Chapter

Developing Polarity: Trichotomy, Tetractys, and Pentad

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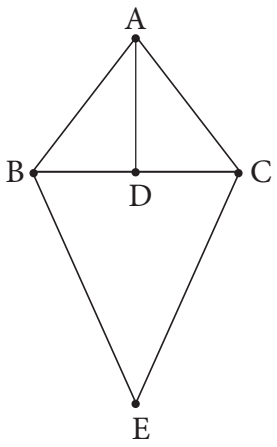
9
Developing Polarity: Trichotomy, Tetractys, and Pentad

This chapter addresses noetic contemplation through Coleridge's higher logic, or rather 'Noetic', of the 'tetrad' (group of four terms), relating absolutes (the Trinity, reality, being, the good, etc.), and his 'pentad' (group of five terms), relating non-absolutes (human institutions, natural powers, and phenomena).[1] First, I commence with a preliminary statement of the general terms of the pentad with Coleridge's following kite figure:



Where:

A = prothesis, the (potential) identity of B and C
B = thesis
C = antithesis
D = 'the Indifference of B and C', or mesothesis
E = 'the *Synthesis* of B. and C.'[2]

[1] Hitherto, Newsome's chapter, 'Coleridge's Trichotomous Logic' (*Two Classes of Men*, 100–11) was the longest study of the tetradic and pentadic forms. Levere, *Poetry Realized in Nature*, 114–26, 154–5, and Modiano, *Coleridge and the Concept of Nature*, 172, 185, 190–96 also study these, focusing on their application to natural science; and Uehlein, *Die Manifestation*, 120 ff, and Evans, *Sublime Coleridge*, 20–4, 95–100 examine their philosophically idealist and theological uses respectively.

[2] *Notebooks*, 5: §5726, f49–49^{v} (January 1828).

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Experience of things and phenomena occurs at the level of the synthesis (E), the realm of appearance. BCD represents the level of actuality, manifesting the one power of the prothesis (A) by opposed forces (B and C). The prothesis (A) is for Coleridge originary reality. Pentads can be made, thinks Coleridge, for any kind of concept or phenomenon (colours, the nation, religions, natural forces, etc.), as can tetrads for constellations of ideas or powers.

In Section 9.1, I argue that the pentads 'tautegorically' represent Coleridge's dynamic and relational metaphysics. I also compare these forms to C. S. Peirce's 'abductive' logic. In Section 9.2, I discuss Coleridge's historical sources, mainly Schelling and other *Naturphilosophen*, who adapt from Fichte, who in turn develops from Kant. I also relate Coleridge's polar logic to Heraclitus, Böhme, Richard Baxter, and, minimally, Hegel. I then argue, in Section 9.3, that Coleridge crucially differs from Schelling here in holding that the Absolute is transcendent to the indifference-point, or mesothesis. Section 9.4 illuminates Coleridge's neglected distinction between his tetracti, which are always and entirely noetic, constellating absolutes (ideas or powers), and his pentads, which are either noetic, containing an absolute term, or logical, constellating only non-absolutes. Section 9.5 then pauses for transitional remarks before the pentads are interpreted in Chapter 10 with respect to the humane value of contemplation and the realization of ideas.

Coleridge's pentadic schemata share something of what he called, in the *Biographia*, the logic of poetry, with 'a logic of its own, as severe as that of science'.[3] I am not suggesting that the pentads are a peculiar form of poetry, but rather that they possess an almost poematic potential for combining rigour and openness, or fixity and fluidity, in developing and firming up thoughts and relations. They bear comparison to creative forms such as the haiku, which fuses self-awareness and natural setting into a strictly drawn syllabic string. Insights through this form are held as individual flashes, paratactically conveyed, that belong as much to the natural environment and the traditional form itself as to the poet.

Similarly, the Petrarchan sonnet offers a progressive technique of thought, blending feeling with structure to evolve an initial problem or argument, via the medial volta, to a resolution and conclusion. The sonneteer has a conviction that no problem need lead to despair. For he or she has been surprised or impressed before by sonnets where the sestet (the volta and ensuing resolution and conclusion) responds, from a higher, hope-inspired vantage, to the difficulty or dilemma declaimed in the octave. The dual forces of pressure from the problem and faith in reaching a resolution push one through to the volta, and no merely conceptual logic can bring one there.

[3] *Biographia Literaria*, 1: 9.

One cannot, therefore, expect an artificial intelligence algorithm to create a truly poetic sonnet, nor achieve the fusion of subjectivity and nature of a haiku. Computers can generate sonnet-like or haiku-shaped poems, with interesting and unexpected semantic connections, but without access to the pull of the idea, nor pushed by anything like possible despair or emotional concern; they will output only poems, but no poetry, to use Coleridge's distinction.[4] Verse kinds like the sonnet and the haiku are often used to focus thought and feeling and move them on, through the constraints specific to the form, to a new insight or perspective. Moving emotion into an intellectual or spiritual yearning, Coleridge's pentads can be read positively in this light.

9.1 Aids to Contemplation

9.1 (i) Metaphysics and Constructive Logic

For Coleridge, logical trichotomy is entailed by the universal principle, both scientific (e.g. Newton's Third Law) and metaphysical, that one power becomes manifest as two opposite forces. Accordingly, for Coleridge, everything in nature, and the mind itself, conforms to this triadic, polar dynamic. This principle is central to Coleridge's

> scheme or formula of all logical *Distribution* of our Conceptions, which I have entitled the Logical Pentad . . .[5]

As I argued in Chapter 8, Coleridge's metaphysics develops from the difference between Platonic 'Divine Ideas' and the natural and socio-cultural forces that govern the sensible world. For Coleridge, the 'Divine Ideas' represent God in numerous forms and constitute reason in its primary sense, as Logos, accessible through reason in its ancillary sense, as defined in Chapter 2 (71–2). Coleridge's attention to the non-absolute and the absolute reflects his attempt to connect immanent experience and transcendence without collapsing their difference. Such a collapse would introduce the pantheism he relentlessly eschewed while steering close to its shores. In a short manuscript essay of 1816, he discusses how one may 'contemplate an absolute, or that which transcends all degree'.[6] A dozen years later, he similarly uses 'a Transcendent' as a synonym for 'an absolute'.[7] Coleridge

[4] *Biographia Literaria*, 2: 15–18.
[5] *Church and State*, 233.
[6] 'Consciousness and Self-Consciousness' (1816), *Shorter Works*, 1: 428.
[7] *Notebooks*, 5: §5980 f4^{v} (February–March 1829).

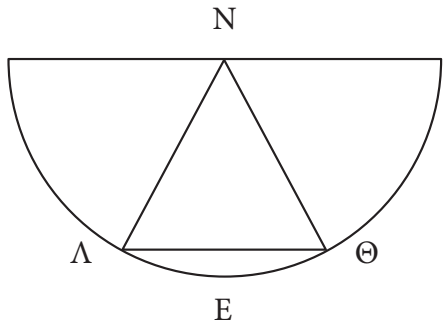
was keenly aware of the difficulty of connecting the finite and the absolute. As he says in his *Opus Maximum*, the 'Noetic'[8] sequel to his *Logic*:

> The passage from the absolute to the ⟨separated⟩ finite, this is the difficulty, which who shall overcome? This is the chasm which ages have tried in vain to overbridge . . . For the finite can be one with the absolute, inasmuch only as it represents the absolute ~~truly~~ verily under some particular form.[9]

Continuous with his usual sense of the word as meaning 'of the *noûs*', Coleridge defines 'Noetic' in his *Logic* as the preferable term for the

> higher, or rather the highest, branch of logic, viz. the logic of ideas and first principles.[10]

With the following diagram, in the introduction to the *Logic*, Coleridge illustrates what he means by universal reason, or *noûs* (N), as being 'above' conceptual and relational logic (Λ), which, like its complement, mathematical *theōría* (Θ; at the mid-level, with Λ), is itself 'above' empirical data (E).



N = 'the νους [*noûs*], or the reason, as the something transcendent of the understanding'; it comprises

> the primary truths—*aeternae veritates*—independent of all time and place and in which the reason itself consists, gives rise to . . . ontology . . . more laxly . . . metaphysics . . . for which the term "noetic", or the science corresponding to the νους, would be the most . . . appropriate exponent.[11]

Λ = logic, as understanding. This represents

[8] *Logic*, 44–5 (see Table 7.2), and index, under 'noetic(s)'. *Marginalia*, 3: 742 (LUTHER), refers to 'my Noetic & Discipline of Ideas'. Many entries in *Notebooks*, 4 and 5, especially the Folio Notebook, pursue this noetic discipline.

