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# 'THE INDIVIDUAL MIND AND THE EXTERNAL WORLD':

# AN ASPECT OF ROMANTICISM IN

# SELECTED WRITINGS OF WORDSWORTH AND COLERIDGE

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of Arts University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg for the Degree of Master of Arts.

SEPTEMBER 1987

## DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

NORMAN DAVID BERNARD

1 SEPTEMBER 1987

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## *TEXTUAL NOTE*

Unless otherwise stated all references to Wordsworth's poetry and the 1805 Prelude are taken from *The Oxford Authors Edition*, edited by S. Gill. References to the 1850 Prelude come from the *Norton* Critical Edition of The Prelude, edited by J. Wordsworth, M.H. Abrams and S. Gill. The relevant details concerning these editions are to be found in *Section D of the Bibliography*.

## SUMMARY

Hopkins' characterization of imagination as the "widow of an insight lost" hints suggestively at a problem which Schiller's famous Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man had already shown long before to be central to European Romanticism. Imagination and consciousness appear only at the cost of destroying an unproblematic unity of self and world. As Wordsworth's Preface to the Excursion suggests, many Romantic poets and thinkers hoped, paradoxically, to regain through consciousness itself a richer, more comprehensive unity of being than the innocent unreflective unity of self and world that had been lost. A demonstration of the kind envisaged in The Excursion that mind and world were essentially "fitted" to each other could regain, immanently within experience itself, the positives of religious experience in purely secular terms.

Section B of Chapter 1 suggests that dichotomies of self and world had come to be sharply experienced as a result of the "Cartesian Split". Descartes' attempts to ground our knowledge of the world by reconstructing it with logical inferences from a certitude, the cogito, given to us in experience indubitably, left the mind at best precariously and contingently connected with the world. The self-defining subject is now central to European thought.

Descartes' procedures reflected the methods of a newly emergent and highly successful physics which tended to favour an atomistic and mechanistic conception of experience. These two trends were connected at a deep level, for to the extent that subject and object, mind and matter were thought of as ontologically distinct, objects were regarded as things to be manipulated and controlled.[2] These dualisms were intolerable to Romantic writers and thinkers. To them, on the contrary, what seemed to be given in experience was an intuition of the life of things. Schelling, believing that the world was an organism to be understood in terms of the direction of its evolution, came to articulate a metaphysics conceiving of man as the spiritual essence of the world rendered conscious.[3] In so doing he became the first notable thinker to try and systematically ground beliefs that man's relationship to the world was a "fellowship of essence". Section C of Chapter 1 ends with a brief look at some verse in The Prelude, and suggests that Schelling's philosophy and Wordsworth's poetry exemplify what Hirsch calls a common "structure of experience".[4]

The examination of Coleridge's work starting in Chapter 2, Section A, shows how these concerns came to play a role in English Romanticism. Coleridge's assertions in the Biographia Literaria that "Truth is the correlative of

Being... *intelligence* and being are reciprocally each other's substrate",[5] and his recasting of the Kantian notion of "Reason" to make it *refer* to something like a direct intuition of spiritual truths,[6] indicate how he too tried to articulate a conception of the *world* as embodied spirit. The characterization of Truth and Being cited above indicates that the "ideas", the spiritual intuitions to which "Reason" gave access strangely resembled potencies and agencies. The identy of subject and objects is the ultimate principle of not merely our knowledge, but of being itself. I attempt to show in Chapter 2 Section B that this attempt to ground the conceptual in the non-cognitive led to Coleridge assigning art in general, and poetry in *particular*, enormous importance. The poem, like the faculty of *Imagination* itself, synthesises and unifies by concretely embodying our *intuitions* into the "life of things" in images.[7] The *symbol*, revealingly defined as a "translucence" of the "*ideal* in the *real*" and of the "eternal through and in the temporal", is claimed to be part of the reality it simultaneously *represents*. Section C of Chapter 2 accordingly examines Frost at Midnight and the Eolian Harp to show how the attempt to express the notions mentioned above influenced the structure and language of Coleridge's poems.

Coleridge's poems often begin by depicting a state of alienated isolation which is gradually overcome by memories and reflections culminating in an insight into the "One Life" celebrated in the Eolian Harp. The use of implied auditors to counter the solipsism implicit in the opening of a poem like Frost at Midnight [8] and generalize the significance of the poem's culminating insight is also fairly frequent. The culminating insight into the "One Life" is given actually in an epiphany which simultaneously certifies the revelation in question. The precariously self-validating nature of the epiphany gives rise to difficulties examined in Chapter 2 Section D. The attempt of "natural piety" - to use Wordsworth's term - to dissolve any sharp distinctions between mind and world in a perception of a supposedly common essence is in danger of relapsing into solipsism. This is shown by one of Coleridge's notebook entries and by some passages in The Prelude such as IV 247-67, where objects are "crossed" with the perceiver's "image". The poetry of Wordsworth and Coleridge accordingly embodies an inconclusive subject/object dialectic. The precariousness of the epiphanic moment can also result in an attempt, seen in the contradictory close of the Eolian Harp, to ground our insight into the "one Life" more securely in a "theology" of sorts. This tendency is seen in The Prelude in the Simplon-Pass passage where objects, "soulless images" in

themselves, owe their radiance to a "light divine". The connections drawn here indicate that Wordsworth's verse will be dealt with, initially, by examining the central concept of "natural piety", and then the divergent conceptions of mind, imagination and experience arising out of attempts to deal with the precariousness of both "natural piety's" beliefs and the epiphanic moments underwriting them.

Chapter 3 Section A deals with those parts of Wordsworth's work - Tintern Abbey and the Invocation to The Prelude are central texts - in which affirmations that mind and world are "kindred streams" are relatively unproblematical. Detailed attention to the language of the poetry shows how calculated verbal and syntactical ambiguities erode hard and fast distinctions between perception and the world perceived. However, ambiguities of diction and syntax present even in the Invocation reveal a latent tension between two strands in Wordsworth's work, one in which the mind half-perceives and half-creates, to use a phrase of Tintern Abbey, and one in which objects are, to a greater degree, constituted as aspects of self. One way to deal with the solipsism latent in "natural piety's" problematical attempt to believe simultaneously in the independent existence of the world and the mind - dependence of perception would be to simply celebrate the autonomy of mind incipient in many passages of The Prelude. This occurs to a

degree in IV 247-67, analysed in some detail, and in a remarkable celebration of the mind as "Lord and master of outward sense". This is, however, problematical, for the poet is then "deparred" from "Nature's images". The second response to the precariousness of the epiphanic moment has already been outlined above. In the Simplon-Pass passage we see the emergence of an ambiguously "autonomous" imagination, the "unfathered vapour", detached from the objects of the natural world to the extent that it seeks participation in the divine. These two divergent responses to the fragility of "natural piety" are dealt with in Section B of Chapter 3.

Section C deals with the Immortality Ode, a poem recording a loss of the "celestial light" and "visionary gleam" which reveals the fundamental precariousness of the visionary faculty celebrated in the Simplon-Pass passage. Nostalgic hankerings after a discredited "natural piety", expressed in stanza 3, only come to highlight the flight of the "visionary gleam", the disjunction between the "celestial light" and the prison-house into which our birth is said to be a descent. Suspended between a discredited "natural piety" and attenuated trust in a faculty of vision whose precariousness has been revealed, Wordsworth attempts to reconcile the poem's tensions, unsuccessfully in my opinion, with the notion of Platonic recollection. In recollection

the significance of the child's immediate participation in the divine is retrieved for consciousness, the "visionary gleam" being simultaneously retained and transformed in the "philosophic mind".[9] This seems questionable, for if our birth is a descent into the "Shades of the prison-house", earthly existence must surely be beset by an ever increasing blindness which leaves the child "best philosopher". The dissertation concludes that Wordsworth's work as a whole is characterized by inconclusive oscillation between various ultimately divergent accounts of mind, experience and the world.

The Epilogue explores the continuities between Romanticism and Modernism, suggesting that the much celebrated belief in a reciprocal interchange between mind and nature may well be Romanticism's most conservative aspect. Romanticism's concern with the subject/object dialectic, with the already noted uncertainty about the extent of the mind's constitutive role in experience was, however, to be massively influential. I argue that we see, in Wallace Stevens' work, a paradoxically simultaneous radicalization of the claims made for imagination on one level, and their attenuation on another. Modernist writers often imply that a nearly absolute autonomy of imagination, rarely seen in Wordsworth, is intrinsic to sense-perception. And yet the activity of the mind in perception never yields anything

like a celebration of the "One Life", of a metaphysically underwritten "fellowship of essence" of man and nature. Redemptive acts of imagination have *merely* individual significance.[10] *This diminished metaphysical confidence is perhaps a reason why one particular aspect of* Wordsworth's response to the fragility of "natural piety", his radicalization of the subject/object dialectic was influential, rather than the Simplon-Pass passage's attempt to ground our perception of "glory" in natural objects transcendentally.

## CHAPTER ONE : INTRODUCTION

### SECTION A

A suggestive hint of what I take to be a central problem of Romanticism is found in Hopkins' sonnet to R.B., in which imagination is characterized as the "widow of an insight lost."[1] In Hopkins' sonnet, imagination is only born at the moment when an unproblematic unity of self and world has already been lost and, as Hopkins' characterization may suggest to us, it is the paradoxical task of consciousness to recover in an enhanced form the unity for whose loss it was initially responsible. Hopkins' poem articulates, albeit in an elliptic manner, a problem that had become widely diffused in European thought and literature from the time of Schiller onwards.

In the letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man Schiller gave the same distinctively Romantic diagnosis of what many of the period's most eminent writers and thinkers perceived to be the fragmentation of contemporary man's experience. Although Schiller at times nostalgically contrasted the modern condition with what he perceived to be the ideally harmonious existence of the Greek polis - the accuracy of

this assessment need not detain us - Schiller's letters also suggest the fragmentation, both individual and collective, to be an unavoidable product of self-consciousness itself: "If the manifold potentialities in man were ever to be developed, there was no other way but to pit them one against the other. . This antagonism of faculties and functions is the great instrument of civilization - but it is only the instrument, for as long as it persists, we are only on the way to becoming civilized."[2] These concerns run through Schiller's text like a leitmotif, and are perhaps most precisely formulated in the opening of the sixth letter - "Such a portrait, you will tell me, does indeed resemble mankind today, but does it not resemble any people caught up in the process of civilization, since all of them, without exception, must fall away from Nature by the abuse of Reason before they can return to her by the use of Reason".[3]

In Schiller's letters On the Aesthetic Education of Man, as in Hopkins' sonnet, beauty and reflection, nature and consciousness, seem to belong to different orders of being that stand in an antithetical relation to one another. Precisely to the extent that Schiller's "Reason" comes to the fore, it seems that "Nature" is irretrievably lost.[4] Ernst Cassirer has shown in a magnificent essay[5] how the problems engendered by polarities of "Life" and "Thought",

"Nature" and "Spirit" have continued to beset modern "philosophical doctrines of man."[6] Similar polarities also loom large in the work of a poet such as Wallace Stevens indicating - despite the by and large far more optimistic thrust of the work of Wordsworth and Coleridge - that Romantic categories are, for better or worse, still influential. Indeeed, much of our thought on these matters still wrestles with problems first articulated clearly at the close of the eighteenth century.

At its best, far from being an unsophisticated primitivism, the work of Romantic poets and thinkers seeks to convert thought into something more encompassing than the merely intellectual.[7] It hopes to attain, paradoxically, through consciousness, a second or "organized innocence" very similar to Blake's ideal in the Songs of Innocence and Experience. As Schiller's antitheses between "Reason" and "Nature" suggest, the means for achieving this is a dialectic of contraries. The most succinct account of this central Romantic motif is given by a famous Von Kleist parable in which he claims that "..We have eaten from the tree of knowledge. Now paradise is bolted shut, and the angel stands behind us. We must journey round the world and see perhaps whether it is open again somewhere on the yonder side..."

"Then we would have to eat again from the tree of knowledge, in order to fall back again into the state of innocence?"

"To be sure" he answered "That is the last chapter in the history of the world".[8]

M.H. Abrams, writing on Schiller, though the theological overtones of Von Kleist's parable are even more obvious, considers the letters On the Aesthetic Education of Man to be a transposition of "a traditional theological concept - the paradox of the felix culpa."[9] Abrams is correct to point to the religious nature of the "structure of experience"[9a] implicit in Schiller's text. It would, however, perhaps be even more accurate to relate the texts of Schiller and Von Kleist to the work of a theologian such as Eriugena, in which we find an exposition of a basic idea various transformations of which have subsequently been "essential to all Northern mysticism of the pantheistic kind."[10] As Kolakowski has noted this, "Speaking in the most general terms ... the idea of the potential Absolute (a semi-Absolute, if this expression can be permitted) which attains to full actuality by evolving out of itself a non-absolute reality characterized by transience, contingency, and evil; such non-absolute realities are a necessary phase of the Absolute's growth towards self-realization, and this function of theirs justifies the

course of world history ... The Absolute had to exceed its own boundaries and create a contingent, finite and transient world in which it could contemplate itself as in a mirror, so that, having re-absorbed this exteriorization of itself, it might become other than it originally was, richer by the totality of its relationship with the world: instead of a closed self-sufficient system it becomes an Absolute known and loved by its own creation. We have here a complete schema of "enriching alienation," serving to explain the whole history of being, the vision of a Deity who develops by a process of decline and re-ascent ... God, when the cosmic epic is concluded, will find himself in a different state than before, enriched by his own creatures' knowledge of him, so also man, though he return to his 'first ginnings', will not be purely and simply in his original state: for he will be in a condition in which a second fall is impossible and his unity with God is eternal and indissoluble."[11]

Much Romantic thought, as the texts examined so far make clear, could indeed be plausibly regarded as a secularised variant of just such a schema of "enriching alienation". The unproblematical unity of self and world shattered, as *Hopkins'* characterization of imagination suggests, by the divisiveness of self-consciousness, is, in its own terms, *reminiscent* of the initial state of Eriugena's God or the neo-Platonic Absolute of the Enneads".[12] The neo-Platonic

Absolute is an undifferentiated and non-contingent being in whom essence and existence co-incide.[13] Accordingly evil, within such a theogony, is construed as a *fall into disunity* and division. This identification of evil and death with disunity and division is endemic to much Romantic thought: "So long as I am identical with nature ... I understand what a living nature is as well as I understand my own life ... *As soon, however,* as I *separate myself* from nature, nothing more is left for me but a dead object".[14]

Where the two schemas differ most fundamentally of all, however, is in the third and final stage of the tripartite "structure of experience" outlined above, a structure of experience also implicit in the texts of Hopkins, Schiller and Von Kleist. As traditional revelation no longer commanded intellectual assent, it seemed difficult to accept a doctrine in which spiritual integration was finally attained when God, "richer by the totality of his relationship with the world", re-absorbed the finite existents which had formerly - see Kolakowski - functioned as an "exteriorization", a self-constituted "other". The paradoxical functions assigned to *consciousness and* knowledge in the texts under examination indicate a strong awareness that, in an age of diminished or lost faith integration, if possible at all, was only to be had by continuing further "along the hard road of culture and *civilization*".[15] The attempt to retrieve, through

consciousness and for consciousness, a state in which knowledge - see Von Kleist - and unity of being are no longer incompatible, amounts to nothing less than a "self-deification"[16] of sorts, in which mind achieves integration through a "dialectic of self-cancelling exteriorization".[17] It is only through some such dialectic that the positives of religious experience could, as the intellectual climate of the age demanded, be regained immanently within experience itself.[18]

The quasi-religious metaphysical reconciliation of the sundered polarities of "Nature" and "Spirit" gestured towards in the texts of Schiller, Von Kleist and Hopkins is deeply problematical. It seems vitiatingly circular to hope that consciousness can overcome the divisions which it is held to have engendered, or believe that we can, through an expansion of awareness, annul our sense of the world's "otherness" in a manner compatible with continued belief in its independent existence. Nonetheless, a dialectic similar to that implicit in the texts of Hopkins, Schiller and Von Kleist remains central to any understanding of Romantic poetry. Much of the poetry of Wordsworth is engaged in a search for that secularized state of Grace in which we come to understand as well as feel

...How exquisitely the individual Mind
...to the external world
Is fitted:- and how exquisitely too:-
Theme this but little heard of among Men -
The external World is fitted to the Mind.
(The Excursion, Preface: 63; 65-8)

Whether or not the sundered polarities of "Reason" and "Nature" can be fused through a re-attainment of unity of being is one of the central concerns of Romanticism. As the Preface to *The Excursion* indicates, Wordsworth, Coleridge and other Romantic poets attempted to overcome the dichotomies of self and world, subject and object, knowledge and integration by trying to articulate a relationship between mind and world that is active and reciprocal, from which self-consciouness of a type associated with the Enlightenment has been excluded. In order to understand why dichotomies between self and world should have been so sharply experienced at this period in European history, it will be necessary to examine what has come to be known as the "Cartesian Split".

SECTION B

The kinds of procedure and modes of argument initiated by Descartes contrast sharply with and were designed to supplant the conventionally religious Medieval and Renaissance view of the "world as text".[9] In a universe thought of as the product of the Creator's intentions, the immanent meaning of an object is hierarchically determined by its place in the whole. Knowledge accordingly consisted in finding the potentially infinite correspondences between beings whose relations to one another embodied a divinely underwritten order, and explanation was conceived of as purely analogical.

These last two points can be confirmed by a brief extract from an early seventeenth century attempt to refute Galileo's claim to have discovered Jupiter's moons. "...There are seven windows given to animals in the domicile of the head, through which the air is admitted to the tabernacle of the body, to enlighten, to warm, and to nourish it. What are these parts of the microcosmos? Two nostrils, two eyes, two ears and a mouth. So in the heavens, as in a macrocosmos, there are two favourable stars, two unpropitious, two luminaries, and Mercury undecided and indifferent. From this and from many other

similarities in nature, such as the seven metals etc, which it were tedious to enumerate, we gather that the number of planets is necessarily seven."[20] Clearly this passage is structured by the assumption that the same conceptual categories apply to both thought and the world, and that correspondences discovered between objects accordingly express the same idea. The implicit assumption that objects were the material embodiments of ideas which could be read off the book of the world ceased, under the impact of religious upheaval and the revival of Pyrrhonian scepticism, to be intellectually tenable for many by the end of the Renaissance. By the turn of the sixteenth century thinkers such as Sir Francis Bacon accordingly hoped to elaborate a philosophy which would acknowledge the explanatory power of the newly emergent physical sciences.

Pre-eminent among those philosophers inspired by mathematics, a science in which logical relations between propositions were both transparent and necessary, Descartes hoped to justify our claims to knowledge of the external world in a quasi-mathematical way by means of a series of logical deductions from a first principle that could be incorrigibly known. In the course of elaborating an epistemology simultaneously inspired by and giving impetus to the success of mathematical modes of explanation in seventeenth century mechanical physics, Descartes was the

first to formulate a specifically modern account of man as a "subject of experience."

The first principle from which reconstruction of our claims to knowledge could begin in the absence of traditionally religious modes of explanation lay in the cogito, the "thinking being" of Descartes' "I think therefore I am". The nature of the certitude, if any, that Descartes uncovered has been intensely debated[21] in a way that need not concern us here. What is important for our purposes is the Cartesian distinction between "thought events,"[22] the realm of the cogito, of which certain knowledge is possible, and the world of common-sense experience, bracketed in the famous "methodical doubt." This doctrine entails conceiving of mind and matter, subject and object, as ontologically distinct. In short Cartesian thought entails a distinction between the modern self-defining subject of experience and the external world about which it comes to have at best problematical beliefs.[23] At a stroke man becomes the privileged being in and through which "representation" in the modern sense of the word becomes possible,[24] and the incorrigibility of the cogito's acts of thinking, believing, intending etc the starting point of philosophy.

The divide between mind and matter, conceived of as ontologically distinct substances, is what has become known

as the "Cartesian Split." It cannot be sufficiently stressed that Descartes' attempt to ground our knowledge in the "self-certainty of the knowing subject"[25] led to a conception of the knowing subject as externally and contingently related to the world. In particular the attempt to locate certitude in the cogito led to the distinctively modern conception of the problem of knowledge as one of "inner representation". Inevitably, its central difficulty was that of moving in a logical way from mental representations, the data given to consciousness indubitably, to the full richness of our experience of the external world.[26]

As the considerations raised in the previous paragraphs suggest, the split between mind and matter, between the knowing subject and the objects about which it comes to hold problematical beliefs through "inner representation", would seem unavoidably to result in scepticism. Descartes proved unable to overcome the scepticism generated by his inability to justify knowledge of the world whose existence had been bracketed in the "methodical doubt" deductively. He could only do so by using the logically unacceptable notion of God as guarantor of the objectivity of our perceptions. As Kolakowski writes "... this passage from cogito to God revealed, from the very beginning, so many logical lacunas that the effect of Descartes' efforts turned out to

contradict his intentions : his strictures on the reliability of current ways of cognition seemed much stronger than his endeavour to build a firm foundation for a new kind of certainty; the sceptical side operated better than the logically fragile reconstruction of the universe in a meaningful order."[27] The effect of this lacuna in Descartes' philosophy is deeply ironic. Given Descartes' failure to justify inferences from the "thought-events" of the cogito to knowledge of the external world, scepticism is the inevitable consequence of a philosophy that had aimed to ground the claims to knowledge implicit in our everyday beliefs in a certitude that would establish them once and for all.

The distinction between the modern self-contained and self-defining subject and the objects of experiece about which it comes to hold at best problematical beliefs, the divide between mind and matter conceived of as ontologically distinct substances and the scepticism it seemed to entail was intolerable to the Romantics. Wordsworth, Coleridge and other Romantic poets and thinkers attempted to rebut this picture of the mind externally and contingently related - if related at all - to the world by implicitly challenging the subject/object model of our epistemological predicament. They hoped to show that, far from being an inevitable consequence of rational thought, such a model rested on questionable assumptions.

The quasi-mathematical nature of Descartes' attempts to reconstruct our knowledge of the external world from clear and distinct ideas and the inferences that can be drawm from them implies a second cluster of equally important assumptions, namely assumptions about what can count as objectivity and rational explanation. One of the most important assumptions of all was that the laws of nature were specifiable by mathematical formulae encoding regularities "underlying sensible appearances".[28] These mathematically specificable laws could be uncovered through controlled observation, experiment and the use of human rationality. The capacity for rational thought enabled everyone, at least in principle, to attain knowledge in science, philosophy or the human sciences by making valid inferences from simple truths known indubitably.[28a] In particular it was believed by many that the success and unprecedentedly rapid development of the physical sciences would allow one to extrapolate from their procedures a set of rules that would be applicable to furthering knowledge in all disciplines, at least in principle. The elaboration of a method capable in principle of placing the study of human nature on a scientific footing would result in a precision capable of resolving or debunking once and for all the endless metaphysical debates engaged in by scholastic predecessors.[29]

Some philosophers, such as Leibniz, encouraged by the fact that the methodological elaboration of the differential and integral calculus had not merely been a means of statically representing the already known, but a means of creating new objects of knowledge, hoped to found a "*mathesis* universalis" ie a universal science of measurement, orders and relations.[30] Others, such as Voltaire, more concerned with social and political thought, placed more emphasis on "'le bon sens', re-inforced by observation, experiment"[31] and a *polemical* willingness to combat prejudice and bigotry wherever they were to be found. More important by far than such differences of emphasis was the belief that "all genuine questions were in principle answerable; truth was one, error multiple; the true answers must of necessity be universal and immutable, that is, true everywhere, at all times, for all men, and discoverable by reason, by relevant experience, *observation and the methods* of experiment, logic and calculation. A logically connected structure of rules, laws, generalisations, susceptible of demonstration or, at least in practice, of a high degree of confirmation ... could, at least in principle, be constructed, and could replace the chaotic amalgam of ignorance, laziness, guesswork, superstition, prejudice, dogma, fantasy and, above all, what *Helvetius called 'interested error'*, which ... had throughout human history been largely responsible for the vices, follies and miseries of mankind."[32] This

confidence in the power of unaided reason and the potentially universal applicability of *scientific method* is, though by no means entirely unchallenged, representative of what Isaiah Berlin has called "the central tradition of the Enlightenment."[33]

One of the most important consequence of Descartes' introduction of quasi-mathematical modes of explanation to philosophy was an atomistic and mechanistic conception of experience itself. Cartesian ideas, it is important to *note*, are atomistically conceived of as distinct and separate, perhaps on analogy with the elementary particles of Galilean physics. The British empiricists, not to mention the more extreme French Enlightenment materialists such as Condillac, La Metrie and Helvetius, believed that a genetic reconstruction of the most complex abstract thoughts in terms of the association and dissociation of impressions *rooted in sensory experience* was possible.[34] Locke, in the Treatise on Human Understanding, defines knowledge in terms of the inner connection and agreement of our ideas. These ideas are, as Berlin makes clear, almost conceived of as distinct particles whose agreement with or disjunctness from one another can be seen by the "inner eye" of the mind in much the same way as the eye itself can group objects on the basis of *shared properties*.[35] *In such a scheme*, human nature itself is in principle knowable through and through

by means of a scientific psychology whose proper objects are to be revealed *through introspection. This strand* of thought is best exemplified by Hume's belief that a science of human nature could be elaborated in which the principle of the association of ideas would, in the manner of Newton's law of Motion, account for any mental phenomenon by explaining why various perceptions come to be "present to the mind".[36]

As the procedures of mechanical physics and the attempt to produce a scientific psychology with the association of ideas as its guiding principle show, a scientific account of a range of phenomena has, in a sense, to abstract from the particular. This tendency is, the early Hartleyanism of men like Wordsworth and Coleridge notwithstanding, fundamentally at odds with the deepest strains of Romanticism.[37] Obviously scientific generalisations can only have *predictive force if the phenomena* to which they apply have properties which are not context-dependent.[38] In short, a fundamentally "expressive" notion of the universe of the type against which the Enlightenment reacted has been replaced by a world of purely empirical correlations to be mapped by observation.[39] For Descartes and the Enlightenment, both Renaissance exegesis of the potentially *infinite correspondences expressing the intentions* of a creator and Romantic notions of the world as embodied

spirit, could only seem to be misguided anthropomorphism and sentimental self-projection.

Charles Taylor is correct to point out that, at a very deep level, the modern notion of a subject of experience and the atomistic and mechanistic conception of experience outlined above are intimately connected with one another. For, precisely to the extent that mind and matter are conceived of as ontologically distinct, the cogito becoming that which determines the being of objects of experience, these objects come to be regarded as things to be manipulated and controlled. It is at this point that the Cartesian notion of subjectivity becomes most strongly linked to the technological control that mathematics and mathematically inspired modes of explanation had made possible. "This control over things which has grown with modern science and technology is often thought of as the principal motivation of the scientific revolution and the development of the modern outlook. Bacon's oft-quoted slogan "knowledge is power" can easily give us this impression, and this 'technological' view of the seventeenth century revolution is one of the reasons why Bacon has often been given a greater role in it than he deserves, alongside Galileo and Descartes. But ... we can read his motivation in a different way. We rather see the control as valuable not so much in itself as in its confirmation of a certain view of

spirit, could only seem to be misguided anthropomorphism and sentimental self-projection.

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things : a view of the world not as a locus of meanings, but rather of contingent de-facto correlations. Manipulability of the world confirms *the new self-defining* identity as it were : the proper relation of man to a meaningful order is to put himself into tune with it; by contrast nothing sets the seal more clearly on the rejection of this v ion than successfully treating the world as object of control. Manipulability both proves and celebrates this vision of things as 'disenchanted' (entzaubert) to use Max Weber's famous phrase ...The point of using *this term is to mark* the fact that for the modern view categories of meaning and purpose apply exclusively to the thoughts and actions of subjects, and cannot find a purchase in the world they think about and act on. To think of things in these terms is to project subjective categories, to set aside these categories is thus to 'objectify'. This marks a new, modern notion of objectivity correlative to the new subjectivity."[40]

SECTION C

An atomistic conception of experience, mechanistic notions of explanation, and a radical separation of subject and object leading to a perception of the world as 'disenchanted,' were aspects of post-Cartesian thought contributing to the spiritual dilemmas of many poets and thinkers whom we loosely term 'Romantic'. Yet poets and thinkers could not overcome the subject/object, nature/spirit dichotomies or respond to a world which, in Carlyle's words, made it impossible even to find solace by believing in a devil,[41] by falling back on the theocentric world-view. After the assaults of the Enlightenment the integration of "fact" and "value" sketched in our brief characterization of the Renaissance no longer, as indicated earlier, inspired general intellectual conviction.

If the ideal articulated by Schiller's letters and Von Kleist's parable of uniting the poles of "Reason" and "Nature" without sacrificing either was to be achieved, sound reasons would have to be given to show that the dichotomies of Enlightenment thought rested on an inadequate and incomplete conception of experience itself. The first philosophical movement to try and do justice to the period's aspirations for wholeness and integration was German

*Idealism*, and the thinker most influential in this respect may well have been Schelling. It is Schelling alone who will be briefly examined here, partly because an attempt to give a history of German idealism from Kant to Hegel will burden the exposition with details of technical philosophy not relevant to our concerns. More importantly, however, in comparing the two men, E.D. Hirsch is quite correct to speak of a "structure of experience" which Wordsworth and Schelling shared.[42] The "structure of experience" examined by Hirsch is also, it might be added, relevant to a consideration of those aspects of Coleridge's work that will be examined in Chapter 2. The many parallels that may be drawn between these three figures indicate a measure of homogeneity in the concerns of European Romanticism.

It is precisely this attempt to articulate a new and more comprehensive conception of experience that was Romanticism's attempted answer to the Enlightenment, and a clue to its nature can be seen in Blake's polemical statement that "An atom is a thing which does not exist."[43] Blake's point is that it is the "atom" or the Newtonian particle that is an illegitimate abstraction from the sensory data. What is actually perceived is the life of things, and to treat a living organism in the manner of science is to lose the truth inhering in one's perception of *the living, the unique and the particular.*

In connecting the concept of truth with the irreducible particularity of perceptions, Blake was drawing attention to what he conceived to be the *limitingly instrumental* nature of scientific thought: "... our intelligence is constructed in such a way as to be able to deal adequately with inert matter and to organize it according to the needs of life; it is primarily an organ of survival and of progress in technical skills. Its tendency is to reduce qualities to quantitative differences, new phenomena to old patterns, the unique to the repeatable and abstract ..."[44] Blake attempts to counterpose to a reductively instrumental rationality a mode of cognition that is, as noted, simultaneously a communion with "what is unique and therefore inexpressible"[45] in the object: "What is real is *always* unique ... abstractions have no equivalents in reality; since they serve to isolate, for pratical purposes, certain qualities, to group objects into classes, they are not, strictly speaking, cognitive instruments and do not open up any avenues leading to genuine acquaintance with reality".[46] It is this ostensibly non-abstracting mode of cognition claiming to yield a knowledge of the world purged of the taint of utilitarian considerations that many romantic thinkers, from Jacobi onwards, called "intuition".[47] A Blakean stress on the unique and particular makes it clear that intuition is a "kind of quasi-identification with the object"[48] in which we are

able to identify with its "life directly, in a movement of sympathy".[49]

Schelling was the philosopher who, more than any other, attempted to give such intuitions a systematic philosophical grounding. If the dualisms of post - Cartesian European thought were ever to be overcome it seemed that this was only possible, as the considerations raised in the previous paragraph suggest, on the assumption of a connection between man and the world that is metaphysical and necessary rather than purely external and contingent. For as long as I subscribe to a subject/object epistemological model, "I assert that external things exist independently and cause representations of themselves in me, I necessarily set myself above thing and representation. And I thus implicitly affirm myself as spirit. And the question at once arises, how can external things exercise a determining causal activity on spirit?"[50]

Kant, it is true, had accorded the mind a more active role in perception than his materialist predecessors had done. His insistence that man only knows phenomenal reality by virtue of the a-priori categories in terms of which raw sense data are synthesized seemed, however, to leave us with the dilemma that we have knowledge only of the phenomenal, not of things as they are in themselves.[51] To Schelling

and others the notion of "things in themselves" independent of our experience of them seemed intolerable, imposing in the last analysis a scepticism that left all the dualisms bequeathed by post-Cartesian thought intact. The core of Schelling's System of Transcendental Idealism lies in his attempt to show that the unity of Nature and Spirit in which he passionately believes has an ontological foundation. Such a connection could be established "not by asserting, as Kant had done, that reality for us is a product of consciousness, but by asserting that mind and the objective world have ultimately the same character."[52]

Schelling believed that he was justified in postulating an identical essence for Nature and Spirit for two important reasons. Firstly, and most importantly, Schelling's somewhat erratic and suspect reflections on scientific and biological phenomena display an interest in the genesis of organic nature out of the inorganic. This process seemed to him to justify regarding the natural world as an evolving organism in which several levels of being could be distinguished and which could only be properly understood in terms of the direction in which it was evolving.[53] The final stage of this evolutionary process was the stage in which, "by imperceptible degrees ... spirit emerged from within the material world"[54] in the form of man. Since it was from within the natural world that spirit emerged

Schelling, to continue taking him on his own terms, regarded man as the essential realization of that world's intrinsic nature. *If man is* the essence of the world embodied and rendered animate and conscious,[55] any attempts to sunder the two conceptually must be mistaken. Schelling, far *from* agreeing with Kant that the notions of purpose and teleology were purely regulative, telling us nothing substantive about the world in itself, believed that the considerations outlined above were sufficient to justify rejecting any scheme that *consigned the physical* and the spiritual to different orders of being.[56]

Schelling also believed, wrongly I think, that the dichotomies of the Enlightenment were even the upshot of an imperfect interpretation of scientific procedure itself. The sheer fact of nature's intelligibility, as demonstrated by *the success of scientific experimentation*, seemed to Schelling to be explicable only on the assumption of an inner kinship with spirit or thought: "Every experiment ... involves putting a question to Nature which Nature is forced to answer. And this procedure presupposes the belief that Nature conforms to the demands of reason, that it is intelligible and in this sense ideal ..."[57] In such a scheme the rift between man *and* nature *opened* through reflection would be resolved, not merely through a sentimental assertion of the primacy of feeling, but at the

level of reflection itself through philosophy and art.[58] In Schelling's System of Transcendental Idealism the distinctions between subject and object, nature and spirit can never be absolute because "unconscious subjectivity in nature tries to rejoin full subjectivity. But reciprocally, conscious subjectivity tries to unite itself to its objective counterpart. And this is essential. For the best nature can do on its own is life."[59]

It is clearly only some such synthesis that could begin to satisfy the demand of finding in consciousness itself the means to overcome the divisions to which it had initially given rise. It was only if justified on grounds like this that unity both within and without, a oneness of self and world that did not degenerate into a simple-minded primitivism, could be made to seem plausible. Schelling's metaphysic is of course at best deeply problematical, depending as it does on the ability to give an account of nature as embodied spirit that is philosophically plausible. Nonetheless it represents an important and influential attempt to show that the Cartesian legacy could be overcome by showing that this legacy rested on a partial and inadequate conception of experience, man and the world.

Speculations about affinities between Wordsworth, Coleridge and Schelling should be treated with a measure of caution.

As Hirsch and others have pointed out frequently, Wordsworth's knowledge of German was hardly such as to allow him to obtain an intimate understanding of texts as difficult as those of Fichte and Schelling. Furthermore, although the possibility of indirect influence by the far more philosophically minded Coleridge cannot be entirely discounted, Wordsworth could comment with hostility that he "never read a word of German metaphysics, thank Heaven."[60]

Nonetheless, if we examine some of the Lyrical Ballads, or the mystical vision into the "life of things" that forms the climax of Tintern Abbey, it is difficult not to feel that Wordsworth was attempting to deal with problems similar to those associated with German Romanticism. His poetry bears testimony to a sensibility and intuitive Weltanschauung that is in many ways strongly reminiscent of Schelling.

