

Q 1. Does the poem have a real geographical location? How does the poet mix up the real and the imaginary to give a sense of the surreal?

Ans- Yes, the poem has a real geographical location. Kubla Khan ordered a magnificent pleasure dome to be built for him in Xanadu. Xanadu is located in China. It was the summer capital of Kubla Khan and from this place Kubla Khan established the Yuan dynasty that ruled China over a century. Then in the last stanza there is a reference of an abyssinian maid playing her dulcimer. Abyssinia is now called Ethiopia which is in Africa.

The poet describes Kubla Khan's pleasure dome. This dome was a specimen of rare architectural skill- it had sunny domes with caves of ice. The description of the landscape is very vivid and precise. The bright garden and sinuous rills, the incense bearing trees laden with sweet blossoms, the sunny spots of greenery and so on. Then there is a description of romantic chasm, the wailing woman, the vision of the Abyssinian maid etc. Thus, the poet mixes up the real and the imaginary to give a sense of the surreal.

Q 2. Pick out -

- (i) contrasting images that are juxtaposed throughout the poem.
- (ii) images that strike the eye and images that strike the ear, both positive and negative.
- (iii) the words used to describe the movement of water

Ans- (i) contrasting images that are juxtaposed throughout the poem are

- (a) The dome is sunny and warm while the caves are icy cold.
- (b) The noisy and fast speeding river is put with a calm, quiet and peaceful garden.
- (c) The wailing woman is juxtaposed with her demon lover.
- (d) The ocean is gloomy and mysterious but the forest is sunny and warm.

(ii)

- (a) Images that strike the eyes both positive and negative are the visual descriptions in the poem as garden bright and sinuous rills, sunny spots of greenery, incense-bearing trees, forests ancient as the hills, a mighty fountain and rebounding hail and chaffy grain etc.
- (b) Images that strike the ears both positive and negative are the tumult of the river, wailing of a woman, maiden's playing on dulcimer and songs of Abora, Kubla Khan's ancestral prophesying voices etc.
- (c) The words used to describe the movement of water are a mighty fountain momentarily forced, the river rushing down the hillside, floated on the waves and the fountain, meander with a mazy motion, bright with sinuous rills etc.

Q 3. What is the discordant note heard at the end of the third stanza? Can we relate this to the grandeur and turmoil that are a part of an emperor's life?

Ans- The poet feels that if he could recapture within him the melody and song, it would fill him with such a divine

inspiration that he would write powerful poetry on Kubla Khan's pleasure dome. Those who would hear him would be able to see that palace in the air. They would then cry out to others to beware of him for they would see his floating hair and flashing eyes. They would weave a circle around him thrice to protect themselves from his magical power.

Yes, we can relate this to the grandeur and turmoil that are apart of an emperor's life. The emperor has to go on wars to protect his empire or to expand it. The emperor always cannot enjoy the comforts, luxuries and pleasures of life.

Q 4. Which are the lines that refer to magical elements?

Ans- The lines that refer to magical elements are

- (a) Ancestral voices prophesying war.
- (b) "Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree". This line creates a magical world
- (c) His flashing eyes, his floating hair! There is an atmosphere of supernatural mystery.
- (d) It was a miracle of a rare device-A sunny pleasure dome with caves of ice. Representation of the dome is magical here.
- (e) Weave a circle round him thrice.
- (f) That romantic chasm which slanted. In this line, the world is presented with some sort of a spell cast by some unknown power.

Q 5. What is poetic ecstasy likened to?

Ans- The poet feels that if he could recapture within him the melody and song of Abyssinian maid, it would feel him with such divine inspiration that he would write powerful poetry to give a vivid description of Kubla Khan's pleasure dome and those caves of ice. His poetic frenzy would make the people think that he was a superhuman being fed on honey-dew and the milk of Paradise. This is what poetic ecstasy is likened to be.

Q 6. The poem is a fragment. What do you think has made it a lasting literary piece?

Ans- 'Kubla Khan' is a fragmentary poem describing a vision that the poet saw in a dream. In 1797 he had been prescribed a drug for relieving pain and while reading an account of Kubla Khan's palace he fell asleep. He was asleep for three hours, when about 200 lines of a poem were conceived by him without any effort. On awakening he began immediately to write down the lines but he was called away on business after about an hour. When he returned he could not remember the rest of the poem. The result is this fragment or incomplete poem. Kubla Khan is known for its poetic merits. It is a piece of verbal magic inspired in a dream. Coleridge blended superbly natural and supernatural elements in the poem.

