can assert," Thomas DeQuincey declared in 1834, "upon my long and intimate knowledge of Coleridge's mind, that logic, the most severe, was as inalienable from his modes of thinking, as grammar from his language". What, then, is the "logic" of the Biographia Literaria?They trace the growth of Coleridge's philosophic consciousness, his rejection of empirical epistemology and the influence on his thought of German idealism, and they lead, in chapter 12, to an outline (heavily dependent on Schelling) of his own "dynamic" philosophy -- an outline intended as the metaphysical substratum from which was to arise the promised (but undelivered) deduction of a theory of imagination. Chapters 5–7 are devoted to a detailed refutation of associationist psychology, especially that of David Hartley, among whose fervent adherents Coleridge had once (and Wordsworth still) counted himself; chapter 8 deals, briefly but effectively, with the problem of Cartesian dualism and the inadequacy of post–Cartesian materialism; and chapter 9 sketches Coleridge's intellectual obligations, in breaking free of materialism and associationism, to the mystics (such as Jacob Boehme) who "contributed to keep alive the heart in the head", to Immanuel Kant who "took possession of me as with a giant's hand", and to the post–Kantian idealists, especially Schelling, in whose work "I first found a genial coincidence with much that I had toiled out for myself, and a powerful assistance in what I had yet to do" (BL, i 98–9, 102).In short, then, Wordsworth is omnipresent; and Whalley argues convincingly that, with the long examination of Wordsworth's work in chapters 14–22, "the Biographia Literaria comes full circle, spun upon the firm centre of Coleridge's poetic and philosophic life, his admiration for Wordsworth's work, his need to utter forth an intuition [fancy–imagination] that had long haunted and enlightened his thinking". Although dissenting voices may still be heard, Whalley's position has been endorsed -- sometimes enthusiastically -- by most recent commentators. Subsequent readers have often wished to modify or qualify Whalley's conclusions, or to adjust the emphasis of the argument by focusing on other unifying threads in Biographia Literaria. Thus, J.E. Barcus, for example, argues that "if the Biographia Literaria is read in the light of Coleridge's own literary principles, it becomes a practical demonstration of the principles he was propagating"; and George Watson, although part of his argument is untenable, finds in the work a "peculiarly Coleridgean" unity in the fact that here Coleridge succeeds for the first and (so far) for the last time in English criticism in marrying the twin studies of philosophy and literature, not simply by writing about both within the boards of a single book or by insisting that such a marriage should be, but in discovering a causal link between the two in the century–old preoccupation of English critics with the theory of the poet's imagination.While still at Cambridge, Coleridge had read Wordsworth's Descriptive Sketches, and "seldom, if ever," (he declared) "was the emergence of an original poetic genius above the literary horizon more evidently announced" (BL, i 56). The full revelation of Wordsworth's genius and power, however, came two years later in September or October 1795, when, at their first meeting, Wordsworth recited his manuscript poem Guilt and Sorrow. The effect of this reading on Coleridge was instant, profound and revolutionary: what made "so unusual an impression on my feelings immediately, and subsequently on my judgement" was 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 world around forms, incidents, and situations, of which, for the common view, custom had bedimmed all the

lustre, had dried up the sparkle and the dewdrops.Both these desires come to fruition in Biographia Literaria and, in the final analysis, it is Coleridge's view of Wordsworth that imparts unity and purpose of design to this soi-disant "immethodical miscellany". A substantial portion of the work, of course, is devoted to a critical appraisal and exposition of Wordsworth's theory and poetic achievement. Most of the second volume (chs 14–22) deals directly with these matters. The largely philosophic first volume, on the other hand, prepares the ground for the literary analysis to follow and deals, sometimes directly, sometimes by implication, with Wordsworth. Certainly, the philosophical chapters are not gratuitous metaphysical embroidery unrelated to the book's central concerns, and (as Whalley observes) it is not often enough remembered that "the centre of the philosophical critique –– the distinction between Fancy and Imagination –– arose from Wordsworth's poetry and was intended to elucidate it".T. S. Eliot, for example, saw reflected in Biographia Literaria the "state of lethargy" produced by "the disastrous effects of long dissipation and stupefaction of [Coleridge's] powers in transcendental metaphysics"; and Maurice Carpenter, for whom the book was "a long monologue" of incorrigible heterogeneity, felt justified as late as 1954 in dismissing it as "the most exasperating book in the English language". The first serious attempt to dispel the prevailing notion of Biographia as "a whimsical and absent-minded improvisation, a mushroom growth in which toughness of fibre is scarcely to be expected", was made by George Whalley in 1953.In the poetry of Bowles he first caught the accents of the true voice of feeling, and what he heard led him to appreciate that the epigrammatic couplets of fashionable eighteenth-century verse were artificial and were characterized "not so much by poetic thoughts, as by thoughts translated into the language of poetry" (BL, i 11). These insights from Boyer and Bowles originated in Coleridge's mind the whole question of the nature of poetry, and they prompted him to labour at establishing "a solid foundation, on which permanently to ground my opinions, in the component faculties of the human mind itself, and their comparative dignity and importance" (BL, i 14).Wherein lay the source of this "freshness of sensation"? What was it in Wordsworth's poetry, what power there manifested itself, that distinguished his poetry from that of eighteenth-century writers? (BL, i 60–l) The desynonymisation of fancy and imagination lies at the heart of Biographia Literaria and is, in a very real sense, its raison d'etre. Coleridge's object in the work is "to investigate the seminal principle" of imagination and, in so doing, "to present an intelligible statement of my poetic creed; not as my opinions, which weigh for nothing, but as deductions from established premises" (BL, i 65).First, he refutes the view that it was a hasty improvisation by pointing out that the issues which it explores had been in Coleridge's mind for well over a decade and that the work "has many indelible marks of prolonged, patient, and mature consideration". Second, he stresses the centrality of Wordsworth, both in the early development and in the final execution of Biographia Literaria. The original motivation to compose the work was rooted in Coleridge's desire to explain the novel power of Wordsworth's art and the related desire to solve the "radical Difference" between his own and Wordsworth's theoretical opinions about poetry.Boyer and Bowles provided indispensable preliminary insights, but Wordsworth struck him with the disturbing force of radical revelation.