

85
Thro' gardens, lanes, and fields new-plough'd,
Thro' his hedge, and thro' her hedge
He plung'd and toss'd, and bellow'd loud—
And in his madness he grew proud
To see this helter-skelter crowd,
That had more wrath than courage!

90
Alack! to mend the breaches wide,
He made for these poor ninnies,
They all must work, whate'er betide,
Both days and months, and pay beside
(Sad news for Av'rice and for Pride)
A sight of golden guineas!

95
But now once more to view did pop
The man that kept his senses—
And now he bawl'd—"Stop, neighbours, stop!
"The ox is mad! I would not swop,
"No, not a school-boy's farthing top
"For all the parish fences.

100
"The ox is mad! Tom! Walter! Mat!
"What means this coward fuss?
"Ho! stretch this rope across the plat—
"I will trip him up!—or if not that,
"Why, dam me! we must lay him flat—
"See! here's my blunderbuss."

105
"A barefac'd dog! just now he said,
"The ox was only glad!
"Let's break his Presbyterian head—"
"Hush!" quoth the sage, "you've been misled;
"No quarrels now! let's all make heed,
"You drove the poor ox mad!"

110
But lo, to interrupt my chat,
With the morning's wet newspaper,
In eager haste, without his hat,

115
116. wet newspaper] Printing was some time to dry. The modern equivalent is "hot from the press".

120
As blind and blind'ring as a bat,
In rush'd that fierce aristocrat,
The pury woollen-drapeer.

And so per force my muse drew bit,
And he rush'd in and panted!
"Well, have you heard,"—"No, not a whit,"
"What! han't you heard?"—"Come, out with it!"
"That TIERNEY's wounded Mr. PITT,
And his fine tongue enchanted?"

178. KUBLA KHAN OR, A VISION IN A DREAM

[Sept–Nov 1797? May 1798? Oct 1799?]

The date of *Kubla Khan* is disputed and is likely to remain uncertain. The three most likely possibilities are Sept–Nov 1797, May 1798, and Oct 1799, but conclusive evidence is lacking as a result of C's unconcern, at a conscious level, for what he had achieved. The poem occupied his thoughts not at all compared with his developing self-recognition in 161 *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and the burden of his hopes for the continuation of 176 *Christabel*. It was published on the spur of the moment, to pad out the *Christabel* volume and at Byron's request, though it might otherwise have found a place in the final pages of *SL*, in the "Odes and Miscellaneous Poems" section.

C's lack of interest must seem wilful in the light of studies like *RX*, which show how deeply the themes and images of the poem engaged him. Its composition called on associative processes of a kind and range found only in the *Ancient Mariner*, and, though the background of *Kubla Khan* tends to be more esoteric and speculative, many sources are shared. *Kubla Khan* differs from the *Ancient Mariner* and C's other poems in another way which is odd, when taken alongside his declared lack of commitment to what he had done. It is unique in the extent to which its images and rhythms reverberate in poems he wrote before and after. The overlap is not of theme and preoccupation, as in the group of poems concerned with a curse, of which 155 *Continuation of "The Three Graves"* and 176 *Christabel* are obvious examples, but partial, more poetic, and more widespread. Like a half-forgotten or repressed phrase, it persists in the approximations to it and variations from it, from 115 *The Eolian Harp* to 652 *The Garden of Boccaccio*, establishing a distinctive web of connections.

C's emphasis on the dream origins of the poem need not be doubted—WW

did not doubt them, for instance (*Life, Journals, and Letters of Henry Alford* ed Fanny Alford 62)—but it is as well to clarify what precise elements in the poem derive from these origins. *Kubla Khan* has an organised formal structure, in which paragraphs or stanzas relate to one another in a way made familiar by 18th-century writers of odes such as William Collins. The complicated rhyming scheme and the allusions, particularly to Milton, make the poem coherent and literary, whether it was spontaneously composed in a dream or not.

Given the evident care with which *Kubla Khan* was put together and the clarity of its structural relations, the uncertainty which surrounds those same relations is remarkable. That is, while the division between lines 1–36 and line 37 to the end is clear, and while the transition from the third-person description of the protagonist to the poet commenting in his own person is thematically obvious, all other connections are undecided. The parts of the poem and the roles of the figures within it are complementary, in counterpoint, but it is not clear how. The tonal significance of the word “Could” in line 42 is neither neutral nor unambiguous. It carries emotion, but you cannot say what sort. The completeness of C’s statement is even less certain than in unfinished narratives like 182 *The Ballad of the Dark Lady* or 253 *Love*, because of this suspension of moral determinacy.

