

Coleridge's The Rime of the Ancient Mariner: A Creation of Frozen Artistic Beauty

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الجمال الفني الجامد في قصيدة أنشودة البحار العجوز لكورليريدج

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Received: 12-10-2025; Accepted: 23-12-2025; Published: 05-01-2026

Abstract:

This paper aims at investigating Coleridge's 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' from an artistic approach. Coleridge used this poem to prove himself as an artist, among his contemporaries, who is capable of creating a beautiful work of art. This poem has undergone controversy ever since its publication, as it received little appreciation from its audience because of the themes it tackles, the archaic language that Coleridge used, and his writing style compared to other poets at that time. Some readers and critics questioned even Coleridge's ability of versification; however, others praised the poem as a hallmark of Coleridge's creativity. Thus, this paper attempts to verify that *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner is an art gallery of frozen images made alive to put Coleridge in the forefront of his contemporaries and to be eternally thought of as an artist whose imaginative power to create makes him among the great*.

Keywords: Ancient Mariner, Artistic Beauty, Art Gallery, Artist, Imagery, Imagination.

الملخص :

تهدف هذه الورقة إلى دراسة قصيدة كولرليريدج "أنشودة البحار العجوز" من منظور فني. استخدم كولرليريدج هذه القصيدة ليثبت نفسه كفنان بين معاصريه، قادرًا على كتابة عمل فني بديع. أثارت هذه القصيدة جدلاً واسعاً منذ نشرها، إذ لم تحظَّ بتقدير كبير من جمهورها بسبب المواقف التي تناولتها، ولللغة القيمية التي استخدمها كولرليريدج، وأسلوبه الكتابي مقارنةً بشعراء عصره. حتى أن بعض القراء والنقاد شكوا في قدرة كولرليريدج على نظم الشعر؛ في حين أشاد آخرون بالقصيدة باعتبارها علامة فارقة في إبداعه. لذا، تسعى هذه الورقة إلى إثبات أن "أنشودة البحار العجوز" هي بمثابة معرض فني للصور الجامدة التي أعيد إحياؤها، لتضع كولرليريدج في طليعة معاصريه، وليرتَّل اسمه كفنان جعلته قدرته الإبداعية الهائلة من بين العظماء.

الكلمات المفتاحية: البحار العجوز، الجمال الفني، معرض فني، فنان، الصور الشعرية، الخيال.

Introduction

Since its publication in 1798, Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* has undergone various controversial and disputable interpretations. It has been considered as a journey of salvation, a journey of self-discovery, a mental journey from the conventional reality to that of imagination, and an allegorical journey of man's struggle from the cradle to the grave. It has also been construed as a journey of dream caused by opium and as Coleridge's poetic journey of Romanticism where the Mariner is the poet, possessed by the guilt of the actual origin of poetry. Paradigmatic scholars have read Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* in many ways. Christopher Stokes (2011) questions the moral agency of the Mariner in his exploration of the question of the original sin in the Rime. Sarah Dyck (1973, p. 596) argues that, "The question of morality thus enters the tale directly not through the Minstrel, the Wedding Guest, or Mariner, but through the editor of the gloss."

While all of these interpretations can argumentatively be applicable to the poem that perplexed and bewildered Coleridge's close circuit of friends, critics and readers through the bygone ages, and it will undoubtedly remain to be so in the ages to come, the interpretation of the poem as a poetic journey is more appropriate and acceptable since he has always struggled to prove that he is capable of creating a work of art that puts him in the forefront of his contemporaries and to be eternally thought of as an artist whose imaginative power to create makes him among the great and the feared.

This paper presents a new artistic outlook at Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* to add to the already accumulated views about its nature, function and its real meaning. Such a suggested perspective is not interested in what the story of the poem is about or in its narrator's mysterious actions; instead, it will examine carefully the poet's artistic creativity depicted in his word-made images and their frozen beauty that were brought

alive in the poem's phraseology and figures of speech. Such a goal can only be achieved through a thorough research of the poem's structure and the artistic techniques that Coleridge used to paint the copious images of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. Thus, *this study explores the poem artistically to show how Coleridge used it as an evidence of his poetic intelligence and creativity*. Also, to establish an understanding of the poem as an art gallery that is replete with vivid pictorial and auditory images. Therefore, this study is oriented towards finding out how Coleridge felicitously drew the various images culminated in the Rime, and bases its argument on substantiating his capability of creating such a masterpiece that remained inspiring throughout the previous centuries and will continue to be 'the unravished bride of beauty' and aesthetics in the years to come. This may help readers and researchers understand the artistic beauty that Coleridge has achieved and open doors for other interpretations of the poem based on an artistic point of view, since it is a fertile area for intensive and extended research, to make them read the poem not as they used to (of horror and superstitions), but to read it in a pleasurable mood.

