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The Notion of Nature in Coleridge and Wordsworth  
from the Perspective of Ecotheology

BY

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## Table of Contents

<b>Abstract</b> .....	v
<b>Note on Texts and Abbreviations</b> .....	vi
<b>Introduction</b> .....	2
<b>Chapter 1, Ecotheology as a conceptual framework</b> .....	18
1. The inter-relatedness of humanity, nature, and God	
1.1. Teilhard: matter and spirit .....	21
1.2. Teilhard: biosphere, noosphere, and Omega .....	23
1.3. Moltmann: the relational dynamic of the Trinity .....	27
1.4. Moltmann: the Trinitarian idea of God and creation .....	29
1.5. A reciprocal relationship over and against a hierarchical one .....	34
2. The presence of God in the universe: the sacredness of nature	
2.1. Teilhard: the cosmic Christ and divine love .....	36
2.2. Moltmann: the cosmic Spirit .....	39
2.3. The possibility of the transcendence and immanence of God .....	40
3. Cosmic eschatology	
3.1. The significance of eschatology in ecotheology and theology .....	45
3.2. Cosmic eschatology in Teilhard and Moltmann .....	50
<b>Ch. 2, Coleridge's quest for the unity of the universe</b> .....	57
1. The inter-relatedness of the universe	
1.1. The monistic idea of God: Priestley and Spinoza .....	59
1.2. The power of love .....	68
1.3. Natural philosophy: polarity and opposition .....	76
1.4. The idea of evolution: individuation .....	81
2. The relationship between the mind and nature	
2.1. Nature as a projection of the mind .....	84
2.2. The problems of solipsism and dualism .....	87
2.3. David Hartley: a scientific approach to the body and mind .....	88
2.4. The unity between the external and the internal in 'The Eolian Harp' .....	96
2.5. The passivity and activity of the mind in 'The Eolian Harp' .....	99

2.6. An external world and the mind in ‘Dejection: An Ode’ .....	104
3. A mutual relationship and a religious aspect in evolution	
3.1. A mutual relationship in a passage from <i>The Statesman’s Manual</i> .....	111
3.2. Martin Buber’s idea of I–Thou .....	116
3.3. A religious aspect in imagination and symbol .....	118
3.4. Symbol and sacrament in nature .....	123
4. The problem of pantheism	
4.1. Coleridge’s struggle with pantheism .....	125
4.2. The pantheist controversy in Germany .....	130
4.3. Kant’s transcendental idealism .....	133
4.4. Schelling’s idea of nature as self–subsistence .....	138
4.5. The Trinitarian notion of God in Coleridge .....	140
<b>Chapter 3, Wordsworth’s yearning for the sense of dwelling</b> .....	147
1. The idea of Dwelling	
1.1. Dwelling and the natural environment .....	148
1.2. Dwelling and the Divinity .....	151
1.3. Heidegger’s idea of dwelling .....	154
1.4. <i>The Vale of Esthwaite</i> .....	158
2. Dwelling in a cottage in Grasmere	
2.1. Fears and anxieties about city–life, uncertainties, and mortality .....	165
2.2. Dwelling and the inner self in <i>the Ruined Cottage</i> .....	171
2.3. The experience of ‘One life’ .....	173
2.4. ‘The one great Life’ and ‘one Household under God’ .....	182
3. Dwelling in the community of the living and the dead	
3.1. A fresh challenge from human mortality .....	189
3.2. Paul de Man and <i>Essays Upon Epitaphs</i> .....	191
3.3. Immortality, language, and the permanence of the epitaph .....	193
3.4. Religion and the idea of immortality .....	197
3.5. The community of the living and the dead .....	199
3.6. The relationship between nature and the graveyard .....	206
4. Heavenly Dwelling	
4.1. <i>Ecclesiastical Sonnets</i> .....	212
4.2. The experience of death in the journey of our life .....	214
4.3. Church architecture as a symbol of heavenly dwelling .....	218
4.4. Nature in the heavenly dwelling .....	222

<b>Chapter 4, Eschatology in Coleridge and Wordsworth .....</b>	<b>230</b>
1. Coleridge	
1.1. The French Revolution	
1.1.1. Enlightenment, aesthetics and politics, and religion .....	231
1.1.2. The French Revolution as apocalypse and millennium .....	236
1.1.3. Nature in apocalypse and millennium .....	243
1.1.4. Coleridge's disillusionment with the Revolution .....	246
1.2. The revolution of the mind	
1.2.1. Hope in a private, domestic and natural sphere .....	250
1.2.2. The revolution of the mind: a moral reformation .....	253
1.2.3. Apocalypse as a symbolic drama .....	257
1.2.4. Apocalypse: morality, symbolic drama, an external reality .....	263
1.2.5. Nature and the Apocalypse as a symbolic drama .....	266
1.3. The final vision of the universe .....	269
2. Wordsworth	
2.1. The French Revolution	
2.1.1. The French Revolution as apocalypse and millennium .....	270
2.1.2. A lesson of nature and 'power of strong controul' in nature .....	277
2.1.3. Wordsworth's disillusionment with the Revolution .....	279
2.2. The growth of the mind: imagination	
2.2.1. Imagination, nature, 'a new world' .....	281
2.2.2. 'A higher power' in 'life's everyday appearances' .....	284
2.2.3. Apocalypse: a prophetic voice, God, and nature .....	288
2.3. The final vision of the universe .....	295
<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>302</b>
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>314</b>

## Abstract

This thesis aims to examine the idea of nature in the works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth from the perspective of ecotheology. Its intention is not to identify their works with ecotheology, but it will be suggested how Coleridge's search for the unity of the universe and Wordsworth's yearning for dwelling relate to recent developments in ecotheological theory. Ecotheology can thus help us understand their ideas on nature. There is a historical and disciplinary gap between the works of the Romantic Period and ecotheology, and, in Romantic criticism, the idea of nature is often misunderstood as a mere projection of the mind. Moreover, Coleridge's poetry has been the subject of an unjustified ideological criticism that has misrepresented its theological viewpoints, and Wordsworth has also been read in terms of a secular narrative about nature and consciousness. However, both Coleridge and Wordsworth to some extent perceive nature as an environmental landscape, and therefore nature can be understood as an independent reality as well as a creation of the mind. They develop ideas of God in their literary works in a way that needs to be understood not in a secular way, but in a religious sense. Just as ecotheology attempts to articulate the value of the non-human natural world, so Coleridge's notion of unity and Wordsworth's idea of dwelling affirm similar values throughout their works.

Focusing in Chapter 1 on the writings of a number of twentieth-century theologians, including Jürgen Moltmann and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, I will outline the development of key ideas in ecotheology in terms of three main elements, the interrelatedness of the universe, the independent sacred value of nature, and a cosmic eschatology, which will be used as a conceptual framework for exploring the works of Coleridge and Wordsworth. Chapter 2 will show that Coleridge's lifelong search for the unity of the universe reveals the interrelatedness of the universe, and the sacredness of nature as an independent value. Chapter 3 will see that Wordsworth's idea of dwelling also implies these two elements. Chapter 4 will show that their eschatological visions are associated with a cosmic eschatology, of which the non-human natural world constitutes a crucial part.

## Note on Texts and Abbreviations

### Coleridge

All quotations from Coleridge's poetry throughout this thesis refer to *The Complete Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 2 vols., ed by E. H. Coleridge (Oxford: Clarendon, 1912), and the Bollingen Series (Princeton University Press, 1971-) has been used for his prose works.

<i>AR</i>	<i>Aids to Reflection</i> , ed. by John Beer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).
<i>BL</i>	<i>Biographia Literaria</i> , 2 vol. ed. by James Engell and W. Jackson Bate (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983).
<i>CCS</i>	<i>On the Constitution of the Church and State</i> , ed. by John Colmer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976).
<i>CL</i>	<i>The Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge</i> , ed. by Earl Leslie Griggs 6 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956-71).
<i>CM</i>	<i>Marginalia</i> , ed. by George Whalley (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980).
<i>CN</i>	<i>The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge</i> , ed. by Kathleen Coburn (London: Routledge, 2002).
<i>CPW</i>	<i>The Complete Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge</i> , 2 vols., ed. by E. H. Coleridge (Oxford: Clarendon, 1912)
<i>Lects. 1795</i>	<i>Lectures 1795 On Politics and Religion</i> , ed. by Lewis Patton and Peter Mann (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971).
<i>Friend</i>	<i>The Friend</i> , ed. by Barbara E. Rooke, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969).
<i>OM</i>	<i>Opus Maximum</i> , ed. by Thomas McFarland, with the assistance of Nicholas Halmi (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).
<i>SM</i>	<i>The Statesman's Manual, Lay Sermons</i> , ed. by R. J. White, Bollingen Series 75 (Princeton: Princeton University Press,

1993).

TL                    *Hints Towards The Formation Of A More Comprehensive Theory of Life*, ed. by Seth B. Watson (London, 1849).

## Wordsworth

The quotations from Wordsworth's poems throughout the thesis, except those from *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, will be keyed to the 'Reading Text' in the Cornell Wordsworth, and quotations from his prose works are from *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. by W. J. B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser, 3 vols, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974). All citations of *the Prelude* are from the 1805 version.

E.E.                    *Essays upon Epitaphs*, in *Prose II*, pp. 43-119.

Guide                *A Guide through the District of the Lakes*, in *Prose II*, pp. 123-253

HG                    *Home at Grasmere: Part First, Book First, of The Recluse*, ed. by Beth Darlington (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1977).

L.B.                    *Lyrical Ballads*, ed. by James Butler and Karen Green (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1992).

LLandaff            *A Letter to the Bishop of LLandaff*, in *Prose I*, pp. 17-66.

Prose                *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, 3 vols., ed. by W. J. B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser (Oxford: Clarendon, 1974)

VE                    *The Vale of Esthwaite*, in *Early Poems and Fragments, 1785-1797*, ed. by Carol Landon and Jared Curtis (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1977).

WL                    *The Collected Letters of the Wordsworths* (Charlottesville, Va.: InteLex Corporation, 2002)  
[http://pm.nlx.com/xtf/view;jsessionid=37EB240D10E88F4E3DF3673681F8A066?docId=wordsworths\\_c/wordsworths\\_c.00.xml;chunk.id=div.el.wordsworth.pmpreface.1;toc.depth=1;toc.id=div.el.wordsworth.pmpreface.1;brand=default](http://pm.nlx.com/xtf/view;jsessionid=37EB240D10E88F4E3DF3673681F8A066?docId=wordsworths_c/wordsworths_c.00.xml;chunk.id=div.el.wordsworth.pmpreface.1;toc.depth=1;toc.id=div.el.wordsworth.pmpreface.1;brand=default) [accessed 23 February 2013].



## Others

- BDT* Martin Heidegger, 'Building Dwelling Thinking', in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. by Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1971), pp. 143–161.
- HU* John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. by Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).
- HOM* David Hartley, *Observations on Man, his Frame, his Duty, and his Expectations* (London, 1801).

## Introduction

This thesis aims to examine the idea of nature in the works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth from the perspective of ecotheology. Ecotheology is a discipline that has only recently emerged, one which tries to re-discover the importance of nature by underlining the intrinsic value of the non-human natural world as part of God's creation and articulating a relational dynamic among humanity, nature, and God. Both Coleridge and Wordsworth were deeply aware of the importance of such a dynamic and attempted to articulate the relationship in their works in their own particular ways. While Coleridge searches for the unity of the universe – humanity and nature and God – on a theoretical level, Wordsworth looks for an ideal place for dwelling within the context of the relationship among them on an experiential level. The two authors' ways of developing the relationship relate to recent developments in ecotheological theory. Ecotheology can thus help us understand their ideas on nature.

In fact, a number of critics have already attempted to investigate Romanticism in the light of ecology. As part of various critical responses to the environmental crisis, ecological literary criticism, or ecocriticism, has developed over the last two decades. In his 'Introduction' to *Writing the Environment: Ecocriticism and Literature* (1998), Richard Kerridge suggests a wide cultural definition of ecocriticism as 'moving beyond science, geography and social science into the humanities':

The ecocritic wants to track environmental ideas and representations wherever they appear, to see more clearly a debate which seems to be taking place, often part-concealed, in a great many cultural spaces. Most of all, ecocriticism seeks to evaluate texts and ideas in terms of their coherence and usefulness as responses to environmental crisis.<sup>1</sup>

As a field of literary enquiry, ecological literary criticism thus aims to ‘reflect and help to shape human responses to the natural environment’ by ‘studying the representation of the physical world in literary texts and in the social contexts of their production’.<sup>2</sup> In other words, ecocriticism investigates the meaning of the relationship between humanity and nature in terms of literary attempts to highlight values in the non-human natural world. Although the movement started rather earlier in the 1970s and 1980s in the United States, most critics acclaim the later scholar Jonathan Bate as ‘a leading example of a significant early step in the evolution of ecocriticism’, especially in British Romanticism.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Kerridge, ‘Introduction’, in *Writing the Environment: Ecocriticism and literature*, ed. by Richard Kerridge and Neil Sammells (London: Zed Books, 1998), pp. 1–10 (p. 5). See also Greg Garrard, *Ecocriticism*, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 2012), p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Kevin Hutchings, ‘Ecocriticism in British Romantic Studies’, *Literature Compass*, 4 (2007), 172–202 (p. 172).

<sup>3</sup> Robert Waller wrote on ‘Enclosures: the ecological significance of a poem by John Clare’ in *Mother Earth, Journal of the Soil Association* in 1963. Thomas Lyon has an important essay on ‘The ecological vision of Gary Snyder’ in the *Kansas Quarterly* in 1970. Glen A. Love, a tireless propagandist for ecological criticism, wrote on ‘Ecology in Arcadia’ in the *Colorado Quarterly* in 1972. In 1974, the first book-length critical study was published, Joseph Meeker’s *The Comedy of Survival: Studies in Literary Ecology*. William Ruekert on ‘Literature and ecology: an experiment in criticism’ in the *Iowa Review* in 1978. Don Elgin’s ‘What is “literary ecology?”’ in *Humanities in the South* in 1983. See, Tony Pinkney, ‘Romantic Ecology’ in *A Companion to Romanticism*, ed. by Duncan Wu, Blackwell Publishing, 1999. <[http://www.blackwellreference.com/subscriber/uid=959/book?id=g9780631198529\\_9780631198529](http://www.blackwellreference.com/subscriber/uid=959/book?id=g9780631198529_9780631198529)> [accessed 3 September 2012]. In particular, the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) was established in 1992, and ecocriticism ‘quickly became a burgeoning field of inquiry in American academia’ with the founding of ASLE’s journal *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* (ISLE) in 1993, and the publication of *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology* in 1996. See Kevin Hutchings, ‘Ecocriticism in British Romantic Studies’, p. 173; Timothy Clark, *The Cambridge Introduction to Literature and the Environment* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 15. See also, Pinkney, ‘Romantic

As a matter of fact, Karl Kroeber ‘first introduced explicitly ecological concepts to British Romantic Studies with his essay “*Home at Grasmere: Ecological Holiness*”’ (1974), but it was Bate’s *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition* (1991) that ‘brought green Romanticism to widespread critical attention, inspiring and provoking numerous critical responses, and setting the terms of much subsequent dialogue and debate within the new field of Romantic ecocriticism’.<sup>4</sup> This manifesto for romantic ecology was then followed by Karl Kroeber’s *Ecological Literary Criticism: Romantic Imagining and the Biology of Mind* (1994) and James McKusick’s *Green Writing: Romanticism and Ecology* (2000).

The ecological reading of Romantic poetry constituted a radical challenge to the existing way of understanding the Romantic tradition in terms of literary theories of the ambivalent relationship between consciousness and nature. Ecological literary criticism regards established literary theories as a misleading way of reading Romanticism. The theories of deconstruction and poststructuralism of the 1970s stressed the idea of textuality, rather than representation, as the dominant literary term for reading texts. For poststructuralists, language over and against material reality is the only world to which we can have access, with the result that nature can exist only as signified within language and culture. Especially Coleridge’s association with German Idealism and Wordsworth’s development of the power of the mind or

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Ecology’; Lawrence Buell, ‘The Ecocritical Insurgency’, in *New Literary History*, 30 (1999), 699–712 (pp. 700–1); Laurence Coupe, ‘General Introduction’, in *The Green Studies Reader: from Romanticism to Ecocriticism*, ed. by Laurence Coupe (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 1–8 (p. 6); Garrard, *Ecocriticism*, p. 4; Hutchings, ‘Ecocriticism in British Romantic Studies’, p. 173.

<sup>4</sup> Hutchings, ‘Ecocriticism in British Romantic Studies’, p. 196.

consciousness may thus create the impression that their notion of nature is a projection of the mind. Then the 1980s gave rise to a kind of politically responsible criticism, a leftist new historicism. For his part, Alan Liu has made the notorious claim that ‘there is no nature except as it is constituted by acts of political definition’.<sup>5</sup> Considering Coleridge’s and Wordsworth’s retreat into the Lake District with their disillusionment with the French Revolution, there may be a lack of historicity or a social context in their notion of nature. Accordingly, for the historicists, their notion of nature has a kind of deficiency. As Jonathan Bate points out, ‘the human mind is superior to nature’ in the idealist reading of Romanticism in the 1960s, and ‘the economy of human society is more important than the economy of nature’ in the post-Althusserian Marxist critique of Romanticism in the 1980s.<sup>6</sup>

Ecological literary criticism, however, repudiates current literary practices by challenging such approaches to the notion of nature. It seeks to uncover how nature exists as an independent material reality in Romantic poetry; how humanity and nature are interrelated in the Romantic tradition. In his *Romantic Ecology*, Bate suggests that we may re-discover Wordsworth as ‘Poet of Nature’, who ‘articulated a powerful and enduring vision of human integration with nature’, and consequently ‘to relearn Wordsworth’s way of looking at nature’.<sup>7</sup> Bate examines the materiality of nature by referring to *Guide to the Lakes* and Naming of Places sequence of poems from *Lyrical Ballads* in

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<sup>5</sup> Alan Liu, *Wordsworth: the Sense of History* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1989), p. 104.

<sup>6</sup> Jonathan Bate, *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 9.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

*Romantic Ecology*, and he focuses on the interrelatedness of the humanities and environment in his *The Song of the Earth* (2001). Referring to his alignment with Bate's criticism of recent academic criticism of romantic poetry, Karl Kroeber also rejects 'rhetorical formalists (those of Yale School)' and 'the new historicists', who 'dismissed romantic description of nature as mere displacements of unconscious political motives'.<sup>8</sup> In his *Ecological Literary Criticism*, Kroeber tries to find how natural and cultural processes are interrelated: how 'nature is a social construct'; how 'human consciousness is a result of natural processes'; how 'society arises out of humankind's place in the natural world'.<sup>9</sup> He presupposes 'the romantics' most intense, original, and enduringly significant discoveries of humanity's place in the natural world' in the sense that 'they believed that humankind belonged in, could and should be at home within, the world of natural processes'.<sup>10</sup> They aspired thus to 'relate cultural productions to natural conditions' so that 'nature and human consciousness were splendidly adapted to one another'.<sup>11</sup> For instance, Kroeber argues that, in Coleridge's 'France: An Ode', 'the authentic sprit of liberty' can be found 'in natural processes' in the sense that 'true freedom of spirit underlying political libertarianism is to be found by engaging ourselves with natural processes.'<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Karl Kroeber, *Ecological Literary Criticism: Romantic Imagining and the Biology of Mind* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p. 2.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., pp. 2, 5-6.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp. 12, 15.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., pp. 12-13. For this argument, he quotes a passage from that poem, 'Thou speedest on thy subtle pinions, / The guide of homeless winds, and playmate of the waves! / And there I felt thee on that sea-cliff's verge, / Whose pines, scarce travelled by the breeze above, / Had made one murmur with the distant surge! / Yes, while I stood and gazed, my temples bare, / And shot my being through earth, sea, and air, / Possessing all things with intensest love, / O Liberty! My spirit felt thee there.' (ll. 97-105).

If established approaches have been hostile to the idea of the organic unity of a literary work in the light of a hermeneutic of suspicion, both Bate and Kroeber attempt to reassess that unity in a positive and constructive way over and against deconstructive and new historicist approaches. And yet, it seems that the debate needs to continue to develop. On the one hand, the ecological criticism of Romanticism is valuable as it has brought back into literary criticism an idea of nature that exists beyond a projection of the mind. It makes us aware of the significance of our relationship with nature within the context of today's ecological crisis, 'rejecting instrumentalism, but esteeming intrinsic value, repersonalizing, resacralizing, and respiritualizing the natural environment'.<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, how far the unity of mind and nature can be viable in a sense that, particularly for Coleridge and Wordsworth, the idea of nature is partly created by the power of the mind needs to be investigated. Romantic poetry manifests a complicated relationship between humanity and nature, one in which the tension arising from the ambivalent relationship between mind and nature cannot be completely resolved.

Both ecological literary criticism and ecotheology thus have the common purpose of re-discovering the meaning of nature and re-establishing a close relationship between the human and nature. Although these two disciplines are closely related to the notion of nature, there is a crucial difference between their perspectives. For some environmentalists, one of the main concerns is how to overcome anthropocentrism, which sees the world from the perspective

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<sup>13</sup> See, Robert Kirkham, 'The Problem of Knowledge in Environmental Thought: A Counterchallenge', in *The Ecological Community: Environmental Challenges for Philosophy, Politics and Morality*, ed. by Roger S. Gottlieb (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 193-207 (p. 194). See also Clark, *The Cambridge Introduction to Literature and the Environment*, pp. 13-14.

of human interests and resources. For instance, deep ecology tries to differentiate itself from other areas of ecology by 'beginning to question anthropocentrism'.<sup>14</sup> Lynn White Jr. makes an interesting comment on Christianity and ecology: 'Since the roots of our trouble are so largely religious, the remedy must also be essentially religious, whether we call it that or not.'<sup>15</sup> In other words, he criticises Christianity for developing a dualism of man and nature and so becoming an anthropocentric religion. Alistair McIlgorm also refers to an intimate relationship in Christianity between humanity and nature in that 'creation is seen as God's work and speaks to us of the transcendent God', but at the same time he points out that this relationship has been broken in the sense that 'Greek thinking has influenced theology and incorporated the dividedness of the enlightenment mindset' and 'people hide from God self evidences Himself in nature'.<sup>16</sup> As a result, ecotheology has emerged as a religious response to the environmental crisis by re-discovering the intimate relationship between God and the world, in which God reveals Himself not only through Jesus Christ but also through creation (His works): 'in all, through all and over all' (Ephesians 4:6); 'in him everything lives and moves and has its being' (Acts 17:28).<sup>17</sup> God also reveals Himself through nature, which implies clearly the intrinsic value of nature.

The uniqueness of ecotheology as against ecology lies indeed in the idea that nature itself can maintain its own independent value owing to its

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<sup>14</sup> John Sitter, 'Eighteenth-Century Ecological Poetry and Ecotheology', *Religion and Literature*, 40 (2008), 11-37 (p. 32).

<sup>15</sup> Lynn White Jr, 'The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis', *Science*, New Series, 155 (1967), 1203-1207.

<sup>16</sup> Alistair McIlgorm, 'Towards an Eco-Theology of Fisheries Management?' *Citeseer* (2000) <<http://uow.academia.edu/alistairmcilgorm>> [accessed 30 November 2012], p. 2.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.



relationship with God. Whereas ecological literary criticism tries to formulate the meaning of nature by examining the materiality of nature and the interdependence of mankind and nature – either being able to overcome anthropocentrism or within its context – an ecotheological perspective professes the independent and intrinsic value of nature as based on the believed fact that it is created by God and that the Creator still reveals Himself through it. In this respect, the ecotheological perspective on Romanticism is different from the ecological reading of Romanticism in that the former investigates the significance of nature in Romanticism within the context of the relationship between the Creator and the creation. It is not intended to claim that an ecotheological perspective is superior to an ecological approach, but merely to draw attention to their different ways of perceiving the universe. Some critics point out how the two disciplines have cooperated with each other. For some Christian theologians, the ecological movement has enabled them to re-discover the value of nature in Christianity; for ecologists, ‘a principal source of their prophetic and egalitarian principles lies in the symbolic wealth of the biblical tradition.’<sup>18</sup> One of the main reasons for discussing Coleridge and Wordsworth from an ecotheological perspective is that their works represent the relational aspect between God and creation in a profound way. Just as ecotheology is the ‘rediscovery of ecological themes in a variety of religious texts’, an ecotheological way of reading Coleridge and Wordsworth can bring to light a relational theme between humanity and nature and God in their works. In

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<sup>18</sup> Ronald J. Engel, ‘Democracy, Christianity, Ecology: A Twenty-First-Century Agenda for Eco-theology’, *Cross Currents*, 61 (2011), 217–231 (p. 229).

other words, their works evince a sincere religious dimension.<sup>19</sup>

As a matter of fact, an investigation of their ideas on religion reveals a complicated picture of the issue. First, their attitudes towards religion changed over the course of their careers. Before turning to orthodox Christianity, Coleridge was a follower of Unitarianism and Wordsworth was interested in mystical experience through nature. Secondly, as Emma Mason put it, ‘twentieth-century criticism has tended to investigate religion either as an oppressive ideology or as the basis of a form of Dissent struggling to free itself of the transcendent to achieve a status as a form of secular politics.’<sup>20</sup> The religious aspects of the works of Coleridge and Wordsworth have been either neglected or misrepresented. Hedley, for instance, indicates that ‘the institutional parameters of twentieth-century English Literature have tended to marginalise the religious and philosophical core of Coleridge’s thought’.<sup>21</sup> M. H. Abrams saw the religious aspects of Wordsworth in terms of a humanistic secularization of Christian doctrine, rather than a form of religion. In his *Natural Supernaturalism*, Abrams asks the question, ‘what does God do in *The Prelude*?’ and answers, ‘Nothing of consequence.’ Though a number of passages refer to God, they do not signify any profound religious thought:

God is at intervals ceremoniously alluded to, but remains an adventitious and nonoperative factor; if all allusions to deity were struck out of *The Prelude*, there would be no substantive change in its subject matter or

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<sup>19</sup> Anne Hallum, ‘Ecotheology and Environmental Praxis in Guatemala’, *Nova Religio*, 7 (2003), 55–70 (p. 55). Quoted by Sitter, ‘Eighteenth-Century Ecological Poetry and Ecotheology’, p. 11.

<sup>20</sup> Emma Mason, ‘Romanticism and Religion’, *Literature Compass*, 1 (2004), 1–4 (p. 2).

<sup>21</sup> Douglas Hedley, *Coleridge, Philosophy and Religion: Aids to Reflection and the Mirror of the Spirit* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 3.

development. God is the purely formal remainder of His former self.<sup>22</sup>

Abrams conceives the poem from the perspective of ‘the secularization of inherited theological ideas and ways of thinking’ within the context of the Enlightenment and French Revolution.<sup>23</sup> In the 1980s Kenneth Johnston likewise argued that the subject of ‘Man, Nature and Human Life’ in Wordsworth’s grand project of *The Recluse*, including *The Prelude*, *The Excursion*, *The Ruined Cottage*, and *Home at Grasmere*, was ‘to have displaced outmoded religious epics (and perhaps religious scriptures themselves) with persuasive representations of a humanistic philosophy’.<sup>24</sup>

On the contrary, in the ecotheological reading of Coleridge and Wordsworth of this thesis, I aim to show that religion is one of the keys to understanding their works. I will not, however, read these texts as ecotheological texts, and do not intend to try to compare or unify the two different disciplines of literature and theology. Throughout the whole thesis, the two disciplines keep their boundaries. By using ecotheology as a conceptual framework for analysing the poetry of Coleridge and Wordsworth, it seems possible to show how their works anticipate and can be elucidated by some key ideas of ecotheology. One of the possible explanations of how literary texts of Coleridge and Wordsworth are able to bear theological ideas derives from the intimate relationship itself between literature and theology. Although literature has been regarded as a way of confirming or preparing for belief, or as a way of challenging, even

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<sup>22</sup> M. H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 90.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>24</sup> Kenneth R. Johnston, *Wordsworth and The Recluse* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1984), p. xii.

nullifying it, literature and theology often share a territory, ‘one at once aesthetic and theological’.<sup>25</sup> On the one hand, the Second Vatican Council argued that ‘the exegete [of the Bible] must look for that meaning which the sacred writer, in a determined situation and given the circumstances of his time and culture, intended to express and did in fact express, through the medium of a contemporary literary form’ (*Dei Verbum*, nn. 12). On the other, Mary Wedd maintains that Romantic poets ‘forged an art that was concerned with the deepest and most important elements of human life [. . .] the consciousness of a deeper reality than that of everyday material and mundane existence’.<sup>26</sup> William Blake, for instance, fuses the two areas of religion and literature in developing Christianity as the fulfillment of a prophetic tradition through his poetry and art.<sup>27</sup>

Likewise, both Coleridge and Wordsworth embody religious ideas explicitly and implicitly in their literary works. A number of critics have discussed the significance of religion in their work, including Robert Barth, Stephen Prickett, David Jasper, and Robert Ryan.<sup>28</sup> Such scholars uncover various theological

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<sup>25</sup> See Giles Gunn, ‘Literature and Religion’, in *Interrelations of Literature*, ed. by J. Barricelli and J. Gibaldi (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1982), pp. 47–66 (pp. 47–8); Mason, ‘Romanticism and Religion’, p. 1; see also, *Ecospirit: Religions and Philosophies for the Earth*, ed. by Laurel Kearns and Catherine Keller (New York: Fordham UP, 2007).

<sup>26</sup> Nicholas Boyle explores the issue of understanding the Bible as a literary work from the hermeneutics point of view, in *Sacred and Secular Scriptures* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 2005).

Mary Wedd, ‘Literature and Religion’, in *A Companion to Romanticism* <[http://www.blackwellreference.com/subscriber/uid=959/book?id=g9780631198529\\_9780631198529](http://www.blackwellreference.com/subscriber/uid=959/book?id=g9780631198529_9780631198529)> [accessed 3 September 2012].

<sup>27</sup> See, Mason, ‘Romanticism and Religion’, p. 1.

<sup>28</sup> Robert Barth, *Coleridge and Christian Doctrine* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969), *Romanticism and Transcendence: Wordsworth, Coleridge, and the religious imagination* (Columbia; London: University of Missouri Press, 2003); Stephen Prickett, *Romanticism and Religion: the tradition of Coleridge and Wordsworth in the Victorian church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976); David Jasper, *Coleridge as poet and religious thinker: inspiration and revelation* (London: Macmillan, 1985); Robert Ryan, *The Romantic Reformation: Religious politics in English literature, 1789–1824* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

aspects in the works of Coleridge and Wordsworth. Focusing on the idea of imagination in Coleridge and Wordsworth, Barth discusses how the creativity of God can be recognised through an imaginative experience. Prickett shows how poetry, theology and metaphysics are combined together in the two authors' works. The language of poetry as metaphorical, symbolic and bi-focal, empowers the two poets to express transcendent reality through the power of the imagination. There is no doubt that their works are fundamentally associated with a religious consciousness, but a thorny issue arises with Wordsworth's early poetry in which the idea of God is often regarded as 'the secularization of inherited theological ideas'.<sup>29</sup> Whereas Coleridge wrote in 1802, 'if there be any two subjects which have in the very depth of my nature interested me, it has been the Hebrew and Christian Theology and the Theology of Plato', he wrote John Prior Estlin in May 1798 that 'on one subject we are habitually silent [. . .] he[Wordsworth] loves and venerates Christ & Christianity – I wish he did more.'<sup>30</sup> Although Wordsworth expresses his experience of a spiritual [or mystical] world through nature in his early poetry, it seems that he was not interested in the Church's teachings in the same way. Nevertheless, his personal experience can be deeply religious on the grounds that the definition of religion is not subject only to a set of teachings and a belief system, but is also based upon the dynamic of personal experience. Intriguingly, critics like Prickett, Ryan, and Jonathan Bate point out that Wordsworth had an enormous influence upon Victorian religious writings.

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1997); see also, Colin Jager, *The Book of God: Secularization and Design in the Romantic Era* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania, 2007).

<sup>29</sup> Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism*, p. 12.

<sup>30</sup> *CL II*, p. 867; *CL I*, p. 411.

When we analyse Romantic poetry from an ecotheological perspective, the problem of the historical gap between them appears. On the one hand, ecotheology is a contextual theology that emerged from the historical context of the ecological crisis caused by human destructive and exploitative attitudes towards nature that has become evident only since the 1960s. On the other hand, the historical context of Romanticism is different in that it was not a response to an ecological crisis as such. In this respect, new historicist critics' claims seem to be fair that Romanticism cannot engage with 'modern environmental concerns on the grounds that to use them in this way is a gross misrepresentation of the historical realities in which the Romantics wrote and thought'.<sup>31</sup> In other words, Romanticism should not be used by modern critics as a means to construct contemporary ecological criticism.

However, attention should be paid to the underlying continuity between the concerns of ecotheology and those of nineteenth-century Romantic writers in terms of ecological consciousness. Some critics actually attempt to discover 'the historical continuity of a tradition of environmental consciousness' in Romanticism.<sup>32</sup> Timothy Clark, for example, locates 'the initial impetus of modern ecocriticism' in the Romantic tradition of 'opposition to the destructive tendencies of enlightenment ideals of the conquest of nature, the market-based economy and industrialism'.<sup>33</sup> Referring to Wordsworth's *A Guide through the District of the Lakes*, Jonathan Bate asserts that Wordsworth was aware of an

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<sup>31</sup> John J O'Keefe, 'The Persistence of Grasmere: Contemporary Catholic Environmental Theology and the Romantic Impulse', *Journal of Religion and Society*, 3 (2008) <<http://hdl.handle.net/10504/24729>> [accessed 21 June 2010] (para. 4 of 32).

<sup>32</sup> Bate, *Romantic Ecology*, p. 9.

<sup>33</sup> Clark, *The Cambridge Introduction to Literature and the Environment*, p. 13.

environmental issue related to industrialism. In the *Guide*, Wordsworth reaffirms the harmony between man and his natural environment in a sense that ‘the hand of man’ is ‘incorporated with and subservient to the powers and processes of Nature’.<sup>34</sup> This sense of harmony, however, is threatened by the destructive power of industrialism. The poet criticises new residents for building their new houses on obtrusive sites where they do not ‘harmonize with the forms of Nature’, whereas they should be ‘styled the co-partner and sister of Nature’. He describes ‘the larch-plantations’ as ‘all gross transgressions’ because these ‘artificial’ plantations bring about environmentally and aesthetically – ‘insipid and lifeless’ – harmful effects to the ‘original’ landscape. He laments the decline of cottage industry due to ‘the invention and universal application of machinery’.<sup>35</sup> Further, in his letter to the *Morning Post*, Wordsworth expressed his objection to the projected Kendal and Windermere Railway partly because he believed large-scale organized Sunday outings would cause environmental damage to the landscape.<sup>36</sup> In this respect, the historical context of ecotheology to some extent finds a common ground with that of Romanticism in terms of an environmental consciousness.

First of all, in Chapter 1, a theory of ecotheology will be formulated to be used as a conceptual framework for reading the works of Coleridge and Wordsworth. It is hard to pinpoint one single main stream of ecotheology because it is still a developing discipline and has various branches, for example,

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<sup>34</sup> *Guide*, p. 201. See also, Bate, *Romantic Ecology*, pp. 46–47.

<sup>35</sup> *Guide*, pp. 209–212, 224.

<sup>36</sup> ‘Kendal and Windermere Railway’, in *Prose*, iii, 340–356. Wordsworth’s letter was published in the *Morning Post* on 11 December 1844. It is printed with commentary by the editor in Alexander B Grosart’s *Prose Works of William Wordsworth . . .* in three Volumes (1876), ii. pp. 330–3, see, *Oliver Goldsmith: The Critical Heritage*, ed. by G. S. Rousseau (London: Routledge, 1974; repr. 1995), p. 301.

deep ecology, eco-feminist theology, liberation theology, and process theology. Nevertheless, the main purpose of ecotheology is to re-discover the meaning of nature, which will be traced through three key elements of ecotheology: the interrelatedness of the universe, the independent sacred value of nature, and a cosmic eschatology. The intrinsic value of the non-human world will be sought by articulating the sacredness of nature through the immanence of God within it, by developing the interrelatedness of humanity and nature within the context of God's presence in the universe, and by examining the significance and necessity of an eschatological vision for the non-human world. In order to do so, the study will identify and analyse mostly the ideas of two theologians, Teilhard de Chardin and Moltmann. The former is regarded as a pioneering thinker of ecotheology and the latter as one of its major theologians.

Chapter 2 will show that the works of Coleridge have two essential ecotheological notions, the interrelatedness of the universe and the sacredness of the nonhuman natural world. One of Coleridge's lifelong aims was to discover the unity of the universe, which he often identified with the idea of the one life. It is noteworthy that his grand theory of unity is always based upon three main elements, human beings, nature, and God. When he was interested in Unitarianism, he expressed the unity of humanity and nature through the Omnipresence of God. Later he uses the theory of *Naturphilosophie* to articulate how all the elements of the universe are interrelated with one another. It will be also shown that this notion of the unity brings about an independent sacred value of nature in terms of three aspects, sacredness, materiality, and mutuality.

Chapter 3 formulates the claim that, like Coleridge, Wordsworth formulates



the two ecotheological elements in his poetry. For him, these two elements find expression in the notion of dwelling which he continues to develop throughout his career as a poet. He always tries to establish the concept of dwelling by bringing together three key factors, a dweller, a natural environment, and God. In the first phase, he locates the ideal place for dwelling in a valley which, together with his cottage, creates a sense of harmony under the presence of God. In the second phase, he associates dwelling with the community of the living and the dead, which represents a sense of interrelatedness, based on the religious notion of immortality in God, and the soothing, beautiful, egalitarian and epitaphic aspects of nature. In the final stage, he looks at the heavenly dwelling, in which the interrelatedness is still of great significance.

Lastly, Chapter 4 will discuss the key role that the natural world plays in Coleridge's and Wordsworth's eschatological visions. Ecotheology is committed to the inclusion of the non-human natural world in eschatology. The two poets develop eschatological visions throughout their works. They enthusiastically interpreted the French Revolution as an apocalyptic event. After their disillusionment with the Revolution, Coleridge located the transformation of the world in the transformation of the mind, and Wordsworth in the growth of the mind and imagination. Finally, they referred to the final vision of the universe. What matters here is that nature constitutes a crucial part in each stage of their eschatological visions.

## Chapter 1

### Ecotheology as a conceptual framework

In this chapter, an attempt will be made to formulate a theory of ecotheology which will provide a conceptual framework for reading the works of Coleridge and Wordsworth. Ecotheology is a contextual theology in the sense that this new discipline has emerged from the specific historical context of ecological crisis.<sup>1</sup> It is a theological response to the issue of environmental degradation. Concern for the environment and ecology developed and intensified during the 1960s and 1970s, and it was during the 1960s that environmental concerns became aligned with religious concerns. A number of theologians have referred to the necessity of a new understanding of theology in the light of a theological response to the environmental crisis.<sup>2</sup> Ecotheology is thus concerned with the non-human world, discovering its intrinsic value.<sup>3</sup> In

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<sup>1</sup> Celia Deane-Drummond, *Eco-Theology* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2008), p. x.

<sup>2</sup> See H. Paul Santimire, *Nature Reborn: The Ecological and Cosmic Promise of Christian Theology* (Minneapolis, MN, 2000), pp. 6-16; Deane-Drummond, *Eco-Theology*, p. ix-xv; Ruth Page, *God and the Web of Creation* (London: SCM, 1996), pp. ix-xix; Thomas Berry, 'The New Story', *Teilhard Studies*, 1 (1978); Sigurd Bergmann, *Creation set free: the Spirit as Liberator of Nature* (Grand Rapids, Mich.; Cambridge: Eerdmans; [Edinburgh: Alban, distributor], 2005), pp. 19-21, 41-47; Denis Edwards, *Jesus the Wisdom of God: an ecological theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1995), pp. 13-15.

<sup>3</sup> Eco-feminist theology sees the domination of both nature and women by men as the root cause of the modern crisis. French feminist Françoise d'Eaubonne set up Ecologie-Féminisme in 1972 as part of the project of 'launching a new action: ecofeminism' and in 1974 published a chapter entitled 'The Time for Ecofeminism' in her book *Feminism or Death*. In the United States, the term ecofeminism was used at Murray Bookchin's Institute for Social Ecology in Vermont in about 1976 to identify courses as ecological, namely, eco-technology, eco-agriculture, and ecofeminism. The course on ecofeminism was taught by Ynestra King, who used the concept in 1980 as a major theme for the conference. King conceptualized ecological feminism as a transformative feminism drawing on the insights of both radical cultural feminism and socialist feminism. Australian philosopher Val Plumwood extends the analysis of domination initiated by d'Eaubonne and King by comparing the debates between deep ecologists, social ecologists, and ecofeminists; Ecotheology's association with liberation theology is concerned with the link between development and the environment in relation to development of impoverished parts of the world and suppressed native cultures. See Leonardo Boff, *Cry of the Earth: Cry of the Poor*

his article, 'The Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis' (1967), Lynn White Jr blamed Christianity for establishing a dualism between man and nature, being the most anthropocentric religion, and exploiting and dominating nature.<sup>4</sup> The dualistic thinking of Christianity and its emphasis on transcendental monotheism are seen as the cause of the ecological crisis in that the separation of human from nature on the one hand and God's absolute otherness from nature on the other entitled people to undermine the significance of nature and to exploit it for their own sake. In this respect, ecotheology amounts to a critique of traditional theology in an attempt at re-discovering the intrinsic value of the non-human world.<sup>5</sup>

Here we need to distinguish ecotheology from secular ecological thought. Both ecology and ecotheology are concerned with an appropriate relationship between humanity and nature, but they differ in their understanding of the value of nature. Ecology makes us aware of the significance of nature in the sense that it is useful and vital to the well-being and survival of humanity on earth. The ethics of ecology is instrumentalist in so far as it does not explicitly defend the intrinsic value of nature. By contrast, ecotheology insists upon the origin and intrinsic value of nature in terms of God's creation.<sup>6</sup> Nature is significant

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(Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1997), *Ecology and Liberation: A New Paradigm* (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1995); Denis Edwards, *Earth Revealing, Earth Healing* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2001); Sarah White and Romy Tiongco, *Doing Theology and Development: Meeting the Challenge of Poverty* (Edinburgh: St Andrew's Press, 1997).

<sup>4</sup> Lynn White Jr, 'The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis', *Science*, New Series, 155 (1967), 1203-1207; Arnold Toynbee also regards the rise of monotheism and the command of the Genesis 1:28 as the fundamental cause for degrading nature, see, Steven Bouma-Prediger, *The Greening of Theology: the Ecological Models of Rosemary Radford Ruether, Joseph Sittler, Jürgen Moltmann* (Atlanta, Ga: Scholars Press, 1995), pp. 2-4. ; see also, Ken Gnanakan, *God's World: Biblical Insights for a Theology of the Environment* (London: SPCK, 1999), pp. 2-18.

<sup>5</sup> In *Nature Reborn*, Santmire mentions a paradigm shift from 'the paradigm of God and humanity to the paradigm of God, humanity, and nature', p. 13.

<sup>6</sup> Professor Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg and Fazlun Khalid maintains that the Abrahamic religious

and meaningful because of this intrinsic value. It can be thus suggested that ecotheology understands the significance and value of nature more fundamentally than ecology.

Having referred to the significance of the intrinsic value of nature, I shall discuss it in relation to three elements which, it is claimed, are the central pillars of ecotheology: the inter-relatedness of the universe, the presence of God, and eschatology. First, we will examine the inter-relationship between humanity and nature and God; secondly, we will see how, according to ecotheology, the presence of God in the universe is not pantheism but panentheism<sup>7</sup>; lastly, we will see how, for ecotheology, even the non-human

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traditions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, conceive nature not as an instrument but as a creation of God; 'Religion and Nature: The Abrahamic faith's concepts of creation', in *Spirit of the environment: religion, value, and environmental concern*, ed. by David E. Cooper and Joy Palmer (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 30-41 (p. 31); In 1973, Naess published a foundational article, 'The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movement', *Inquiry* 16 (1973), 95-100. Naess felt that the normal conservationists view of environment – one that looked at nature only in its value for humans and not for nature's sake, was shallow. Shallow ecology perpetuated the anthropocentric Western view, one that saw nature as existing only to serve human ends. In contrast, deep ecology goes beyond the limited piecemeal shallow approach to environmental problems and attempts to articulate a comprehensive religious and philosophical worldview, recognising the need for identity for all the constituent elements of our environment and a biocentric equality of all the elements and individuals within ecosystems. A major compilation of sources was published by Bill Devall and George Sessions under the title *Deep Ecology: Living as if Nature Mattered* (Salt Lake City: G. M. Smith, 1985), and Naess revised the issues in *Ecology, Community, and Lifestyle*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). In 1991 by Australian philosopher Freya Mathews's development of the foundations of Deep Ecology in relation to the principles of interconnectedness, intrinsic value, and self-realizing systems in her book *The ecological Self* (London: Routledge, 1991); The Protestant theologian John Cobb made substantial contributions to Christian thought about nature by formulating the notion of ecotheology in the light of the writings of the twentieth century philosopher Alfred North Whitehead. In his most important book, *Process and Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1929), Whitehead proposed 'a philosophy of organism', in which every organism is constituted by its set of relations with the rest of the world. An organism is a series of events that Whitehead called 'occasions'. Thus all individuals have their intrinsic value, and all things are internally related to their environments. See, John Cobb, *Is It Too Late? A Theology of Ecology* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Bruce, 1972); John Cobb and David R. Griffin, 'The Global Crisis and a Theology of Survival', in *Process Theology: An Introductory Exposition* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), pp. 143-158; 'Process Theology and Environmental Issues', *Journal of Religion*, October (1980), 440-58.

<sup>7</sup> *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* defines panentheism as 'the belief that the Being of God includes and penetrates the whole universe, so that every part of it exists in Him, but (as against Pantheism) that His Being is more than, and is not exhausted by, the universe', ed. by F. L.

world is included in an eschatological vision. The aim here is not to establish a new perspective about ecotheology, but to develop some crucial aspects of the discipline to help with the understanding of Coleridge and Wordsworth. To do so, reference will be made to the ideas of a number of theologians, particularly, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and Jürgen Moltmann.<sup>8</sup> Teilhard (1881–1955) was a French philosopher, Jesuit Catholic priest, paleontologist and geologist. His thoughts provide a pioneering and foundational model for a new cosmology. Although ecotheology had not emerged during his lifetime, his understanding of the universe was very prophetic in relation to ecotheology. Moltmann (b. 1926), one of the most influential of contemporary German Protestant theologians, developed ecotheology explicitly in his later period with full awareness of the contemporary ecological crisis, particularly in *God in Creation* (1985). My intention is not to make comparisons, but rather to use their insights in a complementary way in order to articulate the above three key elements.

## 1. The inter-relatedness of humanity, nature, and God

### 1.1. Teilhard: matter and spirit

One of the main tasks for ecotheology is to articulate the basic presupposition that God created the universe, and that humanity and the natural world are deeply interconnected through God. Rejecting the dualistic or

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Cross and E. A. Livingstone, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1985), p. 1027.

<sup>8</sup> Teilhard was forbidden to teach and debarred from publishing his theological and philosophical works during his life time because of unorthodox ideas. But recently those interested in establishing a new cosmology in ecotheology have turned to his writings, for instance, Thomas Berry, Paul Santmire, Celia Deane-Drummond, and Denis Edwards; Moltmann has been professor of systematic theology at the university of Tübingen since 1967. His theology is divided into two periods, early and later. His early Period consists of the trilogy, *Theology of Hope* (1964), *The Crucified God* (1972), and *The Church in the power of the Spirit* (1975), and the overarching principle of his later work was the notion of God's Trinitarian history with the world.

hierarchical understanding of matter and spirit, nature and humanity, both Teilhard and Moltmann argue that God, humanity and the natural world are interrelated with one another. Their understanding of cosmology is characterised by the intrinsic value of the non-human world in terms of its sacredness and its relationship with God and humanity, and their approaches complement each other.

First of all, Teilhard rejects the traditional dualism between matter and spirit, and instead argues that they are inter-related. According to him, 'there are no longer two compartments in the universe, the spiritual and the physical: there are only two directions along one and the same road (the direction of pernicious pluralization and that of beneficial unification).'<sup>9</sup> That is, they are two directions or two aspects of one and the same reality within the evolution of the world. Matter and spirit differ in their directions, but inhabit the same reality. In other words, they are not radically different entities.

This same reality can be explained by the dynamic of communion with God. Teilhard not only expresses his love of matter, but also seeks 'to reconcile it with the unique adoration of the only absolute and definitive Godhead'.<sup>10</sup> Matter can be sacred only because of its relationship with God, and at the same time the human can live in communion with God through the sacredness of matter. Teilhard suggests that we can have a 'Communion with God through Earth'.<sup>11</sup> The earth is sacred because of its relationship with God, and human beings have a communion with God through the earth. The implication is that matter is

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<sup>9</sup> Teilhard, 'My Universe', in *Science and Christ* (London: Collins, 1986), p. 51.

<sup>10</sup> Ursula King, *Spirit of Fire: the Life and Vision of Teilhard de Chardin* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), p. 56.

<sup>11</sup> Teilhard, 'Cosmic Life', in *Writings in Time of War* (London: Collins, 1968), pp. 13-71 (p. 57).

an essential element in the relationship between humanity and God. In this respect, matter is interconnected with the human and God.

## 1.2. Teilhard: biosphere, noosphere, and Omega

Interestingly, Teilhard also provides a kind of scientific explanation for the interrelatedness of humanity and the non-human natural world by developing an evolutionary notion of cosmology. As matter and spirit are regarded as two directions of the same reality, there is a sense of becoming, movement or process, in his notion of cosmology. The whole universe, for him, is not static, but is evolving towards a final point, 'Omega'. Referring to the dynamics of evolution, he approaches the universe with two key terms, 'biosphere' and 'noosphere'. The Austrian scientist Eduard Suess first suggested the term biosphere in 1875 in his book *The Origin of the Alps*, and Teilhard, who was interested in the interrelationships within the living world, was an early promoter of the concept of biosphere. The term 'noosphere' was coined and promoted in the 1920s by Teilhard, Edouard Le Roy and Vladimir Vernadsky. For his part, Teilhard is concerned with the interaction between the biosphere, which is common to all creatures, and the noosphere, which is characteristic of humanity.<sup>12</sup>

Teilhard theorizes that there are three major phases of evolution, the geosphere (the physical formation of the planet), the biosphere and the noosphere. The biosphere is the 'terrestrial zone containing life' or 'the actual

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<sup>12</sup> See Ursula King, 'One Planet, One Spirit: Searching for an Ecologically Balanced Spirituality', in *Pierre Teilhard de Chardin on People and Planet*, ed. by Celia Deane-Drummond (London: Equinox, 2006), pp. 74-95.

layer of vitalized substance enveloping the earth'.<sup>13</sup> By contrast, the noosphere is human consciousness and self-reflexivity (cognitive and humanistic processes). In *The Phenomenon of Man*, Teilhard describes it as 'a new layer, the thinking layer, that, after having germinated at the close of the Tertiary, since that time has been spreading out on top of the plant and animal world. Over and beyond the biosphere there is a noosphere.'<sup>14</sup> Like matter and spirit, biosphere and noosphere are not two separate things but integrated in a significant way. The noosphere, to some extent, is a natural extension of the biosphere. Teilhard argues that 'life and thought are bound to the contours and fate of the terrestrial mass not just by accident, but by structure'.<sup>15</sup> The noosphere is the 'hominisation' of the biosphere. As a result, neither man nor Earth can be fully understood except in the light of the hominised Earth.

The interwoven and interdependent relationship between the biosphere and noosphere implies that human consciousness is associated with matter and the non-human natural world. This relationship can be regarded as 'a form of balance between the creative world of imagination and the physical domain of our material existence'.<sup>16</sup> At the same time, the noosphere is deeply involved in the evolution of the biosphere. Although the evolution of animal life is directional and preferential, it does not imply any purpose. Human consciousness, however, has brought an important change into this non-human world in terms of purpose and plan. Teilhard maintains that 'since the

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<sup>13</sup> Teilhard, *The Future of Man* (London: Collins, 1964), p. 157.

<sup>14</sup> Teilhard, *The Human Phenomenon*, trans. by Sarah Appleton-Weber (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 1999), pp. 123-4.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 195.

<sup>16</sup> Paul R. Samson and David Pitt, 'Introduction: Sketching the Noosphere', in *The Biosphere and Noosphere Reader*, ed. by Paul R. Samson and David Pitt (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 1-10 (p. 2).



appearance of man the living individual being becomes able to plan' and 'arranges matter actively through self-evolution'.<sup>17</sup> The emergence of human consciousness (the noosphere) thus transforms the face of the Earth with regard to purpose and plan. Teilhard argues that this reflexive awareness is not a mere variation of elements of the world, but a super-stage of consciousness.

Although the notions of biosphere and noosphere may be just conjectures, they enabled Teilhard to articulate the inter-relatedness of the universe in a scientific manner. He develops this understanding of the universe further through theological reflection. He interprets the idea of the biosphere and the noosphere theologically by associating it with God's action in the universe. The evolution of the universe, consisting of the biosphere and noosphere, leads to a final point, 'Omega' (the Christ). Thus it is the Christ who makes the universe interrelated, unified, and sacred, on the grounds that He is present in the universe and holds all things together as a centre, Omega Point. Christ is the final point towards which the evolutionary process moves. Teilhard holds that 'Christ is the end point of evolution, even the natural evolution, of all beings; and therefore evolution is holy.'<sup>18</sup> This universal Christ is 'the organic centre of the entire universe'.<sup>19</sup> Christ, as the centre, is also described as the heart or soul of the world. As a result, all things in creation are connected with and dependent upon Him and finally brought to Oneness or Unity in the universal Christ. Teilhard describes this unity as a creative union in which the multiple

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<sup>17</sup> Teilhard, 'The Antiquity and World Expansion of Human Culture', in *Man's Role In Changing The Face of The Earth vol. I*, ed. by William L. Thomas, Jr. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), pp. 103-112 (p. 107).

<sup>18</sup> Teilhard, *Hymn of the Universe* (London: Collins, 1965), p. 133.

<sup>19</sup> Teilhard, 'Note on the Universal Christ', in *Science and Christ* (London: Collins, 1968), pp. 14-20 (p. 14).

can become one, not through fusion of identity, but through unity in diversity. In other words, 'in creative union [. . .] everything happens as though the One were formed by successive unifications of the multiple [. . .] creative union does not fuse together the terms which it associates [. . .] It preserves the terms--it even completes them, as we see in living bodies, where the cells are the more specialized.'<sup>20</sup> He calls this final form of union 'Omega' which is 'identical with the revealed Christ'.<sup>21</sup>

Theology understand the materiality of nature in a metaphysical sense, but ecotheology needs to see the natural world from a materialistic as well as metaphysical perspective in order to understand the intrinsic value of nature. Teilhard's account of the biosphere and the noosphere is a useful resource for ecotheology in the sense that this approach offers both perspectives. The dynamic of the biosphere and the noosphere makes us recognise how the human and the non-human natural world are deeply interconnected in terms of a materialistic perspective, and at the same time, this inter-relatedness is eventually associated with the immanence of God in terms of the theological perspective of 'Omega' (the Christ).

Many theologians agree that Teilhard's work is broadly ecological in scope, and therefore very relevant for contemporary ecotheology as well as being resonant with modern cultural and scientific attitudes to evolution.<sup>22</sup> His thought, however, has been criticised for its theological anthropocentrism in the sense that the idea of the development from the biosphere to the noosphere implies an

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<sup>20</sup> Teilhard, 'My Universe', p. 45.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>22</sup> Santmire, *Nature Reborn*, pp. 44-60; Deane-Drummond, *Eco-Theology*, pp. 37-39.

instrumental view of biophysical reality and human dominion over nature. Moltmann also argues that Teilhard is negligent of the victims of evolution.<sup>23</sup> He sees Teilhard's notion of the process as anthropocentric, but a number of ecotheologians try to show how his idea of the cosmic Christ provides a cosmic and ecological vision that is not anthropocentric.<sup>24</sup> As Santmire put it, all creatures, both human beings and non-human beings, are held together and will be 'consummated' in the cosmic Christ, Omega Point.<sup>25</sup> Although human consciousness, the noosphere, is the upper stage of the evolutionary process, the final point of evolution will be completed in the cosmic Christ, who holds the whole universe together. In the light of this vision of the cosmic Christ, Teilhard's thought is not anthropocentric, but rather cosmic. His concept of cosmology thus offers a cosmic and ecological vision to ecotheology.

### 1.3. Moltmann: the relational dynamic of the Trinity

Having examined how Teilhard attempts to articulate the organic relationship of the universe in terms of some scientific discoveries (the biosphere and noosphere) and spirituality, we now turn to Moltmann. Teilhard articulates the immanence of God through the notion of the cosmic Christ, but we need to show how the cosmic Christ is related with God who is the Absolute Other. This necessity makes us draw on another resource in order to comprehend how Absolute Otherness can be present in the universe. Like Teilhard, Moltmann suggests the relational dynamic between God and the

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<sup>23</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ* (London: SCM, 1990), p. 294.

<sup>24</sup> Deane-Drummond claims that 'his cosmic Christ acts as a counterweight to more anthropocentric tendencies in his thinking', *Eco-Theology*, p. 38.

<sup>25</sup> Santmire, *Nature Reborn*, p. 56.

universe, but his way of understanding cosmology is dogmatic in terms of the doctrine of the Trinity. In contrast with the anthropocentric and hierarchical understanding of creation, he suggests a renewed theological understanding of the relationship between God and humanity and nature by examining the relational dynamic of the Trinity and the work of the spirit.

Moltmann associates the relationship between God and creation with the notion of the Trinity as that relationship can be regarded as a Trinitarian process. Rejecting the way of conceiving of God as absolute subject or supreme substance, Moltmann expresses the doctrine of the Trinity through the dynamics of relationship and fellowship. In the triune God, the Father, the Son and the Spirit, each has its own role. The Father is ‘the creating origin of creation’, who ‘sends the Son and the Spirit’; the Son is ‘its shaping origin (the Word of creation)’, who ‘gathers the world under his liberating leadership and redeems it’; the Spirit is the ‘life-giving origin (the creative Energy)’, who ‘gives life to the world and allows it to participate in God’s eternal life’.<sup>26</sup> Though each of them has its own role, they are united in terms of relations of community and fellowship and therefore they are one God.

Moltmann’s favourite way of portraying the Trinity is the notion of *perichoresis* which is a Greek term used for ‘the doctrine denoting the mutual indwelling or interpretation of the three Persons of the Trinity whereby one is as invariably in the other two as they are in the one’.<sup>27</sup> That is, the unity of God

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<sup>26</sup> Moltmann, *God in Creation: an ecological doctrine of creation* (London: SCM, 1985), pp. 97–98.

<sup>27</sup> H. E. W. Turner, ‘Coinherence’, in *A New Dictionary of Christian Theology*, ed. by Alan Richardson and John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1983), p. 112 (p. 112). In Latin, it is called *circumincessio*; E. G. Kaiser defines *perichoresis* as ‘The mutual indwelling of the divine and human natures in Jesus Christ. Trinitarian *perichoresis* (*circumincessio*) is the sacred indwelling of the three Persons in one sole God’, ‘Perichoresis, Christological’, in *New Catholic*

can be described by the *perichoresis* of the divine Persons. He argues that ‘the Trinitarian persons are not to be understood as three different individuals who only subsequently enter into relationship with one another’, as in tritheism<sup>28</sup>; nor are they ‘three modes of being or three repetitions of the One God’, as in modalism<sup>29</sup>; rather ‘the doctrine of *perichoresis* links together in a brilliant way the threeness and the unity, without reducing the threeness to unity, or the dissolving the unity in the threeness.’<sup>30</sup> In other words, the idea of *perichoresis* can contain both the threeness and the oneness of God simultaneously without reducing one to the other. There is ‘genuine unity in difference and authentic difference in unity with this concept of *perichoresis*’.<sup>31</sup> And the possibility of unity in difference and difference in unity is recognised by the relational and communal understanding of God. Through the relational and communal dynamic, the Trinity is one in diversity and diversity in one.

#### 1.4. Moltmann: the Trinitarian idea of God and creation

For Moltmann, the perichoretic unity of God can be applied to the

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*Encyclopedia*, vol. 11, 2nd ed (Detroit: Thomson/Gale; Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 2003), pp. 122–3 (p. 122); ‘By the term circumincession theology understands the mutual immanence and penetration of the three divine PERSONS [. . .] In its present Trinitarian meaning it was first used by St. John Damascene in the eighth century (*De fide orth.* 1.8; *Patrologia Graeca*, 94:829),’ A. M. Bermejo, ‘Circumincession’, in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 3, pp. 741–2 (p. 741).

<sup>28</sup> ‘Tritheists deny God’s unity and profess three essences or natures as well as three Persons in God. Their error is due to failure to distinguish between nature and person, so that to admit three Persons is to accept three divine natures,’ P. J. Hamell, ‘Trinity, Holy, Controversies on’, in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 14, pp. 202–205 (p. 202).

<sup>29</sup> ‘Modalism is the strict form of MONARCHIANISM, a heresy that originated in an exaggerated defense of the unity (*monarchia*) of God; and while verbally admitting a Trinity, it denied the real distinction between the Persons. It affirmed that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are modes, aspects, or energies of one and the same divine Person, who is given different names according as He exercises different functions *ad extra* or outside of the Trinity,’ P. J. Hamell, ‘Modalism’, in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 9, pp. 750–1 (p. 750).

<sup>30</sup> Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom* (London: SCM, 1981), p. 175.

<sup>31</sup> Bouma-Prediger, *The Greening of Theology*, p. 125.

relationship between God and creation. He insists that the divine *perichoresis* is the ‘archetype’ for the relationship between God and creation. That is, ‘all relationships which are analogous to God reflect the primal, reciprocal indwelling and mutual interpenetration of the Trinitarian *perichoresis*: God in the world and the world in God; heaven and earth in the kingdom of God, pervaded by his glory.’<sup>32</sup> Since there is no one-sided relationship of domination and superiority in the triune God, the relation between God and creation is also characterized by mutuality and reciprocity. As the Trinity is a model for man’s relationship to nature, the relationship between humanity and the non-human world should be based on mutuality and reciprocity. As a result, the universe is characterized not by the sense of domination, but by the dynamic of a mutual relationship.

For instance, the relationship between body and soul is based on the mutual relationship of the Trinity. In terms of the notion of the human, the traditional dualistic view considers the human as being composed of body and soul, and the latter was regarded as superior to the former. Moltmann, however, rejects that view. For him, on the one hand, there is a difference between soul and body, between ‘the conscious and the unconscious, the voluntary and the involuntary, the centre and the periphery’.<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, the difference is not hierarchical, but is characterized by the dynamics of *perichoresis*. Moltmann has understood ‘human likeness to God in this same context of the divine *perichoresis* [. . .] the *imago Trinitatis*’.<sup>34</sup> Accordingly, the differentiation of

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<sup>32</sup> Moltmann, *God in Creation*, p. 17.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 259.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., pp. 258–9.

soul and body is as a perichoretic relationship of fellowship and mutual interpenetration. At the same time, there is a unity of body and soul in the spirit. ‘Spirit is the human being’s comprehensive organizational principle’, but ‘the human being’s spirit is not identical with the conscious subjectivity of his reason and his will.’ Rather, it ‘comprehends the whole unified structure of his body and his soul.’<sup>35</sup>

At the same time, the relationship between humanity and nature also reflects the mutual relationship of the Trinity. With respect to the human’s relationship to nature, Moltmann explores two aspects of the human: *imago mundi* and *imago Dei*. First of all, Moltmann’s idea of *imago mundi* shows how the human, as part of nature, is related to all other creatures. As the creation narrative of the Genesis in chapter 2 affirms, the human being is part of nature in the sense that Adam was formed from the soil and would return to it.<sup>36</sup> The modern metaphysics of subjectivity, however, refers to our alienation from nature. Moltmann argues that ‘the human being does not confront nature: he himself is nothing other than one of nature’s products’.<sup>37</sup> Further, he, as the product of nature, is seen as ‘*imago mundi* – as a microcosm in which all

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>36</sup> Genesis 2. 7, ‘And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground’ – formed a man (Heb *adam*) of dust from the ground (Heb *adamah*). *The Bible: Authorized King James Version*, with an Introduction and Notes by Robert Carroll and Stephen Prickett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); One of the reasons I use the King James Bible in this thesis is that both Coleridge and Wordsworth seem to have been influenced by it. Leland Ryken points out Coleridge’s use of the King James Bible in his poetry by noting that ‘during the last decade of his life Coleridge had two books next to his bed – Martin Luther’s *Table Talk* and the King James Version of the Bible. Two copies of the KJV belonging to Coleridge have survived, one of them containing numerous notes from Coleridge’. *The Legacy of the King James Bible: Celebrating 400 Years of the Most Influential English Translation* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2011), p. 201; Adam Potkay also argues that Wordsworth’s poetry is resonant with the language of the King James Bible. ‘Romantic transformation of the King James Bible: Wordsworth, Shelley, Blake’, in *The King James Bible After Four Hundred Years: Literary, Linguistic, and Cultural Influences*, ed. by Hannibal Hamlin and Norman W. Jones (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 219–233.

<sup>37</sup> Moltmann, *God in Creation*, p. 50.

previous creatures are to be found again, a being that can only exist in community with all other created beings and which can only understand itself in that community'.<sup>38</sup> Thus the human being as part of nature is associated with the fellowship of creation and, at the same time, as *imago mundi* he seems to be the embodiment of all other creatures. For Moltmann, the idea of embodiment is also described by the idea of evolution. Through evolution the human being 'contains within itself all the simpler systems in the evolution of life, because it is out of these that the human being has been built up and proceeded [. . .] As microcosm the human being represents the macrocosm'.<sup>39</sup> Accordingly, the relationship between humanity and nature is conceived not as one of dominance and superiority, but as one of mutuality and reciprocity.

