

Analytical exercise: The significance of British Imperialism to culture

Tiffin (1995: 95) points out that more than “three quarters of the contemporary world has been directly and profoundly affected by imperialism and colonialism”. With the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, for instance, Britain was left in governing power over 200 million people¹, of whom a large proportion were Asians (Leask 1996: 235). These political developments went hand in hand with a wave of European artistic and scholarly interest in the cultures and languages of Eastern nations from about the 1760s onwards (Schwab 1996: 294-296). The increased encounter with other cultures, in person and via traveller narratives or cultural artefacts, had a deep impact on Britain’s cultural production.

Romantic poets², for example, adopted the imagery and narratives from these sources and looked to the Orient³ for creative and sublime inspiration but also with feelings of anxiety. Since language is one form through which thoughts and ideas are represented in a culture (Hall 2003: 1), the aim of this analytical exercise is both, to highlight the role of Romantic poetry in the construction of oriental stereotypes, and also, to investigate its significance in accordance with Said’s notion that the “Orient was almost a European invention” (Said 2004: 329). I will accomplish these aims by examining the discursive strategies⁴ employed in Romantic poetry, such as idealization of the Orient, the projection of fantasies and sexual desire as well as the drawing attention to cultural differences and the tendency to represent non-Europeans as the uncivilized and barbaric essential ‘Other’.

According to Hall (2003: 42-43) Foucault is concerned with “the production of knowledge (rather than just meaning)” through a particular discourse. Therefore it is

¹ This amounts to roughly 26 per cent of the world’s total population in 1820 (Leask 1996: 235).

² The most famous Romantic poets engaging with the Orient are De Quincey, Shelley, Byron and Coleridge (Bygrave 1996).

³ During the Romantic period, the Orient was primarily associated with the Islamic world, India and the Mogul Empire (Leask 1996: 227).

⁴ Adaptation of Hall’s discursive strategies (Hall 2003: 308)

important to ask “what did English readers know about these specific colonial Others, when did they know it, and what was the contribution to that knowledge by the tale told?” (Parker 1996: 200). Barrell (1991: 7) argues that the imagery of the Orient is the “imagery of an early but well-established imperialist culture” which became familiar to the British population in the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th century. One source for this knowledge was Romantic poetry.

Yet, far from providing the reader with an objective representation, Romantic poets tend to use a set of stereotypes that rely on signifiers of physical and cultural difference. This is evident in the cultural encounter of the turbaned Malay and the Romantic poet De Quincey in the English countryside as articulated in his *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*. The Malay is described as resembling a “demon” or “tiger-cat” having “bilious skin” and “small fierce restless eyes” (De Quincey 1822: 632). He is not able to communicate in any sophisticated language, whereas De Quincey himself has a reputed knowledge “of all the languages of the earth” (632) and addresses him in Greek since “in point of longitude [it] came geographically nearest to an oriental one” (633). In addition, for the Malay “as an orientalist...opium must be familiar” (633). Therefore, De Quincey’s lethal gift of three pieces of opium, which “was enough to kill three dragoons and their horses”, caused just “one night of respite from the pains of wandering” (633) for the Malay.

Clearly physical appearance and the already established notion that people from the Orient equal opium users, enable De Quincey to characterize his Malaysian visitor without any form of communication. By addressing him in Greek, De Quincey refers to the foundations of Western “cultural and intellectual tradition” (Goody 1997:5) that sets itself above the ‘backward’ Malaysian culture. He uses particularly racist terms, which are even more emphasized by his comparison of the Malay with the young English girl whose “exquisite fairness, together with her erect and

independent attitude” (632) symbolizes civilization and purity in contrast to the Malaysians’ appearance of a naturalized and dangerous “tiger-cat”. This word use and imagery highlights the absolute contrast between the human English girl and the inhuman Malaysian. Here, De Quincey draws clear boundaries between the ‘normal’ and the ‘deviant’, the ‘us’ and ‘them’ (Hall 2003: 258). Hence, to refer to Saussure, it is the difference or the contrasting that is fundamental and carries meaning. Leask (1996: 228) argues, “orientalist stereotypes work by setting up dichotomy between familiar and exotic cultures”. By using “sharply opposed, polarized, binary extremes” (Hall 2003: 229), such as civilized/primitive, and highlighting the differences rather than trying to employ dialogue, De Quincey contributes to the establishment of a particular stereotype of the ‘Oriental’ man. In his representation, the reader gets the picture that the Oriental man is primitive, cruel, dangerous, and unable to communicate.

