

المضامين الرمزية للقمر والسماء في قصائد س. ت. كوليريج وبشكل خاص في "أغنية الكرب" وثلاثيته

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ملخص البحث

الكلمات المفتاح: صورة القمر، صورة السماء، الرمز، الإبداع، الروحانية

هذه الدراسة هي محاولة لاستكشاف وفهم الترابطات المتعددة والمضامين الرمزية للقمر والسماء في أشعار س. ت. كوليريج، وخاصة في قصائده "أغنية الكرب" وثلاثيته. إن صورة القمر في أشعار كوليريج بشكل عام، وفي القصائد المنتقاة والمشار إليها بشكل خاص، تعكس حالتين روحانيتين متناقضتين لدواخل الشاعر وهما الكآبة والفرح، وهما تجليات لعقم الشاعر أو نشاطه الإبداعي. هذا الفرح ليس بمعنى أن يكون الشخص جذاباً، بل هو فرح يعبر عن حالة مرتبطة بنشوة الإبداع ونشاط الخيال. أما الاكتئاب والحزن، فسببهما إدراك الشاعر على أنه غير قادر على التعبير عما يجول في نفسه، وأن قواه الشعرية لا تسعفه. صحيح أن الصور الشعرية للقمر والسماء مأخوذة من الطبيعة، ولكنها في نفس الوقت مرتبطة بدواخل الشاعر وذاتيته وهو اعتقاد راسخ لدى كوليريج والشعراء الرومانسيين. لقد استعمل الشاعر صور القمر والسماء لأغراض رمزية متعددة وكجزء من جمال الطبيعة. وقد أتت الدراسة على ذكر دلالات صورة القمر المختفي والنصف الظاهر والذي ربطه كوليريج مع حالاته الروحية والنفسية على حسب السياق. من جهة أخرى فإن نظرة كوليريج للسماء تختلف عن نظره إلى القمر، لأن صورة السماء استعملت لتعكس أفراح الشاعر وعلاقته المثمرة مع الطبيعة، لذا فهي صورة تدل على رضا الشاعر من ناحية روحية وإبداعية.

Symbolic Implications of the Moon and Sky in Coleridge's Poems with Special Reference to "Dejection: An Ode" and the *Trio*¹

Abstract

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This study explores the fundamental associations and symbolic implications of images of the moon and sky in Coleridge's poems, particularly "Dejection: An Ode" and the *Trio*. Images of the moon in Coleridge's poetry, particularly in "Dejection" and the *Trio*, are used to reflect the poet's two ambivalent spiritual states, that is, dejection and gladness, which are manifestations of the poet's sterility and creativity, respectively. Images of the moon and the sky are taken from observable nature, but Coleridge connects them with the poet's inner self. These images are also used to form beautiful, romantic natural scenery. In addition, Coleridge links the image of the hidden and half-hidden moon with either of his two spiritual states, depending on the context. In contrast, he connects the image of the sky with happiness and fruitful contact with nature, which fulfills his poetic vision and inspiration.

Introduction

The idea that literature, particularly poetry, has a symbolic dimension and that there is in nature "more than meets the eye, or the ear" is well-established; at the same time, however, "the analysis of the symbolical dimension of language and of literature remains so difficult" (Silhol, 2006). Based mainly on Coleridge's poetry and prose and drawing on the work of other scholars, this paper will illustrate the central importance of images of the moon, the hidden moon, the half-hidden moon and the sky in Coleridge's poetry and explore their symbolic implications. It is not the aim of this paper to contest alternative interpretations, such as the claim that the moon in *The Ancient Mariner* symbolizes supernatural forces that are "sometimes saving" and "sometimes inimical" (Warren, 1946, 423-

¹ This term is used here, as many writers have done, to refer to Coleridge's three famous poems: "Kubla Khan," *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, and *Christabel*.

