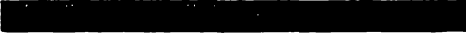


SATISH CHANDRA SINHA

COLERIDGE
AS A
CRITIC




821.09
Si 63C



This book contains absorbing studies of Coleridge as a critic and attempts to unite 'psychology' with 'criticism' as Coleridge has himself attempted. It undertakes to arrange the different known and unknown facets of Coleridge, his interest in criticism and studies in German philosophy, his views on poem and poetry, imagination and fancy, genius and talent, his 'intrinsic' concern for the language of prose and of metrical composition.

The peculiar success of the book lies in the harmony of powers often mutually restrictive. From Aristotle to Herbert Read, there is a diverse discipline of 'criticism' and this book has attempted to unite in one volume the wide range of diversity.

A master book on Coleridge as a critic it is an indispensable manual for every student of English literature.



Price : Rs 38.00

Coleridge as a Critic

COLERIDGE AS A CRITIC

SATISH CHANDRA SINHA

BOOKS INTERNATIONAL

57/143 Rajouri Garden New Delhi-110027



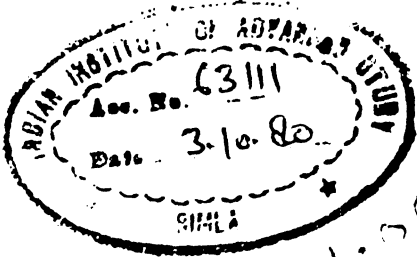
Library

IAS, Shimla

821.09 Si 63 C



00063111



821.09
5163C

© Author

First Edition : 1980

Cover : Bibhasdas

8/2/82

Published by Books International J7/143 Rajouri Garden
New Delhi-110027. Printed at Print India New Delhi-110064.

**To
Babuji**

.....and I must say

Literature, Politics, Philosophy, Psychology—
Coleridge is all in one. A man of the nineteenth
century, or poet-critic of the Romantic era, no,
not only that Coleridge is 'for all reasons and
for all weathers.' Coleridge, like his Ancient
Mariner, catches our eyes and keeps us spell-
bound. To criticize a critic like Coleridge is
itself a matter of criticism. And to say of
institutions an individual like me falls too
short before a towering personality that is he.
In writing the pages of 'Coleridge as a critic',
I have felt the shadow of a man always at my
back. My salutation to the very existence that is
omnipresent. And I must not forget the printer
and the publisher of the book who made my
ideas a reality.

Patna
1st Jan. 1980

S C Sinha

Introduction

Coleridge's criticism is an edifice of such a vast and kaleidoscopic dimension that one cannot perceive it as a whole. Naturally the estimates of the value of his criticism have varied widely. However, broadly speaking, there are two distinct schools of thought—one waxing eloquent about his achievements as a practical critic of unsurpassed powers of penetration, insight and analysis, and the other trumpeting his uniquely successful and suggestive treatment of abstract literary theories and allied philosophical problems. Here, in this book, I have tried to assess his contribution both as a theorist and as a practical critic.

The chief emphasis of Coleridge's criticism is psychological. Perhaps he is the first English critic to use the very word 'Psychology' and apply its principles to the interpretation of literature. As Aristotle and Longinus had done the same thing in ancient times, he is, as Saintsbury points out, of a class with them. And to quote Saintsbury again, he is 'one of the very greatest critics of the world.' He was chiefly interested in the problems of poetry. A poem or a play did not interest him so much as the principle that made it beautiful or significant. He viewed art in general as well, not simply as imitation as others had done before him, but as revelation of the artist's mind. He dived deep into the 'deep well' of the cerebral cortex, the nervous system and the submarine marriage of ideas in the unconscious mind of the artist. This means he sought to explore the process of the making of a poem. In this way he delved deeper into the problems of literature than any English critic before him. With Coleridge criticism took an altogether new turn in England, which has inspired the leading critics of the

twentieth century, like I A Richards and T S Eliot, to develop it further in new directions. His impact on modern criticism is deep and far-reaching. To Eliot, he is one of the three great poet-critics alongwith Dryden and Johnson. To Richards, he is the fore-runner of the modern school of semantics. To Herbert Read, he is head and shoulders above every other English critic. Even the Chicago school of critics pay their obeisance to him.

This book has been divided into five chapters. The first chapter is concerned with Coleridge's interest in criticism and his studies in German philosophy. The second chapter briefly deals with Coleridge's critical works. The third chapter has three parts. It deals with Coleridge's views on poem and poetry, imagination and fancy, genius and talent. In the fourth chapter, Coleridge's views on the language of prose and of metrical composition and about Wordsworth's theory of poetic diction. The last chapter compares Coleridge with other critics. It makes an assessment of his strength and weakness and his wide ranging influence. As such an attempt has been made to study the relevance of Coleridge as a literary critic. For Coleridge is not just a descriptive or legislative critic but a critic primarily interested in the creative process of a work of literary art, particularly poetry giving in the organic concept. Therefore his criticism is not just a lamp, rather a lighthouse directing other explores.

—Author

Contents

Coleridge's Interest in Criticism	13
Coleridge's Critical Works	23
Coleridge on Poem and Poetry	37
Coleridge on Fancy and Imagination	41
Coleridge on Genius and Talent	47
Coleridge's theory of Poetic Diction	53
Coleridge with other Critics	61
Conclusion	71
Works Cited and Consulted	75

Coleridge did not set out to impart information
or even a theory he set out to make man
think philosophically about everything.
If he baffled the generations he also inspired them,
and if he disturbed with holy
dread he also offered consolation for the heart from a deeply
religious and aesthetic,
greatly impersonal, nature.

—Kathleen Coburn

Coleridge's Interest in Criticism and German Philosophy

Coleridge was thoroughly dissatisfied with the neo-classical view of poetry—with its undue stress on rules, its interpretation of mimesis, its confused notion of imagination, its appraisal of Shakespeare. The artificial correctness and lack of passion and flow repelled him and he was led to discover a more natural, passionate and spontaneous way of writing. In collaboration with Wordsworth, he published the *Lyrical Ballads* to charter a new path and direction in poetry. While Wordsworth undertook 'to consider the influences of fancy and imagination as they are manifested in poetry', Coleridge's task was 'to investigate the seminal principle'¹ underlying these influences. Wordsworth had to sketch 'the branches with poetic fruitage', and Coleridge 'to add the trunk and even the roots as far as they left themselves above the ground.'² His deep and long studies in the fine arts, drama, poetry and philosophy had led him to the exploration of the principle of all arts and literary criticism. Coleridge made a psychological study and analysis of the working of the poetic process in himself and as far as possible in Wordsworth.

COLERIDGE'S STUDIES IN GERMAN PHILOSOPHY

LESSING (1729-81) : Coleridge believed that philosophy and literature are inseparably linked and that "no man was ever yet a great poet, without being at the same time a profound philosopher. For poetry is the blossom and fragrant of all human knowledge, human thoughts, human passions, emotions

language.”³ He was a voracious reader with a life-long passion for philosophy which had entered into the very constitution of his mind and intuitions. What he said of Shakespeare applies equally to himself. He had ‘studied patiently, meditated deeply understood minutely, till knowledge, become habitual and intuitive wedded itself to his habitual feelings.’⁴ He had read almost all philosophical literature in England before he turned his attention to German philosophy. After acquiring a proficiency in the German language he directed his attention to the serious study of the elder writers of the language.

The genius of Lessing had a great impact on Coleridge so much so that he seriously contemplated and for some time decide to write his biography. In their condemnation of the French, the praise of Shakespeare, in their views on genius, mimesis, function of art, and the rules and nature of poetry we find a striking resemblance between the two. Neither Lessing favoured the wanton throwing away of the experience of the previous ages, nor did he encourage a slavish imitation of the old rules. In fact, both Coleridge and Lessing were all for the middle path, and both sometimes emphasized judgement and sometimes genius, sometimes the romantic freedom and sometimes the classical restraint. Like Lessing, Coleridge, too, emphasized that the higher powers work through the lower, imagination through fancy, genius through talent, and nature through art. Again Coleridge’s definition of poetry as ‘the excitement of emotion for the purpose of immediate pleasure through the medium of beauty’ find full support in Lessing who holds that creation of beauty is and should always be the sole aim of art.

IMMANUEL KANT(1724-1804) : Coleridge also read and re-read the writings of Immanuel Kant. He always acknowledged his obligations to Kant more than to any other German philosopher. Coleridge’s idea about a possible distinction between Reason and Understanding received a great advancement and a rational basis from Kant’s elaborate distinction between the two. He had learnt from the mystics that ‘the products of the mere reflective faculty partook of

death and were as the rattling twigs and sprays in winter'⁶ and this belief got great support from Kant's similar assertions in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Coleridge's dictum, that the aim of poetry is immediate pleasure, is influenced by Kant's assertion of the disinterestedness of artistic pleasure. His distinction between genius and talent, reason and understanding is also Kantian in origin. Though he leaves Kant finally behind by making the supernatural an essential element in all genius. But it does not mean that Coleridge always echoed Kant. In his specific doctrine of imagination we do not find Coleridge repeating or echoing Kant, Rather he departs from Kant. In Kant's theory the so-called freedom of imagination is only a formal activity and imagination cannot enlighten us about the nature of things. But for Coleridge imagination creates both sensual and the conceptual. Both Kant and Coleridge agree that art is not a substitute for anything else, and that the subjectivity of the artist must be guided by common sense to claim universal validity, approbation and appreciation. Both recognize the essential irrationality and naturalness of genius and its birth in the unconscious Both thought that only art could bridge the gulf between the world of appearance assessible through senses and understanding, and the world of moral freedom approachable in action, and that only art could bring about a unity of the general and the particular, of imagination and reason of intuition and thought.

SCHILLER (1759-1805) : There is also a great similarity in the aims of Schiller and Coleridge. Both were cautious followers of Kant. Both referred their theories to their own practical experience as poets. Kant's epistemology and aesthetics are the sources of the literary theories and terminology of both Coleridge and Schiller. Schiller believed that 'all art is dedicated to joy...Right art is that alone which creates the highest enjoyment'. Coleridge shares this belief when he declares that poetry is 'the excitement of emotion for the purpose of immediate pleasure through the medium of beauty'. Both Coleridge and Schiller advocated an

interdependence of form and content in the ideal art. Schiller emphasized an actual union and interpenetration of matter and form and called it "living shape". He anticipated Coleridge who valued the elements of proportion and form for the creation of beauty but did not admit them as positive cause, and underlined the necessity of thought or idea or nature in the natural form. For Coleridge "beauty itself is all that inspires pleasure without, and aloof from, even contrary to, interest".⁶ He was influenced directly by Schiller in his statement—"Art is the mediatrix between, and reconciler of nature and man".⁷ With Schiller, Coleridge also pleads for a reconciliation of nature and art, intellect and emotion, reason and freedom. Both believed that this synthesis will give birth to the ideal poetry.