[9] *Opus Maximum*, 218. [10] *Logic*, 169. [11] *Logic*, 36.

> the science of the permanent relations in conceptions, as inferior to the absolute, but superior to the variably relative, or facts, which we find, but do not understand or conceive in and of themselves.[12]

Θ = mathematics, understood as *theōría*, the science of the Kantian pure a priori intuitions of space and time.

E = 'the extracircumferential . . . power acting on or from without', the external objects and forces intuited by the senses, which he terms, eight paragraphs later, 'Empiric = evidence of the senses', the general science of which is physics, in contrast to the 'noetic, the logic, and the mathematics . . . comprised in the term "metaphysics"'.[13]

This schema shows the pentadic logic as intermediate between empirical data and the noetically intuitable. While the noetic requires a leap, or bridging over, to contemplate the absolute as transcending the empirical, logic and mathematics are contiguous with the empirical.

In Coleridge's geometrical analogies, points, lines, etc. are constructs that he initially called ideas in both the 1809 and the 1818 *Friend* but, in later annotations, amended to 'theorems', in conformity with 'the severity of Logic'.[14] As has been argued in an important philosophical commentary, through his

> mathematical symbols, point and line, center, radius, and perimeter . . . Coleridge shows the self-explanation of the Absolute One in the same context [of] . . . speculative mathematics . . . as elaborated in Plato's 'unwritten doctrine' and the old Academy, and taken up and continued by Neoplatonism . . . [15]

Agreeing with Plato's notion of the mathematicals (*ta mathēmatiká*, discussed in this book at Chapter 7, 214–5) as theorems, visual or mental constructs, Coleridge saw the natural sciences and geometry as 'confined to Abstractions' derived from sense intuition.[16] Much as symbols aesthetically convey ideas, but 'in a lower dignity', Coleridge's geometrical analogies express objective laws, forces, and ideas for intellectual contemplation, but through the senses.

Coleridge's textual guides in this logical middle ground are ancient and modern. The former includes Plato's divided line, ascending from sense and belief, through conceptual schemata, to noetic contemplation. Like Plato, Coleridge sees theoremes as abstract, conceptual schemata that can indicate what transcends the abstract and conceptual. Coleridge also returns to passages in Plotinus that identify the contemplative act with the product of its creation. In the *Logic*, for

[12] *Logic*, 36. [13] *Logic*, 35, 44 (see Table 7.2), 36.
[14] *The Friend*, 1: 177 fn. [15] Uehlein, *Die Manifestation*, 124 n.
[16] *The Statesman's Manual*, 49, autograph insertion *h–i* (likely *c.*1823). *Logic*, 244–5 describes geometrical 'theoremes' as '*pure* constructions of the intuitive faculty'.

instance, he applies Plotinus' thought on generation in nature to the 'ἐνεργεια θεωρετικη [*enérgeia theōretikḗ*, perceiving energy]' of construction in human thinking; that is,

> of the act of the intuitive imagination and its close connection with its product in the mental diagram . . . when, speaking of the geometricians and then of Nature as acting geometrically, he says θεωρουσα θεωρηματα ποιει [*theōroûsa theōrḗmata poieî*], her contemplative act is creative and is one with the product of the contemplation.[17]

Most influential on him among modern texts concerning this logical middle ground are Kant's notion of mathematical proof as a mental construction, achieved via a priori intuition in the pure forms of space and time, and Schelling's applying the same—beyond and against Kant—to philosophy and intellectual intuition. Schelling opposed as 'arbitrary' Kant's assertion that 'mathematics considers the universal in the particular, while philosophy treats the particular in the universal'.[18] In a Schellingian direction, Coleridge held that ideas can be intimated in the 'philosophic imagination'[19] through symbols, diagrams, 'theoremes', and philosophemes that convey an essential and representative sameness (but in a 'lower dignity').

Symbols, theoremes, and philosophemes[20] are therefore tautegorical, for Coleridge, as they convey the universal through the particular, or the whole in the part, to recall the *pars pro toto* figuration of the tautegory that I discussed in Chapter 7 (191–2). He distinguishes these tautegories from allegories since the former, he holds, convey the same essential relations as the truth that they aim at, but 'in a lower dignity', whereas allegories convey merely coincidental, nonessential similarities of relation that break down when pressed.

> The Prometheus is a philosopheme and ταυτηγορικὸν [tautegory]: the tree of knowledge of good and evil, an allegory ([ἰ]εροπαίδευμα [*hieropaídeuma*, a sacred image of instruction]), though the noblest and most pregnant of its kind.[21]

Defending his claim that the Prometheus myth is tautegorical, Coleridge argued that a relevant analogue exists in every detail of that story, conveying poetically a

[17] *Logic*, 73–4, cited again at 245, quoting Plotinus, *Enneads*, III.8.4, 6–7 (var.); also quoted around six years earlier at *Biographia Literaria*, 1: 251–2. A related passage, from *Enneads*, III.8.3, is paraphrased at *The Friend*, 1: 418.

[18] Beiser, *German Idealism*, 588, referring to Schelling, 'Über die Construktion in der Philosophie', in *Sämmtliche Werke*, 5: 125–34.

[19] *Biographia Literaria*, 1: 241.

[20] A philosopheme, for Coleridge, is an analogical illustration of a philosophical principle or thesis.

[21] 'On the Prometheus of Aeschylus' (1825), *Shorter Works*, 1267–8. Royal Society of Literature, inaugural lecture.

philosophical and theological contemplation of reason—the divine fire, or *noûs*—as a 'gift' different in kind from the faculties that humans share with other animals. Schelling later borrowed Coleridge's concept of the tautegorical in his philosophy of mythology, confiding that

> Coleridge . . . in one word . . . had comprised a whole essay, saying that mythology was not allegorical but tautegorical . . . [22]

Coleridge's metaphysics involves the upward dimension of contemplation or idealization, the downward of actualization, and lateral axis of polarity. These dimensions are synchronously modelled by his pentadic forms. This logic not only represents his metaphysics but also furthers his thinking of it, aligning him with an important logician of later British idealism, namely Bernard Bosanquet, who argued for the identity, or at least the mutually implicative nature, whereby

> in content Logic is one with Metaphysics, and differs if at all simply in mode of treatment . . . To say that the real world is the intelligible world is only . . . to suggest as an elucidation . . . the . . . judgment, that reality is something at which we arrive by a constructive process.[23]

With this view, Bosanquet, had the texts been available to him, would likely have seen more merits in Coleridge's pentadic thinking than the yet later British idealist J. H. Muirhead.

Muirhead takes Coleridge seriously as a philosophical forerunner of British idealism but, perhaps because of his incomplete access to Coleridge's relevant manuscripts, he considers Coleridge's pentadic logic as merely eccentric, rather than an abiding feature of his philosophic project. Muirhead nonetheless accepts Coleridge's trichotomous logic of 'Identity, Thesis, and Antithesis', because in overcoming the dichotomy of affirmation and contradiction it can

> advance beyond the limitations of Logic, or the science of the Understanding to a Noetic, or science of the Reason, which should also be a science of Reality.[24]

Coleridge's trichotomous logic is consequently one of enlargement (like Hegel's) rather than exclusion, as Muirhead approvingly notes. Yet, unaware that Coleridge's noetic pentads theorize a metaphysics of contemplation and actualization, Muirhead simply sees the tetrad and pentad as needlessly expanding triadic logic.[25] *Pace*

[22] Jowett, in Abbott et al., *Life and Letters*, 1: 146. Schelling was confiding to Benjamin Jowett.
[23] Bosanquet, *Logic*, 1: 232. [24] Muirhead, *Coleridge as Philosopher*, 86.
[25] Muirhead, *Coleridge as Philosopher*, 86 n. Barfield, *What Coleridge Thought*, also sidesteps the pentads, although he explores Coleridgean polarity and trichotomy.

Muirhead, I aim to demonstrate how Coleridge used his noetic pentads productively to conceive the three general levels of reality and their interrelations. Reality in this most general sense consists of reality (God, Logos, the ideas, the fundamental powers); actuality (*natura naturans*, the opposed powers or forces that are non-phenomenal yet produce phenomena); and phenomenality (the evolving objects of experience that arise in the synthesis of the opposed powers of actuality).

