locales ayant trait à la maison, que j’ignore, mais qui fait subsister, même dans notre civilisation si émiettée et désaxée, un quid de l’ancienne conception de la maison où résidait le chef de famille, quelque chose comme un pluralis majestatis à la 3e personne. Il est très bien possible que Chez Vandamme... soit interprété dans des milieux picards ou picardisants comme l’article du pluriel (et c’est ce sentiment qui doit avoir suggéré l’explication de M. Vaganay), mais ce serait alors une explication locale d’un fait de langue répandu sur une aire beaucoup plus étendue.

LEO SPITZER

A NOTE ON COLERIDGE’S “KUBLA KHAN”

Nearly all critics appear to believe Coleridge’s statement in the preface to “Kubla Khan” that he wrote the poem during an opium dream. This acceptance of Coleridge’s story is, however, strange, for the poem itself proves that it is inaccurate. In the preface, after declaring that, while asleep from the effects of an

Pape), à sa fille celui de Manette Pape, au petit-fils celui de “le moinet de chez le père Pape”—l’appartenance à la maison des Pape est bien soulignée. Cf. l’anc. ital. Marco Lombardo della casa Lombardo di Venezia ou Marco Daca [= Marco da cà (= casa)] Lombardo, cité par E. Levi, RFH 1, 352, le vénitien Madonna Lisetta daca (= de casa) Quirino (Boccace, Decam. iv, 2), l’asturien ca ti fulano ‘en casa (de) tío fulano’ (Garcia-Lomas). Enfin, une expression comme “Ce sont des gens qui ont été bien de chez eux” dans la bouche des Bretonnes de P. Loti (Matelots, p. 79, les italiques sont originales) se traduirait bel et bien en all. von Haus aus reich et l’idée de la ‘maison,’ ‘famille,’ y est encore latente.

Il est entendu que chez retire d’une main ce qu’il donne de l’autre: la notion de casa y est présente, mais à l’état atténué: c’est plutôt le corps astral, l’atmosphère de la maison que celle-ci. Les traductions de chez par ‘bei, zu,’ ‘with, to’ etc. sont toutes fausses. Brunot, “Histoire de la langue française” III, 645 rapporte la résistance des grammairiens du XVIIe siècle à admettre je m’en vais chez vous, dit à quelqu’un qui est logé dans la même maison (Oudin), et chez Plutarque ‘dans les œuvres de P.’ (Vaugelas). Je suppose qu’encore aujourd’hui chez Plutarque fait vaguement supposer un personnage entouré d’une ambiance à lui, alors que dans Plutarque n’évoque qu’un bouquin. Littré glose bien ‘dans l’esprit de,’ l’esprit étant l’essence aérienne de la maison. Cf. anglais with Shakespeare... en comparaison avec in Sh. we find...
anodyne, the author composed from two to three hundred lines of poetry, Coleridge continues:

On awaking he appeared to have a distinct recollection of the whole, and 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 Porlock, 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 purport of the vision, yet, with the exception of some eight or ten scattered lines and images, all the rest had passed away.

Coleridge says that he had written down "the lines that are here preserved" before the "person" interrupted him, but this cannot be literally true; for the last part of the poem, that beginning "A damsel with a dulcimer," is a comment on Coleridge's loss of the vision. He says that he would build the dome in air if he could, a statement which implies that he is unable to, that he has already forgotten his dream. Coleridge must then have been interrupted before he wrote these final lines. In other words, "Kubla Khan" is not really a fragment. It is a complete lyric made up of a fragment of a vision and a comment on the loss of the rest of that vision. And the comment is so enchantingly sung that few readers would trade it for more of the vision. Perhaps the visitor from Porlock deserves thanks for what he did.

In The Road to Xanadu Professor Lowes has made the usual assumption that these last eighteen lines are part of the dream. His discoveries of sources have, in fact, confirmed him in the error. Finding that the picture Coleridge has given of himself at the end of the poem is apparently influenced by a description of the followers of a Tartar Emperor in Purchas his Pilgrimes and by a description of an Abyssinian King in James Bruce's Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile, Lowes fails to see that it is, nevertheless, a picture of Coleridge. He speaks, in fact, of the "Tartar youth with flashing eyes" and argues that the "vivid incoherence" of his introduction into the poem should banish doubt that the lines were dreamed by Coleridge. Lowes does say at one point that it is just possible that Coleridge was interrupted before he finished the poem, but he assumes that even

1 The Road to Xanadu, pp. 362, 378-9.
2 Ibid., pp. 409, 363.
3 Ibid., p. 409.
if this is so the closing lines of the poem represent memories of
the dream and that the figure with flashing eyes and floating hair
is a remnant of the vision.4

It is certain, however, that the flashing eyes and floating hair
belong to Coleridge. Coleridge is saying that if he could describe
Kubla’s dome,5 listeners would be in awe of him. They would
shrink from him when they saw his (Coleridge’s own) flashing
eyes and floating hair, signs that he had eaten of divine food, i. e.,
that he was feeling a divine inspiration.

