

S. T. COLERIDGE AND THE TRANSCENDENCE OF REASON

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ABSTRACT

This article argues that in his theory of reason as universal Logos, Coleridge held reason, and its constituent (Platonic, divine) ideas, to be transcendent to nature and the human mind. In this view, although nature is suffused by universal reason, and the human mind is transformed by it into an enlightened, spiritualized existence, reason remains a timeless and transcendent power to which the human mind is open, rather than a characteristic that it possesses. Drawing from Coleridge's 'Lecture on the Prometheus' (1825) and related texts, the article argues, in sections II–IV, for the prominence of 'the transcendence of the Nous' as a tenet that informs his wide-ranging polar, hierarchical philosophy of reason and ideas. Section V then discusses the chiasmatic structure of Coleridge's theories of how nature and spirit interact across the divide that for him is central to existence. The article concludes by reconstructing, in section VI, Coleridge's theory of mind as fractally organized, with opposed poles of reason and sense, each with its distinctive form of heightened, noetic or sensory intuitive experience.

I. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Like his fellow early British romantics William Blake and William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge is known for his elevated view of the human imagination and for his sense of a heightened perception of nature intimating the divine.¹ Mystical undercurrents are powerful in their work, and these have often been interpreted as tending towards pantheism (identifying God and nature) or panentheism (locating nature within God, and hence as divine).² A putative tendency to pantheism in Coleridge is too often misinterpreted, however, and this article is intended to clarify that issue by way of explicating his view of reason as transcendent, universal Logos—ultimately, the mind of God.

Coleridge's pantheist tendencies were at work in his pre-1818 prose writings and his poetry, but even then, they were tendencies, not avowals. These are found, most notably, in the passages of volume 1 of *Biographia Literaria*, especially in chapter 12, that draw heavily from Friedrich Schelling's *System of Transcendental Idealism*—in which the identity of mind and nature is itself influenced by Spinozistic pantheism—and in poems such as 'The Eolian Harp', with its famous lines on 'the one Life within us and abroad,/Which meets all motion and becomes its soul', followed by the speculative questioning of the next stanza:

And what if all of animated nature
Be but organic harps diversely framed,
That tremble into thought, as o'er them sweeps
Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,
At once the Soul of each, and God of All?

Yet Coleridge concludes the poem by bursting such

Bubbles that glitter as they rise and break
On vain Philosophy's aye-babbling spring.
For never guiltless may I speak of him,
The Incomprehensible! save when with awe
I praise him, and with Faith that inly *feels* . . .³

Beyond even Spinoza and Schelling, Coleridge acknowledges that the strongest influence on him regarding these pantheist tendencies is the mystic philosophy of Jakob Böhme, for whom the cosmos is the self-manifestation of God. While appreciating their attractiveness, Coleridge, in such works as his treatise 'On the Divine Ideas',⁴ would later argue—contra Böhme, Schelling, and Hegel—against pantheist and panentheist theories of natural and human history as necessary, divine self-manifestation, in favour of God and universal reason, or Logos, as transcendent, and Creation as freely given activity, as love, not necessity.

Böhme's thought had an influential revival around the turn of the nineteenth century. His arguments are more sophisticated than is generally credited, and they can be studied profitably by those engaging with modern formulations of pantheism and panentheism.⁵ Having been a reader of Böhme since his schooldays,⁶ Coleridge recognized Schelling's unacknowledged importation of Behmenist concepts such as the *Ungrund* and the interpenetration of polarized powers, and criticized Böhme, Schelling, and other *Naturphilosophen* for what he called 'the fundamental falsity of the Natur-philosophie.—It places Polarity in the Eternal, in God. All its other Errors are consequences of this.'⁷ Also deeply impressed with Böhme's notion of interpenetrative powers, Georg Hegel notably called Böhme 'the first German philosopher', and was himself involved in early nineteenth-century revival of Behmenism, growing out of the pantheism controversy. Hegel shares his increasingly positive relation to Böhme with Ludwig Tieck, who helped shape the intellectual environment at Jena before Hegel arrived there,⁸ and who corresponded with and later met Coleridge, the latter reinvigorating a return to Böhme in Tieck.

Compared, however, to more thoroughgoing Behmenists like Blake in his own country, Schelling in Germany, and the increasingly Behmenist and similarly panentheist Hegel, Coleridge's relation to Böhme was complicated.⁹ Out of all these thinkers, it is Coleridge who opposes pantheist and immanentist thinking with a view of reason as transcendent Logos. At a turning point in August 1818, he admits that, 'I myself have partaken of the same error' as Böhme, noting how, 'It has become evident to me of late . . . that Behmen . . . approaches so perilously near to Pantheism—'.¹⁰ He then diagnosed that risk as endemic to any system that sees the phenomenal world as the unfolding of the divine. This August 1818 realization is a watershed for Coleridge, his subsequent work consciously balancing the transcendence of God and reason with the human openness to reason as 'that more than man which is one and the same in all men'.¹¹ For the remaining decades of his life, Coleridge

refined his more developed view, overhauling the anti-hierarchical cosmology of Böhme and the early Schelling by setting it within a Christian Platonist order.¹²

Rather than entirely abandon Böhme's view of an immanently manifesting, self-transmuting God, Coleridge synthesized it with the strictly vertical hierarchy of Christian Platonism that commences from the transcendent God and Logos, through the medial mind between, with its bridging imagination, to nature as wholly immanent. In Coleridge's synthesis, the approach is one of 'descent from the Highest & Ascent from the lowest, at once—'.¹³ Though there is no space to examine this synthesis here, I discuss it in detail in a longer work.¹⁴ Retaining the German mystic's focus on an interpenetrative, transmutational logic of intense qualities, or *Quellgeister* (fundamental spirits or energies), that evolve through nature, but placing that evolutionary process within the Christian Platonic hierarchy, Coleridge formed his view of the transcendence of God and reason (as universal Logos), with the Incarnation of Christ, the *deus patiens*, being the sole divine immanence, all else at most symbolizing or intimating the divine, but not identical to it, as pantheists hold, nor even to part of it, as panentheists contend. In this view, the divine ideas¹⁵ and the laws of nature, are truths and powers over and above nature that are not themselves part of nature. In Coleridge's words, the divine ideas cohere in Logos, or universal reason, and are 'God's *ideas* of finite things, *the finite things*—which originate in him but acquire separate existence'—a Christian Platonist thought that Coleridge repeatedly returns to since at least 1806.¹⁶ In this asymmetrical view, the higher can influence or determine the lower, but not vice versa.

