



1-1-2015

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Recommended Citation

Shams, P., & Pourgiv, F. (2015). Shams, P., & Pourgiv, F. (2015). The mariner's way of individuation: An insight into the Jungian principle of acausality. *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies*, 34(1-2), 45–54.. *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies*, 34 (1). <http://dx.doi.org/10.24972/ijts.2015.34.1-2.45>



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The Mariner's Way of Individuation: An Insight into the Jungian Principle of Acausality

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As a Romantic poet who was especially interested in the workings of the mind, Coleridge, in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, has dealt with notions, ideas, and images that lend themselves to a Jungian reading, specifically from the perspective of the principle of synchronicity which is to be the focus of this analysis. The theory of synchronicity, being the principle explaining the concurrence of psychic states and external events which bear no causal relationship, could be employed to bring up a novel interpretation of the poem. The causally unrelated but meaningful succession of events in the course of the poem, finding expression through the archetypes, helps the Mariner get a deeper insight into the universe and further his movement in the process of individuation—the quest for self-realization. The synchronistic events of the poem take place on a bed of poetic expressions of the primordial images mediating between the Mariner's psyche and the world outside, resulting in his inner growth through the process of individuation, wherein, the Mariner comes to the realization that nature and he form an inseparable part of a greater system which is unified through the flow of an invisible spirit—the collective unconscious.

Keywords: *archetypes, Coleridge, collective unconscious, individuation, Jung, The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, synchronicity*

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner is the longest major poem by Samuel Taylor Coleridge first published in 1798 under the title *Lyrical Ballads*, a joint collection of poetry whose larger part was written by Coleridge's counterpart William Wordsworth and a revolutionary text which marked the beginning of the English Romantic movement in literature. The poem contains events that bear no relationship to their consequences, events which fail to lead logically to their outcome; however, they are related through an acausal principle. *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* tells the story of a mariner who, while in the sea with his crew, shoots an albatross to death for no reason. This event is followed by a sudden storm that upsets the crew, who, blaming everything on the Mariner, makes him wear the albatross around his neck as a sign of guilt. Being lost in the sea, they see a ship approaching, but soon their hope changes into despair as they encounter the characters *Death* and *Life-in-Death* on board the ghostly ship, and all the crew except the Mariner drop dead at the sight. Wandering alone, the Mariner comes to praise the beauty of nature, and is suddenly released of the spell around his neck.

The Mariner is then cast into a trance as spirits drive the ship northward. Soon, the curse is expiated and he finds himself approaching his native country, when a boat comes into sight. The Mariner's ship suddenly sinks, and he is saved in the boat aboard of which are the Pilot, his boy, and the Hermit with whom he shares his story. Afterwards, he wanders from land to land, retelling his ghastly tale.

It will be argued that what connects the death of the Albatross to the wandering of the ship, the doom of the Mariner, and finally the death of the crew can be explained by Jung's theory of synchronicity (Jung, 1952/1973). The principle of synchronicity seems to link the causally unrelated events of the poem, and through the archetypes, or primordial images and inherited patterns of thought, connects them to the collective unconscious which comprises in itself those primordial images and common psychic experiences (Jung, 1960/1969). This reading provides a logical basis to what happens in the story and clarifies the poet's point when he implies that destruction and disrespect for natural elements coincide with man's own destruction. This concurrence of events,

which lies outside the realm of causality in the physical and material sense, will be justified as an example of synchronicity, the acausal principle that explains how the Mariner and his companions' perceptions coincide with external events and why some events concur without there being a cause. Getting the gradual insight into this very fact that he is doomed as long as he disrespects nature provides the context for the Mariner's initiation into the Jungian process of individuation, which is "the process by which a person becomes a psychological 'individual' that is, a separate, indivisible unity or 'whole'" (Jung, 1959/1968b, p. 275). Having obtained an insight into the principle of synchronicity, the Mariner becomes aware of how he, as a human, is related to nature and forms a part of a greater system which happens to be thoroughly connected. He takes on the mission of spreading his new found knowledge: respect nature, for we are all like one single soul spread through various bodies and connected through an acausal principle.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner lends itself to an analytical psychological reading since, as Jung believed, art is a psychological activity, and the aspect of art that is a product of the process of artistic creation can be studied in terms of psychology (Jung, 1953/1984, p. 65). There are primordial images lying behind the imagery of art, and being symbolic, art has its source in the collective unconscious (Jung, 1953/1984, p. 80). Based on these perspectives, it is therefore postulated that there are events, symbols, and images in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* that may have archetypal significance, each functioning as a medium connecting psychic states of the characters with the external events. All these events and psychological states offer an opportunity for the Mariner to get an insight into his own self, and finally, to form a whole personality which has brought the personal and collective unconscious into consciousness.