424) or the claim that these images symbolize man's "gentle, feminine, redemptive side" (Clarke, 1933). However, Coleridge's readers often note the prominence and the frequent appearance of moon imagery in his poetry. Already in the 19th century, Carlyle (1888) described Coleridge as "bottled moonshine" (80), the image to which he tried to reduce all of the complexity of Coleridge's thought. This image of the moon, Coleridge believes, is symbolic if it is "a translucence of the Special in the Individual" or "of the Eternal through and in the Temporal" (*The Statesman's Manual*, 1972, 30). The moon is not only one of the chief symbolic images in his poetry but also "the most ubiquitous" of all Coleridge's images and symbols (Suther, 1965, 36). In fact, Coleridge considered the image of the moon to be the highest representation of beauty, seeing the beauty of his beloved through "the Moon-beam" of her soul (39: 19). Even the night is sad without the moon: "Mine Eye the gleam pursues with wistful Gaze / Till chill and damp the moonless night descend!" (50: 60, 68).²

Coleridge certainly focuses on natural beauty to "explore wider issues in his poetry" (Owen, 2002), but at the same time, he is continuously seeking among objects in nature an association with his own spirituality on the premise that there is a sympathetic encounter between the poet and nature. Thus, like other images in Coleridge's poetry, the moon and the sky are used to reflect and represent what is within the poet, although each image is used in distinctive fashion. Accordingly, this study addresses the images of the moon and the sky separately, despite the fact that they are interrelated in Coleridge's poetry as beautiful elements in nature: "I see them all so excellently fair" (364: 37). Moreover, as this paper will argue, the image of the moon is used ambivalently to express the poet's happy moods when his secondary imagination is at work and his creativity is blooming and to portray the poet's melancholic state when his secondary imagination is no longer active. Thus, it serves a wide range of purposes, from alleviating pain to inspiring creativity:

How many wretched Bards address *thy* name,
And hers, the full-orb'd Queen that shines above.

...

And *my poor* heart was sad: so at the Moon
And sigh'd, and sigh'd!

...

² The lines are taken from *Coleridge: Poetical Works*. Hereafter, I refer to Coleridge's poetry using page and line numbers from this book.

At the shrine of his ceaseless renewing;
It embosoms the roses of dawn,
It entangles the shafts of the noon,
And into the bed of its stillness
The moonshine sinks down as in slumber,
That the son of the rock, that the nursling of heaven
May be born in a holy twilight! (93, 209-210, 308: 7-8, 2-3, 11-17)

Even the moon is similar to man, who is full of fancies: “This strange man has left me / Troubled with wider fancies, than the moon” (182: 12-13). Coleridge uses the image of the moon as a portent of hope and beauty and as an emblem of change, and he uses the image of the sky as a symbol of revival in a sonnet he wrote while he was young:

I watch thy gliding, while with watery light
Thy placid lightning o’er the awaken’d sky.
Ah such is Hope! as changeful and as fair! (5: 3, 8-9)

Nature of the Image in Coleridge’s Poetry

As a Romantic, Coleridge creates in his images an “encounter between the deepest parts of [his] own being and the objectively real” (Lloyd, 2002), which opens us to “the impersonal depths of” the poet’s “personality” (Knights, 1965, 165). Nature, Coleridge writes, “is the poetry of all human nature, to read it likewise in a figurative sense, and to find therein correspondencies and symbols of the spiritual world” (*The Statesman's Manual*, 1972, 70). His images involve the crossing of boundaries from outer nature into the poet’s inner nature. “The poet is not only looking at the outer world but is also listening to the sound of his inner voice” (Oguro, 2007, 75); in this way, the image becomes a symbol. The poet’s movement is from the realm of the known and finite to the realm of the unknown and infinite, which transcends reality because the sensual metaphor “grows in intensity to the point of symbolic vision” (Barth, 1977, 86). Thus, Coleridge states in *Anima Poetae* that objects in nature are symbols of what is within:

