

SEVERANCE AND RE-INTEGRATION: SYNCRETIC
NEOPLATONISM AND THE GENESIS OF "KUBLA KHAN"

by

PETER JAMES CLARK
B.A., University of Victoria, 1986

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT

OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department

of

English

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

Supervisor: Dr. G. Kim Blank

Departmental Member: Dr. Lionel Adey

Outside Member: Dr. Angelika F. Arend

External Examiner: Dr. Gordon S. Shrimpton

© Copyright by Peter James Clark, 1989

University of Victoria

All rights reserved. This thesis may not be reproduced
in whole or in part, by mimeograph or other means,
without the permission of the author.

PR4480

K 83 C 56

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
FACULTY OF EDUCATION

DATE _____

ii

Supervisor: Dr. G. Kim Blank

Abstract

As a result of his philosophical interests and his temperament, Coleridge cultivated a system of thought which M.H. Abrams has defined as "circular emanationism." The idea is a central one in the writings of various Neoplatonists such as Plotinus, Proclus, Ficino, Pico and Boehme. The schema was often portrayed allegorically or parabolically as a journey whose destination was its source re-discovered: Odysseus ultimately returns to his "fatherland" after long and arduous peregrinations (Plotinus), the Christian soul is drawn back to its beloved from whence it came by its love of harmony and antipathy to strife (Ficino, Pico and others). What was dis-integrated re-wins its native integrity.

This circular metaphysical schema was enormously attractive to Coleridge and he employed it in imaginative ways in both his poetry and prose. In particular, it was an important element in the development of the Coleridgean theory of imagination and it provided the conceptual underpinnings of both the Rime of the Ancient Mariner and "Kubla Khan." Most importantly, this influence had its effect long before that of the German Romanticists on Coleridge's philosophical and spiritual orientation.

The purpose of this paper, then, is to determine the extent and kind of this Neoplatonic influence. This is achieved by examining Coleridge's own intellectual goals and by studying the nature of those writings which he believed held the key to realizing them. It

is hoped that a clearer understanding of this aspect of Coleridge's thought will help to dispel the idea that his philosophy and poetry can be fully appreciated without serious consideration being given to his theological orientation.

Supervisor: Dr. G. Kim Blank

Departmental Member: Dr. Lionel Adey

Outside Member: Dr. Angelika F. Arend

External Examiner: Dr. Gordon S. Shrimpton

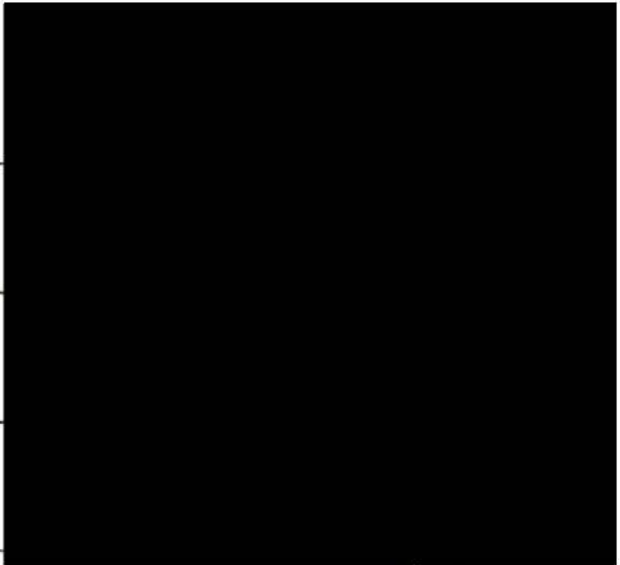


Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	i
Introduction.....	1
Chapter One: No Twilight Within the Courts of the Sun.....	9
Chapter Two: The Hierophant and a Vanishing Metaphysician.....	30
Chapter Three: The Road to Integration.....	35
Chapter Four: Thaumaturgic Platonists.....	41
Chapter Five: The Flight of Imagination.....	63
Chapter Six: The Conjurer's Art.....	76
Chapter Seven: The Garden Transfigured.....	86
Notes:.....	109
Works Cited.....	117
Appendix I: The Problematic Preface.....	124

Introduction

The reputation of Samuel Taylor Coleridge as a major English poet rests almost solely on a handful of poems, the most popular of which were mainly composed during the author's twenty-sixth year. The poems, of course, are The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, "Kubla Khan" and Christabel. I.A. Richards has reminded us that "thousands know these for each reader who can name another three of his poems...they have held their place through a century despite violent oscillations in taste" (Portable Coleridge 33). Each of these pre-eminent compositions deals with the supernatural in some way. And only the Mariner is a completed work according to both author and commentators.

Moreover, during this same period, Coleridge was busy composing in a very different, though no less innovative genre: the conversation poem. Among these we may count masterpieces such as "The Eolian Harp," "Frost at Midnight" and "This Lime Tree Bower My Prison." Although these are superficially very different kinds of poems, it will be found that they have much in common with the supernatural works. But the haunting beauty of the latter has cast its spell most potently in the popular imagination, and repeated attempts to draw attention to the eloquence and richness of the conversation poems has not broken that spell. With the sole exception of "The Eolian Harp," both groups of poems were produced between 1797 and 1798.

Coleridge was a thinker of exceptional ability in an age which produced genius as various as that of Goethe, Beethoven, Hegel, Gainsborough, Blake and the various followers of Jean Jacques Rousseau. To find a term which could embrace all of these is difficult at best. The term chosen has been "Romanticism." It is conveniently used, but stubbornly resists a single definition. Nevertheless, if we consider the dramatis personae we find a number of recurring themes. Among these are a "return to nature" sentiment; a re-invention of Medievalism and romance; a new respect for what we might call the "irrational" (perhaps more appropriately thought of as the "imaginative" or "intuitional"); a fascination with the individual; a passion for democratic principles and a strong propensity for introspection and idealism. Perhaps Coleridge, more than any of the Romantics, demonstrated active interest, and made significant contributions, in all these facets of Romanticism. He may be considered as exemplary of the movement.

It is as poet that Coleridge is chiefly remembered. And it is through his poetry that he was able to integrate his many intellectual interests. But when we consider the short duration of his life as a major poet--and it is unlikely that he would have earned that distinction if he had not written the poems of 1797-8--we are at a loss to fully explain how it is that such capacious genius could spend itself in so short a time. We would like to know what it was that allowed the poetic flourish in the first

place, and what it was that caused its rapid decline after 1798. For by 25 March 1801, he was so painfully aware of his own predicament that he could write in a letter to his friend, William Godwin, that "The poet is dead in me--my imagination (or rather the somewhat that had been imaginative) lies like Cold Snuff on the circle Rim of a Brass Candle-Stick, without even a stink of Tallow to remind you that it was once cloathed & mitred with Flame"¹ (Letters 11: 714). It is true, of course, that Coleridge was chronically melodramatic about his own failings. And we cannot ignore the poetic nature of his very denouncement. But most readers would agree that his finest, or at least his most memorable, poetry had been composed long before 1801.

I

No single study could reasonably hope to fully explain the creation of great poetry. But there are a number of elements at play during the period in question which, if considered carefully, can point the way to a more profound and satisfying experience of the poetry. There is, of course, the new friendship with William and Dorothy Wordsworth, the relatively good health Coleridge briefly enjoyed and the inspiring landscape of the Lake District. A close examination of the poetry itself, however, offers its own clues. This paper will examine what I believe to be one major element

at the root of Coleridge's poetic success during the period immediately prior to 1798--namely the considerable influence of Renaissance Neoplatonic writers on his formulation of a poetically relevant metaphysic which would express itself in both his poetry and prose.

It is tempting to undertake such a project from the point of view of a source study. But I am more interested in the way that Coleridge integrated his various readings than in constructing yet another list of his intellectual debts. To this end I have chosen to focus on selected works of Renaissance Neoplatonists, which the poet is known to have read or shown interest in during the period in question, and to examine the nature of the influence that these texts had on Coleridge as poet. For it is my contention that Coleridge's successful integration of metaphysical ideas with the imaginative observation and portrayal of natural phenomena was most subtle and effective during this period. We find him adopting a vitalistic philosophy--which had become quaint in the estimation of Enlightenment thinkers--and utilizing its precepts in the composition of poems which still enchant and confound their readers. This we may call his synthetic mode. Nowhere, I believe, is he more successful in this than in his composition of "Kubla Khan." For this reason, it has been selected as the poetical focal point of the study. We begin, however, with a study of the Ancient Mariner since its protagonist may be considered as an important symbol of Coleridge's poetic quest.

II

It is important to understand the significance of this Renaissance influence from the point of view of the Romantics themselves. So before it comes back to haunt us, it also is necessary to come to terms with the so-called problem of Coleridge's originality. He was evidently plagued by those who questioned it in his own lifetime. In the preface to Christabel he writes: "there is amongst us a set of critics, who seem to hold, that every possible thought and image is traditional; who have no notion that there are such things as fountains in the world, small as well as great; and who would therefore charitably derive every rill they behold flowing, from a perforation made in some other man's tank" (Works 66).² A.J. Harding states that "Coleridge has been credited with a great deal that is not his own, sometimes because of his own deceitfulness, sometimes because of the partiality of critics, and as a result our picture of the history of European thought at this period must undergo a radical change" (Harding 1974 4). The statement, while it contains truth, is misleading. The ideas contained and employed in the Coleridge canon cannot be "original" in the usual sense of that word. (There is, after all, nothing new under the sun.) Surely the chief criterion of Coleridge's contribution will be the extent to which he employed them in his own particular ways, whether in his poetry or in the formulation of his theory of imagination. We will want to know the manner in which he understood

his various borrowings--especially, in this case, his Platonic borrowings--and the effect they had on his overall conception of reality. We will want to consider carefully the difference between a fountain and a tank.

Finally, we will want to understand the implications of his decision to re-introduce to early nineteenth-century England a system of thought which was in clear contradiction to the prevailing philosophies of his immediate predecessors. Like most innovators, Coleridge is an imaginative traditionalist. That is to say, he read traditional works with the imaginative and intuitive eye of a poet, and by so doing, he created something with an unmistakable pedigree, which is nevertheless "new" and richly suggestive in its altered guise. If Coleridge is most successful at this synthesis in his poetry, it is in his prose that he explores the source of that synthesis. He tirelessly and candidly wrestles with the problem of articulating what is ultimately ineffable and offers, in the process, a strong vindication of the poetic act which employs theological and philosophical language in the manner of a poet.

It is important, therefore, to come to terms with his own notions of originality. In doing so we not only extricate him from the worn-out charge of plagiarism, but shed light on the spirit and purpose of his borrowings to understand more fully the significance of his theory of the imagination and the importance of his

Platonic orientation in general when we approach his poetry; or, in his own words,

To find no contradiction in the union of old and new;
 to contemplate the Ancient of days and all his works
 with feelings as fresh, as if all had then sprang forth at
 the first creative fiat; characterizes the mind
 that feels the riddle of the world, and may help
 to unravel it. To carry on the feeling of childhood
 into the powers of manhood; to combine the child's
 sense of wonder and novelty with the appearances, which
 every day for perhaps forty years had rendered familiar;

With sun and moon and stars throughout the year,
 And man and woman;

this is the character and privilege of genius, and one of
 the marks which distinguishes genius from talents

(Biographia 202).

Coleridge is most interested in vital and imaginative responses to existing phenomena--whether they be "natural" or literary--to satisfy the drive to discover the ultimate source of their unity.

With such a goal in mind, it is hardly surprising that he was drawn

to the study of metaphysics as no other English poet has been. The questions which occupied his mind throughout his life could not have been answered without reference to a vast reserve of metaphysical thinkers. Take, for example, the concerns illustrated in his headnote to the Ancient Mariner: "I can easily believe that there are more invisible creatures in the universe than visible ones. But who will tell me what family each belongs to, what their ranks and relationships are, and what their distinguishing characteristics may be? What do they do? Where do they live" (Works 46). This preference for contemplation of the relationship of the tangible to the ethereal--which is, after all the business of metaphysics--was to determine a path of enquiry for Coleridge which would lead him to those who had asked the same questions.

Metaphysics, for Coleridge, are essentially exercises in Neoplatonism, and I hope to demonstrate that the corpus of such writings, very much on his mind in the 1790s, had a profound and demonstrable effect on his development as a poet. It became, as it were, the staff and scaffold which supported an often precarious organic world view, and we need to understand it in order to gain intelligent access to his writings. In so doing, we will be attempting to re-construct Coleridge's notions of the inherent relationship of philosophical ideas to their poetic expression. He recognized, for example, that "it would employ a life" to explain the simple idea that "extremes meet" (Friend 11: 74), but the poem "Kubla Khan," by its very structure, embodies it. Poetic language and structure are indispensable elements in the conveyance of Coleridge's vision.

Chapter One: No Twilight Within the Courts of the Sun

John Beer has shown in Coleridge the Visionary that the Nether Stowey period is one in which Coleridge strove increasingly for spiritual illumination as he turned away from the more journalistic concerns of earlier years. Beer points to events of the French Revolution as partial cause for this shift in sensibility: like many of his contemporaries, Coleridge was horrified at the bloody outcome of a dream of social justice. It was enough to turn his mind inward to explore other dimensions of thought in an attempt to transcend the ugliness of late eighteenth-century political reality. As was common with Coleridge, he generalized--that is, sought the universal in the particular: certainly his comments on the false freedom brought about by violent revolution are intended as a statement of universal principles. His France: An Ode is a remarkable document, full of evidence of an increasingly conservative and pessimistic position on the possibility of freedom brought about by political means. He warns that

The Sensual and the Dark rebel in vain,
 Slaves by their own compulsion! In mad game
 They burst their manacles and wear the name

Of Freedom, graven on a heavier chain!

O Liberty! with profitless endeavour

Have I pursued thee, many a weary hour;

But thou nor swell'st the victor's strain, nor ever

Didst breathe thy soul in forms of human power

(ll. 185-92).

Such unqualified mistrust of political endeavour, coupled with a more general sense of world-weariness, are pronounced at this time. And one is tempted to consider this stanza as Coleridge's proclamation of a new and personal manifesto. This contempt for seekers of a purely political liberation reminds one of W.B. Yeats' "The Second Coming." Both Yeats and Coleridge began their careers as politically active idealists, both were fascinated by religion, superstition, and the occult, and both would eventually understand political failure in metaphysical terms. Both poets express anxiety about a social phenomenon which psychoanalysts have prepared us to call a rebellion of the collective id or shadow, a passionate rebellion of the unilluminated self against the order which attempts to hold it in check. Coleridge saw this in theological terms. He understood the brutal excesses of the revolution as a kind of spiritual revolt; a following of dark and sensuous forces, of false gods if you will, to a practically inevitable apocalyptic conclusion. Like Yeats, he understood the consequences of the action as "mere

anarchy," a political and spiritual state in which

The blood dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
 The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
 The best lack all conviction, while the worst
 Are full of passionate intensity (Yeats 99-100).

Such responses to catastrophes so great as the French Revolution are expected, and never more so than in the minds of young idealists.

The excesses of the revolution caused Coleridge to vigorously question notions of secular progress and to contemplate the idea of fallenness and humanity's need for spiritual, rather than political, regeneration. The composition of The Rime of the Ancient Mariner is framed by strong denunciations of political revolution and strong endorsements of the inner life. In July 1797 he explained to J.P. Estlin that he was "wearied with politics, even to soreness.--I never knew a passion for politics exist for a long time without swallowing up, or absolutely excluding, a passion for Religion" (Letters 1: 338). Moreover, in a letter to his parson brother George (March, 1798), he announced that "Governments are more the effect than the cause of that which we are" and that he had "snapped [his] squeaking baby-trumpet of Sedition." He continues:

I have for some time past withdrawn myself almost totally from the consideration of immediate causes, which are infinitely complex & uncertain, to muse on fundamental & general causes--the 'causae causarum.'--I devote myself to such works as encroach not on the anti-social passions --in poetry, to elevate the imagination & set the affections in right tune by the beauty of the inanimate impregnated, as with a living soul, by the presence of Life--in prose, to the seeking with patience & a slow, very slow mind 'Quid sumus, et quidnam [sic] victuri gignimur[']--What our faculties are & what they are capable of becoming (Letters 1: 238).

Coleridge believed that "we get the governments our frailty, and our Original Sin, produce and deserve; all leaders are as bad as they dare to be" (Willey 71). We find the poet reading and reflecting upon chiefly metaphysical works at this time in an attempt to deepen his sense of a more permanent and meaningful ethic. This, then, is the intellectual climate which produced the Ancient Mariner and "Kubla Khan."

I

The Mariner was the first of what has come to be known as

Coleridge's supernatural poems. It was composed in the Autumn of 1797 and published in the Lyrical Ballads (1798) which was originally conceived by Wordsworth and Coleridge, while on a walking tour in November 1797, as a means of obtaining much needed funds. It was to be a joint venture, but it soon became clear that Coleridge needed little assistance in this genre. The two poets saw that their relationship was to be complementary rather than co-operative, and it was finally agreed that Coleridge's contribution to the Ballads

should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic; yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith. Mr. Wordsworth, on the other hand, was to propose to himself as his object, to give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us...

(Biographia 314).

This illustrates the extent of Coleridge's shift in poetic sensibility at this time. He had long been fascinated by mystery and the power of

imagination, but now we find him consciously attempting to explore, with new vigour, the poetic portrayal of the unseen. In doing so, he found the voice which has assured him a place among the greatest of poets.

II

The general theme of the Mariner, most will concede, is the "mystery of human life and conscience" (W.J. Bate 55). But it has proved an exceedingly difficult task to articulate the precise message of the narrative. The ballad unfolds like images in a dream, and its hypnotic quality is one of Coleridge's most celebrated poetic achievements. It therefore conforms, rather too well some may argue, to Coleridge's ideal of a delightful "metaphysical" poem: one which "gives most pleasure when only generally and not perfectly understood" (Perkins 519). It is true that a detailed reading of the Mariner may cause us to doubt the existence of any surmisable meaning in the poem at all, and the extraordinary range of critical interpretations since Robert Penn Warren's essay has sometimes tended to obscure, rather than illuminate, the spirit of the work. Its details--like the individual brush strokes of an impressionist painting--may be enjoyed when the work is closely observed, but the larger picture only becomes intelligible as we stand back to observe the work as a whole. In the case of the Mariner, this greater vision is provided by reference to a metaphysical system from which it derives its meaning. Therefore,

it is important to determine the general structure and theme of Coleridge's poem before the interconnectedness of its various elements can be discerned.

