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Coleridge. Collaboration, and the Higher Criticism, Ph.D., 1999

Abstract

Coleridge constructed his later prose works through an unusual "cut-and-paste" method that has generated criticism and controversy ever since these texts were published. Criticism of Coleridge's texts, both verse and prose, has puzzled over his largely unacknowledged borrowings from other authors. Coleridge's direct use of sources is so widespread that Thomas McFarland and Jerome Christensen have suggested persuasively that the technique can be considered a full-blown mode of composition. Explanations as to why he might have composed in this manner are less convincing, however, as most critics tend to use the evidence of Coleridge's dependence on other writers as the basis for a moral judgement or for an analysis of his neuroses.

Leaving Coleridge's psychological health aside, I argue that Coleridge adapted an historical model for his controversial use of texts. The Higher Criticism suggested that the Bible was not a simple collection of books by known, inspired authors, but a collaborative, composite document containing layers of authorship and redaction within a single biblical book. This radical biblical criticism described in detail the manuscript culture in which the Bible was formed, and in the process, put forth theories of authorship and textual authenticity to justify their findings and preserve the integrity of the text. A
natural collaborator, Coleridge was also immersed in both the Bible and this criticism, and adapted the practices of the biblical writers as described by the Higher Critics to his own compositional methods. The dissertation focuses on Aids to Reflection, the prose work of Coleridge’s which was so admired throughout the nineteenth century. Starting its life as an edition, Aids to Reflection was based on the work of the “inspired” Archbishop Leighton, and grew to include substantial amounts of Coleridge’s and many seventeenth-century theologians’ writing, including Coleridge’s marginal glosses on Leighton. The work and its biblical model provides us with a fresh way to examine Coleridge’s ideas of inspiration and authorship, outside of the rather tired issue of plagiarism.
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My parents have provided me with moral (and occasionally financial) support over the course of my university education. My most heartfelt thanks go to my fiancé Craig Martin, who has edited and proofread multiple drafts, suggested words when I was stuck, made me chicken soup when I was sick, and rubbed my head when I was tired.
List of Abbreviations

All works are by Coleridge. Publication information may be found in the “Works Consulted” at the end of this dissertation.

AR  
Aids to Reflection (CC)

BL  
Biographia Literaria (CC)

CC  
The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Princeton UP

CL  

CM  
Marginalia (CC). References from the Marginalia will have the author of the work annotated in small capitals, followed by the note number in boldface.

CN  

CS  
On the Constitution of the Church and State (CC)

EOT  
Essays on his Times (CC)

LS  
Lay Sermons (CC)

N  
Material from the unpublished notebooks, indicated by notebook number, entry number, and folio number.

PL  

SW&F  
Shorter Works & Fragments (CC)

TT  
Table Talk (CC)
Introduction

Coleridge constructed his later prose works through an unusual “cut-and-paste” method which has generated criticism and controversy ever since these texts were published. Contemporary critics called *Aids to Reflection* a “motley collection” (J.R. de J. Jackson, 1: 488) and accusations of plagiarism stemming from Coleridge’s liberal and generally unacknowledged use of sources have dogged the *Biographia Literaria* since De Quincey’s accusations in *Tait’s Edinburgh Magazine* shortly after Coleridge’s death.

Thirty years ago, Thomas McFarland suggested persuasively that the appropriations were so extensive that we had to re-think our view of them: “the very multiplicity of instances—far more than at first charged, and by no means as yet all identified—suggests the explanation, bizarre though it may seem, that we are faced not with plagiarism, but with nothing less than a mode of composition—composition by mosaic organization rather than by painting on an empty canvas” (*Panheist*, 27). Jerome Christensen attempted to refine further the argument that Coleridge’s plagiarisms were a method of writing by proposing that Coleridge “pursues a strategy of indirection by means of a tactic which I call a marginal method: a fragmentary, mobile, aggressively rhetorical mode of argument that reads like a series of marginalia on the texts of others” (29).

This dissertation attempts to contribute to this debate about Coleridge’s use of texts by suggesting a larger historical context. While others have tried to explain the
borrowings as a "neurotic technique of composition" (McFarland, *Pantheist*, 34)—that is, based on the admittedly guilt-ridden and somewhat unstable personality of Coleridge—I argue that his compositional techniques are related to those of the figure of the redactor in manuscript cultures, particularly as it was understood in contemporary biblical criticism. These methods are essentially collaborative, as I believe Coleridge's work in general to be, although his collaborations are often different from the norm. In Coleridge's methods and biblical practices, the author-editor works with the texts of others, often long dead, rather than being in a dialogue with a living author. Like Christensen and McFarland, I consider Coleridge's use of sources to be an actual compositional technique. His borrowings are the main subset in a general collaborative practice that also includes his marginalia, his more conventional collaborations with Wordsworth and Southey, and even his famous conversation and his habit of dictating his manuscripts to amanuenses. By situating Coleridge's compositional techniques within common biblical practices, I argue that his borrowings can be seen as a way in which Coleridge critiques rather clumsy notions of literary property. His writings about biblical authorship and inspiration show that collaboration is not just an accidental process caused by historical circumstances. Instead, it is a method of composition that allows successive generations of writers to add the knowledge of their time to texts while still retaining the wisdom of other cultures and ages. In this introductory chapter, I shall consider concepts of collaboration and multiple authorship generally; define the particular type of "textual

---

1 Jack Stillinger states that "His plagiarisms constitute a unique form of multiple authorship in English literature" (Stillinger, *Multiple Authorship*, 99).
collaboration” which I see Coleridge using and discuss his awareness of this type of authorship in the Bible; and look at Coleridge’s preference for collaboration in his compositional and intellectual activities.

In a broad sense, all texts can be considered intertextual and thus collaborative. Kristeva suggests that “any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another” (Desire in Language, quoted in Clayton and Rothstein, 20), a statement that describes Aids to Reflection more aptly than most texts. In his recent book on multiple authorship, Jack Stillinger also acknowledges this very general sense of collaboration as intertextuality:

All extant works are composites of previously existing materials plus what Wordsworth, attempting to define “genius” in his “Essay, Supplementary to the Preface” (1815), described as “the introduction of a new element into the intellectual universe: or...the application of powers to objects on which they had not before been exercised, or the employment of them in such a manner as to produce effects hitherto unknown. …”

In this contrived but quite practical sense, every work is necessarily the product of multiple authorship. Recent theoretical discussions where
“intertextuality” substitutes for “source and influence” make this inevitably joint aspect of literary production even clearer. (Stillinger, *Multiple Authorship*. 96)

While we might be intellectually aware that multiple authorship exists in every text we read or write, we do not regard it as particularly problematic, as we tend to push this rather “contrived” idea to the background and concentrate on the “‘introduction of a new element into the intellectual universe’” by a single author.

Attempting to analyse the dynamics of a more specific collaboration is often more challenging, as criticism has tended to focus on a book through the lens of a single author, even as I am doing now with Coleridge and his work. Collaboration, as critics such as Jeffrey Masten and Alison Hickey have pointed out, effaces our traditional paradigms of authorial property, in which an author writes a work unassisted which then belongs to him or her alone. We tend to try to restore these paradigms by centring our attention on who has written what in a jointly composed text: “Traditionally, criticism has viewed collaboration as a mere subset or aberrant kind of individual authorship, the collusion of two unique authors whom subsequent readers could discern and separate out by examining the traces of individuality and personality…left in the collaborative text” (Masten, 16). However, these traces have to be sought after, redefined, and reconstructed, and an examination of collaboration may lead us to the conclusion that “property in one’s own ‘life,’ identity and work is…comparative, rather than absolute” (Hickey, 742). We as critics may build a unique author out of a collaborative text, but
that identity is not absolute. When collaboration is viewed as important in its own right, and not simply as an "aberrant kind of individual authorship," it forces a re-evaluation of (and/or complicates) a repertoire of familiar interpretative methodologies—most prominently, biographical and psychoanalytic approaches—based on the notion of the singular author. Other traditional critical categories policing the circulation of language become problematic as well—for example, "plagiarism," "borrowing," "influence" (and its "anxieties"), "source," "originality," "imagination," "genius," and "complete works." (Masten, 20)

The boundaries between collaboration and plagiarism depend to a large extent on how strongly one adheres to the model of single authorship, a useful paradigm for purposes of both copyright law and our own general convenience, Stillinger points out, but one which is most definitely a construct.² Apart from whatever help an author might get (from a fellow writer, or a spouse, or friend) in the creation of a text, once the book goes to press, background collaborators go to work. M. Thomas Inge comments that most of the culture of this century, probably of the nineteenth century, and possibly since the Industrial Revolution has largely been the product of the art of collaboration rather than the art of the individual. From the time movable type was developed, another individual has stood between the writer and the reader—

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² "Obviously, the myth of single authorship is a great convenience for teachers, students, critics, and other readers, as well as for publishers, agents, booksellers, librarians, copyright lawyers—indeed, for everyone connected with the production and reception of books, starting with the authors themselves. The myth is thoroughly embedded in our culture and our ordinary practices, including the ordinary practices of criticism and interpretation, for which, I would argue, it is an absolute necessity. The countering reality of multiple authorship is no threat to the continuing existence of the myth, nor, except for deconstructionist theorists, is there any compelling reason for wanting the myth to cease to exist." (Stillinger, *Multiple Authorship*, 187)
the printer. As soon as the type-setter began to regularize the fonts and impose
systematic grammar and spelling on the contents of manuscripts for the sake of
expediency and readability, the books produced were collaborations. ("The Art of
Collaboration," 4)

In *The Textual Condition*, McGann discusses at length the social conditions enabling
texts, and the way that all books are formed through a network of collaboration. While it
is a reasonably easy stretch to see substantive editorial alterations as altering the text in a
significant enough way to merit the term collaboration, McGann suggests that "the most
important 'collaboration' process is that which finds ways of marrying a linguistic to a
bibliographical text" (*Textual Condition*, 61). The singular author is supported by a
hidden group of co-workers, only vaguely acknowledged if at all, and so most texts could
be said to be "plagiarised" because they rely on the work of others. In "Toward a
Working Definition of Collaborative Writing," Jeanette Harris makes the point that
somewhat of a double standard exists in judging whether work is collaborative or
plagiarised:

> In the past, collaborative writing was often referred to as plagiarism if we
> were talking about students; if we were discussing professional writers or
> ourselves, it was editing....

> In general, the views about collaborative writing divided along
> aesthetic/pragmatic lines. That is, if one were engaged in writing that was
> primarily intended for pragmatic purposes, then collaboration was permissible. If,
on the other hand, one were writing for aesthetic purposes, collaboration was concealed or considered a lesser accomplishment. Therefore, when writers whose purposes were aesthetic involved others in their writing, they often concealed it, referred to it as editing, or rationalized that it wasn’t really collaboration because no one else physically performed the act of writing the words. As a result, the illusion existed that writing for aesthetic purposes was a solitary act—a writer working alone to create art. (78-79)

Editors, although the most important players in the collaboration game, maintain the myth of the single author most stringently in their own practices, and traditionally have purified multiply written texts of any material not belonging to the dominant author (such as Shakespeare). Masten argues that “‘corruption’—the introduction of non-authorial material into a text during the process of ‘transmission’—is ‘collaboration’ given a negative connotation” (19). Issues of property and the appropriation of work are obviously important. However, our initial (twentieth-century) sense of moral outrage should be tempered with an understanding of the historical context of the work and our own norms of authorship.³

Many of our prevailing twentieth-century presumptions about the author as a solitary, originary creator stem from Romanticism and pre-Romantic works such as Edward Young’s “Conjectures on Original Composition.” In the introduction to their provocative collection, The Construction of Authorship, Martha Woodmansee and Peter

³ I will discuss these “issues” for Coleridge in my conclusion.
Jaszi remind us that what seems like our natural, instinctual sense of authorship is actually a fairly new historical phenomenon:

Taken as a whole these studies of writing practices from the Renaissance to the present suggest that the modern regime of authorship, far from being timeless and universal, is a relatively recent formation—the result of a quite radical reconceptualization of the creative process that culminated less than 200 years ago in the heroic self-presentation of Romantic poets. As they saw it, genuine authorship is *originary* in the sense that it results not in a variation, an imitation, or an adaptation, and certainly not in a mere re-production…but in an utterly new, unique—in a word, “original”—work which, accordingly, may be said to be the property of its creator and to merit the law’s protection as such.

Prior to this apotheosis of authorship words and texts circulated more freely—in the sense at least that…appropriation…was common. This is not because surveillance was lax, but because more corporate and collaborative norms of writing prevailed. … (Woodmansee and Jaszi, 2-3)

As Woodmansee and Jaszi go on to explain, “communal and collaborative writing practices” did not disappear. They “persisted not only in everyday and technical writing, but among the very writers who contributed most substantially to the Romantic reconceptualization of this activity” (3). Wordsworth, they point out, effaces much of his work’s collaborative origins “in the authorial persona he projects publicly” (3). Alison Hickey argues that we must reexamine our “insufficiently-considered notions of
Romanticism as the flourishing of individual genius" in order to revise "the history of collaboration and of authorship generally" (736).

Collaboration does seem to be curiously occluded from the title pages of texts of the Romantic period. Its most famous collaboration, *Lyrical Ballads*, was published anonymously in 1798, and under Wordsworth's name alone in 1800. *The Fall of Robespierre*, published as written by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, had two of its three acts composed by Robert Southey, and the newspaper accounts which formed the basis of Southey's contribution were entirely unacknowledged. To turn the tables, Coleridge's part in the writing of Book 2 of *Joan of Arc* did not merit a mention on the title page. Both Southey and Coleridge's *Omniana* and their joint poem "The Devil's Walk" were published anonymously, though "The Devil's Walk" was later published with both authors acknowledged.  

Although Wordsworth may have admitted privately the part which Dorothy played in the writing of his poems, the publication of her journals showed the public just how crucial a figure she was to poems such as "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud." Percy Shelley had a large hand in *Frankenstein*, published first anonymously and then under Mary Shelley's name.

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1 See Mark Storey's recent biography of Southey, 133.  
2 See the introduction to two editions of Dorothy's *Grasmere journals*. Jonathan Wordsworth calls Dorothy's description of the daffodils "the sources of her brother's most famous poem" (*The Grasmere Journal*, 12), and Pamela Woof remarks, "He might have forgotten, had not Dorothy's prose taught him to see again, the leech-gatherer or the shore of daffodils" (*The Grasmere Journals*, xvi). There is also a wide body of feminist criticism which views Dorothy as a solid contributor to her brother's work. See, for example, Susan M. Levin's discussion of "I Wandered Lonely" in *Dorothy Wordsworth & Romanticism*, 34-36.  
3 In addition to these well-known instances, my query to the electronic list of the North American Society for Studies in Romanticism on the topic of anonymous collaborative texts or works with single attribution but joint authorship elicited a goldmine of information. Paul Yoder suggested Samuel Johnson's contributions to Goldsmith's "The Deserted Village" and Catherine Blake's assistance to Blake's designs; Paula Feldman mentioned the Lambs' *Mrs. Leicester's School* and *Tales from Shakespeare*, and
The early history of Romanticism, it seems, is that of unconcerned appropriation. Material was shared, and although there was some concern to let people know privately that a contribution had been made—Robert Southey informed Thomas Southey that “The two last acts of Robespierre are my writing” (Southey, 1: 88)—outside their circle of friends authors took credit for others’ work as a matter of course. When we discuss Romantic authorship and related issues of intellectual property, which we now do with considerably more scepticism than formerly towards the Romantics’ own self-presentation of themselves as originary geniuses (Wordsworth in *The Prelude*, Shelley in “A Defence of Poetry”), we must remember that the transition to the author as sole creator and owner of his or her text was a gradual one. Susan Eilenberg argues convincingly that Coleridge and Wordsworth originally had a rather loose sense of their work as property:

During the gestation of the *Lyrical Ballads* and to some extent even later, the poets’ ideas about what constituted literary property were in flux. Indeed, it is not entirely clear that they regarded their early work in terms of property—in terms at least of *exclusive* property—at all. The two poets and their friends seemed largely indifferent to matters of literary paternity and showed an impressive but not limitless willingness to share literary property. (15)
While Athena may have sprung fully formed from the head of Zeus, very few changes in history happen this way, and the mixed signals that Romantic authors—Coleridge in particular—project are a sign of the shift taking place in which the unacknowledged borrowing of another's work moves from acceptable to unacceptable.

The particular kind of multiple authorship which I discuss in Coleridge's work is largely appropriative. "Textual collaboration" is the working with a previously written text or texts to produce another work which contains the fragments of the source in some direct form. It differs from the more friendly sort of authorial exchanges that we generally think of when we consider collaboration (Beaumont and Fletcher, for example). In textual collaboration, one author always has the upper hand and actively appropriates passages from others' texts without the prior knowledge of the authors, who usually are either long-dead (as were Leighton and the other theologians in the case of Aids to Reflection) or are ignorant of the use to which their work is being put (as Schelling was during the creation of the Biographia). I will not, therefore, be discussing the sort of "lyrical dialogue" (Magnuson) in which Coleridge and Wordsworth participated in their early years: their texts did respond to and quote each other, but with the knowledge and the implicit permission of both writers. Instead, I will view Coleridge's compositions more as "creative plagiarism"—the term Jack Stillinger uses in the title of his sensible
and thoughtful chapter on Coleridge in *Multiple Authorship and the Myth of Solitary Genius.* Textual collaboration, however, differs from the plagiarism of ideas or from more legitimate influence because it includes not just the content, but the actual words of the prior text bodily within its confines. Consequently, it is much more a true collaboration than a work which has borrowed only ideas, as the book formed by textual collaboration includes the voices of at least two authors within it. It is the preservation of the words of the source that justifies in my mind the use of the term “collaboration.”

The text created by textual collaboration becomes a blended text: an aggregation of parts which has become (on the surface, at least) fused. Initially, it is difficult to tell where one author’s work ends and the next begins. While this definition may at first bring to mind the definition of an anthology, the two are quite different: the various parts of an anthology are generally kept quite distinct and are properly acknowledged. The effacing of the demarcation between the fragments which make up a work is crucial to the definition of textual collaboration which I will be using throughout the dissertation. John Livingston Lowes sees Coleridge as blending fragments or images from books “by the controlling power of the imagination into organic entities which bore no marks of the fusing fire upon them” (93). For Lowes, not all of Coleridge’s works undergo the transformation into unified entity. *The Destiny of Nations* is not successful:

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7 Stillinger argues that Coleridge’s “plagiarisms constitute a unique form of multiple authorship in English literature; no other author as eminent as Coleridge seems to have written in this way” (*Multiple Authorship*, 99). Stillinger’s book has been a great help to me in thinking through multiple authorship, both generally and specifically for Coleridge.
Here, then, are precisely such fragments of remembered reading as we found dissolved, diffused, and then re-created, in the elfish beauty and creeping horror of the equatorial seas. The nature of the shattered fragments is identical; the complexity of their interweavings is the same. But there the likeness ends. The meteorological reminiscences before us dovetail into each other trimly, but they remain essentially themselves. They have not melted into one another and transfused their several identities into a new and integrated whole. (Lowes. 102)

I am less interested in whether something has "fused" into a philosophical whole, as Lowes would like to prove—very few of Coleridge's late prose works could reasonably be called unities, though on the surface they appear to be by one author—than in how the blending took place and what might serve as the model for the composite. The works discussed in this dissertation, which concentrates on *Aids to Reflection*, generally borrow substantial sections of text, not just selected images.

+++}

Textual collaboration is close in practice to earlier methods of composition, particularly those of manuscript cultures. Even in early print culture, the standards of borrowing were significantly different from our modern ones. Masten contends "that collaborative texts produced before the emergence of authorship are of a kind different (informed by differing mechanisms of textual property and control, different conceptions
of imitation, originality, and the ‘individual’) from collaborations produced within the regime of the author” (21). Evelyn Tribble talks about the early print book as “encyclopedic” (63): rather than being concerned with originality, it gathers in sources from any authority that seems relevant. But manuscript culture in particular can do much to inform our understanding of Coleridge’s work. Discussing early English annotation, Thomas Toon states that

The early medieval experience of text was radically different. Medieval scribes would not understand our sense of the inviolability of the written page. Any ancient text that was well used shows ample evidence of that use. Only the most depraved of us think it appropriate to extend the rights of private ownership to public property, but medieval scribes felt no such compunction. Further, in making corrections or in adding material, they actually modified the text itself. Their annotations became part of the text and were regularly incorporated into the transmission of the text. (76)

Given Coleridge’s annotative practices, he could be said to have had a “medieval” sense of text. Part of the problem with Coleridge, I believe, is that he was writing in the “regime of the author,” to use Masten’s phrase from above, but in a way which preceded this Romantic reign and, indeed, print culture altogether.

The pre-print cultures which provided Coleridge with his largest sphere of influence were those which formed the Bible. As I will show in chapter one, biblical redactors pasted together texts out of often fragmentary works by various authors, usually
rewriting them and adding their own commentary or compositions to them. McGann and others have argued quite rightly that modern editors are collaborative. However, manuscript author-editors or redactors were much more intrusive, and practised the same type of textual collaboration as Coleridge. Although biblical methods of composition undoubtedly made the largest impression on Coleridge, as his extensive reading in the Higher Critics shows, he was also aware of modes of writing as they were discussed in classical scholarship, particularly questions of Homeric authorship. A notebook entry of December 1823 makes it clear he was aware of the debate:

A speaking of Homer means a book. Where’s your Homer?

B. using the same word means the Author of the Book.

C and D. mean the same by the word as B. But

C thinks of one individual Poet, who at different periods of his life composed the Iliad, the Odyssey, the Hymns & the Battle of the Frogs, while

D. thinks of a Body or Order of Men, ὄμπρεποντων, concinentium [people singing together], having for their common Subject the cycle of the events and heroes of the Trojan War. (CN, 4: 5071)

While discussion of the Homeric legends often centred on oral transmission, the works that Coleridge read and re-read in the controversy surrounding the Bible largely focused on the piecing together of fragments of text, making them more relevant to his practice than classical criticism.
It may seem strange, initially, that a manuscript culture could have such a strong influence on an author born and writing in the age of print. However, it was not the culture itself but that time as it was described by seventeenth- and eighteenth-century theorists that influenced Coleridge. The debates about what types of authorship were acceptable were informed as much by contemporary values as ancient ones. In addition, the Bible, like Homer and the classics, has long served as an exemplar for authors, and Coleridge in particular was immersed in both the Bible itself and contemporary writings about it.

The great question here is what kind of direct influence, if any, the model of text that he would have seen in the Higher Criticism’s description of the Bible had on Coleridge. Two marginal notes discussed in chapter three show Coleridge explicitly comparing his compositional techniques to biblical ones. He likens his practice of glossing his books to that of early Christians annotating New Testament manuscripts, and his tendency of piling notes upon notes to St. Paul. Another comment on the Bible accounts for a problem in Jeremiah as “a mistake common in dictating” (BIBLE Copy B 67): Coleridge would know, as it was a practice which he used to in much of his composition. He also frequently compared literature which he particularly liked to the Bible. An excerpt from Henry Crabb Robinson’s journal, quoted in the introduction to John Beer’s edition of *Aids to Reflection*, suggests that his friends may have seen Coleridge as a biblical author: “Coler. somewhere admits that, musing over Leighton’s text, he was not always able to distinguish what was properly his own from what was
consciously derived from his master. J. J. Taylor quotes this & hints that this might be the case with St. John in his old age when writing his Gospel” (cxii). And Sir Thomas Noon Talfourd, a friend of Lamb’s acquainted with Coleridge, described, somewhat hagiographically, the Sage of Highgate’s plentiful conversation as lacking a sense of intellectual property, a trait which he sees as that of a Homeric poet:

There was a noble prodigality in these outpourings; a generous disdain of self; an earnest desire to scatter abroad the seeds of wisdom and beauty, to take root wherever they might fall, and spring up without bearing his name or impress, which might remind the listener of the first days of poetry before it became individualized by the press, when the Homeric rhapsodist wandered through new-born cities and scattered hovels...and sought no record more enduring than the fleshly tablets of his hearer’s hearts; no memory but that of genial tradition; when copyright did not ascertain the reciter’s property... (Armour and Howes, 352-353)

Though I cannot say for certain that Coleridge consciously used the figure of the redactor as an authorial model, the extent to which he was steeped in these discussions of biblical authorship and the congruence of his own practice with theirs, as I hope to show in this dissertation, is a compelling argument that some influence existed. As Fruman shows in his Damaged Archangel, Coleridge started borrowing very early in his career; he was also acquainted with the Higher Criticism, however, by the time of his lectures in 1795, as we know that he read Michaelis’s Introduction to the New Testament in preparation for them. Herbert Marsh, Michaelis’s English translator, wrote a long disquisition
summarising in great detail the various Higher Critical theories of the composition of the Gospels. Although it is possible that Coleridge would have engaged in textual collaboration had he not been immersed in contemporary concepts of biblical authorship, the Higher Criticism gave him a reassuring model which enabled him to develop it into a fully fledged practice.

Surprisingly, considering how much the later notebooks and marginalia in particular are full of Coleridge's reflections on biblical authorship and composition, few people have mentioned the Higher Criticism as an important influence upon Coleridge's methods of composition. There are two important exceptions: Jerome McGann's article on "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," later published as a chapter in his book, *The Beauty of Inflections*, and Elinor Shaffer's "Kubla Khan" and The Fall of Jerusalem: *The Mythological School in Biblical Criticism and Secular Literature 1770-1880*. McGann's chapter is particularly relevant to my work, as it sees the "Rime" as "Coleridge's imitation of a culturally redacted literary work," as the Bible and *Iliad* both are (153). He argues that "the Higher Critical model" gives Coleridge "a structure in which various materials [the layers of pagan mythology and competing Christian ideologies] apparently alien to each other could be reconciled and harmonized" (162). He concludes that the context of his religious and critical thought shows quite clearly, I believe, that the poem is, as it were, an English national Scripture; that is to say, the poem imitates

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8 "Radical" theories of the composition of the Bible were also well known in Unitarian circles, and Coleridge was a practising Unitarian until at least 1799. He had knowledge of Unitarianism from February, 1793, when the William Frend controversy broke out at Cambridge, and perhaps before.
a redacted literary text which comprises various material…for Coleridge each redaction specifies and calls attention to the series of distinct epochal (that is, ideological) interpretations through which the poetic material has been evolving.

(160)

McGann’s argument provides to my mind the most persuasive explanation for the various contradictory layers which make the poem as a whole so difficult to interpret. Some room, however, is still left for a fuller examination of the Higher Criticism in Coleridge’s thought. In the “Rime,” although the strata of materials make them appear to have been composed by different people from various periods, the layers were all written by Coleridge, so that the poem does not have multiple authors. The outline of Coleridge’s technique of textual collaboration is certainly present, however. Because McGann focuses on this poem exclusively, he does not relate the influence of the Higher Criticism to Coleridge’s textual collaborations, plagiarisms, or unusual authorial practices, which is the main concentration of my dissertation. I also believe that, although the “Rime” mimics the techniques of composing scripture, the content of the poem makes it a less suitable candidate for an “English national Scripture” than, say, *Aids to Reflection*, which was redacted from an earlier, “inspired” work, as I shall argue in chapter five. Nonetheless, McGann’s article has provided reassuring support for my work.

None of the critics who talk about the Higher Criticism and Romanticism, and particularly about biblical modes of composition, focuses primarily on multiple

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9 Lowes does show that Coleridge borrowed images here and there for the poem, but he did not use entire passages of text, which is my main focus.
authorship or Coleridge's plagiarisms. E.S. Shaffer, in the much-lauded 'Kubla Khan' and The Fall of Jerusalem: The Mythological School in Biblical Criticism and Secular Literature 1770-1880, discusses the German biblical critics and Coleridge's relationship to them extensively. Her emphasis, as her subtitle suggests, is on how the visionary perception of history creates mythology. She does deal briefly, in places, with the relationship between authorship and authenticity in the debate over whether John the Evangelist wrote Revelation (71, 82-85), but does not relate it to Coleridge's own practices. She also makes persuasive arguments that Coleridge was acquainted with German biblical theories before his visit to Germany. Ina Lipkowitz, in "Inspiration and the Poetic Imagination: Samuel Taylor Coleridge," holds that the "higher critics' redaction theories of the Bible" gave Coleridge "a way to reconcile his dream of an epic with the lyrical presentation of the Bible: lyric poems, particularly ballads, hymns, and odes, were seen as the raw material from which epics had been assembled" (Lipkowitz, 622-23). However, Lipkowitz concentrates exclusively on poetry, and the details of her argument are somewhat vague.

Relating to Romanticism more generally, a lovely little book by Elizabeth Wanning Harries, The Unfinished Manner: Essays on the Fragment in the Later Eighteenth Century (1994), mentions in a short section the eighteenth-century view of the Bible as a "palimpsest of various versions, written over time by actual people" as a "model for...essentially fragmentary or indeterminate texts" (39). A substantial amount of criticism exists on the relationship between the Bible and Romanticism, including
M.H. Abrams’s comprehensive *Natural Supernaturalism*. Abrams argues that “many of the most distinctive and recurrent elements in both the thought and literature of the age had their origin in theological concepts, image, and plot patterns which were translated, in Wordsworth’s terms, to men ‘as natural beings in the strength of nature…’” (Abrams, *Natural*, 65). Abrams examines “theological concepts, image, and plot patterns” but not the very specific methods which the Higher Criticism saw as being used in the composition of the Bible. *Origins of Narrative: The Romantic Appropriation of the Bible*, a recent (1996) book by Stephen Prickett, discusses in detail the relationship of the Bible to Romanticism. He sees the Bible as a metatype, an anthology of genres which is essentially fragmentary and incomplete. Prickett, however, examines not the Higher Criticism, but the Jena school of Romanticism, which used the Bible as a model for a text that was necessarily, rather than accidentally, fragmentary: no text could ever be completed, and so was always in a state of becoming. He does not relate the compositional practices of the Romantics to the way the Higher Criticism saw the Bible being constituted—a flaw, I think, because the Jena school’s conception of the Bible was influenced by the great and much-discussed developments in German biblical criticism.

Finally, work has been done on how the Higher Criticism’s biblical analysis influenced Blake in the compositions of his early prophecies. An interesting chapter of Leslie Tannenbaum’s *Biblical Tradition in Blake’s Early Prophecies: The Great Code of Art* shows how the figures of Los and Urizen in *The Book of Urizen* were influenced by
the different strands of narrative in Genesis as identified by Astruc.\textsuperscript{10} Jerome J. McGann’s “The Idea of an Indeterminate Text: Blake’s Bible of Hell and Dr. Alexander Geddes” argues that Geddes’s “fragment-hypothesis” was the primary model for the books of Blake’s “Bible of Hell” (\textit{Urizen}, \textit{Ahania}, and \textit{Los}).\textsuperscript{11} In showing how Coleridge drew upon the Higher Criticism’s analysis of the form and method of composition of the Bible, my work will most closely resemble that which has been done on Blake, though I wish to discuss in much greater detail the notions of authorship inherent in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century biblical scholarship.

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Throughout his life, Coleridge preferred to—often could only—work with someone or something, which is why so many of his activities seem necessarily collaborative. Quite early on, he tells Southey in a letter that he needs a “body of thought” in order to compose, which, as Christensen explains, could be either a textual or human body:

\textsuperscript{10} Northrop Frye compared, much earlier, the intertwining of the books of Urizen and Los to the J and E strands in Genesis, but did not suggest that they were a direct source for Blake (247).

\textsuperscript{11} McGann argues against Blake’s having “any direct knowledge about J and E strands in the biblical texts,” though he “probably knew Eichhorn’s documentary hypothesis” (305); later in his article, he talks of the summary of Eichhorn’s theory in the preface to volume one of Geddes’s translation of the Bible (1792). If Blake had read the preface, as McGann’s argument implies, he would have encountered this summary, which included lists of the numbered verses supposed to belong to each document (xix-xx). Therefore, although he was not acquainted with Eichhorn’s text, yet he would have had direct, detailed knowledge of the \textit{theory}, and would have understood which parts of Genesis were supposed to belong to J and to E. McGann dismisses, quite unnecessarily in my view, the theory that the threads of narrative in \textit{Urizen} that can be seen as belonging to Urizen and Los respectively are related to the J/E documentary hypothesis, though he does point out that Tannenbaum does not make a convincing argument as to Blake’s knowledge of it.
whether it be the embodiment of thought in a personality to whom he could direct
\textit{ad hominem} arguments or conversational poems, whether it be the body of
thought that a text such as Mackintosh’s lectures or his own letter might supply,
or whether it be the embodiment of a first principle—he needed a “sensible bulk”
to use Addison’s phrase, to guide his philosophical imagination and to which he
might affix his comments. If the letter to Southey expresses the ebullient side of
that need, this later note reveals its pathos: “My nature,” Coleridge confesses,
“requires another Nature for its support, & reposes only in another from the
necessary Indigence of its being.” (Christensen, 99-100)

While my dissertation concentrates on the \textit{something} (the textual other), he did engage in
more typical partnerships as well.\textsuperscript{12} The collaborations of Wordsworth and Coleridge,
both the \textit{Lyrical Ballads} and the poems up to 1802, have been well scrutinised, and are
considered to be part of a dialogue of texts: “All are parts or fragments of a poetic
dialogue or poetic dialectic, if that word is understood in its loosest sense and does not
imply a logical or linear progress. Each poem or fragment in the dialogue takes its
significance from its surrounding context” (Magnuson, 18). Eilenberg’s \textit{Strange Power
of Speech}, a fascinating book about the dynamics of property and literary voice in
Coleridge and Wordsworth, suggests that the collaboration may have in fact succeeded
all too well, so that Wordsworth worried about the loss of his individual voice:

\textsuperscript{12} “No collaborative situation can be proper in an absolute sense, but some are ‘properer’ than others”
(Hickey, 742).
The collaboration had failed partly because it really had failed but partly also because it had succeeded. Together, Wordsworth and Coleridge had achieved the creation of a voice, audible not just in the *Lyrical Ballads* but also in the conversation poems, parts of the *Prelude*, and the great odes, that belonged properly to neither of them and to both. One effect of the collaboration was thus to undermine the propriety of poetic voice, that which creates an illusion of a single stable human identity behind the voice issuing from its mouth and guarantees the creator of that voice an exclusive property in it. On some level both poets recognized this. But while Coleridge embraced the implications of what they had done, Wordsworth fought them. (4-5)

Zachary Leader, in *Revision and Romantic Authorship*, also sees Coleridge as having a looser sense of literary property than Wordsworth: “His poems much more directly question the autonomy of the self, language, ‘possession’ (that is, the ‘owning’ or authorship of one’s writing) than do Wordsworth’s, but they are rarely as explicitly indeterminist as, for example, Byron’s” (137).

Coleridge worked with Southey in the early heat of the pantisocracy period. Together they composed *The Fall of Robespierre* to earn money for their project, and Coleridge contributed some lines to Southey’s *Joan of Arc*, which Coleridge himself later used in *The Destiny of Nations*. In one copy of *Conciones ad Populum*, Coleridge struck a paragraph and noted “Written by Southey. I never saw these men” (*Lectures 1795*, 41n). Later in life, Coleridge annotated books which Southey had agreed to review, thus
assisting him in his critical task. The first and second editions of Poems on Various Subjects contained poems by the Charleses Lamb and Lloyd. While at Highgate, he assisted James Gillman and Joseph Henry Green with their work. Green was of inestimable support to Coleridge, who eventually considered the system he had been working on with Green since 1818 to be the “Chloro-esteesian Philosophy or...connected Disquisitions concerning God, Nature and Man by J. H. Green, and S. T. Coleridge” (N44.58, f75).

The types of collaboration in which I am interested are quite different from this norm. Although throughout his life he often relied on another being or text, as time went on these presences became almost mute. The lyrical dialogue of the early period turned into a lyrical monologue. In discussing the importance of collaboration to Coleridge. Tim Fulford calls the “author whose words Coleridge stole” a “silent collaborator,” and suggests that the “plagiarised author acted for Coleridge as an ideal audience, who would recognise the appropriation of his words as a tribute to their validity, and welcome Coleridge as a partner” (Figurative Language, 103). It is a peculiar type of collaboration: the other is a vital part of the project, but its presence is its only contribution as it is not permitted to contribute to the new shape of the text. Leighton, for example, has no say in how his works are excerpted and rewritten to form Aids to Reflection, but he has to be considered a co-author.

13 See the marginalia on Malthus and James Sedgwick in CM 3 and 4.
This dependency on a mute partner shows itself in more than just textual collaborations. Coleridge was most productive when dictating to an amanuensis, producing *The Friend* with Sara Hutchinson, *Biographia Literaria* with J. J. Morgan, and several unpublished works with J. H. Green. Armour and Howes’s wonderful collection of contemporary responses to Coleridge’s conversation reveal that he was considered by friend and foe alike to be not a conversationalist, but a monologuist. Many people quote Mme de Staël as saying “‘that he is very great in monologue, but that he has no idea of dialogue’” (Robinson, 1: 132). Thomas Carlyle recorded that “Nothing could be more copious than his talk; and furthermore it was always, virtually or literally, of the nature of a monologue; suffering no interruption, however reverent…” (Armour and Howes, 115).15 De Quincey attempted to explain that, although Coleridge did inevitably monopolise the conversation, he did not do it out of egotism: “Coleridge’s habit of soliloquizing through a whole evening of four or five hours had its origin neither in arrogance nor in absolute selfishness. The fact was that he could not talk unless he were uninterrupted…” (199). Opinions differed as to whether or not the captive listener enjoyed the conversation. Thomas Chalmers confessed that his “conversation, which flowed in a mighty unremitting stream, is most astonishing, but…to me still unintelligible” (127), and Carlyle, never a fan of Coleridge, found his style stifling.

Lamb affectionately tells an obviously exaggerated anecdote about meeting Coleridge, who caught hold of him by one of his coat buttons and began to talk. Lamb, being in a

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15 All following descriptions of conversation in this introduction are taken from Armour and Howes unless otherwise indicated.
hurry, quietly cut the button from his coat, and left. Five hours later, he claims he passed by the same place, where Coleridge was still talking, unaware that Lamb had left (279-80).

The force of Coleridge’s monologues was such that he was consistently described as a “great river, the Orellana, or St. Lawrence...[which] swept at once...into a continuous strain of eloquent dissertation” (De Quincey in Armour and Howes. 192-93). Indeed, Sterling compared him to his own Ancient Mariner (345), binding his passive listener to the spot with his troubled eye, and Cooper found that “no one could speak” (181) while the inexorable flood of Coleridge’s conversation swept across the room.

Though some found his conversation overwhelming, most listeners were more than happy to remain mute: “I have listened to him more than once for above an hour, of course without putting in a single word; I would as soon have attempted a song while a nightingale was singing” (Samuel Carter Hall in Armour and Howes, 229). Though Charles Cowden Clarke says that he “required from me nothing more than the simple recognition of his discourse” (133), we should not underestimate the extent to which Coleridge needed his audience: “Unable to work in solitude, he sought the gentle stimulus of social admiration, and under its influence poured forth, without stint, the marvellous resources of a mind rich in the spoils of time...” (Sir Thomas Noon Talfourd in Armour and Howes, 352). When an audience was not available to him, Coleridge sometimes constructed one while writing:
Pass from this 22\textsuperscript{nd} verse [of Luke 3] at once to Chapt. IV—and then ask yourself

(\textit{You, my imaginary Tete a tete Colloquist, or rather my complaisant Listener and Question-stock, are a Christian too firm in the faith to suffer any apprehension that he can offend the Co-eternal Word, who lighteth every man that cometh into the world...}) (N34.9, f\textsuperscript{16}\textsuperscript{v}^-\textsuperscript{17})

Coleridge also enjoyed reading the record of others’ conversations: Luther’s \textit{Colloquia Mensalia} and John Selden’s \textit{Table Talk} were both books he greatly admired.\textsuperscript{16}

Although Coleridge seemed compelled to monopolise the conversation when in public, he did have a strong recognition of the multiplicity of voices which had gone before him and contributed to a debate. He often criticised those who put forth their own argument ignoring dissenting voices. In a note on Manuel Lacunza y Diaz, he sarcastically remarks. “Be this as it may, one thing would be wonderful, if any thing in Apocalyptic Interpreters were wonderful—the fierce \textit{confidence} of assertion on a point on which of a score of Interpreters (every one) sports a different conjecture” (\textit{Lacunza y Diaz} 6). Eichhorn’s “\textit{vornehm}” (superior) style, which again rises above opinions conflicting with his, was a continual source of irritation (\textit{Eichhorn Apokryphischen Schriften} 9). The marginalia to Hartley Coleridge’s \textit{Worthies of Yorkshire and Lancashire} display irritation with Hartley for asserting an idea too positively or for dogmatising.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{16} See the marginalia on these two figures for Coleridge’s reaction.
\textsuperscript{17} See notes 3, 5, and 20.
Although Coleridge effectively took over the presences, textual or human, which were the crucial stimulation to his work or conversation, he nonetheless sought after duality (or plurality) of voice. His marginalia, which were such an integral part of his writing, demonstrate this doubling. In them, the text stimulates the commentary, but the source cannot defend itself or respond to the response. Two texts are not so much in dialogue as in monologue, though we should not underestimate the importance of the primary text as both stimulus and audience. In addition to using marginalia in actual works, he saw the notes as a basis for future texts. In a letter to C. A. Tulk, 20 January, 1820, he writes, “Of three great Works I have all the materials in bonâ fide mss Existence, that require little more than transcription from the various slips & scraps & pocket-books and Book-margins (to be done unhappily by myself alone) and the putting them together…” (CL, 5: 18). A couple of months later, he describes four planned works to Thomas Allsop (“Characteristics of Shakespear’s Dramatic Works…”; “Philosophical Analysis of the Genius and Works of Dante, Spenser, Milton, Cervantes, and Calderon…”; “The History of Philosophy…”; and “Letters on the Old and New Testament…” [CL, 5: 25-27]) which he claims are completed but need to be transcribed from so many scraps & sibylline leaves, including the Margins of Books & blank Pages, that unfortunately I must be my own Scribe—& not done by myself, they will be all but lost—or perhaps (as has been too often the case already) furnish feathers for the Caps of others—some for this purpose, and some to plume the
arrows of detraction to be let fly against the luckless Bird, from whom they had been plucked or moulted! (CL, 5: 27)

In a copy of Baxter's *Reliquiae Baxteriana* (Copy B 82), Coleridge reports John Kenyon's statement that Southey should write books and Coleridge should write notes on them. Coleridge, it is implied, is at heart a critic, but we can also read into this comment the extent to which he needed that other text. He is fundamentally a collaborative writer.

In the context of this necessary doubling, Hazlitt's description of Coleridge in the *London Magazine* of December 1820 is rather misleading:

He is the man of all others to swim on empty bladders in a sea, without shore or soundings: to drive an empty stage-coach without passengers or lading, and arrive behind his time; to write marginal notes without a text; to look into a millstone to foster the rising genius of the age; to "see merit in the chaos of its elements, and discern perfection in the great obscurity of nothing," as his most favourite author, Sir Thomas Brown [sic], has it on another occasion. (quoted in CL 5: 125n)

Hazlitt was more concerned with being cruel than accurate: Coleridge was incapable of writing marginal notes *without a text*, just as he was often unable to speak or write without an audience. Coleridge knew that the work which had provoked notes or commentary was in fact an integral part of them. He rails against the editor of Lessing's collected works for having published the German author's writings, so many of which were commentary on another's work, without the source text:
I seldom take up a volume of Lessing without renewed indignation at Nicolai’s miserable Judgement, or rather Lack of all Judgement,—in the omission of all the Tracts & Fragments published by L./& retaining only the remarks, sometimes scarcely intelligible, and always less interesting, without them. Had they been extracts from common Books, there might have been some excuse for it; but being either most rare, or Mss. they are in fact a part of Lessing’s Works.

(LESSING Sämtliche Schriften 1)

In Coleridge’s eye, both voices, source and response, are necessary to make a complete work, one which here Coleridge significantly describes as a part of Lessing’s (the commentator’s) works. All of these factors—the marginalia, his pattern of dictation, the monologues, and the borrowings—contribute to a characteristic “text,” whether written or unwritten, which was essentially collaborative and doubled, but which was dominated by Coleridge as monologuist.

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In this dissertation I shall examine Coleridge’s unusual collaborative compositional techniques in Aids to Reflection in light of the model of biblical authorship, making reference to his published and unpublished mature prose works. Chapter one looks at ideas of authorship as elaborated in the progressive biblical criticism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It explores how critics from Hobbes and
Spinoza up to the late eighteenth-century German Higher Critics and English radicals validated a process of biblical composition that transformed previously written documents to create a new book with not one inspired author but with many, often anonymous authors. I argue that this transition away from the idea of the Bible as a divinely dictated, inspired work is a movement toward a view of this exemplary text as collaborative, and toward a conception of authorship as multiple. The extension of this discussion, chapter two, focuses on Coleridge’s acceptance of the paradigm of the Bible as a collaborative and collective text. It investigates his relationship in particular with the well-known German Higher Critic Johann Gottfried Eichhorn through Coleridge’s copious marginalia on this figure. Coleridge’s extensive reading in the texts of Eichhorn and other biblical critics who analyse individual biblical books as composite documents provides him with a template for his own textual collaborations. The conclusion of this section examines how some of Coleridge’s projected and minor works follow the model of this multiply authored text and how Coleridge himself fits the mould of the biblical author-redactor.

In chapter three, I narrow my investigation to one of the most crucial aspects of Coleridge’s textual collaboration, his marginalia. Coleridge was a compulsive marginalist from the early 1800s to the end of his life, and I briefly review his practice and his many comments on it. Here the chapter historicises his technique of marginal notation by looking at discussions of glosses in the biblical text, and how notes have both slipped unintentionally into the text and been intentionally blended with their primary text to
create a new work, a slippage which was not unique to the Bible but widespread in manuscript culture generally. Coleridge was familiar with the amalgamation of the marginal and the primary in the Bible, and identified biblical passages he considered to be originally glosses while at the same time defending the authenticity of a scripture scattered with interpolated notes. The difficulty in identifying them once they have merged into the primary work makes it almost impossible to attain a “pure” text known to be written by a single, identifiable author; marginalia, therefore, question the one-writer model of both inspired and profane texts. The chapter briefly sketches the use of marginalia in Coleridge’s published works and lectures, which would culminate in *Aids to Reflection* (discussed in chapters four and five), and considers the centrality of his annotative practices to his composition techniques.

The heart of the dissertation is chapter four, an examination of the 1825 and 1831 editions of Coleridge’s late prose work, *Aids to Reflection*. I closely examine its uncommon form and Coleridge’s use of commentary. Rather than view this unusual work as a mere collection or routine piece of editing, I take *Aids to Reflection* to be the height of his textual collaboration. Through a careful textual analysis which compares sources and Coleridge’s deformations of them, I examine how his multiple authorship is similar to that of the biblical redactors.

Chapter five discusses the concept of inspiration in *Aids to Reflection*, and how we might begin to redefine inspiration not as stemming from a vatic prophet-poet creating *ex nihilo*, but as a process of multiple authorship using and sometimes rewriting
the texts of others to create a new, "collaborative" work. Leighton's works had a special status for Coleridge, who saw them to be almost as inspired as the gospels themselves. Indeed, the main work of the "divine" Leighton which Coleridge used in *Aids to Reflection*, and which he considered to be a "lingering Vibration of the Sound" of the Apostles' sonorous inspiration, was itself a commentary on 1 Peter, and so dependent on another work. By examining the concept of inspiration in Coleridge's *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit*, a text suggesting that the scriptures were inspired but not infallible or divinely dictated, I argue that for Coleridge, inspiration included a process of composition which was collaborative and communal.

My conclusion looks at the consonance of Coleridge's views on biblical authorship and inspiration with his ideas of authorship and originality generally. By alluding to some treatises on originality in the century before Coleridge, I argue that Coleridge is often in conflict with contemporary ideals of creation as a largely uninfluenced act. This conflict, however, does not stem from an inability to live up to these ideals, but instead his disagreement reveals his deliberate critique of naive ideas of self-originary authorship. The biblical model, then, provides a context which shows Coleridge's rather easy attitudes toward literary property to be not entirely a defence against his own plagiarisms (though they sometimes were), but to be a recognition of the value of collaboration with other texts.
Chapter One

Models of Authorship in the Higher Criticism

He who is capable of distorting a piece of writing against his better knowledge and conscience is capable of anything; he can bear false witness, can forge documents, can invent facts, and can regard any means of substantiating them as permissible. God forbid that I should imply that the Apostles were capable of all this simply because the Church Fathers were capable of them.

—Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, Anti-Goeze

The discipline of biblical criticism is one of the most fruitful—and most neglected—sites for the investigation of multiple authorship in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The scholarship can be seen largely as a discourse on authorship which looks at the relationship between “original” writings and the uses that later authors made of them in forming new texts. Working against the traditional conceptions of the Bible, which assigned known authors to the books of the Bible, the Higher Critics

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18 For Coleridge’s annoyed reaction to this statement, see LESSING Sämtliche Schriften 23. The translation is from CM.
19 The Higher Criticism, a term originally used for the analysis of secular texts but borrowed by Eichhorn for the study of sacred writings (O’Neill, 79), is generally considered a mid- to late eighteenth-century phenomenon. For the sake of simplicity, I will use the term for its predecessors as well (Hobbes, Spinoza, and Simon, for example) who had similar concerns and techniques of inquiry.
uncovered a type of writing in which multiple authorship was not just accepted, but a necessary part in the evolution of a manuscript over the centuries. Where once a single author was seen as creating a unified, original text solely through the help of God or the Holy Spirit, this one composer was now argued to be multiple authors who wrote over many centuries and incorporated often fragmentary documents into their work.\textsuperscript{20} As a result, the figure became less a traditional author and more an intrusive editor, compiling a mass of historical materials which he rewrote and glued together with his own commentary. In effect, the method of assembling a text was remarkably similar to Coleridge’s textual collaborations.

Jerome Christensen suggests that questions of authority in the Romantic text in general were linked to critics’ analyses of the Bible:

Deistic and skeptical inquiries into the accuracy, coherence, and unity of the Bible, which resulted in charges of inconsistency, contradiction, forgery, and fiction, vitiated scriptural authority and boded the metamorphosis of the Bible into just another popular text circulating in the promiscuous relations of writers, publishers, and readers. ...The Romantic will to interpretation, the will to restore the privileged order of author, word, and reader, emerged in the context of this historical deformation of the Book. (Christensen, 24-25)

\textsuperscript{20} Of course, the prophet serving as God’s amanuensis, writing only what He has dictated, can be seen as a type of composite authorship. In this model, however, the human writer is merely an instrument or facilitator, rather than a true contributor. The end result is a single, unified text, not put together with borrowed materials, but forming an original creation.
Investigations into the authorship of the Bible did change its authoritative status, but they by no means completely "vitiated" its validity or transformed it into "just another popular text." Although conservative theologians feared that the drift away from the traditional author-figure of the Bible would lead to charges of "inconsistency, contradiction, forgery, and fiction," the criticism in the field trod a delicate line between what was an authentic and what was an inauthentic work. This chapter shows the prevalence of the idea of the multiple or collaborative authorship of the Bible in a broad survey of biblical critics from Hobbes to Eichhorn, and outlines some of the difficult negotiations needed to preserve scriptural authority.

In general, the Higher Critics attempted to examine the Bible as they would any secular literature, even if this practice meant abandoning the traditional belief in its infallible inspiration.\textsuperscript{21} The discipline investigated the historical circumstances of Scripture, looking at its languages, times of composition, authors, and even the physical means and limitations of writing (how manuscripts were put together and stored, and how much text could fit onto a stone tablet, for example).\textsuperscript{22} Traditionally, the Bible is the

\textsuperscript{21} I will not fully discuss competing ideas of inspiration (complete inspiration, which regarded the Bible as the infallible word of God, versus the belief in the Bible as a human document only partially or not at all inspired) until chapter five, where I will examine Coleridge’s \textit{Confessions of An Inquiring Spirit} in the context of \textit{Aids to Reflection} and Leighton’s work.

\textsuperscript{22} See the section on Spinoza, below, 48, which quotes a passage in which he defines what an historical investigation of the Bible entails. Spinoza did not believe that these circumstances could ever be investigated with any accuracy, but later critics commonly attempted analyses along these lines.
model of the unified book: although it is divided up into different texts, all are guaranteed by the authority of God, and each section was assumed to be written entirely by a single, known author. The Higher Criticism assumed only a circumstantial unity for a biblical book, since in actuality it was comprised of many strata of texts by diverse authors from different historical periods. The work of the field, then, was in a large degree to dissect Scripture to discover layers of text.

Discussing the books of the Bible as composite texts written by sundry people who did not even live in the same era led to great controversy. If Moses did not write the five books of Moses (the Pentateuch), or even more disturbing, if John the Apostle did not compose the Gospel of John, then who did? If the answer was that several people did, some anonymous, some identifiable, then what authority does the text have? How does this proposal change the meaning of Scripture? As a result of the discovery of the Bible's composite authorship and the questions it raised, the Higher Criticism became in many ways a discourse about the relationship of authorship to authenticity. Could an often anonymous collaboration carry the same authority as a work created by one, known author? Although its pretensions to near infallibility were destroyed, Scripture was still considered to have an intrinsic worth by most scholars practising this method of analysis.

Opponents of the Higher Criticism took (and take) its findings as an out-and-out attack upon the Bible as a sacred text. Works such as *A Vindication of the Divine Authority and Inspiration of the Writings of the Old and New Testament* (1692), an answer to Jean le Clerc and, indirectly, to Hobbes, Spinoza, and Simon began to appear.
John Earle defended Moses’ authorship of the Pentateuch in his 1799 *Remarks on the Prefaces Prefixed to the First and Second Volumes of a Work Entitled The Holy Bible... Translated... by the Rev. Alexander Geddes*, calling Geddes’s questioning of it “impertinent and impious” (87).