In another of his prose works, the ‘Oriental Dreams’, an accumulation of a number of contemporary stereotypes can be found. Set in Southern Asia, the text uses a specific diction and evokes disturbing imageries and myths of the East. This text is one of the various examples that show that the Orient is always in the “position of object studied by the Occidental white, instead of vice versa” (Said 2004: 338). It follows up with the Malaysian who “has been a fearful enemy for months” (De Quincey 1822: 680) and has transported him through his means to the regions where “man is a weed” (ibid). This phrase supports the widely acknowledged contemporary understanding that Asia consists of a “numberless, swarming, dehumanized population” (Young 2003: 97).

Southern Asia is a place where an English man would “go mad” if he was to “live in China and among Chinese manners and modes of life and scenery” (680). Even though at one point De Quincey flatters himself that “I was the idol, I was the

priest, I was worshipped” (681), the negative imagery and representation of threat prevail. De Quincey describes his “moral and spiritual terrors” (681) such as his anxiety about the “ancient, monumental, cruel and elaborate religions of Indostan” (680) or his horror of “eternity and infinity” that drove him “into oppressions of madness” (681). This passage can be read as a representation of contemporary Western anxieties and feelings of powerlessness to the impressive antiquity of the Orient. According to MacKenzie (1995: 30) the antiquity of Eastern culture was seen to undermine the claim of White superiority. De Quincey pictures the Orient as a place where not reason governs but where the people live in an endless realm of mythology. Moreover, the text originated in one of De Quincey’s opium reveries, is a first person narrative and as such written as if it was truly experienced. Over two paragraphs he describes the Oriental threat and relates it to his physical pain. Yet, he seems also to be fascinated with the “ugly birds, or snakes, or crocodiles”; “the abominable head of the crocodile, and his leering eyes, looked at me, multiplied into a thousand repetitions – and I stood loathing and fascinated” (681).

De Quincey’s ‘The Malay’ but especially ‘Oriental Dreams’ represent a threatening picture of the East as massively populated, inhuman and terrifying. In using frightening symbols and images, racist diction and binary oppositions of other cultures he constructs knowledge about the Orient, which was recognised as truth by contemporary readers. As a consequence, he established one form of justification for colonialism and the exploitation of land and people where no real claim was. Referring to the passage where De Quincey positions himself as a worshipped idol, he establishes the white colonizers as an unquestionable superiority. Consequently, he acknowledges or even favours the colonizers’ attempt to bring civilization to the savage ‘Others’ – “‘they’ were not like ‘us’ and for that reason deserved to be ruled” (Said 1993: xii). It can be argued that due to the construction of such and similar

knowledge “all share in an unshakable belief in the rightness of British imperial objectives” in the 18th century (Parker 1996: 222). Hence, apart from scientific and economic reasons, the cultural discourse of this time played a significant role in the British justification for colonialism; or as Said (2003: 3) puts it, the Oriental discourse can be seen “as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient”. Both texts show that “European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient” (Said 2003: 3). In this sense it is a form of self-definition as a contrasting image, idea or experience (Said 2004: 329).

In ‘Oriental Dreams’, for instance, De Quincey repeatedly refers to his readers as having the same or similar anxieties - “the causes of my horror lie deep, and some must be common to others”. Hence, De Quincey attempts to bind together “all of ‘Us’ who are ‘normal’ into one ‘imagined community’” (Hall 2003: 258) that stand in contrast to the ‘Others’. In doing so, it is evident that the poet and the audience share “the same conceptual maps and thus make sense of or interpret the world in roughly similar ways” (Hall 2003: 18).

