



Intertextuality in Frankenstein

Part I. Allusion to Samuel Coleridge

Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" is a Romantic tale of man's struggle to understand the relationship between nature and man. Read Coleridge's poem from the link provided; then, consider the following questions and keep these ideas in mind while you read *Frankenstein* (as this poem is alluding to often).

<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/173253>.

1. What is the symbolism of the ice? Of the "albatross?"
2. Why does the mariner slay the albatross and what happens as a result?
3. What "saves" the mariner? How does he react to the natural world?
4. Why must the mariner tell his story?
5. Why do you think the whole crew dies, but not the ancient mariner?
6. In what ways does Coleridge utilize images of nature in his poem?
7. To what extent might this poem be considered romantic literature?
8. Coleridge notes "Instead of a cross, the Albatross/ About my neck was hung." What significance could you draw from this line considering other events in the poem?

9. What possible themes arise in your mind, having read the poem?
10. In Walton's 2nd letter, he alludes to Coleridge's poem. Based on your understanding of the plot and the chapters you've read thus far, what parallels may exist between themes found in Coleridge's poem and those found in Shelley's novel?

Part II. Allusion to William Wordsworth

Read Wordsworth's poem from the link provided; then, consider the following questions, keeping in mind the ideas you discovered from Part I and Shelley's placement of "Tintern Abbey" in Chapter 18 of *Frankenstein*.

<http://www.victorianweb.org/previctorian/ww/tintern.txt.html>

1. How does the placement of the poem affect Shelley's narrative?
2. How does the theme of the poem connect to *Frankenstein*?
3. What is the tone of the poem? How does it relate to our genre study of *Frankenstein*?
4. How does having read the complete poem aid in the understanding of its inclusion in Shelley's novel?
5. How does this poem relate to both the Creature and Victor? Cite specific lines in your analysis.

Coleridge Answer Key

1. What is the symbolism of the ice? of the “albatross?”

Waters usually alludes to some sort of cleaning or purifying but when solid it represents a barrier between two things and maybe in this case the mariner and the sailors. The albatross stands for good luck, which the sailors thought the mariner ruined when they killed it, but then the sailors then realized the bird was bringing on the wind and the fog. It could also represent that you pick your fate and determine it not something else, as it was the mariner who killed the bird.

2. Why does the mariner slay the albatross and what happens as a result?

The mariner slays the albatross because it lead the ship out of the arctic, and the sailors and first are angry because they thought it was helping them but it was really the boy who had led them to wrong directions and was bringing bad weather. As a result the sailor’s praise then brings upon bad spirits:”death” and “life in death”. They roll a dice as if playing a game and death wins the lives of the sailors and “life in death” wins the mariner. For a while the mariner would see the dead bodies of the sailors until the curse was broken after he started to appreciate the sea creatures.

3. What “saves” the mariner? How does he react to the natural world?

The mariner is saved once he respects and appreciates the sea creatures unlike the albatross, and now he sees the beauty in them.

4. Why must the mariner tell his story?

The mariner must tell his story so other people can learn about respecting nature, and not end up in the same problem he got himself into to, and he's also driven by guilt.

5. Why do you think the whole crew dies, but not the ancient mariner? The whole crew dies albeit the ancient mariner because they would need someone to literally narrate/tell the story and a personal witness/survivor enhances the emotion and the lesson to the reader.

6. In what ways does Coleridge utilize images of nature in his poem? Coleridge utilizes images of nature in this poem through rhyme and describing the colors and using personification.

7. To what extent might this poem be considered romantic literature? This poem can be considered romantic literature because of its crazy plotline and the supernatural factors that are involved.

8. Coleridge notes, "Instead of a cross, the Albatross/ About my neck was hung." What significance could you draw from this line considering other events in the poem?

You can conclude that the sailors again got mad at him, and made him wear the bird around his neck to show guilt and embarrassment, but this probably why the sprits were called upon.

9. What possible themes arise in your mind, having read the poem? Respecting nature the destruction of humans, life & death, the spirit of nature, fate, & guilt

10. In Walton's 2nd letter, he alludes to Coleridge's poem. Based on your understanding of the plot and the chapters you've read thus far, what parallels may exist between themes found in Coleridge's poem and those found in Shelley's novel?

Fate, guilt, destruction of humans, and respecting nature. It sets up a possible comparison for Victor and his monster.

Wordsworth Answer Key

1. The placement of the poem effects Shelley's narrative because it creates a reference for us to a feeling or the idea that the poem conveys so that we relate it to what she is trying to present in her own story.
2. The theme of the poem connects to Frankenstein nature is celebrated as well as the connections made to childhood because Victor spoke his childhood often.
3. The tone of the poem is very nostalgic and reminiscent. The author using a lot of imagery and uses a Romanticist style similar to Shelley's style and the time period in which Frankenstein was written.
4. Through the poem we can understand Shelley's influences for writing her story. She draws parallels to the poem and recreates its use of nature through symbolism.
5. Lines 70-74; The Creature only sought out some type of companion as does the speaker seeks nature to be their companion. Lines 106-112; these lines talk about being the creator and embodying ones morals which Victor didn't do. He created, but he didn't follow through on his duties to take care of the creature he so created.