MINISTRY OF HIGHER AND SPECIAL EDUCATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN
SAMARKAND STATE INSTITUTE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES

# REPORT

## **Theme:** *A Christmas Carol by Samuel Taylor Coleridge*

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## Contents

**Samuel Taylor Coleridge**

Coleridge in 1795.

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| **Born** | 21 October 1772<br>Ottery St. Mary, Devon, England |
| **Died** | 25 July 1834 (aged 61)<br>Highgate, Middlesex, England |
| **Occupation** | Poet, critic, philosopher |
| **Alma mater** | Jesus College, Cambridge |
| **Literary movement** | Romanticism |
| **Notable work(s)** | The Rime of the Ancient Mariner,Kubla Khan |
| **Spouse(s)** | Sarah Fricker |
| **Children** | Sara Coleridge, Berkeley Coleridge, Derwent Coleridge,Hartley Coleridge |

**Signature**

**Samuel Taylor Coleridge** (21 October 1772 – 25 July 1834) was an English poet, literary critic and philosopher who, with his friendWilliam Wordsworth, was a founder of the Romantic Movement in England and a member of the Lake Poets. He wrote the poems *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and *Kubla Khan*, as well as the major prose work *Biographia Literaria*. His critical work, especially onShakespeare, was highly influential, and he helped introduce German idealist philosophy to English-speaking culture. He coined many familiar words and phrases, including the celebrated suspension of disbelief. He was a major influence on Emerson, and American transcendentalism.

Throughout his adult life, Coleridge suffered from crippling bouts of anxiety and depression; it has been speculated by some that he suffered from bipolar disorder, a condition not identified during his lifetime. Coleridge suffered from poor health that may have stemmed from a bout of rheumatic fever and other childhood illnesses. He was treated for these concerns with laudanum, which fostered a lifelong opium addiction.

## Early life

*Early life of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*

Coleridge was born on 21 October 1772 in the country town of Ottery St Mary, Devonshire, England. Samuel's father, the Reverend John Coleridge (1718–1781), was a well-respected vicar of the parish and headmaster of Henry VIII's Free Grammar School at Ottery. He had three children by his first wife. Samuel was the youngest of ten by Reverend Coleridge's second wife, Anne Bowden (1726–1809). Coleridge suggests that he "took no pleasure in boyish sports" but instead read "incessantly" and played by himself. After John Coleridge died in 1781, 8-year-old Samuel was sent to Christ's Hospital, a charity school founded in the 16th century in Greyfriars, London, where he remained throughout his childhood, studying and writing poetry. At that school Coleridge became friends with Charles Lamb, a schoolmate, and studied the works of Virgil and William Lisle Bowles. In one of a series of autobiographical letters written to Thomas Poole, Coleridge wrote: "At six years old I remember to have read *Belisarius*, *Robinson Crusoe*, and*Philip Quarll* – and then I found the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments* – one tale of which (the tale of a man who was compelled to seek for a pure virgin) made so deep an impression on me (I had read it in the evening while my mother was mending stockings) that I was haunted by spectres whenever I was in the dark – and I distinctly remember the anxious and fearful eagerness with which I used to watch the window in which the books lay – and whenever the sun lay upon them, I would seize it, carry it by the wall, and bask, and read."

However, Coleridge seems to have appreciated his teacher, as he wrote in recollections of his schooldays in *Biographia Literaria*:

I enjoyed the inestimable advantage of a very sensible, though at the same time, a very severe master [...] At the same time that we were studying the Greek Tragic Poets, he made us read Shakespeare and Milton as lessons: and they were the