Innumerable passages in Wordsworth and Coleridge testify to a "Schellingesque" belief that the relationship between mind and world is one, in Keats' words, of a "fellowship of essence",[61] and that in a post-Enlightenment world fact and value can be reintegrated and the hazards of individual isolation countered through the myth of an interchange between the self and nature. One of the most famous passages celebrating such an interchange is the description in The Prelude of the baby at the mother's breast:

For him, in one dear Presence, there exists
A virtue which irradiates and exalts
Objects through widest intercourse of sense.
No outcast he, bewildered and depressed ...
For feeling has to him imparted power
That through the growing faculties of sense
Doth like an agent of the one great Mind
Create, creator and receiver both,
Working but in alliance with the works
Which it beholds ...

(1850 Prelude: II 238-41; 255-60)

The purposeful ambiguity of the meaning of "sense" makes any absolute distinction between mind and the natural world quite untenable, the mind working in loving reciprocity with "the works/ Which it beholds". Keats' "fellowship of essence", the reciprocal relationship between subject and object in which neither lose their identities but nonetheless possess a deep kinship underwritten by the "one great Mind," fully justifies E.D. Hirsch in speaking of a "structure of experience" which Wordsworth and Schelling share in common. Given Wordsworth's lack of concern for a rigorously philosophical justification of his intuitions in these matters this is probably the strongest defensible statement of the relevant similarities. The nonetheless striking nature of the parallel is indicative of a measure

of homogeneity in European Romanticism, both with respect to what thinkers and poets of various nationalities considered problematical and their attempted solutions. In the following chapters it will be necessary to assess what influence a "Schellingesque" attempt to overcome the dualisms bequeathed by post-Cartesian thought had on the poetry and theorising of Coleridge and Wordsworth.

# CHAPTER TWO

## SECTION A

As was stated in the last chapter, the thinkers and poets of European Romanticism were above all concerned with what was perceived to be the fragmentation of modern man's experience. This concern manifested itself in various attempts to overcome the dualisms of post-Cartesian thought by elaborating a more comprehensive doctrine of the nature of experience, man and the world than that bequeathed by the mechanistic world-view of the Enlightenment. A representative example of such an attempt is to be found in Schelling's "Naturphilosophie". This was chosen for examination because it formulates, in an admittedly more abstract way, doctrines whose essential kinship with the view of nature in much of Wordsworth's and Coleridge's work is not difficult to see.

The attempt to provide a philosophically rigorous grounding for the intuition of nature as embodied spirit made an enormous impact on Coleridge in particular during his two year period of study in Germany. Schelling's work, by his own admission, greatly influenced Coleridge's own

philosophical attempts to elaborate a metaphysics showing the essential kinship of nature and spirit. Such an intuition had already received powerful expression in the new genre of the Conversation Poem. It is accordingly through the work of Coleridge that the concerns examined in Chapter 1 came to play a significant part in the development of English Romanticism.

It will be evident from this that I do not agree with the belief that the "philosopher" and the "poet" in Coleridge were antithetical to one another. No reader of both the poetry and texts such as Biographia Literaria and the Statesman's Manual should fail to realise the ways in which the Conversation Poems, for example, shed light on the concerns of the subsequent philosophical writings and, of course, conversely. Both Coleridge's poems and theoretical work not only attempt to articulate a rather Schellingesque "Naturphilosophie," but also show, in a most concentrated form, the difficulties inherent in any such philosophy. In My Heart Leaps Up, the poem significantly used by Wordsworth as an epigraph to the Immortality Ode, we are told that Wordsworth hopes to achieve wholeness and integration by "binding his days" together through a "natural piety" markedly reminiscent of Coleridge. Accordingly an examination of Coleridge's attempts to articulate a "Naturphilosophie" of sorts, along with the difficulties

they encounter, enhances one's understanding of Wordsworth's poetry as a whole by placing his concerns within the wider context of English and European Romanticism. The ways in which Wordsworth's poetry reflect the concerns and problems discussed here will be the subject matter of Chapter 3.

A reading of the Biographia Literaria shows that Coleridge experienced in the years 1796-7 a crisis very similar to that of Wordsworth's as described in Book 11 of The Prelude.[1] The speculations of the Biographia Literaria make it clear that, like Schelling, Schiller and Von Kleist, Coleridge's personal crisis derived from the sense of metaphysical homelessness attendant on a perception of what he took to be the spiritual bankruptcy of Enlightenment thought. Like Schelling, Coleridge believed that only a full-scale revolution which did not merely tinker with individual doctrines of post-Cartesian thought, but totally transformed the nature of philosophical method and enquiry, could overcome the spiritual sterility of the Enlightenment's "world-view".

For Coleridge the Enlightenment's conception of experience was dead and alienating because of the metaphysical sovereignty accorded to the "pretensions of atomism and mechanism - in Coleridge's view, a useful working hypothesis for physical research which had been converted first into

fact, and then into a total world-view".[2] Instead of treating the procedures of mechanical physics merely as heuristic devices Descartes and later philosophers had "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 Grindings..."[3]

As suggested in Chapter 1, the radical separation of subject and object implied by Descartes' methodical doubt and the atomistic conception of experience that seemed to follow from the methods of mechanical physics left a world that was truly disenchanted, in which fact and value, fact and human purpose were completely sundered. Coleridge[4] was to rail repeatedly against what seemed to him the essentially alienating and de-humanising nature of these doctrines. In particular he deplored the way in which the distinctively religious dimension of pre-Cartesian philosophy and world views had been lost. In this Coleridge displayed very similar leanings to thinkers such as Schelling and poets like Novalis. Also wishing consciously to restore a religious dimension to man's conception of experience, they pointed to their affinities with German mystics such as Jakob Boehme and Meister Eckhardt.[5]

In The Friend Coleridge offers a blanket characterisation of the tenor of Enlightenment thought as "that intuition of things ... which presents itself when we think of ourselves as separated beings, and place nature in antithesis to the mind, as object to subject, thing to thought, death to life. ... abstract knowledge or, the science of mere understanding." This is contrasted with a very different philosophical standpoint. In expounding a new metaphysics Coleridge hoped to make transparent "the contemplation of reason, namely, that intuition of things which arises when we possess ourselves, as one with the whole, which is substantial knowledge ... By this we know that existence is its own predicate, self affirmation ... It is an eternal and infinite self-rejoicing, self-loving, with a joy unfathomable, with a love all comprehensive."[7]

The characterization of "existence" as "an eternal and infinite self-rejoicing" flies consciously in the face of the view, outlined in Chapter 1, that any attempt to see the universe as an "expressive totality", whether this totality is conceived of in traditional religious terms or not, can only be a matter of sentimental self-projection, a fundamentally incoherent anthropomorphism attempting vainly to apply categories of human purpose to a world in which they can never be applicable. By trying to formulate a metaphysics in which the external world could be shown to be

describable in conceptual categories applicable to human purpose Coleridge, no less than Schelling, can be seen to return in a sense to the religious notion of "the world as text" as expounded in Chapter 1. (see pg 9-10; 17-19) But, as with Schelling, Coleridge's philosophy as we may reconstruct it from Biographia Literaria, The Statesman's Manual and The Friend was in intention anything but a mere return. Coleridge realised that no attempt to overcome the "Cartesian split" could be based purely on a theocentric worldview that no longer inspired general intellectual conviction. The above-quoted passage shows that Coleridge, with Schelling and others, attempted to overcome post-Cartesian dualisms by articulating a conception of nature as, in its essence, embodied spirit. In articulating this notion, the debt Coleridge owed to German Idealism in general and Schelling in particular can be spelled out at a level more concrete and precise than broad analogy.

The distinction between "Understanding" and "Reason" drawn in the above quotations derives from Kant, the thinker to whom Coleridge was initially most powerfully drawn. Although Kant's use of the relevant terminology in the Critique of Pure Reason is not always consistent,[8] the "Understanding" is frequently characterised as "the intellect in so far as it co-operates with the senses, or works upon empirical data."[9] It is accordingly through

"Understanding" that we attain our grasp of the phenomenal world of experience as ordered by the a-priori forms of intuition and categories of judgement. "Reason" on the other hand refers to "the intellect insofar as it aspires to go beyond the empirical sphere altogether and arrive at knowledge of a non-empirical reality ... Reason also turns out to have its own pure concepts, the ideas, each of them specifications of the fundamental notion of the unconditioned, and its ambition is to argue on the basis of these ideas to the existence and properties of a series of non-empirical existents, the soul, the world as an absolute whole, God."[10] Kant in a sense regarded these ideas as inevitable and valuable, provided that they were recognised to be purely formal and regulative principles of totality that we are inevitably led to entertain during the course of empirical enquiry. As purely formal principles of totality they can however yield no positive knowledge, and any attempt to make them do so represents an attempt to use a category of judgement to transcend experience in an illegitimate manner.[11] Nonetheless, the Kantian distinction between "Understanding" and "Reason" seemed suggestive to Coleridge, who proceeded to modify it in a way reminiscent, again, of subsequent German Idealist thought.

Coleridge, in the example given from The Friend, uses the category of "Understanding" in a different and more

simplistic manner. Here too Understanding refers to the intellect in so far as it orders empirical data and generalizes on the basis of a sense-experience. But in Coleridge's usage the category of "Understanding" denotes something mechanical, something akin to the Enlightenment's atomistic conception of experience. Coleridgean "Understanding" refers to something different in kind from Kant's structuring of the phenomenal world of experience by the a-priori forms of intuition and categories of judgement, a process in which mind indeed has a constitutive role in perception.

Coleridge's distortion, even if one thinks it in principle mistaken, is not unmotivated, for it is accompanied by a correlative shift in the use of "Reason". This shift is designed to try and overcome Kant's injunction to regard the Ideas of Reason as purely regulative as well as Kant's scepticism about the capacity of metaphysics to provide knowledge other than self-reflexive knowledge of the a-priori structuring of human experience. "Reason" becomes for Coleridge the intuitive, non-discursive awareness of spiritual truths. In these matters Coleridge was obviously at variance with Kant. J.S. Mill correctly saw that Coleridge dissented from the "view that all knowledge consists of generalizations from experience, and that he claims for Reason, as distinct from the Understanding, the

power to perceive by direct intuition realities and truths which transcend the reach of the senses."[12] Although the revelation of the "One Life" in the Eolian Harp forces us to qualify this remark by remembering that such "truths" nonetheless remain intrinsically connected, for Coleridge, with the world of sense, Mill is correct in implying that the Kantian terms have been reformulated to accord more closely with something resembling the German Idealist distinction between "Verstand" and "Vernunft".

As Copleston, Wellek[13] and others have rightly insisted, Coleridge hardly succeeds in making even the epistemological distinctions crucial to his thinking quite clear. Nonetheless the example from The Friend also serves to illuminate a second dimension in Coleridge's use of the term "Reason". In purporting to perceive, through "Reason", the joyous self-affirmation of existence, it is evident that this "perception" is for Coleridge a direct intuition of spiritual truth in the sense outlined above. Indeed this perception of the cosubstantiality of the life within and without us is for Coleridge perhaps the essential spiritual truth. The language of the passage however also refers to the "productive energy"[14] of mind behind the perception of nature as embodied spirit. This characteristically Coleridgean shift of emphasis from product to process, from the spiritual truth intuited to the process by which it is

intuited, results in alternative characterizations of the "Ideas" we gain access to through "Reason" such as this: An idea "is that which is deeper than all intelligence, inasmuch as it represents the will and its essential underivability."[15] In this sense, as Dorothy Emmet points out, our ideas seem to be "energies of thinking and imagining" involved with "the thinker's own individual style"[16] rather than concepts in any ordinary sense of this term. Coleridge's constant vacillation between the use of a term like "Reason" to designate either supposedly unmediated spiritual truths immediately and non-discursively accessible to consciousness on the one hand, and the energy of will behind such apprehension on the other, is of course philosophically confused. The nature of the confusion however indicates the strength of the belief for which Coleridge is trying to provide conceptual foundations, the belief that the radiance perceived in existence and the powers of mind which are the enabling conditions of this perception are essentially one.

The risks of an attempt to make "Ideas" ultimately denote - although Coleridge's use of key terms is seldom rigorous and systematic - something more akin to powers, potencies and agencies than abstractions seemed to Coleridge unavoidable if the mechanical world-view of post-Cartesian philosophy and science was to be avoided. The shift of vocabulary

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allowed Coleridge to attempt to show explicitly the interconnections between what he regarded as two related sets of truths. Firstly, the sundered realms of fact and value could begin to be brought together again within the framework of a more comprehensive doctrine of the nature of experience, a doctrine which would show the genesis of thought in feeling and will.[17] In the Animae Poetae Coleridge speaks of metaphysics as an activity which "makes all one's thoughts equally corrosive on the body, by inducing [illegible] t of making momently and common thought the subject [illegible] ommon interest and intellectual energy [illegible]"[18] In this passage and countless others of similar import Coleridge attempts to bridge the gap between binary oppositions such as fact and value, feeling and thought, mind and body. Like Schelling, Coleridge's metaphors gesture towards a philosophy which would do justice to the emergence of consciousness from a stream of life of which we no less than any natural object, are a part; and, as part of this stream, thought, so far from being distinct from the natural world, can be regarded as the essence of that world rendered conscious and articulate.

Coleridge's use of terms like "Reason", as opposed to "Understanding", to designate the faculty through which we perceive the spiritual potencies connecting thought to its roots in feeling, emotion, will and much else normally

considered to have no relation to the conceptual, also enabled him to try and give substance to a doctrine of nature which sees the world and man as cosubstantial. Speaking of Nature in an appendix to the Statesman's Manual Coleridge writes:

> I seem to myself to behold in the quiet objects, on which I am gazing, more that an arbitrary illustration, more than a mere simile, the work of my own fancy. I feel an awe, as if there were before my eyes the same power as that of the REASON - the same power in a lower dignity, and therefore a symbol established in the truth of things. I feel it alike, whether I contemplate a single tree or flower, or meditate on vegetation throughout the world, as one of the great organs of the life of Nature.[19]

If for Coleridge the "Ideas" intuited through the faculty of "Reason" could be regarded as energies or potencies holding together diverse material in a unity which was for Coleridge the essence of the spiritual, much the same could be said about the organic unity of the "single flower or tree."[19a] The mind's symbolising powers and the phenomena of organic growth could be regarded as essentially continuous with one another.

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SECTION B

There is considerable overlap between Coleridge's speculations on the essential kinship of thought and the world and his writings on beauty and the essential task and nature of poetry. Indeed art assumes for Coleridge an importance fully comparable to that which it has for Schelling, for he too believes it to be the point of union between the conceptual and the pre-conscious and emotive wellsprings of thought.[20] Copleston correctly points out that Schelling's use of art in this pivotal position in his metaphysical system is closely related to his thoughts on the nature of genius and the artistic process itself: "If we consider aesthetic intuition from the side of the creative artist, the genius, we can see that in a real sense he knows what he is doing: he acts consciously and deliberately ... At the same time, however, we can equally well say that genius acts unconsciously. Genius is not reducible to a technical proficiency which can be imparted by instruction: the creative artist is, as it were, the vehicle of a power which acts through him. And for Schelling this is the same power which operates in Nature. In other words, the same power which acts without consciousness in producing Nature, the unconscious poetry of the Spirit, acts with consciousness in producing the work of

art. That is to say, it acts through the consciousness of the artist. And this illustrates the ultimate unity of the unconscious and the conscious, of the ideal and the real."[21]

It is because art, as the locus of the conceptual and the non-conceptual, is a mixed and intermediate mode, that it is so peculiarly suited to body forth in symbolic form the "One Life" of which Coleridge was to speak in The Eolian Harp. Speaking of the intermediary nature of the arts, Coleridge writes that they owe their reconciliatory power to belonging

> to the outward world, for they all operate by the images of sight and sound, and other sensible impressions; and without a delicate tact for these, no man ever was, or could be, either a Musician or a poet; nor could he attain to excellence in any 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 ... 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 Ideal.[22]

The Secondary Imagination, the faculty which is associated with poetic creativity in Coleridge's thought, is described

in the Biographia Literaria as an echo of the Primary Imagination. The Secondary Imagination co-exists 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".[23]

Despite a characteristic ambiguity and lack of focus in Coleridge's formulation of the relations between Primary Imagination, Secondary Imagination and Fancy, the Secondary Imagination, as opposed to Fancy, seems to be the faculty which creatively refashions the "givens" of perception in such a way as to exhibit the organic connections between phenomena superficially considered to be unrelated and distinct. By contrast, the associations of Fancy remain uncreative and mechanistic - Coleridge remarks that "FANCY on the contrary has no counters to play with but fixities and definites".[24] The Secondary Imagination diffuses and dissipates in such a manner as to lead to a spiritual intuition of wholeness and interconnectedness, to "idealize and to unify". Through being the power behind the production of the arts in general and poetry in particular, the Secondary Imagination becomes the mediatory device

through which subject and object, thought *and feeling*, sensuous experiences, images and thought are reconciled.[25] The ideal poem could for Coleridge be thought of as a "concrete universal" of sorts: the poem is that in which our intuition of the "One Life", the "joyous self-affirmation" of existence which Coleridge spoke of in The Friend, can be embodied.[26] To the extent that the work of art is successful on those terms it can be regarded as beautiful. Coleridge writes of beauty as something objective, consisting in a perception of a "pre-established harmony between the organs and their appointed *objects*."[27] *In embodying* beauty in the Coleridgean sense art is "the mediatress between, and reconciler of, nature and man."[28]

For Coleridge then art, as a mode of apprehending the world has enormous cognitive significance. This can be so because the Secondary Imagination is grounded in the Primary Imagination, the latter being the ultimate guarantor of the creativity of all perception through repeating "in the finite mind ... the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM".[29] Coleridge's metaphysics, propounded in the Biographia Literaria and The Statesman's Manual is, despite a time-lapse of nearly twenty years, in no way distant from the actual accomplishment of the Conversation Poems. The metaphysics is in many ways a *philosophical attempt* to

philosophically formalize and clarify the implications of effects achieved in the poetry itself. Coleridge's poetry and his subsequent speculations on the nature of mind perception, art and imagination all seem ultimately to depend - this will be elaborated on in Section D of this Chapter (see p. 68 foll) - on a transcendentally underwritten metaphysics. Even Primary Imagination seems to be a local manifestation of the creative energy of the "infinite I AM", the ultimate reconciler of subject and object and all other metaphysical dualisms. In this metaphysics, as the definition of Primary Imagination and the passages on existence's joyous self-affirmation in The Friend make apparent, the identity of subject and object, mind and matter, the real and the ideal or spiritual is the ultimate principle not merely of our knowledge, but of being itself.[30]

The function of art and poetry was to embody, in and through images, a perception of the ideal within the real. The notion through which Coleridge linked his pre-occupation with wholeness, inherited in part from those strands of German Idealist thought selectively examined in Chapter 1, with his theorising about poetry, was the symbol. Although the concept of the symbol is of great importance in Coleridge's aesthetics, it is seldom explicitly dealt with. Coleridge's most suggestive treatment is to be found in The Statesman's Manual.

> It is among the miseries of the present age that it recognises no medium between the *Literal and the* Metaphorical. Faith is either to be buried in the dead letter, or its name and honours usurped by a counterfeit product of the mechanical understanding, which in the blindness of self-complacency confounds SYMBOLS WITH ALLEGORIES. Now an Allegory is but a translation of abstract notions into a picture-language which is itself nothing but an abstraction from objects of the *senses;* ... On the other hand a Symbol .... is characterized by a translucence of the Special in the Individual or of the General in the Especial or of the Eternal through and in the Temporal. It always partakes of the reality it renders intelligible; and while it enunciates the whole, abides itself as a living part in that Unity, of which it is the representative.[31]

Coleridge and Schelling considered art to be of supreme importance because it was through art that a vision of the cosubstantiality of all being, of the essential kinship of man and world, received concrete embodiment. The symbol in particular concretely embodied this vision because, through being the desired "medium between the Literal and Metaphorical", it could partake of the reality it *simultaneously* represented. In the Statesman's Manual, a work largely devoted to theological matters, Coleridge pays

indirect tribute to the reconciliatory power of art and the faculty of Imagination by insisting that symbolical perception was not appropriate merely to the scriptures, but also to "another book - likewise a revelation of God - the great book of His servant Nature."[32] A metaphysics in which nature is regarded as embodied spirit and the relationship between man and world as a "fellowship of essence" has, as noted before, certain affinities with the Renaissance notion of "world as text". The irreducible "concreteness" of the symbol is shown by Coleridge's characterization of it as the "translucence of the Special in the Individual". The sense of the numinous and sacramental in the natural world celebrated by art is given actually rather than as received revelation. Fact and value, man and world are re-integrated in the religious notion of a world which embodies the "One Life" in all its parts. The positives of religious experience would have been recaptured, as the intellectual climate of the time demanded, by a "natural supernaturalism"[33] that locates the sacred, the animating life-force, immanently within the world and experience itself.

Before proceeding it is worth briefly noting a recurrent tension in Coleridge's philosophical thought, a tension which will be dealt with in section D of this chapter. This

tension can be seen in Coleridge's characterization of the symbol as the translucence of the "Eternal through and in the Temporal". The main thrust of the argument so far has been to locate the "eternal", the "ideal", within the natural world and our experience of it. The formulation is however ambiguous, for the radiance manifested "through and in the Temporal" could well have a source other than the merely natural. A similar ambiguity is apparent in Coleridge's grounding of Primary Imagination in the activity of the "infinite I AM". The explicitly theological nature of the way in which Secondary Imagination is grounded indicates a tendency in Coleridge's thought to move from a "natural supernaturalism" in Abrams' sense to a stance which, although ambiguous, resembles a theism of a more traditional kind. This instability in Coleridge's argumentation causes legitimate doubt about the possibility of recovering our sense of the sacred, the religious dimension of Renaissance thought, using purely secular means.

The insistence that the symbol "partakes of the reality it renders intelligible" stresses its concreteness in such a way as to leave little doubt that here, at least, "the eternal" bears a strong resemblance to the "sentiment of being" spoken of in The Prelude. If the eternal manifested "through and in the Temporal" is essentially kin to the "One Life" of The Eolian Harp, the epiphanic moment in which the

"One Life" is revealed is grounded in our experience of the natural world. Coleridge's principal poetic problem was accordingly to find a language and structure for a poem adequate to displaying the experiential process through which the translucence of eternal in the particular, in natural objects, comes to be perceived.

This necessitated a revolutionising of poetic language and the creation of an essentially new form, that of the Conversation Poem, as exemplified in The Eolian Harp, This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison, and Frost at Midnight. Not even poetry of the "sentimental" tradition of the eighteenth century was adequate to conveying a vision of reality demanding a connection between mind and nature more intimate than any the Enlightenment had been prepared to entertain. Coleridge came to dislike in a sentimental poet like Bowles what he called his "moralizing trick", his didactic habit of connecting the landscapes, ostensibly the cause of his meditations, by "dim analogies with the moral world."[34] In keeping with his beliefs that thought, emotions and the natural object stood in essential and metaphysically necessary rather than external and contingent connection with one another, Coleridge insisted that "a poet's heart and intellect should be combined, intimately combined and unified with the great appearances of nature, and not merely held in solution and loose mixture with them, in the shape

of formal similes."[35] In speaking of the totalizing power of the symbol, a totalizing power at the heart of Romanticism's own self-understanding, Coleridge is searching for a language adequate to a moment of unmediated insight in which all the antimonies of post-Cartesian thought are reconciled. This search for a language that could attain ideality adequate to the translucence of the Eternal in the Temporal places Coleridge in a philosophical tradition whose attitude to language is ultimately mystical.[36]

Far from striving to reform language by purging it of its metaphorical imprecisions[37] Coleridge emphasised a view of language which makes its primary functions "gnostic."[38] Similar thoughts are obliquely present in some of Wordsworth's strictures on the artificiality of the poetic diction of the eighteenth century as a whole. The deep spiritual kinship with Coleridge, the "Schellingesque" sensibility and concern for wholeness Wordsworth shared with him, is strikingly obvious in one of Wordsworth's explicitly theoretical statements, made in the third Essay on Epitaphs.

> 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 (recurring to a metaphor before used) an incarnation of thought, but only a clothing for it, then surely will

> they prove an ill gift: such as some of those poisoned vestments, read of in the stories of superstitious times, which had the power to consume and to 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 ...[39]

Accordingly, examining the achievements of Coleridge's early work, as well as the difficulties and ambiguities inherent in his poetry's attempt to resolve the subject/object dualism, will enhance our understanding of Wordworth's own practice, especially in Tintern Abbey, and The Prelude.

SECTION C

The Conversation Poems as a whole, of which Frost at Midnight and The Eolian Harp will be taken as examples, share a common ternary structure. As Humphrey House and other have correctly pointed out[40] the centre of these poems is the ego or meditative "I", first encountered in a state of isolation and seeking to overcome a dissociated sensibility through regaining an integrated awareness of life and the self's unity with it. Such an awareness is often attributed either to the "I" at an earlier stage of its development or an implicit and silent auditor. The hope is that the initial egoism of the meditation's starting point will ultimately become "revelatory".[41] In the course of a poem such as Frost at Midnight, the "I" recovers, through a sustained interchange of self and world, an intuition of the connection between its moral and intellectual impulses and the natural world of which it is a part.[42] The self to which the meditation must finally return will be enriched, to use a metaphor of The Prelude, by its regained capacity to "bind its days together". The whole point of the poem's circular return, with a difference, to be sure, to its point of departure, lies in the qualitatively enhanced nature of the perception and insight the "I" has gained.[43] This insight unifies matter

and spirit, self and world in an intuition of the numinously grounded correspondences or analogies between the "I", the world, and the "One Life within us and abroad". In a letter of 1815 Coleridge commented that "the common end of all narrative ..... nay, of all poems is to convert a series into a whole; to make those events, which in real or imagined history move on in a strait line, assume to our understandings a circular motion - the snake with it's Tail in it's Mouth."[44]

The Conversation Poems try to make events "assume to our understanding a circular motion," to counter the solipsism implicit in their starting point through the use of Nature in a way that is both descriptive and analogical. A perception of kinship between man and world arises out of a dynamic interchange between the two.

A second structural device through which the Conversation Poems attempt to avoid the dangers of solipsism is their use of an implied auditor which may or may not be the poet's former self.[45] Ideally the implied auditor or auditors present in the poems to be discussed receive the act of meditation which is the poem as a "living communication."[46] In Frost at Midnight, a poem which perhaps displays more successfully than any other example all the general structural features of the Conversation

Poem, this allows a "benedictory conclusion"[47] in which the poet's past and present selves and the natural world are once more reintegrated. The sense of renewed human community is an *analogue* of the kind of natural scene depicted in The Nightingale, where the various components of the landscape reflect and echo one another in mutual sympathy.[48] The state of mind achieved by the "I" in the course of the poem is clearly *far closer* to this all-inclusive intuition of mutual sympathies than the circumscribed, alienating self-consciousness which forms the starting point of Frost at Midnight and This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison. These concerns will now be made more concrete by a brief *analysis of* the movement of Frost at Midnight.

The first section of Frost at Midnight, comprising the first twenty-three lines of the poem, depicts a state of isolation in which the "I's" search for what the *poem* calls a "companionable form" meets with frustration. The frost of the poem's opening which "performs its secret ministry / unhelped any any wind" embodies the powerful but silent and inscrutable productive energies of the natural world. The silence in *which it operates* firmly resists the "I's", attempt to perceive human similitudes in nature.[49] In direct contrast to the experience of the poet, the frost's "secret ministry" is part of a comprehensive and purposeful order - the icicles of its creation are in their turn

reflected in the moon[50] - but not an order on which categories describing human emotion and thought have any purchase. Significantly the child Hartley is at one with the "numberless goings on of life / Inaudible as dreams", emphasising the divisive self-consciousness of the "I" vexed to meditation by the same "extreme silentness."[51] Spencer Hill[52] has pointed out the way in which the poet tries to master the isolating silence by listing the natural objects and scenes that are part of it, but the act of articulation and naming does not elicit the sought after sense of correspondence with the objects named. The only "companionable form" found is, ironically enough, the film fluttering on the grate. Its unrest is both an external analogue of the unease the poet would overcome and symbolises the uselessness of the agitated intellection with which he attempts to do this.

The way in which the fluttering film makes a "toy of thought" indicates the narcissistically self-enclosed nature of the "idling spirit" which seeks "echo or mirror ... of itself". By the end of the first movement of Frost at Midnight human thought does not have any natural similitudes of the kind it seeks. The poet's agitated response to the "silence" within which the frost performs "its ministry" is a measure of the natural world's resistance to being incorporated into the "conversation" which the poem would

wish to make both its central topic and achievement. Nonetheless the work performed by the first movement of Frost at Midnight is not to be understood in merely negative terms. By showing that only a *more inclusive and felt* response can bring about the desired integration, the opening of Frost at Midnight can be said to be voiding habitual consciousness by showing its inadequacy.[53] In doing so a "space" of sorts is created which may be filled with something more productive and life-giving than the disquiet that is displaced.

The film on the grate is a key transitional image. It evokes, by association, memories of the poet's school days when the unhappy boy tried to alleviate his distress through superstitious reverie, taking heart in the fact that such films - traditionally referred to as " strangers"[54] - were taken to promise the return of an absent companion or friend. *The companionable form in question here is the* poet's sister "recalled as a narcissistic twin from the lost paradise when even sexual differentiation was unperceived."[55] As such the sister is not so much a flesh and blood person in the economy of Frost at Midnight as a projected alter-ego, a "companionable form" in the most literal sense. This illusory and projective attempt at fulfillment in the child *parallels the misery of the man.* As Frederick Garber writes, the sense of imprisonment is

heightened by the shift in which the poet "has moved from being a spectator of his current working consciousness into staring at himself as a child; and what he was doing then as a child is exactly what he is doing now as an adult, playing spectator to an earlier acting self ..."[56]

The image of the film is however transitional in another sense, associatively linked as it is with the idyllic happiness of Coleridge's early boyhood days at Ottery. The imagery describing the church-bells of Ottery - images of much the same import as the sympathetic echoes in The Nightingale - allow Coleridge to superimpose two strands of autobiographical material onto one another[57] in such a way as to provide a transition to the third and last section of the poem. Jolted by the Ottery - associations into remembering that Hartley will grow up among "companionable forms" in an environment different from that presided over by the "stern preceptor" of Christ's Hospital, the poet, in a more heartfelt and inclusive response than any achieved until then, perceives the analogies between Hartley's breathings and the natural processes taking place in the silence with which the poem opened. Frost at Midnight is concerned with the way in which our perceptions of the natural world and our thoughts merge into an almost mystical apprehension of the cosubstantiality of all being, the essential kinship of consciousness and the world in which it is embodied.

The suggestive ambiguities of key words in the poem beautifully record a perception whose essence is an awareness of the ways in which the category distinctions of normal awareness are broken down to yield to a more inclusive sense of wonder and mystery.[57a] The unnatural calm that had originally vexed the poet to inconclusive meditation is no longer threatening. The sounds of the wind, the owlet's cry, and the silence within which the frost performed its ministry, no longer stand in an antithetical relation to one another. All participate in something akin to the spirit that "rolls through all things" in Tintern Abbey. Even Hartley's breathings are analogous to and "Fill up the interspersed vacancies / And momentary pauses" of the poet's thought. The "ministry" acquires a retrospective enlargening of significance, encompassing not merely the activity of the frost, but the "restorative qualities of the natural process" as a whole.[58] Technically and in every other way, Frost at Midnight is one of Coleridge's most secure achievements, and as fine an example of the interrelationship of Coleridge's poetry, aesthetic theorising and subsequent metaphysics as can be found.

Frost at Midnight, to show that the procedures used there are not unique, can be usefully juxtaposed to the first part of The Eolian Harp, which contains an explicit formulation

of the "creed" everywhere implicit in Coleridge's work. The opening of the poem is, as has often been pointed out, not merely pastoral and idyllic, but quite self-consciously paradisical, containing implicit references to the pre-lapsarian state of Adam and Eve in Bk 4 of Paradise Lost.[59] The lovers' contentment is suggested by the completely balanced and satisfying combination of peace and movement in the landscape itself, the "serenely brilliant" Evening Star contrasting with the "murmur of the distant Sea" and the scents moving to the cottage from the bean field.[60] The numerous personifications of both natural objects and human virtues - Jasmin, Myrtle and the Sea as well as Innocence, Love and Wisdom are all spelt with capitals - are all functional. The poem's quasi-apostrophic and incantatory mode of referring to natural objects serves, almost in the manner of ritual, to constitute them as beings with whom one can enter into living relationships. As Bloom has pointed out in his book Shelley's Mythmaking, this I - Thou relationship also constitutes the poet in typically Romantic fashion as seer and visionary, as one who can perceive the essential kinship of all things and therefore one to whom the natural world might in turn speak.[61] This purposeful blurring of the distinctions between natural objects and human attributes prepares for the transition to the central image of the harp itself.

To embark on an extended analysis of the next 20 odd lines would entail needless repetition, so only a few general remarks will be made. The metaphors playfully linking the sound of the harp "by the desultory breeze caressed" to the awakening of love give way to comparisons of the "floating witchery of sound" to "gentle gales from Faery Land", comparisons which make explicit the Edenesque nature of the poem's opening.[62] As in the first twelve lines, the intermingling of metaphors allows perceptions of both human emotions and natural objects to shade off into an almost mystical intuition of the unity underlying both, in a way at once elusive and suggestive. M.H. Abrams rightly remarks that the poem "In its final form (1817-28) ... is still a love poem, but a cosmic love-poem, in which the love between the poet and his bride becomes the exponent of a universal relationship - the "union of the individual with the Universe'..."[63] In a manner suggestive of Keats's Ode to a Nightingale, the imagery paradoxically becomes more sensuous as, through the approach to "Faery Land", it seems much less clearly descriptive of the world and objects. In remarkably synaesthesic imagery, reminiscent of Keats, phenomenal objects and properties lose their distinctness to such an extent that by line 29 reference can be made to "A light in sound, a sound - like the power in light." Finally, in the conclusion of the The Eolian Harp's second movement, the breeze is described in terms almost

indistinguishable from those that evoked the sound of the harp, and the "mute still air / Is Music slumbering on her instrument". (Lines 32-3)[64] In Frost at Midnight and the Eolian Harp underlying analogies between all things, the ability to read the objects of the natural world as signatures of consciousness, mark an ascent to visionary insight into the "One Life":

> O! the one Life within us and abroad,
> Which meets all motion and becomes its soul,
> A light in sound, a sound like power in light,
> Rhythm in all thought, and joyance every where -
> Methinks, it should have been impossible
> Not to love all things in a world so filled;
> Wh[illegible]the breeze warbles, and the mute still air
> Is Music slumbering on her instrument.
>
> (Lines 26 - 33)

This epiphanic revelation of the "One Life" in the Eolian Harp is one of the finest possible examples of the operations of Coleridgean "Reason" - see p. 37 foll - and its capacity for seemingly unmediated apprehension of and participation in the "infinite self-rejoicing" of life spoken of in The Friend. Indeed in this climax of the Eolian Harp a diversity of material is held together in that organic unity which we have already indicated to be the

hallmark of the "spiritual" for Coleridge. Poems such as the Eolian Harp embody, no less than the explicitly philosophical writings, a *search for a "richer conception* of rationality" enabling a movement within experience itself "from the particular to the universal so that we can say the latter is adequate to the former".[65] The conception of the relation between universal and particular in the verse under consideration is at antipodes to that of Enlightenment thought in which universals are either abstractions or "reflective principles of unity *operating only within* the faculty of judgement"[66] whose relation to particulars is subsumptive and classificatory. Instead such a view has been jettisoned in an attempt to formulate "a richer conception by which universals should actually be developed out of and not just applied to experience".[67]

This recasting of the relation *between* universal and particular is, as Rosen has pointed out in his magnificent book on Hegel, connected with a similar and related transformation in Romantic thought of the notion of the "infinite".

