Coleridge and Problems of Lexicography

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Introduction

Engaged in a grand project of *Encyclopaedia Metropolitana* (1818-45, 45 vols.) as its leading designer, Samuel Taylor Coleridge wrote the "Prospectus" to it in 1817 and an article titled "Treatise on Method" in the succeeding year, which was later included in *Metropolitana* as "the General Introduction". They give an important perspective on what an encyclopaedia and a classification of sciences should be, according to the Platonism he adopts as "an *universal Method* by which every step in our progress through the whole circle of art and science should be directed [. . .] in the very interior and central essence of the human intellect." ("Treatise on Method", *Shorter Works and Fragments* I, 630) The period when he worked on *Metropolitana* (1817-18) saw the flourish of the materialistic culture of dictionaries and encyclopaedias; among others, the fifth edition of *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1817, 20 vols.) and Abraham Rees' *The New Cyclopaedia,* which was about to reach its completion (1802-20, 45 vols.), acquired general and continued currency. For Coleridge, who had been planning an encyclopaedia at least as early as 1803 (*Letters* II, 955-6), the supervising of *Metropolitana* must have been a once-for-all opportunity to involve his long-cherished idea of organizing philosophy and philology with the cultural campaign of his contemporary time, and especially to triumph over the materialistic emphasis on external facts which French *L'Encyclopédie* and the two encyclopaedias cited above represented, by the vision of the organic development of human intellect.

But, as far as Coleridge was concerned, the project ended with the breakdown of the collaborative task with its publisher because of his bankruptcy and Coleridge's early withdrawal from it. The irony here is, therefore, that the importance of him in the materialistic history of lexicography follows not from any substantial fruition (he didn't make any

more contribution to the *Metropolitana* than those two articles) but only from the ideal(istic) model of an ecyclopaedia he called for. In its head of "encyclopaedia", the current *Britannica* describes *Metropolitana* as "an impressive failure, [whose] ideas for it had a lasting influence" (vol. 18, 259) and "[w]hat *might have been* the greatest encyclopaedia of the century" (274), and Coleridge as making "the most notable contribution to the *philosophy of* encyclopaedia making since Bacon" with "Treatise on Method" (274, italics mine).

Then his idea of an encyclopaedia should not be considered so much in relation to any real encyclopaedic material as to the pattern of thought he models on the metaphor of an encyclopaedia. This abstraction is fully verified by Coleridge himself, for "An Essay on a Principle of Method" (1818), a revised version of "Treatise on Method", omits reference to the design of *Metropolitana,* focusing solely on the abstracted Platonic method of seeking for unified principle of knowledge, despite of much of the passages from "Treatise on Method" being repeated verbatim. This process of "editing" the former article suggests that it is in practice as much as in theory that the idea of lexicography grasped his mind. In short, though there have been many times when he came up with the idea of producing a dictionary or an encyclopaedia, we would soon understand that this idea is an inevitable consequence led out by his interest in philosophical methods of dealing with encyclopaedic materials like words, ideas, and sciences.

Hence this paper will proceed with the following questions; if it is true that his philosophy of lexicography made a path to the history of dictionary making[1], what method of thinking in practice is it that gave a ground to this idea and motivated him toward it? Or what "lexicographical problems" are latent in his texts as having to do with the blueprint of Platonism outlined in "Treatise on Method"? Here we might well expand the concept of lexicography as a hypothetical device with which to measure the nature, method, and even failure, of his theory of language and critical thinking by this theory in general——concerning, for example, what cognitive path for truth language might be expected to open, what kind of nomenclature would be needed for constructing and editing an organic philosophy, and so on. This approach will not only enable us to

reread Coleridge's various texts in terms of formal aspects of his language and of the way he uses language, but also, by way of lexicography as a frame of reference, will be quite useful to reconsider the historical location of Coleridge's speculative activities; although they are generally seen in the history of ideas as traces in the transitive phase of European philosophy between Materialism and Idealism around the turn of the century (often by assuming a solid opposition of these two ideologies), Coleridge's Idealism[2] cannot be understood without the method he took in coping with lexicographical materials he had been absorbing from his early time[3]. So we will be faced with another question that seems a bit paradoxical, "how could he formulate the Platonism of unified knowledge in the very sphere concerning materialistic problems?"

