

# Samuel Taylor Coleridge as Abolitionist

BARBARA TAYLOR PAUL-EMILE

As a young man, Samuel Taylor Coleridge was deeply concerned about slavery; his writing on the subject can be divided into two distinct periods. The first, extending from 1792 to 1798, could be called his more liberal abolitionist phase. During this time he expressed distress over the very existence of slavery and publicly lectured against it. The second phase began in 1808 after a silence of ten years. In that year he wrote a review of Thomas Clarkson's new book on slavery for the *Edinburgh Review*. By this time, his liberalism had been moderated into paternalism, and his main concern became the "civilizing" of Africans. By 1833, when the slaves received partial emancipation, the poet expressed shock at the rashness of the action. This change in Coleridge's thought on the slavery issue from the political liberalism of youth to the strict conservatism of age is worth examining.

In 1792, while Coleridge was still a student at Cambridge, much interest was being generated by public debates and discussions on the moral and ethical values called into question by human slavery. Thomas Clarkson had won the Latin prize at Cambridge in 1785 for writing on the topic: "Is it Right to Make Men Slaves Against Their Will?" In 1792, Coleridge won the Browne Gold Medal for a "Greek Ode on the Slave Trade," subtitled "Sors Misera Servorum in Insulis Indiae Occidentalis," or "The Wretched Lot of Slaves in the West India Islands."<sup>1</sup> The subject was being hotly debated by University clubs and literary societies from Harvard to Oxford and Cambridge in England, and Coleridge's theme reflects the strong literary interest generated by this explosive topic.

In a letter to his brother George on April 2, 1792, Coleridge remarked: “. . . I have been writing for *all* the prizes — namely — The Greek Ode, the Latin Ode, and the Epigrams. I have little or no expectation of success — . . . The prize medals will be adjudged about the beginning of June. If you can think of a good thought for the beginning of the Latin Ode upon the miseries of the W[est] India Slaves, communicate — My Greek Ode is, I think, my chef d'oeuvre in poetical composition.”<sup>2</sup> As it turned out, Coleridge used the subject of slavery not for his Latin but for his Greek Ode.

Some of the ideas expressed in the poem by the young Coleridge foreshadow the attitude with which he would view slaves and slavery for the next few years. He expresses sympathy for their cause and condemns their oppressors, calling on Nemesis to send “burning punishment” on those “who are sated with the persecution of miserable people . . .” Of those who do not take part in this traffic he says, praising himself immodestly:

This muse who is the disciple of virtue  
Will take pleasure in mentioning your name  
This muse with the blessing of the sufferers  
Will raise your name to heaven!

In “Ode to the Departing Year” (1796), Coleridge composed a stirring and magnificent poem which expresses the poet’s anguish over contemporary world events, focusing attention mainly on England and chastising her for her part in increasing the misery of humanity.

The departing year appears as a speaker in a cataclysmic vision and prophesies the destruction of England because of her wrongs against Africa:

But chief by Afric’s wrongs,  
Strange, horrible, and foul!  
By what deep guilt belongs  
To the deaf Synod, ‘full of gifts and lies!’  
By Wealth’s insensate laugh! By Torture’s howl!  
    Avenger, rise!  
For ever shall the thankless Island scowl,  
Her quiver full, and with unbroken bow?  
Speak! from thy storm-black Heaven O speak aloud!

And on the darkling foe  
 Open thine eye of fire from some uncertain cloud!  
 O dart the flash! O rise and deal the blow!<sup>3</sup>

Seeking to preserve his own personal integrity, the poet disassociates himself from the prophesied national calamity:

Away, my soul away!  
 I unpartaking of the evil thing,  
 With daily prayer and daily toil  
 Soliciting for food my scanty soil,  
 Have wail'd my country with a loud lament.<sup>4</sup>

These are the words of Coleridge as a young man. Pained by the unexpected turn of the French Revolution, he was to turn away from his prophetic stance. He later found it necessary to add the following note to this poem: "Let it not be forgotten during the perusal of this Ode that it was written many years before the Abolition of the Slave Trade by the British Legislature, likewise before the invasion of Switzerland by the French Republic . . . ."<sup>5</sup> Clearly, the purpose of this note is to justify his having written such an inflamed piece. The older Coleridge, able to understand and accept England's general political behaviour, would not have reacted with such harsh candour to similar situations.

