The Diary of Karen Blixen:  
A Voyage Across the Seas of "The Sailor-Boy's Tale" and "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"

Preface
It is out of belief that any work of fiction can find its ultimate source in the life of the author that the following work has been created. "The Diary of Karen Blixen" is a fictional creation, but it is based, on a large extent, on the actual life and beliefs of Karen Blixen (April 7, 1885 – Sept. 7, 1962). It is only within the framework of her life and beliefs, that one is able to accurately summarize why she chose the elements that she did from "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," in combination with other resources, in creating "The Sailor-Boy's Tale." I realize that the following is an experiment in comparing and analyzing two pieces of literary works from different genres, and yet, it is my hope that by giving the reader a fictional two-week period out of Karen Blixen's life, represented by what is written in her diary, that the reader will be given the proper amount of background, reason, and support to accurately analyze the following discussion of the similarities between "The Sailor-Boy's Tale" and "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner."

November 1, 1941

Dear Diary,
Pulling together my white-laced curtains, I tried to barricade myself and the Goldstein family against the moaning of autumn, the stomping of marching feet, the roaring of jeeps and tanks, and the occasional firing of M-16s followed by a faint and fading scream. Rungsted Kyst had at one time been a small, peaceful town, but now, it had become another trophy for the shelf of the Nazi Party. I stood there viewing the curtains as they hung there in front of me with their delicate lace running down each of the edges and the blue butterflies gaily dancing around each of the rising ripples. How I wished at that moment that I, like those butterflies, could simply be impervious to the war and fly uncaringly through life. I was tired of being afraid; I wanted to feel safe. Although they fortified me against viewing the Nazi horrors and atrocities, the sounds of occupation and fear still carried itself on the wind and into my home through the crevices in the walls. My father, Wilhelm Dinesen, would have in no way supported this invasion; as an ex-army officer, he would have done all that he could have to help defend the city against attack; that is, if he hadn't have run from his disease [syphilis], gave up any hope of being cured, and finally, committed suicide. I turned around from the kitchen window and the dishes that were still soaking in my sink, and I wiped my hands on my apron. To my left hanging on a nearby wall was a picture of my father when he was younger. When he was seventeen, he had been a lieutenant in the Franco-Prussian War and, during the Paris Commune, saw barricades built and the French blood flowing over the streets, filling the cracks and gutters, with even the most lonely and secluded. It had been a time of intense bloodshed, yet for me, and for the Jews who are hiding in my home, the bloodshed that awaits outside is a hundred times more real.
November 2, 1941

Dear Diary,

Elise asked me today to help take care of her baby. It's hard for her trying to care for her own children in someone else's home. Sometimes, the stress of trying to be Mom and guest gets to her. I try to remember and give her the room she needs. We both chuckled at my awkwardness as she handed Abigail to me. She was so small that I was almost afraid of hurting her. Five-year-old Rachel thought that it was cute that I was holding her sister. We spent the time making faces at Abby trying to get her to laugh---Someone's at the door....It was only Frau Shriever, my next door neighbor. She wanted to borrow some sugar for the cookies she was making. The Goldsteins quickly started hiding evidences of their presence in the livingroom and dining area before I even heard the knock. We were all relieved when it was all over. One can never be too careful even with the neighbors. The crashing foam of the waves interrupted my thoughts. I listened to it for a while. Occasionally, I have found myself wondering what it would have been like to have had a family of my own, to hold my baby next to me and rock her to sleep, and to experience the burst of joy of hearing my child say 'Mama' for the first time. I came so close to having this experience, but my husband, Baron Blixen, threw it out of my reach and tore me in two when I discovered through an exam for malaria that he had given me syphilis. After many fights and tears, he eventually ended our life together with a divorce. The divorce left me feeling empty and broken, much like my father's watch that I keep on the mantle. It hasn't run for years, but it's the only thing I have of his. I pick it up and hold it and remember those times when he use to hold me in his lap and tell me stories as a little girl. The memories make me smile and cry at the same time. Although I dearly loved my father as a child, the watch is a constant reminder of another man who left and was no longer part of my life. I probably wouldn't have been able to make it through those hard times if it hadn't been for Denys Finch Hatton, an English Army pilot that I met in Nairobi. There were many nights to where the loneliness was so severe that I literally ached to be held, caressed, and told that I meant something to someone--that I was alive and that I mattered--and it was during those nights that I found myself lost in his embrace.

