical Method: Reflections on Three Recent Books." MLQ, 27 (1966), 216-20.
- Review of Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism. ELN, 10 (1972), 150-54.
- Locke, Don. A Fantasy of Reason: The Life and Thought of William Godwin. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980.
- Lovejoy, Arthur O. The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1936.

- Lowes, John Livingston. The Road to Xanadu: A Study in the Ways of the Imagination. London: Constable, 1927.
- Macaulay, T.B. The Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay. Ed. George Otto Trevelyan. 2 vols. London, 1876.
- Mandrou, Robert. From Humanism to Science 1480-1700. Trans. Brian Pearce. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1978.
- Marsh, Florence G. Wordsworth's Imagery: A Study in Poetic Vision. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952.
- Marsh, Robert. "The Second Part of Hartley's System." JHI, 20 (1959), 264-73.
- Martin, C.G. "Coleridge and Cudworth: A Source for "The Eolian Harp." N&Q, 211 (1966), 173-76.
- Mattern, R.M. "Locke on Active Power and the Obscure Idea of Active Power from Bodies." Studies in the History and Philosophy of Science, 11 (1980), 39-77.
- Mehlman, Jeffrey. Review of Onorato, The Character of the Poet. WC 4 (1973), 206-08.
- Meyer, G.W. Wordsworth's Formative Years. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Publications in Language and Literature, XX, 1943.
- Miller, Craig W. "Coleridge's Concept of Nature." JHI, 25 (1964), 77-96.
- Miller, J. Hillis. "The Literary Criticism of Georges Poulet." MLN 78 (1963), 471-88.
- "Geneva or Paris? The Recent Work of Georges Poulet." UTQ, 39 (1970), 212-28.
- Monk, S.H. The Sublime: A Study of Critical Theories in Eighteenth-Century England. New York: M.L.A., 1935.

- Moravia, Sergio. "From 'Homme Machine' to 'Homme Sensible': Changing Eighteenth-Century Models of Man's Image." JHI, 39 (1978), 45-60.
- Moorman, Mary. William Wordsworth: A Biography. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957, 1965.
- McConnell, Frank D. The Confessional Imagination: A Reading of Wordsworth's "Prelude." Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974.
- McEvoy, J.G., and McGuire, J.E. "God and Nature; Priestley's Way of Rational Dissent." Historical Studies in the Physical Sciences, 6 (1975), 325-404.
- McFarland, Thomas. Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969.
- MacGillivray, J.R. "The Three Forms of The Prelude, 1798-1805." Essays in English Literature from the Renaissance to the Victorian Age, presented to A.S.P. Woodhouse, 1964. Ed. Miller MacLure and F.W. Watt. Toronto: University of Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964. pp. 229-44.
- McGuire, J.E. "Force, Active Principles, and Newton's Invisible Realm." Ambix 15 (1968), 154-208.
- and Rattansi, P.M. "Newton and the 'Pipes of Pan.'" Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London, 21 (1966), 108-43.
- "Boyle's Conception of Nature." JHI, 33 (1972), 523-42.
- McKenzie, Gordon. Organic Unity in Coleridge. Berkeley: University of California Publications in English, vol. VII, 1939.
- McMaster, Graham, ed. William Wordsworth: A Critical Anthology. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972.
- McMullin, Ernan. Newton on Matter and Activity. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1978.

- McRae, Robert. "'Idea' as a Philosophical Term in the Seventeenth Century." JHI, 26 (1965), 175-90.
- Needham, Joseph. "S.T. Coleridge as a Philosophical Biologist." Science Progress, 20 (1926), 692-702.
- Neubauer, John. "Dr. John Brown (1735-88) and Early German Romanticism." JHI, 28 (1967), 367-82.
- Nicolson, Marjorie Hope. Newton Demands the Muse. Newton's "Opticks" and the Eighteenth Century Poets. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946.
- Science and Imagination. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1956.
- Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory: The Development of the Aesthetics of the Infinite. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1959.
- Oberg, Barbara Bowen. "David Hartley and the Association of Ideas." JHI, 37 (1976), 441-54.
- Onorato, Richard J. The Character of the Poet: Wordsworth in "The Prelude." Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971.
- Orsini, G.N.G. "Coleridge and Schlegel Reconsidered." CL, 16 (1964), 99-118.
- "The Organic Concepts in Aesthetics." CL, 21 (1969), 1-30.
- Coleridge and German Idealism: A Study in the History of Philosophy with Unpublished Materials from Coleridge's Manuscripts. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969.
- "The Ancient Roots of a Modern Idea." Organic Form: The Life of an Idea. Ed. G.S. Rousseau. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972. pp. 8-23.
- Owen, W.J.B. Wordsworth as Critic. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969.

