

Gustave Doré, illustrations for "Rime of the Ancient Mariner," 1876.

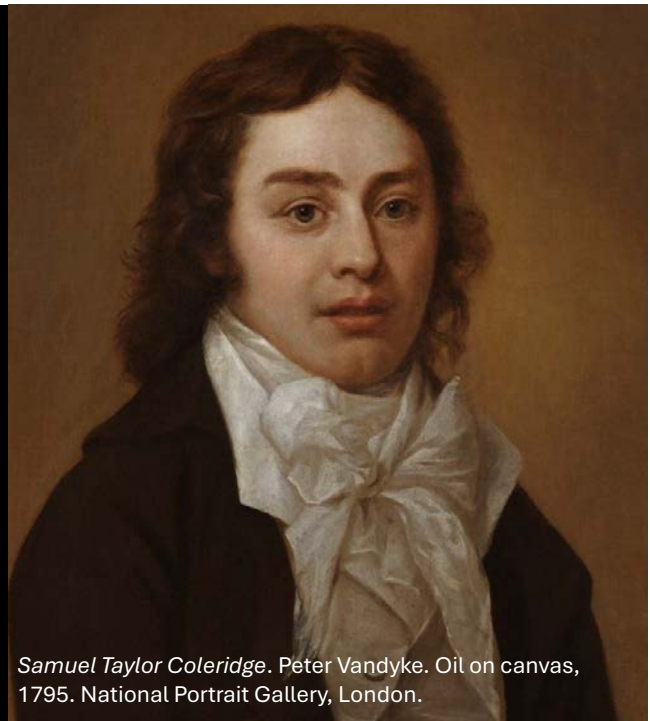
Samuel Taylor
Coleridge:

The Rime of the
Ancient Mariner

ENGL 200
20 January 2026

Samuel Taylor Coleridge: Early Life (NAEL 468)

- Born 1772, in Ottery St. Mary
- Sent to school in London at Christ's Hospital
- 1791: enters Jesus College, Cambridge
- 1794: leaves Cambridge without degree
- Revolutionary youth: Robert Southey, Pantisocracy
- marriage to Sara Fricker



Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Peter Vandyke. Oil on canvas, 1795. National Portrait Gallery, London.

Wordsworth and Coleridge (NAEL 469)

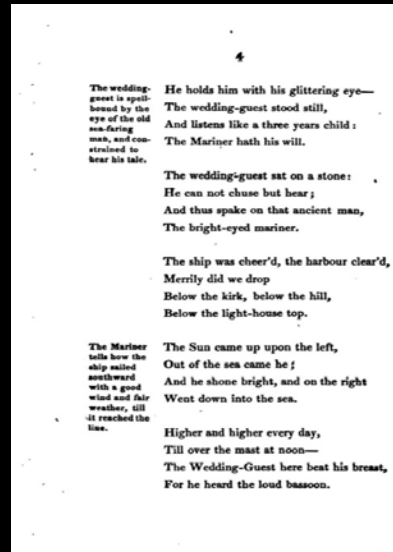
- 1795: Wordsworth and Coleridge meet
- 1797: Wordsworth and his sister settle at Alfoxden, three miles from Coleridge in Nether Stowey
- *Lyrical Ballads*: 1798
- 1800: Coleridge follows Wordsworth to settle in the Lake District

Notable Works and Later Life (NAEL 469-70)

- Coleridge and opium use
- “Kubla Khan” (written 1797; published 1816)
- *Biographia Literaria* (1817)
- Becomes politically conservative
- Political and religious writings; defence of Anglican Church

Composition and Print History of “The Rime” (Fry 8-13)

- Composed 1797-8
- Published as first poem in *Lyrical Ballads* as “The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere” (1798)
- *Lyrical Ballads* republished in 1800; “The Rime” moves to the back of the volume; archaic spellings are changed
- Republished in *Sibylline Leaves* (1817) with the addition of marginal glosses,



“The Rime of The Ancient Mariner” in *Sibylline Leaves* (1817).

- How is “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner” similar or different from Wordsworth’s poetry last week?
- How does Coleridge’s poem fit or fail to fit the definition of a Lyrical Ballad?

Types of Poetry (Baldick)

- Lyric: “any fairly short poem expressing the personal mood, feeling, or meditation of a single speaker”
- Narrative: “A telling of some true or fictitious event or connected sequence of events, recounted by a narrator to a narratee (although there may be more than one of each)”

It is an ancient Mariner
And he stoppeth one of three.
“By thy long grey beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp’st thou me?”

The Bridegroom’s doors are opened wide,
And I am next of kin;
The guests are met, the feast is set:
May’st hear the merry din.”

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.