November 3, 1941

Dear Diary,

Today, Rachel was asking me about what it was like for me when I was a little girl. I brought out my album and showed her some pictures of me and some drawings that I had done. Amidst the jumble of happy and painful memories, her questions took me back to a lot of the more pleasant ones. Back when I was a child and had the comfort of innocence to shield me and the reliance on someone else to fear for my future, I remember the joy and love I felt for my notebooks. I was constantly filling them with poems, stories, plays, and drawings. However, the thing that really peaked my enthusiasm for literature was my relationship with one of Father's good friends, George Brandes, the famous Scandinavian intellectual. How well I remember his laugh and friendly old face! He made such an impression upon me that I studied all his books and then wrote about him in my diary on May 7, 1903:

that it was he who revealed literature to me. My first "personal" enthusiasm for books,—for Shakespeare, Shelly, Heine,—came to me through him (Commire 35).

Eventually though, it was not only through him, but the enthusiasm also grew in my studies of English when I began my studies at Oxford University. I studied 'Beowulf,' 'Paradise Lost,' "The
Rime of the Ancient Mariner;" as well as other writings by European and American authors, such as Edgar Allen Poe. I wasn't quite sure who had affected my writings more, the European and American authors or Aunt Bess.

Aunt Bess was a wonder to behold, even though at her tallest in the early morning [she claimed that during the day, she shrank some], she stood at only 5' 2" tall. Her kind smile and tender demeanor was continually reaching out to others in the town. She once saw one of the neighbor kids crying in the park. She was only a little girl, perhaps four or five. Her parents had gotten into a huge fight, and she was afraid to go home. Aunt Bess took her into her arms and held her for over an hour as she sang to her and told her stories. The girl hugged her and went back home. Aunt Bess just smiled and she watched the girl leave. I often thought of her like a gentle summer breeze that playfully reached out and enveloped all that she encountered. Looking down at a picture from the album that I had colored together with her, I smiled as I thought back to one of our private moments when she had taught me something that I will never forget and made sure to include in my diary in 1899:

Life demands of us that we love it, not merely certain sides of it and not only one's own ideas and ideals, but life itself in all its forms before it will give us anything in return, and when you mention my I had been immersed in Brandes' books for a long time, and I can say philosophy of life, I have no other than that... (Commire 32).

Sarah wasn't too thrilled when her mother told her it was time for her Torah lesson. She was enjoying the pictures and my stories. I put the album back on the shelf and looked at my desk. I'm almost finished with my newest manuscript, Winter Tales. This book was filled with so many good memories, and I had a feeling of such satisfaction as I picked it up and flipped through the first story, "The Sailor-Boy's Tale." It represented so much for me. It represented not only an embodiment of my aunt's "lesson," but also, it was my connection to my Danish past—a past filled with attitudes toward life and living—that I knew would reach out and enrich the lives of my readers. I realize in accomplishing this connection that I had used a number of elements from "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner;" by Samuel Coleridge, which has given my tale an air of the Romantic. I am curious, though, as to how many of these elements are similar, and I have decided to spend the next week comparing the two tales. It's late now. Getting up from my dimly-lit table and making sure that the house is securely locked up, I reached over to the switch and turned off the lights.

November 4, 1941

Dear Diary,
The soldiers are randomly selecting Jewish families from out of the city and are putting them on a freight train. I'm wondering where they are being taken. I hear rumors around town about death camps and gas chambers, and I can't help but feel afraid for the Goldstein family at home....In beginning my comparison of the two tales, I am shocked at how many similarities there are between "The Ancient Mariner" and my tale, "The Sailor-Boy's Tale." Today, I plan on discussing the first two similarities that I've found. In "The Ancient Mariner," the main character is an old seaman. He's lived the majority of his life upon the sea, earning a living from beneath its waves, and yet, he views it as an impersonal force. He has already come to his own conclusions about life and his relationship with the natural order—he has attained his own view of "consciousness." He thinks nothing of defying nature and of killing the albatross, while his shipmates see it as a good omen. I, on the other hand, made my main character a sailor-boy by the name of Simon. As a child, Simon
possesses the potential for consciousness. A consciousness which seeks to embrace all of life, regardless of its form or of its source. It is, therefore, essential that Simon go to sea. For at sea, the desire of the consciousness is given and, then, tested as a means of revealing one's true character. I described this in much more detail in a volume of Contemporary Literary Criticism; in it, I stated the following:

The sea emerges here with increasing power and clarity as a symbol of desire—the desire that animates and unifies all nature. As the restless, shifting area between nonliving and living unconsciousness, the sea is the primordial desire out of which consciousness rises and to which it returns; it is the force which, when consciousness returns to it, unites our deepest desires with our biological and spiritual destiny (Stine and Marowski 159).