On the one hand, De Quincey acknowledges a general superiority over the oriental ‘Others’, which serves as a justification for colonialism, on the other hand, there is an underlying anxiety about the ‘Others’. As Leask (1996: 246) points out “De Quincey fears the European subject will be ‘possessed’ by the Orient which it has set out to dominate”. Especially in the ‘Oriental Dreams’, De Quincey writes as if the Orient tries to absorb and de-civilize him. There is an underlying idea of “loss of self and cultural degeneration” (Leask 1996: 248). This can be seen in the very title of the collection where De Quincey associates himself with the oriental custom of opium eating⁵ and as such portrays himself as ‘orientalized’.

⁵ The nature of Opium eating was particularly associated with Turks and Chinese whereas English used to drink opium in its liquid form Laudanum (Leask 1996: 243).

Such an ambiguity towards the Orient is even more apparent within the representation of Oriental women. Coleridge's 'Kubla Khan', arguably the most famous orientalist Romantic poem, is divided into two parts. The first part introduces the oriental paradise whereas the second part resembles De Quincey's representation of the Oriental hell; "at a moments notice, Paradise could turn into barbarism" (Nixon 2003: 306). In the first part, the reader is introduced to Kubla's "pleasure dome", a "sacred river" and "gardens bright with sinuous rills" (Coleridge 1816: 514, l. 2-8), whereas in the second part, the setting changes into "a savage place" where women were "wailing for her demon-lover" (515, l. 14-16). The last image is a clear reference to the oriental femme fatal who awaits the despot within the harem. Yet, this image prevails not for long the poet moves on to an entirely different geographical setting where we read of the "Abyssinian maid" (515, l. 39) whose singing inspires and is a deep delight for the poet.

Firstly, it is important to emphasize that the poet easily interchanges the geographical settings⁶. As Leask points out many Europeans were "blind to the specificity of different Asian nations" lumping them together into one exotic geography. Secondly, Coleridge represents an explicit oriental sexual contemporary vision. The Abyssinian girl is a symbol for the desirable magical beauty whereas just few lines earlier women in the harem equalled tyrannical eroticism and danger. It can be argued that the harem serves as another signifier for barbarism. What Young (2003: 97) notes in his analysis on the representation of African women in art is also true for Coleridge's presentation of the Oriental woman: She "evokes an attractive but dangerous sexuality, an apparently abundant, limitless, but threatening, fertility" (97). Hence a deep ambiguity concerning the representation of Oriental women can be found in this poem. On the one hand Coleridge desires the unobtainable oriental

⁶ Asian Tartary and African Abyssinia

female, on the other hand, his western identity is endangered and might be overwhelmed by her alien forces.

In conclusion, the analysed texts of the Romantic oriental discourse are very much a product of their time and “emerged out of complex historical and cultural circumstances” (Said 2004: 337). Referring to Foucault, this Romantic representation of the Orient was true “only within a specific historical context” (Hall 2003: 46). As Conrad points out in 1897, these discourses tend to speak to the desire of peace and unrest, to our prejudices and fears, to our egoism and “always to our credulity” (131). Hence the reader of Romantic poetry is “as important as the writer in the production of meaning” (Hall 2003: 33).

