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Καθηγητοῦ τῆς Ἑθρας Βύρωνος
Ἀγγλικῆς Φιλολογίας καὶ Λογοτεχνίας

CAVERNS MEASURELESS TO MAN

If it were possible that a person should give a faithful history of his being, from the earliest epochs of his recollection, a picture would be presented such as the world has never contemplated before. A mirror would be held up to all men in which they might behold their own recollections, and, in dim perspective, their shadowy hopes and fears — all that they dare not, or that daring and desiring they could not expose to the open eye of day. But thought can with difficulty visit the intricate and winding chambers which it inhabits. It is like a river whose rapid and perpetual stream flows outwards; — like one in dread who speeds through the recesses of some haunted pile, and dares not look behind. The caverns of the mind are obscure, and shadowy; or perhaps pervaded by a lustre, beautifully bright indeed, but shining not beyond their portals. If it were possible to be where we have been, vitally and indeed — if, at the moment of our presence there, we could define the results of our experience, — if the passage from sensation to reflection — from a state of passive perception to voluntary contemplation, were not so dizzying and so tumultuous, this attempt would be less difficult.

P. B. SHELLEY, *Speculations on Metaphysics*.

Shelley is calling here for a practical psychology which can unite the percept and the concept, or pass from the one to the other with such ease and rapidity that the wordless intuition is not deformed the moment it is grasped. Can the *actus secundus* ever be adequate to the *actus primus*? The answer is probably no: poetry at any rate must be content with hints and guesses, with allusions and symbols. The river flows outwards: it cannot turn back upon itself; Coleridge's demon-dogged traveller dare not turn his head to see what he is running away from. Coleridge's lonesome road has become a haunted pile in Shelley's version; roads figure very little in his imagery, but the 'caverns of the mind' do. Wordsworth too declares:

*Caverns there were within my mind which sun
Could never penetrate*

but the italics suggest the comparative oddity of the idea. In Shelley the subterranean river of thought flows uncontrollably through dark

and intricate caverns, 'shaking the foundations' of his conscious life¹. The caverns of *Alastor* present themselves in the double aspect suggested in the *Speculations* passage: darkly sinister, or bright with gems.

The images of river and cave are examples respectively of figures which I call 'simple stereotypes' and 'complex symbols'. Critical jargon is always tiresome, and a good deal of it is unnecessary; but some, like Mr Eliot's 'objective correlative', has a purpose to serve in exegesis. In the next few pages I shall be discussing the cave as a complex symbol, and as the Romantic symbol *par excellence*, the locus of the Lost Traveller's dream. The river for its part will figure throughout my study as one of the simplest of stereotypes. I had better explain what I mean by these terms.

We are always, I think, aware of grades of meaningfulness among the 'furniture of heaven and earth' which environs us on our long journey through this world: particularly as these objects enter into the machinery of poetry. Probably this grading exists only for our minds; a superior intelligence, or the eye of a rabbit, will not look with more favour on a tree than on a rusty bicycle wheel. But for us there is a difference. We feel depths in the one which do not exist in the other. If nature is a cryptogram, then intelligent travel is an exercise in interpretation. The traveller is a moving eye, passing from letter to letter, from word to word, appreciatively. Rocks, trees, waves, birds, bees — here is a divine alphabet: what are we to make of it? Forster's dictum is imperative — 'Only connect!': and if the traveller connects, what message emerges? The message will depend, in its emphasis at least, on the deciphering eye; as Wordsworth remarked in a letter to Jacob Fletcher of 25 February 1825, 'our business is not so much with objects as with the law under which they are contemplated'. If, with Blake, we look not with but through the eye, the dots and dashes will yield one kind of sense; if we smuggle in a moral or metaphysical key, with Wordsworth or Coleridge, the cipher will come out different. Keats is an almost pure recorder and we are largely left to glimpse the meaning for ourselves; and so is Shelley at his best, when his mind is not running feverishly on parents, kings and priests.