Therefore, I list the following as the first similarity:

The main character is a sea-faring male.
A storm occurs somewhere in the opening scenes.

This was the second similarity that I noticed right at the beginning. In "The Ancient Mariner," Coleridge uses a storm to drive the ship to the South Pole, where on its return, it encounters a supernatural being who seeks revenge for the murder of the albatross. Coleridge writes,

\[
\text{And some in dreams assured were} \\
\text{Of the spirit that plagued us so;} \\
\text{Nine fathom deep he had followed us} \\
\text{From the land of mist and snow. (Wright 159)}
\]

I have found that the storm is often used as a popular literary symbol for a lack of control over one's environment and destiny. In a "storm," nature and fate upset one's "planned voyage" and takes one off one's route to somewhere unknown. To the Mariner, the unknown is symbolized by the South Pole. This symbol for the unknown, as well as for a place to encounter the supernatural, is also incorporated by Edgar Allen Poe, in his novel, The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket; Poe writes,

\[
\text{The darkness had materially increased, relieved only by the glare of the water thrown back from the white curtain before us. Many gigantic and pallidly white birds flew continuously now from beyond the veil...as they retreated from our vision...we rushed into the embraces of the cataract, where a chasm threw itself open to receive us. But there arose in our pathway a shrouded human figure, very far larger in its proportions than any dweller among men. And the hue of the skin of the figure was the perfect whiteness of snow. (Poe 238-239)}
\]

Rather than using the storm to take man to the unknown, I, on the other hand, used the storm to bring the unknown, the falcon, to the young sailor-boy, Simon. In my manuscript, I wrote,

\[
\text{A bird, that had sought refuge upon the mast, had got her feet entangled in some loose tackle-yarn of the hilliard, and, high up there, struggled to get free. The boy on the deck could see her wings flapping and her head turning from side to side. (Dinesen 7)}
\]
The "storm," as I see it, is the driving force behind our need to understand the unknown, and it is this desire which may lead us either to life or to death. It is, therefore, for the sake of the Goldsteins that I pray that it is for life.

November 5, 1941

Dear Diary,

Today, I had gone downtown to buy some food for all of us. I got a few strange looks from those who know that I live alone. I could tell from their faces that they probably wondered where I was putting it all. When I got outside, I saw a horrifying sight! A group of young men were beating up on an old Jewish store owner. They were laughing, spitting, mocking him, as they beat the poor old man nearly to death. I wanted to help, but I knew questions would be asked, and I couldn't afford that, not with the Goldsteins at home. A few minutes passed by before the patrol finally broke it up, but the sad thing was that I could tell that the patrol didn't really care what happened to the old man by the way they roughly picked him up from the ground and pushed him towards his waiting wife. She stood there. Her eyes filled with helpless terror and love for her husband as he limped towards her outreached arms. It seemed to me that they broke it up only for the sake of appearance. The walk home was a quiet one with millions of questions firing through my mind about what I saw, about how much longer I would be able to keep the Goldsteins safe, and about my new book. It seemed almost ironic that in many regards, the old man reminded me of the next two similarities between my book and Coleridge's poem.

3. Some type of bird is used as a central character in the tales.

Coleridge, in "The Ancient Mariner," uses a large sea bird, an albatross, as a 'God-send' for the crew who are lost in their fears. He introduces the bird in his poem by saying,

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 (Wright 157).

The albatross is used to symbolize the good, pure aspects of nature. The bird stays with the ship and leads the crew out of danger and their fears. The bird, much like God leading the Israelites through the wilderness to the Promised Land, leads the ship to calm, still waters. It is then killed by the Mariner, and thus, releases upon them the evil aspects of nature. In "The Sailor-Boy's Tale," I also use a bird as a central character, a peregrine falcon. However, this is where the similarity ends. The falcon is not a symbol of some aspect of nature or of anything else, rather it is an altered-manifestation of an old Lapp woman. It is through her 'bird-like' form that she--as a character--not a symbol, gets stuck in the rigging of the vessel and is introduced to the main character.

