

Dreams, nature and illusions

Ibsen

- The 'doll house' is a perverse masculine dream, created by Torvald for his own pleasure. Before the party, he wants Nora to dress as 'a Neapolitan peasant girl'; he moulds her into a vision of what he wants her to be.
- In admiring her beauty alone, Nora assumes the role of an inanimate object of desire; in her recognition that 'Our home has been nothing but a playroom' and 'I have been your doll-wife', Nora shatters the illusory nature of the Helmer's outwardly-harmonious home.
- The Norwegian title of Ibsen's play 'Et Dukkehjem' can be translated as either 'A Doll's House' or 'A Doll House'; both translations hold relevance, whilst in one the doll is possessive, the other is merely descriptive of the nature of the house itself.
- Torvald's declaration to Nora that 'I will protect you like a hunted dove' is entirely illusory; Torvald assumes the traditional role of protector, comparing Nora to a 'dove', a bird of purity and peace, yet Torvald's care is an illusion which fades with ease. It transpires that Torvald is a shallow, vain man, concerned with his public appearance and too weak to deliver on his promise of shielding Nora.
- Krogstad gives the illusion of a bitter, vengeful extortionist, until he is reunited with his true love, Mrs Linde. In his union with Mrs Linde, Krogstad assumes a merciful generosity.
- ADH is derived from concepts outlined in the poetics of Aristotle, a play which also has a small number of characters and a single, unchanging scene.

Coleridge

- KK – Coleridge forms a dream-like state through poetic illusion of the dreamer, who suspends all judgement. One of the primary dream-like elements of the poem is its symbolic language, the allusive nature of the language in KK forms a system of communication based on multi-interpretable images – 'Down to a sunless sea'
- KK – Coleridge leads the reader into the poem's simulated dream experience with the hypnotic rhythm of the verse. The first four lines imitate the rhythm of a swinging pendulum, or the ticking of a clock, as they entrance and lull the reader with the four stresses of their regular iambic meter. – 'In Xanadu did Kubla Khan/ A stately pleasure-dome decree/ Where Alph, the sacred river, ran/ Through caverns measureless to man. . .'
- KK – "The verses seem as if played to the ear upon some unseen instrument." – Henry Nelson Coleridge
- KK – Coleridge, intrigued by mesmerism, is perhaps attempting to reproduce an opium-related hypnosis; the word 'hypnosis' itself alludes to a waking-dream, in its derivation from the Greek *hupnotikos*, meaning 'larcotic, causing sleep.'
- "The poet has placed you in a dream, a charmed sleep." – Coleridge
- KK – Xanadu and the Khan are both characters so far beyond memorable history, that they seem mythical; they create an atmosphere of historical romance, giving the reader a point of reference before he is led further into the waking dreamland that is created by romance.
- "Mr Coleridge can write better nonsense verse than any man in English." – William Hazlitt, 1816
- KK – The poet tells of a 'stately pleasure dome decree[d]' by Kubla Khan in the midst of a landscape at once seen and unseen; allegorically, it is the incarnation of a perfect and ideal vision standing majestically in the landscape of the mind and all of its known and unknown workings. The 'sacred river' that flows through all, connecting and bringing sustenance to the landscape, represents the source of inspiration that allows the Khan to create. The landscape above the ground, 'fertile' and 'bright', seems to have a visible perimeter in the form of the 'wall and towers' that 'were girdled round', but though the walls encompass the garden on the sides, below the ground the caverns stretch 'measureless to man/ Down to a sunless sea', to profound depths that are unknown and impossible to contain.
- KK – The speaker is entirely captivated by the power he sees in the natural world, yet man cannot tame nature, it is controlled by a force beyond our reckoning.