

Appendix to Chapter III

ROMANTICISM

The interpretation of this thoroughly controversial term 'romanticism' : (F.L.Lucus, in *The Decline and Fall of the Romantic Ideal*, counted 11396 definitions) divides critics into roughly three camps, with loyalties overlapping. Two viewpoints derive from sharply bifurcating ideas on the scope and period of romanticism in literary history : (a) Croce, e.g. (for once in partial agreement with more traditional historians) differentiates between "romanticism", "later romanticism," and "decadence", where (b) Praz M. Paribastra, and Alberes see in romanticism a. complex of literary phenomena associated with a change occurring in European sensibility toward the end of the 18th century, and extending into the present concept which underlies our own definition. A third major trend in criticism. Spiriting from *Geistesgeschichte*, history of ideas, and literary psychology, is exemplified by the attempts of Strich, Cazamian, and Sir Herbert Read to explain romanticism as one of the poles between which accidental art in all places and periods oscilates: the pendulum swing between the Schelegels' distinction of "classical" and "romantic".

Opinions also differ as to the homogeneity of European romanticism while (e.g.) Wellek argues for its unity, Lovejoy and others stress the diversity of its national manifestations. The truth seems to be that it does not occur simultaneously in all European literatures, varies in its literary aspects from country to country, and as a word, has not the same meaning everywhere. It started in Germany and England during the 1790's as a new mode of imagination and vision, which spread, with considerable modifications, throughout Europe between 1800 and 1830. Directly or by reaction it affects all modern literature. There are traits common to all of European romanticism Universally it proposes absolute creative freedom, spontaneosity, "sincerity", and a sort of emotional engagement on the part of the poet. Romantic doctrines are generally directed against rationalism, and frequently against genres. To neoclassical dictates of objectivity, imitation, invention, clarity, separation of prose and poetry, the romanticists oppose demands for the free play of imagination and originality, functional rather than decorative imagery, the use

of prose rhythms in poetry, and of lyrical prose in novel, essay, and criticism. They defend obscurity as a necessary by-product of myth, symbol, and intuitions of what today would be called the subconscious.

The terrain for romantic poetics was, at least in part, prepared by certain philosophical influences, such as Shaftesbury's concept of genius; discussions of the sublime (*Peri Hypsous*, Young, Wood, the Wartons, Burke); pietist and theosophical undercurrents of the Enlightenment (e.g. Hamann, Moritz); Herder's irrationalist search for a common bond of humanity, his organic concept of history and the universe, with its far reaching consequences for all branches of criticism.

Foremost among the literary sources of the romantic sensibility were Young's *Conjectures on Original Composition*; views on the theatre voiced by L Chaussee, Diderot, and Mercier; the purported imitation of "ancient folk poetry" by Percy, Burger, Macpherson" Ossian, "Herder, *the Haindund*; primitivism and exoticism as literary themes in Rousseau, Bernardin de Saint Pierre, etc; graveyard and nature poetry (Young, Blair, Cowper, Gray, Thomson, Gessner); sentimental, ironical, and gothic novels (Richardson, Sterne, Walpole, Radcliffe); nostalgic evocations of ruins (Volney), the topic of revolt against fate and the gods (Goethe's *Prometheus*); open and concealed eroticism (Crebillion fils, Rousseau, Restiff de la Bretonne, Sade, Laclos, Nerciat, etc.) Rousseau's *Nouvelle Heloise* (1761) already contains all the essential ingredients of European romanticism.

First Period : 1798-1805

A first wave of romantic poetry and criticism, passing lightly over romanticism England, swept Germany between 1798 and 1805. In France romanticism was delayed for two decades by the neoclassical trends of Revolution and Empire. Despite the themes of memory, *ennui*, exoticism, and nostalgia (still clothed in a time-honoured "noble" style) which permeate *Atala* (1801) and *Rene* (1802), Chateaubriand's (1768-1848) lyrical and picturesque prose is still as decidedly neoclassical as the echo it finds in Lamartine's *Méditations poétiques* (1820), with alexandrines as conventional

as any of Parry's. In England, the way was cleared for romantic poetry by two outsiders, the Scottish regionalist poet Robert Burns (1759-96) and William Blake (1757-1827) whose hermetic poems found their public posthumously. The first flare-up of English romanticism marks an attempt at poetic reform and is encompassed by the three editions of *Lyrical Ballads* (1798, 1800, 1802). William Wordsworth (1770-1850) defined poetry as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings", recollected in tranquillity, and presented in a language at once metric, musical and close to everyday usage. S.T. Coleridge (1772-1834) intimates (*Biographic Literaria*, 1817) that Wordsworth's contributions aimed at supernaturalizing the natural, and his own at naturalizing the supernatural.

Only in Germany there emerged about 1798 a fully grown romantic revolt with its own aesthetics, philosophy, and poetics, which placed sensibility and flashes of orphic insight above rational experience. H.W. Wackenroder (1773-98) animates his sentimental anecdotes about Direr, Raphael, Leonardo, Michelangelo, etc. with the spirit of a childlike devotion. His romantic criticism substitutes emotional effusions on religious art and the Christian Middle Ages or neoclassical analysis of form, composition, and structure (*Herzensergiessung eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders*, 1797, with a preface by Tieck, some of whose most important work deals with Christian legends). The medieval unity of Christendom is exalted by Novalis in *Die Christenheit oder Europa*, published as late as 1826 but in manuscript form known to the Schlegels and their circle since 1799. Awakening new interest in medieval christianity, these works early planted the seeds for Z. Werner's. Friedrich and Dorothea Schlegel's conversions to Catholicism between 1808 and 1810. In *Athenaeum*, a literary review published by A.W. Schlegel (1767-1845) and his brother Friedrich (1772-1829), German romantic criticism formulated new concepts of myth, symbol, irony, wit, and imagination; it formulated demands for collective endeavours and a fusion of the rational and irrational powers of the human mind in a total artistic creation (*Sympoesie, Symphilosophie*). It derived from the metaphysics of J.C. Fichte (1762-1814), his disciple F.W.J. Schelling (1775-1854) and Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), whose system continued Kant's transcendentalism. To Novalis, Tieck, the Schlegels, and E.T.A. Hoffmann, Fichte's principle of the individual's boundless creative freedom as the highest realization of the spirit justifies the unrestrained activity of imagination and its rational complement, wit.

