The Revolutionary Philosophy of Samuel Taylor Coleridge

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THE REVOLUTIONARY PHILOSOPHY
OF
SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
Department of English

Division of Graduate Instruction
Butler University
Indianapolis
1937
FOREWORD

In approaching the subject of Coleridge's Revolutionary Philosophy, one finds that the scope of the problem necessitates dividing it into different periods. This division is made not for the purpose of classifying Coleridge's ideals within set limitations, but of viewing his philosophy from varying perspectives. Throughout his life, regardless of age, he was a disciple of Liberty. His pursuit of this ideal furnishes the continuity that we seek throughout his political philosophy.

For the wise counsel and helpful suggestions of Dr. John S. Harrison I express my appreciation.
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COLERIDGE'S EARLY SYMPATHIES FOR THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

Living in times that were animated by political and philosophical controversy and experimentation, Samuel Taylor Coleridge reacted strongly to contemporary ideals and problems. Not to have done so would have rendered him less a Romanticist, for to the young Romantic poet an interest in social systems, in the improvement of the world for the uplift and liberation of human nature came as natural as poetic response to beauty. The great political currents of the last quarter of the eighteenth century, eddying as they did, first about the American Revolution, and later about the French Revolution, inevitably drew to themselves the sympathies of young students whose very youth made them susceptible to the cry for freedom. Youth, particularly of the emotional temperament, finds it difficult sometimes to distinguish between freedom and excess; consequently, Coleridge and his contemporaries in their sympathies for liberty were nothing short of exuberant, and Coleridge the most exuberant of them all.

That Coleridge's political philosophy, at least in its external manifestations, underwent a striking transformation
during the long years of his philosophical inquiry seems obvious from even a casual reading of his poetry. And yet it is striking that in his Biographia Literaria he says that his reprinting of his "anti-ministerial lectures," the Conciones ad Populum, years later in The Friend is "proof that my principles of politics have sustained no change." How then can one reconcile the seeming differences in his political philosophy at the age of twenty and at the age of forty or fifty?

His undergraduate days at Cambridge were colored by the informal gatherings in his room where his guests listened to his opinions on Burke's pamphlets which stimulated his political thinking as did nothing else that he read. Yet at the age of forty-five he is still referring sympathetically to Burke to the extent of saying, "In Mr. Burke's writings indeed the germs of almost all political truths may be found." What then is the nature of the transformation which Coleridge's ideals underwent? One, we would say, not so much a matter of kind as of degree; a transformation based not so much on angry retractions as on the remoulding of ideals that accompanies growing maturity.

Undoubtedly in his early days Coleridge was strikingly in sympathy with the French Revolution, yet he hotly denied even in his youth that he was a Jacobin. Since conservative opinion

1. S. T. Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, II, 150.
in England was running contrary to the Revolution, a man who expressed any sympathy for it was naturally branded, for English minds, steeped in the tradition of hundreds of years of constitutional government, frowned upon a spirit which could cast aside the conventionality of established system, however much of an empty shell it might have become. So it is comprehensible that Coleridge should have been labeled as a revolutionist, even though he saw in the French cause an opportunity to worship not at a bloody shrine of anarchy, but at the altar of freedom—freedom in its broadest sense, freedom as a great ideal. One can detect in his early outbursts that no matter how exultant he may have been, he was not essentially a Jacobin. In the twentieth century a political observer might have gloried in the overthrow of the Czarist régime in Russia because it was an ancient out-grown system, mouldy with its own vices and corruptness. Yet that same political observer could have welcomed that passing of a decadent form of government without necessarily subscribing to Communism which replaced it. So in the latter part of the eighteenth century Coleridge might have witnessed with humanitarian sympathies the passing of the French kings and still not have been a rank Jacobin. Of course it is natural in the white heat of present controversy to frown upon extremes, and it is equally easy for the observer almost a century and a half later to assume a tone of conciliatory tolerance because he has all of the vast panorama laid open to his gaze. One does not criti-
cize either Coleridge or his critics; one merely sees a little more clearly how such impassioned reactions--for and against a revolution--could exist simultaneously, and the world still turn upon its accustomed course with uninterrupted regularity.

It is chiefly because of Coleridge's leanings in his student days at Cambridge that we classify his beliefs and attitudes as those of a revolutionary philosophy. Actually such a philosophy is not limited to his student life. It antedated and inspired to some extent his ambitions for a Pantisocracy, but it also paralleled those same ambitions and survived when they had vanished.

Coleridge's politics in this early period was colored by no narrow insular spirit. His biographers and his critics have divided his politics into two schools of thought--his early humanitarianism and his later patriotism. This line of demarcation they draw because of his disillusionment with the French cause, but one can see evidences of his patriotism early and strong currents of humanitarianism later. If one seeks continuity in Coleridge's political philosophy over a period of years, he can find it.

The depth of feeling that motivated Coleridge to sympathize with the French people in their great struggle to recapture their own identities, which they had lost through centuries of oppression--brow-beaten and subdued with the resigned submission of animals--was the same spirit which enabled him to sympathize with any living thing that was hurt. He saw not only externals,
but with the romantic appreciative outlook of his own sensitive temperament he saw the soul beneath. He despised slavery in any form, but most of all he hated intensely that thralldom which robbed a man of his individuality, his spirit, and which made of him a willing slave. His French sympathies are to be identified with the compassion he felt for the young Thomas Chatterton, denied the helpful understanding and appreciation by which his genius would have flourished, or for the premature death of his own only sister, or for the still lifeless form of a starling, quiet in its iridescent beauty. Like his friend Wordsworth or his predecessor Burns, he felt a deep love for any living thing. He could not stand by speechless when a nation rose up, clamoring to be a nation of individuals and not of serfs.

One does not call Dickens a revolutionary because in addition to seeing the excesses of the Reign of Terror he discerns the heartache that preceded it, nor does one brought up in the democratic tradition label Washington a rebel because he visioned America setting the standard for liberty by her pattern of democracy. Coleridge's politics was equally as broad. In the attack upon the Bastille he recognized the overthrow of tyranny as a logical step in a long series of oppressions. He sees the French peasantry submerged by the lordly insults of their masters, kindled by hope, and restored to their own souls, their own harvests, and their own country. There is nothing essentially heretical in The Destruction of The Bas-
tille for he sees Britain as "First and free'st of the free," at the same time that he looks eastward across the channel. The Destruction of The Bastille was the first of his poems of a political nature. Written shortly after the event it commemorates, it reveals Coleridge's enthusiasm, for he visualized liberty as having claimed France for her own province. The oppressions and the anguish of the serfs surge through the poem, which seems a veritable hymn of rejoicing that the arrogance and disdain of the nobles should have been overthrown. Instead of serfs, Coleridge saw rising a new race of men, with rapture in their eyes and vibrant pulses coursing in their veins, proud that they had found a new life of liberty.

These sentiments, emphasizing the value of the individual as opposed to a lifeless system, perceiving that all social progress must issue from personality, constituted a frame of mind, receptive to suggestions for establishing a colony devoted to the ideal of liberty.

1. S. T. Coleridge, Poems, 11.
CHAPTER II
FANTISOCRACY

It is Coleridge's meeting with Robert Southey in June, 1794, which further fires his political sympathies, that earns for him inevitably the epithets of "republican," "democrat," "Jacobian," that impels him to deny with heated fervor that he belongs to any of these classifications, but to say to Dr. Pearce, master of Jesus College, on leaving Cambridge, "Sir, I am a Fantisocrat!"