4. The crew condones the abuse of the bird.

It is in this similarity between the two tales that the store owner seemed most symbolic. He is a form of life, like the birds, who could not defend himself from his attackers, and thus, in his abuse, was open to feel great vulnerability….In Coleridge's poem, the crew condones the bird's murder by the Mariner, and therefore, pitches in their lot with him. It is through their support of the 'murderer,' rather than his condemnation, that leads the spirit to seek justice for the one he loved:
The spirit who bideth by himself
In the land of mist and snow,
He loved the bird that loved the man
Who shot him with his bow.
...the man hath penance done,
And penance more will do (Wright 168).

I also have the crew condone the abuse of the bird but for a different reason. I use it to show, not that they are accessories to the crime, and therefore, equally deserving of nature's punishment; but through their laughter of Simon knocking the bird in the head, causing unconsciousness—a death-like state—they not only show their approval of the act, but they show their own contempt for the natural order. They simply didn't care what he had done. That crew, in many ways, remind me of the society outside my home. They can watch Jewish individuals being kicked, beaten up, persecuted, and killed, but through their silence, merely walking away and refusing to face the reality of what's happening, they are in actuality condoning the actions of the Nazi Party, and it is this that I find most frightening.

November 6, 1941

Dear Diary,
Not much has happened today; the streets are enveloped in a kind of eerie silence, much like the silence before a great storm...A cool night breeze is blowing through a crack I have made in the window. It feels so good, especially when the house gets this stuffy. The Goldsteins are just going to bed in the back room, and I am barely able to hear what they are saying. They are beginning their nightly prayers. Prayer has indeed become a comfort to them, a source of hope; and each night, they ask a constant prayer—a prayer for deliverance out of their oppression....There have been many moments in the past few weeks where quietly in my heart and mind, I have joined them in those prayers. It is in those intimate moments of silence when we truly grab hold of that essence within us which we call humanity. It is this essence which continues to reach out in hope, even in the worst of circumstances. It is this essence that I see revealed in my continuing study of the two tales. In my analysis, I have discovered that the fifth similarity is quite obvious in the one and only suggested in the other.

5. While desiring to be "rescued" from some 'plight'' on board the ship, the main character catches sight of another vessel.

For the Mariner, this plight on board his ship was quite real. The crew, including himself, was dying of thirst; and with no supplies or wind, they had no hope of escaping their fate. It was at this point, when all seemed lost, that the Mariner saw a ship afar off in the distance, and they are all refreshed with the possibility of salvation:

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
We could nor laugh nor wail;
Through utter drought all dumb we stood!
I bit my arm. I sucked the blood,
And cried, A sail! a sail!
With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
Agape they heard me call:
Gramercy! They for joy did grin,
And all at once their breath drew in,
As they were drinking all (Wright 160).

Instead, fate turned their joy into utter fear. The ship turned out to be a skeleton-ship with Death and Life-in-death as its crew. The sea had become a source of living death for the Mariner. In "The Sailor-Boy's Tale," Simon also faces a "plight" on board his ship. Although his "plight" was not as grim as a confrontation with the Reaper, it was no less as real for him. His plight was one of sexual frustration; he had an aching, overwhelming desire to go ashore and find Nora, "regardless of the cost" (Dinesen 11). It's when he begins to listen to the words of the song that he is singing, feel the cool sea breeze upon him, and see the fullness of the moon, that he develops this insatiable desire to go ashore:

...after a while his own music began to speak to him so strongly that he stopped, got up and looked upwards. Then he saw that the full moon was sitting high on the sky.
The sky was so light that she hardly seemed needed there, it was as if she had turned up by a caprice of her own, she was round, demure and presumptuous. At that he knew that he must go ashore...
(Dinesen 11).

However, he couldn't go ashore for the 'yawl' is gone. He stands on deck in utter frustration. It is then, that he, like the Mariner, catches sight of a boat and perceives it to be his salvation:

He stood on the deck for a long time, a small lonely figure of a sailor-boy on a boat, when he caught sight of a yawl coming in from a ship farther out, and hailed her. He found that it was a Russian crew from a boat named "Anna," going ashore (Dinesen 11).