- "The Sublime and the Beautiful in The Prelude." WC, 4 (1973), 67-86.
- Pagel, Walter. Paracelsus: An Introduction to Philosophical Medicine in the Era of the Renaissance. Basel:Karger 1958.
- "The Prime Matter of Paracelsus." Ambix, 9 (1961), 117-35.
- Parker, Reeve. Coleridge's Meditative Art. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975.
- Pascal, Roy. Design and Truth in Autobiography. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960.
- Passmore, J.A. Ralph Cudworth: An Interpretation. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951.
- Pater, Walter. Appreciations, with an Essay on Style. London, 1889.
- Patrides, C.A. ed. The Cambridge Platonists. London: Arnold, 1969.
- Paul, C. Kegan. William Godwin: His Friends and His Contemporaries. 2 vols. London, 1876.
- Peacock, Markham L. The Critical Opinions of William Wordsworth. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1950.
- Perkins, David. Wordsworth and the Poetry of Sincerity. Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press, 1964.
- Pike, Burton. "Time in Autobiography." CL, 28 (1976), 326-42.
- Piper, Herbert W. The Active Universe: Pantheism and the Concept of Imagination in the English Romantic Poets. London: University of London, Athlone Press, 1962.
- "'The Eolian Harp' Again." N&Q, 213 (1968), 23-25.

- Potts, Abbie Findlay. Wordsworth's "Prelude": A Study of Its Literary Form. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1953.
- The Elegaic Mode. Poetic Form In Wordsworth and Other Elegists. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967.
- Prickett, Stephen. Coleridge and Wordsworth: The Poetry of Growth. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970.
- Romanticism and Religion. The Tradition of Coleridge and Wordsworth in the Victorian Church. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976.
- Rader, Melvin. "Presiding Ideas in Wordsworth's Poetry." University of Washington Publications in Language and Literature, 8 (1931), 121-216. Rev. ed. Wordsworth: A Philosophical Approach. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967.
- Raleigh, Walter. Wordsworth. London: Arnold, 1903.
- Rattansi, P.M. "The Social Interpretation of Science in the Seventeenth Century." Science and Society 1600-1900. Ed. Peter Mathias. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972. pp. 1-32.
- Raysor, Thomas M. "The Themes of Immortality and Natural Piety in Wordsworth's Immortality Ode." PMLA, 64. (1954), 861-75.
- Rea, J.D. "Coleridge's Intimations of Immortality from Proclus." MP, 26 (1928), 201-13.
- Reed, Mark L. Wordsworth: The Chronology of the Early Years 1770-1799. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967.
- Wordsworth: The Chronology of the Middle Years 1800-1815. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975.
- Reiss, Timothy J., ed. "Science, Language, and the Perspective Mind: Studies in Literature and Thought from Campanella to Bayle." Yale French Studies, 49 (1973).

- Richards, I.A. Coleridge on Imagination. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1934.
- Ritterbush, Philip C. Overtures to Biology: The Speculations of Eighteenth-Century Naturalists. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964.
- "Organic Form: Aesthetics and Objectivity in the Study of Form in the Life Sciences." Organic Form: The Life of an Idea. Ed. G.S. Rousseau. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972. pp. 26-59.
- Rogers, G.A.J. "Locke's Essay and Newton's Principia." JHI, 39 (1978), 217-32.
- "Locke, Newton, and the Cambridge Platonists on Innate Ideas." JHI, 40 (1979), 191-205.
- Roper, Derek. Reviewing Before the "Edinburgh" 1788-1802. London: Methuen, 1978.
- Rousseau, G.S. "Science and the Discovery of the Imagination in Enlightened England." ECS, 3 (1969-70), 108-35.
- ed. Organic Form: The Life of an Idea. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972.
- Sailor, Danton B. "Cudworth and Descartes." JHI, 23 (1962), 133-40.
- Salvesen, Christopher. The Landscape of Memory: A Study of Wordsworth's Poetry. London: Arnold, 1965.
- Saveson, J.E. "Differing Reactions to Descartes Among the Cambridge Platonists." JHI, 21 (1960), 560-67.
- Schiller, Joseph. "Queries, Answers and Unsolved Problems in Eighteenth Century Biology." History of Science, 12 (1974), 184-99.
- Schneider, Ben. Wordsworth's Cambridge Education. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957.