In a letter written at Cambridge June 8, 1794, he indicated his intention of leaving the next day for Oxford to visit his friend Robert Allen, a boy whom he had befriended during his years spent at Christ's Hospital in London. He planned to stay three or four days at Oxford and then proceed to Wales where he would make a walking tour of six weeks and after that return to Cambridge. Robert Allen was anxious not only to see Coleridge but to introduce him to a friend of his, Robert Southey, a student at Balliol College, in whom he felt Coleridge would find a kindred spirit. Not even Robert Allen, who knew the sort of minds both of his friends possessed, could have

I. H. D. Traill, Coleridge, 16.
foreseen the extent to which Coleridge's and Southey's sympathies eventually carried them, or the emergence of a plan long since famous as their visionary scheme to establish a Pan-

socracy. The word itself impressed all those who heard it with its novelty and was evidently coined by the two young men responsible for the growth of the ideal which is represented. A

Pansocracy, they said, was a social system providing equal government for all. Its sphere, which included the generalization of individual property, was distinguished by the term

aspheratism. By June 12 Southey was writing to a friend of his, Groseveror Bedford, of his meeting with Coleridge: "He is of the most uncommon merit, of the strongest genius, the

clearest judgment, the best heart. My friend he already is...."

It was not surprising that Coleridge and Southey should immediately have been drawn to each other. Southey, the complete Englishman, had a character not so much of enthusiasm as of conviction. He was more practical than speculative, a man of striking virility whose ideas embraced an uncomprising love of republi-

canism, and a fanatical love of virtue. Coleridge, on the other hand, was capable of enthusiasm that were wildly infectious, was persuasive of speech, and a dreamer, keenly re-

ceptive to the lure of far horizons. He had a breadth of viewpoint and of interests that Southey lacked, and a mystical conception of religion that transcended the rigid dogma of the


Church of England and appealed to Southey as sufficiently liberal to be well suited to the establishment of a colony that would discard the shackles of organized government and religion. Furthermore, both young men had survived a similar background of schoolday abuses. Southey, while attending Westminster School, had published in a school paper, The Flagellant, an article decrying the custom of flogging. As a result he had been forced to leave school. Coleridge had attended Christ's Hospital for eight years, where rations were meagre and whippings arbitrarily administered according to the whim of the monitors or the masters. It was logical for both boys to resent anything in the nature of authority that was misused, and to fancy themselves pioneers in the field of human liberty, qualified and destined to cast aside the fetters of traditionally prescribed restrictions and to live unto themselves.

It is not to be ascertained just how far their plans had proceeded when Coleridge and Southey separated after their first meeting, but judging from their letters to each other and to other friends, one concludes that their plans were only embryonic and that they had not proceeded much further than high hopes and general aims. Their plan was to emigrate to America where they would establish a community upon a thoroughly social basis where "land was to be purchased by their common contributions and cultivated by their common labor."¹ A portion of work

¹ L. C. Southey, Life and Correspondence of Robert Southey, I, 211.
was to be assigned to each man who, after his daily chores were finished, would have much leisure remaining for social converse and literary pursuits. All the men engaging in the project were to be of similar tastes and all were to be married. The women of the party were to take care of the cooking and all the domestic duties, but were to share the intellectual interests of their husbands.

Coleridge continued on his walking tour through Wales in the company of a friend, Joseph Hucks. His mental state during this period seems to have been one of elation, for he writes to Southey that he preached pantiocracy and aspheretism. He was anxious that all whom he met should share the delights of a scheme that to him was a highly intoxicating doctrine. Southey, on the other hand, was concerned with the more practical aspects of their plan, with "seriously arranging...the best method of settling in America."

What was to Southey's mind only a limited project "which was to aim at allowing a few just persons to live apart from the wickedness of society, Coleridge turned into a complete system to regenerate society." His letters to Southey during his trip show the same fervor that he was lavishly expending on the most casual meetings. In the first letter that he wrote from his walking tour he greeted Southey with "Health and Republicanism," referred to Southey's power to open "the gate of democracy" and

to the "pure system of Pantisocracy," despised as aristocracy all who rode in carriages while he tramped the dusty roads, and bade farewell to Southey as "sturdy Republican." He seems conscious of himself as the adherent to a new gospel, to a beautiful ideal, rather than as a future participant in a way of living, involving careful planning, hard work, and possible sacrifice.

Following his walking tour through Wales, Coleridge went to Bristol, there to meet Southey and to perfect their plans. They determined that they would embark the next March or April (1795) and that if possible the colony should consist of twelve men and twelve women. Their immediate aim was to make Pantisocracy serve as a means for abolishing individual property and to effect a return to nature. Ultimately, they wished the colony to serve as a model to future generations. They would take with them farming implements from England and as soon as they reached their territory would clear the land and plant a crop. They reasoned that complete maintenance of the colony could be effected if each man worked two hours a day. This idea alone shows their complete ignorance of the rigors of pioneer life and is evidence that their naive hopes blinded them to the harsh truths of reality. The remainder of the time each man could use for study or discussion or for education of the children. They desired that the second generation should combine "the innocence of the patriarchal age with the knowledge and

refinements of European culture."

Early in September after his sojourn in Bristol, Coleridge went to London. It was his custom to spend his evenings with Charles Lamb at an alehouse called the Salutation and Cat. There he renewed an acquaintance that opened to him a vista of America—a land of challenge and a land of enchantment. His own account reported that:

Every night I meet a most intelligent young man who has spent the last five years of his life in America—and is lately come from thence as an Agent to sell Land....He says two thousand pounds will do—and that he doubts not we can contract for our Passage under £400—that we shall buy this Land a great deal cheaper when we arrive at America, than we could do in England—or why (adds he) am I sent over here? That twelve men can easily clear three hundred Acres in 4 or 5 months—and that for six hundred Dollars a thousand Acres may be cleared, and houses built upon them. He recommends the Susquehanna from its excessive Beauty, and its security from hostile Indians. Every possible assistance will be given us. We may get credit for the Land for ten years or more as we settle upon it—that literary characters make money there, etc., etc. He never saw a Buffalo in his life, but has heard of them. They are quite backwards. The Mosquitos are not so bad as our Bots—and after you have been there a little while they don’t trouble you much."

For several months Pantisocracy was the all-absorbing topic. Perhaps no better statement of the philosophy behind the whole project can be obtained than from the famous letter Coleridge wrote to Charles Heath apprising him of their plans:

A small but liberalized party have formed a scheme of emigration on the principles of an abolition of indi-

vidual property. Of their political creed, and arguments by which they support and elucidate it they are preparing a few copies, not as meaning to publish them, but for private distribution. In this work they will have endeavored to prove the exclusive justice of the system and its practicability; nor will they have omitted to sketch out the code of contracts necessary to the internal regulation of the Society; all of which will of course be submitted to the improvements and approbation of each component member. As soon as the work is printed, one or more copies will be transmitted to you. Of the characters of the individuals who compose the party I find it embarrassing to speak; yet, vanity apart, I may assert with truth that they have each a sufficient strength of head to make the virtues of the heart respectable, and that they are all highly charged with that enthusiasm which results from strong perceptions of moral rectitude, called into life and action by ardent feelings.

