The Transformation of Immanence: From the Augustinian Faith of Henry Vaughan to the Rationalist Faith of S.T. Coleridge

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Recommended Citation
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THE TRANSFORMATION OF IMMANENCE: FROM THE AUGUSTINIAN

FAITH OF HENRY VAUGHAN TO THE RATIONALIST FAITH OF

(TITLE)

S.T. COLERIDGE

BY

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THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1994

YEAR

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING
THIS PART OF THE GRADUATE DEGREE CITED ABOVE

May 9, 1994

DATE

May 9, 1994

DATE
ABSTRACT

The present study focuses on the conception of immanence and the manner in which it evolved from the seventeenth century, as represented in Henry Vaughan's *Silex Scintillans*, to the nineteenth century, as represented in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's nature poetry and his collection of letters, *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit*. Vaughan's conception of a basic immanence of reflected divinity in nature evolved, over the course of two hundred years, into Coleridge's version of an immanence based on reason. These two different conceptions of immanence in part formed the basis of the respective faiths of Vaughan and Coleridge. Vaughan's traditional Augustinian faith accepted unquestioningly the Great Chain of Being, whereas Coleridge's rationalist faith answered the theological challenges from the Age of Reason by exploring intellectually Christianity and accepting what tenets are reconcilable with reason.

The Age of Reason and scientific inquiry effectively destroyed the traditional faith in order, dominant prior to about 1700, by placing a trust in humankind's rational faculty and by effectively dissolving once-rigid boundaries between nature and humanity. Societal factors and Christianity's response to empirical inquiry also played crucial roles in this dissolution of Elizabethan cosmology. Vaughan, who believed so devoutly in order, unwittingly helped to destroy it by contributing to the relative elevation of nature by his intuitive insight into a simple immanence. He thus, quite uncon-
sciously, linked nature and the divine, a belief which was later consciously espoused by Coleridge and the other Romantics.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge Dr. Michael Loudon as my thesis director for both his outstanding insight and his support as this project evolved, the latter of which contributed significantly to the completion of this study. His understanding of Romantic nature theories and their place in history has helped to give this project a solid intellectual foundation.

I also wish to thank Dr. Richard Sylvia and Dr. John Martone, my two readers, for their insights into Romanticism and Henry Vaughan, respectively, assisting greatly in my understanding and contributing to this project.
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INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The relationship between the divine, humanity and nature has probably always been a subject of great concern for humankind. The Christian relationship to God has been considered a relationship with a superior being, whereas the Western relationship with the natural world has traditionally been considered one in which humanity was superior. Certainly, the concept of the Great Chain of Being, staunchly believed in until about 1700, is validation of the ascending hierarchy between nature, humans and God. The idea that nature and the divine may be linked, in even the remotest sense, was a new one in the Christian world.

The need for a new conception of faith arose in the period from 1600 to 1800, emerging substantially from the dissolution of the Great Chain of Being, the Elizabethan conception of cosmological order. The seventeenth-century poet Henry Vaughan contributed to this dissolution by unwittingly privileging nature through his intuitive insight into a simple immanence of reflected divinity in nature that would find full manifestation in Coleridge two hundred years later. Vaughan's unquestioning faith in order constituted the traditional Augustinian faith, one of two strains of belief that Ross Garner in Experience and the Tradition observes in Vaughan's poetry, the other strain being Neoplatonic. This Augustinian faith was considered antagonistic to reason, and dominant prior to about 1700. This rigidly hierarchical faith could not, however, endure the dissolution of the concept of order and the emerging trust in humankind's ability
to reason, both inherent in the Age of Reason. Consequently, Vaughan's Augustinian faith became increasingly suspect in light of the skepticism arising from both empirical and rational inquiry.

In short, the Age of Reason required a new conception of faith adequate to the theological challenge it had inevitably raised. Samuel Taylor Coleridge helped satisfy this need for a new faith by conceiving a rationalist faith. He employed his reason to examine his religious beliefs and chose what tenets to accept, while valuing the mysteries that reason cannot explain. He believed devoutly in the tenets he chose to accept, thus creating a new orthodoxy of immanence based on reason, one that he believed could help destroy the vacuum necessarily created by the Age of Reason.

My thesis examines the ways in which Henry Vaughan and Samuel Taylor Coleridge treat nature in its relationship to God and humankind, in the context of the time periods in which they lived. Vaughan, who lived in the seventeenth century and was subject to its cosmology of intuitively comprehensible order, accepted the idea of human dominion over nature, espoused by Christianity and the Bible. Unlike most of his contemporaries, however, he inscribed nature with importance and believed it capable of modeling virtues for humanity. In contrast, Coleridge was subject to the cosmology of the Age of Reason and its gradually narrowing gap between humans and nature. Coleridge adopted this cosmology but took it further: he saw a reciprocal and nearly equal relationship between humans and nature. I demonstrate that Vaughan initiated intuitively, through his subtle disruption of conventional hierarchy, a transformative dynamic in the relationship between God, humans and nature, that
would become a conscious, fundamental belief of Coleridge and the other Romantics.

Most of Vaughan's contemporaries held the popular Elizabethan opinion that nature was significant only in its degree of subjugation to human will. Even George Herbert, author of *The Temple*, the work that both inspired and influenced profoundly Vaughan's *Silex Scintillans*, did not attempt to question this traditional view. Unlike Herbert in *The Temple*, however, which was based on the architecture and liturgy of the Anglican church, Vaughan in *Silex Scintillans* moves outdoors for inspiration and, significantly, sees nature as having the inherent capacity to offer instruction through reflection for humans.

Vaughan's poems "And do they so?" "Cock-crowing," "The Ass," "The Constellation," "Man," "The Palm-tree," "The Bird" and "The Check" all view nature as a didactic presence for humans. By observing nature, humans can learn humility, obedience and the importance of living in fear of the Second Coming. Thus these lessons are capable of reminding humans of their duties toward God and also of humanity's privileged status on earth. Vaughan was a devout Anglican; his poetry bespeaks a deep love of God and an appreciation of traditional, conservative views, including the Augustinian faith, reflective of the era in which he lived. Yet, while he adopted fully the Elizabethan cosmology and its emphasis on order, his suggestive inscription of values within nature made him significant in his era. I show how Vaughan's intuition was, unbeknownst to him, actually a factor in the dissolution of the Great Chain of Being in which he believed so avidly.
Some critics have viewed Vaughan's poetry as pre-Romantic, based on his occasional themes of the loss of simplicity and longing to be an innocent child. I show that such an assertion is, at best, hasty over-simplification. But more importantly, at-times lively critical debate over Vaughan's alleged pre-Romanticism has ignored largely the more subtle implications of the debate itself—namely, the significance of the fact that nature is inscribed with an importance not otherwise observed in his age. I demonstrate that the existence of the debate itself verifies Vaughan's intuition and its full fruition in Coleridge.

Coleridge's definition of immanence was an evolution from Vaughan's simple immanence, based in part on his perception of intuitive values in nature. Immanence, in Coleridge's view, was based on truths derived from the human mind, which helped to form his rationalist faith. I argue that Coleridge was able to regard immanence and faith as critically related to intellectual faculties because of the time period in which he lived and the cosmology to which he was subject.

Coleridge lived during the late 1700s and early 1800s, a time during which orthodox Christianity was being debated openly. Although Coleridge verges on an implicit pantheism in many of his poems, he never truly questioned most orthodox Christian beliefs. He adopted the investigative, skeptical stance of the Age of Reason, but as he remarks at Highgate late in his life, "With my heart I never did abandon the name of Christ" (Brett 223). I show how Coleridge was able to rectify reason and faith by his conception of a rationalist faith, a faith which, in the battle between reason and faith, seemed to
favor faith, but still managed to view the rational faculty as critical to a new conception of faith.

The Age of Reason and its scientific inquiry substantially narrowed the gap between humans and nature, as Christianity seemed to lose validity. I show how a dissolution began in the rigid boundaries between humans and animals that had been espoused for so long by Christianity. By 1800 the West had experienced a change: the world seemed no longer solely anthropocentric. Coleridge was subject to this new cosmology, and he adopted it; however, he carried it to a more extreme conclusion—he saw a reciprocal and nearly egalitarian relationship between humanity and nature. He refers to this reciprocity as the "one Life within us and abroad," a concept he shares with the other Romantics such as Wordsworth (Abrams 15). The Romantic "innocent child of nature" in "The Foster-Mother's Tale," the unfinished "Wanderings of Cain" and "Christabel" conceive nature as a force with which to commune, even to love. Coleridge parallels the innocence of children and nature. Thus in the Romantic Age, humans were viewed as having the capacity to be much more intimate with nature than they were ever viewed in previous ages.

Not only was nature seen by Coleridge as a power with which to commune, but also, akin to Vaughan's implicit intuition, he saw nature as capable of providing didactic lessons, the ultimate aim of which was to know God. This explicitly didactic attribute is apparent in "The Nightingale," "This Lime-tree Bower My Prison" and "Frost at Midnight." But unlike Vaughan's poetry, these poems are much more subtle in their references to God and consider nature a "ministry." In other words, God is so readily knowable in nature that, to worship
Him, one need just walk outdoors and be receptive with an objective and attentive openness, a practical realization of immanence. For Coleridge, churches were not necessary to worship and to reveal both God's essence and presence, an opinion Vaughan would clearly scorn. The Age of Reason and the decline of Christianity, however, allowed even devout theologians like Coleridge to be a bit more experimental with their theories and skeptical in their beliefs. This inquiring attitude was consequently manifested in Coleridge's rationalist faith, which allowed faith to survive, albeit in a broader conception. Thus, as I argue, Coleridge was able to salvage effectively the essence of Christianity, despite the theological challenge from the new scientific empirical methods and the enshrinement of rational knowledge.
VAUGHAN'S INTUITIVE VIRTUES AND IMMANENCE

The relationship between God, humans and nature in the time of Vaughan was clear-cut for the majority of people. God reigned supreme over both humans and nature, and humans likewise were superior to nature, in a static vision of the universe called the Great Chain of Being. Vaughan, however, was different than most of his contemporaries; he felt nature's virtues could serve as lessons for humans, reminding them of their often-forgotten duties toward the Creator. He viewed nature in a new light by unwittingly elevating it through his suggestive inscription of importance, and, while this implication had little effect on his own age, his belief set in motion a transformative dynamic in the relationship between God, humans and nature. A radical re-conception of this relationship was to emerge in the Romantic Age, subject as it was to the dramatic influence of science and its consequent implications for theology.

Vaughan's faith in the permanence of the Great Chain of Being constitutes the Augustinian faith. He is unquestioning in this faith, but unknowingly, undercuts it by intuiting virtues in nature, as I will examine closely in this chapter. These virtues are part of a simple immanence which will be manifested fully in Coleridge, as his cosmology is necessarily different, due to the Age of Reason.

It is safe to say that Vaughan regards nature as virtuous. All of God's creation is stable, obedient, humble, patient, constant and attentive to the Second Coming of Christ, always following God's will.
Humans can regard nature and see the virtues that they need to live a better life—one in which God is of the utmost importance and concern. Although Vaughan appreciates nature for its beauty and good qualities, it is a severe mistake to believe that nature is the end that Vaughan seeks. Nature primarily serves as a means to God, as a reflector of the divine world. And Vaughan is no pantheist; the Church is still a necessity to experience God, "Vaughan never suggested it is possible to pass directly from the study of nature to the experience of contact with the divine" (Pettet 93). The end of "The Water-fall" reveals Vaughan's priorities:

O my invisible estate,
My glorious liberty, still late!
Thou art the channel my soul seeks,
Not this with cataracts and creeks. (1.37-40)

"My invisible estate" (1.37) and "My glorious liberty" (1.38) refer to his release from his earthly bonds and reunion with God. After praising the sacredness and mystical nature of the waterfall, Vaughan brings into perspective his praise. The waterfall, although important in itself, is not nearly as important as getting back to God.

Vaughan believes nature reflects and reveals God (immanence), that it declares God's glory. Nature is divine, and as Garner believes, by comprehending nature, humans can understand the divine world (36). Nature reveals the divine only in glimpses but is still worthy of contemplation, because it does manifest God (Pettet 97). This attitude is pervasive in Silex Scintillans:
Observe God in his works; here fountains flow,
Birds sing, beasts feed, fish leap, and the earth stands fast;
Above are restless motions, running lights,
Vast circling azure, giddy clouds, days, nights.