Moreover, being a Romantic poem, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* lends itself to a Jungian analysis since Romanticism and Jung's depth psychology seem to share a great number of concerns (see Jung, 1997; Romanticism in Merriam-Webster, 1995, p. 964). First of all, as a characteristic Romantic poet, Coleridge highly regarded imagination, which also seemed to be a pivotal concept for Jung. The Romantics' valuing of emotions, nature, individuality, the universe as a unified whole, inspiration, and spontaneity also prevalent in Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* appears to bear many affinities with Jung's concern with the interrelation of

the psyche and nature (e.g., Jung, 1952/1973; where synchronicity is presented as an interpretation of nature and the psyche), individuation and the Self (Jung, 1951/1968a), dreams and imagination, and the spontaneous occurrence of mental states and external phenomena as in synchronicity (Jung, 1997).

Additionally, in relating the Mariner's spiritual experience, the poem as a characteristic Romantic work of art seems to portray a preoccupation with mystery, fierce beauty, horror, and the sublime with a recurrent attempt to imply the existence of a transcendental truth and an urge to connect with nature (see Romanticism in Merriam-Webster, 1995, p. 964) which, as a whole, can be considered as an equivalent to one of the characteristic features of synchronicity: numinosity. As a spiritual concept present in Jung's psychology, the numinous can be identified with emotional charge, terror, the divine, and the mysterious, resulting in a sense of unity with the universe that can be felt and attained through the experience of synchronistic events. Main (2004, p. 181) pointed to Jung's interview with Mircea Eliade in 1952, where Jung stated that "religious experience is *numinous*, as Rudolf Otto calls it, and for me as a psychologist, this experience differs from all others in the way it transcends the ordinary categories of space, time and causality," and that synchronicity "closely resembles numinous experiences where space, time, and causality are abolished" (McGuire & Hull, 1978, p. 230). Thus, his theory of synchronicity aligns with Jung's focus on the numinous and the mysterious (Main, 2004, p. 174).

This analysis, drawing upon Jung, aims at providing a deeper insight into the poem along with illuminating the principle of synchronicity and its relationship to the concepts of collective unconscious and individuation in the poem. First, the theory of synchronicity will be introduced, followed by its application to the poem and instances from the poem's images and events which indicate the existence of an acausal relationship between events in nature and man's life. Illuminating the archetypal significance of the poem's imagery and symbols helps with explaining both the synchronistic phenomena and the psychological relationship between the inner world of the protagonist and the world outside. The quest of the story, finally, leads to the Mariner's deeper insight into his own self through the process of individuation.

Jung (1953/1984) stated that "the primordial image, or archetype, is a figure ...

that constantly recurs in the course of history and appears wherever creative fantasy is freely expressed” (p. 81). Accordingly, when examined, it becomes evident that these images “give form” (p. 81) to innumerable experiences of the same type in human ancestry. Archetypes function as a medium connecting psychic states and external events. In the words of Shelburne (1989):

Jung postulates that an archetypal ordering principle is at work in ... [the] instances of synchronicity bringing about a situation in which an outer event and a psychic content are expressions of the same meaning. The archetypes in these cases seem to be localized as much in matter and in the environment as they are in the psyches of individuals. (p. 65)

Moreover, in his interpretation of Coleridge’s *Kubla Khan*, Heninger (1960) asserted that the poem is a description of Jung’s process of individuation through which separate elements integrate to give the personality wholeness and identity. He also noted that Coleridge had prophetically used the term individuation to define life, or “the power which unites a given *all* into a *whole* that is presupposed by all its parts” (p. 359). Heninger (1960) added that Coleridge, in his essay *On Poesy or Art*, further stated that a “man of genius must have undergone the process of individuation; he must have successfully integrated the conscious and the unconscious” (p. 360).