With these interests, I will first look at some occasions when the idea of producing a dictionary (an equivalent to an ecyclopaedia) comes to Coleridge's mind, focusing on its philosophical program for the sophistication of human intellect, and also on some problems resulting from his linguistic manipulation of "desynonymization"[4] as a methodical, not substantial, step for that program. Second, I will discuss, in terms of making use of his own encyclopaedic learning, how his prose is structured to embody a lexicographical pattern of thought. My aim therein is to attest that there is a paradox between practice and theory in Coleridge's text, which tends to put his philosophy into fragmentation and digression, and that it is this paradox that indicates historical and personal difficulties in attempting to set up a paradigmatic method which would be intended to overcome and regulate materialistic philosophy.

1. "A Philosophical Dictionary"

If the history of lexicography reflected that of one polemical issue ever bothering and yet-unresolved—whether a dictionary should be prescriptive or descriptive, or to use A. W. Read's expression, whether it should be "the type of the 'academy's dictionary', in which the vocabulary consists of 'good words' only, supported perhaps by quotations from 'reputable authors'" or "the historical type, best represented by the *Oxford English Dictionary,* in which the history of words is set forth objectively"

(Read, 28)—then Coleridge's way of committing himself to lexicography would be understood within that problem area. For instance, his peculiar estimation of Francis Bacon as "the British Plato" in "Treatise on Method" (664) is one answer to that issue from a philosophical perspective; despite of the conventional view that Bacon is the initiator of empiricism based on observation and experiment of particular sensory data, Coleridge reinterprets him to be the Platonic figure who had an arduous attitude of seeking for an organic and holistic set of truths[5], thus seeing him an embodiment, through such works as *The Advancement of Learning* (1605), of prescriptive and systematic knowledge in lexicography. Thus Bacon serves as a spiritual basis for *Metropolitana*'s way of refuting the French *L'Encyclopédie* which he thinks constitutes a mechanical, arbitrary arrangement of sensory objects (672).

But it is quite inadequate to point out the difference between French Encyclopaedists and Coleridge who tries to place himself in line with the history of Platonism inherited by Bacon, because d'Alembert, for example, frankly acknowledges Bacon's great influence on the method of classifying sciences in *L'Encyclopédie,* though with a slight critical modification of his arrangement (the Introduction to *L'Encyclopédie,*100). What is needed to distinguish Coleridge from the Encyclopaedists and even from Bacon is therefore to consider what type of method he adopts in editing encyclopaedic materials, a clue to which seems to be detected not in what he conceptually manifests but in the occasion when he is motivated by an actual need of making encyclopaedias or dictionaries.

Let us start with a passage from *Biographia Literaria* (1817), for it typically contains a germinal awareness of lexicography in him. In the passage, saying that "[t]here is a *philosophic* [. . .] consciousness possessed by a few chosen philosophers which would govern all reflective beings", Coleridge makes a distinction between "transcendental" and "transcendent" according to Kant (*Biographia,* I, 236), the former of which should be appropriated to the mind of such true philosophers. This "desynonymization", however, doesn't lead him to further speculation of the condition of human cognitive faculties as Kant did by these terms, but to slip into a digressive footnote where he begins to reflect upon the

historical reception of these terms, and even claims for the impending need of an English dictionary ever unpublished which would comprehend the history of the whole language:

> This distinction between transcendent and transcendental is observed by our elder divines and philosophers, wherever they express themselves *scholastically*. Dr. Johnson indeed has confounded the two words; but his own authorities do not bear him out. Of this celebrated dictionary I will venture to remark once for all, that I should respect the man of a morose disposition who should speak of it without respect and gratitude as a most instructive and entertaining *book,* and hitherto, unfortunately, an indispensable book; but I confess, that I should be surpirzed at hearing from a philosophic and thorough scholar any but very qualified praises of it, as a *dictionary*. [. . .]
>
> Were I asked, what I deemed the greatest and most unmixt benefit, which a wealthy individual, or an association of wealthy individuals could bestow on their country and on mankind, I should not hesitate to answer, "a philosophical English dictionary; with the Greek, Latin, German, French, Spanish, and Italian synonimes, and with correspondent indexes." (*Biographia,* I, 237-9n)