For Moltmann, this mutual relationship of humanity and nature reflects the Trinitarian relationship and also is permeated by the Triune God. It is the work of the spirit, like the Christ (Omega point) of Teilhard, that is the key element in the interconnectedness between God and humanity and the non-human world. The spirit is a unifying principle in creation. The Word is also involved in creation along with the Spirit, but its role is different. Moltmann argues that 'the Creator differentiates his creatures through his creative Word and joins them through his Spirit'.<sup>40</sup> If the Word is associated with creation in terms of differentiation and distinction, the Spirit is associated with creation in terms of harmony, co-operation and community. Thus, for Moltmann, the Spirit is the 'holistic principle' which creates 'harmony' and 'mutual perichoreses' and

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<sup>38</sup> Moltmann, *God in Creation*, p. 186.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 190.

<sup>40</sup> Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ*, p. 289.



hence ‘community’ among the individual existents of creation.<sup>41</sup> The Word and the Spirit do not oppose each other, but ‘they complement one another in the unity of created things.’<sup>42</sup>

Moltmann’s relational understanding of the Trinity and its association with creation has influenced ecotheology in a significant sense.<sup>43</sup> There is widespread agreement in ecotheology that we need to attribute a proper role to the Trinitarian Persons in the salvific missions of the Word and the Holy Spirit.<sup>44</sup> And a number of theologians attempt to re-discover the Trinity in relational terms, for example, John Zizioulas, Walter Kasper, Catherine LaCugna, and Elizabeth Johnson.<sup>45</sup> But Moltmann’s pioneering contribution to ecotheology is that he expands the work of the Holy Spirit into the non-human world. He successfully links the relational dynamic of the Trinity to the relational dynamic of creation, through the Holy Spirit. As Deane-Drummond argues, ‘he has succeeded where other theologians have failed in widening out the scope of discussion on the Spirit to include creaturely existence that is other than human.’<sup>46</sup> Thus the appeal of Moltmann’s cosmology lies in his understanding of the distinctive role of the Holy Spirit, who is immanent in the whole universe and enables all creatures to exist and evolve in an interrelated world and who

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<sup>41</sup> Moltmann, *God in Creation*, p. 100.

<sup>42</sup> Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ*, p. 289.

<sup>43</sup> See, Deane-Drummond, *Ecology in Jürgen Moltmann’s Theology* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1997); Bouma-Prediger, *The Greening of Theology*.

<sup>44</sup> Denis Edwards, *Jesus the Wisdom of God*, p. 118. See also Karl Rahner, *The Trinity* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970), p. 27; see David Coffey, ‘A Proper Mission for the Holy Spirit’, *Theological Studies* 47 (1986), 227–50.

<sup>45</sup> John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1993), p. 17; Walter Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ* (London: SCM, 1983), pp. 290–310; Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God for us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991), pp. 250–310; Elizabeth Johnson, *She Who Is* (New York: Crossroad, 1993), p. 22.

<sup>46</sup> Deane-Drummond, *Eco-theology*, p. 132.

brings each of them into a communion with the Trinity.<sup>47</sup>

### 1.5. A reciprocal relationship over and against a hierarchical one

So far, we have shown that, for Teilhard and Moltmann, the non-human natural world is not separated from human beings anymore, but is deeply interrelated with them and with God. They provide a transformative notion of cosmology in that they overcome the separation of humanity and nature, and include the non-human natural world within the relationship between humanity and God. Thus we can argue for the unity of the universe in a reciprocal sense. The idea of interrelatedness, however, can be controversial in the light of totality and hierarchy. A perspective stressing organic unity ignores difference in the name of unity and so risks committing violence towards elements that do not fit in or that somehow resist the unity. Further, organicism is susceptible to criticism for ignoring a tension between hierarchy and reciprocity. In *Romantic Organicism*, Charles I. Armstrong provides an investigation into the ways in which the thought of German idealists had influenced the writings of British Romanticists and a number of twentieth-century critics in the light of organicism. Armstrong, however, points out that ‘as romantic organicism was caught between the competing principles of reciprocity and hierarchical organization, modern theories capsize on the aporia opened up between alterity and equal relations of reciprocity’.<sup>48</sup> His intention in this book is neither to attempt to debunk the idea of organicism, nor to attempt to recuperate it. Rather

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<sup>47</sup> Edwards, *Breath of Life: A Theology of the Creator Spirit* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2004), p. 121

<sup>48</sup> Charles I. Armstrong, *Romantic Organicism: From Idealist Origins to Ambivalent Afterlife* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 185.

he tries to express his dream of an organicism in which ‘heterogeneity does not exclude re-ciprocity’.<sup>49</sup>

Here two points should be made. First, we cannot avoid a hierarchical aspect in understanding the universe. For example, in ecotheology we should not deny a hierarchical relationship between humanity and nature and God. God as the Creator of the universe is superior to it, and we do not claim a perfect equity between humanity and nature either. Secondly, the question is then how to maintain both hierarchy and reciprocity and to avoid privileging the one over the other or the other way around. One of the key answers lies in the relationship between God and the creation. Although God as the Creator is absolutely superior to creation, this hierarchical status does not prevent God from loving creation. What matters is God’s attitudes towards the universe.

Some have criticised the dualistic Western way of understanding the relationship between matter and spirit or between human and nature, which caused the problems of separation and hierarchy in a dominating sense. What ecotheology is trying to do is to change such a point of view and to bring about a new perspective on the universe. Armstrong defines organicism as ‘a grounding systematics for understanding all holistic structures’ or to put matters simply, ‘a way of thinking meaningfully about wholes’.<sup>50</sup> In other words, ‘a way of thinking meaningfully about wholes’ is concerned with our attitude towards the universe. In a pamphlet *The New Story*, Thomas Berry holds that our modern crisis is caused by a lack of understanding of humanity’s place in

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<sup>49</sup> Armstrong, *Romantic Organicism*, p. 186.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

the universe.<sup>51</sup> Thus, according to ecotheology, humans need to re-establish their place in the universe by articulating the relationship between God, humanity and non-human world. Although there is still a sense of hierarchy in that relationship, it is associated not with domination, but with a reciprocal sense, because the new cosmology offers us a perspective that enables us to understand the inter-relatedness of the whole universe.

## 2. The presence of God in the universe: the sacredness of nature

### 2.1. Teilhard: the cosmic Christ and divine love

Teilhard and Moltmann develop further the intrinsic value of nature by arguing that it is sacred through the immanence of God. The idea of God's immanence in the universe, however, creates a tension between theology and ecotheology. Traditionally, theology has stressed the transcendence of God as an Absolute Other, being beyond the human and creation. Ecotheology, however, aims to articulate the immanence of God in the universe. When Teilhard and Moltmann describe the immanence of God through the cosmic Christ and the cosmic spirit respectively, two main issues arise: is the immanence of God pantheistic?; how can the transcendent God be immanent simultaneously? In this section, we will explore ways of thinking of God's immanence as not pantheism but panentheism.

Teilhard rediscovers the value of matter by associating it with sacredness. In his writings, he often mentions his love for the world or the universe. For instance, he affirms that 'I know myself to be irremediably less a child of

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<sup>51</sup> Berry, 'The New Story', p. .

heaven than a son of earth'.<sup>52</sup> He even wrote a 'Hymn to Matter': [. . .] 'I acclaim you [matter] as the divine milieu, charged with creative power, as the ocean stirred by the Spirit, as the clay molded and infused with life by the incarnate Word'.<sup>53</sup> For him, 'every fragment of force, every spark of life is equally sacred'.<sup>54</sup> Matter is thus regarded not as merely lifeless and inferior, but as sacred. If traditionally it was separated from spirit, he rediscovers an intrinsic value of matter in the light of its sacredness. In addition, the sacredness of matter reveals God's action in creation. When we regard all of creation as sacred, we 'must necessarily think of the Earth with the kind of reverence that we would accord a lower case sacrament because by sacrament is meant a sign pointing to God's action in our lives'.<sup>55</sup> That is, the sacredness of nature implies God's continuous creative action.

It is through the cosmic Christ and divine love, for Teilhard, that God is immanent in the universe. First, the cosmic Christ as the centre or final point is present in the universe. In *The Divine Milieu* (1927), Teilhard examines how the Divine milieu refers to both a centre and an omnipresence. On the one hand, it, as 'a centre', 'assembles and harmonizes within itself qualities which appear to us to be contradictory'.<sup>56</sup> On the other hand, God is present everywhere 'precisely because he is at once so deep and yet so akin to an extensionless point that God is infinitely near and dispersed everywhere'; 'precisely because

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<sup>52</sup> Teilhard, *The Heart of Matter* (London: Collins, 1978), p. 121.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>54</sup> Teilhard, 'Cosmic Life', p. 28.

<sup>55</sup> James W. Skehan, 'Exploring Teilhard's "New Mysticism": Building the Cosmos', in *Pierre Teilhard de Chardin on People and Planet*, ed. by Celia Deane-Drummond (London: Equinox, 2006), pp. 13-36 (p. 33).

<sup>56</sup> Teilhard, *Le milieu divin*, p. 100.

he is the centre that he fills the whole sphere'.<sup>57</sup> He explains how the divine is present in the universe: 'I could already see God as entering the sphere of external experience in which we move. Animating the great natural currents of life and matter, he penetrated into my own personal essence and into the development and growth of all things. He was the soul of everything that moves.'<sup>58</sup> God's presence thus makes the universe holy.

Secondly, the idea of love is also associated with the immanence of God. According to Teilhard, the sense of omnipresence is similar to the idea developed by St. Ignatius de Loyola in his meditation *Ad Amorem*, in which God is described as permeating the whole creation through His divine love.<sup>59</sup> Teilhard wrote that 'sometime I should gather all my ideas together in a synthesis built around the foundation of everything: love'.<sup>60</sup> That is, love is the crucial mode of God's presence in the universe. The cosmic Christ, as discussed above, holds together all things, and it is the power of love in Him that exerts the great unifying force in the universe. Thus 'the risen Christ is universally present, present to each creature and to all creation, through the creative love that sustains and unifies creation, and that draws it to himself.'<sup>61</sup> If the risen Jesus is creation's future central point, he, at the same time, is present everywhere through his creative love. As a result, the cosmic Christ permeates all realities, all things, all experiences, all our joys and suffering

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., pp. 101-102.

<sup>58</sup> Teilhard, 'The Universal Element', in *Writings in Time of War* (London: Collins, 1968), pp. 289-302 (p. 295).

<sup>59</sup> Michael Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises: text and commentary* (Leominster: Gracewing, 1998), p. 176.

<sup>60</sup> Robert Faricy, 'The Exploitation of Nature and Teilhard's Ecotheology of Love', in *Pierre Teilhard de Chardin on People and Planet*, ed. by Celia Deane-Drummond (London: Equinox, 2006), pp. 123-137 (p. 128).

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 130.

through the outpouring of divine love.

## 2.2. Moltmann: the cosmic Spirit

Like the cosmic Christ of Teilhard, it is through the cosmic spirit that God, for Moltmann, is immanent in the universe. Moltmann provides four principles of the cosmic Spirit which operates in nature: (a) the Spirit as ‘the principle of creativity on all levels of matter and life’ in terms of ‘new possibilities for material and living organism’; (b) as ‘the holistic principle’ or ‘the common Spirit of creation’; (c) as ‘the principle of individuation’ or ‘differentiation of particular working sketches of matter and life on their various levels’; (d) as the principle of being ‘open’ towards ‘their common future’.<sup>62</sup> The cosmic Spirit works not only in humankind but in the non-human world, and therefore God is immanent through the cosmic spirit on which the sacredness of nature is based.

For Moltmann, the Spirit is the vital energy for creation in the world. He asserts that ‘we have to understand the Spirit as the creative energy of God and the vital energy of everything that lives’.<sup>63</sup> Further, it is more than an energy. In terms of the doctrine of the Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are one God, but each is also an independent subject. Thus ‘the Spirit acts as an independent subject, and he does so not merely towards men and women; in the glorification of the Son and the Father, he acts on the Son and the Father as well.’<sup>64</sup> Accordingly, God is present as a divine subject in creation through the

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<sup>62</sup> Moltmann, *God in Creation*, p. 100.

<sup>63</sup> Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ*, p. 91.

<sup>64</sup> Moltmann, *God in Creation*, p. 97. See also *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, where he mentions that ‘it is not always clear from the New Testament that the Holy Spirit is not merely a divine energy, but a divine subject too. On the other hand, we read in the Gospel of John that “God is spirit” (4. 24). Spirit is therefore also a description of the divine existence’, p. 168.

Spirit.

### 2.3. The possibility of the transcendence and immanence of God

The notion of God's immanence in Teilhard and Moltmann may be understood as pantheistic as they describe God as being immanent in the universe and conceive the non-human world as sacred. Their notion of God's immanence, however, is not pantheistic because they also conceive God as the Absolute Other, clearly distinct from creation. So long as there is a fundamental distinction between God and creation, their notion of God's immanence cannot be pantheism, which stresses the immanence of God over and against the distinction between God and creation.

The question is how to articulate the idea of God as transcendent and at the same time immanent in creation. Moltmann tries to draw a distinction between Creator and creation but at the same time to express an intimate relationship between them. That is, he attempts to express the immanence and transcendence through a relational dynamic in the light of a mutual dwelling, *zimzum*, and creation as process (*creatio continua*). Though God created the world by the energies of the Spirit and is present in it through the Spirit, the creation, unlike the Son, is not divine. In other words, 'the world is not begotten by God, as is the Son.'<sup>65</sup> Thus creation is not divine but is nonetheless intimately related to God through the Spirit, which is 'the immanent transcendence in all things' and as such 'the ground and source' of all that is contingent.<sup>66</sup> Moltmann distinguishes between God's indwelling and the world's

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<sup>65</sup> Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, p. 113.

<sup>66</sup> Moltmann, *Creating a Just Future: the politics of peace and the ethics of creation in a*



indwelling. God the Spirit dwells in creation, and in this way ‘God and the world are related to one another through the relationship of their mutual indwelling and participation; God’s indwelling in the world is divine in kind; the world’s indwelling in God is worldly in kind.’<sup>67</sup> There is a mutual indwelling between God and the world, but their indwellings are not the same.

Concerning this mutual indwelling, Moltmann provides a core notion of God: *zimzum*, the kabbalistic doctrine of self-limitation. Moltmann suggests that ‘in order to create something outside himself, the infinite God must have made room for this finitude beforehand, ‘in himself.’ But does not creation as *opera ad extra* then presuppose an inversion of God which releases that extra in the first place?’<sup>68</sup> The *extra Deum* implies ‘a self-limitation of the infinite, omnipresent God, preceding his creation’.<sup>69</sup> Thus there is a distinction or distance between God and creation. The act of creation, however, also happens in God. Moltmann argues that creation must be viewed as ‘God’s act in God and out of God’.<sup>70</sup> In other words, creation is different from God but simultaneously is in God.

The notion of *creatio continua* also shows that God is different from creation but immanent in creation. Moltmann speaks of three types of creation: *creatio originalis*, *creatio continua*, and *creatio nova*. He writes, ‘we can see initial creation as the divine creation that is without any prior conditions: *creatio ex nihilo*; while creation in history is the laborious creation of salvation out of the overcoming of disaster. The eschatological creation of the kingdom of glory,

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*threatened world* (London: SCM, 1989), p. 58.

<sup>67</sup> Moltmann, *God in Creation*, p. 150.

<sup>68</sup> Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, p. 109.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

finally, proceeds from the vanquishing of sin and death, that is to say, the annihilating Nothingness.’<sup>71</sup> The concept of *creatio originalis* by affirming *creatio ex nihilo* refers to the transcendence of God. That is, God is understood as the Absolute Other in the initial creation in that it is not subject to any preconditions or presuppositions. Thus there is a fundamental distinction between God and creation. By contrast, *creatio continua* and *creatio nova* describe a mutual relationship between God and creation. ‘The initial creation’, according to Moltmann, ‘has to be understood as *creatio mutabilis*’, and therefore creation is ‘not closed within itself’ but ‘open for history’.<sup>72</sup> The creation is, to some extent, still in process. ‘Moltmann’, as Deane-Drummond put it, ‘urges us to see creation as an open process, with an eschatological thread between initial creation, salvation history, and the kingdom of glory.’<sup>73</sup> In the end, creation in process is associated with the future. Moltmann argues that the goal of creation ‘is not a return to the paradisaical primordial condition’ but rather ‘the revelation of the glory of God’.<sup>74</sup> If *creatio ex nihilo* and *creatio originalis* conceive God as a transcendental Absolute Being, *creatio continua* and *creatio nova* describe how God is continuously engaged with creation and therefore how He is immanent in it.

The idea of creation as process is also central for Teilhard. For him, God’s creation is not a single act, but a process that is going on now in world history. In his words, ‘the world is still being created.’<sup>75</sup> The evolutionary process of

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p. 90.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 207.

<sup>73</sup> Deane-Drummond, *Ecology in Jürgen Moltmann’s Theology*, pp. 55–6.

<sup>74</sup> Moltmann, *God in Creation*, p. 207.

<sup>75</sup> Teilhard, ‘Cosmic Life’, p. 60.

becoming in the universe is the continuation of God's creation. Although Teilhard mentions that 'the true evolution of the world takes place in souls and in their union', we should not regard his idea of evolution as being separated from matter.<sup>76</sup> For him, matter and spirit are not separated from each other. Matter is deeply interconnected with the spiritual aspect of evolution in the sense that 'through all nature I was immersed in God'.<sup>77</sup> Thus the spiritual aspect of evolution does not exclude the physical domain of living systems. Just as Moltmann understands that God is present in the ongoing process of creation, Teilhard maintains that God is involved in the continuation of creation.

Accordingly, by discovering the immanence of God, Teilhard and Moltmann develop the sacredness of the non-human world, but their idea of immanence is not pantheistic, but panentheistic. After Philip Clayton evoked 'the panentheistic turn' in the theology of the twentieth century, the term, panentheism, has become popular.<sup>78</sup> In addition, this panentheistic turn refers to a fundamental shift in ontology, signaling the shift 'from a substance ontology to a relational ontology'.<sup>79</sup> This idea of panentheism, however, is challenged by traditional theism which criticises panentheism for its inadequate distinction between God and the world. For traditional forms of theism, one of the key issues is to articulate the absolute otherness of God, and therefore the Creator should not

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<sup>76</sup> Teilhard, 'My Universe', p. 51.

<sup>77</sup> Teilhard, 'Cosmic Life', p. 60.

<sup>78</sup> Philip Clayton, 'The Panentheistic Turn in Christian Theology', *Dialog* 38 (1999), 289–93. See also John Macquarrie, *Stubborn Theological Questions* (London: SCM Press, 2003), 'I believe that in the past fifty years or so there has been a movement among Christian theologians to lay more stress on the closeness and immanence of God, in various forms of panentheism', p. x.

<sup>79</sup> Michael W. Brierley, 'Naming a Quiet Revolution: The Panentheistic Turn in Modern Theology', in *In whom we live and move and have our being: Panentheistic reflections on God's presence in a scientific world*, ed. by Philip Clayton and Arthur Peacocke (Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 2004), pp. 1–16 (p. 13).

be influenced by the creature at all. In panentheism, however, the notion of immanence tends to diminish the absolute freedom of God. John Cooper argues that 'Divine freedom is an oxymoron in almost all panentheism', and that Moltmann's notion of *zimzum* is an example of how transcendence and immanence contradict each other in panentheism.<sup>80</sup>

Cooper's criticism, however, is not fair, because God's self-limitation is different from an actual limitation. If God should be immanent in the universe because of his limitation, that means a restricted freedom of God. But the idea of *zimzum* implies that God exists as an absolute other but he empties Himself for the love of the world. Even in this self-limitation, God is still conceived as an absolute other. The notion of self-emptying in *Philippians* (2:5-8) shows well how the transcendence and immanence of the divinity co-exist in Jesus without diminishing each other. For Moltmann, 'the trinitarian concept of creation integrates the elements of truth in monotheism (transcendence) and pantheism (immanence)', and 'in the panentheistic view, God, having created the world, also dwells in it, and conversely the world which he has created exists in him.'<sup>81</sup> Accordingly, God remains absolutely transcendental even in immanence.

In Teilhard's case, the concept of differentiation maintains a proper balance between transcendence and immanence. Teilhard does not refer explicitly to panentheism, but he often regards himself as a 'Christian pantheist', rejecting other forms of pantheism and monism.<sup>82</sup> His idea of pantheism is the pantheism of differentiation, which is very panentheistic. He argues that 'the reflective

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<sup>80</sup> John W. Cooper, *Panentheism, the other God of the philosophers: from Plato to the present* (Nottingham: Apollos2007), p. 326.

<sup>81</sup> Moltmann, *God in Creation*, p. 98.

<sup>82</sup> Henri de Lubac, *The Religion of Teilhard de Chardin* (London: Collins, 1967), pp. 154-60.

centers of the world are really one with God', and that 'this state is not obtained by identification (God becoming all), but by the differentiating and communicating action of love (God all in all)'.<sup>83</sup> Although God is immanent in the world, the distinction between identification and differentiation implies that God does not become the world, and vice versa. In this respect, God is regarded as both transcendent and immanent.

One of the possibilities of the balance is, as discussed above, the relational dynamic of God and the world. The relationship between God and creation is not static, but dynamic, in that God's creation has not finished yet, and He continues to be involved in the process of creation. The way of God's immanence is His continuation of the activity of creation in the universe. When the non-human world is conceived as sacred through the immanence of God, the sacredness implies not the union of one substance between God and creation in a static sense, but the union of a relational dynamic. In this relational dynamic, God is involved in the process of creation and at the same time is distinct from it. As a result, for Teilhard and Moltmann, transcendence and immanence do not contradict each other, but they maintain a proper balance between them.

### 3. Cosmic eschatology

#### 3.1. The significance of eschatology in ecotheology and theology

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<sup>83</sup> Teilhard, *The Human Phenomenon*, p. 223. See also, 'A Clarification: Reflections on Two Converse Forms of Spirit' in *Activation of Energy* (London: Collins, 1970): 'in that magnificent definition of the pantheism of differentiation is expressed [. . .] the very essence of Christ's message', pp. 215-227 (pp. 223, 225); St. Paul claims that 'God may be all in all' (1 Corinthians, 15. 28).

In the previous sections, we have discussed how ecotheology argues for the intrinsic value of nature by articulating the inter-relatedness between humanity, nature, and God, and by discovering the sacredness of nature through the immanence of God. Now we need to investigate the importance of nature in terms of the issue of eschatology. Christian faith is concerned with the future as well as the present. Both in the Old Testament and the New Testament, the people are always given a promise for the future, for example, a better land, or redemption. In Christianity time has a beginning and an ending, but the end is not the annulment of the universe but a new beginning, for example, ‘a new heaven and a new earth’. In conventional theology, the non-human world is usually excluded from the narrative of a final redemption. If the non-human world is not included in the picture of the final salvation, it may be reduced to simply being thought of as existing for the wellbeing of human beings. At the same time, it is not clear that the non-human world needs a final redemption. In this respect, the intrinsic value of nature needs to be examined in the light of eschatology. We will investigate three points: first, the definition of eschatology; secondly, the significance of a cosmic eschatology; and thirdly, the transformation of the universe in eschatology.

It was in the twentieth century that eschatology emerged as a focal point of theology. There are a number of theologians who have stressed the significance of eschatology. Ernst Kasemann argues that the ‘Apocalyptic was the mother of all Christian theology’,<sup>84</sup> and Karl Barth also complained that Protestant

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<sup>84</sup> Carl E. Braaten, ‘The Recovery of Apocalyptic Imagination’, in *The Last Things: Biblical and Theological Perspectives on Eschatology*, ed. by Carl E. Braaten and Robert Jenson (Grand Rapids, Mich.; Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2002), pp. 14–32 (p. 18).

theology had lulled us ‘to sleep by adding at the conclusion of Christian Dogmatics a short and perfectly harmless chapter entitled – “Eschatology”’.<sup>85</sup> Albert Schweitzer discovers that the essence of Jesus’ message is deeply eschatological.<sup>86</sup> More recently, Moltmann emphasises the place of eschatology by developing the theology of hope and locating eschatology at the beginning of theology rather than at the end, on the grounds that hope for the future is a fundamental characteristic of faith.<sup>87</sup> The implication is that eschatology is not an option, but a fundamental element in faith. If we look at the Old Testament and the New Testament, we realise that their key message is concerned with hope for the future and the fulfillment of the promise. In the former the promised land is a recurring motif, and Jesus proclaims the Kingdom of God in the latter. The issue of eschatology cannot be detached from Christian faith. As Jenson put it, faith and eschatological expectation are two aspects of one mode of existence.<sup>88</sup> The emergence of eschatology is thus of great significance.

It is not easy to define what eschatology is, given that the language about eschatology in the Bible is very enigmatic. ‘Eschaton’ is the Greek word for ‘end’, and, in traditional Christian theology, eschatology is understood as the study of the end times in light of four major last things: resurrection, judgment, heaven and hell.<sup>89</sup> Both millenarianism and apocalypse refer to a kind of

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<sup>85</sup> David Fergusson, ‘Eschatology’, in *Cambridge Companion to Christian Doctrine*, ed. by Colin E. Gunton (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997), pp. 226–224 (p. 234).

<sup>86</sup> Braaten, *The Recovery of Apocalyptic Imagination*, p. 18.; Fergusson, ‘Eschatology’, p. 234.

<sup>87</sup> Fergusson, ‘Eschatology’, p. 235; D. A. Lane, ‘Eschatology (In Theology)’, in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol.5, pp. 342–352 (pp. 345–6); Ernst M. Conradie, *An ecological Christian anthropology: At home on earth?* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), p. 20.

<sup>88</sup> Robert W. Jenson, ‘The Great Transformation’, in *The Last Things: Biblical and Theological Perspectives on Eschatology*, pp. 33–42 (p. 34).

<sup>89</sup> Bill T. Arnold, ‘Old Testament Eschatology and the Rise of Apocalypticism’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Eschatology*, ed. by Jerry L. Walls (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008), pp. 23–24 (p. 24); Neal DeRoo, ‘Introduction’, in *Phenomenology and Eschatology: Not yet in the Now*, ed. by Neal

eschatology. Millenarianism, based upon a strictly literal interpretation of the Book of Revelation 20:1–15, is the teaching that before the Last Judgment Christ will return to the earth in order to establish a kingdom which will last for 1,000 years.<sup>90</sup> The notion of apocalypse, which comes from the Greek word *apokalypsis*, meaning unveiling, uncovering, or revelation, had begun to be formulated around the period of the Exile (587–538 B.C.).<sup>91</sup> And apocalyptic writing completely replaced the older prophetic style after the return of the first Jewish exiles – the postexilic age.<sup>92</sup> Particularly it is the Book of Daniel that has the most complete form of apocalypse in the Old Testament.<sup>93</sup> Christianity inherited the apocalyptic tradition, and it appears that John took much of his source material from the Book of Daniel in the Book of Revelation, the last book of the New Testament and one of the finest examples of this literary form.<sup>94</sup> Although the language of eschatology is puzzling, the common basic message of eschatology in the Old Testament and the New Testament is that salvation will entail the judgment of this world and the resurrection of the faithful to a blessed heavenly existence. Eschatology refers to the end times, but, at the same time, is concerned with a new world.

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DeRoo and John Panteleimon (Farnham, Surrey; Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 1–11 (p. 1).

<sup>90</sup> R. Kuehner, 'Millenarianism', in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol.9, pp. 633–35 (p. 633). During this period, Satan is chained for 1,000 years, the martyrs and all who have been faithful to Jesus will come to life (the first resurrection) and for 1,000 years share His royal priesthood in a messianic kingdom. As the 1,000 years near their end, Satan will be permitted to resume his activity. After a bitter struggle Satan will be conquered definitively by Christ in the Last Judgment.

<sup>91</sup> Elizabeth K. Rosen, *Apocalyptic transformation: apocalypse and the postmodern imagination* (Lanham, Md.; Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2008), p. xiii; Braaten, 'The Recovery of Apocalyptic Imagination', p. 15; John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (Grand Rapids, Mich.; Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans, 1998), p. 5.

<sup>92</sup> C. Stuhlmüller, 'Apocalyptic', in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol.1, pp. 545–547 (p. 546).

<sup>93</sup> This book was written during the great persecution of 167 to 164 B.C., when Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the Seleucid king of Antioch, attempted to suppress Jewish national identity in Palestine, see Stuhlmüller, 'Apocalyptic', p. 546.

<sup>94</sup> Rosen, *Apocalyptic transformation*, p. xiii; Stuhlmüller, 'Apocalyptic', p. 546.



My main concern here is to show how eschatology is associated with ecotheology. That is, the view to be defended is the following: along with mainstream thinkers in ecotheology, it can be argued that cosmic eschatology is an indispensable element of a constructive theology emphasising earthly renewal and responsibility. Eschatology deals with the salvation of the human, and some traditional theologians are skeptical of whether the non-human natural world will be included in the final judgment and redemption. Denis Edwards conceives eschatology as God transforming the universe as a whole, but he raises a crucial question: will every sparrow that falls be redeemed?<sup>95</sup> As Phan argues, the perspective of traditional eschatology was heavily anthropocentric in that it viewed the redeemed cosmos mainly as the new habitat for glorified humanity.<sup>96</sup> A number of theologians, however, have tried to articulate the relationship between eschatology and cosmology in different terms. McFague claims that the good news is not only for individual human beings [. . .] but for the entire creation.<sup>97</sup> Phan also holds that the resurrection is not only an event happening to the individual but also an ecclesial and cosmic event.<sup>98</sup> For Karl Rahner, the presuppositions for eschatological statements involve not only man as spiritual person but also man as a reality to whom there

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<sup>95</sup> Quoted by Robert Russell, 'Cosmology and Eschatology', in *The Oxford Handbook of Eschatology*, ed. by Jerry L. Walls (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008), pp. 565–575 (p. 571).

<sup>96</sup> Peter C. Phan, 'Contemporary contexts and issues in Eschatology', *Theological Studies* 55 (1994), 507–536 (pp. 534–5).

<sup>97</sup> Sallie McFague, *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), p. 201.

<sup>98</sup> Phan, 'Contemporary contexts and issues in Eschatology', p. 8; see also, Russell, 'Cosmology and Eschatology': in the Catholic doctrine of bodily resurrection such that 'the whole physical universe [. . .] shares in our destiny', p. 570; Lane, 'Eschatology (In Theology)': 'it is impossible to talk about eschatology today without some reference to the contemporary fascination with cosmology', p. 346; Denis Edwards, *Jesus and the Cosmos* (New York: Paulist Press, 1991): 'God's power to save embraces not just humanity, but all of creation', p. 85; '[. . .] the material world will still be the expression of human spirit, and will participate in the final glorified state of this spirit', p. 94.

necessarily belongs a world as the milieu and environment in which he actualizes his existence.<sup>99</sup> The world and environment where human beings exist cannot be excluded from the vision of eschatology, but rather share in the final destiny of humanity. Rahner rightly writes that ‘Christian anthropology would be incomplete and even false if it wanted to understand the individual’s final state merely as the salvation of an abstract human soul, and if it wanted to ascribe immortality only to this soul and to make its destiny independent of the transformation of the world’.<sup>100</sup>

### 3.2. Cosmic eschatology in Teilhard and Moltmann

In a similar vein, Moltmann explains some crucial reasons for the inseparable relationship between the human and the universe in an eschatological vision. First, he points out that eschatology, without cosmology, would become a gnostic myth of redemption concerned only with redemption from, and not of, the body and the world.<sup>101</sup> Secondly, according to his theological anthropology, ‘there is no such thing as a soul separate from the body, and no humanity detached from nature [. . .] no redemption for human beings either without the redemption of nature [. . .] no eternal life for human beings without the change in the cosmic conditions of life.’<sup>102</sup> Further, the Creator is the redeemer in his doctrine of the Trinity. If God does not redeem all that He creates, He would contradict Godself.<sup>103</sup> Both humanity and the non-

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<sup>99</sup> Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith: an introduction to the idea of Christianity* (New York: Crossroad, 1997), p. 444.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., p. 434.

<sup>101</sup> Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, p. 260.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., p. 260.

<sup>103</sup> Russell, ‘Cosmology and Eschatology’, p. 571.

human world are part of creation, and therefore both of them should be included in the final redemption. In the long run, Moltmann, like Rahner, refers to the significance of a cosmic eschatology.

Having referred to the importance of a cosmic eschatology, it seems possible to argue that the non-human world must be included in the vision of the promise and hope for the future. We still have, however, difficulty in understanding a clear picture of ‘a new heaven and a new earth’ simply because it is beyond our limited human comprehension and imagination.<sup>104</sup> Nevertheless, eschatology plays a crucial role in history. Most of all, the meaning of eschatological narratives should not be accepted literally, but needs to be interpreted, on the grounds that ‘eschatology is not some idle speculation about the future, nor is it some kind of report of what goes on in the next world’.<sup>105</sup> Eschatological narratives offer not the literal facts, but a kind of paradigm through which people may try to understand the current situation and search for hope. For instance, eschatological narratives were often created during times of difficulties, and the symbols and images of apocalyptic revelation have provided words of exhortation and consolation that meet the problems of the day, offering encouragement in the face of persecution, support in the wake of historical disaster, and courage in times of helplessness.<sup>106</sup> A number of

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<sup>104</sup> Rahner mentions that ‘we do not know what a transformed creation will be like. God and God’s future are beyond our limited human comprehension and imagination’, Denis Edwards, *Ecology at the heart of Faith* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis; Edinburgh: Alban distributor, 2006), p. 89; Deane-Drummond also suggests that ‘the new earth is a transformed earth [. . .] but how far and to what extent the same conditions prevail as in our present experience is quite simply outside the boundary of human knowing’, *Eco-theology*, p. 173.

<sup>105</sup> Lane, ‘Eschatology (In Theology)’, p. 347.

<sup>106</sup> Braaten, ‘The Recovery of Apocalyptic Imagination’, pp. 27–8.

Sanders also ‘views the social function of the genre as literature of the oppressed’, Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, p. 9; ‘Apocalypse is a means by which to understand the world and one’s place in it. It is an organizing principle imposed on an overwhelming, seemingly disordered

theologians argue that the eschatological imagination, whatever its intended meaning is, is a tool or a pattern of thought, which helps people deal with present problems and shape a vision for the future.<sup>107</sup> The symbols and imagery of apocalyptic imagination are enigmatic, but they, as a paradigm, still enable people to be aware of where they are and where they are heading.

If we look at the cosmic eschatology of Moltmann and Teilhard, we realise that their understanding of cosmic eschatology becomes a paradigm for analysing the present and suggesting a vision for the future. First, their eschatological vision is not the dichotomy between, but the integration of, the present and the future. We have already seen how both Moltmann and Teilhard develop the organic relationship of the whole universe with the concept of evolution. Teilhard theorizes that there are three major phases of evolution, the geosphere, the biosphere and the noosphere, and Moltmann speaks of three types of creation, *creatio originalis*, *creatio continua*, and *creatio nova*. Creation proceeds towards its final destiny, and the present is already part of the final point in the light of the notion of evolution. The present and the future are deeply inter-related in evolution. As a result, the eschatological imagination, as a tool, a pattern of thought, does not attempt to destroy the old order, but to transform it. Though eschatology is concerned with the future, it is not the

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universe', Rosen, *Apocalyptic transformation*, p. xi; 'The images that are used to describe the eschatological age are at best indicators. They point towards a new quality of existence, but because it is qualitatively different from the present we lack the vocabulary and thus the knowledge to describe it [. . .] the images that are employed provide a direction both for our hopes and for our energies here and now', Fergusson, 'Eschatology', pp. 13-4.

<sup>107</sup> See, Arland J. Hultgren, 'Eschatology in the New Testament: The Current Debate', in *The Last Things: Biblical and Theological Perspectives on Eschatology*, pp. 67-89 (p. 68); Braaten, 'The Recovery of Apocalyptic Imagination', p. 16; Anne Primavesi, *From Apocalypse to Genesis: Ecology, Feminism and Christianity* (Tunbridge Wells: Burns and Oates, 1991), p. 67; Rosen, *Apocalyptic transformation*, p. xi; Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, p. 1.

denial of the present. Jesus teaches that the Kingdom of Heaven has already come in the New Testament.<sup>108</sup> Moltmann, in particular, developed the famous notion of the kingdom, ‘the kingdom is already – but not yet here,’ in his theology of hope. For him, ‘this earth is the real and sensorily experienceable promise of the new earth.’<sup>109</sup> Eschatology thus should not be understood as ‘pie in the sky when you die’, but is already embedded in the here and now.<sup>110</sup> An eschatological vision is never fully realised under the conditions of history, and therefore the world is directed to a point which is not the end of its existence, but the end of its unfinished and continually developing history.<sup>111</sup> In this respect, the present is already part of an eschatological vision. ‘A new heaven and a new earth’ is not the denial, but the transformation, of the present world.

For Teilhard, the transformation of the universe in eschatology is essentially based upon the risen Christ. The evolution of the universe eventually leads to a final point, ‘Omega’, in which ‘all the fibers, the threads, the generating lines, of the universe are knit together’.<sup>112</sup> Teilhard conceives the risen Christ as the Omega of evolution, the goal and fulfilment of the whole process. He argues that the risen Christ is present to the whole universe through the incarnation and the resurrection, and therefore God’s universal presence ‘has transformed itself for us into the omnipresence of

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<sup>108</sup> ‘The kingdom of God is at hand’ (Mark 1. 15); ‘the kingdom of heaven is at hand’ (Matthew 4. 17); ‘the kingdom of God is within you’ (Luke 17. 21).

<sup>109</sup> Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, p. 279.

<sup>110</sup> Fergusson, ‘Eschatology’, pp. 1–2.

<sup>111</sup> Douglas J. Hall, ‘Stewardship as Key to a Theology of Nature’, in *Environmental Stewardship: Critical Perspectives – Past and Present*, ed. by R. J. Berry (London: T and T Clark, 2006), pp. 129–144 (p. 143); Edwards, *Jesus and the Cosmos*, p. 93; Arnold refers to eschatology [. . .] ‘which is still in prospect and which presses for realization’. It is a culmination of history, rather than an annulment of it, ‘Old Testament Eschatology’, p. 25.

<sup>112</sup> Teilhard, ‘My Universe’, p. 48.

christification'.<sup>113</sup> Finally, Christ the Omega draws the universe to its future in God and already empowers the whole process of evolutionary emergence from within because Omega already exists and is at work in the deepest part of the thinking mass.<sup>114</sup> In other words, the risen Christ radiates the energy that leads the universe to its transformation in God.

Moltmann, like Teilhard, understands the risen Christ as the key to a cosmic eschatology. The resurrection of Jesus has become the universal law, not only for human beings, but also for all cosmic life systems, and therefore the raised body of Christ acts as an embodied promise for the whole creation.<sup>115</sup> And the risen Christ draws all things into his future.<sup>116</sup> The whole creation will be perfected or transformed through the risen Christ, and they will become new and participate in the glory of God. As a result, the temporal creation, as the consummation of creation, will become an eternal creation because all created beings will participate in God's eternity.<sup>117</sup> Both Teilhard and Moltmann show the possibility of the transformation of the universe through the risen Christ. But this notion of transformation is not the denial of, but the consummation of, the present.

We have examined the definition of eschatology, the relevance and significance of a cosmic eschatology, and the transformation of the universe in eschatology as a paradigm. Although the concrete picture of the final redemption is beyond our limited human comprehension and imagination, it has

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<sup>113</sup> Teilhard, *Le milieu divin*, p. 112.

<sup>114</sup> Teilhard, *The Human Phenomenon*, pp. 209–15.

<sup>115</sup> Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ*, p. 258.

<sup>116</sup> Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, p. 338.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.* p. 294.

been argued that an eschatological imagination as a tool or pattern of thought plays a crucial role in analysing the present and shaping a vision for the future. Both Moltmann and Teilhard express a cosmic eschatology that the whole creation will be transformed through the risen Christ. Their cosmic eschatological vision is a paradigm for analysing the present and suggesting a vision for the future in two important ways. First, their notion of a cosmic eschatology is critical of contemporary society, particularly in its insistence on seeing the non-human world included in the final redemption. And secondly, it provides a vision for the future that creation will be transformed through the risen Christ at the final judgment. In this respect, it is claimed that their cosmic eschatological imagination consolidates the intrinsic value of the non-human world in terms of its transformation in the final redemption.

Describing and analysing mainly the works of Teilhard and Moltmann, an attempt has been made to articulate the intrinsic value of the non-human world by developing three key elements: the inter-relatedness of the universe, the presence of God in the universe, and eschatology for the universe. This perspective of ecotheology enables us to re-discover and to re-establish our relationship with the universe on the grounds that we are inter-related with nature and God in a reciprocal way; nature needs to be conceived as sacred owing to the presence of God; the non-human world is also included in the final vision of eschatology. Ecotheology as a conceptual framework thus provides us with a transformative understanding of the non-human natural world. Now it is time to explore Coleridge and Wordsworth in the light of three key terms of ecotheology, and show that their works relate to recent developments in

ecothological theory.



## Chapter 2

### Coleridge's quest for the unity of the universe

In this Chapter, it will be argued that the works of Coleridge reflect two ecotheological elements, the interrelatedness of the universe and the independent sacred value of the non-human natural world. Throughout his career as a poet and thinker Coleridge makes a constant and determined effort to discover how we can conceive the universe as a unity rather than as a collection of different parts. Two ideas are key to his lifelong search for unity. In his early years, he was enthusiastic about the idea of the one life, and later he turned to *Naturphilosophie*. Intriguingly, each idea provides its own conceptual frame which enables the poet to articulate the universe as a whole. Thus it will be shown how both of them offer an ecotheological perspective in their way of unifying the universe.

One of the difficulties in examining Coleridge is the uncertainty that surrounds ideas of his early and late periods. With respect to the works of Coleridge, the critics often draw a line between an early period and a later period for various reasons. M. H. Abrams describes Coleridge as a bard in the years 1796–1798 and as metaphysician and critic in the years 1815–1819, the distinction depending on the genres of his works.<sup>1</sup> In *The Life of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, R. Ashton also maps out the critical biography of Coleridge by

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<sup>1</sup> M. H. Abrams, *The Correspondent Breeze: Essays on English Romanticism* (New York: Norton, 1984), p. 206.

splitting his life into two parts, part one 1772–1803 and part two 1803–1834.<sup>2</sup> B. Brice and W. Christie attempt to show how Coleridge’s philosophical and theological ideas had changed from his early period to his later years in their *Coleridge and Scepticism* and *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: A Literary Life*.<sup>3</sup> In his early years, Coleridge was a Unitarian and radical in politics, and studied Hartley’s philosophy (associationism and necessitarianism). However, he rejected necessitarianism and turned to Anglican orthodoxy later. Though Coleridge changed his views on philosophy and theology, a question remains about how his later period relates to his early years. Favouring either continuity or discontinuity, the critics are split on this question.<sup>4</sup> For instance, according to those who chose continuity, Coleridge never left the Church of England. Ronald Wendling argues that Coleridge’s Unitarianism has sympathy for Anglicanism and ‘all of this seems to indicate an emotional withholding of himself from a Christian orthodoxy that he fundamentally accepted even as a young man—the withholding masking itself as intellectual scruple.’<sup>5</sup> Peter Mann, however, points to a fundamental reorientation of his theological views in a sense that, for example, ‘by 1798 C[oleridge] had moved toward the traditional Christian view of evil as personal, innate, absolute, and prior to all conditions and circumstances’.<sup>6</sup>

Both continuity and discontinuity have their own justifications, but here,

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<sup>2</sup> R. Ashton, *The Life of Samuel Taylor Coleridge: A Critical Biography* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996).

<sup>3</sup> Ben Brice, *Coleridge and Scepticism* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007); William Christie, *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: A Literary Life* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

<sup>4</sup> William Ulmer deals with this division in ‘Virtue of Necessity: Coleridge’s Unitarian Moral theology’, *Modern Philology*, 102 (2005), 372–404.

<sup>5</sup> R. Wendling, *Coleridge’s Progress to Christianity: experience and authority in religious faith* (London: Bucknell UP, 1995), p. 109.

<sup>6</sup> *Lectures 1795 On Politics and Religion*, ed. by Lewis Patton and Peter Mann (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 107, n.1.

neither agreeing nor disagreeing with any of them, I would like to focus on the continuity between two periods from another perspective, Coleridge's on-going project on the unity of the universe. As mentioned above, one of his life-long ends was to search for the unity of the universe, which was the main driving force for his intellectual quest in both his early and later years.<sup>7</sup> The doctrine of the one life is often regarded as 'part of the parochial lumber that he shook off once he encountered Kant,' but, as Seamus Perry argues, the idea is 'centrally important for much of his intellectual life and even a key to the Coleridgean predicament.'<sup>8</sup> Although his interest in Unitarianism and Hartley's associationism shifts to orthodox Christianity and natural philosophy later, his primary concern for the one life permeates through both periods. Accordingly, attention needs to be paid to the continuity between the two periods in terms of the unity of the universe, rather than to the division between them.

## 1. The inter-relatedness of the universe

### 1.1. The monistic idea of God: Priestley and Spinoza

In his early works, Coleridge develops the idea of the one life in his quest for the unity of the universe. Most of all, it is important to underline the

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<sup>7</sup> Cutsinger writes, Coleridge 'attached throughout his thinking to the question of unity [. . .] Coleridge was concerned to pierce through custom and habit, what he called "the film of familiarity and selfish solicitude" (footnote 5) in order to see a unity and wholeness of things more inward than surfaces and deeper, hence, than the mutual exclusions of materialism and mechanism and of material and mechanical things: a unity that would preserve also, however, the fullness and abundance of the nature he loved [. . .] Coleridge's method is a method attempting always to disclose a unity, though not identity, among the seeming irreducibles of a dividing vision: a unity of the one and the many, sameness and difference, subject and object, self and other, activity and passivity', 'Coleridgean Polarity and Theological Vision', *The Harvard Theological Review*, 76 (1983), 91–108 (pp. 92–93). See also, John Beer, *Coleridge the Visionary* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1959), p. 151.

<sup>8</sup> Seamus Perry, *Coleridge and the Uses of Division* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1999), pp. 68–9.

religious aspect of the idea in that ‘each Thing has a Life of it’s own, & yet they are all “One Life”’, and this ‘One Life’ is based on God: ‘In God they move & live, & have their Being.’<sup>9</sup> There are some critics who announce religion as a central idea in Coleridge’s thought. Perry regards Coleridge’s philosophy of mind and poetry as being intricately involved with his religion.<sup>10</sup> Hedley also holds that ‘the intellectual parameters of Coleridge’s thought are more theological than is sometimes assumed’.<sup>11</sup> Further, Cutsinger points out how critics often fail to recognise the centrality of God in his idea of oneness.<sup>12</sup> It can be argued that, for Coleridge, religion as a unifying principle plays a central role in formulating the idea of the one life. In other words, Coleridge tries to formulate the inter-relatedness of the universe through his religious faith in a sense that the oneness of the universe is based upon the notion of God whose presence permeates the whole universe. And it is Unitarianism that influenced Coleridge’s idea of God.<sup>13</sup> Concerning Unitarianism, we should explore Priestley and Spinoza because there is no doubt that they contributed significantly to the development of Coleridge’s religious thoughts.

Joseph Priestley, the founder of Unitarianism, influenced Coleridge’s idea of

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<sup>9</sup> *CL II*, p. 866.

<sup>10</sup> Perry, *Coleridge and the Uses of Division*, p. 61–2.

<sup>11</sup> Hedley writes that ‘the actual Enlightenment backdrop was dominated as much by Christian theologians such as Priestley and Paley as by the cultured despisers of religion – Hume and Gibbon’, and that ‘this distinctively Christian context of the debate about Platonism is a vital clue to Coleridge’s thought’, *Coleridge, Philosophy and Religion*, pp. 6–7.

<sup>12</sup> Cutsinger, ‘Coleridgean Polarity and Theological Vision’, p. 93; see also, John Muirhead, *Coleridge as Philosopher* (New York: Humanities, 1930): ‘Coleridge’s whole philosophy was a Philosophy of Religion’, p. 217; J. R. Barth, *The Symbolic Imagination: Coleridge and the Romantic Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1977): ‘all knowledge is ultimately one, whether it be scientific, poetic, philosophical, or religious, and the capstone of all knowledge for him is knowledge of God’, p. 11.

<sup>13</sup> Perry points out that ‘the doctrine of the universal One Life originates in Coleridge’s Unitarianism, encountered at Jesus College through the don Frend’, *Coleridge and the Uses of Division*, p. 70. Gillman attributes Coleridge’s conversion to the influence of Frend, *Life of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (London: William Pickering, 1838), p. 65.

God to the extent that his idea of God was a kind of precursor to Coleridge's notion of the oneness of the universe. In his early years Coleridge was converted to Unitarianism. Writing to Southey in 1794, Coleridge declared himself 'a Unitarian Christian'.<sup>14</sup> A 1798 letter to John Prior Estlin, a Unitarian minister, also shows the strength of his belief in a Unitarian religion: 'to the cause of Religion I solemnly devote my best faculties – and if I wish to acquire [. . .] to defend Religion ably, and by my reputation to draw attention to the deference of it.'<sup>15</sup> Priestley endeavours to articulate the oneness of God and the creation. Challenging the dualism of matter and spirit, Priestley discusses the continuity between them. First of all, in his *Disquisitions relating to Matter and Spirit*, Priestley claims that we should not 'consider matter with that contempt and disgust, with which it has generally been treated' but matter should 'rise in our esteem'. Matter has 'no properties but those of attraction and repulsion', and at the same time it is not 'impenetrable and inert substance'.<sup>16</sup> For him, matter is a kind of energy or force, and 'the whole universe is spiritual force.'<sup>17</sup> Priestley identifies God with this kind of energy: 'God, as a spirit was superior to, but not different in kind from matter, that is to say energy.'<sup>18</sup> God and matter share one common element, energy. 'If then our ideas concerning matter

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<sup>14</sup> *CL I*, p. 148.

<sup>15</sup> *CL I*, p. 373. The motivation of this vow may be found partly in Coleridge's acceptance of a £150 annuity from the Wedgewood family; see *CL I*, p. 384, a letter sent to John Thelwall; see also Ashton, *The Life of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, pp. 118–119.

<sup>16</sup> J. Priestley, *Disquisitions relating to Matter and Spirit. To which is added the history of philosophical doctrine concerning the origin of the soul [. . .]*, 2nd edn (Birmingham: Pearson and Rollason, MDCCCLXXII [1782]) <http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=oxford&tabID=T001&docId=CW3318625236&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE> [accessed 23 March 2011], pp. 22, 24.

<sup>17</sup> H. w. Piper, *The Active Universe: Pantheism and the Concept of Imagination in the English Romantic Poets* (London: The Athlone Press, University of London, 1962), p. 27.

<sup>18</sup> Priestley, *Disquisitions relating to Matter and Spirit*, p. 173.

do not go beyond the powers of which it is possessed, much less can out ideas go beyond powers, properties or attributes with respect to the Divine Being.’<sup>19</sup> But we should note that God is the very source of this power: ‘The Divine Being and his energy are absolutely necessary to that of every other being. His power is the very life and soul of everything that exists; and strictly speaking, without him we are, as well as can do nothing.’<sup>20</sup> Thus matter, as an extension of the Divine Being, ‘resolved into nothing but the divine agency exerted according to certain rules’.<sup>21</sup>

Priestley shows the oneness of God and creation through the dynamic of energy. By conceiving God and all nature as the same energy, Priestley seems to describe God as pantheistic. He, however, seemed to be aware of the danger of Spinozistic pantheism and tried to affirm the transcendence of God: ‘Nor, indeed, is making the Deity to be, as well as to do every thing, in this sense, any thing like the opinion of Spinoza; because I suppose a source of infinite power, and superior intelligence, from which all inferior beings are derived; that every inferior intelligent being has a consciousness distinct from that of the Supreme Intelligence.’<sup>22</sup> Being aware of the danger of Spinoza’s idea of God, Priestley tries to make a distinction between Spinoza’s notion and his by stressing the transcendence of God. In fact, it is questionable whether this dualism of God and the creation can be consistent with the oneness of God and the creation in terms of the dynamic of energy, but the main focus here is that Priestley’s idea of the oneness of God and the creation influenced Coleridge’s

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 140.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 42.

notion of the one life.

Probably one of Coleridge's earliest references to Spinoza appears in a letter to Southey in 1799: 'however, sunk in Spinoza, remain as undisturbed as a Toad in a Rock.' A year later he also wrote to Humphry Davy that 'as soon as I settle, I shall read Spinoza & Leibnitz – and I particularly wish to know wherein they agree with, & wherein differ from'. In Spinoza's *The Ethics*, one of the primary and most controversial notions is substance.<sup>23</sup> At the beginning of the book, he argues that 'by substance, I mean that which is in itself, and is conceived through itself'.<sup>24</sup> If Descartes understood mind and matter as different kinds of substance, Spinoza conceived them as different 'attributes' of one substance. In other words, for Spinoza, there is only one substance which is infinite, eternal, all-inclusive, all-embracing reality, self-sufficient, and necessary. And he identifies this one substance with God: 'God is one, that is, only one substance can be granted in the universe.'<sup>25</sup> Nothing can exist or be conceived without God, and therefore God is 'the indwelling and not the transient cause of all things'. Everything is 'in God' and there is no any substance but God. There is 'nothing in itself external to God'.<sup>26</sup>

Further, in order to exist each thing needs to be conditioned by another particular thing, and 'the force whereby each particular thing perseveres in existing follows from the eternal necessity of God's nature.'<sup>27</sup> God is the force

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<sup>23</sup> *The Ethics*, in *Benedict De Spinoza: On the Improvement of the understanding, The Ethics, Correspondence*, trans. by R. H. M. Elwes (New York: Dover Publications, INC., 1965), pp. 43–271. *The Ethics* consists of five parts: Part I deals with God, Part II with mind and body, Part III with the emotions, Part IV with ethics, and Part V with the power of reason over the emotions.

<sup>24</sup> Spinoza, *The Ethics*, p. 45 (I. Definitions).

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55 (I. xiv).

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62 (I. xviii).

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 118 (II. xlv).

through which all things maintain their existence. Individual things as ‘the modifications of the attributes of God’ are the very expressions of the attributes of God. Spinoza affirms that ‘the more we understand particular things, the more we understand God’.<sup>28</sup> For Spinoza nature or the universe is identified with God. All is one and in God, and all is God. His idea of God brings about the oneness and interconnectedness of the universe, but this idea, based on the unreflective substance monism, causes some crucial problems, pantheism, atheism, determinism, or Godless materialism.<sup>29</sup> Whereas traditional theism tries to hold together both transcendence and immanence in spite of the Incarnation, Spinoza sacrifices ‘God’s personality for the sake of his infinity’ but see ‘God and the world as one’ in a pantheistic sense.<sup>30</sup>

Coleridge repeatedly portrays God as being present in the whole universe. In *Religious Musings*, God is ‘all in all!’ (ll. 43–44), and in ‘Frost At Midnight’, He is ‘Himself in all, and all things in himself’ (ll. 62). The way in which God is ‘Himself in all, and all things in himself’ will be discovered by the dynamic relationship between the universe and God. In ‘The Eolian Harp’,<sup>31</sup> Coleridge depicts that:

And what if all of animated nature  
Be but organic harps diversely framed,  
That tremble into thought, as o’er them sweeps  
Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 260 (V. xxiv).

<sup>29</sup> See, Hedley, *Coleridge, Philosophy and Religion*, pp. 19, 92; ‘Coleridge as a Theologian’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. by Frederick Burwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 473–497 (pp. 479–481); Brice, *Coleridge and Scepticism*, p. 71.

<sup>30</sup> Hedley, *Coleridge, Philosophy and Religion*, p. 70.

<sup>31</sup> The various revisions, see William Scheuerle, ‘A Reexamination of Coleridge’s “The Eolian Harp”’, *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900*, 15 (1975), 591–599 (p. 3).



At once the Soul of each, and God of All? (ll. 44–48)

Although the poem seems to be a love poem to Sara in a local landscape, the poet ‘deftly picks up elements of his larger vision’ in developing a natural symbolism.<sup>32</sup> At first the harp is likened to a ‘coy maid half yielding to her lover’ (ll. 15), but it becomes a contemplative instrument through which finite individuals are related to the infinite in this passage, which clearly shows the poem’s theme that God is present in everything in the sense that one intellectual breeze, activating the animated nature as organic harps, is the Soul of each and God of All.<sup>33</sup> If we look at the second draft of the poem, the meaning of ‘the Soul of each, and God of all’ will be clearer:

Thus God would be the universal Soul,  
Mechaniz’d matter as th’ organic harps  
And each one’s Tunes be that, which each calls I.<sup>34</sup>

God as the universal Soul is intimately implicated with the essence of an individual identity as He ‘organizes and shapes it and endows it with its own living individuality’.<sup>35</sup> Accordingly, the universal Soul implies the

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<sup>32</sup> Ashton, *The Life of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, p. 76.

John Beer, *Coleridge’s Poetic Intelligence* (London: Macmillan, 1977), p. 64.

<sup>33</sup> See, Paul Magnuson, ‘The “Conversation” poems’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Coleridge*, ed. by Lucy Newlyn (Cambridge, England; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 32–44 (p. 3–4).

See, Richard Berkeley, ‘Silence and the Pantheistic Sublime in Coleridge’s Early Poetry’, *Coleridge Bulletin: The Journal of the Friends of Coleridge*, 24 (2004), 59–67 (p. 62).

<sup>34</sup> *The Complete Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge II*, ed. by E. H. Coleridge (Oxford: Clarendon, 1912), pp. 1022–23.

<sup>35</sup> Peter Barry, ‘Coleridge the Revisionary: Surrogacy and Structure in the Conversation Poems’, *The Review of English Studies*, New Series, 51 (2000), 600–616 (pp. 610, 613); Albert Gérard, ‘Counterfeiting Infinity: “The Eolian Harp” and the Growth of Coleridge’s Mind’, *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 60 (1961), 411–422 (p. 413).

interconnectedness of the universe in a sense that the correspondence between 'all the components of this scene, linked as it is by the intellectual breeze', points to 'a link between all living things, including human beings'.<sup>36</sup>

Further, in 'Frost at Midnight', Coleridge provides the idea of a God who, even after creation, deeply engages with the universe by shaping, moving in, and expressing Himself through nature. Addressing the sleeping child, Hartley, the poet closes the poem with a passage of blessing for him by contrasting the deficiency of his own early education with Hartley's future in nature. Whereas the poet himself was 'reared / In the great city, pent 'mid cloisters dim, / And saw nought lovely but the sky and stars' (ll. 51-3), he expresses the hope that his son will attain an intimate relationship with nature and discover a sense of freedom in its permanent beauty:<sup>37</sup>

But thou, my babe! shalt wander like a breeze  
By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags  
Of ancient mountain, and beneath the clouds,  
Which image in their bulk both lakes and shores  
[. . .]  
Therefore all seasons shall be sweet to thee (ll. 54-57, 65)

For Coleridge, nature in this passage is not just the natural world, but a revelation of a divine creative process.<sup>38</sup> He understands the natural world as the language of God:

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<sup>36</sup> Beer, *Coleridge's Poetic Intelligence*, p. 66.

<sup>37</sup> See, Beer, *Coleridge's Poetic Intelligence*, pp. 138-140.

<sup>38</sup> See, Beer, *Coleridge's Variety: Bicentenary Studies* (London: Macmillan, 1974), p. 75.

The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible  
Of that eternal language, which thy God  
Utters, who from eternity doth teach  
Himself in all, and all things in himself. (ll. 59–62)

He also refers to ‘Religious meanings in the forms of Nature!’ in ‘Fears in Solitude’ (ll. 24). At the same time, God engages Himself with the universe actively through the language of nature in a sense that Coleridge ‘encourages Hartley to look forward to the divine instruction of an immanent God’: ‘Great universal Teacher! He shall mould / Thy spirit, and by giving make it ask’ (ll. 63–4).<sup>39</sup> As Coleridge declared to Southey, ‘I am a *Berkleian*’, it may be worth pointing out that George Berkeley (1685–1753) developed an account of the visible worlds as God’s language in terms of an interaction between the Creator and the creature<sup>40</sup>:

This Visual Language proves not a Creator merely, but a provident Governor, actually and intimately present, and attentive to all our interests and motions, who watches over our conduct, and takes care of our minutest actions and designs throughout the whole course of our lives, informing, admonishing, and directing incessantly, in a most evident and sensible manner.<sup>41</sup>

In a letter to John Thelwall, Coleridge also communicates God’s active involvement with the world: ‘there is an Omnipresent Father of infinite power,

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<sup>39</sup> Matthew Vanwinkle, ‘Fluttering on the Grate: Revision in “Frost at Midnight”’, *Studies in Romanticism*, 43 (2004), 583–598 (p. 586).

<sup>40</sup> *CL I*, p. 335.

<sup>41</sup> George Berkeley, *Alciphron*, in *The Works of George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne*, ed. by A. A. Luce and T. E. Jessop, vol. iii (London: Nelson, 1950), p. 160. See, Magnuson, ‘The “Conversation” poems’, p. 37.

wisdom, & Goodness, in whom we all of us move, & have our being.’<sup>42</sup> Thus ‘God is everywhere! [. . .] Himself our Father, and the World our Home.’<sup>43</sup> ‘God’s animating and inclusive ubiquity’ can be extended to non-humans in a sense that Coleridge calls ‘even my Cat Sister in the Fraternity of universal Nature. Owls I respect & Jack Asses I love [. . .] May the Almighty Pantisocratizer of Souls pantisocratize the Earth.’<sup>44</sup> In the long run, for Coleridge, God as the universal Soul and Teacher is intimately immanent in the universe in a way that He is involved in each individual of the natural world as well as human beings, upon which the inter-relatedness of the universe is based.

## 1.2. The power of love

With respect to his searching for the unity of the universe, Coleridge’s idea of God is clearly based on Priestley and Spinoza. By conceiving God as being closely related with the essence of each individual in the universe, he emphasises a unity, rather than a distinction, between God and the universe. Yet, for Coleridge, the power of love, which springs from God, also plays a key role in discovering the inter-relatedness of the universe. *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* has been understood from various perspectives, but the main focus here will be on the relational aspect between the Mariner and the albatross, and the Mariner and the community. One of the Mariner’s central experiences throughout the poem is a profound sense of isolation: the

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<sup>42</sup> *CL I*, p. 280.

<sup>43</sup> *Lines Written in the Album at Elbingerode, in the Hartz Forest* (ll. 37, 39), in *CPW I*, p. 316.

<sup>44</sup> Perry, *Coleridge and the Uses of Division*, p. 76.  
*CL I*, p. 121.

background of the tale he tells the Wedding Guest indicates his separation from the community; the story of his experience is associated with a sea which has never been explored before and is a remote place far from the community and civilisation; and the murder of the albatross leaves him completely alone in a primitive place. Such isolation lends weight to one of the most unsettling elements of the poem: the Mariner's unmotivated murder of the bird. Why did he kill it? Although it appears to be motiveless, the inexplicable act of violence has the disastrous result of rendering him alone. After killing the albatross, the Mariner is gripped by: 'fear at my heart, as at a cup, / My life-blood seemed to sip!' (ll. 204-5), issuing in a scene wherein his fellow sailors die in a nightmarish vision of Life-in-Death:

One after one, by the star-dogged Moon,  
Too quick for groan or sigh,  
Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,  
And cursed me with his eyes.

Four times fifty living men,  
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan)  
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,  
They dropped down one by one. (ll. 212-19)

Finally, the Mariner succumbs to his exile in a vast desolate sea:

Alone, alone, all, alone,  
Alone on a wide wide sea!  
And never a saint took pity on  
My soul in agony. (ll. 232-35)

Whereas his motive for the murder is unclear, the result of his act of violence is clear, leading as it does to an experience of disconnectedness and isolation. Worse still, he experiences a deep separation from God and, feeling his 'heart as dry as dust', a detachment from the power of human and religious love<sup>45</sup>:

I looked to heaven, and tried to pray;  
But or ever a prayer gusht,  
A wicked whisper came, and made  
My heart as dry as dust. (ll, 244-47)

If we further explore the religious and biblical allusions within the poem, the Mariner's experience comes to signify a dynamic of sin and punishment. In fact, in his 'Prefatory Note' to the fragmentary 'Wanderings of Cain', Coleridge explains how '*The Ancient Mariner* was written instead' of 'Wanderings of Cain'.<sup>46</sup> Just as the Mariner undergoes a nightmarish voyage after his act of murder, so Cain is driven into exile after killing his brother. Interestingly, both metaphors – of voyage and of exile – frame murders with shared consequences. Like the Mariner, Coleridge's Cain expresses a wounded sense of abandonment:

The Mighty One that persecuteth me is on this side and on that; he  
pursueth my soul like the wind, like the sand-blast [. . .] I desire to die  
[. . .] the clouds in heaven look terribly on me; the Mighty One who is  
against me speaketh in the wind of the cedar grove; and in silence am I  
dried up [. . .] the spirit within me is withered, and burnt up with extreme

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<sup>45</sup> See, J. Robert Barth, S.J., *Coleridge and the Power of Love* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1988), p. 63.

<sup>46</sup> Susan Eilenberg, 'Voice and Ventriloquy in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*', in *The Rime of The Ancient Mariner*, ed. by Paul H. Fry (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), pp. 282-313 (p. 298).

agony [. . .] I have prayed, and have not been heard; and how can I be afflicted more than I already am? (*WC*, 33-47, 164-172).