In much Romantic thought and poetry the infinite is characteristically not conceived in *either strictly* mathematical terms or Platonically as a "realm of ideas ... thought of as if it were a world of individual entities - the archetypes - existing in separation from the finite

world".[68] Rather, the non-abstractive, empathic act of intuition on which, - see Chapter 1, - a perception of the "life of things" is founded, leads to a conception of the "infinite", not as an abstract realm above and beyond experience, but as "manifestation or embodiment of the transcendent".[69] Thus, although the ultimate "spiritual" truth accessible to "Reason", an unmediated insight into the cosubstantiality of all being can be said, in a sense, to transcend the sensory world, it *remains nonetheless rooted* in experience. This embedding of the transcendent in the finite is essential if the positives of religious experience are, as demanded by the intellectual climate of the age, to be recovered in purely secular terms. This secularisation of religious notions results in an altogether new emphasis on "the quality of the experience or manifestation"[70] through which the eternal manifests itself "through and in the temporal". The way in which the vision of the "One Life" is generated from the response of a highly particularised speaker to an equally particularised *landscape is a magnificent* example of the way in which a "Schellingesque" world view embodies elements of the traditionally religious notion of "world as text" without being a mere return: "Both views stand against the *modern* vision of an objectified universe which is devoid of significance for man. But in one case the world is seen as embodying a set of ideal meanings, and our contact with it

is the contemplation of ideas; in the other case, nature is seen as a great stream of life of which we are part, and our way of contact is thus by sympathetic insertion into this stream. What is sought for is interchange with a larger life, not rational vision of order".[71] This attempted "insertion" into an all-encompassing, sympathetic "stream of life" was given memorable expression in the Eolian Harp for possibly the first time in English Romanticism. This poem accordingly has as good a claim as any to have initiated a genre that was perhaps, as will be suggested in Section A of Chapter 3, to receive its culminating expression in Tintern Abbey.

If, as the previous paragraphs suggest, what the Conversation Poems hope to reveal and make available to comprehension is "symbol", construed as an intuition of the cosubstantiality of all being and the translucence of the eternal through and in the temporal, then the epiphany is the primary means by which "symbol" is revealed. The epiphany has been characterised by Langbaum as "a manifestation in and through the visible world of an invisible life."[72] Langbaum goes on to say that the epiphany

> is a way of apprehending value when value is no longer objective ... The epiphany grounds statements of value

> in perception; it gives the idea with its genesis, establishing its validity not as conforming to a public order of values but as the genuine experience of an identifiable person. It gives us the idea, in other words, before we have to pass judgement on its truth or falsity; before it has been abstracted from perception - while it is still in union with emotion and the perceived object. ... In traditional poetry the unified response belongs to the poet ... as the appropriate response to an objective reality which combines fact and value. But it comes in the epiphany as the climax of a dramatic action, and lasts a moment only. We are then returned to the world of ordinary perception and left with the question whether the idea we carry away from the experience is true ..."[73]

It is perfectly correct to stress the quest of Wordsworth and Coleridge for a means of fusing fact and value, mind and matter, the real and the ideal or sacred that would be *experientially based*. To that extent our perception of the numinous would have a pantheistic flavour in that the "sacred" is immanently located within natural objects rather than, as in traditional religious schemes, above and outside them. It is this "sentiment of Being" that is apparent in the close of Frost at Midnight, the passages examined in The Eolian Harp and numerous passages of The Prelude (from which

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the phrase itself in fact comes). The strand of Coleridge's work concerned with epiphanic revelation of the "sacred" in all things, which perceives our essential kinship with a nature regarded as embodied spirit, is all that has been considered up to now. It is from this strand of Coleridge that Wordsworth's concept of "natural piety" in part derives. Nonetheless there have been largely unexamined tensions in the arguments considered in this chapter, and it is to a brief examination of them that we must now turn.

SECTION D

Langbaum is quite right to stress the precariousness of the epiphanic moment. In particular, the antitheses drawn between the insight and the idea, the experience and the idea are most interesting. The poet hopes in the moment of epiphany to achieve an unmediated perception or vision, a moment in which all mediatory acts of interpretation fall away in the face of a perception that is self-validating, that contains the "certitudes of knowledge" within it.[74] In the moment of epiphany the natural objects perceived reflect back to the perceiver a living reality because the act of perception is an act of sympathetic identification in which the "living consciousness perceived in the object is our own."[75] The dualisms of post-Cartesian thought briefly examined in Chapter 1 seem to be overcome in an unmediated insight into the life of things because our perception of the sacred and numinous in things is given as experience rather than, as Langbaum says, an idea we may agree or disagree with. Such an act of knowing allows us to commune with what is unique, individual and living within the object. However, precisely because the certitude of the vision into the life of things is, if it is to be credible, given immanently within experience itself - hence the antitheses drawn between experience and idea and the

disequilibrium noted between them - such certitude runs the risk of being incommunicable.

The problems to which the precariously self-validating nature of the epiphanic moment gives rise are expressed by two distinct and yet not altogether unrelated tendencies in the work of Wordsworth and Coleridge. One of these is most powerfully illustrated by the contradiction which makes the Eolian Harp a broken-backed poem. In an unfortunate passage, ostensibly the result of Sara's orthodox misgivings about the "nature-mysticism" of the first part of the Eolian Harp, the poem concludes contradictorily by lapsing back into an orthodox theism. This has usually been explained merely in terms of the influence of Sara herself, but the actual difficulty runs much deeper and can be seen to scar the theoretical and philosophical speculations of Coleridge too. Even in Coleridge's theoretical writings, indeed accorded a central place in these writings, is a strand of thought that sits uneasily at best with Abrams's "natural supernaturalism," construed as an attempt to salvage the experiental values of traditional religion in a secular manner.[76] In the *Biographia Literaria* we have seen that Coleridge ultimately grounds the Primary Imagination and therefore, indirectly, the Secondary Imagination, the faculty of artistic creation, in the activity of the "eternal I AM". This oscillation between a "natural

supernaturalism," a nature-pantheism of sorts, and gestures towards a rather more traditional kind of theology, scars Coleridge's theoretical thought constantly. Even in Coleridge's exposition of the concept of the symbol, explicitly designed to be a mode between the literal and the metaphorical and cosubstantial with the reality it represents, there is a similar tension. If one of the symbol's functions is to show the "translucence of the eternal through and in the temporal," it is not clear whether the light of the eternal *is in fact purely immanent* in the natural world or whether the object assumes importance only to the extent that it reflects a radiance not ultimately its own. These considerations sit uneasily with those aspects of Coleridge's thought attempting to derive the notion of the "One Life" from experience and a reflection on the implications of that experience alone.

The deeper reason for this oscillation is, I think, the impossibility of a purely self-authenticating perception of the kind that the epiphany aspires to be. Even if attainable it would not be communicable, hence the distinctions drawn by Langbaum between the moment of perception, which seems certain, and the idea abstracted from it, which seem much less so. Accordingly we also find places where Coleridge treats the symbol in a manner similar to his discussions of the sacraments in his theological

writings.[77] If, as Coleridge writes in The Friend, it is true that "the solution of phenomena can never be derived from phenomena,"[78] then the doctrine of the cosubstantiality of all being must be construed in more traditionally theological or, at the very least, a rather more Platonistic manner. Licence for such an interpretation is given by Coleridge himself in Aids to Reflection where he categorises all thinkers as fundamentally Aristotelian or Platonic in their leanings, the former willing to invoke "spirit" as an explanation of anything only as a last resort. Coleridge considered himself to be a Platonist.[79]

The ambiguities inherent in Coleridge's and Schelling's differing attempts to construct a "Naturphilosophie" of sorts are richly reflected in Wordsworth's poetry. In the Immortality Ode the rainbow comes and goes without eliciting a response, not because of the loss of a "natural piety" analogous to the more pantheistic strains of the thought of Coleridge and Schelling, but because of a loss of the "visionary gleam", a loss of light from a source other than the merely natural. In the light of this one can better understand Wordsworth's tentative use of the Platonic notion of pre-existence in his preface to the Ode to explain how his earlier response to the natural world was possible. The Simplon Pass passage of Bk 6 of The Prelude also, in a manner rare for Wordsworth, decisively privileges an

*ambiguously "autonomous" imagination* over mere perception. Objects are here also seen as bearers of a "glory not their own", and the imagination is "autonomous", an "unfathered vapour". Given that completely secular repossession of our sense of "the sacred", purely secular overcoming of the dualisms of post-Cartesian thought, may well only be possible by means of an impossibly self-validating *perception, this turn from* perception to vision, from doctrines of a pantheistic nature to a theism of sorts in both Wordsworth and Coleridge, is readily comprehensible. It is a product of the precariousness and instability noticed by Langbaum in the moment of epiphany itself. The problematical sense in which imagination may be said to have assumed "autonomy" in these passages will be examined in *Section B of Chapter 3.*

The second danger constantly confronting doctrines attempting to regard nature as embodied spirit and thus essentially connected with the human world and the conceptual categories applicable to it is that of solipsism. The danger is evident in an entry Coleridge made *in 1805 in his notebook while at Malta:*

> In looking at objects of Nature while I am thinking ... I seem rather to be seeking, as it were asking, a symbolic 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 phaenomenon *were the dim* awakening of a forgotten or hidden Truth of my inner Nature.[80]

Wordsworth too spoke in a note of the difficulty he *sometimes experienced as* a child in believing in the existence of material objects as material objects.[81] Indeed if, as Langbaum ambiguously puts it, *the living* consciouness perceived in objects is our own, it is difficult to see whether what we are dealing with is genuinely an insight into the spirit that "rolls though all things" in Tintern Abbey, or an act of self-projection in a *more* limitingly solipsistic sense. Both of the means used to try and overcome the problem in the Conversation Poems, the natural world itself, and an implied auditor or *auditors* which implicitly cast the poems in the form of a dialogue, are of a questionable value. As the quotation from Coleridge's notebook makes clear, it is quite possible that vocabulary used in the poetry to designate a metaphysical *kinship* of nature and spirit may be projective, may, in the last analysis, designate a relation of the human subject to itself. Secondly, the implied auditors of the Conversation Poems are either silent or absent. In Frost at Midnight it is as a "breathing," not as an articulate being that Hartley

is perceived to be kin to the frost's "secret ministry" and the other natural processes described. As such, "like Nature Herself, the infant is silent ... it neither confirms nor denies the vision that Coleridge projects onto it ..."[81] The threat of mind becoming autonomous in a solipsistically self-reflexive sense, autonomous in the manner described by Coleridge's notebook entry, also finds expression in Wordsworth's work. This tendency will, in Sections A and B of Chapter 3, be shown to be implicit in the vocabulary and syntax of the Invocation to the 1805 Prelude, more strongly suggested by[IV] 247-67 of the same work, and celebrated by the paean to mind as "Lord and master of outward sense." If the attempt of "natural piety" to deny that there are any categorical distinctions between mind and world is always plagued by the spectre of solipsism, an unambiguous celebration of mind's constitutive powers may be one way of attempting to resolve this tension. Indeed, although in the context of celebrating objects as bearers of the "light divine", there is a rare moment in both versions of The Prelude where Wordsworth seems to openly affirm the consitutive power of his own poetry : "And, through the turnings intricate of verse / Present themselves as objects recognised, / In flashes, and with glory not their own". An imagination which ultimately seeks participation in the "light divine" cannot be said to be autonomous in the same way as an imagination celebrated

as "Lord and master of outward sense", an imagination which simply constitutes objects of experience as modifications of self. Nonetheless, the common celebration of mind and poetry's constitutive power indicates that the different responses to the precariousness of the epiphanic moment outlined here seem, at least to a degree, to converge with one another. Both the characterizations of mind under consideration deal, whatever their differences from one another, with an imagination hostile to the merely "bodily eye" of Tintern Abbey. An argument along these lines seeking to disentagle the various problematical senses in which "autonomy" is attributed to mind in Wordsworth's work will be advanced in Chapter 3 Section B - see p. 124-28.

An examination of Coleridge's philosophical writings, his practice in the Conversation Poems, and the connections between the two reveals, in concentrated form, the difficulties inherent in a "Naturphilosophie" or a concept akin to Wordsworth's "natural piety", the instrument, he tells us in My Heart Leaps Up, by which he hopes to "bind his days together". Looked at as a whole, Wordsworth's poetry can intelligibly be seen as an examination of the difficulties of trying to do this and, ultimately I think, of why such attempts must necessarily fail. In examining in Chapter 3 the way in which Wordsworth's poetry reflects aspirations towards a nature-pantheism or mysticism and the

difficulties inherent in this, I shall begin by examining those parts of his work in which the idea of an interchange between self and world seems relatively unproblematical. Tintern Abbey and some passages of The Prelude will be central texts. I will then move on to consider more complex and ambiguous manifestations of Wordsworth's poetic imagination, ending with the perplexities reflected in the Immortality Ode. Such an approach will, I hope, have a certain conceptual logic.

## CHAPTER 3

### SECTION A

In the poem My Heart Leaps Up, given retrospective significance by Wordsworth's use of part of it as an epigraph to the Immortality Ode, Wordsworth states a desire fundamental to any appreciation of his work:

> My heart leaps up when I behold
> A Rainbow in the sky:
> So was it when my life began;
> So is it now I am a man;
> So be it when I shall grow old,
> Or let me die!
> The Child is Father of the Man;
> And I could wish my days to be
> Bound each to each by natural piety.

Wordsworth is seen in this poem to aspire to the kind of wholeness, the state of integration of self and world expressed by Coleridge in the Conversation Poems examined. Although the tone and mood of My Heart Leaps Up are about as assured as anything one may find in Wordsworth's work, it is

still noticeable that the last two lines are tentative. They represent the "natural piety" which could bind the poet's adult and childhood selves together as an achievement to be striven after rather than a state of being securely and permanently possessed. The task of binding one's days together through "natural piety", achieving a state of sustained integration of self and world at antipodes to the reductively analytic intellection of The Tables Turned, was to be one of the primary concern of Wordsworth's work.

My Heart Leaps Up also contains, in admittedly embryonic form, motifs that connect both with Wordsworth's subsequent work and the concerns dealt with in the previous two chapters. The desire to unify the poet's life in such a way that it is expressly the "child" that is "father of the Man" is an indication of the need to retain, within the state of adult self-consciousness, the felt unity of self and world expressed by the heart that leaps up at the sight of the rainbow. The state of mind desired is, as with Coleridge, one in which the connection of thought with the affective and the "non-conceptual" is retained in an inclusive awareness that transmutes thought into something finer than the merely intellectual.[1] This desire for integration and wholeness, to attain through consciousness a state of mind inclusive enough to suspend the dualism of mind and external world, relates Wordsworth's work to the concerns of both Coleridge and European Romanticism in general.

Wordsworth's primary task then, as with Coleridge's Conversation Poems, was to produce a poetry which plausibly embodied the world-view implicit in a "natural piety". Wordsworth did this, as Colin Clarke suggests,[2] by exploring the complexities of the process of perception and the knowledge we derive from it. Purposeful verbal and syntactic ambiguities are, as I hope will be shown, one of Wordsworth's chief means of suggesting that there is no difference in kind between terms descriptive of the world and terms descriptive of mind and perception.

There are innumerable passages in Wordsworth's work which speak of the interpenetrability of the world and the mind that experiences it. One of the best known and most frequently quoted of these passages is the Boy of Winander Episode, an extract of which will be given here:

> And there, with fingers interwoven, both hands
> Pressed closely, palm to palm, and to his mouth
> Uplifted, he, as through an instrument,
> Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls
> That they might answer him. - And they would shout
> Across the wat'ry Vale, and shout ag'n,
> Responsive to his call, with quivering peals,
> And long halloos, and screams, and echoes loud
> Redoubled and redoubled; - concourse wild

Of mirth and jocund din! And when it chanced
That pauses of deep silence mocked his skill,
Then sometimes, in that silence, while he hung
Listening, a gentle shock of mild surprise
Has carried far into his heart the voice
Of mountain torrents, or the visible scene
Would enter unawares into his mind
With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
Its woods, and that uncertain Heaven, received
Into the bosom of the steady Lake.

(1805, The Prelude: V 395-413)

The responsiveness to the boy's call and the echoes "Redoubled and redoubled" indicate-as in the sympathetic echoing and re-echoing in the landscape of The Nightingale - a fundamentally sympathetic universe, a world in which there is an effortless reciprocity between the boy and his surroundings. It is such a sense of reciprocity that constitutes "joy" in the Wordsworthian sense of the term. The silence in which the "voice/of mountain torrents" comes into the boy's heart is reminiscent of the "ice-skating" passage in Bk 1 of The Prelude. Here too the unusual perspective, the jolt perception receives through encounter with nature in an unexpected manner, strips away the habitual and the familiar to yield a sudden and epiphanic insight into the "One Life", the essential kinship of all

things. Expressions such as "far into his heart", and talk of the "solemn imagery" of the rocks, soften the boundary between the world and our perceptions of or emotional responses to it[3]. In particular the use of the word "imagery', applicable both to the boy's immediate sense-perception and the objects perceived,[4] recalls Coleridge's speculations on the power accruing to poetry by virtue of its being a mixed mode, its power to concretely embody a metaphysical perception of the ideal in the real, of the spiritual essence shared by man and the world. Speaking of the peculiarly liquid and insubstantial quality of so many Wordsworthian landscapes, Colin Clarke remarks that in the Boy of Winander passage "the 'visible scene'...exists outwardly along with the rocks and woods of which it is composed; and yet it enters the mind as though it were of the same stuff as the mind."[5]

The Boy of Winander passage literally incarnates Coleridge's belief, expressed in Bk 12 of the Biographia Literaria, that "During the act of knowledge itself, the objective and subjective are so instantly united that we cannot determine to which of the two priority belongs."[6] Coleridge called the philosophy claiming to demonstrate the unity of the subjective and the objective "Ideal Realism".[7] In his defence of "Ideal Realism" Coleridge insists that it is "naive realism's" belief in the absolute independence of

natural objects from perception that is untrue to lived experience. It is only through transcendentalist assumptions that we can explain how "something essentially different from ourselves... could possibly become a part of our immediate consciousness; in other words, how that which ex-hypothesi is and continues to be extrinsic and alien to our being should become a modification of our being."[8] For Coleridge the Idealism which reveals the essential kinship of the life within and without us through according mind a constitutive role in perception is simultaneously "the truest and most binding realism".[9] The passages of Wordsworth emblematic of "natural piety" and a perception of essential kinship with the natural world accord fully with these convictions.

The way in which the poetry of the 1805 Prelude tries to suggest an epistemological model of reciprocal casuality - the mind acting "in alliance with the works/Which it beholds," self and object constituted and articulated co-instantaneously - emerges interestingly in the Invocation to Book I . This passage enables us to continue our exploration of the effect which the concerns outlined so far have on the actual language of the poetry.

The Invocation to Book I of the 1805 Prelude stands in an antithetical relation to the "bondage" of the city walls.

In contrast to the inhuman fragmentation of the city life, the landscape of the opening lines has an overtly sacramental quality:

> Oh there is blessing in this gentle breeze
> That blows from the green fields and from the clouds
> And from the sky: it beats against my cheek,
> And seems half-conscious of the joy it gives.
> O welcome Messenger! O welcome Friend!
> A captive greets thee, coming from a house
> Of bondage, from yon City's walls set free,
> A prison where he hath been long immured.
> Now I am free, enfranchised and at large,
> May fix my habitation where I will.
> What dwelling shall receive me? In what Vale
> Shall be my harbour? Underneath what grove
> Shall I take up my home, and what sweet stream
> Shall with its murmurs lull me to my rest?
> The earth is all before me: with a heart
> Joyous, nor scared at its own liberty,
> I look about, and should the guide I chose
> Be nothing better than a wandering cloud,
> I cannot miss my way.
>
> ($^{I}$ 1 - 19)

One of the most important means through which Wordsworth intimates a "kinship of essence" between subject and object, self and world, spirit and matter is, as has been suggested, purposeful ambiguity of both individual words and syntax. Such verbal nuances are used with characteristic subtlety by Wordsworth in this invocation. Reciprocity between self and world is implied from the outset by the ambiguous source of the "blessing" in line 1. It could emanate not merely from the "gentle breeze", as the main thrust of the syntax of line 1 would suggest, but from the poet himself[10]. Of course, and the tenor of the passage as a whole tacitly suggests this last interpretation, we are free to erode all epistemological dualism between subject and object by locating the "blessing" in both. The breeze blows from the "green fields, and from the clouds/And from the sky" thus imbuing - here the reading which locates the blessing in the breeze is stressed - the entire landscape with a sacramental quality both complementing and corresponding to the reverential nature of the protagonist's response. However the poet is himself an embodied part of the natural world in which the "ideal" or the "sacred" is immanent. The blessing accordingly also encompasses him when the wind returns to beat on his cheek[11].

The ambiguity analysed with respect to the source of the blessing reappears in the vocatives of Line 5. It is

uncertain whether the "welcome" of "O welcome messenger! O welcome friend!" is an active welcoming of the breeze by the poet or, on the other hand, a more passive acknowledgement of a blessing that has been bestowed by a companionable but nonetheless external agency[12]. In Line 5 the ambiguity of the vocatives - unlike the ambiguity of Line 1 where the syntax tends to locate the blessing more firmly in the breeze than the poet - seems to me to be rather more complex. It is precisely this undecidability, the difficulty of locating spiritual agency conclusively in the poet or the breeze, which is Wordworth's point. All this by no means exhausts the play of purposeful ambiguity in this passage.

The use of the vocative, of explicit personification in Line 5 is in itself interesting. The personifications concerned *serve*, as observed in the discussion of a similar effect in The Eolian Harp, to constitute the breeze as a "presence". Such a "*presence*", a word used throughout The Prelude to very powerful effect, is an animate being with which one can enter into a living relationship. Reciprocally the poet is constituted as one to whom the animate face of the natural world may in turn speak.[13] Significantly much of Wordsworth's poetry that celebrates an achieved "natural piety" is cast in the form of an implicit dialogue between self and world. This is true in a very simple manner of the

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answering response, the leap of the heart on seeing the rainbow in My Heart Leaps Up, and the previously examined extract from Book 2 of The Prelude, where the mind both gives and receives. This transformation of nature into "presence's" is necessary if the external is to become in some sense a possession of consciousness - note that for Wordsworth this implies an interchange between world and self, not a denial of the former's independent existence - rather than remaining irreducibly other. The syntax of the passage has, however, constituted a slightly ambiguous experience in which consciousness is simultaneously perceived in the object itself on the one hand, and projected in such a way that the object seems to be a modification of self whose independent existence is perhaps more precarious on the other.

Despite this last reservation, the assertion of a living unity between self and world in which both actively contribute and yet enjoy independent existence is as secure here as in any passage to be found in Wordsworth. This accordingly makes the passage an excellent example of the characteristic procedures of Wordsworth's verse at its most convincing. The suggestion that the breeze is "half-conscious of the joy it gives" seems to represent an active thrust of mind through which the joy of the poet, the product of having escaped from the alienating life of the

city, is imputed to the breeze itself[14]. This response to the blessing diffused through the breeze, fields and clouds enhances our sense of a "natural piety" in which the mind both gives and receives. This active projection of subjectivity reaches its height in the concluding apostrophes, in the invocation of the breeze as messenger and friend. However even here, despite a slight reservation suggested by the contrasting characterizations of the wind as "messenger" and "friend", the model of reciprocal causality in which self and world, despite being constituted and articulated simultaneously, retain independent existence, structures the poetry. The wind construed as "friend" would seem, in a slightly solipsistic sense, to be a "companionable form" similar to the sister in Frost at Midnight. The characterization of the wind as "messenger" however suggests an alternative reading in which the poet remains a beneficiary of a blessing brought to him. In this case his joy is a product of his perception of "the sacramental" genuinely inhering in the natural world itself.[15] This ambiguity is very similar, it should be noted, to the syntactic ambiguity noted on p. 86. The full implications of these ambiguities will be explored at the close of this section of Chapter 3 - p.104 foll.

No discussion of "natural piety" in Wordsworth's work would be complete without an examination of Tintern Abbey. This

poem contains what may well be the most powerful expression of that aspect of Wordsworth's poetry celebrating the essential kinship of subject and object, *mind and world:*

> For I have learned
> To look on nature, not as in the hour
> Of thoughtless youth, but hearing oftentimes
> The still, sad music of humanity,
> Not harsh nor grating, though of ample power
> To chasten and subdue. And *I* have felt
> A presence that *disturbs me* with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts; a 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 thought,
> And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
> A lover of the meadows and the woods,
> And mountains; and of all that we behold
> From this green earth; of all the mighty world
> Of eye and ear, both what they half-create,
> And what perceive; well pleased to *recognize*
> In nature and the language of the sense,
> The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,

*The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul*
*Of all my moral being.*

(Lines 89 - 112)

The vision of reciprocity between world and self, of the mind that half-creates and half-perceives, is the essence of "natural piety." The "interfused spirit" of this climactic passage is located, as such a doctrine of perception would lead one to expect, in the ocean, air, sky and the mind of man. By the end of the poem it emcompasses both the protagonist and Dorothy in a world which has become "pellucidly beautiful as the divine glow shines through each particle of it."[16]

The climax of Tintern Abbey owes much of its power to the technical virtuosity with which the poem's language suggests a vision of nature as embodied spirit. In no poem can we see more clearly the distance Wordsworth had travelled from the eighteenth century "sentimental" tradition. No poem better fulfils Coleridge's demand that a "poet's heart and intellect should be combined, intimately combined and unified with the great appearances of nature."[17] As in the Boy of Winander episode of The Prelude, Wordsworth's purposeful ambiguity of diction explores the complexities of perception, complexities in which "the boundary between what is given and what bestowed" becomes "a sliding one, to be established as best one can from the individual context."[18]

The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours and their forms, were then to me
An appetite: a feeling and a love,
That had [illegible] a remoter charm,
By thoug[illegible], or any interest
Unborrowed from [illegible] eye.

(Lines 77 - 84)

The "forms" of rock, mountain and wood, far from having the unambiguous substantiality that the reference to their "colours" seems to confer on them, are also "An appetitie: a feeling and a love" for the boy. The "forms" of this passage are essentially analogous to the "forms of beauty" of Line 24. The "forms of beauty" which provide emotional renewal in Tintern Abbey are, in a manner now familiar from the Boy of Winander passage and the invocation to Bk. 1 of the 1805 Prelude, not merely the objects of the perceived landscape, but also the stuff of memory. This accounts for the curiously Wordsworthian kind of past tense in which the poem is written. This past tense is particularly well suited to registering the strange insubstantiality of many Wordsworthian landscapes.[19] The ambiguity of the word "forms", which one might expect to refer unambiguously to the external world, is matched and complimented by a similar

ambiguity in the no less crucial word "sensations", which refers not merely to the senses and sense - impressions, but to passions and reflection. This interfusion of categories used to describe the mental and the physical is essential to the organization of Tintern Abbey as a whole. The kind of double-reference noted in the use of "forms" and "sensations" is echoed by the use of words like "wild" to refer both to the scene before the poet and Dorothy's eyes, and of "beauty" to refer to both the objects of the world and our perception of them.[20] To avoid needless repetition only one more passage using this technical device will be considered:

> Five years have passed; five summers, with the length
> Of five long winters! and again I hear
> These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
> With a sweet inland murmur. - Once again
> Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
> Which on a wild secluded scene impress
> Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
> The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
>
> (Lines 1 - 8)

The word "impress" functions in the same way as the examples given above, referring explicitly to "Thoughts", but also evoking by implication the weight and solidity of the

cliffs. This example shows that ambiguity of syntax may well play an important part in achieving the kind of double-reference under discussion. The placement of "impress" at the end of Line 6 leads the reader to erroneously expect an intransitive construction in which what would be "impressed" on the scene would merely be the weight of the cliffs themselves.[21] In keeping with the collapse of distinctions between spirit and matter foreshadowed in the opening eight lines, the "human" and "natural" elements of the landscape intermingle harmoniously, the borderlines between cottages, homesteads, lawns, groves and copses becoming progressively more indistinct. In Line 8 this intermingling is extended by the connection of landscape and sky. The verb "connect", appropriately enough, has the kind of multiple reference analysed so far, syntactically related as it is to the protagonist, the cliffs and the "Thoughts".[22] In a hostile but characteristically perceptive analysis, Empson insisted on the way in which the meaning of Tintern Abbey is "shuffled across a series of grammatical ambiguities."[23]

In Tintern Abbey Wordsworth's syntax, more successfully than in many of his poems, creates the illusion of the meditative speaking voice, of the observing consciousness of the protagonist modifying and being modified by the landscape perceived.[24] Geoffrey Hartmann has correctly noted that

this effect is "linked in Tintern Abbey to a vacillating calculus of gain and loss, of hope and doubt."[25] More will be said of Hartmann's "vacillating calculus" later. It is however essential to realise that this effect is related to the remarks on the epiphany in Section D of Chapter 2. It is the irreducible concreteness of the perspective through which the landscape is mediated to us, the fact that we are forced to share the view of a highly particularised speaker, that enables Wordsworth to regain an essentially mystical vision into the "life of things" in secularised terms. This vision, given immanently within experience itself, is described in one of the most famous passages of Tintern Abbey:

> Though absent long,
> Those forms of beauty have not been to me,
> As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
> But oft, in lonely rooms, and mid the din
> Of towns and cities, 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 .....
> Nor less, I trust,
> To them I may have owed another gift,
> Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,

In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world
Is lightened:- that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on,
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame,
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul:
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.

(Lines 23 - 30; 36 - 49)

The doctrine of mind as active in perception, as half-creating as well as half-perceiving, is both cause and effect of a "consecration or sacramental vision" in which "a primal unity is manifested simultaneously in all subjects and all objects".[26]

So far only the technical devices through which Wordsworth makes vivid "the life of things" for the reader have been examined. In the passages quoted from Tintern Abbey in this analysis there has been a strong contrast between the protagonist's childhood pleasures and perception of the landscape and the contemplative joy derived from a mature

insight into the "life of things". The poem, it will be remembered, begins with an unarticulated sense of a loss for which, in a mysterious way, "Abundant recompense" has been received. Tintern Abbey, as Langbaum notes, is "about the dissociation of sensibility from thought and their *reintegration*".[27] The cyclical structure of Tintern Abbey must be briefly examined if the significance of the view of experience implicit in the poem is to be fully *understood*.

It will be remembered that the boy experienced the "forms" of trees, rocks and mountains as an "Appetite". The stress on the appetitive indicates the immediacy of a response to nature unconcerned with bringing interests "unborrowed from the eye" to the landscape. In manhood self-consciousness interposes between the protagonist's *perception* of the natural world and his response to it. However what is lost in immediacy is more than compensated for by the gain in comprehension: "With the sanction of what he once felt, the poet looks upon the same forms and feels a joy which has been chastened and subdued by human experience. Experience provides new relational categories and a wider perspective. Now the poet explicitly relates man to nature; he has ideas about the cosmos. But these relational ideas are founded upon the original immediate feelings of joy; they represent, in fact, a development of those feelings. The sense sublime of something far more deeply interfused is an

explicit interpretation of the meaning that was implicit in the immediate joys of childhood. Thus, the new visit to the scene of earlier experience becomes a renewal on a *different* level of the earlier *affirmation* .... The man is the *explicit* result of that which the child was implicitly".[28] Tintern Abbey embodies, perhaps more clearly than any other single poem of Wordsworth's, the "structure of experience" examined in Chapter 1. The great Romantic hope of recovering, through consciousness, the loss of unity for which consciousness was *initially responsible*, seems to have *been realised*. The joys "Unborrowed from the *eye*" are deepened and extended by the adult's supervening perception of the "life of things".

If a poem as complex as Tintern Abbey can be said to be "about" anything, it is about the ways in which a perception of life's oneness can be renewed, deepened and extended in memory and *reflection*. The organic connection of childhood joy and adult perception enables the poet to bind his days together in "natural piety". The figure of Dorothy is of great importance in this regard in Tintern Abbey. Her youthful wildness is a link with what the protagonist once was, and, in his present self, he perceives what she will become.[29] The humanization of the natural world in Tintern Abbey leads to a connection, to which a book of The Prelude is devoted, between the love of the world and the

love of man. The recognition of "nature" and the "language of sense" as "the anchor" of the poet's "purest thoughts" and "moral being" flows over into a love of Dorothy who embodies the unself nscious power of his former response to the natural world:

> ... and in thy voice I catch
> The language of my former heart, and read
> My former pleasures in the shooting lights
> Of thy eyes. Oh! yet a little while
> May I behold in thee what I was once,
> My dear, dear Sister!
>
> (Lines 127 - 22)

The interaction of Dorothy and Wordsworth adds power to Tintern Abbey by functioning, in a sense, as an objective correlative of the union of human feeling and the natural world, the binding of the poet's days together through memory and recollection with which the poem is concerned.

The considerations raised by the previously analysed passages in Tintern Abbey and The Prelude can now be profitably amplified by an examination of the "correspondent - breeze" passage of The Prelude:

For I, methought, while the sweet breath of Heaven
Was blowing on my body, felt within
A corresponding mild creative breeze,
A vital breeze which travelled gently on
O'er things which it had made, and is become
A tempest, a redundant energy
Vexing its own creation. 'Tis a power
That does not come unrecognised, a storm
Which, breaking up a long-continued frost,
Brings with it vernal promises, the hope
Of active days, of dignity and thought,
Of prowess in an honourable field,
Pure passions, virtue, knowledge, and delight,
The holy life of music and of verse.

(1805, The Prelude: I 41-54)

The "correspondent breeze" of this passage is quite obviously a metaphor for the achieved reciprocity of self and world, man and nature that the poetry of both Coleridge and Wordsworth represents as both task and accomplishment. The "correspondent breeze" elicited within the poet vexing him to creativity, directly answers and compliments the breeze blowing on his body. The "sweet breath of Heaven," encompassing both, imbues this correspondence with a by now equally familiar sacramental quality. This passage's structurally vital position in the opening lines of the 1805

Prelude stresses how important the "natural piety" so often celebrated in Wordsworth's work is. The task of art culating a reciprocity between man and nature is explicitly linked with the proper functions of poetry and imagination.[30]

In a manner closely resembling the capacity of Coleridge's "Secondary Imagination" to idealize and unify, to re-arrange the "givens" of perception and experience so as to reveal kinship and analogy between that which normal consciousness keeps separate, the task of imagination is to celebrate, in the "holy life of music and of verse", an interchange between man and nature. The holiness of music and verse is a response to the "breath of Heaven" in the breeze which blows on the poet's body. The choice of the metaphor of a "correspondent breeze" to designate the birth of imagination firmly establishes the kinship, the near identity in fact, of the movement of imagination and the natural processes which elicit it and to which it is a living response. In a famous metaphor of exactly the same import, Wordsworth refers elsewhere in The Prelude to the activity of the mind, perception and natural processes as "kindred streams".[31]

The dissolution of all dualisms between spirit and matter, mind and world, and the delicate balance between these two potentially disjunct sets of terms achieved in such a

dissolution, has an importance for Wordsworth that can be gauged by a passage in Book 6 of the 1805 Prelude in which the speculations of "The Schoolmen" become "The Self-created sustenance of a mind / Debarred from Nature's images, / Compelled to be a life unto herself ..."[32] (lines 312-14). The assertion that the state of isolation in which imagination becomes a "life unto herself" is an imprisonment leave us in no doubt of the terrors that a disjunction between mind and world held for Wordsworth.