Schofield, Robert. "Joseph Priestley, Natural Philosopher." Ambix, 14 (1967), 1-15.

----- Mechanism and Materialism: British Natural Philosophy in an Age of Reason. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970.

Scoggins, James. "The Preface to the Lyrical Ballads: A Revolution in Dispute." Studies in Criticism and Aesthetics, 1660-1800: Essays in Honor of Samuel Monk. Eds. Howard Anderson and John S. Shea. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1967. pp. 380-98.

Schrickx, W. "Coleridge and the Cambridge Platonists." Review of English Literature, 7 (1966), 71-91.

Shaffer, E.S. "Coleridge and Natural Philosophy: A Review of Recent Literary and Historical Research." History of Science, 12 (1974), 284-98.

Sharrock, Roger. "The Chemist and the Poet: Sir Humphry Davy and the Preface to Lyrical Ballads." Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London, 17 (1962), 57-76.

Sheats, Paul D. The Making of Wordsworth's Poetry, 1787-1798. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1973.

Shelton, John. "The Autograph Manuscript of 'Kubla Khan' and an Interpretation." Review of English Literature, 7 (1966), 32-42.

Silver, Bruce. "William Bartram and Other Eighteenth-Century Accounts of Nature." JHI, 39 (1978), 597-614.

Simpson, David. Irony and Authority in Romantic Poetry. London: Macmillan, 1979.

Singer, Charles. A Short History of Scientific Ideas to 1900. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959.

Smith, Elsie. An Estimate of William Wordsworth by His Contemporaries. Oxford: Blackwell, 1932.

- Smith, N. Kemp. A Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason.' London: Macmillan, 1918. 2nd ed. 1923.
- New Studies in the Philosophy of Descartes.
Descartes as Pioneer. London: Macmillan, 1952.
- Smith, Roger. "The Background of Physiological Psychology in Natural Philosophy." History of Science, 11 (1973), 75-123.
- Smyser, Jane Worthington. "Wordsworth's Dream of Poetry and Science: The Prelude V." PMLA, 71 (1956), 269-75.
- Snelders, H.A.M. "Romanticism and Naturphilosophie and the Inorganic Natural Sciences 1797-1840: An Introductory Survey." SIR, 9 (1970), 193-215.
- Snyder, Alice D. "Books Borrowed by Coleridge from the Library of the University of Göttingen, 1799." MP, 25 (1928), 377-80.
- Coleridge on Logic and Learning. With Selections from the Unpublished Manuscripts. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1929.
- Stallknecht, Newton P. Strange Seas of Thought: Studies in William Wordsworth's Philosophy of Man and Nature. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1945.
- Stempel, Daniel. "Coleridge and Organic Form: The English Tradition." SIR, 6 (1967), 89-97.
- Stephen, Leslie. English Thought in the Eighteenth Century. 2 vols. London, 1876.
- Hours in a Library. 3rd Series. London, 1879.
- Stock, J.E. Memoirs of the Life of Thomas Beddoes. London, 1811.
- Temkin, Owsei. "Basic Science, Medicine, and the Romantic Era." Bulletin of the History of Medicine, 37 (1963), 97-129.

Thackray, Arnold. "'Matter in a Nut-Shell': Newton's Opticks and Eighteenth-Century Chemistry." Ambix, 15 (1968), 28-53.

----- Atoms and Powers: An Essay on Newtonian Matter-Theory and the Development of Chemistry. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970.

Thompson, E.P. The Making of the English Working Class. London: Gollancz, 1963.

----- "Disenchantment or Default? A Lay Sermon." Power & Consciousness. Eds. Conor Cruise O'Brien and William Dean Vanech. London: London University Press, 1969. pp. 149-81.

Thomson, A.W., ed. Wordsworth's Mind and Art. Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1969.

Tillyard, E.M.W. The English Epic and Its Background. London: Chatto and Windus, 1954.

Todd, F.M. Politics and the Poet: A Study of Wordsworth. London: Methuen, 1957.

Toulmin, Stephen, and Goodfield, June. The Architecture of Matter. London: Hutchinson, 1962.

Tuveson, Ernest. "Locke and the 'Dissolution of the Ego.'" MP, 52 (1955), 159-74.

----- The Imagination as a Means of Grace: Locke and the Aesthetics of Romanticism. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960.

Vartanian, Aram. "Trembley's Polyp, La Mettrie, and Eighteenth-Century French Materialism." JHI, 11 (1950), 259-86.