It must be noted that this analysis does not intend to equate Jung’s hermeneutic framework (as a psychologist) with that of Coleridge’s (as a Christian poet); rather, it attempts to bring Jung’s and Coleridge’s interpretations closer together where both authors can be understood as philosophers, whose worldviews can be compared. Thus, Coleridge’s poetic attempt translates into Jung’s language of psychology through similar notions of being and conceptualizations of the universe. Jung and Coleridge, as philosophers of life, have their own methods of expressing what they understand as the truth, but in spite of this plurality in expression, it is not difficult to infer a unity in the content and essence of what they propose. Thus, however variant their worldviews might appear at first glance, they can at times be taken as different verbalizations of a comparable entity, if studied deeply. The very similarities allow for a Jungian analysis of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.

The Mariner’s Way of Individuation

Jung and the Principle of Synchronicity

In *Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle*, Jung (1952/1973) related an example of synchronicity from his own experience with a patient, who, having dreamt of a golden scarab the night before, was describing her dream, when suddenly, a type of scarab beetle, quite rare in the area, flew against the window. Jung described such events as, “the simultaneous occurrence of a certain psychic state with one or more external events which appear as meaningful parallels to the momentary subjective state—and, in certain cases, vice versa” (p. 34). He explained the factors of synchronicity as an unconscious image which literally or symbolically comes into consciousness taking the form of an idea, a dream or presentiment, and “an objective situation [that] coincides with this content” (p. 40). To answer the question why and how the unconscious image and the coincidence arise, it should be noted that the connection between cause and effect is not the only factor in nature leading to meaningful inferences (Jung, 1952/1973, p. 79). The unconscious bears an absolute knowledge, and the macrocosmic events are present in the microcosm (Jung, 1952/1973, p. 83).

Jung (1952/1973) presented the theory of synchronicity as neither materialist nor metaphysical, but as an empirical concept that is not to be viewed as philosophical. Such a view of the cosmos would then result in a “new conceptual language” (p. 107) in which the triad of classical physics, “space, time, and causality” (p. 107) would become tetrad by the addition of the synchronicity factor. Through the principle of synchronicity a “parallelism of time and meaning between psychic and psychophysical events” (p. 126) is illustrated, and the occurrence of meaningful improbable coincidences that seem like chance happenings based on some kind of principle, is devised. Thus, synchronistic phenomena “prove that a content perceived by an observer can, at the same time, be presented by an outside event, without any causal connection ... [therefore] psyche cannot be localized in space ... [or] the space is relative to the psyche” (Jung, 1952/1973, p. 126).

Synchronicity and the Acausally Related Events of the Poem

“I readily believe that there are more invisible than visible Natures in the universe” (Coleridge, 1798/1993, p. 1536). Coleridge began his poem with this Latin epigraph, but it is not the last assertion of the poem that can be associated with the mysterious, the

spiritual, or the psychological. The poem is endowed with mysterious events and claims that, when placed in light of Jungian psychology, imply a relationship to either of the interrelated notions of collective unconscious and synchronicity. Coleridge (1798/1993) referred to the concept of invisible natures several times in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. In the marginal notes to the poem in part two, Coleridge described the spirit who followed the ship crew as “one of the invisible inhabitants of this planet, neither departed souls nor angels ... They are very numerous, and there is no climate or element without one or more” (p. 1540). Moreover, later in the poem, the Mariner related his experience of being cast into a trance while the spirits drive the ship northward (p. 1548).