The harmonious interplay of man and nature achieved by and celebrated in "natural piety" is also a means of avoiding the opposite danger:

> I had been taught to reverence a Power
> That is the very quality and shape
> And image of right reason, that matures
> Her processes by steady laws, gives birth
> To no impatient or fallacious hopes,
> No heat of passion or excessive zeal,
> No vain conceits, provokes to no quick turns
> Of self-applauding intellect, but lifts
> The Being into magnanimity,
> Holds up before the mind, intoxicate
> With present objects and the busy dance

Of things that pass away, a temperate shew
Of objects that endure ...

(1805, The Prelude: XII 24-39)

The personified "Power" stresses the vital and educative force to be found in the natural world by those willing to attune themselves to it. It tempers the intellect and the passions by placing them in reciprocal relationship with nature, with "objects that endure."[33] This state is contrasted with the fate of a mind "intoxicate with present objects." If the reciprocity of self and world celebrated in the metaphors of the "correspondent breeze" and the "kindred stream" is to be sustained, it is vital that neither pole of the subject/object dialectic be given priority. If priority is given to subjectivity mind is, as seen in the first quotation, debarred from nature's living images. If, on the other hand, exclusive priority is given to the objective pole, the mind is left "intoxicate / With present objects" in a manner which suggests a destructive dissipation of any sense of self.[33a]

By and large Wordsworth's poetry seeks to avoid both these dangers through articulating a comprehensive view of experience in which thought and the affective base from which it springs, our moral being, and the natural world which shapes it, are united in a "natural piety" sustained,

deepened and enriched through memory and reflection. The activities of mind, imagination, and the natural processes which modify and are modified by them, are perceived to be "kindred streams". More often than not this insight is gained through an epiphanic revelation of the kinship of nature and spirit. This revelation is a natural outgrowth of the poet's intense response to a highly particularized and finely characterized natural scene.

This facet of Wordsworth's work asserts a living, productive interchange between man and nature, and stands in close relation to much of Coleridge's philosophy, to his poetical practice as exemplified in Frost at Midnight and The Eolian Harp and, in a looser sense, to the thrust of Schelling's "Naturphilosophie" as examined in Chapter 1. In all of these instances we are dealing with an attempt to answer the Enlightenment by formulating doctrines of experience articulating a view of nature and the world as essentially kin to man in their spiritual essence. Nonetheless, the idea of a "natural piety" can be shown to be subject to the same tensions and difficulties that, it was suggested at the close of Chapter 2, were inherent in Coleridge's practice in the Conversation Poems. The rest of this chapter will concern itself with such matters. Ironically enough, such an investigation can begin by touching on Tintern Abbey, in many ways the key to understanding Wordsworth at his most assured.

Tintern Abbey begins by reflecting on a disparity between the response the poet gives to the landscape now and his response of five years ago - in Tintern Abbey, a "sad perplexity" interposes between the visible landscape and the poet's memory of it. The "sad perplexity" is not heavily dwelt on but its mere presence imparts a certain precariousness to the epiphanic revelation of the spirit that "rolls through all things" in the poem's climax. As has been suggested with reference to Coleridge's work in Chapter 2 the epiphanic moment is intrinsically precarious. Langbaum has rightly suggested that the epiphany represents an attempt, in the absence of conventional religious certitude, to fuse fact and value, the real and the sacred, in a manner that would be experientially based. It is precisely this rooting of the poet's perception of the life of things in the concrete and particular that enables one to believe in the revelation as experience.

As the next section of Chapter 3 will examine in more detail the ways in which Wordsworth's poetry, like Coleridge's, reflects the precariousness of the epiphanic moment, a simultaneous recapitulation and recasting of arguments outlined in Chapter 2 Section D is perhaps advisable here. The instability of the epiphanic moment is, it was suggested, related to the concreteness and particularity stressed in the previous paragraph. The epiphany represents

an attempt to overcome the dualisms of post-Cartesian thought in an experientially given, self-validating moment of perception. But because of the epiphanic moment's would-be status as dramatised experience such certitude, if given at all, is given only momentarily, for as long as the flash of insight itself lasts. Therefore any generalizations made from such moments in an attempt to extrapolate, from the epiphanic insight, a comprehensive doctrine of experience such as that implicit in "natural piety", are *by definition problematical*. Precisely because the certitude of our perception of the "One Life" lasts only for a moment there is, as Langbaum pointed out, a disequilibrium between the moment of insight and any idea or set of ideas we may hope to abstract from it.[34]

This difficulty can be clarified by being considered in another way. *So long as we consider* the moment of dramatised experience and insight alone, the judgemental predicates of truth and falsity do not seem applicable to it. In a moment such as the insight into the "life of things" which is the culmination of Tintern Abbey, it seems that we can intelligibly speak of the experience as "given or not given", but not as "true or false".[35] Whether or not an *experience can be "given" in the sense* of being "unmediated",[36] as the epiphanic moment claims to be, is doubtful. But for the moment it will be best to take the

Romantics on their own terms. Whatever our convictions on this matter, this is obviously not so of any attempt to extrapolate from the moment of experience a generalization or doctrine of experience intended to be applicable, at least in intention, to human experience as a whole. Such generalizations or doctrines could clearly be true or false and, to that extent, uncertain. Given the irreducible concreteness of the epiphanic moment in which the relation *between man and world comes* to be perceived as Keats' "fellowship of essence", the "knowledge" it contains would seem, strictly speaking, to be private and incommunicable. This impasse seems to be unavoidable, for the epiphanic moment's claims to authenticity rest, as shown, on its being a moment of dramatised experience.

The consequences of all this for Wordsworth's verse are very serious. The insight achieved in Tintern Abbey into the "life of things" seemed to do the impossible by combining reverential recognition of and participation in the "One Life" with a conception of perception assigning mind a far more formative role in experience than much post-Cartesian thought would allow. The epiphanic moments analysed in *Tintern Abbey*, the *Invocation* to Bk 1 of the 1805 Prelude, The Boy of Winander and the "correspondent breeze" passages all attempt, with great virtuosity, to show how, despite the independent existence of the natural world, *its objects*

could be instrumental in the growth of a poet's mind. It is only because of this deeply felt "kinship of essence" with the natural world that Wordsworth could hope to write a history of his mind's formation through progressively articulating the significance of his childhood experiences of nature, experiences which at once modify consciousness and are modified by it. Epiphanic revelation of the unity of man and world and a sympathetic understanding of the significance of such a revelation by a mind whose role in perception is active and creative are the two pillars on which a doctrine of "natural piety" rests. As the perception of nature as embodied spirit was given actually, allowing the positives of religious experience to be recaptured in secular terms, a doctrine of "natural piety" held out the prospect of overcoming the Cartesian dualisms discussed in Chapter 1 in an intellectually satisfying manner.[37] The above considerations also show - see p.98 foll - that only through "natural piety" did it seem possible to stabilize the subject/object dialectic, to avoid the opposite yet related dangers of the mind becoming "debarred" from "Nature's living images" or "intoxicate with present objects". To the extent that the perceptions and aspirations of "natural piety" are based on the precariously self-validating epiphanies scattered throughout The Prelude and poems like Tintern Abbey, its projected resolutions and syntheses are also vulnerable.

As noted, doctrines of "natural piety" rest on a participation in the "One Life" and a conception of the mind as active in perception. But it is difficult to maintain without contradiction simultaneous beliefs in the independent existence of the natural world and the essentially mind-dependent nature of perception. The analysis of the Invocation to Bk 1 of the 1805 Prelude - see p. 84-87 - showed a significant tension to be suggested by the diction and syntax of Wordsworth's verse. The need, expressed in the vocative personifications of the breeze as "messenger" and "friend", to constitute natural objects and forces as "presences" so as to make them in some sense internally related to consciousness is, at best, ambiguous. At worst, it is indicative of a tendency on the part of mind towards solipsistic projection - see the entry in Coleridge's Malta notebooks quoted at the end of Chapter 2. This tension will be examined in the first part of Section B of Chapter 3, at least in part, through an analysis of IV 247-67 of the 1805 Prelude. The suggestion that objects of perception acquire radiance through being "crossed" with a "gleam" exclusively associated with the perceiver's "own image" radicalises the tensions implicit in the Invocation and looks forward to the solipsistically self-reflexive autonomy of a mind that has become "Lord and master of outward sense". One way of dealing with the spectre of solipsism is to embrace it, to counteract the precariousness

of the epiphanic moment by defiantly asserting the constitutive power of mind, by making perception an act of mastery and subjugation.

The rather different "autonomy" of imagination celebrated in the Simplon-Pass passage is related to the second response to the precariousness of the epiphanic moment outlined in Chapter 2 Section D. As the contradiction in the Eolian Harp showed, this fragility could also result in an attempt to ground a perception of the "life of things" more securely in something resembling a more orthodox theism. Even, for instance, the reference to the "sweet breath of Heaven" in the "correspondent breeze" passage, is slightly ambiguous. Although the predominant thrust of the passage is undoubtedly pantheistic in its flavour, the personification of "Heaven" makes it ultimately uncertain whether the "sacred" is wholly immanent in the natural world, or whether it is a power or force existing independently of man and nature but beneficently encompassing them both. In the Simplon-Pass passage, what is most often merely an occasional tension in Wordsworth's poetry gains full expression, objects having value only in so far as they reflect a light and glory other than the merely natural. This transcendent light can only be apprehended by an imagination - hence the celebration of the "unfathered vapour" - that, despite its participation in the divine, is

also alleged to have become "autonomous" in some or other sense. This aspect of Wordsworth's verse will be dealt with in the concluding part of the following section of Chapter 3. An argument will be advanced trying to partially justify the suggestion, given in Chapter 2 Section D, that the tendencies examined here may tentatively be understood to indicate the various "careers" on which an imagination opposed to the merely "bodily eye" of Tintern Abbey may embark. The investigation of those aspects of Wordsworth's verse sketched here will, to form a link with what has gone before, initially be examined by reviewing and extending arguments already advanced in the analysis of the Invocation to Bk 1 of the 1805 Prelude.

SECTION B

As has been suggested, Wordsworth's desire to "humanise" the natural by articulating a structure of experience allowing for a more intimate relationship between self and world than any the Enlightenment would allow can result in a solipsistic tendency, ultimately at odds with the "natural piety" examined so far. This can be seen by looking again at the syntax of the invocation to the 1805 Prelude.

In the passage concerned it was pointed out that the ambiguities of syntax left open precisely to what extent the mind's role in perception was a constitutive one. In Line 1, though even here the exact source of the blessing in the breeze is not entirely unequivocal, the diffusion of the blessing through fields, clouds and sky before the breeze beats against the poet's cheek seems to locate the life animating the scene predominantly in the natural world itself. However the personifications of Line 5 in which the breeze is welcomed first as messenger and then as friend complicate this picture. The invocation of the breeze as messenger clearly retains the main thrust of the opening line. The blessing implicitly comes from an agency which, no matter how beneficent, is still seen [illegible] nal to the poet himself. However, in the [illegible] e intimate

invocation of the breeze as friend, our sense that the poet's joy results from a perception of the sacramental *inhering* in the landscape is modified.

A friend, as noted, would seem to be a "companionable *form*" in a more intimate sense than a messenger. In this second personification there is perhaps a suggestion that the consciousness perceived in the object may, as Langbaum puts it, to a slightly greater degree, be the poet's own.[38] This *construction* is given further support by the assertion, in Line 4, that the breeze seems "half-conscious of the joy it gives". Here it seems possible that the poet's *sensation* of joyous release at having escaped the confines of the city has been projected onto the external world.

Of course Wordsworth intends this slight shift of emphasis to allow the passage to incarnate the notion of the mind as (in the extract quoted from Book I of The Prelude) "working in alliance with the works / Which it beholds." The blessing permeating the entire landscape is met with an active and reciprocal thrust of mind. The sense of the numinous elicited in the poet through his exposure to nature is deepened and enriched by an active and joyous response *essentially similar* in kind. In this particular passage of The Prelude one may readily concede that the two strands of thought implicit in the verse cannot easily be disentangled

so as to give the one priority over the other. Nonetheless, the vocative personifications of Line 5 make us aware that the objects of the natural world must in a sense be constituted as "Presence's" or "Powers" - both words are used frequently in Wordsworth's work to convey a sense of what A.D. Nuttall calls the "numinous quasi - allegorical figure of Nature"[39] - if they are to be seen as animate beings with whom relationship is possible. The passage displays, in latent form, two strands. In one the poet responds with appropriate reverence to an epiphanic revelation of "being" in the natural world. In the other an active projection of consciousness makes the object seem, to a greater extent, a modification of self whose independent existence is more precarious. It is this second strand that accounts for what Colin Clarke rightly calls the "haunting insubstantiality"[40] of many typically Wordsworthian landscapes.

This peculiar evanescence can indeed be found frequently in Wordsworth's work. In the extract from the Boy of Winander the ambiguity of the key word "image," applicable to both the protagonist's perceptions and the objects perceived, gives the landscape the same fluidity. While enjoying a strangely independent existence, the landscape is yet "of the same stuff as the mind."[41] It is this seeming co-extensiveness of the mental and the physical which allows

the landscape to exist so easily as inner representation. It is obvious that the doctrines concerning the nature of the mind's role in perception implicit in each of the two strands referred to in Wordsworth's work do not entirely agree with one another, seeming as they do to embody ultimately divergent accounts of human experience and possibility. There is no doubt that these ambiguities about the role and nature of perception were, in poetic terms, to prove immensely productive in Wordsworth's work. These tensions were for Wordsworth "part of the nature of things, a dilemma felt on the pulses. His conviction that the natural world is solid, and substantially 'other' than the mind that contemplates it, had to come to terms with his conviction that what we perceive is inevitably mind-dependent. A dramatic tension in his poetry was frequently the result."[42] A well known passage in Bk. 4 of the 1805 Prelude both reflects and gives a new twist to the concerns discussed so far:

> As one who hangs down - bending from the side
> Of a slow-moving Boat, upon the breast
> Of a still water, solacing himself
> With such discoveries as his eye can make,
> Beneath him in the bottom of the deeps,
> Sees many beauteous sights, weeds, fishes, flowers,
> Grots, pebbles, roots of trees, and fancies more,

Yet often is perplexed, and cannot part
The shadow from the substance, rocks and sky,
Mountains and clouds, from that which is indeed
The region, and the things which there abide
In their true dwelling; now is crossed by gleam
Of his own image, by a sunbeam now,
And motions that are sent he knows not whence,
Impediments that make his task more sweet;
- Such pleasant office have we long pursued
Incumbent o'er the surface of past time
With like success; nor have we often looked
On more alluring shows (to me, at least,)
More soft, or less ambiguously descried,
Than those which now we have been passing by,
And where we still are lingering.

($^{IV}$ 247 - 68)

This passage is about a realm which Wordsworth himself calls "ambiguously descried," a realm in which reflection on objects seen increases rather than alleviates the difficulty of distinguishing between the outside world, perception and memory. These "Impediments" to distinguishing clearly between the external scene and "the surface of past time" make the poet's "task more sweet," testifying as they do to the mind becoming interfused, as in Tintern Abbey, with the world. A few lines later, immediately before describing

subsequent social distractions, Wordsworth assures us that all he saw he "loved / Loved deeply." Perception of beauty leads to an enlargening of moral sympathies, to the "joys / Of subtler origin" mentioned earlier. As Colin Clarke correctly points out, "'I loved, loved deeply' becomes equated in the imagination with the meaning 'I saw deeply.'"[43]

Nonetheless, there is a countermovement in this passage corresponding to the second train of thought implicit in The Prelude's invocation, one which tacitly seems to assign the mind a more constitutive role in perception than has been exhibited in most of the passages considered so far. The mind not merely "sees many beauteous sights" but actively "fancies more." Moreover the "beauteous sights" listed are the objects actually constituting the realm "ambiguously descried." The lack of any firm distinction between what the mind "sees" and what it "fancies" is of course the reason why reflection and substance cannot be separated in the realm "ambiguously descried." The passage's brilliant use of the reflections playing in the water is made to suggest the ambiguities of the act of perception itself, the "weeds, fishes, flowers / Grots" and "pebbles" of the river-bottom are merging with the "rocks and sky / Mountains and clouds" of the external landscape. The obvious syntactic parallelism in the descriptions of the two lists

of objects serves to enhance the suggestion of identity in difference conveyed by the scene as a whole.[44] The difficulty, of telling which of the objects given in these lists belongs exactly where, of telling the "shadow from the substance", makes us aware of the way in which the "fancies" and "objects ambiguously descried" in this passage complement one another, deepening the ambiguity noted earlier about the mind's exact role in perception.

Due to the fluiditiy of the relation between shadow and substance, the impossibility of knowing whether the external landscape is substance to the water's shadow or conversely, the "region" where things "abide / in their true dwelling" remains, in principle, impossible to locate precisely. The ambiguities noted so far are deepened by the explicit statement that the realm "ambiguously descried" is "crossed" by the "gleam" of the perceiver's "own image". The gleam of the perceiver's image relates to the "fancies" mentioned earlier. The use of "image" and "gleam" in this passage, the latter strongly suggesting the active nature of perception, implies that the mind constitutes objects of experience as modifications of self. Of course, "the crossing over" through which the self is intermingled with the scene of which it is a part could be used as evidence for a living interchange between man and nature in which, as in Tintern Abbey, the mind is both giver and receiver. But

such a reading would in my opinion be imcomplete and partial, failing to take note of something in this verse giving it a slightly different range of suggestion to most of the previously analysed passages.

It is difficult not to feel that this passage gives a new twist to the argument sketched in outline in the analysis of the Invocation. In the former passage, despite the active projection of consciousness implied by the personifications, we do not get nearly so strong a sense of the poet's self being so dispersed through the natural scene as to almost envelop it. The explicitness with which the observed scene is said to be refashioned by consciousness, literally "crossed" with the gleam of the perceiver's "own image", sits uneasily with a "natural piety" that would fuse self and world through a perception and celebration of their common essence. Suggestions that the mind works in alliance with what it perceives - see for instance the characterization of the natural world as a beneficent mother in the reference to the "breast" of the water - conflict with so strong a suggestion that "consciousness" is perceived in the object only by courtesy of being "crossed" with the perceiver's "own image".

The isolation of two strands implicit in Wordsworth's work, one in which "joy" is the product of perceiving a "life in

things" that is objectively and independently there, and a second in which mind, given a more active role in perception, at least partially constitutes the object as a modification of self, points as noted, to an instability in the subject - object dialectic. Accordingly the poetry is in effect forced to debate which of the terms of the subject/ object, self/world dialectic should enjoy priority. In this passage it seems to me that a noticeable step has been taken in the direction of giving priority to the subject, the self. The use by Coleridge and Wordsworth of terms drawn from the vocabulary of human emotion and response to describe the natural world was the result of an attempt to articulate a relation between mind [illegible]orld more intimate than the dualisms of post-Cartesian [illegible] seemed to allow, to formulate a view of experience in which man's kinship with nature regarded as embodied spirit was perceived. The use of the word "gleam" in the last passage examined, seemingly locating the radiance perceived in the landscape in the perceiver's image, raises the question of whether, in the last analysis, the affective terminology of the Romantics tends to designate a solipsistic attitude on the part of the perceiver.[45]

"Natural piety" attempts to resolve the subject / object dialectic through an epiphanic moment in which an insight into the "life of things" is given as concrete experience in

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"Natural piety" attempts to resolve the subject / object dialectic through an epiphanic moment in which an insight into the "life of things" is given as concrete experience in

an unmediated, self-verifying perception. As noted, the synthesis of "natural piety" could be sundered either through the mind becoming "*intoxicate with present objects*" or through its assumption of autonomy. The same precariousness was referred to, in a different way, through pointing out the difficulty of maintaining a belief in both the objective reality of the external world and the mind - dependence of perception. If, as suggested on p. 106, the beliefs of "natural piety" depend on epiphanic revelation of the "One *Life within us and abroad*" to *a mind* that half-creates and half-perceives, it is hardly surprising that mind's role in perception is active in almost all of Wordsworth's poetry. As a belief in the activity of the mind in fitting our existence to "existing things," in "humanising the natural world, was not something Wordsworth could relinquish, it is no surprise that in his poetry it is usually "*the objective which is eroded by the subjective.*"[46] This incipient autonomy of mind and imagination, often implicit in The Prelude, squares well with Geoffrey Hartmann's observation that Wordsworth does not "write poetry about Nature as an immediate external object ... 'The Prelude' never represents Nature simply as immediate or ultimate object, even when the poet's recall is most vivid."[47]

In particular the intimated collapse of the distinction between the objective world, perception and memory gives substance to Charles Sherry's claim that in some of Wordsworth's verse "Nature is not the cause, but the occasion for poetry. The imagination seizes upon the accidental conjunctions of things in nature, takes them up, and subsumes them under the higher laws of its operation."[48] The subsumption of which Sherry speaks is constantly suggested as a prospect by the incipient autonomy of mind in any belief wishing, however guardedly, to dissolve categorical distinctions between mind and world in the perception of a supposedly common essence. The man wishing to bind his days together by means of "natural piety" is, ironically enough because of the essential nature of his beliefs, constantly threatened by the prospect of being "debarred" from "Nature's images", of being left without a world to inhabit. This tension, engendering a perpetually inconclusive subject - object dialectic, is endemic to any worldview engaged in a "Schellingesque" attempt to "give a plausible interpretation of nature ... as the precipitate of a cosmic spirit on the way to a fuller realization in self-consciousness".[49] This tension points to "one of the most painful spots in modern philosophy and its persistent temptation. To find a consistent language which would embrace both the cogito and the cosmos is probably impossible; once we start with one we do not reach

the other".[50] Despite superficial appearances to the contrary, "natural piety" tends to start with the self.

The difficulty of simultaneously asserting the independent existence of the natural world and the mind - dependence of perception is also revealed by important, almost programmatic passages in The Prelude, standing in opposition to one another. In one of the innumerable passages of The Prelude which shows how love of nature yields to delight of a more refined kind, a corresponding harmony of mind aptly described as "intellectual charm," Wordsworth speaks of the "affinities" that fit our existence to "existing things:"

> Nor, sedulous as I have been to trace
> How Nature by extrinsic passion first
> Peopled my mind with beauteous forms or grand
> And made me love them, may I well forget
> How other pleasures have been mine, and joys
> Of subtler origin; how I have felt,
> Not seldom, even in that tempestuous time,
> Those hallowed and pure motions of the sense
> Which seem in their simplicity, to own
> An intellectual charm, that calm delight
> Which, if I err not, surely must belong
> To those first-born affinities that fit
> Our new existence to existing things,

And, in our own dawn of being, constitute
The bond of union between life and joy.
1805 Prelude: I 571-85)

It is this unification of the self through a "natural piety" binding our "existence to existing things" that is "joy," in the Wordsworthian sense. Nature and perception of natural beauty gives rise to "joys / Of subtler origin" in such a way as to root thought and self-consciousness in the affective, to root "our most sophisticated idea in our most primitive impulse, uniting youth with age, the external with the internal, sense with idea, and matter with spirit."[51] Such a passage's significance is heightened by its sentiments being reflected at the close of The Prelude in the climactic ascent of Mount Snowdon, where the "power" in nature is

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.
This is the very spirit in which they deal
With all the objects of the universe;
They from their native selves can send abroad

Like transformations, for themselves create
A like existence, and, when'er it is
Created for them, catch it by an instinct.
1850 Prelude: XIII 84 - 96)

It is because of the essential analogousness of natural presences and the mind that the latter can construct from its own resources "transformations" kindred to the "Power" in the landscape. Landscape and mind in the ascent of Mount Snowdon are perfect analogues of one another, poetic creation consisting of an elucidation and celebration of the potentially infinite correspondences between them.[51a] The mind can respond actively to the beauty of the world by forging for itself a "Like transformation" or, with equal ease "catch" what has been created for it.[51b] Here, in truly a Schellingesque manner, man, so far from being debarred from nature's living images, is the spiritual essence of the natural world rendered conscious and articulate. In one of the simultaneously satisfying and maddening "circles" so typical of much Romantic thought and poetry, it is imagination's task to bring to our awareness the unity of spirit and matter in which it itself is ultimately grounded. As E.D. Hirsch says "Imagination, like life, is characterized by reciprocal activity ... It strives to unify seemingly diverse elements and, in so striving, it attains the fulfillment it seeks. For, the goal toward

which it strives is, in a deeper sense, already attained. The very unity it seeks is that which makes possible its seeking, for thought and being are implicitly unified."[52]

In these key passages, poetry is an act of creation in which exploration of the poet's mind is, as the epigraph to The Prelude suggests, simultaneously an exploration of the world, for the essence of reality is the non-arbitrary metaphysical kinship of both. The second strand implicit in the poetry's ambiguities of syntax and diction, the strand in which the object seems to owe its kinship with mind to a solipsistic projection of consciousness reminiscent of Coleridge's Malta Notebook entry of 1805, is powerfully expressed in one of The Prelude's most famous passages:

> There are in our existence spots of time,
> Which with distinct pre-eminence retain
> A renovating Virtue, ...
> A virtue by which pleasure is enhanced,
> That penetrates, enables us to mount
> When high, more high, and lifts us up when fallen.
> This efficacious spirit chiefly lurks
> Among those passages of life in which
> We have had deepest feeling that the mind
> Is lord and master, and that outward sense
> Is but the obedient servant of her will.
>
> (1805 Prelude: XI 258-60; 266-273)

"Outward sense" is here reduced to totally subservient status, for all 'outward sense" is an aspect of consciousness in a state of affairs in which mind is its own object. The tensions between the *epistemological doctrines* implicit in each of the two strands of Wordsworth's work uncovered by the analysis of the invocation do not, it can now be seen, merely affect individual passages of verse. As the juxtaposed quotations show, they affect The Prelude as a whole, *making its structure one* of ultimately inconclusive repetition and oscillation in which the various "doctrines" concerning mind, perception, the world, experience, and the relations between them, do not cohere into unity. The structure of inconclusive repetition can be *seen even* more clearly by turning now to an analysis of the Simplon-Pass passage, the best example of Wordsworth's alternative attempts to deal with the precariousness of the epiphanic moment by grounding our perception of "life" in *things transcendentally* in the radiance of a "light divine".

There is a passage at the close of Book 5 of both the 1805 and 1850 versions of The Prelude foreshadowing the emergence of an ambiguously autonomous *imagination*, the seemingly self-engendered "unfathered vapour". Wordsworth speaks of a "Visionary Power" which

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 dangers there
As in a mansion like their proper home;
*Even forms and substances are circumfused*
By that transparent veil with light divine;
And through the turnings intricate of Verse
Present themselves as objects recognised,
In flashes, and with a glory scarce their own.
(1805 Prelude V 619-29)

*Although the main thrust of the poetry here is in the* direction of attributing a problematical "autonomy" to mind, there are some countercurrents. The "there," the precise location in which "shadowy things do work their changes", is still partially ambiguous. The "there" could be either the "Visionary Power" or the "mystery of words." This tension is revealed by the complex syntax of the passage. On the *one hand the run of the syntax seems to quite conclusively* embody the "Visionary Powers" in "words", which would imply that the "Visionary Power" is constituted as such by the poet's verse. On the other hand we are confronted with an alternative and contrary characterization of language as a "transparent veil" in and through which the "Visionary Power" reveals itself without the intervention of human

artifice.[53] This ambiguity causes, as we read on, even our understanding of the phrase "turnings intricate of verse" to be equivocal. The "turnings" of the verse could have a constitutive function, for the use of the word "turnings" seems to insinuate that the verse has strongly independent life and existence of its own. It could, however, also denote an effort to make the verse correspond ever more closely to the contours of an independent object, so that the "Visionary Power" may reveal without distortion.[54] But these ambiguities are, I think, almost wholly dissipated by the last two lines of the passage, whose final and cumulative effect is a celebration of the mind's autonomy. This extract is accordingly directly related to that section of the Simplon-Pass narrative in which imagination rises like an "unfathered vapour".

Although the characterization of language as a "transparent veil" still seems to allow "forms and substances" to be conveyed to us in their full radiance without distortion, objects are nonetheless suffused with a "light divine" disengaging the "Visionary Power" from the natural world which it illuminates. Natural objects are finally perceived "In flashes," contingent and frail bearers of "a glory scarce their own." This disengagement of the natural world from the source of its illumination modifies our interpretation of "In flashes". Objects are perceivable

only when illuminated by a "light divine," a light extrinsic to them which only an imagination that has - in a sense to be considered shortly - assumed autonomy can see. We are accordingly entitled, thinking on the import of the passage as a whole, to retrospectively regard the presentation of objects "in turnings intricate of verse" as one of the very rare passages in which a celebration of the imagination as self-engendered, as an "unfathered vapour", is combined with an assertion of the constitutive power of Wordsworth's poetry.

A comparison of the 1805 Prelude with the 1850 Prelude version of this same passage seems to confirm that Wordsworth himself may well have regarded this last interpretation of the passage's import as a whole to be justified. The first two lines of the 1805 version, "Visionary Power / Attends upon the motions of the winds" are changed to "Visionary Power / Attends the motion of the viewless winds." In the 1805 version the attending of the "Visionary Power" on "the motions of the winds" holds open the possibility of a reciprocity in which the "Visionary Power" is intrinsically connected with or even perhaps immanent in the wind. The 1850 version's characterization of the wind as "viewless" seems to foreclose this possibility, strengthening the assertion of the last two lines that the objects and the "flashes" illuminating them

are disjunct. The glory of objects is not their own, attaining it as they do only when suffused with "light divine." A second emmendation in the 1850 version seems to work to similar effect. The lines "There, darkness makes abode, and all the host / Of shadowy things do work their changes there" becomes "There, darkness makes abode, and all the host / Of shadowy things work endless changes there." The replacement of the personal pronoun "their" with "endless" disembodies the "shadowy things" even more thoroughly, placing in doubt what De Man calls "the ontological priority of the sensory object."[55] This questioning of the sensory object's ontological primacy widens the gap between the natural world and the "light divine" even more, reinforcing also our sense of the constitutive power of the "turnings intricate of verse." In conclusion then, in this passage, to which the description of imagination rising like an "unfathered vapour" is essentially related, we can see an explicit celebration in The Prelude of mind severed from its essentially frustrating and hampering connections with the world of sense.

It was noted as early as Section D of Chapter 2 that the nature of the "autonomy" imagination may be said to have assumed in the Simplon-Pass passage was in need of explication. It would be difficult for the careful reader not to feel that Wordsworth's attribution of autonomy to the

"unfathered vapour" in the Simplon-Pass passage of The Prelude is beset with ambiguities. In the Simplon-Pass passage the emergence of the "unfathered vapour" is associated with an extinguishing of the "light of sense" and a perception of objects suffused with "light divine". Objects become contingent bearers of a "glory not their own". As noted - see Chapter 2 Section D - such considerations force us to treat the vision of nature as embodied spirit and the doctrine of the cosubstantiality of all being in either a more traditionally theological or a more Platonistic manner. And yet such a treatment multiplies rather than eliminates our difficulties. In $^{IV}247$-67 of The Prelude the way in which objects were "crossed" with the "gleam" of the perceiver's "image" enabled one to interpret the incipient autonomy of imagination quite simply as a tendency towards solipsism. Wordsworth's characterization of imagination in the Simplon-Pass passage as "unfathered" and, by implication, self-engendered, seems to insist heavily on autonomy of a similar nature. But if the ultimate goal of mind and imagination is participation in the divine it is difficult to see how they can be autonomous in the same sense[56] as the mind which is "Lord and master of outward sense". In a sense the exact opposite is true, for to the extent that participation in the "light divine" is achieved it seems likely that selfhood of the kind aggressively asserted by

the mind which constitutes objects of experience as aspects of self will be greatly attenuated or possibly even extinguished. This seems to be confirmed, as will be seen, by much of the Immortality Ode. In the Ode birth and individuation, the process of acquiring a self through descent into the "Shades of the prison-house", mark the beginning of vision's dissipation. In short, an imagination seeking participation in the divine may come to disengage the poet from any sense of self as surely as it disengages him from the world of sense. The disjunction of the natural world and the "visionary gleam" in the Ode reveals a similar discontinuity between the child, who enjoys immediate participation in the divine, and the man, frustrated by his hampering immersion in the world of sense. It is hardly surprising that the Ode comes to use the notion of Platonic recollection as a heuristic device to try and connect the natural world and the "visionary gleam", earthly existence and the divine, in such a manner as to preserve the reality of both.

If the analysis sketched in outline in the last page or two has any plausibility whatever, the considerations it raises make it extremely unlikely that any fully coherent sense can be made of the problematical "autonomy" attributed to the imagination said to be "unfathered" and self-engendered. The ambiguity of the "autonomy" seems to me to be irreducible, the extent to which the imagination celebrated

in the Simplon-Pass passage can be said to be "autonomous" being largely a matter of the perspective from which we care to interpret the Simplon-Pass passage as a whole. In elaborating on this suggestion, I shall both recapitulate and recast arguments already presented.

As has been suggested - see p.130, the attempt to participate in the divine implies that the "solution" to phenomena, as Coleridge termed it, is not to be found immanently within them. If objects accordingly become contingent bearers of "glory not their own" it is implied that the "light divine" which is the source of their illumination emanates from a "being" that would be reminiscent, to a degree, of the Neo-Platonic Absolute - see the quotation from Aids to Reflection on p.71. The "One" conferring the radiance without which objects, regarded as merely natural objects, become "soulless images", usurping "living thoughts", may well only be capable of being the transcendental source of illumination it seems to be if it is a "being" which is "absolute, non-contingent, and identical with its own existence".[57] As Kolakowski has correctly pointed out, even "the term 'existence' is inappropriate to the Absolute" since the "reality of the One is inexpressible yet self-evident, since 'to be' in its most basic sense signifies to be immutably and absolutely, to be indifferentiated and outside time".[58] Indeed in the Simplon-Pass passage the relation between universal and

particular, finite and infinite is conceived of in a manner much different from the Eolian Harp's celebration of the "One Life" - see Section C of Chapter 2. The concentration on experience as manifestation of the infinite in the Simplon-Pass passage is different in kind from the "Schellingesque" nature - panthcism in which the truth inhering in one's perception of the particular yielded a sense of the numinous immanent in a world, as suggested in an earlier quotation from Morse Peckham, "pellucidly beautiful as the divine shines through each particle of it". - see p.89

In the Simplon-Pass passage, by contrast, the "Visionary Power" is disengaged from the world it illuminates. Accordingly, an imagination appeasing its hunger for the "sacred", far from perceiving mind and world as "kindred streams", would surely tend to embark on a path akin to the mystic's via - negativa: "Our reason approaches the One by way of negation ... But this negative approach is only the world of transitory objects which is characterized by limitation and participation in non-being".[59] As the remarks made on p.130-31 about the child's pre-natal existence in the "imperial palace" and the process of individuation through a descent into the "Shades of the prison-house" suggest, communion with a "Visionary Power" of the kind celebrated in V619-29 suggests a subsumption of the finite in the infinite which dissipates self as

thoroughly as the world given to the "bodily eye" of Tintern Abbey. As much of the argument of the Immortality Ode suggests, in a manner I shall try to make explicit in Section C of Chapter 3, commitment to an imagination seeking unmediated apprehension of and participation in the "light divine" or "visionary gleam" could lead to a view of the "soul imprisoned in transience, impelled without ceasing from the nothingness of what was to the nothingness of what is to be".[60] For man's existence to co-incide with his essence again, he must jettison "all ties with external reality, ... so that the soul may commune with that which constitutes its inmost being".[61] This annihilative negation of the finite would seem, paradoxically, to be the logical consequence of the "transcendental" perspective we are urged to take by the Simplon-Pass passage. It is however just as obvious that an imagination of this nature is anything but "autonomous". The consequences of the attempt to ground our perception of "life" in things transcendentally in a "light divine" outlined here are almost a point for point negation of anything Wordsworth could reasonably be expected to have intended.