It must be emphasized that one can follow Coleridge extending these forms into the actual business of philosophy, as he used his pentadic logic to think through subjects as diverse as, among others, the 'Five essential Forms of Speech . . . and the two Modifications';[a] the forces of gravity, electricity, and magnetism;[b] the colour spectrum;[c] human ancestral groups;[d] the organization of the nation;[e] the essential structure of the Church;[f] and the Holy Trinity within the Tetractys.[g] [26]

9.1 (ii) The Pentadic Form

A power or idea, for Coleridge, can become manifest only by two opposed and interdependent forces, such as the positive and negative poles of magnetism, or the socio-cultural forces of permanence and progression in a nation.

> The polar forces are the two forms, ~~on~~ in which a one Power works in the same act and instant. Thus it is not the Power, Attraction and the Power Repulsion at once hugging and tugging like two sturdy Wrestlers that compose the Magnet, but the Magnetic Power working at once ~~a~~ positively & negatively. A. and R. are the two Forces of the one magnetic *Power*.[27]

Initiating this dynamic metaphysics is the 'prothesis', the original reality or power and the first term of the Coleridgean pentad. As Levere notes,

> the polar logic is not merely polar, but productive, so that Coleridge's schemata exhibit . . . thesis and antithesis as the polarization of a prothesis.[28]

As Coleridge writes,

[26] (a) *Notebooks*, 4: §4644 f27 (March 1820); (b) *Marginalia*, 5: 266 (Steffens; 1823, or earlier); (c) *Shorter Works*, 2: 1366–8 (1827); (d) *Marginalia*, 1: 539–40 (Blumenbach; 1828); (e) *Church and State*, 233; (f) *Marginalia*, 3: 6 (Irving, *Sermons*; 1828 or 1829); *Marginalia*, 2: 290 (Donne, *LXXX Sermons*, 1640; *c.*1831); *Marginalia*, 5: 631–3 (Taylor, *Polemicall Discourses*); (g) *Notebooks*, 5: §§6320 (30 May 1830), and 6817 (November 1833).

[27] 'On the Polar Forces' (1818), *Shorter Works*, 1: 785.

[28] Levere, *Poetry Realized in Nature*, 113. Coleridge is the first to use the word 'prothesis' in this sense of an antecedent unity. *Notebooks*, 3: §4418 (August 1818).

> the process itself, in which THE ONE reveals its Being in two opposite yet correlative Modes of Existence, I designate by the term, Polarity, or Polarizing.[29]

Between these poles lies the 'indifference point', or 'mesothesis'. From the viewpoint of either pole, it appears as the other, yet it is in fact neither. Newsome glosses that 'the *mesothesis* . . . is both poles in different relations'.[30] Expanding the logic of antithetic poles into metaphysics, as Coleridge did, Barfield perceives that these 'two indestructible "forces" are located in *natura naturans*, and are pre-phenomenal',[31] implying that a further stage in the unfolding of reality gives rise to concrete, finite experience. This phenomenality is the comprehendible yet fluxional world of human and, presumably, animal experience, furnished with concrete things. This last stage in the unfolding of reality is the 'synthesis' of opposed, polar forces, from which arise distinct and particular phenomena. Coleridge, then, does not deny the reality of material things, but sees them as the products of opposed forces, which themselves manifest originary powers or ideas. Thus we have the five terms of the pentad, or 'the five most general Forms or Preconceptions of Constructive Logic'.[32]

The Coleridgean pentad expresses a number of non-arbitrary states and relations, most prominently the following four:

(1) The prothesis must be the most general of the terms, encompassing the others. For example, 'the Real', denoting all that is or is possible, is the most general category, subsuming the 'the Actual' and 'the Potential'.

(2) The thesis and antithesis must be co-dependent opposites, not mutually cancelling contraries.[33] While contraries have an excluded middle, opposites necessarily have a middle position.

> Note here the difference between opposites and contraries. O.[pposites] always have an Equator—C.[ontraries] never. ————|————·)([34]

Such opposites involve and require one another, with his examples including electrical and magnetic positive and negative poles, expansive light and

[29] *Notebooks*, 4: §4538 f167 (May 1819).
[30] Newsome, *Two Classes of Men*, 103.
[31] Barfield, *What Coleridge Thought*, 37.
[32] *Aids to Reflection*, 182 fn.
[33] 'Note on the Difference between Opposites and Contraries' (November 1821), *Shorter Works*, 2: 960, describes 'Contraries that preclude or destroy, and Opposites that require and support each other'. The difference is also discussed at: 'The Sciences and Theology' (1818), *Shorter Works*, 1: 758; *Notebooks*, 3: §4326 (1816–January 1817); and *Church and State*, 35, and 24 fn., a long note on 'the essential difference between *opposite* and *contrary*'. Coleridge derives this difference from Kant's 'Attempt to Introduce the Concept of Negative Magnitudes into Philosophy' (1763), *Theoretical Philosophy*, 203–41 (*Ak*. 2: 165–204).
[34] *Marginalia*, 3: 327 (KANT, *Vermischte Schriften*; *c.*1816). The bisected line represents opposites, with their necessary 'Mesothesis', or 'Equator'. The ')(' sign represents contraries, with an excluded middle. ~~He later used ')(' for disparity, using ')(' for contrariety (see e.g. the key at *Marginalia*, 5: 500).~~

contractive gravity, subjectivity and objectivity, and socio-cultural permanence and progression. Here, Coleridge develops Kant's distinction between real and logical opposition, whereby, as a dynamic opposition of forces or powers,

> real opposition, is that where two predicates of a thing are opposed to each other, but not through the law of contradiction.[35]

While the two contraries of a logical contradiction cannot exist simultaneously, in real opposition, the two opposed powers must co-exist. Because these opposed powers are central to Coleridge's metaphysics, he terms his philosophy dynamic (δύναμις, power).

(3) The 'indifference-point', or 'mesothesis', must function as the thesis to the antithesis, and as antithesis to the thesis. As a physical example, Coleridge gives the midline of a bar magnet. For cultural example, he considers the journalistic 'Press' to function as the indifference between the 'State', catering for the physical and economic needs of the 'Nation' (the prothetic idea of the whole), and the 'Church', which serves its spiritual needs.[36] Able to criticize and support either pole, 'the Press' can appear overly clerical to 'the State' and overly economic to 'the Church'. The historical (second-order) idea of the nation has evolved since Coleridge's day and few now consider the Church powerful enough to act as an equal-and-opposite counter-pole to the state. However, Coleridge's theory requires that an alternative force necessarily arise, such as a clerisy of school and university teachers and other community workers, representing cultural and personal development, rather than material and economic interests.

(4) A thesis–antithesis opposition must be able to produce in synthesis a *tertium aliquid* (a third thing different from the other two), unlike contraries, which exist independently of one another, and, unproductive, the weaker one is simply cancelled out or diminished.[37] His examples include water as the synthesis of hydrogen and oxygen, and the Crown as the symbolic synthesis of Church and state.

These constraints are rules that give the pentad a formal structure, equally based in logic and metaphysics, with ramifications in the physical and social sciences. Rather than being merely arbitrary, Coleridge defers to linguistic convention in deciding that 'the stronger or more desirable is chosen as the Thesis'.[38] Relatedly, the thesis—as the traditionally prominent of the two poles—can often be named by the same term as the prothesis. For example, in Coleridge's day, the term 'Man'

[35] Kant, 'Attempt to Introduce the Concept of Negative Magnitudes into Philosophy' (1763), *Theoretical Philosophy*, 211 (*Ak*. 2: 171).
[36] *Church and State*, 233. [37] *Biographia Literaria*, 1: 300.
[38] *Notebooks*, 4: §4513 f5 (April 1819), restated at §5298 f22^{v} (1825–6) and *Notebooks*, 5: §5980 f4^{v} (February–March 1829).

was used prothetically for the human species and thetically to denote the males of the species. A letter to Revd James Gillman, written in the margins of a copy of *Church and State*, points out

> a necessary Defect, of Language, by which the Term which expresses the Prothesis, is repeated in a modified sense as the Term of the Thesis. Thus, for instance, Metaphysics in the prothetic sense, includes all the sciences, the evidence of which transcends . . . the evidence of the Senses.[39]

So although the term 'Metaphysics' as (1) the prothesis refers to *all* sciences whose evidence is not sensory data, it further includes: (2) the thesis, 'Metaphysics' ('Truths of the pure REASON, i.e. Ideas'); (3) the antithesis of the thesis, 'Mathematics' (in Kantian vein, 'Truths of the pure Sense, i.e. Theorems'); (4) their 'Mid-position, or the *Indifference* of the two', 'Logic' ('Truths of the pure UNDERSTANDING, i.e. Universal *Conceptions*, or laws of necessary Thinking'); and finally (5) the synthesis, or '*Com*position', of thesis and antithesis, producing, in this instance, 'Dynamics' ('Ideas manifested as Powers'), synthesizing metaphysical ideas and mathematical theorems in the science of physical forces.[40]

While not merely arbitrary, finding the antithesis to the thesis is often an intuitive search for the best fit. For example, Coleridge opposes fancy to imagination, and civilization to cultivation. Such intuitive oppositions generate further theory and yield seminal insights, but no certain formula provides them; instead, they are attributable to what he calls 'philosophic imagination'.[41] Antithetic oppositions of natural forces, however, are empirically discoverable. His examples include, following the *Naturphilosophen*, positive and negative electrical charge, magnetic north and south, and dilation and contraction.

