

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

A Jungian Analysis of Coleridge's Mariner

by

Susan Maureen Medd

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ABSTRACT

A Jungian Analysis of Coleridge's Mariner

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This thesis is a study of S.T. Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," using the principles of Jungian psychology. The central argument of the paper, which is delineated in the first chapter of the thesis, is that the Mariner represents the archetypal hero questing for religious self-knowledge and spiritual oneness with God. To determine the nature and the result of the Mariner's religious pilgrimage, the paper examines the symbolic and archetypal content of the poem.

Chapter two deals with the Mariner's descent into his unconscious. As he leaves the world of everyday reality his regressive libido pushes him farther into the depths of his inner being. Although the Mariner's faculty of rational thought (symbolized by the albatross), attempts to terminate his journey into the unconscious, this tendency is eliminated and the Mariner continues his voyage.

Chapter three consists of the Mariner's confrontation with the archetypes of the shadow, represented by the water-snakes, and the anima, objectified through the figure of Life-In-Death. The Mariner reacts to these images with

distaste and horror, but finally, he realizes the beauty of his shadow and is able to formulate its contents artistically.

The Mariner's submission to his unconscious is the subject of chapter four. The Mariner continues to expand creatively on the outward form of the unconscious products, but he is unable to understand the meaning behind the form. As a result, he allows the unconscious images to take control of his consciousness.

Chapter five examines the final stanzas of the poem, and concludes that the Mariner is a fallen hero; he does not continue his spiritual journey of integrating the contents of the unconscious with his ego. The Mariner cannot bring together the opposites of light and darkness inherent in the God-image, and consequently, he does not receive salvation. His psyche remains split, in tension and turmoil. According to Jung, Christianity does not provide individuals with a myth that would help them to resolve the conflict between the unconscious and the conscious.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The Lyrical Ballads, which were published in 1798, consisted of a series of poems written by W. Wordsworth and S.T. Coleridge. Nearly twenty years later, Coleridge explained that he and Wordsworth had agreed that the poems were to consist of two sorts: supernatural and natural. The poems based on natural events had very much the same intent as the supernatural, in that they were aimed at exciting "a feeling analogous to the supernatural," to awaken "the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom."¹ It was decided that Coleridge's endeavors

should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least Romantic; yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith.²

Coleridge claims that it was "with this view," that he wrote "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner."³

At the time of the poem's publication, Coleridge's "characters supernatural" and "shadows of imagination" seemed to resist any form of critical interpretation; readers were unable to uncover an underlying meaning or moral. For example, in the October 1798 issue of the Critical Review, Robert Southey declared that "many of the

stanzas are laboriously beautiful; but in connection they are absurd or unintelligible ... we do not sufficiently understand the poem to analyse it."⁴ Likewise, in the October 1819 edition of Blackwood's Magazine, John Gibson Lockhart declared that "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" "is a poem to be felt, cherished, mused upon, not to be talked about, not capable of being described, analyzed or criticized."⁵

While Coleridge's contemporaries refrained from supplying any critical analysis of "The Rime," during the last two decades of the nineteenth century readers began to look for patterns to explain the drama and meaning of the events. Especially in the period between 1940 and 1987, scholars have made numerous attempts to interpret the poem. Critics have employed theological, autobiographical, and psychological schemas⁶ to explain the events which take place in the poem; however, many of the essays are unable to provide a sufficient understanding of the supernatural contents of the poem, and/or treat the ballad as an arbitrary and discontinuous series of incidents. For instance, Robert Penn Warren interprets the poem as a dramatization of the fundamental Christian concepts of sin, punishment, repentance, and redemption; in order to achieve his 'sacramental vision' he ignores the capricious and irrational elements of the poem and draws heavily on Coleridge's other writings to support his theories.⁷ Similarly, those who adhere to an autobiographical

approach do not deal with the poem as an organic whole. Certain events, such as the killing of the albatross, are explained through extrinsic evidence gathered from Coleridge's letters and notebooks; the experiences of the Mariner are interpreted as a reflection of Coleridge's own encounters, so the actual symbolic action of the poem itself is left unexamined.⁹

In addition to the previously mentioned frameworks used to study "The Rime," many scholars have appealed to the psychological nature of the poem. While this approach has yielded a great deal of success in interpreting much of the symbolic content, most of the essays to date are unable to identify and analyze each of the supernatural events and objects, and place them in a meaningful relationship to each other and to the poem as a whole. This point can be illustrated by Jean-Paul Mileur's work, Vision and Revision. He declares that the Mariner condemns the water-snakes as "projections of his own self-loathing," but Mileur does not confront other critical issues such as the killing of the albatross or the encounter with the figure of "Life-in-Death." Mileur concludes that the poem's supernatural content represents the Mariner's "contingent subjectivity" and his inability, due to suppression, to find "adequate signification within the realm of the natural order."⁹ Mileur makes some significant observations about the Mariner's psychic condition, but his interpretation is not only often vague,

but also incomplete; he fails to tackle all of the supernatural elements of the poem. Therefore, it would appear that Southey's comment that the stanzas of the poem, in connection, are "absurd or unintelligible" continues to hold true throughout the twentieth century.

The purpose of this thesis is to apply the principles of Jungian psychology to help elucidate those supernatural images which seem to transcend comprehension, so that the poem may be viewed as a totality, wherein the events flow in meaningful continuity. Ross Woodman, in a recent article, makes reference to Jung, Coleridge, and "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." He argues that the character of the Mariner is a failed shaman, and that "English Romanticism viewed as a whole is a failed initiation rite."¹⁰ Woodman briefly examines the life and work of Carl Jung and concludes that Jung provides an excellent example of a shaman who has successfully completed the initiation rite. Woodman declines from embarking on a detailed analysis of the poem for fear that such an act would "usurp the place of mystery."¹¹ Within the sphere of art, says Jung, a poem must simply be experienced as a living mystery; "it needs no meaning, for meaning has nothing to do with art."¹² Art is like nature; it simply *is*. However, for the purpose of cognitive understanding, Jung maintains that we must speculate, interpret and find meaning in things;¹³ "what was a mere phenomenon before becomes something that in association with other phenomena

has meaning, that has a definite role to play, serves certain ends, and exerts meaningful effects."¹⁴ For Jung, this meaning is fundamentally religious.¹⁵

Through the use of Jungian psychology, the mere phenomena that inhabit the fanciful world of "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" can become religiously meaningful; they can have a definite role to play, they can serve certain ends, and they can exert meaningful effects. In his discussion of poetry, Jung declares "that the practice of art is a psychological activity and, as such, can be approached from a psychological angle."¹⁶ In fact, as Marie-Louise von Franz remarks,

if the work of art is symbolic, it is necessary for the psychologist to intervene and examine the allusive meaning of the symbols: The more a work of art is dictated directly by the unconscious, the more it tends to take on a dreamlike form, namely a symbolic, visionary character. And it is the latter which mostly calls for the psychologist's intervention, because it is generally not self-evidently understandable but puzzling and mysterious.¹⁷

As many contemporary critics have pointed out, "The Rime" does indeed have a dreamlike nature.¹⁸ Consequently, it is evident from the various interpretations of the poem that it is not "self-evidently understandable but puzzling and mysterious."

From the point of view of Jungian psychology, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" is puzzling and mysterious because the "characters supernatural" and "shadows of imagination" are the archetypes of the collective

unconscious. According to Jung, the psyche consists of two complementary but antithetical spheres of consciousness and the unconscious. The unconscious comprises the personal unconscious, the layer of repressed individual memories, attitudes, and opinions, and the collective unconscious, which is not personal but universal; it "constitutes a common psychic substrate of a supranatural nature which is present in every one of us."¹⁹ The unconscious consists of pre-existent, inherited forms²⁰ which Jung calls "archetypes." The archetypes are deposits of the constantly repeated experiences of humanity, but they are not the experiences themselves; rather, they are the "patterns of instinctual behaviour."²¹ The contents of these psychic "patterns" or "dispositions" are images of parents, wife, children, etc. The content of the archetype can be integrated with consciousness but the archetypes themselves cannot, since they are "factors transcending consciousness and beyond the reach of perception and volition."²² Although the archetypes are beyond the reach of perception, "they possess a certain autonomy and specific energy which enables them to attract, out of the conscious mind, those contents which are best suited to themselves."²³ This content from the conscious mind, the symbols or bridges between the conscious and unconscious, act as "transformers," converting libido from a "lower," unconscious form, into a "higher," conscious form.²⁴ Through this process of transformation, the archetypes

appear as actual personalities in dreams and fantasies.

The central argument of the thesis is that the Mariner represents the archetypal hero questing for religious self-knowledge and spiritual oneness with God. Jung states that the hero

is first and foremost a self-representation of the longing of the unconscious, of its unquenched and unquenchable desire for the light of consciousness. But consciousness, continually in danger of being led astray by its own light and of becoming a rootless will o' the wisp, longs for the healing power of nature, for the deep wells of being and for unconscious communion with life in all its countless forms.²⁵

In other words, the hero represents the longing, the search for the state wherein psychic energy flows freely between the two antithetical spheres of the psyche, so that the psyche may achieve a complementary relationship, a relationship of equilibrium between the light of consciousness and the deep dark wells of the unconscious.

This achievement of balance between the conscious and the unconscious is the "coming to selfhood," or "self-realization," and is the goal of what Jung terms "individuation." "Individuation means becoming a single, homogeneous being, and, in so far as 'individuality' embraces our innermost, last, and incomparable uniqueness, it also implies becoming one's own self."²⁶ This synthetic process of becoming a single, homogeneous being involves the experience of and the confrontation with the products of the unconscious, and the integration of these contents

into consciousness. During each major phase of this process, the corresponding archetype will show itself in dream, or fantasy, or through projection onto some aspect of the environment.²⁷ Each archetype reveals the stage at which the individual is coming to terms with the unconscious; according to Jung there are four main archetypes involved in the process of individuation; shadow, anima/animus, wise old man, and the self or God archetype.

The shadow will appear as a figure of the same sex as the person who is investigating his unconscious. The individual must confront and assimilate those morally reprehensible elements of his personal unconscious which he has previously repressed as merely the shadow of his true personality. The shadow is not only a personal complex, but also a universal archetype, since the tendency to deny the existence of one's own evil is a characteristic of human nature. On the religious level, Christ and the Anti-Christ illustrate this dichotomy of good and evil.

The second archetype to be experienced by the hero on his inner journey to self-knowledge is the anima. The anima represents the feminine aspects of a man's personality, while the animus represents the masculine aspects of a woman's personality. Like the shadow, this archetype can appear negative or positive, depending on the conscious attitude of the individual. If the hero discovers the spiritual wisdom of the anima, this triumph

will be objectified through the figure of the wise old man. He "pierces the chaotic darkness of brute life with the light of meaning."²⁸ The final archetype to be experienced is that of the self, or the God-image. In the human psyche, the God-image and the self appear as synonymous symbols for the wholeness of the personality.²⁹ For Jung, the self is an inclusive term that embraces the whole person. It is the "round wholeness":

[It] is the great treasure that lies hidden in the cave of the unconscious, and its personification is this personal being who represents the unity of conscious and unconscious. It is a figure comparable to Hiranyagarbha, Purusha, Atman, and the mystical Buddha. For this reason I have elected to call it the 'self,' by which I understand a psychic totality and at the same time a centre, neither of which coincides with the ego but includes it, just as a larger circle encloses a smaller one.³⁰

In terms of Christianity, this higher being who personifies the state of transcendent unity and wholeness, is the Christian God. According to Jung, "psychic energy or libido creates the God-image by making use of archetypal patterns, and ... man in consequence worships the psychic force active within him as something divine."³¹ Although Jung declares that the God-image is a real but subjective phenomenon, he also maintains that he has "never asserted that God is only an intrapsychic potency."³² The God-image represents the successful assimilation and integration of the internal and external. This archetype of wholeness is the conjunction of the opposites of good and evil, male and female, spiritual and material, Christ

and Satan, Yahweh and the Christian God, the thinking function and the feeling function.³³

The following is a study of the archetypal and symbolic material in "The Rime," which attempts to determine the relative success or failure of the Mariner's religious pilgrimage, of his ability to confront and integrate the archetypes of the collective unconscious in order to achieve individuation.

In examining the archetypal content of the poem the discussion will be limited to the poem itself, excluding the commentary which appears alongside the text. In the first printing of the Lyrical Ballads in 1798, early reviewers condemned "The Rime" for its strangeness and obscurity. In later editions Coleridge added the marginal glosses.³⁴ It was no wonder that readers complained about the poem, for as Jung points out, a symbolic work "remains a perpetual challenge to our thought and feelings," and affords little aesthetic enjoyment because it grips us so intensely.³⁵ On the other hand, "a work which is manifestly not symbolic appeals much more to our aesthetic sensibilities because it is complete in itself and fulfills its purpose."³⁶ The marginal notes reveal Coleridge's attempt to give purpose to the poem, to make it complete in itself. K. Wheeler comments that

the gloss moralizes by interpolating guilt, blame, remorse, superstition, omens, cause and agency, sin and retribution into the action of the poem, while in the verse

moralizing is specifically and markedly excluded.³⁷

Therefore, as this is a study of the religious nature of the poem, demonstrated through its symbolic and archetypal content, the linear and outward movement of thought represented in the gloss will be omitted.

It is also important to note that although the following analysis involves the examination of the symbols within "The Rime," the actual object of the study is not to explore fully the various possible meanings of each symbol, but to discuss the symbols within the context of the poem, and as they relate to the Mariner's spiritual journey. The following formulation, or translation of the poem's imagery into religious terms, is a study in the process of individuation, whereby the symbols and archetypes lead to an understanding of the Mariner's course of psychic and spiritual development.

Notes to Chapter 1

¹ S.T. Coleridge, "Biographia Literaria," English Romantic Writers, ed. David Perkins (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1967), 452.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Robert Southey, Critical Review 1798. cited in David Jasper, Coleridge as Poet and Religious Thinker (London: Macmillan, 1985), 52.

⁵ John Gibson, Blackwood's Magazine 1919. cited in Jasper, 53.

⁶ The three orientations mentioned are the main approaches to the poem. For a summary of the various individual approaches to "The Rime" see John Spencer Hill, A Coleridge Companion (London: Macmillan, 1983), 152-163.

⁷ Robert Penn Warren, "A Poem of Pure Imagination: An Experiment in Reading," Twentieth Century Interpretations of The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, ed. James P. Boulger (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1968).

⁸ For example, see George Whalley, "The Mariner and the Albatross," Coleridge, The Ancient Mariner and Other Poems, eds. Alun R. Jones and William Tydeman (London: Macmillan, 1973).

⁹ Jean-Paul Mileur, Vision and Revision. Coleridge's

Art of Immanence (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982), 70-72.

¹⁰ Ross Woodman, "Shaman, Poet, and Failed Initiate: Reflections on Romanticism and Jungian Psychology," Studies in Romanticism no. 19 (1980): 51.

¹¹ Ibid, 66.

¹² C. G. Jung. "On the Relation of Analytical Psychology to Poetry." Collected Works (hereafter C.W.), trans. R.C. Hull, ed. Sir Herbert Read et. al. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), vol. 15, par. 121.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ In correspondence with Dr. Hock in 1952, Jung declares that to him personally, "religion is a matter of first-rate importance," and believes that "man lives wholly when, and only when, he is related to God." C. G. Jung. Letters, trans. Gerhard Adler and Aniela Jaffe, ed. R. F. C. Hull, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975) II, 66-67.

¹⁶ Jung, "Poetry" C.W. 15, par. 97.

¹⁷ Marie-Louise von Franz, "Analytical Psychology and Literary Criticism," New Literary History 12 (1980): 120.

¹⁸ See Patricia Adair, The Waking Dream. A Study of Coleridge's Poetry (London: Edward Arnold, 1967); Beverly Fields, Reality's Dark Dream. Dejection in Coleridge (Kent: Kent University Press, 1967); Paul Magnuson,

Coleridge's Nightmare Poetry (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1984).

¹⁹ Jung, "Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious," C.W. 9i, par. 3.

²⁰ Jung declares that the existence of these inherited deposits of our ancestral experiences cannot be proven: "I must confess that I have never yet found infallible evidence for the inheritance of memory images." Jung, "The Relations Between the Ego and the Unconscious," C.W. 7, par. 300.

²¹ Jung, "The Concept of the Unconscious," C.W. 9i, par. 91.

²² Jung, "Aion," C.W. 9ii, par. 40.

²³ Jung, "Symbols of Transformation," C.W. 5, par. 344.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid, par. 299.

²⁶ Jung, "The Ego," C.W. 7, par. 266.

²⁷ Jung declares that "projection is an unconscious, automatic process whereby a content that is unconscious to the subject transfers itself to an object, so that it seems to belong to the object. The projection ceases the moment it becomes conscious, that is to say when it is seen as belonging to the subject." Jung, "Concerning the Archetypes, with Special Reference to the Anima Concept," C.W. 9i, par. 121.

