

**“Yet never, Burke! thou drank’st Corruption’s bowl!”:
Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s
Disagreement with Edmund Burke**

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Im, Bora. “Yet never, Burke! thou drank’st Corruption’s bowl!”: Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s Disagreement with Edmund Burke.” *Studies in English Language & Literature* 43.4 (2017): 17-33. In this article I would like to examine literary dialogues between Edmund Burke, who was the champion of British conservative philosophies, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, a poet, literary critic and polemist. I will focus on Burke’s influential political pamphlet, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, which was published in 1790 and attracted various political responses at that time. I will compare Burke’s *Reflections* with Coleridge’s two works written in his early years -- a political pamphlet titled “On the Present War,” which was included in *Conciones Ad Populum* and a sonnet, “To Burke,” written as a part of sonnet cycles, *Sonnets on Eminent Characters*. Coleridge criticized Burke in those works. In so doing, I will show young Coleridge’s disagreement with Burke’s conservatism. (Chonbuk National University)

Key Words: Edmund Burke, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, sonnet, political pamphlet, British conservatism

I

1793 was the year when the French Revolutionary Wars broke out; the war strengthened the British government's effort to solidify the country's patriotism. Britain's political atmosphere at that time was full of strong conservatism and

antipathy to the French Republic, which was naturally accompanied by the policy of suppressing the radicals within the country. From then on, conservative philosophers such as Richard Watson and William Paley wrote political pamphlets to convey their views to the public. Watson, bishop of Llandaff, remained politically active. He kept his London house in Great George Street until 1803 and appeared regularly in the House of Lords, speaking in the debates on the regency in 1789 and the union with Ireland; he made one of his final appearances in March 1807 to support the abolition of the slave trade. Paley, theologian and moralist, never considered himself a party man. Though he enjoyed the daily paper, *The Sun*, and frequently commented on passing political events, in his writings he attempted to strike a balance between opinions on particular subjects. Paley's liberal principles are evident in his opposition to the slave trade and his discussions of subscription.

I would like to begin my argument by paying attention to the conservative political views of Watson and Paley. I will examine Watson's appendix to his *Sermon to the Stewards of the Westminster Dispensary* and Paley's pamphlet, *Reasons for Contentment, Addressed to the Labouring Part of the British Public*. The discussions will be followed by the reading of Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. I will compare the *Reflections* with Samuel Taylor Coleridge's earlier works -- "On the Present War" and "To Burke" -- to show Coleridge's disagreement with Burke's conservative politics.

II

The French Revolution dominated political controversy in the 1790s and, like many Englishmen, Watson first welcomed and later denounced it. Its early stages appeared consistent with Lockean principles, or social contract theory, which emphasizes that human nature is characterized by reason and tolerance; and in October 1791 Watson insisted that the rights of man are founded upon nature and

the French constitution is the only one in the world which has deliberately asserted these rights and supported them in their full extent. But the French Revolution changed significantly in 1792, and after the execution of Louis XVI in January 1793 Watson could no longer support it. In 1793 he lamented the king's death and the abandonment of a balanced constitution; he denounced republican government as the most oppressive to the bulk of the people (Hole 125).

Watson attached an appendix to his *Sermon to the Stewards of the Westminster Dispensary* preached in April 1785 (Butler 145). Watson's appendix conveyed the passionate eulogy of British Constitution in line with that of William Paley's *Reasons for Contentment, Addressed to the Labouring Part of the British Public*. Watson wrote in the appendix to the *Sermon*:

But some one may think, and, indeed, it has been studiously inculcated into the minds of the multitude, that a monarchy, even a limited one, is a far more expensive mode of civil government than a republic. . . . I think the liberty, the prosperity, the tranquillity, the happiness of this great nation are not cheaply purchased by such a sum. (Watson 30-31)

Here Watson tries, even hysterically, to protect the cause of the British monarchy from the threat of the French Republic. Watson's efforts are understandable; it was the time of national crisis. Watson also needed to emphasize the superiority of the base of the British Constitution: he praised “the liberty, the prosperity, the tranquillity, the happiness of this great nation,” Britain. Watson's conservative political views were shared by Paley.