He continued this letter with a statement of the pecuniary arrangements, much in the same vein that he had written to Southey, following his evenings at the Salutation and Cat. There is no evidence that any book containing a statement of the political principles of Pantisocracy was ever written or printed, although for several months Coleridge entertained plans of bringing out such a work.

Apparently Coleridge never had a very definite idea of the exact site just where the colony was to be located. He speaks in one place of its being "at a convenient distance from Cooper's Town on the banks of the Susquehanna." The opinion has been expressed that he was under the impression from the land agent whom he met that the Susquehanna was a river running southeast into Lake Ontario. His letters do not

give foundation to this opinion, but if it is true, it would mean that the Susquehanna would not have been the river upon the banks of which they would have settled but that their site would have been somewhere in Ontario, for the Susquehanna empties into the Chesapeake. Tradition points to the town of Northumberland, Pennsylvania, as the approximate site that was to have been selected. However, the important point regarding this question is that the location of the colony was as illusory in Coleridge's mind as were all the other considerations. It was the opinion of Joseph Cottle, the famous bookseller who frequently lent Southey and Coleridge money, that the Susquehanna appealed to Coleridge only because of its poetic name and that had it been called the Miramichi or the Irrawaddy it would have been only a vulgar stream, not the center of many pleasurable associations.

Coleridge's preaching of Pantisocracy during the fall term at Cambridge was as vehement as ever, but he left for London in December without a degree and later returned to Bristol where he hoped to swell the communal treasury by the receipts from some political lectures. He delivered the lectures, and they were received with interest, but finances still remained an obstacle, and the Pantisocracy became discouraged. Before they gave over the plan altogether they hit upon the idea of establishing a socialistic farm in Wales. But by com-

comparison with the distance to America, Wales was too near home to offer either romance or Utopia. The Fantisocrats returned to the commonplace concerns of remaining a part of the world they knew.

The persons who desired to enter upon the Fantisocracy were for the most part acquaintances of Southey's. This fact would lend itself to the belief that the idea had originated in the mind of Southey rather than in that of Coleridge. Besides these two leaders there was among the supporters of the plan Robert Lovell, the son of a wealthy Quaker, who was married to Mary Fricker, sister of the two young women who eventually became Mrs. Southey and Mrs. Coleridge. Another believer was George Burnett, an Oxford student from Somersetshire who courted to no avail another of the Fricker sisters, Martha. Robert Allen from Oxford has been referred to as a Fantisocrat, yet Coleridge said that he never promised to be one of their party. Edmund Seaward, another Oxford student, although of democratic views, was strongly attached to the dogma of the Anglican Church and after a short time gave up his support of Fantisocracy because he felt that the ideas held by its leaders were too visionary and unsettled to be practical. Joseph Hucks, the companion of Coleridge's tour in Wales, was prevailed upon to join the party as was also a man named Shadrach Weeks, a servant of Southey's aunt, and Charles Heath of Monmouth, an apothecary. Lovell's brother and two sisters and Southey's mother and brothers were also regarded as prospects. Joseph Cottle,
the bookseller of Bristol, was approached on the subject but appears to have been too earthy to have been taken in by the prospect. "Young as I was I suspected that there was an old and untractable leaven (sic) in human nature, that would effectually frustrate these airy schemes of happiness, which had been projected in every age and always with the same result." Such was his worldly judgment. At Southey's suggestion Coleridge called on Southey's old friend, Grosvenor Bedford, in London and propounded to him their schemes, which he coldly rejected. On the same visit to London Coleridge went to see George Dyer, author of The Complaints of The Poor, who in true humanitarian spirit was enraptured with the system and pronounced it impregnable but showed no disposition to join. Through his suggestion Coleridge was led to believe that Dr. Priestley, the scientist, might become hopeful Panisocratic material, but the idea came to nothing. Two young friends of Coleridge, Le Grice who attended Cambridge and Fawell who was at Christ's Hospital, entreated that they might be allowed to join the colony after they finished college. Both were nineteen and highly embued with fraternal fervor.

Such is the roster of those who were concerned with or approached as to their interest in the ideal of Panisocracy— "to make men necessarily virtuous by removing all motives to
evil—all possible temptation." 1 But the four who were most eager for the success of the enterprise were Coleridge, Southey, Lovell, and Burnett.

To Coleridge Pantisocracy was more than a political scheme. It was a philosophical ideal. His whole being knew a craving for love, and a philosophical desire to integrate his own soul with the soul of the universe. It was not a desire for fame but a wish to feel himself wholly in tune with the infinite, to have a sense that his life was related to an enveloping plan. Pantisocracy, since it was to be founded essentially on a community of interests and on a single social ideal, assuaged this spiritual hunger for Unity, for placing himself in touch with ultimate reality. In his Lines to The Rev. W. J. Hort is seen this conception of unity to be achieved through Pantisocracy:

In Freedom's undivided dell,
Where Toil and Health with mellowed Love shall dwell
Far from folly, far from men
In the rude romantic glen,
Up the cliff and through the glade,
Wandering with the dear loved maid... 2

His use of the word undivided is notable, for this desire for a sense of oneness showed itself in his Cambridge Unitarianism and in his later thinking. Two years later he wrote to John Thelwall, "...the universe itself! what but an immense heap of

little things?...My mind feels as if it ached to behold and
know something great, something one and indivisible."

Even in his political creed then, we see evidence of this
underlying philosophy that would have made him a true pantheist,
had he been able to dispense with an equally strong desire for
this sense of unity to be closely related to a personal ele­
ment—to the conception of God as a personality.

It has been suggested that every time Coleridge formed a
new doctrine, whether social, literary, or political, he fur­
ther discovered his own personality. Whether or not it was
clear to Coleridge, it is plain to the observer that Pantisoc­
ocracy appealed to him not only because it was broadly humani­
tarian but because it was sufficiently illusive and fanciful
to stir his imagination. It offered the glorious opportunity
of a fresh start after his unfortunate army episode. He seems
to have enjoyed his vision most when he was by himself, removed
from the pressure of reality and objections raised by the other
Pantisocrats. It was a fertile subject on which he could de­
claim to whoever would listen, and these eloquent appeals were
as convincing, as satisfying as action itself. In fact, they
were better than putting his theories into action, for by so

1. E. H. Coleridge, ed., Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge,
1, 228.
3. In the December previous to the meeting of Coleridge and
Southey, Coleridge had run away from Cambridge, joined the
army, and several months later was reinstated at the univer­
sity, through the intervention of his brother. His subse­
quent mental state was one of disillusionment and humiliation.
doing he was removed from action entirely. Since by nature Coleridge was resentful of whatever constrained him with responsi-
blities, one concludes that he was more concerned with Pantisoc-
racry as an abstract ideal than he was with its being a work-
able system.