His pentads can be viewed in light of what C. S. Peirce later called abductive logic, a third process beside deduction and induction. Abduction is 'very little hampered by logical rules', its creative discovery occurring 'like lightning'.[42] As one commentator observes, Coleridge's 'deduction, induction, and imagination', or 'production', adumbrates the American pragmaticist's triad of logical procedures, 'the last of which . . . Peirce, later called "abduction"'.[43] Peirce was an admirer and keen reader of Coleridge, whom he reached through his great interest in Schelling. 'I am', he wrote, 'a Schellingian of some stripe.'[44] Describing abduction as argument but not argumentation—where 'argument' is 'any process of thought

[39] *Church and State*, 233.
[40] *Church and State*, 233, developing *Notebooks*, 4: §4784 f128 (1820–1).
[41] *Biographia Literaria*, 1: 241. [42] Peirce, *Collected Papers*, 5: 117.
[43] Hipolito, 'Coleridge's Lectures 1818–19', 257. 'Pragmaticism' is Peirce's term, distancing his philosophy from nominalist versions of pragmatism.
[44] Peirce, *Collected Papers*, 6: 605.

reasonably tending to produce a definite belief' and 'argumentation' is 'an Argument proceeding upon definitely formulated premisses'[45]—Peirce reaches the same insight as Coleridge, who reasoned that 'Analogies are used in aid of *Conviction*'.[46]

Attending to and testing conviction, thinking enters the 'self-circling energies of the reason',[47] as opposed to the coming-and-going discursion required for comprehension by the understanding. The insights and intuitions in this increasingly transparent mode of thought are often described in terms of the luminous. As I discussed in the Introduction (18–24) to this book, opacity, translucence, and transparency are key terms in Coleridge's philosophy of perception, symbolic thought, and noetic contemplation. He characterizes 'Reason' as '*Lux idealis seu spiritualis* [the ideal or spiritual light]' and the higher understanding as the 'Lumen a Luce',[48] the illumination from that substantial light. Similarly, Peirce describes abduction as an act made within '*il lume natural* [the light of reason]' in which human beings perform better than chance in their creative, insightful ability to discover true theories.[49]

In Schellingian-Coleridgean language,[50] Peirce explains how 'Abduction and induction . . . are the opposite poles of reason', the former 'motivated by the feeling' concerning the need for a theory, such that 'new truth . . . can only come from abduction'.

> We are therefore bound to hope that . . . our mind will . . . in some finite number of guesses, . . . guess the sole true explanation . . . [51]

For Peirce, abductive guesses at truth require feeling and hope. Similarly, as I shall discuss in Chapter 10 (307–11), Coleridgean 'Anticipation' stalls without hope or faith. It is no automatic deduction but an intuitive, feeling-propelled and idea-directed activity.

9.2 Historical Context and Influences

In a prominent footnote in the 1818 *Friend*, Coleridge defines the principle of polarity and succinctly states its provenance:

[45] Peirce, *Essential Peirce*, 2: 435, discussed at Paavola, 'Diagrams', 6.
[46] *Aids to Reflection*, 206. [47] *The Statesman's Manual*, 29.
[48] *Marginalia*, 3: 746 (Luther, *Colloquia mensalia*), 5: 797 (Tennemann, *Geschichte der Philosophie*; 1824), *Notebooks*, 5: §6491 f23^{v} (October 1830).
[49] Peirce, *Collected Papers*, 1: 80–1 (*c.*1896), discussed at Paavola, 'Diagrams', 6.
[50] Dilworth, 'Peirce's Transmutation of Schelling', 257, notes that 'Peirce absorbed Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* as well as . . . concepts of nature and evolution . . . through many routes, including the writings of' *Naturphilosophen* 'Eschenmayer', 'Kielmeyer', 'Steffens', 'Ritter', 'Oken', and 'Ørsted', English life scientists 'John Brown', and 'John Hunter', and the philosophical writings of 'Coleridge'. Dilworth's source (uncited) is Peterson, translator's introduction, in Schelling, *First Outline*, xii, 239–40.
[51] Peirce, *Collected Papers*, 7: 137.

> EVERY POWER IN NATURE AND IN SPIRIT *must evolve an opposite as the sole means and condition of its manifestation:* AND ALL OPPOSITION IS A TENDENCY TO RE-UNION. This is the universal Law of Polarity or essential Dualism, first promulgated by Heraclitus, 2000 years afterwards, republished and made the foundation both of Logic, of Physics, and of Metaphysics by Giordano Bruno.[52]

As Barfield demonstrates, Coleridge's view of polarity owes far less to Bruno than to Böhme, in whom

> the quality of psychic oppugnancy, between opposites, is evident in a way it hardly is in Bruno . . . as far as the law of polarity is concerned, Coleridge actually *received* a good deal more from the shoemaker of Görlitz than he ever did from the philosopher of Nola.[53]

Although he finds earlier adumbrations, Coleridge's pentadic and tetradic schemata develop principally from Schelling's modification of Fichte's triadic logic, itself derived from Kant's general trichotomy. Schelling's appropriations of Böhme drove the English thinker to return, with deepening critical penetration, to the writings of the Görlitz mystic.

Baxter discusses the merits, Coleridge observes, of a 'threefold division or trichotomy' a century before Kant finds it 'worthy of notice' in his 'analysis of the mind'.[54] Though René Wellek charges Coleridge with exaggerating Baxter's development of a trichotomous logic, especially since 'Baxter had not the slightest glimpse of the dialectic',[55] Coleridge nowhere claims a systematic dialectic for the Puritan divine. He claims only that Baxter found trichotomous procedure in logical analysis superior to dichotomous. Among its merits, trichotomous procedure is inherently mediatory, whereas dichotomy tends to artificial and tendentious division, leading Coleridge to deprecate

> the dichotomic ~~scheme~~ Logic, more truly Eristic—i.e. not of *Reasoning* but of Disputing . . .[56]

Regarding the principle of trichotomy in acts of thought, Coleridge notes that

> Baxter *grounded* it on an absolute Idea *pre*supposed in all intelligential acts, whereas Kant takes it only as a *Fact* of Reflection—as a singular & curious Fact, in

[52] *The Friend*, 1: 94 fn. [53] Barfield, *What Coleridge Thought*, 187–8.
[54] *Logic*, 241. *Marginalia*, 1: 347 (BAXTER), praises Baxter and Kant for substituting trichotomous method in logic for dichotomy.
[55] Wellek, *Immanuel Kant in England*, 90. [56] *Marginalia*, 5: 460 (SWEDENBORG; 1821).

> which he seems to anticipate or suspect some yet deeper Truth latent & hereafter to be discovered.[57]

The reference is to Kant's note, quoted below, regarding the table of the three 'higher faculties' (understanding, judgement, and reason) in the *Critique of Judgment*. Kant explains his trichotomous divisions as a consequence of synthetically discerned a priori division:

> It has been thought suspicious that my divisions in pure philosophy almost always turn out to be threefold. But that is in the nature of the matter. If a division is to be made *a priori*, then it will either be **analytic**, in accordance with the principle of contradiction, and then it is always twofold . . . Or it is **synthetic**; and if . . . it is to be derived from **concepts** a priori . . . then, in accordance with what is requisite for synthetic unity in general, namely (1) a condition, (2) something conditioned, (3) the concept that arises from the unification of the conditioned with its condition, the division must of necessity be a trichotomy.[58]

Notably, Kant's table contrasts the understanding, as the faculty of cognition, with the reason, as the faculty regulating desire, the two being mediated by the power of judgement, which concerns the 'Feeling of pleasure and displeasure'. In the last of his three *Critiques*, Kant makes judgement the emotive, imaginative ground of feeling and the purposive fulcrum between understanding and reason (nature and freedom). In this light, Coleridge can be seen as pushing this Kantian initiative forward, to establish the symbolic movement of aesthetic thought, raising feeling and imagination as a pro-cognitive capacity.