II. 'THE TRANSCENDENCY OF THE NOUS'

Expounding his 'ideal Realism',¹⁷ Samuel Taylor Coleridge argued for the reality of ideas as powers independent of the human mind. After around 1806, except when he is obliged to use the empiricists' associationist sense of the term while opposing their outlook, Coleridge uses

the word 'ideas' in the Platonic sense, as in a definition, given in a letter, whereby 'the Thoughts of God, in the strict nomenclature of Plato, are all Ideas, archetypal and anterior to all but himself alone . . . and . . . incomparably more *real* than all things besides'. In this same letter, he opposes with his Christian Platonism 'the unphilosophical jargon of Mr Hume and his Followers', and their theories on what 'it is fashionable to misname, IMPRESSIONS and IDEAS'.¹⁸ His accepting the transcendent sense of ideas explains why he 'identifies his own philosophy as Platonism'.¹⁹ For him, reason is the universal Logos, and 'IDEAS (*sensu Platónico*) or supersensual realities'²⁰ are transcendent powers that are active beings and truths above material forces, abstract concepts, and empirical images. While this division characterizes Coleridge's view of human experience, he also saw it as able to be bridged, however imperfectly, by an imagination that stretches between sensations and concepts on one side, and the transcending ideas of reason on the other. Explaining this possibility, Coleridge employs the late antique (and subsequently scholastic) distinction between *lux*, the substantial light, and *lumen*, the illumination from that light.²¹ In this view, the substantial *lux* of reason remains transcendent and thus beyond the understanding, while its 'down-shining'²² *lumen*, which is available to the understanding, casts light on worldly objects and situations by revealing ultimate aims and symbolic intimations of eternal truths and values. In this vein, he likens reason to the Johannine light which shone in the darkness, though the darkness did not comprehend it.²³

Drawing down the higher light of ideas, imagination is therefore, for Coleridge, a torchbearer of reason, bringing that light to human life and experience. With this image, Platonic realism, the Gospel of St John, and the romantic symbol²⁴ converge in a philosophy of ideas with religion at the apex. 'It is wonderful', he remarks, 'how closely Reason and Imagination are connected, and Religion the union of the two. Now the Present', he laments, nonetheless, 'is the Epoch of the Understanding and the Senses.'²⁵ Note that it is specifically

religion, not literature, in which Coleridge sees imagination and reason united. In 1815, Coleridge distinguished poetry from philosophy, defining poetry as ‘that species of composition, which is opposed to works of science, by proposing for its *immediate* object pleasure, not truth’, and philosophy as ‘the affectionate seeking after the truth’ (*Biographia*, vol. 2, p. 13; vol. 1, p. 142). As has been observed,

by 1825 Coleridge had to some extent renounced the centrality of art: above the order of imagination he could see the order of reason, though the higher did not exclude the lower; and above literature stood the sacred writings.²⁶

From this time, Coleridge’s philosophical writing proliferated, always aiming toward religion, as he developed his view of universal reason as transcendent Logos, ultimately based in the divine mind.²⁷

Indeed, it was in 1825 that Coleridge argued, in his inaugural lecture to the Royal Society of Literature, that there is a kind of myth with a religious meaning that is a ‘philosopheme’, wherein the ‘substance, the *stuff*, is philosophy; the *form* only is poetry’.²⁸ Coleridge cited *Prometheus Bound*, attributed to Aeschylus, as a prime example of such ‘sublime *mythus*’ (‘On the Prometheus’, p. 1267). The *Prometheus* expresses a ‘proto-philosophical meaning’ such that its ‘meaning inheres in [its] ontological content’.²⁹ The crux of his argument unequivocally maintains the transcendence of reason, or *noûs*, since, as he claims:

this derivation of the spark from above . . . was intended to mark the *transcendancy* of the Nous, the contra-distinctive faculty of man, as timeless . . . and in this *negative* sense *eternal*. (‘On the Prometheus’, p. 1268–9)

Such reason, he argues:

is not subject to any modifying reaction from that on which it immediately acts; . . . it suffers no change, and receives no accession from the inferior, but multiplies itself by

conversion, without being alloyed by, or amalgamated with, that which it *potenziates*, ennobles, transmutes. (Ibid., p. 1268)

This ‘sublime *mythus* . . . concerning the genesis, or birth of the *vouç* or reason in man’ conveys a truth, Coleridge suggests, that ‘deeply impressed’ Heraclitus—and hence the subsequent history of metaphysics—namely:

That the mere understanding, considered as the power of adapting means to immediate purposes, differs . . . from the intelligence displayed by animals . . . solely in consequence of a combination with far higher powers of a diverse kind in one and the same subject. (Ibid., pp. 1267–8)

That is, human understanding, in this view, differs from animal not through any inherent quality, but in virtue of combining with ‘far higher powers’ that are essentially different from it in kind. As is well known, Coleridge saw ‘the fundamental difference in kind between the Reason and the Understanding’ as ‘pre-eminently the *Gradus ad Philosophiam* [Step to Philosophy]’, and as his mission in life to explain.³⁰ What is not well known, however, and is the purpose of this article to convey, is the form and extent of Coleridge’s commitment to this reason being transcendent.

III. UNDERSTANDING DIVIDED FROM REASON

Coleridge’s argument against empiricism was essentially that it made immanent too much that should remain transcendent. He therefore opposed Aquinas’s Aristotelian dictum, which became central to Lockean empiricism, that ‘*nihil est in intellectu quod non fuerit in sensu* [nothing exists in the mind that was not first in the senses]’.³¹ Coleridge could only accept this dictum with Leibniz’s ingenious codicil: ‘. . . *excipit: nisi ipse intellectus* [except the mind itself]’.³² The ‘mere understanding’ is for Coleridge the instrumental ‘Faculty of means

to medial Ends, that is to *Purposes*, or such ends as are themselves but means to some ulterior end'.³³

His criticism of the excessive immanence in empiricism gained strength by holistically taking over its target, as in his retention of elements of empiricist association theory operating at the lower level of his own more holistic model of mind. On his retrieval of part-truths from systems he opposes as narrow and atomistic, Coleridge writes, 'Exclude Utility? No. My system of Moral Philosophy neither excludes nor rests on it: were it for this reason only that it includes it' (*Notebooks*, vol. 4, §5209, fol. 18). Coleridge retrieves rather than syncretizes, in that his aim is to retrieve partial truths from obsolete or incomplete systems. Welcoming this 'catholic and unsectarian . . . spirit' of Coleridge's, J. S. Mill agrees that truths (or half-truths) from within utilitarianism and empiricism are retained in Coleridge's method, which is 'less extreme in its opposition', because 'it denies less of what is true in the doctrine it wars against'.³⁴ Thus Coleridge's method of philosophical retrieval corrected what he saw as dangerous half-truths by retaining them within a broader and more balanced system (*Table Talk*, vol. 1, p. 248; 12 Sept. 1831).

He aimed to show his generally empiricist and increasingly utilitarian British contemporaries the dangers of understanding everything mechanistically, including mind and humanity. Despite Coleridge seeming to many a romantic idealist crying in a utilitarian wilderness, Mill was partly converted, emending his brand of utilitarianism along Coleridgean lines to distinguish between higher and lower pleasures. Thus Mill rejected Bentham's Helvetian claim, reducing all value to simple sensualism, that, 'quantity of pleasure being equal, push-pin is as good as poetry'.³⁵ The unaided lower or 'mere' understanding—especially one which has foreclosed the possibility of knowledge beyond the senses and the phenomenal world—can never, in Coleridge's view, aim higher than the ordering of sense data according to cause and effect, empirical concepts, and use-value.

At the heart of Coleridge's philosophy, then, lies the divide between human understanding and transcendent reason. While human understanding is for him a more or less 'mechanical', rule-bound, information-processing facility whose basic unit is the concept, transcendent reason is a universal Logos independent of human thought. The understanding has concepts; reason (Platonic) ideas. In the following contrastive columns, Coleridge shows his understanding–reason divide under the heading, 'The Difference in Kind of Reason and the Understanding':

UNDERSTANDING.

1. Understanding is discursive.
2. The Understanding in all its judgments refers to some other Faculty as its ultimate Authority.
3. Understanding is the Faculty of *Reflection*.

REASON.

1. Reason is fixed.
2. The Reason in all its decisions appeals to itself, as the ground and *substance* of their truth. (*Hebrews*, VI. 13.)
3. Reason of Contemplation. Reason is indeed much nearer to SENSE than to Understanding: for Reason (says our great HOOKER) is a direct Aspect of Truth, an inward Beholding, having a similar relation to the Intelligible or Spiritual, as SENSE has to the Material or Phenomenal.