lessons too, which required most time and trouble to bring up, so as to escape his censure. I learnt from him, that Poetry, even that of the loftiest, and, seemingly, that of the wildest odes, had a logic of its own, as severe as that of science; and more difficult, because more subtle, more complex, and dependent on more, and more fugitive causes. [...] In our own English compositions (at least for the last three years of our school education) he showed no mercy to phrase, metaphor, or image, unsupported by a sound sense, or where the same sense might have been conveyed with equal force and dignity in plainer words... In fancy I can almost hear him now, exclaiming *Harp? Harp? Lyre? Pen and ink, boy, you mean! Muse, boy, Muse? your Nurse's daughter, you mean! Pierian spring? Oh aye! the cloister-pump, I suppose!* [...] Be this as it may, there was one custom of our master's, which I cannot pass over in silence, because I think it ... worthy of imitation. He would often permit our theme exercises, ... to accumulate, till each lad had four or five to be looked over. Then placing the whole number abreast on his desk, he would ask the writer, why this or that sentence might not have found as appropriate a place under this or that other thesis: and if no satisfying answer could be returned, and two faults of the same kind were found in one exercise, the irrevocable verdict followed, the exercise was torn up, and another on the same subject to be produced, in addition to the tasks of the day.

Throughout his life, Coleridge idealised his father as pious and innocent, while his relationship with his mother was more problematic. His childhood was characterised by attention seeking, which has been linked to his dependent personality as an adult. He was rarely allowed to return home during the school term, and this distance from his family at such a turbulent time proved emotionally damaging. He later wrote of his loneliness at school in the poem *Frost at Midnight*: "With unclosed lids, already had I dreamt/Of my sweet birthplace."

From 1791 until 1794, Coleridge attended Jesus College, Cambridge. In 1792, he won the Browne Gold Medal for an ode that he wrote on the slave trade. In December 1793, he left the college and enlisted in the Royal Dragoons using the false name "Silas Tomkyn Comberbache", perhaps because of debt or because the girl that he loved, Mary Evans, had rejected him. Afterwards, he was rumoured to have had a bout of severe depression. His brothers arranged for his discharge a few

months later under the reason of "insanity" and he was readmitted to Jesus College, though he would never receive a degree from Cambridge.

Pantisocracy and marriage

Plaque commemorating Coleridge at Ottery St Mary Church

**Cambridge and Somerset**

At the university, he was introduced to political and theological ideas then considered radical, including those of the poet Robert Southey. Coleridge joined Southey in a plan, soon abandoned, to found a utopian commune-like society, called Pantisocracy, in the wilderness ofPennsylvania. In 1795, the two friends married sisters Sarah and Edith Fricker, in St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol, but Coleridge's marriage with Sarah proved unhappy. He grew to detest his wife, whom he only married because of social constraints. He eventually separated from her. Coleridge made plans to establish a journal, *The Watchman*, to be printed every eight days to avoid a weekly newspaper tax. The first issue of the short-lived journal was published in March 1796; it had ceased publication by May of that year.

The years 1797 and 1798, during which he lived in what is now known as Coleridge Cottage, in Nether Stowey, Somerset, were among the most fruitful of Coleridge's life. In 1795, Coleridge met poet William Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy. (Wordsworth, having visited him and being enchanted by the surroundings, rented Alfoxton Park, a little over three miles [5 km] away.) Besides the *Rime of The Ancient Mariner*, he composed the symbolic poem *Kubla Khan*, written—Coleridge himself claimed—as a result of an opium dream, in "a kind of a reverie"; and the first part of the narrative poem *Christabel*. The writing of *Kubla Khan*, written about the Mongol emperor Kublai Khan and his legendary palace at Xanadu, was said to have been interrupted by the arrival of a "Person from Porlock" – an event that has been embellished upon in such varied contexts as science fiction and Nabokov's *Lolita*. During this period, he also produced his much-praised "conversation" poems *This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison*, *Frost at Midnight*, and *The Nightingale*.

In 1798, Coleridge and Wordsworth published a joint volume of poetry, *Lyrical Ballads*, which proved to be the starting point for the Englishromantic age. Wordsworth may have contributed more poems, but the real star of the collection was Coleridge's first version of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. It was the longest work and drew more praise and attention than anything else in the volume. In the spring Coleridge temporarily took over for Rev. Joshua Toulmin at

Taunton's Mary Street Unitarian Chapel while Rev. Toulmin grieved over the drowning death of his daughter Jane. Poetically commenting on Toulmin's strength, Coleridge wrote in a 1798 letter to John Prior Estlin, "I walked into Taunton (eleven miles) and back again, and performed the divine services for Dr. Toulmin. I suppose you must have heard that his daughter, (Jane, on 15 April 1798) in a melancholy derangement, suffered herself to be swallowed up by the tide on the sea-coast between Sidmouth and Bere (Beer). These events cut cruelly into the hearts of old men: but the good Dr. Toulmin bears it like the true practical Christian, – there is indeed a tear in his eye, but that eye is lifted up to the Heavenly Father."