K.W.F.Solger (1780-1819) analyzes in depth the dialectical playfulness of imagination and with which results in *romantic irony*, imaginatione., the poet's every attentive consciousness that mirrors the antinomy of mind in its unfettered freedom and the material boundaries of literary form. It is knowledge about this irremediable conflict, opposing an infinite vision to the limitations of finite poetic form, that leads the artist to mock his public and his art, and to shatter the literary illusion by trusting himself into his work, often under the mask of grotesque self-mockery. Hence, the predominance, of paradox, asphorisms, and the fragment" whose sudden illuminations are preferred to systematically expressed thought, since they appear to be more spontaneous, more truthful, and more sincere.

While Friedrich Schlegel, the foremost theoretician of the movement, admired the balance of nature and spirit in classical Greek art,, he was aware that this perfection - the result of an harmonious reconcillation of opposites - cannot be achieved by the modern artist, whose work is marked by the unbridgeable split which not only the development of Reason but also Christian doctrine, brought about between the finite world of nature and the infinite surge of the spirit. Where classical literature aims at the perfection of being, the romanticist, torn between the ideal and physical reality, expresses in his work the dialectics of becoming, a flux which corresponds to his inner conflict. In an almost existential sense he engages the free subjectivity of his mind, transforming the stuff of reality into poetry, ie., into a function of his soul and mind as fragments of the infinite. Imagination moved by nostalgia for the infinite is that creative power which can metamorphose reality into spiritual experience. The aim of romantic creation is a sort of mystic union of the mind with a transcendental reality; its perfect literary vehicle - freed from the fetters of genres - the novel (*Roman*) as a farrago (*Mischgedicht*), a magic mixture of literary forms, in which poetry, prose, criticism, and philosophy can mingle, transforming reality into dream, dread into reality. On the cosmic level, Schelling's organic view of the physical world (governed as all romantic thought by Platonist and Neoplatonist philosophy) supersedes post-Cartesian mechanistic theories. On this point - the opinions of the *Romantiker* strangely coincide with those of the *Klassiker*, Novalist, the Schlegels, Tieck, Schelling, and Goethe alike - just as decades later in France Hugo, Nerval and Baudelaire - seemed convinced of secret and ambiguous correspondences between nature and cosmic spirit in which later phenomenon the human mind participates.

The contrast of *Klassik* and *Romantik*, real within the framework of the German literary situation, appears artificial from the viewpoint of European romanticism, all the more so since even the last lines of Goethe's *Faust* (2nd part) are permeated with myth and symbolism of the Schlegel-Novalis variety, and since, paradoxically, Schiller (unromantic to the Germans) is considered in France to be eminently romantic. Likewise Goethe's theory of colours derives from the same organic view of nature which characterizes Schelling's philosophy, just as his concept of art for art's sake approximates Schleiermacher's idea of religion as a mystical transformation of reality into spirit, and a "sense of the infinite". As to Goethe in his last years so to Novalis (F.L.von Hardenberg, 1772-1801, author of the hermetic prose poems *Hymns to the Night* (1800) and theoretician of a "magic idealism", all finite things are mere symbols, hieroglyphs, whose archetypal meaning can be deciphered by the poet's intuition and the interpretative art of the scientist. Poetry and *Naturphilosophie* (uniting spirit and nature) are seen as separate keys to the direct knowledge of a deeper reality, where the pulsations of the external universe are analogous to the mysterious impulses of the human spirit. This concept of the *poeta-magus* as an intuitive interpreter of nature's analogies with the human spirit, developed in Berlin and Jena between 1798 and 1805, emerged more than half a century later in France with the *Fleurs du Mal*, the Hugo of *la Legende des Siecles* (1859-83), Rimbaud, Mallarme, and the French Symbolists; it is reflected in E.A.Poet's aesthetics, and since 1817 in Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*. Early German romanticism provides at once a metaphysical and an aesthetic foundation for most European romantic and symbolist schools of poetry.

Second Period : After 1806, German romanticism underwent radical changes during the Napoleonic occupation. At the outset cosmopolitan, urbane, progressive, pantheistic, it now turned to chauvinism and an historical preoccupation with the German Middle Ages. Leading romantics found their way into the Roman Catholic Church. Dissatisfaction with the present had driven the early romanticists toward self-deification and the future. After 1806, the individual submerged in Church and Nation (defied as organic entities), while poetry, philology, and history attempted to transfigure the national past which was explored back to its dim beginnings in prehistory. A predilection for chapbooks, folk songs, and *Märchen* prompted Joseph Gorres (1776-1818) to publish the *Teutschen Volksbücher* (1807), C.M.Brentano (1887-1842) and A

von Arnim (1781-1832) to collect, and upon occasion to forge, German folk songs (*Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, 1806-08) and the brothers Jakob Grimm (1785-1863) and Wilhelm Grimm (1786-1859) to write down traditional fairy tales. Simultaneously the Swabian school of Poetry (Upland, Mörike, Schwab, Kerner) drew on folklore for its lyrical production. A century later, the surrealists went back to these same sources of magic inspiration and archetypal myths, which owe much to the romanticists' interest in the nocturnal side of nature (*magnetism, mesmerism, etc.*) Friedrich Schlegel's investigations into the history of myth and religion had led him to a revolutionary concept of the orphic aspects of Hellenism, later to be defined by Nietzsche as the Dionysian element which he opposed to Winckelmann's Apollonian ideal of classical antiquity. Independently, Friedrich Hölderlin's (1770-1843) poetry descended into the depths of orphism. Against the rising tide of German nationalism, Heinrich Heine (1797-1856) - praised by Nietzsche as the greatest German lyricist - launched from his Paris exile the last (and possibly highest) realizations of romantic irony, his mock epics *Atta Troll* (1843) and *Germany, a Wintertale* (1844).

While German romanticism, from its very beginnings, was a movement conscious of its aims, the English romantics remained, on the whole, unaware of their romantic trends, and refused to apply the term romantic to their own production. The authors of the Lake school (Coleridge, Wordsworth, and de Quincey) are perhaps the closest approximation to an English school of romanticism. Wordsworth, exalting the "purity" of childhood in *Intimations of Immortality* (1802-1805) and *The Excursion* (1814), drew from his pantheism the naive morality that love for nature must needs lead to love for mankind. Together with Coleridge he stressed the superiority of creative imagination over intelligence in its spontaneous intuition of truth (*Preface to Poems*, 1815). Coleridge, in his poetic period (1795-1802), differed profoundly from Wordsworth, in as much as exoticism, magic, dream, imagination prevail in his verse. His *Biographia Literaria* (1817) and *Lectures on Shakespeare* (1818), both reflecting the thought of Kant, the Schlegels, and Schiller, were by far the most influential works of literary criticism, together with those of Hazlitt, Arnold, and Ruskin, in 19th century England. Lord Byron (1788-1824) regarded himself as a neoclassical poet, continuing the tradition of Pope; to the Germans and the French. He became the very personification of romanticism. His poetic travelogue *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812-18), *The Giaour* (1813), *Lara*