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

The wedding-guest sat on a stone:
He cannot choose but hear;
And this spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

“The ship was cheered, the harbor cleared,
Merrily did we drop
Below the kirk, below the hill,
Below the light house top.

The sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he!
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea .

Higher and higher every day,
Till over the mast at noon—”
The wedding-guest here beat his breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon (NAEL lines 1-32).

Baldick Terms	Example
<u>Ballad metre:</u> - Quatrain stanzas - alternating lines of tetrameter (four feet) and trimeter (three feet) - Lines two and four usually rhyme	x / x / x / x / "The Bridegroom's doors are opened wide, x / x / x / And I am next of kin; x / x / x / x / The guests are met, the feast is set: x / x / x / May'st hear the merry din."
<u>Anaphora:</u> "A rhetorical figure of repetition in which the same word or phrase is repeated in (and usually at the beginning of) successive lines, clauses, or sentences"	"Below the kirk, below the hill, Below the light house top."
<u>Internal rhyme:</u> "A poetic device by which two or more words rhyme within the same line of verse"	"The guests are met, the feast is set"
<u>Leonine rhyme:</u> "A form of internal rhyme in which a word or syllable(s) in the middle of a verse line rhymes with the final word or syllable(s) of the same line"	"And he shone bright, and on the right"

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.

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!

At length did cross the Albatross,
 Thorough the fog it came;
 As if it had been a Christian soul,
 We hailed it in God's name.

It ate the food it ne'er had eat,
 And round and round it flew.
 The ice did split with a thunder-fit;
 The helmsman steered us through!

And a good south wind sprung up behind;
 The Albatross did follow,
 And every day, for food or play,
 Came to the mariners' hollo!

In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,
 It perched for vespers nine;
 Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,
 Glimmered the white moon-shine."

"God save thee, ancient Mariner!
 From the fiends, that plague thee thus!—
 Why look'st thou so?"—With my cross-bow
 I shot the Albatross (NAEL 51-82).

The Gothic

- Phenomenon that begins as an 18th century “embrace of a kind of counterfeit medievalism or as a “medieval revival.” As a word they applied to a dark and distant past, Gothic gave Romantic-period writers and readers a way to describe accounts of terrifying experiences in ancient castles and ruined abbeys—experiences connected with subterranean dungeons, secret passageways, flickering lamps, screams, moans, ghosts, and graveyards” (*NAEL* 290).

A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist!
And still it neared and neared:
As if it dodged a water-sprite,
It plunged and tacked and veered.

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
We could nor laugh nor wail;
Through utter drought all dumb we stood!
I bit my arm, and sucked the blood,
And cried, A sail! a sail!

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
Agape they heard me call:
Gramercy! They for joy did grin,
And all at once their breath drew in,
As they were drinking all.

See! see! (I cried) she tacks no more!
Hither to work us weal;
Without a breeze, without a tide,
She steadies with upright keel!

The western wave was all a-flame.
The day was well nigh done!
Almost upon the western wave
Rested the broad bright Sun;
When that strange shape drove suddenly
Betwixt us and the Sun.

And straight the Sun was flecked with bars,
(Heaven's Mother send us grace!)
As if through a dungeon-grate he peered
With broad and burning face.

Alas! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)
How fast she nears and nears!
Are those her sails that glance in the Sun,
Like restless gossameres?

Are those her ribs through which the Sun
Did peer, as through a grate?
And is a that Woman all her crew?
Is that a Death? and are there two?
Is Death that woman's mate?

Her lips were red, her looks were free,
Her locks were yellow as gold:
Her skin was as white as leprosy,
The Night-mare Life-In-Death was she,
Who thicks man's blood with cold.

The naked hulk alongside came,
And the twain were casting dice;
“The game is done! I've won! I've won!
Quoth she, and whistles thrice” (*NAEL* 153-198).

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!
I fear thy skinny hand!
And thou art long, and lank, and brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand.

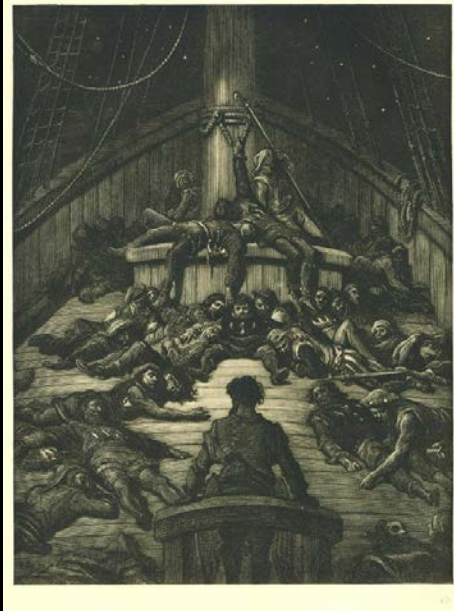
I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
And thy skinny hand, so brown."—
Fear not, fear not, thou wedding-guest!
This body dropt not down.