**The West Midlands and the North**

Coleridge also worked briefly in Shropshire, where he came in December 1797 as locum to its local Unitarian minister, Dr Rowe, in their church in the High Street at Shrewsbury. He is said to have read his *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* at a literary evening in Mardol. He was then contemplating a career in the ministry, and gave a probationary sermon in High Street church on Sunday, 14 January 1798. William Hazlitt, a Unitarian minister's son, was in the congregation, having walked from Wem to hear him. Coleridge later visited Hazlitt and his father at Wem but within a day or two of preaching he received a letter from Josiah Wedgwood II, who had offered to help him out of financial difficulties with an annuity of £150 per year on condition he give up his ministerial career. Coleridge accepted this, to the disappointment of Hazlitt who hoped to have him as a neighbour in Shropshire.

In the autumn of 1798, Coleridge and Wordsworth left for a stay in Germany; Coleridge soon went his own way and spent much of his time in university towns. During this period, he became interested in German philosophy, especially the transcendental idealism and critical philosophy of Immanuel Kant, and in the literary criticism of the 18th century dramatist Gotthold Lessing. Coleridge studied German and, after his return to England, translated the dramatic trilogy *Wallenstein* by the German Classical poet Friedrich Schillerinto English. He continued to pioneer these ideas through his own critical writings for the rest of his life (sometimes without attribution), although they were unfamiliar and difficult for a culture dominated by empiricism.

In 1799, Coleridge and Wordsworth stayed at Thomas Hutchinson's farm on the Tees at Sockburn, near Darlington.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge's daughterSara Fricker-Coleridge – 1830. Portrait by Richard James Lane

It was at Sockburn that Coleridge wrote his ballad-poem *Love*, addressed to Sara Hutchinson. The knight mentioned is the mailed figure on the Conyers tomb in ruined Sockburn church. The figure has a wyvern at his feet, a reference to

the Sockburn Worm slain by Sir John Conyers (and a possible source for Lewis Carroll's *Jabberwocky*). The worm was supposedly buried under the rock in the nearby pasture; this was the 'greystone' of Coleridge's first draft, later transformed into a 'mount'. The poem was a direct inspiration for John Keats' famous poem *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*.

Coleridge's early intellectual debts, besides German idealists like Kant and critics like Lessing, were first to William Godwin's *Political Justice*, especially during his Pantisocratic period, and to David Hartley's *Observations on Man*, which is the source of the psychology which is found in *Frost at Midnight*. Hartley argued that one becomes aware of sensory events as impressions, and that "ideas" are derived by noticing similarities and differences between impressions and then by naming them. Connections resulting from the coincidence of impressions create linkages, so that the occurrence of one impression triggers those links and calls up the memory of those ideas with which it is associated (See Dorothy Emmet, "Coleridge and Philosophy").

Coleridge was critical of the literary taste of his contemporaries, and a literary conservative insofar as he was afraid that the lack of taste in the ever growing masses of literate people would mean a continued desecration of literature itself.

In 1800, he returned to England and shortly thereafter settled with his family and friends at Keswick in the Lake District of Cumberland to be near Grasmere, where Wordsworth had moved. Soon, however, he was beset by marital problems, nightmares, illnesses, increased opium dependency, tensions with Wordsworth, and a lack of confidence in his poetic powers, all of which fuelled the composition of*Dejection: An Ode* and an intensification of his philosophical studies.

In 1802, Coleridge took a nine-day walking holiday in the fells of the Lake District. He made an ascent of Scafell Pike which is notable for three things: it was the first written record of a climb of this mountain; it was a very early, if not the first "recreational" rock climb; Coleridge took a particularly dangerous route down the mountain, which he was lucky to survive.