(1814), *The Corsair* (1814), *Mazeppa* (1818), *Don Juan* (1819-24), introduce to literature the semi-autobiographical *homme fatal*, prototype of the melancholy antihero torn by unbearable guilt feelings, who haunts French romantic literature between 1820 and 1860. Shelley's (1792-1822) Platonism fuses ideals of freedom and world brotherhood with concepts of love and the perfection of beauty. Pain over the inaccessibility of the world of ideals is tempered by a Pantheism which sees in the fleeting moment revelations of divine beauty and truth. In his *Defence of Poetry* (1821), Shelley continued Sidney's theories, defining poetry as prophecy and an intuition of ultimate reality. The contribution of English romanticism to the theatre seems negligible; Byron's *Manfred* (1817) and *Cain* (1821) and *Shelley's The Cenci* (1819) are more pregnant with ideas than excelling in dramatic quality.

Of all British romanticists, Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) exerted by far the greatest influence on the development of the European novel (in France on Balzac and V. Hugo; in England on Marryat, Reade, and Thackeray; in Germany on Hauff, Scheffel, Alexis, Fontane). Romanticism, undergoing subtle modifications, persisted in England throughout the 19th century. Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806-61) with her *Sonnets from the Portuguese* continued the Renaissance and romantic tradition of the sonnet; Robert Browning (1812-89) wrote his Faustian poem with *Paracelsus* (1835) and attained mature symbolism with *The Ring and the Book* (1868-9). The Pre-Raphaelites; in particular D.G. Rossetti (1828-82), with their adoration of Giotto and the Italian *Trecento*, developed the highly romantic metaphysics of love and death and, in their cultivation of spiritual allegory, started a mystical "art for art's sake" movement, which found its erotic and symbolist counterpart in the lyricism of A.C. Swinburne (1837-1909) continuing the themes of Byron's poetry, Swinburne's *Poems and Ballads* (1866, 1878, 1889) bear affinities with the lyricism of Gautier and Baudelaire.

In France - as in Italy, Spain, Portugal, Russia, Poland, the New World, etc. - romanticism is largely derivative. In 1816 (hardly more than a word in France) it is decried as an unpatriotic attempt to glorify the poetry of the victors of Waterloo, and as a blow struck at the very foundations of national (imaginatione. neoclassical) taste. At Milan, Stendhal (Henri Beyle, 1783-1842) joined forces in 1816 with the Italian liberal romanticists Manzoni, Pellico,

visconti, Monti, and Berchet, whose literary aspirations merged with the political aims of the *risogimento*. French romanticism found all its models abroad; across the Channel with "Ossian", Shakespeare (in 1822 still booed in Paris), W. Scott (the "slanderer" of Bonaparte), and Byron; across the Rhine with Schiller (sic), and (to a lesser degree) Jean Paul and Goethe. The vogue of Schiller had been launched from Mme de Stael's headquarters in exile by Barante and Constant, Mme de Stael's *De l'Allemagne* (1813), creating the fateful mirage of an idyllic Germany (which persisted in England and France until 1870), had awakened an interest in the German romantics. It introduced to France the antinomy "classical romantic" gleaned from the Schlegel, which was to split literary and artistic France throughout the Restoration (1815-30) into at least four opposing (yet in their loyalties fluid) factions of royalist classicists, liberal classicists, royalist romanticists, and liberal romanticists.

In the 1820's there developed from these confused beginnings a coherent movement, led since 1827 by Victor Hugo (in 1822 still a royalist classicist; now, as the author of *Cromwell*, a liberal romantic), Romanticism had matured around three centres; (1) the royalist *Muse française* (1823-24), edited by Emile Deschamps, conservative and opposed to excesses but exalting Byron, W. Scott, and Shakespeare, and publishing poetry by Hugo, Vigny, and Marceline Desbordes-Valmore; (2) since 1824 the eclectic *salon* of Ch. Nodier, the librarian of the *Arsenal*, who (before defecting after 1830) received on Sundays Deschamps, Vigny, Hugo, Dumas, Merimee, Nerval, Lamartine (when in Paris), Gautier, Balzac, Delacroix, Deveria, David d'Angers; (3) *Le Globe* (1824-32), a liberal newspaper founded by Paul Dubois, with Stendhal, Merimee, and Sainte Bauve (all still unknown) among its contributors, and Remusat, Vitet, and Ampere (whose translation of E.T.A. Hoffmann appeared in 1828) formulating a doctrine of independent taste and freedom from neoclassical rules. Alessandro Manzoni (1785-1873) in his *Lettre à M. Chauvet* (1823) had postulated the liberation of genius from the fetters of literary conventions, and defined the new movement (somewhat awkwardly) as a classicism broadened by history.

By 1830, most French romanticists were moving away from Byronic frenzy and bizarre ostentation; the necrophily, cult of magic clairvoyance and sadism of A. Rabbe, Pétrus Borel, and Philotée O'Neddy are extravagant but turn into vibrant lyricism when transposed and deepened in Baudelaire's poetry. The

dominant figure remains Victor Hugo (1802-82) whose lyricism - traditional in the *Odes* (1822) picturesque and medieval in the *Ballades* (1826), exotic with brilliant virtuosity in *les Orientales* (1829) - became more personal between 1830 and 1840, his odes in a Bonapartist spirit foreshadowing the short epic, cultivated by Vigny and Leconte de Lisle, and flourishing in his own *Légende des Siècles* (1859-83). *Poeta-magus* in his late verse (1856-85), Hugo becomes a Neoplatonist visionary whose charity, transcending mere social pity, extends to all creatures. His vast poetic structures - dominated by the idea of the great chain of being prophesy the final liberation of suffering matter in its irresistible progress from heaviness and obscurity toward spirituality and light. His "Ce que dit is bouche d'ombre" approaches the hermetic rhythms of Nerval, Mallarmé, and Valéry.

Diametrically opposed to Hugo's optimism is the stoic impassivity of Alfred de Vigny (1797-1863). This disenchanted poet turns his creation into the living symbol of an idea; his terse and impersonal poetry, philosophical and often of epic quality, set a pattern later to be continued by Leconte de Lisle and the *Parnassiens*, whose ascetic cult of "art for art's sake" bears a marked affinity with that of Theophile Gautier (1811-72). The themes and stylistic aspirations of French romanticism found their fulfilment only in Baudelaire, whose *Fleurs du Mal* transformed into ferocious and diabolical obsessions the *spleen* of the dandy and the *ennui* and remorse which, since Chateaubriand, haunted all French literature. In frenzied and majestic images, Baudelaire's *Flowers of Evil* expressed the existential anguish of Modern Man, while his *Spleen de Paris* may be considered the first successful attempt to introduce the prose poem into French poetry.