By using the formalist approach, this paper explores the poem and provides a closer look at five of the artistic images that played a pivotal role in granting the poem its significance and beauty. Since this study is of a qualitative nature, it will deploy descriptive and analytic methods for interpreting five of the potent images that pervade the poem. The basis for this investigation is to present each image and provide a profound, detailed, and lengthy analysis of its structure and potency. Artistically, the analysis of the Rime implies tracing the evidences found in the poem, that are related to the topic, to treat every image as a work of art, and present it in a developed discussion that leads to the provision of a better discernment of the artistic beauty that Coleridge has achieved and the aptness of the poet. To accomplish this goal, the poem's text of (1834) was used as the primary source upon which this study is based, in addition to consulting secondary sources that deal specifically with the subject under discussion to provide a background and support for the investigation. Books such as John Beer's *Coleridge's Poetic Intelligence* (1977), articles such as [Raimonda Modiano](#) (1977), and Coleridge's Essays and Lectures (1914) are among the secondary sources that discuss the same subject from different viewpoints and perspectives.

This paper contributes to the understanding of Coleridge's poem from an artistic point of view. Since art has the ability to elevate, alleviate, and edify the minds of its audience, reading the poem artistically provides the readers with the benefit of being comfortable, passionate and arouse their sentiments to help them achieve the morality that the Mariner is searching for and the tranquility of enjoying a beautiful work of art. Considering the Rime as an art gallery, full of beautiful drawn images, makes it impact and inspire the contemporary and the future generations to use their powers of art to help and heal. Such an understanding benefits the researchers in cultivating their discussions of the poem, laying the ground for future research to uncover critical aspects to consider, and facilitate a fresh explication of the Rime.

Literature Review

Since its publication, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* has been a subject of discussion. Many reviewers controversially discussed the various themes, structures, and the images of the poem acknowledging it to be a beautiful work of art that proves Coleridge's genius. John Beer (1977) considers that the esoteric images of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* reveal Coleridge's attempt to find a paradigm of creative intelligence. Beer's study of Coleridge's poetic brilliance paved the way for this study to discuss the poem's imagery from an artistic point of view.

John Gibson Lockhart in Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine (1819, p. 5) states "It is a poem to be felt, cherished, mused upon, not to be talked about, *not capable of being described, analyzed, or criticised.*" Lockhart emphasizes the prominence of the poem as a creation of artistic beauty because of its vivid images that make it an art gallery. He initiates the consideration of the poem as a work of art that must be felt with human perceptions, and appreciate its value as a creation of genius rather than ruminate about its defects and blemishes. He opens doors to researchers and readers of Coleridge to think highly of the poem and enjoy its beauty and magnificence. Lockhart refutes the critics' misconceptions and claims, as some of them considered the Rime as a purposeless poem of horror. He (*Ibid*) adds: "It is the wildest of all the creations of genius ... its images have *the beauty, the grandeur, the incoherence* of some mighty vision. The loveliness and the terror glide before us in turns." This understanding supports the feasibility of the study as it provides a solid ground for further investigation from a similar perspective.

Other poets and critics wrote some reviews about the poem, explaining their opinions on its merits and shortcomings. William Wordsworth in Lyrical Ballads (1800, p. 263), for instance, starts his review by a brief explanation of some of the technical defects and philosophical comments from his point of view. However, he praises Coleridge's excellence in innovation, and indicates the poem's stature and the quality of his verse. Wordsworth (*Ibid*) states that: "The Poem contains many delicate touches of passion, and indeed the passion is everywhere true to nature; a great number of the stanzas present beautiful images, and are expressed with unusual felicity of language; and the versification, though the metre is itself unfit for long poems, is harmonious and artfully varied, exhibiting the utmost powers of that metre, and every variety of which it is capable." Wordsworth's review establishes and confirms the legitimacy of considering *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* as a true work of art.

Relatively, Lucasta Miller (2006) writes about the inspirational quality of the poem's images, regardless of their eccentricity at the time of its publication as the image of the Albatross hanging from the Mariner's neck that inspired contemporary readers and artists. Miller explains that the image became renowned and is used even by people who have never read the poem. She adds that the poem has also inspired generations of writers and artists, and has become the subject of an exhibition as a work of art. Miller's analysis emphasizes the idea that there are different angles to look at the poem's images with a sense of beauty as when the Mariner watches his crewmen die in front of him.

Many authors consider *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* as a landmark in English poetry. William Christie in his book *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: A literary Life* (2007, p. 7) affirms that this poem is considered as a "testament to his extraordinary poetic powers." Hence, Coleridge, by achieving artistry in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, reaches his goal in making this poem as an evidence of his poetic aptitude. Christie's study bestows this study and other studies the ability to treat the poem with more reverence. Additionally, it provides an ancillary assistance to deal with the poem from Coleridge's perspective.

Analysis

Poetry is beauty, and artists are to depict beauty in its various forms, thus poets are artists in their own field. The calibre of artistic poetry can be measured by its endurance. Certain artistic beauty poems, for instance, have lived through centuries. *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, as a poem that remained inspiring through all times, is a work that is replete with artistic beauty as a vital component of Coleridge's imagination. Carol Rumens (2009) affirms that the "poem's spell doesn't seem to weaken over the years." Artistic beauty is achieved by the utilisation of language to create masterpieces as *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.

