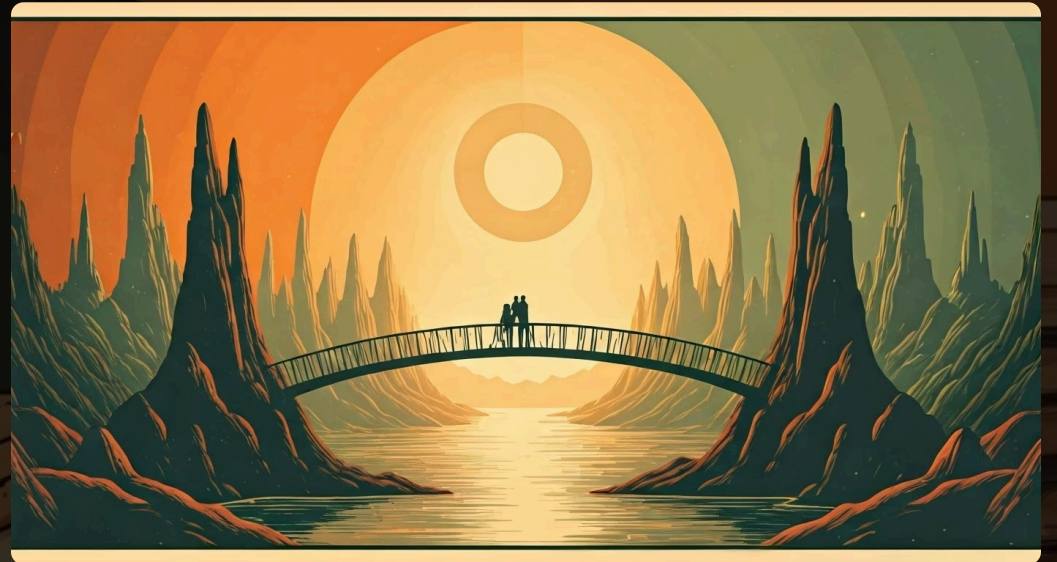


# Exploring Coleridge's Literary Theory

Delve into Samuel Taylor Coleridge's profound theories on imagination, fancy, and the nature of poetry. His philosophical explorations shaped Romantic literature and continue to influence literary criticism today.

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# Primary and Secondary Imagination