But the eye is a selective instrument. It can't take everything in. Not all the dots and dashes will be picked up by our receivers; not all the letters of the divine alphabet (to return to our first metaphor) will record themselves on the sheet of white paper. And among

1. Prince Athanase, 100-104.

the letters some are clearly richer in content, more significant, more capable of entering into combinations, than others. An example. We accord precedence in our human alphabet to the vowels. At the lowest valuation they are cries of emotion; at the highest, they are words in their own right. You can get more out of A, O and I than out of B, R and Z. So too one image (the reflection in poetry of the divine letter) is richer in itself and in its associations than another. It is, so to speak, more flexible, it is unconventionalised. Such images I call 'complex symbols'. The conventionalised images I call 'simple stereotypes'. These latter are representations which have been linked so constantly, in our culture at least, with a single concept or group of concepts that they hardly admit of further development or fresh handling. A number of these spring readily to mind: the rainbow, with its connotation of promise; lightning, with its twin senses of swiftness and destruction; the ain, emblemising divine grace; even the river, that constant figure of life's transience. It is of course some index of the power of a poet that he can give complex status, at some moment or other, to these stereotypes. When Coleridge writes in a Notebook (I, 1154) of 'a quiet stream, with all its eddies, & the moonlight playing on them, quiet as if they were Ideas in the divine mind anterior to the Creation', we recognize the freshness and the strangeness; but then Coleridge was, as I have already pointed out, particularly river-conscious. Even he can do little for the rainbow: 'the stedfast rainbow in the fast-moving, hurrying, hail-mist! What a congregation of Images & Feelings, of fantastic Permanence amidst the rapid Change of Tempest — quietness the Daughter of Storm'¹.

These stereotypes afford identical references wherever we may encounter them: in classical or Elizabethan or Romantic literature, or elsewhere; nor do they vary from poet to poet. 'They are only conventional signs'. Such images, though frequent, are not very important or interesting. In succeeding chapters we shall note them but not stop to analyse them. Our main concern will be with another set of furnishings whose import fluctuates from century to century, from writer to writer, and indeed from poem to poem of the same writer. Mountains, for instance, meant quite different things for classical Greece, for Israel, for the early eighteenth century, for the Romantics — and they meant something rather different for individual poets within each of these and other periods. So too with the sea,

1. *Notebook I*, 1246.

with caves and forests, with deserts. These complex symbols deserve and will receive close attention.

It is true a good number of images fall somewhere between the two extremes. But there are a sufficient number plainly belonging to the one or the other category to make the distinction useful. Useful as a tool of analysis, and as a help, maybe, towards establishing the merit of a piece of writing. It is clear that the two types differ much as do simile and metaphor in the field of 'rhetoric' — a distinction upon which we are accustomed to assess in part the quality (sincerity, immediacy, organic richness) of a poem. There are more, and more spontaneous, metaphors in the later Shakespeare than in the earlier, and we note this as an element in the greater power, the deeper resonances of these plays. I would suggest that a grouping of images into simple stereotypes and complex symbols furnishes us with another gauge, less useful because less certain, but nevertheless offering some critical possibilities. I shall make some use of it throughout this book¹.

'There is nothing so pleasing as retiring to caverns', the Caliph remarks in *Vathek*. It is a sentiment which finds an echo in every Romantic heart (though Peacock is at hand, as usual, to supply the corrective). Our landscape is riddled with caves: caves subterranean, caves submarine, caves on the sea-shore, forest grottos, even speluncles at the summits of mountains. We are confronted with a veritable spelionomania, almost a speliolatry. Here indeed is an inescapable feature of the Path Perilous.

