

'Two Conflicting Principles' Reconciled:

The 'Free Life' and the 'Confining Form' in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*

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Introduction

In 'The Essays on the Principles of Genial Criticism' Samuel Taylor Coleridge says 'In Raphael's Galatea . . . is the balance, the perfect reconciliation, effected between these two conflicting principles of the Free Life, and of the confining Form!'⁽¹⁾ The reconciliation between the Free Life and the confining Form is also an ideal of his own poetic activity. But in the 'sublimar' poems such as *Religious Musings*, *The Destiny of Nations* and 'Ode to the Departing Year,'⁽²⁾ generally speaking, the Free Life within him is suppressed ironically by his public ideal as a poet-prophet, liberty, and the language, in accordance with the bombast of the ideal, tends to be complicated and twisted; to borrow his words, 'there is a garishness & swell of diction,' or 'a laborious and florid diction.'⁽³⁾ Early in 1796 Coleridge himself epitomizes these two defects: 'As to my own poetry, I do confess that it frequently, both in thought and language, deviates from "nature and simplicity."⁽⁴⁾

So, even while he is writing the sublimer poems, he begins to produce poems different both in the matter and in the form, that is, more personal and simpler ones, which George Mclean Harper called 'conversation poems' by expanding Coleridge's own term prefixed only to 'The Nightingale.'⁽⁵⁾ In them, instead of declaring grandiosely his limitless belief in and hope for liberty, he turns his eyes to his inner self and suspects that his spirit is 'unregenerate' or

'idling', but in the last lines of them, in some way or other, he can put down the suspicion by clinging to the possibility of joy through vision and experience of unifying nature shared with his friends (in 'This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison' and 'The Nightingale') or his son (in 'Frost at Midnight'): each soul of men can be united with nature and with Omnipresent Being behind it through 'one intellectual breeze' (in 'The Eolian Harp'). Nevertheless, some suppression remains in these conversation poems; he avoids compelling himself thoroughly to be confronted with his 'idling Spirit'. Before disclosing his should-be-free but hidden thoughts and imaginings in his 'idling Spirit,' he imposes upon himself the positive vision of nature vicariously and precariously and makes it a means of escape from the confrontation. He cannot expose himself to the threatening power of the Free Life within him in such a form as conversation poems, in which the first person 'I' centers and he lacks protections to excuse as Walter Jackson Bate says.⁽⁶⁾ To give full play to the Free Life, to write poems in which he can go down to the bottom of his 'idling Spirit' and investigate its relation to outer nature, he needs another more protective form. His dramatic enterprise like *Osorio* and abundance of narrative poems finished or not between 1797 and 1798 reflect such a situation of him as a poet and from them issues his masterpiece *The Ancient Mariner*. In the following discussion we shall examine it in the light of the reconciliation between the two principles.

The Division of Work

In the chapter 14 of *Biographia Literaria*, Coleridge refers to the plan of *Lyrical Ballads* in which *The Ancient Mariner* was first printed:

... it was agreed, that my endeavours should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic; yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment which constitutes poetic faith. Mr. Wordsworth, on the other hand, was to propose to himself as his object, to give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us; an inexhaustible treasure, but for which in consequence of the film of familiarity and selfish solicitude we have eyes, yet see not, ears that hear not, and hearts that neither feel nor understand.

(*Biographia Literaria*, II, p. 6)

This agreement of division of work is the turning point of Coleridge's life as a poet as George Watson says.⁽⁷⁾ The task assigned to Wordsworth is just what Coleridge has tried and has yet to do in his conversation poems.⁽⁸⁾ Now he nearly leaves this task to his friend and devotes himself to another, that is, to writing supernatural poems, to investigating human nature in the supernatural frame yet without losing psychological truth. This implies that he must face his own inner self, which he has tried to unite with nature and something omnipresent in it to suppress its unregeneracy in conversation poems so far. A new enterprise of him as a poet, thus, is a voyage toward his subjective self and he embarks

on the first navigation in *The Ancient Mariner*. When we trace the navigation we shall proceed along the narrative movement upon the version printed between the pages 186-209 of the two-volume edition by Ernest Hartley Coleridge.⁽⁹⁾

The Narrative Frame

After the epigraph from Thomas Burnet and the argument, a narrator opens the poem: 'It is an ancient Mariner/And he stoppeth one of three' (11. 1-2). Suddenness and arbitrariness of Mariner's choice holds our attention as if we readers were chosen as 'one of three' and they define the basic tone of the former half part of the poem as will be seen in the killing of the Albatross and the Mariner's 'conversion.' Then, to the Mariner, 'one of three' complains:

'By thy long grey beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?

