

The rime of the ancient mariner theology religion



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Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* is said to be his effort to convey supernatural panics to a realistic scene. Some critics have argued that the moral truths of the verse form are non merely unintelligible but besides irrational. But for other critics, this unreason is what gives the verse form its greatest quality. In analysing and reviewing Coleridge 's verse form, an in depth analysis of the irrational is needed. This unreason is non Coleridge 's failure to explicate the supernatural but really an grounds of its Christian moral codification and that the verse form 's unreason emerges because of Coleridge 's interior struggle with his transition from Unitarianism to the Anglicanism faith. This hermeneutic must be in head when trying to construe Coleridge 's verse form.

Before we can look at modern critics such as Christopher Stokes, J Robert Barth, John T Netland, and even Jerome J. McGann, we must first expression at how earlier critics have looked at Coleridge 's work through a Christian eyes. The article " Coleridge And The Aglow Gloom: An Analysis Of The ' Symbolical Language ' In ' The Rime Of The Ancient Mariner ' " by Elliott B. Gose, Jr. examines the verse form through a Christian position merely because Gose believes " the verse form is filled with Christian furnishings " (239) . Gose shows how symbols carry a Christian political orientation and spends considerable clip on analyzing how the Sun (whether glorious or ruddy) represents God while the other forces in the verse form represent the forces of nature. In the terminal, Gose claims that nature is low-level to God and that the Mariner 's ocean trip does non cover with a physical ocean trip but it represents a " Romantic impulse to research the ageless psyche and the temporal emotions " (244) . But throughout the article, Gose fails to to

the full explicate the other alien elements in Coleridge ' s verse form. For case, he brings up A life-in-death, who wins the Mariner in a gamble, but then A dismisses A her by stating A how “ she is evidently outside the Christian hierarchy and is connected with a whole strand of non-Christian figures, incidents, and images in the verse form ” (242) . He interprets this from the vague account given from the rubric and continues with the remainder of the verse form still in Christian ideological model. More modern critics will indicate out how though much of the verse form seems to utilize Christian footings, the more unusual elements and the equivocal inside informations create distance between familiar and unfamiliar which gave problem to many earlier Christian critical readings of Coleridge ' s text.

Gose ' s confusion with the rubric and its vague Christian accent can be explained in “ Reading And Resistance: The Hermeneutic Subtext Of The Rime Of The Ancient Mariner ” by John T Netland. He suggests that the verse form displays an “ incongruous mixture of heathen and Christian symbols ” (38) and examines the usage of the rubric as a hermeneutic. Although the “ gloss-writing editor ” is reacting to the original verse form and seeks to construe it for a modern audience, the editor marginalizes the Mariner ' s experiences and emphasizes the Christian overtones of the verse form. Netland states the rubric and the verse form itself create a alone tenseness “ between contrasting spiritual imaginativenesss ” (41) . One is a universe of categorised and rational set of spiritual experiences (inferred from rubric) while the other a religious, mystical, irrational spiritual sublimity (from the verse form) . Netland states that Coleridge may hold gotten his thought from Bibles at that clip with their rubric notes that gave a clearer reading of

the scriptural text. This is really similar to Jerome J. McGann ' s scrutinies in his superb article, " The Meaning Of The Ancient Mariner " , where McGann briefly inside informations the verse form ' s history from its initial unfavorable judgment to Coleridge ' s embrace of Christian political orientation to his Higher Critical analytics of the re-interpretative procedure of the Bible to Coleridge ' s effort in miming this layered hermeneutic upon his ain work. McGann points to the fact that Coleridge ' s verse form was originally a literary lay among all the other lyrical laies found Wordsworth ' s printed work, Lyrical Ballads. With the 2nd edition, and with Wordsworth ' s concerns, Coleridge made changes to do the verse form less a literary lay and more a lyrical lay. Coleridge may hold realized what he was making was similar to what occurred in Biblical narrations. Coleridge had argued in length on issues of Higher Criticism that Scriptures were " non an direct and fixed scriptural text but an evolved and continuously germinating set of records which include the Church ' s ulterior rubrics on and readings of the earlier paperss " (47) . McGann unusually suggests that Coleridge ' s revised version of his verse form shows four clear beds of development: " (a) an original seaman ' s narrative ; (B) the ballad narration of that narrative ; (degree Celsius) the column rubric added when the lay was, we are to say, foremost printed ; and (vitamin D) Coleridge ' s ain point of position on his invented stuffs " (50) . The last shows Coleridge ' s ain theory of spiritual and symbolic reading. McGann believes that " The Rime of the Ancient Mariner " is Coleridge ' s imitation of " a culturally redacted literary work " (51) .

