Erasmus Darwin's Theory of Repetition and Coleridge's Primary Imagination

Adam Walker

AMONG THE SCIENTISTS COLERIDGE STUDIED, ERASMUS DARWIN arguably had the greatest influence on his early poetic style and his ideas about the mind when Coleridge was emerging as both a poet and a scientific thinker.[1] Scholars have so far examined Coleridge's criticism of Darwin as both a poet and a natural philosopher and have come to understand distinctions between poetic and intellectual or philosophical influences. Desmond King-Heele delineates the Romantic fascination with Darwin in his *Erasmus Darwin and the Romantic Poets* (1986) and dedicates two separate chapters to Darwin's influence on Coleridge. One chapter deals with Coleridge's poetry and the other with his prose. David Ullrich argues that these two influences are different, and that one must come to terms with Coleridge's consistent criticism of Darwin as poet and his regard for Darwin as natural philosopher and thinker by understanding Coleridge's development through these two distinctions.[2] Sorting through Coleridge's shifting attitude toward Darwin, Ullrich argues that "one must distinguish between Coleridge's consistent criticism of Darwin as poet and his waning opinion of Darwin as natural philosopher and thinker, distinctions in Coleridge's development which have been insufficiently explored, even misrepresented."[3] Ullrich's approach marked a turning point in the study of Coleridge and Darwin and elucidates two diverging patterns of influence in Coleridge's thought. This approach is useful towards understanding the origin and progression of a complex relationship at a time when scholars had not yet worked out Coleridge's enthusiasm for, and aversion to, Darwin's theories and poetry. However, such a dichotomy is misleading. Coleridge's interest in Darwin's theories of imitation and repetition does not fit neatly or exclusively into either category of poetic or philosophical.

---

[1] For discussions of Coleridge's debts to Darwin, see Richard C. Sha, *Imagination and Science in Romanticism* (2018); Peter Knox-Shaw, "Coleridge, Erasmus Darwin, and the Naturalizing of Deceit in Christabel," *The Review of English Studies* (April 2016), 316–333; D. King-Hele, *Erasmus Darwin and the Romantic Poets* (1986); Donald Hassler, *Erasmus Darwin* (1973); and *The Comedian as the Letter D* (1973).Ferdinando Abbri, "Romanticism versus Enlightenment," *Romanticism in Science*, ed. Steffano Poggi and Maurizio Bossi (1994); David Knight, "Romanticism and the Sciences," *Romanticism and the Sciences* (1990), 13-24; Trevor H. Levere, *Poetry realized in nature: Samuel Taylor Coleridge and early nineteenth-century science* (1981); and "Coleridge, Davy, science and poetry," *Nature transfigured: Science and literature, 1700-1900* (1989); David S. Miall, "The Meaning of Dreams: Coleridge's Ambivalence," *SiR*, 21 (1982), 57–71; Oswald Doughty, *Perturbed Spirit: The Life and Personality of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (1981); Kelvin Everest, *Coleridge's Secret Ministry: The Context of the Conversational Poems 1795–1798* (1979); Norman Fruman, *Coleridge, The Damaged Archangel* (1972); John Beer, *Coleridge's Poetic Intelligence* (1977); Elisabeth Schneider, *Coleridge, Opium, and "Kubla Khan"* (1953), esp. pp. 91–106; *Imagination in Coleridge*, ed. John Spencer Hill (1978); John Livingston Lowes, *The Road to Xanadu* (1927).

For Darwin and his poetic style, see James V. Logan, *The Poetry and Aesthetics of Erasmus Darwin* (1936); Desmond King-Hele, Erasmus Darwin (1963); Darwin Primer, "Erasmus Darwin's Temple of Nature: Progress, Evolution and Eleusinian Mysteries," *JHI*, 25 (1964), 58–76; *The Essential Writings of Erasmus Darwin* (1968); and *Doctor of Revolution: The Life and Genius of Erasmus Darwin* (1977).

[2] See Trevor Levere's "Coleridge, Davy, science and poetry" in *Nature transfigured: Science and literature, 1700-1900*, (ed. John Christie and Sally Shuttleworth, Manchester UP, 1989).

[3] See David W. Ullrich's "Distinctions in Poetic and Intellectual Influence: Coleridge's Use of Erasmus Darwin" in *The Wordsworth Circle* (vol. 15, no. 2, Spring 1984, pp. 74–80).