The Bridegroom's doors are opened wide,
And I am next of kin;
The guests are met, the feast is set:
May'st hear the merry din.' (11. 3-8)

He is such an ordinary man as cannot disregard his obligation to perform as a relative. But the Mariner ignores the other's protest: 'He holds him with his skinny hand,/"There was a ship," quoth he.' (11. 9-10) The man gets angry and orders the Mariner: 'Hold off! unhand me, greybeard loon!' (1, 11) The latter obeys him officiously but resorts to a new and more powerful means to detain the former:

Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

He holds him with his glittering eye —
The Wedding-Guest stood still,
And listens like a three years' child:
The Mariner hath his will.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone:
 He cannot choose but hear;
 And thus spake on that ancient man,
 The bright-eyed Mariner. (11. 12-20)

His glittering eyes, which anticipate Kubla's 'flashing eyes' and Geraldine's 'fair large eyes,' catch hold of us too. The Mariner resumes his tale but, before much is told, the Guest protests him again by gesture: 'The Wedding Guest here beat his breast,/For he heard the loud basoon' (11. 26-7) However, overpowered by the bright eyes, he cannot but hear and he will never interfere with the tale except when he feels fear only three times in the lines 79-81, 224-9 and 345. The narrator will also remain silent till the last eight lines. This is the narrative frame of the poem.

But one more voice is contained in our version from the beginning, that of the gloss which was added for the first time when the poem was included in *Sibylline Leaves* (1817). Recently not a few scholars lay so much stress on the hearing of the gloss on the verse text that it seems to be an essential point of interpretation. Generally speaking, they argue that the gloss maker does not tell the fact told in the tale but forms moral or logical judgements of his own.⁽¹⁰⁾ For example, Anne K. Mellor elucidates the characteristic of the gloss maker: 'He supplies logical comments between events that the Mariner's narrative presents only sequentially,' and then she affirms: 'By placing this sensible, rational, moral, and deeply Christian vision of an ordered and just universe [the gloss] besides his 1798 narration of the Mariner's inexplicable, agonizing, joyful experience of a chaotic world, Coleridge has created a powerful expression of romantic irony.'⁽¹¹⁾ With the difference between the gloss and the Mariner's tale in our mind, we shall examine the poem in detail.

The Mariner's Tale

In the tale of the Mariner centers his act of

killing the Albatross. We can say that the bird is supplied with three attributes unless we must give up 'symbolical reading entirely. First, its friendly relationship with men: 'And every day, for food or play,/Came to the mariner's hollo!' (11. 73-4) Second, its association with Christianity: 'As if it had been a Christian soul,/We hailed it in God's name.' (11. 65-6) Third, its close connection with nature: 'through the fog it came,' 'And a good south wind sprung up behind;/The Albatross did follow' and 'In mist or cloud.../It perched for vespers nine.' (11. 71-2, 75-6) These three attributes have a symbolical meaning to Coleridge, for by these he has exerted himself to check the Free Life within him in the sublimer poems and conversation poems so far written. He makes the Mariner kill the bird ironically with the cross-shaped arbalest without any definite motive: 'With my cross-bow/I shot the Albatross' (11. 81-2). Coleridge vicariously destroys those which have confined himself and the rest of the tale is on the aftermath of this symbolical act.

For the time being, however, the act is not recognized as essentially evil either by the ship-mates or by the killer himself. On the one hand, whereas they blame him for having 'killed the bird/That made the breeze to blow' (11. 93-4) when they saw the good south wind goes on blowing, they regard his act as right because he 'killed the bird/That brought the fog and mist' (11. 99-100) when the sun appears although the breeze still blows. On the other hand, the Mariner hears their words as if he were indifferent to them. Then the situation changes suddenly:

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
 The furrow followed free;
 We were the first ever burst
 Into that silent sea.

