

Milton nor Vanbrugh nor Settle advocates. As Adam says to Eve in Book ix of *Paradise Lost*: “Seek not temptation then, which to avoide / Were better, and most likeli if from mee / Thou sever not: Trial will come unsought.” Settle, in the passage quoted in my essay, did not advocate a *seeking out* of temptation; he says rather that “Virtue cannot very well be brought up to any *Dramatick* Perfection, nor sparkle with any considerable Brightness and Beauties, unless it *stands* [my italics] a Temptation, and surmounts it.” Loveless recklessly seeks out temptation, and falls; Amanda does not seek it out, but it comes nevertheless, and she *stands* and *withstands* it in a moment thereby brought to “*Dramatick* perfection.”

Over the past few years I have been asking, in various essays, for a reevaluation of late seventeenth-century drama. Obviously my emphasis on the ethical and religious contexts (as well as on the contemporary dramatic theory) by which I think them to be shaped runs counter to the criticism of those like Root who prefer to ignore or discount the testimonies of intentions as given by the playwrights themselves, who ignore or dismiss the contexts and patterns so pervasively present, and who ignore finally the dramatic complications such patterns and contexts introduce into the human experience portrayed on the stage. The differences in point of view are great and the debate may go on for a long while. In the meantime, some readers may wish to consider more carefully (in the light of Root’s letter) the possible implications of the various and progressive “tests” (essentially a series of “renunciations”) undergone by Almanzor in *The Conquest of Granada*, the “test” of Harcourt (his “act of faith” toward Alithea) in *The Country Wife*, the “utmost Tryal” (by Angelica) of Valentine’s “Virtue” in the last scene of *Love for Love*, Harriet’s “testing” of Dorimant in *The Man of Mode* (not merely the keeping of a “Lent” for her, but the showing of a “love strong enough to make [him] bear being laughed at”), the fierce “proving” of Jane’s repentance in *The Tragedy of Jane Shore*. The list could go on.

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On Coleridge’s “Kubla Khan” and “Christabel”

To the Editor:

Charles I. Patterson, Jr., in “The Daemonic in *Kubla Khan*: Toward Interpretation” (*PMLA*, 89, 1974, 1033–42), has included a passage on the meaning of “daemon” as differentiated from “demon,” especially from the point of view of Plato and the neo-Platonists. But although he has called attention to Coleridge’s marginal reference to “daemons of earth or middle air” in *The Rime of the Ancient*

Mariner, in order to make a valid and sufficiently substantial comparison, he has had to adopt the spelling “daemon” found only in the autograph MS of “Kubla Khan” and used in none of the printed editions. Moreover, Coleridge’s commentaries in the *Rime* that contain his references to “daemons of earth and middle air,” who are also identified as “fellow-daemons” of the Polar Spirit, “the invisible inhabitants of the element,” were added only when the poem was printed in *Sybilline Leaves* in 1817. Some editors, however, believe that these glosses may have been the “work of a much earlier period” (see *The Poems of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Ernest Hartley Coleridge, New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1935, p. 186, n. 1). If Eugenia Logan’s *Concordance to the Poetry of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (St.-Mary-of-the-Woods, Ind.: Privately printed, 1940) may be trusted, the late edition of the *Rime* is the only printed poem by Coleridge in which “demon,” however spelled, is not used in a pejorative sense. (Perhaps because these glosses are in prose, Logan does not cite them in her concordance.)

The only other printed uses of the word “daemon,” thus spelled, are two—one in “The Destiny of Nations,” first published as part of Book II of Robert Southey’s epic, *Joan of Arc* (1796), and the other in “Religious Musings” (1794). In line 388 of the first poem the phrase “Daemon War” is associated with “The Maniac Suicide and Giant Murder.” Lines 332–34 of the second poem run

She that worked whoredom in the Daemon Power,
And from the dark embrace all evil things
Brought forth and nurtured: mitred Atheism!

In a note by Coleridge in 1828, however, the passage containing the phrase “Daemon War” in “Destiny” is marked as “Southeyan. To be omitted” (*Poems*, p. 144, n. 2). Coleridge does not say that the lines are by Southey—in 1828 they are to him only reminiscent of Southey. Nothing in these two passages suggests that the “daemons” described fit into Plato’s and Patterson’s “conception of a realm of nonmalicious, daemonic creatures dwelling in unrestricted joy outside the pale of human limitations” (p. 1040).

According to Logan, Coleridge uses various forms of the word “demon” fourteen times in his poetry, including, of course, “Kubla Khan.” Because of the limitations of space, I can only list these as occurring in “To Disappointment” (1792), a variant of “Ode” (1792), “On the Prospect of Establishing a Pantisocracy in America” (1794), *Osorio* (1797), *The Piccolomini* and *Wallenstein* (1799–1800), *Remorse* and its variants (1813), and *Zapolya* (1816).

In spite of his original MS spelling of “daemon,” Coleridge let the other spelling stand through all the editions of the *Lyrical Ballads* and his other volumes.

