COLERIDGE: THE POET AND HIS SELECTED POEMS

Paper III (II): British Romantic Literature

Lesson: Coleridge: The Poet and His Selected Poems

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COLERIDGE: THE POET AND HIS SELECTED POEMS

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834)
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samuel_Taylor_Coleridge

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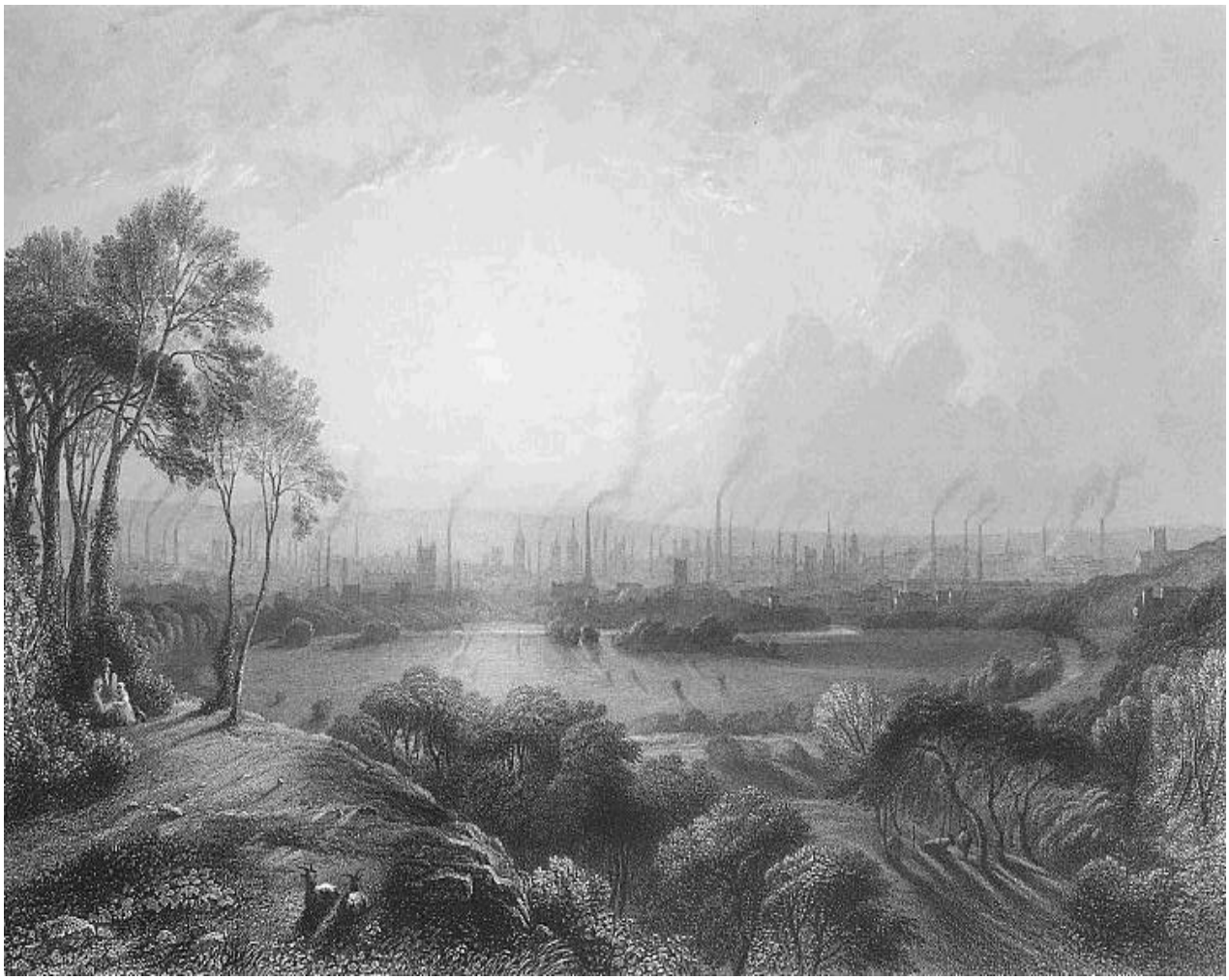
HISTORICAL AND LITERARY BACKGROUND

The Romantic movement was an amalgamation of many characteristics found to be common in the works of the leading poets and writers between the years 1785 to 1830 as Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, Keats and Mary Wollstonecraft. In his essay 'Toward a Theory of Romanticism' Morse Peckham vis a vis Jacqus Barzun, author of *Romanticism and the Modern Ego* lists some of the characteristics of Romanticism as: "a return to the Middle Ages, a love of the exotic, the revolt from reason, a vindication of the individual, a liberation of the unconscious, a reaction against scientific method, a revival of pantheism, a revival of idealism, a revival of Catholicism, a rejection of artistic conventions, a return to emotionalism, a return to nature." (1968:2-3)

The intellectual and imaginative climate of the Romantic period was heavily influenced by the political, social and economic developments taking place. The American Revolution, the French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution and the changing religious ethos, all contributed to the changing temper of the times. The burgeoning population of London was polarized into two distinct classes of the rich and the poor. It was a period of poverty, repression and rising discontent with the population of Birmingham swelling from71,000 to 144,000 and that of Sheffield and Leicester from 46,000 and 17,000 to 92,000 and 41,000. (Rickword: 19)

A feeling of discontentment was widespread among the manufacturers who felt the weight of an obsolete excise system, the farmers who bore the burden of tithes and laws regarding hunting, the lower middle and the working classes who were prey to indirect taxes that were levied on every article whether an essential commodity or a luxury item. The overcrowded industrial towns lacked civic amenities and offered decreased wages with the labor supply far exceeding the demand. It is no surprise that in the face of such gross squalor, want and greed the poets took recourse in Nature and imagination.



Cottonopolis1.jpg , Manchester, England ("Cottonopolis"), pictured in 1840, showing the mass of factory chimneys File:Cottonopolis1.jpg - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia,en.wikipedia.org

Common people found no representation in the parliament and the taxes that they paid did them no good for none was utilized for social good.[1]

Literary historian Edward Albert, laying the blame of the prevalent misery on the prolonged war between England and France 1793 onwards, writes that the conclusion of the long war brought inevitable misery in its wake, in the form of low wages, unemployment and heavy taxation. These measures gave rise to fiery resentment and fierce demands of change on the part of the people. Intellectuals Shelley and Ebenezer Elliott called aloud for social justice. The massacre of

Peterloo in 1819 and the wild rioting over the Reform Bill and the Corn Laws are some of the unforgettable repercussions of the same.