In *France, An Ode*, first published in the *Morning Post* in 1798 as *Recantation: An Ode*, Coleridge included a stanza on slavery and the slave trade which has not so far been found. In *Politics in the Poetry of Coleridge*, Carl Woodring suggests that possibly Daniel Stuart, editor of the *Morning Post*, "or some inconceivable sub-editor . . . took the precaution of excluding it . . ."<sup>6</sup> We know, however, that generally it "linked slavery with impressment for war as murder done continuously under national guidance and responsibility."<sup>7</sup> In place of this stanza a note appeared in the *Morning Post* stating that "The fifth stanza, which alluded to the African Slave Trade as conducted by this Country, and to the present Ministry and their supporters has been omitted, and would have been omitted,

without remark if the commencing lines of the sixth stanza had not referred to it."<sup>8</sup>

The first four lines of the sixth stanza are as follows:

The Sensual and Dark rebel in vain,  
Slaves by their own compulsion! In mad game  
They burst their manacles and wear the name  
Of Freedom, graven on a heavier chain!<sup>9</sup>

The poet here is referring to the French leaders and their supporters who had attacked Switzerland and as a result angered and embarrassed many of their supporters in England. The French, capable of such treachery, were unlike the Blacks, slaves "by their own compulsion."

Evidently the missing stanza alluded to the English government's support of slavery and the trade. It is probable then that its omission was not in the interest of poetical form but for practical political reasons. The *Morning Post* had made a name for itself as a bold speaker for radical and revolutionary ideas. It supported France, but was now in the process of rethinking its position after the new direction of the French Revolution became obvious. The *Post* was "currently in retreat on the issue of democratic freedom . . . In early March, Stuart was summoned before the Privy Council; in late March, Perry of the *Morning Chronicle* was sentenced to Newgate for three months."<sup>10</sup> It might well be that at this time the *Morning Post* thought it politically unwise to print the fifth stanza which attacked the government quite openly. As Coleridge grew older, his own revolutionary ardour cooled, and possibly he felt no need at a later date to replace this stanza.

In 1794 Coleridge and Southey planned their grand scheme to establish a colony on the banks of the Susquehanna in Pennsylvania. In a letter to Southey dated November 3, 1794, Coleridge mentions two servants, possibly slaves, and says: "the *Men* do not want assistance—at least, none that *Shad* can particularly give—And to the Women what assistance can little Sally, the *wife* of *Shad*, Give — more than any other of our married women? Is she to

have no domestic cares of her own? No house? No husband to provide for? No children?"<sup>11</sup> However unrealistic Coleridge's work schedule for himself and the settlers might be, the principles of independent self-support and self-reliance remain.

In order to raise funds for the venture, Coleridge decided to give two courses of six lectures at Bristol. The first set dealt with the Civil War under Charles I and the French Revolution; the second dealt with revealed religion. One of the lectures given at this time was on the slave trade:

Tomorrow Evening, Tuesday, June 16, 1795, S. T. Coleridge will deliver (by particular desire) a lecture on the Slave Trade, and the duties that result from its continuance. To begin at 8 o'clock, at the Assembly Coffee-House, on the Quay. Admittance, One Shilling.<sup>12</sup>

Nothing remains of this lecture. The choice of subject, however, reflects Coleridge's continuing concern with slavery as an issue.

In another letter to Southey, he makes his position on slavery in the proposed Colony even clearer:

My feeble and exhausted Heart regards with criminal indifference the Introduction or Servitude into our Society —; but my Judgement is not asleep: nor can I suffer your Reason, Southey! to be entangled in the web, which your feelings have woven. Oxen and horses possess not intellectual Appetites — nor the powers of acquiring them. We are therefore Justified in employing their Labor to our Benefit — Mind hath a divine Right of Sovereignty over Body — But who shall dare to transfer this Reasoning from 'from Man to Brute' to 'from Man to Man!' To be employed in the Toil of the Field while *We* are pursuing philosophical Studies — can Earldoms or Emperorships boast so huge an Inequality? Is there a human Being of so torpid a Nature, as that placed in our Society he would not feel it? — A *willing* slave is the worst of Slaves — His *Soul* is a Slave. Besides, I must own myself incapable of perceiving even the temporary *convenience* of the proposed Innovation.<sup>13</sup>

The plans for establishing in Pennsylvania fell through because Robert Southey, the leader of the group, was required to remain in England and study law in order to secure a legacy willed to him on that condition. The collapse of their plans was a serious loss to Coleridge. It was

now necessary for him to shift emphasis and look for alternatives. For a time it appeared as though he would become a Unitarian minister.