Oxford Dictionaries define art as "the expression or application of human creative skill and imagination, typically in a visual form such as painting or sculpture, producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power." The adjective 'artistic,' then, must be related in meaning and function to art of any kind or artists of any type in being creative, impressive, imaginative and inventive. Art, through Romanticism and the birth of individualism, used to refer to any originality of almost any sort that makes meaning beyond language. It is to create things that have never been or have been heard of before. It is positively "a means of communication where language is not sufficient to explain or describe its content" (Catherine Bosley 2018), as in painting, sculpture, carving and engraving. Verbal art, as poetry, is not only a means of communication but also a motive that stirs up passions and emotions as music does. Art is always associated with beauty regardless of the latter's nature whether be it natural or artistic. At any rate, art and beauty are inseparable twins that always share the same shrine; they are identical in their function, meaning, appearance and attractiveness. Both are created to remain as one to say that 'art is beauty and beauty is art.'

This paper focuses on Coleridge's artistic frozen beauty depicted in the word-made images of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* that made him among the greatest artists of all times. Unlike Kant, who regards natural beauty to be superior to artistic beauty nor Hegel who regards artistic beauty to be higher than that of nature, Coleridge is almost like Theodor Adorno, who goes beyond Kant's and Hegel's one sidedness view, he (Coleridge) believes that natural beauty is only the spark that ignites the artist's soul to create, apart from nature, what has never been. (Stephen Houlgate, 2016).

Such a poem, as it is renowned for its artistic beauty, is emotive and has the ability to affect the readers and by which Coleridge succeeds in expressing his dismal or happy emotions, that lie in the vast depth of his mind, in the form of verse, as Modiano (1977, p. 233) stresses "the search for an adequate medium of expression that could accommodate the deepest demands of self without sacrificing either the authenticity or the intelligibility of the artistic product is one of Coleridge's life-long concerns." Coleridge's use and manipulation of words as instruments to describe and depict beauty is beauty in itself. As Coleridge aims to draw or transfer a physical natural scene to an abstract image in the minds of the readers or to achieve a certain effect, all the poetic elements (diction, figurative language, rhyme, rhythm, and metre) that he employs and infuses in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, are in fact a beautiful work of art, plus the image that has been created is more beautiful and sometimes it has more influence than the scenery or the situation itself, because the image is timeless and limitless and it can be susceptible to various interpretations.

Coleridge asserts in his lectures that poetry is a beautiful form of art, and in order to draw some beautiful imagery, language must be used exquisitely, thus beauty is used to describe beauty. Artistic beauty is what evokes feelings of melancholy, wonderment, excitement, love, bewilderment, and pleasure. It is not restricted to the concept of love or happiness solely. It has a wider scope; it is simply connected with the feelings of humans. Coleridge has an outstanding capability of presenting the natural alongside the supernatural in an alluring verse. His creation of artistic beauty is when he uses the language artistically to describe even the ugliness, grief, and darkness found in nature. Some of the subjects that he tackles or discusses in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* are not beautiful or attractive; however, the outcome that he achieved is a beautiful piece of art. Poetry does not need to be an identical description of a certain situation or scene, it must carry some artistic elements that work as triggers to the readers' minds, and arouse their sentiments in order to engage the readers in the experience and

make them meditate, contemplate, or consider the importance of a certain morality or the consequences of some immoral actions and deeds.

Thus, Coleridge in his *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* decides to make an imaginative sea journey that has never been made before to acquaint his readers with the unknown, the unseen, the unheard and the untraversed, so as to be the pioneer artistic poet who is capable of creating poetic images that never were or had been heard of, not only by words but also by colours.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner is a living evidence of Coleridge's poetic powers to create frozen artistic beauty that made him one of the best artists of his time and the times to come. Coleridge in his versification utilizes the different poetic elements to create a homogenous artistic beauty, that he describes in *Biographia Literaria* (1834, p. 179) as a 'harmonious whole.' The artistic beauty that Coleridge has achieved in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* exists and manifests itself in the exquisitely drawn imagery. Coleridge stresses that the "reconciliation of the external with the internal," must be present in any artistic creation, meaning that he uses images of real objects to describe or portray by words certain emotions, thoughts, or feelings in the poem, which in turn can be perceived by the human senses.

Coleridge combines these images in the ballad form to lead the readers of this poem into different dimensions and worlds. James Reeves (1969, p. 289) celebrates these images as "so brilliant is the descriptive imagery, so passionate and urgent the expressions of emotion." These varied emotions of (dismay, fear, remorse, appreciation), that Coleridge expounded, emerge from the nature of human beings, so that the readers of the poem will have no difficulty identifying with the Mariner's experience, sharing his attitude throughout the plot, empathising with him, therefore, elevating their feelings and emotions in return as a result of an exposure to art.

The Image of the 'Wedding-Guest'

Coleridge's verse is distinguished by the successful formulation of images by making them both painterly and poetic at the same time. As in this image, the Mariner and his attributes, while contrasted to the Wedding-Guest, are strongly presented into a well-organized structured whole informing the reader of the way he took control of the Wedding-Guest.