## Later life and increasing drug use

Coleridge at age 42, portrait byWashington Allston

*Main article: Coleridge and opium*

### Travel and *The Friend*

In 1804, he travelled to Sicily and Malta, working for a time as Acting Public Secretary of Malta under the Commissioner, Alexander Ball, a task he performed quite successfully. He lived in St Antons' Palace in the village of Attard. However, he gave this up and returned to England in 1806.

Dorothy Wordsworth was shocked at his condition upon his return. From 1807 to 1808, Coleridge returned to Malta and then travelled in Sicily and Italy, in the hope that leaving Britain's damp climate would improve his health and thus enable him to reduce his consumption of opium. Thomas de Quincey alleges in his *Recollections of the Lakes and the Lake Poets* that it was during this period that Coleridge became a full-blown opium addict, using the drug as a substitute for the lost vigour and creativity of his youth. It has been suggested, however, that this reflects de Quincey's own experiences more than Coleridge's.

His opium addiction (he was using as much as two quarts of laudanum a week) now began to take over his life: he separated from his wife Sarah in 1808, quarrelled with Wordsworth in 1810, lost part of his annuity in 1811, and put himself under the care of Dr. Daniel in 1814. His addiction caused severe constipation, which required regular and humiliating enemas.

In 1809, Coleridge made his second attempt to become a newspaper publisher with the publication of the journal entitled *The Friend*. It was a weekly publication that, in Coleridge's typically ambitious style, was written, edited, and published almost entirely single-handedly. Given that Coleridge tended to be highly disorganised and had no head for business, the publication was probably doomed from the start. Coleridge financed the journal by selling over five hundred subscriptions, over two dozen of which were sold to members of Parliament, but in late 1809, publication was crippled by a financial crisis and Coleridge was obliged to approach "Conversation Sharp", Tom Poole and one or two other wealthy friends for an emergency loan to continue. *The Friend* was an eclectic publication that drew upon every corner of Coleridge's remarkably diverse knowledge of law, philosophy, morals, politics, history, and literary criticism. Although it was often turgid, rambling, and inaccessible to most readers, it ran for 25 issues and was republished in book form a number of times. Years after its initial publication, *The Friend* became a highly influential work and its effect was felt on writers and philosophers from J.S. Mill to Emerson.

**London: final years and death**

Between 1810 and 1820, this "giant among dwarfs", as he was often considered by his contemporaries, gave a series of lectures in London and Bristol – those on Shakespearerenewed interest in the playwright as a model for contemporary writers. Much of Coleridge's reputation as a literary critic is founded on the lectures that he undertook in the winter of 1810–11 which were sponsored by the Philosophical Institution and given at Scot's Corporation Hall off Fetter Lane, Fleet Street. These lectures were heralded in the prospectus as "A Course of Lectures on Shakespeare and Milton, in Illustration of the Principles of Poetry." Coleridge's ill-health, opium-addiction problems, and somewhat unstable personality meant that all his lectures were plagued with problems of delays and a general irregularity of quality from one lecture to the next. Furthermore, Coleridge's mind was extremely dynamic and his personality was spasmodic. As a result of these factors, Coleridge often failed to prepare anything but the loosest set of notes for his lectures and

regularly entered into extremely long digressions which his audiences found difficult to follow. However, it was the lecture on *Hamlet* given on 2 January 1812 that was considered the best and has influenced *Hamlet* studies ever since. Before Coleridge, *Hamlet* was often denigrated and belittled by critics from Voltaire to Dr. Johnson, Coleridge rescued *Hamlet* and his thoughts on the play are often still published as supplements to the text.

In August 1814, Coleridge was approached by Lord Byron's publisher, John Murray, about the possibility of translating Goethe's classic *Faust* (1808). Coleridge was regarded by many as the greatest living writer on the demonic and he accepted the commission, only to abandon work on it after six weeks. Until recently, scholars have accepted that Coleridge never returned to the project, despite Goethe's own belief in the 1820s that Coleridge had in fact completed a long translation of the work. In September 2007, Oxford University Press sparked a heated scholarly controversy by publishing an English translation of Goethe's work which purported to be Coleridge's long-lost masterpiece (the text in question first appeared anonymously in 1821).