Paley took a keen interest in prison reform and, in 1801, the plight of the Irish Catholics. In 1789 his views opposing compensation for slave traders were discussed in the newspapers of the day, and in 1792 he aired his criticisms of the diabolical traffic at a public meeting in Carlisle convened to petition parliament and at which he occupied the chair. In general, however, Paley adopted a cautious attitude towards established institutions (Meadley 200). For example Paley commented as follows:

But in estimating the mere diversities of station and civil condition, I have not thought it necessary to introduce religion into the inquiry at all, because I contend, that the man who murmurs and repines, when he has nothing to murmur and repine about, but the mere want of independent property, is not only irreligious, but unreasonable in his complaint; and that he would find, did he know the truth, and consider his case fairly, that a life of labour, such I mean as is led by the labouring part of mankind in this country, has advantages in it, which compensate all its inconveniences. (Paley 21)

In this passage, Paley tries to soothe any (potential) anger of the poor, labouring part of the British public, who was supposed to be the main victim of the country's war efforts. Paley seems to have been aware of anxieties in the labouring people's minds and wished to guide their behaviors by saying that any complaint is irreligious and unreasonable. Paley's political view here is certainly conservative.

Paley's conservatism was in line with Edmund Burke's political views. We cannot discuss Britain's conservative philosophy or politics in the 1790s without mentioning Burke and his political theories. It is well known that Marilyn Butler's influential edition titled, *Burke, Paine, Godwin, and the Revolution Controversy* (1984) focuses on the Revolution controversy of the 1790s, which was ignited by Burke's famous political pamphlet, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* published in 1790. Before exploring the *Reflections*, we need to examine who Burke was.

Burke, politician and author, was born in Dublin. His date of birth is not certain. 1 January 1729 has generally been accepted but it is possible that the year was 1730. His mother came from an impoverished but genteel Roman Catholic family. His father was an attorney and represented the other Ireland, of prosperous, professional, protestant Dublin. It has been suggested that his father was himself a convert and that the knowledge of his apostasy permanently afflicted his son with a sense of familial guilt (Samuels 24). It seems that the sense of the guilt led Burke to write in defence of Roman Catholicism in his *Reflections*.

In 1744 Burke entered Trinity College Dublin to prepare for a legal career. There are indications that he found the formulaic curriculum tedious, and was at best a

moderately conscientious student. On the other hand he read voraciously outside the syllabus, tried his hand as a poet, founded a debating club whose minutes reveal signs of his rhetorical skill, and contributed to a review periodical, *The Reformer*. In 1750 Burke set off for London and the Middle Temple. He became an outstanding speaker in the Commons. His only rivals in the parliament of 1768 were a past prime minister, George Grenville, and a future prime minister, Lord North. Neither could match his range of learning and rhetorical power (Boulton 134).

The *Reflections* began with a frontal assault on the sermon that Richard Price had preached on 4 November 1789 at the second anniversary meeting of the Revolution Society. Against revolutionary values supported by Price, Burke set out his own statement of contrary values: of inherited manners that conferred honour and utility on institutions that might seem otherwise outmoded, of religious beliefs that were deeply ingrained in any civil society worthy of the name, of prescriptive customs and institutions, including property itself, that required protection against untried and arbitrary ideas of rationality. Burke also conducted a critique of what had been done in France in 1789 and 1790, and proclaimed the virtues of Britain's own constitutions and the happiness it brought (Lock 45). Published in November 1790, Burke's *Reflections* generated enormous interest and numerous replies such as Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* (1790); Joseph Priestley's *Letter to the Right Hon. Edmund Burke, Occasioned by His Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1791); James Mackintosh's *Vindiciae Gallicae* (1791); Tom Paine's *Rights of Man* (1791, 1792); and William Godwin's *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793).

In the *Reflections*, Burke wrote:

Our constitution preserves an unity in so great a diversity of its parts. We have an inheritable crown; and inheritable peerage; and an house of commons and a people inheriting privileges, franchises, and liberties, from a long line of ancestors. This policy appears to me to be the result of profound reflection; or rather the happy effect of following nature, which is wisdom without reflection, and above it. A spirit of

innovation is generally the result of a selfish temper and confined views. (*Reflections* 22).

Here Burke praises the British constitution using his great rhetorical skills. To Burke, the British constitution is a perfect system that “preserves an unity” and “diversity” at the same time. But a question needs to be raised: what is the “unity” and whose advantages does it try to promote? As shown in the following statements, the “unity” supports the interests of the British government or the upper classes. Burke puts a great emphasis on “an inheritable crown,” “an inheritable peerage,” “an house of commons and a people inheriting privileges, franchises, and liberties.”