Yet he was continually revising his poems, as the many variants in the successive editions show. Finally, I cannot disregard his own description of "Kubla Khan" as "A Fragment" and his account of the interruption of his wide-awake memory of his "anodyne"-inspired dream of Xanadu and Kubla Khan by the untimely arrival of that unidentified "person on business from Porlock" in 1797. The poem therefore cannot be regarded as the unified whole that Patterson would like it to be.

Nevertheless, I am sure Coleridge was aware of Patterson's preferred kind of "daemon," and I offer him the following example:

If there be Beings of a higher class than Man,
I deem no nobler province they possess,
Than by disposal of apt circumstance
To rear up kingdoms: and the deeds they prompt,
Distinguishing from mortal agency,
They choose their human ministers from such states
As still the Epic song half fears to name,
Repelled from all the minstrelsie that strike
The Palace-roof and soothe the monarch's pride. ("The
Destiny of Nations," ll. 127–35)

Although Coleridge does not use the term "daemons" to describe these "Beings," they clearly belong to the same benevolent category as the invisible possessors of the two "voices in air" that the Ancient Mariner in his trance heard at the end of Part v and the beginning of Part vi of the *Rime*. These two were belatedly described by Coleridge in his glosses as the "Polar Spirit's fellow-daemons." But the rather perverted woman beneath the waning moon in "Kubla Khan" was waiting and wailing for her "demon-lover."

As for Jonas Spatz's article, "The Mystery of Eros: Sexual Initiation in Coleridge's 'Christabel'" (90, 1975, 107–16), his acceptance of James Gillman's account of Coleridge's intentions in completing the poem diminishes rather than enhances the impact of the fragment that he printed. Coleridge may have had some such ideas on sex, love, and marriage as Spatz suggests, but the application of these to Gillman's completion would result in a flat, conventional interpretation of the "wild weird spirit" of the situation as Coleridge has presented it and would not support Coleridge's own final comment on his inability to write the intended last three parts of the story:

The reason of my not finishing *Christabel* is not, that I don't know how to do it—for I have, as I always had, the whole plan entire from beginning to end in my mind; but I fear I could not carry on with equal success the execution of the idea, an extremely subtle and difficult one. (*Table Talk*, 1833)

I attempt in *The Road to Tryermaine* (1939, rpt. New York: Russell, 1962) to solve the mystery by explaining the intention of the poem as "A 'Romance' of the

'Preternatural'"—in which the character of the enigmatic Geraldine is unriddled as that of an unwilling vampire—rather than as a simple romance of the supernatural, as maintained by Gillman and Spatz.

Incidentally, I am somewhat surprised to find that Spatz has not even mentioned the acceptance of Gillman's story by such previous scholars as B. R. McElderry, in "Coleridge's Plan for Completing *Christabel*," *Studies in Philology*, 33 (1936), 437–55, and Donald R. Tuttle, "Christabel Sources," *PMLA*, 53 (1938), 446, n.

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Mr. Patterson replies:

I thank Arthur Nethercot for his interest. In reply, I must stress that my interpretation of *Kubla Khan* does not rest upon Coleridge's spelling of the word *daemon* (l. 16) in the autograph manuscript, later changed to *demon* in the printed texts. The use of *daemon* for a non-Christian supramortal spirit intermediate between Gods and men in Greek myth and *demon* for an evil spirit in Christian tradition was a distinction not strictly observed in the nineteenth century, as it is not today. For nearly 2,000 years theologians have tended to group all daemons together in the latter category. When Coleridge published *Kubla Khan* the spelling *demon* was frequently used with non-Christian meanings—for example, by John Keats in *Ode on Indolence*, line 30, and by William Hazlitt in *Complete Works*, ed. P. P. Howe, v, 153; xii, 285; viii, 94; and xi, 257. The last two of these instances include quotations from Alexander Pope (*Moral Essays*, Epistle iv, l. 16) in which Hazlitt, or his printer, changed Pope's *daemon* to *demon* within the quote though the meaning and context remain non-Christian. Later, the distinguished translator of Plato, Benjamin Jowett, used *demon* consistently while translating passages dealing with non-Christian Platonic daemons, one passage of which I have quoted on page 1036. Coleridge similarly did not maintain consistent differentiation in spelling. In print he tended to use *demon*, sometimes with a distinctly non-Christian meaning, as in *Zapolya*, Part II, iv.i.201, "demon-hunters of middle air"; but in notes and personal writing he more often used *daemon*, frequently with a Christian meaning, as in Items 1650, 2944, and 3148 in his *Notebooks*, ed. Kathleen Coburn, Bollingen Series 50 (New York: Pantheon, 1957–62). Consequently, I doubt that, after *daemon* remained in the manuscript for nearly twenty years, Coleridge's change to *demon* in print indicates a drastic change of meaning. In stating that there is no necessity to consider the wailing Woman's "Daemon Lover" as Satanic, I do not mean