In 1817, Coleridge, with his addiction worsening, his spirits depressed, and his family alienated, took residence in the Highgate homes, then just north of London, of the physicianJames Gillman, first at South Grove and later at the nearby 3 The Grove. Gillman was partially successful in controlling the poet's addiction. Coleridge remained in Highgate for the rest of his life, and the house became a place of literary pilgrimage of writers including Carlyle and Emerson.

In Gillman's home, he finished his major prose work, the *Biographia Literaria* (1817), a volume composed of 23 chapters of autobiographical notes and dissertations on various subjects, including some incisive literary theory and criticism. He composed much poetry here and had many inspirations – a few of them from opium overdose. Perhaps because he conceived such grand projects, he had difficulty carrying them through to completion, and he berated himself for his "indolence". It is unclear whether his growing use of opium (and the brandy in which it was dissolved) was a symptom or a cause of his growing depression.

He published other writings while he was living at the Gillman homes, notably *Sibylline Leaves* (1817), *Hush* (1820), *Aids to Reflection* (1825), and *Church and State* (1826). He died in Highgate, London on 25 July 1834 as a result of heart failure compounded by an unknown lung disorder, possibly linked to his use of opium. Coleridge had spent 18 years under the roof of the Gillman family, who built an addition onto their home to accommodate the poet.[21]

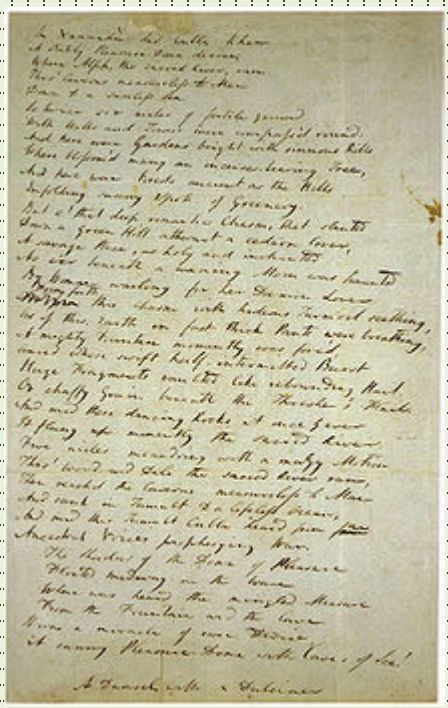
Carlyle described him at Highgate: "Coleridge sat on the brow of Highgate Hill, in those years, looking down on London and its smoke-tumult, like a sage escaped from the inanity of life's battle ... The practical intellects of the world did not much heed him, or carelessly reckoned him a metaphysical dreamer: but to the rising spirits of the young generation he had this dusky sublime character; and sat there as a kind of *Magus*, girt in mystery and enigma; his Dodona oak-grove (Mr.

Gilman's house at Highgate) whispering strange things, uncertain whether oracles or jargon."

## Poetry

Despite not enjoying the name recognition or popular acclaim that Wordsworth or Shelley have had, Coleridge is one of the most important figures in English poetry. His poems directly and deeply influenced all the major poets of the age. He was known by his contemporaries as a meticulous craftsman who was more rigorous in his careful reworking of his poems than any other poet, and Southey and Wordsworth were dependent on his professional advice. His influence on Wordsworth is particularly important because many critics have credited Coleridge with the very idea of "Conversational Poetry". The idea of utilising common, everyday language to express profound poetic images and ideas for which Wordsworth became so famous may have originated almost entirely in Coleridge's mind. It is difficult to imagine Wordsworth's great poems, *The Excursion* or *The Prelude*, ever having been written without the direct influence of Coleridge's originality. As important as Coleridge was to poetry as a poet, he was equally important to poetry as a critic. Coleridge's philosophy of poetry, which he developed over many years, has been deeply influential in the field of literary criticism. This influence can be seen in such critics as A.O. Lovejoy and I.A. Richards.