As Coleridge was aware, one of the fatal consequences of sin in the Old Testament is an exile (most notably, the exile of Adam and Eve), which implies a broken relationship between God and his people. Cain's cries for his unheard prayer resonate with his experience of suffering following his devastating separation from God and community, an exile motif Coleridge repeats in the Mariner's voyage in order to directly connect it back to a dynamic of sin and punishment.

First of all, after going through a nightmarish drama caused by his act of murder, the Mariner begins to recognise the life of nature around him:

The moving Moon went up the sky.  
And no where did abide:  
Softly she was going up,  
And a star or two beside—

Her beams bemoaned the sultry main,  
Like April hoar-frost spread;  
But where the ship's huge shadow lay,  
The charmed water burnt alway  
A still and awful red. (ll. 263-271)

He then watches the water-snakes whose attire was 'Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,' and, for him, 'every track / Was a flash of golden fire.' In other words, he is now able to see the life and the significance of nature through his imagination in a sense that he describes them as 'O happy living things.' He

mentions that 'no tongue / Their beauty might declare.' Further, he deepens this newly recognised relationship by blessing them: 'A spring of love gushed from my heart, / And I blessed them unaware' (ll. 282-285). At that moment he 'could pray' and finally his neck became free from the Albatross which 'sank like lead into the sea'. It is through the power of love that the Mariner can re-establish his broken relationship with the world beyond himself. As Harding puts it, the 'spring of love enables the Mariner to transcend his selfhood for the first time.'<sup>47</sup> Just as the motivation for the murder is not shown, so the reason for the 'spring of love' is not stated. As Barth suggests 'in the depth of his despair, love can come to him only by grace',<sup>48</sup> and it may be God that allows him to feel love for something other than himself. Following this argument, Harding also refers to the divine origin of the 'spring of love'.<sup>49</sup> In fact, at the end of the poem, the Mariner refers to the source of love in God: 'He prayeth best, who loveth best / All things both great and small; / For the dear God who loveth us, / He made and loveth all.' (ll. 614-167).

What needs to be observed here is the act of interpretation which brings about the summarized Christian moral virtue as a crucial way into understanding the Mariner's attempt to recover his broken relationship. The sole authority for the narrative of the Mariner's experience is the Mariner himself, who experienced the events as an eye witness. As experience requires

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>48</sup> Barth, *Coleridge and the Power of Love*, p. 65.

<sup>49</sup> Anthony Harding mentions that 'it is not the recipients of the blessing who are important, but its divine origin [. . .] It does not matter whether the object of his love is water-snakes, stars or Polar Spirits; the important thing is that God, acting perhaps through some "kind saint", has made the Mariner's self a centre and source instead of an enclosing and defensive wall', *Coleridge and the Idea of Love: Aspects of Relationship in Coleridge's Thought and Writing* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974), p. 63.



interpretation in order to be shared with others within the context of a community, the Mariner tries to articulate the events of his voyage in order to convey his experience to others. In other words, his telling of his experience implies his willingness to belong to the human community. The poem has a double structure in terms of the setting: the repetition of the tale in a social context, and the content of the tale framed by a primitive sea. In the final Part VII, which itself takes place in a social setting, the Mariner offers a well-summarized Christian moral virtue; 'O sweeter than the marriage-feast, / To walk together to the kirk / With a goodly company!-/And all together pray' (ll. 601-6). That is, the Mariner takes from his nightmarish and primitive voyage a Christian moral virtue. Though the voyage of the Mariner is coloured by its primitive setting, supernatural powers and the primitive mind of the Mariner, his summary of his experience indicates a Christian value. This echoes back through Part I, where the Albatross is called 'a Christian soul', and the bird is said to perch 'for vespers nine'. After the murder of the bird, there are a number of Christian images and the language of a society, 'God's own head', 'O Christ!', 'the cross', and 'a hellish thing' and 'Twas right', in Part II.

The use of Christian language in the narrative of the tale, however, is not random or arbitrary. If we look at the two interruptions of the Wedding Guest during the narration, it can be suggested that the Mariner is actually re-interpreting his experience according to the context and language of Christianity and the society to which the Wedding Guest belongs. In Part III, the Mariner describes the scene of his shipmates dropping dead one by one, each turning his face with a 'ghastly pang' and cursing the Mariner 'with his eyes' (ll.

212-23): and, at the beginning of Part IV, the Wedding Guest interrupts him, ‘I fear thee, ancient Mariner! / thy glittering eye, / And thy skinny hand, so brown’ (ll. 224-229). This interruption is then followed by his tormenting cry of loneliness, a rather subdued tone of voice; ‘the many men, so beautiful! / And they all dead lie; / And a thousand thousand slimy things / Lived on; and so did I’ (ll. 236-9), and haunting cry of agony using Christian language; ‘I looked to heaven, and tried to pray / My heart as dry as dust / An orphan’s cry,’ etc. (ll. 244, 247, 257).

In Part V the Wedding Guest also interrupts him after hearing how the dead sailors rise like ghosts, ‘groaning’, ‘stirring’, without ‘speaking’ and ‘moving their eyes’; it was strange and eerie ‘even in a dream’ (ll. 331-334). When the Wedding Guest interrupts him in an anxious voice, he tries to pacify his fears by saying, ‘Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest! / ’Twas not those souls that fled in pain, / Which to their corpses came again, / But a troop of spirits blest:’ (ll. 345-9). At the same time, he narrates the more beautiful scenes of his story using a series of eery metaphors: ‘when it dawned [. . .] Sweet sound rose slowly through their mouths [. . .] the sky-lark sing / [. . .] all little birds [. . .] now like a lonely flute; / And now it is an angel’s song [. . .] like of a hidden brook / In the leafy month of June, / That to the sleeping woods’ (ll. 350-371). As Raimonda Modiano argues, ‘the Mariner borrows the metaphors composing his aural reverie from a landscape that belongs to the Wedding Guest’s shore world. Only in this world would one normally hear sounds of skylarks, lonely flutes or hidden brooks.’<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Raimonda Modiano, ‘Words and “Languageless” Meanings: Limits of Expression in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*’, *Modern Language Quarterly* 38 (1977), 40-61 (p. 51).

In the long run, in Parts IV and V, the frightful descriptions of the sailors' death and rising as ghosts are followed by the interventions of the Wedding Guest, and the Mariner appears to placate his anxieties and fears by providing a calmer narrative and using familiar images and metaphors. That is, 'the Wedding Guest's intervention occasions a sudden shift of narrative perspective in the Mariner's tale which meliorates the horror of previous scenes.'<sup>51</sup> If we take into consideration the summarized Christian moral virtue in Part VII and the dynamics of the interchanges between the Mariner and the Wedding Guest in Parts IV and V, it can be argued that we can see 'in his account some of the marks of events reinterpreted to harmonize with a more comfortable theology, particularly, later in the poem, with the Wedding-Guest's more orthodox ideas and fears about ghost and spirits'.<sup>52</sup> When the Mariner moves from his experience into a social language shared by those around him, the process of interpretation seems to be inevitable. And it is through this process of interpretation that he can extend his experience of 'a spring of love' in 'the water-snakes' to the Christian moral virtue of love, which expresses the interrelatedness of the universe.

Coleridge also develops an account of the way the power of love brings about a sense of the inter-relatedness of the universe in his *Conversation Poems*. After proclaiming 'the one Life within us and abroad' in 'The Eolian Harp', the poet confesses that the power of love permeates 'the one Life':

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>52</sup> Harding, *The Reception of Myth in English Romanticism* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1995), p. 53.

Rhythm in all thought, and joyance every where—  
Methinks, it should have been impossible  
Not to love all things in a world so fill'd;  
Where the breeze warbles, and the mute still air  
Is Music slumbering on her instrument.<sup>53</sup> (ll. 29–33)

Further, in 'This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison', Coleridge urges us to be aware of the love between nature and us:

[. . .] Henceforth I shall know  
That Nature ne'er deserts the wise and pure;  
No plot so narrow, be but Nature there,  
No waste so vacant, but may well employ  
Each faculty of sense, and keep the heart  
Awake to Love and Beauty! (ll. 59–64)

In fact, Coleridge was not able to join his friends for a walk around his cottage, owing to an accident.<sup>54</sup> He, however, transcends this physical separation by confirming the connectedness of nature, his friends and himself in terms of the 'Love and Beauty' held in his poetic imagination. It is a sense of love that brings together humanity and nature into the experience of interrelatedness or communion.

### 1.3. Natural philosophy: polarity and opposition

While Coleridge focuses on a monistic idea and love of God in his early

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<sup>53</sup> Added in 1803.

<sup>54</sup> 'In the June of 1797 some long-expected friends paid a visit to the author's cottage; and on the morning of their arrival, he met with an accident, which disabled him from walking during the whole time of their stay. One evening, when they had left him for a few hours, he composed the following lines in the garden-bower', *CPWI*, p. 178.

years, he turns to natural philosophy in searching for his grand theory for the unity of the universe in his later years. If Coleridge was interested in the external appearances of nature in his early years, he showed an enthusiasm for nature as an object of a scientific investigation in his later years. For Coleridge, the idea of polarity is a governing structure in a sense that he tries to categorise the natural phenomena according to it.<sup>55</sup> Perhaps the most succinct of Coleridge's definitions of the idea of polarity is found in a footnote to one of the numbers of his periodical, *The Friend*: '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. This is the universal Law of Polarity or essential Dualism.'<sup>56</sup> Particular attention must be paid to two phrases, 'IN NATURE AND IN SPIRIT' and 'A TENDENCY TO RE-UNION'. The idea is dialectical in that two opposites tend to re-union, and it is concerned with immateriality as well as materiality. In this respect, Coleridge proposes the dialectical principle of polarity as the basis for all of life.

First of all, Coleridge explains how God created the Light from the Darkness through division and separation, and 'the two poles of the material Universe are established, viz. Light and Gravitation.'<sup>57</sup> The different things are divided and separated, but they are re-connected. In the *Notebooks*, Coleridge provides some empirical evidences for how 'Extremes meet': 'Insects by their smallness, the Mammoth by its hugeness, terrible. Sameness in a Waterfall, in

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<sup>55</sup> See, A. D. Snyder, *The Critical Principle of the Reconciliation of Opposites as Employed by Coleridge* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1918); Owen Barfield, *What Coleridge Thought* (Middletown: Wesleyan UP, 1971); Cutsinger, 'Coleridgean Polarity and Theological Vision'; Mary Perkins, *Coleridge's Philosophy: the Logos as Unifying Principle* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994).

<sup>56</sup> *Friend I*, p. 94.

<sup>57</sup> *CL IV*, p. 771

the foam Islands of a fiercely boiling Pool at the bottom of the Waterfall, from infinite Change [. . .] Dark with excess of Light. Self-absorption & Worldly-mindedness [. . .] Despotism and ochlocracy.’<sup>58</sup> Interestingly, Coleridge observes that each pair consists of two different things but they appear to have something in common. Further, he uses the analogy of magnetic power in order to explain the one power of two opposite forces. ‘The Magnetic Power’ works ‘at once positively and negatively, Attraction and Repulsion’, but they are ‘the two Forces of the one magnetic Power’. Coleridge mentions that ‘Opposite powers’ are the two forms but are ‘always of the same kind, and tend to union’.<sup>59</sup> As the one magnetic power is the combination of an attraction and a repulsion between the two poles, two opposite forces are associated with one power in the dynamic of polarity.

Coleridge develops a dialectical way of understanding the re-union of two opposite powers. For him, ‘the *Identity* of Thesis and Antithesis is the substance of all Being’, and ‘the opposite energies are retained in that Synthesis.’<sup>60</sup> In his *the Theory of Life*, Coleridge asserts that ‘life is the unity of thesis and antithesis, position and counterposition [. . .] these unite in a synthesis’.<sup>61</sup> Thus ‘the Life of Nature consists in the tendency of the Poles to re-unite, and to find themselves in the re-union.’<sup>62</sup> Every thing or phenomenon subsists in the identity of two counter-powers, and it needs to be noted that the two opposing powers, energies, or counterpositions, do not disappear, but are

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<sup>58</sup> *CN I*, 1725; See, Thomas McFarland, *Romanticism and the Forms of Ruin: Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Modalities of Fragmentation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 294.

<sup>59</sup> *CCS*, p. 24; See, Owen Barfield, *What Coleridge Thought*, p. 203, n. 24.

<sup>60</sup> *Friend I*, p. 94

<sup>61</sup> *TL*, p. 51-2.

<sup>62</sup> *CL IV*, p. 771.

retained in synthesis. In this sense, the idea of unity is regarded as distinction-in-unity, the unity-of-distinction, distinction without division, or multitude in unity, etc. The unity of two opposing powers is the one of not homogeneity, but diversity.

One of the challenges in Coleridge's understanding of polarity is that he applies this concept to the whole of nature. He conceives polarity as 'a Law which reigns through all Nature [. . .] the manifestation of one power by opposite forces'.<sup>63</sup> Polarity is a law and principle which exists throughout nature. The problem is how we recognise the law acting through the whole of nature. In fact, Coleridge admits that we cannot explain it rationally: 'in the question of Life, I know no possible answer, but God.'<sup>64</sup> Barfield maintains that 'the apprehension of polarity is itself the basic act of imagination'.<sup>65</sup> That is, the idea of polarity can be comprehended by the power of imagination. The following two passages enable us to see how Coleridge senses 'the manifestation of one power by opposite forces' through the power of imagination:

O said I as I looked on the blue, yellow, green, & purple green Sea, with all its hollows & swells, & cut-glass surfaces [. . .] But it was not, the mind within me was struggling to express the marvelous distinctness & unconfounded personality of each of the million millions of forms, & yet the undivided Unity in which they subsisted.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> S. T. Coleridge's *Treatise On Method: As Published in the Encyclopaedia Metropolitana*, ed. by Alice D. Snyder (London: Constable and Co LTD, 1934), p. 18; also *Friend I*, p. 479; See, Barfield, *What Coleridge Thought*, p. 35.

<sup>64</sup> *TL*, p. 35.

<sup>65</sup> Barfield, *What Coleridge Thought*, p. 36.

<sup>66</sup> *CN II*, 2344.

Still as I rise, I am more & more enamoured of the marvellous playfulness of the surface of the Hills/such swellings, startings, sinkings, and yet all so combined as to make it impossible to look at as many/no! it was a manifold *One!*<sup>67</sup>

When he sees the various differences in nature, he apprehends in his imagination the manifestation of unity which is revealed by the different things. Although Coleridge provides some empirical evidences and analogies for the idea of polarity, it seems to be conjectural rather than empirical and scientific.

The idea of polarity as being conjectural, for Coleridge, is a kind of conceptual structure through which he attempts to understand the relationship of the differences in the universe. As Cutsinger put it, knowledge is often involved in causing 'the problem of barriers or dividing surfaces'.<sup>68</sup> We have witnessed how the increase of knowledge set up a barrier between the subject and the object, or the self and the other. In a similar vein, Coleridge makes a distinction between substantial knowledge and abstract knowledge. While the former is concerned with existence which is 'its own predicate, self-affirmation, the one attribute in which all others are contained, not as parts, but as manifestations', the latter argues that 'we think of ourselves as separated beings, and place nature in antithesis to the mind, as object to subject, thing to thought, death to life'.<sup>69</sup> In both *the Statesman's Manual* (1817) and his letter to Lord Liverpool of the same year, Coleridge argues that man has lost 'all communion with life and the spirit of nature' by adopting a few brilliant

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<sup>67</sup> *CN II*, 2705.

<sup>68</sup> Cutsinger, 'Coleridgean Polarity and Theological Vision', p. 101.

<sup>69</sup> *Friend I*, p. 520.



inventions or discoveries.<sup>70</sup> Although the increase of knowledge deepens divisions in the universe, Coleridge tries to find a way of conceiving different things (nature vs. the mind, object vs. subject) as being related. According to the principle of polarity, two different things are not separated, but inter-related or re-united. The concept of polarity is a conceptual structure through which knowledge needs to be understood for Coleridge.

#### 1.4. The idea of evolution: individuation

Coleridge continues to develop this idea by applying the dynamic of polarity and opposition to the relationship between humanity and the non-human natural world. It is through the process of an evolution that the latter is related with the former. For him, nature is not static but dynamic in that it is an evolutionary process, based upon polarity and progressive individuation as the principle of its direction. Coleridge defines 'life as the principle of individuation, or the power which unites a given all into a whole that is presupposed by all its parts'.<sup>71</sup> As the definition implies, the principle of individuation is involved in both differentiation and reunion. All classes of nature have the tendency to independent existence which is shown by the process of individuation, and therefore they are able to maintain for themselves a distinction from the universal life of the planet, for example, from the first rudiments of individualized life in the lowest classes of its two great poles, the vegetable and animal creation, to its crown and consummation in the human body.<sup>72</sup> At the

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<sup>70</sup> *SM*, p. 72-3; *CL* IV, pp. 760-1.

<sup>71</sup> *TL*, p. 42.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 47-8, 67, 70.

same time, this process of individuation, however, is neither separation nor fragmentation in that it unites all classes into a whole. In life, thesis and antithesis, or position and counter-position, unite in a synthesis, and Coleridge explains how the synthesis of fish and insect can be found in birds and how the vegetable and animal worlds, thesis and antithesis, are united in a higher form.<sup>73</sup> The principle of individuation is not just differentiation, but ‘unity in multitude’.<sup>74</sup>

The process of individuation is evolutionary because ‘the individuation itself must be a tendency to the ultimate production of the highest and most comprehensive individuality’.<sup>75</sup> For Coleridge, it is in man that the progressive individuation of nature’s evolution is completed. He describes man as ‘the highest of the class’.<sup>76</sup> Moreover, we need to be aware that the principle of individuation as the synthesis of thesis and antithesis does not exclude thesis and antithesis, but includes them in synthesis. Accordingly, man as the highest of the class has all the previous stages and forms in nature: ‘The whole force of organic power has attained an inward and centripetal direction. He has the whole world in counterpoint to him, but he contains an entire world within himself [. . .] Man himself is a syllepsis, a compendium of Nature the Microcosm ! [. . .] he is a revelation of Nature! [. . .] the sympathy and the inter-communion with Nature.’<sup>77</sup> The implication is that humanity and the non-human natural world are not separated from, but interrelated with each other in terms of the evolutionary process of individuation.

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., pp. 77, 83.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., pp. 48, 85–6

Yet, Coleridge describes the uniqueness of man as the image of God: ‘that last work, in which Nature did not assist as handmaid under the eye of her sovereign Master, who made Man in his own image, by superadding self-consciousness with self-government, and breathed into him a living soul.’<sup>78</sup> As a result, he admits that there is a ‘wide chasm between man and the noblest animals of the brute creation, which no perceivable or conceivable difference of organization is sufficient to overbridge’.<sup>79</sup> It is questionable whether the idea of the wide chasm is compatible with the idea of the one life and the interrelatedness of the universe. The uniqueness of man and the idea of the wide chasm are likely to bring about a sense of hierarchy in the relationship between humanity and non-human natural world.

So far, it has been argued that Coleridge tries to recognise the unity of the universe through, firstly, a monistic notion and love of God in his early years; secondly, the concepts of polarity, individuation and evolution, in his later years. Now the question is how this idea of inter-relatedness is associated with ecotheology. Although it seems that Coleridge is able to understand the unity of the universe through a religious faith in his early years and natural philosophy in his later years, each way of attaining it has its own drawbacks from the perspective of ecotheology. What matters in ecotheology is the independent and sacred value of the natural world within the context of the immanence and transcendence of God. But Coleridge’s thought about the unity of the universe in his early and later years raises some issues in relation to ecotheology: (i) Coleridge understands nature in terms of materiality in his monistic notion and

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 90–1

<sup>79</sup> *TL*, p. 33.

love of God, and evolutionary idea of individuation. Yet, it is often pointed out that it became a sheer projection of his mind; (ii) The idea of evolution seems to foster a hierarchical relationship between humankind and the natural world, and it is also arguable whether the scientific and philosophical notion of the inter-relatedness can be religious; (iii) The monistic idea of God in Priestley's Unitarianism causes the problem of pantheism. Now each issue will be examined separately, and so it will be shown that Coleridge's way of dealing with the problems has ecotheological implications.

## 2. The relationship between the mind and nature

### 2.1. Nature as a projection of the mind

With regard to the independent value of nature, one of the difficulties is that Coleridge's notion of nature is often understood merely as the construction of the mind. In his early poetry he clearly shows his interest in the beautiful outward form of nature, but some critics argue that he eventually rejects the materiality of nature and conceives it as a projection of the mind. Discussing a passage from *The Friend*, Anya Taylor claims that the oneness of man and nature is only the creation of the mind. The quoted passage is this: 'the productive power, which is in nature as nature, is essentially one (i.e. of one kind) with the intelligence, which is in the human mind above nature.'<sup>80</sup> This passage is used as a statement that the creative force in nature is the same kind of force as that which activates human imagination, but Taylor criticises this view: the passage is 'wrenched out of context' and just 'one among many

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<sup>80</sup> *Friend I*, pp. 497–8.

possible hypotheses'.<sup>81</sup> According to him, human beings have a religious instinct that tends to find meaning in everything, for example, nature, trees, running streams or even stones. Further, this instinct engenders the belief that 'a coherence out there corresponds to the coherence we imagine we perceive' and finally 'nature and man share an essential oneness.' Taylor, however, argues that 'the belief is not a fact discovered about the external world but a creation of man's own'. Thus the oneness of the universe is just a construction of the mind, engendered by the religious instinct. In addition, Taylor points out that Coleridge himself refers to the chasm between human perception and the external world in his comments on science: in order to find connections with the life of animals and plants the scientist needs to find 'a correspondent mechanism', and must remind himself that this sense of connection 'originates in the mind [. . .] and could never [. . .] have been derived from outward experience'.<sup>82</sup>

Edward Kessler even perceives in Coleridge a hostility to nature. Coleridge asserts that 'every appearance of origination in Nature is but a shadow of our own casting [. . .] a reflection from our own Will or Spirit', and therefore 'Nature itself creates neither form nor matter; hence man is superior to Nature.'<sup>83</sup> It is true that Coleridge made a number of statements concerning counter-sensuous anti-empiricism in his later years. First of all, praising the 'power of abstraction', Coleridge complained at 'the despotism of the eye' and

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<sup>81</sup> Anya Taylor, 'Coleridge and "Essential Oneness,"' *Wordsworth Circle*, 16 (1985), 29–32.

<sup>82</sup> *Friend I*, p. 499.

<sup>83</sup> *AR*, p. 268; Edward Kessler, *Coleridge's Metaphors of Being* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 17; see also, pp. 30, 32, 35.

‘the tyranny of the Eye’, and attempts ‘to emancipate the mind from’ it.<sup>84</sup> For him, the ‘inward sense’ which is able to perceive ‘invisible realities or spiritual objects’ is superior to any outward sense.<sup>85</sup> Thus he makes ‘the Senses out of the Mind – not the Mind from the Senses’.<sup>86</sup> Further, Coleridge identifies the self with mind<sup>87</sup>: ‘I seem to exist, as it were, almost wholly within myself, in thoughts rather than in things.’<sup>88</sup> Belittling sensory experience and elevating instead the power of the mind, Coleridge leaves us with an impression that he rejects the materiality of nature and regards it as the construction of the mind.

On the one hand, their argument, to some extent, is feasible. The interpretation of nature is given not by nature itself, but by human perception, and therefore knowledge about nature is liable to be projected by the latter. As a result, there is an inevitable gap between nature itself and human perception. Coleridge himself appears to be aware of the problem, and, in *Dejection: An Ode*, he famously mentions that ‘We receive but what we give, / And in our life alone does Nature live’ (ll. 47–48). On the other hand, as John Beer asserts, nature and its relationship to humanity and God ‘was always at the heart of Coleridge’s career, from his early minute observations of nature to his final meditations on God’.<sup>89</sup> If nature is concerned with the issue of the source for a

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<sup>84</sup> *Logic*, ed. by J. R. de J. Jackson (Princeton University Press, 1981), pp. 242–3.

Coleridge also argues that ‘Philosophy by a long and arduous discipline gradually desensualizing the mind, and emancipating it first from the tyranny of the Eye’, in *Shorter Works and Fragments II*, ed. by H. J. Jackson and J. R. de J. Jackson (Princeton University Press, 1995), p. 900; see, Perry, *Coleridge and the Uses of Division*, p. 39.

<sup>85</sup> *Friend I*, p. 156; Perry, *Coleridge and the Uses of Division*, p. 38.

<sup>86</sup> *Table Talk I*, p. 312 (21 July 1832); Perry, *Coleridge and the Uses of Division*, p. 39.

<sup>87</sup> Charles J. Rzepka, *The Self as Mind: Vision and Identity in Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Keats* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1986), pp. 12, 25; See, Perry, *Coleridge and the Uses of Division*, p. 48.

<sup>88</sup> *CL V*, p. 198–9; *CL II*, p. 881.

<sup>89</sup> Laura Dassow Walls, ‘Coleridge’s Responses, Volume III: Coleridge on Nature and Vision’, *The Coleridge Bulletin: The Journal of the Friends of Coleridge*, New Series, 33 (2009), 128–132 (p.

poetic imagination and knowledge in his early period, he treats nature with a scientific and philosophic knowledge in his later period. And we should note that nature always becomes ‘an active partner in the human mind’s quest’ to find the unity of the universe.<sup>90</sup> In the previous section, it was already seen that Coleridge essentially associates the scientific and philosophic understanding of nature with the unity of the universe in terms of the ideas of polarity and individuation. Discussing ‘The Eolian Harp’ and ‘Dejection: An Ode’, I shall argue that, in spite of the tension between the imaginative power of the mind and the sensory experience of nature, the materiality of nature plays a crucial role in a poetic imagination and knowledge.

## 2.2. The problems of solipsism and dualism

First of all, it is necessary to clarify the implication of the idea of nature as a projection of the mind in relation to solipsism and dualism. Whereas early Scholasticism had conceived God, the soul and the world as substances, the individual began to be understood as a conscious self after the Enlightenment. When we regard nature as the construction of the mind, we presuppose that the source of the meaning is the human mind. In other words, the self as the conscious self is understood as the source of meaning that is able to create meaning. The self defines reality, rather than being defined by it.<sup>91</sup> As R. Cohen argues, the self has become the unifying centre of knowing.<sup>92</sup> And yet, the

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p. 129.

<sup>91</sup> Louis Dupré, *The Enlightenment and the Intellectual Foundations of Modern Culture* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 2004), p.46.

<sup>92</sup> Ralph Cohen, ‘Association of Ideas and Poetic Unity’, *Philological Quarterly*, 36 (1957), 464–475.

conscious self is beset with the problem of solipsism. If the self is regarded as source of meaning, it is not able to recognise the identity of the other any more. The implication is that the real ceases to be truly distinct from the self.<sup>93</sup> For example, the notion of nature for Coleridge and Wordsworth has been often criticised as the mere projection of the poets.

Further, the self as the conscious subject confronts another problem in dualism. Although Descartes' idea of *res cogitans* describes the self as the conscious self, he understands the person as consisting of two substances, mind and body. The notion of *res cogitans* thus leads to a dualism in the sense that only the mind is associated with the source of meaning. In order to bridge the gap between body and mind, the French materialists of the eighteenth century, La Mettrie, Diderot, Holbach, and Condillac, reduced the self to the dynamic of materialism. According to them, the mind, like the body, can be explained in terms of the interactions of forces and the simple or complex arrangement of material particles.<sup>94</sup>

### 2.3. David Hartley: a scientific approach to the body and mind

Intellectuals had attempted to explain the nature of the human in the light of scientific investigations since the Enlightenment. One of the key issues was how to understand the relationship between body and mind on a scientifically proven basis. Historians of neuroscience, of biological psychology, and of neurology agree to view the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries 'as a

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<sup>93</sup> Dupré, *The Enlightenment*, p. 76.

<sup>94</sup> 'Mechanistic materialism', in *The Blackwell Dictionary of Western Philosophy*, ed. by Nicholas Bunnin and Jiyuan Yu. Blackwell Publishing, 2004. Blackwell Reference Online. [accessed 24 February 2011].



crucial period for the emergence of an unprecedented series of hypotheses and discoveries concerning the brain and nervous system' in the sense that various attempts were made to find a continuity between body and mind or to articulate an embodied notion of mind, by thinkers such as Darwin, Gall, Priestly, Cabanis, and Bell.<sup>95</sup> In *The Poetics of Sensibility*, Jerome McGann also mentions that writers from Locke to Priestly tried to be 'involved in overturning the traditional understanding of the relations of mind and body'.<sup>96</sup> This historical context accounts for 'a Romantic fascination with the brain, the nerves, and the continuity between body and psyche', and the new dimensions of terms like 'sensibility', 'nervous', 'organic', 'natural', 'universal', and 'brain', in the Romantic discursive field.<sup>97</sup> Especially Hartley's *Observations on Man* was a very influential work, which dominated psychological thinking in this period. In 1774, Priestly wrote that the *Observations* 'contains a new and most extensive science' and promised that 'the study of it [. . .] will be like entering upon a new world'. He added: 'I think myself more indebted to this one treatise, than to all the books I ever read beside; the scriptures excepted.'<sup>98</sup> It was a pioneering attempt 'to treat mind as a scientific object, to explain mental events in terms of principles or laws analogous to those which appear to be operative in physical events'.<sup>99</sup> Hartley's ideas, being associated with neurophysiological psychology, thus played a key role in viewing the mind as being embodied, and in

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<sup>95</sup> Alan Richardson, *British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 19.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>98</sup> Richard Allen, 'David Hartley', in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2012 edition) <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2012/entries/hartley/> [accessed 3 March 2011].

<sup>99</sup> Richard Haven, 'Coleridge, Hartley, and the Mystics', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 20 (1959), 477-494 (p. 480).

understanding the continuity between body and mind in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Intriguingly, Coleridge was very interested in this philosophy. There are a number of passages which show that Coleridge read his works and became an ardent follower of his philosophy. He had mentioned Hartley, when writing to his brother George on 6 November, 1794: ‘And after a diligent, I may say, an intense study of Locke, Hartley and others who have written most wisely on the Nature of Man — I appear to myself to see the point of possible perfection at which the World may perhaps be destined to arrive.’<sup>100</sup> And in December, he wrote to Robert Southey: ‘I am a compleat Necessitarian — and understand the subject as well almost as Hartley himself — but I go farther than Hartley and believe the corporeality of thought — namely, that it is motion.’<sup>101</sup> In fact, I have already mentioned Bate and Kroeber who endeavoured to uncover a material aspect of nature in Romantic poetry. More recently, some critics try to find a new way of articulating the relationship between the mind and nature or to reaffirm the importance of the natural history tradition, challenging the limits of conventional ‘ecocriticism’ or the dominance of ‘the technological hubris’.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> *CL I*, p. 127.

<sup>101</sup> *CL I*, p. 138

<sup>102</sup> In *Ecology Without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics* (Cambridge, Mass; London: Harvard UP, 2007), Timothy Morton examines the idea of nature in Romanticism, and he claims that ‘*Nature* wavers in between the divine and the material. Far from being something “natural” itself, nature hovers over things like a ghost’. He regards ‘Nature’ as ‘a transcendental term in a material mask’. Accordingly, for him, it is ‘the idea of nature itself’ that inhibits genuinely ‘ecological politics, ethics, philosophy, and art’. Then he proposes ‘a new way of doing ecological criticism’, which he calls ‘*dark ecology*’. In dark ecology, ‘far from remaining natural, ecocriticism must admit that it is contingent and queer’, see pp. 14–5, 140–43; Jonathan Skinner raises the question of the relationship between an inside and an outside, and points out that ‘the natural history tradition which helped sharpen’ an awareness of an ‘interrelatedness’, ‘a discipline of close, scrupulous observation of nature, is disappearing’. We need to ‘revalue the “nature walk,” and to venerate the humble, empirical tasks of “natural history”, in ways that were lost to the technological hubris of the last century’, see ‘Editor’s Statement’, *ecopoetics* 1 (2001): 5–8.

There is no doubt that Hartley's philosophy contributed to the development of Coleridge's thought on epistemology, but the question is in what sense Coleridge's works represent his philosophy about the relationship between the mind and nature. Let us turn to Hartley's ideas about the process of acquiring knowledge in terms of the relationship between the inside and the outside. The *Observations* comprises two parts; the first contains the physical doctrine of the vibrations and the operations of the mind, and the second is concerned with Christian religion. Hartley's scientific understanding of the connection between body and mind is mainly dependent upon his two theories, 'the doctrine of vibrations' and 'the doctrine of associations' which are the living organism of brain and nervous system and in the universe. For him, the 'component particles' that constitute the nerves and brain, interact with the physical universe suggested by Newton – a world of 'force of attraction and repulsion'.<sup>103</sup> Thus sensation, thought, and motion, is the result of the vibration of the minute particles of the medullary substance of the nerves, and the aether functions as a vibrating medium. Hartley proposes that, 'Since therefore sensations are conveyed to the mind, by the efficiency of corporeal causes [. . .] it seems to me, that the powers of generating ideas, and raising them by association, must also arise from corporeal causes'.<sup>104</sup> It should be noted, however, that there is no direct and immediate route from sensation to perception. The sensory stimuli of the vibrations do not produce perceptions, emotions, thoughts, and actions, out of sensations directly and immediately, and we need to construct and reconstruct continuously the vibrations and sensations in order to make sense

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<sup>103</sup> Allen, 'David Hartley.'

<sup>104</sup> Allen, 'David Hartley'; *HOM* 1, prop. 11.

of the world.<sup>105</sup>

The reason why the sensations and vibrations could not leave ‘any traces or images of themselves, i.e. any ideas’ is that they are ‘infinitely divisible, in respect of time and place’.<sup>106</sup> Accordingly, these infinitely divisible parts need to cohere together through the principle of associations through which sensory inputs are turned into meaningful perceptual categories. Hartley defines ideas as all ‘internal feelings that are not sensations’.<sup>107</sup> The first among the ideas thus generated are the ‘Vestiges, Types, or Images of sensations, which may be called, Simple Ideas of Sensation’.<sup>108</sup> The notion of simple ideas originates from Locke’s *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690). According to Locke’s understanding of the relationship between simple ideas and complex ideas, the former are produced through passive reception, but the latter are associated with the active production of perceptual categories. ‘The mind’, writes Locke, ‘is wholly passive in the reception of all its simple ideas’, but ‘it exerts several acts of its own’ through which ‘the others are framed’ out of its simple ideas. These actions involve the capacities ‘to unite ideas together, or to set them by one another, or wholly separate them’ in order to combine simple ideas into complex ones.<sup>109</sup>

Although Locke’s ideas appear to be similar to Hartley’s notion of association in terms of the process from simple ideas to complex ones, Hartley

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<sup>105</sup> Gerald M. Edelman describes these sensations as ‘a repertoire of labels from an unlabeled world’, *Bright Air, Brilliant Fire: on the Matter of the Mind* (London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 1992), p. 99; see, Richard Allen, *David Hartley on Human Nature* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), pp. 51–52.

<sup>106</sup> *HOM* 1, prop. 11; Allen, ‘David Hartley.’

<sup>107</sup> *HOM* ; Allen, *David Hartley*, pp. 69–70.

<sup>108</sup> *HOM* 1.1.2.8; Allen, *David Hartley*, pp. 69–70.

<sup>109</sup> *HU* 2.12.1; Allen, *David Hartley*, p. 71.

renounces Locke's distinction between the passive reception and the active production in the mind.<sup>110</sup> If, for Locke, the starting point is the passive reception of simple ideas, the very beginning of the process of construction, for Hartley, is concerned with generating ideas. Hartley, in proposition 11, states that 'ideas, and miniature vibrations, must first be generated [. . .] before they can be associated'.<sup>111</sup> The power of association always requires the power of generating ideas, and therefore association is the basic mechanism of construction without the distinction between the passive reception and the active production. As Allen put it, 'the several acts by which Locke thought the mind frames complex ideas, relations, and abstractions out of the materials and foundations of simple ideas as thus reduced to one: the mechanism of association recurring over and over again – an operation generating complexity out of simplicity through repetition.'<sup>112</sup> Accordingly, it appears that simple ideas, generated through the dynamic of vibrations, are already involved in the doctrine of association in terms of the act of generating ideas. For Hartley, the whole process of making sense of the world is not a double process of reception and production, but the sole mechanism of association.

Hartley is able to show a correlation between the outside and the inside, between what is there outside and what is experienced inside by investigating the mental processes through the two doctrines of vibration and association. It should be, however, noted that he did not intend to propose 'a philosophy of materialism or skepticism', but his aim was 'to provide a scientific proof of the

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<sup>110</sup> Allen, *David Hartley*, pp. 80–81.

<sup>111</sup> *HOM* 1.1.2.11; Allen, *David Hartley*, pp. 80–81.

<sup>112</sup> Allen, *David Hartley*, p. 71.

validity of religious and ethical ideas'.<sup>113</sup> Eventually he attempts to articulate the idea of selfhood and Christian belief through natural laws. He regards the human mind as 'indued with the faculties of memory, imagination or fancy, understanding, affection, and will', and 'the affections have pleasures and pains for their objects.'<sup>114</sup> Pleasure and pain as the common property of all biological organisms, which are 'internal feelings', refer to 'the ways in which the nerves and brain respond to stimuli'.<sup>115</sup> As a result, we are inclined to seek pleasurable sensations and to avoid painful ones. One of the significant features of the dynamic of emotion is its movement. For Hartley, emotion moves around from one experience to word or memory. He gives an example of how 'the appearance of the fire, or of a knife, especially in circumstances like those in which the child was burnt or cut, will raise up in the child's nervous system painful vibrations of the same kind with, but less in degree than, those which the actual burn or wound occasioned'.<sup>116</sup> An experience will be transferred onto the words, and other symbols, which denote such experience, and therefore both emotion and language are associated with each other. For Hartley, this generative psychological operation is the transference of emotion, and the affections after the transference are intellectual affections.

Both emotion and language play a key role in the emergence of selfhood in the sense that individual human personalities are formed by the emotions and the narratives of our past experience. The experience of emotion is involved in

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<sup>113</sup> Richard Haven, *Patterns of Consciousness; and Essay on Coleridge* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1969), pp. 103-4.

<sup>114</sup> *HOM*, Introduction, p. iii.

<sup>115</sup> Allen, *David Hartley*, p. 64.

<sup>116</sup> *HOM*, p. 143.

the act of judgement as ‘the opinions of others concerning us, when expressed by corresponding words and actions, are principal sources of happiness and misery’.<sup>117</sup> We recognise ourselves as being separate from others by seeking praise and approval and by avoiding criticism, and become aware of self-consciousness by being aware that others are inclined to judge us. In addition, we, as users of language, are dependent upon narratives or other words in terms of forming our selfhood. Hartley mentions: because ‘we think in words, both the impressions and the recurrences of ideas will be attended with words’; hence, ‘when a person relates a past fact, the ideas do in some cases suggest the words, whilst in others the words suggest the ideas.’<sup>118</sup> As the affections are transferred onto the words, our memories or past experiences are also transferred onto the words or other symbols. In the long run, the sense of selfhood and the cores of our personalities are constructed by affection and language, or intellectual affections and the words, which are subject to natural principles.

Furthermore, in Part II of the *Observations*, Hartley continues to discuss the sense of selfhood in relation to his Christian belief. As we tend to associate emotions with their causes, we must come to associate all emotions of the self ‘with the ultimate cause, the idea of God’.<sup>119</sup> The reason lies in the fact that ‘Since God is the source of all Good’ and is ‘associated with all our Pleasures, it seems to follow [. . .] that the idea of God, and of the ways by which his Goodness and Happiness are made manifest, must at last take the place of, and

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<sup>117</sup> *HOM* 1.4.2.95; Allen, *David Hartley*, p. 129; see also, *HOM* 1, prop. 77; Allen, ‘David Hartley.’

<sup>118</sup> *HOM* 1.3.4.90; Allen, *David Hartley*, p. 116.

<sup>119</sup> Haven, *Patterns of Consciousness*, p. 106.

absorb other Ideas, and He himself become [. . .] All in All'.<sup>120</sup> Hartley regards this state as 'perfect self-annihilation' which is not the annulment of being a person in a passive and negative sense, but refers to the growth and transformation of the self, through which human beings will become ultimately 'partakers of the divine nature', and they learn to love both others and God.<sup>121</sup> What matters for Hartley is that the realisation of the process is found in a natural environment. If a mental process, selfhood, and self-annihilation are explained according to natural laws, the experience of the external world fundamentally corresponds to the experience of the internal worlds of the mind and religion. Overcoming dualism and solipsism, both physical events and mental events attain a sense of unity without denying or undermining either of them. Hartley attempts to articulate an internal vision through natural principles.

#### 2.4. The unity between the external and the internal in 'The Eolian Harp'

If we look at 'The Eolian Harp', we find that the poem is deeply embedded in Hartley's philosophy. As already seen, the poem is concerned with a vision about the unity of the universe, but this vision is crucially associated with the external world in the sense that the poet tries to read the vision in a natural environment. Accordingly, the relationship between the vision and the physical universe can be articulated within the context of Hartley's thought. First of all, nature becomes an activator for a mental process. As, for Hartley, the functions of the mind are determined by physical stimuli, the awakening of a poetic mind in 'The Eolian Harp' is dependent upon the harmony of a natural landscape. One

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<sup>120</sup> *HOM* I.114; Quoted by Haven, *Patterns of Consciousness*, p. 106.

<sup>121</sup> *HOM* 2, prop. 67; Allen, 'David Hartley.'



of the main features in the *Conversation Poems* is their circular structure, one which they open with a landscape description, and move into inner meditation, and finally return to an initial landscape. Likewise, 'The Eolian Harp' opens with the invocation of 'My pensive Sara!' and the description of the setting, and it turns to the mind of the poet. Finally, it returns to the initial surroundings.

In order to establish a link between nature and the poetic mind, the poet uses the image of the harp. Abrams first called 'attention to the wind-harp as that favorite romantic toy, which he read as a serious analogy of the relationship of the poetic mind to nature in the late Eighteenth century'.<sup>122</sup> As the harp, being struck by the wind, produces music, the imagination of the poet is activated by nature. Thus 'Coleridge transformed the harp into an image of inspiration in which the poet was a harp over whom the winds of inspiration blow.'<sup>123</sup> It seems to be a feeling that the harp brings about first after being struck by the wind. Coleridge wrote a letter to Southey in 1803 which alludes to Hartley's enduring influence in terms of the dynamic of feeling. Recalling the room in Bristol that he shared with Southey in 1795, Coleridge says:

It argues, I am persuaded, a particular state of general feeling — & I hold, that association depends in a much greater degree on the recurrence of resembling states of Feeling, than on Trains of Idea [. . .] I almost think, that Ideas never recall Ideas, as far as they are Ideas — any more than Leaves in a forest create each other's motion — The Breeze it is that runs thro' them / it is the Soul, the state of Feeling — . If I had said, no one Idea ever recalls another, I am confident that I could support the

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<sup>122</sup> Richard Matlak, 'Swift's Aeolists and Coleridge's Eolian Harp', *The Coleridge Bulletin: The Journal of the Friends of Coleridge*, New Series, 20 (2002), 44–53 (p. 46); See, M. H. Abrams, *the Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), p. 51.

<sup>123</sup> Magnuson, 'The "Conversation" poems', p. 34.

assertion.<sup>124</sup>

According to this passage, it is the feeling [the Breeze] that evoked ideas. As the feeling of pleasures and pains is inherent in each idea in Hartley's associationsim, feeling, for Coleridge, plays a crucial role in conjuring up ideas.<sup>125</sup> 'The Breeze' from this passage reminds us of 'the desultory breeze' in 'The Eolian Harp' which caresses 'that simplest Lute' and creates a sense of love in a 'coy maid half yielding to her lover'.<sup>126</sup>

Then 'its strings boldlier swept' to the extent that it produces the pictures of 'Fairy-Land', and eventually his poetic imagination bears the vision of 'the one Life'. In other words, the mental process leads to a philosophical and theological speculation through physical stimuli. What is significant here is the relationship between the physical stimuli of landscape and the vision of 'the one Life'. If the breeze belongs to an external world, the vision is part of an internal sphere of a poetic imagination. The question is whether the experience of an external world is separated from that of an internal sphere and the vision exists only in a poetic imagination, or the former is correlated with the latter. The first case causes the problems of dualism and solipsism, but the second one suggests a sense of unity. There are two reasons that allow one to contend that Coleridge tries to achieve a unity between them.

First, the experience of the one life takes place not only in a poetic imagination but also in an external world. Coleridge tries to describe the unity of the one life through the harmony of two images, light and sound, which

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<sup>124</sup> *CL II*, p. 962.

<sup>125</sup> For Hartley, all our other internal feelings may be called ideas.

<sup>126</sup> Also, the correspondent breeze of Wordsworth's *Prelude* (1850: 1, 35).

conveys 'varying manifestations of a single identity': 'A light in sound. A sound-like power in light' (ll. 28).<sup>127</sup> This harmonious world is full of 'joyance', and it is 'impossible not to love all things' (ll. 29-31). Intriguingly, this world is also found in the description of a landscape at the beginning of the poem in the sense that the poet feels the wholeness of a natural environment around his Cot. In a late afternoon, 'the clouds were rich with light', and 'the stilly murmur of the distant Sea / Tells us of silence' (ll. 6, 11-2). At the same time, in the middle of this harmonious landscape, the poet and his 'pensive Sara', whose 'soft cheek reclined on his arm', generate the blessedness of love with 'white-flower'd Jasmin, and the broad-leav'd Myrtle', the emblems of 'Innocence and Love!'. Secondly, he extends the vision of the one life to a religious thought by associating the presence of God with the one life. The one life is not just a universe of harmony and love, but also a universe of God's presence because God is 'the Soul of each, and God of all' in this universe. Accordingly, we can sense the presence of God in a natural environment as the poet identifies God with 'one intellectual breeze'. As the vision of the one life is found in a physical experience as well as in a poetic imagination, the presence of God is experienced not only in the immaterial sphere but also in nature. In this respect, like Hartley, Coleridge attains a unity between physical events and mental events by showing that the experience of the internal worlds of the mind and religion fundamentally corresponds to the experience of the external world.

## 2.5. The passivity and activity of the mind in 'The Eolian Harp'

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<sup>127</sup> Beer, *Coleridge the Visionary*, p. 151.

And yet, his effort to combine materialism and idealism has a tension at its heart. First, the notion of God as ‘one intellectual breeze’ in nature causes the problem of pantheism. Right after the vision of ‘God of all’, the poet mentions that Sara disapproves of his idea: ‘thy more serious eye a mild reproof.’ Rejecting ‘such thoughts’, she ‘biddest me walk humbly with my God’ (ll. 51–2). He regards the notion as ‘vain Philosophy’s aye-babbling spring’ (ll. 57). It will later be seen how the poet deals with the problem of pantheism. Secondly, the issue of the passivity and activity of the mind arises. In his later period, one of the reasons why Coleridge rejected Hartley’s ideas is that the process of association seemed to imply a passive and mechanical approach to perception and mental acts.<sup>128</sup> In Coleridge’s view, Hartley’s notion of associationism, in which ‘all the reality’ is dependent upon ‘the primary sensations’ and ‘the impressions’, is only involved in ‘controlling, determining, and modifying the phantasmal chaos of association’. Rather than ‘distinct powers’, for example, ‘will’ and ‘reason’, it is a ‘blind mechanism’ and ‘mere lawlessness’, and therefore ‘our whole life would be divided between the despotism of outward impressions, and that of senseless and passive memory.’<sup>129</sup> In this respect, for Coleridge, association is a passive process which is not able to formulate the mind.

If we look at the early versions of ‘The Eolian Harp’, we find how the poet was struggling with the issue of the passivity and activity of the mind. In the

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<sup>128</sup> See, Barbara Bowen Oberg, ‘David Hartley and the Association of Ideas’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 37 (1976), 441–454 (p. 450); Allen, *David Hartley*, pp. 72–73; Richardson, *British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind*, p. 29; John Sutton, *Philosophy and Memory Traces: Descartes to Connectionism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 233–234.

<sup>129</sup> *BL I*, pp. 111, 116, 121.

version of 1817, we can notice the sense of passivity in that ‘many a thought uncall’d and undetain’d / And many idle flitting phantasies, / Traverse my indolent and passive brain’ (ll. 39–41). But the second draft of the poem (1797) expresses the idea of passivity more clearly. Instead of ‘passive brain’, the draft uses ‘passive Mind’ explicitly. In addition, the different understandings of ‘organic Harps’ imply a tension between passivity and activity. Unlike the final version, the second draft provides a longer version of the famous culminating metaphysical vision:

And what if all of animated nature  
 Be but organic Harps diversely fram’d,  
 That tremble into thought, as o’ev them sweeps  
 Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,  
 At once the Soul of each, and God of all? (the final version of 1817)

And what if All of animated Life  
 Be but as Instruments diversly fram’d  
 That tremble into thought, while thro’ them breathes  
 One infinite and intellectual Breeze,  
 And all in different Heights so aptly hung,  
 That Murmurs indistinct and Bursts sublime,  
 Shrill Discords and most soothing Melodies,  
 Harmonious from Creation’s vast concent—  
 Thus God would be the universal Soul,  
 Mechaniz’d matter as th’ organic harps  
 And each one’s Tunes be that, which each calls I (l, 36–46) (the second draft)

Here attention should be given to the understanding of ‘organic Harps’. Whereas the Harps are described simply as ‘diversely fram’d’ in the final

version, the second draft stresses the diversity of the harps by articulating the sense of their individualities in detail. All the harps are different from one another on the grounds that they hang ‘aptly’ ‘all in different Heights’, and each one’s tunes reveal ‘I’. Magnuson makes an interesting comment on the ‘I’ of the second draft. If the ‘I’ is like a tune which is ‘wild’, ‘various’, and ‘random’, then selfhood is ‘an indefinite collection of random notes, unpredictable, unconnected, and without a unifying consciousness’.<sup>130</sup> Here the ‘I’ as ‘an indefinite collection of random notes’ seems to imply the passivity of the mind over and against the notion of God as ‘the universal Soul’.<sup>131</sup>

Coleridge himself is aware of the disharmony of ‘diversely fram’d harps’,

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<sup>130</sup> Magnuson, *Coleridge’s Nightmare Poetry* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1974), pp. 2–3.

<sup>131</sup> Interestingly, the ‘I’ as an indefinite collection of random notes reminds us of Hume’s idea of human consciousness as ‘a bundle or collection of different perceptions’. For Hume, the imagination is ‘the foundation of all our experience’ in the sense that we can discover ‘a stable world’ ‘only through the workings of the imagination’. He mentions that ‘I am naturally led to regard the world, as something real and durable, and as preserving its existence, even when it is no longer present to my perception’. He, however, argues that this real and durable world is a fiction: ‘The smooth passage of the imagination along the ideas of the resembling perceptions makes us ascribe to them a perfect identity. The interrupted manner of their appearance makes us consider them as so many resembling, but still distinct beings, which appear after certain intervals. The perplexity arising from this contradiction produces a propension to unite these broken appearances by the fiction of a continu’d existence’. See, David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. by L. A. Selby-Bigge, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), pp. 252, 197, 205. Also, Cairns Craig, ‘Coleridge, Hume, and the chains of the Romantic imagination’, in *Scotland and the Borders of Romanticism*, ed. Ian Duncan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 20–37 (p. 32); But Coleridge very much opposed Hume’s skepticism. On the one hand, he was interested in Hume’s thoughts: ‘The subject of my meditations ha[s] been the Relations of Thoughts to Things, in the language of Hume, of Ideas to Impressions’ (*CL II*, p. 672, a letter to Humphry Davy in February 1801). On the other hand, unlike Hume, Coleridge tried to develop the nature of the human self in terms of the possibility of its link with an objective existence or the transcendence. For Him, the primary imagination is ‘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’ (*BL I*, p. 304). Accordingly, the primary imagination appears to the ‘the faculty which mediates between sensation and perception, actively ordering these faculties into a body of knowledge. Without this principle they would simply be a mere chaos of sense impressions’. See, Peter J. Kitson, ‘Beyond the Enlightenment: The Philosophical, Scientific and Religious Inheritance’, in *A Companion to Romanticism*, ed. by Duncan Wu, Blackwell Publishing, 1999. <  
[http://www.blackwellreference.com/subscriber/uid=959/book?id=g9780631198529\\_9780631198529](http://www.blackwellreference.com/subscriber/uid=959/book?id=g9780631198529_9780631198529)> [accessed 10 May 2013].

but he is able to perceive harmony out of such disharmony. Their 'Murmurs' are 'indistinct', but 'Bursts sublime'; they create 'Shrill Discords', but 'most soothing Melodies, / Harmonious from Creation's vast concent—'. These 'diversely fram'd harps' are 'Mechaniz'd matter', which implies the passivity of the mind in relation to Hartley's mechanistic understanding of the mind, but 'One infinite and intellectual Breeze' creates the unity of the universe. In spite of 'Shrill Discords', the passive mind can produce a sense of unity owing to the unifying force of God. In this strange cluster of images that seem to contain contradictions Coleridge is working his way towards or trying to find a way to express an idea of God as the unifying force behind this discord.

In consequence, the differences between the second draft and the final version hint that the poet is struggling between the ideas of the passivity and the activity of the mind. While the passivity stands out in the early version, it becomes less conspicuous in the final version. Whether it is passivity or activity, there is no doubt that Coleridge's main concern is to convey the unity of the universe. On the one hand, the second draft produces the unity of the universe in a mechanistic sense through the interaction between 'Mechaniz'd matter' and 'One infinite and intellectual Breeze'. On the other hand, the final version creates the idea of 'the one Life' through the interaction between 'that simplest Lute' and 'the desultory breeze' even before the vision of 'organic Harps'. And 'the one Life' brings about the sense of joy and love contrasted with the sense of mechanism. Yet, the fact that brain is described as 'passive' and Coleridge's 'organic Harps' are subject to 'one intellectual breeze' suggests an anxiety about the status of the activity of the mind. In this respect, William Scheuerle

points out rightly that the vision of 'organic Harps' is not a hymn, but a question about the exercise of the mind.<sup>132</sup> Furthermore, that issue causes another tension between an external world and the mind. If an external world is dependent upon the creativity of the mind, its meaning can be regarded simply as a projection of the mind. The complexities of this problem are explored more fully in Coleridge's 'Dejection: An Ode'.

## 2.6. An external world and the mind in 'Dejection: An Ode'

The two most famous lines of 'Dejection: An Ode' have generated a great deal of critical attention, 'we receive but what we give / And in our life alone does Nature live'. They have been taken as 'a monumental mark of the turn of English thought from empiricism to idealism'.<sup>133</sup> Hailing the ode as one of the two greatest and most representative poems of the early nineteenth century, M. H. Abrams argues that 'Coleridge's theory of mind' was 'revolutionary'.<sup>134</sup> The revolution or shift has been understood to occur between different pairs of terms by different critics: 'idealism and empiricism (or associationism)', 'active and passive', 'inner and outer', 'Kant and Hartley', 'mind and nature'.<sup>135</sup> Yet, some critics, including Murray Krieger and I. A. Richards, cast doubt on the integrity of these binaries. While the former regards the typical Coleridgean dichotomy of mind and nature as a 'deceptive opposition', the latter argues that

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<sup>132</sup> Scheuerle argues that this is 'not a hymn but a questioning in which he wonders whether all living nature be but organic harps that receive but give nothing except passive tunes', 'A Reexamination of Coleridge's "The Eolian Harp"', pp. 7-8.

<sup>133</sup> Luther Tyler, 'Losing "A Letter": The Contexts of Coleridge's "Dejection"', *ELH*, 52 (1985), 419-445 (p. 420).

<sup>134</sup> The other one is Wordsworth's 'Intimations of Immortality'. M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, pp. 66, 158.

<sup>135</sup> Tyler, 'Losing "A Letter"', p. 421.



it is just ‘linguistic illusion’.<sup>136</sup> Although Coleridge seems to shift from empiricism to idealism and to develop hierarchical dualisms, attention must be paid to the tension between mind and nature developed in the poem. If we look closely at the interaction between them in the poem, we find that they influence each other in terms of creating meaning and it is hard to tell which of them is the primary cause for it.

In ‘Dejection: An Ode’, the poet reveals a desperate state of his mind in a confessional tone. It is a failure of his ‘genial spirits’ and his ‘shaping spirit of Imagination’, or, according to Andrew Keanie, a ‘depression’ in a psychological sense in that the poet is ‘trapped in a colorless consciousness’ and ‘removed from the real throb of the senses’, expressing ‘pure dullness’.<sup>137</sup> Whether it is a depression or failure of imagination, the fatal consequence is that he cannot feel the beauty of nature. In Stanza II, the poet conveys ‘the sense of ‘A grief without a pang, void, dark, and drear’ which is caused by the fact that he can ‘see’, but cannot ‘feel’, the beauty of ‘the balmy and serene eve’, ‘its peculiar tint of yellow green of the western sky’, ‘thin clouds’, ‘the stars’ and ‘crescent Moon’. Interestingly, referring to his past experience with an external nature, in Stanza I he voices hopes that she will bring back his ‘genial spirits’:

Those sounds which oft have raised me, whilst they awed,  
And sent my soul abroad,  
Might now perhaps their wonted impulse give,  
Might startle this dull pain, and make it move and live! (ll. 17–20)

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<sup>136</sup> Tyler, ‘Losing “A Letter”’, p. 442, n. 11, 12; see, Murray Krieger, *Theory of Criticism* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), pp. 96–97; I. A. Richards, *Coleridge on Imagination*, 2nd edn (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1960), Chapter 9.

<sup>137</sup> Andrew Keanie, ‘Coleridge’s Capable Negativity in “Dejection: an Ode”’, p. 284.

Here it should be noted that external nature has been a stimulus to his 'genial spirits' in the past, and the poet is still yearning for the similar interaction. The Stanza II displays his desperate effort to retrieve the power through the act of gazing: 'Have I been gazing on the western sky [. . .] And still I gaze.'

Yet, from Stanza III to VI, he proclaims that he abandons hope of such inspiration from an external nature but instead he turns to look within. Most of all, he concludes that it was 'a vain endeavour' to 'gaze for ever on that green light in the west' for 'winning the passion and the life', and realises that their 'fountains are within'. He then makes the famous declaration:

O Lady! We receive but what we give  
And in our life alone does Nature live (ll. 47-48)

For Coleridge, nature becomes a projection of the mind on the grounds that it cannot affect our feelings and emotions any more, and becomes dependent upon the mind in terms of its meanings. Therefore the inner 'soul' itself 'must issue forth a light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud, enveloping the Earth'. Notably, 'Joy', which is given only 'to the pure', is thought of as 'the spirit and the power' which 'wedding Nature to us gives in dower / A new Earth and new Heaven'. This new Earth and new Heaven does not correlate with an external world but is a sheer projection of the mind in that it is 'undreamt of by the sensual' but exists 'in ourselves'.

But, after going through the painful experience of 'a grief without a pang', in stanza VII he appears to regain his 'shaping spirit of Imagination

Hence, viper thoughts, that coil around my mind,  
Reality's dark dream!  
I turn from you, and listen to the wind,  
Which long has raved unnoticed. (ll. 94–97)

Overcoming 'Reality's dark dream' or 'dull pain', the poet now can interact with an external world by noticing the power of 'the wind', which comes not from within, but 'without'. As Barth pointed out, the poet 'had projected his own feelings onto the wind – and so could hear only his own depression' until stanza VI.<sup>138</sup> But he became aware of the wind which is sensory and external, and his 'shaping spirit of Imagination' began to mediate between the poet and nature, telling 'a tale of less affright, and tempered with delight'. In fact, it is not clear whether it is the stimulus of an external nature, or the recovery of joy in himself, that enables the poet to turn away from 'viper thoughts' and to feel again the beauty of nature. Although it is difficult to define the source of the 'A tale of less affright', it is clear that it originates with the interaction between the mind and an external world.

In this respect, it is not fair to view the two famous lines simply as a manifesto for the shift from empiricism to idealism. They need to be understood in terms of the context of the process of poetic inspiration of which they only form a part. As Andrew Keanie points out, the poem is 'not primarily Coleridge's formal recognition of his inability to win 'from outward forms [. . .] The passion and the life, whose fountains are within'. Rather it suggests his

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<sup>138</sup> Barth, *Coleridge and the Power of Love*, p. 95.

awareness of the ubiquity of his melancholy in himself.<sup>139</sup> Paradoxically, in spite of this melancholy or ‘a grief without a pang’, Coleridge manages to ‘make his negative emotions poetically viable’.<sup>140</sup> One of the reasons for his capability is that the poet’s declaration of the deadness of his poetic imagination ‘could not disguise the apparent accuracy of the self-assessment’.<sup>141</sup> In consequence, his expression of the hope for regaining his poetic imagination through his interaction with nature in Stanza I already presupposes the returning of the power in Stanza VII. If we understand the poem as the process of retrieving his genial spirits, rather than a shift from empiricism to idealism, it can be argued that the famous two lines reflect partly the state of the poet’s failure to interact with nature owing to melancholy, or depression, or ‘dull pain’.

If ‘The Eolian Harp’ is questioning whether the mind is dependent solely upon sensory and external experience, ‘Dejection: An Ode’ is concerned with whether nature has its own independent reality or it is just a projection of the mind. Whereas the former is associated with empiricism, the latter is often dealt with in the context of idealism. One of the tantalising issues in Coleridge is that there is no clear boundary between empiricism and idealism, between nature and the mind, in terms of the source for creating meanings. Strikingly, the poet himself is aware of this tension, and his impressive letter to James Gillman in 1825 communicates spiritedly a battle between two rival artists, the Mind and Nature:

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<sup>139</sup> Keanie, ‘Coleridge’s Capable Negativity’, p. 283.

<sup>140</sup> J. C. C. Mays, ‘Coleridge’s Love: “All he can manage, more than he could”’, in *Coleridge’s Visionary Languages: Essays in Honour of J. B. Beer*, ed. by Tim Fulford and Morton Paley (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1993), p. 58.

<sup>141</sup> Stephen Gill, *William Wordsworth: A Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p. 200.

In Youth and early Manhood the Mind and Nature are, as it were, two rival Artists, both potent Magicians, and engaged, like the King's Daughter and the rebel Genie in the Arabian Nights' Enternts., in sharp conflict of Conjuraton — each having for it's object to turn the other into Canvas to paint on, Clay to mould, or Cabinet to contain. For a while the Mind seems to have the better in the contest, and makes of Nature what it likes; takes her Lichens and Weather-stains for Types & Printer's Ink and prints Maps & Fac Similes of Arabic and Sanscrit Mss. on her rocks; composes Country-Dances on her moon-shiny Ripples [. . .] But alas! alas! that Nature is a wary wily long-breathed old Witch, tough-lived as a Turtle and divisible as the Polyp, repullulative in a thousand Snips and Cuttings, integra et in toto! She is sure to get the better of Lady MIND in the long run, and to take her revenge too — transforms our To Day into a Canvass dead-colored to receive the dull featureless Portrait of Yesterday [. . .] she mocks the mind with it's own metaphors, metamorphosing the Memory into a lignum vitae Escrutoire to keep unpaid Bills & Dun's Letters in, with Outlines that had never been filled up.<sup>142</sup>

This is a wry account of how the poet has been struggling between the mind and nature or between subject and object. His personal defeat sounds pessimistic in that 'the mind, having once been the master, has become the slave'.<sup>143</sup> As Abrams put it, 'Coleridge implicitly describes his having succumbed, with the passage of time, to the actuality in his own experience of a concept of the mind in perception against which his own philosophy of the active, projective, and creative mind had been a sustained refutation.'<sup>144</sup> Although this summary expresses 'the stream of pessimism that all [some essential shaping and organizing power] was lost', John Beer points out how

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<sup>142</sup> *CL V*, pp. 497-498.

<sup>143</sup> M.H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism*, p. 459.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 459.

Coleridge paradoxically describes this perpetual struggle ‘imaginatively’ and how ‘his mind was ranging as vividly as before’.<sup>145</sup>

It is arguable whether Coleridge was able to integrate these two rival artists finally into unity or became an idealist by abandoning empiricism. He wrote to Thomas Poole in 1801: ‘If I do not greatly delude myself, I have not only completely extricated the notions of Time, and Space; but have overthrown the doctrine of Association, as taught by Hartley, and with it all the irreligious metaphysics of modern Infidels — especially, the doctrine of Necessity.’<sup>146</sup> This passage has been taken by critics to suggest that Coleridge was enthusiastic about Hartley for a few years but he later criticised his association theory for its mechanical and materialistic aspects.<sup>147</sup> Thus in studies of Coleridge the thought of Hartley is often regarded as the idea which influenced Coleridge for a few years and then disappeared later.

What all this shows is that Coleridge never completely ceased to vacillate between the mind and nature or between idealism and empiricism. What matters in the middle of the tension is the significance of nature as a sensory experience. Whether it is the primary or secondary cause creating meaning, the poet associates the materiality of nature with the power of imagination. Hartley’s theory of sensory experience still remains in his later years.<sup>148</sup> Over and against the idealistic perspective, Coleridge had to admit that he could not avoid the feeling that the interpretation of nature was only a human

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<sup>145</sup> J. Beer, ‘The Paradoxes of Nature in Wordsworth and Coleridge’, *Wordsworth Circle*, 40 (2009), 4–9 (p. 9).

<sup>146</sup> *CL II*, p. 707.

<sup>147</sup> See, J. A. Appleyard, ‘Coleridge and Criticism: I. Critical Theory’, in *S. T. Coleridge*, ed. by R. L. Brett (London: Bell, 1971), pp. 123–146 (p. 128).

<sup>148</sup> See, David S. Miall, “‘I See It Feelingly’”: Coleridge’s Debt to Hartley’, in *Coleridge’s Visionary Languages*, p. 151; Haven, ‘Coleridge, Hartley, and the Mystics’, pp. 480, 487.

perception.<sup>149</sup> For him, that limitation, however, is not necessarily subject to a chasm between human perception and external nature in the sense that the materiality of nature matters even in his later years in terms of its relationship with humanity and God.