But coming back to Netland ' s article, the rubric, he believes, becomes an unequal hermeneutic for analysing the verse form. Netland suggests that the rubric is unequal as a hermeneutic since the editor reduces the Mariner ' s religious journey, actions, and agonies into a straight-forward neat secret plan to stress Christian salvation. Netland states that " the Mariner ^ has experienced something of the spiritual sublime (whether existent or false) , and his compulsive retellings of his narrative point to the incomprehensible reconditeness of his experience " (51) . The author of the rubric fails to understand this and the rubric represses the Mariner ' s heightened spiritual experience. Netland suggests that we alternatively respond like the amazed Wedding Guest which is far more consistent to Coleridgean hermeneutics when analysing the journey of the Mariner.

But can the rubric be ignored? McGann disagrees and states that the alterations (every bit good as the add-on of the rubric) from 1798 to 1817 show an of import narrative in Coleridge ' s development of the intents of his verse form. Many believed that these alterations were " a reactionist motion in which a dare and extremist verse form is transformed into a comparatively tame work of Christian symbolism " (42) when Coleridge retreated from his extremist positions to his ulterior Christian political orientation. McGann, in his article, dives profoundly into Coleridge ' s apprehension of the Higher Critical analysis of the Christian Bible to demo Coleridge ' s Hermeneutic Model of his verse form arising from his thoughts of the procedure of the Bible ' s creative activity. Coleridge saw how God ' s Word was " expressed and later reexpressed through commentary, rubric, and reading by peculiar people at different times harmonizing to their differing visible radiations "

(43) . Coleridge ' s verse form is presented as merely this type of reinterpreted text retaining its ain ideological coherency even through the atomization from reinterpretation. McGann states that the verse form shows Coleridge ' s procedure of “ textual development ” and the symbolic significance of that procedure is a Christian redemptive one.

We can see how the really nature of faith affected Coleridge in his earlier 1798 version and his ulterior 1817 version (with rubric) and can reason that the poet himself and his religion must be examined. J. Robert Barth ' s book, *Romanticism and Transcendence: Wordsworth, Coleridge, and the Religious Imagination*, delves profoundly into Coleridge ' s theories, battles, and faith. Although, he spends the first four chapter researching Wordsworth ' s plants and how it patterns Coleridge ' s theories of imaginativeness, he examines closely the nature of faith in “ The Rime of the Ancient Mariner ” in chapter 6. Although Coleridge had theological guessss, he was a “ practical Christian ” (89) . Coleridge believed in populating out the practical facets of his religion. Barth does non give a completeA scrutiny of Coleridge ' s verse form, but hones in to what he believes gives strength and beauty to Coleridge ' s poesy. The impression of “ mutual opposition ” (a “ balance or rapprochement of antonyms ” (6)) is cardinal to Coleridge ' s theories of imaginativeness. Opposite objects, qualities, or “ tensenesss exist within the same ‘ field of force ‘ ” (6) . Barth besides looks at supplication as a agency of conveying these two forces into harmoniousness (natural and supernatural) . Coleridge is concerned with supplication but at a deeper degree as a agency of “ unifying the animal with the Creator ” (90) . Coleridge ' s guilt and demand for salvation is bound to his yearning for

forgiveness and friendly relationship with God. Coleridge calls prayer the “the attempt to link the wretchedness of Self with the beatitude of God” (90). It is a agency of linking the natural to the supernatural, the temporal to the ageless, and the immanent to the transcendent. Barth states that even though Coleridge does travel from his Unitarian political orientation to his Christian political orientation, a displacement that can be seen in the verse form and its alteration, this thought of supplication is still deep within Coleridge’s psyche. Although, Barth explores supplication within the verse form during Coleridge’s transition, this displacement of religion can be explored farther as agencies for a proper hermeneutic in construing Coleridge’s verse form.

Christopher Stokes’ article “ ‘ My Soul In Agony ’ : Irrationality And Christianity In The Rime Of The Ancient Mariner ” explores the battle between the physical and the religious universe in Coleridge’s verse form. His verse form contains unusual elements that seem unintelligible and irrational. Stokes provinces that these elements stem from Coleridge’s Unitarian moral theory that he subscribed to at the clip. Because these unusual elements are unintelligible, there is an ambiguity between the supernatural events and Orthodox faith. Though much of the verse form seems to utilize Christian footings, there is still inside informations that are equivocal and this creates distance between familiar and unfamiliar. Stokes provinces that these equivocal minutes create a divided tone and he claims this is from Coleridge’s hard passage from Unitarianism to Anglican Christianity. Coleridge struggled with Christianity’s construct of “ original

wickedness ” and a closer scrutiny must be conducted to understand why he perchance struggled with it.