November 7, 1941

Dear Diary,
I cannot begin to explain to you the fear and terror which I experienced today. I was walking a few miles away from my house when I saw some teenagers pick up a bunch of rocks and begin throwing them at the Nazi patrol, calling them, "Pigs!" and "Dirty Murderers!" The patrol didn't think twice and opened fire upon the teenagers. They were dead before they even hit the pavement. I was almost hit by a stray bullet, if it hadn't been for the car that I ran behind for cover. When I got home, I could barely speak, and my hands continued to shake for over an hour. It is through such irreverence for life that insanity is able to reign.

6. Life is treated irreverently and some murder occurs.

This element is the central core of both the poem and the tale. It is this central issue that catapults the main character from co-habiting with nature to facing it in direct conflict. For the Mariner, this occurs when he kills the albatross:

And I had done a hellish thing,
And it would work 'em woe:
For all averred, I had killed the bird
That made the breeze to blow.
Ah wretch! said they, the bird to slay,
That made the breeze to blow! (Wright 158).

The murder of the albatross brings the Mariner into opposition with the spirit from the South Pole, whereas for Simon, he shows a low regard for Ivan's life, and this brings him into direct opposition with the town and with Ivan's shipmates. Both confront death due to their irreverent act, yet from different sources, one natural, and the other, supernatural. In any irreverent act against life, some kind of payment must be given.

7. The dead are mourned.

It was only fitting that last night I mourned for the death of those young men. Those kids were alive with their own hopes, dreams, and aspirations; and in one instant of time, that life was taken away from them. Thus, by mourning for them, as well as all who die, I am able to reassert the sanctity of all life. Yet it is not this sanctity, nor for his feelings for his shipmates, that the Mariner mourns the death of the crew; it is because, as each of them die, he is reminded of the fact that it was he who killed the albatross, and this revives within him the guilt for what he has done.

Four times fifty living men,
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan)
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
They dropped 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 crossbow! (Wright 162)

In "The Sailor-Boy's Tale," the dead are also mourned over, yet in my account, although Simon mourns for the loss of his 'friend,' his 'friend' is not worth as much to him as seeing Nora again. It is through the screams and yells of Ivan's shipmates that Simon, while running, is brought to the reality of what he has done:

As he stopped for a second to choose his way, he heard the sailors behind him scream out, over their dead comrade (Dinesen 13).

Eventually, though, he does break down and mourn the loss of his friend:

..."Why did you kill a man?" she asked after a moment. "To get here," said Simon, "because he tried to stop me. But he was my friend." Slowly he got on to his feet. "He loved me!" the boy cried out, and at that burst into tears (Dinesen 14).
It is through the act of mourning, that we begin to get a glimpse into how precious life really is.

November 8, 1941

Dear Diary,
The possibility of the Goldsteins being discovered has grown so intense that if I don't get them out soon, we shall all be killed. I met with Father Brannigan in secret. He told me that he could set up an appointment with an underground agent, who could get the Goldsteins away to safety. I agreed. The appointment is for 7 o'clock tomorrow night; I am to meet him in the confession booth; that way, he assured me, no one would suspect anything. I only pray that he is right.

November 9, 1941

Dear Diary,
I met with Patrick tonight, the underground agent, and we made plans in arranging the Goldsteins' escape. He was a little taller than average with brown hair and hazel eyes. At first, it surprised me to discover that an underground spy could be so good-looking. Anyway, I am to get the Goldsteins to a deserted cabin about six miles outside of town. We will be met there by an agent who will take the Goldsteins to a nearby evacuation tunnel. I am to have them there at 1 am on the 14th. I'm scared stiff. I need something to help get my mind distracted for awhile.

8. There is a lapse of time when a character cannot speak.

True Consciousness comes to its epitome in silence. It is through time spent in silence that man is able to get a grasp of his present reality, and the consequences of his actions within that reality. For Simon and the Mariner, this time in silence proceeds an act of penance for their misdeeds. Coleridge describes this for the Mariner by saying,

And every tongue, through utter drought,
Was withered at the root;
We could not speak, no more than if
We had been choked with soot (Wright 159).

