

Politics of Affect in Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*

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Abstract — This paper analyzes *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* in terms of Coleridge's imaginative plea for a modification of consciousness about racial slavery prevalent in the then British society. What lends muscle to the plea is the use of gothic supernaturalism, which helps bring about a transformation in the Mariner. The gothic-actuated transformation, this paper claims, derives from Coleridge's own ambiguous attitude to English imperialism—an ambivalence which results into systematic portrayal of the violator as the rightful beneficiary of the reader's sympathy. The paper concludes that the poem's turn to the affect of moral sentimentalism intends to make the reader of Coleridge's time acquiesce in accepting colonial guilt as the spiritual politics of quietism, thereby averting the possibility of a violent reaction both from the hapless victims and some conscientious victimizers. There was not much thrust on an economic and political upgrading of the status of the slaves; instead, the affects of outrage, disgust, horror, and shame were evoked in the white anti-slavery texts so that the ugliness of imperialism and the concomitant slavery were criticized without really writing them off.

Key words — Abolitionist literature; Affect of sympathy; Coleridge; Free labor; Slave labor.

I. INTRODUCTION

In this paper, I have explained the politics of sympathy in abolitionist discourse by analyzing Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* which was written during the consolidation phase of British colonialism after the loss of North American slave colonies and in the context of the problems developed due to European rivalries on the issues of Atlantic slave trade in the wake of the French Revolution and the rise of Napoleon. Tee has pointed out the main ingredients for *The Rime* come from the religious ideas of Old Testament, anthropomorphic elements from Greek poetry, and the ideas of extension of all life including man and other creatures to one universal and divine life from Hebrew poetry [1, p. 67]. The study of Medieval and German literature developed his sense of imagination, fancy, supernaturalism, and gothic elements. By using all the ingredients, Coleridge formulated radical humanitarian political discourse against slave trade in his Bristol lectures and similar of his poems written during 1790s and 1800s.

The Rime has been criticized for its emphasis on "gothic supernaturalism", its being "German origin", having "extravagant" [1, p. 67] incidents and so on. Wordsworth attacked *The Rime* that "the principal person has no distinct character", that the principal character "does not act, but is

continually acted upon", and that "the events having no necessary connection" [1, p. 67]. Coleridge himself commented *The Rime* having "the moral sentiment too apparent ... in a work of such pure imagination" [2, p. 105]. Southey called the poem "a Dutch attempt at German sublimity", but Charles Lamb praised its magical power to hold the reader's attention, "we are dragged ... along like Tom Piper's magic whistle" [2, p. 107]. The poem is sensational in gothic mode.

The Rime has also been reviewed from the perspective of slavery and abolitionism. White reads the poem as Coleridge's sense of collective horror created by slavery. White finds the Mariner's guilt reflected in the poem due to the new sensibility in the process of development and benevolence toward all humans [3, p. 172]. Richardson observes *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* as full of "references and allusions, to colonial exploration, 'exotic' histories and traveler's tales, bear an oblique but demonstrable relation to British natural guilt and imperial anxieties more generally" [4, p. 503]. Lee [5] associates the Yellow fever, in *Ancient Mariner*, to the sinful act of slave trade. Lee locates slavery as guilt of the British and the guilt is associated with their civilizing mission, and "Albatross is an emblematic representation of all innocent lives destroyed by European conquest ... including the guilt associated with slave trade" [5, p. 29]. Slave grown "sugar" is comparable to "disease of white culture", "signified a rotting away of white flesh" [5, p. 33]. Lee cites Hutcheson "the overloaded ships, which, like the curse of vile Pandora's Box, bring forth disease with misery" [5, p. 38]. The slave ships transported all bad things to the otherwise civilized continent. The reviews have established *The Rime* as an abolitionist text.