This entire analysis has been shaped by my Austrian background and my contemporary perspective, which differs significantly from an interpretation of a 19th century reader with an imperialist English identity. Whereas I attempted to deconstruct the stereotypical representation of the Oriental ‘Other’ critically, a 19th century reader would most probably have agreed with De Quincey’s representation. In this sense the produced meanings are never fixed but always subject to change (Hall 2003: 32). During the course of time and even nowadays “European culture was able to manage - and even produce - the Orient politically, sociologically, military, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively” (Said 2003: 3) as the ultimate ‘Other’. As a consequence, cultural productions dealing with the Orient came to “represent a construct, not a reality, an emblem of domination and a weapon of power” (MacKenzie 1995: xii) and as such were not only influenced by English Imperialism but were an essential part of the Imperial discourse of justification.

word count: 2188

References:

- Barrell J. (1991) *The Infection of Thomas De Quincey: A Psychopathology of Imperialism*, London: Yale University Press.
- Coleridge S.T.
(1816) Christable; Kubla Khan: A Vision; The Pains of Sleep: Kubla Khan, in Wu D. (2003) (ed), *Romanticism: An Anthology*, 2nd ed., Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 514-515.
- De Quincey T.
(1822) Confessions of an English Opium Eater: The Malay, in Wu D. (2003) (ed), *Romanticism: An Anthology*, 2nd ed., Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 632-633.
- De Quincey T.
(1822) Confessions of an English Opium Eater: Oriental Dreams, in Wu D. (2003) (ed), *Romanticism: An Anthology*, 2nd ed., Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 680-681.
- Goody J. (1997) *Representations and Contradictions: Ambivalence Towards Images, Theatre, Fiction, Relics and Sexuality*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Hall St. (2003) 'Introduction' in Hall St. (ed), *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practises*, London: SAGE Publications, pp. 1-12.
- Hall St. (2003) 'The Work of Representation' in Hall St. (ed), *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practises*, London: SAGE Publications, pp. 13-74.
- Hall St. (2003) 'The Spectacle of the 'Other' in Hall St. (ed), *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practises*, London:

- SAGE Publications, pp. 223-290.
- Leask N. (1996) 'Colonialism and the exotic' in Bygrave St. (ed), *Romantic Writing*, London: Routledge, pp. 227-250.
- MacKenzie J.M.
(1995) *Orientalism: History, theory and the arts*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Nixon S. (2003) 'Exhibiting Masculinity' in Hall St. (ed), *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practises*, London: SAGE Publications, pp. 291-337.
- Parker K. (1996) 'Fertile Land, Romantic Spaces, Uncivilized Peoples: English Travel-Writing about the Cape of Good Hope, 1800-1850' in Schwarz B. (ed), *The Expansion of England: Race, ethnicity and cultural history*, London: Routledge, pp. 198-231.
- Said E.W. (2004) 'The Discourse of the Orient' in Walder D. (ed) *Literature in the Modern World: Critical Essays and Documents*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 329-340.
- Said E.W. (2003) *Orientalism*, London: Penguin Group.
- Said E.W. (1993) *Culture and Imperialism*, London: Chatto & Windus.
- Schwab R. (1996) 'The oriental renaissance' in Bygrave St. (ed), *Romantic Writing*, London: Routledge, pp. 294-302.
- Tiffin H. (1995) 'Post-colonial Literatures and Counter-discourse' in Ashcroft B., Griffith G. a. Tiffin H. (eds), *The Postcolonial Studies Reader*, London: Routledge, pp. 95-99.
- Young R. (2003) *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*, London: Routledge.

Appendix:

1) De Quincey T., *Confessions of an English Opium Eater: The Malay* (1822)

One day a Malay knocked at my door. What business a Malay could have to transact amongst English mountains, I cannot conjecture; but possibly he was on his road to a seaport about forty miles distant.

