TECHMIND RESEARCH
ISSN: 2368-2132
Journal of English Language and Literature
Volume 6 No. 3 December 2016

The Romantic Quest for Identity: Re-reading the First Part of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*

Gioiella Bruni Roccia
Associate Professor of English Literature
Department of Economics, Political Science and Modern Languages
LUMSA University, Rome, Italy
gioiella.bruniroccia@fastwebnet.it

Abstract – *This paper proposes a re-reading of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poetic masterpiece, 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner', in an attempt to deepen the critical discussion about one of the major themes explored in the poem, that is the search for identity. In particular, this attempt will consist of a close reading of the first section of the ballad, inasmuch as it contains the fundamental pattern of the whole text. The conceptual framework underlying this analysis is based on Coleridge's key principle of "the coincidence of opposites", which the Author develops in his critical work 'Biographia Literaria'. Indeed, the whole of Coleridge's oeuvre is permeated by the idea of a dialectical tension between contrary forces, which struggle against each other so as to be joined, at last, in the dynamic unity of a superior harmony. In the light of this conception, the Romantic quest for identity takes the form of a struggle between two opposing forces: the impact of otherness with its confounding effects on the one side, and the irrepressible aspiration towards a unified self on the other. Such a conflicting dynamics appears to structure the entire ballad, starting from the incipit of the poem and involving all the characters – especially the two opposite figures of the ancient Mariner and the Wedding Guest.*

Keywords - *S. T. Coleridge; The Rime of the Ancient Mariner; Romantic quest; identity; otherness.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, acknowledged masterpiece of English Romantic poetry (Empson, 1964)[10], has lent itself to a multiplicity of scholarly approaches since Samuel Taylor Coleridge published the definitive edition of *The Rime* in 1817 (Fry, 1999a[12]; Boulger, 1969[1]). Especially the second half of the 20th century saw a proliferation of critical studies which explored Coleridge's narrative poem from different theoretical standpoints, such as the new historicism (Fry, 1999b[13]), psychoanalytic criticism (Fry, 1999c)[14], deconstruction (Fry, 1999d)[15], reader-response criticism (Fry, 1999e)[16]. One of the major themes explored in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* is undoubtedly the question concerning the identity of the main character, largely analysed through the lens of psychoanalytic theory (Waldoff, 1971; Rubinstein, 1990[33][40]; Fry, 1999g[18]).

This paper is an attempt to re-read *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* following the thread of Coleridge's concept of "the coincidence of opposites", which can be traced back to Giordano Bruno's principle of *coincidentia oppositorum* (Wheeler, 2010: 47-58)[43]. Indeed, Coleridge's entire conception is permeated by the idea of a dialectical tension between contrary forces, which struggle against each other so as to be joined, at last, in the dynamic unity of a superior harmony. One might affirm that the so-called coincidence of opposites constitutes the structural principle of Coleridge's poetic universe, as clearly witnessed in his most famous work (Owen, 1962)[29]. A significant example of the effectiveness of this principle can be found in the double view adopted in *The Rime*, which is symbolic and realistic at the same time (Chandler, 1965[3]; Dick, 1973[9]; Grow, 1973[21]). The two modalities not only interact in the general development of the narrative poem, but they also achieve integration with such powerful synergy to arouse in the reader "that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith" (*Biographia Literaria*, 314).

In the light of the above, the Romantic quest for identity takes the form of a struggle between two opposing forces: the impact of otherness with its confounding effects on the one side, and the insuppressible aspiration towards a unified self on the other. Such a conflicting dynamics appears to structure the entire ballad, starting from the incipit of the poem and involving all the characters – especially the two opposite figures of the ancient Mariner and the Wedding Guest (Viasopolos, 1979)[39].