*A portal as of shadowy adamant
Stands yawning on the highway of the life
Which we all tread, a cavern huge and haunt;
Around it rages an unceasing strife
Of shadows, like the restless clouds that haunt
The gap of some cleft mountain, lifted high
Into the whirlwinds of the upper sky².*

1. A similar distinction might be made between the archetypal figures which I shall discuss presently — the Sage, the Sybil, the Magic Child — and the mere personifications which abound in Romantic verse. The gigantic figure or War, for instance, stalks through Blake, Shelley, Byron and Coleridge; he is often powerfully realized, but he remains an abstraction and is never a component of the human totality. Death is another of these images, as in *Alastor*, 611-624.

2. *An Allegory*, 1-7.

To this complex symbol alone one might devote a whole study. Here man returns to his origins, and anticipates his end. The cave is womb and tomb¹, it is a place of refuge and a haunt of terror, it is the witches' den, the prophetic antrum of the Sybil, the contemplative cell of the sage, the locus of a divine birth, and the repository of ancient wisdom. 'In mysterious Sinai's awful cave' the wondrous art of writing was given to man: recent discoveries (the Lascaux paintings, the Dead Sea scrolls) still emphasise the cave's importance as a focus of art and knowledge. It is worth while to scrutinize these connotations one by one. The cave features as a tomb in Blake's primitive landscape.

*Then the perilous path was planted,
And a river and a spring
On every cliff and tomb,
And on the bleached bones
Red clay brought forth².*

This sense links up with the sense of the cave as refuge, for it may be the place of final refuge, the goal of the Freudian death-wish. Shelley's extraordinary sonnet 'Ye hasten to the grave' stands with Keats's 'Why did I laugh tonight?' in its use of interior dialogue: he questions his 'quick heart' and 'vainly curious mind' on their destiny:

*Oh, whither hasten ye that thus ye press
With such swift feet life's green and pleasant path,
Seeking, alike from happiness and woe,
A refuge in the cavern of gray death?
O heart, and mind, and thoughts! what thing do you
Hope to inherit in the grave below?*

As associated with the Magic Child, it is the womb, the procreative centre, the stable-cave of Bethlehem. Though Vala, who is Nature, assures Albion that man is no more than a physical birth —

*The Imaginative Human Form is but a breathing of Vala;
I breathe him forth into the Heaven from my secret Cave³.*

— there is constant stress in our poets on the miraculous aspects of the cave-birth. Here prophecy is fulfilled: *teste David cum Sybilla*.

1. Blake's 'the Caverns of the Grave & Places of human seed' (Vala).

2. M.H.H. 190.

3. Jerusalem.

As the haunt of the Sybil, 'the Pythian's mystic cave'¹, it is almost invariably on the sea's marge, and is resonant with sea voices. Shelley's Witch of Atlas, however, dwells in a mountain cave 'by a secret fountain'. The Sage, again, has his cell in the forest or (insofar as his function merges with that of the Sybil, as it does in Shelley — one aspect of his wider androgyny) on desolate shores². Beckford speaks (*Travel Diaries*, I) of 'caves and dens of the earth, inhabited by ancient men familiar with spirits'. In *Alastor* Shelley wishes 'that the dream Of dark magician in his visioned cave... were the true law Of this so lovely world'; and in *Prince Athanase* child and sage are brought together in a setting of forests and sea-caverns. The aged Zonoras fills

*The spirit of Prince Athanase, a child,
With soul-sustaining songs of ancient lore
And philosophic wisdom, clear and mild...*

*So in the caverns of the forest green,
Or on the rocks of echoing ocean hoar,
Zonoras and Prince Athanase were seen
By summer woodmen...*³

In their vision of the cave Shelley and Keats have much in common. Unlike Wordsworth, for whom the cave is 'blind' —

*We have traced the stream
From the blind cavern whence is faintly heard
Its natal murmur,*

he writes towards the close of *The Prelude*⁴ — these poets hail it as a source of wisdom, of inspiration. In an earlier book I have shown how for Keats caves are resonant hollows focusing essences both noetic and therapeutic. With Blake, who speaks of 'All the Wisdom which was

1. *Childe Harold*, III, lxxx.