File:Peterloo Massacre.png - Wikimedia Commons, commons.wikimedia.org

On 16th August 1819 at St. Peters Field, Manchester, England an assembly of workers- ranging from sixty to eighty thousand- gathered to raise their voice along with the radical Henry Hunt and was charged upon by the cavalry, leading to what is still remembered as the "Peterloo Massacre". Though a Reform Bill was introduced in 1832, the outcome was far below expectation.

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The religious rift between the Puritans and the Catholics amplified the feeling of discontentment. The main characteristic of this dissent being the insistence on intellectual and spiritual independence, the right of private judgment in the context of moral issues, the importance on the inner light for the reading of the Scripture, granting the relationship of the devout and the devotee without any intermediary (Bloom: 2006).

It was in keeping with the demands of the changing times that Blake took recourse in his unique mythology, and Wordsworth saw in Nature a divine glory that provided the necessary element of harmony between the external world of reality and the inner world of the poet.

Due to their involvement with the landscape as a living, sentient being Romantic poetry has become synonymous with "nature poetry." Wordsworth aimed to renew our sense of wonder in the everyday. Coleridge, by contrast, achieved wonder by impressing upon his readers a sense of occult powers and unknown modes of being. The pervasiveness of nature poetry in the period can also be linked to the idealization of the natural scene as a site where the individual could find freedom from social laws. Conforming to the view that poetry acted as a mode of venting the poet's feelings, the lyric became a major Romantic form. In contrast with the Neo-classical poetry it was held that the immediate act of composition must be spontaneous, free from the fetters of rules. For Shelley, poetry was the result of unconscious creativity. Blake, Coleridge, Wordsworth, and later Shelley all assumed the persona of the poet-prophet. Though poetry flourished in the age, the prose essay, drama and novel did not lag either. There was also the emergence of the literary critic.[2] Innovations in retailing and the interest of the reading public made publishing a big industry.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Rev. John Coleridge, the father of S.T Coleridge, was the vicar of the parish church and master of the local grammar school in 1772 at Ottery St. Mary, Devonshire. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the youngest of the thirteen children of the family was born in the same year. An extraordinarily sharp and precocious child, the young Coleridge had started to read at the age of three. He had to his credit the first hand knowledge of the Bible and the Arabian Nights before the age of five. From the age of six to nine he studied in his father's school where he learnt the classics, English books and treatises on theology and metaphysics. When Coleridge was nine, his father, John Coleridge died leaving the family destitute.

At ten he was sent to the Charity School of Christ's Hospital, London. He was a dreamer from his childhood days and continued to be so in his youth. At nineteen he entered Cambridge as a charity student only to leave in 1794 without taking his degree. On his return he was possessed by restlessness and was intimately involved in the intense discussions regarding nature of society, as arising out of the political and intellectual turmoil arising due to the French Revolution. A reply to the disastrous outcome of the French Revolution was Coleridge's recourse to "pantisocracy" (a form of utopian social organization in which all are equal in social position and responsibility) with his friend Robert Southey. The desire was to create a small society on better principles than the prevalent ones for which both the friends went to river Susquehanna in Pennsylvania.

In the company of Southey he became a public lecturer in Bristol. Coleridge married Sara Fricker, daughter of a local school mistress, in the year 1795; a decision that he was to regret later. This was also a crucial year for him for having befriended William Wordsworth. Together they embarked upon one of the most influential creative periods that the history of English literature offers to its scholars. It is said that it was Coleridge's intellectual fervor combined with his belief in "life consciousness" in all individuals that rescued Wordsworth from the

depression that he had been suffering from and led to the new approach to nature as visible in *Lyrical Ballads* (1798).

Early in the year 1798 Coleridge once again became concerned with the political developments of the times when he found the French revolutionary government suppressing the states of the Swiss Confederation. The bitterness of the poet at the betrayal of the principles of French revolution can be seen expressed in the poem "France: An Ode."

Coleridge, at this time, was also involved in developing a new mode of informal poetry with a conversational tone and rhythm. Of these poems one of the most successful is "Frost at Midnight" describing a silent frosty night in Somerset, moving on to the relationship between the quiet work of the frost with the quiet working of the baby sleeping at the poet's side with a concluding note that the baby should be brought up as a 'child of nature' so as to keep the detected sympathies alive and reinforced through the child's education.

His attempt to explore the possibility that all religions and mythical traditions with their general beliefs- regarding unity of God and immortality of soul- sprang from a universal life consciousness that found expression through the human genius. It was at this time that he retired to a lonely farm house near Culbone, Somersetshire, and as he himself wrote in the preface to 'Kubla Khan', composed the poetic fragment under the influence of laudanum.

Throughout his life Coleridge found himself unable to hold on to any particular work. His study comprised of education in Germany and then Rome, in the former he also worked as a private secretary but found the drudgery too burdensome to bear. He then started a paper *The Friend* and also took to lecturing -on poetry and the fine arts- to enraptured audiences. But this also could not go on for long for Coleridge found it difficult to keep to his schedules. He received offers in the *Morning Post* and *The Courier* but declined.

He neglected his family and left them to the charge of his old friend Southey. When on the point of becoming a Unitarian minister, he was gifted a small pension by two friends Josiah and Thomas Wedgwood who were impressed by Coleridge's intelligence and promise and offered

him an annual pension of 150 pounds for his sustenance while he pursued his intellectual concerns, thus enabling him to further live for a few years more without regular employment during which Coleridge visited Germany with Wordsworth and Dorothy. Here he attended lectures on physiology and biblical criticism becoming aware in the developments of German scholarship little known in England. On his return to England Coleridge's marital tensions escalated with his falling in love with Wordsworth's sister in law Sara Hutchinson in the year 1799.

File:Sara Coleridge 7.jpg - Wikimedia Commons, commons.wikimedia.org

That he was extremely devoted to the Wordsworths did not help and took its toll on Coleridge who, troubled by domestic strife, had to suffer a worsening of health with an increased dependence on opium. A section of "Christabel" is the achievement of this period along with his verse letter to Sara Hutchinson that today reads as "Dejection: An Ode".