Coleridge chose to provide a plot synopsis of the ballad in the Argument of the 1798 edition:

How a Ship having passed the Line was driven by Storms to the cold Country towards the South Pole; and how from thence she made her course to the Tropical latitude of the Great Pacific Ocean; and of the strange things that befell; and in what manner the Ancyent Marinere came back to his own Country.

But it soon becomes obvious that this is no ordinary ocean voyage.

Coleridge's fascination with the memoirs of old navigators such as Frederick Martens, Thomas James, John Harris, Commodore Phipps and others, has become well-known. Lowes has shown how the poet mined these works for information on places he had not visited in order to construct the supernatural seascape of the Mariner. Often, these memoirs are themselves poetic and Coleridge needed only to alter the language in subtle ways to produce the desired effects. Consider, for example, this fragment from David Crantz in which he is describing events in an ice field: "There was a frightful rumbling, and cracking of the ice, as if many cannons had been fired at once, and then ensued a violent noise, like the roaring of a cascade" (Hill 148). This is transposed by Coleridge to "It cracked and growled, and roared and

howled,/ Like noises in a swound" (l. 60-61). The most significant change in Coleridge's version is its emphasis on animal sounds, rather than the military and geographic lexis of Crantz. The effect is no less visual, but in Coleridge's version there is a stronger sense of presence--of purposeful and angry reaction to the intrusion by the sailors in this "land of fearful sounds where no living thing was to be seen" (AM Gloss 48). By the poet's employment of techniques such as this, the reader is drawn into a realm beyond the natural one of Coleridge's immediate source to another, more animate, more spiritualized universe in which seemingly physical events take on a metaphysical significance. ³ Here we find echoes, no doubt conscious ones, of a tradition much older and of greater importance to the larger scheme of the Mariner. The mariner is surely born of the potent influence on Coleridge's imagination of the great metaphorical voyages in Homer's Odyssey, Virgil's Aeneid and perhaps especially Dante's Divina Commedia--"all of them using a physical voyage as structural scaffolding for spiritual exploration" (Hill 151). More specifically, he is born of Coleridge's love of Plotinus and later Neoplatonists. Interestingly, Plotinus himself used the figure of Odysseus to serve as a parable to explain his philosophy of emanation. In the Enneads, Plotinus writes:

"Let us flee then to the beloved Fatherland." Here is sound counsel. But what is this flight? How are we to

"gain the open sea"? For surely Odysseus is a parable for us here when he commends flight from the sorceries of a Circe or a Calypso, being unwilling to linger on for all the pleasure offered to his eyes and all the delight of sense that filled his days. The Fatherland for us is there whence we have come. There is the Father. What is our course? What is to be the manner of our flight? Here is no journeying for the feet; feet bring us only from land to land. Nor is it for coach or ship to bear us off. We must close our eyes and invoke a new manner of seeing, a wakefulness that is the birthright of us all, though few put it to use (Plotinus 42).

Plotinus' theory of mystical ascent to the source of all being, the "Fatherland," is necessarily circular. Just as Odysseus must find his true home by way of a circuitous voyage, so the mariner returns to his own country after comparable tribulations. Both are changed in the process. If read metaphorically, as Plotinus has done, the voyage of Odysseus is simply an expression of a mystical journey from sensual consciousness to essentially spiritual consciousness--from knowledge of semblance to knowledge of essence. This idea is the preoccupation of the Mariner and the central assumption of Coleridge's theory of imagination which is modelled on the same Neoplatonic theory.

Moreover, the geographically circular form of the mariner's voyage underscores his internal transformation: he has completed the circle of Odysseus; one which begins with ignorance and ends with knowledge.

The idea of circular emanation in the Romantic period has been discussed at great length by M.H. Abrams in Natural Supernaturalism. He suggests that the Romantics were heirs to a system of thought which derived, ultimately, from Heraclitus through Plato and Plotinus in the Graeco-Roman world and, through the eyes of Neoplatonists, the Bible itself could be understood to conform to this schema. The essence of Abrams' argument is that from these respectable sources, thinkers such as Coleridge formulated a world view in which they saw the phenomenal world as an emanation of a transcendent and ineffable source of being--itself beyond being. The proponents, in this case mostly poets and philosophers, applied this metaphysical schema to their own respective works. In the case of Blake and Coleridge, it was in the construction of a "new" approach to poetry in which the poet is seen as bard and prophet by virtue of the fact that he possesses the necessary faculties of vision and intuition, sufficiently developed, to discover the essence in semblance and the general in the particular. This idea is poetized by Blake: "To see a world in a grain of sand,/ And a heaven in a wild flower,/ Hold infinity in the palm of your hand/ And eternity in an hour." Preoccupation with the idea of a poetic

vision, capable of discerning the infinite in the finite and the eternal in the temporal, is at the heart of Blake's work. But Coleridge, too, was very much concerned with the "divine" capabilities of the poetic imagination.

The schema which Abrams has suggested the Romantics adopted may be said to express itself in categories of emanation. Abrams tells us they are "derived from analogy with the spring that overflows, or the fire that radiates heat and light, or (in Shelley's fusion of both of Plotinus' figures) the 'burning fountain' from which flows and which is 'the fire for which all thirst'" (NS 147). It will be noted, then, that what emanates from "above," ultimately returns to its source. What has been separated is drawn back to its origin and regains its native integrity. The universe is seen as vital, organic, animate and circular (in that what emanates from the ineffable, transcendent source, returns to it as does water in a fountain). The poet acts as a priest or hierophant: he serves as intermediary between the spiritual and the phenomenal world. The Mariner gains this knowledge by transgression of divine law. He is initiated into a consciousness of the spiritual essence of reality and is compelled to tell his story to those who will listen. For Blake and Coleridge, at least, he is a fine figure of a poet who has stepped out of ordinary consciousness to become a channel for inspired vision. This ideal of poet as inspired bard is implicit in the Mariner and it is expressed by Coleridge more

succinctly and more completely in "Kubla Khan."

III

The central theme of spiritual exploration is initiated, supported by, and centred on, the figure of the albatross and the consequences of its murder by the mariner. But the immediate context of this act is set against the constant employment in the narrative of Christian symbolism and biblical allusion. The poem begins with a church wedding and ends with reference to the same church and an admonition to pray. During the voyage we find the mariner appealing to Christ, Mary and the Lord in Heaven. There are angelic hosts and a hermit who is asked to shrieve the mariner. In addition, the albatross itself is hailed "as if he were a Christian Soul" (l. 65), and superficially at least, the morality begs comparison with the Christian ethic (although at times the exact association is strained); the mariner commits a sin, is tormented by the forces of darkness until he repents, undergoes penance and is ultimately forgiven. It seems obvious that the poet is inviting the reader to associate the events within a Christian framework. But such an interpretation is frustrated by mention of another group of beings who lack the blessing of orthodox Christianity and force us to revise or modify our understanding of the events by reference to such a framework.

Foremost among these are the occult forces and beings which seem

to have no place in orthodox Christian angelology but a very large part to play in shaping the mariner's fate: an avenging Polar Spirit who follows the ship to ensure the punishment of the mariner and crew; an horrific Night-mare life-in-death (who Robert Graves has said "is as faithful a record of the [pagan] White Goddess as exists") who arrives in a ghost galleon to wager for the fate of the entire crew; as well as a hundred other "slimey things" who accompany them to aid in the torment of the mariner.

IV

The second stumbling block has shown itself in the process of interpreting the moral code of the story. Here again there is considerable critical diversity. At one extreme, there are the thoroughgoing legalists who believe that justice postponed is justice denied, and would have the mariner strung from the yardarm without further ado for murdering such an innocent and benign bird. At the other end of the spectrum, the most extreme "naturalist" has thought of the albatross in the same way as we might think of a frozen turkey at the grocery store: for him, the albatross is only an object which the mariner has every right to slaughter and use in a hearty albatross soup to feed the sailors and to ward off scurvy (Empson 22-23). Clearly, for those who are closest in sensibility to this last case, the mariner's punishment is both cruel and unusual.

At worst, they will say, the act was a misdemeanor. This focus on the appropriateness of the mariner's punishment--too little in the first case and excessive in the latter--is potentially helpful in understanding the poem, but in both the cases cited, a spiritual interpretation is distorted by the interpreter's own moral sensibility. The first position assumes the event is intentional and vicious and the perpetrator unregenerate. The second assumes that this particular bird is no more than a potential meal on a geographical voyage. The problem with both of these critical positions is that they promote a more literal reading than the text will comfortably allow. They are very good indicators, however, of twentieth-century viewpoints which ignore, or will not take seriously, the notion that Coleridge intended to convey a vision of a truly animate universe in which all beings are inextricably connected and possessed of the potential for communion and mutual influence. The world of the mariner derives to a great extent from Coleridge's readings of, and fascination with, an older world view which belongs to the late Medieval and Renaissance periods. It seems curious that so few modern critics have fully acknowledged this fact. The 1797 edition is, after all, composed in archaic language as if to draw attention to this. When considered in this light, the albatross becomes much more than a bird: it becomes a potent symbol of spiritual order which the mariner foolishly violates. The violation has severe repercussions which make little sense to the reader who has not studied the metaphysicians on whom Coleridge drew.

V

It was Wordsworth who suggested to Coleridge that he might represent the mariner as having "killed one of these birds [an albatross] on entering the South Sea, and that the tutelary spirits of these regions take it upon themselves to avenge the crime" (Lowes 228). Coleridge superficially accepted the idea, but in his mind it took on a far more universal significance. The gloss of 1800 tells us that Coleridge associated the idea of "tutelary spirits" with the mysticism of Josephus, the Platonic Constantinopolitan, and Michael Psellus (Works 52). It has been claimed that "explicit in its footnotes and implicit in the text [of the Mariner] are [also] the ubiquitous Neoplatonists--Plotinus, Porphyry, Iamblichus, Proclus, Julian, Hermes, and Marsilio Ficino" (Lowes 233). The idea that the bird which descends out of the mists to guide the mariners is evocative of the intermediary spirits which are an important element of Neoplatonism after Plotinus, and especially in Proclus, is difficult to ignore. Central to this vision of an animate universe is the idea that each creature contains a spark of divinity, otherwise known as a daemon. As such, these essential beings are, as it were, messengers of God who may act as intermediaries in the soul's return to its source. Socrates had suggested as much in his Apology. As a symbol of divine benevolence and guidance, the albatross may be

considered as sacred and the mariner's act of violence as a transgression of cosmic law.

In an important essay, Maren-Sofie Røstvig has shown the peculiarity of the cosmology of the Mariner and concluded, quite reasonably, that it conforms closely to that found in Robert Fludd's preface to the Mosaicall Philosophy (1659)--though she is quick to point out that this cosmology belongs equally to other syncretic Neoplatonists of the Renaissance who blended Kabbalistic and Hermetic ideas with Christian and Platonic ones. Røstvig suggests that, probably unlike Wordsworth, Coleridge saw the employment of supernatural events performed by tutelary spirits as an opportunity to "express a vision of man in the universe" (Røstvig 76). After examining the sources cited by Lowes, she finds that a preoccupation of these writings is "the penetration of the world of matter by pure mind...The problem confronting all of us, crudely put, is how to climb the ladder of creation until we become all mind" (Røstvig 70). She further suggests that the poet thought of the shooting of the albatross in terms of an eternal battle between light and darkness, mind and matter (Røstvig 70). She reminds the reader that the "bird, because of its wings, is a truly ancient symbol of the soul, or mind...while matter is represented by the serpent." Since bird and serpent are central figures in Coleridge's poem, we may interpret the mariner's act of violence as symptomatic of the "loss of the inner, spiritual vision" which results from the determination to

place sensual before spiritual perception (Røstvig 71).

It is illuminating to consider this schema in light of the story of Eros and Psyche in Lucius Apuleius' Golden Ass, a work of enormous popularity during the Romantic period. It too is an allegory of the soul's separation from its beloved, and its eventual reconciliation with it. This story, along with the parable of the Prodigal Son, is expressive of the principle of emanation and the ultimately spiritual nature of reality. Both express the spiritual path as a process of returning to one's birthright. The idea of a return to one's spiritual homeland by imaginative re-creation is central to Coleridge's thought from the 1790s until his death. He endows the imaginative faculty with tremendous spiritual power in his prose, and his best poetry is preoccupied with exploring it as a means of perceiving spiritual reality and of casting off the veil of semblance.

The character of the mariner is drawn in such a way as to invite a parabolic reading. We are given practically no information about him as an individual. He is a type, an Everyman if you will, and his dominant characteristics are his self-centredness, guilt and isolation. He acts and seems to feel as if he were something quite separate from that which he perceives. His separateness is excruciating: he is "Alone, alone, all, all alone, / Alone on a wide wide sea" (l. 232,33). He is therefore an appropriate vehicle for Coleridge's message that those who are subjected to merely sensual perception

are, as such, unregenerate since "the senses cannot lead man to God who is pure mind [and that regeneration is a] question of asserting the supremacy of mind in the mind-body relationship and of regaining the inner vision which alone is capable of perceiving things in their essence" (Røstvig 71). The mariner, prior to his "conversion," at least, is a model materialist whose vision is awakened by knowledge imparted to him by a voyage through uncharted realms. As Blake put it, "the Poetic Genius is the true Man...the body or outward form of Man is derived from the Poetic Genius. Likewise that the forms of all things are derived from their Genius, which by the Ancients was call'd an Angel & Spirit & Demon" (Blake 1). Therefore the mariner's discovery of this truth is something like the poetic act itself as Coleridge seems to understand it--an act born of the imaginative faculty which pierces semblance to reveal essence. The mariner, like the poet, sees the essential divinity in the created world which is not, as it turns out, material at all. It is fundamentally spiritual.

The shooting of the albatross may then be seen allegorically as an anti-spiritual act--a refusal to recognize spiritual harmony, or at least evidence that the perpetrator is purblind. The result is an apparent division between object and subject, and the forces of darkness express themselves in opposition, rather than as a complement to light. In placing the pivotal scene of the blessing of the water snakes in equatorial seas, Coleridge reminds the reader that there is "no twilight within the courts of the sun" (AM Gloss 53). It is

*an act of
destruction as
opp. to creation*

a place where day and night are clearly and immediately separate. This is the nadir of the mariner's fortune, but the beginning of his regeneration. Hence a symmetry emerges which may be construed as referring, in part at least, to the creation of poetry. We find a beautifully constructed reconciliation of opposites which evokes Coleridge's Neoplatonic sources while it anticipates his theory of imagination. For it is, after all, the mysterious power of the mariner's (poet's ?) imagination which makes the reconciliation possible. Again the raw material is taken from a travel journal. This time it is a passage in Father Bourzes' Letters of the Missionary Jesuits concerning luminosity in the wakes of ships: "I have sometimes seen a great many Fishes playing in the Sea, which have made a kind of artificial Fire in the Water, that was very pleasant to look on" (Lowes 40). Coleridge seems to have combined this and other reports to compose some of the most alluring and haunting lines in the Mariner:

Beyond the shadow of the ship,
 I watched the water-snakes:
 They moved in tracks of shining white,
 And when they reared, the elfish light
 Fell off in hoary flakes.

Within the shadow of the ship
 I watched their rich attire:

Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
 They coiled and swam; and every track
 was a flash of golden fire
 (l. 272-281).

This second example of Coleridge's extraordinary ability to find metaphysical significance in natural phenomena represents a vaster synthesis of borrowed images which are united in the poet's imagination in a visionary intensity. The relatively prosaic reports on which Coleridge's lines rely are transformed into powerful symbols or signs of another world seen through an "elfish light." The drama of light playing in darkness has more than sensual effect, though that effect cannot be denied. We are drawn into contemplating the apparent contradiction of snakes, usually associated with the forces of darkness, swimming in a sea which is compared to a witch's cauldron, evoking deep spirituality in the mariner (l. 129). Their appearance is so fascinating to him that it affects a kind of repentance: the mariner tells the wedding guest that "A spring of love gushed from [his] heart,/ And [he] blessed them unaware" (ll. 284-85). This is the turning point of the poem and the first mention in the narrative of the mariner loving anything. It is therefore his initial experience of conscious communion with something outside of himself.

This idea of light found first in shadows is an important element

in the Mariner's logic which we may reasonably assume to derive from any number of occult and mystical sources. It is archetypal. But this notion of reconciling opposition by the contemplation of essence is also central to Coleridge's theory of imagination. The mariner/poet finds light in the darkness. This is an act of the imaginative faculty which allows him to understand the underlying unity of all phenomena and the "untruth" of apparent separateness.⁴ Even the sea snakes are God's creatures--emanations from the same source of being as the mariner and the albatross.

It is small wonder that the wedding guest is both entranced and disturbed by the mariner's tale. He is comfortable in his familiar relationship to God and fellow man. The mariner's ballad destroys the easy distinction between good and evil and replaces it with a vision of awful unity which he himself has probably not fully grasped. The experience is one which all must take if they wish to gain a vision beyond that of the wedding guest, a vision which is circumscribed by the social convention and authority on which it depends for validation. To leave the safety of this state, and to experience the "mystery of human life and conscience," is the challenge of the visionary and the Romantic poet.

Chapter Two: The Hierophant and a Vanishing Metaphysician

From 1798, until his death in 1834, Coleridge's most significant literary output would be within the realm of prose--a good deal of it reflecting on literary matters and on that short period of poetic brilliance which had its centre at Nether Stowey. Here we discover that Coleridge is much more than a poet and critic--he is also a competent philosopher and theologian. Indeed, he produced a massive canon of prose works on a staggering variety of topics. It has been said that the "student who would take all knowledge for his province could do worse than begin with Coleridge" (Schneider 1971 xi). Most importantly, Coleridge must be given the distinction of being the only major figure in English literary history to have exerted influence, and made significant contributions, in the fields of theology, aesthetics and metaphysics--an area of influence far beyond the scope of Matthew Arnold or T.S. Eliot--much of which is still felt today.⁵ It has not been emphasized enough that this propensity for inclusiveness is more than simple eclecticism. It is evidence of a rich and probing mind which seeks to find and express divinity in all things--to make the world "diaphanous to God" (Cutsinger 94). The student who has not recognized the integrity of Coleridge's intellectual pursuits will fail to share his vision. For Coleridge, the practice of poetry is inextricably

bound to his philosophical and theological endeavours. It is both the impetus for, and result of his quest for a bridge between mind and nature. This is particularly relevant during the Nether Stowey period.