Harter (2011) examined Coleridge’s “Essay on the Origin and Progress of the Sect of Sophism in Greece,” and stated that Coleridge assumed a spiritual nature to existence, believing in an invisible reality joined to the material and sensory world, without which the world would become an unintelligible chaos. He supported an ancient philosophy in which the “Invisible” (p. 139) was the “true Being” (p. 139) or the substance of “the material world” (p. 139). As the significance of Coleridge’s invisible natures is concerned, it could be said that Coleridge’s presentation of an invisible spirit inhering in the universe and connecting the whole being indicates a correlation with Jung’s idea of the collective unconscious (1959/1968b). Coleridge seems to have looked upon the issue from a religious point of view, which is not also in contrast with his belief in a unifying omnipresent god. However, his account of the invisible natures inhabiting the universe appears to serve as a poetic assertion relevant to the Jungian notion of the collective unconscious (1959/1968b). A more detailed exploration of Jung’s writings could bring an insight into Coleridge’s conception of the invisible natures as presented in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and the Mariner’s being cast into a trance. Jung (1961/1965) wrote about a fantasy of his soul flowing out of him and the appearance of spirits to him, which he called an example of “loss of soul” (p. 191). He asserted that the soul bears a relationship to the unconscious which also in a sense has a relationship to the collectivity of the dead. Therefore, when someone has the fantasy of his soul vanishing, as Jung himself once did, it means that his soul has withdrawn to the unconscious, or “into the land of the dead” (p. 191), for it gives the ancestral traces a chance to manifest themselves.

Continuing through the poem, one will find numerous instances of acausality of action and consequence which seem to be justifiable through the theory of synchronicity and its relation to the archetypes and the collective unconscious. For instance, the poem’s descriptions clarify that after being lost in the sea, whenever the crew feeds the Albatross who follows the ship, the wind happens to blow, helping the crew find the right direction. At some point, after killing the Albatross for no reason, the Mariner declares: “For all averred, I had killed the bird/ that made the breeze to blow” (Coleridge, 1798/1993, p. 1539). It is just after killing the Albatross that they get lost in the sea again. At first, they blame the Mariner for what he has done, but when the wind starts to blow again, they approve of the Mariner’s killing of the bird as they give up the belief that it was the bird who advanced them through the sea. Even if they do not admit it, it is plausible that the crew may have an unconscious image that the bird should not have been killed. This unconscious idea potentially coincides later with a number of objective external situations. The poem implies that by approving of the murder, the crew become accomplices in the crime; thus, they become lost again. Taking Jung’s synchronicity into consideration, one can offer a way to justify the mysterious relationship between appreciating an act of murder and becoming lost. The crew’s wandering in the sea could be a meaningful parallel to their unconscious subjective state that perceives murder as an act of crime deserving punishment. This mental state, then, concurs with a real tangible situation in the physical world—getting lost in the ocean. Purser (1957) noted that the crew cannot distinguish between worldly and spiritual good, and “the slaying of the Albatross has meant a refusal to acknowledge the spiritual truth” (p. 251). Therefore, if they are struggling to refuse the truth, they may unconsciously develop a feeling of guilt or remorse that takes on external manifestations throughout the poem.

Acausally related events, therefore, go on taking place. As the crew are trapped in the sea day and night, having no single drop of water to drink, they happen to encounter a ship (Coleridge, 1798/1993, pp. 1541-1542):

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.
 (lines 149-152, p. 1541).

Alas! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)
How fast she nears and nears!
Are those *her* sails that glance in the Sun,
Like restless gossamers?
(lines 181-184, p. 1542)

The sight of the ship is followed by the death of all, except for the Mariner (Coleridge, 1798/1993):

Four times fifty living men,
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan)
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
They dropped down one by one.
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!
(lines 216-224, pp. 1542-1543)

In his loneliness, then, the Mariner contemplates nature, feels a bond between him and nature as he watches the water snakes and comes to love them (Coleridge, 1798/1993):

O happy living things! no tongue
Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware:
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I blessed them unaware.
(lines 282-287 p. 1544)

This is when the bird, which was tied around his neck like a spell ever since he had killed it, suddenly drops from his neck and he is rid of it (Coleridge, 1798/1993):

The self-same moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.
(lines 288-291, p. 1544)

How is it possible that the wind might blow as a bird is fed and stop blowing as it is killed? How can it be explained why a crew might drop dead at the sight of a ship? Or why is it that loving the sea creatures can break a spell? Drawing upon Jung's theory of synchronicity to interpret the poem, one could say that the Mariner, the crew, the Albatross, the sea, and in all, the whole universe are woven together through the collective unconscious. It might be considered an accident when the crew gets

The Mariner's Way of Individuation

lost in the sea after the Albatross is killed, but drawing upon Jungian hermeneutic, this is a synchronistic phenomenon, wherein the killing of the Albatross and the crew's getting lost are acausally connected as the bird and the entire crew share a common transcendental wisdom although they consider themselves totally separate beings.