In the twentieth century, detractors and supporters still wrestle with these questions of authority. John Mackay’s introduction to *The Higher Criticism in Relation to the Pentateuch* (1923), a book which argues against Higher Critical methods, says that its author is “keenly alive to the fact that the discussion that centres about the authorship of the Pentateuch is part of a larger whole” of discussions about authorship in literature in general: “methods of criticism which result in denying Homer the credit of the *Iliad*; and Turold the *Song of Roland*; and Luke *The Acts of the Apostles*, are fundamentally one with the methods in criticism that result in a negation of the Mosaic authorship” (Naville, xvi). Naville says that the Higher Criticism is interested in the “settling of four points”: the integrity, authenticity, form, and credibility, of the Scriptures. Under the subject of authenticity, he has the Higher Criticism ask the following questions: “Is the name of the author given in connection with the writing? Is the writing anonymous, or pseudonymous, or is it a compilation?” (Naville, 2-3). For traditional critics, there is a strong connection between the authority of the Holy Scriptures and their attribution to one, clearly identifiable writer and between the validity of literature and an identifiable author, be it Moses, Homer, Turold, or Luke.
More current discussions of the Bible as literature, though usually more tolerant of multiple authorship, do wonder how our author-centred society should deal with a composite text:

Once the variegated and often self-contradictory nature of its many-layered texts has been explored, how then is the Bible to be read?…Once one begins to wander in the wilderness of historical study, is there any way back to the wholeness of the unified text?…Is [the name of the book] “the Bible,” a great code whose unity transcends its separate parts, or is it ta biblia, “the books” whose different forms and often contradictory viewpoints have been brought together by the pressures and accidents of cultural history? (Damrosch, 298)

Robert Alter, in a chapter of *The Art of Biblical Narrative* called “Composite Artistry,” dwells on the difficulties in finding “integrity” in the fragmented Scriptures:

A still graver challenge to the integrity of many biblical texts which we might want to look at as literary wholes is the elaborately layered nature of the material articulated in ancient tradition. A century of analytic scholarship has made powerful arguments to the effect that where we might naively imagine that we are reading a text, what we actually have is a constant stitching together of earlier texts drawn from divergent literary and sometimes oral traditions, with minor or major interventions by later editors in the form of glosses, connecting passages, conflations of sources, and so forth. (132)
Alter artfully proposes that "the biblical writers and redactors...had certain notions of unity rather different from our own" (133) and so used a technique of montage combining several, often contradictory accounts of an event to show different aspects of a subject (140, 153-54). The concern with finding "unity" as a source of authority for Scripture is still a prevalent concern, and the question of whether a composite authorship can be authentic remains an essential part of the discourse of biblical criticism.

Although the main thrust of scholarship which proposed a composite authorship for various books of the Bible took place during the mid- to late eighteenth century, there were earlier precedents for this idea. I would like to trace the idea of the Bible as a collaborative text as it occurs in a wide variety of authors. Coleridge may not have read (though he probably did know of) all these authors. He was also familiar with others—Lessing is a case in point—whom I do not treat extensively, often because they do not examine in detail who authored what in the Bible. The purpose of my discussion is to show the prevalence of this idea of authorship and text in the progressive biblical criticism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; accordingly, my summary will focus entirely on these matters, and will not give a general account of the overall work of the authors under notice.
The Pentateuch, the traditional books of Moses, was the initial locus of a debate which started the shift away from an inspirational model of composition toward a more collaborative idea of an often fragmentary text involving multiple authors and compilers. Current histories of biblical criticism usually mention Hobbes as one of the first to declare outright that Moses was not the author of the Pentateuch. Although there had been hints in the literature before Hobbes’s Leviathan, chapter thirty-three of this work was the first lengthy analysis of the Old Testament that considered it to be an edited compilation. Hobbes argues that the title the “Books of Moses” did not necessarily mean they were written by the prophet, but rather that they were about him. Using internal evidence to support his argument, Hobbes claims that the temporal references contained within the Scriptures reveal that the books were written well after the death of Moses. The last chapter of Deuteronomy, verse 6—“that no man knoweth of his [Moses’] sepulcher to this day,”—is a clear indication for Hobbes that “this day” was after the death and burial of Moses. For most of the books of the Old Testament, in fact, Hobbes feels that the rule that “the Facts Registred are alwaies more ancient than the Register” (419)—i.e. the subject matter from which the book takes its title is older than its author—holds true.

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23 My discussion will concentrate on questions of authorship in the Old Testament, though I do sketch some of the later controversies surrounding the composition of the New Testament.
24 See, for example, Rogerson, Rowland, and Lindars, 104, and Gabel and Wheeler, 86. Gabel and Wheeler’s The Bible as Literature is a simple yet excellent introduction. Coleridge’s four philosophical letters to the Wedgwoods in early 1801 show a detailed knowledge of Hobbes, and marginal notes on Leviathan exist, with the probable date of 1807.
25 Hobbes also mentions Genesis 12.6 and Numbers 21.14 as texts written after the death of Moses.
Hobbes's declaration that many biblical books, including the books of Moses, were not composed by their eponymous author was extremely controversial. However, he does have in certain ways a traditional view of biblical authorship. Regardless of the circumstances of composition, the various writers were directly inspired by the Holy Spirit: "...although these Books were written by divers men, yet it is manifest the Writers were all indued with one and the same Spirit" (Hobbes, 424). Ultimately, then, the entirety of the Bible has God as its "first and original Author" (425). (It is difficult to tell if Hobbes is merely being canny, using divine inspiration as a shield to protect his controversial arguments.)

In spite of this recuperative move back to a traditional author-figure, Hobbes's actual analysis of the text reveals the composite or collaborative nature of many books and postulates an editorial figure in place of the single "author." While Moses may not have wholly composed the Pentateuch, Hobbes believes he did nevertheless make up a large part of its writing: "But though Moses did not compile those Books entirely, and in the form we have them; yet he wrote all that which hee is there said to have written..." (418). By implication, then, another person must have "compiled" a text comprised partly of Moses' actual writings (the "Volume of the Law" and other sections which the Bible states are Moses') but with the addition of this editor's own commentary, and perhaps other sources. Hobbes doesn't stop with the Pentateuch. The Psalms and Proverbs, traditionally ascribed to David and Solomon respectively, are also seen as collections of works by more than one author: "The Psalmes were written the most part
by David, for the use of the Quire. To these are added some Songs of Moses, and other holy men...” (420). Proverbs is not only a “Collection of wise and godly Sayings, partly of Solomon, partly of Agur the son of Jakeh; and partly of the Mother of King Lemuel” involving three authors, but has an additional figure, the editor-compiler, involved in its creation: “though the sentences be theirs [Solomon’s, Agur’s, and King Lemuel’s mother’s], yet the collection or compiling them into this one Book, was the work of some other godly man, that lived after them all” (421).

Hobbes speculates that this figure put together the whole of the Old Testament after the Jews’ captivity in Babylon and before the translation of the Old Testament into Greek called the Septuagint:

But considering the Inscriptions, or Titles of their Books, it is manifest enough, that the whole Scripture of the Old Testament, was set forth in the form we have it, after the return of the Jews from their Captivity in Babylon, and before the time of Ptolemaeus Philadelphus, that caused it to bee translated into Greek by seventy men, which were sent him out of Judea for that purpose. (Hobbes, 422).

This editor-compiler, Hobbes concludes from passages in the Apocrypha, is Esdras. However, Esdras is not simply an assembler of documents, but is responsible for saving and rewriting the whole of the older materials in the Old Testament after their loss through fire:

And if the Books of Apocrypha (which are recommended to us by the Church...) may be credited, the Scripture was set forth in the form wee have it in, by Esdras;
as may appear by that which he himself saith, in the second book, chapt. 14. verse 21, 22, &c. where speaking to God, he saith thus, *Thy law is burnt; therefore no man knoweth the things which thou hast done, or the works that are to begin. But if I have found Grace before thee, send down the holy Spirit into me, and I shall write all that hath been done in the world, since the beginning, which were written in thy Law, that men may find thy path...* (422)

Although earlier in this book of the *Leviathan* Hobbes seemed to be suggesting a simple editorial figure, the Apocryphal text which he quotes here to give a name and time to this person has startling implications.

Esdras has not just gathered, arranged, and added to what Hobbes insists are the actual writings of Moses, David, and Solomon, but has *rewritten* them through the inspiration of God after their total destruction. Esdras “by the direction of Gods Spirit retrived them, when they were lost” (Hobbes, 423). More than a compiler, yet less than an author, Esdras is even less than the traditional author-as-God’s-amanuensis. Esdras here is the instrument to *rewrite* and *recreate* documents that have already been written but no longer exist; he forms a composite text without the physical presence of the documents he is supposed to compile. The inspired prophet-author has become a strangely inspired copier-editor. Hobbes’s analysis, which took away the traditional authors of the Old Testament and made supposedly unified books into compilations, was extremely threatening to the authority of the Bible. As Richard Popkin puts it, “The importance of maintaining the Mosaic authorship is that it was the supposed guarantee of
the truth of the text. Moses received the text directly from God” (388). By pointing to
Esdras as an inspired compiler, Hobbes attempts to repair the damage by unifying the bits
and pieces through this figure. However, the authority of the Bible is only shakily
preserved: the move away from an inspired author to an inspired editor is one from single
to multiple authorship.

There had been some limited speculation about biblical authorship even earlier
than Hobbes’s 1651 Leviathan. Geddes MacGregor notes that
critical reflection about the composition and structure of the Old Testament had
been going on even in the days of Tyndale. For instance, the Reformers had
noticed the curious fact that Moses, in the last of the five books of the Pentateuch
traditionally attributed to him, appears to recount his own death. … (268)
Coleridge was delighted to find that Jacob Böhme speculated that Moses was not the
author of Genesis, and pointed out in his marginalia that Böhme saw the problems with
the traditional attribution of Genesis almost “200 years before” (BÖHME 67) the
eighteenth-century critics Astruc and Eichhorn did. The text Coleridge marked in his

26 Richard Simon, in his 1678 A Critical History of the Old Testament (Histoire critique du Vieux
Testament) mentions several authors who also argue that the Pentateuch was not wholly Moses’ work
(Simon, 36). Richard Popkin also notes that Andreaes von Karlstadt, Martin Luther, John Lightfoot, and
John Richardson all agreed that the passage about the death of Moses could not have been written by him
(387).
27 MacGregor’s A Literary History of the Bible: From the Middle Ages to the Present Day emphasises the
composite character of the biblical text as seen by Hobbes, Spinoza, Astruc, and others.
28 Böhme’s Aurora was published in 1612.
copy of Böhme’s works speculates that the stories in Genesis were passed down orally until the Flood, well after the death of Moses: “And it is very likely, that the Creation, before the Flood, was not described in Writing, but was kept as a dark Word in their Memories, and so delivered from one Generation to another, till after the Flood…” (BÖHME 67). The books of Moses, then, were put in writing by an unknown historian only after years of oral transmission (and possible distortions). Around the same time as Hobbes, a little-known figure, Isaac La Peyrère (1596-1677), was questioning the accuracy of the biblical Scriptures. Because of the “thousands of variants in the different manuscripts,” La Peyrère mistrusted not only the precision of the multiple copyings of Scripture but “whether we can be sure who wrote the document we have” (Popkin, 390). The Bible is a “heap of copie of copie,” or, as Richard Popkin paraphrases it, “a compilation of diverse materials” (390).

Hobbes’s analysis had shown cracks in the traditional authorship of the Bible. Later in the seventeenth century, a few decades after the publication of Leviathan, Spinoza published his Tractatus Theologico-Politicus (1671), which makes some daring suggestions about how we should view the Bible, and specifically, its first five books. Following a hint from Aben Ezra, a medieval Spanish rabbi, Spinoza argues that Moses did not write the Pentateuch, “but someone who lived long after him” did. Furthermore, he believes “the book which Moses wrote was something different from any now extant” (Spinoza, 121); in short, while Moses may have written a text, the present form of our

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29 See Richard Popkin, “Spinoza and Bible Scholarship,” 386, for further information about Aben Ezra.
Scriptures does not contain the Book of Moses in its original form, and so he cannot be called the “author” of the Pentateuch.

The *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* started a movement toward a more thorough investigation of the historical circumstances surrounding the composition of the Bible, a trend that would lead to the Higher Criticism of the later eighteenth century. In this work, Spinoza lays out rigorous guidelines for the examination of Scripture in the light of its historical meaning, rather than its theological truth:

The history of a Scriptural statement comprises—

I. The nature and properties of the language in which the books of the Bible were written, and in which their authors were accustomed to speak. …

II. An analysis of each book and arrangement of its contents under heads; so that we may have at hand the various texts which treat of a given subject. …We are at work not on the truth of passages, but solely on their meaning. …

III. Lastly, such a history should relate the environment of all the prophetic books extant; that is, the life, the conduct, and the studies of the author of each book, who he was, what was the occasion, and the epoch of his writing, whom did he write for, and in what language. Further, it should inquire into the fate of each book: how it was first received, into whose hands it fell, how many different versions there were of it, by whose advice was it received into the Bible,

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30 From his first allusion of being “sunk in Spinoza” in a 1799 letter (CL, 1:534), Coleridge mentioned Spinoza frequently in both his letters and notebooks throughout his entire life. Coleridge marked passages in the *Tractatus*, and also mentions it in his marginalia on Eichhorn (*Eichhorn Alte Testament* I).
and lastly, how all the books now universally accepted as sacred, were united into a single whole. …

Lastly, we should have knowledge on the other points I have mentioned, in order to be sure, in addition to the authenticity of the work, that it has not been tampered with by sacrilegious hands, or whether errors can have crept in, and, if so, whether they have been corrected by men sufficiently skilled and worthy of credence. (101-103)

The use of these standards would create a detailed history of a biblical book: the nature of the language in which it was written, the biographical circumstances of the author(s), its subsequent reception and corruption into variants, and the editorial practices which led to its inclusion in the Bible. The first part of this history (I) implies that “the language in which the books of the Bible were written” is different enough from our own language that translation may be more problematic than we think. A historical investigation of the language itself, its nature and properties, its quirks, colloquialisms, and syntax, is necessary to understand fully what the Scriptures are saying. In this model, the Word of God does not transparently reveal its truths to the reader. Next, the analysis of a book and categorisation of its component parts (II) is not for the purposes of discovering a theological truth, as is a traditional harmony which brings together often conflicting passages on the same subject for the purposes of reconciling them. Rather, these various texts on a given subject enable us to discover their historical meaning. The third
guideline (III) is the study of the author's background and circumstances of writing, along with the reception and historical transformations and deformations of the text.

The problem with this very thorough method is that it is often impossible to use for the Bible, as Spinoza points out: "it requires the history of all that has happened to every book in the Bible; such a history we are often quite unable to furnish" (111). Our ability to determine the biographical and historical background of the authors of Scripture is at least as suspect. "Of the authors, or (if the expression be preferred), the writers of many of the books, we are either in complete ignorance, or at any rate in doubt" (111). Furthermore, Spinoza pointedly notes that "we do not know either the occasions or the epochs when these books of unknown authorship were written; we cannot say into what hands they fell, nor how the numerous varying versions originated; nor, lastly, whether there were not other versions, now lost" (111). Having set up this logical, thorough method, he now undermines it to show how little we have in the way of hard evidence about the Bible's authorship and textual history. The main clues to its authorship must be located within the text itself, and this internal evidence opens the way to a view of the biblical author(s) and text(s) as multiple and fragmented, respectively.

Employing this principle, Spinoza concludes that Moses did not write the Pentateuch, and so this Scripture is made up of a compilation of different documents, collected and edited by another figure. Spinoza speculates that some of these documents may have come from the time of Moses: "it may be that the assembly of elders wrote down the decrees of Moses and communicated them to the people" (127). Later a
“historian collected them, and duly set them forth in his narrative of the life of Moses” (127). Collaborative texts co-authored by an “assembly” of people are subsequently interpolated into another’s work. Spinoza determines that “all the books [the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings] we have considered hitherto are compilations” (128). Far from being an original record of immediate events, instead “the events therein are recorded as having happened in old time,” i.e. are written from an historical perspective (128). Although the texts in question are not the work of a single author, Spinoza does feel that there is a guiding hand which assembled them into the form that we now know:

Now, if we turn our attention to the connection and argument of all these books, we shall easily see that they were all written by a single historian, who wished to relate the antiquities of the Jews from their first beginning down to the first destruction of the city. ...The putting together, and the order of the narratives, show that they are all the work of one man, writing with a definite aim... (128-9)

This man, the “historian” as Spinoza earlier calls him, is Ezra (the Latinised name of Esdras).

Spinoza attributes the book of Deuteronomy to Ezra, with some of Moses’ original writings (what he calls the book of Moses) inserted into it. As the later biblical critics will do, Spinoza analyses some sections to determine what is Mosaic and what is not: “So, also, verses 6, 7, 8, 9, of the tenth chapter are inserted parenthetically among the words of Moses. ...To these parentheses we must add the preface to the book, and all the
passages in which Moses is spoken of in the third person, besides many which we cannot now distinguish…” (131). Although Spinoza sees Ezra as the figure who pulled all these books together, he nonetheless is quite critical of Ezra’s editorial practices, and the resulting state of the biblical text. Ezra, Spinoza implies, did not finish the job adequately, but left his text in a condition that cried out for a further level of editorial intervention: “…Ezra…did not put the finishing touches to the narratives contained therein, but merely collected the histories from various writers, and sometimes simply set them down, leaving their examination and arrangement to posterity” (133). The narratives were thrown together “from various writers without previous arrangement and examination” (138). Ezra, simply put, is a bad editor:

If anyone pays attention to the way in which all the histories and precepts in these five books are set down promiscuously and without order, with no regard for dates; and further, how the same story is often repeated, sometimes in a different version, he will easily, I say, discern that all the materials were promiscuously collected and heaped together, in order that they might at some subsequent time be more readily examined and reduced to order. (135)

Spinoza originally had posited Ezra as a unifying compiler, but the Pentateuch as he sees it is a mess of unsorted documents, without order and full of repeated versions of the same story by different authors. It clearly shows its origins in a mass of histories, which here are jumbled together without any thought or care. To Spinoza, the collaboration is far from seamless: indeed, the figure of Ezra seems to have no valid function. Although
Spinoza earlier claimed that “a single historian” must have written the Pentateuch because of the “connection and argument of all these books” (128), Ezra’s role as compiler, as Spinoza goes on to analyse the books, becomes almost non-existent. If “all the materials were promiscuously collected and heaped together,” what did Ezra do except mechanically gather them into one document, which we now call the Pentateuch?:

“An examination of [the prophetic books] assures me that the prophecies therein contained have been compiled from other books, and are not always set down in the exact order in which they were spoken or written by the prophets, but are only such as were collected here and there, so that they are but fragmentary” (147). The emphasis in Spinoza, then, unlike that in Hobbes (whose inspired “editor” is a unifying figure) is on the fragmentary and chaotic nature of the biblical text.

The Bible is not only fragmentary, but also flawed. According to Spinoza, “these books were not guarded by posterity with such care that no faults crept in” (140). God has not protected His Scriptures from shoddy editing, poor compilation, and mistakes in translation and copying, and Spinoza scoffs at those people “who will not admit that there is any corruption...but maintain that by some unique exercise of providence God has preserved from corruption every word in the Bible” (140). Even the theoretical original of the text, it seems, was not perfect. The prophets were not the omniscient instruments of God, but as human as any writer today:

Everyone has been strangely hasty in affirming that the prophets knew of everything within the scope of human intellect; and, although certain passages of
Scripture plainly affirm that the prophets were in certain respects ignorant, such persons would rather say that they do not understand the passages than admit that there was anything which the prophets did not know; or else they try to wrest the Scriptural words away from their evident meaning. (33)

Again his target is those theologians who try to explain away obvious lapses in the text, instead of admitting their presence.

Spinoza protests that his aim has not been to overthrow "the authority of Scripture" by suspecting it "of error in any passage" (154), but instead it is to purify it. "[M]y object," he says. "has been to prevent the clear and uncorrupted passages being accommodated to and corrupted by the faulty ones; neither does the fact that some passages are corrupt warrant us in suspecting all" (154). Although Spinoza admits that this view of the sacred text may be more than controversial, even his statement acknowledging the contentious nature of his argument merely serves to reinforce his idea of the Bible as incomplete:

Those who look upon the Bible as a message sent down by God from Heaven to men, will doubtless cry out that I have committed the sin against the Holy Ghost because I have asserted that the Word of God is faulty, mutilated, tampered with, and inconsistent; that we possess it only in fragments, and that the original of the covenant which God made with the Jews has been lost. (165)

While in Hobbes an attempt is made to preserve the Old Testament as the inspired word of God, the overwhelming impression left by Spinoza’s tract is that of Scripture as a very
human document, flawed and fragmented by both its original authors and particularly its later compilers. Multiple authorship in Spinoza is suspect because the compilation has been so poorly performed. The editor has not worked to knit together his sources, so the Scriptures end up not as a unified collaboration but a poorly collected anthology.

Richard Simon’s *A Critical History of the Old Testament*, translated into English in 1682, argues for a collective authorship of much of the Old Testament. The Roman Catholic priest suggested that what we call prophets were in fact public scribes, writing the history of their people under the guidance of Moses, initially, who borrowed the practice from the Egyptians. Therefore, Simon says, the question of the authorship of the Pentateuch or any other book in the Bible was a moot point:

having establish'd in the Hebrew Commonwealth the Prophets or publick Writers, who took care of collecting faithfully the acts of what pass’d of most importance in the State, we need not too curiously enquire, as usually men do, who were the Authors of each particular Book of the Bible, because it is certain that they were all writ by Prophets, which the Hebrew Commonwealth never wanted as long as it lasted.

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31 Though Simon talks at greatest length about the scribal method of the Pentateuch, he also names Joshua and Samuel specifically as being authored by “prophets” under the direction of these two leaders (22) and suggests that Chronicles was compiled by scribes from various fragmentary documents (19). Dryden’s “Religio Laici” was written in reaction to Henry Dickinson’s translation of Simon.
Besides, as these same Prophets, which may be call’d publick Writers, for the distinguishing of them from other private Writers, had the liberty of collecting out of the ancient Acts, which were kept in the Registers of the Republick, and of giving a new form to these same Acts by adding or diminishing what they thought fit; we may hereby give a very good reason for the additions and alterations in the Holy Scriptures without lessening of their Authority, since the Authours of these additions or alterations were real Prophets directed by the Spirit of God.

Wherefore their alterations in the ancient Acts are of as great Authority as the rest of the Text of the Bible. (Simon, A1')

We “need not too curiously enquire,” he says, who precisely were “the Authors of each particular Book of the Bible” because all of the anonymous “Prophets” were “directed by the Spirit of God.” Not only is the Bible composed by this anonymous collective, but it is based on even more ancient documents which this corporate body revised, altered, and added to. The Scriptures, then, are composed of various anonymous and perhaps fragmentary texts, which another anonymous body of writers rewrote. Much later, after the time of the Babylonian captivity, Esdras “made a new the holy Scriptures,” “adding, diminishing, or changing what he thought necessary” (5). His group of scribes re-wrote, re-edited, and abridged the work of the previous scribes under Moses and after him (29-30). In Simon’s model, original documents were collected and reworked at least twice.

What I find most interesting in Simon is the negotiation between collectivity and authority that we have also seen in Hobbes. Simon argues that the question of authorship
is not of primary importance, yet he also states that the works of the Prophets are authoritative "because they can be ascribed only to persons which Moses had commanded to put into writing the most important actions of his time" (A3'). The history in the Pentateuch was composed by scribes, but Simon balks at attributing certain sections—the "Law and Ordinances" (3)—to anyone other than Moses. Therefore, "one may say in this sense that the whole Pentateuch is truly Moses’, because those who made the Collection lived in his time, and did not do it but by his order" (Simon, 3). Like Hobbes, Simon must recuperate the Bible as a collaborative document by transferring the authority of Moses and of the Holy Spirit to the collective.

Yet interestingly, the Roman Catholic Simon is also trying to question the worth of the Bible as the Protestant touchstone of faith. He emphasises that, although the act of multiple authorship in the times of Moses and Esdras does not impair the authority of the Bible, the later corruptions occasioned by thousands of years of transcription do: "Men have been the Depositories of these sacred Books...and their first Originals have been lost...there must needs happen some changes, as well by reason of the length of time, as the carelessness of Transcribers" (2). Nonetheless, the authority of the Bible is not weakened by its method of composition, but by what has happened to it since then. Repeatedly he asserts that its various books "have never the less Authority" (A2'-A3') even though Moses or another identifiable figure was not the direct author of them. They

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32 Simon was attempting to undermine what he saw as the foundation of the Protestant faith, in order to weaken it. Coleridge also attacked what he saw as an over-reliance and blind faith in the Bible among adherents to the Protestant faith. His aim, however, was precisely the opposite: to strengthen Protestantism by acknowledging that although the Bible was a flawed historical document it nonetheless had a spiritual value. See Rogerson, Rowland, and Lindars, 102-03, for a discussion of Simon’s attack on Protestantism.
were all composed by "real Prophets directed by the Spirit of God. Wherefore their alterations...are of as great Authority as the rest of the Text of the Bible" (A2'). The tensions in the text are obvious: the question of the authorship does not matter, but "the whole Pentateuch is truly Moses's" (3); the Scriptures are authoritative yet the "great alterations...utterly destroy the Protestants... Principle, who consult onely the same Copies of the Bible as we at present have them" (A4').

Jean le Clerc, a contemporary of Simon's, rejects his argument that "the Pentateuch was written by public scribes, preferring instead a view that it was based upon various documents, some of which were pre-Mosaic" (Rogerson, Rowland, and Lindars, 103). For le Clerc, the redactor of the Pentateuch was unequivocally Moses, who "diligently copied and connected them [the ancient documents] with the History of his own Age" (le Clerc, 108). He asserts that no one would have dared to re-edit Moses' compilation, and supports this argument by citing the repetitious and disordered state of the text: if a later redactor had reworked the Pentateuch, he surely would have left it in a better form (le Clerc, 113). Some passages, however, le Clerc is forced to acknowledge as later interpolations (116-29). With rather twisted logic, he concedes that if he had not already proven that the Pentateuch was written by Moses, "there would be great weight in the above-mentioned Objections, to incline us to believe that these Volumes were written much later than is commonly pretended" (129). Jean Astruc (1684-1766), famous for his division of the Genesis narrative into the Jahvistic and Elohistic strains in his Conjectures

33 Coleridge mentions le Clerc in some of the later notebooks (N26.27,f55; N 53.31,f24).
sur les mémoires originaux (1753), also saw the book as a composite text edited by Moses (MacGregor, 268-69). According to Astruc, Moses was not responsible for the confusion occasioned by the mingling of these different narratives:

[Astruc] is remembered for his isolation of documents on the basis of different divine names. What is often forgotten is that, holding the full Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, he sought to absolve Moses from responsibility for the dislocations of Genesis. He did this by suggesting that Moses had several documents at his disposal which he arranged in parallel columns, like synoptic Gospels; but later scribes put them together in a defective way. (Fuller, 80-81)

Moses, then, edited documents written by various authors, and his clear edition, properly attributing the older material to its sources, was reworked, inadvertently or purposefully, by later scribes.

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By the mid- to late eighteenth century, the centre of the progressive movement in biblical studies had shifted to Germany. The “Higher Criticism,” as the German scholars dubbed it, was becoming established as a reputable and common method of biblical criticism. Semler, Michaelis, Lessing, and Herder all read the Bible as a human document that could be treated like any other ancient literature, even if it meant abandoning the belief in its absolute infallibility. The Higher Critics began to study the
New Testament, an even more dangerous text to analyse in terms of multiple authorship because of its status as the foundation of Christianity, and they hotly debated the relationship between the first three Gospels and a hypothetical original gospel, oral or written, which preceded them. Before looking at some of the many important German biblical critics who wrote on both the Old and New Testaments, I would first like to conclude my overview of Old Testament critics with two radical British thinkers strongly influenced by the ideas coming out of Germany.

In Britain, the intellectual climate in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was less open to the idea of the Bible as a human document not divinely inspired. As late as 1825, Connop Thirlwall, the translator of Schleiermacher’s *A Critical History of the Gospel of Luke*, wrote, “it cannot be concealed that German theology in general, and German biblical criticism in particular, labours at present under an ill name among our divines” (viii).34 When Dr. Alexander Geddes, a Roman Catholic priest, embarked upon a new translation of the Bible, based on a collation of all the extant manuscripts, his aim seemed innocent enough: to reach as “pure and genuine” a “common Code” as possible (Geddes, *Prospectus*, 147). 35 Although the translation itself was somewhat controversial, it was his remarks in the *prefaces* to the two volumes published which really raised eyebrows.36 Geddes states bluntly that the “Pentateuch, in

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34 Coleridge annotated this work shortly after its publication.
35 A good argument can be made that Coleridge was acquainted with Geddes’s criticism through their mutual associations with Unitarian circles, though no hard proof exists that Coleridge read any of Geddes’s written work. Fuller (147, n2) mentions a letter of September 14, 1798 from Geddes to Paulus, which Coleridge carried to Germany with him, recommending him to the professor. Coleridge also mentions Geddes (rather unfavourably) in a letter dated January 4, 1820.
36 See Fuller, 94-95, for a summary of a review in the *British Critic* (14 [1799]: 577-86) which condemns Geddes’s denial of Mosaic authorship. Geddes’s proposed *General Preface*, which he intended to write
its present form, was not written by Moses” and assigns a tentative date during the reign of Solomon (which he calls “the Augustan age of Judæa”) for its composition (Geddes, Bible, 1: xix). The documents from which it was compiled are ancient, “some…coeval with Moses, and some even anterior to Moses” (Bible, 1: xix); Geddes also acknowledges that a large part of the work may have been taken from Moses’ “journals.”

Ever the gentlemanly scholar, Geddes acknowledges that this theory (of a single Solomonic compiler) may not be entirely correct: Moses “may have been the original author or compiler,” taking at least some of his documents “from the archives of Egypt.” This Mosaic collection would then have been re-edited “into their present form by the compiler of the Pentateuch, in the reign of Solomon” (Bible, 1: xix). Although he believes that the Old Testament Scriptures were formed from a collection of ancient texts, Geddes dismisses the hypothesis of Eichhorn and Astruc, who had dissected Genesis into two different documents that had been merged (commonly known as the J and E documents, after the names, Jehovah and Elohim, used for God in each). The controversial biblical critic

saw no need, in the composition of the Pentateuch as a whole to suppose the existence of strands or strata of traditional written narrative...Among the individual fragments he would at times identify particular items but without

after his full translation of the Bible was completed, would have elaborated on his theories of the Bible’s composition. Unfortunately, it was never written, as Geddes died before he could complete even the translation. In the text of his Bible, he identifies what he considers to be interpolations, either removing them from the text to a footnote or bracketing them within the text. Hypothetical gaps within the text are identified by an ellipsis. Geddes puts the traditional numbering and chapter breaks in the margin as a reference, but breaks and even rearranges the text where he feels it necessary (see Gen. 4. 22-23 and Deut. 9, 10).
attempting to link them together. The isolation of the fragments was the first consideration. (Fuller, 57)\(^\text{37}\)

Geddes, then, is not so much interested in ascribing a name or even a pattern to the Bible, but in demonstrating its composite nature.\(^\text{38}\) The divine authority of the Scriptures, in which he does believe, does not depend on its having a single author or editor.

The radical Thomas Paine made no pretence to believe in the validity of the Bible. In *The Age of Reason*, he launches an out-and-out attack against the idea that a “revelation” put into writing and handed down throughout the centuries could be valuable. If in fact records of eyewitnesses even existed, they had undoubtedly been corrupted throughout the centuries:

When the Church Mythologists established their system, they collected all the writings they could find and managed them as they pleased. It is a matter altogether of uncertainty to us whether such of the writings as now appear under the name of the Old and New Testaments are in the same state in which those collectors say they found them, or whether they added, altered, abridged or dressed them up. (Paine, 409)

\(^{37}\) Reginald Fuller's *Alexander Geddes, 1737-1802: A Pioneer of Biblical Criticism*, is a full and detailed study of this interesting figure. See Geddes, *The Holy Bible*, 1: xix, and *Critical Remarks*, 29, for Geddes's gentle dismissal of Astruc and Eichhorn's documentary hypothesis. Geddes, it should be said, was not so much interested in actively asserting a theory that the Bible was made up of unconnected fragments, as he was sceptical about whether the fragments could be linked in such a unified way as the Eichhorn theory claimed.

\(^{38}\) In Germany, Johann Severin Vater translated and abundantly expanded parts of Geddes's theories, and “concluded that the Pentateuch was put together from a great variety of fragmentary records by an unspecified number of redactors” (Fuller, 106). See Fuller, 105-07 and Cheyne, 6-10.
As a result, Paine challenges the traditional authorship of many biblical books. For him, Genesis is a document which no self-respecting author would acknowledge: "Why it has been the Mosaic account of the Creation, I am at a loss to conceive. Moses, I believe, was too good a judge of such subjects to put his name to that account" (Paine, 410). Although the Proverbs "are an instructive table of ethics," Solomon did not have the "knowledge of life" required to write them (Paine, 411). Paine, it should be said, does not dwell on authorship in the Bible, but mentions it only incidentally as a step in destroying scriptural authority in general. The Bible is not invalid just because its authorship could not be determined, but because it is written in language:

The continually progressive change to which the meaning of words is subject, the want of a universal language which renders translation necessary, the errors to which translations are again subject, the mistakes of copyists and printers, together with the possibility of wilful alteration, are of themselves evidences that the human language, whether in speech or in print, cannot be the vehicle of the Word of God. The Word of God exists in something else. (Paine, 414)

Human speech is essentially mutable, so it is no surprise that biblical texts have been altered, either deliberately or accidentally. While Paine is not interested in dwelling on the process of transformation that a book underwent, nonetheless he reveals how easily innate human fallibility could nullify the authority of Scripture.
The German biblical scholars of the late eighteenth century began to examine the Bible thoroughly and impartially, just as scholars had done earlier with classical texts such as "Homer's" Iliad and Odyssey. They began to question the idea of infallible inspiration in the composition of all of the Scriptures, and so turned the Bible into a document that was human and somewhat flawed, though still valuable and even authoritative as a spiritual guide. Although the Englishman Hobbes had been the first to develop the idea of composite authorship in the Old Testament, the German Higher Critics were the innovators with regard to the New Testament. They noticed that there were too many verbal parallels between the first three Gospels (the Synoptic Gospels) for them not to be related; therefore, they attempted to determine whether the relationship was one of borrowing between Matthew, Mark, and Luke, or whether they had a common source or sources.

Johann David Michaelis published his Einleitung in das Neue Testament (Introduction to the New Testament), which he revised over four editions, the last of them appearing in 1788. Soon after, Herbert Marsh translated it into English and published it along with Marsh's own "Dissertation on the Origin and Composition of Our Three First Canonical Gospels," both of which Coleridge used in preparing his 1795 lectures on religion. In it, Michaelis argues that the verbal similarities between the first three Gospels (written in Greek, though with some evident Hebraisms) were not occasioned by borrowing, but by Matthew's, Mark's, and Luke's separate use of the same written
sources. The “remarkable verbal agreement,” Michaelis says, he cannot explain except by the theory of “several apocryphal Gospels” existing before Matthew, Mark, and Luke had written their versions (3.1: 94). Although the three evangelists did not know each other’s work, he argues that similarities exist because Mark, Luke, and the translator of the original Hebrew Matthew into Greek all knew of these sources and used them in their Gospels. According to Marsh’s “Dissertation,” le Clerc had been the first to mention this theory in 1716, but the Germans developed it and made it common currency, though everyone had his variants. Eichhorn believed in one common Urevangelium or original gospel, as Marsh explains: “Eichhorn supposes that only one document was used by all three Evangelists, but he supposes that various additions had been made in various copies of it, and that three different copies, thus variously enriched were respectively used by our three first Evangelists” (3.2: 192). Marsh investigates every possible combination and permutation of borrowing between Evangelists and rewriting of common documents in Greek or Hebrew, and at the end of 200 pages, proposes a theory which shows how astonishingly complex these hypotheses could become. Marsh considers a Hebrew document to have existed which he names N as well as a Greek translation of the same text, which was later augmented with additions α, β, etc.:

St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke, all three, used copies of the common Hebrew document N; the materials of which St. Matthew, who wrote in Hebrew, retained in the language, in which he found them, but St. Mark and St. Luke translated them into Greek. They had no knowledge of each other’s Gospels: but
St. Mark and St. Luke, besides their copies of the Hebrew document N, used a Greek translation of it, which had been made, before any of the additions α, β, &c. had been inserted. Lastly, as the Gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke contain Greek translations of Hebrew materials, which were incorporated into St. Matthew’s Hebrew Gospel, the person, who translated St. Matthew’s Hebrew Gospel into Greek, frequently derived assistance, from the Gospel of St. Mark, where St. Mark had matter in common with St. Matthew: and in those places, but in those places only, where St. Mark had no matter in common with St. Matthew, he had frequently recourse to St. Luke’s Gospel. (3.2: 361)

Though it is unnecessary to delve into the complexities of who took what from where, nonetheless the various versions of this theory all show just how many fingers were in each textual pie. One document spawned a multitude of texts, which were more than just variant forms. The theoretical Urevangelium, an anonymously composed document, was supplemented by additions of various kinds, both by known authors and unknown translators, to form interrelated, collaborative works.

To conclude, I would like to turn to the highly respected and prolific Johann Gottfried Eichhorn, Coleridge’s favourite biblical critic, and to examine in detail his Einleitung in das Alte Testament (Introduction to the Old Testament) to see how he
examines the composition and authorship of the Old Testament. Coleridge’s letters and marginalia are an eloquent witness to the lifelong, if rather argumentative, relationship that he had with the works and thought of Eichhorn. As his 1795 lectures show, Coleridge was interested in biblical scholarship even before his trip to Germany, but undoubtedly his reading and meeting with important figures in this field while in Germany strengthened his interest. He writes to Thomas Poole on May 6, 1799 that “The Professors here are exceedingly kind to all the Englishmen; but to me they pay [the most] flattering attention—Especially, Blumenbach and Eichhorn” (CL, 1: 494). Coleridge would make several other references in his letters to Eichhorn over the course of his lifetime, but the real depth of his intellectual engagement with this important figure is shown in the extensive marginalia on Eichhorn’s works. Although Coleridge was quite familiar with other contemporary German critics (Michaelis, Herder, Lessing), his marginalia show that the work of Eichhorn was the main source to which Coleridge turned in his mid- to later life to explore and argue questions of form and authorship in the Bible.

Like Hobbes and Spinoza, Eichhorn believed that the Old Testament was a composite text which had been edited, sometimes over many generations, to produce the Scripture which we have today. In a long introduction before his analysis of the actual

39 Coleridge used Michaelis’s *Introduction to the New Testament*, translated by Herbert Marsh, in lecture four. At this point in Coleridge’s intellectual development, authorial validity was linked to truth in the Bible: “if we can demonstrate the authenticity of the Scriptures their genuineness will be found to imply the Truth of the Facts which they contain” (*Lectures* 1795, 177).
40 The headnote to the marginalia in *CM* 2: 369-70 briefly traces Coleridge’s relationship with Eichhorn in Germany, through allusions in his letters and, of course, his marginalia.
41 See the section on the Eichhorn marginalia, below, chapter two.
Old Testament text, he describes minutely the general practices of the Hebrew scribes, and emphasises that the composite text formed by various authors and editors is not corrupt, but a natural evolution of the text in a manuscript culture.

Eichhorn explains many problems in the biblical text through editorial practices. The repetition of passages or phrases had long been a clue that perhaps the "original" of Scripture had been supplemented. For Eichhorn, these duplicated passages are easily accounted for:

The compilers of the Old Testament after the Babylonian captivity may have found some passages already introduced twice; others may have first inserted them a second time. In the first case, a double edition by the author himself is the source of such a second insertion...; but sometimes the second edition was the work of a later author, or a new work was composed from materials drawn from a more ancient one. ...In both cases words may have been changed, new and more valuable reading selected, and, in short, those changes made which constitute the essence of a revised edition... (Gollop, 171)42

Notice the different levels of redaction subtly posited here. The "compilers of the Old Testament after the Babylonian captivity" who arranged these manuscripts are already looking at several levels of writing and revision. The first author may have served as editor of his own works, creating two separate editions which, Eichhorn implies, may at

42 George Tilly Gollop translated the introductory material of Eichhorn's *Introduction to the Old Testament*. Where possible, I have used his work (indicated by "Gollop"); no marker indicates my own work. Translations of Eichhorn's analysis of Genesis are the collaborative efforts of myself and Christina Jahn.
some point have been combined to cause the duplication. However, the second edition may be the work of an entirely different person in a later period. "Edition" may not even be the proper word, as Eichhorn says here, since what is in essence a "new work" may be composed "from materials drawn from a more ancient one," forming a blend of old and new. Editing slides into composition quite naturally. Also interesting in this passage, as will be examined later in more detail, is Eichhorn's emphasis that this compilation is more valuable than the original. Rather than being viewed as a degradation of the original, the work, repetitions and all, becomes a "revised edition."

The mingling of old and new was perhaps unavoidable, considering the fragmentary state of the manuscripts with which the compilers were working. Eichhorn develops his argument by speculating on the physical condition of the texts:

Some writings of the Old Testament appear to have come into the hands of the compilers in very faded copies; and many gaps and irreparably injured passages, with respect to which the ancient translators as well as the latest interpreters appear to have been equally at a loss, are derived probably from such exemplars. The compilers of our canon read and guessed to the best of their ability; but what was quite lost was beyond their means to restore, since their labours in this regard were scarcely guided by a miraculous leading of the Deity.

(Gollop, 177)

The fragmentary state of the text (which Spinoza also emphasises) is here not a result of shoddy compilation, but of an irreparable material loss. In many circumstances, the
compilers (as Eichhorn viewed them) were forced to add their own material because the original was not there. Eichhorn, unlike Hobbes, has no stories of an inspirational rewriting to fill in the gaps seamlessly. His editors are forced to guess; as he rather ironically puts it, with perhaps the Apocryphal figure of Esdras in mind, “their labours in this regard were scarcely guided by a miraculous leading of the Deity.”

Not only are the manuscripts physically fragmented, but even these decrepit sources are only a small part of what Eichhorn postulates was a much larger collection of writings. The temple library, he theorises, contained “a far greater and more complete collection of prophecies than we possess” (Gollop, 17), leaving us with only “a few books of prophetic anthology or extracts” (Gollop, 18). Aside from the writings of Jeremiah, which Eichhorn views as “more complete,” the prophecies of “Ezekiel, and the other prophets who lived after the overthrow of the State, consists partly of merely unconnected fragments of prophetic poetry, and partly of pieces confined to the short space of a few generations” (Gollop, 17). What is astonishing, given his theory of this perfect, complete collection of prophecy, is that Eichhorn so rarely falls into viewing the state of the Scripture that we now possess as corrupted, or degraded. Generally, as we shall see, he does everything to counteract this view.43

Eichhorn makes a strong argument that the normal and necessary state of a text as ancient as the Hebrew Scriptures is a composite one, involving many layers of authorship

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43 Occasionally, he does use language which implies the originals are superior to the state of the texts we now possess. Early on in the work, he argues that if the scriptures originate from the first copies made in that first temple, we would expect “a far richer and purer text” (Gollop, 21). However, the present defects of the scripture “appear to result from very corrupted manuscripts” (Gollop, 21). These types of references (the “pure” older text, and the “corrupted” newer version) are very rare, however.
and editorial intervention. He takes for granted that “most of the writings of the Hebrews
have passed through various hands, before acquiring their present form, and that in them
sometimes old and new are found mingled” (Gollop, 48). However, this textual state
should not induce “an impartial judge” to doubt “their genuineness” (Gollop, 48).
Practical considerations of the size of the manuscripts, Eichhorn declares, may in fact be
partly responsible for the intermingling of differently authored materials:

In short, it was the custom to arrange old and new together, and to connect with
one another what was capable of such disposition—sometimes to increase the
extent of separate books and suit the rolls in size to one another, sometimes on
account of similarity of matter, and so on. ...

Were it now resolved to describe as forgeries all books in which not all
parts and passages come from the same time, then truly very few genuine writings
of the Hebrews would survive such a sentence; but at the same time this would be
a great blow to the classics of both Greek and Roman antiquity. (Gollop, 50,
altered)

Almost no genuine writings from ancient times could be considered pure; our wish to
have an uncorrupted text is merely a fantasy, Eichhorn implies. The beloved Greek and
Roman classics are highly respected even though all their “parts and sections [do not]
come from the same time”: by implication, all could not be written by the same person.
To support his textual view of the Scriptures, he again and again compares them to this
equally respectable, but not so sacrosanct, body of ancient writings, the classics.
Eichhorn’s assertion that the Hebrews casually mixed together documents of different eras and origins solely for the sake of making their rolls uniform in size reveals how unimportant are the particulars of who composed a text and when it was written in this model. The Book of Isaiah, for example, is not a single unit composed by one author, but “a collection of various anonymous prophetical poesy, of which much appears to belong to the time of the Babylonian captivity, and to which the name of Isaiah was given, that no part might be lost” (Gollop, 49). Authority does not depend on authorship. Eichhorn is calling for a revision of our whole way of looking at the authenticity of texts. Our inability to attribute a work to one person and to a single historical era does not mean that it is not genuine. A text with multiple authors, then, has just as much value as a text with one author.

Rather than deciding on questions of authenticity, the task of biblical criticism is to perform what Elizabeth Harries calls “textual archaeology” (39). In the case of both the Greek and Roman classics as well as the Scriptures, Eichhorn believes, “the higher criticism should exercise its office and pronounce sentence after separating, from internal evidence, what belongs to different authors and times” (Gollop, 50, altered). The first job at hand is to sort out the different layers, to try to pinpoint what belongs to whom, so that one set of threads may be detached from the others. Again he emphasises how universal is this process of accretion in any ancient work, sacred or profane:

There is no instance of any surviving ancient author, of what nation soever, whose text has not undergone many alterations and interpolations. ...
sometimes remarks were made on the margin, for the writers’ or others’ use, without any intention of their introduction into the text, but which have been subsequently interpolated by the excessive zeal of posterity. Before, then, the genuineness of a book can be affected by such passages, a careful previous critical examination must be made, as to whether they originally stood where they now are, and really flowed from the author’s pen. (Gollop, 48)

Here, Eichhorn does seem to be trying to get back to an original text by identifying and perhaps removing interpolations. In this passage, he discusses a text, substantially one author’s, which has been altered with a few marginal comments. Eichhorn may see this case differently from an instance where the older text serves as a basis for a substantial rewriting. Alternatively, Eichhorn could be torn between defending a composite text as valuable (as the classics are great works of literature), and yielding to his (and our) era’s longing for the purity and authority of an uncorrupted original.

Certainly in many other places in the Introduction, Eichhorn applauds the use and sometimes transformation of the original text into a new composition. This borrowing of the text was not seen as a form of plagiarism or as a sign of creative drought, but as “a literary use of old writings”: “Single passages, for instance, were taken from the works of many poets differing from one another, and new poems composed out of the same” (Gollop, 156). A poem would be built around a passage from a more ancient one, resulting in a new composition which is still not seen as derivative. The later Prophets, particularly Jeremiah and Ezekiel, “compiled many prophecies from the works of earlier
Prophets. In this, however, they did not proceed like slavish copyists; they made
omissions, additions, and exercised a choice as to readings which were more poetical,
suitable to their genius or to the immediate occasion” (Gollop, 156) Specifically,
Eichhorn suggests that Psalm 108 has been composed from Psalms 57, verses 8 to 12,
and 60, verses 7-14, and that Jeremiah 48 can be compared to Isaiah 15 and 16. Although
he is clearly performing his textual archaeology, Eichhorn does not seem to be suggesting
that the composite Psalm should be removed or somehow restored to its original state.
Here, these compositions are perfectly valid in and of themselves, although they are
undoubtedly textual collaborations.

The Prophets are not “slavish copyists,” nor are they simply editors or compilers.
They edit and choose, but in a way which makes the texts “more poetical, suitable to their
genius or to the immediate occasion.” The text, then, becomes a “literary” one, a new
creation. Eichhorn describes the later work, with its layers of accretion, as not less pure,
but actually preferable to the original: “If an ancient writing underwent revision at a very
early period and became the basis of a new work enlarged by means of insertions and
additions, would it not be natural after such alteration to prefer the richer and more
perfect work to the meagre and shorter one, and to leave the defective original to decay?”
(Gollop, 162). This explanation as to why we are not in possession of the more ancient
manuscripts posits the original as actually “defective” compared to the “richer and more
perfect” rewriting. Once the new collaboration has been formed, the older document may
be eliminated. Rather than losing its authority through (unauthorised) change, the new text becomes fuller and more meaningful.

Particularly interesting in this context of composite texts and authorship are Eichhorn's ideas on originality. He begins his *Introduction to the Old Testament* with a discussion of the ancient Jewish culture and the outside influences upon it. The Jews, he says, were in too close contact with the Egyptians not to have borrowed much from them. As a step in the defence against the argument that the Jews and their Scriptures are merely derivative, Eichhorn meditates on the meaning of originality:

If a nation can only be held to be original and to possess an original literature which from the lowest step of education has raised itself by its own strength gradually upwards, has invented its own laws and religion, and the progressive gradation of whose knowledge has never been interrupted by aids from foreign learning, arts, and inventions, in that case the Jews can pass for no original people and be held to have no original literature. (Gollop, 1)

If what we mean by original is a complete and uninfluenced self-creation, then neither the Hebrews nor their literature are original. However, as we might guess from our previous analysis of the *Introduction*, Eichhorn has other ideas. Materials and influences from other sources are acceptable if used properly. As with a collaboration, the culture can be considered original “if a people have never descended to slavish imitation, but have dealt with their borrowed and foreign notions in so prudent a manner that when mixed and dissolved with their own stores the joint materials should form a homogeneous whole...”
(Gollop, 3). To create this new whole, the matter should have been used in such a way that the author gave “a new nature to the foreign, and converted it to its own” (Gollop, 3). The once foreign elements have now been imprinted with “a peculiar and fixed character on its mode of thinking, manners, and mental productions” (Gollop, 3). “And in this sense,” Eichhorn declares, “were the Jews ... original to the highest degree” (Gollop, 3).

Originality, then, depends upon the ability to make the borrowed material your own, rather than creating entirely new ideas. Using this criterion, Eichhorn sees some Hebrews poets as original, others not: “One poet is original, like Isaiah, Joel, and Habakkuk; another a copyist, as Ezekiel. One wanders along the untrodden paths of genius, whilst another steals by his side over beaten ground” (Gollop, 45). If we think back to our discussion above, we will remember that Eichhorn considered “Isaiah,” whom he here calls an original poet, to be a “collection of various anonymous prophetical poesy...to which the name Isaiah was given” (49). “Isaiah” can still be original in Eichhorn’s view, even if “he” is a collection of many different unknown authors compiled together. In other words, originality does not depend on the work being a creation of an individual personality, or even of the content of the work being entirely new, but in that content’s being combined or reworked in a novel way.

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Eichhorn applies these general theories of authorship which he expounded in the preliminaries of his *Introduction* to the specific case of Moses and the creation of Genesis. However, Eichhorn is not entirely consistent throughout his work, as he seems to imply in some portions that Moses was in large part the author of Genesis, but in others that he was a redactor. In the early parts of the book, he argues, "Supposing the Mosaical books in their present disposition not to be the work of Moses, still they are composed of Mosaical materials, merely put into form by a later hand" (Gollop, 48-49). In other words, writings most likely composed by Moses were redacted by a later editor. However, this statement is made in the context of Eichhorn’s emphasis on the “intermingling of old and new passages,” a stress which occurs throughout his discussion of Genesis.

In Eichhorn’s analysis of Genesis, Moses does play a crucial role, but as an editor-author who combines older documents with his own materials. An impartial reader, he says, will find “an author who had lived and written at the time of the Giving of the Law.” Eichhorn also derides the idea that Moses was only a mythical figure, created to give coherence to a fragmentary document:

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44 Elinor Shaffer claims that the scholar was rather limited in his view of the Pentateuch: “Eichhorn refused, through the four editions of his book, to entertain the idea that the Pentateuch was not all of a piece (though it might have been written by ‘the Deuteronomist’ rather than Moses); this has been accounted the major block in his Old Testament scholarship” (*Kubla Khan*, 78). While Eichhorn does seem to imply this view in places, in his fuller analysis of Genesis, examined below, he sees Moses putting the text together from different sources.

45 “Selbst die Art der Entstehung vieler Schriften des A. T. macht es nothwendig, daß in denselben alte und neue Stellen und Abschnitte mit einander wechseln müssen. [The intermingling of old and new passages and sections arose by necessity from the very mode of origin of many of the writings of the Old Testament]” (Eichhorn, 1: 60; Gollop, 48-49).

46 “einen Verfasser…der zur Zeit der Gesetzgebung gelebt und geschrieben hat” (Eichhorn, 2: 248).
That there never was a Moses, founder and lawgiver of the Hebrew state, in the world—only the most absurd scepticism could have this idea. A state must have, according to the world, a founder, and a state, in which the laws are enmeshed with one another like the cogs of a machine, must have had a lawgiver.  

However, Moses was by no means a completely independent author.

Genesis is not a “direct revelation from God,” but “may have flowed from a human spring, from an oral or written tradition.” In other words, Moses did not sit down and write the book to God’s dictation, but it was created over the course of time from many different sources. Although Eichhorn believes that oral tradition played some part, the larger part of the work was put together from several different documents: “He [the Genius of these books] in addition indicates very clearly the use of written transmission, especially so for a fragmentary combination of single documents.”