2. THE DRAMATIC INCIPIT OF THE POEM

Italo Calvino reminds us that every re-reading of a classic is always a new experience (Calvino, 1995: 7)[2]. It is, however, quite rare that this impression of novelty emerges with immediate intensity; it is unusual that it surprises us with such vivid and palpable evidence, as happens every time that we approach Coleridge's poetic masterpiece

(Stempel 1978[36]; Watson, 1986[42]). It is as if the impact of that incipit, both familiar and archaic, never fails to amaze the reader with its promise of mystery and discovery:

> *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.' (The Rime, 1-8)*

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner opens with a formula of immediate, dramatic impersonality, which straight away presents the haunting figure of an old sailor. "It is an ancient Mariner": the incipit of the poem typically recalls the rhetorical modules of medieval ballads, suggesting an impact of intense interaction which goes back to the oral matrix and polyphonic nature of these compositions (Jones, 1972)[23]. "It is an ancient Mariner": the opening sentence seems like an answer to the implicit question of a hypothetical interlocutor, who is supposed to be present on the scene, as if the reader were invited to enter the dialogical dimension of the text and identify with the "Wedding-Guest". Thus, the reader is immediately involved in a sort of interactive relationship, which coincides with the threshold of the narrative poem. On this very threshold the reader is invited to remain, practising "that willing suspension of disbelief " that, according to Coleridge, is the indispensable condition for grasping the profound significance of the poetic word (Koelb, 1984)[24].

It is as if the language had to find other formulae, different modalities of enunciation – albeit in the characteristic style of the ballad form – to convey the sense of total extraneousness aroused by the visual impact with the *Other*. "It is an ancient Mariner": the expression presupposes a question about the identity of the main character: Who is that man? It is a stranger whose origin is destined to remain unknown. It is a man who comes from elsewhere and bursts on the scene as the symbolic apparition of the foreigner, who has no connection with what surrounds him, without ties, without belonging, identified only by the features of a visual, surprising otherness. It is also significant that the characterizing features of the Mariner – the long grey beard and the glittering eye – are perceived through the eye of the interlocutor, the young Wedding Guest on his way to the wedding feast (Pafford, 1963)[30].

"By thy long grey beard and glittering eye": these are the first words with which the young man reacts to the stranger, as if he wanted to fix his appearance in the objectivity of a shared language, exorcising the apprehension that the strange encounter has aroused in him.

The Mariner is immediately perceived as an inopportune presence, an outsider, a veritable intruder in the context of the wedding feast, while the young interlocutor declares his identity precisely in connection with that context: "I am next of kin". He claims to be a close relation of the bridegroom, thus emphasizing the relationship that ties him to a social group and makes him part of a community. It is up to him, therefore, to introduce the scenario of the wedding feast, an exemplary metaphor for every bond of alliance and communion among mankind. It is up to the wedding guest to recompose the ritual in which he aspires to have a place – the ceremony of marriage – in order to be confirmed in his own identity (Larkin, 2007)[25].

3. SINGULAR OTHERNESS VS COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

It is essential, at this point, to analyse more closely some meanings implicit in the initial dialogical and descriptive sequence, often considered as a mere frame narrative and consequently pushed into the background. The scene that opens the ballad and describes the dramatic encounter between the ancient Mariner and the young man takes place on the threshold of a wedding feast. The doors of the hall are open wide to welcome all those who are "invited". Besides, the social roles are clearly defined, as witnessed by the recurring expression "Wedding-Guest", indicating one who is destined to take part in this great ritual of human society. A brief prose gloss in an antique English, placed at the beginning of the poem, resumes the content of the first three stanzas (Wall, 1987)[41]:

> *An ancient Mariner meeteth three Gallants bidden to a wedding-feast, and detaineth one. (The Rime, p. 49)*

Here there is a semantic nuance that is worth-noting. The three young men are invited ("bidden") to a wedding feast: where the use of the archaic verb "to bid", implying the meaning of order, command, calls to mind consolidated, binding conventions. In other words, what is considered a social obligation within the community is ordered with formal courtesy. At the same time the syncopated, scanned rhythm of the verses, accentuated by the use of the internal rhyme ("The guests are met, the feast is set") contributes to produce the effect of a ritual succession of actions, implying the idea of an established structure of things, of an ordered sequence to be respected (Payne, 1978)[31].

Interestingly, right from the beginning of the poem, certain modules and stylistic elements characteristic of medieval ballads – the use of archaisms, the insertion of glosses in prose with an explicative function, the internal rhyme – are elements that work together to evoke a set of codified traditions and normative models of social life. It is also worth noting that the Mariner meets "three Gallants bidden to a wedding-feast", where the number three symbolically represents a minimal nucleus of people in a reciprocal relationship, recalling the principle of an organized collectivity. Moreover, the use of the archaic noun "Gallants", evocative of courteous and gallant contexts,

suffices to introduce an idea of strong conventionality (Sonmez, 2002)[35].