Regarding the relationship between poetry and philosophy, Coleridge himself wrote, "All metaphysic is in its origin poetic: and in Poesy, that highest in which Phil. and Poetry interpenetrate & mutually co-inhere it must end" (*CN* IV:4692). As Coleridge explores poetic imagination as derivative of a greater organic, vital law, we find the two categories of poetry and philosophy less easy to distinguish, and we are prompted to investigate further the connections Coleridge draws between poetry, philosophy, and the scientific theories concerning the imagination.

Even more significantly, an unappreciated paradox lies at the heart of Coleridge's poetic-scientific engagement with Darwin's materialist premises. Scholars have generally considered Darwin's materialism as entirely antithetical to Coleridge's synthetic and organic understanding of the mind. While the imagination for Darwin has its source in muscular motion and physiological development, Coleridge recontextualized Darwin's theories by locating the cause of motion, especially repetition, as a pivotal act of the law of nature and as fixed in the divine. Coleridge insists upon a connection between the powers of generation and the poetic and creative activities of the mind, disputes Darwin's materialist understanding, and eventually advocates, as he did in the *Biographia Literaria*, an "Active" mind that "by perceiving, creates" the phenomenal world around it (*BL* I, 118).[4] This activity, for Coleridge, required refiguring intellect and free will as a part of physiology while simultaneously resisting a reduction of the imagination under a mechanistic framework. What is worth noting about Coleridge's sustained engagement with Darwin is that, although he discredited Darwin's mechanistic reductions, Coleridge innovatively carried forward Darwin's ideas beyond exclusively poetic or philosophical delineations; and perhaps none were carried forward so far as Darwin's theory of repetition. Coleridge's philosophical misgivings about materialist approaches to the imagination are generally less concerned with the nature of the ideology than they are with Darwin's refusal to conceptualize it within a theistic framework. His disagreement notwithstanding, Coleridge exercises parts of Darwin's materialist argument in subversive ways when theorizing about the human imagination. This surprising intertext is my point of departure.

I. RHYTHMS AND MOTIONS

Darwin believed that the significance of poetic repetition is rooted in bodily and cosmological repetitions or motion and sense. Coleridge takes Darwin's theory of repetition further by linking it to a common law within nature, rooted within a divine ontology. The "inaugurated assumption" in Darwin's

[4] However, the distinguishing between what Coleridge understands as nature and the mind is not so easily deduced for the two are bound and divided by a relationship—or rather, the participation and mediation enacted by the imagination. This point about the active role of the imagination bears insisting, as Nicholas Reid has explained, that the archetype for Coleridge's form is established "in the recirculating energies of the Trinity" and that "we must always recall that form is essentially an inner, vital principal, *forma formans*, rather than a reified entity, *forma formata*." See Nicholas Reid's *Coleridge, Form and Symbol, or Ascertaining the Vision* (Ashgate, 2006) p.176.

Zoonomia, as James Engell describes, is that the mind is conceptualized as a "dynamic network" rather than a *tabula rasa* or a mere catalogue of inscriptions.[5] *Zoonomia* inspired Coleridge to seek a dynamic way of understanding the mind apart from the theories of associationism which had grown increasingly popular during the late eighteenth century.[6] My approach in this article is, therefore, comparative. I will examine Darwin's concept of repetition in his *Zoonomia* alongside Coleridge's evolving conceptualization of the primary imagination as a "repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM" (*BL* I, 118). Rather than highlight the differences between the two approaches, I will examine how Darwin's scientific treatises actually prompted and enabled Coleridge to conceptualize a teleological force common to both organic and intellectual life.

The first volume of Darwin's *Zoonomia* was published in 1794 and deals primarily with the mind and body, while the second volume, published two years later, focuses on the medicinal treatment of diseases. Darwin's theories of repetition, as described in the first volume of *Zoonomia*, rely on a long tradition of physiological discourse beginning with Aristotle's premise that humans are imitative animals. Darwin draws from the associationism of the eighteenth century, particularly Hobbes's and Hartley's, and identifies four kinds of imitations: voluntary, sensitive, irritative, and associative. Darwin's primary argument is that ideas are "configurations of the organs of sense" that are "originally in consequence of the stimulus of external bodies" (*Zoonomia* I, 254). Darwin writes:

> Hence, it appears, that our perceptions themselves are copies, that is, imitations of some properties of external matter; and the propensity to imitation is thus interwoven with our existence, as it is produced by the stimuli of external bodies, and is afterwards repeated by our volitions and sensations, and thus constitutes all the operations of our minds (I, 254).