²⁸ Jung, "Archetypes," C.W. 9i, par. 77.

²⁹ Jung, "A Psychological Approach to the Trinity" C.W. 11, par. 231.

³⁰ Jung, "Concerning Rebirth," C.W. 91, par. 248.

³¹ Jung, "Symbols," C.W. 5, par. 129.

³² Letters Vol. II, 66-67. In one of his works, Jung also states that the God archetype has a "reality independent of the conscious mind. It is a psychic existent which should not in itself be confused with the ideas of a metaphysical God. The existence of the archetype neither postulates a God, nor does it deny that he exists." "Symbols," C.W. 5, footnote to par. 89.

³³ A psychic function is, according to Jung, "a certain form of psychic activity that remains theoretically the same under varying circumstances." Jung, "Psychological Types" C.W. 6, par. 731. The thinking function perceives the world through cognition and logical inferences, while the feeling function apprehends the world through feelings and valuations. Jung maintains that in the Western world, for most people thinking is the dominant, more conscious function while feeling is the inferior, more unconscious function. For a summary of Jung's theory of functions, see Jolande Jacobi, The Psychology of C. G. Jung trans. Ralf Manheim (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 10-18.

³⁴ David Perkins, ed. English Romantic Writers (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1967), 405.

³⁵ Jung, "Poetry," C.W. 15, par. 119.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ K. M. Wheeler, The Creative Mind in Coleridge's Poetry (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981), 59.

CHAPTER 2

Descent Into The Unconscious

In order for the hero to embark on his journey into the depths of the unconscious, he must first separate himself from the familiar world of everyday reality; as Joseph Campbell points out, the hero's "spiritual centre of gravity" is transferred "from within the pale of his society to a zone unknown."¹ Whether in myth, dream, or poetry, this region of adventure, the realm of the unconscious, is variously represented as a distant land, a forest, an underground kingdom, or a place beneath the waves. In "The Rime of The Ancient Mariner," the Mariner descends into the watery depths of the sea. According to Jung, the sea and water in general are universal symbols for the unconscious.² In fact, he declares that the archetypal image of the night sea journey is "a kind of *descensus ad inferos* -- a descent into Hades and a journey to the land of ghosts somewhere beyond the world, beyond consciousness, hence an immersion in the unconscious."³

Although it may appear arbitrary that the character of the Mariner is the one who undertakes this journey into the watery abyss of his unconscious, according to the findings of Carl Jung, the Mariner is ready for such an experience. Jung declares that the first half of life involves the

initiation into outward reality, where the individual adapts to the demands of the environment. The second half is the initiation into the inner reality; therefore,

at the climacteric ... it is necessary to give specific attention to the images of the collective unconscious, because they are the source from which hints may be drawn to the solution of the problem of the opposites.⁴

It is at this point that the tension between the opposites of good and evil, conscious and unconscious, male and female, and so forth, becomes increasingly apparent, so that the individual may be forced to examine the roots of his conscious psyche. It is obvious that the Mariner is at his climacteric; he is referred to by the adjective, "ancient," and the Wedding-Guest calls him a "grey-beard loon."⁵ In addition, the character of the Mariner is never referred to by his first or last name; he is completely identified in terms of his occupation as "mariner." On the one hand this points to the fact that he has adapted to the demands of the external world by developing the persona⁶ of "mariner"; by creating a system of relations between his individual consciousness and society, he is ready to adapt to the demands of the internal world. In addition, the fact that the Mariner has no identity apart from his vocation, suggests that his persona, the mask displayed to the world, is overdeveloped. The Mariner's true individuality is hidden beneath his role of "mariner." Consequently, the balance between the inner and outer realms of the psyche needs to be restored through the

confrontation with the collective unconscious. The Mariner's "descensus ad inferos" represents his search for the wholeness of personality through the exploration and integration of the opposites of his conscious self, that lie deep within his unconscious. Only when the Mariner is able to bring together the opposites within his own psyche, can he receive the religious experience of true spiritual oneness with God.

This journey into the unconscious commences when the Mariner leaves his familiar homeland:

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

The first object mentioned in the Mariner's account of his journey is the ship. The ship plays an important role in the Mariner's voyage inward. In analyzing a dream which included the image of a ship, Jung states that

the ship is the vehicle that bears the dreamer over the sea and the depths of the unconscious. As a man-made thing it stands for a system or method (or a way: cf. Hinayana and Mahayana = the Lesser and Greater vehicle, the two forms of Buddhism).⁷

In the same way that Buddhism is said to be the raft, or device, that enables the individual to reach the other shore and attain true enlightenment, the Mariner's ship may represent the analytical method, or process of self examination, wherein the individual confronts the unconscious aspects of his psyche. If this investigation

of the personal and collective unconscious is successful, in that many of the contents previously hidden are assimilated into consciousness, then the individual will have completed the process of individuation, "the process by which a person becomes a psychological 'in-dividual,' that is, a separate, indivisible unity or 'whole'."⁸ Therefore, if the ship, as the analytical process which brings the Mariner to a confrontation with the mythical pantheon of the collective unconscious, completes its journey and returns the Mariner to shore, it has the potential value of becoming a symbol of psychic wholeness.

The image of the ship as a symbol of individuation is further enhanced by the fact that it lies on the line between the water and the air; with its keel below the water, in the dark, hidden realm of the unconscious, and its mast in the air, in the bright visible realm of consciousness, the ship functions as a link, or bridge, between these complementary but antithetical spheres of the psyche.⁹ Since the greater portion of the boat is above the water, through individuation a greater portion of the unconscious can be made conscious, but a small part of the boat forever remains below the surface because the full contents of the unconscious can never be completely realized.

The Mariner's voyage begins when he "drops" below the familiar signs of his homeland. As Mark Littman points out in his analysis of the poem, it is significant that the

line reads not "sailed away" or "headed south," but rather, "Merrily did we drop."¹⁰ John Cornwell comments that the word "drop," together with the thrice repeated "below" provides "a powerful impression of a vertical progression downwards,"¹¹ a descent into the vast oceanic world of the unconscious. The Mariner "merrily" begins his voyage into the unconscious, unaware of the danger and adversity that accompanies the journey inward.

The Mariner drops below the church, hill and lighthouse. These objects represent the familiar sights of the external world. In particular, the church and lighthouse contain specific symbolic value, pointing to the nature of the conscious attitude of the Mariner. L. P. Berkoben, in his discussion of the symbolism in "The Rime," comments that "at the outset of the journey the Mariner first loses sight of his church and perhaps of the religion it objectifies."¹² The church as an external object may point to the external, collective nature of institutionalized religion, over against the internal, individual experience of God. Although the creeds and rituals of the church are the effects of the spontaneous and autonomous activity of the objective psyche, they may easily degenerate, causing spiritual inertia and stagnation, if they are not coupled with actual spiritual experience. As Jung puts it, "once metaphysical ideas have lost their capacity to recall and evoke the original experience they have not only become useless but prove to

be actual impediments on the road to wider development."¹³ Therefore, it is psychologically necessary for the Mariner to cut himself off from the comfort and safety of formulated religious ideas, so he can search for the inner religious experience of God Himself. Only through such action can he gain true faith, for "legitimate faith must always rest on experience."¹⁴

While the church represents the external, collective form of religious experience, the lighthouse symbolizes the light of reason and intellect, that is, the purely rational side of the individual. Jung declares that "light is the symbolic equivalent of consciousness,"¹⁵ and that "the rational is essentially tied to the conscious mind."¹⁶ Although reason is important to create order out of the chaos of life, in Jung's schema it is only one of the possible mental functions (the others being intuition, sensation, and feeling). In the Western world, reason most often becomes the superior function, so that the irrational contents of the psyche, the collective unconscious, fail to become differentiated and assimilated into consciousness. The lighthouse is an especially effective symbol because its light protects ships from crashing into rocks during the night. As long as the light from the lighthouse (the rational) remains bright and constant, one need not encounter the dangers and horrors of the night (the irrational). However, as the ship sails out to sea it is inevitable that it will leave the lighthouse behind, and as

the analytical process continues it is inevitable that the Mariner must suspend his power of conscious thought and understanding, in order to experience the contents of the collective unconscious.

As the Mariner drops below the signifiers of the external world -- the dogma of codified experience and the faculty of rational thought -- he continues his journey southward.

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.(25-28)

According to Jung the symbol of the sun can express a variety of meanings depending upon the context in which it appears; the most common clusters of meaning are those of consciousness and masculinity (derived from the sun's attribute of light and brightness), and of the conjunction of opposites and the symbol of the self (derived from the sun's round mandala shape).¹⁷ Although strict symbolic significance cannot be assigned to the image of the sun in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," it generally functions as a signifier of consciousness; it has the role of separating periods when the unconscious is highly activated (accompanied by the moon), from periods when the unconscious contents are not nearly as intense. In the above stanza the sun not only reveals the direction the ship is going, but also points to the fact that the Mariner has barely begun his journey into the unconscious. Since the sun shines brightly the Mariner has not yet encountered

the dark contents of his unconscious. In addition, the sun and its activity are essentially natural because for the moment the conscious attitude and the world of externals are still exerting a great deal of influence over the Mariner.

In the following stanzas conditions change; the sun is no longer the dominant image providing a sense of normalcy, calm, and safety. The ship is now driven further into the south by a storm.

'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.(41-50)

The Storm-Blast, tyrannous, strong and roaring as it strikes the ship and chases it southward, appears as a powerful and formidable force. Psychologically speaking, this force which enables the analytical process to carry on by pushing the Mariner further into the unconscious, is the libido. Jung maintains that the libido, like energy, "never manifests itself as such, but only in the form of a 'force,' that is to say, in the form of something in a definite energetic state."¹⁰ It is "the unconscious creative force which wraps itself in images."¹¹ In the case of "The Rime" the libido seems to wrap itself in the image of the Storm-Blast.

In addition to revealing itself in images the libido flows in two directions: forwards and backwards. The progression of the libido consists in a "continual satisfaction of the demands of environmental conditions" while regressive movement "as an adaptation to the conditions of the inner world, springs from the vital need to satisfy the demands of individuation."²⁰ The libido of the Mariner seems to be flowing backward, towards the realm of the mothers where spiritual wisdom resides, wisdom that will expand the personality if it is incorporated into consciousness. Since psychic energy is autonomous, regression is "an involuntary introversion,"²¹ and for this reason the Mariner is struck, chased and pursued, and is powerless to do anything but go where the storm takes him. The storm is regarded as the "foe," because often the regressive libido seems to be the enemy of the conscious attitude, demanding that certain contents be recognized.

As the ship flees southward it encounters "mist and snow" (51) and ice (53-62). It would seem that the drive south has taken the ship into the region of the antarctic. Both mist and snow obscure the vision of the human eye("I") and therefore become appropriate expressions of the nature of the unconscious. The mist is especially pregnant with meaning; mist, as a water vapor in the air, represents the transformation from something corporeal into something seemingly incorporeal.²² Consequently, the encounter with mist signifies the transformation from the external or

corporeal world of consciousness, to the internal or incorporeal world of the unconscious.

Through the imagery used in the following stanzas, the ice also appears to be a symbol of the unconscious:

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! (53-62)

The ice totally surrounds the Mariner; it is here and there and all around. This image of the ice totally surrounding the Mariner is an extremely effective and accurate symbol of the unconscious. Jung declares that the human psyche possesses unconscious layers that encircle consciousness:

In my experience the conscious mind can only claim a relatively central position and must put up with the fact that the unconscious psyche transcends and as it were surrounds it on all sides. Unconscious contents connect it backward with physiological states on the one hand and archetypal data on the other. But it is also extended forward by intuitions which are conditioned partly by archetypes and partly by subliminal perceptions, depending on the relativity of time and space in the unconscious.²³

Therefore, as the regressive movement of the libido has activated the internal contents of the psyche, the Mariner begins to feel trapped and boxed in, for he is isolated

from the outside world of familiar sights and sounds.

It is significant that the ice is "As green as emerald." Jung also points out that "green is the color of the vegetation numen ('green is life's golden tree')." ²⁴ It is the color often associated with growth and life. In this sense it may symbolize the hope and possibility of life which results from the experience of the unconscious products and the integration of these contents into consciousness. The Mariner declares that because of the ice he could not see any "shapes of men or beasts." The impression is given of the green, icy world of the unconscious forming a barrier between the Mariner and the familiar shapes of the conscious world.

There is a further connection between the unconscious and the image of ice, in that ice often occurs in the dreams and fantasies of depressed persons, ²⁵ and depression, states Jung, "is an unconscious compensation whose content must be made conscious." ²⁶ The ice may therefore symbolize elements of the unconscious which must be made conscious, in order to compensate for the Mariner's rigid and narrow conscious attitude. In addition, the fact that the ice is specifically compared to the growling, roaring, howling sounds of animals, also suggests the instinctual and primitive nature of the collective unconscious. Jung declares that "regression carried to its logical conclusion means a linking back with the world of natural instincts." ²⁷ The Mariner experiences the

noises, the rumblings, of the instincts only because he has not yet confronted the archetypes themselves. The fact that the Mariner hears these noises in a "swoon" reveals the dizzying effect such experience has upon him, and how ill-equipped he is to deal with the unconscious.

Although the Mariner is disturbed by his initial experience of the unconscious, in order for him to benefit from the healing effects of the objective psyche he must continue his journey inward; he must encounter, and integrate, the primordial images or "dominants" of the collective unconscious. Unfortunately, as Jung points out,

in most cases the conscious personality rises up against the assault of the unconscious and resists its demands, which, it is clearly felt, are directed not only against all the weak spots in the man's character, but also against his chief virtue (the differentiated function and the ideal).²⁰

Through the appearance of the albatross, the Mariner's conscious personality does indeed rise up against the assault of the unconscious. For the length of five stanzas the albatross occupies the attention of the Mariner and his crew.

At length did cross an 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 mariner's 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.(63-82)

With the coming of the albatross there is no longer any mention of the tyrannous storm, the dismal sheen of the snowy clifts, or the growling, howling ice; in fact, when the albatross appears the ice splits and a good south wind pushes the ship along on its course. Under a south wind the ship must be sailing in an opposite direction, northward, back toward the realm of consciousness. Therefore, the sense of normalcy and familiarity is predominant throughout this passage. Paul Magnuson, in his commentary on "The Rime," concludes that the albatross is a "sanctifier in virtue of it being the one recognizable reality in the unfamiliar world."²⁹

The albatross does function as a sanctifier, for it temporarily stops the instinctual contents of the unconscious from erupting into consciousness. The reason why the bird is able to impede the onslaught of the unconscious is because the bird symbolizes the Mariner's conscious attitude; his superior thinking function, which has begun to accompany the analytical process, provides the stabilizing effect of rational thought. According to Jung, "the bird, an inhabitant of the bright realm of the

air, is a symbol of conscious thought, of the (winged) ideal, and of the Holy Ghost (dove)."³⁰ Throughout Jung's writings the bird is a universal symbol of either spirit or thought.³¹ Considering the context in which the albatross appears in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," the functional meaning of this individual symbol is that of conscious thought.

Not only does the arrival of the albatross coincide with the splitting of the ice (the ego's disconnection with the unconscious) and the good south wind (the influence of consciousness), but the bird also creates a sense of community when it comes "every day, for food or play." This activity re-establishes the psyche's conscious orientation to the outer world, thus abandoning the terrifying encounter with the internal world. In addition, the albatross is assigned religious meaning; it is hailed in God's name and is likened to a Christian soul. Since the contents of the unconscious have either been repressed or have never been known by the ego (some of which never can be known), they remain in opposition to the conscious attitude and may consequently be viewed as being evil. Therefore, the arrival of the albatross, of rational thought, seems to the Mariner to be a saving grace. Also, the terms "Christian" and "God" are conceptualizations of a numinous reality which act as a safeguard against the actual experience of the reality behind the concepts. The reference to "vespers nine" especially indicates ritualized

religious behavior, and points to the creeds and dogma that the Mariner left behind when he dropped below the kirk. Suddenly the dominance of rational thought has reappeared, and is attempting to terminate the Mariner's journey into his unconscious. Jung points out that "nothing is more injurious to immediate experience than cognition."³²

In order for the Mariner to continue his voyage inward the albatross is eliminated. The Mariner declares, "With my cross-bow / I shot the albatross" (81-82). No reason, no rational explanation, is provided by the Mariner because the rational faculty did not partake of this action; the re-activated power of the unconscious shot down this symbol of persisting consciousness. The unconscious has gained such an unassailable ascendancy that it can withdraw libido from the conscious world. For a successful adaptation to externals and the progression of libido, there must be regular interaction and mutual influence between the conscious and the unconscious; since there was no interaction, repression of the unconscious once more caused the backward movement of the libido. The Wedding-Guest's statement that fiends plague the Mariner is an appropriate description of the libido. Jung declares that "as a power which transcends consciousness the libido is by nature daemonic."³³ Regardless of the fact that the Mariner attempted to focus his attention on the external world of natural objects and events, and repress the internal world of the unconscious, his libido held him in

its grip, relentlessly plaguing him to continue his examination of the contents of his inner self.