In France, as elsewhere in Europe and the New World of Poe, Melville, and Whitman, romanticism and its later developments opposed to the neatly rational, universal, and orderly *solutions* of neoclassicism the unitidy and *problematic* world of Man - as a *creator* freely probing the irrational and inventing new forms, and as an *individual* dispossessed of beliefs, traditions, and affiliations, torn by *ennui* and laden with guilt, a stranger among strangers, and stranger unto himself. The 20th century, reviving "everything that reinforces our irrationalism" (Malraux) with its poetics ever widening the gap between neoclassical genres and free experimentation in aesthetics, and with its poetry

sounding the depth of the subconscious, is producing a literature which, in its ontological quest, is now largely regarded by critics like Albert Béguin, A. Malraux, F.M.Albérès, and Marsi Paribatra, as an extension of romanticism, and labelled "neoromantic".

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5. R.Welleck, *A History of Modern Criticism, 1750-1950* (v.2 *The Romantic Age*, 1955)
6. T.M.Raysor (ed) *The English Romantic Poets : A Review of Research* (1950)
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CHAPTER-IV

COLERIDGE I : PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUND

We have reasons to believe that the philosophical renaissance in England after the middle of the century was a late off-shoot of German Idealism, that it nourished itself on German sources, and was penetrated by the German spirit, or, to speak more prosaically, that it was essentially a German commodity. This is intended simply as a statement of fact, not as a judgement of praise or blame. We are saying nothing at the moment of the changes to which the foreign article was subjected after it had become established on British soil, of the extent to which it was linked to native lines of thought, or of the new forms that grew out of it. Indeed, we must emphasize the fact that the incursion of the German stream of thought was not brought about in a purely external fashion, for example, by scholastic interests or by intrigue, but happened when it did because of an inner necessity. For there can be no doubt that at that time the conditions for the acceptance of the new seed were specially favourable, and that the deciding factors were several and various.

First of all the mental atmosphere was prepared for the reception of an idealistic view of the world by means of poetry and literature generally. The preliminary work performed in the first half of the century by outstanding poets and other writers outside professional philosophical circles, and for the most part in opposition to them, was a very important factor in the release of the strictly philosophical movement. It was out of the poetry of the Romantics that the new view of the world and attitude to life grew up which superseded the antiquated forms of thought of the Enlightenment. The earliest indications of the new spiritual content, which much later was to break its way through into philosophy also, are to be found in the poems of Shelley and Keats, of Wordsworth and Coleridge. Of these, however, only Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) has any special importance. He was not only an inspired poet, but also a man of genuinely philosophical endowment, always striving to give his vision of the universe a theoretical as well as an artistic articulation. In the process

his extremely receptive and restless mind passed through many changes, submitting itself at one time or another to the influence of Hartley, Berkeley, Spinoza, Plato, Plotinus, Kant, Schelling, and others. After various confusions and revulsions he finally arrived at a kind of spiritualistic metaphysics which found expression more in brilliant aphorisms and fragments than in strictly systematic form. In these he sharply opposed the prevailing philosophical views of his time and country, especially the empiricist Utilitarianism of Bentham, which was then coming into vogue. That Coleridge introduced into British philosophy a new spirit which had next to nothing in common with the current dogmas was occasionally noticed even in strictly philosophical circles (as in J.S. Mill's articles of 1838 and 1840 on Bentham and Coleridge, reprinted in his **Dissertations and Discussions**, vol. 1). Still, of any intrusion of this new spirit into academic circles there is no trace at all either during the lifetime of the poet, or even for a generation after his death, which is the best proof that the time had not yet come for a comprehensive idealistic renovation of British thought.

In another respect the philosophy of Coleridge is of importance for our survey. With it a broad stream of German Idealism first flowed into England. Whether the central ideas of his view of the world had already shaped themselves in the poet's mind before he came into contact with the German systems,¹ or whether they only did so as a consequence of that contact, is a question difficult to settle; but all that concerns the history of thought is the fact that such a contact did happen, that it was an extremely close one, and that with it German philosophy entered into the mental perspective of the English for the first time². We know that Coleridge studied in detail the doctrine of Kant, and that this left evident traces on his own thought. Still deeper, however, was the influence of Schelling, whose cosmological and aesthetic doctrines attracted and shook him and at times almost overwhelmed him. Recent research has shown that he studied various writings of Fichte and Hegel as well, and made marginal comments on them, although the influence of these thinkers is less noticeable in his published works (see footnote, *Coleridge as Philosopher*, 1930, p. 271). In addition, Lessing, Herder, Goethe, and Schiller acted decisively on his thought. In Coleridge, therefore, we have the spectacle of an early and extremely striking invasion of English spiritual life by

German idealistic thought, along with a sharp reaction against the mental attitude of the eighteenth Century and the persistence of this throughout the first decades of the nineteenth Century in the native philosophy. The empiricist current of Utilitarianism, which found in J.S.Mill a new champion, was able to dominate the field until after the middle of the century, with the result that Coleridge's profound insights remained scattered and unable to find almost anywhere soil in which to strike root. In one disciple only was the seed he sowed to spring up. This disciple was the surgeon Joseph Herry Green (1791-1863), the poet's intimate friend for many years, and eventually his literary executor. In this latter capacity he had the task of sorting Coleridge's philosophical remains and putting them into systematic shape, a task to which he selflessly devoted the greater part of his later years, without bringing it to completion. Out of the writings, memoranda, marginal notes, and conversations of the poet, however, he built up a sort of Coleridgean system of philosophy, which was posthumously published under the title *Spiritual Philosophy, founded on the teaching of the late S.T.Coleridge* (1865, two vols.). Despite the change that had set in since Coleridge's death this work appeared and remained unnoticed, being overshadowed by Stirling's book on Hegel, which appeared the same year; and thereafter men went straight to the German sources without troubling themselves about Coleridge and his disciple. Only a few of them besides Green kept Coleridge's thoughts alive, for instance, F.D.Maurice and S.H.Hodgson; the latter's *Philosophy of Reflection* (1978) is dedicated to him as the author's "Father in Philosophy". It is only recently that Alice D. Snyder (*Coleridge on Logic and Learning*, 1929; *Coleridge's Treatise on Method*, 19234) and J.H.Muirhead (*Coleridge as Philosopher*, 1930) have won the merit of subjecting the great romantic poet's philosophy to historical investigation.