The Result is: that neither falls under the definition of the other. They differ *in kind* . . . (*Aids to Reflection*, p. 223)

As Coleridge argues in these columns, where the understanding is discursive, in moving between propositions and examples; medial, in referring below itself to the evidence of the senses, or above itself, to the self-evidence of reason; and reflective, in operating on its own abstractions, the reason is fixed, in being non-discursive, absolute, and eternal; self-evident, i.e. not drawing on the evidence of another faculty, e.g. sense; and contemplative, being an intuitive 'inward Beholding' of the intelligible or spiritual. This essential divide between understanding and reason makes Coleridge's a philosophy of transcendence. Rather than

conceiving of this central divide as the utter separation of the human being from transcendent reason, however, he posited the transcendence-directedness of imagination and its symbols, prayer, and contemplation as imperfectly (humanly) traversing the divide between concept and idea.

Explaining how the symbol exemplifies, with a notable intensity, the universal in the particular, he describes the imaginative perception of the higher in the lower, such that

a Symbol is . . . characterized by a translucence of the Special in the Individual or of the General in the Especial or of the Universal in the General. Above all by the translucence of the Eternal through and in the Temporal. It always partakes of the Reality which it renders intelligible.³⁶

This 1816 definition of the symbol develops from Schelling's of intellectual intuition, from 1802, whereby:

intellectual intuition is simply the capacity to see the universal in the particular, the infinite in the finite, the two combined into a living unity.³⁷

Coleridge also develops Kant's framing of the *Verstand–Vernunft* (understanding–reason) distinction. He favours, however, the original version of this distinction, namely Plato's, between *diánoia* and *nóēsis*. Despite its transcendental, rather than transcendent, status in Kant, reason for Coleridge and Plato can be approached and intuited in the purest form, without images, as real and transcendent beings that are powers beyond the human mind. Convergently, Kant, Coleridge, and Plato, agree that it is the higher understanding, and not the reason, that renders abstract and theorized objects of thought in images and schemata. Kant and Coleridge also agree, in a view that aligns with Plotinus, but not with the letter of Plato, that the imagination creates symbols whereby the ideas of reason are represented in

aesthetic material, so that culture and general experience can become suffused with intimations of ideas, which are otherwise wholly transcendent to sense experience. This intimation allows for the aesthetic apprehension or anticipation of ideas without requiring them to be immanent. For Kant, however, though the ideas are transcendental (i.e. they are the a priori pre-requisites for experience and knowledge), they are dependent on the human mind, being its necessary components, and they are therefore in that sense immanent to the human mind.

Coleridge took pains to point out the harm in treating distinctions (between two or more things of the same kind) as divisions (rifts between kinds), and notes that we are prone to separate things artificially that are not truly separate from one another, in order to distinguish them more clearly. He states this principle—the distinction–division difference—in the aphoristic form that ‘it is a dull and obtuse mind that must divide in order to distinguish; but it is a still worse, that distinguishes in order to divide’ (*Aids to Reflection*, p. 33). It is all the more notable, then, when he affirms and analyses the real and separating differences between understanding and reason.

The understanding exists, Coleridge held, in varying degrees in different people, and in some animal species, as ‘the Faculty judging according to Sense’ (*Aids to Reflection*, p. 215). While the understanding is clearly capable of degrees, there are no degrees of reason. Indeed, reason is no faculty at all, unlike the understanding, for

REASON with the silence of light . . . describes itself, and dwells in *us* only as far as we dwell in *it*. It cannot in strict language be called a faculty, much less a personal property, of any human mind! (*The Statesman’s Manual*, pp. 69–70)

This is why Coleridge says that we can

speak of the *human* Understanding, in disjunction from that of Beings higher and lower than man. But there is, in this sense, no *human* Reason. There neither is nor can be but one Reason, one and the same. (*Aids to Reflection*, p. 218)

In the same year that he published *Aids to Reflection* (1825), he described, in his lecture to the Royal Society of Literature, his view of reason as independent of the human mind, asserting that ‘Reason is from God, and God *is* reason *mens ipsissima* [mind its very self]’ (‘On the Prometheus’, p. 1281).³⁸

IV. COLERIDGE’S POLARIZED PLATONISM

Annotating the back flyleaf of the Kantian philosopher W. G. Tennemann’s *Geschichte der Philosophie*,³⁹ to which Coleridge critically referred while compiling his own lectures on the history of philosophy, Coleridge schematically outlines his two-level polar theory⁴⁰ in his ‘Order of the Mental Powers’ diagram, which displays the most general and comprehensive contours of his system as follows:

The simplest yet practically sufficient Order of the Mental Powers is, beginning from the ~~lowest~~.

	lowest	highest
	Sense	Reason
	Fancy	Imagination
Fancy and Imagination are Oscillations, <i>this</i> connecting R. and U; <i>that</i> connecting Sense and Understanding.	Understanding	Understanding
	———	———
	Understanding	Understanding
	Imagination	Fancy
	Reason	Sense

(*Marginalia*, vol. 5, p. 798; 1824)

This valuable annotation refers to a page where Tennemann is discussing the late-medieval philosophy and mystical theology of Jean Gerson and the earlier Christian neo-Platonism of the Victorine School, initiated by Hugh and Richard of St Victor. Here we see Coleridge's scheme of the mental powers, or epistemological modes, which arguably modifies Plato's simile of the divided line.⁴¹

The bar between the higher understanding and the lower understanding shows, within a wider context of the mental powers, 'The Difference in Kind of Reason and the Understanding' that Coleridge outlines around the same time, in *Aids to Reflection*. This divide is logically equivalent to Plato's division between knowledge and opinion, and, specifically, between theoretic, abstract understanding (*diánoia*) and everyday understanding and belief (*pístis*). Plato places this *diánoia* (which for Coleridge becomes the higher understanding) above everyday understanding and belief, and below the higher reason (*nóēsis*) that he claims perceives or contemplates higher truths and 'ideas', whether directly in intuition, or after the logical approach of dialectic. Plato has Socrates explain the theory of ideas to Glaucon (Plato's brother) in a way that allows a schematic initial understanding of the proposed ontology and epistemology of that theory.

The line is first divided in an uneven ratio, the lower section shorter than the higher, with relative length representing *saphēneía*, or clarity of knowledge. The longer upper section, *epistēmē* (knowledge), has greater clarity, being more properly 'knowledge' than the lower, *dóxa* (opinion). Each section is then sub-divided according to the initial ratio. This has the mathematically necessary result that the upper section of the lower division is of the same length (i.e. represents the same intermediate degree of clarity) as the lower section of the higher division. In ascending order of clarity and purity of knowledge, the sections are:

$$eikasía : pístis :: diánoia : nóēsis$$

That is, seeing and fancying images (*eikasía*) is to common-sense belief and everyday understanding (*pístis*), as abstract, conceptual and schematic understanding (*diánoia*) is to higher reason and the contemplative intuition of ideas (*noēsis*). In Coleridgean terms, the rational schema (literally a ratio of ratios) is as follows:

sense + fancy : lower understanding :: higher understanding + imagination : reason

So, intuitive sense + imagistic fancy relate to the lower understanding (which is unenlightened, natural and instinctive), as the higher understanding (which is discursive, and enlightened by ideas of reason) + symbolic imagination is to intuitive reason.