The critical significance of this paper, however, lies in the investigation of Coleridge's politics behind the transmission of affects like horror, outrage, disgust, shame, and sympathy through *The Rime*. Compassionate humanitarianism as evolving in the text remains problematic, in the changed political economic context, in the background of revolutions and British involvement in war with France; moral sentimentalism in the text has been directed against the excess of slave trade and at the same time for the perpetuation of imperialism. In spite of the predominance of sympathy element in the abolitionist discourse why there is not much thrust on the improvement of the status of the slaves? The objectives of this study have been to unmask the socio-economic embeddings of the aesthetics of sympathy and its relationship to the question of slavery and to track the politics of sympathy as it circulated through the Romantic era literary

domain and into the larger sphere of public debate. The main argument has been directed to establish that the turn to affect, turn to sentimentalism, and humanitarian cause have been largely used as rhetorical persuasive techniques for the enhancement of conservatism, i.e., the spiritual politics of quietism, averting the possibilities of violent means against atrocities, accumulating moral backing from the abolition of slave trade, and using it as a tool for imperial advancement.

II. CONTEXTUALIZATION

When the abolition of slavery became moral and socio-economic issue of the day British Romanticism made use of the sentimental rhetoric of sympathy as persuasive discursive technique. Late 1790s has been termed as Coleridge's greatest activity period at Bristol as political speaker and writer with radical ideas against slave trade and parliamentary corruption. Bristol and West Country had been radical dissenters against mainstream political and religious discourse. According to Kitson, these commercial and colonial cities had long tradition of dissent, going against London and Westminster [6, p. 115]. Since Bristol had been colonial and trading centre during the period, being the gateway to colonies, the dissenters expressed their radical ideas not only against slave trade but also against anti-colonial government in London. In the changing economic context and developing new humanitarian context, Bristol dissenters' ideas had been ambivalent.

Whelan states that British parliament failed to pass the slave trade bill in 1795 that provoked Coleridge for pouring his agitation in his lectures at Bristol addressing the audience of merchants, leaders, and plantation owners who got profits from the commerce and slave grown products: "A part of that Food among most of you is Sweatened with the Blood of the Murdered ... O Blasphemy! Did God give Food mingled with Brothers' Blood! Will the Father of all men bless the Food of cannibals ...?" [7, p. 102]. The affect of outrage and disgust directed against the slave traders, slavers, and corrupt government, affect of negativity, produced good feeling among the middle- and lower-class contemporary public. Such affective argument stirred the sentiment of the middle-class public resulting in sympathy directed to the slaves and hatred towards the corrupt government. Coleridge has extended the horrors linked to human trafficking to the consumers of the slave grown products. Similar affect of outrage and disgust has been evoked by Coleridge's publisher Joseph Cottle in Whelan: "Why do corrupt government and tyrannical leaders not understand that all mankind are brethren?, the offspring of one common parent, who has placed his children in this world in order to prepare them for a better, by cherishing universal benevolence?" [7, p. 103]. Cottle's statement is tantamount to a call for securing human rights for the hapless slaves.

Sea life has been depicted to be very risky since there had been danger of epidemics, pirates, rivalry with military ship, and unfavorable climate and calamities factors. Tee speculates Coleridge's sea men might be "smugglers or pirates" "fleeting vengeance of military law" [1, p. 50]. They might have sailed to the extreme south to the safe distance to escape the military ship on the course. Tee states Wordsworth pointing out in 1843 that the germ of *The Rime of the Ancient*

Mariner came to Coleridge from reading *A Voyage Round the World*, in which George Shelvocke, the captain and author, mentions of the route "west across the Atlantic, then south to round Cape Horn to reach the Pacific Ocean ... the route of Speedwell" [1, p. 55]. Wordsworth's indication and Shelvocke's description of the climate and creatures have been matched to the setting and plot of *The Rime*, as Tee has furthered:

Add to this our misfortune of having continual misty weather, which led to us under hourly apprehensions of falling foul of islands of ice ... the cold is certainly much more insupportable in these, than in the same Latitudes to the Northward ... so rigid climate ... we had not the sight of one fish or any kind ... nor one sea bird, except a disconsolate black Albatross [1, p. 56].

The disconsolate black Albatross in Shelvocke's description can be pointed as catalyst to Coleridge's imagination. The Mariner violated the rule of hospitality by killing the Albatross since it was disconsolate, hateful, and black. Coleridge attempted to invoke natural and transnatural forces for teaching English life of hospitality and cosmopolitan love to all God's creatures, just like the Mariner: "I pass, like night, from land to land;/ I have strange power of speech" [8, lines 586-87] for teaching and praying of cosmopolitan love to "Both man and bird and beast" [8, line 613].