It is into this type of silence that I draw the character of Simon. I draw Simon into a level of consciousness where he is able to sort out and come to some type of realization of the reality that brought himself: the killing of his new friend, the consequences of his action, and the overwhelming fear that he is now absorbed within; in fact, this reality has so enveloped him that he is left with nothing to say—he is silent.

Wavering and out of breath, he sank down on his knees;
For a moment he could not speak (Dinesen 14).

9. Penance is sought.
It is in penance that one is able to seek and find true inner release, but the Mariner only finds partial release. He is absolved of his crime only as long as he keeps telling people his story. He writes,

Since then, at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns:
And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns.
I pass, like night, from land to land;
I have strange power of speech;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me:
To him my tale I teach (Wright 174).

Nora, the little girl whom Simon seeks forgiveness from, is not able to "wipe away" his guilt but rather chooses to love him in spite of his guilt. I described this in the following episode:

"Then," said Simon, "give me something to wipe my hands on."
"What is the matter with your hands?" she asked and took a little step forward. He stretched out his hands to her. "Is that your own blood?" she asked.

"No," said he, "it is his." She took the step back again. "Do you hate me now?" he asked.

"No, I do not hate you," said she. "But do put your hands behind your back." As he did so, she came up close to him, at the other side of the fence, and clasped her arms around his neck. She pressed her young body to his, and kissed him tenderly (Dinesen 14).

He is shocked, rather, to discover that the only one who is willing to "wipe away" his crime and free him from the punishment is the old Lapp woman:

While the two walked along the street, the old woman lifted up her skirt, and put the hem of it into the boy's hand. "Wipe your hand on my skirt," said she.

It is through the seeking of penance that the "blood" is eventually "wiped away," satisfying nature, and thus, opening the door again to nature's positive aspects and the possibility of being saved from their plight.

November 10, 1941

Dear Diary,
I was talking to Elijah [Mr. Goldstein] today. He was sharing with me some of the funny stories his father taught him while he was growing up. His father had been the town's rabbi, and Elijah spent most of his time with his father, visiting members of the congregation and discussing various views about the Torah [Mosaic Teachings]. While sitting there looking at me, a big grin appeared on his bearded face, and he told me this story.

A man came to one of the famous rabbis, and said, "Rabbi, I am a dedicated Jew, and I wish you to teach me the mysteries of the Torah."
The man stood there waiting, but the Rabbi did not respond. The man said it again, only louder, but still there was no response. Yelling, the
man said, 'Listen, I want you to teach me Torah! Did you hear me!'' But still no answer. The man fully frustrated, took a deep breath, and gave it one more try. 'Rabbi, I am going to stand here on one foot until you teach me the mysteries of Torah.' With a snarl on his face, the man raised up on one foot. The Rabbi, looking at him, grinned, and said, 'The mysteries of the Torah [Law] is this that you love your neighbor as yourself, all the rest is commentary. Now, go and learn.' Puzzled, the man walked away.

For me, there was a certain attraction to this story. In many regards, I saw life as a large book of mysteries, much like the Torah. I thought about the mysteries of love and relationships, of fear and hatred, and even, of the mystery of war; and while I sat there engaged in Elijah's stories, I realized that I am much like the man in the story. I am also a student, and like the man, I need to listen more intently to that hidden teacher, who like the Rabbi with his searching eyes and flowing gray beard, often encourages me to accept the ultimate challenge of my day-to-day life 'to now, go and learn.'

10. Some type of supernatural being saves the main character.

Their rescue must come by means of the supernatural; for nature, as a non-living entity, did not possess the ability to do it, and for the Mariner, his rescue is performed by a host of angelic beings, known as 'Seraph-men.'

Each corpse lay flat, lifeless and flat,
And, by the holy rood!
A man all light, a seraph-man,
On every corpse there stood.
This seraph-band, each waved his hand:
It was a heavenly sight!
They stood as signals to the land,
Each one a lovely light;... (Wright 171).

The seraph-men, after having gotten the Mariner back home, stand upon the deck, as a light signal to the shore, until a boat comes out to get the Mariner. The supernatural being who saved Simon was the old Lapp woman; she directly faced Simon's adversaries herself and got him 'off the hook' herself:

The door opened, and two of the Russian sailors came and stood in the opening, there were more people outside. 'Has anybody come in here?' they asked.' We are after a man who has killed our mate, but he has run away from us. Have you seen or heard anybody this way?'