Plato's divided line is linear and progressive, and although Coleridge's diagram is progressive too, it is not straightforwardly linear. Instead, it has a pronounced bipolarity and harmonic balance—though not one of equilibrium or parity, in contrast to Böhme and the early Schelling, as for Coleridge the order is hierarchical, with reason always highest. As Plato's scheme is straightforwardly linear, or unipolar, he just needs one ascending ratio of two ratios ($a : b :: c : d$). But because Coleridge's scheme is bipolar, his extremes (sense and reason) have a harmonic similarity not explicitly shared by Plato's *eikasía* and *noēsis*.

Coleridge's counterpart poles of sense and reason draw experience outwards, into a reality that transcends the understanding at both ends of the aesthetic–intellectual spectrum. While sense pulls toward nature beyond phenomena, reason pulls toward the reality of the human-mind-independent ideas and universal principles, which for him are ultimately divine.

Between these extremes, everything we can comprehend or conceive passes through the cognitive chiasmus of the higher (discursive and enlightened) and lower (impulsive and instinctual) understanding. Flanking this conceptual hub are fancy below, and imagination above. Fancy draws intuitions up from sense to become empirical concepts, which oscillating fancy then draws back down, into sense, to inform perception. In the higher parallel,

imagination draws ideas of reason down to enlighten discursive understanding, allowing experience to be elevated beyond concepts to contemplate the ideas.

Coleridge's almost poetic schema is like verse in an ABC-CBA rhyme scheme. That he sketched it out twice further brings out the cross-currents, counterpoint, and harmonies. While it progresses from the lowest level, sense, to the highest, reason, as it does in Plato's divided line, Coleridge's extremes are pronouncedly counterparts, as are fancy and imagination, a complementary pair of intermediating, oscillating powers. Fancy bridges intuitive sense and the lower understanding, and this lower-level oscillation mirrors imagination moving between higher understanding and intuitive reason at the higher level. The lower and higher levels of understanding (equivalent to Plato's *pístis* and *diánoia*) are also counterparts, and their opposition effects the crucial chiasmus of mind through which ideas and images cross over and transform, where intermediary concepts are given shape before being sent on their various missions to the edges of experience.

Owen Barfield memorably notes that Coleridge's complementarities in this schema are like octaves. Indeed, there is more in common, or in tune, between reason and sense, in this theory, than between reason and understanding, even though understanding is linearly closer to reason along the pole. Thus Coleridge defines 'reason . . . as an organ bearing the same relation to spiritual objects, the Universal, the Eternal, and the Necessary, as the eye bears to material and contingent phænomena' (*The Friend*, vol. 1, pp. 155–6). It is apt that a poet observed and articulated these spiritual–sensual connections, devising an elegant schema acutely alert to conceptual rhymes in the balance of opposed yet complementary powers. This conception of a harmonic scale within the hierarchical relation between sense and reason is a kind of rationalist intuitionism, acknowledging that the aesthetic and the noetic operate at opposite epistemological poles, but in such a way that, as in Böhme's cosmology, extremes meet. Like Kant's system, it synthesizes empiricism and rationalism, but in a way that retains

the transcendence of reason and the ideas. It also accords with, yet goes beyond, Plato's divided line, so that by bringing out the harmony between sense and reason, Coleridge also demonstrates their essential similarity.

The Cambridge Platonist John Smith anticipated this rationalist intuitionism by a century and a half, arguing that '*Reason . . . is turn'd into Sense: That which before was only Faith well built upon sure Principles (for such our science may be) now becomes Vision*'.⁴² While Smith's neo-Platonic theory of '*Reason . . . turn'd into Sense*' is an important influence, Coleridge's 'spiritual realism' is more systematic than that developed in Cambridge Platonism, which should not surprise, as Coleridge's system is further evolved, and gains support from German transcendental idealism. In Coleridge own diagnosis, the pre-critical Cambridge Platonists lacked what he called Kant's 'Philocrisy', or 'a pre-inquisition into the mind' as 'an examination of the Scales, Weights and Measures themselves, abstracted from the Objects'.⁴³ His system being overtly hierarchical, Coleridge qualifies his rationalist intuitionism by noting an asymmetry in the otherwise harmonic ends of the mental polarity. The physical organs of sense, with their mental counterparts in sensation, are very different from their objects, which objects they must convert into their own kinds by receiving them as physical stimuli to be converted into qualia.⁴⁴ The higher mind of imagination and contemplative reason, on the other hand, is for Coleridge already of the same kind (spirit) as its objects.

V. THE CHIASMUS: CROSSING THE DIVIDE

Consistently anti-reductionist in opposing the reduction of lived experience and human meaning to sensation or reflection on sensation, Coleridge complained that empiricists saw the conceptual understanding as the developmental apex of human thought (*The Friend*, vol. 1, p. 440). Yet while it is the crucial chiasmus of human mind for Coleridge, the conceptual

understanding is but the midpoint of his Order of the Mental Powers, and at this juncture he draws a bar, just before the higher (enlightened) understanding. The understanding below that line is informed by sense, the understanding above it is enlightened by ideas, the difference for him being that between nature and spirit.

The summit of the empiricist scheme is thus but the halfway post of the Coleridgean, in a theory he says develops from Shakespearean, Spenserian, Miltonian, Swiftian, Wordsworthian ‘spiritual, platonic old England’, rather than from Lockean, Priestleyan, Paleyan, Pittian ‘commercial G. Britain’ (*Notebooks*, vol. 2, §2598, fol. 80; 1805). Indeed, from the purely empiricist perspective, imagination and reason are things unseen, and thus entirely ultramontane, that is, mere hypotheses on the other side (if there is one) of the mental Alps. In his 1817 work of philosophical autobiography and literary criticism, *Biographia Literaria*, he represents the empirical–transcendental divide with a geographical analogy, arguing that

As the elder Romans distinguished their northern provinces into Cis-Alpine and Trans-Alpine, so may we divide all the objects of human knowledge into those on this side, and those on the other side of spontaneous consciousness . . . (*Biographia*, vol. 1, p. 236)

Thirteen years later, distinguishing the reason (and its ideas) from the understanding (and its concepts), Coleridge remarked that Aristotle’s mastery over conceptual understanding was a cloud obscuring his ability to see what Plato meant in his theory of transcendent ideas, for

Aristotle was and still is the sovereign lord of the Understanding—the Faculty judging by the Senses. He was a Conceptualist, but never could raise himself into that higher state, which was *natural* to Plato and is so to others, in which the Understanding is

distinctly *contemplated* and looked down upon from the Throne of Actual Ideas, or Living, Inborn, Essential Truths (*Table Talk*, vol. 1, p. 173; 2 July 1830).⁴⁵

This cloud, the bar between Coleridge's lower and higher understanding, marks the limit of empirical concepts and theoretical schemata.

The higher understanding, for Coleridge, is the understanding enlightened by the ideas of reason, which themselves constitute reason in its positive sense. Accordingly, he sometimes calls the higher (or enlightened) understanding, the 'negative reason', or 'reasoning' (discourse and ratiocination) as opposed to 'Reason' (the ideas, objective and human-mind-independent). Thus, in the note where he draws out his Order of the Mental Powers, he distinguishes:

Positive Reason, or R. in her own Sphere . . . from the merely *formal* Negative Reason, R. in the lower sphere of the Understanding. The + Reason = Lux: – Reason = Lumen a Luce. By the one the mind contemplates Ideas: by the other it meditates on Conceptions. (*Marginalia*, vol. 5, p. 797)

The higher understanding can be called reason only in the qualified, negative sense of its ability to employ the universal Law of Contradiction in forming and applying distinctions (*The Friend*, vol. 1, p. 159). The Law of Contradiction has the quality of universality, impressing the understanding and awakening the 'unindividual and transcendent character of the Reason as a presence to the mind, not a particular faculty of component part of the mind' (*Logic*, p. 69).⁴⁶ After this awakening, the understanding becomes 'enlightened' and reflective. The enlightened understanding is able to focus inwards because attention is forced away from outward objects and onto universals. Further, it is able to focus 'upwards', metaphorically, towards transcendence, because, for Coleridge, reason is 'above' nature, and

a divine spark, as it appears in the ‘philosopheme’ and ‘sublime mythus’ of the *Prometheus*. This reason is beyond the human, even as it defines the human.