Thus, the threshold of the ballad configures itself as a sort of ritual dimension which regulates forms of behaviour and validates them within a reference group. In this way the subjectivity of each individual person is absorbed into the collective identity of a social organism. It is evident, therefore, that the wedding feast assumes its full meaning of ritual, inasmuch as it consecrates the primeval bond of union: that bond in which the entire community is called upon to recognize the principle of all social cohesion and growth. Thus the three young men are invited to take part in the wedding feast ("bidden to a wedding feast").

It is precisely against this background of organized sociality and this network of customs that the figure of the *Other* suddenly bursts in. The unknown bursts on the scene with its disquieting and disturbing appearance, questioning the solid, invincible conviction of our identity, that is, of our existence here and now. In effect, the Mariner attracts his interlocutor beyond the confines of the visible and audible, taking him out of the context of the wedding feast and dilating time and space through the infinite narration of his endless wandering (Rubasky, 2004)[32].

It is here, where for the Wedding Guest it is important to be present in his social role, that his personal identity is questioned. The *Other* is the one who breaks conventional schemes of social life, overturning the established order by his only presence, inevitably interfering on the reassuring ways of cherished traditions and customs. The ancient Mariner's first action is to "stop one of three", thus creating a division within the group of friends, stopping only one of the guests and preventing him from following his natural path. The impulsiveness and force of the action give rise to a situation of strong conflict, which is expressed in the dramatic contrast of the first three stanzas (Melville, 2004)[28]. And while the young man tries to free himself from the Mariner's hold, the latter begins his magic tale:

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. (The Rime, 9-12)

"There was a ship": the mythical and fairy-tale beginning immediately opens a dimension of total otherness in time and space, thus beginning the extraordinary and unique story of the ancient Mariner (Mc Gann, 1981)[27]. However, from the narrator's perspective, it is a story of guilt and expiation containing the very sense of his existence and of his wandering from land to land, like Cain and the Wandering Jew (Fulmer, 1969)[19]. It is his personal story, which he is obliged to relive every time with intimate torment. It is "his tale", as the gloss to *The Rime* makes clear: in other words, the myth of a unique and singular experience is set against the great rite of sociality. Precisely in the unrepeatable uniqueness of what he has lived, precisely in what separates him from the civil association with other men, the ancient Mariner recognizes his own identity.

4. THE OTHERNESS OF NATURE

The ancient Mariner's tale of guilt and expiation unwinds through a surprisingly varied series of unexpected turns and radical transformations in the exterior scene, as in the inner and personal condition of the first-person narrator. However, the decisive event of the story, the raison d'être of the Mariner's unending wandering is the killing of the Albatross (Foakes, 2001)[11]. This action against nature and life determines the separation of the Mariner from all the other living beings, from all created realities; this is the wound that makes him extraneous to himself, being etched on his face as the distinctive sign of an irreducible otherness (Gill, 1981)[20]. This crucial event, on which depend all the successive developments of the story, is to be found at the very end of the first section of the poem. Significantly, it is here, in conjunction with the killing of the Albatross, that the individuality of the Mariner emerges for the first time as an absolute singularity: "I shot the Albatross." It is worth pausing to consider in particular this first part of the Rime, which functions as a matrix for the entire poem (Fry, 1999f)[17]. The voyage begins under the best auspices, in the festive atmosphere of an adventure that is both mythical and modern, described through symbolic and realistic elements:

'The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared,
merrily did we drop
below the kirk, below the hill,
below the lighthouse top.' (The Rime, 21-24)

On leaving the harbour, the ship is presented immediately as a microcosm: the crew is named with an inclusive first person pronoun, about to be launched on the historical route of circumnavigation of the world, described with rigorous topographic precision. In re-evoking the moment of departure, the narrator reveals the emotion common to all the sailors ("did we drop"), as they see the familiar symbols of their country disappear beyond the horizon. In this first scene the crew is perceived as one man as the ship sails southwards, heading to the Equator. The first event that intervenes to modify the conditions of the voyage is the arrival of a hurricane, which, for its violence, is personified as the enemy:

And now the Storm-Blast came, and he
was tyrannous and strong:
he struck with his o'ertaking wings,
and chased us south along.

