Romanticism and System in Coleridge and Schlegel

Alexander J.B. Hampton [*]

ABSTRACT: Friedrich Schlegel and Samuel Taylor Coleridge share strong structural affinities in the path they followed in developing their Romantic philosophies. What connects them is a common concern with systematicity in an age of convulsing systems. This examination begins by outlining the problems of systematic thought in the 1790s and continues with what each of the two young authors believed to be the appropriate grounding principle for systematic thought, with Schlegel turning to beauty and Coleridge to religion. Both initially adopted the positions of contemporary philosophers, respectively Fichte and Hartley to secure the ground for their philosophical positions. However, Schlegel and Coleridge both became disillusioned with contemporary philosophy and instead developed new kinds of systematic exposition that recognized the impossibility of certain foundational principles, whilst nevertheless recognizing the reality of their absolute ideals as an object of approximation. This article compares the paths of both thinkers towards this independently arrived at, yet remarkably similar conclusion, in the early development of their careers.

Keywords: Schlegel, Coleridge, Fichte, Hartley, system, Romanticism

RÉSUMÉ : Il y a entre les philosophies romantiques de Friedrich Schlegel et de Samuel Taylor Coleridge de nettes affinités de structure quant à leurs élaborations. Ce qui les relie, c'est une préoccupation commune pour la systématicité à une époque où les systèmes sont en crise. On commence par mettre en évidence les problèmes que pose la pensée systématique dans les années 1790. On montre ensuite ce que chacun des deux jeunes auteurs pensait être le fondement adéquat d'une pensée systématique, Schlegel se tournant vers la beauté, Coleridge vers la religion. Ils ont d'abord chacun repris à leur compte les positions de philosophes contemporains, respectivement celles de Fichte et de Hartley, pour asseoir leurs propres positions philosophiques. Néanmoins, ils ont tous deux perdu leurs illusions à l'égard de la philosophie de leurs contemporains et développé de nouvelles formes d'exposé systématique tenant compte de l'impossibilité de certains principes fondamentaux, tout en reconnaissant la réalité de leurs idéaux absolus en tant qu'objet d'approximation. Cet article compare le cheminement des deux penseurs vers cette conclusion à laquelle ils arrivent chacun indépendamment, mais de manière remarquable-ment similaire, au début de leur carrière.

Mots-clés : Schlegel, Coleridge, Fichte, Hartley, système, romantisme

[*] Assistant Professor, Department for the Study of Religion, University of Toronto, Jackman Humanities Building, Room 303, 170 St. George Street, Toronto, ON M5R 2M8 – a.hampton@utoronto.ca

ALEXANDER J.B. HAMPTON

1. An Italian Postlude

In 1805 a somewhat aimless and practically penniless Samuel Taylor Coleridge entered the city of Rome. Ostensibly, he was returning to England after a year's work as a civil servant in Malta. He had decided to take the long way home. From Sicily, he made his way up the Italian peninsula with the intention of travelling overland back to Britain. In reality, he was procrastinating; home was anything but inviting. Back in England were unwanted commitments, mounting debts and an unhappy marriage. A slow return which took in the classical monuments and Renaissance sculpture of Italy was a far more attractive option, but for the fact that Napoleon's armies were now advancing from the North. Yet in Rome, Coleridge stopped and stayed, and there he came into contact with the German colony centred at the residence of the Prussian minister to the court of Pius VII, Wilhelm von Humboldt.

The splendid residence of the brother of the famous adventurer scientist Alexander overlooked the Trinita dei Monti and the Spanish Steps, and it was there that Coleridge met Johann Ludwig Tieck. The two immediately formed a friendship and together they discussed German Idealism, Böhme and Shakespeare. Just four years earlier Tieck had been in Jena, a principal member of the *Frühromantik* circle there, among whom was of course, Friedrich Schlegel. Sadly, no real record of the Italian conversation survives. Perhaps it was thrown into the Mediterranean on Coleridge's return to England, as had been done with his Malta notes when a Spanish privateer boarded their ship and Coleridge claimed to be an American. However, Tieck's sister, also at Rome, would later write to Wilhelm August Schlegel of the remarkable Englishman at Rome who knew so much about the current German literature.[1]

This proximity between Friedrich Schlegel and Samuel Taylor Coleridge was greater than this chance closeness in the Caput mundi. Both share a similar journey and ultimate conclusion in the development of their respective Romantic positions. What connects them is a common concern about systematicity in an age of convulsing systems and the problem of locating a grounding principle for systematic thought. Systematic philosophical thinking, it was assumed, required a grounding principle, whether it be God, nature or the self. The problem with which Schlegel and Coleridge struggled was how systematic thought could be true to the human condition, which lives and acts in the particular, yet thinks and dreams in the universal,

---

[1] Richard Holmes, *Coleridge: Darker Reflections* (London: Harper Collins, 1998), 53.

and whose commitments and realities were manifold, yet whose ideals and desires were unifying.

This examination begins with the state of the Enlightenment in the 1790s, its key themes of freedom and reason, and the crisis in their systematic elaboration. It continues with what each of the two young authors believed to be the appropriate grounding principle for systematic thought, with Schlegel turning to beauty and Coleridge to religion. Both initially thought they had found in the contemporary philosophies of Fichte and Hartley respectively, a suitable systematic framework, but both became dissatisfied with these philosophical positions. It was out of this dissatisfaction that they arrived at a new kind of systematic exposition that did not base itself on any single objective certainty and therefore did not construct a complete system. Rather their Romantic systems were based in human finitude and its constant state of striving toward an ideal that could never be fully attained. This examination compares the paths of both thinkers towards this independently arrived at, yet remarkably similar conclusion, in the early development of their careers. In illustrating the development of this position, we find an alternative to readings of Romanticism which understand it as advocating a non-systematic or irrational anti-Enlightenment position, or a kind of proto-Postmodernism.[2] Rather, what marks out the early development of Schlegel and Coleridge is that they both developed new kinds of systematic exposition that recognized the impossibility of certain foundational principles, whilst nevertheless acknowledging the reality of their respective absolute ideals as objects of approximation.[3]

2. Enlightenment, System and Romanticism

The complex relationship between the Enlightenment and Romanticism is beyond the scope of this examination, yet it is possible to argue for the

---

[2] Examples of such an approach include Isaiah Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999); Jerome Christensen, *Romanticism at the End of History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000); Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Literary Absolute: The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988); Paul De Man, *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984); Azade Seyhan, *Representation and its Discontents: The Critical Legacy of German* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Kathleen M. Wheeler, *Romanticism, Pragmatism, and Deconstruction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993).

[3] As such, the paper is in agreement with the interpretations of Romanticism offered in Frederick C. Beiser, *The Romantic Imperative: The Concept of Early German Romanticism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003), and more fully elaborated in my *Romanticism and the Re-Invention of Modern Religion: The Reconciliation of German Idealism and Romantic Platonism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

continuity of two major concepts—reason and freedom—between the two movements, at least in the case of Coleridge and Schlegel. The Enlightenment had claimed reason as the sole arbiter of truth, providing individuals with the right to criticize all beliefs. In the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* Kant characterized his epoch by this very faculty:

> Our age is the genuine age of criticism, to which everything must submit. Religion through its sanctity and the state through its majesty commonly seek to exempt themselves from it. However, they thus arise just suspicion against themselves and cannot lay claim to that sincere respect that reason grants only to that which has been able to endure its free and public examination.[4]

Connected with this faculty was freedom, the right of all individuals to think for themselves, to determine their actions, and to develop their powers. Freedom and reason were intimately connected, and their mutual growth constituted for Kant "the human being's emergence from his self-incurred immaturity."[5]

Driving forward and uniting these two principles was the overarching belief in the power of systematic thought, which promised the ability to articulate the complexity of all understanding within a whole composed of parts. The model for the systematic organization and articulation of knowledge ostensibly began with Aristotle's division of knowledge into such subjects as metaphysics, physics, ethics, politics and biology, which were united internally and in toto through fundamental concepts and ideas such as plausibility, reflection, classification, relation and observation. At the close of the eighteenth century, systematicity had renewed importance with the exponential advances made in fields such as physics, biology, chemistry and geology. Not simply understanding, but rationally ordering these advances was fundamental in removing humankind from ignorance and advancing freedom in the logic represented by Kant. Systematicity was the fundamental connection between reason and freedom. As knowledge expanded, the power of reason advanced in its ability to comprehend the whole. Likewise, as reason grew with the power of knowledge, so did freedom by its liberating thought from superstition and ignorance. "Human reason is by its nature

---

[4] Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, ed. Wilhelm Weischedel (Frankfuft/Main: Suhrkamp, 1974), Axii, 13. All further references to Kant will note the Prussian Academy number only.
[5] Immanuel Kant, *Gesammelte Schriften*, 29 vols., ed. der Königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Berlin: Reimer, 1902), VIII, 35.

architectonic," wrote Kant, "that is, it considers all knowledge as belonging to a possible system."[6]

The Enlightenment principles of freedom and reason, however, came into conflict with each other, exposing a fundamental problem with its systematic mode of thought. Reason was increasingly identified with a complete scientific naturalism that was expressed through mechanistic explanation. This paradigm of rational systematicity, based on the principle of sufficient reason, when fully elaborated, resulted in the exclusion of both final causes and freedom. In this sense, reason came to undermine its own promise of freedom within a cause-and-effect determinism. Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi offered the most popular articulation of this problem, equating the determinism of rationalistic thinking with fatalism and ultimately nihilism.[7]

This gap between theory and practice did not only manifest itself theoretically, but practically. The exercise of freedom had led to chaos. Politically this was particularly evinced by the events in France, which following the revolution grew increasingly anarchic, culminating in the Terror. The exercise of freedom had not led to the maturity and improvement of the human condition but to a seemingly irrational pande-monium. Nor was the systematic exposition of reason leading to increasing unity. Rather, the same facts were conceptualized and systematized in mutually exclusive, but rationally coherent ways. This produced antinomies of reason, in a development that grossly paralleled the development of mutually exclusive sectarian doctrine in the sixteenth century.