When seasons change, then lay before thine eyes
His wondrous method; mark the various scenes
In heaven; hail, thunder, rain-bows, snow, and ice,
Calms, tempests, light, and darkness by his means;
Thou canst not miss his praise; each tree, herb, flower
Are shadows of his wisdom, and his power.
("Rules and Lessons" 1.87-96)

Because nature is reflective of God and because it contains
virtues that humans either do not have or usually do not employ,
nature can be a didactic presence for humankind. Indeed, Vaughan
wonders openly in "The Star" what "man may learn from thee
[nature]" (1.12), and, in "The Constellation, he claims "the herb he
[humans] treads knows much, much more" (1.28) than humans do.

One of Vaughan's favorite subjects is the contrast between na­
ture's vigilance for Christ's return and humanity's neglect of this (as
he conceives it) inevitability. This contrast is the central theme of
"And do they so?:"
And do they so? have they a sense
Of ought but influence?
Can they their heads lift, and expect,
And groan too? why the elect
Can do no more: my volumes said
They were all dull, and dead,
They judged them senseless, and their state
Wholly inanimate.
Go, go; seal up thy looks,
And burn thy books.

I would I were a stone, or tree,
Or flower by pedigree,
Or some poor high-way herb, or spring
To flow, or bird to sing!
Then should I (tied to one sure state,)
All day expect my date;
But I am sadly loose, and stray
A giddy blast each way;
O let me not thus range!
Thou canst not change.

Sometimes I sit with thee, and tarry
An hour or so, then vary.
Thy other creatures in this scene
Thee only aim, and mean;
Some rise to seek thee, and with heads
Erect peep from their beds;
Others, whose birth is in the tomb,
And cannot quit the womb,
Sigh there, and groan for thee,
Their liberty.

O let me not do less! shall they
Watch, while I sleep, or play?
Shall I thy mercies still abuse
With fancies, friends, or news?
O brook it not! thy blood is mine,
And my soul should be thine;
O brook it not! why wilt thou stop
After whole showers one drop?
Sure, thou wilt joy to see
Thy sheep with thee.
Vaughan interprets the constant watch of animals for predators as a watch for the Savior. He wishes he were an animal or plant, and not a man, for then he would be "tied to one sure state" (l.15). Instead, he only prays for an hour or so, then occupies himself with "fancies, friends or news" (l.34). He asks that he not do less than the animals, that he be more like them, on constant alert for the Second Coming.

This poem brings into focus how the creatures glorify God. They do so not by intention, which implies will and reason, but unconsciously (Garner 98), by their very existence. Humans, on the other hand, have will and reason, which is of course the disadvantage that allows them to be so concerned with the temporal. Nature's advantage over humans lies in its simplicity. Garner summarizes effectively Vaughan's views of humankind and nature, "Man is worse than the other creatures because he is morally reprehensible, which they cannot be, and better than they because he shares the divine Intellectus, which they do not, and is the image of God, which they are not" (22).

"Cock-crowing" also concerns nature's intentness on God. At night, the rooster watches for the morning, which Vaughan associates with the Second Coming:

Their eyes watch for the morning hue,
Their little grain expelling night
So shine and sings, as if it knew
The path unto the house of light. (l.7-10)

Vaughan thus idealizes the rooster as a creature which concentrates only upon God.
Another virtue nature has is its obedience to the divine will. In "The Ass," Vaughan represents the ass as an animal obedient and mindful only of God. He asks God to "Teach both mine eyes and feet to move / Within the bounds set by thy love" (l.15-16), not to do anything that God does not want him to do.

In "The Constellation," Vaughan views the stars as paragons of obedience and order, as opposed to human restlessness and depravity due to the Fall. The constellation always moves with "exact obedience" (l.5), with no signs of sloth or weariness. Humans, on the other hand, are idolatrous ("Adores dead dust [l.19]) and consider "music and mirth" (l.21) to be necessities, instead of the real necessity, concentration on God and his will. Humans seek the stars' "Obedience, Order, Light" (l.29), because "Our guides prove wandering stars" (l.46). Our troubles are due to the Fall, or swerving from "our first love" (l.48). Vaughan asks God to "Settle, and fix our hearts" (l.55), in order to have the constancy of the stars. Vaughan makes clear his belief that all of nature can show humans obedience, not only the stars, in his crucial line "And taught obedience by thy whole Creation" (l.55). Nature, by its very existence, teaches obedience.

Humility is also modeled by nature and, as virtues go, is closely linked with obedience. In "The Constellation," once humans are "taught obedience by thy whole Creation" (l.55), they can form a "humble, holy nation" (l.56). "Grant I may soft and lowly be" (l.17) Vaughan asks God in "The Ass."

Obedience to God's will and humility toward God are traditional Christian virtues; Vaughan, not surprisingly, is not treading new ground here. The human submission to divinity, moreover, confirms
the broader concept of order; humans are less than God and must act on a daily basis accordingly. Any departure from God's path equals utmost presumption.

The stability of God's creatures juxtaposed against the comparative instability of humankind is the central concern of "Man":

Weighing the steadfastness and state
Of some mean things which here below reside,
Where birds like watchful clocks the noiseless date
   And intercourse of times divide,
Where bees at night get home and hive, and flowers
   Early, as well as late,
Rise with the sun, and set in the same bowers;

I would (said I) my God would give
The staidness of these things to man! for these
To his divine appointments ever cleave,
   And no new business breaks their peace;
The birds nor sow, nor reap, yet sup and dine,
   The flowers without clothes live,
Yet Solomon was never dressed so fine.

Man hath still either toys, or care,
He hath no root, nor to one place is tied,
But ever restless and irregular
   About this earth doth run and ride,
He knows he hath a home, but scarce knows where,
   He says it is so far
That he hath quite forgot how to go there.

He knocks at all doors, strays and roams,
Nay hath not so much wit as some stones have
Which in the darkest nights point to their homes,
   By some his sense their Maker gave;
Man is the shuttle, to whose winding quest
   And passage through these looms
God ordered motion, but ordained no rest.
As Pettet observes, in this poem nature is represented as teaching directly by the good it manifests (96). Birds, bees and flowers set examples for humans as consistently completing the tasks they need to survive at the same time every day. Vaughan believes these tasks are "divine appointments" (l.10), suggesting to the reader his belief that nature worships God by its very existence: "All things that be, praise him" ("The Bird" [l.11]). Vaughan devoutly wishes God would allow humans to be as steadfast in their worship as nature is in its existence. Instead, humans have lost sight of what is really important--God ("He knows he hath a home, but . . . he hath quite forgot how to go there" [l.19, 21]), and instead they are "restless and irregular" (l.17). Nature has inherent knowledge (knowledge as part of the divine consciousness, not knowledge as humans have acquired it through mental faculties) that humans do not have: "He [a human being] hath not so much wit as some stones have" (l.23). God's creatures "point to their homes [Heaven]" (l.24) by the "hid sense their maker gave" (l.25), whereas man is a "shuttle" (l.26), full of "motion" (l.28). Line 23, "Nay hath not so much wit as some stones have," no doubt sounds merely humorous to modern-day taste, but Vaughan was serious. All of creation, from the animate to the inanimate, shares in the knowledge of the divine consciousness. In fact, Vaughan is known for his rather odd insistence on sentience in stones, apparent in "The Stone," "Palm-Sunday" and "The Day of Judgement" (Hutchinson 176).

Patience, as well, is exemplified by nature. In "The Palm-tree," the tree is interpreted to be "pressed and bowed" (l.3) by the original sin by which both humankind and nature were thrust from God's fa-
vor ("now shut from the breath / And air of Eden" [l.5-6]). But the palm-tree is patient for the redemption of the Second Coming:

Here is the patience of the Saints; this tree
Is watered by their tears, as flowers are fed
With dew by night; but One you cannot see
Sits here and numbers all the tears they shed. (l.21-4)

The tree is watered by the tears of the saints, revealing the closeness of the divine and nature. The palm-tree in part symbolizes the plight of fallen humankind. We, like the palm-tree, are "pressed and bowed" (l.3), degraded by our sins, but, perversely, we continue to live well despite our flaws, akin to the palm-tree: "for the more he's bent / The more he grows" (l.8-9). The palm-tree, however, provides "a forthright object lesson in the patience required for enduring life beneath the veil" (Calhoun 193). Until our redemption in Christ, Vaughan believes we must be patient, for He will come, and provide "Man's life, and your [nature's] full liberty" ("Palm-Sunday" [l.17]).

"The Bird" bears thematical similarities to "The Palm-tree." By observing a bird, Vaughan learns that he must pass his life with a patience that will enlighten him (Calhoun 199). The bird endures a stormy night, but when morning comes, it sings, and Vaughan interprets these songs as hymns praising God. Similarly, despite earthly hardships (symbolized in the poem by the "dark fowls" of night [l.25], and, generally, the land turning to "brimstone" [l.29]), Vaughan realizes that he must be patient, "Till the Day-Spring breaks forth again from high" (l.32).

One of the more poignant lessons humans need to see in nature is the inevitability of death. Vaughan believes in the traditional Christian view that earthly life means little and that the afterlife
"beyond the veil" is much more important than the rewards of experience. In "The Check," Vaughan begs his fellow humans to realize that the earthly life is short and to do God's will in order to gain salvation in heaven.

Of the four stanzas in the poem, Vaughan dedicates two to this lesson of Creation: "All things teach us to die" (l.20). All animals and plants we should take note of for this reason, especially pets, as they are in some ways closer to the human race:

> View thy fore-runners: creatures given to be
> Thy youth's companions,
> Take their leave, and die; birds, beats, each tree
> All that have growth, or breath
> Have one large language, Death. (l.25-9)

Interestingly, although Vaughan is a conservative Anglican, he does not take the medieval stance that this life is nothing, meaningless, and that temporal life should be viewed only as a stepping-stone to God. While Vaughan, in many poems, reveals a scorn for the earthly and thus transient, as opposed to the divine and eternal, in "The Check" a sense of urgency for the appreciation of this life is borne out to some degree. He refers to this life as a "glimpse of light" (l.24) not to be played away. He compares this life to day and death to night. Day and night denote divinity in Vaughan's poetry, which bespeaks his hermetic influence, whereas he might be expected to view death as light, because it could signify a reunion with God, and this life as death, because it might signify an estrangement from God. Vaughan, though at times almost tiringly predictable, surprises the reader every once in a while.
Although Vaughan delights in nature and its virtues, as compared to corrupted humankind (blamed for the Fall), and although nature can be a didactic presence for humans, Vaughan never doubts the general superiority of humankind over nature. A firm believer in the Great Chain of Being, still "the central principle by which most men organized their conception of the cosmos" (Simmonds 145), to doubt such an accepted belief, one that is so basic to the Bible, would be an unacceptable heresy for Vaughan. Let us not for one minute doubt who is "on top." Vaughan argues in "Cock-crowing" that the rooster crows at the break of day, because it reminds the rooster of the impending Second Coming. Vaughan wonders:

If such a tincture, such a touch,  
So firm a longing can impower  
Shall thy own image think it much  
To watch for thy appearing hour? (l.13-18)

Even more direct is the following from the same poem:

If joys, and hopes, and earnest throes,  
And hearts, whose pulse beats still for light  
Are given to birds; who, but thee, knows  
A love-sick soul's exalted flight? (l.31-4)

If a bird can watch so earnestly for Christ ("light" [l.32]), God surely knows how much Vaughan desperately yearns for Him. These lines reveal the belief in human dominion over animals; Vaughan is essentially saying, "If a bird can love God so dearly, certainly I can do better."

Thus Vaughan's intuition must be unwitting, as it contradicts his espoused belief in order, his Augustinian faith. Vaughan, however, is part of a larger movement, the new cosmology of the Age of Reason, that will disintegrate once-sacred boundaries between hu-
manity and nature. In the following chapter, I will describe why some critics have called Vaughan a pre-Romantic.
THE DEBATE OVER VAUGHAN'S "PRE-ROMANTICISM"

Good critics, primarily before 1950, have made the error of believing Vaughan to be pre-Romantic. Most notably, H.C. Beeching in *The Poems of Henry Vaughan, Silurist* (1896) and Edmund Blunden in *On the Poetry of Henry Vaughan* (1927) both argue for consideration of Vaughan as pre-Romantic (Friedenrich 48). As I argue in this chapter, he cannot legitimately be considered such. More critical, however, is the significance of the debate, for if some critics find Vaughan treating nature in a manner akin to the Romantics, this comparison reveals that he is treating nature differently; he is viewing it as more important than his contemporaries are regarding it. This facet of Vaughan's work has been apparently lost in all the virulence of this debate. The few elements of pre-Romanticism that I find in *Silex Scintillans*, do, however, portend a later fruition in Coleridge.