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48 “unmittelbare Eröffnungen Gottes” but “aus menschlichen Quellen, aus mundlicher oder schriftlicher Ueberlieferung, geflossen seyn möge” (Eichhorn, 2:275).
49 See §422 in volume 2.
50 “Er [der Genius des Buchs] stimmt vielmehr sehr deutlich für den Gebrauch schriftlicher Ueberlieferung, und außerdem noch für eine fragmentarische Zusammenstellung einzelner Urkunden” (Eichhorn, 2: 276). Eichhorn acknowledges that he is not the first to propose this dissection “…Astruc, a famous doctor, did that which no other critic in the profession dared to do, and carved up the whole of Genesis into single fragments. And I have employed the same analysis; without, however, choosing Astruc as my leader or guide, in order to not have my opinions be influenced by anything […]hat Astrük, ein berühmter Arzt, das gethan, woran sich kein Kritikus von Profession, wagen wollte, und die ganze Genesis in einzelne Fragmente zerlegt. Auch ich habe dieselbe Untersuchung angestellt; aber, um meine Gesichtspuncte durch nichts verrücken zu lassen, ohne Astrük zu meinen Führer oder Geleitsmann zu wählen)” (Eichhorn, 2: 292).
Two main documents form the primary substance of Genesis, but matter from another work or works is also interjected throughout: "one supposed document [is created] out of two historical works put together,... which are interrupted only here and there by the interpolation of a single foreign text...."\(^{51}\)

As Astruc had done, Eichhorn separates the two main documents by looking at the two different names ("Elohim" and "Jehova Elohim") that God is called throughout Genesis:

Some chapters of the first book of Moses bear the distinct mark of separate surviving documents, whose authors do not take additional, visible part in the remaining portions. Similarly the second chapter from the fourth verse and the entire third chapter thus makes up an individual separate document. The second to fourth verses do not hang together with the first. Even the peculiar heading (Ch. II, 4), "this is the creation of the heaven and the earth," separates both pieces clearly enough from each other. Thus an artistically created plan lies also in the first chapter as a foundation, which is followed artfully through all parts, and decides in advance the proper place for each idea. However, in the fourth verses of the second [chapter] the narrative falls into a youthful quality full of noble simplicity, which speaks out of the childhood of the world. In the first chapter up to the fourth verse of the second "Elohim" is used without exception for God; and from there on the other hand up to the end of the third "Jehova

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\(^{51}\) "eine aus zwey historischen Werken zusammen gesetzte Schrift...die nur hie und da durch Einschaltungen einzelner fremder Denkschriften... unterbrochen werden..." (Eichhorn, 2: 296).
Elohim" is used without exception. Could this distinction in the expressions possibly be the work of a mere coincidence? or should not this difference rather be ascribed to the difference of the authors?

However, the second chapter from the fourth verse and the entire third breathe the same spirit and the same sensual imagination, and in both the histories fit together as simply just two broken fragments of one monument could fit together...^{52}

Not only do these separate works subtly betray their origins through their use of different names, but also in the style of their composition. While one narrative has “an artistically created plan,” the second has “a youthful quality full of noble simplicity, which speaks out of the childhood of the world.” The second fragment hangs together because its component parts “breathe the same spirit and sensual imagination.” In contrast, the fourteenth chapter “exists disjointed and separate, interpolated there into the history of Abraham. ...the tone and expressions of the narrative separate it from all preceding and


Aber das zweyte Kapitel vom vierten Vers an und das ganze dritte hauchen einerley Geist und einerley sinnliche Vorstellungsart, und in beyden paßt die Geschichte so genau zusammen, als nur immer zwey Bruchstücke Eines Denkmals aus dem Alterthum zusammen passen können...” (Eichhorn, 2: 292-93).
subsequent sections by a deep chasm.”\textsuperscript{53} Again, subtle differences in word choice and tone mark the boundaries between this interpolation and the two documents (“J” & “E”) making up the bulk of the work. Although it could be argued that the “Jehova” and “Elohim” manuscripts are two different works by the same person, Eichhorn uses the shift in style to suggest that two different authors must be involved (Eichhorn, 314).

However, Genesis is not just the work of three writers (the “J” author, the “E” author, and the author of the interpolation in chapter 14). In addition to the oral traditions which were a main source for these works, older written documents were also used. “Elohim” borrowed from a precursor for his genealogies (Eichhorn, §422), and the “Jehova” writer interpolated his material into an older work: “But probably the authors of both the works that are collected together in Genesis already used written documents in the description of ancient times. If I may follow the internal traces, the author of the “Jehova” document put into his work an old document of the first history of man.”\textsuperscript{54} The writers did more than base their works on older histories, as many historians do even now: they combined their newer information with the text of the previous work or works. Eichhorn finds layers of authorship. In one place “the spirit of the older text betrays an

\textsuperscript{53} “Abgebrochen und einzeln steht…in die Geschichte Abrahams eingeschaltet, da. Ton und Ausdruck der Erzählung scheiden es von allen vorhergehenden und nachfolgenden Abschnitten durch eine tiefe Kluft.” (Eichhorn, 2: 294)

\textsuperscript{54} “Aber wahrscheinlich haben die Verfasser der beyden Werke, die in der Genesis zusammen gestellt sind, schon schriftliche Documente bey ihrer Beschreibung der ältesten Welt gebraucht. Darf ich innern Spuren folgen, so stellte der Verfasser von der Urkunde mit Jehova seinem Werke ein altes Document von der ersten Geschichte der Menschen…voran” (Eichhorn, 2: 318).
author before Moses, who must have lived near the time of the event”;55 however, he also sees “an author who had lived and written at the time of the Giving of the Law.”56

With all of these layers of writing, where does Moses, the traditional author of the Pentateuch, fit in? Although Moses wrote some of the “first five books of Moses,” those dealing with his own time, Eichhorn believes that he served only as redactor to Genesis:

In Moses’ time, the contents of both of the previously written works were known. ...I think it likely that Moses himself had brought both documents into the form which we now know, especially since it seems to be ordered with consideration to the second book (whose author most likely is Moses) and is broken off with Jacob’s death, in order that the second book could start with the history of his descendants. Only with great distance in time and with a lack of a definite witness, we can’t prove this formally. It would be possible that another Hebrew before him combined both sources and put them next to one another, and that Moses, if he is the author of the following books, only attached the story of his time and his law-giving to the work of his predecessors. Also nowhere is Genesis presented as the work of Moses or has his name, neither in the Old nor the New Testaments: only in the writings of Philo, Josephus, and in the Talmud does this happen...57

55 “der Geist des Denkmals verrät einen vormosaischen Verfasser, welcher der Zeit der Begebenheit nahe gelebt haben muß” (Eichhorn, 2: 294).
56 “einen Verfasser...der zur Zeit der Gesetzgebung gelebt und geschrieben hat” (Eichhorn, 2: 248).
57 “Zu Moses Zeit war der Inhalt der bisher beschriebenen beyden Werke bekannt. ...Es ist mir auch wahrscheinlich, das Mose selbst die deyden Urkunden in die Form gebracht habe, in der wir sie jetzt noch besitzen, zumal da es mit Rücksicht auf das zweyte Buch (dessen Verfasser höchst wahrscheinlich Mose ist) scheint geordnet und mit Jacobs Tod deshalb abgebrochen zu syen, damit das aeyte mit der Geschichte seiner Nachknommen aufangen möge.... Nur bey der großen zeitferne und dem Mangel eines
Eichhorn cannot be sure, of course, that there was only one editor: there may be layers of editors as there are layers of authors. It is certain, however, that the attribution of Genesis to Moses is only traditional: the internal textual evidence does not support the claim, nor does the explicit commentary of the book itself. Indeed, Eichhorn makes it quite clear that the attribution to any person as either editor or author is not important: “But the name of the redactor [Zusammenordners] doesn’t matter to us. The believability and usefulness of our Genesis depends not upon his name, but instead upon his fidelity and conscientiousness in the process of putting the work together.”

As long as the editor combines his sources in a reasonable way, who the figure is does not matter. Authority depends on process and content, not on the personality of a redactor or writer: “not the name of the author, but merely the contents—the oldest history of humanity—bind together the remaining parts of Genesis.”

Eichhorn’s most valuable contribution to the debate of authorship versus authority may be his persistent emphasis on the conditions of composition in a manuscript culture. The historical conditions of writing for the creation of ancient documents were not favourable to the preservation of an unaltered text written by only one person. Ancient


58 “Ueberhaupt aber kann uns der Name des Zusammenordners gleichgültig seyn. Nicht auf seinem Namen, sondern auf seiner Treue und Gewissenhaftigkeit im Zusammenordnen beruht die Glaubwürdigkeit und Brauchbarkeit unserer Genesis” (Eichhorn, 2: 323).

59 “nicht der Name des Verfassers, sondern bloß der Inhalt—älteste Menschengeschichte—an die übringen Theile der Genesis bindet” (Eichhorn, 2: 294).
texts, Eichhorn continually reiterated, were inevitably reworkings and collaborations. Our image of Moses composing the Pentateuch to God's dictation was a myth created by the early Church Fathers. While Moses may have written part of the first five books of the Bible, it was unreasonable, considering the historical circumstances of authorship and transmission of manuscripts, to suggest that the work had a single author.

Although the scholarship made textual collaboration the necessary condition of an ancient work, I do not wish to argue that the critics were always entirely comfortable with a virtual obliteration of authorship. The textual archaeology of the Higher Critics, which divided up a single book into different parts according to their composition, is still a type of obsession with authorship, after all. This chapter has reviewed many negotiations between authorship and authenticity, none of which is entirely favourable towards collaboration or multiple authorship. Hobbes felt compelled to say that God was the genius of the Bible at the same time that he created cracks in the traditional Mosaic origin of the Pentateuch. Spinoza hardly embraces multiple authorship, as his emphasis on it serves only to present the Old Testament as a poorly compiled anthology of fragments. Although Simon's idea of public scribes gives the most conventionally collaborative vision of the authorship of the Bible, he nonetheless must attribute the ultimate authority of the Pentateuch to Moses, who he says oversaw their work. For Paine, the written word is an essentially corrupt and corrupting medium, so the interference of later figures makes little difference to a document which is inherently impure. Hobbes, Spinoza, Geddes,
and even Eichhorn all suggest removing later interpolations in an attempt to purge the Bible.

Multiple authorship was an inherently difficult problem, but one which the Higher Critics had to think through, or face throwing out the Bible completely (as Paine did). Although Geddes attempted to arrive at as “pure and genuine” a “common Code” as possible (*Prospectus*, 147), the scholarship had gone too far in discovering the collaborative roots of Scripture: the Bible could not be purified according to the rules of single authorship. By these critics’ findings, if one were to take everything not written by Moses out of the Pentateuch, little would be left. Ideas of authenticity were redefined; for Eichhorn, originality became a matter of coherent rewriting and collaboration. By necessity, content had to become the ground of authority; textual collaboration had to be accepted, though a certain residue of ambivalence toward multiple authorship is always detectable.
Chapter Two

Coleridge and Biblical Authorship

Coleridge spent much of his later life examining questions of authorship and authenticity in biblical texts. His notebooks in this period reveal him systematically reading through the Bible and performing his own analyses along the lines of the biblical criticism explored in chapter one. Coleridge generally advocated multiple authorship in the Bible, though he too had occasional reservations, most often when interpolations were obvious and did not fit with earlier material. In general, what any text said was more important to Coleridge than who said it, even in the Gospels. His often-quoted statement—"I regard truth as a divine ventriloquist: I care not from whose mouth the sounds are supposed to proceed, if only the words are audible and intelligible" (BL, 1: 164)—sometimes viewed as a hypocritical cover for plagiarism, is borne out by his views on the composition of the Bible. An examination of his views on biblical authorship can give us a new context for looking at his ideas of authorship generally, and particularly, at his distinctive compositional practices.
The marginalia on Eichhorn are a wonderful record of Coleridge's responses both to the critic and to contemporary theories about the Bible.\textsuperscript{60} Certainly his annotations reveal that Coleridge by no means sat idly by and passively agreed with Eichhorn's theories; his relationship is instead engaged and acutely argumentative. One of Eichhorn's characteristics which frustrated Coleridge was the German critic's tendency to present his arguments not as reasonable hypotheses, but as absolute facts. "I abominate Sneering," Coleridge writes, "but really the cool complacency with which in the course of a few pages E. elevates a mere Guess of his own into a portion of History, and \textit{narrates} the same, is too provokingly cavalier.—" (EICHHORN \textit{Alte Testament} 45).

Eichhorn's unequivocal statement that the collection of prophecies known as Isaiah took its name simply because the lead manuscript on the parchment was Isaiah's, draws this terse comment: "a poor evasion grounded on a mere assertion" (EICHHORN \textit{Alte Testament} 44). This "vornehm" (superior) style causes Coleridge to become even more exasperated with what he sees as Eichhorn's often poor reasoning (EICHORN \textit{Apokryphischen Schriften} 9). The marginalia are littered with irritated comments: "[A]ll Eichhorn's arguments are Moonshine! — or rather the fire-fly scintillations of minute Criticism" (EICHHORN \textit{Neue Testament} Copy A 5). A little later in the same book, he

\textsuperscript{60} When looking at marginalia as marginalia, rather than simply mining them for content, we tend to perform a similar type of textual archaeology to the Higher Criticism. We read the "original" text, digress to look at interpolations, return to the text, and try to figure out when the additions were made or to what stratum of annotation they belong.
exclaims, "the whole Train of [Eichhorn's] Reasoning is Feather and Snow-flake"

(EICHHORN Neue Testament Copy A 52).61

This frustration, however, does not mean Coleridge rejected all Eichhorn's hypotheses, but suggests that he felt he needed to treat them with caution, since they often could not be proven. The sheer volume of the marginalia (spanning over 150 pages in the Collected Coleridge edition) would dispute a complete dismissal, even in the absence of the plentiful other signs showing his agreement with Eichhorn. In a note on the Introduction to the New Testament, Coleridge agrees (here) with Eichhorn's theory that the Urevangelium was known to John before the writing of his gospel.62 However, he still warns himself: "This is so plausible, nay, so probable, that I am always detecting myself in the act of taking it as proved. It is necessary, however, still to bear in mind that it is an hypothesis, the result of combinations of facts, not itself an attested fact"

(EICHHORN Neue Testament Copy A 36).

Leaving Eichhorn's style and tendency to jump to conclusions aside, Coleridge's main disagreement with the German critic was in more fundamental matters. Signs of a sceptical rationalism, which tried to explain away miracles and the more supernatural, spiritual aspects of the Bible, led Coleridge to deny Eichhorn's authority in matters of

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61 Coleridge felt a similar impatience with all of the German Higher Critics: "rashness in conclusion," he says in a notebook entry, "is characteristic of the Neological School from Semler to Schleiermacher" (CN, 4: 5322).

62 Sometimes Coleridge seemed to endorse, sometimes not, Eichhorn's idea of the Urevangelium, or hypothetical original gospel on which our canonical gospels were based. In a note on Eichhorn's Neue Testament, he calls it a "Will o' the Wisp" which "is for ever leading him out of his way" (Neue Testament Copy A 18). However, another note mentions the Temptation of Christ as forming "part of the Proto-evangellion or Original Gospel" (HACKET 18). For further discussion, see below, 97ff. This set of marginalia is dated c. 1816-19 and 1827-28 by the editors.
doctrine. "The shallow Morality of Paley, Garve, Faber &c," he declaims, "and the constitutional Lack of all religious Sensibility, fitted E. admirably for the Scavenger office of removing Rubbish; but — in short, Scavengers are not Architects! —"

(EICHHORN Apokryphischen Schriften 16). In other words, Eichhorn may analyse the authenticity, authorship, and historical validity of a text (with the goal, it is implied, of creating a purer text — one with less "Rubbish"), but he is no "Architect."63 He cannot build a theology. In one of many plans scattered throughout his writings, Coleridge proposes to write a work which will "extract the numerous medicinal herbs free from the hemlock & other noxious weeds" in Eichhorn (EICHHORN Neue Testament Copy B 3). Eichhorn has provided many helpful materials (the "medicinal herbs") but these ideas need to be taken out of their harmful context and rewritten.64

At the end of his life, in a comment written in 1829, Coleridge sums up his lifelong relationship to Eichhorn:

let me leave on record that as far as sound and extensive book-learning, unfettered research, and acute judgement, in determining the Age of Writings and the grounds of their attribution to this or that traditionary Name are concerned, I gladly & thankfully take Eichhorn, as my Guide. But as to the philosophy, the religion by the comprehension of which alone the Contents of these Writings can

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63 Coleridge may also mean the clearing away of the rubbish of outdated beliefs that were a hindrance to the true study of the Bible. Eichhorn's information would help to remove the Protestant bibliolatry based on a belief in the infallibility of the scriptures.

64 Although Coleridge did not agree with Eichhorn's theology, nonetheless he respected what he called Eichhorn's "honesty." "Eichhorn pretends to no faith in spiritual Christianity," he notes, but nonetheless is "an honest Philo-christian — loves and respects Christianity for its own merits and reverences it because he sees it to be & to have been under the protection and favor of the Divine Providence in a degree so superior and so much more evident, than he can discover in the history of any other Religion" (CN, 4: 5334).
be interpreted, I would [as] soon trust a blind man in a question of Colors.

(EICHHORN Neue Testament Copy B 18)

What Coleridge takes out of Eichhorn, then, is not his theology, but his ideas of how a text is put together. In what age or ages was it written? Who or how many people composed it? To whom was it attributed? Is this traditional attribution valid? As the marginalia amply show, Eichhorn got Coleridge debating questions of the composition and authorship of the scriptures, questions which would prove suggestive not just for sacred texts.

Coleridge wrote most liberally about his views on the composition and structure of the Bible in the writings which he did not plan to publish: “Many of Coleridge’s speculations and conclusions about the Bible, as I have been suggesting, are confined to letters, notebooks, and marginalia” (Lipkowitz, 614). The reason for the freedom of expression there which was not available in his published works was fairly clear. The largely German theories of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries had not found wide currency in England, and were treated with deep suspicion.65 For example, Alexander Geddes’s treatment of the biblical text was reviled except among those

considered radicals, especially the Unitarians. William Van Mildert, Bishop of Durham, had this to say about Geddes just after the Roman Catholic priest’s death in 1802:

Of those who, professing the Faith, have yet laboured to do it most essential injury and whom charity itself can hardly exculpate from the charge of wilfully endeavouring to bring it into contempt, none perhaps appears in a more disgraceful light than a distinguished Divine of the Romish Church … This Writer applied the whole weight of his learning and talents to an artful attack upon the Divine Authority of the Scriptures ... 66

Geddes’s profession of his faith did nothing to stop the slander, and Coleridge knew that the intensity of his beliefs would not halt similar attacks if his ideas were published. Cardinal Newman’s largely respectful comments about Coleridge in the *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* make it clear that he was convinced that Coleridge also held rather maverick beliefs:

While history in prose and verse was thus made the instrument of Church feelings and opinions, a philosophical basis for the same was laid in England by a very original thinker, who, *while he indulged a liberty of speculation, which no Christian can tolerate, and advocated conclusions which were often heathen rather than Christian*, yet after all instilled a higher philosophy into inquiring minds, than they had hitherto been accustomed to accept. 67

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Coleridge struggled to decide whether or not he should present his theories to his English readers, and concluded that the time was not ripe. In a notebook entry of May, 1825, he assesses the public's reaction:

These concurring arguments would compel me to declare my Scruples: if I had a Christian Public, for my Readers. But alas! the vast majority, the only not all, of the Christened World, knows so little what they know, that they may aptly be resembled to Heifers, that start back with affright from their own Stall, if only the Stable Door should be painted [...] anew, or the same novelty of appearance produced by cleansing it from the coats of dirt or bad paint, to which they had been accustomed.— (CN, 4: 5228)

Accordingly, Coleridge's few published comments are extremely tentative, and so the works not intended for public view become the most fruitful sites to look at how Coleridge saw the Bible.

Coleridge does not always agree with Eichhorn or other critics in the details of what text belonged to which author or to which era, but he is always receptive to the idea that the scriptures could be a mix of authors and texts from different historical periods. In the Old Testament, he refers to “the documents from which [the Pentateuch] was formed” (CN, 4: 4794); in the New, he warns of “the uncertainty as to what extent the written Reports of the Declarations of our Lord and of the inspired Apostles, are

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68 Coleridge makes relevant comments in AR, 200 and 359-60, and in the Statesman’s Manual, appendix B. For discussions of these passages, see below, 96, and chapter three, page 142. His Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit, published posthumously, was the most controversial of his theological writings, but dealt more with the concept of inspiration and infallibility than with the textual state and authorship of the Bible. Chapter five will deal with the Confessions.
imperfect, blended with inferences, and even added to”: “nothing is more common, than the blending of two incidents or events, that have some point in common, or by any other cause are brought together & so from contact pass into confusion, into a third” (N35.14, f17). Like his predecessors in biblical criticism, he gives his opinion on what may be later fragments of text, slipped into the older writings. Genesis 36. 31-36 is an “Evident but very ancient Interpolation; the same names being found in the Samaritan Text” (BIBLE Copy B 5). Similarly, he sees “no harm in supposing these verses, in Deuter[17. 14-20] to have been inserted by Samuel” (BIBLE Copy B 20). Although grouped as part of one book, its component parts derive from different eras (and therefore were composed by different authors). The first two books of Esdras were a compilation, “a free and in many respects a better & more faithful tho’ less literal Translation of the Canonic Ezra, with parts [of] Nehemiah, and the Chronicles” (CN, 4: 4870). Coleridge wishes that Eichhorn had given him more information on the third and fourth books, since they seem to him “to have been the work of different centuries” (EICHORN Apokryphischen Schriften 1) from the first part.

Problems perceived in Isaiah and in the Psalms Coleridge, like Eichhorn, usually resolved by considering them as a collection gathered under one name:69 “the greater number [of fragments] will have the inscription omitted, & consequently should the whole number be collected in one Roll, will have appearance of belonging to and being included in the titular Inscription last preceding” (N26.73, f113). He even puts the

69 See as well CL 6: 688-89.
situation in terms of contemporary printing practices, comparing this “titular Inscription”
to “(what in our mode of Printing) would be the Running Title—which will be, of course,
the name of the Prophet of most celebrity, and by whom the larger number of the Oracles
in the collection were either known or generally reputed to have been delivered” (N26.73,
fl13²). Certain Psalms could not have been written by their traditional author, David,
and are identified as being composed no “earlier than the reign of Solomon” (BIBLE Copy
B 42). Coleridge’s solution is that the name, a “Psalm of David,” is generic. A “Ps. of
D. must often mean no more than a Davidic Psalm: as we say, a Pindaric Ode” (BIBLE
Copy B 34). In a July 1822 notebook entry Coleridge speaks of “the erroneous
Inscriptions of many of the Psalms & Oracles—...the attachment or prefixture of
Names (vide Eichhorn/—ex. gr. that of Solomon to Ecclesiastes” (CN, 4: 4913).
Although in an earlier comment he seems not to have agreed with Eichhorn’s notion that
the book of Isaiah was a collection named so because Isaiah’s contribution came first in
the manuscript, 70 most of his later comments agree with Eichhorn’s theory. We could be
certain that the historical figure of Isaiah wrote what is ascribed to him only if “the
inspiring Deity had provided some satisfying evidence for us of the actual Date of the
Oracle, some proof of its having been delivered by Isaiah.” Instead, he says,

we are ignorant even of the name & age of the compilers of the Canon; but are
certain that they were fallible Men, by undeniable instances of their fallibility —
in sundry of the Titles of the Oracles — and even they no otherwise assign this

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70 See above, page 87.
Oracle to Isaiah than by prefixing his name as the introductory Title of the whole collection. — But so are the Psalms entitled collectively Psalms of David.

(EICHHORN *Alte Testament* 41)\(^7\)

However fallible the “compilers” of the biblical canon were, their own imperfection never makes Coleridge hint that the product is worthless. The Psalms and Isaiah, although a compilation written by many, often anonymous authors, still has value.

Yet

Even the New Testament Gospels Coleridge didn’t see as infallible documents, wholly written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. He believed that the Greek phrase translated as “according to” in the Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, and Luke meant that these texts were the “Notes or *Reports* taken of the words of the *Heralds*, evangelizing” rather than the actual writings of the apostles themselves (EICHHORN *Neue Testament* Copy A 1). The authority of the Gospels depended on the accuracy of their history, rather than on who wrote them:

*For them* [the people of the first century] a Gospel was a Gospel—an exact analogy I cannot give; but yet I would say—somewhat as with us every wealthy Family has a Morning Newspaper—and one says to the Man—What do you think of the News in today’s Paper—/—assuming, that in all probability what is in one

\(^7\) There are many similar explanations in the notebooks. See, as one example among many, N26.73, f/113-113v.
will be in another/or in a celebrated Trial, of which two or three Short hand
Writers have published Reports—/—Where nothing arises, to prove that the one
is not on the whole pretty nearly as faithful a report as the other, we speak of the
Report of the Trial, without caring or mentioning whose—or if we do—still when
I quote from Gurney’s Report, my Neighbor who has read the same substantially
in Woodthorpe’s, does not think of procuring Gurney’s—He has got one—& till
the occasion rises that gives him cause to think his Report garbled or incorrect,
one is enough. So beyond all question it was with the Gospels. (N26.27, f54v)

A Gospel is like a newspaper report: as long as it is “faithful,” we do not particularly care
who wrote it, nor are we interested in comparing multiple versions. The facts speak for
themselves, and their validity is not based upon the authority of Matthew, Mark, or Luke.
Strictly speaking, it is inaccurate to speak of the evangelists as writing the Gospels, and
Coleridge at times corrects himself: “Matthew & Mark (the Compilers. I mean, of the
Gospels so called)” (N26.73, f113).

In Aids to Reflection, Coleridge gives the reader a hint of his agreement with
German biblical theories of the composition of the New Testament. After quoting a
passage from Leighton’s “Lectures on the first nine chapters of St. Matthew’s Gospel”
which includes the biblical text “In those days came John the Baptist, preaching,” he
adds a footnote:

By certain biblical Philologists of the Teutonic School (Men distinguished
by Learning, but still more characteristically by hardihood in conjecture and who
suppose the Gospels to have undergone several successive revisions and enlargements by, or under the authority of, the Sacred Historians) these words are contended to have been, in the first delivery, the common commencement of all the Gospels \( \kappa\acute{a} \tau\acute{a} \sigma\acute{a}r\acute{a} \) (i.e. \textit{according to the Flesh},) in distinction from St. John’s, or the Gospel \( \kappa\acute{a} \tau\acute{a} \pi\nu\epsilon\tilde{u}\mu\alpha \) (i.e. \textit{according to the Spirit}). \textit{(AR, 359-60)}

The description of the “Philologists of the Teutonic School” suggests that Coleridge has Eichhorn primarily in mind, given his marginalia on this figure. (The phrase “hardihood in conjecture” is rather more diplomatic than his private comments.)\textsuperscript{72} The Gospels “\textit{according to the Flesh}” (that is, the first three) originally all began in the same way, and have been augmented not once, but several times. Notice, though, the appeal to the authority of the “Sacred Historians” to legitimise what would have been controversial. If this footnote obliquely suggests that there may have been a common Gospel or \textit{Urevangelium} in existence before our canonical Gospels, then the vagueness of the term “Sacred Historians” leads the reader to believe that these figures were either the apostles or others equally inspired. Even with this caution, Coleridge does suggest through Eichhorn that these writings may not have sprung straight from the pens of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, since they may have only supervised the composition and many revisions done “\textit{under the authority of}, the Sacred Historians.”

In his private analysis, as we know, Coleridge is much less cautious, and he spends a considerable amount of time puzzling over the composition of the Gospels, and

\textsuperscript{72} See above, page 87.
their relationship to Eichhorn’s theoretical *Urevangelium*. Coleridge has some objections—“Had there been a Proto-evangelium in Paul’s time, is it possible that he should never have referred to it?” *(CN, 4: 5169)—*and many alternative theories, as exemplified in this notebook entry:

Nov. 22 1824. Ramsgate.—I am more and more sensible of the difficulty of solving the problem of the 4 Gospels. I find it hard to determine on which of the different hypotheses the greater number & weight of perplexities press.—That each Gospel was intended as a complete History of Jesus in his Messianic character & during the period of the Messiahship from his Baptism to his Ascension, independent of the other three, and with or without any knowledge of their existences—. Even tho’ this should be granted of the three first, John’s must, I think, be made an exception. Or were the so-called Mat. Mark, and Luke Expansions of a Proto-evangelium? Or Excerpts from a more voluminous Biography, each Evangelist excerpting according to his particular views or the needs of his Mission or Church? Or were they compiled from smaller separate Monograms …. But if the one Gospel was to be supplemented out of the others, how are we to account for the *Repetitions*—nay, the evident variations & in a few instances apparent contradictions?—*(CN, 4: 5169)*

Coleridge suggests several hypotheses, with Eichhorn’s *Urevangelium or Protoevangelion* being only one of four. The Gospels could be completely independent of each other; they could be expansions of one, original Gospel; they could be separate
condensations of a larger work; or they could be variously pasted together from many smaller works.

Indeed, Coleridge appears to find Eichhorn’s theory of the *Urevangelium*, though not unsound, yet somewhat restrictive. “Eichhorn's theory grounded on the hypothesis of an *Urevangelium*,” he says, “appears to me more objectionable in the form than in the substance” (N34.3, f6). In other words, the fact that a gospel might exist before the canonical ones preserved in the Bible is not upsetting to Coleridge, though he always wants to tinker with the details. He attaches “less than zero” credit “to the supposition of a Protoevangelion composed by the 12 Apostles conjointly, Matthew being their Clerk or Secretary,” as the idea is contradicted by the opening of Luke. He “regard[s] it as certain that the facts asserted and related by the Apostles in their character as Eye-witnesses…were severally committed to writing by one or other of the Converted Auditors” (N33.12, f12). For him, there was not *one* *Urevangelium*, but many different Gospels written by people who had heard the Apostles first- or second-hand. Eichhorn’s theory was technically correct in that “some one of these many Memoirs or *Ana* of Jesus was the *first*, and that the *first* was undertaken on the Authority, or at least not without the sanction of the Apostles” (SCHLEIERMACHER *Critical Essay* 2). Our first three Gospels are not sacrosanct documents, but the best of many different writings circulating at the time. As he says in his note above, a Gospel is a “report,” often compiled from many different oral stories and pieces of text.
Like most of the biblical critics at the time, Coleridge studies to determine sections of the Gospels not written by their putative authors. He quarrels with Eichhorn over the last chapter of John, agreeing that it was not composed by John, but disagreeing with the critic as to who the author might be (Eichhorn *Neue Testament* Copy B 7). One place about which Coleridge does not change his mind as to its analysis is the last chapter of Mark. At Mark 16.8, he along with the “best biblical Critics” believed that “the Gospel according to St Mark ended. The twelve last verses are not to be found in some, & are marked with asterisks as spurious or doubtful in others of the eldest MSS. — Providentially so: for these 12 verses contain difficulties that have never been fairly explained” (Bible Copy B 101). In his marginalia on Hooker, he goes into more detail, in a curiously tentative comment: “I trust therefore that no disbelief or prejudice against miraculous events and powers will be attributed to me, as the ground or cause of my strong persuasion that the last Chapter of Mark’s Gospel was an addition of a later Age, for which Luke’s Acts of the Apostles misunderstood supplied the Hints” (Hooker 39). The invalid material (dealing with Jesus’ appearance after his resurrection to Mary Magdelene and the disciples) is given a possible source and time. Again, he implies that the Gospels were being changed and added to well after the time of their original writings.

73 I do not mean to imply that a wishy-washy Coleridge couldn’t commit himself to one analysis of the Bible. Coleridge’s openness of mind, which often meant that he threw out last year’s reading of the scriptural text, was quite deliberate. He condemned Eichhorn, as we saw above, for presenting theories as facts. Because these hypotheses could not be absolutely proven, sticking to one premise when on a second, third, or fourth reading other possibilities might occur to you, was simply stubborn.

74 The note is written on James Gillman, Jr.’s copy of Hooker, so Coleridge may have been diluting his theories because of his audience.

75 See also Irving *For Missionaries* 1.
The stories of Jesus' boyhood found in Matthew and Luke Coleridge also views as a later interpolation. If we "Remove the *mist* of feeling...and *pare* off the callus of tactless Custom from the comprehension" (N35.3, f4), our reading of Luke will show that these traditional tales have been interpolated between the dedication (1.1-4) and the original beginning of Luke at chapter three. Matthew also uses this "Legend or Symbolism," but in his Gospel, "the Christopædia is undeniably a part of the whole Narrative—not prefixed, or intertruded, but co-organized and concorporate" (N35.3, f4). Same matter, but used textually in two different ways: the childhood stories are inserted into Luke in one complete piece, but have been edited and mixed into the materials of the later Matthew.

Late in life (1829), Coleridge developed a theory which considered the New Testament to have been composed at two major periods: the apostolic age and the "earliest post-apostolic" (CL, 6: 784). The Acts of the Apostles, he proposed, "are two works of different dates that (in the first instance possibly from their being transcribed on the same Roll) have blended or as it were inosculated" (CL, 6: 784). Much as Eichhorn did with Genesis, Coleridge goes on to divide the "inosculated" work into its component parts, and to suggest that the first chapter and part of the second were a common introduction.76 "This Hypothesis," he says, "solves all the difficulties." In a notebook entry of the same period, Coleridge disagrees with Eichhorn's hypothesis that Acts is "one continuous History": "as soon as I turn the Chapters themselves, the spell is broken,

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76 See also N38.17.
and the arbitrariness and factitious character of his three Foci, Jerusalem, Antioch and the Voyage become evident” (N38.31,f23). Much of Matthew, the Gospel most augmented with insertions and later material, also belonged to this post-apostolic period, Coleridge believed.

Coleridge was as free in his speculations about the Pentateuch and the place of Moses as author, proposing many different theories over his lifetime. He often speaks of Moses, its traditional author, as a compiler, though he disagrees with Eichhorn that these documents could have been written in the Egyptian language: “But surely the Documents, from which Moses compiled the History of Adam to the Call of Abraham, were not Egyptian?” (EICHHORN Alte Testament 7). Eichhorn’s “documentary hypothesis” (the theory first proposed by Astruc and developed by Eichhorn that Genesis was comprised of two separate documents), was treated by Coleridge with some scepticism, or at least as not the only solution to the book’s problems.77 In a passage marked by Coleridge in the Introduction to the Old Testament, Eichhorn suggests that “Several chapters of Genesis carry the clear imprint of single independent documents, the authors of which have no detectable hand in the other parts,” and identifies two distinct

77 See the January 8, 1821 letter to L. Neumegen (Hyman Hurwitz’s successor at the academy for Jewish boys in Highgate), which is trying to sort out the parallels between usage of the Hebrew “Jehova,” “Elohim,” and “Jehova Elohim” in the Hebrew versus the English “God,” “the Lord,” and “the Lord God.”
sections. Coleridge’s comment indicates that this solution is not necessarily the only one: the first section contains the “physical theory of the Earth,” the second “the moral or spiritual theory or philosopheme of Man,” both making therefore “one Double-nut” (Eichhorn Alte Testament 20). Whether this “Double-nut” is the work of one person writing the creation with two separate emphases or two different people is unclear, though the former would probably make the most sense in this context.

Coleridge’s reservations about the documentary hypothesis are based not on opposition to the idea of Genesis being composed by more than one author, but on the weakness of Eichhorn’s theory in explaining all the facts. To Eichhorn’s question, “The book of Genesis is, then, patched together from two works, but is it also from works of two different authors?” Coleridge observes,

I am not so well satisfied with this very plausible Hypothesis, as I was for the 4 or 5 first years of my Acquaintance with it. Had it been limited to the first ten Chapters of Genesis, I should probably have been less disposed to quarrel with it. But two documents, with Authors of a diverse faith, the one a Worshipper of the Gods, the other of Jehovah, for the biography of one Family — ! —

I regard the Chapters respecting the Flood as by far the strongest nail in the fastening of Eichhorn’s Hypothesis. And yet the present form of the whole Pentateuch I cannot help thinking later than Moses. (Eichhorn Alte Testament 22)
This rich note suggests many ideas about Coleridge’s theory of the authorship of the Pentateuch as it changed over the course of years. While once Eichhorn’s hypothesis suited him, at the time of writing, he is in doubt. It is not the fact that a sacred text has been patched together out of two documents which bothers Coleridge, however, but that these two writers have completely diverse faiths, according to Eichhorn. Would any responsible redactor, let alone Moses (Eichhorn’s proposed editor), combine sources with such opposing viewpoints? However, the segment written about the Flood does almost convince him that Eichhorn’s pet theory might be true. Yet, if Moses were considered the compiler of the two independent documents, then Coleridge again cannot yield to Eichhorn’s supposition, since at this time he considers the “present form,” at least, to be later than Moses. (This idea does not remove the possibility that Moses could have initially collected the documents, and that a further level of redaction took place after Moses.) On another occasion, writing in the Bible itself, Coleridge identifies a segment (Deut. 17. 14-20) which he now considers to be the actual composition of Moses: “A perplexing Section, beset with difficulties whatever date be assigned to it’ — such was my first thought; but I now find in it one of the strongest evidences of the Authenticity of the whole Book. Neither before nor after Moses could it have been written: therefore by Moses” (BIBLE Copy B 16). This note, dated between 1826 and 1829, is probably later than the Eichhorn marginalia (up to 1827). However, I believe that Coleridge’s identification of this particular section is not evidence of a “progression” toward a more
conservative notion of the authorship of the Bible, but of his consistent reconsideration of the scriptures.

Indeed, the later notebooks are filled with Coleridge's speculations about the compilation of Genesis, and there is no evidence of a move toward a traditional model (one in which Moses was the author). Although he believes that fragments of the book were composed before the Flood, he tries to make clear the difference between the composition of a work and the compilation of it. "One great impediment," he says, "to a sound biblical Criticism has been the Confounding of the Documental Writings with the Compilation of the same—their arrangement, needful elucidations, and connecting Links, or rather sewing Threads" (N42.94, f67). He picks out chapters which have "the appearance of having been compiled out of several different documents" (N42.51, f51), and exclaims "Surely, Genesis was not written for Ante-diluvians! Most certainly, not compiled for them, even tho' we should suppose that some of the Documents were written by Seth or Noah" (N42.16). While his primary instinct in these later notes favours an initial compilation in the time of David or Samuel of more ancient documents, he acknowledges that the question of "whether [Genesis] be a continuous narrative founded on a single line of Tradition, oral or documental; or whether a compilation of sundry fragmentary documents from different sources" (N42.53, f45) was valid. In the end, although he could not make a firm judgement on the exact nature of the composition of Genesis, its value was substantial: "The more often I read, the longer I meditate on, the different fragmentary Documents in Gen. VI-IX, the less I am able to form any
quieting judgement. . . Of the substantial Truth, however, of the Narration I have not the least doubt” (CN, 4: 5116).

One canonical book which Coleridge considers to be of little value is the book of Daniel. He laments the fact that although it was obviously spurious, he would still be reviled by his fellow British Christians were he to suggest its removal from the canon: “The state of the English Church is likewise heavy upon me!—that Book of Daniel, which every learned Christian ought to have conspired to remove from the sacred Canon/and how large a majority would deny me bread, water, and fire (except that from faggots) for expressing a doubt” (N40.47, f24v). Nonetheless, the way in which he analyses it, and the place his conviction that it was a forgery holds in his belief make his comments very revealing. He compares the bits and pieces of folklore which made up the book to other traditional tales, and considers the possible circumstances under which these stories might have been collected:

...there were many floating Traditions of Daniel among the Jews, and old fragments of Oracles attributed to him — just as our Ancestors had of Merlin, Nostradamus &c, and the Greeks & Romans of the Sibyls … during the tyranny of Antiochus Epiphanes some Man of Genius of the Maccabæan Party framed the Oracles … as a political Pamph[1]let … (EICHHORN Alte Testament 48)

Just as Geoffrey of Monmouth or Malory collected and reworked the Arthurian legends, so did this Maccabæan “Man of Genius” gather these traditional oracles. However, this collection was then further added to by a later editor, who was not as concerned as the
initial compiler with unifying his contribution stylistically with what had come before:

“Of course, the purity of the Style would be included in the Writer’s Object — but no such object would exist for the later Compiler of the biographic Traditions ... prefixed to the Copy of the oracles, when they were placed together with Esther among the Sacred Books” (EICHHORN Alte Testament 48). A biographical preface was attached to what was only a collection of folklore in the first place.

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A long note on Manuel Lacunza y Diaz’s *The Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty* makes clearer Coleridge’s conception of the structure of Daniel as well as the strength of Coleridge’s convictions about the spiritual importance of maintaining an open mind about the scriptures textually. The preface to the Maccabæan collection (the first six chapters) he considers highly suspect: “I should demand better evidences than I have yet seen, of the Authenticity of the VI first Chapters, i.e. the biographical preface to the prophecies, of Daniel; and even of the competence in point of historical information, of the Compiler; before I consented to interpolate History with this anachronical Darius the Mede ...” (LACUNZA Y DIAZ 68). Darius the Mede was a figure Coleridge believes to be too late for the rest of the book, and thus was evidence of interpolation. Mere interpolation would not be a problem, if the rest of the book met the criteria of authenticity. However, its compiler seems to be ignorant of basic historical information.
and cannot be believed. The whole book, he says later in the note, has been constructed out of “a fragment of the traditional memorabilia of Daniel in corrupt Hebrew and equally corrupt Chaldaic — & this more probably a Translation than part of the original Work.” A hypothetical “far larger Greek” work existed, he felt, of which the Hebrew fragments were only a part, but he is not even willing to concede that the “the Greek Copy is the original/” (LACUNZA Y DIAZ 68).

The end of this extremely lengthy note shows just how vital to Coleridge was a method of reading the scriptures which felt free to consider them as texts with multiple, 

*human* authors:

In short, I will not suppress my conviction. From motives of prudence — no selfish prudence either, but from the fear of giving offence to the weak in faith — I tried for a while the plan of *negative* falsehood, concealing my doubts & my *no* doubts/ but a dearth and a dryness came upon my spirit — difficulties, objections, scruples started up in every page almost of the Scriptures ... all of which vanished ... as soon as I had liberated my mind from the thralldom of Fear & again read my bible in the breezy open air and sunshine of my nature. (LACUNZA Y DIAZ 68)

The difficulties in holding what was then such a controversial belief in the construction of the Bible are written all over this note. Afraid that his persuasion that even the canonical scriptures are a fallible mix of documents might convince a weak believer they have no authority, he attempts to suppress this method of reading. This self-censorship,
though, has the opposite result to that intended, causing more “difficulties, objections, scruples” to appear than before.

Clearly, Coleridge accepted the methods of the Higher Criticism as they related to multiple authorship, even if he did not always assent to each individual conclusion. Interpolations, documents collected under one name that were authored by many people, collaborative texts glued together from different historical time periods: all these things, though indications that the scriptures were written and compiled by “fallible Men” (EICHHORN Alte Testament 41) ultimately did “no harm” to their authority, as he remarks about an interpolated passage (BIBLE Copy B 20). The circumstances of composition and our age’s inability to connect all of the layered pieces of text to individual, known names does not make its substance less authentic. The age of early Christianity “was notoriously the Age for private men to write under the names of Apostles & Apostolic Men” (N34.7,f16): “Christians of all sorts during the first 5 Centuries attached little or no criminality to to [sic] the sending forth of Books under false Names—that where any good end (i.e. what they thought such) was proposed, they made no conscience of forging Authorities to support it . . .” (CN, 4: 5351). As a result, he finds the obsession with attribution somewhat puzzling:

Am I to be damned for having a stronger and more lively faith than others have? damned because I find in the mere fact of Christianity, and in the philosophy common to the immense majority of Christians . . . sufficient both external and internal Evidence to found and support an undoubting Faith in its
Verity and a fervent Love so that I would witness the same with my Blood? Am I to be damned, because the mere contents of the Gospel of John, and the passages in each of the 3 Gospels common to the two others, satisfy me — without any full conviction that the 3 Gospels in their present state were all and each in every part written or attested by Matthew, Mark and Luke? (CHILLINGWORTH Works Copy B

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If the evidences are apparent that the Gospels were not written entirely by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, then it is sheer bibliolatry not to admit this possibility, especially when the content of them alone is enough to support a willing faith. Again he fumes that he “cannot clearly understand, how my Faith in Christ should be one & the same Act of my Soul with the judgement, [that] my understanding is induced to form on the question respecting the Writers of the 3 first Gospels…” (CN, 4: 5224). The debate on authorship, though engaging, was a matter for human judgement, not a question of divine reason. In fact, at one point Coleridge states that the Bible itself is not the groundwork of Christianity, because it belongs to that realm of fallible human understanding. Instead, Christianity as “presented to the mind for itself, as Light that is its own sufficing Evidence, with the whole World of History” is the essential which then leads us to see “the sweetness, the precious-ness, the inestimable Value, the incomparable Worth, of the Sacred Scriptures”:

O the gathering storm of sense, the sense of exceeding importance of the Position, that the Belief and the Study of the Bible ought to be consequent on the
knowledge and Belief of Christianity—and not the ordinary means of acquiring that Knowledge, or of grounding that Belief!—much less made an essential part of Christianity and imposed on the Conscience, as a distinct Article of Faith. (N F°165, f63)

At one point Coleridge speculates on the worst-case scenario regarding the composition of the Gospels: “For taking it at the worst, what does it all amount to?—Why, that two or three of the hundred Legends, Collections of popular Reports, sacred Romances &c have been excerpted from the rest, and been allowed to usurp a higher & more serious character than properly belonged to them.” Still, “In all this there is little or nothing that need, or that ought to, unsettle a Believer’s mind or to give offence to an enlightened Christian” (N35.4, f6).

It is true that Coleridge was less willing to give up the attribution of the Gospel of John to the disciple of that name. In his notebooks, he writes

> It would inflict a sharper pang than the Loss of any other portion of outward Evidence, on my mind, were I compelled to entertain a doubt of the Authenticity of the 4th Gospel — or that it was not bona fide, with the possible exception of the latter half of the last Chapter, written by the beloved Disciple — & not only like Matthew, according to him.” (CN, 4: 5069)

The Gospel of John is the most important of the four for Coleridge: the only Gospel “according to the Spirit” rather than “according to the flesh,” as the first three were. The

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78 See also N35.25, f27.
entry continues: “However, be it whose Vision it may, the scheme & principle of interpretation is sufficiently clear, provided that it is to be retained in the canon among the inspired Scriptures . . .” Even the name of John may be given up, if the substance of his work be preserved.

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The analysis of the Bible by the Higher Criticism provided many variations on a theme of authorship which involved a relationship between a writer and his use of extant texts, which I have named textual collaboration. Most of the examples discussed in my analysis of the Higher Criticism involve a figure mixing editorial and authorial functions: editorial because he is working with and arranging previously written materials; authorial because he is in some sense creating anew by adding passages and rewriting the original texts. Coleridge could have followed the example of this method of composition even if he hadn’t agreed with its validity as an account of the composition of the Bible; given his obvious ease with it, it becomes even more likely for him to use it as a model. As Elinor Shaffer points out (63), if the Bible was now to be analysed as secular literature, the tables could also be turned so that secular literature could take its cue from biblical form. In a marginal note on James Abraham Hillhouse’s poem, Hadad, Coleridge compares the composition of a contemporary piece of literature—Pope’s “Rape of the Lock”—to the Book of Tobit. In both cases “a simple Tale” is “inlaid” with material from a different
period—"ridiculous and frigid Machinery, borrowed from the popular superstitions of the Greeks"—though in the Pope text the weaving is done "by the same author, and with a very different result" (Hillhouse 1).

A letter to William Hart Coleridge, January 16, 1818, proposes a plan for reworking parts of the Bible to form a new collection:

I am about [to] attempt a plan, in the furtherance of which I can with confidence solicit your kind offic[es] a double Translation, the one literal from the original Hebrew, the other metrical, — first, of all the Prophecies in the old Testament which were interpreted by Jewish Divines themselves, both before and since the coming of the Redeemer, as Messianic — a collection of which under some such name as 'Marks of the Messiah' evidently appears to have been made by the Syndrium (Vide Matthew, C. II.v.3-7. — and John VII.40-53.) — 2. Of all the Odes or Fragments of Poems scattered in the prose Works of the Old Testament — as Jacob's prophetic Blessings on his Children — The Song of Deborah &c — and lastly, a selection of Odes from the Prophets, with several of the minor Prophets translated as entire Poems — & an abridgement (I know no better name at present) of Job — the whole accompanied with copious notes, historical & critical, which will comprize all that is valuable in the voluminous Works of Eichhorn, Paulus of Jena, Rosenmüller, and the other Neologists of German Theology, free from the Poison of their Peculiarities — of which I shall take no
DIRECT notice, but involve the confutation of their errors in the brief proofs of the orthodox interpretation. (CL, 4: 811)

These new compilations will collect parts of the Bible under several different categories: the Messianic prophecies and all of "Odes or Fragments of Poems" in the Old Testament separated out from the prose, with a selection of prophetic odes. Coleridge explicitly compares his plan for gathering the Messianic excerpts to that which has already been done in the New Testament by the Synedrium, making his current practice on a continuum with the ancient one. The Book of Job he will revise by an abridgement. All this emendation will be surrounded by his "copious notes, historical & critical," which themselves will be a selection and reworking of the best of Eichhorn and similar critics — what he will later call removing "the numerous medicinal herbs free from the hemlock & other noxious weeds" (EICHHORN Neue Testament Copy B 3).

Another, earlier plan (1806) to recompile parts of the Bible is contained in a notebook, this time a condensation of the four Gospels:

The following Work I should suppose almost secure of a considerable Sale; the four Gospels reduced into one narration so that every thing in each not found in the other be added to that which is common to all … with a collection of all the striking parallel Passages from the Ancient Moralists before Christ, and from those of whom tho’ after Christ there is no probable reason that they had seen the Gospels: with an Essay, prefixed or annexed, concerning the nature and true point
of the superiority of the Gospel as a system of religion, Ethics, to that of the
Ancient Philosophers, of whatever Sect. (CN, 2: 2971)\(^7^9\)

Again passages from different texts are melded together, with accompanying
commentary. The commentary is not here an intermingled part of the new work, as it is
in the biblical models we have seen, but the whole form of the Gospels will be
completely reworked, so that all the various versions will be blended together. This
technique is very similar to the practice of Old Testament compilers gluing together two
different versions of the same event, and leaving in some repetitions and often
contradictions between texts.\(^8^0\)

These plans of Coleridge’s show signs of becoming textual collaborations, a term
which we can now define more fully in light of the biblical practices Coleridge and the
other Higher Critics discussed. The source manuscripts are not just rewritten: this is not
literary influence, in which elements, genres, or themes are borrowed from another
author. Large sections of text are inserted unchanged, but other pieces may be rewritten,
reordered, or otherwise reworked, and the whole blended with commentary and other
original writings of the compiler. While the work may start off as a simple anthology or
compilation, some of the resultant work is usually new, mixed with the pericopes of
other, usually earlier authors. This collaborator, then, is more than just an intrusive

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\(^7^9\) Coleridge’s plan is very similar to early rewritings of the Gospels: “in the second century, the disturbing
differences in the four Gospel accounts of the one life that was supposed to reveal God’s intentions
prompted scholars such as Tatian into weaving bits and pieces of all four Gospels into a new text or
‘harmony’ called the *Diatessaron* (only a small parchment fragment of which has survived). This was to
take ‘scissors and paste’ to the texts in order to create an improved, unified, ‘composite edition’ that would,
in principle, replace the divergent, dissonant accounts” (Kendrick, 837).

\(^8^0\) See Robert Alter’s chapter on “Composite Artistry” for some interesting readings of biblical passages
that have been formed by this method.
editor. (If a modern-day editor began rewriting his/her copy text and adding large amounts of his/her own work, we would treat this editor with suspicion, to say the least.)

The insertion of material into a new work is related to quotation, but different concerns arise in a textual collaboration. There is no attribution, nor any concern to connect the original author to his text or to demarcate the boundaries between multiple authors: the older texts are simply blended into the new. Often, as we have seen in Eichhorn’s discussion of Old Testament works and in Coleridge’s analysis of the Gospels, the earlier work is not treated as something that has to be preserved exactly in order to maintain its integrity. Instead, the previous material may be altered and rewritten in a way a quotation cannot (or at least should not) be. Coleridge thought Johnson’s dictionary was an “entertaining Quotation-book, but most contemptible, Dictionary...” (PASINI 1); its value was as a collection of material by different authors, though its commentary was of little use. This work is not a “true” collaboration since it makes no attempt to blend or rework the quotations, but still it shows that Coleridge appreciated it as a composite collection.

Interestingly, in a few instances, Coleridge tries to bring back the boundaries of quotation in a text. These cases are interesting because they show the difference between a “Quotation-book” and a blended collaborative text. While discussing the New Testament, he suggests several times that Jesus may not have been speaking his “own” words, but drawing in bits of scripture. In Aids to Reflection, he argues that “the Lord’s Prayer was a selection, and the famous Passage (The Hour is now coming, John v. 28,
29.) a *citation* by our Lord from the Liturgy of the Jewish Church” (200). Christianity’s most famous prayer is a composite assembled from pieces of the Jewish liturgy. By saying that a passage is a “*citation,*” Coleridge makes Jesus not mean the same thing by these words as if they were actually said “by” him, an explanation that can remove the difficulty from problematic portions of scripture. Therefore, Christ’s agonised cry on the cross, “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me,” according to Coleridge, becomes a *quotation* from Psalm 22, said to reassure his followers that the prophecy contained in that Psalm, the eventual triumph of the Messiah, would come true.81 By viewing this as a quotation, by demarcating this text from Jesus’ other words (by “unblending” a collaborative text, in short), Coleridge answers the question of whether Jesus doubted God with a resounding no. By referring the unit of text to another context, the quotation does not “say” what it apparently says. Jesus does not mean, according to Coleridge, “Why have you forsaken me, God,” which is at the least problematic; instead, the reference to the Old Testament passage gives the text a completely different meaning: “Let me show you that I am the Messiah, that God is with me.” In this instance, the blended text causes difficulties for Coleridge.