And yet another interpretation of the via-negativa spoken of by Hartmann,[62] as well as arguments advanced in Section D of Chapter 2 and (p.104 foll) Section A of Chapter 3 perhaps yield a sense in which an admittedly problematical "autonomy" can yet be attributed to the "unfathered

*vapour*". As the previous paragraph suggests, the attempt to overcome the precariously self-validating nature of the epiphanic moments on which the doctrines of "natural piety" are based by grounding our perception of "glory" in objects in a "Visionary Power", is associated with an hostility of the merely "bodily eye" of Tintern Abbey. Imagination, construed as a faculty of vision rather than an act of empathic intuition, liberates mind from its servitude to vision, stigmatized at one point in The Prelude as the most despotic of the senses. The constitutive power, the "glory" of imagination - see $^{VI}525-36$ - retrieves for consciousness the significance of our kinship "with Infinitude". Wordsworth was above all concerned, indeed almost obsessively concerned to ground our intuitions of the "sacred" in the world securely by rendering them intelligible. His poetry, as suggested on p.128 foll, oscillated inconclusively between ultimately divergent conceptions of mind, world and the relations between them, each one of which he at times entertained as an explanation of his primordial intuition of a "life" "glory" or radiance in things. In the light of this last consideration, the attempt to formulate a contrast, in the context of the Simplon-Pass passage, between the "bodily eye" and a faculty of vision so as to make an instrument of discovery of the latter perhaps corresponds more closely with Wordsworth's intentions. An attempt to construe the passage in this

manner should not however blind us to the fact that another approach to Wordsworth's poetry which would stress the potential dissipation of self noted earlier would be both informative and legitimate.

In summary then, the only partial resolution of this exegetical problem I posed initially that I can offer is suggested by the opposition between the imagination construed as "unfathered vapour" and the Wordsworthian notion of "natural piety", construed as a reverence for and participation in the "life of things". The oscillation in Coleridge's work between "natural piety" and a something resembling a more traditional theism was seen in Chapter 2 Section D to be a probably unavoidable product of the unstable moment of epiphany on which the claims of "natural piety" to see the "One Life" rests. If the natural world's radiance ultimately derives from a source extrinsic to it such as the "light divine", then such a light could, by definition, not be apprehended by the merely "bodily eye" of Tintern Abbey. The "light divine" of the Simplon-Pass passage or the "visionary gleam" of the Immortality Ode could be apprehended only by an imagination which may, in its own way, be no less "opposed to images culled or developed from Nature"[63] than the solipsistic mind which is "Lord and master of outward sense". Imagination would radically question "the ontological priority of the sensory

object", to recall the earlier quotation from Paul De Man. An imagination of this nature, when contrasted with the imagination of "natural piety" could, in a sense, be said to be autonomous. As noted before the precariously self-validating nature of the moment of epiphanic perception left it prone to collapse into either soplisism or something resembling a more traditional theism. If the "unfathered vapour's" "autonomy" is glo ed in the manner suggested above, the Simplon-Pass passage interestingly shows the two processes to be not altogether unconnected. It is possible that Wordsworth intended something on these lines. None of this however really resolves the difficulty noted in the previous pages. These unresolvable tensions and ambiguities are, I would suggest, evidence of the impossibility of recovering a sense of the sacred immanently in experience, in purely secular terms. The relationship between the Simplon-Pass passage and the metaphors of the "correspondent breeze" and the "kindred streams" on the one hand, and the subtly different celebration of the mind as "lord and master of outward sense" on the other, exemplifies the structure of necessarily inconclusive oscillation and repetition characterizing The Prelude as a whole. For the sake of convenience then, in discussions of the Simplon-Pass passage and the Immortality Ode, the word "autonomy" will denote a state of affairs in which imagination is disengaged from and hostile to the merely "bodily eye" of Tintern Abbey,

whatever its problematical relation to the "light divine" or the "visionary gleam" might be.

Geoffrey Hartmann, in a study of the *Simplon-Pass passage* to which every subsequent examination must in some way be indebted,[64] points to a significant change of mood in the verse immediately prior to the celebration of imagination's autonomous power:

> The wondrous Vale
> Of Chamouny did, on the following dawn,
> With its dumb cataracts and streams of ice,
> A motionless array of mighty waves,
> Five rivers broad and vast, make rich amends,
> And reconciled us to realities.
>
> There small birds warble from the leafy trees,
> *The Eagle soareth in the element;*
> There doth the Reaper bind the yellow sheaf,
> The Maiden spread the haycock in the sun,
> While Winter like a tamed Lion walks
> Descending from the mountain to make sport
> Among the cottages by beds of flowers.
>
> Whate'er in this wide circuit we beheld,
> Or heard, was fitted to our unripe state

Of intellect and heart. By simple strains
Of feeling, the pure breath of real life,
We were not left untouched. With such a book
Before our eyes, we could not chuse but read
A frequent lesson of sound tenderness,
The universal reason of mankind,
The truth of Young and Old.

(1805 Prelude: VI 456 - 77)

The description of the Alpine landscape culminates in the all too familiarly Wordsworthian sense of a reciprocity between self and world in which the natural world is a book where one may read "The universal reason of mankind". This sense of essential kinship with the natural world is partially displaced when mingled with "something of stern mood." Immediately after this qualification we are given the narration of the crossing of the Simplon-Pass, the final upshot of which is that Wordsworth and his companions have crossed the Alps unawares.

Upturning with a Band
Of Travellers, from the Valais we had clomb
Along the road that leads to Italy;
A length of hours making of these our Guides,
Did we advance, and, having reached an Inn
Among the mountains, we together ate

Our noon's repast, from which the Travellers rose,
Leaving us at the Board. Ere long we followed,
Descending by the beaten road that led
Right to a rivulet's edge, and there broke off.
The only track now visible was one
Upon the further side, right opposite,
And up a lofty Mountain. This we took.
After a little scruple, and short pause,
And climbed with eagerness, though not, at length,
Without surprize and some anxiety
On finding that we did not overtake
Our Comrades gone before. By fortunate chance,
While every moment now encreased our doubts,
A Peasant met us, and from him we learned
That to the place which had perplexed us first
We must descend, and there *should find the road*
Which in the stony channel of the Stream
Lay a few steps, and then along its Banks;
And further, that thenceforward all our course
Was downwards, with the current of that Stream.
Hard of belief, we questioned him again,
And all the answers which the Man returned
*To our inquiries, in their sense and substance*
Translated by the feelings which we had,
Ended in this; that we had crossed the Alps.

(1805 Prelude: VI 494 - 524)

The result is frustration, frustration at the anti-climatic annihilation of the significance with which Wordsworth had invested the act of *crossing*. The nature of this significance however, brought to and imposed on the landscape by the poet himself, is at antipodes to the insight into the spirit that "rolls through all things". This passage contrasts sharply with the circular movement of imagination described in a previous quotation by E.D. Hirsch, in which the imagination seeks and finds the unity with the natural *world which simultaneously* underwrites its own activity. Hartmann is therefore surely right in regarding the "stern mood" as "Wordsworth's premonition of spiritual autonomy, of independence from the immediacy of sense experience ... The traveller's separation from their guides, then that of the road from the stream, and finally their trouble with the peasant's words, all subtly express the *soul's desire for a* world beyond".[65] It is precisely because of this frustration of expected significance, the blankness caused by an encounter with the *world* running completely counter to all expectations, that the "original disappointment is seen not as a test, or as a prelude to magnificence, but as a revelation in itself."[66]

*It is in that moment* of blankness born of thwarted expectation that subtle desires "for a world beyond" reach fruition in a revelation of imagination's power:

Imagination! lifting up itself
Before the eye and progress of my Song
Like an unfathered *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.' 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.
(1805 Prelude $^{VI}$ 525-36)

Here, finally, are mind and imagination, *autonomous in* the sense *previously indicated.* The separation of mind's active *powers* from the natural world is perfectly captured by the description of imagination as an "unfathered vapour". It rises self-engendered from the soul whose "Glory" - its constitutive power - is explicitly recognised as such for the first time. The "invisible world," corresponding to the "light divine" of $^{V}$ 619-29, can only be *seen* when the "light of *sense / Goes* out" in a moment that reveals our true destiny to lie "with Infinitude." The extinguishing of the "light of sense" is appropriately called a "usurpation,"

a moment in which any awareness of natural objects as natural objects is expunged by the seemingly self-engendered and problematically "autonomous" imagination.

The celebration of the imagination as "unfathered vapour" has, as its correlative, the denigration of objects as "soulless images" in an earlier passage:

> That day we first
> Beheld the summit of Mount Blanc, and grieved
> To have a soulless image on the eye
> Which had usurped upon a living thought
> That never more could be ...
>
> (1805 Prelude: VI 452-6)

The usurpation here is a usurpation of imagination's living power by the same "light of sense" extinguished in the previously quoted passage. The opposition of the "soulless image" and the "living thought" it usurps, in addition to making the import of the present passage quite clear, prefigures a subsequent usurpation which Wordsworth is uncharacteristically willing to endorse. The "light of sense" is extinguished so as to reveal the "invisible world" equated with "Infinitude." As the phrase "soulless image" makes quite clear, the "bodily eye" of Tintern Abbey is inextricably meshed with the natural world on which the poet

turns his back. Objects now only have value to the extent that they reflect a "glory not their own," a "light divine" very similar to the "visionary gleam", the flight of which is lamented in the Immortality Ode.

The strand of Wordsworth's work examined in this part of Section B attempts to overcome the precariously self-validating moment of epiphany in which the essential identity of spirit and matter, man and nature justifying a "natural piety" is revealed, by making objects have value only in so far as they are *vehicles for the transcendental*, for the "light divine." In so doing the "light of sense" goes out in such a way, as De Man says, to call into question the "ontological primacy of the sensory object." In these passages, taken collectively, Wordsworth attempts to overcome the difficulties attaching to the impossibly "unmediated" self-verifying moment of perception which the *epiphany attempts to be* by relying on vision rather than mere perception.

However, this radical attempt to resolve the ambiguities of the divergent epistemological standpoints implicit in The Prelude is itself precarious. In the first instance, vision may fail. Its failure, and the perplexity attendant on the *flight of the* "visionary gleam", is the starting point of the Immortality Ode. In Book V 619-29 of the 1805 Prelude

and in the corresponding passage of the 1850 Prelude, vision would indeed seem to be only intermittent, *objects being* illuminated only "In flashes" by a "glory not their own." Lastly, a poet of Wordsworth's temperament, seeking to justify the assumptions concerning mind, nature, perception and the relations between them of the "correspondent breeze" passage, could hardly remain content with a state of affairs in which he remained permanently "Debarred from Nature's living images."[67]

Particularly for this last reason Wordsworth attempts, immediately after the celebration of imagination as an "unfathered vapour," to re-establish connections with the natural world.[68] The result is one of the most famous and unusual passages in all Wordsworth:

> downwards we hurried fast
> And entered with the road which we had missed
> Into a narrow chasm. The brook and road
> Were fellow travellers in this gloomy Pass,
> And with them did we journey several hours
> At a slow step. The immeasurable height
> *Of woods decaying, never to be decayed,*
> The stationary blasts of water-falls,
> And every where along the hollow rent
> Winds thwarting winds, bewildered and forlorn,

The torrents shooting from the clear blue sky,
The rocks that muttered close upon our ears,
Black drizzling crags that spake by the way-side
As if a voice were in them, the sick sight
And giddy prospect of the raving stream,
The unfettered clouds and region of the heavens,
Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light
Were all like workings of one mind, the features
Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree,
Characters of the great Apocalypse,
The types and symbols of Eternity,
Of first and last, and midst, and without end.
(1805 Prelude : VI 551-72)

The poetry's antitheses attempt, in a way familiar by now, to yield a climatic insight into the unity underlying the natural scene. Yet, to me at least, it seems scarcely credible that the diverse workings of this paradox-riven scene can so readily be assimilated to the "workings of one mind." Hartmann may well be right in seeing in this particular apocalypse a "self-thwarting march and countermarch of elements, a divine mockery of the concept of the Single Way."[69] The imagery of the passage contains improbable fusions of stasis and violance.[70] In a phrase such as "the stationary blast of waterfalls," for instance, it is impossible to decide whether primary emphasis should

be placed on "stationary" or "blast," and accordingly to decide whether the components of the landscape are emblematic of an achieved harmony of opposites or of irreconcilable conflict. The confusion is increased by the use of the same verb or verbs to characterize different phenomena, the "blast" of the wind being carried over into the "stationary blast of waterfalls" and the sound of the streams being similarly displaced to characterize the "black drizzling crags."[71] Even the nature of the "one mind" into which all the tensions of the landscape are declared to be resolvable is ambiguous. The insistence that the landscape is to be read as a book bearing the visible imprint of a "power" immanent in nature, to be read as the "types and symbols of Eternity," does not entirely preclude the possibility that the "one mind" is something akin to either the consciousness of the observer[72] or even the unifying awareness of an undefined but non-temporal Spirit. The tensions examined in this passage scar even its climactic moment, for the connotations of "Apocalypse" on the one hand, and "Eternity" on the other, differ significantly. Many eminent commentators, M.H. Abrams prominent among them, accept Wordsworth's attempted resolutions at face value: "the Scriptural Apocalypse is assimilated to an apocalypse of nature; its written characters are natural objects, which are read as types and symbols of permanence in change; and its antithetic

qualities of sublimity and beauty are seen as simultaneous expressions on the face of heaven and earth, declaring an unrealized truth which the chiaroscuro of the scene articulates for the prepared mind - a truth about the darkness and the light, the terror and the peace, the ineluctable contraries that make up our human existence."[73] It is difficult to believe that the problems posed by the dramatic emergence of the imagination as "unfathered vapour" can be so readily resolved. The ending of the Simplon-Pass passage is unsatisfactory because it is guilty of sleight-of- hand. It "resolves" the undoubted dilemmas latent in the Simplon-Pass passage and Wordsworth's poetry in general through proclamation and the grand gesture. This is not surprising, for the celebration of objects as bearers of "light divine" raises the doubtlessly insoluble problem of explaining the participation of the finite in the infinite without depriving either the former of its reality or the latter of its transcendence.

This passage is, I would suggest, emblematic of the difficulties of any untroubled reversion to "natural piety" after the emergence and celebration of an autonomous imagination and mind. If natural objects are indeed "soulless images" necessarily opposed to the "living thought", it is impossible to see how any celebration of the

natural world could be accomplished except at the cost of the "unfathered vapour", the self-engendered imagination whose emergence has been celebrated. For the poet of the Simplon-Pass narrative "Imagination experienced as a power distinct from Nature opens his eyes by putting them out."[74] [illegible] position between the "soulless image" and the "[illegible]ght" suggests, the visionary imagination can only perceive [illegible] "light divine" at the cost of severing all contact with "Nature's living images." Such would seem to be the ultimate fate of any poetry that calls into question "the ontological primacy of the sensory object."

Indeed, any merely nostalgic return to an unproblematical belief in an interchange between man and nature is impossible, for the "unfathered vapour" only arose because of the fragility of "natural piety" as a means of "binding" one's days together. The ambiguous nature of the "one mind" in this concluding section of the Simplon-Pass narrative makes it impossible to locate the unifying spiritual presence in the landscape itself or the observing consciousness. The passage is ambiguously poised between many of the divergent accounts of perception and experience implicit in the various strands of Wordsworth's work isolated by our analysis of the poetry. If the reader preserves a measure of distance from the affective rhetoric of this famous passage so as to avoid excessively simplistic

readings of it, the close of the Simplon-Pass narrative may well seem one of the most complex passages in all Wordsworth. Its by no means wholly coherent ambiguities leave it inconclusively suspended between any commitment to either "natural piety" or mind's "autonomy", in any of the senses considered so far. The "sad perplexity" of being suspended between the loss of both "natural piety" and the "visionary gleam" will be the subject matter of the Immortality Ode, an analysis of which will constitute the last section of this chapter.

SECTION C

*Frances Ferguson* has pointed out that, in all the collections of his poetry which Wordsworth edited between 1815 and the year of his death in 1850, "the Ode is the only one of Wordsworth's shorter poems which he left conspicuously unconnected to any of the categories of his classification ... Wordsworth continually placed the Ode outside, leaving it to stand in a crucial final position."[75] Wordsworth's consistent refusal over a period of more than three decades to place it in any of the categories into which he divided his verse suggests that the Ode had a peculiar significance for him. This sense is I believe justified, for the Ode powerfully embodies many of the tensions in Wordsworth's poetry discussed so far. In terms of its intellectual content it can be regarded as a summation of the concerns and tensions of Wordsworth's poetry and, as seen above, there is external evidence to suggest that it came to hold very special significance for Wordsworth too.

The Immortality Ode uses as an epigraph three lines from My Heart Leaps Up invoking the "natural piety" used as our starting point for the investigation of Wordsworth's poetry:

> The Child is Father of the Man;
> And I could wish my days to be
> Bound each to each by natural piety.

The epigraph, invoking belief in a "natural piety" the possibility of which the Ode is to place in question, encourages us to read the Ode as a gloss on Wordsworth's poetry as a whole. In the Ode, Wordsworth is to display more than passing doubts about whether the child indeed is father of the man and, if one's days can indeed be bound together, whether "natural piety" is the means to do this.

The echoes of My Heart Leaps Up in the Immortality Ode extend considerably beyond the use of the epigraph. The second stanza of the Immortality Ode, for instance, makes ironically detailed reference to the imagery of My Heart Leaps Up, for the rainbow is used in My Heart Leaps Up as an occasion for displaying exactly the kind of unproblematical "natural piety" now being called into question:

> My heart Leaps up when I behold
> A Rainbow in the sky:
> So was it when my life began;
> So is it now I am a Man; ...

The simple correspondence between the response of the boy and the man to the beauty of the rainbow is a perfect example of the way in which a spontaneous, always renewed and renewable sense of kinship with the natural world, binds the poet's different selves together into an ongoing pattern of growth and restoration. The constant re-appearance of the rainbow makes the renewal that comes through experiencing it accessible to both boy and man. This in itself is a demonstration of the way in which the cyclical recurrence of natural processes fosters similar wholeness and integration through time in the lives of those who respond to natural beauty. Although even the ending of this poem is tentative, expressing the hope that this continuity of response should always remain possible, there can be no doubt that it still represents one of Wordsworth's most simple, almost childlike, celebrations of a state in which the essential being of man and world are one.

Surely the lines of the epigraph are intended to indicate the gulf separating the assertion of such a condition from the opening stanzas of the Ode, stanzas which seem a point for point negation of all the positives of My Heart Leaps Up. The Ode begins amidst the perplexity caused by an absolute disjunction of response in which the child seems anything but the father of the man. The appearance of the rainbow only induces a realization that it can come and go

without eliciting an answering response through which the appearances of the natural world, our affective responses and moral impulses become "interfused" with one another as in Tintern Abbey and many of the passages of The Prelude examined in the first section of this chapter. As the phrase "celestial light" and its subsequent relation to the "visionary gleam" makes clear, what is at stake in this failure of response is not anything like "natural piety", but loss of an unspecified source of illumination that is *not merely* "natural." The opening stanzas of the Immortality Ode seem then to be related to those passages in the Simplon-Pass narrative in which the objects of the world, "soulless images" in themselves, attain value only to the extent that they become contingent, precarious and intermittent bearers of a "glory not their own."

The Ode initially seems, like the Simplon-Pass passage, to underwrite an attempt to ground our response to the numinous in objects more securely in the perception of a divinity of sorts. It seems to exemplify the first of the responses to the precariousness of the epiphanic moment outlined in Section D of Chapter 2 - see p.68 foll. Accordingly, much of the Ode articulates a conception of imagination hostile to that implicit in the notion of "natural piety", an imagination conceived of as "autonomous" in the same problematic sense as the "unfathered vapour" - see p.129

foll. Objects are experienced as valuable only to the extent that they reflect the "celestial light", and man can experience fulfilment only to the extent that mind and imagination, autonomous in the sense suggested in Section B of Chapter 3, give access to the transcendentally located well-springs of our existence. The opposition between the "Heaven" lying about us in childhood, the "imperial palace", and the "Shades of the prison-house" into which our birth is a descent, all emphasise the essential antagonism between the "pleasures" of earth in stanza 6 of the Ode and the "visionary gleam" that has fled. Especially in the Ode's opening stanzas, the bodily senses are indeed powerless to either confer "glory" on natural objects or perceive the "celestial light" which is the extrinsic but sole source of glory the otherwise *"soulless images" can have.*

This aspect of Wordsworth's verse arose out of the inherent precariousness of the doctrines and perceptions of "natural piety", but that is not to say that this attempted resolution is any less fraught with difficulties. At the close of Chapter 3 Section B it was suggested that an imagination divorced from the "bodily eye" through becoming either "Lord and master of outward sense" or seeking participation in the divine would necessarily become problematical for a poet seeking to celebrate the essential unity of man and nature conceived of as embodied spirit.

Both these responses to the inadequacies of the doctrine of "natural piety" risk leaving the poet "debarred" from "Nature's living images", without a world he can inhabit. However the attempt to gi a "transcendental" justification for our sense of the "One Life" by celebrating natural objects insofar as they reflect the "light divine" is precarious in another way. This difficulty, only latent in the Simplon-Pass narrative, becomes part of the explicit subject-matter of the Immortality Ode. In the verse immediately the Simplon-Pass narrative, a hint as to the nature *precariousness was given when it was* asserted that objects were illuminated only "in flashes", that they were only contingently and, in a sense, gratuitously bearers of "a glory not their own". Vision is precarious because it can fail, because it can be discontinuous. The Immortality Ode is in part an investigation of the problems attending an attempt to ground our perception of the "sacred" in nature in vision, for it is with a failure of vision, a loss of the "visionary gleam", that the poem opens. The Ode is no longer as securely committed to vision as the Simplon-Pass passage, and seemingly unable to return to the simple "natural piety" of its epigraph. The Immortality Ode embodies in itself many of the tensions and inconclusive oscillations of *perspective* between ultimately divergent conceptions of mind, and imagination and the world seen to characterize The

Prelude. The "sad perplexity" spoken of in Tintern Abbey becomes, in the fullest possible sense, the Ode's explicit subject-matter.

If so complex a poem can be said to be "about" anything the Ode is, as Frances Ferguson has pointed out in an interesting treatment of it, "about connections,"[76] about the attempt to forge, if possible, "connections" to replace those that have lapsed or proven inadequate. Ferguson goes on to note that "Memory, logic and metaphysics - systems of establishing connections which are the staples of education in its most overt sense - figure almost obsessively in the Ode ... Here in the Ode, at the "end" of Wordsworth's educational journey with his readers, the rhetoric of connections appears with an intensity which becomes almost tragic as the felt emptiness of the connections becomes apparent in the wavering, the almost infinite reversibility of each new tack."[77] This selective reworking of some ideas suggested in Chapters 2 and 3 has, I hope, helped to situate the Immortality Ode by placing its perplexities within the wider context of Wordsworth's work as a whole. That this, or something like it, is in fact the dilemma of the poem can be seen from a brief analysis of its opening four stanzas.

The first stanza begins in wistful remembrance of a time when all nature seemed to be "Apparelled in celestial light":

There was a time when meadow, grove and stream
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore; -
Turn whereso'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.
(Stanza I: 1-9)

The first stanza of the Immortality Ode is a naked statement of grief and perplexity. As in the opening lines of Tintern Abbey it is the very sameness of the external landscape that induces perplexity in the poet, for the sameness of the external details of the natural world means that it cannot in itself account for the gnawing sense of loss permeating the stanza. The enumeration of "meadow, grove, and stream," of all the objects once imbued with a sense of the sacramental, reinforces both our sense of the poet's former unity with the world in all its manifestations, and of the completeness with which this reciprocity has vanished. The loss mourned in stanza 1 is connected explicitly with the departure of "celestial light", a source of illumination extrinsic to and disjunct from the merely "natural". The potential faltering of vision, implicit in the intermittent

flashes of the "light divine" of The Prelude, has now become a reality. The precariousness and evanescence of the vision lost is strongly suggested by a comparison with the necessarily short-lived "glory" and "freshness of a dream." As Frances Ferguson has pointed out,[78] this effect is enhanced by calling the time when the earth indeed seemed "Apparelled in celestial light" a time of "yore." To suggest that the poet's condition is not "as it hath been of yore" imbues both the former natural setting and the poet's former feeling of reciprocity with a mythical quality.

The components of the landscape are enumerated in traditional images of fertility and plentitude reminis ant of the pre-lapsarian bower of Adam and Eve in Paradise Lost, making the whole stanza suggest the loss of an Edenesque state.[79] These traditional images of paradise, far from being mere clichés, are of some structural importance in the first four stanzas of the Immortality Ode, for the pre-lapsarian connotations of the imagery reinforce the import of "celestial light". The stanza therefore insists, both implicitly and explicitly, that objects are contingent bearers of a "glory not their own," dependent for their lustre on light from a source other than the merely natural. The nature of the loss lamented by the poet is such as, to quote De Man's remark again, "to question the ontological primacy of the sensory object."

The second stanza deepens and extends the lament of the poet, insisting on the inability of natural phenomena to revive the lost sense of *reciprocity with the world:*

> The Rainbow comes and goes,
> And lovely is the Rose,
> The Moon doth with delight
> Look round her when the heavens are bare;
> Waters on a starry night
> Are beautiful and fair;
> The sunshine is a glorious birth;
> But yet I know, wher'er I go,
> That there hath passed away a glory from the earth.
>
> (Stanza II: 10-18)

Now, by contrast, the rainbow can come and go without *eliciting a response.* Frances Ferguson has very perceptively pointed out the biblical resonances of the imagery of this stanza. In stressing his complete failure of response "It is as though the poet were countering - and banishing - his recollections of the rainbow as God's covenant with man, of the rose as a symbol of the heavenly paradise, of the trackings of the moon in Isaiah and *Job.*"[80] *Indeed* the images of the opening of stanza two are powerful precisely because they are so completely stripped of their traditional symbolic overtones. *This*

withdrawal of the sacramental from the natural world parallels the loss of the suggestively pre-lapsarian state noted in stanza one.

The last half of the stanza enumerates the various natural sights - waters on a starry night and the sunshine that are, in purely sensuous terms, beautiful. These lines, counterpointed by the "I feel - I feel it all" and "I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!" of stanza 4, reinforce our awareness that even the most impassioned co-operation of all the senses cannot do anything to restore the glory that has passed away from the earth. The close of stanza 2 merely reiterates, in effect, the despair of the close of the opening stanza, a despair in which the things the poet had been capable of seeing, he "can see no more." The failure of response mourned, it must be stressed, has nothing whatsoever to do with any failings in sense - perception and *sensory awareness of the manifold* textures of the natural world.[81] This only increases our already strong awareness of the disjunction between these joys and the "celestial light" that has departed. The effect is further enhanced by a clever use of verbal parallelism in stanza 2, the "glorious birth" of the sunshine being fundamentally discontinuous with the "glory" that has passed. Stanzas 1 and 2 then are central to that aspect of the Ode which locates the possibility of salvation, if any such exists, in

the "celestial light" accessible to an imagination akin to the "unfathered vapour" of the Simplon-Pass passage. And yet, as noted, the Ode remains ambivalent, for the departure of the "glory" whose loss is lamented makes completely single-minded commitment to vision as a means of redemption impossible.

The tensions examined so far are both reflected in and intensified by the marked change of perspective of stanza 3:

> Now, while the Birds thus sing a joyous song,
> And while the young Lambs bound
> As to the tabor's sound,
> To me alone there came a thought of grief:
> A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
> And I again am strong.
> The Cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep,
> No more shall grief of mine the season wrong;
> I hear the Echoes through the mountains throng,
> The Winds came to me from the fields of sleep,
> And all the earth is gay,
> Land and sea
> Give themselves up to jollity,
> And with the heart of May
> Doth every Beast keep holiday,
> Thou Child of Joy

Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy
Shepherd Boy!

(Stanza III: 19-35)

The central image of this stanza is that of the "Echoes" thronging through the mountains, for the various parts of the landscape do indeed echo and re-echo one another in a universal sympathy similar to that depicted in some of Blake's Songs of Innocence. The "joyous song" resonates with the "tabor's sound", and the "Echoes", the interlocking chains of auditory images and descriptions of unselfconscious play, evoke a scene in which it can truly be said that "all the earth is gay."

The poet's assertion "No more shall grief of mine the season wrong" holds out the prospect of a corresponding personal renewal. This prospect is seemingly given substance by the use of tense in the stanzas examined so far. The first two stanzas strangely atemporal use of a continuous present tense strongly implied that the blankness and despair attendant on the loss of the "celestial light" extended back into an indefinite past and would persist into an indefinite future. The past tense of the third stanza however speaks of a "timely utterance" that "gave that thought relief". The thoughts to which relief seem to be given are possibly, though by no means certainly, the despairing thoughts of the

first two stanzas.[82] Superficially, the poet would also seem to be regaining the sympathetic imagination of "natural piety" through which reciprocity with the natural world might be re-established. A comparison with verse like the Joy of Winander or the "ice-skating" passages of The Prelude would however reveal the similarities of verbal texture to be merely superficial.

I shall quote part of the "ice-skating" episode of The Prelude to facilitate comparison:

> Not seldom from the uproar I retired
> Into a silent bay, or sportively
> Glanced sideway, leaving the tumultuous throng,
> To cut across the image of a star
> That gleamed upon the ice. And oftentimes
> When we had given our bodies to the wind,
> And all the shadowy banks, on either side,
> Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still
> The rapid line of motion; then at once
> Have I, reclining back upon my heels,
> Stopped short, yet still the solitary Cliffs
> Wheeled by me, even as if the earth had rolled
> With visible motion her diurnal round.
> Behind me did they stretch in solemn train
> Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watched
> Till all was tranquil as a dreamless sleep.
>
> (1805 Prelude: I 474-89)

These lines are as fine an example of the *epiphanic moment* in which we see into the life of things as any to be found in the verse of Wordsworth and Coleridge. The epiphanic insight owes its power, as always, to being dramatised as *experience*, the perception of the "life" in things flowing directly from perceived interaction with the natural scene. The numerous mimetic effects, especially in the rhythm of the verse, - the way in which the placement of "stopped short" tries to simulate the action of the boy in skating is one notable example - enhance our perception of the boy as an embodied part of the nature whose "life" is essentially continuous with his own. This embedding of the boy into the landscape is however most powerfully felt in the manner in which the verse gives rise to the epiphanic moment itself. When the skating boy "stops short", the earth still, predictably enough, seems to be circling round him with great velocity, as if in simulation of his own movements while skating. It is through this correspondence of movement that he comes to see the "visible motion" of the earth's "diurnal round." As Langbaum writes, "the extraordinary perspective affords ... an intuition of the object in its ultimate reality - in its organic connection that is with the observer and, through the observer's innate conception of universality, with the universe. It is in ... organic connection with Wordsworth's ... sense of cosmos ... that the mountain and the spinning landscape come alive."[83]

This epiphanic revelation of the essential kinship of man and the natural world, man and the Coleridgean "One Life", is far removed from the third stanza of the Immortality Ode. Far from being an embodied part of the "One Life", the observer's involvement in the life around him is vicarious, for he is merely an onlooker with respect to the play of the creatures around him. This is made quite clear by the opening of stanza 4 in which the observer's perceptions are registered:

> Ye blessed Creatures, I have heard the call
> Ye to each other make; I see
> The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;
> My heart is at your festival,
> My head hath its coronal,
> The fullness of your bliss, I feel - I feel it all.
> Oh evil day! If I were sullen
> While Earth herself is adorning,
> This sweet May-morning ...
>
> (Stanza IV: 36-44

There is a marked difference between the way in which the heavens sympathetically "laugh with" the "blessed creatures" of stanza 4 and the poet's ultimately vicarious relation to the joy around him. E.D. Hirsch is correct to note the shrillness of "I feel - I feel it all" and "Oh evil day! if

I were sullen / While the Earth herself is adorning, / This sweet May- morning ..."[84] The poet remains, however sympathetically, an onlooker, vicariously relishing the joys and energies of a festival in which he is not a direct participant. This sense of distance, subtly differentiating the total effect of the third stanza and the first two-thirds of stanza four of the Immortality Ode from superficially comparable passages in The Prelude is apparent also in the closing injunction of stanza 3:

Thou Child of Joy
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy
Shepherd-boy!

(Lines 33-5)

These lines similarly indicate a desire to experience, by proxy if necessary, a unity with the natural world the speaker cannot achieve in his own right. The poet's desire for a mode of relationship that ultimately eludes him suggests an emotional state also, to my mind, implicit in the repetitious "I feel - I feel it all" and "I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!" In the context of the "ice-skating" passage emotively charged interjections comparable to those just quoted - significantly they are not deemed necessary - would be no more than a rapturous acknowledgement of a felt kinship with the natural world. The sense of distance

differentiating stanzas 3 and 4 of the Ode from such a passage makes us aware that these exclamations betray an unnaturally charged element of will in the poet's attempt to re-establish the unity of self and world whose loss the opening stanzas of the Ode mourned. The first four stanzas of the Immortality Ode undoubtedly tend, as noted, to privilege a perspective comparable to that of the Simplon-Pass narrative in which objects are "soulless images" unless transfigured by "light divine". The precariousness of vision, dramatised by its loss of continuity in stanza 1, generates a counter-movement in the Ode which gives powerful expression to nostalgic yearnings for a state of "natural piety" which the bulk of the poem discredits as an intellectual possibility.

The close of stanza 4 confirms intuitions that the previous attempts to restore the "natural piety" of the epigraph were scarred by an element of strain. In an abrupt - though as the foregoing analysis would suggest, by no means entirely unprepared - change of mood, a renewed lament for the lost "visionary gleam" re-establishes the second stanza's discontinuity between sense perception, however detailed and intense, and the "glory" whose absence is so keenly felt:

- But there's a Tree, of many one,
A single Field which I have looked upon,

Both of them speak of something that is gone:
The Pansy at my feet
Doth the same tale repeat:
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

(Stanza IV: 51-7)

The tree and the pansy, haunting memories of a sense of harmony that *is lost*, both *testify now* to the loss of the "visionary gleam". The rhyme of "dream" and "gleam", strategically placed at the end of the crucial question, retrospectively equate the "visionary gleam" with the "glory" and the "celestial light", for the conjunction of "celestial light" with both the "glory" and the "dream" occurs in stanza 1. At the end of the complex first movement of the Immortality Ode, the blankness of the opening stanzas is once again seen to be a condition brought about by the loss of "autonomous" vision, our only means of contact with the transcendental source of light imbuing natural objects with "glory." The problem then remains of trying to formulate an account of how it was once possible to perceive the "celestial light", of how it was once possible to securely possess the faculty whose loss is now mourned.