### 3. A mutual relationship and a religious aspect in evolution

#### 3.1. A mutual relationship in a passage from *The Statesman's Manual*

From an ecotheological perspective, there is another problem in the relationship between humankind and nature. Although the complex interactions between them reveal the significance of nature as a physical reality, their relationship still generates the unresolved tension of hierarchy with regard to the issue of epistemology. According to Coleridge's terms, there is the question of who is the master between the two rival Artists. In addition, as pointed out already, for Coleridge, in spite of the interrelatedness between man and the noblest animals of the brute creation, there is a wide chasm between them in his idea of evolution to the extent that the human body is the crown and summation of the evolution. We cannot deny the impression that the thought of Coleridge assumes the superiority of humankind over nature, but it can be asserted that he understands their relationship not in terms of dominance, but in a reciprocal and mutual way. Besides, in this section, it will be seen that Coleridge's attempt to find the unity of the universe through the scientific and

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<sup>149</sup> In fact, Coleridge himself refers to the inevitable intervention of the mind, in his *Philosophical Lectures*: '[. . .] the human understanding itself is but an individuality in nature, having its own peculiar organization, and modifying all objects, even its own form of self-consciousness, no less than the forms seen as external, by its own peculiar appropriate perspective', p. 373. Quoted by Nicholas Meihuizen, 'Coleridge: Polarity, Circles, Spirals and the Quest for Being', *English Studies in Africa*, 34(1991), 13-20 (p. 16).

philosophical ideas of the process of evolution is essentially associated with his religious thought.

If we look at a passage from *The Statesman's Manual*, it will be noted that Coleridge is aware of the problem of domination in the relationship between humankind and nature, but at the same time he attempts to establish a reciprocal and mutual relationship between them within the context of his religious ideas:

I seem to myself to behold in the quiet objects, on which I am gazing, more than an arbitrary illustration, more than a mere *simile*, the work of my own Fancy. I feel an awe, as if there were before my eyes the same Power as that of the Reason – the same power in a lower dignity, and therefore a symbol established in the truth of things. I feel it alike, whether I contemplate a single tree or flower, or meditate on vegetation throughout the world, as one of the great organs of the life of nature. Lo! – with the rising sun it commences its outward life and enters into open communion with all the elements, at once assimilating them to itself and to each other [ . . . ] in incorporating the one extreme becomes the symbol of the other; the natural symbol of that higher life of reason, in which the whole series (known to us in our present state of being) is perfected, in which, therefore, all the subordinate gradations recur, and are reordained “*in more abundant honour*”. We had seen each in its own cast, and we now recognise them all as co-existing in the unity of a higher form, the Crown and Completion of the Earthly, and the Mediator of a new and heavenly series. Thus finally, the vegetable creation, in the simplicity and uniformity of its internal structure symbolising the unity of nature, while it represents the omniformity of her delegated functions in its external variety and manifoldness, becomes the record and chronicle of her ministerial acts, and inchoates the vast unfolded volume of the earth with the hieroglyphics of her history.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> *SM*, p. 72–73.



Most of all, Coleridge clearly articulates an idea of the organic relationship of the whole universe in the sense that all the elements of the universe hold communion with one another. Rejecting a mechanistic view of nature and the mind, the poet constructs a vision of the communion through the interaction between 'the creative powers of the mind and the powers of growth in organic nature'.<sup>151</sup> Yet, this vision implies the issue of superiority and inferiority as each part of the universe is regarded as inferior or superior to other parts. The phrases, 'in a lower dignity', 'higher life of reason', 'subordinate gradations', indicate implicitly that Coleridge himself is aware of a hierarchical system of the universe, but he tries to overcome the sense of hierarchy not by destroying it, but by looking at it from another perspective.

In particular, attention should be paid to the phrase, '*in more abundant honour*', which implies the significance of 'all the subordinate gradations'. The phrase is a quotation from 1 Corinthians 12:24, and St. Paul, in this chapter, argues that our body consists of many members; all the members make one body; and at the same time, 'God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honour to the inferior member.'<sup>152</sup> The implication is that the inferior members of the body are given their own unique value by God, and therefore the different members of the body maintain a reciprocal relationship rather than the relationship of dominance. Interestingly, Coleridge uses this quotation in articulating the relationship of the universe. For him, man as the completion of the progressive evolution is a higher form, but this idea of superiority does not

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<sup>151</sup> Jibon Krishna Banerjee, *The Dramatic Works of Wordsworth, Coleridge And Southey* (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 1994), p. 74.

<sup>152</sup> 1 Corinthians 12. 24.

presuppose man's dominance over nature. As the inferior member of the body is given the great honour by God, so is nature re-ordained '*in more abundant honour*' by the divinity.<sup>153</sup> Although humanity is regarded as superior to the non-human natural world in some senses, the relationship between them is characterised not by dominance, but by reciprocity and mutuality in terms of the dynamics of communion and re-ordination '*in more abundant honour*'.

This reciprocal and mutual relationship is also based on the one-and-many theory of the one life described in the first section of this chapter.<sup>154</sup> The universe expresses a sense of unity through the divine presence which is ubiquitous, but this 'one Life' does not diminish the being of each part of the universe. Rather each of them maintains its own unique being. Concerning the relationship between humanity and nature in the one life, Coleridge holds that 'Nature has her proper interest'.<sup>155</sup> Seamus Perry translates this idea into these terms: 'natural objects in their own right have the noblest of callings, for they are, in a most literal way, and while remaining entirely themselves, living evidences of God'.<sup>156</sup> As a result, the notion of the one life represents a reciprocal and mutual relationship. Coleridge asserts a similar idea in the last part of *The Ancient Mariner*:

He prayeth well, who loveth well

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<sup>153</sup> Douglas Brownlow Wilson argues that nature, for Coleridge, is a potential source of sacramental vision, 'Two Modes of Apprehending Nature: A Gloss on the Coleridgean Symbol', *PMLA*, 87 (1972), 42-52 (p. 42); James Boulger also suggests that, in spite of his later semidualism between matter and spirit, Coleridge's sacramental implication was a lingering issue even in his old age; *Coleridge as Religious Thinker* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), pp. 143-195.

<sup>154</sup> *CL II*, p. 866.

<sup>155</sup> *CL II*, p. 864.

<sup>156</sup> Perry, *Coleridge and the Uses of Division*, p. 78.

Both man and bird and beast.

He prayeth best, who loveth best  
All things both great and small;  
For the dear God who loveth us,  
He made and loveth all. (ll. 612-617)

The mariner experienced a sense of aloneness by being isolated from his community and God, and he shows that he could reestablish the broken relationship through the power of love. Interpreting his experience according to the language of Christianity and the society to which the Wedding Guest belongs, the Mariner provides a final summarizing moral.<sup>157</sup> When we look at the two phrases, ‘Both man and bird and beast’ and ‘All things both great and small’, it is clear that Coleridge makes a distinction between humankind and the non-human natural world in terms of superiority and inferiority. But, at the same time, he attempts to establish a reciprocal relationship between them, rather than a relationship of separation and dominance, through the power of love. Although the universe consists of different parts, both ‘great and small’, each of them has its own intrinsic value which is based on the power of God’s love. Because of that, in spite of the distinctions of superiority and inferiority, they are able to develop a mutual and reciprocal relationship. For Coleridge, the possibility of such love is opened up by his religious faith, God ‘made and loveth

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<sup>157</sup> As Perry argues that the summary ‘makes a good point in an unkind way’, *Ibid.*, p. 284, the summarizing moral has its own controversial points (*Coleridge and the Uses of Division*, p. 284). It can be said that the poem ‘has as its centre the affirmation of a redemptive ideal and philosophic truth’, but, nevertheless, this does not mean that ‘it can be read as a coherent allegorical presentation of the ideas of sin, penance, and redemption, or as the poetic declaration of a particular view of the world and man’s place in it’, see Vincent Newey, ‘Indeterminacy in Coleridge’s *The Ancient Mariner*’, *Aligarh Critical Miscellany* 5 (1992), 167–180 (p. 176). Thus his summarizing moral is unlikely to be a determinate conclusion to the interpretation of his experience.

all'. Whereas the creation is characterised by variety, sometimes carrying with divisions of superiority and inferiority, the intrinsic value of each part of creation does not spring from that differentiation, but from the power of love.

### 3.2. Martin Buber's idea of I-Thou

Martin Buber's work is a help to understand what Coleridge seems to be getting at. In his best-known book, *I and Thou* (1923), Buber offers two different ways of understanding the dynamic of relationship, I-Thou and I-It. The former is remarkably similar to Coleridge's understanding of love between humanity and nature. For Buber, the world is twofold in terms of man's attitude and basic words, and the basic words consist of a pair, 'one basic word is the word pair I-Thou. The other basic word is the word pair I-It.'<sup>158</sup> As 'in the beginning is the relation', the essential dynamics of the basic words is that of relation.<sup>159</sup> The I-Thou relation establishes a reciprocal relationship, whilst the I-It relation rejects the reciprocal dynamic. In the former, 'my Thou acts on me as I act on it', and therefore 'he (thou) is no thing among things nor does he (thou) consist of things.'<sup>160</sup> In the latter, the I 'is not bodily confronted by a You but surrounded by a multitude of contents', and, as a result, 'the relationship is permeated by means.' The Thou becomes 'an object among objects, possibly the noblest one and yet one of them, assigned its measure and boundary'.<sup>161</sup>

His concept of two types of relation is involved in two levels, between God and man, and between man and man. If the one is 'essentially an epistemological

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<sup>158</sup> Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. by Walter Kaufmann (New York: Scribner, 1970), p. 53.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., pp. 59, 67.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., pp. 63, 68.

issue dealing with the peculiar ways in which God is known', the other is 'mainly an ethical question regarding the proper way to act toward other human beings'.<sup>162</sup> The I-Thou relation as a way of knowing is concerned with mystical knowledge about God, and as a moral way it shows how other people need to be treated in the world. Particularly, the ethical level of the distinction between I-Thou and I-It is important in assessing how the modern world encourages humans to treat others as objects and instruments to be exploited and used within the context of technological progress. If 'I-Thou relation refers to an intimate, caring relation which accepts another person for what he is', 'I-It relation refers mainly to the inevitable use of objects and persons for private, selfish purposes.'<sup>163</sup>

Interestingly, Buber's idea of the two different types of relation reflects on the different relations between the human and nature. In other words, the dynamics of the I-Thou and I-It relationships can be applied to the relationship between the human and nature. It has often been pointed out that the anthropocentric Western view of nature established a dualism of man and nature, and saw nature as existing only to serve human ends. Further, the domination and exploitation of nature has been accelerated by the progress of science and technology. This kind of relationship between the human and nature can be described by the I-It relation in that the I-It is 'a world where there are objects to be used by the I, observed by the I [. . .] the I stands unrelated to the It, as a user [. . .] not being personally or subjectively involved'.<sup>164</sup> In addition,

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<sup>162</sup> Stuart Charme, 'The Two I-Thou Relations in Martin Buber's Philosophy', *The Harvard Theological Review*, 70 (1977), 161-173 (p. 162).

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., p. 163.

<sup>164</sup> Lloyd Geering, *The World of Relation: an Introduction to Martin Buber's I and Thou*

the I-It world, as Buber points out, 'induces man to consider the It-world as the world in which one has to live and also can live comfortably – and that even offers us all sorts of stimulations and excitements, activities and knowledge'.<sup>165</sup> Nature in the I-It relation only exists for human needs.

From the I-Thou's point of view, nature is no longer treated as an object or instrument with purely functional value, but is regarded as a whole and as a unity with its own independent intrinsic values. As the I-Thou relationship is reciprocal, there is an interactive relationship between the human and nature, not in an exploitative and dominant sense, but in a caring and organic sense. Likewise, Coleridge's understanding of the relationship between humanity and nature signifies the I-Thou relation as it refers to the interconnectedness of humanity and nature, based on love and reciprocity, rather than dominance.

### 3.3. A religious aspect in imagination and symbol

We have discussed that the power of divine love plays a key role in overcoming a hierarchical relationship between humankind and nature in Coleridge's scientific and philosophical notion of the inter-relatedness of the universe. Yet, another question arises from the perspective of ecotheology whether the notion represents the idea of the divinity. In order to examine that question, I shall return to the passage quoted above from *The Statesman's Manual*, in which the presence of God can be revealed in the interactions between the elements of the universe through the powers of imagination and symbol.

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(Wellington: Victoria UP, 1983), p. 21.

<sup>165</sup> Buber, *I and Thou*, p. 84.

According to the passage, all the elements of the universe are not only in communion with one another, but also interact with one another through the dynamic of symbol in that ‘the one extreme becomes the symbol of the other’. In order to perceive the dynamic of the symbol in the universe, we need to understand Coleridge’s idea of imagination. Coleridge’s understanding of imagination has been subject to a very great deal of critical discussion, but here the main focus will be on its religious implications. Coleridge’s idea of imagination is basically religious in the sense that it is concerned with the sense of transcendence and the knowledge of God.<sup>166</sup> In Chapter XIII of *Biographia Literaria*, the famous definition of ‘The primary IMAGINATION’ describes the transcendental power of the imagination as ‘the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM’.<sup>167</sup> Elsewhere, Coleridge also called the imagination ‘a dim analogue of Creation, not all that we can believe but all that we can conceive of creation’.<sup>168</sup> For him, the power of imagination enables the human mind to participate in the activity of the divine mind.<sup>169</sup> As the human mind can be associated with the I AM through the imagination, Coleridge claims that the imagination enables the mind to experience a sense of transcendence.

When we look at its relationship with reason, the religious implication of imagination will be clearer. The human understanding has two distinct organs,

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<sup>166</sup> See, James Volant Baker, *The Sacred River: Coleridge’s Theory of the Imagination* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1957), p. 213; Daniel M. McVeigh, ‘Coleridge’s Doctrine of the Imagination and the Enigmatic Name of God’, *Religion and Literature*, 17 (1985), 61–75 (p.3).

<sup>167</sup> *BL I*, p. 304.

<sup>168</sup> *CL II*, pp. 1033–34; McVeigh, ‘Coleridge’s Doctrine of the Imagination’, p.3

<sup>169</sup> Christine Gallant, *Coleridge’s Theory of Imagination Today* (New York: AMS Press, 1989), p.4; Barth, *The Symbolic Imagination*, p. 155.

‘the outward sense, and the mind’s eye’. Reason is this mind’s eye, ‘an organ of inward sense’.<sup>170</sup> Reason also needs to be mediated by imagination because the latter is completed by the former, which has the power of clearness, depth, and understanding.<sup>171</sup> Reason impregnated with the imagination becomes ‘intuitive, and a living power’.<sup>172</sup> Thus reason contains the imagination within itself, and the former needs to be mediated by the latter. The power of imagination, exerted by reason, is deeply religious in that reason is the highest human power, the breath of the power of God, a pure influence from the glory of the Almighty.<sup>173</sup> God, the soul, and eternal truth are the objects of reason, but at the same time we name ‘God the Supreme Reason’.<sup>174</sup> Accordingly, the transcendental power of imagination itself is fundamentally involved in the Supreme Being.

This power of imagination is a cognitive power through which we are able to recognise not what is there, but what is not there.<sup>175</sup> Coleridge also applies the dynamic of polarity to the cognitive power of imagination. In Chapter XIV of *Biographia Literaria*, he suggests that the power of imagination ‘reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities: of sameness, with difference; of the general, with the concrete; the idea, with the image; the individual, with the representative’.<sup>176</sup> In a polar unity, two distinct realities neither oppose nor separate from each other, and therefore this dynamic of

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<sup>170</sup> *Friend I*, pp. 155–159.

<sup>171</sup> *SM*, pp. 69–70.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 69–70.

<sup>173</sup> Gallant, *Coleridge’s Theory of Imagination Today*, p. 5.

<sup>174</sup> Grosvenor Powell, ‘Coleridge’s “Imagination” and the Infinite Regress of Consciousness’, *ELH*, 39 (1972), 266–278 (p. 269).

<sup>175</sup> Gallant, *Coleridge’s Theory of Imagination Today*, p. 5; McVeigh, ‘Coleridge’s Doctrine of the Imagination’, p. 7.

<sup>176</sup> *BL II*, p. 16–17.



polarity in imagination provides the perception of the connectedness between human and divine. As Cutsinger put it, Coleridge had glimpsed ‘a world translucent to deity’ through the polar unity of imagination.<sup>177</sup> Accordingly, the cognitive power of imagination, opening our eyes to the revision of immanence and transcendence, the reality of the self and the reality of God, compels us to see the divine reality which permeates the universe.

Likewise, the beginning of the quoted passage implies that for Coleridge the power of imagination enables the poet to see beyond ‘the quiet objects’. Although he is ‘gazing on’ ‘a single tree or flower’, he can perceive something more than that which brings about a sense of ‘an awe’, which is more than the work of his Fancy but is based on ‘the Reason’, the Supreme Reason. In this respect, the natural world is regarded not just as material reality but also as an idea, contemplated by the power of imagination. For Coleridge, there is unity between nature and an idea in that ideas are ‘CONSTITUTIVE, and one with the power and Life of Nature’.<sup>178</sup> As ‘an idea, in the highest sense of that word, cannot be conveyed but by a symbol’, the natural world as an idea is able to interact with others by becoming a symbol.<sup>179</sup> Coleridge argues that the one becomes the symbol of the other ‘in incorporating’, and therefore the natural world becomes the symbol of human reason. It must also be noted that human reason as ‘a higher form’ is ‘the Crown and Completion of the Earthly, and the Mediator of a new and heavenly series’. In other words, the human reason as the Mediator ‘is in its turn a symbol of that divine Reason, the Logos, which is

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<sup>177</sup> Cutsinger, ‘Coleridgean Polarity and Theological Vision’, p. 93.

<sup>178</sup> James Vigus, *Platonic Coleridge* (London: Legenda, 2009), p. 47; *SM* (Appendix E), pp. 113–114.

<sup>179</sup> *BL I*, p. 156.

the life and the light of men'.<sup>180</sup> Coleridge names 'God the Supreme Reason'.<sup>181</sup> Accordingly, the natural world as a symbol of human reason participates in the reality of humanity, and human beings as a symbol of the Supreme Reason take part in the reality of the divinity. The quoted passage maintains that all are 'co-existing in the unity of a higher form'. As a result, what the poet feels is 'the same Power as that of the Reason- the same power in a lower dignity, and therefore a symbol established in the truth of things'. The implication is that humanity and the natural world are in communion with each other by sharing in the reality of the Divinity through the power of the symbols.

Here it might seem necessary to clarify further the idea of symbol in order to show that the vision, conveyed by the contemplation of the mind and dynamic of the symbols, displays an ontological sense as well as an epistemological sense. As Catherine Wallace suggests, 'symbols communicate ideas more adequately than discursive logical formulations, because a symbol holds together the contradictions that logic can only break apart.'<sup>182</sup> Symbols can approach what is beyond our senses. Further, a symbol, for Coleridge, is not a metaphor or allegory or any other figure of speech or form of fancy, but an actual and essential part of that, the whole of which it represents, and therefore 'it always partakes of the Reality which it renders intelligible.'<sup>183</sup> In other words, the one is able not only to represent but also to participate in the reality of the other by becoming the symbol of the other. Therefore a symbol is interrelated

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<sup>180</sup> M. H. Abrams, *The Correspondent Breeze: Essays on English Romanticism* (New York: Norton, 1984), p. 221.

<sup>181</sup> *Friend I*, p. 156.

<sup>182</sup> Gallant, *Coleridge's Theory of Imagination Today*, pp. 7-8

<sup>183</sup> *SM*, p. 30.

with what it symbolises in an ontological sense as well as an epistemological sense.

### 3.4. Symbol and sacrament in nature

Accordingly, if the natural world becomes the symbol of humanity, it can be ‘a natural home for humanity’s ultimate identity’ through the dynamic of symbols.<sup>184</sup> The natural world, contemplated by the power of the imagination, is not just a physical reality, but also ‘prophetic of history, of the moral and religious life of human beings’.<sup>185</sup> In consequence, the human mind becomes ‘the hermeneutical key to nature’ and ‘discloses it as a system of identifications’ in a sense that ‘all the subordinate gradations recur and are reordained *in more abundant honour*’ in the human mind.<sup>186</sup> In addition, nature ‘provides the symbolism with a language for the divine’ because the ‘Power’ of ‘the Reason’ can be found ‘in a lower dignity’ as well as in a ‘higher life’.<sup>187</sup> In this respect, the power of symbols enables the universe to represent the idea of communion within the sense of the divinity. Even all elements are ‘perfected’ ‘in the natural symbol of that higher life of reason’.

In addition to the dynamic of symbol, the sacramental language of the passage also suggests how the natural world is permeated by the presence of God and participates in the reality of the Divinity. Some phrases in the passage refer to sacramental implications, for example, ‘communion’, ‘re-ordained’ and

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<sup>184</sup> Alan P. R. Gregory, *Coleridge and the Conservative Imagination* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 2002), p. 240.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid., p. 240.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid., p. 240.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid., p. 240.

‘ministerial acts’. For Coleridge, the sun appears to be ‘the traditional metaphor for God’s power, the source of growth and self-realisation’.<sup>188</sup> He mentions that ‘Man knows God only by revelation from God – as we see the Sun by his own Light’.<sup>189</sup> Further, in *the Statesman’s Manual*, from which the passage is quoted, Coleridge claims that ‘the natural sun is a symbol of the spiritual’.<sup>190</sup> When ‘with the rising sun’ nature enters into ‘open communion with all the elements’, it is shown that the communion of the whole universe is sacred in the light of the rising sun, which symbolises the power of God. At the same time, in the sacredness of the communion, ‘all the subordinate gradations are reordained’ ‘*in more abundant honor*’. We have already seen the significance of this phrase in terms of the I-Thou relationship between humanity and the non-human natural world. Here the focus must be on the word, ‘reordained’. This term expresses definitely the sense of a sacrament in that the act of ordination embodies God’s act in relation to the creation. When the nature is reordained in ‘*more abundant honour*’, the act of reordination refers to the establishment of the relationship between God and the creation. The prefix ‘re’ is worth noting. The nature was already ordained through the creation of God, but Coleridge seems to emphasise its sacredness by regarding it as being ordained again.

Interestingly, Coleridge even describes nature as performing an act of ministry associated with the idea of sacrament. In the passage quoted from *The Statesman’s Manual*, he propounds the idea that ‘the vegetable creation becomes the record and chronicle of her ministerial acts’. If nature is in

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<sup>188</sup> Kessler, *Coleridge’s Metaphors of Being*, p. 104.

<sup>189</sup> *CN I*, 209; Kessler, *Coleridge’s Metaphors of Being*, p. 104.

<sup>190</sup> *SM*, p. 10.

communion with itself in terms of the rising sun and is reordained, her 'ministerial acts' alludes to the sense of sacrament. The natural world, for Coleridge, is conceived not just as a natural phenomenon, but also as the act of sacrament in relation to its sacredness. The idea of sacrament is usually linked with humanity, but Coleridge clearly applies it to nature in this passage. It is not inappropriate to relate nature with the sense of sacrament. When we regard all of creation as sacred, we 'must necessarily think of the Earth with the kind of reverence that we would accord a lower case sacrament because by sacrament is meant a sign pointing to God's action in our lives'.<sup>191</sup> Accordingly, the non-human natural world, for Coleridge, communicates the idea of sacrament.

#### 4. The problem of pantheism

##### 4.1. Coleridge's struggle with pantheism

When ecotheology attempts to express the oneness and sacredness of the universe through the immanence of God, it has to face the problem of pantheism. Whereas, traditionally, theology has stressed the transcendence of God as an Absolute Other, ecotheology tries to articulate the immanence of God in the universe, which sometimes blurs the distinction between the finite and the infinite. It is crucial for ecotheology to maintain both the immanence and the transcendence of God. Likewise, pantheism had become a thorny issue for Coleridge even from his early years in the sense that he often struggled with the tension between pantheism and Christian orthodoxy. As McFarland mentions

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<sup>191</sup> James W. Skehan, 'Exploring Teilhard's "New Mysticism": Building the Cosmos', in *Pierre Teilhard de Chardin on People and Planet*, ed. by Celia Deane-Drummond (London: Equinox, 2006), pp. 13-36 (p. 33).

that ‘it is almost as though literary commentators have entered a kind of silent conspiracy never to challenge one another as to the exact meaning of these ideas [pantheism], or to the appropriateness of their invocation’, it is hard to define the meaning of pantheism.<sup>192</sup> For example, pantheism means that ‘every single thing is divine’, or it denotes that ‘it is the Whole, the unitary All, that is the only God’.<sup>193</sup> First of all, the problem of pantheism in Coleridge appears to originate in his involvement with the thoughts of Priestley and Spinoza.

In a letter to John Thelwall in 1797, he expresses a desire for a kind of totality through a universally transforming power:

I can at times feel strongly the beauties, you describe, in themselves, & for themselves – but more frequently all things appear little – all the knowledge, that can be acquired, child’s play – the universe itself – what but an immense heap of little things? – I can contemplate nothing but parts, & parts are all little – ! – My mind feels as if it ached to behold & know something great – something one & indivisible – and it is only in the faith of this that rocks or waterfalls, mountains or caverns give me the sense of sublimity or majesty! – But in this faith all things counterfeit infinity!<sup>194</sup>

This passage explicitly indicates that Coleridge is eager to discover the oneness in various parts. Presupposing the power of ‘one and indivisible’, the poet is able to feel ‘the sense of sublimity or majesty’ in nature. In addition, ‘all things’ appear to represent ‘infinity’ through the power. Accordingly, for him, nature is more than a mere object. In the second section, it was seen that

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<sup>192</sup> Thomas McFarland, *Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), p. 127.

<sup>193</sup> Stephen R. L. Clark, ‘Pantheism’, in *Spirit of the Environment: Religion, Value and Environmental Concern*, ed. by David E. Cooper and Joy Palmer (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 42–55 (p. 42).

<sup>194</sup> *CL I*, p. 350.

Coleridge describes nature as the place of divine presence by focusing on the immanence of God, rather than the Absolute Otherness: ‘the Universal Soul’, ‘the Soul of each, and God of all’ in ‘The Eolian Harp’, ‘God its Identity: God all in all!’ in *Religious Musings*, ‘All-conscious Presence of the Universe!’ in *The Destiny of Nations*. In this respect, nature is not just a physical natural world, but becomes more than a mere object through its close association with divine presence.

The sense of divine presence empowers nature to be animated and active. In *The Destiny of Nations*, God is pronounced as ‘Nature’s vast ever-acting Energy! [. . .] Impulse of All to All!’, and He becomes ‘Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze’ which ‘animates nature’ in ‘The Eolian Harp’. The idea of active and animated nature is also prevalent in other *Conversation Poems*. In ‘This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison’, the poet imagines that his friends ‘wander on / In gladness all’ in nature, but he describes in a touching way how ‘my gentle-hearted Charles’ may be ‘most glad’ in this beautiful landscape in a sense that he:

[. . . ] hast pined  
And hunger’d after Nature, many a year,  
In the great City pent, winning thy way  
With sad yet patient soul, through evil and pain  
And strange calamity! (ll. 27–32)

Further, the poet shows that ‘my friend struck with deep joy’ experiences a spirit as well as solace in nature:

[he] gaze till all doth seem  
Less gross than bodily; and of such hues  
As veil the Almighty Spirit, when yet he makes  
Spirits perceive his presence. (ll. 40–43)

Intriguingly, the poet provides a more detailed description of this passage in his earlier version of the poem:

[. . .] gaze till all doth seem  
Less gross than bodily, a living thing  
Which acts upon the mind—and with such hues  
As cloath the Almighty Spirit, when he makes  
Spirits perceive his presence. (from *Annual Anthology*)<sup>195</sup>

In this earlier text, all nature is explicitly conceived as ‘a living thing’ that, ‘in the manner of God’, ‘acts upon the [human] mind’ –‘a statement that can be read as compatible with the ‘animated nature’ and ‘intellectual breeze’ in “The Eolian Harp”’.<sup>196</sup> And it is the presence of ‘the Almighty Spirit’ that makes all nature ‘a living thing’. In a similar vein, in ‘The Nightingale’, the moon, emerging from behind a cloud, ‘awakens earth and sky / With one sensation, and those wakeful birds / Have all burst forth in choral minstrelsy, / As if some sudden gale had swept at once / A hundred airy harps!’. (l. 78–82). Like ‘intellectual breeze’, ‘the moon’ appears to animate all nature.

The idea of God as ‘the Universal Soul’ and ‘intellectual breeze’, which is resonant with the thoughts of Priestley and Spinoza, appears to cause the

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<sup>195</sup> Quoted in Jack Stillinger, *Coleridge and Textual Instability: The Multiple Versions of the Major Poems* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 51.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.



problem of pantheism. As the creation is identified with God in the dynamic of energy in Priestley and the idea of substance in Spinoza, Coleridge conveys the impression of the identification of God and the universe in the intimate relationship between God and nature, in which nature becomes animated. Modiano points out that this ‘metaphoric equivalence established between God and nature *via* the unifying “intellectual breeze”’ inevitably made Coleridge liable to ‘the stigma of pantheism’.<sup>197</sup> In fact, Coleridge himself became fully aware of the problem of pantheism in the thoughts of Priestley and Spinoza.

In a letter to John Edwards in 1796, Coleridge argues: ‘how is it that Dr Priestley is not an atheist? – He asserts in three different Places, that God not only does, but is, everything – But if God be every Thing, every Thing is God – : which is all, the Atheists assert.’<sup>198</sup> A year later Coleridge wrote in his note that ‘Unitarian/travelling from Orthodoxy to Atheism’.<sup>199</sup> In addition, Coleridge shows an ambivalent attitude towards Spinoza.<sup>200</sup> He describes Spinozism as a skeleton in a number of places: ‘Spinoza’s is the only true philosophy; but it is the Skeleton of the Truth, to scare & disgust – and an imperfect Skeleton, moreover.’<sup>201</sup> On the one hand, he praises the philosophy of Spinoza. On the

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<sup>197</sup> Modiano, *Coleridge and the Concept of Nature*, p. 58; see also, Barry, ‘Coleridge the Revisionary’, p. 604; Berkeley, *Coleridge and the Crisis of Reason*, pp. 3–4.

<sup>198</sup> *CL I*, p. 193.

<sup>199</sup> *CNI*, 80. Here it is suggested that this entry is dated [? April–May 1797].

<sup>200</sup> In Henry Crabb Robinson’s famous anecdote: ‘Coleridge walked with me to A. Robinson’s for my Spinoza, which I lent him. While standing in the room he kissed Spinoza’s face in the title-page, and said, “This book is a gospel to me.” But in less than a minute he added, “his philosophy is nevertheless false”’, Robinson I: 399–401. Entry for October 3, 1812. Quoted in Berkeley, *Coleridge and the Crisis of Reason*, p. 42.

<sup>201</sup> A marginal note on *The Friend*, See Wordsworth, ‘Some Unpublished Coleridge Marginalia’, p. 369; also, ‘Spinoza’s System is to mine just what a Skeleton is to a Body, fearful because it is only the *Skeleton*’, *CL IV*, p. 775; ‘Spinosism with all it’s Skeleton unfleshed, bare Bones and Eye-holes, as presented by Spinoza himself’, *CL IV*, p. 548; referring to a passage from Schelling’s *Jahrbücher der Medicin*, Coleridge mentions that ‘This is the Basis of the Schellingian Atheism [. . .] or the *cloathed* Skeleton of Spinoza!’, ‘*Jahrbücher der Medicin*’ in *CM III*, pp. 114–

other hand, he rejects it. Richard Berkeley explains this dual attitude to Spinoza in terms of the crisis between reason and faith. He claims that Coleridge's binary view of Spinoza is an attempt at 'establishing a pattern of trying to reconcile Spinoza's reason with his own faith'.<sup>202</sup> Coleridge refers to the clash between reason and faith in *Biographia Literaria*: 'For a very long time indeed I could not reconcile personality with infinity; and my head was with Spinoza, though my whole heart remained with Paul and John.'<sup>203</sup>

Coleridge's fundamental dilemma over the idea of God lies in the tension between the immanence and the transcendence of God. He wants to conceive God as being present in the universe, but at the same time he tries to be loyal to the Christian orthodox idea of God as Absolute Otherness. In fact, this on-going struggle reveals a significant aspect about the continuity and discontinuity of Coleridge's thinking about religion and philosophy. At the beginning of the chapter, it was mentioned that his interest in Unitarianism and Hartley's associationism later shifted to orthodoxy Christianity and natural philosophy, but he never entirely overcame the tensions implicit in this shift. His primary concern to conceive the universe as a whole remained a crucial part of Coleridge's thinking, and it is, for Coleridge, a divine presence that empowers the universe to attain a sense of unity. As a result, he remained reluctant simply to discard the pantheistic ideas of God he had found in Priestley and Spinoza.

#### 4.2. The pantheist controversy in Germany

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131 (pp. 122–123); 'Schelling's thought is an attempt to clothe the skeleton of Spinozism', *OM*, p. 205.

<sup>202</sup> Berkeley, *Coleridge and the Crisis of Reason*, p. 463.

<sup>203</sup> *BL I*, p. 201.

In order to examine the process of how Coleridge tries to overcome the problem of pantheism, it seems that we need to understand the historical and intellectual contexts of pantheism during early German Romanticism with which Coleridge was familiar. As has been acknowledged, there were three crucial intellectual happenings of the 1780s, which contributed considerably to the formation of the so-called German Romantic circle in 1790s; the breakout of the pantheist controversy (*Pantheismusstreit*), the instant enthusiasm for Immanuel Kant's critical philosophy, and the transforming power of the French Revolution.<sup>204</sup> Especially, reference should be made to the pantheist controversy, which is considered as a springboard leading to German Romanticism. Friedrich Jacobi had a conversation with Lessing in 1780 and was convinced that he was a clear Spinozist in his last days: Jacobi: 'You [Lessing] surprised me [. . .] there is nothing that I would have suspected less, than to find a Spinozist or a pantheist in you. And you blurted it out to me so suddenly. In the main I had come to get help from you against Spinoza.'<sup>205</sup> Jacobi sent a private letter to Moses Mendelssohn with a long account of his conversation with Lessing. Disagreeing with Jacobi's thought on Lessing and Spinoza, Mendelssohn published *Morgenstunden*, or *Lectures on the Existence of God* in 1785, in which he tries to justify their philosophy as 'a morally and religiously acceptable purified pantheism (*gelauterter Pantheismus*)' which can be

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<sup>204</sup> See, Julia A. Lamm, 'Romanticism and Pantheism,' in *The Blackwell Companion to the Nineteenth Century Theology*, ed. by David Fergusson (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 165-186 (p. 166).

<sup>205</sup> In 1780, 'my trip [Jacobi's] took place, and on the fifth of July, in the afternoon, I held Lessing in my arms for the first time. On that very same day we talked about many things; and about individuals, moral and immoral, atheist, theist and Christian,' F. Jacobi, *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza* (1785), in *The Main Philosophical Writings And The Novel Allwill: Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi*, trans. by George di Giovanni, pp. 173-251 (p. 185); Jacobi, *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza*, p. 187.

‘consistent with any positive religion’: ‘Lessing envisaged pantheism in the totally refined manner I have scribed to him: in complete harmony with whatever has a bearing on life and happiness; indeed, that he was on his way to link pantheistic concepts even with positive religion.’<sup>206</sup> As an immediate counter to it, Jacobi published *On the Doctrine of Spinoza* which is a collection of his talks with Lessing and his idea on Spinoza. Jacobi conceives Spinozism as ‘atheism’ in the sense that, according to Spinoza’s principles, ‘outside thinking finite things there cannot be yet another particular infinite will and understanding, together with a particular infinite absolute thought’.<sup>207</sup> In other words, for Jacobi, Spinoza’s idea of God is not God at all because He has neither will nor intellect which is infinite and unconditioned, but He is only an immanent God.

Interestingly, this pantheist controversy ‘proved an epoch-marking event, for it brought into the open the underground current of Spinozist sympathy, where it rapidly revealed itself as having swollen to a Romantic tide’.<sup>208</sup> A number of [early] Romantics responded enthusiastically to the controversy, Herder, Schleiermacher, Schlegel, Novalis, Schelling. One of the reasons they were fascinated with it is their aim to find the unity of the universe, for example, in terms of the relationship between the world and God, the finite and the infinite, over and against dualism. Jacobi observes that ‘whenever Lessing wanted to represent a personal Divinity, he thought of it as the soul of the All;

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<sup>206</sup> McFarland, *Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition*, p. 81; Moses Mendelssohn, *Morgenstunden*, in *The Spinoza Conversations between Lessing and Jacobi: Text with Excerpts from the Ensuing Controversy*, tran. by G. Vallee, J. B. Lawson and C. G. Chapple, pp. 64–77 (p. 77).

<sup>207</sup> Jacobi, *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza*, p. 233; *Ibid.*, pp. 221–2.

<sup>208</sup> McFarland, *Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition*, p. 82.

and he thought the Whole after the analogy of an organic body'.<sup>209</sup> Lessing himself says to Jacobi, 'the orthodox concepts of the Divinity are no longer for me; I cannot stomach them. *Hen kai pan!* I know of nothing else [. . .] I have come to talk to you about my *hen kai pan*.'<sup>210</sup> This phrase means 'one and all' which, according to Lessing, was the inscription on a temple of the ancients.<sup>211</sup> Likewise, the Romantics were definitely willing to discover their own *hen kai pan*. Although the Romantics attempted to formulate the notion of the unity by linking the finite with the infinite through Spinozism, they were caught in a thorny dilemma between the atheism – the pantheism of Spinozism – and the Absolute Otherness of orthodox Christianity. If they follow the idea of substance in Spinoza, they can attain the wholeness of the universe but cannot avoid the criticism of pantheism and atheism. By contrast, orthodox Christianity is often subject to the dualism between the finite and the infinite. In order to find a way of holding together both the finite and the infinite without obscuring the boundary between them, they developed a natural philosophy in which they were able to attain the unity but at the same time to maintain the distinction. Now I shall contextualise the dynamic in terms of the relationship between God and the world in German Romanticism.

#### 4.3. Kant's transcendental idealism

The rise of the natural philosophy which had a considerable impact on Coleridge in his later period is related closely to the development of

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<sup>209</sup> Jacobi, *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza*, 196.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 187.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 187, 594.

transcendentalist thought in Germany that started with the works of Immanuel Kant.<sup>212</sup> There is no need to underline the significance of Kant's philosophy in the German Romantics in that the latter spurred on by and grew out of the former.<sup>213</sup> Mentioning the visionary idealism of Berkeley and the skeptical idealism of Descartes, Kant describes his idea of idealism as 'transcendental idealism'.<sup>214</sup> For the former two tendencies in idealism, the reality of external objects is doubted or regarded as a merely imaginary entity. Kant, however, opens up the possibility of external reality through the supposition of outer experience: 'All cognition of things merely from pure understanding or pure reason is nothing but sheer illusion, and only in experience is there truth.'<sup>215</sup> For him, the idea of experience is not purely empirical, but is associated with the idea of the transcendental. He 'calls all cognition transcendental that is occupied not so much with objects but with our manner of cognition of objects insofar as this is to be possible *a priori*'.<sup>216</sup> The transcendental 'would concern the origin of our cognitions of objects insofar as that cannot be ascribed to the objects'.<sup>217</sup> Thus the transcendental is not concerned with objects themselves, but with how to know them. When Kant refers to the possibility of truth 'only in

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<sup>212</sup> Raimonda Modiano, *Coleridge and the Concept of Nature* (London: Macmillan, 1985), p. 151.

<sup>213</sup> Vinod Lakshmipathy, 'Kant and the Turn to Romanticism', *KRITIKE*, 3 (2009), 90–102 (p. 90).

<sup>214</sup> 'Idealism', in *A Kant Dictionary*, ed. by Howard Caygill, Blackwell Reference Online [http://www.blackwellreference.com/subscriber/tocnode?id=g9780631175353\\_chunk\\_g978063117535313\\_ss1-4](http://www.blackwellreference.com/subscriber/tocnode?id=g9780631175353_chunk_g978063117535313_ss1-4) [accessed 8 May 2011].

<sup>215</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Theoretical Philosophy After 1781*, ed. by Henry Allison and Peter Heath, trans. by Gary Hatfield (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), IV:374 (p. 162).

<sup>216</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. and trans. by Paul Guyer and Allen Wood (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), A 12 (p. 133). In the first edition, it says, 'all cognition transcendental that is occupied not so much with objects but rather with our *a priori* concepts of objects in general.'

<sup>217</sup> Kant, *CPR*, A 56 (p. 196). Here Kant argues that 'not every a priori cognition must be called transcendental, but only that by means of which we cognize that and how certain representations (intuitions or concepts) are applied entirely a priori, or are possible (i.e., the possibility of cognition or its use a priori)'.

experience', the notion of experience is conditioned by the idea of the transcendental.

In this respect, Kant's philosophy can be seen basically as 'an effort to resolve the conflict between dogmatism (especially, Leibnizian) and skepticism (especially, Humean)'.<sup>218</sup> While he argues against the dictatorship of dogmatism that human reason should be 'set to limits' owing to the possibility of truth only in experience, he argues against the skepticism of empiricism that we have '*a priori* knowledge independent of all experience, a kind of knowledge which makes all our experience possible'.<sup>219</sup> Although Kant's transcendental idealism appears to overcome the limitations of empirical skepticism and idealistic dogmatism, it is still subject to dualism. In the First *Critique*, Kant makes a distinction between phenomena and noumena: 'Appearances, to the extent that as objects they are thought in accordance with the unity of categories, are called *phaenomena*. If, however, I suppose there are to be things that are merely objects of understanding and that, nevertheless, can be given to an intuition, although not to sensible intuition [. . .] such things would be called *noumena*'.<sup>220</sup> In order to allow human beings to have freedom in terms of morality, he points out another difference between them that 'there is no freedom; everything in the world takes place solely in accordance with the [mechanical] laws of nature [cause and effect]', but there is in 'man a power of self-determination, independently of any coercion through sensuous impulses'. Kant explains that 'every effect in the world must arise either from nature or

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<sup>218</sup> Lakshmiopathy, 'Kant and the Turn to Romanticism', p. 90.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid., p. 90.

<sup>220</sup> Kant, *CPR*, A249 (p. 347); quoted by Lakshmiopathy, 'Kant and the Turn to Romanticism', p. 91.

freedom, or whether instead both, each in a different relation, might be able to take place simultaneously in one and the same occurrence'.<sup>221</sup> He tries to bridge the gap between *noumena* and *phenomena* by conceiving human actions as being both spontaneous and subject to the mechanical laws of the natural world of phenomena, but, as Lakshmipathy points out, Kant is 'unclear about how exactly the interaction between them is possible'.<sup>222</sup> As a result, the dualism still remains.

In addition, Kant's philosophy is prone to another dualism between the 'regulative' and the 'constitutive uses of pure reason'. In fact, Kant formulates a philosophy of science that repudiates the mechanical understanding of nature but conceives it as dynamic. In his *Physical Monadology* and *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Kant argues that both attractive and repulsive forces are required for natural phenomena.<sup>223</sup> For example, he explains how the solar system was formed by means of the interaction of attractive and repulsive forces in *Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens*.<sup>224</sup> Nature is

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<sup>221</sup> Kant, *CPR*, A 536/B564 (p. 534); quoted by Lakshmipathy, 'Kant and the Turn to Romanticism', p. 92.

<sup>222</sup> Lakshmipathy, 'Kant and the Turn to Romanticism', p. 92.

<sup>223</sup> Immanuel Kant, 'The employment in natural philosophy of metaphysics combined with geometry, of which sample I contains the physical monadology (1756)', in *Theoretical Philosophy 1755-1770*, ed. and trans. by David Walford, in collaboration with Ralf Meerbote (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 47-66 (see, pp. 62-63); *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, ed. by Paul Guyer, trans. By Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000). 'hence it [imagination] is precisely as attractive as it was repulsive for mere sensibility', 5:258 (Part I, Sect. 27, p. 142); 'in analogy with the law of the equality of effect and counter-effect in the mutual attraction and repulsion of bodies', 5:465 (Part II, Sect. 90, p. 329); see also, 'Metaphysical Foundations of Dynamics', in *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, trans. and ed. by Michael Friedman (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 33-74. Here Kant argues that 'Matter is the movable insofar as it fills a space', and that it consists of two forces, 'attractive force' and 'repulsive force'. The former is 'that moving force by which a matter can be the cause of the approach of others to it', and the latter is 'that by which a matter can be the cause of others removing themselves from it', see pp. 33, 35.

<sup>224</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens*, trans. by Stanley L. Jaki (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1981). Kant argues that 'nature has still other forces in



defined as not a ‘motive power’ but a ‘formative power’ which is associated with ‘self-propagating formative power’ and produces a product ‘in which everything is an end and reciprocally a means as well’.<sup>225</sup> Although Kant describes nature as a dynamic power, it is regarded as just ‘the mathematical whole of all appearances and the totality of their synthesis’.<sup>226</sup> He differentiates the regulative principle from the constitutive principle: the former is ‘a principle of the greatest possible continuation and the extension of experience, in accordance with which no empirical boundary would hold as an absolute boundary’, but only the latter can ‘anticipate what is given in itself in the object prior to any regress’.<sup>227</sup> And, for him, ‘a natural end is no constitutive concept of understanding or of reason, but it can still be a regulative concept for the reflecting power of judgment, for guiding research into objects of this kind.’<sup>228</sup> Accordingly, ‘all appearances, are ‘not things, but rather nothing but representations, and they cannot exist at all outside our mind.’<sup>229</sup> In addition, he distinguishes matter from substance, and identifies the former with appearance. Matter as ‘a mere form or a certain mode of representation of an unknown object’ ‘seem to cut themselves loose from the soul, as it were, and hover outside it’.<sup>230</sup> Thus matter is ‘*substantia phaenomenon*’ (phenomenal substance),

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store which especially evidence themselves when matter is diluted into fine particles, whereby they repulse one another and through their conflict with [the force of] attraction produce that motion which is, so to speak, an enduring life of nature. Through this repulsive force, which reveals itself in the elasticity of vapors in the strongly smelling bodies and in the expansion of all spirituous matter and which is an indisputable phenomenon of nature, the elements sinking toward their points of attraction become directed sidewise in all sorts of ways and the perpendicular fall issues in circular motions which surround the center of sinking, p. 115.

<sup>225</sup> *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, 5:374, 5:376 (Part II, Sect. 65–66., pp. 246–247).

<sup>226</sup> Kant, *CPR*, B 446 (p. 465–466).

<sup>227</sup> Kant, *CPR*, A509/B537 (p. 520).

<sup>228</sup> Kant, *Critique of the Power Judgment*, 5:375 (Part II, Sect. 65, p. 247).

<sup>229</sup> Kant, *CPR*, A 492 (p. 511).

<sup>230</sup> Kant, *CPR*, A 385 (p. 434).

not a thing in itself.<sup>231</sup>

Kant's transcendental idealism attempted to overcome the limitations of empiricism and dogmatism by bringing about a unity between external reality and the subject, but it could not solve the dualism. Unlike the empiricists, Kant develops the idea of *a priori*, and at the same time, unlike the idealists, he acknowledges the reality of external objects to the extent that nature has a dynamical power. Yet, in his transcendental idealism, the knowledge is based on the subject of the 'I' on the grounds that 'objects of experience are never given in themselves, but only in experience, and they do not exist at all outside it'.<sup>232</sup> As a result, there is an irreducible dualism between *phenomena* and *noumena*.

#### 4.4. Schelling's idea of nature as self-subsistence

Criticising this lack of spirit in nature, Schelling develops Kant's notion of nature as a formative power into a state of self-subsistence by 'transferring the only possible positive conception of per-se-ity to things'.<sup>233</sup> For Schelling, nature is not just an object, but it has its own absolute origin. He argues that 'as the object [*qua* 'conditioned condition'] is never absolute/unconditioned (*unbedingt*) then something per se non-objective must be posited in nature; this absolutely non-objective postulate is precisely the original productivity of nature'.<sup>234</sup> The idea of nature is not just a sum of outer products, but also an absolute producing subject. If Kant relates the transcendental, *things in*

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<sup>231</sup> Kant, *CPR*, A 277 (p. 375).

<sup>232</sup> Kant, *CPR*, B 521 (p. 512).

<sup>233</sup> Schelling, *Of Human Freedom*, trans. by James Gutmann (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Company, 1936), p. 25; quoted by Lakshmipathy, 'Kant and the Turn to Romanticism', p. 95.

<sup>234</sup> Schelling, *SW I/3*, p. 284; Andrew Bowie, 'Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling', in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. by Edward N. Zalta <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2010/entries/schelling/>> [accessed 21 May 2011].

*themselves*, with the subject I, Schelling associates nature with the conscious being. Nature thus ‘carries within itself the ground of its own existence’.<sup>235</sup> This way of understanding nature not only re-interprets the essence of nature but also marks an important turning point in the relationship between the world and God. Whereas Kant is unclear about the interaction between *phenomena* and *noumena*, Schelling opens up the possibility of a unity between nature and God by conceiving nature as self-subsistence.

But the idea that nature has the ground of its own existence is similar to Spinoza’s notion of substance which is subject to pantheism. Being aware of the issue of pantheism with regard to the ground of nature, Schelling tries to differentiate nature from the Absolute.<sup>236</sup> He explains how God is different from nature: ‘we understand by nature the absolute identity, insofar as it is to be contemplated not as existing, but as the ground of its own being. Here the existing absolute identity is to be distinguished from the not-existing, which is merely the ground of its existence, and only the latter is called nature [. . .] the existing absolute identity (God understood immanently; God as subject) must be set above nature, the not-existing absolute identity.’<sup>237</sup> Schelling regards God as the existing absolute identity, and nature as the not-existing absolute identity. Nature can be identified with God in terms of the ground of its own being, but it needs to be differentiated from God in that it is not fully realised yet like God himself.

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<sup>235</sup> Schelling, SW II, 38–41; see, Modiano, *Coleridge and the Concept of Nature*, pp. 161–162.

<sup>236</sup> Modiano, *Coleridge and the Concept of Nature*, p. 167; Richard Berkeley, *Coleridge and the Crisis of Reason* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2007), pp. 118–142.

<sup>237</sup> Schelling, SW VIII 25; Berkeley, *Coleridge and the Crisis of Reason*, p. 120.

#### 4.5. The Trinitarian notion of God in Coleridge

So far, we have tried to contextualise the issue of pantheism in German Romanticism by discussing the pantheism controversy, the dualism of Kant, and the philosophy of Schelling. The focal point of the context was the idea of nature and its relationship with God in the attempt to unify the whole universe. In *Coleridge and Kantian Ideas in England, 1796-1817*, Monika Class pointed out that Coleridge was searching for ‘an Absolute Unity’ through ‘the possibility of metaphysics’ but his ‘thorough study of Kant appears to have entailed an element of disappointment’.<sup>238</sup> First, Coleridge, like Schelling, criticises Kant for the dualism of matter and spirit.<sup>239</sup> He tries to show that matter is not merely an object, but is deeply related to spirit. We have seen that, for Kant, matter consists of two distinct powers, ‘attraction’ and ‘repulsion’, and Coleridge mentions that Kant regards matter as merely these two powers.<sup>240</sup> For Coleridge, however, the two powers are just the properties of matter: ‘Matter [is] assumed as a datum, the subject of the powers / tho’ two of these powers are elsewhere taken as constituting matter!’<sup>241</sup> Further, he disagrees with the Kantian understanding of nature as regulative but not constitutive.<sup>242</sup> According to Aristotle and Kant, Ideas are regulative only, but Coleridge maintains that they are ‘CONSTITUTIVE, and one with the power and Life of Nature’.<sup>243</sup> For him, ‘AN IDEA is an educt of the Imagination actuated by the

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<sup>238</sup> Monika Class, *Coleridge and Kantian Ideas in England, 1796-1817: Coleridge’s Response to German Philosophy* (London; New York: Bloomsbury, 2012), pp. 172-174.

<sup>239</sup> Modiano, *Coleridge and the Concept of Nature*, p. 154; Marginal note to Kant, *Metaphysische Angangsrinde der Naturwissenschaft*, p. 80-81; *CN IV*, p. 71.

<sup>240</sup> Modiano, *Coleridge and the Concept of Nature*, p. 156; fly-leaf note referring to pp. 45-6.

<sup>241</sup> Modiano, *Coleridge and the Concept of Nature*, p. 156; marginal note, pp. 103-4.

<sup>242</sup> See, Vigus, *Platonic Coleridge*, p. 47.

<sup>243</sup> *SM* (Appendix E), pp. 113-114.

pure Reason, to which there neither is or can be an adequate correspondent in the world of the senses.<sup>244</sup> The implication is that the notion of ‘An Idea’ is transcendental in terms of Kantian terms but this ‘Idea’ is not separated from nature, but is one with it. Like German Romantics, Coleridge tries to empower nature to be more than a mere object.

Secondly, whereas Coleridge agrees with Schelling’s rejection of the dualism, he disagrees with his concept of nature because of pantheism. In a letter he argues that:

Schelling is the Head and Founder of a philosophic Sect, entitled Natur-philosophen, or Philosophers of Nature. He is beyond doubt a Man of Genius, and by the revival and more extensive application of the Law of Polarity (i.e. that every Power manifests itself by opposite Forces) [. . .] his System is extremely plausible and alluring at a first acquaintance. And as far as his attack on the mechanic and corpuscular Philosophy extends, his works possess a permanent value. But as a System [. . .] it is reduced at last to a mere Pantheism.<sup>245</sup>

This passage shows that Coleridge was influenced by Schelling in terms of natural philosophy and at the same time how he criticises his notion of nature as pantheistic. Although Schelling tries to avoid pantheism by distinguishing nature from the Absolute, nature as a self-subsistent reality, for Coleridge, is still equivalent to the pantheistic equation of God with nature.<sup>246</sup> If, Coleridge argues, ‘God as God be the one necessary Existence, if he be *Ens semper perfectum*, and all-sufficient, the material World cannot be necessary – and if it

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<sup>244</sup> Ibid., 113–114.

<sup>245</sup> *CL IV*, p. 883?; Berkeley, *Coleridge and the Crisis of Reason*, p. 111.

<sup>246</sup> See Modiano, *Coleridge and the Concept of Nature*, p. 167.

be, then God as God is not self-sufficing – i.e. he is not GOD, but a part of the universe, nay, a product of the same.’<sup>247</sup> If nature is conceived as self-subsistent in itself, God cannot be ‘the one necessary Existence’. Accordingly, Schelling’s idea of nature leads to pantheism and atheism. Coleridge always felt the need for much clearer distinctions between the natural world and the Absolute, but Schelling violates the boundary between them.

Coleridge’s solution to the tension between the immanence and the transcendence of God was to turn eventually to the Trinitarian notion of God. In his philosophical lectures he states that:

First of all the highest and best of men felt by an impulse from their reason and necessity to seek an unity, and those who felt wisely like Plato and Socrates, feeling the difficulties of this, looked forward to that Being of whom this necessity and their reason was a presentiment to instruct them.<sup>248</sup>

While he suggests that the power of reason encourages us to look for unity, it is through divine revelation that we can attain the goal. Coleridge tries to reconcile the clash between reason and faith by arguing that unity is based on faith. He argues continually that ‘without personality there can be no God for Religion: & that the Xtn Trinity is the only possible Medium’.<sup>249</sup> What the

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<sup>247</sup> *CL IV*, pp. 874–875.

<sup>248</sup> *Lectures 1818–1819 On the History of Philosophy I*, ed. by J. R. de J. Jackson, p. 133; see, Berkeley, ‘The Providential Wreck: Coleridge and Spinoza’s Metaphysic’, *European Romantic Review*, 17 (2006), 457–475 (p. 465).

<sup>249</sup> A note to Johann Albert Heinrich Reimarus’s *Über die Gründe der menschlichen Erkenntniss und der natürlichen Religion* in *CM IV*, pp. 215–231 (p. 226); ‘it is the *personal, living, self-conscious* God, which it is so difficult, except by faith of the Trinity, to combine with an infinite being infinitely and irresistibly causative’, a note to Richard Baxter’s *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, in *CM I*, pp. 240–361 (p. 242); Coleridge also holds that ‘the Trinity is the only form in which an idea of God is possible, unless indeed it be a Spinozistic or World-God’, in *Notes on English*

Trinitarian idea of God enables him to do is to make compatible both the transcendence of God and the immanence of God. In terms of the Trinity, God as ‘the Universal Soul’ is present in the whole universe, and at the same time He as the transcendental Being remains the Absolute Other.

It is through the relational dynamic of the Trinity that Coleridge overcame the problem of pantheism. In theology, one of the main tasks for the understanding of the Trinity is to maintain both the unity of God as one divine subject and the dynamic mutuality of the Triune God. To understand the Trinity as a relational dynamic has great significance in a sense that it can overcome the dangers of tritheism and modalism. Interestingly, Coleridge is one of the pioneering thinkers who introduced the relational notion of the Trinity to England, but we often overlook this fact. We are, according to Stephen Ford, ‘indebted to Coleridge for contributing to English-speaking theology the technical Trinitarian term “interpenetration”, the equivalent of “perichoresis”’.<sup>250</sup> He used the term ‘perichoresis’ twice: ‘it is an eternal proceeding from the Father to the Son and from the Son to the Father, but such procession being in its nature circular [. . .] the Greek Fathers have entitled the ‘perichoresis or co-eternal intercirculation of Deity’; ‘in the synthesis of these, in the Life, the Love, the Community, the Perichoresis, or Inter(cir)culation – and that there is one only God.’<sup>251</sup> As Coleridge mentioned, this term, perichoresis, is traced back to the Cappadocians, the Eastern tradition, and

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*Divines*, 2 vols., ed by Derwent Coleridge (Lond., 1853), I, p. 12; Berkeley, ‘The Providential Wreck’, pp. 461, 464–465.

<sup>250</sup> Stephen H. Ford, ‘Perichoresis and Interpenetration: Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s Trinitarian Conception of Unity’, *Theology: a journal of historic Christianity*, 89 (1986), 20–24 (p. 20).

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21; *CL VI*, p. 1738.

Richard of St Victor.

The idea of the Trinity as perichoresis represents not the unity of a substance, but that of a community or communion in which there are three subjects, Father, Son and Spirit. Perichoresis refers to the mutual dwelling of the divine persons in which the subjects are not separate or isolated individualities, but maintain an interpersonal relationship. As Grabowsky puts it, there are two different kinds of understanding of person in the past, ‘person understood as substance and person being seen as constituted by relation’.<sup>252</sup> This relationality is not in opposition to personal identity but is constitutive of what being a person means. Thus ‘by virtue of their eternal love, the divine persons exist so intimately with one another, for one another and in one another that they constitute themselves in their unique, incomparable and complete unity.’<sup>253</sup> Likewise, Coleridge explains this cyclical movement like this: ‘the Holy Spirit proceedeth from the Father to the Son’, and ‘is returned from the Son to the Father’ and ‘in this circulation constitutes the eternal unity in the eternal alterity and distinction– the life of Deity in actu purissima’.<sup>254</sup> As a result, the Trinity is construed as a communion of three divine subjects who interact with one another through knowledge and love of one another.

Further, this interrelationship of the Trinity tends to include the world by opening up their relations. The dynamic of the Trinity is involved in creation in the sense that ‘the Spirit–Word polarity is reflected in all the powers, forces,

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<sup>252</sup> John S. Grabowski, ‘Person, Substance and Relation’, *Communio*, 22 (1995), 139–163 (p. 140).

<sup>253</sup> Stanley J. Grenz, *The Social God and the Relational Self* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), p. 44.

<sup>254</sup> *OM*, p. 209; ‘in actu purissima’ (‘in the most pure act’); James Boulger, *Coleridge as Religious Thinker*, p. 141.



and products of the natural world'.<sup>255</sup> Coleridge describes 'the Father as Ipseity, the Son as Alterity, and the Spirit as Community', and the Word (Alterity) is associated with the distinction and the Spirit (Community) with the unity in relation to creation.<sup>256</sup> As Coleridge conceives the life of nature as the principle of polarity, the process of creation is that of the polarity of the Word and the Spirit.<sup>257</sup> 'The act of creation', as Perkins put it, 'is accomplished through a polarization which transforms indistinction into unity (the peculiar quality of the Spirit of Love and Community); and multeity into individuality (the peculiar quality of the "Word", who is distinction, "alterity")'.<sup>258</sup> As a result, for Coleridge, the act of creation is fundamentally based upon the Trinitarian idea of God.

When Coleridge first came up with the notion of the one life, perhaps he did not fully understand it. At this initial stage he might not have been aware of a relational notion of the Trinity, but I would argue that Coleridge worked towards this idea of a relational Trinity in his attempts to overcome the dualism of matter and spirit and avoid the dangers of pantheism. Just as the relational idea of the Trinity represents 'distinction-in-unity', so the idea of the one life could point towards a relational idea of unity. When 'one intellectual breeze' makes nature 'animated', it does not mean that nature becomes God but that

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<sup>255</sup> Perkins, *Coleridge's Philosophy*, p. 126.

<sup>256</sup> *Table Talk II*, ed. by Carl Woodring (Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 65 ('Bull and Waterland. – The Trinity, 8 July 1827'); *OM*, p. cxlii; see also, *CN IV* 5256; *OM*, p. cxxiii.

<sup>257</sup> Coleridge argues that 'Hence therefore we have a three fold Polarity—First that of the Creaturely and the divine Will: second, the Indistinction and the Multeity in the creature itself, and which as actualized by the Spirit and the Word [? Of] constitute it existentially, i.e. are both it and its properties; thirdly, the result of the distinction of the divine Influences in the creature, and partaking therefore of its essential (self-) contrariancy, in the opposite acts by which resisting *this* it allies itself with *that*, *OM*, p. 392.

<sup>258</sup> Perkins, *Coleridge's Philosophy*, pp. 122–3.

nature becomes related to God through the Spirit of love, community and unity. And all things become one in diversity through this relational dynamic. The notion of the relational Trinity finally enabled the poet to hold together his early interest in the immanence and his later concern about the transcendence. In this respect, Coleridge's thinking is less like pantheism but more like Moltmann's notion of the cosmic spirit as panentheism.

It has been shown that Coleridge tries to locate the unity of the universe through a monistic idea and love of God in his early years, and the thoughts of polarity and evolution in his later years. Coleridge's notion of the unity expresses two key ecotheological tendencies, the independent sacred value of nature, and the inter-relatedness between humanity, nature, and God. First, the presence of God enables the poet to articulate the relational aspect between humanity and nature, and the relationship develops further through God's love, which permeates it. The evolutionary process of individuation also formulates the inter-relatedness, and, at the same time, that inter-relatedness is characterised by a mutual and reciprocal relationship; it is fundamentally associated with the sense of sacrament and the religious aspects of imagination and symbol. Secondly, the on-going tension between the mind and nature in terms of the passivity and activity of the mind, and nature as an object of natural philosophy, show that, for Coleridge, nature matters as materiality. In addition, this nature is perceived as being sacred as God is present in it as a power. In these respects, it can be argued that the works of Coleridge relate to two ecotheological aspects.

## Chapter 3

### Wordsworth's yearning for the sense of dwelling

This chapter aims to argue that we can see Wordsworth working towards two ideas that have been very important in ecotheological writing: the interrelatedness of the universe and the independent sacred value of nature. Just as the core issue of ecotheology is nature's relationship with humanity and God, Wordsworth attempts ceaselessly to make sense of human life and the world by scrutinising and contemplating the relationship between them. With respect to his grand project of *The Recluse* Wordsworth announced to James Tobin on 6 March 1798: 'My object is to give pictures of Nature, Man, and Society. Indeed I know not any thing which will not come within the scope of my plan.'<sup>1</sup> Two letters of 1804 underline the seriousness of his commitment: in a letter to Sir George Beaumont in December, he mentioned that *The Recluse* 'is the chief object which my thoughts have been fixed these many years', and, in a letter to Thomas De Quincey in March, he said, 'to this work I mean to devote the Prime of my life and the chief force of my mind.'<sup>2</sup> Intriguingly, Wordsworth pronounces the relationship between 'Nature, Man, and Society' as 'one Household under God' in the 'Prospectus to *The Recluse*', *Home at Grasmere*, which is the First Book in the First Part of *The Recluse*.<sup>3</sup> Particular attention should be paid to this phrase, which I take as a crucial element in understanding

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<sup>1</sup> *WL I*, p. 212.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 518, 454.

<sup>3</sup> *HG*, p. ix.

Wordsworth's idea of dwelling from the perspective of religion.

If Coleridge was yearning to discover the unity of the universe throughout his life, Wordsworth was longing to discover an ideal place for dwelling. In other words, one of the essential thoughts with which Wordsworth is concerned throughout his poetry is the idea of dwelling. It appears as early as *The Vale of Esthwaite* (1787), his first sustained original poem.<sup>4</sup> His way of understanding the notion has an ecotheological dimension. It is concerned with ways of being human on earth in a relational dynamic between humanity, nature, and God, and it places an emphasis upon nature's intrinsic independent value in terms of its sacredness and materiality. I shall examine how the notion of dwelling in Wordsworth relates to an ecotheological point of view.

## 1. The idea of Dwelling

### 1.1. Dwelling and the natural environment

Hubbell points out that Wordsworth's epistemology of dwelling has been explored in various ways over the last few decades, but answering the question of what is dwelling for Wordsworth remains challenging.<sup>5</sup> A difficulty may arise from the complexity of the notion of 'dwelling' itself and his changing attitude towards it. As the poet continues to develop the idea of dwelling, various elements -- death, memory, imagination, transcendence -- begin to emerge in the formulation of the idea. One of the key driving forces in his continuous

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<sup>4</sup> *VE* was written at the age of seventeen, and prior to his departure for Cambridge. It was unpublished but Wordsworth published an 'Extract' of lines 498–513 of *VE* in 1815. See, Hartman, *Wordsworth's Poetry, 1787–1814*, rev. ed. (New Have: Yale University Press, 1971), p. 76.