Even the fact that it is night and the moon is present at the time the Mariner shoots the albatross ("Glimmered the white Moon-shine") points to the dominance of the unconscious. Jung declares that the moon is a prevalent symbol of the unconscious: "A man's unconscious is the lunar world, for it is a night world, and this is characterized by the moon...."³⁴ As Mark Littman comments, "the moon will be found to be the principal initiator in all the ordeals through which the Mariner passes,"³⁵ for it is by the authority of the unconscious that such incidents come to pass.

After the Mariner shoots the albatross, the process of directing libidinal energy inward slowly begins. Although the sun rises from the right, indicating that the ship is continuing its journey northward, toward the external world, the mist suggests that the conscious attitude is clouded, or under the influence of unconscious forces.

The Sun now rose upon the right:
Out of the sea came he,
Still hid in mist, and on the left
Went down into the sea.(83-86)

In contradistinction to the first time when the sun rose upon the left, when the Mariner first began his voyage (25), the sun is now "hid in mist," that substance of transformation between the corporeal world of consciousness and the incorporeal world of the unconscious. Therefore,

the conscious sphere of the psyche has not fully regained the power it enjoyed at the commencement of the journey.

In line 87 the Mariner declares that the "good south wind still blew behind," and that he has "done a hellish thing" (91) by killing "the bird / That made the breeze to blow" (93-4). As a symbol of consciousness, the bird brought a good south wind to propel the ship and return it to the world of externals. However, since the "fair breeze" (103) continues to blow and the mist and fog clears -- "Nor dim nor red, like God's own head, / The glorious sun uprist" (97-98) -- the crew concludes that the albatross brought the fog and mist and therefore, "'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay" (101). Psychologically, it appears that a power struggle is taking place between the realm of the unconscious (symbolized by the fog and mist), and the realm of consciousness (represented by the fair breeze and bright sun). Both are fighting for ascendancy. The conscious attitude battles to redirect psychic energy northward, toward the external world, while the compensatory nature of the unconscious strives to disrupt the progressive flow of libido. Finally, the unconscious proves victorious and the breeze ceases; the forward movement of psychic energy is halted. Although the influence of consciousness has not quite been eradicated, it does not last long:

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
'Twas sad as sad could be;
And we did speak only to break

The silence of the sea!(107-110)

The consequences of the Mariner's action of killing the albatross are now realized. By eliminating both the albatross and the wind of conscious motivation, the Mariner has indeed done a hellish thing from the point of view of his conscious attitude; he now must continue his journey into the depths of the unconscious. The sadness that the Mariner feels at being without the familiarity and security of conscious control soon turns to fear later on in the voyage.

Once the albatross is killed and the good south wind ceases, the sun seems unnatural and even evil:

All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody Sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the Moon.(111-114)

The Mariner's gradual descent into the unconscious is effectively depicted by the gradual change of the sun. At the onset of the journey the sun "shone bright" (26); directly after the albatross is killed it is "hid in mist" (85); and now, the sun is not only bloody but it is identified with the moon. Since the sun, the symbol of consciousness, takes on characteristics of the unconscious, it is apparent that the contents of the Mariner's unconscious are beginning to gain full control over his conscious self.

For the moment, he is "stuck" between the conscious and the unconscious.

Day after day, day after day

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

As William Walsh points out,

unreality is laid upon unreality, a mere illusion of a ship is placed upon an artificial sea ... the repetition of 'day after day,' and then of 'painted,' monotonous and echoing and unprogressive, makes heavier the sense not only of absence, but of the futility, of action.³⁶

Indeed, the action of the conscious attitude to make progress, to return to the external world is futile. As a result, nothing seems real or tangible from the point of view of the Mariner's ego. Even though the influence of consciousness has subsided, the Mariner has not yet encountered the archetypes of the unconscious so he remains in a state of stasis, suspended between the two realms. The Mariner's exclamation of "water, water everywhere" (119), emphasizes the fact that he is totally surrounded by the unconscious, but as Richard Haven points out, the line "nor any drop to drink" (122) signifies the Mariner's "spiritual dryness".³⁷ Similarly, Ross Woodman comments that "cut off from nature, the psyche rots in its own depths because its proper oceanic world is denied it."³⁸ The Mariner has given up his complete reliance on the superior function (most likely that of thinking), in order to fully explore and develop his inferior function (most likely that of feeling); but he remains cut off from the oceanic world of his collective unconscious because he has not yet encountered those archetypal images which will

guide him along the road of individuation and spiritual renewal.

The Mariner is now ready to meet with the primordial images that have long remained unconscious and unattainable. He has completed the first stage of his journey by breaking away from the complete control of the conscious world, and by yielding to the unconscious forces that strive to restore psychic balance and harmony. His success at integrating and assimilating the archetypes remains to be seen.

Notes to Chapter Two

¹ Joseph Campbell, The Hero With A Thousand Faces (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 58.

² See Jung, "Psychology and Alchemy," C.W. 12, par. 203, 156, 57; "Symbols," C.W. 5, par. 320; "The Psychology of the Unconscious", C.W. 7, par. 140; "Archetypes," C.W. 9i par. 40.

³ Jung, "The Psychology and Transference," C.W. 16, par. 455.

⁴ Jung, "The Psychology of the Unconscious," C.W. 7, par. 184.

⁵ S. T. Coleridge, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," in English Romantic Writers, ed. David Perkins (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1967), line 11. Subsequent reference to the poem will be included in the text as bracketed line numbers.

⁶ According to Jung, the persona is a mask designed to make a definite impression on others, and to hide the individual's true nature. "Society expects, and indeed must expect, every individual to play the part assigned to him as perfectly as possible." Jung, "The Ego," C.W. 7, par. 305.

⁷ Jung, "Alchemy," C.W. 12, par. 305.

⁸ Jung, "Conscious, Unconscious, and Individuation,"

C.W. 9i, par. 490.

⁹ Richard Holmes suggests that the events of the poem belong to one of three zones, demarcated diagrammatically by a "matchstick ship resting on the line of the sea, the mast in the air, the keel below the surface." Richard Holmes, Coleridge (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1982), 88-89.

¹⁰ Mark Littman, "The Ancient Mariner and Initiation Rites," Papers on Language and Literature 4 (1968): 371.

¹¹ John Cornwell, Coleridge. Poet and Revolutionary. 1772-1804 (London: Penguin, 1973), 228.

¹² L.P. Berkoben, Coleridge's Decline As A Poet (Paris: Mouton, 1975), 86.

¹³ Jung, "Aion," C.W. 9ii, par. 65.

¹⁴ Jung, "Symbols," C.W. 5, par. 345.

¹⁵ Jung, "Commentary on 'The Secret of the Golden Flower,'" C.W. 13, par.28.

¹⁶ Jung, "The Psychology," C.W. 7, par. 110.

¹⁷ Jung, "Mysterium Coniunctionis," C.W. 14, par. 96, 100, 127f, 544, 108f.

¹⁸ Jung, "Symbols," C.W. 5, par.505.

¹⁹ Ibid, par.329.

²⁰ Jung, "On Psychic Energy," C.W. 8 par. 75.

²¹ Jung, "Symbols," C.W. 5, par. 625.

²² Jung, "The Visions of Zosimos," C.W. 13, par. 101.

²³ Jung, "Alchemy," C.W. 12, par. 176.

²⁴ Jung, "Symbols," C.W. 5, par. 615.

²⁵ Jung, "The Ego," C.W. 7, par. 343.

²⁶ Jung, "Symbols," C.W. 5, par. 625.

²⁷ Ibid, par. 631.

²⁸ Ibid, par. 459.

²⁹ Magnuson, 59. Magnuson comes to this conclusion after examining a statement made by Coleridge in one of his "Notebook" entries: "outward Forms and Sounds, the Sanctifiers, the Strengtheners."

³⁰ Jung, "Types," C.W. 6, par. 446.

³¹ Jung, "Symbols," C.W. 5, par. 538; "Alchemy," C.W. 12, par.305; "The Philosophical Tree", C.W. 13, par. 321, 338.

³² Jung, "Poetry," C.W. 15, par. 121.

³³ Jung, "Symbols," C.W. 5, par. 170.

³⁴ Jung, "The Tavistock Lectures," C.W. 18, par 412.

³⁵ Littman, 374.

³⁶ William Walsh, The Work and the Relevance (London: Chatto and Windus, 1967), 115.

³⁷ Richard Haven, Patterns of Consciousness: An Essay on Coleridge (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1969), 29.

³⁸ Woodman, 61.

CHAPTER 3

Confrontation With The Unconscious

Once the hero leaves his familiar homeland, the realm of consciousness, and ventures into the very depths of his inner being, he confronts the contents of his personal and collective unconscious. These contents are personified for the Mariner through the shadow -- the individually and universally dark side of human nature -- and the anima -- the soul-image, the feminine side of men. According to Jung, the shadow symbol "is the first test on the inner way, a test sufficient to frighten off most people, for the meeting with ourselves belongs to the more unpleasant things"¹ that we wish to avoid. Judging from the Mariner's reaction to the creatures of the sea, it is obvious that he does indeed find them unpleasant:

The very deep did rot: O Christ!
That ever this should be!
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea.(123-126)

Jung states that when the unused, undifferentiated functions of the psyche "are activated by regression and so reach consciousness, they appear in a somewhat incompatible form, disguised and covered up with the slime of the deep."² From the point of view of the Mariner, the "very deep" of his unconscious is composed of nothing but slime and rot; the "slimy things" specifically symbolize

these dark, unacceptable elements of the unconscious, such as inferior traits of character and incompatible tendencies. Jung maintains that, "whoever looks into the water sees his own image, but behind it living creatures soon loom up; fishes, presumably, harmless dwellers of the deep - harmless if only the lake were not haunted."³ The lake is indeed haunted; as the Mariner gazes into the water, into the depths of his unconscious, he is repelled by that inferior and guilt-laden part of his personality that has long been hidden and repressed.

The extreme emotion of loathing and disgust that the Mariner expresses at seeing the creatures of the sea, strongly reveals the extent to which the Mariner's inferior, feeling function has been rendered incompatible with his ego. Jung declares that the display of emotion indicates the existence of an underdeveloped segment of the personality: "Affects occur usually where adaptation is weakest, and at the same time they reveal the reason for its weakness, namely a certain degree of inferiority and the existence of a lower level of personality."⁴ The emotion exhibited when the shadow has been confronted is understandable because the recognition of the dark aspects of the personality as present and real is a moral problem that challenges the whole ego-personality.

This moral problem, and the affect it generates, is especially acute because of the collective nature of the shadow. While the shadow symbolizes the personal

unconscious, (the individual memories and thoughts of one's psyche that are irreconcilable with the chosen conscious attitude), it is also an archetype of the collective unconscious because it points to the universally dark and dangerous side of every human being. Consequently, the ego-personality often views the inferior portion of the psyche as the source of all evil. Later on in "The Rime" the Mariner refers to the "slimy things" specifically as water-snakes (273). In Jungian Psychology the snake is a universal symbol of the shadow and of evil:

The snake, like the devil in Christian theology, represents the shadow, and one which goes far beyond anything personal and could best be compared with a principle, such as the principle of evil....⁵

As an archetypal principle of evil, the shadow manifests itself most vividly in the Christian legend of the Antichrist. The Antichrist develops as the cut-off counterpart of Christ; the human psyche demands that the perfect image of Christ be countered with an imitating spirit of evil "who follows in Christ's footsteps like a shadow following the body."⁶ Christ, as the archetype of human wholeness, is not complete without the devil, the dark aspect of the unrecognizable portion of the personality.

Although this unrecognizable portion of the psyche is dark, the shadow is not wholly evil;⁷ it only appears as such because it is primitive, unadapted and awkward. Jung

maintains that in actuality, the shadow is the life force, vitalizing human existence.

What the regression brings to the surface certainly seems at first sight to be slime from the depths; but if one does not stop short at a superficial evaluation and refrains from passing judgement on the basis of a preconceived dogma, it will be found that this "slime" contains not merely incompatible and rejected remnants of everyday life, or inconvenient and objectionable animal tendencies, but also germs of new life and vital possibilities for the future.²

At this point the contents of his unconscious do appear to be "slime from the depths," but only when the Mariner confronts and accepts the "slimy things" as part of his personality, can he receive these germs of new life and the possibility of psychic wholeness and spiritual unity with God.

At the present, the Mariner's conscious mind continues to fear the compensating tendency of the unconscious, as he attributes an evil nature to the water:

About, about, in reel and rout
The death-fires danced at night;
The water, like a witch's oils,
Burnt green, and blue and white.(127-130)

The "death-fires," the "witch's oils," and the burning of the water clearly reveal that the unconscious continues to possess an irreconcilable and hostile character, standing in opposition to the ego-personality.

Even though the Mariner is repelled by his unconscious, the process of regression continues to activate unconscious elements, transforming them into

symbols perceptible to consciousness.

And some in dreams assured were
Of the Spirit that plagued us so;
Nine fathom deep he had followed us
From the land of mist and snow.(131-134)

Members of the crew receive dreams of the Spirit who follows the ship. Throughout the poem the personalities of the crew members are never developed individually; rather, they are wholly dependent on the Mariner. As Bostetter points out, "the crew have no identity apart from" the Mariner.⁹ For this reason it seems plausible that the crew may represent the ego-complex. Jung maintains that the ego is a composite of psychic elements such as clarity and emotional coloring,¹⁰ "as well as the images recorded from the sense functions...and the accumulation of images of past processes."¹¹ Furthermore, the independence of each separate aspect of consciousness is submerged in the unity of the overruling ego.¹² Symbolically, the Mariner may represent this overruling ego, while the individual crew members may represent various aspects of ego-consciousness. Therefore, the dreams of the Spirit received by the crew have begun to compensate for the Mariner's narrow and rigid conscious attitude; since the regressive libido has pushed the Mariner further into the realm of the unconscious, the contents of the unconscious are surfacing.

The Spirit is a particularly effective image of the emerging contents of the unconscious since, as Jung contends, Spirit is "the totality of primary forms from

which the archetypal images come."¹³ It dwells "Nine fathom deep" in the inner recesses of the unconscious and follows the ship from the land of mist and snow, because, as previously discussed, the mist and snow are symbols of the unconscious. Jung specifically refers to spirit as a

higher consciousness because the concept of spirit is such that we are bound to connect it with the idea of superiority over the ego-consciousness.... Psychologically, the spirit manifests itself as a personal being, sometimes with visionary clarity.¹⁴

In other words, the Spirit becomes an archetype of wisdom, which Jung personifies as the wise old man. However, at this point in the poem the Spirit has not been fully perceived by the ego; the Mariner declares that "Some in dreams assured were / of the Spirit" because the existence of the Spirit has only been vaguely detected by consciousness.. The Mariner feels plagued because he dimly senses the presence of an interior opponent who challenges his conscious understanding and whose goals and aims run contrary to those of the ego.

As a result of the Mariner's lack of inner renewal and harmony which results when contents of the unconscious are integrated into consciousness, he and his crew are choked by the "utter drought" (135) of spiritual dryness. However, the psychic wholeness which brings spiritual salvation appears to be a possibility for the Mariner when the dead carcass of the albatross is hung around his neck; the albatross, as a symbol of consciousness, has been

killed so it no longer contains this symbolic value. In being hung around the Mariner's neck the bird now dwells between the two realms of the sea (unconsciousness) and the sky (consciousness), and becomes a potential symbol for individuation. Although the albatross is at present dead, and is therefore a "dead symbol" or sign,¹⁵ it now provides the Mariner with the symbolic material by which he may become individuated.

The fact that the albatross possesses the latent power for becoming a symbol of the self, or psychic wholeness, is most evident with the identity of the albatross with the cross: "Instead of the cross, the Albatross / About my neck was hung" (141-142). The concrete imagery of the albatross hanging like a cross (ie. feet pointed upward, head downwards, and wings to each side), suggests that like the cross the albatross has the potential for becoming a symbol of unity.

Jung maintains that the "central Christian symbol, the cross, is unmistakably a quaternity."¹⁶ In his study of myth, dreams, religion and literature, Jung discovered that the quaternio is a frequent symbol for totality. On the religious level, the quaternio refers to the Father, Son, Spirit, and devil. The trinity is not an adequate symbol because the evil principle is not included, but leads an "awkward existence on its own as the devil."¹⁷ On the psychological level, the quaternio refers to the unity of the four functions: thinking, feeling, sensation, and

intuition. For most people, three of the four orienting functions are available to consciousness; for those whose superior function is thinking, the inferior function will be feeling. The cross, as a symbol of totality, must by definition include the conjunction of opposites. The opposites of light/dark, good/evil, spirit/matter, and masculine/feminine, come together in the symbol of the cross and therefore vividly express the archetype of the self.¹⁶ The self is the psychic totality of the individual, and wherever this archetype predominates, the inevitable psychological consequence is a state of conflict.

