



Private Lives of the Ancient Mariner: Coleridge and his Children

Molly Lefebure

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A fascinating new study of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Private Lives of the Ancient Mariner* illuminates the poet's deeply troubled personality and stormy personal life through a highly original study of his relationships. In her last published work the celebrated Coleridgean, Molly Lefebure, provides profound psychological insights into Coleridge through a meticulous study of his domestic life, drawing upon a vast and unique body of knowledge gained from a lifetime's study of the poet, and making skilful use of the letters, poems and biographies of the man himself and his family and friends.

The author traces the roots of Coleridge's unarguably dysfunctional personality from his earliest childhood; his position as his mother's favoured child, the loss of this status with the death of his father, and removal to the 'Bluecoat' school in London. Coleridge's narcissistic depression, flamboyance, and cold-hearted, often cruel, rejection of his family and of loving attachments in general are examined in close detail. The author also explores Coleridge's careers in journalism and politics as well as poetry, in his early, heady 'jacobin' days, and later at the heart of the British wartime establishment at Malta. In both of these arenas Coleridge exerted his talents to brilliant effect, although they have often been overlooked in appraisals of his works. His virtual abandonment of his children and tragic disintegration under the influence of opium are included in the broad sweep of the book which also encompasses an examination of the lives of Coleridge's children, upon whom the manipulations of the father left their destructive mark.

Molly Lefebure unravels the enigma that is Coleridge with consummate skill in a book which will bring huge enjoyment to any reader with an interest in the poet's life and times.



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