2. Collins, as so often, anticipates this basic Romantic theme:

*'This thine to sing, how, framing hideous spells,
In Sky's lone isle, the gifted wizard-seer,
Lodged in the wintry cave, with Fate's fell spear,
Or in the depth of Uist's dark forest dwells.*

Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands of Scotland strophe IV.

3. *Prince Athanase*. Shelley's most remarkable conflation of the child and the sage comes in *Hellas*, line 996, where Greece is seen as a 'hermit-child'.

4. *The Prelude*, XIV, 194-196.

hidden in caves and dens from ancient Time³, Shelley thinks in more concrete terms — of the living Sage, teaching and admonishing, or of the written word in shape of scroll or mural inscription. For Keats, the living Sage is unnecessary, for the cavern has its own voice, a 'grace dissolved in place', and its message is of and for the present moment; for Shelley, the lore of centuries accumulated in caves may point the road back to the Golden Age:

*Her cave was stored with scrolls of strange device,
The works of some Saturnian Archimage,
Which taught the expiations at whose price
Men from the Gods might win that happy age
Too lightly lost, redeeming native vice;
And which might quench the Earth-consuming rage
Of gold and blood — till men should live and move
Harmonious as the sacred stars above...¹*

No doubt such scrolls were visible to Coleridge too, when,

*oft alone,
Piercing the long-neglected holy cave,
The haunt obscure of old Philosophy,
He bade with lifted torch its starry walls
Sparkle, as erst they sparkled to the flame
Of odorous Lamps tended by Saint or Sage².*

But note the difference. For Coleridge the cave is the repository of a lost, a dead wisdom. There is no possibility of receiving inspiration from focused powers or regaining the secret of the Golden Age. For Coleridge, as for Milton, the folding-star of Bethlehem has long dimmed the Sage's odorous lamp.

So far we have viewed the cave in its double function as womb and tomb, and seen how this function is linked, through the figures of Sage and Sybil, with its role as depository of wisdom. If I have

1. *The Witch of Atlas*, xviii. Scrolls recur in Byron's *Heaven and Earth* in a Biblical cave context:

*The scroll of Enoch prophesied it long
In silent books which, in their silence, say
More to the mind than thunder to the ear...*

2. *A Tombless Epitaph*, 28-33.

emphasised — over-emphasised, some readers may think, this aspect of the cave, it is because I believe Sage and Sybil to be the most important figures met with by our Travellers; and the relations of the Travellers with these figures cast a brilliant light on the nature of their several journeys. But these points cannot be brought out now: they must wait for the consideration of individual writers in the pages which follow. All I am doing now is amass material — images, insights playing over a very broad field — which I shall focus later at selected moments in my analyses. The method is clumsy, certainly, but the enterprise is highly complex.

Let us turn now to the cave in its twin aspect of danger and of salvation. We are still moving, be it noted, among ambivalences (a mark, this, of the cave's status as a complex symbol. Simple stereotypes are not Janus-faced). We are still moving, in fact, in the sphere of the womb-tomb antithesis, but in the active rather than the passive mode: the reference has been narrowed to the emotional field of fear and security. To put it in yet another way, we have come down from the metaphysical to the moral or practical plane. And in doing so, we find our figures correspondingly fallen, limited, less archetypal. The sage is replaced by the wizard, the sybil by the witch, and the magic child by the little boy lost. Powers of evil are represented by brigands or wolves, The light of wisdom has gone out and only the sputtering candle or the glow of decay reveals the outline of the cavern.