The response, especially in Germany, was to see these problems as a crisis of systematicity, of the way in which reason and freedom were developing in the thought of the age. Karl Leonhard Reinhold, the great popularizer of Kant's attempt to address this crisis, explained that this problem uniquely characterized his age:

> The most conspicuous and characteristic feature of our age is the convulsion of all hitherto familiar systems, theories, and manners of

---

[6] I. Kant, *KrV* A474/B502.

[7] Jacobi first equated rationalism with nihilism in 1799 against Fichte; previously he had equated it only with fatalism and egoism against Mendelssohn (*Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi Werke: Gesamtausgabe der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, ed. Walter Jaeschke (Hamburg: Meiner, 2004), III, 44; Peter Jonkers, "Jacobi's Response to Religious Nihilism" in *Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi and the Ends of the Enlightenment*, ed. Alexander J.B. Hampton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), 124-38, and Alexander J.B. Hampton, 'Jacobi and the Romantics', 267-285, in the same volume.

> thinking, a convulsion the breadth and depth of which the history of the human mind can show no example.[8]

One response to this condition was to reject rational systematic thought outright. This was the position struck by *Sturm und Drang* in the 1770s, which was characterized by a fervent Rousseauian naturalism and the celebration of genius; its literature and music displayed an emotional enthusiasm and the rejection of convention and authority. The explosion of emotional energy that characterized the movement found its greatest expression in the dramas of Klinger and Lenz, the novels of Moritz and the young Goethe, and the theory of Herder and Hamann. The *Stürmer und Dränger*, like Karl Moor in Schiller's *Die Räuber* pronounced a "Pfui! pfui! über das schlappe Castraten-Jahrhundert [Tut, tut, on this feeble castrated century]."[9] In place of speculation, they valued emotion and action.

William Blake and the radical religious Dissenters of late eighteenth-century London were perhaps the closest equivalents in Britain. Both Blake and many Dissenters rejected the corrupting influence of church doctrine and natural theology, favouring a return to prophecy and direct communion with God.[10] Blake's proclamation in *Jerusalem*, that "I must Create a System, or be enslav'd by another Man's; / I will not Reason and Compare: my business is to Create," was far from being a call for all to participate in a project of measured rational system building. Rather, it was a radical incitement to personal creative prophecy and self-autonomy against both established religions, Lockian empiricism, and Deism.[11] Every individual, through the recovery of a prophetic poetic genius, would henceforth "converse with God & be a King & Priest in his own house."[12]

Yet neither of these campaigns forcefully sustained themselves. Goethe, the author of *Werther*, the greatest *Sturm und Drang* novel, took a position in the Saxon-Weimar civil service, and Lenz, the movement's other great proponent, succumbed to insanity and eventually death. With these developments, the anti-systematic movement in Germany had run its course. Correspondingly in Britain, the radical rhetoric of Blake and fellow Dissenters grew increasingly impossible with the country at war with France

---

[8] Karl Leonhard Reinhold, *Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie*, ed. R. Schmidt (Leipzig: Reclam, 1923), I, 24. Quoted in Frederick Beiser, *Hegel* (London: Routledge, 2005), 21.
[9] Friedrich von Schiller, *Sämtliche Werke*, 12 vols. (Leipzig: Hesses, 1890), II, 503.
[10] Jon Mee, *Dangerous Enthusiasm: William Blake and the Culture of Radicalism in the 1790s* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992).
[11] William Blake, *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, ed. David V. Erdman (New York: Anchor Books, 1988), 153.
[12] Ibid., 615.

and freedoms severely limited. Blake found himself accused both of spying and later on trial for sedition. From these conditions, Romanticism emerged as a more measured response to the crisis of Enlightenment. It would champion both freedom and reason, and would do so systematically, at least in the case of both Schlegel and Coleridge.

Both thinkers realized the need for, and the problem inherent in, systematic thought. Schlegel's fifty-third *Atheneaumsfragment* expressed the challenge succinctly: "It is equally deadly for the spirit to have a system and not to have one. It will thus have to decide to join the two."[13] Coleridge articulated the aim of his system in a way that also recognized the problems inherent in systematicity:

> My system, if I may venture to give it so fine a name, is the only attempt I know, ever made to reduce all knowledges into harmony. It opposes no other system, but shows what was true in each; and how that which was true in the particular, in each of them became error, because it was only half the truth. I have endeavoured to unite the insulated fragments of truth, and therewith to frame a perfect mirror.[14]

For Schlegel, this concept of systematicity would be articulated through his concept of *Wechselerweis* and the genre of *romantische Poesie*, whereas for Coleridge it would take the shape of a trinitarian epistemology and a language of symbols.

Inherent in each of these statements is the recognition that the discursive performance of a rationalized system will always fall short of, and never do justice to, the ideal of an unconditioned and complete system. What marks Schlegel and Coleridge is that they regarded system as a process, as a regulative concept that is centred upon individuals and their reality as opposed to an abstract totality, beyond the finite scope of the individual. There is, as Coleridge commented concerning his own system, a "contrast between the continuous and systematic character of Principles, and the occasionally & fragmentary way, in which they have hitherto been brought

---

[13] Friedrich Schlegel, *Friedrich Schlegel Kritische Ausgabe*, 35 vols., ed. Ernst Behler, Jean Jacques Anstett, and Hans Eichner (Munich: Schöningh, 1958-), II, 53, 173. All further references to *Kritische Ausgabe* will be indicated by KA, volume number, fragment number if applicable, page number.

[14] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Table Talk*, vol. 14, ed. Kathleen Coburn and B. Winer, *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 16 vols., (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), II, 147. All further references indicated as TT.

before the Public." [15] Or alternately as Schlegel put it: "every proof is infinitely perfectible," making the task of philosophy not one of systematic totality, but infinite striving towards that ideal. [16]

This recognition does not mean that systematic striving is merely contingent. [17] Rather, as this examination will illustrate, concomitant with systematic striving and the regulative ideal of system, both Schlegel and Coleridge came to develop a conviction in philosophical realism. This connected them to the very tradition that the Enlightenment, and indeed much early modern thought since the development of the via moderna and Reformation had sought to overcome. This realism is that of the Platonic and Christian Platonic traditions. It is the belief that ideals (transcendentals, divine ideas) are real intelligible realities that transcend the particulars that instantiate them (whether that be objects or human minds), and furthermore that these ideals resolve themselves into a unity, the One, the Absolute, or God. [18] It is this Absolute or God that is the goal of their respective romantic forms of infinite approximation or striving.

3. Early Convictions

In March 1772 Friedrich Schlegel was born at Hannover just five months after Coleridge. Aesthetics were a matter of concern in the Schlegel household from the beginning. Schlegel's father, Johann Adolf Schlegel, a clergyman, had been a co-founder of the *Bremer Beiträger*, a group of literati who argued for more aesthetic freedom against the restrictive Classicism of

---

[15] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 6 vols., ed. Earl Leslie Griggs, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), VI, 714. All further references to *Collected Letters* indicated as CL. Cited in Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Opus Maximum*, ed. Thomas McFarland, Nicholas Halmi, *Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, vol. 15 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), lxxiv. All further references to *Opus Maximum* indicated as OM.

[16] KA XVIII, 9, 518.

[17] The Platonic nature of this conclusion is considered in relation to Coleridge in Douglas Hedley, *Coleridge, Philosophy and Religion: Aids to Reflection and the Mirror of the Spirit* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 6, in relation to Schlegel in Frederick Beiser, *The Romantic Imperative: The Concept of Early German Romanticism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003), 67, and in relation to German Romanticism in general in Alexander J.B. Hampton, *Romanticism and the Re-Invention of Modern Religion: The Reconciliation of German Idealism and Platonic Realism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

[18] For a more substantive elaboration of this see Hampton, *Romanticism and the Re-Invention of Modern Religion* (2019), 13-29.

Gottsched.[19] Friedrich's uncle, Johann Elias Schlegel, had been a successful dramatist and an early exponent of Shakespeare at a time when the English playwright was largely unknown to the German public.[20] In preparing for university entrance examinations, Schlegel found himself enamoured with classical literature, reading the major Greek dramatists and the works of Plato.