The old Lapp woman turned upon them, and her eyes shone like gold in the lamplight. 'Have I seen or heard anyone?' she cried, 'I have heard you shriek murder all over town. You frightened me, and my poor silly boy there, so that I cut my thumb as I was ripping the skin rug that I sew, the boy is too scared to help me, and the rug is ruined. I shall make you pay for that. If you are looking for a murderer, come in and search my house for me, and I shall know you when we meet again.
The Russian came in, looked around the room, and at her and her blood-stained hand and skirt. "Do not put a curse on us now, Sunniva," he said timidly. "We know that you can do many things when you like. Here is a mark to pay you for the blood you have spilled."

She stretched out her hand, and he placed a piece of money in it. She spat on it. "Then go, and there shall be no bad blood between us," said Sunniva, and shut the door after them. She stuck her thumb in her mouth, and chuckled a little (Dinesen 17-18).

11. A retribution is paid.

It is here that nature receives its satisfaction. Once an offense has been committed, it is only through retribution that justice can be served and pardons finally given. For the Mariner, retribution comes in two stages for the killing of the albatross. The first stage was in his suffering on board ship as payment for the suffering of the bird. Secondly, there is the stage where the Mariner must wander from land to land telling his story. The Mariner would, by most definitions, not have any "real" type of life, yet neither does the albatross possess any kind of life. Thus, retribution is satisfied. In "The Sailor-Boy's Tale," retribution also comes in two stages. First of all, there is the retribution that Sunniva must give to Simon for saving her life. He discovers through their discussion that she is the falcon that he helped to get free from the rigging.

"Do you not know?" she answered. "Have you not recognized me yet? But you will remember the peregrine falcon that was caught in the tackle-yarn of your boat, the "Charlotte," as she sailed in the Mediterranean? That day you climbed up by the shrouds of the topgallant mast to help her out, in a stiff wind, and with a high sea. That falcon was I. We, Lapps, often fly in such a manner, to see the world. She swathed a corner of her skirt round her thumb, and bit at it. "We do not forget, I hacked your thumb, when you took hold of me, it is only fair that I should cut my thumb for you tonight" (Dinesen 18-19).

Therefore, she repays her offense against him by cutting her finger and by lying to the mob. The second stage of the retribution comes in his repaying the offense against her. When he had rescued her from the mast, he hit her in the head and knocked her out. She takes retribution for this offense.

She stared into his face. "We do not forget," she said. "And you, you knocked me on the head there, high up on the mast. I shall give you that blow back." With that she smacked him on the ear as hard as she could, so that his head swam (Dinesen 20).

With retribution, all accounts have now been settled.

November 11, 1941

Dear Diary,
The radio announced today that the Nazi Party would be beginning a thorough house-to-house search. The purpose of the search is to find hiding Jews, and those who, by hiding them, side against the Party. What will happen if they get here before we are able to leave? Will they kill us
immediately? Will they try and torture us for information? What will happen...? What will happen...? In the other room, I can hear Rachel whimpering in her sleep. She's probably having another bad dream. She told me once that she found comfort in sleeping with her teddy bear; right now, I wish I had a bear to hold...All that we can do now is wait.

12. Wisdom is gained.

In "The Ancient Mariner," wisdom is, first of all, implied to have been given to the Mariner, because he is able to tell the Wedding-Guest the central message of his tale: to love and reverence all things that God has made and loves.

    Farewell, farewell! but this I tell
    To thee, thou Wedding-Guest!
    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 (Wright 175).

Secondly, wisdom comes to the Wedding-Guest. At the finish of this ghastly and terrible tale, the Guest is made wiser for his hearing it.

    ...and now the Wedding-Guest
    Turned from the bridegroom's door.
    He went like one that hath been stunned
    And is of sense forlorn:
    A sadder and a wiser man,
    He rose the morrow morn (Wright 175).

In 'The Sailor-Boy's Tale,' the "stated" wisdom is given to the boy when he drinks "coffee" with the old Lapp woman. The "coffee" probably contained some type of secret potion.

    She went and rattled an old copper kettle upon the fireplace; after a while she handed him a bit of strong black drink in a cup without a handle on it. "You have drunk down a little wisdom, so that in the future all your thoughts shall not fall like raindrops into the salt sea" (Dinesen 19).