He holds him with his skinny hand,
'There was a ship,' quoth he.
'Hold off! unhand me, grey-beard loon!'
Eftsoons **his hand** dropt **he.** (9-12)

Coleridge, in this image, pictures a scene of the Mariner having a complete command over the Wedding-Guest as a preparation for this young man to listen to the Mariner's story. The dominance was gradual in some sense. First, the Mariner stops the Wedding-Guest and detains him from entering the wedding festival. When the Mariner saw the reluctance of the Guest, he used his hand to stop him. The alliteration in the line: **He holds him with his skinny hand**, draws the readers' attention to the idea that the Mariner is really determined to make the Guest listen to what he is going to say. The repetition of the sound /h/ gives the line a slow and quiet tone, thus, it reinforces the painted image. After the Mariner held the young man, he immediately told him the beginning of his story. This urgency to tell his tale is shown in the line: 'There was a ship,' quoth he, it pictures the Mariner as an earnest and persistent old man willing to take control of the reluctant Wedding-Guest who refuses to listen to him. The young man, who is startled by the Mariner's impudence to stop him, orders the Mariner to remove his hand from him. The annoyance is inferred from the line: 'Hold off! unhand me, grey-beard loon!', the use of the phrases 'Hold off!', 'unhand me', 'grey-beard loon' as well as the two exclamation marks indicates the discomfort that the young man felt. The Mariner's insistence to captivate the Wedding-Guest vanishes temporarily in a strange way. Again, Coleridge uses alliteration in the last line of this stanza to emphasize the sudden and unexpected loss of interest. However, this situation is just temporary, as the Mariner knows that he can use a more effortless hypnotic power to have the Wedding-Guest's attentiveness.

He holds him with his glittering eye
The Wedding-Guest stood still,
And listens like a **three years' child:**
The Mariner **hath his will.** (13-16)

Again the alliteration serves as an alert to what is coming in the line: He holds him with his glittering eye. The alliteration in this stanza makes it more noticeable as it carries the notion of the Mariner succeeds in his attempt of having his will upon the Wedding-Guest. The emphasis is put on this stanza by infusing alliteration in each line. Another indication of the Mariner's control is the simile in the third line: And listens like a three years' child. Children of three years old are normally obedient and willing to comply with the instructions of elders and mentors, and that is what the Mariner wants from the Wedding-Guest; to listen to him attentively without objections, as Coleridge states it clearly in the last line: The Mariner hath his will. The appearance of the Mariner

is described by mentioning his prominent features 'his skinny hand', 'grey-beard', 'glittering eye' that seem to help the Mariner command the Wedding-Guest physically and mentally.

This image combines two different aspects of human nature; the wisdom of the old and the immaturity of the young. It is a complexity that imposes itself in this image when Coleridge describes the Wedding-Guest as a three years child who is going to listen to a long tale of the Mariner's voyage and supposed to comprehend the moral out of it. Another contradiction that Coleridge paints in this image is the difference between the appearances of the two men. The Wedding-Guest looks neat and full of vitality, whereas the Mariner is depicted as a pale and ragged man overwhelmed and exhausted by the incidents he encountered at the sea, yet the sight of the two forms a harmonious beautiful image that its beauty lies in the well introduced description alongside the contradictions mentioned.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone:

He cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner. (17-20)

The final resolution and the core of this image is depicted in this stanza as the Wedding-Guest complied with the Mariner's will and sat on a stone to hear his story. The act of setting strengthens the willingness of the young man, whether this desire to listen is his choice or imposed upon him by the Mariner's previous actions. In both cases, this is what the Mariner wants. The alliterative sound /s/ in the words 'sat', 'stone' emphasizes the act of setting down; hence the Wedding-Guest is ready to be informed of the Mariner's tale. Although they are both present in front of the gate to the wedding ceremony, the hypnosis had a powerful influence that the two men could not be interrupted by any intrusion from the celebration. Moreover, after the Mariner finished his tale, the Wedding-Guest left to an unknown place as 'a sadder and a wiser man', he did not care to go back to the wedding. The vividness and powerfulness of this image put the readers of this poem in the place of the mesmerized Wedding-Guest immediately, and make them fully involved in the Mariner's tale, that they also feel compelled to listen and pay attention.

The Image of 'Ice All Around'

The presentation of natural scenes with regard to distances, shapes and colours is stressed to assert the depiction of a more intrinsic agreement. All the way through the poem, the reader is provided with generous and detailed descriptions of nature with tints of supernatural elements to make the pleasure of vision as the central idea at some point.

And now there came both mist and snow,
And it grew wondrous cold:
And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald.

And through the drifts the snowy clifts
Did send a dismal sheen:
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken—
The ice was all between. (51-58)

In this image, the ship was carried slowly by a current of air and water as it reached the South Pole; the atmosphere is misty and the sea was full of ice. The temperature is apparently below zero, yet the Mariner still describes it as 'wondrous'. The oxymoron (two words that have contrary meanings used together) here serves the sense of wonderment and amazement that he and his shipmates felt at that time and place. There were icebergs as high as the mast of the ship floating all around the sea reflecting a dreary soft luster on their surface. The green colour of the sea that reflects on the iceberg and makes it look like emerald, functions as the soothing and calming agent in this image, it is also associated with life and harmony found in nature. Another oxymoron is the 'dismal sheen,' as the reflections of light on the surfaces of ice and water are bright and glossy, but the Mariner describes them as gloomy. These contradictory descriptions are probably a preparation for the upcoming settings, where nothing is clearly explainable nor clear, and can only be understood through the Mariner's perception, as Coleridge (1796, p. 193) states: "Incomprehensibility is as necessary an attribute of the First Cause, as Love, or Power, or Intelligence." The image depicts an intense feeling of the noises, movement, and colour, creating a melodious and dreamy atmosphere at the sea.