In looking at objects of nature, while I am thinking, as at yonder moon dim-glimmering through the dewy window-pane, I seem rather to be seeking, as it were ‘asking’, a symbolical language for something within me that already and for ever exists, than observing any thing new. Even when that latter is the case, yet still I have always an obscure feeling, as if that new phenomenon were the dim awaking of a forgotten or hidden truth of my inner nature. (136)

In his poetry, Coleridge aims to find in those objects “*natura naturata*,” that which corresponds to what is within, “*natura naturans*” (*Biographia*, 1907, 2: 255), as the poet is privileged to “have access through the symbolic imagination to see into the life of things” (Fried, 2006). We can find the same idea in the following description of the moon in *Biographia* (1907): “The sudden charm, which accidents of light and shade, which moon-light or sun-set, diffused over a known and familiar landscape, appeared to represent the practicability of combining both. These are the poetry of nature” (2: 5).

The Image of the Moon Is Used for Multiple Purposes and Carries Multiple Associations

The image of the moon in Coleridge’s poems is used ambivalently to represent both destructive and constructive forces: if the image of the moon is associated with the superstitious or described as waning, it is used to allude to destruction and dissolution awaiting creation--that is, the waning of Coleridge’s poetic powers. However, if the image of the moon is associated with beautiful, romantic scenes or happy events, it symbolizes the lively creativity and the rebirth of the poet’s “spiritus of the imagination” (Eddins, 2000). Logically, the poet is spiritually elevated if he or she can create but is depressed if he or she cannot. The image of the moon reflects this change in the poet’s life, as indicated in “A Sunset”:

Upon the mountain’s edge with light touch resting,
There a brief while the globe of splendour sits
And seems a creature of the earth; but soon
More changeful than the Moon. (394: 1-4)

However, a number of critics associate moon imagery in Coleridge’s poetry with poetic creativity. House (1953), for example, argues that the light of the moon is used to represent not only creativity but also poetic joy:

Imagery from the moon and stars, clouds, the night-sky and uncertain lights ... such images were used for creativeness both of a wider and of a more specially poetic kind; but they were used also for much else, especially in conjunction with the subtler processes of the mind and the more delicate modes of feeling. They were used especially for the mysteries and uncertainties of mental life which Coleridge was beginning to explore. (112)

This idea is found in other critics’ writings. For example, Takahashi (1967) believes that the “moonlight which is steeped in Coleridge’s poetic world is a perfect symbol” for the fusion of the “subject and object,

reason and imagination, the conscious and the unconscious, light and darkness” (123). Schulz (1964) asserts that “The light stands to joy as dark to dejection, and calm stands to passivity of imagination as storm to creativity of imagination” (33). Lowes (1927) tries to prove that Coleridge attempts to create his own moons from “remembered moons,” which are themselves symbols of his creativity (163).

In addition to such symbolic uses, the moon is used to fulfill a number of other aims, roles, and purposes. First, the moon is used as an essential constituent in beautiful natural scenery and exhibits the beauty in nature, which can only be observed perfectly under its light:

Motionless torrents! silent cataracts!
Who made you glorious as the Gates of Heaven
Beneath the keen full moon? (379: 53-55)

This beauty is glorified in a number of poems, such as “Fancy in Nubibus”:

O! It is pleasant, with a heart at ease,
Just after sunset, or by moonlight skies,
To make the shifting clouds be what you please,
Or let the easily persuaded eyes. (435: 1-4)

Second, the moon is linked to birds, which symbolize beauty, freedom, and creativity. For example, the nightingale, which is conventionally related to beauty and creativity in poetry, is organically related to the moon. Thus, the nightingale is the “Minstrel of the Moon” (94: 16). In fact, all birds become more beautiful under the moon: “O beauteous birds! ’tis such a pleasure / To see you move beneath the moon” (255: 61-62).