The Biographia Literaria is, of course, his principal prose work. In it, and in the many additional non-poetical works, we find a rich source of biographical anecdote, flights of metaphysical speculation, miscellaneous literary criticism, and valuable lists of influences upon his thought.

Most of this later writing is useful to the student of Coleridge's poetry for, among other things, it tells us a great deal about the way Coleridge's mind worked and the sorts of ideas which most impressed him. We might think of the Biographia, for example, as an attempt by the author to explain for himself, if not his reader, the source of his earlier poetic excellence. Coleridge does not fully explain it, but he does offer a number of clues which could help us to discover the source for ourselves.

Coleridge remains a difficult writer. His prose is notorious for being alternately tantalizing and exasperating, clear and confused. Intrigued by his richness of intellect, we may be justifiably disappointed that such promise should culminate, as it all too often does, in unexplained and baffling digression from which there is frequently no return. This makes a systematic study of Coleridge's thought a near impossibility, and one must exercise great

caution when approaching it for insight germane to the poetic texts. As Earl Leslie Griggs put it, "when at the core of his subject...Coleridge skips, by means of a letter and asterisks, the most important section of the argument" (Best of C xv). He has been aptly dubbed the "vanishing metaphysician" (Harper 188) and if we wish to enter the intellectual maze of Coleridge's writings, we must do so on his terms. For this reason, Arthur Symons has warned his reader that Coleridge's thought "has to be pursued across stones, ditches and morasses; with haste, lingering, and disappointment; it turns back, loses itself, fetches wide circuits, and comes back to no visible end" (Symons viii). Burke's dictum that "a clear idea is therefore another name for a little idea" is one which Coleridge seems to have taken very much to heart.

I

Happily, it will be found that there is as much to be learned by studying the process by which Coleridge forms his most interesting ideas as there is in studying the ideas themselves. Despite his occasional lack of clarity, and frequent lack of consistency, the prose works may be seen as useful artifacts in the search for context in the study of Coleridge's poetry, without depreciating their own worth. For, in the case of the theory of imagination, what we have is a statement of meta-critical import--a statement of principles and evidence of philosophic and aesthetic orientation

which will serve as an indispensable key to a deeper comprehension of his poetry.

The relationship of an artist's philosophic endeavours to his artistic expression is always a difficult one to ascertain, and in Coleridge's case this is compounded by his formidable erudition and neurotic fear of drawing conclusions. John Livingstone Lowes understood this difficulty as well as any, as the reader of The Road to Xanadu well knows. But Lowes, seduced by the sheer strength and mystery of the poetic works--especially "Kubla Khan" and The Rime of the Ancient Mariner--undertook a study of Coleridge's Note Books. He has shown how rewarding it can be to trace the movements of a mind as myriad and complex as Coleridge's through a slough of surprising sources to the final magical synthesis discovered in a single image--a unified image of immeasurably greater force and beauty than the sum of its constituent parts. Coleridge scholarship will forever remain indebted to Lowes' monumental labour. He produced a list of Coleridge's readings which is in itself a major contribution. Unfortunately, Lowes did not take Coleridge's philosophic interests seriously and the result has been a source study which assumes the poet was little more than a literary magpie who simply followed the lead of each and every footnote to obscure and exotic passages which he then combined in his composition of poetry. This is a half truth. It seems incredible that Coleridge, or any poet, could be satisfied with the simple re-construction of the imagery found in the works

of others without considering the importance of the ideas themselves in the formulation of a tenable philosophy. Again, this is particularly relevant with regard to Coleridge's Platonic readings. Without the philosophical framework of the Neoplatonists, Coleridge's fascination with the occult world of magic, demonology, superstition and folklore would have translated in his poetry to little more than a series of fantastic visions and left itself open to the kind of criticism that Byron offered of Keats' poetry: that it was little more than phantasmagoria "produced by raw pork and opium" (Byron Letters 346-47) without the point of reference required to signify its connectedness.

Before we return to the poetic works themselves, then, it will behoove us to briefly rehearse the intellectual background against which Coleridge composed his most popular poetry. In so doing, we may discuss the part played by the revival of the Platonic philosophy--a philosophy of which Coleridge is said to be the "hierophant" in the onset of English Romanticism (Notopoulos 155).

Chapter Three: The Road To Integration

During the 1790s, Coleridge was perhaps the most intellectually ambitious man in England. Generally self-effacing, he occasionally offered a glimpse of the scope and depth of his interests and his hope of encompassing them: "I should not think," he wrote in a letter to his friend Joseph Cottle (April, 1797),

of devoting less than twenty years to an Epic Poem.

Ten to collect materials and warm my mind with universal science. I would be a tolerable Mathematician, I would thoroughly know Mechanics, Hydrostatics, Optics, and Astronomy, Botany, Metallurgy, Fossilism, Chemistry, Geology, Anatomy, Medicine--then the mind of man--then the minds of men--in all Travels, Voyages and Histories. So I would spend ten years--the next five to the composition of the poem--and the last five to the correction of it.

So I would write haply not unhearing of that divine and rightly-whispering Voice, which speaks to mighty minds of predestined Garlands, starry and unwithering (Letters I: 320-1).

These same words from another might seem a mere pipe dream or jest. But Coleridge, despite serious health problems and chronic financial embarrassment, quite remarkably proceeded to carry out a substantial proportion of this program. He was an omnivorous reader, and he went about his pursuit of knowledge not as a passive student, but as an active participant. We might think of the trip to Germany with William Wordsworth on 16 September, 1798. His purpose was to learn directly from the Germans who, he felt, were capable of combining "a frank recognition of what modern science and scholarship were rapidly accumulating with a power of generality in thinking and an eagerness to find philosophic meaning" (W.J. Bate 89). He sought out and interviewed poets, set about learning the language, enrolled at Göttingen University, attending lectures on such various subjects as physiology, anthropology, and German Biblical criticism. In so doing, he managed to impress some of the finest German scholars of his day with his exceptional intelligence (W.J. Bate 92-93). In light of the sheer weight and depth of Coleridge's interests and talents, Norman Fruman has reasonably asked: "Who can honestly claim the knowledge required to survey so vast a field?" (Fruman 178-9).

The German episode was not, by any means, an exceptional chapter in Coleridge's pursuit of erudition. In his "Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago," Charles Lamb was to write of the youthful Coleridge as if he were the admired wellspring of erudition in his age. He calls him "Logician, Metaphysician, Bard!" and compares him

to "the young Mirandula," Ficino's most brilliant and influential pupil. Lamb also indicates that even in these early years mystical philosophy was not beyond Coleridge's grasp. We are told that he unfolded, in his "deep and sweet intonations, the mysteries of Jamblichus, or Plotinus (for even in those years thou waxedst not pale at such philosophic draughts)..." (Elia 25).

I

Any attempt to incorporate more than a fraction of Coleridge's writings into a single coherent commentary would be doomed before it began. But there is something in his unusual hunger for knowledge which suggests that Coleridge wanted perhaps, more than anything else, to formulate what we might call a unified field theory of philosophical knowledge. It is scarcely an exaggeration to claim that Coleridge was obsessed with the the problem of unity: the relationship between the general and the particular. He could put it thus: "I would make a pilgrimage to the Deserts of Arabia to find the man who could make us understand how the one can be many! Eternal, universal mystery!" (Notebooks 1: 1561). Shortly after the date which Coleridge gives as the composition of "Kubla Khan," he wrote: "My mind feels as if it ached to behold and know something great--something one and indivisible--and it is only in the faith of this that rocks or waterfalls, mountains or caverns give me the sense of

sublimity or majesty!--But in this faith all things counterfeit infinity!" (Letters 1: 349). If Coleridge was searching for a formula which would offer a solution to the problem, to some extent he found the promise of such a unifying force in the power of the imagination which, in turn, finds its prototype and inspiration in the philosophy of those whom Coleridge's close friend, Thomas De Quincey, called the "thaumaturgic Platonists" (Lake Poets 41). It was at about this time, in his twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth year, that Coleridge's Platonic readings became most intense.

II

His apparently unbridled intellectual ambition was greeted with scepticism by some. Certainly not all his contemporaries were as enthusiastic as Lamb had been of his breadth of thought. His friend and fellow poet, Robert Southey, saw in Coleridge's thirst for diverse knowledge the mark of a haphazard but original mind, a directionless sampling of conflicting systems with no coherent end in sight. Southey noted that Coleridge "plays with systems, and any nonsense will serve him for a text from which he can deduce something new and surprising" (W.J. Bate 3ln). Southey's criticism can be explained, in part, by a radical difference in the way the two poets approached philosophical theories and the part they would respectively allow them to play in their poetry. In a revealing passage, Coleridge describes the difference

between them: "Southey," he wrote in a letter to John Thelwall 31 December 1796,

does not possess opulence of Imagination, lofty-paced Harmony, or that toil of thinking, which is necessary to plan a Whole....I think, that an admirable Poet might be made by amalgamating him & me. I think too much for a Poet; he too little for a great Poet. But he abjures thinking--& lays the whole stress of excellence--on feeling (Letters 1: 294).

What might have been dry, disconnected systems to Southey, contained the promises of unity in Coleridge's imagination. Fruman, unlike Southey, has recognized Coleridge's underlying need for intellectual integrity: "All his [Coleridge's] life he strove to make intellectual connections. If the imagination was a unifying force, it was his life-long dream to unify, and harmonize, all knowledge, all art, all thought, into a simple embracing system" (Fruman 178). This system would need to take as much stock of feeling as thought, then, as well as offer a cosmology capable of unifying the various knowledge which Coleridge had acquired.

Coleridge is generally regarded as a more successful poet than philosopher. However, the distinction between Coleridge the

philosopher and Coleridge the poet becomes difficult to maintain when we consider the poetic nature of his philosophy and the philosophic nature of his poetry. Empirically derived "truth" is not as important to Coleridge as the poetic force of an idea. He was, ultimately, a transcendentalist. In his comment on a passage in Ficino's Theologia Platonica, he states that the "gross errors of the Platonists in physics" (such as the assumption that the "force of gravity pulls down a piece of wood faster if it is sharp than if it is thick") do not discount the importance of their essential message. Coleridge declares that the primary obstacle to truth in contemporary European culture is impatience---"occasioned, & occasioned by, the passion for merely sensuous phenomena" (Marginalia 11: 648). He could then read, in the same treatise, the statement that "virtue is increased by union and it is decreased by dispersion" as much more than a lesson in physics. The introduction of a moral quality such as virtue into a discussion of natural phenomena is decidedly Coleridgean, and it is not surprising that he would relish this earlier world view and shun the empirical dryness of the earlier eighteenth century. This fusion of natural and metaphysical elements is Coleridge's most cherished goal, and it is expressed most eloquently in the poetry of the Nether Stowey period. We may now digress a little to identify the sources of Coleridge's Platonic orientation and discuss more fully the part they would play in the composition of his best poetry.

Chapter Four: Thaumaturgic Platonists

Like many of his contemporaries, Coleridge was fascinated with the poetic potential he found in Platonism. Since this is central to our study, it will be useful to review the main elements of that philosophy. We could do worse than adopt the following as our working definition: Classical Platonism is characterized by a partial contempt for sense knowledge and empirical studies and by a profoundly spiritualistic perception of life. It maintains an unwavering faith in the capacity of the human mind to attain absolute truth. Through the sensory faculties, we come to know the phenomenal world. Through intellectual, or rational, cognition we may apprehend another world, that of immutable essences, intelligible Forms or Ideas. The Forms contain the ultimate pattern of sensible things. Material reality is therefore "less" than spiritual reality. As will become clear, Platonism is more a way of seeing than a dogmatic system of thought. From this relatively simple faith, later thinkers would extrapolate more complex systems of intermediaries, sympathies and influences. Some of these we shall have occasion to discuss below.

To understand Platonism by its denotation alone, however, is to miss the poetic potential of its epistemology. Percy Bysshe Shelley, a young contemporary of Coleridge and not unlike him in his broad genius, considered Plato to be poet-like in his language and spirit:

"Plato," he said, "exhibits the rare union of close and subtle logic, with the Pythian enthusiasm of poetry...his language is that of an immortal spirit rather than a man" (Shelley's Prose 336). Coleridge thought too that the poetic element of Plato was central. In Lecture 14 of the Philosophical Lectures, for example, he wrote of Plato's poetic nature:

Plato was a poet of such excellence as would have stood all other competition but that of his being a philosopher. His poetic genius implanted in him those deep impressions and the love of them which, mocking all comparison with after objects, leaves behind it thirst for something not attained, to which nothing in life is found commensurate and which still impels the soul to pursue (157-58).

Moreover, in his Biographia, Coleridge tells how semblance, that "despotism of the eye," is overthrown in Plato and Pythagoras by the contemplation of essence, or unchanging reality (213). Coleridge and Shelley demonstrate a kindred sentiment towards Plato: he is seen as the champion par excellence of the immaterial and the infinite: the mystical Philosopher/Poet.⁶

The admiration of Plato as poet is a very long-standing tradition in English literary history. Sir Philip Sidney, impressed

by the writings of various Continental Neoplatonists such as Baldesar Castiglione, and first in a line of English poet-critics which extends through Jonson, Dryden, Addison, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Shelley, Arnold and Eliot, spoke of the poetic quality of Plato's writings with no less conviction than his Romantic counterparts (Apology 8-9). It is evident that no English writer since the early sixteenth century has approached Plato untouched by the interpretations of Renaissance commentators. We need to consider the contributions of these intermediary proponents, if only in the most cursory manner, to grasp the nature of Platonism as it was understood by the Romantics. For Coleridge, although well-versed in the master himself, "found Neoplatonism more congenial" (Notopoulos 156).

Platonism has tended to be more satisfying to poets than has Aristotelianism. Its richly evocative ideas clearly lend themselves to poetic re-formulation. In general terms, its cosmology is plastic enough to permit a wide range of imaginative interpretation. And the Neoplatonic philosophy, which began with Plotinus but awaited Proclus for its most elaborate expression, postulated an intricate spiritual hierarchy inhabited by tutelary daemons or spirits. Its suggestion of pantheism, transcendentalism, and the idea of a Spiritus Mundi, are all the stuff that dreams are made on as the attentive reader of the Ancient Mariner well knows. For the Romantic poets the Neoplatonists opened up an entire realm of possibility beyond the staid mechanism of their immediate predecessors. Moreover, Platonic cosmology as expounded in

the Timaeus is a personalized universe in which the macrocosm is seen as being in communion with the poet's soul. The Platonic Hierophant could, I think, hardly resist the temptation to indulge in the "wild" thoughts of the "philosophy dreamers" (Letters 1: 156).

I

There is a significant body of evidence which would seem to confirm that by the late 1790s Coleridge was thoroughly and deeply influenced by Neoplatonic ideas. Yet there has been surprising reluctance on the part of scholars to explore the significance this may have had on his poetry. Compared to the influence of the syncretic Neoplatonists on Coleridge's poetry and thought in the late 1790's, the influence of the British Empiricists and the German Idealists was marginal. When this fact has been recognized, it has generally been studied as if his poetic sensibility and his philosophical interests could be separated.⁷

Mystical writers--among them, Hermetic, Neoplatonic and Kabbalistic proponents and commentators--were central to Coleridge's reading during the 1790s, and they were central to his most ardent intellectual pursuits. He wrote to Thelwall on 19 November 1796 to inform him that he had "read almost everything." He describes himself as a "library cormorant...deep in all out of the way books, whether of the monkish or the puritanical aera--I have

read & digested most of the Historical Writers--but I do not like History. Metaphysics & Poetry, & 'Facts of mind,' (i.e. Accounts of all the strange phantasms that ever possessed your philosophy-dreamers from Tauth [Thoth] the Egyptian to Taylor the English Pagan,) are my darling Studies" (Letters 156). Moreover, Coleridge tells the reader of the Biographia that the "early study of Plato and Plotinus, with the commentaries and the Theologia Platonica, of the illustrious Florentine [Marsilio Ficino]; of Proclus...[and] the philosopher of Nola [Giordano Bruno]" all contributed to his philosophical education (Biographia 229). Elsewhere, he praises the "fullness of heart and intellect" found in the writings of Jacob Boehme, William Law and George Fox (Biographia 231). Professor Lowes has noted that Coleridge has written, among various fragments, "excerpts from the Greek text of the Phaedo and the Republic: a phrase which contains the core of the Platonic doctrine of pre-existence, and the beginning of the great Parable of the Cave." Furthermore, "the passage from the Republic is slipped in between a reference to Aristotle's Metaphysics and a direct quotation from it. And the citation from the Phaedo and the reference to the Metaphysics is separated by a sentence from Plotinus" (Lowes 29).

Coleridge was also an accomplished Greek scholar: he had, after all, translated the eight Hymns of Synesius from the Greek prior to his fifteenth year (Biographia 288). Moreover,

a passage discussing Thomas Taylor's translation of Proclus would indicate not only his considerable knowledge of Greek, but a familiarity with the elaborate Neoplatonism of Proclus (which would have offered answers to most of the questions posed in the headnote to the Ancient Mariner). He informs the reader that the "most beautiful and orderly development of this philosophy, which endeavours to explain all things by analysis of consciousness, and builds up a world in the mind out of materials furnished from the mind itself, is to be found in the Platonic Theology by Proclus. A part of it has been translated by Taylor, but so translated that difficult Greek is transmuted into incomprehensible English" (W. Knight 107).

II

Coleridge's Platonic readings were, we may be sure, extensive. But a dominant presence in his reading list was Marsilio Ficino: the intriguing priest, philosopher, physician, magus and founder of the Platonic Academy in Florence, whose translations and commentaries contained the very germ of Renaissance Platonism. Ficino is a logical choice as the main influence on Coleridge's understanding of Neoplatonism. His Latin translations of Plato's Dialogues (1484) and the Enneads of Plotinus (1492) were widely respected and used extensively until the beginning of the nineteenth century. His strain

of thought may be considered as the quintessence of Renaissance Neoplatonism and his philosophy had a profound effect--directly or indirectly--on earlier English writers such as Edmund Spenser, Sir Philip Sidney, Thomas More, John Milton, Sir Thomas Elyot, Sir Thomas Browne, the Cambridge Platonists, who Coleridge considered "more truly Plotinists" (C. on Seventeenth Century 366), the Metaphysical poets and others. Coleridge's reading of these would have further transmitted Ficino's ideas to him indirectly.