Alone in such an area, there is no sign of life, no other men sailing there, nor animals living in the place they were at, nothing but ice. The word 'shapes' strengthens the image of a misty atmosphere around them for in mist no obvious objects can be seen, only distant shapes can be seen. The repetition of the word 'ice' emphasizes the diffusion of ice all over the place, contributing to the mental image of the dominance of icebergs over the region. Also, the recurrence of the sound /aɪ/ in this stanza represents the echo found in the places where mountains

are, as an attempt to analogize the image of the sea with icebergs all around with the image of a valley full of mountains, evoking the feeling of isolation and remoteness of the Mariner and his crew. The gigantic icebergs and their sounds, the calmness and lifelessness of the Antarctic represent the magnificence and grandeur of nature. Everything there evokes feelings of beauty and admiration towards nature, although ice is usually associated with death and idleness as it contradicts warmth and vitality. Coleridge deliberately pictures a view of nature that is different from the ones he was describing in his earlier poetry, using the ballad as an appropriate form for this purpose. He wanted to create in the mind of the reader a striking picture of ice bergs floating around the sea of the South Pole; he used a vivid imagery which forces the readers to see them as if they were on the ship along with the Mariner and his shipmates.

The ice was here, the ice was there,

The ice was all around:

It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,

Like noises in a swound! (59-62)

Coleridge uses onomatopoeia along with cacophony and euphony in this stanza. The description of sounds made by the ice in these two lines is marvellous in itself. The words 'cracked,' 'growled,' 'roared,' and 'howled' produce the sounds they represent. They carry the sounds that accompany the vehement movement of ice on the glaciated sea surface, as the separation of ice into parts and chunks. This sound is the only sound that can be heard in this place. The repetition of the conjunction 'and' before each verb gives them more emphasis, making them distinguished from the others. Also, the repetition of the sound /d/ at the end of these onomatopoeic words creates a rhythmic sound, resembling the sound of ice chopping. The Mariner and his shipmates driven by the current to be mesmerized spectators watching an orchestra performing on a stage with all of these sounds like a music produced by nature. The crew of the ship is pictured as ordinary human beings whose perceptions and mental faculties are sufficient to the needs of their voyage. When they enter the South Pole, their senses are stimulated by the chilly atmosphere, so that they experience events they never experienced before, as Beer (1977) claims that the Mariner, in this state, is indefensible against nature's forces.

This scene aroused mixed feelings inside the Mariner; amazement and bewilderment. In such an uncertain state, he again fails to appreciate nature and its elements, referring to all of these sounds by the word 'noises' indicating the annoyance and disturbance he felt. The use of simile in the last line of this stanza is to compare between the 'noises' produced by the movement of the ice and the noises a person can hear when he is about to faint and lose consciousness. This simple simile represents the complexity of sounds mixture that accompanies the ice movement. It is also used by Coleridge to create dream-reality confusion, thus all the scenes and sounds in an experience cannot be determined real or part of a dream. According to H.R. Rookmaaker (1984, p. 71), De Quincey recalls that shortly before Coleridge thought about writing The Ancient Mariner, he had been thinking of writing "a poem on delirium, confounding its own dream-scenery with external things, and connected with the imagery of high latitudes."

This simile also supports the enigma that surrounds this poem. The contradiction is between the simplicity of the anaphora at the beginning of the stanza and the complexity of its last line that contains the archaic word 'swound' meaning 'swoon', this change in diction creates an enigmatic, uncertain, and antique image atmosphere. The word 'swound' is in itself a mystery that Coleridge considered for its meaning and association to paint this image. Beer (1977) supports this idea by explaining that this voyage through the Polar Regions acts as a delirium in disrupting the senses and the perception.

The Image of 'Painted Ship upon a Painted Ocean'

Coleridge in this image manipulates syntax to recreate the view in ways that strongly evoke the coldness, stillness, and lifelessness of the ocean, a perpetual scene that cannot be changed. This change in the arrangement of words and sentences in these stanzas represents the dramatic change in the weather and the conditions that the ship encountered. Coleridge succeeds in depicting this change by the use of literary devices such as inversion and enjambment along with other sound devices that work for the sake of semantic and aesthetic purposes as well.

All in a hot and copper sky,

The bloody Sun, at noon,

Right up above the mast did stand,

No bigger than the Moon. (111-114)

He starts with a description of the sky and the Sun; it is painted as copper coloured, a red-brown sky. It may be interpreted as the sky has an iridescent spectrum (multiple colours) because of the intensity of light, as the copper's colours change when it is being heated as Coleridge used the adjective 'hot'. The precise description of copper's colours under heat tells about the poet's knowledge of physics. The Sun is burning atrociously and it is red as if it is covered by blood. The adjective 'bloody' emphasizes the ferocity of the Sun at that time of the day. It also can be inferred as an imprecation that shows the Mariner's irreverence for nature. These interpretations of the word 'bloody' provide the readers with different ideas about the Mariner's perspective towards the Sun; indicating the Mariner's fear from the threatening sun, and contributes to the repugnance of the Mariner towards

other creatures throughout the plot of the poem before his realization of the opposite at the end. Abe Delson (1974, p. 717) comments that “the lasting image of the sun is one of turmoil and absolute power over the Mariner.” Coleridge personifies the sun stating ‘Right up above the mast did stand,’ hence; he gives Sun human traits by the use of ‘stand.’

