

**Points to Ponder on Coleridge’s late poetry**

The image above is of a “Brocken spectre” or “Brocken bow”: a magnified shadow, surrounded by an aureole, cast by an observer on clouds or mists below. It is associated with hiking the Brocken peak in Germany, where it has been known to produce spectacular coronas. Coleridge refers to this phenomenon in the final lines of “Constancy to an Ideal Object”; how is it related to the ideas in that poem?

In his *Statesman’s Manual*, Coleridge argues that symbols are “the translucence of the Eternal through and in the Temporal,” whereas allegories are mere “abstraction[s] from objects of the senses,” an “insubstantial” “picture-language.” He associates the first with the language of the Bible and the second with the “mechanic philosophy” of the “present age.” Do these poems present us with symbols or allegories, and what might the implications of that be?

“Limbo” is a strange and difficult poem. It is sometimes helpful when confronted with a difficult poem to articulate those features that make it opaque. In this case, what are those features?