Moreover, in 1796, John Thelwell purchased the following works on behalf of Coleridge: Juliani, Opera; Iamblichus, de Mysteriis; and Plotini Opera (Ficino's translation). He also bought a volume of 543 pages which contained the Pimander and Asclepius of Hermes Trismegistus; Jamblichus' De Mysteriis Aegyptiorum, Chaldaeorum, Assyriorum; Porphyrius De Divinis atque Daemonibus and Psellus De Daemonibus--all edited by Ficino (Lowes 234).

Lowes recognized, to some extent, the importance of these "wingy mysteries" in furnishing potent imagery for Coleridge's poetry. Neoplatonism, he suggests, conjured the "shimmering mist into which the cloud capped towers and gorgeous palaces of Plato's luminous fabric had dissolved" (Lowes 229). Principally, he sees them as offering a reservoir of enticing imagery--stuff of poetry. This is a useful insight into the sources of some of Coleridge's imagery. But we need also to consider that the reading of a travel book (Lowes has shown that Coleridge loved them) is not the same as the reading of a philosophical treatise. In the first instance, the poet

may well have sought information on exotic places which he could then incorporate into his poetry. No doubt he did just that. But in the second instance he would be receiving material of a spiritual nature--material that could have transformed the way in which he experienced the natural world and the way he thought about the relationship between mind and nature. In the case of the travel books, he might fairly be accused of filling his bucket at the "perforation made in some other man's tank." In the case of Renaissance Neoplatonism, he was shown the way to a vital fountain from which he could drink and derive inspiration.

III

The syncretic nature of Ficino's Platonism, demonstrated by the variety of works which he edited and translated, is important to remember when we consider his direct and indirect influence on Coleridge. Distinctions between Kabbalistic, Christian, Platonic, Hermetic, and mystical works which we might wish to make were blurred and even harmonized in the alchemy of Ficino's mind. Take, for example, the following passage in which Ficino is discussing the origin of love:

In the Argonautica, when Orpheus, in the presence of Chiron and the heroes, sang about the beginnings

of things, following the theology of Hermes Trismegistus, he placed Chaos before the World, and located Love in the bosom of that Chaos, before Saturn, Jove, and the other gods; and he praised Love in these words: Love is the oldest, perfect in himself, and best counselled. Hesiod in his Theology Parmenides the Pythagorean, in his book On Nature, and Acusilaus the poet agreed with Orpheus and Hermes. Plato, in the Timaeus, describes Chaos in a similar way, and places Love in it. And in the Symposium Phaedrus recounted the same thing (Commentary on Symposium 37-38).

It is here a practical impossibility to separate Orphic cosmogony from Plato's metaphysics, or either of them from Hermetic cosmology. In his search for what D.P. Walker has termed the prisca theologia (Ancient Theology 1), Ficino abandons the Scholastic love of distinction in the pursuit of syncretism. In a gesture of amazing intellectual optimism he assumes that reconciliation is simply a matter of perspective. The title "Philosophy dreamer" is used by Coleridge in a positive sense. It is used to describe those thinkers who were sufficiently intoxicated with the Platonic mysteries to see in them the germ of absolute unity. The key to the reconciliation of Moses, Orpheus, Hermes, Plato and others was found in the idea that each had imbibed from a single source. This

is an element of Florentine thought which must have strongly appealed to Coleridge--who, after all, is notorious for his acceptance of apparently disparate beliefs (Haven 477).

Prior to the fifteenth century, Plato's dialogues were lost to the West--with the notable exceptions of the Meno and Phaedo, and sections of the Parmenides and Timaeus (Ficino Phaedrus 5). Ficino provided the first complete translation of Plato's work into a European language and enthusiastically interpreted and defended Platonic philosophy. He was doing so in an intellectual climate which was decidedly Aristotelian. He was, therefore, obliged to act as apologist for the suspect intruder. Subsequently, Renaissance intellectuals received the greater part of Plato's works via a Neoplatonist.

Ficino's major work, the Theologia Platonica (1482) which Thelwall procured for Coleridge, is an esoteric treatise of profound importance in the history of Neoplatonism. In it, Ficino combines Neoplatonic metaphysics and Augustinian theology with his own ideas. The flow of Greek scholars and texts into Florence had increased since the fall of Byzantium to the Turks in 1453. Newly available texts of Plato and early Neoplatonists (including Plotinus) as well as the mysterious Corpus Hermeticum were given to Ficino by Cosimo de Medici to translate. In short, Ficino assumes a hierarchical system of the universe (God, Angelic Mind, Quality, Body etc.) and tirelessly argues for the immortality of the soul. The central form of life in the created universe is man. Human life is

interpreted as an internal ascent of the Soul towards God. Cosmologically, then, Ficino posits that as man is the centre of living creation, he occupies an intermediary position between heaven and earth--he may be considered a magus. This, I believe, contains the basic elements of Coleridge's cosmology as it expresses itself in "Kubla Khan" and The Ancient Mariner.

IV

We have said that Platonic ideas captured the imagination of the Romantics as they had that of earlier intellectuals. In addition, we have adopted a working definition of Platonic philosophy and found that although it offered a useful guide, it failed to convey the poetic importance of Plato's works. We have discussed, in a synoptic manner, the cosmology of Ficino to which Coleridge was exposed in 1796. We might now look a little more closely at one or two seminal ideas of Ficino's Platonism which Coleridge and his fellow-poets may have found attractive. Such an enquiry ought to begin with reference to the De Amore, Ficino's commentary on Plato's Symposium, which he later translated into the Italian vernacular and which rapidly became his most popular work--a position it still enjoys (Ficino Pheadrus 15). Under consideration is a central passage in the Platonic canon itself--one which was of great significance to Neoplatonists in general. The work is a deceptively simple one. It contains within it most of the

assumptions of the Platonic philosophy which the Florentines admired.

In the Symposium, Aristophanes relates a fable designed to explain the genesis of human disintegration and mutual attraction. In the beginning, he says, there were three genders of human beings: male, female, and hermaphrodite. The appearance of each was whole and globular. The male was born of the sun, the female of the earth, and the hermaphrodite of the moon. Because of their pride they fought with the gods to ascend into heaven. Jupiter thus weakened them by dividing them lengthwise--making two in place of one. Further division was threatened if they did not desist from rebellion. The result was that each half desired its other and sought to regain its integrity by embracing it (Plato Dialogues 542-44).

For the Neoplatonist, eros is the force which strives to create ever greater unities. It is the way back to original wholeness. And the discussion of this force could be seen as the unifying theme of the Symposium, since each discourse offers a commentary on the nature of love. Aristophanes' simple story thus carried profound implications for those who considered it as a thinly disguised parable of the human condition. This idea of original wholeness, or integrity, followed by apparent separateness and disintegration, is a major element in the story of the Christian Fall, and never more closely aligned with the Neoplatonic idea of Adam as the *Mysterium Magnum* than in Renaissance thought. This theme is central to a reading of "Kubla Khan" in which "Alph, the sacred river" falls into ever

increasing fragmentation to plunge into the darkness of a "sunless sea." Moreover, the idea of a primal androgyne, similar to that in Aristophanes' fable, found expression in the Hermetic writings which Ficino translated (Poimandres 1:9; 12:15 ; Asclepius 20) and in the Kabbalah (Zohar 55) as well as in the writings of several Christian Neoplatonists such as Boehme and Paracelsus.

The Platonic myth of the Fall, with its suggestion of the soul's return to integrity through the force of Eros (which Ficino combined with the Christian idea of agape) is made more explicit in the speech of Socrates and carries important connotations. Neoplatonists, such as Plotinus, Origen and Proclus could extrapolate from these myths a system of descent into the corporeal world and return to the source--a system far more complex than the Platonic original. These systems, which impressed Coleridge, may easily be seen as the intellectual prototypes of the Coleridgean theory of imagination as well as a rich source of poetic imagery.

As the dialogue continues we learn from Agathon the poet that "Eros is always concerned with beauty," a sentiment echoed by Keats in his "Ode on a Grecian Urn." Finally, Socrates recounts the doctrine of Eros which he tells us was revealed to him by the Mantinean priestess Diotima. She admonishes Socrates to resist fixation to embodied, individual beauty, and to ascend, "ever mounting the heavenly ladder, stepping from rung to rung...until

at last he comes to know what beauty is" (Symposium 211c).

In short, the Symposium offers a poetic expression of the Fall of man and the means by which he may return. The tale is deceptively fanciful in tone and content. That the dialogue is intended to be taken very seriously is underlined by Ficino's gloss (Commentary 72). He also takes pains to warn the reader not to be too literal-minded: "it was the custom of the ancient theologians," he said, "to conceal their holy and pure mysteries in the shadows of metaphors, lest they be defiled by the profane and impure" (Commentary 72).

In the Phaedrus--for which Ficino also provided a commentary-- we are given another, though not unrelated myth of origin. Reference to it will provide us with enough material to consider a major element of Coleridge's philosophic orientation during the period in question. In the Phaedrus the spiritual home is alluded to in another mythic image. Socrates explains to Phaedrus that the young unfallen soul enjoyed a paradisaal state prior to its incarnation when "we beheld with our eyes that blessed vision... steadfast and blissful were the spectacles; on which we gazed in the moment of final revelation; pure was the light that shone around us, and pure were we, without taint of the prison house which now we are encompassed withal, and call a body, fast bound therein as an oyster in a shell" (Phaedrus 250c).

This vision of an ethereal source of being, of innocent

pre-existence, is seductive to the philosopher who wishes to contradict the notion of the mind as tabula rasa, as John Locke had suggested, and to the poet who would want to re-awaken a sense of wonder. This is an idea which, as we have noted, Coleridge considered "intelligible poetry," even if it be "wild philosophy."

V

Ficino's most impressive student, Pico Della Mirandola (whom Lamb had allusively compared to Coleridge) was inspired by the mysticism of Dionysius the Areopagite, Plotinus, the newly discovered and translated Hermeticum, and a host of other writings. He enthusiastically proceeded to attempt further syncretization of Neoplatonic, Christian, Hebraic, Arabian, Kabbalistic, Pythagorean and Hermetic beliefs in a flourish of youthful intellectual caprice. Significantly, the work relies on flights of imagination to discover unity in apparent diversity. It is this esemplastic power of the imagination which Coleridge revels in, and the writings of Plato and his commentators--the "philosophy dreamers" are prime material for a young poet's imagination. Its proponents must have been seen by him as strong intellectual allies.

The tradition of Christian Neoplatonism, in which Ficino, Pico and others were entrenched, could well accommodate the idea

that the end is like the beginning insofar as all creatures are of God and ultimately return to Him provided that their souls have developed to the point of regaining the "wings" which had been theirs prior to the Fall. The metaphors of Judeo-Christian scripture are thus in concert with those of Platonic philosophers in the writings of Ficino and those of his Academy. In some cases, they are melded by reference to another source entirely. We might think of Pico's argument in his Oration on the Dignity of Man where he invokes words attributed to Zoroaster: "that the soul is winged and that, when the wings drop off, she falls headlong into the body; and then, after her wings have grown sufficiently, she flies back to heaven. When his followers asked him in what manner they could obtain souls winged with well-feathered wings, he replied: 'refresh ye your wings in the waters of life'" (Oration 236).

The imagination, as bridge between divine and mundane reality, might be seen as the Romantic version of Pico's "wings." It allows the artist to participate in the world of Forms and to create unities through the God-like faculties of the higher intellect. We are not here concerned with inter-textual comparison so much as with the development of these ideas in Coleridge's fertile imagination. He would employ them as a Romantic poet, not as a Renaissance priest or magus, but the central ideas contained in Coleridge's Platonic readings could serve as powerful agents in the creation of poetry.

It is not irrelevant that Pico had intended to write a book on the occult nature of pagan myths which was to have been entitled Poetica theologia. "It was the opinion of the ancient theologians," he wrote, echoing Ficino, in his Commentary on Benvineli's Canzona d'amore,

that divine subjects and the secret Mysteries must not be rashly divulged...That is why the Egyptians had sculptures of sphinxes in all their temples, to indicate that divine knowledge, if committed to writing at all, must be covered with enigmatic veils and poetic dissimulation...How that was done...by Latin and Greek poets we shall explain in the book of our Poetic Theology (Wind 17).

Few would argue that, with regard to his supernatural poems at least, Coleridge's most successful poetry relies on enigmatic veils and poetic dissimulation to express the ethereal and preserve an air of mystery which tends to accentuate rather than obscure the spiritual nature of the message. Mystification was a Coleridgean ideal. "The elder languages," he wrote in 1799,

were fitter for poetry because they expressed only

prominent ideas with clearness, the others but darkly... Poetry gives most pleasure when only generally and not perfectly understood. It was so by me with Gray's "Bard" and Collin's Odes. The "Bard" once intoxicated me, and now I read it without pleasure. From this cause it is that what I call metaphysical poetry gives so much delight (Perkins 519).

The difficulty which critics have experienced in interpreting Coleridge's poetry suggests that a closer look at the sources, that which informs it and may serve as a cipher to decode its "mysteries," would be useful if only to contextualize its composition. It seems obvious that such a significant influence as Florentine Neoplatonism ought to be taken quite seriously in this regard. A knowledge of this source, not just the "furniture" but the essential ideas, is as necessary to our understanding of Coleridge's supernatural poems as a firm foundation in the central ideas of Anglo-Catholicism is to an understanding of T.S. Eliot's Four Quartets. If an individual's spiritual belief has any relevance at all to the way he understands and experiences his life, a knowledge of that belief is crucial to an understanding of his writings--particularly if, as in Eliot and Coleridge, the central ideas of his composition are unabashedly mystical. Since they are essentially mystical, however, we must rest content with a partial explanation of them. Poets compose

poems to express what cannot be expressed in prose. A poem which can easily be paraphrased, we shun as prosaic.

From what we know of Coleridge--his craving for a unified system of thought and his desire for a re-birth of wonder and mystery--it is likely that he found exactly what he was looking for in Renaissance Neoplatonism. It provided a system by which the soul could enjoy a mystical communion with the forces of nature, and ultimately a world view which stressed absolute unity. Moreover, the philosophy was, according to its proponents, thoroughly compatible with their Christian faith and therefore free of the charge of pantheism. It may be seen as the source of his own animistic cosmology and the foundation of the haunting mysticism of his supernatural poems. It is highly plausible that Coleridge also gained much needed confidence in his own intuitive abilities (a comfort which chronically eluded him) by allying himself with these masters of imaginative mystical theology.

Lamb's allusive comparison of Coleridge to Pico is, therefore, probably not as overly generous and fanciful as it may seem. Coleridge's fascination with the possibilities inherent in the Platonic philosophies only increased during the decade preceding his twenty-sixth year, and he shared Pico's desire for reconciliation of traditionally conflicting belief systems by reducing each to its spiritual essence. We cannot forget that it was Coleridge's hope, never far from his mind throughout his adult life, to write the

Magnum Opus, a treatise on the Logos--surely among the most ambitious intellectual endeavours ever contemplated.

Coleridge was too fine a thinker to simply borrow the mental furnishings of the Florentine Neoplatonists. Their vision of a perfectly integrated universe in which the poet, just as the magus, as mediator between the spiritual and the mundane, may "wed earth to heaven, that is...weds lower things to the endowments and powers of higher things" (Oration 249) could hardly have escaped his attention. As we study Coleridge's theory of imagination we will have further occasion to consider Pico's aspirations as well as Ficino's imaginative interpretations of Plato.

VI

The evidence we have considered tells us that Coleridge had been exposed to a significant quantity of Florentine thought. If he read the works of Ficino and his followers, and there is no reason to doubt that he did, we may conclude that he possessed enough knowledge of the tradition to have subscribed intelligently to its precepts. But we might want to determine more precisely the nature of Coleridge's Platonism.

In his study of Shelley, in which he has given considerable attention to Coleridge, James A. Notopoulos has identified three types of Platonist: "(1) the Platonist who is influenced by Plato

indirectly, through Plato's plastic interpenetration in the thought and history of civilization; (2) the Platonist who studies, accepts, and is directly influenced by Plato's thought as contained in the Dialogues; and (3) the Platonist who has Plato's wonder, inspiration, and insight into the realm of speculation" (Notopoulos 4).

Coleridge, we may say with certainty, was indirectly influenced: Alfred North Whitehead's celebrated assertion that the "safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato" is sufficient to convey the extent of Plato's presence in Western culture. Whitehead does not mean that Plato had the last word on all significant avenues of enquiry, but that Plato's "inheritance of an intellectual tradition not yet stiffened by excessive systematization, has made his writings an inexhaustible mine of suggestion" (Process and Reality 39). Most of European literature has been influenced to some extent by the Platonic tradition.

If Coleridge read Plato and his commentators and accepted the essential truth of their teachings--and his frequent references to the Platonic canon in his writings indicate that he did--then he qualifies, too, under the second definition. This becomes evident when we study his theory of imagination. The third mode, that of the thinker who shares Plato's sense of wonder, is more difficult to determine, but is particularly relevant when we consider Coleridge as poet. We might fairly say that the Romantics in general were

considerably more at ease with the Platonic philosophy than were their Enlightenment predecessors and that a dominant theme in Romanticism is an attempt to revive that sense of wonder so much damaged by the insistent anti-Platonic method of empiricism.

It becomes increasingly difficult to deny that Coleridge was probably naturally Platonic before he read the Renaissance Neoplatonists, and that his readings only contributed to his formulation of a more intelligible epistemology. He would later write that "I have read most of the works of Plato several times with profound understanding, but not all his writings. In fact, I soon found that I had read Plato by anticipation" (Table Talk 83). He was, therefore, not entirely unlike the Yankee farmer who borrowed an edition of Plato's works from Ralph Waldo Emerson. Upon returning it, he said to Emerson: "that man has a good many of my ideas [sic]" (Shorey 155). Considering Coleridge's life-long crisis of confidence, the Platonists might well have validated his own intuition.

If what we have said of Coleridge's Platonism is true, we might expect it to play a major role in his development of the theory of imagination, begun at about the same time as the composition of the supernatural poems. The riddle of Coleridge's poetic works is, in fact, partly solved by a careful study of that theory.

Chapter Five: The Flight of Imagination

The idea of imagination as a unifying power is at the heart of much of Coleridge's writings, and a great deal of commentary has concerned itself with this aspect of his thought. The construction of his theory of the imagination is his best known contribution outside of his three best known poems: "Kubla Khan," The Ancient Mariner and Christabel. And when he finally comes to offer a systematic definition of his conception of it, he employs what I believe to be a strongly Platonic schema. It has as its source the Platonic and Neoplatonic idea of original wholeness and the soul's desire to recover its lost integrity. This, I will argue, is central to an understanding of Coleridge's idea of severance and re-integration and the part it played in his overall vision of Romantic organicism. It is an inescapable element of his thought for the student who wishes to gain understanding of Coleridge as poet, philosopher, or theologian and more so for the one who would seek the force which unites all three in his most memorable poetry.