## Secondary Imagination

Conscious creative power



## Primary Imagination

Unconscious perceptive power

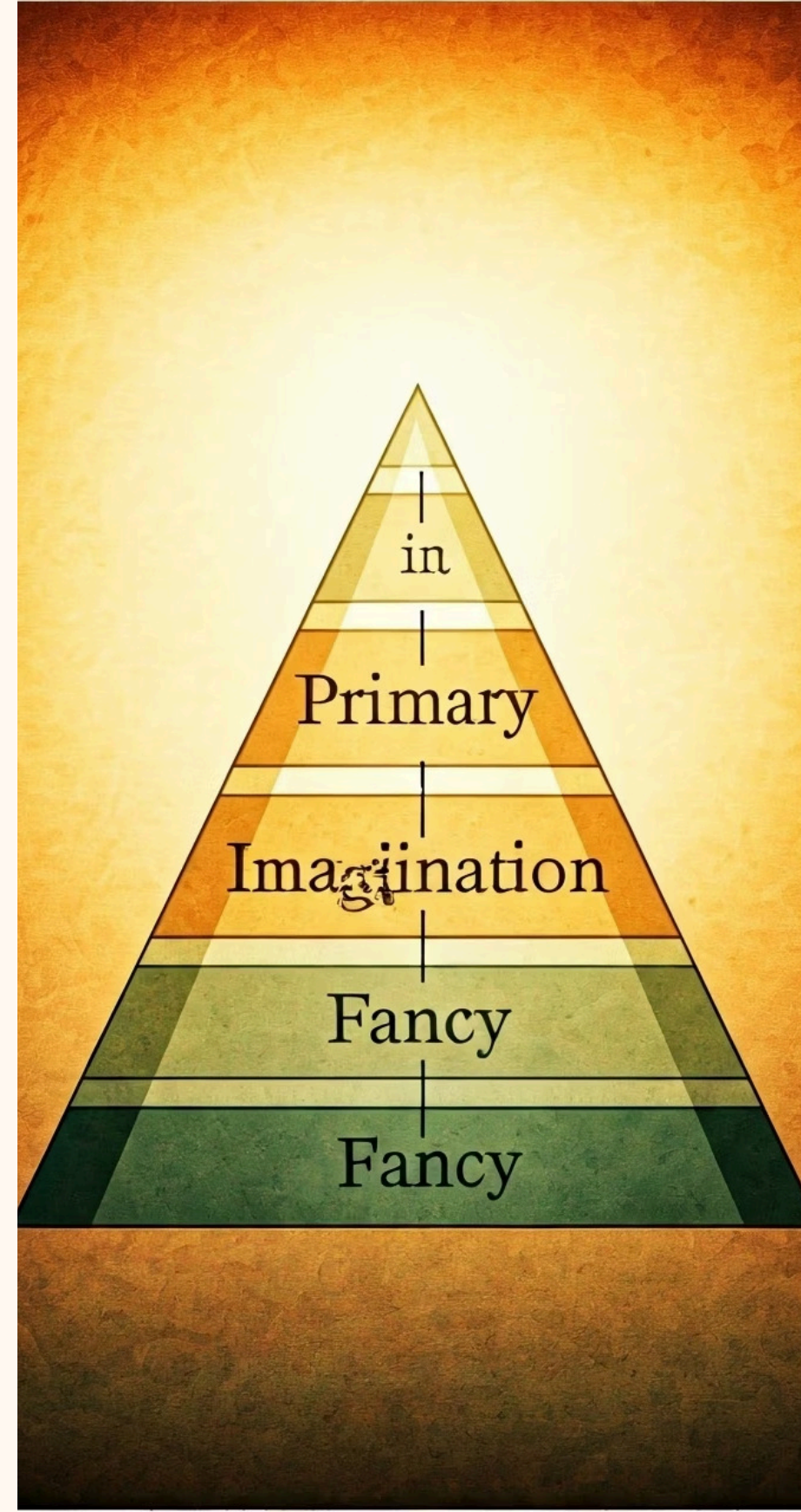


## Fancy

Memory freed from time and space

Coleridge distinguishes between primary and secondary imagination. The primary imagination is "the living power and prime agent of all human perception," a finite echo of divine creation. The secondary imagination coexists with conscious will, dissolving and recreating reality. It "struggles to idealize and to unify" and is "essentially vital."

In contrast, fancy merely rearranges "fixities and definites." It operates as "memory emancipated from the order of time and space," modified by choice but still receiving "all its materials ready made from the law of association."





# The Birth of Lyrical Ballads

## Initial Conversations

Coleridge and Wordsworth discuss exciting reader sympathy through truth and novelty through imagination.

1

## Division of Labor

Coleridge focuses on supernatural elements while Wordsworth reveals the wonder in everyday life.