A W SCHLEGAL (1767-1845)—August Wilhelm Schlegel influenced Coleridge's views on primary and secondary imagination, form and organism, growth and beauty. Both were the law-givers and upholders of Romantic poetry. Both championed the cause of literary cosmopolitanism and liberalism. And both emphasized the pivotal role of imagination in all creative activities. August Wilhelm described poetry as 'speculation by imagination'. He saw no sense in the identification of prose and poetry and held that the poetic diction should be quite distinct from the language of ordinary life. We find clear echoes of it in Coleridge's arguments against Wordsworth's theory of diction. 'There may be, is, and ought to be,' he says, 'an essential difference between the language of prose and metrical composition.' His observations that metre checks the workings of passion by a salutary antagonism and that it is quite essential to poetry are also clearly derived August Wilhelm. So are his ideas on metaphor, allegory, symbol, imagination, metre and poetry in general. In the third volume of his dramatic lectures August Wilhelm contrasted organic and mechanical forms,⁸ and extended the parallel to the minerals, plants and animals. Coleridge was so much influenced by these views that he adopted them almost verbatim when he distinguished

between form as proceeding and shape as superinduced. Both emphasized the interdependence of matter and form, spirit and letter and held that in a work of art these are inseparable like body and soul.

SCHLEGEL (1772-1829) : Friedrich Schlegel also influenced Coleridge. He lays great stress on the aloofness of the artist from himself and his work. The artist is advised to stand above and apart from his work because one can describe an object truly and well only when one is detached from it. The idea is, no doubt, similar to that of Eliot's "impersonal" theory of art. Coleridge finds this aloofness in Shakespeare, and Friedrich in Aristophanes and Jean Paul. Both call allegory indispensable for the true expression of beauty and find art based on myth, symbolism or "divine magic." From Friedrich, too, Coleridge got confirmatory support for his concept of genius being a combination of the conscious and subconscious, of instinct and intention, of rule and passion. Friedrich wanted the critics to take into account the "spiritual and artistic architectonics of the work, its nature, its tone, and finally its psychological genesis, its motivation by laws and conditions of human nature"⁹ before passing judgement on a work of art. This is almost identical with Coleridge's psychological approach and reconstructive process of criticism. Coleridge's views on *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet* and beauty, for and organic aspect of all art have a great deal of similarity with those of Schlegel brothers.

F W J SCHELLING (1775-1854) : F W J Schelling who revived neo-platonism and enthroned beauty as the highest value in art, cast a great spell on Coleridge who some time became an expounder of his philosophy. In Schelling's 'Natur Philosophie' and the 'System Des Transcendentalen Idealismus' Coleridge found "a general coincidence with much that I had toiled out for myself, and a powerful assistance in what I had yet to do"¹⁰ From this work he adopted large portions as the basis of his own theory of poetry. In chapters

twelve and thirteen of *Biographia Literaria*, Coleridge has taken over long passages from Schelling to provide an epistemological and metaphysical basis for his theories. He got from Schelling his ideas concerning the relations between art and nature, the reconciliation of the opposites, and the distinction between allegory and symbol, and also learnt from him the relationship between imagination and cognition.

Coleridge's essay on 'Poesy or Art' (1818) is so much influenced by Schelling's oration of 1807 "Concerning the Relation of the Plastic Arts to Nature," that it has been called a paraphrase by Rene Wellek. In this oration Schelling describes plastic arts as wordless poetry. Between the soul of man and nature the plastic arts act as links and living centres. He poses the question whether art should imitate nature, which is, on the one hand "the dead sum of an infinite quantity of objects," and on the other, "merely the soil from which man extracts his food and livelihood,"¹¹ and only to the inspired investigator is it "the world's holy eternally creating primal energy which engenders and actively brings forth all things out of itself."¹² According to Schelling a pupil of nature is not supposed to imitate everything in it quite indiscriminately. He should "reproduce beautiful objects, and of these only the most beautiful and perfect elements."¹³ Coleridge also echoes the same thing. He says, "You must master the essence, the *natura naturans*" and not mere nature, the '*natura naturata*,' the artist must imitate only the beautiful in nature—the *Naturgeist*, or spirit of nature.

Schelling advises art first to withdraw itself from nature and then to return to it in its final perfection. Only then can the artist elevate himself to the realm of pure and sublime ideas and lose the creature. In almost identical words Coleridge underlines the same marriage of the conscious and the unconscious and wants the artist to absent himself from nature for a season. Both Schelling and Coleridge emphasize

the importance of idea in a true work of art. "The idea is the only living element in things and all else vain and unsubstantial shadow." Schelling points out the importance of form in art and says, "the outward face or basis of all beauty is the beauty of form." But no form can exist without essence as no fruits can be available without roots. Coleridge, too, talks of essence and organic form in the same phraseology and idiom.

No doubt, like Shakespeare, Coleridge borrowed different materials from different sources, but he glorified whatever he borrowed. To quote Vinayak Krishna Gokak, "Whatever his indebtedness to Kant and Schelling, it is clear that Coleridge was himself a free spirit breathing the mountain air of heights to him."¹⁴

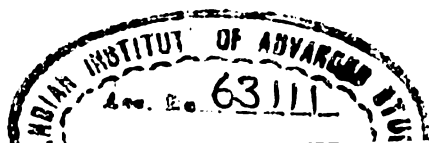
REFERENCES

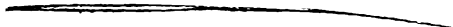
1. *Biographia Literaria*, Vol. 2, Ed. J. Shawcross, Oxford, 1907, p.64.
2. *Ibid.*, p.64.
3. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p.19.
4. *Ibid.*, pp.19-20.
5. *Ibid.*, Vol., I. p.98
6. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p.257.
7. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p.253.
8. "The form is mechanical when through outside influence it is imparted to a material merely as an accidental addition, without relation to its nature (as e.g. when we give an arbitrary shape to a soft mass so that it may retain it after hardening) Organic form, on the other hand, is innate; it unfolds itself from within and acquires its difiniteness simultaneously with the total development of the germs". (Quoted by Rene Wellek in his *A History of Modern Criticism—The Romantic Age*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1961, p.48.
9. Quoted by Rene Wellek in his *A History of Modern Criticism: The Romantic Age*, Op.cit., p.9.
10. *Biographia*, Vol. I, p.102.

11. 'Concerning the Relation of the Plastic Arts to Nature' Trans. M. Bullock, Herbert Read's *The True Voice of Feeling*, Faber & Faber, London 1947, p.325.
12. *Ibid.*, p.325.
13. *Ibid.*, p.326.
14. V K Gokak, *Coleridge's Aesthetics*, Abhinav Publications, New Delhi, 1975, p.12.

But you cannot make anything true
which results from, or is connected with,
real externals, you can only find it out.

—Coleridge





Coleridge's Critical Works

S T Coleridge was a voracious reader and he wrote a bulk of literary criticism. We have his *Biographia Literaria*, *Lectures On Shakespeare*, papers in *The Friend*, *The Table Talk*, *Omniana*, *The Letters*. and *Anima Poetoe*.

BIOGRAPHIA LITERARIA

In July 1817, Coleridge published *Biographia Literaria* or 'Biographical Sketches of My Literary Life and Opinions'. Arthur Symons has hailed *Biographia Literaria* as "the greatest book of criticism in English"¹ and Saintsbury says that "with all its gaps and all its lapses, the whole book is among the few which constitute the very Bible of Criticism."² And to V K Gokak, it is "one of the great peaks of excellence that English literary criticism has produced."³ It is said that after long years of hesitation, indecision and constant change of plan, it was very hurriedly written in less than four months. The story of its publication also is in full of tangles and confusions a two year adventure in the press. At long last when it was published, it did not bring Coleridge any joy or pecuniary benefits nor any immediate applause. It was ignored by *Quarterly Review* and was damned by the Blackwood's: Wordsworth, Coleridge's friend, received it rather coldly. The book does not have a formal logical design. Its form is fragmentary. It is neither an autobiography, nor a sketch, nor a treatise. Coleridge himself disparagingly called it an "immethodical miscellany," a "semi-narrative". Yet it has its own place.

It has, however, a Coleridgean unity and has achieved a marriage of philosophy and literature. Here Coleridge's approach is quite psychological. He makes a special study of the mental operations of the reader and the writer. He points out that "the ultimate end of criticism is much more to establish the principles of writing than to furnish rules how to pass judgement on what has been written by others."⁴ His aim in *Biographia Literaria* was "to reduce criticism to a system by the deduction of causes from principles involved in our faculties."⁵ This book is Coleridge's Poetics. It is in two volumes covering twentyfour chapters. The first volume forms a record of the author's literary philosophy beginning from his days at Christ's Hospital with James Boyer and ending in his definition of the Esemplastic Imagination. The second volume sets forth an elaborate practical criticism of Wordsworth's poetic principles and practice.

Boyer, Coleridge's teacher at Christ's Hospital, put before him models of high excellence from the past—Homer, Theocritus, Shakespeare, and Milton. He also taught him the great lesson of the unity of a poem. Coleridge learnt from him that "poetry, even that of the loftiest and, seemingly that of the wildest odes, had a logic of its own, as severe as that of science, and more difficult, because more subtle, more complex, and dependent on more, and more fugitive causes."⁶

It was, however, the poetry of W L Bowles rather than that of the old masters which first moved Coleridge. From Bowles, he received the impulse for the critical examination of the poetry of Pope's school which excelled in "thoughts translated into the language of poetry."

Coleridge, however, got his real insight into the true nature of poetry after his friendship with William Wordsworth, the father of Romantic Age. What impressed Coleridge greatly in Wordsworth's poetry was not the freedom from false taste but "the union of deep feeling with profound thought, the fine balance of truth in observing, with the imaginative faculty

in modifying the objects observed, and above all the original gift of spreading the tone, the atmosphere, and with it the depth and height of the ideal word around forms, incidents, and situations, of which, for the common view, custom had bedimmed all the lustre, had dried up the sparkle and the dew drops."⁷ After a prolonged and profound reflection on these characteristics of Wordsworth's poetry, Coleridge got his ideas about the Esemplastic Imagination and Fancy. Thus, the first four chapters of *Biographia Literaria* give us an idea of three major influences on the development of Coleridge's poetic theories. These were Boyer, Bowles and Wordsworth.

In his exposition of the concept of imagination, Coleridge proceeds in an autobiographical manner beginning with his disenchantment with Hartley's associationism. He vehemently attacks associationist philosophy as materialistic, mechanical, passive and irreligious, and rejects its theory. After devoting four chapters—i.e; chapters five to eight—he says that he will not "dilate further on the subject."

Thoroughly disillusioned with Hartley's system, Coleridge comes to the idealistic philosophy of Kant, Schelling and Fichte and other German philosophers in the ninth chapter of *Biographia Literaria*.

Chapters tenth and eleventh of *Biographia Literaria* are full of digressions and anecdotes on his literary ventures, his opinion on religion and politics, and advice to the would-be authors.

Coleridge's uneasy and hesitant manner is revealed in the title of the twelfth chapter, "A chapter of requests and premonitions concerning the perusal or omission of the chapter that follows." Here he resumes the discussion on imagination.

The thirteenth chapter on "the Imagination or Esemplastic Power" has little besides the oft-quoted definitions. His definitions of the Imagination and Fancy conclude the chapter. Here ends the first volume of Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*.

The second volume of *Biographia Literaria* is mainly devoted to a discussion of the poetic theory and practice of William Wordsworth. Coleridge first defines a poem and poetry before launching upon his criticism of Wordsworth's theory of diction. He discusses poetic genius and Shakespeare's greatness and follows it up with an exhaustive analysis of Wordsworth's theory of diction. Then he gives his detailed analysis involving the natural and necessary differences between the language of poetry and that of prose. The remaining chapters of *Biographia Literaria* consider the defects and merits of Wordsworth's poetry. There are, no doubt, other works that are important for a clear understanding of the position adopted by Coleridge on salient problems; but whatever Coleridge has said elsewhere moves round his fundamental thesis embodied in the *Biographia Literaria*. It is really one of the gems of the English literary criticism.

