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**Aims and Scope:** Formerly *Cardiff Corvey: Reading the Romantic Text* (1997–2005), *Romantic Textualities: Literature and Print Culture, 1780–1840* is an online journal that is committed to foregrounding innovative Romantic-studies research into bibliography, book history, intertextuality, and textual studies. To this end, we publish material in a number of formats: among them, peer-reviewed articles, reports on individual/group research projects, bibliographical checklists, and biographical profiles of overlooked Romantic writers. As of Issue 15 (Winter 2005), *Romantic Textualities* also carries reviews of books that reflect the growing academic interest in the fields of book history, print culture, intertextuality, and cultural materialism, as they relate to Romantic studies.

Romanticism, who perhaps should have been included but were not, such as Walter Scott to name but one.

A. O. Lovejoy once commented that ‘the offspring with which Romanticism is credited are as strangely assorted as its attributes and its ancestors’, and this book is a prime example of this. It attempts to do many things in its overall structure: it re-examines the relationship between Romanticism and religion; addresses what Hopps and Stabler call the ‘recent attempts to recruit the poet [Byron] for the cause of “radical unbelief” ’ (p. 9); and extends temporal boundaries beyond first-generation Romantics to include Gerald Manley Hopkins and Wallace Stevens. Added to a mix of topics and genres (there are essays on poetry, prose, drama, art, and language), these competing aims make the book hard going at times and are a hindrance to its overall coherence. The book would also have benefited from a clearer explanation of how it defines the term ‘Religion’. This is particularly relevant when the editors admit that ‘[n]ot all the chapters in the collection espouse a religious viewpoint’, but what they contribute is [after appropriating Alan Rawes quotation], a responsive openness to possibilities’ (p. 13). It could be argued that while these chapters are hugely valuable in their own right, they result in the book taking steps towards the blurred boundaries between secular and non-secular readings. Regardless of this, *Romanticism and Religion from William Cowper to Wallace Stevens* is a worthy contribution to the field of Romantic studies, and will instigate and inspire continued debate on the subject for some time to come. 

Wendy Hunter  
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Nicholas Reid, *Coleridge, Form and Symbol: Or the Ascertaining Vision* (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate 2006), ix + 189pp. ISBN 0-7546-5327-7; £45 / \$89.95.

THE AIM OF ASHGATE’S NINETEENTH CENTURY SERIES ‘is to reflect, develop and extend the great burgeoning interest in the nineteenth century [...] as a locus for our understanding not only of the past but of the contours of our modernity’ (p. x). In *Coleridge, Form and Symbol: Or the Ascertaining Vision*, Nicholas Reid engages with the dual articulation of Ashgate’s locus through an intriguing examination of Coleridge’s metaphysics and his theories of the imagination, symbol, and form. What is especially refreshing about Reid’s study is how it situates the relevance of Coleridgean concepts and thought within contemporary critical theory. Rather than solely reading Coleridge *through* the lens of critical theory, Reid frames an interchangeable *dialogue* between Coleridgean concepts and theory, which reciprocally inform and enlighten one another.

In Part I, for example, Reid draws on twentieth-century aesthetics to show that ‘a Coleridgean phenomenology, far from being mere folk psychology, is

well-grounded by the evidence. I hope that readers will recognise in this an attempt to revalue those centrally Coleridgean concepts, form and imagination, and will also see the relevance of this part for contemporary critical theory' (p. vi). Reid does not approach Coleridge as a case-history whose system of thought belongs to the nineteenth-century past. Rather, he posits Coleridgean thought as a valuable contribution to current discussions: 'I do [...] think that Coleridge's thought is of interest in its own right. And to refuse to consider the major preoccupations of so major a figure as Coleridge, is to settle for a limited and partial view' (p. vii). Reid's balanced discussion accomplishes this convincingly throughout the volume.