Certainly Burke takes the opposite viewpoint to the revolutionaries. While the revolutionary theorists furiously attacked the crown, peerage, the people inheriting privileges from their own ancestors--the execution of Louis was an important, symbolic event--Burke in the above statements defends them passionately. He believed that they had been the mainstay of Britain and that the latter could not survive without the help from them. The French Revolution strongly armed with “a spirit of innovation,” as shown in the quotation above, must have threatened Burke's conservative mind. Burke did not want Britain to be revolutionized like France; he wished that Britain adhered to tradition as it always had done.

Burke's praise of conservative values and the British constitution is shown in the following quotation as well:

Our political system is placed in a just correspondence and symmetry with the order of the world, and with the mode of existence decreed to a permanent body composed of transitory parts; wherein, by the disposition of a stupendous wisdom, moulding together the great mysterious incorporation of the human race, the whole, at one time, is never old, or middle-aged, or young, but in a condition of unchangeable constancy, moves on through the varied tenour of perpetual decay, fall, renovation, and progression. Thus, by preserving the method of nature in the conduct of the state, in what we improve we are never wholly new; in what we retain we are never wholly obsolete. (*Reflections* 30).

As Parker aptly points out, Burke sees nature as itself mysterious. Parker speculates that Burke describes the British constitution as an inheritance that can embrace and claim the presence of the past: Burke “repeatedly secures the meaning of this idea of inheritance through recourse to the common law property concept of the entail, precisely the legal device through which ancestors controlled the disposition of property down the bloodline” (Parker 82).

Burke's faith in “our political system” or the British constitution is very firm: he writes that it is in a just “symmetry with the order of the world.” Burke believes in the importance of cherishing tradition. To Burke, Britain is a country where tradition and innovation already harmonize with each other. In other words, Burke implies that the country does not need any revolution or innovation as executed in France; as Burke points out, Britain continues to go on by protecting tradition, monarchy, and aristocracy because its constitution is sound and perfect.

Burke's theories as shown in the quotations above, and in the *Reflections* in general are thought to be the epitome of British conservative philosophies. According to Marilyn Butler’s famous formulation, the revolution debate during the 1790s resulted in “the pamphlet war” (Butler 2). And at the centre of the war was *Reflections*. Since *Reflections* appeared on 1 November 1790 some seventy pamphlets had been published in response to it from both radical and conservative camps until the controversy over the former came to an end in 1793 (Boulton 83). Burke’s target audience was “every well-born mind” in Britain as he himself said in *Reflections*, or in Conor Cruise O’Brien’s phrase, “the landed proprietors of England” (*Reflections* 46).

Burke's aim was not to reason with his enemies the Dissenters and the revolutionary theorists but to dissuade his friends, Fox and the liberal Whigs, from supporting their cause in Parliament (Butler 33-34). Therefore he might have expected that some supportive arguments would come from the conservative side to augment his already powerful rhetoric. But quite contrary to his anticipation, the remarkable responses came from the radical theorists like Mary Wollstonecraft and

Tom Paine, neither from the pamphleteers who supported him nor from the haute bourgeoisie. The tracts from the counterrevolutionary camp could not even imitate Burke's vigour. They did not have any capacity for argument and the literary ability shown by Burke's opponents either, and thus could not be of any help to him at all (Boulton 95).

III

Samuel Taylor Coleridge was just one of those who were responsive to Burke's *Reflections* like Wollstonecraft and Paine. But before examining Coleridge's radicalism, I would like to discuss his conservative philosophies. As Alan Gregory aptly points out, Coleridge contributed to British early conservatism (Gregory 1). Certainly Coleridge in his later years was inclined to conservative thinking. In that sense, older Coleridge can be thought to have shared some conservative philosophies with Burke. For example, let me explore Coleridge's address entitled *A Lay Sermon Addressed to the Higher and Middle Classes on the Existing Distresses and Discontents*. As Coleridge wrote in his letter to R. H. Brabant of September 1816, he composed the work in the following circumstance:

I had been solicited by the House of Gale and Fenner, whom I had conceived at least to have felt kindly towards me, no small merit in an age of atrocious Calumny, to give them a small Tract on the present Distresses in the form of a Lay-Sermon. I labored from morning to night, and found myself writing a Volume, not a Tract of a single sheet. (*Coleridge's Letters* 672).