He entered the University of Göttingen in 1790, and then Leipzig the next year — a move which allowed him to be closer to the largest collection of plaster casts of classical art north of the Alps. Ostensibly studying law, Schlegel read widely, if indiscriminately, and learned modern languages. His letters during this period indicate a restless and frustrated spirit, and by June 1793 he wrote to August Wilhelm about the impossibility of submitting himself to the profession of law. Instead, he had resolved to become a writer and scholar of classics.[21] During the next year and a half, Schlegel would read classical scholarship intensively with the intention of producing a three-volume study of classical poetry. This would include the philhellenic aesthetics of J. J. Winckelmann, as well as the idealist aesthetic philosophy of Immanuel Kant. It is the claims of these two thinkers that would structure the demands of Schlegel's Neoclassicism.[22]

Winckelmann's work had tremendous influence in art history and his views were lauded and emulated by many, including Schiller and Goethe, the latter comparing him to Columbus in discovering art as a new living thing.[23] The most important of Winckelmann's works for Schlegel was *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst* (1755). Though Winckelmann was concerned with the visual arts, the aesthetic principle that his works advocated had poetic and indeed philosophical import that interested Schlegel. Winckelmann argued that the Greeks did not attempt to create the extraordinary in their artistic production, as the Egyptians did, nor were they content with the aesthetic realism and preoccupation with originality that characterized modern art. Instead, Winckelmann maintained that the Greeks turned to nature, which they were

---

[19] The elder Schlegel also published a German translation and commentary of the French aesthetic philosopher Charles Batteux's *Les beaux-arts réduits à un même principe*. Only one of his works, a hymn, has been preserved (Karl Bertheau. "Schlegel, Johann Adolf." *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, 56 vols., ed. Rochus von Liliencron, et al. (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1875-1912), vol. 31, 385–387.)

[20] Johann von Antoniewicz, "Johann Elias Schlegel", *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 31, 378–384.

[21] KA XVIII, 103-04.

[22] Hampton, *Romanticism and the Re-Invention of Modern Religion*, 114-36.

[23] Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: The Rise of Modern Paganism* (New York: Norton, 1966), 296.

closer to than the moderns. Yet, they did not merely attempt to copy nature. Rather, they engaged in a process of idealization that strove to find, in all of the instances of individual beauty, perfect beauty. [24] In doing so, Winckelmann argued, "they purified their works of all personal affections, which deduct [the] spirit from true beauty."[25]

The other major influence upon Schlegel was Kant's *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (1790), the last of the philosopher's three critiques to carry out his project of developing a critical philosophy. Kant sought to examine the faculties of the mind (cognition, pleasure and displeasure, desire) and their corresponding cognitive faculties (understanding, judgment, reason).[26] The third *Kritik* argued that judgments which concern the beautiful are made independent of the concepts of the understanding and the moral law of reason, and in this way they are autonomous.[27] Kant characterized this situation of non-conceptual cognition as the free-play of the faculties of the imagination and understanding. Imagination grasps the object yet is not restricted to any definite concept of the understanding. It is this conceptual disinterestedness that results in pleasure.[28] For Kant, "The beautiful is that which, without a concept, is cognized as an object of a necessary delight."[29]

The difficulty for Schlegel was that both of the arguments offered by Winckelmann and Kant came into conflict. Winckelmann had argued for a realist position in that the portrayal of beauty was not mere imitation, but involved the attempt to reproduce its ideal form. Contrary to this, what made art autonomous and free in the nominalist framework of the Kantian proposal was its subjective conceptual disinterestedness, meaning the impossibility of an objective standard for the beautiful. Schlegel desired both, holding that the possibility of a Neoclassical aesthetic depended upon the actuality of an objective autonomous ideal of taste upon which judgments of true beauty could be made.

This tension between an aesthetic ideal and aesthetic subjectivity is outlined in the most important work from Schlegel's Neoclassical period, *Über das Studium der Griechischen Poesie* (1795), which was originally intended

---

[24] Monika Schrader, *Laokoon "eine vollkommene Regel der Kunst": Ästhetische Theorien der Heuristik in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 2005) 20-21, 24-24.
[25] Johann Joachim Winkelmann, *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums*, cited in Schrader, *Laokoon,* 26.
[26] Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, Alvi/Blviii.
[27] Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, ed. Wilhelm Weischedel (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1974), A229/B232.
[28] Ibid., A27, 28/B27, 28.
[29] Ibid., A67/B68.

to be an introduction to a much larger study. In this work, Schlegel both outlines his poetic ideal and diagnoses the problems of modern literature. For Schlegel, Greek poetry represented the beautiful itself, in its harmony, order, restraint and proportion. "Greek poetry," he wrote, "encompasses the whole of human nature in uniform completion."[30] In doing so it embodied what Kant had theoretically required of beauty, *viz*. "in the case of the Greeks alone was art equally free of the constraints of necessities and the lordship of understanding." [31] At the same time, it was the historical ideal that Winkelmann had described: "The history of Greek poetics is a general natural history of poetics; a perfect and legislative intuition."[32]

Against this ideal Schlegel indicted what he variously referred to as modern, Romantic, or interested literature, on a number of charges. The first of these charges was that such literature does not concern itself with beauty, but rather attempts to make art serve didactic moral or discursive scientific ends.[33] This lack of aesthetic concern is further characterized by a lack of self-restraint, where each writer strives to be more interesting than the previous.[34] A second line of argumentation is the constant confusion and mixture of genres present in Romantic literature.[35] "So confused," Schlegel writes, "are the boundaries of science and art, of the true and the beautiful, that even the conviction of those unchangeable eternal boundaries has largely begun to falter. Philosophy poeticizes and poetry philosophizes."[36] Rather than the ideal and the objective, modern poetry is distinguished by the particular and the interested. For Schlegel, "lack of character seems the singular characteristic of modern poetry; confusion its common measure, lawlessness the spirit of its history, and skepticism the result of its theory."[37] Despite this criticism, however, Schlegel does not dismiss modern poetry outright. Betraying the inner tension that would soon cause his neoclassicism to waver, and perhaps the influence of his father and uncle, he describes Shakespeare admiringly as the apex of modern poetry.[38] Ultimately, however, modernity was, for Schlegel, like Hamlet: full of conflict, and unable to act decisively because of its lack of an ideal.

---

[30] KA I, 276.
[31] KA I, 275.
[32] KA I, 276.
[33] KA I, 220.
[34] KA I, 219-20, 238.
[35] KA I, 219.
[36] KA I, 219.
[37] KA I, 222. These are, of course, among the very characteristics that Schlegel would come to praise (see below).
[38] KA I, 249.

In response to this, Schlegel sets for himself the task of creating a science of aesthetics to determine a deduction of the universal and necessary qualities of beauty. Two early outlines from 1795 illustrate a desire to derive the nature of art, not from theory alone, as Kant had done, nor from history, as Winckelmann had done, but from both, and in doing so arrive at the *a priori* principles that would guide a new modern poetry.[39] In the concluding pages of *Über das Studium der Griechischen Poesie* Schlegel writes that aesthetic theory has reached a point where an objective outcome to the aesthetic problem cannot be far away. There remained, after Kant's critical philosophy, the problem of an aesthetic skepticism, but now he writes, the philosophy of Fichte seems able to carry out the Kantian project to its completion in propounding an absolute ground upon which to rest objective claims. In a letter describing Fichte as "the greatest metaphysical thinker now living," Schlegel tells his brother August Wilhelm that Fichte is "the kind of intellectual Hamlet had sought in vain."[40] Fichte was to be the hero of Schlegel's Neoclassical aesthetics.

For Schlegel, the project of Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* held out the possibility of establishing the objective universal and necessary principles to ground his Neoclassical aesthetics. Fichte's system claimed to have discovered the first principle of reason outside of the ground of experience in the absolute I. What Fichte was in essence carrying out in the *Wissenschafts-lehre* was an extension of Kant's transcendental deduction. In the deduction, Kant had established the objectivity of the subjective conditions of the possibility of experience (i.e. the applicability of the intuitions of space and time and the categories of the understanding) to objects of experience.[41] For Fichte, a true principle of first philosophy did not express itself as a fact of content (*Tatsache*), but as a fact of action (*Tathandlung*):

> If philosophy begins with a fact [*ThatSache*], then it places itself in a world of being and finitude, and it will be difficult for it to discover any path leading from this world to an infinite and supersensible one. If philosophy begins with an act [*ThatHandlung*], then it finds itself at the

---

[39] See KA XVI, *Von der Schönheit in der Dichtkunst*, 3-14, 15-38, esp. 8.
[40] XXIII, 248.
[41] Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, A89/B121, A93/B126. In the second *Critique*, Kant provided a deduction for morality, and in the third a deduction for aesthetic pleasure and teleology.

precise point where these two worlds are connected with each other and from which they can both be surveyed in a single view.[42]

According to Fichte's assertion, self-consciousness, the ground of all knowledge, had to be self-positing and he articulated his conception of a self-positing absolute I in three logical propositions: identity, contradiction, and synthesis.[43] Identity is presupposed in each act of consciousness, yet this is a fact, not the self-positing of the I. Therefore, the I must posit itself, but in so doing it also posits a Non-I, since in the act of self-positing there is an active I that perceives itself as an object of consciousness, and therefore a Non-I. From this arises the contradiction that the I cannot be both I and Non-I. Despite this, in self-consciousness, we are aware of ourselves as identical to the I which we posit and also that the object positing the I cannot be identical with the I. The synthesis to this problem occurs in knowledge which recognizes the transcendental unity of I and Non-I. In this unity, the I posits itself as determined by the Non-I and the I posits the Non-I as determined by the I.

The fundamental assertion of Fichte's reasoning is that "The I purely posits itself."[44] For Fichte, the I begins with a self-positing rather than a fact of consciousness. As Schlegel saw, and Fichte intended, this allowed Kant's transcendental deduction to be grounded on an act as opposed to a fact of experience, giving foundational objective validity to the claims of experience. If Fichte's system could accomplish this, it could also determine the first principles of beauty, providing aesthetic criticism with the objective ground necessary for Schlegel's Neoclassicism. With Fichte, Schlegel wrote," there can be no serious doubt about the possibility of an objective system of a practical and theoretical science of aesthetics."[45]

If a commitment to beauty guided Schlegel's philosophical search for an objective ground, Coleridge was guided by a commitment to religion. Five months prior to Schlegel, Coleridge was born, in October 1772. Coleridge was first educated by his father, a clergyman, until his death when the young Coleridge was nine. Under his father's tutelage, Coleridge was brought up

---

[42] Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Gesamtausgabe der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, ed. R. Lauth and H. Jacob (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1962-2012), I.4, 468. *Introductions to the Wissenschaftslehre and Other Writings (1797-1800)*, trans. and ed. Daniel Breazeale (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994), 51.