With sloping masts and dipping prow,
as who pursued with yell and blow
still treads the shadow of his foe,
and forward bends his head,
the ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,
and southward aye we fled.
(The Rime, 41-50)

"And now" (line 41): this expression underlines an unexpected change, albeit through the continuity of an itinerary that proceeds in the direction of the South Pole, pushed by the pressing force of stormy winds. For the first time here we see the otherness of nature through the fearful aspect of the Hurricane – "the Storm-Blast" – depicted in its tyrannical, furious power. Besides, this natural perturbation is reflected in a deviation from the metrical pattern of the ballad, as shown by the above-quoted stanza, composed of six lines (Coffin, 1951)[4]. It is also the first example of a simile that appears in the poem: the ship, with its masts bent and the prow submerged, is compared to a man who, fleeing, leans forward while he treads on the shadow of the enemy bearing down on him in his flight (line 47). The South Pole is eventually reached: "The land of ice, and of fearful sounds where no living thing was to be seen", as the marginal gloss reads (*The Rime*, p. 50); where nature's hostile and unfriendly face is extended to every aspect of the perceptible scenario, in a fearful crescendo of sinister sounds and freezing images:

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!
(The Rime, 55-62)

At this point the ship is completely surrounded by icebergs, flashing lights and sounds of impressive power, which the poetic word suggests through onomatopoeic expressions. No living form can be perceived all around the horizon. What the crew sees and hears, what transpires from the Mariner's story, can only confirm the horrifying image of an alien context – a context radically averse to any movement or appearance of life. It is also worth noting that a similar desolate, freezing scene, placed at the extreme limits of the southern regions of the earth, represents the final stage of a progressive process of estrangement and separation from the known world (Ulmer, 2008)[38]. It is not possible to go beyond that limit. The ship is a prisoner of the ice, and the sensation caused by the total extraneousness of nature is compared to a faint – "swound", line 62, is an archaism for "swoon", which means "faint" (Swanepoel, 2010)[37].

5. THE DIVIDED SELF AND THE SEARCH FOR IDENTITY

On the desolate horizon of the Antarctic scene an Albatross suddenly appears, immediately welcomed "with great joy and hospitality", according to the eloquent comment of the gloss (p. 51; Wall, 1987)[41]. Indeed, by its only presence, the great sea-bird has the power of changing radically the state of mind of the sailors:

At length did cross an Albatross,
thorough the fog it came;
as if 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!
(The Rime, 63-70)

"Thorough the fog it came": penetrating the curtain of fog and sleet that totally blocks out the horizon, beyond all possible expectations, the Albatross comes as a divine sign, as the silent word of the invisible. Foreign to all that surrounds it, the Albatross follows the ship and takes part in the life of the crew. Its existence – the mere fact of being there for the sailors – is an event of absolute, irreducible singularity. With its sudden appearance, with its silent following the ship, with its punctual return every day like a tacit appointment, the Albatross affirms its sovereign freedom, revealing its inner self. It represents a symbol of the divine life that pervades the universe, being in harmony with all the elements of the creation, and yet not comparable to any of them (Guo-qing, 2006)[22]. In its surprising and unexpected arrival, in its heterogeneous presence, in its being there, the Albatross expresses its own unique, unrepeatable identity. Suddenly, without any explanation, the ancient Mariner shoots the great sea-bird with his cross-bow:

'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.' (The Rime, 79-82)

The unspeakable guilt on which the whole poem is based is the senseless killing of the Albatross. However rash and unmotivated this act may seem, the Mariner recognizes his own personal responsibility by confessing his sacrilegious deed: "With my cross-bow / I shot the Albatross" (lines 81-82). Significantly, with these words the first part of the ballad concludes. As already pointed out, it is the first time that the first person singular pronoun occurs in the poem, isolating the individuality of the narrator and thus detaching the identity of the ancient Mariner from the rest of the crew. On the verbal level, then, the protagonist feels guilty for the crime committed, declaring it with dramatic incisiveness. But the Mariner's countenance, and in particular his gaze, reveals the inner torment he feels when he recalls his sacrilegious act. It is significant, in this regard, the frightened reaction of the Wedding Guest: his allusion to the demons that "plague" the Mariner's soul evokes the disquieting image of a split personality, of a divided self.