As shown in the quotation above, Coleridge in *A Lay Sermon*, aimed to describe and explore "the present Distresses."

What is remarkable here is that Coleridge did so in the conservative point of

view. I would like to examine an excerpt from *A Lay Sermon*:

It was one among the many anomalies of the late War, that it acted, after a few years, as a universal stimulant. We almost monopolized the commerce of the world. The high wages of our artisans and the high prices of agricultural produce intercirculated. Leases of no unusual length not seldom enabled the provident and thrifty farmer to purchase the estate he had rented. Everywhere might be seen roads, rail-ways, docks, canals, made, making, and projected; villages swelling into towns, while the metropolis surrounded itself, and became (as it were) set with new cities. (*A Lay Sermon* 30).

“The late War” mentioned here refers to the Revolutionary wars. It is worth noting that Coleridge in the quotation above thinks of “the late War” as “a universal stimulant.” Coleridge praises the war very fervently as, he believes, it boosted the national economy: the war helped Britain to “monopolize the commerce of the world”; it led Britain’s artisans to receive higher wages and raised the prices of agricultural produce; the war also made farmers rich with “leases of no unusual length”; and the war improved social infrastructure such as roads, rail-ways, docks, and canals.

Coleridge, however, in his earlier lecture written in 1795, titled “On the Present War” could not praise war in such a manner. As Frederick Burwick suggests, “On the Present War” is a part of Coleridge’s *Conciones Ad Populum*, which was published in November 1795. Coleridge’s *Conciones* was comprised of an “Introductory Address” and a section “On the Present War.” The former was a revised version of his first political lecture and the second was probably a version of either or both the second and third of the three lectures. The second part of the *Conciones* contained a spirited and bitter attack on the government of William Pitt and its prosecution of an unjust and unnecessary war (Burwick 100).

Coleridge’s political views in the 1790s as shown in “On the Present War” were similar to those of other anti-war thinkers such as Anna Letitia Barbauld and George Dyer, who published radical pamphlets. Barbauld in her tract, whose title is *Sins of*

Government, Sins of the Nation; or, a Discourse for the Fast, Appointed on April 19, 1793, by a Volunteer, published in 1793, wrote as follows. Barbauld criticizes the devastating war bitterly:

We must think of the uncounted tears of her who weeps alone, because the only being who shared her sentiments [her husband] is taken from her; no martial music sounds in unison with her feelings; the long day passes, and he returns not. She does not shed her sorrows over his grave, for she has never learnt whether he ever had one. If he had returned, his exertions would not have been remembered individually, for he only made a small imperceptible part of a human machine, called a regiment. (*Sins of Government* 24).

Barbauld attacks the war as it destroys the life of the people left behind. She asks her readers to think of “the uncounted tears of her who weeps alone,” not, for example, victory in the war or national glory or economic prosperity resulting from warfares, as Coleridge in *A Lay Sermon* had stated. Barbauld writes that we need to think of the sufferings of the wife who has sent her husband to the battlefield and is not even free to lament his death, because she does not know whether he is dead or alive. Barbauld's polemic shown in her *Sins of Government, Sins of the Nation* is a typical example of anti-war statements of Britain in the early 1790s.

Likewise, Coleridge in his pamphlet, “On the Present War” criticized the present war with France:

This Duty we should exert at all times, but with peculiar ardor in seasons of public Calamity, when there exists an Evil of such incalculable magnitude as the PRESENT WAR. Of its peculiar crimes and distresses we shall endeavor to give a comprehensive view, that each of us may proportion his energies to the vastness of the general evil, not to the weight of his individual grievances. But its total Causelessness must be proved: -- as if the War had been just and necessary, it might be thought disputable whether any Calamities could justify our abandonment of it. (“On the Present War” 54).

Coleridge claims that the present war is “an Evil” and focuses on “peculiar crimes and distresses” resulting from the war. Coleridge also criticizes a wartime cliché exploited by warmongering politicians that the war is “just and necessary.” It was the phrase that the current prime minister William Pitt often used in his speeches in the Parliament.