It was the wish of his father, a vicar, that Coleridge be prepared for the clergy. Although he did not enter the profession, his interest in religion stayed with him throughout his life. In a letter to his brother George, Coleridge implies that religion does not condone slavery, and he points instead to the gospel as a means of alleviating human distress. He says "I have been asked what is the best conceivable mode of meliorating Society — My answer has been uniformly this — 'Slavery is an Abomination to every feeling of the Head and Heart — Did Jesus teach the *Abolition* of it? No! He taught those principles, of which the necessary *effect* was — to abolish all Slavery . . . You ask me, what a friend of universal Equality *should* do — I answer — 'Talk not of Politics — *Preach the Gospel!*'"<sup>14</sup>

Coleridge's most finely reasoned arguments against slavery are to be found in his short-lived journal, *The Watchman*. This periodical, published in 1796, was supposed to review books, to present some poetry, to attack injurious governmental policies, and in sum to be a liberal publication. An essay on the slave trade appeared in the fourth number on Friday, March 25, 1796.

In the first paragraph of the essay Coleridge begins by asking the question, "Whence arise our miseries? . . . From Imaginary Wants."<sup>15</sup> From this he proceeds to show that ". . . if each among us confined his wishes to the actual necessities and real comforts of Life, we should preclude all the causes of Complaint and all the motives of Iniquity."<sup>16</sup> Our basic needs are often supplied; it is the desires created by the imagination which often lead men astray in their attempts to satisfy them. From this point, he undertakes a damaging study of the question of the slave trade and slavery, where he ridicules the position of the pro-slavery forces who maintain that interference from

government or abolitionists would lead to national disaster.

Up to 1807 the fight was centred on abolition of the slave trade, not slavery itself. The struggle was difficult enough as it was, and any talk of emancipation was thought to be premature. Coleridge's attack on Pitt further on in the essay, therefore, referred only to the latter's dallying over the Slave Trade Bill, not emancipation. "There are some who think Mr. Pitt sincere in his zeal for the abolition of this Trade; and I must certainly applaud their charity: but charity itself will allow that there are suspicious circumstances. Several violent and unpopular bills have lately been carried through both Houses — how came this bill, (certainly not an unpopular measure) to fail?"<sup>17</sup> Later in his life Coleridge was to claim that Pitt was one of the great supporters of the Abolition cause. At the time of the *Watchman* essay, however, he was politically still very much to the "left" of the Prime Minister.

After a ten-year silence Coleridge once again began to comment on slavery and on Africans. In a letter dated May 23, 1808, to Francis Jeffrey, the fiery and controversial editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, Coleridge asked for a favourable review of Thomas Clarkson's newly-published book on slavery, a work which he had been permitted to read in manuscript form. In his letter to Jeffrey, Coleridge said: "I write to you now merely to intreat — for the sake of mankind — an honourable review of Mr. Clarkson's 'History of the Abolition of the Slave Trade.' I know the man, and if you knew him you, I am sure, would revere him, and your reverence of him, as an agent, would almost supersede all judgment of him as a mere literary man. It would be presumptuous in me to offer to write the review of his work. Yet I should be glad were I permitted to submit to you the many thoughts which occurred to me during its perusal."<sup>18</sup>

Coleridge claimed that he wrote to Jeffrey regarding the review of Clarkson's work because Mrs. Clarkson had in-

dicated to him that a severe review might have an adverse effect on her husband. It is likely, knowing the extent to which Jeffrey disapproved of the Romantic poets, that Coleridge hoped to prevent Jeffrey from extending his wrath to a close friend and associate.