The passage exposes an evidential moment when the method of desynonymization serves as an indispensable tool to make a "philosophical", sophisticated nomenclature. The nomenclature is required to be authoritative for the sake of a "philosophical" reflection on that language, but if such a "philosophical" nature of a dictionary can be vindicated by its total inclusion of the vicissitudes of their actual use (in relation to "Greek, Latin, French, Spanish, and Italian synonimes"), it follows that the descriptive method might lead to the prescriptive, Platonically comprehensive state of the dictionary. What is idiosyncratic to Coleridge is his self-referential focusing on a "transcendental" consciousness in light of lexicography; although the state of being "transcendental" is supposed to be the kernel of human intellect, it also acts as a trigger of the idea of the philosophical dictionary by becoming just one of the entries it

would include. Thus a philosophical consciousness can be understood just by agency of the philological nature of the term concerned. That's why, in a lecture of philosophy, he declares that "[a]ll our knowledge may be well comprised in two terms. The one is philology, [. . .] in which he has a desire of arriving at that which the Logos or intellectual power can communicate; the other is philosophy, or that which comprises the Logos, and including it, at the same time subordinates it to the Will, and thus combining with the other, is philosophy, the love of wisdom with the wisdom of love" (*Philosophical Lecture,* II, 587), and also that's why, in another occasion, which begins with a pedagogical remark on desynonymization——"[t]here are few pursuits more instructive and not many more entertaining, I own, than that of retracing the progress of a living language for a few centuries, and its improvement as an organ and a vehicle of thought by desynonymising words"——he explicates "the duty of a philosopher" as furthering "the progress of language" with "new distinctions" (*Lectures of Philosophy,* II, 553-4). So, for instance, he criticized Hobbes' confusion between "compelled" and "obliged" for the description of moral responsibility, for the former suggests nothing more than the forced state of "must" in a mechanistic sense, whether one likes it or not, while the latter describes its inner truth as voluntary moral impetus like "ought to" (*Lectures of Philosophy,* I, 213).

Seen from a wider epistemological point of view, such a philological task of desynonymization charged with philosophical functions gives a concrete shape to the way of grasping the world and the whole human intellect as they should be, which the following passage professes well:

> The whole of the progress of the society might be expressed in a dictionary; [. . .] there would arise a motive for giving a term for each as warning ad safeguard; and the whole of the progress of society, as far as it is human society, depends upon, it may sound as a paradox but it is still a very serious truth, the process of desynonymising [. . .]. (*Lectures of Philosophy.* I, 212)

The metaphor of a dictionary (or a book) for the world has been traditional

since the Bible as a world-image made by God, marking its climax in the French Enlightenment with its embodiment by *L'Encyclopédie,* Coleridge carries this idea out by use of philology and etymology[6], and, very peculiarly, justifies it with the support of Plato as an early claimer of the importance of an encyclopaedia; in the following passage, where he praises Plato and Speusippus, his direct successor, who became "the first man who attempted an encyclopaedia in the genuine sense of the word, that is, a coorganisation of the sciences as so many [inter]independent systems, each having a specific life of its own but all communicating with philosophy as the common centre [. . .] by means of a philosophic logic as the great sympathetic nerves leading to it (214). This is just where Coleridge's ideological position of Platonism / Idealism is sustained by his lexicographical scholarship under academic purposes , almost getting closer to what Paul Hamilton calls the "philosophical programme full of Enlightenment optimism" (Hamilton, 76). His application of philology becomes obvious in *Metropolitana*; though it was intended to embody the "coorganisation of the sciences" by a unifying "philosophic logic", Coleridge "beg[s] to call the reader's attention to" its fourth (last) section, for it contains "Alphabetical, Miscellaneous, and Supplementary [materials], [. . .] and a Philosophical and Etymological LEXICON of the English Language" (the Prospectus to *Metropolitana, Shorter Works and Fragments,* I, 584-5), whose features he says are "distinguishing [. . .] and perfectly original" among other encyclopaedias because of its treatment of "the history of such applications of each word in the chronological arrangement of the authorities cited"(586). Such an inclusion of accidental, historical changes of words in its scope seems to reflect Coleridge's edifying purpose by means of the living nature of words and ideas.