<sup>5</sup> J. Andrew Hubbell, 'A Question of Nature: Byron and Wordsworth', *The Wordsworth Circle* 41 (2010), 14–18 (p. 17).

exploration of the issue is his own experience of death and loss, which reminds him of the vulnerability and mortality of humans. He appears to be obsessed with finding a safe dwelling place immune to the transience and mortality of human life. In the middle of his searching for such a place, his idea of dwelling becomes more complicated in that the dynamics of memory, poetic imagination, and transcendence develop a complex relationship with a physical geography. The idea of dwelling is based on multiple layers of meaning: the natural environment, the psychological and emotional aspects of life, and the idea of transcendence. In other words, for Wordsworth, dwelling is not just about a place to live, but a way of being in the world through a relational dynamic between humanity, nature, and God.

Focusing on the importance of geography and locality, the relationship between culture and nature, and organic natural process, Bate, McKusick and Kroeber refer to the significance of dwelling in the natural environment for Wordsworth. They argue that Wordsworth associated the sense of dwelling with the natural environment, and they articulate Wordsworth's sense of what he considers the appropriate and positive relationship between humanity and nature. The thought that 'human identity is somehow tied to location' has 'both a long ancestry over the centuries and a wide currency across cultures', but Bate tries to establish Wordsworth as 'the founding father for a thinking of poetry in relation to place, to our dwelling on the earth' by claiming that his 'poetry of place began to be inspired by place itself', rather than by an 'occasion' of 'a patron's request, or a historical event or association'.<sup>6</sup> In

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<sup>6</sup> J. E. Malpas, *Place and Experience: A Philosophical Topography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 2.

particular, Bate coins the term *ecopoetics*, which asks ‘in what respects a poem may be a making (Greek *poiesis*) of the dwelling place – the prefix eco– is derived from the Greek *oikos*, the home or place of dwelling’, and we can regard the poetry of Wordsworth as an imaginary natural environment in which we can ‘accommodate ourselves to a mode of dwelling’.<sup>7</sup> The notion of *ecopoetics* in Wordsworth reflects a close relationship between human dwelling and the natural environment.

For example, at the beginning of *Michael: A Pastoral Poem*, Wordsworth suggests that Michael, a shepherd, is interrelated with his natural surroundings in terms of his way of dwelling. He dwells ‘Upon the forest-side in Grasmere vale’ and nature becomes an essential part of his life:

Fields, where with cheerful spirits he had breathed  
The common air, the hills which he so oft  
Had climbed with vigorous steps, which had impressed  
So many incidents upon his mind  
Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear,  
Which like a book preserved the memory  
Of the dumb animals whom he had saved (ll. 65–71)

The expressions ‘cheerful spirits’, ‘his mind’, and ‘the memory’, indicate that nature is associated not only with Michael’s physical body, but also with his inner self. But he does not seem to recognise his close relationship with nature in the sense that he ‘errs grossly’ because he ‘should suppose / That the green valleys, and the streams and rocks, / Were things indifferent to the shepherd’s

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Jonathan Bate, *The Song of the Earth* (London: Picador, 2001), p. 205.

<sup>7</sup> Bate, *The Song of the Earth*, pp. 64, 75.

thoughts' (ll. 62-4). Although Michael is not aware of such an intimate relationship with his surroundings, Wordsworth refers to the effect the habitat has on the shepherd to the extent that 'these fields, these hills, / were his living being even more / Than his own blood' (ll. 74-6). Seamus Heaney holds that 'the Westmorland mountains were so much more than a picturesque backdrop for his shepherd's existence' and they were 'rather companionable and influential', flowing in 'to Michael's psychic life'. These surroundings were thus 'not inanimate stone but active nature, humanized and humanizing'.<sup>8</sup> This mutual relationship between Michael and the natural environment places nature at the centre of his way of dwelling.

## 1.2. Dwelling and the Divinity

Emphasising the interdependent relationship of humanity and nature in the idea of dwelling, we face a tension between different perspectives on the natural world, for instance, between materialist and idealist, or theistic points of view. Each of the above-mentioned critics implies spiritual dimensions in the notion of nature. Bate mentions that Wordsworth sees 'types and symbols of eternity in the landscape of the Alps'.<sup>9</sup> McKusick shows how Wordsworth formulates the idea of dwelling by vacillating between 'an abyss of idealism' and 'the ineluctable presence of concrete material objects'.<sup>10</sup> For Kroeber, an ecological view is not religious but naturalistic, and the Romantics as proto-ecological poets subscribe to 'a fundamentally materialistic worldview' and to 'a

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<sup>8</sup> Seamus Heaney, *Preoccupations: Selected Prose 1968-1978* (London: Faber and Faber, 1984), p. 145.

<sup>9</sup> Bate, *Romantic Ecology*, p. 20.

<sup>10</sup> James C. McKusick, *Green Writing: Romanticism and Ecology* (London: Macmillan, 2000), p. 56.

biologically materialistic understanding of the human mind'.<sup>11</sup> He, however, suggests that 'the ecological tendencies of romantic poets were more complex than mere substitutes for religious experiences' and 'religiosity' needs not to be excluded from 'ecological conceptions of natural reality'.<sup>12</sup> For instance, *Home at Grasmere*, Wordsworth's major nature poem, reveals the 'physical' and 'materialistic' notion of nature, but suggests this 'need not be driven by derogations of spirit'.<sup>13</sup>

None of these critics, however, pay serious attention to the relationship between dwelling and the presence of God in Wordsworth. Generally speaking, the religious dimension of Wordsworth's poetry has been often neglected or regarded only in terms of 'the secularization of inherited theological ideas and ways of thinking'.<sup>14</sup> In addition, a materialistic and naturalistic perspective tends to signify a disbelief in the creative power of a Deity or a belief in the power of natural process to transform all forms of life, dismissing any possibility of a transcendent dimension. But I will suggest that, if we are to grasp the full meaning of dwelling in Wordsworth, we cannot ignore the role of the divinity in his poetic mind.

One of the complexities in Wordsworth's poetry is that his idea of dwelling continues to change due to the painful experiences of death and loss. Maintaining that 'Wordsworth's entire career was shaped by his need to find a dwelling place', John Kerrigan succinctly divides the development of Wordsworth's search for home into three periods: an early period in which the

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<sup>11</sup> Kroeber, *Ecological Literary Criticism*, pp. 8-9, 53 (also see, footnote).

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>14</sup> Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism*, p. 12.



poet 'sought security in rural granges and rose-ringed cottages'; a second phase, based on the awareness of the 'insecurity and vulnerability of stone-built dwellings', is concerned with the tomb which Wordsworth thought 'an immutable place to dwell'; finally, in a third phase, Wordsworth 'committed himself to thoughts of heavenly dwelling', and 'cottages and tombs are replaced by chapels and churches'.<sup>15</sup>

Each phase is characterised not only by a relational dynamic between humanity and the natural environment, but also by the power of the divinity, whose aspects are different in each phase. If Wordsworth focuses upon the earthly dwelling with the immanence of God in a peaceful and harmonious relationship between humanity and nature in his early years, he gradually looks at the heavenly dwelling with the transcendence of God later. At the same time, the dynamics of memory and the poetic imagination are associated with this relational aspect in formulating the notion of dwelling. Edward Soja conceives 'the interpretation of human spatial organization as a social product' in the sense that the land around us is 'a reflection of our culture and society'.<sup>16</sup> I would like to add a religious dimension to Soja's social one. For Wordsworth, the meaning of dwelling place is not only a physical geography, but a reflection of his understanding of the relationship between humanity, nature, and God, which develops through the dynamics of memory, a poetic imagination, and his experience of death.

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<sup>15</sup> John Kerrigan, 'Wordsworth and the Sonnet: Building, Dwelling, Thinking', *Essays in Criticism*, 35 (1985), 45-75 (pp. 50-51).

<sup>16</sup> Edward W. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London: Verso, 1989), p. 79; Malpas, *Place and Experience*, p. 11.

### 1.3. Heidegger's idea of dwelling

Heidegger offers us a notion of dwelling which bears a considerable similarity with Wordsworth, an issue explored by several critics. In his essay, 'Building Dwelling Thinking', Heidegger develops and enriches the idea of dwelling in a profound way by discussing the relational aspects of 'earth, sky, divinities and mortals' – nature, humanity, and God. Given that 'the idea of the inseparability of persons from the places they inhabit is an especially important theme in the work of Heidegger', it is understandable that some critics introduce Heidegger's notion of dwelling to the interpretation of Wordsworth's poetry.<sup>17</sup> But they have tended not to deal with the issue of transcendence seriously, focusing instead upon the close relationship between humanity and place. Intending to introduce Heidegger's notion of dwelling as a useful framework for understanding Wordsworth's idea of dwelling, it can be claimed that Heidegger, like Wordsworth, tries to develop the notion of dwelling by bringing together humanity, nature and the transcendence with a special reference to human mortality.

For Heidegger, dwelling is far more than just a building in that 'to be a human being means to be on the earth as a mortal, it means to dwell'.<sup>18</sup> At the beginning of his essay, he traces the roots of the Old English and High German

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<sup>17</sup> Malpas, *Place and Experience*, p. 7; See, Jonathan Bate, *The Song of the Earth*, pp. x, 206; Michael Peters and Ruth Irwin, 'Earthsongs: Ecopoetics, Heidegger and Dwelling', *The Trumpeter*, 18 (2002), 1-17.

<sup>18</sup> Heidegger, *BDT*, p. 147; In his 'Letter on Humanism', referring to 'the saying of Heraclitus', he mentions that 'the abode of man contains and preserves the advent of what belongs to man in his essence [. . .] Man dwells, insofar as he is man'; he also argues that 'the house in which the jointure of Being fatefully enjoins the essence of man to dwell in the truth of Being. This dwelling is the essence of "being-in-the-world"', in *Basic Writings: from Being and Time (1927) to The Task of Thinking (1964)*, ed. by David Farrell Krell (London; New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 213-265 (pp. 256, 260).

word 'Bauen', which means to dwell. The word 'bin' belongs to 'bauen', and therefore 'ich bin and du bist' refers to 'I dwell and you dwell'. The implication is that 'the way in which you are and I am, the manner in which we humans are on the earth, is *Buan*, dwelling'.<sup>19</sup> Heidegger attempts to show an intimate association between dwelling and the meaning of human existence. Dwelling thus signifies the ontological situation of human existence, the questions of who we are, and the way we find ourselves in this world. For Heidegger, 'dwelling is the basic character of Being in keeping with which mortals exists.'<sup>20</sup>

It is through a relational aspect of being that Heidegger shows a strong bond between dwelling and the truth of being. As early as *Being and Time*, Heidegger identified the dynamic of interrelation as the central character of being human. For him, Being as Being-in-the-world is openness to others and things, and a clearer understanding of our being can be acquired by the set of meaningful relationships – people, things and issues.<sup>21</sup> When we say that we dwell, we mean that we build these relationships. In 'Building Dwelling Thinking', Heidegger introduces four elements in the relational activities of being-in-the-world – earth, sky, divinities, and mortals. Human beings discover who they are and how they are by dwelling in the relational dynamic of the four elements.

I would like to focus on three aspects of their relationship. First, Heidegger recovers an ethical dimension of dwelling in the fourfold relationship. He argues that the old word 'bauen' also means 'to cherish and protect, to preserve and

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<sup>19</sup> Heidegger, *BDT*, p. 147.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160.

<sup>21</sup> Nicholas Dungey, 'The Ethics and Politics of Dwelling', *Polity*, 39 (2007), 234–258 (p. 241).

care for, specifically to till the soil, to cultivate the vine'.<sup>22</sup> In addition, the Old Saxon 'wuon', the Gothic 'wunian' like the word 'bauen', mean to remain, to stay in a place, but 'wunian' means 'to be at peace, to be brought to peace, to remain in peace: preserved from harm and danger'.<sup>23</sup> Referring to these connotations of 'bauen' and 'wunian', Heidegger asserts that 'the fundamental character of dwelling is this sparing and preserving', and that 'mortals dwell in the way they preserve the fourfold – earth, sky, divinities and mortals – in its essential being'.<sup>24</sup> His way of preserving Earth and the Sky alludes to the ethical responsibilities of human beings, those which enable Earth and the Sky to be what they are. Mortals dwell in that they save the earth, and therefore they set it free into its own being, rather than exploiting, mastering, or subjugating it. Mortals dwell in that they receive the sky as sky, rather than turning night into day, or day into a harassed unrest.<sup>25</sup> According to Foltz, this aspect of Heidegger's thinking brings back a broadened notion of ethics, akin to the idea of 'coming into right relation'.<sup>26</sup> While the narrowness of the modern conception of ethics tends to concentrate only on certain sorts of moral obligation, Heidegger's idea concerns the bearing through which we comport ourselves toward entities, how we hold ourselves in relation to the being of entities, and how we in turn are held by our being.<sup>27</sup> As a result, in his idea of dwelling, Heidegger discovers a reciprocal relationship between mortals and the

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<sup>22</sup> Heidegger, *BDT*, p. 147.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., *BDT*, p. 149.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 149.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 150.

<sup>26</sup> D. Ladkin, 'When Deontology and Utilitarianism Aren't Enough: How Heidegger's Notion of "Dwelling" Might Help Organizational Leaders Resolve Ethical Issues', *Journal of Business Ethics*, 65 (2006), 87–98 (p. 92).

<sup>27</sup> Bruce V. Foltz, *Inhabiting the Earth: Heidegger, Environmental Ethics, and the Metaphysics of Nature* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1995), p. 168–169.

earth and sky through sparing and preserving.

Secondly, Heidegger conceives death as an essential part of dwelling. If dwelling is the basic feature of Being, it cannot, to some extent, avoid the issue of death. Human beings are called mortals because they can die, but Heidegger holds that to die means 'to be capable of death as death'.<sup>28</sup> Being 'capable of death as death' is neither to make death empty or nothing nor to darken dwelling by blindly staring toward the end. Rather 'mortals dwell in that they initiate their own nature – their being "capable of death as death" – into the use and practice of this capacity, so that there may be a good death.'<sup>29</sup> Although Heidegger does not articulate further the meaning of a good death in detail, he appears to make death a basic part of dwelling in a constructive and positive sense without generating a sense of discontinuity and emptiness.

Thirdly, Heidegger claims the oneness of the four elements. He proposes that 'mortals dwell in that they await the divinities as divinities [. . .] They wait for intimations of their coming and do not mistake the signs of their absence'.<sup>30</sup> In the long run, dwelling is built on saving the earth, receiving the sky, awaiting the divinities, and initiating mortals. But the fourfold is achieved in a simple unity. Heidegger provides an example of how earth, heaven, divinities, and mortals accomplish the simple oneness in dwelling by describing the structure of a farmhouse in the Black Forest, which was built some two hundred years ago:

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<sup>28</sup> Heidegger, *BDT*, p. 150.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 151.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 150.

It placed the farm on the wind-sheltered mountain slope looking south, among the meadows close to the spring [. . .] It did not forget the altar corner behind the community table; it made room in its chamber for the hallowed places of childbed and the ‘tree of the dead’-for that is what they call a coffin there [. . .]<sup>31</sup>

The structure of the house shows how nature, the divinities, and death are integrated into dwelling. Interestingly, the ‘tree of the dead’ is part of the house through which the dwellers are reminded of human mortality as well as remember their ancestors. Further, they appear to deal with this reality of the death by awaiting the divinities and being dependent upon the transcendence of the divinities, which ‘the altar’ may symbolise. All these elements as a single unity contribute to establishing the idea of dwelling.

Heidegger thus provides a very important notion of dwelling for discussing Wordsworth’s idea of it. He gives an explicit and systematic explanation about dwelling which is expressed implicitly throughout the works of Wordsworth. Thus it offers us a conceptual framework which helps us to analyse Wordsworth’s idea of dwelling. As discussed above, Heidegger expresses a few crucial thoughts on dwelling, the relational dynamic, the integration of death into dwelling, and the significance of God in the oneness. For him, to dwell means not just to inhabit a building, but a way of being human on the earth. Likewise, Wordsworth’s idea of dwelling develops through the reality of death and the presence of God.

#### 1.4. *The Vale of Esthwaite*

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 160.

Before moving to the next section, it will be useful to introduce one of Wordsworth's very earliest poems, *The Vale of Esthwaite*. Although the poem has received little attention, even criticised as being little more than 'gothic claptrap', some critics see it as a seminal work for his mature poetry, either in terms of his ideas of poetic imagination or the dynamic of emotion.<sup>32</sup> I suggest that *The Vale of Esthwaite* expresses some crucial elements in the idea of dwelling. Most of all, it shows how deeply the poet experienced a sense of loss and displacement and how intensely his yearning for dwelling was embedded in his mind. The haunted visions of the poet's underworld journey which occupy the first half of the poem are followed by the memory of his father's death:

With sighs repeated o'er and o'er,  
I mourn because I mourned no more.  
For ah! The storm was soon at rest  
Soon broke the Sun upon my breast  
Nor did my little heart foresee  
-She lost a home in losing thee. (ll. 288-293)

What is noteworthy is his awareness of the consequence of the death. His mother died when he was 8 years old, in 1778, and his father, John Wordsworth, followed Wordsworth's mother a few years later, in 1783. The death of his father brought the sense of safety to an end. Certainly these deaths affected their children outwardly in the changed situation of their lives as well as inwardly in their emotion and psychology. Finally, in his delayed grieving for his dead father Wordsworth became fully aware of the consequence of the death,

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<sup>32</sup> James H Averill, *Wordsworth and the Poetry of Human Suffering* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1980), p. 193.

‘losing home’.

If we look at a letter from Dorothy Wordsworth to her lifelong friend, Jane Pollard, dating from late July 1787, the year when the poem was written, we find that she, like her brother, became conscious of the result of her parents’s death. Dorothy has been living with her mother’s cousin, Elizabeth Threlkeld, in Halifax after her father’s death, but in May 1787 had to move to her Cookson grandparents in Penrith.<sup>33</sup> The letter which was written after two months in the Cookson house shows how Dorothy felt about the way she was being treated:

We have been told thousands of times that we were liars but we treat such behaviour with the contempt it deserves. [We] always finish our conversations which generally take a melancholy turn, with wishing we had a father and a home.<sup>34</sup>

Like Wordsworth’s poem, this passage reflects a growing understanding of what the loss of their father meant. She again told Jane in February 1793 that ‘we in the same moment lost a father, a mother, a home’.<sup>35</sup> As Moorman rightly notes, ‘the real loss sustained by the Wordsworth children in the death of their father was perhaps less that of a beloved person than of a happy home.’<sup>36</sup> In fact, his experience of death and loss does not end with the death of his parents, but continues to challenge him through his life, as he had yet to face the death of

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<sup>33</sup> Mary Trevelyan Moorman, *William Wordsworth: A Biography, vol. I*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 16, 18, 75; Gill, *William Wordsworth*, pp. 18, 34, 36; Duncan Wu, *Wordsworth: An Inner Life* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), pp. 7–8.

<sup>34</sup> Duncan Wu, *Wordsworth*, p. 10.

<sup>35</sup> The passage of the letter and the phrase, ‘losing home’ from the poem are so close, and Wu suggests ‘either that Wordsworth had read Dorothy’s letter or that the poem influenced her’, Duncan Wu, *Wordsworth*, p. 10.

<sup>36</sup> Moorman, *William Wordsworth I*, p. 70.



his brother John and his own children later.

Obviously Wordsworth's development of the idea of dwelling is fundamentally associated with the experience of death. Even during this juvenile period, we find that dwelling is not simply about a place to live, but has multiple layers of meaning. The poem consists of three parts. The first part describes the scenery of the shepherd, his dog, and a cottage. The second reveals the anguished visions of an underworld journey, and the third expresses the poet's intellectual and emotional responses to both happy and painful memories. Despite a lack of coherence, each part is closely involved with the way the narrator experiences a sense of dwelling that is threatened and shattered by death.

First, the natural environment, which displays harmony, peace, and joy, becomes a crucial part of the experience of dwelling. At the beginning of the poem, the narrator provides a detailed description of how the shepherd and his dog dwell in harmony, peace, and joy, in a valley:

The shepherd's restless dog I mark  
Who bounding round with frequent bark  
Now leaps aroun[d] th'uncovered plain  
Now dives into the mist again  
And while the guiding sound he hears  
The [    ] shepherd lad appears  
Who knows his transport while he sees  
His cottage smoking from the trees  
[ ? ] [ ? ] then turns the shepherd boy  
And claps his clinging dog for joy. (ll. 15-24)

Further, the narrator deepens the sense of this peaceful and harmonious dwelling in nature by imagining that the scene of the shepherd and his dog encircled by mist 'seems an island in the air' (ll. 13-14). Then the scene turns to other obscure worlds with visions where the poet sees images of a battle between 'Gigantic moors' (ll. 146). Right after this horrifying vision he tries to soothe his 'soul' by reminding himself of the 'pleasure' of 'lovely Grasmere's heav'nly vale' (ll. 178, 180). The natural environment of 'the landskip's varied treasure' forms this portrayal of dwelling.

Secondly, dwelling is also associated with the incorporeal dynamic in that the place for living has a psychological and emotional dimension. For the narrator, the landscape is not only a place to live, but also a place that carries memories of happiness and loss. Surveying 'the Vale of Esthwaite', the narrator tells that the landscape contains his past:

The time when these sad orbs shall close  
May hold before me Nature's Page  
Till dim seen by the eyes of age  
Then basking in the noontide blaze  
Here might I fix my feeble gaze  
As on a Book companion dear  
Of childhood's ever-merry year  
Retrace each scene with fond delight  
While memory aids the orbs of sight. (ll. 339-347)

Then he pronounces, 'From every rock would hang a tale' (ll. 353). In particular, the landscape is perceived as the 'vale of woe'. Death, one of the dominating images of the poem, has turned the vale into the 'vale of woe', and consequently

brought about displacement and disconnectedness. The implication is that the natural environment is not only a physical place, but also a reflection of the dweller's memories. As mentioned earlier, the narrator realises that losing a father means losing a home. The disturbed visions of the underworld journey in the second part -- the images of wandering, weariness, suffering, aloneness, separation, and displacement -- implies that the poet is struggling with the experience of losing home not purely in physical terms of place, but on the level of his emotion and psychology. But at the same time, the poet expresses his desperate yearning for restoring this broken relationship with the people and place in the third part.

Lastly, this longing for home is resonant with transcendent aspects. The narrator attempts to overcome the experience of loss and displacement by looking beyond the earthly dwelling. His painful awareness of death and the loss of home is immediately followed by the 'sweet voice':

That says we soon again shall meet  
For oft when fades the leaden day  
To joy-consuming pain a prey  
Or from afar the midnight bell  
Flings on mine ear its solemn knell  
A still voice whispers to my breast  
I soon shall be with them that rest. (ll. 297-303)

He then describes his own death as a way of being together with them that rest: 'Ah may my weary body may sleep / In peace beneath a green grass heap / In church-yard such at death of day' (ll. 314-316). In addition, at the end of the

poem, the poet conceives the relationship between his sister and himself as 'heav'n connected chain', which is 'for ever'. It appears that dwelling involves not only the earthly home but also a transcendent or spiritual space in that the narrator deals with the consequence of death, 'losing home', by assuring himself of being together in an eternal home. This is not to suggest that Wordsworth is already referring to the heavenly home explicitly in this period, but we can see here the seminal idea of a heavenly dwelling in Wordsworth. As he grows older, his idea of heavenly dwelling becomes more conspicuous.

*The Vale of Esthwaite* has often been read in terms of its psychological and biographical significance, and Duncan Wu also associates it with Wordsworth's experience of death.<sup>37</sup> His biographical backgrounds provide some reasons why he was struggling with the issue of dwelling. My aim in introducing this poem, however, is not to simply relate it to these biographical contexts. Rather, my purpose is to make one aware that in his early work Wordsworth was intensely affected by a sense of loss and displacement in ways that profoundly conditioned his yearning for home. Although there is a lack of coherence in this early poem, it as a seminal work for his mature poetry contains some crucial elements for dwelling. Having examined this early statement of the notion of dwelling in the poetry, in the next three sections we will explore how it develops from the idea of an earthly dwelling towards the community of the living and the dead, and finally a heavenly dwelling. It will be suggested that the relational dimension of dwelling reveals an ecotheological perspective.

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<sup>37</sup> Wu, *Wordsworth*, pp. 21-22; see also Kurt Fosso, 'A World of Shades: Mourning, Poesis, and Community in William Wordsworth's *The Vale of Esthwaite*', *The Modern Language Review*, 93 (1998), 629-641 (p. 631).

## 2. Dwelling in a cottage in Grasmere

### 2.1. Fears and anxieties about city-life, uncertainties, and mortality

This section discusses *The Ruined Cottage*, *The Pedlar*, *Tintern Abbey*, and *Home at Grasmere*. I examine Wordsworth's development of the trope of dwelling in a cottage by discovering the relational dynamic between human beings, the natural environment, and God. In this phase, Wordsworth appears to find an ideal place for home in a cottage in a natural environment, 'our dear vale' in Grasmere, and it seems that this is a reflection of his inner mind as well as of the physical geography. One of the main characteristics in his idea of dwelling is that it resonates with the anxieties of mortality and suffering. That is, he tries to discover a dwelling place over and against such anxieties and experiences. If we look at these poems, we recognise that a sense of displacement and yearning for home are the main driving forces for formulating the idea of dwelling. And the experience of displacement involves various aspects: death, suffering, and the cold realities of life.

Although Wordsworth appears to find an ideal place for dwelling in the vale of Grasmere, *Home at Grasmere* is still resonant with his anxieties and fears about the inhuman ways of city-life and human mortality. On the one hand, Geoffrey Hartman has focused on the joy and optimism of *Home at Grasmere* in a sense that the poem remains 'the sole sustained example of Wordsworth making "A present joy the matter of a song"'.<sup>38</sup> Karl Kroeber also views it as the expression of a sense of the continuity between humanity and nature within

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<sup>38</sup> Hartman, *Wordsworth's Poetry*, p. 171.

an unequivocal vision of ecological wholeness.<sup>39</sup> On the other hand, some critics, including, Kenneth Johnston, Raimonda Modiano, and Bruce Clarke, draw our attention to the anxieties, doubts, and tensions that imply his fears ‘being “home at Grasmere” might not be the kind of being, the kind of home, or even the kind of Grasmere he says it is’ due to the narrative’s sense of ‘an imagination of mortal violence’.<sup>40</sup> Wordsworth’s optimistic vision of an ideal dwelling place in the poem needs to be understood within the context of such anxieties and fears. He does not seem to overcome them completely because they reappear continuously throughout his later years. They remain a significant component of his poetic vision. There is an inner tension between these two aspects of his thinking, but it should be noted that his idea of home develops through the interaction between them.

First of all, his idea of dwelling in the vale has been formulated by his critical attitude towards the city. Just before declaring ‘The True community of many into one incorporate’, he contrasts the urban metropolis as ‘a deracinated space of alienation’<sup>41</sup>:

[. . .] he truly is alone,  
 He of the multitude, whose eyes are doomed  
 To hold a vacant commerce day by day  
 With that which he can neither know nor love—  
 Dead things, to him thrice dead—or worse than this,

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<sup>39</sup> Kroeber, *Ecological Literary Criticism*, p. 134,

<sup>40</sup> Kenneth R. Johnston, “‘Home at Grasmere’: Reclusive Song’, *Studies in Romanticism*, 14 (1975), 1–28 (p. 5); Raimonda Modiano, ‘Blood Sacrifice, Gift Economy and the edenic World: Wordsworth’s “Home at Grasmere”’, *Studies in Romanticism*, 32 (1993), 481–521 (pp. 481–2); Bruce Clarke, ‘Wordsworth’s Departed Swans: Sublimation and Sublimity in “Home at Grasmere”’, *Studies in Romanticism*, 19 (1980), 355–374 (p. 357).

<sup>41</sup> Kevin Hutchings, ‘Ecocriticism in British Romantic Studies’, *Literature Compass* 4/1 (2007), 172–202 (p. 193).

With swarms of life, and worse than all, of men,  
His fellow men, that are to him no more  
Than to the Forest Hermit are the leaves  
That hang aloft in myriad. (ll. 808-816)

‘A vacant commerce day by day’ implies a sense of dehumanisation caused by urbanisation and the Industrial Revolution, in which a person becomes just one ‘of the multitude’, without establishing a relationship with them in knowledge and love. Intriguingly, this passage reminds us of Wordsworth’s representation of urban life in *Tintern Abbey* in which the two phrases ‘in lonely rooms’ and ‘in hours of weariness’ ‘mid the din of towns and cities’ (ll. 26-28) convey the experience of isolation. ‘Towns and cities’ are full of people, but the poet still feels ‘lonely’, and he appears to be disconnected with them in the middle of ‘a vacant commerce’. In Book VII of *The Prelude*: Residence in London, Wordsworth provides an account of the alienated nature of city-life: ‘how men lived / Even next-door neighbours (as we say) yet still / Strangers, and knowing not each other’s names’ (ll. 118-120).

In addition to the experience of the isolation of city-life, Wordsworth describes his struggle with ‘the Realities of Life’: ‘so cold, / So cowardly, so ready to betray, / So stinted in the measure of their grace’ (ll. 54-6). Here he expresses a critical voice against the inhuman and corrupted way of city-life. In his pastoral poem, *Michael*, the poet shows how the shepherd’s son, Luke, who has been raised to understand the value of the natural environment, ‘gave himself to evil courses’ and was lost into depravity and disgrace after moving to ‘the dissolute city’ (ll. 453-456). Further, in *Home at Grasmere*, his wrestling

with ‘the Realities of Life’ is also partly caused by something which ‘was deemed so difficult’ in his ‘blindness’ (ll. 75, 76). In *Tintern Abbey*, Wordsworth describes this sense of difficulty and blindness as ‘the burthen of the mystery’ which brings about ‘the heavy and the weary weight of all this unintelligible world’, ‘the many shapes of joyless day-light’, and ‘the fever of the world’ (ll. 39-41, 52-55). Critics have articulated various senses of ‘the burthen of the mystery’. Weinfield suggested the poet’s struggle is ‘at once personal (and private) and religious (and public)’.<sup>42</sup> On a personal level, he may have been afflicted with the on-going issues of loss, mortality, and powerlessness in life, particularly during the early 1790s, for example, ‘his impotent hostility to his own country’s policies, his responsibility to Annette and their child, and the lack of direction and of financial independence’.<sup>43</sup> In addition, it has been suggested that the poet had to face a religious and epistemological crisis in relation to a tension between Christianity and the Enlightenment in terms of materialism, rationalism, and necessitarianism.<sup>44</sup> Thus, that crisis may have caused the poet to oscillate between skepticism and affirmation, which creates a sense of instability.<sup>45</sup>

Another significant element which seems to cast a shadow over the harmony and safety of dwelling is the destructive power of death. Interestingly, at the beginning of *Home at Grasmere*, Wordsworth explains that even when he

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<sup>42</sup> Henry Weinfield, “‘These beauteous forms’: “Tintern Abbey” and the post-Enlightenment religious crisis’, *Religion and the Arts* 6 (2002), 257-290 (p. 258).

<sup>43</sup> Gill, *William Wordsworth*, pp. 153-4; in Books XI and XII of *the Prelude* (1850), Wordsworth speaks of his personal crisis during the 1790s, ‘This was the crisis of that strong disease, / This the soul’s last and lowest ebb; I drooped, / Deeming our blessed reason of least use / Where wanted most’ (ll. 306-309).

<sup>44</sup> Brian Barbour, “‘Between Two Worlds’: The Structure of the Argument in “Tintern Abbey””, *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 48 (1993), 147-168 (p. 150).

<sup>45</sup> See Weinfield, “‘These beauteous forms’”, p. 283.



saw the vale and thought of 'living here' as 'happy fortune', he imagined that 'if I thought of dying, if a thought / Of mortal separation could come in / With paradise before me, here to die' (ll. 9-12). As a boy, he associated the happiness of dwelling with the stern reality of mortality. *Home at Grasmere* offers four episodes about a pair of swans and some couples which are related with death. First, the description of 'Sweet Spring' in Grasmere is followed by absence:

But two are missing – two, a lonely pair  
Of milk-white swans. Ah, why are they not here?  
There above all, ah, why are they not here  
To share in this day's pleasure? (ll. 322-5)

The poet and his wife, Emma, 'saw them day by day, / Through those two months of unrelenting storm', and 'knew them well' (ll. 329-330, 332). The reason he is so concerned about their absence is not only 'their beauty and their still / And placid way of life and faithful love' but also the resemblance between this pair, and the poet and Emma: 'They also having chosen this abode- / They strangers, and we strangers – they a pair / And we a solitary pair like them' (ll. 339-341). He hopes that 'neither pair be broken' (ll. 350), but 'an imagination of mortal violence breaks into' this hope that 'the shepherd may have seized the deadly tube' or 'haply both are gone' (ll. 352, 356).<sup>46</sup> The absence of the swans thus implicitly brings about a sense of anxiety regarding the security of his relationship with his wife in the face of the threat of death.

Secondly, Wordsworth also expresses anxiety about death in the three

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<sup>46</sup> Clarke, 'Wordsworth's Departed Swans', p. 357.

stories about local dwellers in the vale of Grasmere. He refers to the attraction of ‘all Arcadian dreams, / All golden fancies of the golden age’ (ll. 829–830), but he reminds us that the local dwellers of Grasmere cannot avoid the human condition of death. The first story is about a local farmer who deceived his wife with their maid. Then he lets his farm go to ruin out of remorse, and ‘could not bear the weight of his own shame’ and ‘died of his own grief’ (ll. 531–2). The second one is about a father whose wife died a long time ago and left him ‘many helpless children’ (ll. 538). Although it is a ‘tale / Of sorrow and dejection’, the poet discovers that ‘the whole house is filled with [the] gaiety’ of the children (ll. 539–540, 606). In the final episode, the ruinous power of mortality is contrasted with the blooming of a grove. A dame explains that she and her now dead husband had planted this grove, ‘Just six weeks younger than her eldest boy’ (ll. 613). While they ‘No longer flourish’: he ‘entirely gone’ and she ‘withering in her loneliness’, the plant is ‘now flourishing’ (ll. 640–2). Immediately after these episodes, he tries to convince himself that:

No, we are not alone: we do not stand,  
 My Emma, here misplaced and desolate,  
 Loving what no one cares for but ourselves.  
 We shall not scatter through the plains and rocks (ll. 646–649)

Whereas the poet expresses his deep yearning for a happy dwelling with Emma in Grasmere, this passage portrays his fear of human mortality in the sense that the three stories cast the shadow of death on their dwelling.

## 2.2. Dwelling and the inner self in *the Ruined Cottage*

If we look at *The Ruined Cottage*, we can see how the experience of death and loss destroys the sense of dwelling. This poem, written in 1797–98, but published as book I of *The Excursion* in 1814, is an account about the disintegration of Margaret's family and her silent suffering.<sup>47</sup> As war destroys the rural economy, her husband, Robert, deserts Margaret and enlists in the military. Leaving 'a purse of gold' for his family, he could not face saying farewell. And he never came back home. Her eldest child and little babe also died later, and eventually 'she was left alone' (ll. 476). The disintegration of her family leads to the loss of home in that she herself became a wanderer in her own place. Interestingly, losing people brings about a disrupted relationship between Margaret and the place where she lives. The deterioration is captured by Margaret's wandering and the pedlar's account of the decaying of her cottage. After Robert left, Margaret 'was used to ramble far' (ll. 382). She herself mentions that she has 'wandered much of late and has need of her best prayers to bring her back again' (ll. 399–401). After the disappearance of her husband and the death of her eldest child, she hopes that:

[ . . . ] heaven  
Will give me patience to endure the things  
Which I behold at home (ll. 412–414)

The 'things' are not specified, but we can assume that they are 'the things' which may remind her of the fuller sense of dwelling with which they are

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<sup>47</sup> See, *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, vol. 2, sixth ed., ed. by M. H. Abrams (New York; London, W. W. Norton and Company, 1993), p. 160.

associated. Her restlessness shows that she has lost a sense of rootedness and comfort.

The pedlar returns to the cottage several times after Robert's disappearance, and provides an eyewitness account of how it has been ruined. On his first return, he describes how Margaret's face had become 'thin and pale' (ll. 396) and her cottage was changed:

And knots of worthless stone-crop started out  
Along the window's edge and grew like weeds  
Against the lower panes. [. . .]  
The unprofitable bindweed spread his bells  
From side to side, and with unwieldy wreaths  
Had dragged the rose from its sustaining wall  
And bowed it down to earth. (ll. 368-370, 372-375)

On his second return, he clearly sees that 'a sleepy hand of negligence' (ll. 440) has shadowed the place, and finally, that 'her poor hut / Sunk to decay' (ll. 512-513). The process of the cottage's ruination reflects an estrangement between her and the place.

Particularly, the decaying cottage demonstrates the crucial relationship between the place and her inner self. As Wordsworth lost a home by losing his parents, Margaret is displaced by losing her family. If, for Wordsworth, the loss of his parents brought about the loss of home, Margaret's loss of her family does not drive her from the place as a locality, but she does lose it as a home in terms of dwelling. What has changed is not the place, but her inner situation. Furthermore, 'the things' in her home deepen her experience of loss, because

they evoke absence as well as memory. It is not the place itself, but her inner state of the mind that causes her displacement. Accordingly, dwelling involves the relationship between a place and her inner self. In this respect, Margaret's dwelling place remained a home for her physical body, but not for her inner self.

The pedlar's closing comment on Margaret and her cottage conveys the complex meaning of dwelling:

She loved this wretched spot, nor would for worlds  
Have parted hence; and still that length of road  
And this rude bench one torturing hope endeared,  
Fast rooted at her heart (ll. 523-526)

'This wretched spot' used to be her home, but the absence of her family deprived her of the proper sense of dwelling. The image of wretchedness represents her broken relationship with the place and the sense of uprootedness on a psychological and spiritual level. But the fact that she still 'loved this wretched spot' and cherished hope of Robert's returning 'at her heart' reflects her yearning for a restoration of home. In *the Ruined Cottage*, her yearning for home is not concerned so much with the place itself as with her husband and children. In the long run, the meaning of dwelling requires a place not only for a physical body but also for the dynamic of an inner self in relation to psychology and spirituality.

### 2.3. The experience of the one life

Having looked at Wordsworth's struggles, fears, and anxieties about death

and the alienation of urban life, I will discuss his attempts to discover an ideal place for dwelling in the vale of Grasmere. We have seen how the loss of family, the experience of alienated city-life, and the burden of the mystery, ruin the harmony and joy of dwelling, but his poetry continues to point towards a relationship between humanity, nature, and God as the foundation for a home over and against them. Both the natural environment and the notion of transcendence constitute an indispensable part in dwelling. Particularly, in this phase, for Wordsworth, the concept of the one life is crucial to the formulation of a dwelling place in relation to the three elements.

For Wordsworth, the idea of the one life becomes one of the primary themes of his writing in the 1790s, especially after Wordsworth developed a close relationship with Coleridge in 1797–1798.<sup>48</sup> During these years, the two poets met frequently and exchanged their ideas on various subjects. There is no doubt that this relationship contributed to Wordsworth's intellectual development in a profound way. Later Wordsworth mentioned that Coleridge was 'one of the two beings to whom my intellect is most indebted'.<sup>49</sup> Although Wordsworth owes the idea of the one life to Coleridge, he develops it in a different way. H. W. Piper made an interesting comment on the difference between them in this regard. Whereas Coleridge was 'preoccupied with the creative nature of the soul and with his loss of poetic power, and became more concerned with the Imagination as an activity of the mind', Wordsworth 'continued to see it [the one life] as a natural phenomenon occurring in the life

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<sup>48</sup> See, Moorman, *William Wordsworth I*, pp. 270–271; Gill, *William Wordsworth*, pp. 93, 111, 122.

<sup>49</sup> *WL V*, p. 536.

of a chosen being'.<sup>50</sup> This contrast reflects their different ways of pursuing the idea of the one life. Coleridge gradually turned from poetry to prose, in which he continued to try to formulate a grand theory for the unity of the universe. By contrast, what matters for Wordsworth is his own personal experience, often associated with feeling rather than any larger theory. As Jonathan Wordsworth put it, he must experience his ideas 'on his pulses'.<sup>51</sup> If Coleridge tried to articulate the oneness of the universe through his voluminous readings and hard thinking, Wordsworth had to contemplate and to feel it in his personal experience. Presupposing that there is the one life, Coleridge tried to find it through recent scientific discoveries, philosophy, and theology. Rather than being interested in the grand idea of the one life, Wordsworth was more preoccupied by various issues about human life, for example, the experiences of grief, loss, and suffering.

*The Pedlar*, composed in February – March 1798, was originally planned to be part of *The Ruined Cottage*, which was written the previous summer, but they were never published as one single poem.<sup>52</sup> In *The Ruined Cottage* the pedlar tells the tragic story of Margaret, but in *The Pedlar* the narrator provides the story of the pedlar in Part I. Like Margaret, the pedlar underwent a painful experience of loss and poverty. When he was a boy, his father died and left the family destitute. Whereas Margaret becomes disconnected from her dwelling place, the pedlar moves beyond suffering. His enlightenment does not take

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<sup>50</sup> Piper, *The Active Universe*, p. 137.

<sup>51</sup> Jonathan Wordsworth, *William Wordsworth: The Borders of Vision* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), p. 286.

<sup>52</sup> Jonathan Wordsworth suggests that Wordsworth might have decided that *The Pedlar* was too long, or too different, to be part of *The Ruined Cottage*. See, 'The Pedlar', in *The Pedlar, Tintern Abbey, The Two-Part Prelude*, ed. by J. Wordsworth (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985), p. 19.

place suddenly, but is related with the formation of his mind. Various elements contribute to the development of the pedlar's mind. He was taught to fear God and to respect 'God's word' (ll. 112-113). He also read books 'greedily' (ll. 164-174). Interestingly, he could not find 'love' or 'the pure joy of love' in books (ll. 175-180). It was through the power of nature that he was able to feel 'the lesson deep of love' (ll. 180-185). In other words, he learned through his relationship with nature what he could not gain in the more traditional way via religious education, or knowledge of books.

Furthermore, the Pedlar was able to experience the presence of God in nature. When he was a boy, he 'had perceiv'd the presence and the power / Of greatness' in the wood on his way back home. While tending herds on the tops of the high mountains, he beheld the sun:

Rise up, and bathe the world in light. He look'd;  
The ocean and the earth beneath him lay  
In gladness and deep joy. The clouds were touch'd,  
And in their silent faces did he read  
Unutterable love. Sound needed none,  
Nor any voice of joy: his spirit drank  
The spectacle. Sensation, soul, and form  
All melted into him: they swallow'd up  
His animal being: in them did he live  
And by them did he live. They were his life, (ll. 192-201)

Intriguingly, he describes this mystical experience as a 'visitation from the living God' (ll. 203). This much-quoted passage represents clearly the idea of the one life in terms of the relationship between humanity and nature and God



to the extent that nature and the pedlar are united by living in each other's life through the presence of God in nature. In the one life, he can experience 'unutterable love' and 'joy', but it should be noted that the experience is based on the immanence of God in nature. A parallel passage in *Tintern Abbey* also communicates a similar experience of the one life. The poet, like the pedlar, felt 'a presence' in nature:

Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round ocean, and the living air,  
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man – (ll. 98–100)

When he becomes aware of 'a presence' in nature, he, at the same time, perceives 'a motion and a spirit that impels / All thinking things, all objects of all thought, / And rolls through all things' (ll. 102–103). Therefore, for him, nature was 'all in all' (ll. 76). The immanence of God in nature enables the poet to recognise the unity of all things and to feel 'the joy of elevated thoughts' (ll. 95–6).

In fact, these two passages are often regarded as pantheistic. But it is important to pay attention to the sense of immanence and transcendence in them. Integration seems to be offered between the Presence in nature and the Absolute Otherness. 'The sun's bathing the world in light' conjures up a striking image of how God is present in the whole universe, but the idea of 'visitation from the living God' implies that the universe and its Creator are distinct. Although the pedlar experiences the one life through the visitation, he

confesses that 'He did not feel the God, he felt his works'.<sup>53</sup> A distinction between God and His creature is thus drawn. In a similar vein, *Tintern Abbey* communicates such a distinction in terms of the poem's portrayal of dwelling. The notion that nature is the dwelling place of God seems to evoke a pantheistic mood, but does not identify nature with the transcendence of God in the poem. In fact, the idea of the accommodation of God as a traditional Christian concept implies how God can dwell in nature. In his *Essay, Supplementary to the Preface* of 1815, Wordsworth himself explains the traditional *acomodatio*:

The commerce between Man and his Maker cannot be carried on but by a process where much is represented in little, and the infinite Being accommodates himself to a finite capacity.<sup>54</sup>

As the concept of *acomodatio* reflects a distinction as well as integration between the infinite Being and the finite creature, God's dwelling in nature maintains both immanence and transcendence. He is immanent in nature in that He accommodates himself to it, and at the same time He is transcendent as long as a distinction between the dweller and the place remains. Accordingly, the presence of God in the two comparable passages ought to be conceived as the vitality of immanence and transcendence, rather than as pantheism. The implication is that, in this stage, Wordsworth appears to put emphasis on the immanence of God as he tries to build up an ideal place for home in the natural environment.

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<sup>53</sup> These sentences are omitted in the text of MS. E (1803-1804).

<sup>54</sup> *Essay, Supplementary to the Preface*, in *Prose III*, pp. 55-107 (p. 65).

Having argued that the idea of the one life is deeply religious in terms of his experience of divine immanence in nature, the outcome of the pedlar's visionary experience remains to be explored. It is noteworthy that the pedlar is able to corroborate his religious faith through his mystical experience. After having encountered the one life in relation to nature and God, he finally authenticates his religious faith:

Oh! Then, how beautiful, how bright appear'd  
The written promise! He had early learn'd  
To reverence the Volume which displays  
The mystery, the life which cannot die:  
But in the mountains did he feel his faith: (ll. 212-216)

The passage implies a tension between the teaching of historical Christianity and personal experience in nature. Although he has learned the teachings of the faith, it appears that he is able to convince himself of them through his personal and mystical experience in nature. It is through the 'unutterable love' in the unity of nature that he can embrace 'the written promise' and 'the life which cannot die', which empowers him to overcome the pain of mortality.

The wisdom of nature expands the perceptive power of his mind in a sense that he came to see what others could not see. The pedlar tells the narrator that:

I see around me here  
Things which you cannot see: we die, my Friend,  
Nor we alone, but that which each Man lov'd  
And priz'd in his peculiar nook of earth

Dies with him, or is chang'd; (ll. 405-409)

Reminding us of the inevitable reality of death and the transience of our life, he implies that he found a way of going beyond that reality. After finishing the tragic story, the pedlar acknowledges that he has created a sense of sorrow. He, however, argues that:

What we feel of sorrow and despair  
From ruin and from change, and all the grief  
The passing shews of being leave behind,  
Appear'd an idle dream that could not live  
Where meditation was: (ll. 865-869)

Through meditation he seems to be able to conceive the sorrow of despair, death, and mutability as 'an idle dream'. In spite of the sadness of the tragic story, he could thus find 'tranquility' and 'walked along his road in happiness' (ll. 862, 870). His visionary experience of the one life reveals that his way of overcoming this reality is not to compensate for it with the joy of the experience, but to be aware of the promise of immortality, which was 'felt' by the experience. At the end, he consoles the narrator by saying that 'she sleeps in the calm earth, and peace is here' (ll. 856). The faith of immortality based upon the infinite Being allows him to feel the interrelatedness of life even in the face of death and mutability.

Likewise, in *Home at Grasmere*, Wordsworth explores the consolation of immortality as a way to overcome suffering. Despite the anxieties of death felt in the poem, the poet, like the pedlar, is willing to challenge the shadow of our

life:

The Vision of humanity and of God  
The Mourner, God the Sufferer, when the heart  
Of his poor Creatures suffers wrongfully-  
Both in the sadness and the joy we found  
A promise and an earnest that we twain (ll. 244-248)

Interestingly, this passage refers to the two natures of Christ who was both God and human. He was divine, but at the same time human, 'the Sufferer'. He died as a human but revealed the idea of immortality in the divine. 'A promise' assures the poet that, 'in the midst of these unhappy times, all the Vales of earth and all mankind will be given love and knowledge by a portion of the blessedness' (ll. 253-256), through which they will overcome human mortality. At the end of the poem, the poet offers a condensed form of summary for hope against suffering which reminds us of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5. The poet would sing the songs for 'Hope for this earth and hope beyond the grave--:

Of blessed consolations in distress,  
Of joy in widest commonalty spread,  
Of the individual mind that keeps its own  
Inviolat retirement, and consists  
With being limitless the one great Life- (ll. 965-971)

Although human life is overshadowed by the experience of suffering and loss, the poet attempts to write a song for hope, which reassures us of the

consolation of immortality in the context of ‘the one great Life’.

#### 2.4. ‘The one great Life’ and ‘one Household under God’

If the idea of the one great life enables the poet to reconcile himself to mortality, the question arises what kind of relationship the idea develops with the notion of dwelling. Offering us an idealized picture of dwelling in *Home at Grasmere*, Wordsworth declares, ‘dear Vale, / One of thy lowly dwellings is my home’ (ll. 52–3). First of all, he stresses the significance of this place as a locality and a physical geography within the context of a natural environment. For Wordsworth, this dwelling-place is neither a ‘mere place in respite from the fragmented restlessness of modern life’, nor ‘a symbol of a utopian existence’, but is ‘a choice of the whole heart’: not ‘a weak indulgence’ but ‘an act of reason that exultingly aspires’ (ll. 78–82).<sup>55</sup> One of the elements which explains this firm determination to choose this particular spot as a home can be found in his memory of childhood. The poem opens on a scene in his memory which refers to the first time the poet as ‘a School-boy’ overlooked the vale of Grasmere, and he remembers his passionate yearning for this place as a home: ‘What happy fortune were it here to live!’ (ll. 9); ‘For rest of body ‘twas a perfect place’ (ll. 22); ‘here / Should be my home, this Valley be my World’ (ll. 42–3). Further, in a letter to Lady Beaumont in November 1805, Dorothy recollects John’s visit to the new house in Grasmere in 1800, during which he ‘paced over this floor in pride before we had been six weeks in the house, exulting within his noble heart that his Father’s Children had once again a home

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<sup>55</sup> Karl Kroeber, “‘Home at Grasmere’: Ecological Holiness”, *PMLA*, 89 (1974), 132–141 (p. 134).

together'.<sup>56</sup> In the poem Wordsworth also mentions briefly that John, 'a never-resting Pilgrim of the Sea', 'finds at last an hour to his content / Beneath our roof', and he describes the union of his siblings as 'a happy band!' in a 'Vale of Peace' (ll. 866-8, 873-4). In this sense, this particular spot, as an element of physical geography, enables the poet to maintain the continuity of the self between the past and the present.

This place for a home needs to be understood in terms of a physical geography and a natural environment. As 'From that time forward was the place to me / As beautiful in thought as it had been / When present to my bodily eyes' (ll. 44-6), the natural beauty of the place is important to the poet. His experience and perception of life in an urban space shattered the peace and joy in dwelling, but the natural environment in Grasmere enabled him to create an ideal place for dwelling. He discovered a sense of 'peace' and 'gladness' in the 'soft and gay and beautiful' vale of Grasmere (ll. 134). This dwelling place provided a sense of safety to the extent that 'What once was deemed so difficult is now / Smooth, easy, without obstacle' (ll. 75-6). Likewise, in *Tintern Abbey*, Wordsworth confesses that he has 'owed to the forms of beauty' in nature the overcoming of the sense of 'loneliness' and 'weariness' in 'towns and cities' and the experiencing of 'tranquil restoration' (ll. 31). The process by which nature lightens 'the heavy and the weary weight of all this unintelligible world' (ll. 40-41) implies that nature is associated with the mind as a corporeal landscape. That is, the outward forms of nature stimulate the senses and create 'sensations sweet' which are 'felt in the blood and 'along the heart' and finally

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<sup>56</sup> *WL I*, p. 649.

reach into the mind (ll. 28–30). Accordingly, the sense of locality and the physical geography of this particular spot need to be underlined.

The reason for underlining the physicality of the dwelling place in Grasmere is that, for Wordsworth, the relational aspect between the place and the dweller is of great significance, but the physical dimension is often regarded as a mere projection of the mind by critics. I want to stress that the physical geography of a particular spot matters in the formulation of a dwelling place. In developing the idea of dwelling, the poet reveals the significance of the intimate relationship between dwellers and their natural environment. As he defines the theme of the poem as ‘on Man, on Nature, and on human Life’ (ll. 959), he shows us that he is attempting to build the notion of dwelling by integrating diverse elements into one single unity. Moreover, in *Home at Grasmere*, he describes a kind of interpersonal relationship between humanity and nature, which live together not in a hierarchical sense, but in a reciprocal way. If we look at the process of his settling in this place, we see him as the beneficiary in this natural environment as he is given a safe place over and against the cold ‘Realities of Life’. He tries to build an ‘I-Thou’ relationship with the place, rather than ‘I-It’, by personifying the vale and asking it to ‘Embrace me then, ye Hill, and close me in’ (ll. 129). Instead of occupying the place by simple choice, the poet is willing to let the place accept him as a dweller:

[. . .] Grasmere, our dear Vale,  
Received us. Bright and solemn was the sky  
That faced us with a passionate welcoming  
And led us to our threshold, to a home  
Within a home [. . .] (ll. 258–262)



‘A home Within a home’ implies that Grasmere itself becomes a home, and the vale as home offers a sense of safety by ‘concealing us from the storm’ (ll. 456). Therefore he feels ‘enclosed / To breathe in peace’ ‘under Nature’s care’ and ‘guardianship’ (ll. 854-5, 753, 131). Further, their relationship deepens through love: ‘It loves us now, this Vale so beautiful / Begins to love us!’ (ll. 268-9).

In return for the loving care the vale shows to the poet, he acknowledges the intrinsic value of the place. He endorses the sacredness of the vale in that the dwellers are already ‘blessed’ owing to ‘this holy place’ (ll. 366-369). We should not despise ‘this lowly dwelling’ (ll. 53) because:

Each Being has his office, lowly some  
And common, yet all worthy if fulfilled  
With zeal, acknowledgement that with the gift  
Keeps pace a harvest answering to the seed. (ll. 880-883)

The poet urges us to ‘love all gentle things’ (ll. 943). Further, his knowledge of this place grows as he becomes familiar with the inner life of the natural environment as well as its appearances. Although he is a ‘Newcomer’, he notes that ‘the inward frame opens every day’; ‘Though slowly opening’ (ll. 693-5). ‘As it unfolds itself, now here, now there’, the poet enriches his understanding of ‘this fair Valley’s self’ (ll. 697, 700). In this respect, the poet and the vale develop an interpersonal relationship by interpenetrating each other in that he opens himself to the fullness and care of the vale, and at the same time it also

opens its inward frame to him every day.<sup>57</sup>

The growth of the mind plays a key role in appreciating the intrinsic value of such a natural environment. If we look at *the Pedlar* and *Tintern Abbey*, too, we see that the transformative experience of coming to understand the one life is not limited to the unity of a static understanding, but has to do with feeling and perception. What changes is not the person or nature, but the way of feeling and seeing in the visionary experiences. In *The Pedlar*, the pedlar perceives ‘the moral properties and scope of things’ (ll. 162–163) and gives ‘a moral life’ to ‘every natural form, rock, fruit, and flower, even the loose stones that cover the highway’ (ll. 80–82, *The Ruined Cottage*). There is nothing unimportant in nature because even ‘the least of things seem’d infinite’ (ll. 220–221). In a similar vein, the poet, in *Tintern Abbey*, confesses:

[ . . . ] I have learned  
To look on nature, not as in the hour  
Of thoughtless youth, but hearing oftentimes  
The still, sad music of humanity, (ll. 89–92)

The visionary experience enabled him to see nature in a different perspective, and therefore he came to recognise the intrinsic value of nature in relation to the ethical or spiritual aspect of nature and the preciousness of little things. In other words, it opened the eye of the mind in terms of an epistemological dimension through which he could ‘see into the life of thing’ (ll. 50). The pedlar and the poet re-establish their relationship with nature through mystical experience by discovering the intrinsic value of the natural environment.

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<sup>57</sup> Kroeber, “Home at Grasmere” pp. 134, 137.

In the long run, the poet is able to discover an alternative ‘Society’, ‘The True community, the noblest Frame / Of many into one incorporate’ (ll. 818–820) in the vale of Grasmere, and describes this community as ‘one Household under God for high and low, one family and one mansion’ (ll. 822–823). The thought of ‘one Household under God’ epitomizes Wordsworth’s idea of dwelling. For him, to dwell means to foster a reciprocal relationship between a dweller and a natural environment in the one life. The interrelatedness between the dweller and a dwelling place deepens their bond to the extent that the poet can locate the sense of self-completeness in the beautiful natural surroundings. For him, ‘this small abiding-place of many men’ in the valley of Grasmere is:

A Centre, come from wheresoe’er you will,  
A Whole without dependence or defect,  
Made for itself and happy in itself,  
Perfect Contentment, Unity entire. (ll. 167–170).

Nothing is wanting in the valley because everything is there, and ‘it is indivisibly self-unified.’<sup>58</sup> The poet thus perceives the unity of the dwellers and ‘the topographical actuality of the valley’ in Grasmere, which represents ‘one Household’.<sup>59</sup>

In his *Wordsworth and the Poetry of What we are*, Paul Fry declares that the works of Wordsworth do not reflect a radical subjectivity or egotism but are concerned with the ‘ontological’ unity of the human and the nonhuman, or of us

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<sup>58</sup> Kroeber, “‘Home at Grasmere’”, p. 133.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 133.

and the rest of the world.<sup>60</sup> Discussing the relationship between human consciousness and all nonhuman things in the 'Preface', Fry claims that the ontic unity is not 'the reinforcement of human self-importance by nonhuman analogs', but 'the disclosure to human reflection of the nonhuman unity, perhaps also the spiritual unity, of all somatic existence'.<sup>61</sup> It is noteworthy that the poetry of Wordsworth, rather than creating, 'discloses the unity constituted by and as the being, apart from meaning and apart even from difference, of all human and nonhuman things'.<sup>62</sup> What Wordsworth discovers is 'the revelation of being itself in the nonhumanity that "we" share with the nonhuman universe.'<sup>63</sup> Accordingly, the unity between the dwellers and 'the topographical actuality of the valley' in Grasmere is based not on a sheer subjective experience, but on the poet's awareness of the reciprocal relationship between them.

What I would particularly add to Fry's account is the religious aspect of dwelling. We have seen that *Home at Grasmere* is resonant with fears and anxieties about death and the inhuman nature of city-life, but the poet tries to deal with them through the experience of the one life. The notion of the one life shows his awareness of how he is interrelated with nature *and* with God. In particular, the sense of the one life convinces him of faith in immortality 'beyond the grave', which is based upon the immanence of God in nature. Because of this faith, the poet can finally build up a dwelling place in the vale of Grasmere with a sense of safety and peace and joy over and against any

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<sup>60</sup> Paul H. Fry, *Wordsworth and the Poetry of What We are* (New Haven; London: Yale UP, 2008), p. 6.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., pp. 55-56.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 9

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. x.

anxieties. As he proclaims 'Great God' as 'breath and being, way and guide, power and understanding' (ll. 1042-1044), the thought of 'one Household' is revealed to be dependent upon the immanence of God. In this respect, for Wordsworth, the notion of the one life is associated with a psychological and spiritual space as well as a physical space in dwelling.

### 3. Dwelling in the community of the living and the dead

#### 3.1. A fresh challenge from human mortality

In the previous section we have seen that *Home At Grasmere* is a kind of eulogy or manifesto for an ideal of dwelling, in which humanity, nature, and God are interrelated with one another. In this poem, Wordsworth appears to reconcile himself with the reality of loss and death to the extent that he can find peace and harmony in his new dwelling, Grasmere, trusting in the hope of eternal life. But in his works after the eulogy he still return to an anxiety about home in the sense that Wordsworth keeps conjuring up images of loss and wandering. In particular, he is seen struggling with the experience of death in a very profound way, even during his adult life. Although the death of his parents left the boy a painful memory, he later had to face a fresh challenge from the bitter reality of death due to the death of his brother John and two children.

In the middle and late 1800s, Wordsworth was exhaustively tested in terms of 'the faith that looks through death'.<sup>64</sup> His brother, John, a ship's captain, was drowned at sea in 1805, and his daughter Catherine died of convulsions at the age of three in June in 1812, while his son Thomas, six and a half years old,

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<sup>64</sup> 'Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood', ll. 188.

died of pneumonia in December of the same year. Wordsworth wrote some letters and poems about these deaths that express his intense feelings of unbearable sorrow and pain. They not only express a collection of heartbreaking emotions, but allow us to catch a glimpse of his changing perspectives on the relationship between humanity, nature, and God within the context of dwelling. First of all, in his letters, Wordsworth conveys the sense that his stable family in a loved place seems to be broken apart: ‘the set is now broken’; ‘God keep the rest of us together’.<sup>65</sup> It reminds one of Wordsworth’s childhood experience of separation after the death of his parents. With the death of Catherine, Wordsworth recognises that he is struggling not only with sorrow but with uncertainty: ‘I write with a full heart; with some sorrow, but most oppressed by an awful sense of the uncertainty and instability of all human things’.<sup>66</sup> The awareness of ‘an awful sense of the uncertainty and instability of all human things’ alludes to his overall spiritual crisis in his understanding of life.<sup>67</sup> Although he had had the experience of losing his parents in his childhood, the death of John and his children appears to represent a new challenge to Wordsworth, as a husband, father, and brother. When the death of John and the two children shattered the peace and harmony of his dwelling, he became conscious of the mutability or fragility of his own human efforts. He was aware of how vulnerable to death and loss his happy dwelling was. If he was yearning

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<sup>65</sup> *WL I*, p. 540; in another letter, he mentions that ‘For myself I feel that there is something cut out of my life which cannot be restored’, *WL I*, p. 565.

<sup>66</sup> *WL III*, p. 25.

<sup>67</sup> Thomas McFarland reads John Wordsworth’s death in 1805 off Portland Bill as the crisis that definitively cast the poet ‘back upon his final defense: stoicism’, associated with the defensively ‘egotistical sublime’, *Romanticism and the Forms of Ruin*, 148; quoted by Kurt Fosso, *Buried Communities: Wordsworth and the Bonds of Mourning* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), p. 194.

for just another home after the death of his parents in his childhood, the death of John and his two children made him perceive the unreliability and unpredictability of the earthly home itself. Accordingly, for the poet, ‘all human things’ seemed to be unstable and uncertain. Yet, if we look at *Essays Upon Epitaphs* and Books V, VI and VII of *The Excursion*, we discover that Wordsworth tries to overcome this spiritual crisis by reaffirming the idea of immortality.

### 3.2. Paul de Man and *Essays Upon Epitaphs*

In recent decades, critics have tended to see Wordsworth’s epitaphic writings from a deconstructive perspective, focusing on ‘the gap between the sheer materiality of the inscribed epitaph, figuring the textuality of writing, and the absence of the author, associated with the absent dead’.<sup>68</sup> For them, epitaphs open up a gap between signifier and signified, text and the human presence. In his ‘Autobiography as De-Facement’, Paul de Man investigates the relationship between language and mortality in *Essays Upon Epitaphs* and points to the unbridgeable gap between them. Presupposing that the essays are forms of autobiography, de Man argues that ‘Wordsworth’s claim for restoration in the face of death, in the *Essays Upon Epitaphs*, is grounded in a consistent system’: ‘a system of mediations that converts the radical distance of an either / or opposition in a process allowing movement from one extreme to the other by a series of transformations that leave the negativity of the (or lack of

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<sup>68</sup> See Scott Hess, ‘Wordsworth’s Epitaphic Poetics and the Print Market’, *Studies in Romanticism*, 50 (2011), 55–78 (p. 55). Douglas Kneale, *Monumental Writing: Aspects of Rhetoric in Wordsworth’s Writing* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), see, xviii. Frances Ferguson, *Wordsworth: Language as Counter-Spirit* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977).

relationship) intact. One moves, without compromise, from death *or* life to life *and* death'.<sup>69</sup> Yet, for de Man, language as 'trope' and 'figure' is 'always private', and it is 'not the thing itself but the representation, the picture of the thing'. Just as the pictures are 'mute', so this language is 'mute'. Accordingly, our dependence upon this language in writing implies 'the possible manifestation of sound at our own will'.<sup>70</sup> Although the essays try to construct 'a sequence of mediations between incompatibles: body and grave', any correlation between them is invalidated by the fact that 'the shape and the sense of a world' is 'accessible only in the private way of understanding'. De Man thus claims that 'death is a displaced name for a linguistic predicament, and the restoration of mortality by autobiography deprives and disfigures to the precise extent that it restores'.<sup>71</sup> In a nutshell, for de Man, *Essays Upon Epitaphs* are a sheer self-restoration which cannot go beyond the poetic self.

But for Wordsworth, epitaphs are not mere rhetoric without human presence, but a core element which 'restores a sense of broken community' by linking the living with the dead.<sup>72</sup> In other words, they enable the poet to re-locate his dwelling place in terms of the relationship between the living community, the dead, nature, and immortality. In the process, we should consider the continuing importance of ideas of the one life to his writing in this period, even if critics have tended to overlook this when discussing the later poetry and prose. Admittedly, his way of dealing with mortality in *Essays Upon*

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<sup>69</sup> Paul de Man, 'Autobiography as De-Facement,' in *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), pp. 67-81 (p. 74).