Controversy has centered around the question of who was really responsible for the idea of Pantisocracy. Joseph Cottle in his *Recollections* states that it was Coleridge who made the suggestions for the colony; and Southey's son in his father's biography likewise ascribes the origin of the plan to Coleridge. Furthermore, in 1836 Southey "made an effort to repudiate his share in the vain visions." He insisted that the enterprise had been suggested by Coleridge and his friend Hucks. But in Southey's account of his first meeting with Coleridge there is no reference to a similar meeting with Hucks, and since Hucks was with Coleridge in Wales after the plans were once begun, there would have been no possibility for Southey's meeting Hucks until later. Furthermore, all the evidence is on the side of Southey's responsibility for the idea, as may be seen from a comparison of the two men's writings before they met. In Coleridge's poems and letters prior to June, 1794, there is no re-
ference to ideal republicanism. His *Destruction of The Bastille*,
as we have noted, shows his interest in and sympathy with the French Revolution, but this presupposes no plans for a Panti-

socracy. In 1792 in a poem to Mrs. Evans, the mother of his first love, he spoke of "each social duty and each social care," and his early version of *Loneliness on the Death of Chatterton*, written in 1790, contains a reference to liberty and bliss, but these are nothing more than democratic sympathies. Since Coleridge and Southey were accustomed to use the word scheme in reference to Fantisocracy, a reader prone to free interpretation might note that a poem written in 1787 contains a line:

Vain...schemes by heated fancy planned.²

But the line is too general to be significant, and furthermore, at the age of fifteen Coleridge was not likely to be entertaining serious notions of embarking to a foreign land.

Of his letters prior to his meeting with Southey most were written to his brother George and occasionally some to Mary Evans and her mother and sister. In one letter to his brother there is a reference to Burke, but aside from that, the letters contain no mention of politics. The subjects that he discussed were those of college life and personal interests and activities—finances, his health, his aspiration for prizes and scholarships, his study of the classical poets, and gay, sometimes pedantic nonsense. But immediately after his meeting with Southey his letters sustain a notable change.

Southey's letters, on the other hand, reveal a more than casual interest in Greek republicanism. He makes repeated references to Plato and to the republic of Athens. In the fall of 1793 he writes of Plotinus and his desire to rebuild the ruined city of Campania and people it with philosophers, to be governed by the laws of Plato, and after whom the city was to have been called Platonopolis. His comment is interesting:

The design would certainly have proved impracticable in that declining and degenerate age--most probably in any age....Yet I can not help wishing that the experiment had been tried; it could not have been productive of evil, and we might at this period have received instruction from the city of Platonopolis.

A month later one of his letters contains this record:

...There are few enterprises, however hazardous and however romantic, in which I would not willingly engage. It was the favorite intention of Cowley to retire with books to a cottage in America, and seek that happiness in solitude which he could not find in society. My asylum there would be sought for different reasons, (and no prospect in life gives me half the pleasure this visionary one affords); I should be pleased to reside in a country where man's abilities would ensure respect; where society was upon a proper footing, and man was considered as more valuable than money; and where I could till the earth, and provide by honest industry the meat which my wife would dress with pleasing care....

Surely one can not regard these aspirations as anything less than Pantisocracy in embryo.

Doubtless the enterprise was attributed to Coleridge be-

cause he was reputedly the most vociferous of the Pantisocrats. He was the center of agitation on the subject both while at Cambridge and at Bristol, so much so that he seemed convinced that the only refuge of repose was on the banks of the Susquehanna.

In analyzing the main principles on which Pantisocracy was based, one finds their counterparts in the works of Plato and of Jean Jacques Rousseau. These ideals may be classified under four headings:

1. The desire to encourage human perfectibility by living closer to nature away from the corrupting influence of organized society.

2. The education of children according to a rational system.

3. The cultivation of the women's minds to share in the intellectual interests of their husbands.

4. The use of leisure for the cultivation of literary and philosophical pursuits.

Coleridge in the heat of his enthusiasms proclaims, "It is melancholy to think, that the best of us are liable to be shaped and coloured by surrounding objects— and a demonstrative proof that Man was not meant to live in great cities." His mind was evidently so permeated with Rousseau's doctrines that he could express his own thoughts, unconscious that he had borrowed them from another philosopher. Rousseau had said, "Man

were not meant to be massed together in herds, but to be scattered over the earth which they are to cultivate. The more they herd together, the more they corrupt one another....Cities are the graves of the human species."

The education of the children was to be effected by Rousseau's method of training the mind entirely by contact with nature and by learning early the law of cause and effect. In Plato we see that the system devolved upon the teaching of gymnastics for the control of the body and of music for the cultivation of the soul. So Rousseau would have temperance and labor the physicians of the young body. At eighteen the youth would be a product of nature. His mind should be cultivated after he had been made the master of his own physical nature. Coleridge seems to have been more interested in the mental rather than in the physical development of the child, probably because except for his great love of walking, he was physically lazy and had little enjoyment of sports. He was particularly anxious that the second generation should be unpollieted by a knowledge of the schisms of so-called civilization. That children, already the product of English life, should be taken along to America he considered unfortunate. He wrote to Southey:

These children--the little Prickers, for instance, and your brothers,--are they not already tinged with the prejudices and errors of society? Have they not learned from their school fellows Fear and Selfishness, of which

the necessary offsprings are Deceit and desultory Hatred? How are we to prevent them from infecting the minds of our children? 1

The religious education of children was likewise a matter of thoughtful consideration. With great contempt he expressed his belief that Mrs. Fricker, in spite of the men's wishes, would be teaching the children Christianity, or at least "the mongrel whelp that goes under its name," and that older children born in England would be difficult to silence concerning God. This sounds like atheism or at best paganism, yet it could not have been such for at the same time that Coleridge was expressing these ideas he was convinced that talking politics was not enough. That must be supplemented by preaching the Gospel. He believed in the teachings of Jesus as the best way of life, but he objected to the superstitions and prejudices that dishonestly assumed the name of Christianity.

The education of the Pantisocratic women presented a problem. They must be shown how to share the intellectual aspirations of their husbands, first to assure the community of interests of the colony, and second to make certain that the education of the children should be conducted with the entire unanimity of their elders without any subversive influences. Coleridge at this stage seems not to have been entirely convinced that the feminine mind could be rendered anything but petty and trivial. He realized that the women must be made to believe in

the enterprise, and not to be enthusiastic for it merely because of its novelty. Their literary tastes must be cultivated and encouraged; only through congeniality could the success of Pantisocracy be assured. For enlightenment on this subject the Pantisocrat had recourse to Plato and Rousseau.

Plato in his Republic had approached the question of the education of women:

The question is whether women are able either wholly or partially to share in the employments of men....If the difference of the sexes is only that one beget and the other bear children, this does not prove that they ought to have distinct educations. Admitting that women differ from men in capacity, do not men equally differ from one another? Has not nature scattered all the qualities which our citizens require indifferently up and down among the two sexes? and even in their peculiar pursuits, are not women often, though in some cases superior to men, ridiculously often surpassed by them? Women are the same in kind as men and have the same aptitudes or want of aptitudes, "I

Coleridge's correspondence concerning Pantisocracy would indicate that he wanted to believe Plato right. But in his own thinking he leaned toward Rousseau, whose Sophie was more pensive than intellectual, a passive wife rather than a congenial companion. So important did Coleridge consider the education of their wives, that he believed the success or failure of the venture rested on this problem.

Just how the Pantisocrats were to spend all of their time is not clear. Studying and writing were apparently to take

most of their time. The studies of history, politics, and ethics were the ones to which Coleridge preferred to devote his attentions. An amusing inconsistency is offered by the fact that Coleridge who deplored laws, taxes, and money of the Old World, should hail the New World because he had heard that there literary men made money. This materialistic lapse was scarcely to be expected from a true disciple of Rousseau.