Finally, Muirhead has made a distinguished contribution to the history of the idealistic movement. Placing the movement in a wider intellectual setting, he has sought to understand its origin and development as well as its total significance. He traces what he calls the "Platonic tradition in Anglo-Saxon philosophy" to its very beginnings and exhibits, in opposition to the usual accounts, a unitary and uninterrupted stream of idealistic thought, flowing, if only at times as an undercurrent, through the entire history of British philosophy; and shows how the XIXth Century renewal

under the influence of Germany was being prepared for on English soil long before its obvious outburst, firstly through the romantic poetry of Shelley, Keats, Wordsworth, and Coleridge (on him Muirhead has written the very penetrating monograph), then through the literature of such Victorians as Carlyle, Emerson, Tennyson, Browning, and Arnold, and finally through the general change in ideas and institutions which marked the latter half of the century. Having been an eye-witness of the outburst of the movement in the 'seventies, and an active participant in it ever since, Muirhead was better fitted than anyone else to look back upon it in the eventide of his long life, see it as a whole, and disclose to the younger generation both the story of its development and the riches of its doctrinal content.

References :

1. This contact occurred first during his visit to Germany in 1798-99, and thereafter through intensive study of German literature and philosophy.
2. On the introduction of Kantianism into Britain see *Kant in England*, by R. Wellek, 1931 (Princeton).

The first books in English on Kant were : *General and Introductory View of Professor Kant's Principles*, by F.A.Nitzsch, 1796; *Principles of Critical Philosophy*, by J.S.Beck, trans. by J. Richardson, 1797; *Elements of Critical Philosophy*, by A.F.M. Willich, 1798.

The earliest English translations of Kant were - *Essays and Treatises on Moral, Political and Various Philosophical Subjects*, two vols., 1798-99; *Metaphysic of Morals*, 1799; *Logic*, 1819; *Prolegomena to Every Future Metaphysic*, 1819; the last two reissued with *Enquiry into the Grounds of Proof for the Existence of God*, 1836. All these were translated by J. Richardson. J.W.Semple's version of the *Metaphysic of Ethics* first appeared in 1936. The first translation of the first *Critique* was by Francis Haywood, *Critick of Pure Reason*, 1838 (Second edition, 1848). Haywood published in 1844 *An analysis of Kant's Critick of Pure Reason*.

CHAPTER - V

COLERIDGE - II

During the 17th century, the terms 'Imagination' and 'Fancy' had often enough been used in a vaguely synonymous way to refer to the realm of fairy tale or make-believe. Yet here and there (as in the opening of Hobbes's *Leviathan*) the term 'imagination' had tended to distinguish itself from 'fancy' and settle toward a meaning centered in the sober liberalism of sense impressions and the survival of these in memory. This was in accord with medieval and Renaissance tradition, where *imaginatio* and *phantasia* had all along been fairly close together, but where, so far as a distinction of this kind had been made, it was *phantasia* which meant the lighter and less responsible kind of imaging. In the light of 17th century reasonableness, 'fancy' suffered the decline in reputation imagination held its own and even slide into a new place of respect in sensationalist aesthetics. It followed that during the 18th century, whenever the distinction between 'imagination' and 'fancy' was being made - and it often was honours were likely to fall to the term 'imagination'. A certain softness and warmth and depth of good feeling grew around the term 'imagination' in its Addisonian sense; it stayed close to the heart of 18th century poetry. A corresponding coldness and brittleness and a suggestion of unreliable frolic invested the related but opposed term 'fancy'. As 18th century 'imagination' moved through the stages of association theory to which we have alluded in an earlier chapter, the honours accorded the two terms were now and then reversed - 'fancy' assuming the higher role of reference to a more creative mental power, imagination, the humbler reference to the mind's more reportorial kinds of drudgework. But such an assignment of honours was a little noticed exception. The relative dignity of the two terms 'imagination' and 'fancy' was so well established in English usage by the end of the 18th century that no matter what revised meanings Wordsworth and Coleridge and others

might assign to them, it was almost inevitable that the superior term should be 'imagination'.

II

An early and somewhat haphazard attempt on the part of Wordsworth to discriminate between imagination ("Impressive effects out of simple elements" and fancy ("pleasure and surprise... excited by sudden varieties of situation and accumulated imagery") appears in a note to "The Thorn" in the 1800 edition of *Lyrical Ballads*. But the first word in the major critical discussion by Wordsworth and Coleridge occurs in the Preface to the *Poems* of 1815, when Wordsworth breaks out in an excited correction of William Taylor's *British Synonyms Discriminated*, 1813. Taylor had unfortunately written :

A man has imagination in proportion as he can distinctly copy in idea the impressions of sense: it is the faculty which images within the mind the phenomena of sensation. A man has fancy in proportion as he can call up, connect, or associate, at pleasure, those internal images (*phantazein* is to cause to appear) so as to complete ideal representations of absent objects. Imagination is the power of depicting, and fancy of evoking and combining. The imagination is formed by patient observation; the fancy by a voluntary activity in shifting the scenery of the mind. The more accurate the imagination, the more safely may a painter, or a poet, undertake a delineation, or a description, without the presence of the objects to be characterized. The more versatile the fancy, the more original and striking will be the decoration produced.

That summed up a century more or less of settled usage and compromise opinion. Wordsworth's objection was in part simply that the terms, as an antithetic pair, were turned upside down. "Imagination", not "fancy", should be used to refer to the creative or poetic principle.

Furthermore, and this was really the critical issue (though how far Wordsworth distinguished the merely semantic from the critical may be questioned), the very distinction between the two terms was made at too low a level. The higher power (What Taylor called "fancy") had to be something better than the mere power of wilfully (capriciously) "evoking or combining" images - "shifting the scenery of the mind" - making "decorations." There was a "higher" creative power than that. And this was the "imagination".

"Fancy does not require that the materials which she makes use of should be susceptible of change in their constitution, from her touch; and, where they admit of modification, it is enough for her purpose if it be slight, limited, and evanescent.

The law under which the processes of Fancy are carried on is as capricious as the accidents of things, and the effects are surprising, playful, ludicrous, amusing, tender, or pathetic, as the objects happen to be appositely produced or fortuitously combined. Fancy depends upon the rapidity and profusion with which she scatters her thoughts and images; trusting that their number, and the felicity with which they are linked together, will make amends for the want of individual value: or she prides herself upon the curious subtilty and the successful elaboration with which she can detect their lurking affinities."