By effacing at least some demarcations, so that we cannot distinguish between a quotation made in another context and the same words written for the new composition, textual collaborations mingle old and new so that they more effectively commandeer the original text to make what we saw Eichhorn call a “literary use of old writings” (Gollop,
Ideally, the initial documents would be carefully reworked and selected, though sometimes they were not. Coleridge did not always view a compiled text with favour: the "later works of the Jews" were merely "paltry patch-work" (EICHORN Apokryphischen Schriften 9), he felt. Similarly, Coleridge consistently identifies and attempts to remove what he sees as players' alterations in Shakespeare: speeches introduced "nolente volente, by head & shoulders" (SHAKESPEARE Copy A 92), including the entire porter's scene in Macbeth. While obviously trying to purify the text, his attitude is still fairly relaxed about these interpolations:

does it detract from, or in any way affect my judgement of Shakespear, that I am persuaded that his successive Editors have been under an error in placing Titus Andronicus among his Plays?... Does it detract from or not rather increase, my reverence for his Genius and Judgement, that in some of his undoubtedly genuine plays some interpolations are to be found...? (CN, 4: 5372)

The problem for Coleridge is that these passages do not meld with Shakespeare's work, but jump out at him. The criterion for criticism here is not that the work has more than one author, but that the passages have not blended together. A note to Abbé Claude Fleury's Ecclesiastical History grumbles, "I suspect that the Abbé interpolated his history with these absurd Romances from the notorious Acta Sincera to make his Book sell: Nuts for the Devotees" (FLEURY 61).

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82 "This low Porter Soliloquy I believe written for the Mob by some other Hand, perhaps with Shakespear's Consent—and that finding it take, he with the remaining Ink of a Pen otherwise employed just interpolated it with the sentence, 'I'll devil-porter it no further;' & what follows to 'bonfire.' Of the rest not one syllable has the ever-present Being of Shakespear" (SHAKESPEARE Copy A 109).
Of course, unaltered pericopes of previously written text, which make the new work a collaboration, also always cause it to be in some ways a patchwork, though the reader is not certain where one piece ends and the next begins. The ideal, as Eichhorn describes it, is when the patchwork elements are “mixed and dissolved with [the author’s own] stores” so that the “joint materials should form a homogeneous whole” (Gollop, 3). Coleridge did have respect for this type of text, as is demonstrated by his admiration for Southey’s The Chronicle of the Cid. A footnote in the Biographia Literaria praises the narrative:

I know no work of the kind in our language (if we except a few chapters of the old translation of Froissart) none, which uniting the charms of romance and history, keeps the imagination so constantly on the wing, and yet leaves so much for after reflection; but likewise, and chiefly, because it is a compilation, which in the various excellencies of translation, selection, and arrangement, required and proves greater genius in the compiler, as living in the present state of society, than in the original composers. (BL, 1: 59-60n; my emphasis)

The compiled nature of Southey’s text is what makes it great, according to this note. Like Eichhorn, Coleridge sees the revision, a composite “translated from different sources and then interwoven,”83 as stimulating the imagination more than its originals, and its compiler greater in “genius” than the original authors. A writer’s responsibility is

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83 Editors’ note, BL, 60, n2.
not to ignore the past, but to work with it. He objects to Carl Friedrich Flögel not quoting a necessary passage because someone else had already, saying

absurd! as if every man were expected to possess every book. The Duty of a Writer is to make his Book as perfect as possible & to avail himself of, nay, to supersede, the historical collections of his predecessors — even as every judicious Encyclopædia supersedes the former. — The Works of Genius alone, the Individualities of mighty minds, must not, because they cannot, be superseded!

(Flögel 48)

The ideal is the encyclopaedic, the accumulation of knowledge by building on others' work.

Coleridge pleads for the understanding of some of his own later texts as unified compilations, not mere patchwork. In an unpublished advertisement to On the Constitution of the Church and State, he calls the work not "patchy," but a "Pasticcio" (lvi). This statement, which can look like an excuse for a fragmentary text, should carry considerably more resonance now. The Shorter Oxford defines a pasticcio as a "medley; a hotch-potch, farrago, jumble," but obviously this definition is too close to being "patchy" to fit in this context. A pasticcio seems to be what I have been defining as a textual collaboration, and Church and State fits the bill, as do so many of his later works.

In his last published text, Coleridge does most of his appropriating from himself, inserting passages from the Friend, Statesman's Manual, and the Biographia as well as using some of his marginalia in a glossary, and one of his letters to make up an
As we shall see later, *Aids to Reflection* and many of his other prose works use the same technique, blending in passages not only from his own earlier works, but also from other sources. In Coleridge’s mind, a real difference exists between a collection of fragments and the type of writing which he practised and admired: a collaboration which brings together and unifies the knowledge of many different voices.

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84 He calls attention to his use of the *Biographia*, so the reader will know that he is not “stealing” from himself.
Chapter Three

Marginalia, the Biblical Gloss, and Collaboration

—Mr. Brooke was detained by a message, but when he re-entered the library, he found Dorothea seated and already deep in one of the pamphlets, which had some marginal manuscript of Mr. Casaubon’s—taking it in as eagerly as she might have taken in the scent of a fresh bouquet after a dry, hot, dreary walk.

—Oh, he dreams footnotes, and they run away with all his brains.

(Mrs. Cadwallader about Mr. Casaubon)

*Middlemarch*, George Eliot

Coleridge’s marginalia are the most important genre of his textual collaborations. Like critical annotation, marginalia are inherently collaborative, in that they depend upon the presence of another text to stimulate a response. But unlike criticism, marginal notes have a tendency to slip into the text which they annotate: the “elaborately layered nature”
(Alter, 132) of the biblical text, for example, is partly a result of glosses “inosculating” themselves, as Coleridge would say (CL, 6: 784). Glosses also play a large role in the collaborative mélange of the Bible. The Higher Critics view marginal material as comprising a large part of scripture, so that the accretion of glosses became a common method of composition in the New Testament. Coleridge was familiar with this amalgamation of the marginal and the primary in the Bible. He selected passages he thought to be marginal glosses, and defended the authenticity of a scripture scattered with interpolated notes. However, marginalia which have coalesced with their texts were commonly viewed as potentially if not actually dangerous. The reason, I argue, is because marginalia question the one-author model of the inspired text, and so to make the scripture “pure” (that is, attributable to one person), critics must remove the offending, anonymous material. Marginal notes, no matter how innocuous they may initially seem, do change a work into something new. This transformation can be disturbing, if one is attempting to maintain textual purity. From Coleridge’s point of view and the perspective of most readers of his marginalia, however, the change is a welcome collaboration, which adds the richness of multiple viewpoints to a textual foundation.

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The critical literature on marginalia is authoritative, if sparse. Lawrence Lipking distinguishes between marginalia and the marginal gloss:
Marginalia—traces left in a book—are wayward in their very nature; they spring up spontaneously around a text unaware of their presence. Nor could they have been considered publishable until the Romantic period had encouraged a taste for fragments and impulses, the suggestive part rather than the ordered whole. ... The charm of such notes depends on their being on the edge. (Lipking, 612)

Glosses, on the other hand, respond “to the need for a total interpretation, the fitting of the part to the whole” (Lipking, 639). Although most of Coleridge’s notes are “wayward” marginalia, “written indiscriminately,” often “in other men’s Books” (N35.5, f6v), even these often tend, as so much of his work does, toward the gloss—“the fitting of the part to the whole.” H. J. Jackson characterises marginalia as conventionally responsive, personal (though anonymous), critical (in the sense of evaluative), and economical. They respond to an antecedent text; they express the separate (usually contrary) views of the marginalist, and thereby assert a separate personality; they make a critical appraisal of the original statement; and they must do it economically because of the physical constraints of margins. They are profoundly self-indulgent. ("Writing in Books," 219)\(^\text{85}\)

Swift’s marginal reply to Burnet’s shocked hints of “‘unnatural practices’” in his *History*—“‘Only sodomy’”—fits the definition nicely (quoted in Patterson, 53).

\(^{85}\) Jackson qualifies her definition by saying that the marginalia of Coleridge, literature’s most prolific annotator, often does not fit these characteristics.
George Whalley argues that Coleridge started his marginalizing in earnest about 1801, though scattered notes exist before that time (254-55). He was extremely conscious of it as a practice, writing notes about his notes, a genre that William Slights calls “a kind of meta-marginal exercise that evidently appealed to some of the more pedantic practitioners of the form” (685). While most of Coleridge’s notes are anything but pedantic, they do often call attention to themselves as marginalia—“N.B. Spite of Appearances, this Copy is the better for the Mss. Notes. The Annotator himself says so. S. T. C.” (DONNE Poems 15)—and some elicit the sympathy of those who would read them afterwards: “I shall die soon, my dear Charles Lamb! and then you—will not be vexed that I had bescribbled your Books. 2 May, 1811” (DONNE Poems 61). As both George Whalley and H.J. Jackson, the editors of the Marginalia in the Princeton Collected Coleridge, have pointed out, Coleridge does not just scrawl on books for his own amusement, but also with others in mind: “the notes were written for the appreciation of a particular, known audience” (H.J. Jackson, “Writing in Books,” 224). For example, one of the several editions of Shakespeare’s complete works which Coleridge annotated was prepared for the benefit of the Morgan household. Even when writing his notes for a specific audience, Coleridge also responded directly to the text

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86 See also H. J. Jackson, “Writing in Books and Other Marginal Activities,” 226, for her definition of “metamarginalia.”
87 Apologising for marring another person’s book seems a convention with marginalists. Swift excuses himself for annotating Dr. John Lyon’s copy of Burnet’s History, saying “But I cannot help remarking this fellow. I write only with a pencil; so that you may rub it out, when you please” (quoted in Patterson, 47).
88 See also Whalley, 255. Of course, sometimes the owners of annotated works were not so pleased. According to Coleridge, Mr. Tudor was “scared & scandalized” by the marginalia in the volumes of Cocceius lent to Coleridge (N35.5, f6v).
89 See Copy A of Shakespeare in CM 5.
itself, which is always in some sense the primary audience. For example, he annotated a copy of James Sedgwick’s *Hints to the Public and the Legislature, on the Nature and Effect of Evangelical Preaching* for Southey, who was doing a review of the book, but also talks directly to Sedgwick: “Why, thou miserable Barrister, it would take an Angel an eternity a post to tinker thee into a Skull of half his Capacity!” (J. SEDGWICK 56).

Though Coleridge often writes notes the length of small essays, extending to endpapers and adjoining margins, he is acutely aware of the constrictions of the space, which Whalley argues stimulates rather than inhibits him (256). While writing in Alexander Chalmers’s *The Works of the English Poets*, Coleridge is “just in the mood to describe and inter-distinguish” between the respective wits of Butler, Pope, Congreve, and Sheridan, but exclaims, “what a pity that the marginal space will not let me!” (CHALMERS 4). He coyly remarks elsewhere that the National as opposed to the Christian Church is “not a question to be discussed *marginally*, large and tempting as the Margins of this Charge happen to be!” (BLOMFIELD 6). In some of these cases, he turns to the notebooks, which contain many examples of notes responding to books though not physically written on the page.

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While a good deal more than this brief survey could be written on marginal practices generally, and Coleridge’s in particular, some characteristics are particularly
relevant to marginalia as a collaborative and compositional method. Unlike critical annotation, which stays modestly in the bottom margin, the marginal note writes itself as more or less an equal with the primary text, challenging it and commenting on it from a position of authority. Lawrence Lipking sees the "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" as a whole "made of tensions" between the poem and the gloss, a situation enabled by the form of the work: "The margin, unlike the footnote, is capable of such dialectic, since it rises to rough equality with the text" (Lipking, 640). This assertion of its own self-worth—and often its superiority—makes the marginal note a more suitable candidate for true collaboration than critical annotation.

In addition to their equality with the primary text, marginalia, both on a printed text and in a manuscript culture, generally do not stop at one comment or set of comments, but build layers of notes. Stephen G. Nichols observes that medieval manuscripts encouraged all kinds of supplementation, from "scribal participation" to "formal elements for ordering the text on the manuscript page" and "marginal glosses made...by generations of readers" ("Commentary," 965). Discussing the manuscript culture of the Florentine fourteenth century, Jeffrey T. Schnapp notes that the "successive layers of ornamentation, scribal annotation, and textual commentary" actually made a manuscript more valuable: "The more such geological strata accumulated over and about

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90 Much has been made lately of the footnote's subversive and threatening nature, which threatens to overwhelm the text it annotates. See, for example, Schnapp, especially 815-16; Derrida, "This is not an Oral Footnote"; McFarland, "Benjamin Whichcote," 167; Watson, 12.
the primary text in the course of centuries, the greater the latter’s presumed antiquity, legitimacy, and power” (825).

Coleridge realised both the value of marginalia and its perpetually additive nature. He was quite fond of “hypermarginalia,” the qualification of a marginal note with another one: “In several works that he reads more than once, or read in overlapping phases, Coleridge often corrects or comments on his earlier notes, recording new layers of reaction” (Jackson, “Writing in Books,” 225). In Baxter’s *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, Coleridge writes a note to his earlier one: “Since the Mss Note below was written, I have seen or believed myself to see cause for qualifying the opinion there expressed…” (BAXTER Copy B 47). An asterisk in a lengthy note to Eichhorn’s *Einleitung in die Apokryphischen Schriften des Alten Testaments* leads to this declaration at the end: “I retract the above Remark. A man could not think so in Hebrew” (13). In fact, Coleridge equates his hypermarginalising to compositional practices in the Bible. A particularly dense passage in St. Paul he explains as follows:

It would greatly facilitate the understanding of St. Paul’s Writings and of this Epistle in particular, if only they were printed as the Apostle himself, were he now on earth, would have prepared them for the Press—viz. subjoining or annexed in the margin or at the bottom of the Page as Notes what are now interworfed, rather than inwoven as member Parentheses. I have in writing more than once found occasion to make a note on a note, a † to a * and something like
this not seldom occurs in the long parenthetic passages of the Apostles. (BIBLE Copy B 116)

While the passage from the epistle does not include St. Paul’s notes on another’s work, it does use his own marginalia on himself, according to Coleridge. Again, in St. Paul as in Coleridge, we have a structure that builds upon itself.

The type of text that resulted from these layers of additions was one that was intertextual, inclusive, and profoundly plurivocal. Thomas McFarland argues that because “marginalia always...invade their host text...no form so fully participates in the literal significance of the word intertextuality” (“Synecdochic,” 78). What is fascinating about marginalia’s specific type of intertextuality is that the participating texts are both (or all) there to be seen, with accompanying contradictions and affirmations. If the annotator makes a note which challenges either the original text or his or her own note, both versions remain, side-by-side, for the reader. William J. Kennedy writes that medieval interpreters would “substitute a new reading” for ones with which they disagreed: “The principle was additive rather than disputative; each new commentator juxtaposed his or her commentary against existing ones” (quoted in Tribble, 63). Again we see Coleridge’s “medieval” sense of the text. Coleridge adds more than his own layers to the annotated text: he also throws other authors into the mix. A note in Field’s Of the Church, for example, uses liberal quotations and paraphrases from Daniel Waterland’s A Second Vindication of Christ’s Divinity (23).

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91 See my introduction, page 14.
This process of accretion with layers of different voices (the original text, older and younger Coleridge, other authors) led to a very mobile text. It had no logical point of conclusion, but like the archetypal Romantic work, was always in the process of becoming. Anthony Grafton's comments on the readings of Gabriel Harvey, another devoted marginalist, can be applied with equal force to the interpretation and writing making up an annotated text:

How did Harvey read Livy? Clearly this simple question cannot be simply answered. Harvey's reading of Livy is not a single thing and never froze in a fixed form. It did not eventuate in a formal commentary, and probably was never meant to do so. More remarkably, it seems never to have established a single fixed method or point of view. Rather, it was centrifugal and mobile. Harvey proceeded from Livy to his friends, from life to Livy, from treatise to text and text to treatise, finding that each reflected light on the other. There was no point at which the investigation logically had to stop, for each deeper insight into a single passage could result in novel interpretations of the rest. And the whole game started anew every time a new event or text, a Sidney or a City of God, penetrated Harvey's consciousness and set it turning again. (124)

This ongoing process of interpretation is in Coleridge crystallised in sites of contesting yet complementary texts. Because the marginal form was so mobile, it was sometimes difficult to use it to produce a conventional text, frozen in print. A slip to the printer producing *Aids to Reflection* shows the difficulty in using marginalia for making
corrections. Trying to simplify a passage in the proofs, Coleridge writes "I have...cast the passage anew, into several independent periods; but despair of correcting it by means of marginal alterations, so as not to confuse and perplex the Compositor" (AR, 451) and instead writes out his new version on a separate slip. While a lack of space in the proofs is perhaps the primary reason for Coleridge’s difficulties, this incident also shows that marginalia constitute a genre of accretion, not correction. Adding a comment, even one that is contradictory, is more congenial and natural to the marginal process than is deleting or changing the original text.

A marginalised text undergoes a complete transformation, which justifies the label collaborative. No longer the locus of one authoritative voice, the work is now the site of at least two and perhaps many authors who compete for the reader’s attention. A note dated October 1811—a particularly low period for Coleridge—on Charles Lamb’s copy of Beaumont and Fletcher, not only plays for sympathy but reveals Coleridge’s awareness of the transformation his marginalia have occasioned: “I will not be long here, Charles!—& gone, you will not mind my having spoiled a book in order to leave a Relic” (Copy A 13). A simple book, one of perhaps thousands like it, has now become a unique artefact. Or more precisely, after Coleridge’s death, when his lifelong interpretative process is finally frozen, it will become an emblem of the (sainted?) writer. The book is no longer primarily identified with Beaumont and Fletcher, but has become a collaborative text which, Coleridge implies, “belongs” as much to the annotator as the annotated.
It is interesting to see how this mobile form is adapted for a text which is traditionally seen as fixed and stable, the Bible. Particularly for the Protestant religion, in which the Bible played such a large role, Scripture was supposed to be the ultimate authority, an original monument of God’s word, not a document formed through a process that lasted many years and involved multiple authors. Biblical editors and commentators had begun to identify difficult textual passages as glosses in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. When reading Leighton’s *An Exposition of the Creed*, Coleridge would have found the seventeenth-century archbishop quibbling about the text, “Descended into hell.” Leighton quietly suggests that it has no scriptural authority, and is merely an explanation of the term “buried,” which comes just before it. The explanation has been transcribed from the margin into the main text, creating in Leighton’s mind a tautological phrase (“was crucified, dead, buried; he descended into hell”): “Not that the author or authors of this so brief a confession, would express one thing by divers words, but that it may be, in the more antient copies, only the one of them hath been in the text; and in after copies, in transcribers’ hands, the other hath crept into it, out of the margin” (Leighton, 4: 15).

Although the conservative Leighton did not try to call into question difficult passages in actual scripture (as opposed to the Creed) using this explanation, others
before him did. In the furious controversy between the Puritan William Fulke and the
Roman Catholic Gregory Martin over the relative merits and demerits of recent Catholic
and Protestant translations of the New Testament, the purity of a text that may have been
invaded by alien marginalia is debated. Fulke’s 1583 *A Defence of the Sincere and True
Translations of the Holy Scriptures into the English Tongue, Against the Cavils of
Gregory Martin* is interesting in its own right, as this reply to Martin’s *Discovery of
Corruption by Heretics* (1582) includes the whole of Martin’s text within it, interspersed
with Fulke’s arguments. The Puritan text could be said to be functioning as a type of
systematic marginalia (though not set up as such on the page), since Fulke’s *Defence*
responds to a text of which it is an inseparable part. Martin argues (in the *Discovery*
included within the *Defence*) that the Calvinist theologian and former Roman Catholic,
Theodore Beza, relied too heavily on the explanation of misplaced glosses to dismiss
problematic passages. Beza’s “common and...almost only conjecture” for explaining
errors in the text, Martin claims in asserting the purity of the Bible, is that they have
“crept out of the margin into the text” (Fulke, *Defence*, 42). Fulke replies: “As for
creeping out of the margin into the text, which you say is his [Beza’s] common and
almost only conjecture, why may it not come to pass in writing out of the books of the
scripture, as it hath in other writings of other authors?” (Fulke, *Defence*, 42-43). The
English translation of Beza (*The Newe Testament of Our Lord Iesus Christ, translated out
of Greeke by Theod. Beza. Whereunto are adioyned large expositions of the phrases and
harde places by the Author and others...*), at any rate, does not use this rationale as a
“common” conjecture, as it occurs only once in the first three gospels, referring to Matt. 27.9: “Seeing this prophecie is read in Zach. 11.12 it cannot be denied but Jeremies name crept into the text, either through the Printers fault, or by some others ignorance: it may be also, that it came out of the margine…” (Beza, 35'). “Common” explanation or not, the interpolation of marginal comments into the text became a recognised method of accounting for errors in the first modern editions of the Bible, even before the Higher Criticism of the eighteenth century. In these earlier critics, interpolated comments were seen as alien, erroneous. They do not create an acceptable textual composite or collaboration, but instead must be removed to bring the text back to its original state of purity.

The Higher Critics often discussed glosses in the same way the Renaissance critics did, as very brief sections of text that would move into a work, creating passages that were recognisably later. However, they also considered their insertion as a means by which substantial parts of a manuscript could be formed. Several eighteenth-century biblical critics, well known to Coleridge, talked of the process by which marginal notes could merge with the text during the transcription of a manuscript. Eichhorn asserts that even before the canonisation of the Old Testament, while the composition of scripture was still taking place, “scholia were written on the margins of manuscripts” (Gollop,
173). These notes were explanatory, serving to remedy the imperfect diction of an earlier age:

In the childhood of the author-world, when precision in expression was not aimed at, the phrase for a later reader is deficient in meaning; the author had no anticipation that his later reader would miss an idea, since its absence was not perceptible to himself. ... the possible supplement was written by some officious hand on the margin, and by another transferred to the text. (Gollop, 173)

Eichhorn picks out some possible interpolated passages, Gen. 4.8 and 35.22 among them. In his translation of the Bible, Alexander Geddes not only identifies marginal comments, but also removes the phrases from the main body of the text to a footnote, explaining in the case of Gen. 46.8 that the words “Jacob and his sons” “may have been originally a marginal note” (Bible, 1: 87).

The book that provided Coleridge with the fullest explanation of the many circumstances under which glosses could insinuate themselves into the main text was Michaelis’s *Introduction to the New Testament*. Michaelis discusses the transfer primarily as a source by which the scriptures have become tainted with “false readings” (1: 285). One sign that a note may have crept in is a tautological phrase, indicating that a marginal translation or explanation may have been carried into the main text, creating repetition: “In the Proverbs of Solomon are instances where the same Hebrew words are twice translated, which can be explained on no other supposition, than that one of them
was originally a marginal note, which has insensibly crept into the text itself" (Michaelis, 1: 235).

Not content merely to identify marginal interpolations, however, he goes into extraordinary detail as to the precise conditions enabling them. Most explanations deal with his theories of the process of transcription and correction of manuscripts. The margins were used for additional comments and explanations, as we would use them today in proof-reading, for the correction of errors and addition of words inadvertently omitted in the original transcription. At times the marginal explanation and the correction of an omission would be confused:

Another source of false readings is a transcriber's mistaking a marginal note for a part of the text: for having observed that an omission in the text, or a passage wrongly written, was sometimes supplied or corrected in the margin, he falsely concluded that every word, which he saw before him, must be admitted into the body of the work, which he was then writing. (Michaelis, 1: 285)

In this situation, all glosses become part of the main text, as they are thought to be parts of it that have slipped out into the margins through the carelessness of a scribe. The practice of writing “in the margin an explanation of a difficult passage, or a word synonymous to that text, … or with the intent of supplying a seeming deficiency” (1: 285) makes it difficult to identify what we might call a marginal composition from a proof-reader’s correction of a mistake or omission. “[A]ny or all” of these marginalia, Michaelis avers, might “be easily obtruded on the text itself” (1: 285). He labels Mark
11.10 and Epistle to the Romans 8.20 as examples of this inadvertent integration. The movement of material sometimes works the other way, so that instead of accretion of text, there is deletion. Omissions from the text that were added in the margins for later inclusion can also be ignored (1: 299) or transcribed in the wrong place (1: 300):

“omissions are sometimes occasioned by an oversight of the copyist, or by mistaking a real part of the original, for a scholion obtruded on the text” (Michaelis, 1: 308).

Nonetheless, additions to a manuscript were more frequent, as the holder of a work would feel free to add his own knowledge of the happenings described into the textual borders: “The owner of a manuscript makes a note in the margin, either explanatory of some narration in the text, or containing an account of some event that was handed down by tradition, which manuscript being afterwards transcribed, the copyist writes text and notes without distinction in the body of his work” (Michaelis, 1: 292-93).92 Here Michaelis moves from describing a phrase merging here and there, which may be easily removed as a “false reading,” to depicting a larger amount of material being added as a compositional process. A text may be slowly built up over time, as one person adds marginalia that contribute new information, which are then taken into the text in later transcription; another person then adds more marginalia, and as the shampoo commercial says, “and so on, and so on, and so on.”

The first three Gospels of the New Testament were thought to have been formed by such a process, according to Michaelis and Eichhorn. An original gospel, circulating

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92 Michaelis mentions John 5.4. and Matt. 20.28 as examples.
in various transcriptions, accumulated in its margins other stories so that three different versions eventually emerged. Michaelis’s *Introduction* follows Eichhorn’s theory of the *Urevangelium* in broad outline, though Coleridge read Michaelis first and Eichhorn, the originator, second. The details of which gospel is the earliest, whether the first document was in Hebrew or Greek, and other such matters are unimportant here, but I will quote Michaelis’s theory of the construction of the three gospels through this accumulative method:

The ancient transcribers of the Gospels were always more inclined to insert new passages, than to erase what already existed: we must conclude therefore that, if the Hebrew Gospel used by the Nazarenes was St. Matthew’s original, it received various additions, after the Greek translation had been made, and that hence arose the difference between the Hebrew and the Greek texts. … it is not extraordinary that they who had copies of St. Matthew’s Hebrew Gospel, should add in the margin whatever information they could procure, with an intention of making the history of Christ as complete as possible. In subsequent transcripts these marginal additions were taken into the text… (Michaelis, 3.1: 169-70)

As is typical of marginalia, accretion is more frequent than deletion. The Hebrew Gospel, here the originator, was translated into Greek and then amassed many “marginal additions” in the language of translation. In this case, the mode of composition is a “not extraordinary” process of recording the collective knowledge of many different people,
rather than a source of error which contaminates the manuscripts with new and unauthorised readings.

Herbert (later Bishop) Marsh's "Dissertation on the Origin and Composition of Our Three First Canonical Gospels," included with his translation of Michaelis, reiterates the idea that the gospels were largely collaborations composed through copious later additions to an earlier text: "To the original text therefore of the common document, which in its primitive state contained only so much matter of the forty-two sections, as is common to all three Evangelists, various additions were made in the several transcripts, which were taken of it." He adds in a footnote, giving the credit to Eichhorn, "the proprietors of different copies of this document added in the margin those circumstances, which had come to their knowledge, but which were unnoticed by the author or authors of the document, and these marginal additions were taken by subsequent transcribers into the text" (Marsh, 3.2: 197). Since this practice ends up creating a document or documents that are substantially different from the original (as the Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, and Luke differ from each other and from their putative source), it is a form of composition. The gloss is not an explanatory phrase, but a supplement of entire anecdotes, and so cannot be removed as a false reading. The willingness to see the marginalia as part of the finished text is partly because of the scale of their contribution, but also because the Higher Critics had a more lenient approach to authorship, accepting composite and non-inspired writing. After all, Michaelis and Eichhorn must first have accepted the idea that scripture may be a collaborative effort by many, anonymous people
before they would identify such a large part of the Gospels as originating in marginalia. Although they too label short phrases as later additions which are “false readings” in order to explain away problematic phrases, they do not regard glosses as invariably perverting, chiefly because of their recognition of composite authorship.

Coleridge, as might be expected, not only labelled possible notes in scripture but valiantly defended the authenticity of a text peppered with marginal comments. Again and again, he identifies passages of the Bible as having originated in marginal glosses. In the Eichhorn marginalia, he explains the unexpected early use of the name “Jehovah” in Genesis as a note that has worked its way into the scripture: “Had the word, Jehovah, been only annexed marginally on all such occasions, the marginal note would soon be received into the Text” (Alte Testament 25). Coleridge takes it for granted that the note will be transferred into the text over the course of time. Just a few pages later, he suggests that “it would be much easier to consider” the problematic phrase “And the Canaanite was then in the land” (Gen. 12.6), which indicated that the composition of Genesis took place much later than traditionally thought, “as we must do several other annotation-like sentences in the Pentateuch as a Gloss” (Alte Testament 27).

In many other cases in his marginalia, Coleridge identifies notes as having crept into the Bible. John 4.22, he says, “has all the characters of an early marginal gloss that
had slipped into the text" (BIBLE Copy B 107). A notebook entry reiterates the idea: "the verse thus violently, & if I might dare say so, so awkwardly intertruded breathes a spirit so little agreeing with the sublime sentiment of the prophecy in v. 21 and 23rd, or with that of the Gospel generally, that I should not hesitate to consider it as a marginal gloss of a very early date" (N36.55, f52). In his copy of Hartley Coleridge's Worthies, S. T. Coleridge explains problems with the biblical text as a gloss. Hartley argues that 1 John 5.7 was an original part of the epistle, whereas Coleridge considers the words of this verse as a palpable intertrusion, not only utterly impertinent to the Apostle's Reasoning, but inconsistent with it, yea contradictory. They are, doubtless, a marginal Gloss, cited from S1 Augustine, as a comment on the passage by some one who had not comprehended the gist and import of S1 John's argument, & afterwards slipped into the Text. (HARTLEY COLERIDGE 3)93

Material from 2 Kings was appended to the last chapter of Jeremiah as a note, which then was blended in: "The 52nd Chapter was probably written by the Author of the Book of Kings, who resided in Chaldea—& was appended to the Oracles, as a Note, as we now should say" (BIBLE Copy B 69). It was "the received opinion among the Learned that the last Chapter, or at least the latter Half" of one of John's Epistles, "was a Postscript or Note added by John's Successor at Ephesus" (PAULUS 35).

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93 See also CN 4: 5301.
An appendix to the *Statesman's Manual* also identifies a passage of the New Testament as a potential gloss, but not nearly as confidently as the unpublished marginalia do. He hesitates, he tells his audience, to question the genuineness of any passage of the New Testament “unless I could adduce the most conclusive evidence from the earliest manuscripts and commentators, in support of its interpolation: well knowing that such permission has already opened a door to the most fearful license” (*LS*, 57). He would not dare to doubt a passage of Scripture that related a miracle or an article of doctrine, he fervently assures his readers, (though the passage that he questioned in his marginalia on Hartley’s *Worthies*, 1 John 5.7, above, is an important statement of the doctrine of the Trinity) but Matthew 12.10, the verse in question, does not fall under these categories: “I dare permit myself to propose the query, whether there does not exist internal evidence of its being a gloss of some unlearned, though pious, Christian of the first century, which had slipt into the text?” (*LS*, 57). The apologetic manner in which he proposes the theory makes it clear that Coleridge expects his audience to react with disfavour to the suggestion. Because his readers will consider Matthew to have been tainted by the alien note, Coleridge makes its author a naive but pious Christian, who, although he has (inadvertently) contaminated the text, is still constructed as a harmless figure. Through Coleridge’s characterisation of the unknown (to him as well as to the reader) author, the gloss becomes an innocuous impurity, rather than an absolute corruption.
In these instances (and there are many more scattered throughout his writings), Coleridge sees the glosses as "palpable intertrusions" rather than as a compositional method. The more obvious they are, the more they disturb the unity of the text. However, even these textual misfits do not affect the overall worth of the Bible, nor does Coleridge seem to be particularly anxious to remove them, though he does in one case mark a verse "with the bastardizing Asterisk" (N36.79, f69'). "The Contents" of the book of Joshua "were, I doubt not, written and placed in the Archives shortly after the death of Joshua—and at what period they were edited with explanatory Notes, in the present form, is of little Consequence: as neither the Credibility nor the interpretation of the Narratives is at all affected thereby" (EICHHORN Alte Testament 33). The book of Joshua is the book of Joshua: the editorial apparatus, which eventually became part of Joshua as we know it today, does not destroy its integrity as Scriptural text. (He does add, however, at the end of this particular note, "Not so the Life & Diplomacy of Moses"—i.e. the Pentateuch may be affected to a larger degree.) Speaking of the Itala, the Latin translation of the Bible in use until the fourth century, Coleridge declares that its numerous interpolations did not affect "seriously any one doctrine of Christianity or act of Christ" (EICHHORN Neue Testament Copy A 27).

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94 Coleridge also identifies glosses in non-sacred texts. In a notebook entry, he speculates that some of Aristotle's "successive Editors, Compilers and Arrangers" may have added glosses "which other may have afterwards adopted or from oversight have suffered to slip, into the text." He emphasises, however, that the interpolations do not "affect the genuineness of the Metaphysics" (CN, 4: 5133). A couple of "vile" lines in Shakespeare draw a similar comment: "As with the Parenthesis or Gloss slipt into the Text concerning Jonah in the Gospel, we have only to read the passage without it, to see that it never was in it" (SHAKESPEARE Copy A 125).
Coleridge not only asserts the essential integrity of a book invaded by marginal glosses, but in a marginal note to Eichhorn, appropriately enough, he also explicitly compares his own copious marginalia to this common biblical practice: “But why not consider this [Gen. 36.31] as a gloss introduced by the Editors of the Pentateuch, or Preparers of the Copy that was to be layed up in the Temple of Solomon? The authenticity of the Books would be no more compromised by such glosses, than that of the Book before me by this marginal Note of mine” (EICHHORN Alte Testament 28). Coleridge does more here than defend the authenticity of a Bible interpolated with “foreign” comments; he paves the way for his own use of the practice of glossing a book, and having the marginalia integrate themselves with the text. This method of composition, he asserts quite clearly, does not destroy the genuineness of a book. Eichhorn’s Introduction to the Old Testament remains an authentic, though changed, text as the result of Coleridge’s marginalia. Although Coleridge’s glosses have not found their way inside Eichhorn’s text here, as they would in Leighton’s works to form Aids to Reflection, we know from Coleridge’s previous comments that the slippage was an almost inevitable event. Indeed, Coleridge identifies this “intertrusion” as having taken place in one of his own printed texts, the Friend, where he says that the printer blended material intended for a note into the main work (1: 428).

Like Michaelis and Eichhorn, Coleridge also believed that multiple versions of the Gospels were formed through an ongoing process of marginal annotation. This process was not only inevitable, but “natural”: 
what was to prevent the Possessors of a Copy of either, from annexing to it, or inserting marginally, sometimes an annotation stating some text of the Law or Prophets, as in the opinion of the Reader fulfilled—or where some Passage of the Prophets previously interpreted of the Messiah had no event corresponding thereto, and the Possessor of the Copy had heard some tradition, supplying this defect, what more natural than so to do! (N33.13, f114v)

Other relevant passages are added, and perceived gaps filled with multiple readers’ own knowledge. The result of this compositional process is a veritable explosion in the versions of Gospels:

the number [of Gospels] is necessarily inascertainable—since every fresh Copy of a Gospel might by additions & insertions at the will of the Owner of the Copy become another Gospel, & if it happened to be the property of a Bishop or Presbyter, or of a whole Congregation, it would have a new name, borrowed from the Church/as the Gospel according to the Hebrews, according to the Nazareans, according to the Egyptians, &c &c.—— (N35.3, f4v-f5)

The transformative force of marginalia is apparent here, as the additions make it “another Gospel,” called by a different name.
Although *Aids to Reflection* is the most obvious work of Coleridge’s that uses the interpolation of marginalia as a compositional technique, he regularly blends commentary on another’s work together with the actual text to create a document comprised of what Christensen calls “marginal exegesis” (105) on a “body of thought”—“a sustaining text that he can cover with marginalia: notes, interpolations, and revisions” (104). Of course, Coleridge was always proposing traditional biblical commentaries—on the Gospel of John, for example, “collating the *Word* of the Evangelist with the Christ crucified of St Paul” (*CL*, 4: 589). In two other letters from 1815, Coleridge mentions an interesting, ultimately unfulfilled project, related to this method of composition: “a series of Odes on the different Sentences of the Lord’s Prayer” (*CL*, 4: 546). He explains what he means in more detail to Thomas A. Methuen: “I hope soon to present...a series of Odes and Meditations, in different metres, on each clause of the Lord’s Prayer: as the first, on the word *Our*: the second, on *Our Father*: the third, on ‘which *art*—in the Heaven,’ &c.” (*CL*, 4: 583). Coleridge does not write any “Odes,” but he does write a loose “Meditation” upon the prayer in his marginalia on Grew:

Almighty, God—our Father, who art in Heaven! who fillest Heaven and Earth, yea, Heaven & the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain—who eminently art, when Spirits conformed to thy will live in the beatific vision of thy presence—Hallowed—and by us, who look toward thee thro’ the Veil of flesh with fear & with thanksgiving—hallowed be thy NAME/ even the Name which above all

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95 Coleridge also mentions the commentary in an October 7, 1815 letter to Daniel Stuart.
names THOU hast glorified even as thyself, Jehovah, the Word Incarnate… (Grew 43)

The note continues until “thy Will may be done on earth as it is in Heaven,” with the commentary growing ever more profuse in proportion to the prayer. Although this text did not start off as marginalia proper to the Lord’s Prayer, nonetheless, this meditation written on a blank leaf of Grew’s Cosmologia Sacra has interpolated itself into the prayer in the same way that a gloss might have. Coleridge has taken a text, here extremely well known, and fleshed it out with his interspersed commentary.96

Another planned composition is described in a late (1832) letter to H. F. Cary:

I have a thought, by way of a light prelude, a sort of unstiffening of my long dormant joints & muscles, to give a reprint, as nearly as possible except in quality of the paper a fac Simile of John Asgill’s Tracts, with a Life & Copious Notes—to which I would affix Postilla et Marginalia—i.e. my MSS Notes, blank leaf & marginal, on Southey’s Life of Wesley, and sundry other Works. (CL, 6: 901)

As we shall see in the next chapter, the description of the publication of Asgill’s tracts, with a biography and notes, sounds very much like the initial description of the work that became Aids to Reflection. In this planned work, however, the role of Coleridge’s marginalia would be even more vital. Part of the text would be dedicated to “Postilla”—a series of marginal comments, usually on Scripture, which often formed the basis of a sermon—“et Marginalia.”

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96 See also the end of BROOKE 14 for a similar expansion of the Lord’s Prayer.
Coleridge employed his marginalia in many of his actual, as well as his potential works. He annotated copies of Shakespeare and Jonson to prepare for his 1808-09 and 1818-19 literary lectures. As a set of marginalia, the notes for the later lectures (preserved in copies C and D of the Shakespeare marginalia) are more analytical and less reactive. They also contain his directions to himself on content. “Tell the story of the Portrait that frightened every one—“ (SHAKESPEARE Copy D 27). “Dwell o[n] the immediacy of this Conversat[i]on with the Assassin, & the Ghost of Banquo in Macbeth’s dreadfully agitated State of Mind & Body—Now he at once appeals to & avails himself of popular superstition/” (SHAKESPEARE Copy C 37). My favourite, however, is “This explai[n] as the Genius of the moment perm[its]” (SHAKESPEARE Copy C 25). These notes do fall more under the umbrella of critical annotation than that of a text transformed by marginalia. However, they do show how second-nature the writing of marginalia had become to Coleridge, in that he jotted his lecture notes on the books, rather than on a separate slip of paper. The Tennemann marginalia were also crucial to the Philosophical Lectures.

The only marginalia of Coleridge’s to be published separately as marginalia in his lifetime appeared in Blackwood’s Magazine under the title “The Character of Sir Thomas Browne as a Writer.”97 The excerpt is a mini-essay which had been written in the front fly-leaf of an edition of Browne’s Works for the benefit of Sara Hutchinson.

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97 See the Annex at the end of the marginalia on Sir Thomas Browne, CM 1. Coleridge also published a few notes identified as marginalia within Aids to Reflection and Church and State. See the editor’s introduction in CM 1, clxi.
Unfortunately, for our purposes at least, the note is an overall summary of Browne, not responding to a specific passage, and so does not exhibit any of the "typical" characteristics of marginalia (mobility, duality, transformative qualities, etc.). Other marginalia were "hidden" in Coleridge’s published works, most notably Aids to Reflection, which will be analysed in the next chapter. In addition to the overall technique of marginal exegesis in the Biographia, Coleridge also inserted some of his marginalia on Maass, an author whose work he borrowed in the text. Although "embedded" marginalia do not play a large role in these works, the texts are fraught with issues that are germane to a marginalised text, such as the propriety of blending other voices into a textual collaboration.

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People have argued for centuries over whether or not annotation, separate from the main text or not, is a helpful supplement or a "perversion," to use David Pirie's comment about the marginal gloss in the "Rime of the Ancient Mariner." The eleventh-century interest in "marginal or interlinear glosses" to the Bible (such as the glossa ordinaria) was to the "detriment of concern for textual purity" (46), according to Geddes MacGregor. In other words, glosses, even when not blended into the text, somehow sully

98 Jerome McGann quotes Pirie in The Beauty of Inflections, 139.
its purity, because they provide other voices to challenge and supplement the text, and always have the potential to incorporate themselves in it.

Annotation, whether marginal or not, may be seditious because it argues a theologically political position. Spinoza attacks the way in which commentary has become more important than scripture:

Ambition and unscrupulousness have waxed so powerful, that religion is thought to consist, not so much in respecting the writings of the Holy Ghost, as in defending human commentaries, so that religion is no longer identified with charity, but with spreading discord and propagating insensate hatred disguised under the name of zeal for the Lord, and eager ardour. (98-99)

Religion has lost sight of its charitable goal and instead uses Christianity merely to serve its own political ends. In other words, the secondary discourse of annotation makes itself primary, transforming and distorting Scripture. Michaelis, too, sees the defence of sectarian doctrine leading to prejudiced annotation, in this case marginal: “blinded by prejudice, and bound by the fetters of a theological system, [the true believer] finds his favourite doctrine in every line; he expounds therefore not by reason, but by system; his explanations acquire the form of marginal notes, and these marginal notes are at length obtruded on the text” (1: 324). Michaelis makes the progression seem inevitable: prejudice leads to a biased reading, explication of this overly systematic reading leads to marginal notes, which then soil the immaculate text.
Evelyn Tribble, in her *Margins and Marginality*, discusses the Protestant and Catholic views of annotation during the Renaissance: “Reformist rhetoric first stressed the self-interpreting nature of Scripture, figuring the medieval gloss as an elaborate system of interference with the ‘plain’ meaning of the text” (7). Scripture was understandable, able to be interpreted without the aid of an authoritative gloss. “Yet,” Tribble goes on to point out, “this theory of transparency is belied by the Reformist practice of including doctrinal marginal notes, whose inflammatory nature excited at least as much attention as the translations themselves” (Tribble, 7).

But although there is an apparent “tension...between the alleged plainness or transparency of the text and the need for interpretative additions” (Tribble, 16), Reformers such as William Fulke do distinguish between corrupting Catholic and informative (though arguably political) Protestant annotation. The full title of his “counteredition” of the Rheims New Testament, which had been translated out of Latin by the English Roman Catholic seminary in that city, and which was included in Fulke’s text, makes clear his particular dislike of the glosses: *The Text of the New Testament of Jesus Christ, translated out of the vulgar Latine by the Papists of the traiterous Seminarie at Rhemes. With Arguments of Bookes, Chapters, and Annotations, pretending to discover the corruptions of divers translations, and to clear the controversies of these days. Whereunto is added the Translation out of the Original Greek, commonly used in the Church of England, with a Confutation of all such Arguments, Glosses, and Annotations, as Containe Manifest impietie, of heresie, treason, and slander, against the...*
Catholike Church of God, and the true teachers thereof, or the Translations used in the Church of England: Both by auctoritie of the holy Scriptures, and by the testimonie of the ancient fathers. The preface of the Text of the New Testament rails against the “hereticall annotations” (Bv) of the Rheims edition, which has “indevored to corrupt the sense of the new testament...with hereticall notes” (1-2). The Holy Bible, Fulke asserts, has been “poisoned...with never so hereticall and blasphemous Annotations” (AΑ).

Indeed, Fulke feels that he must “confut[e] these annotations” in order to “lay open and overthrowe” a “part of whole impietie against the Lorde, his worde, his Church, and your Majestie his annointed” (Fulke, “Text,” 3). This rhetoric, though vehement, is to be expected, given the heat of the controversy, but since Fulke annotates the Catholic annotations within their translation, how can he defend his practice?

The clue to Fulke’s distinction between a Catholic and Protestant practice is to be found in his description of the notes of other Reformers: “The gloses, prayers, and confessions [of Calvin and his followers], though they be printed, and bound in the same volume with the Bible, yet they be not priviledged & auctorised to be so joyned with y′ Bible, as part of it” (Fulke, “Text,” Preface Bv). Although the annotations of Calvin are physically joined to his edition of the Bible, they are still not “part” of it. In other words, Fulke seems to say, the notes do not set themselves up as having the same authority as the

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99 Although Tribble’s discussion of this controversy is evocative, as is much of Margins and Marginality, it is also surprisingly short (43-51), considering the richness of Fulke’s preface alone in its view of annotation. The term “counteredition” to describe Fulke’s work comes from this section.

100 Tribble points out the contradiction between arguing against elaborate glosses while at the same time glossing the text, but only moves this far forward in her argument. She does not observe that Fulke actually makes a distinction between his notes and the Catholic ones.
scripture (they are not “auctorised to be so joyned” with it), as the Catholic annotations, by implication, do. In the Roman Catholic text, “human commentaries are accepted as divine records” (Spinoza, 8)—a situation which Spinoza deplores. Fulke implies that glosses, no matter how politically or theologically controversial, are acceptable, as long as they remain distinguished in some way from the main text of the Bible. When marginal interpretation becomes more important than its primary text, or when the demarcation between inspired and human text is lost—in short, when the text becomes a textual collaboration between God and man—glosses become the corrupting influence they are in the Rheims New Testament. By the time the King James version of the Bible was published, a few decades later, glossing was seen as so subversive that biblical translators were given these instructions: “No marginal notes at all to be affixed, but only for the explanation of the Hebrew and Greek words which cannot without some circumlocution so briefly and fitly be expressed in the text…” (quoted in Prickett, Origins, 84). Whether as a forum for political debate that distracts from or a more authoritative voice that diminishes the main text, the mobile and collaborative gloss always threatens.
Glosses can be sneaky creatures, almost impossible to detect when fused with another work. Michaelis mentions how popular the identification of glosses has become among biblical critics:

No source of various readings is so productive as the present, and none so frequently mentioned by the critics: but as their opinions are widely different, and what appears a manifest scholion to some, is taken by others for the genuine reading, it may be useful to enumerate some of the principal examples, which I have collected since the publication of the third edition of this work. (Michaelis, 1: 269)

While critics love to explain a moment in scripture that does not accord with the theology or theory they are arguing as a “manifest scholion,” a difficulty exists: every person, it seems, has a different opinion on what is a gloss, and what is part of the authentic text. After all, the blended text presents itself as a unified whole, with only subtle and easily misread internal indicators of what might have originated in the margins. Think of how difficult it would be to differentiate between Coleridge’s interspersed annotation and the biblical words in the Grew marginalia if we did not already know the Lord’s Prayer.\footnote{See above, page 146.}

To guide the reader, Michaelis presents a list of the “principal examples” he has collected: Mark 2.14, Mark 8.24, Luke 23.45, Acts 1.12, Rom 5.18, Rom 8.28, Rom
10.1, 1 Cor. 16.2, 2 Cor. 8.4, 1 Pet. 2.13, 1 John 2.27, 1 John 4.3. He then proceeds to invite readers to perform their own textual archaeology and to detect others (1: 269).

Although Coleridge defended the identification of glosses (and practised the technique himself, as we have seen in the examples from the marginalia), he did realise the dangers that a free-for-all detection, such as Michaelis was inviting, would pose. In the Statesman's Manual, where Coleridge is obviously nervous about appearing to support a “radical” technique of biblical analysis, he does tell his readers that he recognises its hazards. “[S]uch permission,” he primly states, “has already opened a door to the most fearful license. It is indeed, in its consequences, no less than an assumed right of picking and chusing our religion out of the Scriptures” (LS, 57). The “license” which Coleridge rightly fears is the freedom to call any part of scripture an interpolated, and therefore inauthentic, gloss. Any passage may be dismissed, and biblical interpretation has the potential to become a farce. As James Nohrnberg points out (discussing the Bible and Finnegans Wake), “virtually anything in a text that is isolated for particular scrutiny will present itself as a gloss upon some other part of the text”; nonetheless, “one has to speak as if we can distinguish the text from the glosses, which are typically identified as instances of inconsonant specification, parenthetical or interpolated comment, internal but nonetheless extracontextual reference, overdetermined prose discourse, editorial cross-referencing, and the like” (Nohrnberg, 13). Can we really distinguish the two, though, or are the borders so blended that even a rigorous textual
archaeology will be at best a speculative enterprise? The opinions of the critics as to what is a gloss and what is not, Michaelis has pointed out, "are widely different" (1: 269).

In a blended text, the problem arises of where to draw the line. What do we accept and what do we reject? A critic wishing to get rid of a passage because it does not accord with the theological position he is arguing does so by making its authorship suspect. Marginalia, either the brief gloss or the larger composition, question the single-author focus even more strongly than does the redactor-author discussed in the first two chapters. After all, a gloss that has incorporated itself is slyer and more anonymous than a text that has been redacted. As well, a manuscript created from layers upon layers of marginalia often cannot project the comforting figure of an editor who has some control of the manuscript, though he or she may combine texts in ways that are themselves subversive to the one-author model. Marginalia which "slip in" through the process of transcription constitute an inadvertent composite which lacks a figure to whom we may assign authorial control. Rather than appropriating a text or texts, as an author may do, marginalia instead invade a text and erase, almost accidentally and without conscious human volition, the demarcation between works composed by different writers: authorship disappears, replaced by truly anonymous collaboration.

Coleridge supports the authenticity of a text that almost "creates" itself out of a long process of communal glossing and subsequent transcription. Again we must return to his belief that the content of a text, rather than its authorship, is the key to its authenticity. After all, if any passage may be dismissed from scripture because a critic
argues it is an anonymous later gloss, and therefore inauthentic, the whole Bible may be dismissed piecemeal, since the difficulty in delineating glosses means that any passage can be considered a marginal note. As Coleridge says in the Statesman’s Manual, the dismissal of presumed glosses is “no less than an assumed right of picking and chusing our religion out of the Scriptures” (LS, 57). In a sense, once the issue of glossing has been raised, Coleridge must allow the multiple-author model, which accepts a text regardless of authorship, or risk having the Bible picked apart.

The more accepting of multiple authorship one is, the less perverting marginalia seem. The Higher Critics, then, could see the slippage of glosses as both a source of false readings and a valid, if anonymous, compositional process, because they viewed the Bible as a composite document. Coleridge follows their lead, delineating some glosses as later, perhaps less authentic, passages, but still accepting the composite nature of the material as creating a “genuine” text. But in a society preoccupied with the ownership of texts, as ours is and Coleridge’s was beginning to be, the invasion of a work by marginalia will always be somewhat indecent, since it effaces the boundaries of property and propriety. What do we do when authors are anonymous? Is it advisable or even possible to purify the text? It is at this critical point that we must come to terms with collaboration.
In the case of Coleridge’s works, we do have the (somewhat) comforting figure of one annotator upon whom we can project authorial intentions, though his practices may make us question our ideas of authorship. But even without the issues of anonymity and multiple collaborators, the question of interpretation, particularly marginal, is still vexed, as Coleridge himself realised. He viewed the Laudites as twisting “the plain simple moral & common-sense admonitions of Paul,” and suggests sarcastically that “these Divines” might have “possessed an Autograph of the Apostles, interlined & the blanks filled up, with Lemon-Juice, which by the fire of inspiration they had brought out” (CN, 4: 5067). The fire of their supposed “inspiration” brings out interlinear glosses written in an invisible ink which only the Laudites can see. These seventeenth-century interpreters have written their own commentary into Scripture, changing and distorting its “plain” meanings. An epigraph to an essay in the Friend is also evocative. The passage is Coleridge’s translation of a letter of Rudolph von Langen:

But how are we to guard against the herd of promiscuous Readers? Can we bid our books be silent in the presence of the unworthy?...

To have written innocently, and for wise purposes, is all that can be required of us: the event lies with the Reader. I purchased lately Cicero’s work, de officiis, which I had always considered as almost worthy of a Christian. To my suprise it had become a most flagrant libel. Nay! but how?—Some one, I know not who, out of the fruitfulness of his own malignity had filled all the margins and other blank spaces with annotations—a true superfoetation of
examples, that is, of false and slanderous tales! In like manner, the slave of impure desires will turn the pages of Cato, not to say, Scripture itself, into occasions and excitements of wanton imaginations. There is no wind but feeds a volcano, no work but feeds and fans a combustible mind. (*Friend*, 1: 51-52)

This is annotation from the indignant viewpoint of the original author. The “herd of promiscuous Readers” may transform a book any way they like. The interpreter’s creativity—here “the fruitfulness of his own malignity”—may change the work into a richer, more fertile text, or into “a most flagrant libel.” Scripture may become the “occasions and excitements of wanton imaginations.”