In contrast to this higher, enlightened understanding, Coleridge calls the lower understanding ‘the mind of the flesh’, and sometimes the ‘mere understanding’.⁴⁷ It is the instrumental ‘Faculty of means to medial Ends, that is to *Purposes*, or such ends as are themselves but means to some ulterior end’ (*Church and State*, p. 59). Illuminating but not guiding, ‘the light which Experience gives is a lantern on the stern which shines only on the waves behind us’ (*Table Talk*, vol. 1, p. 260). Negative reason, on the other side of the mental equatorial line, is the Coleridgean higher understanding, one level higher than ‘mere understanding’. Rather than simply being overwhelmed by ‘contingent and particular facts’, the higher understanding follows the illumination of ‘absolute Principles’ (‘the *Light of Reason*’)—such as the Aristotelian Laws of Thought that inspire confidence in the tremendous scope of the ideas of necessity and universality—to discover that ‘Laws’ or ‘Ideas’ might ground what would otherwise remain conceived as the brute and unintelligible facts of phenomena. The principles of logic, then, used by the discursive and negative reason (higher understanding) such as the Law of Contradiction, help discover universal truths through the mass of factual data.

Negative reason, then, enables abstraction in terms of universals. While negative reason works in the understanding and is regulated especially by the Law of Contradiction, positive reason is served by the imagination and gives rise to our sense of the unity of nature and its laws, which transcend phenomena, as well as ideas of transcendent realities and eternal truths such as God, the soul, and freedom. Negative reason, he says,

consists wholly in a man’s power of seeing, whether any two conceptions, which happen to be in his mind, are, or are not, in contradiction with each other, it follows of

necessity, not only that all men have reason, but that every man has it in the same degree. (*The Friend*, vol. 1, p. 159)

Negative reason is thus reason unconscious of itself, operating only to the degree with which the understanding can cope. The understanding orders its objects according to sameness and difference, and thus forces that detachment from nature so deeply felt in the nineteenth century, fascinated as it was by mechanical understanding.

Positive reason, however, as the human openness to substantial reason, is not discursive. Positive reason contemplates, and what it contemplates are ideas, which are not simply objects within reason, because, according to Coleridge's Platonic view, 'they are themselves reason' (*The Friend*, vol. 1, p. 156). Distinguishing positive and negative reason, Coleridge employs the late antique and early medieval Church distinction between *lux*, the substantial light itself, and *lumen*, the illumination derived from the light (Isidore, *Etymologies*, 13.10.14, p. 274). He explicitly likens reason to the Johannine light which shone in the darkness, though the darkness did not comprehend it:

The mystery is in the Shining down of the Light into the Darkness, in the Irradiation of the Mind of the Flesh, in by virtue of which it becomes a human Understanding, in the apt phrase of Shakespere "a Discourse of Reason"—a mysterious Fact so sublimely annunciated by the Evangelist John—I.5. "The Light shineth into and in the Darkness: and the Darkness comprehendeth it not". (*Notebooks*, vol. 5, §5679; 9 May 1830)⁴⁸

And so, for Coleridge, reason is symbolized as the divine light, independent of human mind, yet a light to which humans might hope to attain. As in the *Prometheus*, this reason nonetheless remains transcendent, irreducible to worldly knowledge or conceptual comprehension, necessary though it is for both. Negative reason, by contrast, which does not contemplate ideas but meditates on conceptions, is the indirect illumination from that light

(‘Lumen a Luce’). That is, negative reason is the understanding that has been enlightened by reason and can meditate on concepts and principles, though it falls short of contemplating ideas. In contemplating ideas, one exercises positive reason, for Coleridge the highest human mental power, being our openness or directedness toward human-mind-independent reason, the *lux* itself.

The lateral lines that Coleridge draws to bisect his Order of the Mental Powers are bars that divide the understanding into higher and lower modes, and the octave-like harmony of correspondence between the poles implies a similitude across higher and lower levels. As sense intuits its stimuli, reason opens to ideas. The intuitions of sense are likewise divided from the transcendent ideas of reason, with the ideas for Coleridge, as they were for Plato, being objective powers—unlike for Kant, for whom they were not transcendent, but transcendental, and not objective, but subjective. As this is a polarity, the faculties above and below the bar are not simply opposed, but are also harmoniously connected, as two forces of one power, opening and closing together like finger and thumb. Thus sense has a strong affinity with reason, its polar counterpart, as does fancy with imagination, and the lower (mechanical) with the higher (enlightened) understanding. For Coleridge, this connection of opposites is necessary in the economy of human thought.

Coleridge configures the contemplated objects and principles of ultimate truth—the ideas of reason—as the transcendent counterparts to the sensations and associations of immanent mind. The higher and lower faculties of understanding straddle the equatorial midline between the poles, ‘the Line’ beyond which the Ancient Mariner was pulled by the ‘Polar Spirit’, as Stanley Cavell perceptively suggests,⁴⁹ into a world of irrational forces where actions have incommensurate consequences and the boundaries between life and death dissolve in the daemonic, numinous antipode to the encounter with truth, goodness, and

beauty in the intuitions of higher reason or the intellectual discourse in the higher understanding.

Note that although his system skirts close to homuncular faculty psychology, Coleridge does not assume discrete faculties, but rather describes different kinds of mental processing. Like Kant, his ‘analysis of the “strengths and measures of the human mind” does not construct a traditional “faculty psychology”’, but provides instead ‘a transcendental analysis of the conditions which make experience possible’.⁵⁰ Distancing his system from the lack of holism that mars traditional faculty psychology, Coleridge asserts that every

distinction in human nature . . . is a distinction, not a division, and that . . . every act of mind . . . unites the properties of Sense, Understanding, and Reason. Nevertheless, it is of great practical importance, that these distinctions be made and understood. (*The Friend*, vol. 2, p. 104; 28 September 1809).

Reason, for Coleridge, is self-aware only in the higher mind, being somnambulant in the lower. Making this point, he adds an autograph note on somnambulant reason in a copy of the 1812 edition of the 1808–10 (first) version of *The Friend*.

Plants are Life dormant; Animals = Somnambulists; the mass of Mankind Day-dreamers; the Philosopher only awake. (*The Friend*, vol. 2, p. 75 n. 3)

This develops Schelling’s position that ‘animals, those incessant somnambulists’, cannot act freely, but rather the natural ground acts through them.⁵¹ Genuine creativity, however, unifies the faculties, awakening the whole soul in combining mental toil with keen enjoyment, so that:

The poet, described in *ideal* perfection, brings the whole soul of man into activity, with the subordination of its faculties to each other . . . He diffuses a tone, and spirit of unity, that blends and . . . *fuses*, each into each, by that synthetic . . . power . . .

imagination. This power . . . reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities . . . (*Biographia*, vol. 2, pp. 15–17)

A year or so later, annotating Tennemann's *Geschichte der Philosophie*, he describes spirit as the free and intellectually unified exercise of the mental powers. 'What', he asks, 'is precisely meant by Geist? Does it mean anything more than the whole man in the free and combined use of all his faculties, even as he uses his senses?' (*Marginalia*, vol. 5, p. 801). Each process along the Coleridgean polarity, be it flight of fancy or confident deduction of the higher understanding (negative reason), involves the whole in an organicism that opposes empiricist and mechanistic reduction. Further, even though individuals are not equally aware of the presence of reason in every human act, reason, somnambulant though it often is, is nevertheless always present in this theory of 'ideal Realism' (*Biographia*, vol. 1, p. 303).