III. METHODOLOGY

The theoretical tool for vindication of the argument comes from affect theory which reveals the politics behind the evocation of an affect. New rhetorical persuasive techniques of moral sentimentalism and Romantic sympathy have also been used in order to explain the affect(s). Barzilai's ideas on educative imaginative process for the extension of sympathy through Smith's notion of impartial spectator and Emerson's concentric circle have been utilized [9, p. 122]. Campana's [10] concept of affective turn and DiGangi's [11] notion of affective entanglements has been applied in order to analyze the persuasive techniques in *The Rime*, and to investigate the hidden politics in it. Reiser's [12] terms like culture's shared nervous system, affective circumstances, and shared response-ability are effective notions in evaluating ethical tilt of the author to particular community. Brennan's [13] ideas about the transmission of affect, and Witherell's evaluation of emotions as "affective machines" [14, p. 16] have been applied in the analysis. Probyn's [15] ideas about writing shame have also been utilized. The traces of the trauma of colonial guilt have been investigated in the light of the trauma theory utilizing LaCapra's [16] notions of acting out, transference, and middle voice.

IV. TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

The Mariner's outrage illustrated in *The Rime* stems from Coleridge's knowledge of the atrocities of the Middle Passage as performed by the slave traders and crews on the slave ships, against the slaves in chain, on the board: "I looked upon the rotting sea/ and drew my eyes away;/ I

looked upon the rotting deck/and there the dead men lay” [8, lines 240-243]. Coleridge, haunted by the knowledge of the inhumanity, the diseased bodies, rotting bodies, the stinking on the slave ships during Middle Passage, atrocities on the board against slaves while transporting them across the Atlantic from South African slave ports to North America, comes up with the Romantic imagination guided by disgust, horror, and outrage. Affect of disgust against the Middle Passage spectacles like rotting sea, rotting decks, dead men and so on in *The Rime* produce similar effects in the readers. The diseased slaves in chain, their excretion all over, dying, and diseased slaves thrown alive into the sea must have created such intentional mindset of the author, producing disgusting images in the readers’ mind. In this sensational argument, the transmission of the affects of horror and disgust from writer to reader in the anti-slavery text has been seen for the purpose of developing hatred of the audience against inhuman act of slave trade. Coleridge’s outrageous disgust to the evils of slave trade and slavery gets reflected also in his lectures for abolitionist ideas and boycotting the slave grown products. The ideas had been directed to the formation of consciousness and new sensibility in the context of new humanitarianism, as Coleman puts, due to “moral responsibility generated by commerce and colonialism” [17, p. 241]. But the issue has remained worth analyzing whether the evocation of such sensational affects is meant for upgrading the status of the slaves and developing effect of sympathy to them or just Coleridge’s politics otherwise.

Mariner’s killing of the Albatross, central incident in *The Rime*, has been interpreted as the breach of the rule of hospitality, according to the Christian world view of cosmopolitanism that all God’s creatures including man and bird are the part of the same divine universal soul. Lines from *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* are excerpted here for further reference:

At length did cross an Albatross,
Through the fog it came;
As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hailed it in God’s name
.....
And a good south wind spring up behind;
The Albatross did follow,
And every day, for food or play,
Came to the Mariner’s hollow! [8, lines 63-66, 71-74]

