

THE CAMBRIA

Episode four – The Albatross

❖ About the characters

Daniel O’Connell, 1775-1847, a.k.a. “the Liberator” or “the Emancipator”, was an Irish politician and leader whose philosophical ideas are said to have inspired many great leaders throughout history, including Frederick Douglass, Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi. Mr. O’Connell was most famous for the Catholic Emancipation which gave Catholics back their freedom of religion. His work with Catholic Emancipation paved way for the emancipation of British Jews. He also worked for the repeal of the Act of Union even though he didn’t get to see such a repeal during his lifetime.

❖ About the poem

“**The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere**” published in 1798 by British Samuel Taylor Coleridge was along with Coleridge’s other poems seen as a beginning of the Romantic era in British literature and the start of modern poetry.

It is about a sailor, a mariner, who boards a ship that drifts into Antarctic waters. There, he shoots and kills an albatross. His fellow crewmembers get angry with him, seeing the albatross as a symbol of warm winds and returning to warmer waters and they force him to carry the albatross around his neck.

Eventually they climb aboard Death’s ship and they get punished for what they have done. The sailor receives his punishment in that he must wander the Earth and warn others of his story, never being able to die.





Discuss before listening:

- What do you know about laws aboard ships? What happens when you break the law in so called international waters? What would happen to you in the mid-1800's you think? Who would be the judge of such laws?
- What do you know about deportations of asylum-seekers? What happens with those who are not given asylum? How are they physically removed to the country they came from?

Discuss after listening:

- Why do you think it's important for Solomon to let Frederick Douglass speak to the men in the crew?
- Captain Judkins is unwilling to obey the wishes of Mr. Dodd, saying that the nation is split in this matter so he can't decide how it should be. What do you think would have happened if this took place ten years earlier? Ten years later? Would the scenario be any different?

Exercises after listening:

- What was life on plantations like? Read the notes of some eyewitnesses and see if you can understand what it was like. Was slavery the same all the time in America or did the lives of slaves change through history in regards of liberty etc?
- Read the ballad "the Rime of the Ancyent Marinere" and analyse it according to one of the analysis structures included below.
- Find out more about Frederick Douglass' Aunt Esther. Do you think her fate was unique or was it common among slave women?
- Who were in the crew of a trans-Atlantic ship in the 1800's? Were the men who worked ships free men or were they indebted? Did they sail by their own free will or were they forced to labour? Find out what you can about typical men in a crew and make a description of a typical ship's crew including both words and pictures.
- Find out what you can about St. Patrick's Day now and then. Are the celebrations of it today similar to back then? Make a party committee and prepare your school for the next St. Patty's Day!
- Find out what really happens during a deportation of asylum-seekers. Whose responsibility is it? Who executes the orders? How are the asylum-seekers transported?



Useful links:

- About St. Patrick's Day:

https://books.google.se/books?id=7FleEqDJZD8C&pg=PA7&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_pictures/7949129.stm

http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2004/03/0312_040312_stpatrick_2.html

- About Frederick Douglass' Aunt Esther:

<http://leighfought.blogspot.se/2012/04/jenny-hester-harriet-and-maryann.html>

<http://www.let.rug.nl/usa/biographies/frederick-douglass/a-childs-reasoning.php>

- About life as a slave:

<http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/slavelife.htm>

<http://www.ushistory.org/us/27b.asp>

<http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-antebellum/5602>

<http://abolitionnc.weebly.com/life-as-a-slave.html>

<http://www.docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/jacobs/jacobs.html>

http://americanabolitionist.liberalarts.iupui.edu/plantation_life.htm

<http://www.slaverystories.org/home>

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/voices/vfssp.html>

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/wpa/index.html>

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/18485/18485-h/18485-h.htm>

About seamen aboard a trans-Atlantic ship in the 19th century:

<http://www.hamilton-scourge.hamilton.ca/lifeof.htm>

- The rime of the Ancyent Marinere" by Samuel Taylor Coleridge:

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

- Analysing a poem:

<http://www.wikihow.com/Analyze-Poetry>

<http://web.uvic.ca/~englblog/closereading/>

- About St. Patrick's Day:

https://books.google.se/books?id=7FleEqDJZD8C&pg=PA7&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false

- About deportations:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/asylum-seeker-deportations>

<http://www.irr.org.uk/research/statistics/asylum/>

Did you know?

To carry **an albatross around one's neck** means to carry a burden. The metaphor was introduced to the English language by Mr. Coleridge through his poem "the Rime of the Ancient Mariner".

Another metaphor introduced into the English language by the same poet was **Achilles' heel**, meaning a weak or vulnerable factor, which he used in a poem to describe Ireland in the eyes of Britain.

Monty Python, the British humour group, did a sketch with a man carrying an albatross around his neck, trying to sell it sort of as ice cream.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z_u7VGiMOOU