The mind embodied, as Darwin posits, actively shapes our identity through the sum of our unconscious thoughts which are governed by repetition, "our acquired habits or catenated trains of ideas and muscular motions" (I, 111).

In Sect. XXII of his *Zoonomia*, Darwin conceptualizes the repetitive power of poetry as imitative of the "annual, lunar, and diurnal catenations of animal

---

[5] See James Engell's *The Creative Imagination*, Cambridge: Harvard UP (1981), p. 68. Implicit in Darwin's theory of repetition is his doctrine of evolution, present in his *Zoonomia*, *The Botanic Garden*, and *The Temple of Nature*. Coleridge rejected Darwin's evolutionism as atheistic, perhaps bearing too many similarities to the determinism inherent within Ludwig von Hammon's Spermism, one of the many theories J.F. Blumenbach countered with his teleological concept of the *Bildungstrieb*.

[6] Associationism's understanding of the mind might be best represented for our purposes by the following proposition form Hartley's *Observations on Man*: "Since therefore sensations are conveyed to the mind, by the efficiency of corporeal causes … it seems to me, that the powers of generating ideas, and raising them by association, must also arise from corporeal causes, and consequently admit of an explication from the subtle influences of the small parts of matter on each other, as soon as these are sufficiently understood." See *Observations*, 1, prop. 11.

motions" (I, 251).[7] He continues: "To the facility and distinctness with which we hear sounds at repeated intervals, we owe the pleasure, which we receive from musical time, and from poetic time; as described in Botanic Garden" (I, 251). Darwin attributes this kind of repetition to the "sensorial powers" of the body that are reflected by poetic and artistic devices. He writes, "To the facility and distinctness, with which we hear sounds at repeated intervals, we owe the pleasure, which we receive from musical time, and from poetic time. […] And to this the pleasure we receive from rhimes and alliterations of modern versification; the source of which without this key would be difficult to discover" (I, 373).

Darwin continues to describe how reveries are sometimes evoked by a lack of repetitive sensuous stimulation, an idea Coleridge seems to have had in mind when composing his poem "A Day Dream." The first line of Coleridge's poem, "My eyes make pictures when they're shut," initiates a detailed account of an uninterrupted reverie (or memory) involving the Hutchinson sisters. Coleridge employs Darwin's positing of "reverie spectra" that emerge once the eyes are closed and attributes this phenomenon to the active imaginative power of the mind (I, 537). According to Darwin, in dreams and reveries, the imagination "runs into perfect reverie" and actively creates a sensual experience that suspends sensual engagement of the body. This circumstance, for Darwin, is proof "that all our ideas are repetitions of the motions of the nerves of sense" (I, 203).

Darwin also considers the nature of daydreams and their interactions with the actively directed human will and reason:

> In our waking hours, whenever an idea occurs which is incongruous to our former experience, we instantly dissever the train of imagination by the power of volition, and compare the incongruous idea with our previous knowledge of nature, and reject it. This operation of the mind has not yet acquired a specific name, though it is exerted every minute of our waking hours; unless it may be termed INTUITIVE ANALOGY. It is an act of reasoning of which we are unconscious except from its effects in preserving the congruity of our idea. (*Zoonomia* I, 200, emphasis original)

Coleridge was fascinated by this suspension of volition and portrays the interaction between the imagination and will throughout his poetry, particularly in the *Morning Post* poems composed between 1799 and 1802 during his infatuation with Sara Hutchinson.

For example, if we turn to Coleridge's "The Picture, or the Lover's Resolution," we find a similar conflict represented.[8] Concerning "The Picture,"

---

[7] Darwin explains this understanding of motion in an earlier entry in *Zoonomia* Sect. XII. 3.3.

[8] For commentary on "The Picture," see Frederick Burwick's "Coleridge as Translator" in *The Oxford Handbook of Samuel Taylor Coleridge,* Oxford UP, 2009; Heidi Thompson's "'Merely emptying out of my Desk': Coleridge about Wordsworth in the Morning Post of 1802" in *The Coleridge Bulletin* (NS 31, Summer 2008); and Jennifer Ford's *Coleridge on Dreaming: Romanticism, Dreams, and the Medical Imagination*. Cambridge UP, 1998.