[43] For this interpretation of Fichte I rely heavily on Elizabeth Millán-Zaibert, *Friedrich Schlegel and the Emergence of Romantic Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), 72-74.

[44] "Das Ich setzt schlechthin sich selbst" (Fichte, *Gesamtausgabe*, I, 2, 259).

[45] KA I, 358.

under the doctrine of the established church, yet his father also stressed a devout and deeply personal faith that involved a sense of individual moral responsibility. [46] At the same time, Coleridge read precociously, notably romantic stories and tales of magic. He became so involved in these books that his father once resorted to burning some of them. Tracing his manner of thought to his early years, Coleridge would later reflect:

> From my early reading of Faery Tales, & Genii &c &c—my mind had been habituated *to the Vast*—& I never regarded *my senses* in any way as the criteria of my belief… Those who have been led to the same truths step by step thro 'the constant testimony of their senses, seem to me to want a sense which I possess—They contemplate nothing but *parts*—and all the parts are necessarily little—and the Universe to them is but a mass of *little things*."[47]

Throughout his career, Coleridge would refer to this intuitive sense of transcendence, manifested for him in classics and folklore, nature and the sublime, and most of all in a sense of moral responsibility and creaturely connection.

After his father's death, Coleridge was sent to study at Christ's Hospital, a charity school in London. Here his habituation to the vast seems to have been fed by his reading, if not his educational experience. Charles Lamb recalled the "inspired charity-boy" as unfolding "in thy deep and sweet intonations, the mysteries of Jamblichus, or Plotinus (for even in those years thou waxedst not pale at such philosophical draughts), or reciting Homer in his Greek or Pindar."[48] However, Coleridge also came into contact with Enlightenment rationalism through the writings of Voltaire. After reading the French *philosophe*, Coleridge declared himself an unbeliever, and received a sound beating at the hands of the schoolmaster. Coleridge later claimed this to be the only just flogging he ever received while at the famous bluecoat school.[49]

Coleridge went up to Cambridge in 1791, destined to follow his father into the ministry. Later he would refer to this period as a kind of "religious twilight" that was "made up of the Evangelist and Deist philosophy."[50] At

---

[46] J. Robert Barth, *Coleridge and Christian Doctrine* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969), 2.
[47] CL I., 354.
[48] Charles Lamb, *The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb*, ed. E. V. Lucas (London: Methuen, 1903), II, 21.
[49] John Beer, "Coleridge, Samuel Taylor (1772–1834)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, [http://www. oxforddnb.com/view/article/5888], Accessed 2 Feb 2023.
[50] CL I, 78.

Cambridge, he found his religious belief tested by both Continental-inspired rationalism and Dissenting religious claims, particularly Unitarianism. He came to adopt Unitarianism largely because it responded to the requirements of natural and rational theology, freeing him from the demands of both systematic religious thought and the defence of the increasingly questioned doctrine and creeds of the historical Church.

In his reading at Cambridge Coleridge was exposed to several rationalist theologians including Joseph Butler, William Paley, Joseph Priestly and David Hartley, all of whom engaged in the evidential exposition of rational theism. In his Bristol lectures on revealed religion, delivered after leaving Cambridge without taking a degree, Coleridge can be seen as relying heavily on this reading. The task of composing the lectures had the effect of requiring Coleridge to more fully explicate his own religiosity. Though the lectures display an inevitable degree of immaturity and inexperience, they reveal Coleridge's attempt to reconcile two opposing forces, the first of these being the habituation to vastness that had been instilled in him since childhood. The second was the rational, even skeptical, spirit of reason, present both in Britain and especially active on the revolutionary continent and to which was central the ideas of freedom and individualism.

One of the best examples of Coleridge's attempt to reconcile these opposing forces can be found in his long poem *Religious Musings*. Coleridge began this work on Christmas Eve 1794 and finished it for publication two years later. It is here, more than in the Bristol lectures, that we find Coleridge trying to find his own religious self. Throughout the latter half of the 1790s, he repeatedly refers to it in both his publication, *The Watchman*, and in his correspondence. "I rest for all my poetical credit on the *Religious Musings*," he reported to his friends.[51] In the work, all of Coleridge's readings, his beliefs and his enthusiasms are collected. The poem expresses his sympathy with the French Revolution and his hopes for the furtherance of social justice. From the spirit of these revolutionary times, Coleridge writes, "Sprang heavenly Science; and from Science Freedom" (l. 225). This optimism is expressed in a millenarian context: "Yet is the day of Retribution nigh: / The Lamb of God hath open'd the fifth seal: / … The hour is nigh / And lo ! the Great, the Rich, the Mighty Men, / shall be cast to earth" (l. 303-12). The freedom of science will act as the purifier of religion, casting out the "Fiends of Superstition… / The erring Priest" (l.135-36). Coleridge continues:

---

[51] CL I 97, 203, 205 cited in Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Poetical Works*, ed. J. C. C. Mays, *Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, vol. 16 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 173. All quotations from *Religious Musings* are taken from this edition. All further references indicated as PW.

> And curse your spells, that film the eye of Faith,
> Hiding the present God; whose presence lost,
> The moral world's cohesion (l. 142-44)

Here the Nonconformist critique of tradition and authority is raised to accuse the superstitious ceremonies of the historical church of obscuring the moral message of Jesus, "Of Him whose life was Love!" (l. 29), and whose sacrifice promises universal redemption.

The problem which Coleridge addresses in the poem is one of the fundamental problems of the age and the central problem for Coleridge — that of reconciling religion with reason and the advancement of freedom. This required, or Coleridge thought, a rational systematic elaboration of faith that would objectively ground it in accord with the thought of his day. For Coleridge, the greatest possibility of this reconciliation lay with the philosophy of David Hartley. Though Coleridge later came to repudiate Hartley's philosophy, most explicitly in the sixth and seventh chapters of the *Biographia Literaria*, the importance of Hartley's philosophy through the 1790s cannot be dismissed as a mere flirtation with associationism. In a letter to his friend Thomas Poole in 1796 Coleridge famously referred to Hartley, after whom Coleridge had just named his firstborn son, as "that Great master of *Christian* Philosophy."[52] As late as 1801 he still included Hartley in a list of "deep metaphysicians" along with Zeno, St. Paul, Spinoza, Kant, and Fichte.[53] What lay behind Coleridge's adoption of Hartley was the need to address faith from a scientific, rather than a theological position. The contemporary values for judging truth demanded analysis in terms of cause and effect and necessary connection. This kind of empirically minded form of verification had become accepted wisdom, and Coleridge's Nonconformist optimism coupled with his faith in the freedom of science was such that he believed laws for the experience of faith could be given in the same manner as laws for the experience of motion.

In as many words this was Hartley's task. Hartley, like Coleridge, was a devout Christian and the son of a clergyman. He, too, desired to reconcile his faith with his understanding. Scruples precluded him from signing the Thirty-Nine Articles and he entered medicine rather than the clergy. His *Observations on Man* (1749) was his most comprehensive attempt to address the understanding-faith problem. The work treated the human mind scientifically and sought to explain mental events in terms of laws like those

---

[52] CL I, 236.
[53] CL II, 768.

Newton had developed for physics. This was, however, far from advancing a materialist philosophy like those that would soon be propounded by the likes of Julien Offray de La Mettrie and Étienne Bonnot de Condillac. Rather, such laws aimed to provide proof of the validity of moral and religious ideas. If they were determined with the same necessity as the laws of the physical world, their objective validity could be argued for in a systematically coherent rational way.

Near the beginning of *Religious Musings*, in a section called Christ's prayer on the Cross, Coleridge addressed the central dilemma of faith — transcendence. The transcendent by its nature is beyond naming. Yet in order to make even this claim the unnamable is named "transcendent," placing another barrier between individuals and God. Any statement about God generates the aporia that the subject must be named to affirm that it is beyond naming.[54] The mystic response to this situation is apophasis, un-speaking or speaking-away, often carried out in poetical form. In mystic apophasis, the self enters a dialectic which unspeaks both the self and the named God, in an attempt to reach a state prior to the reflexive distinction between self and other, a state antecedent of the pronoun.[55] Coleridge, describing Christ as having freed the self from fear and idolatry, articulates this state of mystical discourse:

> Strong to believe whate'er of mystic good
> Th 'Eternal dooms for his Immortal Sons.
> From HOPE and firmer FAITH to perfect LOVE
> Attracted and absorb'd: and center'd there
> GOD only to behold, and know, and feel,
> Till by exclusive Consciousness of God
> All self-annihilated it shall make
> GOD its Identity: God all in all!
> We and our Father ONE! (l. 37-44)

At line forty-three, Coleridge adds the following footnote referring to self-annihilation: "See this demonstrated by Hartley, vol. 1, p. 114, and vol. 2, p. 329. See it likewise proved, and freed from the charge of Mysticism, by Pistorius in his Notes and Additions to part second of Hartley on Man, Addition the 18th, the 653rd page of the third volume of Hartley, Octavo

---

[54] Michael Sells, *Mystical Languages of Unsaying* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1994), 2-4.
[55] Alexander J.B. Hampton, 'The Poetics of Mysticism', ed. Edward Howells and Mark McIntosh, *The Oxford Handbook to Mystical Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 241-64.