Q 7. What idea does the poet want to convey through the woman wailing for her demon lover?

Ans- Through the description of a wailing woman for her demon lover, the poet wants to give reference to the medieval tales of love and romances. Coleridge wants to give a touch of romance and medievalism along with supernaturalism through this poem. To serve this purpose, Coleridge has

imparted a touch of remoteness to the story as well as added to it a sense of supernatural, mystery and wonder through different medieval symbols.

Q 8. Discuss the role of imagination in the poem Kubla Khan.

Ans- Coleridge was a romantic poet. He wants the reader to form a mental picture of the world. His romantic poetry employs imagery and scenery in order to inspire human beings. It is the power of his imagination that gives him the necessary power to recreate the charm and wonder of the miraculous pleasure-palace of Kubla Khan. The entire poem develops on the true imagination of the poet.

Q 9. Discuss the role of nature in the present poem.

Ans- The poem Kubla Khan has been weaved in natural surroundings. When the poem starts, we find a description of Xanadu and its mystical scenery. The deep romantic chasm presents peace and beauty with its flowing water. The depiction of the fountain and the river running in a zigzag way and finally falling in the sea. Nature is described in its vivid forms. Thus, nature has a deep impact on the poet and his imagination.

Q 10. Write a central idea of the poem Kubla Khan.

Ans- The poet has laid the scene of action in the remote and unknown place Xanadu to make us believe in the supernatural elements. The poem takes us in those semi-mythical ages when Kubla Khan was supposed to have ruled. Kubla Khan was an very powerful king who created his pleasure-dome by only an order. There was a river Alph in Xanadu which used to pass through the woods and valleys and then reached the unfathomable caverns and sank noisily into a lifeless ocean.

The presence of the supernatural in the form of ghostly ancestors warning him of the approaching danger is realistic. The element of mystery and surprise is found in the bringing together the opposite charms of sunny domes and caves of ice together. A mysterious chasm stretching across a green hill covered with cedar groves is also described. Hearing the music and song of the Abyssinian maiden, the poet thinks to create such a pleasure palace in his imagination which is a remarkable allusion of supernaturalism.

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

- Who wrote the poem 'Kubla Khan'?**
 - John Donne
 - John Milton
 - S.T. Coleridge
 - W.B. Yeats
- What is another name for the poem 'Kubla Khan'?**
 - A Vision in a Dream: A Fragment
 - A Lecture Upon Shadow
 - Blood
 - The Human Abstract
- Coleridge was a close friend of**
 - W.B. Yeats
 - William Wordsworth
 - John Milton
 - William Blake

- Coleridge and Wordsworth belonged to Age.**
 - Victorian
 - Modern
 - Puritan
 - Romantic
- Coleridge and Wordsworth belonged to generation of Romantic poets.**
 - first
 - second
 - third
 - fourth
- The poem, Kubla Khan is a/an poem.**
 - abstract
 - complete
 - incomplete
 - none of the above
- Where was Kubla Khan's capital situated?**
 - Beijing
 - Xanadu
 - Rome
 - Mesopotamia
- Which river ran through the capital?**
 - Alph
 - Nile
 - Thames
 - Sutlej
- What did Kubla Khan order?**
 - to build a bridge
 - to make a pleasure dome
 - to go to war
 - to celebrate his birthday
- The river ran down to a**
 - mountain
 - Indian ocean
 - sunless sea
 - valley
- The lifeless ground described in the poem was of miles.**
 - five
 - ten
 - seven
 - six
- Which figure of speech is employed in the phrase 'ancient as the hills'?**
 - simile
 - metaphor
 - alliteration
 - personification
- Why was the woman described in the poem wailing?**
 - because she had lost her parents
 - because she had lost her child
 - because her demon lover had abandoned her
 - because she was punished by Kubla Khan
- Kubla Khan heard from far ancestral voices prophesying**
 - war
 - birth of a male child
 - victory over Chinese
 - peace all over the world
- The Abyssinian maid was playing a**
 - guitar
 - violin
 - sitar
 - Dulcimer

ANSWER KEY

1.-c, 2.-a, 3.-b, 4.-d, 5.-a, 6.-c, 7.-b, 8.-a, 9.-b, 10.-c, 11.-b, 12.-a, 13.-c, 14.-a, 15.-d