Thus, the first part of Coleridge's *Rime* dramatically ends with the protagonist slaying the sea-bird. At this crucial point, however, the reader will have understood that, for the ancient Mariner, the act of killing the Albatross has meant to murder a part of his own inner self (Sikora, Shelley, Don Kuiken, Miall, 2010)[34]. Throughout the

subsequent sections of the narrative poem, the Mariner's tale will outline a veritable inner voyage that configures itself as a personal search for identity. The turning point in this spiritual quest is represented by the pivotal part of the *Rime*, that is the fourth, where the Mariner's interior agony reaches its acme in the vain and repeated attempt to pray, and especially in his inability to die: "and yet I could not die" (line 262). However, the most eloquent expression of the tormenting effects of the divided self is to be found in the final part of the poem, where the Hermit asks the Mariner the crucial question on his identity: "what manner of man art thou?" (line 577). Upon that question the Mariner is seized by an atrocious agony, which compels him to tell his story:

> *Since then, at an uncertain hour,*
> *that agony returns:*
> *and till my ghastly tale is told,*
> *this heart within me burns. (The Rime, 582-585)*

The ancient Mariner is thus revealed as one who has dramatically experienced, in his deepest interiority, the struggle against his *other* self. It is here, in this returning agony, in this unending struggle with the *Other*, recognized every time as more intimate to him than himself, that the true identity of the character lies.

REFERENCES

[1] Boulger, James D. (1969). *Twentieth-Century Interpretations of 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner'. A Collection of Critical Essays*. Vol. 844. Prentice Hall.
[2] Calvino, Italo (1995). *Perché leggere i classici*. Milano: Mondadori.
[3] Chandler, Alice (1965). "Structure and Symbol in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*." *Modern Language Quarterly*, 26, 3: 401-413.
[4] Coffin, Tristram P. (1951). "Coleridge's Use of the Ballad Stanza in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*". *Modern Language Quarterly*, 12, 4: 437-445.
[5] Coleridge, Samuel Taylor (1985). *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1817). *The Major Works*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 48-68.
[6] Coleridge, Samuel Taylor (1985). *Biographia Literaria* (1817). *The Major Works*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 157-482.
[7] Davidson, Arnold E. (1981). "The Concluding Moral in Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*." *Philological Quarterly*, 60, 1: 87.
[8] Davies, Lindsay (1990). "The Poem, the Gloss and the Critic: Discourse and Subjectivity in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*." *Forum for Modern Languages Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 259-271.
[9] Dick, Sarah (1973). "Perspective in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*". *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 13, 4: 591-604.
[10] Empson, William (1964). "The Ancient Mariner." *Critical Quarterly*, 6, 4: 298-319.
[11] Foakes, R. A. (2001). "Coleridge, Violence and *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*", *Romanticism*, 7, 1: 41-57.
[12] Fry, Paul H. (1999a). "*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*: The 1798 and 1817 Texts." *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. Macmillan Learning, 26-75.
[13] Fry, Paul H. (1999b). "The New Historicism and *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*." *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. Macmillan Learning, 168-219.
[14] Fry, Paul H. (1999c), "Psychoanalytic Criticism and *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*." *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. Macmillan Learning, 220-260.
[15] Fry, Paul H. (1999d), "Deconstruction and *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*." *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. Macmillan Learning, 261-314.
[16] Fry, Paul H. (1999e). "Reader-Response Criticism and *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*." *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. Macmillan Learning, 97-130.
[17] Fry, Paul H. (1999f), "Combining Perspectives on the *Rime*." *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. Macmillan Learning, 315-342.
[18] Fry, Paul H. (1999g). "Samuel Taylor Coleridge: *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*". *Case Studies in Contemporary Criticism.* Boston and New York: Bedford / St. Martin's.
[19] Fulmer O. Bryan (1969). "The Ancient Mariner and the Wandering Jew." *Studies in Philology*, 797-815.
[20] Gill, Richard (1981). "*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and Crime and Punishment: Existential Parables." *Philosophy and Literature*, 5, 2: 131-149.
[21] Grow, Lynn M. (1973). "*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*: Multiple Veils of Illusion." *Notre Dame English Journal*, 9, 1: 23-30.
[22] Guo-qing, L. I. U. (2006). "An Allegorical Epic of Human Growth: *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* from Ecocritical Perspective." *Journal of Northeast Normal University*, 6: 19.
[23] Jones, David (1972). *An Introduction to 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner'*. Clover Hill Editions.
[24] Koelb, Clayton (1984). *The Incredulous Reader. Literature and the Function of Disbelief*. Cornell University Press.
[25] Larkin, Peter (2007). "Repetition, Difference and Liturgical Participation in Coleridge's *The Ancient Mariner*." *Literature and Theology*, 21, 2: 146-159.
[26] Lupton, Mary Jane (1970). "*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*: The Agony of Thirst." *American Imago*, 27, 2: 140.