Following Kant, Fichte advanced his thesis-antithesis-synthesis trichotomy that Schelling soon adapted, greatly influencing Hegel—and Coleridge.[59] Later departing from Schelling, Hegel argues that any thesis–antithesis opposition occurs not between different concepts of forms, but within individual ones, deriding Fichte's and Schelling's thesis-antithesis-synthesis '*triadic form*' as a 'lifeless scheme' of 'mere shadow' and 'monotonous formalism'.[60] Using sublation (*Aufhebung*), whereby internal contradiction reconciles into a higher unity, Hegel theorized history, as I outlined in Chapter 8 (256–9), as the logical unfolding of universal reality. Yet despite, if Muirhead is correct, 'far more points of agreement than of conflict' between Coleridge and Hegel,[61] the sage of Highgate was impatient with the German absolute idealist, finding

[57] *Marginalia*, 1: 347–8 (Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae*).
[58] Kant, 'Introduction' to *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, 82–3 fn. (*Ak*. 197–8 fn.).
[59] McFarland, 'Prolegomena', *Opus Maximum*, lxxxviii–xc, surveys trichotomous logic in Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, in the context of Coleridge and the principle of polarity.
[60] Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 29–30.
[61] Muirhead, *Coleridge as Philosopher*, 88. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 81–2, 3 as at once "to keep", "to preserve", and "to cause to cease".

> bewilderment throughout from confusion of Terms originating in the πρῶτον ψεῦδος [*prṓton pseûdos*, first falsehood] of overbuilding the Προθεσις [Prothesis] by the Thesis, Antithesis, and Synthesis.[62]

Annotating an early section in the *Wissenschaft der Logik* (1812–16), Coleridge politely objects to 'a logical informality in this reasoning':

> "*To be*" (Seyn, το ειναι) is opposed to the "Nothing" (Nichts) whereas the true opposite of "To be" is "Not to be". Thing, is the opposite to Nothing: for even Something or Somewhat (Etwas) implies more than Being and belongs to predicable *Ex*istence, having as its proper opposite no what or not-anything.[63]

Unassuaged by what followed, Coleridge never returned to Hegel.

It is from Fichte's and Schelling's thesis-antithesis-synthesis logic that Coleridge derived his progressive dialectic and its initially triadic layout. By 1800–1, Schelling had abandoned the radical subjectivism of Fichte's ego philosophy to focus on the neglected pole of nature. He began his inquiry into subjective–objective bipolarity in his *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature* (1797), the seminal work of *Naturphilosophie*. In *Of the I as a Principle of Philosophy*, an early work influenced by Fichte, Schelling writes a 'Table of the Forms of Modality' comprising two triads, one below the other, each structured as follows:

1. Thesis 2. Antithesis
3. Synthesis[64]

Although a recent philosophical commentator bristles at Schelling's work being 'plagued' by 'Byzantine Porphyrian trees' forming recursive stacks of such triadic diagrams, he accepts that 'it is crucial to see the necessity of infinite recursion within the *Identitätssystem*'.[65] Abandoning Fichtean subjectivism as one-sided, Schelling saw that approaching reality from the objective pole, in terms of nature, is just as valid. Potentially a more comprehensive version of transcendental idealism, this objective approach could incorporate advances in the natural sciences and in turn philosophically ground the sciences with a unified theory of natural forces.

[62] *Marginalia*, 2: 990 (Hegel, *Logik*; *c.*1818).
[63] *Marginalia*, 2: 989 (*c.*1818). At *Marginalia*, 3: 1055 (Oken), Coleridge criticizes the 'exquisite absurdity of calling the same X Nichts (Nothing) and Ousia (Being)'.
[64] Schelling, *Vom Ich als Prinzip der Philosophie* (1795), in *Sämmtliche Werke*, 1: 226–7.
[65] Whistler, *Schelling's Theory of Symbolic Language*, 112–13.

9.3 Coleridge's New Direction: The Chasm between Identity and Indifference

Coleridge recognized Böhme's cosmogony and its tripartite polar form in Schelling. With Böhme, original reality is the *Ungrund*, the unmanifest divine will. This becomes Coleridge's prothesis:

> the Subject-Object in absolute Identity neither Subject or Object, or both in Combination, but the Prothesis or Unground of both = Το υπερουσιον, το πατηρ [the 'beyond being', the Father].[66]

With the original monad as an incipient All, a plenum beyond comprehension like the Parmenidean 'One', Coleridge's prothesis is 'pregnant Indistinction',[67] echoing Böhme's 'Genetrix . . . the eternal Mother' who 'generated this World'.[68] This prothetic 'Identity', the Absolute prior to physical manifestation, is a universal involution. All reality is involved in it, but not as existence (actuality), nor as phenomena.

Defining utterly *involved* being, Coleridge called this *Ungrund* 'intense Reality'.[69] It is *intense* because it is anterior to all extension, to extended substance, or nature. Intense and involved—neither extended nor evolved—this originary reality subsequently evolves qualities prior to quantities, the importance of which I discussed at Chapter 5 (139–40). The qualities are for Coleridge the primary manifestations of the 'Constituent Powers of Nature', being 'the Forms, in which these Powers *appear* or manifest themselves to our Senses'.[70] All natural powers evolve, for him, from the primary physical powers—light (ever-expansive and revealing) and gravity (ever-contractive and dark), and all become manifest through opposed forces or powers. Coleridge's 'Powers are constitutive. What appears in nature is produced by the synthesis of polar powers.'[71] His pentads theorize this dynamic metaphysics as different modes of being evolving from unmanifest reality (ideas and powers), through actualization, or existence (polar forces), to the synthesis of these forces in experience (phenomena).

Böhme's originary will, the undifferentiated *Ungrund*, thus becomes for Coleridge the monadic prothesis that manifests as the dyad, the triad, and the tetractys, from which evolves the pentad. The final product, the concrete synthesis, images in experience the unity of the ideal prothesis, reconciling the opposed

[66] *Notebooks*, 3: §4427 (August–September 1818). Coleridge's υπερουσιον alludes to Plato's *epékeina tḗs ousías* (beyond being), *Republic*, 509b10 (bk 6).
[67] *Letters* 4: 807 (12 January 1818), to Tulk.
[68] Böhme, *Three Principles*, in *Works*, 1: 39. *Marginalia*, 1: 652, comments on this passage. *Marginalia*, 1: 662, discusses polarity and identity in the context of Böhme's cosmogony.
[69] *Marginalia*, 1: 563.
[70] 'The Constituent Powers of Nature' (*c*.1820), *Shorter Works*, 2: 849.
[71] Levere, 'Coleridge and the Sciences', 299.

poles of its manifestation. Between the thesis and antithesis, the mesothesis (or indifference-point) represents in a lower order the prothesis (or 'Identity'),[72] but does so negatively, as a null-point, the 0 between + and −. This indifference-point is 'ideally the whole, really or rather materially nothing'.[73] By contrast, the synthetic product of the dyadic polar opposites represents their unity positively, in a concrete image of the 'Identity'. To suggest an analogy for this relation, the prothesis is the originary reality, the indifference-point is the mirror, held between the opposed poles, and the synthesis is the reflection perceived to be 'behind' or 'within' the mirror.

An actual indifference-point is no physical thing, yet theory requires it be posited as a mathematical or theoretical object. Thus, while no material part at the centre of a bar magnet is truly neither north nor south, such a line is theoretically necessary. Or, as a cultural example, in any controversy opposing economic and spiritual interests, no representative of the journalistic press will be truly unbiased, though such an ideal serves a function that Coleridge sees as necessary in theory and influential in practice. In this section I discuss the metaphysical ramifications of Coleridge's positing, contra Schelling, the 'Identity-point' as transcendent to any 'indifference-point'.