Vereker, Charles. Eighteenth-Century Optimism: A Study of the Interrelations of Moral and Social Theory in English and French Thought between 1689 and 1789. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1967.

Watson, George. The Literary Critics. Harmondsworth:
Penguin Books, 1962.

Weiskel, Thomas. The Romantic Sublime: Studies in the
Structure and Psychology of Transcendence.
Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press,
1976.

Wellek, René. Immanuel Kant in England. Princeton:
Princeton University Press, 1931.

----- A History of Modern Criticism: 1750-1950. I.
The Later Eighteenth Century. II. The Romantic
Age. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955.

----- Concepts of Criticism. New Haven: Yale University
Press, 1963.

Westfall, Richard S. "Newton and the Hermetic Tradition."
Science, Medicine and Society in the Renaissance:
Essays to Honor Walter Pagel. Ed. A.G. Debus.
London: Heinemann, 1972. II, 183-98.

Wetzels, W.D. "Aspects of Natural Science in German
Romanticism." SIR, 10 (1971), 44-59.

Whalley, George. "The Bristol Library Borrowings of
Southey and Coleridge, 1793-8." The Library,
5th ser., 4 (1949), 114-132.

Whitehead, A.N. Science and the Modern World. Cambridge:
Cambridge University Press, 1926.

Whyte, Launcelot Law. The Unconscious Before Freud. New
York: Basic Books, 1960.

Wilkie, Brian. Romantic Poets and Epic Tradition. Madison:
University of Wisconsin Press, 1965.

Willey, Basil. The Seventeenth Century Background: Studies
in the Thought of the Age in Relation to Poetry and
Religion. London: Chatto and Windus, 1934.

----- The Eighteenth-Century Background. Studies in the
Idea of Nature in the Thought of the Period. London:
Chatto and Windus, 1940.

- Nineteenth-Century Studies. Coleridge to Matthew Arnold. London: Chatto and Windus, 1949.
- Samuel Taylor Coleridge. London: Chatto and Windus, 1972.
- Williams, Bernard. Descartes: The Project of Pure Enquiry. Hassocks: Harvester, 1978.
- Williams, Raymond. Culture and Society 1780-1950. London: Chatto and Windus, 1958.
- The Country and the City. London: Chatto and Windus, 1973.
- Wimsatt, William K., and Brooks, Cleanth. Literary Criticism: A Short History. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957.
- "Organic Form: Some Questions About a Metaphor." Organic Form: The Life of an Idea. Ed. G.S. Rousseau. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972. pp. 62-81.
- Wittreich, Joseph Anthony, ed. The Romantics on Milton. Cleveland: The Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1970.
- Wlecke, Albert O. Wordsworth and the Sublime. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973.
- Wordsworth, Christopher. Memoirs of William Wordsworth. 2 vols. London, 1851.
- Wordsworth, Jonathan. The Music of Humanity: A Critical Study of Wordsworth's "Ruined Cottage" incorporating texts from a manuscript of 1799-1800. London: Nelson, 1969.
- "William Wordsworth 1770-1969." Chatterton Lecture on an English Poet, Proceedings of the British Academy, 55 (1969), 211-28.

- "The Growth of a Poet's Mind." Cornell Library Journal, No. 11 (1970), pp. 3-24. Rev. "The Two-Part Prelude of 1799." Norton Prelude, pp. 567-85.
- ed. Bicentenary Studies in Memory of John Alban Finch. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970.
- "The Climbing of Snowdon." Bicentenary Studies, ed. Jonathan Wordsworth. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970. pp. 449-74.
- and Gill, Stephen. "The Two-Part Prelude of 1798-9." JEGP, 72 (1973), 503-25.
- Usurpation and Reality: Wordsworth's Great Six Weeks. Oberlin: Oberlin College, 1974.
- "Fructifying Spots of Time." TLS, No. 3946, 11 November 1977, p. 1330.
- "The Five-Book Prelude of Early Spring 1804." JEGP, 76 (1977), 1-25.
- "On Man, on Nature and on Human Life." RES, NS. 31, No. 121 (1980), 17-29.
- Yates, Frances A. Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964.
- "The Hermetic Tradition in Renaissance Science." Art, Science, and History in the Renaissance, ed. Charles S. Singleton. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1967. pp. 255-74.
- Zall, Paul M. "The Cool World of Samuel Taylor Coleridge: Dr. Beddoes the Bristol Brunonian." WC, 2 (1971), 67-73.