LECTURES ON SHAKESPEARE

"In the history of English literary criticism there is no work which surpasses in interest Coleridge's lectures upon Shakespeare,"⁸ so says T M Raysor. This is because Shakespeare's rare genius for its correct appraisal needed a critic of genius, and Coleridge with his profound and wide reading, his superb powers of psychological analysis, and overflowing sympathy and piety for his subject, was no doubt the right man to undertake the monumental job.

Coleridge's oft-stated purpose in these lectures was "to meet and refute popular objections to particular points in the works of our great dramatic poet."⁹ His first difficult task was the defence of Shakespeare's conceits and puns which ran counter to the neo-classical idea of "correctness and propriety". These were trivialities in serious drama and an offence against the sense of decorum. Coleridge defends them on several grounds—that they arise from Shakespeare's intellectual exuberance, that they are perfectly natural in their place and were also an Elizabethan vogue, and that they, particularly .

the puns, are interpolations and not the words of the master. He next defends Shakespeare against the charge of immorality and coarseness. He points out that laughter is necessary to drive away impurity, and that there is a difference between morals and manners of speech. He said that Shakespeare was purer in his speech and morals than all of his contemporaries. His fine treatment of love is a positive proof of his morality, and his women characters are perfect examples of the ideal in the real and are much better drawn than Fletcher's.

Coleridge then takes up the defence of Shakespeare's fools. He finds that the Fool in *King Lear* is the most genuine and real of Shakespearean fools because his jests "heighten and inflame the passion of the scene."¹⁰ Hamlet's jests and puns serve the same purpose. The fools are a substitute for the Greek chorus as they are "unfeeling spectators of the most passionate situations."¹¹ Coleridge concludes that the comic scenes in Shakespeare only heighten the tragic effect by contrast.

Coleridge is at his best in defending Shakespeare against the charge of the violation of the three unities. He says that Shakespeare was interested deeply, not so much in action as in individual characters, in the lyrical suggestiveness of his style, in an impartial attitude to life itself, and refused to make out a moral fable out of the chaos of experience. Shakespeare presented life as he saw it.

Coleridge's psychological character analyses are masterpieces of critical insight. Naturally he gives greater importance to the four great tragedies — i.e. *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Macbeth* and *King Lear*. His best attention is the problematic character Hamlet — a romantic hero who resolves again and again to act but never does. "To be or not to be"—that was the question before Hamlet. Coleridge's analyses of *Richard II*, *Romeo Juliet*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, and *The Tempest* are profound and revealing.

THE FRIEND

The first number of *The Friend* made its appearance on June 1, 1809, and it concluded with the last issue of 15th March, 1810. No modern print of the original *The Friend* is available. The current text is a recast of the 1818 edition in which the old matter was completely re-arranged and much matter of later date added. It is dedicated to Dr. and Mrs. Gill.

The influence of Kant is all pervading in *The Friend*, but somehow the German idealists are absent here. Coleridge has drawn a fine distinction between reason and understanding. It is almost on the lines of Imagination and Fancy. He asserts that reason is the supreme faculty and is the organ of precise and highest knowledge. He says that reason is "the mother of conscience, of language, of tears and of smiles."¹² Our own moral being is the source of the certainty of all knowledge. But it is ethical, speculative and practical simultaneously. Coleridge did not support the arbitrary rigidity of distinction between practical and speculative reason. Understanding may exist without reason, but not reason without understanding. In essay No. 15, Coleridge explains the distinction between genius and talent also. To him, genius is an endowment and talent an acquirement. A man of genius is impulsive, whereas the man of talent is cool, collected, calculating, and worldly wise. Talent is borrowed knowledge and is so powerless to bring us to truth.

In the fourth essay of the second section of *The Friend*, Coleridge defines method as that process which unites and makes many things one in the mind of man. The principle of method leads to the principle of the organic form. Dead arrangement is not method. Method always implies progressive transition and gives direction and purpose to feelings and passions and saves them from utter chaos and unites many facts to a common end.

Saintsbury says of *The Friend*, "there is little criticism in

extraordinary mingle-mangle of religion, politics and philosophy."¹³ Words of wisdom are, however, scattered throughout *The Friend* and for the serious and thinking reader there is a lot of ideas. At the top of every essay a golden motto is affixed, if all these are collected they themselves are capable of providing a rich proverb book. It is like Bacon's essays. It is a friend indeed, as Coleridge intended to be.

THE TABLE TALK

Henry Nelson Coleridge, Coleridge's nephew, collected his table talks and published it in 1835. It deals with the last twelve years of S T Coleridge's life.

On December 29, 1822 Coleridge was in a devastating mood when he compared Schiller's profuseness with Shakespeare's economy of means. "Schiller has the material sublime, to produce an effect he set you a whole town on fire and throws infants with their mothers into the flames, or locks up a father in an old tower. But Shakespeare drops a handkerchief and the same or greater effects follow." Othello is not a 'negro', but a "high and chivalrous Moorish chief". Shakespeare, again he says, "learnt the spirit of the character from the Spanish poetry, which was prevalent in England in his time. Jealousy does not strike me as the point in his passion, I take it to be rather an agony that the creature whom he had believed angelic, with whom he had garnered up his heart, and whom he could not help still loving should be proved impure and worthless. It was the struggle not to love her." King Lear is the most tremendous effort of Shakespeare as a poet, Hamlet as a philosopher or meditator, and Othello is the union of the two.

Coleridge found a "sad want of harmony" in Lord Byron's verses.

On May 8, 1824, Coleridge ranged from Plato to Prometheus, from Milton to Vergil. "Plato's works are the logical

exercises for the mind." He thought nothing could be added to Milton's definition of poetry. According to Milton poetry should be "simple, sensuous, and impassioned", that is to say, to Coleridge, "single in conception, abounding in sensible images and informing them all with the spirit of the mind." He found Milton's Latin style better and easier than his English. On Virgil, Coleridge makes a fine and subtle remark. "If you take from Virgil his diction and metre what do you leave him?"

June 24, 1827 was also another remarkable day when eloquence spontaneously flowed from Coleridge's lips about Spenser, Shakespeare and about maxims. He says that Spenser's "attention to metre and rhythm is sometimes so extremely minute as to be painful even to my ear, and you know how highly I prize good versification." He defines a maxim which is only a conclusion upon observation of fact and "it is retrospective, an idea or a principle carries knowledge within itself, and is retrospective." According to Coleridge, a man of mere maxims is like "a Cyclops with one eye, and that eye placed in the back of his head."

Talking of Ben Jonson, Coleridge is "inclined to consider *The Fox* as the greatest of Ben Jonson's works. But his smaller works are full of poetry."

Another remarkable day was July 12, 1827 when Coleridge said about Baxter, Bolingbroke, Burke, Ariosto and Young poets. "Bolingbroke's style is not in any respect equal to that of Cowley or Dryden". To him Burke's *Essays on the Sublime and Beautiful* are "a poor thing", and his thoughts upon Taste "neither profound nor accurate." He wishes clever young poets to remember his homely definitions of prose and poetry, that is, "prose = words in their best order, poetry = the best words in the best order."

On July 23, 1827 Coleridge talked of Berkley, genius and envy. "Berkley can only be confuted or answered by one

sentence. So it is with Spinoza. His premises granted, the deduction is a chain of adamant." Coleridge holds genius as co-existing with "wildness, idleness, folly, even with crime, but not long with selfishness and the indulgence of an envious disposition." Again he says about Envy that it "dwarfs and withers its worshippers."

And one may go on reading through *The Table Talk* which is so delectable and stimulating bunch of opinions coming from a master mind.

OMNIANA

Here we have Coleridge's contribution to Robert Southey's anonymous *Omniana* or Horace's *Otiosiores* published in 1812. Small pieces as they are, they do not detain us long but their psychological insight, felicitous wording, and wisdom take a long and firm hold of our mind. In a most fascinating way he writes about the internal blindness of some people. If you talk to a blind man, he knows his deficiency and does make proper allowance willingly to understand. But there are certain internal senses which man may want, and yet be wholly ignorant that he wants them. It is most unpleasant to talk to such people on subjects of taste, beauty, philosophy, religion and art.

The aberrations of modern criticism on the works of elder writers, remind Coleridge of "the connoisseur, who, taking up a small cabinet picture, railed most eloquently at the absurd caprice of the artist in painting a horse sprawling. 'Excuse me, Sir,' replied the owner of the piece, 'you hold it the wrong way : it is a horse galloping.'"¹⁴

Charges of impenetrable obscurity have been laid against Plato, Aristotle, Kant and almost every great discoverer and thinker of the human race.

Gems of such observations lie strewn all over *Omniana*.

Coleridge was a master of the marginalia and fragments, and *Omniana* is a masterpiece of a master.

THE LETTERS

In any survey of Coleridge's criticism, his letters must be included. These letters are as important as the letters of Keats or D H Lawrence. For in them is displayed abundantly his great protean personality with all autobiographical frankness, intimacy, and emotion. In these letters, Coleridge judges himself. These letters were written from the deepest core of his heart for private friendly eyes, not for publication. Hence in *The Letters* we have a rare passionate and uncontrollable sincerity and torrential flow of varied experience.

Coleridge wrote to Thomas Poole on March 23, 18 1, about the philosophy of Locke and Newton. To him, Locke was "a perfect little-ist" and Newton "was a mere materialist." About Newton, Coleridge says, "Mind, in his system, is always passive, a lazy Looker-on on an external world."

In the letter of W Sotheby, which was written on July 13, 1802, Coleridge says about the poetic diction and about his differences with William Wordsworth. Of Wordsworth, however, he has the highest opinion as expressed in his letter to Richard Sharp which was written on January 15, 1804—"Wordsworth is a poet, a most original poet. He no more resembles Milton than Milton resembles Shakespeare—no more resembles Shakespeare than Shakespeare resembles Milton. He is himself...."

In the letter of Tom Wedgwood, written on September 16, 1803, Coleridge gives his idea about Hazlitt. According to Coleridge Hazlitt is kindly-natured, very fond of children, but jealous and gloomy and addicted to women. There is, however, much good in Hazlitt, "He sends well-headed and well-feathered thoughts straight forward to the mark with a twang of the bow string." Coleridge once again gives a good

remark upon Hazlitt in his letter to Hugh J Rose which was written on September 15, 1816. He says—"Hazlitt possesses considerable talent, but it is diseased by a morbid hatred of the beautiful, and killed by the absence of imagination."

About the distinction of Reason and Understanding, S T Coleridge has written two letters—the first is to Thomas Clarkson on October 13, 1806 and the second to Charles Augustus Tulk on February 13, 1821,

In short, these letters of Coleridge carry in them a lot of information about his views on art, literature, philosophy and religion.

The fact is that a letter unfolds the innerself of a man, and in his letters Coleridge has observed the good as well as the evil in an artist or in an art.

ANIMA POETAE

Coleridge had a wish to make a volume out of his note books and pocket-books which he considered "the confidants who have not betrayed me, the friends whose silence was not distraction, and the inmates before whom I was not ashamed to complain, to yearn, to weep, or even to pray." This wish was carried out after his death by E H Coleridge who edited the note-books and published them in 1895, under the title *Anima Poetae*.

Coleridge always frowned at too much discipline and rule in poetry. According to him, "Poetry, like school boys, by too frequent and severe correction may be cowed into dullness."¹⁵ In poetry, he desires, "a union of harmony and good sense, of perspicuity and conciseness." Poetry always gives him "most pleasure when only generally and not perfectly understood." It is for this very reason that he always likes metaphysical poetry more than any other kind.