VI. FRACTAL MIND AND NOETIC VISION

Because Coleridge's model of mind is a bipolar system, a fitting analogy (though imperfect, as analogies must be) is the bar magnet, no portion of which is separate from another, though its two halves are starkly opposed. Should the magnet be cut across the middle, it would become two bar magnets, and not a separate north pole in one hand and a south in the other. And so on, fractally; for as long as one keeps breaking the magnet, one is left holding whole magnets, and not mere parts. By the same principle, purely abstract, analysed components of experience are fictional figments that in reality retain within themselves aspects of the dynamic whole in which they remain. The bar-magnet analogy helps one focus on the bipolarity of the mental powers. As a magnet cut in two results in the divided parts themselves becoming fully polarized magnets, with each formerly north or south pole now becoming instantly polarized into its own north-and-south whole, so, the more one analyses any mental occurrence, an infinitesimal bipolarity is revealed. As if through a bar magnet,

Coleridge, in his Order of the Mental Powers diagram, draws a line through the understanding to show the higher (intellectual) and lower (sensual) levels of mind at its crux. This line divides the natural mind from the mind enlightened by the ideas of reason. After that line, one moves beyond the ‘Cis-Alpine’ provinces, through the ‘higher ascents’ that once formed one’s horizon, and into the ‘Trans-Alpine’ region (*Biographia*, vol. 1, pp. 236, 239).

While the higher and lower levels of the understanding straddle the mental equator, a similar bipolarity can be found in any mental act or process. Thus in any lower-level act, of fancy, say, there will always be an upper pole, tending towards or influenced by (though only dimly aware of) the idea or principle above it, as well as a lower pole, leading to dissipation perhaps, yet exploring with an energetic, antennae-like curiosity, feeling along associating currents of memory, convention, and present stimuli. This mental holism suggests fractal models of thought and behavior with a lower, material and basic pole, and a higher, spiritual or cultivating pole. Thus the pathways of sexual desire, say, are open to being shaped by contingent concerns for material needs, but also by ideas of love; or a sensation of physical pain will be accompanied by regressive memories but can also occasion higher-order reflection on Stoicism, self-overcoming, and the vicissitudes of life, as in Coleridge’s own account of his opium withdrawal symptoms in his poem ‘Pains of Sleep’ (1803), where he overcomes the ‘Fantastic passions! maddening brawl!’ of yesternight, as ‘silently, by slow degrees, | My spirit I to Love compose’ (*Poetical Works*, vol. 1, p. 753).

But although the universalizing pole of the higher mind opposes the individualizing, particularizing tendencies of lower, sensual mind, the two are nonetheless connected within a living whole. ‘This again is the mystery and the dignity of our human nature’, as Coleridge puts it, ‘that we cannot give up our reason, without giving up at the same time our individual

personality' (*The Friend*, vol. 1, 97). Reason, in this view, establishes individual personality by transcending it.

For it must appear to each man to be *his* reason which produces in him the highest sense of certainty; and yet it is *not* reason, except as far as it is of universal validity and obligatory on all mankind. (Ibid.)

This position is shared with Heraclitus, who noted that 'most men live as if each had a private intelligence of his own', when in fact 'the Logos is common to all'.⁵² It is indeed 'the Queen Bee in the Hive of error', Coleridge colourfully cautions, to identify 'universal Reason with each man's individual Understanding' (*Church and State*, p. 171), for the individual understanding creates most of its concepts from experience, and each such concept is nuanced to all manner of idiosyncrasies familiar to biographers, confessors, and psychoanalysts. An idea, however, remains one and the same idea, whether its light filters through a thousand human minds or none.

In the Coleridgean philosophy of life, the idiosyncrasies of personal experience and suffering should not be abstracted into theory, but should rather bring us to reflect so that:

whatever humbles the heart and forces the mind inward, whether it be sickness, or grief, or remorse, or the deep yearnings of love . . . in proportion as it acquaints us with 'the thing, we are', renders us docile to the concurrent testimony of our fellow-men in all ages and in all nations. (*The Friend*, vol. 2, p. 7)⁵³

In his notes on the eccentric theories of John Asgill, who argued that human beings need not necessarily die, and that some might become 'translated' to heaven, Coleridge examines the errors and special pleadings in Asgill's treatise. He finds the chief defects to flow from arguing for religion with empirical concepts and abstract notions only, without recourse to

the *ideas* necessary for faith in things beyond sense experience. He concludes that when abstracted from necessarily idiosyncratic experience, the light of reason is ‘always, more or less, refracted, and differently in every different individual; and it must be re-converted into *Life* to rectify itself and regain its universality’ (*Marginalia*, vol. 1, p. 123). In a similar note, he wrote of the problems that arise because ‘Each man will universalize his notions & yet each is variously finite’ (*Notebooks*, vol. 2, §2208, 13 October 1804), defining, a dozen years later, the term ‘notion’ as the abstract counterpart of a ‘fact’ or ‘cognition’, and thus as a conception that is imagined rather than perceived (*The Statesman’s Manual*, p. 113).

These ‘notions’ resemble Locke’s ‘ideas’, being sense impressions and atoms of remembrances: flotsam jostling in the stream of association. While an empirical concept in two minds becomes two concepts—my concept of ‘dog’, ‘game’, or ‘friend’ is never your concept of the same—it would be erroneous to believe that the same idea (in Coleridge’s Platonic sense) in two minds is two ideas and not one. Freedom is freedom, one and the same idea held to be a unitary and real power, despite how our varying notions or concepts transform and shade across different points of view. Hence Coleridge notes the ‘unindividual and transcendent character of the reason as a presence to the human mind, not a particular faculty or component of the mind’ (*Logic*, p. 69).

Compellingly, Coleridge also argues that we owe our humanity to the ideas of reason. Not only does the influence of ideas in the higher mind transform the natural (prudential and mechanical) understanding into a human understanding, he further argues that, ‘a *man* without the ideas of God, eternity, freedom, will, absolute truth, of the good, the true, the beautiful, the infinite’ would cease to be human, and remain only a ‘subtile . . . but likewise cursed’ creature or machine (*Church and State*, p. 47 n.). If the understanding ignores or turns away from the ‘down-shining’ of reason, then it will remain merely mechanical, rather than fully human. With this down-shine, Coleridge employs the neo-Platonic imagery of

intellect irradiated by reason, with the soul and nature in turn receiving that light of reason in more diffused form.

Dim and diffused reflections of reason in sense and nature notwithstanding, Coleridge maintained the transcendence of reason itself as distinct from the light of reason in the human mind. Furthering this view, he worked to establish:

the diversity of Reason and Understanding, and the distinction between the *Light* of Reason in the Understanding, viz. the absolute Principles presumed in all Logic and the conditions under which alone we draw universal and necessary Conclusions from contingent and particular facts, and the Reason itself, as the Source and birth-place of IDEAS, and therefore in its conversion to the Will the power of *Ultimate* Ends . . .