Third, the moon not only serves as a source of beauty but also beautifies other elements in nature:

I saw a cloud of palest hue,
Onward to the moon it passed
Still brighter and more bright it grew,
With floating colours not a few,
Till it reached the moon at last:
Then the cloud was wholly bright. (254: 15-21)

Fourth, the moon is linked to Coleridge’s concept of the romantic pantisocracy, or the Eden on earth, which he espoused and tried to apply in his life when he was young:

Sublime of Hope, I seek the cottag’d dell
Where Virtue calm with careless step may stray,

And dancing to the moonlight roundelay,
The wizard Passions weave an holy spell. (69: 5-8)

Fifth, the moon has a bond with childhood, which embodies innocence, purity, and innovation. The moon lulls and comforts children:
And he beheld the moon, and, hushed at once,
Suspends his sobs, and laughs most silently,
While his fair eyes, that swam with undropped tears,
Did glitter in the yellow moon-beam! Well! – (267: 102-105)

Sixth, given that the moon is linked with romantic scenery, it is often connected with peace and happiness. This is clear when the poet declares his need for his beloved and a peaceful home under the moon:

To have a home, an English home, and thee!
Vain repetition! Home and Thou are one.

The peacefull'st cot, the moon shall shine upon. (456: 18-20)
This link between the moon and gladness is repeated in a number of poems, such as “Lines Composed in a Concert-Room”:

By moonshine, on the balmy summer-night,
The while I dance amid the tedded hay
With merry maids, whose ringlets toss in light. (324: 18-20)

Lastly, contrary to favorable associations with the image of the moon, it is sometimes used with a number of elements in nature to reflect melancholic moods:

Lo! of his beams the Day-Star shorn,
Sad gleams the Moon through cloudy veil!
The Stars are dim! Our Nobles mourn. (436: 17-19)

Image of the Moon in “Dejection: An Ode”

The moon in “Dejection” is related to or portends events with sad consequences, insofar as it and other elements in nature are presented in sinister and unfamiliar form. Thus, “The image of the new Moon, / With the old Moon in her arms” in the epigraph, taken from *The Ballad of Sir Patrick Spence*, is central to the poem’s meaning. This juxtaposition of “the New-moon” and “the old Moon” traditionally warns of impending unfavorable events. Furthermore, using this quotation as an epigraph frames the mood of “Dejection” by associating the moon with destruction: “And I fear, I fear, my Master dear! / We shall have a deadly storm” (362). This idea is fostered in the poem’s first stanza, which contains an image that couples death with life, that is, the “New-moon” and “the old Moon.” Lowes (1927) considers this image, which portends

destruction, to be “the most magical” statement Coleridge “ever wrote about the moon” (160). It echoes the epigraph with its “deadly storm” under “the new winter-bright Moon!” with “the old Moon in her lap” (363: 9, 13). In this context, the image reflects the poet’s infertility, or his inability to see “a new Earth and a new Heaven” (366: 9). This is intensified by the fact that the moon appears in winter, the season that brings coldness and liquidation of the vividness of nature:

For lo! The New-moon winter-bright!
And overspread with phantom light,
(With swimming phantom light o’erspread
But rimmed and circled by a silver thread)
I see the old Moon in her lap, foretelling
The coming-on of rain and squally blast. (363: 9-14)

However, Coleridge’s exclamation about the stars and moon, “I see, not feel, how beautiful they are!” (364: 3), exemplifies his melancholic state, in which he has lost his creativity as a result of his inability to deduce from nature the necessary sources of his poetic imagination that enabled him to see symbols through its beautiful sceneries. This not uncommon because “from time to time, poets produce ‘poems’ about being unable to write poetry” (Eddins, 2000), and the image of the waning moon is a declaration of the poet’s self-assessed deadness (Gill, 1988, 200).