Arguments can be made for Vaughan's pre-Romantic elements, but it is a vast over-simplification to say that he is a precursor of Romanticism. His poetry contains elements of Romanticism; however, to say he is pre-Romantic is jumping from points A, B and C to Z—a drastic and erroneous conclusion.

Like the Romantics over a century later, Vaughan views childhood as a time of innocence before the corruption of adulthood:
Since all that age doth teach, is ill,
Why should I not love child-hood still?
("Childhood" 1.19-20)

For ere thou [a dead infant] knew'st how to be foul,
Death weaned thee from the world, and sin.
("The Burial of an Infant" 1.7-8)

Vaughan also apparently believes in the pre-existence of the soul, which has lead critics to associate him closely with Wordsworth. This concept, however, was not unique in the mindset of the seventeenth century (Garner 38). Created by Plato, it was condemned by the Council of Constantinople in 540 but managed, according to Garner, to survive until the Renaissance, at which time the concept became very popular (38). No doubt, Vaughan read the Cambridge Platonists, and thus had access to it, even though, Garner argues, it was not an orthodox belief (38). Thus it is not surprising that he embraces this belief, from the standpoint that it was popular in his day, although his belief in the pre-existence of the soul is a deviation from his usual religious conservatism.

Even though only one poem from Silex Scintillans reveals this belief, it is on this basis that Vaughan is viewed by some as pre-Romantic. "The Retreat" is Vaughan's best known poem:

Happy those early days! when I
Shined in my Angel-infancy.
Before I understood this place
Appointed for my second race,
Or taught my soul to fancy aught
But a white, celestial thought,
When I had not walked above
A mile, or two, from my first love,
And looking back (at that short space,)
Could see a glimpse of his bright-face;
When on some gilded cloud, or flower
My gazing soul would dwell an hour,
And in those weaker glories spy
Some shadows of eternity;
Before I taught my tongue to wound
My conscience with a sinful sound,
Or had black art to dispense
A several sin to every sense,
But felt through all this fleshly dress
Bright shoots of everlastingness.

O how I long to travel back
And tread again that ancient track!
That I might once more reach that plain,
Where first I left my glorious train,
From whence the enlightened spirit sees
That shady city of palm trees;
But (ah!) my soul with too much stay
Is drunk, and staggers in the way.
Some men a forward motion love,
But I by backward steps would move,
And when this dust falls to the urn
In that state I came return. (172-73)

Clearly "The Retreat" bears striking resemblances to Wordsworth's "Ode: Intimations of Immortality." The idea of the pre-existence of the soul, the longing for a return to an innocent and divine childhood and the revealed divinity of nature are present in both poems. Crucial differences, however, remain between the two poets. Wordsworth believes his memory of the "vision splendid" is his salvation, whereas Vaughan sees death and a consequent return to the Creator as the only possible salvation.

Vaughan's vision of nature also differs from Wordsworth's. Often based on Biblical allusion ("That shady city of palm trees" [l.26] from Deuteronomy 34:3-4), it seems rather static and unoriginal compared to Wordsworth. Gazing for an hour upon "some gilded cloud, or flower" (l.11) is certainly static. The picture of nature that
emerges from *Silex Scintillans* is of a biblical landscape, and thus idealized (Pettet 88). This is appropriate to the overall static vision of nature in an age where each plant, animal, vegetable and mineral were sorted on a ladder of increasing divinity and importance, the Great Chain of Being. The Elizabethans' conception of nature was dependent on their idea of order, and there could be no change in such an order. What function would such change serve? Change equalled chaos for the Elizabethans.

As Pettet acknowledges, Vaughan rarely speaks of the wilder aspects of nature (88). But Wordsworth's ode is full of motion: lambs bounding, echoes in the mountain and rolling waters. Wordsworth evokes a real sense of life's vitality.

Vaughan's nature poetry is not of a Romantic flavor. Although *Silex Scintillans* describes Vaughan's Welsh homeland, it is not an elaborate description, for nature itself is not his priority, and that is made plain in *Silex Scintillans*. Whereas the Romantics had an intimate vision of nature, Vaughan looks to nature primarily to see a shadow of life beyond the veil. He clearly appreciates nature in itself, but it is not enough for him.

Thus Vaughan is not a precursor of Romanticism, although his poetry contains elements of Romanticism. He is a man of his time, despite his vision of nature as didactic presence. It can safely be said, however, that in his poetry, as Miriam K. Starkman believes, "we can see the distant prospect of Romanticism in the future" (Simmonds 17). Indeed, we see the fruition of Vaughan's immanence in the "distant prospect" of Romanticism. The next chapter will in
part address developments of issues other than those of the literary question that create a need for a new cosmology and a new faith.
THE AGE OF REASON AND THE DEATH OF ANTHROPOCENTRISM

In this chapter, I will trace the emergence of a new cosmology on a societal level and how this cosmology came into being. In my view, the new cosmology was dependent on the death of the faith in order. Many factors contributed to the emergence of the new cosmology of humanity and nature being more similar than they were ever viewed before. Vaughan had contributed to the dissolution of the Great Chain of Being. Science found no basis for the rigid boundary between humanity and nature that was so crucial a part of the old cosmology. I briefly trace the death of anthropocentrism due to scientific inquiry, changes in society and both Christianity’s response to the new rational mindset and its own internal problems.

Not only do I address societal factors in this chapter, but I also situate Vaughan's and Coleridge's stances on the new scientific mindset of the Age of Reason. I show that Vaughan looked back towards the Middle Ages in respect to science when he followed his Augustinian strain of thought, even though, ironically, he contributed to the dissolution of the faith in order, just as the science to which he was so averse would do. I place Coleridge with one foot in the eighteenth century and one foot in the nineteenth, showing that he truly was subject to the mechanist mindset, although he would partly eschew it as he developed a Romantic cosmology.
The scientific mindset was born in the 1600s, during which Vaughan lived. Alfred North Whitehead aptly refers to this century as the "century of genius" (43) in his all-encompassing survey of scientific advancement, *Science and the Modern World*. Bacon, Harvey, Kepler, Galileo, Descartes, Pascal, Newton, Locke and Leibniz are just a sampling of the great thinkers of the age. Their pride was the new method of induction (43), critical to scientific inquiry as we know it. Although Vaughan lived in such a remarkable age in this respect, his poetry does not reflect it. Instead, in some of his poetry he follows what Garner refers to as the "Augustinian strain of thought"; that is, the belief that both humans and their ability to reason are flawed (30). The knowledge of human beings is not to be trusted. We should trust only in God, Vaughan believed, for He will endow us with all the knowledge needed for this life. In "The Ass," he asks God:

> Let me thy Ass be only wise  
> To carry, not search mysteries;  
> Who carries thee, is by thee led,  
> Who argues follows his own head. (1.21-4)

Vaughan advises those of us who desire to know the truth to rely on faith in God, and not our scientific inquiries: "Search well another world; who studies this, / Travels in clouds, seeks manna, where none is" ("The Search" [l.95-6]). Thus he poses a limitation on the lessons we can learn from nature; we should contemplate nature and absorb its didactic presence, but we should not go too far, Vaughan says; we should not use our reason for such a purpose. We should use our faith instead.
Vaughan is looking back towards the Middle Ages in this respect, instead of looking forward with the scientists, who espoused the need for reason in their endeavors. His outlook is antithetical to the scientific mindset just being born in his age. It is important to remember that science in the 1600s was just the beginning of what science means to us today—at worst, the frightening implications of a Godless universe. As Whitehead attests, most of Western mankind, including the scientists, were still content with a simple faith in the order of nature (51). The majority of the scientists, Newton included, felt their inquiries would substantiate, not question, a Creator. They were true to the Elizabethan concept of order in the universe. It was left to the 1700s, and even later, for the implications of the new science to be fully contemplated.

These implications, in part, led to a new conception of the world. The 1700s was the Age of Reason, the Enlightenment. Common sense reigned. Faith, although still a factor, seemed to have lost considerable ground. The idea that the world was a machine, running itself eventually into dissolution, emerged and became popular. Mechanism is a key word for this era, the doctrine that natural processes as we know them could be completely explained by the new scientific laws of chemistry and physics.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge was born in 1772 and as such was subject to this cosmology. He embraced it initially, praising Newton in his "Greek Ode on Astronomy," written at Cambridge in 1793 (Wylie 32). He spent much time contemplating Newton's work and the "static balance" view of the universe. Due to his own contemplations and his interaction with his intellectual peers, among other
factors, he came in large part to reject the cosmology of the 1700s. It is an over-simplification, however, to say that he rejected it completely, even when he became so clearly a vital part of the Romantic revolution. Coleridge was too much of a thinker to subscribe to any doctrine without careful, almost excruciating, examination, as we shall see.

Even in 1795, Coleridge had not eschewed his inheritance from the "machine-world mindset." By this time he was most likely quite advanced in the development of his vitalist beliefs, apparent in much of his nature poetry and prose from 1797-1801. His indebtedness to the eighteenth century was clear in his Bristol lectures of 1795 (Pym 30). A Unitarian at this point in his life, he had a Deistic conception of God, and engaged in what David Pym calls "rationalist logic-chopping" (30). He was later to become more obviously orthodox in his theology and to more obviously separate himself from the rationalism of the eighteenth century. Still, compared to his fellow English Romantics, he was never an extremist, even within the context of Romanticism. Virginia Radley believes Coleridge, taken as a whole, stands between an eighteenth-century point of view and extreme Romanticism (32), and I agree. While he held the Romantic view of nature as an organic, vital unity, his view of history and ethics is rationalist (Pym 29). Although history and ethics are outside the scope of this study, this point serves to show that Coleridge, in some respects, had a foot in the eighteenth century and a foot in the nineteenth. Indecisiveness? Hardly. Instead, this range of knowledge shows the breadth of his mind. He was never above holding partially contradictory views. Whitehead has observed that contradictions are
the very basis of new truths (187), and Coleridge was, in all respects, after that elusive prey, truth.

Literary historians sometimes date 1789, the onset of the French Revolution, as the year the "Romantic revolution" began. Give or take a few years, it was around this time that the benefits from the death of the old cosmology came to fruition. Stale thought-patterns, particularly the old anthropocentrism, had been severely and effectively questioned on many fronts, as I will show. The demise of the view that nature existed only for humankind's use allowed the Romantic revolution to occur. With this premise as a basis, the Romantics went further, to consider nature as having a reciprocal and almost equal relationship with humans, one vital and divine spirit linking God, humans and nature. It seems highly doubtful that without the narrowing of the gap between humanity and nature from 1600-1800, that the Romantics could have conceived of nature as they did. Vaughan, who, like Coleridge, believed nature as capable of modeling lessons, the aim of which was to know God, could most likely have never transcended the dictums and boundaries set by the Christianity of his time. Both Vaughan and Coleridge loved nature, although Coleridge communicates this rapture in a manner more agreeable to most modern tastes. Although Vaughan was open-minded enough to consider nature as having the capacity to model lessons, to expect him to deal with nature as Coleridge did is too much to ask; Christianity was strong in his age and science but in its early development. The relative "tearing down" of Christianity, as science gained steam, allowed the Romantics to see nature in a vastly different manner than had previous generations.
The Romantic discovery of nature as alive, wild, changeable and organic is both well-documented and even better known. What is less widely known is precisely what factors allowed the Romantics to take such a revolutionary view of nature. The Romantics viewed nature in a different light than past generations; humans, nature and God were imbued with one divine spirit, the "one Life within us and abroad," Coleridge's admonition from "The Eolian Harp." He and most of the other English Romantics saw a reciprocal and nearly egalitarian relationship between humanity and nature. The static Great Chain of Being, so vital to the West's conception of the relationship between God, humanity and nature, was, at long last, being effectively overthrown. It took from about 1600-1800 for this basic relationship to change. Scientific inquiry, increasing secularization (due in great part to scientific inquiry) and societal factors were all responsible for this change, which allowed the Romantics to take the view that perhaps Vaughan would have taken, had his age's cosmology been different--that animals and humans were not so dissimilar, after all.

A myriad of factors are responsible for the dissolution of the rigid boundaries between humans and nature, espoused for so long by Christianity. Of primary importance was the influence of science from roughly 1600-1800. Natural historians began to describe the life of animals and plants as separate from the life of humankind (Thomas 51; unless otherwise noted, subsequent citations in this chapter refer to Keith Thomas, Man and the Natural World). At first, these historians did not succeed in considering nature with scientific
detachment; they categorized nature according to human criterion or values. For example, Linnaeus' new system for classification, accepted in England in the 1760s, was a step forward for science; however, he classified animals and plants in "tribes" and "nations" and "kingdoms," still reflecting the anthropocentric view of his times (65). He freely mingled adjectives such as loathsome and disgusting with zoological terms (69). Other taxonomists, however, helped develop a more scientific taxonomy.