Though not all of Coleridge’s works contain his marginalia, and only *Aids to Reflection* uses them in any detail, the issues involved in a marginalised text are germane to all Coleridge’s textual collaborations. He had already annotated a large majority of the texts that he borrowed for use in his own works, indicating, as Christensen has noted, a strong relationship between Coleridge’s marginalia and his “marginal exegesis.” Marginalia, though they change the text they comment on, are viewed as we do criticism or commentary—an interesting supplement—as long as they remain separate. However, their tendency to incorporate themselves with the original text leads us to questions on how we view composite collaborations and anonymous texts. Coleridge’s marginalia are acceptable in terms of literary propriety, but is *Aids to Reflection*? The *Biographia*? Can we overlook questions of appropriation to celebrate the richness and diversity of opinion that a textual collaboration brings? In the end, how different is the transformation that
the text undergoes as a result of critical annotation from the changes caused by the formation of a composite text?
Chapter Four

“A Motley Collection”: *Aids to Reflection* and Biblical Form

To say that the form of *Aids to Reflection* was simply unusual or rather peculiar would be a kindness. Contemporary critics were not so generous, and called the work in general “deplorably unreadable.” An unsigned review in the *British Critic*, October 1826, scathingly described how the work evolved from its original plan of an edition of Archbishop Robert Leighton to its final form:

by degrees the character and the objects of the work were changed. The archbishop, who had entered as a principal, soon became only an auxiliary. Other authors were permitted to dispute the place with him; and above all, the reflections of the editor himself, fermented by the spirit of the critical philosophy, swelled to such a magnitude as to become the dominant feature of the whole; and at last, instead of the beauties of Leighton, there came out a motley collection, consisting of aphorisms, introductions, and sequels to, and commentaries upon aphorisms, with notes indifferently upon them all; which after being arranged in order, as prudential, moral, and spiritual, have been ushered into the world under

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the imposing title of *Aids to Reflection*. (J.R. de J. Jackson, *Critical Heritage*, 1:

488)

This portrayal of the text, though negative, is nonetheless accurate; the work is a

"collection...of aphorisms, introductions, and sequels to, and commentaries upon

aphorisms, with notes indifferently upon them all." Rather than seeing *Aids to Reflection*

as a "motley collection," however, I would argue that it developed from a selection of

Leighton's works into a textual collaboration of the sort that Coleridge knew from the

Higher Criticism's descriptions of the Bible. As a collaboration, rather than an artless

patchwork, Coleridge's commentary—whether the marginalia on Leighton and other

authors used in the work, or the revisionary "glosses" which slipped interlinearly into the

source texts—became an integral part of the text. In spite of initial negative reactions

among contemporary critics, the work was enormously influential in England and

America during the nineteenth century. Coleridge's update of Leighton and his fellow

seventeenth-century theologians provided the reader with the religious wisdom of two

ages in one collaborative volume, and remains a profound and deeply sincere work. In

this chapter, I will examine the development and form of *Aids to Reflection* as well as the

minute particulars of the composite text, in order to demonstrate its essentially biblical

structure.

††††
Aids to Reflection had a long and peculiar gestation, undergoing such significant alterations in the time from conception to publication as would constitute a "revolution" in Coleridge's "plan and object" (AR, 534).\(^{103}\) Always conscious of the effect his work might have on an often hostile critical audience, Coleridge apologised in his advertisement to the 1825 edition for the confusion that "several passages" in the "introductory portion" might cause and went on to explain the "Changes it has undergone during its immature and embryonic state" (AR, 533).\(^{104}\) The work, he explained, "was proposed and begun as a mere Selection from the Writings of Archbishop Leighton...with a few notes and a biographical preface by the Selector" (AR, 533). The initial proposal, in a January 18, 1822 letter to John Murray, described the "peculiar character" and spirit of Leighton's writings, praising him as a thinker who "mak[es] and leav[es] a deep impression on Readers of all classes" (CL, 5: 198)—a trait, one would think, sure to impress a publisher interested in marketing the book to buyers "of all classes." Coleridge suggested a volume of "Beauties," a form which selected the best short passages from a writer, combined with a life of Leighton, to replace what he felt were the less-than-adequate biographies already published, and "a biographical and critical Introduction or Preface, and Notes" (CL, 5: 200). Coleridge's role, then, was to be the standard one of an editor: introduction and explanatory notes.

\(^{103}\) John Beer, in his comprehensive introduction to Aids to Reflection, has traced the various stages in the development of both its form and ideas. I am deeply indebted throughout this chapter to him, and most particularly to his footnotes tracing Coleridge's manifold sources. My sketch of the evolution of AR, while bearing some resemblance to that section of Beer's introduction, nonetheless has quite a different focus, as I am concerned with tracing the development of Coleridge's role from editor to author, and the transformation of the text from a selection of Leighton to a collaborative text given Coleridge's name.

\(^{104}\) The entire advertisement is contained in Appendix G of Beer's edition (AR, 533-534), along with other materials deleted from the 1825 edition for the 1831 version.
Murray, in turn, offered Coleridge a copy of the four-volume 1820 reprint of Jerment's 1805-08 edition,105 which Coleridge gladly accepted. His initial plan was to "send back [the volumes] with the passages marked, and with a sufficient numeration of the order in which I intend them to stand, and specimens of the Headings" (CL, 5: 205). Murray could then get an idea of the tone and length of the volume. Coleridge also suggested "a sort of appendix, some short biographical and critical notice of that every way interesting class of Writers, before and immediately following Thomas à Kempis..." (CL, 5: 205)—the first hint that his role might involve considerably more composition than editing and that the volume would, in fact, expand beyond Leighton into a larger arena.106

Without warning, Murray got cold feet. About eighteen months after the initial proposal, Coleridge complained to Tulk,

On the Day, I dined with you, I had called in Albermarle Street with the Volumes of Archbishop Leighton's Works, with the several passages, I had considered as the characteristic Beauties of his Writings, marked in the side Margins, and my own Notes in the blank space at the top and bottom of the Page—and having waited an hour or so & the young Gentleman in attendance informing [me] that there was no chance of Mr Murray's coming for that day, I wrote a few lines stating the proposed title, and scheme of the little Volume... (CL, 5: 282)

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105 LEIGHTON Copy C in CM 3. Coleridge, of course, had access to Gillman's 1819 reprint of Middleton's 1805 edition (LEIGHTON Copy B), but did not think it would "be proper to use it as such" (CL, 5: 205).

106 The finished Aids to Reflection did not use Thomas à Kempis or any other fifteenth-century author, but employed exclusively writers of Leighton's period, such as Taylor, Hooker, and More. The earliest author used is Luther.
Not surprisingly after this cold reception, Murray sent him a note a few days later, rejecting the proposal for a reason which, Coleridge rightly grumbled, he “knew as well when the Proposal was first made by me & to a certain degree encouraged by him—namely the existence of a Reprint of Leighton’s Works” (CL, 5: 282). As Coleridge pointed out later in this letter, Murray must have known about the reprint since the publisher sent him a copy of it “for the purpose of selecting from it” (CL, 5: 282).

Leaving Coleridge’s disappointment and Murray’s mysterious rejection aside, we can see in this letter the way Coleridge was beginning to compose and assemble the volume by using his everyday practice of marking passages “in the side Margins” and writing his “own Notes in the blank space at the top and bottom of the Page” (CL, 5: 282). Given the amount of his commentary contained in the Leighton works, Coleridge’s notes would already have been a substantial contribution, both in size and content, to the planned “edition.”

Not long discouraged, Coleridge sent a letter on August 8, 1823, to Taylor and Hessey, another publishing firm with whom he hoped to have more luck. As he had in the initial letter to Murray, he talked of the potential problems of the “Beauties” form and his reassurances that they would be solved. By this time, however, Coleridge had what would be the final title, “Aids to Reflection,” and had also decided on grouping the extracts under three headings: “1. Philosophical and Miscellaneous. 2. Moral and Prudential. 3. Spiritual” (CL, 5: 290), designations somewhat different from their final
form. Coleridge again suggested sending round his annotated volume of Leighton for the publishers’ perusal.

Taylor and Hessey promptly accepted his offer.\(^{107}\) Coleridge began inquiries about the acceptable length of the portion of his “original” work, the life of Leighton, and requested the loan of Laud’s works and books by and about Leighton’s controversial father.\(^{108}\) By September 9th, 1823, Coleridge’s contribution was getting larger; the life of Leighton was optimistically proposed to occupy a full half of the volume of beauties (\(CL, 5: 300\)). Approximately two months later, in early November, Coleridge appeared to be well into the project, having already received some proofs, and enclosed manuscript material. He promised that “books, corrected proofs, and all that belongs to the Work, the Essay on the Life, Character, & Times of Leighton” (\(CL, 5: 305\)) would be sent by coach a few days later. The printer, then, was working from a combination of Coleridge’s handwritten slips of paper and marked, annotated books.

Shortly thereafter, Coleridge ran into an aesthetic snag. The work that had been planned as selections with a few explanatory notes was rapidly becoming as much Coleridge as Leighton. Rather than presenting excerpts, properly attributed to Leighton’s works, and standard format footnotes, the large amount of commentary seemed to demand that the Coleridge material be intermixed on the page with the Leighton. This format brought the “editor” out of the bottom margins where, traditionally, he or she

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\(^{107}\) Coleridge’s reply to their offer was dated August 16th, only eight days after his initial proposal.

\(^{108}\) A strong, even radical Scottish Presbyterian, Alexander Leighton preached for a number of years in England. After publishing the anti-Episcopal \textit{Sion’s Plea against Prelacy}, he was punished severely.
lurked, and placed him or her on the page as an equal with the supposed author, Leighton. The fact that even the first proofs were formatted with Coleridge’s contribution *not* in the margins, but as part of the main text suggests that he was already considering himself more as a co-author than an editor.

Originally, as John Beer explains in pages lxix-lxvi of his Introduction, the proofs had been set up without the division between aphorism and comment that exists in the final version. The two pages of the first proof and the manuscript material that Beer includes in his edition show “continuous text” (*AR*, 435), with the Leighton matter demarcated by quotation marks and attributed by volume and page numbers. The content of Coleridge’s own contribution in these early fragments is much the same as in the printed edition, but several examples reveal that what would later become numbered aphorism and comment was originally uninterrupted. Faced in the first proofs with “the disorderly and heterogeneous appearance which the Selections intermixed with my own comments &c would have,” Coleridge was forced to rethink the plan of the volume, starting with the layout. As part of the “rifacciamento,” he tentatively submitted “printing the Aphorisms *numerically* with interspace” (*CL*, 5: 306) and labelling them as “L.” (Leighton), “E.” (Editor), or “L.E.,” in the case of those “in which part only is Leighton’s” (*CL*, 5: 307), a plan which was adopted for the 1825 edition.

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109 See Appendix B, “Manuscripts and an Early Proof,” in *AR*, with the illustration of the proof between pages 456 and 457. Beer also provides a brief introduction which discusses the material in the appendix, page 435.
This concern with the work’s reading in a disconnected or “disorderly and heterogeneous” way went back to Coleridge’s reservations about the original form of “beauties.” Coleridge insisted to Murray that, usually, “‘Beauties’...are objectionable works—injurious to the original Author, as disorganizing his productions—pulling to pieces the well-wrought Crown of his glory to pick out the shining stones—and injurious to the Reader, by indulging the taste for unconnected & for that reason unretained single Thoughts...” (CL, 5: 200).110 If these beauties (which were at least excerpts from the same author) were disjointed, then it would seem that passages thrown together from two different authors, Leighton and Coleridge, would be worse. But even in the earliest plan for the beauties, Coleridge envisaged his selection as actually unifying Leighton’s work. As a verse-by-verse commentary on the first epistle of Peter, Leighton’s most famous book was by “nature and necessity” presented in an “un- or rather dis-connected manner” (CL, 5: 290); its “abrupt transitions from one subject to other and wholly different, and...continual interruptions of the thread of Interest as well as of Thought” (CL, 5: 290) therefore prevented readers from fully appreciating Leighton’s many insights.

Coleridge’s idea was to give these disconnected passages “a connection or at least a propriety of sequency” (CL, 5: 200) by arranging “with the necessary additions, or completions, & the occasional substitutions of a word or phrase when the words in the original have acquired...a mean or ludicrous sense” (CL, 5: 290). These “additions,”

110 See also his initial letter to Taylor and Hessey, which talks of his “objection to ‘Beauties’ of this or that writer, taken as a general Rule,” comparing the practice of excerpting them to “taking out the Lights of a Titian or a Correggio & presenting them apart from the Shades...considered as a specimen of the Picture” (CL, 5: 289).
perhaps stimulated by Coleridge’s habit of supplementing the original text in its margins, soon generated a substantial amount of material not functioning as connective and organisational, but asserting itself in its own right. Though the original plan was to make Leighton’s text more unified by dint of careful arrangement, *Aids to Reflection* was turning out to be even more “disorderly and heterogeneous,” precisely because of the Coleridge contribution. Still, Coleridge’s plan for the Leighton material shows him doing more than just merely editing a selection; instead, his goal is to remake the work to find in it a unity which it lacks without this “editorial” intervention.

Coleridge’s solution for the format of his book, dividing the work into numbered aphorisms and comments, gave a more recognisable form to its piecemeal structure, and also tied the work more strongly to its origins as Leighton’s text with Coleridge’s marginalia as commentary. Finally abandoning the idea of publishing only “beauties,” Coleridge now started, in the midst of its publication, to revise *Aids to Reflection*. Coleridge first began a revision of the proofs already set up, apparently dividing the printed text into numbered units, as described in his letter to Hessey.¹¹¹ Leighton’s contributions were no longer demarcated by quotation marks and identified by volume and page number, but simply designated by “LEIGHTON.” By what Griggs estimates to be January 1824, Coleridge wrote Hessey, “God be praised! I have here inclosed the last of the manifoldly and intricately altered and augmented Proofs” (*CL*, 5: 323). (Presumably he was referring to the detailed changes necessitated by the switch in format.)

¹¹¹ Again, pages lx1 to lxvi of Beer’s Introduction provide a detailed guide to the chronology of Coleridge’s re-working the first proofs.
The life of Leighton, which originally was to be Coleridge's main contribution, was now abandoned. Although Coleridge wrote very optimistically about its progress and anticipated completion, judging at one point that it might comprise half of the volume, he appeared to have trouble finishing the job. Suffering from health problems and upset at Mrs. Gillman's injury in a fall, he wrote to Hessey in December 1823 that he could not at this time send him "the biographical Essay" promised in early November, "being really unable to put the different Parts together..." (CL, 5: 320). Shortly thereafter, he gave up the idea of the life altogether, citing "prudent motives" in his letter to George Skinner in March, 1824: "the Prudence is public as well as private, and has the dislike of even appearing to cast a weight into the Dissenter scale for one source" (CL, 5: 345). The materials for the "Life" in the Shorter Works and Fragments of the Collected Coleridge edition 112 contain little or no direct discussion of Leighton, but plenty about the religious and political debates of the time. Therefore, it seems that the "Life" would have been closer to a history of the controversies of the Scottish Established Church and the Presbytery, making Coleridge's reservations about publishing it more meaningful than if it had been strictly a biography of Leighton.

With the elimination of what had promised to be a large part of Aids to Reflection, it is not surprising, then, that Coleridge began speaking of his "work growing and new-forming itself under my hand" (CL, 5: 333). The work, to be published near the end of May 1825, was now winding up. On May 10, 1825, Coleridge sent Hessey two mottoes

112 See "Commentary on Books of Church History" (2: 1045-1072) and "Drafts of the 'Apology for the Life of Archbishop Leighton'" (2: 1074-1079).
for the opening, one of which seemed strangely appropriate, given the way the text was put together—"So a soul, collecting all things to itself, and itself gathering itself together, most easily and surely becomes blessed"—and a few days later requested his books, used by the compositor in setting up the copy, returned. At this completion of the long and sustained process, in May 1825, Coleridge wrote to Mrs. George Frere, "Thank God! I was, when Bartlet sent up your note, putting down the last sentence of the long-lingering "Aids to Reflection" which was to have been a small volume of Selections from Archbishop Leighton with a few notes by S.T.C. and which has ended in a few pages of Leighton and a large Volume by S.T.C.—" (CL, 5: 431). When compared to its original conception, Coleridge's volume, as he describes in the 1825 Advertisement, had indeed become a "changeling" (AR, 534).

By the end of 1828, Coleridge was beginning to make noises about re-publishing "the Aids to Reflection, considerably improved" (CL, 6: 773). A couple of months later, Coleridge claimed to be almost ready "to send to the Press three works," one of which is "an almost entire Rinfacciamento [sic], or Re-construction of the Aids to Reflection" (CL, 6: 781). By February 20, 1829, ill health had "compelled [him] to suspend the task" of reworking it (CL, 6: 786). Henry Nelson Coleridge seems to have agreed to take over the revision and correction of proofs by the fall of that year (CL, 6: 819), and in that same letter, Coleridge was mentioning transferring the publication of the second edition to Hurst, Chance, and Company, his publishers for On the Constitution of Church and State.

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113 Altered from Marinus De vita Procli, translated from the Greek (AR, 4, n1).
(AR, cxxx). He had managed to make this transfer at least by the time of his letter to
Thomas Hurst, August 23, 1830, where in a postscript he promises him the new edition,
revised or not:

You may if you like & continue to wish it have the first half of the Aids to
Reflection, on the understood condition that you shall have the second as soon as
it is actually required, whether I have or have not made the additions or rather
substitutions which I meditate, and which consisting almost wholly of
transcription from MSS, my health only has prevented—This is the best
compromise that in the present uncertainty and restiveness of my Beast-body I
can make between my desire to improve the Book and my anxiety not to worry or
disappoint you or your Printer. (CL, 6: 845)

The next letter mentioning the changes for the 1831 edition was to Henry Nelson
Coleridge, who was attempting to correct the copy passed on to him. In his discussion of
this letter, Beer mentions that “it is clear that in that copy…he had deleted all the
headings that assigned the authorship to Leighton, other authors, or himself” (AR, cxxxi),
in part perhaps because of his discomfort with the term “Editor” left over from the early
conception of the original work, which he had discussed in the 1825 Advertisement.\textsuperscript{114}
H. N. C. had obviously raised some problems that the removal would cause, suggesting,
it appears, that the references to Leighton in the text would now be puzzling, and perhaps

\textsuperscript{114} I discuss Coleridge's removal of the attributions in detail, below, page 182.
hinting that Coleridge’s confiscation of Leighton’s text might not be entirely legitimate.

Coleridge responded to his concerns:

As to your questions, I am somewhat puzzled for an answer, not having the Corrected Copy. The best that suggests itself to my mind, is to substitute “Leighton” for “the Arch-bishop,” in the few instances of formal quotation—: and to leave all the rest to be explained in the preface—For my object, God knows! being to convey what appeared to me truths of infinite concernment, I thought neither of Leighton nor of myself—but simply of how it was most likely they should be rendered intelligible and impressive—The consequence of this was, that in so many aphorisms, taken in the main, from Leighton, I had so modified them, that a contra-distinction of these from my own was deceptive.—In the preface, I shall state plainly the Leightonian Origin & still remain[ing] ingrediency—and I assure you, that I have quite confidence enough in your taste & judgement to give you a Chart Blanch for any amendments in the style— (CL, 6: 848-49)

In about June 1831, the new edition was published, without the authorial designations and without the preface attributing part of the work to Leighton.

Aids to Reflection is made up of five main sections of aphorisms, the Introductory Aphorisms, Prudential Aphorisms, Moral and Religious Aphorisms, Aphorisms on
Spiritual Religion, and Aphorisms on that which is Indeed Spiritual Religion, with some preliminary material added here and there.\textsuperscript{115} Although we might expect the first group of aphorisms to be taken from Leighton—the work was, after all, supposed to be an edition of that author—this group is almost exclusively a composite of works Coleridge had already published or composed.\textsuperscript{116} We can explain the paucity of materials from Leighton by viewing them as Coleridge's editorial "introduction," later put into aphoristic form. This section is unified strongly by theme: most of the aphorisms speak of the need for reflection, particularly self-reflection or self-examination, indicating that from the beginning of his writing, Coleridge had seen this as the primary theme of the work.\textsuperscript{117} The final introductory aphorisms introduce the concept of prudence, the theme of the second major section.

The Prudential Aphorisms were changed more than any other section in the remaking of the volume for the 1831 edition, so that much of the Leighton material was purged. In the 1825 edition, the opening co-authored aphorism is followed by four more by Leighton (PA 2-5), two by Coleridge (PA 6-7), and another by Leighton (PA 8), with Coleridge's comment on PA 8 and three more aphorisms: the section ends with four

\textsuperscript{115} I will use the abbreviations IA for the "Introductory Aphorisms," PA for "Prudential", MRA for "Moral and Religious," ASRa for the "Aphorisms on Spiritual Religion," and ASRb for the "Aphorisms on that which is Indeed Spiritual Religion," followed by a number to designate individual aphorisms.

\textsuperscript{116} Leighton is used in IA 4 and 6, which are attributed to Leighton, and in 8, marked as L. & E. Only the first paragraph of IA 4 is used exactly, and the remaining material is heavily adapted. Another Leighton extract is also used as a footnote to Coleridge's aphorism (IA 29).

\textsuperscript{117} Coleridge did mention the title \textit{Aids to Reflection} as early as August 8, 1823, in his letter to Taylor and Hessey, quoted above.
selections from Leighton (PA 12-15).118 Coleridge alters the Leighton very little, and the
majority of the material in this section is taken from the Archbishop and carefully marked
in Leighton Copy C of the marginalia. Obviously, this 1825 group was chosen from
Coleridge’s copy of Leighton’s works, and set up with Coleridge’s commentary
functioning as an addition to the primary text, rather than the other way around.
However, what remains in the 1831 edition after the purging of much of the seventeenth-
century material is more Coleridge than Leighton, as only two of the four aphorisms are
Leighton (one of which is joint). The “editor” has also included two comments which are
far longer than any of the rather short aphorisms. This 1831 section, furthermore, is
much more coherent thematically than the 1825 version, as the later edition was
organised around the notion that self-interested prudence can lead to virtue.

The Moral and Religious Aphorisms (similar in form in both editions), preceded
by the section “On Sensibility,” are with the 1825 Prudential Aphorisms the closest the
book comes to being a selection of the Archbishop’s “Beauties.” As a collection of
excerpts, then, it is not surprising that they cannot be gathered under one thematic
umbrella. Coleridge does begin the section (in On Sensibility, his first two Remarks, and
the long comment on MRA 6) by attempting to impress upon the reader a definition of
morality and its roots in the understanding and senses, as opposed to the supersensual
will. He chooses passages at the beginning from Leighton which mention problematic

118 See Appendix A of the edition, which provides a road map of the changes to the Prudential Aphorisms
from 1825 to 1831. Appendix B to this chapter lists sources for all borrowed material in 1831 edition of
AR, which may be of some help in negotiating my discussion of Coleridge’s use of sources in this chapter.
doctrines that might offend our sense of morality. After the comment on MRA 6, the Leighton selections are quite wide-ranging, from the dangers of worldliness, through how to read scripture (literally is safest), to the evils that an unrestrained tongue can cause. All but two of the aphorisms are by Leighton or the Editor and Leighton, or use Leighton in some way.\textsuperscript{119} As with the 1825 Prudential Aphorisms, Coleridge alters Leighton less here than he does the various authors in the remaining two groups: the aphorisms are mainly extracts, rather than rewritings. John Beer points out that the compilation of extracts after the Introductory Aphorisms becomes “increasingly ‘mechanical’…at least in the sense that the extracts from Leighton’s writing appeared in the same order as in the original” (AR, lxvii). Indeed, with the exception of MRA 26 and MRA 50,\textsuperscript{120} all of the passages in this large segment are taken in order from Leighton’s \textit{Commentary on 1 Peter}, a fact which makes understandable the topical heterogeneity of the section as a whole.\textsuperscript{121}

Although these “Beauties” appear to be chosen fairly “mechanically”—that is, picked out in order for convenience, rather than progressing in a particular pattern or having a general concord of subject—the rest of the work does not progress in the same way. Beer argues that Coleridge’s original plan for the spiritual aphorisms “seems to have been … a discussion of the question of redemption” and other aspects of “the

\textsuperscript{119} The exceptions are MRA 25 and 46. MRA 11, attributed to the Editor, is actually Leighton, and MRA 14 quotes Leighton in its opening.

\textsuperscript{120} MRA 26 is from the \textit{Commentary}, but taken out of order. MRA 50 is from “Meditations of Psalm CXXX.”

\textsuperscript{121} Although this commentary is on one work, Leighton, like most annotators, tends to use the different verses of the epistle as a starting point to pursue various themes.
spiritual life” (AR, lxxi), a discussion which would continue to use passages from
Leighton. The first set of Aphorisms on Spiritual Religion, he notes, seem not to have
been originally planned to be inserted after the Elements of Religious Philosophy, since
at the end of the Elements Coleridge promises another Leighton passage, but More
follows (AR, lxxii). Although Coleridge had tentative plans for the Spiritual section,
Beer suggests that “a change of his plans had taken place” (AR, lxxii) which resulted in
the development of two divisions of spiritual aphorisms.

It is at this point, after the Elements of Religious Philosophy, I believe, that
Coleridge’s larger conception of the work shifted. As the editor of Leighton’s
“Beauties,” Coleridge had already become rather intrusive, intermixing his commentary
on the page with the selections. From the Elements of Religious Philosophy introducing
the Spiritual Aphorisms, until the end of the work, Aids to Reflection bears no
resemblance whatsoever to an edition of Leighton. The material is more homogeneous in
substance than that in the two sections of collected Leighton extracts (PA 1825, and
MRA), but less so in form, in that various sixteenth- and seventeenth-century theologians
are used as well as a far greater proportion of Coleridge’s work. It becomes no longer
possible to use the word “commentary” to describe with any accuracy Coleridge’s
contribution in this section. The short Aphorisms on Spiritual Religion section employs
mostly More, with a bit of Hacket thrown in at the end, but the Aphorisms on that which

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122 The Aphorisms on Spiritual Religion begin with More, not Leighton; the Aphorisms on that which is
Indeed Spiritual Religion begin with Leighton.
is Indeed Spiritual Religion include passages derived from Burnet, Hooker, Leighton, Taylor, Luther, and Field, in addition to quotations from a score of others.

Beginning with the spiritual aphorisms, Coleridge began to create a true textual collaboration, and the work began to move into a very comfortable mode of composition for Coleridge. There are several characteristics that differentiate this collaborative mode from the earlier selections. Coleridge’s last two main sections each have a general consistency of subject matter: the first group (ASRa) is organised around the topics of reason and enthusiasm. The second, though less coherent, looks at two articles of faith — redemption and original sin. Coleridge demonstrates to the reader how to understand them through a grasp of the distinction between the reason and understanding, and thus tries to guide the reader in comprehending the proper place of the spiritual in religious thought.\textsuperscript{123} These sections comprehend, as I mentioned above, texts by many different authors. Most importantly, Coleridge feels free to alter, revise, rearrange, and sometimes wholly rewrite the authors’ work, and to blend it with his own. He rarely quoted any other writer with absolute scrupulousness, even himself, but in general the Leighton material in the 1825 Prudential Aphorisms and in the Moral and Religious Aphorisms is only slightly altered. However, even in the preliminaries to the spiritual aphorisms, the excerpted texts begin to be radically reworked. Only the Hacket text in the Aphorisms on Spiritual Religion is taken from its source more or less exactly; all of the More passages are altered in some way. In the first two (ASRa 1 and 2), Coleridge takes text from later

\textsuperscript{123} I am not interested in arguing that Coleridge’s \textit{Aids to Reflection} is a completely unified text, but in demonstrating that the more collaborative sections have a \textit{greater} unity than the groups of selections.
on in the work and slips it into the middle of the portion he has chosen for the aphorism. ASRa 4 and 5 see Coleridge picking out important phrases from the source and using them in his rewriting, as well as more generally paraphrasing it (ASRa 5).

His tendency to rework the material he is using becomes extremely pronounced in his last major section, the Aphorisms on that which is Indeed Spiritual Religion. While I would like to leave the details of exactly how the text is transformed until a later part of this chapter, a sketch of the textual trans- or deformations reveals how different his treatment of authors is here than it is in the 1825 Prudential Aphorisms or the Moral and Religious Aphorisms. The Burnet passage from *The History of the Reformation of the Church of England* is broadly reworked, though Coleridge acknowledges just “slight alterations” (ASRb 3). Only minor stylistic changes are made to the Hooker until the last sentence (ASRb 6), but two of the Taylor texts (ASRb 10 and 23), the Luther excerpt from the *Colloquia Mensalia* (ASRb 15), and even some of the Archbishop’s passages used in ASRb 16, 17, and 18 are considerably modified. Field alone escapes relatively unscathed, with a few parenthetical additions and some minor changes which serve to clarify and modernise him.

In the sections which are constructed as textual collaborations, Coleridge plays a role which is more than that of an editor, but less that of an “original” author creating *ex nihilo*: this role should by now be very familiar to us through the biblical criticism discussed in the last three chapters. The method of composition, which involved choosing selections that were freely altered in order to create work with some topical
unity, did not confine itself to using a diversity of extra-authorial sources. Coleridge was just as likely to employ sections of his own previously written works, both published and manuscript, in addition to the marginalia written for this project. The Introductory Aphorisms, which begin *Aids to Reflection*, are his own composition, and contain very little material which is not Coleridge’s. They are, though, put together in very much the same way as are the last two sections which gather together so many different authors and blend them with the work Coleridge specifically wrote for the new composition. The very first of the Introductory Aphorisms is adapted from *The Friend*, with some additional phrases and some omissions.\(^\text{124}\) Other aphorisms in this group also use *The Friend* (IA 8, n.2; comment on IA 15), as well as drawing on material from the *Lay Sermons* (comment on IA 12; IA 13 and comment; IA 14 and 15). The little Leighton which he does enlist in the Introductory Aphorisms is modified (IA 6 and 8), signifying, I argue, that Coleridge is putting on his composer’s rather than his editor’s hat. Of course, twenty-four of the thirty-two aphorisms are entirely new, in addition to four comments.

The argument that Coleridge began to remake the work into a collaboration after the Moral and Religious Aphorisms is strengthened when we look at the 1831 revisions. In 1825, the structure was as follows: an introductory composite (IA), attributed to Coleridge; two groups of selections (PA and MRA); and after a significant change of plan involving the switch from editor to collaborator, two sections of pasticcio or blended text. His plans for the “*Rinfacciamento* [sic] of the Aids to Reflection” (*CL*, 6: 780) for the

\(^{124}\) Coleridge developed the *Friend* passage from *CN* 2: 2535, and used the last sentence of it in *SM*, 25, and the *Opus Maximum* manuscript.
1831 edition were greater than he could carry out, and most of the changes were made only in the Prudential Aphorisms. These changes, however, are the kind that effect a transformation of the text from the group of selections it had been, to something approaching the method of collaborative composition epitomised in the later parts of the work. The respective weight of Coleridge's as opposed to Leighton's contributions in 1831 already belies the idea that Prudential Aphorisms are mere selections. The reworking of the first five aphorisms into one (1831 PA 1) occasions the omission of three of Leighton's (1825 PA 2, 4, and 5), as well as much of the beginning of the 1825 PA 1. In the 1831 version, PA 1 consists of an opening sentence, based on Leighton but altered by Coleridge; the second and third sentences are taken exactly from Leighton's *Theological Lectures*; the fourth sentence (sentence one of paragraph two) is a combination of a broad rewriting from one of Coleridge's marginal notes on these lectures (Leighton Copy C 51) and some phrases out of Leighton a few pages after the passage on which marginalia were written; and the rest of the aphorism is taken, with a few minor changes, from Leighton. While admittedly the 1831 version of the Prudential Aphorisms does not constitute as complete a textual collaboration as we see in the spiritual or even the introductory aphorisms, it is much closer to that type of composition than the same section of the 1825 edition had been.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{125}} See Beer's Introduction, cxxviii-cxxxiii, and appendix G. \text{\textsuperscript{126}} See Appendix A to this chapter for exact page numbers, etc., of these sources.\]
It is fairly clear, then, that after he completed the “Moral and Religious Aphorisms” in 1825, Coleridge’s remaining work on *Aids to Reflection* for the 1825 and 1831 editions used a collaborative method of assembling a text, a technique which was distinctly a form of composition, rather than merely a type of selection. The most controversial change in the 1831 edition, of course, though one which did not affect how the work was put together, was the removal of all attributions, as described above. In his introduction, John Beer points out that Coleridge did not make Leighton’s contribution to the 1831 edition at all apparent, since the “preface” in which this was to “be explained” (*CL*, 6: 848) was never written, and “the 1825 Advertisement, in which the relationship to Leighton had been made reasonably clear, was now dropped in favour of an address ‘To the Reader’” (*AR*, cxxx) which did not mention the Archbishop or any other of Coleridge’s inadvertent “collaborators” at all. The end result, Beer suggests, was “not altogether happy” (*AR*, cxxx), since references to Leighton still remained inconsistently at points within the text. (These occasional attributions do indicate that Coleridge was not just trying to pull the wool over his reader’s eyes and fool them into believing that he had written the whole of the volume.\(^{127}\) Leighton’s name also remained in the 1831 subtitle, “Illustrated by Select Passages from our Elder Divines, Especially from Archbishop Leighton.”) The problem of lack of attribution, then, according to Beer (who would speak for many Coleridge critics) “arose...partly, perhaps, from Coleridge’s long-

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\(^{127}\) Of course, the existence of the 1825 edition, which *did* attribute the selections to Leighton and others, would make it difficult to argue that Coleridge was simply trying to steal other authors’ work.
standing tendency to underestimate the extent of contributions from others once they had been incorporated in his own work" (AR, cxxxi-cxxxii).

While I reserve full discussion of the plagiarism controversy for my conclusion, I would like to suggest that this appropriation is part and parcel of the textual model that I believe Coleridge is using. As I discussed in my opening chapter in detail, the composer-redactors of biblical books were completely unconcerned with designating who wrote what parts of the text, and would "appropriate," as we call it in modern times, large sections of other authors’ writings in order to rework them. Eichhorn, we remember, argued that new works were composed from passages taken from many different authors, so that composers made "literary use of old writings" (Gollop, 156). The later Hebrew prophets used the works of the earlier prophets to form their prophecies. Eichhorn emphasises, however, that they were not copyists, but exercised discretion and judgement, even "genius" (Gollop, 37).

The end result of this gathering and reworking of writings (a description that would be just as relevant to Aids to Reflection as it would to the Bible) is a text in which the boundaries that separate and the markings that designate each individual author have disappeared. Coleridge believed that the book of Acts was compiled from two different works that had been "inosculated" into one another (CL, 6: 784). In the case of marginalia on the scriptures, the boundaries of the text are transgressed through a largely inadvertent, though occasionally deliberate blending. For example, in a later notebook
entry, Coleridge discusses a number of cases in which the editor’s work merges with that of the author’s:

I should venture conjecturally to mention him [John the elder], undoubtedly, the Author of the Apocalypse, as the Editor of S^1 John's Gospel—whose notes & marginal glosses soon slid into the text, or as in the last Chapter lost the line of separation by which it had been originally marked as an Appendix.—The last Chapt. of Jeremiah, and all the Chapters in Isaiah after the 40th, and the continuation of the Catalogue of the Priests to the time of Alexander the Great in the Book of Nehemiah are all cases in point. (N36.55, f52v)\textsuperscript{128}

In many of the models that depicted the role of the biblical redactor or editor-author, the fusion of materials is quite deliberate, resulting in a text that is unattributed or attributed to only one of the contributors (the “Books of Moses” or Isaiah, for example). This composite is not seen as plagiarised or otherwise suspect, but original: Eichhorn believed that the Hebrew authors could be considered “original to the highest degree” if they “dealt with their borrowed and foreign notions in so prudent a manner that when mixed and dissolved with their own stores the joint materials should form a homogeneous whole” (Gollop, 3). The word “homogeneous” is extremely important here, as it suggests that the various parts must be integrated into one in order to be considered a valid, that is new or original, work.

\textsuperscript{128} In the case of John the elder, it is interesting to note that he is an author as well as editor.
What confronts the reader, both in the individual books of the Bible and in Coleridge’s 1831 *Aids to Reflection*, is a text that at first glance appears to be “by” a single author and shows only traces of its origins in multiple authors and sources. Robert Alter’s representation of the scriptures as “a constant stitching together of earlier texts drawn from divergent literary and sometimes oral traditions, with minor or major interventions by later editors in the form of glosses, connecting passages, conflations of sources, and so forth” (132) also describes *Aids to Reflection*.

In order to discern its sources, the “textual archaeology” of the Higher Criticism must be performed upon these innocent-looking works, and the huge number of footnotes in the modern edition of *Aids to Reflection* makes it clear that John Beer had, in fact, to practice a type of Higher Criticism upon the text. Coleridge’s removal of the designations in 1831 caused his text to conform to the biblical model even more closely, since it subsumed all his sources under the one name.

The argument can be made that the appropriation which left Coleridge’s name as the sole occupant of the title page “preserved” the Leighton work for posterity. Eichhorn suggested that the name of Isaiah, the best-known of the prophets, was given to a composite collection of prophecies to preserve them (Gollop, 49). In other words, the more famous name lent authority to various other works to safeguard their existence.

Charles Lamb, in a letter quoted in Beer’s introduction, writes that “Coleridge’s book is

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129 Coleridge’s text, of course, does not use oral sources or have multiple editors, though it gives the appearance of multiple levels of redaction, as I explain below in my section on Coleridge’s marginalia, page 232.
good part printed, but sticks a little for more copy. I am confident that there will be plenty of good notes in it, more of Bishop Coleridge than Leighton, I hope, for what is Leighton?" (AR, xcix). Time is on Lamb’s side, since Leighton in this century is known primarily because of Aids to Reflection. Coleridge, however, could not have been certain that this would be the case, and so Coleridge’s desire to preserve Leighton’s work is far from the only issue surrounding this complex text. However, Coleridge may have used this idea to rationalise using a biblical textual model which was in conflict with the emerging concerns about plagiarism.

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At any rate, the boundaries between Coleridge and other authors were shifting long before the 1831 edition. In the 1825 Advertisement, when discussing why the term “Editor” was affixed to so many of the aphorisms when his role had changed, Coleridge admits that the aphorisms written “conjointly” were “modified and (avowedly) interpolated” because of his “desire of enforcing, and as it were integrating, the truths contained in the Original Author, by adding those which the words suggested or recalled to my own mind” (AR, 533-34). These combined aphorisms, with their designation of “L. & Ed.,” were quite common. In many of them, Coleridge simply joined a section of Leighton with a paragraph or paragraphs of his own, so that the two authors were

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130 See also the letter to H. N. Coleridge (CL, 6: 848-49), quoted above, page 173.
combined; these passages were not so much “interpolated” with Coleridge’s comments as simply coupled together.\textsuperscript{131} Even so, the reader still has no idea in most of these aphorisms exactly what is Coleridge and what is Leighton. In other “conjoint” aphorisms, Coleridge’s writing seeps into Leighton’s in a much more insidious manner.\textsuperscript{132}

ASRb 17 could be justly called “(avowedly) interpolated.” Coleridge inserts his own commentary interlinearly within the Leighton text. Leighton’s original work reads as follows:

\textbf{Would any of you be cured of that common disease, the fear of death?}

\textbf{Look this way, and you shall find more than you seek;} you shall be taught, not only not to fear, but to love it. Consider, 1. His death: \textit{He died}. By that, thou who receivest Him as thy life, mayest be sure of this, that thou art, by that His death, freed from the second death. …He who is our life, says Augustine, descended hither, and bore our death, killing it by the abounding of His life. …He longs to lie down in that \textbf{bed of rest}, since his Lord lay in it, and hath \textbf{warmed} that \textbf{cold bed}, and purified it with His \textbf{fragrant} body. 2. But \textbf{especially} be looking forward to \textbf{His return thence, quickened by the Spirit;} this being to \textbf{those who are in Him, the certain pledge}… (\textit{AR}, 427)\textsuperscript{133}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{131} See MRA 3, 7, 10, 15, 17, 22, 24, 33, 41, 47.
\item \textsuperscript{132} See IA 8; PA 1; MRA 12, 26, 31; ASRb 16, 17, 18.
\item \textsuperscript{133} As in further comparisons of text, the bold type indicates words or their close variants shared between the two examples.
\end{itemize}
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While Coleridge’s last paragraph (from “his return”) is copied almost entirely accurately from Leighton, the first intersperses commentary with three key elements borrowed from the earlier work:

Would any of you be cured of that common disease, the fear of Death? Yet this is not the right name of the Disease, as a mere reference to our armies and navies is sufficient to prove: nor can the fear of death, either as loss of life or pain of dying, be justly held a common disease. But would you be cured of the fear and fearful questionings connected with the approach of death? Look this way, and you shall find more than you seek. Christ, the Word that was from the beginning, and was made flesh and dwelt among men, died. And he, who dying conquered death in his own person, conquered Sin, and Death which is the Wages of Sin, for thee. And of this thou mayest be assured, if only thou believe in him, and love him. I need not add, keep his commandments: since where Faith and Love are, Obedience in its threefold character, as Effect, Reward, and Criterion, follows by that moral necessity which is the highest form of freedom. The Grave is thy bed of rest, and no longer the cold bed: for thy Saviour has warmed it, and made it fragrant. (AR, 303)

Coleridge commences with a Leighton sentence. Yet, he is not entirely pleased with how the text is phrased, and so he attempts in the next two sentences to refine its meaning before reproducing the sentence which immediately follows in the Commentary: the fear of death is not precisely the right name of the disease, nor can it be called a common one,
he quibbles. By the second of his sentences, he has come up with a revised version of Leighton’s original question, which apparently satisfies him. Just as he so often does in his marginalia, he leaves his revision alongside the original text. The next “intertextual” comment, following Leighton’s “Look this way…seek,” begins by relating to Leighton’s discussion of Christ’s death and our redemption, but fairly quickly moves away to talk about belief, faith, love, and obedience. Coleridge then compresses Leighton’s slightly effusive “He longs to lie down in that bed of rest…” before going on to the next paragraph, extracted largely from Leighton.

In some cases (MRA 12, 26, and 31), Coleridge rewrites some or all of the Leighton. The first paragraph of MRA 31 is taken exactly from Leighton, but the second is a mixture of Coleridge’s reworking and condensation of a passage a paragraph later than the first excerpt, followed by a sentence extracted with only minor changes, and an original sentence. The original passage in Leighton before Coleridge’s reworking reads:

Consider next, as another grand part of the tongue, uncharitable speeches…these are likewise of two sorts, 1. Open railing and reproaches. 2. Secret slander and 

detraction.

[The remainder of the paragraph on the topic of “Open railing and reproaches” has been omitted.]

But the other, of 

detraction, is more universal amongst all sorts, as being a far easier way of mischief in this kind, and of better conveyance. … it spreads and infects secretly and insensibly, is not felt but in the effects of it; and it works
either by calumnies altogether forged and untrue, of which malice is inventive, or by the advantage of real faults, of which it is very discerning, and these are stretched and aggravated to the utmost. It is not expressible how deep a wound a tongue sharpened to this work will give, with a very little word and little noise, as a razor... And they convey it under fair prefacing of commendation; so giving them poison in wine, both that it may pass the better and penetrate the more. ... Vain fruitless speeches are an evil of the tongue, not only those they call harmless lies, which some poor people take a pleasure in, and trade much in, light buffooneries and foolish jestings... They are in this world of evil, in the tongue... (Leighton, 457-58)

Coleridge picks key words from this discussion to use in a condensation that shifts the emphasis slightly:

The slanders, perchance, may not be altogether forged or untrue: they may be the implements, not the inventions, of Malice. But they do not on this account escape the guilt of Detraction. Rather, it is characteristic of the evil spirit in question, to work by the advantage of real faults; but these stretched and aggravated to the utmost. It is not expressible how deep a wound a tongue sharpened to this work will give, with no noise and a very little word. This is the true white gunpowder, which the dreaming Projectors of silent Mischiefs and insensible Poisons sought for in the Laboratories of Art
and Nature, in a World of Good; but which was to be found, in its most
destructive form, in "the World of Evil, the Tongue." (AR, 111)

Coleridge takes Leighton's two kinds of slanders (those untrue, and those which magnify
real faults), merges them into one (the "slanders...may not be altogether forged or
untrue" but they also may be, by implication), and further abridges the rest of the
passage. Then, after quoting almost exactly from Leighton, he suddenly abandons the
simile "as a razor," and develops, in the last sentence of this aphorism, the metaphor of
"white gunpowder," using, and in one instance even quoting, a couple of Leighton's
terms. In all of MRA 31, there are no indications as to who has composed the individual
parts.

Of course, even when the separation between authors appears to be clear, it is
often not. In the first two paragraphs of MRA 26, Coleridge combines his own rewriting
about tolerance, borrowing key words and themes from Leighton's discussion ("The
boasted Peaceableness...est disputandum"), with a passage faithfully following the
Archbishop's Commentary, omitting one paragraph ("And many there be...that kind of
quietness"). This example follows typical Coleridgean form, but the third paragraph,
functioning as his comment, suggests to the reader that all of what has come before was
by Leighton: "The preceding Extract is particularly entitled to our serious reflection..."
(AR, 108). MRA 12 is similarly misleading. The first paragraph, written by Coleridge, is
obviously inspired by Leighton's passage on 1 Pet. 1.3-4 in that it also talks about our
knowledge of God being primarily negative, and again Coleridge adopts a couple of
phrases verbatim. In this instance, he is even more explicit about attributing the text, which has so little of the *Commentary* in it, to Leighton: “This Remark of Leighton’s,” he says ingenuously, “is ingenious and startling” (*AR*, 92). In both these cases, Coleridge ends up manufacturing a Leighton aphorism, and then making a judgement upon it, leading to a very odd textual dynamic. Coleridge appears to be appropriating Leighton’s name so that he can in all modesty then call attention to the particular weightiness and value of the truth contained in the “Archbishop’s” words. In the 1831 edition, these references to another author must have been particularly puzzling.

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In the 1825 edition, Coleridge is more likely to make long-dead authors “plagiarise” from him—that is, put his words in their mouths—than he is to appropriate from them.\(^{134}\) Or, to put it another way, he is more likely to appropriate the authority of their name than their text, and so he effaces the boundaries which should separate his writing from theirs by the proper attribution of text to author. In *The Imperial Dryden: The Poetics of Appropriation in Seventeenth-Century England*, David Bruce Kramer discusses this strategy, used by Dryden as well, which Kramer labels “misquotation”:

> the term … denote[s] the strategy of inventing another’s words so that one’s own thoughts seem to emerge from the other’s mouth—a ventriloquism of voice in

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\(^{134}\) In the 1831 edition, of course, the situation is reversed, as the whole *Aids to Reflection* text gets subsumed under Coleridge’s name.
which language is projected backward through time, to speak as if from the past
and from the dead. By this means, past literary authorities are transformed from
articulating subjects into silent objects, masks from which the misquoter's own
eyes peep, the misquoter's own voice sounds. (4)

Coleridge makes significant additions or modifications to many aphorisms ascribed
solely to another author;\(^\text{135}\) by contrast, in the 1825 edition he puts another writer's work
under his name only once, when he names the one-sentence MRA 11, taken again from
Leighton's *Commentary*, as "Editor." Material which Coleridge adds to a text is not
always written by him, since on one occasion he joins a sentence he has adapted from
Jedd's *Works* to a Taylor aphorism (ASRb 22). Sometimes Coleridge does not so much
interpolate text of his own into another author's work as introduce that author's into his.
In ASRa 5, one of the aphorisms by "More," the Coleridge material, which does
admittedly take its cue from More, begins and ends the unit, with the (altered) More
material in between.

On a few occasions, Coleridge will modify the text by rearranging the order in
which sentences appear in the original and so slipping in a fragment of text from earlier
or later (ASRa 1, 2). Often only a small portion of the aphorism will be rewritten, as in
the Hooker (ASRb 6), where Coleridge makes only minor stylistic changes until the last
two sentences, where he revises Hooker's "but those Crystal *tears* wherewith *my* sin and
*weakness was bewailed*, have procured my endless joy; *my* Strength *hath been my

\(^{135}\) Coleridge also makes many *minor* alterations, as indicated in my appendix B.
Ruine, and my Fall my Stay” (AR, 423) to read “But my shame and the Tears, with which my Presumption and my Weakness were bewailed, recur in the songs of my Thanksgiving. My Strength had been my Ruin, my Fall hath proved my Stay” (AR, 196). And again, in ASRb 1, Coleridge changes only one sentence, this time the first, to make Leighton’s “And there is nothing but the power of Christ alone, that is able to effect this, to persuade a sinner to return, to bring home a heart unto God” into a snappier opening: “Where, if not in Christ, is the Power that can persuade a Sinner to return, that can bring home a Heart to God?” (AR, 157).136

While these changes may seem relatively minor, and transgress the integrity of the original author’s text only mildly, other modifications are more extreme. Often Coleridge begins by transcribing the text more or less exactly, but then begins the alteration process and strays away to his own text.137 In IA 4, for example, he initially quotes from the last Theological Lecture (no. 24) of Leighton. By the second paragraph, Coleridge takes only his cue from what comes next in the Lectures, and proceeds on his way, stopping only to borrow a quotation and its translation from forty pages earlier in the introduction. (Interestingly, in the 1825 edition, this aphorism, though marked at its title as “Leighton,” had the passage from the Lectures set in quotations, and Coleridge’s paragraph designated as “Ed.” at the end, indicating the trouble he may have had with properly sorting out the attributions.138) In the same way, Coleridge begins ASRa 4 by

136 See Beer’s note for Leighton’s original.
137 Jack Stillinger comments on Coleridge’s seeming compulsion to revise his own texts, what Stillinger calls “Coleridge’s almost flaunting display of the instability of his texts. As he kept revising his works, he also called attention to his revising in notes and prefaces to the poems” (Stillinger, “Multiple,” 139).
138 See Beer’s note at AR 12, n.1.
staying relatively close to a passage from More’s *An Explanation of the Grand Mystery of Godliness*, as follows:

For **tell me, O ye high-flown Perfectionists, and ye great Boasters of the Light within you, Could the highest Perfection of your inward Light ever shew to you the histories...of Arts and Tongues, without any external Helps of either Books or Teachers? How then can you understand the Providence of God, the Purpose of Prophecies and the authority of that Religion which God has peculiarly appointed us to walk in, without external Assistances? How can you make a due **Judgment of the Truth of Christianity**, without a rational Explication of the Prophecies that foretold the coming of Christ, without weighing what may be said concerning **the Authentickness and Uncorruptedness** of his History in **the Gospels**, and without considering the reasonableness of all those miraculous Matters there recorded concerning him, and of what is behind for him to perform at his visible Return to judge the quick and the dead? No **Light within you**, unassisted of **Helps without**, and of the **knowledge** of History, Tongues, and Sciences, and careful Exercise of **Reason**, that **excellent Gift of God to Mankind**, can ever make you competent Judges of this Matter. (App. A, *AR*, 421)

Coleridge, under More’s name, writes:

**Tell me, Ye high-flown Perfectionists, Ye Boasters of the Light within you, could the highest perfection of your inward Light ever show to you the History** of past Ages, the state of the World at present, the **Knowledge of Arts**
and Tongues, without Books or Teachers? How then can you understand the Providence of God, or the age, the purpose, the fulfilment of Prophecies, or distinguish such as have been fulfilled from those to the fulfilment of which we are to look forward? How can you judge concerning the authenticity and uncorruptedness of the Gospels, and the other sacred Scriptures? And how without this knowledge can you support the truth of Christianity? How can you either have, or give a reason for the faith which you profess? This Light within, that loves darkness, and would exclude those excellent Gifts of God to Mankind, Knowledge and Understanding, what is it but a sullen self-sufficiency within you, engendering contempt of Superiors, pride and a Spirit of Division, and inducing you to reject for yourselves and to undervalue in other the Helps without, which the Grace of God has provided and appointed for his Church—nay, to make them grounds or pretexts of your dislike or suspicion of Christ’s Ministers who have fruitfully availed themselves of the Helps afforded them?—

Henry More (AR, 149)

Coleridge’s version is very similar in subject matter to More’s, and the rewriting does not change the sense in any significant way, though obviously the words are quite different. Coleridge expands a few phrases at More’s “histories of Arts and Tongues” and “the Purpose of Prophecies,” perhaps to reflect the greater knowledge the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries had of “the History of past Ages.” Coleridge also avoids
More's phrase, "the reasonableness of all those miraculous Matters," as it probably reminded him too much of Priestley and his school of "evidences."

Coleridge can, on occasion, omit text or substitute text of his own in an aphorism attributed to another to make it follow the thread of his argument in his commentary. These changes can be minor, as in ASRb 20, where he alters Taylor's "for although a man's reason is a right judge" to "For although Reason is a right Judge" (AR, 340). The omission of "man" removes the emphasis from the human to support Coleridge's characterisation of reason, in the note to this phrase, as dealing with "spiritual truths and objects super-sensuous" (AR, 340). In the second sentence of the second paragraph of ASRb 10, Coleridge also makes a significant cut, when he compresses Taylor's "he sinned, and fell into God's displeasure, and was made naked of all his supernatural endowments, and was ashamed and sentenced to death, and deprived of the means of long life, and of the Sacrament and instrument of Immortality, I mean the Tree of Life" (App. A, AR, 424) to "He sinned, and brought evil into his Supernatural endowments, and lost the Sacrament and instrument of Immortality, the Tree of Life in the centre of the Garden" (AR, 265). While these changes at first glance may not seem momentous, the action is attributed in the first version to God, and in the second to Adam. In Taylor's passage, because of "God's displeasure," God makes Adam naked, and strips him "of the means of long life, and of the Sacrament and instrument of Immortality"; in Coleridge's revision, Adam brings the evil upon himself, and himself
loses the sacrament. Taylor’s characterisation of God as one who punishes because of his anger is excised from the passage.

Coleridge rewrites God’s temperament as well in ASRb 15, an extract taken from Luther. Luther writes:

It is (said Luther) a very hard matter; yea, an impossible thing for thy humane strength, whosoever thou art (without God’s assistance) that (at such a time when Moses setteth upon thee with his Law, and fearfully affrighteth thee, accuseth and condemneth thee, threatneth thee with God’s wrath and death) thou shouldest as then bee of such a mind; namely, as if no Law nor sin had ever been at anie time; I saie, it is a manner a thing impossible, that a humane creature should carrie himself in such a sort, when hee is and feeleth himself assaulted with trials and temptations, and when the conscience hath to do with God, as then to think no otherwise, then that from everlasting nothing hath been, but onely and alone Christ, altogether Grace and deliverance.

(App. A, AR, 425-26)

Coleridge changes this to:

It is a hard matter, yea, an impossible thing for thy human strength, whosoever thou art (without God’s assistance), at such a time when Moses setteth on thee with the Law (see Aphorism XII.), when the holy Law written in thy heart accuseth and condemneth thee, forcing thee to a comparison of thy heart therewith, and convicting thee of the incompatibleness of thy Will and Nature
with Heaven and Holiness and an immediate God—that then thou shouldst be able to be of such a mind as if no Law nor Sin had ever been! I say it is in a manner impossible that a human creature, when he feeleth himself assaulted with trials and temptations, and the Conscience hath to do with God, and the tempted man knoweth that the root of temptation is within him, should obtain such mastery over his thoughts as then to think no otherwise than that FROM EVERLASTING NOTHING HATH BEEN BUT ONLY AND ALONE CHRIST, ALTOGETHER GRACE AND DELIVERANCE! (AR, 299-300)

Here, as in the Taylor, Coleridge shifts the responsibility for the action. In the Luther, “when Moses setteth upon thee with his Law” it is the prophet who “fearfully affrighteth thee, accuseth and condemneth thee, threateneth thee with God’s wrath and death” and God is again characterised as an angry, Old Testament God. In Coleridge’s version, the accusations are internal, motivated from within: “when Moses setteth on thee with the Law...when the holy Law written in thy heart accuseth and condemneth thee, forcing thee to a comparison of thy heart therewith...” (my emphasis). Coleridge later expands the Luther by adding in the phrase “and the tempted man knoweth that the root of temptation is within him, should obtain such mastery over his thoughts” (my emphasis) to suggest again, as he did so often in his introduction, that internal examination is what is important.