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p. 80.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p. 81.

<sup>72</sup> Lorna Clymer, 'Graved in Tropes: The Figural Logic of Epitaphs and Elegies in Blair, Gray, Cowper, and Wordsworth', *ELH*, 62 (1995), 347-386 (pp. 350-351).



*Epitaphs* is different, for instance, from that in *The Pedlar*. On the one hand, in the latter, he seeks consolation over and against the reality of mortality through the experience of the one life, but the dead are not considered as being included in the dwelling. On the other hand, in the former, he tries to re-establish the idea of the dwelling by making the dead part of his dwelling, rather than being separated from the living, through a relational dynamic. Accordingly, it can be claimed that the vanishing of the idea of the one life does not mean that Wordsworth rejected it; rather he continued to search for an ideal place for dwelling by investigating how the world is interrelated.

### 3.3. Immortality, language, and the permanence of the epitaph

During the period of *The Pedlar* and *Home At Grasmere*, Wordsworth refers to the idea of immortality, but it is in *Essays Upon Epitaphs* (1810) and *The Excursion* (1814) that he provides us with a comprehensive account of immortality in relation to death.<sup>73</sup> In the first essay of his *Essays Upon Epitaphs*, he suggests that ‘the desire to live in the remembrance of his fellows’ and to remember others is due to ‘the consciousness of a principle of immortality in the human soul’.<sup>74</sup> He regards immortality as a built-in idea in human consciousness in the sense that it is ‘implanted in all men naturally’.<sup>75</sup> Then he associates the idea of immortality with the act of writing, which produces epitaphs. He argues that ‘as soon as nations had learned the use of letter, the

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<sup>73</sup> The first ‘Essay upon Epitaphs’ appeared originally, without Wordsworth’s name, as a stop-gap essay in Coleridge’s *The Friend* for 22 February 1810, see ‘Introduction: General’, in *E.E.*, p. 45.

<sup>74</sup> *E.E.*, p. 50.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

epitaphs were inscribed upon these monuments' for immortality.<sup>76</sup> Accordingly, epitaphs manifest the human compulsion to perpetuate life even after death through inscriptions.

The language of immortality in these inscriptions is the reincarnation of the human beings, who are to be remembered in epitaphs. For Wordsworth, language plays a key role in connecting the source with its final destination. In his trope of a 'running stream' in a permanent state of 'influx', language is conceived as the very 'receptacle' of 'the mighty influx' 'without bounds or dimensions', aspiring towards 'infinity'.<sup>77</sup> If we compare the journey of the immortal soul to the mighty influx of a running stream, human language can be understood as the vehicle of the journey. As language becomes an intermediary of the stream between the beginning and the end, it becomes boundlessly or limitlessly a mediator of the soul's journey before and after death.

In this respect, for Wordsworth, language and death are deeply interrelated with each other. Even after death, the soul will return through language in the form of epitaph. In the third essay, the poet argues that language is the incarnation of the thought:

They [words] hold above all other external powers a dominion over thoughts. If words be not (recurring to a metaphor before used) an incarnation of the thought but only a clothing for it, then they surely will

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>77</sup> 'Never did a child stand by the side of a running stream, pondering within himself what power was the feeder of the perpetual current, from what never-wearied sources the body of water was supplied, but he must have been inevitably propelled to follow this question by another: "Towards what abyss is it in progress? What receptacle can contain the mighty influx?" And the spirit of the answer must have been, though the word might be sea or ocean, accompanied perhaps with an image gathered from a map, or from the real object in nature—these might have been the *letter*, but the *spirit* of the answer must have been as inevitably, – a receptacle without bounds or dimensions; – nothing less than infinity', *E.E.*, p. 51.

prove an ill gift [. . .] Language, if it do not uphold, and feed, and leave in quiet, like the power of gravitation or the air we breathe, is a counter-spirit, unremittingly and noiselessly at work to derange, to subvert, to lay waste, to vitiate, and to dissolve.<sup>78</sup>

The metaphor of language as clothing for thought was common in neo-classical poetics, but Wordsworth rejects it, choosing to see ‘words’ as ‘incarnation’ rather than ‘clothing’.<sup>79</sup> In his fourth essay on Style (1841), De Quincey, referring to Wordsworth’s metaphor of incarnation for thought, maintains that ‘if language were merely a dress, then you could separate the two’. But the union of language and thought is ‘too subtle, the intertexture too ineffable, – each co-existing not merely with the other, but each *in* and *through* the other’. Thus ‘the two elements are not united as a body with a separable dress, but as a mysterious incarnation.’<sup>80</sup> If a word can enter into a thought as a constituent part, ‘the incarnation of thought made into a word about decaying flesh directs attention to the reincarnation of human beings to be memorialized in the form of the epitaph’.<sup>81</sup> As a result, the dead can be immortalized by the inscription of the epitaph, which is a very particular kind of incarnation of thought.

Given that a desire for remembering the dead is implanted naturally in human beings and the inscription of the epitaph is the incarnation, rather than clothing, of this desire, Wordsworth holds that the epitaph reveals the sense of permanence and immortality in conjunction with the mortality of human beings.

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<sup>78</sup> *E.E.*, pp. 84–85.

<sup>79</sup> For example, ‘expression’ was regarded as ‘the dress of thought’, see ‘Commentary’, in *E. E.*, p. 114.

<sup>80</sup> De Quincey, ‘On Style’, in *Collected Writings*, ed. by Masson, x (Edinburgh, 1890), p. 300; quoted in ‘Commentary’, in *E.E.*, p. 115.

<sup>81</sup> Dewey W. Hall, ‘Signs of the Dead: Epitaphs, Inscriptions, and the Discourse of the Dead’, *ELH*, 68 (2001), 655–677 (p. 660).

He emphasises the ‘permanence’ of the inscription itself by contrasting it with the ephemeral ‘funeral oration or elegiac poem’ which produce transitory ‘weakness and anguish of sorrow’.<sup>82</sup> Here what matters is the relationship between the permanence of the epitaph and the idea of dwelling. For Wordsworth, the permanence of the epitaph serves not only the dead, but also the living in that he appears to re-formulate the idea of dwelling through the location of the epitaph for those who still live there.

First of all, the permanence of the epitaph reassures people of immortality over and against the darkness and fear of death, which threatens the stability of dwelling. As the writings about the death of John and his two children imply, Wordsworth is struggling with uncertainty as well as the sorrow of loss. When the poet emphasises the immortality of the human soul through the permanence of the epitaph, he attains two objects. The epitaph enables him to recognise that the dead do not disappear completely but continue to dwell in their final home, and at the same time it releases him from the uncertainty of human mortality. ‘The departed Mortal is telling the people that his pains are gone; that a state of rest is come; and he conjures them to weep for him no longer.’<sup>83</sup> In *The Excursion*, death is described as a ‘vivid promise, bright as spring’, as well as being ‘cold, sullen and blank’ (V. ll. 556). The Pastor claims that:

Life, I repeat, is energy of Love  
Divine or human; exercised in pain,  
In strife, and tribulation; and ordained,  
If so approved and sanctified, to pass,

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<sup>82</sup> *E.E.*, pp. 59–60.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

Through shades and silent rest, to endless joy. (Book V, ll. 1018 – 1022)

Although human life goes through the darkness of death, it is ‘the channel’ to ‘endless joy’. Wordsworth describes how ‘the contemplative Soul’, as if ‘sailing upon the orb of this planet’ from west to east, ‘travels in the direction of mortality and advances to the country of everlasting life’.<sup>84</sup> In the long run, death with ‘twofold aspect’ points to faith in immortality as well as to the pain of mortality, through which the living can attain the stability of dwelling, threatened by the darkness of death.

#### 3.4. Religion and the idea of immortality

For Wordsworth, the idea of immortality is not just poetic imagination or philosophical reasoning, but a religious faith. The poet pronounces the epitaph ‘a humble expression of Christian confidence in immortality’, and the faith in immortality described by the pastor in *the Excursion* is also explicitly Christian.<sup>85</sup> But it is debatable whether he accepted Christian faith wholeheartedly during this period. If we look at the poems and letters concerning the death of his brother and his children, we find that they display a rich mixture of suffering and surrendering. The death of his brother John is reflected in the ‘Elegiac Stanzas Suggested by a Picture of Peele Castle’ (*Poems in Two Volumes*, 1807):

I have submitted to a new controul:  
A power is gone, which nothing can restore;

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. 56.

A deep distress hath humaniz'd my Soul. (ll. 34–36)

Yet, he declares that ‘the feeling of my loss will ne’er be old’, and he closes the poem with the juxtaposition of hope and pain: ‘Not without hope we suffer and we mourn’ (ll. 39, 60). After the death of Thomas in 1812, Wordsworth wrote to Southey that ‘For myself dear Southey I dare not say in what state of mind I am [. . .] yet in the agony of my spirit in surrendering such a treasure I feel a thousand times richer than if I had never possessed it’.<sup>86</sup> He seems to suffer from the loss, paradoxically, as much as he surrenders presumably to ‘a new controul’ with hope.

With regard to the juxtaposition of suffering and surrendering, critics have pointed rightly to the ambivalence of his religious faith during the period of the death of his brother and two children. According to Ryan, the poet’s decision to rejoin the Church of England was more like a pledge of allegiance than a confession of faith on the grounds that Christian doctrine gave him comfort after the death of John, but he seems to have been struggling toward a confident assurance of an afterlife as late as 1805.<sup>87</sup> Intriguingly, *The Excursion* conveys a tension between faith and doubt through multiple points of view. Although the didactic narrative of the Pastor dominates Book V, VI and VII of the poem, the unresolved pessimistic view of the Solitary ‘unsettles the

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<sup>86</sup> *WL III*, p. 51.

<sup>87</sup> Robert M. Ryan, *The Romantic Reformation: Religious Politics in English Literature, 1789 – 1824* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 98; Also, in a letter to Sir George Beaumont in March 1805 concerning his struggling with the suffering from the death of his brother John, Wordsworth says that ‘Would it be blasphemy to say that upon the supposition of the thinking principle being destroyed by death, however inferior we may be to the great Cause and ruler of things, we have *more of love* in our Nature than he has? The thought is monstrous; and yet how to get rid of it except upon the supposition of another and a better world I do not see’, *WL I*, p. 556.

absolute claim of any one speaker'.<sup>88</sup> Sharp suggests that '*The Excursion* has no universally authorized poet or reader'.<sup>89</sup> Referring to this unsettled ending of the poem, Gill also sees *The Excursion* 'not as a *confessio fidei*, but as an exploration of faith'.<sup>90</sup>

Although it seems that Wordsworth examines, rather than believes sincerely, his exploration indicates something of the way he begins to see another aspect of God. In *The Pedlar* and *Home At Grasmere* the poet focuses on the immanence of God, present within the world, but now he begins to look at the transcendence of God by which He may exist beyond the world. It will be seen that Wordsworth eventually in his later years committed himself to the idea of heavenly dwelling. Yet, one of the key points in dealing with religion in Wordsworth is how to understand the relationship between the pantheistic tendency in the early years and the more doctrine-oriented attitude in later years. There is a danger of claiming that Wordsworth had two different sets of notions about God. But it should be stressed that his growing interest in the transcendence of God does not exclude a belief in the immanence of God. Likewise, his searching for the immortality of the soul during this period does not mean that he neglected the idea of the earthly dwelling, but rather enabled him to re-formulate the idea within the context of death.

### 3.5. The community of the living and the dead

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<sup>88</sup> Susan J. Wolfson, *The Questioning Presence: Wordsworth, Keats, and the Interrogative Mode in Romantic Poetry* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1986), p. 124.

<sup>89</sup> Michele Turner Sharp, 'The Churchyard among the Wordsworthian Mountains: Mapping the Common Ground of Death and the Reconfiguration of Romantic Community', *ELH*, 62 (1995), 387–407 (p. 403).

<sup>90</sup> Gill, *William Wordsworth*, p. 295.

With his presupposition of the immortality of the soul, Wordsworth re-creates the ideal of dwelling by associating the dead with both the living and nature. For him, the dead do not disappear completely from the community after their death, but they become part of the community in terms of locality, emotion, and morality. Wordsworth even alludes to ‘communion between living and dead’ in the sense that they share a common dwelling place.<sup>91</sup> In ‘We are seven’, an eight-year-old girl understands that both the living and the dead are part of a community. A man encounters a little cottage girl and asks her how many family members she has. She replies:

‘Seven are we,  
And two of us at Conway dwell,  
And two are gone to sea.  
Two of us in the church-yard lie,  
My sister and my brother,  
And in the church-yard cottage, I  
Dwell near them with my mother.’ (ll. 18-24)

Then the adult tries to correct her by reminding her that two are dead. However, she explains how she still regards her two dead siblings as part of her dwelling. For her, they are not separated from those living on the grounds that ‘Their graves are green’; ‘Twelve steps or more from my mother’s door’; ‘My stockings there I often knit’; ‘I sit and sing to them’; ‘And eat my supper there’ (ll. 37, 39, 41, 44, 48). Whereas the man demarcates a clear boundary between the living and the dead, this little girl continues to develop an intimate relationship with the dead in terms of locality, emotion and sharing.

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<sup>91</sup> *E.E.*, p. 66.



In *the Excursion*, the graves are often described not as a cold and dark lifeless place, but as home or ‘habitation’ (Book VI, ll. 116, 219) in peace and holiness. Referring to a vivid Jacobite and a sullen Hanoverian, the Pastor also perceives the Church-yard:

The visible quiet of this holy ground  
And breathed its soothing air; –the Spirit of hope  
And saintly magnanimity (Book VI, ll. 498–500)

As the deaf man was carried ‘from his home / (Yon Cottage shaded by the woody crags) / To the profound stillness of the grave’ (Book VII, ll. 483–485), the act of dying, to some extent, is the act of moving from one home to another home.<sup>92</sup> The graves, as other homes, are ‘around the dwelling place for the living’ (Book V, ll. 649), and thus the dwelling places for living and dead are brought together. In addition, Wordsworth mentions that the bones of the people who died away from home are transferred to their community in order to ‘rest by the side of their forefathers’.<sup>93</sup> The implication is that the dead one, rather than being separated completely from the living, remains part of the community in terms of dwelling place.

The bond between living and dead is developed further through the channel of emotion. For Wordsworth, ‘the general sympathy’, created by the epitaphs, is based upon ‘love—the joint offspring of the worth of the dead and the affections

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<sup>92</sup> Sally Bushell also suggests that in *the Excursion* death is ‘seen as nothing more threatening than a change of dwelling place’, ‘Exempla in the Excursion: the Purpose of the Pastor’s Epitaphic Tales’, *Charles Lamb Bulletin*, 10 (2009), 16–27 (p. 26).

<sup>93</sup> *E.E.*, p. 66. Interestingly, Sharp mentions that Wordsworth’s argument about moving the bones implies ‘a critique of the various economic forces that would have given rise to this general transfer of inhabitants from one locale to another, or even worse, from village to city, see, Sharp, ‘The Churchyard among the Wordsworthian Mountains’, p. 391.

of the living!'.<sup>94</sup> The emotions of the living play a key role in forming their relationship with the dead. At the same time, this emotional response brings people together: 'they suffer and they weep with the same heart; they love and are anxious for one another in one spirit'.<sup>95</sup> Critics, including Sally Bushel, Kurt Fosso, Michele Turner Sharp, and Lorna Clymer, have recently discussed how the culture of mourning contributes to the establishment of the relationship between the dead and the living, and between the people in a community.<sup>96</sup>

In this respect, we ascribe the despondency and seclusion of the Solitary in *The Excursion* to his troubled mourning. The history he narrates about the death of his two children and wife discloses how he has displaced mourning. Referring to the death of his wife, he mentions that he 'suffers now, not seldom, from the thought / That I remember, and can weep no more-' (Book III, ll. 494-495). Then he proclaims:

[. . .] my business is,  
Roaming at large, to observe, and not to feel;  
And, therefore, not to act—convinced that all  
Which bears the name of action, howsoe'er  
Beginning, ends in servitude—still painful,  
And mostly profitless. (Book III, ll. 899-904)

His refusal to feel reveals his way of escaping from loss, grief and 'Mutability,

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<sup>94</sup> *E.E.*, pp. 57-58.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59.

<sup>96</sup> See, Sally Bushel, *Re-Reading The Excursion: Narrative, response and the Wordsworthian dramatic voice* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), p. 165. Kurt Fosso, *Buried Communities: Wordsworth and the Bonds of Mourning* (Albany: State University of New York, 2004). Michele Turner Sharp, 'The Churchyard among the Wordsworthian Mountains: Mapping the Common Ground of Death and the Reconfiguration of Romantic Community', *ELH*, 62 (1995), 387-407. Lorna Clymer, 'Graved in Tropes: The Figural Logic of Epitaphs and Elegies in Blair, Gray, Cowper, and Wordsworth', *ELH*, 62 (1995), 347-386.

which is Nature's bane' (Book III, ll. 465). Interestingly, this displacing of mourning reminds us of the delayed mourning in *The Vale of Esthwaite*, where the narrator, as we discussed earlier, was able to relieve his soul from grief by 'paying the mighty debt of Grief' (ll. 287). The Solitary's 'yearning for reclusion from attachment', as Fosso holds, is 'owed not just to these painful feelings of mortal loss' but 'to grief over his mourning's premature cessation, to his mourning of mourning'.<sup>97</sup> For Wordsworth, emotion becomes one of the key channels through which the dead and the living can develop their relationship.

In addition to the ideas of immortality and mourning, graves also have a moral influence upon the living. In the eighteenth century the social consciousness of remembering the dead was recognised in terms of morality. In his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, Edmund Burke had suggested that social affection is dependent upon the connection between the dead and the living in that the monuments 'keep a durable record of all our acts'.<sup>98</sup> Examining the association of Wordsworth's poetry of epitaph and English burial reform, Karen Sánchez-Eppler shows that the reformers' stance on the relocation and renovation of England's cemeteries was variously reinforced by 'a newly voiced need to protect the repose of the dead, and the notion that the graveyard should be a place of moral edification'.<sup>99</sup> She also mentions William Godwin's comment that the mere act of 'Erecting Some Memorial of the Illustrious Dead [. . .] on the Spot where their Remains have been Interred' would have 'moral uses [. . .]

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<sup>97</sup> Fosso, *Buried Communities*, p. 209.

<sup>98</sup> Edmund Burke, 'Reflections on the Revolution in France', in *The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke, Vol. VIII: The French Revolution, 1790-1794*, ed. by L. G. Mitchell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), pp. 53-293 (p. 21). Quoted by Stuard Allen, 'Wordsworth, Death and Politics', *Literature Compass*, 1 (2004), 1-4 (p. 1).

<sup>99</sup> Karen Sánchez-Eppler, 'Decomposing: Wordsworth's Poetry of Epitaph and English Burial Reform', in *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 42 (1988), 415-431 (p. 416).

of no common magnitude'.<sup>100</sup> Likewise, Wordsworth evokes the moral influence of the graves on the living. In a footnote to his first *Essay*, Wordsworth criticises Dr. Johnson's thought that 'to define an Epitaph is useless; everyone knows that it is an inscription on a Tomb. An Epitaph, therefore, implies no particular character of writing'.<sup>101</sup> Wordsworth, however, reveals the historical role of graves and epitaphs within the moral constitution of the community in that 'epitaphs personate the deceased and represent him as speaking from his own tomb-stone':

He admonishes with the voice of one experienced in the vanity of those affections which are confined to earthly objects, and gives a verdict like a superior Being, performing the office of a judge.<sup>102</sup>

Wordsworth thus recognises 'a parish-church' as 'a visible centre of a community of the living and the dead' where 'the sensations of pious cheerfulness, which attend the celebration of the Sabbath-day, are profitably chastised by the sight of the graves of kindred and friend'.<sup>103</sup>

In Books VI and VII of *The Excursion*, the stories of the unmarked dead in the vale also inspire a moral message. Most of all, the Pastor's act of recounting the stories is 'a positive and communicative act, creating new links between the living' and the dead.<sup>104</sup> His oratory has an effective power to evoke a living narrative in the memories of others. In his 'admiring description

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<sup>100</sup> William Godwin, *Essay on Sepulchres: or, A Proposal for Erecting Some Memorial of the Illustrious Dead of All Ages on the Spot where their Remains have been Interred* (London: 1809), p. 91. Quoted by Sánchez-Eppler, 'Decomposing', p. 417.

<sup>101</sup> *E.E.*, p. 49.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 55–56.

<sup>104</sup> Bushell, 'Exempla in the Excursion', p. 26.

of the Pastor as narrator', Charles Lamb pointed out how, in particular, the environmental context of his oratory generates a sense of the connection between life and death:

Nothing can be conceived finer than the manner of introducing these tales. With heaven above his head, and the mouldering turf at his feet – standing betwixt life and death – he seems to maintain that spiritual relation which he bore to his living flock, in its undiminished strength, even with their ashes.<sup>105</sup>

By bringing back various memories of the dead through his narrative, the Pastor attempts to re-connect the living with the dead in terms of moral implications. He provides a number of stories about the dead who were poor and rich, powerful and marginalized, virtuous and wicked, friends and opponents, and draws the same conclusion from them all: that human beings share their mortality in common. After hearing the tales, the grey-haired Wanderer exclaims:

So fails, so languishes, grows dim, and dies,  
All that this Word is proud of. From their spheres  
The stars of human glory are cast down;  
Perish the roses and the flowers of Kings,  
Princes and Emperors, and the crowns and palms  
Of all the Mighty, withered and consumed!  
Nor is power given to lowliest Innocence  
Long to protect her won. The Man himself  
Departs; (Book VII, ll. 998–1007)

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<sup>105</sup> Charles Lamb, 'The Excursion; a Poem', *Quarterly Review*, 12 (October 1814), 100–111 (p. 108). Quoted by Bushell, 'Exempla in the Excursion', p. 26.

This response is resonant with the sense of the transitoriness of human life, and therefore the graves become ‘a warning for a thoughtless Man’ (Book VI, ll. 824). For instance, the Pastor recounts a story about a woman who was often sent abroad and lost her child, and reminds us that

[. . .] for not only she bewailed  
A Mother’s loss, but mourned in bitterness  
Her own transgression; Penitent sincere  
As ever raised to Heaven a streaming eye. (Book VI, ll. 1009 – 1012)

In this respect, the dead become part of dwelling with the living ‘in memory and for warning’ (Book VI, ll. 1103).

### 3.6. The relationship between nature and the graveyard

We have seen how nature is a crucial part of dwelling in *The Pedlar* and *Home At Grasmere* in terms of the immanence of God, its beauty, and its reciprocal relationship with the dwellers. It continues to play a key role in Wordsworth’s reformulation of the idea of dwelling in association with the dead. As an idealized community stands in a close relationship to nature within the context of the natural environment, Wordsworth recognises the significance of nature in the location of the graveyard. Allocating several pages in the first ‘Essays’ to an examination of burial practices from ancient times to the present, Wordsworth presents a striking contrast between a large town and the countryside with regard to the place of epitaphs:

Let a man only compare in imagination the unsightly manner in which our monuments are crowded together in the busy, noisy, unclean, and almost grassless church-yard of a large town, with the still seclusion of a Turkish cemetery, in some remote place; and yet further sanctified by the grove of cypress in which it is embosomed.<sup>106</sup>

He prefers above all else the location of ‘a village church-yard, lying as it does in the lap of nature’, and most favourably contrasted with ‘that of a town of crowded population.’<sup>107</sup> One of the reasons why Wordsworth wants to locate the monuments in nature is that ‘the language of the senseless stone’ can be given ‘a voice enforced and endeared by the benignity of that nature’.<sup>108</sup> And this ‘voice’ of the monuments offers a ‘Traveller’, passing by, some soothing ‘visible appearances or immediate impressions, lively and affecting analogies of life as a journey–death as a sleep overcoming the tired wayfarer [. . .] of virtue that standeth firm as a rock against the beating waves [. . .] of admonitions and heart-stirring remembrances, like a refreshing breeze that comes without warning, or the taste of the waters of an unexpected fountain’.<sup>109</sup>

Just as in *The Excursion* the stories of those dead in the vale coalesce together with those of the living, so the site of the graves, like the dwelling place of the living, is hardly differentiated from the landscape.<sup>110</sup> As the act of dying is an act of moving from one home to another home, the dead, like the living, inhabit the vale. The natural environment appears to create a soothing

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<sup>106</sup> *E.E.*, p. 54.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>110</sup> See, Sharp, ‘The Churchyard among the Wordsworthian Mountains’, p. 396.

effect on the burial site as well as on the dwelling place of the living. After reading the tranquilizing inscription in the ‘Church-yard’: ‘Discerning Mortal! Do thou serve the will / Of Time’s eternal Master, and that peace, / Which the World wants, shall be for Thee confirmed’ (Book VI, ll. 535–537), the Sceptic agrees that ‘Smooth verse, inspired by no unlettered Muse’, and ‘the strain of thought / Accords with Nature’s language’ (Book VI, ll. 538–540). In other words, he identifies the effect of the verse with the effect of the natural surroundings: ‘the soft voice / Of yon white torrent falling down the rocks / Speaks, less distinctly, to the same effect’ (Book VI, ll. 540–542). For example, in Book VII, the Pastor explains how a ‘Tall-pine tree’, standing next to the tomb of the deaf Dalesman:

At the touch of every wandering breeze,  
Murmurs, not idly, o’er his peaceful grave.  
Soul-cheering Light, most bountiful of Things!  
Guide of our way, mysterious Comforter!  
Whose sacred influence, spread through earth and heaven. (ll. 497–501)

Therefore, Wordsworth affirms that ‘when death is in our thoughts, nothing can make amends for the want of the soothing influences of nature’.<sup>111</sup> In this respect, he finds a close connection between nature and the tombs in that the latter owe their soothing beauty to the former: even to the extent that the language of the monuments is ‘in unison with that nature’.<sup>112</sup>

Another aspect of the close link between nature and graves can be found in

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<sup>111</sup> *Essays Upon Epitaphs*, p. 54.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.



Wordsworth's egalitarian idea of dwelling. He invokes the sense of commonness everywhere from *Lyrical Ballads* to *The Excursion*, and we have seen that, in *Home at Grasmere*, he emphasises a reciprocal relationship between the dwellers and the natural environment, and integrates the lives of the locals into his idea of dwelling.<sup>113</sup> Likewise, the graves, as part of Wordsworth's re-established notion of dwelling, are associated with the sense of commonness within the context of nature. In *The Excursion*, we hear about various deaths, but all of them will 'find an equal resting-place' in 'this place':

[. . .] open to the good  
 And evil, to the just and the unjust;  
 In which they find an equal resting-place:  
 Even as the multitude of kindred brooks  
 And streams, whose murmur fills this hollow vale,  
 Whether their course be turbulent or smooth,  
 Their waters clear or sullied, all are lost  
 Within the bosom of yon chrystal Lake,  
 And end their journey in the same repose! (Book V, ll 920-928)

For Wordsworth, in 'nature' 'all men resemble each other, as in the temple where the universal Father is worshipped, or by the side of the grave which gathers all human Beings to itself, and equalises the lofty and the low'.<sup>114</sup> In addition, an epitaph is 'not a proud writing shut up for the studious: it is exposed to all – to the wise and the most ignorant': 'in the church-yard it is

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<sup>113</sup> 'Advertisement', in *Lyrical Ballads 1798* (Oxford: Woodstock, 1990), pp. i-v (p. i): he announces that his poetry is concerned with 'the language of conversation in the middle and lower classes of society'; 'The Preface', in *Lyrical Ballads 1800* (Poole: Woodstock, 1997), pp. v-xlvi (p. xxxvi-xxxvii): here he also says that he has chosen 'subjects from common life, and endeavoured to bring my language near to the real language of men'.

<sup>114</sup> *E.E.*, p. 59.

open to the day; the sun looks down upon the stone, and the rains of heaven beat against it'.<sup>115</sup> The beauty of nature also contributes to the epitaph's openness to all in that it 'must have borrowed the beauty from the surrounding images of nature – from the trees, the wild flowers, from a stream running perhaps within sight or hearing'.<sup>116</sup> Thus, nature is involved in the egalitarian and common aspects of the graves.

Interestingly, nature itself also plays an epitaphic function in association with memory. In his 'Wordsworth, Inscriptions, and Romantic Nature Poetry', Hartman holds that, for Wordsworth, landscape and graveyard merge together through the dynamic of the mind. In eighteenth-century poetry, 'not only is the graveyard a major locus for the expression of nature sentiment, but is herself a larger graveyard inscribed deeply with evidences of past life', for example, 'Gray's Elegy (1751)'.<sup>117</sup> In a similar vein, Kneale also recognises 'the voice of nature' as 'an epitaphic voice' in which 'nature itself is like one giant epitaph, one complex memorial text to be conned by human beings'.<sup>118</sup> This convergence of graveyard and nature is found in Wordsworth's poetry where he 'commemorates a strange spot in nature rather than a grave' and 'sees the pile of stones as a funeral pile' in his imagination.<sup>119</sup> For example, in his earlier experimental poems such as 'The Thorns', 'The Two April Mornings', and 'To Joanna', we discover that 'the spot of mourning' 'lies in close association to the

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>117</sup> Quoted in Jonathan Roberts, 'Wordsworth, Epitaph, and the "Epitaphic"', *Literature Compass* 1 (2004), 1–4 (pp. 2–3); Geoffrey Hartman, 'Wordsworth, Inscriptions, and Romantic Nature Poetry', in *From Sensibility to Romanticism: Essays Presented to Frederick A. Pottle*, ed. by Frederick W. Hilles and Harold Bloom (New York: Oxford UP, 1965), pp. 389–413 (p. 392).

<sup>118</sup> J. Douglas Kneale, *Monumental Writing: Aspects of Rhetoric in Wordsworth's Poetry* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), p. 83.

<sup>119</sup> Hartman, 'Wordsworth, Inscriptions, and Romantic Nature Poetry', p. 393.

natural objects of a thorn bush, a bridge, a native rock'.<sup>120</sup> In 'Lines Left upon a Seat in a Yew-tree', Wordsworth gives an account of a man who died in a vale, whose memory is evoked by 'this lonely yew-tree,' 'piled-stones,' 'barren rocks' (ll. 1, 9, 25). And the poet pronounces 'this seat his only monument' 'in this deep vale' (ll. 42-43). 'The poet reads landscape as if it were a monument or grave', and therefore 'the lapidary inscription, replaced by the meditative mind', is 'freed from its dependence' upon a specific tomb.<sup>121</sup> Landscape itself, rather than a specific tomb, becomes epitaphic by associating itself with memory. Accordingly, in *The Vale of Esthwaite*, the poet, 'wandering round the vale', states that '[From] every rock would hang a tale' (ll. 352-3).

Furthermore, nature's epitaphic function requires that landscape is closely associated with the consciousness of the characters in *The Excursion*. Given that landscape as epitaph inspires the meditative mind particularly in relation to memory, it can be shown that, in Book V of *the Excursion*, 'the poet transforms the physical journey through nature into a mental excursion which concerns the metaphysics of existence'.<sup>122</sup> Being approached by the Pastor, the Wanderer provides a brief summary about his discussion on despondency with the Solitary:

[. . .] A living power  
Is virtue, or not better than a name,  
Fleeting as health or beauty, and unsound?  
So that the only substance which remains,  
(For thus the tenor of complaint hath run,)

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<sup>120</sup> Hall, 'Signs of the Dead', pp. 657-658.

<sup>121</sup> Hartman, 'Wordsworth, Inscriptions, and Romantic Nature Poetry', pp. 400-401.

<sup>122</sup> Hall, 'Signs of the Dead', p. 662.

Among so many shadows, are the pains  
And penalties of miserable life,  
Doomed to decay, and then expire in dust!  
Our cogitations, this way have been drawn,  
These are the points,” the Wanderer said, “on which  
Our inquest turns. – Accord, good Sir! the light  
Of your experience to dispel this gloom” (Book V, ll. 466–477)

This comment implies that the despondency of the Solitary is caused by his way of interpreting death as ‘the pains and penalties of miserable life’. The Solitary’s gloom regarding the plight of existence, caused by his way of understanding, shows how ‘elegies lamenting the dead turn into self-morbid solipsism’.<sup>123</sup> As the Wanderer ‘turns our inquest’ on such inner aspects of human experience, his excursion ‘turns inward as an incursion through the inner depths of consciousness played out in the voices of the Wanderer, the Solitary, the Pastor, and the poet himself’.<sup>124</sup> As a result, the description of the landscape can be associated with that of the consciousness.

#### 4. Heavenly Dwelling

##### 4.1. *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*

In the previous section, we saw how Wordsworth re-establishes the idea of dwelling by associating the peace and harmony of a cottage in nature with the influence and presence of death. If Wordsworth’s early notion of dwelling is concerned with an earthly home and the immanence of God, in *Essays Upon Epitaphs* and *The Excursion* he considers immortality and the transcendent

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid., p. 663.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., p. 662.

aspect of God. Further, one of the interesting changes in his later period is that he becomes more aware of the vulnerability of earthly cottages and attempts to seek a more secure home in a heavenly dwelling. Most critics regard his later poetry as showing a decline in his poetic powers or a falling off in his achievement, but my purpose in this section is not to examine whether his poetic imagination gradually diminished, but to show how his perspective shifts from a view of the dwelling in this world to a view of the dwelling in the next world.<sup>125</sup> Focusing on Part III of the *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, I shall explore how Wordsworth contemplates the heavenly dwelling through church architecture, in which nature still constitutes one of the key elements.

The *Ecclesiastical Sonnets* consist of 132 sonnets that, while beginning with the establishment of Christianity in England to the situation of religion in Wordsworth's day and dramatizing its ebb and flow, describe a journey or pilgrimage to an eternal city, along with a struggle over the uncertainty of faith in a fallen world, as well as a yearning for political stability and a spiritual goal over and against mutability, decay, change and paradox.<sup>126</sup> The sonnets used to be not only part of Wordsworth's long neglected later work, but also along with the poet's doubtful achievements in his later works, received some harsh criticism.<sup>127</sup> But some critics have not failed to recognise their significance

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<sup>125</sup> See, Richard D. McGhee, 'And Earth and Stars Composed a Universal Heaven: A View of Wordsworth's Later Poetry', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 11 (1971), 641-657 (p. 641).

<sup>126</sup> The series were originally published in 1822 as the *Ecclesiastical Sketches* with 102 sonnets, but in 1837 Wordsworth changed the title to the *Ecclesiastical Sonnets in Series*, and he had added thirty sonnets to the original 102 by 1845. See, Anne L. Rylestone, *Prophetic Memory in Wordsworth's Ecclesiastical Sonnets* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1991), p. xi; The quotations from *Ecclesiastical Sonnets* refer to *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, 4 vols., ed. by E. De Selincourt and Helen Darbishire (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), vol. 3, pp. 341-416.

<sup>127</sup> There has been very little written about the *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, which are touched upon

within the context of Wordsworth's whole work. For example, attention should be paid to the interconnectedness of religious ideas in the *Ecclesiastical Sonnets* and in *The Excursion* concerning the nature of religion, the origins of worship, immanence and transcendence in nature. While the uncertainty of faith was not resolved yet in *The Excursion*, the composition of *Ecclesiastical Sonnets* 'marked a very important moment in Wordsworth's intellectual life' in which he claimed 'the necessity of defending' faith as 'the safeguard against anarchy', 'social retrogression', mutability and mortality.<sup>128</sup> In particular, it is clear that the poet is still preoccupied with the fear of death and the vulnerability of any earthly home in the sonnets. In *Essays Upon Epitaphs* and *The Excursion*, death is discussed in a positive sense as the poet attempts to be reconciled with it by uncovering the meaning and influence of death for the living. In the *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, however, the poet focuses upon the destructive power of death, which is in marked contrast with the immortality and eternity of the heavenly dwelling.

#### 4.2. The experience of death in the journey of our life

If the sonnets outline the whole of British Church history, Wordsworth,

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only in a footnote or a passing comment in Wordsworth studies; In 1949, Hoxie Neale Fairchild argued that 'Detailed analysis of *Ecclesiastical Sonnets* is probably unnecessary and certainly impossible. With a few familiar exceptions, the sonnets are mildly agitated pieces of rhetoric rather than poems. They seldom reveal any personal religious emotion. So far as their ideas are concerned, they give the impression of being the result of collaboration between a humane Protestant who wishes to say all that can justly be said for Catholicism and a humane Catholic who wishes to be equally polite to Protestantism. The plus and minus signs in this travesty of the via media cancel out, leaving an intellectual and spiritual zero', *Religious Trends in English Poetry. Vol. 3, 1780-1803: Romantic Faith* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1949), pp. 227-228. Quoted by Rylestone, *Prophetic Memory*, p. xv; Stephen Gill also mentioned that 'there are some strong lines and Mutability is rightly anthologized as an example of Wordsworth's later manner at its most august, but for the most part the sonnets are dull', *William Wordsworth*, p. 344.

<sup>128</sup> See, Gill, *William Wordsworth*, pp. 343-344.

interestingly, draws a picture of a person's whole life-journey from birth to death in part III from Sonnet XX to Sonnet XXXIV. His understanding of the journey of life is now entirely conditioned by the link between the mortality of human life and the promise of faith. Each stage of life, overshadowed by the fear of human mortality, is marked by a sacrament, such as Baptism (XX), The Marriage Ceremony (XXVI), and Funeral Service (XXXI).<sup>129</sup> Although the sacrament of Baptism is meant to celebrate the sense of a new beginning for a new born baby under 'parental Love' and 'Grace from above', Wordsworth juxtaposes life and death in Sonnet XX (Baptism). In the first half the sacrament of baptism is described as a transformation into 'a christian Flower / A Growth from sinful Nature's bed of weeds!', which reminds us of St. Paul's idea that 'Therefore as by the offence of one *judgement came* upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon all men unto justification of life'.<sup>130</sup> The new born baby thus changes from death to life through baptism. Yet, a tension between life and death dominates the second half of the sonnet in the sense that 'The tombs – which hear and answer that brief cry, / The Infant's notice of his second birth – / Recall the wandering Soul to sympathy / With what man hopes from Heaven, yet fears from Earth'. In spite of the grace of life 'from above', the awareness of 'fears from Earth' recalls the unavoidable reality of death.

In Sonnet XXII (Catechising), Wordsworth continues to evoke a painful

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<sup>129</sup> XX. Baptism, XXI. Sponsors, XXII. Catechising, XXIII. Confirmation, XXIV. Confirmation Continued, XXV. Sacrament, XXVI. The Marriage Ceremony, XXVII. Thanksgiving After Childbirth, XXVIII. Visitation of the Sick, XXIX. The Communion Service, XXX. Forms of Prayer at Sea, XXXI. Funeral Service, XXXII. Rural Ceremony, XXXIII. Regrets, XXXIV. Mutability.

<sup>130</sup> Romans, 5. 18.

experience of mortality, being reminded of the loss of his mother at an early age. This Sonnet uses the narrator's recollection of the occasion on which the children were tested to decide whether they were ready to be confirmed into the church. The first seven lines describe well the anxious little children who were gathering around 'the Pastor', wearing 'new-wrought vest' and holding 'a vernal posy': some were murmuring 'like a distant bee', but some made 'a bold unerring answer'. The next few lines recall an affectionate relationship between the narrator and his mother as her 'anxious heart for me' [narrator] may have been 'fluttered' by 'a bold unerring answer' and her son wore 'the flowers' 'bound' by the 'happy hand' of 'Beloved Mother'. And yet, this loving relationship is juxtaposed with a bitter remembrance of her death. A picture of her face is conjured up by the 'inaudible command' of 'Sweet flowers', but the last two lines disclose that the narrator was too young to understand the idea of death and to mourn his loss, and that his present 'heartfelt sigh' does not seem to compensate properly for the loss: 'O lost too early for the frequent tear, / And ill requited by this heartfelt sigh!' In a similar vein, Sonnet XXIV (Confirmation Continued) expresses a mother's painful experience of her older daughter's death, creating a tension between a vision of Heaven and human mortality. Although the sonnet imagines that the 'Sister-child' may dwell in Heaven, the questions the poet asks – 'Did gleams appear? / Opened a vision of that blissful place / Where dwells a Sister-child?' – underline the hard fact of the girl's death reserved for the last lines of the sonnet: 'And was power given / Part of her lost One's glory back to trace / Even to this Rite? For thus She



knelt, and, ere, / The summer-leaf had faded, passed to Heaven.’<sup>131</sup> Just as the poet reveals ‘ill requited’ loss in the final line of Sonnet XXII, so he finds an insecure balance between an eternal life in Heaven and human mortality on earth in Sonnet XXIV.

Wordsworth then carries on the journey of life from birth to death on earth through other sacraments, and ends finally with Sonnet XXXIV (Mutability), acknowledged as the greatest poem in the entire series and the final sonnet in the series on liturgy. Although by juxtaposing a loving relationship and a painful experience of loss the poet creates a tension over the teachings of the sacraments in the previous sonnets, he appears to want to transcend the reality of mortality by the authority of the voice in the sonnet ‘Mutability’, the impersonality of mutability itself.<sup>132</sup> In this poem, the impersonal voice of ‘Mutability’ communicates Wordsworth’s realisation of both the ubiquity of mutability and our inability to control it. The ‘outward forms’ of ‘Truth’ are compared to ‘frosty rime, / That in the morning whitened hill and plain / And is no more’, but this sense of mutability is ubiquitous:

From low to high doth dissolution climb,  
And sink from high to low, along a scale  
Of awful notes, whose concord shall not fail

Further, ‘the unimaginable touch of Time’ suggests our inability to control death and dissolution. The poet thus manages to keep a distance from the painful

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<sup>131</sup> Nancy Easterlin, *Wordsworth and the Question of “Romantic Religion”* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1996), p. 147.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148.

personal emotional aspect of human mortality and he is able to recognise death as it is through his ‘overarching awareness of death and dissolution as the quintessential common experience’.<sup>133</sup> What is implied in ‘Mutability’ is that, in spite of being overshadowed by mortality, the sacraments of the church, to which ‘the Soul must be tied by chain’ (XXV. Sacrament), can outshine the fear and ‘gloomiest shade’ (XXV. Sacrament) of death by bringing out ‘hopes from Heaven’ (XX. Baptism) and ‘a path of light’ (XXV. Sacrament). It should be noted that the sonnets about a life’s journey from birth to death are immediately followed by the sonnets on the subject of church architecture (XXXVIII – XLVII), which symbolises the heavenly dwelling as well as the house of God for common worship. Just as human life is subject to mutability and mortality, so human dwelling itself on earth is vulnerable to ruin. Although the poet conceives human life as ‘grass that springeth up at morn, / grows green, and is cut down and withereth / Ere nightfall’ (XXXI. Funeral Service), he attempts to move beyond this view by looking at the eternity of the heavenly dwelling through church architecture.

#### 4.3. Church architecture as a symbol of heavenly dwelling

In the previous parts of this chapter, it was shown that cottages and tombs are key elements to formulate the idea of dwelling, but as Kerrigan points out, in Wordsworth’s later works they are ‘replaced by chapels and churches’, which are ‘increasingly treated as types of heaven, images of the Father’s house with many mansions which Christ promised his followers’.<sup>134</sup> Yet, in fact,

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid., p. 149.

<sup>134</sup> Kerrigan, ‘Wordsworth and the Sonnet’, pp. 50–51.

Wordsworth already associated his understanding of human life with the idea of church architecture, even during those periods when his poetry was full of cottages and tombs. In his 'Preface' to *The Excursion*, for instance, Wordsworth famously described *The Recluse* as 'a gothic Church' in a holistic sense in which *The Prelude* is 'the Anti-chapel' and his minor Pieces are 'the little Cells, Oratories, and sepulchral Recesses'.<sup>135</sup> Considering *The Recluse* as 'a philosophical Poem', 'of Man, Nature, and Sociey', we suppose that for Wordsworth church architecture must be an essential model revealing the whole picture of human life. The conclusion is that the image of the church building already played a crucial role in his perception of the unity of the universe in his early period. Moreover, in *Essays Upon Epitaphs*, he presents 'a parish-church' as 'a visible centre of a community of the living and the dead'. Finally, in the *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, the Church 'suddenly imposes itself upon the reader's consciousness much like a mountain that has long dominated a familiar landscape'.<sup>136</sup> Whereas the poet was able to find solace and vision in landscape in the past, he now turns to church architecture in which he uncovers an imperishable eternal home. In other words, he tries to locate a safe and eternal home over and against mutability in the church building which symbolises a heavenly dwelling.

Most of all, the poet establishes the Church as a place of shelter for Faith, for the exiled and the distressed. In Sonnet XXXIX, the church which would be built from 'Those forest oaks of Druid memory, / Shall long survive, to shelter

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<sup>135</sup> 'Preface' to *The Excursion* (1814). '[. . .] and the two Works have the same kind of relation to each other, if he may so express himself, as the Anti-chapel has to the body of a gothic Church.'

<sup>136</sup> Rylestone, *Prophetic Memory*, p. 1.

the Abode / Of genuine Faith'. The Church of England is also described as 'a fearless resting-place' for 'self-exiled / From altars threatened, levelled, or defiled' during the French Revolution in Sonnet XXXVI (Emigrant French Clergy). Roaming through the aisles of Westminster Abbey, the poet holds that, 'in hours of fear / Or grovelling thought', the believers can 'seek a refuge' here (Sonnet XLV).

Further, church buildings as a shelter present a sense of eternity and immortality. Just before introducing Sonnet XXXVIII (New Churches), Wordsworth offers two sonnets on 'Old Abbeys' (XXXV) and 'Emigrant French Clergy' (XXXVI) which deal with the destruction of churches. The former traces back to the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1539, and the latter originates with the French Revolution in 1789. For Wordsworth, one of the decisive common features between them is that churches were reduced to ruins or dust during those periods: 'MONASTIC Domes! Following my downward way, / Untouched by due regret I marked your fall! / Now, ruin' (XXXV); 'EVEN while I speak, the sacred roofs of France / Are shattered into dust' (XXXVI). Although they were wrecked in ruin and dust, a sense of continuity flows through them: 'Once ye were holy, ye are holy still' (XXXV), and the 'self-exiled' find 'a fearless resting-place' for 'their Faith' in England (XXXVI). Finally, in Sonnet XXXVIII (New Churches), he declares 'the wished-for Temples rise!' again 'through England bounds'. Just as a phoenix burns itself on a funeral pyre every five centuries and rises from the ashes with renewed youth, the poet imagines that new churches rise from ruins and dust. The notion of re-rising thus, like a phoenix, embodies the ideas of eternity and immortality, which resonate

through the sonnets on church architecture: ‘ye everlasting Piles!’ (XLII), ‘born for immortality’ (XLIII), ‘dreamt not of a perishable home’ (XLV), ‘Infinity’s embrace’ (XLV), ‘the eternal City’ (XLVII).

In Sonnet XLIII (Inside of King’s College Chapel, Cambridge), the poet is able to refer explicitly to the notion of immortality in the interaction between the ‘immense’ / And glorious’ interior architecture of the chapel and music, light, and shade which ‘directs the human spirit to reveries of paradise’<sup>137</sup>:

These lofty pillars, spread that branching roof  
Self-poised, and scooped into ten thousand cells,  
Where light and shade repose, where music dwells  
Lingering-and wandering on as loth to die;  
Like thoughts whose very sweetness yieldeth proof  
That they were born for immortality. (ll. 9–14)

In fact, the church building itself is not the heavenly Jerusalem, but the symbol and prototype of the eternal home, ‘a microcosm of the celestial world on earth’, which links the earthly with the heavenly home and enables the believers to overcome the fear of mortality in an earthly home.<sup>138</sup> Wordsworth thus, at the beginning of the next Sonnet XLV, writes that ‘They dreamt not of a perishable home / Who thus could build’. In addition, he asserts, ‘The house that cannot pass away be ours’, in a sonnet, published in 1842, which implies his yearning for heavenly dwelling, in contrast with the mutability and mortality of any

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<sup>137</sup> John Delli-Carpini, *History, Religion, and Politics in William Wordsworth’s Ecclesiastical Sonnets: with an Appendix Containing the Text of the Ecclesiastical Sonnets* (Lewiston, N.Y.; Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 2004), p. 98.

<sup>138</sup> See Delli-Carpini, *History, Religion, and Politics*, p. 97: ‘Sunlight shining through the stained glass windows of gothic cathedrals on the whitewashed walls of its interior was intended to foreshadow the gems of the heavenly Jerusalem as described in Revelation 4. 2–3.’

earthly dwelling.<sup>139</sup>

#### 4.4. Nature in the heavenly dwelling

Unlike the earthly dwelling, a heavenly dwelling seems to involve transcendence and ‘the world above’ (XLII), rather than the material world of a landscape in nature. Intriguingly, however, in the sonnets on church buildings nature as corporeal reality continues to play a key role in the church building with reference to the spatial and emotional and mental contexts. First of all, nature as material reality is incorporated into church buildings in terms of beauty, purity and caring. In the prefatory letter to *Ecclesiastical Sketches* (1822), Wordsworth informs us that the composition of the sonnets was inspired by his and his friend Sir George Beaumont’s search for a site for a new church in his Estate in 1820.<sup>140</sup> What is striking is how the beauty of nature stimulated him to look at human life from the perspective of the power of faith: ‘It was one of the most beautiful mornings of a mild season, -- our feelings were in harmony with the cherishing influences of the scene; and such being our purpose, we were naturally led to look back upon past events with wonder and

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<sup>139</sup> Sonnet XXVIII in *Micellaneous Sonnets*, ‘The most alluring clouds that mount the sky / Owe to a troubled element their forms, / Their hues to sunset. If with raptured eye / We watch their splendor, shall we covet storms, / And wish the Lord of day his slow decline / Would hasten, that such pomp may float on high? / Behold, already they forget to shine, / Dissolve – and leave to him who gazed a sigh. / Not loth to thank each moment for its boon / Of pure delight, come whensoever it may, / Peace let us seek, – to steadfast things attune / Calm expectations, leaving to the gay / And volatile their love of transient bowers, / The house that cannot pass away be ours.’

<sup>140</sup> ‘During the month of December, 1820, I accompanied a much-loved and honoured Friend in a walk different parts of his Estate, with a view to fix upon the Site of a New Church which he intended to erect. It was one of the most beautiful mornings of a mild season, --our feelings were in harmony with the cherishing influences of the scene; and such being our purpose, we were naturally led to look back upon past events with wonder and gratitude, and on the future with hope. Not long afterwards, some of the Sonnets which will be found towards the close of this Series were produced as a private memorial of that morning’s occupation’, ‘Advertisement’, in *Ecclesiastical Sketches* (1822).

gratitude, and on the future with hope.’ This beautiful landscape thus encouraged the poet to embrace the past and the future in the light of God’s love for the world during his search for a site for a new church. Looking at ‘Old Abbeys’, the poet detects ‘beauty’ and ‘ancient stillness’ as well as ‘ruin’ in Sonnet XXXV, which vividly reminds us of *Tintern Abbey*, in which the beauty of nature near Tintern Abbey is praised.

The purity of nature also contributes to building a new church in that the chosen site for a new church is not an arbitrary one, but a place which maintains its innocence in nature. At the very beginning of Sonnet XXXIX (Church To Be Erected), he proclaims:

Be this the chosen site; the virgin sod,  
Moistened from age to age by dewy eve,  
Shall disappear, and grateful earth receive  
The corner-stone from hands that build to God. (ll. 1-4)

Interestingly, the phrase, ‘Moistened from age to age’, implies additionally the awareness of a sacredness which points to primitive gods. In the next lines, it is mentioned that ‘Those forest of oaks of Druid memory’ will ‘shelter the Abode Of genuine Faith’. This primitive sacredness then is consecrated as God’s dwelling place by His holiness:<sup>141</sup>

[. . .] there let the holy altar stand

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<sup>141</sup> Mircea Eliade comments on the link between primitive and modern religious architecture: ‘Thus religious architecture simply took over and developed the cosmological symbolism already present in the structure of primitive habitations’, *The Sacred and the Profane* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1959), p. 58. Quoted by Delli-Carpini, *History, Religion, and Politics*, p. 96.

For kneeling adoration; – while – above,  
Broods, visibly portrayed, the mystic Dove,  
That shall protect from blasphemy the Land. (ll. 11-4)

‘The mystic Dove’ implies that the purity and ancient holiness of nature will turn into the sacredness of God. Wordsworth uses a similar image about the relationship between nature and a new church-yard in Sonnet XLI (New Church-Yard). Just as ‘the virgin sod’ shall be offered to the site for the new church, so ‘The encircling ground, in native turf arrayed’ is now ‘given to social interests, and to favouring Heaven’ ‘by solemn consecration’ even to the extent that ‘the lonely Sexton’s spade shall wound the tender sod’. Yet, this pure place will become a place for encounter between the people and God: ‘The prayers, the contrite struggle, and the trust / That to the Almighty Father looks through all.’

Further, the caring aspect of nature appears to replace the power of incense in the new churches. In Sonnet XL, Wordsworth describes the moment of burning incense inside the church: ‘clouds of incense mounting and veiled the rood’. But he sees it as ‘appalling rite’, which ‘Our Church prepares not, trusting to the might / Of simple truth with grace divine imbued’. Rather than ‘concealing the precious Cross, like men ashamed’, with clouds of incense, he imagines that caring nature will venerate it:

[. . .] the Sun with his first smile  
Shall greet that symbol crowning the low Pile:  
And the fresh air of incense-breathing morn  
Shall wooingly embrace it; and green moss  
Creep round its arms through centuries unborn. (ll. 10-4)



Just as the Grasmere vale receives a new dweller with tenderness, so the smile of the Sun, morning fresh air and green moss, will pay homage to the cross. Soothing nature's veneration of the cross brings to mind the pedlar's mystic experience in nature through which he was able to feel 'the lesson deep of love' (ll. 180-185), rather than by the traditional way of religious education. The landscape is thus integrated spatially and spiritually into the church, which suggests that a soothing experience in nature can point to the idea of a heavenly dwelling.<sup>142</sup>

The coalescence of nature and the church is also found when Wordsworth articulates the emotional, psychological and spiritual solace in church architecture, which bears a close parallel to the images of nature creating consolation and hope. When the poet contemplates the interior architecture of the church, the account of his experience is very close to the account of his experience in nature. In fact, there is nature's literal assimilation into the church in Sonnet XXXIII (Regrets) in which 'the church building, filled with greens at Christmas', serves as a 'counter Spirit to nature in winter'<sup>143</sup>:

Go, seek, when Christmas snows discomfort bring,  
The counter Spirit found in some gay church  
Green with fresh holly, every pew a perch (ll. 9-11)

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<sup>142</sup> Rylestone comments that 'the cooperation between the elements of nature and the Church is portrayed forcefully by John Constable in his *View of Salisbury Cathedral from the Bishop's Grounds* (1826), in which the trees nurturingly frame, indeed embrace, but do not oppress or visually overpower the cathedral. The friendship between Wordsworth and Constable began in 1806 and continued to the painter's death in 1837. Although they admired each other's work, there is no record that Wordsworth commented on this particular painting', *Prophetic Memory*, p. 118 n. 3.

<sup>143</sup> Rylestone, *Prophetic Memory*, p. 96.

Here the solace and 'Hope' (XXXIII) created by the church's Christmas rituals seems tantamount to an experience of nature.<sup>144</sup> Further, for Wordsworth, the sensual aspects of nature, such as light, dark and sound, are of great significance in that they themselves bring about consolation and at the same time enable the poet to perceive the depth of life in his poetic imagination. Intriguingly, we can find such images inside the church, 'where light and shade repose, / where music dwells' (XLIII), even to the extent that darkness and light or solitude and joy in nature are held together in one vision.<sup>145</sup> In Sonnet XLIV, he expresses how the fusion of the darkness of Night and the music leads to a mystical experience in King's College Chapel:

Shine on, until ye fade with coming Night!-  
 But, from the arms of silence-list! O list!  
 The music bursteth into second life;  
 The notes luxuriate, every stone is kissed  
 By sound, or ghost of sound, in mazy strife;  
 Heart-thrilling strains, that cast, before the eye  
 Of the devout, a veil of ecstasy! (ll. 8-14).

The interplay between music and darkness can create a sense of ecstasy, but in fact it is the power of darkness that enables the music to maximise the

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<sup>144</sup> I also quoted above a passage from XLIII. Inside of Kings College Chapel, Cambridge, which shows how the perception of the interior architecture is typically associated with the meditation of nature, in particular, with respect to the sense of immortality: 'These lofty pillars, spread that branching roof / Self-poised, and scooped into ten thousand cells, / Where light and shade repose, where music dwells / Linger-ing-and wandering on as loth to die; / Like thoughts whose very sweetness yieldeth proof / that they were born for immortality.'

<sup>145</sup> Florence Marsh, *Wordsworth's Imagery: a Study in Poetic Vision* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1963), p. 53.

experience of bliss in the church. In a similar vein, in *On the Power of Sound*, the mortality of Arion, whose music ‘could humanise the creatures of the sea’, becomes immortalized by ‘one chant’ in ‘silent night’: ‘And he, with his preserver, shine starbright / In memory, through silent night’ (IX).<sup>146</sup> The image of darkness, which is often associated with the darkness inside the tomb, calls to mind human mortality, which may be transformed into immortality through music.

There is also a metaphorical interplay between nature and the church. To reveal the historical continuity and connectedness between the world and God, the poet uses the metaphor of a river or a stream of water. In the introductory sonnet in Part I the aim of the sonnets is announced:

I, who essayed the nobler Stream to trace  
Of Liberty, and smote the plausive string  
Till the checked torrent, proudly triumphing,  
Won for herself a lasting resting-place;  
Now seek upon the heights of Time the source  
Of a Holy River [ . . . ] (I. Introduction)

And in the very last sonnet in Part III ‘That Stream upon whose bosom we have passed’ finally ‘has reached the eternal City–built / For the perfected Spirit of the just!’ (XLVII). The journey motif of a nation or an individual in the *Ecclesiastical Sonnets* is developed and exemplified by the image of a river. As a river is born and flows, a human being or a society is born and grows. In the final sonnet of *The River Duddon*, whose name is mentioned in Sonnet I in Part I

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<sup>146</sup> Composed in 1828; published in 1835.

of *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, the ever-gliding stream is described as ‘a type of the ever-vanishing yet ever developing race of man’.<sup>147</sup> Whereas human beings ‘go toward the silent tomb’, the river does not pass away. But the poet’s advance to ‘the source / Of a Holy River’ suggests ‘the mingling of the soul with eternity’.<sup>148</sup> In this respect, the river as an image of growth and eternity constitutes a crucial element in exploring the journey into the permanent dwelling place through the metaphorical interplay between nature and the church.

Dividing his career into three phases, we have seen how Wordsworth attempts to shape the idea of dwelling over and against fears and anxieties about human mortality: 1. dwelling in a cottage in Grasmere; 2. dwelling in the community of the living and the dead; 3. a heavenly dwelling. For him, dwelling does not mean simply a place for living, but, as with Heidegger’s idea of dwelling, it is fundamentally based upon a close relationship between humanity, nature, and God, which develops at the level of emotion and psychology and also as an environmental locality. Evidently each phase has two principal ecotheological aspects, the independent sacred value of nature, and its inter-relatedness. In the first phase, the experience of the one great life, which

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<sup>147</sup> XXXIV. After-Thought, ‘*I THOUGHT of Thee, my partner and my guide, / As being past away. – Vain sympathies! / For, backward, Duddon! As I cast my eyes, / I see what was, and is, and will abide; / Still glides the Stream, and shall for ever glide; / The Form remains, the Function never dies; / While we, the brave, the mighty, and the wise, / We Men, who in our morn of youth defied / The elements, must vanish; – be it so! / Enough, if something from our hands have power / To live, and act, and serve the future hour; / And if, as toward the silent tomb we go, / Through love, through hope, and faith’s transcendent dower, / We feel that we are greater than we know*’; ‘I, who accompanied with faithful pace / Cerulean Duddon from his cloud-fed spring, / And loved with spirit ruled by his to sing / Of mountain quiet and boon nature’s grace’; Arthur Beatty, *William Wordsworth: His Doctrine and Art in Their Historical Relations* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1960), p. 222.

<sup>148</sup> Marsh, *Wordsworth’s Imagery*, p. 94.

refers to 'one Household under God' in Grasmere, is founded upon a mutual and caring relationship between the dwellers and the natural environment within the context of God's presence, and at the same time upon the sacredness of nature articulated by the presence of God in nature. Secondly, dwelling in the community of the living and the dead, who are bonded together by locality, emotion, and morality, is dependent upon the religious notion of immortality, and the soothing, beautiful, egalitarian and epitaphic aspects of nature. Lastly, the heavenly dwelling, represented by church buildings, is also integrated into a crucial relationship with God and nature on the ground that it is based upon the sense of immortality in God and upon nature's various characteristics: beauty, purity, sacredness, care, consolation, hope, and metaphor for on-going journey. Overall, it can be affirmed that Wordsworth's idea of dwelling combines two significant ecotheological aspects.

## Chapter 4

### Eschatology in Coleridge and Wordsworth

In this Chapter, I explore the ecotheological implications of the eschatological aspects of the works of Wordsworth and Coleridge. Chapter 1 underlined the significance of eschatology to ecotheology, which tries to locate the non-human natural world in its context of final salvation. If nature is not thought about with regard to the end of the time, nature may be thought of simply as existing for the wellbeing of human beings. In order to appreciate the intrinsic value of nature, ecotheology considers it essential to formulate an eschatological theory that understands nature as one of the key elements of the Apocalypse. It will be shown that nature is involved in Apocalypse through its symbols, images, and effects upon the psychology and emotion of human beings. Chapters 2 and 3 argued that Coleridge's on-going search for the unity of the universe and Wordsworth's notion of dwelling reveal clearly some key ecotheological aspects of their thinking. Now it is necessary to investigate whether the two poets develop an eschatological vision that provides a distinctive role for nature.

Wordsworth and Coleridge were both deeply committed to eschatological thinking, although over their careers it differed in its complexity. First, both of them perceived the French Revolution as an apocalyptic event which could provoke the transformation of the world in a literal sense. Secondly, even after their disillusionment with the Revolution, they did not give up their yearning to

transform and develop an internalized means for attaining it. If Coleridge turns to the revolution of the mind, Wordsworth looks to the power of imagination. Although these are internalized means to an apocalypse, it will be shown that in a fundamental sense they are associated with an external reality. Lastly, both Coleridge and Wordsworth offer a final vision of the universe beyond our life on earth. What remains to be shown is to show how the non-human natural world is integrated into their eschatological vision at each stage of their development.

Before proceeding, however, we will discuss briefly the definition of eschatology. As shown in Chapter 1, traditionally the two ideas of ‘apocalypse’ and ‘millennium’ have been dealt with together in relation to eschatology. The transformative power of an apocalypse brings to an abrupt end the present world and gives birth to a new world, which is often described as the ‘millennium’. Hartman explains some meanings of the term ‘apocalypse’: i) ‘the Apocalypse of St. John (the Book of Revelation)’; ii) being concerned with ‘the Last Things’; iii) a desire for ‘the inauguration of a new epoch’; iv) ‘any strong desire to cast out nature and to achieve an unmediated contact with the principle of things’.<sup>1</sup> Both Coleridge and Wordsworth use the terms ‘apocalypse’ and ‘millennium’ for their eschatological vision in relation to the transformation of the world, sometimes referring to the Apocalypse of St. John either explicitly or implicitly.

## 1. Coleridge

### 1.1. The French Revolution

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<sup>1</sup> Hartman, *Wordsworth's Poetry*, p. xxii.

### 1.1.1. Enlightenment, aesthetics and politics, and religion

It is obvious that apocalypse and millennium are principal themes in Coleridge's poems of the early and middle 1790s in relation to the French Revolution.<sup>2</sup> The idea that the French Revolution shaped thinking in the period scarcely needs restating. Indeed it was widely seen as a sign of the coming of the Apocalypse and of the Millennium. It is worth pointing out the principal elements in apocalyptic thought about the Revolution, which influenced the responses of Coleridge and Wordsworth: Enlightenment, aesthetics and politics, and religion. First, the Revolution was ascribed partly to the power of reason and science in the Enlightenment. In his lectures on *The Philosophy of History* (1822), Hegel describes the Revolution as a triumph over faith: in the French Revolution 'man had advanced to the recognition of the principle that Thought ought to govern spiritual reality. This was accordingly a glorious mental dawn.'<sup>3</sup> The French Revolution is 'the happy consciousness of satisfied Enlightenment' in that the inner epistemological revolution of the Enlightenment becomes actualized in the real world.<sup>4</sup> Both Wordsworth and Coleridge associated the French Revolution with the power of Reason. For Wordsworth, it was the time 'When Reason seem'd the most to assert her rights / When most intent on making of herself / A prime Enchanter to assist the work / Which then was

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<sup>2</sup> The Revolution was undoubtedly the epicentre of his thinking about these issues. See, Morton Paley, *Apocalypse and Millennium in English Romantic Poetry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), p. 100.

<sup>3</sup> Georg Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, trans. by J. Sibree (New York: Dover, 1956), p. 447. Quoted in David Beran, *Early British Romanticism, the Frankfurt School, and French post-structuralism: in the wake of failed revolution* (New York: P. Lang, 2001), p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Georg Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. by A. V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977). See Beran, *Early British Romanticism*, p. 13.



going forwards in her name'.<sup>5</sup> In Stanza V of 'Destruction of the Bastille', Coleridge claims that the enlightened mind of a peasant will no longer be 'fettered' by irrational 'fear' and superstition, for 'Liberty the soul of Life shall reign' (ll. 27-30).<sup>6</sup>

Milton was also an important influence on literary and political responses in this regard, especially for Coleridge and Wordsworth. As Peter Kitson put it, during the middle of the eighteenth century Milton became 'the paramount poet of the sublime, and *Paradise Lost*, became along with the Bible', a presence that was 'a political as well as a literary one'.<sup>7</sup> Thomas De Quincey, for example, notes that 'in Milton only, first and last, is the power of the sublime revealed'.<sup>8</sup> Probably it was Edmund Burke who, in his *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757), established him as the sublime poet for the Romantic Age. Attempting to define the aesthetic notion of the sublime, Burke described Milton as 'the great poet', who understood better than anyone 'the secret of heightening, or of setting terrible things' and was able to create the effect of the sublime through the dynamic of light and darkness, instancing 'a light which by its very excess is converted into a species of darkness'.<sup>9</sup> What mattered for Burke was the idea of the sublime,

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<sup>5</sup> *The Prelude*, X, ll. 697-700.