Even more important, however, to the gradually decreasing anthropocentrism was the new Latin terminology scientists used to identify plants and animals (81). This terminology replaced the vernacular names the country folk had used to identify the natural world. The vernacular names were discarded for many reasons, one being that some were just too vulgar (i.e. plant names like "naked ladies" and "pissabed" or "shitabed") (85). The new terminology fostered the new scientific mindset, a staunch and unyielding one at that. Botanist John Berkenhout remarked in 1789, "Those who wish to remain ignorant of the Latin language, have no business with the study of botany" (87). Keith Thomas firmly believes that the new terminology did the most to destroy anthropocentrism:

In place of a natural world redolant with human analogy and symbolic meaning, and sensitive to man's behavior, they [the scientists] constructed a detached natural scene to be viewed and studied by the observer from the outside, as if by peering through a window, in the secure knowledge that the objects of contemplation inhabited a separate realm, offering no omens or signs, without human meaning or significance. (89)
Nature was nature, not a reflection of human needs and concerns, as it had been prior to about 1600.

Other scientific developments overturned previous assumptions based on the Christian orthodox belief that the earth and everything on it had been made for humankind's express purpose. Astronomers enlarged the conception of the universe, making it more difficult for humans to regard the world as made solely for our use (167). Microscopes revealed an oppositional world to the one discovered with the assistance of telescopes—one of bacteria and other minute organisms of which humans had never conceived (167). Anthropocentrism was further destroyed by investigation from the geologic community. By 1820, geologists were united in their belief that the earth's age was not a matter of thousands of years, as Biblical study had lead the West to believe, but of millions (186). This meant that the Bible had been proven wrong by the rational faculty of humans—a tremendous blow to Augustinian faith. The study of fossils and bones seemed to support Darwin's evolutionary theories.

The doctrine of evolution seemed to sound the death knell for the anthropocentric mindset, at least from the scientific front. Darwin's *Origin of the Species* (1859) introduced the theory of natural selection. In 1871, his *Descent of Man* argued that humans and animals were descended from a common ancestor. The implications of both were simple: the Book of Genesis' version of creation was, at the very least, not literally true, and that God was not necessary to explain creation.
On a societal level, as well, many changes occurred from 1600-1800 to put anthropocentrism to rest. Although many laborers had always felt relatively close to their working animals, often naming particular cows and horses, it was not until pets became popular in the 1700s that animals became highly regarded by the general citizenry (121). Dogs were the most popular pet in England for this time period (101). Pets in the home allowed people to obtain an intimate look at the animal world, and their conclusions were favorable: "There is no doubt that it was the observation of household pets which buttressed [scientific] claims for animal intelligence and character" (121).

In the eighteenth century, a concern for the welfare of animals was part of the broader movement involving increasingly compassionate views humanity toward those segments of society once loathed, such as the criminal and the insane (184). Previously, England had been renowned for such cruel sports as bear-baiting and cock-fighting, among many others. In the 1700s, increasing compassion for animals was evident primarily in the educated and the upper class (not always members of the same class), but the movement influenced the general population and became a relatively popular cause, as evidenced by the founding in 1824 of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (180). It is interesting to note, however, that those most concerned with cruelty to animals were not, paradoxically, those most in contact with animals, the laboring class (182). It would be very hard indeed to be a farm-laborer, constantly needing to urge on a horse in the field, and remain concerned about the animal's rights.
Other societal factors which helped end anthropocentrism were the growth of towns and increasing industrialism (181). Both of these factors helped to create a world in which animals were increasingly marginal; therefore, urban expansion fostered the environment necessary for the "animals-have-rights-too" mentality.

This sketch is but the most cursory summary of the many scientific and societal factors which overthrew the earlier Christian view that the world was made for humans and that all of nature was created by God to serve us. My purpose has been to give only a flavor of the many scientific and societal factors at work, for a clear delineation of every factor is outside the scope of this study. The increasing influence of science and developments not on the intellectual level but throughout the population in general did their part to destroy the old mindset. Religious factors, as well, had a profound effect on the old mindset, often exacerbating its dissolution.

Christianity had always espoused man's (not humankind's) authority over the natural world. The Biblical account of the early relationship between God, humankind and nature is as follows: before the Fall, humans and the natural world lived in a paradise ruled by God's special appointee, Adam. Animals and humankind co-existed peacefully together. But the Fall degenerated humankind, animals, plants, indeed everything including the soil itself, creating a newly-hostile world. Animals became fierce and unruly, but God restated man's authority over the animal world. This authority allowed man to do whatever he liked with animals, and claim divine permission. Animals could be beaten, killed and exploited in every
conceivable fashion, and God, supposedly, would acknowledge and bless it. Humankind ruled the world and everything in it.

As I have summarized, scientific and societal factors led to the very destruction of this mindset by 1800. Christianity itself inadvertently helped to destroy the old anthropocentrism. Instead of responding to scientific advances with an inquisitive attitude, Christianity's representatives vehemently attacked scientists for their discoveries. Furthermore, they adopted a very closed mindset, which Whitehead likens to a garrison of a fort surrounded by hostile enemies (189), withdrawing into themselves. Instead of engaging in a dialogue with scientists to discover the unknown truth about the origin of the universe, they presented the world with an "either-or" dilemma--either one believed "us," or one believed "them." Thus, it is easy to understand the reaction of the intellectual community, in the face of all the overwhelming scientific evidence--to place less credence, less faith, in religion. The skepticism among the intellectual elite was becoming, slowly, more secular than it had ever been before. And if Christianity was invalid, so were, logically, its premises, one of them being the superiority of humans over nature.

The term Enlightenment is a biased one, when used to refer to the eighteenth-and nineteenth-century scientific discoveries. For, in a profound way, this age was a darkening, not a period when lights were turned on. Science made humanity question the very existence of God and the validity of Christianity, foundations upon which the West had been built. Now the simplicity of the Augustinian world seemed like a sick joke, and eventually led Nietzsche to pronounce
God dead. The light of faith was to a great extent extinguished, even as the lights of reason and science were being turned on.

Christianity's own internal problems, outside the sphere of science, made people even more suspicious of its validity. The dominant Christian church, the Roman Catholic church, had had its problems: corruptions, schisms, usury and so forth, which prompted Martin Luther, an ordained priest, to break with it. He was the first of a slew of Protestant reformers. Although these attempts to "purify" Christianity were noble, from the hindsight of historical study, they no doubt testify to an increasingly troubled and fragmented orthodoxy. Christianity was not even sure of itself, sometimes proliferating sects over very mundane matters (for example, the start of Anglicanism by Henry VIII over his marital and successional problems. Anglicanism, by the way, is startlingly similar in its practices to Roman Catholicism, showing that this church seemed to have few quarrels with the bulk of Catholicism's teachings).

Thus religious, societal and scientific factors all played a part in narrowing the perceived gap between humanity and nature. By 1800, anthropocentrism was not dead, but was well on its way to being regarded as anachronistic from the point of view of the intellectual elite, making way for the Romantic conception of linkage between divinity, nature and humanity. The Great Chain of Being and Vaughan's Augustinian faith were effectively destroyed, in part by rationality and scientific inquiry. But with this destruction came a deep need for a new conception of faith, one that could take into account empiricism and accept—not condemn—reason. In the final chapters of this study, I will focus on Romanticism and Coleridge, and
reveal how an orthodox theologian is able to assimilate his inheritance from the Age of Reason.
THE ROMANTIC REVOLUTION AND COLERIDGE

The Age of Reason dissolved the old cosmology of the Great Chain of Being. With the death of this concept, a need for a new faith arose to replace the traditional Augustinian faith. A dichotomy between faith and reason arose, as if the two could never be reconciled, but Coleridge's challenge toward the end of his life is to do just that—to rectify seeming opposites.

This chapter in my consideration of Coleridge shows, in a general manner, how the Romantics, including Coleridge, revolted against their inheritance from the Age of Reason, particularly in relation to the treatment of nature. In the next chapter, I focus on his nature theories, on lessons perceivable to persons very receptive and open to nature, and on his conception of immanence, while, in the final chapter of my consideration of Coleridge, I demonstrate his struggle to conceive a new faith accountable to the value placed on rational knowledge in his age.

The Romantics "revolted" against the mechanistic mindset and rationality of the period in which they lived. They sought an organic wholeness, against the mechanist view that nature consisted of forces, or, as Tennyson was to say, that the "stars blindly run" (Whitehead 77). Of all the English Romantics, it is Wordsworth that Whitehead considers the representative of the typical Romantic response to the machine-world mindset (77). Wordsworth was "morally repulsed" by the eighteenth-century viewpoint that science
could be accepted at face value; he was convinced that something was missing, and that "something" was the thing of most importance (77). He looked for unity in a world that sought so vehemently to chop apart, to dissect. As Whitehead believes, Wordsworth dwelt upon "the mysterious presence of surrounding things," which imposes itself upon any individual part of nature that is held up for its own sake (83).

One of the most important facets of the Romantic revolution against the old cosmology was its concentration upon nature instead of God. Perhaps it was a way of coping with the doubts about the existence of God that science had inevitably raised. It certainly is part of the secularization of the modern era. Wordsworth's *Excursion*, meant to be "a philosophical poem containing views of Man, Nature, and Society," begins thus: "'Twas summer, and the sun had mounted high" (Whitehead 81). Whitehead finds the fact that the poem begins with an image of nature to be reflective of the Romantic revolution (81). Nature, not God, is emphasized; whereas, before Romanticism, this had not been the case. Marjorie Hope Nicolson, in *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory: The Aesthetics of the Infinite*, argues convincingly that the Romantics climaxed the historical development of what she terms the "aesthetics of the infinite," or "the transfer of Infinity and Eternity from a God of Power and a God of Benignity to Space, then to the grandeur and majesty of earth" (393). In other words, humans have a real need for the vast, the eternal, the incomprehensible. This yearning was initially entirely satiated by the concept of God. As the concept of God began to be questioned openly by the West, however, this need
began to be filled by seeing what had previously been the sole domain of God in nature. Certain aspects of nature, like mountains (her specific interest in this book), began to represent the unknown affirmation humans needed so desperately. This transfer of validity from God to nature, again, is part of modern secularization, and brings up the prospect of pantheism, an idea Coleridge flirted with openly but never took seriously.

An excellent example of the "aesthetics of the infinite" is in The Prelude:

The immeasurable height
Of woods decaying, never to be decayed,
The stationary blasts of waterfalls
And in the narrow rent at every turn
Winds thwarting winds, bewildered and forlorn,
The rocks that muttered close upon our ears,
Black drizzling crags that spake by the way-side
As if a voice were in them, the sick sight
And giddy prospect of the raving stream,
The unfettered clouds and regions of the Heavens,
Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light-
Were all like workings of one mind, the features
Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree;
Characters of the great Apocalypse,
The types and symbols of Eternity,
Of first, and last, and midst, and without end.

(VI, lines 624-40 [393])

Vastness is expressed in the woods' "immeasurable height" (l.624). The clouds and the regions of Heaven are "unfettered" (l.633), an image of wildness. "Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light" (l.634) are images of opposites which evoke vastness; there is a long way between darkness and light, for instance. The workings of nature are the "types and symbols of Eternity" (l.639). Infinity is expressed in "Of first, and last, and midst, and without end" (l.640),
reminiscent of God's declaration: "I am the Alpha and the Omega."

Vastness, infinity and eternity are thus all in nature, all expressions of an incomprehensible power. Nicolson, however, also argues that these features of the unknown and unseen in nature do not reveal the ultimate reality: they essentially reflect God (393). The Romantics have certainly not "given up on God" but are apparently searching for concrete expressions of His being, and they find this confirmation to a great extent in nature.

Another aspect of the Romantic revolution is its view of nature's mutability and irregularity. Previous to Romanticism, nature was viewed as orderly, what Nicolson refers to as the "classical canons of regularity, symmetry and proportion" (15). Vaughan, for instance, had very little to say of the possibility of a wild and irregular nature. Such a possibility would have horrified him. The Romantics, however, delighted in nature's unpredictability and asymmetry, which to some extent represented nature as being "other" than humankind. These poets did not strive to impose the human value of order upon nature; they recognized this codification as false. They saw nature "as it is," a wild existence, defying our wishes for comfortable conformity. Although in this limited sense the Romantics separated themselves from nature, their predominant tendency, as we shall see, was to see the common bonds of humanity and nature, the spectacular "one Life."