(Wordsworth's *Preface* of 1815 is quoted from *Wordsworth's literary Criticism*, p. 155-65)

(Even fancy was far from being the uncreative or unoriginal thing, the mere juggler, which William Taylor would have made it.) But imagination | Imagination was a "conferring", an "abstracting" a "modifying", and "endowing" power. The imagination "unites" and "coalesces". It "shapes and creates." In the language of his friend Charles Lamb, the imagination "draws all things to one it makes things animate or inanimate, beings with their attributes, subjects with their accessories, take one colour and serve to one effect".(*Lamb's Works*, I. 96).

Imagination :

"... recoils from everything but the plastic, the pliant, and the indefinite.... When the Imagination frames a comparison ... 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... the Imagination is conscious of an indestructible dominion; - the Soul may fall away from it, not being able to sustain its grandeur; but if once felt and acknowledged, by no act of any other faculty of the mind can it be relaxed, impaired, or diminished.

In short, where the 18th century had been content with a distinction between a faithfully reportorial imaging faculty, and an unfaithful, or playfully inventive fancy, Wordsworth raised the level of the whole distinction. Simple reproduction interested him not at all. He distinguished two modes of imaging, both inventive. The difference was that one was frolicsome, and inferior, the other was totally serious, and superior.

It was this concession to fancy, though it was only incidental to Wordsworth's aim of elevating the imagination, that became a point of grievance with Coleridge. In Chapter XII of his *Biographia*, he comes down on Wordsworth's venture with a heavy hand.

"If, by the power of evoking and combining, Mr. Wordsworth means the same as, and no more than, I meant by the aggregative and associative, I continue to deny, that it belongs at all to the imagination; and I am disposed to conjecture, that he has mistaken the co-presence of fancy with imagination for the operation of the latter singly".

After giving Wordsworth the grand credit of having originally

inspired his own whole theory of the imagination, Coleridge had already drawn a patronizing distinction between Wordsworth's purpose of considering only the "influences" or "effects" of fancy and imagination "as they are manifested in poetry," and his own more psychologic purpose of investigating "the seminal principle" - that is, the process of imaginative creation, rather than poems themselves. It is our own view that Coleridge did not differ vitally from Wordsworth about "imagination", and that the two may well be considered together, although Coleridge no doubt may be conveniently accepted as the more articulate and more theoretical spokesman of the two.

II

Coleridge traces the growth of his mind from Hartleyan associationism to neo-Platonic and then to German transcendental idealism. All this is undertaken in preparation for the grand purpose of expounding "the nature and genesis of the imagination," And he states his "main result" in the following .

"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 finite I A.M. The secondary Imagination I consider as an echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the kind of its agency, and differing only in degree, and in the mode of its operation. It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate; 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."

"Fancy, on the contrary, has no other counters to play with, but fixities and definites. The Fancy is indeed no other than a mode

of Memory emancipated from the order of time and space; while it is blended with, and modified by that empirical phenomenon of the will, which we express by the word Choice. But equally with the ordinary memory the Fancy must receive all its materials ready made from the law of association."

For similar but briefer Coleridgean definitions of "*imagination*" and "*fancy*" one may also see *Coleridge's Miscellaneous Criticism*, edited by T.M. Raysor. Does Coleridge mean the same thing that Wordsworth means in the more informal and literary statement of the 1815 Preface? Or does Coleridge mean something far more profound? The question is complicated by the presence of German ideas in Coleridge's mind.

It is not the issue of plagiarism (though that is present for the biographer of Coleridge) which we would here pursue, but the relation of his theory to certain presiding metaphysical notions of his time, and especially to the notions of Kant and Schelling. It is true that a number of clear and even detailed borrowings by Coleridge from the Germans are to be noted, but let us say in advance that the importance of his debt is not always in proportion to its fragrance or its definability.

The lecture *On Poetry or Art* of 1818, for instance, is a fairly close paraphrase of Schelling's Academy Oration *On the Relation of the Formative Arts to Nature* (1807). One of the most amusing betrayals of Coleridge's way with sources is his coinage of the term *esemplastic* (unifying or coadunative) of the *Biographia* on the model of Schelling's *In-Eins-Bildung* and apparently with the mistaken notion also that the term is authorized by the German word *Einbildungskraft*. One of Coleridge's clearest debts to Kant appears in his *Principles of Genial Criticism* (1814), where both doctrine and examples, concerning pleasure, taste, beauty, and disinterest are taken directly from Kant's *Critique of Judgement*. Yet this aesthetic borrowing has no very

important relation to Coleridge's own literary aesthetic. The main relation of Coleridge's literary theory to Kant lies in the direction not of the *Critique of Judgement* but in that of Kant's general epistemology and ontology in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. "The writings of the illustrious sage of Konigsberg, the founder of the Critical Philosophy," says Coleridge in the *Biographia*, "more than any other work, at once invigorated and disciplined my understanding." It may be worth adding that the ideas concerned had been rather widely foreshadowed throughout the neo-Platonic tradition, a tradition in which Coleridge was deeply versed, and one in which Kant himself stood as the theistic and transcendental champion of the age against Spinozan immanentism and pantheism.

We may see the relation of Coleridge's "imagination" and "fancy" to German ideas better if we set beside the definitions already quoted from of the *Biographia* the following passage, defining two Kantian terms, "Understanding" (*Verstand*) and "Reason" (*Vernunft*), from an early essay by Coleridge in *The Friend* :

"By understanding, I mean the faculty of thinking and forming judgements on the notices furnished by the sense, according to certain rules existing in itself, which rules constitute its distinct nature. By the pure reason, I mean the power by which we become possessed of principles - the eternal verities of Plato and Descartes, and of ideas, not images."

Complete Works, II, 164.

And along with this let us set down the development of these ideas, in Coleridge's later religious and philosophic work entitled *Aids to Reflection*. (London, 1913) p. 148.

1. Understanding is discursive. 2. The Understanding in all its judgements refers to some other Faculty as its ultimate Authority. 3.

Understanding is the Faculty of Reflection.

1. "Reason is fixed. 2. The Reason in all its decisions appeals to itself, as the ground and substance of their truth. (Hebrews vi, 13.) . 3. Reason of Contemplation. Reason indeed is much nearer to SENSE than to Understanding: for Reason (says our great HOOKER) is a direct aspect of Truth, an inward Beholding, having a similar relation to the Intelligible or Spiritual, as SENSE has to the Material or Phenomenal".