1

Coleridge's compulsion to explain the poetic act led him to dictate the brilliant, but frustrating Biographia Literaria. Even the name

is misleading. It might more appropriately have borne the title "Biographia Philosophica" (Barfield 4). Arthur Symons warned the reader in his 1906 Introduction that it was the "greatest book of criticism in English, and one of the most annoying books in any language" (Biographia vii). Symons' response is understandable, but his dismay might have been less if he had recognized that the Biographia is much more than a book of criticism. It is the most important document we have of Coleridge's search for unity in all fields of knowledge. Coleridge did not separate philosophical belief from personality, and he held "that ideas energize a man's mind and work their way into his conduct" (Brett 31). This, I think, is a sign of intellectual richness, not indecisiveness. The theory of imagination is one major landmark in the history of his search for integration of seemingly disparate phenomena. The unity in the Biographia, as it was throughout his life, is found nowhere if not in his "constant religious inclination" (Mercer 48). In this sense, as will become clear, it is a religious statement--if by religious we mean that which relates to, or manifests, devotion to an acknowledged ultimate reality. Coleridge's approach to that ultimate reality, we have said, is best described as Platonic. In a revealing note, he expressed his affinity with the English poets and philosophers whom he considered the channels of true spirituality and compares them to those recent ones he considers less admirable:

Let England be Sir. P. Sidney, Shakespere, Spenser, Milton, Bacon, Harrington, Swift, Wordsworth; and never let the names of Darwin, Johnson, Hume, furr it over!--If these too must be England, let them be another England,--or rather let the first be old England, the spiritual, platonic, old England & the second with Locke at the head of the Philosophers & Pope of the poets, with the long list of Priestleys, Payles, Hayles, Darwins, Wm. Pitts, Dundasses, &c. &c. be representative of commercial G. Britain; these have their merits but are as alien to me, as the Mandarin Philosophers & Poets of China (C. on Seventeenth Century 544).⁸

It is in keeping with Coleridge's interests that he would begin Chapter 13 with one of the most significant pieces of poetized theology in the English language. It seems particularly apt that that piece in turn owes much to the Florentine Neoplatonists. The chapter begins with a quotation from Milton's Paradise Lost which Merritt Y. Hughes has identified as "Milton's most beautiful and crucial ontological passage" (Milton 193). It may be considered as a portent of things to come and worth studying closely:

O Adam! one Almighty is, from whom

All things proceed, and up to him return 470
 If not deprav'd from good; created all
 Such to perfection, one first nature all
 Indu'd with various forms, various degrees
 Of substance, and in things that live, of life;
 But more refin'd, more spiritous and pure, 475
 As nearer to him plac'd or nearer tending,
 Each in their several active spheres assign'd,
 Till body up to spirit work, in bounds
 Proportion'd to each kind. So from the root
 Springs lighter the green stalk: from thence the leaves 480
 More airy: last, the bright consummate flower
 Spirits odorous breathes. Flowers and their fruit,
 Man's nourishment, by gradual scale sublim'd,
 To vital spirits aspire: to animal:
 To intellectual!--give both life and sense, 485
 Fancy and understanding: whence the soul
 Reason receives. And reason is her being,
 Discursive or intuitive.

(Par. Lost, b.v)

The speaker is Raphael who has descended into Paradise to admonish
 Adam of "his obedience, of his free estate, of his enemy near at

hand; who he is, and why his enemy and whatever else may avail Adam to know" (Milton 302), but the message has an intriguing relevance to the theory of imagination.

Milton's ontological tree is a condensation of the Christian Neoplatonic doctrine of emanation and divine order. The belief that all goodness "cometh down from the Father of lights" (James 2: 17) has been joined with the philosophy of the Neoplatonists to eloquently describe a plan of spiritual regeneration in which mankind returns to God by climbing the ladder of creation, "by gradual scale sublim'd." Coleridge demonstrates in the supernatural poems that he feels deeply connected with this cosmology, and he does not fail to apply its precepts in his formulation of his theory of imagination.

The description of Adam's prelapsarian state in Milton's passage may be thought of as a portrait of human possibilities congruent with the philosophy of the Neoplatonists who tended to downplay the effects of the Fall and to accentuate the human capacity for reason and contemplation. D.C. Allen has suggested that Milton's ladder of light (as expressed in the invocation to light at the beginning of Book 3 of Paradise Lost) is a metaphor in the spirit of the Catholic Neoplatonism of the Florentine school. It was a central idea in the thought of Ficino and Pico that we "may rise by a ladder of light to an almost complete comprehension of its real source" (Allen 101). It seems probable that Coleridge intended to draw attention to the similarity between his theory of the imagination and the Ficinian system. The central image of the tree probably

derives from Plato's Timaeus (90a) where man's "spiritual root" and "perfecting character" are both said to end in heaven (Milton 194). The combined effect of the images conveys a view of humanity which emphasises its access to Jacob's ladder as a means of ascending to God. Since Adam is placed in the position of "intermediary of creatures" (Oration 223) and therefore both burdened and blessed with freedom of the will, it is within his power to ascend by "gradual scale" to the higher realms of being. Freedom implies the possibility of choosing the opposite. This is the thrust of Pico's assertion that

if we wish to be companions of the angels going up and down on Jacob's ladder,...inspired by the Cherubic spirit, using philosophy through the steps of the ladder, that is of nature, and penetrating all things from centre to centre, we shall sometimes descend, with titanic force rending the unity like Osiris into many parts, and we shall sometimes ascend, with the force of Phoebus collecting the parts like the limbs of Osiris into a unity, until, resting at last in the bosom of the Father who is above the ladder, we shall be made perfect with the felicity of theology (Oration 230).

Similar imagery exists in the works of contemporary Platonists of the Cambridge School to which we know Coleridge was attracted (Milton 194).

Coleridge could hardly have chosen a more appropriate prelude to his theory of imagination.

Above the Milton quotation in Coleridge's text are the words "On the imagination, or esemplastic power" and below it is a passage in Latin which, in part, translates thus: "If indeed corporeal things contained nothing but matter they might truly be said to consist in flux and to have no substance, as the Platonists once rightly recognized" (Biographia 307). The context of the theory is firmly set.

II

It is here, in Chapter 13 of the Biographia, that we find the passage most relevant to a study of Coleridge's theory of imagination. It is a fine illustration of Coleridge's ability to imbue traditional ideas, in this case essentially Neoplatonic ones, with renewed force and relevance:

The imagination then, I consider either as primary, or secondary. The primary imagination I hold to be the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM. The secondary imagination I consider as an echo of the

former, co-existing with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the kind of its agency, and differing only in degree, and in the mode of its operation. It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealize and to unify. It is essentially vital, even as all objects (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead.

Fancy, on the contrary, has no other counters to play with, but fixities and definites. The fancy is indeed no other than a mode of memory emancipated from the order of time and space; while it is blended with, and modified by that empirical phenomenon of the will, which we express by the word choice. But equally with the ordinary memory the fancy must receive all its materials ready made from the law of association (Biographia 313).

Nothing in the Coleridge canon, outside of a handful of poems, has proved more enticing or demanded more attention than this tiny fragment of a complex and difficult work, although it has shown itself to be somewhat of a sphinx when the time has come to determine precisely what the author meant by it. The role of imagination fascinated several

of Coleridge's contemporaries such as Blake, De Quincey, Keats, Shelley and Wordsworth, in ways which exceeded that of their Enlightenment predecessors. Coleridge's theory continues to fascinate literary critics and theologians such as James Cutsinger, Robert Barth, Anthony John Harding and others who have concluded that there is a strong Neoplatonic or mystical bent to the theory. But in order to understand the context of this fragment, and hence the source of the inspiration and the excitement it engendered, it is crucial that we consider the intellectual climate of the time and the importance of the Romantic idea of imagination. In other words, Coleridge's idea of the imagination must be contextualized.

III

Problems arise immediately when we attempt to explain the meaning of this theory without reference to its Neoplatonic source, and its consciously anti-Aristotelian, and therefore, from Coleridge's point of view, anti-materialist stance. For the context and significance only becomes clear when seen in the light of Romantic Platonism which posits, most importantly, that truth is innate and remembered, not learned in the usual sense of that word. The theory can no more be comprehended without this knowledge

than can Sidney's Apology for Poetry.

Imagination is not something which can be proven or measured scientifically. It is, therefore, somewhat of a bugbear to those who would attempt to explain the universe in purely materialistic or mechanical terms. But the mechanistic cosmology of Issac Newton and the materialist philosophy of John Locke, Thomas Hobbes and others had become increasingly dominant since the seventeenth-century. It had begun in earnest with the speculations of Francis Bacon and René Descartes--both avid proponents of the scientific method in which empirical evidence was considered as more trustworthy than intuition or even deduction. They therefore implicitly denied the validity of a spiritual conception of reality. Those enemies of an organic and spiritual conception of the universe and mankind's relationship with it, could be considered by the Romantics as Aristotelians. As Coleridge put it:

Every man is born an Aristotelian or a Platonist.

I do not think it possible that anyone born an Aristotelian can become a Platonist; and I am sure no born Platonist can ever change into an Aristotelian. They are the two classes of men, beside which it is next to impossible to conceive a third. The one considers reason a quality, or attribute; the other considers it a power. I believe that Aristotle

never could get to understand what Plato meant by an idea....Aristotle was, and still is, the sovereign lord of the understanding--the faculty judging by the senses. He was a conceptualist, and never could raise himself into that higher state, which was natural to Plato, and has been so to others, in which the understanding is distinctly contemplated, and, as it were, looked down upon from the throne of actual ideas, or living, inborn, essential truths (Table Talk, 2 July 1830, in Works 594-5)).

This is perhaps one of the most admirably concise explanations of the essential differences between the two philosophers that anyone has ever ventured to provide. It is also very useful to our understanding of his theory of the imagination. Those who could transcend the limits of sense experience to philosophically probe the suprasensual or mystical realms--to contemplate essence-- could be conveniently considered as followers of Plato. Raphael had eloquently intimated as much in his painting, "The Academy," in which Plato is portrayed as pointing to the heavens, and Aristotle to the Earth. By suggesting such a clear delineation between the two paths of knowledge, with Platonic contemplation surpassing an understanding gained by a judgment of the senses, he is not only embuing the poetic act with increased dignity, but

holding it up as a more suitable means of realizing Truth.

Imagination is seen by Coleridge as a transcendent faculty which is therefore capable of intuiting that which transcends sensual experience. It communes, as it were, with "the higher realms of reality, including the divine" (Barth 25). To follow this line of thought to its logical conclusion, we can say that the author is, circumspectly perhaps, suggesting that this faculty is no less than a "possible way of seeing God" (Cutsinger 92).

The primary imagination, which is possessed by all, might be seen as the universal bridge from the finite to the infinite. It is an immaterial force which permits us to make sense of the phenomenal world, and, by so doing, allows the human mind to conceive of cosmos. Without it the phenomenal world would appear as a chaotic stream of shapes, sounds and colours without any discernable connection to one another, though in reality they are unified. Each shares in the reality of God's being, but they are also unique. Instinctively we organize our sensual experiences to create "meaningful wholes" and this instinctive action is based on an act of faith (Barth 23). The primary imagination is therefore creative energy from the source of all being, and as such, is shared by all sentient beings. This is clearly a very close analogy, if not re-statement, of the Platonic idea of innate knowledge.

The secondary imagination, then, is the "esemplastic" power strongest in the artist--the one who would strive to re-express primal

order in creative ways. The medium might be paint, words, stone or melody. But whatever the choice of form, a new unity is expressed by reconstructing apparent chaos into a new order. To do so, the artist must perform something like an act of dis-integration before a re-integration can be achieved. In other words, the artist is endowed with the power to create cosmos from chaos--he is a kind of magus. Clearly, the power imputed to the artist is of a very high order indeed. It might even be said that Coleridge believed that human action of this sort is of the same kind as the divine act of creation (Barth 24). The theory blurs the distinction between creator and creature: a notion of profound import in the study of "Kubla Khan," in which the poetic imagination may be seen as containing the promise of a return to the vision of Adam. Like the intellectual climber of Jacob's ladder, the artist can "descend" to render the unity "like Osiris into many parts" or ascend like Phoebus to re-collect the fragmented into a new unity. It is the imagination which "modifies images and gives unity to variety" (Table Talk 309).

Chapter Six: The Conjuror's Art

The Coleridgean distinction between fancy and imagination is best illuminated by reference to the writer's distinction between reason and understanding. In Coleridge's view, reason differs from understanding in kind, not merely degree. As in his related distinctions between genius and talent and symbol and allegory, Coleridge's contrast between reason and understanding is evaluative rather than simply descriptive and illustrates in sharp relief his larger agenda of subordinating empirical and associationist concepts within the matrix of an encompassing idealism. Understanding is "the faculty judging by the senses" (Works 595). It is a "merely reflective" and "generalizing" faculty which is characterized by its absence of "heart" (a complaint commonly made by critics of Enlightenment thought). In a letter to Southey, he commented on the lack of "feeling" in Hartley's theory of association: "how flat, how wretched!--Believe me, Southey! a metaphysical Solution, that does not instantly tell for something in the Heart, is grievously to be suspected as apocry[p]hal" (Letters II: 961). The "reasonable" intellectual antidote to this manner of thinking was, of course, found in the writings of mystics. Speaking of writers such as George

Fox, Jacob Boehme and William Law, Coleridge declared that

the writings of these mystics acted in no slight degree to prevent my mind from being imprisoned within the outline of any single dogmatic system. They contributed to keep alive the heart in the head; gave me an indistinct, yet stirring and working presentment, that all the products of the mere reflective partook of death, and were as the rattling twigs and sprays in winter, into which a sap was yet to be propelled, from some root to which I had not penetrated, if they were to afford my soul either food or shelter (Biographia 231-32).

Coleridge sees understanding as the pragmatic reasoning faculty of the empiricists which is a product of the "despotism of the eye." The term Understanding is used by Coleridge as a generally pejorative term to describe the negative aspects of Enlightenment science and logic. Reason, on the other hand, is an esoteric faculty which can pierce the veil of semblance to reveal essence and is closely allied with the religious thought of earlier writers who expounded the primacy of spiritual vision over scientific logic. Philosophically, Coleridge is attempting to persuade contemporary thinkers to reconsider the cosmic order of the pre-Newtonian Christian Neoplatonists.

In that earlier vision of an animate universe he saw the promise of new life.

His distinction between fancy and imagination is designed to provide the same dignity for the poetic act as the understanding/ reason distinction could provide for Romantic philosophy. We have seen that imagination for Coleridge is a "synthetic and magical" power capable of creation--not precisely ex nihilo, but certainly by willful reconstruction of primal sensation into new and meaningful wholes. Fancy is closely related to understanding. It can play only with "fixities and definites" of associative knowledge. It cannot conjure its own vision. It is a subject of sense, not of inspiration, and must rely on existing fragments if it wishes to build a "new" order. If imagination is the "fountain," then fancy is the "tank."

Nevertheless, Coleridge is determined to incorporate--rather than banish--this "lower" function into his theory. Fancy is part of the imaginative trinity because all knowledge, even associative knowledge, must ultimately admit an existential dependence on a common source: a source which in Coleridge's estimation is suprasensual. Coleridge is both asserting the essential mystery of perception--contra the empirical model and the subsequent materialist theorists of perception --and destroying the notion of the possibility of an independently functioning faculty of association. This is a more splendid and subtle piece of thought than Coleridge is generally given credit for.


The time of trying to apply them as absolutely distinct and

separable entities in any given piece of literature would be better spent in studying Coleridge's own comments on the theory. He tried to make it as clear as he thought necessary that it was not his intention to suggest that fancy and imagination are mutually exclusive. In addressing Wordsworth's misunderstanding of his meaning he wrote: "I am disposed to conjecture, that he has mis-taken the co-presence of fancy and imagination for the operation of the latter singly. A man may work with two very different tools at the same moment; each has its share of the work, but the work effected by each is very different" (Biographia 306). He further states that imagination "must have fancy, in fact the higher intellectual powers only can act through a corresponding energy of the lower" (Table Talk, April 20, 1833). Coleridge insists that this is the case, and as Richards has suggested, he "would have insisted still more often had he been a better judge of his reader's capacity for misunderstanding" (Richards 75). Understanding and fancy serve their purpose, but cannot attain to truth without the "higher" functions of reason and imagination.

I


The theory concerning fancy and imagination is significant to a study of Coleridge's philosophical orientation during his annus mirabilis, for by that time, he had already formulated

it in his mind. He tells us that, in his twenty-fourth year (1795/6) he heard Wordsworth reading his own poetry and subsequently reflected on the nature of imagination. He began to suspect "that fancy and Imagination were two distinct and widely different faculties, instead of being, according to the general belief, either two names with one meaning, or, at furthest, the lower and higher degree of one and the same power" (Biographia 203). What impressed him in Wordsworth's poetry was its difference from the poetry of contemporaries and that of the earlier eighteenth-century poets. He articulates this quality as



the union of deep feeling with profound thought; the fine balance of truth in observing, with the imaginative faculty in modifying, the objects observed; and above all the original gift of spreading the tone, the atmosphere, and with it the depth and height of the ideal world around forms, incidents and situations, of which, for the common view, custom had bedimmed all the lustre, had dried up the sparkle and the dew drops (Biographia 202).

This describes very closely the qualities we identified in Coleridge's own poetry of 1797/98. This way of seeing marks a radical switch in Coleridge's philosophical position and a corresponding increase in



the vitality of his poetic compositions.

When Coleridge first met Wordsworth, he was an admirer of the philosophical tradition of Locke and Newton. In a letter to Southey (December, 1794) he explained:

I am a complete Necessitarian--and understand the subject as well as Hartley himself--but I go farther than Hartley and believe the corporeality of thought,--namely, that it is motion. (Letters 1: 137).

In 1796 he still showed enough respect for Hartley to name his first-born son after him. But by now, Coleridge's reading had taken a very different path. His exposure to Platonism increased at this time, and its implications for the nature of consciousness, of the incorporeality of thought, were not missed by him. The Neo-platonists had become for him a "pillar of fire throughout the night" following his disillusionment with Hartley (Biographia 232).