<sup>6</sup> Beran, *Early British Romanticism*, p. 10.

<sup>7</sup> Peter J Kitson, 'To Milton's Trump: Coleridge's Unitarian Sublime and the Miltonic Apocalypse', in *Romanticism and Millenarianism*, ed. by Tim Fulford (New York: Palgrave, 2002), pp. 37-52 (pp. 40, 42).

<sup>8</sup> 'On Milton' (December, 1839), in *The Romantics on Milton: Formal Essays and Critical Asides*, ed. by Joseph Anthony Wittreich Jr. (Cleveland, Oh. And London, 1970), pp. 475-483 (p. 480). Quoted in Kitson, 'To Milton's Trump', p. 42.

<sup>9</sup> Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, ed. by J. T. Boulton (London, 1958), pp. 59, 61-2, 80. Quoted in Kitson, 'To Milton's Trump', p. 43.

but for others Milton's blend of politics and aesthetics was of significance.<sup>10</sup> In his radical pamphlet *The Plot Discovered* (1795), Coleridge pleaded for 'wisdom and inspiring zeal' with 'Sages and patriots that being dead do yet speak to us, spirits of Milton, Locke, Sidney, Harrington!'.<sup>11</sup> Wordsworth also began his sonnet 'London' (1802) with the invocation, 'Milton! thou should'st be living at this hour' and asked him to give 'manners, virtue, freedom, power' to us, who are 'selfish men'.<sup>12</sup> For them, Milton was a republican hero, an example of a prophetic voice, which stood out against the sinfulness of the times in which he lived. In other words, Milton's mixed message of politics and aesthetics was applied to comprehending the Revolution.

Although the Revolution was praised as a triumph of Reason over faith to bring about the transformation of the world, the transformation itself was understood as a religious event by some people, such as Richard Price and Joseph Priestley.<sup>13</sup> Among the most famous of the millenarian responses to the

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<sup>10</sup> See, Kitson, 'To Milton's Trump', p. 43.

<sup>11</sup> Coleridge, *The Plot Discovered: or An Address to the People Against Ministerial Treason* (Bristol, 1795), pp. 10–11.

<sup>12</sup> Wordsworth, 'London' (1802).

<sup>13</sup> As 'a religion or a philosophy lies at the base of every Revolution', 'the French Revolution took for its base one of the deepest rooted and most compelling myths in the culture of Christian Europe – the story of Christ's resurrection and the salvation of mankind in his Second Coming.' See, John P. Farrell, *Revolution as Tragedy: The Dilemma of the Moderate from Scott to Arnold* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), p. 46; Greg Kucich, 'Ironie Apocalypse in Romanticism and the French Revolution', in *Revolution and English Romanticism: Politics and Rhetoric*, ed. by Keith Hanley and Raman Selden (Hemel Hempstead, 1990), pp. 67–88, p. 73. See also Abrams, 'English Romanticism', p. 98; Prior to the 1790s most Britons, whether they were Anglicans or dissenters, believed in the thousand-year reign of Christ on earth, that would be followed by Christ's second coming. See, Matt Slykhuis, 'Chaos and Clay: Apocalyptic Expectation And Human Depravity in Coleridge and Byron', in *Turning Points and Transformations: Essays on Language, Literature, and Culture*, ed. By Christine DeVine and Marie Hendry (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2011), pp. 59–94 (p. 61). Slykhuis mentions that in 1703 Daniel Whitby published a New Testament commentary with an appendix entitled 'A Treatise of the Millennium: She shewing That It Is Not a Reign of Persons Raised from the Dead, but of the Church Flourishing Gloriously for a Thousand Years after the Conversion of the Jews, and the Flowing-in of All Nations to Them Thus Converted to the Christian Faith'. As its unwieldy title suggests, this text presented the optimistic, postmillennial view that history was moving

Revolution was that of Richard Price in his sermon to the London Revolution Society in 1789.<sup>14</sup> Price described the Revolution as bearing on the idea of the millennium:

*Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation [. . .] Behold kingdom, admonished by you, starting from sleep, breaking their fetters, and claiming justice from their oppressors! Behold, the light you have struck out, after setting America free, reflected to France, and there kindled into a blaze that lays despotism in ashes, and warms and illuminates Europe!*<sup>15</sup>

Here Price associates the political events of the American and French Revolution with the coming of a millennial Kingdom. Priestley, the leading Unitarian thinker, also followed this apocalyptic and millenarian view of politics in the Revolution. In his *Sermon, Preached at the Gravel Pit Meeting in Hackney* in 1794, given before he left Britain for the United States, Priestley explicitly adopted a blend of apocalypse and millennialism in hailing the Revolution as the opening-up of the expected time, ‘the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ’. He insists that the establishment of the Kingdom would be preceded by ‘great calamities, such as the world has never yet experienced’, and he explains the political events of the Revolution in France as the predicted signs of the times

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inexorably toward the Church’s ‘Flourishing Gloriously’; See also, Fulford, ‘Millenarianism and the Study of Romanticism’, pp. 1–2.

<sup>14</sup> See, *Romanticism and Revolution: A Reader*, ed. by Jon Mee and David Fallon (Oxford: Wiley–Blackwell, 2011), pp. 12–13.

<sup>15</sup> Richard Price, *A Discourse on the Love of Our Country* (Boston, 1790), Eighteenth Century Collections Online <http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=oxford&tabID=T001&docId=CW105378031&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE> [accessed 14 March 2013], p. 40; See also Paley, *Apocalypse and Millennium*, p.111.

by interpreting them as the accomplishment of Revelation, chap. xi.3: ‘And the same hour there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men (or literally, *names of men*) seven thousand, and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to God’.<sup>16</sup> The violent events of the French Revolution are the beginning of those very calamitous times, and the millennium is imminent.<sup>17</sup>

### 1.1.2. The French Revolution as apocalypse and millennium

Likewise, Coleridge had also showed an initial enthusiasm about the Revolution. Looking back on the decade in *The Friend*, he mentioned that ‘My feelings, however, and imagination did not remain unkindled in this general conflagration; and I confess I should be more inclined to be ashamed than proud of myself, if they had: I was a sharer in the general vortex.’<sup>18</sup> Further, his way of perceiving the Revolution was always deeply influenced by the language of

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<sup>16</sup> Joseph Priestley, *The Present State of Europe Compared with Antient Prophecies: A Sermon, Preached at the Gravel Pit Meeting in Hackney, February 28, 1794, being the Day Appointed for a General Fast* (London, 3<sup>rd</sup> edit., 1794), Eighteenth Century Collections Online <http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=oxford&tabID=T001&docId=CW123004949&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE> [accessed 14 March 2013], p. 26.

<sup>17</sup> Orianne Smith refers to Hester Lynch ‘Piozzi’s apocalyptic speculations’ and ‘millenarianism’ arguing that she, ‘like many Britons’, ‘read the French Revolution through the lens of scripture and believed that the time had come for ordinary people with extraordinary gifts to wear their rightful mantles as spiritual or political leaders’. For instance, in her *Retrospection*, Piozzi pointed to the imminent Apocalypse: ‘That not one prodigy foretold our fate, can hardly [. . .] be complained of with justice. The aurora borealis, not seen in England till the beginning of this century, was considered as portentous by the vulgar, and wondered at a little even by the wise’ (quoted from Samuel Johnson’s unfinished tragedy *Irene*, cited by James Boswell, *Boswell’s Life of Johnson*, ed. by George Birkbeck Hill, rev. L. F. Powell, 6 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934), vol. 1, p. 109. See, *Romantic Women Writers, Revolution, and Prophecy: Rebellious Daughters, 1786-1826* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 75-98 (pp. 76, 95); Jon Mee also presents some intellectuals linked to millenarianism in the 1790s, such as W. B. Cadogan’s *Liberty and Equality* (1792), George Riebau’s *God’s Awful Warning* (1795), and Garnet Terry’s *Prophetical Extracts* (1795). See, *Dangerous Enthusiasm: William Blake and the Culture of Radicalism in the 1790s* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 21, 33.

<sup>18</sup> *Friend I*, p. 223.

the Bible, often mediated through Milton.<sup>19</sup> Accordingly, secular events are described as sacred events in his poetry. If we look at ‘Destruction of the Bastile’, written while the poet was still at school, we catch a glimpse of how the school boy understood the Revolution religiously as well as politically. He celebrates the dawn of a new era for humanity in that personified ‘Freedom’ and ‘Liberty’ as ‘the soul of Life’ ‘shall reign, Shall throb in every pulse’, and ‘shall flow thro’ every vein!’, over and against ‘Tyranny’ and its ‘terrors’. At the same time, his description of the Revolution is deeply coloured with apocalyptic imagery. In Stanza VI, the poet addresses the question, ‘Shall France alone a Despot spurn?’, but he asserts that ‘every land from pole to pole / Shall boast one independent soul!’. Yet, ‘favour’d Britain be /first ever of the first and freest of the free!’ Rather than limiting the Revolution only to France, the patriotic schoolboy turns his eyes to the whole world, particularly wishing that a similar transformation would happen in England.<sup>20</sup> In addition, it is important to note that he introduces apocalyptic imagery in describing the emergence of Freedom: ‘Freedom rous’d by fierce Disdain’, ‘broke thy triple chain’, ‘the storm which Earth’s deep entrails hide’, ‘Power’s blood-stain’d streamers.’ In his later descriptions of the Revolution, these images will re-appear in a more sophisticated way linked to thoughts of apocalypse and millennium.

However, Coleridge’s interpretation of the Revolution as apocalypse and

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<sup>19</sup> See, Peter Kitson, ‘Political Thinker’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Coleridge*, ed. by Lucy Newlyn (Cambridge, England; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 156–169 (pp. 157, 160, 162).

<sup>20</sup> Ashton comments that ‘Coleridge welcomes France’s “wild” breaking of the “triple chain” in terms not very different from those of the Whig progress poems he was still imitating’, *The Life of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, p. 28.

millennium is not always straightforward because the hope and promise was followed by the Terror and the Wars. As the Revolution turned in an undesirable direction, Coleridge had to change his understanding of the Revolution. The fervent Romantic response to the Revolution lasted from 1789 to 1794, from the fall of the Bastille to the establishment of the Directorate after the Terror, and Coleridge's three major poems on the Revolution were written after that period, *The Destiny of Nations* (1796), *Religious Musings* (1796), and *France: An Ode* (1798).<sup>21</sup> Although the Revolution began with pure intentions, it had been subverted by the use of violence. Coleridge saw the situation as a paradox of 'a nation wading to their Rights through Blood, and marking the track of Freedom by Devastation!'.<sup>22</sup> Yet Coleridge did not immediately give up his hope and continued to identify the Revolution with personified Freedom by interpreting the violence as part of the whole process. In *The Destiny of Nations*, Joan of Arc sees a vision that 'The Sun that rose on Freedom, rose in Blood!' but 'Soon shall the Morning struggle into Day, / The stormy Morning into cloudless Noon'. Coleridge confesses that 'In my calmer moments I have the firmest faith that all things work together for good. But alas! It seems a long and dark process'.<sup>23</sup> During this period his treatment of the Revolution is thus characterised by a mixture of criticism and hope. It will be helpful to look more closely at *Religious Musings* to find out how Coleridge comprehended the French Revolution as a mixture of hope and violence. This

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<sup>21</sup> As Norman Fruman comments 'The Destiny of Nations' and 'Religious Musings', both equally long and discursive epics, 'embody the general shape of the poetic realm he hoped to conquer'; they share some crucial themes and patterns in common. See, Norman Fruman, *Coleridge, The Damaged Archangel* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1972), p. 256.

<sup>22</sup> *Lects. 1795*, p. 6.

<sup>23</sup> *CPWL*, p. 148.

may show how his eschatological understanding of the Revolution can provide an ecotheological perspective.

*Religious Musings* describes the political events during the Revolution as apocalyptic by adapting the religious beliefs of apocalypse to current political circumstances. Coleridge has a pessimistic view of human nature and of the moral failing of the established order, which explains his enthusiasm for the Revolution.<sup>24</sup> Shortly after the description of creation (ll. 105–116), Coleridge gives an account of the dark side of humanity. A young Angel looks down on Human Nature and beholds:

A sea of blood bestrewed with wrecks, where mad  
Embattling Interests on each other rush  
With unhelmed rage!  
'Tis the sublime of man (ll. 124–127)

This 'sublime of man' alludes ironically to Pitt's Government, the slave trade ('loud-laughing Trade / More hideous packs his bales of living anguish'), the war and the defences of it in Parliament which turn God into an 'Accomplice Deity'. The Church of England is described as 'mitred Atheism'.<sup>25</sup> But Coleridge suggests that the depravity of humanity is a problem not only for contemporary society, but for the whole history of human beings. He sketches a brief history of such depravity: during 'the primeval age' 'the vacant Shepherd', wandering with his flock, gives way to 'A host of new desires' and 'Property began'. Then 'Warriors, and Lords, and Priests' created 'all the sore ills / That vex and

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<sup>24</sup> See, Slykhuis, 'Chaos and Clay', p. 61.

<sup>25</sup> Ashton, *The Life of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, p. 84.

desolate our mortal life'. Thereafter he talks about the Enlightenment during which 'heavenly Science' emerged and granted 'Freedom', and Philosophers and Bards / Spread in concentric circles o'er waken'd realms'. Nevertheless, these great thinkers are impotent to resist the coming judgement which is portrayed with images of lions and hyaenas with 'bloody jaws', and 'a poor widow' weeping over 'her husband's mangled corse'.<sup>26</sup> They could only bewail, 'Why there was misery in a world so fair.'

Having provided a historical overview of the perversion of human nature, Coleridge projects a prophetic voice, pronouncing an apocalyptic judgement in the near future against contemporary society. The poet does not hide his agitation in predicting the imminent 'day of Retribution', and tells the 'Children of Wretchedness' that 'More groans must rise, / More blood must stream, or ere your wrongs be full' (ll. 301-302). Finally, he foresees that:

The Lamb of God hath opened the fifth seal:  
And upward rush on swiftest wing of fire  
The innumerable multitude of wrongs  
By man on man inflicted!  
[. . .]  
And lo! the Great, the Rich, the Mighty Men,  
The Kings and the Chief Captains of the World  
With all that fixed on high like stars of Heaven  
Shot baleful influence, shall be cast to earth,  
Vile and down-trodden, as the untimely fruit  
Shook from the fig-tree by a sudden storm.  
Even now the storm begins: [. . .] (ll. 304-315)

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<sup>26</sup> Slykhuis, 'Chaos and Clay', p. 64.



Just as Coleridge opens the poem with the sound of ‘a Cherub’s trump’ and ‘the vision of the heavenly multitude’, this passage conveys explicitly the thought of an apocalypse borrowing some direct quotations from St. John’s visions on Patmos. He provides a passage from the sixth chapter of the Revelation of St. John in his Note.<sup>27</sup> What is noteworthy in the Revelation is that, before the fifth seal is opened, ‘Death and Hell’ were given ‘power’ ‘to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with pestilence, and with the beasts of the Earth’. As the event of an apocalypse is an act of judgement, it eventually brings violence and turmoil. Coleridge applies this judgement from the Bible to contemporary political events. He explains that the above-quoted passage alludes to the French Revolution.<sup>28</sup> Abandoning ‘a vantage point beyond history’, Coleridge ‘plunges his poem into the impermanence of history’ in order to show how ‘the prophecies of Revelation’ will be fulfilled by ‘the ambitions of the French Revolution’.<sup>29</sup> Although he has witnessed the violence of the Revolution, he still has faith in the promise and hope of the Revolution in that he regards the violence as a turbulent act of judgement, describing it as the beginning of ‘the storm’. In this sense, for Coleridge, the downfall of ‘the Great, the Rich, the Kings’ is part of an apocalyptic judgement.

Apocalyptic destruction is not the whole picture as it will be followed by a millennium and finally the opening of the gates to Paradise through the return of Christ. In particular, the opening of *Religious Musings*, written on Christmas Eve of 1794, describes the scene of the Nativity. The poet uses the story of Christ

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<sup>27</sup> *CPWL*, p. 120.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 121.

<sup>29</sup> David Collings, ‘Coleridge Beginning a Career: Desultory Authorship in *Religious Musings*’, *ELH*, 58 (1991), 167–193 (p. 170).

not only as 'a point of reference' for salvation but also a paradigm for the relationship between apocalypse and millennium.<sup>30</sup> The scene of the Nativity moves immediately to that of suffering and death, but Coleridge emphasises the necessity, rather than the unavoidable tragedy, of death within the whole history of God's redemption, declaring that his death was in truth 'Lovely'. He holds that before 'the Messiah's destined victory!' 'first offences needs must come!'. Suffering and death was thus required as part of the salvation history.

This paradigm of Christ permeates the poem and consolidates the crucial relationship between apocalypse and millennium. Just as death preceded the resurrection of Jesus, apocalyptic violence will be followed by a millennium. There can be no millennium without apocalypse just as there could be no resurrection without death. Morton Paley shows that Coleridge's thought about that relationship is based on his study of John of Patmos, Milton and Thomas Burnet's *Sacred Theory of the Earth*.<sup>31</sup> In the third and fourth books, Burnet articulates the inter-related bond between apocalypse and millennium in a way that there will be 'New Heavens and Earth; and yet these shall be annihilated'; these first will be 'redu'd to nothing, and then others created, spick and span New, out of nothing'.<sup>32</sup> In the new Heavens and new Earth, 'the Prince of Peace shall rule'.<sup>33</sup> Likewise, after his account of the apocalyptic storm, Coleridge

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<sup>30</sup> Jon Mee, *Dangerous Enthusiasm: William Blake and the Culture of Radicalism in the 1790s* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 43-46. Quoted in John Beer, 'Romantic Apocalypses', in *Romanticism and Millenarianism*, ed. by Tim Fulford (New York: Palgrave, 2002), pp. 53-69 (p. 56).

<sup>31</sup> Paley, *Apocalypse and Millennium*, p. 117.

<sup>32</sup> In *BL II*, Coleridge refers to the book: 'The writings of Plato, and Jeremy Taylor, and Burnet's Theory of the Earth, furnish undeniable proofs that poetry of the highest kind may exist without metre, and even without the contradistinguishing objects of a poem', p. 14; Thomas Burnet, *The Sacred Theory of the Earth* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1965), Book IV, Ch. I Introduction, p. 321.

<sup>33</sup> Burnet, *The Sacred Theory of the Earth*, Book III, Ch. I Introduction, p. 240. Further he argues

expresses his yearning for a new world: ‘O return! / Pure Faith! Meek Piety!’ Then, ‘The massy gates of Paradise are thrown / Wide open’, and ‘The Saviour comes!’ who will the Prince in ‘the Thousand Years.’ The experience of the apocalyptic violence does not amount to nothingness, but becomes part of the process of ‘New Heavens and a New Earth’. As Jon Mee maintains that ‘*Religious Musings* produces images of apocalyptic violence to control and contain them’, Coleridge intends to control or to justify such violence by understanding it as a necessity for a new world.<sup>34</sup> Accordingly, the Revolution will ultimately be ‘the vehicle’ of a new world.<sup>35</sup>

### 1.1.3. Nature in apocalypse and millennium

The question is, whether the non-human natural world would participate in this process of transformation. Whereas human societies need to be renewed due to the corruption of human nature, Coleridge does not posit any specific need for nature’s redemption at this stage of his eschatological vision. Nevertheless, it should be noted that nature continues to be a crucial element in this new Heaven and new Earth as well as in the process of apocalypse and millennium.

We have seen that the poem makes use of nature’s symbols and images for the apocalypse and the millennium. In particular, the potential for nature to wield destructive power appears in the violence of the apocalypse. In *Religious*

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that, in ‘a Paradise’, there ‘will be neither curse, nor pain, nor death, nor disease [. . .] all things are new, all things are more perfect: both the World itself, and its Inhabitants’, pp. 240–241.

<sup>34</sup> Jon Mee, *Romanticism, Enthusiasm, and Regulation: Poetics and the Policing of Culture in the Romantic Period* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 145.

<sup>35</sup> Robert Sayre, ‘The Young Coleridge: Romantic Utopianism and the French Revolution’, *Studies in Romanticism, English Romanticism and the French Revolution*, 28 (1989), 397–415 (p. 402).

*Musings*, Coleridge notes that the universe consists of three parts, ‘earth, heaven, and deepest hell’ (ll. 401). *Religious Musings* propounds a Unitarian idea of God who ‘Diffused through all’, ‘does make all one whole’ (ll. 131), and is ‘Nature’s vast ever-acting Energy! / In will, in deed, Impulse of All to All!’ (*The Destiny of Nations*, ll. 461–2). The poet bases the whole frame of the poem on the omnipotence of God by opening and closing with hymns to God, and by examining the possibility of salvation only through ‘the Creator love’. What is implied here is that God ‘loves’ and ‘blesses’ ‘all creation’, which is called ‘very good’ (ll. 112–3). The earth is thus described as a blessed place:

But lo! the bursting Sun!  
Touched by the enchantment of that sudden beam  
Straight the black vapour melteth, and in globes  
Of dewy glitter gems each plant and tree;  
On every leaf, on every blade it hangs!  
Dance glad the new-born intermingling rays,  
And wide around the landscape streams with glory! (ll. 98–104)

Right after referring to the blessedness of ‘all creation’, Coleridge ascribes the corruption of the world to ‘human nature’. Although nature is not blamed for sin, its destructive power is used as a vehicle for an apocalyptic judgment. The poet makes the interesting comment in *Religious Musings* that ‘Earth should league with Hell’ (ll. 67), which reveals its potential destructive power. In both ‘Destruction of The Bastile’ and *Religious Musings*, ‘the storm’ as an apocalyptic power is described as hiding in the earth. When Coleridge refers to Freedom’s power to break the ‘triple chain’ of ‘Tyranny’ in ‘Destruction of The

Bastile', he writes 'the storm which Earth's deep entrails hide, / At length has burst its way and spread the ruins wide'. In *Religious Musings*, 'the storm' 'burst hideous from the cell / Where the old Hag, unconquerable, huge, / Creation's eyeless drudge, black Ruin, sits / Nursing the impatient earthquake' (ll. 319-322). Accordingly, the non-human natural world plays a crucial role by carrying a disastrous storm, which strikes the world in the event of an apocalypse.

At the same time, nature is fully integrated into Coleridge's imaginative picture of 'the renovated Earth'. It contributes to the experience of joy and love in a significant way in the new Heaven and new Earth. When 'the massy gates of Paradise are thrown wide open', 'Sweet echoes of unearthly melodies' come forth and 'odours' 'from the crystal river of life spring up on freshened wing, ambrosial gales' (ll. 346-351). At the end of the poem, meditating on the 'mystic choir' of 'Contemplant Spirits' above, Coleridge's experience of God's love is expressed in terms of the pleasures to be found in nature:

I breathe the empyreal air  
Of Love, omnific, omnipresent Love,  
Whose day-spring rises glorious in my soul  
As the great Sun, when he his influence  
Sheds on the frost-bound waters-The glad stream  
Flows to the ray and warbles as it flows. (ll. 414-419)

The implication is that, for Coleridge, the experience of joy and love in nature continues to matter even in a new Heaven and a new Earth. Thus, Coleridge's eschatological vision of the Revolution includes an ecotheological perspective,

perceiving nature as a crucial part in the vision, rather than excluding or transcending it.

#### 1.1.4. Coleridge's disillusionment with the Revolution

Coleridge's lingering faith in the promise of the Revolution, despite his anxieties about violence, finally disappeared around 1798 when the French invaded the peaceful cantons of Switzerland.<sup>36</sup> In a letter to his brother George, 10 March 1798, Coleridge shows a heightening of his fears about violence, quoting a passage from the First Book of The Kings: 'Of the French Revolution I can give my thoughts the most adequately in the words of Scripture – 'A great & strong wind rent the mountains & brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind.'<sup>37</sup> Then he continues that there is no Lord in either an earthquake or the fire. Just as in the same letter he mentions that 'no calamities are permitted but as the means of Good', the apocalyptic storm of the Revolution was conceived, in *Religious Musings*, as a providential means of 'the redeeming God'. However, the Revolution now becomes a sheer natural disaster without any Good.

If we look at the poems written after *Religious Musings*, 'Fire, Famine, and Slaughter', 'The Devil's Thoughts', and 'The Two Round Spaces on the Tombstone', published in the *Morning Post* from 1798 to 1800, we find that Coleridge excludes any vision from the apocalyptic violence and sees it as

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<sup>36</sup> See, Sayre, 'The Young Coleridge', p. 403, 414.

<sup>37</sup> *CL I*, p. 396; 1 Kings 19. 11-13: 'a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; *but* the Lord *was* not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; *but* the Lord *was* not in the earthquake: And after the earthquake a fire; *but* the Lord *was* not in the fire.'

sheer catastrophe. He still ‘envisages apocalyptic subjects’ and yet ‘without its millennial counterpart’.<sup>38</sup> The poems share some similar patterns in describing an apocalyptic disaster, with personified calamities and the biblical allusions from the Revelation. In ‘Fire, Famine, and Slaughter’, the three personified catastrophes, Fire, Famine and Slaughter, which may allude to the four riders of the Revelation quoted in *Religious Musings*, cast apocalyptic violence upon the world: ‘I’ll gnaw, I’ll gnaw the multitude, / Till the cup of rage o’erbrim.’ The fifth stanza of ‘The Devil’s Thoughts’ conjures up the image of the apocalypse through ‘an Apothecary on a white horse / Ride by on his vocations, / And the Devil thought of his old Friend / Death in the Revelations’, and Coleridge clearly indicates that this passage refers to Revelation 6:8 in the footnote.<sup>39</sup> Finally, the last stanza mentions, ‘It was general conflagration.’ What matters in these poems is that Coleridge did not leave any trace of millennial hope. The aesthetic value of the apocalyptic can be ‘sublime’ when it is represented in relation to the millennium; but ‘the sublime merges into the grotesque’ ‘with the disappearance of any accompanying millennial element’.<sup>40</sup>

As Octavio Paz put it, ‘like the early Christians expecting the Apocalypse, modern society has been waiting since the late-eighteenth century for the coming of the Revolution. And revolution comes; not the expected one but another, always another.’<sup>41</sup> In other words, the Revolution came, but failed to achieve its aim. On the one hand, some critics point out that by the end of the

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<sup>38</sup> Paley, *Apocalypse and Millennium*, p. 139.

<sup>39</sup> The authorial footnote: ‘And I looked, and behold a pale horse, and his name that sat on him was Death, Revelation. 6. 8.’

<sup>40</sup> Paley, *Apocalypse and Millennium*, p. 140.

<sup>41</sup> Quoted in John P. Farrell, *Revolution as Tragedy: The Dilemma of the Moderate from Scott to Arnold* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1980), p. 18.

1790s the themes of apocalypse and millennium had finally disappeared with Coleridge's abandonment of his enthusiasm for the improvement of humankind through political powers. On the other hand, it has been argued that his longing for the transformation of the world took a different mode or direction after his disillusionment. In fact, the generally accepted view of Coleridge's change from 'radical to conservative' after the failure of the French Revolution involves several key issues. Politically, he gave up a radical and revolutionary position; personally, he turned from a public life to domestic and private concerns; religiously, he gradually moved from Unitarianism to Orthodoxy. And yet I would argue that Coleridge continued to search for the revolutionary transformation of the world even after the failure of the Revolution. As I have already pointed out in Chapter 2, there is a continuity in Coleridge in terms of his quest for the unity of the universe, even after he discarded the idea of the one life. His longing for a new world continued to captivate his mind, and his thought about an apocalyptic transformation took a different direction after his disillusionment.

While agreeing, to some extent, with Abrams and Paley in their argument about the apocalypse after the French Revolution, I look at Coleridge's later ideas on apocalypse from a different point of view. Although Abrams focuses more upon Wordsworth, his key term, 'the internalization of apocalypse', is relevant to Coleridge in that he obviously turned inward after his disillusionment.<sup>42</sup> For Abrams, 'the hopes invested in the Revolution were

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<sup>42</sup> Abrams argues that 'For Wordsworth and his contemporaries, too, the millennium didn't come. The millennial pattern of thinking, however, persisted, with this difference: the external means was replaced by an internal means for transforming the world', *Natural Supernaturalism*, p. 334.



themselves part of the Romantic secularization of inherited theological ideas and ways of thinking and with its failure these hopes themselves became internalized', but it can be argued that the change is still religious.<sup>43</sup> Paley also gives a remarkable insight as to how Coleridge came to apply a different notion of the relationship of Revelation to history after 1817: his later apocalyptic language is 'figurative', 'leavening a secular exposition with yeasty eschatological tropes'.<sup>44</sup> It is evident that Coleridge stopped applying a literal meaning of apocalypse to history, but it seems possible to argue that his later apocalyptic vision is more than 'figurative' in the sense that it provided the basis of a pattern of thought which enabled him to interpret and to perceive the world morally and religiously. Shifting from a literal expectation of an apocalypse to an eschatological pattern of thought, Coleridge moved from the dramatic historical events of the Revolution to moments of ordinary daily life in which an individual can experience a sense of transformation by perceiving and responding to the world according to such patterns of thought. In discussing these issues in my next section, we shall focus on both the revolution of the mind as the process of the internalization of an apocalypse, and the understanding of Revelation as a symbolic drama and a paradigm. Eventually it will become clear that this eschatological pattern of thought implies an ecotheological perspective, because nature constitutes an essential part of it.

## 1.2. The revolution of the mind

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<sup>43</sup> Simon Bainbridge, 'Wordsworth and Coleridge', in *The Oxford Handbook of English Literature and Theology*, Oxford Handbooks Online 2009 DOI < 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199544486.001.0001> [accessed 1 January 2013], pp. 1–35 (p. 18).

<sup>44</sup> Paley, *Apocalypse and Millennium*, p. 152.

### 1.2.1. Hope in a private, domestic and natural sphere

After renouncing his revolutionary hopes, Coleridge turned to a private, domestic, and natural sphere. The focus of his poetry changes from being political and public to private, domestic, and natural. As ‘critics of Coleridge’s early work routinely distinguish between a sublime and a conversation style’, we need to be aware how the poems of revolutionary enthusiasm differ from the so-called ‘conversation poems’ in terms of style and theme.<sup>45</sup> Whereas the former, most notably *Religious Musings* and *The Destiny of Nations*, seek the transformation of the world in the spheres of politics and history, the latter put a ‘new emphasis on personal experience and local environments’ in a domestic setting.<sup>46</sup> Without the hyperbolic rhetoric of the sublime style, the ‘conversation poems’ talk about ordinary temporal experiences in a natural landscape. His yearning for a transformation is still there, however.

Looking back on the turbulent revolutionary past and regretting his ‘youthful years’, both ‘France: An Ode’ and ‘Fears in Solitude’ are ‘sermoni propria’, where the poet appears to seek an ideal society in a natural, private, and domestic setting.<sup>47</sup> Coleridge opens ‘France: An Ode’ by invoking the purity of nature in the sense that it ‘Yield[s] homage only to eternal laws!’, and he affirms that he ‘still adored / The spirit of divinest Liberty’. From stanza II, he explains briefly the hope and despair of the French Revolution. He believed that France would liberate the nations, ‘Till Love and Joy look round, and call the

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<sup>45</sup> John Axcelson, ‘Timing the Apocalypse: the Career of *Religious Musings*’, *European Romantic Review*, 16 (2005), 439–454 (p. 439).

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 440.

<sup>47</sup> See, Ashton, *The Life of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, pp. 134, 424. She describes these two poems as ‘a sort of middle thing between Poetry and Oratory – sermoni propria’. Note by Coleridge on a copy of the poem, *CPW I*, 257n. See Richard T. Martin, ‘Coleridge’s Use of sermoni propria’, *The Wordsworth Circle*, 3 (1972), 71–5.

Earth their own', but he casts a prophet judgement against France's invasion of Switzerland by applying 'to France the figure of sexual transgression that Jeremiah does to Jerusalem': 'O France! That mockest Heaven, adulterous, blind.'<sup>48</sup> Then he expresses a sense of guilt about 'those dreams!' which he cherished once during the Revolution: 'Forgive me, Freedom! O forgive those dreams!' And yet the transgression of the Revolution does not destroy completely Coleridge's yearning for a world liberated with love, in that he 'shot my being through earth, sea, and air, / Possessing all things with intensest love, / O Liberty! my spirit felt thee there'. Although the hope of the Revolution is lost for Coleridge, his enthusiasm for the transformation of the world was too great to disappear immediately. The Revolution failed his dreams, but he does not give them up. He turns instead to nature.

'Fears in Solitude' has a similar structure. At the beginning of the poem, Coleridge describes a peaceful landscape where he found 'Religious meanings in the forms of Nature! / And so, his senses gradually wrapt / In a half sleep, he dreams of better worlds'. As he sensed the purity of nature in 'France: An Ode', he is now able to dream of the transformation of the world in nature. Then the poem moves from this private natural landscape to the next part, in which he raises a critical voice against the violence, caused by war. 'Fears in Solitude' was written in April 1798, under the alarm of a French invasion, and in this second part Coleridge couples the violence of this possible invasion with the image of the savagery that happened over the last decade during the Revolution. The poet, however, in the last part, turns from this stormy public world to his

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<sup>48</sup> Paley, *Apocalypse and Millennium*, p. 138.

private domestic sphere in nature, which Tim Fulford terms ‘Coleridge’s spiritual high ground’.<sup>49</sup> Beholding ‘beloved Stowey!’ and his ‘own lowly cottage, where my babe / And my babe’s mother dwell in peace!’, Coleridge appears to dream of a better world:

[. . .] O green and silent dell!  
And grateful, that by nature’s quietness  
And solitary musings, all my heart  
Is softened, and made worthy to indulge  
Love, and the thoughts that yearn for human kind. (ll. 221, 226, 228–232)

In her *The Emigrants* (1793), C. T. Smith also, after witnessing the ‘mournful truth’ (l.94) of the French Revolution, tries, like Coleridge, to find in nature a place ‘unspoil’d by Man’ (l.56): ‘And sigh for some lone Cottage, deep embower’d / In the green woods, that these steep chalky Hills [. . .] There do I wish to hide me; well content’ (l. 43–4, 48). Coleridge as a family man tries to find peace and the improvement of humankind in his private domestic setting in nature, rather than in public politics. Further, in ‘Dejection: An Ode’ (1802), Coleridge declares:

Joy, Lady! is the spirit and the power,  
Which wedding Nature to us gives in dower  
A new Earth and new Heaven, (ll. 67–9)

This passage suggests that the poet can uncover a new world through his interior powers.

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<sup>49</sup> Tim Fulford, *Landscape, Liberty, and Authority*, p. 236.

### 1.2.2 The revolution of the mind: a moral reformation

Although his vision of a new world in a domestic setting would not last for long and may have been a form of self-deception, there is obviously a shift of his apocalyptic idea from the public and political in history to the private and interior in nature.<sup>50</sup> Yet, this leads eventually to a revolution of the mind in terms of morality and cognitive power. In his letter to John Thelwall, December 1796, Coleridge announced, 'I am not fit for public Life', but he added, 'yet the Light shall stream to a far distance from the taper in my cottage window.'<sup>51</sup> The implication is that he intends to retreat from public politics to private domesticity but is willing to continue to search for the improvement of humankind. And what Coleridge eventually proposes for the transformation of the world is, as Gregory Leadbetter put it, the revolution of the mind.<sup>52</sup> Coleridge endorses the aims of the Revolution, Liberty and Freedom, but he deplores the means of achieving it, its violence.<sup>53</sup> He suggests that we need to enlighten the mind of each individual in order to achieve the aims of a revolution.

In the 'Introductory Address' of *Conciones ad Populum*, Coleridge explicitly

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<sup>50</sup> Considering Rosemary Ashton's remark that 'the praiser of domestic rootedness would embark on a life of wandering undertaken apart from his family', Nicholas Roe's judgement that 'Coleridge's indulgence is self-deception' appears to be, to some extent, appropriate; R. Ashton, *The Life of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, p. 134. Further she comments that 'he [Coleridge] who wrote so feelingly about Nether Stowey would spend only another few months there as a permanent resident. The fond father of the infant Hartley would be chronically unfit to fulfil a father's role towards him'; Nicholas Roe, *Wordsworth and Coleridge: the Radical Years* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), p. 267.

<sup>51</sup> *CL I*, p. 277.

<sup>52</sup> I owe the idea of the revolution of the mind to Gregory Leadbetter, 'Coleridge and the More Permanent Revolution', *The Coleridge Bulletin*, New Series, 30 (2007), 1-16.

<sup>53</sup> See, *Lects. 1795*, p. 6; he argues that 'French Freedom is the Beacon, that while it guides us to Equality should shew us the Dangers, that throng the road'.

argues: ‘that general Illumination should precede Revolution, is a truth as obvious, as that the Vessel should be cleansed before we fill it with a pure Liquor’.<sup>54</sup> Immediately before this passage, he introduces a poem, entitled ‘To The Exiled Patriots’, in which he praises ‘MARTYRS OF FREEDOM’, who ‘against Corruption nobly stood / For Justice, Liberty, and equal Laws’, and at the end of the poem he expresses a desperate wish, ‘shall your great examples fire each soul.’<sup>55</sup> In addition, Coleridge uses a biblical allusion in describing ‘Pure Ones and uncorrupt’ as shining like ‘Lights in Darkness’, which appears in John 1:5 and Romans 2:19.<sup>56</sup> For him, human nature is associated with the idea of corruption, and therefore the ‘general Illumination’ of ‘Pure Ones and uncorrupt’ may ‘reconcile us to our own nature’ by shining like Lights in Darkness and firing our soul.<sup>57</sup> Intriguingly, nearly forty years later, in a letter to Gioacchino de Prati from 1833, Coleridge reiterates the same argument:

[. . .] from the very outset I hoped in no advancement of humanity but from individual mind & morals working onward from individual to individual – in short, from the Gospel –. This in my first work, the *Conciones ad Populum*, I declared, in my 23<sup>rd</sup> year: and to this I adhere in my present 63<sup>rd</sup>.<sup>58</sup>

In this letter he continues to claim that ‘Liberty without Law can exist nowhere’. The aim of the revolution, Liberty, was correct, but the nature of each

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<sup>54</sup> *Conciones ad Populum*, in *Lects. 1795*, p. 43.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 41–2.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43; see, ‘And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not’ (John 1:5), and ‘And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness’ (Romans 2:19).

<sup>57</sup> *Conciones ad Populum*, p. 43.

<sup>58</sup> *CL VI*, p. 965.

individual, Law and Morality, was not good enough to achieve it. As a result, a revolution should be preceded by a revolution of each individual's nature.

The question is, what does the illumination of human nature, as a precondition for a revolution, mean? For Coleridge, it is a moral reformation.<sup>59</sup> If we look at *The Friend*, Coleridge's intention in this journal appears to be consonant with his concern about the best way to develop our inner powers with reference to our actions and reactions. In his 'Prospectus' to *The Friend* (a letter to a correspondent), outlining a brief summary of his life-long quest through unrealised schemes, and the mass of his miscellaneous fragments, reflections and observations, he maintains that all these have 'one common End ([. . .] what we are and what we are born to become)'.<sup>60</sup> In fact, eleven years earlier in a letter to Godwin in 1803, he mentioned that he would:

set seriously to work – in arranging what I have already written, and in pushing forward my Studies & my Investigations relative to the *omne scibile* of human Nature – what we are, & how we become what we are; so as to solve the two grand Problems, how, being acted upon, we shall act; how, acting, we shall be acted upon.<sup>61</sup>

Reflecting upon the great promise and the terrible violence of the Revolution stemming from the same people, Coleridge is eager to find out how the former turned into the latter. Then he becomes aware of the importance of 'an act of

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<sup>59</sup> In his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Coleridge argues that 'the highest point' of 'morality' can be shown in 'the present state' of 'an enlightened statesman', *Lectures 1818-1819 on the History of Philosophy*, p. 190.

<sup>60</sup> 'Prospectus of The Friend (Extracted from a Letter to a Correspondent.)' in *Friend II*, pp. 16-20 (p. 17).

<sup>61</sup> *CL II*, pp. 948-9.

the Will' in that 'in the moral being lies the source of the intellectual'.<sup>62</sup> In order to 'determine what we are in ourselves positively', we need to investigate 'the moral worth and intellectual power of the age in which we live'.<sup>63</sup> Accordingly, the realization of truth is based upon the improvement of morality.

With respect to a moral reformation, Coleridge looks closely at the consciousness or inner mind of each individual. In a letter to his brother, George Coleridge, in 1798, Coleridge mentioned that he has withdrawn himself 'almost totally from the consideration of immediate causes, which are infinitely complex & uncertain, to muse on fundamental & general causes – the "causae causarum"', and tried to find out 'what our faculties are & what they are capable of becoming'. He loves 'fields & woods & mountains with almost a visionary fondness', and he has found 'benevolence & quietness growing' within himself 'as that fondness [has] increased', through which he may 'destroy bad passions'. Further 'he wishes to be the means of implanting it in others.' Here we should note the two contrasting attitudes, 'benevolence' and 'bad passions'. Depending on the state of our human faculties, we are liable to produce 'benevolence' or 'bad passions'. Coleridge was able to become gradually 'benevolent' through his love of nature with a 'visionary fondness'. In other words, human faculties need to be nurtured or developed so that their potentialities can be realised in terms of moral improvement and intellectual power.

Coleridge also stresses the inner powers of one's own consciousness. He

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<sup>62</sup> *Friend I*, p. 115.

<sup>63</sup> 'Introduction' in the third volume of *The Friend* consists of two letters. The first one, signed by Mathetes, was written by John Wilson and Alexander Blair, and the second one was a reply to it by Wordsworth. The quotation is from the second letter, in *Friend I*, pp. 376–405(p. 388).



holds that ‘any new truth’, which ‘relates to the properties of the mind’, cannot be ‘made our own without examination and self-questioning’.<sup>64</sup> In a similar vein, in his reply to Mathetes in *The Friend*, Wordsworth asks his reader to be dependent ‘upon voluntary and self-originating effort, and upon practice of self-examination, sincerely aimed at and rigorously enforced’, in order that his ‘pure and high-mindedness’ can be protected ‘from any fatal effect of seductions and hindrances which opinion may throw’ in his way.<sup>65</sup> In his *Lectures 1818-1819 on the History of Philosophy*, Coleridge regards Plato as ‘the Prophet & Preparer for the New World’, whose writings intend to ‘actuate the minds of men’ and to ‘lead them to seek further’.<sup>66</sup> In this way, Coleridge underlines the significance of the inner powers of one’s own consciousness in that ‘the very first step to knowledge, or rather the previous condition of all insight into truth, is to dare commune with our very and permanent self.’<sup>67</sup>

### 1.2.3. Apocalypse as a symbolic drama

Clearly the revolution of the mind is associated with the Apocalypse as a paradigm and symbolic drama. Coleridge applied literally faith in the Revelation to the historical event of the French Revolution. Yet, in spite of the failure of the Revolution, the language of apocalypse remained in his pursuit of a vision. As critics such as E. S. Shaffer, Morton Paley, and Christopher Burdon have pointed out, Coleridge continued to defend ‘the authenticity of Revelation’ up to

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<sup>64</sup> *Friend I*, p. 114.

<sup>65</sup> *Friend I*, p. 394.

<sup>66</sup> See, Leadbetter, ‘Coleridge and the More Permanent Revolution’, p. 9-10; *Lectures 1818-1819 on the History of Philosophy*, pp. 189, 190, 195.

<sup>67</sup> *Friend I*, p. 115.

his death in 1834.<sup>68</sup> In a letter to Edward Coleridge, 8 February 1826, he argued that without the Apocalypse ‘the New Testament would not be what it is, the compleat Quadrature and Antitype of the Old’.<sup>69</sup> His way of interpreting it, however, changed along with his disillusionment. In a footnote to *A Lay Sermon*, he mentions that the idea of an apocalypse ‘has been most strangely abused and perverted from the Millenarians of the primitive Church to the religious Politicians of our own times’.<sup>70</sup> He develops his new approach to the meaning of apocalypse in relation to history by interacting with, particularly, Johann Gottfried Eichhorn and Edward Irving.

Coleridge was introduced in 1824 to the Scottish minister Edward Irving, whom he described as ‘the present Idol of the World of Fashion, the Revd. Mr. Irving, the super-Ciceronian, ultra-Demosthenic Pulpiteer of the Scotch Chapel’.<sup>71</sup> Irving became a regular visitor to Highgate. Their friendship, however, was challenged by Irving’s growing interest in, and literal interpretation of, the Book of Revelation, which Coleridge disputed on numerous occasions. Irving dedicated his book *For Missionaries after the Apostolical School* in 1825 to Coleridge, but the poet made a note on the book’s end-paper that ‘I cannot help, believing, that his [Irving] imagination that the XXth Chapter of the Revelations favors the doctrine of a future Millennium prevents him from

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<sup>68</sup> Christopher Burdon, *The Apocalypse in England: Revelation Unravelling, 1700–1834* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), pp. 134–5; Paley, *Apocalypse and Millennium*, p. 153; Elinor S. Shaffer, ‘Kubla Khan and the Fall of Jerusalem: the Mythological School in Biblical Criticism and Secular Literature, 1770–1880’ (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp. 97–100.

<sup>69</sup> *CL VI*, p. 558.

<sup>70</sup> *A Lay Sermon*, in *Lay Sermons*, ed. by R. J. White (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 147.

<sup>71</sup> *CL V*, p. 280, a letter to Charlotte Brent in July 1823.

seeing, that it is a mere imagination'.<sup>72</sup> In a letter in February 1826, Coleridge expresses his puzzlement that 'I do not at all understand our Friend's [Irving] late excursions into the prophecies of a sealed Book, of which no satisfactory proof has yet been given whether they have already been or still remain to be fulfilled'.<sup>73</sup> In a note on *Sermons, Lectures, and Occasional Discourses*, a copy of which was given to him, Coleridge describes messianic interpretation of Old Testament prophecy as founded on 'ruinous and fleshly fancies [. . .] a carnal Superstition'.<sup>74</sup> Then he claims that the Apocalypse is 'a Symbolic Drama [. . .] I know indeed no Poem ancient or modern, unless it be the *Paradise Lost*, that can be compared with it either in the felicity of its Structure, or the sublimity of the parts'.<sup>75</sup> In the long run, for Coleridge, the Apocalypse should not be read literally, but symbolically, in that it is 'a Symbolic Drama' or 'Poem'. In fact, there are clear echoes of Eichhorn in Coleridge's arguments against Irving's literal interpretation of the Apocalypse.

When Coleridge was staying in Göttingen in 1799, he had come to know J. G. Eichhorn, one of the leading figures of Higher Criticism in Germany. It was to Eichhorn's commentaries that he turned many times and himself annotated when studying Revelation in greater detail.<sup>76</sup> The German higher critics attempted to get at the historical truth underlying biblical narratives by de-supernaturalizing the Bible, but they encountered difficulties with the Apocalypse, a book full of supernatural phenomena, yet associated with historical events in

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<sup>72</sup> A note to Edward Irving's *For Missionaries after the Apostolical School*, in *CM III*, pp. 3-9 (p. 9).

<sup>73</sup> *CL VI*, p. 550, a letter to Basil Montagu in February 1826.

<sup>74</sup> A note to Edward Irving's *Sermons, Lectures, and Occasional Discourses*, in *CM III*, pp. 10-74 (p. 34). See, Burdon, *The Apocalypse in England*, p. 157.

<sup>75</sup> A note to Manuel Lacunza y Diaz's *The Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty*, in *CM III*, pp. 415-482 (pp. 452-3). This book was translated by Irving.

<sup>76</sup> Burdon, *The Apocalypse in England*, p. 144.

the life of the early Church. Being aware of the impossibility of a scientific or historic proof of supernatural events, Eichhorn conceives the Book of Revelation as ‘a grand symbolic drama in three acts, with prologue (1:4–3:22), prelude (4:1–8:5), and epilogue (22:6–11), written by the apostle as a poetic interpretation of the fall of Jerusalem a generation after the event’.<sup>77</sup> For instance, in his commentary on Revelation 11:1–3, Eichhorn interprets ‘the 42 months and the 1260 days’ as being ‘fictitious and symbolical’ and ‘standard expressions for the long duration of a public calamity’.<sup>78</sup> Finally, he describes the Apocalypse as ‘a poetic work’ full of ‘materials of the liveliest imaginative power’.<sup>79</sup> Coleridge generally accepted such arguments in his use of Eichhorn’s commentary over a period of thirty years, but he challenged ‘the commentary’s aesthetic reponse to Revelation’. For Coleridge, it was ‘a Vision, not a Poem.—Whether divine and *bona fide* prophetic’.<sup>80</sup> It seems contradictory that Coleridge could regard the Apocalypse as ‘a Symbolic Poem’ and also describe it as ‘a Vision, not a Poem’. Yet, special attention needs to be paid to the word ‘symbolic’. For Eichhorn, it seemed that the Apocalypse was a mere poetic fiction without vision. He considered ‘all the raptures and visions’ of Ezekiel as ‘mere drapery, mere poetic fiction’, but Coleridge disputed strongly this

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<sup>77</sup> According to Eichhorn, ‘the accounts in the Bible of crude supernatural and miraculous happenings owed their form and content to the fact that the authors [. . .] did not understand scientific causality, and described in terms of the supernatural what enlightened humanity would ascribe to natural causes.’ See, J. W. Rogerson, ‘Myth’, in *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*, ed. by R. J. Coggins and J. L. Houlden (London: SCM Press, 1990), pp. 479–482 (p. 479); J. G. Eichhorn, *Commentarius in Apocalypsin Joltannis* (Gottingen 1791), I, p. liv. Quoted by Burdon, *The Apocalypse in England*, p. 144.

<sup>78</sup> Johann Gottfried Eichhorn’s *Commentarius in Apocalypsin Joannis*, in *CM II*, pp. 503–520 (p. 516).

<sup>79</sup> Eichhorn’s *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, in *CM II*, pp. 435–502 (p. 458).

<sup>80</sup> Burdon, *The Apocalypse in England*, p. 145; a note to Eichhorn’s *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, in *CM II*, pp. 458–9.

comment in the margin:

It perplexes me to understand, how a Man of Eichhorn's Sense, Learning, and Acquaintance with Psychology could form, or attach belief to, so cold-blooded an hypothesis. That in Ezechiel's Visions Ideas or Spiritual Entities are presented in visual Symbols, I never doubted.<sup>81</sup>

Although the Apocalypse needs to be interpreted symbolically, the symbols are not merely poetic fiction but are essentially associated with the vision of the Apocalypse. Here we need to be reminded of Coleridge's concept of a symbol, which, for him, is not a metaphor or allegory, but an actual and essential part of the whole it represents; 'it always partakes of the Reality which it renders intelligible.'<sup>82</sup> Thus symbols must not be interpreted literally, yet they represent a vision because, for Coleridge, they participate in it. Now the question is, in what sense can this symbolic poem be involved with history?

In his extensive notes on Irving's *Sermons, Lectures, and Occasional Discourses*, Coleridge shows that the Apocalypse as a symbolic drama is part of the whole redemptive history. Referring to 'the Brahmin Theology's manifestation of the Godhead in Nature in the trinity of Production, Destruction and Reproduction', Coleridge explains that the Christian human history is the process of 'Creation', 'Destruction', and 'Reproduction (Re-creation, Re-generation, New Birth)'.<sup>83</sup> For Coleridge, it seems that the process of creation, destruction and reproduction shows a dialectical dynamic. One stage of the process presupposes the next stage in the sense that 'every great Epoch of

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<sup>81</sup> A note to Eichhorn's *Einleitung ins Alte Testament*, in *CM II*, pp. 373-414 (p. 410).

<sup>82</sup> *SM*, p. 30.

<sup>83</sup> A note to *Sermons, Lectures, and Occasional Discourses*, in *CM III*, p. 60.

Reproduction is preceded by a Destruction'.<sup>84</sup> As a result, he holds that 'the Creation of the material universe appears as the first Act of the Redemption by the Spirit & the Word' and the 'Fall' was 'the necessary Result'.<sup>85</sup> Although he defends 'the authenticity of Revelation', he is not sure, in terms of the final redemption, whether the prophecies of a sealed Book have already been, or still remain to be, fulfilled. Nevertheless, what he discovered after his disillusionment with the French Revolution was that this symbolic drama of the redemption becomes a paradigm for history, in that this drama continues to take place throughout the grand narrative of redemption.<sup>86</sup> In other words, he applies the process of the redemption symbolically to some great epochs in history. For instance, he interprets 'the two great Revolutions' – 'the dread destructive Moments of the existing Epoch, the one recorded, the other predictively denounced, in Holy Writings [the Flood and the lake of fire' (the second death foretold in Rev. 20:14-15)] – as 'the two forms of Death', 'the two modes of destructive disorganization'.<sup>87</sup> Accordingly, the Apocalypse as a symbolic poem becomes a pattern of thought through which people can understand the world and their life.

Intriguingly, if we look at 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11, we find that St. Paul also shifts from the literal approach to eschatology to a symbolic understanding. The early Christians believed that they would see the second coming of Jesus, the so-called 'parousia', but the problem was that it continued to be delayed. St.

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>86</sup> Burdon also points out that 'Coleridge wishes to see the Bible as paradigm of all redemptive history [...] he wishes to see Genesis and Apocalypse as a paradigm of the biblical canon itself', *The Apocalypse in England*, p. 165.

<sup>87</sup> A note to *Sermons, Lectures, and Occasional Discourses*, in *CM III*, pp. 60-2.

Paul begins Chapter 5 of I Thessalonians by saying ‘Now concerning the times and the seasons’, but, instead of answering, he refers to the ‘unexpectedness’ of the parousia with the metaphor of ‘a thief in the night’: ‘the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night’ (v.2).<sup>88</sup> Implying an inability to know the times, he speaks of the mode of existence in ordinary daily life, encouraging people to ‘keep awake and be sober’, and to ‘put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation’, for ‘you are all children of light’ (v. 5, 6, 8). Rather than wait for the day of the Lord, they are expected as the children of light to maintain and to improve their morality within the context of the day of the Lord. In other words, ‘parousia’ is now understood as a paradigm which influences the mode of existence in ordinary daily life.

#### 1.2.4. Apocalypse: morality, symbolic drama, an external reality

Likewise, for Coleridge, the symbolic drama of the Apocalypse is a paradigm which is associated with morality. With regard to Coleridge’s two ideas, the revolution of the mind and the symbolic drama of the Apocalypse, I maintain that they are fundamentally interrelated. When Coleridge changed from a literal to a symbolic understanding of the Apocalypse, this symbolic drama

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<sup>88</sup> Howard Marshall, *1 And 2 Thessalonians* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 1983), p. 133; 1 Thessalonians 5:1–11 from the King James Bible: ‘But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. / For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. / For when thy shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. / But ye, brethren, are not in the darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. / Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. / Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. / For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. / But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. / For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, / Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. / Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.’

became a paradigm which defined ordinary daily life in history on the grounds that people are expected to formulate their mode of existence according to it. Therefore, given the paradigm of a symbolic drama, the transformation is not a final dramatic event, but an experience of moral improvement in ordinary daily life, which reminds us of St. Paul's mode of existence in the context of the parousia.

The images Coleridge uses to describe the transformation of the mind have religious connotations. He associates it with images of 'general Illumination', 'Light in darkness' and 'firing our soul', which enlighten the mind so that it can improve its moral capacity. When he speaks of the Apocalypse as a symbolic drama of creation, destruction, and reproduction, he also presents 'the Word (or Logos)' as 'Light'.<sup>89</sup> 'Life' can become 'the Correlative' only where the Light, as 'a consuming Fire to all Iniquity, is *in actu*' (actual, in action).<sup>90</sup> Just as St. Paul calls his people the 'children of light', so Coleridge requires 'general Illumination' and 'Light' to fire and to guide the soul for transformation. In this sense, the transformation of the mind is not just concerned with the growth of consciousness, in terms of morality and cognitive power, but also has a religious aspect. The revolution of the mind thus needs to be understood as a crucial part of the symbolic drama of the Apocalypse. For Coleridge, the symbolic drama of the Apocalypse as a paradigm is fundamentally associated with the revolution of the mind, which each individual needs to experience in order to taste 'a new Earth and new Heaven'.

Yet it should be noted that this internalized interpretation of apocalypse is

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<sup>89</sup> A note to *Sermons, Lectures, and Occasional Discourse*, in *CM III*, pp. 59–60.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.



involved in an external reality. The internalization of the transformation does not limit itself merely to the inner and private sphere of a person, but extends to outward social and natural aspects in terms of morality. In other words, for Coleridge the transformation of the mind becomes a paradigm through which social injustices are criticised. In the *Lay Sermon* of 1817, Coleridge blames ‘the OVERBALANCE OF THE COMMERCIAL SPIRIT’ for causing the ‘trouble’ and ‘perplexity’ of the present state.<sup>91</sup> In 1819 in a letter to Thomas Allsop he praises Cobbett for his criticism against ‘the hollowness of commercial wealth’.<sup>92</sup> In 1815, Coleridge made a public speech at Calne, attacking the ‘Injustice and Cruelty’ of ‘the Corn Bill’. He said ‘it is a Poll Tax [. . .] the poorest pay the most’.<sup>93</sup> In 1818, Coleridge campaigned vigorously for ‘the passage of Peel’s Bill to regulate the working hours of children in cotton factories’, writing three pamphlets in its support (SWF I 714–751), which turned on one question: ‘Whether some half score of rich Capitalists are to be prevented from suborning Suicide and perpetrating Infanticide and Soul-murder.’<sup>94</sup> Although Coleridge rejected the violence of the Revolution, he continued to seek the transformation of the external world through the revolution of the mind, which was not the transformation itself, but an internalized means for the transformation.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> *A Lay Sermon*, pp. 139, 169.

<sup>92</sup> *CL IV*, p. 979.

<sup>93</sup> *CL IV*, pp. 549–500: ‘On Wednesday, 1 Mar. 1815 F. J. Robinson introduced in the House of Commons a bill prohibiting the importation of wheat until the domestic price rose to 80 shillings per quarter. Innumerable petitions against the new bill were dispatched to Parliament, and it seems likely that the ‘public meeting’ to which Coleridge refers in the present letter was held at Calne on Wednesday 8 Mar.’

<sup>94</sup> *CL IV*, p. 854. Quoted in Leadbetter, ‘Coleridge and the More Permanent Revolution’, p. 13.

<sup>95</sup> Here it may be worth mentioning that, as Jacqueline Labbe argues, C. T. Smith in *The Emigrants* also rejected the horrors of the Revolution but not ‘Revolution’, and ‘the public space’ – ‘The reign of Reason, Liberty, and Peace!’ (II. 444) – is ‘reimagined as derived from the

### 1.2.5. Nature and the Apocalypse as a symbolic drama

The symbolic drama of the Apocalypse relate to an ecotheology in so far as the natural world forms an essential part of it. In fact, nature itself reveals the symbolic drama. Chapter 2 already mentioned that nature becomes the eternal language of God in 'Frost at Midnight'; nature is often presented as a book of revelation by Coleridge. In his *Lectures on Politics and Religion* (1795), he describes 'the Volume of the World' as 'the Transcript of himself', and maintains that 'its [nature's] every Feature is the Symbol and all its Parts the written Language of infinite Goodness and all powerful Intelligence'.<sup>96</sup> In *The Statesman's Manual*, he also calls nature 'another book', 'a revelation of God—the great book of his servant Nature'.<sup>97</sup> For Coleridge, there are thus two Books in terms of God's revelation: the book of nature and the book of the Bible. He continued to see nature as the book of God's language, but the image of God in nature eventually developed into 'an orthodox trinitarianism, and Christ, or the Word'.<sup>98</sup> If we look at the notebooks written in Malta, we find that when Coleridge observed the sun reflected in the sea, he began to be aware of the 'Logos ab *Ente*', or the Word from the beginning, in nature, rather than the image of God.<sup>99</sup> In his letter to Joseph Cottle, April 1814, Coleridge, having been asked about 'the Trinity', mentions that he 'accepts the doctrine' and has

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personal', changed from 'passive spectator to active director'. Jacqueline M. Labbe, *Charlotte Smith: Romanticism, poetry and the culture of gender* (Manchester, UK; New York: Manchester University Press, 2003), pp. 116, 122.

<sup>96</sup> *Lect.* 1795, pp. 94, 158.

<sup>97</sup> *SM*, p. 70.

<sup>98</sup> Graham Davidson, 'Coleridge and the Bible', *The College Bulletin*, New Series, 23 (2004), 63–82 (p. 65).

<sup>99</sup> *CN II* 3159, 'Logos ab *Ente* – at once actual and real & therefore, filiation not creation'; quoted by Davidson, 'Coleridge and the Bible', p. 65.

‘in my head some floating ideas on the Logos, which I hope, hereafter, to mould into a consistent form’.<sup>100</sup> Interestingly, in the very last paragraph of the last Chapter in *Biographia Literaria*, Coleridge provides a vivid account of how the Trinitarian God can be described in the starry heaven:

It is Night, sacred Night! The upraised Eye views only the starry Heaven which manifests itself alone: and the outward Beholding is fixed on the sparks twinkling in the awful depth, though Suns of other Worlds, only to preserve the Soul steady and collected in its pure *Act* of inward Adoration to the great I AM, and to the filial WORD that re-affirmeth it from Eternity to Eternity, whose choral Echo is the Universe.<sup>101</sup>

If he saw images of God in the book of nature before, now he can read from the same book the dynamic relationship between the Father and the Son. In other words, the natural world reveals it through its symbols and parts.

Nature’s revelation of the Son comes from the fact that the Logos is concerned with redemptive history through creativity and Incarnation. While ‘the sun, moon, stars, and the very plants and herbs of the field speak of God’, now Coleridge indicates specifically that he can read the redemptive power of God in them.<sup>102</sup> In his ‘Sermons, Lectures, and Occasional Discourse’, he argues that ‘the Truth of Christ’ as ‘Logos’ who ‘lighteth every Man’ expresses ‘a continuous, ever unfolding Revelation in the Natural World symbolically’.<sup>103</sup> It should be noted that Coleridge here integrates the Logos as the Christ into the

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<sup>100</sup> *CL III*, p. 480.

<sup>101</sup> *BL II*, p. 247–248; Quoted in Malcolm Guite, *Faith, hope and poetry: Theology and the poetic imagination* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), p. 34.

<sup>102</sup> *AR*, p. 109.

<sup>103</sup> A note to *Sermons, Lectures, and Occasional Discourse*, in *CM III*, p. 23.

act of redemption in that He 'lighteth every Man'. Therefore the book of nature, like the book of the Bible, reveals the history of redemption in the sense that the symbolic drama of creation, destruction, and reproduction 'express declarations in Scripture, and facts equally express and declarative in Nature'.<sup>104</sup> In this sense, the natural world itself communicates the symbolic drama of the Apocalypse, creation, destruction and reproduction.

In addition, the natural world enables the poet to experience the power of transformation and also helps him to carry through the revolution of the mind. As was already noted, after abandoning the hope of the Revolution Coleridge in 'France: An Ode' could find in nature a liberated new world. He can experience a transforming power, which he was looking for in the Revolution, by participating 'in the uncontrollable vitality manifested in clouds, waves, and wind-swung forest branches whose energy fulfills "eternal laws"'<sup>105</sup> (ll. 4):

O ye loud Waves! And O ye Forests high!  
And O ye Clouds that far above me soared!  
Thou rising Sun! thou blue rejoicing Sky!  
Yea, every thing that is and will be free! (ll. 15-18)

His conscious engagement with this dynamic natural world is also found in the process of the revolution of the mind. Coleridge was able to 'destroy bad passions' through his love of 'fields & woods & mountains with almost a visionary fondness' so that human faculties can be nurtured and developed in terms of moral improvement. The power of nature thus helps him to transform

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>105</sup> Kroeber, *Ecological Literary Criticism*, p. 13.

the mind. In consequence, Coleridge's eschatological vision after his disillusionment expresses an ecotheological perspective in that the natural world itself represents a symbolic drama and at the same time is involved in the transformation of the mind.

### 1.3. The final vision of the universe

So far, it has been suggested that the natural world constitutes a key part in two phases of Coleridge's eschatological vision, the literal understanding of the French Revolution as the Apocalypse and the Millennium, and the symbolic drama of the Apocalypse and the revolution of the mind after his disillusionment. Lastly, we should note that Coleridge offers a final vision of the universe into which nature will be integrated. Although he abandoned any literal understanding of the Apocalypse after his disillusionment and turned to its symbolic drama, he still defended the authenticity of the Revelation and eventually drew a picture of the day of the Lord, including the natural world. In his *Lecture Introductory*, Irving gives a speculative analysis of Nature: 'God hath ordained nature in its present form' and 'from man down to the lowest creature [. . .] everything containeth the presentiment of its own future perfection'.<sup>106</sup> Interestingly, Coleridge made a note here, implying that Irving's idea is based on his own work, *Aids to Reflection*. In Chapter 2, I discussed Coleridge's understanding of the natural history of the cosmos, 'the great redemptive process, which began in the separation of light from Chaos'; this includes the non-human natural world as well as human beings.<sup>107</sup> Creation is

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<sup>106</sup> A note to *Sermons, Lectures, and Occasional Discourse*, in *CM III*, p. 64.

