

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

Romanticism and Supernaturalism in

Ancient Mariner: — What is best in Coleridge's poetry is of rare excellence. His personal poems, like Dejection: an Ode and the poem Work without Hope have a pathetic interest in connection with the tragedy of ineffectiveness which made of his life. But his historical importance is due mainly to such poems as The Ancient Mariner and Christabel which triumph of romanticism as fully as Wordsworth's narrative poem represent the triumph of naturalism, we have already seen that Coleridge took the supernatural as his particular province and far beyond any writer before him he treated the supernatural in a purely poetic way. It will be remembered that Wordsworth saved naturalism from the hard literalism to which it was tending by touching fact with imagination.

Coleridge saved supernaturalism from the coarse sensationalism then in vogue by linking it with psychological truth.

Coleridge is essentially a medievalist different from Wordsworth in a fondness for the weird and unusual romantic themes, he is ^{the} purest of romantic, ~~the~~ powerful in his creation of hallucinatory

reality and in his communication of moral truth. In his lectures on Poetry he adopts Milton's prescription that poetry should be simple, appealing to the primary laws of our nature; that poetry should be sensuous "and by its imagery elicit truth of flesh," and that poetry should be impassioned in order to "move our feelings and awaken our affections"; Coleridge's verse on the whole confirms to this conception. He is a master of exquisite verbal melody and witchery of language. His imaginative power is intense. Possibly his main contribution to poetry is his subtle appeal to the Romantic sense for the supernatural. To quote Stopford ~~he is essentially an all that~~ he did excellently might be bound up in twenty pages, but it should be bound in pure gold.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner is the story of crime and punishment. The story of the poem is simple enough. An ancient mariner meets three gallants bidden to wedding ~~great~~ feast and detains one of them to

to recount his story. The wedding guest is spellbound by the old faring man and is constrained to hear his story. The Mariner tells how his ship was drawn towards the South Pole by the storm. When the ship was surrounded by ice a great sea bird called the albatross came through the snowfog and was received with great joy and hospitality. The bird proved a bird of good omen and followed the ship. But the Ancient Mariner inhospitable killed the bird. For this act of cruelty; a curse fell on the ship sailed northward while returning and was suddenly banished. The albatross began to be avenged by the spirits of the unseen world. The crew of the ship who had justified the act of slaughter, died of thirst, the Ancient Mariner alone surviving. He was now alone in the ship with his ~~ship~~ two hundred companions and passed through bigger agonies. He could even pray since he had a sinful heart. It was only after seeing the water snakes that the spell began to break and the ship was brought back to England. But the Mariner was condemned by way of penance to travel from land to land and to teach by his example love and reverence to all creatures.

1.7.20

Wordsworth and Coleridge were the two great poets of Romanticism and it was by their joint efforts that the romantic revival in poetry was brought about during the nineteenth century. They were both gifted with imagination sensibility and creative power. They decided to transform the shape of English poetry and give it a new turn. Coleridge's rich romantic imagination which is the chief characteristic of romantic poetry. He conceived and perceived both the natural and supernatural. In practice as well as in theory. He laid great emphasis on imagination. For him the real world was a world of fixities and definites. In the line of the Ancient Mariner deals with the supernatural and penance of a seaman who want only killed an albatross. Dramatic Climax is the falling off of the albatross when the mariner blessed the water Snake, the ~~the~~ moral of all embracing love. Essence of the poem is its picture

of Coleridge's spiritual isolation. Irving Bakit has declared that perhaps no work embodies more successfully the main romantic motif of solitude. Thus we can say in Medieval period romanticism stands for remoteness and faraway atmosphere particularly regarding the landscape, feats of daring and bravery, chivalry belief in supernatural charms and magic woman worship etc. Hence originally the word "romantic" signified the qualities in these semi-historical such as 'far fetched and opposed to fact' in later eighteenth century the term 'romantic' was used in the sense irregular, wild and fantastic.

In modern English usage generally four distinct meanings of the term are found (1) As opposed to commonplace: imaginative, remote from experience and everyday life, visionary expressing vague longings away from ordinary (2) Opposed to probable: fanciful, fantastic, pertaining to a dreamy fairland (3) As opposed to the literal: mystic, symbolic, unseen (4) opposed to formal: grand picturesque, passionate, irregularly beautiful.

Supernaturalism will be discussed in the next class.