### *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, *Christabel*, and *Kubla Khan*



Coleridge draft of the poem *Kubla Khan*

Coleridge is probably best known for his long poems, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and *Christabel*. Even those who have never read the *Rime* have come under its influence: its words have given the English language the metaphor of an albatross around one's neck, the quotation of "water, water everywhere, nor any drop to drink" (almost always rendered as "but not a drop to drink"), and the phrase "a sadder and a wiser man" (again, usually rendered as "sadder but wiser man"). The phrase "All creatures great and small" may have been inspired by *The Rime*: "He prayeth best, who loveth best;/ All things great and small;/ For the dear God who loveth us;/ He made and loveth all." *Christabel* is known for its musical rhythm, language, and its Gothic tale.

*Kubla Khan*, or, *A Vision in a Dream, A Fragment*, although shorter, is also widely known. Both *Kubla Khan* and *Christabel* have an additional "Romantic" aura

because they were never finished. Stopford Brooke characterised both poems as having no rival due to their "exquisite metrical movement" and "imaginative phrasing."

**The Conversation poems**

*Main article: Conversation poems*

- *The Eolian Harp* (1795)
- *Reflections on having left a Place of Retirement* (1795)
- *This Lime-Tree Bower my Prison* (1797)
- *Frost at Midnight* (1798)
- *Fears in Solitude* (1798)
- *The Nightingale: A Conversation Poem* (1798)
- *Dejection: An Ode* (1802)
- *To William Wordsworth* (1807)

The eight of Coleridge's poems listed above are now often discussed as a group entitled "Conversation poems". The term itself was coined in 1928 by George McLean Harper, who borrowed the subtitle of *The Nightingale: A Conversation Poem* (1798) to describe the seven other poems as well. The poems are considered by many critics to be among Coleridge's finest verses; thus Harold Bloom has written, "With *Dejection*, *The Ancient Mariner*, and *Kubla Khan*, *Frost at Midnight* shows Coleridge at his most impressive." They are also among his most influential poems, as discussed further below.

Harper himself considered that the eight poems represented a form of blank verse that is "...more fluent and easy than Milton's, or any that had been written since Milton". In 2006 Robert Koelzer wrote about another aspect of this apparent "easiness", noting that Conversation poems such as "... Coleridge's *The Eolian Harp* and *The Nightingale*maintain a middle register of speech, employing an idiomatic language that is capable of being construed as un-symbolic and un-musical: language that lets itself be taken as 'merely talk' rather than rapturous 'song'."

A statue of the Ancient Mariner atWatchet Harbour, Somerset, England

The last ten lines of "Frost at Midnight" were chosen by Harper as the "best example of the peculiar kind of blank verse Coleridge had evolved, as natural-seeming as prose, but as exquisitely artistic as the most complicated sonnet." The speaker of the poem is addressing his infant son, asleep by his side:

> Therefore all seasons shall be sweet to thee,
> Whether the summer clothe the general earth
> With greenness, or the redbreast sit and sing
> Betwixt the tufts of snow on the bare branch
> Of mossy apple-tree, while the nigh thatch

Smokes in the sun-thaw; whether the eave-drops fall
Heard only in the trances of the blast,
Or if the secret ministry of frost
Shall hang them up in silent icicles,
Quietly shining to the quiet Moon.

In 1965, M. H. Abrams wrote a broad description that applies to the Conversation poems: "The speaker begins with a description of the landscape; an aspect or change of aspect in the landscape evokes a varied by integral process of memory, thought, anticipation, and feeling which remains closely intervolved with the outer scene. In the course of this meditation the lyric speaker achieves an insight, faces up to a tragic loss, comes to a moral decision, or resolves an emotional problem. Often the poem rounds itself to end where it began, at the outer scene, but with an altered mood and deepened understanding which is the result of the intervening meditation." In fact, Abrams was describing both the Conversation poems and later poems influenced by them. Abrams' essay has been called a "touchstone of literary criticism".–As Paul Magnuson described it in 2002, "Abrams credited Coleridge with originating what Abrams called the 'greater Romantic lyric', a genre that began with Coleridge's 'Conversation' poems, and included Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey*, Shelley's *Stanzas Written in Dejection*and Keats's *Ode to a Nightingale*, and was a major influence on more modern lyrics by Matthew Arnold, Walt Whitman, Wallace Stevens, and W. H. Auden."[24]