The cross, or whatever other heavy burden the hero carries, is himself, or rather the self, his wholeness, which is both God and animal -- not merely the empirical man, by the totality of his being, which is rooted in his animal nature and reaches out beyond the merely human towards the divine. His wholeness implies a tremendous tension of opposites paradoxically at one with themselves, as in the cross, their most perfect symbol.¹⁷

The burden of the albatross, of the self, indicates that the remainder of the Mariner's journey will not be easy. If he is truly to become individuated he must accept the creatures of the sea as necessary and beneficial elements of his own personality, and he must confront and integrate the archetypes of the anima (his soul), and the wise old man (spiritual wisdom) into consciousness. If indeed the Mariner continues his voyage towards self examination, and returns safely to shore, then the self will no longer be

represented strictly as a burden, but as a treasure which the hero has won through arduous and dangerous feats.

Unfortunately, the Mariner has not won this treasure of psychic wholeness and harmony; in fact, the very next stanza once more lays stress on the Mariner's condition of spiritual dryness:

There passed a weary time. Each throat
Was parched, and glazed each eye.
A weary time! a weary time!
How glazed each weary eye,
When looking westward, I beheld
A something in the sky.(143-148)

The adjective "weary" is repeated four times, strongly emphasizing that the members of the crew have grown extremely fatigued. In order for the archetypal images to emerge energy is withdrawn from consciousness, causing the ego-personality to feel weakened and tired. As Jung points out, "the demands of the unconscious act at first like a paralyzing poison on a man's energy and resourcefulness."²⁰

The "something in the sky" starts to take shape as archetypal content slowly surfaces from the depths of the unconscious.

At first it seemed a little speck,
And then it seemed a mist;
It moved and moved, and took at last
A certain shape, I wist.(149-152)

At this point, the unconscious product cannot be distinguished or identified; its presence has been detected by the ego-conscious, but it has not yet gained sufficient energy to cross the threshold of consciousness and become fully perceptible. The fact that the object appears as a

mist (a symbol of the unconscious), reveals that it is indeed material from the unconscious.

As a result of the crew's "utter drought" (159), they "could nor laugh nor wail" (158). In order to free his speech the Mariner drinks his own blood,

I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,
And cried, A sail! a sail!(160-161)

Apart from their literal meaning, these lines may suggest the sacrificial attitude whereby the ego-personality gives up its power in the interest of the unconscious. As the Mariner sacrifices his own blood so that he may greet the oncoming ship, symbolically he sacrifices the energy in-consciousness so that the unconscious material may be transformed into an image perceptible to his conscious mind -- so that he may consciously greet that which was previously unknown and foreign. Jung declares that "the myths tell us that the impulse to sacrifice comes from the unconscious."²¹ The Mariner's sucking of his arm is an instinctual action to release the speech of the unconscious. When the crew realizes that this object is a ship, they are ecstatic:

Grammercy! they for joy did grin,
And all at once their breath drew in,
As they were drinking all.(164-166)

The sight of the approaching ship is like a saving draught quenching their thirst. They react with joy to the hope of being released from their tortured state.

As this image from the collective unconscious is examined more closely, as its character and nature are

ascertained by consciousness, the hope of receiving a pleasant and soothing vision that will calm and reassure the ego-personality is soon shattered. The crew discovers that the ship is strange and unearthly. It moves "Without a breeze, without a tide, / [And] steadies with upright keel" (169-170), because it is propelled by the ineffable, mystical powers of the unconscious. In contrast to the "good south wind" (71) brought by the albatross as a symbol of consciousness, this ship, as a symbol of the unconscious, is not motivated by the natural forces from above, but by the supernatural forces from below.

In the following stanza it becomes apparent that the image rising from the unconscious is not only in direct opposition to the conscious attitude, but that it has now gained the energy level to invade the ego-personality.

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.(171-180)

It is significant that the "day was well nigh done" when the ship approaches. As in the shooting of the albatross when the forces of the unconscious prevailed, the appearance of the ship also takes place when night is drawing near. The "broad bright sun," a symbol of consciousness, is obstructed by the "strange shape" of the

unconscious. The ship stands between the Mariner and the sun, pointing to the fact that the light of reason and intellect is blocked by the inferior function of the unconscious. In the succeeding stanza the sun even appears to be imprisoned, as it peers through a "dungeon grate." The sun has been taken captive by the powers of the unconscious; its position of authority has been usurped so that the unconscious material is allowed to rise fully to consciousness.

In the following stanzas the unconscious contents do indeed rise to consciousness:

Are those her ribs through which the Sun
Did peer, as through a grate?
And is 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.(185-194)

The Mariner confronts a second archetype, the anima. Jung declares that

if the encounter with the shadow is the 'apprentice-piece' in the individual's development, then that with the anima is the masterpiece. The relation with the anima is again a test of courage, an ordeal by fire for the spiritual and moral forces of man.²²

The anima "means soul and should designate something very wonderful and immortal"²³ "Soul is the living thing in man"²⁴ for it "sums up all the statements of the unconscious, of the primitive mind."²⁵ It is not

surprising that the Mariner's anima figure appears with a mate since the syzygy of animus and anima form the divine pair, the two of halves which comprise the whole.²⁶

The Mariner's confrontation with his soul-image is definitely a "test of courage, an ordeal by fire" for she appears as the mythical Lamia²⁷ who "thicks man's blood with cold." The Mariner aptly refers to her as "The Nightmare Life-in-Death," for as Jung points out, "the lamias are typical nightmares."²⁸ Jung explains that the anima, along with the shadow, personifies the unconscious and "stands for the 'inferior' function, and for that reason frequently has a shady character; in fact, she sometimes stands for evil itself ... she is the dark and dreaded maternal womb."²⁹ The reason why this negative anima, or Terrible Mother,³⁰ as Jung calls her, is "dark and dreaded" is because the Mariner's conscious attitude is in such opposition to this contrasexual aspect of his psyche, that he perceives this manifestation of previously unconscious and alien material as a threat to his conscious position. It is interesting that when the Mariner first saw the skeleton ship he called out to the Virgin Mary -- "Heaven's Mother send us grace" (178). Mary is the positive anima, the virgin archetype, "who is not turned toward the outer world and is therefore not corrupted by it. She is turned rather towards the 'inner sun,' the archetype of transcendent wholeness -- the self."³¹ Just before the Mariner is about to confront his own unconscious

femininity, his fear causes him to appeal to this familiar anima symbol that has long been a part of organized religion. The direct experience of his soul is so threatening that he seeks help from this external image of the positive anima, the archetype turned towards wholeness and harmony rather than evil and turmoil.

Not only is the negative anima portrayed as dark and evil, but also as chaotic, unconditional and dangerous:

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.(195-198)

It becomes apparent later in the poem (212-223) that this dice game is over who will win the souls of the crew. In accordance with the Mariner's description of her nature, Jung describes the anima as possessing "chaotic capriciousness," because she is the life-giving daemon who plays her game with human existence.³² Bostetter, in his analysis of "The Rime," has observed that the dice game remains blatantly inimical to any concept of a just and ordered world:

The most disturbing character of this universe is the caprice that lies at the heart of it; the precise punishment of the Mariner and his shipmates depends upon chance...[the dice game] knocks out any attempt to impose a systematic philosophical or religious interpretation ... It throws into question the moral and intellectual responsibilities of the religious rulers of the universe.³³

No systematic philosophical or religious system of thought can be imposed upon the actions of the soul-image, because

she is an autonomous entity who does not adhere to the rules that govern the world of consciousness, but to the primitive instincts that govern the world of the unconscious.

Regardless of the anima's appearance, Jung maintains that the person who grapples with her seriously realizes more and more

that behind all her cruel sporting with human fate there lies something like a hidden purpose which seems to reflect a superior knowledge of life's laws. It is just the most unexpected, the most terrifyingly chaotic things which reveal a deeper meaning.³⁴

For this reason, the Mariner's anima figure is aptly called Life-in-Death; she provides the deeper meaning and spiritual wisdom which brings the possibility of psychic wholeness and new life in the midst of overvalued reason. If the Mariner truly comes to grips with his anima, he will discover the secret knowledge or hidden wisdom of the unconscious. If indeed he experiences the spiritual meaning and the significance of those mythical elements of the collective unconscious, this triumph will be objectified by the archetype of the wise old man, "the superior Master and teacher, the archetype of the spirit, who symbolizes the pre-existent meaning hidden in the chaos of life."³⁵ This archetype would most likely manifest itself through the emergence of the Spirit from the depths of the sea (131-134). Once this archetype of meaning has been experienced, the final archetype to be encountered is

that of the self, or the God archetype. As previously mentioned, the symbolic value of the ship and the albatross is presently dormant, but there is the potential for them becoming symbols of the integrated, individuated self, if the Mariner continues his psychic journey.

After the dice game the "sun's rim dips; the stars rush out" (199), signifying the dominance of the night world of the unconscious. In the thick of the night, with only the dim light of the stars, the Mariner is gripped by fear:

Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
My life-blood seemed to sip!(204-205)

Jung maintains that the emotion of fear often points to a primitive dread of the contents of the unconscious -- "it is the deadly fear of the instinctive, unconscious, inner man."³⁶ The Mariner's fear is most definitely the result of his confrontation with the nightmare world of his unconscious. Although these lines are physically repellent, the imagery is actually quite positive. The sacrificial and sacramental suggestion of the chalice implies the redeeming work of Christ; Jesus gave his life as a ransom to give humankind new life through the creation of greater consciousness, resulting from the differentiation of the opposites. According to Jung, Jesus is the awakener: "It is as if, with the coming of Christ, opposites that were latent till then had become manifest."³⁷ Not until the coming of Christ does Satan take on the role of the Anti-Christ, the adversary of

God.³⁸ Therefore, the sacrament of communion, carried out in remembrance of Christ, suggests that through his confrontation with the collective unconscious, the Mariner has hope of new life through the differentiation of the opposites of good and evil, spirit and matter, etc. Cornwell comments that the lines referring to the image of fear sipping from the heart reinforces "the baptismal significance of cleansing and quenching in the forming of dew on the sails"³⁹ -- "From the sails the dew did drip--" (208). Although the symbols of baptism and communion are subtle, and consequently the revitalizing effect of the Mariner's confrontation with the anima is at present minimal, these lines do provide evidence of the Mariner's psychic progress.

The action of the poem continues with the death of the Mariner's crewmates, but just prior to the departure of the souls of the men the Mariner provides a description of the moon:

Till clomb above the eastern bar
The horned Moon, with one bright star
Within the nether tip.(209-211)

According to sailors it is a bad omen when the moon appears with one star. In fact, on the margin of a copy of the poem Coleridge wrote that "it is a common superstition among sailors that something evil is about to happen whenever a star dogs the Moon."⁴⁰ The evil thing that is about to happen is obviously the deaths of the members of the crew; on the psychological level, the increased

symbolic value of the moon (as a signifier of the unconscious) may point to the increased power of the unconscious over the Mariner's consciousness. In fact, this power is so great that it has rendered aspects of the Mariner's ego-complex (the crew) inoperative:

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

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

The curse in the eyes of the crew may reflect the Mariner's feelings of persecution resulting from his intense and continual experience of the collective unconscious. It is interesting to note that the last reference to the cross-bow (81) was made when the albatross (as a symbol of consciousness), was shot by the regressive libido because not enough unconscious material was being actualized; once more the unconscious, in the form of the figure of "Death," has gained ascendancy over consciousness by withdrawing energy from the ego-personality, thus "killing" its potency.

Although the Mariner has not been completely inundated by the materials from the unconscious, his weakened conscious state has the effect of isolating him from many of the psychic elements which comprise the ego-complex. As a result of the crew's death he laments,

Alone, alone, all, all alone,

Alone on a wide wide sea!
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.(232-235)

The Mariner is alone on the "wide wide sea" of his unconscious. On another level, the Mariner's loneliness may also point to the fact that when one embarks on the inner journey one is segregated from the external community. Jung points out that "those who stand behind, the shadowy personifications of the unconscious, have burst into the 'terra firma' of consciousness like a flood."⁴¹ The invasion of the unconscious into consciousness through the bridges, or linking images of the shadow (water-snakes) and the anima (Life-in-Death) "constitutes a painful personal secret which alienates and isolates him from his surroundings. It is something that we cannot tell anybody...."⁴² In fact, Jung relates that as a result of his own confrontation with his unconscious he experienced a great deal of loneliness: "if a man knows more than others he becomes lonely."⁴³

This knowledge of the unconscious, the awareness of the archetypes, gradually increases through the Mariner's experience of his inner self. This point is most evident through the comparison between an earlier stage in the Mariner's development, and his present psychic state. When the Mariner first met with his shadow he discovered the slimy and shadowy contents that lie deep within him, but they still possessed a very alien and foreign nature, and could therefore not be accepted as an actual part of his

personality:

The very deep did rot: O Christ!
That ever this should be!
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea.(123-126)

Now, after elements of his unconscious have continued to force themselves upon the Mariner, he begins to associate closely with their contents -- "And a thousand thousand slimy things / Lived on; and so did I" (238-239). These lines suggest that the shadow is indeed being raised from the unconscious and identified with the Mariner as part of his own personality. However, the unconscious products are still somewhat incompatible and alien, covered with the slime of the deep. The Mariner despises the fact that "The many men, so beautiful! / ... all dead did lie" (236-237), while he, together with the slimy contents of his unconscious, lives on; the elements of his ego-personality, so beautiful, so familiar, so stable, have been drained of their life, their energy, so that the counter-position of the unconscious can make itself known to the Mariner. Regardless of the Mariner's sadness over the loss of his crew, and his agony at remaining alive and alone with the creatures of the sea, the unconscious products are rising to consciousness.

The Mariner's psychic development is reinforced in the following stanza:

I looked upon the rotting sea,
And drew my eyes away;
I looked upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay.(240-243)

In the earlier stanza the Mariner declared only that "the very deep did rot," but now the deck of his ship is also rotting; the Mariner's conscious world has been violated and contaminated by the "slimy," "rotting" elements of his shadow. In addition, in the lines, "For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky / Lay like a load on my weary eye" (250-251), the sky and the sea are used interchangeably. Jung declares that the kind of mental and moral attitude that is necessary in dealing with the disturbing influences of the unconscious, "consists in getting rid of the separation between conscious and unconscious."⁴⁴ It appears that the Mariner is making progress in his journey towards psychic wholeness, by narrowing the chasm that separates the realm of consciousness (sky) and the realm of the unconscious (sea); the two do not stand in such strict opposition, but are becoming complementary, flowing towards each other as the yin and the yang in the Taoist symbol of wholeness. Finally this psychic content, which the ego perceived as being only distantly related to itself, has begun to be accepted and integrated into consciousness. The next step in the Mariner's development is to withdraw his attitude of loathing and disgust and recognize the positive, life-giving quality of the shadow.

At the moment, a harmonious relationship between the opposites does not exist within the Mariner's psyche; he continues to perceive the material rising from the

unconscious as being vile and evil:

I looked to heaven, and tried to pray;
But or ever a prayer has gusht
A wicked whisper came, and made
My heart as dry as dust.(244-247)

The "wicked whisper" of the ancient images, primitive ideas, and instinctual impulses, previously repressed as the shadow of his true personality, leave his "heart as dry as dust." The Mariner relentlessly clings to his traditional views and popular misconceptions as he looks up to heaven for the comfort and strength of God. Jung maintains that "what one could almost call a systematic blindness is simply the effect of the prejudice that God is 'outside' man."⁴⁵ The Mariner fails to realize that the "wicked whisper" is the voice of God from within; only when he accepts the archetypal content rising from the unconscious as the numinous experience of the inward Divinity will he truly be able to communicate with God and receive the comfort for which he yearns.

This comfort will remain beyond the Mariner's reach as long as he regards his experience of the unconscious as a curse:

The cold sweat melted from their limbs,
Nor rot nor reek did they:
The look with which they looked on me
Had never passed away.

An orphan's curse would drag to hell
A spirit from on high;
But oh! more terrible than that
Is the curse in a dead man's eye!
Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse
And yet I could not die.(253-262)

From the point of view of the Mariner's ego, the death of

the crew is indeed a curse because it provides the unconscious with more energy to actualize itself. The Mariner's desire to die reveals his inability to deal with the events that are taking place; if his ego were to be terminated he would not have to grapple with the problem of the opposites that is now confronting him. The fact that it is seven days and seven nights, "seven" being a mystical number, that the curse haunts the Mariner, suggests that a certain degree of numinosity surrounds the bodies on the deck. This numinosity is increased by the fact that the bodies do not rot. Since the elements of the ego-complex have not been permanently destroyed it could be that they are being preserved for some future purpose; if the Mariner proves strong enough to endure the conflict between the ego and non-ego, the flow of energy would reverse and the Mariner's ego-complex would be re-activated so as to transform, adapt and integrate the unconscious material.