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
 'Twas sad as sad could be;
 And we did speak only to break

The silence of the sea! (11. 103-10)

Dragged from the world of motion into that of entire stoppage, they experience a drastic and ironical hardship: 'Water, water, every where,/ Nor any drop to drink.' (11. 121-2) Some of the ship-mates think of this situation as plague brought about by the Spirit from 'the land of mist and snow.' (l. 134) Thus, only when they come across a misfortune do they search for a cause of it and definitely regard the act of the Mariner as the cause, forgetting their earlier capricious attitude toward it: 'Instead of the cross, the Albatross/About my neck was hung.' (11. 141-2) This causes the Mariner to realize for the first time that his act was evil. But his guilt is not spontaneous but imposed upon him by the ship-mates, so he is sorry not about the act itself but only about its result. Such a nature of his regret is clearly revealed when he exerts himself to inform them of a sail coming near: 'I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,/And cried, A sail! a sail!' (11. 160-1) Here he wants only to rescue the ship from stoppage which he is said to have caused. But his effort is vain for the sail is of a spectre-ship whose crew are a woman, 'The Night-Mare Life-in-Death,' and a man, 'Death.' Hope and joy are captured by 'bars' like 'a dungeon-grate' and by *her* sails glancing 'in the Sun/Like restless gossameres' (ll. 183-4). The twins are playing dice and the female says, 'The game is done! I've won! I've won!' (l. 197) Soon the ship-mates die one after another, but the Mariner the killer remains alive. Even without the gloss, we can see that Life-in-Death may have won the Mariner's life. Ironically, joy and hope lead to utter disillusionment. The arbitrary decision of fate by dice conforms to the arbitrary nature of the ship-mates and the Mariner.

Now that he is left alone on the wide sea, he feels that he is forsaken by any saint and he sees dead bodies:

Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide wide sea!

And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

The many men, so beautiful!
And they all dead did lie:
And a thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on; and so did I. (11. 232-9)

Even the dead bodies are beautiful compared with his miserable coexistence with slimy things. He never enjoys seeing the bodies but he feels self-loathing.⁽¹²⁾ The Mariner tries to look up to heaven in vain; he has to see 'the curse in a dead man's eye!/Seven days, seven nights' (11. 260-1), unable to die in spite of his death-wish. He certainly experiences 'Life-in-Death.' At the height of his loneliness, the moving moon suddenly rises with a star or two beside her and her beams and shadows throw a charm upon the sea:

Her beams bemoaned the sultry main,
Like April hoar-frost spread;
But where the ship's huge shadow lay,
The charmed water burnt away
A still and awful red.

Beyond the shadow of the ship
I watched the water-snakes;
They moved in tracks of shining white,
And when they reared, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their attire:
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coiled and swam; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire. (11. 267-81)

Under the moonlight the aspect of nature changes suddenly; even the water-snakes look fascinatingly beautiful. The Mariner blesses them besides himself:

O happy living things! no tongue

Their beauty might declare:
 A spring of love gushed from my heart,
 And I blessed them unaware:
 Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
 And I blessed them unaware. (11. 282-7)

In a sense, as Jean-Pierre Mileur rightly comments, these lines resemble those of the bestowal of the positive vision of nature in conversation poems: 'No plot so narrow, be but Nature there' ('This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison,' 1.61), 'all seasons shall be sweet to thee' ('Frost at Midnight,' 1. 65) or 'In Nature there is nothing melancholy' ('The Nightingale,' 1. 15).⁽¹³⁾ The beauty of natural scenery, however, is much different from that in conversation poems; not gentle or consoling but ominous, garish and supernatural beauty. But in spite of the difference a series of good events ensue and first the Albatross falls off from his neck suddenly:

The self-same moment I could pray;
 And from my neck so free
 The Albatross fell off, and sank
 Like lead into the sea. (11. 288-91)

It is very difficult to see no connection between his blessing of the water-shakes and the fall of the bird and only to emphasize arbitrariness and suddenness of both events. What really matters here is that this poem does not end in joy brought about by the positive vision of nature as conversation poems do.

