The influence of Wordworth’s poetics of health, in which associations embody a relationship to a religiously unspecific conception of the transcendent, continues to be felt far into the Victorian period, underpinning, for example, the argument of Leslie Stephen’s well-known 1876 essay ‘Wordsworth’s Ethics’. The same is arguably true of what one might dub Coleridge’s poetics of unhealth, which remain a subterranean presence in the Victorian accounts of visionary kinds of experience drawn on by William James’s *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. That leading light of the Wordsworth Society, the Revd Stopford Brooke, in his 1874 lectures on *Theology in the English Poets*, for instance, contrasts Coleridge’s conception of the ‘one life’, in which ‘the image of the thing begins to be supplanted by the thoughts it awakens, and of which it is in reality the appearance; and ever growing less and less real, as it is replaced by the growing thoughts, becomes at last a vision in the mind’, with Wordsworth’s ‘healthier view’ which preserves the distinction between ‘the life in Nature and that in man’ and so avoids the ‘pathetic fallacy’ defined by Ruskin (91). For Brooke, the Coleridgean vision, which locates itself within Nature rather than outside of it (and, as Brooke argues, substitutes itself for Nature), is intrinsically unhealthy, a characterization which, as in this chapter we shall see, reflects Coleridge’s own account of visionary experience, in which transcendent vision is not in opposition to, but rather the reverse side of the bodily spectre produced by ill health.

Coleridge’s account of what, in an oxymoronic formulation combining the transcendent and the bodily, we may call visionary hallucinations, is accorded a prominent role in the physician Samuel Hibbert’s influential 1824 *Sketches of the Philosophy of Apparitions*, and still seems to be an influence in Victorian physician and alienist Henry Maudsley’s 1886 book on a similar theme, *Natural Causes and Supernatural Seemings*. Although Maudsley doesn’t explicitly refer to Coleridge, he does discuss Shelley and Blake in a way that indicates his awareness of the relationship between his
neurophysiological account of supernatural visions and Romantic theories of the imagination, and his choice of examples echoes Coleridge. For Maudsley, visionary experiences are simply an extension of ordinary perception, in which ‘a person for the most part sees only a very small part of that which he thinks he sees, the mind contributing, by virtue of its former experiences, what is necessary to fill up the image’ (188). Maudsley echoes the language of Common Sense philosophers such as Thomas Reid, suggesting that the mind actively constructs its perceptions in a process in which the ‘visual impression’ merely functions as a ‘sign’ (188) and arguing that prior beliefs exert a strong influence on what is ‘seen’. For Maudsley, the decline of sightings of ghosts in the modern age is indicative of general decline of belief in the supernatural (198), a development he describes with a nostalgic regret (143) which may well have influenced Thomas Hardy. Maudsley emphasizes the contribution made to progress by the same ‘narrow and intense mental temperament’ (133) which tends to predispose social visionaries to hallucination, which, although ‘illusive’, may nonetheless represent thought which is ‘good and valid’ (205).

Maudsley’s account of hallucinations closely parallels themes which in this chapter I will argue underlie many of Coleridge’s writings. This intellectual proximity suggests that the late nineteenth-century project of ‘mental physiology’ which Maudsley shares with figures such as Alexander Bain and G. H. Lewes can be seen as a continuation of the ‘neural Romanticism’ identified by Alan Richardson, both being linked by the medical ideas in which Neil Vickers has shown Coleridge took such an interest. Coleridge’s impact on later thinkers, such as I. A. Richards, is mediated by medical thought in a way which has yet to be fully studied, and which suggests that Coleridgean thought is much more embedded in an empiricist tradition than critics who emphasize the influence on him of German Idealist philosophy usually recognize.

In an essay published in 2007, Alan Barnes demonstrated the important role which philosophical discussions with Tom Wedgwood played in the development of Coleridge’s thought. In particular, Barnes has shown, using unpublished material from the Wedgwood Accumulation, that Coleridge’s well-known philosophical letters to Josiah Wedgwood, whose references to the concepts of time and space have often been claimed by critics as evidence for Kantian influence on Coleridge by 1801, and which have a close relationship to the drafting of the preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, must be interpreted as responses to Tom Wedgwood’s speculations about temporality and spatiality as psychological categories. As is suggested by the existence of a letter, dated 1790, from Tom Wedgwood to the Scottish Common Sense philosopher Thomas Reid on the philosophical and psychological significance of touch (also a subject in which Coleridge took an interest) the ideas of Wedgwood to which Coleridge acknowledged his indebtedness were formulated within the context of a British empiricist tradition marked