The borrowed material may be either condensed or expanded. The second last aphorism in the book, ASRb 23, takes a 500-word excerpt from Taylor and abridges it to
just over 300 words, including some new material. Coleridge effects this transformation not through a drastic revision, as he does in so many other places, but by eliminating many of Taylor’s sentences and phrases, and gluing the rest together. In the Burnet excerpt from *The History of the Reformation* (ASRb 3), to which Coleridge admits “slight alterations” (*AR*, 189), the material is expanded by a broad and loose revision of Burnet’s text, which in the original runs:

> That Religion is chiefly designed for perfecting the nature of Man, for improving his Faculties, governing his Actions, and securing the Peace of every Mans Conscience, and of the societies of Mankind in common, is a truth so plain, that without further arguing about it all will agree to it. Every part of Religion is then to be judged by its Relation to the main ends of it; and since the Christian Doctrine was revealed from Heaven, as the most perfect and proper way that ever was, for the advancing the good of Mankind, nothing can be a part of this holy Faith but what is proportioned to the end for which it was designed. (*App. A*, *AR*, 423)

As he so often does, Coleridge rewrites the text by picking out key phrases, often not in precisely the same order:

> That Religion is designed to improve the nature and faculties of Man, in order to the right governing of our actions, to the securing of the peace and progress, external and internal, of Individuals and Communities, and lastly, to the rendering us capable of a more perfect state, entitled the kingdom of God, to which the
present Life is *probationary*—this is a **Truth**, which all who have truth only in view, will receive on its own evidence. If such then be the **main end of Religion** altogether (the improvement namely of our nature and faculties) it is **plain**, that **every Part of Religion is to be judged by its relation to this main end.** And **since the Christian** Scheme is Religion in its **most perfect** and effective Form, a *revealed* Religion, and therefore, in a *special* sense proceeding from that Being who made us and knows what we are, of course therefore adapted to the needs and capabilities of Human Nature; **nothing can be a part of this holy faith** that is not duly **proportioned to this end.** (*AR*, 188-89)

One of the unusual things about this passage is that it really does not differ in terms of content in any significant way from the original. Coleridge adds a couple of small points: religion is designed to render “us more capable of a perfect state, entitled the kingdom of God, to which the present Life is *probationary,***” he states, and later at the end of the aphorism, he glosses More’s “revealed from Heaven” to focus more specifically on “that Being who made us and knows what we are.” However, much of Coleridge’s unacknowledged “editing” really does not make any substantial changes. In this and passages that use a similar technique, perhaps he might be recalling the text from memory, rather sitting down at his desk copying exactly from a book in front of him.

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A footnote of Coleridge’s gives some support for this hypothesis. While speaking of conversion in IA 28, he refers us to a passage from one of Donne’s sermons, “quoted from memory” (AR, 35):

Whereas Christ’s other disciples had a breeding under him, St. Paul was born an apostle; not carved out, as the rest, by degrees and in course of time, but a fusile apostle, an apostle poured out and cast in a mould. As Adam was a perfect man in an instant, so was St. Paul a perfect Christian. The same spirit was the lightning that melted, and the mould that received and shaped him. (AR, 35)

Beer, as usual, provides us with the actual Donne text for a handy comparison:

In this sense especially doth S. Paul call himself [sic] Abortivum, a person borne out of season. That whereas Christ’s other Disciples and Apostles, had a breeding under him, and came first ad Discipulatum, and then ad Apostolatum, first to be Disciples, and after to be Apostles, S. Paul was borne a man, an Apostle, not carved out, as the rest in time; but a fusil Apostle, an Apostle poured out, and cast in a Mold; As Adam was a perfect man in an instant, so was S. Paul an Apostle, as soone as Christ tooke him in hand. (AR, 35, n.1)

Again, Coleridge does not modify the text drastically, but shortens it by removing the Latin phrases, and he also adds the metaphor of the lightning to it. If Coleridge’s “quoted from memory” can be believed, it would explain some of the modifications happening in
the other authors’ works, as well as giving us a new respect for the accuracy of his powers of recall: much of the Donne quotation is *quite* close to the original, after all.

Most of the passages which Coleridge uses in *Aids to Reflection* are marked in Copy C of Leighton’s works. However, there are several excerpts from Leighton, used in the Introductory Aphorisms and the Aphorisms on that which is Indeed Spiritual Religion, that are unmarked. If Coleridge did not plan to use these passages in his original annotation of the volumes, and so left them unmarked, he might not have had the Leighton in front of him or have been able to find the exact section he wished to use when writing these sections. Instead, he may have recalled them without checking the original. These aphorisms are modified in much the same manner as the Donne quotation and many of the other excerpts are, in that key phrases are used and often rearranged. For example, the original Leighton for IA 8 reads:

*It is certainly a matter of great difficulty, and requires* uncommon art, *to fix the thoughts of men*, especially of young men and boys, and turn them in upon themselves. …

*It is the advice of the Psalmist, that we should converse much with ourselves: an advice, indeed, which is regarded by few; for the greatest part of mankind are nowhere greater strangers than at home.* (App. A, AR, 419-20)

Coleridge writes:

*It is a matter of great difficulty, and requires* no ordinary skill and address, *to fix the attention of men on* the world within *them*, to induce them to study the
processes and superintend the works which they are themselves carrying on in their own minds; in short, to awaken in them both the faculty of thought and the inclination to exercise it. For alas! the largest part of mankind are nowhere greater strangers than at home. (AR, 14)

As we have seen so often, Coleridge glosses a phrase, in this case Leighton’s “to fix the thoughts of men, especially of young men and boys, and turn them in upon themselves” and expands it (he does omit the phrase dealing with the particular difficulty of getting “young men and boys” to reflect, since Coleridge’s professed audience was “the studious Young at the close of their education or on their first entrance into the duties of manhood and the rights of self-government” [Preface, AR, 6].) The remainder is largely identical, and many of the phrases are used in the same order as in the original.

In three of the other four unmarked aphorisms, Coleridge takes the various elements for his new version out of order from the original.\footnote{IA 6, ASRb 16, and ASRb 18 are reassembled, but ASRb 17, though heavily altered, is not out of order. ASRb 17 was discussed above, page 187.} IA 6 is appropriately enough about throwing sibylline leaves to the wind, where they can fall in any order, one might guess:

He (says Archbishop Leighton) who teaches men the principles and precepts of spiritual wisdom, before their minds are called off from foreign objects, and turned inward upon themselves, might as well write his instructions, as the sybil wrote her prophecies, on the loose leaves of trees, and commit them to the mercy of the inconstant winds.
In the Introduction to the *Theological Lectures*, Leighton writes:\textsuperscript{140}

But that you may be capable of this supernatural light and heavenly instruction, it is, first of all, absolutely necessary, that your minds be called off from foreign objects, and turned in upon themselves \textsuperscript{2}; for, as long as your thoughts are dispersed and scattered in pursuit of vanity and insignificant trifles, he that would lay before them the principles and precepts of this spiritual wisdom \textsuperscript{1}, would commit them \textsuperscript{4}, like the sibyl's prophecies, that were written on loose leaves of trees \textsuperscript{3}, to the mercy of the inconstant winds \textsuperscript{5}, and thereby render them entirely useless. (App. A, *AR*, 419)

Apart from compressing the Leighton, Coleridge does nothing else which changes the meaning of the text fundamentally, but he significantly juggles around the text he has fragmented. Notably, he does eliminate the phrases which call these sibylline leaves “entirely useless.”

ASRb 16 and 18 follow much the same pattern, only here Coleridge is working with text from much larger passages. He ranges all over Leighton’s commentary on 1 Peter 3. 18 for material to use in ASRb 16. The original reads:\textsuperscript{141}

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, (that he might bring us to God,) being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.”

\textsuperscript{3}

\footnote{The numbers represent the order in which Coleridge used these elements in his aphorism.}

\footnote{I will only examine ASRb 16, as ASRb 18 is less interesting: Coleridge uses seven different sections from two paragraphs on 1 Peter 5.9, taken mostly in order, with the exception of the last. Again the numbers show the order in which Coleridge used the sections of text in his aphorism.}
But the Spirit, here opposed to the flesh or body, is certainly of a higher nature and power than is the human soul, which cannot of itself return to re-inhabit and quicken the body [5].

Put to death.] His death was both voluntary and violent [1]. That same power which restored His life, could have kept it exempted from death; but the design was for death. He therefore took our flesh, to put off thus, and to offer it up as a sacrifice, which, to be acceptable, must of necessity be free and voluntary; and, in that sense, He is said to have died even by that same Spirit, which here, in opposition to death, is said to quicken him. See Heb. ix. 14 [4]...

[The rest of this long paragraph is omitted]

Thus, then, there was in His death, external violence joined with internal willingness [2]. ... [The rest of this paragraph and three other long paragraphs are omitted]

...Yea, when thou art most sunk in thy sad apprehension, and far off to thy thinking, then is He nearest to raise and comfort thee; as sometimes it grows darkest immediately before day [7]. Rest on His power and goodness, which never failed any who did so. It is He (as David says) who lifts up the soul from the gates of death [6]. (App. A, AR, 426-427)\textsuperscript{142}

Again, Coleridge pastes together an aphorism from a large segment of Leighton:

\textsuperscript{142} The text is copied from Beer's appendix, but I have also looked at the 1805 edition of Leighton's works to determine how far apart the selected material is.
Christ’s Death was both voluntary and violent. [1] There was external violence: and that was the accompaniment, or at the most the occasion, of his Death. But there was internal willingness [2], the spiritual Will, the Will of the Spirit, and this was the proper cause. By this Spirit he was restored from Death: neither indeed “was it possible for him to be holden of it.” (Acts ii. 24-27.)

“Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit,” says St. Peter. [3] But he is likewise declared elsewhere to have died by that same Spirit, which here in opposition to the violence is said to quicken him. Thus Hebrews ix. 14. [4] Through the eternal Spirit he offered himself. And even from Peter’s words, and without the epithet, eternal, to aid the interpretation, it is evident that the Spirit, here opposed to the Flesh, Body or Animal Life, is of a higher nature and power than the individual Soul, which cannot of itself return to re-inhabit or quicken the Body. [5]

...Take comfort then, thou that believest! It is he that lifts up the Soul from the Gates of Death: [6] and he hath said, I will raise thee up at the last day. Thou that believest in him, believe him and take comfort. Yea, when thou art most sunk in thy sad apprehensions, and he far off to thy thinking, then is he nearest to raise and comfort thee: as sometimes it grows darkest immediately before day. [7] (AR, 301-03)

Coleridge starts with a short and attention-grabbing sentence taken almost exactly from Leighton [1]: “Christ’s death was both voluntary and violent.” From there, he jumps
down to the beginning of the next paragraph to plunder an opposition, “external violence joined with internal willingness” [2], which he glosses in the aphorism: “external violence...was the accompaniment, or at most the occasion, of his Death” but “internal willingness, the spiritual Will, the Will of the Spirit...was the proper cause.” Having added another sentence, he then quotes part of the verse from 1 Peter upon which Leighton writes his commentary (found twenty pages earlier than the first piece of text Coleridge uses from this section) [3], and moves back to a passage [4] in between the first two he has excerpted, quoting Hebrews 10.14, which Leighton had only referenced. After a brief transitional phrase, Coleridge takes the sentence immediately before the first selection [5], and uses it almost exactly: “And even from Peter’s words, and without the epithet, eternal, to aid the interpretation, it is evident that the Spirit, here opposed to the Flesh, Body or Animal Life, is of a higher nature and power than the individual Soul, which cannot of itself return to re-inhabit or quicken the Body.” After three more sentences of his own, he skips down five paragraphs to quote from David [6] and then after a few more original phrases, ends with a selection from this same paragraph [7].

If these passages were indeed quoted from memory, two points should be noted. First, Coleridge truly must have had an extraordinary memory, to be able to quote more or less exactly as many phrases and sentences as he did out of the large bulk of Leighton’s works. Second, Coleridge’s mind seemed to work naturally by reorganising, annotating, and revising these stray pieces of text floating around in his mind.

Contemporary evidence did seem to indicate that Coleridge was capable of such feats of
memory. Wordsworth read his draft of the “Intimations” Ode to Coleridge, and Coleridge replied, quoting and responding to phrases. If Coleridge did not take a copy of the work, then it indicates how able he was to recall phrases after only one hearing. (Coleridge would have read the Leighton multiple times.) Tim Fulford describes how “Coleridge’s powers of talk collected an audience around him [at Jesus College], … to hear his verbatim recall and recitation of the latest political pamphlets” (Figurative, 3). Even his primary twentieth-century detractor, Norman Fruman, inadvertently proves Coleridge’s power to reproduce large passages of text. While discussing how different incidents in his letters change according to Coleridge’s audience, Fruman remarks, “Nine days later, writing to another college friend, he repeats enormous blocks of the former letter verbatim” (Damaged Archangel, 18). Coleridge’s natural power of memory worked with his tendency to update and revise texts to fit them with his system. Large blocks of texts from other sources were always at hand, ready to be altered and blended with Coleridge’s own rich intellectual stores. This extraordinary ability, combined with Coleridge’s collaborative tendencies and an authoritative biblical model, led to a most interesting—and distinctive—form of composition.

Coleridge’s indifference to the necessity of checking an excerpt against the original and instead “quoting from memory” might explain his sloppiness with quotations.
Starting with the Elements of Religious Philosophy, he alters no fewer than twelve passages enclosed in quotation marks. Some changes are extremely minor, like the two-word alteration in the Taylor quotation in the Note Prefatory to Aphorism XXIII and the slight modifications in style to Plume’s Life of Hacket (ASRb 2). The excerpt from Wall’s A Conference Between Two Men That Had Doubts About Infant-Baptism in the comment on ASRb 24, has some cuts and a few extremely minor stylistic changes (AR, 379, n.84) and changes to the More quotation ending the Elements of Religious Philosophy also consist of some omissions and two additions. However, many revisions are quite consequential. The extract from Baldwin’s Weekly Journal that Coleridge uses in a footnote to the comment on ASRb 19 is restated in order to condense it,143 and while the synopsis does not alter the meaning, nonetheless, there are a large number of important textual variations for a “quotation.”

In the comment on ASRb 8 and his Reflections by the Author Introductory to Aphorism X, Coleridge quotes from multiple authors within the remark, all of whom are altered to some degree. In the Reflections, Coleridge cites and modifies John Smith, Milton, and Pindar’s “Olympic Ode.” The comment on ASRb 8 reworks four different quotations to varying degrees. Minor adjustments are made to the Browne, and two lines are added to the Baxter passage, besides several omissions and numerous small variants. Material is also added at the end of the quotation from Coleridge’s own Lay Sermons, and the text that was a footnote in the Sermons is inserted into the main text, though not in the

143 See Beer’s notes 69 and 70, AR, 331 for the original.
same place as in the original. The biggest adjustment, however, is in the Harrington passage, in which Coleridge claims to have made “no other change than was necessary to make the words express, without the aid of the context, what from the context it is evident was the Writer’s meaning” (AR, 207). If fact, Coleridge completely remolds the excerpt to make it say what he wants it to say. The original, which he copied into CN 2: 2223 and later used in The Friend, reads: “Man may rather be defined a religious than a rational Creature: in regard that in other Creatures there may be something of Reason, but there is nothing of Religion” (AR, 207, n. 3). Coleridge’s “quotation” of Harrington in Aids to Reflection is as follows: “‘The definition and proper character of Man—that, namely, which should contra-distinguish him from the Animals—is to be taken from his Reason rather than from his Understanding: in regard that in other creatures there may be something of Understanding, but there is nothing of Reason” (AR, 207). The terminology is entirely Coleridge’s, and supports the differentiation he will make in the next section, On the Difference in Kind of the Reason and the Understanding. While Coleridge may have felt that Harrington meant what he represents him to have written, there is quite a transformation. Harrington uses “Reason” where Coleridge substitutes “Understanding,” and “Reason” is then exchanged for the earlier author’s “Religion.” While many of these minor changes may be a result of simple slips of memory resulting a new text substantially the same as the old, the Harrington quotation shows how Coleridge naturally effects a transformation to create a text that accords with his philosophy.
Coleridge is an egalitarian author in the sense that he treats his own works in the same way that he treats other authors'. He employed a large number of excerpts from his own notebooks and published works in *Aids to Reflection*, apart from the marginalia. Looking at how Coleridge uses his own works in the text is like viewing in miniature the way he adapts other writers' works. At times, particularly toward the beginning of the work, Coleridge excerpts a section from one of his earlier texts to comprise the entire aphorism or comment, with some variants, omissions, and often minor additions (IA 1; IA 13 and comment; IA 14, 15, 18; ASRb 9). Generally, though, the aphorisms are formed from a blend of old and new. The comment on IA 15 uses a variant of *The Friend* 2: 70-71 (1: 104) for the first sentence, and the second sentence was added for *Aids to Reflection*. Four paragraphs from *The Friend*, with minor changes and omissions, are blended into the Elements of Religious Philosophy, and Coleridge also uses a quotation from his *Lay Sermons* in ASRb 8.\(^{144}\) The Reflections, Introductory to Moral and Religious Aphorisms takes a paragraph out of Coleridge's early *Watchman*, which was changed to eliminate the "slightly stronger language" (AR, 58, n. 6) the earlier text had used.\(^{145}\) Some omissions are also made to rework this passage for an entirely different context: *The Watchman* of March 25\(^{th}\), 1796, was a condemnation of the slave trade, in which Coleridge composed one paragraph on the "false and bastard sensibility"

\(^{144}\) Discussed above, page 210.

\(^{145}\) Coleridge acknowledges this excerpt in his footnote (AR, 58).
(W, 139) of those who “fatten” on other “equally certain and far more horrible” evils (i.e., slavery) than even those vices present to their senses. “Provided the dunghill be not before their parlour window, they are well content to know it exists,” he says (in both The Watchman, 139 and Aids to Reflection, 59, minor variants), and added in the 1796 text: “The merchant finds no argument against it in his ledger: the citizen at the crowded feast is not nauseated by the stench and filth of the slave-vessel—the fine lady’s nerves are not shattered by the shrieks! She sips a beverage sweetened with human blood, even while she is weeping over the refined sorrows of Werter or Clementina” (W, 139). The language is really considerably toned down in the later work from what seems to me the far more than “slightly stronger” earlier expressions (“a beverage sweetened with human blood”), as befits a passage distinguishing sensibility from morality and prudence (AR), as opposed to an attack on the slave trade. This excerpt was also used in the 1812 Omniana.

This reworking or borrowing of his own texts was an extremely common practice of Coleridge’s, and we can see in Aids to Reflection some favourite passages that had been reused many times over. For example, the excerpt forming IA 1 was taken, with some changes, from The Friend (1: 110, 2: 74). The first part of the aphorism (to the word “meet”) was a variant of CN 2: 2535 (where The Friend passage obviously had its origins), and the last sentence is also found in the Statesman’s Manual (25) and the Opus Maximum manuscript. Favourite quotations from other authors could also travel; see, for
example, the passage from Erasmus’s *Epistola ad Dorpium* used previously in the
*Biographia* (*AR*, 244-45; *BL* 2: 207).

Whether or not they were used in more than one of his works, the older Coleridge
materials were generally varied, more or less extensively, and blended with new writing.
While many of the passages discussed above did not have major changes made to them,
Coleridge in some cases greatly expanded or rewrote his own work as he did with others’.
In the comment to his last aphorism, *On Baptism*, about 40 lines of the first 110 follow
quite closely from *CN* 4: 4750, a record of Coleridge’s discussion on baptism with
Launcelot Wade, a “born and bred Baptist” (*AR*, 361). The first twenty lines are
expanded from the first four sentences of the notebook entry, which is as follows:

Launcelot Wade and myself are agreed as as [sic] to the following:

1. That we are opposed equally to all attempts to explain any thing *into*
   Scripture, and to all attempts to explain any thing *out of* Scripture/—i.e. to
   explain away the positive assertions of Scripture under pretence that the literal
   sense is not agreeable to reason, i.e. their notions drawn from Their school of
   phi- or psilosophizing. Thus a Platonist would believe as ideally true certain
   doctrines independent of Scripture and therefore anticipate their Scriptural
   realization which an Epicurean will not receive on the most positive
   declarations of the divine Word.—

   We both agree likewise, that as the Unitarians (and a large part of the
Arminians who will not allow themselves to be Unitarians in the…fashionable
plusquam-socinian sense) **err grievously in the latter point, so tho’ less grossly**

the Pædo-baptists **err in the former.** *(CN, 4: 4750)*

Because of “interlinear glosses,” or insertions which creep between the phrases of the old material to enlarge it, the first section of the comment in *Aids to Reflection* reads:

> Our discussion is rendered shorter and more easy by our perfect **agreement** in certain preliminary points. We both disclaim alike every **attempt to explain any thing into Scripture, and every attempt to explain any thing out of Scripture.** Or if we regard either with a livelier aversion, it is the latter, as being the more fashionable and prevalent. I mean the practice of both high and low *Grotian* Divines **to explain away positive assertions of Scripture** on the pretext, **that the literal sense is not agreeable to Reason,** that is, *THEIR particular* Reason. And inasmuch as, (in the only right sense of the word) there is no such thing as a *particular* Reason, they must, and in fact they *do,* mean, that the literal sense is not accordant to their *Understanding, i.e. to the Notions* which their Understandings have been taught and accustomed to form in *their school of philosophy.* **Thus a Platonist** who should become a Christian, **would** at once, even in texts susceptible of a different interpretation, recognize, because he would expect to find, several **doctrines** which the disciple of the *Epicurean* or Mechanic School **will not receive on the most positive declarations of the Divine Word.** And as we agree in the opinion, that the *Minimi-fidian* Party (p. 214) **err grievously in the latter point, so** I must concede to you, that too many
**Paedo-baptists** (*Assertors of Infant Baptism*) have erred, though less grossly, in the former. (*AR*, 361-62)

While the two texts are obviously strongly related, the second, published transformation takes the more condensed text and glosses it with phrases slipped in between the original ones, often to explain Coleridge’s somewhat cryptic shorthand to an unfamiliar audience. After this section which is directly linked to the notebook entry, Coleridge goes on in *Aids to Reflection* to give further explanations and concrete illustrations of the next notebook sentence — “We both appear to ourselves to see, that there is no end or determinable Limit...to these inferences and probable deductions”—though this sentence is not included in the published version. After this, the next brief section of the *AR* comment (from “the Texts appealed to” on the bottom of p. 365 to “implied herein” on the top of 367, including the footnote on p. 366) has much the same relationship to the next three paragraphs of the notebook entry as did the beginning of the comment.

Since I fear that I may be taxing my reader’s patience with all of these lengthy textual comparisons, I will try simply to summarise the other places in *Aids to Reflection* in which Coleridge greatly alters his own text: the methods, after all, that he uses to transform textually his own previously written material are precisely the same that we saw him employ throughout *Aids to Reflection* for other authors’ works. ASRa 3, like the last comment, is expanded and rewritten from a shorter notebook entry (*CN*, 4: 5066), and similarly borrows key phrases from it. *The Friend* is used, as it is in so many places, in note two of IA 8; this remark, which distinguishes between the concepts of “thought”
and "attention," begins as does the two-sentence passage in the 1810 *Friend* (2: 277), but quickly moves away from it by explaining thought more thoroughly than it does attention, and putting more of the emphasis on the passivity of attention.\(^{146}\)

Two sections toward the end of this long work are composed using multiple Coleridge texts. In addition to the marginalia on Leighton with which it begins, *On the Difference in Kind of the Reason and the Understanding*, extracts a synopsis of Kirby and Spence's *Introduction to Entomology* (attributed to "Hüber") from *CN* 4: 4884, with only minor alterations; expands *CN* 3: 4260 to make part of a paragraph in a long footnote (*AR*, 226); and utilises a greatly expanded *CN* 4: 5435, which in turn takes its starting point from a sentence in Swift’s “Thoughts on Various Subjects,”\(^ {147}\) for the rest of this footnote. The conclusion is a similar melange of mostly notebooks entries, adapted and expanded, from *CN* 4: 4931, the *Opus Maximum* manuscript, *CN* 4: 5195, and *CN* 3: 4125.

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All along, I have been arguing that *Aids to Reflection* evolved into a collaborative composition which blends away demarcations between authors in order to create a homogeneous text out of a collection of fragments. But the astute reader may point out that the aphorism-commentary format of the book which Coleridge adopted makes a clear

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\(^{146}\) See Beer’s note on p. 14.

\(^{147}\) Again, see *AR*, 226, n. 35, for Swift’s original text.
distinction between author and editor/commentator, much more so than the continuous prose that Coleridge had first decided to use. When he saw the earliest proofs, Coleridge was distressed at "the disorderly and heterogeneous appearance which the Selections intermixed with my own comments &c would have" (CL, 5: 306). The original format, which did not make the divisions, would at first glance appear to be much more homogeneous (and therefore better support my argument for a blended text) than the final arrangement. Yet Coleridge calls it "disorderly and heterogeneous"—why? I would suggest first of all that the continuous prose, though not numbered or spaced, was nonetheless divided because of the quotation marks and attribution of sources (volume and page number) which demarcated the Leighton "Selections," as he here calls them from "my own comments &c." Coleridge was still thinking at this point of an edition, rather than a composition, and since obviously Leighton was still the "primary" author in this mode, he must be acknowledged. As an edition, the text must preserve the distinction between author/source and editorial commentary. Since Coleridge was, in adopting the aphorism form, still conceiving of it as a collection of selections which must contain the demarcations his text eventually loses, the division into aphorism and commentary not only makes sense as far as organisation is concerned, but is also strongly related to the origins of Aids to Reflection in Coleridge's marginalia on Leighton. The "beauties" or selections from Leighton and commentary in the 1825 work are formatted in generally the same way as the Collected Coleridge edition of the Marginalia: a

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148 See my discussion above, page 167.
fragment of "source" text, followed by a comment by Coleridge. Therefore, as an edition of selections, it was a sensible way to regularise a potentially fragmentary and disorganised form.

Before looking at Coleridge’s use of marginalia and how it is related to this structure, I would like to ponder Coleridge’s definition of the aphorism and aphoristic form generally. Certainly aphorisms were a favourite genre of Coleridge’s: “I should like to know, whether or how far the delight, I feel & have always felt, in adages or aphorisms of universal or very extensive application, is a general or common feeling with man, or a peculiarity of my own mind.” His own favourite, “Extremes meet,” he says, “has it enabled me to contemplate [many hostile Tenets], as Fragments of the Truth—false only by negation, and mutual exclusion” (CN, 4: 4830). In a footnote to the comment on IA 25, Coleridge gives quite a clear definition of aphorism:

Aphorism, determinate position, from the Greek, ap, from; and horizein, to bound or limit; whence our horizon.—In order to get the full sense of a word, we should first present to our minds the visual image that forms its primary meaning. Draw lines of different colours round the different counties of England, and then cut out each separately, as in the common play-maps that children take to pieces and put together—so that each district can be contemplated apart from the rest, as a whole in itself. This twofold act of circumscribing, and detaching, when it is exerted by the mind on subjects of reflection and reason, is to aphorize, and the result an aphorism. (AR, 32-33)
An aphorism is a limited or bounded text: that is, a passage that has had been newly set off from its original context, as Coleridge’s map illustration makes clear. What was once part of a whole has been excerpted, but (ideally) does not lose itself as a fragment: rather, because it “can be contemplated apart from the rest,” becomes “a whole in itself.” Aphorising is a mental act, one of selection (“circumscribing, and detaching”) on “subjects of reflection and reason.” Coleridge’s excerpting of Leighton’s text (in this case, the map of England) is truly a case of aphorising, and “the result an aphorism.” The goal of reading aphorisms is to train the mind in connected thought. Coleridge explains in the comment to which the definition is a note that “It was customary with religious men in former times, to make a rule of taking every morning some text, or aphorism, for their occasional meditation during the day, and thus to fill up the intervals of their attention to business” (AR, 32-33). Therefore, in the opening address, Coleridge asks his readers to judge the book by how it has affected them; they should ask themselves upon finishing it “has it increased your power of thinking connectedly?” (AR, 3). Beer speculates that Coleridge chose the aphoristic form because he seems to have feared that the adoption of continuous prose would encourage over-swift reading of sentences where the meaning was highly concentrated. The aphoristic method had the advantage that it held up specific statements as successive points of focus for the reader’s meditation, making a superficial reading more difficult. (AR, lxvi)
Continuous prose, apparently, does not lend itself to the development of the same mental processes as the reading of aphorisms involves.

The problem is that aphorisms, no matter how pedagogical when viewed ideally, are still fragments and so potentially dangerous to a form striving to be whole. Even after the completion of Aids to Reflection, Coleridge wrote to John Taylor Coleridge, requesting him to read the first third of the work, because of his worries about the form: “One of my principal motives for the request, I have made, is that I may have an opinion, that I can rely on, as to the effect of the aphorismatic form; whether it distracts or relieves the attention” (CL, 5: 443). Coleridge had reservations about the form of “Beauties” in his initial letter to Murray, since he claimed that they “are objectionable works— injurious to the original Author, as disorganizing his productions—pulling to pieces the well-wrought Crown of his glory to pick out the shining stones—and injurious to the Reader, by indulging the taste for unconnected & for that reason unretained single Thoughts” (CL, 5: 200). What the difference is between “beauties,” which pick the jewels out the author’s crown, and “aphorisms,” which cull the counties out of the map of England, is not always clear, and a piece of text may be a “beauty” or an aphorism, a fragment or a new whole, depending on your viewpoint. To a certain extent, Coleridge acknowledges, an aphorism is always incomplete, as he intimates in Aids to Reflection slightly after his definition: “Exclusive of the abstract sciences, the largest and worthiest

\[149\] He continues, “The remaining two thirds of the Volume, (the philosophical and theological) are, of necessity, more continuous: and of these I can form some opinion: of the former I cannot—but am quite adrift” (CL, 5: 444), suggesting that the demarcated aphoristic form he viewed as belonging to the first part of the work, the “selections,” as opposed to the more truly collaborative later material.
portion of our knowledge consists of aphorisms: and the greatest and best of men is but an aphorism” (AR, 34). We may possess a county in England, a phenomenal or finite whole, but not the whole map, which is only God’s. The aphorism, therefore, although a whole, is still a fragment compared to “the” whole, one might say. What rescues the aphorism from its potential fall into total fragmentation, as opposed to the necessary incompleteness of our fallen knowledge, is the thought exerted on it. Ideally, the partial nature of the aphorism draws our mind to fill in the blanks, so to speak. John Beer contends (AR, lxvi-lxvii) that Bacon was the model for this usage of “aphorism,” and so I would like to turn to Bacon’s works briefly.

The first book of The Advancement of Learning criticises the composition of books by “method,” that is, a technique “whereby a whole subject would be partitioned under a variety of heads and carefully packaged so as to present the appearance of completeness and comprehensiveness,”150 as one of the “Errors…which Hinder the Progress and Credit of Learning” (32) and commends in its stead an aphoristic style. The reason is that young men (Coleridge’s audience as well), when presented with a methodical, complete text, “do seldom grow to a further stature,” whereas “knowledge, while it is in aphorisms and observations…is in growth” (Advancement, 34). Later, in book two, Bacon makes the statement, which is very fitting for Coleridge’s theory of the aphorism, that “aphorisms, representing a knowledge broken, do invite men to inquire further” (136; my emphasis). Aphorisms are fragmentary by nature: “the first and earliest

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150 This succinct definition is from Peter Urbach’s introduction to his co-edition of Novum Organum, p. xii.
seekers after truth...were in the habit of casting the knowledge which they
gathered...into *aphorisms*, short and scattered sentences, not linked to each other by a
rhetorical method of presentation; nor did they pretend or profess to embrace the entire
art” (*Novum Organum*, 96). The aphorisms of *Novum Organum* could also provide a
model for Coleridge, as they are in Bacon’s practice *not* “short and scattered sentences,”
but are in many cases ten or more pages long.

By contrast, aphorisms are usually defined by “Brevity and self-containment”
(Snider, 60); they are, typically, “concentrated, neatly phrased, and often puzzling, even
maddening” (Lind, 311). While Coleridge’s aphorisms, particularly upon a first reading,
could be considered “maddening,” it is not usually because of their brevity.\(^{151}\) Gavin
Edwards, linking aphorisms composed by an identifiable author to anonymous folk-
proverbs, suggests that “Proverbs are that form of artistic speech most widely diffused in
everyday discourse; they are part of conversation. But they are a part of conversation
designed to put a stop to conversation, replies that do not ask for replies” (46-47).
Similarly, William Matthews calls aphorisms “portable and memorable,” and says that
they “have the last word” (148). A “typical” aphorism, of the kind that Bacon and
Coleridge did not write, is brief and so self-contained, so wise, that it comprehends the
essence of the subject in its limited boundaries, making it unanswerable. By contrast,
Coleridge has a Nietzschean view of aphorisms; Nietzsche wrote that “An aphorism,
properly stamped and molded, has not been ‘deciphered’ when it has simply been read;

\(^{151}\) Coleridge does write a few “aphoristic” aphorisms: see, for example, MRA 23 and 25.
rather, one has then to begin its *exegesis.*¹⁵² Coleridge does not wish to stop conversation with his aphorisms, but to provoke it, and his commentary is a model for the reader, an attempt to demonstrate the results of meditating on these thought-provoking “fragments.”

One would expect the aphorism-commentary form of *Aids to Reflection,* developing as it did out of the selections and annotations format, to be aphorisms by Leighton (pieces of his own particular map of England, his works) with commentary, originally marginal, by Coleridge. Some aphorisms follow this pattern, but a fairly small percentage of them. The comments on MRA 36 and 43 are from the marginalia on the preceding excerpt, and the comments on PA 1 and ASRb 2, 8, 10, 19, and 24 are partly composed of marginalia.¹⁵³ Sometimes this content was fairly minor: in ASRb 2, the first two sentences only, and in ASRb 8, the last paragraph, derive from Coleridge’s marginal notes, and both comments are long. Coleridge occasionally employs marginalia as footnotes, a related usage to that of the demarcated commentary (MRA 9, 16, 42). The difference, one would think, should be that the footnote annotates only a specific part of the text and therefore cannot follow it as a normal comment, which would elucidate most or all of the preceding excerpt. Now, while the marginal footnote to MRA 16 glosses a particular phrase (“the spirits should pass”), the other two footnotes discuss the text more generally and could serve as comments. The main other use of marginalia in *Aids to*

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¹⁵² Alvin Snider quotes this passage from *On the Genealogy of Morals* as his epigraph to “Francis Bacon and the Authority of Aphorism,” 60.

¹⁵³ The remark preceding MRA 6 is also from the marginalia on this excerpt. However, it does not comment on the Leighton, but introduces it.
Reflection is in the combined (Leighton and Coleridge) aphorisms (PA 1, MRA 7, MRA 33, MRA 41). Therefore, in his aphorisms, Coleridge has blended in what was originally commentary.

The generic distinction between aphorism and commentary, like the demarcation between author and editor or between various authors' works, breaks down everywhere in Aids to Reflection. By the time Coleridge had got around to dividing his text in this manner, he was already proposing not just aphorisms (excerpts) from Leighton, but aphorisms of his own and of a combined origin. If you can have aphorisms by the "editor," who ideally should stick to commentary, then what is an aphorism as distinguished from a comment? As defined by Coleridge, an aphorism is a fragment that has had new boundaries drawn around it to make a new whole; any excerpt that can make sense on its own and is demarcated from its original can be an aphorism. The question is then, what is commentary, and how is that distinguished from the aphorism? Speaking ideally, again, commentary is what the aphorism should provoke, and this mental exegesis should serve to unify the admittedly "broken" text. When Coleridge initially wrote to Murray, describing the proposal for Aids to Reflection, he described how he would give Leighton's rather disconnected commentary a unity it never had, "a connection or at least a propriety of sequency" (CL, 5: 200). This integration would be achieved, he claimed in making the proposal the second time around to Taylor and Hessey, by bestowing "the necessary additions, or completions" upon Leighton's work.

154 See the letter to Taylor and Hessey (CL, 5: 306) discussed above, page 167.
What is interesting here, and perhaps indicative of the generic confusion between aphorism and commentary for Coleridge, is that the work he mentions, Leighton's *Commentary on 1 Peter*, has itself an aphorism and commentary form, according to Coleridge's definition. The work divides 1 Peter into verses or groups of verses, and comments on them. Therefore, the biblical text provides the material for the aphorisms, excerpted and contemplated as individual wholes, and Leighton supplies the commentary, which should make the "necessary additions, or completions" to fill in the blanks. Yet Coleridge's characterisation of the commentary on these biblical aphorisms, as commentary, was that it was "by nature and necessity" disjointed (*CL*, 5: 290), since it must jump from one piece of text to another. Since Leighton moved through the biblical text in order, he could not decide what subject to speak of next, and therefore could not unify the work thematically: Coleridge proposed to do so by arranging them "on a principle wholly independent of the accidental place of each in the original Volumes."

Coleridge, however, in the section which is most aphoristic, 155 the "Moral and Religious Aphorisms," orders them in precisely the same way as Leighton: he uses the excerpts in the order in which they occur in the *Commentary*.

Though he keeps the demarcations clear theoretically, Coleridge makes it next to impossible to keep practical distinctions between aphorism and comment. In the Introductory Aphorisms, in particular, he often writes his own aphorism and then

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155 Coleridge, we remember from his letter to his nephew, John Taylor Coleridge, viewed the beginning of the book, that which was not in the "philosophical and theological" section (therefore, the MRA) as having an "aphorismatic form" while the remainder was "more continuous" (*CL*, 5: 443). See above, page 221.
comments on it. While this format could be explained by viewing the aphorism as a unit particularly worthy of contemplation, and the comment as a reflection on it or an explication of it, in practice, these clear-cut discriminations blur. Is the comment on IA 19, which begins “Few are so obdurate, few have sufficient strength or character, to be able to draw forth an evil tendency or immoral practice into distinct consciousness, without bringing it in the same moment before an awaking conscience,” for example, any less aphoristic than the preceding aphorisms? Does it comment on IA 19 specifically or does it just have the same thematic relationship to it as to the rest of the Introductory Aphorisms? If we read through the work attempting to define the aphorism as distinct from commentary, by means of Coleridge’s usage, at times, we would be able to identify distinctions, but often we would fail. More often than not, the generic borders are transgressed.

The merging of attributions of text to himself and Leighton, and himself and other authors, as I have discussed in such detail above, means that the boundaries of the aphorism are constantly being violated by Coleridge’s commentary. For example, PA 1 and MRA 7 both slip marginalia, that is commentary, into an aphorism, with no indication that the notes are somehow out of place or distinguishable from the aphorism “proper”: what was originally commentary mimics the genre of aphorism. In MRA 10, 17, and 47, however, passages by Coleridge which were not originally marginalia are

156 Of course, because there are not any hard and fast rules, my reading of commentary that has blended indistinguishably into an aphorism, as opposed to that which retains its generic marker as commentary, is somewhat subjective; the analysis may differ somewhat from reader to reader. MRA 33 and 41 also blend Coleridge’s marginalia into an aphorism, but integrate it somewhat less successfully, I think.
inserted into a joint aphorism and function distinctly as a comment, though under the aegis of "aphorism." In all three, a definite break is made between the "comment" and the Leighton passage (both contained within the aphorism) by the comment’s referring back to the Leighton as a distinct entity: "There is something exquisitely beautiful and touching in the first of these similes [in the passage we have been contemplating]" (AR, 91); "The same sentiment [as in the Leighton passage]...has been finely expressed by a sage Poet of the preceding Generation" (AR, 99-100); "The same sentiments [as are found in the preceding passage] are to be found in the works of Pagan Philosophers and Moralists" (AR, 129). I have put in my own parenthetical comments to attempt to make clear the separation between the passage commented on, and the new, critical voice which is making the comment (though both are contained within the aphorism). Why is Coleridge’s contribution not put into a comment proper? At one point (IA 29), an extract from Leighton is actually used as a comment in a footnote to Coleridge’s aphorism.

On the surface, the aphorism-commentary format gives Aids to Reflection a structure which appears to organise the text to make the demarcations between authors, or author and editor, clear, making the text less homogeneous. Yet this organisation is only superficial: both the authorial designations, which disappear by the 1831 edition and often do not indicate correctly the contributions of all involved157 and even the generic divisions between aphorism and commentary do not keep their borders intact. The relentless movement in Aids to Reflection is the blending of “marginalia” and text or, to

157 I am thinking here particularly of Coleridge’s contributions to aphorisms attributed exclusively to other authors.
phrase it another way. the appropriation of the aphorism by Coleridge’s generically protean “commentary,” an assimilation which is a common mode of composition for Coleridge, and what we might call the height of textual collaboration.

Coleridge describes his “Life of Leighton,” the ever-planned but never completed introduction to *Aids to Reflection*, as a work which will also be a newly composed compilation, in effect. After warning his publishers that the Life will “occupy a full half of the Volume,” he reassures them that after a “laborious Collation of Spottiswood, Heylin, Prynne, Wharton, Burnet, Hacket &c,” “all my Materials are both ready, and arranged, save only a spot of terra incognita which I hope to colonize out of WOODROW’s History of the Church” (*CL*, 5: 300-01). If we can extrapolate from his compositional technique in *Aids to Reflection*, having all of his “materials” ready means that he will form the Life in part from the sections he will “colonize” from other authors’ works. This metaphor is extremely interesting, as we can relate this back (or forward, chronologically) to Coleridge’s map illustration in his definition of the aphorism. To recapitulate, Coleridge describes the action of aphorising as drawing a line around one of the counties in a map of England, and detaching it so that it “can be contemplated apart from the rest, as a whole in itself” (*AR*, 32-33); the detached county is an aphorism. Obviously this is a textual metaphor: the map of England is a text, or several texts, and the abstracted county a fragment of that work. The “spot of terra incognita” which he wants to “colonize” out of Woodrow uses the same metaphor of text as land, but makes the appropriation of it more clear, and implies that Coleridge’s relationship to his text or
land in *Aids to Reflection* is also one of coloniser to colonised. Textual collaboration, after all, does take over the detached counties or fragments of text and assimilate them to what we might call the motherland, Coleridge’s own philosophy. In his *Aids to Reflection* metaphor, Coleridge tries to make the counties stand on their own, complete and “whole” in themselves, but the figure of speech does not account for the commentary. The “colonisation” metaphor is more appropriate, because the invading armies of commentary begin at the borders of the text and slowly work their way in, eventually taking over much of the map.\(^{158}\)

In *Aids to Reflection*, marginalia and their relation, commentary—which in this text function so often as interlinear glosses—are an integral part of Coleridge’s compositional method. A composite text needs glue to hold it together, and we know that Coleridge thought of his comments on Leighton as the glue that would unify Leighton’s disjointed commentary. Yet the problem (or delight) of Coleridge’s composite collaboration is that the glue, like biblical glosses, seeps into every crack and crevice of the text, so that the “marginalia” are soon not at all marginal, but overwhelm or (to mix my metaphors) colonise the main text. In the Aphorisms on that which is Indeed Spiritual Religion, not only is the amount of commentary disproportionate to the “source” text, but it invades its textual boundaries, as well. All the texts used as aphorisms in the last two sections (Taylor, Hacket, Burnet, More, Leighton, Hooker) had marginalia written on them; these marginal notes were the beginning of the process of colonisation.

\(^{158}\) Some work has been done on “the close relationship, in Romantic travel writing, between plagiarism and colonialism” (Mazzeo, 157). See Mazzeo’s article for a description and other sources.
Even the original materials which did not begin their life as marginalia physically are a type of pseudo-marginalia. Most of these additions to and rewritings of text are dependent on another work for their existence: they take their starting point responding to or transforming another text and slip readily into other works. Coleridge loved to produce notes, whether these are in the margins of a book, slipped interlinearly into another author’s work, or in the standard footnote format. In a letter to Hartley Coleridge a few years before writing *Aids to Reflection*, he enthuses:

A blessing, I say, on the inventors of Notes! You have only to imagine the lines between the ( ) to be printed in smaller type at the bottom of the page—& the Writer may digress, like Harris, the Historian, from Dan to Barsheba & from Barsheba in hunt after the last Comet, without any breach of continuity.

Digress? or not digress? That’s now no question.

Do it! Yet do it *not!* See Note* below. (*CL*, 5: 98-99)

In *Aids to Reflection*, he has a format in which he feels his notes can expand as much as they like. At the end of one particularly long footnote (of many), he adds: “P.S. In a continuous work, the frequent insertion and length of Notes would need an Apology: in a book of Aphorisms and detached Comments none is necessary, it being understood beforehand, that the Sauce and the Garnish are to occupy the greater part of the Dish” (*AR*, 229). Coleridge himself is quite aware that his “notes,” whether they be commentary, actual marginalia, or footnotes, have taken over the primary text.
Like the gospels formed through the accretion of layers of notes added to the Urevangelium, Coleridge’s text has multiple strata of annotation. If the marginalia written in Leighton’s (and others’) works were the first and earliest level, the interlinear glosses that Coleridge used to rewrite his source texts, the marked “commentary,” and the lengthy footnotes (one of which has its own note), are other layers in various stages of assimilation into the main text. While the “Rime of the Ancient Mariner” mimics the biblical composition with different layers apparently written by various authors, in Aids to Reflection, we can see that the actual process of creation, which absorbs many different earlier texts and blends them with these various strata of notes, also from different times, is uncannily similar to the construction of the Bible. As well, when we view Aids to Reflection as being modelled on the biblical text as the Higher Critics described it, I would argue that its rather unusual compositional process is much more readily understandable.

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Whether Coleridge consciously used the Bible as a model is open to debate. However, his marginal note on Eichhorn explicitly comparing the annotations which have been received into the Bible with his own practice suggests an awareness that the
scriptural pattern could be applied to his own texts.\footnote{See chapter three, page 144, above. Coleridge writes “The authenticity of the Books would be no more compromised by such glosses, than that of the Book before me by this marginal Note of mine” (EICHHORN Alte Testament 28).} With his extensive reading in the biblical critics, Coleridge would have seen again and again the description of text composed by multiple, anonymous authors and redactors, attributed to one authoritative name, and comprised of a composite of many different works, marginal glosses, and editorial commentary. Coleridge’s detailed study of the composition of the Bible, his conscious comparisons of his and other contemporary literature, and the clear resemblance between his practice, particularly in Aids to Reflection, and the biblical authors as described by the Higher Criticism, argue persuasively for influence.

I would like to examine the end of Aids to Reflection, in which Coleridge defends his text against the critics, in order to argue that Coleridge associated the compiled nature of his own text with a biblical model. While Beer is of the opinion that it is a glorious closing in which Coleridge “survey[s] his own work as a whole and...look[s] at possible objections” (AR, lxxxvii), I find the tone extremely defensive, an attitude which is not surprising considering the reception his previous works had received. Apart from his primary worry that the work will seem mystical, the critics’ loose word for “Visionary Ravings, Obsolete Whimsies, Transcendental Trash” (AR, 383) or anything else not easily understood, Coleridge is also concerned that his readers will censure him for not being original, even for plagiarising, an accusation entirely beside the point, according to him: “The charge will probably be worded in this way:—There is nothing new in all this!
(as if novelty were any merit in questions of Revealed Religion!) It is Mysticism, all taken out of William Law..." (AR, 383-84). Coleridge goes on to detail his knowledge of Law's works and to assert his innocence of plagiarism, a defence that Beer finds "puzzling" (AR, 385, n.9) as Coleridge does not appear to have borrowed from Law (AR, 385, n.10 & 11):

I am acquainted with the SERIOUS CALL; and besides this I remember to have read a small tract on Prayer, if I mistake not, as I easily may, it being at least six-and-twenty years since I saw it. He may in this or in other tracts have quoted the same passages from the fourth Gospel as I have done. But surely, this affords no presumption that my conclusions are the same with his; still less, that they are drawn from the same premisses; and least of all, that they were adopted from his writings. Whether Law has used the phrase, assimilation by faith, I know not; but I know that I should expose myself to a just charge of an idle parade of my Reading, if I recapitulated the tenth part of the Authors, Ancient and Modern, Romish and Reformed, from Law to Clemens Alexandrinus and Irenaeus, in whose works the same phrase occurs in the same sense. And after all, on such a subject how worse than childish is the whole dispute! (AR, 384-85)

Another (justly) bewildered annotation by Beer notes that "the phrase [assimilation by faith] appears neither in [Law's] The Spirit of Prayer nor in AR" (AR, 385, n.11); nonetheless, when Coleridge guiltily launches a defence against plagiarism, it is usually a signal that something is afoot. Here, it is not appropriation from Law, I suggest, but his
concerns over the “reverse plagiarisms” of *Aids to Reflection*, the giving another’s name to his own text, and the rather illegitimate invasion of the borders of these other texts, as well as about its overall form as a compiled text. These passages follow shortly after Coleridge’s suggestion to “the operative Critic that he may compile” a review “out of Warburton’s Tract on Grace and the Spirit”. The conjunction of these ideas, a compiled text and worries over originality and plagiarism, are not coincidental. They reveal Coleridge’s uneasiness over the composite nature of *Aids to Reflection*.

Coleridge suggests that his text, which contains “nothing new” (and too much that is old, by implication), should be exempted from considerations of plagiarism because of its religious subject matter: “And after all, on such a subject how worse than childish is the whole dispute” (*AR*, 385); “novelty” is of no importance “*in questions of Revealed Religion*”(*AR*, 384). He then immediately turns to consider the question of whether “the fourth Gospel [is] authentic” and whether “the interpretation, I have given, true or false” (*AR*, 386). To me, this sudden shift was initially rather puzzling, since although the Gospel of John has provided an important subtext to *Aids to Reflection*, with mentions of and quotations from it scattered throughout the work, it is most definitely an implicit rather than explicit theme, and Coleridge nowhere provides a distinct “interpretation” of it.

What connections are there between the notion of composing a review through a process of compilation, Coleridge’s defence of his unoriginal, possibly plagiarised text as valid because of its religious subject matter, and the sudden appearance of the question of
the authenticity of John? Quite a few, I argue, if we look at Coleridge's text as being influenced by a biblical model which the conservative critics of the time would not have accepted as authentic. It is fairly easy to see the ties between the putting forth of compilation as a method of composition, generally, and Coleridge's defence of his text. Although he does not specifically call it a compilation, his concerns that it will be seen as not new mean by implication that it has borrowed something (text and/or ideas) from earlier works. The hypothetical link between this justification of *Aids to Reflection* and the authenticity of John is much more oblique, but still arguable. Coleridge supports the unoriginal, compiled nature of his text by claiming that innovation is not necessary in a discussion of religious matters; in fact, a dispute about even outright plagiarism has no place in theology. As he writes to H. N. Coleridge in the letter discussing the 1831 revisions, "For my object, God knows! being to convey what appeared to me truths of infinite concernment, I thought neither of Leighton nor of myself—but simply of how it was most likely they should be rendered intelligible and impressive," and so he explains that as a result, he modified "so many aphorisms...that a contra-distinction of these from my own was deceptive" (*CL*, 6: 848-49). Truth, as he says so often in his other works, is his object, not authorial propriety and attribution, and this claim is particularly important in spiritual matters, where truth should take precedence over all other things.

Moving from the statement that "the whole dispute" about plagiarism in religious texts is "childish" immediately to the question "Is the fourth Gospel authentic?" implies that the concerns of the first somehow lead to the second. Now, if Coleridge felt that he
had to defend the Gospel of John against the accusations of plagiarism that a text which might not have been written entirely by John would provoke, or if he thought that he had to exonerate himself from the accusation that he believed “the writings, which the Church has attributed to this Apostle” (AR, 386) not to be “authentic,” i.e. not composed by John,\(^\text{160}\) this juxtaposition would finally make sense. Somewhere in Coleridge’s mind, a connection existed between the authority of his book as a compilation and the authenticity of the Gospel of John. This tie, to me, is indirect but suggestive evidence that Coleridge connected his compositional practices to those of scripture, and had similar concerns about how his readers would perceive the authenticity of both. The connection between the Gospel of John and Coleridge’s perception of his own work is oblique because Coleridge could not risk arguing to his readers the extremely controversial position that the Bible was a compilation formed in the same manner as Aids to Reflection was. Nonetheless, whether or not we interpret the juxtaposition of Coleridge’s defence against plagiarism and the question of the authenticity of John as having a connection, the Higher Critics’ model of biblical composition, with its blending of multiple sources, the marginal glosses incorporated into the main text, and the intrusive editor-author figure, provides a convincing way to historicise the distinctive form of Aids to Reflection.

\(^{160}\) The latter suggestion may be the most plausible here, since John was almost the only book of the Bible Coleridge wished to see remaining authentic in the sense of attributable to a known author. See the discussion of the authorship of John in chapter two, page 111. At any rate, the question of its genuineness was for most of Coleridge’s contemporaries intrinsically coupled with the problem of its attribution.
Our secular century has virtually ignored this deeply religious and didactic text, but *Aids to Reflection* made a profound impact on nineteenth-century religious and philosophical thought, both in England and America. James Marsh’s publication of the work in America in 1829 “gave new life to the nascent movement of Transcendentalism and established new religious sensibilities in America” (Ledbetter, 177). Coleridge’s “system” as revealed in the *Aids* gave a group of independent thinkers, the most notable of whom was Emerson, a “common bond” (Carafiol, 37). Nancy Craig Simmons says that by the time of the publication of Shedd’s edition of the *Complete Works*, Coleridge “had become an American guru” (380). In England, Coleridge was “a primary source of inspiration” for the Cambridge Apostles (Deacon, 9)—a group that included F.D. Maurice and John Sterling.