Indeed, his hope seems to be strengthened by subsequent good events for the time being: sleep, dream, wind and the motion of the ship. Even the dead men rise up and begin to work the ropes:

The body of my brother's son
 Stood by me, knee to knee:
 The body and I pulled at one rope,
 But he said naught to me. (11. 341-4)

This happening confirms that the Mariner still cannot recover the former relationship with others, only to intensify his loneliness. His hope degrades to disillusionment as in the case of the spectre-ship. Nevertheless he tries to explicate this strange phenomenon rather optimistically to the Guest who interferes in the tale again:

Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest!
 'Twas not those souls that fled in pain,
 Which to their corpses came again,
 But a troop of spirits blest: (11. 346-9)

The reason for his explication is that he heard sweet sounds rise up through their mouths, and no evidence is given that they are not auditory hallucinations which his irritation brought about by intensified loneliness has caused. This is true of the song of a sky-lark. He wants to interpret all the phenomena surrounding him as suited to his wish as possible.

When the sweet sounds stop, the ship also stands still and then it bounds and begins to move onward so fiercely that he loses his consciousness. In a faint he hears two voices, and one of them says: 'The man hath penance done/And penance more will do.' Mellor rightly points out: 'These two voices occur in the Mariner's "soul" and express his subconscious conviction of guilt and hope for redemption through penance.'⁽¹⁴⁾ He wakes up to find the ship sailing as in a gentle weather, and sees the dead men rise up together and fix their stony eyes on him:

The pang, the curse, with which they died,
 Had never passed away:
 I could not draw my eyes from theirs,
 Nor turn them up to pray. (11. 338-41)

His passive attitude toward the dead men's eyes reminds us of that of the Wedding-Guest toward Mariner's eyes. His situation does not essentially change after the blessing, for he looked up to

heaven to pray in vain also before it. A temporal restoration of ability to pray turns out to be a trap to invite him into deeper despair. But soon the curse of the eyes disappears:

And now this spell was snapt: once more
I viewed the ocean green,
And looked far forth, yet little saw
Of what had else been seen — (11. 442-5)

The gloss comments on these lines: 'The curse is finally expiated.' If so, why is it that the Mariner cannot help feeling fear and dread immediately after that?

Like one, that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round walks on,
Turns no more his head;
Because he knows, a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread. (11. 446-51)

In fact the spell or the curse was only transplanted from the dead men's eyes into his soul. It will attack him as a woful agony, drive pilot's boy mad and force a man like the Wedding-Guest to hear his tale passively. We had better say that the curse is finally internalized.

At last he reaches his own country and gazes the scenery to which he paid only a little attention at departure as Charles A. Owen, Jr. comments.⁽¹⁵⁾ Soon he finds 'a man all light, a seraph-man' (1. 490) standing on each corpse:

This seraph-band, each waved his hand:
It was a heavenly sight!
They stood as signals to the land,
Each one a lovely sight: (11. 492-5)

At first this light which he regards as 'a heavenly sight' yields a good result; it invites a hermit to rescue the Mariner and enables him to hope that the hermit will shrieve his soul and wash away the Albatross's blood. As in the earlier events, however, disillusionment follows

hope. After the ship has sunk and he is saved in hermit's boat, pilot's boy goes mad to see the Mariner. This is the first disillusionment. Then, as soon as the Mariner comes on shore, he utters his wish to the hermit:

'O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man!
The Hermit crossed his brow.
'Say quick,' quoth he, 'I bid thee say —
What manner of man art thou?' (11. 574-7)

The Mariner may well expect him to shrive his crime because the latter is such a man:

This Hermit good lives in that wood
Which slopes down to the sea.
How loudly his sweet voice he rears!
He loves to talk with marineres
That come from a far countree.

He kneels at morn and noon, and eve —
He hath a cushion plump:
It is the moss that wholly hides
The rotted old oak-stump. (11. 514-22)

He resembles the Albatross in that he is closely related to Christianity and nature and has a friendly relationship with others. The Mariner trusts him and tells a tale of his voyage:

Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched
With a woful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale;
And then it left me free. (11. 578-81)

If he had become completely free, or if the Hermit had washed away the blood, he would not have told his tale to the Wedding Guest. In fact, the agony has returned repeatedly since then:

Since then, at an uncertain hour,
The agony returns: And till my ghastly tale is
told,
This heart within me burns.

I pass, like night, from land to land;
 I have strange power of speech;
 That moment that his face I see,
 I know the man that my tale I teach.
 (11. 582-90)

He has had and certainly will have to wander like Cain and experience innumerable his cursed voyage by telling the tale. Now he knows that the Hermit did not redeem him from his guilt completely. This is the second and more serious disillusionment that his hope from 'a heavenly sight' leads to. So, rather prosaically speaking, the light of 'the seraph band' may have been merely a phosphorescent light which dead bodies are said often to emit.