A philosophical dictionary he proposes, if we imagined as really issued, however, would surely expose ambiguity with regard to how the desynonymization, apt to be conceptual and arbitrary, could come to terms with the positivistic handling of words as historical materials. In short, philosophy and philology remains unbridged. Even studies on etymology, though usually required to be evidence-based and descriptive enough, is granted its importance by him only in its possible effects of enacting

hidden truths, and hence sometimes lapses into a self-indulgent pedantry in which his serious speculative activity on words becomes difficult to tell from a mere wordplay. An example of this is his tracing the meaning of "think" back to that of "thing" which is etymologically not correct at all.

> To think absolutely or indefinitely is impossible, for a finite mind at least. To think [. . .] is to *thingify*. Thing = the Ing, a word found either separately or in the terminations of all the Gothic Dialects, is a somewhat set apart—thus *Ingle* = the Hearth. (*Letter,* IV, 885)

His erudition and imaginative wit allows him to say that the act of thinking is rooted in "thing", by whose forcibly associated imagery of an "ingle" he justifies the Kantian idea that to think is not to see something naked but to see it through a categorical form of experience of things like seeing fire in a hearth (ingle). Thus his "philosophical" emphasis on the history of words seems to be self-contradictory, disclosing such a conflict of lexicons as between the state of being purely given data and that of being under subjective choice and manipulation. True that he never parts with philological materials due to their possibilities of revealing themselves to be "living Words" (*Aids to Reflection,* 7. See also *Statesman's Manual,* 29), but their miscellaneous nature and his arbitrary handling of them are definitely on the verge of producing only a mass of debris to fall from the Platonic construction of knowledge.

2. Practice of Self-Knowledge: "Nominalistic Reduction"

Here we need to make sure that the lexicographical problems appear just in Coleridge's own studies on words, not in any actual form of dictionary. This suggests that it is not sufficient to understand the nature of Coleridge's idea of lexicography from the side of its theoretical formula, what is at more actual issue is to see his attitude toward words as materials and his routine exercise of reflecting upon them in his texts. In this section, I will take two steps for considering some aspects of his lexicographical concerns in practice; first, to delineate the way his philosophical postulate "self-knowledge" or "self-reflection" (the key concept which noticeably enables Coleridge to make a "philosophical" defense, or

guise, for his activities, following Plato and Schelling with the imperative of the ancient Delphic dictum, "Know Thyself!" (*Biographia,* I, 252) is carried out in his texts, its role being in fact a technical, rather than idealistic, one. Second, I will ascribe such a performative self-reflection to his obsessive tendency to reduce, or condense, philosophical ideas into particular nomenclatural indexes, characterizing it as "nominalistic reduction". Coleridge well understands that human intellect can hardly exerts "Reason", the faculty of intuitively getting to the essential divine truths, and what usually works is instead "Understanding", the faculty of "generalizing the notices received from the Senses in order to the construction of *Name:* of referring particular notices (*i.e.* impressions or sensations) to their proper name" (*Aids,* 232), which yet remains delusive because of its dependence on empirical forms of truth rather than on the truth itself (218). So if "the nominalistic reduction" pervades over his texts, it becomes very critical to him because it is only performed in a digressive place like notes, indexes, parenthesis, or marginalia; we will find out that, despite of his pragmatic application of nomenclature, just as if the act of thinking were to consult an imaginary "transcendental" dictionary as a tool, this method is just what makes his texts stagnant by indulgence in jumbles of words, with his professed Platonism being in danger of lapsing into materialism.