Image of the Moon in the *Trio*

Unlike the image of the moon as destructive in “Dejection,” the image of the moon in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* reflects two antithetical states, the constructive and destructive sides of the poet’s life. Among other critics, Stokes (2011) thinks that the image of the moon in *The Ancient Mariner* is enigmatic, “like so many of the apparently sense-bearing objects.” Catastrophic events afflict the Mariner and his crew under the moon, yet the Mariner’s spiritual revival and his communion with nature begins under its beautiful light. At the beginning of the poem, the Mariner is describing vespers in the moonlight, and the moon is associated with the albatross, the bird of good omen:

In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud
It perched for vespers nine;
Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,
Glimmered the white Moon-shine. (180: 75-78)

However, the image of the moon after the killing of the albatross and before the Mariner's appreciation of the water snakes becomes a bad omen foretelling the fearsome events that will befall the Mariner, the ship, and the crew. Accordingly, the image of "The hornéd Moon, with one bright star / Within the nether tip" (196: 210-11) is an indication that danger is near. Thus, events of destruction after the killing of the albatross take place under the light of the moon:

One after one, by the star-dogged Moon,
Too quick for groan or sigh,
Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,
And cursed me with his eyes. (196: 212-215)

Even the size of the harsh sun is compared to the size of the moon:

All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody Sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the Moon. (190: 111-114)

After the stalemate of the Mariner's situation, the first sign of revival is triggered by the dead bodies of the crew under the auspices of the moon:

The loud wind never reached the ship,
Yet now the ship moved on!
Beneath the lightning and the Moon
The dead men gave a groan. (199: 327-330)

However, the crucial moment that diverts the course of events in the poem is the Mariner's spontaneous and interior appreciation of the beauty of the water snakes, which "is the most important act in the poem" (Dilworth, 2007, 516). He watches their movements "in tracks of shining white" (198: 274) under the moon, whose light is "Like April hoar-frost spread" (197: 268). A series of favorable events occur under the auspices of the moon, prompting the appreciation:

The moving Moon went up the sky,
And no where did abide:
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside— (197: 263-166)

After this image of the moon, signs of revival begin to appear. First much-needed rain pours from the clouds, symbolizing life and the Mariner's spiritual rebirth:

The thick black cloud was cleft, and still
The Moon was at its side:
Like waters shot from some high crag,
The lightning fell with never a jag,

A river steep and wide. (199: 328-331)

The second event is the magical resurrection of the crew, who stand up under the light of the moon after they are inhabited by angelic spirits:

Beneath the lightning and the Moon

The dead men gave a groan.

'Twas night, calm night, the moon was high;

The dead men stood together. (199, 203: 329-330, 432-433)

The third event is the reuse of the repaired ship by the angelic spirits who inhabit the bodies of the crew and are thus regenerated and renewed.

Moreover, the Mariner's native land appears, and he sees the shore under the light of the moon, which now symbolizes the attainment of one's ultimate goals and the poet's ability to create and thus reach fulfillment:

"And on the bay the moonlight lay, / And the shadow of the Moon" (204: 474-475). The same symbolic implications of revival and fulfillment recur when the voyage is close to its end:

Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship

The harbour-bay was clear as glass,

So smoothly it was strewn!

And on the bay the moonlight lay,

And the shadow of the Moon. (204: 460, 473-476)

However, at the end of the poem, images of the moon are associated with harmony in nature and within the Mariner:

The ocean hath no blast;

His great bright eye most silently

Up to the Moon is cast --

If he may know which way to go;

For she guides him smooth or grim.

See, brother, see! how graciously

She looketh down on him.'

.....

The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,

That stands above the rock:

The moonlight steeped in silentness. (202, 205: 415-421, 476-78)

In *Christabel*, the moon is associated with dullness, coldness, the lifeless boughs, an old mastiff bitch, and a barren tree. For instance, the first appearance of Christabel outside the castle is under the small, dull moon, which foretells events to come and their evil effects on her:

The thin gray cloud is spread on high,

It covers but not hides the sky.

The moon is behind, and at the full;

And yet she looks both small and dull. (216: 16-19)

This journey under the moon is the beginning of Christabel's meetings with Geraldine, the sinister, fatal woman who is behind her suffering:

What sees she there?