On French poetry, on Cowper, on Etymology, on the attitude of poetry, on power of words, Samuel Taylor Coleridge gives us a fresh and refreshing breath of criticism,

Coleridge thinks that those who are really original are never anxious to be thought original. He says, "the certainty, the feeling that he is right, is enough for the man of genius, and he rejoices to find his opinions plumed and winged the authority of several forefathers."¹⁶

Thus, on close scrutiny of *Anima Poetae* we find that Coleridge was a habitual watcher of the flux and reflux of his complex mind.

REFERENCES

1. Introduction to Everyman's Edition, 1906, p.X.
2. G Saintsbury, *A History of English Criticism*, William Blackwood & Sons, London, 1949 p.328.
3. V K Gokak, *Op. cit.*, preface.
4. *Biographia Literaria*, Vol. I, p.63.
5. Letter to Lord Byron, 17 October, 1815
6. *Biographia Literaria*, Vol. I, pp.4-5.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 59.
8. T M Raysor. *Shakespearean Criticism, Vol. I*, Everyman's Library, London, 1960, p. xv.
9. *Ibid* , Vol. II, p. 143.
10. *Ibid* , p. 47.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 167.
12. *The Friend*, No. 5 & 9.
13. G Saintsbury, *Op. cit.*, pp. 329-330.
14. Stephen Potter's, *Coleridge, Selected Poetry and Prose*, p. 198.
15. *Anima Poetae*, p. 4.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 160.

He (Coleridge) is all for thought
and imagination, and nothing else,
—Leigh Hunt,

Coleridge on Poem and Poetry

Coleridge was fond of making distinctions between seemingly similar words, often dividing the subject into opposing parts. These distinctions are Fancy and Imagination, Genius and Talent, Poem and Poetry etc.

Coleridge says that "A poem is that species of composition, which is opposed to works of science, by proposing for its immediate object pleasure, not truth, and from all other species (having this object in common with it) it is discriminated by proposing to itself such delight from the whole, as is compatible with a distinct gratification from each component part."¹ He further adds that a legitimate poem "must be one, the parts of which mutually support and explain each other, all in their proportion harmonizing with, and supporting the purpose and known influences of metrical arrangement."² The concensus of opinion during all the ages has denied the beauties of a poem on the one hand to striking lines which attract the attention of the reader to themselves, as though they were a separate entity by themselves, and on the other hand to a loose composition from which the general result can be quickly deduced without being attracted by its component parts. The true poem will carry forward its reader, "not merely or chiefly by the mechanical impulse of curiosity, or by a restless desire to arrive at the final solution, but by the pleasurable activity of mind excited by the attractions of the journey itself."³ The reader moves forward almost like a snake, the emblem of

intellectual power, or like sound through the air, pausing and receding at every step and thus gathering the force for pushing forward.

Coleridge considers the making of a poem to be a deliberate art and not the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" as his colleague Wordsworth did. The aim is always pleasure which the component parts of a poem and the feeling expressed in it must attain, and metre—"a studied selection and artificial arrangement"—must enhance this pleasure in part after part.

"The writings of PLATO, and Bishop TAYLOR, and 'Theoria Sacra' of BURNET, furnish undeniable proofs that poetry of the highest kind may exist without metre, and even without the contra-distinguishing objects of a poem,"⁴ so says Coleridge. He further adds that "The first chapter of Isaiah (indeed a very large portion of the whole book) is poetry in the most emphatic sense ; yet it would be not less irrational than strange to assert, that pleasure, and not truth, was the immediate object of the prophet."⁵ The definition shows that Coleridge had not rightly chosen the contra-distinguishing objects of a poem.

"In short," Coleridge asserts, "whatever specific import we attach to the word, poetry, there will be found involved in it, as a necessary consequence, that a poem of any length neither can be, nor ought to be, all poetry."⁶ This distinction, like the one between the primary and the secondary imagination, gave rise to a lot of controversy. The distinction befogs the issue more than it clears it. Coleridge does not argue his case cogently and clearly and suddenly changes the topic and makes further observations on the poem. He believes that for the production of a harmonious whole, the parts must keep the spirit of poetry intact. This could be achieved by a judicious selection coupled with necessary artificial arrangement and by providing for the excitement of a more continuous and equal attention than the language of

prose, whether oral or written, aims at. The poem is a metrical form is the embodiment of poetry and captures the spirit in the appropriate manner. The medium of prose is really not suitable for poetry, though on certain occasions poetry of the highest kind can be written in prose. Poetry can be distinguished from prose by metre.

Coleridge highly appreciates the definition of poetry by Milton in three words—"simple, sensuous, passionate." He feels that if these three words had been properly understood and remembered by the readers a lot of false poetry would never have been written at all, rather in its place would have come up a whole library of works truly excellent, inspiring, and ennobling. "Simplicity ... distinguishes poetry from the arduous processes of science ... sensuousness, insures that framework of objectivity ... passion, provides that neither thought nor imagery shall be simply objective, but that the *passio vera* of humanity,"⁷ shall warm and animate both.

Coleridge found poetry to be the proper antithesis to science not to prose which is opposed to metre. Compared to science poetry is more spontaneous than voluntary and a more pleasure-giving activity. But Coleridge emphasizes the need of rules and restraints and control which may be gentle and unnoticed. He had learnt from his teacher Boyer that, "Poetry even that of the loftiest and, seemingly, that of the wildest odes, had a logic of its own, as severe as that of science, and more difficult, because more subtle, more complex, and dependent on more, and more fugitive causes."⁸ Pleasure and emotion are unifying agents. But for writing poetry conscious will and understanding are also required. Like all other living powers, the spirit of poetry must circumscribe itself by rules. As a living body needs organization, so does poetry need to submit itself to the discipline of form in order to reveal itself properly.

REFERENCES

1. *Biographia Literaria*, Vol. II, p. 10.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 11
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*, p. 268.
7. T M Raysor, *Op. ctt.*, Vol. I, p. 149.
8. *Biographia Literaria*, Vol. I, p. 4.

Coleridge on Fancy and Imagination

“If we wish to distinguish a single characteristic which differentiates the English Romantics from the poets of the 18th century, it is to be found in the importance which they attached to the imagination and in the special view which they held of it.”¹ In the poetical theory of the eighteenth century imagination was not a cardinal point. It was imitation of nature, by which was meant not ‘dead nature’ or out-door landscape but facts and ideas having a universal appeal or “general nature”, as it was often called. Allied to the concept of imitation was the concept of imagination and fancy, Aristotle had always considered imitation to be an imaginative, recreative-pleasure-giving, idealizing, universalizing and beautifying process. Facts had to be imitated and fancy added to them to make them beautiful and agreeable. Aristotle never thought of imitation as a mere carbon copy. The artist puts his ideas, intuitions, perceptions and his whole personality into the process of imitation and gives us more than life and nature. Therefore, imagination, according to Aristotle, plays an important role in the creation of art. His ideas were extensively borrowed by the neo-classical authors and critics.

According to Dryden, the artist does not aim at a mere copy, but at making “a beautiful resemblance of the whole.” But photographic naturalism, in Dryden’s view, is “a mere theft from nature, it is not life transmuted by imagination”. The real artist does not allow himself to be strait-jacketed by rules. Shakespeare, according to Dryden,

is the most outstanding example of an artist who succeeded without rules.

According to Addison, imagination is a faculty which enables a man in the dungeon to entertain himself with scenes and landscapes more beautiful than any we can find in the whole of nature.

Addison's interpretation of imagination paved the way for an aesthetic approach to literature. He is "the first man in the history of English literature and philosophy to write a systematic treatise on aesthetic...He stimulated a whole century to interest in imagination, he created a climate in which questions about the psychology of the imagination were considered important."² In a way Addison anticipated Coleridge's theory of imagination and sublimity.

Dr. Johnson showed little interest in the metaphysics of imagination or the new theory of creative imagination. He did not place any faith in the psychology of the artist. Imagination is accepted by Johnson as an important part of the poet's equipment, but by this term he merely meant the power representation. He defines poetry as "an art of uniting pleasure with truth by calling imagination (i.e. fancy) to the help of reason."³ Like Addison and Dryden before him, he also makes little or no distinction between Fancy and Imagination.

Thus, the eighteenth century writers considered Imagination and Fancy to be synonymous terms. To Coleridge, "the distinction between imagination and fancy presented itself as the distinction of two types of philosophy : even as for Wordsworth it might symbolize the distinction of two kinds of poetry, the poetry of nature and of artifice."⁴

Elaborating the two faculties, Coleridge says, "Milton had highly imaginative, Cowley a very fanciful mind."⁵

In Fancy are involved a 'choice', cool and calculating, a selection, a preference, and an arrangement. It is a mode of

memory but it is on a higher level than mere memory or perception because of its selections and preferences from the store-house of sensations. It is inferior to Imagination because instead of producing new things, it merely shuffles and reshuffles into patterns readymade materials, "fixities and definites". It creates, "merely a world of lifeless forms, unconnected and devoid of motive power."⁶ It is passive, associative, mechanical, barren, superficial, and shallow. The Images of Fancy, says Coleridge, "have no connection, natural or moral, but are yoked together by the poet by means of some accidental coincidence."⁷ Many of the conceits of the seventeenth century metaphysical poets are good examples of Fancy.

The distinction between Fancy and Imagination occupied much of Coleridge's thinking for a long time. In fact it was his habit to find out distinction between pairs of words.

Fancy is intellectual and associative. Imagination is emotional and unconscious. Mere auto-biographical experiences reshuffled by a writer will give us a work of Fancy, whereas new things are created by Imagination. Fancy collects bright and odd objects and weaves patterns out of them, arranging and re-arranging them, the objects remaining unchanging in themselves. It brings about issueless marriages, whereas Imagination blesses marriages with new births.

Fancy involves images or impressions, Imagination deals with insights and intuitions and emotions. Coleridge gives an analogous distinction between delirium and mania, "you may conceive the difference in kind between the Fancy and the Imagination in this way, that if the checks of the senses and reason are withdrawn, the first would become delirium, and the last mania."⁸ There is no coherence, no connection, relevance or sequence in delirium—no unifying principle except the law of association. The mind in mania, on the other hand, is haunted by a fixed idea and all other things are seen and interpreted in direct relationship to that fixed idea, so even in sickness it has a power of unification.

I A Richards says that in “prose fiction, the detective novel is a type of Fancy, but any presentation of an integral view of life will take the structure of Imagination.”⁹ He further says that “The units imaginatively disposed may themselves be products of fancy ; and, conversely, a series of imaginative passages may be arranged (as beads on a string) in the mode of Fancy—a structure characteristic of Hardy.”¹⁰

Finally it has to be remembered that Coleridge included fancy as one of the powers of imagination. These terms are to be taken as relative to one another. “Imagination must have fancy, in fact the higher intellectual powers can only act through a corresponding energy of the lower.”¹¹ Richards also emphasizes this point—“Coleridge often insisted—and would have insisted still more often had he been a better judge of his readers’ capacity for misunderstanding—that Fancy and Imagination are not exclusive of or inimical to one another.”¹²

There are different opinions about this distinction between Fancy and Imagination. A modern critic called this distinction “celebrated but useless.” S C Sen Gupta writes that “the distinction between Imagination and Fancy is often difficult to draw in practice, and what appears to be imaginative to one poet or reader may appear to be fanciful to another, but it is not a useless distinction, for it attempts to draw the line between poetry and pseudo-poetry.”¹³ Professor Lowe says that “Fancy and Imagination are not two powers at all, but one.”¹⁴ I A Richards is all for this distinction. Herbert Read also defends Coleridge on this fine distinction.