The role of the main characters even separately is ambivalent in a similar way. Kubla Khan was not an admirable person, either in the contemporary view or in C’s. His name was a byword for cruelty and oppression, and there is evidence that C associated Kubla’s pleasure-dome with Catherine of Russia’s ice-palace and his empire-building with Napoleon’s devastation of Europe. What is distinctive in the poem, therefore, is the way these associations and values are neutralised. Themes of the luxury and ambition of princes, of property and pride, associations with figures like Cain and Nimrod and Jubal—besides those already mentioned—are translated into a poem about creativity, in which they lose all but the shadow of their moral and political urgency. The protagonist undergoes metamorphosis in the course of composition, to emerge as a type of the creator-poet, more romantic than ferocious, bringing order rather than loosing destruction. At the same time, the damsel with a dulcimer and the poet himself share in the ambiguity. The paradise she sings of in the ms version is Milton’s false paradise, Mount Amara, and the inspired poet is estranged like the poet-madman of Plato’s *Ion*.

The nature of C’s involvement with the poem is commensurate with its mystery, openness, and depth—qualities he apparently feared might disguise a moral abyss. For this reason, the Preface complements the poem in the same way that the gloss does in the *Ancient Mariner*, linking the poem to the rest of C’s concerns with the help of prosaic details almost certainly invented for the occasion. Up to the time he published the poem, C was prepared to repeat it for sympathetic listeners, like Mary Robinson or Byron, or in convivial surroundings, like CL’s; but there are no transcripts as there are in the case of *Christabel*. The single holograph ms of the poem is unusual in being actually a fair copy

for presentation (see vol II Fig 8), and it and the four printed texts of the poem differ very little. The text printed here is the first printed one, but using the corrected Greek of *PW* (1834) at the end of the Preface, and emending the start of line 11.

OF THE FRAGMENT OF KUBLA KHAN

The following fragment is here published at the request of a poet of great and deserved celebrity, and as far as the Author’s own opinions are concerned, rather as a psychological curiosity, than on the ground of any supposed *poetic* merits.

1.5

In the summer of the year 1797, the Author, then in ill health, had retired to a lonely farm-house 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:” “Here the Khan Kubla commanded a palace to be built, and a stately garden thereunto. And thus ten miles of fertile ground were inclosed with a wall.” The author continued for about three hours in a profound sleep, at least of the external senses, during which time he has the most vivid confidence, that he could not have composed less than from two to three hundred lines; if that indeed can be called composition in which all the images rose up before him as *things*, with a parallel production of the correspondent expressions, without any sensation or consciousness of effort. On awaking he appeared to himself to have a distinct recollection of the whole, and

1.15

of *TT* for 26 Sept 1830 (VCL S MS 20, clutch 6, ff 32^v–33^r = *TT*–CC—1 205) and *CN* III 4006 f 23ⁿ.

1.8. indisposition . . . anodyne] The ms identifies the indisposition as dysentery, and the anodyne as “two grains of Opium”.

1.10. The sentence in Purchas’s *Pilgrimage* (1617 ed p 472), which the ms follows more closely, is as follows: “In *Xamdu* did *Cublai Can* build a stately Palace, encompassing sixteen miles of plaine ground with a wall, wherein are fertile Meddowes, pleasant springs, delightful Streames, and all sorts of beasts of chase and game, and in the midst thereof a sumptuous house of pleasure, which may be removed from place to place.”

1.2–3. poet of great and deserved celebrity] Lord Byron. Byron’s enthusiasm for the poem was recorded by Thomas Medwin (*Conversations of Lord Byron* ed Lovell 178).

1.6. summer of the year 1797] The ms dates the composition in “the fall of the year 1797”. The argument for the date May 1798 rests on a notebook entry of 1810 (*CN* III 4006 f 23^v), which refers to a period of retirement following the intensification of C’s quarrel with Charles Lloyd.

1.7. a lonely farm-house between Porlock and Linton] Identified (on the basis of the ms description “a quarter of a mile from Culbone Church”) as Ash Farm; or as Broomstreet Farm, which is 2 miles from Culbone church, on the basis of a ms fragment

taking his pen, ink, and paper, instantly and eagerly wrote down the lines that are here preserved. At this moment he was unfortunately called out by a person on business from Portlock, and detained by him above an hour, and on his return to his room, found to his no small surprise and mortification, that though he still retained some vague and dim recollection of the general purpose of the vision, yet, with the exception of some eight or ten scattered lines and images, all the rest had passed away like the images on the surface of a stream into which a stone has been cast, but, alas! without the after restoration of the latter.