Let four terms, the, "Primary Imagination" ↔ "Understanding," "Secondary Imagination" ↔ "Reason", stand as a kind of ascending series, with affinities between the first (or lower) and the second (or upper) pair indicated by the sign ↔. And let "Fancy" ride as a kind of side effort or false parallel to "Secondary Imagination". The Platonic sensory knowledge (*eikasia*), more or less the equivalent of the Kantian immediate sensory intuition (*Anschauung*), does not appear in the Coleridgean system, but so far as it might be distinguished in itself it would be conceived as a shadowy beginning which is substantiated or shaped up into the world of our everyday external experience (horses and houses) by the faculty of Primary Imagination (*Einbildungskraft*) working in accord with the schemes or laws of the scientific Understanding. This "Imagination" is a primary creative act, a willed activity of spirit, a self-consciousness, a "self-realizing intuition, 'joining and coalescing the otherwise separated parts of our self, the outer unconscious, and the inner conscious, the object and the subject. To support this part of the interpretation, we turn back to the Theses of *Biographia*.

"There are evidently two powers at work, which relatively to each other are active and passive; and this is not possible without an intermediate faculty, which is at once both active and passive. (In philosophical language, we must denominate this intermediate faculty in all its degrees and determinations, the

IMAGINATION." (I.86).

The two powers between which the Imagination mediates are the "subject" and "object" and the two opposing the counter-acting forces described in the involved Schellingian terms of, before it is interrupted by the letter from the friend. Primary Imagination is a human creative act which we may take as a type of and participation in the Divine Act.

III

Every human being, then, is, so far as he perceive anything at all, a creator and an idealizing agent. What then about the special role of the artist (the poet or maker) ? What more can he do ? What kind of "imagination" does he enjoy ?

"... in common language, and especially on the subject of poetry, we appropriate the name to a superior degree of the faculty, joined to a superior voluntary control over it." (Chapter VI, I, 86)

We conceive the "Secondary Imagination", a higher plastic power. This rewords the perceptual products of primary imagination into concrete expressions (symbols) of those "ideas" - the self, the absolute, the world, and God - which are otherwise, conceptually, given by that superior part of the transcendental mind the Reason. Nature, especially as seen by the poet, symbolizes the spiritual life of man and hence too that higher life in which the spiritual life of man participates, "the one life within us and abroad." The ideas of such a life were, as Kant conceived them, framed by the Reason only as regulative hypotheses. But for Coleridge (as for the German post-Kantians, Schelling, Fichte, and Hegel), these ideas were realities (*noumena*) and the Reason was the faculty of philosophic insight into them - as Secondary Imagination gave them symbolic embodiments. Kant had distinguished this imagination, under the name of the "aesthetic", from the "productive" (Coleridge's "primary Imagination") and from the

"reproductive" (Coleridge's "fancy").

Various other writings of Coleridge give more poetically coloured and less difficult accounts of that higher meaning of nature which he conceived it to be the role of poetic imagination to create and in creating know.

"Certainly the Fine Arts belong to the outware world, for they all operate by the images of sight and sound, and other sensible impressions; and without a delicate tact for these, no man ever was, or could be, either a Musician or a Poet; nor could he attain to excellence in any one of these Arts; but as certainly he must always be a poor and unsuccessful cultivator of the Arts if he is not impelled first by a mighty, inward power, a feeling, quod nequeo monstrare, et sentio tantum; nor can he make great advances in his Art, if, in the course of his progress, the obscure impulse does not gradually become a bright, and clear, and living Idea" (*Preliminary Treatise on Method*, 1818, III, 21, ed. Alice Synder, London, 1934, pp.62-3).

"If the artist copies the mere nature, the natura naturata, what idle rivalry ... Believe me, you must master the essence, the natura naturans, which presupposes a bond between nature in the higher sense and the soul of man... In the objects of nature are presented, as in a mirror, all the possible elements steps, and processes of intellect antecedent to consciousness, and therefore to the full development of the intelligential act; and man's mind is the very focus of all the rays of intellect which are scattered through the images of nature." (*On Poetry or Art in Biographia*, II 257-8).

"To have a genius is to live in the universal, to know no self but that which is reflected not only from the faces of all around us, our fellow creatures, but reflected from the flowers, the

trees, the beasts, yea from the very surface of the waters and the sands of the desert. A man of genius finds a reflex of himself, were it only in the mystery of being." (*The Philosophical Lectures*, ed. K. Coburn, 1949, p.179).

"In looking at objects of Nature while I am thinking, as at yonder moon dim-glimmering through the dewy window pane, I seem rather to be seeking, as it were asking for, a symbolical language for something within me that already and forever exists, than observing anything new. Even when that latter is the case, yet still I have always an obscure feeling as if that new phenomenon were the dim awaking of a forgotten or hidden truth of my inner nature." (*Anima Poetae*, Boston, 1895, p. 115).

Or the emphasis might fall sadly on the waning or loss of that inner power of investiture.

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

(Compare Wordsworth's *Ode : Imitations* ... "There was a time when meadow, grove and stream ...").

All these statements about the meaning of art and the meaning of

nature refer to a kind of union between the two. They could all be developed under the aspect of union, the Schellingian emphasis on coalescence, on reconciliation. And it is precisely this emphasis that is the most distinctive feature of Coleridge's theory. This, though it was a tenet of absolute idealism, was capable of working out, and in Coleridge's thinking to some extent did work out, into a dualistic and variously applicable theory of poems. Reconciliation of what? Primarily and generically of the two sides of self, conscious and unconscious, subject and object - and of certain related abstract entities. In-Eins-Bildung, said Schelling, *des Einem mit dem Vielen*. In-Eins-Bildung des Realen und Idealen. Or, to give the antithesis a warmer color, In-Eins-Bildung (coadunation) of *man* and *nature*. Coleridge's lecture *On Poesy or Art* (1818) is in parts a close paraphrase of Schelling's oration *On the Relation of the Formative Arts to Nature*.

"Art itself might be defined as of a middle quality between a thought and a thing, or, as I have said before, the union and reconciliation of that which is nature with that which is exclusively human. It is the figured language of thought, and is distinguished from nature by the unity of all parts in one thought or idea."

In a passage of the *Biographia* much celebrated recently, Coleridge writes his most enthusiastic and expansive account of the aesthetic "reconciliation."

"Imagination... reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities: of sameness, with difference; of the general, with the concrete; the idea, with the image; the individual, with the representative; the sense of novelty and of freshness, with old and familiar objects; a more than usual state of emotion, with more than usual order; judgement ever awake and steady self-possession, with enthusiasm and feeling profound or vehement; and while it blends and harmonizes the natural and the artificial, still subordinates art to nature; the

manner to the matter; and our admiration of the poet to our sympathy with the poetry."(Chapter XIV, II, 12) T.S.Eliot quotes the passage in his essay on Marvell and also by I.A.Richard.