Despite serious, mainly theological, objections,

> Coleridge retained many features of Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* . . . [e.g.] the three powers of inorganic nature (magnetism, electricity, the chemical process or galvanism) and their correspondence to . . . length, breadth and depth, as well as his . . . three powers of organic nature (reproduction, irritability, sensibility) . . .[74]

But Coleridge finds Schelling's definition of the Absolute as the indifference-point (*Indifferenzpunkt*) of subject and object seriously misconceived. Hegel also opposes this conception, in his *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807), deriding it as 'the night in which . . . all cows are black—this is cognition naively reduced to vacuity'.[75] While an easy slight at Schelling or arguably his followers,[76] Hegel's famous criticism has undergone some recent reassessment. Iain Grant, for example, argues that Hegel misconceives the Schellingian Absolute, not understanding that the originating identity of opposites 'is not the recovery or "integration" of differences,

[72] *Notebooks*, 4: §4835 f64^{v} (1821).
[73] 'Notes on Polar Logic' (1828), *Shorter Works*, 2: 1383.
[74] Modiano, *Coleridge and the Concept of Nature*, 172.
[75] Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 9. Beiser, *German Idealism*, 577–80, defends the Schellingian Absolute that the early Hegel supported.
[76] Amongst other intellectual historians, Muratori (*The First German Philosopher*, 139) argues that Hegel's criticism is 'more appropriate to the consciously anti-philosophical interpretations of *Identitätsphilosophie* such as the one provided by Eschenmayer, than to Schelling's own'.

but [that which] causes difference to proliferate'.[77] Unlike Hegel, Coleridge in fact agrees with Schelling that 'Identity' is originary, active, and produces polar oppositions, rather than being a latent potential between them. Coleridge, then, does not attempt to prove Schelling incoherent here, but opposes his notion of Absolute indifference that entails a pantheism leaving God bereft of personëity, making it untenable to most forms of Christianity, especially Trinitarianism. As Coleridge argues in the *Logic*, the 'Supreme Being' as Absolute is, contra Schelling, *transcendent*, *personal*, and the *bearer of certain attributes*:

> though we attribute to Him neither heat, nor cold, nor colour, nor shape, nor hardness, nor softness, is our idea merely negative? Does it consist in the abstract term "reality" without knowing what we mean by it, save only that we do not mean any one of the realities of which we have any conception? Do we not far rather attribute to him intelligence, will, bliss, power, etc?[78]

Positing the Absolute itself as indifference typifies, for Coleridge, how 'Schelling begins and ends in Abstractions . . . or disguised Generalizations'.[79] By contrast, Coleridge notes, 'Behmen has this great advantage over Schelling', namely that his 'Intuitions' are 'true and fruitful in many respects', because they commence with positive intuitions.

While Schelling sees indifference as the attribute of the Absolute, Coleridge finds indifference only at the level of manifestation, at the centre of polarity, and therefore in nature and history, not as characterizing the Absolute itself. Coleridge is theologically motivated to view the Absolute as a personal God in whom all existences are held in unity yet remain distinct (e.g. in the co-instantaneity of omniscience). This 'Identity', for Coleridge

> the Supreme Reason, is the Substance, the Noumenon of which all the Laws of Nature are the Perspective & revealing Phænomenon . . . all these in God are transcendently One, tho' inconfundibly distinct—[80]

The Coleridgean indifference-point and the point of 'Identity' therefore stand as negative and positive to each other, theorizing divine transcendence versus an immanent manifestation that polarizes across a medial null-point. The transcendent 'Identity-point' not only upholds Coleridge's anti-pantheist argument, it also supports his view that the human contemplation of reason and ideas requires a faith rooted in imagination. Here, Coleridge shares some ground with Hume, who also sees insight into purported laws of nature (for Coleridge, the correlate of the idea) as a form of faith or belief. Where Hume maintains epistemological

[77] Grant, *Nature after Schelling*, 172.
[78] *Logic*, 130, §26.
[79] *Marginalia*, 1: 620 (Böhme, *Aurora*).
[80] *Notebooks*, 5: §6666 f84 (March 1832).

scepticism, however, and a pragmatic acceptance of habitual and common-sense belief, Coleridge holds that reasoning passes into positive faith.

But how does he manage to conceive of the indifference-point as at once nothing, yet real, and entirely immanent? To use a favourite geometrical analogy of Coleridge's, all the possibilities within a given bipolarity protract into a line of positive numbers, 1, 2, 3, etc., as theses to the left of the indifference point—denominated 0—with the antitheses as the negative 1, 2, 3, etc., to the right.[81] Like an Eleatic paradox, any actual point, however infinitesimally small, that is picked out as the indifference-point, will prove positive or negative, and not the true zero. Thus there is no existent, actual indifference point; it is relationally real but actually nothing. The nullity of the indifference-point, for Coleridge, contrasts perfectly with the transcendent 'Identity', which is the plenitude of originary reality from which the line is projected.[82] Null though it may be, the indifference-point is a negative that is the imprint of the positive. This negativity negatively reveals pure positivity, like Pascal's 'outline and empty trace' of God, the 'infinite abyss' that the human 'tries unsuccessfully to fill . . . with everything that surrounds him'.[83] Or like Descartes' notion of the idea of infinity in the human mind as the hallmark of God, 'the idea . . . the mark of the craftsman stamped on his work'.[84] Beyond Coleridge's immanent indifference-point, the transcendent can be humanly contemplated only along a path anticipated in imagination or continued in faith.[85]

The indifference-point for Coleridge is thus the product and subsequent representative of the transcendent 'Identity', and not the producer of actuality, as it is for Schelling. This provides an insight into noetic contemplation, for where literalist, imagistic fancy sees the indifference-point as a nullity, symbolic, reason-directed imagination sees the representative of transcendent power in the immanent. Exactly between the two poles, the indifference-point represents the unity of the higher power, which is otherwise polarized across two opposing forces. This dynamic has important implications for Coleridge's 'Theory of Life', where he contrasts the polar 'equatorial point' conceived as 'rest, or mere neutralization' with the higher view of it from the vantage of reason:

> To the fancy alone it is the null-point, or zero, but to the reason it is the *punctum saliens*, and the power itself in its eminence.[86]

[81] 'The Role of the Tetradic Logic' (*c.*1818–22), *Shorter Works*, 1: 711; *Aids to Reflection*, 179–80 fn.; *Notebooks*, 5: §5504 f12^{v} (April 1827).

[82] The argument is distinct from that other Coleridgean bulkhead against pantheism (discussed in this book, 148–9, 158–9), where Coleridge hierarchizes the Behmenist, bipolar chiasmus of opposed energies by fusing it with the Platonic, linear ascent to contemplation and the ideas of reason.

[83] Pascal, *Pensées*, 52. [84] Descartes, *Meditations*, 41 (Third Meditation).

[85] *Biographia Literaria*, 2: 247. [86] 'Theory of Life' (1816–18), *Shorter Works*, 1: 521.

The term *punctum saliens* (leaping, or salient, point), which Coleridge gives as the higher meaning of the *punctum indifferens*, derives from embryology, denominating, in a pertinent connection here, as matter pulses into life, 'The first trace of the heart in an embryo, appearing as a pulsating point' (*OED*).[87]

In *Aids to Reflection*, Coleridge continues to argue for the transcendence of reason and the ideas by using geometrical analogies:

> In order to render the constructions of pure Mathematics applicable to Philosophy, the Pythagoreans, I imagine, represented the Line as . . . radiated, by a Point not contained in the Line but independent, and . . . transcendent to all production, which it caused but did not partake in. *Facit*, non *patitur* [It *makes*, not *suffers*]. This was the Punctum invisibile, et presuppositum [invisible and presupposed point]: and in this way the Pythagoreans guarded against the error of Pantheism, into which the latter schools fell. The assumption of this point I call the logical PROTHESIS.[88]

As he noted three or four years earlier, the indifference-point is able to symbolize the 'Identity' as a lower-level counterpart:

> The Punctum Indifferentiæ is not ~~the~~ = A, or the primary Root or Involute of the Productive Power, in the sense of = as "*the same as*" but = A in that sense only in which a Son standing in the place of his Father at the head of a second Table in his Father's House is said to be equal to his Father.[89]

The theological relevance is clear: a transcendent power generating its immanent representative, which suffers, not makes, and as the Son, is equal to the Father whom he represents but is not '*the same as*'. Further, the transcendent-become-immanent is humiliated, having become ostensibly a nullity, holding opposites together at the point of crucifixion, to recall the crucifixionism that I outlined in Chapter 7 (200). Thus it embodies the principle through which the immanent can be redeemed into transcendence.