The book is divided into three parts. Part I, 'Image and Form', explores the relationship between thought and image, and how that relation is embodied in the concept of form. Drawing on the works of Susanne Langer and Louis Arnaud Reid (incidentally, the author's grandfather to whom the volume is dedicated) these two chapters elucidate 'a somewhat polemical defence of Coleridge's intuitions about the connection between form and imagination' (p. 5). Yet, this self-termed 'defence' is forward-looking in embracing the contexts of the Artificial Intelligence debate to demonstrate how writers such as Alan Richardson, Antonio Damasio, Ralph Ellis, and George Lakoff 'have moved back towards what is in some ways a Coleridgean view of the place of imaging (or imagination) at the heart of cognition' (p. 11). Reid's discussion of 'image' as a mental construct, 'an object-directed, *mental* act' (p. 13, Reid's emphasis) in which 'imaging is the ground of meaning' (p. 22) and of 'Coleridge's view of form [...] the single most important concept in Coleridge's thinking' (p. 30) present the contemporary resonance of Coleridge's thought and the foundational scope for developing the significance of symbol in Part II.

The three chapters in the second section, 'Coleridge's Poetry', look at Coleridge's views more closely through an examination of his poems 'in which Coleridge first worked out the basis of his later theories of symbol and form' (p. 43). Chapter 3 reads the symbolic method in 'The Ancient Mariner' as an intertextual commentary on 'the process of interpretation' (p. 49). Specifically, Reid argues that 'the poem directs attention to its own function as myth, and to the function of the reader in participating in the interpretation of divine symbols' (p. 53). The 'emphasis on textuality and readership' in this reading 'reflects Coleridge's own hermeneutics' and supports Reid's premise that Coleridgean thought on form, symbol and imagination develop in, as well as from, his poems (p. 57). This is further developed in Chapter 4's examination of a 'pattern of absence and presence' in the conversational poems—specifically, 'This Lime-tree Bower', 'Frost at Midnight', and 'Dejection'—where Reid explores 'a phenomenology of vision, the correlative of form' (p. 61). Having always been very partial to Coleridge's conversational poems, Reid's lively discussion makes this chapter my favourite in the book. The last chapter in this section traces the influence of Mark Akenside's *The Pleasures of Imagination* (1744) as a contextual source 'in which Coleridge's views on symbol and form arose' (p. 83).

A self-confessed ‘critical experiment’, Reid’s reading in this chapter examines ‘Akenside from [...] the Coleridgean perspective; and in fact [...] engage[s] in the project of reading Coleridge *through* Akenside’ (p. 83, Reid’s emphasis).

The chapters in Part III, entitled ‘Coleridgean Metaphysics’, shift the focus to a discussion of the philosophical system of the later Coleridge. Chapter 6 traces the process of how the initial influence of F. W. J. Schelling’s *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800) develops into Coleridge’s critique of ‘Schelling’s failure to derive the categories of thought and logic which underlie his system’ (p. 116). This chapter’s sections on ‘Coleridge’s Marginal Critique’ and ‘The Trinity’ (pp. 116, 120) show how Coleridge’s logic is fundamentally different from Schelling’s *System*—specifically through Coleridge’s development ‘in the dynamic act of the Trinity [...] an act which eschews the subject-object categories of the finite Understanding’ (p. 125). In the last ten years of his life, Coleridge continued to engage with ‘Schelling’s transcendental deduction’ and while ‘the broader picture’ and ‘the essential logic of the system’ did not change, Coleridge did ‘modify [...] [his] views of nature and the imagination’ (p. 137). Chapter 7 focuses specifically on the imagination, and aims to affirm ‘[Anthony] Harding’s sense that evil plays a fundamental role metaphysically in the later Coleridgean imagination—and that the kind of absence or via negativa which we have seen in Coleridge’s earlier conversation poems reflects, phenomenologically, the role later seen for darkness in Coleridge’s thought’ (p. 138). Chapter 8 discusses Coleridge’s theory of language. Reid aligns Coleridge ‘akin to the views of Susanne Langer’ about the human mind’s use of two kinds of symbols—‘the conventional symbols of language’ and the symbol as ‘perceptual image’ (p. 152)—rather than pursuing the ‘desire to find in Coleridge a linguistic nominalism or anti-realism of the sort which was common in theoretical circles until the later 1990s’ (p. 151). A discussion about Coleridge’s ‘On Poesy or Art’ and the ‘Essay on Method’ in Chapter 9 concludes the volume.