Thus through the series of hope and disillusionment, he has realized that he will never be redeemed completely and live in despair until he dies. So he cannot but accept his fate and wander from land to land with a strange power of speech, a sharp insight into human nature and coercing glittering eyes. These powers are what he has gained by killing the Albatross, so in a sense he is rewarded by the act as Edward E. Bostetter says.⁽¹⁶⁾ But he must pay the price for his gain. The Mariner speaks of his hope for a friendly relationship with others to the Guest:

O Wedding-Guest! this soul hath been
 Alone on a wide sea:
 So lonely 'twas' that God himself
 Scarce seemed there to be.

O sweeter than the marriage-feast,
 'Tis sweeter far to me,
 To walk together to the kirk
 With a goodly company! — (11. 597-604)

On these lines, Carl Woodring comments: 'The answer to parched isolation is community.'⁽¹⁷⁾ But, paradoxically, the Mariner is excluded from community. If not, he need not 'pass, like night, from land to land.' So, though these words are

uttered in the indicative mood, they must be heard as his subjunctive wish. Similar paradox is found in a lesson the Mariner tells calmly to the Guest at the end of his tale:

He prayth well, loveth well
 Both man and bird and beast.

He prayth best, who loveth best
 All things both great and small;
 For the dear God who loveth us,
 He made and loveth all. (11. 612-7)

The Mariner himself, however, cannot live up to the lesson, for, after he experienced so much loneliness on a wide sea that 'God himself/ Scarce seemed there be,' he knows nothing will fully redeem him. He lives as a counterexample of the lesson.

Then the narrator appears again and tells that, having heard the tale, the Guest turns from the bridegroom's door:

He went like one that hath been stunned,
 And is of sense forlorn:
 A sadder and a wiser man,
 He rose the morrow morn. (11. 622-5)

As the experience on the sea brought about a gain and a loss on the Mariner, so the tale influences upon the Guest ambivalently; he becomes wiser because he knows how to remain in the ordinary world and to be loved by God, and he becomes sadder because, to do so, he has to be a philanthropist regardless of his tastes. Thus the poem ends.

Conclusion

In the supernatural narrative frame of *The Ancient Mariner*, which enables him to detach himself from the protagonist, Coleridge makes the Mariner kill the Albatross and gets a vicarious emancipation from restraint he has imposed upon himself so far. As soon as he destroys

those which he has used to check the Free Life within him (a sense of duty to commune with others, Christianity and nature), ominous but fascinating images (supernatural) and thoughts (isolation and eternal damnation) gushes out from the bottom of his inner self where they have been suppressed. This is the gain of Coleridge as a poet and may be, as Mellor says, a 'joyful experience' to him in part. But the price is expensive. Once he has seen the amoral but powerful flow of the Free Life within him, he suspects that he may no longer remain in the sphere of human beings and defy God unless the flow disappears or he alleges it has disappeared from within him. Thus he is always threatened by the danger of isolation and atheism. This is painful to him but if he is to live as a poet expressing what the Free Life gives birth to by means of words, he cannot help accepting his fate even though it is that of a *poète maudit*,⁽¹⁸⁾ to write marvellous poems like *The Ancient Mariner*, he must continue shooting the Albatross with his cross-bow, that is, at the expense of his Christian morality as an ordinary man.

It is characteristic of Coleridge to be able to show such a painful recognition only within a protective frame of the rather old-fashioned ballad-styled narrative. The frame serves as a confining Form, which provides him with a protection to excuse, and he can allow full play to the Free Life in that Form. Thus in the *Ancient Mariner*, the two conflicting principles, the Free Life and the confining Form, are reconciled. But this reconciliation is very precarious for, if Coleridge loses the courage to confront himself with the amoral flow and the painful recognition of the poet's fate even within the narrative frame as in *Christabel*, he will go on to declare or rather allege that the Free Life within him disappears. Coleridge really declares that 'My genial spirit fail' in 'Dejection: An Ode' only about five years after the apex of his career as a poet. The gloss attached to the text about twenty years later tries to

make believe that the *Mariner* is finally redeemed in spite of disproof by the verse text and reveals Coleridge's discouragement clearly.

Notes

¹ Included as an appendix in Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria; or Biographical Sketches of My Literary Life and Opinions*, 2 vols., ed. by John Shawcross (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1907), II, p. 235.