In his early years, Coleridge was infatuated with nature, as all the English Romantics were. In the 1790s he produced much nature poetry, some of it excellent, but as most critics would attest, not achieving the level of perfection his friend and associate, Wordworth,
would attain. He associated with other Romantics, constantly con-
versing about crucial issues of the time and living a life of high intel-
lectual excitement. A new age was upon them, the Romantics felt
sure, and the French Revolution was but a portent of great things to
come, an impending age of "universal felicity" (64), in the words of
M.H. Abrams. This period of the pantisocratic scheme was not only a
plan to create a situation where a new spirit of brotherhood would
thrive, but also involved a theory of nature as well (Beer, Poetical
Intelligence 43). For the community would be situated near a river,
and husbandry in nature would be the means of survival (43). Thus
Coleridge's nature theories were initially closely linked with this
practical scheme. This scheme did not take long to fail; however, this
failure of the utopian plan seems to have had little effect on his
nature theories, as reflected in the poems that I will discuss in the
next chapter.

The thoughts of Coleridge's friend Hucks, as recorded in his
journal, reveal the mindset regarding nature of those young radical
Romantics. Hucks' journal describes the walking-tour of 1794 that
he and Coleridge engaged in, before the pantisocratic plan fell
through (Beer, Poetical Intelligence 42). The fact that both were
walking and not riding in a stagecoach itself shows the new "spirit of
the age," in that, significantly, all men were equal; no man should be
presumptuous enough elevate himself falsely by using a carriage
(42). The idea of the walking-tour also reflects the new relationship
between humanity and nature, "his would be a most comfortless
state of existence, with a mind that could have no idea, if at all, of the
deity" (42). That nature was reflective of God was an idea, according
to that Coleridge critic, John Beer, not atypical of Coleridge and his peers (42). Moreover, humans *needed* nature.

As I have shown, the Romantics view nature in a new manner, usually concentrating upon nature instead of God, but they are neither atheists nor pantheists--nature can in fact serve as a statement of His being. Romantic nature theories conceive nature, humanity and divinity as vitally connected with one spirit. In the following chapter, I outline Coleridge's nature theories and reveal how these theories operate in his nature poetry and prose and discuss Coleridge's version of immanence.
COLERIDGE'S NATURE THEORIES AND IMMANENCE

I have shown that Vaughan's concept of immanence was of an uncomplicated, reflected divinity in nature. As I discuss in this chapter, in the 1790s, Coleridge sees immanence in much the same manner as Vaughan: nature as reflected divinity. Because of his rational inheritance from the Age of Reason, Coleridge is finally able to see an immanence of a broader kind; nature did not simply reflect divinity, but, as he believes after he eschews his nature theories, nature can reflect divinity only with human intellectual intervention. His version of immanence is practically realized when a receptive person immerses himself or herself in the natural world, communing not only with nature, but with God. Coleridge comes to believe eventually that the mind is required to do this in any real sense, as I argue in the next chapter.

I believe Coleridge's immanence allows nature to serve a didactic function for humankind, the purpose of which is to demonstrate nature's beauty, joy and spirituality. This spirituality is indeed the ultimate lesson to be learned from Coleridge's conversation poems. I will first address conceptually Coleridge's nature theories, then show these theories at work in six of his poetry and prose works.
Coleridge had literally an assortment of theories regarding nature, some rather complex, during the idealistic decade before about 1800. These idealistic years witnessed a Coleridge who conceived a simple immanence similar to Vaughan's immanence. Nature could reflect divinity, if one were open to this revelation, but the rational faculty need not intervene. This immanence was more of a feeling. Later Coleridge, however, was to separate himself from nature and view to rationality as absolutely critical to this process of immanence. He thus eventually will uphold the need for reason, despite Romantic denunciations of the rationalistic mindset; but, as I have already discussed, Coleridge never really did entirely escape the mechanistic mindset to which much of the West was still subject in the late 1700s.

I will concentrate on but a few of his nature theories. Coleridge believed, firstly, in the reciprocal and nearly egalitarian relationship between humanity and nature, the "one Life within us and abroad." Graham Davidson believes this to be the dominant quest of Coleridge's career: "where Coleridge finds a sense of unity in diverse phenomena, he also senses the presence of the divine spirit" (20). "The Eolian Harp" conveys his desire to see what the Cambridge Platonists referred to as the "plastic power" of the universe.

One of his most sincere desires was to be able to find a tangible basis for his sense of "oneness" in the world. In his desire to discover an explanation, he temporarily became intrigued with magnetism and hypnotism. The magnetists, mostly French, believed an invisible link connected all humans to one another, and that this link was more apparent in those who had been reared extensively in the
natural world (Beer, Poetical Intelligence 135). The appeal of this doctrine for Coleridge is obvious. Both magnetism and hypnotism could help explain the more mysterious aspects of human nature; both were links by which he could "hold together a series of psychological speculations and apparently supernatural phenomena" (222). Both were concrete ways in which an unseen force could influence human behavior. Coleridge's infatuation with these ideas is apparent in his poetry; "The Nightingale" contains subtle hints of magnetism, while "Christabel" clearly has instances of hypnotism (220). Beer speculates that Coleridge became disenchanted with these concepts after his visit to Germany, where he attended the lectures of Blumenbach, a renowned physiologist in Europe (220). Blumenbach was a complete skeptic, and this stance no doubt made Coleridge rethink his commitment to both magnetism and hypnotism as ways of explaining the "one Life" (220). This fascination is but one attempt Coleridge made to justify a belief in a divine spirit pervading the world.

Another nature theory that Coleridge held was the Romantic "innocent child of nature" theory. The Romantics believed both nature and children were innocent of the corrupt influences of adulthood and civilization. Children were idolized for their simplicity. They had not yet been forced by exposure to the adult world and its values of sense and rationality to subordinate their natural instincts, which the Romantics prized, but throughout most of history was, at best, viewed as superfluous, at worst, something children would quickly outgrow. Children were also much closer to the "vision splendid" of their pre-existence before their incarnation in this
world. They were much more attuned to the "one Life" than most adults could ever be. In his "innocent-child-of-nature" poetry, Coleridge provides us with a vision of the child, reared in a natural environment, able to feel this "one Life" literally ebbing through his or her body.

Coleridge of course learned much about the behavior of children from his own children, particularly, it seems, from Hartley. He went so far as to take notes regarding Hartley's behavior and to relate these to his theories. The following observations were made in a notebook under the heading "Infancy and Infants":

1. The first smile--what kind of reason it displays --the first smile after sickness.--
2. Asleep with the polyanthus held fast in his hand, its bells drooping over his rosy face.
3. Stretching after the stars.--
4. Seen asleep by the light of glow worms.
5. Sports of infants--then incessant activity, the means being the end.--Nature how lovely a school-mistress.

(Beer, Poetical Intelligence 136-7)

Of course, it is essential to remember the end toward which the Romantic idealization of childhood strived. The Romantics were trying to view nature in a new way, to break out of stale conventions, and children did have what M.H. Abrams calls the "freshness of sensation" (379) for which the Romantics were looking. To think as children thought would be a root of new creativity for the poet. Most Romantics did realize that childhood, as a whole, was a sterile state (261), and therefore wanted to be successful in carrying on "the feelings of childhood into the powers of manhood," as Coleridge comments in Biographia Literaria (Abrams 381).
The final nature theory I will be addressing is the "nature-as-ministry" theory. Coleridge was often subtle in his references to God in his nature poems, but that does not mean that he harbored serious doubts regarding God, not even during the 1790s, as some have hastily asserted. "Nature as ministry" refers to the idea that nature itself can serve as the essential function of a church: to provide a forum for devout worship. Indeed, although Coleridge would never have espoused the neglect of church-worship, he likely thought nature was in some way superior to churches for worshipping. For if nature reflects God, and can serve a didactic function for humans why be "pent up" in a human-made creation? Walk outdoors instead, and immerse oneself in the divinity, keeping a very open and receptive attitude, thus practically realizing immanence. The following excerpt from "To Nature" is an excellent example of nature as ministry:

So will I build my altar in the fields,
    And the blue sky my fretted dome shall be.
And the sweet fragrance that the wild flower yields
    Shall be the incense I will yield to Thee,
Thee only God! and thou shalt not despise
    Even me, the priest of this poor sacrifice.
(Beer, Visionary 224)

Coleridge's alleged pantheism seems to still be an issue for critics, and the final word shall certainly not be said here. I have, however, found no evidence of firm pantheistic beliefs. A flirtation? Certainly, and one that seemed relatively serious during his output of nature poetry in the 1790s. But a flirtation does not a conviction make, and there is little reason to doubt his assertion at Highgate late in his life," With my heart I never did abandon the name of Christ" (Brett 223).
"The Foster-Mother's Tale," a dramatic fragment from his tragedy Osorio, is an unremarkable story, except for its demonstration of several of Coleridge's nature theories. The tale revolves around an "innocent child of nature" who remains unnamed, to show his belonging to the natural world, as names are a false creation of humankind. The child is found beneath a tree "wrapt in mosses, lined / With thistle-beards" (l.24-5) by a woodsman. By including no evidence of any one having abandoned the child, Coleridge creates this child as the ultimate "child of nature"; it seems possible, within the context of the story, for the earth itself to have given birth to him. Coleridge furthers this picture of the child by having him initially be "most unteachable" (l.30) in conventional religious practices, but instead the child soon reveals his alliance with nature; he whistles as the birds do and shows his creative force by planting flowers. He is only able to learn to read and write by instruction from a friar. The fact that a spiritual man is the only one able to teach the natural child reveals the link between nature and religion. This conventional teaching, however, is the beginning of a corrupting process for the child, as he is drawn further and further away from his natural origins, and further into adult civilization's expectations. He now lives at the convent or the castle and becomes "a very learned youth" (l.42). All his reading, however, "turns" his brains, until he has "unlawful thoughts" (l.45). Coleridge never specifies what these thoughts are, but presumably they are thoughts not conducive to the functioning of society. The child, who is now nearly twenty, retains his "natural world consciousness," for although he enjoys praying, he dislikes praying "With holy men, nor in a holy
place" (l.47). Finally, the earth itself protests his adaptation into society, as it heaves under the child and his benefactor, collapsing the chapel almost on top of them. This quasi-narrative reveals the reciprocal relationship between the boy and nature; the boy has always worshipped nature, and nature has loved him, and now nature wants him back as truly one of her own.

And nature does get him back. The youth is put into a dungeon after he misinterprets the chapel's collapse, believing it to be God's protest of his "unlawful thoughts" (his misinterpretation of the chapel's collapse shows how far he has deteriorated from oneness with nature). He is let out of the dungeon, becomes an explorer and, in America, escapes into the wilds, living "among the savage men" (l.81).

The "one Life" between humanity and nature is especially pronounced in this child. He evidently feels an acute connection to nature even in his farthest deviation from his natural life. Nature calls him back to the home from whence he originally came. He probably is very contented living with Indians, for they have remained uncontaminated by the corrupting influences of civilization (or so Coleridge would see it). The idea that humans decline from an original virtue by contact with civilization is attributable to Rousseau's idea of the "noble savage." (Beer, Poetical Intelligence 27). Coleridge thus parallels the innocence of the child, nature and the New World.

The child treats nature as a ministry. He knows nature reflects God (immanence, not pantheism) and that to simply be in nature is a suitable worship of God. He dislikes praying in churches. Perhaps Coleridge is saying that churches are a false human construct, or that
"holy men" are often hypocrites or just generally corrupt. Significantly, the child was originally found under a tree, and that same tree was used to build the chapel which caved in on the boy. This particular tree apparently has a special connection to the child, as odd as that sounds, for it is part of the collapsed chapel, and seems to have "recognized" the gradual degeneration of the child, and collapsed with the earth's movement. Although the prospect of trees "recognizing" human beings takes us into a most unorthodox train of thought, Coleridge's emphasis on this particular tree in this way can have no other explanation. Except, perhaps, that the tree itself was protesting its usage in a church, but this seems unlikely, for the boy would be left completely out of the collapse.

The final scene in "The Foster-Mother's Tale" includes the child's rebellion against civilization, his return to nature, by a boat "set sail by silent moonlight" (1.79). Beer informs us that the moon is, for Coleridge, a transmitter of divine light (Visionary 93), and that Coleridge uses the term moonlight to symbolize natural revelation (118). If this is the case (and it seems a very reasonable argument), then Coleridge makes it clear at the conclusion that the child has God's blessing for his return to nature.