Throughout Reid writes in a clear and direct style that highlights his vast knowledge of Coleridge and contemporary critical theory. The topical rubrics in the chapters are both a practical and informative aid for the reader. Occasionally, the reader may find the development of the book’s overall argument slightly discursive—perhaps a result of the fact that most of the volume is a collection of previous publications. Aside from the concluding chapter, earlier versions of all chapters, in whole or in part, have appeared in: *Romanticism on the Net* (Chapters 1, 2, and 8), *AUMLA* (Chapters 3 and 5), *The Charles Lamb Bulletin* (Chapter 4), and *Studies in Romanticism* (Chapters 6 and 7). At times, this may have a disjointed effect upon the reader in completely connecting the full impact of the overall argument between individual chapters. Having said that, insightful discussions on the conversational poems, nature, and the Trinity—to name but a few—are interwoven throughout the sections in the text and it might be this reader’s desire to encase these insightful and provoking thoughts more fully in their own chapters that fuelled the reservations noted above. The scope of this intriguing book is ambitious, and Reid convincingly

argues, challenges, and raises the reader's awareness of Coleridgean metaphysics, critical theory, and the history of ideas, in a manner sure to stimulate future debate. 

Maximiliaan van Woudenberg  
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## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS



**Peter Garside** is Professor of Bibliography and Textual Studies at the University of Edinburgh. He has recently co-edited an edition of James Hogg's *The Forest Minstrel* (EUP, 2006), and has just completed work on an edition of Walter Scott's *Waverley* for the Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels.

**Wendy Hunter** is in the process of completing her PhD thesis at the University of Sheffield, which has a working title of 'Literary Identity in the Work of James Hogg'. She has recently published an article on Hogg's periodical *The Spy* for the *Literary Encyclopaedia* and has contributed to a forthcoming e-book on Hogg's contributions in Chambers' *Edinburgh Journal*.

**Anne MacCarthy** is Senior Lecturer in English Literature in the English Department at the University of Santiago di Compostela, Spain. She has published book-length studies on Edward Walsh, James Clarence Mangan, and the development of Irish literature during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as well as heading a research project on the influence of nineteenth-century Irish literature on the work of James Joyce.

**David Stewart** (BA Stirling, MPhil Glasgow) is a second-year PhD student at the University of Glasgow. His thesis focuses on the periodical culture of the 1810s and '20s, particularly literary magazines such as *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, the *London Magazine*, the *New Monthly Magazine*, and Leigh Hunt's *Examiner*, *Reflector*, and *Indicator* papers, as well as the intersections between print culture, commercialism, and the aesthetic.

**Abraham Thomas** is Curator of Designs at the Victoria & Albert Museum. In 2006, he co-curated the V&A's 'Alternating Currents' season on Islamic architecture, and 'On The Threshold', an exhibition in the Architecture Exhibition Gallery looking at contemporary housing. During 2007, he will be curating a display entitled 'Full Tilt', looking at the fashion photography and graphic design at *Harper's Bazaar* and *Vogue* magazines in the 1940s/1950s, which opens in August in the V&A's 20th-Century Gallery.

**Lisa M. Wilson** is Assistant Professor in the Department of English and Communication at the State University of New York College at Potsdam. Her research focuses on issues of authorship, gender, and print culture in the British Romantic period and she has published on Matthew ‘Monk’ Lewis, Charlotte Dacre, and Mary Robinson. She is currently working on a book manuscript, *Marketing Authorship in an ‘Age of Personality’, 1780–1850*. This article forms part of her new study on Romantic-period satirical novels, which began as part of a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Seminar directed by Stephen Behrendt at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln.

**Maximilaan van Woudenberg** (BA McMaster, PhD Alberta) is Professor of Communications at the Sheridan Institute of Technology in Oakville, Canada, where he teaches Literature and Digital Storytelling. He has published several articles on Coleridge’s activities at the University of Göttingen and is currently preparing a monograph entitled *Coleridge and the Continental University*.