The servant who opened the door to him was a young girl, born and bred amongst the mountains, who had never seen an Asiatic dress of any sort: his turban, therefore, confounded her not a little; and as it turned out that his attainments in English were exactly of the same extent as hers in the Malay, there seemed to be an impassable gulf fixed between all communication of ideas, if either party had happened to possess any. In this dilemma, the girl, recollecting the reputed learning of her master (and, doubtless, giving me credit for a knowledge of all the languages of the earth, besides, perhaps, a few of the lunar ones), came and gave me to understand that there was a sort of demon below whom she clearly imagined that my art could exorcise from the house. I did not immediately go down, but when I did, the group which presented itself, arranged as it was by accident, though not very elaborate, took hold of my fancy and my eye in a way that none of the statuesque attitudes exhibited in the ballets in the opera-house, though so ostentatiously complex, had ever done. In a cottage kitchen, but panelled on the wall with dark wood, that from age and rubbing resembled oak, and looking more like a rustic hall of entrance than a kitchen, stood the Malay, his turban and loose trousers of dingy white relieved upon the dark panelling; he had placed himself nearer to the girl than she seemed to relish, though her native spirit of mountain intrepidity contended with the feeling of simple awe which her countenance expressed, as she gazed upon the tiger-cat before her. And a more striking picture there could not be imagined, than the beautiful English face of the girl, and its exquisite fairness, together with her erect and independent attitude, contrasted with the sallow and bilious skin of the Malay, enamelled or veneered with mahogany by marine air, his small, fierce, restless eyes, thin lips, slavish gestures, and adorations. Half hidden by the ferocious-looking Malay, was a little child from a neighbouring cottage, who had crept in after him, and was now in the act of reverting its head and gazing upwards at the turban and the fiery eyes beneath it, whilst with one hand he caught at the dress of the young woman for protection.

My knowledge of the Oriental tongues is not remarkably extensive, being, indeed, confined to two words, -- the Arabic word for barley, and the Turkish for opium (madjoon), which I have learnt from "Anastasius." And, as I had neither a Malay dictionary, nor even Adelung's Mithridates, which might have helped me to a few words, I addressed him in some lines from the "Iliad"; considering that, of such language as I possessed, the Greek, in point of longitude, came geographically nearest to an Oriental one. He worshipped me in a devout manner, and replied in what I suppose was Malay. In this way I saved my reputation with my neighbours; for the Malay had no means of betraying the secret. He lay down upon the floor for about an hour, and then pursued his journey. On his departure, I presented him with a piece of opium. To him, as an Orientalist, I concluded that opium must be familiar and the expression of his face convinced me that it was. Nevertheless, I was struck with some little consternation when I saw him suddenly raise his hand to his mouth,

and (in the school-boy phrase) bolt the whole, divided into three pieces, at one mouthful. The quantity was enough to kill three dragoons and their horses, and I felt some alarm for the poor creature; but what could be done? I had given him the opium in compassion for his solitary life, on recollecting that, if he had travelled on foot from London, it must be nearly three weeks since he could have exchanged a thought with any human being. I could not think of violating the laws of hospitality by having him seized and drenched with an emetic, and thus frightening him into a notion that we were going to sacrifice him to some English idol. No; there was clearly no help for it. He took his leave, and for some days I felt anxious; but, as I never heard of any Malay being found dead, I became convinced that he was used to opium, and that I must have done him the service I designed, by giving him one night of respite from the pains of wandering.

This incident I have digressed to mention, because this Malay (partly from the picturesque exhibition he assisted to frame, partly from the anxiety I connected with his image for some days) fastened afterwards upon my dreams, and brought other Malays with him worse than himself, that ran amuck at me, and led me into a world of troubles.

2) De Quincey T., Confessions of an English Opium Eater: Oriental Dreams (1822)