The strength of *Aids to Reflection*, then and now, is the collaboration between Coleridge and Leighton. Leighton’s voice needed to be heard in the early nineteenth century, the religious thought of which was still enmired in the “decayed rationalism” (Welch, 3) of the eighteenth century. However, Leighton’s voice alone was not enough. Leighton himself did not become a touchstone for nineteenth-century thinkers, but the mixture of Coleridge and Leighton (and Taylor, More, Hacket, Luther, etc.) found in *Aids to Reflection* did. Even today, Coleridge’s urge to enter into these texts and his sincere desire to make them speak truth for his time through additions and rewriting are fascinating. The interplay between Coleridge and the seventeenth-century thinkers found in *Aids to Reflection* provides an ingress into an exciting and unjustly neglected work.
Appendix A: Leighton in the 1825 and 1831 Prudential Aphorisms

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<th>1831</th>
<th>1825</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PA 2</strong></td>
<td>Leighton Copy C 56B (4: 319-20), first paragraph reworked, truncated from marked passage</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PA 3</strong></td>
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<td><strong>PA 4</strong></td>
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<td><strong>PA 5</strong></td>
<td>Leighton Copy C 54B (4: 245-46), uses all of marked passage.</td>
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<td><strong>PA 6 &amp; 7</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PA 8</strong></td>
<td>Leighton Copy C 56B (4: 319-20), first paragraph the same as 1831, uses all of marked passage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PA 9</strong></td>
<td>Editor</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PA 10</strong></td>
<td>Editor</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PA 11</strong></td>
<td>Leighton Copy C 55A (4: 268), as marked.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PA 12</strong></td>
<td>Leighton Copy C 55C (4: 274-75), slight alteration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PA 13</strong></td>
<td>Leighton Copy C 56A (4: 317-18), as marked.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{161} This passage is marked 4: 201 in *Aids to Reflection (CC)*.

\textsuperscript{162} See Appendix G (g) of *Aids to Reflection (CC)*.

\textsuperscript{163} See Appendix G (h) of *Aids to Reflection (CC)*.
Appendix B

TO THE READER added in 1831, from marginalia on an 1825 copy of AR.

MOTTOS Marinus adapted freely. Vico has slight changes and one omission.

PREFACE Description of readers weakly related to Leighton Copy C 40 (not mentioned in Beer).

INTRODUCTORY APHORISMS

I Editor. Adapted from Friend (1: 110, 2: 74), with some phrases added and some omitted. First part of passage (to “meet”) is a variant on CN 2: 2535. Last sentence is also found in Statesman’s Manual 25 and the Opus Maximum ms.

II Editor

III Editor


V Editor

164 I am indebted to John Beer for most of the information in this appendix, as in the footnotes and appendices of Aids to Reflection, he has given the source and text of almost every passage Coleridge used in the work. Although he usually indicates the degree to which a passage has been changed, I have made my own comparison of the sources and AR text, and the descriptions here are my own. This appendix, therefore, is a helpful “aid” to my reader (and myself) in sorting out the intricacies of what has been borrowed and how much the sources have been changed, in order to make the reading of chapter three a little less confusing. Occasionally I have refined Beer, pointing out a couple of places where marginalia were used that were not marked in the notes, and these I will indicate in the text of the appendix.

165 A letter following a marginalia number indicates in CM that the passage was marked but not annotated. A number alone means that the passage has been annotated. The page numbers, unless otherwise indicated, are from the edition used in Copy C.
VI  Leighton, Introduction to *Theological Lectures* Copy C 4: 190 (not marked in marginalia). Adapts and rearranges Leighton.

VII  Editor

VIII  Leighton and Editor. Certain phrases borrowed from Leighton Copy C 4: 190-91 (not marked), with the rest being a paraphrase and condensation of it. Note two adapts and elaborates on two sentences in the 1810 *Friend* (2: 277), borrowing some phrases and paraphrasing others.

IX  Editor

X  Editor

XI  Editor

XII  Editor

Comment  Related thematically to *Lay Sermons* 175, where he also (mis)quotes 2 Pet. 1.5.

XIII  Editor, *Lay Sermons* 175. Minor changes and a minor omission.

Comment  From *Lay Sermons* 175. Minor changes and two omissions.

XIV  Editor, adapted from *Lay Sermons* 180. Minor changes, one addition, and a substitution for one phrase.

XV  Editor, *Lay Sermons* 180, variant. Two additions, several omissions, and variant phrases.
Comment  First sentence a variant on *Friend 2: 70-71*, 1: 104 (repeated in SM 47-48), with minor omissions and changes, and the addition of “and a spirit of inquiry” at the end. Second sentence new.

XVI Editor

XVII Editor

XVIII Editor, from *Friend 1: 55-56*, variant, in turn derived from *CN 3: 3511*. Several minor omissions and some substitution of phrases.

Comment

XIX Editor. Quotes (with proper attribution) “Sin” from George Herbert’s *Temple*.

Comment

XX Editor

XXI Editor

XXII Editor

Comment

XXIII Editor

Comment

XXIV Editor

XXV Editor

XXVI Editor

XXVII Editor
XXVIII Editor. Footnote adapts "Donne's Sermons — quoted from memory."

Many phrases the same as Donne, but rearranged.

XXIX Editor. An extract from Leighton Copy C 49A 4: 194-5 (Theological Lecture 2)

is used as a footnote to Coleridge's aphorism.

XXX Editor

XXXI Editor

XXXII Editor

PRUDENTIAL APHORISMS

I Leighton and Editor. First paragraph, with the first sentence altered, from

Leighton's Theological Lectures 3 "On the Happiness of Man" Leighton Copy C 51A 4: 198. Second paragraph: first sentence derived from Leighton Copy C 52 4: 200, then includes a much shortened version of the marginalia on Leighton Copy C 51 4: 196, and Leighton Copy C 52A 4: 201; last three sentences have only minor variants from Leighton Copy C 53 (Coleridge substitutes a few phrases). This aphorism is a truncated version of the 1825 edition, which used the extracts from Leighton whole.

Comment (originally Aph. VI & VII in 1825 ed.) Related to the marginalia on Leighton Copy B 27 (not mentioned by Beer).
Leighton *Theological Lectures* 19 "That Holiness is the Only Happiness on Earth"; Leighton Copy C 56B 4: 319-20 (Aph. VIII in 1825). Minor changes, mostly to fit the paragraph into its new context.

Comment

III Editor

IV Editor

**REFLECTIONS, INTRODUCTORY TO MORAL AND RELIGIOUS APHORISMS**

I. ON SENSIBILITY  Fourth paragraph condensed, with some variants, from the *Watchman*, 139. Coleridge acknowledges *Watchman* in footnote; also reproduced in *Omniana* 1812 2: 204. Quotes part of "Reflections on Having Left a Place of Retirement."

**MORAL AND RELIGIOUS APHORISMS**

I  Leighton Copy C 4B 1: 5, much altered. First part of aphorism radically rewritten, though keeping the same sense; from "Ambassadors" to end is Leighton, differing only in accidentals. All the moral aphorisms, except L., are taken from Leighton's *Commentary on 1 Peter*.

II  Leighton Copy C 4C 1: 6.

III  Leighton and Editor. First paragraph Coleridge; second Leighton Copy C 7A 1: 14.
IV Leighton Copy C 8B 1: 21. Coleridge substitutes periods for semicolons to make the sentences tighter.

Remark An introduction to V rather than a “Comment” on IV.

V Leighton Copy C 8A 1: 20-1, 22-3. Coleridge alters a few phrases in beginning and end of first paragraph, omits two paragraphs in the middle of the Leighton passage, and makes one small change in the last paragraph.

Remark Again, an introduction to the following; from marginalia, slightly altered (additions at beginning and end), on VI.

VI Leighton Copy C 9 1: 23. One paragraph omitted as marked in the marginalia.

Comment Adapts a quotation from Tale of a Tub (acknowledged) to apply to AR; passage was transcribed into CN 4: 5041.

VII Leighton and Editor. First two-thirds of first paragraph is marginalia on Leighton Copy C 10, with a slight omission, followed (as instructed in the marginalia) by the original of Leighton Copy C 10, then Leighton Copy C 10A 1: 29-30, almost exact.

VIII Leighton Copy C 10C 1: 35-36. Slightly altered as in marginalia.

IX Leighton Copy C 11 1: 36. Marginalia (unchanged) as footnote

X Leighton and Editor. First paragraph Leighton Copy C 11A 1: 38-39; second Coleridge (instructions in marginalia mention an inserted slip, now lost).

XI Editor. [Actually Leighton Copy C 11B 1: 41.]
XII  Leighton and Editor. First paragraph based loosely on Leighton Copy C 11C 1: 41; second and third Coleridge.

XIII Leighton Copy C 11G 1: 55

XIV Editor. Quotes Leighton at beginning (Copy C 11H 1: 55) with acknowledgement but without using quotation marks.

XV Leighton and Editor. First paragraph Leighton Copy C 11I 1: 56-57, slightly altered, largely as marked in marginalia; second Coleridge.

Corollaries to Aphorisms XV Added in 1831 from marginalia on an 1825 edition.

XVI Leighton Copy C 15 1: 110-11. Leighton text has two slight changes; Coleridge’s note is slightly altered from marginalia.

XVII Leighton and Editor. First paragraph Leighton Copy C 15A 1: 119; second Coleridge, with an adaptation of a passage from Fulke Greville’s *A Treatie of Warres* (last line taken from *MacBeth*).

APHORISM XVII CONTINUED Leighton Copy C 15B 1: 122, almost exact. Two passages are marked for omission in marginalia, only one omitted.

XVIII Leighton Copy C 17D 1: 148. Slight change in punctuation (Beer does not mention this change).

XIX Leighton Copy C 17E 1: 171-2, almost exact. Small changes made largely to have the passage make sense out of its context.

XX Leighton Copy C 17F 1: 175-76, almost exact. One deletion and the substitution of “show” for “shew.”
XXI  Leighton Copy C 17G 1: 182. Sentence deleted.

XXII  Leighton and Editor. First sentence Coleridge's; rest Leighton Copy C 17I 1: 187-88

XXIII  Leighton Copy C 17L 1: 205

XXIV  Leighton and Editor. Leighton Copy C 17O 1: 226. First paragraph Leighton, one omission; second paragraph Coleridge.

XXV  Editor, CN 4: 5026. Minor changes.

XXVI  Leighton and Editor. Coleridge follows Leighton and rewrites the first three sentences, then follows Leighton Copy C 18D 1: 411-12, with an omission, and concludes with his own passage, functioning as a comment.

XXVII  Leighton Copy C 17P 1: 261. "to" becomes "toward," "shew" becomes "show"

(Beer makes no mention of changes).

XXVIII  Leighton Copy C 18A 1: 311-12

XXIX  Leighton Copy C 18B 1: 313, one slight alteration

XXX  Leighton Copy C 18C 1: 398

XXXI  Leighton and Editor. First paragraph Leighton Copy C 18F 2: 3-5; second paragraph a broad rewriting which changes the sense somewhat.

XXXII Leighton Copy C 18H 2: 7-8. Small change at beginning necessitated by the passage being taken out of context.
XXXIII  Leighton and Editor. First paragraph Leighton Copy C 19A 2: 9, altered; second Coleridge's marginalia (Copy C 20). Coleridge changes the second sentence of Leighton to make it more aphoristic, and alters the last sentence by adding one phrase and making Leighton's last phrase into a sentence.

XXXIV  Leighton Copy C 20B 2: 12-13, almost exact.

XXXV  Leighton and Editor. First paragraph Leighton Copy C 20F 2: 25, a few alterations. Only some of Coleridge's alterations marked in the marginalia are copied; following paragraphs by Coleridge quote Leighton briefly, and function as a comment.

XXXVI  Leighton Copy C 21 2: 52

Comment  Marginalia on preceding, copied almost exactly, with one addition made in 1831.

XXXVII  Leighton Copy C 21A 2: 53. One omission, marked in marginalia.

XXXVIII  Leighton Copy C 21B 2: 57

XXXIX  Leighton Copy C 22A 2: 75-76. Long omission.


XLI  Leighton and Editor. First two paragraphs Leighton Copy C 24 2: 82-86, one small change and omission of "for holy things are not to be cast to dogs"; third paragraph and note are taken from marginalia; fourth paragraph Leighton Copy C 24 2: 86, with a minor change to make the transition from Coleridge to Leighton.
XLII  Leighton Copy C 25 2: 87-90. One sentence omitted, changes to contextualise, marked in marginalia; note from marginalia.

XLIII  Leighton Copy C 26 2: 93. Slightly altered and three sentences deleted.

Comment  Third sentence begins marginalia on Leighton Copy C 26 2: 93 above.

XLIV  Leighton Copy C 26A 2: 94

XLV  Leighton Copy C 26B 2: 97

XLVI  Editor

XLVII  Leighton and Editor. First four paragraphs Leighton Copy C 27B 2: 116-18, omission of one paragraph; last paragraph Coleridge.

XLVIII  Leighton Copy C 35A 2: 199

XLIX  Leighton Copy C 36A 2: 211-12

L  Leighton Copy C 38A 2: 440-41, “Meditations on Psalm CXXX”

Comment

ELEMENTS OF RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY, PRELIMINARY TO THE APHORISMS ON
SPIRITUAL RELIGION

PRELIMINARY:  Midway, takes four paragraphs from the Friend 2: 279-81, with minor changes and several omissions, and a change from past to present tense for much of the section.  Ends with a quotation (in quotation marks) from Henry More’s An Explanation of the Grand Mystery of Godliness in Theological Works, adapted by Coleridge, who omitted text, rearranged it, and added a phrase of his own.
Motto  taken from CN 4: 5089

APHORISMS ON SPIRITUAL RELIGION

I  More An Explanation of the Grand Mystery of Godliness in Theological Works.  
    Adapted and rearranged slightly (text slips in from later section).

II  More (same).  Adapted and rearranged (again, text inserted from a later section).

III  Rewritten from a notebook comment on More, Theological Works (CN, 4: 5066),  
     so in effect, pseudo-marginalia.

IV  [More Theological Works 369] acknowledged at end.  Adapted and rewritten with  
    phrases picked out from More.

V  [More Theological Works 372-3] acknowledged at end; adapted.  First sentence  
    Coleridge (picking up certain phrases and ideas from More), next sentence More,  
    altered; third sentence is Coleridge’s condensed paraphrase.

VI  [John Hacket A Century of Sermons], acknowledged at end.  Almost exact.

Comment

APHORISMS ON THAT WHICH IS INDEED SPIRITUAL RELIGION

(Introduction)

I  Leighton Copy C 27C 2: 120-21.  One omission, first sentence Coleridge’s  
    rewriting of Leighton.

Comment
II Leighton. First sentence comes from Leighton Copy C 71: 11 (Leighton Copy B 11: 9-13); last sentence based on one several pages later. Included because it was the first Leighton passage annotated by Coleridge.

Comment First two sentences from marginalia, broadly adapted, on Leighton Copy B 11: 9-13. First footnote uses extract from Plume’s Life of Hacket, with slight changes in style. Beginning of third paragraph uses marginalia on Leighton Copy C 5, altered (not mentioned by Beer).

III Burnet The History of the Reformation of the Church of England. Broadly altered; Coleridge acknowledges “slight alterations.”

Comment

IV [Editor, not attributed]

V [Editor]

Comment

VI Hooker Works (1682) 521; altered. Only slight stylistic changes until last two sentences.

VII Editor

Comment

VIII Leighton Copy C 121: 71; almost exact

Comment Quotes Harrington, changing it considerably (he claims to have made “no other change than was necessary to make the words express, without aid of the context, what from the context it is evident was the Writer’s meaning”);
Harrington quotation was copied almost exactly into *CN* 2: 2223, then used in *Friend* 1: 154-61. Quotes Sir Thomas Browne, with slight changes, in quotation marks. Footnote quotes material from *Lay Sermons*, variant, with a *LS* footnote inserted into the main text (though not in the same place as the footnote was indicated in the original), and two new sentences added near the end of the selection; quotes ll. 33-34, 51-2 of "From a poem of Hildebert on his Master, the persecuted Berengarinus," from Tennemann, who uses ll. 31-34, 45-6, 51-2 (Coleridge copied all of the lines quoted in Tennemann into *CN* 4: 5062); quotes from Baxter, in quotation marks, but omits several phrases and adds two lines, beside numerous minor changes (accidentals, transitions, etc.). Entire last paragraph of the comment is adapted from part of a long marginal note on the previous aphorism (Leighton Copy C 12).

**ON THE DIFFERENCE IN KIND OF THE REASON AND THE UNDERSTANDING**

First sentence broadly adapted from marginalia on Leighton Copy C 12 (following directly after the excerpt used in the previous comment), as are the first four ½ sentences of the following paragraph, and the first sentence of the third. Part I of the account of the "Humble-bees" is taken, slightly altered, from a notebook condensation of Kirby and Spence but attributed to "Hüber" (*CN*, 4: 4884); Part II is a long quotation (attributed) from Huber’s *Natural History of Ants* (1820). Portions of a long footnote are expanded from *CN* 3: 4260, with minor changes and additions, and greatly expanded from *CN* 4: 5435 (which takes
its starting point from Swift "Thoughts on Various Subjects"). Coleridge follows
the notebook entry fairly closely, polishing the language somewhat, but also
inserts large portions of new material, thematically related to the subject.

IX  Editor. Various drafts, the third of which is a fairly close variant to the aphorism
in CN 4: 5131, which takes its cue from Aristotle, possibly through Tennemann,
as well as Plato. A sentence similar to the first was used in Friend 1: 519.

SEQUELE: OR THOUGHTS SUGGESTED BY THE PRECEDING APHORISM

Comment   Quotes a passage from Erasmus’s Epistola ad Dorpium used in BL

ON INSTINCT IN CONNEXION WITH THE UNDERSTANDING

REFLECTIONS BY THE AUTHOR INTRODUCTORY TO APHORISM X

Paraphrases Hobbes (acknowledged); quotes and alters John Smith; quotes and
alters Milton (rearranges sentence and adds material to connect); quotes Pindar’s
"Olympic Ode" and alters.

X  Jeremy Taylor Deus Justificatus, adapted. First paragraph: rewritten, although the
sense remains the same; second paragraph changes sentence two considerably (as
described in AR 265, n.3), second last sentence Coleridge substitutes in "Reason
and Conscience" (AR 266, n.5), and makes omissions at the beginning of the last
sentence.

Comment   A small section of this very long comment is an adaptation from his own
marginalia (Taylor Unum Necessarium). Quotes from Taylor’s Unum
Necessarium, making some slight changes.
XI  Editor.

XII Editor.

XIII Editor. C’s notes on three copies of AR 1825 suggest that this aphorism should have been split in two after the third paragraph.

XIV Leighton Copy C 17B 1: 142. Besides making changes in accidentals, Coleridge rewrote the end of sentence one (though less drastically than the alterations marked in the marginalia); two lines are omitted between “us” and “as” in the last sentence, and two lines of Coleridge’s added at the end.

XV Luther Colloquia Mensalia (1652) 190, considerably altered. In addition to some minor changes at the beginning of sentence one to fit it into the context, Coleridge replaces a section mid-sentence with four lines of his own, and omits and adds material in the second section.

Comment

XVI Leighton & Editor; Leighton Copy C 2: 124, 125-6, 127 (unmarked in marginalia). Coleridge lifts seven different passages from pp. 124-27 and reorders them, adding material of his own (most of paragraph two).

XVII Leighton & Editor. Leighton Copy C 2: 127-28 (unmarked). First paragraph takes two sentences directly from Leighton, with Coleridge’s commentary surrounding them, a third sentence is adapted from Leighton, with the rest of the text of this paragraph relating thematically to Leighton; much of paragraph two is taken directly from Leighton, with a few minor changes.
Comment

XVIII [Leighton and Editor; Coleridge acknowledged rewriting Leighton in preceding comment]. Leighton Copy C 2: 356, unmarked. The first lines of this aphorism use seven different passages from Leighton, taken largely in order; Coleridge’s own comments follow, with biblical quotations, unacknowledged, scattered throughout.

XIX [Field Of the Church, acknowledged at end.] Adds three parenthetical comments, some minor changes clarify and modernise Field.

Comment Greatly expanded from the marginalia on Field (CM 2: 657-59), which it follows quite closely in parts; extract (acknowledged) from Baldwin’s London Weekly Journal, condensed and altered, used in long footnote.

XX Jeremy Taylor, Worthy Communicant. Minor changes, one omission.

XXI Taylor, WC. Changes only in accidentals.

XXII Taylor, WC. First sentence from John Jebb Works, adapted; one omission in the Taylor, and changes in accidentals and modernisation of spelling.

NOTE PREFATORY TO APHORISM XXIII Quotes, changing two words, from Taylor’s Worthy Communicant.

XXIII Taylor “A Sermon at the Funeral of ... Sir George Dalston,” The Worthy Communicant 416-17. Greatly condensed and somewhat altered.

Comment
[XXIV] ON BAPTISM  Leighton Copy C 41B 3: 20. First two paragraphs from the third

“Lectures on the first nine chapters of St. Matthew’s Gospel,” with minor changes
(Coleridge also rewrites the first part of the first sentence to introduce it); adapts
a brief comment from Deut. 28:29.

Comment  Or Aid to Reflection in the forming of a sound Judgment respecting the
purport and purpose of the Baptismal Rite... About 40 lines of the first
approximately 110, along with a footnote, follow closely from CN 4: 4750, a
record of Coleridge’s discussion with Launcelot Wade. Ends with an excerpt
from Wall’s A Conference Between Two Men That Had Doubts About Infant-
Baptism (1795) 6-8, with some very minor changes and omissions, and with what
he identifies as a “Marginal Note written (in 1816) by the Author in his own Copy
of Wall’s Work” (annotated volume untraced).

Conclusion  Dialogue on MYSTICS AND MYSTICISM, with the exception of the last
sentence (related to annotations on Baxter and Birch, and BL 1: 30), taken from
part of CN 4: 4931, with a large number of variants and some additions. Part of
two paragraphs adapted from the Op Max ms; one paragraph expanded from CN
4: 5195 (end of paragraph follows the entry must more closely than the
beginning). Ends with an extract from Paley’s Moral and Political Philosophy,
Coleridge’s comment on which is adapted from CN 3: 4125 (Coleridge puts his
own opinion about finding truth in another author into Virgil’s mind). Quotation
from Pauleius, with minor changes.
Chapter Five

"The Last Hour of Inspiration": Leighton, Inspiration, and Aids to Reflection

"I heard a voice which commanded me plainly in these words: Read whatever cometh into thine hands, for thou art able to reform and prove any thing; thou hast had this advantage from the beginning, and it hath led you unto faith."

—Epistle of Diodnysius of Alexandria to Philemon, quoted in Fleury’s Ecclesiastical History

Aids to Reflection was a text integrally linked to Coleridge’s ideas of inspiration. Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit, Coleridge’s main work on the subject of inspiration, was slated for inclusion in Aids to Reflection, and the marginalia on Copy B of Leighton, written at about the same time, also deal with many of the same issues. In his later writings, Coleridge moved away from a traditional concept of inspiration, in which the human being served as an instrument for God’s infallible dictation, to one which is both more human and more collaborative. Looking at Aids to Reflection against the backdrop

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166 See CM 2: 724.
167 The Copy B marginalia are dated from 1819 to 1823, with some entries running possibly as late as 1825: Confessions was started in 1820 and passed in to the publisher in 1824 or 1825, originally to be included with Aids to Reflection. See the headnotes to these respective works in CC.
of Coleridge’s views on inspiration adds compelling evidence to the argument that his revision of Leighton in this text is profoundly influenced by a biblical model. Not only was the form of *Aids to Reflection* biblical, but the text upon which it was based was in Coleridge’s opinion “next to inspired.” For Coleridge, however, an “inspired” text is not a perfect or infallible text—even the Bible was constantly evolving—and so his revision of Leighton was part of a necessary collaborative process that supplemented the wisdom of the past with that of the present. Though it is most obviously present in *Aids to Reflection*, the biblical model holds true for many of Coleridge’s other texts, even if they are not built upon inspired works.

The work of Archbishop Leighton contained insights Coleridge considered to be desperately needed in his age. In Leighton, Coleridge saw a concern with the personal and spiritual evidences of Christianity which he had found lacking in the new rationalist theology of both the Higher Criticism and the English Paleyan school. Elinor Shaffer astutely remarks that “In the *Aids to Reflection*, Coleridge attempted to reconstruct the mode of thought of Archbishop Leighton, and with it the milieu of seventeenth-century Christian belief, in order both to point up what was out of reach of contemporary Christianity, and exactly in that measure to restore it” (*Kubla Khan*, 87). What was “out of reach” was that which the rationalists, as Coleridge asserted in his *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit*, “diluted and explained away”: the spiritual side of Christianity, “the operations of Grace, the aids of the Spirit, the necessity of Regeneration, the corruption of our Nature, in short all the peculiar & spiritual Mysteries of the Gospel” (*SW&F*, 2:
1144-45). In a note on Eichhorn's *Neue Testament*, he rants at the author for attempting to remove the miraculousness of miracles, arguing, "What remains after he has taken away the Divinity, Incarnation, mysterious Redemption, and all the miraculous coloring of the Facts?...This seems to me the most puerile and at the same time the most sneaking [sic] Form of Deism" (*EICHHORN Neue Testament* Copy A 26). Coleridge relied on the Higher Critics for their research into attribution and multiple authorship, but he rejected their often overly rationalistic religious beliefs (*EICHHORN Neue Testament* Copy B 18).  

Leighton's works, by contrast, discussed "the Heart, the Moral Nature" that "was the beginning and the end" of religion (*AR*, 192); in his initial letter to Murray about the selections of Leighton, Coleridge enthuses that he showed "the rare and vital Union of Head and Heart, of Light and Love, in his own character" (*CL*, 5: 199). For Leighton, as for Coleridge, religion is intensely personal and subjective. "It is a cold lifeless thing to speak of spiritual things upon mere report," Leighton says in a comment on 1 Peter 1. 3-4, "but they that speak of them, as their own, as having share and interest in them, and some experience of their sweetness, their discourse of them is enlivened with firm belief, and ardent affection..." (Leighton, 1: 33). Particularly in his *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit*, Coleridge asserts the importance of subjectiveness in Christianity, arguing that a person should consider those parts of the Bible truly inspired that spoke to his or her inner soul: "In short, whatever finds me [in the Scriptures]...bears witness for itself that it

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168 See my discussion, chapter two, pages 88ff.
had proceeded from a Holy Spirit" (*SW&F*, 2: 1122). Leighton helped to teach him this lesson. The following passage is marked in the first copy of Leighton’s works that Coleridge annotated:

If any one’s Head and Tongue should grow apace, and all the rest stand at a Stay, it would certainly make him a Monster; and they are no other, that are knowing and discoursing Christians, and grow daily in that, but not at all in Holiness of Heart and Life, which is the proper Growth of the Children of God. (LEIGHTON Copy A 13)

The sin-burdened Coleridge’s comment in this, his first thorough reading of Leighton, was “Father in Heaven have mercy on me! Christ, Lamb of God have mercy on me! Save me Lord! or I perish. Alas, I am perishing” (LEIGHTON Copy A 13).169 In *Aids to Reflection*, Coleridge also ultimately stresses not “Head and Tongue” (knowledge and discourse), but the lived experience of Christianity: “Christianity is not a Theory, or a Speculation; but a *Life*. Not a *Philosophy* of Life, but a *Life* and a living *Process*” (*AR*, 202).

Leighton was more than just a guide to Coleridge, his works more than a balance to the overly rationalistic tendencies of most theology of the time; he holds an unusually

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169 This textus is also marked at LEIGHTON Copy C 171 (text is slightly different) and used in MRA 22.
important place in Coleridge’s spiritual development. Although he read and re-read other theologians of Leighton’s period, such as Jeremy Taylor and John Donne, Coleridge saw the Archbishop as an inspired writer, almost a latter-day evangelist: “Oh, how divine! surely, nothing less than the Spirit of Christ could have inspired such thoughts in such language. Other divines, Donne & Jeremy Taylor, for instance, have converted their worldly gifts, and applied them to holy ends; but here the gifts themselves seem unearthly” (LEIGHTON Copy A 9). In the emotional reading of Leighton recorded in LEIGHTON Copy A, again and again Coleridge talks of the author as “this divine Writer” (LEIGHTON Copy A 7) or “this divine man” (LEIGHTON Copy A 12), of his works as almost a new scripture: “Surely if ever Work not in the sacred Canon might suggest a belief of Inspiration, of something more than human, this it is. ... S.T. Coleridge April 1814” (LEIGHTON Copy A 1). Although his next stratum of marginalia on Leighton’s Works, the 1819 edition belonging to James Gillman (Copy B), reacted intellectually as well as emotionally to the text, it too continually described Leighton and his works as being influenced by the supernatural: Coleridge praises the “next to inspired Commentary of Archbishop Leighton” (LEIGHTON Copy B 9); “the white-robed Leighton” (LEIGHTON Copy B 10); “a minister of Christ so clearly under the especial light of the divine grace” (LEIGHTON Copy B 11). Not just in the privacy of his marginalia, but in his letters, he consistently portrayed him the same way. In a letter to Cottle, June 1814, he writes, “If there could be an intermediate space between inspired, and uninspired writings, that space would be occupied by Leighton” (CL, 3: 478-79n). The impression of Leighton as
almost an Apostle is reinforced by his letter to Murray: “For at a time, when I had read but a small portion of the Archbishop’s principal Work...I remember saying to Mr Southey—that in the Apostolic Epistles I heard the last Hour of Inspiration striking, and in Arch. Leighton’s Commentary the lingering Vibration of the Sound” (CL, 5: 198).

The response to Leighton in Copy B serves as a way for Coleridge to work through what is inspiration and what is not by applying it to Leighton’s text. Although Leighton was a “divine writer,” Coleridge was not in complete agreement with his works: “I dare not affirm that this is erroneously said; but it is one of the comparatively few passages that are of service as reminding me that it is not the Scripture, that I am reading” (LEIGHTON Copy B 4). At one place, two or three of Leighton’s “slips of human infirmity” serve to remind him “that Leighton’s Works are not inspired Scriptures,” but on consideration, he adds a postscript, reconsidering:

On a second consideration of this passage, and a revisal of my marginal animadversion—yet how dare I apply such a word to a passage written by a minister of Christ so clearly under the especial light of the divine grace as was Archbishop Leighton?—I am inclined to think that Leighton confined his censure to the attempts to ‘explain’ the Trinity—and this by ‘notions’... (LEIGHTON Copy B 11)

Coleridge feels he has to retract his criticism because the passage was inspired, written “so clearly under the especial light of the divine grace.” However, in many other places he does not agree with Leighton, and continues to see him as “inspired.” Is Leighton
truly inspired? If so, can Coleridge “dare” to call him wrong? If he is fallible, does this mean that the Archbishop is not inspired? These are questions absolutely fundamental to the debate about inspiration and infallibility. The marginalia on Leighton give a useful record of Coleridge’s deliberations about the nature of inspiration in a modern-day writer, and throw some light on his meditations about the idea more generally.

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Certainly, for Coleridge, the ideas of inspiration and infallibility are not interdependent. I would like to turn now to his writings on inspiration, both those scattered through his marginalia, letters, and notebooks, and most particularly the work which was to be included in the publishing of *Aids to Reflection, Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit*, in order to elucidate aspects of his thought which will ultimately bear weight on his relationship with Leighton’s works and the composition of *Aids to Reflection*.¹⁷⁰ As Anthony Harding points out, one of Coleridge’s main targets in the *Confessions* was “literalism, the doctrine that the Scriptures do not err” (*Inspired Word*, 74). The conservative school who held this to be true (most of England at the time) grounded their arguments

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¹⁷⁰ Anthony Harding’s excellent book, *Coleridge and the Inspired Word*, gives a much fuller analysis of the idea of inspiration in Coleridge over the course of his career than I can here. I am interested especially in those aspects of inspiration which I see relating to Coleridge’s use of Leighton in *Aids to Reflection*. 
on the position, that the Bible... *throughout* was dictated by Omniscience, and therefore in all its parts infallibly true & obligatory; and that the men, whose names are prefixed to the several Books and Chapters,... were in fact but as different *Pens* in the hand of one and the same Writer, and the Words the Words of God himself. (*SW&F*, 2: 1148)

This "doctrine of infallible dictation" (*SW&F*, 2: 1145), which can only explain away incongruities and contradictions in the Bible through an unconvincing theological gymnastics, was a misapprehension about the true nature of inspiration. "[I]t is the Spirit of the Bible," Coleridge corrected, "and not the detached words and sentences, that is infallible and absolute!" (*SW&F*, 2: 1156).

Coleridge makes a distinction between a looser sense of inspiration—"the divine Will working *with* the agency of *natural causes*"—and a rigid infallibility, "the same Will supplying their place by a special Fiat" (*SW&F*, 2: 1159). The word "inspiration" has a "double sense," he says, which Coleridge attempts to desynonymise (*SW&F*, 2: 1166). The term is commonly used in the sense of a miraculous communication from God, so that the human receiver becomes only a vehicle for the transmission of God's word. However, although Coleridge does acknowledge that kind of inspiration, he thinks that the more common sense of the term should be one in which the Holy Spirit is simply a guide for the "existing Gifts of Power and Knowledge" of the "inspired" Writer (*SW&F*, 2: 1166). Our confusion as to the composition of the Bible arises from conflating the two—we do not "always distinguish the * inspiration (the imbreathment)* of the
predisposing and assisting SPIRIT from the REVELATION of the informing WORD” (SW&F, 2: 1158)—whereas there should be “a positive difference of Kind” between them. In infallible inspiration, the divine overwhelms the individual, but in the less strict sense, the will of the writer remains free and human personality plays a role in shaping the text. Michaelis defines inspiration in much the same way, providing one of many possible sources for Coleridge:171

If inspiration can be ascribed to an author who by the mediate or immediate command of the Deity composes a work by the aid of his own natural abilities, in the same manner, as an historiographer is commissioned by his sovereign to write a history, St. Mark was undoubtedly inspired; but from such inspiration it does not follow that he was infallible, and in some immaterial instances he seems to have erred. Inspiration in the usual sense of the word conveys a much higher notion, and implies not only a divine command to write, but immediate assistance from the Deity in writing, so as to secure the author from the danger of mistake.

(Michaelis, 1: 91)

Michaelis goes on to say that if “real contradictions exist in the four Gospels,” then “the writers were not infallible, or in other words, not inspired by the Deity”; however, he says, these contradictions should not lead us to conclude “that the history itself is a

171 Harding does not discuss Michaelis in his book, although his and Coleridge’s positions are very close. This fact is not surprising, considering the wide currency ideas about and definitions of inspiration had in the theological climate of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Similar ideas (the argument that the Hebrews’ assertion that their words came directly from God was only a figure of speech, that the editors and transcribers of a work would have to be inspired as well to preserve its absolute infallibility, that the Gospels should be believed because of their content, not because of the claims to inspiration, for example) float from biblical critic to biblical critic, and it is almost impossible to say who is the originator.
forgery” (Michaelis, 3: 25). Michaelis is not as certain as Coleridge is that there can be true inspiration without infallibility, but he believes that the Gospels can be true without necessarily having been inspired.\(^\text{172}\)

In *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit*, Coleridge refined his definition of this second type of inspiration, which was different enough from the traditional concept to be a difference in “Kind,” not just degree. Although the origin of the history we have recorded in the Bible is supernatural—“the Word of the Lord did come to Samuel, to Isaiah &c” (*SW&F*, 2: 1124)—this fact does not mean that the actual *recording* of it was a supernatural event. While the “origin of the words...[is] supernatural,” the words themselves take “place among the phænomena of the Senses” (*SW&F*, 2: 1124). In addition to discerning the differences between supernatural origin and phenomenal event, Coleridge also makes a distinction between different degrees of inspiration. He is prepared to believe the statements of the prophets that they have received their words directly from God, though this situation happens infrequently.\(^\text{173}\) But lesser kinds of inspiration also exist, he claims, and have been recognised in the Hebrew scriptures for centuries: “different degrees, nay *sorts*, of Inspiration were affirmed of different parts of the Hebrew Scriptures—: Inspiration κατ´ ἔξοχην [eminently] to the Pentateuch—a somewhat inferior to the Prophets—and a lower to the Hagiography” (*LEIGHTON Copy B 28*). The lowest grade of inspiration, he asserts, is “scarcely more than we attribute to

\(^{172}\) Like Coleridge, Michaelis believes that the content alone is enough to prove the worth of the books, but he takes the point further than Coleridge, stating that the Apostles could be viewed as uninspired “human historians” (1: 75).

\(^{173}\) See *SW&F*, 2: 1124-25 and Harding’s discussion p. 92. To show how few Biblical texts Coleridge thought were infallibly inspired, see *LUTHER 79*. 
favorite devotional Books...when we say, the Writer was eminently favored by God's grace” (Eichhorn *Alte Testament* 46). Leighton, Coleridge’s favourite devotional writer, would fit at least into this lowest category, but since Coleridge puts Daniel, a book he considered to be largely spurious, into this section, Leighton might rise even higher.

Critics who attacked the doctrine of infallible inspiration argued that a perfect text would be possible only if all participants were inspired: editors, transcribers, even commentators.\(^\text{174}\) Although Coleridge also questions the infallibility of all the Bible, he does suggest that the lesser form of inspiration might be available to all participants in its composition: Coleridge considers the “Editors” who added explanations and glossary to the original Mosaic documents to be “likewise inspired Men” (N42.96, f69-69\(^v\)).\(^\text{175}\) This moderating influence, however, would not lead to an error-free text.

In addition to redefining inspiration, Coleridge’s main thrust in *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit* was to show that a factual, historical viewpoint could and must be blended with the spiritual one: “Christianity is *Fact* no less than *Truth*. It is spiritual yet so as to be historical—and between these two Poles there must likewise be a ...mid-point, in which the Historical & Spiritual meet” (*SW&F*, 2: 1119). A letter to Thomas Allsop, April 8, 1820, shows Coleridge eager to begin the *Confessions* so that he might “unfold the true ‘glorious Liberty of the Gospel’ by shewing the distinction between

\(^\text{174}\) For example, Michaelis maintains that “if we suppose [a manuscript] to be perfect, or absolutely free from all mistakes, we must believe that either the copyist, or the printer, or the editor, were inspired by the Holy Ghost” (Michaelis, 1: 265).

\(^\text{175}\) Harding writes that “Schleiermacher argued persuasively in his *Critical Essay on the Gospel of St. Luke* that the work of the Spirit must also be recognized in the amanuensis or transcriber of the words uttered, in the editors who assembled the written accounts into a connected narrative, and in the faith community which preserved and studied the received texts” (Harding, 12).
Doctrinal Faith & it’s Sources, and Historical Belief, with their reciprocal action on each other” (CL, 5: 37). Showing the interconnectedness of “truth” and “fact,” or “Doctrinal Faith” and “Historical Belief” will have two effects. It will counteract bibliolatry by showing the fallibility of the Bible factually, and “expose in it’s native Worthlessness the so-called evidences of Christianity” by revealing the necessity of the spiritual (CL, 5: 37).

While history had its place, interpreters should not make the Bible “wholly objective,”—that is, a factual history—“to the exclusion of all its correspondent subjective” (SW&F, 2: 1165). For Coleridge, “Revealed Religion (and I know of no religion not revealed) is in its highest contemplation the Unity (i.e. the identity or co-inherence) of Subjective and Objective” (SW&F, 2: 1168).

History, or the objective pole, was extremely important to Coleridge, even though it always had to be balanced with the subjective and spiritual. In light of the work of Eichhorn and the Higher Critics, the historical dimension of the Bible, which made it a finite, fallible, human document, had to be acknowledged. Asserting its absolute infallibility was really just burying one’s head in the sand. Yet a completely rationalist view, which explained away all the spiritual, was also not acceptable. In a strange way, history also revealed not just the factual or objectively true, but also the subjective in the sense of the human. The historical emphasis examined the circumstances of composition and the milieu of the age, information which brought authors to life as human beings, rather than as timeless, infallible vehicles for the Word of God. The “Unity of the Spirit is translucent thro’ the Letter/which read, as the Letter merely, is the Word of this and
that pious but fallible and imperfect Man” (LUTHER 6). The objective pole can only see man’s fallibility; however, a union of subjective and objective shows “the Supernatural light shining thro’ the Human flesh-panes, but not removing the waving lines or even every tiny speck, knot, or bulb of temporary & individual” (LACUNZA Y DIAZ 29). By contrast, those who insist only on the spiritual make “the words themselves ...the Spirit” (LUTHER 6), and ignore “every tiny speck, knot, or bulb of temporary & individual,” since these specks might sully the purity of God’s word. In an effort to make the text infallible, the age’s “numerous Harmonists” attempted to do away with all human inconsistencies, and therefore all human personality. But for Coleridge, “God most often acts by a potenziation of existing, or the awakening of inherent, tho’ dormant or latent Faculties of Human Nature—not by suspending or overwhelming the natural powers and reducing the Seer or Prophet into a passive Automaton, or mere Camera Obscura” (N42.102, f75-75).

Historical information also made it possible to enter into the subjective mind of the writer. Critics have emphasised again and again that inspiration for Coleridge was human, not just supernatural. Coleridge detested the idea of God dictating to the

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176 See, for example, Tim Fulford, who claims that visions were “formed by the cultural experience and expectations of the seer” (“Kabbalah,” 67); Anthony Harding, who says that Coleridge’s “development...of the Romantic perception that the prophets and witnesses whose words are recorded in the Bible remain human—only become, in fact, most human—when God moves them to speak” is “Coleridge’s distinctive contribution to the understanding of Scripture in the English-speaking world” (Harding, Inspired Word, 9); Ronald C. Wendling, who argues that, for Coleridge, the Bible’s “sacredness and prophetic power comes precisely from the essential humanity through which the Spirit communicates within it” (182); and J. Robert Barth, who emphasises Coleridge’s “constant belief in the importance of the human ‘instrument,’ the inspired author. He is not an automaton, but an individual, rooted in time and place and in certain prejudices and thought-patterns” (Christian Doctrine, 60).
prophets because it removed both human agency and all personality. In *Confessions*, he pleads,

But let me once be persuaded that all these heart-awakening Utterances of *human* Hearts, Men of like faculties and passions with my own, mourning, rejoicing, suffering, triumphing, are but as a “Comedia Divina” of a superhuman—O bear with me, if I say—Ventriloquist—that the Royal Harper, to whom I have so often submitted myself as a “many-stringed Instrument” for his fire-tipt fingers to traverse, while every several nerve of emotion, passion, thought that thrids the *flesh-and-blood* of our common Humanity, responds to the Touch—that this sweet Psalmist of Israel was himself as mere an instrument as his Harp, an *automaton* Poet, Mourner, & Supplicant—all is gone! all sympathy, at least, all *example!* (SW&F, 2: 1136)

Coleridge objects to the conception of the poet as a ventriloquist’s dummy: a passive receptacle for God’s word. If the text does contain not the supernatural *mediated* by the human, then the emotional response to Scripture is lost: “all is gone! all sympathy, at least, all *example!*” Particularly interesting in this passage is Coleridge’s portrayal of his own response to “the Royal...Harper,” since Coleridge acts here as passive as the receptacle he is arguing against: he becomes an “Instrument” which the biblical writer plays. Yet Coleridge submits himself, willingly, to the harpist’s touch, and responds emotionally and subjectively—in short, humanly—to “every several nerve of emotion, passion, thought that thrids the *flesh-and-blood* of our common Humanity.” Coleridge is
responding to the *common* humanity that both he and the writer share as “Men of like faculties and passions,” and is able to react to the text because he can imaginatively participate in the writer’s “heart-awakening Utterances.” The text may be playing Coleridge, but the reactions are his own.

The ability to enter imaginatively into a work is an important method of reading, and one which can ultimately test the worth of the text. Coleridge emphasises that we must read by re-creating an author’s intentions: “Every Book worthy of being read at all must be read in and by the same Spirit, as that by which it was written. Who does not do this, reads a Sun Dial by Moonshine” (*ETERNAL PUNISHMENT* 2). In a long and very revealing marginal note on Irving, Coleridge applies this tenet specifically to the Bible, detailing how he would read a passage from the Epistle to the Hebrews. Not only must an interpreter unite learning and judgement, but these sober qualities must combine with “that rare Gift of imagination which enables the possessor to think, feel, and reason in the form and character of a distant Age under circumstances the most diverse from his own” (*IRVING Sermons* 5). Coleridge considers three points: the truth to be conveyed by the text; the audience; and the way in which that audience can be best approached. By taking that text, and imagining how different authors would narrate that same essence to very different audiences—St. Paul to “a Sheik or Nomad Chief in his Tent with his Camels, Flocks, and Sheep-dogs” or “the Apostle Thomas” to “the mind of a Brahmin who held the shedding of Blood in abhorrence”—Coleridge can separate the “Drapery” from the “Substance.” Yet the truth must have “some Drapery” as well as substance: in other
words. Coleridge explains, it must have “an historic pole as well as an ideal or spiritual.”

The imaginative participation in this historic world is absolutely necessary to the perception of truth, and the ability to create different draperies in the imagination is also necessary to discern what is unchanging substance. Here the emphasis is on discovering the integral truths of the passage, rather than participating in a shared emotional experience, as above, but both reactions are important.

The recognition of inspiration in the scriptures, then, is an interpretative event which is dependent on a shared experience, imaginatively created and available through the historical residue of the personality of the writer in the text. Interpretation is (or should be) also contingent on the shared experiences of readers throughout the ages. It is dangerous to believe that God is speaking directly to you from the Bible, Coleridge says in a note on The Coming of Messiah, since “the interpretation [rather than “the words” themselves] of the Scripture is that which passes into the mind” (LACUNZA 29). So how can we interpret properly? How can we be certain that the Holy Spirit is guiding our interpretation? How do we know our interpretation is inspired? Coleridge outlines a method:

first to determine the true character and purpose of the Sacred Scriptures collectively, & then to draw up a code of canons of Interpretation a priori as abstracted from our reading-experience collectively & established [in] each canon by its evident reasonableness & applying these with due consideration of the
distinctive character of the Sacred Book which is to be interpreted to abide by the result. *(LACUNZA Y DIAZ* 29)

It is the collective nature of the experience I would like to emphasise here, as Coleridge does. An individual interpretation is potentially relevant to only one reader, and must be tested against a broader base of experience. An interpretation which draws on the collective experience of a community of interpreters as well as participating in the shared experience of the “known general purpose” and personality of the writer, as Coleridge goes on to point out later in the annotation, approaches closer to the “truth” of the passage. Even sound doctrines, Coleridge believes, “can be adequately and profitably vindicated only by their own *trueness* and *consonancy* with the whole Spirit of the Sacred Writings collectively” *(CN, 4: 5315).*

Given a concept of inspiration which is human and fallible, it is not a great leap to argue that Leighton’s works function for Coleridge as a kind of latter-day Bible. Although they do not approach the ultimate importance that the scriptures had for him, Leighton’s works partake of the same type of fallible inspiration as most of the Bible does: they differ in degree more than in kind, to use a Coleridgean phrase. Like the Psalms which are also distinctly human outpourings, Leighton’s text is permeated with

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177 See above, page 271.
his personality. Leighton “had by nature a quick and pregnant Fancy” and a fruitful imagination, but

in his freest and most figurative passages there is a subduedness, a self-checking Timidity, in his Colouring, a sobering silvery-grey Tone over all; and an experienced eye may easily see where and in how many instances Leighton has substituted neutral tints for a strong Light or a bold Relief—by this sacrifice, however, of particular effects giving an increased permanence to the impression of the Whole, and wonderfully facilitating it’s soft and quiet Illapse into the very recesses of our Conviction, Leighton’s happiest ornaments of style are made to appear as efforts on the part of the Author to express himself less ornamentally—more plainly. (CL, 5: 199).

Leighton’s characteristic “self-checking Timidity” facilitates his text’s “soft and quiet Illapse into the very recesses of our Conviction”; in other words, his personality enables us to enter into his text (or his text to enter into us) in a way that would otherwise not be possible.

Certainly, Coleridge’s reaction to Leighton as recorded in the marginalia, Copy B, is testimony to the fact that his works have “found him.” If it were not for his “manifold infirmities,” so unlike the saintly Leighton, Coleridge says, “I could almost conceit that my soul had been an emanation from his” (LEIGHTON Copy B 10). Indeed, Leighton’s works have such a resonance for Coleridge that he seems “to be only thinking

178 “In short, whatever finds me [in the Scriptures]...bears witness for itself that it had proceeded from a Holy Spirit” (SW&F, 2: 1121-22), quoted above, page 260.
my thoughts over again, now in the same and now in a different order” (Leighton Copy B 10). In the note written just before this one, his identification with Leighton is explicitly compared to the identification with “Christ the Word”:

We say; ‘Now I see the full meaning, force and beauty of a passage, —we see them through the words.’ Is not Christ the Word...not as our words, arbitrary; nor even as the words of Nature phenomenal merely? If even through the words [of] a powerful and perspicuous author—(as in the next to inspired Commentary of Archbishop Leighton,—for whom God be praised!)—I identify myself with the excellent writer, and his thoughts become my thoughts: what must not the blessing be to be thus identified first with the Filial Word, and then with the Father in and through Him? (Leighton Copy B 9)

Coleridge compares his reading of Leighton not with the Bible, which (to use Harding’s distinction) contains the word of God but is not the Word of God entirely, but with the “Filial Words.” The Bible is, as a human document, “phenomenal” and “arbitrary,” like Leighton’s text, which is only one step removed from the Bible—it is “next to inspired,” or with a loose definition of inspiration, has a lesser degree of enlightenment. Coleridge sets up a progression: the Word of God, which is eternal though unknowable in the finite world; then the Scriptures; and then the “next to inspired” Leighton. Coleridge here appears to use the Leighton as he might the Bible: he identifies “with the excellent writer, and his thoughts become my thoughts,” just as, in a different framework (the eternal rather than the phenomenal), Coleridge imagines the bliss he would receive from a union
with Christ. Coleridge’s depiction of Leighton’s *Commentary* in his letter to Murray again shows it as being only one step down from the Bible: as a vibration of the “last hour of Inspiration” which struck in the apostolic epistles (*CL*, 5: 198). Although the last hour of inspiration may have struck, the echo in Leighton still sounds strongly for Coleridge.

What I find very interesting in all of this is that inspiration seems to reproduce itself, creating a repetitive effect. Leighton is the vibration or echo of Biblical inspiration, and Coleridge, by entering into an identification with Leighton, partakes of this enlightenment, though as an even fainter echo. We know an inspired text by whether or not it “finds” us, but Coleridge is not so much recognising inspiration as participating in it: just as Leighton is a reiteration of the apostolic inspiration, so Coleridge’s soul is an “emanation” from Leighton’s (*LEIGHTON Copy B* 10). Inspiration echoes from person to person, just as Leighton’s commentary on the biblical text is then repeated by Coleridge’s commentary on Leighton. The inspiration which Coleridge describes in *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit* is accessible, not just to the Apostles, but to Leighton and then Coleridge in a sequence of echoes.

The three layers of marginalia which Coleridge wrote on Leighton’s works reveal his stages of reaction to a non-Biblical but inspired text. After the emotional outpouring of Copy A, Coleridge still describes Leighton in Copy B as inspired but is beginning to find errors which he interprets as being created by the ignorance of the Archbishop’s era,

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179 See above, page 262. This comment became Coleridge’s set phrase for Leighton, as he also used it in a notebook entry (*CN*, 4: 4867) and in his and Southey’s *Omniana*. 
as I will show later. In Copy B we see him wrestle with the question of whether Leighton's works are in fact akin to "Scripture" or whether his errors disqualify the writings from being called inspired. As we know from *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit*, Coleridge decided not only that fallibility did not preclude a work from being inspired, but that canonising a text as infallible "petrifies" it (*SW&F*, 2: 1134). A fallible inspired text, therefore, is open to change, precisely because it is not perfect. Harding points out that the view of the Bible as "as an inspired but unfinished epic, still in the process of composition, and capable of being added to by the inspired writings of later times" (*Inspired Word*, 6) was prevalent among the English (and German) Romantics. Therefore, a human work of inspiration such as Leighton's is open to amendment, which is precisely what Coleridge does to it in the marginalia Copy C and *Aids to Reflection*. Coleridge not only interprets Leighton, but also adds to him, as I have pointed out in my previous chapter, redacting and rewriting his inspired works as a later editor of scripture would do to form a new work which contains not only the "truths" of Leighton, but also those of Coleridge. Therefore, Coleridge is not simply interpreting Leighton, but somehow writing a new, "inspired" text.

While Leighton’s works shone through with the Archbishop’s luminescent personality, having the heart and soul to become a new "scripture," they also contained some of the ignorance of his era, just as in a "small portion of the Bible" there could "be found a few apparent errors...resulting from the state of knowledge then existing”

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180 This theme is also one of the main arguments of Stephen Prickett's *Origins of Narrative*. 
Coleridge’s textual collaboration in *Aids to Reflection*, therefore, is not just an unusual compositional technique. It serves a vital purpose: to update and improve Leighton for a later age. Coleridge’s marginalia often corrected faults in writers whom he recognised were often occasioned by the historical times in which they lived. In a note on Grew, for example, Coleridge says that Grew’s conclusions about the date the Canon was fixed were painful because he lived in the “infancy of historical Criticism” (*Grew* 24). When Hooker naively recommends the translation of the Bible which most closely approximates the letter of the original, Coleridge comments,

Hooker had far better rested on the 1. impossibility, 2. the uselessness, of a faultless translation — and admitting certain mistakes and over-sights recommended them for notice at the next revision — & then asked, what objection such harmless trifles can be to a Church that never pretended to infallibility? — But in fact, the Age was not ripe enough even for a Hooker to fell, much less with safety to expose, the protestant idol — i.e. their Bibliolatry.