Lowes might have been less certain that the passage from Bruce
cited above was the source for the flashing eyes and floating hair
if he had realized that Coleridge was describing himself. Of course
it is not impossible that Coleridge remembered the words of Bruce
(“[the king’s] long hair floating around his face, wrapt up in his
mantle so that nothing but his eyes could be seen”) when he drew
this picture of himself, but a more important influence was proba-
ably what he had seen in the mirror.6 Nearly every contemporary
who describes Coleridge declares that his eyes were bright and
animated, particularly when he was talking. Dorothy Wordsworth
was greatly impressed by this fact when she first met him. She
says in her letter to Mary Hutchinson of June, 1797: “His eye
... speaks every emotion of his animated mind; it has more of the

4 As proof that he considered this part of the dream, we have Lowes’
statement (p. 363) that “nobody in his waking senses could have fabri-
cated those amazing [last] eighteen lines.” Elsewhere (p. 104) he says
that in “Kubla Khan” “we see the unconscious playing its game alone.”
Practically all other critics have also treated the whole poem as a dream.
Among those who have been most specific in their statements to this effect
are H. D. Traill in Coleridge, pp. 56-57; Robert Graves in The Meaning
of Dreams (London, 1924), pp. 146-159; M. H. Abrams in The Milk of
Paradise (Cambridge, 1934), pp. 46-47; and Lawrence Hanson in The Life
“Kubla Khan” “the supreme example in English literature of the work-
ings of the creative subconscious, unhelped—or unhindered—by conscious
composition.”

5 Coleridge does not explain why the recall of a song sung by a damsel
in another vision would enable him to bring back the vision of the pleasure
dome. Apparently he feels that both visions are locked in the same part of
his brain.

6 Clement Carlyon in Early Years and Late Reflections (London, 1836),
1, 29, reports that Coleridge was wont to look at himself whenever there
was a mirror in the room.
‘poet’s eye in a fine frenzy rolling’ than I ever witnessed.” 7 Then, too, Coleridge’s hair was many times described as being long and disordered. William Jordan even declares that it floated in the air on one occasion when Coleridge was excited. 8 Most striking are the frequent descriptions of the animation of Coleridge’s face when he was talking or reading his poetry, 9 and the evidence that he was himself conscious of (and conceited about) his fine appearance on such occasions. 10 Such testimony leaves little doubt that at the end of “Kubla Khan” Coleridge has pictured himself, not a creature from his dream. 11

7 Hazlitt in “My First Acquaintance with Poets” (Complete Works, ed. P. P. Howe [London, 1930-34], xvii, 109) and Harriet Martineau in her Autobiography (Boston, 1877), i, 299, make similar statements.

8 Autobiography (London, 1853), iv, 233. Dorothy Wordsworth (loc. cit.) calls Coleridge’s hair “longish” and “loose-growing,” and Hazlitt (loc. cit.) says that it “fell in smooth masses over his forehead.”

9 Charles Cowden Clarke in Recollections of Writers (London, 1878), p. 64, gives the following description of Coleridge as he appeared in the midst of an outburst of praise for Beethoven: “His elevated tone as he rolled forth his gorgeous sentences, his lofty look, his sustained flow of language, his sublime utterance, gave the effect of some magnificent organ peal to our entranced ears.” See also Lamb’s description of Coleridge in a letter to Wordsworth dated April 26, 1818, and Washington Allston’s comment on Coleridge’s appearance when the “divine afflatus” possessed him (Life and Letters of Washington Allston [New York, 1892], p. 104).

10 Clement Carlyon (op. cit., i, 29-30) says that Coleridge boasted about how his negligence in dress was lost sight of the moment he began to talk, and Thomas Frognall Dibdin declares in Reminiscences of a Literary Life (London, 1836), i, 255, that Coleridge’s face revealed “the secret conviction that his auditors seemed to be entranced with his powers of discourse.”