(*Notebooks*, vol. 4, §5293; 1825–6)

The '*Light*' of reason becomes negative reason, the formal reason of logic, which is but reflected moonlight to the sun of substantial 'Reason itself', where ideas are unreflected and undiffused. Negative reason (the higher understanding), in contrast to this positive reason, has for its objects not ideas themselves, but phenomena, the *lumen* (or glow) that shines through the translucent appearances of the world, behind which is the *lux*, or direct light itself. To reiterate, though lower in the scale than reason in a straightforward, linear way, sense is more alike to reason for Coleridge than understanding, as both are intuitive and direct, rather than medial and conceptual.

From here, Coleridge's finding hints of reason in sense leads to his nudging Plato in a Plotinian direction.⁵⁴ Clearly Coleridge, the romantic poet-philosopher, gives a dignity to feeling and imagination that was present in Plotinus but notably absent, at least in overt explications, in Plato. This overt absence of a deep vision of the senses as an incipient *nóēsis* must be balanced, however, with such Platonic passages of high poetry as the winged horses

and the charioteer of the soul in the *Phaedrus*, or the steps to universal beauty in the *Symposium*, passages whose rich philosophical meaning rightly became highly charged for the neo-Platonists.

To these neo-Platonic concerns, and aware of the *mýthos* within Plato's own dialogues, Coleridge adds St John's sense of the Christian Logos:

The Mystery is in the Shining down of the Light into the darkness, in the irradiation of the Mind of the Flesh, by virtue of which it becomes a *human* Understanding, in the apt phrase of Shakespere 'a Discourse of Reason'—a mysterious Fact so sublimely annunciated by the Evangelist John—I.5. 'The Light shineth into it and in the Darkness: and the Darkness comprehendeth it not'— (*Notebooks*, vol. 5, §6291, fol. 33; 9 May 1830).

Unsurprisingly, Coleridge referred to his *Opus Maximum* as his 'Logosophia': an extensive but uncompleted manuscript on his theory of noetic science and philosophy of religion, a work that remained uncollated and unpublished until 2002. His Christian Platonism, and his modifying the divided line into a polar harmony with an elevated imagination, allowed an account, absent, though arguably implicit, in Plato but supported by Plotinus, of how the noetic vision can also be intimated through the appearances of nature and in our emotional and aesthetic responses to them, and not only in pure *nóēsis*. Thus reason, as the universal Logos, remains transcendent, in Coleridge's view, to the natural and the merely instrumental, although it can be glimpsed in the understanding as the cognitive power of the necessary and the universal, and anticipated or dimly intuited in imaginative perception, where it is intimated in symbols that stir ideas.

¹ This work was supported by JSPS Kakenhi, grant number 19K00107.

² Daniel Dombrowski, ‘Wordsworth’s Panentheism’, *The Wordsworth Circle*, 16.3 (1985), 136–42; William Andrew Ulmer, *The Christian Wordsworth, 1798–1805* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2001), 36–78; Thomas McFarland, *Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), *passim*; Richard Berkeley, *Coleridge and the Crisis of Reason* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 29–33, 59–67. McFarland’s study emphasizes Coleridge’s resistance to and arguments against pantheism.

³ S. T. Coleridge, ‘The Eolian Harp’ (1795–6), *Poetical Works Part One: Poems (Reading Text)*, ed. J. C. C. Mays, 2 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), vol. 1, p. 233, ll. 26–7; p. 234, ll. 44–8; ll. 56–60. The lines on ‘the one Life’ were inserted in 1817, in the *Sibylline Leaves* addendum.

⁴ ‘On the Divine Ideas’ (MS c.1823), Fragment 3 in *Opus Maximum*, ed. Thomas McFarland and Nicholas Halmi (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

⁵ e.g. Andrei A. Buckareff and Yujin Nagasawa, eds, *Alternative Concepts of God: Essays on the Metaphysics of the Divine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

⁶ Coleridge, recounts being early influenced by ‘Behmen’s Aurora, which I had *conjured over* at School’; *The Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. E. L. Griggs, 6 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956–71): vol. 4: 751, to Ludwig Tieck (4 July 1817).

⁷ S. T. Coleridge, *Marginalia*, vols 1–2, ed. George Whalley (1980–4); vols 3–4, ed. H. J. Jackson and George Whalley, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992–2001): vol.3, 1055, annotating Lorenz Oken (August–September 1818).

⁸ Celia Muratori, *The First German Philosopher: The Mysticism of Jakob Böhme as Interpreted by Hegel* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2016), pp. 9–21, describes Tieck’s precursory romantic reception of Böhme.

⁹ Elizabeth Engell Jessen, 'Boehme and the early English Romantics', in Ariel Hessayon and Sarah Apetrei, eds, *Introduction to Jacob Boehme: Four Centuries of Thought and Reception* (London: Routledge, 2014), pp. 180–95.

¹⁰ Coleridge, *Marginalia*, vol. 1, p. 600, annotating Böhme (27 August 1818).

¹¹ S. T. Coleridge, 'Ideal of an Ink-Stand' (1821), *Shorter Works and Fragments*, ed. H. J. Jackson and J. R. de J. Jackson, 2 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995): vol. 2, p. 947.

¹² Muratori, *The First German Philosopher*. My review article on this work compares Hegel's and Coleridge's use of Böhme; Peter Cheyne, 'Review of Muratori, The First German Philosopher', *The Coleridge Bulletin*, 54 (Winter 2020).

¹³ S. T. Coleridge, *The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, vols 1–3 ed. Kathleen Coburn, 1957–73; vol. 4 ed. Kathleen Coburn and Merton Christensen, 1990; vol. 5 ed. Kathleen Coburn and Anthony Harding, 2002 (Princeton: Princeton University Press): vol. 4, §5276 fol. 8 (November 1825). See also *Notebooks*, vol. 5, §5816 fol. 43 (March 1828).

¹⁴ Peter Cheyne, *Coleridge's Contemplative Philosophy* (Oxford University Press, 2020), esp. chs 5 and 7, discuss Coleridge's modifications of Behmenism and Platonism respectively, and his synthesis of them at the heart of his own system.

¹⁵ Coleridge sees the divine ideas as essentially Platonic forms conceived in the Judeo-Christian sense of Philo and the Church Fathers, especially Origen, as eternal ideas in the mind of God. Mary Ann Perkins, *Coleridge's Philosophy: The Logos as Unifying Principle* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

¹⁶ Coleridge, 'Reflections on God's Ideas' (1806 or later), *Shorter Works and Fragments*, vol. 1, 156.

¹⁷ S. T. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria* (1817), ed. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate, 2 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983): vol. 1, p. 303.