Throughout the poem, the Mariner depicts mental images of the places, movements, and shapes of Sun and Moon. The size of the Sun is bigger than the Moon, but in this place as they reached the Equator and at this time it appears similar in size to the Moon because Sun is farer than its usual distance in this place. The use of inversion in the line: ‘Right up above the mast did stand,’ instead of the normal order (The bloody sun at noon stood right up above the mast), helps the speaker of the poem to deliver this change to the reader. The comparison, in the last line of this stanza, may give indirect hints of the Mariner’s preference and predilection for the Moon rather than the Sun. The comparison between them leads to the contrast between their roles in the poem. The Sun made the Mariner and his crew suffer from severe thirst, and drought that caused the ship to shrink, while the Moon is painted in other images as a bride by using adjectives that indicate tenderness and passion. As Beer (1977, p. I) confirms: “the various key images in the great poems owed their existence not only to their vividness and sensuousness, but also to their association with certain basic patterns of ideas.”

Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean. (115-118)

The ship is now fixed in the same position for several days ‘We stuck, nor breath nor motion.’ Coleridge makes use of Ekphrasis like he is in a museum standing in front of some painting and infatuated by its sight. Using simile, the artistic poet draws their state in the sea as if he was describing a painting of a ship on the ocean to emphasize the firm steadiness of the ship and the calmness of the water and atmosphere around them. Words like ‘stuck,’ ‘nor motion,’ ‘idle,’ harmonize with the intrinsic shape of paintings and the frozen state of art in general. In fact, Coleridge tried to eternalize the ship and its crew on the big wide ocean by making it a work of art to last forever.

The repetition in the first line represents the length of time the ship spent in that idle state. Usually, the length of time is closely associated with art, as it is well-known that the quality and value of art directly proportion with time. The older a work of art is, the more it is appreciated. The linkage here might be a coincidence; it can also be made intentionally by Coleridge in this particular way. The use of enjambment in the lines: ‘As idle as a painted ship\ upon a painted ocean’ helps reinforce the linkage between the two lines, making them integrated into one image. Therefore, avoid any confusion that might happen in conveying the image to the reader, if they were separated by commas, semicolons, or periods.

Water, water, everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink. (119-122)

As in the image of the ice all around, Coleridge draws another image but with water all around the ship ‘Water, water, everywhere.’ The repetition of the word ‘water’ provides a deeper level of emphasis of such an idea, and the anaphora itself makes it more prominent; as they are the most notable and memorable lines in the poem and almost the most cited in English poetry, Reeves (1969, p. xxi) confirms this as he states: “repetition is one of the most powerful means of securing emphasis and compelling attention.” Although they are surrounded by water, the hull of the ship started to contract and become desiccated because of the extreme heat from the bloody sun above the mast. Again, Coleridge manipulates paradoxes and repeats the words ‘water’ and ‘everywhere’ to emphasize the situation that they are surrounded by water but they cannot make use of it at all, as they seem to completely used up their supply of fresh water.

The irony in these four lines depicts the ordeal of the Mariner and his shipmate, and drives readers to empathize, understand and share their feelings. This straightforward yet complex image demonstrates the intended meaning in a brief and compressed way in which even longer descriptions would not. Beer (1977, p. 168) adds: “the Mariner allowed himself to be governed by an urge towards fixity and definiteness; he now finds himself immobilized in a still ocean. The breeze has stopped; the sun is registered in the mind as a shrunken burning circle above the mast. The saltiness of the water thwarts the desperate urge to drink.”

The Image of ‘Death of Men’

In *Biographia Literaria* (1834, p. 262), Coleridge states: “It is only in beauty that the sight of what is subordinated and conquered heightens the strength and the pleasure.” Coleridge in his poem exhibits a different kind of beauty. Depicting death and turmoil in a beautiful way is not an easy task, nor seeing beauty in death can be familiar. In the image of the crew when they started to fall dead one after another, Coleridge draws this scene

vividly and exquisitely by employing literary devices, sound devices, a unique diction to form powerful imagery. Although the Mariner and his shipmates thought that the spectre-ship would bring release and redemption at first, it only exacerbated their plight. It introduces two figures who are fixed in the modes of life and death respectively, and who play a game of dice that determines their destinies with an equal certainty.

One after one, by the star-dogged Moon,
Too quick for groan or sigh,
Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,
And cursed me with his eye.

Four times fifty living men,
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan)
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
They dropped down one by one.

The souls did from their bodies fly,—
They fled to bliss or woe!
And every soul, it passed me by,
Like the whizz of my cross-bow! (212-223)

In the delineation of this image, Coleridge begins it with the description of the sight of the moon with a star at its lower edge shining bright in the dark sky. As it can be noticed in several parts of the poem, Coleridge builds the scene first and then proceeds with the course of an action. The suspense of the previous image is now being figured out gradually by the Moon rising with a star at its lower tip. The sun sets and then immediately comes the dark and the stars appear in the sky but they are dim. The transformation of punishment from natural to supernatural, from thirst and prolonged drought to a sudden death of two hundred men with uncertain destiny, to heaven or hell, whereas the Mariner is prone to be affected by a living death, a chronic torment of severe physical and spiritual suffering.