Whatever the reason, Coleridge's intercession was successful. Jeffrey in a polite letter asked him to write the review, which appeared in the *Edinburgh*, July 1808.

In the first paragraph of the review Coleridge points out that one cannot discuss Clarkson's work within the traditionally prescribed framework of criticism which refers only to "style and arrangement." One must deal primarily with the subject or substance of the work, for it is to this that the author gave his foremost attention. Clarkson's book, Coleridge notes, "contains the history of the rise and progress of an evil the most pernicious if only because the most criminal, that ever degraded human nature" (355).<sup>19</sup> "In short," he continues, "the present work is the history of one great calamity, — one long continuous crime; involving every possible definition of evil: for it combined the wildest physical suffering with the most atrocious moral depravity" (356).

At first there is great praise for William Pitt, who "by his eloquence, and by his authority gave confidence to the cause of justice, and currency to the dictates of reason. When we consider the solemnity of his protestations, and the great political interest of those whom he disoblged by his exertions, it is painful, and almost impossible to admit any doubt of his sincerity" (366). Then in an ironic turnabout the piece continues: "Yet, if he was sincere, he certainly was not zealous in the cause; and neglected so many opportunities of promoting it . . . . For the long space of twenty years, Mr. Pitt could persuade about three fourths of the members of Parliament to adopt any scheme of finance, or external policy, which he chose to countenance, — but he could never once prevail with a bare majority to support him against the slave traders and con-



signees of sugar in Bristol and Liverpool" (367). The reviewer goes on to point out that it was not until after the war with Holland, when such colonies as Guiana, Demarary and Bernice fell to the English, that abolishing the slave trade was given serious consideration. At that time, the older and established planters wanted the importation curtailed, seeing a threat to their position and wealth if these new possessions were allowed to buy slaves and develop into competing sugar islands. So "the clamours of the sugar-dealers produced the interference which humanity and justice had formerly solicited in vain" (367).

In several letters to friends, Coleridge was later to deny that he wrote two of the political passages in the review: the passage disparaging Pitt, and that praising Wilberforce. In a letter to Allsop he said: "When the Review was published, in the place of some eulogiums due to Mr. Pitt and which I stated upon the best authority (in fact, they were from Tom Clarkson himself) was substituted some abuse and detraction."<sup>20</sup> In a footnote to this passage he added: "Was not this a fraud, a moral forgery? And this man, who attained notoriety and influence by conduct and practices like these, is he not a Judge, whose office it is to punish such acts in others?"<sup>21</sup>

In a letter to T. J. Street in 1809, Coleridge had occasion again to refer to this incident. He speaks of his intention to republish this "review on Clarkson's History of the Abolition in the *Edinburgh Review*, which was most shamefully mutilated; but in two paragraphs added (in a vulgar style of rancid commonplace metaphors) made to contradict myself — first in a nauseous and most false ascription of the Supremacy of merit to Mr. Wilberforce, and secondly in an attack on Mr. Pitt's Sincerity substituted for a Paragraph in which I had both defended it and him; and proved that of all the parliamentary Friends of the Africans he was the most efficient. With the exception of these paragraphs, I trust, you will read the Review with some satisfaction, even as it now stands . . ." <sup>22</sup> In another

letter to Thomas Poole on January 12, 1810, he says that he prefers to write for newspapers, "for Reviewing, which is more profitable and abundantly more easy, I cannot engage in, as I hold it utterly immoral — and was confirmed in it by the changes, Jeffrey made, in my Review of Clarkson's History of Abolition in the *Edinburgh Review*, the only case in which I thought myself warranted to make an exception."<sup>23</sup>

As editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, Jeffrey had become quite well known for the freedom with which he handled pieces submitted to him. Undoubtedly he must have felt it necessary to insert his own critique into Coleridge's review as the attack on Pitt was certainly not written by the poet since his political outlook had altered by this time. Possibly Coleridge's admiration for Pitt provoked Jeffrey, who was definitely a Whig, causing him to omit those passages and insert his own. The swift turning away from veneration and praise, on the one hand, to sarcastic ridicule on the other is a favorite technique of Jeffrey and one which he had used often enough in his assessment of the works of contemporary poets. The fact that Coleridge did not question the passages on slavery and on the colonizing of Africa upon publication of the piece suggests that he was satisfied that they had remained unembellished by Jeffrey.