Once more the poem's symbolism suggests that the Mariner is making progress in his psychic journey:

The moving Moon went up the sky.
And no where did abide:
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside.(263-266)

The moon, as a symbol of the unconscious, moves higher up into the sky, the realm of consciousness. The image is created of the unconscious content, which has been detected by consciousness and therefore lies within the conscious realm, rising even further into consciousness, as if the

ego is grasping its contents more fully than before.

The stanza about the moving moon seems to foreshadow the following event. In the light of the moon "The charmed water burnt away / A still and awful red" (270-271), and the Mariner watches the water-snakes, moving "in tracks of shining white" (274). Rather than despising the slimy things of the sea, he is fascinated by their color and movement:

Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire:
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coiled and swam; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.(277-281)

It is within the shadow of the ship that the Mariner observes the creatures of the sea. He closely examines and studies the contents of his shadow, which is made discernible, or cast, by the process of internalization symbolized by the ship. He is fascinated by the "rich attire" of his shadow and and blesses its contents as things of beauty:

O happy living things! no tongue
Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blesses them unaware:
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I blessed them unaware.(282-287)

The Mariner has discovered that, as Jung states, the shadow "does not consist only of morally reprehensible tendencies, but also displays a number of good qualities, such as normal instincts, appropriate reactions, realistic insights, creative impulses, etc."⁴⁶ The Mariner has recognized and rejoiced over these "good qualities" which

lie within his unconscious being.

According to Jungian psychology, the specific process that is effective when the Mariner blesses the water-snakes, is that of "creative formulation." Jung maintains that once an individual has confronted the archetypes and has obtained the material from the unconscious, a procedure for expanding and integrating the products of the unconscious is implemented. Depending on the personality of the individual, the contents will be formulated according to the principle of aesthetics or the principle of understanding. The "aesthetic formulation tends to concentrate on the formal aspect of the motif,"⁴⁷ while the intellectual tendency "struggles to understand the meaning of the unconscious product."⁴⁸ These two functions

are bound together in a compensatory relationship ... aesthetic formulation needs understanding of the meaning, and understanding needs aesthetic formulation. The two supplement each other to form the transcendent function.⁴⁹

The transcendent function manifests itself as the new level of being (the self), resulting from the conjoining of opposites, the constant flow of energy between the ego and the unconscious.⁵⁰

The Mariner begins this process of formulating the unconscious elements when he utilizes his conscious media of expression to elaborate on the beauty of his shadow. It moves in "tracks of shining white"; "Blue, glossy green, and velvet black," it coils in a "flash of golden fire."

This particular creative expression appears to be that of an artist; within the Mariner's conscious mind the material from the unconscious takes the form of a brilliant painting. This painting represents the shaping and integration of the images of the unconscious into the total personality; therefore, the Mariner blesses the water-snakes in an act of accepting them as part of his personality.

The Mariner declares that he blessed them "unaware" because, as Jung points out, the aesthetic formulation integrates the form of the unconscious product but "leaves it at that and gives up any idea of discovering a meaning."⁵¹ The fact that the Mariner does not understand the content of the images is further displayed when he attributes his love for the water-snakes to the intercession of his "kind saint." Paul Magnuson comments that "characteristically he seeks for a cause for his renewed ability to love in a source outside himself because he does not understand the origins of his passions."⁵² At this point the Mariner does not understand the origins nor the meaning of his passions, but if he is to continue his voyage in search of psychic unity he must satisfy the intellectual requirements by discovering the wisdom which underlies his experience.

Notes to Chapter 3

¹ Jung, "Archetypes," C.W. 9i, par, 44.

² Jung, "On Psychic Energy," C.W. 8, par. 64.

³ Jung, "Archetypes," C.W. 9i, par. 52.

⁴ Jung, "Aion," C.W. 9ii, par. 15.

⁵ Jung, "A Study in the Process of Individuation," C.W. 9i, par. 567.

⁶ In the same way that the shadow is not wholly evil, the snake can also be a healing image, a symbol of Christ and of good. Jung, "Symbols," C.W. 5, par. 580. The representation of the snake in the individual psyche depends upon the conscious attitude of the person; however, more often the snake presents itself as a symbol of one's fear of the unconscious and its compensating tendency.

⁷ Jung, "The Psychology," C.W. 7, par.78.

⁸ Jung, "Energy," C.W. 8, par. 63.

⁹ Edward Bostetter, "The Nightmare World of 'The Ancient Mariner,'" Coleridge, The Ancient Mariner and Other Poems eds. Alun R. Jones and W. Tydeman (London: Macmillan, 1973), 193.

¹⁰ Jung, "Aion," C.W. 9ii, par. 10.

¹¹ Jung, "The Spirit and Life," C.W. 8, par. 611.

¹² Ibid, par. 614.

¹³ Jung, "Symbols," C.W. 5, par. 641.

¹⁴ Jung, "The Spirit," C.W. 8, par. 643.

¹⁵ In his system of psychology, Jung distinguishes between a symbol and a sign. The symbol "is an indefinite expression with many meanings, pointing to something not easily defined and therefore not fully known. But the sign always has a fixed meaning, because it is a conventional abbreviation for, or a commonly accepted indication of something known." Jung, "Symbols," C.W. 5, par. 180.

¹⁶ Jung, "Trinity," C.W. 11, par. 250.

¹⁷ Jung, "Religion," C.W. 11, par. 103.

¹⁸ Jung, "Aion," C.W. 9ii, par. 117.

¹⁹ Jung, "Symbols," C.W. 5, par. 460.

²⁰ Ibid, par. 458.

²¹ Ibid, par. 660.

²² Jung, "Archetypes," C.W. 9i, par. 61.

²³ Ibid, par. 55.

²⁴ Ibid, par. 56.

²⁵ Ibid, par. 57.

²⁶ Jung, "Aion," C.W. 9ii, par. 41,59.

²⁷ Lamia is the mythical character who seduces Zeus. See C.G.Jung, "Symbols," C.W. 5, par. 369. The Lamia figure is popular in many of the writings by Romantic poets.

²⁸ Jung, "Symbols," C.W. 5, par. 370.

²⁹ Jung, "Alchemy," C.W. 12, par. 192.

³⁰ In his "The Symbols of Transformation" Jung refers

to the "Terrible Mother who devours and destroys, and thus symbolizes death itself." C.W. 5, par. 504.

³¹ Ibid, par. 497.

³² Jung, "Archetypes," C.W. 9i, par. 66.

³³ Bostetter, 187.

³⁴ Jung, "Archetypes," C.W. 9i par. 64.

³⁵ Ibid, par. 74.

³⁶ Jung, "Symbols," C.W. 5, par. 457.

³⁷ Jung, "Aion," C.W. 9ii, par. 78.

³⁸ Jung, "Trinity," C.W. 11 par. 254.

³⁹ Cornwell, 241.

⁴⁰ S.T. Coleridge, Notebooks. Cited in Magnuson, 63.

⁴¹ Jung, "Alchemy," C.W. 12, par. 57.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Jung, Memories, Dreams, Reflections, trans. Richard and Clara Winston. (New York: Vantage, 1965), p.356.

⁴⁴ Jung, "The Transcendent function," C.W. 8, par. 145.

⁴⁵ Jung, "Religion," C.W. 11, par. 100.

⁴⁶ Jung, "Aion," C.W. 9ii, par. 423.

⁴⁷ Jung, "Function," C.W. 8, par. 175.

⁴⁸ Ibid, par. 174.

⁴⁹ Ibid, par. 177.

⁵⁰ Ibid, par. 189.

⁵¹ Ibid, par. 180.

⁵² Magnuson, 75.

CHAPTER 4

Submission To The Unconscious

Once the hero has travelled to "the place of the Mothers," and has encountered the primal demons who threaten to destroy him, he must take courage and strength to win the battle for supremacy over these spirits who wield such formidable power. Jung declares that heroes

give way to their regressive longing and purposively expose themselves to the danger of being devoured by the monster of the maternal abyss. But if a man is a hero, he is a hero because, in the final reckoning, he did not let the monster devour him, but subdued it, not once but many times.... Anyone who identifies with the collective psyche -- or, in mythological terms, lets himself be devoured by the monster -- and vanishes in it, attains the treasure that the dragon guards, but he does so in spite of himself and to his own greatest harm.¹

The Mariner has indeed given way to his regressive longing and has exposed himself to the dangers of the unconscious; he has encountered the "slimy," disgusting elements of his shadow and the fearful, deadly form of his anima; as a true hero he has attained the treasure which lies deep within the collective unconscious by accepting the brilliance and splendor of its contents, and by allowing them to freely surface without any opposition from his ego-personality. The Mariner must now subdue the monster by asserting his conscious powers of rational thought; he

must complement his aesthetic formulation of the unconscious material with an understanding of its meaning, in order to win the battle against the monster and achieve psychic and spiritual wholeness.

Unfortunately, the stanza following the blessing of the water-snakes suggests that the Mariner submits to the monster, to the autonomous powers of the unconscious:

The self-same moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.(288-291)

Once the Mariner blesses the water-snakes he can pray, because just as the "slimy things" are transformed into a thing of beauty, the former "wicked whisper" of the unconscious is now acceptable to the Mariner's consciousness. However, the fact that the albatross, the potential symbolic material for individuation, has fallen completely into the realm of the unconscious, suggests that the Mariner has lost the material by which he may reach psychic wholeness. After the Mariner encountered the shadow and the anima, he began to formulate these contents through an aesthetic tendency. Jung warns that

the danger of the aesthetic tendency is overvaluation of the formal or 'artistic' worth of the fantasy-productions; the libido is diverted from the real goal of the transcendent function and sidetracked into purely aesthetic problems of artistic expression.²

It is possible that the Mariner was so overwhelmed and hypnotized by the luminous experience of his unconscious, that he has indeed vanished in it, just as the dead

albatross has vanished into the ocean. It would seem that the Mariner has relinquished his responsibility of working towards the "real goal of the transcendent function" by casting off the burden of the self, by abandoning the fight for the unity of opposites, by allowing himself to be devoured by the monster.

Throughout Parts five and six of the poem the symbolism supports the supposition that the Mariner is so overpowered by the unconscious influences that he discontinues his search for psychic unity. The image of sleep is the first of these symbols to convey the Mariner's surrender to the unconscious:

Oh sleep! it is a gentle thing.
Beloved from pole to pole!
To Mary Queen the praise be given!
She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven,
That slid into my soul.(292-296)

Jung declares that in extreme cases, the compensating function of the unconscious which reveals itself in dreams "becomes so menacing that the fear of it results in sleeplessness."³ During the Mariner's confrontation with his unconscious he is constantly weary, and there is no mention of him receiving the gentle, restful sleep which he now experiences. The Mariner also expresses his fear of the events taking place (204). Even though the Mariner despised the fact that he, together with the sea creatures, lived on while his crew lay dead (236-239), it could be that throughout the voyage his dread and mistrust of the unconscious was so great that he could not relax his

conscious control for fear that he would be totally annihilated. The fact that the Mariner can now sleep suggests that he no longer fears the unconscious nor resists its demands to actualize itself. His ability to sleep is an especially effective indicator of his psychic state since, as Jung maintains, during sleep the psyche continues to exist and act; "consciousness has merely withdrawn from it, and lacking any objects to hold its attention, lapse[s] into a state of comparative unconsciousness."⁴ When the albatross dropped from the Mariner's neck, he gave up the work of further integrating the contents of the unconscious through critical, intellectual thought; he withdrew the input of his conscious attitude, and without the object or goal of individuation, of the differentiation of opposites, to occupy his attention he lapses into unconsciousness. The Mariner praises the Virgin Mary for the "gentle sleep" she sent from heaven because, in the same way that the Mariner attributes his ability to bless the water-snakes to his "kind saint," he ascribes the reason for his sleep to Mary Queen, a force external to himself, rather than to the internal workings of his psyche.

In addition to the symbol of sleep as an indication of the Mariner's psychic state, while he is asleep it rains.

The silly buckets on the deck,
That had so long remained,
I dreamt that they were filled with dew;
And when I awoke, it rained.

My lips were wet, my throat was cold,
My garments all were dank;
Sure I had drunken in my dreams,
And still my body drank.(297-304)

The fact that the weather conditions have undergone an extreme reversal from utter drought to rain, signifies that the Mariner too has deviated from his earlier position of intense opposition to the unconscious, to complete acceptance. Jung declares that although it is initially necessary to satisfy either the aesthetic or intellectual requirements in integrating the unconscious products, the danger of remaining too long on one of these bypaths is that "after a certain point in psychic development has been reached, the products of the unconscious are greatly overvalued precisely because they were boundlessly undervalued before."⁵ Earlier in the poem the products of the unconscious were boundlessly undervalued; the Mariner laments that there is "Water, water, everywhere / Nor any drop to drink" (121-122), because there was the psychic potential to raise the products of the unconscious and gain spiritual renewal, but his conscious attitude violently resisted the unconscious material to such a degree that the waters of enlightenment were unable to deliver the Mariner from his state of spiritual thirst. Now, the water the Mariner drinks in his dreams becomes a reality when he awakens and finds that it is raining. The regenerating effects of the collective unconscious have risen from the dreaming world of the unconscious, and have crossed the threshold of consciousness so the Mariner is able to drink

its contents. The unconscious has "rained" and there is indeed "water, water everywhere," but this time, it is fully available to the Mariner.

Likewise, the buckets on the deck that have remained empty so long are completely full; the Mariner has been consciously "empty," or restricted and narrow for so long, but now many elements of the unconscious are surfacing, filling him with the primal images from the watery world of the unconscious. Therefore, the symbols of the rain and the buckets reveal that the products of the Mariner's unconscious may have become greatly overvalued.

In one respect the rain is a positive symbol because it indicates the release of the unconscious contents from behind the barrier of the Mariner's previously held conscious attitude. The Mariner has acquired the treasure through his encounter with the unconscious and his aesthetic formulation of its contents; however, as Jung pointed out earlier, there is the danger of remaining on the bypath of artistic consideration too long. The Mariner cannot achieve salvation unless he obtains an inner wisdom, an understanding of his experience (objectified through the archetype of the wise old man), and develop a relationship between the unconscious and the conscious aspects of his psyche (symbolized by the self).

Unfortunately, it becomes increasingly apparent as the poem continues that the Mariner has refused to further his psychic development:

I moved, and could not feel my limbs;
I was so light -- almost
I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blessed ghost.(305-308)

The Mariner feels "so light" because the burden of the self has been lifted. Jung declares that the transcendent function, as "the process of coming to terms with the unconscious, is a true labour, a work which involves both action and suffering."⁶ The Mariner has ceased the work of coming to terms with his unconscious; at this stage in his development he must implement the principle of understanding and struggle to comprehend the meaning of the unconscious products, but instead, the Mariner has refused to use his faculty of directed, logical thinking to adapt the products of his unconscious to external reality. Rather than pursuing this difficult and exhausting work he readily succumbs to the dreaming, or fantasy state, whereby contents of the unconscious are allowed to appear effortlessly and spontaneously and dominate his consciousness. Consequently, the Mariner declares that he feels like a "blesed ghost," for he has discarded the burden of human existence which demands that man use his critical faculties to differentiate ego from non-ego, and to maintain an ongoing flow of energy between the two. By declining the responsibility of remaining firmly anchored in outward reality the Mariner is a mere ghost of a man, retreating into the ghostly world of the unconscious.

The symbols in the following stanzas reveal that

the unconscious has become the dominant force and controlling power in the Mariner's life. The "rain poured down from one black cloud; / The Moon was at its edge" (319-321): not only are the rain and the moon symbols of the unconscious, but the black cloud is an ominous sign of the Mariner's psychic condition. The loud, roaring wind never reaches the ship, "Yet now the ship moved on" (328). The natural winds of the upper conscious world no longer exert any influence upon the Mariner; he is motivated and directed by a mysterious force of the underworld.

The full extent of the Mariner's surrender to the unconscious is blatantly evident when the bodies of the crew are infused with a troop of spirits and begin to work the ropes:

The helmsman steered, the ship moved on;
Yet never a breeze up-blew;
The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,
Where they were wont to do;
They raised their limbs like lifeless tools --
We were a ghastly crew...

'Twas not those souls that fled in pain,
Which to their corpses came again,
But a troop of spirits blest.(335-349)

When the figure of "Death" won the souls of the men, and the anima, "Life-in-Death," won the soul of the Mariner, the resulting psychological condition was that elements of the Mariner's ego-complex, such as volitional processes, processes of recognition, sense-perceptions from the external world, etc., were overpowered so that the forces of the unconscious could gain ascendancy. Now that the Mariner has given full control to the unconscious, these

autonomous forces have actually replaced many of the Mariner's conscious functions in the form of the "troop of spirits blest." From the point of view of the Mariner these spirits are "blest" because he no longer opposes the invasion of the unconscious but readily allows the unconscious to assume complete control of the psyche: the helmsman steers and the rest of the crew work the ropes. In the same way that psychic energy is withdrawn from consciousness during the sleeping state, but the life of the psyche continues, the Mariner has failed to utilize his conscious processes so the material from the unconscious dominates his psyche.