The cave figures as the witch's den in the more lurid products of the Romantic muse, both in verse and prose. *Macbeth* is a potent influence here, descending by way of Restoration opera and Beattie's *The Minstrel*, with its

*hags, that suckle an infernal brood,
And ply in caves th'unutterable trade,
Midst fiends and spectres, quench the Moon in blood,
Yell in the midnight storm, or ride th'infuriate flood,*

to find re-expression in Scott's Meg Merrilies, Shelley's Medusa and Keats's Lamia. As for the schoolboy melodrama of brigands and their victims (though Collins affords a few lines in his ode *to Fear* to the:

*haunted cell
Where gloomy Rape and Murder dwell!*

and though we have the later examples of Wordsworth's *The Borderers*, Coleridge's translation of *The Robbers*, Shelley's *St. Irvyne*

and Byron's *The Corsair*) we can say that serious literature has little truck with these *coups de théâtre*.

The cave is a place of danger; it is also a place of refuge. The Traveller is not only lost — he is tired and afraid. He falls asleep and dreams in the cave 'under the hill'. His dreams will vary with the motive for his turning aside into the cave. Guilt, as well as fear, may have driven him there. We must not forget that the traveller is Cain and Ahasuerus as well as Ulysses and Christian. 'And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord'¹. Then the cave is the mask of guilt. Juan and Haidee think to escape God's eye thus, but in vain. In *The Borderers* the eye as a star foils Marmaduke's murderous purpose:

'Twas dark — dark as the grave: yet did I see,
Saw him — his face turned toward me: and I will tell thee
Idonea's filial countenance was there
To baffle me — it put me to my prayers.
Upwards I cast my eyes, and, through a crevice,
Beheld a star twinkling above my head,
And, by the living God, I could not do it².

But for those whose purposes are innocent, the cave is an ideal refuge. Here the Lion and the Virgin meet, as in Blake's *The Little Girl Lost*, a poem where, as so often in Blake, the cave has definite neo-Platonic connotations³. Indeed, we find ourselves here in the presence of the great protecting archetypes, in particular with the Sybil, and with that which is protected, the little girl lost or the Magic Child. With a study of these I shall conclude this paper.

The archetypal figures, like the cave which is their centre, are ambivalent. They are powerful to save, but also to destroy. We accept their aid at our peril. For both Sage and Sybil have a double aspect, and even in the Magic Child there is a Puckish element. The Sage is a magus, and there is a black magic as well as a white. In the Sybil this ambivalence is still more accentuated by reason of her often strongly defined sexual aspect: she is Circe, La Belle Dame, Lilith, as well as Sophia, Beatrice, Eve. Sage and Sybil are indeed figures

1. Isaiah II, 19.

2. *The Borderers*, Act. II.

3. As Miss Kathleen Raine has amply demonstrated in her brilliant study of the poem in the symposium *The Divine Vision* (Gollancz, 1957).

of the cave, and have all the cave's mystery, darkness and depth about them as well as its warmth and security. In trusting to their good offices we may find ourselves in the grip of forces beyond our control. This is the theme of much of Keats, and it is to the fore in Byron, Shelley and Coleridge. The 'emanations' of Blake's symbolic books, and even Wordsworth's stern asexuality, are direct or indirect reminders of the Sybil's power.