The review illustrates the beginning of the shift in Coleridge's opinions. As he grew older, he began to move away from the political liberalism of his youth, and at this time, 1808, his attitudes towards slavery, the state and the English church began to undergo a change. More and more he began to fear that abolition would lead to great social disorders, and that the state's stability would be threatened by this upheaval. He became less concerned over the plight of the Africans and began to emphasize the cultural importance of religion for them. He stressed the ameliorating value of Christianity and the inevitable superiority of the Europeans who espoused this religion. In

the *Edinburgh Review*, he wrote the following: "It cannot be denied that the superstitions of the Africans will occasion great difficulties and embarrassments; but, by systematic repression of all religious proselytism, except indeed that most effective instrument of conversation, the Christian conduct of our agents; by a prudent and affectionate attention to the wishes and comforts of the chieftains, and the Mandingo priests; and by sedulous endeavours to enlighten them as men; this obstacle might gradually be removed, — at all events greatly lessened" (377).

In order to set a code of conduct "Let no alarming zeal be betrayed;" Coleridge advises: "rather let the initiation into Christianity be held up as a distinction, — as a favour to be bestowed; and it need not be doubted, that natural curiosity will prompt the chieftains; and most intelligent of the African tribes, to inquire into the particulars of a religion professed by a race confessedly so superior to them, and that the sense of superiority will act as a powerful motive toward adoption of it" (378).

In the best tradition of sound economics, philanthropy and profit would go hand in hand. Coleridge suggests that "civilizing commerce" be begun at once with Africa. His plan would lead to profit on both sides. In support of this design he suggests that the forts along the West coast of Africa which were used for slave-holding and slave-trading be converted into cultural centres. "Privileges, both useful and flattering, should be held forth to such of the African tribes as would settle round each of these forts; still higher honours should be given to the individuals among such settlers, as should have learnt our language, and acquired out arts of manufacture or civilization" (377).

Coleridge's conception of society, at this point, influenced his change in attitude towards Africans and slavery. As a young man, he saw society as essentially classless. His support of the Pennsylvania colony illustrates this idea. In religious matters he tended toward Unitarianism. As he grew older, however, his attitude on both these subjects

changed. He "came to have a very different conception of state and Church. In his raw Jacobinical days, it is true, he had been as individualistic as anyone; as a philosopher and a political theorist he had at first been an avowed disciple of Locke, Hartley, and Godwin. But he had learned from Plato, from Kant, from Schilling and above all from Burke — the thinkers who became the great lights of . . . his later seeing — to regard society as an organism."<sup>24</sup>

He now believed that society was composed of parts which together made up a whole. Each part must carry out its assigned function in order to benefit the whole. The state is composed of the National Church, whose function is to "keep alive art, letters, and all things spiritual."<sup>25</sup> The landed and commercial classes will serve to balance each other, with greater governmental power and control being given to the landed classes. The people of the state will benefit from the interrelatedness. In essence, we have arrived at the "central point of Coleridge's political philosophy. The State is 'a moral unit, an organic whole.' The individual's place in the State is ultimately determined by his value to the State. This value is an absolute of experience, like any other moral judgment. What we call the rights and duties of the individual — the two are inseparable — are the external, tangible marks by which we may know whether that individual has his proper place in the State. It is misleading to say that men have *equal* rights and duties, but we must say that all have *equally* rights and duties."<sup>26</sup>

As Coleridge came to believe this, the state appeared to him more and more sacred and timeless. "He felt that there was urgent call for change; but it was change not in the direction of the novel and untried — it was change in the backward direction, a return to the original ideas of Church and State which had been lost."<sup>27</sup> His concept of society is reflected in his attitude towards reform in general. Although he was always concerned with many of the social ills of his age, such as child labour, the shabby and

unhealthy living conditions of the oppressed, the open abuse of poor people in general by the new industrial system, Coleridge in his maturity was anti-democratic. He believed "in aristocracy, in respect for rank and ancestry and the maintenance of certain fixed gradations of Society."<sup>28</sup>

His plans for the Africans involved attempts to improve their lot, not really to change their position in society. He had come to believe in the enormous benefits of education not only for the Africans but for the poor and illiterate Englishmen. As far as he was concerned hope for reform lay in moral improvement of all classes in society, their Christian education and redemption from materialistic values. He had come to believe that nothing should break the interdependence of the higher, middle and lower classes. Viewed from this position, although the moral and physical welfare of slaves should be looked after, slavery as a state was not particularly alarming.