The failure of the plan to materialize was due both to its impracticability and to the youth of its proponents. Coleridge was twenty-two, Southey twenty, Lovell twenty-four, and Burnatt eighteen. Their experience had not been broad enough for them to recognize all the obstacles that such dreams would entail. Their lives had centered around the study of the classics, and Plato and Rousseau, however infused with their spirits the young poets might be, were not reliable guides on the subjects of agriculture and carpentry, both of which Coleridge hoped to learn in a few months' study. Furthermore, they had no money, and according to their plans each member should be able to contribute approximately £125, although this standard was not to be adhered to rigidly, for what one lacked another might supply. However, this was undue optimism, since Coleridge was not possessed of a single extra pound beyond that needed by his immediate necessities. In most cases family disapproval intervened. Coleridge was spared this obstruction, for having lived very little with his family since he was ten years old, he was free to act with more independence than his friends.
Perhaps disillusionment had something to do with the decline of Fantisocracy. As they had aspired to the union of kindred spirits, it was a shock for them to discover that there could be discord among themselves. Coleridge had become annoyed with Lovell whom he suspected of trying to obstruct his love affair with Sara Fricker. He even discovered that he and Southey could disagree to the point of unpleasantness when Coleridge thoughtlessly failed to keep an appointment for a lecture.

There had been one principle of Fantisocracy on which they had argued and which showed the completeness of Coleridge's humanitarian philosophy—the question of servants. Southey thought it proper that Shadrach Weeks, his aunt's servant, should still perform servile duties in America, although he and his family would be allowed to eat at the common dining table. Coleridge was strongly averse to there being any difference in rank among the Fantisocrats. The absolute equality of all members was to him one of the most basic principles of the colony. So far did his fraternal spirit carry him at this time that in his youthful effervescence, everybody whom he loved and admired he called his brother or his sister. He closed his letters "fraternally yours" and remarked, "I call even my Cat Sister in the Fraternity of universal Nature. Owls I respect and Jack Asses I love....But Kings, Wolves, Tygers [sic] Generals and Ministers, and Hyenas, I renounce them all...."  

A philosophy that could stir him to such giddy heights must have unsounded depths. Such he struck, and thoughts of Fantisocracy waned, lost in the vast retrospect of the dreams of youth.
CHAPTER III
THE PERIOD OF TRANSITION

Although Pantisocracy proved only a mirage in the desert of social controversy, Coleridge continued to be guided by some of its principles, but after its demise he entered upon a period of transition in his political thinking. There are evidences of a conflict in his mind, and yet he is not wilfully inconsistent. It is as if he were in a vast arena witnessing a huge spectacle, but were constantly looking for just the right angle from which he might catch the truest perspective of what was going on beneath his gaze. It is a period of searching for the truth. If he seems to vacillate, to change, it is not due to fickleness or lack of conviction, but because he is constantly learning, and that in itself would mean that his mind was adapting itself to new ideas. It is the period in which his poetry contains his deepest political fervor and in which his prose is most thoroughly dedicated to controversial subjects. An inherent love of truth for its own sake had demonstrated itself in his poems in 1794, when he had begun to consider all of Europe, including England, dangerous because despotism was endeavoring to stifle all expressions of truth, "the immortal mind's expanding ray." Even though Coleridge

saw how unsuited Pantisocracy was to his present circumstances, it is interesting to note that a year after the idea had been discarded, when planning a course of study for a teaching position which he never filled, he held a conception of society still compatible with the Pantisocratic ideal. First it was his intention to teach his students of man the individual, as an animal, as an intellectual being, and as a religious being. "Then," he says, "proceeding from the individual to the aggregate of individuals, and disregarding all chronology, except that of the mind, I shall perfect them (my students): 1—in the history of savage tribes; 2—of semi-barbarous nations; 3—of nations emerging from semi-barbarism; 4—of civilized states; 5—of luxurious states; 6—of revolutionary states; 7—of colonies."

Obviously in his own thinking the highest ideal for society is still the colony. His broadest conception of political philosophy was not subject to the vagaries of his own personal circumstances.

Still too, the ideal of truth as the basis for all political knowledge and activity persisted, and Coleridge entered upon a new venture—that of publishing The Watchman, a periodical for which he issued the following prospectus:

To supply at once the places of a Review, Newspaper, and Annual Register.

On Tuesday, the last of March, 1796, will be published
No. 1, price fourpence, of a Miscellany, to be continued
every eighth day, under the name of The Watchman, by Sam-
uel Taylor Coleridge. This Miscellany will be comprised
in two sheets, or thirty-two pages, closely printed Svo;
the type long primer. Its contents, 1.—A history of the
domestic and foreign policy of the preceding days; 2:—
The speeches in both Houses of Parliament; and, during
the recess, select parliamentary speeches from the com-
 mencement of the reign of Charles I to the present era,
with notes historical and biographical. 3:—Original es-
says and poetry. 4:—Review of interesting and important
publications. Its advantages. 1. There being no adver-
tisements, a greater quantity of original matter will be
given, and the speeches in Parliament will be less abridged.
2. From its form it may be bound up at the end of the
year, and become an Annual Register. The last circum-
stance may induce men of letters to prefer this Miscel-
laney to more perishable publications as the vehicle of
their effusions. 4. Whenever the Ministerial and Oppo-
sition prints differ in their accounts of occurrences,
etc. such differences will always be faithfully stated.1

As a motto for his Watchman he adopted the words, "That
all might know the truth and that the truth might make us
free." Its purpose was "to cry the state of the political
atmosphere and to preserve Freedom and her friends from Rob-
bbers and Assassins." In his Biographia Literaria Coleridge
stated that he had been urged to enter upon this venture at
the suggestion of some philanthropists and anti-polemists.
Whatever the instigation, The Watchman lived only two and
one-half months to "cry the state of the political atmosphere,"
so that not even one Annual Register ever appeared. The num-
ber of subscribers whom Coleridge urged to patronize his period-
dical speaks well for his persuasiveness, for one thousand sub-

scribes were registered for the magazine before it was published. However, the very nature of its contents would limit its reading public, for it was intensely serious and definitely intellectual. Coleridge's instincts were those of a teacher, and he seems to have regarded himself as fulfilling his mission best when he was influencing his fellow men. Coupling with this his belief that education in political doctrine was necessary to political advancement, he was motivated by an idealistic policy.

The politics of *The Watchman* was devoted almost entirely to current issues—to the slave trade, the cause of liberty, and reviews on books and pamphlets on political theory. The two names which stand out from all the names which he attacked and championed were those of Edmund Burke and William Godwin, two men whose ideas were destined to exert as strong an influence on his political thinking as did any of his contemporaries. Three years before, Godwin's famous book on *The Enquiry of Political Justice* had appeared, and at the time of editing *The Watchman* Coleridge branded his principles as vicious. His attitude toward Godwin illustrates the nature of his mental adjustments during these later years of revolutionary sympathies, for a few months earlier he had addressed a complimentary sonnet to him in the *Morning Chronicle*. Years later he swung back and was in greater accord with Godwin's ideas. Through the pages of *The Watchman* he entered into discussion with his subscribers, some of whom objected to his policies because he
published so much "democratic scurrility." But Coleridge held that his miscellany was open to all ingenious men whatever their principles, and whether he agreed with them or not. He exemplified a high degree of tolerance.