We may make our best approach to the Sybil not through Romantic poetry but through prose. De Quincey gives us an extraordinarily complete analysis in some pages of *Suspiria de Profundis* (1845) which sum up or, one may say, eintessentialize the Romantic iconography of the Sybil. The *Suspiria* is a series of papers contributed to *Blackwood's Magazine* which begins, appropriately enough, with *Dreaming*, and continues with *The Palimpsest of the Human Brain*, *Vision of Life*, *Memorial Suspiria*, *Savannah-la-Mar*, and ends with *Levana*, and *Our Ladies of Sorrows*. All these short papers are relevant to our theme. The Dark Interpreter tells us that 'there are creative agencies in every part of human nature, of which the thousandth part could never be revealed in one life': from such agencies proceed *Levana* and *Our Ladies of Sorrows*. *Levana* is the benevolent sybilline figure who directs 'that mighty system of central forces hidden in the deep bosom of human life, which by passion, by strife, by temptation, by the energies of resistance, works for ever upon children, resting not day or night, any more than the mighty wheels of day and night themselves, whose moments, like restless spokes, are glimmering for ever as they revolve'. The *Ladies of Sorrows* are the ministers of *Levana*, who 'utter their pleasure not by sounds that perish, or by words that go astray, but by signs in heaven, by changes on earth, by pulses in secret rivers, heraldries painted on darkness, and hieroglyphics written on the tablets of the brain'. The eldest sister, *Mater Lachrymarum*, 'night and day raves and moans, calling for vanished faces'. The second sister is *Mater Suspiriorum*: 'Murmur she may, but it is in her sleep. Whisper she may, but it is to herself in the twilight. Mutter she does at times, but it is in solitary places that are desolate as she is desolate, in ruined cities, and when the sun has gone down to his rest'. The third sister, *Mater Tenebrarum*, is the most terrible. 'Her kingdom is not large, or else no flesh should live; but within that kingdom all power is hers... She is the defier of God. She is also the mother of lunacies, and the suggestress of suicides. Deep lie the roots of her power...'

The suggestion is that the Mater Tenebrarum (who wears the turret like the Cybele who emerges from darkness and returns silently to darkness in *Endymion*) is rather more than a servant, she is a rival of Levana: and this dichotomy of the Sybil is something we encounter throughout Romantic poetry. As the benevolent Sybil she is a figure of the Garden: the primal Eve or the ultimate Madonna. As the malevolent Circe she is a figure of the Way: the seductive Lamia or the terrifying Life-in-Death: she *lies in wait* for her victims. The Abyssinian Maid of *Kubla Khan*, Neuha in *The Island* and Haidee in *Don Juan* are natives of their respective Paradises: their functions are to console and to save. But Lamia and the Belle Dame are met with on the journey; Shelley's Medusa lies in wait on the rocks, by the cave's mouth, or, in *Epipsychidion*:

*By a well, under blue nightshade bowers,
The breath of her false mouth was like faint flowers,
Her touch was as electric poison...*

The subtlety of Coleridge's portrayal in *Christabel* is that the spell is woven and accepted within the circuit of home; the victim is not abducted, like the Knight-at-arms and Lycius, to a false Paradise, but bears the vampire in her arms over the threshold of the fortress of herself. The possibilities of such a situation are almost unlimited, and already begin to unfold themselves in what we have of the poem. Levana, in the form of Christabel's dead mother, is impotent: she knows, but cannot act. Christabel does not know, but she can act, by sheer virtue of her innocence; and her action will be to restore Geraldine, the Mater Tenebrarum, to the service of Levana. Such, to me, seems the main line of possibility.

Sage and Sybil are constantly linked in Shelley's verse. This tells us something about Shelley personally — about his need for masculine wisdom as well as for feminine consolation — but it has broader relevance in bringing us back to the theme of relationship. It reminds us that the three archetypes are not detached, solitary figures, but form a pattern; and that pattern is the family. Shelley's Sybils are predominantly maternal, and of all the great Romantics he probably came nearest to achieving a satisfactory married life: something of this all-roundness is projected into his rather Holy Familyish picture of the archetypes. The cave which is the Sybil's grotto and the Sage's cell is also the locus of a birth: the birth of the Magic Child from

their union¹. With the birth a cycle is completed: a new dimension is added to duality, and the cave is transformed into the sphere, filled with light and music, detaching itself from the heavy and the stony and floating upward, as is *Prometheus Unbound*:

*And the wild odour of the forest flowers,
The music of the living grass and air,
The emerald light of leaf-entangled beams
Round its intense yet self-conflicting speed,
Seems kneaded into one aerial mass
Which drowns the sense. Within the orb itself,
Pillowed upon its alabaster arms,
Like to a child o'erwearied with sweet toil,
On its own folded wings, and wavy hair,
The Spirit of the Earth is laid asleep...*