During an individual's exploration of the unconscious, he must relax his powers of criticism and simply allow the images of the unconscious to surface; any interference blocks the flow of energy and frustrates the goal of releasing the unconscious from the state of repression caused by the prevailing conscious attitude. Once this has been achieved the individual must engage in critical thought, the ego must take the lead in adapting the products of the unconscious and bringing together the opposites of the ego and the unconscious in a continual relationship of interaction. Symbolically speaking, the Mariner must take control of the ship, and through the faculty of directed, or logical thinking continue the process of individuation by adapting the products of the unconscious to the reality of the everyday, conscious

world. According to Jung, once the energy from the unconscious has been unleashed, it is imperative that a man should be firmly rooted in his ego-function in order to differentiate the ego from the non-ego. If consciousness proves unable to assimilate the contents pouring in from the unconscious, if it does not possess the skills to take control, then the unconscious materials will inundate consciousness, causing a collapse of the ego-personality:

The rediscovered unconscious often has a really dangerous effect on the ego. In the same way that the ego suppressed the unconscious before, a liberated unconscious can thrust the ego aside and overwhelm it. There is a danger of the ego losing its head, so to speak, that it will not be able to defend itself against the pressure of affective factors .⁷

The Mariner does indeed lose his head in the sense that he has lost control of his ship; he works with the spirits -- "The body and I pulled at one rope" (333) -- but the crew members are now autonomous spirits from the unconscious who propel and direct the ship regardless of the Mariner's action.

Obviously, the Mariner does not possess the intellectual or spiritual tools to defend himself against the affective factors of the unconscious; instead, he continues to concern himself with the artistic shaping and forming of these factors.

Sweet sounds rose slowly through their mouths,
And from their bodies passed.

Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
Then darted to the Sun;

Slowly the sounds came back again,
Now mixed, now one by one...

And now 'twas like all instruments
Now like a lonely flute;
And now it is an angel's song,
That makes the heavens be mute.(352-366)

Once more it becomes evident that the Mariner is overvaluing the aesthetic formulation of the unconscious products. In the same way that the Mariner described the water-snakes in terms of the beauty of their appearance -- "Blue, glossy green, and velvet black...and every track / Was a flash of golden fire" (279-281) -- he is overvaluing the beauty of the spirits' music, darting and flying around and around like an orchestra, a lonely flute, or an angel's song; while the movement of the water-snakes took the form of a magnificent painting, the spirits are conceived as a symphony of sounds. The Mariner is dwelling on these fantasy-productions, expanding on the form of the "sweet sounds" of his unconscious. He loses himself, his ego, in the obsession for an artistic expression of the images rising up from the unconscious, rather than searching for an understanding of their meaning.

The unconscious continues to hold the Mariner firmly in its grip.

Slowly and smoothly went the ship,
Moved onward from beneath.

Under the keel nine fathom deep,
From the land of mist and snow,
The spirit slid: and it was he
That made the ship to go.(375-380)

The ship is moved onward from beneath, from the power of

the unconscious. At the onset of the analytical process it was desirable to allow the regressive libido to bring to consciousness that which was previously unserviceable; however, the fact that the ship (as a symbol of the analytical process and the potential symbol of individuation) continues to be motivated by the unconscious, reveals that the Mariner is not progressing beyond his present point of psychic development. The Mariner has identified with the contents of the unconscious, for just as the ship carrying Life-in-Death moved without a breeze, so does the Mariner's ship move by the forces of the unconscious.

The Mariner specifically states that it is the spirit from the land of mist and snow (the land of the unconscious) which makes the ship drive on. As previously stated, this spirit may represent the archetype of the wise old man, the enlightener, master, and teacher.² He accompanies the ship, but unlike the archetypes of the shadow and the anima, this spirit does not surface; he remains "nine fathom deep" because the Mariner fails to comprehend the import of his experience of the unconscious. The spirit continues to follow the ship since there is still the potential for the Mariner to be enlightened as to the meaning of his adventure.

At this point in the poem the ship reaches the equator --"The Sun, right up above the mast" (383) -- signifying the beginning of the Mariner's re-entry into consciousness.

At the commencement of the journey, the Mariner left his homeland, crossed the equator, and then began his experience of the unconscious. The fact that the ship reaches the equator implies that the analytical process is drawing to a close. His libido begins its progressive flow, as opposed to the regressive direction which brought the Mariner into contact with his unconscious. The Mariner's psychic energy takes him to the place from whence he came. Jung emphatically states that "progression should not be confused with development, for the continuous flow or current of life is not necessarily development and differentiation."⁹ In the case of the Mariner, he is moving towards the world of consciousness whereby the progression of his libido satisfies the demands of the environment, but he has not adapted to the inner world of the unconscious.

Once the Mariner reaches the equator he exclaims that his vessel moves "Backwards and forward half her length / With a short uneasy motion"(387-388). Since the ship, as a potential symbol for individuation, exhibits an uneasy motion, swaying backwards (toward the unconscious realm), and forward (toward the conscious realm), it reveals the Mariner's problem with unifying the internal and the external elements of his psyche. The motion of the ship knocks the Mariner unconscious -- "It flung the blood into my head, / and I fell down in a swoon" (391-392) -- suggesting that the Mariner is not strong enough to cope

with the task of incorporating his experience into conceptual understanding; the pressure and turmoil from the demand to bring together the opposites of consciousness and the unconscious into a working relationship knocks him out and he falls back into the state of complete unconsciousness.

After the Mariner is knocked unconscious, he awakes to the voices of two spirits discussing his situation. These two stanzas reinforce the symbolism of wholeness which surrounded the albatross.

'Is it he?' quoth one, 'Is this the man?
By him who died on cross,
With his cruel bow he laid full low
The harmless Albatross.(398-401)

The spirits declare that by the hand of the Mariner the albatross "died on cross." Through such an act the albatross became a potential symbol of individuation. Although the lines imply that the Mariner cruelly killed the harmless albatross through the use of his cross-bow, the phrase "died on cross," produces the image of Christ and the significance of his death on the cross. Jung maintains that since man identifies himself solely by his ego, and since the self, his psychic totality, is indistinguishable from the God-image, God's incarnation brings forth man's self-realization or individuation. Therefore, the "passion of Christ signifies God's suffering on account of the injustice of the world and the darkness of man."¹⁹ As a result of the integration of opposites, the individual's ego enters the "divine" realm where it

participates in "God's suffering." It is a "passion of the ego," where the individual is threatened by death, "the fate of losing himself in a greater dimension and being robbed of his fancied freedom of will."¹¹ This concept of the self is conceivable only through symbols, so the life and death of Christ is the archetypal event "of a man who has been transformed by his higher destiny."¹² Just as it was necessary for the people of Jerusalem cruelly to put Christ to death on the cross in order for human darkness to be conquered, it was psychologically necessary for the Mariner to have killed the harmless albatross so that he would have the symbolic material through which to achieve individuation. In the same way that many people are blind to the redemptive work of Christ and remain in the darkness of an undifferentiated psyche, the Mariner proves unable to use this symbol of a "higher destiny" and does indeed lose himself in the maternal abyss.

The spirits go on to say:

The spirit who bideth by himself
In the land of mist and snow,
He loved the bird that loved the man
Who shot him with his bow.(402-405)

Although the Mariner was unaware of it at the time, a relationship of unity existed between the living albatross (consciousness), the spirit (unconsciousness), and the Mariner (the ego); only through the death of the albatross, as with the death of Christ, did the Mariner possess the symbol to release his ego from darkness and bring this

relationship of wholeness to conscious awareness. However, the Mariner cast off the burden of the cross, the burden of the self, when the albatross dropped back into the unconscious, so this relationship of unity between the two incongruous spheres of his psyche once more recedes into the Mariner's unconscious.

"The spirit bideth by himself / In the land of mist and snow" because the point at which the spirit can become a symbol of light to pierce the Mariner's darkness with meaning has passed, so the spirit returns to the depths of the unconscious. The spirit's potential value as teacher and enlightener is evident in the fact that he created the relationship of unity by first loving the bird who loved the man. Unfortunately, this information is provided by the two spirits because the Mariner never becomes conscious of the self, the state of psychic unity and harmony resulting from the integration of opposites. Part five of the poem ends with one spirit prophetically announcing that the Mariner "hath penance done, / And penance more will do" (408-409). The Mariner has suffered in his task of becoming aware of some of the elements of the unconscious, and yet because he is returning to consciousness while the unconscious is highly activated, and yet without the wisdom and understanding of his experience, he will undoubtedly endure a great deal more suffering.

The voices of the spirits continue their conversation by discussing the ship's rapid movement. The Mariner's

libido rushes forward, taking him closer to his homeland. All the time that the ship is driven so fast the Mariner is in a trance; when he awakes the ship slows, "sailing on / As in a gentle weather" (431). The moon is high and the Mariner sees the dead men standing on the deck:

All stood together on the deck,
For a charnel-dungeon fitter:
All fixed on me their stony eyes,
That in the Moon did glitter.

The pang, the curse, with which they died,
Had never passed away:
I could not draw my eyes from theirs.
Nor turn them up to pray.(434-441)

The Mariner is constantly reminded of the curse, the encounter with his unconscious, through which he lost his freedom of will. The eyes of the men glitter in the moonlight, and the Mariner cannot draw his eyes from theirs nor turn them up to pray because he is possessed by the numinous power of the unconscious. Finally the spell breaks:

And now this spell was snapt: once more
I viewed the ocean green,
And looked far forth, yet little saw
Of what had else been seen -- (442-445)

The ocean loses its numinous, mystical appearance, symbolizing the Mariner's return to consciousness. He looks "far forth" but as of yet, cannot see any other familiar signs of the conscious world. As the next stanza reveals, the Mariner may be returning to the world of consciousness, but the unconscious elements have already been activated and cannot be repressed as they were at the onset of the journey; they follow him like a frightful fiend.

Like one, that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round walks on,
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows, a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.(446-451)

The Mariner has been walking a "lonesome road" of introspection, for during the course of his journey he has been withdrawn from the external, social world so that he could experience the inner, spiritual world. He has turned his head, he has looked back at the ancient, primitive, images of his collective unconscious, causing him to feel both fear and dread, and now, after such a terrifying experience he has no desire to further examine or confront his unconscious. He wants to forget about the existence of his unconscious, but it "doth close behind him tread." Although the Mariner's psychic energy is flowing in a progressive manner, reorientating him to the the outer world, the constellated contents of his unconscious have crossed the threshold of consciousness, and have found expression so they cannot be pushed back into darkness.

The Mariner's re-entry into the natural world is further symbolized when he feels a breeze softly blowing upon him:

But soon there breathed a wind on me,
Nor sound nor motion made:
Its path was not upon the sea,
In ripple or in shade.

It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek
Like a meadow-gale of spring --
It mingled strangely with my fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming.(452-459)

Ever since the Mariner killed the albatross the wind ceased to blow, but now that the Mariner approaches the realm of consciousness, the winds of the upper air are moving. The breeze feels like a welcoming because it welcomes the Mariner home to the conscious world; it represents the familiar, trusted ways of the external upper world, as opposed the foreign chaotic ways of the internal lower world. The breeze does not leave a path on the sea, the natural events of the conscious world do not prevail, because the Mariner has not fully returned to his homeland; he is in transition between his experience of the unconscious, and his return to the everyday reality of the conscious world.

The ship "Swiftly, swiftly" (460) sails in the direction of the harbour until the Mariner can see his homeland:

Oh! dream of joy! is this indeed
The light-house top I see?
Is this the hill? is this the kirk?
Is this mine own countree?(464-467)

The Mariner is ecstatic at the sight of the familiar landmarks of the external, conscious world. The progressive libido is returning the Mariner from his encounter with the primal and the mythical, and bringing him back into contact with aspects of his conscious disposition, such as rational thought (lighthouse) and dogmatic religious belief (kirk). He has not yet reached the shore, but as he crosses the harbour-bar, he sobs:

O let me awake, my God!

Or let me sleep alway.(470-471)

The Mariner would rather be fully immersed in the unconscious, or else remain in the conscious world without any memory of his experience; he cannot endure the tension between the two. Jung maintains that the task of man is

to become conscious of the contents that press upward from the unconscious. Neither should he persist in his unconsciousness, nor remain identical with the unconscious elements of his being, thus evading his destiny....¹³

After the Mariner blessed the water-snakes he surrendered his psyche to the autonomous images that "press upward from the unconscious"; for a great deal of his psychic journey he did persist in his unconsciousness, but now that his libido is pushing him towards the external world he is being forced out of his relaxed conscious state. Since he has not acquired an understanding of his encounter with the unconscious, he cannot fully integrate his experience into his ego-personality; at the same time, as Jung points out, the unconscious cannot "be finally drained of libido and thus, as it were, eliminated."¹⁴ Without the creation of a greater personality, in which psychic energy freely flows between the conscious and the unconscious, the Mariner cannot cope with the split in his psyche; he pleads for the eradication of either the sleeping, nightmare world, or the waking, rational world.

As the following stanzas prove, the Mariner's prayer that he be delivered from the conflict of the opposites remains unanswered. The harbour-bay, as well as the

familiar sights of home, are bathed in the white moonlight.

The harbour-bay was clear as glass.
So smoothly it was strewn!
And on the bay the moonlight lay,
And the shadow of the Moon.

The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,
That stands above the rock:
The moonlight steeped in silentness
The steady weathercock.(472-479)

The harbour-bay represents the conscious which has in it now a memory, a shadowy reflection of the moon, of the unconscious. The Mariner re-experiences the familiar sights of his conscious contents (the hill and the kirk), under the soft beams of the moon, in the light of the lingering unconscious.

The last connection with the spirit world of the unconscious is broken when the spirits which animated the dead bodies of the crew wave a hand as they depart:

This seraph-band, each waved his hand:
No voice did they impart --
No voice; but oh! the silence sank
Like music on my heart.(496-499)

As the Mariner returns to his homeland, the seraph-band that took the place of his ego-complex temporarily withdraws into the unconscious. The silence that ensues after the spirits depart is like music to the Mariner, for he is relieved that the unconscious is finally quiet and leaves him in peace.

The Mariner has gained the treasure that the dragon guards; he has confronted the collective unconscious and has partially integrated the form, or shape of its contents

into consciousness. However, the Mariner has not subdued the monster through a critical understanding of its meaning, and as a result, he has been devoured by the demons of the maternal abyss. The Mariner is about to return to his homeland with the experience of his encounter with the archetypal images of the unconscious, but, as Jung declares, the hero who identifies with the collective psyche attains the treasure but "he does so in spite of himself and to his own greatest harm."¹⁵

Notes to Chapter 4

- ¹ Jung, "The Ego," C.W. 7, par. 261.
- ² Jung, "Function," C.W. 8, par. 176.
- ³ Jung, "On the Nature of Dreams," C.W. 8, par. 566.
- ⁴ Jung, "On the Structure of the Psyche," C.W. 8, par. 296.
- ⁵ Jung, "Function," C.W. 8, par. 176.
- ⁶ Jung, "The Psychology of the Unconscious," C.W. 7, par. 121. The process of coming to terms with the unconscious has been termed the *transcendent function* "because it represents a function based on real and 'imaginary,' or rational and irrational, data, thus bridging the yawning gulf between conscious and unconscious. It is a natural process, a manifestation of the energy that springs from the tension of the opposites, and it consists in a sequence of fantasy-occurrences which appear spontaneously in dreams and visions." "The Psychology," C.W. 7, par. 121.
- ⁷ Jung, "Function," C.W. 8, par. 183.
- ⁸ Jung, "Archetypes," C.W. 9i, par. 77.
- ⁹ Jung, "Energy," C.W. 8, par. 70.
- ¹⁰ Jung, "Trinity," C.W. 11, par. 233.
- ¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹² Ibid.

- ¹³ Jung, Memories, Dreams, Reflections, 326.
- ¹⁴ Jung, "The Ego," C.W. 7, par. 258.
- ¹⁵ Ibid, par. 261.

CHAPTER 5

Return To The World Of Consciousness

Once the hero descends into the underground of the unconscious and fetches the treasure, he returns to the world of everyday reality transformed, and with an elixir to restore society. Jung declares that

every descent is followed by an ascent; the vanishing shapes are shaped anew, and a truth is valid in the end only if it suffers a change and bears new witness in new images, in new tongues, like a new wine that is put into new bottles.¹

The vanishing shapes of the collective unconscious, the ancient truths of the ages, are shaped anew into ideas and concepts that can be communicated to others; these truths are the new wine, and the hero is the new bottle, for he returns as a new being, reborn, transfigured, bearing new witness in new tongues.