In the left-hand side glossary note to the cited text Coleridge himself in the 1817 version of the poem has written “Till a great seabird called the Albatross, came through the snow fog, and was received with great joy and hospitality”, at another point, little further, another glossary note appears, “The ancient mariner inhospitably killeth the pious bird of good omen”. Coleridge [2] has mentioned the word hospitality in his 1800 version of the poem as an “argument” at the top of the poem thus: “How a ship, having first sailed to the equator, was driven by the storms, to the cold country, towards the South Pole, how the Ancient Mariner cruelly, and in contempt of the laws of hospitality, killed the sea-bird; and how he was followed by many and strange judgments ...” [2, p. 103]. The killing of the pious bird of good omen has remained the central regretful event. In all these instances the

notion of hospitality is seen to be problematized. Albatross has been referred to as Christian soul that crosses through the fog bringing joy to the distressed crew who appear hospitable to the bird; the rule of hospitality gets violated when the Mariner kills his own guest. The incident can be related to Shakespeare’s famous play in which Macbeth murders King Duncan, when the former has been his faithful warrior and host, and the latter has been the respectable and guest to the former’s residence. Both are taken as regretful in the respective texts. Both cases breach the rule of hospitality, both transgress the boundary of Christian textuality. *The Rime* reveals what has been masked, hidden, or constructed otherwise by mainstream historical consciousness. Coleridge’s plea for the modification of consciousness, gothic-actuated transformation, is ambiguous, since efforts have been made for the systematic portrayal of the Mariner, the violator of the rule of hospitality, to be the rightful beneficiary of the reader’s sympathy. Massumi’s term “micropolitics” [18, p. 58] can rightly be used to describe Coleridge’s affects of horror and disgust directed to the development of sympathy ultimately to the Mariner, showing that there was breaching of the rule of hospitality in such society with high level of morality, has been populist critical practice in a moralizing kind of way, just like Warren Hastings impeachment case in British parliament from 1788 that tried systematically to show that the British were after all benevolent rulers in India. This can only be Coleridge’s sentimental appeal and critical practice of “controlled walking” [18, p. 16], balancing and moving act of capitalism.

The killing of the Albatross in *The Rime* can be related to the deep-rooted system of racial slavery in the Christian world. Instances in *The Rime* like the spectacles suggesting Middle Passage atrocities created in the poem, the effect of the image created by the filthy looking water snakes and the Mariner’s been able to extend his love to them, the black color of the male spectre in the skeleton ship indicating the ghost of the black slave who suffered the atrocities on the slave ship, and the reference to the epidemics related to tropical hot climates of the African coasts unbearable to the white people, justify *The Rime*’s relation to racial slavery. There had been roar against slave trade in the later part of 1790s in England, but the legislatures and slave owners did not pay heed to it. Due to the British society’s indifference to the issue, Coleridge might have used affect-oriented approaches that, according to Massumi, “tend to focus on the immediate without considering the historical background” [18, p. 177]. Coleridge focuses less on the past and more on securing the future. Coleridge does not evoke much about the past atrocities; rather the perpetrator has been presented facing dire circumstances in trial with nature and supernature, thereby achieving reconciliatory settlement in the end. The affective turn of Coleridge in *The Rime* facilitated, using Brennan’s term, “atmosphere getting into the individual” [13 p. 36] and, using Witherell’s term, establishing the issue into “national present tense” [14, p. 16], all meant for the transmission of affects. Coleridge’s fascination with supernatural daemonic power for the invasion of free will was considered necessary for making affect of sympathy instrumental. Leadbetter writes of Coleridge’s daemonic imagination to be useful for “invading the free will with devil” [19, p. 8] that is instrumental in transforming the

subject's free will by the intervention of external and supernatural devilish agency. This transformation has become the drama of becoming, not like the drama of the fall according to the Christian knowledge.