Everyone of the crew rotated his face towards the Mariner with a sudden sharp pain, looked him in the eye and cursed him. When death approached them, they must have known that they couldn't prevent it as if they will retire a little and afterwards return again. Death was an end to their agony in the sea. Two hundred men died easily without complaints nor pain. The repetition of 'nor sigh nor groan' emphasizes the easiness and fastness of death. Taking their last breaths through their baked lips and they drop dead one by one silently, the souls left their bodies and like arrows they passed by the Mariner, their bodies are now empty.

The internal rhyme –which he uses occasionally in the poem- in the line: 'With heavy thump, a lifeless lump' creates a rhythmic beat to give special importance to this line and lead the reader accurately to the idea of the men's bodies making a ponderous and heavy sound as they were falling dead on the deck of the ship in the form of bodies that are deprived of souls and lives. Coleridge deploys different rhythms to express different tones and moods throughout the poem. The alliteration of the sound /d/ in the words 'dropped', 'down' evokes the heavy sound of the drop; also it emphasizes and draws attention to these words. The alliteration of the light consonant sound /l/ in the words 'lifeless' and 'lump' can be pronounced easily, which adds a sense of easiness to what is happening. Beer (1977, p. 168) explains that "in the case of the crew those fates are realized almost immediately. The sight and sound of their deaths is, meanwhile, part of the Mariner's own fate, confirming his fixity of isolation into a state of 'life in death'. He remains trapped like an ever-living insect in some ever-torturing substance."

When they were dropping on the deck of the ship, no indication of vitality is left except their eyes that gazed at the Mariner and haunted him, full of fear, hatred as they took their last glimpse of the Mariner. Again Coleridge emphasizes the role of the eye in granting beauty even to a corpse that is deprived of everything but an expression of bewilderment on its face. These expressions and the eyes of the crew are telling a story of suffering the consequences of the Mariner's act, as if they are telling the Mariner 'it is all your fault.' Coleridge in this line emphasizes the natural and supernatural role of the eyes.

Although death has taken the crew's ability to speak or even to sigh or groan, they still can communicate through their eyes. They expressed their anger and resentment towards the Mariner using their eyes when their tongues fail to express them. This image also evokes the Mariner's alienation and separation from his shipmates because of his sense of guilt and the curse from the rest of his crew, and his responsibility for the death of the crew. Beer (1977, p. 169) adds: "the beating of his eyeballs 'like pulses' – suffering a movement which in normal human life operates more unobtrusively and benevolently. Above all, his eyes are caught and held by the fixed curses that glitter in the eyes of the dead."

Coleridge made the death of the men look gentle and less provocative by using euphemism in this image which is the substitution of some unpleasant and violent words or expressions with pleasant and innocuous words as in this line: 'The souls did from their bodies fly,' along with the inversion in this line to stress the easiness of their death, and to retain the rhyme scheme. The Mariner believes that he can hear their souls as they leave the bodies of the crew, which emphasizes the supernaturalism and superstitions of old beliefs that souls can be seen

and heard. Coleridge used simile to compare the sound of the souls leaving the bodies to the sound of arrows leaving the cross-bow, to give the readers the impression that their death was fast and abrupt. The use of simile helps building the imagery in this stanza and facilitates the visualization of the image for the reader. Also the use of the onomatopoeic word ‘whizz’ has an emphatic effect on the description of their sudden death, the use of ‘whizz’ works as a reminder of the Mariner’s misdeed. Coleridge connects the two images cleverly that the incidents in the poem are correlated.

Though there are supernatural elements in this image (not factual), but Coleridge connects them with the reality of death. In fact, Coleridge immortalized the ship crew by drawing a beautiful image of their death, he also transferred this macabre scene into a beautiful one with pictures and sounds, as Beer (1977, p. 175) states: “without the reader’s being aware of inconsistency, he gradually infuses the superstitious, sometimes crabbed speech of the earlier part of the poem with a lyrical utterance attuned to the workings of his own sensibility is a marvellous piece of poetic conjuring.”

The Image of ‘The Salvage’

Under the water it rumbled on,
Still louder and more dread:
It reached the ship, it split the bay;
The ship went down like lead. (546-549)

The Mariner describes the constant, heavy, and resonant sound that came from under the water. It is getting louder as it gets nearer each time. The Mariner is waiting with apprehension for the approaching frightening and dreadful sound. When the fierce movement finally reached the ship, it caused the inlet of the ocean to split and be divided into two fractions, leading to the sinking of the ship in this fissure. The simile in the last line compares the sinking of the ship to that of lead into the water. This simile originates from the scientific fact that lead sinks immediately because of its high density. If one throws a piece of lead into the water, it will sink because the water and lead have different densities. The latter is denser than water.