Though the distinction between Fancy and Imagination was brought into a sharp focus by Coleridge, it was coming up through the previous centuries. ‘Phantasia’ in classical times was the creative power, and ‘Imagination’ strictly belonged to the receptive or passive part of the mind. Through the middle ages and upto Hobbes the distinction remained

like that. Addison in a way started the semantic shift, though he often used the two terms interchangeably.

Coleridge has divided Imagination into two parts—the primary and the secondary. He says that “The primary Imagination I hold to be the living power and prime Agent of all human Perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I am. The secondary Imagination I consider as an echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the kind of its agency, and differing only in degree, and in the mode of its operation. It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates in order to recreate, or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealize and to unify.”¹⁵

The primary imagination is the main faculty of all human perceptions in everyday life. The “Infinite I am,” that is God, is eternally transmitting infinitely various messages which the finite mind of the ordinary man catches and decodes into meaning. The “Infinite I am” conceives, the finite mind of the man perceives. God creates, the poet recreates. The normal man beholds the external world through the primary imagination.

To sum up, the primary imagination is essentially utilitarian. It has utility but is not concerned with civilized values. It is purely constructive whereas the secondary imagination destroys, dissolves and fuses finally.

Coleridge distinguishes between the perception of the common man and that of the artist. The latter is the secondary imagination or the esemplastic imagination. The imagination of the artist is an echo of God’s imagination. “Believe me you must master the essence, the *natura naturans*, which presupposes a bond between nature in the higher sense and the soul of man.”¹⁶

The secondary Imagination does not work involuntarily

but is dependent on the human will. With the active co-operation of human volition it works on the phenomena furnished by the Primary Imagination. The ordinary world is brazen ; the secondary imagination delivers it golden. It has a Midass-touch. The secondary imagination recognizes both beautiful and ugly forms. Observing the beautiful, it has feelings of satisfaction, pleasure, absence of conflict ; observing the ugly, the contrary feelings. R L Brett differentiates it in these words—"The essential difference between the primary and the secondary imagination is that the one is involuntary, for we cannot choose whether to perceive or not, whereas the other is related to 'the conscious will'." 17

REFERENCES

1. C M Bowra, *The Romantic Imagination*, p. 1.
2. J V Baker, *The Sacred River*, pp. 84-88.
3. Johnson, *Life of Milton*.
4. I A Richards, *Coleridge on Imagination*, p. 69.
5. *Biographia Literaria*, Vol. I, p. 62.
6. J Shawcross, Introduction to *Bio graphia Literaria* p, xxxiii,
7. Coleridge, *Table Talk*, 23 June, 1834.
8. *Table Talk*, June 23, 1834.
9. I A Richards, *Coleridge on Imagination*, Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., London 1955, p. 95.
10. *Ibid.*,
11. *Table Talk*, April 90, 1833.
12. I A Richards, *Op. eit.*, p. 75.
13. S C Sen Gupta, *Towards A Theory of the Imagination*, Oxford University Press, London, 1955, p. 40.
14. Prof. Lowe. *The Road to Xanadn*, p. 103.
15. *Biographia Literaria*, Vol. I, p. 202.
16. *Biographia Literaria*, Vol, II, p. 257.
17. R L Brett, *Fancy and Imagination*, Methuen & Co. Ltd , London, 1959, p. 44.

Coleridge on Genius and Talent

As Coleridge always made it a point to give distinct and appropriate meanings to words hitherto used as synonymous or with fluctuating application, he essayed a distinction between the terms 'Genius' and 'Talent' also. He considered the qualities of intellect of individuals and countries under four kinds—genius, talent, sense and cleverness. He defines genius as "originality in intellectual construction, the moral accompaniment and actuating principle of which consists, perhaps, in the carrying on of the freshness and feelings of childhood into the powers of manhood."¹ And by talent, Coleridge means, "the comparative facility of acquiring, arranging, and applying the stock furnished by others and already existing in books or other conservatories of intellect."² Sense is the balance of faculties and endows health to our judgement. It shuns extremes, understands the necessity and utility of compromise, and sympathises with the general mind of the public. In the domain of intellect the faculty of genius takes the initiative, talent is the administrative agency, and sense the conservative. Cleverness is a kind of genius for instrumentality. It is the brain always at the alert. It is an attribute of wit.

A man of talent is worldly wise, more prudent than good and believes in expedients, and values the means which can materialise his ambitions and dreams. In his ends he does not differ from the common mass of mankind though his means may be revolutionary. On the other hand, the man of genius

often has a predominance of impulse over his motive and may be hostile to prudence and throw it to the winds. His virtue is without a guide or guardian and his benevolence is often squandered away thoughtlessly.

Genius flows like a sacred river in the unknown, impenetrable, unfathomable, dynamic depths of the unconscious within the two banks of honesty and purity. All great and immortal literature and art grows out of these deeps of unconscious genius. In Coleridge's words, "To make the external internal, the internal external, to make nature thought and thought nature,—that is the mystery of genius in the fine arts ... He who combines the two is the man of genius ; and for that reason he must partake of both. Hence there is in genius itself an unconscious activity, may that is the genius in the men of genius."³ As Coleridge advocates the collaboration of the unconscious and conscious, his friend and follower Hazlitt too emphasizes the "happiness as well as care." He believed that the genius was never conscious of its powers. "The definition of genius," says Hazlitt, "is that it acts unconsciously, and those who have produced immortal works have done so without knowing how or why, the greatest power operates unseen."⁴ The true inspiration is a chance occurrence and the artist has but little to boast of. A close friend of Coleridge, William Blake, too, said of his 'Milton,' "I have written this poem from immediate dictation, twelve or sometimes twenty or thirty lines at a time, without premeditation and even against my will, the time it has taken in writing was thus rendered non existent, and an immense Poem exists which seems to be the labour of a long life, all produced without labour or study."⁵

Coleridge also said that the divinity of genius should be helped by art, and that the superior powers work hand in hand with the inferior ones. "Genius must have talent as its complement and implement, just as, in like manner, imagination must have fancy. In fact the higher intellectual

power can only act through a corresponding energy of the lower."⁶

Coleridge always thought genius to be impersonal and objective grasping the whole universe as its domain. A true poet has no axe of his own to grind. "To have a genius," he says, "is to live in the universal, to know no self but that which is reflected not only from the faces of all around us, our fellow-creatures, but reflected from the flowers, the trees, the beasts, and from the very surface of the waters and the sounds of the desert."⁷ Shakespeare's genius reveals itself in his judgement. It is perfect in general construction as well as in minute details. The man of genius is like an intensely sensitive instrument which bursts forth in tunes at the merest touch or even by the slightest stir in the air. Such a person always lives in the ideal world oblivious of the past and unconcerned about tomorrow as his present holds both. Coleridge says, "Like the moistures or the polish on a pebble, genius neither distorts nor false-colours its object, but on the contrary brings out many a vein and a tint, which escapes the eye of common observation, thus raising to the rank of gems what had been often kicked away by the hurrying foot of the traveller on the dusty high road of custom."⁸ Talent is required in all other trades but the least in literature and more so in writing poetry. "The difference indeed between these and the works of genius is not less than between an egg and an egg-shell, yet at a distance they both look alike."⁹

Coleridge says that, "poetic Genius is not only a very delicate, but a very rare plant."¹⁰ Genius is like the "wilderness of noble plants" compared to the garden of talent shaped "by the skill of a gardener." Dr. Johnson compared Shakespeare's compositions to a forest, and that of correct and regular writer to a garden. Genius ploughs a lonely furrow, and often is a "lone wanderer to eternity, misunderstood, ignored and maligned by his contemporaries, rewarded at most by posthumous fame. Great men stand out as giants in lonely isolation."¹¹ Coleridge, too, says—"How restless, how difficulty hidden, the powers of genius are;..."¹²

Talent is mechanical and manufactured and may be called the "faculty of appropriating and applying the knowledge of others." It is borrowed knowledge, and imitates the earlier works of art. It is acquired by hard labour over a long period. It is learning and is, therefore, transferable.

REFERENCES

1. *The Friend*, Section II, Essay I, p, 280.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Biographia Literaria*, Vol. II, p. 258.
4. *The Plain Speaker*, Vol. XII, Ed. P P Howe. pp. 118-119.
5. *The Table Talk*, April 20, 1833.
6. *Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, pp. 866-867.
7. *Philosophical Lectures*, Ed. K. Coburn, p. 179.
8. *Biographia Literaria*, Vol. II, p. 121.
9. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 26.
10. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 106.
11. Rene Welleck, *Op*, cit., p. 313.
12. *Biographia Literaria*, Vol, II, p. 106.

...there may be, is, ought to be an essential difference
between the language of prose and of matrical
composition .

—Coleridge

Coleridge's theory of Poetic Diction

Wordsworth and Coleridge published the *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798 as a joint venture to ventilate their disagreement with the neo-classical norms and practice of poetry. The preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*, written by William Wordsworth, was an attempt to liberalise poetic diction and a defence of his own manner of writing poetry. After reading the published preface, S T Coleridge discovered that he had radical differences with his friend about metre and poetic diction. He found Wordsworth's views both erroneous in practice and selfcontradictory.

Protesting against "the gaudiness and inane phraseology of many modern writers,"¹ Wordsworth in his poems had proposed "to choose incidents and situations from common life and to relate or describe them, throughout, as far as possible in a selection of language really used by men."² He had generally chosen "humble and rustic life" for in that condition "the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity." He further said that "Not only the language of a large portion of every good poem, even of the most elevated character, must necessarily, except with reference to metre, in no respect differ from that of good prose, but likewise, some of the most interesting parts of the best poems will be found to be strictly the language of prose, when prose is well written."³ He goes even to the length of asserting that it may be safely

affirmed, that "neither is, nor can be, any essential difference between the language of prose and metrical composition."⁴

Coleridge rebuts Wordsworth's points one by one. His first objection is against the language taken from the mouth of men in real life. He says, "In any sense this rule is applicable only to certain classes of poetry, secondly that even to these classes it is not applicable, except in such a sense as hath never by any one (as far as I know or have read) been denied or doubted, and lastly that as far as, and in that degree in which it is practicable, yet as a rule it is useless, if not injurious, and therefore either need not, or ought to be practiced."⁵

Coleridge cites the example of some of Wordsworth's most interesting poems like—"The Brothers", 'Michael', 'Ruth', 'The Mad Mother', etc." in which figure persons by no means taken from low or rustic life. And the language and sentiments also of these persons are not connected with their occupations and abode. "The thoughts, feelings, language and manners of the shepherd-farmers in the vales of Cumberland and Westmoreland, as far as they are actually adopted in those poems, may be accounted for from causes, which will and do produce the same results in every state of life, whether in town or country."⁶ Some special mental equipment is necessary for the improvement of the soul in rustic life. "It is not every man that is likely to be improved by a country life or by country labours. Education, or original sensibility, or both, must pre-exist, if the changes, forms, and incidents of nature are to prove a sufficient stimulant. And where these are not sufficient, the mind contracts and hardens by want of stimulants : and the man becomes selfish, sensual, gross, and hard-hearted,"⁷ so says Coleridge. Opinions would vary widely about the desirable influences of low and rustic life. Swiss mountaineers, praised highly for their winning manners, cannot be cited as beneficiaries of rustic life because they are better educated and greater readers than people of the same rank in urban society. But to the illiterate peasantry of North Wales the glories of nature are "pictures to the blind and music to the deaf."⁸ Coleridge has full faith in Aristotle's

principle that "poetry is essentially ideal, that it avoids and excludes all accident, that its apparent individualities of rank, character or occupation must be representative of a class : not with such as one gifted individual might possibly possess, but such as from his situation it is most probable before hand that he would possess."⁹

