

## **Narrating the Wound: Trauma and Memory in Coleridge's 'Ancient Mariner' and Poe's 'The Raven'**

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### **Abstract**

Demystifying the puzzle of the ancient Mariner's real story and identity has been the aim of many critics. A direct analysis of the poem would always propound a crossing of boundaries between the real and the uncanny without providing a clear interpretation of the actual context of the mariner's tale. The mariner's dilemma occurs when he shoots an albatross without any distinct reason, thus resulting in the death of all the crew members who turn into eccentric creatures. Accentuating his sense of guilt, the mariner stops a guest entering a wedding and starts narrating his story. Whereas the guest never questions the reliability of the fictitious elements of the mariner's account, the readers do. Similarly, Edgar Allan Poe's protagonist posits questions to an un-welcomed guest, a raven, who visits him at night and gets infuriated at the consistent answer he receives from him: 'Nevermore'. The readers are aware that the protagonist is suffering from a psychological disorder since he insists the raven would reply to his distorted inquiries. This paper reads the mariner's as well as the Raven's protagonist's quandaries in association with trauma theory highlighting their traumatic experiences and underscoring the unreliability of their narration by diagnosing them as patients of what is referred to in recent psychoanalytic theories as post-traumatic stress disorder. Reference will be made to the importance of the albatross and the raven as fundamental motifs that project the characters' psychological predicaments resulting in the implausible tales they both recount.

**Key Words:** Romanticism – Trauma – unreliable narrator – PTSD – Coleridge – Poe