Coleridge states that his intention was to write a poem that explored "the endeavor to emancipate the soul from day-dreams & note the different attempts & vain ones" (*CN* II, 1153). The poet escapes into nature to seek reason and wisdom, believing himself free from passionate thoughts. Coleridge portrays Darwin's "intuitive analogy" through a conflict between the reasonable narrator and his imaginative and unruly daydreams. These two natures of the mind act as characters within a drama of what Coleridge termed the "Somnial or Morphean Space" of dreams (*CN* IV, 536). Retreating into the countryside, the poet proclaims:

> Here Wisdom might resort, and here Remorse;
> Here too the love-lorn man, who, sick in soul
> And of this busy human heart aweary,
> Worships the spirit of unconscious life (ll. 17-20)

After turning to the natural world, he banishes such thoughts:

> But hence, fond wretch! breathe not contagion here!
> No myrtle-walks are these: these are no groves
> Where Love dare loiter! (ll. 26-28)

Coleridge's ironic attempt to de-Romanticize in the latter lines betokens the superseding of a dreamlike mental space by a more realistic one, in which the poet strikingly snaps himself out of it.

The conflict between the rational mind and the dreaming lover takes place through this exchange of "intuitive analogy," an interplay of active and passive states of consciousness that Coleridge would later describe in his notebooks and lectures. "In sleep we pass at once by a sudden collapse into this Suspension of Will and the Comparative Power," he writes in a later lecture on dreams, "whereas in an interesting play, read or represented, we are brought up to this point, as far as it is requisite or desirable, gradually, by the Art of the Poet and the Actors" (*CL* II, 266). His observations on sleep and the collapse into the "Suspension of Will" are further informed by Darwin's theories about the governing influence of motion and repetition upon the brain. In a Darwinian reverie, the poet in "The Picture" envisions a "maiden" upon the reflection of a stream and is taken in by his own imagination:

> Contemplative! Behold! Her open palm
> Presses her cheek and brow! Her elbow rests
> On the bare branch of half-uprooted tree,
> That leans towards its mirror! (ll. 76-79)

The train of imagination is then interrupted when the poet momentarily gains control of reality:

> Not to thee,
> O wild and desert stream! Belongs this tale
> […]
> On thy steep banks, no love hast thou, wild stream!
> (ll. 111-112, 116)

The image of the maiden, who ostensibly is not actually present, is visually repeated as the poet endeavors to escape his fantasies; he finds her everywhere within the external landscape--beneath a tree, in the mirror of the pool, among the breezes.

In these moments, the poet imaginatively portrays a state of mind similar to what Darwin describes as reverie.[9] The person in such a reverie, Darwin writes, cannot "distinguish this train of sensitive and voluntary ideas from the irritative ones excited by the presence of the external objects […] till at length this interesting train of ideas becomes exhausted […] and we return with surprise, or with regret, into the common track of life" (*Zoonomia* I, 220). Near the poem's conclusion, the poet discovers a picture in the grass, and becomes certain of the reality of his fantasy. When the poet seeks to distract his mind by focusing on the objects in the landscape, he soon falls unawares into a reverie in which the external object of the landscape imitates the object of the mind.

II. (DIS)ORDERING CONCEPTUAL PROCESSING

Perhaps even more fascinating than both writers' preoccupation with the tendency of the mind to wander is the poet's association of daydreams with disease. In "The Picture," Coleridge describes the "love-lorn man" as "sick in soul," a "lunatic," and an "Ill fated" and "love-distempered youth" wasting his time with "sickly thoughts" ("The Picture," ll. 88-111). In *Zoonomia*, Darwin labels the nightmare as a disease (I, 206), and, similarly, in his chapter on reveries, Darwin attributes reveries to symptoms of madness and defines a reverie as "a disease of the epileptic" and, in some instances, incurable (I, 225). The ability to breathe contagion and contract infection by standing in proximity of an infected person is also observed in Darwin's *Zoonomia* (I, 399), as well as in *The Botanic Garden*, as we have seen. However, because Darwin, of course, never went so far as to suggest such fits of the imagination were contagious, Coleridge seems to have invented the connection himself in order to emphasize the severity of love-sickness in his poem. Like Darwin's epileptic patient plagued by reveries, the poet in "The Picture" is hopelessly incurable. Coleridge's association of sexual reveries with contagious disease demonstrates not only his debt to Darwin, but also that Coleridge was actively exploring the connection between the body and the imagination within his poetry. The state of reverie—repetitive reflection on some idea—is, for Coleridge, part of poetic

[9] Reverie, according to Darwin, occurs "in pursuit of some interesting ideas" when we "cease to be conscious of our existence" (*Zoonomia*, I 220).

creation—even if daydream is linked with a diseased mind.