Another rather obscure prose work exhibiting his nature theories is "The Wanderings of Cain." The role of the "innocent child of nature" is played by Cain's young son Enos. Coleridge establishes this reference by directly telling us he is an "innocent little child" (113). His affinity with nature is evident when he attempts to play with the squirrels. His extreme naivete touchingly appears when he asks his father Cain why the animals do not play with him: "Why, O my /
father, would they not play with me?/ I would be good to them as thou art / good to me" (113). He has no conception of the consequences of the Fall, of which his father is, of course, emblematic.

Even more important than Enos' status as the child of nature is his role as redemptor-- he is needed to help save his sinning father. Cain is so far "fallen" that he relies on his child to help him: "Lead on, my child! . . . Guide me, little child!" (113). Enos at least twice reassures his father that they will soon come into "the open moonlight" (113), moonlight being a symbol of God's revelation through nature. Enos thus gives his father to understand how close they are to redemption.

The child also at one point grasps his sitting father, "as if he [Enos] would raise him [Cain]" (114). Raise has connotations of the raising of Christ from the dead. Cain is "dead" like Christ was for three days. Cain, however, is not physically dead, but is so in every other sense of the word. This allusion to the resurrection of Christ also works in another way-- a dead Christ, in purgatory for three days, is at the farthest point away from God, as is an unredeemed Cain.

Two more instances of Enos as redemptor of his father include an image of Abel with "the child by his right hand, and Cain by his left" (115). The right hand of God is the favored one; Christ assumed this position after he was raised from the dead. Enos' innocence apparently makes him favored over his flawed father, who must sit at Abel's left side. When Cain begs Abel to allow him to be forgiven, Abel acquiesces, but tells him to "bring thy child with thee!" (116). In the triangle of Abel, Cain and Enos, the latter symbolizes
innocence in its purest form, of a kind that does not even realize the consequences of the Fall, and the only kind that can help redeem sin. It seems as if Cain, by himself, would be doomed to the hell he is in, if not for his love for Enos. Cain killed, the ultimate action that hate can produce, but his love for his son stands opposed to that. The fact that he can love is his salvation.

Enos sees nature as a force to love. He vainly tries to play with the squirrels and is genuinely puzzled when they run away from him. He is abundantly, joyously alive, unlike his father, who wishes more than anything to die and become part of the natural landscape that he has so profoundly offended. His attempt to commune with nature fails, because of Adam and Eve's Fall, but his own father re-enacts the fall in his own manner (Davidson 55).

The "one Life" concept is apparent in what Graham Davidson calls the "symbolical landscape" that Cain and Enos inhabit, which reveals Cain's inner life (56). Cain is in a hell on earth, created by his actions. Nature and Cain's consciousness are so closely interfused that the landscape takes on the characteristics of Cain's consciousness in a pathetic fallacy:

The scene around was desolate... the bare rocks faced each other, and left a long and wide interval of thin white sand... There was no spring, no summer, no autumn: and winter's snow, that would have been lovely, fell not on these hot rocks and scorching sands... The pointed and shattered summits of the ridges of the rocks made a mimicry of human concerns. (114)

Certainly, this scene is a hell on earth. This hot, dry landscape, however, exists not on its own, but as a reflection of Cain's psychol-
ogy; as he says "in silence am I dried up" (114). His very spirituality is dried up. He later tells Abel that he would lament for him, "but that the spirit within me is withered, and burnt up in agony" (116). Like the Mariner, he needs redemption, and that redemption starts with the lamenting that he has thus far been unable to do.

"Christabel" has nearly obsessed Coleridgean critics. Who or what is Geraldine, and what exactly does she do to Christabel? Is what is done to Christabel good or bad? Certainly, the answers to these questions lie in a thorough examination of Geraldine, but as I am focusing upon the "innocent child of nature" and relevant nature theories, Christabel's character will instead be my object of my analysis.

Clearly, Christabel represents goodness and innocence. This symbolism is apparent without even contrasting her to Geraldine. She prays for her lover, she takes Geraldine into her home, and she often raises her eyes to heaven. Geraldine tells her, "All they who live in the upper sky, / Do love you, holy Christabel!" (l.227-8). Although Geraldine's general character may make what she says questionable, she does vacillate from deviousness to a state of goodness approaching that of Christabel. Because she has just drank from the "wine of virtuous powers (l.191) made by Christabel's mother, she has just shifted into her "good persona," and therefore her comment is sincere and believable.

Upon being awakened by Geraldine, she realizes that she has sinned, but she wants to atone, "Now heaven be praised if all be well!" (l.382). She prays to Christ to forgive her sins of the previous night. Coleridge emphasizes her continuing innocence near the end
of the poem. She is "So fair, so innocent, so mild" (l.624), with eyes "so innocent and blue" (l.612). Furthermore, at least twice Coleridge directly invokes divine personages (Jesus and Mary) to protect Christabel, the force of good falling subject to evil, or, at the very least, disruption, as Kathleen M. Wheeler maintains in a very post-structuralist reading (87). Thus, Coleridge goes to great lengths to make sure the reader sees Christabel as innocent and generally "good," and that she continues to be so, despite her infatuation with Geraldine.

Christabel's affinity with nature is most apparent when she leaves the castle, a universe of death, for the woods to pray. Like Enos, she is very much alive in her father's world of death, and she leaves to escape into a world to which she feels closer. She feels acutely the "one Life" between nature and her. Both are alive, something Christabel's closest companion, her father, is essentially not.

Beer maintains that the powers of nature are working at so low an ebb as to be almost nonexistent (Poetical Intelligence 186). The pulsation of life in the woods is there, but one would need to use a stethoscope to detect it. This low spiritual energy is evident in the following lines from the scene of Christabel praying in nature:

There is not wind enough in the air
To move away the ringlet curl
From the lovely lady's cheek--
There is not wind enough to twirl
The one red leaf, the last of its clan. (45-9)

Of the six nature poems I will explore, "Christabel" was written last, in 1801, when Coleridge's faith in his nature theories was be-
ginning to falter. The "one Life" theory applies here, but nature's life does appear dim, as opposed to the absolutely joyous nature represented in the conversation poems. Never again would he write a child of nature poem; he was moving on to different intellectual horizons, as I will show.

Although Beer's observation above is excellent, he is less on the mark when he affirms that Christabel has a strong bond with nature because she is constantly forced to look up into the sky for her dead mother's spirit (Poetical Intelligence 191). This claim is absurd. Yes, Christabel does often "raise her eyes to heaven," and perhaps part of the reason that she is doing so is to get in touch with her deceased mother. But to then extend the argument to say that because of these factors, she has a bond with nature, is stretching too far.

Christabel significantly decides to pray in nature, an example of the "nature-as-ministry" theme. She knows a church is not required on order to have God hear her prayers. This poem, in its explicit assertion is different from others exhibiting nature as ministry, where a simple nature walk is worship of God. Christabel actually kneels beneath an oak tree, clasps her hands and prays. Perhaps the difference lies in her specific prayers for her lover. It is also possible that Christabel is more orthodox than Coleridge's other characters, such as the child in "The Foster-Mother's Tale." The medieval setting points to this distinct possibility, as does the number of times Christabel prays. Coleridge is also pointing to religious orthodoxy in his repeated "Jesu, Maria, shield her well!" (l.54,582). Even such a devout worshipper, however, sees the benefit of nature as a forum for prayer.
The conversation poems, written between 1795 and 1798, fit Coleridge's nature theories especially well. Raimonda Modiano says they show that nature has an affinity with and permeates human unconscious life (56). Graham Davidson feels that all of Coleridge's conversation poems reveal a desire to understand how separate things can participate in the "one Life" (43). However, "This Lime-tree Bower My Prison," "Frost at Midnight" and "The Nightingale" also reveal a nature capable of modeling lessons, the ultimate aim of which is to know God. Nature serves a didactic function for humans, as it does in Vaughan's *Silex Scintillans*, and, akin to Vaughan's immanence, Coleridge's version of immanence evokes nature's didacticism. The nature of the lessons, however, differ in the two cases. Coleridge's purpose is not to affirm humanity's privileged status on earth, but to demonstrate nature's essential joy, beauty and spirituality.

"The Nightingale," like "Christabel," contains a young woman as a child of nature. She is a "most gentle Maid" (1.69), who is "like a Lady vowed and dedicate / To something more than Nature in the grove" (1.72-3). This simile brings to mind a nun, a woman whose life is dedicated to God. She is a nun in a sense, but she makes her devotions in the woods, not in a church; nature is her ministry. She knows all the notes of the nightingales intimately, revealing a close contact and knowledge of nature. Besides the hint of the maid being like a nun, Coleridge creates this scene in another way to bring an image of church to the reader's mind by having the nightingales "burst forth in choral minstrelsy" (1.80). The nightingales sing joyously in response to the moon's re-appearance from behind a cloud.
Their response to the moon indicates the "one Life" theory between the moon and the birds. This supposition is evidenced by the Eolian imagery in the scene. The birds "Have all burst forth in choral minstrelsy, / As if some sudden gale had swept at once / A hundred airy harps!" (l.80-2). A kindred spirit pulsates through all of nature, making the nightingales respond to the moon, and the mind so familiar with the nightingales' song that she "knows all their notes" (l.74).

This scene shows Coleridge's flirtation with the idea of magnetism. He sought to ground the "one Life" theory with a scientific basis, showing his eighteenth-century inheritance. Was it possible that the moon exercised a magnetic influence over animals and humans, as the French magnetists had suggested? Coleridge's answer, in this poem, is "yes."

The next scene in the poem shows an even clearer instance of magnetism. Coleridge takes his "innocent nature child," Hartley, into the woods one night while the baby is crying. The child responds immediately to the moon:

And he beheld the moon, and, hushed at once,
Suspends his sobs, and laughs most silently,
While his fair eyes, that swam with undropped tears,
Did glitter in the yellow moon-beam! (l.102-5)

The moon, also, is a symbol of divinity revealed through nature for Coleridge, so Hartley and the nightingales are, apparently, also responding to the revelation of God. Nature is, again, ministry.

Hartley knows instinctively that nature is a force with which to commune. Coleridge speculates that if Hartley were accompanying the Wordsworths and him, the child would place his hand to his ear and bid them listen to the nightingales. For the nightingales, as part
of nature, serve a didactic function for Hartley, for the maid, for Coleridge and the Wordsworths, for poets; indeed, for all who listen and observe it.

The nightingales show us that "In Nature there is nothing melancholy" (l.15). This distance from a fallen sense of nature is the "different lore" Coleridge speaks of in line 41. Coleridge and William and Dorothy Wordsworth know that nature "is always full of love / And joyance" (l.42-3), rather than the poetic conceit of the melancholy nightingale. A poet should learn the true essence of the natural world by "surrendering his whole spirit" (l.29) to it, absent of pre-judgement. Only then can poets represent nature as it is, suggests Coleridge, the way the innocent children of nature, like Hartley and the maid, and the "different lore" poets know it to be; a celebration of joy, and more importantly, reflective of divinity.

"The Nightingale" is full of religious references. Coleridge does not want to "profane" (l.41) "Nature's sweet voices" (l.42). The nightingale has a "soul" (l.48) which wants to release its music. The birds enliven the air with "harmony" (l.62), "murmurs musical" (l.60) and "one low piping sound more sweet than all" (l.61), reminiscent of a church choir. The similarity of the birds' song to a church choir is confirmed in the scene in which the birds respond to the moon, singing jubilantly in "choral minstrelsy" (l.80). The birds sing in the "moonlight" (l.64), Coleridge's symbol to denote God reflected in nature. Thus Coleridge, from the very beginning of the poem, wants us to associate nature with religion and God. He never explicitly says that nature reflects God, but the spirituality of the poem as well as his employment of the nature-as-ministry theory make his intention
clear. The ultimate aim of this poem, the final and most important lesson, is that nature reflects God. The lesson of nature's joy pales in comparison to the lesson of reflected divinity.

In contrast to "The Nightingale," in which Coleridge knows the lessons of nature from the start of the poem, "This Lime-tree Bower My Prison" begins with a dejected Coleridge, stuck in his "prison," feeling as if he has "lost / Beauties and feelings" (1.2-3). He envies his friends, whom he believes "wander in gladness" (1.8), for some imagined difference between his situation and theirs. His dejection is reflected in the natural scene he conjures to his mind:

The roaring dell, o'erwooded, narrow, deep,
And only speckled by the mid-day sun;
Where its slim trunk the ash from rock to rock
Flings arching like a bridge;-- that branchless ash
Unsunned and damp, whose few poor yellow leaves
Ne'er tremble in the gale, yet tremble still,
Fanned by the water-fall! and there my friends
Behold the dark green file of long lank weeds,
That at all once (a most fantastic sight!)
Still nod and drip beneath the dripping edge
Of the blue clay-stone. (l.10-20)

(Beer, Poetical Intelligence 127)

There seems to be very little life in this scene. The few leaves trembling and the weeds dripping are about the total of the force of life. This directly corresponds to the depression of the speaker, showing the reciprocity of the life force between Coleridge and nature. The natural scene depends upon Coleridge's state of mind, as his state of mind is affected by the natural scene.