Stanza five's assertions that the child's birth is "but a sleep and a forgetting", and that its "naturalised" existence is characterised by "Fallings" and "vanishings", indicate that the Ode will use the Platonic notion of anamnesis in an attempt to do this. At this point Wordsworth's own remarkable account of Platonic recollection in the 1842 Fenwick note, where he elaborates on the reasons why the notion suggested itself to him as well as the degree of belief he invested in it, becomes relevant. It is well worth quoting in full:

> To the attentive and competent reader the whole sufficiently explains itself, but there may be no harm in adverting here to particular feelings or experiences of my own mind on which the structure of the poem partly rests. Nothing was more difficult in childhood than to admit the notion of death as a state applicable to my own being ... But it was not so much from feelings of animal vivacity that my difficulty came as from a sense of the indomitableness of the spirit within me. I used to brood over stories of Enoch and Elijah, and almost to persuade myself that, whatever might become of others, I should be translated, in something of the same way, to heaven. With a feeling congenial to this, I was often unable to think of external things as having external existence, and I communed with all I saw as something not apart from, but inherent in, my own immaterial nature. Many times, while going to school have I *grasped* a wall or a tree to recall myself from this abyss of idealism to the reality. In a later period of life I have deplored, as we all have reason to do, a subjugation of an opposite character, and have rejoiced over remembrances as is expressed in the lines -
>
> " Obstinate questionings
> Of sense and outward things
> Fallings from us, vanishings" etc
>
> To that dream-like vividness and splendour which invests objects of sight in childhood, every one, I believe, if he would but look, could bear testimony, and I need not

dwell upon it here: but having in the poem regarded it as presumptive evidence of a prior state of existence, I think it right to protest against a conclusion, which has given pain to some good and pious persons, that I meant to inculcate such a belief. It is far too shadowy a notion to be recommended to faith, as more than an element in our instincts of immortality. But let us bear in mind that, although the idea is not advanced in revelation, there is nothing there to contradict it, and the fall of man presents an analogy in its favour. Accordingly, a pre-existent state has entered into the popular creeds of many nations; and, among all persons acquainted with classic literature, is known as an ingredient in platonic philosophy. Archimedes said that he could move the world if he had a point whereon to rest his machine. Who has not felt the *same aspirations* as regards the world of his mind? Having to wield some of its elements when I was impelled to write this poem on the 'Immortality of the Soul' I took hold of the notion of pre-existence as having sufficient foundation in humanity for authorising me to make for my purposes the best of it I could as a poet."[85]

The links between the first four stanzas of the Ode, its subsequent development and the considerations touched on in the Fenwick Note, begin to be elaborated in stanza five:

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its 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,

But He beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy;
The Youth who daily farther from the East
Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light on common day.

(Stanza V: 58-76)

The child's birth, the process of becoming "naturalised" in the fullest imaginable sense of the term, is a "sleep and forgetting," for the soul "hath had elsewhere its setting / And cometh from afar." The soul comes "trailing clouds of glory", the clouds of glory presumably being the light of the "visionary gleam" from which the child is moving away. This correlates perfectly with the assertion at the close of the stanza that the "light of common day," the gradual interlocking of the child's existence with that which is "common" in the sense of mundane and earthly, is the beginning of vision's dissipation. The two chains of imagery are tied even more closely through the beautifully precise way in which the child's "trailing clouds of glory" suggests the shedding of garments, linking with the opening stanza's assertion that the world was formerly "Apparelled in celestial light." The nearly continuously sustained

opposition between two different kinds of light in the Immortality Ode, the opening stanzas' insistence that the "glory" of sense-perception and the "glory" of the "visionary gleam" to which the child has access are disjunct, enables Wordsworth to equate the "light of common day" with the "Shades of the prison-house."

The stark opposition between man's earthly existence and the "glory" that has fled is also used to structure the following stanza:

> Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
> Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
> And, even with something of a Mother's mind,
> And no unworthy aim,
> The homely Nurse doth all she can
> To make her Foster-child her Inmate Man,
> Forget the glories he hath known,
> And that imperial palace whence he came.
>
> (Stanza VI: 77-84)

In stanza six the "homely Nurse" assumes the paradoxical guise of a seductress of sorts, seducing the child with "pleasures" fundamentally at odds with the "clouds of glory" and the "visionary gleam". Immersion in these "pleasures" has as its final product the alienation with which the Ode

opens. Those virtues which can appropriately be called "imperial" are not those of mundane existence, the word "imperial" suggesting, as pointed out by Trilling,[86] the difficulty of sustaining the child's vision in the hostile and recalcitrant actuality of the world.

The firmness of the opposition between the "earthly pleasures" and the "imperial palace" leaves us in no doubt that Stanza six's main thrust confirms and complements Stanza five's characterization of our "naturalised" life as an imprisonment. The train of thought we have been tracing in the second movement of the Immortality Ode can perhaps be said to reach its climax in stanza eight's celebration of the child as "best Philosopher". The logic of the imagery would seem to make this self-evident for the child, before birth, enjoys immediate participation in the "light divine", whereas the man has become involuntarily alienated from the transcendental well-springs of our being. The import of stanzas 5 - 8 is continuous with the implications of the opening stanza's opposition of the natural world, the "visionary gleam" and the "glory" that has fled. The logic of the whole Ode thus far insists on a tension amounting to antagonism between the "homely" pleasures of earthly existence and the yearnings of an imagination seeking to become autonomous in the manner of the "unfathered vapour", to regain immediate participation in the divine.

However, as noted, the failure of vision which is the poem's starting point renders completely unequivocal commitment to an imagination become "autonomous" in the sense defined in Chapter 3 Section B (p.129 foll) impossible. This precariousness of vision is perhaps responsible for a subsidiary but noticable counter-movement implicit in the imagery of stanzas 5 - 8. Stanza 5 is a key transitional point in the structure of the Immortality Ode. Glossing the crucial line "Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting" E.D. Hirsch writes that what "Wordsworth means in stanza 5, of course, is that the state of pre-existence when we are united with God is the highest and most glorious form of life we can know. Compared to that stage of existence, everything else is a sleep. On the other hand, life before birth lies in the fields of sleep. The effect of the line is to imply that our birth is a sleep and an awakening. And, as if to call further attention to this paradox, the poet again deliberately (if not completely) contradicts himself. Even though birth is a "forgetting" we come "not in entire forgetfullness.""[87]

Although Hirsch uses considerations such as these to support a more affirmative reading of the Ode than any I can endorse, he is correct to point to the slight measure of ambiguity that can be found in almost all the key images and pronouncements of the poem. He is also perceptive in

electing to single out the tension between the two lines cited. Latent paradoxes such as these make us retrospectively aware that the flight of the "visionary gleam" does not entirely extinguish awareness of the "imperial palace", the Heaven which "lies about us in our infancy". Although the primary thrust of this stanza insists on a disjunction between the beauties, however intense, accessible to sense perception and the "visionary gleam", its images are also related to stanza nine's similar but subtly different characterization of our earthly life in terms of "fallings and vanishings". The nature of the resolution towards which Wordsworth is led by these considerations will be examined later in this section. For the moment it will suffice to note that the counter-assertion that we come "Not in entire forgetfullness" connects with the Fenwick Note's remarks on Platonic recollection: "The natural world manifests the absence of the divine, and yet that absence, felt along the senses as the absence of nature's former radiance, is the perpetual reminder of the divine ... The natural world ... is the starting-point for the recollection's backward glance, which frees the man from the natural perspective and places him within the eternal silence, the perfect orbit of his immortal liberty".[88]

Although in describing the nature of the forgetfullness into which the child falls, Stanza 6 confirms the previous assertion that the child's birth is a descent into the "Shades of prison-house", it is complicated by slight ambiguities similar to those noted in Stanza 5. Although *the "earth is not an environment in which the celestial or imperial qualities can easily exist ... it is to be observed* that the foster-mother is a kindly one, that her aims are at least not unworthy ... Wordsworth, in short, is looking at man in a double-way, seeing man both in his ideal nature and his earthly activity. The two views do not so much contradict as supplement each another. If in stanzas V-VIII Wordsworth tells us that we live by decrease tanzas IX-XI he tells us of the everlasting connec : the diminished person with his own ideal personality".[89] It is difficult to reconcile Wordsworth's insistence on the usurpatory nature of the nurse - hers is a "Foster-child" - with the simultaneous assertion that her attempts to accomodate the child to its earthly existence embody "no *unworthy aim*". *In terms* of the argument advanced by the Ode, any such immersion in the world of sense can lead only to an alienation from the "imperial palace" from which the imagination derives its vitality. The way in which the child, and later the man, diminished by their descent into the "Shades of the prison-house", remain connected with the ideal personality of which Trilling speaks is obscure.

Although this point is tenuous in a way that would not make me wish to insist on it, the *difference* between the attitudes to the "homely Nurse" may indicate that the nostalgic yearnings for an unproblematical participation in nature expressed in Stanza 3 are, however attenuated, not entirely appeased. Just as the main thrust of the Ode's argument thus far reaches a climax in stanza eight, so does the thread of counter-suggestion implicit in the imagery of stanzas 5-8. In a *manner consistent* with an implicit desire to soften the disjunction between earthly existence and the "visionary gleam" we have been analysing, the "best Philosopher" and "Mighty Prophet" is also said to be "blindly" at strife with its "blessedness". As Hirsch has pointed out, the praise of the child's intrinsic but as yet unselfconscious and unrealised wisdom indicates that he is as yet "only a philospher in potentia ... Wordsworth emphasises how implicit that wisdom is and how important, therefore, man's whole teleological development is ..."[90] Here a complete disjunction of man's earthly existence and the "imperial palace" seems to be qualified by implying that supervening adult self-consciousness is necessary in some mysterious way for the realisation of the child's implicit wisdom. If this is so then one could, as does Hirsch, speak of the necessity of a "teleological development" of sorts. This line of thought is however opposed to the main arguments advanced thus far and seemingly far too tenuous to carrry conviction.

It is accordingly hardly surprising that considerations such as these are swept aside by the bitterness of stanza eight's conclusion:

> Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might
> Of untamed pleasures, on thy Being's height,
> Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
> The Years to bring 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!
>
> (Lines 124-31)

Unable to believe in anything remotely resembling "natural piety", plagued by the precariousness of the faculty of vision in which it seeks redemption, and seemingly unable to give substance to a notion of teleological development capable of unifying the various phases of man's life, the second movement of the Ode ends in desperation. The subordinate counter-current in the imagery of stanzas 5-8, the paradox that immersion in the natural world did not completely extinguish memory of the "imperial palace" as one might expect, foreshadows the attempt to use the Platonic notions of pre-existence and anamnestic recollection to unify the many tensions of the Ode. It is because of its

structural importance in the Ode that *I spent what may seem* a disproportionate amount of space examining an admittedly subsidiary line of suggestion in stanzas 5-8. It is to Wordsworth's, to my mind unsuccessful, attempt to unify the poem using the ideas articulated in the 1842 Fenwick Note, that we must now turn.

A clue as to how the attempted reconciliation is effected may be found through returning once again to the characterisation of our earthly existence in terms of "fallings" and "vanishings." The use of the present participle in "fallings" and "vanishings" leaves open the possibility, however tenuous, of some small measure of continuity between the child's existence and the "visionary *gleam*". *In the Fenwick note*, the notion of pre-existence is tentatively used as a heuristic device to explain how it is that, most frequently in childhood, we experience objects as invested with "dream-like vividness and *splendour*". As in the platonic texts cited as precedents for such a notion, immersion in earthly existence is indeed a "sleep and a forgetting". The frequency and power of the child's perception of the "visionary gleam" is entirely due to his closeness to its transcendental source. However, anamnestic recollection of former closeness to the "celestial light" is always possible. The descent into the "Shades of the prison-house" never entirely erodes the man's capacity for

*those "obstinate questionings / Of sense and outward things"* that potentially renew whatever attenuated degree of contact with the "visionary gleam" is still possible. Anamnestic recollection is invoked to explain both the precariousness of vision, the flight of the "visionary gleam" mourned in the Ode's first four stanzas, and the belief that attenuated access to vision's transcendental source can be preserved through memory.[91]

It is this vestigial access to the "celestial light" that is referred to in the "embers" of stanza 9:

> O joy! that in our embers
> Is something that doth live,
> That nature yet remembers
> What was so fugitive!
> The thought of our past years in me doth breed
> *Perpetual benedictions: not indeed*
> For that which is most worthy to be blest;
> Delight and liberty, the simple creed
> Of Childhood, whether fluttering or at rest,
> With new-born hope for ever in his breast:-
> 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: ...
>
> (Stanza IX 132 - 147)

The "embers" are, of course, an image of mortality, of the passage of human life towards death. The image is brilliantly chosen, for the light thrown off by the dying "embers" is a recollection of the "celestial light" itself, of that "fugitive" remnant of the "visionary gleam" which "nature yet remembers." The light of the "embers" is of course also a celebration of that remnant of access to the "visionary gleam" producing the "obstinate questionings", the "fallings" and "vanishings" for which thanks is given. The qualified hope of these lines is born from an ironical demonstration of the sense in which, through the agency of Platonic recollection, the child can yet be said to be the father of the man. This conclusion is endorsed by the celebratory tone of the lines with which stanza 9 concludes:

> Our noisy years seem moments in the being
> Of the eternal Silence : truths that wake,
> To perish never;
> Which neither listlessness nor mad endeavour,
> Nor Man nor Boy,
> Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
> Can utterly abolish or destroy!
> Hence, in a season of calm weather,
> Though inland far we be,
> Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea
> Which brought us hither,

Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the Children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.
(Stanza IX 157-70)

The suggestion, through the image of the never completely extinguished embers, that our access to the "celestial light" is never completely lost, is explored in some detail in the closing lines of this stanza. In the last two lines the proximity of the children to the shore seems to be related to both stanza nine's "fallings" and "vanishings" and the earlier assertion that our birth is a "sleep and a forgetting". Although the children are closer to the source of the "visionary gleam" than the adult, we are nonetheless credited with the ability to "hear the mighty waters rolling evermore." A fuller understanding of this last line can be gained by linking it to the use of similar imagery in The Prelude. In the ascent of Mount Snowdon, the waters roaring underneath the poet seem to represent the flux and reflux of natural process itself. As E.D. Hirsch has pointed out, such imagery is also used to evoke the "sentiment of being" in Book 2 of the 1805 Prelude:[92]

My seventeenth year was come,
And, whether from this habit rooted now
So deeply in my mind, or from excess

Of the great social principle of life,
Coercing all things into sympathy,
To unorganic natures I transferred
My own enjoyments, or, the power of truth
Coming in revelation, I conversed
With things that really are, I at this time
Saw blessings spread around me like a sea.
Thus did my days pass on, and now at length
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
O'er all that moves, and all that seemeth still, ...
($^{II}$ 405 - 21)

The flow of water is often used in Wordsworth to signify something akin to the "sentiment of being", to a state of deeply felt harmony between man and world. In the Ode the continuity celebrated is of course of a different nature. Although the mature poet's distance from the source of the "celestial light" is seen by the fact that he, unlike the children playing on the shore, is "far inland," the land is nonetheless essentially continuous with the "waters rolling evermore." This continuity gives flesh and body in the imagery of the poem to the suggestion that the child can, in

a sense, still be deemed the father of the man. The continuity of the "shadowy recollections" with the fled "glory" which is yet the "fountain - light of all our day" is also underwritten in stanza nine in metaphysical terms, in the assertion that the vicissitudes of earthly existence are "*moments in the being / Of the eternal Silence.*" E.D. Hirsch has summarised well the dual terms on which a reconciliation of the Ode's tensions is attempted in this stanza : "Metaphysically the divinity and continuity of life are assured because our noisy years are moments in the eternal silence out of which we arose. Psychologically, that continuity is assured by the ever-recurrent fusions with divinity that we experience from birth till death. As always, the essential perfection of this life is assured by reference to a beyond, to a prenatal state of perfect fusion with God or the eternal Silence."[93] It is in the moments of "calm weather", moments of anamnestic recollection "which are themselves types and symbols of the 'Eternal Silence'", that "obstinate questionings" restoring our connection to the divine become possible.

Wordsworth's play with imagery at the close of stanza 9 is most complex. The promontory on which the poet stands, although distant from the shore of the "immortal sea" on which the children play, is nonetheless made to seem geographically continuous with the "waves rolling

evermore".[94] This continuity is in fact strongly insisted on by the striking assertion that our souls "can in a moment travel backward",[95] can participate in the divine with which the children are associated. The heuristic notion of pre-existence seems to be used here to reconcile the natural world and the "imperial palace", the temporal and the divine, through the idea that man's existence is a mediate one. Man, straddled between the "celestial lights" and the "Shades of the prison-house" partakes of both worlds, forming a precarious but nonetheless enduring interface between them. This characterization of man's existence as an irreducibly "mediate" one, mediate in the sense of being suspended between the natural and the divine is one aspect, although a decidedly subordinate aspect, of the Ode's reconciliatory concluding movement.

It should be stressed at once that any attempt to reconcile the tensions of the poem in this manner is peculiarly at odds with the arguments advanced in the Ode's previous eight stanzas. The main arguments advanced by the Ode make the discontinuity between the transcendental "light divine" and the "prison-house" into which our birth is a descent too uncompromising for any attempt to be made to fuse them metaphysically in the essential being of man. It is also inconsistent with the main thrust of the Ode's attempted resolution of its various tensions in stanzas IX-XI. The

concluding movement of the Immortality Ode seems to imply, almost exclusively, that "The transcendent link of the *finite to the infinite is revealed in the visitations* of the imagination. But upon what basis? The revelation of the infinite in the finite ... does not come from without but is seen as coming from within. The imagination is an 'endowment' of a mind standing in a privileged relation to its world ... The disclosure of the link between the divine and the mortal does not proceed through the agency of some *external force*, but is recognised as an endowment of the poet's mind."[96]

In order to understand the primary arguments of the Ode at this point it is necessary to realise that the reconciliatory powers of Platonic recollection in fact depend on rather than overcome a qualified disjunction of "autonomous" mind and natural objects, the fled "glory" and the "world of sense". In the act of "binding" our days together through memory, the "visionary gleam" is transmuted into the "philosophic mind":

Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind,
In the primal sympathy

Which having been must ever be,
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering,
In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.
(Stanza X 180-9;

"The hour of splendour in the grass" and the "glory in the flower" are indeed irrecoverable, for they are a product of the unmediated contact with the "celestial light" whose loss was mourned in the Ode's opening stanzas. The "philosophic mind", by contrast, is intimately connected with stanza nine's highly self-conscious "questionings / Of sense and outward things." It is these questionings that restore our contact with the "visionary gleam" by countering the "forgetfulness" - see stanza 6 - inherent in our immersion in the world of sense. For Wordsworth the consolations of merely mediated contact with the "visionary gleam" are not spurious for, as seen in stanza 8, the child's unmediated contact with the "celestial light" is blind. As Sherry and Hirsch point out, in terms of Wordsworth's argument in stanzas IX-XI, the immediacy of the child's relation to the "celestial light" militates against it understanding the nature of its condition: "The glory which the child first senses is fundamentally the same as the truth which the "philosophic mind" perceives. Our early instincts later

become the poet's awareness of the divine totality to which we belong: Being closest to the source, the divine sea, the children sport upon the shore, but in their joyful direct participation they cannot "see", as can the poet, life's divine totality".[97] The transmutation of the "visionary gleam" into the "philosophic mind" shows a structure of experience that we have observed, in admittedly very different contexts, throughout our consideration of Romanticism. The "philosophic mind" attempts to recover, for consciousness, the full meaning and significance of the child's unmediated participation in the divine. The phrase "philosophic mind" indeed suggests a measure of self-conscious introspection differentiating it from the terms in which the child's perception of the "visionary gleam" is described in the poem: "The significance of the way in which the child regards the world is only discovered in recollection, after that vision has largely been lost. It is for the man looking back at his experience of the world as a child that the anamnestic vision of nature takes on a meaning it could never have had for the child. For the man looking back in recollection, this vision becomes an intimation of the divine origin of the soul and a promise that the end of life will be a return to that origin. The 'Intimations Ode' is founded upon the conscious recollection of an unconscious memory. Recollection is the act which recovers, by raising it into consciousness, the significance

of the child's unconscious memory of how it once perceived the divine."[98]

In concluding an examination of this aspect of the Immortality Ode, it should be noted that Wordsworth's use of the notions of pre-existence and Platonic recollection to try and overcome the seemingly complete opposition between our earthly existence and the "visionary gleam" implies a new concept of imagination. This new mode of imagination would be distinct from both the imagination of "natural piety" and, to a lesser extent, from the "unfathered vapour." Imagination would now be nothing other than the moment of recollection in which the "philosophic mind" recovered for consciouness the full meaning and significance of the child's perceptic·.[99] Such retrospective *realisation of significance* both illuminates the child's experience of the world and allows us to see in such experience our kinship with the divine. This recognition is a distinctive achievement of the "philosophic mind", allowing the poet to discover "his freedom from a slavery to the senses, and the power to subject the external world to the workings of imagination."[100] It is on this - little developed in his poetry - conception of imagination as a moment in which the "autonomous" mind recovers, for consciousness, our kinship with the divine in an act of memory, that Wordsworth rests and justifies the hope with which the Ode ends.

I committed myself on p.180 to an assertion that the reconciliatory movement of the Immortality Ode was unsuccessful. My analysis will end with a recapitulation of the reasons why I believe this is so. In the Ode the precariousness of vision, merely latent in the assertion of The Prelude that objects were only illuminated by the "light divine" intermittently, "In flashes", becomes fully manifest in a loss of vision's continuity, in the loss of the "celestial light". Like the Simplon-Pass narrative, much of the Ode articulates a conception of imagination which makes it hostile to the natural world. Objects are experienced as valuable only to the extent that they reflect the "celestial light", and man can experience fulfillment only to the extent that "autonomous" mind and imagination give access to the transcendentally located well-springs of our existence. The opposition between the "Heaven" lying about us in childhood, the "imperial palace", and the "Shades of the prison-house" into which our birth is a descent, all emphasise the essential antagonism between the "pleasures" of earth in stanza 6 of the Ode and the "visionary gleam" that has fled. The lapse of vision with which the poem began, however, inhibits the unequivocal celebration of autonomous mind and imagination displayed in the Simplon-Pass passage. The notion of anamnesis, of Platonic recollection is invoked to account for the weakening, or even periodic loss of the adult's capacity to perceive the

"visionary gleam". Given that birth is a descent into the "Shades of the prison-house", a distancing from the divine wellsprings of our being, this attenuated contact is inevitable.

However, this strand of the Ode's argument has a counter-movement. The mere capacity to hanker after the "visionary gleam" is proof that something still glows in the "embers" of stanza 9. The fundamentally visionary autonomy of mind, manifested in the "obstinate questionings / Of sense and outward things", can never be completely eroded. The poem holds out as a consolation the simultaneous transformation and retention of the "visionary gleam" in the "philosophic mind". In anamnestic recollection the "philosophic mind" recovers for consciouness a fully *articulated awareness of the meaning of the child's* unmediated perception of the "visionary gleam". What is irretrievably lost in immediacy is compensated for by an increase in understanding. Despite the fact that awareness of vision's potential frailty renders completely unequivocal commitment to the "unfathered vapour" impossible, the primary thrust of the Ode still seems to locate whatever measure of salvation may be open to us in the "obstinate questionings" of Stanza 9.

In such moments, moments in which the efforts of the "homely Nurse" to seduce us with earth's "pleasures" are circumvented, the "light of sense" goes out to reveal, as it did in the Simplon-Pass passage, mind and imagination's essential kinship with the divine and also, in this context, our essential kinship with the child. At such times man perceives his connection with the "imperial palace" from which he came. It is this transformation of the "visionary gleam" into the "philosophic mind" that Wordsworth uses to try and 'bind his days together". Ironically - the irony is generated by an implied comparison with the Ode's epigraph - the child remains the father of the man in an attenuated sense; continuity seemingly being re-established at the level of vision rather than "natural piety". None of this however justifies, on examination, an assertion of continuity between either child and adult, or mind and the world of which the man is an embodied part.

The second of these last two points is, I think, almost self-evident. As the parallel with the Simplon-Pass outlined above suggests, the "philosophic mind's" task of restoring our contact with the fled "glory" make it intractably hostile to the world of sense. The first of these points can, I think, be shown to be at least plausible. From the outset the Ode is structured by oppositions of a particularly stark nature between the

natural world and the "visionary gleam". This disjunction - see particularly the close of stanza 4 - is confirmed by stanza five's characterisation of our birth as a "sleep and a forgetting" in a Platonic sense, a descent into the "Shades of the prison-house". The child's perception of the "glory" which gives natural objects a borrowed radiance seems to be purely a product of his closeness to the transcendental source from which the "celestial light" emanates. Seen in these terms our worldly existence can only be beset by an ever increasing blindness. If wisdom is truly a function of our closeness to the transcendental sources of our being then, despite Wordsworth's assertions, the consolations of the "philosophic mind" remain at best redundant and at worst spurious, for on these assumptions the *child must by definition remain* the "best philosopher".[101] The tonal crudity of stanza 7 is also noteworthy, betraying a measure of uncertainty about the metaphysical load the child is being made to carry.

The extraordinarily precarious nature of any commitment to a mind or imagination that has become autonomous in any of the senses discussed in this dissertation perhaps accounts for a counter-current in the Ode. A lengthy analysis of stanza 3 revealed the vestigial presence of a nostalgic desire for a state of unproblematical "natural piety" at odds with the poem's fundamental premises. Despite repeated assertions of

the incompatibility of sense-perception and the only "glory" that matters, the fled "glory" of the "visionary gleam", the poet retains a measure of attraction for the play of the lamb, the joyous birdsong and the sympathetic echoes and re-echoes of the landscape.

Understandably enough, the attempt to restore the unproblematical interchange of world and self typical of "natural piety" fails. The poet's relation to the play of the creatures around him remained, as comparisons with superficially similar verse in The Prelude showed, ultimately vicarious. In urging the child to surround him with his joyous shouts, the observer showed a strong desire to experience, even if only by proxy, a oneness with the natural world that he could not achieve in his own right. A measure of ambivalence is also apparent in stanza six's assertion that the "homely Nurse's" attempts to accommodate her adopted child to the conditions of his naturalized existence embody "no unworthy aim". Finally, though I would not insist too heavily on this point, I tried to suggest that a subsidiary aspect of the Ode's final movement attempted, in a different way, a rapprochement of the adult's earthly existence and the "visionary gleam" at odds with the primary thrust of the poem. The closing images of stanza 9, while re-affirming the child's far closer proximity to the "visionary gleam," nonetheless see the land

on which the man stands as continuous with the sea on whose shore the children play. There would seem to be a possible suggestion that man's existence is, as stated in the full analysis of the Ode given in the third section of Chapter 3, a "mediate" one. Suspended between the "Shades of the prison-house" and the "imperial palace", man appears to unite the divine and the natural by forming an interface between them. Any such implications fly in the face of the poem's frequent insistence on the fundamental incompatibility of the "light of sense" and the autonomous mind and imagination capable of apprehending the "visionary *gleam*"

In conclusion, an investigation of the Immortality Ode shows it to be incapable of *resolving the tensions between the* divergent conceptions of experience, mind and the world implicit in its many different strands. As became apparent in an analysis of the Simplon-Pass passage, once the "ontological primacy of the sensory object" is questioned by a poetry committing itself to a celebration of the "unfathered vapour", the continuities of "natural piety" are not readily re-established within the same discourse. The Ode embodies in itself most of the tensions that scar Wordsworth's poetry as a whole, displaying the structure of inconclusive repetition, the oscillation between different accounts of mind and its relation to the world seen to

characterize The Prelude. Ironically the Immortality Ode can be read as a gloss on Wordsworth's career as suggested by his practice in those editions of his poetry he supervised personally, though doubtlessly not in the sense he intended. No longer able to consider the affirmations of "natural piety" a serious intellectual possibility, and plagued by the precariousness of a vision which in any case only enabled the poet to intuit the transcendental at the cost of denying him contact with the world, the Immortality Ode, despite its assertions, leaves the "sad perplexity" which was its essential subject - matter unresolved. The failure to resolve it renders all the postulated affirmations and syntheses of Wordsworth's verse problematical at best.

## EPILOGUE

In the last chapter we saw how the Immortality Ode embodied in itself all the tensions that scar Wordsworth's poetry as a whole. The Ode remains, to use two of Wordsworth's own phrases, suspended between the competing claims of the "light of [illegible]" and the "visionary gleam". Although the greater weight of the Ode's allegiance seems to lie with views of experience related to those valorized more unambiguously in the Simplon-Pass passage, it is unable to entirely resist nostalgic yearnings for a state of simple "natural piety". Such a state is however discredited as an intellectual possibility not merely by the Ode itself, but also by the inconclusive oscillations between the various divergent conceptions of experience that we have traced in Wordsworth's poetry as a whole. Although the thrust of much of Wordsworth's work is optimistic, the great Romantic hope of showing how exquisitely mind and the external world were fitted to one another remained unrealised. The attempt to attain the secularised state of grace described in the preface to The Excursion through "natural piety" failed.

Particular doctrines of Romantic writers and thinkers may well be quite dead. An attempt to resolve the dualisms of post-Cartesian thought through a Schellingesque "Naturphilosophie" in which nature is thought of as embodied

spirit is an intellectual option for nobody, or almost nobody, today. A recent commentator states quite rightly that "a case can be made for saying that it is precisely this claim of a natural supernaturalism based on the imagination which is the most conservative element in a literature that stands on the edge of modernism, in a universe already recognised as discontinuous rather than organic. The Romantic rhetoric of affirmation avoids breaking with the past, and simply restates with reference to imagination the optimistic humanism urged by the Enlightenment with reference to reason. The compensatory, conservative nature of Romantic sacraments such as the marriage between mind and nature ... is nowhere more evident than in Wordsworth ... Thus the Romantic claim of a marriage between mind and nature, often considered revolutionary in its implications, can also be seen as a conservative and sentimental attempt to revive a Renaissance or hermetic system of correspondences in a world which has already been revealed as discontinuous".[1]

If the "natural piety" typical of so many Romantic attempts to reconcile the polarities of "Reason" and "Nature", "Spirit" and the "World" spoken of in the texts of Schiller and Von Kleist no longer inspires conviction, then the claim of Chapter 1 that the work of the Romantic movement nonetheless remains continuous with contemporary concerns needs justification. Providing such a justification is, I

think, not too difficult. Beyond any reasonable doubt, Romantic poetry's concern with the subject/object dialectic was to be massively influential. The debate concerning the nature and extent of the mind's constitutive powers we noted to be implicit in the syntax of the Invocation to Book 1 of The Prelude and contrasting characterization of the mind as "correspondent breeze" and "Lord and Master of outward sense", were to continue in the works of major twentieth century poets, both European and English. On reflection, this is not too surprising. A rejection of specific Romantic doctrines or articles of faith by no means entails that the dualisms of post-Cartesian thought no longer plague us, or that the subject/object dialectic with which much Romantic thought and poetry was obsessively concerned has been satisfactorily resolved. The attempt to negotiate the subject/object dialectic without, using Wordsworthian images for convenience, being "debarred" from "Nature's living images" by an imagination that has become solipsistically autonomous on the one hand, or becoming "intoxicate with present objects" on the other, is a problem that still has contemporary relevance. This continuity of concern as well as the differences between the literature of Romanticism and Modernism can be seen very clearly in the work of Wallace Stevens. A brief glance at a few well known poems will have to suffice.

The Snow Man is a poem exemplifying the dangers of privileging the objective pole of the subject/object dialectic:

One must have a mind of winter
To regard the frost and the boughs
Of the pine-trees crusted with snow;

And have been cold a long time
To behold the junipers shagged with ice,
The spruces rough in the distant glitter

Of the January sun; and not to think
Of any misery in the sound of the wind,
In the sound of a few leaves,

Which is the sound of the land
Full of the same wind
That is blowing in the same bare place

For the listener, who listens in the snow,
And, nothing himself, beholds
Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is.

In the earlier stanzas of this poem an act of consciousness in a projective sense is noticeable in the perception of "misery in the sound of the wind". The perception of

emotion, of sympathetic analogy between man and world in the landscape, is even more clear in the correspondences between the "mind of winter" and the snow observed on the pine-trees. These correspondences imply that an admixture of imagination attaches to even the meanest act of seemingly neutral perception. The poet wishes to purge all acts of perception of any trace of imagination, for such traces allow one to slide into the fallacies of anthropomorphic self-projection. Such tendencies must be stopped in the interest of seeing "Nothing that is not there". The almost moral insistence on purging perception of imagination in the interests of objectivity, of unmediated contact with the world as it "independently is," heightens our shock when confronted with the "soulless image" that such a world would be.

Such a world is describable only in terms of utter vacancy as the "nothing that is". This world corresponds, through most ingenious wordplay, with the "nothing" used to designate the observer who is "nothing himself". This "nothing" can be glossed as "neutral" or "presuppositionless". Any gloss will do provided it is recognised that Stevens is concerned with that residue left to perception when the natural world is confronted by an observing consciousness as close as possible to a transparency of one or other kind. In this world any sense of self is obliterated by the random driftings of the snow,

the "nothing that is" cleverly being evoked in an image which comes as close as possible to being colourless and formless.

At the close of the Snow Man the fictive projections of consciousness implicit in earlier correspondences between perceiver and landscape are demystified only at the cost of confrontation with a "truth which is generally represented in Stevens as everywhere and always hostile to human being".[2]

The Snow Man is then a poem about the dilemma attendant on privileging the objective pole of the subject/object dialectic. However, this poem contains a counter-movement in which the powers Stevens attributes to autonomous imagination become clear in an oblique way, ironically enough, precisely by means of the concluding description of what a world completely bereft of imagination is like. The Snow Man is a good example of the complex continuities and differences between the poetry of Romanticism and Modernism. In The Snow Man we may indirectly infer that even to perceive the "pine-tree crusted with snow", imagination must be granted an almost absolute autonomy. Although the precise relations of mind, nature and imagination to one another in the work of the two poets do not always coincide, Stevens' work represents a radicalization of that strain of Romantic poetry glorying in

the mind as "lord and master of outward sense". The powers of autonomous imagination, either celebrated or desired in those rare passages of The Prelude in which objects are "crossed" with the perceiver's "image" on the one hand, or the eye is stigmatized as the most "despotic" of our senses on the other, now seem to be intrinsic to even the most mundane act of sense-perception. In a sense the polarities of the subject/object dialectic are sharpened, the potential distance between the two terms widened. The claims Stevens is prepared to make for the redemptive capacities of imagination, its ability to order and confer meaning on experience, are stated explicitly in the famous Anecdote of the Jar :

I placed a jar in Tennessee,
And round it was, upon a hill.
It made the slovenly wilderness
Surround that hill.

The wilderness rose up to it,
And sprawled around, no longer wild.
The jar was round upon the ground
And tall and of a port in air.

It took dominion everywhere.
The jar was gray and bare.
It did not give of bird or bush,
Like nothing else in Tennessee.

Detailed analysis of this poem will not be given as it would entail needless repetition. What is important is the way in which the jar, imposing order on an otherwise "slovenly wilderness", is an analogue of the sovereignty of imagination in all perception.[3] And yet even in this poem's celebration of imagination, an important limitation is placed on imagination's generative capacities. Unlike the rest of Tennessee - the last line presumably refers to the natural objects and processes which imagination so comprehensively orders - the imagination does not and cannot "give of bird or bush".[4] Imagination's exclusion from generation in this sense hints at the solipsistically self-reflexive nature of the imagination seemingly unambiguously celebrated. Stevens is fully aware that to privilege the subjective pole of the subject/ object dialectic is to risk an imprisonment in mind, to be left without a world one can inhabit, without anything external to self with which relationship is possible. Accordingly, much of Wallace Stevens' poetry is essentially a search for an accomodation of imagination and world where imagination's autonomy is not incompatible with the world's reality, for a

poetry capable of fashioning "A tune upon the blue guitar / Of things exactly as they are".[5]

The self-defeating nature of this enterprise is made clear in these lines from Add this to Rhetoric:

> In the way you speak
> You arrange, the thing is posed,
> What in nature merely grows.
>
> Tomorrow when the sun
> For all your images,
> Comes up as the sun, bull fire,
> Your images will have left
> No shadow of themselves.

The solipsism attendant on attempting to make the power of constitutive imagination engulf all perception and reality is shown by the poetic image's inability to cast a shadow.[6] Once artifice has done all it can, imagination can no more constitute the sunrise "in its own image" than it can generate bird or bush. The perception of disjunction between world and imagination is clinched by the opposition of "posed" and "grows",[7] the artifice, the element of conscious manufacturing caught in the word "pose", being irreducibly distinct from natural growth.