Coleridge observes, that the characters of 'The Brothers' and 'Michael' have verisimilitude and representative quality, but 'Harry Gill' and 'Idiot Boy' do not have characters who are a real and native product of a "situation where the essential passions of the heart find a better soil, in which they can attain their maturity and speak a plainer and more emphatic language."¹⁰ The image of an ordinary morbid idiocy balanced by the folly of the mother only presents a laughable burlesque to the readers. Then again a rustic's language purified of its provincialism and grossness, and consistent with rules of grammar will not differ from that of any other man of common sense, however learned or reared. Of course, the notions of the rustic may be fewer and more indiscriminate. The rustic with more imperfect faculties and lack of cultivation will convey only 'insulated facts' of his 'scanty experience or his traditional belief.' And the cultivated and "the educated man chiefly seeks to discover and express those connections of things, or those relative bearings of fact to fact, from which some more or less general law is deducible. For facts are valuable to a wise man, chiefly as they lead to the discovery of the indwelling law, which is the true being of things, the sole solution of their modes of existence, and in the knowledge of which consists our dignity and our power."¹¹

Coleridge cannot admit that the rustic can communicate with the best objects of nature, and therefore his is the best language. What, then, is the best language? Coleridge affirms that the best part of the human language is born when the human mind reflects upon its own acts. He says, "It is formed by a voluntary appropriation of fixed symbols to internal acts, to processes and results of imagination, the

greater part of which have no place in the consciousness of uneducated man ; though in civilized society, by imitation and passive remembrance of what they hear from their religious instructors or other superiors, the most uneducated share in the harvest which they neither sowed or reaped.”¹² In fact it would be found that the peasants have assimilated a surprisssingly large number of phrases of learned society from the speeches of the cleargy. The uncivilized tribes which are very much more in hourly communion with the best and beauteous forms and objects of nature than the peasants of Cumberland do not have facilities and phrases in their so-called language whereby even the simplest moral and intellectual processes can be communicated to them by our adroit and enthusiastic missionaries. Therefore, it may be asserted that the language which Wordsworth attributes to rustics cannot be theirs any more than the style of Hooker, Bacon to Tom Brown. If the peculiarity of each is omitted, the resultant style and language must be the same.

Coleridge objects to the word ‘Real’ for its equivocation. The language of a man differs from that of the other according to his own knowledge, activity of his faculty and profundity and rapidity of his feelings. The language of every man is marked by its individualities, class, and universality. Even the language of great geniuses like Hooker, Bacon, Bishop Taylor and Burke differs from that of the learned class only because of the superiority and novelty of their thoughts. The language of Wordsworth’s homeliest composition has a marked difference with that of a common shepherd or peasant. Therefore, Coleridge would like to substitute ‘ordinary’ or ‘lingua communis’ for the word ‘real’. Coleridge thus concludes that Wordsworth’s “attempt is impracticable ; and that, were it not impracticable, it would still be useless. For the very power of making the selection implies the previous possession of the language selected.”¹³

Coleridge then takes up the order and arrangement of words in Wordsworth’s own poems. He shows by various examples that Wordsworth’s rustic could not have placed

words in the order in which the poet has done it because in the rustic "There is a want of that prospectiveness of mind, that surview, which enables a man to foresee the whole of what he is to convey, appertaining to any one point ; and by this means so to subordinate and arrange the different parts according to their relative importance, as to convey it at once, and as an organized whole."¹⁴ Coleridge is happy that a "mere theory though of his own workmanship" interferes very little with practice of Wordsworth. In short, there is a world of difference between the theory and practice of Wordsworth.

Coleridge argues that as reading differs from talking, "prose itself, at least in all argumentative and consecutive works, differs, and ought to differ, from the language of conversation."¹⁵ It may be said that the edifice of Westminster Abbey is architecturally different in style from that of St. Paul's, though both of them were built with blocks of identical form procured from the same quarry. Words used in poetry and prose may be and sometimes are the same, but their arrangement and order are different. In other words, there are passages which suit prose but not poetry ; instead some suit poetry but not prose. In Wordsworth's argument Coleridge finds a tinge of sophism and says that the language of prose may sometimes be identical with that of poetry but it is not convertible.

Metre also necessitates a different order and arrangement of words in a sentence. In every metrical composition, firstly, there should be an excitement and a language appropriate to it. Secondly, by a conscious act these elements artificially should be formed into metre provide a merger of delight and emotion in such a manner as to make discernible the volitional act. These two conditions must be united. There must be "not only a partnership, but a union ; an interpenetration of passion and of will, of spontaneous impulse and of voluntary purpose."¹⁶ He further says that "this union can be manifested only in a frequency of forms and figures of speech (originally the offspring of passion, but now the adopted children of power) greater than would be

desired or endured, where the emotion is not voluntarily encouraged and kept up for the sake that pleasure, which such emotion, so tempered and mastered by the will, is found capable of communicating."¹⁷ This union tends to produce a more picturesque language.

Really, the metre is "the proper form of poetry and poetry (is) imperfect and defective without metre."¹⁸

Coleridge further observes that "for any poetic purposes, metre ... resembles ... yeast, worthless or disagreeable by itself, but giving vivacity and spirit to the liquor with which it is proportionately combined."¹⁹ From the practice of the best poets of all the countries and ages a final assertion can be made that "there must be, is, and ought to be an essential difference between the language of prose and of metrical composition."²⁰ All the arguments of Wordsworth are finally rebutted by a characteristically pregnant Coleridgean remark—"I write in metre, because I am about to use a language different from that of prose."²¹

REFERENCES

1. Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Biographia Literaria*, Vol. II, pp. 29-30.
6. *Ibid.*, p.31.
7. *Ibid.*, p.32.
8. *Ibid.*, p.32.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 33-34.
10. *Ibid.*, p.35.
11. *Ibid.*, p.39.
12. *Ibid.*, p.40.
13. *Ibid.*, p.43.
14. *Ibid.*, p.44.
15. *Ibid.*, p.45.
16. *Ibid.*, p.50.
17. *Ibid.*, p.50.
18. *Ibid.*, p.55.
19. *Ibid.*, p.52.
20. *Ibid.*, p.57.
21. *Ibid.*, p.53.

I rejoice to think that those who have
most profited by what he (Coleridge) has
taught them do not and cannot form a school...

—F D Maurice

Coleridge with other Critics

An avowed eclectic, Coleridge invites comparison with almost all his predecessors and successors. Like a bee he imbibed the quintessential honey from whichever quarter he found.

Coleridge's concept of imitation bears a striking resemblance to Aristotle's. Both agree that art is not merely a copying. It is not a slavish imitation twice removed from truth, but that it is an imaginative, recreative, and pleasure-giving process. According to Aristotle, "A work of art reproduces its original not as it is in itself, but as it appears to the senses."¹ Art completes the unfulfilled purposes of nature, supplies its deficiencies, and corrects its flaws and failures. Art, thus, improves nature and does not merely imitate it.

For Coleridge, art is "the mediatress between, and reconciler of nature and man."² It humanizes nature by infusing into the object of perception the thoughts and passions of man. "It is the figured language of thought, and is distinguished from nature by the unity of all the parts in one thought or idea."³ In all art the two constituent elements of likeness or unlikeness, or sameness and difference must be united and be perceived as co-existing. Coleridge insists that the artist must imitate only that which is within the thing—the 'Natur-geist' or spirit of nature, the universal in the individual or the individuality itself. Coleridge adopts with full faith the Aristotelian doctrine that poetry as poetry is essentially ideal for it avoids and excludes all accidents. He agrees with Aristotle's dictum of the "involution

of the universal in the Individual.” Both hold that the artist transfigures the concrete and the particular in such a manner that the higher truth, the idea of the universal, shines through it.

Both believed in the idea of the organic unity, which makes a thing individual, intelligible, and perfect and at the same time adds to its universality. Aristotle calls organic unity “an inward principle which reveals itself in the form of an outward whole.” The organic unity is manifested in the whole which is complete in its parts, and nothing can be taken out or transposed without disturbing the organism. Coleridge also talks of the principle of unity wherein the centripetal and centrifugal forces are properly balanced. Almost all of Coleridge’s major critical works are based on the principle of organic unity. His theory of the reconciliation of the opposites—of the internal with the external, the art with nature, the genius with judgement, the conscious with the unconscious—is nothing but the principle of organism or organic unity. “Plot is the first thing”, said Aristotle. Coleridge echoes the same thing when he says that we must have unity arising from a “predominant passion.”

Coleridge has greater affinity with Longinus who like him is essentially a Platonist. Longinus has been held as the first romantic critic and Coleridge as the best. Both seasoned their romanticism with the best of classicism. Longinus argues that sublimity in literature is the product of a marriage between art and nature. “Art is perfect”, says Longinus, “when it has the semblance of nature, and nature herself hits the mark when she has art hidden in her bosom.” Like him, Coleridge also emphasizes excellence in art, the unity of judgement and genius, matter and manner, conscious and unconscious, internal and external, subject and object, head and heart.

Coleridge insists on the “predominant passion” and “the energy and depth of thought”, Longinus on vehement passion and nobility of thought. “No man was ever a great poet”, says Coleridge, “without being at the same time a profound philosopher”. Longinus observes, “Great utterance is the echo

of greatness of soul", and that "great literature and little minds go ill together." For Coleridge the beauty of imagery depends on the excitement of the poet's imagination which leads to the reduction of the multitude to unity. Intensity of passion illuminates the imagery. Longinus holds that the use of metaphor and that their relation is a natural and fundamental one. Longinus declares the aim of poetry is to transport which is uplifting, stimulating and nourishing. And Coleridge is for immediate pleasure through beauty. Sincerity and ardour of thought, generosity of judgement and modesty in putting forward opinion, acute sensibility and catholic taste, and a genuine concern with essence rather than form of literature mark the approach of both Longinus and Coleridge. The style of both is subjective, lively and personal and at the same time analytical and illustrating. Both use the historical and comparative method of criticism.

Coleridge invites comparison with Dryden too who was a liberal neo-classicist. Both of them were great scholars and poets of the first rank, and their criticism was born of their experience. Their views about the end of poetry, imitation, imagination, and the blending of art and nature are similar. "Delight is the chief, if not the only end of poesy." His own aim as a poet is "to delight the age in which I live." This delight is to come through creation of beauty. Coleridge almost in tune with him declares the aim of poetry to be "the excitement of emotion for the purpose of immediate pleasure through the medium of beauty." Both emphasize the elements of pleasure and beauty. Both believe that nature can only supply the raw material out of which the artist will make something very much of his own with the help of his "shaping imagination." Both believe in the happy blending of genius with judgement. "Without rules", says Dryden, "there can be no art any more than there can be a house without a door to conduct you into it." Coleridge, too, believes that a poet who is not a mere usurper of the name must be conversant with the rules and that poetry has as severe a logic as science has. The method of both is psychological, comparative and historical.