There she sees a damsel bright,

Dressed in a silken robe of white,

That shadowy in the moon light shone. (217-218: 57-60)

The dim moon is an indication of a great danger facing Christabel: "The moon shines dim in the open air, / And not a moonbeam enters here" (222: 175-74). These images of the moon reflect Christabel's passivity and lack of vitality. Christabel prays under the "old oak tree" with its "lifeless boughs" under the "moonlight" (228: 281-84), when "the moon shines dim in the open air," and Geraldine is able to enter Christabel's room and to begin performing her spell over her (222: 175). The mastiff bitch that is supposed to guard the castle and the people "Lay fast asleep, in the moonshine cold" (221: 46). This gives us the impression that forces of destruction could be victorious. All events that drastically affect Christabel happen under the light of the moon, and all lead to the assumption that Geraldine has power over Christabel:

That holds the maiden in her arms,

Seems to slumber still and mild,

As a mother with her child. (226: 296-301)

Taken symbolically, Christabel can be viewed as representing forces of life and creativity, whereas Geraldine represents forces of darkness, death, and sterility.

Unlike the atmosphere of *Christabel*, in which Christabel is defeated, the majority of the images in "Kubla Khan" are associated with the triumphant act of poetic creativity, which is manifested clearly through the poet's preternatural appearance at the end of the poem:

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 drunk the milk of Paradise. (298: 49-54)

It is clear that the images that dominate "Kubla Khan" are those of vividness and creativity, such as the image of the fountain, which was considered by the Romantics as a symbol of "uncontrolled bounding energy" (Hough, 1963, 64), and the image of the serpent, "the ancient symbol of eternity" (Stevenson, 1973, 609). On the other hand, there is the chasm between the glorious images of creation and the garden under the light of the "waning moon," which represents the destruction and

dissociation of relations between the woman wailing for her demon lover and that demon lover:

A savage place! As holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover! (297: 15-18)

The contrast between the happy images of the glorious creation of the paradise-like gardens and the pale image of the “waning moon” is a remarkable touch in the poem. The general atmosphere of the poem leads us to associate the waning moon with the poet’s dwindling creativity and sterility, which is “a Coleridgean emblem for declining powers of imagination” (Yarlott, 1967, 141).

Images of the Hidden and Half-Hidden Moon

It is worth noting that Coleridge uses the hidden and half-hidden moon as a sign of either hope or dejection in accordance with the atmosphere of the poem. For example, in *The Ancient Mariner*, the image of the hidden moon by “fog-smoke white” clouds (189: 77) is a sign of hope because the moon will appear soon and the Mariner will be freed from his state of stillness in life-in-death. I believe this image alludes symbolically to the poet’s spiritual and creative revival of the fountain within him after the life-in-death situation. Lowes (1927) endorses the symbolic interpretation of the half-hidden moon: “The flake of cloud above the sunken moon is a symbol of that convergence of the wealth of the inward eye upon the witness of the outer which is the rich gift of imaginative minds” (163). Taylor (2002) is right when he says that “*Christabel* hides at its center a different sort of Coleridge places this almost incommunicable emotion,” which, in my view, is the poet’s hidden, mysterious life and a signal of the poet’s receding creativity:

The thin gray cloud is spread on high,
It covers but not hides the sky.
The moon is behind, and at the full;
And yet she looks both small and dull. (216: 16-18)

The half-hidden moon is used in a number of Coleridge’s poems, such as “The Three Graves,” as a bad omen:

The day was scarcely like a day --
The clouds were black outright:
And many a night, with half a moon. (278: 302-304)

By and large, as with all elements in nature, the half-hidden moon is a constituent of the beautiful, romantic scenery:

E’en when a fatal cloud o’erspread

The moonlight splendour of his sway,
Yet still the light; remain'd, and shed
Mild radiance on the traveller's way. (437: 45-48)