Edition."[56] Here, at this crucial point in the poem, Coleridge refers his reader to Hartley to support his point, rather than justifying it through a mystical, scriptural, or theological source. Furthermore, he remarkably claims that the passage's blatant mysticism can be, in fact, free of such a characterization.

Hartley's *Observations on Man*, which Coleridge directs his reader to, sets out a rational schematization of religious experience such that self-annihilation and union with God can be rationally supported. In the initial sections of *Observations*, Hartley overcomes dualism with the notion that events in the mind and the brain correlate through vibrations.[57] From this, he develops a doctrine of association where certain sense experiences are associated with clusters of ideas which include pleasure and pain.[58] For Hartley, knowledge of God is associated with pleasure, and since the mind associates pleasure and pain with their causes all pleasure is ultimately associated with God.[59] The first passage that Coleridge cites refers to this relationship. Since God is the source of all good, he "must, at last, take the place of and absorb other Ideas, and HE himself become, according to the language of the scriptures, *all in all*."[60] The second passage to which Coleridge refers elaborates this same argument in algebraic terms. The third reference which Coleridge provides refers to a third volume of elaborations on Hartley's arguments by a German Reformed clergyman.[61] In this gloss, it is argued that the self-annihilation to which Hartley refers cannot be dismissed as religious enthusiasm. Rather, it is the result of natural self-interest which desires that which is pleasurable. Therefore, the pure love of God that exists in self-annihilation is "deduced from the fundamental laws of the human mind."[62] As a result mystical union is not an irrationality, but a psychological fact arrived at through rational systematic analysis. The kind of self-annihilation to which Coleridge points therefore is the result of a process initiated by the experience of pleasure which the mind then associated with its ultimate cause in God. In this manner, religious experience is accounted for objectively in an external source and systematically explained within empiricism.

---

[56] PW, I, 176.

[57] David Hartley, *Observations on Man,* 3. vols. (London: J. Johnson, 1791), I, 33-34.

[58] Ibid, I, 74-5, 343.

[59] Ibid., II, 13.

[60] Ibid., I, 114.

[61] The section to which Coleridge is referring is a sixteen-page gloss (Hartley, *Observations*, III, 653-69). For a discussion of Hermann Andreas Pistorius (1730-95) see Hoxie N. Fairchild, "Hartley, Pistorius, and Coleridge," *PMLA*, 62.4 (1947): 1010-1021.

[62] Hartley, *Observations*, III, 669.

Religious Musings foreshadows within its lines two further developments which would come to undermine this rational empirical version of religious belief. The first of these is evinced in the poem's style, which constantly destabilizes itself through the use of footnotes like that just examined. No fewer than thirteen notes of various lengths provide elaboration, supporting examples and clarifications from sources that range from philosophical treatises to Hansard. However, this should not be interpreted as a lack of faith in the poetic genre *per se*, but more of the methodological genre upon which the poems' positions are being elaborated, that is, an empirical rational systematicity. The second foreshadowing of the position to come is Coleridge's focus on a personal, rather than a metaphysical, accounting of religion. For Coleridge, proof of God does not lie with rationalistic arguments for the existence of the deity, but with an internal source that manifests itself in feeling.

4. Disillusionment

In 1795 Schlegel was criticizing Romantic literature and commending Fichte as the philosophical ground for a new Neoclassical aesthetics. However, in 1798 he had embraced the seemingly undisciplined and anarchic form of Romantic literature and was repudiating Fichte along with all foundationalist philosophies.[63] Two major events caused Schlegel's reversal: his contact with the Jena *Grundsatzkritiker*, and his meeting with Fichte himself.[64]

In Jena, in the early 1790s, a group of young thinkers began to coalesce around the philosopher Friedrich Immanuel Niethammer. Together they were reacting to the attempts of post-Kantian Idealists such as Karl Leonhard Reinhold and Fichte to base Kant's critical philosophy on self-evident principles. Their focus on first principles, *Grundsätze*, gave their movement its name.[65] Following his contact with the group, Schlegel spent the winter of 1796 undertaking a detailed examination of Fichte's philosophy, and his various criticisms illustrate the influence of Niethammer and his circle.[66]

---

[63] Schlegel's use of Fichte was not restricted to aesthetics. In his *Über den Begriff des Republikanismus* (1796) he used a Fichtean first principle to deduce the principles of republicanism (KA VII, 15-16).

[64] Novalis is often cited as one of the major influences in converting Schlegel from Fichte. However, in their correspondence, it is Novalis who credits Schlegel (KA XXIII, 371-72).

[65] For a treatment of Niethammer and the *Grundsatzkritik* see Richard Fincham, "Refuting Fichte with 'Common Sense': Friedrich Immanuel Niethammer's Reception of the *Wissenschaftslehre* 1794/5", *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 43.3 (2005): 301-324.

[66] For a detailed account of Schlegel's *philosophische Lehrjahre* see Manfred Frank, *Unendliche Annäherung: Die Anfänge der philosophischen Frühromantik* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1997),

Schlegel claims that nothing justifies the abstract absolute postulation of the I. As an abstract analytic proposition Schlegel argued that it is not Absolute, but essentially empty.[67] Furthermore, the first principle of the I is impossible to justify: "What Fichte assumed as agreed and self-understood, one can almost always boldly contradict."[68] It is equally possible to assert a contrary intuition as first principle.[69] Schlegel also objects to Fichte's "empirical egoism," which limits the self to its own sphere of introspection, ignoring its historical situation.[70] The result is a self-contained system signifying nothing: "The *Wissenschaftslehre* is just as rhetorical as Fichte himself; with regard to individuality, it is a Fichtean representation of Fichtean spirit in Fichtean letters."[71] More damningly Schlegel writes: "Fichte is like a drunk who does not tire of mounting one side of a horse, and transcending over it, falling off the other side."[72]

Schlegel's meeting with Fichte was no less disconcerting for him. Though he found the thinker congenial when not behind the lectern, Schlegel discovered him to be wholly unwilling to muddy his philosophical theory with the consideration of history. In a letter, Schlegel reported to a friend that Fichte "said to me he would rather count peas than study history."[73] This is hardly the answer that the author of *Über das Studium der Griechischen Poesie* would have wanted to hear, for the promise of that work was to marry the historical example of Greek poetry with an objective Fichtean foundation. The result of Schlegel's meeting with Fichte was such that in January of 1797 he was writing to that same friend with the news that "I have categorically separated myself from the teacher of the *Wissenschaftslehre*."[74] The conclusion of the *Grundsatzkritik* was a fundamental antifoundationalism that first principles and a system of reason could only ever be a goal to which one could eternally strive.[75]

Lecture 21, 569-593 and Elizabeth Millán-Zaibert, *Friedrich Schlegel and the Emergence of Romantic Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), 95-116.

[67] KA XVIII, 71, 512.

[68] "Was Fichte als ausgemacht und s.[ich] von selbst verstehend voraussetzt, kann man fast immer ganz dreist wiedersprechen" (KA XVIII, 126, 31).

[69] KA XVIII, 51, 510.

[70] KA XVIII, 31, 508.

[71] KA XVIII, 144, 33.

[72] KA XVIII, 138, 32.

[73] KA XXIII, 333.

[74] KA XXIII, 343.

[75] For this reason, Manfred Frank has called the *Grundsatzkritik* a re-Kantianization of epistemology (Frank, *Unendliche Annäherung*, 505).

In 1794 Coleridge wrote "I am a compleat [sic] Necessitarian—and understand the subject as well almost as Hartley himself—but I go further than Hartley and believe in the corporality of *thought*—namely, that it is motion." [76] Furthermore, in 1796 he refers to "the most unintelligible Emanuel Kant." [77] However, in 1801 Coleridge would write of his being engaged in a transcendental deduction of his own:

> I have not only completely extricated the notions of Time, and Space; but have overthrown the doctrine of Association, as taught by Hartley, and with it all the irreligious metaphysics of modern Infidels — especially, the doctrine of Necessity. —This I have *done*; but I trust, that I am about to do more — namely, that I shall be able to evolve all the five senses, that is, to deduce them from *one sense*, & to state their growth, & the causes of their difference—& in this evolvement to solve the process of Life & Consciousness. [78]

Several important intellectual events occurred in Coleridge's life in the intervening years between 1794 and 1801, not the least of which was the productive period he spent with Wordsworth and the publication of the *Lyrical Ballads*. However, what seems most decisive in terms of Coleridge's philosophical development was the 1798-99 trip to Germany and the shift in Coleridge's reading following that journey.

In characterizing his philosophical orientation in 1796 Coleridge wrote: "I do not particularly admire Rousseau — Bishop [Jeremy] Taylor, Old [Richard] Baxter, David Hartley & the Bishop of Cloyne [George Berkeley] are my men." [79] Upon his departure for Germany, Coleridge's major intention was to become familiar with the general intellectual environment. He was especially interested in advances in physiological psychology and Biblical criticism — aims that somewhat match the disparate list of Coleridge's "men" whom he named before his departure. Yet upon his return from Germany, the impression made by Kantian and Spinozistic thought is evident in the shift in his reading. After 1800 Coleridge not only turned to the detailed study of German Idealism, but also to Neoplatonic and mystic thought and away from his native empiricism and rational theology. Notebook entries and marginalia show him reading Giordano Bruno, Marsilio Ficino, Proclus, Plotinus, Plato (particularly *Parmenides* and *Timaeus*) and Böhme.

