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CREATIVITY AND IMAGINATION IN KUBLA KHAN

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ABSTRACT

Kubla Khan is one of the beautiful poems of S.T.Coleridge. He wrote the hallucinatory poem shortly after waking up from an opium- influenced dream in 1797.In the poem, the poet envisions the landscape surrounding the Mongol ruler and Chinese emperor Kubla Khan 's summer palace called "Xanadu" describing it as a place of beauty and pleasure. The holy river Alph ran through dark caves. Finally there is description of an Abyssinian maid playing a stringed instrument sing about Mount Abora.

Keywords : Hallucinatory, Envision, Intoxication, Consume, Substance

Kubla Khan has been considered one of the well-known works of English Romantic Poet S.T. Coleridge. Different critics have given different opinions about the poem in the past more than 200 years. The aim of my research paper is to highlight the art of creativity and imagination in Kubla Khan. The poet S.T.Coleridge wrote KublaKhan in the autumn of 1797, allegedly in a farmhouse near Exmoor, but it was published only in 1816. The poet himself accept it as an opium-induced dream as it is implied in the secondary title of the poem: A Vision in a Dream. Furthermore, it is also supposed that the imagery of the poem is partly inspired by Marco Polo's reports about his journey to China and the description of the area called "Shangdu" which is identical with the poem's spot called Xanadu where Mongolian ruler Kubla Khan really used to have a summer palace in the 13 th century. The description of Marco Polo was also included in in Samuel Purchas's book titled Pilgrimage (Vol.xi,231).

S.T. Coleridge himself hints in his note to the poem.

" In the summer of the year 1797,the Author, then in ill health, had retired to a lonely farmhouse between Porlock and Linton, on the Exmoor confines of Somerset and Devonshire. In consequence of a slight indisposition, an anodyne had been prescribed, from the effects of which he fell asleep in his chair at the moment that he was reading the following sentence, or words of the same substance, in Purchas's Pilgrimage."

Since the poet himself commented on the composition of the work, it is possible he wrote it under the influence of drugs or the vision described in the poem was caused by intoxication.

The poem is divided into three parts. It begins with the description of a wonderful palace built by Mongolian and Chinese ruler Kubla Khan in Xanadu a really existing geographical area situated in China. Kubla Khan was a really historical character existed once and even the palace described in the background. Outside

the visionary palace a holy river, the Alph is flowing into the dark, sunless sea as Coleridge describes. Then the poem continues with the description of the fertile grounds near the palace and it also turns out that the building is surrounded by ancient forests and hills. In short, the first paragraph describes a historical, but at the same time seemingly supernatural and mythical, majestic world dominated by Kubla Khan. It appears such awstatic world which is beyond of time.

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

The second part describes a mysterious canyon. A geyser erupted from the canyon throwing rubble into the air and forming the source of the sacred river Alph. The journey of the river is described in beautiful words. It crawls through the woods, caves and dark sea. An image of pleasure dome reflected on the water, surrounded by the sound of the geyser aboveground and the river underground.

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 warning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon –lover!

The third stanza describes an Abyssinian maid. The speaker saw the maid in a vision playing a dulcimer. She was singing of Mount Abora if he could revive her song within himself, he says, he would revive the pleasure dome itself with music. Those who heard would also see themselves there, and cry out a warning. Their warning concerns an alarming male figure. The stanza ends with instructions and warning, to carry out a ritual because he has consumed the food of paradise.

A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw
It was an Abyssinian maid
And on her dulcimer she played
Singing of Mount Abora.

The poem is different in style and form from other poems composed by Coleridge. Its language is highly stylized with a strong emphasis on sound devices that change between the poem's two original stanzas. The first stanza describes Khan's pleasure dome built alongside sacred river fed by a powerful fountain and the second stanza is the speaker's response to the power and effects of an Abyssinian maid's song. The rhythm of the poem, like its themes and images, is different from other poems Coleridge wrote. The poem relies on many Sound based techniques, including cognate variation and chiasmus. There is heavy use of assonance, vowel sounds and alliteration. Repetition of the first sound of a word, within the poem including the first line:" In Xanadu did Kubla Khan.

The poem is a beautiful creation of imaginative world. The poem depicts that the speaker has been imagining what the place of Xanadu would look like. This makes him recall an experience he had ,and he wonders if his imagination could ever do it justice in describing it. The image of the dome shaped by imagination rather than reality – It is sunny but filled with 'caves of ice'. Coleridge knows how imagination influences people to create things.

Thus the research paper focuses how S.T. Coleridge mingled creativity with imagination to create magical effect.

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