It is important to remember that Coleridge must have formulated his theory of imagination as early as 1795/96 and that it therefore owes little to German Idealist philosophy. McFarland has reminded us that Coleridge was early in his Platonic borrowings, which are the inspiration and foundation of his theory of imagination. He read works of Plotinus, and Boehme, for example, by the late 1780s--about twenty years before Schelling read either (McFarland 35). Coleridge

makes plain his lack of dependence on German thinkers for his theory. It was, we will recall, in 1798, after the Lyrical Ballads had gone to press, that he left the Lake District to spend a year in Germany. Before this, he could not read German. He was impressed by Kant, Schelling and other German philosophers, but he insists, against the charge of plagiarism, that "all the main and fundamental ideas, were born and matured in [his] mind before [he] had ever seen a single page of the German Philosopher [Kant]" (Biographia 235). The claim is repeated as late as 1825 in a letter to his nephew, John Taylor (Letters 11: 735-6). For several years, however, he would remain content to express this vision mainly through the medium of poetry. Even in the Biographia, Coleridge relies heavily on poetry to communicate his ideas. He began the crucial Chapter 13 with a substantial quotation from Milton's Paradise Lost and he ends Chapter 14 with a passage from another poet in order to explicate the nature of the imagination and its power to unify: to reconcile opposites and discern the spiritual essence of matter. It is revealing and appropriate that Coleridge's theory be ultimately summed up in a poem about the soul written by an English Renaissance poet. This time he invokes Sir John Davies' observation of the soul, which Coleridge suggests may "with slight alteration be applied, and even more appropriately to the poetic imagination":

Doubtless this could not be, but that she [imagination] turns
 Bodies to spirit by sublimation strange,
 As fire converts to fire the things it burns,
 As we our food into our nature change.

From their gross matter she abstracts their forms,
 And draws a kind of quintessence from things;
 Which to her proper nature she transforms
 To bear them light, on her celestial wings.
 Thus does she, when from individual states

She doth abstract the universal kinds;
 Which then re-clothed in divers names and fates
 Steal access through our senses to our minds
 (Biographia 319-20).

This alchemy is best performed by the poet. He is the great hierophant,
 the bard "Who Present, Past, & Future sees/ Whose eyes have heard,/ The
 Holy Word,/ That walk'd among the ancient trees" (Blake 18). Poetry is
 thus a spiritual act similar to that of prophecy--the period of 1760 to
 about 1825 was indeed "the period of 'bardolotry'" (Engell 154).

II

The myth of Eros and Psyche, the fable of Aristophanes and the

subsequent philosophy of the Florentine school and their followers, are re-enacted here in Coleridge's theory. It is in the writings of Plato, Augustine, Proclus, Plotinus and Iamblichus, as seen through the eyes of Renaissance Neoplatonists, which the author was reading with great intensity during the late 1790s, that the theory has its prototype. In the Ancient Mariner, we saw Coleridge exploring the idea of spiritual discovery set against the plot of a metaphorical voyage. The mariner did have an experience of essential unity--an experience of the immutable behind the phenomenal. The general shape of the poem and its suggestion of a completed circle from origin to origin rediscovered portrayed geographically and spiritually, as well as the frequent references to spiritual beings which belong to the realm of early Neoplatonism, lead us to contemplate the debt it might owe to the Neoplatonic orientation that the author exhibited at the time of its composition. To understand more fully the significance of Coleridge's intellectual orientation as it related to his poetic compositions, we need to explore another poem written during the same period, "Kubla Khan." As we enter the realm of Xanadu we will do well to remember that a full recognition of the interconnectedness of Coleridge's thought is an essential prerequisite of intelligent interpretation of his poetry. McFarland has concluded that there is

in reality no tripartite division of rhapsodic poet, maundering metaphysician, and pious theologian; the same Coleridge philosophizes, poetizes, and theologizes, and, furthermore, the different fields of his interests are mutually interdependent--his poetry, both in theory and practice, is essentially, not accidentally, involved with his philosophy, and his philosophy is reciprocally bound up with his theological interests (McFarland xxxvii-xxxviii).

It is unlikely that there is another poet in the language who requires more of his readers. We are obliged to struggle with a tangled web of speculations found in the province of his prose to arrive at satisfying answers--albeit partial ones--to the riddle of his poetry.

Chapter Seven: The Garden Transfigured

In earlier chapters, we discussed the idea of severance and re-integration as it expressed itself in Coleridge's poetry and prose. We saw how it was a central element in the composition of the Ancient Mariner and the essential ingredient in the theory of imagination. The problem of unity in apparent diversity was shown to be reconciled for Coleridge by reference to a Neoplatonic world view in which all phenomena are connected by virtue of their enjoying a single, transcendent source of being. For Coleridge, Neoplatonism was the cohesive principle, "the thread upon which the beads are strung" (Taylor 3). The poet was seen as the great hierophant, the intermediary between the ethereal and the material. "Kubla Khan" is Coleridge's supreme celebration of the "synthetic and magical power" of the creative imagination and of the artist as magus.

I

"Kubla Khan: Or, A Vision in a Dream" has been enshrouded in mystery since it was composed. Even the date of its composition has not finally been ascertained. ¹⁰ Another major challenge to its interpretation has been created by Coleridge's own implausible, yet

intriguing Preface (see Appendix One). The author's suggestion that the poem is a fragment seems particularly odd since it apparently conforms to his own ideal of poetic circularity as articulated in a letter to Joseph Cottle, March, 1815. He stated 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 in imagined History move on in a strait line, assume to our Understandings a circular motion--the snake with its Tail in its mouth" (Letters IV: 956).

"Kubla Khan," it seems to me, is one of the most perfectly "circular" poems in the language--its end is to re-discover its beginning. Moreover, few readers would ever think of considering the poem as fragmentary if the author had not suggested that it were. Even those readers who doubt that "Kubla Khan" exists in the same state as the author had originally hoped it might, would tend to agree that the poem is not a "fragment" in the usual sense of that word and that "whatever may have got lost, the three stanzas tick off a perfect form, with beginning, middle, and end respectively" (Burke 33). Certainly, the composition conforms to an "Hegelian" logic of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. The serenity of the garden in stanza one (thesis) for example, is thrown into a state of extreme turbulence in stanza two (antithesis) which ultimately causes its

near complete disintegration. The synthesis is then found in the final stanza. As Coleridge implied in his theory of imagination, re-creation by way of the secondary imagination is brought about first by a dis-integration before a new integration (synthesis) can be born. Coleridge believed that "Every power in nature and in spirit must evolve an opposite, as the sole means and condition of its manifestation: and all opposition is a tendency to re-union...The identity of thesis and antithesis is the substance of all being" (Friend 1: 94n). Coleridge not only realized his ideal of poetic circularity in the composition of "Kubla Khan," but also managed to express poetically his theory of imagination. Perhaps the problem of reconciling this fact with his own self-deprecating testimony is best solved by reference to his persistent crisis of confidence. It was characteristic of the author to achieve his own ends and then to deny the accomplishment. Finally, there is another, more subtle, impediment to the poem's interpretation.

In our discussion of the Ancient Mariner we noted that Coleridge tended to follow his own aphorism that a "metaphysical" poem "gives most pleasure when only generally and not perfectly understood." The same general ambiguity haunts "Kubla Khan." It has delighted, frustrated and fascinated its readers since its composition, and this has generally been the case regardless of whether the reader has been a trained critic or a sensitive reader with little critical acumen. The poem has remained an enigma and, as has been suggested, "it is

probably no exaggeration to say that no single interpretation of 'Kubla Khan' has ever wholly satisfied anyone except the person who proposed it" (Hill 97). Once the critic steps beyond a general discussion of the poem, he or she is faced with the task of explaining how the elements in the poem are interconnected. This is impossible without a knowledge and understanding of the principles which hold them together. The recognition that the poem resists easy analysis is not a new one: it was widely feared by some of Coleridge's closest contemporaries that the work might turn out to be nothing more than delicious nonsense. In 1816, Charles Lamb wrote to Wordsworth and disclosed his puzzlement:

There is an observation Never tell thy dreams, and I am almost afraid that Kubla Khan is an owl that wont bear day light, I fear lest it should be discovered by the lantern of typography & clear reducting to letters, no better than nonsense or no sense (Lamb Letters 111: 215).

Lamb evidently enjoyed the musical quality of the piece in spite of his inability to discern any paraphrasable meaning in it. He spoke of Coleridge reciting the poem "so enchantingly that it irradiates & brings heaven & Elysian bowers into my parlour while he sings or says it" (Lamb Letters 111: 215). Leigh Hunt also noted the musical quality of the piece and attempted to illuminate the

possible meaning of the poem by reference to music and painting, and in his extravagance he stumbles on useful analogies:

'Kubla Khan' is a voice and a vision, an everlasting tune in our mouths, a dream fit for Cambuscan and all his poets, a dance of pictures such as Giotto or Cimabue, revived and re-inspired, would have made for a story of Old Tartarie, a piece of the invisible world made visible by the sun at midnight and sliding before our eyes (de J. Jackson 475).

These contemporary comments serve as reminders that the genre of the work is that of a dream vision and that it does not need to comply with the conventional neoclassical rule of the three unities. The "logic" of "Kubla Khan" is the logic of dreams. It is organic, rather than structural. It did not seem to occur to Lamb or Hunt that the musicality and the ambiguity of the poem is part of its meaning.

As Coleridge would later emphasize (especially in his Shakespearean criticism), a work of art could be held together by a more profound and subtle unity than that expounded in the poetical theories of Horace or Aristotle which the English Augustans had admired. A vital sense of unity could spring from within the work itself. In the case of "Kubla Khan," the poet has allowed ideas to,

as it were, flow from each other in what at first seems a mere "dance of pictures." But when the poem is considered as a whole, these seemingly fragmentary images are seen to connect in a meaningful way. At the time of its composition, this was not a generally known or accepted theory of poetry and it seems probable that this lack of theoretical framework made it difficult for Lamb or Hunt to recognize its application. The underlying premise of the poem is indebted, once again, to the works of Neoplatonists which the author had read during the 1790s. The distinguishing marks of Coleridge's theory of imagination were, as we have seen, "organic unity and reconciliation of opposites" (Baker 129-30). The two themes are connected: "It is by and through reconciling opposites that the esemplastic power creates unity...the true origin of this principle in Coleridge's critical thinking is Neo-Platonic"(Baker 130).¹¹

We know that Coleridge's metaphysical sensibility had led him to the conclusion that all events may be understood as outward visible signs of an essentially spiritual reality and that real change comes about as a result of spiritual, rather than political regeneration. The Pantisocratic activist had become the Platonic philosopher and the explorer of an ideal world within. Not surprisingly, he sought to express this in poetry and in so doing he relied on a vast reserve of spiritual writings from which he drew images and symbols as well as inspiration. Increasingly, Coleridge was compelled to express the underlying unity of all phenomena. He wished to illuminate the

larger cause behind the stream of events. In 1832, Coleridge reflected upon the purpose of the Lyrical Ballads. He tells us that Wordsworth, at his prompting,

was to infer and reveal the proof of, and necessity for, the whole state of man and society being subject to, and illustrative of, a redemptive process in operation, showing how this idea reconciled all the anomalies, and promised future glory and restoration. Something of this sort was, I think, agreed on. It is, in substance, what I have been all my life doing in my system of philosophy (Works 599).

The essential idea was hardly new. Plotinus would have reminded Coleridge that Heraclitus urged "the study of this matter" saying that "contraries necessarily change into each other." And talking of "the way up and the way down," [asserts] that "change is repose" (Plotinus 62). Coleridge's own poetic expression of this simple, but profound, philosophical principle required the invention of a subtle, but potent, symbolic language which could speak to a post-Augustan sensibility. This language would need to be capable of conveying an ideal world which is, but never can be--a "piece of the invisible world made visible at midnight"--a world in which the essential, intangible essence is more real than its material expression. The poem is a dialectic of paradox which invites, yet defies,

allegorical interpretation. As in the Ancient Mariner, Coleridge syncretizes and conflates elements from a wide range of philosophical and religious traditions in order to develop multivalenced symbols which are rich enough to express mystical experience in the context of poetic creativity. If we are to glean the essence of Coleridge's vision we must decipher, as best we can, the central symbols on which it relies for its transmission.¹²

II

Marshall Suther has noted that only a select few of Coleridge's poems employ the name of a personage as an element in their titles. He cites The Ancient Mariner, "Christabel," "The Ballad of the Dark Ladie, A Fragment," and "The Wanderings of Cain" (Suther 189). In each case, the protagonist (even Cain is considered as such) is one who encounters evil or the horrors of the underworld in his search for a more perfect knowledge. The significance of Coleridge naming his "psychological curiosity" after the infamous Tartar is easily missed by the modern reader.

Kubla Khan has been chosen by Coleridge as both the title of the poem and the initiator of a new order. The choice is not a neutral one. The brutal reputation of the Tartars had made their names synonymous with hubris of the highest order--of human depravation and willful opposition to divine law--in the minds of many thinkers of

the late eighteenth century. The Romantic sensibility, however, was never so singular. If the Romantics deplored the savagery of "tartary," they often admired the magnificence of the rebellious spirit. Perhaps no better example can be found than the Romantic opinion of Milton's Satan (especially since it has become increasingly apparent that "Kubla Khan" grew under the shadow of Paradise Lost and some of Milton's lesser-known works such as "At a Solemn Music" and Paradise Regained). Milton was generally revered by the Romantics in a way which would have seemed perverse to an earlier generation (and it seems most unlikely that Milton would have approved of their admiration of his arch villain). Probably the best known observation of Satan's grandeur was made by Blake in the Marriage of Heaven and Hell. He believed that the "reason Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of Angels & God, and at liberty when of Devils & Hell, is because he was a true Poet and of the Devil's party without knowing it" (Blake 35). Shelley had gone as far as to suggest in his Defense of Poetry that "Milton's devil as a moral being is far superior to his God" (Shelley 498). Coleridge, somewhat of a conservative by Romantic standards, had seen both sides of Satan's character and recognized it to have existed in "the mighty hunters of mankind from Nimrod to Napoleon" (Essays 286). He saw that "pride and sensual indulgence, finding in self the sole motive of action" was the controlling force in Milton's Satan, but that "around this character" Milton had "thrown a singularity of daring, a grandeur of sufferance, and

a ruined splendour, which constitute the very height of poetic sublimity" (Essays 286). For Coleridge, the character of Milton's Satan was closer to that of an Icarus than a Mephistopheles. The significance of this Romantic penchant for rebel angels is seen more clearly when contrasted with the views of an earlier generation who were suspicious of "great men" and whose morality of self-restraint, respect for authority, propriety and manners found in Milton a disturbing element of revolution.

If Kubla is a type of rebellious spirit, the idea that the poem conforms to a Romanticized expression of an essentially Neoplatonic metaphysic becomes an attractive possibility. It is, after all, a "stately," not a "sacred" pleasure-dome that Kubla decrees. It is a palace set in Paradise in the hope of enclosing it. Coleridge may well have associated the mighty Tartar with the forces of earthly will and corruption which build a "Hell in Heavens despite"--an antithesis to the primal innocence of Eden. Kubla's power is one of division--he builds his kingdom by separating it from what lies outside its now measured terrain. "Gardens bright with sinuous rills / Where blossomed many a incense-bearing tree" (ll. 8-9) are now "girdled round" with the artificial boundaries of "walls and towers" (l. 7). Such is the psychology of ownership. And never is its tyranny more strongly felt than when what is claimed as private property was once a paradisaal garden open to all and owned by none. The greedy one becomes a victim of his own excesses who

of Blake
Garden of Love

loses Paradise in the attempt to own it. We are presented, as we had been in the Mariner, with the idea of a conflict between sympathetic and antipathetic powers. The forces of chaos are set into operation by an act of transgression against the divine order. Kubla's act may be seen, then, as a will to sensuality and self-imposed spiritual limitation. The presentation of this antithesis sets in motion a series of "events" which portray division and increasing disintegration--a movement away from the original harmony towards a new one. We know that this idea was commonly held in the minds of many important late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth-century writers. Each in his own way, Immanuel Kant, Friedrich von Schiller, William Wordsworth and others contributed to the debate about the teleology of human progress towards a finer state of being as a result of the loss of primal innocence. Generally, the idea was that the state of mankind had begun in "simple self-unity" and "fallen into multiplicity" (Abrams 209). This was essentially another version of the paradoxical doctrine of the felix culpa: out of evil comes a greater good. This, I believe, is the essential role of Kubla: to bring about a more perfect Paradise by causing the collapse of the original.

Now that we have established the general theme of the poem, we may proceed to examine more closely the ways in which it is developed.

The exact nature of the symbolic pleasure-dome deserves

detailed attention since its construction is the first "act" of the poem which sets all other events into action. The dome is ostensibly an architectural structure imposed on what is easily recognized as a fairly traditional paradisaical garden. But given the context of its placing and the language that Coleridge uses to describe both it and that which it contains, the dome is also highly evocative of a womb. It circumscribes as well as nurtures "twice five miles of fertile ground" (1.6), and it is difficult not to think of the walled and womb-like hortus conclusus of Medieval iconography which C.G. Jung has associated with the Mother archetype. The dome, while it may ostensibly refer to a building, carries the added connotation of being a channel for new life. The "pregnancy" of the first stanza is that of immanent chaos.¹³

Wilson Knight has interpreted the "sacred river" as a symbol of the "birth-death time-stream" (Knight 94). He sees the course of the river, "through caverns measureless to man...down to a sunless sea" as the symbolic portrayal of the journey of life "through nature towards death" and he points to a similar use of the river symbol in Wordsworth's Immortality Ode (Knight 91). The river may then be, by extrapolation, a symbol of the creative current and of the source of life itself. But the caverns through which it flows lend another dimension to this symbol. The cave, or cavern, carries strong connotations in Platonic literature. The locus classicus of the cave as symbol of sensual entrapment is Plato's Allegory of the Cave in

the Republic (514). Plotinus states that this is his own interpretation: that Plato's cave, "like the grotto of Empedocles, [signifies] the realm of sense, because for the soul to 'break its chains and ascend' from its cave is, he says, to rise to the intelligible realm" (62-3). Caves were commonly associated with the maze of materiality in writings of the Romantic period. For example, in Thomas Taylor's translation of the Hymns of Orpheus, we find this note concerning the symbolic significance of the cave:

A cave, as we learn from Porphyry,...is an apt symbol of the material world; since it is agreeable at its first entrance on account of its participation of form, but is involved in the deepest obscurity to the intellectual eye, which endeavours to discern its dark foundation. So that, like a cave, its exterior and superficial parts are pleasant; but its interior parts are obscure, and its very bottom darkness itself (Taylor 225n).