11 Lowes’ discovery of a Tartar youth in “Kubla Khan” is influenced by his postulated source from Purchas (Road to Xanadu, pp. 362-363). Purchas tells how a Tartar emperor introduced his followers to a cleverly contrived paradise filled with damfools and provided with milk, honey, and clear water. Thereafter these warriors, hoping to die and enter that paradise forever, were fearless in battle. Lowes’ assumption is that the one with flashing eyes and floating hair in “Kubla Khan” is such a warrior and that he is therefore to be feared. But Coleridge in fact represents the flashing eyes and floating hair as inspiring holy dread—that is, awe rather than terror. And since this is so, may the milk and honey not have come from the Promised Land of the Old Testament, which is many times (Exodus, 3, 8; Lev., 20, 24; Josh. 5, 6; etc.) described as flowing with milk and honey? According to the NED. honey dew and honey are often synonymous.
Even though the sense of the poem did not prove that the last lines of "Kubla Khan" were written after the visitor had returned to Porlock, the student of Coleridge might very well have been able to guess that such was the case. For there is a difference between what one imagines when under the influence of opium and what one imagines when not under that influence. This has been made clear by De Quincey, who describes the effect of opium on his imagination in part as follows:

I seemed every night to descend—not metaphorically, but literally to descend—into chasms and sunless abysses, depths below depths, from which it seemed hopeless that I could ever reascend. . . .

The sense of space, and in the end the sense of time, were both powerfully affected. Buildings, landscapes, &c., were exhibited in proportions so vast as the bodily eye is not fitted to receive. Space swelled and was amplified to an extent of unutterable and self-repeating infinity. This, however, did not disturb me so much as the vast expansion of time. Sometimes I seemed to have lived for seventy or a hundred years in one night; nay, sometimes had feelings representative of a duration far beyond the limits of any human experience.\(^{19}\)

Now in the first part of "Kubla Khan" there are several indications of these effects. It is true that Coleridge does not reveal them in so extraordinary a manner as De Quincey, but it is to be remembered that Coleridge was as yet a neophyte in his use of the drug. Certainly Coleridge's "deep romantic chasm," his caverns, and his sunless sea are like De Quincey's "chasms and sunless abysses." Moreover, in the first part of "Kubla Khan" there are indications that Coleridge was experiencing the widening of the limits of space and time described by De Quincey. The caverns are "measureless to man," \(^{13}\) the forests are "ancient as the hills," and Kubla hears a message from the remote past,—"ancestral voices prophesying war." \(^{14}\) In the last eighteen lines of the

\(^{19}\) *Collected Writings*, ed. David Masson, iii, 435. As M. H. Abrams states (*op. cit.*, p. 65, n.), confirmation of these symptoms occurs in almost every article that has been written on the subject of opium.

\(^{13}\) It must be admitted that one finite phrase, "twice five miles of fertile ground," sounds unlike a part of an opium dream.

\(^{14}\) There is another indication that the first part of the poem was written when Coleridge was affected by opium. In a letter which he wrote to his brother George in 1798, Coleridge said: "Laudanum gave me repose, not sleep; but you, I believe, know how divine that repose is, what a spot of enchantment, a green spot of fountain and flowers and trees in the very
poem, on the other hand, the images are clearly outlined and finite. The damsel with the dulcimer and Coleridge himself are described with poetic imagination, but they have none of the vagueness and grandeur of the phantoms of an opium dream. This change in atmosphere is striking.

Lines 31-36 of "Kubla Khan," those beginning with "The shadow of the dome of pleasure," lie between the two parts discussed above. These lines may, of course, represent the "eight or ten scattered lines or images" that remained of the dreamed poem after the person from Porlock had departed. If so, the composition of the poem is to be described as follows: Lines 1-30 are what Coleridge had written down when he was interrupted; lines 31-36 represent his effort to continue the vision; and lines 37-54 are his comment on his loss of the vision.

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JOHN MIRK ON BONFIRES, ELEPHANTS AND DRAGONS

In his homily for the feast of St. John the Baptist John Mirk describes the manner of celebrating the vigil, a description of obvious value to the historian of folk-custom and yet, apparently, little noted. The account runs:

But set, yn þe worship of Saynt Ion, men waken at evyn and maken þre maner of fyrys: on ys clen bonys and no wod, and ys callyd a bonne-fyre; anþer ys of clene wod and no bonys, and ys callyd a wakefyre, for men syttyth and wakyth by hit; þe thryd ys made of bonys and of wode, and ys callyd Saynt Ionys fyre.

heart of waste sands" (Letters of S. T. Coleridge, ed. E. H. Coleridge [New York, 1895], I, 240). The letter, whether written before or after "Kubla Khan," indicates that the luxuriant beauty of a garden was to Coleridge a symbol for the repose found in opium.

Sir James G. Frazer, for example, in Balder the Beautiful (London, 1913) discusses the St. John fires in Europe with copious reference to our sources of information. It is significant that he makes no mention of Mirk's testimony. See Balder the Beautiful, pp. 160-219.