Stunned by that **loud** and dreadful **sound**,
Which sky and ocean smote,
Like one that hath been seven days drowned
My body lay afloat;
But swift as dreams, myself I found
Within the Pilot’s boat. (550-555)

The Mariner was scared by this sound that struck both the ocean and the sky. The words ‘loud’ and ‘sound’ give this sound the features of thunder, and the word ‘smote’ gives it the features of lightning. However, instead of coming from the sky, this sound comes from under the surface of the ocean. The Mariner drowns with the ship, but his body went above the surface of the water again as if it was a corpse that has been drowned for several days. This simile in the line: *Like one that hath been seven days drowned*, comes from the scientific fact that when the body is submerged under the water, the lungs and the body become filled with water instead of air, which in turn causes the body to stay drowned in the bottom of the ocean. After several days, the corpse starts to rot by the bacteria which produce gases inside the corpse, making it buoyant and able to float again. In a sudden, the Mariner found himself within the Pilot’s boat. Coleridge compares the quickness of the rescue to the velocity that a dream goes by. This simile in the line: ‘But swift as dreams, myself I found’ also indicates that the Mariner was unconscious at that time, as if the whole of what he experienced was part of a dream.

Upon the whirl, where sank the ship,
The boat spun round and round;
And all was still, save that the hill
Was telling of the sound. (556-559)

The same whirl that caused the ship to sink, also caused the boat that carries the Pilot, the Pilot’s Boy, the Hermit, and the rescued Mariner, to spin around rapidly in a spiral movement. The repetition of the word ‘round’ stresses the fast turning of the boat. Everything seems to calm and become quiet except for the echoes of the loud frightening sound reflecting from the hill near the bay.

I moved my lips—the Pilot shrieked
And fell down in a fit;
The holy Hermit raised his eyes,
And prayed where he did sit. (560-563)

Here, the Mariner's ship had already sunk and disappeared under the white froth of sea. The Mariner has been rescued by a Pilot, his son, the Hermit. They thought that the Mariner is dead. Unexpectedly, the Mariner moves his lips as an indication that he is still alive. The Pilot screams out of fear, and faints. The Hermit is sitting at bow of the boat, he prayed while he raised his eyes to the sky. What was his prayer?

I took the oars: the Pilot's boy,
Who now doth crazy go,
Laughed loud and long, and all the while
His eyes went to and fro.
'Ha! hal!' quoth he, 'full plain I see,
The Devil knows how to row.' (564-569)

After the Pilot went unconscious, the Mariner is now inclined to rise and take hold of the oars and start propelling the boat. This action represents the struggle and persistence of human beings in spite of hardships and sufferings. The Pilot's Boy is shocked by what he has just seen and erupts into a long laughter. The alliteration of the sound /l/ in the words 'Laughed', 'loud', 'long', emphasizes the Boy's reaction. His eyes wobble from side to side as he keeps laughing, stating he can see very clearly that 'The Devil knows how to row'. This line indicates that the Mariner is seen as the devil. The Boy's perception could not comprehend what he saw, because he thought for a while that the Mariner is dead, thus, he perceived the Mariner as a devil. This image combines the two contradictions evil (represented by the Mariner) and goodness (represented by the Hermit), both are in one boat, contributing to the overall picture that the two are found in life side to side.

Conclusion

Coleridge was an extraordinary poet who has an influential literary mind. His imagination, that has a capacity for bringing together contraries in his verse which deems essential, produced prolific revolutionary ideas about nature, art, and artistry. This generous exploration of natural and supernatural worlds is presented as a sea voyage which represents Coleridge's poetic journey. *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* is considered as his 'magnum opus' that works as a testament to his poetic powers, and a significant art piece of great importance and value, known worldwide. This evocative narrative poem, difficult to disregard or forget, contains an abundance of sensory details. These visual and auditory descriptions appeal to the reader in a way that tickles their perceptions. These iconic images captivated the readers by manipulating their predictions and anticipations as well as arousing their sentiments of hope and fear. They are implanted in the minds and hearts of the readers.

Coleridge's manipulation of rhyme and meter, the divergence between atmospheres and tones, and the merging of familiar and peculiar in one image; all serve to endow the poem its magic. Moreover, some of these images are compendiously yet adequately painted; however, others are lengthy and detailed. In both cases, the outcome is a harmonious beauty that allows for multitude of interpretations. For Coleridge (1834, p. 178), a legitimate poem is the one "the parts of which mutually support and explain each other; all in their proportion harmonizing with and supporting the purpose." Any analysis that does not take these characteristics into consideration, will fail to provide a true and faithful appreciation of the poem. On the opposite, if one treats Coleridge as an artist and expounds his art with reverence to the smallest characteristics and details of these images, this will add other dimensions to the understanding and appreciation of this poem.

This demands an analysis that is independent in its nature. Using the effects found in the literary text created by the poet will lead to a better recognition of the meaning, as well as an insight into the labyrinths of the poet's consciousness and subconscious, thus, the opaqueness in the end becomes pellucid and clearly perceived. As stated earlier, artistic beauty evokes certain feelings, so an artistic poem will have some effects on its audience. This impact emerges from the imagery found in the poem. Every image has a psychological effect that differs from one reader to another. Arnaud Pictet and Emily Holmes (2012, p. 187), in their scientific study *The Powerful Impact of Mental Imagery in Changing Emotion*, proved that "mental imagery was found to have a more powerful impact on changing emotion for both negative and positive emotional states." Applying this theory on the previously discussed images, a reader of this poem can elicit some probable psychological effects out of these images.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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