Coleridge continues to attack the ongoing war:

In all public meetings these Men [who support the present war] signalize themselves. Argument they answer by inarticulate Noises, and their zeal for the Constitution they manifest by breaking the Peace. Certain to make a riot in their great ardor to prevent one, and prepared to persecute what they are determined not to hear, they wilfully blind themselves to Truth, and like angry Cowards shut their Eyes as they strike the Blow. (“On the Present War” 53).

Coleridge's statements shown here are very different from his arguments in *A Lay Sermon*. While Coleridge defended the Revolutionary wars in *A Lay Sermon*, he attacks the evils resulting from it in “On the Present War.” In “On the Present War,” Coleridge criticizes the men who try to support “the Constitution” with “zeal.” Coleridge writes that they break the peace by resorting to war and “persecute what they are determined not to hear”: in other words, “they wilfully blind themselves to Truth.” We need to note that the most influential author and politician in the early 1790s who tried to support “the Constitution” with “zeal” was Burke; and quite probably, Coleridge was aware of Burke's fame and his passionate conservatism.

Therefore, we can safely say that Coleridge challenges Burke's conservative philosophies in “On the Present War” by attacking the British constitution and the privileged class at the same time; the pamphlet was an implicit attack against Burke and his conservatism. But Coleridge composed a sonnet titled “To Burke,” which can be thought of as an explicit criticism upon Burke. I would like to quote the sonnet in full. Coleridge wrote it in 1794:

As late I lay in Slumber's shadowy vale,
 With wetted cheek and in a mourner's guise,
 I saw the sainted form of FREEDOM rise:
 She spake! not sadder moans the autumnal gale--
 "Great Son of Genius! sweet to me thy name,
 Ere in a evil hour with alter'd voice
 Thou bad'st Oppression's hireling crew rejoice
 Blasting with wizard spell my laurell'd fame.
 "Yet never, BURKE! thou drank'st Corruption's bowl!
 Thee stromy Pity and the cherish'd lure
 Of Pomp, and proud Precipitance of Soul
 Wilder'd with meteor fires. Ah Spirit pure!
 "That Error's mist had left thy purged eye:
 So might I clasp thee with a Mother's joy!" (*Poetical Works* 80-81).

"To Burke" was first published in the *Morning Chronicle* for 9 December 1794. The sonnet was a part of Coleridge's sonnet cycles, titled the *Sonnets on Eminent Characters*. What is remarkable about "To Burke" is that it writes about a person with whom Coleridge disagreed; other sonnets in the cycles praise eminent figures Coleridge admired. Coleridge felt that Burke did not know of the real meaning of freedom as shown in his various speeches.

We can imagine how much Coleridge did not like Burke by comparing "To Burke" with another sonnet, "To the Honourable Mr Erskine," which Coleridge published earlier in the *Morning Chronicle* on 1 December. In "To the Honourable Mr Erskine," Coleridge praised Thomas Erskine, a moderate reformer, as follows:

When British Freedom for an happier land
 Spread her broad wings, that flutter'd with affright,
 ERSKINE! thy voice she heard, and paus'd her flight
 Sublime of hope. (*Poetical Works* 80).

Coleridge continues to praise Erskine: "Therefore thy name / Her sons shall

venerate, and cheer thy breast / With blessings heaven-ward breath'd” (*Poetical Works* 80). Coleridge's admiration for Erskine makes a sharp contrast with his disagreement with Burke.

Since the sonnet, “To Burke” was published in the *Morning Chronicle*, it was included in Coleridge's collection of poems published in 1796 with a note, which criticizes Burke for receiving a government pension. In the note, Coleridge writes as follows:

Yet never, BURKE! thou drank'st Corruption's bowl! When I composed this line, I had not read the following paragraph in the Cambridge Intelligencer (of Saturday, November 21, 1795): -- “*When Mr. Burke first crossed over the House of Commons from the Opposition to the Ministry, he received a pension of £ 1200 a year charged on the Kings Privy Purse.*” (*Poetical Works* 80).

Here Coleridge shows off his remarkable prescience: Coleridge thinks that Burke's reception of the government pension or the act of tergiversation -- as implied in the statement, “Mr. Burke first crossed over the House of Commons from the Opposition to the Ministry” -- in 1795 confirms the truth of his remarks in “To Burke.”