The Malay has been a fearful enemy for months. I have been every night, through his means, transported into Asiatic scenes. I know not whether others share in my feelings on this point; but I have often thought that if I were compelled to forego England, and to live in China, and among Chinese manners and modes of life and scenery, I should go mad. The causes of my horror lie deep, and some of them must be common to others. Southern Asia in general is the seat of awful images and associations. As the cradle of the human race, it would alone have a dim and reverential feeling connected with it. But there are other reasons. No man can pretend that the wild, barbarous, and capricious superstitions of Africa, or of savage tribes elsewhere, affect him in the way that he is affected by the ancient, monumental, cruel, and elaborate religions of Indostan, &c. The mere antiquity of Asiatic things, of their institutions, histories, modes of faith, &c., is so impressive, that to me the vast age of the race and name overpowers the sense of youth in the individual. A young Chinese seems to me an antediluvian man renewed. Even Englishmen, though not bred in any knowledge of such institutions, cannot but shudder at the mystic sublimity of CASTES that have flowed apart, and refused to mix, through such immemorial tracts of time; nor can any man fail to be awed by the names of the Ganges or the Euphrates. It contributes much to these feelings that southern Asia is, and has been for thousands of years, the part of the earth most swarming with human life, the great officina gentium. Man is a weed in those regions. The vast empires also in which the enormous population of Asia has always been cast, give a further sublimity to the feelings associated with all Oriental names or images. In China, over and above what it has in common with the rest of southern Asia, I am terrified by the modes of life, by the manners, and the barrier of utter abhorrence and want of sympathy placed between us by feelings deeper than I can analyse. I could sooner live with lunatics or brute animals. All this, and much more than I can say or have time to say, the reader must enter into before he can comprehend the unimaginable horror which these dreams of Oriental imagery and mythological tortures impressed upon me. Under the connecting feeling of tropical

heat and vertical sunlights I brought together all creatures, birds, beasts, reptiles, all trees and plants, usages and appearances, that are found in all tropical regions, and assembled them together in China or Indostan. From kindred feelings, I soon brought Egypt and all her gods under the same law. I was stared at, hooted at, grinned at, chattered at, by monkeys, by parroquets, by cockatoos. I ran into pagodas, and was fixed for centuries at the summit or in secret rooms: I was the idol; I was the priest; I was worshipped; I was sacrificed. I fled from the wrath of Brama through all the forests of Asia: Vishnu hated me: Seeva laid wait for me. I came suddenly upon Isis and Osiris: I had done a deed, they said, which the ibis and the crocodile trembled at. I was buried for a thousand years in stone coffins, with mummies and sphynxes, in narrow chambers at the heart of eternal pyramids. I was kissed, with cancerous kisses, by crocodiles; and laid, confounded with all unutterable slimy things, amongst reeds and Nilotic mud.

I thus give the reader some slight abstraction of my Oriental dreams, which always filled me with such amazement at the monstrous scenery that horror seemed absorbed for a while in sheer astonishment. Sooner or later came a reflux of feeling that swallowed up the astonishment, and left me not so much in terror as in hatred and abomination of what I saw. Over every form, and threat, and punishment, and dim sightless incarceration, brooded a sense of eternity and infinity that drove me into an oppression as of madness. Into these dreams only it was, with one or two slight exceptions, that any circumstances of physical horror entered. All before had been moral and spiritual terrors. But here the main agents were ugly birds, or snakes, or crocodiles; especially the last. The cursed crocodile became to me the object of more horror than almost all the rest. I was compelled to live with him, and (as was always the case almost in my dreams) for centuries. I escaped sometimes, and found myself in Chinese houses, with cane tables, &c. All the feet of the tables, sofas, &c., soon became instinct with life: the abominable head of the crocodile, and his leering eyes, looked out at me, multiplied into a thousand repetitions; and I stood loathing and fascinated. And so often did this hideous reptile haunt my dreams that many times the very same dream was broken up in the very same way: I heard gentle voices speaking to me (I hear everything when I am sleeping), and instantly I awoke. It was broad noon, and my children were standing, hand in hand, at my bedside--come to show me their coloured shoes, or new frocks, or to let me see them dressed for going out. I protest that so awful was the transition from the damned crocodile, and the other unutterable monsters and abortions of my dreams, to the sight of innocent HUMAN natures and of infancy, that in the mighty and sudden revulsion of mind I wept, and could not forbear it, as I kissed their faces.

3) Coleridge S.T., *Christable; Kubla Khan: A Vision; The Pains of Sleep: Kubla Khan* (1816)

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.

So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round:

And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills,
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the 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:
Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:
And 'mid these dancing rocks 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 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
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!

A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw:
It was an Abyssinian 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 dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,
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.