As a hero figure, the Mariner returns to his homeland and the descent, or regression of his psychic energy, is followed by the ascent, or progression of libido. Unfortunately, the Mariner has been unable to shape the vanishing shapes anew. He has encountered these images in the form of the water-snakes, the character of Life-in-Death, and the troop of angels who inhabited the bodies of the crew, but he continued to expand on the artistic form of these images rather than on the meaning behind the form.

As a result, the treasure, the eternal truth, which he has discovered does not suffer a change, and as the remainder of the poem illustrates, the Mariner cannot bear new witness.

The Mariner's complete return to the external world is marked when he comes into contact with actual human beings, rather than the ghosts and demons of the watery world of his sea journey. A boat approaches which holds three -- a Pilot, the Pilot's son, and a Hermit:

But soon I heard the dash of oars,
I heard the Pilot's cheer;
My head was turned perforce away,
And I saw a boat appear...

Dear Lord in Heaven! it was a joy
The dead men could not blast.(500-507)

In the same way that the Mariner is relieved to see the landmarks of the conscious world, he rejoices at the sight of human beings; the death and darkness that cling to his ship in the form of the dead men, the remnants of his nightmarish encounter with the figures from the underworld, cannot take away the jubilation he feels at coming back in touch with the sights and sounds of human existence. The spirits from the netherworld have left the bodies of the crew, but these bodies remain dead; the souls of the crew do not return because the unconscious is now highly activated and the energy needed to maintain the activity of the unconscious portion of the psyche continues to be drawn from consciousness. Although the Mariner is returning to the world of consciousness, the world of external reality,

the dominance of his ego cannot be restored to its original position of power because the Mariner arrives at his homeland without his crew, without the full strength of his former conscious personality.

As a result of the fact that the unconscious is highly activated, and therefore beyond the control of the Mariner's conscious self, he looks to the Hermit for help in abolishing, in washing away, the influence of the unconscious:

I saw a third -- I heard his voice:
It is the Hermit good!
He singeth loud his godly hymns
That he makes in the wood.
He'll shrieve my soul, he'll wash away
The Albatross's blood.(508-513)

After the Mariner shot the albatross, this persisting sign of critical thought, the regressive libido was allowed to go its course, taking the Mariner back to the ancient beginnings where he experienced the horrors of the collective unconscious; it was the albatross's blood that brought the "curse" of encountering the unconscious. The Mariner's hope that the Hermit will "wash away" the blood of the albatross reveals his desire to eradicate his experience of the unconscious. When the Mariner was nearing his homeland he exclaimed, "O let me be awake, my God! / Or let me sleep away" (470-471). The Mariner is now exhibiting his anxiety, his inability to cope with the dichotomy between the sleeping nightmare world and the rational waking world, by attempting to eliminate the world

of sleep, the world of the collective unconscious. Since the Mariner continues to view his confrontation with the unconscious as a curse caused by the sin of deviating from his conscious attitude and allowing the products of the unconscious to surface, he has still not understood the full meaning of his experience.

It is significant that the Mariner hopes to receive absolution from the Hermit. The Hermit is portrayed as a man of God; he is referred to as being holy (562, 574), he devotes his life to singing "godly hymns" (510), and, as the following stanza indicates, he prays throughout the day:

He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve --
He hath a cushion plump:
It is the moss that wholly hides
The rotted old oak-stump.(519-522)

The Hermit appears as a pious Christian, isolating himself from society in order to dedicate himself completely to the worship of God; however, the imagery of the moss concealing the "rotted old oak-stump" suggests that his religiosity is not based on the direct experience of God, but on ritual and outward observance. The word "rotted" has been used throughout the poem in reference to the sea (123, 240); it could be that the oak-stump, like the sea, symbolizes the unacceptable, "rotten" aspects of the unconscious. In speaking of the tree symbol, Jung declares that "taken on average, the commonest associations to its meaning are growth, life, unfolding of form in a physical and spiritual sense, development ... ";² whereas the dead

or truncated tree symbolizes death, like the tree of paradise that died after the fall, Christ as the tree cut down in his passion, the alchemical motif of the "tree of death" and the Egyptian tale of Bata.³ Therefore, the "rotted old oak-stump" may represent the Hermit's state of "psychic death," the lack of spiritual growth and development, resulting from his inability to raise the unacceptable, contaminated, "rotted" contents of the unconscious into conscious awareness. The moss which "wholly hides" the unconscious from conscious awareness makes a plump cushion for him to kneel on when he prays; it makes life more comfortable since it allows the Hermit to concentrate on the activities of praying and singing, rather than involving him in the conflict of examining what lies beneath the moss, beneath the surface of consciousness. Consequently, the Hermit appears to be a highly devoted Christian but he is not psychically whole, for he is repressing both the shadowy, negative side of his nature, and the awesome, numinous side of God. As Jung declares,

our consciousness is so saturated with Christianity, so utterly moulded by it, that the unconscious counter-position can discover no foothold there, for the simple reason that it seems too much the antitheses of our ruling ideas.⁴

Later in the poem, the manner in which the Hermit reacts to the Mariner, as one who has experienced the unconscious counter-position and explored the antitheses of his ruling

ideas, further reveals the Hermit's lack of spiritual development.

The fact that the Mariner has indeed been affected by his experience of the unconscious is evident from the description given of the Mariner's ship by the inhabitants of the Pilot's boat. The Hermit declares that the sails of the Mariner's ship are thin and sere, like the "Brown skeletons of leaves that lag / My forest-brook along" (533-534), while the Pilot exclaims, "Dear Lord! it hath a fiendish look" (538). When the Mariner first saw the spectre-bark his reaction was similar to that of the Hermit and the Pilot, for he thought that the sails of the ship were ribs through which the sun peered (185). The Pilot even declares, "I am a-feared" (540), a response identical to that of the Mariner after he encountered the spectre-bark (204). Holmes declares that "the roles are curiously reversed as the Mariner discovers that for these ordinary mortals it is now he who is on a 'spectre-bark.'"⁵ His ship resembles the ship of Life-in-Death because his experience has not transformed him; he submitted to the unconscious without utilizing his faculties of critical thought, without striving to understand the meaning of the archetypal images, and without integrating this meaning into consciousness.

The action of the poem continues with the Pilot's boat nearing the Mariner's ship.

The boat came close beneath the ship,
And straight a sound was heard.

Under the water it rumbled on,
Still louder and more dread:
It reached the ship, it split the bay;
The ship went down like lead.(544-549)

Earlier in the poem the albatross fell from the Mariner's neck and "sank / Like lead into the sea" (290-291). The repetition of the phrase, "like lead" graphically illustrates that the ship and the albatross do not simply float on the water, or that they are submerged just below the water line, but that they actually sink into the very depths of the sea, where there is no hope of recovering them. The ship was the vehicle that carried the Mariner across the sea of his unconscious and therefore represented the analytical process. The fact that the ship does not reach the shore effectively demonstrates the Mariner's inability to complete the work of individuation by coming to terms with the meaning of his experiences. Like the albatross, the ship is also a symbol of the self, and is lost in the depths of the unconscious; the ship does not make it to harbour and consequently the Mariner does not achieve his completion of personality.

After the Mariner's ship sinks he is flung on board the Pilot's boat, which signifies his re-entry into the conscious world of everyday reality -- "But swift as dreams, myself I found / Within the Pilot's boat" (554-555). Although the Mariner has returned from his oceanic encounter with the maternal abyss, the process of individuation has not been completed, so the Mariner is in

a state of psychic turmoil. Consequently, the Mariner has a negative effect on those with whom he comes into contact:

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

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

The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,
And scarcely he could stand.(560-573)

In reacting to the Mariner's presence, the Pilot shrieks, the Pilot's boy goes crazy, and the Hermit can barely stand. The Mariner's failure to be transformed through an understanding of his encounter with the primordial images of the collective unconscious, causes him to identify with the unconscious products. In the same way that the sight of his ship induced fear into the Pilot, a similar effect is produced by the Mariner's appearance and the sound of his voice. The fact that the Pilot's boy refers to the Mariner as the Devil suggests that his highly activated unconscious has made the Mariner a likely object of projection. Through the person of the Mariner, the Pilot's boy meets with the collective unconscious; this encounter triggers the constellated archetype of the shadow, and his unconscious projects this archetype upon the Mariner. Projections, says Jung, "appear on persons in the immediate environment, mostly in the form of abnormal over- or under-valuations..."⁶ They "change the world into the replica of

one's own unknown face."⁷ The Mariner, as the Devil, the dark side of the personality, is the replica of the boy's own unknown face. The boy goes crazy, most likely because his ego is not fully developed and strong enough to withstand the confrontation with the non-ego.

Once the boat reaches the shore the Mariner implores the Hermit to shrieve him -- "O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man" (574). According to Jung, for a Catholic mentality "confession and absolution are always at hand to ease excess of tension"⁸ caused by inner conflict and the existence of sin. The Mariner is seeking this easing of tension between the unconscious and conscious aspects of his psyche; however, he is never shriven because neither he nor the Hermit can fulfill their duties in the act of confession. First of all, as Paul Magnuson points out, the Mariner is never shriven by the Hermit because he cannot confess: "The Mariner's inability to confess reflects his lack of comprehension of what has happened to him,"⁹ and since "confession must contain an understanding of the offence, the original intention of confession is forgotten and the Mariner is never shriven by the Hermit."¹⁰ Since the Mariner does not comprehend his experience of the sea voyage, he cannot receive the easing of tension that results from a meaningful understanding and explanation, or confession, of his encounter with the unconscious. The Mariner relates the events which took place during his voyage (578-581), but he has no understanding of the

"crime" or the events which followed the killing of the albatross; he does not realize that it is not that the sinful, unacceptable contents of the unconscious must be eliminated, or washed away, but that he must integrate these products into consciousness. Absolution, the freedom from the feelings of sin and guilt that plague the Mariner, would automatically be granted if only the Mariner could actually "confess" or comprehend the psychological implications of his experience.

The Mariner is also never shriven because the Hermit is in no position to offer absolution. Jung maintains that Catholic confession has a tremendous effect "when it is not just a passive hearing, but an active intervention."¹¹ It is incumbent on the priest to ask questions and provide understanding.¹² The Mariner looks to the Hermit for help because appearances suggest that the Hermit is holy and close to God; it could be that in the person of the Hermit, as a religious man isolated from society, the Mariner is unknowingly seeking the archetype of meaning, for it is only through wisdom and spiritual understanding that the conflict between the opposites can be resolved. Unfortunately, the Hermit is not a healer of souls. He reacts to the Mariner's request by crossing himself and asking, "What manner of man art thou?" There is also no mention of the Hermit questioning and intervening while the Mariner tells his tale. It is obvious that the Hermit is ill-equipped to help the Mariner. He cannot

alleviate the pain of the Mariner's distress because he does not understand the nature of the problem.

To a certain degree, the dichotomy between the Hermit's rigorous show of religious piety, and his inability to understand the inner workings of the psyche, resulting from his lack of spiritual wisdom, provides a powerful comment on the effectiveness of the religious leaders of the Christian world. In a letter to Pastor Walther Uhsadel in 1936, Jung stated that the most important task of the priest, minister, pastor, etc. as "the educator of the soul would be to show people the way to the primordial experience which most clearly befell St. Paul, for example, on the road to Damascus."¹³ While Jung maintains that the most important task of the healer of the soul is to guide individuals to the actual experience of Christ, in his "Psychological Types" he declares that Christianity "has an undoubted tendency to suppress the unconscious in the individual as much as possible, thus paralyzing his fantasy activity."¹⁴ In the case of the Mariner, his fantasy activity continues to dominate his psyche, but the Hermit cannot provide relief because he has suppressed his own unconscious to such a degree that he cannot understand the Mariner's plight. He cannot help the Mariner continue his psychic journey by discovering the archetype of wisdom and the archetype of wholeness, because he has not made that journey himself.

As a result of his inability to be absolved of his

sin, of the tension between the unconscious and the conscious, the Mariner's conscious self is periodically overtaken by the products of the unconscious striving for expression and recognition:

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.(578-590)

From the Mariner's description of the "woful-agony" which forces him to repeat the events of his encounter with the unconscious, it would seem that he suffers from the possession of an autonomous complex. Jung describes the autonomous complex as "a psychic formation that remains subliminal until its energy-charge is sufficient to carry it over the threshold into consciousness."¹⁵ "One of the commonest causes" of this complex, says Jung, "is a moral conflict, which ultimately derives from the apparent impossibility of affirming the whole of one's nature. This impossibility presupposes a direct split."¹⁶ In the case of the Mariner, the moral conflict caused by his encounter with his shadow and anima, and the impossibility of understanding and accepting these elements as part of himself has resulted in a split in his psyche. The

unconscious gained its energy-charge through the course of the voyage and crossed into consciousness. If the archetypes encountered during his voyage had been completely fathomed and explored and integrated with the ego, the Mariner would have affirmed his whole nature and the images would have lost their initial chaotic nature and life; they would be transformed into a new truth, like new wine placed in new bottles. Since the Mariner has not understood their meaning, these products of the unconscious continue to confront the ego-consciousness as a hostile foreign body, splitting off from consciousness and causing a dissociation in the psyche.

According to Jung, there are numerous kinds of complexes, such as the power-complex and the erotic complex.¹⁷ It would appear that the Mariner is possessed by a particular complex which Jung refers to as an autonomous creative complex. According to Jung, nothing can be known about this complex apart from the artist's finished work; "the work presents us with a finished picture, and this picture is amenable to analysis only to the extent that we can recognize it as a symbol."¹⁸ As well as being symbolic, says Jung, a work of art "has its source not in the *personal unconscious* of the poet, but in a sphere of unconscious mythology whose primordial images are the common heritage of mankind."¹⁹ This sphere of unconscious mythology is the collective unconscious, where the primordial images, or archetypes, originate. The

Mariner's ballad, the finished work, which he relays to the Hermit and later to the Wedding-Guest, depicts a period of introspection when he encountered some of the archetypes of the watery world of his collective unconscious. As his story reveals, he focusses on the artistic form of the primordial images, expanding on the brilliant color and movement of the water-snakes and the melodious sounds of the troop of angels, rather than on the meaning behind these images. Unfortunately, as Jung points out,

whenever the creative force predominates, life is ruled and shaped by the unconscious rather than by the conscious will, and the ego is swept along on an underground current, becoming nothing more than a helpless observer of events.²⁰

From the Mariner's description of his fate, it is evident that his life is indeed ruled and shaped by the autonomous creative complex. The "woful agony" which forces him to convey his story returns at "an uncertain hour" because, as Jung states,

it is not subject to conscious control, and can neither be inhibited nor voluntarily reproduced. Therein lies the autonomy of the complex: it appears and disappears in accordance with its own inherent tendencies, independent of the conscious will.²¹

The Mariner also states that he passes "like night, from land to land." Not only does the line reveal his instability and lack of a normal, secure life, but by comparing himself to night, and not to day, he emphasizes his relation to the night world of the unconscious is emphasized. His "strange power of speech" is the language

of the unconscious when it emerges and forces itself to be heard. Once his story is told, the Mariner is left free of the complex, not in the sense of real psychological salvation, but in terms of being released from the "ghastly tale," the eruption of chaotic images from the unconscious. When the creative complex withdraws, the Mariner's conscious mind is able to suppress its contents until the complex is once more triggered. Jung maintains that the "complex can usually be suppressed with an effort of will, but not argued out of existence, and, at the first suitable opportunity it reappears in all its original strength."²² According to the Mariner, this "suitable opportunity" arises when he comes into contact with a man who must hear his tale, a man who must be exposed to the darker side of the psyche. The Mariner declares that he teaches his tale, but he does not teach in the sense of imparting knowledge and insight about the unconscious; rather, he merely describes his feelings, and the psychic events that took place during his encounter with the mythical pantheon of the collective unconscious. Since the Mariner has not integrated the products of the unconscious they retain their original chaotic form, and consequently, he has a negative effect on others, causing them to fall down in a fit, go crazy, or be stunned.

The fact that the Mariner has been unable to integrate the unconscious contents with his consciousness, thereby creating a complete individuated self, is evident in the

following statement:

Alone on a wide wide sea:
So lonely 'twas, that God himself
Scarce seemed there to be.(598-600)

Throughout his experience of the unconscious, the Mariner failed to realize that God is to be found within; the Mariner refused to believe that God was present during his voyage into the unconscious because, as Jung points out, the God-image as the archetype of human wholeness²³ "enters into man, not as unity, but as conflict, the dark half of the image coming into opposition with the accepted view that God is 'Light'."²⁴ The Mariner was lonely because he was alienated from God as 'Light,' so he could experience the dark, numinous side of God that had previously been suppressed and unexplored. As a result of the Mariner's probable religious teaching, his conscious attitude could not accept that his encounter with the chaotic horrors of his inner self was also the encounter with God. In Jung's opinion,

the myth of the necessary incarnation of God -- the essence of the Christian message -- can then be understood as man's creative confrontation with the opposites and their synthesis in the self, the wholeness of his personality. The unavoidable internal contradictions in the image of Creator-god can be reconciled in the unity and wholeness of the self as the *coniunctio oppositorum* of the alchemists or as a *unio mystica*. In the experience of the self it is no longer the opposites "God" and "man" that are reconciled, as it was before, but rather the opposites within the God-image itself.²⁵

The Mariner cannot reconcile the internal contradictions in

the God-image because he has not achieved the unity and wholeness of the self. As a result, the opposites within his own personality, and the opposites inherent in the image of God remain split apart, creating tension and conflict.