In the comic evocation of the sun rising "bull-fire" as "the sun" despite all the poet's fictionalizing efforts and the ironic recognition of the image's inability to cast a shadow, Stevens develops the reservation implicit in the restriction placed on imagination's generative capacities in Anecdote of the Jar. As Ruggiero points out,[8] Stevens attempts to neutralize the fact that the act of creative writing unavoidably "poses" by affirming the irreducible particularity of the objects entering into the poem: "Stevens' poetics is a two term system where fiction and reality engage in endless and complex play in which one term, while open to qualification by the other, always successfully resists subsumption by its opponent".[9] As the humorously rhetorical use of the word "bull-fire" indicates, it is "self-consciousness, the governing third force in Stevens' system which enables desiring consciousness to step away from itself and watch its fictive projections fail to enclose the real in its transformative vision".[10]

Through using consciousness' powers reflexively as a means of interrogating consciousness itself, Stevens engages in the search for the "metaphor" that will "murder metaphor", a mode of writing in which, as indicated before, the world's reality and mind's autonomy will be compatible. Ironically it appears, in Add this to Rhetoric, that Steven's

paradoxical purposes may best be served by what may, in a sense, be described as a poetry of failure, a poetry which "turns repeatedly to self-ironic celebration of the illusory efficacy of the human imagination".[11] In Add this to Rhetoric the evocation of the sunrise enhances our awareness of the poetic image's inability to "name" in a manner that could hope to generate "bird or bush". Through a poem self-reflexively "naming" its inability to "name" in the required sense, the autonomous imagination ostensibly guarantees the "openess of its fictions to time".[11a] As Ruggiero indicates, an attempt is made to make autonomous imagination an instrument of experience and knowledge by merely "envisioning" an object "placed outside of the realm of the poem"[12] itself.

The attempt to preserve the "integrity" of the object through ensuring that perception ceases to be merely an act of subjugation and mastery represents, as Lentricchia has perceptively pointed out, an attempt to turn the epistemological difficulties of stabilizing the subject/object dialectic into the poetry's major strength.[13] The attempt made in much of Stevens' poetry "to set up an apparently rigid dualism of fiction and reality and then attempt to break down that dualism in an act of self-consciousness"[14] testifies to the hopelessly vitiating circularity of any attempt to "play a tune upon

the blue guitar / Of things exactly as they are". An examination of the vicissitudes of the subject/object dialectic in The Snow Man, Anecdote of the Jar and Add this to Rhetoric only sharpens our awareness of poetic fictions' "double and generally self-contradictory mission: to discover 'truth' of the real as well as to 'escape'; to 'recognize' and pay adequate respect' to 'real' time, the time of the world, and to inform mere successiveness ... with the Aristotelian literary necessity of temporal beginning, middle and end ..."[15].

In the last analysis, to place complete trust in autonomous imagination is to remain trapped in the "image" in a limiting sense, to be deprived of a world to which one can relate. And yet, as the close of The Snow Man shows, for a poetry based on Wallace Stevens' assumptions, the death of incarceration within self cannot be counteracted by a single-minded celebration of "what is". To purge perception of any imaginative admixture would be to confront the "nothing that is", to court the opposite death of self-annihilation. The poetry of Wallace Stevens then, like much modern poetry concerned with the nature of imagination's functions and their relation to that which is exterior to consciousness or self, displays an inability to harmonize various ultimately divergent views of experience and reality into a coherent whole. In this it displays an

inconclusiveness similar to that found to characterize The Prelude.

As noted, however, the polarities of the subject/object dialectic have widened and intensified in the intervening century because of the greater weight placed on the potentially redemptive power of imagination. Although the continuity of Stevens' concerns with those reflected in Wordsworth's verse is fundamental, the difficulties of stabilizing the subject/object dialectic have increased in such a way as to render the essential condition of the poetry even more, to use a phrase of Lentricchia's, "metaphysically precarious".[16] The metaphysical precariousness of which Lentricchia speaks interestingly implies, as I hope to show, that Stevens' radicalization of the claims of imagination on one level, imply an attenuated scope for imagination on another.

As The Snow Man allowed us to obliquely infer, imagination is essential if we are to see something as rudimentary as the snow-covered pine-tree, if we are to be capable of even perceiving a natural object as a natural object. However in Stevens' work, where sense-perception is at bottom an act of imaginative mastery, there is nothing answering to the reciprocal thrust of energies between mind and world depicted so often in The Prelude, nothing remotely

resembling the "blessing" in the breeze that complements the blessing the poet gives. The activity of mind in perception does not produce a sense of the sacramental in nature, of anything resembling an epiphanic revelation of the "One Life" within us and abroad. Autonomous imagination's power is necessary for any "world" to be given to perception at all. But, at least in The Snow Man, even autonomous imagination would not seem able to provide very much more.[17] Lentricchia is accordingly right in saying, in a fine book on Robert Frost, that Frost and Stevens do not seem to "have in their cultural contexts a paradigm and a promise (however difficult to realise) for the ultimate romantic cure of alienation, the metaphysical continuity of subject and object which breaks down the prison of subjectivity. For Frost the redemption of alienation is never an experience of metaphysical transcendence, as it sometimes is in Wordsworth. For Frost the frequent failure to redeem alienation is never accompanied (as it sometimes is in Wordsworth) by the sense that human limitation has cruelly denied him the experience of what he believes to be most profoundly true of human beings and their relationship to nature."[18]

The polarities of the subject/object dialectic have widened to such a degree that any conceivable redemption of objects exterior and hostile to man through the sympathetic agencies

of imagination falls far short of the metaphysical "kinship of essence" between man and nature, the cosubstantiality of all being frequently celebrated by Wordsworth and Coleridge. The underwriting of any such metaphysical kinship by "natural piety" is no longer even a distant intellectual possibility. The result is that any "salvation" won through the consolations of autonomous imagination will have purely individual validity, and psychological rather than metaphysical significance.[19] As we infer from The Snow Man, imagination yields to perception the possibility of seeing the sensory texture of the winter landscape, but not much more. The redemptive act of mind is altogether less grandiose than is often the case in Wordsworth and Coleridge, and the "redemption" granted correspondingly attenuated in both scope and significance. It is for these reasons that I was careful to specify fairly closely which of the various aspects of Wordsworth's verse examined in Chapter 3 was to be influential. By and large this was, as I hope has become evident, that aspect of Wordsworth's verse which responded to the precariousness of the epiphanic moment by glorying in the constitutive powers of mind, rather than attempting to ground our perception of the "life of things' transcendentally in a visionary faculty capable of participating in the "light divine". The paradoxically simultaneous radicalization and diminishment of imagination's claims and scope outlined here makes the

reasons for this self-evident. Yet even here it could be argued that Yeats' search for what he termed "unity of being" is a secularised echo of the more overtly religious and metaphysical longings of the Romantics. Unfortunately this question cannot be pursued here.[20]

We have noted two modifications of the Romantic inheritance in the work of Wallace Stevens: the radicalization of the subject/object dialectic through a greater stress on the redemptive power of autonomous imagination; and the poetry's frequently diminished "metaphysical reveberation," the increasingly personal and merely psychological significance of any harmony established between mind and nature, self and world. They are closely related. An attempt to stabilize the subject/object dialectic through a "natural piety" which would underwrite the metaphysical and necessary rather than external and contingent unity of man and world is no longer possible. The temptation to seek salvation by immersing oneself fully in the world of sense or retreating to the sphere of autonomous and pure mind is accordingly greatly increased. If what in effect amounts to a "dissolution" of the subject/object dialectic in a perception of common essence is no longer possible, what remains but to privilege either the subject or object pole of the subject/object dialectic?

Despite causing a large shift of emphasis, the radicalization of the subject/object dialectic discussed in this epilogue is, at a deeper level, fundamentally continuous with the more problematical aspects of Wordsworth's verse examined in Chapter 3. It is those aspects of Wordsworth's verse that are distant from the simplistic affirmations of "natural piety", those aspects of his poetry manifesting their discontent with such characteristically Romantic resolutions of the subject/object dialectic that are at the centre of Romanticism's by no means exhausted contemporary relevance. The problems with which the greatest Romantic writers and thinkers wrestled remain "contemporary" in a way that many of their attempted solutions of them do not. It is Romanticism's "sad perplexities" that were to form its truly enduring bequest to modern writers concerned with the nature of mind, imagination and the world. Their radicalizations of the subject/object dialectic still leave their work prey to the dangers of either drowning in the world of sense, or remaining incarcerated within the sterile purity of solipsistically self-reflexive mind.

The persistence of the subject/object dialectic in the work of such writers testifies to an ultimate uncertainty about the relation between mind and world. The dialectic is accordingly hostile to the unity of being the poetry holds

out to itself as prospect and achievement. And yet it is only out of the frustrations and tensions of this dialectic that poetry can be written at all. When in Sailing to Byzantium, Yeats "imagines his existence in "artifice" or the golden bird, it is not of the timeless abstraction that he tells us he will sing but of nature and time, or nature in time".[21] Despite the latent contradiction this is inevitable, for nothing else could be the subject-matter of the song. The poetry starts out from assumptions concerning consciousness, experience, the world, and the relations between them that render the tensions discussed between self consciousness and world insoluble, for the poetry strains perpetually towards a resolution it can achieve only at the cost of extinction. The dilemmas of Romantic thought could only be evaded through the elaboration of doctrines of experience based on radically different philosophical assumptions. Fortunately an examination of this question lies well beyond the scope of this dissertation.

APPENDIX :

THE DEJECTION ODE

Coleridge's Dejection Ode is one of the most famous poems in English Romanticism about the ambiguities of "natural piety" and the fragility of any attempt to overcome the divisive effects of self-consciousness through the typically Romantic doctrine of an interchange between man and nature. Accordingly a text of the poem itself and my reasons for not including a discussion of it in the main body of the text will be given here.

In a manner that I find at best only partially plausible, the Ode still seems ultimately to place its faith in "Joy", defined as the product of a redemptive interchange of world and self:

O pure of heart! thou needest not ask of me
What this strong music in the soul may be!
What, and wherein it doth exist,
This light, this glory, this fair-luminous mist,
This beautiful and beauty-making power.
Joy, virtuous Lady! Joy that ne'er was given,
Save to the pure, and in their purest hour,

Life and Life's effluence, cloud at once and shower,
Joy, Lady! is the spirit and the power,
Which, wedding Nature to us, gives in dower
A new Earth and new Heaven,
Undreamt of by the sensual and the proud -
Joy is the sweet voice, Joy the luminous cloud -
We in ourselves rejoice!

(Lines 59-72)

The sacramental images of marriage and dowry, and the characterization of "Joy" as a power both beautiful and productive of beauty, recall Wordsworth's metaphors of the "correspondent breeze" and "kindred streams". In Coleridge's work "Joy", by "breaking down the boundaries of the isolated consciousness, relates the self both to other human selves and to an outer nature which it has inanimated, and so made compatible with itself".[1] In this the Dejection Ode is reminiscent of the opening lines of the 1805 Prelude, considered in Section A of Chapter 3. Just as Wordsworth considered the imagination to be properly employed when it celebrated the "blessing", the sacramental inhering in the natural world in "The holy life of music and of verse", Coleridge concludes the Dejection Ode with a metaphor strongly suggesting the metaphysical kinship of mind and world:

Joy lift her spirit, joy attune her voice;
To her may all things live, from pole to pole,
Their life the eddying of her living soul!
O simple spirit, guided from above,
Dear Lady! friend devoutest of my choice,
Thus mayest thou ever, evermore rejoice.

(Lines 134-9)

As Jackson Bate has pointed out, the validity of the act of blessing, impossible for Coleridge himself, is affirmed by his wish that it may always be possible for Sara.[2] The affirmations of "natural piety" are not fundamentally questioned.

The failure of imagination lamented in the Dejection Ode is however related to the arguments advanced in Chapter 2 Section D (p.68-76) concerning the necessary precariousness of the epiphanic moment in which a perception of the "life of things" is given immanently within experience itself. It was noted that the epiphanic moment, the flash of insight claiming to contain the certitudes of knowledge within it, had a solipsistically self-referential quality. This makes it at best uncertain whether or not the "life" perceived in the natural world, far from being given to perception within experience itself, is the product of an act of self-projection in a far stronger sense. Subtle doubts

about whether the "Joy" Coleridge had known was the product of an equal and reciprocal interchange of self and world are raised in lines like this: "hope grew round me, like the twining vine, / And fruits, and foilage, not my own, seemed mine". Coleridge's emphasis on the measure of "gratuitousness" in this sense of hope, its ability to sustain itself in seemingly implausible circumstances, makes it legitimate to wonder whether the hope in question is not self-engendered to a greater degree than the passages considered so far would allow.[3]

This argument is supported by the close of Stanza 2 where we learn that the dejection with which the poem is concerned is not the product of a mere failure of perception:

> And still I gaze - and with how blank an eye!
> And those thin clouds above, in flakes and bars,
> That give away their motion to the stars;
> Those stars, that glide behind them or between,
> Now sparkling, now bedimmed, but always seen:
> Yon crescent Moon, as fixed as if it grew
> In its own cloudless, starless lake of blue;
> I see them all so excellently fair,
> I see, not feel, how beautiful they are!
>
> (Lines 30-8)

The discontinuity between the strength of the poet's perception of beauty in the landscape and the dejection in which he languishes suggests an alternative characterization of mind, one which assigns it a far more constitutive role in perception:

> O Lady! we receive but what we give,
> And in our life alone does Nature live:
> Ours is her wedding garment, ours her shroud!
> And would we aught behold, of higher worth,
> Than that inanimate cold world allowed
> To the poor loveless ever-anxious crowd,
> Ah! from the soul itself must issue forth
> A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud
> Enveloping the Earth -
> And from the soul itself there must be sent
> A sweet and potent voice, of its own birth,
> Of all sweet sounds the life and element!
>
> (Lines 47-58)

In this alternative view of imagination and its functions natural objects, considered merely as natural objects, are lifeless. The "inanimate cold world" can only be redeemed through a projective act of consciousness in which the world is "Enveloped" by a light external to it. Stanzas 3 and 4 of the Dejection Ode seem to imply that the fears so often

engendered by the possibility of solipsism can perhaps be overcome by fully embracing it, renouncing all "hopes from outward forms to win / The passions and the life, whose fountains are within". This strand of argument in the Dejection Ode is strongly reminiscent of IV 247-67 of the 1805 Prelude, in which it is suggested that the objects of the natural world live to the extent that they are crossed with the "gleam" of the perceiver's "image". As has been noted frequently in this dissertation, the metaphysical kinship of self and world of "natural piety" implies that mind is active in perception. However, as was seen in Section B of Chapter 3, a simultaneous assertion of the mind's activity in perception and the independent existence of the world perceived is difficult to sustain. To pursue the line of thought presented in these stanzas of the Dejection Ode would be to risk being "debarred" from Nature's "living images", to be left without a world one could inhabit. The unsatisfactory nature of this method of restoring the poet's "genial spirits" is shown by the immediately following account of "Joy" in stanza 5 with which our analysis of the Ode began, and, even more powerfully, by the recurrence of "viper thoughts" in stanza 7. The conclusion of the Ode does not do justice to the tensions between the various positions advanced within it. Coleridge does not allow himself to register fully the implications the divergent accounts of experience given in

stanzas 3 and 4 on the one hand, and stanzas 5 and 8 on the other, have for the "natural piety" which he still seems to affirm as an intellectual possibility.

Much criticism of the Ode has erred by glossing over these tensions in a manner similar to Coleridge himself, making the secondary literature oddly resemble a displaced version of the poem of which it is an account.[4] Perhaps focussing too exclusively on passages such as the paean to "Joy" in stanza 5, or the desire, expressed at the close of stanza 1, for the rain and the wind to give their "wonted impulse", the poet's dejection has been interpreted to be the result of an incapacity to respond to the natural world.[5] As the close of stanza 2 indicates this is, in an important sense, simply not so. If the account of the Dejection Ode offered here has any plausibility a critic like Rajan, although overstating her case, makes an interesting point when she writes that the real paradox of the poem is not to be found "in Coleridge's ability to create despite his professed inability to do so. The dilemma of the poem is that there is no consolation in the power of imagination to constitute an ideal that is not fulfilled in the prose of the world".[6] Although the Ode is an important document in the history of English Romanticism, an account of it adds nothing essential to the argument advanced in the main body of this dissertation's text. The tensions between divergent

accounts of experience discussed here were dealt with, as the cross-referencing indulged in I hope showed, in Sections A and B of Chapter 3. The danger of a world-view that allowed for no distinctions in kind between terms descriptive of the world and terms descriptive of mind lapsing into solipsism was seen, locally, in passages such as $^{IV}$ 247-67 of the 1805 Prelude. The questions raised by the Ode could also be analysed by examining the structure of The Prelude as a whole, by juxtaposing the metaphor of the "correspondent breeze" with the celebration of the mind as "lord and master of outward sense".

My second reason for proceding as I did in Chapter 2, giving structural prominence to the Eolian Harp, is more important. The close of the Eolian Harp showed how the instability of the epiphanic moment potentially had a second possible set of consequences, a set of consequences moreover that could not be deduced from the Dejection Ode in the same way. The precariously self-validating moment of epiphany could lead, most notably in the contradictory close of the Eolian Harp, to an attempt to ground our perception of the "One Life" more securely - something like a more traditional theology. Coleridge's characterization of the symbol as the "translucence of the eternal through and in the individual" and his grounding of Primary Imagination in the activity of the "Infinite I AM" shows that his

philosophical work also oscillates uneasily between a "natural supernaturalism" and a theology of sorts - see Sections B and D of Chapter 2. This aspect of Coleridge's work formed a useful background for subsequent discussions of the Simplon-Pass passage and the Immortality Ode. In all three cases, objects become contingent bearers of a glory "not their own". Such a light - see Section B of Chapter 3 - could only be perceived by an imagination that was, in a sense, autonomous from the natural world, opposed to the merely "bodily eye" of Tintern Abbey. And yet, as the goal of imagination here is presumably participation in the divine, it is not autonomous in the manner of the mind which is "lord and master of outward sense", which simply constitutes objects of experience as modifications of self. Thus, Coleridge's and Wordsworth's divergent conceptions of imagination could be shown, no less than their divergent characterizations of experience, to be incapable of finally cohering with one another in an ordered structure. I hope the reader will find that the analyses of Wordsworth's poetry in Sections A and B of Chapter 3 illuminate the questions raised by the Dejection Ode without significant loss of content. I also hope the reader may agree that an examination of the Eolian Harp allowed a richer and different set of connections be drawn between the work of Wordsworth and Coleridge, connections that could not have been suggested as readily in other ways.

SUMMARY FOOTNOTES

1. Abrams, M.H. Natural Supernaturalism : Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971, p.67-8.

2. Taylor, C. Hegel. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975, p.7 foll.

3. Ibid., p.41 foll.

4. Hirsch, E.D. Jnr. Wordsworth and Schelling: A Typological Study of Romanticism. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960, p.24

5. Coleridge, S.T. Biographia Literaria. Ed G. Watson. London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1965, repr. 1975, p.152.

6. Copleston, F.S.J. A History of Philosophy Volume 7 Part 1: Bentham to Russell. New York: Image Books, 1967, p.177.

7. See Rajan's characterization of the ideal Romantic poem as a "Concrete Universal" in Rajan, T. Dark Interpreter: The Discourse of Romanticism. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980, p.221.

8. Ibid., p.213 foll.

9. Hirsch, op.cit., p.169 foll.

10 Lentricchia, F. Robert Frost: Modern Poetics and the Landscapes of Self. Durham: Duke University Press, 1975, p.102-3.

NOTES : CHAPTER 1

1. Hopkins, G.M. Poems and Prose Ed. W.H. Gardner. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1953, p.68. For a seminal discussion of this motif, see Romanticism and Anti-Self-Consciousness in Hartmann, G. Beyond Formalism : Literary Essays 1958-70 New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970.

2. Schiller, F. On the Aesthetic Education of Man - Trans. E.M.Wilkinson & L.A. Willoughby - Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967, p.41.

3. Ibid., p.31

4. See "Spirit" and "Life" in Contemporary Philosophy in Ed. Schlipp, P.A. The Library of Living Philosophers Vol. VI: The Philosophy of Ernst Cassirer, Evanston, Illinois: 1949, p.858-9.

5. Ibid.,p.857-80

6. Ibid., p.858

7. Hartmann, G. op.cit.,p.300

8. Quoted in Abrams, M.H. Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature. London: Oxford University Press, 1971, p.221.

9. Ibid., p.208

9a Hirsch, E.D. Jnr. Wordsworth and Schelling: A Typological Study of Romanticism. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960, p.24

10. Kolakowski, L. Main Currents of Marxism: Vol 1, The Founders. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978, p.23

11. Ibid., p.23, 26 & 28.

12. Ibid., p.13 foll.

13. Ibid., p.13 & 17.

14. Quoted in Abrams, op.cit., p.181.

15. Abrams, op.cit., p.185.

16. Kolakowski, op.cit., p.16.

17. Kolakowski, op.cit. p.52.

18. Abrams, op.cit., p.67-8.

19. Taylor, C. Hegel - Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975. See Chapter 1.

    This question is further pursued in the essay Language and Human Nature, in Taylor, C. Human Agency and Language: Philosophical Papers, Volume 1 Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, p.215-47, and Rationality, to be found in Taylor, C. Philosophy and The Human Sciences: Philosophical Papers, Volume 2. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, p.134-51.

20. Ibid., p.4

21. See Ed.Doney, W. A Collection of Critical Essays - Descartes. London: Macmillan, 1968.

    Fortunately the intricacies of this debate need not concern us. What is important is the way in which the Romantics attempted to overcome the dualisms of mind and matter, self and world, to which post-Cartesian philosophy gave rise.

22. Ed.Honderich, T. Philosophy Through Its Past. Pelican Books, 1984.

23. Williams, B. Descartes: The Project of Pure Enquiry. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Pelican Books, 1978. See especially Chapter 3, p.72-101.

24. Guignon, C.B. Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge. *Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company,* 1983, p.17-18. For a full discussion of the origin of Cartesian conceptions of mind see Rorty, R. Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980, p.17-69.

25. Ibid., p.23

26. For a full discussion of the conception of knowledge as 'nner representation, see Rorty, op.cit., p.17-69.

27. Kolakowski, L. Husserl and the Search for Certitude. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975, p.13

28. Williams, op.cit., p.28.

28a Williams, op.cit., p.28.

29. Berlin, I. Against the Current: Essays in the History of Ideas. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981, p.81.

30. Ibid., p.81-2.

    Cassirer gives an account of Leibniz's desire to produce a "mathesis universalis" in Cassirer, E. The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms. Volume 1, Language. Trans. R. Manheim. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955, p.128-32.

31. Ibid.,p.81

32. Ibid.,p.163-4

33. Ibid.,p.164

    Similar conclusions are thoroughly elaborated in Cassirer, E. The Philosophy of Enlightenment. Trans. F.C. Koelln and J.P. Pettegrove. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951. See especially The Mind of the Enlightenment (p.3-36) and Nature and Natural Science (p.37-92)

34. See Introduction of Berlin, I. The Age of Enlightenment: The Eighteenth - Century Philosophers. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979, p.11-29.

35. Ibid., p.18-19

36. Stroud, B. Hume. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977, p.8. In his first chapter, (p.1-16) Stroud gives a magnificent account of how Hume's ambition to become the Galileo of the study of human nature indicates a belief in the quite literally universal applicability of the methods of the physical sciences. The spur Newton's Laws of Gravitation was to him is repeatedly stressed by Stroud.

37. Quite frankly, I have always found Coleridge's early enthusiasm for Hartley to be somewhat surprising. Hartley's explicit declaration that he based his methods on those of Newton places him squarely in the tradition of thought, examined in Chapter 1, which aimed to make psychology a strict science. As the objects of this science were the elementary sense - impressions revealed in introspection, the mathematical formalizations of Newtonian physics would not be possible. Nonetheless, in common with the French Materialists, Hartley seems to have believed that a genetic reconstruction of even the most complex abstract thoughts in terms of the association and dissociation of impressions rooted in sensory experience was possible. As Abrams remarks, in 1749 Hartley published "a version of associative theory, developed independently of Hume, in which he set out to

demonstrate rigorously that all the complex contents and processes of mind are derived from the elements of simple sensation, combined by the single link of contiguity in original experience." (See Abrams, M.H. The Mirror and the Lamp 1953, p.162) Furthermore, the methods of such thinkers implied, as stressed in Chapter 1, an atomistic conception of experience, in which the elementary sense - impressions seemed to somewhat resemble the particles of Galilean physics. Copleston, in the light of similar considerations, also seems to have found Coleridge's early Hartleyanism somewhat surprising. (See Copleston, F.S.J. A History of Philosophy Volume 8, Part 1, p.176-7). Finally, Dorothy Emmet quotes a passage from the Anima Poetae that one would, unless one knew the relevant bibliographical details, have expected to be representative of Coleridge's views on associationist psychology all along. Speaking of Hume, Coleridge disagrees that we can intelligibly speak of our being in terms of "an aggregate of successive single sensations! Whoever felt a single sensation? Is not every one at the same moment conscious that there co-exist a thousand others, a darker shade or less light, even as when I fix my attention on a white horse or a grey bare hill or rather long ridge that turns out of sight each way.." (Emmet, D. Coleridge on the Growth of the Mind in Ed. Coburn, K. Coleridge: A Collection of Critical Essays, p.164).

The dualisms Coleridge and Wordsworth sought to overcome resulted in the doctrine that Wordsworth was to call "natural piety". Indeed, as suggested in Chapter 1, the Romantics generally came to believe that the dualisms of post-Cartesian thought could only be satisfyingly overcome if the connection between mind and world was shown to be metaphysical and necessary rather than merely contingent. This resulted in various attempts - Schelling and Coleridge being the examples looked at - to formulate a "Naturphilosophie" in which nature was regarded as embodied spirit, and man as the essential being of this world rendered articulate and conscious. Doctrines such as these are surely far more in keeping with the deeper strains of Romanticism, with revelations of the "One Life within us and abroad", than any "Hartleyanism" could hope to be.

Suggestions that Hartley's work could be rendered compatible with the "natural piety" of much of The Prelude by supplementing it with a conception of unconscious association seems to me to be implausible. It seems to me that the views of associationist psychology belong to a philosophy of a kind from that of a Schellingesque "Naturph. At least

some of the theoretical pronouncements of Romantic thinkers and writers would support such a view. At times, see Chapter 2, Coleridge chose to stress the affinities between his work and Neo-Platonism. Novalis and Schelling, by expressing their admiration of mystics such as Meister Eckhardt and Jakob Böhme, also drew attention to the ultimately gnostic roots of much of their work. (For a different account of the relation of Wordsworth and Coleridge to Hartley, see Prickett, S. Coleridge and Wordsworth: The Poetry of Growth. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970).

38. Cuignon, op.cit., p.37.

39. Taylor, op.cit., p.7 & 9.

40. Taylor, op.cit.,p.8,9-10.

41. Langbaum, R. The Poetry of Experience: The Dramatic Monologue in the Modern Literary Tradition. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Chatto and Windus, 1957,p.7

42. Hirsch, E.D. Jnr. Wordsworth and Schelling: A Typological Study of Romanticism. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960, p.24.

43. Frye, N. Fearful Symmetry: A Study of William Blake. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947. (See Chap.1, 'The Case Against Locke')/

44. Kolakowski, L. Bergson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985, p.16.

45. Ibid., p.24.

46. Ibid., p.28.

47. Colletti, L. Marxism and Hegel. Trans. Garner, L. London: Lowe & Brydone Printers Ltd., 1973, p.139-56.

48. Kolakowski, L. Bergson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985, p.32.

49. Ibid., p.60.

50. Copleston, F.S.J. A History of Philosophy Volume 7, Part 1: Fichte to Hegel. New York: Image Books, 1965, p.134.

51. Ibid.,p.17-23

It should be stressed that the interpretation of the Kantian "thing-in-itself" suggested on p.19 is typical

of the response of Fichte, Schelling and Romantic thinkers to Kant. It is hardly uncontroversial. Kant's Critique of Pure Reason *is by no means entirely* consistent in its use of terminology, so any interpretation is bound to emphasise selective strands of his work. However, eminent modern commentators such as Korner and Scruton have drawn attention to a possible interpretation of the "thing-in-itself" as a "limiting concept" rather than some or other unknowable entity: "A phenomenon is an 'object of possible experience', whereas a noumenon is an object knowable to thought alone, and which it does not make sense to describe as the object of experience. It is natural to connect the two distinctions, and to assume that Kant believes appearances, or phenomena, to be knowable through experience, and "things-in-themselves" to be mere noumena, not knowable at all since nothing is knowable in thought alone. Kant says, for example, that the concept of a 'noumenon' can be used only negatively, to designate the limit of our knowledge, and not positively, to designate things as they are in themselves. ....In which case, the "*thing-in-itself*" *is* not an entity, but a term standing proxy for the unrealisable ideal of perspectiveless knowledge. (Scruton, R. Kant. 1982, p.42-3). If this is so, and my sympathies are with Scruton, then the explanation of Kant suggested in Chapter 1 is radically mistaken. Throughout Chapter 1 my main concern has always been to illuminate Romantic thinkers' and poets' understanding of a great thinker, rather than to assess the accuracy of their interpretations of Descartes, Locke, Hume or Kant. It is their own understanding of post-Cartesian thought and the dualisms it seemed to them to entail that determine the nature of their own doctrines, the cogency of which I am concerned to assess. It is however necessary to indicate one's methodological principles and stress that views attributed to philosophers directly or indirectly in Chapter 1 may, accordingly, not be a faithful reflection of what they actually wrote.

52. Hirsch, op.cit.,p.18

53. Magee, B. The Philosophy of Schopenhauer. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983,p.256.

54. Ibid.,p.257

55. Ibid.,p.257

56. Copleston, op.cit.,p.135

57. Copleston, op.cit.,p.135

58. Langbaum, R. The Modern Spirit: Essays on the Continuity of Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Literature. New York. Oxford University Press, 1970, p.174. This motif is, as indicated, dealt with extensively by M.H. Abrams, Geoffrey Hartmann, Cassirer and Charles Taylor to name but a few.

59. Taylor, op.cit.,p.41

60. Hirsch, op.cit.,p.3

61. Hirsch, op.cit.,p.17

CHAPTER 2 : FOOTNOTES

1. See Abrams, M.H. Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature. London: Oxford University Press, 1971. p.107-10. See also Abrams, M.H. The Romantic Vision of the World in Ed. Beer, J. Coleridge's Variety: Bicentenary Studies. London: Macmillan, 1972, p.101-31.

2. Quoted in Abrams, M.H. The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953, repr. 1975, p.316. See also Abrams, M.H. in Ed. Beer, J., p.107.

3. Ibid., p.169-70

4. See Ibid., p.156-225; 298-335 as well as the whole of the Biographia Literaria

5. Taylor, C. Hegel - Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975, p.42. See also Abrams, M.H. Natural Supernaturalism. 1971, p.143-252

6. Coleridge, S.T. The Friend: A Series of Essays to Aid in the Formation of Fixed Principles in Politics, Morals and Religion, with Literary Amusements Interspersed. Ed. B.E. Rooke, in The Collected Works. Ed. Coburn, IV. 2 vols, I520-1 (Also quoted and examined in Kessler, E. Coleridge's Metaphors of Being. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979, p.137.

7. Ibid., I519-21. Also cited by Abrams, M.H. in Ed. Beer, J. op.cit., p.112.

8. For discussions of these terminological inconsistencies, see Korner, S.Kant. London: Penguin, 1955; Scruton, R.Kant. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982. Cassirer, E. Kants Life and Thought. Trans. J. Haden. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981, p.139-218 and Walsh, W. Kant's Criticism of Metaphysics. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1975.

9. Walsh, W. Kant's Criticism of Metaphysics. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1975,p.241

10. Ibid.,p.242.

11. Discussions of this matter are contained in all the sources listed in note 8.

12. Ed.Leavis, F.R. Mill on Bentham and Coleridge. London: 1950. Also quoted in Copleston, F.S.J. A History of

Philosophy Vol.8, Part 1: Bentham & Russel. New York: Image Books, 1967, p.177.

13. See Copleston, F.S.J. A History of Philosophy. Vol.8, Part 1: Bentham & Russel. New York: Image Books, 1967,p.176-81 and Wellek, R. A History of Modern Criticism 1750-1950. Volume 2: The Romantic Age. Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1955, repr. Cambridge University Press, 1981, p.151-187.

14. Emmet, D.M. Coleridge on the Growth of the Mind in Ed. Coburn, K. Coleridge: A Collection of Critical Essays, Twentieth Century Views. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967,p.168. See also Emmet, D. Powers in Mind and Nature in Ed. Beer, J. op.cit., p.166-82.

15. Quoted in Snyder, A.D. Coleridge on Logic and Learning. London: 1929, p.135 and also Ibid.,p.168.

16. Ibid.,p.168

17. Coleridge's reformulation of the Kantian notions of "Reason" and "Ideas" - examined in Section A of Chapter 2,p.33-7 - so as to root conceptual thought in the *instinctive and the affective is a fine example* of the correlations between the poet and the philosopher. Such passages also make clear the "structure of experience" shared by Coleridge's "Naturphilosophie" and Wordsworth's "natural piety". These correlations between the work of Coleridge and the poetry of Wordsworth can be seen by juxtaposing M.H.Abrams' account of "joy" in Coleridge (See Abrams, M.H. Natural Supernaturalism. 1971,p.275-77) with Langbaum's account of "joy" in Wordsworth. (See The Evolution of Soul in Wordsworth's poetry in Langbaum, R. The Modern Spirit. 1970, p.26-7). See also Emmet, D. Powers in Mind and Nature in Ed. Beer, J. op.cit., p.171-2.

18. Coleridge, S.T. Anima Poetae, from the unpublished notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Ed. E.H. Coleridge. London: 1895,p.23.

19. Coleridge, S.T. The Statesman's Manual: or, the Bible the Best Guide to Political Skill and Foresights: A Lay Sermon, Addressed to the Higher Classes of Society. "First Lay Sermon". in Lay Sermons. Ed. R.J. White, in The Collected Works ed. Coburn, VI Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972. See also Emmet, D. Powers in Mind and Nature in Ed. Beer, J. op.cit., p.174.

It is Appendix C (of The Statesman's Manual that is relevant to the discussion of Chapter 2, p.33-7).

19a See Emmet, D. Powers in Mind and Nature in Ed. Beer, J. Coleridge's Variety: Bicentenary Studies. London: Macmillan, 1972, p.174.

20. Taylor, op.cit.,p.41-2

21. Copleston, F.S.J. A History of Philosophy Volume 7, Part 1 Fichte & Hegel. New York: Image Books, 1965, p.150.

22. From Coleridge, S.T. A Treatise on Method. Quoted in Fogle, R.H. The Idea of Coleridge's Criticism. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962,p.51-2.