A social project, which like Pantispacocracy never reached a period even of inception, is heralded at this time. In The Watchman Coleridge had reviewed some essays by a Count Rumford, who had cleared some Austrian cities of vagabonds and beggars and entered on a course of social uplift. He had observed the unproductive idleness of soldiers, while unoccupied with drill, and had established garden spots in cities where soldiers might practice agricultural pursuits or other remunerative occupations. Coleridge planned to present the system to the cities of Bristol, Manchester, and Birmingham, by lectures to the citizenry, who he had no doubt would welcome such suggestions for civic improvement. Joseph Cottle, still swayed by the practical, dissuaded him. If of no other significance, the idea illustrates Coleridge's interest in improving mankind by changing his environment.

Following the termination of The Watchman, which suffered a discouraging dropping off of subscribers, Coleridge vowed his intention of giving up all local and temporary politics which had become an aversion to him. However, he could not yield his interest in the French Revolution so suddenly; furthermore, his meeting with Wordsworth was a spur to his interpreting liberty anew. Wordsworth and Southey are sometimes referred to as if they fanned Coleridge's revolutionary phi-
losophy in the same way. This is not true, for the two men were entirely different, and Coleridge's response to the two of them was in no way the same. Southey inspired Coleridge's mind to a peak of effervescence. Wordsworth spoke to his soul, and the ensuing friendship was one of understanding and of tenderness. Wordsworth had already experienced a deep fervor for the French Revolution, yet his fell short of that of Coleridge, both as a matter of enthusiasm and duration. But while they both believed in the cause, they exchanged their ideas in long walks over the Quantock Hills, and held in high esteem the revolutionary salutation of "Citizen". In fact, at one time their politics impressed their neighbors as so dangerously democratic that a guard was sent down to Stowey to spy on them. He found nothing on which to base accusations of treason. Perhaps it was their associations with John Thelwall, a man who had attracted considerable attention with his revolutionary principles, that Coleridge and Wordsworth were subject to suspicion.

What Coleridge pleaded for the Revolution was not unthinking endorsement, but understanding. Following is an excerpt from his lecture, Convivium ad Populum; it is a passage typical of his attitude in 1795 and 1796.

The example of France is indeed a warning to Britain. A nation wading to its rights through blood and marking the track of freedom by devastation! Yet let us not smite our feelings against our reason. Let us not indulge our indignant passions under the mask of humanity. Instead of railing with infuriate declamations against these excesses, we shall be more profitably employed in tracing them to their sources. French freedom is the beacon which if it guides to equality should show us like-
wise the dangers that throng the road.

The annals of the French revolution have recorded in letters of blood, that the knowledge of the few cannot counteract the ignorance of the many; that the light of philosophy, when it is confined to a small minority, points out the possessors as the victims, rather than the illuminators of the multitude. The patriots of France either hastened into the dangerous and gigantic error of making certain evils the means of contingent good, or were sacrificed by the mob, with whose prejudices and ferocity their unbending virtue forebade them to assimilate. Like Samson, the people were strong—like Samson, the people were blind. 'Those two massive pillars' of the temple of oppression, their monarchy and aristocracy. 1

Here is evidence that even at the height of his enthusiasm he saw the dangers toward which their excesses were carrying the Revolutionists. Although he approved of the underlying principle of liberty, he saw in the Revolution much that by the power of a negative example he wished England to avoid. What he did clearly see was that true freedom rested on the liberation of the masses from ignorance. His philosophy was one of necessitarianism—that the Revolution even with its terrors had arisen from a series of preceding circumstances which had foreordained its existence, and that when it had served its usefulness it too would disappear. In his philosophical growth Coleridge later claimed to have outgrown this theory of necessity and to have become a true idealist.

His belief in democracy was synonymous with what he chose to call a universal fraternity of love. Being a democrat for its own sake was not enough, for around him he saw those who

professed their belief in that political doctrine and who, he
also saw, sprang to its defense because they belonged to one
of three classes. Some were professed friends of liberty be-
cause they felt themselves to be victims of state oppression,
of too much government, and rushed to embrace any doctrine which
offered a means of escape. Others, he pointed out, were "mad-
headed enthusiasts" who absorbed only the furors and not the
essence of liberty; those, he believed, assimilated poison in-
stead of food. Still other unenlightened minds, especially
those steeped in ignorance, saw in the Revolution a sort of
wild justice being meted out to the smug aristocrats, grown
complacent in their isolation from the masses, and the idea
of a terrible retribution appealed to them, however savage
it might be. None of these did he consider true democrats;
for revenge could have no place in the pattern of democracy.
Narrow, self-centering views must give way to opinions built
on thoughtfulness and study, for equality could never exist
merely by wishing it so but must grow from a belief in the
perfectibility of mankind. He saw that religion was not
enough to raise human nature above depravity. Preaching the
gospel to the poor would help, but where there was want and
suffering religion alone would not elevate men who were still
economic rivals for a crust of bread to keep them alive. Two
forces were necessary: demands for physical comforts must be
granted, for men denied economic necessities could not be free;
but what was of equal importance was that the masses should be
educated to the use of liberty. Thinking minds should plea
for the oppressed, not to them, and after even the most funda-
mental reforms had been effected the severity of a revolution
would be reduced. Men could not be treated like animals and
become gods, but seek out the god-like element in their nature,
that is, their minds, and improvement would be notable. Cole-
ridge was not such a visionary as to believe that man could
reach perfection, but cultivate his spirit and his perfect-
ibility would be demonstrated.

 Eloquence characterized his political essays during this
period. He approached the problem from a vast angle of reform
and perhaps was subject to Utopian ideas, but his plans for
the equality and brotherhood of mankind were built on the prin-
ciple of Christianity, that humanity could be improved only by
the enlightenment of the individual.

 His Ode To The Departing Year has been described as the
obituary notice of the liberal ideas of his youth. He does
not love England less because he criticizes her, but he sees
in her policies glaring faults that need condemnation. A
thinking citizen is not one who says, "My country, right or
wrong!" And Coleridge was not devoid of patriotism in wish-
ing that England might abolish her slave trade or her prac-
tices that robbed other peoples of their personal rights while

3. J. Charpentier, Coleridge--The Sublime Somnambulist, 158.
she gloated in her freedom and insular security. In this same
ode he criticized other nations as much as England, for he de-
nounced Russia too, in her obstruction of French progress.
His expression is one of lament that murder and tyranny should
stalk abroad at the expense of liberty and truth and justice.

Coleridge seems never to have been classified by either
his contemporaries or his successors as either Whig or Tory.
His politics transcended party lines, but he despised Pitt
the Younger, the premier, and blamed much of the social tur-
moil of his time on his policies.

Thus it was his faith in human nature, his belief in its
possibilities, that drew him to the cause of the French Revo-
lution. Perhaps it is a subtle irony that the very power which
attracted him to it divorced him from it, for when revolutio-
ary excesses reached such a pitch that innocent nations suf-
fered, Coleridge's ardor for the cause of France cooled. But
this does not mean that he was less enthusiastic for the ideal
of liberty. This ideal merely changed its course and sought a
new channel. His *France: An Ode* shows how deep was his dis-
illusionment that he could no longer believe in a cause that
had been carried to such extremes.