It is well known that Coleridge in his childhood memorized Burke's speeches in the House of Commons. It is quite probable that Coleridge was attracted by Burke's oratorical skills. Burke's rhetoric had a power to fascinate even his political opponents. Burke's act of tergiversation must have been intolerable to Coleridge because the latter loved Burke's oratorical style and strong opposition to the government so much.

It was Burke's criticism of the French Revolution that led Coleridge to compose the sonnet, “To Burke.” Burke had approved the American Revolution passionately, and thus, Coleridge and other reformers and radicals anticipated that Burke would support the French Revolution as well. Instead of defending the French Revolution, Burke wrote the *Reflections*, where he lamented the death of French monarchy and

the triumph of reason:

But now all is to be changed. All the pleasing illusions, which made power gentle, and obedience liberal, which harmonized the different shades of life, and which, by a bland assimilation, incorporated into politics the sentiments which beautify and soften private society, are to be dissolved by this new conquering empire of light and reason. All the decent drapery of life is to be rudely torn off. (*Reflections* 45).

From the viewpoint of revolutionists or reformers, Burke's phrases such as "the pleasing illusions," gentle power and liberal obedience can be thought of as paradoxical: how the illusions can be pleasing; how power can be gentle; and how obedience can be liberal. But Burke in the *Reflections* believed that such concepts are not self-contradictory: to Burke they are elements that make human society sound and decent. It was the French Revolution, Burke thinks, that destroyed those valuable elements of society.

It is quite understandable why Coleridge could not agree with Burke's anachronistic views. Coleridge, like other reformists, thought that illusions and blind obedience are the symptoms of unhealthy society or monarchy; and to Coleridge, it is almost impossible for power to be gentle because it inevitably accompanies human greed. But Burke had firm convictions of the evils of the French Revolution:

On the scheme of this barbarous philosophy, which is the offspring of cold hearts and muddy understandings, and which is as void of solid wisdom, as it is destitute of all taste and elegance, laws are to be supported only by their own terrors, and by the concern, which each individual may find in them, from his own private speculations, or can spare to them from his own private interests. (*Reflections* 46).

At the end of the day Burke was right. Indeed, the French Revolution was to be supported by "terrors": Maximilien Robespierre appeared and ruined the spirit of the revolution with terrors. This is the point where Burke's anticipation works perfectly

well. But in 1794 when Coleridge was writing the sonnet “To Burke,” the arguments in the *Reflections* must not have persuaded Coleridge very successfully. To many reformists, the theories and principles of the French Revolution were not “barbarous philosophy, which is the offspring of cold hearts and muddy understandings, and which is as void of solid wisdom, as it is destitute of all taste and elegance,” as Burke stated.

Therefore, Coleridge declared, “Yet never, BURKE! thou drank'st Corruption's bowl!” Even though Coleridge admits that Burke is “Great Son of Genius,” he cannot condone the latter's “Corruption.” Coleridge eventually would embrace conservative philosophies as I mentioned above, and share some ideas with Burke in the end. But in 1794, younger Coleridge could not be silent when Burke introduced counterrevolutionary politics in his *Reflections*; and the result was the composition of the Miltonic sonnet, “To Burke.”

IV

Burke tried to protect traditional order such as monarchy and aristocracy from the sweeping power of the French Revolution. We might think of Burke as an anachronistic figure who attempted to maintain what could not be maintained. But we need to note that Burke anticipated rightly: the French Revolution went wrong in the end; and as monarchy and aristocracy were vanished from France, other evils such as the Reign of Terror and social and political brutalities appeared to afflict the country. Therefore, Burke's speculations were not wrong at the end of the day. But young Coleridge did not agree with Burke's conservative ideals. It was the reason why Coleridge composed “On the Present War” and “To Burke,” where the poet criticized Burke's support of the British constitution implicitly and explicitly.

Older Coleridge, however, accepted Burke's conservatism as shown in *A Lay Sermon*:

The administration of the laws of Great Britain; the almost continual preaching of moral prudence; the number and respectability of our sects; the pressure of our ranks on each other. (*A Lay Sermon* 11).

Coleridge here praises the element of the British constitution and “the laws of Great Britain,” as Burke had done in the *Reflections*. The sentiments of older Coleridge were very different from those of the young poet.

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