



Nature in Anne Sophie Swetchine (1782–1857)

Conley John J.
Loyola University Maryland

Heavily influenced by Romantic Neo-Platonism, Mme Swetchine argues that an elaborate correspondence exists between the material structure of the cosmos and the psychic structure of the human soul. Material nature and human nature are mutually formative. “Everything in the visible world, in the world we touch or hear, comes to express what is in our heart or to respond to it. It is another language but the same history” (1875: 61). The sight of particular natural objects often provokes a corresponding effect in the viewer’s moral or affective character. The purity of mountain air can stimulate a sense of moral purity. Stony, rugged mountains can point to the difficulty of unresolved moral dilemmas. A glimpse of the sublime in the ocean or in the Alps can encourage the viewer to long for the spiritual sublime found in eternity.

Primary Sources:

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Secondary Sources:

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