_Forgive me, Freedom! O forgive those dreams!_
_I hear thy voice, I hear thy loud lament,_
From bleak Helvetia's icy caverns sent—
_I hear thy groans upon her blood-stained streams:_
_Heroes, that for your peaceful country perished,_
And ye that, fleeing, spot your mountain-snows,
_With bleeding wounds; forgive me, that I cherished_
One thought that ever blessed your cruel foes!
To scatter rage, and traitorous guilt,
Where Peace her jealous home had built;
A patriot-race to disinherit
Of all that made their stormy wilds so dear;
And with inexpiable spirit
To taint the bloodless freedom of the mountaineer-
O France, that mockest Heaven, adulterous, blind,
And patriot only in pernicious toils!
Are these thy boasts, Champion of human kind?
To mix with kings in the low lust of sway,
Yell in the hunt, and share the murderous prey;
To insult the shrine of Liberty with spoils
From freemen torn; to tempt and to betray? ¹

He did not renounce his belief in liberty; rather his very faith in it impelled him to deny his adherence to a cause which could desecrate the rights of Switzerland, a nation as habituated to liberty as to its own mountains. Suffering this disenchchantment he sought liberty in her own native state—in winds and seas where he could worship her in complete beauty and risk no chance of having his idol shattered.

In his *Fears in Solitude* he makes himself one with all Englishmen who having heartlessly gloried in war, have made their religion, their law-courts, their state institutions an idle mockery. His prayer is that England may be spared the awful recompense of an invasion from France and that her citizens may awaken to the true worth of her spiritual and physical beauties. ² France has now become the "vengeful enemy," a menace to English liberty.

It was not easy for Coleridge to give up ideas which he

had cherished, for his whole youth had been permeated with a conception of the French Revolution as representative of freedom. In fact, disowning this conception was acknowledging the passing of his youth.

We have heretofore noted Coleridge's references to Edmund Burke. Before completing a study of his reactions to the Revolution, it is essential to remark upon the similarity of his later sentiments to those of the man who had inspired him at Cambridge. In 1790 Burke had published a treatise in the form of a letter to a young French friend stating his political reactions. He had written it before the mass murders of the Reign of Terror had begun to alienate European sympathy. His reactions were the result of mature judgment and rich political experience. Burke had long been the exponent of humanitarian causes; he had seen clearly the case presented by the American Revolution, and at the trial of Warren Hastings he had urged impeachment to indicate how strongly he was disposed to the humane treatment of subject peoples. But he was essentially a conservative. He loved liberty, but he held that it could spring only from order and not from chaos. He respected wisdom because it resulted from centuries of racial experience, and he venerated a political system long entrenched in tradition and custom. That it had lived a long time proved to him that it must be suited to its purposes.

When the French Revolution discarded a government built on ages of tradition he opposed it vehemently, not because he
believed that nothing better could take its place but because the new government was based on abstract theories and not at all on experience. That the bounds of liberty could be extended to the benefit of mankind he admitted, but such a change should occur gradually and with extreme caution. Following is his statement of how far liberty was related to the Revolution:

I should therefore suspend my congratulations on the new liberty of France, until I have been informed how it has been combined with government, with public force; with the discipline and obedience of armies; with the collection of an effective and well-distributed revenue; with morality and religion; with the solidity of property; with peace and order; with civil and social manners. All these...are things too; and, without them, liberty is not a benefit while it lasts, and is not likely to continue long. The effect of liberty to individuals is that they may do what they please; we ought to see what it will please them to do, before we risk congratulations, which may be soon turned into complaints. Prudence would dictate that in the case of separate, insulated private men; but liberty, when men act in bodies, is power; and particularly of so trying a thing as new power in new persons of whose principles, and tempers, and dispositions they have little or no experience, and in situations where those who appear the most stirring in the scene may possibly not be the real movers.

Burke conceived that liberty was not only reconcilable but auxiliary to law, and that government was based on reverence for civil institutions. He had no illusions that any state could be based on absolute equality for even when society was leveled individuals did not remain on the same plane, but some, by the strength of their own mental equipment, rose to leader-

ship. Government he conceived as a partnership in which "all men have equal rights; but not to equal things." He acknowledged that whatever correctives arose in a state resulted from expediency, but unlike the French Revolution, theories arose from them and not they from theories.

The dangers he saw in the Revolution were the same excesses and follies that Coleridge observed, but Burke noted them eight years before the younger man pronounced the Revolution as unworthy because it was founded on a mechanistic philosophy. Later Coleridge regarded Burke as a scientific statesman and seer. Undoubtedly his prophetic understanding of contemporary problems was largely responsible for such an estimate of his abilities.

With the passing of the revolutionary furore, Coleridge turned his attention later to theories of government and of politics that showed a deeper philosophy than those of his youth; likewise the influence of Burke still persists.

Although it is not within the province of this thesis to consider the interesting problems afforded by Coleridge's personality, a strange coincidence is suggested by the fact that his loss of creative force, his acute spiritual dejection, and the lapse in his domestic happiness occurred all within a few years of his political disillusionment. Perhaps cause and effect are in no way involved, but the observation holds possibilities for a fascinating study.

CHAPTER IV
THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF MATURENESS

During the latter half of Coleridge's life when the French Revolution had ceased to be a current issue but when the Napoleonic struggle in France and social conflict in England were emerging, Coleridge manifested the same interest in politics, with the emphasis now placed on the state—its evolution, responsibilities, and theories of government. His attention was limited not so much to specific instances of political issues as it had been in the past but had broadened to encompass world politics and the inter-relations of states. He was not apologetic for the flights of political fancy that he had known in his youth but viewed them as a fitting preface to the idealistic political philosophy that he evolved in maturity. He looked back on his youthful enthusiasms with all the kindly understanding with which a father might regard the exuberances of a son. He says:

I was never myself at any period of my life a convert to the Jacobinical system....My feelings, however, and imagination did not remain unkindled in this general conflagration; and I confess I should be more inclined to be ashamed than proud of myself, if they had. I was a sharer in the general vortex, though my little world described the path of its revolution in an orbit of its own. What I dared not expect from constitutions of governments
and whole nations, I hoped from religion and a small company of chosen individuals. I formed a plan, as harmless as it was extravagant, of trying the experiment of human perfectibility on the banks of the Susquehanna; where our little society, in its second generation, was to have combined the innocence of the patriarchal age with the knowledge and genuine refinements of European culture; and where I dreamed that in the sober evening of my life, I should behold the cottages of independence in the undivided dale of industry,—

And oft soothed sadly by some dirgeful wind, 
Huse on the sore ills I have left behind. 
Strange fancies, and as vain as strange! yet to the intense interest and impassioned soul, which called forth and strained every faculty of my intellect for the organization and defense of this scheme, I owe much of whatever I at present possess, my clearest insight into the nature of individual man, and my most comprehensive views of his social relations, of the true uses of trade and commerce, and how far the wealth and relative power of nations promote or impede their welfare and inherent strength. Nor were they less serviceable in securing myself, and perhaps some others, from the pitfalls of sedition: and when we at length alighted on the firm ground of common sense from the gradually exhausted balloon of youthful enthusiasm, though the air-built castles, which we had been pursuing, had vanished with all their pageantry of shifting forms, and glowing colors, we were yet free from the stains and impurities which might have remained upon us, had we been traveling with the crowd of less imaginative malcontents, through the dark lanes and foul by-roads of ordinary fanaticism.