This split between the opposites of conscious and unconscious, light and dark, etc., becomes fully apparent when the Mariner finishes telling his story and the autonomous complex retreats into the unconscious. The primal images of the actual inward spiritual experience are replaced by the "little vesper bell" (595-596) and the church, merely external signs of that experience. The Mariner talks of how sweet it is to walk "to the kirk / With a goodly company" (603-604), and of all people bending "to his great Father" (607) and praying together. He concludes with the following statement:

He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.(614-617)

This moralistic, theological explanation appears grossly inadequate as a statement of the Mariner's horrifying experience of dark, oceanic chaos. David Miall, in commenting on the ending of the poem, declares that the "Mariner has some vital experience, the implication of which he can neither understand nor communicate in other terms than conventional piety."²⁴ The Mariner cannot understand nor communicate his experience in other terms than conventional piety because the experience has not been

integrated into consciousness; therefore, there is no way for the Mariner to bridge the chasm between the psychic events of his night sea voyage which he just related to the Wedding-Guest, and the external world of everyday reality. He cannot reconcile the dark side of God, experienced within the depths of the psyche, with the light side that is presented by the dogma and doctrine of the church. As David Jasper points out,

whatever the Mariner says, and quite possibly believes, it is quite clear that the 'dear God who loveth us' is, in the context of the poem, a deity with an independent mind and will whose expression of love for all creation is, to say the least, ambivalent.²⁷

The Mariner cannot harmonize his experience of God with the Christian conception of God because, says Jung, whenever one confronts the unconscious, science, philosophy, and the "traditional teachings of religion" help only to a small degree: the "judging intellect with its categories proves... powerless. Human interpretation fails, for a turbulent life-situation has arisen that refuses to fit any of the traditional meanings assigned to it."²⁸ Therefore, from time to time the unconscious takes control of the ego and demands that the mythical contents of the journey be brought to consciousness; the thinking faculty cannot interpret these events so the psyche remains split, in tension and turmoil.

This situation of psychic division is paralleled in the character of the Wedding-Guest. Magnuson observes that

"the Wedding-Guest is a psychological double of the Mariner."²⁹ As the Mariner relates his story to the Wedding-Guest, the Wedding-Guest simultaneously experiences the world of the unconscious, and reacts to it in a similar manner as the Mariner. This subplot has the effect of emphasizing and reinforcing both the process of psychic development and the state in which the Mariner is left when his journey comes to an end.

The Wedding-Guest's involvement begins at the commencement of the poem, with the Mariner stopping one of three men about to attend a wedding feast. The number three, as a mystical number, foreshadows that the following events may certainly be beyond the ordinary and mundane. The Wedding-Guest attempts to resist the Mariner:

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.'(5-8)

Radley declares that

it should be noted that the Wedding-Guest stands in these lines as a man concerned with externals, that is with the merriment and festivities of the occasion rather than with the more sacred implications of the marriage ceremony. In this sense the Wedding-Guest is demonstrating a superficiality in his mode of living.³⁰

In addition, he says that he is next of kin, suggesting that it is his duty to attend.³¹ This exhibition of superficiality and concern with the social world, as opposed to the individual, inner life of the psyche, reveals a man who needs to be enlightened through an

encounter with the collective unconscious.

The Wedding-Guest tries to resist the Mariner and cries for him to leave him alone -- "'Hold off! unhand me, grey-beard loon'" (11) -- but the Mariner "holds him with his glittering eye" (13). In the same way that the Mariner dropped below the familiar sights of the conscious world when he left the harbour and began his journey, the Wedding-Guest is taken away from the "merry din" of the external world and drawn into the inner life of the psyche. The Mariner has the power to hold the Wedding-Guest:

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 thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.(14-20)

Ross Woodman declares that "against his will, the Wedding-Guest submits to the Mariner. The Mariner has aroused in him the archetypal world to which feelings are bound."³² The Wedding-Guest listens like a child because he has been transported back to this primal world of feeling, the world of the unconscious. In Memories, Dreams, Reflections Jung comments that a characteristic of childhood is its naivete and unconsciousness.³³ Therefore, the Wedding-Guest cannot choose but hear because, as Magnuson declares,

the Mariner conquers him just as the nightmare conquers the Mariner ... He is paralyzed by fear just as the Mariner is, and is transfixed by the Mariner's gaze just as the Mariner is frozen in 'loneliness and fixedness.'³⁴

Indeed, as the Mariner expresses his fear of the unconscious (204), the Wedding-Guest likewise voices his own feelings of terror and dread.

'I fear thee, ancient Mariner!
I fear thy skinny hand!
And thou art long, and lank, and brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand.(224-227)

It is interesting that the Wedding-Guest focusses on the Mariner's hand as an object of his fear. The Mariner's hand is compared to the ribbed sea-sand, suggesting that just as the sand on the sea-shore is formed into a ribbed configuration by the sea, the Mariner has been touched, or affected and changed by his encounter with the unconscious. As a result of this change the Mariner is likewise able to affect the Wedding-Guest by the numinous images of the primal world of the collective unconscious.

When the Mariner finishes his tale he leaves:

and now the Wedding-Guest
Turned from the bridegroom's door.

He went like one that hath been stunned,
And is of sense forlorn:
A sadder and a wiser man,
He rose the morrow morn.(620-625)

Since the Mariner is only able to present his experience, the chaotic images of the unconscious, he upsets and disrupts instead of offering the Wedding-Guest a way of understanding the unconscious portion of his psyche. The Wedding-Guest is turned from the bridegroom's door because he has been transported to the mythical realm of the unconscious and does not possess the tools to integrate the

Mariner's tale with the "loud uproar" (591) of the wedding feast. Magnuson points out that

the Wedding-Guest's being "of a sense forlorn" means more than that he has been stunned. "Sense" refers both to sensation and comprehension. "Forlorn" adds to the serious implications, for the word strongly implies that the Wedding-Guest is as affected by the tale as the Mariner is himself and that his loss of sensation and comprehension equals the Mariner's. The Mariner's experiences are duplicated in the Wedding-Guest.³⁵

This experience of the Mariner's that is duplicated in the Wedding-Guest involves the encounter with the collective unconscious, and the inability to comprehend and integrate this encounter with the world of everyday reality. Symbolically, the Wedding-Guest does not attend the wedding feast, the celebration of marital union, because he himself has not achieved that union within. The Mariner presented the Wedding-Guest with the dichotomy between the realities of the inner world of the psyche, and with the basic tenets of the Christian faith (God loves all things, and man is to reciprocate by finding happiness and peace in prayer). These two worlds cannot be reconciled within the traditional Christian doctrines, so neither the Mariner nor the Wedding-Guest can comprehend the events that took place during the Mariner's sea journey. For the Mariner and the Wedding-Guest there is no marriage feast, there is no celebration of the "self."

The three main characters of "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," the Mariner, the Hermit, and the Wedding-Guest,

were all unable to come to terms with the reality of the unconscious and the traditional concepts and dogma of the Christian religion. This failure to integrate one's experience of the unconscious with the traditional tenets of Christianity reveals a problem which Jung maintains is central to Christianity:

The old question posed by the Gnostics, 'Whence comes evil?' has been given no answer by the Christian world.... Today we are compelled to meet that question; but we stand empty-handed, bewildered, and perplexed, and cannot even get it into our heads that no myth will come to our aid although we have such an urgent need of one...we are shaken by secret shudders and dark forebodings; but we know no way out.³⁶

Jung maintains that our reason for not having a myth cannot be blamed on the Scriptures; the words and actions of Christ, as well as the letters of Paul and the Book of Revelation, have set out the original myth and provide ample opportunity to develop it further. The fault, says Jung, lies with the Christian world, for not only having failed to further develop what the New Testament instituted, but for actually suppressing any attempts to do so.³⁷ Organized religion has effectively suppressed the chance for the Christian myth to develop by suppressing the unconscious. Jung maintains that rite and dogma are the dams and walls, keeping back the dangers of the unconscious:

Dogma takes the place of the collective unconscious by formulating its contents on a grand scale...Almost the entire life of the collective unconscious has been channelled into dogmatic archetypal ideas and flows

along like a well-controlled stream in the symbolism of creed and ritual.³⁸

The immediate religious experience is replaced with suitable symbols "tricked out with an organized dogma and ritual," maintained by the Catholic Church through her "indisputable authority," and by the Protestant Church through the "insistence on belief in the evangelical message." ³⁹ As a result of this careful protection against the experience of the unconscious, individuals are left without a myth, a link, between the opposites of good and evil, light and dark, God and Satan, conscious and unconscious.

Does the Mariner represent the modern hero, "everyman," who fails to complete his psychic journey because he is not armed with the shield of wisdom, and is consequently devoured by the monster of the maternal abyss? From a Jungian perspective, this is indeed the case. Individuals in the present day are not armed with a myth that would help explain and integrate the products of the unconscious. Religion, says Jung, should be the experience of the "numinosum,"⁴⁰ but he declares that what is ordinarily called "religion" is a substitute to such an amazing degree that he prefers to call it a creed.⁴¹ The mechanical dependence on the creeds and traditions of the Christian churches leads the individual away from the true purpose of religion, to become psychically and spiritually whole, to become one with the Father.

The Latin motto, quoted from Thomas Burnet, which

appears before the beginning of "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," provides a very appropriate summary of the poem:

I readily believe that there are more invisible than visible things in the universe. But who shall describe for us their families, their ranks, relationships, distinguishing features and functions?...The human mind has always circled about knowledge of these things, but never attained it...⁴²

The Mariner experienced the invisible elements of the universe, and therefore fully believes in their existence; however, his mind circles "about knowledge of these things" and never understands them because he is unable to integrate them into consciousness, into the traditional teachings of Christianity. Without a myth to encompass the two conflicting spheres of the psyche, and to provide insight into the "ranks, relationships, distinguishing features and functions" of the unconscious products, the Mariner is condemned to a fragmented life of psychic confusion and pain.

Notes to Chapter 5

- ¹ Jung, "Symbols," C.W. 5, par. 553.
- ² Jung, "The Philosophical Tree," C.W. 13, par. 350.
- ³ Ibid, par. 400-401. In the tale of Bata the hero places his soul in a tree. When the tree was cut down his soul was found in a seed, and with this he was restored to life.
- ⁴ Jung, "The Psychology," C.W. 7, par 118.
- ⁵ Holmes, 95.
- ⁶ Jung, "The Psychology," C.W. 7, par. 152.
- ⁷ Jung, "Aion," C.W. 9ii, par.17.
- ⁸ Jung, "Religion," C.W. 11, par.86.
- ⁹ Magnuson, 74.
- ¹⁰ Ibid, 73.
- ¹¹ Jung, "Psychoanalysis and the Cure of Souls," C.W. 11, par. 544.
- ¹² Ibid, par. 542.
- ¹³ Letters, 216.
- ¹⁴ Jung, "Types," C.W. 6, par. 80.
- ¹⁵ Jung, "Poetry," C.W. 16, par. 122.
- ¹⁶ Jung, "A Review of the Complex Theory," C.W. 8, par. 204.
- ¹⁷ Ibid, par. 209.
- ¹⁸ Jung, "Poetry," C.W. 16, par. 124.

¹⁹ Ibid, par. 125. According to Jung, "art receives tributaries" from the personal unconscious, but they are "muddy ones; and their predominance, far from making a work of art a symbol, merely turns it into a symptom."

²⁰ Jung, "Psychology and Literature," C.W. 16, par. 159.

²¹ Jung, "Poetry," C.W. 16, par. 122.

²² Jung, "Complex Theory," C.W. 8, par. 201. Jung points out that the activity of the complex seems to have a wavelike character of hours, days, or weeks, but as a result of limited research this question remains unclarified.

²³ Jung maintains that "one can never distinguish empirically between a symbol of the self and a God-image since the two ideas, however much we try to differentiate them, always appear blended together." See Jung, "Trinity," C.W. 11, par. 231.

²⁴ Memories, Dreams, Reflections, 334.

²⁵ Ibid, 338.

²⁶ David S. Miall, "Guilt and Death: The Predicament of the Ancient Mariner," Studies In English Literature, 24, no. 4 (1984): 637.

²⁷ David Jasper, Coleridge as Poet and Religious Thinker (London: Macmillan, 1985), 57.

²⁸ Jung, "Archetypes," C.W. 9i, par. 66.

²⁹ Magnuson, p.84.

³⁰ Virginia Radley, Samuel Taylor Coleridge

(Boston: T. Wayne, 1966), 58.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Woodman, 62.

³³ Memories, Dreams, Reflections, 244.

³⁴ Magnuson, 84.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Memories, Dreams, Reflections. 332-333.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Jung, "Archetypes," C.W. 9i, par. 21.

³⁹ "Religion," C.W. 11, par. 75.

⁴⁰ Jung maintains that the 'numinosum' is a dynamic agency that seizes and controls the individual. He borrows this term from Rudolf Otto, who first used it in his book, The Idea of the Holy. See Jung, "Religion," C.W. 11, par. 6.

⁴¹ Ibid, par. 73.

⁴² Coleridge, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," English Romantic Writers, 405.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

As a highly creative work of art, or in Coleridge's own words, a work of "pure imagination"¹ "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" can be viewed as a poetic expression of a hero's voyage into the deep, watery recesses of the unconscious, where he experiences the dark side of his own personality, and the daemonic side of God's being. The purpose of this thesis was to examine the archetypal and symbolic material in "The Rime" to determine whether the Mariner succeeds in his religious pilgrimage towards psychic unity and oneness with God. The conclusion of the study is that the Mariner does not succeed. He is a fallen hero. Jung, in his "Symbols of Transformation," remarks that

man with his consciousness is always a long way behind the goals of the unconscious; unless his libido calls him forth to new dangers he sinks into slothful inactivity, or in the prime of life he is overcome with longing for the past and is paralysed. But if he rouses himself and follows the dangerous urge to do the forbidden and apparently impossible thing, then he must either go under or become a hero.²

The Mariner's libido did indeed call him forth to new dangers; the vicious storm, the regressive libidinal energy, forced his ship down toward the cold, icy region of the antarctic, into the very depths of his unconscious

being. Once the Mariner was able to overcome the dominance of his critical thought (symbolized by the albatross), he began to experience the archetypes of the collective unconscious. He encountered the shadow and the anima. He was able to formulate creatively the contents of the shadow, as well as other unconscious contents taking the shape of the spirits, but could not discover the meaning that existed behind the form. Similarly, in the case of the anima, the Mariner could not get beyond her chaotic, terrifying nature to find the spiritual knowledge that lay within his soul, and consequently, he did not experience the archetype of the wise old man or that of the self, or God-image.

The Mariner followed "the dangerous urge to do the forbidden and apparently impossible thing"; he embarked on a spiritual journey into his unconscious, but he did not become a hero. In Jung's words, the Mariner went "under." He could not endure the tension between the opposites within himself and within the God-image. As a result, the activated contents of his unconscious were not fully integrated into consciousness, but existed as a split off portion of his psyche, causing psychic and spiritual turmoil.

From a Jungian perspective, the reason why the Mariner could not deal with the conflict between the opposites, is because Christianity does not provide the tools, the myth, to repair the fragmentary condition of an individual's

psyche. Jung emphatically states that,

instead of insisting so glibly on the necessity of faith, the theologians, it seems to me, should see what can be done to make this faith possible. But that means placing symbolic truth on a new foundation - a foundation which appeals not only to sentiment, but to reason.³

For the Mariner, the symbols he encountered during his exploration of his unconscious appealed only to his sentiment, to his sense of aesthetics and creativity. Since the images rising from the unconscious did not appeal to his reason, he could not integrate the world of religious feeling and experience presented by the archetypes of the unconscious, together with the world of religious thought and logic presented by the dogma and creed of consciousness. Unfortunately, without the integration of these two worlds, the Mariner does not achieve spiritual oneness with God.

Although the length of this thesis precludes the further study of other poems written by Coleridge, it would be interesting to complete a Jungian analysis of his other works to determine whether the theme of spiritual conflict between the conscious and the unconscious occurs, and whether the hero, or heroine, is successful in dealing with the conflict. In particular, "Kubla Khan" and "Christabel" would make excellent objects of research.

Notes to the Conclusion

- ¹ Coleridge, "Biographia Literaria," 452.
- ² Jung, "Symbols," C.W. 5, par. 540.
- ³ Jung, "Symbols," C.W. 5, par. 336.

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