The death of the Albatross forebodes the death of the crew and the Mariner's life in death, which the Mariner conceives as a worse punishment than his crew's death because he gets cast into a horrific state of being neither dead nor alive. It is possible to assume that the Mariner is in such a state of remorse about slaying the Albatross that he encounters the personification of Death and Life-in-Death as the crew of a ship in the sea, followed by losing his own crew and soul. Referring to Jung, it could be inferred that the Mariner's unconscious feeling of guilt finds its way to his consciousness by taking the form of either a horrifying dream or an external eccentric situation. In either the symbolic or literal manifestation of this unconscious image, it can be postulated that an objective event has coincided with a subjective content.

The Mariner is obsessed with death, and death personified intrudes upon him. He is obsessed with the presence of the bird, and the bird turns into a necklace replacing the cross around his neck. All these events confirm that a certain psychic state can occur at the same time that an external event happens, and the two appear to be the meaningful parallel of one another although in the realm of physics no causal relationship could be ascribed to their occurrence; thus, the acausal principle of synchronicity comes forth to give the impression that what the Mariner has in mind, can manifest itself in an external event, and vice versa.

From a Jungian perspective, what connects these acausally are the archetypes mediating between the mariner's psyche and the world outside. All the events, images and symbols of the story seem to bear an archetypal significance which brings together the Mariner and the flow of the universal unconscious mind, a stream which at times is shaped by the Mariner's psychic state.

Synchronicity and the Archetypal Significance of the Events, Images and Symbols

Synchronicity, archetype and individuation could be considered as inseparable concepts since:

synchronistic events tend to occur in situations in which an archetype is active or “constellated.” Such constellation of archetypes in the life of a person is governed by the process of *individuation*—the inherent drive of the psyche towards increased wholeness and self-realization. (Main, 2007, pp. 15-16)

Heninger (1960) observed that Coleridge’s poetry requires a psychological reading since he “was obsessed with examining the workings of the mind, both his own and Wordsworth’s” (p. 358). He noted Jung’s definition of poetry as the “intelligible statement of submerged truths, the communication of archetypal patterns which reside within the collective unconscious” (p. 358) and further asserted that a poem is the expression of these archetypal patterns which “well up from the primordial region of the mind” (p. 358).

Heninger (1960) cited a passage from Shakespeare often cited by Coleridge explaining that:

The poet’s mind, “in a fine frenzy” of Platonic afflatus, “gives to airy nothing a local habitation and a name”; “imagination bodies forth the forms of things unknown.” The symbols used by the poet bring into our ephemeral consciousness those timeless psychic experiences shared with our ancestors. (p. 358)

Thus, he concluded that “Coleridge shared Jung’s view that poetry is the communication of archetypal wisdom” (p. 359).

Therefore, Coleridge is concerned with archetypal patterns, and the archetypes present in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* seem to be of particular significance as it is the archetype that gives manifestation to the synchronistic events of the story. In other words, the archetypes seem to function as the medium connecting the Mariner’s psyche and the external world, providing the synchronistic basis for the succession of events in the course of the story. As the collective unconscious provides the ground for occurrence of synchronistic phenomena, it is perhaps the archetypes that provide a means by which the collective unconscious can find expression and reveal its existence to human beings. Thus, the archetypes provide the link between the worlds within and without, being symbolized in the events, characters, and images of the story. While with a Jungian perspective these events, characters, and images are taken as archetypes through which the collective unconscious expresses its existence to

the Mariner and furthers his movement towards growth and self-realization, in Coleridge’s poetic narrative they could serve as a means by which God communicates to the Mariner’s mind. The Mariner puts his own impression of the story into words as (Coleridge, 1798/1993):