A philosophy such as Spinoza's or Schelling's that privileges immanence and, unlike Coleridge's, denies transcendence, must, having accepted the law of polarity, theorize the polarities as produced within nature itself. That is, an immanentist philosophy that accepts the law of polarity must view polarities such as gravity and light, the + and − of electromagnetism, being and action, subject and object, as themselves produced by nature. Coleridge, however, argued that this production could not occur within nature itself; indeed, to claim as much would

[87] Aristotle, *Parts of Animals*, 665a33 ff, and *History of Animals*, 6.3, concludes, after meticulous observations of hen's eggs, that this living speck is the first self-moving part of sanguineous creatures.
[88] *Aids to Reflection*, 181 fn. [89] *Notebooks*, 4: §4835 f64^{v} (1821).

amount to logical bootstrapping. Nature cannot produce the polarities, for productive nature *is* the polarities. Nature, as *natura naturans* (productive nature; nature naturing), produces syntheses *from* its polarities, and its products are the things and phenomena of *natura naturata* (nature natured). For Coleridge, these relatively stable, yet essentially changing products appear at the next ontological level down from existence, or polar manifestation, in the synthesis produced from the poles, namely, the hypostasis of phenomena. The producer of the polarities themselves, he argued, must therefore be a transcendent principle, viz. the originary identity of *B* and *C* in the transcendent point *A*, figured as the apex of a triangle which is therefore able to produce the immanent baseline *BC* without itself partaking in and being subject to it, in distinction from *a*, the indifference-point at the exact midpoint of the *BC*, which clearly does partake in the line.

Returning to Coleridge's Christian Trinitarian perspective, God is not only transcendent point *A*, as Father and generative Godhead, but is also immanent point *a*, as the suffering God, the Son, *deus patiens*, the Incarnation as God become immanent. The Holy Spirit, as the communicative intercirculation between transcendent and immanent hypostases, completes the whole in 'Community'. This Tri-unity promises redemption for points along the line halves *Ba* and *aC*, which are able to ascend to *A*, across the divide, via *a*, if they will but turn and approach *a* as representing *A*.[90] Prayer is accordingly the archetype of noetic contemplation for Coleridge, adding humane concern and emotion, depth, and personality, as well as frailty, to what would otherwise be a wholly intellectualist act.

9.4 'In *Divine Matters* a *Tetrad*. A *Pentad* in all Others'

Coleridge's tetrads and pentads have been largely overlooked in the last century and a half, save for some enthusiasm seeking in Coleridge promise for a systematic Anglican theology. A few theologians have found a revitalized approach in Coleridge's trichotomous logic that is, moreover, especially contemplative.[91] As one notes,

> Through Coleridge's Polar Logic and its derivatives, the Pentad and the *tetractys*, man aspires to gaze on eternity . . .[92]

[90] This image suggests the returning sinner, the prodigal son, in Luke 15:20: 'And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.' See *Logic*, 17 for a relevant schema.

[91] Gunton, *The One, the Three and the Many*, among other works; ~~David~~ Newsome, *Two Classes of Men*, esp. 100–10, on Coleridgean 'Noetics' and trichotomous, pentadic logic; Barth, *Coleridge and Christian Doctrine*; Jasper, *Coleridge as Poet and Religious Thinker*, 130–44.

[92] Jasper, *Coleridge as Poet and Religious Thinker*, 134.

This 'gaze on eternity' has a distinctly Platonic aspect. Paralleling Plato's *diánoia–nóēsis* distinction with his own between the logical (for 'the Finite or Conditional') and the noetic (for 'the Absolute Forms'), Coleridge asserts that

> to distinguish the intelligential Light by which ~~we~~ the Absolute is known to us from the Faculty by which we seek to understand and distinguish the finite, I have named the Science which has the former for its subject Noetic, from Noûs, and the latter Logical, and call the Absolute Forms the noetic Tetractys, the Forms of the Finite or Conditional the logical Pentad.[93]

Further, annotating a volume of Jeremy Taylor, Coleridge describes 'the Noetic Pentad' as the 'universal *Form* of Contemplation,*' adding the following codicil as an asterisked footnote:

> * Except where *all* the Terms are absolute, & consequently there is not Punctum Indifferens [a Point of Indifference (mesothesis)]. In *divinis Tetras*, in omnibus aliis *Pentas* [In *divine matters a Tetrad. A Pentad* in all others].[94]

Coleridgean tetrads, then, are always noetic, i.e. they refer to ideas and originary beings or powers. Their archetype is the Trinity and the 'Identity' that eternally generates it, namely, the Godhead, the counterpart to the undifferentiated divine will of Böhme's *Ungrund*. With Coleridge, as one philosophical commentator glosses, 'The Tetractys thus becomes the figure of the absolute reason.'[95] After this, 'all things non-absolute fall under the Pentad *Formula*',[96] which has two kinds. If a pentad allows noetic contemplation by virtue of including at least one term that is absolute (and hence praeter-conceptual), it is a noetic pentad. But if a Coleridgean pentad consists entirely of finite or conditional, non-absolute terms (concepts, not ideas), then it is used to schematize the relations and provide conceptual clarity between solely non-absolute terms and is a logical pentad.

The Coleridgean tetrad represents the originary, absolute unity, viz. the 'Identity', which manifests itself in the 'Position' and 'Counter-position' at the poles of existence.[97] Unlike in the pentad, however, a bipolar continuum straddling an indifference-point is not produced in the tetrad, for the position and counter-position are now absolutes. Understanding the difference between Coleridge's tetrads and pentads can therefore help focus how he views the transcendent (in the tetrad, or tetractys), the immanent (in the logical pentad), and transcendence in immanence (in the noetic pentad).

[93] *Marginalia*, 3: 16 (Irving, *Sermons*; 1828 or 1829).
[94] *Marginalia*, 5: 631 (Taylor, *Polemicall Discourses*). *Notebooks*, 4: §5726 f49^{v} (January 1828), discussed in this section, also describes the formal marks of 'the Noetic Pentad'.
[95] Uehlein, *Die Manifestation*, 51.
[96] *Notebooks*, 5: §6296 f47$^{r–v}$ (May 1830).
[97] 'The Role of the Tetradic Logic' (*c.*1818–22), *Shorter Works*, 1: 710.

In Coleridge's view, ascribing continuity between absolutes would be to deny their transcendence, because to ascribe to absolutes mutability along a continuum, with one of those points being the null-point of indifference, would be, absurdly, to deny their absoluteness. He therefore criticizes thinkers such as Böhme, Schelling, and other *Naturphilosophen*, for locating polarity in the Absolute and thereby ending up with pantheism. It is barely an exaggeration to note that Coleridge's criticism of Schelling's *Identitätsphilosophie* 'can be summed up in a sentence', such as when he objects to Schelling's 'establishment of Polarity in the Absolute' and, at root, his 'making Nature absolute'.[98] The following critical note he inscribed in a work by Oken is representative, written during his 1818 turning-point when he realized the extent of the pantheism implied by *Naturphilosophie*:

> Here lies the fundamental falsity of the Natur-philosophie.—It places Polarity in the Eternal, in God. All its other Errors are consequences of this.[99]

With no continuum between the second and third positions of the 'Tetractys' ('Ipsëity' and 'Alterity', selfness and otherness, equivalent to thesis and antithesis), no point of indifference (the fourth position of the pentad) can occur between them. The fourth absolute term, then, of the divine tetrad, proceeds from the second and third, and is neither their point of indifference, nor their synthesis. This fourth tetractic term, 'Community', resolves the mutual alterity of the second and third terms. 'Ipsëity' (Father), 'Alterity' (Son), and 'Community' (Spirit) are themselves united in the first term, the Godhead, or 'Identity'.

Unlike tetrads, Coleridgean pentads always include a type of phenomenon as the synthesis, and a vertical line runs from ideal prothesis, through polar indifference-point, to phenomenal synthesis. The originary, prothetic unity at the top of the pentad manifests itself in the next level down as two interpenetrative (co-inherent) opposites (the horizontal line), according to

> the law of POLARITY, or the manifestation of one power by opposite forces . . . [100]

The positive pole, placed on the left—the conventionally positive, active, or desirable term—is the *being* side of the polarity; the negative pole, on the right, is the *power* side. For example, with the 'Real' as the prothesis, the 'Actual' is the thesis on the left, with its antithesis, the 'Potential', on the right.[101] The 'Actual' and the 'Potential' are thus opposites, not contraries. While Coleridge's constellation

[98] Uehlein, *Die Manifestation*, 107; *Notebooks*, 3: §4449 (October 1818).
[99] *Marginalia*, 3: 1055 (OKEN, *Lehrbuch der Naturphilosophie*, 1809; August–September 1818).
[100] *The Friend*, 1: 479.
[101] *Notebooks*, 4: §5143 (March–May 1824).

of terms representing the unfolding of an absolute is necessarily tetractic, his counterpart logical schemata of non-absolutes are never tetrads, but pentads, heptads,[a] octads,[b] enneads,[c] or decads.[d] [102] Instances of all these can, however, be essentially resolved into pentads.