The poem employs the technique of conversational poems, the sensitive rhythms and phrasings of the technique employed masterfully to represent his extremely depressed state of mind. Though Coleridge hoped to remain balanced in his love for Sara Hutchinson along with his obligations towards his family, his hopes were too lofty to be realized, further telling upon his health. Therefore, he decided in 1804 to spend some time in the warmer climate of Malta as secretary to the then acting governor.

Graham Hough calls" Dejection" "the greatest and most terrible" of his poems, the "swan song" of his poetic career wherein he projects his own feelings, borne out of ill health, opium addiction and domestic misfortune, on the stormy night around himself (67).

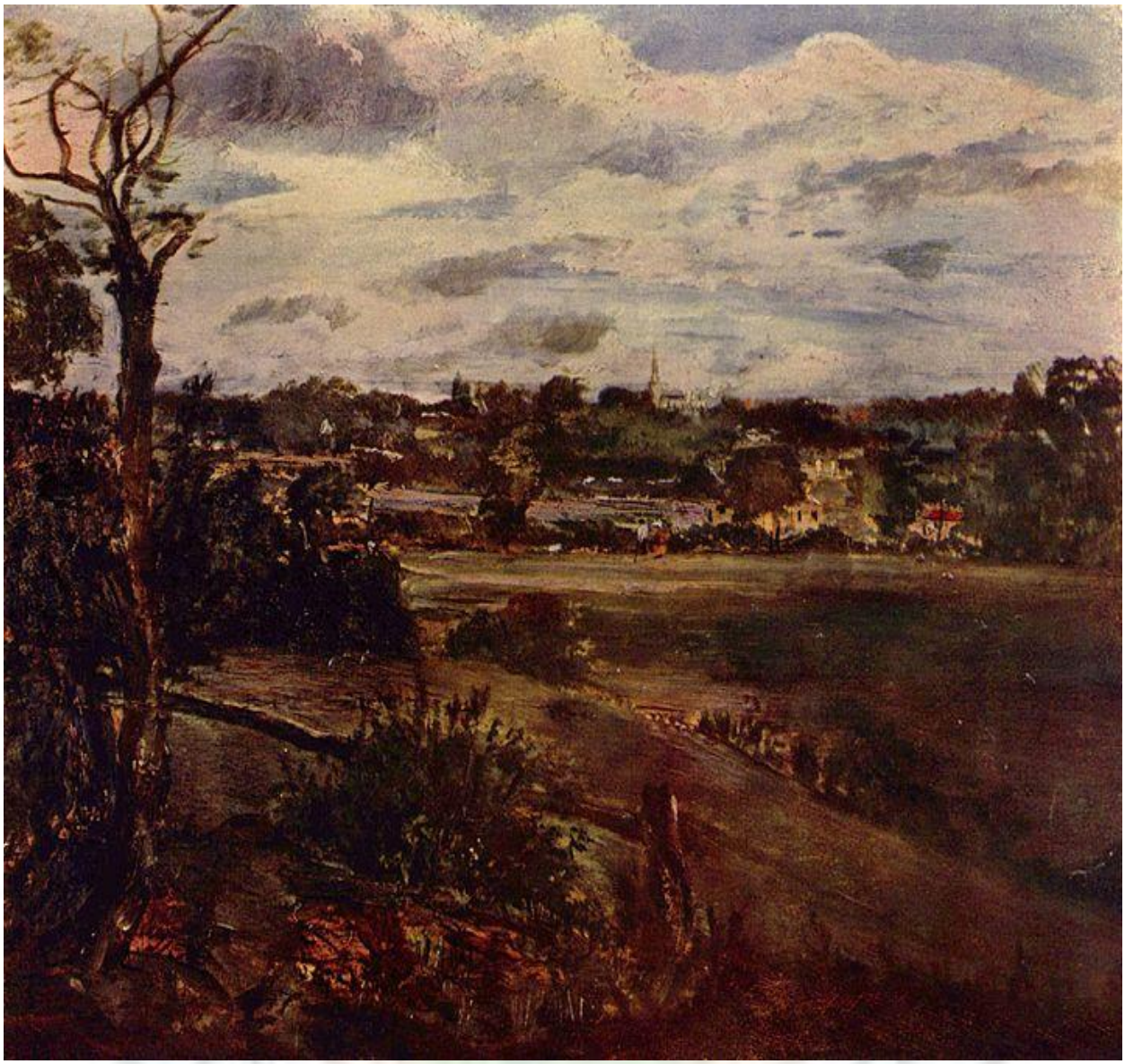
After his return to England Coleridge decided to separate from his wife and spend some time with the Wordsworths. From June 1809-March1810 he published a periodical *The Friend* but discontinued when Sara Hutchinson -who till now had been acting as his literary assistant- finding the strain of this relationship too stressful, decided to retire to her brother's farm in Wales. A resentful Coleridge decided to terminate his working relationship with the Wordsworths on the grounds that they had encouraged Sara's withdrawal and decided to settle in London.

The following period was the most difficult in the life of Coleridge as evident in the writings of this period characterized by unhappiness and self dramatization bordering on self pity. There were signs of slow revival as a course of lectures that he delivered in 1811-1812 drew huge audience. For a long period he continued to be fascinated by the achievements of Shakespeare

and his psychological interpretations of Shakespeare's chief characters were appreciated by his contemporaries.

It was in 1813 that his play "Osorio," written much earlier, was staged at Drury Lane with the title *Remorse*. In the late years of his life Coleridge found consolation in religion. Christianity now became a source of strength for him, gaining him approval and acceptance from the orthodox Christians of his times and spurring him on in his effort of revitalizing the English Church by his poetic endeavors. As he explored the writings of the 17th century divine, Archbishop Robert Leighton's commentary on the First Letter of Peter, he found tenderness and sanctity that were deeply comforting. Coleridge died in 1834, and was buried at Highgate Church.