Coleridge has tried to create the equilibrium in the plot of *The Rime* that the Mariner "hath penance done" [8, line 408] and now he "pass, like night, from land to land" [line 486]. The drama of forgiving the Mariner can be interpreted as white writer's 'ability to affect' the reader 'and be affected' by the socio-economic situations. The drama of forgiveness to the Mariner, for his misdeeds of killing the Albatross that can be related to all the crimes and atrocities committed by slave traders, crews and sailors on the slave ships, and slave holders against the slaves. But Mariner's burning desire to travel from "land to land" can be interpreted as his new idea developed out of the changed political economic situation. It is Britain's shift of interest from inhuman act of slave trade to the perpetuation of imperialism. It was the shift of interest of the capitalist from slave labor to the free labor of laissez faire economy as advocated by then political economist like Adam Smith. The changing nature of capitalism and hidden politics in them cannot be so easy to predict. According to Reiser, writer writes from his "affective circumstances" [12, p. 8], and Massumi elaborates, "our experiences are not objects. They are us; they are what we are made of. We are our situation. We are our moving through them" [18, p. 14]. We, our experiences, our expressions are the product of our situation. Kitson has also commented on the agitation of the Romantics against the slave trade and the institution of slavery as the "conservative-minded project to turn the people away from attempting to change society by political means" [20, p. 676], turning people to "spiritual politics of quietism" [p. 676], diverting people from violent reaction and political revolutions to the realm of Romantic imagination, displacement of historical, social, economic reality by idealism. Romanticism averted the potentials of violent revolutions like that in France and America, and of course, the violent slave uprising in the slave colonies. Romanticism cooled down the revolutionary instinct to equilibrium by foregrounding the issues like reformation through moral sentimentalism, new sensibility, Methodism and Evangelicalism. It brought abolitionist agenda to the fore. The politics behind all these things revealed their desire for the extension of colonies to the east and Middle East, in the context of the loss of North American slave colonies. It was seen rather a shift of economy from highly profitable slave trade and slavery to alternative colonial economy as explained by the world system theory, exploiting the resources from the colonies and accumulating capital and resources for the development of the centre of the empire. Political actors also announced the reformation agenda to the colonies. The entire discourse had been directed to the justification of imperialism guided by humanitarian cause. Mariner's thirst in *The Rime*, "I pass, like night, from land to land/ I have strange power of speech" [8, lines 586-87] and his getting penance reveals similar desire.

In Coleridge, nature and supernatural communicate and seek to establish harmony by playing with fate. Mariner is passive; fate is active, playing upon him. Mariner's killing of the Albatross has been avenged by polar spirit through the effect of magic, "Instead of the cross, the Albatross/ About

my neck was hung" [8, lines 140-41]. The killing of the Albatross is symbolic to all crimes and atrocities associated with slave trade and hence portrayed as regretful. The play of fate and involvement of gothic supernaturalism have been identified as tools for bringing about transformation in the Mariner. The affect of disgust and horror exuded in the above cited lines can be seen to have planned for the transmission of similar affects in the then British white readers so as to persuade them against the crimes and atrocities related to inhuman act of slave trade. The affects of negativity related to the inhuman act have produced good feelings in the middle- and lower-class public who clamored against poverty and social ills prevalent in the then British society due to uneven distribution, slave labor, parliamentary corruption, and capital in control of few aristocratic families. There is no doubt that Coleridge's sentimental affective argument in *The Rime* supported the abolitionist movement, but the affects have been seen as the background for the "micropolitics", Massumi's term, [18, p. 58] in the development of the affect of sympathy to the Mariner. Coleridge's raising voice against the mainstream establishment not with too much cruelty has remained to be the conservative minded project, begging for the forgiveness appeal for the perpetrator, rather than granting justice to the victim by violent means.

The Mariner has been depicted distressed: "Alone on a wide wide sea! And never a saint took pity on/ My soul in agony" [8, lines 233-35], in trial with nature and supernature. This is writer's systematic effort to develop readers' sympathy to the Mariner by portraying his pathetic state, his shameful outburst of regret, sentimental and appealing argument. "Writing shame", for Probyn, "is a visceral reminder to be true to interest, to be honest about" [15, p. 87]; he continues, shame enlarges since "onlookers bow their heads in shame, sowing the seeds of shame in the inmates" [p. 88]. Good literature of shame spreads "optimism" [15, p. 87], it is crucial for moral development, bringing about national reconciliation between the perpetrator and victim, and restoring national pride. Does *The Rime* succeed in establishing that? The Mariner expresses his love and kindness to filthy and hateful creature in the sea out of compulsion, since there was no sign of life around for days, thus: "O happy living things! no tongue/ Their beauty might declare:/ A spring of love gushed from my heart/ And I blessed them unaware" [8, lines 282-85]. This portrayal of the state of the Mariner is the result of affect driven shameful revelation in the process of making Christian self. In Coleridge, it smells his ethical tilt to his community when efforts are seen to be made for the development of the affect of sympathy to his community through *The Rime*. Writing shame with "subjective disposition", Deleuze and Guattari's phrase as used by Probyn [15, p. 87], cannot be writing on the moral ground, it is only to be the face saving and ethical tilt to the community. It is at the same time the inversion of "Judeo-Christian symbolism that associates the snake with the source of all evil" [19, p. 174]. The previous incident of the Mariner's killing of the Albatross had not been part of his nature or will, rather it was accidental, and due to the play of the external force or fate, Coleridge shows. Coleridge has used the otherwise filthy looking water snakes as the symbol of Mariner's universal love to God's all creations, the message Mariner tells the Wedding-Guest in *The Rime of the*