It is worth considering that just in the period around which Coleridge took part in *Metropolitana* he also attempted to absorb the knowledge of German Idealism into his own. *Biographia Literaria* (1817), a monumental work for this attempt, introduces a dynamic philosophy as the first principle of both human spirit and external nature, from which the poetic imagination can be deduced. We can hence regard *Biographia* as aiming to give a philosophical premise to the scientific, encyclopaedic mind presented in "Treatise on Method". In order to demonstrate that the unity of being and knowing, or "the coincidence of an object with a subject" (*Biographia,* I, 252), much of whose ideas being owed to Schelling though, he expounds the unity with a concept of "self-consciousness"; it "is the fixt point, to which for us all is morticed and annexed, [. . .] may be the modification of a higher form of being, perhaps of a higher consciousness, [. . .]; in short, self-consciousness may be itself something

explicable into something, which must lie beyond the possibility of our knowledge, because the whole synthesis of our intelligence is first formed in and through the self-consciousness" (*Biographia,* I, 284-5). Apart from its conceptual qualities which he explains as intuitively revealed by some divine medium ("the heaven-descended", 252), however, it remains unclear how this consciousness can work out. A later work, *Aids to Reflection* (1825) recommends readers to perform self-consciousness in a clearer, more practical manner, as a deed of reflecting on the nature and limit of human knowledge, the most significant object of it being language:

> Self-knowledge is the key to this casket; and by reflection alone can it be obtained. Reflect on your own thoughts, actions, circumstances, and [. . .] accustom yourself to reflect on the words you use, hear, or read, their birth, derivation and history. For if words are not THINGS, they are LIVING POWERS, by which the things of most importance to mankind are actuated, combined, and humanized. (*Aids to Reflection,* 10)

As long as self-consciousness is to be realized by understanding the nature of words——no less than cognitive media through which one can pierce into the objects they represent——lots of Coleridge's texts are found to be sites where this consciousness becomes manifest. I would like to show three distinct examples to illustrate it, in all of which the "nominalistic reduction" characteristically takes place. The first is *Statesman's Manual* (1816); with persistent criticism on French materialism which, in his view, distorted the terminology of what he calls "old philosophy", the book professes an alternative organic philosophy based on the intuitive and imaginative power of human mind. But he says in a passage, "whoever should have the hardihood to reproclaim its solemn Truths must commence [of the old philosophy] with a Glossary" (*Statesman's Manual,* 43), and indeed concludes the work with "a nomenclature of the principal terms that occur in the *elements* of speculative philosophy, in their old and rightful sense, according to my belief" (*Statesman's Manual,* 113), enumerating special terms like "sensation", "perception", "intuition", "idea", and so on, to give them enough prescriptive definitions to support his philosophy. The second

is *Biographia Literaria,* whose first volume is at first aimed to make "the applications of the rules, deduced from philosophical principles, to poetry and criticism" (*Biographia,* I, 5), but in fact focusing on desynonymizing imagination from fancy, impatiently abandons the demonstration of "the first philosophy" ever performed, and ends with nominal definitions of these two faculties (*Biographia,* I, 304-5). Hence the first volume can be regarded as a kind of a huge footnote to give a self-conscious criterion on terms which are to be applied to the literary criticism in the second volume. The last is the desynonymization of Reason and Understanding in *Aids to Reflection* (1825), which serves as a fulcrum of the main theme; though the work thematically attempts verification of the mystery of Christian doctrines by a defense that "the CHRISTIAN FAITH [. . .] IS THE PERFECTION OF HUMAN INTELLIGENCE", its method is "[t]o direct the Reader's attention to the value of the Science of Words, their use and abuse [. . .] (*Aids,* 7), for he believes the confusion of terms threatens to make people fall into "sophistry", the Sin of human intellect. (*Aids,* 46) Therefore a distinction of Reason, the faculty of intuiting the divine truth, and Understanding, the faculty of grasping objects of sense through conceptual forms, is the most crucial task for clarifying the boundary between faith and knowledge. Here again, the theological issues are moulded in nominal forms, except for which there will be no path to the essence of Christianity. All of these examples well suggest that they presupposes a lexicographical form within their structure apparently as a procedure modeled after the experience of referring to a dictionary for the insight into the topics in question.