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

(lines 614-617, p. 1553)

Griggs (1956) stated that these lines could be regarded as either a simplistic lesson a primitive mariner learned after his nightmarish experiences, or the moral Coleridge tried to obtrude to his poem, yet, in either case, the poem as a whole supports Coleridge’s belief that “everything has a life of its own, and ... we are all One Life” (p. 864), which he has stated in his letter to Sotheby in 1802. Besides, in his *Theory of Life* (1848), Coleridge has defined life as “the principle of unity in multieity” (p. 42). Another point relating Coleridge’s view to that of Jung is his use of the term *individuation* even before Jung:

I define life as *the principle of individuation*, or the power which unites a given *all* into a *whole* that is presupposed by all its parts. The link that combines the two, and acts throughout both, will, of course, be defined by the *tendency to individuation*. (Coleridge, 1848, p. 42)

However different Coleridge’s system might be from that of Jung’s, it seems possible to find such similarities in order to translate the essence of what he proposed into the language of Jung. In Coleridge’s narration, the Mariner goes through a number of horrifying mysterious experiences to realize, as he claims, that he must love whatever great or small created by God, or else he will be punished. However, the course of the story seems to offer more than the Mariner’s perception when Coleridge’s philosophy of life is sought within the lines of his poem and Jungian notions are summoned to illuminate the dark side of the Mariner’s horrifying experience or nightmarish daydream, whatever it is. Hereafter, the archetypal significance of the poem’s images and events will be highlighted from a Jungian point of view so as to bring Coleridge’s *individuation*, *One Life* philosophy, and “dear God” closer to the collective unconscious of Jung.

First, the Mariner himself can represent the archetypal character of the *Outcast*, which is defined as “a character who is thrown out of the community as punishment for a crime against it” (Dobie, 2012, p. 64). He is banished from the social group which is his ship crew, and wanders in loneliness from one place to another. As an outcast who suffers from great pain and agony, he lives in a state of awe and terror wherein life and death have comingled. Thus, he gets the opportunity to spend time in contemplation, and potentially gets step by step closer to the realization of his Self in the course of the story.

In *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, complications are triggered as the Mariner kills an albatross, and the story is given direction by what follows this seemingly sinful deed done to a bird. From the very beginning, the bird becomes a recurring motif in the poem and seems to serve as an important archetype. Jung (1952/1973) stated that in the Babylonian Hades, the souls were considered “feather dress” (p. 32), and in ancient Egypt the soul was considered to be a bird. According to Wansbury (2006), birds in mythology, as natives of both the ground and the air, are the symbol of the separation of the earth and the sky, and also of the union of the god in the sky and the god in the earth to create humans. Usually, the element of air represents the mind, and our mental ability is reflected in a bird’s ability to fly through the air. Birds also symbolize knowledge and wisdom coming from the realms above filtering down into the conscious mind so as to be of use in life (Wansbury, 2006, p. 35). In this sense, birds represent human spiritual aspirations and also a kind of transcendence, or a shift to new levels of awareness (p. 37).

The killing of the bird has instilled in the crew an unconscious psychic state that concurs with a causally irrelevant external event, such as getting lost in the sea. The crew sees the bird as the one causing the wind to blow and associate its absence with the recession of the wind. When the bird, a symbol of wisdom and mind, is dead and the crew approve of its being killed, they happen to lose their wisdom and guide, and finally become lost. This is to say that their symbolic and archetypal loss of wisdom coincides with a literal event, and they lose their way. Whenever they admit that the bird should have been dead, they lose wisdom and become lost in the ocean. Hence, it seems that the Mariner’s process of individuation is inaugurated by his relation

to the bird, thus reinforcing the symbolic meaning of the bird as awareness, transcendence, and knowledge. Then appears an acausal relationship between the bird’s death and human death. The story implies that the crew receives the punishment of death for the Albatross’s being killed. By converting Coleridge’s imaginary and mysterious interpretation into Jung’s system of thought, a causally impossible concurrence such as murdering a bird and the murderers’ death could be explained: it seems that the crew believe themselves to have deserved punishment for killing the bird, and this mentality finds an objective external manifestation as a synchronistic phenomenon where they actually drop dead. As the story goes on, archetypal images and synchronistic events continue to appear.