Coleridge's mature philosophy of government is a strange mingling of politics and metaphysics. In fact, he chose to apply to his own system the term *metapolitics*. But he was concerned less with names than with ideas. He was interested in abstractions, and his mind is that of the philosopher, but like Burke he could not endorse any political system that sprang purely from theory. He saw that "human experience, like the sternalights of a ship at sea, illumines only the path

which we have passed over." The future of any state, then, he saw, was destined to dark uncertainty unless it benefited by its successes and errors of the past.

It is remarkable that although Coleridge had been so favorable to the philosophy of Kant and his Critique of Pure Reason he could not agree to a system of politics which took the reason as its sole guide. Thus, he opposed the man to whose theories he had youthfully assented—Rousseau. The theories of the origin of government Coleridge classified into three schools of thought: one, that government was based on the fear of the subjects for their sovereign; a second, that government derived its principles from the reason of man; and a third, that national institutions grew out of particular circumstances that rendered them expedient.

Coleridge could not yield to the first because he felt that a sovereign-subject relationship presupposed that a sovereign had risen above his fellows because he had earlier shown signs of leading them to attain ends that were collectively desired. Having socially desirable traits, then, a sovereign must have been one with his associates and as such logic dictated that their willingness to accede to his leadership had been inspired by confidence and respect rather than fear. His conception of government was too idealistic to permit him to conceive of it as a means of maintaining the submission of

slaves. Its origin, therefore, rested upon choice and agreement and the consent of the governed.

He objected to pure reason as the basis for government because although he was eager to regard reason as a formative influence in men's lives, he realized that human behavior was controlled by other forces too. Man was an emotional creature and could be appealed to through his understanding and sensations. Reason, Rousseau had argued, was that which distinguished man from animal; it was this capacity that endowed him with freedom, that established his individuality. But Coleridge believed that government could not originate from a condition where men laid more stress upon their individuality than they did on collective good. If men clamored only for individual rights, no government could result.

But human prudence and experience, he believed, were the moulding influences of political institutions. As circumstances arose, necessity dictated a prescribed course of actions to be followed. When a change of circumstances occurred, innovations suitable to those changes followed. Thus, out of years of experience man formed his system of government. Public opinion was an undeniable political force; for this reason it was important that a citizenry should not be ignorant.

Coleridge realized the impossibility of constructing in theory a constitution or form of government that would be suited

to the needs of Russia and America, or of England and France.

If a form of government was so broad as to be capable of being adopted by any country, it would be useless even for one. Laws seldom become obsolete as long as they are practicable and useful. For that reason he tested them by the criteria of whether they were practicable, suited to the existing circumstances, and necessary for that government's accomplishing its ends most satisfactorily.

A political system in whatever country it might exist Coleridge believed should fulfill certain purposes:

First, to make the means of subsistence more easy to each individual:—Secondly, that in addition to the necessaries of life he should derive from the union and division of labor a share of the comforts and conveniences which humanize and enable his nature; and at the same time of perfecting himself in his own branch of industry by having those things which he needs provided for him by others among his fellow-citizens; the tools and raw or manufactured materials necessary for his own employment being excluded....Thirdly, the hope of bettering his own condition and that of his children.

That the fulfillment of these purposes hinged largely on the rights of property he was quick to admit. He believed that government had originated not so much for the protection of life as for the protection of property. Wherever landed property was individually owned there would result inequality. But equality of possession he regarded as impracticable; furthermore where it could exist government would be superfluous. A system of taxation he saw as a necessary adjunct to the posses-

sion of property and opposed strongly the ideas of Thomas Paine, who held that all taxation was only a means of sustaining an objectionable monarchy and aristocracy, and that the money could be better used if applied to the needs of the infirm and the poor. Coleridge's attitude on this subject is an interesting one because it reveals how his ideas had changed since the time of his youth. His Pantisocracy was to have provided property collectively owned, and taxation was to have been unnecessary. Maturity taught him the necessity of being practical.

Turning his attention to what he chose to call the Law of Nations, international affairs consumed his interest. As the actions of individuals were gauged by a law of morality, he did not believe that when those individuals were banded into a state, their collective actions should be released from a standard of morality. But as there was no higher authority to appeal to in settling international questions, each nation should aim for the same standard for its actions that it applied to its own citizens. This does not mean that he would erase the bounds of nationality. He saw something infinitely nobler in being a patriot than in being a cosmopolite, for it is easier for men to cooperate with citizens of their own country than with all of humankind. Furthermore, a patriot was one whose concerns were for social uplift and as such he became the benefactor of all mankind.

In his famous treatise on Church and State, Coleridge considered the nature and function of the Church. He said:
The Christian Church...is no state, kingdom, or realm of this world; nor is it an estate of any such realm, kingdom, or state; but it is the appointed opposite of them all collectively—the sustaining, correcting, befriending opposite of the World, the compensating counterforce to the inherent and inevitable evils and defects of the State, as a State, and without reference to its better or worse construction as a particular state; while whatever is beneficent and humanizing in the aims, tendencies, and proper objects of the State, the Christian Church collects in itself, as a focus, to radiate them back in a higher quality...

The concern of the Christian Church Coleridge conceived to be in another world, but not exclusively in a world to come; rather in a world that now exists though latent—the spiritual world. Its only purpose is not to teach religion, but through science, fine arts, and culture to awaken man to the capacities of his own soul. He believed the church was not a separate organ but another function of the state.

What, we asked, in the early pages of this study, was the nature of the transformation that Coleridge's political philosophy underwent? The conclusion is that Coleridge expanded his philosophy to apply to all of mankind. In his youth he had sought a system of living whereby he and his friends might seek freedom apart from the world. In maturity he sought freedom for human kind, not by violent innovations or discarding the heritage of the past, but by cultivating the human soul, which was the true birth-place of liberty.

It is extremely fortunate for English poetry that Coleridge

is unquestionably appreciated as one of the foremost Romantic poets. But it is equally unfortunate for modern world politics that he is not more generally accepted as a foresighted political philosopher. Some of his own ideals he expressed so cautiously that one concludes he saw little possibility of their immediate acceptance in the nineteenth century. His vision for a more unified system of international law would have known at least partial realization in a League of Nations and a World Court, however fallible they might be. Whatever failures they may have succumbed to would not, I think, have shaken Coleridge's belief in their inherent rightness. The sensibilities of a man who could say, "War at present ought to be spoken of by all men of genius as contemptible, vulgar, the dotage of second childhood, the lechery of Barrenness," would have had reason to be shocked at the highly inflammable state of twentieth century politics and at the precarious position of his adored Liberty in some world powers where a man's soul is hardly his own.

Surely the fact that one of his fellow country-men later emulated his ideal for a social colony by establishing one at New Harmony, Indiana, or that the transcendentalists established Brook Farm is not the only connecting link that Coleridge affords between two continents or two centuries.

His political philosophy was so revolutionary that it was

his hope that some of the guiding principles he evolved might afford enlightenment for a state where men would seek the harmony and the unity that Coleridge chose to call God.
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