As we noted in our study of the Mariner, the protagonist's "fall" was his seemingly arbitrary act of shooting the albatross. This violation of a sacred harmony became a symbol of the mariner's loss of "inner, spiritual vision" and of his willful subjection to sensuality. In "Kubla Khan," the poet employs the ancient symbol of the cave to represent a spiritual blindness which follows as a consequence of a

comparable act of transgression. This knowledge is helpful to an interpretation of the events of the second stanza--the antithesis of Eden.

III

In the first stanza the central symbols of the "sacred river" and the "pleasure-dome" existed in a state of seemingly perfect harmony. But the very act of the dome's introduction to Paradise implied division and the possibility of change. What was potential discord in the first stanza is dramatized in the second.

A gothic sense of horror and fascination is present throughout lines 12-30. Evil, as in Christabel and the Ancient Mariner, is portrayed as a hypnotic and enticing force which elicits both repulsion and desire. The very descent is both exhilarating and fearful. We move rapidly from "sunny spots of greenery" to a "deep romantic chasm," and the idyllic garden in which Kubla decreed his pleasure-dome is replaced by a haunted chaos: "A savage place!" which is nevertheless "holy and enchanted." The action takes place under the conditions of the reflective and failing light of the "waning moon" (l.15). We hear a "woman wailing for her demon-lover!" (l. 16), and yet the moaning is quickly associated with child birth:

And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
As if this earth in thick fast pants were breathing,

A mighty fountain momentarily was forced:
 Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst
 Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
 Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail (ll. 17-22).

What has been born is not so much a new order as a new chaos--it is an act of dis-integration like the dismemberment of Osiris which Pico had chosen as a metaphor of descent on Jacob's ladder (Pico 230). At first it seems that the sacred river, which is unceremoniously "flung up" has been cast into the oblivion of a "lifeless ocean" (l.28). The river meanders "with a mazy motion" (l. 25), as if dazed, until it reaches the "caverns measureless to man" (l. 27). The generative force of the sacred river becomes diffused as it finds itself entangled in the tumultuous upheaval evident in the poem's mid-section. This separation of the hitherto integrated symbols of the garden and the river gives rise to a new order, but not before the tangible expression of their union is utterly dis-integrated. Cataclysm has replaced the peace of the primal garden. The force of antipathy waxes in its stead, and at its point of maximum influence we hear that "mid this tumult Kubla heard from far/ Ancestral voices prophesying war!" (ll. 29-30). The tone of the poem alters dramatically at this point, moving from the frenzy of apocalypse to the lulling, dreamlike vision of potential harmony:

The shadow of the dome of pleasure
 Floated midway on the waves;
 Where was heard the mingled measure
 From the fountain and the caves,
 It was a miracle of rare device,
 A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!
 (11. 30-6).

CRAP!

The creation which had occurred in the first stanza is now experienced as no more than an insubstantial "shadow," but the image presented to us still contains the essence of its original integrity. The symbol of the creative force, "the fountain," and the symbol of the material world, "the caves," are presented to us as co-existent principles whose harmonization is represented musically as a "mingled measure."¹⁴ Strife becomes what it opposes as a result of its opposition. This principle, it will be recalled, was expressed by Coleridge in the maxim: "all opposition is a tendency to re-union" (Friend 94n). A "sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice" is a poetized crystallization of this principle and surely a "miracle of rare device." Fire and ice exist as complements, rather than opponents, and their co-existence results in a new creation. This passage marks the transition from the measured and divided world of Kubla to the vision of a perfect world made possible by the "magical and synthetic power" of the poetic

F

imagination. The transition is marked by the speaker, now speaking in the first person, recollecting his vision:

A damsel with a dulcimer
 In a vision once I saw:
 It was an Abyssinian maid,
 And on her dulcimer she played,
 Singing of Mount Abora
 (ll. 37-41).

This reappearance of a feminine presence is the antithesis of the "woman wailing for her demon-lover." The mood is lyrical and measured rather than chaotic. She is "an interpreter, a Beatrice who appears to promise divine guidance to the poet in his ascent to Paradise, or a moon-goddess, a Queen Isis, promising redemption and wholeness to the bard Osiris-Coleridge, and bringing ancient wisdom from the dark caves in which it had been hidden" (Harding 1985, 53). The identity and significance of the "damsel with a dulcimer" is brought to our attention by Beer, who has indicated that Coleridge's reading of James Bruce and Herodotus would have provided the potent imagery of legendary antediluvian Abyssinian cave dwellers who were reputed to be guardians of occult knowledge. Moreover, they were said to have been "androgynous...and to have within their territory the 'fountain of the sun'" (Beer 252). The detail of

androgyny should not be overlooked. We noted that syncretic Neoplatonists, informed by the fable of Aristophanes, the discourses of Hermes Trismegistus and the Kabbalistic commentaries on Genesis, stressed the androgyny of the pre-lapsarian Adam. He was not, they said, originally separate from Eve. Adam had existed in a state of psychic totality. With this in mind, the thirteenth-century Kabbalist, Moses de Leon, wrote that "any image that does not embrace male and female is not a high and true image" (Zohar 55). Coleridge's invocation and internalization of this feminine presence is in itself a reconciliation of opposites and it represents a return to primal integrity. It echoes central concerns of the syncretic Neoplatonic philosophy which had been such a dominant presence in his life during the years immediately prior to the composition of "Kubla Khan." But there is more to be said about the vision.

Once again, Coleridge's life-long admiration of Milton finds expression. The fact that the maid is "singing of Mount Abora" is important because it illustrates with even greater intensity the idea of a return to Paradise by means of the poetic faculties. It is difficult not to associate Coleridge's reference to Mount Abora with the "Mount Amara" listed by Milton in Paradise Lost (iv. 280-4) as one of the false Paradises and "where Abassin Kings thir issue Guard." This seems particularly suggestive when we consider the undeniable similarities between Coleridge's description of the landscape of Xanadu and Milton's description of Eden.

Beer has offered a plausible explanation for the change in Coleridge's poem from "Amara" to "Abora." He points to the second page of Holwell's mythological dictionary on which Coleridge would have found the comment that "the Sun was called Abor, the parent of light" (Beer 256). If Coleridge conflated Paradise with the source of light, he was simply following in the spirit of the Neoplatonists. If this is the case, we do not need to read Coleridge's Mount Abora as a consciously ironic reference to a false Paradise. Indeed, it seems likely that he simply borrowed the idea from Milton and imbued it with further significance. The stress, I believe, should be placed on the idea of music as a redemptive power, not on whether or not the Paradise is illicit. The central idea of these lines is that Paradise is found by re-membering one's original integrity--by regained communion with the source. The remaining lines, then, should be understood in the context of this principle. The lexis of music remains central, and it is music which is offered as the vehicle of re-integration. But this is a sacred music which can only be heard by one in a visionary or ecstatic state. This music is the harmony of the spheres, but "whilst this muddy vesture of decay / Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it," Lorenzo says in The Merchant of Venice (V.i. 63-5). In other words, this sacred music cannot be heard by those who are held in thrall by the senses. The means of realizing this music is, of necessity, a stepping out of the illusory world of Plato's cave to drink the milk of Paradise.

This is simply a romanticized re-telling of an ancient Greek doctrine concerning the source and purpose of poetic inspiration.¹⁵ If read carefully, the speaker is simply suggesting that if he could rediscover the source of this ancient music, he would be able to achieve Paradise in a more perfect way than Kubla. Instead of attempting to give it material expression by measuring and enclosing it, he could, perhaps, "build that dome in air." The notion suggests a re-spiritualized vision of Paradise which the poet could conjure from the depths of his own being. He could realize a Paradise within, a world of "deep delight." But the importance of the "syntactically ambiguous 'Could,' at once a conditional and an operative" (J. Bate 72) cannot be ignored. It only serves to stress the magnitude of the task, not the certainty of its completion. It would be an extraordinary and magical act capable of striking fear in the hearts of those who witnessed it. Therefore, all should cry,

Beware! Beware!

His flashing eyes, his floating hair!

Weave a circle round him thrice,

For he on honey-dew hath fed,

And drunk the milk of Paradise

(ll. 49-54).

But the fear which this spectre is most likely to elicit is "holy dread."¹⁶ The experience is described in the first person, and the achievement of this world-to-be is described as a personal one. Those who may watch the speaker climb to ecstatic heights are spectators, not participants. This visionary state is associated with the secondary, not the primary imagination. It is the way of the artist and visionary not of the Mariner's wedding guest.

Whereas the world of the first two stanzas is principally figurative and symbolic and more or less in a state of dis-equilibrium or division, the visionary world of the final stanza is a trans-figuration of that world. Essentially, it contains the same elements, but they exist on a different plane. The visionary has communed with Plato's world of the Forms. He has known the essence and source of these various elements and found unity in variety. These elements are now experienced extemporaneously and the conflated myths of creation, with which the poem has been concerned, are now no longer myth only, but presently vital. The re-membrance (anamnesis) of a prior state of psychic integrity becomes the vehicle for its realization.¹⁷

The universe which we inhabit is made up of a series of apparently contradictory elements, yet the desire to unify them, if only in our own minds, has usually taken precedence over the other available option of simply accepting the fact and making a virtue of necessity. For Coleridge, the search for a unifying principle was one which occupied his mind for most of his life. Impressed by the

beauty and evanescence of the sensible world and longing for permanence, he was compelled to postulate, through his intuition and his reading of the works of kindred spirits, that what appears to us as phantasmagoria is reducible to unity if the imaginative faculties are liberated from the shackles of barren logic and mechanism. By the cultivation of this spiritual power of imagination, the artist not only describes, but creates his own reality.

Notes

1 The textual emphases are Coleridge's unless otherwise stated.

2 Works and Biographia refer to the text of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. ed H.J Jackson (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1985) unless otherwise stated.

3 It might also be noted that Coleridge suggested a symbolic relationship between "coldness of Affections" and "Atheism" in the first of his Lectures on Revealed Religion (Lects Politics and Religion 1795 96). The shooting of the albatross takes place in a frozen landscape which might very well signify the spiritual condition of the Mariner. Coleridge also commented on atomic materialism in Lecture 2 of his Philosophical Lectures: "It is an anti-philosophy arising out of a thorough coldness of the moral feeling, and the habit of looking so intensely at the external world with all the powers of the heart fixed upon it, that at last the man does not deserve to be considered merely as having self-love (that supposes a reflex); he becomes a mere lover of self" (P Lects 107).

4 Jacob Boehme put it thus:

When we consider the visible world with its essence,
and consider the life of the creatures, then we find
therein the likeness of the invisible spiritual
world, which is hidden in the visible world, as the
soul in the body; and see thereby that the hidden God

is nigh unto all, and through all; and yet wholly
hidden to the visible essence (Mysterium I: vii).

5 Coleridge's Shakespearean criticism, for example, does not seem outdated. We tend to forget that our own approach to literature has been, to a very large extent, the result of his innovations in literary theory. We are, to that extent, "Coleridgean" and might fairly say that Coleridge is the greatest single influence on our reading of Shakespeare, with the possible exception of Freud.

J.S. Mill had recognized the far-reaching importance of Coleridge's thought as early as 1838. He says of Bentham and Coleridge that they were "the two great seminal minds of England in their age" and added that "there is hardly to be found in England an individual of any importance in the world of mind who...did not first learn to think from one of these two" (Mill 1: 330-31). More recently, T.S. Eliot proclaimed that "the criticism of today...may be said to be in direct descent of Coleridge" (Eliot 115) and Eugene L. Stelzig confirms that "Coleridge is the founding father of Anglo-American criticism" (Stelzig 82).

6 Coleridge considered the Platonic philosophy as a gateway to a higher state of consciousness conducive and helpful to the practice of poetry. He referred to the works of Plato as "preparatory exercises for the mind. It leads you to see, that proportions which

involve in themselves contradictory conceptions, are nevertheless true; and which therefore, must belong to a higher logic--that of ideas. They are contradictory only in the Aristotelian logic, which is the instrument of understanding" (Table Talk, 82-3). Coleridge's most memorable poetry achieves this reconciliation of contradictions by application of this "higher logic."

7 There have been a few valuable studies of Coleridge's philosophical interests, including J.M. Muirhead's Coleridge as Philosopher, Thomas McFarland's Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition and Owen Barfield's What Coleridge Thought. These are indispensable to the serious student of Coleridge's borrowings, innovations and philosophic goals. But they are not principally concerned with the relationship that Platonism may have had to his poetic sensibility. Some important studies for the student of Coleridge's Platonism have been prepared by those of theological turn of mind. There are not many, and most of these are not book length. They include James A. Cutsinger's "Coleridgean Polarity and Theological Vision;" J. Robert Barth's essay, "Theological Implications of Coleridge's Theory of Imagination" and Maren-Sofie Røstvig's excellent article, "'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' and the Cosmic System of Robert Fludd." Other papers worthy of mention are Lucyle Werkmeister's "The Early Coleridge: His Rage for Metaphysics;" W. Shrickx's "Coleridge and the Cambridge Platonists" and Bishop C. Hunt Jr., "Coleridge and the Endeavour of Philosophy."

John Beer's classic, Coleridge the Visionary, Anthony John Harding's Coleridge and the Inspired Word and E.S. Shaffer's 'Kubla Khan' and the Fall of Jerusalem are also very useful in this regard. Each of the above, however, tends to favour one aspect of Coleridge's genius over another.

8 Coleridge seems to have had a special affection for the Cambridge Platonists. As W. Schrickx has shown, there is ample evidence that Coleridge read not only Law and Fox, but also Henry More and Ralph Cudworth. He seems to have been particularly fond of Cudworth's The True Intellectual System of the Universe (Ed. T. Birch). He borrowed the two compendious volumes from the Bristol library for two weeks in May, 1775, returning them on 1 June. He then re-borrowed the work in the following Autumn and did not return it until 13 December 1796 (Whalley's entry 55 and 90).

9 Theories of the imagination, and its distinction from fancy, were by no means unheard of during the latter half of the eighteenth century. The question had in fact become commonplace. Without rehearsing the ancient theories on the subject--which tended to place a higher value on fancy than imagination--we know that Coleridge found himself heir to a significant body of commentary on the subject by his own countrymen. The writings of Puttenham, Temple, Dryden, and Addison all contributed to the debate. He must have been aware, too, of the essay by Arthur Browne on "Fancy and Imagination" in his Miscellaneous Sketches; or, Hints

for Essays (1798) in which the terms are simply a reversal of Coleridge's. Coleridge was treading a well-trodden path and he must have assumed his reader to be aware of that fact. We would be justified in assuming that Coleridge wished to do more than simply offer another twist on a familiar theme. It seems likely that he was attempting to offer a more powerful vindication of the poetic faculties which would tend to undermine the insidious premises of his intellectual enemies, most notably materialist philosophy and science.

10 The dating of "Kubla Khan" has been an obstacle to the poem's interpretation and significance. The author gives the summer of 1797 as the date of composition, but his grandson and editor, Ernest Hartley Coleridge, states confidently that there "can be little doubt that Coleridge should have written 'the summer of 1798'." He cites evidence from an unpublished MS., dated 3 Nov., 1810, which suggests a connection in Coleridge's mind between a "retirement to 'Linton and Porlock' and a recourse to opium with his quarrel with Charles Lloyd, and consequent distress of mind. That quarrel was at its height in May 1798" (Poetical Works, 295n). I.A. Richards, H.J. Jackson, Earl Leslie Griggs and others have accepted 1798 as the probable date of composition. E. Schneider believes it was written as late as 1799 or 1800. Recently, however, H.W. Piper has suggested that there is little reason to doubt the poem's traditional date of 1797. Piper suggests a possible conflation in

Coleridge's mind between two separate visits to a cottage in the vicinity of Porlock. The first took place in 1797 and involved opium use and the composition of "Kubla Khan," and the second, in late 1799, was associated with Coleridge's quarrel with Charles Lamb and the true beginning of his addiction to opium. Dorothy Wordsworth's oblique mention of the poem in 1798 indicates that it was composed before 1799. Piper believes the common link to have been the consumption of opium (Abora, 60). I find Piper's argument convincing, but even a date of early 1798 would not alter the importance of the poem as evidence of the poet's metaphysical sensibility before his trip to Germany in September of that year.

11 Like the positive and negative poles of an electrical current, they require each other to exist, and they derive from a single source. This idea of the true unity of apparently opposing forces is central to Neoplatonists as various as John Scotus Eriugina, Jacob Boehme, and Giordano Bruno. Coleridge was familiar with their writings.

12 James Volant Baker's definition of a symbol as "the equivalent in words of an iconic sign in plastic art...like the catholic definition of a sacrament, the outward visible sign of an invisible meaning" (Baker, 201) is particularly helpful with regard to Coleridge in general and to "Kubla Khan" in particular.

13 E.S. Shaffer has argued that Coleridge has managed to free the poem from the constraints of spatiality by expressing the

universal by way of an exercise in specificity (surely another reconciliation of opposites). He suggests that the "very attempt to establish a mappable landscape succeeds in dis-establishing it utterly" (Shaffer 165). Shaffer further points to the "impression of precise 'placing'" in the poem and interprets language such as "In Xanadu;; "Where Alph, the sacred river, ran"; "Down"; "there were gardens"; "here were forests"; and "amid" as comprising something approximating a sacred geometry, not merely geography." (Shaffer 165).

14 It might be noted that Coleridge's favourite gospel was St. John's. This is replete with images of the waters of life everlasting. Reference to this rich source of symbol offers another dimension to the water-related imagery in the poem. In John's gospel There is a "well of water springing up into life" (IV. 51), "rivers of everlasting life" (VIII. 38) and we are admonished that "he that believeth in me shall never thirst" (VI. 35). Moreover, in Revelation we read of "living fountains of waters" (VII. 17) and "a pure river of water of life" (XXXII. I). According to mystical tradition, this "fountain of life" (Ps. 36:9) is associated with the male principle--in contrast to the feminine connotations of the "caves" and the "pleasure-dome." This dialectic is operative throughout the poem.