[27] Mc Gann, Jerome J. (1981). "The Meaning of the Ancient Mariner." *Critical Inquiry*, 8, 1: 35-67.
[28] Melville, Peter (2004). "Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*." *The Explicator*, 63, 1: 15-18.
[29] Owen, Charles A. (1962). "Structure in *The Ancient Mariner*." *College English*, 23, 4: 261-267.
[30] Pafford, Ward (1963). "Coleridge's Wedding-Guest". *Studies in Philology*, 60, 4: 618-626.
[31] Payne, Richard (1978). "The Style and Spirit of the Elder Poets: *The Ancient Mariner* and English Literary Tradition." *Modern Philology*, 75, 4: 368-384.
[32] Rubasky, Elizabeth A. (2004). "*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*: Coleridge's Multiple Models of Interpretation." *The Coleridge Bulletin*, 19-28.
[33] Rubinstein, Chris (1990). "A New Identity for the Mariner? A Further Exploration of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*." *The Coleridge Bulletin*, 2: 16-29.
[34] Sikora, Shelley, Don Kuiken, and David S. Miall (2010). "An Uncommon Resonance: The Influence of Loss on Expressive Reading." *Empirical Studies of the Arts*, 28, 2: 135-153.
[35] Sonmez, M. (2002). "Archaisms in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*." *Cardiff Convey: Reading the Romantic Text*, 9.
[36] Stempel, Daniel (1978). "Coleridge's Magical Realism: A Reading of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*." *Mosaic*, 12, 1: 143.
[37] Swanepoel, A. C. (2010). "Coleridge's Transcendental Imagination: The Seascape beyond the Senses in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*." *JLS / TLW*, 26, 1: 191-214.
[38] Ulmer, William A. (2008). "Answering the Borderers in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*." *European Romantic Review*, 19, 3: 233- 246.
[39] Viasopolos, Anca (1979). "*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* as Romantic Quest." *The Wordsworth Circle*, 10, 4: 365-369.
[40] Waldoff, Leon (1971). "The Quest for Father and identity in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*." *Psychoanalytic Review*, 58, 3: 439.
[41] Wall, Wendy (1987). "Interpreting Poetic Shadows: The Gloss of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*." *Criticism*, 29, 2: 179-195.
[42] Watson, Jeanie (1986). "Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*: An Encounter with Faerie." *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, 11, 4: 165-170.
[43] Wheeler, Kathleen M. (2010). *Sources, Processes and Methods in Coleridge's 'Biographia Literaria'*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Gioiella Bruni Roccia is Associate Professor at LUMSA University (Rome). At present she is also Director of the newly established degree course in *Language Mediation and Intercultural Communication*, where she teaches 'English Literature' and 'Theory of Translation'. Her major research interests lie in the interrelations among narrative, scientific and philosophical discourse during the Long Eighteenth Century. Her publications in this field include, besides numerous articles on the most important novelists of the period, the translation and critical edition of Shaftesbury's *Sensus Communis. An Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour* (Rome, 2006) and a monograph on John Locke (*Locke e la costruzione del lettore moderno. Sulle soglie del 'Saggio sull'intelletto umano'*, Rome, 2013). She has also devoted her critical attention to authors and works that marked a turning-point in English literary history, such as the first generation of Romantic poets with their innovative theory of poetic language, and the experimental fiction of the major modernist writers. The intersection between these two lines of research led to the publication of a comparative and intertextual analysis, entitled *Myriadminded Men. Coleridge and Joyce* (Rome, 2008).