More and more Coleridge came to feel that influence in government should correspond to the amount of property owned.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, "although Coleridge's conservatism was willing to do everything for the people, it was strenuously opposed to allowing anything to be done *by* the people . . . . He showed Burke's profound distrust of the political capacity and moral stability of the average man."<sup>30</sup> He was most unfriendly to unions and other associations of labourers. When therefore, a slave calls for freedom, this does not mean that he should become free. Without the proper moral education, and instruction as to his place in the state he cannot determine what is to his good.

In 1809 Coleridge planned a new periodical, *The Friend: a Literary, Moral and Political Weekly Paper*. It ran at a loss and folded that same year. In essays VII and XIV of this journal, Coleridge attacked those who boasted that his age was one of great enlightenment. He pointed to various failings of present society: the illiteracy of the population, the ineffectiveness of particular political policies, and the

failure of the French Revolution. He declares that only a few men are responsible for improving the conditions of humanity and among them are Thomas Clarkson, Grenville Sharp, William Wilberforce, and members of the Society of Friends, who worked effectively against slavery. In a lecture delivered in May 1808, the content of which is similar to the substance of these essays in *The Friend*, he praises Clarkson again as one who had accomplished much good.

In his "Lectures on Shakespeare and other Dramatists" (1812), Coleridge discussed *Othello*. Here he deals with the question of racial identity. Did Shakespeare create Othello as a Negro? After quoting Roderigo's lines: "What a full fortune does the thick — lips owe, If he can carry't thus," Coleridge says:

. . . and here comes one, if not the only, seeming justification of our blackamoor or negro, Othello . . . Can we imagine [Shakespeare] so utterly ignorant as to make a barbarous negro plead royal birth, — at a time too, when negroes were not known except as slaves?<sup>31</sup>

Coleridge's attitude here reflects how he had come to regard Africans. He is astonished at the thought that anyone could possibly conceive of Othello as being negroid. He feels it "monstrous to conceive" of shared romantic feeling between "a beautiful Venetian girl" and "a veritable negro." Othello must be a Moor. If Shakespeare made this error in dramatization, there is no reason to "adopt one disagreeable possibility instead of a ten times greater and more pleasing probability." He even goes so far as to admit Desdemona's "want of balance" if this romance were true.

Coleridge's approach to the discussion of this aspect of *Othello* is not literary, but racial. His reference to the roles of the dramatis personae in the play serves only to substantiate his theory, and literary concerns are subordinated to the question of Othello's ethnic background.

In earlier references to black people as they appeared in English literature, Coleridge had expressed appreciation of the portrayal of the black Colonel in Mrs. Bennett's *Beggar Girl*. In a letter to Wordsworth dated 1798, he discussed the role of Negro slaves in *Count Benyowsky* (a tragic comedy written by Kotzebu and translated from the German by W. Render in 1798) who, he felt, were poorly drawn.<sup>32</sup> In a discussion of the defects of *Castle Spectre*, by M. G. Lewis, he points to poor style and structure. Of one of the characters, he says: "Now Hassan is a negro, who *had* a warm & benevolent heart; but having been kidnapped from his country & barbarously used by the Christians, becomes a Misanthrope."<sup>33</sup> In these cases the characters are dealt with briefly and dismissed.