Adapted from: http://www.gutenberg.org/files/10609/10609-h/10609-h.htm#chap10www.gutenberg.org & Encyclopedia Britannica, www.britannica.com



View of Highgate, John Constable, 1st quarter of 19th century, en.wikipedia.org

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BIOGRAPHICAL TIMELINE

1772	**Coleridge was born in Devonshire, England.**
1775	**Attended Dame Key's Reading School.**
1781	**His father Vicar of Ottery, St. Mary dies.**
1782	**Sent to Christ's hospital for schooling.**
1791	**Enters Jesus College, Cambridge, England.**
1793	**Joins 15th Light Dragoons, British Cavalry Unit.**
1794	**Returns to Jesus College.**
1795	**Marries Sarah Fricker.**
1796	**'The Eolian Harp'- his first major poem published in *Poems on Various Subjects* . He also edited a periodical**

	the *Watchman.*
1798	**Joint publication with Wordsworth of *Lyrical ballads*.**
1806	**Separates from Sarah.**
1810	**Moves to London.**
1813	**His only dramatic work, *Osorio*, written in 1797 was performed under the title Remorse.**
1816	**"Christabel" and "Kubla Khan" published.**
1825	**'Aids to Reflection' published**
1829	**'The Constitution of Church and State' published.**
1834	**Coleridge dies on July 25 at Highgate.**

Adapted from: Samuel Taylor Coleridge Biography - life, childhood, death, wife, school, young, information, born, college, marriage, www.notablebiographies.com

LITERARY OUTPUT

The mariner up on the mast in a storm. One of the wood-engraved illustrations by Gustave Doré of the poem., en.wikipedia.org

According to the literary historian J.Long the works of Coleridge naturally divide themselves into three classes,--the poetic, the critical, and the philosophical, corresponding to the early, the middle, and the later periods of his career. Some of his noteworthy poems that stand out for their melody and suggestive images are: "A Day Dream," "The Devil's Thoughts," "The Suicide's Argument," and "The Wanderings of Cain." His later poems, a combination of

imagination and research are "Kubla Khan," "Christabel," and "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner". Among his shorter poems "Ode to France," "Youth and Age," "Dejection," "Love Poems," "Fears in Solitude," "Religious Musings," "Work Without Hope," and the glorious "Hymn Before Sunrise in the Vale of Chamouni" stand out. His talent for translation manifests in "The Virgin's Cradle Hymn," from Latin and his version of Schiller's *Wallenstein*.

His first book was *Poems on Various subjects* (1796) following which in collaboration with Wordsworth he produced the *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798, a volume containing nineteen poems by Wordsworth and four by Coleridge himself. 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' belongs to *Lyrical Ballads*. Edward Albert informs, **"[**T]he main idea of the voyage, founded on a dream of his own, was Coleridge's" (2009:302) discussed during their walks on the Quantock hills.

Initially they had decided to work on it together but as Coleridge's imagination took over, Wordsworth left it to him to work upon. It was in 1797 that Coleridge wrote the first part of "Christabel" (the tale of a "of a kind witch" who takes the shape of a beautiful lady and wins the confidence of the protagonist of the poem), and though a second part was written in 1800, the poem remained unfinished and was not published till 1816. "Kubla Khan" was initiated in 1798 and also remained unfinished and unpublished till 1816.

In her book *Reading Romantic Poetry* (2014) Fiona Stafford suggests that if "Kubla Khan" is read in the company of "Christabel" and "The Pains of Sleep" then it may seem like an artistic exploration of the workings of the unconscious mind. "The Pains of Sleep" provides its reader abstract, disturbing nightmares and forms a part of its companion poems giving insight into the unconscious sources of the mind and the mysterious, supernatural sources that the world has to offer. She maintains that whereas the horrifying experience of "The Pains of Sleep" may be seen as a repercussion of drug addiction or psychological illness but given the religious nature of the poet and the temperament of the age open to various theories on dreams, their being "punishments" or "diabolical" visitations is a distinct possibility (215). Regarding "Christabel" not being presented as a dream poem but connected with the other two with which it appeared in a slim volume, Stafford comments, "When the poem is read along with "Kubla

Khan" and "The Pains of Sleep" it may seem another study of the workings of the unconscious mind, as Christabel is haunted by nightmarish images, though unable to capture quite what she had seen" (217).

The Northern Flank of Beacon Hill (Quantocks). In late summer the northern Quantocks are ablaze with heather and gorse. Minehead can be seen in the distance,en.wikipedia.org

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In 1796 Coleridge started *The Watchman*, a periodical that did not run for a long time. He contributed some essays to this journal. He also wrote for The *Morning Post* as a contributor. During his residency at the Lake District he started *The Friend* (1809) but like *The Watchman* it did not have a long life. When considerably out of the habit of taking opium, he published *Biographia Literaria* and *Sibylline Leaves.*

From a literary point of view of Coleridge's prose works, the *Biographia Literaria, or Sketches of My Literary Life and Opinions* (1817), *Lectures on Shakespeare* (1849), and *Aids to Reflection* (1825) are seen as the most interesting. While *Biographia Literaria* is an explanation and criticism of Wordsworth's theory of poetry containing ideas on the general subject of poetry, the *Lectures* attempt to do away with the arbitrary rules in the way of literary criticism of Shakespeare, in order to study the works themselves. In the *Aids to Reflection* Coleridge introduced the idealistic philosophy of Germany into England proving to be a multifaceted genius of the Romantic era. After his death *Table Talk* was published in 1835. *On the Constitution of Church and State* and *The Confessions of an Enquiring* Spirit were also published posthumously in 1840.

Source:http://www.gutenberg.org/files/10609/10609-h/10609-h.htm#chap10, www.gutenberg.org , Samuel Taylor Coleridge (British poet and critic) :: Late life and works -- Encyclopedia Britannica www.britannica.com

Excerpts from *Biographia Literaria* on Fancy and Imagination:

The Imagination then I consider either as primary, or secondary. The primary Imagination I hold to be the living power and prime agent of all human perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM. The secondary Imagination I consider as an echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the kind of its agency, and differing only in degree, and in the mode of its operation. It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate: or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealize and to unify. It is essentially vital, even as all objects (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead.

FANCY, on the contrary, has no other counters to play with, but fixities and definites. The fancy is indeed no other than a mode of memory emancipated from the order of time and space; while it is blended with, and modified by that empirical phenomenon of the will, which we express by the word Choice. But equally with the ordinary memory the Fancy must receive all its materials ready made from the law of association.