I can now identify three main differences between Coleridge's tetrads and pentads:

(1) While the tetrad contains absolute terms only, the pentad contains non-absolute terms. Pentads can be either logical or noetic. A pentad containing only non-absolute terms is a logical pentad. For example, Coleridge described as a 'logical pentad' his reformulation of Blumenbach's distinction of the five races of humans.[103] His heptad and octad of colours are also purely logical, not noetic, and are reducible to pentads.

A pentad containing at least one absolute term, however, can be considered a noetic pentad for two reasons. First, absolutes can only be contemplated (they pertain to *nóēsis*, not to *diánoia*) and are thus *noetic*, unlike concepts, which are understood (i.e. conceived, or schematically imaged) and are thus objects for *logical* consideration. Second, as I shall further explore in Chapter 10, a pentad is noetic if it can be considered an aid to contemplation (*nóēsis*), which it can be only if it attends to an absolute, and to finites, or non-absolutes, in their relation to that absolute.

(2) Tetrads contain no indifference-point (or mesothesis), because indifference cannot occur between absolutes. Thus, in a note inscribed in Irving's *Sermons*, Coleridge recommends the tetrad as an aid to contemplation, saying that the mesothesis

> must be omitted . . . in the exposition of the Forms, under which the Absolute is contemplable.[104]

As Coleridge points out in the *Opus Maximum*, 'the indifference, punctum indifferentiae, of two extremes, ex. gr. in the magnet', is an 'equilibrium' that neutralizes the polar extremes. In his sense of the term, however, absolutes cannot admit of equilibration, nor be neutralized, for they are the 'eternal verities' of absolute reality.

[102] (a) 'Heptad of Color', or 'Schemes of Colours', (1827–8), *Shorter Works*, 2: 1367–8; and *Table Talk*, 1: 288–9 (24 April 1832); (b) 'Octad of Colours' (1827), *Shorter Works*, 2: 1366; (c and d) *Marginalia*, 1: 643, reading in Böhme's multiplication of qualities a baroque evolution from monas, via polarity to dyad, the 'Indifference-point' making a triad, thence, by bisection and synthesis to pentad, heptad, and ennead, to 'the completing Decad . . . on which Nature revolves'.

[103] *Marginalia*, 1: 540 (BLUMENBACH, theory of human racial types).

[104] *Marginalia*, 3: 15 (IRVING, *Sermons*; 1828 or 1829).

(3) No absolute is a synthesis, because absolutes are unconditioned beings or powers, and never aggregates or compounds. In the 'divine Tetractys', for example, 'Community' is a non-composite absolute that interrelates the 'Idem et Alter [Same and Other]' of the relatively subjective position (the 'I AM', 'Ipsëity', the Father) and the relatively objective counter-position (the Logos, 'Alterity', the Son). Coleridge affirms that 'in the Absolute neither Indifference nor Synthesis have place'.[105] In 1829, he clarifies that because 'a primary Idea' is 'distinctly simple' (i.e. not a composite), it cannot admit synthesis.[106]

In the noetic pentad, in terms of Coleridge's neo-Platonic notion of 'eradiation',[107] the prothetic idea produces the thesis-mesothesis-antithesis hypostasis by polar manifestation, which in turn produces, by subsequent synthesis, the hypostasis or realm, of phenomena. This schema integrates four interrelated metaphysical commitments: (1) the reality of divine, essentially Platonic, 'Ideas'; (2) the actualization of these ideas requires a bipolar forces at the level of physical (natural or historical) existence; (3) an indifference-point occurs at the polar midpoint, which can appear, from an immanentist perspective, as the nullity at the heart of existence or, from a theistic perspective, as a negative representation of the positive, transcendent unity ('Identity') of opposites; and (4) that the concrete things of experience subsist in the synthesis of polar opposites, with experience itself requiring the Kantian synthesis of concepts and sense intuition. The synthesis in the noetic pentad is, then, a composite and symbolic image,[108] reflecting in experience the noetic form of 'Identity' via the poles in between, as if the phenomenal world were the Absolute, seen dimmed and protracted through a mirror.

All of these moments refer to the rare, positive access of noesis, i.e. the 'inward . . . ',[a] 'immediate . . . ',[b] or 'intellectual Beholding'[c] [109] of an idea, reached in the contemplative 'Sabbath moment', though our cognition is usually negative, indirect, and discursive.

> Well for him, to whom the ~~Truth and~~ Certainty therefof ~~are~~ is made known, tho' but negatively, by seeing the impossibility of the Contrary! But blessed is He, ~~to~~ on whom tho' but once, in but one Sabbath moment, the Truth itself is presented—tho' as the Sun in the Rent of a dark Cloud which instantly closes again. ~~In the succeeding holy Gloom~~ It is the Soul of Faith: and what if a Darkness

[105] *Notebooks*, 5: §5726 f49^{v} (January 1828).
[106] *Notebooks*, 5: §5980 ff4^{v}–5 (February–March 1829).
[107] e.g. *Notebooks*, 5: §§5555 f27 (July 1827), and 6654 f40^{v} (February 1832).
[108] *Marginalia*, 1: 651 (Böhme).
[109] (a) *Aids to Reflection*, 224; (b) *Logic*, 151 (quoting Hooker); (c) *Notebooks*, 5: §6517 f8^{v} (November 1830).

follows? The Soul feels the pressure of the Sealing tho' unable to discern the character and image.[110]

9.5 Transitional Remarks

While the logical pentads help attain conceptual clarity in the distinction and relation of terms and while the tetracti constellate, without comprehending, transcendent ideas, it is the noetic pentads that are the most fertile aids to contemplation. They are also distinctly Coleridgean in constellating what in this book have come to the fore as the essentials of his philosophy: the transcendent (idea, law, or power); the productively polar antitheses; the mesothetic indifference-point that represents the higher power in the immanent position of a Behmenistic, chiastic crux; and the synthesis that is the essence of all experience and phenomena and which can be encountered imaginatively, as a symbol of the idea. Synthesis, famously the hallmark of Coleridgean imagination (itself developed from Kant, as I argued in Chapter 4, 109–13), is in the pentad the result of the downward movement of actualization, producing nature and the unfolding of historical phenomena.

As I argued in Chapters 5 and 6, Coleridge advanced his philosophy of nature and philosophy of mind, respectively, with his pentad of the 'Powers of Nature'[111] and his 'Order of the Mental Powers', the former being a logical, the latter a noetic pentad, through which he envisions, for each, two 'modifying or adjective Powers' or 'Oscillations' between the three substantive ones. Also, as I explored throughout Chapters 4–6, the imagination synthesizes ideas with sensual content, drawing down ideas in art and elevating feelings in the mysterious processes of perception that can, I argued, experientially intensify or resolve into inchoate contemplation. Far from being mere exuberances, as Muirhead supposed, Coleridge's noetic pentads represent his metaphysics in a highly succinct form and, further, tellingly relate to his poetics of the movement of aesthetic thought.

As I said in the preamble, this chapter on the more abstract and formal aspects of Coleridge's metaphysics is necessarily technical, the benefit concerning contemplation coming, as promised, in the next chapter. Coleridge's aim was ambitious: to develop a comprehensive theory of reality, nature, and experience. In this aim, he was aided by a triadic logic that he took over from Schelling and the *Naturphilosophen* (themselves following Kant and Fichte) and developed into a heuristic that represented relations between objects of thought, whether noumena or phenomena, and which he directed ultimately towards

[110] *Marginalia*, 3: 17 (Irving, *Sermons*; 1828 or 1829).
[111] *Marginalia*, 5: 266 (Steffens, *Inner Natural History of the Earth*, 1801; 1823, or earlier).

transcendent ideas or powers. In their ability to generate constellations of thought, his pentadic scheme belongs, Coleridge said, to an 'Organon Heuristicum [heuristic logical system]' in the same series as syllogism and dialectic.[112] He conceived his pentadic schemata as both aiding a theory of how humans think and, more fundamentally, representing an ontology in which divine 'Ideas' and powers become actualized in polar forces. As I shall argue in detail in the next chapter, for Coleridge the pentads not only reflect the actualization of ideas and laws into phenomena when read as 'the way down', they further serve as aids to contemplation when read in reverse: 'the way up'.

[112] 'The Role of the Tetradic Logic' (*c.*1818–22), *Shorter Works*, 1: 711.