Darwin's concept of the mind is an organ that actively translates the external world into activities of the brain and, after they are processed, are received again by the body.[10] The volition for Darwin operated dynamically, almost electrically, between the mind, body, and nerves. He writes:

> Next the long nerves unite their silver train
> And young SENSATION permeates the brain;
> Through each new sense the keen emotions dart,
> Flush the young cheek, and swell the throbbing heart.
> From pain and pleasure quick VOLITIONS rise,
> Lift the strong arm, or point the inquiring eyes.
> (*The Temple of Nature* II, 269-74, emphasis original)

The passage incorporates the language of flirtation to describe how "sensation" is sent to the brain and rendered into "emotions," which are, in return, signified through the body. From extreme sensation in pleasure and pain, the mind processes these sensations and governs the external actions through bodily movement in voluntary function or involuntary reflex.

This volition drives what Darwin terms the "Progress of the Mind" in Canto III of *The Temple of Nature*. Summarizing Darwin's concept, King-Hele writes, "When we have received ideas from the external world via our senses, the characteristic attribute of our mind is its tendency to make us imitate these ideas—in social behaviour, in learning to speak and in the arts of poetry, painting and music" (2). What Darwin calls the "fine power of IMITATION" emerges from the ideas generated by external sensation,

> And apes the outlines of external things;
> With ceaseless action to the world imparts
> All moral virtues, languages, and arts.
> (*The Temple of Nature,* III 285-8)

Essentially, Coleridge diverges with Darwin's theories about the activity of the human mind, the understanding of which, according to Darwin's Anglo-French scientific approach, was based on variations of Newton's and Locke's materialism.[11] The "Mind in [Newton's] system," writes Coleridge, "is always passive—a lazy Looker-on on an external World. If the mind be not *passive*[…] there is ground for suspicion, that any system built on the passiveness of the mind must be false, as a system" (*CL* II, 709). Though Darwin departs from

[10] Alan Richardson notes how Darwin rescues volition from mechanistic psychology; this is something that Hartley, as Coleridge lamented, did not do. See Richardson's *British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind*, Cambridge UP, 2001. p.16.

[11] Trevor Levere identifies the materialism of the Anglo-French approach to science as dealing "in analysis rather than synthesis, dissection rather than unification, abstraction rather than reality, plurality rather than unity, mechanism rather than organicism, and sensual empiricism rather than rational empiricism." See Levere's "Coleridge, Chemistry, and the Philosophy of Nature," *Studies in Romanticism*, Vol. 16, No. 3, Romanticism and Science, 1977. p. 359.

Locke by postulating an active mind with unconscious psychological progressions, it is a mind exclusively rooted in the activities of the body. The mind, for Darwin, was inseparable from sensual experiences, and the "spirit of animation," Darwin argues, is not a metaphysical power but made of a matter that humans "possess in common with brutes" (*Zoonomia* I, 109). He makes this point in the opening pages of *Zoonomia* by distinguishing two "essences" that makes up the whole of nature: spirit and matter. Spirit possesses the power to commence or produce motion, and the latter receive and communicate it," while motion "considered as a cause immediately proceeds every effect; and considered as an effect, it immediately proceeds every cause." He concludes that "the laws of motion are therefore laws of Nature" (1).

III. ONE FORM AND LAW

Coleridge's most explicit reference to Darwin's theory of repetition appears in a notebook entry from March 1810 and demonstrates a conscious effort to find the cause of Darwin's cause, the spirit of animation. Coleridge writes, "I wish very much to investigate the connections of the Imagination with the *Bildungstrieb*—Imagination = imitation vel repetitio Imaginis—per motum? Ergo, et motuum—The Variolae—generation—Is not there a *link* between physical Imitation & Imagination?" (*CN* III, 3744, emphasis original).[12] We find in this passage immediate connections within *Zoonomia* that link Darwin's physiological and mental conception of repetition and imitation with the German naturalist J.F. Blumenbach's *Bildungstrieb*, an incarnation of the *nisus formativus* and one which Coleridge associated with *natura naturans*, an actively shaping nature.[13]