The idea, derived from German theorists like Schelling, that art was a mixed mode partaking in both the real and the ideal and, therefore, best suited to embody our vision of the "One Life", is one of the central ideas of Romantic aesthetics. Its influence on Coleridge was particularly strong. In Dark Interpreter Rajan correctly draws attention to the fact that Coleridge's Conversation Poems can be regarded as "Concrete Universals" (p.221). This aptly chosen phrase highlights the close similarities, the near identity in fact, of the terms in which Coleridge discusses both the reconciliatory power of art in general and poetry in particular, and the symbol. The symbol, the most powerful device of what Coleridge would deem a "true" poetry, also embodies the ideal in the real, is claimed to be an irreducible part of the reality it simultaneously represents. This stress on the concreteness of our perception of the ideal is most important, for it is intimately connected with the Romantic hope of recapturing the positives of religious experience in secular terms. If "symbol", - see Section C of Chapter 2, - construed as a perception of the ideal in the real is what Romantic poets strive for, then the "epiphany", an experientially based flash of insight, is the means by which "symbol" is revealed. I attempt, in Chapter 2, to link the notion of the poem as "Concrete Universal" with a discussion of the symbol on p.46-48 and with discussions concerning the necessary concreteness of the epiphanic moment on p.49-50;65. Discussions of both the aesthetic doctrines of German Romantic poets and thinkers and the importance of the symbol in Romantic aesthetics are legion. A few of the sources I have found particularly helpful are: Wellek, R. A History of Modern Criticism 1750-1950 Volume 2: The Romantic Age. Jonathan Cape ltd., 1955. repr. Cambridge University Press, 1981; Todorov, T. Theories of Symbol. Trans. C. Porter. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982, p.147-221; Part 1 of Gadamer, H.G. Truth and Method. Trans. W.Glen-Doepel. London: Sheed & Ward, 1975; De

Man, P. The Rhetoric of Temporality in Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism. New York: Oxford University Press, 1971. repr.1983, p.187-228; Belsey, C. Critical Practice. London: Methuen, 1980, p.118-24; Ed. Simpson, D. German Aesthetic and Literary Criticism: Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Schopenhauer, Hegel. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984; Fogle, R.H. The Idea of Coleridge's Criticism. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962.

23. Coleridge, C. Biographia Literaria. Ed. G.Watson. London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1965, repr.1975, p.167.

24. Ibid., p.167.

25. See all the sources listed in footnote 22.

26. Rajan, T. Dark Interpreter: The Discourse of Romanticism. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980, p.221.

27. Quoted in Fogle, R.H. The Idea of Coleridge's Criticism. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962, p.39.

28. Ibid., p.39.

29 Coleridge, op.cit., p.167.

30 Emmet, op.cit.,p.167-70.

31. Coleridge, C. The Statesman's Manual. Ed. R.J. White in The Collected Works, Ed. Coburn. VI Princeton: Princeton University Press, p.30.

This passage is also quoted - either in whole or part - and examined in De Man, P. Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism. New York: Oxford University Press, 1971. repr.1983, p.192-3 and Barth, R.S.J. The Symbolic Imagination: Coleridge and the Romantic Tradition. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977, p.3-4 & 11.

32. Coleridge, op.cit., Appendix C, p.70. Also quoted in Barth, R.S.J. The Symbolic Imagination: Coleridge and the Romantic Tradition. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977, p.6.

33. See relevant footnotes in Chapter 1.

34. Quoted in Langbaum, R. The Poetry of Experience: The Dramatic Monologue in the Modern Literary Tradition. London: Chatto & Windus, 1957, p.33.

35. Ibid., p.33

36. Barth, R.S.J. The Symbolic Imagination: Coleridge and the Romantic Tradition. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977, p.3-21; 128-43.

37. Ibid., p.19.

38 Ibid., p.3-21; 128-43

In stressing that Coleridge's writings on the symbol stand far closer ultimately to Christian or Neo-Platonic mysticism than Kant Barth is, I believe, quite correct. This point is supported by the Biographia Literaria and indirectly, as pointed out, by the fully justified way in which thinkers like Schelling drew attention to the gnostic roots of their works.

39. Ed. Owen, W.J.B. & Smyser, J.W. The Prose Works of William Wordsworth, 3 vols. Oxford: 1974, Vol.2., p.84-5.

40. House, H. Coleridge: The Clark Lectures, 19[illegible] ndon: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1953 and Hill, J.S. [illegible] idge Companion. London: Macmillan, 1983, p.19 and

It should be noted that what House, Hill and others have described bears the closest resemblance to the "ternary structure" of experience discussed in p.1-5 of Chapter 1 and the analysis of Tintern Abbey in Section A of Chapter 3.

41. Hill, J.S. A Coleridge Companion. London: Macmillan, 1983, p.20.

42. Hill, op.cit., p.20 foll and Langbaum, op.cit., p.37.

43. Ibid., p.20. See also Rajan, op.cit., p.212 foll & House., op.cit., p.79 foll.

44. Coleridge, S.T. Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Ed. E.L. Griggs. 6 Wks. London and New York: 1956-71 (IV 545). Also quoted in Hill, op.cit., p.20.

45. Hill, op.cit.,p.21.

For a far fuller discussion of Coleridge's use of implied auditors and the implicit casting of the Conversation Poems in the form of a dialogue, see Rajan, op.cit., p.201-59.

46. Rajan, op.cit., p.213.

47. Rajan, op.cit., p.227.

48. Rajan, op.cit., p.214.

49. Hill, Rajan and Langbaum are all informative in their description of the poet's afflicted state of mind at the outset of Frost at Midnight. See especially Rajan, op.cit., p.224 foll

50. Rajan, op.cit.,p.224.

51. See Rajan, op.cit., p.224 and Hill, op.cit., p.43.

52. Hill, op.cit.,p.43.

53. The way in which the silence, much commented on in the secondary literature, has this second more positive effect does not seem to me to be sufficiently stressed.

54. This is touched on by Hill, op.cit., p.43, but a rather more extensive discussion is given by Reeve-Parker, C. Coleridge's Meditative Art. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975.

55. Reeve-Parker, ibid., p.134.

56. Garber, F. in The Wordsworth Circle. IV 130-1. See also Hill, op.cit.,p.44.

57. Hill, op.cit., p.44.

57a Langbaum, op.cit., p.39.

58. Langbaum, op.cit., p.38-9.

59. Hill, op.cit.,p.26.

60. Hill, op.cit., p.26.

61. Bloom, H. Shelley's Mythmaking - New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959, p.75.

62. Hill, op.cit., p.27.

63. Abrams, M.H. Coleridge's A Flight in Sound - Science, Metascience, and Poetic Imagination. Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, 116 (1972) p.474.

64. Hill, op.cit.,p.27.

65. Rosen, M. Hegel's Dialectic and its Criticism. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982, p.102.

66. Ibid., p.103.

67. Ibid., p.103.

68. Ibid., p.106.

69. Ibid., p.105.

70. Ibid., p.108.

71. Taylor, op.cit., p.25.

72. Langbaum, op.cit.,p.39-40.

73. Langbaum, op.cit., p.40.

> In part because the focus of his study is on the dramatic monologue, Langbaum does not explore the full consequences of the disequilibrium he identifies. For all the enormous usefulness of his discussion Langbaum shares, I think, a tendency of very many critics to treat the "natural piety" of Wordsworth as representative of the oeuvre as a whole. Such assumptions may perhaps be a deeper reason for failing to elaborate the consequences of the "disequilibrium" he speaks of. This "disequilibrium" between idea and insight points to a precariousness in the doctrines of "natural piety" and the epiphanic moments claiming to underwrite them. Langbaum's formulation correctly links this precariousness to the self-contained purportedly self-validating nature of the epiphany itself. My dissertation is in large measure nothing other than an attempt to explore the nature and consequences of the "disequilibrium" of which Langbaum speaks. I hope the text and footnotes of Chapter 3 will make the reader at least consider the proposition that this choice of starting point leads to results different from those critics attempting to make "natural piety" representative of Wordsworth's work as a whole on the one hand and, more importantly, from those critics like De Man, Hartmann, Terry, Perkins, Armstrong and Ruggiero who, in various ways deal with the more problematical aspects of Wordsworth's poetic imagination on the other.

74. Cassirer, E. The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, Volume 3, The Phenomenology of Knowledge. Trans. R. Manheim. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955, p.2. See also Norris, C. Contest of Faculties: Philosophy and Theory after Deconstruction. London: Methuen, 1985, p.80-1.

75. Langbaum, op.cit., p.17.

76. Abrams, op.cit., p.68.

77. See footnote 32.

78. Coleridge, S.T. *The Friend: A Series of Essays to Aid in the Formation of Fixed Principles in Politics, Morals and Religion, with Literary Amusements Interspersed*. Ed. B.E. Rooke, in The Collected Works, Ed. Coburn, IV. 2 Vols. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969, I 500.

79. Quoted in Copleston, F.S.J. *A History of Philosophy Vol.8, Part 1: Bentham & Russel*. New York: Image Books, 1967, p.178.

80. Coleridge, S.T. The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Ed. K.Coburn, 5 Vols. and index. London and New York: 1957, II No.2546.

81. Wordsworth, W. The Poetical Works, 5 Vols. Ed. Darbishire, H. and De Selincourt, E. Oxford: 1940-9.

82. Rajan, op.cit., p.227.

The tendency I spoke of in footnote 63 is shown very clearly by the readiness with which readers take Coleridge's affective rhetoric entirely on its own terms. This is particularly clear in Hill's unqualified assertion on p. 20-1 that the use of "auditors" conclusively overcomes the solipsism implicit in the poem's starting point. The same mistake is made by most of my other principal sources in the discussion of Frost at Midnight, namely House, Reeve-Parker and even Langbaum.

## CHAPTER 3 : FOOTNOTES

1. Hartmann, J. Beyond Formalism: Literary Essays 1958-70. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970, p.300.

2. Clarke, C. Romantic Paradox: An Essay on the Poetry of Wordsworth. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962. See especially p.1-13.

3. Ibid., p.7.

4. Ibid., p.7.

5. Ibid., p.8.

6. Coleridge, S.T. Biographia Literaria. Ed. G. Watson. London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1965, repr. 1975, p.145.

7. Ibid., p.148 foll

8. Ibid., p.147-8.

9. Ibid., p.149.

   The importance of these passages for an understanding of the poetry of Wordsworth is also seen by Clarke. (See Clarke, op.cit.,p.10-13). It should be added that Chapters 12 and 13 of the Biographia Literaria, expounding as they do the conceptual underpinnings of Coleridge's belief that man's relation to the world was a "fellowship of essence", are essential for an understanding of his "Naturphilosophie". Chapter 12 also contains revealing asides on Descartes and an indication of the affinities Coleridge felt his work to have with Neo-Platonism. These last points are however dealt with more thoroughly in Chapters 8 and 9 of the same work.

10. Armstrong, I. Language as Living Form in Nineteenth Century Poetry. Brighton, Sussex: The Harvester Press, Ltd., 1982, p.22.

    Armstrong's book deals superbly with the tendency towards solipsism implicit in the language of Wordsworth's poetry. Her analyses show how the difficulty of maintaining simultaneous belief in the formative powers of perception and the independent existence of the world is reflected in the language of The Prelude. She rightly insists that it is necessary to "consider a structure of poetic language and how it behaves in relation to an epistemology concerned with

the structure of consciousness". (p.20). I think she however, overemphasises the tendency towards an absolute idealism of parts in Wordsworth's poetry, conflating that aspect of Wordsworth's work revealed by the celebration of mind as "Lord and master of outward sense" with other strands of his verse. I shall touch on this point in the notes to those passages in Section B of Chapter 3 dealing with the Simplon-Pass passage, and deal with it at some length in the note on Helen Ruggiero's work - see esp. note 33.

11. Ibid., p.22

12. Ibid., p.22

Armstrong pays attention to line 5, noting an ambiguity in the welcoming of the breeze: "if welcome is a verb, the onrush of emotion is towards the messenger or breeze. If it is an adjective, the welcome faces towards Wordsworth, a gift of the breeze, welcome, joyous, to me" (p.22). As Armstrong's analysis of the syntax shows an awareness of latent uncertainty about the extent to which the "blessing" is received or projected, it is strange that she does not examine the apostrophes themselves, for they duplicate the same ambiguity. Furthermore at a deeper level the device of personification itself, the constitution of natural objects as "presences", hints at the incipient autonomy of mind in The Prelude. Examination of this device also permits more explicit correlations to be drawn with the "gleam" of the perceiver's "images" in $IV_{247-67}$. Armstrong, to my mind, does not fully explore the possibilities suggested by her analysis.

13. Culler, J. The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981, p.192. See Chapter 7 on the apostrophe, p.135-54.

Culler has some interesting remarks to make on the apostrophe, albeit from a theoretical perspective different from mine. For another discussion of these matters, see Ode to the West Wind in Trilling, L. Prefaces to the Experience of Literature. p.238-42. Also of relevance here is Bloom's treatment of Shelley's poems, following Martin Buber, as an attempt to articulate an "I-thou" rather than an "I-it" relation between man and the world. (See Bloom, H. Shelley's Mythmaking, 1959).

14. Armstrong, op.cit.,p.22.

15. Armstrong, op.cit.,p.22.

16. Ed. Harvey, W.J. & Gravil, R. The Prelude: A Selection of Critical Essays. London: Macmillan, 1972, p.217.

17. Quoted in Langbaum, R. The Poetry of Experience: The Dramatic Monologue in the Modern Literary Tradition. London" Chatto & Windus, 1957, p.33.

18. Abrams, M.H. The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and The Critical Tradition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953, repr. 1973, p.62.

19. Clarke. op.cit.,p.8.

20 Clarke, op.cit.,p.39-53.

21. Easthope, A. Poetry as Discourse. London and New York: Methuen, 1983, p.127 (See also Clarke, op.cit.,p.44-5).

22. Ibid., p.127.

23. Empson, W. Seven Types of Ambiguity. Harmondsworth: Penguin, repr. 1961, p.153.

    Empson, with an element of correctness, considered the verbal and syntactic ambiguities of Tintern Abbey obfuscating, generating what he termed a sense of vague interdenominational uplift.

24. Hartmann, G.H. Wordsworth's Poetry: 1787-1814. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964. (See the whole discussion of Tintern Abbey).

    This point is also dealt with by Easthope, op.cit., p.128-32 and in a seminal discussion by Langbaum, op.cit., p.35-6; 39-40; 41 foll

25. Ibid.,p.27.

26. Ed. Abrams, M.H. Wordsworth: A Collection of Critical Essays, Twentieth Century Views. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc. 1972, p.99.

27. Langbaum, op.cit., p.37.

28. Hirsch, E.D. Jnr. Wordsworth and Schelling: A Typological Study of Romanticism. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960, p.76.

    This is one of the most cogent examinations I know of Wordsworth's "natural piety" and, to use Hirsch's phrase, the "structure of experience" Schelling and Wordsworth share with one another. It suffers

unfortunately from a defect that can be observed very often in the secondary literature, a tendency to make one strand of Wordsworth's poetry emblematic of his work as a whole.

29. Ed. Abrams, op.cit., p.100-2. See also Benziger, J. Tintern Abbey Revisited. PMLA, 65 (1950) and Ruggiero, H. The Limits of Imagination: Wordsworth, Yeats and Stevens. Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1976, p.63.

30. Ruggiero, H. Wordsworth, Yeats, Stevens: The Limits of Imagination. Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1976, p.73 foll.

31. Almost every traditional discussion of Wordsworth, going right back to Mathew Arnold, can in a sense be said to be an exploration of the implications of this metaphor. For an exposition of the correspondence between the movements of nature and imagination see Ruggiero, op.cit. p.73-4.

32. Ruggiero, op.cit.,p.76.

33. Ruggiero, op.cit.,p.66.

Ruggiero's work tackles these problems from another perspective, attempting to articulate a distinction between what she calls the "temporal perspective" and the "natural perspective". For her "The Wordsworthian imagination seeks out the world of nature but validates it in the world of time, placing it in a context in which it can be "re-membered". It is of course the inescapable function of consciousness to constantly transform experience into memory. By trying to place the experience of nature within a temporal order in which restoration is always possible, Wordsworth casts it back into the alienating process of temporality." (p.45). Realising the implications of this for what I have throughout called "natural piety" and wishing to link this remark with subsequent discussions of the Immortality Ode and the Simplon-Pass passage, Ruggiero writes that Wordsworth will come to "sense the tension between imagination and reality and validate his withdrawal in terms of poetic survival ... The "bodily eye" - "the most despotic of our senses" - is rejected for the "inward eye" and the visionary perspective. But the withdrawal from nature ... is also a movement inward, a recognition of the autonomy of the imagination ..." (p.45-6). While Ruggiero is perfectly correct to say, in her treatment of the Immortality Ode, that Wordsworth is concerned with memory's relation to

eternity, she does not realise that the imagination seeking participation in the divine is not "autonomous" in the same sense as an imagination which constitutes objects as modifications of self. In this latter case the "autonomy" concerned can be interpreted far more simply in a purely secular sense, as a tendency towards solipsism.

This confusion results, I would suggest, from too simplistic an understanding of the concept "subject - object dialectic". This dialectic is usually used in the secondary literature to refer to the interchange of self and world typical of so much Romantic poetry, in which the mind half-creates and half-perceives - see the relevant lines of Tintern Abbey. The notion is thus used within a secular framework. The relative priority given to the subjective or objective pole of this dialectic will depend on one's views concerning the extent to which mind plays a constitutive role in experience. Therefore one can readily speak of the tension implicit in the syntax and diction of the invocation implying a subject - object dialectic. It is also possible - see p.98-102 of Chapter 3 Section A - to speak of "natural piety" as a doctrine attempting to stabilize a subject/object dialectic by avoiding the opposite dangers of solipsism and becoming "intoxicate/with present objects." This is why I tend to use the term subject-object dialectic to refer to the interchange of self and world celebrated in "natural piety" on the one hand, and the tension between the simultaneous belief in the mind-dependence of perception and the independent existence of the world on the other. The spectre of solipsism haunting "natural piety's" attempt to stabilise this dialectic may result, as noted, in an attempt to ground experience solely in the constitutive powers of mind. It seems difficult to apply the same concepts to characterize an imagination seeking participation in the divine for such an imagination is not in any obvious sense "constitutive", does not simply constitute objects as modifications of self - see Section B of Chapter 3, p.129 foll. Indeed, as Coleridge pointed out - see Section D of Chapter 2 - an imagination of the kind Ruggiero deals with on p.45-6 implies, if not a theology of sorts, a decidedly Platonistic conception of reality. Accordingly, I tend not to use the term subject-object dialectic in my discussions of the Simplon-Pass passage and the Immortality Ode. This perhaps also shows the advantages of analysing divergent conceptions of mind, world and the relations between them in Wordsworth's work in terms of the precariousness of the insights of "natural piety" and the epiphanies purporting to underwrite them.

Interestingly, again through failure to differentiate the various tendencies of Wordsworth's poetry precisely enough from one another, Armstrong's discussion of the Simplon-Pass passage makes the opposite mistake - see note 54.

33a Ruggiero, op.cit., p.66.

34. Langbaum, op.cit., p.40.

35. Cassirer, E. The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms Volume 3: The Phenomenology of Knowledge. Trans. R. Mannheim: New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955, p.3.

36. For a magnificent argument that it cannot, see Ibid., p.1-41.

37. See relevant notes to Chapter 1 for bibliographical details.

38. Langbaum, op.cit., p.17.

Actually, I am using Langbaum's words for my own purposes here. He speaks of a projective act of consciousness in suggesting the flavour of that conception of experience I have consistently called "natural piety". The tendency towards solipsism has been examined in the work by Armstrong already cited. For further treatments see Lentricchia, F. After the New Criticism, 1980, p.52-60, De Man, P. Blindness and Insight, 1971, repr.1983, p.187-98, Rajan, T. Dark Interpreter: The Discourse of Romanticism 1980, p.13-26; 204-66, Bostetter, E. The Romantic Ventriloquists: Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, Byron 1963, Belsey, C. Critical Practice, 1980, p.118-24, Culler, J. The Pursuit of Signs, 1980, p.138-48, Nuttall, A.D. A Common Sky: A study of Solipsism in Literature and Philosophy, 1974. See especially p.13-44; 129-47 and finally, Hazlitt's remarkable review of The Excursion, part of which is reprinted in Ed. G. McMaster. Wordsworth: Penguin Critical Anthologies Series 1972, p.114-20 as well as his treatment of Wordsworth in The Spirit of the Age.

39. Nuttall, A.D. A Common Sky: A Study of Solipsism in Literature and Philosophy. London: Chatto & Windus, 1974.

40. Clarke, op.cit., p.8.

41. Clarke, op.cit., p.8.

42. Clarke, op.cit., p.10.

43. Clarke, op.cit., p.71.

44. Abrams, M.H. Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature. London: Oxford University Press, 1971, p.75. See also Clarke, op.cit., p.71 and Armstrong, op.cit., p.30-2.

45. De Man, P. Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism. New York: Oxford University Press, 1971. repr. Methuen, 1983, p.196.

    Speaking of the tendency, noted by Clarke and others, of the Romantics to use words like "affinity" and "sympathy" in descriptions of nature, words usually used to characterize human emotions, De Man notes that "the new terminology indicates a gliding away from the formal problem of a congruence between the two poles (he is speaking of the subject/object dialectic) to that of the ontological priority of the one over the other. For terms such as "affinity" or "sympathy" apply to the relationships between subjects rather than to relationships between a subject and an object. The relationship with nature has been superseded by an intersubjective, interpersonal relationship that, in the last analysis, is a relationship of the subject toward itself." (p.195-6).

46. Nuttall, op.cit., p.141.

47. Ed. Harvey, W.J. & Gravil, R. op.cit.,p.182.

48. Sherry, C. Wordsworth's Poetry of the Imagination. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980, p.41.

49. Taylor, op. cit., p. 45.

50 Kolakowski, L. Bergson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985, p. 104.

51. Langbaum, op.cit., p.37.

51a Ruggiero, op.cit., p.75-6.

51b Ruggiero, op.cit., p.75-6 (mainly p.75). As Ruggiero says, poetic creation is conceived of in this passage as an epiphanic manifestation of "being", of "that which is".

52. Hirsch, op.cit., p.105.

53. Armstrong, op.cit.,p.65.

54. Armstrong, op.cit., p.65-6.

Strangely, Armstrong's frequently perceptive reading seems on the verge of attributing mind and imagination "autonomy" in this passage, but finally does not. Writing on this passage she concludes that there "is a mystery in words, an interpretable 'darkness' which may even be the darkness of consciousness, but which Wordsworth leaves unpenetrated. To resolve the opposition between the two ways of seeing the world would be, finally, too dangerous. The dangers of deciding for one syntax rather than another, for one account of the world rather than another, are the subject of this chapter". (p.67-8). I have two objections to this. The first is that natural objects considered purely as natural objects, become "soulless images" in the last two lines of this extract. They owe their radiance to the intermittent flashes of a "light divine" that can surely, as Ruggiero suggests - see note 33 - be seen only by an imagination hostile to the merely "bodily eye". Imagination has become "autonomous" in the problematical sense considered in Chapter 3, Section B p.124 foll.

My second objection can only be understood by contextualising Armstrong's reference to a "dual syntax" in Wordsworth's work. For Armstrong Wordsworth's "double syntax" (p.64) can simultaneously "claim both the reflexive, self-creating powers of mind which make the world categories of itself, and a reciprocal relationship in which the self is an object for the landscape as much as the world is an object for the self". (p.64). The "double-syntax", whose workings she then claims to analyse in the passage under examination is "double" because it has inscribed within it the tensions uncovered in the syntax of the Invocation - see Chapter 3 Section A p.76-8. This tension is a tension between "natural piety" and mind conceived of as "Lord and master of outward sense". However - see note 33 - I have argued throughout that the solipsistic autonomy of mind in question here is different from the opposition to the natural world of an imagination seeking participation in the divine, however construed. Even, then, had Armstrong insisted unequivocally on the mind's assumption of "autonomy" in this passage, she would not have done so in the relevant sense. Through failing to differentiate between the conceptions of mind, experience and the world implicit in celebrations of mind and imagination as "Lord and master of outward

sense" on the one hand, and the "unfathered vapour" on the other, Ruggiero and Armstrong make opposite mistakes for the same fundamental reason.

55. See De Man's seminal essay Intentional Structure of the Romantic Image in Ed Abrams, op.cit., p.144.

56. I owe this vital point largely to my supervisor, Professor A.G. Woodward.

57. Kolakowski, L. Main Currents of Marxism: Vol 1, The Founders. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978, p.17.

58. Ibid., p.13.

59. Ibid., p.14.

60. Ibid., p.15.

61. Ibid., p.15-16.

62. Ed. Harvey, W.J. & Gravil, R., p.175-93.

63. See Hartmann's famous A Poet's Progress: Wordsworth and the Via Naturaliter Negativa, reprinted in Ed. Harvey, W.J. & Gravil, R., op.cit.,p.175.

64. Hartmann in Ed. Harvey, W.J. & Gravil, R., op.cit., p.175-93.

65. Hartmann in Ed. Harvey, W.J. & Gravil, R. op.cit., p. 187.

66. Hartmann in Ed. Harvey, W.J. & Gravil, R., op.cit.,p.190.

67. Ruggiero, op.cit.,p.76.

68. It seems to me that this point is too little emphasised. Hartmann's article makes some of the relevant points, but many critics still take Wordsworth's affective rhetoric entirely on its own terms and read the passage as emblematic of an achieved harmony of opposites. The point is made however in Ruggiero, op.cit., p.79 foll.

69. Hartmann in Ed. Harvey, W.J. & Gravil, R., op.cit., p.192.

70. Armstrong, op.cit., p.84.

71. Armstrong, op.cit., p.84. See also De Man, P. in Ed. Abrams, op.cit.,p.146-2.

72. This ambiguity is picked up by Armstrong, op.cit.,p.84-5. However, she reads the passage as a particularly memorable instance of the "two syntaxes" (p.83) I spoke of in note 54, "reflexive and reciprocal, constituting the world as mind and challenging that assertion, disputing and refuting one another..." (p.87-8). This enables Wordsworth, in Armstrong's opinion, to acknowledge the strengths of idealist language and its weakness" (p.88). The distinctions conflated by reading this passage in terms of an "idealism" in this sense have been spelt out at length in notes 33 and 54, as well as p.72-6;104 foll & 129 foll. of the dissertation itself.

73. Abrams, op.cit.,p.107.

74. Hartmann in Ed.Harvey, W.J. & Gravil, R. op.cit., p.193. See also Ruggiero, op.cit., p.81.

75. Ferguson, F. Language as Counter-Spirit. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977, p.98.

76. Ibid.,p.99-102.

77. Ibid.,p.101.

78. Ibid., p.109.

79. Ibid., p.109.

80. Ibid., p.109-100.

81. Trilling, L. The Immortality Ode in The Liberal Imagination: Essays on Literature and Society. Macmillan, 1948, repr. Peregrine Books, 1970, p.139-40.

An insistence on this point is indeed vital to any understanding of the Immortality Ode. However, in a manner to be outlined later, I disagree with Trilling's interpretation of the fled "glory", the "visionary gleam" and the "imperial palace" - see note 89.

82. Hirsch, op.cit.,p.150-1.

83. Langbaum, op.cit.,p.36.

84. Hirsch, op.cit.,p.157.

Although Hirsch makes a good point, I think he does so for entirely the wrong reasons. Hirsch writes that "Just as Wordsworth has qualified his thought of grief by calling attention to nature's constant glory, he has

also qualified his thought of joy in nature by pointing to the difference between the child's instinctive gaiety with his own joy which demands the poet's sympathetic imagination". (p.157). It seems impossible to me to endorse any of Hirsch's assertions. I tried to show in detail in my analysis of stanza 3 that the vicarious nature of the speaker's relation to the joy around him differentiated this verse decisively from superficially comparable passages in The Prelude where Imagination indeed performs "its appointed job which is sympathetically to correlate and fuse the external and internal". (p.156) Hirsch is at pains to show the workings of counter-movements operating throughout the Ode to minimise the difference between the speaker's thoughts of grief and joy, to show that "glory is both lost and not lost", (p.152) to suggest that "in a deeper sense nothing has changed". (p.154) Hirsch is of course concerned to show that the Ode exemplifies the "structure of experience" common to Wordsworth and Schelling. Let us examine the first part of the quotation cited initially. The evidence Hirsch cites for his contention that the "two glories are after all" (p.154) is revealing: "The rainbow still comes and goes .... the rose still blooms, and the sun rises every morning. These common sights never change; they are available in every period of a man's life" (p.154-5). This is indeed so, but it is precisely the sameness of the physical landscape which heightens an awareness of the disjunction between the "glories" accessible to sense-perception and the "visionary gleam". Hirsch's reading is fatally flawed by his insistence on finding unity of perspective in the poem he examines. These distortions are, I think, indirect evidence for the different kind of reading of the Immortality Ode I prefer. Nonetheless, the main reason for this note, as for a similar note in Chapter 1 is methodological; it is to emphasise that quotations selected for citation are not necessarily used in ways their authors would approve of. In this instance I used Hirsch's remark because it seemed to contain valid implications for an understanding of the Ode, implications I tried to develop in my analysis of stanza 3, which Hirsch's preferred methods in principle prevented him from exploring.

85. Wordsworth, W. The Poetical Works, 5 Vols. Ed. Darbishire, H. & De Selincourt, E. Oxford: 1940-49, Vol. 4.

86. Trilling, op.cit., p.156.

87. Hirsch, op.cit.,p.156.

88. Sherry, op.cit.,p.37.

89. Trilling., op.cit.,p.156.

While agreeing that the "imperial qualities" (p.156) cannot readily exist on earth, I don't agree with any other aspect of Trilling's, to my mind, altogether too naturalistic interpretation of the "visionary gleam". Trilling, after having earlier on compared the existence of the child of the Ode immediately after birth to a famous passage in Bk.2 of The Prelude speaking of the "Blest Babe" along whose "infant veins are interfused/The gravitation and the filial bond/Of Nature that connect him with the world" (p.151-2), adds that "The child hands on to the hampered adult the imperial nature, the 'primal sympathy/Which having been must ever be'." (p.156) This equation stems from a belief that "The Prelude says in naturalistic language what stanza V of the Ode expresses by a theistical metaphor". (p.152) It goes without saying that I do not believe the "visionary gleam" can be naturalized in this manner. This is yet another instance where I have used a quotation in ways its author might not have approved of. Again, as with Hirsch, I think Trilling's comment to be true, but not for his reasons.

90. Hirsch, op.cit.,p.168.

While fully agreeing with Hirsch that this prepares for the unexpected "O Joy" opening stanza 9 by suggesting that the child's immediate and therefore uncomprehending participation in the divine needs to be retrieved for consciousness, I do not believe the consolatory close of the Ode is convincing. In terms of the oppositions structuring the Immortality Ode, the child must surely remain the "best philosopher".

91. Hirsch, op.cit.,p.170-3.

92. Hirsch, op.cit.,p.172.

93. Hirsch, op.cit.,p.171.

94. Hirsch, op.cit.,p.171.

95. Langbaum, R. The Evolution of Soul in Wordsworth's Poetry in The Modern Spirit: Essays on the Continuity of Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Literature. New York: Oxford University Press, 1971, p.22.

96. Sherry, op.cit.,p.5; 6.

97. Hirsch, op.cit.,p.170-1.

98. Sherry, op.cit.,p.6.

99. Sherry, op.cit.,p.6-10; But see whole of Chapter 1, p.1-31).

100 Sherry, op.cit.,p.62.

101 Ed. Abrams, M.H., op.cit., p.186.

## EPILOGUE : FOOTNOTES

1. Rajan, T. Dark Interpreter: The Discourse of Romanticism. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980,p.15

   Similar claims would be made in a different manner by Paul De Man. See The Rhetoric of Temporality in Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism. New York: Oxford University Press, 1971 *repr. 1983, p.187-228.*

2. Lentricchia, F. After the New Criticism. Athlone Press, 1980, p.32; 53 foll.

3. Ruggiero, H. The Limits of Imagination: Wordsworth, Yeats & Stevens. Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1976, p.116.

4. Ibid., p.27 & 165.

5. Ibid., p.165.

   The significance of this poem has, however, been recognized by all Wallace Stevens' more important commentators.

6. Ibid., p.159.

   Ruggiero makes the point in a different way, but is correct to stress that the image's mode of being differs radically from that of the object. Her analysis of the implications of this for the poetry is also both thorough and acute.

7. Ibid., p.159.

8. Ibid., p.148-9.

9. Lentricchia, op.cit., p.34.

10. Lentricchia, op.cit., p.34.

11. Lentricchia, op.cit., p.33.

11a Lentricchia, op.cit., p.34.

12. Ruggiero, op.cit., p.148-9.

13. Lentricchia, op.cit., p.36; 38 foll.

14. Lentricchia, op.cit., p.38.

15. Lentricchia, op.cit., p.35-6.

16. Lentricchia, F. Robert Frost: Modern Poetics and the Landscapes of Self. Durham: Duke University Press, 1975, p.101-3

17. See Ibid., 101-119.

18. Ibid., p.102.

19. Ibid., p.103.

    This diminished "metaphysical reverberation" is, as Lentricchia and many others have pointed out, one reason for the ironical self-consciously "fictive" nature of the work of a writer like Stevens. This is yet another example of the continuities and differences between Romanticism and Modernism. It would be no exaggeration to say that a small industry has grown around the exploration of these questions, including many of the more frequently cited bibliographical sources in my footnotes. It will be obvious from this dissertation that I believe the continuities between nineteenth and twentieth century literature and philosophy to be deeper than the disjunctions. To that extent I disagree with Lentricchia. A work dealing with these matters explicitly in relation to Wordsworth is Rheder, R. Wordsworth and the Beginnings of Modern Poetry. London: 1981. Both Abrams' Natural Supernaturalism and Langbaum's Poetry of Experience, it goes without saying give impressive testimony to the depth of the cultural upheaval that took place in European intellectual life in the latter part of the eighteenth century. The ocean of literature is such that piecemeal naming of titles serves even less purpose than normal. I will therefore conclude by saying that Taylor's book on Hegel is one of the most distinguished attempts I know to demonstrate these continuities in politics and philosophy. The figure of Hegel is particularly suited to demonstrating the point with which this chapter opened, that a thinker's concerns can still so massively present generations after his solutions are dead.

20. For what it is worth, I think it is. Although there is no question of a "fellowship of essence" between world and self being established, Stevens' desire to stabilize the conflict of the subject/object dialectic through finding a tune on the "blue guitar" that would leave things as they are is an expression of the same hope animating Schiller's letters.

21. Trilling, L. Prefaces to the Experience of Literature. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967, repr. Uniform Edition, 1981, p.273

## APPENDIX : FOOTNOTES

1. Abrams, M.H. Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971, p.276.

2. Bate, W.J. Coleridge. New York: Macmillan, 1968, p.110.

3. Again too many readers take Coleridge on his own terms entirely. The degree to which hope and external circumstance in the past were not calibrated with one another makes "Joy", as in stanza 3, a product of the "fountains within". The debate about how "affirmative" the end of the poem may be said to be, well summarised by Hill in Hill, J.S. A Coleridge Companion. London: Macmillan, 1983, p.204-5, overlooks a deeper conflict in the poem between two implicitly different conceptions of "Joy" and mind. This is certainly true of those accounts I have read, namely by Abrams, Bate, House and Walsh.

4. De Man has suggested, provocatively I think, that many readers of Wordsworth and Coleridge do this by taking the affective rhetoric of "natural piety" on its own terms. He raises the point, as I understand it, with reference to influential readings of Romanticism by Abrams, Wassermann and Wimsatt. See De Man, P. Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism. New York: Oxford University Press, 1971. repr. 1983, p.187-98.

5. Hill, S.J. A Coleridge Companion. London: Macmillan, 1983, p.201.

6. Rajan, T. Dark Interpreter: The Discourse of Romanticism. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980, p.251.

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Many books which a student of Wordsworth and Coleridge may well wish to consult eg. Trilling's The Liberal Imagination or Bloom's The Visionary Company are concerned only in part, or perhaps even deal only indirectly with the poets concerned. Such books have been placed in the section devoted to general studies. The works cited in the bibliographical sections devoted to Wordsworth and Coleridge respectively deal specifically with the poet concerned.

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