What might be noted is that his working on words generally becomes more spontaneous, imaginative, or sometimes obsessive in spaces where subsidiary reflections, whimsical associations, or irresponsible joking, are freely done, than in such writings as might require him to do tightly logical arguments. Coleridge once said, "I converse better than compose, and write better letters than essays" (quoted in Willey, 212), and it is in those slackened spaces that, Owen Barfield analyzes, the punning and funning becomes a decisive spur on his writing energy; in his letters, "[h]owever low those spirits [of his], and perhaps at their very lowest pint

Coleridge always felt up to having a lark with a word", whose frequent occurrence is "refreshing to the reader, as no doubt it was refreshing to him".(Barfield, 206) But of course it doesn't mean that his indulgence in words is limited to private writings; as John Beer remarks, not only his "intellectual activity [. . .] spills rapidly into notebooks and letters" but even "it tends rather to be siphoned off into footnotes and appendixes" (Beer, 59) whose general function is to reconsider, define, or tinker with, the assumptions of topics or the terms used for them. Thence we might answer the question put by W. V. Harris about "the authority to be given to unpublished material and thus the limits of its legitimate use" (Harris, 46), by saying that it is of great importance to see out of the whole of his texts a recurring pattern which conditions and effectuates his intellectual occupation through nominalistic reduction, whether philosophical or jesting, whether in public or private writings, or whether in texts and subtexts. What pervades his writings is more often a heuristic method through nominal index than an organized procedure of logical arguments; heuristic because, as the three examples above imply, it is the act of defining, or reflecting on words that offers an approach to philosophy even without being given a theoretical foundation.

Then we are led, in this time at the level of his practical method, to a crucial paradox. Though the nominalistic reduction aims toward Platonic revelation of a word into the Word, it is generally apt to work out in a marginal, digressive space of his texts. To use Coleridge's favorite terms in a different context, his thoughts are driven by "centripetal" and "centrifugal" forces at the same time (*Biographia,* I, 286). It is not that the one force is in operation while the other is at halt, but the Platonic centripetality in the pursuit of the essence of a word is found in his incidental, long-excursive footnotes and other associated spaces. Of Coleridge's notebooks Seamus Perry puts this tendency in a succinct way; "[t]o 'feel too intensely the omnipresence of all in each' is to be exercised by a persistent equivocation between the apprehensions of diversity and unity; the claim of unity lead to a kind of inclusiveness, a principled form of copiousness; while the pull of diversity means that individual elements of the resulting plenitude are always ready to become items of

imaginative interest in their own right. (Perry, 93) "The pull of diversity" leads Coleridge to get indulged in digression where his philological interest might display itself to the full, and nevertheless this indulgence would be justified by the formulae Platonic "omnipresence of all in each", or "self-consciousness" by which the subject gets into the heart of the object he is engaged in.

This double-oriented strain of his texts is also implicit in the metaphor of "cement", which he often uses favorably in his articles to express a method of binding particular ideas and sciences from a unifying standpoint. "Treatise on Method" claims for the importance of the "'subtile, *cementing,* subterraneous' power" of human intellect (630, italics mine) required for an encyclopaedia, and *Biographia* applies the image to illustrate the Kantian a priori categories for experiences; "[h]ow can we make bricks without straw? Or build without cement? We learn all things indeed by *occasion* of experience; but the very facts so learnt force us inward on the antecedents, that must be pre-supposed in order to render experience itself possible" (*Biographia,* I, 142). Yet, while serving as a fundamental principle of knowledge which gives each of experiences a unified form, the cement is also applied to make a rhetorical defense for a jumbled-up mass of his discussion; during the time of writing *The Friend* (1818), a miscellaneous collection of essay, it was the fragmented and long-winding style of his prose that was a most worrying matter not only to his readers but to Coleridge himself; his prose is, he admits, "an *entortillage* in the sentences & even the thoughts", and a "stately piling up of *Story* on *Story* in one architectural period, which is not suited to a periodical Essay".(*Letter,* III, 234) In The *Friend* he justifies the piling and winding architecture of his prose in comparison to "the stately march and difficult evolutions, which characterize the eloquence of" the seventeenth century writers he admires like "Hooker, Bacon, Milton, and Jeremy Taylor [who] are, notwithstanding their intrinsic excellence, still less suited to a periodical Essay". His claims here is that these writers are possessed with "all the cement of thought" (*Friend,* I, 20) while the French epigrammatic, or we can even say materialistic, style fatally lacks it because the clarity and palpability of its sentences give readers "the habit of receiving