The Image of the Sky in Coleridge's Poetry in General and in "Dejection: An Ode" and the *Trio* in Particular

Unlike the ambivalent meanings of the moon in Coleridge's poetry, the image of the sky is related to beauty, kindness, hope, and revival. The sky will never be blurred and is synonymous with life itself. Thus, despite all the suffering, for Coleridge, the "sky will still be blue and constant as the triumphant imagination" (Taylor, 2002). Coleridge describes the gentleness of the deep blue sky as "rich with tints heaven-borrow'd: the charm'd eye / Shall gaze undazzled there, and love the soften'd sky" (103: 8-9). He described it in an 1804 note as majestically triggering poetic inspiration. To his eyes, it seems like "an inverted goblet, the inside of a sapphire Bason, as if the infinite space of air had assumed the form of a dome in a cathedral" (Coburn, 2, 2346). Coleridge's happy connection to the sky had been established since his childhood. This is clear in his poem "Frost at Midnight," in which he describes his experience at school:

And in far other scenes! For I was reared
In the great city, pent 'mid cloisters dim,
And saw nought lovely but the sky and stars. (242: 51-53)

Moreover, the sky is an organic element in romantic natural scenery and serves as a beautiful background:

And thine the peaceful evening walk;
And what to thee the sweetest are --
The setting sun, the Evening Star --
The tints, which live along the sky.
So will I build my altar in the fields,
And the blue sky my fretted dome shall be. (32, 429: 81-84, 9-10)

Like the moon, the sky is associated with creativity. For example, in "The Nightingale," the sky is linked to the appearance of the nightingale, the bird that traditionally represents poets, imagination, and beauty:

What time the moon was lost behind a cloud,
Hath heard a pause of silence; till the moon
Emerging, hath awakened earth and sky
With one sensation, and those wakeful birds
Have all burst forth in choral minstrelsy. (266: 26-30)

Another example is "From the German," in which the sky is related to the gentle wind, which is traditionally associated with freedom and creativity:

“Soft blows the wind that breathes from that blue sky!” (311: 3). What reinforces this link between the image of the sky and poetic creativity is the connection between the sky and the skylark, which forever sings in the sky, signifying the revival of life and the spontaneity of creativity:

But the Lark is so brimful of gladness and love,
The green fields below him, the blue sky above,
That he sings, and he sings; and forever sings he -- . (386: 7-9)

In addition to birds that fly as freely as the poet’s imagination, the sky is also linked with other elements in nature to foretell the coming of liberty and its happy consequences:

And O ye Clouds that far above me soared!
Thou rising Sun! thou blue rejoicing Sky!
Yea, every thing that is and will be free!
Bear witness for me, wheresoe’er ye be,
With what deep worship I have still adored
The spirit of divinest Liberty. (244: 16-21)

Moreover, the sky is related to the poet’s gladness:

Within these circling hollies woodbine-clad --
Beneath this small blue roof of vernal sky --
How warm, how still! Tho’ tears should dim mine eye,
Yet will my heart for days continue glad,
For here, my love, thou art, and here am. I! (409: 1-5)

Thus, it is not surprising that Coleridge connects the sky to the happiness of healing in “To a Young Lady [Miss Lavinia Poole] on Her Recovery from a Fever”:

The sunny showers, the dappled sky,
The little birds that warble high,
Their vernal loves commencing,
Will better welcome you than I
With their sweet influencing. (252: 6-10)

Finally, it is worth noting that although the earth is the palace of romantic beauty, it is less translucent and noisier than the peaceful sky in “A Thought Suggested by a View of Saddleback in Cumberland.”