We find this question concerning a physiological understanding of the imagination as a primary issue at stake within the *Biographia Literaria*, and Darwin's theory of repetition functions both as a conceptual stepping-stone toward, and a cornerstone within, Coleridge's definition, culminated in the thirteenth chapter.[14] Coleridge's progression becomes evident in earlier works, such as *The Friend*. Although Darwin would not go so far as to attribute the law of nature derivative of a divine ontology, Coleridge would press this point further by conceiving of a shared power in his summary of Darwin's *Zoonomia* (which he mistakenly refers to as "Phytonomia"). Coleridge writes:

> Since at that time [of the *Zoonomia*'s publication], the same idea has dawned in the minds of philosophers capable of demonstrating its objective truth by induction of facts in an unbroken series of

[12] Translation of the Latin reads: "imitation or repetition of an Image—by movement? Therefore, also of movements—"

[13] In her note on this passage, Kathleen Coburn refers us to Sect XXII of the *Zoonomia*, in which Darwin describes the process of imitation enacted through the production of contagious matter, such as inoculated small-pox. See (*CN* III, 3744n).

[14] Richard Sha's *Imagination and Science in Romanticism* brilliantly locates the significant, though unnoticed, influence of the physiologist Richard Saumarez, whose *New System of Physiology* facilitated Coleridge's endeavor to place the speculative powers of the mind within physiology (144-47).

> correspondences in nature. From these men, or from minds enkindled by their labours, we hope hereafter to receive it, or rather that yet higher idea to which it refers us, matured into laws of organic nature; and thence to have one other splendid proof, that with the knowledge of LAW alone dwell Power and Prophecy, decisive Experiment, and, lastly, a scientific method, that dissipating with its earliest rays the gnomes of hypothesis and the mists of theory may, within a single generation, open out on the philosophic Seer discoveries that had baffled the gigantic, but blind and guideless industry of ages. (*Friend* I, 169-70, emphasis original)

Coleridge saw repetition as evidence for a greater law of organic nature or "symbols of elementary powers, and the exponents of a law" which most natural philosophers are laboring to "extract" (*The Friend* I, 470).[15] Darwin and other natural philosophers observed nature *vis-à-vis* a mechanistic framework, governed and understood primarily through the motion of its components. But Coleridge hoped to broaden the scope of medicine and physiology beyond a reduction to a diagnosis of symptoms and urged to include mental faculties as well. Behind all these observations is the power to present what Coleridge goes further to describe as the "ONE FORM" manifested in many varieties. In conclusion to his essay in *The Friend*, Coleridge describes the power of the imagination, which intuits this one form, as "sanctioned by the correspondence of nature." In linking this organic law to same power as that of poetry, he states that "we find poetry, as it were, substantiated and realized in nature." Finally, in a flourishing attempt to link the common power of nature with the divine *logos*, he quotes a Latin phrase from *De divisione naturae* of the theologian Johannes Scottus Eriugena, whose third division of nature attributed all creative power to the theophanic *logos*. The conclusion of Coleridge's essay reads:

> It is the sense of a principle of connections given by the mind, and sanctioned by the correspondence of nature. Hence the strong hold which in all ages chemistry has had on the imagination… yea, nature itself disclosed to us, *Geminam istam naturam, quae fit et facit, et create et creatur*, as at once the poet and the poem!" (471).[16]

The Latin phrase is translated "that double nature that makes and is made, creates and is created." Coleridge's singular form behind all poetic, intelligent, and organic life is echoed from its source in the "infinite I AM," disclosed by nature.

These exchanging energies of nature and the mind, described by Eriugena, take on a theophanic role, have their ontological source within the

[15] Excepting perhaps the natural philosophers Humphry Davy, a close friend of Coleridge, and the physiology professor in Göttingen J.F. Blumenbach, among others.

[16] In his marginalia to Emanuel Swedenborg's *Oeconomia regni animalis*, Coleridge quotes the same passage from Eriugena, translating the quotation into English: "Twin Nature, which acts and is acted upon, forms and is formed" (*M*, V 444).

incarnational "I AM"—a point essential in understanding the participatory role of Coleridge's primary imagination as "repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM" (*BL* I, 118). Coleridge's hurried definition of "law" found in The Friend is taken up repeatedly in the *Biographia Literaria*, where it provides insight into phenomena and acts in accordance with the "ONE FORM." Envisioning the "highest perfection of natural philosophy," Coleridge imagines a "perfect spiritualization of the laws of nature into the laws of intuition and intellect." He identifies the "law" as the formal and the "phenomena" as the material and thereby regards materiality as a repetition from the governing, creative law, rooted in divine ontology.