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The Annotated Ancient Mariner: The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

By Samuel Taylor Coleridge



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The Annotated Ancient Mariner: The Rime of the Ancient Mariner By Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Coleridge's greatest work, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, is utterly unique, unlike any other ballad. No narrative poem has rivaled it in combining scenes of terror with scenes of incomparable beauty. Although enormously popular in the nineteenth century, it is seldom read or studied today. This annotated version by Martin Gardner will help to renew the appreciation and deepen the understanding of Coleridge's unjustly neglected masterpiece.

Preceding the poem is a biographical sketch of the great poet, which emphasizes those aspects of his many-sided life and personality that have the strongest bearing on the poem, especially on circumstances surrounding its composition. Both the 1798 and 1834 versions of the poem are presented, with notes on words, lines, and stanzas that Coleridge later excised. Following the poem, Gardner summarizes major critical attitudes toward the ballad, discusses possible higher levels of meaning, and closes with questions concerning the poem's much-debated moral.

Many artists have illustrated the *Rime*, but none as skillfully as Gustave Doré. He was far and away the most popular and prolific book illustrator of all time, and though his work has been out of fashion for some time, it is becoming harder and harder to dismiss him as a mere yeoman illustrator.

Here is your chance to read, or reread, Coleridge's classic *Rime*, to fully understand it, and to relish Doré's magnificent illustrations.



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Editorial Review

Review

"For those who have not read the poem since a university English class, Gardner makes it well worth revisiting." -- *Baltimore Sun*, September 14, 2003

"The engravings by Gustave Dore are exquisite and worth the price on their own." -- *The Bloomsbury Review*, November/December 2003

From the Inside Flap

One of the most evocative, famous, and mysterious poems in the English language is undoubtedly Samuel Taylor Coleridge's THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER. This seaman's story--full of symbols, strange occurrences, moral implications, and moral ambiguity--has fascinated scholars and lovers of verse. This edition is not only the most comprehensive and informative available but also the most elegant ever to appear.

Martin Gardner, well known for his ANNOTATED ALICE, has written an introduction, a brief biography of Coleridge, copious explanatory notes to the text that are designed to deepen the reader's understanding of the ballad, and a chapter summing up the major critical attitudes toward the poem in which he also discusses possible higher levels of meaning. He closes with questions concerning the poem's much-debated moral. Included also is the first published version of the RIME--significantly different from the final version--and a selected bibliography.

The illustrations by Gustave Dore are in his famous style of "romantic realism" and are especially suitable to the tone of the text. This book, like THE ANNOTATED ALICE, should be on everyone's bookshelf.

About the Author

Martin Gardner, the creator of *Scientific American's* "Mathematical Games" column, which he wrote for more than twenty-five years, was the author of almost one hundred books, including *The Annotated Ancient Mariner*, *Martin Gardner's Favorite Poetic Parodies*, *From the Wandering Jew to William F. Buckley Jr.*, and *Science: Good, Bad and Bogus*. For many years he was also a contributing editor to the *Skeptical Inquirer*.

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