For more click on the link below:

Biographia Literaria, Chapter XIII,http://www.gutenberg.org/files/6081/6081-h/6081-h.htm#link2HCH0013

www.gutenberg.org

OPIUM AND THE "DREAM" OF "KUBLA KHAN"

That Coleridge was an opium addict is as inseparable part of his life and poetry as his love for Sara Hutchinson. There are many how and whys associated with this addiction. John Spencer Hill in his book *A Coleridge Companion* shares some interesting information regarding the use of opium in the early eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. One of them is that little was known about the use of opium then though it was widely used and available. It was not known that the drug was addictive causing withdrawal syndrome with reduced dosage or discontinuation. This is one of the basic reasons as to why laudanum was freely used to cure a variety of ailments from toothache to emotional disorders, used as an analgesic and tranquillizer, administered even to babies.

In case of Coleridge also it was ignorance about the nature of the drug that led to his addiction. He had used opium in 1791 and continued to use it occasionally on medical advice for a series of physical and nervous problems. "I am seriously ill", he wrote to Joseph Cottle in November 1796**;** "The complaint, my medical attendant says, is nervous -- and originating in *mental* causes. I have a Blister under my right-ear -- & I take Laudanum every four hours, 25 drops each dose" (as qtd. by Hill). During his first year at Great Hall, Keswick in 1800-1801, he was afflicted with prolonged illnesses that made things very difficult for him and his dependence on the drug grew.

Though Coleridge blamed the condition he suffered from (irregular gout and nephritic attacks) on the wet climate of the Lake District the addiction had devastating results as he became a slave to the drug habit. All his efforts to deal with the addiction went in vain. It was a very humane desire on his part to desire the legislative ban on the use of the drug so that others were spared from suffering a similar fate. In 1808 he wrote to T.G Street that if he would entirely recover he would consider it his sacred duty to publish his case so that others (especially the poorer classes) may be informed about it.

The addiction to opium and its effects are very clearly indicated in the preface to “Kubla Khan” where Coleridge mentions explicitly that on account of ill health he had retired to a lonely farm house that was situated between Porlock and Linton and due to a slight indisposition had taken anodyne. The poem is a result of the three hours of profound sleep that had overtaken the poet. The few lines of the poem from what could have stretched to two hundred to three hundred lines is what could be recollected by the poet, a fragment of the original.

Graham Hough in his book *The Romantic Poets* comments that Coleridge had been taking opium all his life but it was not only the effect of opium but something more that led to the creation of such wonderful poetry as “Kubla Khan” and “The Pains of Sleep”.

Adapted from: “Opium and the “Dream” of Kubla Khan”, A Coleridge Companion
www.english.uga.edu/~nhilton/232/stc/comp3c.htm

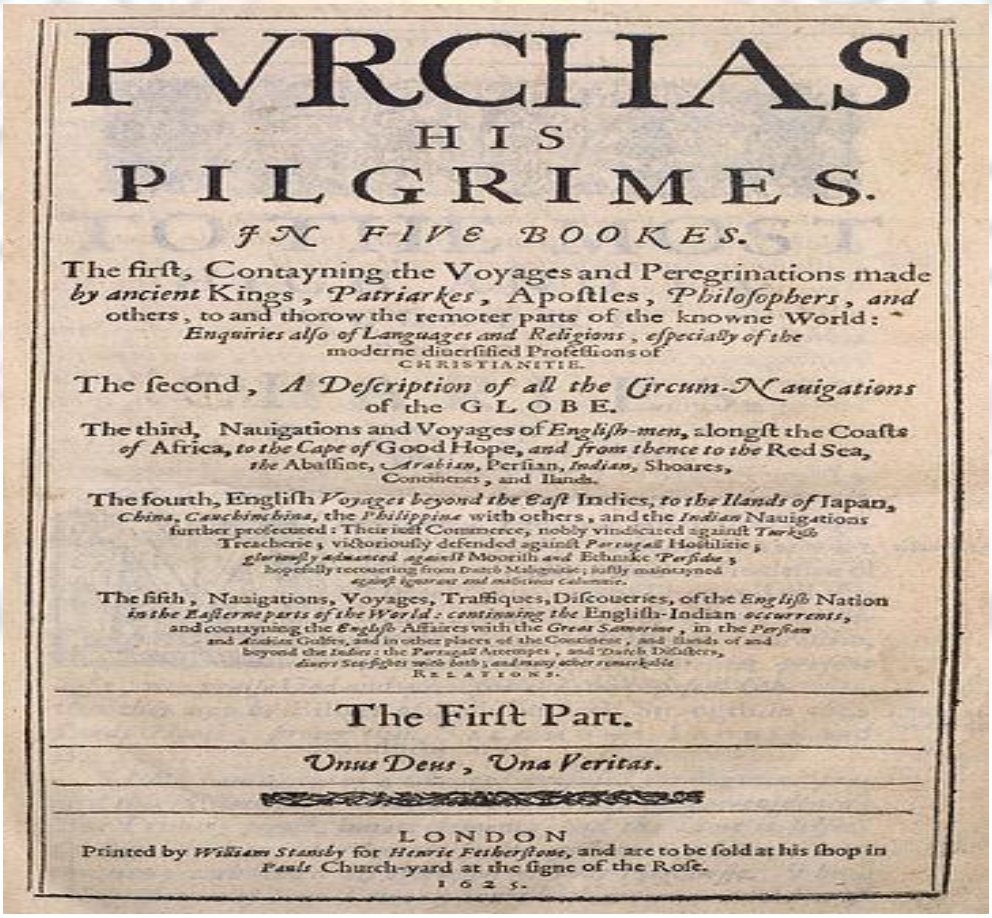
"KUBLA KHAN: OR, A VISION IN A DREAM. A FRAGMENT"

The date of composition of the poem is shrouded in controversy. However, as is agreed upon by most of the scholars, the poem was written in October 1797. According to the introductory note Coleridge having taken anodyne fell asleep while reading *Purchas his Pilgrimage*. In his sleep he composed two to three hundred lines and was able to write only 30 when he was disturbed by a visitor from Porlock who stayed with him for above an hour. After the visitor left Coleridge realized that he could no longer remember much of the vision other than the few scattered lines that he had written.

It is due to its preface that "Kubla Khan" is read as a dream poem, fragmentary in nature, and one of the important genres of the Romantic period. Valued for the escape from the order of sequence, rational and ethical responsibility, it was thus invested with wonder and mystery. The vivid images metaphoric or symbolic in nature could have multifarious meanings otherwise impossible, and yet could be understood in terms of sequence through the law of association. The theme of fragmentation is a distinct formal and thematic characteristic of the poem. The interlude of the visitor from Porlock however can be seen as a conscious, pre- meditated structural device.