Ancient Mariner: "He prayeth well who loveth well/ Both man and bird and beast.// He prayeth best, who loveth best/ All things both great and small,/ For the dear God who loveth us/ He made and loveth all" [8, lines 612-17]. Coleridge's water snakes are loving, playful, sympathetic, whereas Milton's serpent had been Satan and vile, the symbol of evil. Coleridge's imagination leads to an alternative perspective that deconstructs the traditional notion about racial slavery deep rooted just like the symbolism related to serpent. The blacks have been considered savage, primitive, barbaric, and inferior race created for the service of the superior race. They had been hated like the serpent. By the use of transnatural forces in *The Rime*, the Mariner has been placed in such a situation that he is alone in the wide sea even without any living creature in sight. The Mariner is in the state of compulsion to extend his love to God's creation since there is no other sign of life around for days. Moral sentimentalism evoked in the poem has been directed against the excess of slave trade and against the English conduct in the atrocities associated with it. Coleridge extends the circles of sympathy to the outermost concentric circle, by erasing the distinction between self and the other.

Publications on yellow fever show that "it was the epidemic of the West Indies from 1793-1796, losses of army navy averaged as high as 35,000 annually" [1, p. 53]. Skeleton ship carrying ghostly crew can be suggestive of the contagion of epidemics from ship to ship. Ships in general had been considered as ghostly, bringing yellow fever and trouble from tropical climate. The yellowness of the female spectre in *The Rime* must have been suggestive of yellow fever: "Her lips were red, her looks were free/ Her locks were yellow as gold:/ Her skin was as white as leprosy" [8, lines 190-92]. And through the effect of her magic, "Four times fifty living men .../ They dropped down one by one" [8, lines 216,219]. The effects of horror and fear developed in the plot of *The Rime* are meant for redressing the sinful act Mariner had been involved in. The epidemics and deaths, the septre woman and her magic, natural and supernatural forces are all the spectacles utilized in bringing about transformation in the Mariner, ultimately developing affect of sympathy to him. All the spectacles related to Middle Passage horror are targeted to slave trader in order to develop fear in them and hatred to slave trade. This is Coleridge's hidden politics directed to the accumulation of moral backing for the extension of British Empire, in the changed political economic situations.

The Rime shows that Coleridge was troubled by the contemporary political problems as well as slave trade and slavery. According to Christie, "psycho-spiritual dis(ease) to be overcome by a mind working in concert with God and nature" [2, p. 113], that Coleridge accomplished by writing *The Rime*. Archetypal guilt, collective in the English unconscious could be realized to the "heart of darkness" [2, p. 107] only by creating dream like horror. Man is born naked but constantly in the process of becoming, unlike animals that remain as they were born. The Mariner gets transformed through natural and transnatural agents. Nature or transnature is given agency, and they perform their capacity to bring about transformation in the Mariner's consciousness, and they become instrumental in the process of the Mariner's becoming. The agents like climate, moon and stars, storm, Albatross, polar spirit, spectre woman and her mate, water

snakes, Mary Queen and so on are depicted effectively in the poem. Imagination modifying novel ideas can be more effective art than plain adherence to the truth of nature. The former has remained Coleridge's art in *The Rime* that has been instrumental in the process of becoming, by the use of gothic mode and sensational moral sentimentalism.