Joseph Addison's interest in aesthetics, his preoccupation with genius and taste, his exposition of various genres and critical terms, his interest in the re-discovery and revaluation of older literature—were some of things which resemble Coleridge. In Addison we have Aristotle, Horace, Longinus, Sidney and Dryden. Coleridge, too, echoes these critics. Addison was questioning the prevailing critical standards and methods of his time and was trying to shatter the rigid orthodoxy of the neo-classical creed. In judging literary excellence he preferred the sum total emotional response of an individual to a work of art, to rules or rather mechanical instruments.

Addison interpreted some critical terms such as—taste, wit, judgement, imagination and fancy like Coleridge.

Like Addison and like Coleridge, Alexander Pope also was motivated by a desire to improve the standards of criticism. His *Essay on Criticism* is a compilation of critical precepts drawn from Horace, Rapin, Boileau and others, just as *Biographia Literaria* of Coleridge in a sense is the compilation of critical precepts drawn from German philosophers. Pope collected the wisest dicta from various sources, ancient and modern, arranged them, and displayed them in a brilliant way. The main charm of *An Essay on Criticism* lies in what Pope said—"What oft was thought, but ne'er so well express'd." Dr. Johnson specially commended its "selection of matter, novelty of arrangement, justice of precept, splendour of illustration, and propriety of digression."⁴

Pope's friend Richardson said that Pope always spoke of the *Essay* as an "irregular collection of thoughts, thrown together as they offered themselves, as Horace's *Art of Poetry* was." It is like the *Biographia Literaria* of Coleridge upon which he said, it is an "immethodical miscellany", a "semi-narrative."

"To judge, therefore, of Shakespeare by Aristotle's rules, is like trying a man by the laws of one country, who acted under

those of another," so said Pope in his *Preface to Shakespeare*. Coleridge, too, said in almost the same way. Like Coleridge, Pope recognizes the individuality of Shakespeare's characters and admires his power of vivifying the passions of the human heart.

Pope was a liberal neo-classicist. His attitude to neo-classicism was not as rigid as it is generally supposed to be. He accepted the system with some reserve. His basic approach was that rules could be transcended if an appeal was made to the heart of the reader. In actual practice, he himself did not hesitate to go beyond the conventional canons of neo-classical criticism. This is evident from his criticism of Shakespeare and Homer. The flexibility of his attitude is nowhere so obviously reflected as in his statement, to quote again,—“To judge therefore of Shakespeare by Aristotle's rules, is like trying a man by the laws of one country, who acted under those of another.”

Coleridge has a few points of similarity even with Dr. Johnson. Both are encyclopaedic scholars with a passion for knowledge. Johnson's critical method was comparative and psychological. Coleridge is decidedly an acknowledged and outstanding practitioner of the historical, comparative, and psychological criticism. Both were interested in the etymology of words, their subtle nuances, and usage. Johnson prepared the first dictionary and Coleridge in a way laid the foundation of the modern science of semantics and linguistics. Both were intensely interested in the improvement of the language. Truth for Dr. Johnson has to be pleasure-giving. And Coleridge says that “immediate pleasure through the medium of beauty to be the aim of poetry.” Coleridge shares with Dr. Johnson a love of the poetry of Milton and an unbounded appreciation for the genius and judgement of Shakespeare. Johnson holds the test of good literature to be the “general and continued approbation of mankind,” and Coleridge believes only those poems to be really valuable to which we return again and again.

Wordsworth and Coleridge were the two faces of a single coin. Wordsworth published *Lyrical Ballads* with collaboration of Coleridge. On September 30, 1800, Coleridge informed Daniel Stuart that "the *Preface* contains our joint opinion on Poetry." Wordsworth believes with Aristotle that "poetry is the most philosophic of all writing ... its object is truth not individual and local, but general and operative." It is universal truth "carried alive into the heart by passion." Coleridge, too, says that philosophy and literature are inseparably linked together and that "no man was ever yet a great poet, without being at the same time a profound philosopher. For poetry is the blossom and fragrantcy of all human knowledge, human thoughts, human passions, emotions, language."⁵

Like Coleridge, Wordsworth, in his critical theory, affirmed the role of imagination in a poetical composition. For Wordsworth, writes C M Bowra, "imagination was the most important gift that a poet can have, and his arrangement of his own poems shows what he meant by it. The section which he calls 'Poems of the Imagination', contain poems in which he united creative power and a special, visionary insight. He agreed with Coleridge that this activity resembles that of God."⁶

Both Wordsworth and Coleridge based their theory of imagination on the sensationalist philosophy of David Hartley who maintained that "mental activity is due to molecular vibrations of the nerve centres, and knowledge is the organisation of associated ideas with the help of memory and reasoning." For Coleridge Fancy was "the aggregative and associative power," whereas Imagination was "the shaping and modifying power." For Wordsworth, "To aggregate and to associate, to evoke and to combine, belong as well to the Imagination as to the Fancy." To Wordsworth, Imagination is essentially an intuitive and interpretive function under the control and guidance of human emotions. But to Coleridge, its function is operative and creative and is guided by will and understanding.

Like Coleridge, Shelley borrowed his material for the criticism from different sources. His 'Defence of Poetry' is much inspired by the works of Plato and Sidney. To quote M H Abrams, "There is more of Plato in the 'Defence' than in any earlier piece of English criticism..."⁷ Shelley, too, emphasized on the importance of metre, on imagination, and on aesthetic value of poetry as Coleridge did,

Coleridge and matthew Arnold were essentially a poet who turned into critics. In his critical work 'On translating Homer', Arnold defines criticism as "The endeavour, in all branches of knowledge, theology, philosophy, history, art, science, to see the object as in itself it really is." It is like the definition of poetry given by Coleridge. Like Coleridge, Arnold gave his comments on Milton and on Shakespeare. And again like him, Arnold was a man of the two worlds—the world of Romantics and the world of Neo-Classics. He can be described as an "anti-romantic romantic."⁸

As a critic, Walter Pater inevitably invites a comparison with S T Coleridge in spite of the fundamental difference in their critical attitudes. Both of them were scholars, one was of Oxford and the other of Cambridge, engaged in their own way in refining the literary taste of their age. Like Coleridge, Pater was a scholar and a recluse who contemplated art as a great end in itself and the pursuit of beauty as the greatest ideal of his life. He was the chief exponent of the aesthetic movement, and Coleridge too was a great aesthetist.

But when we think of Eliot we find that Eliot and Coleridge both were poet-critics. Both, T S Eliot and S T Coleridge, have been influenced by a large number of critics and philosophers.

Coleridge, thus, occupies a unique position among the literary theorists. Taking inspiration from the German philosophers and critics, he introduces to English criticism alongwith other valuable concepts and suggestions, the relevance of organic concept of poetry and the "raisond'etra"

of the study of semantics. While showing the difference between Fancy and Imagination, he convincingly demonstrates the role of 'esemplastic' imagination in any creative process. As such Coleridge's literary criticism appears more a lamp than mirror in giving light to other artists and critics coming after him. We may even trace the influence of Coleridge not only in I A Richards and Chicago critics but many other critics of today.

REFERENCES

1. Butcher, *Artstotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art*, Daver Publications, INC., America, 1951, p.127.
2. *Biographia Literaria*, Vol. II, p.253.
3. *Ibid.*, p.255.
4. Dr. Johnson, *Lives of the English Poets*.
5. *Biographia Literaria*, Vol. II, p.19.
6. C M Bowra, *The Romantic Imagination*, p. 18.
7. M H Abrams, *The Mirror & The Lamp*, The Norton Library, 1958, p.126.
8. The phrase has been borrowed from D Bush.

He (the poet) must have the ear of a wild Arab listening
in the silent Desert, the eye of a North American
Indian tracing the footsteps of an Enemy Upon the
Leaves that strew the Forest— the Touch of a Blind
Man feeling the face of a darling Child.

—Coleridge.

Conclusion

Coleridge's influence on English literary criticism is very great. Critics like Saintsbury, Arthur Symonds, J H Muirhead, I A Richards, and Herbert Read all agree in regarding Coleridge as one of the greatest, if not the greatest, of English critics. If his reputation as a literary critic stands today very high, it is particularly on account of the fact that Coleridge was the first English critic to attempt to ground literary criticism in philosophy, psychology, and metaphysics. Thus with S T Coleridge, literary criticism begins as a not merely the art of judgement, nor is it a set of practical rules for the writer, nor only the anatomy of a work of art, rather, it is a branch of philosophy dealing with the nature of art, and psychology of aesthetic appreciation.

In a letter to a friend in 1816, Coleridge wrote : "I am convinced that a true system of philosophy—the Science of Life—is best taught in poetry." And again—"no man was ever yet a great poet, without being at the same time a profound philosopher." It is because of this that his opinions on art and literature show his philosophical bias. The chief foreign influences on Coleridge are thus those of Lessing, Kant, Schelegel brothers, and Schelling. In the condemnation of the French, the praise of Shakespeare, in their views on genius, mimesis, function of art, and the rules and nature of poetry we find a striking resemblance between Lessing and Coleridge. The fundamental philosophical distinctions—such as

genius and talent, reason and understanding etc.—accepted by Coleridge are Kantian.

The fact is that there are two stages in the development of Coleridge's philosophical and critical mind. In the first stage, Coleridge was a follower of Hartley and was an Associationist. But later, he cut off himself from this doctrine as smacking of mechanism, and became an idealist under the influence of Kant, Fichte, Schelling and others. Even the idealists could not stamp their hold permanently upon Coleridge. About Schelling, from whom he borrowed so largely, he made the disparaging comment—"The more I reflect, the more I am convinced of the gross materialism of the whole system." It is said that with advancing years, Coleridge inclined more and more towards a spiritualistic view of the universe and became a theologian rather than a metaphysical idealist. In one of his letters, written on October 1, 1803, he said—"My speculative Principles were wild as Dreams - they were 'Dreams linked to purposes of Reason' ; but they were perfectly harmless—a compound of Philosophy and Christianity." But whatever the progress in the critical mind of S T Coleridge, it is certain that his critical theories bore traces of German philosophy. One cannot separate it. "There are critics like Leslie Stephen who think that a system cannot be constructed out of Coleridge's scattered utterances, but others do not agree, and Muirhead has even tried to present Coleridge as a philosopher."¹

Leaving for the present, Coleridge's interest in metaphysics and theology we may say that he is known for his distinctions between the seemingly similar words. They are for the layman's similar words, but on close scrutiny Coleridge found a world of difference. This fine sense of nuances shows his poetic gift and critical insight. Coleridge says that "a poem of any length neither can be, nor ought to be all poetry."² Coleridge considers the making of a poem to be a deliberate art and not the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" as his friend Wordsworth did. About genius and talent, Coleridge says—"The difference indeed between these and the

works of genius is not less than the difference between an egg and an egg-shell”³ looking alike from a distance. Coleridge’s distinction between Fancy and Imagination has generally been regarded as a central importance by literary critics and scholars. This distinction drawn by Coleridge between Fancy and Imagination is celebrated, but some have called it ‘useless’. “In fact, it is a valid distinction, and we can realize the nature of the fusion effected by Imagination if we place it against the systematization of reason on the one hand and the assemblage of Fancy on the other.”⁴ From this distinction, especially from his theory of Imagination, Coleridge evolved the notion of symbol, one of the key concepts of modern literary criticism.