<sup>107</sup> *CCS*, pp. 113.

not static but ‘contains the presentiment of its own future perfection’, on the grounds that nature ‘is about to be born’ and is ‘always becoming’.<sup>108</sup> In fact, Coleridge referred not to the imperfection of nature, but to the corruption of human nature, when he applied the idea of the Apocalypse to the French Revolution. Yet, in his final vision of the universe, he expects the future perfection of all creation on the last day. In other words, ‘all things strive to ascend, and ascend in their striving’, and, finally, this process ‘has its end in the union of life with God’ in the day of the Lord.<sup>109</sup> This eschatological vision thus signifies explicitly an ecotheological perspective by formulating a final vision for the non-human natural world as well as for human beings.

## 2. Wordsworth

### 2.1. The French Revolution

#### 2.1.1. The French Revolution as apocalypse and millennium

The term ‘apocalypse’ appears only once in Wordsworth’s writing and that is in the passage in *The Prelude* where Wordsworth refers to ‘Characters of the great apocalypse’ during his walking tour in the Alps in Book VI. The term, however, has provided one of the key debating points in Wordsworth criticism over the last century.<sup>110</sup> Though the term is used just once in Wordsworth, there are various passages which express an apocalyptic pattern of imagination. The last stanza of the *Salisbury Plain*, (1793), for instance, speaking of ‘another

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<sup>108</sup> A note to *Sermons, Lectures, and Occasional Discourse*, in *CM III*, p. 64; *AR*, p. 251.

<sup>109</sup> *AR*, p. 118; *CCS*, p. 113.

<sup>110</sup> As early as A. C. Bradley, *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Macmillan, 1941); Geoffrey Hartman, *Wordsworth’s Poetry, 1787–1814* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971); M. H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* (New York; London: Norton, 1973).

world to which the artist as prophet must point, includes the whole world in its apocalyptic vision'.<sup>111</sup> Book IX of *The Excursion* (1814) evokes an apocalyptic vision: 'That Paradise, the lost abode of man, / Was raised again'. And the conclusion of the series of *Ecclesiastical Sonnets* (1820) also asserts an apocalyptic vision, saying that all will reach 'the eternal City'. There is no doubt that the works of Wordsworth are charged with apocalyptic.

To explore Wordsworth's way of understanding this, reference must be made to *Descriptive Sketches* (1793), *A Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff*, Book VI of *The Prelude*, and Books II and III of *The Excursion*, which allow us to glimpse something of the development of his apocalyptic thinking. Wordsworth left England for France in the late autumn of 1791, and returned to England in late December 1792. Announcements of the execution of Louis XVI appeared in the London papers on 24 January 1793, and a few days later two poems were published in London, *An Evening Walk* and *Descriptive Sketches*, by Wordsworth.<sup>112</sup> If *Descriptive Sketches* provides an account of his first-hand experience of the Revolution that developed in less than two years, Book VI of *The Prelude* is a recollection of that experience no less than fourteen years after it developed. On the one hand, it is obvious that there is a considerable distance between *The Prelude* and *Descriptive Sketches* in terms of style and thought.<sup>113</sup> On the other hand, there is 'in part a continuity between an attitude of mind present in 1790 that was to become dominant by the time the 1805 *Prelude* was complete, and work going forward on *the Excursion*' in terms of

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<sup>111</sup> Stephen Gill, 'Introduction', in *The Salisbury Plain Poems of William Wordsworth* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975), p. 6.

<sup>112</sup> 'Introduction: General', *Llandaff*, p. 19; Gill, *William Wordsworth*, p. 68.

<sup>113</sup> Hartman, *Wordsworth's Poetry*, p. 109.

his understanding of the French Revolution.<sup>114</sup> Both poems reveal clearly his enthusiasm for the transformation of the world through the Revolution in an apocalyptic sense, but *Descriptive Sketches* communicates it more explicitly, dramatically and urgently, than *the Prelude* and *the Excursion*.

Unlike Coleridge, Wordsworth does not apply clear biblical references to his understanding of the Revolution, but his transformative experience can be interpreted as apocalyptic. When he wrote *Descriptive Sketches*, the violence of the Revolution caused fear and anxiety. Yet, his *Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff* obviously shows that he had not given up hope in the Revolution as he tries to provide a justification for revolutionary violence. Having heard that on 21 January 1793 Louis XVI was guillotined in Paris, the Bishop ‘hurriedly composed an indignant protest’: ‘I fly with terror and abhorrence even from the altar of liberty when I see it stained with the blood of the aged, of the innocent, of the defenceless sex’.<sup>115</sup> Wordsworth condemns this comment and defends the necessity of violence:

What! have you so little knowledge of the nature of man as to be ignorant, that a time of revolution is not the season of true Liberty. Alas! the obstinacy & perversion of men is such that she is too often obliged to borrow the very arms of despotism to overthrow him, and in order to reign in peace must establish herself by violence.<sup>116</sup>

As violence in revolution seems to be inevitable, Wordsworth sees the world of ‘true Liberty’ coming out of it. He attempts to understand the Revolution as a

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<sup>114</sup> John Williams, *Wordsworth: Romantic Poetry and Revolution in Politics* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989), p. 44.

<sup>115</sup> ‘Introduction: General’, in *LLandaff*, p. 19. *LLandaff*, p. 33.

<sup>116</sup> *LLandaff*, pp. 33–34.



mixture of violence and hope associated with the dynamic of apocalypse and millennium.

Above all, Wordsworth's enthusiasm for the Revolution is based not just on the transformation of the system in politics, from monarchy to republicanism, but on something fundamental in the creation of the world. One of the main themes which Wordsworth tries to express in *Descriptive Sketches* recounting his walk through the French and Swiss Alps is the sense of being granted a vision of a primitive innocence. In particular, he imagines the uncorrupted original state of 'Man', which reminds us of Rousseau:

Once Man entirely free, alone and wild,  
Was bless'd as free – for he was Nature's child.  
He, all superior but his God disdain'd,  
[. . .]  
As Man in his primaeval dower array'd  
The image of his glorious sire display'd,  
Ev'n so, by vestal Nature guarded, here  
The traces of primaeval Man appear. (ll. 520–529)

According to Mary Moorman, this section suggests that Wordsworth's 'whole outlook on man had undergone a change'.<sup>117</sup> Over and against 'human vices' (ll. 486), he seems to encounter a kind of original condition of human nature. In Book VI of *the Prelude*, he also mentions that 'twas a time when Europe was rejoiced, / France standing on the top of golden hours, / And human nature seeming born again' (ll. 352–4). In *the Excursion*, the Solitary perceives the

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<sup>117</sup> Moorman, *William Wordsworth I*, p. 198; See also, Williams, *Wordsworth: Romantic Poetry*, pp. 51–2.

Revolution as ‘The glorious opening, the unlooked-for dawn’ of ‘a new world of hope’ (II, ll. 224, 233), and this new world is compared to ‘A golden Palace’ which ‘rose from the wreck’ (III, ll. 722–723). In addition, he extends the meaning of this particular historical event to the whole universe by making the joy of the Revolution that of the whole world: ‘By joyful all ye Nations, in all Lands’ (III, ll. 737). Wordsworth considers the Revolution to be the transformation of the whole universe by associating the revolutionary power with the primitive state of human nature.

This idea of rebirth is not just the sense of renewal, but is deeply involved in the dynamic of apocalypse and millennium. One of the key points in the description of nature in *Descriptive Sketches* is that it brings out two contrasting faces of nature: its destructive power, and the sense of joy, hope, beauty and the sublime. In the early part of *Descriptive Sketches*, the poet is absorbed in the beauty of nature: ‘How bless’d, delicious Scene! the eye that greets / Thy open beauties’ (ll. 120–121), but soon he is overtaken by fear of the destructive power of an Alpine avalanche. Throughout his walk, he has to face such fear in that he sees ‘their fiery clouds, their rocks, and snows’ ‘hiding’ on the high summits’ (ll. 205–206) and ‘In the deep snow the mighty ruin drown’d, / Mocks the dull ear of Time with deaf abortive sound’ (ll. 378–379). Eventually ‘the avalanche of Death destroy[s] / The little cottage of domestic Joy’ (ll. 600–601). And yet, in the middle of such terror, the poet is able to listen to ‘the vernal breeze’, whispering ‘hope’ (ll. 443), and he exclaims, ‘Gay lark of hope thy silent song resume!’ (ll. 632). What he experiences during his walk is a complex feeling about nature because ‘Abortive Joy, and Hope

works in fear' (ll. 651). Although he is frightened by its destructive power, he comes across 'One flower of hope' 'For ye have reach'd at last the happy shore, / Where the charm'd worm of pain shall gnaw no more' (ll. 661, 668-669). In this sense, nature's violent force is not completely negative, but can be regarded as part of the process for reaching 'the happy shore'.

Intriguingly, his yearning for 'Liberty' also involves a destructive power, which penetrates, or is penetrated by, his experience of the dual faces of nature. The poet is thoroughly aware of the conflict between freedom and slavery in that his initial joy in beautiful nature is tainted by his consciousness that there is 'Slavery' (ll. 158). Wordsworth, as shown above, is able to envisage the freedom of 'primaeval Man', and yet, this 'Freedom' is often accompanied by 'Victory and Death' (ll. 537). At the end of *Descriptive Sketches*, the poet announces the coming of 'Liberty' (ll. 774), but it brings about the transformation of the world in a stormy and catastrophic way, which is resonant with the language of the Revelation. When Liberty shall raise 'his beacon's comet blaze', 'Pride's perverted ire / [shall] Rouse Hell's own aid, and wrap thy hills in fire' (ll. 774-5, 780-781). The poet then supplicates:

Oh give, great God, to Freedom's waves to ride  
Sublime o'er Conquest, Avarice, and Pride,  
To break, the vales where Death with Famine scow'rs,  
And dark Oppression builds her thick-ribb'd tow'rs;  
[. . .]  
Where Discord stalks dilating, every hour,  
And crouching fearful at the feet of pow'r,  
Like Lightnings eager for th' almighty word,  
Look up for sign of havoc, Fire and Sword (ll. 792-803)

It is evident that images of 'Death', 'Famine', 'Fire', and 'Sword', remind us of the apocalyptic judgement in the Revelation (19:11–21). Just as the apocalyptic judgement is followed by the millennium (Rev., 20:4), so Wordsworth tells people to 'rejoice' because 'from the' innocuous flames, a lovely birth! / With it's own Virtues springs another earth: / Nature, as in her prime, her virgin reign / Begins, and Love and Truth compose her train' (ll. 780, 782–785). Here it may be worth noting Westbrook's comment that 'Wordsworthian apocalypics are deeply marked by biblical intertextuality and what may be called a form of biblical iconography'.<sup>118</sup> The biblical images in Wordsworthian apocalyptic are often unobtrusive, but nevertheless 'adjust the texts to accommodate their force and presence'.<sup>119</sup> On the one hand, in Book III of *The Excursion*, Wordsworth still in a mood of apocalypse expresses retrospectively a sudden and tumultuous expectation of a new world, but such a mood seems to be much more weak than in *Descriptive Sketches*:

[. . .] The potent shock  
 I felt; the transformation I perceived,  
 As marvelously seized as in that moment  
 When, from the blind mist issuing, I beheld  
 Glory – beyond all glory ever seen,  
 Confusion infinite of heaven and earth,  
 Dazzling the soul! (III. ll. 725–731)

On the other hand, the vision of earth's renovation in *Descriptive Sketches*

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<sup>118</sup> Deeanne Westbrook, *Wordsworth's Biblical Ghosts* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), p. 146.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 145.

vividly carries an apocalyptic sense of transformation through the dynamic of its images, which resonate with the apocalyptic judgement of the Revelation. Thus, Wordsworth understood the violence of the Revolution as an apocalyptic violence which would deliver a judgement against 'human vices and eventually bring about the 'Freedom' of 'primaeval Man'.

#### 2.1.2. A lesson of nature and 'power of strong controul' in nature

Nature contributes crucially to his apocalyptic understanding of the Revolution in *Descriptive Sketches*. There is a striking parallel between the two faces of nature and the hope and violence of the Revolution in that the poet identifies a destructive power as well as a sense of rebirth in both nature and the Revolution. Eventually, in Book VI of *The Prelude*, he equates various beautiful aspects of nature with 'Characters of the great apocalypse, / The types and symbols of eternity' (ll. 570-1). It is hard to say whether his experience of nature is simply a projection of his ideas; or whether his way of understanding the hope and violence of the Revolution is completely subject to his experience of the two faces of nature. Most of all, nature itself mattered to the poet. Just before mentioning his landing at Calais on the very eve of that great federal day (VI, ll. 356-7), he explains his motivation for this walking tour. Although 'an open slight / Of college cares and study was the scheme', he confesses that 'nature then was sovereign in my heart' (VI, ll. 342-3, 346). In *Descriptive Sketches*, he shows how he was impressed by nature's beauty and sublime. And yet, he was also struggling with the problem of the violence in the Revolution because the imminent flood, which would cleanse the blemished

world through its violence, could not be imagined without ‘a fainter pang of moral grief’ (*Descriptive Sketches*, ll. 769). Interestingly, in Book VI, beholding the summit of Mont Blanc and the wondrous Vale of Chamouny, he remembers that ‘With such a book / Before our eyes we could not choose but read / A frequent lesson of sound tenderness, / The universal reason of mankind’ (ll. 473–6). As Hartman suggests, *Descriptive Sketches* is neither ‘a portrait of nature’ nor ‘the projection on nature of an idea’; but ‘the portrayal of the action of a mind in search (primarily through the eye) of a nature adequate to its idea’.<sup>120</sup> In other words, both the descriptions of nature and the thoughts of the Revolution can be integrated into each other in the sense that the lessons taught by nature are applied to dealing with the problem.<sup>121</sup>

The idea of divine power connects nature with Wordsworth’s apocalyptic way of thinking in a significant way. In *Descriptive Sketches*, the poet is continuously reminded of the presence of divine power in nature. He begins the poem by referring to ‘a spot of holy ground’ which ‘Nature’s God had giv’n to man’ (ll. 1, 2), and he feels ‘a secret Power that reigns / Here, where no trace of man the spot profanes’ (ll. 424–425). When we look at his Keswilll letter of September 6, 1790, to his sister Dorothy, it can be seen that his experience of divine power is deeply religious, rather than sheer rhetoric: ‘Among the more awful scenes of the Alps, I had not a thought of man, or a single created being; my whole soul was turned to Him who produced the terrible majesty before me’.<sup>122</sup> Further, this power is not only present, but active in nature. He

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<sup>120</sup> Hartman, *Wordsworth’s Poetry*, p. 107.

<sup>121</sup> See, Williams, *Wordsworth: Romantic Poetry*, p. 52.

<sup>122</sup> *WL I*, p. 34.

envisages a world beyond the earth: 'For images of other worlds are there, / Awful the light, and holy is the air' (ll. 544-5), and, at the same time, 'An unknown power connects him with the dead' (ll. 543). Eventually, this 'power of strong controul', which the poet encounters in nature, is invoked to bring 'Liberty' (ll. 774) to the persecuted and oppressed. In this way, nature is a crucial element in Wordsworth's apocalyptic way of comprehending the Revolution.

### 2.1.3. Wordsworth's disillusionment with the Revolution

The turbulent expectations for a new world turned into terror and despair, and Wordsworth became disillusioned with the Revolution, as he recounts in Books IX and X of *The Prelude*. At the time of hope, the French are compared to 'bees' who 'swarmed' (VI, ll. 398), but at the time of terror they are described as 'ant-like swarms' (IX, ll. 58). At the beginning of Book X, in which Wordsworth moves from 'the scenes of vineyard, orchard and calm waters' towards 'the fierce metropolis' of the past two month's massacres, he describes how 'the swarm' 'came elate and jocund' but 'had shrunk from sight of their own task, and fled in terror' (X, ll. 4-6, 13-20). As Morton Paley pointed out, the image of the swarm reminds one of 'the image of Satan's fallen angels entering their hall': 'As bees / In spring-time, when the Sun with Taurus rides [ . . . ] so thick the aery crowd / Swarmed and were straitened'.<sup>123</sup> In addition, Wordsworth appears to equate the terror of the Revolution with the disaster of the plagues in ancient Egypt: 'The land all swarmed with passion, like a plain /

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<sup>123</sup> Paley, *Apocalypse and Millennium*, p. 174; *Paradise Lost*, i. 768-76.

Devoured by locusts' (IX, ll. 178-9).

As the poet walks 'through the wide city' (X, ll. 41) and across 'The Square of the Carrousel' where the dead had been 'heaped up' (X, ll. 47-8), his experience of despair deepens. Whereas he was able to read the book of nature as 'Characters of the great apocalypse' while crossing the Alps with the hope of the Revolution (VI, ll. 570), the current volume of the terror became unreadable in that it was 'locked up from him', 'being written in a tongue he cannot read' (X, ll. 51-3). In Book III of *The Excursion*, the Solitary, who 'reconverted to the world' of the Revolution, also reveals feelings of 'scorn' and 'contempt' for its 'Shade' (ll. 742, 776, 785). Wordsworth clearly experienced a growth in a prophetic voice which 'enabled him to denounce apocalyptic wrath upon the world',<sup>124</sup>:

But as the ancient prophets were inflamed,  
[. . .]  
Before them in some desolated place  
The consummation of the wrath of Heaven;  
So did some portions of that spirit fall  
On me, to uphold me through those evil times (X, ll. 401-410)

He wishes that the Holy Spirit may descend upon France like the Pentecost in Acts 2:

The gift of tongues might fall, and men arrive  
From the four quarters of the winds do to  
For France what without help she could not do,

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<sup>124</sup> Paley, *Apocalypse and Millennium*, p. 184.



A work of honour. (X, ll. 121–124)

Although Wordsworth is disillusioned with the Revolution, he does not abandon his hope for the transformation of the world. The question now is, where does Wordsworth turn in terms of revolution in the world?

## 2.2. The growth of the mind: imagination

### 2.2.1. Imagination, nature, ‘a new world’

In 1790, the 20-year old Wordsworth and his friend Robert Jones went on a walking tour towards the Alps during his summer vacation from Cambridge, but the ‘two brother pilgrims’ (VI, ll. 478) famously missed the destination of their pilgrimage. When they learned from a local peasant that they had already crossed the Alps, their long-hoped for vision, without noticing it, an anticlimactic narrative followed their disappointment. But Wordsworth’s sense of frustration shifted immediately with the unexpected manifestation of his own imagination: ‘Imagination – lifting up itself [. . .] “I recognize thy glory”’ (VI, ll. 525, 532). The ‘usurpation’ (ll. 533) of Imagination thus enabled the poet to envisage the landscape. In a similar vein, through the power of imagination Wordsworth offers a vision of a new world over and against the terror and despair of the Revolution. Books IX and X of *the Prelude* show how the poet was thoroughly disillusioned with the promise of the Revolution in so far as he referred to ‘utter loss of hope itself / And things to hope for!’ (XI, ll. 6–7). But he simultaneously attempted to voice a new hope in ‘our song’: ‘Not with these began / Our song, and not with these our song must end’ (XI, ll. 7–8). As the

exercise of imagination compensated for missing the object of his pilgrimage, he endeavours to re-write his song with a new hope through the 'Restored' power of imagination. In the last three Books of *the Prelude*, Wordsworth touches on various themes, including imagination, nature, the growth of mind, hope, inside and outside, spots of time, poet and prophet, everyday experience, God and man and the universe, and finally, the vision of Snowdon.

There is no doubt that the relationship between imagination and nature is one of the key themes which Wordsworth discusses repeatedly in the last three Books, but I would suggest there is another dimension to this relationship. We must remember that *the Prelude* is called 'the Anti-chapel' as part of his grand project, *The Recluse*, which would deal with 'Nature, Man, and Society'. In the last three Books of *the Prelude*, Wordsworth tries to make sense of human life in terms of the relationship between man, nature, and God in that he is finally able to perceive 'a new world' (XII, ll. 372), in 'communion with the invisible world' (XIII, ll. 105). It is through growth of his mind that he could attain this vision, and therefore the 'restored' power of imagination plays a key role.

Although the poetic vision of a new world requires no turbulent transformation of the world, as in the apocalyptic vision of the Revolution, it is still focused on an apocalyptic way of transforming the world in so far as this song expresses a vision of 'a new world' (XII, ll. 371). It can thus be argued that this song replaces the disillusioned world of the Revolution by envisaging an apocalyptic pattern of a new world. His yearning for a new world and his apocalyptic pattern of thinking do not disappear even after the disappointment of the Revolution, but persist in a different way. Interestingly, Abrams provides

a remarkable insight into how ‘the external means was replaced by an internal means for transforming the world’. That is, ‘faith in an apocalypse by revolution now gave way to faith in an apocalypse by imagination or cognition.’<sup>125</sup> If the new world of the Revolution meant the transformation of the actual outward world, this new song, according to Abrams, is concerned with the internalization of the apocalypse. But it should be noted that imagination itself is not a vision, but a means through which the poet can write his song for hope. Although Wordsworth formulates the song for a new world through such internalized means, the power of imagination, his song is profoundly associated with an external world.

As the title of Book XI, ‘Imagination, how impaired and restored’, implies, the last three Books offer an account of how Wordsworth struggled between external and internal powers to uncover a primary source for knowledge and emotion. External objects had ‘power over my [his] imagination since the dawn of childhood’, but now the poet declares that ‘the mind’, ‘a *creative* soul, is lord and master, and that outward sense is but the obedient servant of her will’.<sup>126</sup> This statement seems to justify the idea that nature is a mere projection of the mind, but it must be noted that the power of mind does not disown nature in terms of its materiality and independent value.<sup>127</sup> Rather than deny nature, the restored power of imagination enables the poet to re-discover what before he could not see in nature. ‘Having tracked the main essential power – Imagination’, Wordsworth now ‘returns’:

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<sup>125</sup> Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism*, pp. 333–4.

<sup>126</sup> *The Prelude*, XII, ll. 147–9; XI, ll. 256, 270–2.

<sup>127</sup> See, Hartman, *Wordsworth's Poetry*, p. 225.

And in the rivers and the groves behold  
Another face, might hear them from all sides  
Calling upon the more instructed mind  
To link their images [. . .]  
With forms and definite appearances  
Of human life.” (XIII, ll. 289, 294–301)

Most significant is the phrase, ‘the more instructed mind’, which brings ‘another face’. It seems that the poet can find a deeper knowledge in nature through the growth of mind. This sense of growth, in fact, reminds us of *Tintern Abbey*, in which Wordsworth confesses, ‘I have learned / To look on nature, not as in the hour / Of thoughtless youth’. The restored power of the imagination re-establishes a relationship with nature such that Wordsworth still finds beauty and consolation in nature, but now he can look on a new aspect of nature in relation to ‘a new world’ through his more instructed mind.

#### 2.2.2. ‘A higher power’ in ‘life’s everyday appearances’

Indeed, it was through this restored power of imagination that the poet eventually could find ‘a new world’, for which he had been yearning and could replace the disappointing new world of the Revolution. At the end of Book XII, he mentions that he ‘exercised’:

Upon the vulgar forms of present things  
And actual world of our familiar days,  
A higher power – have caught from them a tone,  
An image, and a character, by books  
Not hitherto reflected. (ll. 360–365)

Thus, 'in life's everyday appearances', he was able 'to have a sight / Of a new world' (XII, ll. 369-371). Jonathan Roberts also argues that Wordsworth's engagement with apocalypse is 'one in which apocalyptic language is fulfilled in the everyday', rather than 'a revelation of the transformation of the mind' or 'the anticipation of revolutionary bloodshed'.<sup>128</sup> In this new world, there are two main elements, 'a higher power' and 'everyday appearances'. His idea of a new world refers not to a special world, but to 'a high power' in ordinary everyday experience.

What the poet is able with the growth of his mind to recognise in daily life experience is the sense of greatness and wonder, which is enough to bring hope for a new world. In the first half of Book XI the power of imagination is underlined, and the second half recounts two famous 'spots of time' concerning memory and mind. For Wordsworth, however, the significance of imagination itself, as mentioned above, is not the subject of his song. Book XII begins with 'nature's gift' and suggests a re-established relationship between nature and the mind through returning with a mature mind: 'Did nature bring again that wiser mood, / More deeply re-established in my soul' (ll. 45-6). Then the poet addresses some fundamental questions on 'rulers of the world', 'the dignity of individual man', 'hope' and 'obstacles'. In order to find the answers, he chooses to 'turn / To you, ye pathways and ye lonely roads', and seeks 'you, enriched with everything I prized' (ll. 123-5). He describes the bliss of walking or wandering daily through fields or groves or forests or naked moors, conversing

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<sup>128</sup> Jonathan Roberts, 'Wordsworth's Apocalypse', *Literature and Theology*, 20 (2006), 361-378 (p. 376).

with men on the way.<sup>129</sup> Eventually, in ‘such walks’, he could find:

Hope to my hope, and to my pleasure peace  
And steadiness, and healing and repose  
To every angry passion. There I heard,  
From mouths of lowly men and of obscure,  
A tale of honour – sounds in unison  
With loftiest promises of good and fair. (ll. 178–184)

This passage epitomizes the idea of ‘a new world’ which can be discovered with the growth of the mind in ‘life’s everyday appearances’. The rural environment provides him with the sense of peace, calm, and restoration. Whereas he sought out liberty and dignity in the grand scale of the Revolution, he now recognises the ‘loftiest promises of good and fair’ from ‘lowly men’ and ordinary daily life. These discoveries enable him to realise his hope for a new world. In fact, what has changed is not the world itself, but the way of perceiving it, which is dependent upon the growth of mind and the power of imagination. Accordingly, a new world is based on the integration of mind and nature as it is the outcome of ‘a balance, an ennobling interchange of action from within and from without: Both of the object seen, and eye that sees’ (ll. 376–9).

Having touched on the issue of the sublime in the common, lowly, trivial and mean, we cannot overlook the discussions between Coleridge and Wordsworth over *Lyrical Ballads*, which indicate again a significant relationship between common life and the power of imagination in terms of ‘a new world’. In the Advertisement of *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), it is mentioned that the language and

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<sup>129</sup> See, Book XII, ll. 127–177.

style of 'the middle and lower classes of society is adapted to the purposes of poetic pleasure'.<sup>130</sup> In the Preface of 1800, Wordsworth explains more specifically how he is interested in 'the incidents of common life', 'low and rustic life', 'the beautiful and permanent forms of nature', in order to communicate 'the essential passions of the heart'.<sup>131</sup> Interestingly, in the expanded Preface of 1802, he develops his earlier statement, suggesting that over 'the incidents and situations from common life' he throws 'a certain colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual way'.<sup>132</sup> When Wordsworth refers to common and rural life in his poetic project, he does not mean adding some typical images of such life, but indicates a new way of perceiving it. Later, in Chapter XIV of *Biographia Literaria* (1817), Coleridge corroborates such an idea by arguing that Wordsworth aims:

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; an inexhaustible treasure, but for which, in consequence of the film of familiarity and selfish solicitude we have eyes, yet see not, ears that hear not, and hearts that neither feel nor understand.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> 'Advertisement', *L.B.*, 1798, p. i.

<sup>131</sup> 'Preface (1800)', in *Prose I*, pp. 123–4.

<sup>132</sup> 'Preface (1802)',

<http://www.english.upenn.edu/~jenglish/Courses/Spring2001/040/preface1802.html> [accessed 22 March 2012].

<sup>133</sup> *BL*, p. 161.

This comment explains how Wordsworth tried to discover a sense of greatness in the minutiae of lowly life through ‘the modifying colours of imagination’.<sup>134</sup> Of particular importance is the biblical phrase, ‘we have eyes, yet see not, ears that hear not’. What matters is not the transformation of outward appearances, but the growth of an inner mind, through which we can see and hear what we could not see and hear before. As Abrams put it, Wordsworth attempts to ‘make the old world new not by distorting it, but by defamiliarizing the familiar through a refreshed way of looking at it’.<sup>135</sup>

### 2.2.3. Apocalypse: a prophetic voice, God, and nature

‘A new world’ does not involve the outwardly turbulent and dramatic transformation of a world, but, rather, is found in the appearances of daily life through the power of imagination. How does this idea of a new world suggest an apocalyptic vision? First of all, this new world is expressed in a prophetic voice as a hope for the future and a criticism of the present. Wordsworth seems to be aware of his vocation as a poet-prophet both before and after the French Revolution. Although, in *Home At Grasmere*, he narrates that he was ‘no prophet, nor had even a hope, / Scarcely a wish’ (ll. 13-4), the poem reveals his ‘prophetic declarations’, which close with the invocation of the ‘prophetic spirit’, ‘teaching me to discern’ and ‘expressing the image of a better time’ (ll. 1026, 1030, 1045).<sup>136</sup> If we look at one of the famous ‘spots of time’ episodes in Book XI of *the Prelude*, we find an interesting way of re-interpreting the past in a

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid., p. 160.

<sup>135</sup> Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism*, p. 379.

<sup>136</sup> Beth Darlington, ‘Introduction’, in *HG*, ed. by Beth Darlington (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1977), pp. 3-32 (p. 22).



prophetic sense. On a stormy and wild day, the thirteen-year-old schoolboy on a crag was watching intensely and waiting impatiently for two horses, which would take him home for the Christmas holidays. But, before staying for ten days at home, his father died. He regards it as 'a chastisement' (XI, ll. 369). As he recalls that day with 'such anxiety of hope' on the summit, he 'bowed low / To God who thus corrected my desires' (XI, ll. 371, 373-4). In other words, an event of the past is re-interpreted as a prophetic sign for correcting his desires in that the father's death makes him 'convert that moment of hope into an ominous, even murderous anticipation'.<sup>137</sup> In Book XII, the vocation of the poet as a prophet is distinctly revealed. Book XI describes the mission of the poet as 'speaking of purer creatures!' (ll. 68-9), and, in Book XII, a poet and a prophet are 'connected' with each other 'in a mighty scheme of truth', who are 'enabled to perceive / Something unseen before' (ll. 301-5). Accordingly, the song of 'a new world' bears a prophetic voice which has the ability to see 'something unseen before'.

This prophetic tone is also sensed in Wordsworth's critical attitude towards urban life and class-based society over and against his new hope. Although some critics regard Wordsworth's poems as increasingly turning away from history and politics, he clearly engages with contemporary social issues even after his disillusionment with the French Revolution. Like the Old Testament prophets, Wordsworth is seen to raise his voice against contemporary society. According to Ian Baucom, Wordsworth's poems express the moral that 'metropolitan culture' is harmful to 'Englishness, primarily because the city

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<sup>137</sup> G. H. Hartman, 'The Poetics of Prophecy', in *The Unremarkable Wordsworth* (Methuen: London, 1987), pp. 163-181 (p. 170).

induces a forgetfulness of precisely the skill the poems teach – the skill of reading and valuing England’s memorial places’.<sup>138</sup> Wordsworth is explicitly aware of the Industrial Revolution and its outcome with the phenomenon of urbanization. In Book XII, he contrasts sharply the ‘loftiest promise of good and fair’ in rural walks with the sickness of city life by dichotomising them. Immediately after his account of the enlightenment, he begins to criticise city life:

Oppression worse than death  
Salutes the being at his birth, where grace  
Of culture hath been utterly unknown,  
And labour in excess and poverty  
From day to day pre-occupy the ground  
Of the affections. (ll. 194–199)

This passage implies that the people in cities were oppressed by poverty and overwork partly due to urbanization and industrialization. Accordingly, the poet denounces ‘cities’ where ‘the human heart is sick’ and ‘love does not easily thrive’ (ll. 201–2).

His criticism is also aimed at the class-based society emerging from these processes.<sup>139</sup> In a letter to John Wilson from 1802, Wordsworth criticises the

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<sup>138</sup> Ian Baucom, *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire, and the Locations of Identity* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. 33. Also quoted by Tanya Agathocleous, *Urban realism and the Cosmopolitan Imagination in the Nineteenth Century: Visible City, Invisible World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 6; in an interview, G. H. Hartman also mentions that Wordsworth is concerned about urbanization and journalism, exposing the negative aspects of the Industrial Revolution. See, Cathy Caruth, ‘An Interview with Geoffrey Hartman’, in *The Wordsworthian Enlightenment: Romantic Poetry and the Ecology of Reading*, ed. by Helen Regueiro Elam and Frances Ferguson (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), pp. 296–318 (p. 309).

<sup>139</sup> In his *Wordsworth’s Counterrevolutionary Turn*, John Rieder argues that in the mid-1790s Wordsworth took a ‘counterrevolutionary turn’ from the grand stage of political activism to his

privileged classes for falsely ‘supposing them to be’, rather than a part of human nature, ‘fair representatives of the vast mass of human existence’.<sup>140</sup> The *Essay* of 1815 also states that one of the difficulties in creating such taste lies in ‘breaking the bonds of custom’, and we need to ‘divest the reader of the pride that induces him to dwell upon those points wherein men differ from each other, to the exclusion of those in which all men are alike, or the same’.<sup>141</sup> In both the letter and the *Essay*, what Wordsworth tries to point out is that a privileged class is not the universality of all human life, but a part of it. Then he endeavours to show that ‘we have all of us one human heart’, which is deeper than the outward forms of different classes.<sup>142</sup> As the Advertisement of *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) reveals, Wordsworth attempts to articulate this ‘one human heart’ through his ‘class-conscious experiment with language of conversation in the middle and lower classes of society’.<sup>143</sup> Eventually, in Book XII of *the Prelude*, he proclaims that he has found in the common and lowly life hope and the ‘loftiest promises of good and fair’.<sup>144</sup> Accordingly, when the poet sings a song of a new world of ‘one brotherhood of all the human race’, it is fully supported by his critical view of the rigidity and false superiority of a privileged

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idea of an aesthetic cohesion with the dispossessed, struggling with ‘the problem of social class’. See, *Wordsworth’s Counterrevolutionary Turn: Community, Virtue, and Vision in the 1790s* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1997), p. 19–29; Jon Klancher also maintains that, for Wordsworth, the power of imagination ‘frees us from a materially intolerable social world and enables us to overcome the barriers of social class’. See, *The Making of English Reading Audiences, 1790–1832* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), pp. 136, 150.

<sup>140</sup> *WL I*, p. 355.

<sup>141</sup> William Wordsworth, ‘Essay, Supplementary to the Preface’, in *Prose III*, p. 80.

<sup>142</sup> *The Old Cumberland Beggar*, ll. 146.

<sup>143</sup> G. H. Hartman, ‘Reading: The Wordsworthian Enlightenment’, in *The Wordsworthian Enlightenment: Romantic Poetry and the Ecology of Reading*, ed. by Helen Regueiro Elam and Frances Ferguson (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), pp. 29–44 (p. 34).

<sup>144</sup> *The Prelude*, Book XII, ll. 178–184.

class.<sup>145</sup> But we need to clarify that the outward forms of the lowly do not themselves represent ‘the universal heart’, but can be recognised as such through the power of imagination, which is attained by the growth of mind.<sup>146</sup>

I take this prophetic voice, which foresees hope in the common and lowly life and criticises the present, to be fundamentally religious. First, his song for a new world is associated with the eternity of God. Just as the poet can sense ‘The sky-roof’d temple of the eternal hills’ in ‘communion’ ‘with God’ in *Descriptive Sketches* (ll. 551, 553), so in the Simplon Pass of Book VI, ‘Characters of the great apocalypse’ are conceived as ‘the types and symbols of eternity, / Of first, and last, and midst, and without end’, which is resonant with the prayer of Adam and Eve in *Paradise Lost*, ‘Him first, him last, him midst, and without end’.<sup>147</sup> This view of eternity also ‘alludes to the words in John’s first vision’ of *The Book of Revelation*: ‘I am Alpha and Omega, says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.’<sup>148</sup> Likewise, the song of a new world ‘seeks in man (and in the frame of life, / Social and individual) [. . .] the gifts divine that has been, is, and shall be’ (XII, ll. 39–44). ‘The objects’ which are spotted on ‘a public road’ are ‘like a guide into eternity, / At least to things unknown and without bound’ (XII, ll. 145–150). The grace of God is seen to be present in human life, and the objects on a public road are said to indicate a sense of eternity. At this stage the poet does not say that a new world will finally lead to eternity beyond our life on earth, but he clearly

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<sup>145</sup> *The Prelude*, Book XI, ll. 88.

<sup>146</sup> *The Prelude*, Book XII, ll. 219.

<sup>147</sup> *Paradise Lost*, Book V, ll. 165.

<sup>148</sup> See, Paley, *Apocalypse and Millennium*, p. 172; the Revelation, 1. 8., ‘I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty’ (from the King James Bible).

links it with the idea of eternity which is based on the Christian idea of the eternal God, 'Was, Is and Shall be'.

Secondly, in the conclusion to *the Prelude* (Book XIII), the vision of Snowdon shows that the idea of a new world is deeply related to a feeling of the presence of God and eventually to the sense of eternity. The ascent of Snowdon was already the climax of *Descriptive Sketches* and was re-used in the Five-Book *Prelude*. There is no need to underline the significance of his experience of the ascent, seeing that he retained that privileged position for it in *the Prelude* of 1805; here it is the thematic resolution for, at least, the last half of *the Prelude*, dealing with the disillusionment of the French Revolution, the regained power of imagination, and a song for a new world.<sup>149</sup> Further, as Hartman put it, 'his special poetic mission is made absolutely clear by the power and character of the episode.'<sup>150</sup> The Snowdon vision can be analysed by dividing it into three parts. In the first part (ll. 1-65), the poet describes his mystical experience of 'the universal spectacle' within the structure of nature. When light fell instantly like a flash upon the turf, he saw a huge sea of mist, being looked down upon by the moon in single glory. At the same time, like 'Characters of the great apocalypse' in the Simplon Pass, he heard the roar of waters, torrents, streams innumerable, roaring with one voice. Just as he can find hope in the common and lowly, he also experiences the universal spectacle of the glory in nature.

This experience is followed by 'a meditation' in the second part (ll. 66-84). After the scene disappeared, Wordsworth has 'the perfect image of a mighty

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<sup>149</sup> Paley, *Apocalypse and Millennium*, p. 188

<sup>150</sup> Hartman, *Wordsworth's Poetry*, p. 254.

mind'. There is a striking similarity between this meditation and that of the Simplon Pass in the sense that both of them ascribe the great spectacle of the scenes to the workings of 'one mind' or 'a mighty mind'. But the difference is that the meditation of Snowdon, unlike that of the Simplon Pass, explicitly identifies this mind with 'the sense of God', who 'feed[s] upon infinity'. In this respect, for Wordsworth, the universal spectacle in nature, which can be recognised by the power of imagination, is essentially linked with the presence of God. After this meditation, Wordsworth re-visits in the third part (ll. 84-122) the area of the mind in terms of discerning truth and knowledge. He claims that higher minds have the power to acknowledge such thoughts, but nature is part of the power in that it 'thrusts forth upon the senses'. He calls it 'the spirit' in which higher minds deal with all the objects of the universe. Interestingly, such minds are associated with God and eternity as they are 'truly from the Deity' and 'fit to hold communion with the invisible world'. After the disillusionment of the Revolution, Wordsworth has attempted to create a new song of hope, and he is able to write his new song through the power of imagination. He does not stop there, but tries to relate higher minds with the presence of God and eternity. Why does Wordsworth want to link the mind with God and the invisible world? It appears that he is trying to lay a secure foundation for his vision by associating it with faith in God. He proposes five phrases beginning with the adverb 'hence' after referring to the relationship between higher minds and the Deity. Owing to that relationship, everything is secured; 1) the identity of such minds, 2) religion and faith, 3) sovereignty and peace and emotion, 4) cheerfulness in every act of life, 5) truth in moral judgements and delight in the

external universe. He describes this state as 'genuine liberty', and therefore his vision for a new world is based on the presence of God.

In the long run, his song for 'a new world', formulated by the internalized means, is fundamentally religious and involved in the external world through its prophetic voice. Further, it should be noted that it does not overlook the external reality of nature, but rather offers a deepened insight into it. In other words, for Wordsworth, this song unearths the intrinsic value of the natural world. First, the possibility of writing the song is dependent upon the growth of the mind and the power of imagination, but this internal faculty is affected by nature's material aspects as the rural environment provides the poet with the sense of peace, calm, and restoration. Secondly, the song aims to discover the 'loftiest promises of good and fair' from 'life's everyday appearances', and it enables the poet to re-discover a deepened knowledge of nature. Accordingly, he now can see what he could not see before. Thirdly, nature maintains its own intrinsic value over and against the internal power of the imagination because the presence of God permeates the natural world. Given that the imagination becomes a key element in creating the song, it might be supposed that the meaning of nature is now defined by it. Thus nature would be a mere projection of the mind. Yet, the song develops a mutual relationship between the poet and nature in terms of the calm of the rural environment, his deepened insight, and the presence of God. The natural world thus plays a part in this song for 'a new world'.

### 2.3. The final vision of the universe

Wordsworth suggests a final vision of the universe in which the whole universe, including the non-human world, will be integrated into the eternal city on the day of the Lord. Wordsworth's thought about an apocalypse seems linked to the sense of eternity, and eventually his vision goes beyond this earthly life. On the one hand, in both visions of Snowdon and Book IX of *The Excursion*, he refers to the transformation of the present life in that the power of infinity is present in the whole universe, 'moulding, enduing, abstracting, and combining the outward face of things', and 'That Paradise, the lost abode of man, / Was raised again; and to a happy Few, / In its original beauty, here restored.'<sup>151</sup> On the other hand, in the conclusion of *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, he claims that the universe will 'reach the eternal City' after being purified from 'stain' and 'pollution'.<sup>152</sup> The *Ecclesiastical Sonnets* are concerned with the journey of the British Church or of an individual, struggling with the uncertainty of faith in a fallen world as well as yearning for political stability and a spiritual goal over and against mutability, decay, and paradox. And the natural world participates in the journey. The predominant image for this journey is 'a Holy River' which introduces, binds, and concludes the sequence in a circular pattern.<sup>153</sup> If Wordsworth sets out on a journey, seeking in the sonnet of Introduction 'upon the heights of Time the source / Of a Holy River', he completes the orbit and reaches 'the eternal City' in the sonnet of Conclusion. Although sequence characterises history, as being subject to mutability and a fallen state, the world is transformed into eternity beyond time and sinfulness. A sense of the eternity

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<sup>151</sup> *The Prelude*, Book XIII, ll. 70, 79; *The Excursion*, Book IX, ll. 714-716.

<sup>152</sup> *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, XL VII Conclusion.

<sup>153</sup> Delli-Carpini, *History, Religion, and Politics*, p. 60.



of heavenly dwelling was mentioned in the previous chapter, but now we can show that the sense of eternity is contained in an apocalyptic vision.<sup>154</sup> That is, stained human history can be transformed into a Heavenly Jerusalem through an apocalyptic power.

The last two sonnets of the *Ecclesiastical Sonnets* assert by the interaction between humankind and the natural world Wordsworth's apocalyptic vision that the second coming of Jesus Christ will enable us to return to our lost Paradise. The first part of sonnet XLVI (Ejaculation) refers to the glory and light of God and the Son in 'love divine'

That made His human tabernacle shine  
Like Ocean burning with purpureal flame;  
Or like the Alpine Mount, that takes its name  
From roseate hues, far kenned at morn and even

The metaphors of glory and light applied to God and the Son are reminiscent of those of 'a new heaven and new earth', the holy city, the new Jerusalem', in the Revelation: 'the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. The nations will walk by its light' (21:23-4). Intriguingly, the second part of the sonnet urgently asks people to 'seek the light' 'at the approach of all-involving night'. What is significant here is the interaction between humankind and the natural world in seeking the light: 'Earth prompts – Heaven urges' [. . .] like the Mountain, may we grow more bright / From unimpeded commerce with the Sun.' This intense atmosphere of seeking the light links with the dramatic transformation of the Holy River in the

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<sup>154</sup> See, Rylestone, *Prophetic Memory*, pp. 106-7.

next sonnet.

The first part of the last sonnet presents a picture of a closed future, ‘why sleeps the future’, with the image of ‘a snake, enrolled, coil within coil’, which reminds one of the Fall of Adam and Eve in Genesis. But ‘the Word’ – Jesus Christ – yields ‘power at whose touch the sluggard shall unfold / His drowsy rings’. Then we hear an urgent call in the imperative phrase, ‘Look forth!’, and the Holy River suddenly ‘bursts through the inert present into the apocalyptic future’:<sup>155</sup>

[. . .] Look forth! – that Stream behold,  
THAT STREAM upon whose bosom we have passed  
Floating at ease while nations have effaced  
Nations, and Death has gathered to his fold  
Long lines of mighty Kings – look forth, my Soul!  
(Nor in this vision be thou slow to trust)  
The living Waters, less and less by guilt  
Stained and polluted, brighten as they roll,  
Till they have reached the eternal City – built  
For the perfected Spirits of the just!

This second part has two main features of an apocalyptic vision. Though there are no turbulent symptoms like thunder and storms, the sense of suddenness is underlined by the contrast between the stillness of sleeping in the first part and the dramatic transformation in the second part. In particular, ‘the Word’ who begins to exert His ‘Power’ on ‘the sluggard’ refers to the second coming of the Lord, which brings about a transcendent transformation of ‘The living Waters’. Secondly, the relationship between the stream and human beings is important.

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid., p. 91.

Obviously ‘the living Waters’ shape the apocalyptic vision, as human beings have passed upon the bosom of the stream, and at the same time they are transformed into ‘the perfected Spirits’ through the purifying power of ‘the living Waters, less and less by guilt / Stained and polluted’. At the beginning of the last chapter of Revelation, ‘the river of the water of life’ in the new Jerusalem is described as:

Flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. Nothing accursed will be found there any more. (22. 1–3)

Whereas Coleridge points explicitly to the imperfection of both humankind and the non-human natural world by referring to the ‘future perfection’ of ‘all the creation’, Wordsworth appears to have in mind only the sinfulness of humankind as he mentions ‘the eternal City – built / For the perfected Spirits of the just!’. Nevertheless, the two sonnets show that the non-human natural world plays a crucial part in his apocalyptic vision of the day of the Lord. This is how the poet formulates his final vision of the universe, into which the non-human world will be integrated on the second coming of Jesus.

We have seen that Coleridge’s and Wordsworth’s thoughts on eschatology divide into three phases: 1) they showed an initial enthusiasm for the French Revolution, interpreting it as the Apocalypse and Millennium; 2) even after their disillusionment, they continued to seek the transformation of the world, through a transformation of the mind for Coleridge, and a growth of the mind and of the

imagination for Wordsworth; 3) finally, they envisaged an eschatology with a final vision of the universe, including the non-human natural world. And it has been shown that each stage has an ecotheological perspective, in that nature plays a significant part. For Coleridge, in the first phase, nature participates in the apocalyptic and millennial vision of the Revolution through symbols and images of, in particular, its potential destructive power, and its power of joy and love in the new Heaven and new Earth; secondly, nature itself portrays the symbolic drama of the Apocalypse, creation, destruction and reproduction through its symbols and elements, and it enables the poet to experience the power of transformation and also helps him partly to attain the revolution of the mind; lastly, the non-human natural world will go through a transformation on the final Day as all creation 'contain[s] the presentiment of its own perfection' and it will be perfected through 'the union of life with God' on the Day. For Wordsworth, first of all, the lessons taught by nature enable the poet to confront the violence of the Revolution in terms of the dynamic of destruction and rebirth, and at the same time the 'power of strong controul' in nature is invoked for bringing about the apocalyptic transformation of the world; secondly, the restored power of imagination does not deny the value of nature, but re-establishes a mutual relationship with it to the extent that it enables the poet to re-discover a deeper knowledge in nature, which provides him with a sense of peace, calm, and restoration; however, the intrinsic value of nature is independent of human recognition, because the presence of God permeates the natural world; finally, the non-human natural world is integrated into a final vision of the eternal city through its interaction with humankind as shown by the

metaphors: light, glory, and the Holy River.

## Conclusion

In this thesis, the central aim has been to investigate the concept of nature in the works of Coleridge and Wordsworth from the ecotheological point of view, and to suggest how Coleridge's search for the unity of the universe and Wordsworth's yearning for dwelling relate to recent developments in ecotheological theory. Ecotheology can thus help us understand their ideas on nature. Chapter 1 defined ecotheology in terms of three issues derived primarily from the works of Teilhard and Moltman, which were then used as a conceptual framework for examining the works of Coleridge and Wordsworth. These three issues were the interrelatedness of the universe, the independent sacred value of nature, and a cosmic eschatology. These three aspects of ecotheology attempt to locate the significance of nature in its relationship with humanity and God. Unlike ecology, ecotheology helps human beings to recognise the importance of nature and to develop an appropriate relationship with it by uncovering God's involvement with the universe. Ecotheology thus forms a faith-based conceptual framework for communicating the intrinsic value of nature.

In proposing to use this framework for exploring the works of Coleridge and Wordsworth, a number of challenges arise, mentioned in the Introduction. Most of all, it is hard to define Coleridge's and Wordsworth's concept of nature. On the one hand the ecological and ecotheological readings of Romantic poetry pose a radical challenge to existing ways of understanding it by developing the

idea of nature, not as a mere projection of the mind, but as an independent material reality, and the unity of mind and nature. On the other the two authors formed their ideas of nature in terms of the creation of the mind as well as an independent material reality. For Coleridge, the landscape of nature offers the source of consolation and beauty, and later it becomes an object for scientific investigation into the idea of evolution. At the same time, he creates the meaning of nature through the power of the imagination as he can read the language of God in the beauty of nature and the sacramental language in the evolutionary process of nature. Wordsworth also develops a similar way of comprehending nature. For him, the natural environment plays a crucial role 1) in providing the harmony and joy of dwelling over and against city life through the soft, gay, and beautiful vale of Grasmere; 2) in creating the community of the living and the dead through the sense of beauty, soothing influence, and egalitarian aspect; 3) in being incorporated into church architecture in terms of beauty and caring. And yet, he expresses the presence of God in nature in the sense that sacredness is experienced in nature and the mystical experience is described as a 'visitation from the living God'.

The meaning of nature is thus dependent upon both its external reality and the power of the mind, but it is hard to say to what extent the meaning of nature is subject to the power of the mind. Interestingly, both Coleridge and Wordsworth themselves were aware of the difficulties posed by the relationship between the mind and nature in terms of creating a meaning for nature. Coleridge was struggling with the passivity and activity of the mind or the external world and the mind, and in 1825 the poet refers to a battle between

two rival artists, the Mind and Nature. Wordsworth underwent a process of growth of imagination. In his *Preface to the Edition of 1815*, Wordsworth provides a sense of the interactive relationship between perceiver and object: 'These processes of imagination are carried on either by conferring additional properties upon an object, or abstracting from it some of those which it actually possesses, and thus enabling it to re-act upon the mind which hath performed the process, like a new existence.'<sup>1</sup> It may be questionable to what extent he preserved successfully the integrity of both the mind and the object in his poetry. Just as Coleridge acknowledges the tension between two rival artists, so, for Wordsworth, the interplay between the mind and an external reality, as Keith Thomas has put it, may 'never reach synthetic closure' but instead 'the tensions reinstate themselves, prompting Wordsworth to favor by turns one tendency over another, or let the tension persist unresolved'.<sup>2</sup> The debate about the relationship between them will continue within Romantic criticism, but it ought to be recognised that, even after the power of imagination became dominant in the works of Coleridge and Wordsworth, the idea of nature as an external materiality still continued to matter.

The possibility of integrating the two different dimensions of the meaning of nature can be found in the relational dynamic among humanity, nature, and God. Coleridge's lifelong search for unity, which is based upon a monistic idea of God and the power of love in his early years, and an evolutionary idea of individuation in his later years, is fundamentally associated with the

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<sup>1</sup> *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth, Vol. III*, p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> Keith Thomas, *Wordsworth and Philosophy: Empiricism and Transcendentalism in the Poetry* (Ann Arbor; London: UMI Research Press, 1989), p. 18.



interrelatedness among them. A monistic idea of God, derived from Spinoza's philosophy and Priestley's Unitarianism, is immanent as the universal Soul in the universe, and therefore it enabled the poet to see the universe as one in the sense that each individual, human and nonhuman, shared as a common source, the one substance and energy of God. Individuals are interrelated with each other through God in whom they move, live, and have their Being. Coleridge also imagined a close relationship between them by arguing that all should be loved because God loves all. After becoming interested in natural philosophy, he applied evolutionary thought to his understanding of the universe as unity in that, in the evolutionary process of individuation through polarity and opposition, man as the highest of the class has all the previous stages and forms in nature, through which man and the natural world achieve a sense of unity. Rather than focusing upon whether this scientific knowledge is valid or not, Coleridge uses it as a tool for articulating the unity of the universe.

Likewise, for Wordsworth, his on-going search for an ideal place for dwelling, which goes through three phases, is always based upon the interrelatedness between humanity, nature, and God. His idea of dwelling does not simply mean a place for living, but, like Heidegger's idea of dwelling, is fundamentally associated with the idea of interrelatedness. It develops at the level of emotion and psychology and also as an environmental locality. In the first phase of dwelling in a cottage in Grasmere, the poet is struggling with the inhuman ways of city-life and the fears and anxieties of human mortality, but he experiences 'one life' in 'one Household under God' in Grasmere. He is able to discover an ideal place for dwelling here, in which he develops a mutual and

caring relationship between the dwellers and the natural environment within the context of God's presence. Yet, this ideal place is still subject to human mortality in that he had to go through the death of his brother and two children. The second phase thus tries to embrace the dead in his idea of dwelling. He locates the idea of dwelling in the community of the living and the dead whom are bonded together by locality, emotion, and mortality, and, at the same time, this community represents a sense of interrelatedness on the grounds that it is dependent upon the religious notion of immortality in God, and the soothing, beautiful, egalitarian and epitaphic aspects of nature. Recognising that even this community of the living and the dead is subject to human mortality, Wordsworth eventually turns to the heavenly dwelling which is represented by the church buildings. The idea of church architecture symbolises an imperishable eternal home, and it bears a close relationship to God and nature because it is based upon the sense of immortality in God and nature's various characteristics: beauty, purity, sacredness, care, consolation, hope, and metaphor for on-going journey.

This relational dynamic in Coleridge's lifelong search for unity and Wordsworth's on-going search for an ideal place for dwelling shows that the two poets are able to formulate their relationship with nature and God metaphysically as well as physically. They are affected by nature's material reality but at the same time they produce the meaning of nature through their power of the mind. They are willing to experience the presence of God in the world but at the same time they are looking for God who is beyond the world. These physical and metaphysical dimensions of nature bring about the intrinsic

value of nature in terms of materiality, sacredness, and mutuality. If nature can maintain its own external reality insofar as its materiality has an influence on the power of the mind, the sacredness of nature is perceived by the power of the mind. For Coleridge, the monistic notion of God and the powers of imagination and symbol in the evolutionary process of individuation communicate the presence of God in nature. Wordsworth continues to express a sense of holiness in nature throughout three phases for the idea of dwelling. Both Coleridge and Wordsworth also build a mutual relationship with nature over and against a hierarchical relationship. While Coleridge attempts to promote the value of nature through the thought of being ‘reordained *in more abundant honour*’ and to categorize ‘both great and small’ into one same level, ‘love’, Wordsworth indicates nature’s caring and egalitarian aspects.

With respect to this intrinsic value of nature, it was mentioned in Chapter 1 that, in ecotheology, it is of great significance for nature to be included in the picture of the final salvation. Otherwise the understanding of nature can be susceptible to being anthropocentric. Intriguingly, both Coleridge and Wordsworth develop their cosmic eschatological visions, ones in which nature constitutes a significant part. When they interpreted the French Revolution as the Apocalypse and Millennium, nature is essentially associated with their eschatological visions through, for Coleridge, its symbols and images of, particularly, a potential destructive power, and its power of joy and love in the new Heaven and new Earth, and, for Wordsworth, the lessons taught by nature in terms of the dynamic of destruction and rebirth, and the ‘power of strong controul’ in nature in relation to the apocalyptic transformation of the world.

Even after their disillusionment, they continued to pursue their eschatological vision by communicating the transformation of the world through, for Coleridge, the transformation of the mind, and, for Wordsworth, the growth of the mind and imagination. In this stage, in Coleridge, nature itself discloses the symbolic drama of the Apocalypse, creation, destruction and reproduction through its symbols and parts, and it enables the poet to experience the power of transformation and also helps him partly to conduct the revolution of the mind. In Wordsworth, the restored power of imagination does not deny the value of nature, but re-establishes a mutual relationship with it to the extent that it enables the poet to re-discover a deeper knowledge in nature, which still provides him with the sense of peace, calmness, and restoration. Finally, in Coleridge, the non-human natural world will go through the transformation on the final Day on the grounds that all the creation 'contain the presentiment of its own perfection' and they will be perfected through 'the union of life with God' on the Day. Wordsworth integrates the non-human natural world into the final vision of the eternal city by involving it with the apocalyptic process of the Last Day in terms of its metaphors: light, glory, and the Holy River.

For the two authors, this intrinsic value of nature is fundamentally associated with their understanding of God, but it was not an easy task to hold that the representation of God in their works is religious, partly because their views on the idea of God changed and at the same time were neglected or misrepresented. First of all, it has been suggested that Wordsworth's early religious aspects should not be regarded as a mere secularization of Christianity on the grounds that the definition of religion is not subject only to a set of

teachings and a belief system, but is also based upon the dynamic of personal experience. There is no doubt that Christianity had been seriously shaken during the eighteenth century by the force of reason in the Enlightenment, recent scientific discoveries, and the secularization in French Revolution.<sup>3</sup> But we should not be mistaken about the aftermath of the historical process, which could bring about, to some extent, an unavoidable change to Christianity, but at the same time could not portray a completely different picture about it overnight. Intriguingly, James Deboo holds that the perceived chasm between ‘orthodox’ and ‘secularising’ accounts of the religious reaction to the Enlightenment and the French Revolution is not as wide as is often assumed.<sup>4</sup> One of the most significant changes since the Enlightenment is the awareness of the authority of a subjective mind. In his article, ‘What is Enlightenment?’, Kant described Enlightenment as ‘man’s quitting the nonage occasioned by himself’.<sup>5</sup> He argued that the crucial element in realizing Enlightenment is freedom, ‘a freedom to make public use of one’s reason’, and he coined the

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<sup>3</sup> In his *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*, trans. by Theodore M. Greene and Hoyt H. Hudson (New York: Harper and Brothers., 1960), Immanuel Kant asserts that there is ‘only one (true) Religion but there can be faiths of several kinds’, pp. 98–99. Such comments imply a critical transformation, or even crisis, of religion during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Also quoted by Donald G. Marshall, ‘Religion and Literature after Enlightenment: Schleiermacher and Wordsworth’, *Christianity and Literature*, 50 (2000), 53–68 (p. 53); Abrams points out that ‘it is a historical commonplace that the course of Western thought since the Renaissance has been one of progressive secularization’, *Natural Supernaturalism*, p. 13.

<sup>4</sup> James Deboo, ‘Wordsworth and the Stripping of the Altars’, in *Religion and the Arts* 8 (2004), 323–343 (p. 324). He introduces and examines a few critics whose books are aimed to reveal how Catholicism or a traditional way of believing in God was still influential even after the Reformation or the French Revolution: including, Eamon Duffy’s *The Stripping of the Altars*, Martha C. Skeeter’s *Community and Clergy: Bristol and the Reformation c. 1503–c. 1750.*, Suzanne Desan’s *Reclaiming the Sacred: Lay Religion and Popular Politics in Revolutionary France*. What they contend is that Catholicism or Christianity had not been wiped out during those times by such historical events but was able to stay more or less in some parts of life as it used to be.

<sup>5</sup> Kant, *Essays And Treatises: Immanuel Kant, Vol I* (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1993), p. 3.

term, '*Sapere aude!*': have courage to exercise your own understanding.<sup>6</sup> Kant's definition of the Enlightenment entitles an individual to use his/her own reason in reinterpreting an established doctrine over and against an established authority.

Clearly, aspects of personal feeling came to have great significance in understanding religious experience during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. There had been the affective tradition in religion, particularly mysticism, in the past, and Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834) may be one of the pioneering modern European thinkers who attempted to base religion on feeling.<sup>7</sup> He constantly uses the word 'feeling' to characterise religious experience throughout his major writings.<sup>8</sup> In *The Christian Faith*, he famously writes:

The common element in all howsoever diverse expressions of piety, by which these are conjointly distinguished from all other feelings, or, in other words, the self-identical essence of piety, is this: the consciousness of being absolutely dependent, or, which is the same thing, of being in relation with God.<sup>9</sup>

Having discussed the importance of feeling within individual experience, in his

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Isabel Rivers refers to both Issac Watts (1674–1748) and Philip Doddridge (1702–1751), who 'were largely responsible for defining and disseminating affectionate religion' and 'tried to balance the rational and evangelical tendencies of dissent'. See, *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment: A Study of the Language of Religion and Ethics in England, 1660–1780* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 164–204 (p. 168).

<sup>8</sup> Schleiermacher's account of religion was subject to considerable development over the thirty-two years between the first edition of the *Speeches on Religion* and the second edition of *The Christian Faith*, see Andrew Dole, 'Schleiermacher and Otto on Religion', *Religious Studies*, 40 (2004), 389–413 (p. 398).

<sup>9</sup> Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, trans. by H. R. Mackintosh, J. S. Stewart et al. (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1999), p. 12, § 4.

famous second speech in *On Religion*, Schleiermacher argues that ‘one can have much religion without coming into contact with any of these concepts’, such as ‘miracles, inspirations, revelations’.<sup>10</sup> Likewise, we have seen that the dynamic of feeling plays a key role in Wordsworth’s yearning for dwelling, based on the natural environment and the presence of God. In *The Pedlar*, Wordsworth explicitly and implicitly contrasts the traditional doctrine of Christianity with a mystical experience in nature by explaining how the pedlar, whose religion ‘seemed self-taught, as of a dreamer in the woods’ (ll. 357), ‘feels his faith in the mountains’ (ll. 216). Above all, he identifies this mystical experience as ‘visitation from the living God’. In addition, in *Descriptive Sketches*, the poet experiences a sense of sacredness and ‘power of strong controul’ in nature which is recognised as ‘great God’ later in the same poem. Even in his later poetry, *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, soothing nature, not the traditional smoke of incense, is involved in the veneration of the cross in the Church. Hans-Georg Gadamer made an interesting comment that a ‘conscious break with tradition’ led in turn to ‘the creation of a new consciousness of continuity in the reaction to this break’.<sup>11</sup> In this respect, it can be claimed that this act of feeling within an individual experience opens up a new way of understanding religion, which equally demonstrates the depth of religion in a different way over and against the traditional language of Christianity.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers*, trans. by Richard Crouter, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988), p. 48.

<sup>11</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, ‘The Future of the European Humanities’, in *On Education, Poetry, and History: Applied Hermeneutics*, ed. by Dieter Misgeld and Graeme Nicholason, trans. by Lawrence Schmidt and Monica Reuss (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), pp. 193–208 (p. 197). Quoted by Marshall, ‘Religion and Literature’, pp. 55–56.

<sup>12</sup> Wordsworth told Henry Crabb Robinson that ‘I can feel [. . .] sympathy with the orthodox believer who needs a Redeemer and who, sensible of his own demerits, flies for refuge to Him

Secondly, I tried to uncover a sense of continuity in the change of Coleridge's and Wordsworth's religious views. They did not identify their religion with the established Church in their early years in the sense that Coleridge was a Unitarian and Wordsworth was looking for a power of transcendence in nature, a kind of nature mysticism. Whereas there is a discontinuity from the perspective of religion as an institution, a continuity still can be detected from the perspective of their personal understanding of God, which is basically involved in Coleridge's lifelong search for unity and Wordsworth's on-going search for an ideal place for dwelling. On the one hand, the Unitarian and Spinozistic ideas of God enabled Coleridge to attain a sense of unity, and Wordsworth was able to formulate the idea of 'one Household' in Grasmere through the experience of God in nature. On the other, Coleridge became aware of the problem of pantheism, but later perceived the presence of God in the universe without pantheistic suspicion through the relational notion of the Trinity. Along with the painful experience of human mortality, Wordsworth gradually moved to the idea of heavenly dwelling, which referred to the transcendence of God. Although their later views on God focused on the sense of transcendence, the immanence of God still mattered. In other words, they were able to grasp both the immanence and transcendence of God in their later years. Accordingly, their early and later years are not disconnected by two different Gods, but connected by the same God. In the former the immanence was important, but in the latter the transcendence was recognised.

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(though perhaps I do not want one for myself.' Edith J. Morley, *Henry Crabb Robinson on Books and their Writers*, 3 vols (London: Dent, 1938), vol. 1., p. 87. Quoted by Deboo, 'Wordsworth and the Stripping of the Altars', p. 331.



In spite of the gulf between two periods, a sense of continuity thus needs to be acknowledged in terms of their understanding of God with the two different dimensions.

Ultimately it has been argued that the works of Coleridge and Wordsworth relate to three pivotal principles of ecotheology. It is not intended to identify these ecotheological aspects in them with ecotheology itself, but to refer to an intimate relationship between them, in that their works offer considerable resources for further developing the concept of ecotheology. The historical gap between Romanticism and ecotheology has already been mentioned, but it has been shown that the two poets, in particular, Wordsworth, were already aware of ecological issues. Moreover, we have noted the chasm of two different disciplines separating literature and theology, but they were seen as being able to cooperate with each other and both Coleridge and Wordsworth explicitly and implicitly communicate their religious ideas through literary forms. Providing a substantial resource for ecotheology, this thesis sheds a new perspective on Coleridge and Wordsworth, which enables us to see our place in the universe and to recognise our significant relationship with the natural world within the context of God's presence in creation.

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