The extension of sympathy through educative process or through imaginative training had been the widespread concept towards 1790s that came into existence in reaction to Hobbes's "egoistic psychology" [21, p. 71]. Traditionally sympathy used to have related with 'proximity' or 'reciprocity', that is, sympathy directed to the self or its extension to the closest circles, or based on giving and receiving, both way traffic; classical notions of sympathy directed to the suffering of the hero indirectly benefitting the self. However, Barzilai has made investigation into Smith's "impartial spectator" and Emerson's "concentric circles" as imaginative educative process for extending sympathy to the cosmopolitan citizen including downtrodden, by extending the circles of sympathy and repeating the process "until all humanity rests inside the innermost circle" [9, p. 122]. The educative and imaginative training of sympathy thus gets targeted to develop harmonious "intersubjective relations" and practice "how sympathy could be sparked in the cases where it appeared to be lacking" [22, p. 93]. Sympathy is rather vital moral force that could be extended to beggar, slave, or even to the dead. Critics have called it Romantic sympathy. But the smell of hidden politics is that sympathy flourished through sentimental literature and new sensibility especially in response to changing socio-political and economic relations, for Rai, was the strategic tool for "colonial governmentality" and "bourgeois humanism" [23, p. 15]. Coleridge has used his full effort in developing reader's sympathy to the Mariner. Due to the effect of his killing of the Albatross he has faced innumerable dire circumstances and that the divine power has forgiven him, and hence he deserves to be the rightful person for reader's sympathy, Coleridge wishes to show. To quote lines from *The Rime* at length:

I heard, and in my soul discerned
Two voices in the air
"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.
.....
The other was a softer voice,
As soft as honey dew.
Quoth he, "The man hath penance done,
And penance more will do." [8, lines 395-400,406-09]

We find sentimental affective argument in the lines. Shame has been masked and the effort has been directed to the formation of Christian self. Argument based on rationality could not have brought about reconciliation in the possible danger of racial rivalries between slaves and the owners, so Coleridge's turn to affect can be interpreted as reconciliatory practice.

The Rime as abolitionist text is Coleridge's "affective turn" [10, p. 133], using Campana's term. The poem reads like the

forgiveness appeal of the poet on behalf of the Mariner. DiGangi [11] has used a term “affective entanglements” for showing the effect of the same affect on different readers, and for showing how the writers use affect for persuasive purpose differently; for some, it can be to persuade others and be beneficiary oneself, and for others, get persuaded and be the medium of other’s benefit. In the first type, there is obvious politics since it is directed to the benefit of the self; in the second type, there is politics but reconciliatory solution. In this case, the white is the agent, persuader, and beneficiary. Coleridge’s Mariner represents white man, perpetrator in the case of racial slavery, and violator of the law of nature and divine rule, in the case of the plot of the poem. Coleridge has used his full effort in persuading the reader by accumulating sympathy for the Mariner and making him the beneficiary. In the first person narrative, the narrator who himself remains the violator or the agent of the misdeed and the causing factor for the misfortunes that follow cannot remain free from rationalization or biasness. This has become revealing intentional politics of Coleridge’s turn to affect guided by some hidden interest.

Bailey and DiGangi’s [24] terms like “affective technologies” and “affective practices” can also be interesting in reading Coleridge’s use of affect as persuasive technique in *The Rime*. The same emotion can have stirring capacity on the onlookers differently. Coleridge’s perpetrator has been put in trial with natural supernatural forces, a gothic-actuated transformation, and sensational emotional treatment for averting their course of conduct in the changed political economic context. Observing it from the postcolonial perspective one can smell politics in Coleridge’s favoring the Mariner and his neglecting the victim. According to Reiser, writer is a part of “culture’s shared nervous system” [12, p. 79], who extends his actual affective experience to the reader, from his own “affective circumstances” [12, p. 78]. This is what Wimsatt and Beardsley had called intentional and affective fallacy. But reading affective literature by neglecting affective politics in them would be new fallacy, according to ‘turn to affect’ theorists. The entire Romantic discourse turning to moral sentimentalism, in the process of forming new sensibility, in order to evoke Romantic sympathy, cannot remain free from constraints.