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.
- "Kubla Khan or, a vision in a dream. A Fragment"

The poem is a fragment of the original one of two to three hundred lines conceived in the mind of the poet divided into two fragments. The image of fragment is a constant throughout, from the image of the dome in the water of the river, to the image of fragments of rocks being hurled out of the chasm. Coleridge's use of the fragment was inspired by his knowledge of German Romanticism where the "fragment" was a recognized literary form valued for its imaginative nature.



PVRCHAS
HIS
PILGRIMES.
IN FIVE BOOKES.

The first, Contayning the Voyages and Peregrinations made by ancient Kings, Patriarkes, Apostles, Philosophers, and others, to and thorow the remoter parts of the knowne World: Enquiries also of Languages and Religions, especially of the moderne diuersified Professions of CHRISTIANITIE.

The second, A Description of all the Circum-Nauigations of the GLOBE.

The third, Nauigations and Voyages of English-men, alongst the Coasts of Africa, to the Cape of Good Hope, and from thence to the Red Sea, the Abassine, Arabian, Persian, Indian, Shoares, Continents, and Ilands.

The fourth, English Voyages beyond the East Indies, to the Ilands of Iapan, China, Cauchinchina, the Philippine with others, and the Indian Nauigations further prosecuted: Their iust Commerces, nobly vindicated against Turkish Treacherie, victoriously defended against Portugall Hostilitie, gloriously advanced against Moorish and Pehuske Persidie, hopefully recouering from Dutch Malegestie, fully maintayned against ignorant and malicious Calumnie.

The fifth, Nauigations, Voyages, Traffiques, Discoueries, of the English Nation in the Easterne parts of the World: continuing the English-Indian occurrents, and countrying the English Affaires with the Great Samarins, in the Persian and Arabian Gulfes, and in other places of the Continent, and Ilands of and beyond the Indies: the Portugall Attempts, and Dutch Diuiders, diuers Sea-fights with both; and many other remarkable RELATIONS.

The First Part.

Vnus Deus, Vna Veritas.

LONDON
Printed by William Stansby for Henrie Fetherstone, and are to be sold at his shop in Paules Church-yard at the signe of the Rose.
1625.

File:Purchas his Pilgrimes by Samuel Purchas.jpg - Wikimedia Commons, commons.wikimedia.org

Xanadu on the French map of Asia made by Sanson d'Abbeville, geographer of King Louis XIV, dated 1650. It was northeast of Cambalu, ormodern-day Beijing. Xanadu on Map of Asia - Kubla Khan - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia en.wikipedia

In Xamdu did Cubali Can builds a stately Palace, encompassing sixteen miles of plaine ground with a wall, wherein are fertile Meddows, pleasant Springs, delightful Streames, and all sorts of beasts of chase and game, and in the middle thereof a sumptuous house of pleasure.

Samuel Purchas, *Purchas his Pilgrimes*, the Fourth Book, chapter 13, page 415. digital version from the copy owned by John Adams in the Boston Public Library, Kubla Khan -

Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia en.wikipedia.org

The opening lines suggested by a passage in Purchas's *Pilgrimage*, that Coleridge was reading as he entered his dream or reverie describe an ideal landscape watered by a sacred river, of paradisal happiness. Here Kubla Khan- an all powerful lord- desires to create his pleasure dome by passing a decree. But in the succeeding lines come images of fear, enchantment, violent and uncontrollable energy, oblivion, death and forebodings of strife (Hough1953, rpt. 1970: 64).

Coleridge describes the beautiful summer palace of Kubla Khan at Xanadu as unique in its make, a combination of the warm and cold, for being at once open to the sun and harboring caves of ice. Near this stately structure coursed a sacred river by the name Alph. The river Alph was born out of a chasm in the form of a fountain. It coursed through an area of five miles above and below the deep measureless caves that form a part of the Xanadu landscape, before joining the ocean.

"coleridgesque (mandalay hill)" [in Burma] photo taken by flickr.com user "pwbaker" April2011, Creative Commons License

The whole area of ten miles of the summer kingdom was enclosed by tall walls and towers, boasting of beautiful gardens, forests and streams. It is in one part of the forest under the cover of Cedar trees that there is located a chasm- slanting down a green hill that throws out big rocks and boulders along with a fountain. The area is lent with supernatural beauty as it evokes the image of a woman "wailing" for her demon lover.

The vision of this woman is taken over by another one as the poet goes back to describing the beauty of the pleasure dome as seen in its shadow in the river and where could be heard the sounds issuing both from the fountain and the caves.

The first part of the poem gives a description of a landscape that is almost paradisal in its beauty, a walled summer kingdom replete with a beautiful palace, abounding with gardens, winding streams, green hills and cedarn groves.

The river born out of a chasm branching out in "sinuous rills", fertilizing the forest and the gardens to run underground the caves, and finally joining the ocean is an important part of the landscape. The river is the sacred river itself, bursting out after an underground sojourn, like the classical Alpheus, from which its name Alph seems to be derived. As the river disappears into the sea Kubla hears prophecies of war. The idyllic calm of the opening line is threatened, and the movements of Alph seem to symbolize this. The pleasure dome is reflected in the river. The fountain is also seen as a metaphor for uncontrolled bounding energy and the caves, a metaphor for the final annihilation (Hough: 64).

The next part of the poem is dominated by the vision of an Abyssinian maid singing of Mount Abora. Mount Abora has been translated as a metaphor for Mount Amara, the fabled paradise of Milton, as seen in Paradise Lost Book IV 268-284. But it is at this time that memory fails Coleridge and he is unable to remember the song of the Abyssinian maid. The poet feels if he could re-live in his imagination the song of the Abyssinian maid, he himself could build the magic pleasure dome, as Kubla had done, and so would he become like Kubla a symbol of power though in a different realm altogether.

But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!
A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!
- "Kubla Khan or, a vision in a dream. A Fragment"

The recurrent Coleridgean theme of poetic inspiration becomes evident in the river merging into the ocean thus reaching its end. In this context Alph, the sacred river becomes a metaphor for the river of Muses, the poetic imagination, terrible yet seductive, and threatened ultimately with conflict and extinction. Could he only recapture at will the vision of it, and the paradise through which it flows, all his dreamed of poetry would get written and he would become the inspired magical prophet –bard which the quintessential romantic poet asks to be.