As he continues to imagine his friends wandering, his mood improves, as he thinks of different natural scenes. Slowly, he begins to think of the glory and joy of nature. He no longer thinks of drip-
ping weeds, but of burning clouds, the ocean and purple flowers, all
doing their utmost to impress Coleridge's friend Charles Lamb. His
increasing good spirits are reflected in the number of exclamation
points he uses while describing this new scene (a total of seven
between lines 31 and 37). Finally, he admits "A delight / Comes sud-
den on my heart, and I am glad / As I myself were there!" (1.44-6).

Coleridge is quite explicit in his attribution of a didactic func-
tion to nature. He realizes that the lime-tree bower has beauty too
and spends thirteen lines (l. 47-59) describing its radiance. Then he
says, "Henceforth I shall know" (1.59). Clearly, he has learned some-
ting from nature, and that is "That Nature ne'er deserts the wise
and pure; / No plot so narrow, be but Nature there" (1.59-60). No
place is devoid of nature, and its capacity to "employ / Each faculty
of sense, and keep the heart / Awake to Love and Beauty!" (1.62-4).
He thus openly acknowledges that his contemplation of the natural
beauties in the bower have led him to a realization that nature is
everywhere when one is outdoors; no place is superior over any
other place, because they are all beautiful.

The real lesson, however, is that nature reflects God. Like "The
Nightingale," "This Lime-tree Bower My Prison" is replete with reli-
gious references in connection with nature. His friends wander un-
der the "wide wide Heaven" (1.21). The scene, consisting of hills and
the sea, is a "many-steepled tract magnificent" (1.22); in other words,
nature serves as both church and sacred text. Later in the poem,
Coleridge blesses a rook, believing it was seen by Charles.

Even more strikingly, he says he has stood "silent with swim-
mimg sense" (1.39), gazing until nature seems "of such hues / As veil
the Almighty Spirit, when yet he makes / Spirits perceive his presence" (1.41-3). This simile, in simpler terms, means that the colors of nature are like the colors of God when he makes himself manifest. This simile gets to the heart of immanence: nature shows the existence of God, but nature is not God. Coleridge does not say that the colors of nature are those that veil God. He is not a pantheist. But he is saying that a contemplation of nature is a way to see the divine.

Graham Davidson argues that for omnipresence to be known in this poem, the senses must swim (29). Only until the observer has drunken deeply of nature, so much so that his senses are almost off-balance, can the divine be perceived. Here, unlike the other conversation poems, the individual forms of nature are not enough (29). This claim is entirely plausible, especially when the lines "gaze till all doth seem / Less gross than bodily" (1.40-1) are considered. Coleridge seems to strain a bit here; one imagines him gazing at nature for a long time until the divine is sensed. Yes, divinity is sensed, and that is the true lesson of nature, but it requires an extra bit of work in this poem to arrive there.

In contrast to "This Lime-tree Bower My Prison," "Frost at Midnight' begins with a sense of the divine in nature in the very first line, "The Frost performs its secret ministry." Thus Coleridge begins with a conviction of divinity in nature, as he does in "The Nightingale," whereas in "This Lime-tree Bower My Prison" he arrives at the conviction through the course of the poem.

Coleridge sits and contemplates at midnight in his cottage. All is quiet, and his infant son Hartley is by his side. Seeing flint flap in the grate, he thinks of his school days, where the same scene would
bring to his mind visions of home, and a hope of seeing family or friends. His contemplation of his early years as a child playing with his sister brings him to address the sleeping Hartley. He tells Hartley that "thou shalt learn far other lore" (1.50), which bears the same meaning as the "different lore" of "The Nightingale," education in nature, not in a city, "pent 'mid cloisters dim" (1.52), like the poets of "The Nightingale." The purpose of such an education becomes quickly and vividly apparent; nature will reveal to him:

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.  
Great Universal Teacher! he shall mould  
Thy spirit , and by giving make it ask. (1.59-64)

This passage is the most explicit of any conversation poem in explaining Coleridge's greatest aim in these poems: to make the reader believe that nature models lessons. The purpose of these lessons is the knowledge of God.

The above passage, in a simpler form, says that God utters an "eternal language" (1.60), and that language is nature. All things in nature reflect God: "Himself in all, and all things in himself" (1.62). God is a "Great Universal Teacher" (1.63), who will make Hartley eager for more knowledge by the very presence of nature. Coleridge thus represents God as teacher, communicating to humankind his essence and presence through the medium of nature. Hartley will be student, as any person could be, who is willing to observe nature. This observance itself is an act of worship, for it serves one function that churches serve, essentially, to make God's presence known. This role is made explicit in the twice-repeated phrase, "secret ministry"
Ministry means functions of a minister; frost performs the functions of a minister, to communicate religion to people. Ministry also means the agency by which something is communicated. It is "secret" because no one literally witnesses the formation of frost. Why Coleridge used frost to represent all of nature is here a cogent question. Frost covers everything when it appears, so perhaps this makes it suitable to represent all of nature. The final scene sheds some light on the spiritual symbolism of the frost. The frost "hangs" water "up in silent icicles" (l.73), which are "Quietly shining to the quiet Moon" (l.74). First, the moon is a symbol of divine revelation through nature, thus summing up the importance of the poem in a single, final image. Second, the reader is left with three images of coldness in the last three lines--frost, icicles and the moon. The moon is cold and pure, as are the frost and icicles which "shine to" (l.74) the moon. This shining and the similarities between frost, icicles and the moon communicate an affinity between the earthly icicles and the moon, and, as Ronald A. Sharp has pointed out, a reciprocal relationship (40). The moon also represents perfection, the original state of humankind, because it has not been subject to the Fall like earth has been. Thus in the last lines of "Frost at Midnight," perhaps Coleridge is expressing a desire for perfection here on earth, the utmost spiritual experience--the Second Coming of Christ.

Nature's spirituality, its connection to the divine, is thus Coleridge's early and rather simplistic version of immanence, a theory he will reject when he rejects his Romantic nature theories. The final chapter in my consideration of Coleridge will explore why
Coleridge begins to view immanence differently after about 1800, and how this new conception of immanence is a response to the emphasis placed on rationality in his age, and how this new immanence helps to rectify reason and religion.
I find Coleridge's conception of immanence to be based on reason in a way Vaughan would have rejected, certainly when he followed his "Augustinian strain of thought." This immanence is a crucial part of his rationalist faith, his attempt to be an orthodox Christian, but to answer the great skepticism to which Augustinian faith was increasingly falling prey. I understand this rationalist faith, however, to never devalue mystery, for, despite the trust placed in rationality in the Age of Reason, there were still things we could never understand. The age Coleridge was born into allowed him to view immanence and faith, those critical constituents of his rationalist faith, as necessarily related in order to do both faith and reason justice. Oddly enough, Coleridge, in my view, favored faith; he wanted so desperately to believe, to be truly orthodox, as my consideration of Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit bears out.

I briefly examine Confessions in this chapter, exploring specifically the doctrine of the Bible's total verbal inspiration, part of the "Bibliolatry" he so despised. Akin to his view of nature, he wanted the Bible to be a living document. I trace and describe Coleridge's loss of faith in his nature theories, examining theories as to why he rejected this aspect of Romanticism.

Coleridge, during these early years, fully believed in the power of nature to reveal the divine. During the lectures of 1795, at age 23, he stated confidently, "The Omnipotent has unfolded to us the vol-
ume of the world, that there we may read the Transcript of Himself" (Davidson 21). But by 1818 his belief had changed. The revelation was forthcoming:

Then will the other great Bible of God, the Book of Nature, become transparent to us, when we regard the form of matter as words, as symbols, valuable only as being the expression, an unrolled yet glorious fragment, of the wisdom of the Supreme Being. (21 [italics my own])

Why had Coleridge lost faith in his nature theories? What had happened? Why had nature gone from a path to God to a "wary, wily, long-breathed old witch" (Beer, Visionary 289), as he stated in a letter in 1825, at the age of 53?

There are a multitude of possible reasons. He seems to have given up on trying to find the exact means by which the "one Life" exists; he had finally dismissed magnetism and hypnotism. Davidson asserts that Coleridge gradually came to believe that ideas mediate between humanity and nature, that without ideas, nature is but chaos (212), certainly not capable of modeling lessons. Gradually, he began to think that humans must erect themselves to their true humanity, which is in Christ (213). This qualification would enable a person to examine nature safely and find Christ there, instead of proceeding directly from nature (213). Nature began to have no truth in itself, but only those truths, Davidson argues, derived from the mind (215); the idea of nature and the human mind as existing in a reciprocal, interfused relationship was discounted. Slowly, he began to assert that humans must seek union with God and must separate themselves from nature. If nature has no truth in itself, then simply walking outdoors and being receptive to nature alone
does little good in the attempt to find divinity. The mind must enter this equation, he came to believe, for this realization of evolved immanence to work, and this new immanence suitably answers the demands of the rationalist mindset. Immanence based on reason, a divinity in nature sensed with the assistance of the mind, does rectify reason and faith.

Coleridge's personal life reveals volumes about his gradual disenchantment with both nature and his nature theories. In 1795, Coleridge was a confident man. He was ready for the pantisocratic scheme and had even hastily married in order to facilitate the plans. The Bristol lectures find him denouncing public institutions (Pym 29), fulfilling his radical political bent of the time. Unitarianism seemed the answer to this religious queries.

Then nearly everything seemed to collapse. He found himself quite incompatible with the wife of whom at one time he had favorably spoken of in "The Eolian Harp." The French Revolution became the Napoleonic era, one tyrant replacing the monarchical tyrants. His health became a major concern. In 1796, he started to take laudanum for his pain, and his addiction grew in alarming proportion. His career seemed doomed for various reasons, most outstanding being his failure to put many of his ideas to paper in a consistent fashion. More concretely, in 1796, The Watchman failed (Pym 35), an early and thus all the more severe blow to his confidence.

Thus, by 1805, Coleridge was little short of a wreck. He was searching, always searching, for truth, and he felt that he had not found it in his earlier theories. So, logically, why not embrace new ones? So many of his initial beliefs had proven to be false that it
seemed entirely possible that some of his nature theories were not all that they had once seemed to be. M.H. Abrams asserts that Coleridge was not alone in his doubts; almost all the English Romantics lost had faith in their earlier beliefs (460). They lost, effectively, the "assurance and buoyancy of their radical youth" (460).

To make matters worse, he felt he was losing the poetical powers that had produced verse of the quality of the conversation poems. He confessed in a letter, "The Poet is dead in me" (Beer, *Poetical Intelligence* 250). Raimonda Modiano has an interesting theory as to the decrease in Coleridge's ability to write poetry and his increasing ambivalence toward nature. She maintains that Coleridge's affections for nature decreased in direct relation to his increasing estrangement from Wordsworth (33). At the basis of this theory lies his alleged jealousy of Wordsworth for being the better nature poet (36), and, shockingly enough, for Sara Hutchinson's desire for Wordsworth (40). Also, according to Modiano, Coleridge was deeply hurt by Wordsworth's assumption of sole authorship of *Lyrical Ballads*, after which he often "jokingly" commented to friends how he had surrendered his role as poet to Wordsworth, and was now delving into philosophical studies (42). This seems conjecture entirely possible as a crucial piece of the puzzle as to the *why* of Coleridge's abandonment of nature. The theory of Sara Hutchinson being in love with Wordsworth, and Coleridge having to suffer the myriad of pains attendant on that scenario, seems a bit far-fetched, but of course, is within the realm of possibility. People's actions are often profoundly affected by romantic matters, even in instances in which the "stakes" seem so high. In retrospect, it is hard to imagine the ruin of a bril-
Hant poet's abilities due in part to unrequited love, but that is human nature.

If Coleridge abandoned a great deal of his nature theories and the old conception of immanence, what beliefs did he consequently embrace? Religious ones, primarily. He studied Spinoza, Luther, the Caroline divines, Richard Baxter, andKant, among many others, picking the best of what he read and incorporating it into his own slowly-evolving metaphysical synthesis. As Pym acknowledges, he had few original theological concepts of his own (19). He found many of Spinoza's theories to be agreeable, but decided that his pantheism was a denial of the omniscience of God (36). He abandoned Unitarianism, contemplating the virtues (as he conceived it) of Trinitarianism, finally calling the trinity "the grand article of faith, and the foundation of the whole Christian system" (23). He found the doctrine of the trinity to be crucial to his continued desire for immanence, a personal God, and an "inward, warm, experiential religion" (13). Thus, he was not a new person; he still wanted to see immanence and believe in the personal God and religion that the Romantics wanted. He was, however, someone who was placing much more faith in metaphysical speculation than in the Romantic nature theories of previous years.