---

[76] CL I, 137.
[77] CL I, 284.
[78] CL II, 706.
[79] CL I, 245.

The aspect of Kantianism which Coleridge would later describe as having "took possession of me as with a giant's hand" was its transcendental idealism, particularly that it offered a rational and systematic way to account for faith, but did so in a way that made its source internal rather than external.[80] Coleridge's own Copernican revolution was to realize that an empirically based account of faith, such as the one he had championed through Hartley in the *Religious Musings*, discarded all a priori internal evidence for Christianity.

The total externalization of Christianity is easily seen in Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, where he argues that we are obliged to believe "those holy men of old who had revelations from God" on the basis that mankind has been provided with "outward signs that convince of the Author [i.e. Locke] of those revelations."[81] This can especially be seen in the work of William Paley, whose writings were on the undergraduate reading list at Cambridge. In his *A View of the Evidences of Christianity* (1794), Paley argues that God chose to reveal his will to the early Christians by performing miracles and that the credibility of this revelation rests on whether there are good reasons for believing that these miracles occurred. For Paley, it is reasonable to assume that God, the creator of natural laws, would be able to suspend them at a point of His choosing and that the Scriptures provide a reliable witness to such instances. To this end, his *Horae Paulinae* (1790) outlines the many consistencies between Acts and the Pauline Epistles attempting to illustrate that neither account was falsified.[82]

With his own Copernican revolution having taken place, Coleridge now realized the problematic nature of his philosophical commitments, and how contrary it was to his own religiosity. An empirically based faith was dangerous because it was forced to turn entirely outward for its source and therefore was solely dependent upon miracles and their testimony giving rise to bibliolatry, the turning of scripture into an idol. It was contrary to his sense of religion because it contradicted his own intuitive sense of transcendence. For Coleridge, Kant, in making the structure of the mind independent of the external world, could account for those aspects of the self, including his own predilection to vastness that the Hartleian system had reduced to passive external sources and the consequent association of ideas. The deduction of

---

[80] *Biographia Literaria, or Biographical Sketches of My Literary Life and Opinions*, ed. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate, vol. 7, 2 parts, *Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 16 vols. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983), I, 153. All further references indicated as BL.
[81] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 705.
[82] William Paley, *Natural Theology* and *Horae Paulinae*, (New York: American Track Society, 1865).

the "one sense" that Coleridge excitedly mentions in his 1801 letter is the deduction of that habituation to the vast without which "the Universe… is but a mass of little things."[83] By 1801 Coleridge was adopting a Kantian-inspired epistemology, just as Schlegel had done. It held out the possibility for articulating religion in a way that did not attempt to ground it in objective rational theology or history but in an internal process.

5. Towards Romantic Systems

The project of the *Grundsatzkritik* was a return to the self in the spirit of Kant's critical philosophy. From Fichte, Schlegel maintained the active *Tathandlung* of the I, but it was this very activity that undermined Fichte's own foundationalist claim of a complete system built upon the first principle of the self. The assertion of the I becomes, for Schlegel, not a fundamental principle, but a regulative one:[84]

> The *I ought to be* must also be able to be demonstrated analytically and for itself, independently of the I=I. The construction of the sentence is purely practical, the deduction is transcendental.[85]

In this brief observation, three important idealist terms are being applied to a renewed understanding of the I: transcendental, practical and analytic. Elaborating how each of these terms redefines the I and the system based upon it, provides insight into the grounding of Schlegel's new Romantic system. First, the statement "I ought to be" is the result of a transcendental deduction. That which is transcendental is defined as that which is necessary for the possibility of experience, as the I is. The transverse of this statement is also true, that the I is known through its process of experiencing. This observation reverses Fichte's assertion of a *Tathandlung* back to a *Tatsache*. Second, that the statement is purely practical indicates that the reasoning that has led to this statement concludes in action rather than a proposition of a new belief. Furthermore, it is by its nature a criterion for every moral agent who cares to concern themselves with the I. Third, the statement of the imperative I must be able to be demonstrated analytically and independently of the I=I, which does not refer to a Kantian analytic judgment (i.e. a judgment in which the predicate is already contained within the concept of the subject, such as a buck is a male deer). Rather, it is used in a second

---

[83] CL I, 354.

[84] This regulative reading of Fichtean foundationalism was commonplace among the *Grundsatzkritiker* (Beiser, *Hegel*, 23).

[85] KA XVIII, 187, 36.

sense, also Kantian, as a reflective ascending movement from one proposition assumed to be true to its ground. When this is done in the case of the I=I, the proposition is revealed to be hypothetical, and therefore since it cannot be absolutely justified, yet is nevertheless transcendental and practical, it takes the form of the imperative "the I ought to be."[86] Thus Schlegel writes:

> The analysis must be led as high as possible until: *That I ought to be*. Fichte's extension of the science in Kant was nevertheless only an ingenious idea, not a methodological discovery. Philosophy is only then in good standing if it does not need to count on ingenious ideas only ingenious power, but can nevertheless progress on a safe methodological path.[87]

It is from this claim that Schlegel is able to conclude: "In my system the final ground is actually a reciprocal proof [*Wechselerweis*]. In Fichte's it is a postulate and an unconditional proposition."[88] For Schlegel, the analytical demonstration of the I becomes an imperative—a Romantic imperative.[89]

In the *Wechselerweis* there is an infinite variety of possible ways to analytically assert the ought of the I and organize and explicate a system of knowledge around it. This means that no system can claim overriding ascendancy. The only overriding claim is the ought. At the same time, it affirms the possibility of system, but one that is based not on first principles, but on process. It is this reasoning that is behind Schlegel's claim: "It is equally deadly for the spirit to have a system and not to have one. It will thus have to decide to join the two."[90] What Schlegel is here saying is that systems that build upon supposedly solid foundations do so by imposing arbitrary limits. However, at the same time, some manner of system is necessary because unity and coherence are essential to all knowledge, and it is in the context of a system that this is achieved. Schlegel requires philosophy to be less linear, and more cyclical.[91]

This circle system finds its clearest expression in Schlegel's aesthetics, particularly as elaborated in *Gespräch über die Poesie*, a mixed dialogue in prose work. The text gives us a glimpse into the discussions that were held at the home of August and Caroline Schlegel in the latter part of 1799, which

---

[86] Frank, *Unendliche Annäherung*, 864, and Manfred Frank, *The Philosophical Foundations of Early German Romanticism*, trans. Elizabeth Millán-Zaibert (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), 191.

[87] KA XVII, 17, 519.

[88] KA XVIII, 22, 520.

[89] KA XVI, 586, 134.

[90] KA II, 53, 173.

[91] KA XVIII 133, 31.

functioned as the social focus for the Jena Romantics. Most importantly it introduces an aesthetic, cyclical, non-foundationalist system organized around the realist philosophical concept of 'poesie'. The book's preface offers an expanded elaboration of the concept, and in doing so expresses a new and essential development in Schlegel's thought. Schlegel distinguishes between the narrow literary use of the word, and a broader definition of the concept, which connects it to the tradition of philosophical realism. Of this broader sense of poesie, Schlegel provides a descriptive definition which connects it to notions of the Logos and anima mundi. He describes the 'unformed and unconscious *poesie* which stirs in the plant, and shines in the light, smiles in a child, gleams in the flower of youth, and glows in the loving breast of women.[92]' Schlegel goes on to describe Poesis as the 'poetry of the divine [*Gedichte der Gottheit*]'.[93] As the animating force of all creation, it is consequently the motive force behind creaturely reality as well as aesthetic production. The result of this metaphysical assertion is that human creative activity participates in divine creative activity.

Schlegel's earlier concern with providing an objective foundation for aesthetics here finds a resolution of sorts in the dynamic unfolding of divine creativity, a creativity in which human activity directly participated, and in which human aesthetic activity was granted a privileged role. This would have the result of drastically altering Schlegel's concept of poetics, and particularly his evaluation of Romantic poetry. What Schlegel had previously criticized in modern literature, that it was not concerned with an ideal objective beauty, that its authors were constantly striving to surpass what preceded them, that it mixed genres, and that it confused the boundaries between science, philosophy and ethics, now appeared as strengths. Its eclecticism and its continued striving were exactly what Schlegel's new concept of system demanded. Romantic poetry was not merely equal to classical poetry, it was superior. It manifested a constant yet never-fulfilled progression toward the truth, an endless approximation of the ideal in all its conceivable forms. In the most famous of all of Schlegel's fragments, the *Atheneaumsfragment* no. 116, he characterizes this infinite striving:

> Other forms of poetry are completed, and are now capable of being completely analyzed. The Romantic form of poetry is still in the state of becoming, that is its true essence; that it eternally becomes, and can never be completed. It can never be exhausted through any theory, and only a divinatory criticism would dare to try to characterize its ideal. It

---

[92] KA II, 285, 54.
[93] Ibid.