Then all the charm

Is broken—all that phantom-world so fair
Vanishes, and a thousand circlets spread,
And each mis-shape the other. Stay awhile,
Poor youth! who scarcely dar'st lift up thine eyes—
The stream will soon renew its smoothness, soon
The visions will return! And lo, he stays,
And soon the fragments dim of lovely forms
Come trembling back, unite, and now once more
The pool becomes a mirror.

Yet from the still surviving recollections in his mind, the Author has frequently purposed to finish for himself what had been originally, as it were, given to him. Ἀῦριον ἄδιον ἄσω: but the to-morrow is yet to come.

As a contrast to this vision, I have annexed a fragment of a very different character, describing with equal fidelity the dream of pain and disease.

In Xanadu did KUBLA KHAN

A stately pleasure-dome decree:

Where ALPH, the sacred river, ran

1.28-37. Then all the charm . . .] larly complicated patterns of sound in From 300 *The Picture* 91-100.

1.40. Ἀῦριον ἄδιον ἄσω] Theocritus *Idyll* 1.145 (var) τὸ "Tomorrow I shall sing more sweetly." The Greek phrase as originally printed was superficially closer to Theocritus (instead of Ἀῦριον, Σήμερον for Theocritus' ὑστερον "later"), but nonsensical since σήμερον means "today".

1.41-2. a fragment of a very different character] 335 *The Pains of Sleep*, composed in Sept 1803.

1. KHAN] C almost certainly pronounced the word as it was sometimes spelled, "Can". In view of the particu-

Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.

So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round;
And here were gardens bright with sinuous rills
Where blossom'd many an incense-bearing tree;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

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!
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
A mighty fountain momently was forced:

Amid whose swift half-intermitted Burst
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:
And mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momentarily the sacred river.

Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reached the caverns measureless to man,
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war!

The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves;
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.

Such implications do not exclude one another or others. 6, five] The ms reads "six", which is closer to Purchas's *Pilgrimage*, 1795-8. 11. greenery] Apparently the first occurrence of the word.

35
It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw:
It was an Abyssinian maid
And on her dulcimer she play'd,
Singing of Mount Abora.
Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 'twould win me,
That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread:
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drank the milk of Paradise.

179. CONTRIBUTION TO
WE ARE SEVEN,
BY WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[Mar-May 1798]

40
WW's poem was one of several written specially to make up the collection of *LB* (*WPW* 1 236-8). He described how it came to be written in a note for Isabella Fenwick, in 1843:

45
When it was all but finished, I came in and recited it to Mr. Coleridge and my Sister, and said, "A prefatory stanza must be added, and I should sit down to our little tea-meal with greater pleasure if my task were finished." I mentioned in substance what I wished to be expressed, and Coleridge immediately threw off the stanza thus . . . I objected to the rhyme, "dear brother Jem," as being ludicrous, but we all enjoyed the joke of hitching-in our friend, James Tobin's name, who was familiarly called Jem. (*WPW* 1 361-2; cf *The Fenwick Notes of William Wordsworth* ed Jared Curtis—Bristol 1993—3)

50
WW repeated the same story of C's contribution to other interested persons (*CRB* II 481; *Whately Personal and Family Glimpses of Remarkable People* 205). When the poem was published in *LB* (1798), the first line was revised to read "A simple child, dear brother Jim," and this reading was retained in subsequent editions of *LB*. When the poem was collected in *WW's Poems* (1815), the first line was revised again to read "— A simple child."

On James Webbe Tobin (1767-1814) see *WL* (*E* rev) 210n. WW had come to know him through the Pinneys at Racedown. After Oxford, Tobin's failing sight had prevented him from entering the Church, and he turned to help his brother John, the dramatist, in London. He was a guest at Alfoxden in Sept 1797, he contributed to the second volume of *RS's Annual Anthology* in 1800, and he left England for the West Indies in 1809, where he died completely blind.

The present single stanza stands for an entire category of assistance contributed by C to WW's poetry which is not as easily quantifiable. Other stanzas and revisions are in his hand in WW's mss, but he never claimed them, nor did WW specify him as their author. The evidence is now widely available in the facsimile Cornell Wordsworth ed Stephen Parrish (Ithaca 1975-); also in the facsimile *Manuscript of William Wordsworth's "Poems, in Two Volumes" (1807)* ed W. H. Kelliker (1984). In general, in ways that have long been recognised, the relation between WW and C cannot be measured by detached passages but is symbiotic and entire.

36*. The later printed versions have *PL* IV 280-7. Leigh Hunt remembered no line-space here, which may or may not be an uncorrected printer's error of the sort found in later printings of 176 *Christabel*. The only certain stanza-division in the ms occurs at this point. The paragraphing suggests subtly different relations between the groups of lines.

41. Abora] The ms reading (first "Amora", then "Amara") recalls the false Abyssinian paradise described in