² In the dedication to Thomas Poole, Coleridge refers to 'The ode to the Departing Year' as 'the sublimer Ode.' The word 'sublimier' could be applied to other two large-scaled poems, where he has a much sublimer aim to unite 'My poetic Vanity and my political Furore.' For the dedication, see *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 6 vols., ed. by Earl Leslie Griggs, (Oxford: Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1956-71), I, p. 289, and for his aim in the early poem, *ibid.*, I, p. 275.

³ *Collected Letters*, I, p. 278, and Coleridge, 'To a Friend [Charles Lamb]', 1. 32.

⁴ *Collected Letters*, I, p. 278.

⁵ George McLean Harper, *Spirit of Delight*, rept. in part titled as 'Conversation Poems' in *English Romantic Poets: Modern Essays in Criticism*, 2nd edition, ed. by M.H. Abrams (London: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 189.

⁶ Walter Jackson Bate, *Coleridge* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1987 (Originally published New York: Mac-Milan, 1968)), p. 48: 'But to Coleridge, so apprehensive of criticism, so quick to take

steps to forestall or deflect it, the lack of a protective, superimposed form — protective because it could itself serve as a lightning rod for blame, as an excuse for saying (or having to say) what he did — compelled him to construct his own protections or, more accurately, allowed some of his habitual, personal defenses to enter bodily into the poem.⁷

⁷ George Watson, *Coleridge the Poet* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), p. 88: "This agreement was the turning-point of Coleridge's life as a poet, since the unfinished "Christabel" and so-called "fragment" "Kubla Khan," as well as "Ancient Mariner" itself — a large part of Coleridge's major achievement as a poet — all issue, clearly out of it."

⁸ "The Eolian Harp" and "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison" were written earlier than *The Ancient Mariner* but "Frost at Midnight" and "The Nightingale" were later.

⁹ Coleridge, *The Complete Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 2 vols., ed. by Ernest Hartley Coleridge (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1907).

¹⁰ As far as I know, the first to deal in detail with the relation between the gloss and the tale was Huntington Brown, "The Gloss of *The Ancient Mariner*," *Modern Language Quarterly* 6 (1945), pp. 319-24. For recent studies, see Sarah Dyck, "Perspective in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner,"" *Studies in English Literature* 13 (1973), pp. 591-604, Frances Ferguson, "Coleridge and the Deluded Reader: "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner,"" *Georgia Review* 31 (1977), pp. 617-35, and Jean-Pierre Mileur, *Vision and Revision: Coleridge's Art of Immanence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), pp. 61-89.

¹¹ Ann K. Mellor, *English Romantic Irony* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard

University Press, 1980), p. 148.

¹² For the Mariner's self-loathing, see D.W. Harding, "The Theme of "The Ancient Mariner,"" *Scrutiny* 9 (1941), p. 339, and Charles A. Owen, Jr., "Structure in *The Ancient Mariner*," *College English* 23 (1962), p. 265.

¹³ Mileur, p. 70: "His spontaneous blessing is another Coleridgean act of bestowal — an evidence of the mariner's release from a relentless logic of the self-enclosure which distorts in its own image, by the force of the self's demand on the world, every attempt to reach out and contact the "the other.""

¹⁴ Mellor, p. 267.

¹⁵ See Owen, p. 267.

¹⁶ Edward E. Bostetter, "The Nightmare World of *The Ancient Mariner*," *Studies in Romanticism* 1 (1962), p. 251: "The Mariner's act may have been a sin, but it made him important to God and men alike; in this sense he was rewarded rather than punished."

¹⁷ Carl Woodring, "The Mariner's Return," *Studies in Romanticism* 11 (1972), p. 377.

¹⁸ Robert Penn Warren, "A Poem of pure Imagination: An Experiment in Reading" in his *Selected Essays* (New York: Random House, 1958), p. 258: "It [that he passes like night from land to land] tells us . . . that the Mariner is the *poète maudit*." Bostetter, "The Nightmare World of "The Ancient Mariner,"" p. 251: "As Warren points out, he [the Mariner] can be seen among other things as the *Poète Maudit*, accursed and alienated; but as such he has what Coleridge longed for all his life and achieved as poet only through writing "The Rime" — power to tell his tale and to force the world to listen."