The theory of poetic diction in Coleridge’s criticism is a landmark in the history of English literary criticism. Coleridge asserts that as reading differs from talking, “prose itself, at least in all argumentative and consecutive works differs and ought to differ from the language of conversation.”⁵ Words used in poetry and prose may be and sometimes are the same, but their arrangement and order are different. The metre is “the proper form of poetry, and poetry (is) imperfect and defective without”⁶ it. Coleridge says : “I write in metre, because I am about to use a language different from that of prose.”⁷

An avowed eclectic, Coleridge invites comparison with almost all his predecessors and successors. In his criticism, we have not excessive subjectivism as we generally find in many of the Romantic critics. He was both objective and subjective as Ernest Bernbaum points out in *A Guide Through The Romantic Movement*. It is this quality of his thought which has made a special appeal to the modern critics like Herbert Read, I A Richards and the Chicago critics of America.

Coleridge was not merely a mere theoretician or a dry critic interested in theories but a critic of armed vision having genuine poetic sensibility. His own poems such as ‘Kubla Khan’, ‘Christable’, and ‘The Ancient Mariner’ are beautiful poems

showing perfect marriage between realism and romance, natural and supernatural, familiar and unfamiliar, and even passion and thought. And this background of associated sensibility helped him in exploring the poetic process in a remarkable way. Moreover, the analytical method of close study of the given text that he adopted in 'Venus and Adonis' studying contextual behaviour of words, is a landmark even for the New Critics.

Moreover, Coleridge's use of psychology, metaphysics, philosophy and other allied disciplines enriched and deepened his critical insights. And his criticism highlighting the organic concept of poetry naturally leads us to the theory and perfect fusion of 'inescape' and 'instress' of G M Hopkins, 'irony' emphasized by R P Warren, 'tension' by Allen Tate and 'paradox' by Cleanth Brooks.

As such S T Coleridge's literary criticism may be taken as a lighthouse for guiding other curious explorers in the field of poetry and criticism. Decidedly his literary criticism is more than a mirror (transcending the 'mimetic' concept of art), a lamp or perhaps a lighthouse in the dark corridors of history of literary criticism.

REFERENCES

1. Quoted by S C Sen Gupta in *Towards A Theory of the Imagination*, Oxford University Press, 1959, p.27.
2. *Biographia Literaria*, Vol. II. p.268.
3. *Ibid.*, p.26.
4. S C Sen Gupta, *Towards A Theory of the Imagination*, op.cit., p.40.
5. *Biographia Literaria*, Vol. II, p.45.
6. *Ibid.*, p.55.
7. *Ibid.*, p.53.

Works cited and consulted

PRIMARY SOURCES

Works of S T Coleridge

1. *Biographia Literaria*, Ed. with his aesthetical essays by J. Shawcross. 2 Vols. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1907 ; repr., 1958.
2. *Specimens of the Table Talk of the lat S T Coleridge*, by H.N. Coleridge. London, 1835.
3. *Letters of S.T. Coleridge*, Ed. by E.H. Coleridge, London, 2 Vols., 1895.
4. *Coleridge's Shakespearean Criticism*, Ed. by T.M. Raysor, 2 Vols., 1930, rev. 1960 (Everyman's Library).
5. *Coleridge's Miscellaneous Criticism*, Ed. by T.M. Raysor, Cambridge, Mass : Harvard University Press, 1936.
6. *Collected Letters of S.T. Coleridge*, Ed. by E.L. Griggs, 4 Vols., Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1956-59.
7. *The Notebooks of S.T. Coleridge*, Ed. by Kathleen Coburn, 1957-61.
8. *Anima Poetae : From the Unpublished Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, Ed. by E.H. Coleridge, London, 1895.

9. *The Table Talk and Omniana of S T Coleridge*, Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1917.

SECONDARY SOURCES

The Critical works on or Related to Samuel Taylor Coleridge

1. Abrams, M H, *The Mirror and the Lamp : Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition*, New York : Oxford University Press, 1953.
2. Appleyard, J A, *Coleridge's Philosophy of Literature*, Harward University Press, Cambridge, 1965.
3. Aristotle, *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art*, with a Critical Text and Translation of the Poetics, Ed. and Translated by S H Butcher, 3rd edition, London ; Macmillan & Co., 1902.
4. Aiyar, R Sadasiva, *A Handbook of Literary criticism*, Popular Book Depot, Bombay, 1957.
5. Baker, J V, *The Secred River*, Louisiana State University, Press, 1957.
6. Bate, W J, *From Classic to Romantic : Premises of Taste in Eighteenth Century, England*, Cambridge, Mass., 1946.
7. Bate, W J, *Coleridge on the Function of Art*, in 'Perspectives of Criticism' Ed. by Harry Levin, (Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature, Vol. 20) Cambridge, Mass : Harward University Press, 1950.
8. Badawi, M M, "Coleridge's Formal Criticism of Shakespeare's Plays", in *Essays in Criticism*, 10 (1960) 148-162.
9. Benziger, J, "Organic Unity : Leibniz to Coleridge", *PMLA*, 66 (1951) : 24-48.

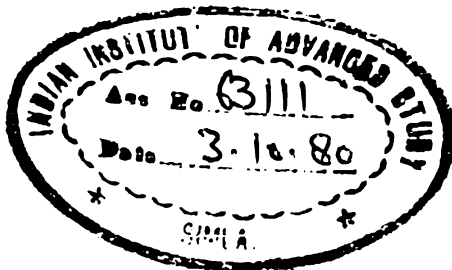
10. Brett, R L, *Fancy & Imagination*, Methuen & Co. Ltd., London, 1962.
11. Brett, R L, *Coleridge's Theory of Imagination*, English Studies, Ed. by Sir Philip Magus, London, 1949, pp. 75-90.
12. Brooks, Cleanth., *The Well-Wrought Urn*, Methuen & Co. Ltd., London, 1968.
13. Cazamian, Louis & Emile Legouis., *A History of English Literature*, London, 1947.
14. Compton-Rickett., *A History of English Literature*, London, 1946.
15. Cohen, Ralph., *The Art of Discrimination*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1964.
16. Crane, R S, *Critics and Criticism*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London, 1957.
17. Colmer, John., *Coleridge : Critic of Society*, Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1959.
18. Carver, P L, *Coleridge and the Theory of Imagination*, University of Toronto Quarterly, 9 (1940), 452-65.
19. Daichess, David., *A Critical History of English Literature* 2 Vols. Seeker & Warburng, London, 1963.
20. Daichess, David., *Critical Approaches to Literature*, Longmans, Green & Co. Ltd., London, 1963.
21. Eliot, T S, 'The Secred Wood' : *Essays on Poetry & Criticism*, Methuen, London, 1920.
22. Eliot, T S, *Selected Essays (1917-32)*, Feber & Faber Ltd., London, 1951.
23. Eliot, T S, *The Use of Poetry & the Use of Criticism*, Faber & Feber Ltd., London, 1934.

24. Elton, Oliver., *A Survey of English Literature*, 2 Vols., Edward Arnold & Co., London, 1928.
25. Ellis, John M., *The Theory of Literary Criticism*. University of California Press, London, 1974.
26. Foakes, R A, *The Romantic Assertion*, 1958.
27. Fogle, R H, *The Idea of Coleridge's Criticism*, 1962.
28. George, A G, *Critics and Criticism*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1971.
29. Gokak, Vinayak Krishna., *Coleridge's Aesthetics*, Abhinav Publications, New Delhi, 1975.
30. Gupta, S C Sen., *Towards A Theory of the Imagination*, Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1959.
31. Gardner Helen., *The Business of Criticism*, Oxford : Oxford University Press, London, 1963.
32. House, H, 'Coleridge : The Clark Lectures' 1951-52, London : Rupert Hart-Davis, 1953.
33. Hyman, S.E., *The Armed Vision*, New York : Alfred A Knopf, 1948.
34. Johnson, Samuel., *The Lives of the English Poets*, 2 Vols. Ed. by G B Hill, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1905.
35. Kant, Immanuel., *Critique of Practical Reason and other Writings in Moral Philosophy*, Translated and edited with an introduction by Lewis White Beck, Chicago University of Chicago Press, 1949.
36. Kant, Immanuel., *Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, Translated by Norman Kemp Smith, London : Macmillan & Co., 1933.

37. Leavis, F.R., 'Coleridge in Criticism' ; *Scrutiny*, 9(1940), 57-69 ; also in 'The Importance of Scrutiny,' Ed. by Eric Bentley (New York, 1948), pp. 76-87.
38. Lowes, John Livingston., *The Road to Xanadu : A Study in the Ways of the Imagination*, Boston & New York : Houghton Mifflin & Co., 1927.
39. Mckenzie, Gordon., *Organic Unity in Coleridge*, University of California Publications in English, Vol VII ; No. 1. Berkeley : University of California Press, 1939.
40. Muirhead J H, *Coleridge as philosopher*. London : George Allen and Unwin, 1930, Repr. 1954.
41. Ogden, C K & I A Richards., *The Meaning of Meaning*, New York : Hercourt, Brace & Co., 1960.
42. Prasad, Dr. Nagendra., *Personal Bias in the Literary Criticism*, a Doctoral thesis, 1971.
43. Prasad, Birjadish., *An Introduction to English Criticism*, Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1965.
44. Parrish, Stephen Maxfield, 'The Wordsworth-Coleridge Controversy', *PMLA*, 73 (1958) : 367-74.
45. Pater, Walter, *Appreciations*, Rupa & Co., Bombay, 1967.
46. Ransom, J C, *The New Criticism*, Norfolk, New Directions, 1941.
47. Raysor, T M, 'Coleridge's Criticisms of Wordsworth', *PMLA*, 34 (1939), Baltimore.
48. Read, Herbert., *The True Voice of Feeling*, Rather & Faber Ltd. London, 1947.
49. Read, Herbert., *The Nature of Literature*, New York : Grove Press, 1958.
50. Richards, I A, *Principles of Literary Criticism*.

80 COLERIDGE AS A CRITIC

51. Richards, I A, *Coleridge on Imagination*, Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., London, 1955.
52. Richards, I.A., *Practical Criticism*.
53. Righter, William, *Logic and Criticism*, Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., London., 1963.
54. Saintsbury, George., *A History of Criticism & Literary Taste in Europe*, 3 Vols. 4th Edition, Edinburg & London, William Blackwood & Sons, 1949.
55. Scott-James, R A, *The Making of Literature*, Seeker & Warburg, London, 1953.
56. Shipley J T (Ed.), *Dictionary of World Literature : Criticism—Forms—Technique*, New York, The Philosophical Library, 1943.
57. Thorpe, Clarence D., *The Imagination : Coleridge & Wordsworth*, PQ, 18 (1939), pp 1-18.
58. Watson, George., *The Literary Critics*, London, 1964.
59. Willey, Basil., *The Eighteenth Century Background : Studies on the Idea of Nature in the Thought of the Period*, London : Bhatto and Windus, 1940.
60. Wellek, Rene., *A History of Modern Criticism : 1750-1950*, 4 Vols. Jonathan Cape, London, 1961.
61. Winter, Yvor., *The Function of Criticism*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1962.
62. Wordsworth, Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, in 'English Critical Texts' by Enright & Chickern, Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1962.



SATISH CHANDRA SINHA
born on the first day of June,
1949 at Begusarai, Bihar. He
was educated at Monghyr,
Patna and Bodh Gaya. He
took his Master's degree in
English from Magadh
University. At present he is a
lecturer in English at
G S College, Bihta, Bihar.

BOOKS INTERNATIONAL