Beneath the moon, in gentle weather,
They bind the earth and sky together.
But oh! the sky and all its forms, how quiet!
The things that seek the earth, how full of noise and riot! (347: 6-9)

In “Dejection,” Coleridge depicts the beauty of the sky and its clouds in the second stanza:

Have been gazing in the western sky,

And its peculiar tint of yellow green.
And still I gaze -- and with how blank an eye!
And those thin clouds above, in flakes and bars,
That give away their motion to the sky. (364: 28-32)

Because the poet is in a state of dejection, he fails to feel within him the beauty of the sky; instead, he gazes at the elements in nature “with how blank an eye!” (364: 30). Thus, he sees but does not feel “how beautiful they are!” (364: 38). However, readers appreciate the beauty of the sky in “Dejection” despite its melancholic tone. Even in the case of complete lifelessness, the sky appears as the place to which life clings and from where it starts. This is represented in the image of

The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
That dances as often as dance it can,
Hanging so light, and hanging so high,
On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky. (365: 49-52)

The beauty of the sky in “Dejection” conveys the Coleridgean idea that in life there is always a window of hope, which, for the poet, is the revival of his poetic creativity, despite the fact that it may be void and black.

In the gloss of *The Ancient Mariner*, the sky awakens the Mariner’s perception of the beauty in nature and is a haven of peace: “the blue sky belongs to them, and is their appointed rest, and their native country and their own natural homes” (197). Heaven or the sky is the place from where mercy descends. In his ordeal, after the killing of the albatross, the Mariner looks “to heaven” and tries “to pray,” but this attempt is blocked by a “wicked whisper” (197: 244, 246). Later on, when the Mariner appreciates the beauty of the water snakes, the sky, which is a source of hope, is full of life and jubilation and reflects the revival of the Mariner’s spirituality:

The upper air burst into life!
...
Sometimes a—dropping from the sky,
I heard the sky-lark sing;
Sometimes all little birds that are,
How they seem to fill the sea and air
With their sweet jargoning! (199-200: 314, 359-363)

Just as the sky is a source of mercy in *The Ancient Mariner*, it remains a haven in *Christabel* and a source of hope in all circumstances, no matter how difficult. Thus, though the clouds cover the sky, they never hide it: “The thin gray cloud is spread on high, / It covers but not hides the sky” (216: 16-17). Christabel raises “to heaven her eyes” (223: 215), asking the saints to help Geraldine because “saints will aid if men will

call: / For the blue sky bends over all!" (226: 330-331). In other words, the path to the sky is always open to everyone. Moreover, the sky is a source of forgiveness and love:

All they who live in the upper sky,
Do love you, holy Christabel!
And you love them, and for their sake

...

For the blue sky bends over all! (223, 228: 227-229, 33)

Coleridge elevates the sky to the state of motherhood: "Christabel—My first cries mingled with my Mother's Death-groan/--and she beheld the vision of Glory ere I the earthly Sun—when I first looked up to Heaven, consciously, it was to look up after or for my Mother-- & c & c" (Beer, 1977, 191).

"Kubla Khan" differs from the other three poems ("Dejection," *The Ancient Mariner*, and *Christabel*) insofar as the sky is not mentioned but represented by the dome. The "sunny pleasure dome with caves of ice!" (298: 36), in which diverse elements of warmth and coldness are mingled. It is an extremely beautiful image reflecting the poet's state of exultation at the end of the poem, when "he on honey-dew hath fed, / And drunk the milk of Paradise" (298: 53-54).

Conclusion

The image of the moon is an essential component in Coleridge's poetry as one of the lovely elements in nature: "Moonshine, the imaginative Poesy of Nature," that "gives to all objects a tender visionary hue and softening" (Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection*, 1933, 393). In addition, the image of the moon has symbolic implications through which the poet crosses the boundary from the external to the internal and vice versa and attempts to establish a correspondence between them. It is part of the poet's attempt to find symbols that help transcend the external images in nature. These images reflect the ambivalent, symbolic implications of the poet's states of joy and dejection--that is, creativity and its barrenness or dwindling--depending on the mood in each poem. Consequently, the images and their symbolic implications in *Dejection*, for example, are different from those in "Kubla Khan." However, the image of the sky is unlike that of the moon because the former is related only to the poet's happy moods and lively creativity.

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