The construct and philosophy of “ Original Sin ” was developed by the early Roman church and was based on Paul ‘ s instructions found in the Book of Romans. In the Old Testament (specifically from Genesis) , A Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the Garden and the consequence was that they were cursed and banished out of the Garden. Because of the actions of Adam and Eve, “ wickedness ” (a leaning to disobey God) originated in the Garden and continued to all future coevalss. Paul teaches a reinterpretation of this Genesis narrative. In Romans 5. 12, Paul states that “ merely as wickedness entered the universe through one adult male, and decease through wickedness, and in this manner decease came to all people, because all sinned. ” At the clip of Paul ‘ s instruction, audiences of the early Gospels will be familiar with the narrative of Jesus (particularly since Mark and Matthew may hold been go arounding prior to Romans being written) . The audiences would understand that Jesus died as a sacrificial lamb for the wickednesss (existent personal committed wickednesss ; a personal noncompliance) of all adult male. But Paul goes to re-explain Christ ‘ s decease to add that Jesus died to non merely take our personal wickednesss but besides to take the clasp of original wickedness on humanity which consequences in decease. “ For merely as through the noncompliance of the one adult male the many were made evildoers, so besides through the obeisance of the one adult male the many will be made righteous ” (Romans 5. 19) . This meant that all humanity was guilty for their personal wickednesss and guilty for the wickedness of Adam and Eve that was passed to coevalss.

Subsequently under the Roman church, Saint Augustine of Hippo taught that all of humanity was in a province of wickedness that came from Adam. Man is born with wickedness and a diminished free-will that gravitates toward wickedness. Adam and Eve ' s wickedness and guilt is carried onto each coevals (Kelley, 34-38) . This was the construct of “ Original Sin. ” This is a belief that is still held today by Catholics and Protestants (although, it may change based on demonisation) .

But Unitarians do not believe in the construct of “ Original Sin. ” They do not believe that the wickedness of Adam and Eve corrupted all of humanity and that we still carry their guilt. They province “ it would belie the love and justness of God to impute to us the wickedness of others, because wickedness is one ' s ain personal action ” (Jol? zsef, 107) . This was a cardinal to why Coleridge struggled in his transition to Christianity and is apparent in his verse form. Stokes, in his article, explains the battle readers have with the strange and irrational elements in the verse form are brooding and grounds of Coleridge ' s battle in his going from Unitarian ideologyA to Anglican ideology. A An illustration can be seen with the violent death of the Albatross which many critics agree is a unusual component to the verse form. The Mariner merely kills the bird with no idea prior and the lone daze is from the Wedding Guest. The crew at first thought it incorrect, but so agreed that the bird was bad fortune. Without the rubric notes (and in the original 1798 version) , it seems that even nature is unmoved by something that seemed like a offense and the reader is n't given any ground that the killing set any clear event in gesture (a “ deciding effects of motivations ” based on Unitarian moral theory (5)) . The millstone ' deathA is a “ powerful but

ab initio unintelligible event ” but has “ no obvious lesson or spiritual significance ” (6) . A

Coleridge, after his transition and firming in Christian political orientation, comes to term with original wickedness and revises his work (through additions, minuss, and including a rubric for the verse form) giving it a more Anglican tone. The rubric becomes an Anglican hermeneutic conveying the verse form under a Christian political orientation and moral order. The verse form under the rubric gives it aA ChristianA “ salvational flight ” (20) . It is merely through the rubric (and Coleridge ‘ s ulterior alteration in 1817) that we learn that “ the antediluvian Mariner inhospitably killeth the pious bird of good portents. ” Stokes understands the common critical belief that “ the Mariner conspicuously relies on Christian rites and beliefs. . . the Christian philosophy fails to explicate his universe of inordinate agony and irrational events ” (11) . A But he states that before we dismiss these unusual elements as irrational, A we must exploreA Coleridge ‘ s spiritual thought at the clip of composing the verse form and both its alterations. It is merely through the scrutiny of his personal religion and transition that we can develop a proper hermeneutic to construe Coleridge ‘ s verse form.

It would be erroneous to assumeA unreason asA aA failure ofA the poem’sA Christian moral codification. One must look at Coleridge ‘ s transition every bit good as his battle with the Christian philosophy of original wickedness that creates the irrational or at least creates equivocal linguistic communication. It is merely through this hermeneutic that we can to the full understand and appreciate Coleridge ‘ s verse form where he attempts to understand and show to usA the constructs that are beyond understanding.

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