15 As Hill has reminded us, the convention is a well-documented one, "stretching from the Orphic cults of ancient Greece to the poet

with his 'eye in a fine frenzy rolling' of A Midsummer Night's Dream [V.i. 12], and beyond" (Hill 92). The closing lines of "Kubla Khan" are held together by reference to Plato's teaching that poets partake in a divine power which impels them "like the power of the stone Euripides called the magnet...This stone does not simply attract the iron rings, just by themselves; it also imparts to the rings a force enabling them to do the same thing as the stone itself" (Ion 533d). This idea was a central one in Coleridge's theory of imagination. The poet communes with "the higher realms of reality including the divine" (Barth, 25). Human action of this sort is of the same kind as the divine act of creation (Barth, 24). The poet transforms the spatial and the temporal world into spiritualized consciousness by participation in the divine. The poet-bard, as Coleridge portrays him in "Kubla Khan," bears striking similarities to the ecstatic poets described by Socrates to Ion:

when once they launch into harmony and rhythm, they are seized with the Bacchic transport, and are possessed --as the baccants, when possessed, draw milk and honey from the rivers, but not when in their senses. So the spirit of the lyric poet works, according to their own report. For the poets tell us, don't they, that the melodies they bring us are gathered from rills that run with honey, out of the glens and gardens of the Muses,

and they bring them as the bees do honey, flying like the bees? And what they say is true, for a poet is a light and winged thing, and holy, and never able to compose until he has become inspired, and is beside himself, and reason is no longer in him (Ion 534).

16 The image is not only that of a poet-bard, but also of the visionary prophet. Piper has noted the similarity between Coleridge's inspired poet and Raphael's portrait of Ezekiel. Coleridge was "conscious of his role as a poet-prophet, not only by calling himself 'the Watchman' after Ezekiel, but in stressing the sacred character of what he was attempting to do in poetry" (Piper 71).

17 Coleridge seems to have believed with Blake that "the imaginative pursuit redeems the fallen world and elevates what Keats calls 'nothings,' like poetry, to shape, to meaning, and to supreme worth" (Engell 247). By his communion with the realm of the divine, the poet, like a visionary prophet, "participates in the eternal, the infinite, and the one" (Shelley Defense 483). The spatial, temporal world of Kubla is transmuted from "temporal construct into spiritual reality" (Harding, 53). The poem itself prophesies this transformative power and "reaffirms the sense for the divine in the human race but does not subsume or secularize it, if by that we mean that the sense for the divine is emptied of its content" (Harding, 53). On the contrary, the divine capabilities of the poet, by the

power of the shaping and transformative spirit of the secondary imagination, destroy the idea of a distinct object/subject dichotomy, a major problem faced by Romantic thinkers.

Works Cited

- Abrams, M.H. Natural Supernaturalism. New York: Norton, 1971.
- Allen, Don Cameron. The Harmonious Vision: Studies in Milton's Poetry. Baltimore: John Hopkin's, 1970.
- Apuleius. The Golden Ass. Trans. W. Adlington. New York: Liveright, 1943.
- Baker, James Volant. The Sacred River: Coleridge's Theory of Imagination. n.p.: Louisiana State UP, 1957.
- Barfield, Owen. What Coleridge Thought. Middletown: Wesleyan UP, 1971.
- Barth, J. Robert, S.J. "Theological Implications of Coleridge's Theory of Imagination." SLitI. 19.2 (Fall-1986): 22-33.
- Bate, Jonathan. "'Kubla Khan' and 'At a Solemn Music'." ELN. 24 (Sept 1986-June 1987): 71-73.
- Bate, Walter Jackson. Coleridge. New York: Macmillan, 1968.
- Beer, J.B. Coleridge the Visionary. London: Chatto & Windus, 1959.
- Blake, William. The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake. Ed. David V. Erdman. New York: Anchor, 1982.
- Boehme, Jacob. Mysterium Magnum. Trans. John Sparrow. Ed. C.J.B. 2 vols. London: John M. Watkins, 1965.
- Brett, R.L. Fancy and Imagination. Fakenham: Methuen, 1969.
- Burke, Kenneth. "'Kubla Khan:' Proto-Surrealist Poem." in Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea, 1986: 33-52.

- Byron, Lord. Selected Letters and Journals. Ed. Leslie A. Marchand.
Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1982.
- Coleridge, S.T. The Best of Coleridge. Ed. Earl Leslie Griggs. New York:
Ronald P, 1934.
- . Coleridge and the Seventeenth Century. Ed. Roberta Florence
Brinkley. Durham: Duke UP, 1955.
- . Coleridge Poetical Works. Ed. Ernest Hartley Coleridge.
Oxford: Oxford UP, 1980.
- . Collected Letters. Ed. E.L. Griggs. 6 vols. Oxford: Clarendon,
1956-71.
- . Essays and Lectures on Shakespeare and Other Poets and Dramatists.
New York: Dent, n.d.
- . The Friend. Ed. Barbara E. Rooke. 2 vols. London: Princeton
UP (Bollingen), 1969.
- . Lectures 1795 On Politics and Religion. Ed. Lewis Patton and
Peter Mann. London: Princeton UP (Bollingen), 1971.
- . Marginalia. Ed. George Whalley. 2 vols. Princeton: Princeton
UP (Bollingen), 1980-84.
- . Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Ed. Kathleen Coburn. 2
vols. London: Routledge, 1957.
- . The Philosophical Lectures, 1818-1819. Ed. Kathleen Coburn.
New York: Philosophical Library, 1949.
- . The Portable Coleridge. Ed. I.A. Richards. Harmondsworth
Penguin, 1978.

- . Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Ed. H.J. Jackson. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1985.
- . Table Talk and Omniana. London: Oxford UP, 1917.
- Cutsinger, James S. "Coleridgean Polarity and Theological Vision."
HTR 76:1 (1983): 91-108.
- de J. Jackson, J.R. ed. Coleridge: The Critical Heritage. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1970.
- de Leon, Moses. Zohar: The Book of Enlightenment. Ed. and Trans. Daniel Chahan Matt. New York: Paulist P, 1983.
- De Quincey, Thomas. Recollections of the Lakes and the Lake Poets. Ed. David Wright. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970.
- Empson, William. "The Ancient Mariner." in Modern Critical Interpretations: Samuel Taylor Coleridge's The Rime of the Ancient Mariner. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea, 1986.
- Engell, James. The Creative Imagination. Cambridge Mass: Harvard UP, 1981.
- Eliot, T.S. Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot. Ed. Frank Kermode. London: Faber, 1975.
- Dionysius the Areopagite. The Divine Names & The Mystical Theology. Trans. C.E. Rolt. London: SPCK, 1940.
- Ficino, Marsilio. The Book of Life. Trans. Charles Boer. Irving: Spring, 1980.
- . Commentary on Plato's Symposium on Love. Trans. Sears Jayne. Dallas: Spring, 1985.

- . Marsilio Ficino and the Phaedran Charioteer. Trans and Intro. Michael J.B. Allen. Berkeley: U. of California P, 1981.
- . The Philebus Commentary. Trans. Michael J.B. Allen. Berkeley: U. of California P, 1975.
- Fruman, Norman. Coleridge, The Damaged Archangel. New York: George Braziller, 1971.
- Graves, Robert. The White Goddess: A Historical Grammar of Poetic Myth. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1966.
- Harding, Anthony John. Coleridge and the Inspired Word. Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 1985.
- . Coleridge and the Idea of Love. London: Cambridge UP, 1974.
- Harper, G.M. "Coleridge's Conversation Poems." in English Romantic Poets. Ed. M.H. Abrams. London: Oxford UP, 1975.
- Haven, Richard. "Coleridge, Hartley, and the Mystics." JHI. 20. (1959): 477-494.
- Hermes Trismegistus. Hermetica. Ed. and Trans. Walter Scott. 4 vols. Boston: Shambhala, 1985.
- Hill, John Spencer. Imagination in Coleridge. London: Macmillan, 1978.
- Holy Bible. (King James Version). London: Collins, 1975.
- House, Humphry. Coleridge: The Clark Lectures 1951-52. London: Rupert Hart Davis, 1962.
- Hunt, Bishop C. Jr. "Coleridge and the Endeavour of Philosophy." PMLA. 91 (1976): 829-839.

- Keats, John. John Keats: Complete Poems. Ed. Jack Stillinger.
Cambridge, Mass: Harvard UP, 1982.
- Knight, G. Wilson. The Starlit Dome: Studies in the Poetry of Vision.
London: Methuen, 1959.
- Knight, William. ed. Memorials of Coleorton. 2 vols. Boston:
Riverside, 1887.
- Lamb, Charles. Elia & The Late Essays of Elia. Ed. Jonathan Bate.
Oxford: Oxford UP, 1987.
- . The Letters of Charles and Mary Lamb. Ed. Edwin W. Marris,
Jr. 5 vols. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1978.
- Lowes, John Livingston. The Road To Xanadu: A Study in the Ways of
the Imagination. Boston: Riverside, 1927.
- McFarland, Thomas. Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition. Oxford:
Clarendon, 1969.
- Mercer, Dorothy F. "The Symbolism of 'Kubla Khan'" JAE. XII. 1
(September-1953): 44-66.
- Mill, J.S. Dissertations and Discussions. 2nd ed. 4 vols. London:
Longmans, 1875.
- Milton, John. John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose. Ed
Merritt Y. Hughes. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1957.
- Muirhead, John H. Coleridge as Philosopher. London: George Allen,
1930.
- Newsome, David. Two Classes of Men. London: John Murray, 1974.
- Notopoulos, James A. The Platonism of Shelley. Durham: Duke UP,
1949.

- Origen. Origen. Trans and Intro. Hans Urs Von Balthasar. New York: Paulist P, 1979.
- Perkins, David. English Romantic Writers. New York: Harcourt, 1967.
- Pico [Giovanni] Della Mirandola. Oration on the Dignity of Man. Trans. Elizabeth Livermore Forbes, in The Renaissance Philosophy of Man. Ed. Ernst Cassirer et al. Chicago: U. of Chicago P, 1948.
- Piper, H.W. The Singing of Mount Abora. Cranburg: Associated University Presses, 1987.
- Plato. The Collected Dialogues. Ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1961.
- Proclus. The Elements of Theology. Trans. E.R. Dodds. Oxford: Clarendon, 1963.
- Plotinus. The Essential Plotinus. Trans. Elmer O'Brian. 2nd ed. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1964.
- Richards, I.A. Coleridge on Imagination. London: Routledge, 1950.
- Røstvig, Maren-Sofie. "'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' and the Cosmic System of Robert Fludd." TSL. XII (1967): 69-81.
- Schneider, Elizabeth. Coleridge, Opium and Kubla Khan. Chicago: U. of Chicago P, 1953.
- . "Introduction" Samuel Taylor Coleridge: Selected Poetry and Prose. 2nd ed. Ed. Elizabeth Schneider. San Francisco: Rinehart, 1971.
- Schrickx, W. "Coleridge and the Cambridge Platonists." ELR. 7.1 (1966): 71-91.

- Shaffer, E.S. 'Kubla Khan' and the Fall of Jerusalem: The Mythological School in Biblical Criticism and Secular Literature 1770-1880. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1975.
- Shelley, Percy Bysshe. Shelley's Poetry and Prose. Ed. Donald H. Reiman and Sharon B. Powers. New York: Norton, 1977.
- . Shelley's Prose or The Trumpet of Prophecy. Ed. David Lee Clark. Albuquerque: U. of New Mexico P, 1954.
- Shorey, Paul. Platonism, Ancient and Modern. Berkeley: U. of California P, 1938.
- Sidney, Sir Philip. An Apology for Poetry. Ed. Forrest G. Robinson. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1970.
- Stelzig, E.L. "Coleridge's Failed Quest: The Anti-Climax of Fancy/Imagination in the Biographia Literaria." UMSE. 1 (1980): 82-96.
- Suther, Marshall. Visions of Xanadu. New York: Columbia UP, 1965.
- Symons, Arthur. "Introduction." Biographia Literaria. by Samuel Taylor Coleridge. London: Dent, 1906.
- Taylor, Thomas. Thomas Taylor the Platonist: Selected Writings. Ed. and Intro. Kathleen Raine and George Mills Harper. Princeton: Princeton UP. (Bollingen), 1969.
- Walker, D.P. The Ancient Theology. Old Woking: Gresham P, 1972.
- Warren, Robert Penn. Selected Essays. New York: Random, n.d.
- Werkmeister, Lucyle. "The Early Coleridge: His 'Rage for Metaphysics.'" HTR. 54. (1961): 99-123.

Whitehead, Alfred North. Process and Reality (corrected edition).

Ed. David Ray Griffin and Donald W. Sherburne. New York:

Free P, 1978.

Willey, Basil. Samuel Taylor Coleridge. New York: Norton, 1972.

Wind, Edgar. Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance. New York:

Norton., 1968.

Wordsworth, William. Selected Poems and Prefaces. Ed. Jack

Stillinger. Boston: Houghton (Riverside), 1965.

Yeats, W.B. Selected Poetry. Ed. A. Norman Jeffares. London: Pan,

1974.

Appendix One: The Problematic Preface

Coleridge wrote in the Preface that "Kubla Khan" came about under the following conditions:

In the summer of the year 1797, the Author, then in ill health, had retired to a lonely farm house between Porlock and Linton, on the Exmoor confines of Somerset and Devonshire. In consequence of a slight indisposition, an anodyne had been prescribed, from the effects of which he fell asleep in his chair at the moment that he was reading the following sentence, or words of the same substance, in 'Purchas's Pilgrimage': 'Here the Khan Kubla commanded a palace to be built, and a stately garden thereunto. And thus ten miles of fertile ground were inclosed with a wall.' The author continued for about three hours in a profound sleep, at least of the external senses, during which time he has the most vivid confidence, that he could not have composed less than from two to three hundred lines; if that indeed can be called composition in which all the images rose up before him as things, with a parallel production of the

correspondent expressions, without any sensation or consciousness of effort. On awakening he appeared to himself to have a distant recollection of the whole, and taking his pen, ink, and paper, instantly and eagerly wrote down the lines that are here preserved. At this moment he was unfortunately called out by a person on business from Porlock, and detained by him above an hour, and on his return to his room, found, to his no small surprise and mortification, that though he still retained some vague and dim recollection of the general purport of the vision, yet, with the exception of some eight or ten scattered lines and images, all the rest has passed away like the images on the surface of a stream into which a stone has been cast, but, alas! without the after restoration of the latter (Works 102).

Lowes seized on this report as evidence of the creative imagination acting in its most candid performance. He accepted it as wholly authentic. Perhaps the strongest adversary to this position has been Fruman. He points out that Coleridge commonly made similar claims. The poet had, for example, "claimed that 'Religious Musings' had been written 'on the Christmas Eve of 1794,' but he had worked hard on the poem for almost two years" (Fruman 335). Fruman argues convincingly that the Preface is a fraud and that the poem had in

fact been the product of much revision, of which the Crew MS, an autograph manuscript of "Kubla Khan" disclosed in 1934, is but one. He believes with Elizabeth Schneider that the poem is a "fragment with a postscript added at some later time when it has become obvious to the poet that he cannot finish the piece" (Schneider 1953 247). But Fruman is not entirely pleased with his own explanation. He, like many others, has found "Kubla Khan" to be a poem like none of Coleridge's other compositions, even the Ancient Mariner with which it is often associated, or for that matter any other poem in the language. I do not wish to contradict Fruman or to call Coleridge a liar. Since Coleridge remained forever after silent about the poem, and since no one else has been able to verify or refute the story, we are left in the unfortunate position of either taking Coleridge at his implausible word and deciding what he meant by it or fabricating our own explanation of why he would have felt it necessary to delude his reader. Though we would dearly like to know the truth about the composition of "Kubla Khan" we are obliged to do without the certainty that we possess it. What seems to me a somewhat desperate attempt to avoid this conclusion has been posited by H.J. Jackson who contends that Coleridge never intended the Preface to be taken as literally true, but was "meant to suggest the frame of mind in which the poem (which Coleridge called a 'psychological curiosity') was to be read, as is the case with the note prefixed to 'This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison'" (Works 702). The events described by Coleridge in

A

the Preface are simply too specific and detailed to pass for this.

There is at least one thing of which we may be sure: the poem is more literary and less a dream composition than Lowes had supposed. Until recently, most scholars have followed his lead and assumed that the account given by the poet was more or less literally true. This position has cultivated the belief that the poet did compose the poem in a state of profound sleep of the external senses after having read a sentence in Purchas's Pilgrimage and that this tells us something about the nature of poetic creation--as a mysterious event involving the subliminal association of one word or image with another in "the twilight realms of consciousness" and one in which the elements of this composition, "atomes crochus," are the primal building blocks "out of whose confluences and coalescences suddenly emerged the poem" (Lowes 357)--as well as offering a major source for the imagery and theme of "Kubla Khan." The disclosure of the Crew MS ought to have caused significant revision of this position, but even without it there is something wrong with this theory. It does not consider the larger significance of the images and so it cannot explain how they are meaningfully yoked. It has become increasingly apparent that literary and philosophical allusion, consciously employed, is no less a part of "Kubla Khan" than any other poem. Most importantly, these allusions are employed by the poet in such a way as to offer contextualization to otherwise disconnected images and events. They are responsible for imparting

what little discernable meaning that the poem contains and they are principally Platonic and Neoplatonic in origin. Lowes, we have noted, did not take the content of Coleridge's Neoplatonic readings seriously, believing that the poet did little more than mine them for poetic furniture. This oversimplification might have been avoided by a closer study of Coleridge's philosophical orientation.

VITA

Surname: Clark Given Names: Peter James

Place of Birth: London, England. Date of Birth: 15 March, 1954.

Educational Institutions Attended:

Okanagan College, Penticton	1981 to 1982
Okanagan College, Kelowna	1982 to 1983
University of Victoria, B.C.	1983 to 1989

B.A. (1st Class Major) 1986 University of Victoria, B.C.

Publications:

Rev. of The Memoirs of a Literary Blockhead, by Robin Skelton.

Malahat 83 (Summer 1988): 197.

PARTIAL COPYRIGHT LICENSE

I hereby grant the right to lend my thesis (the title of which is shown below) to users of the University of Victoria Library, and to make single copies only for such users or in response to a request from the library or any other university, or similar institution, on its behalf or for one of its users. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by me or a member of the University designated by me. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Title of Thesis:

Severance And Re-Integration: Syncretic Neoplatonism and the Genesis of "Kubla Khan."

Author

PETER JAMES CLARK

14 April, 1989



National Library
of Canada

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Canadian Theses Service Service des thèses canadiennes

Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0N4

The author has granted an irrevocable non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of his/her thesis by any means and in any form or format, making this thesis available to interested persons.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in his/her thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without his/her permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence irrévocable et non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de sa thèse de quelque manière et sous quelque forme que ce soit pour mettre des exemplaires de cette thèse à la disposition des personnes intéressées.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège sa thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

ISBN 0-315-50137-5