Alone, alone, all all alone,
Alone on a wide wide sea!
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

The many men, so beautiful!
And they all dead did lie:
And a thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on; and so did I (224-239).

*The wedding guest feareth
that a spirit is talking to
him.*

*But the ancient Mariner
assureth him of his bodily
life, and proceedeth to
relate his horrible
penance.*



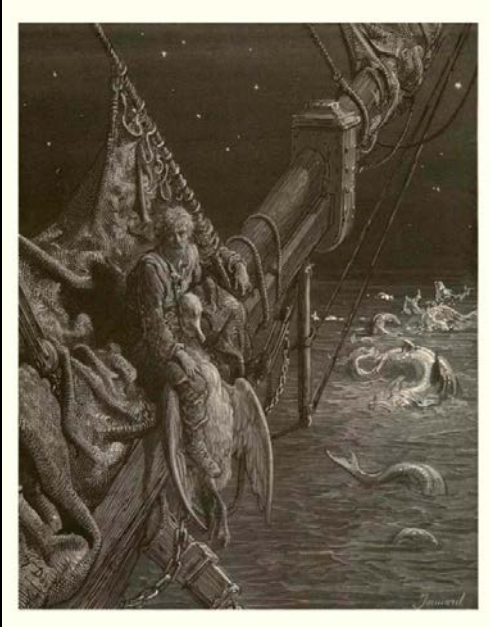
Gustave Doré, illustrations for "Rime of the Ancient Mariner," 1876.

Frame Narrative (Baldick)

"A story in which another story is enclosed or embedded as a 'tale within the tale', or which contains several such tales."

Examples:

- Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*
- Shelley's *Frankenstein*



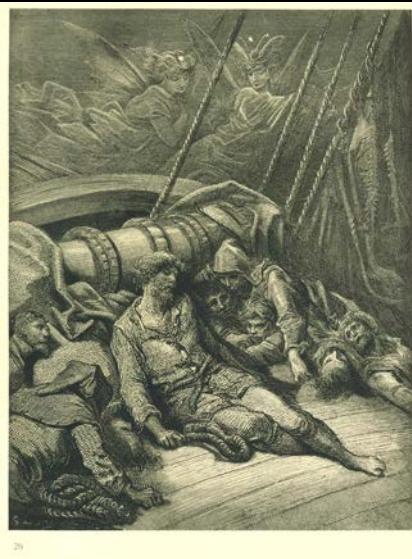
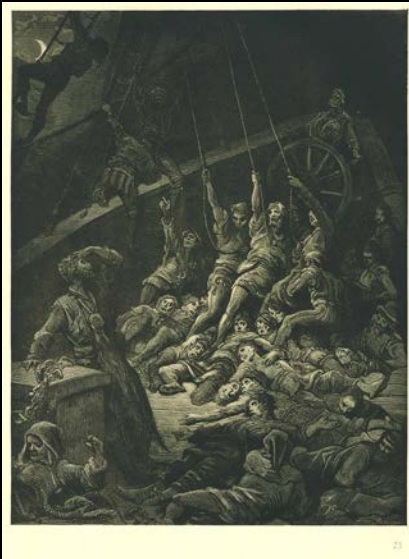
Gustave Doré, illustrations for "Rime of the Ancient Mariner," 1876.

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

Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire:
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
The coiled and swam; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.

O happy living things! No tongue
Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware:
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I blessed them unaware.

The selfsame moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off and sank
Like lead into the sea (272-291).



*"The Polar Spirit's fellow
daemons, the invisible
inhabitants of the element,
take part in his wrong; and
two of them relate, one to
the other, that penance
long and heavy for the
ancient Mariner hath been
accorded to the Polar
Spirit, who returneth
southward"* (gloss, 391-
401)

Gustave Doré, illustrations for "Rime of the Ancient Mariner," 1876.

“O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man!”
The hermit crossed his brow.
“Say quick,” quoth he, “I bid thee say—
What manner of man art thou?”

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

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

I pass, like night, from land to land;
I have strange power of speech;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me:
To him my tale I teach (574-590).

O sweeter than the marriage-feast,
‘Tis sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk,
With a goodly company!—

To walk together to the kirk,
And all together pray,
While each to his great Father bends,
Old men, and babes, and loving friends,
And youths and maidens gay!

Farewell, farewell! But this I tell
To thee, thou Wedding-Guest!
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all (601-617).



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