In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river ran
Through caverns measurless to man,
Down to a sunless sea.
So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers was girdled round,
And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;
And there were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

Coleridge’s “Kubla Khan”

Romanitic Traits or Interests

• opposite of the common
  • the exotic--places that seem almost beyond reach.

• Man’s creative power
  • Being a visionary
  • Having a vision

• Nature infused with spirit
  • “sacred river”

• “Measureless” nature

• Fertile nature bursting forth but contained in a sense.
But oh! That **deep** romantic chasm that slanted  
Down a 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,  
Amidst whose swift half-intermitted burst,  
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,  
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail,

**Nature** seems to have its own uncontainable force—it is **personified** as being as holy and enchanted as a woman wailing for her demon-lover; is that holy?

**Nature** is sexualized and portrayed here as dark, savage, deep, covered—but as something ceaseless that will not be contained.

The imagery evokes human metaphors of the creative process—“stream of consciousness” or a “break through,” for example.
And 'midst this tumult, at once and ever,
It flung up momently 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 'midst this tumult Kubla heard from afar,
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.
It was a miracle of rare device;
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

Tumult is the key here. Nature appears turbulent, noisy, uneasy, with potential uprisings—just like the people Kubla Khan hears in his head.

As a ruler, he ought to keep certain tendencies of nature in mind. The tumultuous imagery sends a dark omen. (Kubla Khan’s vision will not last, just as Coleridge’s vision is fleeting.)

But for now the pleasure dome appears amazing.
A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw;
It was an Abasynnian maid,
And on her dulcimer she played,
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 pleasure-dome.
That sunny dome! Those caves of ice!
And all who heard would see them there
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread;
For he on honeydew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

Here, the Kubla Khan imagery begins
to fade with the sudden interruption of
another related idea.

The speaker is thinking of something
else now, a similar memory--an
enchanting singing maid--he also
wishes he could have held onto.

But such visions are fleeting, like when
you wake up from a vivid dream. Their
intensity fades.

The three woven circles are said to be
part of an ancient magic ritual “to
protect the inspired poet from
intrusion.”

The inspired poet is portrayed as
having a taste of paradise. In a
different way, this is the point of
Wordsworth’s “Intimations of
Immortality.” The poet catches a
glimpse of something god-like.