According to Humphry House Kubla Khan is a poem about the act of poetic creation and about the ecstasy in imaginative fulfillment as in the years 1797-1798 Coleridge far from bemoaning the loss of creative power was only just discovering its strength.

There are other interpretations though. Douglas Hedley in his essay ['Coleridge's Intellectual Intuition, the Vision of God, and the Walled Garden of "Kubla Khan"] suggests Coleridge as a Christian poet and philosopher. He proposes the walled garden for an image of transcendence used by fifteenth century Christian Platonist Nicholas of Cusa: "The concept of Glory" (the "supreme and transcendent end of all") he writes "is linked to the vision of the heavenly city, where the walls of paradise are the walls of finite intellect. The transformation of self-consciousness through the aid of indwelling Christ is a forecasting of the dwelling in the heavenly city. The heavenly city is an emphatic image of transcendence": of what he calls "beyond Being" (1998: 131).

On the same note drawing a parallel between the Platonic idea of the transformation of the soul and the oriental landscape of "Kubla Khan", Hedley cites one of Coleridge's entry in his Notebook, "In the paradisiacal World Sleep was voluntary & and holy—a spiritual; before God, in which the mind elevated by contemplation retired into pure intellect suspending all commerce with sensible objects & perceiving the present deity" (118).

ROMANTIC ORIENTALISM

"Romantic Orientalism" — the second term sometimes expanded to "Oriental exoticism" or "Oriental

fantasy" — brings together two concepts that continue to be much in dispute among theorists and literary historians. For practical purposes, "Romantic" here refers to the writers (and the ideas and culture they reflect) of the Romantic Period section of the *Norton Anthology of English Literature*, where the dates are given as 1785–1830. "Orientalism" refers to the geography and culture of large parts of Asia and North Africa, plus some of what we now think of as Eastern Europe. Above all, from a British point of view, "Orientalism" connotes foreignness or otherness — things decidedly *not* British — and it sometimes seems as if the "East" signified by "Orient" is not only what is east of Europe and the Mediterranean but everything east of the English Channel.

In literary history, Romantic Orientalism is the recurrence of recognizable elements of Asian and African place names, historical and legendary people, religions, philosophies, art, architecture, interior decoration, costume, and the likes in the writings of the British Romantics. At first glance, Romantic literature may seem to be divided between the natural settings of sheep fields in the southwest of England or the Lake District and the unnatural settings of medieval castles that are, for all their remoteness from present-day reality, always Christian and at least European, if not always British. But a closer look reveals a tiger — decidedly not indigenous to the British Isles — in one of Blake's most famous songs; an impressive dream of "an Arab of the Bedouin Tribes" in book 5 of Wordsworth's *Prelude*; the founder of the Mongol dynasty in China as well as an Abyssinian "damsel with a dulcimer" in Coleridge's "Kubla Khan"; Eastern plots, characters, and themes in Byron's "Oriental tales," some of which show up later in *Don Juan*; a poet's journey into the innermost reaches of the Caucasus (the legendary boundary between Europe and Asia) in Percy Shelley's *Alastor*; a tempting affair with an Indian maiden in Keats's "Endymion" and a feast of "dainties" from Fez, Samarcand, and Lebanon in "The Eve of St. Agnes"; an Arab maiden, Safie, as the most liberated character in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Orientalism, via the literature and art of the time, was increasingly in the air (as well as the texts) in both London and the British countryside.

For more click on the link below:
The Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Romantic Age: Topic 4: Overview, www.wwnorton.com

That the Christian tradition provides two images of paradise and two models of prophecy is one of the important ideas as proposed in the essay: the garden/city and prediction/vision. Hedley explains that there is a strong emphasis on Paradise as the walled garden and the vision of God as the glimpsing beyond the walls as the basis of his spiritual exercise or meditation.

In order to see beyond the material it is important for the human intellect to divest itself of difference and thus experience absolute unity. God dwells within the wall of paradise that is guarded by the highest spirit, that of reason, “God, within these walls is the trans-categorical unity, the coincidence of opposites, the spinning top” (123). The image extended is expressive of the thought that in God all the polarities merge distinguishing the infinite being from the finite. Thus in the third stanza the various fragmentary images of the poem are blended into a united whole.

"Dejection: An Ode"

British Night Sky,Photo taken by Flickr.com user Tom Bayly March 8, 2012 Creative Commons License, excellence-in-literature.com

Late, late yestreen I saw the new Moon,
With the old Moon in her arms;
And I fear, I fear, my Master dear!
We shall have a deadly storm.
(Ballad of Sir Patrick Spence)
- "Dejection: An Ode"

"Dejection" was written in 1802 but was originally drafted in the form of a letter to Sara Hutchinson, the woman Coleridge loved. It has been suggested by critics that it was for personal reasons (Coleridge was married to Sara Fricker) that Coleridge found it necessary to camouflage the real origin of his feelings, whereas others believe that it was actually about the loss of imaginative power and joy in his life.

The story of Sir Patrick Spence forming the epigraph of the poem is an ancient Scottish ballad about a sailor who drowns with a boat full of Scottish noblemen sailing on orders from the king against the better judgment of Spence himself. The ballad contains lines depicting the cycle of the moon's movements suggestive of predicting of storms, quoted by Coleridge as an epigraph for the ode. The landscape imagery- the rising wind- as seen in the impending storm is indicative of the hope of regeneration of spirit that Coleridge needed so much.

Putting aside the solipsistic view of himself and nature Coleridge tries to replace from the wind the projection of his own feelings and tries to listen to the wind in an effort to let the healing power of nature rejuvenate him. He escapes from his joyless condition and his attention moves away from himself in a loving prayer for another.

At the end it is no longer a, the grief lost in the power flow or "eddy of creativity" as Harold bloom worded it. Expanding the idea further Bloom comments that the image of the eddy is the "summary figure" of the poem indicating that the imaginative power, the blessed state is transient in nature " the glory comes and goes" irrespective of the stages of life, the progression is "simply linear" and "irreversible" (223). Bloom finds the poem's repetitiveness meaningful, for rejecting the myth of Wordsworth's "Child".