The older Coleridge made his position on the relation of ethnic peoples to one another quite clear when he repeated and endorsed, during one of his evening conversations on February 24, 1827, Blumenbach's scale of the family of man:

- |                       |                                    |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1                     |                                    |
| Caucasian or European |                                    |
| 2. Malay              | 2. American                        |
| 3. Negro              | 3. Mongolian-Asiatic <sup>34</sup> |

Upon the emancipation of the slaves in 1833 Coleridge said: "Have you been able to discover any principle in this Emancipation Bill for the Slaves, except a principle of fear of the abolition party struggling with a fear of causing some monstrous calamity to the empire at large! Well! I will not prophesy, and God grant that this tremendous and unprecedented act of positive enactment may not do the harm to the cause of humanity and freedom which I can not but fear! But yet, what can be hoped, when all human wisdom and counsel are set at naught, and religious faith — the only miraculous agent among men is not invoked or regarded! and that most unblest phrase — The Dissenting *interest* — enters into the question."<sup>35</sup>

Coleridge's final attitude on slavery is two-fold. On the one hand, he wants to improve the condition of the slaves as well as that of all poor people in England. He does not, however, want any sudden freedoms or liberties to be granted to them as this might upset the hierarchical pattern on which society is based. He had become convinced that inequality was acceptable in society as long as all members were instructed as to their proper place and duties through religious edification. Prior to emancipation he had remarked: ". . . I utterly condemn your [abolitionist's] frantic practice of declaiming about their rights to the blacks themselves. They ought to be forcibly reminded of the state in which their brethren in Africa still are, and taught to be thankful for the providence which has placed them within the reach of the means of grace."<sup>36</sup> Coleridge had passed from youthful abolitionism to settled conservatism.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup>*Complete Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. J. D. Campbell (London: Macmillan and Company Ltd., 1925), pp. 476-677. I quote from a translation of "Sors Misera . . ." by Apostolos Marmaras, University of Colorado, 1970.
- <sup>2</sup>*Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. E. L. Griggs (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), I, 34.
- <sup>3</sup>*The Complete Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. E. H. Coleridge (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), I, 165.
- <sup>4</sup>Coleridge, I, 168.
- <sup>5</sup>Coleridge, I, 168.
- <sup>6</sup>Carl Woodring, *Politics in the Poetry of Coleridge* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1961), p. 183.
- <sup>7</sup>Woodring, p. 50.
- <sup>8</sup>Coleridge, I, 247.
- <sup>9</sup>Coleridge, I, 247.
- <sup>10</sup>Woodring, p. 181.
- <sup>11</sup>Griggs, I, 122.
- <sup>12</sup>Joseph Cottle, *Reminiscences of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Robert Southey* (New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1847), p. 14.
- <sup>13</sup>Griggs, I, 121-122.
- <sup>14</sup>Griggs, I, 126.
- <sup>15</sup>Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "On the Slave Trade," *The Watchman in The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Lewis Patton (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1970), II, 130.



- <sup>16</sup>"On the Slave Trade," I, 131.
- <sup>17</sup>"On the Slave Trade," I, 137.
- <sup>18</sup>*The Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. E. H. Coleridge (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1895). II, 527-528.
- <sup>19</sup>Samuel Taylor Coleridge, review of Thomas Clarkson's *History of the Abolition of the Slave Trade* (London, 1808), *The Edinburgh Review*, XII (May 1808). References to this review in my text cite page numbers.
- <sup>20</sup>Allsop, p. 113.
- <sup>21</sup>Allsop, p. 55.
- <sup>22</sup>*Unpublished Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. E. L. Griggs (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1933), II, 4.
- <sup>32</sup>Griggs, *Unpublished Letters*, II, 32.
- <sup>24</sup>F. T. C. Hearnshaw, "Coleridge, the Conservative," *Nineteenth Century*, CXVI (July, 1934), 109.
- <sup>25</sup>Crane Brinton, *Political Ideas of the English Romanticists* (New York: Russell and Russell Inc., 1962), p. 78.
- <sup>26</sup>Crane Brinton, *English Political Thought in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1954), p. 82.
- <sup>27</sup>Hearnshaw, 108.
- <sup>28</sup>Bernard N. Schilling, *Human Dignity and the Great Victorians* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1947), p. 56.
- <sup>29</sup>Schilling, pp. 56-57.
- <sup>30</sup>Hearnshaw, 109.
- <sup>31</sup>*The Complete Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. W. T. Shedd (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1884), IV, 178-179.
- <sup>32</sup>Griggs, I, 378.
- <sup>33</sup>Griggs, I, 378.
- <sup>34</sup>Shedd, VI, 279.
- <sup>35</sup>Shedd, VI, 459.
- <sup>36</sup>Shedd, VI, 457.