2

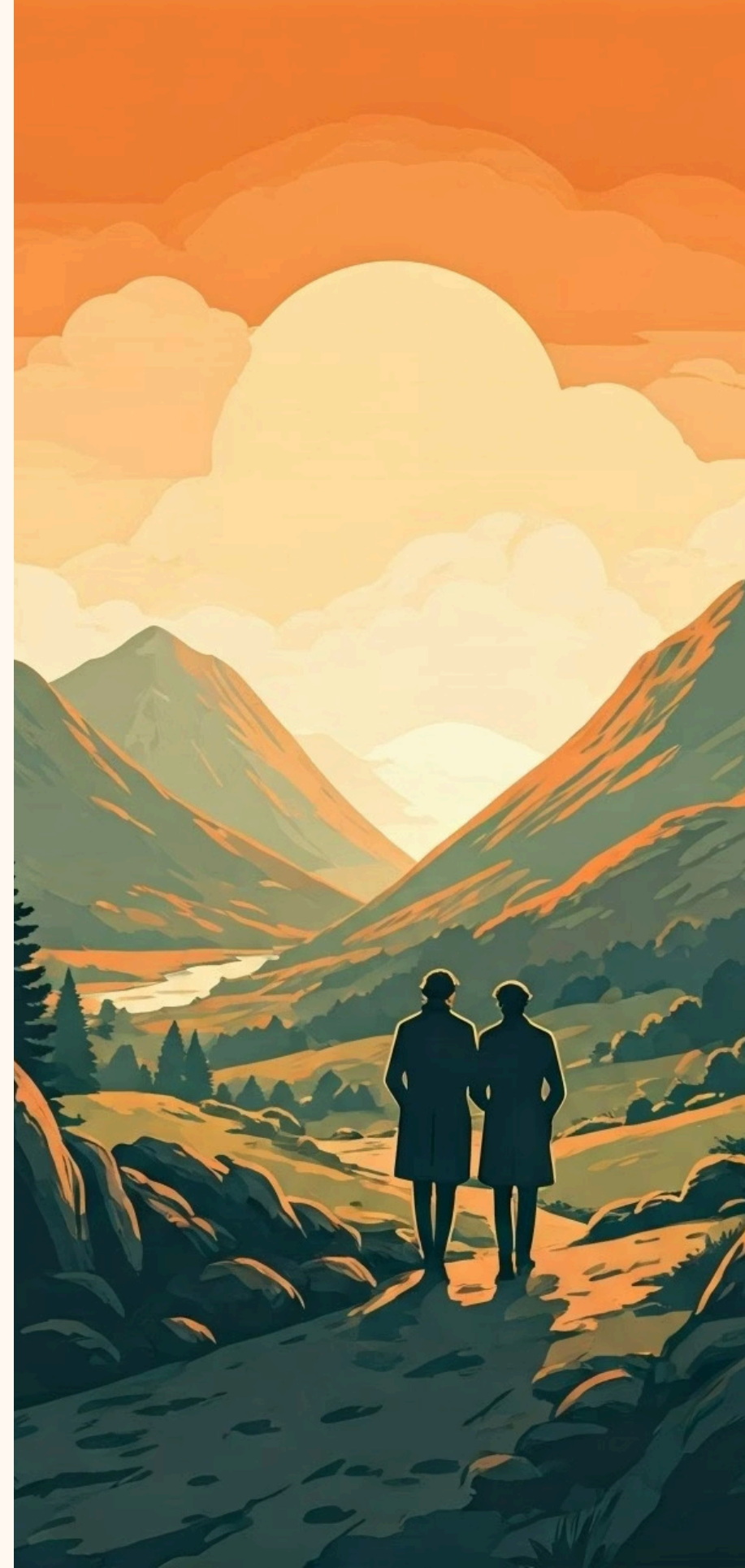
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## Collaborative Concept

They develop a plan for poems of two sorts: supernatural elements and ordinary life subjects.

During their first year as neighbors, Coleridge and Wordsworth frequently discussed "the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature, and the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colours of imagination." They observed how light and shade transform familiar landscapes, suggesting the possibility of combining both powers.

This led to the creation of *Lyrical Ballads*, with Coleridge focusing on supernatural elements that create a "willing suspension of disbelief," while Wordsworth aimed "to give the charm of novelty to things of every day" and awaken readers to "the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us."



# The Nature of Poetry and the Ideal Poet

## Balance of Opposites

Poetry reconciles  
"sameness with  
difference" and "the  
idea with the image"



## Emotional Depth

"More than usual  
emotion with more  
than usual order"

## Unified Whole

Forms all elements  
"into one graceful  
and intelligent whole"

## Intellectual Control

"Judgment ever  
awake" alongside  
"enthusiasm and  
feeling"

Coleridge defines the ideal poet as one who "brings the whole soul of man into activity, with the subordination of its faculties to each other." The poet diffuses "a tone and spirit of unity" through imagination, which "reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities."

In his famous conclusion, Coleridge states that "GOOD SENSE is the BODY of poetic genius, FANCY its DRAPERY, MOTION its LIFE, and IMAGINATION the SOUL that is everywhere, and in each; and forms all into one graceful and intelligent whole."