How much the theme of the Magic Child may owe to *Macbeth's* 'naked new-born babe Striding the blast' it would be difficult to assess. Certainly one of its first appearances in the verse of our period is as the 'child on a cloud' who commissions the *Songs of Innocence*; and Blake was sufficiently impressed by the *Macbeth* image to recreate it in terms of engraving. That the Child is also a prince is suggested too in *Macbeth* by its connection with Duncan, and the point is of prime importance. Wordsworth's babe comes trailing clouds of glory like royal robes from an 'imperial palace'. On earth he is a changeling, and Nature is his foster-mother. This adds immensely to the pathos of one who, though 'glorious in the might Of heaven-born freedom', is physically weak and unprotected. Power and weakness constitute the paradox of the Magic Child. Blake's red-haired Orc, though energy and revolt personified, can yet be chained to the rock by his jealous father. Shelley's cherub-child in *The Revolt of Islam* helplessly witnesses her mother's death at the stake. But all draw upon a reserve of hidden strength that cannot be tampered with.

*Our childhood sits,
Our simple childhood, sits upon a throne
That hath more power than all the elements*².

1. 'The Magic Child' is a coinage of Coleridge's, from *The Pang More Sharp than All*: 'For still there lives within my secret heart The Magic image of the magic Child' (st. IV).

2. *The Prelude*, V, 507-509.

Blake's child who 'leaps into the dangerous world... like a fiend hid in a cloud' adds dynamism and a welcome touch of devilishness to Wordsworth's too static image: but both stress power.

From what has now been said, and still more, I hope, from the individual studies which follow, we see in how profound a sense Romantic poetry is a poetry of motion and of distances. If we go back from these writers to read the older poets — to Pope, to Herbert, to Donne, even to Spenser — we feel at once a sense of the static and the contracted. Motion is arrested, vistas shrink, horizons narrow. The earlier poets are more compact, 'infinite riches in a little room'; we are, in a real sense, more at home with them, and there is comfort in their domesticity. The Romantics offer us little in the way of comfort or reassurance. Their distances are disturbing. And this is because they are inner as well as outer distances, 'the dim-discover'd tracts of mind'. With the elder poets this is not so, even when their writing is overtly allegorical. The colourful scenes which succeed each other so smoothly in *The Faerie Queene* come from a mind which delighted in the high Malorian enterprise; but Spenser's heart is at home in Gloriana's court, not in the wild wood. This is still clearer in Chaucer. Over against the narrative of Custance's travels — always imposed, never sought ('Of viage is ther noon eleccioun') is set the explicit or implicit image of home, a home which is known and loved and which is not the goal of wandering. But the Romantics were homeless, and because their hearts were empty and unfocused the external vistas were sought, welcomed and received within. De Quincey has commented on Wordsworth's lines on the Boy of Windermere —

*...a gentle shock of mild surprise
Has carried far into his heart the voice
Of mountain torrents; or the visible scene
Would enter unawares into his mind
With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
Its woods, and that uncertain heaven received
Into the bosom of the steady lake*

— that 'the very expression «far» by which space and its infinities are attributed to the human heart, and its capacities of re-echoing the sublimities of nature, has always struck me with a flash of sublime revelation'. So in *The Waggoner*, 'from hiding places ten years deep', the temporal is subordinated to the spatial. In *The Excursion* (IV, 627) he speaks of 'the heart within the heart', an expression not far from

Shelley's *cor cordium*. In *Tintern Abbey* the 'sensations sweet Felt in the blood and felt along the heart' pass into his purer mind. The phrasing is consistently spatial.

Romantic perception thus has an inscape, to use Hopkin's word, that corresponds to the outer panorama and extends it into the land of dreams. Indeed, there are moments when reading this complex verse when we cannot be certain if the frontier has been passed or not (we feel this particularly in Shelley): and this is a feature which the Romantics passed on to their successors, not only to the misty pre-Raphaelites but to Hopkins himself and to Yeats and Eliot.

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