Affective literature moves readers by “providing the political valency” [25, p. 214] to character(s), sometimes justifying, other times praising or blaming, according to the affective circumstance from which the writer’s perspective has been formed. Coleridge bestows political valency on the Mariner, who has been portrayed to have suffered much due to his inhuman act. Coleridge makes the supernatural powers remold the Mariner, gives him ‘political valency’, staging the drama of expiation and forgiveness. Coleridge has asked readers in the narrative, indirectly though, let’s forgive him, he has faced sufficient dire circumstances and tortures in trial with nature and transnature. Now he deserves to be the missionary of God for spreading harmony and love. Mariner himself claims in the seventh part of the poem thus: “I pass, like night, from land to land; I have strange power of speech” [8, lines 586-87], and until he does that “This heart within me burns” [line 585]. The Mariner has been transformed into God’s agent preaching people that “He prayeth well who loveth well/ Both man and bird and beast” [8, lines 614-15].

The more the writer tries to cover the shame the more it gets revealed because the poem is written from the perpetrator’s perspective to valent with him. Going ‘from land to land’, preaching of love to all God’s creatures including ‘man and bird and beast’ can be interpreted as the white man’s civilizing mission.

The Rime has remained the narrativization of the colonial guilt for the acting out the Mariner’s trauma. Good trauma writing traumatizes the reader creating secondary trauma in him. It is written in middle voice, in free indirect speech blending and balancing the first person and the third person, according to LaCapra [16]. Mariner’s acting out his trauma by telling it to people from land to land is the “transference” [16, p. 36] of his trauma to the reader. This acting out has healing potentiality. Hole in the psyche can be healed by acting out and ‘transference’ of the trauma, but the problem with trauma writing is perspectivization and ethical tilt due to political motivation and ideology at work. However, the smell of politics in *The Rime*, being written by white writer for the white readership, appealing readers’ sympathy directed to the white character, his empowerment and giving him clean cheat, absence of the victim’s voice, lessens the value of the poem from being good literature of trauma. The value of the Mariner’s trauma lies in transmission of affects that are directed to the development of the affect of sympathy to the self. The acceptance of the guilt has remained duplicate mask like thin layer of sugar-coated candy. Mariner’s burning desire to “pass, like night, from land to land” reveals his mask targeted to the extension of colonies by using the tool of moral sentimentalism. Coleridge’s revealing politics all over has been found to be directed to divert radical agitation and protest to the spiritual politics of quietism and imperial extension.

V. CONCLUSION

The paper establishes that the play of affects like outrage, disgust, horror, shame, and sympathy developed therein function as sentimental humanitarian critical affective practice guided by politics in the context of changed political economic situations of England. Previous studies have shown *The Rime* to be radical humanitarian political discourse against slave trade, however, this study makes critical appreciation to the claim, explores further into the politics behind the transmission of negative effects in the context when slavery created collective horror in British society. It is an attempt to explore into affect of sympathy in *The Rime* and to question why there is not much thrust on the improvement of the status of the victims. The objectives of this study have been to unmask the socio-economic embeddings of the aesthetics of sympathy and to track the politics of sympathy as it circulated through the Romantic era literary domain and into the larger sphere of public debate. The findings can be summarized as the narrativization of the Mariner’s trauma and spectacles of Middle Passage atrocities against slaves on board aim at transmission of affect of outrage, disgust, shame, and horror directed against slave trade in order to accumulate moral strength for the perpetuation of imperialism and transmission of sympathy for the Mariner to bless him with political valency. Spectacles of Middle Passage atrocities haunt Coleridge but the victims of the atrocities are not

considered about in *The Rime*. The acceptance of colonial guilt, practice of new humanitarianism, and Romantic sympathy are all persuasive techniques used in the poem to cool down revolutionary instinct. In Coleridge, the affect of sympathy has been found to be directed to his community rather than to the victim. All the rhetorical persuasive techniques and affective technologies used are for the enhancement of conservatism, i.e., spiritual politics of quietism, accumulating moral backing from the abolition of slave trade and using it as a tool for colonial advancement. The findings can further be applied to future study on contemporary mainstream writers, women abolitionists, and slaves' narratives in order to delve deeper into the issue.

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