pleasure without any exertion of thought, by the mere excitement of curiosity and sensibility" (20).

In this way the material metaphor of cement gives us a clue to a system which is supposed to pierce through, but in fact is dependent on, a bundle of his miscellaneous, winding ideas which really constitute it. Cement is an inevitable agency for the whole of various parts to be united, but it is after all no more than a means, or an aid to reflection, given only qualities that are material and subsidiary to the main body of the architecture. This exemplifies the paradox above; the more obsessively self-reflective Coleridge becomes with "the cement of thought" in pursuit for the organic unity of knowledge, the clearer the excess of its material, digressive characters turns out. His etymological studies, intermissive punning on words, and even the fourth section of *Metropolitana* which as he planned consists of massive philological data——all of these therefore can be read as documents to show the strange coexistence between Platonism and Materialism, centripetality and centrifugality, unity and digression, and so forth.

Conclusion

What could we lead out in reading the way Coleridge's texts are constructed or edited in the framework of lexicography? Their historical peculiarity seems to lie in his tumbling in the abstraction of a methodical form out of materialistic objects, trying to extend its scope to the general method of searching for truth. In this sense we should not see his approach to constructing unified knowledge as a profession of total Idealism radically cut off from Materialism; much material occasions are found in his texts, and in this sense his Idealism can be found only in the process of his abstracting a "method", by which, in spite of its originally pragmatic sense, he seems to mean a universal laws for a wide range of sciences that is so generalizing and comprehensive that it might lose its specific objects and hence become "spiritual" or "philosophical". But after all a method for what? In "Treatise on Method" Coleridge goes as far as to say that it is a method for "a principle of UNITY WITH PROGRESSION" (630), but this in fact reveals the very moment when it becomes metaphysical enough to

repress Coleridge's own actual method for materialistic problems. I have so far attempted, by seeing philological materials as they are in the very process and failure of abstraction by Coleridge's own hand, to clarify such a strain in the structure of his texts at work within the epistemological boundary of his contemporary conceptual debates. If we are to see a series of Coleridge's texts, and failed *Metropolitana* as well, symptomatic of such epistemological aspects, then we can locate him as a significant figure who embodies the nodal point where his personal intellectual propensity, the paradigmatic frictions in philosophy, and also those in lexicography, are converged with one another.

Notes

1) James McKusick sees his organic notion of the history of language as preparing the "ideological climate that provided the *OED* with the rationale and cultural authority." (McKusick 1992, 22)
2) "Platonism" would be a better term for its wide and implicit meaning, and my later discussion will often use this term in behalf of "Idealism".
3) See McKusick's detailed description of his philological learning through Horne Tooke and Göttingen University. (MuKusick 1986, 33-85)
4) "Desynonymization" is the term Coleridge coined himself for the act of dividing and redefining two terms that have been used confusingly. Its first appearance is in *Biographia,* I, 82.
5) Coleridge's Bacon as an embodiment of Platonism is formulated by his following remark: "With him, therefore, as with us, an idea is, an experiment proposed, an experiment is an idea realized." ("Treatise on Method, 664)
6) See his belief that "[t]here are cases, in which more knowledge of more value may be conveyed by the history of a *word,* than by the history of a campaign." (*Aids,* 17n)

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