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- ¹⁸ Coleridge, *Letters*, vol. 2, pp. 1195, 1194 (13 October 1806), to Thomas Clarkson.
- ¹⁹ James Vigus, 'The Philosophy of Samuel Taylor Coleridge', in W. J. Mandler, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of British Philosophy in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014, pp. 520–40), p. 521.
- ²⁰ S. T. Coleridge, *Logic* (MS c.1821, or later), ed. J. R. de J. Jackson (Princeton: Princeton University Press), p. 212.
- ²¹ Isidore of Seville, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville* (c.600–25), tr. Stephen A. Barney, W. J. Lewis, J. A. Beach, and Oliver Berghof (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 13.10.14, p. 274. Coleridge uses this distinction at: *Marginalia*, vol. 1, pp. 687, 712; vol. 3, p.746; vol. 5, p. 797; and *Notebooks*, vol. 4, §§4907, 4923 (1822), 5290 (1825–6); vol. 5, §§5495 fol. 62^v–63, 5581, 5615 fols 18^v–19 (1827), 5860 f67 (1828), 6109, 6120 fols 75^v–76 (1829), and 6291 (1830).
- ²² A Coleridgeism: *Notebooks*, 5, §§6482 (October 1830) and 6743 (September 1833). Coleridge, 'On the Polar Forces' (1818), *Shorter Works and Fragments*, vol. 1, pp. 783–5. *Ibid.*, p. 783, similarly refers to the 'down-shine' of reason.
- ²³ John 1: 5. Coleridge relates reason and understanding thus, referring to the divine Logos as the light of reason and the understanding as the 'darkness', at *Notebooks*, vol. 5, §§5679 (9 May 1830) and 5679 (2 December 1827), and elsewhere.
- ²⁴ For contrasting views of the romantic symbol in Coleridge, see Nicholas Halmi, *The Genealogy of the Romantic Symbol* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 99–132, and Douglas Hedley, 'S. T. Coleridge's Contemplative Imagination', in Peter Cheyne, ed., *Coleridge and Contemplation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp. 221–36.
- ²⁵ S. T. Coleridge, *The Friend* (1808; 1818), ed. Barbara E. Rooke, 2 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), vol. 1, p. 203 n., recording an 1829 annotation in a copy of the 1818 expanded edition.

²⁶ George Whalley, 'Coleridge on the Prometheus of Aeschylus', *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Canada*, 54.2 (1961, pp. 13–34), p. 23.

²⁷ The roots of Coleridge's 'Logosophia' in sources including Plato, Plotinus, Proclus, the Church Fathers, the Renaissance humanists, and the Cambridge Platonists are explored in Mary Anne Perkins, *Coleridge's Philosophy*, passim; and Douglas Hedley, *Coleridge, Philosophy and Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), esp. pp.18–87.

²⁸ Coleridge, 'On the Prometheus of Aeschylus' (1825), *Shorter Works and Fragments* (vol. 2, pp. 1251–301), pp. 1267–8.

²⁹ Nicholas Halmi, 'Coleridge on Allegory and Symbol', *The Oxford Handbook of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Frederick Burwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009, pp. 345–58), pp. 354–5.

³⁰ Coleridge, *Table Talk*, ed. Carl Woodring, 2 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), vol. 2, p. 88 (14 May 1830).

³¹ Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* (1265–74), vol. 1.a. 14–18, ed. Thomas Gornall, S. J. (London, 1964; reprint Cambridge, 2006), q. 2, 'On Truth', a. 3, arg. 19.

³² Leibniz, *New Essays on Human Understanding* (1704; 1st edn 1765), tr. Peter Remnant and Jonathan Bennett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), Bk 2, Ch. 1, 111. The title advertises Leibniz's target, Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Coleridge expresses his agreement with Leibniz's 'excipit' clause at *Biographia*, vol. 1, p. 141; *Logic*, p. 226; and *Aids to Reflection* (1825), ed. John Beer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 226 fn.

³³ S. T. Coleridge, *On the Constitution of the Church and State According to the Idea of Each* (1829), ed. John Colmer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 59.

³⁴ J. S. Mill, ‘Coleridge’, *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill, Volume 10: Essays on Ethics, Religion, and Society*, ed. John M. Robson, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985), pp. 158, 125.

³⁵ Mill, ‘Bentham’, *Collected Works*, vol. 10, p. 113.

³⁶ S. T. Coleridge, *The Statesman’s Manual* (1816), in *Lay Sermons*, ed. R. J. White (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 31.

³⁷ Friedrich Schelling, ‘Further Presentations from the System of Philosophy (1802)’, tr. Michael G. Vater (partial translation), *Philosophical Forum*, 32.4 (2001), pp. 373–97.

³⁸ Distinguishing reason in its human aspect from its human-mind-independent sense, see also Coleridge, *Letters*, vol. 5, pp.137–8.

³⁹ W. G. Tennemann, *Geschichte der Philosophie*, vol. 13, part 2 (Leipzig: J. A. Barth, 1811), copy annotated by Coleridge held at British Library, shelf mark C.43.C.24.

⁴⁰ Coleridge’s concern with polarity in philosophy, psychology, and natural science arose in a post-Kantian context shaped by Schelling and *Naturphilosophen* such as Steffens and Oken. Thomas MacFarland, ‘A Complex Dialogue: Coleridge’s Doctrine of Polarity and its European Contexts’, *Romanticism and the Forms of Ruin* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), pp. 289–341.

⁴¹ Plato, *Republic*, Book 6, 509d–511e, in *Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper and D. S. Hutchinson (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), pp. 1130–2.

⁴² John Smith, *Select Discourses* (1660; Delmar, NY: Scholars’ Facsimiles and Reprints, 1979), p. 16.

⁴³ Coleridge, *Marginalia*, vol. 5, p. 81, annotating John Smith, 6 March 1824.

⁴⁴ For discussion of the correspondences between concepts, objects, and qualia, see Coleridge, *Logic*, pp. 34, 44–5 n., 263; and S. T. Coleridge, *Lectures 1818–19: On the*

History of Philosophy, ed. J. R. de J. Jackson, 2 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp. 112–15.

⁴⁵ See also Coleridge, *Notebooks*, vol. 4, §5295 (1825–6).

⁴⁶ Barfield, *What Coleridge Thought*, pp. 110–11, discusses the operation of the ideas of necessity and universality as the essential characteristics of the higher understanding.

⁴⁷ For his theory of the Pauline ‘mind of the flesh’, see ‘Essay on Faith’ (1820), in Coleridge, *Shorter Works and Fragments*, vol. 2 (pp. 833–44), p. 841. For ‘the mere understanding’ see Coleridge, *The Friend*, vol. 1, p. 439, and Coleridge, *The Statesman’s Manual*, p. 22.

⁴⁸ See also, among other entries, *Notebooks*, 5, §5679 (2 December 1827).

⁴⁹ Stanley Cavell, ‘Emerson, Coleridge, Kant (Terms as Conditions)’, *In Quest of the Ordinary: Lines of Skepticism and Romanticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988, pp. 27–49), pp. 45–9.

⁵⁰ S. V. Pradhan, *Philocrisy and its Implications: Essays on Coleridge* (New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1999), p. 110.

⁵¹ Friedrich Schelling, ‘Aphorisms as an Introduction to Naturphilosophie’ (1805), tr. Fritz Marti, *Idealistic Studies*, 14.3 (1984, pp. 244–8), p. 255.

⁵² Heraclitus, *The Fragments* (c.500 BC) trans. Thomas M. Robinson (University of Toronto Press, 1987), p. 11. (Fragment 2); see also *The Fragments*, p. 178 (‘Ancient Testimonia’, 16.1.b): ‘Man is not rational; only the surrounding substance is intelligent.’

⁵³ Quoting ‘the thing, we are’ from Shakespeare, *The Rape of Lucrece*, l. 149.

⁵⁴ Besides his own claims, Coleridge’s neo-Platonic direction has been argued for since at least James H. Rigg, *Modern Anglican Theology: Chapters on Coleridge, Hare, Maurice, Kingsley, and Jowett, and on the Doctrine of Sacrifice and Atonement* (London, 1857), p. 24. While Rigg’s relating Coleridge to neo-Platonist arguments is deprecatory, disparaging the paganism of these ancient philosophers, more positive accounts of Coleridge’s Platonism can

be found throughout three recent studies: Perkins, *Coleridge's Philosophy*; Hedley, *Coleridge, Philosophy and Religion*; and James Vigus, *Platonic Coleridge* (Oxford: Legenda and MHRA, 2009).