> alone is infinite, just as it alone is free; and it recognizes as its first law that the will of the poet can suffer no law over itself. The Romantic kind of poetry is the only one which is more than a kind, that it is, as it were, poetry itself: for in a certain sense all poetry is or should be Romantic.[94]

Schlegel finds that his reflections on poetry extend far beyond the bounds of poetics. Because poetry's striving is unbound by any abstract and arbitrary academic division, and because it is an imperative, with the full Kantian weight of that word, it extends into all fields of existence. "The Romantic imperative," Schlegel writes, "requires the mixture of all forms of poetry. All nature and all science should become art. Art should become nature and science."[95]

In Romantic poetry Schlegel claims to have found a system and a genre which expresses the human condition, one which responds to the demands of systematicity, reason, and freedom. Romantic poetry recognizes the irresolvable conflict between living in the particular and thinking in the universal. It recognizes the contention between the conditioned and the unconditioned, and that any attempt to know the unconditioned falsifies it by making it conditioned. At the same time, it recognizes the necessity of striving for the unconditioned because we can only approach the truth if we strive for the ideal. Romantic poetry creates forever anew, and in doing so "hovers at the midpoint between the portrayed and the portrayer, free from all real and ideal self-interest, on the wings of poetic reflection."[96]

In *Religious Musings* Coleridge had operated under the view that the individual's internal knowledge must conform to the reality of external objects. In *Dejection: An Ode*, a poem written six years after the publication of the *Musings*, Coleridge would describe how the objects of the external world, in this case, a gathering storm, necessarily conform to the individual's own internal faculties:[97]

> Though I should gaze for ever
> On that green light that lingers in the west:
> I may not hope from outward forms to win
> The passion and the life, whose fountains are within.

---

[94] KA II, 116, 183.
[95] KA XVI, 586, 134.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Cf. Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, Bxvi.

> O Lady! we receive but what we give,
> And in our life alone does Nature live: (l. 43-48)

Dejection is a poem about several things occurring in Coleridge's life in 1802: most especially his troubled relationship with Sarah Hutchinson with whom he was in love though married to Sarah Fricker), but also his response to Wordsworth's *Immortality* ode, and most evident in these lines, his struggle to work out a new epistemology that would express his religious feelings.

Coleridge came to hold the position that religiosity was something that formed the way the individual experienced the world and the self, not something that was gained from experience. This way of conceiving religion was attractive to Coleridge's desire to account for religion psychologically, appealing neither to the rational argument of the Deists, nor the evidential arguments of churchmen like Paley. At the same time, this also meant having to systematically account for a third term in addition to the self and external reality. These were the transcendental aspects of cognition that made experience what it was. These could be deduced in the same manner that Kant had deduced the categories of the understanding and the practical moral laws. Transcendental deduction was a method that allowed one to justify the possession and employment of pre-theoretical concepts and how those concepts, which are not obtained from experience, relate to objects.

When Coleridge wrote "the pith of my system is to make the senses out of the mind—not the mind out of the senses, as Locke did," he differentiated his transcendental idealist standpoint from that of the empirical.[98] Empirical deduction concerns itself with facts traceable to experience. This was the method set out by Locke and Hume and followed by Hartley. Transcendental deduction differs in that it concerns itself with the legitimacy of experience. The difference between these two approaches can be illustrated with cause and effect. Hume's aetiology argued that there is no reason to believe that causation is something that actually exists: "We are never able, in a single instance, to discover any power or necessary connection, any quality, which binds the effect to the cause, and renders the one an infallible consequence of the other."[99] For Kant the question was not to ask whether such concepts had an empirical source, but whether such concepts were transcendental, that is whether they constituted an antecedent condition under which something can be thought as an object in general. In such a case all objects of knowledge necessarily appear under such concepts if they were

---

[98] TT, II,179.
[99] David Hume, *Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 63.

to be cognized at all.[100] Therefore cause and effect is a justifiable transcendental category because it plays a necessary role in our cognition of the external world.

The effects of either approach go beyond just epistemological theory and have a direct bearing on the concept of the self. In the empirical model, the self does not differentiate itself from experience, rather it is, as Hume argued, identified with that experience: "For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other.... I can never catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception."[101] For Coleridge, the idealist model served as an alternative where the self existed in relation to both the external world and to a religious intuition which was not expressed objectively, but experientially, as in Schlegel's system.

This marks a fundamental shift in Coleridge's thought from what might be called the binary logic of his rational empiricism to the triune logic which would come to structure his later thought. Coleridge claimed this mode of thought originated in 1796. He wrote in the *Biographia Literaria*: "I was at that time and long after, though a Trinitarian (i.e. *ad norman Platonis*) in philosophy, yet a zealous Unitarian in Religion."[102] However, an examination of the notebooks reveals that this three-part thinking is better placed as starting in 1801, after he had returned from Germany and after the focus of his reading had shifted to Idealism, Neoplatonism and mysticism. [103] Coleridge continued to develop it as he worked on his *Logic*, and most fully elaborated it into a philosophical phenomenology in his incomplete *Opus Maximum* manuscripts.[104]

The underlying difference between these two approaches was between reason and the understanding.[105] The empirical dyadic model operated upon the understanding alone. This faculty deals with the individual's experience of the world, taking that which is furnished by the senses, and classifying and generalizing it into comprehensible impressions. It analyzes and abstracts

---

[100] Kant makes this argument for concepts of the understanding at A93/B125 in the first *Kritik*.

[101] David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 252.

[102] BL I, 179-80.

[103] Coleridge's formal conversion to orthodox Trinitarianism can be dated to February 1805 (*The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Kathleen Coburn, 5 vols. (London: Routledge, 2002), II, 2444, 2445, 2448.

[104] See Murry J. Evans, *Sublime Coleridge: The Opus Maximum* (London: Palgrave, 2012).

[105] For a more through treatment see Alexander J. B. Hampton, "The Struggle for Reason: Childhood Development of Triadic Self-Consciousness in the Opus Maximum," *The Coleridge Bulletin*. 26 NS (2005), 45-55.

what would otherwise be the chaos of experience into cause and effect.[106] It is, Coleridge explains, "the power of imagining the shortest possible line between two points," the logic of association or causal connection. [107] Alternately, reason is a faculty that is associated with this third logical term, "bearing the same relation to spiritual objects, the Universal, the Eternal, and the Necessary, as the eye bears to material and contingent phænomena."[108] That is to say, reason is concerned with that which an individual is conscious of in an intuitive, super-sensory manner, most notably moral intuition in contrast to the cause and effect of the understanding.[109] It is "the power of the universal… the Source and Substance of Truths above Sense." Further-more, "it is an organ identical with its appropriate objects. Thus, God, the Soul, eternal Truth, &c. are the objects of reason; but they are themselves *reason*."[110] In the sense Coleridge describes, reason is the "representative of the infinite" invested in the finite nature of the individual.[111]

Coleridge argues that reason is dependent upon the understanding for its expression. The understanding can exist without reason, yet when it does so, as illustrated by Hume, it has no sense of itself apart from experience. Coleridge explains the relationship as follows:

> Understanding and Experience may exist without Reason. But Reason cannot exist without Understanding; nor does it or can it manifest itself but in and through the understanding, which in our elder writers is often called *discourse*, or the discursive faculty, as by Hooker, Lord Bacon, and Hobbes: and an understanding enlightened by reason Shakespeare gives as the contra-distinguishing character of man, under the name *discourse of reason*. In short, the human understanding possesses two distinct organs, the outward sense, and "the mind's eye" which is reason….. In this way we reconcile the promise of Revelation, that the blessed will see God, with the declaration of St. John, God hath no one seen at any time.[112]

In this passage, Coleridge makes two important claims about his tripartite epistemology. The first refers back to Coleridge's Hegel-like conception of

---

[106] OM 86-7, Samuel Taylor Coleridge. *The Friend*, ed. Barbra E. Rooke, vol 4 in 2 parts, *Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 16 vols. (London: Routledge, 1969), I, 156. All further references indicated as F.
[107] OM, 6.
[108] F, I, 155-56.
[109] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection*, ed. John Beer, vol 9. *Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 16 vols. (London: Routledge, 1994), 26. All further references indicated as AR.
[110] F, I, 155-56.
[111] OM, 87.
[112] F, II, 156–7.

his own system, that is, it "opposes no other system, but shows what is true in each."[113] Here the great British Empiricists are not enemies, but allies in the expression of reason. This brings up the second claim of this passage, that it is through the articulation of the understanding that the transcendence of God which no one can see is reconciled with the promise of revelation, and this occurs through the symbol.

Throughout Coleridge's writings, there is an interest in the question of how an idea becomes something that can be more or less objectively communicated. For Coleridge, an idea is supersensuous in that it arises mentally, not from sensuous experience. As a result "an IDEA in the *highest* sense of that word, cannot be conveyed but by a *symbol*."[114] All language engages in moving an idea from internal subjectivity to discursive objectivity: "all language is utterance, i.e. Outer-ance, and with Outness the imagination necessarily associates a sensation of reality [with it]."[115] The result of this is a symbol which is the combination of both reason and the understanding. The symbol acts, Coleridge explains, as a "reconciling and mediatory power, which incorporating the Reason Images of the Sense, and organizing (as it were) the flux of the Senses by the permanence and self-circling energies of Reason, gives birth to a system of symbols, harmonious in themselves, and consubstantial with the truth, of which they are conductors."[116]

That symbols are "consubstantial" brings the model of the Trinity directly into play. The Son is consubstantial with the Father in that they are of one and the same substance. Just as Christ is the incarnation of God, the symbol is the incarnation of the idea. Furthermore, just as Christ as Logos is God's creative presence in the world, the symbol is the individual's creative presence in the world for Coleridge. Finally, what makes this possible is the imagination, which Coleridge famously defines as "a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM," meaning that just as God has the power of self-creation (the "I will be what I will be" of Exodus 3:14) the imagination has the power of self-creation in asserting the ideas of reason which have their source in the activity of the self, not the passivity of experience.[117] "Symbols," Coleridge writes, "are the translucence of the Eternal through and in the Temporal. It always partakes of the Reality which it renders intelligible; and while it annunciates the whole, abides itself as a

---

[113] TT, II, 147.
[114] BL, I, 156.
[115] OM, 312.
[116] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Lay Sermons*, ed. R. J. White, vol 6, *Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 16 vols. (London: Routledge, 1972), 29. All further references indicated as LS.
[117] BL, I, 304.

living part in that Unity, of which it is the representative."[118] In this manner, the transcendent reality of ideas share in a community of ideas with the temporal world of the understanding, their "outer-ance" allowing them to be the subject of objective discourse.