Literary criticism

**Biographia Literaria**

In addition to his poetry, Coleridge also wrote influential pieces of literary criticism including *Biographia Literaria*, a collection of his thoughts and opinions on literature which he published in 1817. The work delivered both biographical explanations of the author's life as well as his impressions on literature. The collection also contained an analysis of a broad range of philosophical principles of literature ranging from Aristotle to Immanuel Kant and Schelling and applied them to the poetry of peers such as William Wordsworth. Coleridge's explanation of metaphysical principles were popular topics of discourse in academic communities throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, and T.S. Eliot stated that he believed that Coleridge was "perhaps the greatest of English critics, and in a sense the last." Eliot suggests that Coleridge displayed "natural abilities" far greater than his contemporaries, dissecting literature and applying philosophical principles of metaphysics in a way that brought the subject of his criticisms away from the text and into a world of logical analysis that mixed logical analysis and emotion. However, Eliot also criticises Coleridge for allowing his emotion to play a role in the metaphysical process, believing that critics should not have emotions that are not provoked by the work being studied. Hugh Kenner in *Historical Fictions*, discusses Norman Fruman's *Coleridge, the Damaged Archangel* and suggests that the term "criticism" is too often applied to *Biographia Literaria*, which both he and

Fruman describe as having failed to explain or help the reader understand works of art. To Kenner, Coleridge's attempt to discuss complex philosophical concepts without describing the rational process behind them displays a lack of critical thinking that makes the volume more of a biography than a work of criticism.

In Biographia Literaria and his poetry, symbols are not merely "objective correlatives" to Coleridge, but instruments for making the universe and personal experience intelligible and spiritually covalent. To Coleridge, the "cinque spotted spider," making its way upstream "by fits and starts," [Biographia Literaria] is not merely a comment on the intermittent nature of creativity, imagination, or spiritual progress, but the journey and destination of his life. The spider's five legs represent the central problem that Coleridge lived to resolve, the conflict between Aristotelian logic and Christian philosophy. Two legs of the spider represent the "me-not me" of thesis and antithesis, the idea that a thing cannot be itself and its opposite simultaneously, the basis of the clockwork Newtonian world view that Coleridge rejected. The remaining three legs—exothesis, mesothesis and synthesis or the Holy trinity—represent the idea that things can diverge without being contradictory. Taken together, the five legs—with synthesis in the center, form the Holy Cross of Ramist logic. The cinque-spotted spider is Coleridge's emblem of holism, the quest and substance of Coleridge's thought and spiritual life.

**Coleridge and the influence of the Gothic**

Engraving of a scene from *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. The frozen crew and the albatross by Gustave Doré

Coleridge wrote reviews of Ann Radcliffe's books and *The Mad Monk*, among others. He comments in his reviews: "Situations of torment, and images of naked horror, are easily conceived; and a writer in whose works they abound, deserves our gratitude almost equally with him who should drag us by way of sport through a military hospital, or force us to sit at the dissecting-table of a natural philosopher. To trace the nice boundaries, beyond which terror and

sympathy are deserted by the pleasurable emotions, – to reach those limits, yet never to pass them, hic labor, hic opus est." and "The horrible and the preternatural have usually seized on the popular taste, at the rise and decline of literature. Most powerful stimulants, they can never be required except by the torpor of an unawakened, or the languor of an exhausted, appetite... We trust, however, that satiety will banish what good sense should have prevented; and that, wearied with fiends, incomprehensible characters, with shrieks, murders, and subterraneous dungeons, the public will learn, by the multitude of the manufacturers, with how little expense of thought or imagination this species of composition is manufactured."

However, Coleridge used these elements in poems such as *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1798), *Christabel* and *Kubla Khan* (published in 1816, but known in manuscript form before then) and certainly influenced other poets and writers of the time. Poems like these both drew inspiration from and helped to inflame the craze for Gothic romance. Mary Shelley, who knew Coleridge well, mentions *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* twice directly in *Frankenstein*, and some of the descriptions in the novel echo it indirectly. Although William Godwin, her father, disagreed with Coleridge on some important issues, he respected his opinions and Coleridge often visited the Godwins. Mary Shelley later recalled hiding behind the sofa and hearing his voice chanting *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.