In his essay "Coleridge's Scrofulous Dejection" Martin Wallen highlights the reasons for the dejected state as suffered by Coleridge and as reflected in the poem. That it was due to his protracted illness, his unreciprocated love for Sara Hutchinson and his unhappy marital life is by now common knowledge. One of the interesting pieces of information that Wallen discloses is that "Dejection" was written as "One of several appeals to friends to understand the reasons for his lack of productivity" and to garner their faith regarding his poetic prowess " that he still

possessed the potential to write something that would match Wordsworth's achievement" (2000:555) .

Wallen informs that the condition that Coleridge was suffering from was in medical terminology called "scrofula". Scrofula was characterized by a capricious appetite oscillating between insatiability and aversion to food, distended belly, irregular bowels and in general a feeling of indisposition accompanied by lethargy. Scrofula added with rheumatism- from which Coleridge suffered- was aggravated by cold weather.

The opening of "Dejection" describes an onset of a squally weather which made things further difficult for scrofulous patients. In a letter of 1802 Coleridge writes to his brother James that he felt for him there was no relief for him "in any part of England.—Very hot weather brings about in an instant--& I relapse as soon as it coldens" (Wallen: 560).

It was in 1808 that Coleridge began admitting of his addiction to opium as the reason for his stomach complaint and as he could not make the information public he transferred the symptoms to Scrofula. For him the addiction to opium meant "the absence of ethos" (Wallen 556). And this can be seen as the beginning of the end of his imaginative/ creative faculty.

The original version of "Dejection" was in the form of "verses" linked closely to an entry in the Note- Book of Coleridge where he wrote, "O Sara wherefore am I not happy! Why for years have I not enjoyed one pure and sincere pleasure! One full joy! –one genuine Delight, that rings sharp to the Beat of the Finger!—all cracked, dull with base Alloy!" (cited by House: 133).

That he had many things to worry about and was not happy is indicated in Dorothy Wordsworth's journal of 1801 where she writes on Coleridge's departure for spending the winter in London, "Poor C. left us and we came home together….O how many, many reasons have I to be anxious for him."(1973: 624)

Freeing Coleridge from the charge of self-pity in the poem Humphry House observes that "Dejection: An Ode" is "not primarily a poem about modes of perception. It is a poem about unhappiness and about love and about joy. Of the later autobiographical poems there is least

self-pity in it, the self-analysis being all the clearer and more mature…" (1968: 137). He reiterates, the idea of joy was a guiding principle in the life of Coleridge.

It is interesting to note that when the verse letter was turned into an ode not only many of the references to stanzas related to Wordsworth were removed but overt references to Sara Hutchinson and Coleridge's unhappy marital life were also eliminated. The person addressed in the poem for all practical purposes became William rather than Sara when published on Wordsworth's wedding day, finally to be substituted by "lady" when included in a book.[3]

O Lady! we receive but what we give,
And in our life alone does Nature live:
Ours is her wedding garment, ours her shroud!
– "Dejection: An Ode"

Critics have suggested that for personal reasons Coleridge found it necessary, to hide the real origins of his feelings; others that he realized his real concern was the loss of imagination and so he reshaped the poem to highlight this loss. Still others feel that having experienced such deep grief, he used *Dejection* to explore the process of grief with which the experience began.

In the poem Coleridge clearly states that the joy and beauty experienced in the external world are a reflection of the state of the internal world of the individual, that of the poet here who has lost the joy of living and finds his imaginative power the poorer for it. But, he maintains, such is not the case for the woman he loves as she being pure of heart is still alive to the joys of the world.

Methinks were fitter instruments for thee,
Mad Lutanist! who in this month of showers,
Of dark-brown gardens, and of peeping flowers,
Mak'st Devils' yule, with worse than wintry song,
The blossoms, buds, and timorous leaves among.

-"Dejection: An Ode"

Belonging to the conversation poems of Coleridge "Dejection" shares the characteristics of blank verse meditations, informal, offhand and unpretentious (Fairbanks: 875) in nature.

Regarding the assimilation of the conversational form with the ode form as seen in "Dejection", A. Harris Fairbanks is of the opinion that as the conversation poems frequently depicted a meditation beginning with a relaxed mental state following a single, continuous curve of emotion to a quiet conclusion, it could not possibly represent such a deeply disturbing mental crisis as that Coleridge was undergoing. The odic form of the poem manifesting itself in the tension between the completeness of the strophes and their relation with the whole thus becomes a perfect choice to represent Coleridge's ideal of "unity in multeity" (1975:879).

Links to Essays:

- Coleridge as a Philologian by JH Hanford - - JStor,www.jstor.org/stable/432949

- 'Kubla Khan': The Poet in the Poem by G Little - 2008, openjournals.library.usyd.edu.au/index.php/SSE/article/download/.../413

Audio –Video Links:

- "Kubla Khan" by Samuel Taylor Coleridge (read by Tom O'Bedlam) www.youtube.com/watch?v=U8mqHCgVdZc

- Samuel Taylor Coleridge - Kubla Khan - Ralph Richardson - Video Daily motion, www.dailymotion.com

- Dejection: An Ode by Samuel Taylor Coleridge I-V - YouTube www.youtube.com

- Poetry Analysis 1 Dejection An Ode by S T ... - YouTube www.youtube.com

NOTES

1. See "The social Setting' by Edgell Rickword. *The Pelican Guide to English Literature : From Blake to Byron. Op.cit.*
2. For details confer The Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Romantic Age: review: Summarywww.wwnorton.com
3. See *Romantic Poetry and Prose, op.cit.*

GLOSSARY

Analgesic: A drug that relieves pain

Biblical: Of, relating to, or being in accord with the Bible

Gout: A kind of arthritis that causes attacks of pain or swelling in one or more joints

Highgate: A suburban area of North London

Linton: A village in rural area Cambridgeshire, England

Multeity: Mutliplicity

Nephritic attacks: Pain associated with disorder affecting the kidneys

Odic: Of, relating to, or forming an ode

Opium: A reddish- brown, heavy-scented addictive drug prepared from the juice of opium from the poppy

Pantisocracy: A form of utopian social organization in which all are equal in social position and responsibility

Porlock: A coastal village in Somerset, England

Rheumatism: Any of various conditions characterized by inflammation or pain in muscles, joints, or fibrous tissue

Scrofula: A form of tuberculosis

Tranquillizer: Drug used to reduce mental anxiety and tumult

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