For example, the sea snake is another important archetype in the poem. Considering the sea snake as fish, it symbolizes the alchemical Lapis which means unconscious wholeness to Jung. Jung (1951/1968a) believed that

The alchemical fish symbolism leads directly to the lapis ... ; that is, psychologically, to the self. We now have a new symbol in place of the fish: a psychological concept of human wholeness. In as much or in as little as the fish is Christ, does the self mean God. It is something that corresponds, an inner experience ... into the psychic matrix, a new realization of the divine Son. (p. 183)

Therefore, Jung concluded that fish symbolism implies an increase in conscious development (p. 183). Jung (1951/1968a) also emphasized that “fishes and snakes are favorite symbols for describing psychic happenings or experiences that suddenly dart out of the unconscious and have a frightening or redeeming effect. That is why they are so often expressed by the motif of helpful animals” (p. 186). The Mariner’s encounter with the water snakes coincides with an increase in his consciousness and wisdom. Staring at the sea snakes, The Mariner feels a love for nature, and this sudden new insight somehow relieves his pains as if the snakes had a redeeming effect. Here, as another instance of a synchronistic phenomenon, his appraisal for nature coincides with getting rid of the spell around his neck. The Mariner himself believes that his act of blessing the beauty and happiness of nature in his heart led to the breaking of the spell (Coleridge, 1798/1993):

Beyond the shadow of the ship,
 I watched the water-snakes:
 They moved in tracks of shining white,
 And when they reared, the elfish light
 Fell off in hoary flakes.
 (lines 272-276, p. 1544)

Hence, it could be inferred that the water snakes symbolize consciousness and wisdom, and the light falling off in flakes symbolizes wholeness and perfection, which is soon to be attained completely by the fall of rain and the redeeming effect of water.

Jung (1959/1968b) stated that “water is the commonest symbol for the unconscious” (p. 18), and elsewhere noted that water can acquire “the divine quality of transforming and giving spiritual rebirth to man” (1938/1966, p. 110). The story of the Albatross, the Mariner’s consequent wandering, and the death of the crew all take place in the sea. Thus, Chandler’s (1965) assertion that the whole poem follows the pattern of destruction and rebirth is worth noting:

though it [the ship] sinks in the bay, the Mariner rises from it. The wind dies down to be born again, and the Moon reappears after its invisible phase. Out of nothing the Albatross is born; out of corruption the sea snakes. Though the Albatross is destroyed, the spirit triumphs. (p. 413)

As concerned with the concept of spiritual birth, rain could be inferred as a suggestive image. After the spell begins to break, the Mariner relates, “I dreamt that they were filled with dew / and when I awoke, it rained” (Coleridge, 1798/1993, p. 1545). He wakes up to find the buckets filled with rain. Water and rain seem to indicate the Mariner’s state of being born again and his progress in the path toward self-awareness and salvation.

When the Mariner is saved and finds his way to the land, he encounters a Hermit (Coleridge, 1798/1993):

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 shrive my soul he’ll wash away
 The Albatross’s blood.
 (lines 508-513, p. 1550)

The Hermit can be simply interpreted as the archetypal *Old Wise Man*, which is “the psychic personification of what Jung identified as spirit, especially spirit as knowledge or wisdom” (Hopcke, 1989, p. 117).

Finally, the whole poem could be interpreted as the archetype of *Initiation* wherein:

The hero undergoes a series of excruciating ordeals in passing from ignorance and immaturity to social and spiritual adulthood, that is, in achieving maturity and becoming a full-fledged member of his or her social group. The initiation most commonly consists of three distinct phases: (1) separation, (2) transformation, and (3) return. (Guerin, 1992, p. 154)

Similarly, the Mariner hero takes on the journey of passing from ignorance to spiritual maturity. He goes through the stage of separation when he is isolated from the crew. The transformation stage is his encounter with Life-in-Death and his reconciliation with the new state. Finally, he returns to the land after obtaining an insight into the spirit of the world and is shrived by the Hermit at his arrival. Then, in the words of Coleridge, he takes on the mission of “teach[ing] by his own example, love and reverence to all things that God made and loveth” (Coleridge, 1798/1993, p. 1553), admitting that “He prayeth well, who loveth well / both man and bird and beast” (Coleridge, 1798/1993, p. 1553, lines 612-613).