Much has been written of Coleridge's "return to orthodoxy," as if such a prospect is positive, as if his Romantic ideas were, well, "flaky," and now, at a mature age, he "saw the light." Or, sometimes, the oppositional view is taken, that he settled into safe thinking. But as critics Pym, Davidson and Radley will attest, Coleridge was always grounded in Christianity. Davidson says, "He always proclaimed him-
self a Christian" (1). One should not allow the implicit pantheism of the poems of the 1790s to fool himself; he was never a pantheist. In his metaphysical speculations, he rejected strains of thought that seemed to lead to pantheism; hence, the partial rejection of Spinoza, Jacob Boehme, George Fox and William Law (Radley 23). Coleridge had that heretical sort of a mind--voracious, devouring, sometimes capable and unafraid of contradiction, and always-evolving--but his flirtation with heresy is also comprehensible by the Age of Reason and the decline of the power of Christianity--they allowed him to open up his thought-patterns in a way which would have been truly inconceivable for Vaughan.

The age in which he lived in part necessarily forced Coleridge to view religion in a new way. He really could not believe blindly and ignore his rational faculties and be in any meaningful way a credit to theologians. His challenge in Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit, published after his death, was precisely to try to rectify reason and religion, a formidable task for anyone. Undoubtedly, in Coleridge's age many theologians still adopted the "closed-fortress" mentality to cope with the advances of science and the waning power of religion. In 1925, the scientist Alfred North Whitehead was still complaining that theology was set back by such a mentality, and even today many prominent religious leaders have little desire to examine the impact and influence of science; they would rather close ranks in a seemingly defensive gesture. Thus, the enormity of the challenge Coleridge was undertaking cannot be underestimated. Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit reflects Coleridge's sincere desire to rectify his longing for orthodoxy and his own aggressive rational
mindset to help destroy the theological vacuum created by the Age of Reason. Coleridge's rationalist faith, his rectification of seeming opposites, is, I find, a definite response to the Age of Reason's enshrinement of rational knowledge, for as devout and orthodox as he would like to be, reason is too highly valued to ignore, as Vaughan's Augustinian faith does. This faith thus helps to save the concepts of faith and religion, both under increasing fire, and still under fire today.

The task of rectifying reason and religion is one with a large scope, so Coleridge refined his intellectual explorations in *Confessions* to one facet; the popular belief in the Bible's total verbal inspiration, or the "doctrine," as he calls it. It was a commonly held belief of the time that the Bible was God's words verbatim, communicated through human offices. God was a ventriloquist, and Mark, John and the other "speakers" of the Bible but puppets who only said what God had put into their heads--that was the Bible.

Coleridge felt this view constituted an unnecessary tenacity to a problematic part of the Christian faith. He had many problems with the common acceptance of this doctrine. It reduced all the wonderful characters of the Bible to mere mouthpieces. Especially alarming was the prospect of Christ as nothing but an "automaton poet, mourner, and supplicant" (*Confessions* 36; unless otherwise noted, subsequent citations are to the *Confessions*.) It literally petrified the Bible, freezing it for all eternity into a "hardened, inflexible and distant voice" (32). The acceptance of the Bible had, historically, allowed the powerful to explain their abuses (i.e. the Inquisition, "Popery") by Scriptural passages taken out of context. The doctrine
created an almost insurmountable problem in the consideration of the several inconsistencies in the Bible. How could God err? Any attempts to explain *that* needed "fancy footwork" indeed. Lastly, an unmalleable Bible made the "souls of the unwary and weak in faith" prey to the arguments of "infidels" (79).

Instead of the almost irrational acceptance of the total verbal inspiration of the Bible, which tested the faith of even the most devout Christian, Coleridge believed that common sense and reason should be applied to Biblical studies. Despite the great reverence and respect for Biblical authority, he believed human reason was "up to the task" of analysis:

> And what though my reason be to the power and splendor of the Scriptures but as the reflected and secondary shine of the moon compared with the solar radiance;-- yet the Sun endures the occasional co-presence of the unsteady orb, and leaving it visible seems to sanction the comparison. (10)

Essentially, Coleridge wanted the Bible to be treated in the same manner as any literary work--subject to interpretation, using our God-given critical faculties. This approach would create a malleable Bible, a document not written in stone, but subject to modern needs. He thus conceived of the Bible much as modern Americans conceive of the Constitution--as an outline, a framework, but one that can adjust to new developments and ideas. It is the *spirit* of the Bible, like the spirit of the American Constitution, that is constant. The Bible should not be the Christian religion, but the Christian religion should be found in the Bible, Coleridge believed.

Christians should not be afraid of acknowledging the Bible as divinely inspired, but spoken through humans, and thus subject to
human error. This view would, Coleridge hoped, suitably explain Biblical inconsistencies as human error, not divine error. Attempts to invent details to "fill in the gaps" in the Biblical story only serve to confuse matters (41), and reveal fear, not faith (95). Accept the discrepancies as human error, Coleridge said, and work with them (41). Thus a reliance upon faith was important as the very root of Christianity, for if someone came to Biblical study with a disbelieving attitude, the Bible would not convince this person on its own merits (71). Bible study should be a mix of heart and head, faith and reason. Either alone is insufficient. Faith without reason amounts to a "Middle Ages" mentality--consisting of fear, abuse and blind acceptance; whereas reason without faith is against the very spirit of religion, the coldness of detachment versus the warmth and good feeling that religion is partly intended to provide.

Coleridge detested those who saw all of life from a scientific perspective, except in their study of the Bible. The doctrine, it seemed, was the last bastion of blind faith in the Age of Reason, and Coleridge wanted to bring the "light" in "Enlightenment" into the arena of Biblical studies. He believed that the Bible had gone "hand in hand" with law and science for centuries, always supporting and leading the way (72). Unfortunately, Coleridge attempts to validate this claim with an argument unpalatable to most thinking modern tastes. He felt that Christian beliefs derived from and supported by the Bible had provided a basis for Westerners to develop the technology that had so clearly made them superior (73). Thus, he argues, the Bible was advantageous to scientific study.
Coleridge had literally hungered after truth, as he said; he loved it "with an indescribable awe" (4), and he saw reason and religion as having the capacity to be rectifiable. Therein lie the truth about ourselves, our heritage and our world. As he said:

I only object to the inconsistency of those who profess the same belief [the doctrine], and yet affect to look down with a contemptuous smile on John Wesley for rejecting the Copernican system as incompatible therewith. (44)

In the tradition of Aquinas and Neoplatonism, reason and religion could be rectified.

It is hard to say whether, all told and reading "between the lines" of Confessions, faith or reason is preferred. He strikes an odd balance-- on the one hand, he favors reason in that he dares to explore intellectually his Christianity, but on the other, he draws a firm line when his thoughts approach heresy. But Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit betrays a real orthodoxy at the core. When finished reading it, one senses a tone that favors religion and faith, perhaps the sincerity of the tone, but whatever this intangible quality of tone is, it is there. Written during the last years of his life, these seven letters to a friend reveal a man struggling to be orthodox. Sick and depressed, Coleridge yearned for his reason to back entirely his faith.

As I have demonstrated, Coleridge had an inquiring, rationalist mindset, due in part to the cosmology and inheritance from the Age of Reason. Significantly, this mindset allowed him to salvage the essence of Christianity and helped to create his legacy.
COLERIDGE'S LEGACY

Coleridge's life, on several fronts, had not been particularly successful. Toward the end of his life, his loneliness was acute; permanently and severely estranged from his wife, and forbidden the love of the woman he truly cared for, he suffered emotionally. Physically, illnesses racked his body, forcing him to reside with Dr. Gillman for nearly two decades before his eventual death. On the professional level, he was haunted by his self-perceived failure as a nature-poet. He was viewed by some as one who subsisted primarily on the largess of others. All told, it is easy to view Coleridge as a genius, brimming with ideas, but either unable or too distracted to commit his musings to paper; in some respects, a wasted talent. To make matters worse, charges of plagiarism continue to obscure his memory and both his integrity and perceived value to scholars.

But such thoughts belie his significant legacy as scholar, philosopher and poet. In my view, his most important legacy, outside the sphere of his poetry, is his conception of a rationalist faith. He was bequeathed several potential obstacles to his religious orthodoxy from the Age of Reason. First and foremost stood the importance placed upon empirical inquiry and reason during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Secondly, growing religious skepticism brought Christianity under fire from scientists. Less and less of the English citizenry placed full, unquestioning Augustinian faith in Christianity.
Both must have pained Coleridge, so desirous as a mature man
to be devout and orthodox. Perhaps, if he could have, he would have
preferred being more like Henry Vaughan, a full, firm believer in
Anglicanism, not daring to question his religious beliefs, having an
Augustinian faith to the last. But he could not do so and be of any
substantive use to modern theological thought, and he knew it. His
greatest legacy is his ability to modernize Christianity, making it ef­
f ectively accountable to both the orthodox and the scientific mindset,
which valued so empiricism. Serious theologians even today would
do well to read both *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit* and *Aids to
Reflection*; perhaps these works would assist them in their struggle
to rectify reason and faith and might even change the perception of
the "closed fortress mentality" scientists like Whitehead so despise.

That is not to say that Vaughan's Augustinian faith, as unques­
tioning and suspicious of reason as it was, is to be condemned. He,
like Coleridge, was a man of his time, so such a value judgement bor­
ders on the ludicrous. To expect him to view the relationship be­
tween God, humanity and nature as Coleridge did, as being linked
with one vital spirit, is decidedly too much to ask. I believe he
would have scoffed openly at such a prospect. To him, order was es­
sential: "a place for everything and everything in its place," as the
saying goes. For the purposes of this study, Vaughan's significance
lies in great part in his intuitive insight into a simple immanence,
linking nature and the divine, and thus unwittingly undermining the
Great Chain of Being. Vaughan, most unknowingly, was performing
much the same function as science and rational inquiry would come
to destroy the old cosmology. Written during a peaceful retirement
in the countryside, *Silex Scintillans* was meant as both a tribute to Herbert and as a devotional book, like *The Temple*.

But *Silex Scintillans*, Vaughan's masterpiece, would later be considered by some as evidence of pre-Romantic beliefs. A debate would arise as to the source of Vaughan's work, some critics considering Vaughan a pre-Romantic, some a hermetic philosopher. Those who attribute pre-Romanticism to Vaughan have largely not recognized the conclusion that can be gleaned from the existence of the debate itself. Vaughan saw nature in a way most of his contemporaries most avowedly did not, as reflected divinity, and as having great importance, if for that reason only. Coleridge was first to see nature as reflected divinity, or simple immanence, but would later view the mind as absolutely critical to the discernment of nature's divinity—an evolution from Vaughan's simple immanence.

The Age of Reason saw a new cosmology emerge—the gap between humans and nature substantially narrowed. The West thus greatly reduced its presumption in this area of thought during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Anthropocentrism, the once-powerful idea that the world was created for humankind, was almost completely nullified. The death of this concept allowed the Romantics to create a new cosmology of one spirit linking nature, humanity and God. Certainly, for the Romantics, humans and nature existed almost on a parity. But, in retrospect, a new concept of anthropocentrism was created. This new human-centeredness was predicated on the fact that *humans* perceive and articulate the world and the relationship between God, humanity and nature. The human mind explores its surroundings and establishes these relationships, so our percep-
tions of God and nature necessarily stem from ourselves. As far as we know, nature has not articulated its view of the world, and God most likely has not either (although this is still disputed by more ardent Christians). Thus, anthropocentrism of a sort is inescapable; it is our lot, created by us and subject to our mental faculties. We will never escape this definition of anthropocentrism.

The fact that we rely so heavily today on our reason and that we place such credence upon science (the new "God") shows both how important and enduring the Age of Reason for us yet today. This age is still critical to our modern conceptions of ourselves and our priorities. It is hard to imagine the extent and impact of the scientific revolution in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. When I try to conceive of this revolution, I am forced to credit Coleridge even more for attempting to salvage faith. Here is not a man merely trying to resuscitate dying beliefs, but one who recognizes the necessity of the modernization of these beliefs. He had both an aggressive rational mindset and a desire to be orthodox, and he successfully rectifies this seeming dichotomy, never ignoring the importance of mystery. This synthesis, I firmly believe, is Coleridge's greatest legacy.
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