

"Kubla Khan" Literary Devices

Writer: Samuel Taylor Coleridge | Generated: Jan 26, 2026

Symbols

Nature: The poem is rich in natural imagery, referencing gardens, rivers, and forests. These elements can symbolize the untamed, sublime aspects of nature.

The Dome: The dome or palace that Kubla Khan ordered to be built represents his power and authority. It can also symbolize the human desire to create and control.

The Abyssinian Maid: This figure can symbolize the muse or inspiration for the poet. She is a source of creativity and artistic inspiration.

The River Alph: The river running through the poem symbolizes the flow of creativity and the passage of time.

"Sunless Sea" and "Sunless River: The description of a "sunless sea" and a "sunless river" can symbolize a sense of loss or an unattainable ideal, such as the Garden of Eden.

Figures of Speech

Metaphor: The "sunless sea" and "caverns measureless to man" are metaphors that create an atmosphere of mystery and awe.

Simile: Coleridge uses similes to make comparisons, as seen in "As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted by woman wailing for her demon-lover!"

Hyperbole: Coleridge exaggerates the grandeur of the palace and its surroundings. For instance, "twice five miles of fertile ground" exaggerates the domain's vastness.

Personification: The river Alph is personified when described as "sacred" and "meandering."

Symbolism: The river Alph, the chasm, and the dome carry deeper meanings, representing various elements of creativity, nature, and power.

Imagery: Coleridge employs vivid and detailed imagery to create a sensory experience for the reader. For example, "A sunny pleasure dome with caves of ice" paints a striking visual picture.