Yet they are not fixed, though they are always consubstantial with the transcendent ideas of reason, their expression in the understanding is subject to flux: "We can neither rest in an infinite that is not at the same time a whole, nor in a whole that is not infinite. Hence the natural Man is always in a state either of resistance or of captivity to the understanding, which cannot represent totality without limit."[119] It is in this way that Coleridge reconciles the promise of revelation and the invisibility of God. Religion is therefore best expressed in a genre that forms a symbolic system that engages in a process of endless striving. "Christianity," Coleridge writes, "is not a Theory, or a Speculation; but a *Life*. Not a *Philosophy* of Life, but a Life and living Process."[120]

6. Conclusion

This examination moves from the pre-Romantic lives of Coleridge and Schlegel, only to the development of the early forms of their Romantic thought. It demonstrates the fascinating correspondence between their two parallel lives. These concurrent developments would continue as both thinkers moved into the mature stages of their Romantic thought. For Schlegel, this can be located in many of the lectures he delivered later in his life when resident in Vienna. Particularly in his development of a *Lebens-philosophie*, which elaborates and distills many of the early elements discussed here into a practical philosophy. This is reinforced in his other later lectures which consider literary genres and the dialogical character of the nature of language.[121] For Coleridge, this is especially true of the triune logic which he articulates as a systematic framework in his *Opus Maximum*, particularly in fragment three, which takes up the realist tradition of the divine ideas and their relation to creation, and fragment two, which examines the ethical grounding for personhood in the Absolute.[122] In the case of both thinkers, these later developments have often been unfairly characterized as a

---

[118] LS, 30.
[119] LS, 60.
[120] AR, 2.
[121] Friedrich Schlegel. *The Philosophy of Life and Philosophy of Language in a Course of Lectures*, trans. A. Morrison (London: H. G. Bohn, 1874).
[122] The philosophy of the *Opus Maximum* is the subject of a detailed essay I plan to publish in the near future.

conservative ossification of the ideas they developed in their younger years. However, in the context of this examination, they are better understood as a further development and refinement.

Schlegel and Coleridge were among the most influential Romantics in their respective nations, defining the movements that those following them would either take up or challenge. The development of their early Romantic positions arose from an initial desire to establish an unconditioned ground for systematic thinking in an age when systematic thinking was becoming increasingly problematic. In realizing that foundationalism was not possible within the philosophical climate of their day, they also came to the broader and more substantive conclusion that the discursive nature of a rationalized system will always fall short of, and never do justice to, the ideal which one seeks to make its ground.

The systems that they proposed were instead based upon this insight: that their respective ideals could never be wholly obtained, but instead had to be an object of continuous approximation. For both Schlegel and Coleridge, the forms in which this kind of infinite striving is achieved, the eclecticism of Romantic poetry and the consubstantiality of the symbol, are not static but instead infinitely perfectible in their striving to approximate an ideal. The respective dynamism of the Romantic *poesie* and the symbol are not indicative of any contingency in terms of what they express. Rather, their instability of conceptual articulation is representative of the nature of the unconditioned truth that lay behind them. This ultimately places the respective Romantic philosophies explored here in a position that seeks to unify the conceptual achievements of German idealism with the perennial tradition of philosophical realism.[123]

Bibliography

Allen, Richard. *David Hartley on Human Nature* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999).

Barbeau, Jeffery W. *Coleridge's Assertion of Religion: Essays on the Opus Maximum*. (Dudley, Mass.: Peeters, 2006).

Barth, J. Robert. *Coleridge and Christian Doctrine* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969).

Beer, John. "Coleridge, Samuel Taylor (1772–1834)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (http://www. oxforddnb.com/view/article/5888, Accessed 2 Feb 2008).

Beiser, Frederick C. *The Romantic Imperative: The Concept of Early German Romanticism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003).

———. *German Idealism: The Struggle Against Subjectivism, 1781-1801.* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002).

———. *Hegel* (London: Routledge, 2005).

Berlin, Isaiah. *The Roots of Romanticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

Blake, William. *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, ed. David V. Erdman (New York: Anchor Books, 1988).

Blanchot, Maurice. *The Infinite Conversation*, trans Susan Hanson. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

Christensen, Jerome. *Romanticism at the End of History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000).

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. *The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Kathleen Coburn, 5 vols. (London: Routledge, 2002).

———. *Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 16 vols. (London: Routledge, 1969).

———. *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Earl L. Griggs (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966).

De Man, Paul. *Aesthetic Ideology*, ed. Andrzej Warminski (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

———. *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984).

Evans, Murry J. *Sublime Coleridge: The Opus Maximum* (London: Palgrave, 2012).

Fichte, Johann Gottlieb. *Introductions to the Wissenschaftslehre and Other Writings, 1797-1800*, trans. and ed. Daniel Breazeale (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994).

———. *Gesamtausgabe der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, ed. R. Lauth and H. Jacob (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1962-2012).

Fincham, Richard. "Refuting Fichte with 'Common Sense': Friedrich Immanuel Niethammer's Reception of the Wissenschaftslehre 1794/5." *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 43.3 (2005): 301-324.

Frank, Manfred. *The Philosophical Foundations of Early German Romanticism*, trans. Elizabeth Millán-Zaibert (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004).

———. *Unendliche Annäherung: Die Anfänge der philosophischen Frühromantik* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1997).

Gay, Peter. *The Enlightenment: The Rise of Modern Paganism* (New York: Norton, 1966).

Hampton, Alexander J.B. 'Jacobi and the Romantics', *Friedrich Jacobi and the End of the Enlightenment: Religion, Philosophy, and Reason at the Crux of Modernity*, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), 267-285.

———. *Romanticism and the Re-Invention of Modern Religion: The Reconciliation of German Idealism and Romantic Platonism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

———. 'Romantic Religion: Dissolution and Transcendence in the Poetics of Hölderlin', *Symphilosophie* 1 (2019): 61-74.

———. "The Poetics of Mysticism", ed. Edward Howells and Mark McIntosh, *The Oxford Handbook to Mystical Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 241-64.

———. "The Struggle for Reason: Childhood Development of Triadic Self-Consciousness in the Opus Maximum," *The Coleridge Bulletin*. 26 NS (2005): 45-55.

———. "The Conquest of Mythos by Logos: Countering Religion without Faith in Irenaeus, Coleridge and Gadamer." *Forum Philosophicum* 12:1 (2007), 57-70.

Hamilton, Paul. *Coleridge and German Philosophy: The Poet in the Land of Logic*, (London: Continuum, 2007).

Hedley, Douglas. *Coleridge, Philosophy and Religion:* Aids to Reflection *and the Mirror of the Spirit* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

Holmes, Richard. *Coleridge: Darker Reflections* (London: Harper Collins, 1998).

Hume, David. *Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

———. *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978).

Jacobi, F.H. *Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi. Werke: Gesamtausgabe der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, ed. Walter Jaeschke (Hamburg: Meiner, 2004).

Peter Jonkers. 'Jacobi's Response to Religious Nihlism' in *Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi and the Ends of the Enlightenment*, ed. Alexander J.B. Hampton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), 124-38.

Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and ed. Paul Guyer, Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

———. *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* ed. Wilhelm Weischedel (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1974).

———. *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, ed. Wilhelm Weischedel (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1974).

Lacoue-Labarthe, Philippe and Jean-Luc Nancy. *The Literary Absolute: The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988).

Lamb, Charles. *The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb*, ed. E. V. Lucas (London: Methuen, 1903).

Locke, John. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).

Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie, 56 vols., ed. Rochus von Liliencron, et al. (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1875-1912).

Mee, Jon. *Dangerous Enthusiasm: William Blake and the Culture of Radicalism in the 1790s* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992).

Millán-Zaibert, Elizabeth. *Friedrich Schlegel and the Emergence of Romantic Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007).

Muirhead, John H. *Coleridge as Philosopher*, (London: Macmillan, 1930).

Paley, William. *Natural Theology* and *Horae Paulinae*, (New York: American Track Society, 1865).

Reinhold, Karl Leonhard. *Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie,* ed. R. Schmidt (Leipzig: Reclam, 1923).

Schiller, Friedrich von. *Sämtliche Werke*, 12 vols. (Leipzig: Hesses, 1890).

Schlegel, Friedrich. *On the Study of Greek Poetry*, trans. and ed. Stuart Barnett (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001).

———. *Dialogue on Poetry and Other Literary Aphorisms*, trans. Ernst Behler, Roman Struck (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1968).

———. *Friedrich Schlegel Kritische Ausgabe*, 35 vols., ed. Ernst Behler, Jean Jacques Anstett, and Hans Eichner (Munich: Schöningh, 1958-).

———.*The Philosophy of Life and Philosophy of Language in a Course of Lectures*, trans. A. Morrison (London: H. G. Bohn, 1874).

Schrader, Monika. *Laokoon "eine vollkommene Regel der Kunst": Ästhetische Theorien der Heuristik in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 2005).

Sells, Michael. *Mystical Languages of Unsaying* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1994).

Seyhan, Azade. *Representation and its Discontents: The Critical Legacy of German* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

Wheeler, Kathleen M. *Romanticism, Pragmatism, and Deconstruction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993).