(*Hooker* 33; emphasis added)

Knowledge progresses through the ages, Coleridge implies, so that his age may be able to articulate truths that were impossible to reveal or even know in an earlier time. Coleridge’s conviction about this gradual increase in knowledge was so strong that he even felt that “on certain points we may have clearer views of Christianity than some of the Apostles had” (*CL*, 6: 550).
In fact, the inspired Leighton’s view of inspiration needed revising, as Coleridge makes clear. Leighton writes, in a conservatively devout passage, “This is the very life of divine faith, touching the mysteries of salvation, firmly to believe their revelation by the Spirit of God. This the word itself testifies, as we see; and it is really manifest in it; it carries the lively stamp of Divine inspiration, but there must be a spiritual eye to discern it” (LEIGHTON Copy C 13). Even if the text of Scripture may seem contradictory or erroneous to us initially, Leighton asserts that with the proper interpretation (the “spiritual eye”), we can discern its divine—for Leighton, infallible—inspiration. This concept of scripture has been argued for centuries, Coleridge comments: “On this evidence the Fathers of the four first Centuries, on this the great Reformers of the Church, on this the Founders and Martyrs of the Church of England mainly rested the divine authority of the Scriptures. And with this too the most eminent Divines of our Church before the Restoration were content” (LEIGHTON Copy C 13). Coleridge, however, like some of the divines after the Restoration, is not “content” with this interpretation, and the marginalia and Aids to Reflection were in part an attempt to correct the errors to which even the “divine” Leighton subscribed. For example, Leighton’s opinions about baptism, which Coleridge disputes in LEIGHTON Copy C 31 and 32, may have provoked Coleridge’s inclusion of the last aphorism “ON BAPTISM,” which was added at the last moment when it seemed that the Confessions were too long for the volume.181

181 Coleridge was also responding to Jeremy Taylor’s opinions about baptism in this aphorism, and later, to D'Oyly and Mant on the sacrament of communion.
The lack in Leighton that Coleridge perhaps felt most greatly, and which inspired him to write a long section of *Aids to Reflection*, was Leighton’s inability to distinguish between reason and understanding: “How often have I found reason to regret, that Leighton had not clearly made out to himself the diversity of reason and the understanding” (LEIGHTON Copy B 15), Coleridge writes after several notes correcting the Archbishop. “But there are *Ideas*,” he scolds Leighton, “which are of higher origin than the notions of the understanding and by the irradiation of which the understanding itself becomes a human understanding” (LEIGHTON Copy B 11). The lengthy discussion in LEIGHTON Copy C 12 became the long note used at the end of the comment on ASRb 8 and forming much of the basis for the central essay in *Aids to Reflection*, “On the Difference in Kind of the Reason and the Understanding.”

The multiple additions to Leighton’s work in *Aids to Reflection* served two purposes: to add gems of truth and wisdom from writers of Leighton’s era, so that the deficiencies in Coleridge’s age might be remedied, and to revise the older authors in order to correct misapprehensions common to both these writers and Coleridge’s readers, as when Taylor’s interpretation of original sin is disputed and corrected. Because Leighton’s work is not “petrified”—in other words, because this inspired foundation has not been canonised into a scripture that is incorrectly seen as infallible and unchanging—Coleridge can redact the text to include both his own revisions and the work of other writers in order to form a collaborative text which unites the strengths of all. Coleridge enters into Leighton’s text both imaginatively and physically through the written invasion
of its border by his commentary, and then adds other “writers” to the experience. In other words, the work is not just one of individual biblical criticism—what Harding calls “a human being called into relationship with another human being” (Inspired Word, 58) through the reading of a sacred text. Instead, Aids to Reflection includes within its boundaries the collective experience that Coleridge discussed as one of the criteria of interpretation: the “draw[ing] up a code of canons of Interpretation a priori as abstracted from our reading-experience collectively” (LACUNZA Y DIAZ 29, my italics).

Interpretation—what we might call the recognition of inspiration in a text—is a shared experience. But so then is writing, since it is invariably the rewriting of truths that have been expressed in other “draperies” according to different authors’ personalities and the ages in which they lived. All types of writing must be collaborative in that they draw upon past truths. But in the case of the Bible and Aids to Reflection, the collaboration is even more direct as the older, “inspired” texts themselves are reworked. Coleridge insists upon the inspiration of biblical redactors who play the same role as he does to Leighton’s Commentary.182 Leighton’s primary work is itself a commentary which reshapes (as all commentaries do) the text it is interpreting. Although the transformation of the actual book we call the Bible apparently stopped with its canonisation, Coleridge insists that, in fact, scripture must constantly change for each person and each age.

J. Robert Barth sums up Coleridge’s view of the Bible as a text that was “gradual and evolving, sometimes fragmentary, always in forms of imagery and expression which

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182 See above, page 268.
are adapted to its immediate human context” (Christian Doctrine, 99). Coleridge saw Christianity generally as “a growth, a Becoming, a Progression, and on this account not symbolizable by Presences that identify the Future with the Past, and consequently declare only that which has already been. —HISTORY therefore, and History under its highest form of Moral freedom, is that alone in which the Idea of Christianity can be realized” (CN, 4: 5300). History, as the ever-progressing force of change, is the means by which Christianity is manifested. An identification of the future with the past would inhibit this progression and “petrify” both Christianity and its texts. Coleridge emphasised that we should not make the writers of the Bible into distant exalted figures, but instead must show how the Holy Spirit through a human being would partake “of his individualities, as a man of that age, that country, composing under the influence of those particular events, views and motives” (N37.25, f17'). The “Principle of making the Inspired Saints of old as diverse as possible from the Faithful” has led to a “long and woeful Train of Ill Consequences” (N37.25, f17'-f18). Even these “Inspired Saints” were not different from us, and their texts were not unchangeable monuments. Instead, Coleridge asserts that “we are called on, invited, commanded to seek for the same Spirit, and to press forward to yet higher and clearer Visions” (N37.25, f18). Coleridge does not seek the same depth of vision as the biblical writers, but “yet higher and clearer” ones. The call, by implication, is to continue the process of composition—and in the same way: through the rewriting and revising both ideas and text to add the contributions of our age.
The Bible, for Coleridge, is “all Life—like the Polypus” (*CN*, 4: 4909). A polypus, as Coleridge used the term, is an organism which reproduces by sending out shoots, which then themselves grow. Coleridge once described it as having “tails, [which] inspired by the spirit of independence, shoot out heads of their own” (*SW&F*, 2: 973). The image suggests that the Bible, then, is an ever-growing, ever-evolving document which propagates itself by spawning other texts. Leighton’s work was the vibration of the bell of apostolic inspiration, and Coleridge echoes and revises Leighton’s inspiration. The structure, of course, does not descend in a straight line from the Apostles to Leighton to Coleridge, but spokes out with many different tails (Leighton is one) which then grow heads of their own (*Aids to Reflection*): the Apostles-Leighton-Coleridge arm is only one of many. Coleridge’s description of the Bible as a polypus, interestingly, is part of a discussion in which he wonders whether part of the book of Daniel was composed by a later author or was “founded on documents or on popular Traditions”(*CN*, 4: 4909). The question ultimately does not matter, as the Bible is composed through a *process* involving multiple authors and a grand sense of collective collaboration which continues to this day.

In his discussion of the “Ancient Mariner,” Jerome McGann discusses this constant process of evolution which the Bible undergoes. The Scriptures “do not represent a ‘true’ narrative of certain fixed original events; rather, they are a collection of poetic materials which represent the changing form of ‘witness’ or testament of faith created by a religious community in the course of its history” (*Beauty*, 150). Because the
“Ancient Mariner” also imitates this process, McGann argues that “the poem is, as it were, an English national Scripture” (*Beauty*, 160). I can only agree with McGann that the process which the “Ancient Mariner” mimics is that of the composition of the Bible, though the poem’s *content* does not make it the most likely candidate for scripture: a fact signalled by McGann’s “as it were.” *Aids to Reflection*, because of its process of revision of multiple texts and additions of glosses as well as its construction from Leighton’s “inspired” theological text, is truly Coleridge’s “English national Scripture.” Its collaborative, encyclopedic form demonstrates that truth, for Coleridge, is not heard in a voice crying in the wilderness, but in a multiplicity of utterances in different ages and nations.
Conclusion

Coleridge has been criticised, even vilified, for his unusual compositional practices. Accusations of plagiarism and defences of his plentiful borrowings have been a running theme of criticism since shortly after his death. However, the contexts for the use of sources in a literary work have not yet been fully explored in this period, and the question of whether or not a Romantic work which borrows materials or ideas without acknowledgement should be called “plagiarised” still remains open. This dissertation has attempted to provide one alternative model of composition—contemporary theories of the authorship of that exemplary book, the Bible—and to examine Coleridge’s collaborations in that context. To conclude, I would like to look afresh at some of Coleridge’s ideas on originality and borrowing, as well as to allude to contemporary ideas to broaden the context. Since this topic itself could provide materials for an entire dissertation, my discussion will be suggestive rather than comprehensive.

Coleridge’s ideal of authorship was quite different from that of many of his time in that it stressed the wisdom of collectivity rather than absolute self-creation, but it is consistent with his ideas of biblical composition. Much work has been done on Coleridge and originality, and this conclusion will therefore examine how our perceptions of his writings might change in the light of the biblical textual model. As collaboration
becomes more celebrated in our own culture, we can recognise the importance of
Coleridge’s critique of originality and his acceptance of multiple authorship.

The ideal of originality as it was developed in the mid-to-late eighteenth century
was spontaneous, creative, and to a certain extent, self-originary. Edward Young said
that “An original...rises spontaneously from the vital root of genius; it grows, it is not
made: imitations are often a sort of manufacture wrought up by those mechanics, art and
labour, out of pre-existent materials not their own” (Conjectures, 552). While some form
of imitation was possible—imitating the method of Homer or “the spirit, and...taste of
the ancients” (Young, Conjectures, 555) was acceptable—direct use of another’s
materials was not. John Bowle questioned Ben Jonson’s genius because he “made it his
study to cull out others sentiments, and to place them in his works as from his own mint.
This...savours very little of Invention or Genius: It borders nearly upon, if it is not really
plagiarism” (Bowle, 64; also quoted in Rose, 122).183 William Duff argued that “A Poet
endued with a truly original Genius, will...be under no necessity of drawing any of the
materials of his composition from the Works of preceding Bards; since he has an
unfailing resource in the exuberance of his own Imagination” (Duff, 248).184 However
noble this ideal may have been, it was not consistently the practice, even among those
who professed it. As Mark Rose notes, Samuel Richardson gave liberal suggestions to
Young on his Conjectures (Authors and Owners, 117). The correspondence between

183 It should be said, however, that Bowle did not normally encourage calling parallel phrases
“plagiarisms” unless there was good historical evidence that the later author had in fact borrowed them.
184 Duff did acknowledge that philosophical genius relied more on arrangement, system, and judgement
than did the poetic genius, which should create spontaneously and unassisted (94ff).
Young and Richardson reveals that the subtleties of the distinctions between different types of imitation in Young's *Conjectures*, for example, comes from Richardson. "Should there not be here some distinction of *imitators of other authors*, and imitation of nature, in which respect poetry is called one of the imitative arts?" Richardson writes to Young on January 14, 1757, shortly after Young has sent him the *Conjectures*. "The tame imitator of other poets is a copier of portraits, the true genius a noble painter of originals, to whom nature delights to sit in every variety of attitude" (Young, *Correspondence*, 449). An examination of the letters written around the time of the work's composition reveals that the *Conjectures* are a collaborative composition: the essay did not rise "spontaneously from the vital root of genius" but was the product of "art and labour" using "materials" that were not Young's own. This example is not intended to make Young into less of an "original" author, but to show that we often need to separate ideals and practices.

Most of the time, Coleridge saw those critics who insisted upon tracing sources and parallels in order to accuse an author of not being original as rather naive. Milton’s sources were a favourite object of discussion to his editors, and Coleridge laughs that the first rule I have observed in notes on Milton and others, is to take for granted that no man had ever a thought originate in his own mind; in consequence of which, if there is anything in a book like it before, it was certainly taken from that. And you may go on, particularly by their likenesses, to the time of the Deluge, and at last it amounts to this: that no man had a thought but some one
found it, and it has gone down as an heirloom which one man is lucky enough to get and then another. It struck me with astonishment when I found how devoid of power and thought our Milton is! (PL, 296-97).

Ideas are not always borrowed directly, but can and do occur independently to a later author. The main point is not whether Milton did or didn’t borrow, but the lack of insight on the part of the critics. Even if these borrowings could be proved to have been conscious, does that make Milton “devoid of power and thought”? No. Milton’s texts are inherently powerful although they repeat ideas and phraseology from older authors.185

Coleridge realised that no work could be considered truly original since it must inevitably borrow from the past. The Courier of September 20, 1810 contains a paragraph from the editor, supplied by Coleridge, which protests that a recent article signed “STC” was in fact not by Coleridge. One of the reasons, the editor/Coleridge submits, is that Coleridge would never use the term “imitation” in the sense that it had been in the article: “Neither is Mr. Coleridge able to interpret the phrase ‘guilty of imitation,’ a sort of guilt in which every writer in prose or verse must of necessity be implicated; if we except Homer, who is himself immaculately original, only from the loss of all the writings anterior to the Iliad” (EOT, 2: 105). The only reason his age considered Homer “immaculately original,” Coleridge says, is because we cannot trace

185 See also Coleridge’s notes 5 and 13 on Milton’s Poems upon Several Occasions in CM 3. Other writers have been similarly frustrated by the source-hunting critics. Tennyson asserts that “I will answer for it that no modern poet can write a single line but among the innumerable authors of this world you will somewhere find a striking parallelism. It is the unimaginative man who thinks everything borrowed” (quoted in Sucksmith, 89). After Helen Keller was accused of plagiarism, Mark Twain comforts her by saying, “As if there was much of anything in any human utterance, oral or written, except plagiarism!” (quoted in Swan, 68).
his sources. (Coleridge, of course, with his knowledge of manuscript culture and the way ancient texts were put together from oral and written sources, would know that Homer could not be considered at all "original" in the sense in which the term was commonly used.) Coleridge was aware, though, of the pressures that authors (including himself) were under to keep up a façade of originality. A letter to Thomas Poole in November 1798 describes his meeting with the German poet Klopstock, who had written an epic poem largely derived from Milton's *Paradise Lost*:

He said, he had first planned the Messiah when he was Seventeen—that he had meditated on the Plan three years before he wrote a Line—/ & that he had never seen Milton till he had finished his Plan.—This was a flat self-contradiction; but he appeared, according to Wordsworth, very fearful lest he should be considered as an *Imitator* of Milton! (*CL*, 1: 444)

An author who is heavily dependent on a source is unwilling to admit his indebtedness, a situation which maintains the false ideal of originality. Although Klopstock had created a work acknowledged to be a masterpiece in his own country, he still must pretend that it was entirely his own creation. Of course, Coleridge himself often failed to admit sources for his own works, but here he seems somewhat puzzled that anyone should be ashamed to be an imitator of *Milton*.

Although Coleridge obviously had great respect for many German critics and philosophers, he also rebuked them for being more concerned with originality than truth. Coleridge explains an unconvincing argument of Eichhorn's that goes against received
opinion by saying that “Eichhorn wants to be always original” (N26.27, f55). He sees “one bad quality of the Kantian & Fichtean School” as their “endless P[...ing] to bran [sic] new originality in everything” (FICHTE Das System der Sittenlehre 2). Although the note has been cropped, the point is clear. Again, in the Friend, he sees “no better remedy for the overweening self-complacency of modern philosophy, than the annulment of its pretended originality” (1: 462). Coleridge attempted to counteract the pretence privately: a letter to J.H. Green in September 1818 finds “the entire principia philosophiae Schellingianae in the fragments collected by Fr. Patricius from the Pagan and Christian Neo-platonists, Proclus, Hermias, Simplicius, Damascius, Synesius, & others ejusdem farinae” (CL, 4: 874).

Truth and originality were often incompatible. Since Coleridge felt that we build upon and rewrite universal wisdoms, then something which has never been thought before may simply be a new falsehood. If anything except for the drapery of the materials is original, then Coleridge says he “should regard as a strong presumption of the untruth of my convictions, as a ground of suspicion, that I had deluded myself and mistaken subjective vapors for forms of objective & Universal Truth—” (N35.21, f23'-24). “I ever feel myself weakest,” he says publicly in the Courier, “when I suppose myself most original” (EOT, 2: 390). The job of the writer, as Coleridge said in a well-known passage used in the Friend, Biographia Literaria, and Aids to Reflection, was to rescue
the most admitted truths from the impotence caused by the very circumstance of their universal admission. Truths of all others the most awful and mysterious, yet being at the same time of universal interest, are too often considered as so true, that they lose all the life and efficiency of truth, and lie bedridden in the dormitory of the soul, side by side, with the most despised and exploded errors. (BL 1: 82)

True originality, then, is not the ability to create "awful and mysterious" truths but to make these universal ideas come to life.

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Of course the problem with Coleridge is that very often the clothing itself was not new: the words themselves as well as his ideas were borrowed from his sources. The extent to which the borrowing of either ideas or text was tolerated in the period has still to be assessed, but there do seem to be some common, practical conventions. In the "Sixth Discourse" of his Discourses, Sir Joshua Reynolds outlined some guidelines:

It must be acknowledged that the works of the moderns are more the property of their authors; he, who borrows an idea from an antient, or even from a modern artist not his contemporary, and so accommodates it to his own work, that it makes a part of it, with no seam or joining appearing, can hardly be charged with plagiarism; poets practise this kind of borrowing, without reserve. But an artist

186 See also Friend, 2: 74 and AR, 11.
should not be contented with this only; he should enter into a competition with his original, and endeavour to improve what he is appropriating to his own work. Such imitation is so far from having anything in it of the servility of plagiarism, that is a perpetual exercise of the mind, a constant invention. Borrowing or stealing with such art and caution, will have a right to the same lenity as was used by the Lacedaemonians; who did not punish theft, but the want of artifice to conceal it. (quoted in Eilenberg, 19)

Borrowing from the “antients” is more proper than from the moderns. Fielding, in *Tom Jones*, calls the classics “a rich Common, where every Person who hath the smallest Tenement in *Parnassus* hath a free Right to fatten his Muse” (Fielding, 551; also quoted in Rose, 116). Michaelis also argues that “every writer is at liberty to apply to his own purpose the words, which he has borrowed from the writings of another; a liberty which we frequently take in applying passages from the classic authors” (1: 201-02).

Interweaving biblical passages into your work, even when they were not demarcated by quotation marks, was widely accepted. In “Of the Happiness of the Life to Come” from the *Theological Lectures*, Leighton paraphrases Revelation 21.4 without any indication of the source: “All tears shall be wiped away from our eyes, and every cause and occasion of tears for ever removed from our sight; there are no tumults, no wars, no poverty, no death, nor disease; there, there is neither mourning nor fear, nor sin…” (4: 243).  

187 See *AR*, 325, for a fine example of Coleridge’s use of biblical passages.
Of course, pieces of the classics or the Bible were generally known and so recognised, even out of context. The fragments, although incorporated into a new work, were not really appropriated. However, Reynolds acknowledges that even moderns are used in this way, quite acceptably, although their works are “more the property of their authors.” The limit he places on the use of works is that they should not be from a contemporary, possibly because their unauthorised use could injure the author financially. Borrowing is acceptable if (as we have seen Eichhorn say) the older material is made “a part” of the new, “with no seam or joining appearing.” Moreover, the source should be improved by a “perpetual exercise of the mind, a constant invention.” In her interesting article on plagiarism and travel writing, Tilar J. Mazzeo contends that “In the early nineteenth-century, plagiarism was viewed as a primarily aesthetic problem, which hinged upon the failure to incorporate the borrowed material. Plagiarism was problematic not because it was intellectual theft, but because it jeopardised the organic unity of a work and its status as ‘literary’” (Mazzeo, 161-62).

Plagiarism, it seemed, was winked at if the author had the skill—or the audacity—to disguise his or her theft successfully. Reynolds uses the example of the “Lacedaemonians,” who didn’t punish stealing, “but the want of artifice to conceal it.” In the introduction to his Pinakidia, Edgar Allan Poe compares two texts, one of which he condemns for verbatim borrowings. The other, though it also steals from others’ works,

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188 Mazzeo also quotes a letter from Byron to Murray, which scoffs at accusations of literary theft: “/ laugh at such charges [of plagiarism]—convinced that no writer ever borrowed less—or made his materials more his own” (162).
is acceptable: “its superiority consists altogether in a deeper ingenuity in disguising his
stolen wares, and in that prescriptive right of the strongest which, time out of mind, has
decided upon calling every Napoleon a conqueror, and every Dick Turpin a thief” (Poe,
1). Napoleon and Dick Turpin are essentially the same, but differ mainly in the
confidence with which they appropriate the text. Poe, of course, should know. A
footnote analysing the sources of the text he condemns is actually taken from Isaac
Disraeli’s Curiosities of Literature (Poe, 5, n. g). He also flaunts his unacknowledged
borrowings. This collection, he says, “are either piecemeal cullings at second hand, from
a variety of sources hidden or supposed to be hidden, or more audacious pilferings…”
(Poe, 1). Poe, himself a literary Napoleon, undermines the concept of “originality”:

Such collections, as those of which we have been speaking, are usually
entertaining in themselves, and for the most part, we relish every thing about them
save their pretensions to originality. In offering, ourselves, something of the kind
to the readers of the Messenger, we wish to be understood as disclaiming, in a
great degree, every such pretension. Most of the following article is original, and
will be readily recognized as such by the classical and general reader—some
portions of it may have been written down in the words, or nearly in the words, of
the primitive authorities. (Poe, 2)

As the editor’s note to this passage explains, some Poe critics and editors have attempted
to insert the word “not” into the phrase “Most of the following article is original” to make
it continue the sense of the previous sentences. Poe also could have been using “original”
in this phrase to mean "an original"—an older, perhaps revered text. But what does the following phrase, "some portions of it may have been written down in the words, or nearly in the words, of the primitive authorities," mean? That he has borrowed their texts verbatim? In that case, why use the conditional tense "may have"? That only some of his material in this collection of piecemeal texts is borrowed and that the rest is original? In any case, Poe acknowledges that he has "pilfered" but he leaves the reader to try to decipher how much is stolen, what the texts are, and even what the term "original" really means.

Although Coleridge was not usually as playful as Poe was about his use of sources, he obviously had a fairly loose sense of literary property. This did not prevent him from occasionally identifying plagiarisms in other authors, however. He calls the author of a sonnet appearing in the *Chronicle* in 1796 a "Plagiarist" because it was actually Southey's (*CL, 1* : 196), and asserts that one of La Place's works is "an unprincipled Plagiarism" of Kant (*CL, 4* : 808). A note to a poem by Denham in Anderson's *The Works of the British Poets* suggests that Pope used a couplet from the work, though Coleridge is quick to point out that he "despise[s] pretended Plagiarisms, as if no two men could have originated the same Thought" (*ANDERSON'S BRITISH POETS Copy B 33*). Coleridge, however, also questions practices, such as unacknowledged translation and borrowing, which he uses himself. He dismisses Jonson's "Drink to Me Only" by questioning if the editor, Ritson, "Was...ignorant that this is a mere Translation of a Greek Epigramma, or more probably Scolion?" (*RITSON A Select Collection 7*). In a
copy of William Hone’s derivative edition of the New Testament Apocrypha, Coleridge queries, “Why has Mr Hone omitted to mention the Books, from which he made these reprints?” (BIBLE New Testament: Apocrypha 2). In another marginal note, Coleridge wonders why Schelling has not mentioned Böhme as an influence, as Schelling’s friends the Tiecks had remarked on the similarities between the systems: “[Pr]obably, pru[d]ential motives [re]strain Schelling [for] a while: for [I w]ill not think, [th]at Pride or [a] dishonest lurking Desire to appear not only [an] original, but the Original, can have influenced [a] man of Genius, like Schelling” (SCHELLING Philosophische Schriften 42). In the Biographia, Coleridge had mentioned Schelling’s influence, but failed to attribute the actual text to the German author. Coleridge also makes several tart comments about Sir Walter Scott, perhaps because Scott was so reluctant to admit the influence of Coleridge’s “Christabel” on The Lay of the Last Minstrel. He professes surprise that “a Man, of such accredited frankness of temper, as Sir W. S. ought still less to have transferred [a character from Goethe] without acknowledgement” (SIR WALTER SCOTT Waverley Novels COPY C 14). A passage from Quentin Durward Coleridge sees as stolen “From the Ancient Mariner…and (as usual) spoilt in the attempt to disguise the theft” (SIR WALTER SCOTT Waverley Novels COPY C 23).

These various comments on plagiarism by other authors demonstrate that Coleridge’s ideas on attribution and originality were extremely complex, and his motives, as Engell and Bate point out, sometimes “tangled” (BL, cxvii). Although most of the time he detested the critical attitude which would call parallel passages “plagiarisms,” he
also sometimes required literary standards from other authors—such as the acknowledgement of a work that forms the basis of a translation (Jonson), or of someone else's translation (Hone), or of a major influence (Schelling), or of the use of a borrowed character or passage (Scott)—which he failed to uphold himself. But the comments are nevertheless interesting in that they also reveal that the issue of literary property was always a negotiation. Calling a work an "unprincipled" plagiarism raises the question of whether there could be a "principled" one, perhaps one that used the work more correctly, in Coleridge's view. The passage from the "Ancient Mariner" which Scott borrowed was "spoilt in the attempt to disguise the theft," implying that it could have been borrowed and not spoilt, if Scott had not been so concerned about covering his tracks. As well, the distinction Coleridge draws in his comment on Schelling and Böhme between "[an] original" and "the Original" is suggestive. Schelling's desire to be the Original is the longing to be the sole originator of a work: to appear to produce a system without influence. It is possible to be "original" even though your ideas have their source in another's work. A comment in a letter to Rest Fenner, the eventual publisher of Biographia Literaria, dated September 22, 1816, may explain Coleridge's rationale, even though it first appears as one of his famous anticipatory defences against his use of literary sources: "I can not write, no, not even for a newspaper, the commonplaces of the age, or what is supplied to me by memory, by passive recollection of other men's writings. It must be my own to the best of my consciousness—the result of earnest meditation and an insight into the principles" (CL, 4: 677). There is a fine distinction
here: Coleridge is not saying that he will not use others’ writings, but he asserts that he must make the texts (initially supplied to him by memory?) his own through “earnest meditation and an insight into the principles.” Other authors’ texts may become your own (as we have seen Reynolds and Eichhorn suggest) if they are handled properly: here, if they are thoroughly comprehended as part of the principles or larger truths that formed them.

What makes Coleridge’s ideas of authorship so difficult to talk about are his well-known and usually false defences of his own literary originality—or more precisely, of his independence. Like Klopstock, he must assert that he was not influenced by his source. The arguments, whether about the relationship of Schelling to the Biographia (BL, 1: 147 and 1: 161-64), Schlegel to the Shakespeare lectures (SHAKESPEARE Copy D 127), or German metaphysics to his thought generally (CL, 5: 421-22), are much the same: although the other author’s work was published first, Coleridge protests that he had formulated these ideas independently, and his unpublished notebooks, marginalia, and letters will show him to be telling the truth. Sometimes he acknowledges that he is using the other writer’s words, though he could have used his own (BL, 1: 147); most of the time, though, he attributes any similarity of phrase to patterns of thought formed by shared readings in the subject, to the universality of truth, or simply to coincidence. The private writings (notebooks, marginalia, and letters) fail to support his claim, and the coincidence in phraseology is usually occasioned, as has been well proven, by his direct use of sources. Most damaging to his credibility, perhaps, is his assertion that he could
not have plagiarised because he did not have access to the books (*BL*, 1: 164) when it was obvious that he knew them intimately. The sense of guilt which comes through so overwhelmingly in these passages may not be entirely due to a wish for his work not to be seen as derivative, but can be attributed to a desire for others to not view him as lazy.\textsuperscript{189} When adding a paragraph from the *Biographia Literaria* to *Church and State*, Coleridge anxiously calls attention to the insertion, so that the reader will not think that he has "stolen" from himself (75). The borrowed text is Coleridge's: he has every right, by any standard of literary property, to do with it what he wishes, but the overmastering sense of guilt is still present.

These unfortunate, guilt-ridden denials tend to taint what I believe was his earnest belief that, ultimately, even unacknowledged literary borrowing was a valid technique in creating a text and perhaps even a necessary part of composition. Even in his confused defences, Coleridge does not assert that he is the originator or primogenitor, but that he came up with the thoughts *independently*. This latter claim, of course, is also not true, but it is consonant with his general thoughts on the naïveté of concepts of originality. The ideas that Coleridge "shares" with the other author are true, and it is a proof of their value that two educated men of genius arrived at them independently, he alleges. Even in these defences, Coleridge stays true to his ideal that ideas ultimately cannot be owned: he is not claiming to be the creator and sole owner, but professing that he has tapped into a

\textsuperscript{189} Françoise Meltzer argues that "...one of the major reasons for the scandal of plagiarism, or copying...[is that] it does not entail much labor....the advent of the work ethic and the eventual appearance of Protestantism on the European scene may have combined to privilege labor to a point allowing for rigid judgments on plagiarism, copying, and other forms of what are considered to be easy means of fame..." (71).
universal truth which is the property of none and available to all. Indeed, he makes the same claims to have arrived at ideas independently even when they are found in the Bible:

When the Ideas rise up within me, as independent Growths of my Spirit, and I then turn to the Epistles of Paul & John and to the Gospel of the latter, these seem a Looking-glass to me in which I recognize the [? indirectly] same truths, as the reflected Images of my Ideas—and when I begin with meditative Reading of these divine Writings, then they become the Objective completing and guaranteeing the reality of the subjective Truths in myself... (N35.25, f26")

Obviously, Coleridge here is not trying to assert that he is the “true” originator of John’s ideas or to “plagiarise” from the New Testament: the notions are absurd. However, because Coleridge has found other instances of concepts so similar that they seem the mirror-image of his, he knows his subjective process of thinking to be correct.

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Considered broadly, all writing is fundamentally re-writing, and through his study of biblical composition, Coleridge realised this truth better than most authors. Writing is—and perhaps should be—appropriative because one of its fundamental goals is to rework truths in order to re-present them in a new system or so they can be seen afresh. In an excellent discussion of appropriation *vis à vis* the Bible, Stephen Prickett suggests
that “the primeval tension between theft and creative acquisition is not an accident of the written word, but in some way endemic to it” (Origins, 34). Appropriation in a general sense is “a normal condition of intellectual and cultural vitality,” but it combines “both a quality of thinly disguised theft and a recognition that such a take-over is a necessary part of the way in which any person, or even society, makes an idea its own” (Origins, 32).

Coleridge is caught in precisely this crux: the main tendency of his thought is to support an ideal of collaborative intellectual freedom in which ideas and even words move freely from author to author (appropriation is necessary), but he cannot help falling—sometimes disastrously, as his defences show—into a model in which the author should be a completely independent creator (appropriation becomes theft). His much-discussed image of truth as a divine ventriloquist, made famous from the Biographia, is a frequent trope in Coleridge’s writing which counteracts the idea that truth can be owned. Writing to Thomas Allsop about Cobbett’s radical journalism, he says:

The self-complacency, with which he assumes to himself exclusively truths which he can call his own only as a Horse-stealer can appropriate a stolen Horse by adding mutilations and deformities to Robbery, is as artful as it is amusing. Still, however, he has given great additional publicity to weighty truths—as ex. gr. the hollowness of commercial wealth—and from whatever dirty Corner, or Straw Moppet, the Ventriloquist Truth cause her words to proceed, I not only listen but must bear witness that it is Truth talking. (CL, 4: 979)
This comment shows a sophisticated understanding of literary appropriation. Cobbett’s truths, mutilated and deformed as they seemed to the conservative Coleridge, were not ultimately tainted by the radical’s attempt to call them his own “exclusively.”

Of course, our sense of ownership is often stronger towards our own texts than our recognition of others’ literary property. Coleridge, although he freely dissected and altered to form his own works, was not amused on the few occasions when other authors cut and pasted his texts in like form. The *Biographia*, “like all my writings...has been remorselessly pillaged both by Reviewers & Magazinists” (*CL*, 5: 287). In several letters in early 1818, he complains bitterly about the treatment of his “Preliminary Treatise on Method” that he wrote for Rest Fenner’s *Encyclopaedia Metropolitana*. Dr. Stoddart revised the essay, and it became “so bedeviled, so interpolated and topsy-turvey” (*CL*, 4: 825-26) that Coleridge despaired: “Had the Paradise Lost been presented to him in Mss, he would have...pulled it piecemeal & rejoined it in the same manner” (*CL*, 4: 821). When he protested to the publishers, they replied that “they had purchased the goods, and should do what they liked with them” (*CL*, 4: 826). Part of the problem here is that Coleridge is displeased with the end result (he eventually published a revised version of the treatise in the 1818 *Friend*). The essay had been changed beyond recognition, he felt, by the editorial revisions.

Appropriation is disturbing—and is often condemned at the same time it is recognised as necessary—because the new context does change the original text. Coleridge did make the distinction between truths, which were universal and belonged to
no one, and the arrangement of those truths, which was the only way in which an author could make them his or her own. A letter to Josiah Wedgwood in February 1801 explains, “A System may have no new Truths for its component Parts, yet having nothing but Truths may be for that very reason a new System—which appears to me to be the case with the moral philosophy of Jesus Christ” (CL, 2: 700). After explaining that this situation does not describe “Mr. Locke’s Essay,” he becomes anxious lest he be seen as “ungracious” like “one of those trifling men who whenever a System has gained the applause of mankind hunt out in obscure corners of obscure Books for paragraphs in which that System may seem to have been anticipated” (CL, 2: 700). A much later notebook entry, which asserts that he learnt “the great truths” of his system “from no one,” also argues that he has met and would invariably meet “the same Ideas” in older books “even tho’ I should no where meet with the same System or Method” (N 35.21, f23v).\footnote{Coleridge was not just concerned with the arrangement of ideas, but also with the physical layout of his texts. He writes to Samuel Curtis, explaining that until details of the publication and setup of the Friend are confirmed, “I do not know how to correct the Sheets or to what purpose it would be—for assuredly no one can expect me to put my name to a work, which is not properly my own—for the arrangement of a work is a vital part of the work” (CL, 6: 1042-43).}

In a sense, then, the circumstances of composition—whether those be the arrangement of fragments or the individual voice of an historical person—do have an impact on the “trueness” of truth. As a result, Coleridge’s famous ventriloquism metaphor is slightly suspect. Although he obviously uses it to show the ultimate crudeness of the concept of literary property, it does gloss over the extent to which the presentation or the voice of the speaker is an essential part of truth. A note on Edward
Irving’s *Sermons, Lectures, and Occasional Discourses* says that Irving is borrowing from him, but not explaining Coleridge’s ideas adequately: “if only the Ventriloquist Truth makes her words audible, it is a matter of small anxiety to me whether the Voice appears to proceed from my mouth or from that of another. But then it must be the whole Truth...” (IRVING *Sermons* 53). In other words, the whole truth may be made into untruths by fragmenting it and rearranging it. Looking back to another use of Coleridge’s “ventriloquism” figure in the context of the Bible reveals why the metaphor sometimes seems disingenuous. In the *Confessions*, he argues that the Psalms cannot be seen as the work of a “superhuman...Ventriloquist” (*SW&F*, 2: 1136) with no will of his own but must be manifested through a “flesh-and-blood” harpist: in other words, the “dummy” or person through whom the truth is manifested *does* matter.\(^{191}\) Although in the *Biographia*, for example, the metaphor asserts Coleridge’s lack of concern with literary property, in the *Confessions* its dangerous passivity is brought to the forefront. For the Psalms to be true for Coleridge, they must find him not through his perception of universal truths that could be speaking out of anyone’s “mouth,” but through his identification with the poet’s individual humanity. Ideas, perhaps, cannot be owned, but how they are clothed and arranged is a more vital part of their truth than the ventriloquism figure sometimes allows.

Textual collaboration is more appropriative than an equal partnership of authors because the source text always changes. Even when texts are not necessarily rewritten,

\(^{191}\) See the discussion in chapter five, above, page 271.
their rearrangement or insertion into another work can effect a dramatic change in their meaning and authority. The juxtaposition of the two versions of creation in Genesis, for example, raises questions of how the two interact with each other. Is one more “correct” than the other? Is one literal and one symbolic? Do both combine elements of history and myth? Are they, as Coleridge put it, one “Double-nut” (EICHHORN Alte Testament 20): retellings of the same event with different emphases? Even if Moses or another redactor did not rewrite these accounts—though of course they may have—their arrangement creates a different work with very different implications than each had singly. Excerpting a work and then glossing it effects an even more dramatic transformation. All interpretation and reading (as the passage from Rudolph von Langen which Coleridge used in the Friend points out)\(^{192}\) moves the text away from an original authorial intent. But should we stop reading? Like the Bible, all texts are kept alive through their reworking. Coleridge’s “collaborative” practices partake in a situation which is endemic not just to writing, but also to reading and interpretation.

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To conclude, I would like to attempt to bring together Coleridge’s general ideas of originality and literary property with his notions of authorship and composition in biblical texts by looking at an unusual and little known work, “The Historie and Gests of Maxilian.” Coleridge published this fragmentary adaptation of E.T.A. Hoffmann’s story

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\(^{192}\) See chapter three, page 158.
“Der goldne Topf” in *Blackwood’s Magazine* in 1822. The long satirical introduction is an epistle in reply to Dick Proof, a fictional corrector and critic, who is “a mighty man for parallel passages...a very ferret in hunting out the pedigree and true parentage of a thought, phrase, or image” (*SW&F*, 2: 973). Through Dick Proof, Coleridge pokes fun at like-minded critics who do not believe in “equivocal generation, or giving credit to any idea as an *Autochthon, i.e.*, as self-sprung out of the individual brain.” Instead, Coleridge suggests that Proof and his compatriots subscribe to the pre-adamite heresy: they believe that even the original man has his predecessors (*SW&F*, 2: 973).

However, Coleridge also satirises *authors* (like Coleridge himself) who claim a precedence for their ideas although similar ones have already been published. He constructs an elaborate scenario in the prefatory material which, like the tale following, revolves around “the conflict of two worlds, the world of commonplace experience and the world of the imagination” (H.J. Jackson, “Coleridge’s ‘Maxilian,’” 40). “Some ten or twelve years ago,” as time is counted in the corporeal world, the author claims to have been sitting “in literary chit-chat with Lucian, Aristophanes, Swift, Rabelais, and Moliere,” at which time he “read them a rough *pre-existent*, or as we say here, copy, of Maxilian” (*SW&F*, 2: 974). However, as “a spirit from Thought-land, (North Germany...)” was looking over his shoulder at the moment of the reading, he says, “the great idea...of the *ideal work*” of the author of “Maxilian” “awoke, in the consciousness” of the German author “Frederick Miller” (2: 974-75). Before the Maxilian author could “put a single line on paper” (2: 975), the German writer came out with a “surreptitious
duplicate" (2: 976) differing only in names and local details from "Coleridge's" pre-existent work. The "credit" for the work "must be assigned to the said Frederick Miller by all incarnate spirits," though the author hopes to "claim" it to himself if he can ever be relieved of his corporal body (2: 976). This very complex satire, with both critic and author as target, seems to highlight the difficulty of trying to make intellectual or non-corporeal ideas into one person's "property," though perhaps it must be done. It is a necessary part of writing to clothe anew older ideas—whether the text is the Bible or a secular one—and the drapery can be either German or English, depending on which manifestation of the idea one reads. However, the strange complexity of Coleridge's ideas about originality and sources which combine his own feelings of guilt with noble ideas of the universality of truth apparently compel him to use the name "Miller" instead of "Hoffman" even when Coleridge (or the author of the preface) is giving "credit" to the German author who first published the story.

There seems to be a Biblical subtext here—or perhaps Coleridge's ideas of writing and originality generally are so linked to his discussions of biblical compositional practices that they resonate inadvertently. Coleridge begins his epistle by responding to Dick Proof's "wild" suggestion to "'Lay your scene further off!'" (SW&F, 2: 967) as Proof believes that "The present... is not the age of the supernatural" (SW&F, 2: 968). Coleridge replies that "the locality, man, is an essential part of the a priori evidence of its truth" (SW&F, 2: 967). The supernatural can be found in our age, Coleridge asserts. In other words, we are not different from the prophets or "Inspired Saints" (N37.25, f17),
and so we too may write the spiritual with “yet higher and clearer” visions (N37.25, f18). In addition, Coleridge emphasises again and again that the ideal is always manifested in an historical individual, and that this corporealisation is part of what makes the text speak to us: in other words, “the locality, man, is an essential part of the a priori evidence of its truth.” Although Proof may see truth as located in some distant past, Coleridge (and the reader of “Maxilian,” he hopes) see it as part of living history: “I will neither affront the reader by attributing to him a faith so dependent on dates, nor myself, whose history is a concave mirror, not a glass case of mummies…” (SW&F, 2: 968). Even these images anticipate Coleridge’s later use of them in describing the Bible: “the Epistles of Paul & John and to the Gospel of the latter,” seem “a Looking-glass” in which Coleridge recognises the “same truths, as the reflected Images of my Ideas” (N35.25, f26”). Viewing the Bible as infallible—that is, a distant monument of the past in which truth is located—“petrifies” it (as “mummies” are embalmed?), he says in the Confessions (SW&F, 2: 1134). The process is valid for both sacred and secular texts: we do not have to rewrite the Bible constantly, but to reproduce in our own age and time those spiritual, ideal, or “supernatural” truths that “pre-exist.” Not only is our age capable of writing the supernatural, but it may be more capable in some ways: the Maxilian epistle argues that “we are the quintessence of all past ages, rather than an age of our own” (SW&F, 2: 970). Knowledge is cumulative: Coleridge can correct Leighton while still emphasising his strengths; later ages may have clearer views of Christianity than even the Apostles (CL, 6: 550). The satire frees Coleridge so that he can present his ideas about the crudeness of
notions of literary property, while at the same time acknowledging its necessity in this imperfect world.

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It is not surprising how consonant Coleridge's general statements about authorship and the use of sources are with his views on biblical composition, considering the admiration he had for the Bible. Lowth's enormously influential Lectures on Hebrew Poetry looked at the Bible as literature and also held up the Bible as a pattern for contemporary literature. This "best of all books" (TT, 1: 277) conveyed for Coleridge a degree of authority surpassing even the literary ideals of the time. We cannot overestimate the importance this exemplary book played in his life and, I argue, in his compositional practices. The Bible is the "Best Guide to Political Skill and Foresight," the subtitle of the Statesman's Manual tells us, and it may also be the best guide to developing a sense of text in which truth is owned by all and writing is inherently collaborative. As a literary model, it provided a rationale for a free use of ideas and text in a way which showed that progress toward knowledge must be a collective effort.

Evidence, I believe, is strong that Aids to Reflection adapts a biblical form as described by the Higher Critics. The question remains, however, as to whether Aids to Reflection is alone in the Coleridge canon in its use of this model, or whether other works draw on it as well. Aids to Reflection is the only text of Coleridge's that fully develops
the form—the only one which could truly be said to be an attempt to write a “national scripture” or latter-day gospel. It has all of the elements: it is based on and “redacts” other inspired works; it has a theological subject matter; and it is a real collaboration, in that it uses a significant amount of other authors’ material. It is possible, however, that Coleridge’s other works use the technique of textual collaboration on a much more limited scale, even though they do not aspire to be a type of “Bible.” After all, Coleridge did not see the Bible as a thing apart: it may have been the “best of all books” but it was “still a book” (TT, 1: 277). It served as an exemplar for both the form and process of composition of many Romantic texts, even when their subject matter was secular. The techniques of biblical authorship which Coleridge adapted in Aids to Reflection can inform his other works.

The Biographia Literaria, the most important of Coleridge’s prose works in this century, especially deserves a reconsideration in the light of this model, and although limitations of space do not allow me to consider the work in the detail it deserves, I will sketch out some comments. The Biographia Literaria has generated a storm of criticism for its unacknowledged borrowings ever since De Quincey first brought to light the extent of Coleridge’s plagiarisms in 1834. It is certainly arguable that in this text, Coleridge crosses the line, even given the looser standards of his age. The quantity of the material used was considerable, and the borrowings were taken from contemporary

193 Jack Stillinger gives a succinct and balanced account of the accusations in his chapter on Coleridge in Multiple Authorship and the Myth of Solitary Genius, as do the editors of the Collected Coleridge edition of the Biographia in their introduction (see especially pp. cxiv-cxvi). As this history has been rehearsed so often, I will not provide a summary. Coleridge’s literary ethics were already being questioned in the context of the borrowings from A.W. Schlegel in his literary lectures.
authors. However, Coleridge by no means copied blindly but employed the material in a profoundly interesting way. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate, the editors of the *Biographia* in the *Collected Coleridge*, point out the unusual characteristics of his "plagiarisms":

Coleridge at times translates or paraphrases from an author who, in turn, was himself quoting or paraphrasing from another writer. Moreover, Coleridge’s use of German books and his own marginalia in them was often so fluid and intertwined—a sentence here, then two or three sentences elsewhere—that our experience repeatedly confirmed what McFarland calls the "mosaic" form of composition in Coleridge. There would be a passage from, say, Maass or Schelling, and then—before going on—he would leap ahead, or he would follow up sources they used, or he would suddenly intermix still other sources or his own marginal notes. (*BL*, cxvi)

This strange composite does not consist of "orderly blocks of verbatim translation, but something more like a chemical compound" (*BL*, cxx). Although critics have argued that the combination of inconsistent philosophical systems (Kant and Maass, an anti-Kantian, for example) reveal that Coleridge simply did not fully understand the philosophical implications of the works,194 others have contended that Coleridge deliberately assembled...

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194 Orsini quotes J.H. Stirling: "it is difficult to believe that there is any single philosopher in the world whom he either thoroughly studied or thoroughly understood" (Orsini, 24). René Wellek suggests that Coleridge misunderstands the German *Einbildungskraft* to mean "esemplastic." Wellek doesn’t consider that Coleridge may have deliberately transformed the word.
the pieces to create his own meanings. Stephen Prickett, for example, has pointed out that “Coleridge was given not just to borrowing like a magpie, but of altering his borrowings as he went. He not merely quoted without permission; he frequently misquoted—and the results are, as Schelling had the rare humility to observe, sometimes very interesting” (“Biographia,” 10). David Ferris argues that Coleridge’s insertions in the Biographia “effectively transform the character of Schelling’s philosophical exposition” (45).

I would like to pick two places from the Biographia, the beginnings of chapters six and eight, to examine how they are put together and to demonstrate that they are extremely similar to the techniques Coleridge later used in Aids to Reflection. Chapter six borrows from Johann Gebhard Ehrenreich Maass’s Versuch über die Einbildungskraft. The first paragraph mentions Maass, though there is no indication that his work will be employed later in the chapter, and ends with a note by Coleridge that originally had been attached to Robert Southey’s Joan of Arc. Paragraphs two and three translate Maass closely but sandwich two of Coleridge’s illustrations into the passage, just as we have seen the “interlinear glosses” slip into texts in Aids to Reflection. Given the context (that materialism is problematic because it attempts “to render that an object of the sight which has no relation to sight”), it is perhaps ironic that Coleridge uses

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195 “[T]he issue of plagiarism needs to be supplemented by understanding how Coleridge shaped all materials into a body whose message and shape could not be extrapolated from its separate sections” (Editors’ Introduction, BL, cxviii-cxix).
196 In discussing how Coleridge so often names the source from which he is borrowing (without actually acknowledging the text in question), McFarland amusingly notes that “Coleridge presents us with the paradox of a burglar who seems more intent on setting off the alarm than robbing the safe” (Pantheist Tradition, 40).
sensual, concrete metaphors to illustrate Maass’s abstract discussion. However, the figures are analogies, not factual explanations, and they do render the German author’s text much more intelligible. Coleridge is on his own for paragraph four and draws on his marginalia on Maass. Paragraph five is also developed from the Maass marginalia and includes, interestingly enough, a translation of the passage upon which the notes were written. In this case, we might say that the source has slipped into the gloss. The passage describing the story of the woman from Göttingen follows, and both Christensen and Eilenberg have pointed out that this story can be read as a parable of Coleridge’s own compositional method: “Her will paralyzed, uttering words of whose sense she was unconscious, her false inspiration inspiring wonder in others, attended in her illness by an amanuensis, she must have seemed to Coleridge (deeply implicated in plagiarisms even as he wrote this passage) a sinister reflection of himself…” (Eilenberg, 144). This reading is certainly the worst-case scenario for an author building a composite text, though Coleridge had considerably more control and authority over his material than the girl from Göttingen did. Coleridge was profoundly conscious of the sense of the words he was using, so much so that he alters other authors’ words to suit his sense contextually. 197

The first four paragraphs of chapter eight rely heavily on Schelling. After an introduction in which some of the conclusions are derived from Kant, Coleridge begins midway through this first introductory paragraph to translate from Schelling’s System.

197 See, for example, the discussion of the Harrington quotation in chapter four, above, page 221.
Again he glosses the text with an illustration. His statement that Leibniz’s doctrine of pre-established harmony comes originally from Spinoza could have been taken from Mendelssohn, Lessing, or Jacobi,¹⁹⁸ and is also asserted in his marginalia on Maass (Maass 2). The first part of the sentence beginning paragraph two is translated from Kant, although Coleridge objected to this statement when he annotated it (Kant Metaphysische 32). He elaborates or glosses the remark and in the process borrows an image from an early (1801) notebook entry. Paragraph three starts with a favourite illustration. In what the editors call a “curious ‘hop-skip’” process, Coleridge returns to Schelling’s System at exactly the point where he left off in paragraph one (the middle of a paragraph in the System) and then goes back in the Schelling text to the start of that same paragraph. Next, he jumps to an entirely different work of Schelling’s (the Abhandlungen) for a few sentences, then back to the System but a different section twenty pages later than the passage he previously used. Coleridge’s analogy of the iron tongue of the bell is slipped into the translation. Paragraph four returns to the end of the same paragraph in Schelling that had been used earlier in chapter eight’s paragraph one and the beginning of three.

To summarise, in four paragraphs Coleridge uses a paragraph from the System (SW 3: 406-07),¹⁹⁹ which is divided into three parts, sections from the Abhandlungen, and

¹⁹⁸ See the editor’s footnote in CM 3: 790. Again we see how mobile ideas were in the age. Did Coleridge borrow directly from one of the figures, or was this notion just “in the air” at the time?
¹⁹⁹ SW stands for Sämtliche Werke, ed. K.F.A. Schelling, 14 vols., Stuttgart & Augsburg, 1856-61. All of the information about this edition and the page numbers are taken from the footnotes of BL (CC).
another, much later paragraph from the *System* (*SW 3*: 428-9). The order in which they are used is not predictable:

*BL* ch. 8 ¶ 1  
Schelling *System 3*: 406-07 (midway through the paragraph)

*BL* ch. 8 ¶ 3  
Schelling *System 3*: 406-07 (top of paragraph)

Schelling *Abhandlungen*  
Schelling *System 3*: 428-9

*BL* ch. 8 ¶ 4  
Schelling *System 3*: 406-07 (bottom of paragraph)

Although a considerable amount of Schelling is used, its use is very eccentric, so much so that it would seem almost as much work to assemble a text in this manner as it would to write it.

Although the Higher Critics’ descriptions of the Bible provide us with a model that sheds an important new light on Coleridge’s largely unacknowledged borrowings, it must be said that Coleridge was guilty of a certain wilful blindness in adapting it to a nineteenth-century text. The Bible came out of a manuscript culture with no concerns for copyright and literary ownership, but these issues were becoming increasingly important in the period in which Coleridge lived. He was not unaware of this fact, though his writings on originality, ownership, and truth make it clear that the emphasis on literary property frustrated and even alarmed him. I believe that Coleridge does regard textual collaboration as a method that can best get to the truth, in part because it effaces concerns of individual authorship in favour of collective wisdom. However, although Coleridge uses his “collaborations” to reveal the naïveté of unthinking notions of originality, he
exhibits his own head-in-the-clouds idealism at times. He tends to ignore how this type of writing is appropriative and how it conflicts with his era’s evolving ideas of intellectual ownership. (He also glosses over the fact that these very structures of ownership allow him to gain financial and intellectual compensation for his work.) As a result, Coleridge’s textual collaborations will probably always raise some ethical questions, but I hope that my examination of contemporary theories of the Bible will demonstrate convincingly their many strengths.

In the final assessment, Coleridge’s texts are like the work described in the Author’s Preface to Mary Shelley’s The Last Man. The narrator outlines the trip in which she and her nameless companion found the true Sibyl’s Cave with its collection of fragmentary, nameless prophecies. “Shelley” deciphers “these sacred remains” for publication:

I present the public with my latest discoveries in the slight Sibylline pages. Scattered and unconnected as they were, I have been obliged to add links, and model the work into a consistent form. But the main substance rests on the truths contained in these poetic rhapsodies, and the divine intuition which the Cumæan damsel obtained from heaven.

I have often wondered at the subject of her verses, and at the English dress of the Latin poet. Sometimes I have thought, that, obscure and chaotic as they are, they owe their present form to me, their decipherer. As if we should give to another artist, the painted fragments which form the mosaic copy of Raphael’s
Transfiguration in St. Peter's; he would put them together in a form, whose mode would be fashioned by this own peculiar mind and talent. Doubtless the leaves of the Cumæan Sibyl have suffered distortion and diminution of interest and excellence in my hands. My only excuse for transforming them, is that they were unintelligible in their pristine condition. …

I hardly know whether this apology is necessary. For the merits of my adaptation and translation must decide how far I have well bestowed my time and imperfect powers, in giving form and substance to the frail and attenuated Leaves of the Sibyl. (3-4).

Part author, part compiler, Shelley's narrator finds that the boundaries of property dissolve in her reworking. As in Coleridge's work, the shapings of the mosaic fragments are as important as the fragments themselves, and inspiration is manifested in rewriting, not writing. Coleridge's vision is not an apocalyptic change which destroys its progenitors, but a gradual accumulation in which past voices are transformed but not eliminated. Like Shelley's sibylline authorship, Coleridge's biblical composition critiques a model of self-originary authorship which suppresses and forgets the voices of its past. In the context of Coleridge's views on biblical composition and inspiration, then, his distinctive use of sources becomes not shameful plagiarisms but a collective form that can be celebrated.
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