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Do you like this poet?

Coleridge was the son of a vicar. He was educated at Christ's Hospital, London, where he became friendly with Lamb and Leigh Hunt and went on to Jesus College Cambridge, where he failed to get a degree. In the summer of 1794 Coleridge became friends with the future Poet Laureate Southey, with whom he wrote a verse drama. Together they formed a plan to establish a Pantisocracy, a Utopian community, in New England. They married sisters, but the scheme fell apart and they argued over money and politics.

The shepherds went their hasty way,

And found the lowly stable-shed
Where the Virgin-Mother lay:
And now they checked their eager tread,
For to the Babe, that at her bosom clung,
A Mother's song the Virgin-Mother sung.

II.

They told her how a glorious light,
Streaming from a heavenly throng.
Around them shone, suspending night!
While sweeter than a mother's song,
Blest Angels heralded the Savior's birth,
Glory to God on high! and Peace on Earth.

III.

She listened to the tale divine,
And closer still the Babe she pressed:
And while she cried, the Babe is mine!
The milk rushed faster to her breast:
Joy rose within her, like a summer's morn;
Peace, Peace on Earth! the Prince of Peace is born.

IV.

Thou Mother of the Prince of Peace,
Poor, simple, and of low estate!
That strife should vanish, battle cease,
O why should this thy soul elate?
Sweet Music's loudest note, the Poet's story,
Didst thou ne'er love to hear of fame and glory?

V.

And is not War a youthful king,
A stately Hero clad in mail?
Beneath his footsteps laurels spring;
Him Earth's majestic monarchs hail
Their friends, their playmate! and his bold bright eye
Compels the maiden's love-confessing sigh.

VI.

Tell this in some more courtly scene,
To maids and youths in robes of state!
I am a woman poor and mean,

And wherefore is my soul elate.
War is a ruffian, all with guilt defiled,
That from the aged father's tears his child!

VII.
A murderous fiend, by fiends adored,
He kills the sire and starves the son;
The husband kills, and from her board
Steals all his widow's toil had won;
Plunders God's world of beauty; rends away
All safety from the night, all comfort from the day.

VIII.
Then wisely is my soul elate,
That strife should vanish, battle cease:
I'm poor and of low estate,
The Mother of the Prince of Peace.
Joy rises in me, like a summer's morn:
Peace, Peace on Earth! The Prince of Peace is born!
Samuel Taylor Coleridge

My eyes make pictures when they're shut:--
I see a fountain large and fair,
A Willow and a ruined Hut,
And thee, and me, and Mary there.
O Mary! make thy gentle lap our pillow!
Bend o'er us, like a bower, my beautiful green Willow!

A wild-rose roofs the ruined shed,
And that and summer well agree
And lo! where Mary leans her head,
Two dear names carved upon the tree!
And Mary's tears, they are not tears of sorrow:
Our sister and our friend will both be here to-morrow.

'Twas Day! But now few, large, and bright
The stars are round the crescent moon!
And now it is a dark warm Night,
The balmiest of the month of June!
A glow-worm fallen, and on the marge remounting
Shines, and its shadow shines, fit stars for our sweet fountain.

O ever -- ever be thou blest!
For dearly, Asra! love I thee!

This brooding warmth across my breast,
This depth of tranquil bliss -- ah me!
Fount, Tree, and Shed are gone, I know not whither,
But in one quiet room we three are still together.

The shadows dance upon the wall,
By the still dancing fire-flames made;
And now they slumber, moveless all!
And now they melt to one deep shade!
But not from me shall this mild darkness steal thee:
I dream thee with mine eyes, and at my heart I feel thee!

Thine eyelash on my cheek doth play--
'Tis Mary's hand upon my brow!
But let me check this tender lay,
Which none may hear but she and thou!
Like the still hive at quiet midnight humming,
Murmur it to yourselves, ye two beloved women!

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

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