The "implied" wisdom is the wisdom that the reader will receive when reading this tale. Its wisdom is the same message given by the Mariner to the Wedding-Guest: to love and reverence all things that God has made and loves, but with the added promise that if one does, then everything will work itself out.
November 12, 1941

Dear Diary,
About midnight tonight, we are planning on leaving for the cabin. I've packed up a few overnight things to take with me, including my diary. I have written too much down inside it to leave it here at home--it has to come with me! I can tell by Mr. And Mrs. Goldsteins' quietness that they are scared. Rachel, on the other hand, is really getting hyper--she just can't believe that they are going to go outside again and go somewhere...I'm going to have to break it to her that this isn't going to be a fun trip, but one that could be extremely dangerous, possibly resulting in all of our deaths.... My brother, Thomas, owns a house that he is not presently renting about a couple of miles from the cabin. I plan on us holding up there until it is time for us to meet with the agent. I am going out for a little while and picking up the key to the house where my brother said that he would leave it. Before we leave, I'm also planning on taping a note to the door that reads, 'Gone to visit Mother---Be back in a few days.' This will hopefully keep people from wondering why I am not home, even though, my mother actually died a few years ago in Switzerland. Before leaving, I think I'll say a prayer.

November 13, 1941

Dear Diary,
We made it to Thomas's house. We had a few close shaves along the way. We were almost caught by a night patrol walking along the old dirt road that leads back to this house. However, by using good-size rocks and moving quietly, we were able to convince them that someone was getting away in the other direction. Elsie [Mrs. Goldstein] had a terrible time of it. She got so scared at that point that she almost threw up the little bit she had in her stomach; not to mention the fact that she broke both her heels and got a number of snags in her favorite pair of slacks. The radio announced last night that Hitler invaded Russian. I don't think we would have been so lucky, but I saw a number of patrols having small parties of their own in celebration of this victory. But now, we are indeed here, and there is nothing to do but to wait for tonight.

In overlooking my comparison of 'The Ancient Mariner' and 'The Sailor-Boy's Tale,' I discovered that there were more similarities than I had anticipated at the beginning of the study. I was indeed shocked to discover how similar the stories really were. It just proves that when one follows the dictates of a particular genre, then one is bound to discover similarities with your own work and another in the same genre. There are two important areas that tales address for the modern reader: first of all is entertainment. If one is entertained, then one is likely to leave the experience feeling good, not only of the experience, but also with oneself as well. Also, if one is entertained, then it is possible that the individual will pick up more books in this genre, increasing one's knowledge of literature, and perhaps, increasing one's reading ability as well. Secondly, and finally, tales leave the reader with a valuable moral. The morals are not restricted to time and space, and thus, spreading over the borders of time and geography reach out for the possibility of teaching the whole world.

November 14, 1941

Dear Diary,
Upon reaching the abandoned cabin, we found it to be quite grown over with weeds, dust, and spider webs. We waited around the back of the cabin to make sure that we would not be seen by any patrols. At 1 a.m. exactly, a group of three men came out of the darkness towards the cabin.
Upon reaching the cabin, they knocked at the door, thinking that we were probably inside and asleep. As they entered the cabin, we came out of the shadows from behind the cabin and slowly followed in behind them. They jumped and almost killed us when I reached out and touched one of their shoulders. After everyone had settled down, I had a chance to say good-bye before the Goldsteins left. I stood there at the door of the cabin, watching them disappear into the darkness. I wondered if I would ever see them again. If not within reality, then perhaps, we would meet within the borders of my dreams. On the way back to Thomas's house, I made sure to avoid any of the night patrols. Getting in, I locked the door and flopped myself down onto the rocker. I sat there wondering where they would be going, and if they would be happy.

Then, I began to turn my thoughts inward and wondered what I would find when I got back home. Would it be left the way I left it or would it be ransacked? Because of my note, I believed that I would not be suspected of anything. After thinking about it for awhile, I realized that I wasn't taking my own advice. I, therefore, took a few minutes to re-affirm my faith in Aunt Bess’s lesson and in the example of Simon, the sailor-boy, and decided to rest myself on those two things. Life shall be my love, and as long as it is, everything will work itself out. Reaching back towards the wall, I imagined seeing Aunt Bess and Coleridge nodding their approval; smiling, I reached for the switch and turned off the lights.
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