IV

The theory of imagination elaborated by Coleridge, and less precisely but in substantially the same way, by Wordsworth, was an excellent description of their own best poetry in its formal, structural, and metaphoric aspect. One might redescribe this structure approximately in these terms : It is a structure which makes only a restrained use of the central overt statement of similitude which had been so important in all poetry up to that time. Both tenor and vehicle are wrought in a parallel process out of the same material. The landscape is both the occasion of subjective reflection or transcendental insight and the source of figures by which the reflection or insight is defined. In such a structure, finally, the element of tension in disparity may not be prominent. The interest derives not from our being aware of disparity in stated likeness, but in the opposite activity of our discerning the design and the unity latent in a multiform sensuous picture. This is no doubt a form of "reconciliation." At the same time there are certain clearly anti-"metaphysical" tendencies here - the absence of overt definition, the reduction of disparity, the play of phenomena on the one hand and of "spirit" on the other, rather than of entities conceived substantially.

The romantic nature poems are all poems of a certain symbolic furniture and of a certain philosophy - the philosophy of immanence or pantheism which appears in Coleridge's *Aeolian Harp* and in Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey*, and the related idealism of Coleridge's *Dejection*. For Coleridge, as for the Germans, there was a powerful temptation to equate philosophy and poetry. It is notorious that he proposed to write an essay on poetry which would "supersede all the books of metaphysics, and all the books of morals too." It would be in

reality a "disguised system of morals and politics." In his chapter of the *Biographia* on Shakespeare, he says, "No man was ever yet a great poet, without being at the same time a profound philosopher." This was Coleridge's dabbling in that grandiose absorption of metaphysics into *Dichtung and Kunst*, or into a philosophy of these, such as we have noted among the Germans. The modern intuitional critic will object to this as an over-conceptualization of poetry. The modern "Aristotelian" will say, in his own language, that such a theory of poetry is not a theory of the poetic object as something specifically different from anything else, that the theory deals only with the poetic process and furthermore assimilates this to metaphysics and to other non-poetic mental processes. To which it may be added that Coleridge himself, in Chapter XIV of the *Biographia*, offers his own definition of the poem as a "composition" having "for its immediate object pleasure not truth," but that by this definition he would have had trouble discriminating between a poem by Wordsworth and one by Bowles. It was only when the general norms of content - passion and thought - were invoked that he could tell a good poem from a bad one.

A difficulty that has always been rather prominent for romantic scholarship lies in the fact that romantic poems do so pronouncedly contain and assert the philosophy of nature and of art which is supposedly also their formal principle. What the writers in the classical *Ars Poetica* tradition might try to do here and there, as in Pope's little series of handsprings on the theme of sound and sense, the romantic writers may approximate in a whole poem, and more subtly - and this, presumably, one would say they were led to do and were able to do because of the intimate union which they conceived to obtain between art and nature. The theory was endlessly reflexive and self-conscious. The assertion of the romantic poetries seems always to lurk not far from the embodiment in the poems and to be needed for the deciphering of the latter. Romantic poems tend to be about romantic imagination. Shelley's *West Wind* and Wordsworth's *Prelude* are triumphant instances of how the assertion may be dramatized and assimilated into structure.

Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*, which may be read as a poem about imagination, gets along with so little assertion that its theme has perhaps not even been suspected until very recently. The assertion (the content) of a poem is, however, never the same as the embodiment (the poem itself, the achievement), and the first never assures us of the second.

V

The 18th century notion of sublimity as a subjective experience of genius had gotten along well enough with the emerging principle of association by emotive congruity. The latter principle was so well installed in critical thinking by the time of Wordsworth and Coleridge that they could hardly have avoided taking advantage of it. It is true that they did this with delicacy. Wordsworth in his 1800 Preface, after twice invoking the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings", adds the tempering phrase "emotion recollected in tranquility," and he touches the same note in his verse.

And then my heart with pleasure fills
And dances with the daffodils.

The music in my heart I bore
Long after it was heard no more.

In one of his later letters he professes: "I have never given way to my own feelings in personifying natural objects without bringing all that I have said to a rigorous after-test of good sense." Like the Germans, both Wordsworth and Coleridge must be largely exculpated as transmitters of 18th century sentimentalism. Nevertheless the critical theory of each contains some striking statements of the emotive principle. Thus, in the 1800 preface :

Another circumstance must be mentioned which distinguishes these Poems from the popular Poetry of the day ; it is this, that the feeling therein developed gives importance to the action and situation, and not the action and situation to the feeling.

"the appropriate business of poetry,... " he says later, "and her duty, is to treat of things not as they are, but as they appear; not as they exist in themselves, but as they seem to exist to the sense, and to the passions." "You feel strongly," he writes to a minor poet; "trust to those feelings, and your poem will take its shape and proportions as a tree does from the vital principle that actuates it." (*Letters*, I, 537)

And Coleridge :

Association depends in a much greater degree on the recurrence of resembling states of feeling than trains of ideas. ... A metaphysical solution [like Hartley's] that does not instantly tell you something in the heart is grievously to be suspected... I almost think that ideas never recall ideas any more than leaves in a forest create each other's motion. The breeze it is runs thro' them - it is the soul or state of feeling. If I had said no one idea ever recalls another, I am confident that I could support the assertion." (*Letters*, I, 428)

What first struck Coleridge about Wordsworth's poetry was

"the union of deep feeling with profound thought ... and above all the original gift of spreading the tone, the atmosphere and with it the depth and height of the ideal world..." (*Biographic Literaria*, IV)

And apropos of Shakespeare :

Images become proofs of original genius only so far as they are modified by a predominant passion. (*Biographic Literaria*, XV).

He speaks of "modifying a series of thoughts by some one predominant thought or feeling." In the preceding chapter, his phrase is "a tone and spirit of unity." In his dramatic criticism, Coleridge likes to speak about the ruling passion of a character (Capulet or Lear), and like A.W. Schlegel, he replaces the old unities of time, space, and action by a "unity of interest."

If the Wordsworthian formula "emotion recollected in tranquillity" be taken in an approximately holo-morphic way, one may suppose that "emotion" refers to a kind of poetic content, and tranquil "recollection" to the control or shaping of this content - the formal poetic principle. In the Coleridgean formulas which we have just quoted, however, the emphasis is reversed. Emotion appears, or attempts to appear, as the organizing principle. The difference is crucial. As organization is a form of intelligibility, it is a basic question of poetic theory whether in fact emotion as such can become the formal or organizing principle of a poem without the disappearance of the principle.