As Purser (1957) proposed, in Coleridge’s narrative, the Mariner, knowing no peace of soul, is used by God to go from one place to another making others recognize the spiritual nature of things by insistence on the facts of pain and death. The Mariner has to reconcile himself with his new state of being. First, he is all alone and his wandering about in loneliness, his longing for death, and his attempts to pray are followed by a gradual restoration and then to understanding the spiritual truth. Contemplating upon the beauty of nature, he comes to know that the fault is in fact in his own self (Purser, 1957, p. 253). Thus, one sees the Jungian concepts of archetypes and synchronicity merging to bring about psychological integration. As the story progresses, the Mariner goes through different experiences and gains deeper insights by aid of primordial images and synchronistic events, moving him forward in the process of individuation to obtain a sense of identity, self, and wholeness. To summarize, the synchronistic phenomena and the archetypes go hand in hand to further the Mariner’s movement in his quest for self-realization.

Conclusion

In the course of the story of the Mariner, a synchronistic foundation for the succession of events is provided by the occurrence of archetypes and primordial images which connect the internal world of the Mariner's psyche to the outer world of nature and universe. The Mariner experiences pain and death through his journey of initiation and begins the process of individuation.

In so far as the Mariner and the crew consider the Albatross as a bird of good omen from the heaven, they can find their way. As the Mariner blames himself for killing the bird of good omen and yearns for death in a moment of despair and misery, he encounters Death and Life-in-Death personified. Just as he comes to praise the beauty of nature and reconciles with the spirit of the universe flowing through all aspects of being, he gets rid of the corpse of the Albatross which had turned to a spell hung around his neck. He falls asleep and dreams of buckets filled with dew, and having woken up, he realizes that it is raining. All these synchronistic events which manifest themselves through archetypes transform the Mariner's psychic state so that he reaches a higher level of self-awareness, helping him accomplish the journey of individuation each individual has to go through in encountering their own self.

All in all, synchronicity

is a means for one to become aware of the fact that one is not on the right path in one's life, and that a correction is to be made. The synchronistic event is an opportunity for a person to wake up and realize that he is not doing what he should be doing. In other words, he is not following the path that his Self or Higher Power wants him to follow (Rossi, 2004, p. 130).

From a Jungian perspective, in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, the synchronistic events that take place by aid of primordial images further the movement of the Mariner in the process of individuation. He will, by the end of the story, be conjoined to the nature as a whole, and reconcile with his own self. This is the stage in the process where, as Walker (2002) noted, the individual to some extent realizes the archetype of the Self which serves as the basis for the sense of self identity, and reaches the ultimate end of human life (p. 33).

Aziz (1990) proposed that Jung's writings on synchronicity show that "the individuation process

extends beyond the psychological realm and assumes the character of a drama that takes the whole of nature for its stage" (p. 165). He continued that inner and outer worlds, enclosed within a circle of wholeness, work to advance the individual's progress towards wholeness, and lead him to an experience of connecting the events of the worlds within and without. Thus, the individual can achieve a full understanding of the meaning of his existence that unites him with both the unconscious and the circle of nature as a whole—"a new spiritual challenge of individuation" (pp. 165-166).

A triad of synchronicity, archetype, and individuation is at play in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, where synchronistic events take place and archetypes find poetic expression to lead the Mariner toward integrating the archetype of the Self in his process of individuation. In the end, he comes to realize that the flow of an invisible spirit, the collective unconscious, connects him with nature to form an inseparable part of a great unified system. He then starts to follow the path that his Self wants him to follow.

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The *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies* is a peer-reviewed academic journal in print since 1981. It is sponsored by the California Institute of Integral Studies, published by Floragades Foundation, and serves as the official publication of the International Transpersonal Association. The journal is available online at www.transpersonalstudies.org, and in print through www.lulu.com (search for IJTS).