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THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

S. T. Coleridge

An Introduction to the Poem

Great English poets 'Wordsworth' and Coleridge planned a poem named 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner', on 20th November 1797, during their walk in the Quantocks. The imagination and source of the poem 'The Rime of Ancient Mariner' is seemed to be affected from the ideas of Professor J. L. Lowes's expression in his work 'The Road to Xandu'. In his poem Mr. Lowes has given his imagination a great fling, and made his work a remarkable one. Although Coleridge has drawn his imagination from various sources, but he moulded them according to his image and presented them in a new way. One of his friend 'Cruikshank', is said to have affected him in a big way, as he saw a big skeleton ship, with some figures on its deck, in his dream. Coleridge had defied it and said that work is based on imagination and has nothing to do with dreams. Although he has presented them in a dream like manner and showed the specific qualities of a dream.

It is admitted in 'Biographia Literaria', that the poem has a combined effect of the feelings of Wordsworth and Coleridge. Wordsworth gave the idea of novelty of nature and Coleridge wrote about some supernatural things and characters with their misterious behaviour. Actually, it's Mr. Coleridge's invention and only few parts are suggested by Wordsworth. The story of the ancient mariner is so well knitted that it befitted its main character 'the mariner well and one can easily understand the events and the behaviour of mariner. Coleridge gives the story a supernatural and misterious touch and linked it to the behaviour and experience of human kind. The story also convey a moral message that all the living beings in this world, are the creation of on God and one must have sympathy and love towards them. The supernatural idea does not mistify this clear message of the story in anyway.

The main theme of the story consists, the old navigator, his crime, the punishment and his wandering in the sea. *and his return*
Wordsworth tells that at that time he was busy in reading Shelvoeke's 'Voyages' wherein it was mentioned, that mariners

often saw some albatrosses, while crossing the 'Cape Horn' and in that latitude it was easy to found the sea birds, with very long wings. He suggested Coleridge that one of these albatrosses must be killed by the old navigator and the spirits of that region must take revenge upon them, in return Coleridge found the idea suitable for the story and he generated the medieval period atmosphere, so as to justify the rituals of ancient mariner. The poet displayed the uncommon wit and skills in order to express the situation of the voyage, and the medieval atmosphere filled with mysterious happenings and supernatural events he seems to be attracted towards the legends and the stories of the medieval period.

Coleridge also might have taken some ideas from the letter of Bishop Paulinus of 'Nova', who was also the Vice prefect of Rome in 4th Century the letter was about the seraphs, who used to animate dead bodies in order to bring the ships safely to the harbour. It tells the story of an old man who left behind alone on the ship and all the navigators, except him flew in a life boat. He spends anxiously six lonely and horrible days on the ship and in the end 'Lord' himself come to his rescue and some giant angelic hands make the ship moving towards the harbour. Coleridge was so fascinated with the idea that he included it in his poem.

The poem 'Ancient Mariner' is a unique work of Coleridge and is written in a manner that is often seen in ballad stanzas the poet has introduced us of his remarkable style, his supernatural feelings that are moulded in a real way. The main theme of the story consists, the crime and the punishment, and conveys a clear message that the true prayer towards God is to love his creation to have a sympathy towards them.

In the beginning of the story, the ancient mariner tells the events, one by one, in a hypnotic manner, he introduces all the happenings in a spectral way; the killing of the bird, the rageful atmosphere, sudden death of his companions, their cursing and reminding him of the murder of albatross, the souls moving round the ship and producing the horrible sounds the anxiety of himself and at the end his rescue.

All the dramatic events produces a suspense and thrill and make us aware of the remarkable skill of the poet in handling the events. Some references contributes to its narrative beauty-such as the mysterious sounds of crossbow, and of souls, the vesper bell the shivering hermit and his prayer to 'Mary Queen' all this narration takes us in the atmosphere of medieval periods.

Coleridge has drawn the dreams of mariner in a specific

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way their uniqueness and the logic behind them is convincing enough he has used the ideas of himself as the essential matter for the poem; for some extent he seems to rely upon the ideas of few poets, but has reshaped them in a modified way. In the end, he displayed the catholic idea of penance, that introduces us the medieval way of religious rituals. The rhythmical narration of the poem introduces us the poet's love for music.

According to 'Walter Peter', This sort of fascination 'The Ancient Mariner' brings to it's highest degree : it is the delicacy, the dreamy grace, in his presentation of the marvellous, which makes Coleridge's work so remarkable.

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